



# The Crisis in Zimbabwe

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*The political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, brought on by the subjugation of democracy and the rule of law by the regime of President Robert Mugabe, deserves sustained attention from the international community. This paper outlines the background of the crisis, describes the atrocities committed by the regime, and makes a case for a concerted, coordinated preventive strategy for major players in the region and in the international community.*

**Z**imbabwe is in a state of crisis. The country once known as Africa's breadbasket is currently at the center of a region-wide food emergency that could leave as many as 14.5 million people facing starvation.<sup>1</sup> It has one of the highest HIV/AIDS infection rates of any country in the world at approximately 33.7 percent of the population, incurring 200,000 fatalities in 2001.<sup>2</sup> Egregious human rights abuses are prevalent in all sectors of the society, including torture, rape, extra-judicial killing, forced removal from private property, suppression of freedom of speech and the press, and general disregard for the rule of law.<sup>3</sup> The political atmosphere is riddled with aggression, fear, corruption, and thuggery, highlighted by the "fast-track" land reform process instituted by President Robert Mugabe and the ruling Zimbabwe African Union Party-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in 2000. Nearly all international observers deemed the presidential elections of March 2002 neither free nor fair, with the notable exception of election monitors from other African countries, many of whom proclaimed Mr. Mugabe's victory as "a triumph for democracy in Africa."<sup>4</sup> The public health and political crises facing Zimbabwe are compounded by an economic landslide that has turned the country from extremely prosperous by African standards into one of the most impoverished places on earth. In March 2002, 70 percent of the population was unemployed, with 117 percent inflation and a 10 per-

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cent decline in GDP in 2001.<sup>5</sup> The effect of this economic free fall is being felt throughout the region, most notably in South Africa where significant amount of revenue is being lost and thousands of refugees are seeking asylum from the brutality of the Mugabe regime.<sup>6</sup>

The central focus of this article is that the current political and economic situation in Zimbabwe has the potential to lead to a more profound crisis, possibly on par with Rwanda, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Indeed, Zimbabwe possesses many of the characteristics of these states, and without assistance from the international community, the situation could deteriorate further into state failure or potential civil war. For these reasons, preventive diplomacy must be actively pursued in order to avert these possibilities and return Zimbabwe to a peaceful, democratic, and economically viable country.

This article will begin with an examination of the background of the crisis, dating back to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. What were the early warning signals of the collapse and what was the response of the international community? The second section will analyze the current state of affairs in the country and the reaction by foreign powers, regional organizations, and international organizations to the situation. Why have preventive measures failed thus far and what international action can help reverse the current trends and re-establish the rule of law? This section will focus on the response by the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, the Commonwealth, the United Nations, and the African Union/ New Partnership for African Development. It is not too late for preventive diplomatic action to curb Zimbabwe's descent into state failure, which could in turn lead to armed civil conflict, but the window of opportunity is quickly closing.

## **Independence**

Under the auspices of the British South Africa Company, white settlers first arrived in Zimbabwe in 1888 and named it Rhodesia after its "founder," Cecil Rhodes. The history of the colony is replete with violent uprisings by the African population. As the British Empire was crumbling after the Second World War, hardliners in the Rhodesian government gained power under Prime Minister Ian Smith, and in 1965 unilaterally declared independence from Great Britain. Rhodesia immediately became a pariah state, totally cut off from the international community. The country was never formally recognized by the United Nations or any of its member states.<sup>7</sup> For the first time in its history, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) implemented a scheme of economic sanctions designed as a coercive measure to topple the Smith regime. The only countries that continued to trade with Rhodesia were Portugal, which clung to its colonial possessions in neighboring Angola and Mozambique until 1974, and apartheid South Africa, the country on which Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) has always depended economically.<sup>8</sup>

