

SEX-FOR-MAIZE SCANDAL



By Angela Mtambo in Kasama

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- One woman said a clerk told her she would only be helped fast if she “cooperated,” and she had seen other women giving in.
- Another reported being harassed with compliments and requests to meet at night. When she refused, her maize was ignored for a week.

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The Nakonde Border Queens Who Trade Beyond Limits between Tanzania and Zambia

By Annie Zulu

By 6:00 AM, the black market in Nakonde is already alive. Footsteps pound the dusty ground, traders shout out their best deals, and shop shutters rattle open in rhythmic unison. It’s the sound of a border town in motion, and at the heart of it are the women crossing from Tanzania each day, chasing opportunity one sale at a time.

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Farmers in Northern Province are raising alarm over what they describe as widespread corruption, inefficiency, and mistreatment by Food Reserve Agency (FRA) officers at satellite depots during this year’s maize marketing season. Radio Mano visited several FRA depots dotted in five districts in Northern Province, and the situation was almost the same everywhere. Piles of maize were stacked high, while tired farmers—men and women and in some cases children—sat nearby, unsure of when they would be attended to. Their names were written down, but the lists were never followed.

At Lubushi depot in Lunte district, farmers complained that waiting lists were ignored, leaving them frustrated and hopeless. And in Misambo in the same district, hundreds of bags of maize already bought were left uncollected—a clear sign of inefficiency. Robert Mutale, a farmer at Misengo depot, told Radio Mano that he had spent more than a month sleeping at the satellite depot without being attended to. "We are suffering here. Some of us have been here for weeks. If you speak out, they tell you they won't attend to you unless you pay them," Mutale said. Sharon Kabwe, a farmer from Kasama, accused depot clerks of demanding money for empty grain bags—sometimes up to K800 for 150 bags—and showing favouritism to wealthier suppliers.

"They buy from big suppliers first and leave us small-scale farmers stranded. Some women have even been sexually harassed in exchange for having their maize bought quickly," Kabwe alleged. Sexual Favour Demands Targeting Women Farmers Even more disturbing are allegations by some female farmers that some FRA clerks are demanding sexual favours in exchange for faster service. "He told me I would be helped quickly if I ‘cooperated’," said a female farmer from Kasama, her voice trembling. “I have seen other women accepting.” “He kept saying I’m beautiful and asked me to meet him at night. When I said no, my maize stayed for a week.”

Favouritism and Inefficiency

Broken Systems, Bribes, and Delays Leave Patients Dying Without Treatment

From page 1

In this report, Ennety Munshya exposes the human cost of a failing cancer care system—told through the real-life stories of patients and caregivers, many of them poor and from rural communities, who endure pain, worsening health, and death amid chronic delays, broken equipment, and broken promises.

Zambia’s only public cancer facility, the Cancer Diseases Hospital (CDH) in Lusaka, is in crisis. The hospital is crippled by broken or outdated equipment, drug shortages, bureaucratic delays, and alleged corruption. The result is preventable patient deaths and widespread suffering. In March 2024, the Zambian government signed a US\$30.8 million contract with Siemens Healthineers to rehabilitate and re-equip CDH, the country’s only public cancer treatment centre. The contract includes the decommissioning of obsolete equipment, structural rehabilitation, and the installation of modern medical machinery—such as four linear accelerators, two brachytherapy units, two CT simulators, an MRI machine, and a mammography unit.

Failed referral plans

In October 2023, then Health Minister Sylvia Masebo announced that radiation patients would be sent to Tanzania during renovations.

The plan failed. India was later named as the new referral destination, but many patients report bribery, false promises, and uncertainty surrounding access. It is hoped that, once completed, these high-profile upgrades at the cancer hospital will bring much-needed relief to patients—many of whom are poor and from rural areas—who continue to endure prolonged pain, worsening health, and even death as a result of the system’s ongoing failures.

Human cost – a mother’s tragedy

A woman recounts how her mother died of cervical cancer after waiting months for treatment at CDH and paying K6,000 in a bribe for a referral to India that never materialised. Her mother was diagnosed with cervical cancer in October 2023, after experiencing abdominal pains and irregular discharge. Concerned about her symptoms, she went for a check-up at Livingstone General Hospital, where doctors suspected cervical cancer. The hospital referred her to a private laboratory for a biopsy, which confirmed that the cancer was at Stage 2B – meaning the cancer had spread beyond the original site. She was then referred to the Cancer Diseases Hospital in Lusaka for specialised treatment.

