

Zimbabwe in Crisis

CAII • THE CHURCHES' AGENCY ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES: RESOURCING CHURCHES AND CONGREGATIONS ON GLOBAL CONCERNS

Zimbabwe is in crisis: politically, economically and socially. One of Africa's brightest hopes, Zimbabwe had been a model for reconciliation, food security and economic growth. Now it is regarded as a basket case. The Mugabe government faces condemnation for political intimidation and violent repression, human rights abuses, its controversial farm seizure programme and plunging Zimbabwe into economic chaos and poverty.

This Hot Topic examines some of the key elements of the Zimbabwean crisis current to August 2004, its implications for the churches and the dilemma it poses for the international community.

Why is Zimbabwe a Hot Topic?

- The crisis threatens the well-being of millions of Zimbabweans
- Over 3 million Zimbabweans are seeking safety and refuge outside the country, including nearly 3000 in New Zealand
- Seizures of white-owned farms for redistribution to black peasant farmers have captured world media attention, but how much do we know about the issues behind the headlines?
- The crisis raises questions about how churches respond in times of political crisis
- The international community has been divided over how to act when powerful elites within a sovereign state abuse citizens' human rights
- The situation highlights the effects of unresolved colonial tensions for post independence governments and the continuing difficulties facing African countries in the global economy



Current Issues

Political and Constitutional Crisis: The crisis in Zimbabwe is essentially political. The ruling Zanu PF party, under the leadership of independence fighter Robert Mugabe, has been in power since Zimbabwe's first elections in 1980. Neither Zanu PF nor Mugabe has been prepared to

have their political stranglehold over the country challenged. Yet in 2000, they faced their first defeat, losing a critical referendum on constitutional reform (a constitutional change that would have enabled Mugabe to remain President for life). A close call at the parliamentary elections followed, with the newly formed MDC (Movement for Democratic Change), finishing with only five seats fewer than Zanu PF. Since then, the Mugabe government has resorted to increasing corruption and brutality to quell opposition to its rule. The 2000 Parliamentary and 2002 Presidential elections are subject to widespread allegations of electoral fraud and intimidation. In a populist land reform programme, the economy has been destroyed to levels where the country can no longer meet its balance of payments or provide basic social services, resulting in unprecedented poverty.

Land Resettlement: Mugabe's land reform programme is one aspect of the crisis that has captured headlines around the world. From 2000, the government has encouraged war veterans to seize and occupy white-owned commercial farms. These invasions have claimed the lives of both white and black citizens, forced thousands of white Zimbabweans off their farms, left close to two million black farm workers and their dependants without a livelihood, and destroyed the agricultural system. Much of the land seized remains unproductive because of lack of expertise, support and inputs. Coupled with drought, Zimbabwe has gone from producing enough food to export to the entire southern African region to being heavily dependent on food aid.

Economic collapse: According to the IMF and other economic observers:

- poverty in Zimbabwe has doubled in the last five years and 70% of the population live below the basic needs poverty line
- economic output has fallen by 37% over the last four years
- school enrolment has dropped to 65%
- inflation is over 600%, requiring large piles of banknotes for simple transactions
- unemployment stands at about 70%
- there are shortages of fuel and foreign currency and transport costs are prohibitive
- more than half the population of thirteen million have been dependent on food aid
- food has become a political weapon

The Zanu-PF government says the economy is being sabotaged by outsiders in revenge for white farmers losing their farms in Mugabe's land redistribution policy. According to independent economists, land reform was badly managed, contributing significantly to the economic meltdown that had its roots in unbudgeted expenditure for Mugabe's political ends. One of the most disturbing economic outcomes is the reliance on food aid and its manipulation as a political tool.