The period between 1974 and 1980 was tumultuous as political maneuverings

were accompanied by a bloody guerilla war led by two major factions: Robert Mugabe's ZANU forces, comprised largely of the country's dominant tribe, the Shona; and the Zimbabwe African Patriotic Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo, made up mostly of Ndebele, a people who comprise the majority in the Matebeleland region of Zimbabwe. Several international attempts to negotiate a settlement failed for a variety of reasons, including Smith's inflexibility and the lack of unity by the revolutionary forces. Finally, on September 10, 1979, The Lancaster House Agreement reached in London initiated a transition to an independent Zimbabwe to be born on April 18, 1980. The agreement was controversial, placing derisive restrictions on the new Zimbabwean government with regards to land reform and minority rights. In 1980, Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF won a resounding majority in Parliament, and he became State President, a position he has held ever since.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Massacre in Matebeleland**

Mugabe came into power on a radical Marxist-Leninist platform. While Zimbabwe was officially a non-aligned state during the Cold War, the State President made no secret of his desire for a one-party state based on a communist revolution. During the struggle for independence, an alliance of convenience between ZANU-PF and ZAPU-PF hid the fissure between the two parties.<sup>10</sup> After the first democratic elections, however, Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU forces continued the armed struggle in Matebeleland in southern Zimbabwe. There was and continues to be deep distrust of the government by the Ndebele people of Matebeland because of a commonly held view that Mugabe, who is Shona, was bent on revenge for a nineteenth century invasion by Ndebele King Lobengula into Shona territory.<sup>11</sup>

In response to the continued insurrection, Mugabe sent the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade of the National Army into Matebeleland in the 1980s. According to a report by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), the Fifth Brigade massacred approximately 6000 civilians between 1981 and 1988. The CCJP reports the brutality of the Brigade:

The soldiers picked out the two pregnant girls from the rest of the villagers and shot them at close range to death. That did not seem to meet their standards for bestial ruthlessness and – using bayonets fixed on their AK-47 rifles, the soldiers then split open the dead girls' stomachs exposing their moving fetuses.<sup>12</sup>

Mugabe was given a copy of the report on the atrocities committed by forces under his control, and responded, "Let us remember that there are those who are bent on mischief-making, persons who see in our unity and history of the struggle that unites us, a force against their own machinations. If we dig up history, we wreck the nation and we tear our people apart into factions."<sup>13</sup> The massacres of the 1980s remain an

open wound in the Ndebele community, and Matebeleland continues to be a center of opposition to ZANU-PF and the site of serious human rights violations.<sup>14</sup>

## The Land Issue

As in most African countries under colonialism, white settlers stole the vast majority of arable land, while Africans were forced to eke out an existence on overcrowded communal farms in more arid regions. The issue over unfair land distribution remains a difficult problem throughout the region. Many Africans view the continued prominence of white farmers on prime real estate as a continuation of racist colonial policies and a failure of the revolution. This perception of injustice is compounded by the traditional correlation in many African societies between land and power, especially true in Zimbabwe, where agriculture continues to be the country's most significant means of production. The psychological power of the land issue remains a vital aspect of the political atmosphere in the country.<sup>15</sup>

The Lancaster House Agreement, brokered by former colonial power Great Britain, favored the land-owning minority of the country. Sunset clauses in the agreement prohibited the government of Zimbabwe from mandatory resettlement for the first ten years of independence and called for a "willing buyer-willing seller" method of land redistribution. Any commercial farmer had to agree to sell his land to the government at a fair market value. Additionally, the British Government did provide a "land resettlement grant" of £44 million to the government of Zimbabwe, which was entirely spent by 1988, despite minimal results.<sup>16</sup>

The Lancaster House restrictions lapsed in 1990 and the government began a new process of resettlement. The Land Acquisition Act of 1992 established a commission of six officials who had the power to remove farmers from their land with "fair" compensation based on non-market guidelines. A proposed land tax was never implemented, and the acquisition program actually slowed down in the 1990s. In the first ten years of independence, over 50,000 families were re-settled on approximately 3 million hectares; but in the second decade only 20,000 were re-settled on less than one million hectares of land. According to the Commercial Farmers Union, 4500 predominantly white, commercial farmers still owned eleven million hectares of the most arable land in Zimbabwe in 1999. These farms had remained immensely profitable, despite repeated droughts in the 1990s, and sustained Zimbabwe as an exporter of maize and other agricultural products.<sup>17</sup>

