



Attention: The SADC Chairperson, H.E Dr Hage G. Geingob

CC. All SADC Heads of State and Government, SADC Secretariat

13 February 2019

OPEN LETTER TO THE SADC CHAIRPERSON IN RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT ON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE

We, the Civil Society Organisations and Social Movements under the banner of Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN) are greatly disturbed and perturbed by the SADC Chairperson's statement in response to the political and socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe.

Disappointedby:

- SADC's statement in response to the Zimbabwean situation which lacks balance as it is only based on what His Excellency, Dr Hage G. Geingob was briefed by the President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency E.D Mnangagwa without being attentive to citizenry voices regarding the situation. SAPSN strongly encourages the SADC leadership to appoint a fact finding mission to establish the facts on the ground which include bizarre acts of torture, killings and rape of women and minors.
- The failure of the SADC Chair to honour his commitment to continue engaging with those who would seek engagement with him during his tenure of office. This promise was made in August 2018 when SAPSN handed a Communiqué to the SADC Chair upon assuming his position on the 17th of August 2018 at Safari Hotel, during the SADC People's Summit (a people's process which is held parallel to the SADC Heads of State and Government Summit) held in Windhoek.
- SADC's failure to condemn themilitarisation of the state and departure fromgenuine civilian rule in Zimbabwe.
- SADC's failure to reign in the Zimbabwean regime for gross human rights violations that ensued when Zimbabweans, in accordance to the National Constitution,SADC, African Union (AU) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights embarked on protests against the deteriorating political, social and economic situation in the country.
- SADC's concurrence with the government of Zimbabwe's stance that NGOs with the support of external forces have continued to destabilise the country.

- SADC's prolonged silence and indifference on Zimbabwe's deepening political and economic crisis.

SAPSN would like to state on record that:

- Contrary to the smear campaign against Zimbabwean civil society organisations, the social movements in Zimbabwe (particularly those affiliated to SAPSN) are not working in cahoots with external forces to destabilise the Zimbabwean state. Instead, NGOs are fighting for the entrenchment of democracy and genuine rule of law in Zimbabwe.
- Citizens feel that the Transitional Stabilisation Programme as well as other policy pronouncements by the current administration are exclusive in nature and lack the requisite citizen participation and support. Therefore the TSP is not collectively shared and remains unpopular and unknown to the citizens.
- Contrary to government claims that they are transforming the economy to bring about prosperity to citizens, the government is busy increasing vulnerabilities and food insecurities through destabilisation of the informal sector by demolishing vendors' properties without providing alternative sources of livelihoods in an economy with high unemployment rate. The demolitions are also done with the support of seurocrats in an inhumane and undignified manner.
- The national dialogue you were briefed on is flawed being limited in scope, structure, issues and vision. Furthermore, the national dialogue process in its current settings is nothing more than a consensus of the elite lacking inclusivity.

We now therefore call upon and plead with SADC to;

- Assist by facilitating an all-inclusive dialogue (including government, all political parties and civil society) on the existing political and socioeconomic situation in the country.
- Call for the demilitarisation of the state and restoration of true civilian rule in Zimbabwe;
- Reinforce Zimbabwe's commitment to SADC **Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP)** in maintaining good political, economic and corporate governance entrenched in the culture of democracy, full participation by civil society, transparency and respect for the rule of law;
- Enforce Zimbabwe's commitment in fostering fundamental human rights and freedoms as enshrined in Section 11 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013.

For more information on the unfolding situation do not hesitate to contact:

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