

ZIMBABWE: AN END TO THE STALEMATE?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After years of political deadlock and continued economic and humanitarian decline, a realistic chance has at last begun to appear in the past few months to resolve the Zimbabwe crisis, by retirement of President Robert Mugabe, a power-sharing transitional government, a new constitution and elections. Both factions of the divided Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition and powerful elements of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party support the concept in outline. Although many of his party's leaders are pressing him to retire in twelve months, when his term expires, Mugabe seeks to extend his tenure to 2010 by a constitutional amendment to harmonise presidential and legislative elections in that year. Increased pressure and intervention including from the regional organisation, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the West, in the run-up to the mid-year parliamentary session, could lead to a new political order, but concessions to ZANU-PF should only be made in exchange for true restoration of democracy.

The economic meltdown, as well as the bite of European Union (EU) and U.S. targeted sanctions, is pushing ZANU-PF towards change, since business interests of key officials are suffering. The party is split over the succession issue but Mugabe's long successful divide-and-rule tactics have started to backfire as the two main factions are coming together to try to prevent him from staying beyond the expiration of his present term in March 2008. They showed their strength by blocking his proposed constitutional amendment at the party's annual conference in December 2006 and will seek to do so again at the central committee in March so they can explore a deal resulting in his retirement to make way for moderate leaders who could negotiate with the MDC and civil society on transitional mechanisms, seek SADC endorsement and reengage with the West and foreign investors.

A deal that merely removed Mugabe while in effect maintaining the political status quo by keeping ZANU-PF in power would be no change at all. The

situation is reminiscent of the last stages of Mobutu's reign in the Congo. The IMF predicts that inflation – already the world's highest – could pass 4,000 per cent by year's end, while foreign exchange is being wasted or stolen and smuggled abroad. Peaceful protests are repressed, and a new round of home and business demolitions similar to Operation Murambatsvina that displaced 700,000 in 2005 is being planned. Salaries of the security services and civil servants alike are mostly below the poverty line. Economic issues, discontent among underpaid police and troops and the increasing willingness of opposition parties and civil society to protest in the streets all increase the risk of sudden major violence.

The desire to remove Mugabe within the year provides a rare rallying point that cuts across partisan affiliations, and ethnic and regional identities. Opposition party leaders are keeping lines of communication open with the ZANU-PF dissidents while preparing for a non-violent campaign to demand immediate constitutional reform. The MDC's credibility and effectiveness, however, will be severely compromised unless efforts underway to reconcile its competing factions led by Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara succeed.

SADC (including South Africa) and the wider international community can make a vital contribution to resolving the crisis. SADC governments, who for long have been extremely reluctant to press Mugabe, now privately acknowledge they want him out to pave the way for a moderate ZANU-PF government. Without applying public pressure, the SADC troika is quietly beginning to explore ways to negotiate a retirement package for the president while persuading the West to relax its pressures. Mugabe's exit, however, should be only the starting point. Zimbabwe needs a more radical change to get back on its feet.

The West should both maintain pressure at this crucial point and increase support for democratic forces but also be more precise about the conditions for lifting sanctions and ending isolation. SADC, the EU and the U.S. should adopt a joint strategy with a clear

sequence of benchmarks leading to a genuinely democratic process for which removal of sanctions and resumption of international aid to government institutions could be used at the appropriate time as incentives. Consultations are needed now to get such a strategy in place by July when the parliament will be expected to take crucial decisions either on Mugabe's harmonisation scheme or on plans for transition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Zimbabwe and ZANU-PF:

1. Abandon plans to extend President Mugabe's term beyond its expiration in March 2008 and support SADC-led negotiations to implement an exit strategy for him no later than that date.
2. Negotiate with the MDC on a constitutional framework, power-sharing agreement, detailed agenda and benchmarks for a two-year political transition, beginning in March 2008, including:
 - (a) adoption of a constitutional amendment in the July 2007 parliamentary session providing for nomination in March 2008, by two-thirds majority, of a non-executive president, an executive prime minister and de-linking of government and ZANU-PF party positions;
 - (b) a power-sharing agreement leading in early 2008 to a transitional government, including ZANU-PF and the MDC, tasked with producing a new draft constitution, repealing repressive laws, drawing up a new voters roll and demilitarising and depoliticising state institutions in accordance with agreed timelines and benchmarks, and leading to internationally supervised elections in 2010; and
 - (c) implementation of an emergency economic recovery plan to curb inflation, restore donor and foreign investor confidence and boost mining and agricultural production, including establishment of a Land Commission with a strong technocratic base and wide representation of Zimbabwean stakeholders to recommend policies aimed at ending the land crisis.
3. Abandon plans for a new urban displacement program and act to redress the damage done by Operation Murambatsvina by:

- (a) providing shelter to its homeless victims; and
- (b) implementing the recommendations of the Tibaijuka Report, including compensation for those whose property was destroyed, unhindered access for humanitarian workers and aid and creation of an environment for effective reconstruction and resettlement.

To the Movement for Democratic Change:

4. Proceed with internal efforts to establish minimum unity within the party and a common front for dealing with the government and ZANU-PF and contesting presidential and parliamentary elections, while retaining reunification as the ultimate goal.
5. Hold internal consultations between faction leaders to adopt a joint strategy aiming at:
 - (a) finalising negotiations with ZANU-PF over constitutional reforms, a power-sharing agreement and formation of a transitional government in March 2008; and
 - (b) preparing for a March 2008 presidential election if negotiations with ZANU-PF fail, and President Mugabe retains power.

To Zimbabwean and South African Civil Society Organisations:

6. Initiate legal proceedings in South African courts to attach any assets stolen from the Zimbabwean government and transferred to or invested in South Africa and to obtain the arrest and prosecution of egregious Zimbabwean human rights abusers visiting South Africa.

To SADC and South Africa:

7. Engage with the U.S. and the EU to adopt a joint strategy for resolving the crisis that includes:
 - (a) mediation by SADC of negotiations for an exit deal on expiration of President Mugabe's term in 2008 and of an agreement between ZANU-PF and the MDC on a power-sharing transitional government to oversee development of a new constitution, repeal repressive laws and hold internationally supervised presidential and parliamentary elections in 2010; and

- (b) understandings on the use by the U.S. and EU of incentives and disincentives to support the strategy in regard to targeted sanctions, political relations with the transitional government and resumption of assistance.
- 8. Engage with the Zimbabwe government to facilitate talks between ZANU-PF and the MDC leading to the above steps.
- 9. Convene an urgent meeting of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation to consider the regional consequences of the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe and recommend action by the Heads of State summit to deal with the situation.

To the United States and the European Union:

- 10. Engage with SADC countries to adopt the above-mentioned joint strategy, including understandings on timelines and benchmarks to be met by the Zimbabwean authorities in restoring and implementing a democratic process.
- 11. Increase pressure on President Mugabe and other ZANU-PF leaders if they do not cooperate with efforts to begin a transition and restore democracy, including by taking the following measures to close loopholes in targeted personal sanctions:
 - (a) apply the sanctions also to family members and business associates of those on the lists;
 - (b) cancel visas and residence permits of those on the lists and their family members; and
 - (c) add Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono to the EU list.
- 12. Portugal, holding the EU Presidency in the second half of 2007, should not invite President Mugabe and other members of the Zimbabwe government or ZANU-PF on the EU targeted sanctions list to the EU-AU summit unless significant reforms have already been undertaken.
- 13. Increase funding for training and other capacity-building assistance to democratic forces in Zimbabwe.

To the United Nations Secretary-General:

- 14. Assign a senior official – a new Special Envoy to Zimbabwe, the Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Africa or a high-level member of the Department of Political Affairs – responsibility for the Zimbabwe portfolio including to support the SADC-led initiative, and monitor the situation for the Secretary General.

To the United Nations Security Council:

- 15. Begin discussions aimed at placing the situation in Zimbabwe on the agenda as a threat to international peace and security.

To the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights or in the alternative the Human Rights Council:

- 16. Initiate a follow-up investigation on the Tibaijuka Report, including plans for a new urban displacement campaign, arrests of informal miners and political repression, and recommend actions to the member states, the Security Council and the Secretariat.

To the Commonwealth Secretariat:

- 17. Encourage Commonwealth member countries in Southern Africa to help mediate a political settlement for a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe, setting benchmarks for a return of the country to the organisation.
- 18. Establish a group of Eminent Persons to engage with Zimbabwe, using the good offices of its regional members to facilitate access.
- 19. Work through Commonwealth civil society organisations to build up civil society capacity in Zimbabwe.

Pretoria/Brussels, 5 March 2007

ZIMBABWE: AN END TO THE STALEMATE?

I. INTRODUCTION

A political and economic crisis that has reached its seventh year is pushing Zimbabwe towards total collapse. The world's fastest shrinking peacetime economy has left the country teetering on the brink. The combination of that meltdown, rampant corruption, a deteriorating humanitarian situation, high poverty, political paralysis and repression mirrors the situation in the Congo during the last days of Mobutu's rule. In defiance of the growing domestic outcry for a radical change in leadership and new policies to return credible democracy and prosperity, President Robert Mugabe seems determined to change the constitution to extend his rule. For Zimbabwe to begin to recover, however, he must step down in 2008, when his term ends, and the opposing parties must negotiate a political transition leading to a new constitution and viable, democratic institutions. Domestic and international actors must act now if Zimbabwe is not to become a failed state.

