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He dreams of becoming a neurosurgeon. But his struggle for specialised teaching support has delayed his education

From page 1

By Ennety Munshya

At 25, Chilombo Chama is still in grade 12, determined to fulfil his childhood dream of becoming a neurosurgeon. But his journey through school has been marked by inconsistent access to teachers trained to support learners with visual impairments.

He now expects to sit his final examinations in 2027, a year later than planned, after his family says the specialised teaching support he needed arrived too late to prepare him for this year's examinations.
"Sometimes I would learn and sometimes I would not learn because the teachers were not available. Because of the lack of teachers all the time I would delay in my school work. But now that I have been given a teacher learning is serious," he said.

Chilombo lost his sight in May 2007, while in grade one, following an illness that led to surgery to remove a brain tumour at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka.

According to his father, Fredrick Chilombo Chama, Chilombo spent approximately two to three years out of school after losing his sight.
It was during his treatment that Chilombo developed the ambition to become a neurosurgeon, inspired by the doctors who operated on him.

"I want to be a neurosurgeon. When I went to UTH, I asked the doctor who was operating on me about his work. He was a neurosurgeon, and he inspired me," Chilombo said.

His father recalls how the experience shaped his son's ambition.

"My son got encouraged by the team of doctors led by Dr (Laston) Chikoya at UTH that operated on him. From that time, he has always said that he wants to be a neurosurgeon," he said.
Chilombo hopes to study medicine in the United States before returning to Zambia to help patients, just as the doctors who treated him helped him.
But his father says the education system has not consistently provided the specialised support his son needs to pursue that dream.

When specialised support became harder to access

Although Chilombo received specialised attention in primary school, the situation changed when he entered grade eight.

His secondary school had no dedicated special education unit, leaving him in mainstream classes without consistent access to teachers trained to support learners with visual impairments.

His father says he has had to arrange private lessons, buy braille equipment and help his son with schoolwork.

In August 2026, the District Education Board Secretary's office assigned a teacher to assist Chilombo with braille and English.
By late September, his father said he was still waiting for support in other subjects. MakanDay later received information that additional teachers had been assigned.

But his father says the assistance came too late to adequately prepare Chilombo for the 2026 grade 12 examinations.

According to Mr Chama, the newly assigned teachers recommended that Chilombo sit the examinations in 2027 instead.

He also says he discovered that his son had not been registered for the 2026 examinations.

The family has faced difficulties securing appropriate examination support in the past.

When Chilombo sat his grade nine examinations, his father says, another person read the questions aloud, recorded his responses and entered the answers on his behalf.

His newly assigned teachers have reportedly recommended that the family purchase a Dictaphone (voice recorder) to assist him during his Grade 12 examinations.

For Chilombo, the difficulties have made the journey through secondary school longer than he had hoped.

The financial burden on his family

The shortage of specialised teaching support has also placed a financial burden on Chilombo's family.

His father says he bought a Braille slate through Alibaba, an online marketplace, for approximately US$25 (about K500 at the time). He estimates that the family has spent close to K6,000 on Braille equipment and learning materials.

Private tuition costs another K800 a month, while transport to and from school costs approximately K40 a day.

When he cannot accompany Chilombo on public transport, the family sometimes pays about K100 for a taxi.

For Mr Chama, these are additional expenses incurred to help his son participate in education.

The challenges facing learners with visual impairments have been documented for years.

A 2018 UNICEF-funded study conducted by the University of Zambia in collaboration with SINTEF, a Norwegian research organisation, documented shortages of Braille textbooks, Braille paper and computers for learners with visual impairments.

The study also identified inadequate training and support for mainstream teachers working with learners with disabilities.

For Chilombo's family, however, the immediate concern is ensuring that he receives the teaching and learning materials he needs to complete Grade 12.

The ministry's response

The Ministry of Education acknowledges that finding teachers with both specialised education training and qualifications in particular subjects remains a challenge.

Dr Mwenya Nicholas Mwamba, the ministry's Assistant Director for Specialised Services, said Zambia had approximately 3,700 teachers qualified to teach learners with special educational needs and disabilities.

However, he acknowledged that the number becomes smaller when schools require teachers who have both specialised training and qualifications in subjects such as mathematics and science.

"If you want a teacher for maths and has done education for the visually impaired the numbers begin to drop same applies with science subjects. That is where the challenge is," he said.

Dr Mwamba said the ministry was working to strengthen specialised teacher training and improve the availability of assistive devices and learning materials.
He also said schools could request specialised expertise when they were unable to meet a learner's needs.

Referring to Chilombo's situation, Dr Mwamba suggested that alternative schooling arrangements could have been considered.

"If the school failed to attend to this learner, they would have even sent him to Mumbwa Secondary School," he said.

The ministry's response highlights the challenge of ensuring that qualified teachers are available in the schools where learners need them.

For Chilombo, the additional support has now arrived. His family's concern is that it came too late for him to complete his secondary education as planned.

A dream delayed

Nearly two decades after undergoing surgery to remove a brain tumour, Chilombo still dreams of becoming a neurosurgeon. But before he can pursue that ambition, he must first complete grade 12.

