

Zimbabwe Weekly Update 18/2011 – 2 May 2011

Overview

1. **Elections:** MDC-T 3rd National Congress
 2. **Natural Resources:** CRD calls for the resignation of Minister of Mines Obert Mpofu
 3. **International Relations:** Mugabe attends the late Pope John Paul's beautification ceremony
United States – SADC Meeting
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1. Elections: MDC-T 3rd National Congress

- Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga gave the key note address at the MDC-T's third elective Congress that took place in Bulawayo 28 - 30 April. Notwithstanding the negative effects of colonialism, the Kenyan Prime Minister put the tragedy affecting the African continent on its many leaders who have performed 'dismally'. "... we cannot continue blaming the colonialists for our problems. Since the 1990s, a clear consensus has emerged both within and outside Africa that the problems the continent faces have to do with the way it is governed today. This has led to human rights abuses, the breakdown of the rule of law, the over-centralisation of power, particularly as vested in imperial presidencies, and the accompanying cultures of corruption and impunity"

He urged the people of Zimbabwe to stop the 'blame game' but embrace the culture of constitutionalism, equity, impartiality and to invest in building institutions of democracy.

- In his opening speech at the MDC-T Congress, the President of the party, Tsvangirai noted that the coming elections would represent 'the culmination of the hard work, sacrifice and dedication to democracy exhibited by millions of Zimbabweans over the past 11 years'. Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai expressed MDC-T confidence in taking the reigns of government in the next elections. However he mentioned that it was crucial to implement necessary mechanisms that would guarantee free and fair elections.
- May Day marches by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions were banned in some cities in Zimbabwe, while rallies were allowed.



2. Natural Resources

- The Centre for Research and Development (CRD), has called upon Mines Minister Obert Mpofu to resign. The call follows reports of the arrest in India of Zohra Desai and Prema Desai for smuggling a 9.72 KGs / 48 663 carats consignment of rough diamonds from Marange. CRD said the Minister should account for the continued loss of revenue, among other things. The Zimbabwe Blood Diamonds Campaign (ZBDC) has concurred to this call pointing to this as evidence that the time is not yet ripe for the Kimberley Process to relax conditions on the export of diamonds from Marange/Chiadzwa.

3. International Relations

- President Robert Mugabe this week attended the beautification of the late Pope John Paul II amid regional and international outcries. The President and his wife, Grace, who also reportedly arrived in Rome, are on the European Union targeted measures list. The Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi reportedly justified this on the diplomatic relations the Holy Sea has with Zimbabwe.
- Meanwhile, Zimbabwe Vigil Coalition and others in the United Kingdom condemned the invitation extended to the Zimbabwean Embassy to attend the Royal Wedding, saying that it should have been rescinded.
- A meeting to discuss the worsening human rights situation in Zimbabwe took place on Thursday between officials from the US National Security Staff, Department of State, Department of Treasury and USAID and senior officials from Namibia, Zambia, South Africa and the SADC Secretariat. The meeting comes ahead of an extraordinary SADC meeting on Zimbabwe expected to take place in Namibia on 20 May.

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