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Zimbabwe Update

Zimbabwe on the brink

By Glenys Kinnock

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"Glenys Kinnock has provided a sober and accurate assessment of the desperate situation in Zimbabwe and given quite practical suggestions for the way forward as a known and devoted friend of the people of Zimbabwe. The proposals are eminently implementable and I commend them warmly to all who have the best interests of Zimbabwe and Africa at heart to avert a looming catastrophe."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people, I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Nelson Mandela, Rivonia Trial, 1963

Introduction: The Problem

Zimbabwe has been slipping into crisis for several years. This crisis is now entering a new and, probably, final stage. My intention when writing this pamphlet is to try to galvanise support around the need for the kind of action which is likely to bring peace and security to the people of Zimbabwe.

I believe that it is time to chart a way forward – it is not a time for despair, or for a weakening of resolve. The suffering people of Zimbabwe need and deserve better, and only strong political action will safeguard all those lives which are at risk at this time. It is a time to be aware that there is a danger that Zimbabwe could slide into an even more tragic situation than we see now, and that no-one should turn their back as the pitiful drama unfolds.

The solutions to the unsustainable situation in Zimbabwe, as always, lie with the Zimbabweans themselves. Good governance, the rule of law and democracy would earn the support of the majority of the people and would pave the way for a return to stability and prosperity. The international community has to use a range of pressures and incentives, and must use its leverage in a principled and focused way.

The next few months will be critical, as tension increases and repression, intimidation and political violence characterise people's daily lives. Zimbabwe's economy is in tatters, and is the worst performing in the world – poorer than at independence in 1980. Tony Hawkins, Business Studies Professor at the University of Zimbabwe, recently said, "There is no foreign currency in the country and not even a credible exchange rate. Why would anybody want to invest in Zimbabwe?" The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has stated that "similar decline in economic activity and human welfare in other countries have taken a decade or more. In Zimbabwe, this has happened in the short space of four years". And it is ordinary Zimbabweans who are the victims. Those who oppose the obdurate despotism of Mugabe, and the increasingly oppressive one-party rule of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU- PF), suffer torture, harassment and discrimination.

Over 170 Zimbabweans have been killed in state-sponsored violence since 2000. According to the

International Crisis Group, Zimbabwe has "one of the highest torture rates in the world, criminal corruption, endemic state violence and systematic destruction of the rule of law". Many are now denied food merely because they do not own a ruling party membership card. Elections, national and local, have for two years been subject to gross manipulation by the ruling party and corrupt election officials. Zimbabwe can no longer call itself a democracy.

The blame lies squarely at the feet of the regime of President Robert Mugabe and the inner circle within ZANU-PF who depend on him for their position and preferment. The regime has driven away foreign investment and western donors, reneged on international agreements designed to restore stability to the country, and turned a manageable drought into an unmanageable famine. Two thirds of the population are now starving – an estimated eight million people. The country's commercial farming, mining and manufacturing sectors have been massively damaged. The regime runs the country like a private fiefdom, talks a lot about Zimbabwe's independent status, then arrogantly absolves itself of any responsibility for the mess it has caused.

The reality is that the Mugabe regime represents Africa's ugly past. However, in the midst of this crisis, there are signs of hope. Zimbabwe will not be a lost cause if there are concerted efforts, by Africans in particular, to promote a peaceful resolution of a situation which so threatens the lives and livelihoods of millions of Zimbabweans. ZANU-PF has mismanaged Zimbabwe into bankruptcy, having lost the moral authority to govern. My prediction is that in the coming months, external assistance will be required to stave off a complete meltdown. Zimbabwe is already unable to feed its people. Soon it will be unable to fuel the economy. Very soon afterwards, the country will grind to a halt. Zimbabweans, the countries of the southern African region and the wider international community are now debating the terms of a post-Mugabe and post-ZANU-PF era.

Only a government which enjoys the genuine support of the majority of ordinary people will be able to steer Zimbabwe back to stability. But the international community also has a role to play in bringing this about, resolving to avoid quick fixes. My aim, therefore, is to articulate both a way forward and to point out the pitfalls to avoid.

Presidential Election, March 2002

"Mugabe's Stolen Election"

"Zimbabwe suffers from a drought of governance. What can we do? This is a humanitarian crisis."
President Festus Mogae Of Botswana

All over Africa, brave individuals are challenging the right of their rulers to continue to hold on to power without seeking the authority of the people. The people of Kenya have indeed shown that it is possible to reclaim the right to peaceful change through the ballot box, at the December 2002 General Election. The people of Zimbabwe are also entitled to ask for that right to democracy and an end to their misery and their suffering.