Facts About Zimbabwe



Population: 12,800,000

approximately 3 million (most of them professionals/skilled) have left the country in the last four years

Area: 390,760 SQ KM

Capital: Harare

Currency: Zimbabwe dollar
currently \$1 NZ = \$5400 Zm

Language: English (official)

Ethnic Groups:

African 98% (Shona 82%, Ndebele 14%, other 2%)
mixed and Asian 1%
white < 1%

Religions:

syncretic (Christian/indigenous beliefs) 50%,
Christian 25%
Indigenous beliefs 24%,
Muslim and other 1%

Executive Power:

Under Zimbabwe's constitution, the President is not accountable to parliament but wields wide ranging powers including:

- appointing one fifth of the MPs (120 members of the legislature are elected, the remaining 30 are Presidential appointments)
- control of electoral law and processes
- delaying parliamentary legislation
- and serves a 6 year term compared to parliament's 5 years.

Robert Mugabe has been Zimbabwe's only President.

Hot Topics

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Editor: Liz Martyn

Additional Research: Mandla-Akhe Dube
with thanks to Revd Dr Bryden Black



Getting to Crisis Point...

The roots of the crisis lie in Zimbabwe's colonial past and in its post-independence politics.

Land: The local Shona people first faced pressure on their land from the 1810s as the Ndebele people moved north to escape white settlement of South Africa. From the 1830s, both Shona and Ndebele were pushed off their land as settlers moved into the area of present day Zimbabwe. African resistance to the invasion lasted until 1897, when their leaders were captured and hanged. Africans were disenfranchised, being denied the vote in 1892 and having the amount of land they could own limited in 1894. During the 1920s and 1930s, new laws barred blacks from owning the best farmland. By 1960, settlers of European origin (approximately 5% of the population) owned 70% of the arable land. In 1985, five years after full independence, 4,500 white farmers owned around 50% of the productive arable land.

Independence agreements provided for land reform with limited financial compensation. These early attempts failed because there was no support for new farmers, many of whom had been soldiers and did not know how to farm. Dairy herds were lost and cultivation was disrupted. The plan was discontinued. In 1990, Parliament approved a new programme for expropriation of land held by Europeans at a fixed price. White farmers, supported by legal experts, opposed this as a violation of their constitutional and human rights. Although recognising the need for land reform, the EU and IMF pressured the government to limit its land appropriation, seeing the programme as too ambitious. Meanwhile, Zanu PF supporters were pressuring the government for the programme to begin. Mugabe vacillated between starting and delaying the programme.

In March 2000, black war veterans occupied 420 white owned farms marking the start of illegal and usually violent land occupations. Mugabe was accused of orchestrating the takeovers to mask the failure of his land programme. Despite international pressure and growing famine, the programme has continued. By March 2003, 3900 white farmers had lost their land. Only 120 received compensation - the ones who did not appeal to the courts. By mid 2004, about 500 white farmers remain. Land seizures continue.

The land has been given to 'settlers' ranging from peasant farmers to urban bureaucrats and members of Zanu PF's political elite. In some areas, 60% of the land allocated to small-scale black farmers has not been taken up. In the vast majority of cases, the new settlers do not have the seeds, fertilizer, tools, machinery or expertise to farm the land productively. They do not have tenure or title deeds so cannot get bank loans or any capital to buy what they need. Most have received only minimal support, if any. Some have sold all the farm machinery and seed stocks to survive. Land has been left fallow. Two million black farm workers have been displaced, losing not only income but the community services such as schools, health clinics and housing that commercial farms provided.

Post Colonial Land Reform

The blatant inequities of Zimbabwe's land ownership were a striking legacy of white minority rule. With the exception of hardline white colonials, few questioned the need for land reform. What has been condemned is not the principle but the chaotic, unconstitutional, racially divisive, violent and illegal process of farm seizures.

The Zimbabwean opposition, UN, Commonwealth and others had called for a phased, sustainable and fully funded land reform programme providing training and adequate support to new small farmers and compensation to displaced farm workers and commercial farm owners. Now the land reform process is so entwined with Mugabe's attempts to maintain power that anyone speaking against farm seizures is labelled unpatriotic, suffering from a hangover of colonialism, or a stooge of western paymasters.