His family says the specialised support he needed was not

He dreams of becoming a neurosurgeon cont...

consistently available during his secondary education. Although additional teachers have now been assigned, his father believes the intervention came too late for him to sit the 2026 examinations.

Chilombo hopes to sit his final examinations in 2027.

His experience raises a wider question: how many other learners with disabilities are falling behind while waiting for the specialised support they need?

In Part 2, MakanDay examines government statistics, research findings and Zambia's commitments to inclusive education to establish why learners with disabilities continue to face barriers in classrooms.

Inclusive Education In Zambia: Why learners with disabilities still struggle to get support

By Ennety Munshya

Zambia has committed itself to providing inclusive education for learners with disabilities. But government statistics and international assessments reveal continuing gaps in the specialised classrooms, trained teachers and learning materials needed to make that commitment a reality.

According to the Ministry of Education's 2025 Education Statistics Bulletin, Zambia had 124 permanent special education classrooms at secondary school level, compared with 409 at primary school level.

The distribution was uneven. Lusaka Province accounted for 49 permanent special education classrooms at secondary level, while Central, Muchinga and North-Western provinces had none recorded.

These figures do not show how many schools have teachers trained in Braille or whether learners with visual impairments have access to the specialised learning materials they need.

The ministry also acknowledged broader challenges affecting education quality, including inadequate teacher training, insufficient teaching materials and funding constraints.

For learners with disabilities, the consequences can be significant.

In the first part of this investigation, MakanDay reported on 25-year-old Chilombo Chama, a grade 12 learner with a visual impairment who hopes to become a neurosurgeon.

His father says Chilombo struggled for years to access consistent specialised teaching support. Although additional teachers were assigned in 2026, his family says the assistance came too late to prepare him for his final examinations.

His experience raises questions about whether Zambia's commitment to inclusive education is translating into practical support for learners.

Where are the specialist teachers?

The Ministry of Education says it is working to strengthen inclusive education through teacher training, the development of learning materials and the provision of resources to schools.

Dr Mwenya Nicholas Mwamba, the ministry's Assistant Director for Specialised Services, said Braille and sign-language syllabi had been prepared for use in mainstream and special education schools.

He put the number of teachers qualified to teach learners with special educational needs and disabilities at 3,700.

However, Dr Mwamba acknowledged that finding teachers with both specialised education training and the appropriate subject qualifications remained a challenge.

"If you want a teacher for maths and has done education for the visually impaired the numbers begin to drop same applies with science subjects. That is where the challenge is," he said. The distinction is significant.

A teacher may have training in special education without being qualified to teach a subject such as mathematics or science. Equally, a subject teacher may lack the skills needed to teach a learner who uses braille.

The ministry's figure of 3,700 qualified teachers does not establish how many have both sets of skills or how they are distributed among schools.

Dr Mwamba said the Zambia Institute of Special Education had been training teachers to support learners with visual impairments alongside another teaching subject.

He said changes to teacher-training programmes were also expected to increase the number of teachers with relevant specialisations.

A retired teacher with 37 years of teaching experience, who requested anonymity, questioned whether placing learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms without adequate support amounted to meaningful inclusion.

"Their needs are different from their friends. You cannot place them in one classroom and call it inclusive learning," the teacher said.

The concern is not that learners with disabilities should be separated from their peers, but that schools need the appropriate teachers, materials and teaching methods to accommodate different learning needs.

Shortages of learning materials and assistive technology

The challenges extend beyond the availability of trained teachers.

A 2018 UNICEF-funded study conducted by the University of Zambia in collaboration with SINTEF, a Norwegian research organisation, documented shortages of Braille textbooks, Braille paper and computers for learners with visual impairments.

The study also identified inadequate training and support for mainstream teachers working with learners with disabilities. Charles Cheelo, a disability rights advocate associated with the Kabwe Network of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities, says shortages of Braille books and accessible learning materials can leave students dependent on sighted classmates to complete assignments.

"When a student has to rely on another person to transcribe written work, their opportunity to complete academic tasks independently is limited," he said.

Cheelo says braille paper is particularly expensive.

"Braille paper is another challenge, it is very expensive. A ream of braille paper can be as expensive as K500," he said.

He also highlights the amount of paper required to complete assignments in braille.

"If I give a student with visual impairment to write an assignment up to 7 pages, in braille that seven pages will translate into 30 to 40 pages. Where are they going to get the Braille paper from?" he asked.

Cheelo says students may receive braille paper for examinations but still have to find their own supplies for assignments.

He believes learners with visual impairments should also receive training in computer use and assistive technology to help them access information more independently.

Such technologies include screen readers, which read digital text aloud, and other audio-based learning tools.

A 2022 assessment conducted by the Zambian government, UNICEF Zambia and the Clinton Health Access Initiative found that 73.2% of respondents who needed an assistive device had not received one.

Although the assessment covered a wider population rather than learners with visual impairments alone, its findings

Inclusive Education In Zambia: Why learners with disabilities still struggle to get support cont....

highlight broader barriers to accessing assistive technology in Zambia.

Different disabilities, similar barriers

The difficulties are not limited to learners with visual impairments.