The election in Zimbabwe was a defining moment for the international community. The deeply flawed election process was exacerbated by draconian legislation intended to suppress all dissent and dismantle what democratic frameworks remained. I was in the South African Parliament when their Observer Mission reported back, and I was certainly struck by how different their judgement was from the Commonwealth Observer Mission, the Norwegian Observer Mission and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) team. In fact the process was described by almost all credible international observers as "unfree and unfair". Apart from Zimbabwe's African neighbours, the only observer delegations who described the election as free and fair were those from Russia, China and Iran. The election had failed to adhere to any of the SADC norms and standards for a free and fair election – documented by the SADC countries and signed by the Zimbabwean government.

Pre-Election

Draconian Legislation

In January 2002, just two months before the election, Mugabe introduced legislation which was blatantly aimed at undermining the MDC election campaign and curtailing the activities of the independent media. These measures remain in place. They bear a marked similarity to legislation enacted by the Smith regime during UDI.

The Public Order and Security Act

- makes it illegal to 'undermine the authority of the President' or 'engender hostility towards him'.
- gives the police powers to arrest anyone at a public meeting who is not in possession of an identity card.
- requires police permission for MDC political rallies, including spontaneous meetings of two or more people to discuss political issues.
- empowers the police to completely ban MDC political meetings for up to three months in any given jurisdiction.
- makes it illegal to make abusive, obscene or false statements against the "President".

The police rigorously enforced these measures in the build up to the election, severely hampering MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai's campaign strategy by forcing his party to cancel numerous rallies. The MDC could not hold meetings, display posters or criticise the President.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

- makes it an offence to "spread rumours or falsehoods that cause alarm and despondency under the guise of authentic reports". The clause against spreading falsehoods does not seem to apply to the state-controlled media.
- forces Zimbabwean citizens to apply to the Junior Information Minister for special permission to work for foreign media.
- forces all journalists operating in Zimbabwe to register with a government-appointed and controlled Media Commission.

This Act was purposely introduced prior to the election in order to limit freedom of speech and blunt the effectiveness of the independent media, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of propaganda churned out by the government-controlled media.

The General Laws Amendment Act

- makes it illegal to put up election posters or distribute election pamphlets without police permission. This does not apply to ZANU-PF.
- limits the activities of civil society in the field of voter education.
- restricts postal voting to diplomats and members of the armed forces.
- decrees that in urban areas people can only register to vote if they produce their identity cards as well as utility bills proving that they have lived in the same house for twelve months.

This Act was clearly aimed at reducing the opposition's share of the vote. The stringent provisions for voter registration in urban areas was a blatant move to disenfranchise thousands of opposition supporters. Not only are urban areas traditional MDC strongholds, a significant proportion of urban dwellers live in rented accommodation and do not pay utility bills – a fact not lost on the ZANU-PF government. The restrictions on postal votes disenfranchised over two million Zimbabwean passport holders living outside the country. After the election this Act was challenged by the Supreme Court on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. However by this time it was too late – the damage had been done.

Voters' roll

Despite repeated requests, the opposition MDC has not yet been allowed to see the voters' roll for the Presidential elections. This, coupled with the recently released census figures showing there are two million fewer people in Zimbabwe than had been thought, cast grave doubts over the veracity of the voters' roll.

Violence and Intimidation

With the war veterans having been at the vanguard of ZANU-PF violence since before the June 2000 Parliamentary Elections, Mugabe decided to increase his party's capacity to inflict violence by establishing a vicious youth militia – the 'Green Bombers', as they are otherwise known. In the build up to the Presidential election the youth militia set up road blocks and attacked anyone caught carrying MDC membership cards; they confiscated identity cards of MDC supporters, preventing them from voting, and engaged upon a

campaign of terror against thousands of innocent civilians.

Mugabe's plan was to intimidate MDC supporters to such an extent that they would either not turn up on polling day, or they would turn up and vote for Mugabe out of pure fear. The youth militia is completely immune from prosecution and remains at the forefront of state sponsored political violence. Despite their heinous crimes, not one member of the youth militia has ever been prosecuted. The Mugabe regime announced in December 2002 that they intend to have youth militia stationed in every district in Zimbabwe within the first half of 2003. Despite the scale of ZANU-PF violence and its intensification since the election, the police have failed to make a single prosecution.

