

**ZIMBABWE:**  
**THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION**  
**AND INTERNATIONAL DIVISION**

17 October 2002



international  
crisis group

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## **ZIMBABWE: THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND INTERNATIONAL DIVISION**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Despite the rising humanitarian costs of the crisis in Zimbabwe, the international community remains deeply divided about its response, allowing President Mugabe to believe that he can exploit the policy fissure between – broadly – the West and Africa. The foreign media's emphasis on the plight of white commercial farmers plays into the regime's liberation rhetoric, reinforcing the erroneous but widespread belief in Africa that the West is concerned about Zimbabwe only because white property interests have been harmed. What is happening in Zimbabwe and the lack of a continental response have damaged perceptions of Africa in the wider international community, weakening in the process the promising but still embryonic New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU).

Zimbabwe's crisis of governance is the primary cause of its economic tailspin and food emergency. The ruling ZANU-PF party has consolidated nearly absolute political and economic power in the aftermath of the stolen March 2002 presidential election and the similarly flawed 28-29 September local elections. Both were marked by systematic state-sponsored violence and intimidation, but ZANU-PF officials went even further in the latter case, telling local chiefs and headmen in some areas that if they did not produce a ruling party victory, they would not receive food. Indeed, food is increasingly being used as a political weapon to undermine opponents and reward loyalists.

If current trends are not reversed, there is a real prospect that its political, economic and social foundations will collapse, leaving Zimbabwe a failed state. At the least, the escalating economic

crisis will further destabilise the region, particularly South Africa, by driving tens of thousands more refugees out of Zimbabwe and into the neighbouring states. Destruction of the commercial farming sector, the backbone of the economy, ensures that this is no short term emergency.

Despite government rhetoric, the land invasion strategy has not reformed ownership inequities. Its real objectives – as with the abuse of food aid – have been to punish the opposition and to reward its own supporters. Large estates have routinely been given to ZANU-PF officials and military officers, creating a class of absentee landlords who are growing few crops in the midst of intensifying famine. Mugabe believes that the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) will disintegrate without white farmer support. He wants to retain many white farmers since his government needs the foreign exchange they can generate, but as docile supporters of his party. He has calculatingly taken a temporary hit in production to break the back of commercial farmer support for the MDC. Politically compliant farmers will be allowed to remain, while the assault will continue on those who are more politically active.

The international response is still characterised by too much bark and too little bite. Mugabe himself may be virtually impossible to influence at this stage, but to affect ZANU-PF calculations, key actors must increase the regime's isolation. More credible targeted sanctions – wider, deeper and better enforced than those presently in place in the U.S. and the EU – are a necessary start.

Without serious regional movement, however, there is little hope for achieving meaningful change in Zimbabwe. South Africa and its negotiating partner, Nigeria, can provide ZANU-PF an honourable way out of the crisis by resuming the process they began last spring, before the ruling party walked out, for negotiation of a transitional or interim government leading to an internationally supervised new election.

However, South Africa does not yet appear to be sufficiently convinced of the imminence of the threat to its own stability to act with sufficient energy, especially as it seems to fear the impact of Mugabe's charges that it is in collusion with the West. Therefore, the U.S. and EU, although they should not drop their insistence that more vigorous action regarding Zimbabwe could engender greater support for NEPAD, should, eschew public and presently counter-productive pressure on Pretoria to do more, while increasing quiet engagement with and pressure on the other countries of the Southern African Development Commission (SADC) and Nigeria. If they can be persuaded to act more resolutely, even if only behind the scenes while many remain relatively supportive of Mugabe in public, this will have a positive impact in turn on South Africa's willingness to act.

If it wishes to energise a timely and effective regional response, the wider international community will also need to develop and demonstrate greater understanding of the land issue as it is strongly felt throughout the continent, especially in southern Africa.

The objectives remain an end to the political standoff, restoration of the rule of law, timely retirement of Mugabe and creation of conditions for free and fair elections so that Zimbabwe's citizens can determine their leaders. The division of labour between states applying public pressure and those working in private is the most realistic tactic by which to resolve the crisis before Zimbabwe collapses entirely or more widespread violence erupts.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To the governments of South Africa and Nigeria:**

1. Revive efforts to negotiate an inter-party (ZANU-PF and MDC) solution, with civil

society input, which will require initial pressure to bring ZANU-PF back to the table.

2. Coordinate regional (SADC) and broader African pressures to ensure that ZANU-PF no longer obstructs the process, which should be directed toward achieving a negotiated inter-party solution that includes restoration of the rule of law, genuine land reform, an exit strategy for Mugabe, and establishment of conditions for free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections to be held significantly ahead of the regularly scheduled dates.

### **To the wider international community, especially the governments of the U.S. and EU:**

3. Undertake a more nuanced two-track policy of strong and public unilateral actions to isolate the ZANU-PF regime while quietly engaging with and applying back-stage pressure on key African states and SADC to encourage them to more resolute action.

#### **(a) To isolate the ZANU-PF regime:**

- enforce existing targeted sanctions rigorously, tighten loopholes and, when international legal obligations require host states to permit Zimbabwean officials to attend conferences, restrict delegates narrowly to the immediate conference area of the city in question;
- expand the list of those targeted to cover the regime's commercial supporters and bankers (including safari operators fronting for ZANU-PF economic interests), key army and police officers, ZANU-PF officials one tier below those currently on the list, and family members of those targeted, particularly those studying in the West;
- use the International Convention Against Torture to arrest senior members of ZANU-PF responsible for Zimbabwe having one of the highest rates of torture in the world if these individuals do travel into their jurisdiction without the benefit of international legal immunity;
- mount a campaign to expose the extent of stolen assets for which ZANU-PF is responsible, particularly by identifying assets held outside Zimbabwe in countries

that will not participate in any asset freeze against ruling party officials; and

- ❑ increase assistance for civil society and opposition institutions, particularly in the form of direct budget and operational support, to lay the foundation for a return to democracy.
- (b) To engage quietly with key African states and SADC and apply back-stage pressure to encourage more resolute action:
  - ❑ reduce the rhetoric that plays into Mugabe's anti-colonial posture and stimulates regional concern about being perceived as carrying out the West's policies;
  - ❑ continue quietly to condition support for NEPAD upon more robust regional action on Zimbabwe; and
  - ❑ concentrate efforts at persuasion upon Nigeria and the members of SADC other than South Africa.
- 4. Engage more directly and systematically on the issue of land reform, focusing initially on listening to the concerns of southern African governments, opposition parties and civil society organisations about unequal ownership.

#### **To the Food Donors and Operational Relief Agencies:**

5. Shine a spotlight on the politicisation of food aid in Zimbabwe and make all food relief conditional on ensuring that everyone receives assistance regardless of political affiliation.

6. Specifically target displaced persons.
7. Work urgently with the government to have more implementing partners approved for food distribution.
8. Minimise controversy by providing maize wherever possible from non-genetically modified supplies or, if this is not feasible, substituting as necessary other grains such as wheat.

#### **To the Government of Zimbabwe:**

9. Return to the negotiating table with the MDC, cease violence and repression against the opposition and civil society, and ameliorate the food crisis by stopping use of food as a political weapon, liberalising its import, and approving additional implementing partners to distribute it.

#### **To the Opposition MDC:**

10. Clarify the party's position on land reform and the differences between it and ZANU-PF on implementation.

**Harare/Brussels, 17 October 2002**

## ZIMBABWE: THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

### I. INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's crisis continues to divide the international community.<sup>1</sup> This division, largely between key Western nations and Africa, has encouraged the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), to hold fast to its policy of looting national assets while destroying the political opposition and independent voices. President Robert Mugabe and his top supporters believe they can effectively exploit differences between Western and African policymakers. The international media's over-concentration on the plight of white commercial farmers has given Mugabe's liberation rhetoric greater resonance in many African quarters, reinforcing belief that the West cares about Zimbabwe only because whites suffer. In fact, Western concerns include the following:

- ❑ Zimbabwe was once one of the most successful countries in Africa but the systematic destruction of its institutions and economy has worsened global perceptions of the continent's political and economic development.
- ❑ The assault on private property – and the lack of an effective response, particularly from South Africa – has shaken investor confidence in Africa.
- ❑ The extensive and brutal attack on democratic institutions and human rights encompasses a

stolen election, one of the highest torture rates in the world, criminal corruption, endemic, state-sponsored violence and systematic destruction of the rule of law.

- ❑ Government policies have turned a drought of the kind that has been handled well in the past into a food emergency, creating conditions to use food as a political weapon and deeply undercutting long-term production capabilities.
- ❑ With serious impact on the economies of neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa, already evident, a further meltdown risks destabilising the southern Africa region by producing more refugees and crime and reducing foreign investment.
- ❑ All this casts grave doubt on the efficacy of new institutions – primarily the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) – designed to improve Africa's political stability and economic prosperity.

However, both the situation in Zimbabwe and the international response are dynamic. With a more effective approach, the situation is salvageable. Already, senior figures in the region and in the broader international community share a common assessment of the culpability of the ruling party. As a highly placed South African official explained:

It's not only Mugabe who is responsible. The entire ZANU-PF leadership is stuck in the past. They are like us in the early 1980s. They are like the North Koreans. The military was trained in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and

<sup>1</sup> ICG has reported extensively on the crisis as it has built over the past several years. See most recently, ICG Africa Report N°47, *Zimbabwe: What Next?*, 14 June 2002, and ICG Africa Report N°41, *Zimbabwe at the Crossroads: Transition or Conflict?*, 22 March 2002.

they can't get away from it. They are a block against change.<sup>2</sup>

However, President Mbeki of South Africa and other African leaders have a very different view from key Western governments of how to affect change in Zimbabwe. They believe that the land issue must be resolved first and that this can best be facilitated through quiet engagement, and they are highly sensitive to suggestions that Africa must do more. President Mbeki told a recent interviewer:

I think basically what some people want us to do is to walk into Zimbabwe and overthrow the government.... So when people say: 'Do something', we say to them: 'Do what?' And nobody gives an answer because they know when they say 'do something' what they mean is march across the Limpopo and overthrow the government of President Mugabe, which we are not going to do.<sup>3</sup>

This report attempts to explain the divide between the West and African leaders on strategy and tactics for addressing the Zimbabwe crisis<sup>4</sup> and to present practical steps for bridging it. A subsequent report will focus on the issue of land ownership and land reform in Zimbabwe and its impact on South Africa and the broader region.

