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## Douglas Mwonzora

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**Douglas Mwonzora** is a lawyer, politician and senator representing [Movement for Democratic Change](#) in parliament. Mwonzora is currently Secretary General of the MDC Alliance. He was the COPAC Co-Chairperson representing the opposition parties in the drafting of the new constitution in 2013, the other chairperson being Zanu-PF's [Paul Mangwana](#). He is former Member of Parliament, Nyanga North Zimbabwe. Mwonzora is a former Law Lecturer.<sup>[1]</sup>

Douglas Mwonzora



Born

Douglas Mwonzora

Nationality

Zimbabwe

Education

[University of Zimbabwe](#)

Alma mater

[University of Zimbabwe](#)

Occupation

- Advocate
- Politician.

Political party

[MDC-T](#)

In early 2019, it was reported that Mwonzora was looking to contest MDC-Alliance president, Nelson Chamisa for the presidency of the MDC Alliance at a congress to be held in May 2019. Commenting on

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the reports and rumours Mwonzora said that he was free, as any MDC Member to contest any seat in the party and that he had not made his mind up about contesting. He, however, said that as a leader he had the experience and the strategy to beat Zanu-PF at an election.

## Background

Mwonzora attended Goromonzi High School and the University of Zimbabwe.

## The GNU Era

Mwonzora became more famous in the Zimbabwean political fraternity after the controversial elections in 2007 which did not yield a clear winner. This resulted in a series of negotiations and confrontations between the ruling [Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front](#) (ZANU PF) led by [Robert Mugabe](#) and the Movement for Democratic Change led by [Morgan Tsvangirai](#) as well as the [Arthur Mutambara](#) MDC faction.<sup>[2]</sup>

Douglas Mwonzora who was the spokesperson of MDC-T party during this period was on the forefront of denouncing the [Robert Mugabe](#) led government for rigging the elections. He was also instrumental in the negotiations which subsequently followed after the controversial elections.

## In the Negotiating Team

The MDC party's negotiating team included its president Morgan Tsvangirai, [Tendai Biti](#) the then Secretary-General, [Thokozani Khupe](#) as the vice president and [Nelson Chamisa](#) as the National Organising Secretary among others. Mwonzora's position automatically puts him on the forefront since he was the voice of the party in the negotiations which were mediated by former president Thabo Mbeki of South Africa who was later on replaced successor Jacob Zuma. Not only did he claim fame in the local media but also in the international media as the political impasse in Zimbabwe attracted international attention especially from the west and the eastern countries.

## As COPAC Co-Chair

Mwonzora was appointed by his MDC party to represent the party in the constitution making process which began after the formation of the Government of National Unity on 2007. Douglas Mwonzora together with [Paul Mangwana](#) of ZANU PF has been credited for coming up with the country's first constitution after independence.

## 2013 Elections

During the controversial 2013 elections, Mwonzora lost his parliamentary seat to a Zanu-PF candidate. His Nyanga North Constituency in [Manicaland](#) went to the ruling party and he automatically was removed from parliament because of the loss. He, however, contested the results arguing that there were a lot of irregularities which took place. He argued that the voters' roll, especially in his constituency, did not reflect the number of people registered to vote in the constituency. His pursuit for transparency failed to



yield results as the constitutional court threw away his application.

## Elevation in the Party

Mwonzora brews a shocker when he beat his colleague in the party Nelson Chamisa in the 2014 elective congress held in Harare. Nelson Chamisa who was the [Kuwadzana](#) member of Parliament was contesting for the position of the Secretary-General which was left vacant after the departure of Tendai Biti who formed a new political party.<sup>[3]</sup>

Mwonzora, who until elective congress was the party's secretary for information, amassed 2,464 votes against Chamisa's 1,756.<sup>[4]</sup>

Until the MDC-T internal poll, Mwonzora looked strong headed to the proverbial slaughter by the youthful and popular legislator after his entry into the competition was only occasioned by a single nomination from his Manicaland home province against Chamisa's overwhelming 11. But the practicing lawyer was adamant, carried on until the day for his surprise victory over the charismatic Chamisa, who now becomes an ordinary member of the party.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Boot-licking Allegations

Prior to the 2014 elective congress, Mwonzora was accused of boot-licking on the party president Morgan Tsvangirai. He did not oppose Tsvangirai's move to centralize power. This move had been seriously opposed by some senior party members such as Chamisa. It is also speculated that Mwonzora's good relations with former Prime Minister necessitated his rise to the position of the Secretary-General of the party. As a result of these allegations, there was speculation that his relationship with former organizing secretary Nelson Chamisa deteriorated. This has also been placed in the context of the on-going succession battles and intra-party politics.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Factionalism after the death of Morgan Tsvangirai

