



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

Zimbabwe

Eighth Report of Session 2002–03



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

Zimbabwe

Eighth Report of Session 2002–03

*Report, together with formal minutes, minutes
of evidence and appendices*

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 20 May 2003*

HC 339

Published on 27 May 2003
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£0.00

The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Office of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

Rt Hon Donald Anderson MP (*Labour, Swansea East*) (Chairman)
David Chidgey MP (*Liberal Democrat, Eastleigh*)
Sir Patrick Cormack MP (*Conservative, Staffordshire South*)
Fabian Hamilton MP (*Labour, Leeds North East*)
Eric Illsley MP (*Labour, Barnsley Central*)
Andrew Mackinlay MP (*Labour, Thurrock*)
John Maples MP (*Conservative, Stratford-on-Avon*)
Bill Oler MP (*Labour, Nuneaton*)
Greg Pope MP (*Labour, Hyndburn*)
Rt Hon Sir John Stanley MP (*Conservative, Tonbridge and Malling*)
Gisela Stuart MP (*Labour, Birmingham Edgbaston*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/foreign_affairs_committee.cfm. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is in the inside front cover of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Steve Priestley (Clerk), Geoffrey Farrar (Second Clerk), Elizabeth Sellwood (Committee Specialist), Jane Appleton (Committee Assistant), Sheryl Bertasius (Secretary) and Andrew Boyd (Senior Office Clerk).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerks of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Committee Office, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone numbers for general enquiries are 020 7219 6106/6105/6394; the Committee's email address is foraffcom@parliament.uk.

Contents

Report	<i>Page</i>
Conclusions and recommendations	3
Introduction	5
The situation in Zimbabwe	6
The political situation	6
The humanitarian situation	7
The United Kingdom and Zimbabwe	10
A human rights dossier	10
Support for independent media	11
The cricket World Cup	11
Mugabe's honours	12
The European Union and Zimbabwe	13
Was there a deal with France?	13
Should there be a stronger sanctions regime?	14
Zimbabwe and the international community	15
The Commonwealth	15
The United Nations	16
Zimbabwe in its Region	18
Formal minutes	20
Witnesses	21
List of written evidence	22

Conclusions and recommendations

1. We conclude that Mugabe's regime may indeed be in its last throes, although we do not underestimate its determination to cling to power. We recommend that the Government ensure that it is in a position swiftly to restore good working relations with any incoming administration which demonstrates a real commitment to restoring the rights, welfare and dignity of the people of Zimbabwe. (Paragraph 7)
2. We recommend that the Government ensure that the policy which it supports, of refusing to operate through Zimbabwean governmental organisations or other official channels, is not subverted by inappropriate relationships with organisations closely associated with ZANU-PF. (Paragraph 14)
3. We recommend that the Government prepare and publish a detailed dossier on human rights in Zimbabwe. (Paragraph 18)
4. we recommend that in its response to this Report the Government bring the Committee up to date on progress towards publication by the EU of a document on human rights in Zimbabwe. (Paragraph 19)
5. We recommend that the Government take a positive decision to provide technical and financial assistance to the independent media in Zimbabwe, in consultation with representatives of those media. (Paragraph 21)
6. We recommend that the FCO—on it own, with other relevant Government Departments, or through the European Union—consider carefully the case for offering appropriate support to independent broadcasters operating from outside Zimbabwe. (Paragraph 22)
7. We recommend that the Government take steps to strip Robert Mugabe of all honours, decorations and privileges bestowed on him by the United Kingdom. (Paragraph 25)
8. We recommend that the Government explain in its response to this Report exactly how Interpol came to honour Chihuri, and how it now proposes to persuade Interpol to remove the honour. (Paragraph 26)
9. We conclude that the French government's decision to invite Mugabe to attend a conference in Paris just one day after sanctions were due to elapse was a deeply regrettable and offensive act, which ran wholly counter to the convention that EU partners respect each other's interests in such cases, and which lent unwarranted credibility to the ZANU-PF regime. (Paragraph 30)
10. We recommend that in its response to this Report the Government set out in full the objections raised by other EU member states to a strengthening of sanctions against Zimbabwe, state by state. (Paragraph 31)

11. Because of their likely adverse impact on the Zimbabwean people as a whole, we would not yet advocate the introduction of trade sanctions against Zimbabwe, other than the arms embargo which is already in place, but we recommend that, in its response to this Report, the Government set out its policy on the imposition of bilateral, non-trade sanctions against ZANU-PF, in addition to those imposed by the European Union. (Paragraph 32)
12. We conclude that for Zimbabwe to be readmitted to the Councils of the Commonwealth without a very substantial and verifiable improvement in its human rights record and major steps to re-establish democracy would be a travesty of the Harare principles and a betrayal of all that the Commonwealth stands for. We recommend that the Government continue to seek a consensus in the period leading up to the December heads of government meeting, but that it resist any compromise which does not require full compliance by Zimbabwe with the 2002 Marlborough House Statement. (Paragraph 36)
13. We recommend that the Government consult informally with other members of the Security Council and with African countries with a view to raising in the Council ZANU-PF's persecution of its political opponents, its use of torture, beatings, rape and starvation against its own people, and the threat which it poses to the prosperity and stability of southern Africa, as a matter of grave concern to the region and to the international community. (Paragraph 42)
14. We recommend that in its response to this Report the Government set out its policy on the use of an international force to supervise the distribution of aid and, in the longer term, to assist Zimbabwe's transition from dictatorship to democracy. (Paragraph 43)
15. We conclude that if Zimbabwe's neighbours were fully to assume their responsibilities—for example, by imposing targeted non-trade sanctions similar to those already imposed by the EU, by some Commonwealth countries and by the United States—Mugabe's regime would be further isolated, his opponents would be encouraged and his days would be numbered. We further conclude that the Government would be entirely right to accept such a step, if it is taken, as evidence of the intention of the countries concerned to adhere to the principles to which they have committed themselves under NePAD and other international agreements, qualifying them to receive the benefits of those programmes. We recommend that Ministers take every opportunity to make this point clear to their counterparts in southern Africa. (Paragraph 48)