Although Mugabe remains in a fairly strong position to choose the time and manner of his departure, growing economic and political pressures could hasten him into retirement. Loyalists are pushing for a two-year extension of his term, so that the presidential elections scheduled for 2008 would be held in 2010, the same as the parliamentary elections. However, powerful members of his ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party opposed this at the December 2006 party conference. If the Central Committee does not approve it in March, options will emerge for a negotiated transition.

There are four principal reasons for some cautious optimism over Zimbabwe's future:

Rebellion in ZANU-PF. Party officials are unhappy about the economy and Mugabe's manoeuvring that has prevented them from planning for a transition. ZANU-PF has broken into factions, which could prove dangerous for the president. A number of officials want him to leave in 2008 so a more moderate wing of the party could take over the government and re-engage with the West to rebuild the economy.

The emergence of cross-party dialogue. Crisis Group discussions with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), ZANU-PF and diplomats indicate wide support for a plan centred on a transitional government taking power in 2008 to develop a new constitution and hold free and fair elections.

The potential for a resurgent political opposition. The MDC shows signs of recovering from its paralysis. The still divided party as well as civil society organisations are jointly committing to strategic non-violence aimed at pressing the government to negotiate establishment of a transitional government. The MDC lacks the organisation and resources to march on Harare in its own colour revolution but it is the potential beneficiary in any elections of the economic discontent and ZANU-PF divisions. It is prepared to negotiate an end to the crisis, accept a power-sharing agreement and support constitutional reforms – if ZANU-PF delivers Mugabe's exit.

Growing regional fatigue. South Africa and other SADC nations are increasingly tired of the crisis' effect on the region and want to mediate. While they are not likely to condemn Mugabe publicly, they could orchestrate a retirement package for him and facilitate resumption of foreign aid if democratic reforms are implemented.

Due to the gravity of the economic situation, however, unplanned violence could erupt at any time, set off perhaps by an event as simple and common as a traffic accident or overzealous police activity. The military is also a potential source of instability. Despite pay raises in 2006, most salaries are dangerously close to or beneath the poverty line. The rank and file of the security services are suffering along with ordinary citizens, and there are credible reports of desertions and mutiny.¹ ZANU-PF factionalism is also contaminating the higher echelons of the military. Only favoured units close to Mugabe can be fully trusted.

This report analyses the window of opportunity and proposes a course of action for Zimbabweans, regional actors and donors to end the crisis.

¹ "Soldiers strike over salaries", Zimonline, 11 February 2007.

II. THE WORSENING CRISIS

A. THE ECONOMY

The economy declined by 40 per cent between 1998 and 2006, and unemployment is now 80 per cent.² Gross domestic product (GDP) fell 5.1 per cent in 2006 and is expected to sink a further 4.7 per cent in 2007.³ Zimbabwe has gone from having the second largest GDP in SADC to the tenth of thirteen.⁴ Already leading the world in inflation – the official figure is 1,593 per cent annually – a recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) study predicted the rate could soar to 4,279 per cent by year's end.⁵ Output has declined in all sectors.⁶ Cross-border traders have become the saviours of local retailers by supplying basic commodities following the collapse of local manufacturing.⁷ The increase of mineral smuggling into South Africa is hinted at by the contradiction between official statistics showing a 57 per cent decrease in gold production from 1999 to 2006 and the insistence of gold producers that the amount mined has stayed constant.⁸ An energy shortage is likely to accelerate collapse of the formal sector.⁹

All this has had a devastating effect on the majority of citizens. By mid-2005 income per capita had fallen to the 1953 level, a loss unprecedented in a country at peace and greater than what was experienced during recent conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire, the Congo and Sierra

Leone.¹⁰ The middle class, most of which cannot earn enough to feed their families, has been forced into poverty or emigration.¹¹ The cost of living for a family of six rose by 26.4 per cent in one month alone in 2006 (September to October) according to the government-funded Consumer Council of Zimbabwe. That rise was due mainly to skyrocketing healthcare costs. Office workers in Harare are taking their children out of school because they cannot pay the fees, and foregoing medical treatment.

A ZANU-PF politburo member admitted to Crisis Group that the government will be close to bankruptcy if the economy does not significantly improve by June 2007.¹² In what was intended as a confidential memo, Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri acknowledged that current pay disparities within the security services risk propelling officers into "active rebellion against the government".¹³ Youth members of a national service training program, routinely dispatched by the government to assault and intimidate opposition groups, earn close to Z\$600,000 (\$120)¹⁴ at the parallel market rate, while junior police and army officers earn just Z\$27,000 (\$5). The poverty line is Z\$534,000 (\$106). A junior army officer said: "We work harder than them but at the end of the day they earn more money than us. I tell you most junior members will be leaving in droves next year because of this".¹⁵ Reports have emerged of a mutiny within the ranks of the junior military over low salaries.¹⁶

According to government data, 80 per cent of the population was already below the poverty line in 2002, and 59 per cent was below the food poverty line.¹⁷ By now these figures are probably much worse.

The collapse of social services and the unavailability of basic commodities, particularly food (almost half the country faces shortages), has a particularly adverse effect on the poor. Zimbabweans have one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the world, 36.6 years, and the eighth highest death rate (21.84 per

² Tony Hawkins, "Still Standing: The Economic, Political and Security Situation in Zimbabwe 2006 and Implications for the SADC Region", presented at the "Security 2006" conference, Institute of Strategic Studies, University of Pretoria, 4 May 2006.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Only three SADC economies, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland, have smaller GDPs than Zimbabwe, *ibid.*

⁵ "World Economic Outlook 2006", International Monetary Fund, September 2006.

⁶ Hawkins, *op. cit.*

⁷ Quoted in the *Zimbabwe Standard*, 28 January 2007, <http://www.thezimbabwestandard.com>.

⁸ "Pillage and Patronage: Human rights abuses in Zimbabwe's informal gold-mining sector", Sokwanele Report, 27 January 2007, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/Sokwanele270107.htm>.

⁹ Its acting chairman, Professor Christopher Chetsanga, admitted ZESA, the power utility company, was broke and could not supply enough power, quoted in Zimonline, 26 January 2007.

¹⁰ Michael Clemens and Todd Moss, "Costs and Causes of Zimbabwe's Crisis", Center for Global Development, Washington DC, July 2005, <http://www.cgdev.org>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Crisis Group interview, Harare, 14 January 2007.

¹³ "Chihuri warns against low salaries", Zimonline, 10 December 2006.

¹⁴ Figures denoted in dollars (\$) in this report refer to U.S. dollars unless otherwise stated.

¹⁵ Crisis Group interview, Harare, 21 December 2006.

¹⁶ "Soldiers strike over salaries", Zimonline, 31 January 2007.

¹⁷ "Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2002", Government of Zimbabwe, 2004.

1000), as well as the third worst unemployment rate. The impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is stark as well. Although the government claims the prevalence has been reduced, the 2005 official figure (20.1 per cent of 15-49 year olds) is among the highest in the world (sub-Saharan Africa's average is 6.6 per cent). Moreover, Zimbabwe now has the world's highest rate of orphans per 1,000, while analysts forecast a significant increase in the infant mortality rate if the crisis is not reversed within the next five years.¹⁸ Zimbabwe is among a handful of countries whose UN Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Index – a composite measure of health, education and income – has consistently declined since the start of the 1990s.¹⁹

In 2006 Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono tried to assert greater control over the economy with two controversial monetary reforms. In August, he devalued the currency, cutting three zeroes off the Zimbabwe dollar and introducing new banknotes.²⁰ A maximum of Z\$100 million (\$1,000) could be exchanged per day, and there was near chaos at banks as people sought to turn in their cash for the new banknotes before the three-week deadline expired. Anyone with more than \$15,000 in cash saw the surplus become worthless. Rural citizens and those with lower incomes were particularly affected: urban dwellers bought farm equipment, animals, and large items such as furniture with excess old banknotes from sellers unaware of the exchange program.

In October, Gono closed the money transfer agencies (MTAs), primarily used by diaspora Zimbabweans to send home remittances that are vital to many families. This meant the money could only be received officially through banks at rates up to ten times worse

than those in the parallel market.²¹ Some MTAs were allowed to re-open in early December after agreeing to remit half their foreign currency to the Reserve Bank.²² This currency grab resulted in the parallel exchange rate increasing 50 per cent, according to some analysts. In February 2007 Gono conceded that rebuilding the economy required a political solution.²³

B. REPRESSION

Zimbabweans have suffered systematic repression for seven years under laws aimed at stifling opposition and preventing anti-government protests. On 18 February 2007 police crashed the presidential campaign launch of MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, leaving three feared dead, though the event was sanctioned by the High Court.²⁴ A rally by the Arthur Mutambara faction of the MDC to launch a "Defiance Campaign Against Mugabe" was banned the same weekend, with the home affairs minister claiming the political climate was too volatile.²⁵ Three days later the police banned rallies and protests for three months to avoid "pandemonium and looting".²⁶

The government has increasingly resorted to violent tactics and draconian laws – especially the Public Order Security Act (POSA) – over the past half-year to suppress dissent, including massive arrests and severe beatings as its response to civil society protests such as that of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which seeks a new constitution. "They have maintained and increased repression", said a leader involved in the protests.²⁷ A Western diplomat told Crisis Group: "They know in their hearts that they don't

¹⁸ Clemens and Moss, *op. cit.*, forecast an increase of ten from a World Bank 2003 infant mortality base of 78 per 1,000 births. Some commentators have gone as far as to describe the rapid decline in life expectancy under Mugabe as constituting "genocide": see R. W. Johnson, "Zimbabwe, the land of dying children", *Sunday Times*, 7 January 2007, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article1290268>. ece, although as a matter of international law it is highly unlikely that the narrow criteria of the Genocide Convention would be satisfied here, especially following the *Bosnia v. Serbia* judgement the International Court of Justice handed down on 27 February 2007, http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/ipresscom/ipress2007/summary_2007-2_bhy_20070226.htm.

