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PRESS RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST NOT ABET MUGABE

Namibia's National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) urges the international community to cease inviting Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe to address international conferences.

President Mugabe has a track record of [ab]using international forums to defend his own and his Government's horrible human rights record, launch personal attacks on political opponents and spoil the atmosphere of meetings as well as harm the desired impact.

"Let's face it. President Mugabe has abused such reputable and well-meaning world conferences, such as the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, the recent UN World Summit and now the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) conference in Rome, to stir controversy", NSHR executive director Phil ya Nangoloh said.

Through world conferences the international community has been able to adopt and implement international standards and norms of conduct for both States and individuals, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 and the Rome Statute on the Permanent International Criminal Court of 1998.

President Mugabe and other senior members of his Government are prime candidates for indictment for war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing against the people of Zimbabwe.

"Hence, it is both unethical and contradictory to assist Mugabe and other international 'bête noires' in using world forums as safe havens from which to make propaganda and mislead world public opinion. Instead, the international community must combine forces to have President Mugabe and other senior members of his Cabinet indicted for such grave violations of international human law" said NSHR spokesperson Dorkas Phillemon.

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