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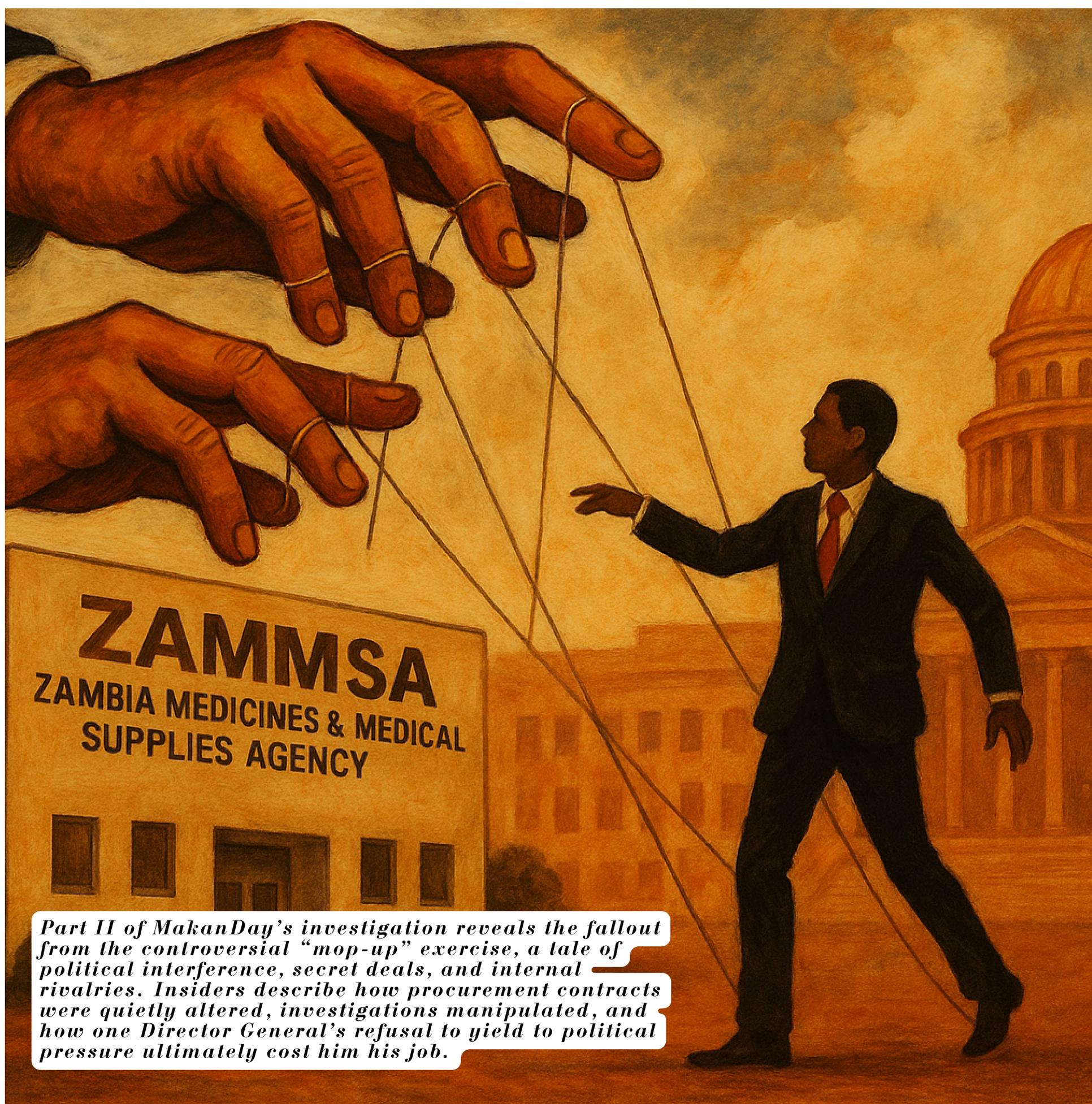


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DRUGS, DEALS, AND DISMISSALS: How Politics Poisoned Zambia's Drug Supply Chain



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By Charles Mafa | MakanDay Investigates

At stake is far more than leadership — it's the credibility of Zambia's entire public health supply system.

