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Jabulani Sibanda

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Jabulani Sibanda is a former member of the [Zanu-PF](#) party and former leader of the [Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association](#). Widely viewed in Zimbabwe as controversial, Sibanda has been suspended and expelled from the Zanu-PF party on different occasions, the latest being in November 2014 when he was expelled from the party for fanning factionalism and insulting Mugabe. Earlier in the month, Sibanda had been expelled from the ZNLWA by "elders" of the association for indiscipline.^[1]

Jabulani Sibanda



Jabulani Sibanda

Born	(1970-01-31) January 31, 1970 (age 49)
Residence	Zimbabwe
Occupation	Politician
Known for	Being leader of the War Veterans

Controversy over age and participation in liberation war

Sibanda's age has been a subject of controversy with the war veteran himself refusing on many occasions to disclose his exact age. It is believed he was born on 31 January 1970.^[2] His age became of great interest to the public due to his claims that he actually fought the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe against the white regime of [Ian Smith](#). There was general speculation that during the peak of the Second

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Chimurenga war in Zimbabwe, Jabulani Sibanda was still very young and others even claim that he was still in primary school. Some time in 2012, during a hot interview with [The Sunday Mail](#) journalist, [Munyaradzi Huni](#), Sibanda ran out of words when drilled about his real age.

In an interview in with ZimEye, Sibanda said in November 2014 that he was more than 10 years old in 1969. he also claimed that he was [Joshua Nkomo](#)'s bodyguard before and after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.^[3]

For many years, people in ZANU PF have queried why president [Robert Mugabe](#) entrusted Sibanda said to be too young to have fought in the liberation struggle with the headship of the war veterans association together with [Joseph Chinotimba](#) who also the late retired army general [Solomon Mujuru](#) several times openly embarrassed rubbing his liberation war credentials; This was before Mujuru's mysterious death at his farm house in 2011.^[2]

Military Training

Sibanda claims that he joined the liberation struggle and crossed the border in 1976 to join fellow guerrillas in Zambia. He revealed that he was very young at that time of joining the liberation struggle. In his personal narrative, he also illuminated that he went to train in Angola at Boma Training Centre in Moxico Province. From Zambia we moved by trucks. He also narrated how they moved from Zambia to Angola; "It was a long journey taking into account that the state of the roads in Zambia was very bad, but in Angola the roads were worse because there was a civil war at that time. Boma was about 39km north of a small town called Luena, which was called Lusso during the colonial regime."^[2]

[Tsholotsho Declaration](#)

Sibanda was one of the key figures involved in the Tsholotsho declaration of 2004. The declaration was a political arrangement which was meant to seize power through unscrupulous means from Robert Mugabe the president of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Other key members who were involved in the declaration included [Emmerson Mnangagwa](#) and [Jonathan Moyo](#). Due to his taking part in the Tsholotsho declaration, Sibanda was suspended from the party. He however returned with new energy in the 2008 elections when he was made part of the national campaign team. Critics have argued that his return was necessitated by the need for unity of purpose at a time a when the opposition parties such as the [Movement for Democratic Change](#) were gaining ground especially in the rural areas.

Intimidation and Violence

In 2007

Sibanda was believed to be the one behind a crusade of violence perpetrated against opposition supporters in [Masvingo](#) Province during the 2007 run-off elections which resulted in the government of national unity. Sibanda with other war veterans and youths targeted those aligned to [Morgan Tsvangirai](#) and other opposition movements.^[4]

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From 2011 to 2012

Around June 2011, Sibanda is reported to have gone around the Masvingo (mainly to [Bikia](#), [Zaka](#) and [Gutu](#) districts) province, especially to constituencies that had lost the 2008 election to the MDC, threatening Zanu-PF supporters with violence and death. Sibanda would force villagers to attend his meetings and would threaten them with violence and death if they didn't vote for Mugabe in the next elections (2013 harmonised elections).^[5]

In August 2011, Saibanda is reported to have warned villagers that the war veterans would be “roasting livers” of sellouts in the next election. He allegedly made the remarks at [Zvehuru Primary School](#) but he denied the accusations when he was later asked to explain.^[6]

Sibanda is also reported to have used the same intimidation tactics in [Hurungwe](#), [Mashonaland West](#) province, and [Tsholotsho](#) in [Matebeleland](#)^[7]

Asked by the media about his campaign of intimidation, Sibanda said: *"I have met people in Masvingo and Manicaland and we just go around enlightening people about their role in the party."*^[7]

Million Men March

Sibanda was one of the key organisers of the attempt at a Million Man March in November 2007 to support the candidature of Mugabe in the 2008 presidential elections. The march drew thousands of Zanu-PF supporters on the streets of Harare.^[8] For this role, Sibanda was awarded with a brand new twin cab vehicle and a house in an up-market suburb of Harare. It's been reported that his farm was also heavily equipped.^[9]

Factionalism in 2014

In the drama brewing "Meet the People" rallies held by the first lady [Grace Mugabe](#) in the month of October 2014, Jabulani Sibanda was one of the leaders who did not support the initiative. This led to widespread speculations that he was linked to the Mujuru camp led by vice president [Joice Mujuru](#).