Ruth Daka, a learner with a hearing impairment, says she has sometimes had to interpret for fellow learners because teachers lacked the sign-language skills needed to communicate with them effectively.

Her experience reflects concerns raised by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In findings issued in April 2024, the committee identified barriers to inclusive education in Zambia, including shortages of trained teachers, accessible learning materials and assistive devices.

It recommended improved teacher training in Braille and sign language, alongside greater access to assistive technology.

More than two years later, the experiences of learners such as Ruth and Chilombo raise questions about how effectively those recommendations have been implemented.

What is the government doing?

The Ministry of Education says it is taking steps to address some of the barriers.

Dr Mwamba acknowledged gaps in the availability of assistive devices and learning technologies, describing their distribution as a major challenge to inclusive education. He said the government was seeking to procure assistive devices, textbooks and other learning technologies centrally for distribution to schools that needed them.'

He also cited special education grants to schools as part of the government's response to the UN committee's recommendations.

Dr Mwamba said teachers in Kabwe and Chibombo districts had received inclusive education training under the Realising Inclusive and Safe Education (RISE) Project.

The training, he said, included early identification, screening and assessment to help teachers recognise learners who may be experiencing difficulties and identify barriers to learning.

According to Dr Mwamba, these assessments are conducted at school level, with schools able to request additional specialised expertise where necessary.

However, the number of Braille-trained teachers deployed to individual schools and the extent to which learners have received the required equipment remain important questions.

A right promised, but is it being delivered?

Zambia's Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012 provides a legal framework for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to education.

Section 23 addresses special education facilities and equipment in educational institutions, while other provisions deal with access to education for children with disabilities.

Yet research findings and the experiences of learners with disabilities raise questions about how these legal protections are being translated into practical support in schools.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges that shortages remain, particularly among teachers with both specialised education training and the qualifications needed to teach specific subjects.

The ministry also recognises gaps in the availability of assistive devices and learning technologies.

For learners with disabilities, the challenge is not simply gaining admission to school but receiving the support needed to participate meaningfully and complete their education.

The government's commitments and planned interventions provide a framework for improvement.

But without clear information on where qualified teachers are deployed, which schools have accessible learning materials and how many learners receive the assistance they need, it remains difficult to assess the reach of those interventions.

For learners such as Chilombo, the consequences of delayed support can be measured in missed lessons, additional family expenses and postponed examinations.

The question for Zambia's education authorities is whether the measures being introduced will reach learners early enough to prevent others from experiencing similar setbacks.

Entries Open for the MakanDay Investigative Reporting Award

Now in its fifth year, the Eminent Prize for Investigative Journalism celebrates Zambian journalists whose reporting goes beyond the headlines to expose corruption, abuse of power and injustice.

Entries close: 31 October 2026

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

What's at stake?

Overall Winner: A brand-new laptop
Runner-up: A fully paid internship at MakanDay
Honourable Mentions: Up to two outstanding entries may receive special recognition, with the journalists invited to MakanDay's awards ceremony.

Winning and finalist investigations will also be showcased on the MakanDay website and across our social media platforms, giving exceptional investigative journalism greater visibility.

Who can enter?

The award is open to journalists based in Zambia, including MakanDay contributors. However, journalists employed by MakanDay are not eligible to enter.

Entries should demonstrate strong investigative reporting by uncovering information of significant public interest, particularly reporting that exposes corruption, abuse of power, wrongdoing or injustice.

Journalists may submit their own work or nominate another journalist's work with their permission.

Submission Guidelines

Eligible work must have been published or broadcast between 1 December 2025 and 31 October 2026.

Entries published or broadcast in languages other than English must be accompanied by an English translation.

For print or written entries, submit a scanned or digital copy. Where the text is difficult to read, include a transcript in Word or PDF format.

For radio, television or online video entries, provide a working link or attach the relevant audio or video file.

Every submission must include a short biography and photograph of the entrant or entrants.

Ready to enter?

Send your submission to editor@makanday.org by 31 October 2026.

Visit the MakanDay website for more information.

Great investigations deserve to be recognised. If your journalism uncovered what others wanted hidden, we want to see it.



Africa Must Do More Than Export Its Minerals, PARI-Africa Researchers Warn

As African leaders meet in Lusaka and Harare to discuss mining investment and regional integration, researchers Dr Tamuka Charles Chirimambowa and Dr Blessing Ivan Vava argue that new railways, trade corridors and mineral-processing plants will deliver limited benefits unless they create jobs, strengthen African businesses and improve the lives of mining communities.

By Gibson Zulu

Africa is rich in minerals that the world increasingly needs. From Zambia's copper to the Democratic Republic of Congo's cobalt and Zimbabwe's lithium, the continent occupies an important position in the global transition towards cleaner energy and new technologies.

Yet an uncomfortable question remains: how much of the wealth generated from these resources stays in the countries and communities where they are extracted?

For decades, African economies have exported raw materials while importing finished products, machinery and technology, often at much higher prices. New investments in railways, border facilities and regional trade corridors promise to improve the movement of goods, but they do not automatically change this economic relationship.