President Hakainde Hichilema recently announced plans to make the theft of medicines a non-bailable offence, a move he said would help curb abuse in the sector. But MakanDay's findings suggest the crisis at the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA) runs much deeper, one that cannot be fixed by tougher laws alone.

Discrepancies in the mop-up documentation

Insiders revealed that contracts under the "mop-up" procurement exercise were inflated and tampered with, with discrepancies between the publicly stated K700 million and the internal figure of K685 million.

MakanDay interviewed current and former employees, including past Director Generals (DGs), who described systemic failures marked by corruption, document tampering, and procurement irregularities.

Political pressure and the mop-up defence

Sources said ZAMMSA operates under intense political pressure, with senior authorities often dictating which companies receive contracts, regardless of capacity or track record, undermining the DG's independence and weakening institutional integrity.

The mop-up exercise in 2023, introduced to address medicine shortages following disputes over Egypt-sourced drugs, illustrates how political pressure continues to influence procurement decisions. Although it was officially presented as part of efforts to achieve the government's 80% national stock availability target, insiders say it masked inefficiency and entrenched political interference within the medical supply system.

A ZAMMSA official told MakenDay that the forensic audit commissioned by President Hakainde Hichilema, following reports of medicine theft, unfairly singled out the mop-up exercise while overlooking the broader context in which the 80% availability rate was achieved.

He explained that the figure was attained through four parallel interventions, a government-to-government agreement with Egypt, UN system support, the mop-up procurement, and direct purchases from Mission Pharma, which was re-engaged in 2021 despite earlier payment disputes.

The source added that the mop-up became necessary after local pharmaceutical firms protested Egypt's involvement, reducing the value of Egypt-sourced medicines from K65 million to K24 million. To bridge the shortfall, the Ministry of Health launched the mop-up, with ZAMMSA's role limited to implementation, not initiation.

MakanDay established that then DG Billy Mweetwa coordinated the exercise under instructions from the Ministry of Health, with limited authority over major decisions.

Leadership tensions and political control

Another source said former DG Victor Nyasulu lacked technical expertise in pharmaceuticals and relied on the Director of Supply Planning, who worked closely with the Ministry. Despite this, Nyasulu was frequently engaged by the then Minister of Health and two presidential advisors, whose "confidence" in him, according to the source, may have come with an expectation of compliance. When he began questioning directives, he was allegedly seen as uncooperative.

The same source claimed that competent companies were sidelined for having links to the previous administration. For example, International Drug Company Limited (IDC) saw its contract slashed from K195 million to K34 million during the mop-up review.

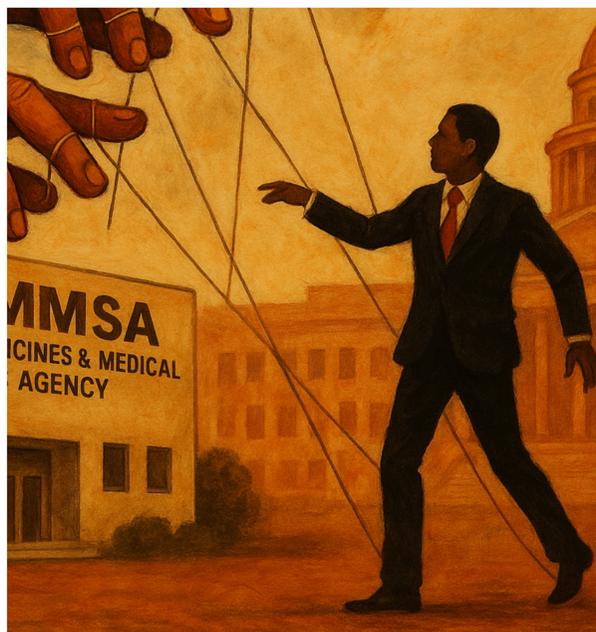
In another case, the Ministry ordered health centre kits to be split, 60% to Mission Pharma and 40% to local suppliers. However, after Mission Pharma executives reportedly met "the Boss" at State House, instructions were issued to award the entire contract to Mission Pharma, sidelining local firms.