Introduction

1. Our last Report on Zimbabwe was published in July 2002.¹ In it, we noted Zimbabwe's descent into chaos, and its decline from democracy to oppressive despotism. We expressed the hope that, for the sake of the people of Zimbabwe, a time of change would come soon. To our great regret, the situation has instead deteriorated further. We are therefore producing this further Report, in the hope of maintaining public and official interest in the plight of Zimbabwe, at a time when other pressing issues in foreign affairs threaten to obscure it.

2. In preparing this Report, we heard oral evidence from a former High Commissioner in Harare, Mr Peter Longworth CMG; from BBC Online's Zimbabwe reporter Mr Joe Winter; from Ms Georgina Godwin of SW (Short Wave) Radio Africa; and from the then Minister for Africa—now Secretary of State for International Development—Baroness Amos. We held informal meetings with a group of community leaders from Matabeleland² and with the Most Reverend Pius Ncube, Archbishop of Bulawayo. We also received helpful written evidence, and have made use of recently published studies of Zimbabwe, including the latest report of the International Crisis Group,³ and the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Report to the Commonwealth Chairpersons' Committee on Zimbabwe.⁴

1 Foreign Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 813

2 Ev 43

3 Available at www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=915

4 This Report has not been published by the Commonwealth, but was released by the Conservative Party in April 2003 and is now in the public domain. See www.conservatives.com/pdf/CommonwealthSecGenreport.pdf.

The situation in Zimbabwe

The political situation

3. Since we last reported to the House, Robert Mugabe has tightened his hold on power. Within the past few weeks, his ZANU-PF ruling party attempted to rig several by-elections in seats held by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). At least the fact that these elections took place shows that there remain some residual elements of democracy in Zimbabwe. By attempting to manipulate the democratic process, Mugabe had hoped to gain a two-thirds Parliamentary majority, which would have allowed him to change the constitution, for example so that he could hand the presidency to a chosen successor.⁵ He failed only because of the courage of thousands of Zimbabwean voters, who cast their votes for opposition candidates in defiance of the threats and intimidation by ZANU-PF.

4. Despite this recent electoral success, opposition supporters have found that their attempts to achieve change through the democratic process have been frustrated at every turn. Denied the opportunity to remove their corrupt government by electoral means, many MDC supporters have resorted to direct action. Strikes and demonstrations have attracted considerable support, but have been repressed by ZANU-PF militia and by police using force. On 25 April, police raided the headquarters of the MDC in Zimbabwe and arrested 30 people.⁶ By such means, Mugabe retains control over his country.

5. Not everything has been going Mugabe's way. There have been reports that his close political associates are looking for ways of removing him from power;⁷ one witness described this as a "feeding frenzy" within ZANU-PF.⁸ Others have made critical comments on the record. In January, General Vitalis Zvinavashe, Commander of the Armed Forces of Zimbabwe, referred to the economic situation in Zimbabwe as a "crisis", while in March a founder member of ZANU-PF, Edison Zvogbo, called in the Zimbabwean Parliament for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission to inquire into abuses of power by members of the regime. General Zvinavashe and Speaker of the Zimbabwe Parliament Emerson Mnangagwa have also been reported as drawing up a plan to find a successor to Mugabe, even talking to the MDC opposition through an intermediary,⁹ while a land audit carried out by Vice President Joseph Msika revealed—when leaked—that a number of senior members of the Government have corruptly exploited the land reform programme for personal gain.¹⁰ Reports have been appearing in the Zimbabwean and South African media that Mugabe is preparing his exit strategy, although these have been rebutted by ZANU-PF.¹¹ Former United Kingdom High Commissioner in Harare, Peter Longworth, speculated that

5 Ev 17, para 4; Q 4; Q 138

6 *Zimbabwe Daily News*, 26 April 2003

7 Q 137

8 Q 59

9 Q 59

10 Ev 35

11 See, for example, *Zimbabwe Daily News*, and *The Herald*, 29 April 2003

a moment has now come within the upper echelons of the ruling ZANU-PF party where the President's continued tenure is seen as a liability to the future of the party and also to the ability of the party to stay cohesive.¹²

6. Meanwhile, there has been no resumption of the inter-party talks, which were established at the instigation of Presidents Mbeki and Obasanjo after last year's flawed presidential election and which had already been suspended when we last reported to the House.¹³ ZANU-PF withdrew from the talks when the MDC launched a legal challenge to the election process and refuses to rejoin them until the court has reached a verdict or the action is withdrawn. The MDC, whose leader is on trial for treason with other senior party figures, has not set preconditions for a resumption of the dialogue, but has refused to withdraw its own court action¹⁴ and refuses to accept Mugabe's precondition that the legitimacy of the presidential elections be recognised.¹⁵ Despite the recent attempt by the Presidents of three African countries, Malawi, Nigeria and South Africa, to restart the talks, there appears now to be little prospect of them resuming.

