

ECOSOCC - Zambia

STATEMENT ON THE RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ZIMBABWE

Delivered at Ndeke Hotel, Lusaka Zambia, June 25th 2008

We, the Zambia Civil Society Representatives on the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) would like to register our grave concern on the deteriorating political, economic and social situation in Zimbabwe.

We do hereby condemn the calculated harassment, intimidation and deaths of political opponents by the ruling ZANU-PF and the non tolerance being exhibited among the various political stakeholders towards the run-up to the 27th June 2008 runoff elections in that country. These acts are contrary to the provisions of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Principles governing Democratic Elections; the African Union (AU) Declaration on Democracy and UN International Standards for Democratic Free and Fair Elections endorsed by the UN in 2005 and clearly against the constitution of Zimbabwe which also seeks to protect human life and allows for free expression and assembly

We consider the political meltdown in Zimbabwe not only as a national issue for Zimbabwe and the Zimbabweans but a regional and continental problem for Africa and the Africans, as the situation obtaining in that country has the potential for far reaching implications on the entire region. We also believe that such implications can be exemplified by the recent xenophobic attacks experienced in South Africa which we largely attribute to the political, social and economic situation in Zimbabwe.

We would like to commend and support the SADC Chairperson President Levy Mwanawasa SC, who is also the President of Republic Zambia on the firm stance he has taken on the Zimbabwean political situation and his call for the postponement of the Zimbabwean runoff elections. This is a demonstration of his clear leadership on regional issues. We would also like to urge all SADC Heads of States to rally behind their Chairperson and overtly express their support as one way of putting pressure on the Mugabe administration to do the right thing and let the people of Zimbabwe exercise their sovereign right to vote in a free, fair and democratic environment.

We further wish to demand that a high profile delegation led by the SADC Chairperson and supported by other eminent African Statespersons like former President Kenneth Kaunda, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Ambassador Salim Ahmed Salim, should travel to Harare as soon as possible and meet all stakeholders not only to have a negotiated settlement but also to make it clear to President Robert Mugabe that the rest of the region will not sit back and allow his personal agenda of aggrandizement to hurt the political and economic gains of the region.

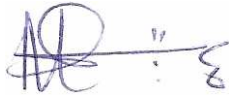
We further call upon the AU to invoke Article 4 (h) of the AU constitutive Act to take action in respect to the grave circumstances bordering on crime against humanity. This will allow the AU to intervene and help contribute to the creation of favourable conditions for the holding of free, fair and credible elections in that country with the intervention of the AU.


Furthermore, we call on the UN to continue with its position and even be more proactive and practical in its response to the gross humanitarian abuses in Zimbabwe and indeed any part of Africa before Africa registers another genocide.

Finally, we wish to register our great concern on the mediation role of the South African President, Thabo Mbeki, on behalf of SADC and hereby challenge him to deliver the postponement of the run-off elections and the subsequent holding of free, fair and credible run-off elections in the shortest possible time in Zimbabwe.

Signed by ECOSOCC Country Representative Organizations:

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