The emergence in the late 1990s of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) represented the first serious political challenge to Mugabe. In order to counter the opposition and increase popularity with voters, the government officially instituted a "fast-track land redistribution program" in July 2000. Government officials listed more than 2700 farms covering more than six million hectares for immediate occupation. Groups of self-proclaimed "war veterans," many of whom were born after 1980, and ZANU-PF youth militia led the occupation. Acts of violence, torture,

and the murder of white farmers and African farm workers have plagued the resettlement process. Mr. Mugabe has repeatedly stated that the goal of his government is to finally rid Zimbabwe of all invaders and colonists.<sup>18</sup> Given his past record in Matebeleland and the continued violence in all sectors of society, the threat of genocide against whites should not be taken lightly.

The reallocation of farms demonstrates the level of governmental corruption, as farms have been given to government officials, groups of war veterans, and family members of the State President, while the vast majority of Zimbabweans remain in subsistence farming communities.<sup>19</sup> To make matters worse, many people are simply being moved from one settlement to another. With the promise of prosperity, they are forced to leave their homes, families, and communities behind, only to find conditions worse than those they left. Huge tracts of once prosperous farmland have been left fallow, as the new tenants do not have the experience or the will to properly till the land.<sup>20</sup> While the land issue has received the most intense scrutiny from the international media, it is only one part of the story of Zimbabwe's decay.

### **The Movement for Democratic Change and The Politics of Oppression**

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed in 1999 from the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions after a series of labor strikes led by current MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai. The party poses the first serious threat to Mugabe's ZANU-PF, which, until the parliamentary elections in June 2000, had received nearly universal electoral support in Zimbabwe. The MDC nearly won a parliamentary majority in 2000 despite serious intimidation of its supporters in the days and weeks leading up to the election by ZANU-PF members. Although there were reports of widespread violence, international observers deemed those elections both free and fair.<sup>21</sup> It is not surprising that Mr. Mugabe's fast-track land reallocation program was instituted only one month after nearly losing his majority in Parliament. It was the first step in a series of desperate measures to cling to power, culminating in the stolen presidential elections in March of 2002.

As the elections approached, the campaign of violence against white farmers outlined above was spread to any and all supporters of the MDC. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG):

The widespread use of violence, intimidation and coercion formed the backbone of the government's strategy to cow the electorate into supporting ZANU-PF, not supporting the MDC or staying away from polling places. Opposition supporters were beaten, tortured, and sometimes even killed, particularly in rural areas, by ZANU-PF youth militia and war veterans unleashed to terrorize the electorate into supporting the ruling party. These actions were taken with the complicity of the police and with total impunity.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the state-sponsored violence, the government manipulated voter registration in regions known to be supportive of the MDC and restricted access of international observers in these regions during the election. One week before the election, Mr. Tsvangirai was arrested on clearly slanderous charges of high treason and subsequently released. The vast majority of international observers declared the elections “stolen” and Mr. Mugabe’s Presidency as illegitimate.<sup>23</sup> However, more than a year after the election, the reality is that Mugabe is still very much in power.

While the attention of the international media has been drawn away from Zimbabwe since the election, the situation has only been getting worse. People unable to produce a ZANU-PF party identification card are subject to immediate torture. According to a recent report issued by the United States Institute of Peace: “Torture methods popular with ZANU-PF and others include beating the soles of victims’ feet and subjecting various body parts to electric shock. Zimbabwean Human Rights NGO Amani Trust has also witnessed many victims with ruptured eardrums, produced by percussive slapping of their ears.”<sup>24</sup> The report states that these incidences have actually increased since the election as the government attempts to consolidate its power and remove the opposition from the political equation. This type of tactic recalls Mugabe’s actions in the war for independence in the 1970s and the Matebeleland massacres of the 1980s. Tony Reeler of Zimbabwean Human Rights NGO Amani Trust states: “We have not learned that torture’s a terrible thing in Zimbabwe. What we have in fact done is we’ve ensured that its victims are utterly silenced. That also, in our view, encourages repetition. I know of no way not to conclude that among Zimbabweans and in Zimbabwe, torture is an acceptable way to deal with political conflict.”<sup>25</sup>