¹⁹ "Human Development Reports 2006", UNDP.

²⁰ "Zimbabwe money loses three zeroes", BBC News, 31 July 2006.

²¹ Official exchange rates are fixed, not pegged to keep inflation; parallel market rates are adjusted often and so are more accurate.

²² "Central Bank lifts ban on seven money transfer agencies", Zimonline, 2 December 2006. In 2006 the Reserve Bank purchased foreign currency from the parallel market for Mugabe's trip to the UN in New York, Crisis Group interview, senior civil society leader, Harare, 23 October 2006.

²³ In its 2006 article IV consultation on Zimbabwe, the IMF emphasised that a comprehensive macroeconomic program is needed, underpinned by strong fiscal adjustment and complimentary structural reforms.

²⁴ "Three people feared dead in political violence", Voice of America, 17 February 2007.

²⁵ Crisis Group telephone interview, Welshman Ncube, Secretary General MDC (Mutambara faction), 20 February 2007.

²⁶ "Protest ban in Zimbabwe capital", BBC News, 22 February 2007.

²⁷ Crisis Group interview, senior civil society leader, Harare, 23 October 2006.

have the population behind them anymore”.²⁸ Lovemore Madhuku, the NCA president, narrowly escaped death when his house was petrol bombed in a politically-motivated robbery.²⁹ In October 2006 Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) activists were detained in cells with their children for demonstrating against the steep increases in school fees.³⁰

Those arrested in September 2006 in a protest in Harare organised by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)³¹ experienced unusually brutal treatment. A civil society leader who examined the victims said “the ZCTU protests were the worst we have ever seen in terms of beatings in detention”.³² Fifteen detainees were hospitalised. Others reported being threatened with death by police. Some were told they were being beaten because they “wanted to turn the country over to the whites”.³³ Witnesses reported that some police expressed support for the effort to confront the government over the economy but were upset at the small size and organisational capacity of the protests. Some told the protestors they wanted to contribute but were not yet prepared to defy orders.³⁴

President Mugabe drew criticism for seeming to condone the beatings: “We cannot have a situation where people decide to sit in places not allowed and when police remove them they say ‘no’. We can’t have that. This is a revolt to the system”, he said. Some are crying that they were beaten. Yes, you will be thoroughly beaten. When the police say move, you move. If you don’t move, you invite police to use force”.³⁵

In 2005, 700,000 people were displaced when the government launched Operation Murambatsvina aimed at destroying informal housing structures and businesses.³⁶ Following a two-week fact-finding visit, UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues Anna Tibaijuka issued a damning report, which said the government had precipitated an immense humanitarian crisis and should build adequate housing for those displaced. But little has been done. Many victims remain unemployed and/or homeless after more than a year and a half in make-shift structures. In response to international criticism, the government launched Operation Garikai, which was to ensure the internally displaced had adequate housing, but many houses that have been built go to ZANU-PF supporters.³⁷ Often the few built for victims were of such poor quality and so dangerous the recipients refused them.

Harare Metropolitan Governor David Karimanzira is preparing a new wave of demolitions of homes and illegal business structures that are sprouting in both urban areas and the countryside, where thousands make a meagre living from informal gold mining.³⁸ Local Government Minister Ignatius Chombo, Murambatsvina’s architect, has set up a joint task force from his ministry and the police to oversee the campaign. A ministry official told a South African newspaper: “New illegal structures have come up since Operation Murambatsvina. We will target these structures that have sprouted up and others that somehow survived the first Murambatsvina”.³⁹

The government has already begun to crack down on the many Zimbabweans who engage in informal mining. Between November 2006 and January 2007, police arrested 27,000 people countrywide for illegal gold and diamond mining. This Operation *Chikorokoza Chapera* (Illegal Mining is Over) included the burning of homes.⁴⁰ In addition police seized all minerals discovered in their raids. Police Commissioner Chihuri told the state-run newspaper *The Herald* that businessmen and politicians were exacerbating the problem by recruiting the unemployed to mine, buying the minerals and then selling them on the international market.⁴¹

²⁸ Crisis Group interview, senior Western diplomat, Harare, 11 October 2006.

²⁹ “Madhuku raided,” *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 20 December 2006.

³⁰ “WOZA demonstrators detained”, *The Zimbabwe Mirror*, 10 September 2006.

³¹ The march was held to protest a wide variety of issues relating to living conditions for workers. Organisers intended to deliver a petition to the ministry of labour expressing displeasure with high taxes, falling salaries, commodity prices and unavailability of anti-retroviral drugs to treat HIV. Leadership of the protest included members of the MDC national executive.

³² Crisis Group interview, senior civil society leader, Harare, 23 October 2006.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Some protestors were reportedly asked by police, “why don’t you do better next time?”, *ibid*.

³⁵ Speech to the Zimbabwe embassy, Cairo, 23 September 2006, quoted in “You Will Be Thoroughly Beaten: The Brutal Suppression of Dissent in Zimbabwe”, Human Rights Watch, November 2006.

³⁶ Crisis Group Africa Report N°97, *Zimbabwe’s Operation Murambatsvina: The Tipping Point?*, 17 August 2005.

³⁷ “Garikai houses allocated to ZANU-PF supporters”, Zimonline, 11 December 2006.

³⁸ “Spirit of Murambatsvina should not die”, *The Mail and Guardian*, 7 November 2006.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “Zimbabwe arrests 27 000 for illegal mining”, *The Herald*, 27 January 2007.

⁴¹ Ibid.

III. ZANU-PF: CHANGE FROM WITHIN?

A. THE GOROMONZI REBELLION

President Mugabe's bid to extend his term until 2010 suffered a major setback when the December 2006 ZANU-PF annual conference failed to adopt the resolution required for harmonising the presidential and parliamentary elections. The key obstacle was the threat of some influential members to rebel, as a result of which the security agencies advised Mugabe to abandon the effort at the conference.⁴² The issue was referred back to the party's provincial structures for further consultations and then to the central committee for a decision.⁴³ Provincial opinion is vital, since all who sit on the provincial leadership councils are central committee members.

No resolution sponsored by Mugabe had ever before failed, and this exacerbated ZANU-PF's recent split into three camps. The one led by retired Army General Solomon "Rex" Mujuru (Vice President Joyce Mujuru's husband) is leading the campaign to force Mugabe into retirement when his term expires in 2008. Although senior army, police, and intelligence officials, the "securocrats", attempted to mobilise support for the proposal, representatives from Mashonaland East, Mujuru's home province and ZANU-PF's strongest (the opposition not having won a seat in an election there in the past seven years) stood firm against it. Representatives of other provinces, impressed by the resistance from the party's stronghold, began to revise positions, disregarding the the securocrats.⁴⁴ Representatives from Midlands, the home of another presidential aspirant, Emmerson Mnangagwa, dropped their support and said they were for harmonisation of elections but not extending Mugabe's term, which then had the backing of only eight of the ten provincial delegations. A cabinet minister aligned with the Mujuru camp told Crisis Group:

If President Mugabe can convince us on what two extra years of his rule will do to the well being of the economy and to the renewal of ZANU-PF, we are ready to support him all the

way. In the absence of any strong compelling reason to extend his term, the country should move on under a new leader. We need to change course. We need a new man. People are suffering.⁴⁵

ZANU-PF officials say Mujuru's argument resonates with other key party leaders, though many are afraid to openly denounce Mugabe's proposal.⁴⁶ At a politburo meeting on the eve of the conference, Mujuru denounced the plan to extend Mugabe's term, arguing the party had never officially discussed it.⁴⁷ Mujuru has used politburo meetings to attack Mugabe's bid openly and rally support for his campaign to make him retire in 2008.

In a move widely seen as part of the strategy to increase pressure on Mugabe before the conference, a key member of the Mujuru camp, Finance Minister Herbert Murerwa, submitted his resignation on 19 December, saying he could not work with Reserve Bank Governor Gono, Mugabe's ally and personal banker.⁴⁸ Mugabe told him to "rethink" his request.⁴⁹ If he had accepted the resignation, all ministers from the Mujuru camp – half the cabinet, including health, education, defence and youth – planned to leave in solidarity, thus crippling the administration.⁵⁰ On 6 February 2007, Mugabe finally dropped Murerwa in a mini reshuffle.⁵¹ Party insiders say Mujuru has been pushing for Mugabe's retirement in favour of the party's deputy secretary for economic affairs, Simba Makoni, since the 2001 ZANU-PF conference in Victoria Falls, but has been unable to find a critical mass of support until now.⁵²

⁴⁵ Crisis Group interview, senior ZANU-PF official, Harare 14 January 2007.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Crisis Group interview, ZANU-PF politburo member, Harare 23 December 2006.

⁴⁸ Crisis group interview, ZANU-PF politburo members, Harare 15 January 2006. Gono and Murerwa have been at odds over economic and monetary policies. Gono, who has directed access to Mugabe, has often ignored Murerwa's directives. Mugabe tends to listen to Gono's advice, leading to the sidelining of Murerwa in key economic policy decisions.

