



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



9 July 2008 No. 1

Zimbabwe

Expected Council Action

The Council is considering a draft resolution on Zimbabwe, which may be put to a vote this week. The resolution, drafted by the United States, imposes an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on fourteen Zimbabwean individuals considered most responsible for the violent crisis in the country. It also calls for an immediate end to restrictions on international humanitarian assistance to the country and condemns the decision of the government of Zimbabwe to go ahead with the 27 June presidential run-off elections.

Recent Developments

The security situation in Zimbabwe deteriorated seriously following the 29 March elections in which the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party emerged as having the widest public support. Violence targeted against opposition leaders and supporters intensified in the lead up to the 27 June presidential run-off election. (MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai won more votes than Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) party leader and incumbent President Robert Mugabe in the 29 March elections—but not enough to avoid a run-off.)

Numerous instances were identified of state-sponsored violence against supporters of the opposition MDC. Some reprisal attacks by the opposition followed. Humanitarian organisations were placed under severe restrictions, and many were banned from discharging their mandates.

On 22 June, Tsvangirai withdrew from the presidential run-off, citing the absence of conditions for credible elections due to widespread violence and restrictions on his ability to effectively campaign. Thousands of opposition supporters were reported missing, scores of opposition activists were killed and many ordinary Zimbabweans suffered beatings and displacement. Mugabe then stood as the sole candidate for the elections and was promptly declared winner. Several African monitoring bodies (the AU, the Pan-

African Parliament and the Southern African Development Community or SADC) which observed the electoral process said that it fell short of AU standards and was not free, fair or credible.

Prior to the run-off election, following a request by Belgium, the Council had held an open meeting where it was briefed on 23 June, by UN Under Secretary- General B. Lynn Pascoe on the situation in the country. Pascoe indicated during the meeting that the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios, had been granted access by the Zimbabwean authorities, had met with various political actors and stakeholders and had reported on the circumstances of the electoral situation to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General subsequently advised the Zimbabwean authorities against holding the 27 June run-off presidential elections on the grounds that conditions did not exist for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe and that no outcome of an election conducted under those conditions could be considered credible. He also pressed for the resumption of humanitarian activities. Pascoe noted the increasing number of pronouncements by African leaders on the situation and the mobilising efforts of the region to solve it. He highlighted that the SADC chief mediator on Zimbabwe, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, declared that the political leadership of Zimbabwe should try to find a solution to the challenges facing the country. He also referenced an open letter signed by a group of 40 African former Heads of State and prominent personalities calling for a cessation of the political violence in Zimbabwe and appropriate conditions to be created for the run-off elections.

On 23 June, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/23) which condemned the campaign of violence in Zimbabwe against the political opposition in the lead up to the second round of presidential elections and also the actions of the Zimbabwean government which had denied its political opponents the right to campaign freely. It also stated that the violence and the restrictions against the opposition had made it impossible for free and fair elections to take place on 27 June and further noted that the results of the 29 March elections must be respected. The Council further expressed concern over the impact of the situation in Zimbabwe on the wider region and called on the Zimbabwean authorities to cooperate fully with all efforts aimed at making peaceful progress through dialogue between the parties that allowed for the formation of a legitimate government. It furthermore called on the Zimbabwean government to allow the immediate resumption of the activities of international humanitarian organisations and requested the UN Secretary-General to report on “ongoing regional and international efforts to resolve the crisis.”

Following Mugabe’s rejection of international calls (including by the UN Secretary-General) for postponement of the run-off elections, Mugabe’s claim of victory, and in light of reports of ongoing violence and a deepening humanitarian crisis, the US circulated in private consultations a draft resolution on 3 July. The draft expresses concern with the violence and political repression, as well as strong concern with the irregularities that occurred in the 27 June elections and the grave humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. The draft requests the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on the situation in the country, with a duty of supporting negotiations between Zimbabwe’s

political parties and reporting to the Council on the political, humanitarian, human rights and security situation. The draft resolution would also impose sanctions including:

- an arms embargo; and
- an assets freeze and travel ban against individuals designated to have engaged in or provided support for actions or policies to undermine democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe, including Robert Mugabe.

Council members have since been meeting at the expert level to consider the draft resolution, and on 8 July, the US indicated its intention to request a vote on the resolution by the end of the week.

On 8 July 2008, the Council was briefed in an open meeting by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Asha-Rose Migiro, on developments since the second round of presidential elections on 27 June. Migiro attended the AU summit held in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 30 June to 1 July. In her remarks to the AU Assembly, she stated that the situation in Zimbabwe posed a serious challenge to the southern Africa region because of its terrible humanitarian and security consequences as well as the dangerous political precedent it set. She called Zimbabwe a challenge to the world and said that the outcome of the elections could not be deemed legitimate. She said the country would have to go through a political transition involving a process of national healing and reconciliation and stressed that a government of unity was a solution largely supported in the region. Migiro also conveyed the Secretary-General's call for immediate resumption of humanitarian activity in view of 5.1 million Zimbabweans at grave risk of food shortage. The Council subsequently met in private consultations with Haile Menkerios who had returned from a visit to the region.

On 1 July, the AU adopted a resolution expressing concern about the violence in the country and stressing the need to avoid further deterioration of the situation to prevent a spillover of the conflict into the broader region. The AU also encouraged the Zimbabwean leaders to engage in dialogue in order to foster peace, stability, democracy and reconciliation. Following the elections, President Mbeki of South Africa, SADC mediator on Zimbabwe, urged that a unity government should be formed which would take into account the results of the first presidential elections on 29 March. Mbeki has since been trying to persuade both Mugabe and Tsvangirai to commence related talks.