The situation on the ground continues to deteriorate as the crisis in governance drives a drastic economic slide and food emergency. One economist observed, "Zimbabweans have begun to accept a degree of violence as normal".<sup>5</sup> The ruling ZANU-PF party has consolidated nearly absolute political and economic power in the aftermath of the stolen March 2002 presidential elections. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is in disarray. Since the election, President Mugabe has put in place a legal infrastructure clearly designed to extinguish dissent. Zimbabwe's public and private

assets are being systematically looted by the ruling party hierarchy, its commercial supporters, and key military officers.

Political developments have also been unfavourable. A South African political analyst warns: "There is a group in Zimbabwe within the ruling party that is convinced they can do without the world, and they are headed for a complete collapse".<sup>6</sup>

Negotiations between ZANU-PF and the MDC that South Africa and Nigeria encouraged after the March presidential election remain suspended following a walk-out by the ruling party. The 28-29 September 2002 district elections were much like the presidential vote six months earlier, except that the systematic state-sponsored violence and intimidation were more blatant in the absence of foreign observers. The greatest change in the past half-year is that denial of food to opposition strongholds has replaced overt violence as the government's principle tool of repression and control.

Large estates taken from white farmers have routinely been given to ZANU-PF officials and military officers, who enjoy them as weekend retreats but leave the land idle in the midst of intensifying famine. The President's wife, Grace Mugabe, received one of the most sought-after properties – worth an estimated U.S.\$100 million – which includes a 27-room mansion.<sup>7</sup> Other Mugabe family beneficiaries have included two of the president's sisters, his brother-in-law and his wife's nephew. Christopher Chingosho – the provincial lands chairman – allocated himself six farms.<sup>8</sup> Instead of reducing inequalities – the stated objective – the land invasion strategy is being applied to further enrich members of the ruling party and their supporters in the security services and to destroy the white commercial farmers as an important MDC constituency, albeit one overemphasised by ZANU-PF.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>3</sup> *Sunday Times* (South Africa), 14 October 2002.

<sup>4</sup> As illustration of the distance between the West and Africa, note the remarks of President Sam Nujoma of Namibia at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, August-September 2002, who after seeing the standing ovations received by President Mugabe, said, "I just want to make it categorically clear that if the EU does not lift the [targeted] sanctions against Zimbabwe, the whole African Union will also impose economic sanctions against Europe". *The Star* (South Africa), 2 September 2002.

<sup>5</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

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<sup>6</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>7</sup> *Zimbabwe Independent*, 23 August 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Extensive lists are being compiled by Zimbabwean organisations of high level party and military officials that are benefiting from the land grab. On Chingosho, see *Washington Times*, 22 August 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Farmers in Matabeleland claim that the government is writing letters to "loyal white commercial farmers" urging them to continue to farm. *The Zimbabwe Standard*, 25

As bad as the present situation is, it could easily and quickly worsen. Especially if the food crisis degenerates into full scale famine, political opposition could turn to violence, either as a calculated decision or as the outcome of food riots. Either eventuality would surely result in a redoubling of ZANU-PF violence and repression. The MDC has not followed through on mass protest actions it threatened in the late spring. Party leaders decided after much internal debate to concentrate for the moment on strengthening the MDC's internal organisation. The prospect that such actions will be attempted and that a draconian government response will lead to a major bloodbath, however, remains very real. Even the MDC's recent decision to begin small-scale campaigns of defiance of laws could elicit a severe backlash from the security services.<sup>10</sup>

Any of these scenarios would trigger greater regional instability and further erode international confidence in Africa as a whole. Even maintenance of the current status quo – the best that can be hoped for in the absence of a strong international attack on the problem – will ensure a level of retrograde instability and crisis that will continue to damage Zimbabwe, destabilise the region, dampen investor interest, and undermine Africa's new institutions and priorities.

## II. THE ESCALATING CRISIS

### A. CREATING AND MANIPULATING FOOD SHORTAGES

Although a serious drought has had some impact on Zimbabwe's cereal production, the acute food crisis across the country results from specific government policies. Little food is being produced because the government has not extended support to small farmers and has dismantled the commercial food sector. Maize output has fallen by two-thirds compared to last year's already depressed numbers<sup>11</sup> and wheat production by more than half.<sup>12</sup> The public's purchasing power has been eroded by inflation and unemployment. The government's monopoly on imports and control of foreign exchange ensure that the crisis will worsen.<sup>13</sup> Donors have been slow to intervene given the difficulties of working with the current government and Agricultural Minister Joseph Made's initial denial of shortages. There has been severe manipulation of the commercial food import system, and to a lesser extent of internationally donated food aid. It is estimated that 6.7 million Zimbabweans will require food aid by the end of the year,<sup>14</sup> and malnutrition rates are rising sharply.<sup>15</sup>

That ZANU-PF is using food to punish MDC supporters and reward allies is widely acknowledged to ICG in off-the-record comments

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<sup>11</sup> UN crop assessment, cited in IRIN, 3 September 2002.

<sup>12</sup> This is unrelated to the drought, as wheat is a winter crop and grown under irrigation. The government prevented most commercial wheat farmers from growing wheat. ICG interviews, September and October 2002. Small scale cultivators are traditionally the backbone producers of maize, in particular making up for shortfalls in the production of that staple food crop when market prices made it unattractive to the commercial sector. The small scale maize producers have not done so this year, due both to poor support from the government and the unfavourable weather.

<sup>13</sup> In mid-October Tony Hall, the U.S. ambassador to the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation, said that Zimbabwe would face a "major famine" if the government did not remove its restrictions to importing and distributing food. *Independent on Line* (South Africa), 11 October 2002.

<sup>14</sup> This is the estimate produced by a September UN/NGO assessment.

<sup>15</sup> "We are seeing a frightening and rapid deterioration in the condition of many children", said UNICEF's representative in Harare, Festo Kavishe. Wasting rates have increased to 7.1 per cent, underweight rates to 24.4 per cent, and stunting to 43.2 per cent. IRIN, 12 September 2002.

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August 2002. The MDC in actuality is multi-racial and cross-regional.

<sup>10</sup> The MDC announced that it would begin to defy security laws by holding meetings and rallies without police clearance. BBC Online, 26 September 2002.



by humanitarian officials on the ground and officials in the commercial food network.<sup>16</sup> Few officials are willing to confront these issues publicly, because of the implications for operational agencies on the ground. An example is the district of Binga in Matabeleland North. On 25 May 2002, the government sealed off the local food warehouse and stopped the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace from implementing its relief program for 30,000 children for two months. The ZANU-PF youth militia had accused the Commission of supporting the MDC. When the blockade on the food was removed by the militia at the end of July, distribution resumed on very restricted terms.<sup>17</sup> However, after losing the September district elections there to the MDC, ZANU-PF told the Catholic Commission and Save the Children-UK to stop distributing food in the area, saying it was punishing villagers for voting for the opposition.<sup>18</sup>

Another example is the Bulilimamangwe constituency, in Matabeleland South, near Gwanda, where, after the MDC candidate won the September district election, ZANU-PF militia and war veterans threatened that the government would no longer provide food because the area was “selling the country to Britain”. A villager reported: “At the meeting the war veterans told us that we would no longer receive any food from the government”.<sup>19</sup>

A number of ZANU-PF officials have openly threatened to use food as a weapon to the point of selective starvation. For example, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Abednico Ncube admonished villagers in Matabeleland:

As long as you value the government of the day you will not starve, but we do not want people who vote for colonialists and then come to us when they want food. You cannot vote for the MDC and expect ZANU-PF to help you....You have to vote for ZANU-PF

candidates ... before government starts rethinking your entitlement to this food aid.<sup>20</sup>

The most remarkable admission came from ZANU-PF Organising Secretary Didymus Mutasa:

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.<sup>21</sup>

Three groups are particularly vulnerable. First, significant acceleration in the mortality rate of those afflicted with HIV/AIDS is likely, given that this group is more vulnerable to inadequate nutrition. Since Zimbabwe's infection rate is the second highest in the world, the food crisis threatens early death for thousands.<sup>22</sup> Secondly, vulnerability has also increased for black farm workers, many of whom have been made homeless and destitute by the land invasion strategy. The 1.5 million farm workers and family members are perceived as mainly MDC supporters and have had their access to commercially imported food restricted.<sup>23</sup> Thirdly, the elderly, sick and orphaned are increasingly falling through the large gaps in the social safety net.

Most food now comes into Zimbabwe commercially, not as aid. ZANU-PF has politicised its distribution through a variety of methods, including: monopolising imports;<sup>24</sup> distributing it based on political calculations; controlling eligibility for its purchase and for the milling of grain; removing MDC supporters from food-for-work programs; allowing party officials or commercial allies to profit from re-sale of food at exorbitant black market prices; confiscating maize at informal roadblocks; putting the party's youth militia in control of grain depots; and, requiring party membership as a condition for purchasing food in some locations.<sup>25</sup> The system is controlled down to

<sup>16</sup> Mafia-like food rackets are controlled by ZANU-PF cronies and military officers. Black market food prices are two to three times the official price. IRIN, 3 September 2002.

<sup>17</sup> *The Times* (UK), 1 August 2002.

<sup>18</sup> *Zimbabwe Daily News*, 11 October 2002. Subsequently, the same paper reported that at least two villagers were said to have died from starvation in Binga. It quoted Joel Gabbuza, the local member of parliament, as saying: “With the ban of Save the Children UK, we are likely to witness more deaths because people have virtually nothing to eat”. *Zimbabwe Daily News*, 16 October 2002.

<sup>19</sup> *Zimbabwe Daily News*, 12 October 2002.

<sup>20</sup> *Zimbabwe Standard*, 21 July 2002.

<sup>21</sup> *Sunday Times* (UK), 11 August 2002. Zimbabwe's population is twelve million.

<sup>22</sup> “People are dying quickly and silently, hidden from view”, one Zimbabwean professional claimed to ICG, August 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Vulnerability is increased for the many black farm workers who lack full Zimbabwean documentation, having come from neighbouring Malawi or Mozambique.

<sup>24</sup> The Grain Marketing Board (GMB) controls all food imports and is the only legal importer of food.

