



Press Release

The Southern African People's Solidarity Network(SAPSN) Regional Coordinating Committee comprising the Foundation for Social and Economic Justice (Swaziland), Malawi Economic Justice Network, Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC), Economic Justice Network of South Africa, Development for Peace Education and the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) notes with great concern, the unsubstantiated and fictitious claims by the Herald newspaper of the 16th of August 2019 where it published a story "*Civil Society plots to smear Zim at SADC.*" The claims are not only deliberate but malicious and meant to tarnish the brilliant solidarity work that has been championed by the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN) since its inception in 1999.

ZIMCODD is the current host secretariat of SAPSN after taking over from the Development Peace Education of Lesotho in 2018. ZIMCODD's work is known since 2000 as an advocate for citizens' social and economic rights. ZIMCODD thus remains focused on its mandate and as the SAPSN member and host secretariat, assert the right to freedom of association and will endeavor to advance the all-important interest of regional, national and international people to people solidarity as inspired by decades of struggle for liberation and subsequent independence of many colonized states in the region.

The SADC People's Summit remains a peaceful platform for SADC citizens to participate in advancing climate, political, social and economic rights of citizens in theregion holding the regional bloc accountable to the commitments made in the various protocols.

The SADC People's Summit takes place every year on the side-lines of the SADC Heads of State and Government Summit. Citizens from SADC member states convene to discuss the climate, political, social and economic challenges they are facing and deliver petitions stemming from their conversations to the Heads of States, who have on 12 occasions in different countries received such petitions.

In 2014, when Zimbabwe took over the Chairmanship of SADC, in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, the SAPSN convened a similar event and submitted the petition through the Zimbabwe Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The 2019 People Summit convened in Dar es Salaam is the 13th edition and is held in the same spirit, meant to strengthen regional solidarity and citizens campaigns for social, environmental and economic justice. During the Summit, Issues of climate justice became topical as the continent succumbs to the effects of global warming.

Since its inception in 2006, SAPSN has never been implicated in any cases of violence or terrorism. Our mandate is derived from the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Programme and the SADC Charter of Fundamental Rights among other SADC protocols which Zimbabwe is a signatory to, which emphasise the role of SADC citizens in shaping the development trajectory in our region.

It is thus unfortunate for Mr Zvamaida Murwira and the Herald newspaper to discredit the nation in the Herald article by insinuating that the Zimbabwe government does not recognise the participation of citizens in national development.

Statement Issued By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sofonea Shale', written over a light-colored background.

Sofonea Shale

Chairperson- SAPSN Regional Coordinating Committee