



THE WEEKEND READER

"Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Socio-Economic Justice"

PARKING IN THE HARARE CBD: A CITIZEN'S NIGHTMARE

City of Harare and their collection partner (subsidiary), City Parking, have come under fire due to unsatisfactory service likened to a deliberate scam to fleece the public and fundraise. The issues under discussion include parking fees and penalties on parking offenses, the role of municipal traffic police in parking, bribe solicitation and the overall conduct of city of Harare parking marshals. The matter, which has generated significant public outrage especially on social media platforms, has seemingly come to a head with the involvement of Central government. Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Honorable July Moyo has appointed a committee to investigate most importantly the issue of exorbitant and chaotic clamping fees. As a coalition for social & economic justice, ZIMCODD is concerned by the imposition of unjust fees which are now working against the intended objective which is to decongest and reduce chaos in the Central Businesses District (CBD).

Leeroy Muzuza @lfmuzuza · 8h

@CityParkingHre

@JMafume

@nigelchanakira

@Cde_Ostalos

I hope this tweet gets attention as a small account, I parked in **Harare** for 3 good hours paying my **parking fees** and when my time expired at 1434hrs I got clamped at 1438hrs.

The Harare CBD is now characterised by anarchy with running battles between council police and citizens becoming an almost daily occurrence. While Local government has a responsibility to enforce their mandate, abuse of power by marshals albeit against unjustified fees is working against the poor. The challenges include the below;

Exorbitant Fees

While parking for an hour in the CBD costs US\$1 per hour or the RTGS equivalent, the penalty once the fare expires amounts up to US\$130. A single parking bay (if used through the daily collection hours) should generate US\$8. The current penalty is sixteen (16) times more than this daily collection leading to the question of how the penalty structure is calculated. This is also an unjustifiable amount especially considering the reality of Zimbabwean incomes where government, the largest employer, pays citizens far less than that.

1. <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/govt-appoints-committee-to-investigate-harare-city-parking-chaotic-and-exorbitant-clamping-fees/>



Tabani 🏆³⁵ @tabanimcgucci · Mar 3

Who approves these \$162 parking penalty fines though?

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Is Harare City Council complicit in this punitive rip off from the poor populace? @JMafume

Who are the faces behind this City Parking company?

Absenting parking Marshals

Citizens have reported that they park in the CBD and wait for prolonged periods of time with no marshals in sight, only to turn up as soon as they decide to conduct their business. The protocol as per council instruction even in this instance is to ticket arrears for that hour which the driver can pay once they have completed their business. However, the reality on the ground is that marshals are instantly clamping cars if a parking ticket is not displayed. This alleged deceitful behaviour amounts to scamming citizens while the liability should be on the city's side for not having adequate officers manning parking bays. Today (10th of March), City Parking released a statement following consultations with stakeholders which they believe will sufficiently address the issue of absenting marshals with the below resolutions. It suffices to say that these measures may not be sufficient as they ignore the fundamental concern of the amount being unreasonable.



Press Release

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For immediate release
10 March 2023

Following consultations with key stakeholders concerning City Parking enforcement operations, the following changes shall be made effective the 10th of March 2023:

1. Unpaid vehicles shall be clamped and fined \$132.00 or equivalent after a 30-minute grace period.
2. Paid vehicles shall be clamped and fined \$132.00 or equivalent after an hour's grace period from expiry.
3. The level of the fine can only be reviewed through a budgetary process which the city council is looking into.

Malfunctioning Payment platforms/ machines

A recurrent problem as reported is that of dysfunctional payment systems especially the swipe machines carried by marshals. Once a citizen is unable to swipe, they are given the furthered responsibility to look for alternative payment methods whereas liability should be that of the collecting agent.



Beyond the swipe machines, the parking marshal's receipting system constantly faces network challenges after which marshals demand cash from drivers. This is unjust as citizens should be able to pay with chosen legal tender as advertised by the city.

Bribe Solicitation

Parking marshals are known to solicit bribes from citizens once their cars have been clamped. The unreasonable US\$132 amount is used to negotiate lower amounts paid directly to a marshal. Furthermore, the threat of vehicles being impounded and even higher amounts are a constant threat hanging over citizens.

Dzimba Dzemabwe 🇿🇼 🇿🇼 @paulmuchemwa2 · Mar 8

City of Harare aren't doing any favors to the struggling Citizens of Zimbabwe

Nowhere to be found when **parking**

Your car clamped 2 mins after you go

It's like they will be hiding just waiting for you to go

How much do you give workers who clampdown cars???

Payment of penalties in United States Dollars

While citizens are earning in the fragile RTGS, marshals are known to demand the United States Dollar which is hard to come by. As a result, citizens are unable to pay the dollar and eventually end up being clamped.

Recommendations

- Penalties on offenses should be rationalized and within reach of citizens. The city should embark in a consultative process with citizens to determine a fair rate. Furthermore, the city should also reflect on best practices in the region and globally to develop a legitimate fare structure.
- The city should improve its systems by going the automated or digital route. While they currently have a USSD platform for payment, it's reliant on network services from the service provider, EcoCash. It's also fact that not all citizens use EcoCash. An inclusive platform should then be developed to ensure all citizens are able to pay.
- City of Harare and City Parking should improve their internal systems and conduct an inquiry into the allegations of corruption levelled against their officers. Not only are citizens punished by corruption but the city itself is losing revenue.
- Finally, the city should comply with the committee that has been appointed by central government to investigate all the above matters. The longstanding battles between the two due to political party differences should not have a negative bearing on the lives of citizens.