



The future of US and Zimbabwe relations – and the precarious future of Zimbabwe

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**An Overview for the Home Committee on Foreign Affairs at US Congress
3 June 2015**

"Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

William Jennings Bryan (1860 – 1925)



*A wantonly destroyed centre pivot irrigation system on a former commercial farm
Photo courtesy Farmer's Weekly magazine (SA)*



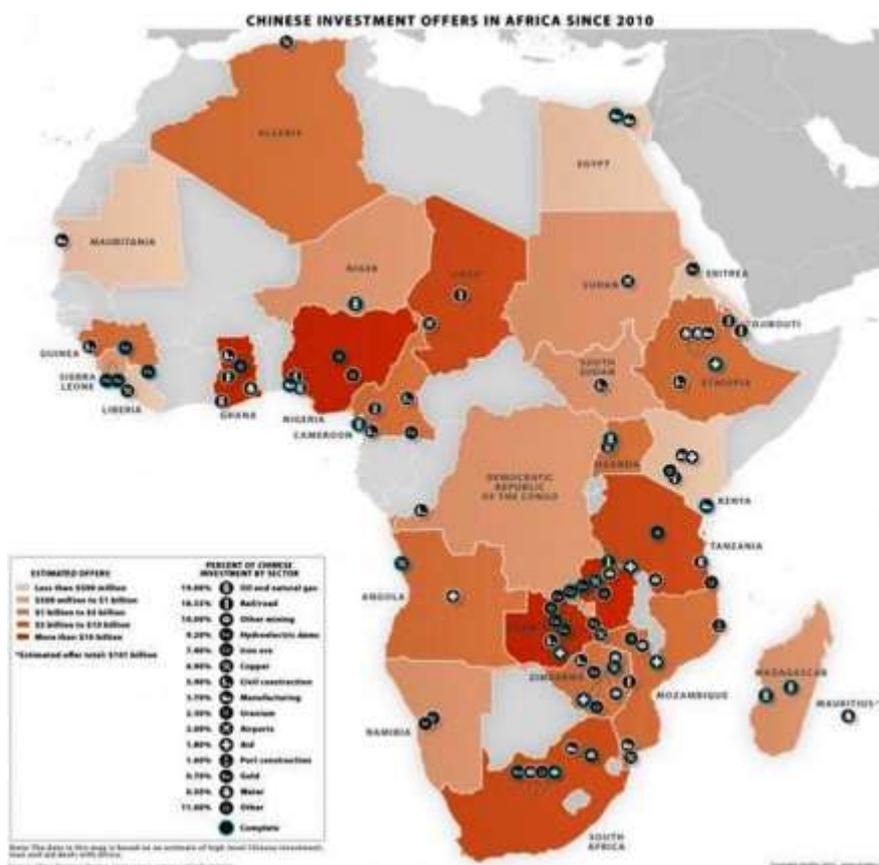
The derelict yard of the Cold Storage Commission (CSC) in Bulawayo which used to export high quality beef to Europe. Photo courtesy Robin Hammond/Panos

OVERVIEW: KEY POINTS

THREATS

1. **The Power of President Robert Mugabe:** President Mugabe is currently Chairman of the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), so he wields very considerable power and influence on the continent.
2. **Potential terrorist threat:** Zimbabwe's geographical placement makes it a hub for the rest of southern Africa. It is therefore strategically important that democracy is allowed to function and that terrorist and other undemocratic forces do not take over.
3. **Chinese and Russian Influence:** The Chinese and Russian influence continues to grow as investment is stifled from any other sources. Economic linkages between the United States and Zimbabwe need to be strengthened in order to reduce this disturbing trend.
4. **"Look East" Policy:** As a result of Zimbabwe's "Look East" economic policy, adopted in 2003, trade between Zimbabwe and China increased to nearly US\$1.2 billion in 2014 (January-November). China is now the biggest source of imports for Zimbabwe, with cheap Chinese products threatening the survival of local industries. This has resulted in significant Chinese investments in various sectors, including mining, telecommunications, infrastructure, agriculture and retail.