In March 2003 the Movement for Democratic Change organized a nationwide general strike that effectively brought the country to a halt for three days. The action proved that support for the opposition is still strong despite the torture and intimidation techniques employed by the government and that the people of Zimbabwe yearn for political democracy, economic stability, and food security. The regime responded to the strike in a typically repressive manner, imprisoning thousands of suspected MDC supporters amidst widespread reports of beatings, torture, and murder.<sup>26</sup>

The atrocious political and human rights atmosphere in Zimbabwe is compounded by a severe drought and famine currently plaguing the region. The World Food Program estimates that approximately 46 percent (5 million people) of the population are currently facing starvation. With the exception of South Africa, the entire region has been placed in peril, especially because countries like Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Swaziland traditionally relied upon the bounty of Zimbabwe’s commercial farming industry for survival in times of food shortages.<sup>27</sup>

Several international NGOs report that ZANU-PF has included hunger in its repertoire of intimidation. Desperately needed humanitarian aid is being withheld

from MDC supporters, especially in Matebeleland. Organizations like CARE and Catholic Relief Services have been expelled from the country for significant periods because of accusations that they are somehow favoring opposition groups.<sup>28</sup> Government officials have been documented using food as a weapon of political intimidation. According to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Abednico Ncube in a speech to starving villagers in Matebeleland: “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>29</sup>

Other officials have stated that the country’s problems would be seriously reduced if MDC supporters were to simply fade away. These statements are chilling because they do not represent empty threats, but rather a calculated policy by a regime that will stop at nothing to retain power. Ignoring this situation could lead to tragedies on the scale of Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mr. Mugabe continues to remain defiant, and despite political intimidation tactics, his popularity remains intact in many African countries. At the 2002 Global Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, Mugabe gave a speech decrying the evils of globalization, the despoiling of the South, and the racism of Tony Blair and others. Some western observers likened his remarks to the ranting of a lunatic, yet he was cheered wildly, and interrupted on three occasions for standing ovations. In contrast, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was jeered unceasingly during his ten-minute speech. This dichotomy highlights a broader fissure between Africa and the West, which, if not addressed, will continue to be a cause of serious conflict. However, it is absolutely essential that the governments and organizations who are stakeholders in the region put their differences aside and actively engage in Zimbabwe while there is still time.

## **The International Response**

The international community should take concise, unified action to prevent Zimbabwe from deteriorating even further. Zimbabweans continue to suffer, and as long as the Mugabe regime continues its ruthless behavior, the situation cannot possibly be rectified. Learning lessons from past failures to heed early warning signals, key international and regional actors have the opportunity to use their respective power and influence to effect positive change. This section outlines specific recommendations for South Africa, the U.S., the U.K., the Commonwealth, the United Nations, and the African Union/New Partnership for African Development.

### ***South Africa***

South Africa’s response to Mugabe’s transgressions can be described as troubling at best. The regional superpower and its normally outspoken President Thabo

Mbeki have been conspicuously silent on Zimbabwe since the crisis began in 2000. South Africa has continued normal economic relations with its neighbor to the north, has not denounced the blatant violations of human rights and democracy, and its election observers concluded that the results in March were both free and fair. Amidst growing international pressure to respond to the crisis, Mbeki told *The Sunday Times*:

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>31</sup>

Yet Mbeki has far greater leverage in Zimbabwe than these comments suggest. Zimbabwe has always been dependent on South Africa as a trading partner, so much so that Mugabe repeatedly broke with international economic sanctions against the apartheid regime in the 1980s. South Africa should immediately begin to assert its power in the region by using all of its economic clout to convince Mugabe to change his behavior.