The source said such politically driven decisions ultimately led to Nyasulu's dismissal.

The 61-truck scandal

The same source linked the 61 trucks stranded at Chirundu Border — first exposed by MakenDay, to a scheme aimed at discrediting and removing then Director General Victor Nyasulu.

In a radio interview earlier in the year, Nyasulu revealed that during his tenure, ZAMMSA faced severe financial strain despite increased government allocations for drug procurement. While funds for medicines were readily available, administrative costs such as salaries, clearing fees, and logistics remained underfunded.



To address this, ZAMMSA requested 8% of drug funds for administration, a model similar to the National Road Fund Agency. The Ministry of Finance approved the request in December 2023, but the Minister of Health objected, calling it an attempt by officials to "pay themselves huge salaries", the source said. The Treasury later withdrew approval, leaving ZAMMSA without operational funds.

When the truck crisis erupted in July 2024, ZAMMSA reportedly needed only K220,000 to clear the first 23 containers but lacked funds. The consignment, sourced from Egypt's EGYCOPP, piled up as the agency couldn't pay clearing agents or hire storage space.

A Ministry insider said K50 million had been released for the clearance but was never authorised for use by the Minister. The delay led to ZAMMSA accumulating a K23 million debt to J&J Transport, a case still unresolved.

Audit, dismissals, and unanswered questions

Multiple government agencies, including the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA), the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC), and the Zambia Police, investigated the incident. The President later commissioned a forensic audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), yet so far, the only tangible outcome has been the dismissal of Victor Nyasulu and his team.

A sixth source, a former ZAMMSA DG, questioned the ongoing leadership vacuum, saying: "It's been a year, and there's still no board. Are you telling us Zambia can't find seven qualified people to serve?"

He alleged that ZAMMSA has become the new hub for financial deals and kickbacks, replacing the Ministry of Health as the centre of procurement influence.

"If ZAMMSA is now a failed project," he added, "then just change the law and take procurement back to the Ministry, that's what some people want anyway."

The Ministry has since advertised the DG's position, a move critics say is illegal, as only a duly appointed ZAMMSA Board can make such appointments.

Governance experts warn that the prolonged absence of a ZAMMSA board weakens oversight, erodes donor confidence, and stalls crucial procurement decisions needed to ensure a steady supply of medicines and equipment.

From Rebel Poet to Public Servant

Editor's Note

When this profile, “Pilato – The Making of a Folk Hero,” first appeared in the October 2015 edition of the Bulletin and Record, Fumba Chama was one of Zambia’s most fearless musical voices. Through satire and song, he challenged authority, mocked hypocrisy, and demanded a fairer society—often at great personal cost.

A decade later, Chama’s journey has come full circle. Once jailed for his lyrics and branded an enemy of the state, he now serves as a Permanent Secretary for arts (Ministry of Youth, Sport & Art) in the UPND-led government, a position few would have imagined for the man once known for his defiant anthem “Alungu Anabwela”.

Revisiting this story offers a powerful reminder of how art, courage, and conviction can shape a nation’s conscience, and how time transforms both rebels and the societies they sought to change. Pilato’s evolution from street poet to public servant raises profound questions about the relationship between power and protest, dissent and duty, and whether the voices that once sang truth to power can help build a more just future from within it.

Pilato – the making of a folk hero

By David Julian Wightman

Fumba Chama, perhaps better known as Pilato, is arguably the most reluctant celebrity in Zambia. Under the spotlight, wearing the trademark gown and shaggy afro wig, Chama transforms into his creation, the “crazy” and “controversial” musician Pilato, a figure all the more famous since his satirical single ‘Alungu Anabwela’ and State House’s heavy-handed response. Yet in private, Chama is a shy and thoughtful character, deeply concerned about the state of Zambian society, and our humanity as a whole.

