

## Containing the Mushala Rebellion: Strategies and Challenges, 1976-1990

by

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### **Abstract**

*This article examines how the Zambian government responded to the Mushala rebellion in North Western Province between 1976 and 1990. The Mushala rebellion was the consequence of Mushala's dissatisfaction with President Kaunda's one-party system, which limited political opposition by force or coercion. His insurgence was also fuelled by Kaunda's refusal to accord Mushala the position of Director of Game and Fisheries. He was further dissatisfied with what he perceived as government's failure to fulfil the people's expectations of national and economic development. In particular, Mushala was infuriated with the marginalisation of the people of North Western Province, a situation he attributed to government's failure to develop the province. He also wanted political power. The article investigates the strategies and measures the government enacted to contain the rebellion and the challenges it faced in suppressing the revolt. The article argues that the government adopted a two-pronged strategy aimed at winning the cooperation of the local people in its efforts to track down the insurgents, while simultaneously using coercive measures to suppress the rebellion. The article concludes that this strategy was not without its problems. The use of coercive measures, for example, alienated the local population from the government. The locals were thus unwilling to provide critical intelligence about Mushala's activities. This contributed to the government's failure to end the rebellion speedily.*

**Key Words:** Adamson Mushala, Rebellion, Counter action, Insurgents.

### **Introduction**

From the mid-1970s to 1990, Zambia experienced one of the most disruptive insurgencies in the history of the country. Adamson Bratson Mushala, the leader of 200 plus rebels, organised the only significant armed rebellion against the UNIP government. During the early 1960s when the nationalist struggle was at its highest peak in Northern Rhodesia, UNIP decided to send approximately thirty-five youths including Mushala to Egypt and China to undergo military training in guerrilla warfare. UNIP took this decision following its scheme to dislodge the colonial government through an armed struggle in the event that the Lancaster negotiations failed.

<sup>1</sup> While Mushala was away on military training, Zambia gained independence and the UNIP scheme to dislodge the colonialists through armed struggle was abandoned. When Mushala returned from military training, he hoped and expected to be treated like a hero, but this also did not happen. In recognition of his efforts towards the nationalist struggle, the Kaunda government instead gave Mushala the post of Deputy Secretary of the Education Committee at Freedom House, the UNIP headquarters in Lusaka. However, Mushala was not satisfied with this position. It is alleged that Mushala wanted to be Director of Game and Fisheries, but this request was rejected by Kaunda.<sup>2</sup>

Kaunda's refusal to appoint Mushala as Director of Game and Fisheries marked the turning point for Mushala. He embarked on an armed struggle against the UNIP government, a journey in which he would defy many laws against humanity. There were several reasons which compelled Mushala to take up arms against the UNIP government. Mushala was dissatisfied with Kaunda's one-party system, which used force or coercion to limit political opposition.<sup>3</sup> His insurgence was also fuelled by Kaunda's refusal to accord him the position of Director of Game and Fisheries.<sup>4</sup> He was further dissatisfied with what he perceived as government's failure to fulfil the people's expectations of national and economic development.<sup>5</sup> In particular, Mushala was infuriated with the perceived marginalisation of the people of North Western Province, a situation he attributed to government's failure to develop the province.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, Mushala sought to address these challenges in the province. He also wanted political power and his main goal was to form a new government. Collectively, the above factors set the Mushala gang in motion on a mission to fight the UNIP government and in the process terrorised the people of North Western Province from 1976 until the 1990s.

Following the outbreak of the Mushala rebellion in 1976, the Zambian government spared no effort to kill or capture Adamson Mushala the lead rebel and his followers. The government therefore devised strategies and measures to contain the rebellion which greatly compromised the security system of the country. Much of the historiography on the Mushala rebellion examines the Mushala rebellion from a more general perspective, this includes works by non-historians such as journalist Patrick Wele.<sup>7</sup> However, a few scholars who have

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Wele, *Zambia's Most Famous Dissidents: From Mushala to Luchembe*, (Solwezi: PMW, 1995), P. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Miles Larmer and Giacomo Macola, "The Origins, Context, and Political Significance of the Mushala Rebellion against the Zambia One Party State," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (2007), p. 471; and Wele, *Zambia's Most Famous Dissidents: From Mushala to Luchembe*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> John M. Mwanakatwe, *End of the Kaunda Era*, (Lusaka: Multimedia Publication, 1994), p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> Beatwell S. Chisala, *The Downfall of President Kaunda*, (BS, Chisala, 1994), p. 319.

<sup>5</sup> Miles Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p.131.