There have been encouraging steps taken recently by Mbeki, President Obasanjo of Nigeria, and President Bakili Muluzi of Malawi. The three heads of state traveled to Harare in April 2003 for a round of shuttle diplomacy with Mugabe and Tsvangarai. The talks did not lead to any tangible results, but the action by Mbeki and his colleagues at least showed a willingness to engage with the parties at the highest level.<sup>32</sup>

One of the compelling reasons for Mbeki's reluctance to denounce Mugabe is the sense of solidarity amongst African liberation movements. ZANU-PF and the African National Congress (ANC) share a heritage of the struggle against oppression by white settlers. Some analysts have observed that it is politically impossible for Mbeki to break ranks with Mugabe without being viewed as a puppet of the West.<sup>33</sup> Mugabe's accusations of racism against Mr. Blair have kept this aspect of the dilemma on the table. If the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe is not enough reason to act, then the economy of South Africa and the strain on its already troubled population from the influx of refugees should serve as motivation. If Zimbabwe is allowed to fail, it could bring the fragile economies of the region down with it. While South Africa is certainly the most economically stable country in the region, it has significant problems, and an entire collapse in the region would be catastrophic.

The Government of South Africa should alter its policy toward Zimbabwe and consider taking the following measures to help resolve the crisis:

- Immediately end the special economic relationship between the countries and condition its reconstitution upon the return to the rule of law in

Zimbabwe.

- Denounce the stolen elections and call for a return to the rule of law and democracy, which were the foundation of the New South Africa, created in May of 1994.
- Continue the active engagement with ZANU-PF and encourage Mugabe to resume negotiations with the MDC for new elections and a possible power-sharing agreement.<sup>34</sup>
- Encourage increased action by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which has yet to present a unified voice concerning the political crisis in Zimbabwe, despite a recent communiqué by the Organ of Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation that identified the land issue as the core component of the strife.<sup>35</sup> SADC must condemn the subversion of the rule of law and human rights abuses by the regime in Harare.
- Continue “quiet diplomacy” with the Mugabe regime and attempt to use South Africa’s position of power to influence ZANU-PF to curb its repressive policies.
- Use South Africa’s role as regional superpower to rally other countries to the cause of democracy in Zimbabwe. If Mugabe loses his African support base, he may be convinced to acquiesce peacefully.
- Use directed aid to help empower Zimbabwean civil society in a similar manner as suggested for the United States (see below).

The success of preventive measures in Zimbabwe is almost entirely dependent on the South African government and the ANC. If Mbeki does not immediately change his policy, the situation will continue to spiral out of control and lead to catastrophe.

### *The United States*

Since the elections in March 2002, the Bush administration has not given priority to the crisis in Zimbabwe. While this is understandable given the focus on international terrorism and the reconstruction of Iraq, the United States should seriously consider investing significant political capital in resolving this crisis. The lessons of the past should not go unheeded by this administration. Somalia, Afghanistan, and Bosnia are just a few of the countries where early intervention could have saved countless lives while protecting American interests.

One of the basic tenets of the Bush Doctrine on National Security is that the United States must prevent state failure, which can become a breeding ground for terrorism. While Zimbabwe is certainly not a center of Islamic fundamentalism and has no history of international terrorism, current trends could result in state failure and possibly destabilize the entire region. Engagement with Zimbabwe at this critical juncture can demonstrate that American power can be employed positively in

Africa.

