

RESOLUTION ON STATE REPRESSION IN ZIMBABWE

By The International Association of Genocide Scholars

We, the leadership and membership of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, a world-wide professional association of experts on genocide, call upon the government of Zimbabwe to reverse its discriminatory and life-threatening policies toward the urban poor and supporters of the political opposition. The government has in recent years used food as a political weapon by denying it to people thought to support Zimbabwe's main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change. On June 1, 2005, the government agreed to resumption of international food donations to feed up to four million people, but has objected to creation of World Food Program centers to distribute food to the general population. Instead food will be directed to government-controlled institutions including schools, orphanages, and work programs open only to ZANU-PF government party members.

Simultaneously the government has initiated Operation *Masambatsvina* ("drive out rubbish") to evict more than a million urban poor by demolishing squatter shacks. More than 22,000 people have already been arrested in the first few days of the crackdown, according to a police spokesman. News reports tell of hundreds of thousands of people driven from their homes, with many fleeing to the outskirts of cities where they are camped with no shelter, food, or means of transportation to whatever jobs they may have had.

The Zimbabwe government organized major massacres during the 1980's against the Matabele people, which cost over 20,000 lives. The massacres were carried out by an all-Shona army brigade trained by North Korean advisers. The Mugabe government has again organized Shona youth militias, nick-named the "Green Bombers," who terrorise members of the political opposition, many of whom are Matabele. The government's denial of food thus has an ominous ethnic dimension, an early warning sign of potential genocide by attrition.

Denial of food to targeted groups and forced evacuation of poor communities are among the tactics used in past politicides. These policies are creating a humanitarian crisis for targeted ethnic, economic, and political groups in Zimbabwe. They constitute an early stage of a politicide aimed at eliminating ethnic, class and political opponents of the government.

We call on governments and international organizations to condemn policies of the Zimbabwe government that target the Matabele ethnic group, the urban poor, and political opponents of the Mugabe regime.

· Zimbabwe's neighbors, the Republic of South Africa above all, should exert political and diplomatic pressure on the government to reverse these malign policies.

· The African Union should take similar actions in coordination with the Commonwealth and the European Union.

· The United Nations' World Food Program should insist that the food aid it has recently agreed to supply be distributed to all in need, without regard to political affiliation.

· International financial institutions on which Zimbabwe depends for investment and loans should make it clear that assistance is conditional on government policies that deal equitably and humanely with the needs of all citizens.

· NGO's should publicize the escalating humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and advocate preventive responses by all members of the international community.

Adopted unanimously at the biennial meeting of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, Boca Raton, Florida, June 7, 2005.

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