Even before the success of ‘Alungu’, Pilato was known as a champion of the people, capable of relaying the untold trials and tribulations of the poor and marginalised, in the tradition of minstrels over many centuries. The fact that Chama himself has now been forced to stand trial for his outspokenness has only sharpened his resolve and made Pilato more popular.

Chama always had passion for learning. “I read my first words in grade one,” he explains. “I’ve always wanted to know more, to learn, and reading was one way I could know more.” Born in Ndola in 1984, he grew up in a small house in Ndeke. “It was a full house,” he remembers. He was the second of four boys, his mother looking after the family while his father ran an engineering business holding contracts with Indeni refinery.

“My father believed so much in me,” he recalls. “Much of his businesses were done at home and I was his right-hand man. We could go to the bank together and I knew how to deposit money before I even had my NRC. I knew how to write official letters when I was in grade seven.”



That early maturity was sorely tested in his mid-teens, when Chama lost both parents in odd circumstances. His father developed knee problems which doctors failed to diagnose or treat. He was called to the village in Northern Province for a cure. “So he went and he never came back. We were just told that your dad died and we don’t know where he was buried, we couldn’t go. And the same thing happened to mum as well... she got sick and the family said we’ll take her to the village and that’s what happened, we were just told that your mum is dead.”

Losing his parents had a lasting effect on the young man, never mind how philosophical the grown-up Chama may have become. “It’s a bitter story and I wouldn’t want to dwell on the bitterness of it. But I still think how can someone with a knee problem die within a few weeks? The people who took him [to the village] said the moment he got there everything was grabbed from him and he was just left under a tree. This was a man who had houses in Ndola, and some good business going, but then was left under a tree, and it was rainy season then. It wasn’t anybody else that did that, it was his own people!”

Family life in Ndola fell apart, and Chama was left with little more than a few belongings and the house in Ndeke. Renting the property provided money for schooling, though by then he had realised the limitations of classroom learning. “Our education system is more of a puppet and master thing,” he says. “As much as you want to learn it doesn’t liberate you, it actually enslaves you and doesn’t make you a better person apart from a better consumer.”

Instead, Chama became a consumer of books and a writer of prose poetry. “As long as you can read and write, to me that’s the biggest part that education has played in my life and can play in anybody’s life.” Besides tolerating his classes at Masala High School, Chama read books and immersed himself in writing, filling notebooks and scrap papers with lines of verse.

This process of self-education, Chama claims, is what defines his way of thinking and living: “I don’t have a degree from an institution but from life and from the streets I think I have three, four, five degrees...”

I want to know what’s happening around me, I want to understand the environment I live in, even my own humanity, what’s my purpose.”

It didn’t take long for Chama to realise that his sense of purpose often clashed with the nature of authority and the institutions around him. “The hardest [thing] for me is to keep quiet when you see a lot of people marginalised, not by God, not by nature, but by our own leaders... The problem is there is a class of people who want to remain powerful, who want to remain in charge, so how do they do that? They ride on the ignorance of the masses, and as long as the people don’t know, they remain in power.”

Chama traces his political consciousness to childhood. “I grew up with a lot of people who had so much hardship, you know, people who were good, hardworking, strong people, some of them very intelligent. I saw them moving from one house to another because they failed to pay their rentals, they couldn’t find a good job, and that’s all part of what inspired me... I feel I need to fight for any human being regardless of who they are. I feel it is my responsibility and everybody’s responsibility to protect and fight for the integrity of humanity.”

Having completed Grade 12, Chama was acting as drama director for his church when the pastor introduced him to Chala Tumelo, producer of the ZNBC TV programme Loose Ends. Tumelo apprenticed the promising youth in video production, and within a year Chama was shooting and editing a drama series that was aired throughout southern Africa. “I got so used to the work that I didn’t have to use my brain anymore,” he explains of a reality he was to experience again after moving to Lusaka to work for TL studios and then MuviTV.

