



**Z A P U**  
ZIMBABWE AFRICAN PEOPLES UNION



<https://zapu.org>

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## Call for the independence of football and all sporting disciplines from manipulation



Sport plays a critical role in bringing our nation together. Despite our polarized political environment, we have seen Zimbabweans rising above their differences to unite under the big banner of sports, particularly football. To preserve this unifying force, we call for the independence of football and all sporting disciplines from manipulation! We cannot ignore reports of tenders and government contracts being manipulated, with the tainted proceeds of corruption being channeled into sports!

We have watched in dismay as certain football clubs receive large sums of money, reportedly from corruption in government tenders and misuse of resources by questionable people who dish out cars to celebrities when all government ministries are allocated less than 30% funds from the government budgets year in year out. The Ministry of Education, for instance, has been struggling to settle its ballooning debt to schools under the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), a facility meant to keep underprivileged children in school. Yet some people are splashing large sums of money on football teams!

While we welcome investment and donations towards football as a popular sport, we strongly oppose gifts that come with strings attached. Football clubs should be encouraged to generate revenue streams and operate within their means. There should be strict rules enacted and enforced by our football governing body, ZIFA. For example, the Financial Fair Play is a set of rules introduced by UEFA in 2009 to ensure European clubs operate within their means and promote fair competition. We need such rules here. The unregulated injection of hefty sums of money into cherry-picked football teams by the likes of Wicknell Chivhayo disturbs the natural flow of talent and organic growth of local football clubs. We end up having elitist clubs that are moneyed, prevailing over ordinary teams with modest financial resources.

Therefore, recipients of large cash donations – often unsolicited – should guard against meddling and direct control by their strange benefactors. Football and other sporting disciplines remain viable tools for nation-building and social cohesion. We must safeguard these tools and never allow them to be weaponized by the merchants of division. Let the glory of our players and coaches be earned through sheer hard work and not the power of shadowy benevolence.