On 8 June 2004, there were reports of plans to nationalise all Zimbabwean farmland by cancelling title deeds to productive land and replacing them with 99-year state-issued leases. "In the end all land shall be state land and there shall be no such thing as private land," Land Reform Minister John Nkomo was quoted as saying (CNN 8/6/04). By 21 June, the government said that only land acquired by the state under land reform programmes, including white owned farmers seized over the last few years, was to be nationalised (Associated Press 21/6/04). The future of land policy remains unclear, while Zimbabwe is still not producing enough food to feed its own population.

Getting to Crisis Point...

The economy: Zimbabwe's economic woes began with huge unbudgeted payouts in 1997 to veterans of the war for independence and Zimbabwe's massive expenditure on military involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) civil war (most of the ruling elite have financial interests in the DRC diamond industry). The economic decline spiralled to collapse as farm seizures escalated, disrupting several planting seasons, drastically reducing agricultural production and leaving millions economically worse off.

Five years ago, Zimbabwe was a net exporter of maize. In 2003, it produced less than half the maize needed for domestic consumption. Wheat yields halved between 2001 and 2002. Milk production is 60% of its output prior to farm seizures. Soya bean production declined by about two-thirds and the national cattle herd dropped from 1.2 million to 200,000. Once a supplier to the World Food Programme, Zimbabwe now depends on food relief. While drought has been a factor, most observers argue the land redistribution programme has directly led to the reduced food output. Zimbabwe is the only drought affected Southern African state still requiring food aid.

Manufacturing used to absorb 60% of agricultural output and is also in crisis. Political violence has devastated Zimbabwe's once vibrant tourism industry, a key source of foreign exchange. With security fears and travel advisories against Zimbabwe, tourism has declined 80%.

The economic collapse has undermined the social welfare system, with a devastating impact on the AIDS crisis. Officially, one in four adults are HIV positive. Health workers are frustrated at the prohibitive cost of drugs and the lack of funding. Some hospitals can't even afford to run HIV tests. The crippling cost of fuel prevents people getting to clinics, while the economic crisis is forcing hundreds of thousands of people to cross the borders in search of work. Migrant workers are at high risk of contracting HIV. Life expectancy at birth now stands at only 33.9 years.

Descent into dictatorship? As the African decolonisation process began in the 1960s,

In the 1970s Robert Mugabe was hailed by the world as a revolutionary hero fighting racist white minority rule. Now he is viewed as a dictator attempting to hold onto power at any cost.

Ian Smith's colonial government of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) rejected British plans for a gradual transfer of power to the majority African population. To hold onto white supremacy and political and economic privileges, Smith declared independence unilaterally in 1965. Mugabe, and others, led a guerrilla war against him. By 1979, the white government was forced to negotiate. The

British oversaw free elections in February 1980, which Mugabe's party won in a landslide.

Mugabe brought other parties into his cabinet, a reconciliation move to prevent old rivalries hindering Zimbabwe's development. Yet political opposition in the early 80s was violently put down by a special armed unit. Over 20,000 people were killed. In 1987 the major opposition party, Zapu, merged with Mugabe's Zanu to become Zanu PF. In 1990, Zanu PF won 116 of the 119 seats. Mugabe saw this as a mandate for a one party system under his ongoing presidency - although voter turnout was only 54% and opposition parties got nearly 15% of the vote (up to 30% in urban areas). When opposition leader, Ndabaningi Sithole, announced plans to run for President, he was arrested along with 2 non Zanu PF MPs for allegedly conspiring to assassinate Mugabe. Mugabe went on to win in 1996 with 93% of the vote, although 68% of the population did not vote. Opposition parties boycotted the election because of questionable processes.

By 2000, economic decline made people look for a political alternative. The newly formed MDC won 57 seats, only 5 less than Zanu PF. Since then, Mugabe's government has carried out a sustained campaign against the MDC and Zimbabwe's democratic processes. Mugabe labels the MDC as 'sell outs' to white and foreign interests. The MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, has been tried for treason, a charge which carries a death sentence. He has been accused of plotting to assassinate Mugabe. The verdict is expected in October 2004.