Attempted Ouster

After his absence from Grace Mugabe's rallies, some war veterans passed a vote of no confidence in their national chairman Sibanda, accusing him of making the association dysfunctional. The war veterans elders said the non-participation of Sibanda in the war veterans meeting with Grace Mugabe at Mazowe and at previous rallies countrywide showed that he sympathised with those being condemned by the First Lady for deviating from the principles of the party and destroying it from within.^[10]

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Ouster from ZNLWVA in 2014

After the failure of the attempted ouster, the war veterans finally regrouped on the 31 of October 2014 and passed a vote of no confidence on their leader. The so called war veterans elders comprising former leader Patrick Nyaruwata, George Mlala, and Victor Matemadanda officially deposed their leader citing abuse of office and fanning factionalism as the main reasons. They immediately announced that a new 14 member team was going to take over the running of affairs in the war veterans movement.^[11] It also came to light that Sibanda's war credentials were still being doubted. It was realised that Sibanda joined the liberation struggle in 1978 and he was still in his adolescent age. However there is widespread speculation in the media that Sibanda's ouster does not have anything to do with incompetence since he was very instrumental in the 2007 elections in Masvingo province, in fact, some sections of the media believed that he was ousted due to his fading loyalty to the president and and his wife Grace who also showered some criticism on him.

Controversial 2014 Speech

Sibanda made shocking comments that Grace Mugabe the first lady and a member of the women's league was attempting to effect on bedroom coup on President Robert Mugabe. Sibanda openly rejected the authority of Grace Mugabe arguing that the first lady was agitating internal strife through her slogans which ridiculed big figures like Joice Mujuru and [Didymus Mutasa](#) who are believed to be the strongholds of the Mujuru camp.^[11]

After his ouster, Sibanda did not easily give up on his political ambitions. He continued to assert his authority as the leaders of the former freedom fighters. He at one point in time called for a meeting where he was meant to address the war veterans leaders and journalists. The meeting was however blocked and the venue ([Harare International Conference Centre](#)) was also booked for other business activities.

Expulsion From The Party in 2014

On Thursday 13 November, at a ZANU PF politburo meeting held at the party Headquarters in Harare, Jabulani Sibanda was officially expelled from the party. The news was announced by Simon Khaya Moyo the party's acting spokesperson.

Sibanda was kicked out for allegedly insulting President Robert Mugabe and his wife Grace and for not attending Grace's rallies. Before today Sibanda was hoping to meet President Mugabe to explain his position amid the allegations in good time before the upcoming congress. Sibanda is the one who invested the term "Bedroom Coup," referring to Grace Mugabe's ascendancy to power, something Buhera South legislator [Joseph Chinotimba](#) says was a personal attack on Mugabe himself.^[12]

An elective congress for the war veterans was also organized and it was to be held in Mutare. But former chairperson of the organ Patrick Nyaruwata confirmed the conference saying attendance would be strictly by invite. "In terms of the ZNLWA constitution section 8(a), the national executive committee shall

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convene a conference of the association every three years, something that current executive has failed to do. The last general congress was held in 2003 in [Mutare](#), with no election ever conducted thereafter. It is against this background that an elective conference is being held.

Arrest in 2014

In the noon of Friday 28 November 2014, Sibanda was picked up by police at his Nyamandlovu farm in Bulawayo in Matabeleland.^[13] Police spokesperson assistant inspector [Charity Charamba](#) confirmed the arrest. She speculated that Sibanda was likely to face charges of undermining the authority of the president.^[13] She also indicated that Sibanda was likely to be charged under section 33 of the Criminal Law (Codification and reform) Act which criminalises undermining the authority of the president. Sibanda's arrest prompted calls for the arrest of Zanu-PF secretary for administration Didymus Mutasa and ousted [Manicaland](#) provincial chairman John Mvundura in whose company Jabulani Sibanda accused the President of plotting a "bedroom coup" and threatened to march to State House to confront him.^[13] Police sources said investigators were keen to get the former war veterans leader to clarify comments he made in which he appeared to accuse President Mugabe of plotting a "bedroom coup", while voicing his opposition to First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe's imminent elevation to lead the Zanu-PF Women's League.^[13] Sibanda who is being represented by Harare based attorney and former attorney general Sobusa Gula-Ndebele went on to file an application for his case to be heard at the supreme court but he was further remanded to February 27, 2015 by Harare magistrate Milton Serima.^[14]

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