<sup>25</sup> ICG interviews in Zimbabwe, August 2002, and *Africa Confidential*, 26 July 2002.

local retailers at the village level.<sup>26</sup> Thousands of children have been pulled out of school because the state is not providing food to schools in many locations.<sup>27</sup>

District elections were delayed a month, to September 2002, to allow the strategy time to reduce MDC support. "This is slow torture, and there is nothing anyone can do about it", said a Zimbabwean advocate.<sup>28</sup> For others it brings back memories of 1984 in Matabeleland, when ZANU-PF used a similar strategy.<sup>29</sup> One high level ZANU-PF official pulled no punches: "You cannot vote for the MDC and expect ZANU-PF to help you".<sup>30</sup>

Political manipulation of food is not entirely new. Zimbabwe has always been a net exporter of maize, and the last few years have seen an increase in political manipulation of the grain trade. As influential party officials began to profit from it, the strategic grain reserve, normally maintained at about 300,000 to 400,000 metric tons, was emptied. The cynical calculation, said one grain trader, is that "ZANU-PF knew the rest of the world would have no choice but to feed the country".<sup>31</sup> The food aid system has also been under government pressure. ZANU-PF has prevented the UN World Food Programme from registering sufficient implementing partners to expand operations and has threatened others with de-registration.<sup>32</sup> By sustaining the food crisis, the government has been able to maximise opportunities for black market racketeering. WFP's executive director raised concerns about distribution on the basis of political affiliation directly with the government,<sup>33</sup> but the international relief community is not well positioned to counter such official abuses.

Worse, government policies virtually ensure an enduring food problem. The Famine Early Warning System reports that over 90 per cent of Zimbabwe's farmers have not received maize seed from the government's input support program. The budget for this critical effort is estimated to be only 5 per cent of overall need.<sup>34</sup>

## B. THE ECONOMY: DETERIORATION AND CORRUPTION

ZANU-PF economic policies have transformed one of Africa's most diversified economies into a pre-industrial, peasant-based economy. Ironically – and despite President Mugabe's emphasis on economic sovereignty – they are making the country more vulnerable to having its assets stripped by government officials who collude with foreign investors eager to pick up Zimbabwe's institutional and natural resources at fire-sale prices. Oil-for-assets deals with Libya may be only the tip of the iceberg. While the government expresses faith in populist policies, land seizures, price controls and a fixed exchange rate seem a recipe for ruin. With 75 per cent of Zimbabweans now living in poverty, the UN Economic Commission on Africa concluded, "Zimbabwe is facing the worst crisis in its history".<sup>35</sup>

Farm invasions have devastated the country's engine for economic growth, agriculture. Export losses in that sector alone reach U.S.\$400 million.<sup>36</sup> With commercial farming being systematically dismantled, the ripple effects are felt throughout the economy. Many businesses geared to supporting exports have also suffered. Additionally, the government has begun issuing eviction notices to MDC urban supporters as the land grab spreads to city apartments, houses and condominiums, most of which belong to blacks.<sup>37</sup>

Poor fiscal management, including a projected deficit of 19 per cent of GDP in 2002, and dismal monetary policy that refuses to devalue the currency, are taking a heavy toll. Most firms operate only two or three days per week, and business confidence is at an all-time low.<sup>38</sup> Many companies

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<sup>26</sup> Commodity traders refer to the "Manica Connection" as the ZANU-PF core group from that province, which allegedly controls most maize delivered to the GMB. It reportedly organises road transport for imported grains from the port of arrival into Zimbabwe. *Africa Confidential*, 9 August 2002.

<sup>27</sup> This is above and beyond the hundreds of thousands of black farm worker children who no longer attend school because they were thrown off the farms on which they lived since birth.

<sup>28</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>29</sup> ICG interviews in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in an op-ed by Ed Royce in the *Washington Times*, 29 August 2002.

<sup>31</sup> ICG interview, September 2002.

<sup>32</sup> Refugees International briefing paper, 16 September 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>34</sup> IRIN, 1 October 2002.

<sup>35</sup> *Business Day* (South Africa), 18 July 2002.

<sup>36</sup> *Africa Confidential*, 26 July 2002.

<sup>37</sup> Correspondence with ICG, 26 September 2002.

<sup>38</sup> "Zimbabwe Country Report", Economist Intelligence Unit, August 2002.

have already closed, unable to purchase raw materials with foreign currency, thus exacerbating both unemployment and a general shortage of goods. Real GDP is forecast to drop 9.6 per cent this year, capping a three-year fall of more than 21 per cent.<sup>39</sup> Per capita GDP, adjusted for the real exchange rate, is significantly below U.S.\$1 per day, the World Bank's standard for "extremely poor nations".<sup>40</sup> Inflation is nearly 120 per cent, and the unofficial exchange rate is at least fourteen times higher than the official peg, dramatically hurting exporters and the current account deficit.<sup>41</sup> The rate on the parallel market has doubled since the March presidential election.

Zimbabwe's mounting external debts – U.S.\$24 million to the Southern Africa power pool and U.S.\$12 million to Hydro de Cahora of Mozambique, as well as the suspension of IMF and Western economic assistance – have furthered financial dependence on alternative sources of income, almost solely diamond mining in the Congo and oil deals with Libya.<sup>42</sup> Some debtors are increasingly frustrated with Zimbabwe's lack of payment. Hydro de Cahora recently threatened to cut electricity supplies progressively.<sup>43</sup> Mugabe further harmed investor confidence when his speech to the UN Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg in early September contained a threat to expropriate all foreign owned businesses in Zimbabwe.<sup>44</sup>

ZANU-PF has created a mafia economy over the last few years. It owns many larger companies, and parastatals have become convenient vehicles for corruption and patronage. New opportunities for corruption are being discovered at a "fevered pitch", according to a Zimbabwean businessman.<sup>45</sup> The formal economy and treasury are almost bankrupt, while ZANU-PF officials continue to be enriched by predatory policies that favour individual over state profit.

The Congo intervention remains a major source of profit. The UN panel investigating exploitation of wealth in that country is still uncovering evidence of the depth of Zimbabwean asset stripping. Aside from diamonds and other minerals that the military companies mine and then ship – uncut – to Asia where the real profit is realised, officers and ZANU-PF officials have been buying maize and selling it at a huge profit to the military to feed itself in the Congo.

Another practice that illustrates looting of the state involves high ranking ZANU-PF and military officials who use the fixed exchange rate (55 Zimbabwean dollars to the U.S. dollar) to send American currency to foreign accounts, leaving half those dollars in the foreign account while bringing the rest back at the unofficial exchange rate of approximately 700 Zimbabwean dollars to one. Foreign exchange is thus not being used for any productive purpose and further holds economic growth hostage to racketeering and personal enrichment.<sup>46</sup> The profits, however, give the ruling elite clear interest in colluding to keep President Mugabe in power.

Despite Mugabe's vilification of white farmers, evidence is increasingly emerging that his principal local facilitators, financiers, money launderers and arms suppliers are primarily white Zimbabweans.<sup>47</sup> They provide a front for ZANU-PF to conduct business internationally and in return make millions of U.S. dollars. Another irony, given Mugabe's emphasis on sovereignty, is the extent to which he appears willing to exchange state assets with Libya for fuel. The long-term implications are problematic. In mid-September, Libya renewed a U.S.\$360 million deal to cover Zimbabwe's fuel imports for 2003. In exchange, it will receive equity stakes in mining and real estate. To meet the terms, considerable assets will have to be transferred.<sup>48</sup> This will require further expropriations, justified inevitably by more anti-colonial rhetoric. Libya, which is already the third largest shareholder, seeks the controlling interest in the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe currently held by South Africa's ABSA Bank.<sup>49</sup> Gaddafi allegedly wants the bank to handle

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "Banks and Banking 2002 Survey", *The Independent* (Harare), 9 August 2002.

<sup>41</sup> IRIN, 25 July 2002.

<sup>42</sup> IRIN, 13 September 2002.

<sup>43</sup> *Business Day* (Johannesburg), 10 September 2002.

<sup>44</sup> Text of President Robert Mugabe's speech at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, August-September 2002.

<sup>45</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>46</sup> ICG interviews with Zimbabwean officials, August and September 2002.

<sup>47</sup> ICG interviews, August and September 2002.

<sup>48</sup> ICG interviews, September 2002.

<sup>49</sup> *Zimbabwe Financial Gazette*, 22-28 August 2002.

his growing African investment portfolio.<sup>50</sup> Zimbabwe's sovereignty was further undermined recently when a Libyan oil company called in a U.S. \$63 million debt, thus slowing fuel imports and worsening an energy crisis.

### C. STATE SPONSORED VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION

*We believe in democracy and the rule of law... We fought for these values.*

President Robert Mugabe<sup>51</sup>

The above comment notwithstanding, ZANU-PF has systematically harassed, arrested, tortured and intimidated the political opposition and civil society. "Mugabe has shamelessly reincarnated and re-enacted Rhodesia", charged a Zimbabwean political analyst.<sup>52</sup> Torture is a major tool in the ruling party's arsenal,<sup>53</sup> with over 1,000 cases documented already this year,<sup>54</sup> and laws against freedom of speech and association have been selectively applied to decimate the opposition's organising efforts. Rape continues to be used for political control. Union leaders have been arrested, the latest of whom are the heads of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ).<sup>55</sup> The UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers expressed "outrage over the further

deterioration of the rule of law in Zimbabwe",<sup>56</sup> and society in general continues to be militarised with officers serving in most key institutions.

While the government may view overt violence as a less useful means of control than food, it nonetheless continues. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum received evidence of political violence prior to the September district elections against teachers in eight of the country's ten provinces, causing closure of 30 schools. Teachers were also threatened with termination of employment if they supported the MDC.<sup>57</sup> Violence, food diversion and denial of resources have emasculated MDC rural support.

Specific threats, torture, and even murder<sup>58</sup> dissuaded roughly half the potential MDC candidates from running for district offices. Roughly 700 were either too intimidated to run or were barred from registering.<sup>59</sup> Some MDC candidates were hauled off to registration centres and given a choice to withdraw or see their home village burned.<sup>60</sup> A late September count by one embassy found 77 MDC candidates in jail,<sup>61</sup> while the MDC claimed immediately before the election that 70 candidates were under arrest on false charges.<sup>62</sup> The Public Order and Security Act has been widely used to subvert basic freedoms of assembly and speech.