7. We conclude that Mugabe's regime may indeed be in its last throes, although we do not underestimate its determination to cling to power. We recommend that the Government ensure that it is in a position swiftly to restore good working relations with any incoming administration which demonstrates a real commitment to restoring the rights, welfare and dignity of the people of Zimbabwe.

The humanitarian situation

8. The House's International Development Committee produced a helpful Report on the Crisis in Southern Africa in March.¹⁶ Observing that "the crisis is at its most acute in Zimbabwe," they concluded that

In Zimbabwe poor government is the key factor behind the humanitarian crisis. Zimbabwe's badly-planned land redistribution programme has severely disrupted the rural economy—both commercial farms and smallholders—and created a new class of vulnerable people, the displaced farm workers and their families. The politicisation of food aid, the exclusion of the private sector from any role in importing food, and poor relationships between the Government and donors have hindered responses to the crisis. Zimbabwe would normally help to alleviate food shortages in southern Africa. Instead, it is a major cause of the crisis, and an obstacle to an effective humanitarian response.¹⁷

12 Q 3

13 Foreign Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 813, para 38

14 See www.mdczimbabwe.com

15 *Zimbabwe Daily News*, 26 April 2003

16 International Development Committee, Third Report of Session 2002–03, *The Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa*, HC 116

17 *Ibid*, para 10

Since our colleagues reported, the situation has deteriorated still further. As the Minister told us:

The latest estimates are that 7.2 million Zimbabweans will continue to require food aid. We have a current situation where the World Food Programme is feeding some 4.5 million people, and [the UK is] engaged in supplementary feeding programmes for some 1.5 million people in Zimbabwe, mainly children, pregnant mothers, the elderly and those who have been thrown off the farms, the farm workers and their families.¹⁸

9. That substantial part of the Zimbabwean population not in receipt of foreign aid is at the mercy of ZANU-PF, which, as the FCO reminded us, “has continued to manipulate the distribution of food for political advantage.” We were also alarmed to hear from Georgina Godwin of SW Radio Africa that

It is an open secret in Harare that on the Save the Children trucks you see people in ZANU-PF youth militia uniform. That goes on every day. Who is talking about it? You ring up all these aid agencies; they do not want to speak about it. It is a terrible thing and I believe they must surely take on board this responsibility. They are watching people starve whilst feeding other people. They need to do something about the people they cannot feed.¹⁹

Ms Godwin continued:

The World Food Programme is distributing food but... they have to distribute through various organisations. WFP chooses to distribute through ORAP (the Organisation for Rural Associations for Progress). The person who runs ORAP is Mrs Sithembiso Nyoni; she is a ZANU-PF MP... I believe they may not be doing it deliberately, but they are certainly aware of the ORAP link; it has been brought to their attention several times.²⁰

10. We asked the Minister to respond to these allegations. In relation to the first, she replied that

Save the Children in Zimbabwe strongly deny this [allegation]. They have checked it thoroughly, and are satisfied that there is no truth in it.²¹

Save the Children also wrote to us, rebutting Ms Godwin’s evidence.²²

18 Q 151

19 Q 73

20 Q 80

21 Ev 35

22 Ev 55

11. On the second allegation, the Minister told us that

[The UK's] funding commitments through Christian Aid pre-date [Mrs Nyoni's] appointment to Government, and our monitoring indicates that assistance provided through ORAP is reaching its intended beneficiaries and is not politicised. Nevertheless, Christian Aid has raised with her the damaging effects of even the appearance of political influence through her continued participation in ORAP. A new Executive Director has now been appointed to manage the day to day activities of the organisation.²³

12. We welcome the assurances given by the aid providers. But we also appreciate that the Government and the aid agencies face an appalling dilemma. If they refuse to co-operate with ZANU-PF, they may find that they lose all control over the aid process. They cannot simply hand over aid to a regime which is corrupt; if they did, the aid would not reach the people who need it most. However, if they were to withdraw their aid those same people would suffer just as surely. In some cases it may be easier, therefore, to tolerate a degree of involvement by ZANU-PF.

13. In considering this dilemma, our colleagues on the International Development Committee concluded that the United Kingdom and international aid agencies

must strive to maintain freedom from political interference in their responses to humanitarian emergencies, while at the same time ensuring that the humanitarian imperative remains the overarching principle, irrespective of the nature of the regime or difficulties in relationships between international actors and national governments.²⁴

We endorse this conclusion, which echoes one in our previous Report.²⁵

14. We welcome the Report of the International Development Committee on the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa. **We recommend that the Government ensure that the policy which it supports, of refusing to operate through Zimbabwean governmental organisations or other official channels, is not subverted by inappropriate relationships with organisations closely associated with ZANU-PF.**

23 Ev 35

24 International Development Committee, Third Report of Session 2002–03, *The Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa*, HC 116, para 86

25 Foreign Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 813, para 47

The United Kingdom and Zimbabwe

15. We noted in our previous Report that the United Kingdom's relations with Zimbabwe are complicated by its status as the former colonial power.²⁶ Any steps which the United Kingdom takes, bilaterally or through international bodies, are liable to be misrepresented by Zimbabwe as continuing interference in the affairs of an independent African state by its former white masters.²⁷ The Government has to decide whether such misrepresentation makes it less likely that its goals in relation to Zimbabwe will be achieved. Ministers appear to have concluded that many of the actions urged on them by others would be counter-productive.