CHINESE INVESTMENT OFFERS IN AFRICA SINCE 2010



"Meanwhile China quietly takes over Zimbabwe" – to view larger map and read full article:
<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2014-03-02/meanwhile-china-quietly-takes-over-zimbabwe>

ECONOMIC CRISIS

1. **Economic status at independence:** When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, the country had a diversified economy, well-developed infrastructure and an advanced financial sector. Thirty-five years later, it is now one of Africa's poorest countries.
2. **Economic shrinkage:** Since 2000, the economy has continued to shrink, and the fallout is impacting negatively on the region. The country is being battered by political instability, poor harvests due to land nationalization, liquidity shortage, collapsing industries and job losses from business closures – all linked to lack of security of tenure and lack of rule of law.
3. **Underperformance of economic drivers:** Zimbabwe's short-term economic outlook is now bleaker than at any time since the hyperinflationary meltdown of 2007/8, due to the underperformance of its main economic drivers—industry, agriculture, mining and tourism. GDP could contract by 5% this year.
4. **Government's bloated wage bill:** A study published by the Development Bank of Southern Africa in April 2013 found that the Zimbabwean government employed an estimated 250,000 people, generating a wage bill of more than US\$960 million. This worked out at more than 70% of revenue collections, 60% of the total budget, and more than 15% of GDP.
5. **Government spending is 29.3% of GDP:** State enterprises are strongly subsidized, and taxes and tariffs are some of the highest in the world. State regulation is costly to companies, and starting or closing a business is slow and costly. The labour market is highly regulated, so hiring a worker is cumbersome and firing one is difficult and often hugely expensive.
6. **Unemployment:** More than 85% of people are unemployed, including professionals, former farm workers and highly skilled commercial farmers, university graduates and students who have been forced to drop out of school because parents cannot afford the fees.
7. **Diaspora Remittances:** Diaspora remittances remain a critical source of liquidity in the market and are vital for destitute family members. The Reserve Bank estimates that Diaspora remittances into the country currently stand at around US\$1.7 billion and gravitating towards US\$2 billion (translating to above 50% of exports) per year, with around 50% (US\$840 million in 2014 and US\$790 million in 2013) coming through local formal banking channels.
8. **Domestic and foreign debt:** As of April 2015, domestic and international debts have escalated to US\$ 9.9 billion, without any possibility of repaying them.
9. **Foreign Direct Investment:** Zimbabwe has lagged behind regional peers in FDI, with neighbouring Zambia receiving US\$8 billion between 1980 and 2013, and Mozambique US\$16 billion. Zimbabwe only received US\$1.8 billion.
10. **Infrastructural decline:** The sustained and severe deterioration in the quality of infrastructural assets stems from very inadequate levels of public expenditures for routine and periodic maintenance, especially in power, water and sanitation, and transport.

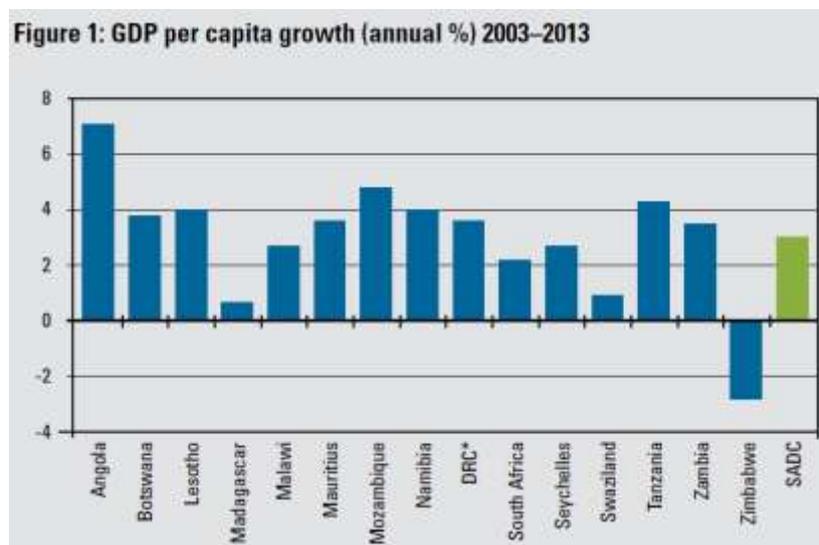
Engineers have started on a US\$330 million rescue marathon to prevent the "catastrophic failure" of Kariba Dam, one of the biggest man-made dams in the world. The World Bank warns that a potential wall collapse threatens the lives of about 3-million people in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique.