Returning to Ndola a few years later, Chama joined West Life studios as head video technician, responsible for shooting and editing music videos. It was at West Life in 2009 that Chama met music producer, Draf-X, who became his chief collaborator. “One day there wasn’t much happening at the studio so I walked up to him and said hey, let’s do a song... It was about a girlfriend in the suburbs,” he admits with a giggle. The reaction from co-workers was positive and spurred Chama to take on something with more bite.

“So now I had to sing seriously so I had to find serious material to talk about, which in this case was about street vendors... They were kicked off the streets and the song was asking the council why, when there’s so many things the council can start with, like garbage everywhere, or you find a dog was bashed by a car, it’s still there but [they] are not bothered by that, they want to go kick somebody that is surviving on the streets.”

From Rebel Poet to Public Servant Cont...

Chama produced a simple music video for 'Nomba Nkekala Shani' (meaning "How Will I Live?"), the song became a hit on the Copperbelt, and marked the debut of Pilato. (An acronym for "People In Lyrical Arena Taking Over." Chama explains: "It's basically a statement to say you cannot just have politicians as leaders, you can even have artists and creators as leaders. Instead of them just sitting by the wayside they can be part of the leadership, part of the team that is creating the destiny of ourselves and our country.")

After 'Nomba Nkekala Shani' Chama began to be recognised on the streets. "When I was in town people would scream Pilato! Pilato! The most disturbing thing was one day I was on a bus, next to the driver, and he starts telling stories about me. He says Pilato is insane, last night he was in Kawama and he got so drunk and they beat him up, the cops arrested him, he's very creative but then he drinks too much. And he's telling me that, telling a story about me and I'm thinking, Who the hell is this Pilato he's talking about? And then everyone on the bus started talking about how Pilato is all those things. So I got off and never got on a bus again."

It's ironic and revealing that a man who doesn't drink or smoke is so often accused of drunkenness and debauchery. Blaming alcohol and drugs for Chama's convictions---and Pilato's "controversial" lyrics---is a convenient way of dismissing both. But Chama is sober and intent on keeping his mind free of distraction.

"I want to be in charge," he insists. "I want to be responsible for everything I say and do. That doesn't mean I do perfect stuff. I know my weaknesses, I know what sins I commit. But I shouldn't have an excuse to say, It's because I smoked, it's because I was drunk, that's why I did this."

Chama is also unequivocal about the difference between himself and his stage persona. "I know what role Pilato plays and what role Fumba plays. It's easy for me to say, Okay, now this is Pilato time. Pilato is crazy. Pilato gets excited most of the times, Fumba doesn't get excited most of the times, he's always looking at things with two eyes, one mind and two ears. But then for Pilato, when people are dancing to his music obviously he gets drunk with power."

Do those dancing fans see the difference between the artist and his creation? "Sometimes it gets blurred, especially in instances where I have to interact with people who know me as Pilato and want to approach me as Pilato... One thing I would not allow myself is to get lost in the Pilato image, in Pilato's fame. I don't want Fumba to be big-headed because of what Pilato is doing, I don't want to get blinded by the magic that Pilato does."

That Pilato "magic" was shown most clearly in 'Alungu', the track that earned Chama his first arrest, detention and court appearance. The song also proved to be Pilato's biggest hit to date, thanks in no small part to the state's attempts to intimidate and silence one of its critics.

"Our silence does not mean the absence of thoughts," Chama explains when asked where he got the inspiration for 'Alungu'. "The fact that people don't say things doesn't mean they don't think about things. And for me the greatest victory is conquering those thoughts and speaking things that are on my heart and mind. The moment that I do that I feel free. On this song I felt the need to tell the story. People said, Wow, you're going to be in trouble. Well, at least that trouble won't be inflicted on me by me. I don't want to imprison myself, I don't want to assume trouble and in the end be my own prisoner."

Not that Chama expected to be literally held prisoner as a result of speaking his mind. "From the word go I knew this song was clean," he insists. "People said You are defaming the President. I asked, How? Where? I listened to the song a million times. Where did I defame the President?"