Polling Days

The two polling days of the Presidential Election were characterised by systematic ballot rigging, the intimidation and abduction of opposition polling agents, the flagrant disenfranchisement of thousands of voters, and the denial of entrance to independent election observers.

Mugabe's fraudulent election victory demonstrated, in the starkest terms, that the crisis permeating Zimbabwean society is not a crisis about land, as Mugabe and his supporters would like us to believe. Instead it is clearly a crisis of legitimacy, characterised by an absence of rule of law, bad governance and a regime which ignores the will of the people in order to protect a cynical system of self-serving patronage.

Legitimate government is the product of a free and fair election reflecting the will of the people. This did not happen in Zimbabwe in March 2002; the evidence in support of this is compelling to any truly independent observer.

Zimbabwean Poverty – The "Empty Plate"

"We are very, very close to famine here."

World Food Programme Deputy Country Director For Zimbabwe, Gawaher Atif

"Those distributing aid have an obligation to ensure that aid is given to beneficiaries based on their needs, and not upon political affiliation."

Kofi Annan

The population of Zimbabwe, it is estimated, should be about 14 million. However, a recent census revealed that now the population is down to 10.4 million. These figures reveal how many millions have left Zimbabwe – often to live in squatter camps in neighbouring countries.

Botswana is unable to cope with the massive flow of illegal immigrants, and is sending back 1,600 people every month to Zimbabwe. At least a million Zimbabweans have died of AIDS. 35% of all adults (approximately two million people) are infected with HIV/AIDS – mostly women. AIDS deaths are increasing, especially in areas where food is being denied to the population. There are 75,000 orphans, which represents 15% of all Zimbabwean children. And TB, malaria and other infections rage in urban and rural areas. 65% of girls of school age are not in school. There are high levels of infant deaths and clear evidence of factors related to deprivation and poverty.

More than half the population are starving, and there is widespread despair and uncertainty. A high number of child-headed families are the worst hit by the catastrophe. One boy, Simbarashe, who is sixteen, said, "I am always hungry and so are my little brothers. If none of our neighbours bring us anything to eat before dusk, it will be another night with an empty, complaining stomach". Most basic commodities, including bread, cooking oil, sugar and the staple, maize meal, are virtually unobtainable. Meat has virtually disappeared from the shops, along with soap and salt.

One cause of the extreme hunger is the land seizures which have dismantled the commercial agriculture sector without replacing it with any other way of producing food efficiently and effectively. The UN has called these seizures "unsustainable" and asserts that without them, the consequences of Zimbabwe's drought would have been contained. Another contributory factor has been the regime's policy of fixing prices at uneconomic levels, and their refusal to allow the private sector to import maize. Only 50% of the land that was once farmed is actually under cultivation – and seeds and fertilisers are in short supply. The food shortages are as evident in the cities now as in the rural areas, and without doubt the evidence we see and hear confirms that. Of course the present drought is a contributory factor. But Zimbabwe has faced droughts before and never been confronted with mass starvation – the main problem this time is government policy. As the Economic Intelligence Unit has said, "There is a possibility that an enraged population, particularly in the cities, will revolt. Everywhere, people struggle to find food they can afford to buy. It is a relentless struggle to survive in an atmosphere of misery, tension and threat, and where any recovery will be long and very difficult".

The BBC journalist Fergal Keane recently entered Zimbabwe, posing as a tourist, and described a "catastrophe". His view is that misrule, corruption and drought are combining to make that catastrophe, and he called Zimbabwe "the land of the empty plate". More than 100,000 farm workers have lost their jobs and are destitute. In addition, there is clear evidence that those who cannot show a ruling party membership card are being denied food by regime-controlled organisations. Furthermore, the commercial food sector is being run by ZANU-PF and they now police food imports and allow party officials to run, as the International Crisis Group says, "profitable food resale rackets". The 'Green Bombers' and self-styled war veterans whip up panic and terror in the food queues. They know that whatever they do, they are guaranteed impunity.

The Danish Group of Physicians for Human Rights have reported that even children are being victimised on the grounds that their parents are believed to be opposition supporters. This is a serious violation of human rights, as is the whole issue of politically driven starvation. The denial of food to those suspected of being sympathetic to the MDC is a clear abuse of the importance which is attached to the neutrality and independence which should characterise humanitarian assistance. It is the food that is government-bought, rather than international aid, which is being manipulated in this way.

