



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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March 3, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

I am writing to share with you the deep concerns of the Southern Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference regarding the situation in Zimbabwe. A copy of their recent Pastoral Letter is attached.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops shares bonds of solidarity with the Church in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa. We urge you to act to protect the lives and dignity of the long-suffering people of Zimbabwe. Specifically, our Conference urges strong U.S. leadership in monitoring the new Unity Government in Zimbabwe, holding the parties accountable to their agreement and addressing the country's critical economic, health, and humanitarian crises.

The bishops of Southern Africa state clearly that the time for talking is long past. Swift and effective action is required to end the long-standing suffering of the Zimbabwean people. Even as the political leaders move to put in place a Unity Government, evidence of their resolve will come only when they take bold initiatives to alleviate the hunger that threatens over half of the population, respond to the horrible outbreak of cholera that has killed upwards of 3,000 people, and address the corruption and gross economic mismanagement that threatens the country's economic future.

Our Conference supports the call of the bishops of Southern Africa to the leaders of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to pressure the leaders of Zimbabwe to end the political deadlock and mismanagement and begin long-term efforts to build a legitimate, democratic government that will give priority to the common good of the people, particularly the poor.

Our Conference appreciates the aid provided by the U.S. Government to the people of Zimbabwe, including through our own Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and local partners there. CRS President Ken Hackett, in a recent visit to Harare earlier this month, directly expressed this appreciation to Ambassador McGee on behalf of both CRS and the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe.

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Please act to intensify the efforts of the international community to work with the leaders of the SADC to accomplish these goals. As you are aware, the Unity Government faces significant challenges. For this reason, the United States and the world community, including the UN system, must actively monitor the letter and spirit of the Unity Government's actions and insist on specific progress towards the rule of law, stability and economic recovery. The people of Zimbabwe look to the United States for its leadership in the support of the human dignity of all people, especially those who suffer from gross injustice and neglect.

In gratitude for your attention to the urgent situation in Zimbabwe, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Howard J. Hubbard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'H'.

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard

Bishop of Albany

Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace