

P6_TA-PROV(2007)0172

Zimbabwe

European Parliament resolution on Zimbabwe

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions of 15 January 2004¹, 16 December 2004², 7 July 2005³ and 7 September 2006⁴,
 - having regard to the Emergency Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of 28-29 March 2007, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania,
 - having regard to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Bureau's Declaration of 21 March 2007 on the ill-treatment of the Zimbabwean opposition MP Nelson Chamisa,
 - having regard to Council Common Position 2007/120/CFSP⁵ of 19 February 2007 renewing restrictive measures against Zimbabwe until 20 February 2008,
 - having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 236/2007⁶ extending the list of those persons in Zimbabwe targeted by the restrictive measures,
 - having regard to the Declaration on Zimbabwe of the African Civil Society Forum 2007 of 24 March 2007,
 - having regard to the International Crisis Group's report of 5 March 2007 entitled 'Zimbabwe: An End to the Stalemate?',
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas this month marks the 27th anniversary of Zimbabwean independence but the Zimbabwean people have yet to gain their freedom,
- B. whereas members of the opposition parties, civil society groups and individuals in Zimbabwe are assaulted and/or arbitrarily arrested, and are victims of police and government security service brutality in a climate of systematic political violence aimed at destroying the structures of the opposition and civil society before the 2008 elections,
- C. whereas, since the violent break-up of the opposition gathering of 11 March 2007, in which two people were killed, more than 300 members of civil society groups and opposition parties have been arrested,
- D. whereas the Bureau of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly has stated that it 'condemns the brutal attack on its colleague Nelson Chamisa in the strongest possible terms',

¹ OJ C 92 E, 16.4.2004, p.380.

² OJ C 226 E, 15.9.2005, p. 358.

³ OJ. C 157 E, 6.7.2006, p. 491.

⁴ *Texts Adopted*, P6_TA(2006)0358.

⁵ OJ L 51, 20.2.2007, p. 25.

⁶ Commission Regulation (EC) No 236/2007 of 2 March 2007 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 314/2004 concerning certain restrictive measures in respect of Zimbabwe (OJ L 66, 6.3.2007, p. 14).

- E. whereas the country's political and economic situation has now been deteriorating for eight years and Zimbabweans continue to face serious food shortages, with the World Food Programme providing emergency food aid to 1.5 million Zimbabweans in the first three months of 2007 but calculating that over 4.5 million suffer from malnutrition,
- F. whereas life expectancy in Zimbabwe is now among the lowest in the world, at 37 for men and 34 for women, and 20% of adults are HIV-positive, with over 3 200 people dying each week from the disease, creating the world's highest orphan rate,
- G. whereas 80% of the population is living below the poverty line, the country has an unemployment rate of 80% in the formal sector and the few Zimbabweans who are in employment do not earn enough to meet even their basic needs, suffering from massive de-skilling, corruption, prohibitive school fees and the collapse of the health system and vital services,
- H. whereas a third of Zimbabwe's population live within the borders of neighbouring countries, millions of Zimbabweans have already fled the country and currently 50 000 Zimbabweans are fleeing the country each month,
- I. whereas alarm is growing within the region at the repercussions of Zimbabwe's economic disaster on neighbouring countries,
- J. whereas all forms of gathering of over three people are now subject to prior police consent under the Public Order and Security Act as a consequence of the amendments made by President Robert Mugabe to the Constitution prior to February 2007, and whereas media laws are repressive and the Electoral Act is undemocratic,
- K. whereas many Zimbabweans do not receive information on the violence the security forces have unleashed on the opposition and civil society activists because of the absence of any independent daily press and media; whereas, however, the stories of the victims of violence are widespread,
- L. whereas, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), every African country will enjoy positive economic growth in 2007 with the exception of Zimbabwe, whose economy has contracted by 40% in the last decade and will contract by a further 5.7% this year; whereas Zimbabwe moved into technically defined 'hyper-inflation' when its annualised inflation rate surged to 2 200% in March 2007 and whereas, according to the IMF, that rate could top 5 000% by the end of the year,
- M. whereas, according to the Zimbabwean Chamber of Mines, the gold mining sector, which is the country's biggest exporter and accounts for 52% of its mineral output, is facing collapse; whereas the Zimbabwe tobacco industry, which accounts for approximately 50% of the country's foreign exchange, is facing a similar position with the start of the 2007 tobacco selling season being postponed; and whereas agricultural productivity has fallen by 80% since 1998,
- N. whereas the development of Africa is a priority for the Western democracies, whereas aid alone can achieve little and whereas African governments are expected to commit themselves to democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights,
- O. whereas the African Union (AU), the SADC and in particular South Africa all have vital roles to play in resolving the crisis, and whereas the SADC meeting on 28-29 March 2007 was a significant step in this direction;

