

Digest

EU HEADS OF MISSION MEETING: 13 JULY 2005

Present: Presidency (UK) plus Commission, Denmark, DFID, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden.

5. EU Troika Demarche on 'Operation Restore Order' in Zimbabwe.

The Presidency reported that the Troika had carried out the demarche and that a Coreu with more detail would follow shortly. One member informed the Group that they had received a Note Verbale from the Zimbabwean Embassy on the issue. The Mission agreed to circulate this to the rest of the Group.

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eGram 8357/05

Date created 06/07/2005 15:49:00

Subject ZIMBABWE: OPERATION RESTORE ORDER: UPDATE

Summary

1. Demolitions continue. Tens of thousands still without adequate shelter. UNSG's Envoy Tibaijuka extends her stay... AU Envoy Nyanduga arrives, but GoZ prevent him from starting his mission to assess the Operation.
2. First high-profile ZANU(PF) resignation in protest at Operation...

DETAIL

4. Despite GoZ assertions to the contrary... demolitions in poor urban areas have continued over the past week. So far, the UN locally estimate that the Operation has affected 72,000 families (around 360,000 people).

5. Annan's Envoy, Anna Tibaijuka, has extended her stay in Zimbabwe to complete her assessment mission. She has seen some of the worst-affected areas, including the Porta Farm informal settlement outside Harare (her visit was covered by the media – footage shown on BBC), the Caledonia Farm "holding camp", and the cities of Mutare and Bulawayo.

6. ... GoZ is reluctant to allow a full-scale humanitarian response for fear of creating new "permanent" settlements. For example, at Caledonia Farm (to where around 4,000 people have been moved) the authorities won't allow aid agencies to put in access to the mains water supply 5km away, or to dig boreholes. So UNICEF have to truck to the camp 15,000 litres of water daily – inadequate, expensive and

unnecessary. We have also had reports that the (GoZ appointed) Governor of Mutare has ordered the Zimbabwean Red Cross to remove tents they had provided to some of those made homeless.

8. Meanwhile, the fanfare with which GoZ announced the new “reconstruction” stage has been tempered by widespread cynicism that the plans are realistic or adequate. GoZ doesn’t have the Z\$3 trillion (approx USD 300 million) announced for construction of new houses (this is unbudgeted expenditure)... In any case, this sum would be insufficient to meet post-Operation needs. Although the military have been tasked with urgent construction of houses, they have a maximum of eight army field squadrons of engineers (approx 1600 men) available. We estimate that, even if working to full capacity, this force would only be able to construct around 2,000 houses by their target date of the start of the rainy season (September/October).

10. An envoy from the AU Commission on People’s and Human Rights, Bahame Tom Nyanduga, has arrived in Zimbabwe. He has been sent by Konare, Chairman of the AU Commission, on a fact-finding mission on the Operation.

11. This week saw the first high-profile resignation from the ruling ZANU(PF) party in protest at the Operation. Central Committee member Pearson Mbalekwa (former ZANU MP and Central Intelligence Organisation director) has been quoted in the (independent) press as saying he “could not be seen to be part of the whole exercise which has caused untold suffering to people whom we claim to represent.” ...

13. Meanwhile, other negative developments include:

- A recent upsurge in the number of farm invasions, confirmed by the Commercial Farmers’ Union – they reckon there are currently around five cases per week.
- The fuel, and therefore transport, crisis is deepening. Most petrol stations have been dry for many weeks. The two or three outlets which sell fuel in bulk for foreign currency (the sole source for this Embassy) now have queues of 4-5 hours, with no guarantee of supply.
- Many basic goods remain unavailable, and when they do appear on the shelves, the price is beyond the reach of the majority.

Date created 28/06/2005 14:15:00

5. The team said they had been horrified by suggestions in the state-run media that they would endorse the ongoing “Operation Restore Order” because of its stated aim of clamping down on the informal sector. In their view, the Operation would only make the economic situation worse, since the parallel market was acting as a safety valve in the crisis-ridden economy. They had made this clear to their interlocutors during the visit, and it was included in their press statement.
