

Permanent Mission
of the Republic of Zambia
Mr. Mathias Daka
Chemin du Champ-d'Anier 17-19
1209 Geneva

Basel, 02 June 2008

RE: Situation in Zimbabwe

Dear Mr. Daka,

We are writing this private letter to you in your capacity as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia to the UN in Geneva. We represent Swiss faith-based, developmental, humanitarian and solidarity organisations working in different SADC countries. We and our partners in southern Africa commend SADC for its efforts to assist Zimbabweans solve the political, economic and social crisis in their country thus far. We are writing to express to you our own grave concerns about the unfolding situation in Zimbabwe.

Since the recently held elections, we have become increasingly concerned by reports from our partners, which include church and secular agencies. Firstly there were delays in announcing the results which gave rise to suspicions of electoral irregularities. But, more importantly, of great concern to us are the reports we are now receiving from partners and staff in Zimbabwe detailing growing cases of political violence and politically motivated displacements around the country. All credible reports indicate that this is a deliberate campaign being perpetrated by militia groups aligned to the ruling party against suspected opposition party supporters and those who worked as election observers or election officials on polling day. A statement made by Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights on 9 May 2008, reports that out of fifty three victims treated in one day in Harare hospital, 'the perpetrators in all cases were alleged by the victims to be war veterans and Zanu PF supporters.'

To date, there are reports of thirty dead, hundreds injured and thousands displaced. This also has significant consequences for the possibility of a free and fair vote in the run off of the presidential election to be held on the 27 June 2008.

Many humanitarian agencies have been obliged to stop their direct assistance work. This includes feeding programmes for children and support for vulnerable groups such as orphans, disabled people, those with HIV and AIDS and the elderly. This was confirmed by the UN Resident Representative in a statement on 13 May 2008.

We respectfully request your government to redouble its efforts to assist Zimbabweans to end the violence and intimidation and ensure that Zimbabwe abides by the SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections. This should include ensuring freedom of access by all parties to all areas of the country, equal access to the media, peaceful campaigning - all essential to providing a level electoral playing field. We further urge that observers – short and long term – be assembled ready to be deployed as soon as possible. It is essential that a significant number of these remain in place until the result is announced.

We take no position on whom Zimbabweans elect to positions of authority, since this is their democratic prerogative. However, our partners and we believe that Zimbabweans should have the right to make that choice in an atmosphere free of violence and intimidation where the human and democratic rights of all are respected and upheld.

We look forward to your response on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

HEKS & EPER
Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz
Entraide Protestante Suisse
Swiss Interchurch Aid

Fonds für Entwicklung
und Partnerschaft in Afrika
Fund for Development
and Partnership in Africa



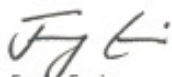
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