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VOA

By Brenda Moyo, James Butty, Thomas Chiripasi & Loirdham Moyo

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A senior official of one of Zimbabwe's two main opposition formations said Thursday that the Movement for Democratic Change faction led by Arthur Mutambara will join forces with Simba Makoni, a former finance minister the ruling party has expelled.

Vice President Gibson Sibanda of the Mutambara MDC formation said the deal would be announced Friday in a joint news conference by Mutambara and Makoni. Such an alliance would undermine the candidacies of both President Robert Mugabe, seeking re–election, and Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC founder who is also running.

Sibanda told reporter Brenda Moyo of VOA's Studio 7 for Zimbabwe that his formation strongly believes in a united front against President Mugabe.

The Mutambara and Tsvangirai factions recently announced that they had not been able to overcome their differences to reunite behind a single presidential candidate.

Mutambara has not formally declared his candidacy, and Sibanda's announcement of a deal suggests he may throw the weight of his faction, generally considered to have a smaller membership than Tsvangirai's grouping, behind Makoni's breakaway bid.