Farmers also report that even when they arrive early, they are pushed back in the line if they don’t have connections within FRA or money. “They serve their friends and relatives first,” said a farmer from Misengo village. “Some even arrive late and still go ahead of the queue.” Farmers also complain about slow operations and absenteeism by depot staff. “By 11am, they say they are going for lunch. We are left sitting with our maize in the sun,” said a farmer at Kasama Central satellite depot.

Poor Sanitation and Inhumane Conditions

Some farmers, especially women, spend multiple nights at depots, waiting for their turn without access to clean water or toilets. “There is nowhere to bathe or relieve ourselves,” said a woman from Lubushi. “It’s not safe or healthy.” In one video clip reviewed by Mano filmed at Musuba satellite in chilunga ward in kasama central constituency, women are seen cooking by the roadside, their maize stacked beside them, as children play nearby in dust and heat. Mano has also established that clerks are extorting farmers and traders, demanding unofficial payments before granting access to depot services. In one instance, this reporter, posing as a customer during an undercover investigation, was asked to pay K1,865 to sell 200 bags of maize. A source within the FRA, who asked to remain anonymous, claimed that some of the misconduct could be linked to the fact that depot clerks have not been paid for the past month. "Although this does not justify the corruption, the workers are frustrated," the source said.

Chiefs and Clergy Speak Out

Senior Chief Mwamba confirmed that he has received multiple reports from his subjects regarding corruption at depots in Kasama. "These are serious allegations. I am warning both farmers and depot clerks to refrain from such acts," he said. Fr. Christian Muselela of Lubushi Minor Seminary, urged the government to open alternative markets, specify the number of maize bags to be purchased this year, and improve road infrastructure to ease transportation. "Corruption is killing the country’s growth. Farmers must resist it, and the government must act," he stressed.

“By the time of her diagnosis, she was very okay, and we were hopeful that once she went to Lusaka for treatment, everything would be fine,” the daughter recalls. Their first visit to Lusaka was in November 2023.

“The hospital opened a file for her, did some tests, and gave her painkillers. She was told to return in January 2024 for a review,” she said. However, in January, they were again told to come back in March. “During the January visit, I tried to engage someone to help speed up the process. Through a connection, more tests were done, and a doctor recommended that my mother undergo radiotherapy. But I was told the treatment was not available at the hospital—she would have to go to India,” she explained.

By May, her mother’s health had worsened. While at the hospital registry, the daughter said a woman approached her, offering to help get her mother’s name on the list of patients being sent to India for treatment. “She told me I needed to pay her K6,000 for a recommendation letter to be written and signed by the doctor. She assured me my mom would travel to India within two weeks. I accepted, because I was desperate.” Her mother remained in Lusaka, waiting for the promised letter—but it never came. Eventually, she returned to Livingstone. A month later, after constant follow-ups with the woman from CDH, she was advised to bring her mother back to Lusaka for chemotherapy while they continued waiting for the India trip.

When Mano contacted some of the accused depot clerks, they declined to comment. One of them responded: “We don’t talk to the media. Go ahead and report the matter to the PMC (Provincial Marketing Coordinator).”

FRA’s Zero Tolerance to Corruption

In response to the allegations, the FRA issued a statement condemning the reported misconduct. “The Agency wishes to categorically state that such behaviour, if proven to be true, is wholly unacceptable, unethical, and illegal,” said John Chipandwe, FRA’s Public Relations Coordinator. “The Agency maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of corruption, bribery, and abuse of authority.” He confirmed that investigations would be launched and that any individuals found culpable would face disciplinary action. On the allegations of sexual harassment, the FRA described them as “extremely disturbing.”

“Any form of sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse is strictly prohibited,” Chipandwe added. “We encourage farmers, especially those affected, to report such cases to the nearest FRA regional offices or police stations.” Responding to complaints about unfair treatment of farmers, Chipandwe said: “FRA operates on a first-come, first-served basis. Farmers are encouraged to clean their grain at home to reduce waiting time.” He explained that FRA field officers conduct regular monitoring to ensure procedures are followed. However, farmers like Mutale and Kabwe insist the situation on the ground is far different from what the agency describes.

“We just want fairness. If they can pay us on time and stop corruption, we will all be happy,” Robert said. FRA is currently buying maize nationwide and aims to purchase more than 500,000 metric tons this year. Official guidelines state that depot clerks are entitled to overtime pay through the agency—not from farmers. Government’s Response Northern Province Permanent Secretary Bernard Mpundu, warned depot clerks against collecting money from farmers under the pretext of overtime. "If this continues, those involved risk being taken to court for corruption," Mpundu said.