That is the central concern raised in a new PARI-Africa policy paper, From Mining Corridors to Digital Infrastructure: Can Regional Integration Drive Africa's Productive Transformation?

The paper comes as Zambia hosts the Mining and Investment Insaka in Lusaka from 19 to 23 October 2026, while regional leaders gather in Harare for the 25th Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Summit.

Both meetings place regional integration, industrialisation and investment at the centre of discussions.

But the question is not simply whether African countries can trade more efficiently. It is whether they can produce more of what they consume, develop their own industries and retain a greater share of the value generated from their natural resources.

Faster Exports Do Not Necessarily Mean Greater Prosperity

Major infrastructure investments are reshaping Southern Africa's mineral transport routes.

The Lobito Corridor, supported by the United States, European Union and African Development Bank, seeks to connect the mineral-rich Copperbelt to Angola's Atlantic coast.

Meanwhile, China, Zambia and Tanzania signed a US$1.4 billion concession agreement in November 2025 to rehabilitate and operate the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) railway.

These investments could reduce transport costs, improve access to international markets and increase mineral exports.

However, faster movement of minerals does not necessarily translate into more manufacturing jobs or stronger local businesses.

A railway that transports copper more efficiently to a foreign port may increase export earnings without creating substantial opportunities for Zambian engineering companies, equipment manufacturers or technology firms.

The researchers argue that regional integration must go beyond reducing trade barriers.

They identify three priorities: making cross-border trade more efficient, processing more goods within Africa, and developing the skills, technologies and businesses needed to sustain production.

Without the third element, African economies risk remaining dependent on foreign companies for machinery, expertise and technology, even when minerals are processed locally.

Zambia and DRC's battery ambitions face a practical test

Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo agreed in 2022 to develop a regional battery value chain, including special economic zones at Ndola in Zambia and Musompo in the DRC. The initiative presents an opportunity for the two countries to move beyond exporting copper and cobalt towards producing materials used in electric vehicle batteries.

However, the PARI-Africa paper highlights several obstacles, including unreliable electricity, policy uncertainty, shortages of specialised skills and delays at border crossings.

These challenges demonstrate why industrialisation cannot be achieved simply by establishing processing facilities.

A battery plant requires reliable power, trained workers, technical expertise, supporting industries and access to markets.

The researchers argue that Zambia and the DRC could benefit from closer cooperation with Zimbabwe and South Africa, whose engineering, chemical and manufacturing industries could contribute to regional production.

Rather than each country attempting to establish an entire battery industry independently, they propose a coordinated regional approach that allows countries to specialise in different stages of production.

Such cooperation would require governments to align investment incentives, improve electricity supply and support local suppliers.

Who owns the processing plant?

Processing minerals within Africa is an important step towards retaining more economic value, but it does not guarantee that African businesses and workers will benefit.

The paper points to Indonesia's experience with nickel processing.

Following its ban on nickel ore exports in 2020, Indonesia recorded a substantial increase in processed nickel exports, from US$5.8 billion to US$22 billion within three years.

However, the researchers note that Chinese companies control more than three-quarters of the country's nickel-processing capacity.

The experience raises questions about whether increased processing necessarily results in local ownership, technology transfer or the development of domestic industries.

Zimbabwe's lithium sector presents similar concerns.

Despite restrictions intended to encourage domestic processing, much of the country's lithium export earnings still come from concentrates rather than more advanced products.

The researchers argue that governments should measure industrial progress not only by the number of processing plants established, but also by the skills transferred, local businesses supported and value retained within their economies.

Mining communities must not be left behind

For communities living near mining operations, the question of who benefits from mineral wealth is particularly urgent.

In Zambia's Copperbelt, mining has generated significant economic activity while also exposing surrounding communities to environmental and social risks.

The February 2025 failure of a tailings dam at Sino-Metals Leach near Kitwe illustrates these concerns. The incident released acidic mining waste into the environment, damaging crops, contaminating water sources and disrupting water supplies.

The PARI-Africa paper cites the incident as an example of how communities can bear the environmental costs of mineral extraction without necessarily receiving a proportionate share of its economic benefits.

Similar concerns have been documented in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where communities have faced displacement and disputes over compensation linked to copper and cobalt mining developments.

The researchers argue that host communities should be recognised as participants in decisions affecting their land, water and livelihoods.

Africa Must Do More Than Export Its Minerals, PARI-Africa Researchers Warn cont....

They propose stronger protection of land rights, fair compensation, meaningful consultation and environmental guarantees to ensure that companies can meet the costs of rehabilitation when damage occurs.

They also recommend that a defined share of mineral revenue should reach host districts through transparent community funds.

For mining towns such as Chingola, Kitwe and Solwezi, these proposals raise a practical question: how much of the wealth extracted from surrounding mines is reflected in better roads, schools, healthcare and economic opportunities?

Local businesses need more than promises

Another concern raised by the researchers is the limited participation of African businesses in mining supply chains.

Mining companies purchase machinery, spare parts, engineering services, software and other goods worth substantial amounts of money.

Yet local businesses often struggle to secure these contracts because of limited access to finance, technical capacity and established procurement relationships.

The paper proposes that governments and mining companies move beyond general commitments to local content and establish structured supplier-development programmes.

