



Elections & Post Elections period in Zimbabwe:

What to do after 29 March 2008

"Views from Civil Society and Dialogue with the European Union"

About EEPA

EEPA (Europe External Policy Advisors) is a Brussels-based group of consultants specialising in EU development policy. EEPA's work is motivated by the goal of promoting a socially responsible European Union, based on the values of solidarity and equality and with a strong focus on global poverty eradication. EEPA's objective is to strengthen the participation of actors that can contribute to building a responsible social Europe. EEPA is both a politically and financially independent organisation.

EEPA

Rue Stévin 115
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel. +32 (0)2 230 07 32
Fax. +32 (0)2 230 37 80
E-mail: info@eepe.be
Website: <http://www.eepe.be>



About ZIMBABWE WATCH

Zimbabwe Watch is an independent coalition of organisations in the Netherlands that contributes to the creation of a democratic Zimbabwe, a Zimbabwe that respects human rights and treaties. The coalition undertakes common analysis, lobbying and advocacy work with this goal. Zimbabwe Watch links up with and strengthens local and regional Civil Society.

Zimbabwe Watch

C/O NiZA
P.O. Box 10707
1001 ES Amsterdam, Netherlands
Tel: + 31 (0)20 520 62 10
Fax: + 31 (0)20 520 62 49
Email: zimwatch@niza.nl



Table of Content

Introduction	3
Quotes	4
Recommendations	6
Press Release I	9
Press Release II	11
Participants	12
Programme	14
Websites	15

On 29 March 2008, Zimbabwe faces crucial local, parliamentary, senate and presidential elections. As civil society organizations from Zimbabwe and from Europe, we felt this was a very judicious moment to take stock of both the opportunities and challenges associated with the elections as well as the pressing longer-term issues that will need to be addressed in a country shattered by a complete deficit of democracy, peace, human rights and justice.

Given that the 29 March election cannot be a legitimate expression of the will of the Zimbabwean people, urgent and sustained efforts must be made (by the international community in conjunction with and in support of national initiatives) in the post-29 March period to demand, encourage and assist a process of transition which must have among its most urgent objectives the creating of adequate conditions for a legitimate election, so that Zimbabwe may begin the process of return to democratic and accountable government.

Against this background, in collaboration with both its European and Zimbabwean partners, Zimbabwe Watch organised a roundtable titled "Elections and Post-Elections period in Zimbabwe: What to do after 29 March 2008 - Views from Civil Society and Dialogue with the European Union" on 13 March 2008 in Brussels. The roundtable brought together civil society activists from Zimbabwe, officials of the European Union (EU) institutions and various European and international interest groups. As envisaged, the discussion came alive with a free exchange of views between the participants on how to commonly address the very dire economic, social, civil and political rights situation faced by Zimbabweans.

On behalf of Zimbabwe Watch, and in conjunction with Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Media Institute of Southern Africa - Zimbabwe Chapter (MISA-Zimbabwe), Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU), Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and 'the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE), I present this report which summarises the main highlights and recommendations spelled out during the roundtable. Addressing the critical issues in Zimbabwe is first and foremost the onus of Zimbabweans themselves; however, to bring about the transition civil society in Zimbabwe is aiming for, support from the regional and international community is equally crucial. The suggestions presented in this report emerged out of the interactive discussion on what the role of the regional and international community can be and how we can work jointly towards a free and democratic Zimbabwe.

Pascal Richard
Coordinator
Zimbabwe Watch



Maureen Kademaunga,

Human Rights and Gender Unit, Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU):

"The Election Commission is very partisan as its members are still appointed by Mugabe. The voter registration process did not embrace all citizens; especially, in the rural areas it was not adequately facilitated and was accompanied by harassments and bribes. There is no equal access to the media and human rights abuses are increasing".

Wilbert Mandinde,

Legal Officer, Media Institute for Southern Africa - Zimbabwe Chapter (MISA-Zimbabwe):

"The situation on the ground is not conducive for free and fair elections. No proper voters' education; no proper access to information of candidates; no proper information on the venues of polling stations and no free media that can broadcast on the elections except for the heavily biased, government owned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation".



John Stewart,

Director, Nonviolent Action and Strategies for Social Change (NOVASC), Vice Chair, Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum:

"Voting should open up a possibility for change but these elections are not legitimate. The current conditions of law and order are making free and fair elections impossible. If the people had a real say, Mugabe would lose but we fear that the government will ruthlessly use fraud and intimidation to steal the elections again".



