



## Zimbabwe Weekly Update 21/2011 – Monday 23 May 2011

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### Overview

1. Elections: Zimbabwean civil society activists detained at SADC Extraordinary Summit
  2. Natural Resources: Fresh human rights violations in Marange Diamond fields
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### 1. Electoral Preparations

- The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Extraordinary Summit that took place in Windhoek, Namibia this weekend has been deemed a 'non-event' by both media and activists. The Summit was attended by eight Heads of States and representatives from 5 other member states. Only Madagascar and Seychelles were not present.
- Civil activists expressed their disappointment for its failure to deal with the issue of Zimbabwe. The Summit opened with accusations of corruption levelled against the SADC Secretariat. The new SADC Chair, Namibian President Hifikepunye Pohamba gave assurances that the issue will be dealt with by the Council of Ministers. The SADC facilitator on Zimbabwe, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, was unable to attend the Summit. The Zimbabwe issue would be returned to soon, probably in Johannesburg, South Africa on 11 June.
- The SADC proceedings were marred by allegations of harassment and intimidation of civil society activists. The activists were barred from demonstrating outside the Safari Court Hotel, the venue of the event. Statements from civil society organisations indicate that Zimbabwe state security agents, working in cahoots with Namibian police, detained and interrogated civil society activists and a journalist from Zimbabwe. Some of the interrogations included questioning the activists on their personal details, their mission in Namibia, where they were staying and when they arrived. A statement released by the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights indicates that,



“The state security agents also briefly detained Jelousy Mwarire for allegedly capturing pictures and chased away Shastry Njeru of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum from the venue of the SADC Summit. Mwarire, who had his pictures deleted from his camera, was later released after the intervention of Namibian human rights lawyer Norman Tjombe.”

- Other issues discussed at the Summit included the SADC Tribunal and Madagascar. On Madagascar, no decision was taken, although the Summit considered the report of the SADC Mediator, former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, which expressed the need for an inclusive political process and constitutional implementation as steps to realising sustainable solutions to the crisis. On the issue of the Tribunal, the SADC Communique issued on Friday stated that the institution,

"mandated the Ministers of Justice/Attorneys General to initiate the process aimed at amending the relevant SADC legal instruments and submit a progress report in August 2011 and a final report to Summit in August 2012"

Meanwhile, reports to the allegation of the reconstitution of the judicial arm follow claims that there was pressure from the Zimbabwean government which has been critical of its ruling against the land reforms.

## 2. Natural Resources

- Allegations of more human rights abuses in the Marange diamond fields have been reported. Activists are reportedly blaming Mbada for setting guard dogs on residents forcing them to relocate. Security guards are said to be patrolling with vicious dogs, which have allegedly attacked four people in the last two weeks. All this is fuelled by the demands from the people to want more than the US\$1000 compensation for the seizure of their homes and farming plots.

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