

The EU and sanctions

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 15 December 2013 12:44 -

By Wilbert Mukori who attended a recent meeting of the Zimbabwe Europe Network in the Hague

The European Union seems to be preparing to lift the sanctions against Mugabe and his cronies. France wants to move the EU in that direction because it does not want any African country to boycott the France-Africa conference in protest at the EU sanctions. When the French authorities extended an invitation to the Zimbabwe government, the latter asked if Mugabe was invited and the EU ban on him visiting would be lifted. The French answered no to both questions and the Mugabe regime said no Zimbabwean official would attend.

The Zimbabwe regime has since offered Paris an inducement: the regime will accept Mugabe not being invited provided the EU lifts the sanctions!

Another EU country pushing for the lifting of the sanctions is Belgium. They want the sanctions lifted so that Antwerp can recover its dominant position as the cut-diamond capital of the world. Because of the ban, Zimbabwe's illicit diamonds have ended up in China, Lebanon, Israel and India.

Mugabe refused to grant anyone from the West election observer status. "Not whilst the West retains its regime-change sanctions against us," Mugabe had argued.

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At the time, the EU promised to lift the sanctions if the elections were free, fair and credible. The EU said it would use SADC and the AU's findings as the basis of its own decision.

Despite all the evidence of failure to implement even one of the democratic reforms which both SADC and the AU had agreed were necessary for free and fair elections, failure to produce key electoral documents like the voters' roll, confirmed reports that nearly one million voters were denied the right to vote, video evidence of Zanu PF supporters bussed in to vote in areas they were clearly complete strangers to etc, SADC and the AU still judged the elections free and fair. Both SADC and the AU were keen to wash their hands of Zimbabwe.

Australia, Canada and the USA said the elections were "not credible" without a moment's hesitation.

"Gudo kushata, kushata zvaro asi haridyi chakafa chonga!" So goes the Shona saying. The baboon may be ugly but still it would not eat something if it was not sure what killed it. The hyena has no such qualms.

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The vote rigging was so blatant that even the EU, under pressure from the Belgians to lift the sanctions and not to be seen as going back on its own promise to do so, hesitated. Mugabe is like the black and white striped mephitis skunk – a well delivered stench will have the hyena gasping for breath.

In February 2014, eight months after Mugabe blatantly rigged the elections, the EU is going to have another go at lifting the sanctions; under pressure from France and Belgium.

Mugabe's propaganda machine backed by well-paid PR firms, one in UK and the other in USA, have since the July rigged elections been calling on those accusing Mugabe of vote rigging "to produce the evidence". For those of us old enough to know the dark old days of colonial oppression, this is an old trick.

Stories of blacks being shot dead by police, for example, were very common. The police would then bury their victim and claim that he slipped whilst having a shower or that he committed suicide in his cell. It was no use having eyewitness accounts of the shooting. The authorities would demand "produce the evidence" that they themselves had buried and put beyond reach.

In the corrupted voters' roll we have the smoking gun of the rigged elections. Everyone knows that. Mugabe has stubbornly refused to release the voters' roll although he is legally obliged to do so. This is a key election document that should have been made public at least a month before the elections. Mugabe cannot refuse to release the roll for much longer and the truth

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about how he rigged the elections will come out.

The EU is going to lift the sanctions on the feeble excuse that no one has produced the evidence of vote rigging by Mugabe! This is no more than bathing the skunk in Channel 5 but as long as the skunk has smell glands the threat of the over-powering stench will remain real.

The EU is looking for an excuse for lifting the sanctions but does not want to be seen as rewarding Mugabe. The reality is they will be rewarding Mugabe for rigging the elections, period.

For ordinary Zimbabweans all talk of free, fair and credible elections will remain just that – talk – until we can demonstrate that no one can rig elections and get away with it! It is for that reason that the truth about the rigged elections must be teased out regardless of how long that takes!

If Mugabe thinks if he sits tight on the voters' roll and all the other incriminating evidence of vote rigging everyone will give up he could not be more wrong.