

For the record No. 4



# THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE

Statement by the  
Prime Minister

ZIMBABWE RHODESIA



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## STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

The following is the text of an address by the Prime Minister, Bishop the Hon. A. T. Muzorewa, at a Press Conference at his official residence Dzimbahwe, on Saturday, 28th July, 1979.

As you are aware, the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference takes place next week in neighbouring Zambia. You are also aware that I shall not be present in Lusaka, neither will Zimbabwe Rhodesia be represented at the talks. At the same time, we can be sure that I and my Government will be condemned by some of the representatives of the countries attending the conference, particularly those from other parts of Africa, for Zimbabwe Rhodesia will undoubtedly be the central issue.

Since I shall not be allowed to put this country's case in person during the deliberations in Lusaka, I am taking this opportunity to place before you some of the points I would have made had I been invited to attend.

I would have told the conference that Zimbabwe Rhodesia is a unique miracle which, instead of receiving denunciation and condemnation by certain countries, ought to arouse admiration and acclaim throughout the world.

It is absolute insanity for people, whoever or wherever they may be, to continue to denounce or isolate this country for the reasons they did in the past. These reasons have absolutely no bearing on the present situation here. The white racist minority government, and all the iniquitous racialistic legislation, are things of the past.

They no longer exist in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. They have gone forever. UDI of 1965 was swept away in 1979 and replaced by true freedom and independence through the will of all the people of this country. Exercising, for the first time, their birthright of one person one vote, the people brought into being our popularly elected government.

I would have reminded the delegates that despite the fact that we were told that the elections would never take place, and that under potentially lethal conditions, 64.8 per cent. of our population, in the clearest possible manner, determined the path their country should follow in the future. Our people were dangerously brave to vote under threat of death pronounced by terrorists. I would have pointed out just how far we have travelled along this road in the short space of eight weeks during which our black majority Government has been in power.



I would have presented facts, ladies and gentlemen, facts making this abundantly clear, as I do now to you.

Our Parliament, which previously consisted of 50 whites and only 16 blacks, now has 72 black and 28 white members.

We have a black President and a black Prime Minister, whereas previously both these high posts were held by whites. The Executive Council or Cabinet of the pre-1978 Smith government did not have a single black minister. Today, our government of national unity caters for 14 black and only five white ministers. My office—that of Prime Minister—in the past, 100 per cent. white, is now 99 per cent. black.

The Police and Defence Commissions, which were also 100 per cent. white, are 50 per cent. black. Furthermore, as Minister of Combined Operations and Minister of Defence I have executive control and ultimate authority over all military matters. The military commanders operate under my direct policy directives. Their loyalty to me personally, and to the State, is beyond question.

Similarly, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr. Francis Zindoga, holds executive powers over the Police. At the same time, he controls all systems of justice and the civil service. Their loyalty and dedication are equally assured. The Army is already 85 per cent. black and the Police consist of 75 per cent. black personnel.

If my generals and commanders are white, I would ask how is it possible to produce black ones within eight weeks of taking over government? I would point out that Nkomo and Mugabe, Nkomo in particular, have had to go to the communist countries to get their generals, who are just as white as mine. The only difference is that those who serve me are free men, the same as the troops and police they lead. They are not commissars sent to watch over their men making sure they keep in line, following a doctrine with the one objective of trying to overthrow our popularly elected black majority government and impose Marxism on our free land. What is more, they will not allow our people who are outside to return as they now wish to. Just as the East Germans will not allow people to go to free West Germany. They keep them in what are no more than prison camps, under pain of torture and death if they even mention returning home to enjoy with us our hard won freedom and promising stability and prosperity.

My final appeal would be to that wonderful, great daughter of Britain, Mrs. Thatcher, to continue to show her courage, as she has done so far, to do what is right, even though I know she has a world of appeasement, hostility and indifference disrupting her.

The Land Tenure Act, and all racialistic segregation laws, have been removed from the statute book through the abolition of the 1969 Constitution. Equalisation of the various sections of our society is now rapidly taking place. I believe that we are working towards positive change at a reasonable and acceptable speed.

I have no doubt that our new constitution will be criticised as imperfect by those unenlightened and misguided delegates. In reply, I would have pointed out that it was drafted and agreed upon by both black and white members of the four parties to the March 3rd Agreement of 1978. I have yet to see any constitution which was perfect when first introduced, or which has even reached a state of perfection. We will be criticised for allowing the whites 28 seats in Parliament and accused of giving them too much influence and power.

My answers would have been simple. The whites of this country are not tourists, visitors or expatriates. They are citizens by birth, some going back to the fifth generation. They should, in fact, be properly termed as white Africans. Whatever they produce, and whatever contribution they make, is for the benefit of all the people, not only for themselves. The concessions we have given them, at least for the initial crucial stage of any country's development, is a small price to pay to retain their skills and expertise. They are indispensable if Zimbabwe Rhodesia is to flourish and fulfil its tremendous economic, industrial, mining and agricultural potential.

On the question of the Public Service, I would have made it clear that it has traditionally evolved from within the country, and is staffed by Zimbabwe Rhodesians of all races. Unlike most pre-independence African countries, it is not a system imported from, and imposed from, outside.

I would have compared what we are attempting to do here with what has happened elsewhere in Africa, where after independence emotions took over from reason and logic, where the position of whites was made untenable, where there was wholesale indiscriminate nationalisation without thought being given to the effect, where countries which were rich and prosperous at the time of handing over are now poor and impoverished, where they indulge in Africanisation for the sake of it with complete disregard to realism and pragmatism. Independent they may be, but it is paper independence. They now rely on charitable handouts and go round with their begging bowls to keep their countries running. Their expertise comes from fly-by-night expatriates—people with no stake in the country, and less interest. People from all over the world who go there as economic mercenaries and end up fattening



their own pockets, leaving the countries they are supposed to serve bankrupt. I would have pointed out that I have not the slightest intention of allowing Zimbabwe Rhodesia to follow such a road to economic destruction. Rather, I do intend to take the path which will lead us to prosperity and even affluence based on a course of reason, realism and pragmatism, as I have made clear on many previous occasions.