11. **The Heritage Foundation's 2015 Index of Economic Freedom:** Zimbabwe is the most repressed economy in sub-Saharan Africa and in the bottom five worldwide – 175 out of 178 countries - due to government intervention, policy inconsistency and corruption. It is ranked lowest in Africa, even below the war-ravaged Central African Republic, and ahead only of Venezuela, Cuba and North Korea.ⁱ
12. **World Bank Group's Doing Business Index for 2014:** In this index, which measures how conducive the regulatory environment is for starting and operating a local firm, Zimbabwe ranked 171 out of 189 countries.ⁱⁱ
13. **Comparative data: At Independence from Britain in 1980:**
 - Economy: Zimbabwe had the second largest economy in southern Africa*
 - GDP: Zimbabwe had the third highest GDP per capita in southern Africa
 - Exports: Zimbabwe was the world's largest exporter of tobacco, after the USA
 - Gold production: Zimbabwe was the world's sixth largest gold producer
 - Currency: Z\$1 was worth US\$2.

***The Southern African Development Community (SADC) comprises 15 countries.**

13. **GDP per capita growth – SADC Region [2003-2013]:** Zimbabwe was the only country to record a per capita income decrease, ie 2.8% annually over the same period. (See graph below)

Comparative GDP of the 15 countries in the SADC region [2003-2013]:



Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/worlddevelopment-indicators>, accessed 22 October 2014

14. **Import/Export imbalance:** For the period January to November 2013, total exports stood at US\$3.3 billion as against imports of US\$7.2 billion. The declining growth in exports was a reflection of the overall slowdown in real economic activity in the wake of endemic company closures.

ZIMBABWE'S MAIN ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTORS IN 1998:

The situation today in the industrial, mining, tourism and agricultural sectors is as follows:

INDUSTRY – 2015

The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries warned government last year that de-industrialisation had reached “catastrophic levels with dire consequences for the country’s struggling economy”.

1. **Business closures:** Zimbabwe’s manufacturing industry, which once employed more than 200,000 people, now accounts for only 93,000 jobs. The Central Bank reports that 4,600 businesses have closed in the past three years.
2. **Indigenisation threat and racism:** Foreign investors continue to face uncertainty relating to the Indigenisation Act and the toxic Section 72 of the new Constitution. [Section 71 purports to protect private property, but this right is annulled in Section 72 when applied to agricultural land. This section was struck down by the SADC Tribunal but there has been no attempt by the Zimbabwe Government to comply with this Judgment].

MINING - 2015

1. **Mining industry shrinks:** The mining industry in Zimbabwe, the world’s third-biggest platinum producer, is shrinking due to lower metal prices, lower capital and FDI inflow, high cost structures, sub-optimal royalties that have to go to government and shortages of power.
2. **Diamonds:** Zimbabwe is the world’s fourth-largest diamond miner, producing an estimated eight million carats annually, with potential to supply 25% of global demand. However, due to fraud, corruption and non-compliance, there is little to show for its diamond wealth. In 2012, during the tenure of the coalition government, Finance Minister Tendai Biti (MDC party) was forced to slash the country’s national budget to US\$3.4 billion from US\$4 billion after receiving US\$41 million instead of a targeted US\$600 million from diamond sales. As a result of massive plundering, the vast alluvial fields have now been virtually depleted, resulting in significant retrenchments.