⁴⁹ Crisis Group interview, senior intelligence officials, Harare 16 January 2007.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "Mugabe reshuffles Cabinet", *The Herald*, 7 February 2007.

⁵² Crisis Group interview, senior ZANU-PF officials, Harare, 14 January 2007.

⁴² Crisis Group interview, ZANU-PF politburo member. Crisis Group researchers were in Harare and Goromonzi during the ZANU-PF conference, 16-20 December 2006.

⁴³ "Harmonisation resolutions referred back to the Central Committee", *The Herald*, 19 December 2006.

⁴⁴ Crisis Group interview, ZANU-PF provincial chairmen, Harare, 18 December 2006.

B. THE STATE OF THE FACTIONS

ZANU-PF is now divided into three distinct factions. President Mugabe still controls the loyalist bloc, which includes senior party leaders such as State Security Minister Didymus Mutasa, Gono and senior military officials. The opposition groupings led by Mujuru and Mnangagwa want Mugabe out in 2008 so they can lead a more moderate party that would maintain political control while re-engaging with the West.

The Mujuru camp, galvanised by its success in forcing Mugabe to pull back in Goromonzi, went on a countrywide outreach program, meeting with ZANU-PF leaders in the provinces and campaigning against an extension of the president's term.⁵³ Emissaries from the Mujuru and Mnangagwa camps have been holding exploratory talks about a common position ahead of the central committee debate in March and considering possible power-sharing arrangements in the post-Mugabe era.⁵⁴ In an effort to keep options open and in anticipation of the harmonisation resolution reaching parliament, both factions have been reaching out to explore cooperation with the MDC.⁵⁵

1. The Mujuru camp

The Mujuru faction is the more powerful challenge for the Mugabe loyalists. Mujuru, one of the wealthiest politicians in Zimbabwe with business interests in mining, agriculture and safari operations, is powerful and well-respected in both the party and the military and intelligence services. Although he has never expressed a desire to become president, his faction openly demands that Mugabe retire in 2008. It has made inroads with the business sector and wants to craft a moderate ZANU-PF that can work with the West and rebuild the economy to save the collapsing commercial empires. A senior ZANU-PF politburo member from Mujuru's camp said: "We need to look at the interests of the party, meaning what measures should we take to ensure that ZANU-PF as a party remains in power. One of those measures is clearly to have a new

leader and to begin to make moves to engage with the international community".⁵⁶

The plan is first to secure Mugabe's retirement, then form a transitional government with Joyce Mujuru as interim president and negotiate with the MDC on a new constitution and elections.⁵⁷ Speaker of Parliament John Nkomo might become interim vice president, with a technocrat such as Makoni in the new position of interim prime minister.⁵⁸ Such an arrangement would give the Mujuru faction two years of incumbency, virtually assuring Joyce Mujuru of the party's 2010 presidential nomination and giving her a large advantage over opposition candidates.

Persuading the U.S. and European Union (EU) to ease their targeted sanctions against senior ZANU-PF and government figures could be delegated to Makoni, a former finance minister long viewed as a leader who could be a palatable interlocutor for the West and restore the economy. Though linked to the Mujuru camp and acceptable to the Mnangagwa camp as a possible compromise candidate, Makoni does not have much grassroots support. He has distanced himself from the factional fights in the party leadership and is considered untainted by the corruption scandals around other presidential aspirants. However, Mugabe, who might only be persuaded to hand over power if he had absolute assurances from the next leader that he and his assets would be protected and he would not be prosecuted for actions while in office, would be unlikely to trust guarantees from Makoni.

2. The Mnangagwa camp

After the failed Tsholotsho rebellion in 2004, when it was unable to install the former speaker of parliament as vice president against Mugabe's will, the president has been hostile to the Mnangagwa faction.⁵⁹ Mugabe does not trust Mnangagwa but has used him more recently to help combat the greater threat from the Mujuru camp. His faction lacks the support of a senior figure of Solomon Mujuru's stature to fight party battles behind closed doors. However, Mnangagwa is popular within the party, controls some ZANU-PF

⁵³ Crisis Group interview, senior ZANU-PF officials, Harare, 16 January 2007.

⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, ZANU-PF politburo member aligned to the Mnangagwa faction, Harare, 11 January 2006.

⁵⁵ Crisis Group interviews, senior MDC leaders from both factions, Harare 12-13 January 2007. The Tsvangirai and Mutambara factions of the MDC have 20 and 21 representatives in parliament respectively. Both Tsvangirai and Mutambara have had informal contact with the Mujuru and Mnangagwa camps since the Goromonzi conference.

⁵⁶ Crisis Group interview, senior ZANU-PF official, Harare, 15 January 2007.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ There is no position of prime minister in the Zimbabwe system. It would need to be established by constitutional amendment.

⁵⁹ At the Tsholotsho party meeting in December 2004, the Mnangagwa camp defied a directive from the politburo to choose a woman as vice president and sought to replace every member in that body except Mugabe.

parliamentarians and has considerable influence within the state security and intelligence organisations.

While Mnangagwa initially supported extending Mugabe's term to 2010 in order to blunt Joyce Mujuru's ascendancy, he has reversed his position in the hope of striking a power-sharing agreement with the Mujuru faction for the post-Mugabe era. He is keeping his options open, however, by not foreclosing an eventual compromise with Mugabe. He is also prepared to be the kingmaker if the contest ultimately becomes a straight struggle between the Mujuru and Mugabe factions for the presidency and control of ZANU-PF.

What Mnangagwa really wants is an open contest within the party for control. He believes he can win an internal vote for the presidential nomination if Mugabe's loyalists refrain from manipulating the process. Mnangagwa came close to securing the vice presidency during the Tsholotsho meeting despite Mugabe's objections, and he retains core support. Many in the party prefer him to Joyce Mujuru due to the battles he has fought within it, his personal resolve and his influence within the military.

If Mugabe continues as president until 2010, Mnangagwa would not object to Gono taking a greater role in government, possibly as prime minister. His rise would hurt Makoni and so make it harder for the Mujuru faction to take power. Mnangagwa would bet that Gono would be too weak to keep control once Mugabe was gone.

3. The Mugabe camp

As a result of the challenges within the party, Mugabe has recently placed his trust in the security apparatus, whose leaders are now responsible for arranging his dignified exit and securing his interests. Fearing possible sabotage in the execution and delivery of tasks, he has also directed that his military allies sit in committees that supervise cabinet ministers and senior government officials.⁶⁰

The loyalists include high party leaders such as State Security Minister and Administration Secretary Didymus Mutasa, Secretary for the Commissariat Elliot Manyika and key state officials such as Reserve Bank Governor Gono, Defence Forces Commander (ZDF) Constantine Chiwenga and Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) Director General Happyton Bonyongwe. However, the Mujuru bloc also has top

security allies, including Air force Commander Perence Shiri and Police Commissioner Chihuri. Mnangagwa's bloc is supported by Army Commander Phillip Sibanda and Deputy Director General of the CIO Maynard Muzariri.

Following the Goromonzi conference, Mugabe moved to consolidate his power base around the securocrats.⁶¹ He strengthened a parallel, militarised framework that extends down to the grassroots level to oversee traditional ZANU-PF and local government structures whose loyalties are in question. The Joint Operation Command (JOC), manned by senior military officers, now presides over day-to-day government, oversees policy formulation and implementation and supervises cabinet ministers.⁶² Members of the youth militia and war veterans who have been allocated land in the former white commercial farming areas are under the defence ministry, forming Mugabe's foot soldiers in the provinces and campaigning for extension of his term. Mugabe has also started to strike back at the Mujuru faction, labelling it power hungry and guilty of undermining his leadership by questioning his contribution during the independence struggle.⁶³ But control of the military and security apparatus has become the new battle ground, as the senior figures in these services align themselves with one of the camps vying for power.

If Mugabe chooses to stay until 2010, he is likely to appoint Gono prime minister. This would meet heavy resistance from party stalwarts who view Gono as a newcomer, even compared to Makoni who was a minister in the first post-independence cabinet.⁶⁴ But Mugabe knows he is loyal, probably his most reliable successor in terms of assuring his personal and financial security. Although not popular in the party, he is said to have embarrassing information on illegal financial activities of much of the leadership. He demonstrated his power when he launched the monetary reform in 2006 with little consultation, perhaps partly to test his strength while still under Mugabe's protection, but in doing so he angered many leaders whose personal fortunes were negatively affected.

⁶¹ Crisis Group interview, senior military official, Harare, 4 January 2007.

⁶² "Military officers supervise Cabinet Ministers", *The Mail & Guardian*, 10 November 2007.

⁶³ In an unedited television interview on his birthday on 21 February 2007 in Harare, Mugabe said the Mujuru faction's machinations were ruining their chances of succeeding him, while praising Mnangagwa. Former ZANU-PF Secretary General Edgar Tekere had attacked Mugabe as a weak leader in memoirs published in January 2007.

⁶⁴ Sentiment expressed to Crisis Group during numerous meetings with Western diplomats, Harare, October 2006.

⁶⁰ "Senior military officials supervise Cabinet", *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 8 October 2006.