<sup>6</sup> Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia*, p.131.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick Wele, *Kaunda and the Mushala Rebellion*, (Lusaka: Multimedia Publication, 1987); and Patrick, *Zambia's Most Famous Dissidents: From Mushala to Luchembe*, p. 15.

attempted to look at the Mushala revolt from a historical point of view do so only in passing.<sup>8</sup> These scholars have focused almost exclusively on the extent to which the armed uprising was an unwelcome creation of UNIP's economic policies and Kaunda's political choices such as the imposition of the one-party state in 1963. These writers investigate the different ways in which both economic and political factors played a role in setting in motion the Mushala rebellion in Zambia. Beatwell S Chisala and Joseph Hanlon for instance, argue that Mushala waged a war against the Zambian government in protest against the one-party rule in Zambia.<sup>9</sup> Chisala and Hanlon's view commends Mwizenge Tembo's suggestion that the Mushala rebellion in Zambia was a political dissent. Tembo notes that following the introduction of one party system, Zambians could not find legitimate ways of expressing disagreements, changing the UNIP government peacefully, or influencing changes in the economic and political policies. He notes that some Zambians who opposed the one-party state never abandoned their belief in the multi-party system and this gave rise to Mushala's armed political struggle against the Kaunda dominated one-party state.<sup>10</sup>

Writing on post Second World War conflicts, Klaus Jargen Gantzel, points out that Mushala used the socio-economic hardships of North Western Province to recruit supporters in his struggle against the Kaunda regime.<sup>11</sup> This argument is supported by Larmer who argues that the Mushala rebellion was fuelled by the failure of the independent Zambian state to fulfil its people's expectations of national economic development. According to Larmer Mushala and his group saw themselves as spokesmen of the people of North Western Province.<sup>12</sup>

Based on oral interviews and archival sources, this article examines the main challenges faced by the Zambian government in trying to quell the Mushala rebellion. It further, analyses the measures put up by the government to overcome this rebellion. It argues that immediately the rebellion started, the defence and security committee of the UNIP central committee came together and constituted itself into a regular fighting force by deploying security officers into North Western Province as a way of counter act the insurgency. This was aimed at protecting the affected people and ensuring security in the province.

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<sup>8</sup> Beatwell S. Chisala, *The Downfall of President Kaunda*, (BS Chisala, 1994); and James Anthony Pritchett, *Friends for Life, Friends for Death: Cohorts and Consciousness among the Lunda-Ndemba*, (London: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Chisala, *The Downfall of President Kaunda*, p. 319; and Joseph Hanlon, *Beggar your Neighbor: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa*, (London: Indiana University Press, 1986.), p. 244.

<sup>10</sup> Mwizenge Tembo, *Satisfying Zambian Hunger for Culture Social Change in the Global world*, (Virginia: Xlibris, 2012), p. 347.

<sup>11</sup> Klaus Jargen Gantzel, *Warfare since the Second World War*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2000.), p. 351.

<sup>12</sup> Miles Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia*, (Franham: Ashgate, 2011), 132.

The article starts by investigating government measures in response to the rebellion. Among other measures, the government extended the state of emergency in 1976. "The state of emergency was first imposed on 27 July 1964, initially to deal with the Lumpa Crisis. In the wake of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on 11th November 1965, the regulation was extended to cover the whole country"<sup>13</sup>. The Government further mobilised troops, offered a reward for Mushala's capture, detained, and charged suspects with treason. It further examines the myths that came to surround the rebellion in question in an attempt to explain why it took long for Mushala to be killed. The article argues that people in North Western Province believed Mushala was well proficient in magic that rendered him invincible to security forces and held that this is why it took long to quell his uprising. However, this article refutes these arguments and insists that the longevity of the Mushala rebellion can best be understood in the social context in which the rebellion unfolded. The article shows that there were a number of factors that enabled Mushala to avoid capture by the security offices bringing to the fore the many challenges faced by the government in overcoming the rebellion. Among the main reasons was his skill in guerrilla warfare coupled with his knowledge of the terrain where he operated. It goes on to examine the activities of the remnants of Mushala gang after his death until their pardon by President Kenneth Kaunda in 1990.

### **The 1976 State of Emergency and Reward for Mushala's Capture**

Immediately the rebellion started, the Zambian government's security officials commenced investigations with the view of establishing the people responsible for the suspected terrorist activities in North Western Province. This followed the rebels' killing and kidnapping of people and the destruction of property thereby causing a great deal of fear among the local communities of the province.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, on 28 January 1976, President Kaunda invoked a state of emergency.<sup>15</sup> "The state of emergency was first imposed on 27 July 1964, initially to deal with the Lumpa church uprising. In the wake of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on 11 November, 1965, the regulation was extended to cover the whole country".<sup>16</sup> During the UDI, the state of emergency was extended to allow the government deal

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<sup>13</sup> Clarence Chongo, "The Impact of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on Zambia's Economic and Socio-political Development, 1965-1979," M.A Dissertation, The University of Zambia, 2009, p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Rabson Samora, Mufumbwe, 13 October, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> GRZ, *Invocation of the Full Powers of the State of Emergency by his Excellency the President Dr K. D. Kaunda*, (Lusaka: government printers, 1976), p. 1

<sup>16</sup> Clarence Chongo, "The Impact of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on Zambia's Economic and Socio-political Development, 1965-1979," M.A Dissertation, The University of Zambia, 2009, p. 76.

effectively with the security problems which were created.<sup>17</sup> However, on 28 January, 1976, President Kaunda declared the full application of the state of emergency in response to the grave security situation which was developing in North-Western Province so as to defend the national constitution and the nation.<sup>18</sup> President Kaunda noted that it was in the interest of the government to protect the people of Zambia and ensure peace and stability in the country.<sup>19</sup> Kaunda's declaration of the state of emergency was aimed at giving the government more power to effectively deal with security challenges caused by the rebellion in North Western Province and reduce the crime levels in the area.<sup>20</sup> Kaunda noted that the rebellion which had started there was being led by Mushala and he was responsible for the terror in that area.<sup>21</sup>