TOURISM – 2015

1. The Central Bank says tourism is one of the major drivers of the economy this year, but the domestic market is envisaged to remain depressed, exerting further pressure on rates and margins for the hospitality industry. In 2014, tourism contributed approximately 10% to GDP. However, the tourism sector operates well below its potential, ranking 115 out of 141 countries in a recent study on tourism (World Economic Forum: Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015).
2. Despite Zimbabwe having magnificent natural resources, between 1999 and 2013, overseas arrivals to Zimbabwe declined by over 50%. It is estimated that tourist arrivals to Zimbabwe could have grown to over 14 million per annum based on trends to 1999, but arrivals for 2014 were only 1.88 million.

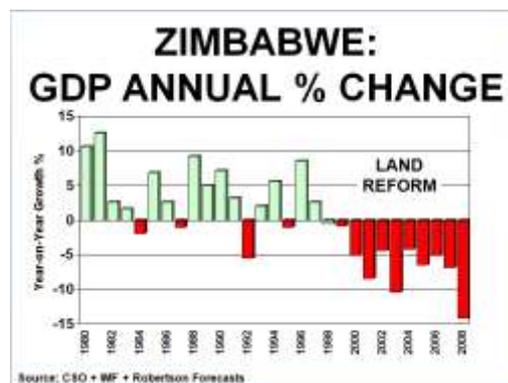
AGRICULTURE – 2015:

THE “FAST TRACK” LAND NATIONALISATION PROGRAMME AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

1. **Agriculture [prior to 2000]:** From 1980 to 2000 [i.e. the 20 years prior to the fast track land nationalisation programme which has decimated the commercial farming sector] Zimbabwe had a food surplus in all but three severe drought years. The country was both self-sufficient

and a net food exporter. Every year since 2000 (post-land nationalisation), there has been a food shortage. Corn (maize) is now imported from Zambia where many former Zimbabwean commercial farmers have resettled and set up successful farming enterprises.

2. **Fast track land nationalization programme [2000] – the reasons:** Mugabe’s corrupt and parasitic ruling clique had by 1999 seized all organs of state and his ZANU PF government was extremely unpopular. In February 2000, when Mugabe lost a referendum to change the constitution (which would have further entrenched his power), an urgent new strategy was required to retain power. The violent land invasions were therefore initiated to neutralise the farm worker vote by stopping any opposition members campaigning on the commercial farms, and by causing intense fear throughout the rural areas. Despite this, ZANU PF effectively lost the 2000 elections to the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party and it was only the appointment of 30 seats from among the chiefs that gave Mugabe control of Parliament.
3. **Land nationalisation – dependence on imports:** The land nationalisation programme has resulted in a critical dependence on imports. Approximately 1.8 million tonnes of maize [corn] are required annually to meet the country’s needs against the current national yield of less than half that. Every year since 2000, there has been a food deficit. In 2013, the UN appealed for more than US\$100 million dollars to feed 1.7 million people. In 2014, the World Food Program (WFP) warned that 2.2 million people would require food aid.
4. **Land nationalisation– smallholder production:** The increase in smallholder production is wholly inadequate to feed Zimbabwe and has come at the cost disrupting the link between Zimbabwean agriculture and industry. It has further undermined state revenue, making it impossible to provide support to successful smallholders.
5. **Land nationalisation – displacement:** A decade and a half since the land nationalisation started, up to 70,000 households - perhaps 350,000 people - remain displaced, living in poverty on the urban peripheries of cities and towns. But the total displacement is far greater. Over two million in the farm worker community and among the urban poor did not receive land and became economic migrants, mainly to South Africa and Botswana.
6. **Land nationalization and resettlement will not solve unemployment:** With a mere 700,000 people (only 14% of the workforce) currently employed in the formal economy, land resettlement cannot and will not solve the country's unemployment problem.
7. **Land nationalisation – impact on GDP:** Zimbabwe's real GDP fell 40% from US\$6.6 billion in 2000 to US\$4.1 billion in 2010, while real per capita incomes in 2011 were 37% lower than when Zimbabwe finally gained independence from Britain in April 1980. (World Bank)



Zimbabwe’s GDP annual percentage change after farm nationalisation and property rights destruction in 2000

8. **“Land nationalisation” programme – the costs:** In 2009, estimated costs of the land nationalisation included US\$2.8 billion in international food aid on an emergency basis, nearly US\$12 billion in lost agricultural production since the start of the farm invasions in 2000, and a potentially far higher figure in compensation. Less than 1 % of farmers have had any offer of compensation for the taking of their homes and livelihoods.
9. **“Land rentals” to pay back white commercial farmers:** In May 2015, the government announced that it would soon start collecting land rentals from new black farmers to help compensate white farmers whose farms were taken, many of whom are now destitute. However, based on approximately 11 million hectares at US\$3 per hectare, the proposal is totally unrealistic. As one calculation suggests, this could take a couple of centuries, even at a zero interest rate, factoring in no administration costs and assuming 100% collection rate.