1. Strongly condemns the Mugabe dictatorship for its relentless oppression of the Zimbabwean people, opposition parties and civil society groups and its destruction of the Zimbabwean economy, which has deepened the misery of millions of Zimbabweans;
2. Welcomes the Council Conclusions of 23 April 2007 expressing strong concern at the rapidly deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe and the wide-scale human rights abuses still taking place in the country, and urges the Zimbabwean Government to honour its own commitments, as a signatory to the SADC Treaty and the Protocols thereto, the Constitutive Act of the AU, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, to democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law;
3. Deplores the fact that, despite the condition of the country, regional and international criticism and a 27-year rule, Robert Mugabe was again endorsed as the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front's (Zanu-PF) candidate for President in 2008 by its central committee and that a campaign of intimidation is already taking place in order to destroy the structures of the opposition and civil society and to ensure the result of the parliamentary and presidential elections;
4. Calls again on Robert Mugabe to abide by his own promise to stand down, sooner rather than later, which would be the largest single step possible towards reviving Zimbabwean society, politics and the economy;
5. Strongly condemns the violent break-up of the Save Zimbabwe Campaign prayer rally organised on 11 March 2007 by opponents of Mugabe; condemns, in particular, the murders and expresses profound sorrow at the deaths of Gift Tandare, an opposition activist, who was shot and whose body was snatched and secretly buried without his family's knowledge, Itai Manyeruke, who died a day later after being severely beaten up by the police, and the journalist Edmore Chikomba on 30 March 2007;
6. Strongly condemns the attacks on opposition leaders and the subsequent arrest of Morgan Tsvangirai, Chairman of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Nelson Chamisa, Grace Kwinjeh, Lovemore Madhuku, William Bango, Sekai Holland, Tendai Biti, Arthur Mutambara and many others, their brutal treatment by the police forces and the prohibition on seeking medical treatment outside Zimbabwe; deeply deplores the fact that several other participants in the gathering were savagely assaulted by the Zimbabwe police; expresses deep consternation at the fact that on the same occasion Zimbabwe's Information Minister, Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, rejected the reports of police brutality and torture, instead accusing the opposition of attacking the police;
7. Protests at the re-arrest of MDC members including Morgan Tsvangirai and others on 28 March 2007, the continued detention of many opposition activists, including Ian Makone, special adviser to Mr Tsvangirai, the renewed attacks against MDC members, the on-and-off court trials they face on unsustainable charges and the ongoing arrests and abductions of suspected opposition members;
8. Finds unacceptable the attack on Nelson Chamisa, perpetrated on his way to Harare airport, where he was to take a flight to attend the meetings of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU JPA);
9. Is deeply concerned by the news that 56 women belonging to Zimbabwe's NGO 'Women of Zimbabwe Arise' were arrested on 23 April 2007 and that ten of their babies were jailed with them;