Although Zimbabwe may not be a current priority, the United States certainly has a history of involvement. In 2001, the United States delivered nearly 500,000 metric tons of food to Southern Africa.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the U.S. enacted targeted economic sanctions against Mugabe and other ZANU-PF officials, including a travel ban for his inner circle and selected asset freezing.<sup>38</sup> This is clearly not enough. It is recommended that the United States:

- Tighten the targeted sanctions against Mugabe and expand them to a wider circle of ZANU-PF members. The Bush Administration should tie the approval of billions of dollars in aid for the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) to the successful resolution of the crisis in Zimbabwe.<sup>39</sup>
- Use its clout with Zimbabwe's neighbors and other important African countries like Nigeria to convince them to denounce Mugabe and his behavior.<sup>40</sup>
- Attempt to involve the United Nations Security Council, which to date has been conspicuously silent on this issue.
- Through USAID, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the National Democratic and Republican Institutes, the United States should help to empower Zimbabwe's civil society and the political opposition. It is clear from the flawed election results and the successful general strike orchestrated by the MDC in March 2003 that a majority of Zimbabweans are fed up with the current regime. The United States should devote funding to organs of civil society in Zimbabwe and provide training in non-violent direct action similar to the program that helped Serbian opposition activists remove Slobodan Milosevic from power in 2000.

### *The United Kingdom*

As the former colonial power, Britain has obvious interests in Zimbabwe. Tony Blair has shown excellent leadership in consistently criticizing Mugabe and ZANU-PF, and in keeping the issue in the focus of his government's foreign policy. When the Labour Party came into power in 1997, it immediately became involved in Zimbabwe, focusing on the need for good governance, democracy, and protection of human rights. The Department for International Development (DFID) also began looking for new ways to assist with land reform. When the political crisis began in 1999, however, Mr. Mugabe immediately began to look for scapegoats. In addition to white farmers, he chose Mr. Blair as a target, and has been relentlessly demonizing him ever since. Mugabe has accused Mr. Blair of being a racist and of perpetuating British colonialism in Africa. The policy of constructive engagement with Mugabe was therefore discarded in 2000.<sup>41</sup>

The British government must stay at the forefront of the international

community's response to the crisis in Zimbabwe. Mr. Blair should use his country's close friendship with the United States to enhance the Bush Administration's involvement in the crisis. Furthermore, the U.K. can use its position of leadership in the Commonwealth (see below), membership in the U.N. Security Council, the European Union, and the Group of Eight, to keep the issue as a priority. The U.K. should pursue the same set of recommendations outlined above for the United States, especially increasing pressure on Mugabe, prodding South Africa into action, and empowering Zimbabwean civil society.

### ***The Commonwealth***

Of all of the international actors involved in Zimbabwe, the Commonwealth has been the most prominent and offered the best chances for early resolution. The Abuja Agreement, signed on 6 September 2001 under the leadership of Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, outlined tangible methods for resolving the land reform issue within the rule of law. As we have seen, however, the agreement failed miserably as Mugabe blatantly disregarded his treaty obligations and has continued the fast-track program.<sup>42</sup>

After the election in March 2002, the Commonwealth voted to suspend Zimbabwe for one year. This action was taken, but not without controversy within the organization. Many countries with predominantly black populations refused to denounce Mugabe's actions and continued to support his membership in the organization, while those with a majority of white citizens voted for immediate suspension.<sup>43</sup> The situation has thus been converted into a racial argument, while virtually ignoring the blatant disregard for democratic government in Zimbabwe, the torture and murder of people of all races in the country, and the complete subjugation of the rule of law. Mugabe has succeeded in using the sensitivities of other nations in the Commonwealth and in Africa to divert attention from his criminal behavior. Although the organization did extend the suspension for an additional year in March 2003, it should be permanent, with re-admission conditioned upon a return to the rule of law in Zimbabwe.