Angela is an investigative journalist based in Kasama Produced by Radio Mano for Makanday Centre for Investigative Journalism - Zambia. The article has been edited and fact-checked by MakanDay.

“We took her back to CDH, but chemotherapy couldn’t be done because her hemoglobin levels were too low. She was given medication to take for two weeks to help boost her blood levels.”

When they returned to the hospital, they were told the cancer had progressed to Stage 4 and had spread to her kidneys. At that point, the doctors said there was nothing more they could do. “She was told to go back home. That was the worst period of her life. She lost all hope. She even stopped taking her herbal medicine. It was as though she had accepted that she was going to die.”

In August 2024, her mother was admitted to Livingstone Central Hospital after experiencing vomiting and diarrhea. She was discharged after three days, but her condition continued to deteriorate. “She became very sick. Even opening her mouth to eat or drink was a problem. We just started praying for a miracle.” Two weeks later, she experienced heavy vaginal bleeding, which led to her death. She was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital. “Thinking about the queue—it’s very unfortunate that just to be put on that list, you have to bribe someone. It’s sad that Zambians can’t get that treatment locally. I think it would even be cheaper for the government to procure the necessary machines to provide the treatment here, rather than sending patients abroad. My mother’s cancer advanced from Stage 2B to Stage 4 in just ten months,” she explained.



Photo Credit. Victor Musonda | BBC Media Action (Kasama FRA Depot)

Over the past three months, a MakanDay journalist has been visiting the Cancer Diseases Hospital, speaking with patients and their caregivers. Many reported being given multiple hospital appointments—often without receiving any actual treatment.

One patient, who requested anonymity for fear of victimisation during future visits, revealed that she was diagnosed with stage 2B cervical cancer in July last year. She also said that the hospital staff informed her she would be placed on a list of patients being considered for treatment in India. However, she’s uncertain when or if that will happen. “I don’t think it’s even easy to get on that list. They keep giving me new appointment dates, but nothing is ever done. I’m always sent back home. I’m in pain and surviving on painkillers,” she narrated. Esnart Nyendwa a care giver has told MakanDay that the processes are very slow at the hospital.

“I have been bringing my husband here for the past five months but every time we come we are given a new date. Some tests were conducted but up to now we don’t know the results. We had an appointment to see the doctor today, we came here at 08:00hrs but this is 12:00hrs we have not been attended to,” she said. The Zambian Cancer Society (ZCS), a non-profit, says CDH in Lusaka was a major step forward but is now overwhelmed and under-equipped.

ZCS Communications and Administration Manager, Idah Phiri, called for urgent investment, proper National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIMA) coverage for cancer treatment, and stakeholder collaboration to prevent more deaths. Zambia has only one hospital providing comprehensive cancer care for its population of nearly 20 million. A second facility is under construction in Ndola, Copperbelt Province, and is nearing completion, with equipment already beginning to arrive. The existing hospital, located within the University Teaching Hospital grounds in Lusaka, opened in July 2006 and was officially inaugurated on 17th July 2007. Prior to the construction of the hospital, the government sent cancer patients abroad at a cost of US\$10,000 per patient. This expense has likely increased since then. Due to limited budget allocations for treatment abroad, only 350 cases out of 5,000 were sent between 1995 and 2004. Lack of transparency On July 9, 2025, MakanDay requested for official data from the Cancer Diseases Hospital on how many patients have been referred to India for treatment, criteria for selection, cancer death rates, and the extent of coverage under NHIMA. As of the day of publication, the hospital has not responded.

By Kennedy Mbewe | Makanday Investigations

Inside the Successes, Scrutiny, and Shifting Ownership at Zambia’s National Heart Hospital

According to a post shared on the National Heart Hospital’s Facebook page on June 17, 2025, a patient named Esther was referred to the facility for further evaluation and care. A scan revealed a mass growing in the left atrium of her heart. She was admitted and prepared for surgery. On June 9, 2025, a dedicated cardiac team at the hospital successfully performed a left atrial myxoma excision, along with a mitral valve replacement—a critical procedure aimed at removing the tumor and restoring normal heart function.

Part of the post read: “Today, she is doing remarkably well, and we are truly delighted to see her back on her feet and on the path to full recovery.” Esther’s case is just one of many powerful success stories recorded by the health facility since its establishment in early 2021.