Such programmes would help domestic firms meet technical standards, develop products and compete for larger contracts.

The researchers point to Chile's experience, where mining companies have worked with local suppliers to develop solutions to operational challenges.

They argue that similar arrangements could support African engineering companies, manufacturers, universities and technology firms.

The objective should not simply be to award contracts to locally registered businesses, but to help them develop lasting productive capacity.

The digital economy presents similar challenges The paper also extends its analysis beyond mining to Africa's expanding digital economy.

While African countries have demonstrated considerable innovation in mobile money and digital financial services, much of the continent's telecommunications and data infrastructure remains dependent on foreign technology and investment.

According to figures cited in the paper, sub-Saharan Africa accounts for approximately 18 percent of the world's population but only 0.6 percent of global data-centre capacity.

The researchers argue that African governments should use public procurement, regional cooperation and technology partnerships to develop domestic digital capabilities.

Mining companies, utilities and public institutions could provide important markets for African technology businesses offering software, automation, logistics and maintenance services.

This would allow mineral-rich economies to participate not only in the extraction of resources used in modern technologies, but also in developing and maintaining the technologies themselves.

Transparency will determine who benefits

The researchers also warn that regional integration and industrial policy can create opportunities for corruption and preferential treatment when investment agreements are negotiated without public scrutiny.

Mining concessions, tax incentives, procurement arrangements and infrastructure contracts can determine how natural-resource wealth is distributed for decades.

Yet citizens often have limited access to the agreements governing these investments.

The paper calls for greater disclosure of mining and infrastructure contracts, identification of the beneficial owners of companies receiving licences, and stronger parliamentary scrutiny of major agreements.

It also proposes public reporting on tax incentives and their economic outcomes.

These measures would make it easier to determine whether investments are delivering promised jobs, local procurement opportunities, technology transfer and public revenue.

A different measure of success

The PARI-Africa researchers propose that COMESA and the Southern African Development Community introduce annual assessments of major transport corridors, including Lobito, TAZARA and the North–South Corridor.

Rather than measuring success primarily through infrastructure spending and the volume of goods transported, they recommend tracking local procurement, skilled employment, manufacturing growth, environmental performance and revenue reaching host communities.

The proposal reflects a broader argument: regional integration should be judged by what African economies become capable of producing, not simply by how efficiently they export what lies beneath their soil.

As African leaders discuss new investments and regional partnerships, the challenge is to ensure that the benefits extend beyond governments, mining companies and international financiers.

For ordinary citizens in mineral-rich communities, meaningful economic transformation would be visible in better public services, more employment opportunities, stronger local businesses and a fairer share of mineral wealth.

Africa's railways, refineries and digital infrastructure may help determine the continent's economic future.

But the lasting measure of success will be whether they strengthen African industries and improve the lives of the people whose resources make those investments possible.



Editor's note: This article is adapted from the PARI-Africa Public Policy Dialogue Series, No. 1, October 2026, From Mining Corridors to Digital Infrastructure: Can Regional Integration Drive Africa's Productive Transformation, authored by Dr Tamuka Charles Chirimambowa of the Masosote Institute for Political Economy and Dr Blessing Ivan Vava of the Southern Africa Coalition for Democracy and Accountability (SACDA). The arguments and recommendations reflect the authors' analysis.

Illegal Truck Parking in Mongu: Why Are Police Guarding Trucks Parked in Prohibited Areas?

For nearly a decade, heavy-duty trucks have continued to park illegally along major roads in Mongu, Western Province, despite signs clearly prohibiting the practice.

But an investigation by Oblate Radio Liseli has uncovered a troubling contradiction: while Mongu Municipal Council acknowledges that the roadside parking is prohibited, the Zambia Police Service has confirmed entering into an agreement with a private company to provide security for the trucks.

The arrangement raises important questions. Why are police providing security for trucks parked in prohibited areas? Who is paying for this service, and how much? And why has the illegal parking continued despite years of complaints from residents?

The investigation also reveals damage to a public road, obstruction of businesses, poor sanitation and growing concerns about the safety of women and girls living near the informal truck parking areas.

Mongu Municipal Council says it cannot enforce the parking restrictions until its designated truck park is operational. But residents are questioning why a problem that has persisted under two government administrations remains unresolved.

In this report, Situmbeko Skuka of Oblate Radio Liseli in Mongu follows the money, examines the enforcement failures and asks who is being held accountable for the continued illegal parking of heavy-duty trucks in Mongu.

Watch here: https://makanday.org/illegal-truck-parking-in-mongu-why-are-police-guarding-trucks-parked-in-prohibited-areas/

This article was produced by MakanDay's Local Reporting Network. Subscribe through our website and follow our Facebook page to receive stories like this one as soon as they are published.

EDITORIAL

It Seems Disorder Is Our Way of Life

It seems disorder has become our order.

Look around our towns and cities. There is disorder on our streets, in our markets and in many of our public spaces. What should be orderly places have become spaces where everyone seems to do as they please, often with little regard for others.

We see pedestrians crossing roads wherever they please, even where designated crossing points exist. Bus drivers stop anywhere to pick up or drop off passengers, sometimes blocking traffic without the slightest concern for other road users.