Even the police high command had to admit the weakness of a defamation charge, so Chama was instead charged with conduct likely to breach the peace, and a warrant was put out for his arrest. Recalling the events of early June, Chama says: "I was told that cadres, not the cops, the cadres with pangas and everything, had been to my former house. My friend was abducted, picked from his office and I don't know where they took him and tortured him to squeeze answers from him. Fortunately this guy didn't know where I moved to. He got out and told me, Hey man this is bad, these guys almost killed me, they want your blood, so if you're anywhere in Ndola please run."

Chama heeded the advice and escaped to Lusaka, escorted by a friend as he sat hidden in the backseat. "But then I noticed that the pressure was just there in Ndola. I met cops in Kabwe and they were so excited about me and the song." This wasn't the first or last time he received support from unexpected places, though his reception at Lusaka Central Police was certainly surprising: "On the Monday (June I went and found lots and lots of cops in riot gear. My lawyer had asked for bond but [the police] had instructions that I should spend the night there. I got to the cells but before I could even sit they said, You're not going in the regular cell, you're going in the special one. So I got in a VIP cell [with] illegal immigrants and everything, and it was normal, you could order a pizza, you know, so it was okay. The conditions [in other cells] are very bad but I was given a better cell, there was a nice mattress, very clean beddings, and if I wanted to eat I was going to eat well because these guys that I shared the cell with had monies."

Chama found many fans among his fellow inmates. "They were so happy, but they didn't understand why I was there," he recalls. It's a good question, one that Chama answers philosophically: "Depending on where you're going in life, if you're going higher, jail is part of what you will have to [experience]. I learned a few things within the few hours that I was there."

I learned that as a country we do not respect human life. I learned that the people who were Rwandese had been there over a month, no trial, no visitors. These people are there because they are immigrants. And I'm thinking, This is human life here!

The arrest and persecution of Pilato won him the respect and admiration not only of his cellmates but also the vast majority of average Zambians suffering under the current regime. The violation of freedom of expression also made international headlines, and won Chama the support of the all-powerful donor community. German Ambassador Bernd Finke declared that the international community was "looking closely that the freedom of expression... is being guaranteed", while American Ambassador Eric Shultz invited Chama to his office and was pictured together with the artist flashing a thumbs up.

Such shows of support from influential figures and the public at large bolstered Chama's spirits, yet concerns for his safety and that of his family persist. "I've been told I should watch out who I shake hands with and who's microphone I speak on because somebody might poison me through the microphone," he laments.

So far the only direct threats Chama has faced have been from cadres in Ndola and Lusaka. "They told me I was going to die soon and that they were going to deal with me. I left, I ran away. I don't want to be confused by the madness of a shallow mind." What bothers Chama much more than personal threats is the potential consequences for his wife and two young daughters.

"I don't know what has become of our country and society. I don't know what has become of us, where we don't want to fight with an idea, we want to fight with the person that has the idea."

Ironically, those who want to fight Chama over his criticism of the ruling party are the same cadres who cheered Pilato's songs when in opposition.

"The first song I ever did was during Levy Mwanawasa's time and they said I was PF. I did it again with Rupiah Banda and they said I was PF. Now PF is saying I'm UPND. And if UPND gets into power they'll be saying I'm with somebody else... It makes people feel better when they say the only reason Pilato is doing this is because he's sponsored by the UPND and the opposition. For them to do what they do somebody's paying them. So it's easy for them to assume that whoever is doing anything is being sponsored."

Chama has in fact appeared on stage for both the PF and UPND, most recently during the January presidential by-election during which he was hired for several opposition rallies.

"I must admit that I have friends in the UPND, but also I've got friends in PF. What's so prominent about my connections with these people is not their politics, it's their humanity."

From Rebel Poet to Public Servant Cont...

Leading members of both the PF and UPND were instrumental in supporting Chama throughout his arrest and trial.

“The first people that supported me were from the PF, not small people but huge figures in PF. A big funder of the PF on the Copperbelt said, Come and hide at my place, if things get worse we can go to Congo. I knew this guy was genuine.” The bipartisan support carried through to Lusaka, where a leading figure in the UPND youth kept Chama at his house for several days before the artist turned himself in to police.