According to the World Health Organisation 2023 report, Zambia’s premature mortality rate from cardiovascular disease (CVD) among people aged 30–70 stands at 10%, highlighting the critical role of institutions like NHH in saving lives. Situated off Airport Road near the Waterfalls Mall area east of Lusaka town, the hospital was built on land donated for its development in Chongwe district, just outside the city centre. The government allocated the land to ease pressure on the University Teaching Hospital (UTH)—Zambia’s highest referral facility—and to reduce reliance on costly overseas referrals.

Developed in partnership with Japan’s Tokushima International Cooperation (TICO), the modern 120-bed facility includes a 25-bed Intensive Care Unit.

The Unfolding ‘Matter of the Heart’

However, the future of Zambia’s flagship cardiac institution has come under public scrutiny following reports that the state-of-the-art facility may have been sold to private interests.

“I’ve heard those reports, but I can’t confirm their accuracy as I haven’t been at the hospital for some time...,” said a hospital staff who asked for his identity to be withheld.

Another staff member reflected on the hospital’s growth: “Seeing the transformation from a small cardiac unit at UTH to a fully-fledged cardiac hospital has been the highlight of my career. The most important question now is: why—especially for this hospital?”

While the government denies an outright sale, it has confirmed entering into a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to manage the hospital—raising concerns about transparency, job security, and continued access to affordable healthcare. Reports indicate that staff at the National Heart Hospital (NHH) were recently informed of a new commercial management structure under undisclosed ownership. However, on June 16, 2025, Health Minister Dr Elijah Muchima dismissed claims that the hospital had been sold.

“No, it’s not true—the hospital has not been sold. Instead, the government has entered into a Public-Private Partnership with a major hospital,” Dr Muchima told MakaanDay in a phone call. “We don’t sell government property just like that. There’s a procedure through the Ministry of Finance. Have you heard the Minister of Finance announce the sale of that hospital?”

Dr Muchima declined to name the private partner, stating only that it is a “significant institution” expected to bring in equipment to benefit the Zambian people.

“Under a PPP, it’s give and take. You have to understand how the two sides will operate it. Those details are being handled by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Infrastructure. The public will be informed,” he said, referring further questions to Finance Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane or Infrastructure Minister Charles Milupi.

When contacted, Infrastructure Minister and PPP Council Vice-Chairperson Charles Milupi confirmed that the proposal had not yet reached the PPP Council.

“The matter has not even come to the PPP Council. We have not sat to deliberate on it. That doesn’t mean it’s not in process—I can only comment once it reaches us,” he explained.

“We want state-of-the-art facilities so that Zambians can be treated locally, instead of being sent abroad at huge cost to the government,” he added.

He added that PPPs are necessary for large infrastructure projects, citing examples of the Lusaka–Ndola and Ndola–Mufulira roads, which are both being constructed under PPPs.

Previously, the hospital has partnered with several international organisations—including Japan’s TICO, Israel’s Save a Child’s Heart, and Tanzania’s Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute—on capacity building and pediatric cardiac care. Staffed by a multinational team of highly skilled doctors, the hospital reached a major milestone when it began performing heart surgeries, made possible through collaboration with TICO.

According to the Ministry of Health, by 2025 the hospital had successfully performed over 114 life changing cardiac surgeries, alleviating pressure on the national health care system and enhancing patient’s outcome.

In November 2022, the Zambian government formalised a US\$320 million PPP to expand cardiac surgery capacity, involving partners like TICO.

Two years later, in November 2024, a US\$10.4 million oxygen plant project was also commissioned at the facility under another PPP with UNOPS and the Global Fund.

Former Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) Chief Executive Officer Professor Fastone Goma welcomed the idea of a PPP but urged caution.

“Having a PPP in place is not necessarily bad. It can help regulate prices and make services affordable. But government must tread carefully,” he said.

On job security, Professor Goma said Zambian labour laws are clear: imported labour must be justified, especially in specialised fields like medicine.

“There is no way foreigners can take jobs that Zambians can do. Even if some foreign specialists are brought in, Zambia currently has a deficit of health workers, so it shouldn’t disadvantage locals,” he added.

He gave the example of Indian hospitals that operate efficiently and cost-effectively, suggesting that similar models could benefit Zambia.

Kennedy is a talented journalist based in Kitwe at Radio Icengelo. He is currently on a three-month paid internship at MakaanDay after he emerged second in the prestigious 2024 MakaanDay Media Awards.