The government further appealed to the public and the villagers in the affected communities to help the government by alerting security officers on the whereabouts of Mushala and his insurgents.<sup>22</sup> It also offered a reward to anybody who would provide information leading to the whereabouts of the insurgents. A reward of K100.00 was offered to anybody with information that would lead to Mushala's arrest.<sup>23</sup> The reward was meant to stimulate the effort of the ordinary people in bringing Mushala and his men to justice.<sup>24</sup> However, time went by and there were no reports about the whereabouts of Mushala and his rebels.<sup>25</sup>

### **Mobilisation of Troops to North Western Province**

The Zambian government responded to the Mushala rebellion with military force as soon as reports of Mushala and his terrorist activities began.<sup>26</sup> Initially, the rebellion was considered nothing more than banditry by the government. When Mushala started his terrorist campaign, he meant war with the government and he was determined to achieve his military objectives by all means. Fire was increasingly exchanged with the paramilitary and in most cases, both

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<sup>17</sup> Chongo, "The Impact of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on Zambia's Economic and Socio-political Development, 1965-1979," p. 76.

<sup>18</sup> Government of the Republic of Zambia (hereafter) GRZ, *Invocation of the Full Powers of the State of Emergency by His Excellency The President Dr K. D. Kaunda*, (Lusaka: government printers, 1976), p. 1 and High Court of Zambia (hereafter) HCZ HN 351, Judgment No. 20, Yona Mutanda V Attorney General, 20 September, 1980.

<sup>19</sup> *Zambia Dairy Mail*, 17 January, 1976.

<sup>20</sup> *Zambia Dairy Mail*, 29 January, 1976 and GRZ, *Invocation of the Full Powers of the State of Emergency by his Excellency the President Dr K. D. Kaunda*, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> GRZ, *Invocation of the Full Powers of the State of Emergency by his Excellency the President Dr K. D. Kaunda*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 1 June, 1976.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Samora Rabson, Former Member of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), Mufumbwe, 13 October, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 30 May, 1976

<sup>25</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 30 May, 1976; and Interview with Grey Zulu, Former Minister of Defence, Lusaka, 16 February 2018.

<sup>26</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 1 June, 1976.

police officers and the insurgents were killed.<sup>27</sup> The Zambian authorities initially underestimated the threat posed by the Mushala group, but after it became clear that the rebels were killing and abducting people and destroying property, the government deployed the paramilitary police to intercept the rebels and protect the local people in the area.<sup>28</sup>

After a number of unsuccessful engagements by the paramilitary police, it was realised that the paramilitary alone could not be equal to the task.<sup>29</sup> This was because Mushala employed guerrilla tactics against the paramilitary police. He avoided confrontation with them but would systematically set traps and ambush them with the aim of gradually depleting them while lessening his own losses. Coupled with his knowledge of the terrain where he operated, Mushala became invisible as he knew where to hide while in the forest. However, Bautis F. Kapulu, then Member of the Central Committee for North Western Province attributed Mushala's successes in launching military attacks to the fact that he had informants among the paramilitary police.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the government engaged the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Lusaka to work together with the paramilitary officers in the area in an effort to capture the rebels as well as to give the government an outlook of the crime situation in the province.<sup>31</sup> In doing so, the police were able to arrest three men who were believed to be members of the Mushala gang and began interrogating them on the whereabouts of Mushala.<sup>32</sup>

In February 1976, Mushala was reported in Kashinakazhi area in Kabompo District.<sup>33</sup> There, he continued to terrorise the area. The police forces also set camp in Kashinakazhi and regularly conducted search operations for him and his men in order to protect the people. During this time, the police officers had received information from James Maliki together with the Councillor of the area that Mushala's group was in Kashinakazhi and was seen around by the roadside unconcerned of who might see them.<sup>34</sup> This information was later confirmed by a group of unknown women who had seen the rebels from a distance. The police then moved into action with the view of apprehending the rebels.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> United National Independence Party Archives hereafter (UNIPA), 16/6/30, B.F. Kapulu Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>28</sup> Hanlon, *Beggar your Neighbor*, p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> Hanlon, *Beggar your Neighbor*, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Bautis F. Kapulu Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>31</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 13 May, 1976; and Wele. *Zambia's Most Famous Dissidents: From Mushala to Luchembe*, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Samora.

<sup>33</sup> Wele. *Zambia's Most Famous Dissidents: From Mushala to Luchembe*, p. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Rabson Samora.