IV. THE MDC: DECISION TIME

The MDC was badly but not irreparably damaged when it split into two factions in October 2005, one loyal to Tsvangirai, the party president, the other led by the secretary general, Welshman Ncube. Today there is recognition that a joint strategy is required to reenergise the party.⁶⁵ Arthur Mutambara, president of the breakaway faction, said: “There is no alternative to all democratic forces working together to bring about democratic change”.⁶⁶

The party would greatly benefit from reconciliation. Its domestic and international image has dipped since the split. Western diplomats in Harare and senior officials in South Africa have asked why they should support inter-party talks if the MDC cannot agree on a platform or a negotiating team.⁶⁷ ZANU-PF has said the same. Failure to reconcile could kill any potential deal with ruling party moderates.

The next election may be the last chance for current MDC leaders. Tsvangirai’s term as party president expires in 2010. Despite success in founding and sustaining an opposition party under a dictatorial government, party leaders failed to provide meaningful resistance after the internationally condemned elections of 2002 and 2005, and they had no effective response to Operation Murambatsvina and the subsequent humanitarian disaster. Defeating Mugabe’s plan to extend his term to 2010 and setting the groundwork for free elections would redeem the opposition. Failure would bring with it a harsh judgement of history.

A. AN END TO FACTIONALISM?

The realization by the MDC factions that they are weaker as separate parties has fuelled a flurry of negotiations aimed at bridging personal differences among the leaders. Committees of senior figures have been set up to discuss the modalities of reunification.⁶⁸

The Mutambara faction privately seethes about Tsvangirai and his management style, though

Mutambara himself is careful to avoid public criticism. Similarly, the Tsvangirai faction harbours deep distrust of Ncube. A key Tsvangirai adviser said, “the party did not split. The leadership of the party split”.⁶⁹ According to top officials, the Mutambara faction is primarily focused on building a constituency in Matebeleland, all but conceding Mashonaland to Tsvangirai.⁷⁰ Its main strategy is to prevent either ZANU-PF or Tsvangirai from winning without its support. “It is important for the other side [the Tsvangirai faction] to learn they can’t win”, said Ncube. “They thought they could destroy us in six months. They failed”.⁷¹

Both factions did poorly in the Rural District Council (RDC) elections of 28 October 2006, winning combined only 89 of 1,340 seats, divided almost evenly between them.⁷² In areas where at least two parties contested the election, the MDC won 81 of 849 seats.⁷³ Although the rural areas are not traditional MDC strongholds, the Mutambara faction had hoped for a better showing in Matebeleland, where it did gain one more contested seat than the Tsvangirai faction. The elections happened at a time when the MDC factions were preoccupied with their internal struggle, and if anything, the elections brought home the weakness of a divided party.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Crisis Group interview, senior Tsvangirai faction adviser, 24 October 2006.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interviews, senior Mutambara faction leaders, Harare, 14, 18 October 2006.

⁷¹ Crisis Group interview, Mutambara faction Secretary General Welshman Ncube, 18 October 2006.

⁷² “2006 Rural District Council and Kadoma Mayoral Elections Final Report”, Zimbabwe Election Support Network, 30 November 2006.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Although the split and insufficient resources were primarily responsible for the MDC’s poor showing, the election was not free and fair by any means. Opposition parties were hampered in multiple ways. According to the MDC factions, 500 of their candidates were rejected by the nomination courts. Some were allowed to register later but ZANU-PF won 454 seats unopposed. Many candidates were denied registration for dubious reasons ranging from having alternative, though legal, forms of identification, to refusal by local ZANU-PF officials to certify their residence. Most candidates failed to register due to new regulations for police clearance, which cost Z\$1,000 to Z\$2,000 and had to be obtained in Harare. Police turned others away saying they had no fingerprint forms or receipt books with which to register them. The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), which monitored the elections, noted that inadequate voter registration and public education led to very low turnout. It also reported numerous instances of local leaders loyal to ZANU-PF refusing to register MDC candidates and ordering their constituents to vote for the ruling

⁶⁵ Crisis Group interview, Tsvangirai faction Secretary General Tendai Biti, Harare, 24 October 2006.

⁶⁶ Crisis Group interview, Arthur Mutambara, Harare, 19 October 2006.

⁶⁷ Sentiment expressed to Crisis Group during numerous meetings with Western diplomats, Harare, October 2006.

⁶⁸ Crisis Group e-mail correspondence, senior Tsvangirai faction adviser, 10 November 2006.

An official from the Mutambara faction admitted to Crisis Group that building local structures in Matabeleland will not restore democracy.⁷⁵ The Tsvangirai faction should also recognise that reconciliation is in its best interests. Tsvangirai's faction demonstrated its strength in Mashonaland but has failed to make inroads in Matabeleland, leaving it with limited capacity to neutralise ZANU-PF's traditional rural support.

Personal friction remains the key obstacle to reunification. Mutambara officials express more anger against Tsvangirai than against the government. "It is the person of Morgan Tsvangirai who is the problem. If Morgan is out of the picture, there isn't anything preventing the factions from coming together", Ncube said.⁷⁶ However, even Ncube, who has the most to lose by reunification, noted: "In politics, anything is possible. You can't rule out the reunification of the MDC or an alliance". While Tsvangirai officials say little about opposite numbers even in private, they claim reunification would not be a problem if Ncube was out of the equation. Both sets of leaders have recently indicated they can at least still work together towards the common objectives of restoring democracy and ending Mugabe's rule. "We want unity of purpose not just unity for the sake of it", Tsvangirai said.⁷⁷

Efforts have been made to resolve differences. Allegations of intra-party violence drove a deep wedge between the factions in October 2005. Tensions heightened over the beating of Trudy Stevenson, a parliamentarian from the Mutambara faction, and several others in July 2006. The Tsvangirai faction appointed a commission, primarily of human rights attorneys, to investigate. The report exonerated Tsvangirai of direct involvement but admonished him and other senior leaders for not doing enough to crack down on violent elements.⁷⁸ While the report also implicated the CIO, Tsvangirai promised to weed out any element within his faction involved in the

party. ZESN called on the Zimbabwe Election Commission to enact measures to reduce the number of voters turned away at the polls and to ensure that accredited observers could do their job.

⁷⁵ Crisis Group interview, Mutambara faction senior official, 14 October 2006.

⁷⁶ Crisis Group interview, Mutambara faction Secretary General Welshman Ncube, 18 October 2006.

⁷⁷ Crisis Group interview, Morgan Tsvangirai, 11 January 2007.

⁷⁸ "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the assaults perpetrated on Honourable Trudy Stevenson, Mrs. Simangeke Manyere, Mr. Linos Mushonga, Mr. Luxton Sibanda and Mr. Tawanda Mudzerema on Sunday 2 July 2006", Commission of Inquiry, 11 September 2006.

violence. Both sides suspect the original split was exacerbated by CIO infiltrators.⁷⁹ Cases of mismanagement have surfaced since the split. A private audit done by the party revealed that corruption and pervasive lack of accountability had emptied the treasury well before the split.⁸⁰

Relations improved when both presidents and secretaries general signed a code of conduct in August 2006, which outlined how the factions should interact in and out of parliament. Sticking points remain though. The Mutambara faction alleges their rivals circumvented party decision-making bodies. The complaint centres on the "kitchen cabinet" of unofficial advisers, which they believe Tsvangirai set up to bypass the National Executive, on which his critics had a majority.⁸¹ Recently, however, Mutambara acknowledged that the president of a party should feel free to have outside advisers, as long as elected organs were not circumvented.⁸² What is still both necessary and compelling, however, is a strategic alliance not only between the two factions but also involving similarly minded organisations. A coordinating body may be required to help arrive at common positions and strategies.

B. PROSPECTS FOR A JOINT STRATEGY

If the MDC commits to a unified strategy for confronting the government, each faction can play a key role. Over the last year, the Tsvangirai faction has focused on building relationships with civil society organisations and churches and exploring strategic non-violent action, mainly through the Save Zimbabwe Campaign, in which the Mutambara faction is also represented and with which it hopes to pressure the government into negotiations around a transitional government, a new constitution, and free and fair elections. The Mutambara faction has focused on building local structures, primarily in Matabeleland, and preparing to confront the ruling party in elections. Ultimately, both approaches are necessary for restoring democracy, but it remains to be seen if the factions will support each other's tactics.

⁷⁹ Sentiment expressed to Crisis Group in numerous interviews with key MDC faction leaders, October 2006.

⁸⁰ Crisis Group interview, senior MDC official, Harare 17 January 2007.

⁸¹ His camp responds that Tsvangirai was free to consult with anyone he wished, Crisis Group interview, senior Tsvangirai adviser, 24 October 2006.

⁸² Crisis Group interview, Arthur Mutambara, 19 October 2006.

So far, most leaders are saying the right things. David Coltart, the Mutambara faction's secretary for legal and parliamentary affairs, explained that "while elections are an important form of struggle, they are not the only form.... We will defeat this regime through a multi-pronged approach". Secretary General Tendai Biti of the Tsvangirai faction agreed the party should support all positive efforts at opposing the government instead of trying to identify a single method.⁸³ If both factions are serious about this, their strengths could complement each other. They need to find ways to coexist under the same MDC banner and a strategy with which to mobilise their respective supporters and strengthen their credibility. The overall objectives should be to establish democratic, collegial and transparent procedures within party structures, choose common presidential, parliamentary and local candidates and negotiate a mutually satisfactory mixed leadership.