The Nakonde Border Queens Who Trade Beyond Limits between Tanzania and Zambia

From page 1

By Annie Zulu

By 6:00 AM, the black market in Nakonde is already alive. Footsteps pound the dusty ground, traders shout out their best deals, and shop shutters rattle open in rhythmic unison. It’s the sound of a border town in motion, and at the heart of it are the women crossing from Tanzania each day, chasing opportunity one sale at a time.

One of the first to set up shop is Zakia Hussian Salehe, 30, who carefully lines up men’s shirts at her stall. She’s not Zambian, but you wouldn’t know it. For the past three years, she’s made the daily journey from Tunduma, just across the border in Tanzania, to run her now-thriving business.

“Zambia gives us room to grow. I’ve never had problems here. I pay my taxes, I speak Bemba, and the people treat me like one of their own,” she says, her voice full of pride.

A Border Town in Motion

Zakia is not alone. She’s part of a growing wave of Tanzanian women who are powering Nakonde’s informal economy. Armed with hustle, resilience, and an eye for opportunity, these women are turning cross-border trade into a pathway for financial freedom.

“This business helps me support my family. Women need to be independent. We can’t always rely on our husbands. We have to stand on our own,” Zakia says.

In the past, cross-border trade on the Zambian side was largely dominated by Tanzanian men. In recent years, however, an increasing number of women have entered the space, some even choosing to migrate permanently.

While Tanzanian women dominate Nakonde’s informal retail trade today, selling clothes, food, and cooked meals and deeply integrating into local communities, Tanzanian men tend to operate behind the scenes in wholesale, transport, and logistics.

A few blocks away, Noweriya Musa, 42, is busy stacking oranges on a street corner. She’s been selling fruits in Nakonde for four years and, like Zakia, makes the daily trek from Tunduma.

“On a good day, I make over K500 (\$19). This town is always busy. Travelers, traders, workers, they need food to keep going. Sometimes my stock finishes so fast, I have to go back for more that same day,” she says.

Noweriya Musa, Tanzanian trader, smiles warmly at a customer as she balances a basin of oranges on her head in the streets of Nakonde.

It’s hard work, but for Noweriya, the effort is worth it.

“I love it here. The people are kind, business is good, and I’ve never had any issues. It’s like a second home.”

Over at the town’s buzzing bus station, the scent of spiced rice fills the air. That’s Anna Richard Sinkala, 32, another Tanzanian trader, dishing out hot meals to station workers and travelers heading to other parts of Zambia. She’s up before sunrise and at her stall by 6:00 AM every morning.

A Sisterhood Across Borders

“I’ve made friends with the Zambian women here. We live like sisters. We help each other. Zambia feels like home to me now,” Anna says with a smile.

And the sisterhood goes both ways. Zambian traders and consumers have not only welcomed the Tanzanian women, but they’ve grown with them.

Catherine Nakaona, 48, a Zambian trader who sells clothes in Nakonde’s Black Market, says Tanzanian women have brought more than just goods across the border; they’ve brought knowledge, culture, and new ways of doing business.

“We do business with Tanzanians, and we’ve even learned how to speak Swahili. They’ve taught us a lot about doing business. I used to speak only Bemba and Nyanja, but now I speak Swahili so well that people think I’m from Tanzania,” she says.

Margaret Nyondo, 47, a fruit seller at the main bus station, echoes her sentiment.

“In this station, it’s a mix of Zambians and Tanzanians. We work well together and help each other out. Most of our food, the bananas, potatoes, and rice, comes from Tanzania. Sometimes, they even give it to us on credit, and we pay after selling. They are good people, and we live like sisters,” she says.

Tanzania is widely recognized for its strong agricultural sector, known internationally for producing crops like coffee, tea, cashews, and bananas.

Outside the market, Tanzanian women are making an impact. Kantapi Sichilima, 45, a local bus driver, appreciates the convenience they bring.

“These women have made life easier for us. We don’t need to travel to Tanzania for bananas anymore; they bring them right here. And the prices are the same,” he said.

A Border Town in Motion

But not everyone sees the Tanzanian traders as a blessing. Some Zambian traders feel they’re being pushed out, and Josephine Chileshe, 46, a fruit seller at Wembley Bus Station, doesn’t hide her frustration.

“Sometimes, I only have K70 (\$3) worth of fruit. Then a Tanzanian woman shows up with K400 (\$15) worth, and she still manages to sell everything before me,” she says, shaking her head.

She lets out a small laugh. “Meanwhile, I’m sitting here with my few bananas, waiting all day to sell.”

Josephine admits that her Tanzanian counterparts seem to know how to attract customers better.