A human rights dossier

16. For example, we asked Baroness Amos whether the Government would publish a dossier of Mugabe's abuses of the human rights of Zimbabweans, as it published a dossier on the abuses perpetrated by Saddam Hussein.²⁸ After reflecting on this request, Baroness Amos wrote to us declining to prepare such a report. She told us that "the facts are already widely available, and an FCO Report would add little value." ZANU-PF would "dismiss the reports as 'British lies'."²⁹

17. We are disappointed. While information on the human rights situation in Zimbabwe is indeed widely available to those who, like us, choose to look for it, the act of producing a report on this and, possibly, on corruption in Zimbabwe would serve to focus wider attention on Mugabe's abuses and should serve as a powerful statement of the Government's concern. And while we do not doubt that ZANU-PF would do exactly as the Minister suggests it would, by dismissing the report as post-colonial propaganda, we are surprised that the Government is apparently fearful of allowing the international community to judge for itself who is telling the truth, particularly when much of the evidence comes from sources whose integrity and independence cannot seriously be questioned.

18. We note that the United States State Department published in March an illustrated document, entitled Zimbabwe's Manmade Crisis.³⁰ That document, which has been bitterly denounced by ZANU-PF, is uncompromising in its criticism of "the arbitrary and brutal rule of a self-appointed elite." It is an example of the harder line which we believe it is now time for the United Kingdom Government to take on Zimbabwe, and which it did not hesitate to take when it published its dossier on Iraq. **We recommend that the Government prepare and publish a detailed dossier on human rights in Zimbabwe.**

19. Baroness Amos drew our attention to the publication by the EU on 19 February of a statement about human rights abuses in Zimbabwe,³¹ and undertook to try to publish a

26 *Ibid*, para 43

27 Q 13; Q 65

28 Q 127

29 Ev 35

30 See www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/16501.htm

31 Q 185

factual document under EU auspices.³² We welcome the Minister's commitment to this initiative, and **we recommend that in its response to this Report the Government bring the Committee up to date on progress towards publication by the EU of a document on human rights in Zimbabwe.**

Support for independent media

20. In our previous Report, we called on the Government to “pursue all appropriate means of supporting the work of independent journalists in Zimbabwe”,³³ drawing on our experience of relevant successful government initiatives, particularly in Milosevic's Yugoslavia. The Government responded that it “must think carefully before providing direct technical or financial assistance to the independent media in Zimbabwe. There is a real risk that such support could give the regime a pretext to increase attacks on the independent media.”³⁴ Since then, ZANU-PF have imposed further restrictions on journalists. Some foreign journalists have been refused accreditation; a number of Zimbabwean journalists have been beaten or tortured.³⁵ It is remarkable, and a great testament to the courage of those concerned, that an independent press still functions in Zimbabwe.

21. We are not convinced that ZANU-PF requires any pretext to increase its attacks; it has been doing so in any case. In our view, the best people to ask whether assistance would be welcome or unwelcome are probably those who might require it. **We recommend that the Government take a positive decision to provide technical and financial assistance to the independent media in Zimbabwe, in consultation with representatives of those media.**

22. Media based outside Zimbabwe also play an important role in bringing news to the people of Zimbabwe and in drawing that news to the attention of an international audience. The BBC World Service broadcasts continue to provide an essential service in this regard, but we were also impressed by the achievements of SW (Short Wave) Radio Africa, which is run from the United Kingdom by Zimbabweans. BBC World Service is already funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. **We recommend that the FCO—on its own, with other relevant Government Departments, or through the European Union—consider carefully the case for offering appropriate support to independent broadcasters operating from outside Zimbabwe.**

The cricket World Cup

23. Our inquiry coincided with the cricket World Cup, hosted jointly by South Africa and Zimbabwe. The England cricket team and the Cricket Board had to decide whether to play in Zimbabwe; their decision, taken on security grounds, was to stay away. We believe that was the right decision, although we would have preferred it to have been taken earlier and on more principled grounds, and we wish more teams had followed suit.

32 Q 190

33 Foreign Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 813, para 23

34 Cm 5608, p 2

35 See, for example, Amnesty International's Report *Zimbabwe: Rights under Siege* at <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/zwe-020503-action-eng>

24. We applaud the courage of Zimbabwean cricketers Henry Olonga and Andy Flower in making clear in their moving and dignified personal statement that in taking the field they were representing their country, but not its rulers.³⁶ They later paid for this defiance with their places in the national team. In evidence before us, their fellow countrywoman Georgina Godwin made the following graphic comment :

I think picking up a cricket bat and playing international matches in Zimbabwe, you might as well be clubbing people to death yourself frankly.³⁷

With a tour of England by Zimbabwe's cricket team taking place as we prepare this Report, and a tour of Zimbabwe by the England team on the cards for next November, we hope that England cricketers and others considering sporting links with Zimbabwe will reflect on this comment.