We witness this almost every evening when we knock off from work. As motorists queue patiently in traffic, some drivers suddenly create their own lanes, squeezing through spaces never intended for vehicles.

Others drive along road shoulders or force their way into queues, determined to get ahead of everyone else.

But this culture of disorder extends far beyond our roads.

Walk through some of our markets and you will find traders occupying walkways, drainage channels and spaces meant for public access. In some places, pedestrians must squeeze between makeshift stalls or walk onto busy roads because pavements have been taken over.

We complain about blocked drainage systems when the rains come, yet we casually dump rubbish into those same drains. We demand clean cities but throw litter from moving vehicles, leave waste in public places and expect someone else to clean up after us.

Even where designated trading spaces, bus stops and waste disposal facilities exist, some people choose convenience over following the rules.

This brings me to the resistance against the Lusaka mayor, Chitambala Mwewa's efforts to remove street vendors.

We struggle to understand why restoring order to our streets should attract so much opposition. Surely, we should all want a city where pedestrians can walk safely, businesses operate in designated spaces, and roads remain accessible to motorists and emergency services.

We recognise that street vending is a source of livelihood for many families. People are trying to survive, and their economic struggles cannot be dismissed. The council must therefore provide practical, affordable and accessible trading alternatives rather than simply pushing vendors from one street to another.

But we must also accept that the need to earn a living does not give anyone an unlimited right to occupy public spaces.

If we allow every trader to set up wherever they wish, every motorist to create their own lane and every resident to dispose of waste wherever convenient, what kind of cities are we building?

The problem is that we often demand discipline from others while resisting it when it inconveniences us.

We want clean streets, but we tolerate littering. We want free-flowing traffic, but we disregard road rules. We want organised markets, but we defend trading in places never intended for it.

The mayor's efforts deserve public support, provided enforcement is fair, humane and accompanied by viable alternatives for affected traders.

Ultimately, restoring order is not simply about removing street vendors. It is about changing our attitude towards rules, public spaces and our responsibilities to one another.

We cannot continue demanding an orderly society while defending the very behaviour that makes it disorderly.



Simon Chitambala Mwewa was officially sworn in as the Mayor of Lusaka on October 7, 2026, after winning the mayoral election on the United Party for National Development (UPND) ticket.

MakanDay INVESTIGATE. INFORM. EMPOWER.

YOUR SAY

Your opinion. Your argument. Your space.

A space for our readers to share their views, challenge ideas and contribute to conversations about the issues shaping Zambia and our communities. Opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of MakanDay.

Illegal Truck Parking in Mongu: Why Are Police Guarding Trucks Parked in Prohibited Areas?

- Don't involve your self in things above you go and ask council for mongu they will explain to you why it is like the way it is other wise we know why we pack there and when they tell us to go to council truck pack we will go mind you we know we're council truck pack is - Bashi T Chihana
- Most drivers in Zambia doesn't know how read, they always park at No parking

Weeks After Our Investigation, A Deputy PS Has Been Fired.

- Inclusive is not yet even 60% .children with special needs especially the visually impaired are suffering in schools.Dr Mwamba well said but the system has failed us. - Lily Guchamp

HOUSE BUSINESS: Government Mobilising Funds To Pay Farmers – Nalumango

- That one arrogant Permanent Secretary should lead by example resigning in National Interest unless the law is one sided then every jack and jim would understand otherwise kuwayawayafye.

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EXPLAIN.
INSPIRE CHANGE.

HOUSE BUSINESS



MakanDay's weekly look inside Zambia's National Assembly — what MPs said, what they did, how they voted and why it matters to you.

Why Parliament's New Committees Matter to You

As the national assembly puts together its parliamentary committees, MakanDay explains how MPs are selected, what the committees do and the three types of bills that can be introduced in parliament.

By MakanDay Editor

Much of what Zambians see of parliament happens on the floor of the national assembly, where MPs debate national issues, question ministers and consider proposed laws.

But some of parliament's most important work takes place away from the main chamber, in smaller groups known as parliamentary committees.

As the 14th National Assembly puts together its committees, the process will help determine which MPs examine government spending, scrutinise ministries and investigate matters affecting citizens.

For voters, the appointments matter because they create another avenue through which MPs can demand explanations about public services and the use of public resources.

What are parliamentary committees?

Parliamentary committees are smaller groups of MPs assigned to examine particular issues in greater detail than is usually possible during debates in the main chamber.

For example, a committee examining health matters may question officials about medicine shortages, while another dealing with public finances may investigate how government institutions have spent taxpayers' money.

Committees can examine documents, receive submissions, question witnesses and prepare reports containing findings and recommendations.

Their work allows parliament to look beyond statements made by ministers and examine whether government policies and programmes are being implemented.

Who selects MPs to serve on committees?

Although the Speaker plays an important role in establishing and overseeing parliamentary committees, the responsibility for appointing MPs to standing committees at the beginning of a new parliament rests with the Standing Orders Committee, which is chaired by the Speaker.

The selection process must consider the representation of political parties and independent MPs, as well as gender, experience and qualifications.

