

**Testimony by Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer
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Post-Election Zimbabwe
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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Feingold, Senator Isakson and members of the Committee, I am honored to testify before you today on the situation in Zimbabwe and the world's response. I thank you for your sustained strong support that has been so important in bringing this tragedy to the attention of a world that is beginning to join together for action.

Our goals have been consistent to: (1) push for an end to the violence and to provide humanitarian assistance to the Zimbabwean people and (2) achieve a democratic transition that is consistent with the will of the people of Zimbabwe as expressed on March 29th. Ways to achieve these goals include: (1) an expanded and inclusive negotiation facilitated by the Southern African Development Community, the African Union, and the United Nations; (2) more robust targeted sanctions regime if the regime refuses to negotiate and continues its massive violations of human rights; (3) collaboration with international NGOs and African civil society, to ramp up humanitarian assistance to the population; and (4) cooperation with international financial institutions, like-minded countries, and African leaders to isolate the Mugabe regime and prepare for economic recovery and social rebuilding once Zimbabwe has achieved democratic transformation.

On June 27, the regime of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe conducted an election that by any standard was neither free nor fair. In a ruthless and methodical campaign of violence against the opposition, the regime succeeded in creating conditions that forced opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai to withdraw his candidacy. The

United States does not and will not accept the legitimacy of any result that does not reflect the will of the Zimbabwean people.

I want to walk through the key events of the last three months. The first round of voting in Zimbabwe took place on March 29, followed by an extended period of three weeks of calculated delay before results were released by the official electoral commission. When they were finally released, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai was credited with over 48 percent of the vote compared to Mugabe's 43 percent (there was a third independent candidate as well). Since the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission announced that neither candidate secured the required 50 percent plus one vote to win the election outright, a run-off date was announced.

On June 22, Tsvangirai withdrew from the runoff election due to the violence that had taken place against his party and its supporters that began on March 29. The MDC enumerated why a free and fair election was impossible, citing state-sponsored violence and threats against MDC supporters family members, the Mugabe regime's attempts to circumscribe citizens' right to express their views, and change the government, by making it impossible for the opposition to organize and campaign and for voters to safely and freely vote their consciences through unlawful arrests and prohibition of MDC rallies, partisanship of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, and lack of MDC access to the media. In addition, Mugabe's statements that an MDC victory would not be accepted, planned election rigging, and other factors also prevented a credible election.

Indeed, in order to ensure that Tsvangirai wouldn't win the runoff, the regime carried out a massive campaign of murder, harassment and intimidation to claim "victory" in the June 27 runoff. We know that at least 100 people have been murdered; over 3,000 have sought medical treatment for beatings and torture; and over 30,000 have been driven from their homes. Many Zimbabweans fled for their lives to neighboring states. At least two MDC parliamentarians – winners in the March 29 elections – are missing, perhaps dead. And, a third MDC parliamentarian's whereabouts are unknown. MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti was detained and

charged with treason. Tsvangirai himself was detained four times and forced to seek protection in safe houses and the Dutch Embassy.

The Government of Zimbabwe continues its reign of terror against Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). On June 26, several hundred IDPs arrived at the South African Embassy in Harare seeking shelter and assistance. On June 27, "election day", following a reported arrangement between some international agencies and Zimbabwean authorities, the IDPs were relocated to a facility run by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare outside Harare. On July 3, over 300 displaced MDC supporters arrived at U.S. Embassy Harare seeking shelter, food, medical care, and supplies. Mission staff, through considerable effort and despite the harassing presence of government security officers, were able to provide initial help. With only a limited Zimbabwean government response and civil society and Western and international organizations trying to fill the void with inadequate resources, the situation with the IDPs continues to be bad.

ECONOMY

It wasn't so long ago that Zimbabwe was a model in Africa for democracy and prosperity. This is a country that maintained steady economic growth, was building a middle-class, and was educating its entire population to Africa's highest levels of literacy. It is a country that was succeeding and now is in the process of disintegrating.

The economic figures are staggering. Over 80 percent of the country is unemployed. Inflation is the highest in the world by far. The Zimbabwean government's own Central Statistical Office's most recent inflation estimate was 164,000 percent for February. There's an indication that the June rate may have reached 9,000,000 percent. -- unimaginable numbers. This spring, the IMF forecast a 2008 annual growth rate of negative 4.5 percent. After close to eight years of severe economic decline, a quarter of the population has left the country to seek better opportunities elsewhere, mostly in South Africa. The UN Development Index shows that Zimbabwe's statistics are worse today than in 1975, at the height of the country's war for independence.

