

Organised Resistance Zimbabwe

Tolerance ° Freedom ° Diversity

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'Our quarrel is not with the people of Zimbabwe. Indeed, the European Union today committed itself to assisting ordinary Zimbabweans through the country's mounting food crisis. Our quarrel is with the regime that is responsible for Zimbabwe's man-made disaster. The nature of the regime is clear for all to see. At the weekend, the Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Abedinico Ncube made clear that people would not receive food aid if they supported the Opposition. It is essential that the Zimbabwe regime understands that the world will not ignore its callous behaviour.'

Jack Straw, British Foreign Secretary

Please take a moment to read why the English and Australian cricket teams should boycott the World Cup in Zimbabwe.

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Dear (players name)

World Cup Cricket 2003 – Please do not come to Zimbabwe

Organised Resistance takes this valued opportunity to urge you not to travel to Zimbabwe to play cricket in the first round of the World Cup.

We are committed to the long-term future of cricket, and the future of our country and believe that certain short-term sacrifices are necessary to change the current tragic situation in Zimbabwe.

We have selected three dominant issues/factors on which we base our appeal, namely:

1. The impact of the Mugabe dictatorship on young potential cricket players in Zimbabwe
2. Safety concerns relating to you, the player
3. The contradictions of Mugabe the Patron of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union, ranked second only to Saddam Hussein as the world's worst oppressor by many authorities

We will treat the above matters with brevity not befitting their serious nature but in the knowledge that you would not have the time to absorb a thesis that would be necessary to do each issue justice.

1. Youth and Cricket in Zimbabwe

Outside of the Cricket Academy and a handful of private and prestigious urban government schools the atmosphere for learning and playing cricket is one of desperation.

Several schools in the rural areas have been closed as they have been targeted by the Mugabe regime as being staffed by opposition supporters.

Quote:

The period under study saw the reported closure of 30 schools throughout the country. Most of the reported closures were due to teachers fleeing violence perpetrated against them and their subsequent refusal to go back until their safety was guaranteed. Apart from school closures, teachers were also chased away from their places of employment by either "war veterans" or Zanu PF supporters. The perpetrators would either go to the school where the individual taught and then physically remove them from their places of employment, or just order the transfer of teachers that they suspected to be MDC supporters. Teachers were also threatened with either job loss or personal injury if it was established that they supported MDC.

Source: Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum www.hrforumzim.com

In schools that are still open, teachers have been fired for being non-sympathetic to the regime. As we write this letter these vacant teaching positions are being filled by the youth militia wing of the ruling party. The vast majority of children will spend any spare time they have being subjected to indoctrination and undergoing propagandist lessons at the total expense of sport, in particular cricket.

Following a national food shortage, which has now reached famine proportions, many communities are being denied food aid by the government as part of a thinly disguised program of genocide through starvation. These practices have been well documented by local and international food aid organisations operating in Zimbabwe.

Quote:

A report by the Danish Human Rights Group - Physicians for Human Rights/ Denmark (entitled **Voting ZANU PF For Food: Rural District and Insiza Elections**) based on extensive interviews in Zimbabwe over the last three months, alleges that President Robert Mugabe has cut off food supplies to opponents who have challenged the power of his ruling party. It is the group's opinion that "if it is not possible to increase non-partisan food supplies into the country, starvation and eventually death, will occur along party political lines in Zimbabwe."

Source: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum www.hrforumzim.com

Our children are suffering terribly in all parts of the country. The fact that journalists who attend the World Cup games in Zimbabwe have been told that they cannot move outside the cities is a *powerful indicator of things sinister*.

Quote:

We would be better off with only six million people, with our own people who support the liberation struggle. We don't want all these extra people."

- Didymus Mutasa, ZANU (PF) Organising Secretary, August 2002, on the plight of starving Zimbabweans who don't support the ruling party

It is estimated that up to 6 million people will face serious food deprivation, if not starvation, this year. This equates to over 4 million children who will soon be too hungry to lift a bat or bowl a ball should it be their desire. It is pertinent to note that the food problems of Zimbabwe lie squarely at the feet of Mugabe following a bloody and chaotic land grab.

In summary the future for children of Zimbabwe under the current fascist regime is bleak and our prediction is that Zimbabwe will, within the next decade, fall out of the test playing cricket arena unless we can encourage an adherence to the rule of law, respect for human rights and democratic change in Zimbabwe.