In a bid to retain power, Mugabe has attacked press freedom (banning foreign journalists, arresting local editors and closing down non-government newspapers) and the independence of the judiciary (arresting non-sympathetic judges and ignoring court rulings), allegedly rigged elections, encouraged brutal repression, enacted wide powers to arrest and detain, continued his economically damaging populist land reform policy, and reduced civil liberties. In August 2004, the government drafted a bill to monitor and regulate all non-government organisations (including churches) raising fears of closure of independent groups and control of all aspects of society.

see www.cws.org.nz/resources/international/Zimbabwe or contact **CAII** for a history timeline

Using Food as a Weapon

The Zimbabwean government claims that, thanks to bumper harvests, Zimbabwe has more than enough food and no longer requires food aid. Aid agencies, however, report that food deficiencies continue. UN assessors have been denied entry to the country, although a survey in April 2004, carried out by Zimbabwe's Vulnerability Assessment Committee (which includes government representatives) found over 2.3 million people still in need of food aid for at least the next year.

Many fear that Zanu PF are limiting food aid so they can use their stockpiles to secure votes. In May 2004, the MDC lost a by-election in Lupane north of Bulawayo (its support base where it won almost every seat in the 2000 election.) According to state radio, the result reflected voter disillusion with "foreign backing" for the MDC - and growing support for Mr Mugabe's land reform. The MDC cites political intimidation and manipulation of aid. Voters in the drought-hit region were allegedly told they would not get food aid if they backed the MDC.

In the 2005 elections this could occur on a much bigger scale. The message will be: if you want food from the government, don't vote against the government. The UN is urging the Zimbabwean government to respect the neutrality of humanitarian aid. Aid agencies are avoiding using warehouses to safeguard their food supplies.

For further background: Human Rights Watch (12/08/2004) The Politics of Food Assistance in Zimbabwe: <http://www.hrw.org/background/africa/zimbabwe/2004/ACT> International (Action by Churches Together) a global ecumenical emergency response network, has targeted children and other vulnerable people in famine areas of Zimbabwe. School feeding programmes help families keep sending their children to school despite the economic hardships they face.



CWS/ACT International P. Hevring

Democracy in Crisis

Local groups condemned the 2002 presidential election as unfair and conducted in a climate of fear. International observers mostly agreed. Only observers from Nigeria, South Africa, the African Union and Namibia endorsed the election. Of concern were:

- **Widespread reports of violence** against known opposition supporters and MPs. More than 30 people were killed, including MDC officials.
- **Arbitrary arrest:** About 1,400 people - mostly opposition polling agents and monitors - were arrested during the voting period.
- **Corrupt electoral processes** including: halving the number of polling stations in MDC strongholds, closing polling booths with thousands still waiting in line, and new rules that only civil servants (including police and soldiers) could be on the electoral supervisory commission sparking allegations they were under government control.
- **Harassment** and delaying of opposition officials on their way to polling stations.
- **Restriction of postal votes** to diplomats and members of the armed forces, disenfranchising students and workers living abroad.

Little has changed in the lead up to the 2005 elections.

2002 Voters' Roll Study

The 5.5m voters registered in 2002 included:
600,000 duplicate voters
840,000 dead voters
700,000 not known at registered address

Source: Solidarity Peace Trust

The Way Forward

According to an African Union report, the crisis lies in Zimbabwe's divided society and its search for the best means to achieve change "after two decades of dominance by a political party that carried the hopes and aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe through the liberation struggle into independence". To view the ousting of Robert Mugabe as the solution to the crisis is too simplistic. Zimbabweans are seeking a new political system and greater role for civil society including:

- a new constitution
- representative, accountable multi party government
- government respect for the rule of law
- promotion of human rights of all Zimbabweans
- de-politicisation of the police force
- respect of judicial independence
- free elections conducted by an independent electoral commission
- reconciliation and rebuilding of trust between government and civil society.

