

Zimbabweans say move World Cup from South Africa

Written by Administrator

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The Zimbabwe Vigil, a London-based protest group, has launched a campaign to have the 2010 Football World Cup moved from South Africa because of growing instability in the region. It says FIFA must take action to ensure the safety of teams and their supporters.

The Vigil has been demonstrating outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London every Saturday since 2002 in protest at human rights abuses by the Mugabe regime. It is gathering signatures for a petition to FIFA from the thousands of people passing the Embassy. It says the situation in South Africa will be so bad because of the implosion of Zimbabwe that the World Cup should be moved.

The Vigil is also running a petition calling on European Union governments to suspend aid to governments of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) because they have failed to hold Zimbabwe to account. It wants this money to be used instead to finance refugee camps in countries neighbouring Zimbabwe to provide a refuge for Zimbabweans forced to flee because of hunger, violence and the need for medical attention safe from xenophobic violence.

Vigil Co-ordinator Dumi Tutani said 'we find it repugnant, for instance, that British taxpayers' money should go to the Malawi government. More than £60 million a year goes to Malawi whose President, Bingu Wa Mutharika, has been given a farm in Zimbabwe and has named a highway after President Mugabe'.

Text of the Petitions

- “ **A Petition to the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA)**

With the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe and the likelihood of unrest spreading to South Africa we call upon FIFA to move the 2010 World Cup from South Africa to a safer venue. By the time the World Cup takes place President Mbeki's support of the Mugabe regime will have made the whole region unsafe because millions more refugees will flee Zimbabwe prompting further xenophobic violence in neighbouring countries. **FIFA must ensure that World Cup teams and their supporters are not endangered.**”

- “A Petition to European Union Governments

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We record our dismay at the failure of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to help the desperate people of Zimbabwe at their time of trial. We urge the UK government and the European Union in general to suspend government to government aid to all 14 SADC countries until they abide by their joint commitment to uphold human rights in the region. We suggest that the money should instead be used to feed the star ving in Zimbabwe .”

For further information, contact: Rose Benton (07970 996 003, 07932 193 467), Dumi Tutani (07960 039 775) and Ephraim Tapa (07940 793 090).