### ***The African Union and The New Partnership for African Development***

Yet another troubling aspect of the crisis in Zimbabwe is the negative effect it has thus far had on these two new initiatives for Africa. The African Union (AU) was created in 2000 to replace the antiquated Organization for African Unity. The AU is designed to create closer economic ties between the nations of the continent and to promote democracy, peace, and security in the region. During the July 2001 Lusaka OAU/AU Summit, African leaders adopted the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). NEPAD was created by African heads of state to help promote economic growth and to bring the continent into the global marketplace. Hailed as the first development initiative for Africa by Africans, it could signal the begin-

ning of a new age. Instead of top-down programs hatched in Washington, London, and Brussels, aid projects will be directed by the people those projects propose to benefit.<sup>44</sup> In addition to the economic development tenets of NEPAD, it places significant import on governance, transparency, and human rights. NEPAD's Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance states:

At the beginning of the new century and millennium, we reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of democracy and its core values in our respective countries. In particular, we undertake to work with renewed determination to enforce:

- The rule of law;
- The equality of all citizens before the law and the liberty of the individual;
- Individual and collective freedoms, including the right to form and join political parties and trade unions, in conformity with the constitution;
- Equality of opportunity for all;
- The inalienable right of the individual to participate by means of free, credible and democratic political processes in periodically electing their leaders for a fixed term of office; and adherence to the separation of powers, including the protection of the independence of the judiciary and of effective parliaments.<sup>45</sup>

In order to avoid that the pattern of corruption and repression that has plagued previous development schemes, NEPAD has a built-in peer review mechanism that is supposed to pressure states to enact the principles of the initiative. Currently, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is purely voluntary. Additionally, the APRM does not have the power to expel a miscreant nation from the organization. This has been a stumbling block for western donors anxious for insurance that NEPAD will not represent yet another failed initiative for development in Africa.<sup>47</sup> The APRM is supposed to be a means for African countries to police themselves, but the Zimbabwe crisis has highlighted its ineffectiveness before the organization even begins operation. Most likely, Mugabe will never voluntarily submit to peer review, and even if he did, the reviewers could only offer him suggestions about how to improve the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe. The system as it is currently constituted has absolutely no teeth and must be revised. The APRM should be strengthened to punish miscreant states like Zimbabwe and ensure that the allocation of \$64 billion in annual investments sought by NEPAD is tied to political reform and the protection of human rights.

Zimbabwe is an important test for the new initiatives to prove that the new millennium in Africa will not be business as usual. Mugabe has systematically bro-

ken with all of the principles outlined above. Yet NEPAD's leaders, especially Mbeki, have resisted Western calls for action by saying that this crisis is beyond the scope of the fledgling organization. Still, if all 45-member states of the AU make a concerted effort to denounce the Mugabe regime, through the AU's African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Mugabe may be forced to relent and at least return to the table with the MDC. In the absence of the planned AU Peace and Security Council and the ineffectiveness of the APRM, the member states should at least issue a statement concerning the illegitimacy of the elections and call for a return to the rule of law in Zimbabwe. Continued inaction will serve to validate Mugabe's behavior and make it more difficult for positive engagement as the crisis deepens.

### *The United Nations*

Thus far the role of the UN in Zimbabwe has been relegated to humanitarian assistance. The World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees all have significant missions in the country and must continue to maintain a high profile to help prevent mass starvation. Also, the Security Council has yet to become involved. The UNSC should consider a resolution internationalizing the targeted sanctions already in place by the U.S., U.K., and E.U. Additionally, the Security Council should at least begin to think about the possibility of future peace enforcement mechanisms in the event that the Zimbabwean state fails. We have seen in countless conflicts around the world that UN delays in procuring funding and troops for peacekeeping missions can have disastrous effects. In this case, the early warning signs are clear, and if the situation continues on its current course, a peacekeeping operation may become necessary. Instead of waiting until the crisis degrades into state failure or civil conflict, the UNSC should begin contingent preparations now, so a possible intervention can be undertaken with expedience and proficiency.

