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To:  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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The Netherlands

*Concerns:*

Visa for Mr. Kumbirai Kangai, member of ZANU (PF) Politburo; violation of sanctions against Zimbabwe

Amsterdam, 02 November 2004

Your Excellencies,

The situation in Zimbabwe, a country suffering for over four years now from intimidation, arbitrary arrests, torture, and attacks on the political opposition, is getting worse. Numerous reports from international organisations point out the gross abuses of human rights. At the end of last year, a new repressive media law allowed the government to close the only independent daily newspaper The Daily News. A government that is illegal, since it stole the last elections, using fraud and intimidation. At this moment a very similar law, that allows the government to ban all critical human rights organisations, is being discussed in the parliament. The next elections might be silent, without freedom of media, and without an active, critical and independent civil society. But most of all, elections without any opposition, since the only serious opposition party had to withdraw, because there is absolutely no way that the next elections can be free and fair.

The sanctions towards Zimbabwe that are agreed by the European Union member states are of utmost importance. They are not economic sanctions but target only those individuals who are responsible for the current situation in Zimbabwe. The sanctions include that EU member states do not provide visa to a selected list of Zimbabweans that are co-responsible for the current situation.

We learned that Mr. K. Kangai, member of the ZANU-PF politburo, one of the people on the sanction list, applied for a visa, to attend the upcoming ACP-EU Joint



Parliamentary Assembly in The Hague. To our surprise, this application is not yet refused, as would be logical, in view of the sanction policy.

Although the sanction regulations state that visa can be issued to improve the relationship between the EU and Zimbabwe, this application is not more than a provocation by the Zimbabwean government to ridicule the sanction regulations. We would like to stress the importance of the sanction policy, and that the sanctions cannot be effective, unless they are kept, no matter what. Unfortunately, the seriousness of the situation in Zimbabwe does not allow exceptions.

At previous international ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary assemblies, exceptions have been made. They have had disastrous consequences for the progress of the meetings.

We would strongly call upon you to take the EU policy seriously, and not to allow Mr. Kangai to enter the Netherlands. Your active engagement with the human rights situation in Zimbabwe is vital to protecting the fundamental human rights of Zimbabwe's citizens.

Yours faithfully,

Wiep Bassie  
On behalf of *Zimbabwe Watch*

*Zimbabwe Watch is a consortium of Dutch NGOs, in close contact with Zimbabwean organisations, which aims to contribute to a democratic Zimbabwe that respects international human rights treaties.*