ZANU-PF can expect to have a stranglehold over the media by the end of 2002. New legislation requires the main print dailies to register by mid-October. The government can seize the assets of those that do not comply and refuse to renew work permits for difficult journalists. One of two independent radio stations was bombed in August, while foreign media organisations must pay steep registration fees to stay in the country.

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<sup>50</sup> *Sunday Independent* (South Africa), 15 September 2002.

<sup>51</sup> President Robert Mugabe addressing the World Summit on Sustainable Development, August 2002.

<sup>52</sup> ICG interview, September 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Most torture victims are MDC officials or supporters but others include trade unionists and, increasingly, black commercial farm workers. United States Institute of Peace, "Zimbabwe and the Politics of Torture", Special Report 92, August 2002. A South African paper noted, "Diplomats have begun comparing the brutality with the darkest days of Idi Amin's rule in Uganda, a quarter century ago". *Sunday Times*, 6 October 2002.

<sup>54</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, October 2002 monthly report. Zimbabwean human rights organisations are keeping lists of torture victims as well as offering treatment to the victims. *The Guardian* (UK), 12 October 2002.

<sup>55</sup> The head of the Progressive Teachers Union was reportedly tortured and "seriously injured" in detention. IRIN, 11 October 2002. IRIN also reported on 15 October 2002 that 627 striking members of that union have been fired by the Public Service Commission, which has declared the strike action illegal.

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<sup>56</sup> IRIN, 25 September 2002. The Rapporteur, Dato Param Cumaraswamy, called on the international community to "continue its pressures and double its efforts to get the government of Zimbabwe to comply with its obligations under the constitution and international law. The prevailing lawlessness in the government is not only a menace to the people of Zimbabwe but if allowed unabated could threaten peace, democracy and the rule of law in the African region".

<sup>57</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, September 2002.

<sup>58</sup> In Hurungwe West, an MDC member was hacked to death a week before the by-election by suspected ZANU-PF supporters, Associated Press, 28 September 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> *Sunday Independent* (South Africa), 29 September 2002.

<sup>61</sup> Correspondence with ICG, September 2002.

<sup>62</sup> Associated Press, 28 September 2002.

The judiciary also is under siege, with fewer and fewer independent voices on the bench. After one judge made the mistake of sentencing Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa to three months in jail for contempt of court, he was handcuffed and paraded through the capital city in a Land Rover. Another was dragged from his courtroom by war veterans and assaulted at the government complex.<sup>63</sup> “Zimbabwe has a presumption in its legal system that one is innocent until proven guilty”, a civil society leader asserted. “This presumption is thrown away whenever it is someone from the opposition, independent media or civil society who is being arrested or investigated”.<sup>64</sup>

The government is introducing a bill that will criminalise donor funding to Zimbabwean NGOs and trusts and force them to register. This is the civil society version of the Political Parties Financing Act, which supposedly cut off foreign funding of parties, though ZANU-PF still receives major assistance from Libya.

The government is also advancing plans to try Morgan Tsvangirai and two other senior MDC figures on treason charges, involving accusations that they plotted to kill President Mugabe. The indictments were handed down on 30 September 2002. While the trial is set for 11 November, there is speculation it may be delayed to allow Mugabe further time to consolidate his power while the case is pending, and the opposition’s leaders are kept in limbo.

### III. ZIMBABWEAN FAULT LINES AND STRATEGIES

#### A. ZANU-PF

The ruling party is divided over when (not whether) to seek partial rapprochement with the broader international community. Some officials feel this should be attempted only after further exploitation of national resources. They are considering, for example, such steps as declaring that “permanent residents” (as distinct from “citizens”) cannot own property, which would open new opportunities for expropriation of houses, businesses and even mines. Many of these people recognise what they would lose in a transparent and democratic system. One went so far as to say that exploitation of the land issue had only just begun and would last another decade.<sup>65</sup>

Others within ZANU-PF want normalisation at the earliest opportunity, arguing that the party now controls both the commanding heights of the economy and key security organs and would benefit substantially from the broader national recovery that requires a more moderate strategy. “If they manage to normalise capital accumulation, they can dramatically increase their profits”, pointed out a Zimbabwean analyst. “Some of their party ideologues have said for some time that the process of violent accumulation is a prelude to a more peaceful period of growth”.<sup>66</sup>

Mugabe’s position is central to this debate. He wants to be seen as concluding the anti-colonial revolution with successful land reform that he hopes will translate into increased popularity for his party. However, his vulnerability to charges of corruption and human rights abuse leave him too insecure to trust full normalisation. Any meaningful economic reform package would need to include looser controls on the exchange rate. Given that reform advocate Simba Makoni was dropped as finance minister in the late August reshuffle, it is likely that the hardliners are presently dominant.

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<sup>63</sup> Amnesty International press release, 2 September 2002.

<sup>64</sup> Correspondence with ICG, 4 September 2002.

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<sup>65</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002. A South African made a slightly different prediction: “They want to wait until the white farmers are out, and then they will be willing to deal”. ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>66</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

Youth militias pose a special problem for ZANU-PF. The party used them in its intimidation strategy during the presidential election but has abruptly dropped them in many locations, even closing some camps in June 2002. The pattern appears to be to recruit youths for a specific period and task before discarding them and recruiting substitutes when a new task emerges. This happened before the district elections. The compulsory national service proposed by ZANU-PF would ensure a steady stream of replacements, who could be indoctrinated to hate the MDC.<sup>67</sup> A Zimbabwean human rights advocate, however, points out the risks:

The militia system is destroying lives. There were rapes of female militia in the camps. After undertaking violent actions, many of the kids were simply thrown back to their home communities with no transition. The kids are angry at how they are being treated. This could rebound on ZANU-PF.<sup>68</sup>

War veterans are another potential problem. “Many of the war veterans believed all of the promises the government made but now they can see that they are being used”, said one of their number. Another added: “The war veterans were used by ZANU-PF, and now they are being cast aside and replaced by the youth militia”.<sup>69</sup>

Increasing disillusionment is also associated with the land program. Many war veterans feel that top government officials are receiving the bulk of the benefits while ignoring their needs. Many members of the National Liberation War Veterans Association have formed a political party, the New People’s Party, to challenge ZANU-PF in future elections. “We decided this after realising that some of the politburo members in ZANU-PF have forgotten us”, said a war veteran, “Look at how we are being harassed and left out of the land redistribution exercise”.<sup>70</sup>

The military is a wild card, especially if mass protests occur. Some elements are alleged to support the MDC and to have been disappointed it did not act in the aftermath of the election. Many of

Mugabe’s campaign promises to the rank and file have not been kept, and salary reviews conducted after the election tended to benefit those soldiers who had helped the party’s intimidation strategy. “The top levels cannot predict what the middle and lower levels will do in a crisis”, alleged one war veteran. “Many officers feel that Mugabe is a liability. There is lots of uneasiness in the military”.<sup>71</sup>

## 1. The Mugabe Succession

Mugabe is 78, and the contest inside ZANU-PF for his replacement is underway. While he at one point indicated that would step down in two years time,<sup>72</sup> he has said this before, and he is unlikely to abdicate if any of his self-perceived legacy were at risk or he felt vulnerable to prosecution. At the least, a voluntary retirement would have to ensure impunity and physical security for the president and his inner circle. Because he has drawn so many others into a web of complicity, there will be great reluctance on the part of these officials to see him held accountable. One Zimbabwean policy analyst concurred: “President Mbeki and others must give Mugabe assurances that there will be no recriminations in order to unlock the current impasse”.<sup>73</sup>

It is possible that once he concludes the land issue has been dealt with to his satisfaction, Mugabe could claim success and step down if he has what he deems adequate assurances. Under the constitution, Zimbabwe would have to hold a presidential election in two to three months. The ruling party is seeking to amend the constitution, however, to allow a transfer of power without a new election. A handful of MDC parliamentarians must vote with ZANU-PF for the amendment to succeed. The MDC opposes the amendment but says the government is trying to buy individual votes.

Mugabe may also be placing retired military officers in key positions throughout the government to further protect his person and political interests once he leaves office – building “a fortress beyond State House”, as one Zimbabwean analyst put it.<sup>74</sup> A war veteran elaborated: “Mugabe relies on the

<sup>67</sup> Training manuals used with the youth militias claim the MDC agenda is to return colonial rule to Zimbabwe. ICG interviews in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>68</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>69</sup> ICG interviews in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>70</sup> *The Zimbabwe Standard*, 14 July 2002.

<sup>71</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>72</sup> President Mugabe’s constitutional term (for the office he won again in March 2002) runs until 2008.

<sup>73</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>74</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

military leadership. They are more dependable in a crisis situation, and are sworn to secrecy”.<sup>75</sup>

One potential successor, Simba Makoni, was fired as finance minister in August 2002, after he supported currency devaluation.<sup>76</sup> For the moment Speaker of the Parliament Emmerson Mnangagwa appears to be Mugabe’s most likely choice. He also has the backing of the Karanga ethnic group, mainly in the Southeast of the country. During the last two years, he has cultivated relations with foreign governments generally regarded as friendly to Zimbabwe. He has remained open to the international media in an effort to raise his profile, and, as a former intelligence minister and justice minister, is experienced. Though he is positioned to benefit from the ongoing asset stripping, he is thought likely to reengage with the IMF and World Bank.<sup>77</sup>

Mnangagwa does not command wide strength among the elite of the ruling party, drawing his support instead from the military and intelligence and from control of ZANU-PF finances and patronage. If the party decision is made democratically, he would likely not prevail. There is a significant split, with roots in both politics and business, between Mnangagwa and an influential former army commander, Solomon (Rex) Mujuru, who apparently backed Makoni and is aligned with another deposed minister (Home Affairs), John Nkomo.<sup>78</sup> Fearing that they might be squeezed out in a Mnangagwa presidency, some senior members of the Mugabe inner circle are attempting to build an alliance against him of the three main ethnic groups (Zezuru, Manica and Ndebele, the triple alliance).<sup>79</sup> They supported Makoni until he fell from grace and now seek a candidate from within their group, but most contenders are badly tainted by corruption charges. Nevertheless, the anti-Mnangagwa coalition is growing rapidly.

