



Micah Challenge Statement on Zimbabwe

30 March 2007

Preamble

The current political situation in Zimbabwe is of grave concern and if measures are not taken to mitigate the situation, the impact will be felt on every street in the whole Southern African region. Already the economic conditions in Zimbabwe have deteriorated alarmingly and are affecting other Southern African countries as Zimbabweans migrate in thousands in search of economic security.

We are concerned that the daily occurrence of political violence is eroding the legitimacy of the state and its leaders, and instilling fear in the citizens. Since citizens cannot express themselves freely, democracy is therefore being destroyed, and this has led to political instability and political exclusion, and ultimately we fear, it is leading to a police state and dictatorship.

We are concerned that resentment is steadily building in Zimbabwe in those who are excluded, from being heard, and from participating in the strengthening of democratic infrastructures, and that they may seek undemocratic ways to dislodge the government. We are worried that if the current political situation is not addressed, Zimbabwe will deteriorate into a state where a rebel insurgency or movement (that may gladly receive terrorist, or other outside support) will start within the excluded groups.

Micah Challenge, a global advocacy initiative of the World Evangelical Alliance, representing more than 420 million Christians, and the Micah Network, bringing together more than 300 Christian organisations providing relief, development and justice activities throughout the world, believes that Christians have the responsibility to serve as voice for the voiceless and to speak prophetically to change situations in the favour of the poor, as we find in the Holy Scriptures: *"Speak out for who those can not speak for themselves, for the right of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly, defend the right of the poor and needy."* (Prov: 31:8-9)

The appalling political situation in Zimbabwe, including the arrest and detention of Mr Morgan Tsvangirai and forty eight members of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Party, while on their way to a prayer meeting, the subsequent torture of some of these, and ongoing arrests and detentions by ZANU-PF, has prompted Micah Challenge to add its voice to those of African leaders, including the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube, and the President of Zambia, Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, and others worldwide, to utterly condemn the atrocities committed by Mugabe regime.

Statement

Saddened, by the unfolding tragedy in Zimbabwe, that may impact upon Southern African political and economic transformation, **We**, Micah Challenge, a global initiative to: deepen Christian engagement with impoverished and marginalised communities; and to influence leaders of rich and poor nations to fulfil their public promise to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and so halve absolute global poverty by 2015, do hereby **call** upon:

President Robert Mugabe

We acknowledge your sacrifice to fight against colonial rule and for having provided leadership in liberating Zimbabwe. However, we are **grieved** by the brutal injustices being perpetrated by your regime on your own people.

As leader of your great nation, you have a responsibility to ensure that all people, irrespective of their political, religious, race or ethnic affiliation, have the right to protection from every form of abuse, ill-treatment, torture, sexual abuse and discrimination. We call upon you to make sure that these rights are respected so that all Zimbabweans can participate in using their God given gifts to their full potential, for their benefit and for the good of the nation.

Southern African Leaders (SADC)

We are shocked, by your apparent silence about the situation on your door steps. During the liberation struggle, the then leaders of independent Southern African countries, saw it as an obligation to seek justice, human rights and freedom for the African people of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa and Angola. Don't change the response today! Your approach must be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow-seeking justice and human rights for others, including the Zimbabweans who are being oppressed and tortured.

Rev Ndaba Mazabane

President of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and International Chairperson of the World Evangelical Alliance

Rev Joel Edwards

International Co-Chairperson of Micah Challenge