The crisis in Zimbabwe was also discussed at the 8 and 9 July meeting of the Group of Eight (or "G-8," comprising of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK and the US) leading industrialised nations in Toyako, Japan. Key African leaders, including the president of Tanzania and Chairman of AU Jakaya Kikwete, attended as guests and called for the use of African diplomacy to secure a power sharing agreement in Zimbabwe. The African leaders spoke against the use of Security Council sanctions. However, in a statement, the G-8 nations' leaders (five of whom are on the Security Council, four as permanent members) expressed their resolve to take "financial and other measures against those individuals responsible for violence" in Zimbabwe.

For more information on earlier developments and past involvement of the Council with the situation in Zimbabwe, please see our 19 December 2005 and 28 April 2008 *Update Reports*.

Key Issues

The immediate major issue is how the Council should now proceed in response to the political impasse in Zimbabwe and its attendant dire humanitarian situation.

Options

Options for the Council include:

- adopting the US draft sanctions resolution;
- adopting a more sequenced approach regarding the issue of sanctions, including an initial resolution with specific benchmarks after which sanctions would automatically come into effect if the benchmarks are not met (benchmarks may include removal of restrictions on international humanitarian assistance and specific steps towards an early negotiated solution to the crisis); and
- postponing the vote on the draft resolution to allow further negotiations both in the region and among Council members, with the view to achieving a unanimous approval.

Council Dynamics

While events of the last two weeks have reinforced the level of agreement in the Council on the need for developments in Zimbabwe to be on the agenda, there have been differences among members on how to address the situation. An area of general consensus is the need for the resumption of humanitarian activities. Some challenges remain as to what concrete measures the Council should employ at this time to ensure that the humanitarian situation is adequately addressed. Also, while Council members would like to see immediate humanitarian relief to affected people in the country, there is concern about the possible manipulation of this request by the de facto Zimbabwean government.

There are also differences on the political issues and the role of sanctions. In this regard, the US, whose ambassador has described the situation as a “crisis of political legitimacy”, and the European members of the Council see sanctions as a necessary tool at this stage to bring pressure to bear on the Mugabe regime to fully commit to a negotiated and credible solution to the present political debacle. Costa Rica and Panama have also favoured this approach.

Burkina Faso seems to have moved beyond the generally low-key approach of the other African members of Council, who have preferred to defer to the regional initiative of SADC and the mediation efforts of South Africa. (On 19 June, the Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso, Djibril Bassole, and US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, co-hosted a round-table on the situation in Zimbabwe in the margins of the Council open debate on Women and Peace and Security. Although this round table discussion was not a Council

meeting, it sought to focus attention on the situation in the country.) Burkina Faso is likely to support the draft resolution.

It remains to be seen if Russia (which was reportedly initially opposed to the draft resolution) will actively oppose (i.e. veto) the draft resolution. It joined with other G-8 members at the meeting in Japan in indicating support for financial and other measures against those responsible for violence in Zimbabwe. Yet it has also signaled that it considered the G-8 statement as not applying directly to the actions by the Security Council. At press time, Russia's delegation to the UN had indicated that it was awaiting further instructions from Moscow on the matter.

Similarly, the positions of China, South Africa, Indonesia, Libya and Vietnam remained largely non-committal in terms of active opposition to the adoption of the draft resolution. Concern has, reportedly, been voiced by these Council members about the possible counter-productive effect on securing constructive dialogue between the major political actors in Zimbabwe, if sanctions are applied.

At press time, it seems that the required nine affirmative votes for the adoption of the resolution are likely to be attained; however, it is not clear whether a negative vote—a veto—from a permanent member might be forthcoming. Abstentions from Russia and China may be possibilities.

UN Documents

Presidential Statement

- S/PRST/2008/23 (23 June 2008) was the recent Council statement on the situation in Zimbabwe.

Letters

- S/2008/407 (18 June 2008) was the letter from the permanent representative of Belgium addressed to the president of the Security Council requesting a briefing on Zimbabwe.
- S/2005/490 (26 July 2005) was the letter from the permanent representatives of Australia, Canada and New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the president of the Council, expressing concern with “the growing humanitarian and human rights crisis in Zimbabwe.”
- S/2005/489 (26 July 2005) was the letter from the permanent representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations addressed to the president of the Council, confirming the request made in S/2005/485 to discuss human settlements issues in Zimbabwe.
- S/2005/485 (26 July 2005) was the letter from the permanent representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations addressed to the president of the Council requesting a meeting to discuss human settlements.

Debates

- S/PV.5921 (23 June 2008) was the verbatim record of the 5921st meeting of Security Council.

- S/PV.5920 (23 June 2008) was the communiqué of the Secretary-General regarding the 5920th (closed) meeting of the Security Council.
- S/PV.5919 (23 June 2008) was the verbatim record of the 5919th meeting of Security Council.
- S/PV.5868 (16 April 2008) was the verbatim record of the 5868th meeting of the Security Council.
- S/PV.5237 (27 July 2005) was a communiqué of the Secretary-General regarding the 5237th (closed) meeting of the Security Council.

Other

- Statement of the G-8 Leaders (8 July 2008) on Zimbabwe.
- S/2008/447 (8 July 2008) is the Security Council draft resolution on Zimbabwe.
- Resolution of the AU (1 July 2008) on Zimbabwe.
- Statement of the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General (30 June 2008) on Zimbabwe.
- Statement of the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General (22 June 2008) on Zimbabwe.
- S/2005/504 (25 October 2005) was the Security Council president's monthly assessment for the presidency of Greece, July 2005.