



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
CABINET DU PRÉSIDENT

January 27th, 2003

The Honourable Bill Graham, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

By facsimile: 613-941-6900

Dear Minister Graham,

RE: Canadian Support Makes a Difference in Zimbabwe

On behalf of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA), I write to share news of the impact that Canadian support in Zimbabwe has made to the Law Society of Zimbabwe, and to urge you to continue your valuable support.

On June 3rd 2002, the President and the Secretary of the Law Society of Zimbabwe, Messrs. Sternford Moyo and Wilbert Mapombere, were arrested and detained by the Zimbabwe Republic Police. The Law Society office, Mr. Mapombere's law practice and the private residences of both the President and the Secretary were searched and official Law Society documents seized.

In November 2002, a CBA representative met with Mr. Moyo in Harare. One of the key messages Mr. Moyo wanted brought back to Canada was how influential Canadian support was, including that of the Canadian government, the Canadian Bar Association and its members, in the treatment he and Mr. Mapombere received during their arrest and how they and the Law Society of Zimbabwe have subsequently been treated. The Zimbabwe government had underestimated the international reaction to the arrests. The result of this protest has been the cessation of government threats to take control of the Law Society. Mr. Moyo also believes that it meant that they were not physically harmed or tortured, as many others have been.

While we are pleased to share this news, the situation in Zimbabwe continues to worsen. The CBA is particularly alarmed at the increasing use of torture as a method of investigation and interrogation by state agents on persons in their custody. Most recently, Gabriel Shumba, a lawyer with the Legal Resources Foundation, was detained by members of the Central Intelligence Organisation. He was charged under the notoriously draconian Public Order and Security Act with seeking to overthrow the government. He was tortured for seven hours and then transferred to the cells in police custody. He has now been released on bail.

Mr. Shumba's arrest and torture is, disturbingly, just one of an increasing number of similar reports. Many opposition Members of Parliament and lawyers have been arrested, as were members of the Harare Residents Association, a civic organisation, and the Mayor of Harare, Mr. Elias Mudzuri.

500 - 865 Carling, Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1S 5S8

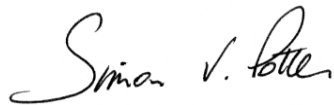
Tel/Tél. : (613) 237-2925 Toll free/Sans frais : 1-800-267-8860 Fax/Télécop. : (613) 237-0185

Home Page/Page d'accueil : www.cba.org E-Mail/Courriel : info@cba.org

The CBA continues to urge the Canadian government to take action with others in the international community, including the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries, in particular South Africa, to find concrete solutions to ensure respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Zimbabwe.

The CBA's International Development Committee is continuing to work with its partners in Zimbabwe who seek to protect the rights of citizens, to uphold the rule of law and to assist the democratically minded in exercising their rights to contest governmental actions that are adversely affecting democracy and constitutionalism. As Canadians and as lawyers, we remain committed to supporting our partners in the Zimbabwean legal community, including the Law Society of Zimbabwe and the Legal Resources Foundation. We ask that the Canadian government continue to make a concerted effort to address the situation in Zimbabwe. It is clear that such support is making a difference.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Simon V. Potter". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Simon V. Potter

cc. The Honourable Susan Whelan, P.C., M.P., Minister for International Cooperation