Under the Standing Orders, most MPs are required to serve on a general purposes or portfolio committee.

An MP ordinarily cannot belong to more than two committees, although a third appointment is permitted if it is to a House-Keeping Committee.
Most committees are limited to 10 members, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson.

These rules are intended to distribute parliamentary responsibilities while ensuring that different political interests are represented.

What types of committees are there?

The Standing Orders provide for three broad types of parliamentary committees.

Standing Committees are established for the life of a parliament. They include committees responsible for examining government ministries, public expenditure and the internal administration of the national assembly.

Standing Committees are further divided into house-keeping, general purposes and portfolio committees.

Select Committees are temporary committees established to examine particular matters requiring parliamentary consideration, including certain presidential appointments.

Committees of the Whole House involve MPs considering matters collectively, except for the Speaker. One example is the detailed examination of a bill during its committee stage.

Can Opposition and Independent MPs Chair Committees?
Yes. Parliamentary committee leadership is not reserved for the ruling party. The Standing Orders specifically require that the chairpersons of the committees responsible for local government aaccounts, parastatal bodies and the Constituency Development Fund must not belong to the party in government. Other committees generally elect their chairpersons and vice-chairpersons from among their members.

Solwezi Central Independent MP Kawina Poho has been named chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), a position previously held by Charles Milupi and Howard Kunda. The committee scrutinises government expenditure and findings from the Auditor-General to establish whether public funds have been properly accounted for.

Why it matters:
Parliamentary oversight helps expose financial irregularities and demand accountability for taxpayers' money. For ordinary Zambians, this can mean ensuring that funds intended for medicines, schools, roads and Constituency Development Fund projects are used for their intended purposes.

What about Bills? Are they all the same?

While committees are being constituted, parliament also has another major responsibility: making laws.

Before a proposed law becomes an Act of Parliament, it is introduced as a bill.

The Standing Orders recognise three types of Bills.

1. Public Bills

These deal with matters of public interest, such as education, health, taxation or other issues affecting the wider population.

A Public Bill can be introduced by the government or by a backbench MP. When introduced by a backbench MP, it is known as a Private Member's Bill.

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HOUSE BUSINESS

MakanDay's weekly look inside Zambia's National Assembly — what MPs said, what they did, how they voted and why it matters to you.

Why Parliament's New Committees Matter to You cont....

However, Bills dealing with certain public financial matters, including taxation and the allocation of public funds, can only be introduced by a minister.

2. **Private Bills**

Unlike a Public Bill, a Private Bill deals with the interests of a particular private group, association or corporate body.

It is introduced by a backbench MP and must meet specific requirements, including publication of notices explaining its purpose.

A Private Bill should not be confused with a Private Member's Bill. The former concerns particular private interests, while the latter describes a Bill introduced by a backbench MP.

3. **Hybrid Bills**

A Hybrid Bill affects both public and private interests.

Such a Bill may concern a broader public matter while also having particular implications for an identifiable private group or organisation. The procedure applicable to Private Bills also applies to Hybrid Bills.

Why should citizens pay attention?

The formation of parliamentary committees may appear to be an internal administrative exercise, but it has consequences for public accountability.

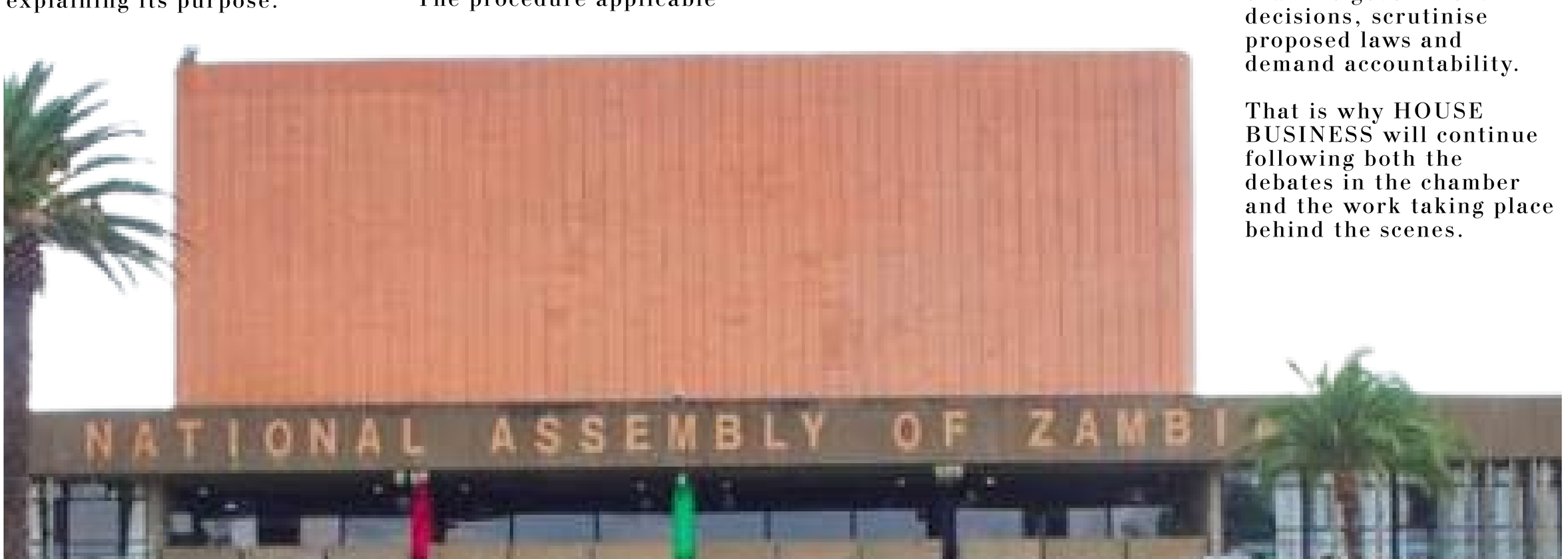
Once committee memberships are announced, voters will be able to see which MPs have been assigned responsibility for scrutinising different areas of government.