<sup>35</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, B.F. Kapulu Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

Mushala, however, used deceit to send the police officers into his trap. As earlier stated, before they came closer, Mushala had dug a trench across the road and covered it with light poles and soil so as to make it look normal. The land rover which was carrying the paramilitary police nosedived into the trench and immediately Mushala opened fire on the security men.<sup>36</sup> In this incident, only one man from the security forces identified as constable Fimbo was killed while others were wounded.<sup>37</sup>

To further humiliate the police, Mushala stripped off the uniform of the dead constable Fimbo. Among the injured was the commander of Kashinakazhi camp, inspector Moonga. While the police abandoned the trapped vehicle in search of cover, Mushala and his men ransacked the police vehicle and took with them an unknown number of G3 rifles and an unknown quantity of ammunition which was left by constable Mutale and Sergeant Linumgo.<sup>38</sup> This was the manner in which Mushala acquired guns and ammunition.

During this time, the police did not know the exact number of men who belonged to Mushala's rebel group, nor the amount of ammunition they possessed. However, the security forces were ready to do anything in order to capture or kill Mushala.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the government ordered the deployment of three battalions under the command of Colonel Christon Tembo to North Western Province to track down Mushala and his rebels.<sup>40</sup> Later on in July 1976, the battalion which was sent to track down Mushala soon fell into his trap. The vehicle carrying soldiers fell into the trench dug by the rebels and Mushala's men instantly opened fire on the security forces killing two soldiers namely Staff Sergeant Nyirenda and Corporal Andrew Mbewe. Following this incident, Mushala became the most wanted man, dead or alive, in Zambia.<sup>41</sup>

In October 1976, it was reported that five members of Mushala's rebel group were killed and that the security forces were doing everything possible to wipe out the entire Mushala group.<sup>42</sup> By August 1979, it was reported that eighteen members of the Mushala rebel group had been killed by Zambian Security Forces.<sup>43</sup> Again in October 1979, three of Mushala's rebels died while in detention. Among the detained were two women who had

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<sup>36</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Bautis F. Kapulu Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>37</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Bautis F. Kapulu Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>38</sup> Wele, *Kaunda and the Mushala Rebellion*, p. 73 and UNIPA 16/6/30, B.F. Kapula Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Gilbert Wisamba, Former Member of Parliament (hereafter) MP Solwezi, Freedom House Lusaka, 13/10/2017.

<sup>40</sup> Wele, *Kaunda and the Mushala Rebellion*, p. 74.

<sup>41</sup> Wele, *Kaunda and the Mushala Rebellion*, p. 78 and UNIPA 16/6/30 Kapula Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976

<sup>42</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 15 May, 1976.

<sup>43</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 15 May, 1979.

become involved with Mushala as a result of being kidnaped and could therefore not desert him for fear of being killed. The dead detainees were identified as Swana Karinga, Julius Saulo and Patson Mwape Lisala.<sup>44</sup> In April 1981, the Zambian security forces overran a rebel camp in Mufumbwe and killed two rebels namely Friday Kananda Mushala, the younger brother of Adamson Mushala and the leader's right hand man, Landwell Kasempa. During the same period, two other rebel members were captured while some of the women who had been kidnapped by the rebels were released.<sup>45</sup> Among the items that were retrieved during this operation were a G3 rifle, one shot gun, one muzzle loader, and over 200 rounds of ammunition.<sup>46</sup>

### **Detention and Treason Trial for Suspects**

The Zambian government handed out the harshest punishment to everyone who was suspected to be involved in the Mushala rebellion and this was done through long term jail time.<sup>47</sup> Any association with Mushala including not being able to report him to the security officials led to detention. Indeed, some of the people who were suspected to have played a major role in masterminding the rebellion were sent to the High Court for treason trial. The suspected individuals were tried on charges including military training in South Africa with a view of plotting to overthrow the established government upon their return and involvement with Mushala and his terrorist activities.<sup>48</sup>

Literature on the political history of Zambia shows that William Chipango who was a former Mayor of Livingstone, was arrested on counts of treason. The argument among scholars is that from the late 1960s, Chipango had been recruiting people to undergo military training in the Caprivi with the view of coming to overthrow the UNIP government using military force.<sup>49</sup> It should be noted here that Mushala did not mastermind the plan alone to overthrow the Zambian government, but rather had joined hands with other politicians such as Nalumino Mundia and William Chipango.<sup>50</sup> While Mushala and others were receiving military training outside Zambia, others such as Mundia were to remain in the country to assess the situation

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<sup>44</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 20 May, 1979.

<sup>45</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 30 May, 1981.

<sup>46</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 30 May, 1981.

<sup>47</sup> *Zambia Daily Mail*, 11 April, 1981.

<sup>48</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 15 June, 1976.

<sup>49</sup> Mushingeh Chiponde, "The Evolution of One-Party Rule in Zambia, 1964-1972," *Trans African Journal of History*, Vol. 22 (1993), pp. 100-121; Mushingeh Chiponde, "Unrepresentative Democracy: One-Party Rule in Zambia, 1973-1990," *Trans African Journal of History*, Vol. 23 (1994), pp. 117-141. Chisala, 1994; Mwangilwa, 1983).

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Wisamba; Interview with Samora and "African Studies Centre, Zambia News Online - (2), 9/27/96," <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Newsletters/zno2.html>, Accessed 24 July, 2018.



so that when the rebels returned, they would execute their plan and overthrow the UNIP government.<sup>51</sup>

In the late 1960s, Chipango and Kalimbwe Lupasa succeeded in making contacts with the South Africans in the Caprivi area for financial aid although this request was rejected.<sup>52</sup> By the early 1970s, Mushala was seeking military training and support in Angola and later South Africa, while Kalimbwe Lupasa was sent to seek military support from Rhodesia.<sup>53</sup> However, these plans soon came to a dead end as the UNIP government began apprehending all those suspected to be involved in such acts.