Adeline Torcol,

Human Rights and Democratisation Unit, Election Desk, Directorate General for External Relations:

"Election experts are based in the Harare delegation of the European Commission. While there will be no proper EU observer mission, Member States are trying to get accreditation for their diplomatic missions to monitor the elections".



Dewa Mavhinga,

Assistant Coordinator, International Liason Office, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum:



"The government is highly militarized and oppressive; the police and the military are basically partisan bodies. There is a need for a home-grown people driven constitution and the overall rehabilitation of the state institutions. The international community should watch the elections closely and be ready to act as there is a likelihood of violent crackdown on the oppositions and civil society after the elections".

M. Takavafira Zhou,

President, Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ):

"While the teachers' salary is 400 million Zimbabwean dollars per month, the military receives 2.3 billion Zimbabwean dollars in comparison. The education system has virtually collapsed. 25000 teachers abandoned their profession last year while a further 8000 left this year. The remaining teachers, while here physically have resigned mentally. Also militarization of the education sector has crept in with members of youth militias favored as teaching staff".



Promise Mkwanzani,

European Representative, Global Zimbabwe Forum:

"Aid should not be channeled through the current government as it will not reach its intended beneficiaries. Aid should not create dependency but instead help people to help themselves. The reintegration of socio-economic refugees into the country must be on the transitional agenda".



Tony Dykes,

Director, Action for Southern Africa, ACTSA:

"The EU should now invest in research and training for transformational economic and political policies with consultative processes. This can help to generate clear direction for the future. The transformation to a new Zimbabwe can either be realized with a soft landing or a hard landing. The EU is well-placed to ensure a soft landing with well prepared policy options that promote active citizenship. The EU is well-placed to ensure a soft landing with well prepared policy options that promote active citizenship and respond to the demands and wishes of the Zimbabwe people".



Recommendations

1. The conditions for the elections are such that they will not be free nor fair and therefore cannot be called a legitimate expression of the will of the people. The African Union (AU) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) should be encouraged to make objective assessments of the conditions and the process based on the SADC Guidelines on Free and Fair Elections. The European Union (EU) should welcome such assessments that recognise the unfree and unfair environment. If the AU and SADC fail to recognise this, the EU needs to voice a very clear position on the the unfree and unfair nature of the elections and condemn these partial assessment. The international community must exert pressure on the Zimbabwean government to restore the rule of law.
2. The delegation of the European Commission in Harare will produce a report on the election process and outcomes. The EU Commission needs to consult relevant Zimbabwean and European civil society organisations and include their inputs in this report as well as in the EU's common position on the elections. This report and the EU conclusions will should refer explicitly to the SADC Guidelines for free and fair elections and look at the longer term election environment which can already be considered as not conducive for free and fair elections.
3. After the elections, a new fully inclusive AU led mediation process that leads to a transitional process need to take place. This mediation must include not only the political parties but also Zimbabwean Civil Society and take place in an open, transparent and accountable process. Such a process should be actively supported by the EU.
4. SADC proposed and started discussing an economic recovery plan for Zimbabwe in 2007 but they will need the support of the international community to implement this plan. The EU should work together with SADC (and with the broader international community) through its regional assistance programme on a broad economic, political and social recovery plan. This process must be strongly inclusive of Zimbabwean Civil Society (including Trade Union). Any recovery plan must reflect the demands and needs of Zimbabwean Civil Society while having good governance and human rights as key concepts.
5. For such a recovery plan to be devised initial audits of all the relevant sectors (such as education, health, land, etc – not only the economy) needs to be undertaken. For example proper accounting of the education sector is required and support to local research institutions and universities is needed. In addition a comprehensive census, including of Zimbabweans outside the country, is needed for planning the recovery. Such a recovery plan needs sustainable planning and clear commitments from the EU for at least the next ten years.

6. The new Africa strategy emphasises common principles on human rights and governance, the role of civil society and regional approaches – the EU should together with SADC develop regional programs on governance, human rights and crisis prevention in which Zimbabwe can be addressed. Europe must develop and maintain a consistent position on Zimbabwe which also responds to the needs and demands of the Zimbabwean Civil Society. The EU must look at all the policy and financial instruments it has at its disposal (such as the Cotonou agreement, the EU-Africa strategy, human rights, peace and security and crisis prevention instruments) to engage SADC and AU partners on Zimbabwe in a principled manner. It must consider Zimbabwe as a military crisis and bring SADC and the AU to look at it in this way e.g. by having SADC excluding Zimbabwe from joint military operations. The EU must investigate if they support regional military training which includes Zimbabwe and pressure for their exclusion from such programs.
7. The European Commission has produced a draft Country Strategy Paper (CSP) in negotiation with the current Zimbabwean government for the spending of the 10th EDF. It plans to adopt it as soon as the political situation allows it. This is not the way to go. The EU has stopped bilateral aid because the current government is not following good governance rules and is not accountable. The EU therefore needs to re-open the negotiation of the CSP with an eventual new (transitional) government and negotiate the key sectors with them and Non-State actors in a very inclusive, transparent and accountable manner. This must apply for any assistance to any new (transitional) government.
8. The influence of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) should be fostered in Zimbabwe, so that labour standards are observed and upheld and serious abuses stopped. Zimbabwe should be answerable to the ILO.