Mugabe's honours

25. Robert Mugabe was created an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in 1994. He is not the first bearer of that honour to fail to deserve it, and his would not be the first name to be erased from the Order's Register were Her Majesty to be so advised: in both cases, the relevant precedent is provided by another despot, Nicolai Ceausescu of Romania. When we expressed our concern to Baroness Amos, she said that she would "take it back",³⁸ by which we presume she intended us to understand that she would raise it with senior colleagues in the Government. **We recommend that the Government take steps to strip Robert Mugabe of all honours, decorations and privileges bestowed on him by the United Kingdom.**

26. A lesser, but still significant honour was recently conferred on Zimbabwe's controversial police chief, Augustine Chihuri, by the international police organisation, Interpol, which created him an honorary vice-president. The Zimbabwe Government's newspaper, the Herald, described this as "a show of confidence in Zimbabwe's police force by the international community."³⁹ In a letter to the Opposition spokesman on Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Secretary called the appointment "an insult to the people who have suffered at the hands of the Zimbabwean police".⁴⁰ We are astonished that such an award should have been made, apparently at the behest of Spain, France and Germany,⁴¹ all of them countries which are party to the EU sanctions regime under which Chihuri has been banned from visiting Europe. **We recommend that the Government explain in its response to this Report exactly how Interpol came to honour Chihuri, and how it now proposes to persuade Interpol to remove the honour.**

36 Full text available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport3/cwc2003/hi/newsid_2740000/newsid_2744700/2744795.stm

37 Q 78

38 Q 169

39 See www.allafrica.com/stories/200305070160.html

40 See www.fco.gov.uk

41 "Interpol honours Mugabe thug", *The Times*, 9 May 2003

The European Union and Zimbabwe

27. The background to the decision of the European Union to impose targeted sanctions on the Government of Zimbabwe is set out in our previous Report.⁴² The sanctions, which consist of a travel ban and assets freeze on 79 members of the ZANU-PF leadership, plus an arms embargo, were renewed for a further period of 12 months from February, but only after “much to-ing and fro-ing”⁴³ between the British, French and other EU governments.

Was there a deal with France?

28. With the sanctions regime due to expire on 18 February, France called a summit with African countries for 19-21 February.⁴⁴ Mugabe was included among the heads of government invited to the summit. Because the dates of the summit fell after the expiry of the sanctions, there was nothing the United Kingdom could do unilaterally to prevent Mugabe’s attendance. While the Minister assured us that representations were made to the French “at the highest levels”,⁴⁵ she told us that “we could not stop Mugabe going to Paris. The French wanted Mugabe to go to Paris, and on that basis they were prepared to invite him and have him there.”⁴⁶

29. The United Kingdom’s priority was to ensure the renewal of sanctions.⁴⁷ Renewal required unanimity on the part of EU member states, including of course the French. While the United Kingdom could not prevent Mugabe’s trip to Paris, France could prevent the renewal of sanctions. Ministers therefore needed to balance the need to make it very clear to the government of France that its invitation to Mugabe was unwelcome with the requirement for a positive French vote in favour of the renewal of sanctions. Baroness Amos referred to “discussions” which took place between the two governments,⁴⁸ causing us to ask whether a deal had been struck. She strongly denied that there was a deal.⁴⁹ However, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there was some linkage.

30. The facts are that the sanctions were renewed; that Mugabe was nonetheless permitted to travel to Paris for the France/Africa summit; and that the planned EU/Africa Summit (scheduled for April) was postponed indefinitely. We are disposed to accept the Minister’s assurances that there was no ‘deal’ behind this series of events, although we stand by our conclusion in our recent Report on Human Rights that the Government should have taken a more robust line with the French.⁵⁰ **We conclude that the French government’s decision to invite Mugabe to attend a conference in Paris just one day after sanctions were due to elapse was a deeply regrettable and offensive act, which ran wholly counter**

42 Foreign Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 813, paras 52–58

43 Q 179

44 See paras 67–72 of the Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2002–03, *Human Rights Annual Report 2002*, HC 257

45 Q 175

46 Q 178

47 Ev 18, para 13

48 Q 171

49 Q 174

50 Foreign Affairs Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2002–03, *Human Rights Annual Report 2002*, HC 257, para 72

to the convention that EU partners respect each other's interests in such cases, and which lent unwarranted credibility to the ZANU-PF regime.

Should there be a stronger sanctions regime?

31. We asked Baroness Amos whether she felt that the sanctions should be extended, as we suggested in our Report of March this year on Human Rights.⁵¹ She replied that “this is something which has been the subject of discussion” and that “the EU will come back to this issue”, but she could not guarantee that sanctions would be strengthened.⁵² The Minister implied that this was the price of achieving unanimity among EU partners. It is unfortunate that some of this country's European partners are apparently reluctant to increase the pressure on ZANU-PF. **We recommend that in its response to this Report the Government set out in full the objections raised by other EU member states to a strengthening of sanctions against Zimbabwe, state by state.**

32. However, some additional sanctions—such as barring the dependants of those on the list from visiting the United Kingdom, or freezing their assets—could be applied without reference to the EU. There is a range of measures which could be taken against the regime, without adopting trade sanctions which might worsen the plight of ordinary Zimbabweans still further. Such measures have been called for by, among others, the political journalist Peter Osborne.⁵³ **Because of their likely adverse impact on the Zimbabwean people as a whole, we would not yet advocate the introduction of trade sanctions against Zimbabwe, other than the arms embargo which is already in place, but we recommend that, in its response to this Report, the Government set out its policy on the imposition of bilateral, non-trade sanctions against ZANU-PF, in addition to those imposed by the European Union.**

51 *Ibid*

52 Q 177

53 Ev 53

Zimbabwe and the international community

The Commonwealth

33. Zimbabwe was suspended from the Councils of the Commonwealth on 19 March 2002, following a report from the 'troika' of the Prime Minister of Australia and the Presidents of South Africa and Nigeria. The Marlborough House Statement which made that suspension effective provided for progress reports from the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Don McKinnon. On 23 September 2002, the troika met at Abuja and agreed to consider the need for "stronger measures" against Zimbabwe at a further meeting, to be held in March 2003.

