

Letter to the Vigil from Foreign Office - May 2019

Written by Administrator

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Dear Zimbabwe Vigil Co-ordinators,

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister of 27 April enclosing your petition about Zimbabwe's readmission to the Commonwealth. I am replying as a member of the Southern Africa Team at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

It is not for the UK to decide if Zimbabwe is to rejoin the Commonwealth. The final decision is for all Commonwealth members. The UK would only support re-admission provided Zimbabwe meets the admission requirements, complying with the values and principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter. We have been clear that the disproportionate use of force by security forces, as seen in January 2019, is inconsistent with the Commonwealth Charter.

The UK Government condemns the brutal suppression in Matabeleland in the early 1980s and supports the process of truth and reconciliation envisaged under the 2013 Constitution. This would allow the historical record to be established and victims of political and ethnic violence and their relatives to feel some justice has been served. We welcomed President Mnangagwa's signing of the National Peace and Reconciliation Bill in 2018. However, this needs to be enacted and form part of a more comprehensive plan of credible national dialogue and healing for Zimbabwe.

The UK stands ready in friendship to support a Zimbabwe that fully embraces the rule of law, human rights and economic reform. We have been clear that international support will be based on genuine political and economic reforms.