“They’re smart with business, I won’t lie. They’ve built loyal customers, they talk well, and they don’t wait; they go after buyers.”

Then she adds, laughing a little more: “Sometimes, you’re talking to someone, and boom! A Tanzanian lady comes in, charms them, and they’re buying from her.”

Even though it feels tough at times, Josephine says there’s something to learn.

“Maybe we Zambians need to improve our hustle. These ladies are better prepared,” she said.

Policies, Permits, and Unequal Borders

Zambia’s favorable trade policies have played a significant role in facilitating cross-border trade, especially for small-scale and migrant traders.

The Simplified Trade Regime (STR), implemented under the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), allows traders to benefit from preferential tariffs and simplified customs procedures for consignments below a certain value.

The Zambian Department of Immigration also allows visa-free entry for Tanzanian nationals for up to 90 days, making travel and trade easier.

Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema and Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan have actively engaged in discussions to enhance free trade and regional integration between their nations.

However, Tanzania’s strict policies make it difficult for Zambian traders to operate across the border.

Zambian women attempting to sell in Tunduma face strict municipal by-laws that prohibit informal vending by foreigners, along with high permit requirements and frequent harassment.

Mercy Namfukwe, 35, a Zambian fruit vendor, says she would love to trade in Tunduma but is barred from doing so.

“We only go there to order our goods. They don’t allow us to sell,” she explains.

According to the 2023 International Organization for Migration (IOM) Zambia Field Report, Tanzanian municipal authorities do not allow foreigners to trade in open-air markets without a local trading license, a regulation that disproportionately affects Zambian women who are mostly small-scale traders and often cannot afford that license.

Nakonde Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Botha echoes this concern.

“For our friends on the Tanzanian side, it’s a very complex issue. You’ll find many Tanzanian traders here in Nakonde, but you’ll never find a Zambian trading in Tunduma. Our laws are more favorable. There’s a serious trade imbalance.

“We would love to see harmonization, where the laws that allow Tanzanian women to trade here are also extended to our Zambian women on the other side,” he says.

Veronica Singolo, 42, a Tanzanian clothing trader who has been selling in Nakonde for nearly five years, now lives in Zambia and is married to a Zambian national. She says currency fluctuations have made it difficult to maintain profit margins.

“The Zambian Kwacha has dropped in value several times. When that happens, our suppliers in Tanzania don’t lower their prices, but here, customers want to pay less; it’s a loss either way. If we raise prices, customers complain or don’t buy. If we don’t, we barely make enough,” she says, folding brightly colored dresses at her stall.

Unsung Economic Backbone

While specific gender-disaggregated data for Nakonde is unavailable, regional trends indicate that migrant women from Tanzania make up a significant share of cross-border traders. Their contributions are particularly evident in times of crisis.

Amid recent droughts in Zambia, for instance, these women have played a vital role in maintaining access to nutritious food. Through their businesses, they also create jobs and livelihoods, like bike riders who transport their goods back and forth.

Precious Nachona, Information Desk Officer for the Cross-Border Traders Association (CBTA) in Nakonde, says about 70% of small-scale cross-border traders in Nakonde are women.

She describes women in cross-border trade as unsung heroes of regional trade.

“These women are the backbone of cross-border trade. They play a critical role in food security and job creation. Most of them reinvest their earnings into their families and communities. Supporting them means strengthening the entire economy,” Nachona says.

“We’re working to ensure they are recognized, respected, and supported. When women trade, communities thrive.”

Nakonde District Administrative Officer (DAO) Alex Sinkala also acknowledges the crucial role of these women in cross-border dynamics.

“Tanzanian women traders play a vital role in both the economy and daily life here in Nakonde. They are not just selling goods; they help feed our communities with the farm produce they bring. They create jobs and keep trade flowing across the border. Without them, our markets would be smaller and less efficient.

“They also help connect our cultures and smooth cross-border relations in ways that formal institutions often struggle to do. For example, many of them speak both Swahili and local Zambian languages, making trade easier and more personal,” Mr. Sinkala said.

He further stressed the importance of continued bilateral cooperation between Zambia and Tanzania to create more inclusive policies, improve border facilities, and provide financial and training support aimed at empowering women in cross-border trade.

Queens of the Border

As the sun sets over the Nakonde border, the women begin to pack up, ready to cross back into Tunduma or head home in town. Their day may be over, but their impact lingers in every corner shop, every bus station meal, and every market stall.

In this border town, they are not just traders. They are queens without crowns trading beyond limits and rewriting the rules of regional trade one hustle at a time.