While the current violence has uprooted thousands and turned them into IDPs, this pattern of displacement is not new. In 2005, the government has also purposely destroyed an entire community near Harare. Operation Murambatsvina (Drive out the Trash), another brutally executed well-planned and executed security scheme, wiped out thousands of homes and made 700,000 homeless in one fell swoop. An additional 700,000 workers once employed and living on commercial farms no longer have either jobs or homes.

A year ago, the government tried in its peculiar way to vanquish hyperinflation by command. It ordered all stores to freeze prices immediately. It came as no surprise that the shelves were emptied quickly and many businesses were forced to close or go bankrupt. And it resorted to printing bills for reserves it didn't possess.

Simply put, Zimbabwe has been and is collapsing. What is unusual, however, about the Zimbabwean case, is that there is no outside factor that has caused it – no natural disaster, no war, no international economic or financial phenomenon that we can often point to elsewhere in the world. Zimbabwe's collapse is entirely self-inflicted by the government's misrule over the course of many years.

HOW ZIMBABWE GOT TO WHERE IT IS

How did Zimbabwe get to this point? Mugabe's economic policies in the 1980s were auspicious, reflecting an understanding that markets and trade-based growth were the country's foundation. A far-sighted education policy of promoting mass literacy and schooling through high school began to bear fruit. A new generation of Zimbabweans came into the marketplace literate, politically aware, and technologically savvy. They enjoyed a multitude of information sources, the Internet, domestic radio, international radio beamed by satellite and aired on FM, domestic and international television, and a healthy independent press.

Early on, however, Mugabe gave the world a glimpse of his capacity for ruthlessness against his own people. Mugabe's base has always been among the majority Shona-speakers. His rival for liberation leadership, Joshua Nkomo, drew his support from the minority Ndebele speakers, centered in the country's southwest.

Determined not to brook any serious opposition, the government's security forces planned and, working with North Korean advisors, executed a calculated campaign against the Ndbele, killing as many as 20,000.

By the 90s, ZANU-PF was evolving from a people's liberation movement into an entrenched and corrupt elite. The turning point came in 2000, when the government lost a referendum on a constitutional revision that would have substantially expanded the presidential authority. By all accounts, the rejection took the government and ZANU-PF by complete surprise, so isolated had they become from ordinary Zimbabweans.

The new generation of well educated Zimbabweans promoted by Mugabe's education policies was sophisticated, well-informed, and hungry for new political leadership. They joined hands with labor, churches, and civil society organizations to create the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The MDC's initial success prompted the government to respond forcefully to hold on to power.

ZANU-PF answered the MDC challenge with every weapon characteristic of a police state. It passed new laws limiting political activity and restricting the media. There was an organized campaign of intimidation and violence against opposition leaders and supporters. So-called "war veterans" led invasions of commercial agricultural lands, occupations that would within a few years destroy most of the country's 4000 highly productive farms that had been the backbone of the nation's economy and had fed the entire region of southern Africa.

These brutal tactics succeeded in maintaining ZANU-PF in power. ZANU-PF won parliamentary elections by a small margin in late 2000. In 2002, Mugabe would claim a highly disputed victory. But the political victories came at a huge price as the economy went into a tailspin where it has stayed ever since. The government's inability to reverse the economic disaster has been its undoing and to this date, it has shown no sign of taking serious, realistic measures to halt a decline into chaos.

GOVERNMENT EXCUSES

When faced with criticism at home or abroad, the Mugabe regime has a long habit of generating excuses. After the land seizure in 2000, officials rejected claims of a steep decline in food production, then later accepted them but blamed it on drought conditions. There actually was a drought, so the partial truth made the excuse more plausible.

The government also has blamed foreign conspiracies for the faltering economy. Targets have included the British government, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and an alleged plot to bring down the regime. Sanctions imposed by the U.S. and U.K. governments, although carefully targeted to affect only the regime's elite, have provided fodder for the foreign conspiracy mindset, and been sold to the people as evidence that the West is trying to bring down the regime by wrecking the economy. All of these excuses indicate an isolated regime cut off not only from most of the world, but from the reality of the conditions affecting its own people as well as Zimbabweans' expressed desire for change.

CURRENT U.S. RESPONSE

The United States has responded with aggressive regional and multilateral diplomacy as well as targeted bilateral sanctions. President Bush and Secretary Rice have encouraged African leaders to take responsibility to develop African solutions to the collapse of Zimbabwe. I attended the summit of the African Union two weeks ago in Sharm al Sheikh, Egypt, in which 53 African member states participated. The official theme of the summit was water and sanitation, but discussion of Zimbabwe dominated the agenda. Only a very few leaders publicly welcomed Mugabe. Little was said about Zimbabwe in public, but there was substantial behind-the-scenes discussion.

