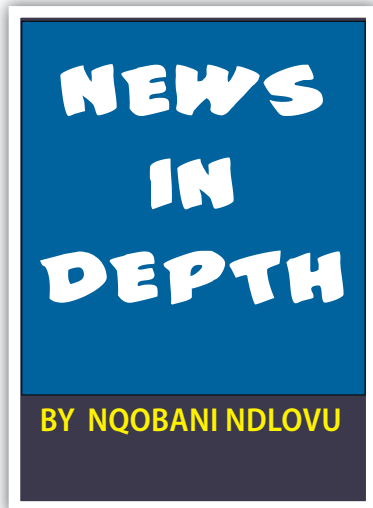


'They just want to loot': Alarm as



ZANU PF-linked 'vultures' are circling Harare City Council with their eyes trained on the municipality's cash cow, the multi-million dollar City Parking company which they are determined to snatch away, *Truth Diggers* has established.

Former Chegutu West Zanu PF lawmaker, Dexter Nduna is leading the onslaught as he pushes a thinly disguised agenda to grab the vehicle parking management contract from the council's City Parking company and he has already laid down the plot.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa recently appointed Nduna as chairperson for resource mobilisation and revenue generation for the ruling Zanu PF party.

The former lawmaker and a company linked to Zanu PF, Team Chapter, want to take over from City Parking to manage vehicle parking in Harare and other towns.

City Parking is a duly registered parking management company, which is wholly owned by the City of Harare. It is mandated to collect parking fees and enforce traffic by-laws on behalf of the municipality.

It started operating in January 2013 after taking over from Easipark, which had been running several parking bays in the central business district.

Easipark, a joint venture between Easihold of Zimbabwe and the Harare City Council, had started operations in 2009.

Its contract was terminated after Harare officials alleged that the council was not getting its fair share.

City Parking has managed to transform the fortunes of Harare's parking business and has been remitting revenue to council since inception.

Over the years, City Parking has also made non-financial contributions towards council.

Investigations by *Truth Diggers* established that Zanu PF's interest in council-owned businesses, especially vehicle parking management, became apparent after it emerged that the municipality was receiving huge pickings from City Parking.

The City of Harare is now proposing merging City Parking with the loss-making Harare Quarry Private Limited, another council owned entity, to ensure the municipality reaps huge profits from its business, according to documents obtained by *Truth Diggers*.

In a letter dated March 2024 addressed to City Parking board chairperson Percy Toriro, Harare town clerk Hosiah Chisango said a council meeting held in February this year proposed the merger.

"You are hereby advised that the business committee meeting dated 14 February 2024 considered a report on the proposed merging of City Parking Pvt Ltd and Harare Quarry Pvt Ltd operations," Chisango wrote.

"The proposed merger is anchored on City Parking Private Limited assuming the governance and operations of Harare Quarry Private Limited."

He added: "The 1923rd ordinary council meeting dated 29 February adopted the recommendations as follows:

"Council approves in principle the merging of City Parking (Pvt) Ltd and Harare Quarry (Pvt) Ltd business operations."

"That the town clerk (business development unit manager) in liaison with acting chamber secretary organises a workshop to enable the committee to understand how the merged entity will operate and how the requested US \$1million assistance will be used.

"Implementation of the above is anchored on undertaking a viability and risk assessment for clarity of direction and decision making."

Zanu PF is also said to be eyeing Harare Quarry as well.

On May 8, 2024, Nduna wrote to City Parking management demanding financials of the company for the past 10 years.

In the letter, Nduna alleged that "government is saddled with the rehabilitation of roads in all local authorities using ERRP1-4 with no help from the funds your company is collecting from parking fees within the city centre and its environs."

Government launched the



City Parking is a duly registered parking management company, which is wholly owned by the City of Harare

Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme (ERRP) in 2021 after Mnangagwa declared the state of national roads a national disaster.

Nduna threatened court action if he did not receive the financials within seven working days.

He wrote a follow-up letter dated June 12 to City Parking through his lawyers Chambati Mataka and Makonese requesting City Parking financials.

"We have been instructed to follow up on the response and if the same is not received by our client or us in the next seven days, we shall proceed to execute instructions given to us to institute legal proceedings without any further notice," Nduna's lawyers wrote.

In a response addressed to Nduna's lawyers dated July 3, 2024, City Parking through its legal representatives Kantor and Immerman said the former Chegutu West lawmaker had no legal basis to demand its financials.

City Parking said Nduna had also not referred to any specific legal provisions of the Roads Act, "which gives him the right to make such a request".