34. The Secretary-General's report to the troika for consideration at that meeting has found its way into the public domain. It relates the deterioration in the political, economic and humanitarian situations in Zimbabwe. It also records that "there has been no significant or substantive change of direction in Zimbabwe towards compliance with the Harare principles" and that "all [the Secretary-General's] efforts to engage with the Government in fulfilment of the mandates given to [him] by the Troika have been rebuffed."⁵⁴ Although it is generally agreed that suspension "hurts" the ZANU-PF regime,⁵⁵ it appears that ZANU-PF has no intention of complying with the basic principles underlying membership of the Commonwealth, ironically codified in the Harare Declaration.

35. Nevertheless, the renewal of Zimbabwe's suspension proved to be less than straightforward. In announcing that Zimbabwe will remain suspended until at least December, the Secretary-General noted that

Some member governments take the view that it is time to lift Zimbabwe's suspension... Some others feel that there is no justification for such a step and that there is in fact reason to impose stronger measures. However, the broadly held view is that Heads of Government wish to review matters... in December 2003.⁵⁶

Mr McKinnon has since gone on the record as saying that Zimbabwe's suspension has failed to bring about any change of policy by ZANU-PF.⁵⁷

36. It is clear that, as Baroness Amos told us, "This will not be an easy issue for the Commonwealth."⁵⁸ As the host nation, Nigeria is concerned that Zimbabwe will dominate the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in December. The Minister recognised that the governments "have to work very hard in the intervening period to see whether or not we can get the Commonwealth to meet a degree of consensus by December."⁵⁹ **We conclude that for Zimbabwe to be readmitted to the Councils of the Commonwealth**

54 See www.conservatives.com/pdf/CommonwealthSecGenreport.pdf.

55 Q 22

56 See www.thecommonwealth.org/dynamic/press_office/display.asp?id=611&type=press&cat=53

57 See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2995185.stm>

58 Q 201

59 Q 201

without a very substantial and verifiable improvement in its human rights record and major steps to re-establish democracy would be a travesty of the Harare principles and a betrayal of all that the Commonwealth stands for. We recommend that the Government continue to seek a consensus in the period leading up to the December heads of government meeting, but that it resist any compromise which does not require full compliance by Zimbabwe with the 2002 Marlborough House Statement.

The United Nations

37. To date, the UN's involvement with Zimbabwe has been limited to aid and development issues, working through its agencies the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Resolutions have also been tabled at the UN Commission on Human Rights, most recently at the Geneva session which ran from 17 March to 24 April.⁶⁰ However, the Security Council has taken no action in respect of Zimbabwe. We asked the Minister why not. She replied that

the UN Security Council deals with issues which are of concern in terms of international peace and security and, for obvious reasons, they tend to stay out of issues which are considered to be domestic.⁶¹

38. The conventional understanding of the remit of the Security Council is certainly that it does not pronounce on the internal affairs of member states, unless they are potentially or actually a cause of regional instability. Iraq is a case in point. However, although the similarities between Zimbabwe and Iraq are obvious, there are important differences too: for example, Zimbabwe does not possess weapons of mass destruction.

39. A more germane comparison may be made with Kosovo, where repression of one section of the population by another became so severe as to cross the threshold of what the international community was prepared to tolerate, even without a direct threat to regional peace and stability. While what occurred in Kosovo was 'ethnic cleansing', with one distinct ethnic, religious and linguistic group attempting to expel or eradicate another, the situation in Zimbabwe is not so easily labelled. In Zimbabwe, a political elite is attempting to expel or eradicate those who disagree with it, particularly those who express their disagreement by campaigning or voting for the opposition. This is not ethnic cleansing, but it is surely no less pernicious.⁶²

40. Reviewing the events leading to NATO's military intervention in Kosovo in 1999, our predecessor Committee noted that United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199, passed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter in September 1998, recognised "the impending humanitarian catastrophe" in Kosovo and the threat to peace and security in the region which that catastrophe would represent.⁶³ The Resolution was passed notwithstanding the fact that the humanitarian catastrophe was taking place largely within the borders of a sovereign state (Yugoslavia).⁶⁴ It had been preceded in March 1998 by

60 See para 46

61 Q 139

62 Q 33

63 Foreign Affairs Committee, Fourth Report of Session 1999–2000, *Kosovo*, HC 28, para 127. For the full text of UNSCR 1199, see www.un.org/documents/scres.htm.

64 There were significant refugee flows out of Kosovo, especially to Albania.

Resolution 1160, also under Chapter VII, sponsored by the ‘Contact Group’ of the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, Germany and France, which dealt entirely with the situation within Yugoslavia, without any reference to its effect on the peace or security of the region.