- Chamisa was appointed acting president as Mudzuri and Thokozani Khupe were in South Africa where they are engaged in coalition talks with other opposition parties.
- MDC-T vice president Thokozani Khupe contested Morgan Tsvangirai's appointment of Nelson Chamisa as the party's acting president saying that it is unconstitutional
- Obert Gutu dismissed Nelson Chamisa's appointment as the party's acting president taking over from Elias Mudzuri.
- Thokozani Khupe, Elias Mudzuri and Nelson Chamisa all claimed to be the rightful acting president in the absence of veteran party leader Morgan Tsvangirai who was undergoing treatment in South Africa.
- Morgan Tsvangirai's family broke its silence over the succession race in the MDC-T. They dismissed Luke Tamborinyoka's statement appointing Nelson Chamisa as MDC-T acting president until their father's return from South Africa where he was receiving treatment for colon cancer.

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- MDC-T deputy president Elias Mudzuri (EM) said his colleague Nelson Chamisa lied that he spoke to ailing leader Morgan Tsvangirai who was in South Africa receiving treatment.
- MDC-T Deputy Nelson Chamisa insisted that he was appointed the party's acting president by ailing leader Morgan Tsvangirai who was in South Africa where he was receiving treatment.
- Chamisa said that while he respected the Tsvangirais, the family was not the party and was not privy to internal party communication.
- MDC-T youth Chairperson Happymore Chidziva gave the opposition party's two Vice Presidents Nelson Chamisa and Elias Mudzuri 48 hours to deal with the factional fights that threatened to derail the party's election campaign.
- The party's co-vice presidents Elias Mudzuri and Thokozani Khupe boycotted a standing committee meeting convened by Nelson Chamisa. The party's national chairman Mr Lovemore Moyo also boycotted the meeting.
- Elias Mudzuri and Nelson Chamisa called for separate meetings at two different locations. At a time when many it was expected that the two would be united as they mourned their former principal, Morgan Tsvangirai.
- Chamisa was appointed as the Acting President by the party's national council although the two other vice presidents did not attend the meeting. Chamisa claimed that Mudzuri did not attend the meeting despite being notified while Khupe was still on her way to Harare.
- MDC-T Vice President Thokozani Khupe accused her counterpart Nelson Chamisa of being power hungry and staging a coup.
- Lydia Tsvangirai, the mother of the late former Prime Minister and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai declared that she did not want to see her son's widow Elizabeth Macheke and MDC-T Acting President Nelson Chamisa at her son's burial.
- MDC-T secretary-general Douglas Mwonzora said that his party violated its own constitution by electing Nelson Chamisa as the acting president of the party, a day after the death of Morgan Tsvangirai.
- According to Welshman Ncube, Tsvangirai chose Chamisa to take over from him after his eventual death.
- The late Morgan Tsvangirai's youngest son Richard endorsed MDC-T acting president Nelson Chamisa as the successor to his father.
- Mwonzora was chased away at Tsvangirai's burial in Buhera and had to leave under police escort.

## Competing Against Chamisa At 2019 Congress

In early 2019, reports in the press and on social media began suggesting that Mwonzora intended to contest for the presidency of the MDC Alliance against sitting party president Nelson Chamisa at the May 2019 congress. Mwonzora himself was mostly silent to the suggestions. Commenting on the contestation of positions in the party, Chamisa said a Gweru rally in February 2019 that all positions were open for contestation.

In late February, MDC Deputy President [Elias Mudzuri](#) said the opposition party's elective Congress in May would possibly split the party due to factional fights, as some members strongly believed Mwonzora was not supposed to contest for the presidency.

Around the same time rumours emerged within the MDC Alliance suggesting that Mwonzora was being

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influenced by Zanu-PF to frustrate Nelson Chamisa's interest in leading the party beyond the congress as well as to cause a possible split. Mwonzora reacted that he had a long history in the opposition and that those suggesting these things just wanted to cause acrimony between him and Chamisa. He said Chamisa and himself respected each other and that their relationship was well.

Mwonzora did not make it clear however if he would contest for the presidency position, choosing instead to maintain that any position was up for contestation and that he was yet to make his mind up about which position he would go for.

## About Pindula

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