



## Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum

### Regional Solidarity Statement on Zimbabwe

**1<sup>st</sup> August 2013**

The Regional Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum notes with concern the premature announcement by the Leader of the African Union Observer Team, Former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, who has provisionally declared Zimbabwe elections free and fair as polls close after a day of voting.

Concerns raised by opposition parties, in particular those raised by MDC T Secretary Tendai Biti, and the numerous concerns regarding the electoral climate raised in statements issued by Zimbabwean civics and regional solidarity movements appear to have been completely disregarded.

In particular the diabolical manner in which the flawed voters roll has been dealt with, and the varied forms of repression and intimidation that have been well documented and clearly presented, cast the AU statement that the election is free and fair in an extremely dubious light.

The Regional Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum has stated repeatedly, based on the SADC Guidelines on Governing Democratic Elections and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance that the credibility of an election does not rest on the conduct of voters at voting stations on the days of the election alone.

In the run up to the polling day the SADC mediation team, speaking on behalf of the African Union as a whole, raised serious concerns about reforms which had been deliberately ignored and purposively circumvented. The failure to act on these reforms, agreed and signed by all conflicting parties, and guaranteed by SADC as a signatory to the Global Political Agreement are a massive set back for the regional and continental democratisation processes.

Regardless of the outcome of the election, efforts to increase meaningful citizen participation in decision making processes regarding their elected leaders, have been dealt a resounding slap in the face.

As the biased and severely tainted Zimbabwe Electoral Commission sits on the results that trickle in, ensuring that it has full control over how these results are reported on, it will be important to seek out and listen to the voices of those who have been on the receiving end of decades of violent policies that have failed to respond to the material needs of ordinary Zimbabweans. Millions of people are likely to remain living in poverty, and as the militarized elite consolidates its grip on power the future for Zimbabweans in and outside of the country remains highly precarious.

Lessons learned in the process of building a deep culture of people-to-people solidarity amongst citizens across the region will have to inform and guide the next steps of these important forms of social organisation. Workers struggles amongst those affected by an increasingly voracious extractive sector, and a rapacious state, have suffered further setbacks, and there is much work to be done to build solidarity across the working classes.

New forms of organisation will have to be found, and increasingly sophisticated ways of mobilising and organising people into new forms of power will have to be developed. We will need to find forms of organisation that cannot be circumvented by the technically flawed and deeply circumspect current systems of voting that cannot any longer be argued to be legitimate representations of the will of the people.

The Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum is a network movement of progressive South African civil society organisations, including youth, women, labour, faith-based, human rights and student formations that are engaged in the promotion of people-to-people solidarity for sustainable peace, democracy and human&peoples rights in Zimbabwe, engaged with and supported by regional counterparts and solidarity formations in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland

*On the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at a multi-sectoral gathering of civil society formations from across Southern Africa, meeting under the banner of the Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum, solidarity activists resolved to commit themselves to a solidarity action plan in support of their Zimbabwean counterparts. This action plan continues.*

**Supported by representatives at the Regional Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July.**

***Delegates were drawn from the following formations:***

<b>The Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum Secretariat</b>	<b>Local Peace Committees from Orange Farm, Alexandra and Soweto</b>	<b>Malawi Economic Justice Network</b>
<b>ACTION Support Centre</b>	<b>Namibia National Farmers Union</b>	<b>World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)</b>
<b>COSATU</b>	<b>Gauteng Concerned Residents</b>	<b>Media Coalition of Tanzania</b>
<b>NUMSA</b>	<b>Treatment Action Campaign</b>	<b>DRC Diaspora Forum</b>
<b>SAMWU</b>	<b>Norwegian People's Aid</b>	<b>OSISA</b>
<b>NEHAWU</b>	<b>Solidarity Peace Trust</b>	<b>PUDEMO</b>
<b>SATAWU</b>	<b>Zimbabwe-Mozambique Solidarity Alliance</b>	<b>Swaziland Solidarity Network</b>
<b>SASCO</b>	<b>TUCOSWA</b>	<b>Swaziland Democracy Campaign</b>
<b>SACC</b>	<b>Zambia Social Forum</b>	<b>SALO</b>
<b>CRISIS in Zimbabwe Coalition</b>	<b>National Constitutional Assembly</b>	<b>ANC branches / ANCYL</b>
<b>PASSOP</b>	<b>GERMANY Trade Union Congress</b>	<b>Regional Solidarity Formation in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland</b>
<b>African Diaspora Forum</b>		
<b>Zimbabwe Peace and Counseling Services</b>		