41. Although we understand the Minister’s reluctance to make comparisons between countries,⁶⁵ we believe that a comparison can and should be made between Mugabe and Milosevic. Each inherited a country with a bright future; each turned away from that future, towards repression and corruption. The United Nations was prepared to express its view on the situation in Kosovo; it should do so on what is happening in Zimbabwe also. The ‘Contact Group’ model could be explored as a means of doing this.

42. We recommend that the Government consult informally with other members of the Security Council and with African countries with a view to raising in the Council ZANU-PF’s persecution of its political opponents, its use of torture, beatings, rape and starvation against its own people, and the threat which it poses to the prosperity and stability of southern Africa, as a matter of grave concern to the region and to the international community.

43. Georgina Godwin of SW Radio Africa suggested that UN peace keeping forces should be put in charge of distributing food aid in Zimbabwe.⁶⁶ Such a step, which could be taken only with the consent of the authorities in Zimbabwe, deserves serious consideration. In our view, it might be more appropriate for an international force to be drawn from the member states of the African Union (AU)—although the AU’s response to international criticisms of Zimbabwe gives no cause for optimism—or possibly from certain Commonwealth countries as part of the price of readmission to its Councils. Post Mugabe, such a force could also supervise free elections, the Zimbabwe police force having been tainted by its intimidation of voters at past elections. **We recommend that in its response to this Report the Government set out its policy on the use of an international force to supervise the distribution of aid and, in the longer term, to assist Zimbabwe’s transition from dictatorship to democracy.**

65 Q 166

66 Q 73

Zimbabwe in its Region

44. Baroness Amos told us that Zimbabwe's neighbours are concerned, not just about the internal situation in Zimbabwe, but "about the impact that the situation in Zimbabwe is having on the region as a whole, in terms of possibilities for investment, the stereotyping of Africa and the region from those outside, the kind of Zimbabwe effect."⁶⁷ This is a depressing echo of our Report of last July, in which we noted the huge economic cost to South Africa of the chaos across its borders.⁶⁸ The situation has deteriorated further since then, but no one has been able to explain to us why the governments of the region are apparently helpless, and apparently choose to be supine, when bringing about a change to stability and prosperity in Zimbabwe is so obviously in their interests. Baroness Amos thought that her "colleagues in SADC and in other African countries face very much the same frustrations as do the British Government."⁶⁹ They extract promises from ZANU-PF, but these turn out to be empty. If they impose trade sanctions, such as cutting off electricity supplies, they risk harming innocent Zimbabweans and alienating their own supporters. Neither is it clear that such sanctions would have much effect on an economy which is already ruined.⁷⁰

45. However, we do not believe that the regional powers are entirely helpless. The leading members of ZANU-PF travel freely within the region, not least to do their shopping. There remains still a deep bond between the region's leaders, which dates back to the days of the liberation movements to which most of them belonged. This durable force which originally united them may still be stronger than the contemporary disagreements which could otherwise now divide them. The leader of the African Union even indicated that if Zimbabwe were not invited to the proposed EU/Africa summit, AU members would boycott it. This is, as the Minister said, "deeply disappointing."⁷¹ It also raises questions about the commitment of African countries to various international agreements, including the G8 group's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NePAD) and the EU's Cotonou agreement.⁷² Those countries' governments should not assume that the developed countries will wish to invest in their economies if they fail to honour their side of these agreements. And as Peter Longworth suggested, "South Africa and the other African states... should be reminded on a regular basis that it is just not good enough to fall back on arguments which derive from the liberation struggle."⁷³ The reality is that competition for scarce international capital is fierce and the perception of Africa among many private investors is already negative.

46. On 16 April, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights narrowly decided on a vote to take no action on a motion critical of Zimbabwe's human rights record.⁷⁴ We are particularly disappointed that the procedure to block any debate on the motion was

67 Q 206

68 Foreign Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 813, para 61

69 Q 207

70 Q 36

71 Q 198

72 Q 30

73 Q 27

74 By 28 votes to 24, with one abstention.

initiated by South Africa, whose representative described the motion as “biased and politically motivated.”⁷⁵ This is another, depressing example of South Africa’s failure to act in the best interests of the people of Zimbabwe, and its readiness to give notions of solidarity with its neighbour priority over undertakings made to the G8. It would be surprising if this failure were not to influence the decisions of the G8 countries when they gather at Evian in June.

47. The Foreign Secretary visited South Africa on 13 and 14 May. In a communiqué issued at the end of the visit, Mr Straw and his South African counterpart, Dr Dlamini Zuma, said that

Both countries agreed on the need to encourage [ZANU-PF and the MDC] to commit themselves to removing the obstacles to the negotiations. They underlined that the longer the problems in Zimbabwe remain unresolved, the more entrenched poverty will become. They stressed their commitment to an outcome in which the people of Zimbabwe enjoy independence, freedom, peace, stability, democracy and prosperity. The [UK/South Africa] Working Group [on Africa] noted unequivocally, that no lasting solution to the challenges that face Zimbabwe could be found, unless that solution comes from the people of Zimbabwe themselves.⁷⁶

This statement shows agreement on the ends, but there is no sign of agreement on the means. South Africa continues to pursue its ‘quiet diplomacy’ and to place emphasis on restarting the stalled inter-party talks. We doubt that Mugabe is listening. Nonetheless, the visit to Harare by Presidents Mbeki, Obasanjo and Muluzi offers a glimmer of hope that the regional countries are at last beginning to recognise their interest in seeking to intervene positively in Zimbabwe.⁷⁷

48. We conclude that if Zimbabwe’s neighbours were fully to assume their responsibilities—for example, by imposing targeted non-trade sanctions similar to those already imposed by the EU, by some Commonwealth countries and by the United States—Mugabe’s regime would be further isolated, his opponents would be encouraged and his days would be numbered. We further conclude that the Government would be entirely right to accept such a step, if it is taken, as evidence of the intention of the countries concerned to adhere to the principles to which they have committed themselves under NePAD and other international agreements, qualifying them to receive the benefits of those programmes. We recommend that Ministers take every opportunity to make this point clear to their counterparts in southern Africa.