9. The International community should now start to plan for and deploy assistance programmes for the coming transition phase including recovery policy development plans by Zimbabwean Civil Society. Planning the transition is campaigning for it! In the event of significant power shifts leading to a transitional government and policy changes, swift support for the reconstruction of institutions, especially the justice, police, banking and education sector must be available.
10. Continued support to civil society organisations as providers of checks and balances for the human rights situation is needed. Protection of human rights defenders (HRDs), especially in the case of escalating post-election violence and security/military clampdowns needs to be prioritised and the EU and member states must find urgent ways to provide necessary support. Adequate actions need to be devised in accordance with the demands from HRD's themselves, the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and the Handbook linked to them provide examples of such actions including observation of demonstrations and trials, visits in prison or hospital, staying in touch with the HRD's and providing safe houses.
11. The EU must support the strengthening of the African Union's Peace and Security Council and making the AU Peace and Security instruments more effective and operational, using Zimbabwe as a test case. The full implementation of the African Charter of Peoples and Human Rights, which Zimbabwe signed, must be demanded. In view of the military nature of Mugabe's regime, no Zimbabwean participation in international peace and military interventions, in the context of the UN or the African Union, must be allowed.
12. Silence of the United Nations Human Rights Council to post-election violence would not be acceptable; it must then come up with a clear resolution. The Mugabe government must be pressurised particularly by African countries to extend an open invitation to all UN human rights special rapporteurs (such as the one on torture) to the country. The EU must work with African partners to ensure such steps. The EU must also continue the monitoring of the human rights violations on the ground and engage the AU and African countries to implement the resolutions coming out of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights condemning the human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. Finally, in the event of escalating post-election violence, Zimbabwe needs to be referred to the UN Security Council.

RIGHTS: 'UN MUST RESPOND TO ZIMBABWE CRACKDOWN'

David Cronin

BRUSSELS (IPS) - Zimbabwe's crackdown on political dissent may need to be discussed by the United Nations Security Council, a prominent southern African human rights activist declared Mar. 11.

Opponents of President Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU-PF party have reported large-scale harassment and intimidation in the tense period leading to elections due later this month. With little prospect of the poll being conducted in a free and fair manner, political activists are calling on international bodies to explore new ways of applying pressure on Mugabe, the octogenarian who has led Zimbabwe ever since winning independence from Britain in 1980.

John Stewart, vice-chairman of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, urged the European Union to consider invoking a clause relating to democratic principles in the Cotonou agreement, which underpins the bloc's relations with Africa. The Cotonou Agreement is a treaty between the European Union and the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific states (ACP countries). It was signed in June 2000 in Cotonou, the largest city in Benin in West Africa, by 79 ACP countries and the then 15 member states of the European Union.

In 2002, the EU decided to impose sanctions on Mugabe and his inner circle -- such as freezing their assets and banning them from travelling to Europe -- after initiating a 'political dialogue' under Article 8 of that accord.

But Stewart argues that the Union should also study the possibility of invoking Article 9 of Cotonou. This states that

democracy should be built "on the basis of universally recognised principles" and that signatories, including Zimbabwe, should ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law.

According to Stewart, the level of state-approved violence in Zimbabwe is now so serious that the EU's military officials should be addressing it.

"I am not advocating sending a Belgian platoon to Mozambique's border with Zimbabwe," he told IPS. "But this is an issue of peace and security. It needs to be talked about."

Stewart, who was visiting Brussels, added that an analysis of the EU on Zimbabwe may lead to the country's situation being discussed by the UN Security Council.

A day earlier the EU's foreign ministers issued a statement expressing concern that Zimbabwe's presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled Mar. 29 are at risk of being unfair. The EU has received no invitation to monitor the poll's conduct, the ministers observed.

Although Stewart said he was "glad" that Zimbabwe remained on the EU's agenda, he argued that the ministers' statement "misses the point." It is futile, he suggested, for the EU to call for free and fair elections "when there is no question this is going to happen."