From the beginning of 1973, there were police reports about the arrest of individuals who were planning to overthrow the UNIP government. Among the many reports there were those from Kaoma District, about the arrest of “Bernard Muluti who had been recruiting people in [Kaoma] District with Adamson Mushala and William Chipango”<sup>54</sup> In 1974, William Chipango was arrested and placed under detention.<sup>55</sup> During the arrest of Chipango, Mushala was nowhere to be seen as he had already gone to Angola to seek military training and later Caprivi.<sup>56</sup> Chipango was accused of recruiting people for military training in South West Africa, now Namibia, with the objective of overthrowing the Zambian government.<sup>57</sup> Godwin B. Mwangilwa notes that Chipango was alleged to have recruited about 100 men for training in South-West Africa under South African soldiers.<sup>58</sup>

On 16 June 1976, therefore, William Chipango, who was a former Mayor of Livingstone together with Sefulo Kakoma, former Sesheke Member of Parliament (MP), Crispin Mwendabai, a former Bank official, and Albert Shishwashwa, who was unemployed, were tried and were found guilty of all 13 counts of treason and sentenced to death.<sup>59</sup> It was revealed in the Zambian High Court that between 1 December 1972 and January 1973, the quartet recruited 100 Zambians for military training in Namibia so that on their return, they would topple the Zambian government by means of force.<sup>60</sup>

The other individuals who were considered to have been part of the Mushala rebel group included Vincent Munalula together with the other six unnamed. Munalula was representing the other six men during the 1972 trial. The seven individuals were detained on

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<sup>51</sup> Miles Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p.141.

<sup>52</sup> Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia*, p.141.

<sup>53</sup> Wele, *Zambia's Most Famous: From Mushala to Luchembe*, p. 38.

<sup>54</sup> Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia*, p.141.

<sup>55</sup> Beatwell Sekeleti Chisala, *The Downfall of President Kaunda*, (BS, Chisala, 1994), p. 319.

<sup>56</sup> Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia*, p. 142.

<sup>57</sup> Mushingeh, “The Evolution of One-Party Rule in Zambia, 1964-1972,” p. 112.

<sup>58</sup> Mwangilwa, *Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula: A Biography of the Old Lion in Zambia*, p. 59.

<sup>59</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 13 May, 1976.

<sup>60</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 1976.

grounds that between November 1972 and January 1973, they did undergo military training by the Portuguese in Angola and South African soldiers in Caprivi with the intention of coming back to overthrow the government.<sup>61</sup> They were further accused of working under the leadership of Adamson Mushala a wanted person who had been terrorising members of the public in North Western Province of Zambia. Therefore, it was convenient that they be put under control through detention.<sup>62</sup> The seven accused men had appealed to the Supreme Court, on grounds that the charge of associating with Mushala was vague because there were no details or instances of the said association given. As a result none of the appellants was able to make a meaningful representation to the detaining authority.<sup>63</sup>

It should be noted here that during the Mushala rebellion, any association with Mushala including failure to report any encounter with him to the security officials was regarded as a compromise to the peace and security of the country. It was believed even without evidence that there were higher chances of continued meeting with Mushala in the future which would jeopardise the security of the country. For instance: "On 30 December, 1976, an order was made by His Excellency the president of the republic of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda to detain... Yona Mutanda under the provisions of reg. 33 (1) of the preservation of public security Registrations".<sup>64</sup> The reason for detaining Mutanda was that on a date unknown but in October, 1976, in the forest in the Copperbelt area, he met Adamson Mushala but failed to report this encounter to the security forces. This act was considered to be prejudicial to public security and for its preservation.<sup>65</sup> It was further believed that there were high chances of a future meeting between Mutanda and Mushala, thus, the detention of the former.

Furthermore, in February 1977, Mungabangaba was detained on the grounds that on the date and month unknown but in 1976, in Kasempa District of North Western Province, Mungabangaba together with Fanwell Munena was recruited by Adamson Mushala to become his agents. The accused were said to have actively taken part in assisting the Mushala insurgents by delivering letters of propaganda for the purpose of gaining support from members of the public.<sup>66</sup> The above acts were considered prejudicial to public security and its perseverance. Therefore, it was found necessary to detain Mungabangaba and Munena on the presidential detention order signed on 9 February, 1977 and their appeal was refused.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Supreme Court of Zambia hereafter (SCZ) ZR 154, Judgment No. 2, Vincent Munalula and 6 Others V Attorney General, 3 January, 1979.

<sup>62</sup> SCZ ZR 154, Judgment No. 2, Vincent Munalula and 6 Others V Attorney General, 3 January, 1979.

<sup>63</sup> SCZ ZR 154, Judgment No. 2, Vincent Munalula and 6 Others V Attorney General, 3 January, 1979.

<sup>64</sup> HCZ HN 351, Judgment No. 20, Yona Mutanda V Attorney General, 20 September, 1980.