2. Safety in Zimbabwe - the ICC Report on Conditions in Zimbabwe

The ICC report entitled *Zimbabwe Report of IDI Safety and Security Delegation* assumes a dangerously arrogant tone and makes serious assumptions and predictions regarding the mood of Zimbabweans and the capabilities of extremist elements in Zimbabwe. The ICC report is vague and demands an explanation of its superficiality and self-serving approach.

Organised Resistance is currently preparing a detailed critique of the ICC report that will be sent to your respective cricket board. We would urge you to read this as an adjunct to this letter.

We draw your attention to the most threatening safety elements that are either skimmed over in the report, or more seriously, misreported.

"The Delegation's visit also coincided with the trial, at the 3rd ODI between Zimbabwe and Pakistan, of the match day security arrangements for traffic free zones, vehicle checks, spectator searches (including magnetometer scans) and zoned accreditation areas within grounds".

"These trials worked successfully with the plans proceeding smoothly. Weaknesses that were identified are now being addressed as the final plans are developed."

ICC Report

Activists in Zimbabwe, many from Organised Resistance's ranks, managed to achieve material breaches of the security arrangements during this particular game. These breaches were achieved in spite of the full strength of security (commercial & plain clothed) and substantial police presence during the ICC's one day "model security" arrangement in preparation for the World Cup. We will not divulge the full nature of these breaches at this stage as this would compromise our initiatives should the games not be moved from Zimbabwe. We must stress that our initiatives would take the form of non-violent civil disobedience within the ambit of the country's constitution.

However we cannot speak on behalf of the more radical groups in Zimbabwe particularly those heading the present campaign being perpetrated by the State and its more militant instruments under the slogan – Chave Chimurenga – (***It is now revolution***).

“It was also highlighted that there was no history of external terrorist attacks or extremism in the country.”

ICC Report

The report fails, either by choice or incompetence, to deal with the internal history of terrorism. This has taken many forms and a high level of skill and capability exists in Zimbabwe to undertake sophisticated forms of terrorism.

We list a few incidents in the last two years which fall into the category of terrorist attacks:

The total destruction, by use of anti-tank mines and other explosives, of the printing presses and printing house of the Daily News, an independent newspaper. 16th February 2001.

<http://www.ifex.org/alerts/view.html?id=8218>

The bombing of the Daily News offices in Bulawayo city centre. 10th February 2002.

http://www.rsf.fr/article.php3?id_article=129

The bombing of the offices of the Movement of Democratic Change in Bulawayo city centre. September 2000.

www.mdczimbabwe.com

The bombing of the offices of the Voice of the People (VOP) less than 3 kms from the world cup cricket venue in Harare. 29th August 2002.

<http://www.theindependent.co.zw/news/2002/August/Friday30/508.html>

To the best of our knowledge no arrests have been made and as a consequence these terrorists continue to roam the streets and no doubt, the hotels of Zimbabwe. Yet the ICC Report states:

“ the security forces themselves believed that they were entirely capable of dealing with this issue”.

Further the report makes no mention of the persistent “hate speeches” made by Mugabe and Jonathan Moyo, Zanu PF Minister for Information against the British and Australian governments.

Zimbabwe has banned Tony Blair and many UK ministers from entering the country, and imposed visa requirements on British tourists. The list includes Mr Blair, about 90 government ministers and officials, some members of the European Parliament and leaders of external pro-democracy pressure groups. Indeed, information on the official British web site states:

The leaders of the ruling party regularly single out Britain for fierce criticism, alleging British interference in Zimbabwe's internal affairs. British travellers should therefore be aware that they may be exposed to particular risk and should avoid being drawn into political discussions.

Recently, in December the head of the Commonwealth Rob McKinnon was banned by the Mugabe regime from entering Zimbabwe. He intended to visit Zimbabwe on a humanitarian fact finding mission.

Yet England is ready to send their cricket team to Zimbabwe.

The ICC report goes on to discuss the danger of civil uprising and dismisses the threat to safety based on the fact that such action would be remote and dealt with by security forces.

“Equally, it is likely that any violence, should it occur, would be well away from the players and officials. This type of outbreak is likely to occur in the suburbs of Harare and Bulawayo while the teams and officials will be located in the centre of the city.

It was also highlighted to the Delegation that in the event of any violence of this type, the internal security forces were very well equipped to quickly isolate, contain and address the problem.”