Those wishing to observe the election have been told they need special permits from the government. Wilbert Mandinde, a former magistrate now working for the Zimbabwean branch of the Media Institute for Southern Africa, noted that only one organisation has so far been permitted to monitor the

poll. Unless more permits are granted, nearly all of the 11,000 polling stations in the country are not likely to face any scrutiny, he added.

And although Zimbabwe has a law stating that the media should cover election campaigns fairly and impartially, Mandinde alleged that television coverage is "tilted in favour of the ruling party."

At the end of February, the launch of ZANU-PF's manifesto could be seen live on the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation. Yet the opposition Movement for Democratic Change did not receive the same treatment when it formally began its campaign a day later.

Takavafina Zhou, president of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, was arrested and tortured when he took part in a 'Save our Education' protest in Harare last month.

Labelling Mugabe a "crocodile liberator" and a "grasping kleptocrat", he said: "We were promised paradise in 1980. What we have managed to get is a bullet in the head and a diet of starvation."

Zhou accused the regime of operating a policy of "systematic torture" against teachers for about eight years. As a result the number of teachers has shrunk from 150,000 to 70,000.

"Just last year, we lost 25,000 teachers and this year we have lost 8,000," he said. "Of those that remain, they are 100 percent mentally resigned, although they physically remain in the classroom. That is a dangerous situation for any profession."

While Zimbabwe used to be known as the breadbasket of Africa, its economy has declined dramatically over the past decade. Inflation has rocketed, unemployment has reached 80 percent of the workforce and 45 percent of the population are undernourished because of food shortages.

Maureen Kademaunga, the gender and human rights officer with the Zimbabwe National Students Union, said demonstrations by students have been brutally attacked. In one instance last month a woman who was nine months pregnant was beaten up.

All universities in the country are now closed and are not due to reopen until after the elections. In effect, this has disenfranchised students, particularly those from rural areas who have returned to their families. Zimbabwe only allows people to vote in areas where they are registered, but Kademaunga said that poverty means students often cannot afford to travel.

Dewa Mavhinga, a human rights lawyer, argued that food aid, on which four million Zimbabweans (in a population of 12.5 million) are dependent, is being used as a political weapon. In rural areas, the ZANU-PF has taken charge of food delivery and has been accused of denying vital supplies to those it views as opponents.

A spokesman for Zimbabwe's embassy in Brussels said he had taken note of the EU's statement this week, but refused to comment further.

ZIMBABWEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FEAR RIGGED ELECTIONS AND POSTELECTION VIOLENCE

BRUSSELS – At a press conference this morning, organized by the international network of catholic development organizations CIDSE and ZimbabweWatch, a delegation of leading civil society representatives from Zimbabwe expressed deep concern about the probable outcome and conduct of the election in Zimbabwe due March 29.

“The incumbent government is illegitimate; under the current conditions these elections will be neither fair nor free. If the people had a real say, Mugabe would lose. But we fear that the government will ruthlessly use fraud and intimidation to steal the elections again”, said John Stewart, Director of NOVASC, a human rights NGO. “With things getting worse every day, there is urgency in a breakthrough towards political transition in Zimbabwe right now.”

While Mugabe is absolutely determined to win his reelection and seeks to silence opposition and media, arbitrary arrests, beatings and torture of members of the opposition, media and civil society are common. “With the regime realizing that its grip on power is waning, we are very afraid of a violent retaliation, as Mugabe will use any means to cling to power”, said Wilbert Mandinde from the Media Institute of Southern Africa.

The situation in Zimbabwe is that dire, that “people are looking towards any possibility for change. If the current Mugabe regime lives on, there is absolutely no hope for change”, said Maureen Kademaunga, Gender and Human Rights officer of the National Student Union (ZINASU). “What we need is transition towards a new kind of government, with principled leaders, who really are accountable to the people”.

The civil society leaders, gathered in Brussels, called on the EU and African states to undertake joint and tougher actions,

based on common principles, to guarantee a democratic Zimbabwe. Takavafira Zhou, President of the Progressive Teachers Union, who was recently severely tortured at a ZANUPF headquarters, said “Europe must not fail Zimbabwe, but work together with African countries on a solution. The international efforts in the Kenyan crisis have clearly shown the potential of coherent international intervention.”

Growing opposition to President Robert Mugabe’s regime, due to economic hardship and growing divisions in his ruling ZANU-PF, means that the result of the elections is more uncertain than ever. With Simba Makoni, a former Finance Minister and opposition candidate from a faction within his own party, and the long serving opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC) running against him, Mugabe faces one of the most serious challenges since he has come to power after independence in 1980.

