

**Statement of Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on Africa
September 30, 2009**

Chairman Feingold, Ranking Member Isakson, and Members of the Committee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Zimbabwe. I look forward to working with the Congress, and especially with this Committee, in advancing U.S. interests and returning Zimbabwe to democracy, stability, and economic prosperity.

The people of Zimbabwe continue to face extreme hardship, and desperately need a government that respects human rights and rule of law and works to rebuild institutions and public services. Thus far in the current fiscal year, U.S. humanitarian aid to Zimbabwe has surpassed \$200 million for emergency assistance, including food aid and food security, refugee support, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs. We continue to be the largest provider of food assistance to Zimbabwe, and we stand solidly behind Zimbabweans in their continuing time of need.

We note that this assistance would not be necessary were it not for the anti-democratic and abusive practices of Robert Mugabe and his followers. The United States has not sanctioned the needy and deserving people of Zimbabwe. Our

targeted sanctions are imposed specifically on individuals and entities that have hindered democracy and abused human rights there. The reason we imposed targeted sanctions and continue them now is the failure of those individuals to act in the best interest of the people of Zimbabwe. Our measures will remain in place until genuine, sustained democratic opening has taken place.

September 15 marked the one year anniversary of the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) by the two factions of the Movement for Democratic Change and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). In February, a transitional government was initiated based on the GPA. We commend Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and members of his Movement for Democratic Change for entering the government in spite of long-standing and ongoing abuse and intimidation by President Robert Mugabe and members of his ZANU-PF party.

During the past seven months, the transitional government has made important progress in halting the devastating economic decline and implementing measures to restore fiscal integrity. The elimination of the worthless Zimbabwean dollar, rationalization of the budget process, and other sound policies by Finance Minister Tendai Biti have eliminated hyperinflation and begun to restore the confidence of the people of Zimbabwe. Other reformist ministers are also embracing change, and abandoning the failed policies of the past, and we strongly

encourage all political actors in Zimbabwe, of whatever political party, to do the same. Challenges remain, however, as most Zimbabweans continue to survive on less than one dollar per day and as millions remain food insecure.

Unfortunately, hardliners from the previous Mugabe regime that remain in Government, and others at their direction, continue to violate the human rights of the Zimbabwean people. These hardliners have refused to move forward with agreements on senior government appointments, media freedom, and other important reforms. The Governor of the Reserve Bank was reappointed by Mugabe, before the formation of the transitional government, and without consultation with the Movement for Democratic Change. The Attorney General was appointed unilaterally by Mugabe prior to the start of the transitional government, in violation of the GPA. Since his appointment, he has carried out a sustained campaign of politicized arrests and prosecution of members of the opposition, in particular Movement for Democratic Change officials, and members of civil society. Violent land invasions continue. So do severe human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, by members of the security forces, especially in the Marange diamond mining area. Revenues from these diamond mines and from gold mines that rightfully belong to the Zimbabwe people are plundered by these hardliners, and moved outside Zimbabwe for their own personal use.

The prospects for reform and democratic transformation in Zimbabwe are immensely challenging, but we remain committed to facilitating peaceful change to improve the condition of Zimbabweans. Our assistance to Zimbabwe seeks to lay the groundwork for a return to democracy and prosperity by supporting democratic voices and civil society, including support to the Prime Minister's office for communications and other capacity building. In addition, our assistance supports efforts to mitigate the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics. As noted by President Obama in June, this humanitarian aid is directed through non-governmental organizations and contractors rather than through the central government. In this way, we can be assured assistance reaches the people who need it. We are mindful of existing legal restrictions on our assistance and will continue to consult closely with the Congress on any new or expanded assistance proposals. This includes our recent notification and consultation on new targeted programs in the agriculture and education sectors. These initiatives were undertaken in response to President Obama's commitment to Prime Minister Tsvangirai in June.

We continue to support those working for full implementation of the GPA, and to seek ways to ease the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe without aiding those forces who cling to power through repression and corruption. The road to reform in Zimbabwe will be long and challenging. In addition to a new

constitution, reform of the electoral process and electoral institutions, as well as the repeal of repressive legislation which restricts freedom of speech and assembly, are essential to free and fair elections. The GPA calls for the completion of a new constitution by August 2010. Following a public referendum on the constitution, internationally-monitored elections should take place as soon as feasible to enable the people of Zimbabwe to freely select their President and other representatives. The international community has joined us in calling for transparency in the process of drafting a new constitution and the conduct of closely monitored elections.

We also call on the nations of Africa, in particular the members of the Southern African Development Community, to ensure that Mugabe and his cohorts fully implement the GPA and work toward democratic reform. We were pleased that South African President Jacob Zuma visited Zimbabwe last month and stressed the importance his government places on democracy and respect for human rights in Zimbabwe and compliance with the GPA.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you have.