### **Conclusion**

The current state of affairs in Zimbabwe is a textbook case for preventive diplomacy. Mohammed Bedjaoui defines the purpose of preventive diplomacy as:

- 1) To prevent disputes arising between states or between governments and minority parties within states;
- 2) To prevent an existing dispute from being transformed into an open conflict; and
- 3) If a conflict breaks out, to ensure that it spreads as little as possible.<sup>48</sup>

There is certainly a dispute in Zimbabwe between the government and the MDC. The crisis has yet to devolve into complete collapse of the state or armed conflict, but both of these will become possible as the situation continues to deteriorate. We have seen that the Mugabe regime has blatantly violated nearly every international norm for governance, the rule of law, and human rights. The once prosper-

ous economy of the country is in free fall and millions of people face starvation, disease, and appalling levels of poverty. ZANU-PF's blatant disregard for human dignity and preponderance for violent intimidation, torture, and extra-judicial killing should sound alarm bells in the international community to immediately take definitive preventive action. The key to successful preventive diplomacy is to heed the early warning signals and to effectively wield influence before it is too late. The principle actors in this case—South Africa, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, the African Union and NEPAD, and the United Nations—*must* form a cohesive strategy immediately or be faced with yet another blight on the collective conscience of the world.

### NOTES

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- <sup>7</sup> Hugh McCullum, Canadian Broadcasting Company, *Zimbabwe Land*, 2003. Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indepth/zimbabwe/index.html>; 13 April 2003.
- <sup>8</sup> Lord Robert Sidelsky and Edward Mortimer, "Economic Sanctions as a Means to International Health," *Preventive Diplomacy: Stopping Wars Before They Start*, ed. Kevin M. Cahill (London: Routledge, 2000), 151.
- <sup>9</sup> McCullum.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Lewis Gaba, "A Chronicle of Post-Independence Massacre," *Africa News*, 16 July 1997, 2.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> Hugh McCullum and Kondwane Chirambo, Southern African Research and Documentation Center "Zimbabweans Make Strong Statement For Peace," 2002. Available at: [http://www.sardc.net/sd/elections2000/zimbabwe/zim\\_zimbabweans.html](http://www.sardc.net/sd/elections2000/zimbabwe/zim_zimbabweans.html); 13 April 2003.
- <sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, March 2002. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/zimbabwe>; 22 July 2003.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*



<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> International Crisis Group, *Africa Report Number 52: Zimbabwe: The Politics of National Liberation and International Division* (Harare: International Crisis Group, 2002), 2.

<sup>22</sup> See *Supra Note 3: Zimbabwe at the Crossroads: Transition or Conflict*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> United States Institute of Peace, *Special Report Number 92: Zimbabwe and The Politics of Torture* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2002), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>26</sup> British Broadcasting Company, "Brutal Zimbabwe Crackdown," 24 March 2003. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2881093.stm>; 13 April 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, "The Limits of Engagement: British Foreign Policy and the Crisis in Zimbabwe," *International Affairs* Vol. 78, no. 3 (2002): 547-65.

<sup>28</sup> See *Supra Note 20: Zimbabwe: The Politics of National Liberation*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>30</sup> See *Supra Note 20: Zimbabwe: The Politics of National Liberation*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> New York Times, "Negotiations in Zimbabwe Fail to Break Political Crisis," 6 May 2003.

<sup>32</sup> See *Supra Note 20: Zimbabwe: The Politics of National Liberation*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> See *Supra* note 32.

<sup>34</sup> Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "Zimbabwe Hijacks SADC," 9 April 2003. Available at: <http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/hr/030409ciz.asp?sector=hr>; 9 May 2003.

<sup>35</sup> This aid has also been a seed for controversy as Zimbabwe has consistently refused to accept genetically modified maize. United States Department of State, 13 November 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Danna Harman, "The West Help, and Harms as Southern Africa Seeks Food," *Christian Science Monitor* Vol. 13 (November 2002).

<sup>37</sup> This recommendation was drawn from the International Crisis Group's *Zimbabwe: The Politics of National Liberation and International Division*. See note 21.

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<sup>39</sup> See *Supra Note 26: The Limits of Engagement*.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> IRIN, "Africa: Support for NEPAD Blueprint May be Weakened," 20 November 2002. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=31010&SelectRegion=Africa>; 13 April 2003.

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<sup>45</sup> Mohammed Bedjaoui, "The Fundamentals of Preventive Diplomacy," in Kevin M. Cahill,

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