Challenging the international community

The crisis in Zimbabwe poses a huge challenge to the international community. How should the world respond to sovereign states that act outside accepted norms of democracy, respect of law and human rights?

Many governments have imposed sanctions against the government of Zimbabwe, including New Zealand, the European Union and the United States. Sanctions are limited to travel bans against senior government members, asset freezes on those benefiting from the regime, an arms embargo and sanctions against government companies. General sanctions have been rejected, as they would hurt the impoverished population more than its government.

The international community is calling for the Zimbabwean government to restore the rule of law, return to democratic norms, and open immediate talks with the opposition. Mugabe has made it clear he does not accept criticism from western leaders, arguing that they continue to push colonial agendas and are punishing Zimbabwe for reclaiming its land from the white minority. Mugabe accuses the MDC of being a front for former colonial power Britain and for white farmers. He will not hold talks with them while they are, as he argues, controlled from abroad. Meanwhile, the MDC is looking for outside support to reform electoral processes, support the people of Zimbabwe and prevent further human rights abuses.

Zimbabwe is a divisive issue for the Commonwealth, splitting member states along race/colonial lines. The wealthier 'white' states of Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand have taken a hard line, resulting in the 2002 suspension of Zimbabwe's membership. Several African and other developing nations have campaigned for Zimbabwe's reinstatement, arguing that dialogue and engagement, not isolation, will bring about change. After much debate, the 2003 Commonwealth Heads of Government agreed to extend Zimbabwe's suspension. Mugabe retaliated by withdrawing Zimbabwe's membership. The Commonwealth has continued to express concern about the abuse of fundamental human rights, the principles of good governance and rule of law in Zimbabwe and calls for restoration and strengthening of democratic rights and protection of civil society.

Mugabe paints the international opposition to his increasingly dictatorial hold on power as a conflict between imperialists and former colonies. Many leaders in sub-Saharan Africa, including Presidents Levy Mwanawasa of Zambia and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa are supporting him, or at the very least are reluctant to publicly criticise him. They see this as a post-colonial issue, of the UK penalising a former territory for having the temerity to do its own thing and are standing by Mugabe in part because of the support Zimbabwe gave the ANC during the apartheid struggle. Other former colonies share the resentment of being treated as second-class nations. Malaysia has said "there is a tendency among the white governments in the Commonwealth to tell us to do this and that, ... They must stop their colonial ways, stop dominating us in the Commonwealth" (CNN 6/12/03). Amongst African states, only Mozambique has openly criticised the Mugabe government, despite a damning report by the African Union on the arrests and torture of opposition representatives, arrests of journalists, and stifling of freedom of expression and other civil liberties.

Opposition forces in Zimbabwe are frustrated at the lack of solidarity from African neighbours. While they appreciate strong statements from New Zealand and other western governments, the people they want to hear from are African leaders, the people they believe Mugabe will listen to.

The question of Zimbabwe clearly shows that as the world moves on to a post-colonial, post cold war stage, it has still not developed effective ways of dealing with international crises and human rights abuses and that while politically independent, former colonies are still not economically liberated. Yet as the world becomes increasingly connected through globalisation of communications, trade and economics, politics and people's movement, such situations cannot be ignored. Already millions of Zimbabweans are being hosted by nations around the world; thousands more are crossing Southern African borders as economic refugees. The world cannot deny knowledge of the deteriorating well-being of Zimbabweans or human rights abuses. Dangerous precedents are set for human rights if the situation is ignored. How can the international community respond to so called rogue or failing states, while supporting the people who are suffering, respecting local wishes, and avoiding imperialistic actions? How can the world address the economic challenges still facing Africa?