ICC Report

The ICC Report fails to mention the NCA march for peace in April 2001, which took place in the centre of Harare, within a “stones throw” of the Meikles Hotel. The security forces being the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) stood by while a large group of thugs, organised by the Mugabe regime, clubbed and beat peaceful marchers of all ages and sexes with iron bars, wooden sticks, barbed wire flails and bricks. Once these thugs had dispersed most of the crowd the security forces moved in and arrested the few protestors who had withstood the assault. To this day none of the perpetrators of this violence have been brought before the courts.

The mood of the people is more angry and desperate than at any time since Independence in 1980.

It is highly likely that mass action and demonstrations will occur during the world cup to take advantage of this unique opportunity and the perceived protection of international press during the cup games.

Once again the report takes refuge under vague wording.

“It should be noted that no foreign tourist has been killed or injured in Zimbabwe for political motives.”
ICC Report

As recently as November 2002 (whilst Pakistan was touring Zimbabwe) Richard Gilman an American citizen was shot and killed at a police roadblock.

http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_708109.html?menu=

A British UN official was subjected to a terrifying ordeal of violence and robbery while carrying out a food survey in Zimbabwe.

http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_712639.html?menu=

The Presidential Guards patrolling the public streets outside Mugabe's residence have killed at least three, unarmed, innocent people who had inadvertently used these roads during the night curfew. One person was a British tourist, the son of Mr. Rupert Pennant-Rea (a senior official of the Bank of England at the time). These heavily armed guards operate within 200 meters of where the wickets will stand during the Harare-based World Cup Game.

The ICC report states that Diplomatic Missions including the British and Australian, assured the ICC that travelling to Zimbabwe was safe if tourists were "sensible". This information flies in the face of information carried on their web sites which state:

Australian

Australians should avoid large gatherings or public demonstrations, especially in Harare, regional cities and towns. They should maintain a high level of personal security awareness and keep themselves informed of developments that might affect their safety.

Official Australian web site

British

British nationals travelling to Zimbabwe are advised to keep a low profile, maintain a high level of vigilance, avoid situations where there might be tension and stay in touch with world events. Demonstrations and public events should be avoided. There continues to be considerable political tension in both urban and rural areas of Zimbabwe, which has led to incidents of political violence, which have resulted in serious injury and deaths. Visitors should also be aware that an open hand is the political symbol of one of the main political parties and a friendly wave may therefore be misinterpreted as a provocative gesture. Similarly the carrying of the main independent newspapers (Daily News, the Financial Gazette, the Independent and the Standard) in rural areas and even in some urban areas can provoke a hostile reaction from Zanu (PF) supporters.

Official British web site

In summary it is our contention that the ICC security report is not exhaustive and does not convey the fact that a very real safety threat exists especially to ambassadors from those countries labelled as "enemies of the state" by Mugabe.

3. Mugabe Oppressor of his people & Patron of Zimbabwe Cricket

Much has been said and written about Robert Mugabe. As a brilliant politician he has the ability to capitalise on global events such as the World Cup and exploit the international recognition this event will garner. And in the meantime he wages war on the majority of Zimbabweans.

The ICC chose to meet only with officials or representatives of the Mugabe regime who were guaranteed to give Zimbabwe a clean bill of health as far as safety and security goes. Not once did the ICC meet with independent civil society organisations involved in the monitoring of violence in Zimbabwe.

The ICC delegation has expediently, in collusion with Mugabe and agents of the State, being the Army and Police Force, through the publishing of their report, created a veneer of normalcy in Zimbabwe. It is noted with concern that no member of the ICC delegation took the trouble to visit, or interview anyone, in the high-density suburbs, a fifteen-minute drive from their hotel.

The ICC disingenuously suggests that Zimbabweans in general support hosting the world cup in Zimbabwe. This could not be further from the truth and is plainly, deceitful. Zimbabweans supported the call for a boycott of the Pakistan Tour. Never before has attendance at cricket matches been so low.

With all that is happening in Zimbabwe, if you are, as a player called on to shake Robert Mugabe's hand as President of Zimbabwe and Patron of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union, you will be seen to support his regime. And that would be a great pity. It would be a blow to democracy and the pursuit of human rights in Zimbabwe.

You would be letting down the next generation of cricketers and the millions of Zimbabweans, who, in their own way are attempting to turn their country into a place where there is freedom, democracy and the release from hunger and poverty,

We wish you and your family a peaceful 2003 and ask that you make a stand against the terror in Zimbabwe by not playing cricket in our nation.

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