C. THE SAVE ZIMBABWE CAMPAIGN

The MDC factions, civil society organisations (CSOs) and churches came together in August 2006 under the Save Zimbabwe Campaign to use strategic non-violent action against plans to postpone the presidential election.⁸⁴ The campaign is aimed at rallying all democratic forces and opposition parties to push for both presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in 2008. The key points of the platform are negotiations with the government to end the crisis, a transitional government, a new constitution and free and fair elections.⁸⁵ Both MDC factions and most CSOs have concluded that a return of democracy requires more direct action. "Without pressure on this regime, Mugabe won't give in", said a senior civil society leader.⁸⁶

But the Save Zimbabwe Campaign may not necessarily succeed where others have failed. Dire economic problems have become synonymous with Mugabe's rule, and the campaign's message resonates also with supporters of the two ZANU-PF camps that are pushing for Mugabe's retirement. However the largely passive national reaction to the declining humanitarian and economic situation to date indicates that most citizens, especially those in urban areas where

opposition support is the strongest, are in survival mode and may not have an appetite for revolution. A civil society leader said: "They will not raise their heads until they have an accountable leadership that will lead them".⁸⁷ The MDC split has hurt the party's credibility and cast doubts on its organisational capacity.

Orchestrating mass civil unrest is also a risky business. The government has a rapid reaction security force of at least 3,000,⁸⁸ not counting regular police and military recruits. In addition, little progress has been made to attract civil servants or soldiers to the opposition.

Momentum, however, is shifting towards support for strategic non-violent action, and the government is taking notice. Aspects of the Save Zimbabwe Campaign have already begun. Key CSOs are starting to carry out periodic protests. The ZCTU, NCA, Women of Zimbabwe Arise and the Zimbabwe National Students Union have held regular street protests. The NCA has begun to distribute flyers asserting "we will vote in 2008 under a New Constitution".⁸⁹ Morgan Tsvangirai's attempt to launch his presidential campaign on 17 February as part of a wider strategy to pressure ZANU-PF to abandon the 2010 project was foiled by police, as was a parallel event planned by the Mutambara faction's Defiance Campaign. "The government's reaction to the ZCTU protest is an indication of the concern of the strength of that momentum", said an official of a foreign development organisation with close ties to CSOs.⁹⁰ In the past, civil society has been good at forming coalitions that did little more than deliberate. Now the coalitions seem interested in street actions.

Similar efforts at bringing the MDC and CSOs together have failed but all seem eager to learn from their mistakes. "This time around, it won't fail", says Tsvangirai Vice President Thoko Khupe. A civil society leader knowledgeable of the Save Zimbabwe Campaign's origins said leaders of the ZCTU and NCA, two of the largest CSOs, met with Tsvangirai and Mutambara, who agreed to abandon piecemeal action in favour of a united effort.⁹¹

⁸³ Crisis Group interview, Tsvangirai faction Secretary General Tendai Biti, Harare, 24 October 2006.

⁸⁴ "Opposition Forces Launch Stop Mugabe Campaign", *The Sunday Standard*, 8 January 2007.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Crisis Group interview, senior civil society leader, Harare, 24 October 2006.

⁸⁷ Crisis Group interview, senior official of the Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe, Harare, 15 January 2006.

⁸⁸ Crisis Group interview, senior Western diplomat, Harare, 18 October 2006.

⁸⁹ Crisis Group telephone interview, Lovemore Madhuku National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) Chairman, Harare 20 January 2007.

⁹⁰ Crisis Group interview, senior official, international development organisation, Harare, 23 October 2006.

⁹¹ Sentiment expressed to Crisis Group during numerous meetings with Western diplomats, Harare, October 2006.

V. THE WAY FORWARD

A. FIVE CRITICAL MONTHS

The next five months will determine whether Mugabe gets his party's endorsement to extend his term to 2010 or ZANU-PF chooses a new candidate and lays the groundwork for presidential elections in March 2008 as scheduled.

The ZANU-PF central committee is to decide the election harmonisation issue on 28 March. If it endorses an extension of Mugabe's term, the matter will go to parliament, which convenes in July, to consider the necessary constitutional amendment, which would require a two-thirds majority (100 of 150) to pass. The two MDC factions would need the votes of ten ZANU-PF parliamentarians to block it. The same arithmetic would apply if Mugabe were to seek a constitutional amendment to retain a portion of his power after retirement or to stage-manage the transition via a non-executive president and a prime minister. If ZANU-PF decides to stay with the 2008 election, it will have to decide within this half year whether Mugabe is to be its candidate or whether to convene a special congress to elect a new leader.

Mugabe has said that the present term will be his last⁹² but has also indicated that he will not leave if his party is in shambles. If the constitution is not altered, his only choices are to stand for another six-year term in 2008 or select a successor to run in his place. The latter is highly unlikely, as it would mean giving up power without guarantees of personal or financial security. ZANU-PF considers the divided MDC a weak opponent, and Mugabe may be tempted to run again. However, foreign investment will not return and targeted sanctions will not be lifted until major policy changes – all but impossible with Mugabe in power – are made.

Some ZANU-PF officials want a constitutional amendment that would create the posts of non-executive president and prime minister. This might be the best answer for the party if it cannot settle on a single candidate to succeed Mugabe and cannot push him out. Creating a post of prime minister might allow the party to install a technocrat as a way of signalling to the West a new start and the desire to attract foreign investment, while allowing a leader with broad support within the party to serve as

president, with power to dismiss the prime minister but not control the day-to-day running of the country.

There is a great risk for ZANU-PF that if it does nothing, the 83-year old Mugabe is likely to stand again, extending the crisis and further delaying a succession decision. The several camps have kept quiet publicly; each hoping Mugabe will favour it for succession, while simultaneously working within the party to make sure he retires in 2008. If Mugabe runs again, or attempts to impose a life presidency, discontent within ZANU-PF will reach dangerous levels, perhaps sufficient to launch a serious effort to topple him.

While the Mujuru and Mnangagwa factions are locked in a bitter battle over party supremacy, they could achieve many of their goals by striking a power-sharing compromise. Emissaries are exploring this in advance of the central committee meeting. The plan pushed by the Mujuru faction, dubbed the Maputo Pact, would make Mnangagwa vice president in return for his support against Mugabe's constitutional amendment. If the factions stand together, they could easily block that proposal at party level.

Recent elections have been marked by violence, intimidation and rigging. Without the full backing of his party, Mugabe might not be able to rely on these methods, and the way could be opened for other ZANU-PF leaders to challenge him at the polls or even for a unified MDC's victory. The Mnangagwa and Mujuru factions largely agree on policy. Both want to preserve their business interests, which requires better governance, engagement with the West and attracting foreign investment. They differ only on who would lead the government. The Maputo Pact could be a first step toward an alliance of convenience.

B. COMMON GROUND BETWEEN ZANU-PF AND THE MDC?

Elements within ZANU-PF and the MDC⁹³ have also discussed a possible agreement on the way forward. Top officials in the Mujuru and Mnangagwa camps separately told Crisis Group of willingness to negotiate with the MDC on a new constitution, a two-year transitional government starting in 2008 and

⁹² "Zimbabwe leader Mugabe plans to retire when his term ends in 2008", Associated Press, 16 May 2006.

⁹³ Both MDC factions agree on the roadmap's general principles. While there are nuances, each has expressed willingness to negotiate with ZANU-PF on a transitional government, constitution and elections. The MDC is referred to as a single entity in this section; reunification, or at least substantial reconciliation, is likely a prerequisite for any deal with ZANU-PF.

subsequent elections.⁹⁴ This is essentially the “Roadmap” the MDC has been asking for. Tsvangirai faction Secretary General Tendai Biti said: “I genuinely believe that ZANU-PF is ready for dialogue”.⁹⁵ The parties came very close to agreeing on a new constitution in 2004 during secret South African-brokered negotiations,⁹⁶ which broke down over whether the constitution would take effect in 2008 or 2010. That issue is now less of a stumbling block.

ZANU-PF rebels seem the more willing to strike a deal. The October 2005 split badly weakened the MDC’s image. Key ZANU-PF leaders no longer consider it the threat it appeared to be when it spearheaded the defeat of a constitutional referendum in 2000 and made strong showings in presidential and parliamentary polls that year and again in 2002. If ZANU-PF agrees to a transitional arrangement, it would get the benefit of greater international legitimacy without necessarily conceding much. The overtures should, therefore, be viewed with caution, as a ploy by which the ruling party hopes in essence to maintain the status quo minus Mugabe. They may also reflect a realisation that ZANU-PF stands little chance of winning an election under current economic conditions. Its leaders know they need at least two years after Mugabe’s departure to benefit from any economic stabilisation and to regain popularity among the rural masses, while blaming the suffering on Mugabe.

If there is no agreement between the ZANU-PF factions, Mujuru might work a deal with the MDC alone to defeat the constitutional amendment in parliament. The MDC would need to accept Joyce Mujuru as interim president, probably in return for the vice presidency and opportunities for some power sharing. This might be tempting, as it would mean a negotiated settlement and an opportunity to work with more moderate members of ZANU-PF. Private discussions between the MDC and all factions are ongoing. Leaders say they are optimistic that policy differences between the parties are minimal.⁹⁷

A senior ZANU-PF politburo member from the Mujuru camp said: “We have no problems to work with them (the MDC). What they have as their Roadmap is an

agenda which the transitional president can implement in two years. In any case we have an almost agreed constitution which is there – so we share with them their way forward”.⁹⁸

The Mnangagwa faction of ZANU-PF, which has made informal approaches to the Mutambara faction of the MDC for a possible coalition in the post-Mugabe era, may take a similar approach. One of its senior politburo members said, “we may differ in how we should approach some of the things but their Roadmap is in sync with [the] transitional mechanism which should lead to elections. Obviously the old constitution has to be revisited”.⁹⁹

But economic recovery and a return to democracy may require something more radical than an alliance of convenience between a ZANU-PF faction and an opposition splinter group, whether Tsvangirai’s or Mutambara’s.