With Mugabe’s blessing, three younger members of the Cabinet are emerging as potential kingmakers.

Information Minister Jonathan Moyo, Agriculture Minister Joseph Made and Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa are seen as hardliners on both domestic and international issue. These three, with the same ethnic composition as the triple alliance, are Mugabe’s most consulted advisers. The president has told visitors and friends that the old politicians are a spent force, and he is recruiting these and other young officials to prepare a future leadership that will continue to consult him closely.<sup>80</sup>

ZANU-PF holds a national convention in December 2002 that may give hints of new power alignments. Reportedly many delegates are anti-Mnangagwa. However the presidential succession eventually is handled by the party, though, Mugabe’s departure, whether sooner or later, will not resolve many fundamental problems. Full return to democracy and the rule of law is a prerequisite for real change, and internationally supervised elections, not an internal party decision, will be key to that effort.

## B. THE OPPOSITION

The MDC’s main accomplishment since the March presidential election has been to survive relatively intact. Intra-party arguments are fierce, however, over whether to embark on mass protests. In the immediate aftermath of the vote, the party president, Morgan Tsvangirai, and others hinted these could be imminent, but they did not materialise. Although those supporting mass action are increasing, the official position remains cautious. “Mass action would sacrifice thousands of lives”, said a top MDC official, “If we confront ZANU-PF head on, lose people, and then don’t push ahead and sustain the effort, it will be a massive defeat”.<sup>81</sup> However, a grassroots official stated:

The general sentiment is increasingly supportive of mass action. The MDC youth are particularly supportive. The younger people are even willing to take up arms, but the leadership is not. Party discipline prevents any unauthorised action, but the MDC youth are complaining at the branch level upward.<sup>82</sup>

A Zimbabwean political analyst concurred: “The young urban underclass are the most radicalised.

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<sup>75</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>76</sup> President Mugabe has repeatedly called those who advocated devaluation saboteurs and enemies of the state. See, for example, his speech opening Parliament, 27 July 2002.

<sup>77</sup> ICG interviews in Zimbabwe, and *Africa Confidential*, 26 July 2002.

<sup>78</sup> Mujuru is believed, like Mnangagwa, to favour efforts to regain Western aid and investment.

<sup>79</sup> Mugabe is Zezuru and has had two deputy presidents, one from the Karanga, the other from the Ndebele.

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<sup>80</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August, 2002

<sup>81</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>82</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

Their feeling is growing that they may have to fight. They are less cautious, and think the state can be confronted”.<sup>83</sup>

Party leaders explain their caution by citing the dangers of a potential bloodbath and their vulnerability to treason charges, which could leave the party rudderless. Furthermore, according to one MDC leader, “Imprisoning our leadership would create divisions and rivalries and further undermine the party. We don’t have the same culture as the [South African] ANC did during its liberation struggle. We didn’t have years to organise, we don’t have half of our leadership in exile as the ANC did”.<sup>84</sup> Other officials question whether Zimbabweans would risk death in the streets. “We don’t have a Serbian psyche”, concluded one.<sup>85</sup> Some key officials believe the government is trying to lure the MDC into a violent confrontation: “They want to push us to extreme action in order to then try to destroy the MDC”.<sup>86</sup>

In late September 2002 Tsvangirai announced that the MDC will defy the draconian security laws and hold meetings and rallies without police permission. Large-scale arrests are expected. This likely signals the beginning of a more active strategy, though not necessarily major strikes. However, Tsvangirai warned, “If anyone thinks we are not doing enough, just wait....They can arrest us....Defiance is a very important step to show that people will not be subject to unjust laws”.<sup>87</sup>

Another major debate within the party is whether to withdraw from the electoral process. Although there is increasing sentiment that the deck is so stacked that contesting further elections is useless, the party remains committed to change through the ballot box. “The majority view is to stretch the system to its limits by participating”, explained a senior official,

“To withdraw now would be a betrayal of those that have lost their lives, it would demoralise people, and would signal defeat on our part”.<sup>88</sup>

A third debate, on political objectives, is mainly with a key civil society group. The MDC has pushed for a new national election, while the National Constitutional Assembly, an advocacy organisation, has a new constitution as its main goal and is quietly hinting it may start a rival party if the MDC does not embrace its agenda. The MDC’s position of re-writing a constitution as its first priority after winning an election has not resolved the argument. Although not differing with the MDC, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions has emphasised help for workers.

A fourth debate is over land. All agree on the importance of a reform, but there are major differences over process and what to do about the land that ZANU-PF has already expropriated extra-legally. Some argue it should be restored to its former owners, and a lawful redistribution should follow. Others feel that the expropriation is so popular it is better for the party to remain quiet for the foreseeable future. Some MDC officials say their rural constituencies support Mugabe’s actions on land.

The MDC is concentrating on party building, attempting to create structures down to the local level. It is young and only now facing fully the important tasks of internal development. Party leaders say they focused exclusively on winning the March election and preparing to govern. Now they have to go back to the drawing board and rebuild. “We have to expand the base by outlining the issues”, explained a top official. “We need to promote candidates and build the leadership of the party. We were trying to crawl, walk and run at the same time”.<sup>89</sup> Shortcomings include inability to continuously attract high quality people at all levels, marginalisation of women, insufficient appreciation of the importance of local government and administration, and difficulty articulating a core vision. But the MDC is also one of the strongest opposition parties in southern Africa with a vibrant, young leadership. It remains multiracial despite ZANU-PF’s reintroduction of racial politics, and it retains an overt and broad base of support or

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<sup>83</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>84</sup> ICG interview in Botswana, August 2002.

<sup>85</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>86</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>87</sup> BBC Online, 25 September 2002. Teachers are presently striking, on the eve of end-of-year examinations. The leader of the Progressive Teachers Union, Secretary-General Raymond Majongwe, has been arrested and reportedly tortured and 627 striking teachers fired by the Public Service Commission. IRIN, 15 October 2002. Other labour unions may follow with similar actions, possibly in an effort to develop a broad civil disobedience campaign that would be less directly confrontational than a mass action or street demonstration.

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<sup>88</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>89</sup> ICG interview in Botswana, August 2002.



sympathy throughout the country as well as nearly half the elected seats in the parliament.

Because the government's message sells in neighbouring countries, the MDC must also devote energy to regional diplomacy. ZANU-PF claims to be returning land to disenfranchised citizens but its play of the race card would be sharply undercut if regional governments knew who actually benefited and the impact on black farm workers. To make headway with African leaders, the MDC must address the land issue more frontally by emphasising its own vision for an effective reform, as well as pointing out how ZANU-PF undermines the objective.

Sharp questions are also raised in the region regarding the MDC's capacity. "The MDC has no profile any more in South Africa", bemoaned a South African political scientist, "They seem to have no strategy other than survival. Tsvangarai looked like a president six months ago, but now everyone is looking inside ZANU-PF for the future leader of the country. And why should South Africa act if Zimbabweans – especially the opposition party – are not acting?"<sup>90</sup> Contemplating such assessments, a Western diplomat concluded:

The political equation in Zimbabwe and the region should leave the entire world marvelling at ZANU-PF's ability to cause natural allies to be on opposite sides of the fence. On the one hand, one would expect a liberation movement like the ANC to see itself reflected in the MDC's fight for justice and offer appropriate support. On the other, if the MDC truly represents the majority of the population, one would expect that mass action for change would naturally occur. But the reality on the ground is more complex and very different. ZANU-PF has been masterful in manipulating the MDC and the region.<sup>91</sup>

## C. CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society organizations have been restructuring and determining priorities since the presidential election. "The resources for civil society are massive", argued a Zimbabwean human rights activist. "What is missing is a comprehensive

plan".<sup>92</sup> Consensus is being built around food security and livelihood issues, which are in turn linked to democratic governance. "These building blocks are likely to show fruit early next year", claimed a civil society leader.<sup>93</sup> Civil society groups, like the MDC, are internally divided about mass action. While some argue for a campaign of defiance and civil disobedience, most remain focused on the issue of the government's illegitimacy. "We cannot give Mugabe the normality that he wants", explained one activist.<sup>94</sup>

Advocates speak of a larger non-violent political process leading eventually to mass action, and argue that such a campaign should concentrate more on constituency building, civic education, and confronting unjust laws than strikes and stay-aways. "If the army doesn't shoot, it will be successful", said a civil society activist.<sup>95</sup> However, key sectors are in disarray or internally divided, often due to government penetration and interference. The effectiveness of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions is hampered by the government backed Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions. The Justice for Agriculture Group, representing many farmers, is divided from the Commercial Farmers Union on how to respond to the land reform program. Student groups have been compromised by government intrusion. Some think the resistance to land grabs will be an indicator of the larger ability of civil society to stand up to the regime. "If that collapses, it will expose the rest of the democratic forces to increased repression", an activist warned.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Correspondence with ICG, October 2002.

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<sup>92</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>93</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>94</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>95</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>96</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

#### IV. SOUTH AFRICA AND SADC: THE POLITICS OF LIBERATION

The responses of African governments, particularly South Africa, to the situation in Zimbabwe have caused both concern and a degree of bafflement in Western capitals. The lack of action divides Africa and key Western governments while Zimbabwe's opposition and civil society feel abandoned and victimised.

The Commonwealth appointed South Africa, Nigeria and Australia early in 2002 to decide on measures to take with respect to Zimbabwe. That special troika voted unanimously in March, immediately after the presidential election, to suspend Zimbabwe's participation in the organisation's councils for a year. In September, however, South Africa and Nigeria outvoted Australia and so determined that this suspension would not be extended to other Commonwealth activities.<sup>97</sup> Some Zimbabweans openly speculated that this was done to give ZANU-PF another six months to destroy the MDC, after which South Africa would address the situation more aggressively.<sup>98</sup> This speculation was fuelled by President Mbeki's televised comments that he could not intervene because the land reform program had been successfully completed.<sup>99</sup> South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel bluntly articulated the international divide:

They say quiet diplomacy has failed. Should we act like Ariel Sharon? Should we? Should we just go in there, kick butt, blow them up, drive over their cars, should we send in our

tanks? If there are alternative solutions, let us hear what they are.<sup>100</sup>

The reasons for African reluctance to tackle the Zimbabwe crisis are complex.