They can then follow whether those MPs attend committee proceedings, ask meaningful questions and contribute to recommendations that address public concerns.

Similarly, when a bill is introduced, citizens should ask what problem it seeks to address, who stands to benefit and whether its provisions could affect their rights or livelihoods.

Parliament's effectiveness is not measured only by how often MPs speak in the House, but also by how thoroughly they examine government decisions, scrutinise proposed laws and demand accountability.

That is why HOUSE BUSINESS will continue following both the debates in the chamber and the work taking place behind the scenes.





Government Mobilising Funds To Pay Farmers – Nalumango

By Gibson Zulu

VICE-PRESIDENT Mutale Nalumango says Government is mobilising funds to settle outstanding payments to farmers who supplied maize to the Food Reserve Agency (FRA).

Speaking during the Vice-President's Question Time in the National Assembly on Friday, Ms Nalumango assured affected farmers that Government was working to pay them as soon as possible.

She said funds were being mobilised through the national budget, commercial banks and other sources to meet the outstanding obligations.

Nalumango was responding to Chama Central Member of Parliament Yotam Mtayachalo, who raised concerns over delays in paying farmers for maize supplied to the FRA.

Mtayachalo said some farmers had gone for two months without receiving payment, a situation he feared could affect their preparations for the next farming season.

He also questioned the delays, saying farmers had previously received payments promptly before the August general elections.

In response, Nalumango maintained that government was committed to paying farmers but needed to mobilise sufficient resources.

She disclosed that the FRA had bought more than two million metric tonnes of maize, exceeding the government's initial target of 500,000 metric tonnes.

The Vice-President said government would need to export some of the maize to raise additional funds for continued purchases.

She, however, urged farmers to retain sufficient maize for household consumption rather than selling their entire harvest.

Retirementin the national interest

Meanwhile, Nalumango clarified that the legal provisions allowing public service workers to be retired in the national interest remained in force.

She said although Government had previously announced that public service workers would not be retired in the national interest, the existing legal framework could still be invoked where circumstances warranted.

The Vice-President distinguished retirement in the national interest from disciplinary action arising from misconduct or poor performance. Civil servants warned against partisan politics

On the role of civil servants in implementing government programmes, Nalumango said public officers were expected to remain politically neutral and implement the policies of the government of the day.

She warned that civil servants who engaged in partisan politics while holding public office risked dismissal.

Nalumango said public officers wishing to participate actively in politics should resign from the civil service. She argued that political interference by civil servants could undermine the implementation of government programmes and national development. The Vice-President cited her decision to leave the teaching profession and enter politics, saying she had wanted the freedom to express her views on national issues.

Political competition and democracy

On political competition, Nalumango urged opposition political parties to strengthen their structures, articulate their policies and compete for public support.

She said political parties should operate within established democratic principles rather than expect their opponents to create opportunities for them.

The Vice-President maintained that political competition should be conducted within the law.

VP warns against threats to president's life
Nalumango also warned that threats against the life of the President were criminal matters that could attract prosecution.

She was responding to a question concerning allegations that individuals within the public service were sharing state information with fugitives.

The Vice-President said a distinction should be made between legitimate political criticism and threats against an individual's life.

She said criticism was permissible in a democracy, but threats of violence could constitute criminal conduct.

On allegations of individuals concealing the whereabouts of fugitives or sharing restricted information with them, Nalumango said the legal implications would depend on the circumstances.

She added that Zambia could seek the extradition of individuals from other countries where applicable legal arrangements existed.



Photo Credit: W.K Mutale Nalumango's Facebook Page

From the Bulletin & Record Archives

In October 2015, The Bulletin & Record featured musician and activist Fumba Chama, popularly known as Pilato, whose music and outspoken criticism of those in power had made him a prominent voice in Zambia's political discourse.

More than a decade later, Pilato is on the other side of government, serving as Permanent Secretary responsible for Arts under President Hakainde Hichilema's administration.

We revisit the story, offering a glimpse into Pilato's journey from outspoken government critic to senior public official.

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.”
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.”)

From the Bulletin & Record Archives

Pilato – The Making of a Folk Hero cont....

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 8) 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,

From the Bulletin & Record Archives

Pilato – The Making of a Folk Hero cont...

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."

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."