INVESTOR CONFIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Investor confidence:** Before confidence can be restored, security issues need to be addressed, especially relating to the lack of property rights in the constitution, the rule of law breakdown and the freeing up of the economy. The regulation, control and theft from investors continues to severely damage the economy. Zimbabwean economist John Robertson predicts negative economic growth of minus five percent by the end of 2015.

BAD GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

1. **Bad governance:** As President Obama pointed out in July 2013, bad governance continues to destroy the economy – which used to be one of the wealthiest on the continent.
2. **Transparency International Global Corruption Perceptions Index for 2014:** Zimbabwe was ranked 156 out of 174 countries. Transparency International noted that a poor score was likely a sign of widespread bribery, lack of punishment for corruption and public institutions that did not respond to citizens’ needs.ⁱⁱⁱ
3. **Corruption and patronage:** The increasing rate of corruption and scandals has drained the country’s resources, worsening from the early 1990s and spiralling out of control from 2000. Since then it has morphed into a powerful patronage system under the President.
4. **Corruption - cost to economy:** The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (Zimra) estimates that corruption drains US\$2 billion from government coffers annually while the African Development Bank suggests the impact of corruption on the economy is in the region of US\$10 billion. These estimates are based on direct economic costs.
5. **Corruption – Marange diamonds:** According to Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), a group campaigning against “blood diamonds”, diamonds worth at least US\$2bn were stolen by Mugabe's ruling elite, international dealers and criminals between 2008 and 2012. PAC noted that revenue which could have revived the ailing economy from the world’s largest diamond producer in 2014 had been channelled into a "parallel government" of police and military officers and government officials loyal to Mugabe.
6. **Corruption and tax evasion:** Cases of corrupt operating partners and government officials accepting bribes – which result in unscrupulous politics and tax evasion - are rife in the Marange diamond industry. In 2013, the Zimbabwe finance minister stated that the Treasury had not received any tax revenue from Marange operations that year.

DESTRUCTION OF JUSTICE SYSTEM AND RULE OF LAW

1. **Destruction of Justice System:** After taking control of his own justice system, allowing the invasion of the Supreme Court and hounding senior judges out of office, Mugabe has been instrumental in destroying the regional justice system which was there to protect democracy, human rights and the rule of law for nearly a quarter of a billion people in southern Africa through the SADC Tribunal. Closed down by the SADC Heads of State in 2012, the Tribunal is now unable to hear any cases from SADC citizens. He also continues to work against justice delivery in Zimbabwe by allowing court orders to be ignored with impunity.
2. **World Justice Project - Rule of Law Index for 2014:** Zimbabwe was ranked 97 out of 99 countries. This index measures the rule of law using 47 indicators organized around 8 themes: constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, and criminal justice.^{iv}
3. **The International Criminal Court:** Mugabe is part of the group of African dictators wanting to ensure the ICC cannot arrest or try them for any of their crimes.

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

1. **Destruction of property rights:** Every year since property rights were destroyed in the commercial farming sector in 2000, international food aid has been required to prevent mass starvation. Due to the collapse of the commercial farming sector and the destruction of irrigation schemes, hundreds of thousands of people will die if not given food aid this year. Zimbabwe's agriculture can be fixed by changing the Constitution to give security of tenure; and re-introducing the rule of law through a non-partisan justice system.

