

Demonstration to Demand the Restoration of Democracy in Zimbabwe

By *moderator*

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Demand the Restoration of Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights in Zimbabwe. Demand an end to the Mugabe Coup.

Join the demonstration hosted by PASSOP, TAC and other organisations at the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting on Thursday 17 April 2008 from 12pm to 2pm at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

For further details call Regis Mtutu on 084 310 8614 or Braam Hanekom on 076 101 1324.

TAC will hand over the following memorandum to the Inter-Parliamentary Union:

Memorandum to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Cape Town

17 April 2008

African Union Governments and Parliaments Across the World: Demand the Restoration of Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights in Zimbabwe. Demand an end to the Mugabe Coup.

On 29 March 2008 Zimbabweans voted in parliamentary and presidential elections. These elections were neither free nor fair. Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF intimidated voters, hampered campaigning by the opposition parties, used various measures over several years to censor the independent media and ensured the state-run broadcasters and newspapers supported the ruling party. There have also been reports of ballot-box stuffing by the ruling party.

Despite this, Zanu PF lost its majority in the House of Assembly. The reasons for this are clear: The last decade has seen the erosion of human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe. Agriculture, the country's main industry, has collapsed and Zimbabwe has the highest inflation rate in the world. Shop shelves stand empty. Between two ? four million citizens have left, often fled, the country, stripping it of teaching, medical and other professional skills. Unemployment is about 80%. The Zimbabwean economy has been destroyed.

Life-expectancy is estimated by the World Health Organisation to be approximately 35, the lowest in the world. Zimbabwean health-care, once strong and competent, is now in ruins. There is no capacity to deal with large AIDS and TB epidemics in a country where it is estimated that between 1.1 and 2.2 million people have HIV. Over the years, supplies of antiretrovirals have been inconsistent; TAC has in the past few years had to make large purchases of antiretrovirals for patients treated at health facilities in Zimbabwe. In recent months there has been a severe shortage and interruption of drug supplies particularly antiretrovirals, endangering thousands of lives.

Corruption, torture, the forced removal of hundreds of thousands of residents from Harare, the use of food as a political weapon, destruction of the independent judiciary, adherence to inappropriate International Monetary Fund austerity

measures and an officially sanctioned land-invasion programme have precipitated the country's crisis. This is why the majority of Zimbabweans want a new government.

But to date the the Zimbabwean Election Commission (ZEC), which is a discredited institution under the control of the Mugabe government, has failed to release the results of the Presidential election. Reports from credible organisations monitoring the elections indicate that Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has received the most votes and possibly even received more than the 50 percent plus one vote required to avoid a run-off against Mugabe.

Mugabe has delayed announcing results and manipulated the electoral process by putting pressure on the discredited ZEC. The results of the electoral process have been posted outside polling stations since 1 April 2008 and collected by various civic organisations, media and the opposition parties. No complaints or statements were issued by the ZEC or ZANU PF to indicate that they were dissatisfied with the results and demand recounts within the stipulated 48 hours as is required by the Zimbabwe's electoral laws.

The Mugabe regime has begun a campaign of terror. It has dispatched armed militias to intimidate populations that voted against the government. Election officials have been arrested on spurious grounds. Workers and opposition party supporters have been beaten, tortured and, in some cases, killed. Farm invasions have resumed. It is obvious that the regime is preparing to fix the result of any possible run-off election. Robert Mugabe is effecting a coup.

In the meanwhile President Mbeki has persisted with his failed policy of quiet diplomacy and has denied that there is a crisis in Zimbabwe. The emergency SADC summit over the weekend was an implicit acknowledgement that there is indeed a crisis in Zimbabwe, yet SADC leaders have failed to take consistent action against the Mugabe regime's abuses. SADC and the African Union do not appear to have the moral courage to end the crisis.

It is imperative that we hold Africa's leaders as well as civil society accountable to resolve the crisis. The inaction of our leaders, particularly President Mbeki, perpetuates the acceptability of human rights abuses across the continent and encourages the worst stereotypes about African governance.

As civil society organisations, we will mobilise to restore democracy in Zimbabwe. We call upon the IPU, as the elected representatives of citizens from many countries, to stand up for the principles of democracy. Demand the restoration of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe and for Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF to relinquish power. Help end the Mugabe coup.

Signed:

Regis Mtutu
TAC INTERNATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR AND
ZIMBABWEAN CITIZEN

Vuyiseka Dubula
TAC GENERAL SECRETARY

ON BEHALF OF THE TREATMENT ACTION CAMPAIGN

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