"Secondly, and in any event, it is common cause that City Parking (Pvt) Ltd is a private limited company registered under the Companies and Other Business Entities Act (Chapter 24:31) and not a road authority as defined in the Roads Act," City Parking lawyers wrote.

City Parking said the Roads Act does not give any right to a private citizen to request for the financial information or opera-

tions of a private company.

"Thirdly, and in terms of the legal instruments governing the relationship between our client and the City of Harare, our client is a private entity whose duty is to report to its sole shareholder, that is, the City of Harare and not to third party private individuals like your client," City Parking said.

"Fourthly, should the government of Zimbabwe be interested in the information that your client is purportedly requesting on its behalf, there is legislated procedure for the government, through the relevant ministry, to obtain such information from the accounting authority that is the City of Harare."

Through Statutory Instrument 91 of 2014, Mnangagwa appointed a commission of inquiry in May 2024 to investigate City of Harare's management and council operations from 2017.

The commission is chaired by retired judge Maphios Cheda and includes former MDC top official Lucia Matibenga, Steven Chakaipa, and Khonzani Ncube.

It was tasked with investigating Harare City Council's financial management systems and audit compliance with the

Public Finance Management Act [Chapter 22:19] and other laws, and financial management of revenue generated through special vehicle companies and other outsourced arrangements, among other terms of reference.

"That process (inquiry) will surely enable the govern-

ment to obtain all the relevant information from the responsible authority," City Parking said while rejecting Nduna's request.

Harare mayor Jacob Mafume told *Truth Diggers* on Friday that City Parking was a wholly owned council firm which could not be hijacked by Zanu PF-linked persons and businesses.

"People are stuck in history. We passed numerous resolutions to restructure the company until it is a 100% owned entity of the City of Harare," Mafume said.

"All the revenues that are being made at City Parking are coming to the City of Harare, directly or indirectly in the sense that it goes to the employees directly, in the sense that it purchases the equipment and road making materials that we are currently using."

Documents obtained by *Truth Diggers* show that between January and July this year City Parking generated US\$948 066 and ZiG 10 706 739 for council from parking and enforcement fees.

Last year, council raked in US\$1 052 863 and \$9 631 756 609 in local currency through the firm.

"It is a model that is working perfectly, and will not be interrupted under any circumstances," Mafumje told *Truth Diggers*.

"Anyone thinking of an early Christmas, taking City Parking from the city council, must look elsewhere before it's too late.

"The council is not there for the taking, or looting."

A City Parking official said the firm was successful because it had leveraged on sound corporate governance, sound management and the introduction of efficient technologies in its operations.

"This has led to great improvement in collection of parking fees. The transition from manual receipt books and parking discs or booklets which were used by council and Easipark plugged revenue leakages," the official said.

"Over the years City Parking has gone through a series of technological upgrades and improvements.

"Our recent self-service platforms available on QR code have excited the motoring public. Drivers are now able to pay for parking on their own using their mobile devices from the comfort of their environments wherever they are.

"Simply by scanning the QR code, a link that provides options

Mike Tyson not planning to fight female boxer

facts&fiction

BY FACT CHECK

FORMER heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson did not say he is willing to fight with Algerian Olympic boxer Imane Khelif for a "battered women's charity", contrary to suggestions made online.

A spokesperson for Tyson said the narrative is fake.

Social media accounts, opens new tab shared a screenshot of an X post saying: "Mike Tyson says he's willing to Box Olympic DUDE with all Proceeds to go to a Battered Women's Charity."

A spokesperson for Tyson said in an email, "It's absolutely false. Mr Tyson has yet to publicly com-

ment about that situation."

Tyson, who has a 50-6 record with 44 knockouts, was one of the most feared heavyweights in history but has not fought a professional fight since 2005.

He will fight YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul on November 15 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

The 25-year-old Algerian boxer Imane Khelif and Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting have been at the center of a debate about gender in sports after failing unspecified International Boxing Association gender eligibility tests last year.

"We are talking about women's boxing. We have two boxers who were born as women, raised as women, who have passports as women and who have competed for many years as women and this is a clear definition of a woman," the International Olympic Committee president said on August 3.



Dexter Nduna

vultures circle Harare's cash cow

for self-service appears. This has brought much parking convenience.

In 2021 City Parking also started operations in Gweru through a joint venture company called Gweru City Parking (Pvt) Ltd.

It has also secured parking arrangements in other cities where it is yet to start operations.

Zanu PF spokesperson Farai Marapira said the party had not deployed any officials or entities to 'takeover' vehicle parking management from City Parking.

"Zanu PF is a law-abiding institution and cannot be seen engaging in activities that are *ultra vires* the law," Marapira said when contacted for comment on Friday.