<sup>65</sup> HCZ HN 351, Judgment No. 20, Yona Mutanda V Attorney General, 20 September, 1980.

<sup>66</sup> HCZ HN 40, Judgment No. 10, Mungabangaba V Attorney General, 26 August, 1981.

<sup>67</sup> HCZ HN 40, Judgment No. 10, Mungabangaba V Attorney General, 26 August, 1981.

### **Provision of Food Aid to the Victims**

The Zambian government also responded to the rebellion by providing food aid to the people who were affected by Mushala's insurgency in North Western Province. Like the Lumpa Church victims who had been provided with bags of maize and maize meal to sustain them during the Lumpa crisis in the 1960s,<sup>68</sup> the Mushala victims whose houses and granaries were burnt were also given bags of maize every month until they recovered the following farming season.<sup>69</sup> The government continued to provide relief until the affected people were able to recover and cultivate food in the next season.<sup>70</sup> In few instances, the government provided clothes to the affected families whose properties were burnt.<sup>71</sup>

### **Why the Rebellion took long to be quelled: Myth and Reality**

It is alleged that Mushala used magic which enabled him to avoid detection by the security officials when sought for, thus the long man hunt for Mushala.<sup>72</sup> According to oral evidence, it was the use of magic that enabled him not to be caught by the police.<sup>73</sup> During the time of the rebellion, reports that Mushala was using black magic in his operations were spreading like wild fire. There were also reports that Mushala could disappear at any time without a trace and that he could transform himself in all sorts of forms such as a bird, a tree or a stone, in simple terms he was a shape shifter.<sup>74</sup>

Mushala was believed to have survived through a complexity of witchcraft and supernatural powers. He incorporated magic into war and different people interpreted his success as being dependent on black magic.<sup>75</sup> There are stories that more than once Mushala flirted with Kaunda in State House in his invisible state. It is alleged that using magic, Mushala would go to State House in his invisible state and dine with President Kaunda without the knowledge of the President. It was further believed that Mushala had charms which worked as bullet proof during the exchange of fire with the security officials. The people in North Western Province believed that Mushala's powers enabled him to know if someone was talking about him, and that his powers were so great that he was able to know if the police and security officers were following him.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Elijah Munga, "The Lumpa Church: It's Socio-Economic Impact in Lundazi District in Eastern Province of Zambia 1955-1995," M.A Dissertation, The University of Zambia, 2016, p. 98.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Samora.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Morgan Sazoza, Senior Headman Kashima West, Mufumbwe, 06 October, 2017.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Sazoza.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Wisamba.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Wisamba.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Samora.

<sup>75</sup> Alan Cowell, "Robin Hood of Zambia: End of the Myth," <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/01/02/world/robin-hoodof-zambians-end-of-a-myth.html>, Accessed, 05 October, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Samora.

In reality, people used local paradigms to make sense of the failure of the Kaunda regime to capture or kill Mushala. Literature on African traditional religion points out that where science does not work; calamities and disasters are explained through traditional beliefs.<sup>77</sup> In the case of Mushala, the common assumption that he flirted with Kaunda at State House was the consequence of the persistent beliefs in supernatural powers. The idea that Mushala flirted with Kaunda was one of the ways the people could comprehend the prolonged manhunt for him.<sup>78</sup>

It took the government almost a decade to quell the Mushala's rebellion. The long manhunt for the rebel leader can be attributed to a number of factors. To start with, even though:

The battalions were well equipped and well trained in counter insurgency operations...the units lacked experience...the men were well drilled in such stereotyped procedures like crowd dispersal, mounting road blocks, cordon and search and patrols...tracking and fighting an elusive guerrilla like Mushala was to prove quite challenging.<sup>79</sup>

The Zambian security officer's lack of experience in such warfare contributed to the long manhunt for Mushala. The nature of his insurgency required that the government deploy a significant number of troops and establish lines of strongholds to restrict the insurgents' movement. But as earlier noted, the Zambian authorities had initially underestimated the threat posed by the rebel group as they had considered the Mushala rebellion as nothing more than banditry. Therefore, tracking and fighting Mushala proved quite challenging.<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, some of the officials who were given the responsibility of tracking Mushala in the province were sometimes irresponsible as they would report on duty drunk. Due to this misconduct, the Mushala man hunt was delayed as some of the officials were not able to work effectively under the influence of alcohol.<sup>81</sup> In addition, the fact that Mushala had earlier worked as a game warden in the very forest where he operated as a rebel made it easy for him to hide and avoid capture by the security officials as he knew the terrain well. He knew the paths of entry and escape; he further knew the good places to hide while in the forest.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> John S. Mbiti, *An Introduction to African Religion* (2nd Edition), (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1992), p. 179; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*, (Oxford: Heinemann, 2006), p. 36; Edward Anaegboka Udoe, *Resolving the Prevailing Conflicts Between Christianity and African (Igbo) traditional Religion through Enculturation*, (Wien: Lit, 2011), p. 100 and Maduabuchi F. Dukor, *Theistic Humanism: Philosophy of Scientific Africanism*, (Lagos: Noble Communications Network, 1994), p. 88.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Allan Kananda, Catholic Catechist for Holy Trinity Parish, Mufumbwe, 21 October, 2017 and Interview with Mulondwe Muzungu, Hellen Kaunda, Lusaka, 08 June, 2018.

