



## Roundtable on Zimbabwe with Burkina Faso Foreign Minister Djibrill Bassolé and United Nations Permanent Representatives

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**  
United Nations Security Council  
New York, New York  
June 19, 2008

**SECRETARY RICE:** (In progress.) Honorable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Minister Bassolé and I agreed to host this meeting out of our great concern about the welfare of the Zimbabwean people and President Mugabe's tyranny (inaudible) for violence, about the viability of the democratic process in Zimbabwe as we approach the second round of presidential elections and about the troubling effects of Zimbabwe's political instability and economic collapse on the security of its neighbors.

Following the discussion of the Council just held this morning on women, peace, and security, we must acknowledge that Zimbabwean women and children are also being brutally attacked for merely seeking to express their peaceful desire for political and economic changes in their country. This is horrifying and intolerable. And we demand that it end immediately.

By its actions, the Mugabe regime has given up any pretense that the June 27 elections will be allowed to proceed in a free and fair manner. Regime supporters, including police and so-called war veterans, have killed more than 60 opposition supporters, injured thousands, and terrorized, intimidated, or displaced many more. Opposition leaders have been baselessly arrested and repeatedly attacked. This orchestrated campaign of violence and harassment by the regime is designed to prevent Zimbabwe's opposition from conducting its peaceful election campaign.

Indeed, President Mugabe has told his supporters that areas where Zimbabweans vote for the opposition in the first round of elections should be cleansed. President Mugabe's regime is using food as a political weapon, confiscating food aid shipments and denying opposition supporters, even young children, access to food. Just recently, the Zimbabwe Government ordered almost all international organizations and NGOs to shut down their operations (inaudible), depriving Zimbabweans, including those displaced by violence, of basic humanitarian assistance. The regime's campaign of harassment has extended to foreign diplomats as well. And in the face of such egregious incidents, we seriously believe that the regime will [not] permit international election observers to operate freely before and during the June 27 vote.

The political instability and economic collapse created by the Zimbabwean Government's actions are destabilizing an entire region. And the United States continues to support Africans' efforts to resolve this crisis. We stand fully behind the efforts of the Southern African Development Community. And we encourage SADC, the African Union, and all other governments and organizations that are invited to observe the elections to send as many observers as possible, as early as possible, and to insist that they be given full freedom to operate and (inaudible) their observations.

The United States welcomes Secretary General Ban's appointment of Assistant Secretary General Haile Menkerios as his Special Envoy. How is President Mugabe and his leadership responding? The increasing violence and repression against the Zimbabwean people and threatening that regime's supporters will take up arms if the opposition wins the upcoming election. Clearly, we have reached a point where broader, stronger international effort is needed. We commend the 14 African former presidents and dignitaries, including former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu, whose call for Zimbabwean authorities to allow a free and fair election on June 27<sup>th</sup>. We urge the SADC to increase its pressure on President Mugabe and his followers to stop this violence immediately, to permit the resumption of humanitarian activities to allow the election to proceed freely and fairly, and to abide peacefully by the results.

This April, South Africa led the UN Security Council in adopting Resolution 1809, which expressed the Council's determination to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations to prevent conflict. The SADC is working to do just that in Zimbabwe, and the Security Council's consideration of Zimbabwe at this time would put the international community's weight squarely behind SADC's efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen, President Mugabe has squandered the promise of the very nation that was once hailed as the jewel of Africa and that he led to independence. He is instead turning it into a failed state that threatens not only the lives of Zimbabweans, but the security and stability of all of southern Africa. We need to ask now: If Zimbabwe could make a transition to democracy; so much would be possible for its people. The international community would finally have a real partner, a democratic partner, and we would fully support a democratic Zimbabwe's efforts to rebuild its economy and reduce inflation, to govern by the rule of law, to undertake difficult but necessary reform, and to expand peace and opportunity and social justice for its people. In short, we could help Zimbabweans fulfill the pride of knowing that their nation is once again the jewel of Africa.

I want to thank you all for participating today. I look forward to your comments and contributions. And now, I would like to turn the floor to Minister Bassolé, my co-chairman. Thank you very much.

**FOREIGN MINISTER BASSOLE':** (Via interpreter.) Thank you. (Inaudible) Secretary General of the United Nations, (inaudible) Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen, as an introduction to our discussion on the situation in Zimbabwe, I would first and foremost like to thank Ms. Rice for having invited me to co-chair this roundtable. I would like to welcome the presence of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his commitment through the appointment of Mr. Haile Menkerios as Special Envoy of the United Nations to Zimbabwe. He will need our support in order to ensure that his mandate be concluded successfully. And finally, I would like to pay tribute to the SADC and the African Union for the many initiatives that they have undertaken in order to seek a peaceful resolution to the current crisis.

Ladies and gentlemen, the electoral process currently taking place in Zimbabwe is undergoing serious difficulties which clearly indicate that the security situation will only deteriorate if nothing is done by the regional and international communities to create an environment that is propitious for a free and fair presidential election. The acts of violence that we have recorded in the field are grievously harming the population within the country and represent a growing threat to peace and security in this region of Africa.

This being the case, Burkina Faso as a Security Council member believes that it is the duty of the international community, through the Security Council and its mission of prevention, to closely monitor the situation in order to ensure that the foreseeable escalation of violence not definitively bring the country to a serious humanitarian crisis and disorder which will reach beyond the borders. A country which is also a member of the African Union

Security Council would like to recall that the constitutive act has established that one of its principles is to promote peace, security, and stability throughout the continent, to promote the principles and democratic institutions, the participation of the population and good government, to promote and protect human rights and the rights of peoples in keeping with the African charter of human rights and peoples, as well as other relevant instruments in the field of human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen, Burkina Faso, as all Africans states, is aware of the fact that the scourges of conflicts in Africa are a major obstacle to the economic and social development of the continent. The situation in Zimbabwe could compromise the efforts for development and integration of the region as well as the human security, both for the African population and others. May the fruit of our discussions guarantee to the Zimbabwean people peaceful, free and fair elections which will preserve peace and stability in this country, which is so dear to us. Thank you.

**2008/T18-4**

Released on June 20, 2008

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.