"We have no such programme to take over City Parking, which is a legal entity on its own."

Reports earlier this week said that the Zanu PF-linked Team Chapter was earmarked to takeover vehicle parking management in the capital.

According to the report, "this transition could establish Team Chapter as one of the largest taxpayers in the country, surpassing City Parking's previous contributions."

Combined Harare Residents Association director Reuben Akili questioned moves to hijack vehicle parking management by Zanu PF politicians and affiliate entities.

"Firstly, what is supposed to happen is that any takeover of this subsidiary must go through a council resolution, but again we realise that in Zimbabwe we are facing a serious crisis of centralisation of power where sometimes these decisions meant to takeover this important institution are then made through a directive from the centre," Akili told *Truth Diggers*.

"However, it is very unfortunate that we have groupings that are not much interested in improving service provision but they have seen the money in City Parking and these people are doing different initiatives not to improve service delivery, but to justify their takeover of City Parking.

"We are opposed to that."

He added: "The best way forward is that any decision on this matter has to be through a council resolution."

"At this moment, councillors have to be vigilant to protect the infrastructure and public restresses of the local authority."

He said residents expected the City of Harare to also issue a statement to highlight their position in response to the threats to hijack vehicle parking management "because it is one of the strategic revenue generation institutions of the councils".

"For example, we saw money from City Parking changing Rufaro Stadium...they want that money, they have nothing to do with improving infrastructure, they just want the money," Akili said.

"We are worried about these developments."

Harare Residents Trust chairperson Precious Shumba, said City Parking has become a target of government bureaucrats and Zanu PF hardliners, who want to loot and cripple the entity.

"It shows that City Parking has made an impact, and obviously this is offending to the government bureaucrats, who would have wanted the City of Harare to be financially grounded," Shumba said.

"Government bureaucrats are looking at City Parking as the source of power for the mayor and the City of Harare and would therefore want to cripple it."

He said attempts to elude City Parking were

against the spirit of devolution.

"The government-

ment must be aware that they took over the vehicle licensing fees from Harare and other cities and transferred them, unjustifiably so, to the Zimbabwe National Roads Authority (Zinara), and that was against the principles of devolution as enshrined in the constitution," Shumba said.

"Unfortunately government is determined to centralise everything and cripple City of Harare operations."

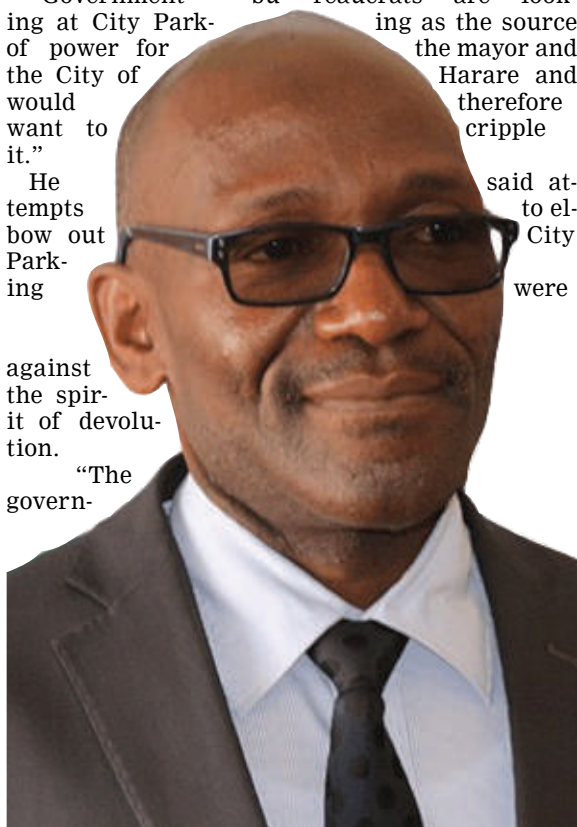
"The City of Harare must safeguard the operations of City Parking and its other strategic business units."

In the past, the Zanu PF government has been accused of sabotaging urban local authorities after it lost control of towns and cities to the opposition at the turn of the millennium.

***Truth Diggers is the investigative journalism arm of Alpha Media Holdings, the publishers of *The Standard*, *NewsDay*, *Southern Eye* and *Zimbabwe Independent* as well as proprietors of *HSTV*.**



Harare mayor Jacob Mafume



Hosiach Chisango

With deepest sympathies

The Board, Management and Staff of Alpha Media Holdings wish to express their most sincere sympathies to the Rushwaya family following the loss of **Simba Rushwaya**, a former AMH staffer.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult period.