*Liberation Politics.* There is great sensitivity throughout the continent about criticising a liberation movement such as ZANU-PF and attacking a leader so identified with the anti-colonial struggle as Mugabe. These sentiments are most pronounced in South Africa with its own liberation history. Some officials there even fear that the West is broadly targeting liberation movements beyond Zimbabwe. "There is a feeling in the region that many Western countries would like to see the ANC replaced", charged one senior member of that ruling South African party.<sup>101</sup> It is very difficult for Mbeki to break ranks with other African leaders and move against a fellow president who is widely perceived as waging an anti-colonial struggle. While colonialism seems a distant memory in most Western capitals, it is widely felt throughout Africa that economic neo-colonialism is fully intact. Mugabe has tapped into that sentiment. Although he has abused the issue and used it as a smokescreen behind which to annihilate the opposition, the need for land reform is real and urgent, and most of Africa sees ZANU-PF efforts as genuine liberation, if tactically questionable.

*Suspicion of Labour.* Governments throughout southern Africa largely emerged out of liberation movements: the MPLA in Angola, ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, FRELIMO in Mozambique, SWAPO in Namibia and the ANC in South Africa. The largest political challenge to most of them potentially comes from labour-based political movements like the MDC. There are suspicions among the ANC and other liberation movements in southern Africa that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) is promoting a change of government in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Tanzania. The sentiment is particularly acute with respect to the MDC, which the ANC views as a protest movement with an unpredictable agenda that could be malleable to Western interests and inimical to the

<sup>97</sup> For the two decisions see, respectively, Meeting of the Commonwealth Chairpersons' Committee on Zimbabwe, press and information summary, 19 March 2002 and 23 September 2002, including this statement in the latter: "Whilst all members of the 'Troika' strongly believe that efforts to engage the Government of Zimbabwe should continue, one member, Australia, supported the full suspension of Zimbabwe with immediate effect whilst the other members wish to see how Zimbabwe responds to the Marlborough House Statement over the next six months as foreshadowed in that Statement, at which point stronger measures might need to be considered".

<sup>98</sup> ICG interviews, September 2002. South African officials, however, say they calculated Zimbabwe would have walked out of the Commonwealth rather than be subjected to further sanctions.

<sup>99</sup> SABC TV, 24 September 2002.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Moeletsi Mbeki, "What is South Africa's Standing in the World", distributed on the Internet, 8 August 2002.

<sup>101</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

ANC's larger agenda of trying to build a Southern bloc in international forums.<sup>102</sup>

*Historical Partnership.* The ANC and other liberation movements-turned-governments feel they owe a debt to ZANU-PF, which sheltered them for years during the apartheid era and their anti-colonial struggles.

*Defence of Sovereignty.* The conviction is firmly entrenched in Africa that sovereignty equates with non-interference in the affairs of neighbours.<sup>103</sup> Mugabe has played on this, warning incessantly that interference with Zimbabwe would trigger a domino effect of cross-border interventionism.

*Potential Backlash.* South Africa has made a strategic calculation that the damage from Zimbabwe can be contained for now and that a more aggressive intervention could provoke a ZANU-PF backlash. The chief concern is the potential for a significant increase in refugees if Harare deliberately elects to use refugees as a "human bomb" against South Africa. "Thousands and thousands of Zimbabweans would come", warned one South African official, "Already they are coming. We are already suffering. Imagine what would happen if we increased the pressure".<sup>104</sup> Mbeki further judges that opposing Mugabe could well cost him domestic political capital.

*Resentment of British and U.S. Pressure and U.S. Unilateralism.* As outlined in previous ICG reports, British and U.S. pressure on South Africa can be counter-productive. South Africa and its neighbours are increasingly sensitive about calls for them to act more strongly. South African Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad gave a rare public airing of this:

We don't believe that their megaphone diplomacy and screaming from the rooftops has helped....If it is not diplomacy we pursue in dealing with Zimbabwe, then it is war. We will not go to war with Zimbabwe. We do not

need to be lectured to about democracy, respect for the rule of law and human rights....What are they proposing we should be doing? Jack Straw and others must tell us what they expect SADC to do.<sup>105</sup>

Calls for Africa to do more on Zimbabwe are also received in the context of concern about U.S. unilateralism that has been reinforced by what senior members of the ANC consider heavy-handed Washington's dictates regarding leadership in Iraq and the Palestinian Authority. Resistance to directives from the U.S. and the former colonial power, the UK – something not evident only a year ago – increasingly shapes South African thinking and tactics. A top ANC official insisted:

We will not fall into the agenda of the West. We will be very wary of being seen to be working with the U.S. If we are perceived to be allying with the U.S., we will then be perceived by the region and the continent to be advancing the U.S. agenda. We will never have the West dictate to us about who will lead Zimbabwe.<sup>106</sup>

A South African diplomat expanded on this:

We perceive that this [U.S.] administration doesn't care to listen to anyone. They take the big brother approach. They say they will do this or that and then they force it. There is no consideration of the views of others. They come here thinking they can just march in and tell people what to do.<sup>107</sup>

This wariness also has historical roots, as one official explained:

People in South Africa have always been sceptical of the U.S., going back to the Cold War and the apartheid era. The U.S. called the ANC and Nelson Mandela terrorists. We had no choice but to go to the USSR. President Reagan said that South Africa was the friend of the U.S., and by that he meant the apartheid regime. We are now sliding back to the view of the U.S. we had during the Reagan era.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>102</sup> "South Africa and the region does not want a U.S.-backed MDC government that ensures U.S. political interests", a South African official told ICG in August 2002.

<sup>103</sup> Although there is willingness to acknowledge limits on total sovereignty in recent extreme cases of loss of life or ethnic cleansing. See, *The Responsibility to Protect*, Report of The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (Ottawa, 2001), available on [www.iciss-ciise.gc.ca](http://www.iciss-ciise.gc.ca).

<sup>104</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>105</sup> *Sunday Times* (South Africa), 29 September 2002.

<sup>106</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>107</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>108</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

Some South African officials report the beginnings of a strain in the U.S.-South African relationship. Zimbabwe is one of the key friction points but Congo policy is cited as well.

*Undelivered British Promises.* South Africans also express frustration with British policy on Zimbabwe. Most, including President Mbeki, believe London made substantial commitments to fund land reform at the time of the Lancaster House independence negotiation but reneged. Mbeki has also complained that Prime Minister Blair, who has avoided personal contact with President Mugabe, does not respect President Mugabe as an independent head of state.<sup>109</sup>

*Economic Stakes.* Zimbabwe has been South Africa's largest trading partner for a decade. Intervention would put that relationship at risk as well as myriad commercial investments. "We can't antagonise Zimbabwe because of the grave economic implications it would have for us in South Africa", said one analyst.<sup>110</sup>

*Regional Solidarity.* South Africa will not act without full backing from the SADC region. It remains sensitive to the perception it dominates southern Africa. President Mbeki has painstakingly cultivated closer alignment between South African policies and those of the broader region, in contrast to former President Mandela, who was more willing to act alone and build support later. However, there are counter trends on Zimbabwe. Minister of Defence Mosiuoa Lekota has publicly criticised Mugabe and said that quiet diplomacy has failed. Lekota will likely contest Jacob Zuma for the job of Deputy President at the ANC convention in December 2002.

Nevertheless, there are signs regional patience with Mugabe's methods is wearing thin. At the annual SADC Summit in October 2002, leaders reversed understandings that would have made Mugabe deputy chairman next year and chairman the year after. Leaders believed this would have jeopardised Western aid on which SADC is dependent. The assembled presidents told Mugabe they supported land reform but not how he was carrying it out.

Publicly, however, SADC maintained strong solidarity with Mugabe.<sup>111</sup>

Some South African officials believe that it is time to confront Mugabe more directly. "There is a feeling among some in the ANC that it is time we tell him what is wrong", said a top party official.<sup>112</sup> Mbeki reportedly sent Mugabe a strongly worded letter in August 2002 urging a course reversal. Officials say that bilateral meetings between the presidents have stopped. "What is the point of us meeting again if they haven't delivered on anything", said one South African diplomat. "Our relations have soured".<sup>113</sup>

A South African policy analyst went further: "Zimbabwe is undermining our efforts to promote NEPAD. South Africa supplies electricity, fuel and maize to Zimbabwe. If we cut these off, this would boost Mbeki's credibility in leading NEPAD. Mugabe is giving South Africa a bad name".<sup>114</sup> Another prominent South African concurred: "The South African government's unwillingness to support the legitimacy of the case of the [MDC] has cast doubt on its commitment to fight for democracy beyond its borders....It is generally accepted even at the highest levels in the ANC that South Africa's policy of quiet diplomacy has failed". He added that both black South African workers threatened by Zimbabwean refugees and South African companies losing money in Zimbabwe want more robust action to prevent further escalation of the crisis.<sup>115</sup>

Ultimately, though, most South African officials believe they have a different role to play than the West on Zimbabwe. One key diplomat explained:

We need to engage Zimbabwe and force the government to negotiate. We have to work with everyone, including Mugabe. We need to talk to the people around him. We need to press for movement from the leadership. Even Mugabe realises he is in trouble. The more his situation becomes difficult, the more willing he will be to come back to us. South Africa is key in his mind. Zimbabwe won't be able to

<sup>109</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002. The land reform issue, including the claims of UK non-delivery on its commitments and previous international efforts to move the issue forward, will be considered in detail in a separate ICG report.

<sup>110</sup> ICG interview, October 2002.

<sup>111</sup> ICG interviews, October 2002, and the *Sunday Times* (South Africa), 6 October 2002.