<sup>79</sup> Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I: Autobiography of a Former Army Commander*, p. 150.

<sup>80</sup> Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I: Autobiography of a Former Army Commander*, p. 150.

<sup>81</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapulu, to UNIP's Secretary General, Solwezi, 9 November, 1976.

<sup>82</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapulu, to UNIP's Secretary General, Solwezi, 9 November, 1976.

Because Mushala knew the terrain very well and the people around, it was very easy for him to organise himself and source support from the local people.<sup>83</sup>

In most cases, the security officials constantly harassed the villagers who seemed to possess information about Mushala. People who reported the movements of Mushala to the security officials were treated as Mushala's accomplices. Such people were detained. Those that took such reports would be beaten and threatened with arrest if they did not show the security officials where Mushala was hiding, even if they did not know his whereabouts.<sup>84</sup> Due to such treatment by security officials, the villagers felt mistreated by both Mushala and the soldiers.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, they began to withhold some important information about Mushala's whereabouts in fear of being harassed thereby leading to a delay in tracking him down.<sup>86</sup>

The local people suffered at the hands of both Mushala and the soldiers. Villagers were in a dilemma, coerced by Mushala to join his gang on one hand and harassed by the security officers for disclosing or not disclosing information about the rebel leader on the other. It became extremely risky for any villager to report Mushala's activities to security officers without being subjected to undue harassment.<sup>87</sup> For instance, during the shootout with the police which led to the death of constable Fimbo, villagers who had helped the wounded officers were accused of causing the death of constable Fimbo. This happened after the wounded officers found refuge in the village. The wounded officers had asked the villagers to help them take the body of the dead Fimbo to the police camp. When the villagers obliged, they were badly beaten by the security officials at the camp and were accused of causing the death of a police officer.<sup>88</sup> The harassment by the police made people afraid of alerting them of Mushala's whereabouts in the area for fear of being accused of collaborating with him and his men. Humiliation, harassment and terror against the villagers did not just come from Mushala and his rebels but also the police. The harassment of the local people by the security personnel contributed to making the manhunt for Mushala longer. People were afraid of giving vital information about Mushala for fear of being accused of working with him.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Bengt Ageros, Report on Incident on Kabompo-Solwezi Road, 31 July, 1976 and UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapula, to UNIP's Secretary General, Solwezi, 9 November, 1976.

<sup>84</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapulu, to UNIP's Secretary General, Solwezi, 9 November, 1976.

<sup>85</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapulu, to UNIP's Secretary General, Solwezi, 9 November, 1976. 76 Interview with Enoch Manamute, Mufumbwe, 18 October, 2017 and Interview with John Latemesha, Mufumbwe, 17 October, 2017.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Amos Lungunge, Mufumbwe, 19 October, 2017; Interview with Donald Shakhwamba, Mufumbwe, 19 October, 2017 and Interview with Felix Kanyane Laimo, Mufumbwe, 20 October, 2017.

<sup>87</sup> Wele, *Kaunda and the Mushala Rebellion*, p. 81.

<sup>88</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapula Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>89</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapula Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

Mushala furthermore, had informants who constantly alerted him on almost all the movements of security forces and this to a large extent enabled him to avoid detection by the security officials.<sup>90</sup> Through his informants within the police, Mushala knew very well the movements of the security forces including the number plates of the trucks used in tracking him.<sup>91</sup> This disloyalty and treachery against the government of the time by some of the police officials led to the prolonged hunt for Mushala and his men.<sup>92</sup> It was such kind of relations and meeting between Mushala and some senior police officers that enabled Mushala to know the government's intention about him.<sup>93</sup>

In addition, by the end of December 1976, there were reports that Mushala was either hiding in the Copperbelt or was on his way to North Western Province after his meeting with the people who were disloyal to the government. It was further reported that Mushala was assisted, backed, hidden and provided with food by some local community members on the Copperbelt.<sup>94</sup> This also contributed to the prolonged man hunt for Mushala as some people were not ready to hand him over to the security officers.

### **The Killing of Mushala**

Mushala was killed in 1982,<sup>95</sup> by the security officials in the Lunga Game Park where he had established his camp, thereby, ending the longest manhunt in Zambia's history.<sup>96</sup> It is argued that the death of Mushala was a result of betrayal by a woman known as Lesy Mukwemba who had once been his wife.<sup>97</sup> Mushala and his men frequently changed wives when they were tired of them.<sup>98</sup> It is believed that by the end of 1981, Mushala had found himself another wife by the name of Edesi Mumbelonga who was younger than Lesy. The attention which was given to Edesi was too much for Lesy to handle, thus, tensions became the order of the day between the two women.

Lesy was an insecure woman, who was not only upset by the fact that Mushala took another wife, but feared losing her place as the older wife of the rebel.<sup>99</sup> The coming in of Edesi as a new wife to Mushala posed a threat to all that Lesy enjoyed. Anger and jealousy

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<sup>90</sup> HCZ HN 351, Judgment No. 20, Yona Mutanda V Attorney General, 20 September, 1980.