The final AU statement on June 30 said that "the election process fell short of accepted AU standards." The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) made a similar observation in its interim statement the same day, saying that the elections were not free, fair, or credible. Importantly, the African Union resolution expressed its concern about

the impact of the crisis in Zimbabwe on the stability of the region, highlighting the "urgent need to prevent further worsening of the situation and with a view to avoid spread of conflict with the consequential negative impact on the country and the sub-region."

Individual African leaders have spoken out as well. Prime Minister Raila Odinga of Kenya has urged the AU to suspend Mugabe and send peace-keeping forces to Zimbabwe. Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, Chairman of the SADC, has called the situation in Zimbabwe an embarrassment to Southern Africa and said "it is scandalous for the SADC to remain silent."

Former South African President Nelson Mandela called the situation "a tragic failure of leadership." And ANC party head Zuma said after the extended delay in announcing the March 29 results: "It's not acceptable. It's not helping the Zimbabwean people who have gone out to...elect the kind of party and presidential candidate they want, exercising their constitutional right."

On June 23, the Security Council unanimously adopted a Presidential Statement (PRST) that condemned the pre-election violence that made it impossible for free and fair elections to take place. The statement also expressed the Council's concern over the impact of the situation in Zimbabwe on the wider region. It called on the Zimbabwean government to cooperate in regional mediation efforts that would allow a government to be formed and to permit humanitarian organizations to resume their services.

On June 27, after UN Security Council consultations on Zimbabwe, members of the Council authorized Ambassador to the U.S. Mission Khalilzad, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, to make a statement to the press reaffirming the Council's June 23 statement and its intention to come back to the issue in the coming days.

On July 1, the United States circulated in UN Security Council capitals the text of a draft Chapter VII resolution on Zimbabwe that would impose a comprehensive arms embargo and an annex of twelve individuals who would be subject to an asset freeze and a

travel ban and asset freeze on those designated as having ordered, planned, or participated in acts of politically motivated violence. The resolution had an Annex of 14 individuals who would be designated upon adoption of the resolution, with Robert Mugabe at the top of the list. The resolution also called on the UN Secretary General to appoint a dedicated Special Representative for the situation in Zimbabwe, who would support the negotiation process between the regime and the opposition. The U.S. formally introduced the draft resolution in the Council on July 3 and held over four rounds of discussions on the text.

Despite receiving nine votes to pass the resolution, it failed due to China's and Russia's vetoes. Thus, the U.N. Security Council missed the opportunity to support the courageous efforts of the Zimbabwean people to change their lives peacefully through elections and show the Mugabe regime that the international community means what it says in demanding an immediate end to the violence, reinstatement of humanitarian assistance, and the start of serious negotiations with the opposition leading to a solution that respects the will of the Zimbabwean. This will not deter us, since the UN action would have been in addition to unilateral financial and travel sanctions applied by the U.S. against more than 150 Zimbabweans who have undermined the country's democratic institutions and processes and entities they control. These targeted measures offer a means of holding officials accountable for their actions without inflicting further hardship to the general population.

NEXT STEPS

What are the next steps?: (1) we will continue to isolate the regime until there is a democratic transition; Africans are starting to take a more public stance, criticizing Mugabe and the electoral process; the United States will continue its own sanctions and encourage others, especially the European Union, to impose additional sanctions to increase pressure on the Mugabe regime; (3) we will support and encourage regional mediation. Finally, we will prepare for the day when the will of the Zimbabwean people is respected by supporting planning for economic recovery, social reconciliation, and rebuilding.

As President Bush said to the United Nations, “In Zimbabwe, ordinary citizens suffer under a tyrannical regime. The government has cracked down on peaceful calls for reform and forced millions to flee their homeland. The behavior of the Mugabe regime is an assault on its people.” President Bush reiterated at the G-8 Summit that he cares deeply about the people of Zimbabwe and was extremely disappointed in the elections which he has labeled as “a sham.”

I will end by emphasizing that Mugabe’s electoral sham has had the positive effect of galvanizing the world to act. We have witnessed in the past three weeks the United Nations, G8, African Union, European Union, and SADC all condemning the fraud and violence in Zimbabwe. Africans themselves are acting. The world has a precious window of opportunity to increase the international pressure on this illegitimate regime. I ask for your support as we look for ways to keep that pressure on, and end the nightmare that the proud and inspiring people of Zimbabwe have suffered for too long.

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