

Letters to MPs re Parliamentary Debate

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 15 February 2015 12:12 -

Dear Supporters

As mentioned in the last diary, the Vigil is asking people to send a letter to their MPs to seek their support for a debate on Zimbabwe in the House of Commons. We have taken on board suggestions and made small amendments to our proposed letter as below. To find your MP, click on <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>, type in your post code or constituency. This will take you to your MP and their contact details.

Dear MP

I am a Zimbabwean living in your constituency. I write to ask you to support a call for a parliamentary debate on Zimbabwe.

The idea of a debate was supported by former Africa Minister, Mark Simmonds, who kindly spoke to Zimbabweans at a recent meeting in Portcullis House (see Zimbabwe Vigil diary of 24th

January 2015:

<http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/650-progress--zimbabwe-vigil-diary-24th-january-2015>

). He said it had been some years since the House of Commons had last discussed Zimbabwe and it was time for another debate. He was backed in this by Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West, who had arranged the meeting at the request of Zimbabweans in his constituency. We were also happy to be addressed by Fiona Mactaggart, MP.

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I am part of a network of Zimbabweans who are writing to their MPs to drum up support for the debate to be arranged.

I am sure you are aware of the dire situation in Zimbabwe, which was recently identified by the Wall Street Journal as the 4th worst economy in the world (http://www.zimbabwe.com/news/zimsit_w_zim-among-most-repressed-economies-the-zimbabwe-independent/). This partly explains our presence in your generous country.

In brief, all elections in Zimbabwe are rigged, there is no rule of law, corruption is rampant and the new constitution – largely paid for by the British taxpayer – is predictably ignored by the Mugabe Mafia. Yet Britain talks of 'progress', 're-engagement' and is lifting sanctions!

We want the debate to raise, for example, such questions as:

1.

What is the British Government's policy on Zimbabwe? (This is unclear at present. Why is the British Government being so ingratiating to the Mugabe regime when all it does is spit in their face?)

2.

Why has the UK lifted targeted sanctions against Mugabe's cronies when the object for imposing them has not been achieved? (Mark Simmonds spoke of 'progress': what progress?)

3.

By resuming direct aid to the Mugabe government the EU is further propping up an illegal regime, allowing it to offload onto donors its obligations to the Zimbabwean people in education, health services etc.

4.

What is the UK's policy on sending back Zimbabweans? (It is still unsafe for political activists; there are few jobs and widespread poverty.)

Alok Sharma, the MP for Reading West, who arranged a parliamentary meeting on Zimbabwe at the request of the ROHR Reading Branch, has offered the following letter.

.....MP

House of Commons

Westminster

SW1A 0AA

DearMP

I am writing to ask you to support a future debate on Zimbabwe in the House of Commons.

There has not been a full debate on the human rights situation in Zimbabwe since December 2010 and this is therefore well overdue.

Since that time, there have been Parliamentary elections held in Zimbabwe, (during which time there were wide reports of violence against members of the opposition). The British government has expressed serious concerns about voting irregularities during these elections, in particular the refusal of the Zimbabwean government to release the full electoral roll.

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Alok Sharma, the Member of Parliament for Reading West, has suggested that there should be a full Parliamentary debate on the issue of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe and has agreed to approach the Backbench Business Committee to facilitate this.

I would be grateful if you could please let me know if you will:

1.

Support Alok Sharma in approaching the Backbench Business Committee to call for this debate

2.

Attend this debate and speak up on behalf of the Zimbabwean community in your constituency

Please do also contact Alok Sharma directly to let him know if you would be happy to support him in approaching the Backbench Business Committee.

Yours sincerely

<Name>

<Address and postcode>

If you have not already written we urge you to send one of these two letters or feel free to put the request in your own words. The important thing is to act quickly.