The Churches' Agency on International Issues:

Christian World Service, PO Box 22652 Christchurch 8032, Aotearoa New Zealand
Phone: (64 3) 366 9274 • email international@cws.org.nz • www.cws.org.nz

Zimbabwe in Crisis: A reflection for Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand



New Zealand's Position

New Zealand has joined with other countries to put

pressure on Zimbabwe's Government to restore the rule of law and return to democratic processes. New Zealand supports the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth and has targeted bilateral sanctions against Zimbabwe including a travel ban to New Zealand by Mr Mugabe, some of his closest associates and business people who have profited from their association with the regime and a ban on the sale of arms. New Zealand does not accept the legitimacy of the Zimbabwe government after the disputed 2002 election and has contributed to humanitarian assistance in southern Africa.

At the UN, NZ has stated its concerns about the situation and the Zimbabwe Government's attempts to exert influence over the distribution of humanitarian aid, calling on the Zimbabwe Government,

"to comply fully with its international human rights obligations and restore democratic governance, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms to the people of Zimbabwe."

(United Nations General Assembly Fifty-Eighth Session -Third Committee Item 117(B) Human Rights Questions Statement By The New Zealand Representative October 2003).

The Role of Churches

Zimbabwe's political polarisation is reflected amongst its church leadership. Some within the church are clearly Zanu PF supported having benefited from Mugabe's rule and in receipt of farms and money; others vigorously oppose the government. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) sees the crisis, to some extent, as an issue to be resolved from within the country and African region, not outside it. In July 2003 the ZCC did issue an apology to the people of Zimbabwe for not speaking out or acting against the deteriorating socio-economic condition the majority of the population were in. Yet they have seemingly taken no further action and there are now concerns that the ZCC is being drawn into the Zanu PF fold.

Zimbabwean Christians in exile feel the churches are failing to write and speak with one voice against human rights abuses and bad governance. With a few outspoken exceptions, such as the Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube, Zimbabwe's churches and church leaders have been reluctant to openly criticise Mugabe.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has made several statements against the worsening law and order situation in Zimbabwe. At its 26 August-2 September 2003 meeting, the WCC Central Committee, acknowledged the socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe was a serious challenge to the country's churches and the wider ecumenical family. The government's land resettlement programme has led to serious human-rights violations, and brought the country to the verge of ruin. It urged member churches to condemn acts of violence in Zimbabwe, and expressed support for the Zimbabwe churches' efforts to redress land distribution inequities. The WCC has written to the Zimbabwean Government urging it to "take immediate steps to restore the rule of law and put an end to arbitrary arrests, torture and killings".

The WCC argues that Zimbabweans are capable of restoring responsible governance, the rule of law and the democratic process in their country, and can put in place a responsible process of land reform that will do justice to all involved. However, they will need international support to do so and the WCC calls on international bodies and concerned states to assist in Zimbabwe's recovery.

Recent reports suggest Mugabe's party is looking to the churches to help it win votes in the March 2005 elections by mobilising their supporters to vote for Zanu PF. A confidential Zanu PF report, cited in the Zimbabwe Independent (18/6/04), claims 600 pastors from Pentecostal churches and over 200 church leaders from African apostolic sects have been identified and the party is networking with them and offering incentives.



"I saw aged women coming to church without shoes, In my heart I felt that they were coming to church, and the only thing they were going to eat all day was the communion wafer."

"What I find missing is the joie de vivre of the people - you hear them laughing, you hear them singing, but they are not joyful. Why should you be joyful when life is such a burden?"

"If we don't speak, people of God will perish: let the blood of this nation not be upon us."

South African Clergy, Solidarity visit to Zimbabwe August/September 2003

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC): At its 37th AGM, the ZCC identified the ongoing socio-economic problems of the country including:

- the people who have starved to death due to food shortages
- the increasing level of poverty, leaving more and more children on the street
- youth unemployment
- declining productivity due to scarcity of fuel and other commodities
- the violence, rape, intimidation, harassment, and torture ravaging the nation while some perpetrators are set free
- political polarization dividing the people
- elections that can not be called free and fair
- a crumbling health system
- a land reform programme progressing without proper infrastructure and under-utilised land, resulting in decreased production

and went on to say:

"While the church has noted all these developments, and while we have continued to pray, we have not been moved to action. James says '... and by my actions I will show you my faith!' We as a Council apologise to the people of Zimbabwe for not having done enough when the nation has looked to us for guidance."