A villager quoted in the 'Daily News' in Zimbabwe said, "ZANU-PF are starving us by saying we are supporting the wrong party". In November 2002 the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, appealed to the government of Zimbabwe to fulfil its commitment to ensure that political considerations do not affect food aid efforts within the country. International food aid is getting through to many of those in need, but the World Food Programme (WFP) is increasingly alarmed by evidence of harassment of people receiving food. The donors should be congratulated on their efforts to offer relief all over Zimbabwe – in rural areas and now in urban areas too. However, the price they have had to pay is to, as they say, "deal with the government". It is apparent now that the WFP is becoming increasingly impatient about the way the government's food distribution decisions are influenced by partisan considerations. James Morris, the WFP Director, has suggested bringing in a UN task force to monitor the government's food distribution. He said, "there is enough suspicion now to warrant UN monitoring". Those of us who know how the WFP consistently refuses to be drawn into any political involvement realise how serious this analysis of the politicisation of food in Zimbabwe is at this time. The WFP clearly realises that nothing will be resolved until the regime ends the state monopoly of the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and ends price controls. There is, in fact, no independent, apolitical private sector involvement in the import and export of maize or wheat.

The Solution

Zimbabwe urgently needs four things:

- the creation of a genuinely representative government, freely and fairly chosen in properly managed and monitored elections. Only then will fear be removed from Zimbabwe's society and normal life resume. Only then will large numbers of skilled people who have fled the country return and begin to re-invest in the economy. Only then will the corruption of Zimbabwe's civil administration, economy and judiciary begin to be reversed. And only then will the international donor community and foreign investors return.
- the adoption of credible economic policies which enable the international donor community and the international financial institutions to resume financial flows.
- the adoption of credible policies to manage Zimbabwe's structural humanitarian crisis, which may well last for several years.
- the design of credible, sustainable policies for longer-term economic development, in genuine co-operation with donors.

This points to an early decision by the regime of Robert Mugabe to agree to step aside, enter meaningful negotiations with the MDC and key stakeholders, and agree a political level solution. Without this, a much-needed healing process cannot begin, and the rule of law and political legitimacy cannot be restored. It points to a reversal of ZANU-PF's Mickey Mouse economics, which have caused endemic shortages, 175% inflation, double digit annual deflation, and 70% unemployment. It also points to the creation of sustainable policies on important issues, such as land reform and land ownership, this time in genuine co-operation with donors and the UN.

Pitfalls

Some in ZANU-PF and southern Africa say that the Zimbabwe crisis can be solved simply by changing the

man at the top. Of course, as Mugabe is the chief architect of the crisis, his departure would be an important and necessary first step. But it is not enough. Zimbabwe's crisis is not down to just one man. It is down to a culture of systemic abuse, corruption, violence and mismanagement by an institutionalised ruling party. If the international community ignores the culture of impunity spawned by that ruling party, Zimbabwe will continue on its downward path.

The self-selecting elite in ZANU-PF, which has enforced and benefited from the mismanagement, cannot expect to retain their ill-gotten gains. It is worth looking at some of the worst examples. Emmerson Mnangagwa has a huge responsibility for the state of Zimbabwe's economy, its administration and the political violence and election rigging. He has been accused in a number of investigations of having responsibility for the massacre of 20,000 Ndebele by Mugabe's 5th Brigade during the mid 1980s. He was also cited in the United Nations Panel Report on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is often assumed to be Mugabe's preferred successor. But he is not a credible leader and has no popular support. As the author of numerous atrocities over many years, including in Matebeleland in the 1980s, Mnangagwa is the last person capable of healing divisions and building an inclusive society. Perhaps, as much as Mugabe himself, Mnangagwa lacks the moral and intellectual compass and the popular support required to lead Zimbabwe in the modern era.

