



PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE
P.O. Box CY 298
Causeway
Zimbabwe
Telephone: 700181/729722/252936-50

27 July 2017

The Speaker of Parliament
Parliament of Zimbabwe
Harare

Dear Hon. Adv. Jacob. F. Mudenda

RE: OPEN LETTER ON THE MARGINALISATION OF WOMEN MPS IN THE HOUSE

We the undersigned Members of Parliament wish to express to you our utter disappointment with the manner in which you exercised your discretion as chair in preventing women members from speaking during the debate on Constitution Amendment No. 1 Bill on Tuesday 25 July 2015.

We noted that you ruled that you would not entertain any points of order in refusing to recognize first Hon Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga, then Hon. Jessie Majome but you proceeded recognize Hon. Nelson Chamisa who is a man. You maintained that position even when you were approached by the two Honourable Members at your chair, insisting that you knew in advance what they intended to say which amounts to prejudice.

You proceeded to refuse to recognize Hon. Jasmine Toffa and Hon. Nomathemba Ndlovu but proceeded to repeatedly recognize Hon Chamisa, Hon. Themba Mliswa and Hon. Innocent Gonese who are all men. Even the Hansard of 25 July 2017 (Vol.43 No. 78) invisibilised and annoymised women MPs as it totally left out Hon. Members Misihairabwi, Ndlovu and Majome's sustained point of order interjections, only Hon. Toffa is recorded as having raised a point of order.

We write to advise you that we are not happy at being discriminated against on the basis of our gender, being equally members of Parliament who must also enjoy the right to hold office as guaranteed by Section 67 of the Constitution as read with Section 56. We request that you respect the equal rights of women MPs to contribute to the political discourse of our country. Women also have views that are valuable to it and should not be dismissed as predictable. As women MPs we find it unfair to be deprived of audience in Parliament yet are often subjected to public criticism for allegedly not speaking in Parliament. How can we do so when we are maligned and marginalized from being presumed to wish to raise unimportant viewpoints?

We trust that you will favourably find this our petition to you and therefore exercise your discretion in a manner that ensures that the representative voices of 54% of our population are heard equally in our Parliament.

Yours Faithfully

1. Priscilla Misihairabwi- Mushonga MP
2. Nomathemba Ndlovu MP
3. Jasmine Toffa MP
4. Fungayi Jessie Majome MP