FOOD CRISIS

1. **Reliance on imported food:** Thirty-five years after independence, Zimbabwe, which was a major regional food exporter, now imports at least 80 percent of the food it needs to support an estimated population of 14 million people. On former commercial farms across the country, there are no longer crops, fences or livestock, the infrastructure has been looted and the buildings are derelict.
2. **Maize (Corn) forecast:** Zimbabwe's staple maize (corn) production is forecast to drop by 49 percent this year due to the poor rains, the destruction of irrigation systems and the chaotic farm situation. The latest forecast for the 2015 harvest is down to 700,000 tons but estimates made from satellite data by food security agencies suggest a crop as low as 300,000 tonnes. This is far less than the 1.8 million tonnes required to feed the population annually.
3. **Cost of imported corn:** Government has belatedly admitted that it will have to import 700,000 tonnes of corn which would cost US\$168 million at current prices. The World Food Program is looking to source US\$60 million to prevent widespread starvation in the region.

ELECTIONS

1. **Elections:** Zimbabwe has not had free and fair elections since 2000 when President Mugabe realized for the first time that his ZANU PF party was in danger of losing power to the newly launched Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party.

The Khampepe Report, commissioned by former South African President Thabo Mbeki on Zimbabwe's disputed 2002 elections, was only released in November 2014 after a protracted court battle. There is no doubt the elections would have been won by the MDC if they had been free and fair – which the Khampepe Report confirms they were not. Foreign observers from democratic countries are not welcome at Zimbabwe elections and elections are a sham.

2. **The March 2015 by-elections:** At an election rally to launch his wife's political campaign, it was clear that Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa would not tolerate a ZANU PF defeat. Emulating Mugabe, he warned that "Everyone will vote at their polling station and we know who will vote at which polling station, voting has a pattern, it is not like death which just comes....." He said headmen should lead their people to the polling station, while party chairmen would follow behind and watch that everyone voted.
3. **Xenophobic violence:** The recent xenophobic attacks and tension in South Africa will only increase as more and more people leave Zimbabwe due to the economic collapse, food insecurity and the ever prevalent fear factor. Up to a quarter of the Zimbabwe population has voted with its feet and left Zimbabwe, the majority escaping to South Africa.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

1. **African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) report:** In 2006, the ACHPR, which had until then been silent about the growing evidence of systematic human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, condemned Mugabe's human rights record in a hard-hitting report.
2. **Violations of human rights laws and the rule of law:** The ACHPR found that the Mugabe government had violated the African Union's charter, as well as other international laws including the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The ACHPR also expressed concern over the lack of respect for the rule of law and the growing culture of impunity.
3. **Forced evictions:** The ACHPR report called on the Harare government to repeal several repressive laws, to stop forced evictions immediately – an estimated 700,000 people were made homeless by the Operation Murambatsvina evictions during winter 2005 - and to allow full and unimpeded access to international aid to help the victims.
4. **March 2008 election violence:** The March 2008 run-off election was preceded by a wave of shockingly brutal human rights violations that resulted in the murder of more than 200 people. At least 9,000 people were injured from torture, beatings and other violations. As many as 20,000 people – some of whom were denied treatment in government facilities - eventually received treatment. Tens of thousands more were forced to flee their homes.
5. **Human rights violations 2015:** March onwards witnessed a spike in human rights abuses characterised by excessive use of force by the police in quelling protests. On March 9, 2015, Itai Dzamara, a freelance journalist and pro-democracy activist courageous enough to want to lead a pro-democracy demonstration, was abducted by suspected agents of the State before he could do. His whereabouts are still unknown and it is feared he has been murdered.
6. **Deaths and covert threats:** The economic hardships facing the country manifested in violent food riots by inmates at Chikurubi Maximum Prison this year. Although there were only few cases of overt political violence, there was a surge of covert forms of violence, notably threats, intimidation, and the partisan distribution of food as well as farming inputs.

7. **Racial Discrimination:** During the 1980s Gukurahundi genocide, over 20,000 people from the minority Ndebele group – men, women and children - were starved and brutally murdered. From the year 2000, more than 95 percent of white commercial farmers have been violently evicted from their homes and businesses, with this racial persecution systematically persisting with racial laws, and a system of impunity through partisan police.