There is a long list of others who share responsibility for Zimbabwe's crisis. Joseph Made, the unelected Agriculture Minister, and Ignatius Chombo, Local Government Minister and relative of Mugabe, have presided over the decline into starvation and the greatest impoverishment of rural Zimbabwe in a century. Patrick Chinamasa, the unelected Justice Minister, has presided over the corruption and politicisation of Zimbabwe's once-respected and once-independent judiciary. Jonathan Moyo, the unelected Junior Information Minister, has turned Zimbabwe's highly regarded broadcast media into an Orwellian mouthpiece of oppression, and sought to destroy Africa's most promising print media. Behind these figures sit an array of other ZANU-PF officials, elected and unelected, their spouses, family members and business associates, who have all benefited from the endemic graft and corruption. Zimbabwe cannot return to normality while such people remain – completely unchecked and unaccountable – in positions of influence and power. Regrettably, some in Africa like the "quick fix" of removing Mugabe and slotting in Mnangagwa, as if rearranging the seats will prevent the Titanic from going down. The international community should resist any temptation to go down this route.

Africa's Part of the Solution

"African leaders have learned from their own experience that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management are candidates for sustainable development. They are making a pledge to work both independently and collectively to promote these principles in their regions and sub regions and on the continent".

Nepad Document (New Partnership For Africa's Development)

African Union

There is growing anxiety and opposition to Mugabe which can be seen and heard across the African continent.

The defeat of President Moi and the KANU party in the recent Kenyan elections underlined the fact that 'winds of change' are beginning to blow through Africa. President Moi, after lengthy prevarication, did agree to leave office. Throughout history the thirst for democracy, peace and security has been an unstoppable process and the people of Africa are increasingly prepared to stand up and campaign for these rights. They are tired of the old liberation leaders who treat office as a personal property, and who use arguments and tactics that belong to a different era.

Africa now has a number of evolving democracies that provide varying degrees of hope for the future of the continent: for example South Africa, Lesotho, Ghana, Senegal, Botswana and Kenya. If, however, the continent of Africa is to break free from the shackles of a past characterised by exploitation by colonial powers, endemic corruption, state-sponsored violence and pervasive insecurity, those countries who have introduced democratic systems of government now must collectively exert leverage on recalcitrant despots such as Mugabe.

Developments over the past twelve months such as the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NePAD) provide a potential framework for collective pressure on undesirable regimes. But the evidence points to an absence of political will. The supposed guiding principles of the AU are good governance, the eradication of poverty, peace and security and sustainable development. 53 African countries, including Zimbabwe, committed themselves to these principles when they signed the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

"In the spirit of the Constitutive Act of Union we must work for a continent characterised by democratic

principles and institutions which guarantee popular participation and provide for good governance," said South African President, Thabo Mbeki, in a speech marking the formal launch of the AU in Durban in 2002. If President Mbeki, in particular, were to take a lead and unite the democratic leaders in Africa behind him, his notion of an African renaissance, characterised by a robust peer review structure on good governance and harnessed within the framework of the AU, could succeed. But President Mbeki's reluctance to tackle the root causes of Zimbabwe's crisis and his continuing 'softly softly' approach to ZANU-PF calls the principles of both NePAD and the AU into question. In these circumstances he must know a better, brighter future for Africa is beginning to recede. The failure by Africa, in general terms, to put its own house in order, jeopardises the prospect of a break with the past.

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

"Connivance is the relaxation of slavery, not the definition of liberty."

Edmund Burke

Throughout the current crisis in Zimbabwe, and given his increasing international isolation, Mugabe has always taken a degree of comfort from his perception that the SADC region would always act as his buffer to the outside world and protect him. This notion, however, is beginning to be called into question.

At a meeting of SADC Heads of State towards the end of 2002, a decision was taken that ensured Zimbabwe, under Mugabe, would not assume the chair of SADC. This fracturing within SADC, however, will have very little influence on Mugabe unless SADC members – especially South Africa – withdraw their political support for the regime. Historical precedent shows that Zimbabwe's neighbours have sufficient leverage to influence real change in Zimbabwe itself.

The problem for the hundreds of thousands of innocent Zimbabweans suffering under Mugabe's tyranny is that at the moment, President Mbeki is simply, it seems, not prepared to act in a positive way. President Mbeki claims the leadership of NePAD and the African renaissance, but he must know that his pursuit of "quiet diplomacy" with Mugabe is clearly not succeeding, and puts NePAD, and all the hope it represents, at risk.

The reality is that until the issue of Zimbabwe's legitimacy is addressed, the situation in the country will continue to deteriorate. This will have a destabilising impact on southern Africa, in both economic and social terms. In fact the close economic relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe means that the value of the rand is affected by events in Zimbabwe. Moreover, of the thousands of Zimbabweans fleeing Mugabe terror, over 70% head for South Africa.

