

**Statement by
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before the**

**U.S. House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Africa, Global Health, Global
Human Rights, and International Organizations**

September 12, 2013

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for holding this hearing on Zimbabwe and for inviting me to testify before you. We appreciate the deep interest of this Committee and are pleased to work closely with Congress in support of our national interests in Zimbabwe and the region.

The seriously flawed presidential and parliamentary elections of July 31 were a missed opportunity for Zimbabwe. The United States and other members of the international community had clearly communicated, both publicly and privately, a willingness to consider rolling back sanctions and other restrictions on Zimbabwe and charting a path to full normalization of relations – if Zimbabwe demonstrated that it was ready to allow its deserving people to freely choose their next government through a fair, peaceful, and credible election.

The fundamental challenge the United States faces, now that President Mugabe has been sworn in for another five-year term, the new parliament has been

seated, and a new cabinet is taking shape, is how best to put into action our long-standing commitment to the Zimbabwean people while maintaining a firm stance against those who continue to undermine democracy and hinder Zimbabwe's progress.

The recent elections were a particularly acute disappointment because they followed some encouraging developments earlier in the year, when the parties of the former Government of National Unity agreed on a draft constitution and the Zimbabwean people overwhelmingly approved it in a peaceful referendum. However, in the days and weeks leading up to the election, that promise faded as the electoral process was systematically manipulated. There were serious irregularities in the provision and composition of the voters roll; political parties had unequal access to state media; and the security sector did not safeguard the electoral process equitably. These problems were highlighted by credible domestic and regional observers. We were disappointed that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) chose not to adhere to their own standards - or address the irregularities highlighted by their observers – in determining that the elections were free and fair.

Secretary Kerry and leaders from other governments noted the deep flaws in the process leading up to the elections and concluded that, although generally peaceful, the elections could not be seen as a credible reflection of the will of the

Zimbabwean people. Elections are a process, not a single-day event, and that process was too flawed to be credible. While we are all grateful that polling was not marked by violence this year, the absence of overt violence is not sufficient for the outcome to be considered legitimate. True democracy will come to Zimbabwe only when the Zimbabwean people are free to exercise the rights afforded to them in their new Constitution, free of fear and manipulation. President Mugabe and certain elements of his party conducted a sustained campaign of intimidation against civil society organizations, political party members, and ordinary Zimbabwean citizens; they allowed partisan conduct by the Zimbabwean media and security sectors; and they made sure that election preparations tilted the playing field heavily in their favor. In doing so, they sent a clear signal to the people of Zimbabwe and the international community that they were more interested in retaining power at all costs than in rejoining the community of democratic nations.

U.S. policy reflects the recognition that a select few in Zimbabwe remain committed to maintaining power and wealth at the expense of their people, and their nation. We therefore continue to maintain targeted sanctions aimed at those who are actively undermining democracy in Zimbabwe and thus depriving all its citizens of a more democratic, prosperous future. Currently, the list of Specially Designated Nationals includes 113 individuals and 70 entities. In the future, we

may add new names to the list or remove others, as conditions warrant. We want all Zimbabweans to know that the United States remains a friend of the Zimbabwean people and that we make a strong distinction between Zimbabwe's 13 million people as a whole and those few, powerful, self-interested individuals who are degrading the country's future.

There are those who argue that we should revisit our sanctions policy because President Mugabe has sought to use U.S. policy as a propaganda tool. We will not be swayed by the attempts of President Mugabe and his party to blame Zimbabwe's economic misfortunes and disastrous economic mismanagement – on the United States and other governments that maintain targeted sanctions on a select group of individuals and entities. We do, however, want to communicate our message clearly. Those who benefit most from the status quo – influential officials within the Zimbabwean government and the defense and security sectors – will no doubt remain the most vocal critics of the United States and other Western countries, and they will continue to rely on state domination of the media to perpetuate misperceptions about U.S. policy.

With the end of the unity government and the relative stability it brought to Zimbabwe's economy, there looms the real possibility of substantial economic decline, which President Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party may seek to blame on sanctions. We – and Zimbabwe's neighbors – need to be prepared for the possible

humanitarian cost of ZANU-PF's proposed policies. We also need to examine, while maintaining our targeted sanctions, opportunities for engagement with the private sector that are consistent with our values, policies, and interests. In addition to helping stave off economic hardship for the people of Zimbabwe, such engagement will also provide a powerful counterargument to the false sanctions narrative that ZANU-PF seeks to weave.

We must also remain supportive of civil society groups that advocate for strong democratic institutions, the rule of law, and human rights. And, we will look for opportunities to work with elements of parliament and local government as a means of strengthening democratic governance going forward.

As my USAID colleague will discuss, we will also need to continue our assistance at a "humanitarian plus" level. We can and should be proud of our ongoing support for Zimbabwe's progress in the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, in improving the lives of smallholder farmers, and in creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

Zimbabwe's human and economic potential is enormous. That makes the events of recent years, and the lost opportunities of this election, all the more tragic. U.S. policy remains dedicated to helping the people of Zimbabwe achieve the democratic, peaceful, and prosperous future that they deserve.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak with your Committee today. I welcome any questions you may have.