HEALTH CRISIS

1. **Health care at independence in 1980:** At independence, Zimbabwe had one of Africa's best health services. In the thirty years since then, it has taken dramatic steps backwards, and is now one of the most health deprived countries in the world.
2. **Doctor/population ratio:** Zimbabwe has suffered immensely from a brain drain of doctors. There are now 1.6 doctors for every 10,000 people. Most government rural health centres are manned by only two doctors who have to perform multiple tasks. Linked to this, there are an average of seven nurses and trained midwives for every 10,000 people in the country.
3. **Health care unaffordable:** The government's inability to adequately fund public health has forced hospitals to deny the poor access to health care and patients are left to die because they cannot afford tertiary care services. Service providers also have withdrawn their services or are demanding cash up front.
4. **Health care donor funding:** The crumbling public health sector currently receives most of its funding from the donor community under the Health Transition Fund (HTF), a US\$435 million multi-donor pooled fund established in 2011 and set to expire this year. By the end of July 2014, the government had disbursed less than 20% of the budget money allocated to public health. From 2003 to mid 2014, Zimbabwe received more than US\$707 million from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In 2013, the Fund approved a US\$555 million grant to fight the three diseases between 2014 and 2016.
5. **Health care and corruption:** Health service delivery has also been crippled by corruption, notably the theft of drugs and equipment from hospitals, and the flouting of tender processes by hospital officials for personal gain. The migration of trained labour has hit this sector more than any other.

EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

1. **Educational crisis:** With unemployment on the increase, escalating school fees and an acute shortage of qualified teachers, Zimbabwe's once revered education system is in crisis. In 2013, close to 13,000 children were forced to drop out of school, a shocking 43 percent increase on the previous year. The government currently employs about 20,000 unqualified teachers, nearly a fifth of the teachers on the payroll. Thousands of qualified teachers have left the country to escape the economic collapse and relentless ruling party harassment during elections.
2. **Educational sector reliance on donors:** In 2014, despite Mugabe's anti-British and anti-Western rhetoric, his government appealed to Britain's Department for International Development (DIFID) to fund school fees for one million impoverished children – about a third of the country's pupils. Britain, Germany and other European donors paid for more than 13 million text books for schoolchildren when the unity government took over.

POLITICS, THE POWER STRUGGLE AND THE NEW VICE PRESIDENT

1. **Mugabe's relationship with Mengistu:** The former Ethiopian dictator, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, has been Mugabe's close and constant confidant since being given refuge in Zimbabwe. The cornerstone of Mengistu's brutal attempt at social engineering was "land redistribution". Mengistu is also believed to have been the brains behind Operation Murambatsvina. This was a ruthless demolition campaign that destroyed 700,000 homes in 2005, overtly claimed to be a slum clearance operation, but covertly designed to reduce the opposition MDC's urban power base.
2. **Ruling party power struggle and Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa:** The ongoing, ruthless power struggle within ZANU PF and the purging of potential successors is divisive and highly damaging for the country and the economy. Emmerson Mnangagwa, Mugabe's powerful new Vice President and heir apparent, who was Minister of State Security during the Gukurahundi genocide (1982-1982), has a reputation for ruthlessness. In 2013 he was appointed Minister for Justice and Legal Affairs.

Mnangagwa is also a key member of Joint Operations Command (JOC). Partnership Africa Canada report, "Diamonds and Clubs" (June 2010), describes the members of JOC as "the high priests of Zimbabwean politics, the final arbiters of tough decisions, and the architects of every single government-sponsored act of repression from the Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland, to the farm invasions, to successive episodes of election-related violence.

3. **Mnangagwa and Beijing:** Mnangagwa has close ties with Beijing and is reported to receive financial and political backing. China has reportedly set aside a US\$1 billion loan facility for Zimbabwe's economic resuscitation under a Mnangagwa presidency, should it materialise.
4. **Mnangagwa – "trained to kill":** Mnangagwa's ongoing threats, made in public and reported in the media, are of great concern. For example, during February 2015, while threatening two multi-million dollar investors in the country, he reminded them that he "was trained to kill", a statement likely to frighten away investors. At the commissioning of a water treatment plant in Masvingo during April 2015, Mnangagwa said if he was God, he would deprive MDC supporters of oxygen so that they would all die because they were anti-revolutionary.

