

## **Statement by Platform for Youth Development on the High Court case between Green Fuel Pvt Ltd and villagers of Chisumbanje and Chinyamukwakwa**

Villagers of Chisumbanje and Chinyamukwakwa have finally dragged Green Fuel Pvt Ltd to court for continuing to invade and ploughing into their communal land without fulfilling processes of transforming communal land into commercial land. The villagers are being represented by the Platform for Youth Development Trust and the of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights namely Blessing Nyamaropa and Passmore Nyakureba today 13 December 2018 at the High Court in Mutare. The matter will was heard at 3.30 pm by High Court Judge Hlekani Mwayera. The villagers argue that they have their rights violated by Green Fuel who continues to ignore the voices of the people. We consider it urgent that the community is seeking for a court interdict to stop the unregulated expansion.

The community wanted the High Court to treat the dispute between the villagers and Green Fuel as matter of urgent warranty for Green Fuel to be stopped from further expansion. The High Court ruled that there was merit in the application but that the matter was not urgent since it is a dispute that has stretched since 2009. Our lawyers were instructed to treat the matter using the normal process with advice that the matter should be handled amicably.

At the courts, it was a heated debate: Green Fuel admits there are issues and operations but denies that the matter is urgent but must be treated as a normal application. Villagers consider the rains and the season therefore that delay may lead to a serious confrontation. As community supporters, we are proud of our community for the determination to fight on. The legal route is one of the three options: the other two are dialogue and non-violent action.

### **Nevertheless, PYD and the communities can document a few positive results**

Our decision to approach the High Court was aimed at proving mainly a point that we follow peaceful and non-violent actions against a narrative that Platform for Youth Development Trust is a shadowy violent group and the whole land dispute is their driving agenda.

The following four points will confirm:

1. The High Court and Green Fuel Pvt Ltd have acknowledged the existence of a boundary conflict involving the community of Chisumbanje and Chinyamukwakwa and that the expansion by Green Fuel Pvt Ltd in Magokova area was happening and of concern to the communities.
2. The High Court process pressured Green Fuel to divulge a lot of details about ownership and operations of the investor which we have been struggling to get for a very long time. This is a success in our work and information will support our advocacy.
3. It was apparent in all official responses by Green Fuel Pvt Ltd that they acknowledged the existence and work of the Platform for Youth Development. The High Court case has proven the capacity of PYD as an official voice of the community. PYD has enjoyed this mandate since 2009.
4. The High Court provided a platform to the general public following on this conflict to witness that the communities in Chisumbanje and Chinyamukwakwa are united in terms of their position against operations of Green Fuel Pvt Ltd. The level of unity and conviction by the affected community is commendable.

It is very clear to PYD, that any attempts by Green Fuel to continue expanding without due processes will be resisted strongly.