To Chama the political labels mean little. “I didn't look at them as UPND people [or as PF], I looked at them as human beings. What we have forsaken as a country is the humanity that exists beyond politics. If I learned that your life was in danger I would not ask what tribe you are, what political party you belong to. If your life is in danger that's what's primary. For me that's what matters, I must make sure you are safe. And that's what these people did for me, they looked at me and said, This guy's life is in danger, so they sheltered me. That's what I would do for anybody. I would even do it for the President if I learned his life was in danger, I would keep him at my house.”

Chama is quick to identify tribalism as being one of the worst manifestations of what is so wrong with Zambian politics. “[Tribalism] is very big now because politicians find it easy to ride in confusion. Our leaders want to ride on the ignorance of the masses, they don't want to look at issues from the perspective of humanity, they want to see human beings as tribal groupings.”

The answer to tribalism, says Chama, is education.

“We need to get as many people educated as possible, to get them to think through these things... because politicians know that a lot of people don't have the basic knowledge and mental ability to read between their lies and propaganda. That's how come we're here as a country.”

What kind of progress would Pilato like to see? “First, I would want to see people debate, to see people communicate and speak out. That my prime (wish). The other thing is I would want everybody's participation. There is no way a country can survive on just political leadership, we've got churches, civil society organisations, [traditional leaders]. We should have everybody's independence and everybody's participation, so that everyone will be answerable to the other... You can't just depend on political leadership, it's too fake, it's too corrupt, you can't develop like that.”

Chama is resolute when asked if a better future is possible for Zambia. “I tell you everything is possible, it's not easy but it is possible. As long as we still have people reasoning, people thinking, it can be done and it will be done. We've got people in schools right now, those kids are learning new words, new fashions, new information, and I can assure you they won't be enslaved anyhow, they will stand up and speak out. It's only the old schoolers that want to intimidate, but the rest, the youth, they won't let anybody intimidate them.”

State House tried to intimidate Fumba Chama by caging him for a night at Lusaka Central Police. It's anyone's guess whether or not they realised how famous Pilato would become due to their repression, and it remains to be seen if they will be foolish enough to once again harass Chama or any other artist or critic

. In the case of the People Vs. Pilato, it was not the People but the Powerful who took offence to ‘Alungu Anabwela’. In the end the State entered a *nolle prosequi*, essentially postponing the trial indefinitely.

“I'm still on a leash,” says Chama philosophically. “Just that the leash has been extended. It's not freedom per se, it's just some allowance to make small moves. I don't feel I'm free, I'm still watched, I'm still monitored.” But is he intimidated? Will this be the end of Pilato? Not a chance, says Chama: “I'm still working toward the future, I still have so many things to speak and share, and so nothing changed, nothing changes. Nothing breaks the spirit.”

This article first featured in the October 2015 edition of the Bulletin and Record Magazine



Opinion: When Power Fears the Truth

In this world, we are called to take sides, for truth against untruth, for light against darkness. It is never easy to do so, because standing for truth always comes at a cost.

Jesus did so. In the Gospel of Luke (11:15–26), when he cast out demons, the powerful accused him of being in league with Beelzebul, the prince of demons. They demonised him because they could not silence him.

Today, history repeats itself. Like Jesus, those who stand for truth in our time are branded liars, enemies, or troublemakers. A senior government official recently accused us of twisting his words in a story we published, an all-too-familiar reaction from those unable to defend their actions when confronted with facts.

What is more troubling is that this official's anger has spilled over into other government ministries, who have now stopped responding to our queries altogether.

We saw this last week when we sought a comment from the Ministry of Health regarding the ongoing scandal at the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency.

Among our questions was why, more than a year later, the government still hasn't appointed a board at the agency. We received no answer.

In fact, one of the young government spokespersons responded blatantly saying:

“I am saying for now we will not take your queries as government, because you misquoted the Honourable. You had an interview with him, he gave you a very good interview, but you went and twisted his words. So, we will not take your queries until we are cleared to take your queries because of what you did”.