<sup>91</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapulu Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>92</sup> UNIPA 16/6/30, Kapulu Member of the Central Committee North Western Province, Security Report 11 June, 1976.

<sup>93</sup> UNIPA, 16/6/30, Letter from F. Kapwanga to the secretary general UNIP, Freedom House, 8th February 1977.

<sup>94</sup> UNIP 16/6/30, F. N. Bulawayo, Copperbelt to Bautis F. Kapulu, Solwezi, 16th December, 1976.

<sup>95</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 12, November, 2018.

<sup>96</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 11 April, 1981.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Wisamba.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Kantumoya.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Matafwali.

overtook Lesy. Soon, Edesi became pregnant and envy grew within Lesy and fights between the two women were uncontrollable. This prompted Mushala to divorce his older wife, Lesy. Instead of killing her, Mushala decided to spare Lesy's life but banished her from his camp after which she went back to her village in Kasempa district.<sup>100</sup>

News of Lesy's return quickly spread to the security officials in Kasempa and arrangements to go and hunt for Mushala with the aid of Lesy were made. Thus, the Zambian soldiers accompanied by some game wardens, with the help of Lesy went into the Lunga Game Park in search of Mushala.<sup>101</sup> On 9 November 1982, Mushala had left the camp for honey collection. Other rebel members had also gone hunting leaving the camp with few men and women. None of the rebel members at the camp knew that they were surrounded by government security forces. As soon as Mushala returned to the camp, soldiers opened fire on him, a shot in the eye and another in the chest, instantly killed him.<sup>102</sup>

The general argument among scholars such as Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw is that the soldiers who had gone to kill Mushala had to strip naked for them to be able to see Mushala with their physical eyes without which they would not have seen him as he was believed to have magic which made him invisible.<sup>103</sup> This was also the belief among local people and still is today.<sup>104</sup> However, this argument is refuted by Benwell Kwanuka, one of the game wardens who had accompanied the soldiers in and out of the forest. According to Kwanuka, the soldiers never stripped off their uniforms when killing Mushala. He notes that they were all fully dressed. At the time, Mushala was away in the forest collecting honey. Unknown to Mushala that the soldiers were nearby, hiding and waiting to attack, he walked straight into their trap and the soldiers shot at him instantly killing him.<sup>105</sup>

After the death of Mushala, the remnants, his rebels regrouped in Mwinilunga under the leadership of Mushala's second in command, Alexander Saimbwende. After Mushala was killed, the rebels continued their terrorist campaign, although with less intensity.<sup>106</sup> After Mushala's death Saimbwende took over as the new leader of the group. The decision to surrender was out of question as the rebels feared the consequences of surrendering. However, not all rebel members remained with Saimbwende. Out of fear, some members of the rebel group deserted him. By the early 1983, the group had only nine members. In 1986, the group managed to recruit about ten more members bringing the number of the rebels to

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<sup>100</sup> Interview with Saimbwende.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Saimbwende; Interview with Chief Chizela and interview with Jeffrey Wisamba.

<sup>102</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 10 November 2018.

<sup>103</sup> Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 2011), p 189.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Kwanuka.

<sup>105</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 10 November 2018.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Alexander Saimbwende, Former Ex-rebel, Mwinilunga, 20 October, 2017

nineteen. However, by the mid-1987, due to misunderstandings within the rebel group, some of the rebels deserted Saimbwende and he was left with only five men and a handful of ammunition. In 1990, news of the general amnesty reached Saimbwende and it was necessary for him to surrender as the rebellion was destined to fail in the absence of the vision carrier Mushala. The rebels were finally pardoned by President Kaunda in September 1990.<sup>107</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This article has established that there were several reasons which compelled Mushala to take up arms against the UNIP government. Particularly, Mushala was dissatisfied with Kaunda's one-party system which used force or coercion to limit political opposition. After the rebellion started, the government had put in place several measures that the government of Zambia took in order to quell the Mushala rebellion and help the affected people in North Western Province. One of the measures introduced was the provision of increased security in the province. Shortly after the rebellion started, the article shows that that government of Zambia imposed a state of emergency in the country. This was done in order for the government to have maximum power to deal with the security challenges brought about by the activities of Mushala and his men. The article further demonstrates that just about the same time, the Zambian government mobilised troops in the province. A number of soldiers were sent to the province to apprehend Mushala and his men and also provide security for the local people. The government further offered a reward to anybody who would come forth with vital information which could lead to the whereabouts of Mushala and his rebel members. The government also provided food and clothes to those whose houses and granaries were burnt.

The article dismisses the common argument that Mushala used magic which enabled him to avoid detection by the security officials. It argues that the people used local paradigms to make sense of the failure of the Kaunda regime to suppress the rebellion under probe. The article further dismisses the argument that the soldiers who had gone to kill Mushala took off their clothes. Based on oral evidence, the article has argued that nobody stripped naked at the time the soldiers killed Mushala. The study shows that Mushala was betrayed by his ex-wife and killed by security officials in 1982. It also notes that after the death of Mushala, Alexander Saimbwende took over although his activities did not match those of Mushala. In 1990, the rebels were pardoned by President Kaunda.

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