C. A CONTROVERSIAL CHURCH INITIATIVE

Mugabe and some civil society leaders have promoted church mediation as a way out of the crisis. Three groups, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Catholic Bishops Conference and the Ecumenical Fellowship, seek to work with the president directly on a solution to the problems faced by average citizens. Mugabe seized on talks with church leaders as a way to give the impression he was open to engaging with opposition voices.

Church leaders involved in the initiative have also painted it as a way for Mugabe to engage with the opposition. However, almost none of the major opposition groups were consulted beforehand, including the MDC, the Christian Alliance, the NCA, the Crisis Coalition, the ZCTU, the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), or the National Pastors’ Conference. These accuse the ZCC and others of backing down from past criticism now that they have held talks with Mugabe. After meeting Mugabe in June, some ZCC members appeared on television to express support for him.¹⁰⁰

The church leaders presented a “National Vision Document” – widely considered a sanitised description of the crisis – to Mugabe in October 2006. Jesuit priests

⁹⁴ Crisis Group interviews, senior Mujuru camp officials, Harare, October 2006.

⁹⁵ Crisis Group interview, senior Tsvangirai faction official, Harare, 24 October 2006.

⁹⁶ Crisis Group Africa Briefing N° 38, *Zimbabwe’s Continuing Self-Destruction*, 6 June 2006.

⁹⁷ Sentiment expressed to Crisis Group by several MDC National Executive members and ZANU-PF politburo members, Harare, October 2006.

⁹⁸ Crisis Group interview, ZANU-PF politburo member, Harare 28 November 2006.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ “Politics makes strange churchfellows”, IRIN, 14 June 2006.

pointed out that reference in the final version to “oppressive laws” was altered to “contentious laws”. A passage arguing that the ruling party had a “tendency to label anyone who criticises the dominant view as an enemy” was deleted, and there was no reference to electoral violence.¹⁰¹

The crisis cannot be resolved without talks between the MDC and ZANU-PF supported by major civil society groups. The church initiative lacks that support. Unless it becomes a more inclusive effort, it should not get international backing. Mugabe buys too much time with initiatives that only give an impression of progress.¹⁰²

D. A ROADMAP FOR CHANGE

Zimbabwe might not escape a bloody uprising in the next few years if Mugabe controls his party and extends his constitutional term as president. But the cosmetic changes that would probably be all that would result from a purely internal ZANU-PF revolt against his rule would not meet the needs of the situation. Zimbabwe requires a comprehensive transition process resulting in a democratic leadership chosen in a free and fair election that will offer a chance for economic recovery under genuinely new policies. The sequence might be:

- talks between a reconciled MDC and ZANU-PF on a constitutional amendment, to be adopted at the next session of parliament, which would block Mugabe from standing for a new term by imposing an age limit and provide for the nomination by parliament of a non-executive president and an executive prime minister in March 2008. The talks should lead to a power-

sharing agreement on a transitional government, including MDC representatives in key government posts, a new constitution, demilitarisation of state institutions, a new voters roll, a program of administrative and legislative reform guaranteeing genuinely free and fair elections on an agreed schedule and emergency economic recovery measures that could lead to full resumption of donor aid after elections.

- early talks to merge the three draft constitutions available – 2000 constitutional commission, NCA and Pretoria – so a referendum can adopt an agreed version during the political transition starting in March 2008;
- Mugabe’s departure from office when his term expires in March 2008 followed by election of a non-executive president and an executive prime minister by two-thirds majority vote in parliament;
- establishment of a transitional government, including MDC representatives, and implementation of an emergency economic reform program to contain inflation and restore agricultural and mining production and donor/investor confidence;
- establishment of a Land Commission with a strong technocratic base and wide representation of Zimbabwean stakeholders to recommend policies aimed at ending the land crisis;¹⁰³
- organisation of a referendum for a new constitution and drawing up of a new voters roll; and
- dissolution of parliament and the beginning of campaigns, monitored by local, regional and international observers, including from the UN, for presidential and parliamentary elections to be held by March 2010.

¹⁰¹ “Rift erupts over church report in Zim”, *The Mail and Guardian*, 27 November 2006. Crisis Group is in possession of the original version and as well as the version given to Mugabe.

¹⁰² UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan met with President Mugabe in July 2006 at the AU summit in Banjul and endorsed a plan the president presented to him for ex-Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa to mediate between Zimbabwe and the UK. However, sources with intimate knowledge said neither the UK nor Mkapa had been approached beforehand, and the plan was actually a Mugabe ruse to divert Annan’s intentions to become more active on the Zimbabwe account. Indeed, after the meeting with Mugabe, Annan cancelled a trip to Harare, where he had been expected to push for a negotiated political settlement. Crisis Group Africa Report N°117, *Zimbabwe: An Opposition Strategy*, 24 August 2006; “Mugabe buys time by evading Annan”, *Mail and Guardian*, 4 July 2006.

¹⁰³ See Crisis Group Africa Report N°85, *Blood and Soil. Land, Politics and conflict prevention in Zimbabwe and South Africa*, 21 September 2004.

VI. WHAT CAN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DO?

A. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ZANU-PF AND THE MDC

The international community should press for Mugabe's exit in 2008, formation of a transitional government and the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as practicable thereafter, but in any event no later than 2010. A negotiated settlement is the preferred solution.

South Africa and its SADC partners have long been criticised for not doing more to end the crisis in Zimbabwe despite the costs to themselves from the refugee influx, the impact on the regional economy, including tourism, and the diminution of SADC standards for democracy and governance that have been continuously ignored by Harare. Mugabe is rarely criticised publicly, and there have been few efforts to confront him directly on the crisis, at least until the August 2006 SADC summit in Lesotho, but SADC now appears willing to mediate. It is unlikely to openly pressure a president whom many in Africa still consider a liberation hero. However, it appears willing to make use of Western threats of more measures to isolate him and his regime as leverage to broker a retirement package.¹⁰⁴

The regional organisation has announced that its troika – Tanzania, Lesotho, and Namibia – will take an initiative aimed at resolving the crisis.¹⁰⁵ Member governments recognise that 2007 is the crucial year in which to prepare the ground for change. SADC has not yet said how the troika will operate but it is likely to approach Mugabe about the terms of his retirement. Those terms present problems but SADC and South Africa want a managed transition, and Mugabe's voluntary retirement would create conditions for formation of a government of national unity that could repeal repressive laws, ease the economic crisis and prepare elections. SADC will also need to engage with Western powers on this strategy, an effort that might best be led by Tanzania, the current head of its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.

If it is to be effective, SADC must also work at reestablishing its credibility with democratic elements in Zimbabwe. Its reputation has suffered due to the impunity with which Mugabe's government has hitherto ignored bedrock documents of the organisation such as the Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Election. "We in the MDC are seriously thinking about the value of staying in SADC if we come to power because of their failure to uphold their own principles", a senior MDC official said.¹⁰⁶ However, SADC governments now seem willing to reach out to opposition groups, even if they would rather see a reformed ZANU-PF in power. Top officials from Botswana and Tanzania met with civil society organisations and the MDC leadership in 2006 on methods to ease the crisis.¹⁰⁷ Tanzania prefers quiet diplomacy but is growing more impatient, according to a Zimbabwean civil society leader with contacts in the Tanzanian government.¹⁰⁸

South Africa, as major power broker in SADC and a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council since January, is also well-placed to facilitate an end to the crisis, though it is much occupied with its own succession politics¹⁰⁹ and other major African crises such as Darfur. President Mbeki is unlikely to increase public pressure on Mugabe but he wants a resolution before the end of his final term. On 8 February he said in televised remarks that South Africa is ready to help if Zimbabwe's politicians sit down to talk over their differences.¹¹⁰

South Africa could assist the SADC troika by merely ending its defence of Zimbabwe in international forums such as the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific nations and the EU.¹¹¹ Even abstention on a vote to discuss Zimbabwe in the Security Council would send a powerful message. At a minimum, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Co-operation should be convened to review the regional consequences of the Zimbabwe crisis, particularly the consequences for the economy and law and order of the flow of up to four million people, a third of the population, into South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique. Appropriate

¹⁰⁴ Crisis Group diplomatic contacts, November 2006-February 2007.

¹⁰⁵ "Zimbabwe in the hands of SADC: Pahad", SABC News, 9 November 2006.

¹⁰⁶ Crisis Group interview, senior Tsvangirai faction official, Harare, 17 October 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Crisis Group interview, senior civil society leader, Harare, 24 October 2006.

¹⁰⁹ President Thabo Mbeki's final term ends in 2009. However, his likely successor will be chosen by the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in 2007.

¹¹⁰ See Mbeki interview, SABC, 13 February 2007.

¹¹¹ Crisis Group interview, senior official, international development organisation, Harare, 25 October 2006.

recommendations should then be made to the heads of state summit for an approach to Mugabe.

The UN should assign the Zimbabwe portfolio to a senior official – either a new special envoy, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa or a senior official in the Department of Political Affairs – mandated to support the SADC-led initiative and monitor the situation. Given Kofi Annan’s failure while Secretary-General to achieve progress in his 2006 mediation initiative, it is understandable that the Secretariat is reluctant to lead the process.¹¹² But support for SADC could help set benchmarks for judging whether a settlement meets international standards, and ensure that a transitional government could expect to receive substantial international assistance.