I would have asked the representatives of the more enlightened and realistic Commonwealth Governments to take a close look at the hypocrisy and double standards practised by the vast majority of their African counterparts and other members of the O.A.U. Take Moçambique, for example. It is entirely dependent upon its declared enemy, South Africa, for the operation of its railways and ports, the mainstay of its economy. Similarly, most of what little food there is to feed its starving population comes from the same source.

In Moçambique, one of our severest critics, they have in their Council of 17 Ministers, nine blacks, three whites, two Goanese and three of mixed blood.

I would have told them that while I couldn't claim that without our help, and that of South Africa, the conference wouldn't have been held, I could claim with some justification that their comfort would have been greatly impaired without our co-operation. The motor-cars they ride in, the specially imported luxury items they eat and drink, have all reached Lusaka through the courtesy of my Government and Zimbabwe Rhodesia Railways. This even applies to the special carpet Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth walks upon. All these came from South Africa, the country which is the sworn enemy of host President Kaunda.

At the same time, we hear all sorts of bleatings from the other African states over Zimbabwe Rhodesia's economic and trade ties with South Africa. These are even used as a reason for maintaining sanctions against us and the refusal of international recognition. I would have asked the conference to face facts — that many of the African countries who sit in judgement and denounce us for openly trading with South Africa are themselves doing the same thing. The only difference is that while we carry on our business as honest men in daylight, they do theirs in the dark of night.

I have no doubt that even if the Patriotic Front does not participate in the conference formally, it will feature prominently in the wings, prompting its O.A.U. sponsors. Great play will be made of allegations that we have not tried to negotiate with, or accommodate, them.

Of course, it would be evil lies. It would have given me the utmost pleasure to have provided the truth. Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe were continually invited to participate in the Transitional Government. In fact, two empty seats were kept for them in the Executive Council.

We agreed to an all-party conference without preconditions. They refused both of these approaches. The Patriotic Front was invited to participate in the drafting of the new constitution and to take part in the elections. Again they declined. The British Labour Party government was invited to participate in the drafting of our constitution, but because their darling, Nkomo, was not participating, they did not. As a result, we had no alternative but to go ahead with our democratic plans. Through these we have effected a peaceful and reconciliatory transfer of power from white minority to black majority rule.

Since then, I have contacted Mr. Nkomo and Mr. Mugabe in writing, under the spirit of the amnesty I have declared. I made it clear that they, and all their followers, are completely free to return home in safety, without fear of arrest, imprisonment, torture or death. I declared to them my honest intention of entering into dialogue with them and anyone truly and sincerely interested in following the same course as my Government, seeking peace for this country and our people.

Immediately after our elections, and prior to the establishment of my popularly elected Government, I communicated with the leaders of the frontline states in a spirit of reconciliation. I pointed out to them that it was our earnest desire to live in peace, harmony and friendship with every other nation, on the basis of mutual respect and economic co-operation.

I put to them far-reaching proposals for a normalisation of the situation between our governments, our peoples and our countries. I informed them that I was open to any suggestions they might care to make to achieve these objectives. I would have to tell the Commonwealth Conference that I had received no response from the Patriotic Front or from the Presidents of Zambia, Tanzania, Moçambique or Botswana. The only implied response was the discovery by my intelligence staff of plans to escalate the war. We have even proved, without surprise, the emptiness of Mr. Nkomo's so-called cease-fire during the period of the conference.

I would have said in Lusaka that after all we have achieved, and what we are attempting to do, international recognition is withheld and sanctions are maintained against us. I would have asked in all sincerity



where is the justice, where the morality in this situation? By comparison, elsewhere in Africa coup is followed by counter-coup and the latest military usurper is recognised by the free world, even while he is busy executing his predecessor.

I would have made the point that had I followed such a course I would have been automatically recognised and sanctions would have been lifted within 24 hours. I would have asked the free world if they honestly believe they are helping Africa by encouraging her by implication to have governments installed by coups rather than by democratic exercises with high percentage polls like 65 per cent.

It would have been a simple one. Can you tell me where else in Africa is true democracy practised as it is in Zimbabwe Rhodesia? How many countries are there left on this continent where the word democracy is even remembered, let alone where its principles are followed? Yet, these are the same countries that point the finger at me, and at us, calling us puppets. If it is a puppet to be the democratic choice of the vast majority of the people in a free, honest, truthful, impartial and fair election, then a puppet I am. And so are all other leaders who are popularly and democratically elected to power.

I wonder how many rulers in the other African states enjoy the same popular following that I do? Perhaps one, or three, to give benefit of doubt. Yet, that majority of despots is allowed veto over my democracy.

My final word to the Commonwealth leaders would be an earnest appeal for sanity, reason and honesty in accepting our democratic rights to international recognition and the raising of sanctions which would assist us in stopping the war and allow us to progress in peace and harmony to prosperity.

I would ask them not to continue with their cheap, naked, hypocritical and expedient politics designed to frustrate the true aspirations of the free peoples of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, who have decided to create a non-racial society next to none in the world. I would ask them to search their souls and do what is right in the eyes of God, for I am convinced that deep in their hearts, including those who regard themselves as our enemies, they know that our cause is just. For they, our enemies, know deep in their consciences that they are no longer fighting for justice or against U.D.I., but only to save their personal friends. They are no longer fighting for majority rule, but for being kingmaker of their personal friends.