Political failures have been crippling the economy, caused unemployment rates above 80 % and ushered in an unheard-of inflation of 100.000 %. Affordable basic commodities, even water and fuel, have disappeared from the shops. Zimbabwe, once a success story, has become a grave humanitarian emergency where 80% of the population life in squalid conditions and have an extreme low life expectancy of 35 years.

At its last meeting, March 10, the Council of the European Union (GAERC) has repeated its concern about the humanitarian, political and economic situation in Zimbabwe, which, according to the Council, “may endanger the holding of free and fair elections”.

For more information, please contact:

Philipp Rohrer - CIDSE

Pascal Richard – Zimbabwe Watch

Participants

Name	Organisation
Tony Dykes	ACTSA
Florian Eisele	Amgott / Mitchell
Susi Dennison	Amnesty International
Simon Murtagh	AWEPA, Ireland
Beth Masterson	CIDSE
Andrea Müller-Frank	EEPA
Mirjam van Reisen	EEPA
Willemijn Nieuwenhuys	EEPA / LDC Watch
Perna Bomzan	EEPA / SAAPE
Adeline Torcol	European Commission
Promise Mkwanzani	European Representative, Global Zimbabwe Forum
Simon Stocker	Eurostep
Kwaku Acheampong	FOS
Nathalie Stanus	Frontline Defenders
Victoria Brereton	ICG
June Sorensen Bedaton	ITUC
Denis Schrey	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
Sven Herpig	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
Wilbert Mandinde	MISA

Participants

Name	Organisation
John Stewart	NOVASC/ZHRF
Russell Pickard	OSI - Brussels
Eva Amon	Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU
Michael Schloms	Permanent Representation of Germany to the EU
Timo Olkkonen	Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU
Sharon Zarb	Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU
Wampie Libon	Permanent Representation of The Netherlands to the EU
M. Takavafira Zhou	PTUZ
Mala Roche	Trocaire
Umar Ahmed	United Network of Yuong Peacebuilders
Beate Twellmeyer	Verband der Chemischen Industrie (VCI)
Gladys Tenday	WIDE
Doreen Vorndran	Youth Action for Peace
Ellitah Bere	Zimbabwe Humanitarian Crisis (ZHC)
Dewa Mavhinga	Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum
Pascal Richard	Zimbabwe Watch
Maureen Kademaunga	ZINASU
Rwatirinda Mahembe	Zimbabwe Graphical Workers Union

Elections & Post-Elections period in Zimbabwe: What to do after 29 March 2008

“Views from Civil Society and Dialogue with the European Union”

Thursday 13 March 2008 from 10:00-13:00
Renaissance Hotel, Ballroom II
Rue du Parnasse 19, Brussels

09:30 – 10:00 Registration

10:00 – 10:15 Welcome

10:15 – 11:05 Panel 1: 2008 Elections

- **Maureen Kademaunga**
Human Rights & Gender Unit, Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU)
- **Wilbert Mandinde**
Legal Officer, Media Institute for Southern Africa - Zimbabwe Chapter (MISA-Zimbabwe)
- **Adeline Torcol**
*Human Rights and Democratisation Unit, Election Desk,
Directorate General for External Relations*

11:05 – 11:55 Panel 2: Constitution, Rule of Law, Civil & Political Rights

- **Dewa Mavhinga**
Assistant Co-ordinator, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum
- **John Stewart**
*President, Nonviolent Action and Strategies for Social Change (NOVASC);
Vice-President, Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum*

11:55 – 12:45 Panel 3: Socio-economic Rights

- **M. Takavafira Zhou**
President, Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ)
- **Promise Mkwanzani**
European Representative, Global Zimbabwe Forum
- **Tony Dykes**
Director, Action for Southern Africa, ACTSA

12:45 – 13:00 Conclusions

Websites

- <http://www.zinasu.org>
- [http:// www.hrforumzim.com](http://www.hrforumzim.com)
- [http:// www.zctu.co.zw](http://www.zctu.co.zw)
- [http:// www.misazim.co.zw](http://www.misazim.co.zw)
- [http:// www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org)

Impressum

Editors

Pascal Richard (Zimbabwe Watch)

John Stewart (NOVASC)

Promise Mkwanzanji (Global Zimbabwe Forum)

Prerna Bomzan (EEPA)

Layout and Design

Benny Gommers (EEPA)

Photos

Filip de Keukeleere (EEPA)

Facilitated by