Another organisation with a continuing role to play is the Commonwealth. Zimbabwe withdrew in December 2003 but all its neighbours are members. They have borne the greatest impact of Zimbabwe’s economic decline and the outflow of its people. They are keen to see it return to the fold and rebuild economically. While they have been reluctant to bring pressure to bear on Mugabe, they are more likely to be prepared to engage in mediating a political outcome which would see the country return to international engagement under his successor. Uganda will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November 2007. President Museveni is known to want a resolution of the crisis and a return of Zimbabwe to the Commonwealth in his subsequent two years as chairman of the organisation. This, too, provides an opportunity for a fresh dynamic as Mugabe loses his grip.

B. PRESSURE ON MUGABE AND ZANU-PF OFFICIALS

Targeted EU and U.S. sanctions on senior regime figures are working. ZANU-PF leaders cite their personal financial situations as motivation for wanting Mugabe out. “We have businesses which we worked hard over years to set up which are collapsing. It is about time we change course”, said a senior politburo member.¹¹³ If change does not come, these sanctions should be updated and loopholes closed. Gideon Gono, for example, is on the U.S. but not yet the EU list.

Ideally, sanctions should be expanded to the business associates and family members of those currently on the list. Many children of ministers study at elite Western universities where tuition is many times the parent’s salary. For the price of one year at such a university, many hundreds of students could enrol at the University of Zimbabwe, which recently had another tuition increase.¹¹⁴

An increase in the pressure Western governments are maintaining on Zimbabwe to restore democracy and on regional governments to act would help Harare focus on the need to strike a deal or face further economic and political isolation. Discussions should be held with SADC to agree on a joint strategy involving both incentives and disincentives. The U.S., EU and Commonwealth nations, for example, could expand targeted sanctions and increase the pressure on ZANU-PF leaders but also ease them and even resume aid if key steps on the roadmap for change are met. SADC and donors should coordinate and agree on what needs to be done in 2007 for a start.

Zimbabwe’s problems do not begin and end with Mugabe. African and Western leaders should also call on regime figures with presidential ambitions to better address humanitarian concerns. All have dark spots on their records. Mhangagwa, as minister for rural housing, has ignored the needs of displaced victims of Operation Murambatsvina while concentrating on his presidential ambitions. Urban displacement should stop and proper housing should be built. Gono still defends monetary reforms that have disadvantaged the weaker in society. Joyce Mujuru has not answered allegations that Zimbabwe has mortgaged mining rights to foreign governments, potentially crippling the economy for decades to come. Simba Makoni bears responsibility for some of the disastrous economic decisions when he was in government as well as for repression during his current term on the ZANU-PF politburo. Candidates for higher office should know they will henceforth be expected to meet a higher standard.

Engagement without prior regime concessions or at least solid prospect of such concessions would be a poor option. Several EU member states have implied

¹¹² For discussion of Kofi Annan’s initiative, see Crisis Group Report, *Zimbabwe: An Opposition Strategy*, op. cit.

¹¹³ Crisis Group interview, ZANU-PF politburo member, Harare, 12 January 2007.

¹¹⁴ The tuition cost for one student at Harvard University in the U.S. equals the tuition for some 2,365 students at the University of Zimbabwe. “Disastrous education decline as chefs send kids abroad”, *The Zimbabwean*, 15 November 2006. University of Zimbabwe annual tuition is Z\$32 000 (<http://www.uz.ac.zw/admini/registry/ordinance40.html>), the equivalent of \$12.80. A year’s tuition at Harvard is \$30,275 (<http://www.fao.fas.harvard.edu/cost.htm>).

a willingness either to ease sanctions or engage with Harare in advance of such prospect, suggesting that they might present an alternative to the tough stance favoured by the UK and U.S. While expressing concern for the crisis, France's new ambassador to Harare, Gabriel Jugnet, said, "of course we want dialogue between France and Zimbabwe. We want to help facilitate an improved dialogue between Zimbabwe and the EU".¹¹⁵ But dialogue divorced from reforms could actually prolong the crisis by giving Mugabe the appearance of international credibility without the need to set real change in motion.

Germany could use its EU presidency through the end of June and its role as host of the G8 summit that month to unite international opinion on Zimbabwe. France played a positive role by refusing to invite Mugabe to its summit with African nations in February. Portugal should do the same for the EU-AU summit anticipated during its EU presidency in the second half of 2007, though if ZANU-PF and the MDC are actively engaged in solving the crisis at that time, consideration might usefully be given to arranging for party representatives to meet with European leaders to brief them on the status of the reform process.

A strong case can be made that the flood of refugees out of Zimbabwe is a threat to peace and security sufficient to require consideration by the UN Security Council. South Africa's Mbeki has acknowledged the possibility of a spill-over effect from Zimbabwe that could destabilize the region. Even discussion of putting the case on the agenda would build more pressure to break the logjam on change in Harare. Though the Council itself is unlikely in the current context to take tough action, other UN bodies could contribute to that pressure. The Tibaijuka report made clear that Operation Murambatsvina significantly worsened the humanitarian crisis. In response to government plans for more demolitions of homes and illegal business structures, either the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) or the Human Rights Council should launch a follow-up investigation, which could include consideration of mass arrests of informal miners as well as ongoing political repression.

C. MUGABE'S EXIT PACKAGE

The biggest stumbling block to a negotiated settlement is an exit package for President Mugabe, who believes that remaining in power is his only guarantee of security. He will likely require three assurances to step aside: freedom from domestic or international prosecution; protection of his personal assets; and removal of personal sanctions on him and his family. While particularly the first of these is not popular among opposition activists, the MDC is likely to agree to immunity in exchange for his retirement and power sharing.

Western diplomats properly insist that EU and U.S. targeted sanctions are directed at the change of policies, not of individuals, and will in consequence be lifted only when repressive laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and POSA are repealed and practices of the ruling party seen as affronts to democracy are halted.¹¹⁶ Mugabe is unlikely to make these changes while in office but SADC might negotiate commitments from ZANU-PF to take certain actions immediately after his retirement, and from the EU and U.S. to suspend Mugabe's inclusion on their lists in anticipation of those commitments being fulfilled.

D. DEMOCRACY BUILDING

Many diplomats, especially from Africa, question why they should intervene when Zimbabweans are not standing up strongly to their government, but it is in their countries' interest to prevent a total state collapse. Unless opposition and democratic advocacy groups are supported by African and Western governments so that they can take a strong, active part in the transition, a post-Mugabe, ZANU-PF government would be unlikely to resolve the crisis. Moreover, Zimbabweans are routinely being arrested, beaten and even tortured for their political views in violation of international human rights standards.

Funding for democracy and governance activities in Zimbabwe has plummeted. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), traditionally a major source for programs that "enhance citizen participation in economic and political decision making",¹¹⁷ does not fund the MDC directly, but does

¹¹⁵ "France urges Zim-EU talks", *The Daily Mirror*, 1 December 2006.

¹¹⁶ Crisis Group interviews, numerous Western diplomats, Harare, October 2006.

¹¹⁷ "Data Sheet", USAID Mission to Zimbabwe, <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2006/afr/pdf/zw613-008.pdf>.

give money to a wide variety of CSOs involved in attempting to strengthen democratic activities in the country. However, its budget for these activities dropped from \$4.328 million in 2004 to \$2.719 million in 2005 and only marginally increased to \$2.735 million in 2006.¹¹⁸ Money for democracy and governance activities from other Western aid agencies has dried up as well, even though CSOs and the MDC are now making specific plans to press for an expansion of democracy.

More financial support is needed for training of party leaders and for civil society groups. The latter should be given the means, for example, to apply to courts in South Africa to freeze assets stolen from Zimbabwe and transferred to, or reinvested in, that country and to pursue the arrest and prosecution of the worst regime human rights abusers when they visit South Africa, whose constitution outlaws torture and which is party to the UN Convention against Torture and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

VII. CONCLUSION

The long political stalemate in Zimbabwe appears to be breaking at last. ZANU-PF moderates are jockeying to nominate a Mugabe successor to take office in 2008. Sanctions and general economic problems are building the domestic constituency for change. The MDC and civil society are rallying around economic and governance issues to unite opposition activists and plan larger non-violent resistance activities aimed at producing free and fair elections under a new constitution. Western pressure, particularly targeted sanctions and diplomatic isolation, is making a contribution. SADC leaders have an opportunity to talk to Mugabe now about a retirement package to be implemented not later than when his term expires in 2008 – and at last get him to listen.

Mugabe might still resist and press on until at least 2010. If so, the inevitable additional years of decline could swallow the entire middle class, and the last vestiges of national resources might be mortgaged for short-term fixes, crippling another generation after he finally exits. More years of underpaid, undermanned and poorly resourced security services would raise further bleak questions about the state's stability and future.

Other SADC nations are moving ahead with economic integration and political cooperation. Zimbabwe is the great uncertainty in the middle of southern Africa that could drag the region down with it but there will not be a better time than now for intervention to resolve the crisis. Until at least the July 2007 parliamentary session, the future leader of the country is undetermined. All scenarios remain possible but more than a mere change of personality at the helm is required. The opportunity is there to help Zimbabwe to a genuine new beginning, fresh democratic dispensation and radical policy shift to start down the path to recovery.

Pretoria/Brussels, 5 March 2007

¹¹⁸ "Zimbabwe: Budget Summary", USAID Mission to Zimbabwe,
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2006/afr/zw.html>.