<sup>112</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>113</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>114</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>115</sup> Moeletsi Mbeki, "What is South Africa's Standing in the World", op. cit.

withstand the pressure for long. When they are ready to talk, we will be there.<sup>116</sup>

## **V. THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

The EU and U.S. continue to make tough public statements without backing them by concrete action such as better enforcing or expanding their targeted sanctions or substantially increasing support for democratic forces. It is probably wiser to avoid tough statements if they remain only rhetoric. Regardless of their intent, such remarks reinforce regional intransigence and make it more difficult for South Africa to act more robustly. A Zimbabwean academic commented: "People need to be careful not to provide ammunition to Mugabe....And you cannot bully the regional leaders either".<sup>117</sup> A high-ranking South African diplomat cautioned: "We cannot be perceived as an agent of anyone".<sup>118</sup>

An assets freeze on key ZANU-PF officials has been hung up in the U.S. bureaucracy since 2001. Although the U.S. and the EU have both implemented a travel ban (and the EU likewise has an assets freeze) these still only affect a relatively small group of ZANU-PF officials and not commercial supporters, second level party officials or family members. Leading Zimbabwean officials on the lists have travelled to the U.S. and Europe to attend international conferences, giving the ban a hollow ring.<sup>119</sup>

In a series of interviews with ICG, South African officials pointed out how counter-productive the phenomenon of too much bark and too little bite is becoming.<sup>120</sup> Key Western countries should consciously reduce their rhetoric and ratchet up the pressure in focused, meaningful ways that do not make it more difficult for regional actors to act.

### **A. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The international community should increase pressure on and isolation of the ZANU-PF regime, while South Africa and Nigeria should increase efforts at forging inter-party talks that would lead to an interim or transitional government and new,

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<sup>117</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>118</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>119</sup> The U.S. and EU are obliged by treaty commitments, however, to permit Zimbabweans on official business to attend meetings at international organisations, such as the UN, that are hosted on their territories.

<sup>120</sup> ICG interviews, August and September, 2002.

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<sup>116</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

internationally supervised, elections. Resumed aid and normal relations should be held out as inducements for concluding such a process, but additional threats are also needed to move ZANU-PF forward. Mugabe's departure would assist the process and should be encouraged. The region and the broader international community should consider an exit package for him and perhaps a few staunch supporters who would work to keep him in power if they felt they would otherwise be hung out to dry.

Western and regional goals in Zimbabwe are similar but it needs to be accepted that tactics will have to be profoundly different. Everyone wants an end to the political and economic crisis and a return to rule of law. The more South Africa is perceived to be colluding with the West (and the more Mugabe makes this charge), however, the less willing it is to act robustly. Independent, meaningful action by South Africa and other key African states would be more likely if their policies were no longer the target of public pressure from the West. One South African official argued: "The international community can put pressure on Zimbabwe, but we won't. We will be there to lend assistance to the Zimbabweans, however, if they want to move forward".<sup>121</sup>

The Zimbabwe-related conditionality inherent in the West's support for NEPAD should not be abandoned. On the contrary, the peer pressure and review element are the keys to NEPAD success. But Western rhetoric about this conditionality and what South Africa must do should be dialled down. Investors will remain sceptical and donors unenthusiastic regardless if Africa does not tend to its Zimbabwe problem.

The U.S. and EU should increase their private engagement with and pressure on SADC states other than South Africa and Nigeria. If these can be persuaded to move more vigorously on Zimbabwe, a key inhibitor – the desire not to act unilaterally – will be removed for South Africa.<sup>122</sup> Quiet pressure should be increased on SADC as an institution, along the lines of recent EU and U.S. decisions to hold upcoming ministerial meetings only if

Zimbabwe is kept away. Special attention might be paid to Angola whose President, Eduardo dos Santos, has some leverage with Mugabe, with whom he has at times cooperated in the Congo. Washington and Brussels should do none of this openly, and it should be understood that the region will likely continue to support Mugabe in public.

In other words, frontal pressure on South Africa to do more will not work, but a more nuanced, indirect strategy of strong engagement with the other regional countries and Nigeria, and escalation of Western pressure against ZANU-PF's leaders and commercial supporters may lead to more significant movement.

A second track for the policy of the wider international community, in particular the U.S. and EU, should be aimed at reducing regional and continental suspicions about their agendas regarding land reform. They need to understand that this subject in Africa, particularly southern Africa, is one of justice first and then of development, not solely the latter. To begin, they should systematically and transparently elicit the views of governments, opposition parties and civil society organisations about the emotive issues surrounding inequalities in land ownership.

## **B. TARGETED SANCTIONS**

A much wider regime of enforced, targeted sanctions is necessary to begin to affect ZANU-PF calculations. While there is no guarantee that this will work, the U.S., EU and others have not yet applied sufficient pressure to make a determination. The current sanctions have already caused some unease within the ruling party and delegitimised the regime in the West. However, enforcement, especially of the travel ban, has been soft. Regime members on official business cannot be prevented from attending sessions of the UN or other international organisations in the West because of international law obligations assumed by states that host such bodies, but they can be more restricted to the immediate area and some of their ancillary activities limited.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> ICG interview in South Africa, August 2002.

<sup>122</sup> Many of these countries are much more reliant on Western aid than South Africa and have a less ideological approach than the ANC. Thus, stronger engagement with them could result in quiet changes of attitude that could in turn make it easier for South Africa to act vigorously without fearing criticism from the region for proceeding unilaterally.

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<sup>123</sup> One case that has aroused controversy involved Zimbabwe's trade minister, Samuel Mumbengegwe. According to press reports, he was permitted to spend a September week in Brussels although he is on the list of

The sanctions should be extended to the regime's commercial supporters and bankers, key army and police officers, safari operators who front for the ruling party's economic interests, second tier ZANU-PF officials (permanent secretaries and parliamentarians, for example), and war veteran leaders and other elements of the architecture of violence and intimidation. Targeting these important constituencies would help crumble the foundations of the ruling party. Some obvious candidates, however, should be kept off the list – or even de-listed – to create uncertainty as to who might be collaborating with external parties.

The targeted sanctions initially gave pause to some ZANU-PF members but a sense of normalcy and comfort is returning. The best way to disrupt this, remove the growing feeling of impunity and cause some to question the party's direction would be to go systematically after those people who are the supportive infrastructure. For example, those facilitating the party's commercial transactions include the individuals who arrange lending, licenses and permits for ZANU-PF-related companies to do business. A number of prominent Zimbabwean businessmen (many white), bankers, patrons and family members of key ZANU-PF officials both abroad and at home are doing the hierarchy's bidding. U.S. and EU intelligence services know their names and have enough evidence to act on many of them.

One of the most controversial debates is whether to extend the targeted sanctions to families of key officials, which would force children home from schools in Europe and North America. The principal argument against such a policy is that it would punish individuals who are in all likelihood innocent of their parents' deeds. However, there are counter arguments:

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those against whom the EU has applied a travel ban. *The London Daily Telegraph*, 26 September 2002. However, Mumbengegwe was an accredited member of Zimbabwe's delegation to the extraordinary session of the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) Council of Ministers meeting that launched ACP-European Union negotiations for a new Partnership Agreement. The EU considered that it was bound by the terms of its agreement with the ACP – the Cotonou Agreement – to accept Mumbengegwe in the same manner that hosts of UN headquarters, UN specialised agencies or similar international organisations would have been required to accept him as a delegate on official business to an international institution of which Zimbabwe is a member.

- ❑ The schools they are attending are being paid with money that is largely stolen from the state, while the Zimbabwean educational system rapidly deteriorates because of draconian budget cuts, and over 200,000 children of black farm workers have been left without schooling after being thrown off the land.
- ❑ ZANU-PF officials see their children as the next wave of leaders and sent them overseas to gain the necessary qualifications to manage state institutions and the party's considerable economic assets.
- ❑ Ensuring that their children inherit the political and economic machinery of the state is a tactic by which ZANU-PF leaders seek to ensure that they maintain impunity for the crimes committed during their tenure.<sup>124</sup>

If targeted sanctions are extended, according to a Zimbabwean analyst, "This will hasten the collapse of consensus between businesses that gain from instability and the political leadership that lives off corruption".<sup>125</sup> A Zimbabwean political activist added, "When these people start getting hit, they will begin to question whether it is worth it. It will drive wedges between them and the top leadership".<sup>126</sup>

### C. INTER-PARTY TALKS

Inter-party negotiations still represent the most realistic and peaceful path to de-escalate the political and economic crisis. Some form of interim government that would pave the way – over time – for new elections and a return to rule of law (including for land reform) while Mugabe prepares his retirement would be a package that satisfies no one completely but everyone enough to break the present standoff. ZANU-PF/MDC talks indeed remain the declared objective of the South African and Nigerian governments. But neither has been willing to apply the significant pressure necessary to return the parties to the table.

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<sup>124</sup> A Zimbabwean businessman argues: "The only future of these officials is their children. ZANU-PF is hanging on, the opposition is hanging on, civil society is hanging on, the farmers and farm workers are hanging on. Whoever removes the other's future will win". ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>125</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>126</sup> ICG interview in Botswana, August 2002.

The two governments appear to have no strategy and not much energy. “They are not putting anything on the table”, says a top MDC official involved in the earlier talks, “They just want the two parties to talk and hope that this would lead to something. They want us to drop the court case [filed in the spring against the March election’s legitimacy] to bring the government back to the table. We would consider it if there was some kind of proposal on the table from the facilitators”.<sup>127</sup> In the face of this hint, that South Africa and Nigeria have not made any new proposals suggests a lack of commitment.

ZANU-PF might return to the table – but with little incentive to negotiate seriously – if it felt it had completed its land program and destroyed the white farmers-MDC link. The bankrupt state treasury, however, might force them to seek a tactical accommodation with more opportunistic MDC elements in order to facilitate reconciliation with international financial institutions and donors. ZANU-PF’s objective, shared in general terms by Pretoria and Lagos, would be a government of national unity involving some MDC cabinet members.

The MDC would likely return to talks unconditionally with an unchanged objective of a transitional arrangement leading to a new election. However, its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, said attempts by Presidents Obasanjo and Mbeki to promote inter-party dialogue after the March poll had given Mugabe the opportunity to consolidate his power in the face of international accusations that he stole the election:

There was one mistake in their strategy. They came in hoping to bring about dialogue and reconciliation between the parties – that was an attempt to legitimise Mugabe without confronting the issue of Mugabe's legitimacy in the election. In other words, they chose diplomacy rather than democracy and gave Mugabe space to consolidate his position, as it were, as president of the country”.<sup>128</sup>

If the Commonwealth duo of South Africa and Nigeria are not soon able to bring the parties back to the negotiating table, and if they are not prepared to exercise the necessary leverage to ensure that ZANU-PF returns without conditions, consideration should be given to moving the mediation into the United Nations.<sup>129</sup>

#### **D. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY**

Support from the international community for civil society and opposition institutions has largely focused on capacity building workshops and training. This has been extremely useful in the development of democratic institutions. However, ZANU-PF’s assault on independent and opposition organisations means that their basic resources are becoming scarce. Aid accordingly should increasingly be redirected toward support of budget and operations. This can be as basic as subsistence, rent, legal fees, communication and transportation. Support should go to civil society organisations, as well as to the MDC party structures, in order to level the playing field. Because foreign assistance for domestic organisations is barred under Zimbabwe’s repressive penal code, it should be provided quietly, without calling attention to it. International organisations supportive of democracy and the rule of law should seek to attend proceedings of the court case brought by the MDC to challenge the legitimacy of the March election. Wider reporting of the evidence of fraud would help establish the justification for a new vote and make it harder for the region to look the other way.