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Watch the Nakonde Border Queens documentary below to witness the women driving trade and connection across one of East Africa’s busiest crossings, one sale, one sisterhood, one sunrise at a time:

Zambia Pioneers Mining ‘G-Factor’ to Expose Companies Ripping Off Citizens

From page 1

By Linda Soko Tembo

Zambia is moving towards introducing a radical transparency policy to identify which mining companies are “ripping off” citizens. Known as the G-factor, the measure would force extractive industry firms to disclose the total taxes they pay as a proportion of the revenue they make. The resulting percentage would allow policymakers and the public to compare mining firms’ contributions to the country. The metric was initially promoted by Gemfields, the company which owns Kagem – the country’s biggest emerald mine. Now the concept is now being adopted and adapted by the Zambia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (ZEITI) as part of its broader efforts to enhance transparency. The Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development (MMMD) is also backing the initiative. In an interview with Makanday, the MMMD Permanent Secretary, Dr. Hapenga Kabeta, confirmed that while the G-Factor is still voluntary, there is growing pressure on companies to participate or risk being labelled poor corporate citizens. “It’s a good initiative. Initially, some companies were hesitant, but more are coming on board. People always say they don’t benefit from mining, but once the G-Factor is made public, they can see for themselves which companies are giving back and which ones are ripping them off,” he said. Kabeta explained that the Ministry is working towards making G-Factor assessments mandatory for all mining companies operating in Zambia, adding that for now, the tool serves as a “name and shame” mechanism, incentivising companies to disclose their contributions or risk public backlash. In an interview with Finance Uncovered - Makanday’s UK journalism partner, Ian Mwiinga, National Coordinator and Head of the ZEITI Secretariat, described the tool as a “simple but powerful” way to measure mining companies’ contributions. “The concept didn’t come from ZEITI. It was actually promoted by Gemfields, and we adopted it into our EITI reporting because it provides an easy, one-pager snapshot of what a company is contributing, far more digestible than the 300-page reports we usually publish,” Mwiinga said.

He explained that the G-Factor provides a three-tiered view of a company’s contributions, including payments to local authorities and corporate social investments (both in-kind and cash) at the community level, taxes and levies paid to the national treasury, and the value retained by the company itself. Mwiinga added that this framework enables communities, policymakers, and civil society to assess which companies are genuinely adding value and which are not pulling their weight. “Zambia has gone a step further by introducing a localized version, G-Factor Z, giving the tool a Zambian face. With the G-Factor Z, we add up all the payments made in a fiscal year by tax type or revenue stream and divide that by the total revenue to give a percentage. This allows comparison between different mining operations in the same region or sector,” said Mwiinga. He said that this transparency is particularly crucial in a country where many citizens feel they have not reaped the benefits of the vast mineral wealth beneath their feet. Mwiinga said that for years, communities living near mines have raised concerns about environmental degradation, displacement, and lack of infrastructure, with little visible return on the extraction happening around them. Gemfields Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sean Gilbertson reinforced this view, stating that mining companies are merely service providers managing resources that belong to the people. “If we do our job well and make a profit, we have earned it. But we must remember these resources don’t belong to us or even the government alone. We are co-custodians. That’s why we pioneered the G-Factor. It’s meant to be a simple scorecard for how well a mining company converts national resources into national benefit,” he said. Gilbertson praised Zambia’s commitment to publishing G-Factor data publicly and commended ZEITI’s efforts. “ZEITI worked hard to secure the publication of the G-Factor for several mining companies and is now making this data publicly available through its online portal. To the best of our knowledge, Zambia is the first African country to implement this initiative,” he said.

Transparency advocates believe that once widely adopted, the G-Factor could help reshape public discourse around mining in Zambia. Communities will no longer be left in the dark. Instead, they will have access to simple data showing where the money goes and who’s giving back. For now, all eyes are on ZEITI and the mining companies. Will they embrace this pioneering transparency tool? And will the Zambian government follow through with making it mandatory? If so, Zambia could become a model not only for the region but for all resource-rich nations seeking to turn extraction into equitable development. This article was developed with Finance Uncovered, a UK based journalism organisation



Lufwanyama District

PRISON CLAIM: Lusambo Battles Chief Nkana Over US\$165,000 From Disputed Mine Sale