Zimbabwe's African neighbours must take stock and make a judgement about how to move forward. It is time:

- to acknowledge that the crisis is actually not about land, but about bad governance. If they do not acknowledge this fact, how do they intend to explain the inevitable deterioration of the crisis even after Mugabe announces that the land reform process has been completed?
- to withdraw political support for the Mugabe regime.
- to unequivocally renounce any support for a Mnangagwa succession being the solution to the crisis.
- to acknowledge that democratic legitimacy needs to be urgently restored and that this can only happen with a re-run of the March 2002 Presidential election held under free and fair conditions.
- to co-ordinate regional pressure against the Mugabe regime.
- for assiduous engagement with the MDC leadership, acknowledging them as an integral part of the solution to the crisis.

If President Mbeki, in particular, takes these steps it would not only mark the beginning of the end of the Zimbabwe crisis, it would also send a strong message to the world that the African renaissance is underway. If he, and his regional colleagues, do not, they risk their own social and economic stability.

What Should the International Community Demand?

Zimbabwe needs immediate measures to arrest its short-term implosion and clear policies to set it on the long-term road to recovery. These include:

- the immediate end to all state-sponsored violence, the disbandment of the so-called "youth militia" and its training camps, repeal of draconian laws which prevent the exercise of basic political rights, and suspension of senior officials, police and intelligence officers responsible for implementing political violence.
- recognition within weeks at all levels within ZANU-PF and the SADC region that the MDC is part of the solution to Zimbabwe's problems and needs to be engaged on an equal basis.
- agreement by ZANU-PF within weeks to resume inter-party dialogue on an unconditional basis, at a top level, leading to an agreement on the restoration of democratic legitimacy within a fixed time scale.
- that African countries make it clear they will withdraw all support from the Mugabe regime – or impose sanctions if it does not comply with the above measures. It is not in Africa's interest to keep allowing ZANU-PF to hold them hostage. Africa has a stake in the outcome. It needs to take a credible ownership of the solution.
- immediate and full co-operation by ZANU-PF with the United Nations on improving flows of staple foods into Zimbabwe, and an immediate end to political manipulation by ZANU-PF of the supply of staple foods.
- consideration of the need to adopt a more interventionist approach to food distribution, including whether the UN should supervise the process.
- early adoption of economic policies designed to ensure swift re-engagement by the World Bank and IMF, accompanied by far-reaching reform and measures to root out and punish corruption and graft.
- early and genuine re-engagement by ZANU-PF, and a successor government, with international donors in order to address donor concerns on mis-governance and abuses of basic freedoms.
- consideration of a sports and cultural boycott of Zimbabwe.

What Should the International Community do if its Demands are not met?

ZANU-PF has embarked on a strategy to destroy the MDC and opposition within civil society. It wants to close all political space to those opposed to one-party rule. It believes that the international community would be forced to deal with ZANU-PF if the MDC is removed from the political equation. The donor community must make it clear to ZANU-PF and the region that there is a political and economic cost of continuing on this route. If this message is ignored, the wider international community should take further coercive measures against the Mugabe regime.

These could include:

- renewing and expanding EU, US and other targeted sanctions to those business people responsible for financing the ZANU-PF regime, including the principal beneficiaries of the graft and corruption. Additional measures could include rescinding rights of residence in Europe and the US and access of family members to employment and educational institutions. Many of these individuals and their bag-men are well-known. They should pay a price for helping dismember Zimbabwe's economic and political institutions.
- naming and shaming any other organisations or businesses, in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, who connive in ZANU-PF's activities. This should include, for example, exposing to shareholders the international banks and financial houses which act as conduits for corrupt earnings. It could also include exposing foreign governments who help finance the regime.
- Zimbabwe's full suspension from the Commonwealth so long as ZANU-PF continues to flout the principles of the Commonwealth Harare Declaration.
- withdrawing Zimbabwe's voting rights at the IMF – in effect, expulsion. And a clear message from International Financial Institutions, the EU and US to any governments considering loaning money to the Mugabe regime that a successor government in Zimbabwe will be required to default on these loans before the EU and US will resume its own lending.
- setting the Mugabe regime a deadline for change, which, if ignored, would deny all senior regime figures any guarantee of amnesty for their part in human rights abuses.