#### **E. RESPONSE TO THE FOOD CRISIS**

The government could easily reverse the slow metamorphosis of a food crisis into a famine. First and foremost, it should liberalise the importation of food. As long as ZANU-PF has the monopoly through the Grain Marketing Board, market mechanisms cannot reduce the absolute food shortfall. However, if the government were to allow the private sector to import food – even temporarily – the acute nutritional crisis in many areas would immediately be reduced. A grain merchant in the region explained:

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<sup>127</sup> ICG interview in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>128</sup> Morgan Tsvangirai in a recent interview with Pdraig O'Malley, a Senior Fellow at the John W McCormack Institute of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, excerpts of which were published in the *Zimbabwe Independent*, 30 August 2002.

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<sup>129</sup> South Africa may be diplomatically over-stretched since it is already leading complex peace processes in the Congo and Burundi and chairing the African Union.



We can respond from surplus areas of South Africa. The stocks there are sufficient. We wouldn't even need international purchases. The private sector in Zimbabwe could buy, mill and distribute enough food to feed all of the cities if there was no restrictions on imports, price controls, and manipulation of currency.<sup>130</sup>

The international food relief system is overwhelmed by the urgent requirement to ramp up deliveries to meet soaring needs and has little ability, therefore, to address the manipulation of those deliveries. However, a number of actions should be taken to enhance its overall ability to get food into the country and into the hands of people who need it:

- ❑ make all food aid conditional on ensuring that everyone receives it regardless of political affiliation;
- ❑ specifically target internally displaced persons;<sup>131</sup>
- ❑ Work urgently with the government so that it approves more implementing partners for relief distribution, given that only 10,000 metric tons per month are now distributed, against a projected need of 55,000 metric tons per month by the end of the year;
- ❑ spotlight politicisation of food aid, which can be done most successfully by highly visible officials such as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, heads of relevant UN agencies,<sup>132</sup> and members of the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus; and
- ❑ reduce complications from the genetic modification issue by providing maize wherever possible from non-genetically modified supplies or by substituting other grains such as wheat if this is not feasible.<sup>133</sup>

On-the-ground interviews ICG has conducted suggest that NGOs have moved to gain more control over the food distribution process, from assessment to monitoring, in order to lessen the possibility for manipulation. The more that independent agencies – whether churches, local NGOs, international bodies or other institutions – can be involved in the distribution of relief supplies, the better the result is likely to be. Donors should demand maximum independent assessment and monitoring. Independent access is a highly political issue, not a technical matter, and diplomats from key governments should back up any negotiations for it.

The politicisation of food aid starts with the selection of recipients. External and internal monitors could help ensure that this process and subsequent distribution are fair. Because the commercial food production sector has been dismantled, the food crisis promises not to be a one-time event. Although donors will be averse to supporting the unlawful land grab in any way, consideration should be given to providing packs of maize seed to small-scale farmers throughout the country, particularly those on communal lands. Small-scale food production would help avert a repeat of this year's acute emergency.

## F. RESPONSE TO TORTURE AND CORRUPTION

The International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment should be invoked against senior members of ZANU-PF responsible for one of the highest rates of torture in the world. Redress does not exist in Zimbabwe, and Article Five obliges signatories to act when perpetrators are on their territory. Zimbabwean groups are building cases against leading officials and supplying evidence to signatory governments, which should be prepared to arrest suspects who enter their territory.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> ICG interview, September 2002.

<sup>131</sup> Many of these displaced persons are black farm workers who have been pushed off the land by the government's policy and are especially vulnerable because they originally came from neighbouring Malawi or Mozambique and lack full Zimbabwean documentation.

<sup>132</sup> Particularly UNDP, WFP, UNICEF and OCHA, as well as the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

<sup>133</sup> Genetic modification is an issue primarily with respect to shipments of maize from the U.S. As maize is the staple food in Zimbabwe, it would be desirable to avoid shifting to

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other grains if possible, even if this requires the World Food Programme in some instances to purchase supplies on the world market in addition to in kind shipments.

<sup>134</sup> As of 1 October 2002, 131 states were parties to the Convention, including all members of the European Union, the United States, and the members of the Commonwealth Troika on Zimbabwe (South Africa, Nigeria, and Australia). Zimbabwe is not a party.

As ICG has argued in past reports<sup>135</sup>, in addition to imposing targeted sanctions against those benefiting from the surge in corruption and looting, an effort to expose the extent of stolen assets should be mounted. The bulk of the stolen assets are believed to be parked in accounts in countries such as Libya and Malaysia that have not cooperated with targeted sanctions, so at least the scale of these assets should be publicised, particularly inside Zimbabwe and the region.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The ZANU-PF government will continue to push its fast track land program and suppress all opposition, whether from the MDC, the media, the judiciary, the labour movement, or civil society organisations. However, once Mugabe has further entrenched his power, the sheer scale of the country's economic problems, the growing food crisis and prospect of a major decline in agricultural exports<sup>136</sup> may force him to seek a solution to the political impasse.<sup>137</sup>

Although there is little likelihood South Africa and Nigeria can convince ZANU-PF and the MDC to form a government of national unity, there is a possibility that they could eventually persuade Mugabe to moderate some of his more extreme policies and laws and strike a deal with the farmers and the opposition to deescalate the immediate crisis. Discreet discussions with some of the former are already under way. Mugabe remains adept at political brinkmanship, so any prediction of real compromise would be highly speculative. In the absence of any process leading to a compromise, assistance to those working for democracy and the rule of law should be increased.

However, if international pressure were to intensify along the lines spelled out above, and if South Africa and Nigeria were to apply diplomatic muscle to the task, a deal could be envisioned that would have to involve a measure of ZANU-PF and MDC agreement around the following points:

- ❑ an interim or transitional government or administration with specific tasks, including amending the constitution and restoring broadly the rule of law while undertaking institutional reforms;
- ❑ restoration of the rule of law to the land reform program, with expectation of donor support –

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<sup>136</sup> The largest foreign currency earner in the Zimbabwean economy is tobacco, traditionally grown by white farmers, as are other products like flowers and soya beans. The disruption of these farmers' activity will have a tremendous effect on export earnings. White farmers still on their farms are being encouraged to mass-produce these products to provide the government with much-needed foreign currency. ICG interviews in Zimbabwe, August 2002.

<sup>137</sup> Mugabe appears to want to allow some 2,000 farmers to remain on their land for the foreseeable future, largely due to the need for export revenues.

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<sup>135</sup> See, for example, ICG Africa Reports *Zimbabwe at the Crossroads* and *Zimbabwe: What Next?*, both op. cit.

particularly from the UK and U.S. because of their historical (Lancaster House) roles;<sup>138</sup>

- ❑ preparation of a free and fair electoral environment for a presidential election that would be held earlier than 2008 when Mugabe's present term expires; and,
- ❑ a retirement package for Mugabe,<sup>139</sup> whose departure would trigger – in line with the constitution – the earlier election date.

No deal will be possible, however, without more meaningful regional engagement. This requires a tacit understanding between the region and the wider international community. The latter should increase efforts to isolate the regime, reduce rhetoric directed toward South Africa, and increase engagement with other southern African states and Nigeria aimed at eliciting a more robust response to the crisis. Ultimately, South Africa and Nigeria must engage energetically on Zimbabwe, notably by applying concerted pressure on ZANU-PF. However, pushing Pretoria to lead is not working. Going through neighbouring countries that may be more amenable to pressure is the most promising way to involve South Africa eventually in a regional effort.

Even then, given Mugabe's intransigence, prospects would be problematic but the current international approach that barks but does not bite emboldens ZANU-PF and reinforces South Africa's reticence. A change is needed. Despite positive developments in Angola and South Africa's crucial role in what may become a Congo success story, the fortunes of the entire southern African region will wane until the Zimbabwe crisis is fully addressed.

**Harare/Brussels, 17 October 2002**

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<sup>138</sup> While the UK, as the former colonial power, was the primary mover of the Lancaster House negotiation that established independent Zimbabwe, U.S. President Jimmy Carter worked closely with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. After a stalled 1977 attempt, Carter authorised U.S. diplomats in London to make a non-specific aid commitment conditional on successful conclusion of the 1979 negotiations. That commitment was not directly tied to compensation for land redistribution but it was a significant element of the Lancaster House understandings. Donald Rothchild, "Successful Mediation: Lord Carrington and the Rhodesian Settlement", in Crocker, Hampson and Aall (eds.), *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, United States Institute of Peace (Washington, D.C., 1996).

<sup>139</sup> A few of Mugabe's key supporters should also be included in such a package to ensure their support for the deal.

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF ZIMBABWE



Courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin

## APPENDIX B

### ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

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The International Crisis Group (ICG) is a private, multinational organisation, with over 80 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers.

ICG's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's Internet site, [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org). ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The ICG Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; and its President and Chief Executive since January 2000 has been former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

ICG's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York and Paris and a media liaison office in London. The organisation currently operates eleven

field offices (in Amman, Belgrade, Bogota, Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, Osh, Pristina, Sarajevo, Sierra Leone and Skopje) with analysts working in nearly 30 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents.

In *Africa*, those countries include Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone-Liberia-Guinea, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe; in *Asia*, Indonesia, Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir; in *Europe*, Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; in the *Middle East*, the whole region from North Africa to Iran; and in *Latin America*, Colombia.

ICG raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. The following governments currently provide funding: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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**October 2002**

## APPENDIX C

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\* The Algeria project was transferred from the Africa Program in January 2002.

## APPENDIX D

### ICG BOARD MEMBERS

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