CONCLUSION: "Zimbabwe's growing instability is exacerbated by dire economic decline, endemic governance failures, and tensions over ruling party succession; without major political and economic reforms, the country could slide into being a failed state," wrote the International Crisis Group (IGS) in a report dated September 29, 2014.

"The current situation is not sustainable," noted the IGS. "Zimbabwe is an insolvent and failing state, its politics zero sum, its institutions hollowing out, and its once vibrant economy moribund... A major culture change is needed among political elites, as well as commitment to national as opposed to partisan and personal interests".

What is it that caused the fastest shrinking economy in the recorded history of the world in a peace time situation? What is it that brought the second most industrialized country in sub Saharan Africa (after South Africa) into a state of 85% unemployment?

What is it that made the bread basket of southern Africa into a country that would have had widespread death by starvation if food aid had not come in from the USA and the West every year for the last 14 years? What is that has caused an estimated 25% of the entire Zimbabwean population to flee the country of their birth in such a short period of time?

At the root of it is the breakdown of the rule of law and the discrimination that has allowed Mugabe's political elite to greedily grab or destroy homes, businesses and other assets from opposition members or people with a white coloured skin. They then asset strip them and leave the workers poor, hungry and dependent on the ruling party and international food aid for their survival so that they can be controlled and manipulated for political ends.

The racial record of the Mugabe regime is dire: first there was the racially inspired genocide of the 1980s when the current regime murdered an estimated 20,000 Ndebele people. Then there is the white population in Zimbabwe which has been depleted in numbers by approximately 90 percent. In the last 15 years the white population on the commercial farms has been systematically and lawlessly driven off their farms and is now less than 5 percent of what it was; and the ethnic cleansing of those rural areas continues. The last 5 percent of white farmer, who are persistently terrorised or criminalised, face two years in jail for committing the "crime" of farming their land and living in their own homes on those farms - in a country that is starving.

My father in law, Mike Campbell, was abducted and severely beaten – and later died. The reason was that Mike took President Mugabe to court in the regional court of the SADC Tribunal on the racial discrimination issue – and because we as white people are constitutionally denied the right to a day in court when our homes and livelihoods are violently and systematically stolen without compensation. Mike got a final and binding judgment in 2008 which confirmed that racial discrimination was taking place in Zimbabwe and had to stop. Despite that, not a single signatory country to the International Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination [ICERD] has asked the Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination [CERD] to investigate the continued violation of the ICERD by the Zimbabwe Government.

In 2012, after the Zimbabwe Government was found in contempt of court President Mugabe put pressure on the SADC Heads of State to close down the entire court, depriving a quarter of a billion people in 15 southern African countries of a court of last resort when the justice systems fail them in their own countries.

In his capacity as both the current African Union Chairman and the Chairman of SADC, Mugabe has recently told SADC: "I give poison not for you to swallow but to give to someone else" - the poison being racial hatred, and the "someone else" being white people.

I have been impressed by the moral manner in which so many people in the USA wish to try to deal with immoral situations. The Zimbabwe Democracy Act needs to remain in place and be strengthened. At the same time, in the spirit of Godly truth and the Martin Luther King civil rights movement ethos, it is important that the USA makes a complaint to CERD and asks for an investigation of the Zimbabwe Government.

Until non-discrimination, property rights and the rule of law are restored to the people of Zimbabwe, hunger, deprivation and regression will continue to be the order of the day. Racial discrimination takes a nation into a never ending spiral of hate and recrimination. There is no way forward while it is allowed to continue. Silence is the sickening sound of tacit approval.

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30 May 2015

ⁱ The Heritage Foundation's 2015 Index of Economic Freedom:
<http://www.heritage.org/index/ranking>

ⁱⁱ World Bank Group Doing Business Index:

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>

ⁱⁱⁱ Transparency International Global Corruption Perceptions Index for 2014:

<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>

^{iv} World Justice Project Rule of Law Index for 2014:

<http://data.worldjusticeproject.org/>