To the government, and particularly to this young spokesperson, responding to a media query now seems like doing the public a favour. Public officers act as though replying to legitimate questions is optional, a matter of personal discretion rather than a duty to the citizens they serve.

But this did not surprise us. Silence has become the official language of accountability. For us, it is a daily reality, our “cup of tea”. Getting people to take sides with truth and light is rarely easy.

When a junior colleague informed us of the minister's complaint, relayed through the spokesperson, we reached out to invite him to clarify what he believed was the accurate version of the story, but he never responded.

What the minister seems to forget is that lies are only defeated by truth, and time. It was his responsibility to present that truth if he truly wished to disprove what he called “our lies”.

In our work, we often meet individuals who will never speak publicly against wrongdoing. They appear loyal to their superiors in public, but in private, they send quiet messages of support: “Keep going, we're proud of your courage”.

This hypocrisy reveals the deep fear that grips those within the system, fear of losing jobs, contracts, or privileges if they are seen to side with truth.

When we founded MakaanDay in 2016, we knew the road ahead would not be easy. We understood that standing for truth, and doing the kind of work that exposes wrongdoing, would come at a high cost, intimidation, isolation, and at times, even danger. But we also knew that remaining silent would make us complicit.

Opinion: When Power Fears the Truth Cont..

What we must remind those who refuse to speak to us is that our work does not rely on their willingness to talk. It is built on evidence, documents, records, testimonies, and the courage of those who believe in accountability.

If our reporting depended on their willingness to talk, MakanDay would not have survived this long. They despise the truth because it exposes them. They would rather we publish their lies than hold them accountable for their actions.

Every day, they move around bribing journalists to amplify their falsehoods. Fortunately, at MakanDay, we refuse to be part of that corruption of truth.

Investigative journalism comes with risks, we know that. As one journalist once said, "We may be in danger for revealing their evil deeds, but the cost of not revealing them is far greater." That cost is the destruction of systems, the erosion of trust, and the slow death of democracy.

Zambia's democracy cannot thrive on secrecy. When journalists are silenced, citizens are blinded. When officials refuse to answer questions, the rot deepens in the dark. Truth is not the enemy, it is the medicine that heals nations.

The work of journalists, therefore, is not merely to expose wrongdoing, but to remind those in power that truth does not die in silence. It waits, sometimes in the shadows, sometimes buried in the files they try to conceal, but with time, it always finds its way back to the light.

At MakanDay, we remain committed to that light. No matter how dark the corridors of power become, we will continue to knock on every door, dig through every file, and tell every story that matters. Because truth, though often denied, always outlives its enemies.

Like Jesus, we will dust off our sandals when we are not welcomed in those temporary government offices, for our mission is not to please those in power, but to serve the truth and the people it protects.

As the Scripture says: "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet." — Matthew 10:14.

Awards Ceremony

Entries Open for MakanDay Investigative Reporting Award

The Eminent Prize for Investigative Journalism is now in its fourth year. This award recognises journalists who demonstrate exceptional commitment to uncovering hidden facts and holding leaders accountable.

Deadline: 31st October 2025

A panel of independent judges will review submissions and select up to two winners.

- Overall Winner: A brand-new laptop
- Runner-up(s): A three-month, fully paid internship at MakanDay
- Honourable Mentions: Up to two may be named and invited to the awards ceremony hosted by MakanDay

Winning and finalist entries will be featured on the website <https://makanday.org> and across our social media platforms.

Submission Guidelines

- Entries must uncover abuse of power, corruption, or expose injustice.
- Journalists may submit their own work or nominate another's work (with their permission).
- Eligible entries must have been published or broadcast between 1st January and October 31st 2025.
- Non-English entries must include a translation.
- For print entries: include a scanned copy (and, if unclear, a transcript in Word or PDF).
- For broadcast entries (TV, radio, or online video): include a link or attach the file.
- All entries must include a biography and photo of the entrant(s).
- The awards are open to all Zambian journalists and MakanDay contributors. However, MakanDay journalists are not eligible to participate.

Submit entries to: editor@makanday.org

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