- further debate in the UN Security Council on Zimbabwe – followed by African support for concrete action on the ground – if the Zimbabwe crisis begins to threaten regional stability or if the humanitarian crisis escalates.

Implications for UK Government Policy

The UK's policy of building a broad international coalition against the abuses of the Mugabe regime is the right approach. It has had some success in exposing the reality of mis-governance in Zimbabwe, and has debunked ZANU-PF's obsessive rantings about what Kenneth Kaunda has called the "ghosts of colonialism".

UK policymakers have also recognised the limitations of international action so long as Zimbabwe's neighbours – often for their own internal reasons – have found it easier to ignore

the crisis while Zimbabwe slides. In 2003, the challenge for the UK Government, the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United States is to maintain and intensify this broad international front. This also means protecting the integrity of sanctions. The UK and the EU should continue to honour their legal obligations under international conventions. But banned Zimbabweans must be denied access to UK and European soil wherever and whenever we have discretion to do so.

And the UK should now press the case for expanding the list of those subject to sanctions. It is deeply regrettable that the French Government has invited Mugabe to the Franco-African summit planned for February 2003. However the knock on effect of this has been a strengthening of resolve amongst EU member states such as, for example, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, that the EU-Africa Summit planned for April would not be attended by them. The threat from African countries not to attend if Mugabe was not invited has been turned on its head by EU member states determined to exclude Mugabe.

Conclusion

The Mugabe regime has embarked on a course of economic and political suicide. Its leaders behave as if the international community – and its hard-pressed taxpayers – owe them a living. It once enjoyed international respect and legitimacy, and its people once enjoyed one of the best standards of living in Africa. It has now fallen to the bottom of the pile. But Zimbabwe's fall from grace, its political repression, kleptocracy and its corruption, are not unique in Africa. The donor community must send out a message that mis-governance on this scale is not the basis for sustainable partnership. If the much-vaunted regional initiatives such as NePAD are to succeed, they cannot escape being judged against all Africa's problems, including Zimbabwe. The relevance of such initiatives in solving deeply entrenched and long standing problems is bound to be questioned if they prove ineffectual in halting avoidable crises. Africa's failure to police its own back yard, in the case of Zimbabwe, has seriously damaged the cause of African development among voters and taxpayers in the West.

At the same time, the UK and EU Governments, Parliaments and, more especially, media, must take a consistent view of the wider African picture when discussing Zimbabwe. Conflicts in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Ivory Coast and other parts of West Africa have killed or displaced millions of people in recent years. Humanitarian crises affect much of southern and north-eastern Africa. Some of these are being resolved by engagement and negotiation, and the commitment of significant donor resources. There is some good news. It should be reported and, where possible, celebrated.

So let's be clear: Zimbabwe matters. It is at the heart of southern Africa's regional economy. Properly governed, it has the human and material resources to act as a motor for regional development and poverty eradication. Badly governed, it has the ability to further impoverish or destabilise its neighbours. The regime has chosen the latter course and has failed. The time has come for its leaders to step aside.

Dealing with the tragedy which is now Zimbabwe will require hard political choices within the country and the region. When the ZANU-PF leadership give us so much evidence that they do not want to see Zimbabwe grow and prosper, there is little that outsiders can do to stop it. If they do want to change, they must acknowledge the extent of the change required and act soon. If they fail to do so, the international community must increase the personal cost to those leaders and their supporters.

There is an onus also on the countries of southern Africa to make this happen. They hold the key, and they should publicly acknowledge the reality that liberation has been perverted into tyranny. Many of their leaders, we know, will be uneasy about taking a public stand, especially against those with "liberation" credentials. They prefer a "quick fix". But Zimbabweans – and the people of the region – need leadership for the future, not the zealotry of leaders obsessed by the phantom ghosts of the past, or those who care more about

political symbolism than they do about the poor.

For the UK, the EU and the international community, the message is clear. We have engaged with the Mugabe regime many times in recent years in the hope that things could be turned around. This engagement was well-meaning, but has failed. The situation is desperate and the slide to disaster demands urgent action. The Mugabe regime, those who implement its policies and those who benefit from its corrupt misrule, may think that the international community will tire and eventually allow them back into the international fold on their terms. This must be refuted, confronted and prevented. I began with a quote from Nelson Mandela, and I end with this one:

"Our common humanity transcends the oceans and all national boundaries...let it never be asked of any of us – what did we do when we knew another was oppressed?"

Nelson Mandela

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