ZCC Communique 2 July 2003



Questions for Reflection

- 1: Identify the affects of the political turmoil on people that we see in the current crisis in Zimbabwe.
- 2: How does the information contained in this Hot Topic compare to the media focus on the suffering of white farmers as represented in their coverage of the political situation in Zimbabwe?
- 3: Discuss the colonial legacy in Africa. What have been Zimbabwe's achievements in the short period of twenty-four years since independence?
- 4: What role did the church play in the colonisation process? How do church people deal with that legacy?
- 5: What does democracy mean? What would be the core elements of democracy in a situation like Zimbabwe? Is there are place for the church in facilitating greater democracy in such situations?
- 6: Is foreign intervention a justifiable or effective response to situations where governments are defined as undemocratic and corrupt? Whose definition of such undemocratic and corrupt situations should we listen to? Reflect on the outcomes of recent interventions in such places as Iraq, East Timor and Somalia, and the non-intervention in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.
- 7: What is our role in addressing land confiscation and consequent injustices which are the outcome of a history of colonisation? How do the issues of land confiscation in Zimbabwe relate to those in Aotearoa New Zealand?



Maize planting in Zimbabwe



Take Action

Pray for a peaceful resolution and for strength for the people of Zimbabwe.

Support humanitarian aid and good development projects that strengthen democracy and human rights.

Write to the NZ government expressing your views on what they should do.

Help keep Zimbabwe on the world political agenda to support the struggle of civil society by writing letters and sharing information.

Offer friendship and understanding to Zimbabweans in exile in New Zealand (see www.zimpacific.com).

Explore ways your church can offer support to the churches of Zimbabwe.

Share the information in this Hot Topic with others. Email CAII: international@cws.org.nz with your views on the crisis. These may be included on the on the CAII website.

Stay up to date on developments – keep an eye on these websites:



www.zimonline.co.za

www.zwnews.com

www.herald.co.zw
(State Controlled Daily newspaper)

www.theindependent.co.zw (weekly independent)

www.fingaz.co.zw (Weekly semi-independent)

www.star.co.za (A South African daily that normally carries stories on Zimbabwe)

www.zim.gov.zw (Government of Zimbabwe)

www.zanupfpub.co.zw (Zanu PF website)

www.mdczimbabwe.org (Opposition MDC website)

www.hrforumzim.com (Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum)

www.zesn.org.zw (Zimbabwean Election Support Network)

www.allafrica.com

www.news.bbc.co.uk (Africa News Section)



Prayers for Zimbabwe

When we know that 6 million Zimbabweans go to bed hungry every night

Eternal God, we pray that the world will respond to their need, that the new season will bring good rains and that the problems causing hunger will be resolved.

When we know that the health system in Zimbabwe has collapsed and many people do not have any basic treatment,

God, our source of inspiration, we pray for the sick in Zimbabwe who have no access to medicines or treatment and we pray that the problems causing this situation will be resolved soon.

When we know that innocent people – journalists, human rights activists, labour union leaders - who work for a human Zimbabwe are in prison now.

Loving God, we cry out for justice. Give these people in prison strength to cope with the situation. Open the hearts and minds of the leaders of Zimbabwe to human need and may fear and greed cease to reign.

When we know that people living with HIV/AIDS are still being seen as outlaws

God of mercy and compassion we ask for courage that the people of Zimbabwe accept their brothers and sisters who need support, encouragement and love.

When we know that in spite of everything there is still hope for Zimbabwe.

God of Transformation, pour your hope in us and all Zimbabweans. Give light and perspective to the people of this beautiful country. Amen

Shupayi Mupunga and Aad van de Meer