By Linda Soko Tembo

After the Ndola High Court lifted a seizure order on US\$215,000 in Chief Nkana’s account—frozen by the ACC in 2022 over suspected proceeds of crime—former Lusaka Province Minister Bowman Lusambo, now serving a four-year sentence for corruption and tax evasion, claimed a large share, sparking a fresh legal battle between the two. The Commission says the seizure was lawful and necessary for its money-laundering investigation, but Godfrey Shamanena, the current Chief Nkana disputes this and has taken the ACC to the Economic and Financial Crimes Court claiming for damages. Trial for this case is scheduled for July 29, 2025. While that case proceeds, Lusambo—speaking through his lawyers from prison—has launched his own claim. He alleges that between 2021 and 2022, he played a key role in negotiations for the sale of Bisma Mining Limited to Grizzly Mining Ltd., owned by businessman Ndiaye Abdoulaye, widely known as Gunnase. Lusambo says he resolved legal disputes that paved the way for the sale, and as part of the deal, US\$165,000 was to be shared between himself (US\$105,000), Chieftainess Malembeka (US\$50,000), and Chief Nkana (US\$30,000). He points to a letter, allegedly authored by the Chief to Grizzly Mining, instructing payment of his share. Instead, he claims, the full US\$165,000 was deposited into the Chief’s personal account—the same account later frozen by the ACC. When the court released the funds this year, Lusambo says the Chief refused to pay, prompting his lawyers at Makebi Zulu Advocates to issue a demand letter on June 24, 2025. With no response, Lusambo secured an injunction freezing the account again. Chief Nkana rejects the allegations, insisting Lusambo had no role in the US\$5 million transaction, which he says was handled solely by Muya and Company. He is now seeking to have the injunction lifted.



Editorial Comment

Hichilema’s ZNS Graduation Keeps Zambia Talking

By John Mukela

Lieutenant Habwela Hichilema continues to stir up a hornet’s nest keeping social media abuzz with opinion and commentary on his graduation from the ZNS intake six of 2024 officer cadet training. Sympathisers say to the detractors, that there is nothing wrong with Lt. Hichilema training with the national service, while critics say there is everything wrong with it. Lt. Hichilema will leach from the poor Zambian treasury, by drawing a salary, they say. Worse still, that he has been strategically embedded, preparing for some kind of military role and manoeuvre to a senior governance role using the military as a stepping stone, sometime in the not too distant future. President Hakainde Hichilema has meanwhile attempted to dispel the detractors. Lt. Hichilema’s training was for purposes of acquiring discipline and survival skills. Not for drawing a public salary from the treasury, says the senior Hichilema. Others say Zambians waste too much time discussing useless things on social media, and that Lt. Hichilema’s recent ZNS training is one such. Democracy advocates will however argue that this is part of the democratic dividend, which allows citizens to freely discuss and engage on matters they care about, trivial or not. Citizens want to feel actively engaged by being part of the national debate and that their point of view is acknowledged and recognised.

On his part, Lt. Hichilema need not have to justify himself if he is able to affirmatively answer these eligibility questions: does he hold a Zambian National Registration Card? Is he over 18 years old? Having duly graduated, whatever he intends to do with his training is entirely up to him and within his rights. There are many examples of sons of national leaders who acquired military training before Lt. Hichilema, and in most cases, it served them well and did them a lot of good. Meanwhile, Zambians should continue to voice out their opinion if it pleases them, as part of holding power accountable within governance transparency, freedom of opinion and freedom of speech. John is MakanDay Managing Partner.



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TALK TO US

- Got something to get off your chest? Email: editor@makanday.org

Good afternoon I think being an investigative Journalist come to kabwe and investigate about former kabwe Zccm mine Who are the main beneficiary of the slag dump, And kabwe being high polluted by lead the roads are not tarred, roads are dust and people are not subjected to medical tests which my company carried out annual medical tests which resulted the majority of my workmates had a level of lead in the body, And we were treated by giving us calcium tablets which our surrounding communities are not accessing, with the help of your institution I highly appreciate it.

Muana Katebele
Ba GP can you help on this matter? We have heard so many rumors concerning FFA. Can there be a way to clear the air on both farmers and the FFA agents.

Rushen Lupwa Likula
This is so sad that poor farmers who worked so hard to get a decent harvest, have to be subjected to corruption and extortion. This matter needs to be investigated and culprits brought to Justice. Transparency International Zambia, Maurice K, Nyamie and other stakeholders, take interest in this matter

Willard Chikwela
This is bad

Moene Gady
That's why in this life I will never take my maize to FFA always mu ma Industry If you know lusaka Industry area you can think there's no FFA

Enock Siemoonga
This problem has gone beyond, because it seems all the provinces are affected with the same pandemic of corruption