10. Strongly condemns the indiscriminate police and army violence against civilians, as took place on the eve of the Easter holiday, with heavily armed riot police assaulting people waiting for transport to their holiday destinations – a tactic which is clearly designed to sow terror;
11. Calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to restore the rule of law and to immediately halt violent attacks on opposition and civil society groups and individuals, to end ‘disappearances’ and arbitrary detentions, to end torture and the abuse of detainees, to respect the courts and members of the legal profession, and to respect and uphold the rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
12. Calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to begin an immediate process to end the country’s crisis by agreeing to a credible road map for a democratic transition, the immediate restoration of the rule of law, a framework for free and fair elections under international supervision, and transitional guarantees of non-partisan control of key state institutions such as the army and the police;
13. Calls also for the necessary constitutional changes to be enacted and for the Electoral Commission to be properly empowered as a genuinely independent body able to oversee the conduct of free and fair elections, through a transparent system, and considers that an essential part of this process will be complete control of ballot papers, properly audited from beginning to end with a reliable record of how many ballot papers have been printed, how many are distributed to each district and how many are validly used;
14. Offers, in this regard, its assistance in the implementation of any agreed process that will establish the basis for truly free and fair elections, including the deployment of an EU Election Observation Mission, and trusts that other organisations, such as the Commonwealth, will also be invited to send electoral observers;
15. Welcomes the new-found unity of purpose among opposition parties and groups in Zimbabwe, including all elements of the MDC, the Churches and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), and their determination to work together in defiance of government oppression in order to bring democracy and freedom to the people;
16. Welcomes the recognition by SADC that a crisis exists in Zimbabwe and the appointment of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to facilitate dialogue between Zanu-PF and the opposition MDC; supports the frank assessments of the situation in Zimbabwe by Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, Ghanaian President John Kuffour, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo; emphasises that there are no economic sanctions against Zimbabwe, only restrictive measures targeted at the Mugabe regime; welcomes the SADC's initiative in seeking a solution that will benefit both the citizens of Zimbabwe and the region as a whole; and urges the entire international community, and particularly African nations, to seize this opportunity;
17. Trusts that the mediation of South African President Mbeki will bring an end to the current cycle of violence and intimidation, without which his mandate to facilitate dialogue between the opposition and the Government in Zimbabwe and a wide national dialogue beyond Zanu-PF and the MDC, including Church leaders, business, trade unions and other civil society players, cannot be adequately fulfilled;
18. Supports the student movement in Zimbabwe, whose leaders and activists are continually arrested, beaten and harassed, and the ongoing campaign of the ZCTU, and applauds their bravery in having staged a two-day 'national stay-away', denouncing the incapacity of Mugabe to stop the economic collapse of the country, despite the fact that there were

reports of police brutality and that the ZCTU's leaders were severely assaulted by police after their last demonstration in 2006; regrets that no constructive engagement is possible with a violent government;

19. Deplores the renewed declaration by the Zimbabwe Government of its intention to harass and close down NGOs which it deems to be supporting opposition and political change, and sees this threat as a serious indication of bad faith on the part of the government in relation to finding a way forward for the country;
20. Calls on the Council to ensure that all Member States rigorously apply existing restrictive measures, including the arms embargo and the travel ban, emphasising that Zimbabwe cannot be treated as a separate issue from the EU's wider relations with Africa; calls, therefore, on the Council to ensure that no banned persons are invited to, or attend, the planned EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007; considers that weakness in the application of targeted sanctions severely undermines the EU's policy towards Zimbabwe and gravely disappoints those in Zimbabwe who seek the support of the international community;
21. Calls on the Council further to expand the scope of the targeted restrictive measures and to enlarge the list of banned individuals so that it encompasses even more of Mugabe's power structure, including government ministers, deputies and governors, military personnel, the Central Intelligence Organisation and police personnel, and the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe;
22. Observes that the EU is the most important donor to Zimbabwe, with total funding of EUR 193 million in 2006, of which the total funding from the EU Member States amounts to EUR 106,9 million and the total funding from the Commission amounts to EUR 86,1 million, and that EUR 94,7 million alone go to food and humanitarian and emergency aid and EUR 49,9 million to human and social development; deeply regrets, however, that the Mugabe regime manipulates such support, particularly food aid, using it as a political weapon with which to punish those who dare voice opposition to the regime;
23. Insists that all aid for Zimbabwe must be delivered through genuine non-governmental organisations and must reach the people for whom it is intended without being intercepted in any way by agents of the Mugabe regime;
24. Calls on the United Kingdom, which assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council in April 2007, to put Zimbabwe on the agenda of the Security Council, and expects that South Africa will play a constructive role as a non-permanent member of the Security Council;
25. Repeats its demand that the Mugabe regime derive absolutely no financial benefit or propaganda value from either the run-up to the 2010 World Cup or the tournament itself; in this regard, calls on South Africa, the host nation, and on FIFA to exclude Zimbabwe from participating in pre-World Cup matches, holding international friendly games or hosting national teams involved in the event;
26. Welcomes the initiative of the ACP-EU JPA of sending a joint delegation to Zimbabwe to ascertain the situation on the ground, calls on the ACP-EU JPA to carry out this investigation as soon as possible and calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to grant access to Zimbabwe to all members of such a delegation; stresses that the delegation should be given access to all areas of civil society and should not be restricted to meeting government-organised groups; requests the Commission to organise a visit to Zimbabwe and urges the authorities in Zimbabwe to cooperate with regard to the idea of a visit;

27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of Zimbabwe, the Government and Parliament of South Africa, the Secretary-General of the Southern African Development Community, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Chairmen of the Commission and Executive Council of the African Union, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the governments of the G8 countries and the President of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).