75 See www.unhchr.ch

76 The full text of the communiqué is available at www.gov.za

77 See, for example, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3003817.stm>

Formal minutes

Tuesday 20 May 2003

Members present:

Mr Donald Anderson, in the Chair

Mr David Chidgey
Sir Patrick Cormack
Mr Fabian Hamilton
Andrew Mackinlay

Mr John Maples
Mr Bill Olnier
Mr Greg Pope
Sir John Stanley

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (Zimbabwe), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1–48 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Eighth Report of the Committee to the House.

Several Papers were ordered to be appended to the Minutes of Evidence.

Ordered, That the Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee be reported to the House.—(*The Chairman.*)

[Adjourned till Tuesday 3 June at 3.30pm]

Witnesses

Tuesday 21 January 2003

Page

Mr Peter Longworth CMG, Former High Commissioner to Zimbabwe.

Ev 1

Ms Georgina Godwin, Journalist, SW Radio Africa.

Ev 7

Mr Joseph Winter, Journalist, BBC World Service

Ev 12

Tuesday 25 March 2003

Baroness Amos, a Member of the House of Lords, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, **Dr Andrew Pocock**, Head, Africa Department (Southern), and **Mr Tony Brennan**, Head, Zimbabwe Section, Africa Department (Southern), Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Ev 20

List of written evidence

1	Memorandum from BBC World Service	Ev 15
2	Memorandum from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Ev 17
3	Supplementary memorandum from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Ev 35
4	Correspondence with the Secretaries of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development	Ev 43
	<i>Letter from the Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee: 18 December 2002</i>	Ev 43
	<i>Letter from the Secretary of State, Department for International Development to the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee: December 2002</i>	Ev 43
5	Letter from the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee to Mr Mark Byford, Director, BBC World Service	Ev 44
	<i>Letter to the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee from the Deputy Director, BBC World Service: 19 December 2002</i>	Ev 45
	<i>Memorandum from the BBC World Service: December 2002</i>	Ev 45
6	Memorandum from the Britain Zimbabwe Society	Ev 45
7	Memorandum from the Commonwealth Trade Union Council	Ev 47
8	Memorandum from Mr C and Mrs M Sabel	Ev 48
9	Memorandum from the Zimbabwe Democracy Trust	Ev 49
10	Memorandum from the Accountability Commission, Zimbabwe	Ev 52
11	Memorandum from Mr Peter Osborne	Ev 53
12	Memorandum from Save the Children	Ev 55
13	Memorandum from Michael Carmichael, The Oxford Centre for Public Affairs	Ev 55

Reports and Evidence from the Foreign Affairs Committee since 2001

The following reports and evidence have been produced in the present Parliament.

Session 2002–03

REPORTS

First Report	The Biological Weapons Green Paper	HC 150 (<i>Cm 5713</i>)
Second Report	Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism	HC 196 (<i>Cm 5739</i>)
Third Report	Foreign Affairs Committee Annual Report 2002	HC 404
Fourth Report	Human Rights Annual Report 2002	HC 257
Fifth Report	The Biological Weapons Green Paper	HC 671
Sixth Report	The Government's proposals for secondary legislation under the Export Control Act	HC 620
Seventh Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2001, Licensing Policy and Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 474

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

Evidence	The Copenhagen European Council	HC 176–i
Evidence	The Prague NATO Summit	HC 66–i

Session 2001–02

REPORTS

First Report	Gibraltar	HC 413
Second Report	British-US Relations	HC 327 (<i>Cm 5372</i>)
First Special Report	Appointment of Parliamentary Representatives to the Convention on the Future of Europe	HC 509
Third Report	Laeken European Council	HC 435
Fourth Report	Zimbabwe	HC 456
Fifth Report	Human Rights Annual Report 2001	HC 589 (<i>Cm 5509</i>)
Sixth Report	Turkey	HC 606 (<i>Cm 5529</i>)
Seventh Report	Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism	HC 384 (<i>Cm 5589</i>)
Eighth Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2000, Licensing Policy and Prior Parliamentary Scrutiny (Quadripartite Committee)	HC 718 (<i>Cm 5629</i>)
Ninth Report	Private Military Companies	HC 922 (<i>Cm 5642</i>)
Tenth Report	Zimbabwe	HC 813 (<i>Cm 5608</i>)
Eleventh Report	Gibraltar	HC 973 (<i>Cm 5714</i>)
Twelfth Report	FCO Annual Report 2002	HC 826 (<i>Cm 5712</i>)

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

Evidence	The Inter-Governmental Conference 2004: The Convention on the Future of Europe	HC 965–i
Evidence	The Barcelona European Council	HC 698–i

The reference to the Government response to the report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number