

Dear friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to an initiative aimed at galvanizing and building the Solidarity Movement for Zimbabwe in South Africa and that we hope you will participate in the activities towards building the solidarity Movement. **SAVE ZIMBABWE NOW!**

This initiative is supported by several high profile individuals such as Nelson Mandela's wife Graca Machel and member of The Elders and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Solidarity for Zimbabwe is not 'created' through this movement, rather we are hoping to provide a basis for consolidating all the wonderful initiatives and organisations that already exist to make it a more powerful voice.

Zimbabwe as I am sure you are aware in 2008 became not only a crisis nation within its own borders, but that social and political threat that has now spread to neighbouring countries. A few men in positions of political power are decimating an entire nation of people who are being adversely affected by the fallout.

We as South Africans can play a role in helping Zimbabwe achieve the freedom it so deserves.

The widely reported cholera epidemic has spread to several South African provinces and neighbouring countries but it is only one symptom of a much larger collapse of public services in Zimbabwe. Some have called the actions of the Zimbabwean government human rights abuses, a statement that can be backed by the level of international aid and concern that the world is showing.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) upon realizing the levels of destruction mediated the then South African president Thabo Mbeki to mediate between the two warring political parties with the aim of finding a political and lasting arrangement. This however has not been successful and the situation has deteriorated dramatically in the last 12 months.

This Solidarity Movement aims to support and offer solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe, as so many did for us as South Africans under Apartheid.

The building of the Movement will begin with a 'fasting relay'. As starvation and acute malnutrition are rife, it was thought that this would be an appropriate action. Individuals can decide to fast for the full 21 days, one day a week or in any way which is manageable to them as individuals. It is hoped that this act of solidarity will lead to further actions and enthusiasm for this Movement which will positively influence Zimbabwe.

This is all part of Archbishop Desmond Tutu's call for action. You can read the article and some background information at <http://news.iafrica.com/sa/1218084.htm>

Please join us at the Central Methodist Mission on Wednesday the 21st of January to help us launch this movement. We will be able to provide you with further details of the event and what ways you can be involved in the weeks and months to come. If you are unable to attend but are interested in becoming involved, please reply to this letter with your commitment to the fast or any action you believe to be appropriate.

Several individuals cannot fast for various reasons but have pledged their support a public endorsement of this Movement which we will launch next Wednesday and or have suggested ways we can grow this solidarity.

These include Graca Machel who will open the ceremony, Archbishop Desmond Tutu who will release a written statement in support of the initiative, Kumi Naidoo, Nombonis Gasa, Louisa Zonda and Paul Verryn, among others.

If you have any individuals or organizations who you think would appreciate being informed by this initiative, please let us know. Likewise if you have any suggestions of activities or protests / acts of support we should look into incorporating into this Movement we would be most grateful.

In Solidarity,
Venitia Govender & Emily Wellman