



**Non-Governmental Organization with Special status at the ECOSOC in the United Nations, member observer at the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) of the African Union and at the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **WITHDRAWAL OF TSVANGIRAI: A SERIOUS BLOW TO DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE**

The African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO) expresses its deep sadness and its serious concerns following the withdrawal of the candidate Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of Zimbabwean opposition of the presidential race. The withdrawal was predictable, because a true caricature election staged in a climate of terror, violence, torture and civil war, intended to remain in power by all means President Mugabe defeated in first round of the presidential elections..

Nobody can throw the stone to Morgan Tsvangirai who, driven by a high sense of responsibilities, has preferred to withdraw to avoid a bloodbath even genocide in Zimbabwe.

The date of June 22 2008 is a significant black stone because this is the day when a mortal blow was dealt by President Mugabe of Zimbabwe to democracy.

This is a failure which is the big day of impotence and incompetence for SADC and the African Union who have been unable to resolve a crisis whose premises have arisen since a long time and calls upon the personal responsibility of the President Thabo Mbeki dealt a serious blow to diplomatic leadership of South Africa. President Thabo Mbeki has shown a complacency that has confined the complicity vis-à-vis the regime of Zimbabwe.

This failure has also highlighted the crisis of African democracies serious completely knock ou by the resistance of "political dinosaurs" ready to die to be able to leave empty constitutions and political institutions of content.

Cette situation lamentable de la démocratie en Afrique appelle une nouvelle approche, une nouvelle orientation et une véritable mobilisation de la société civile africaine dont le silence pendant cet épisode zimbabwéen a été scandaleux.

This deplorable situation of democracy in Africa requires a new approach, a new orientation and a genuine mobilization of African civil society whose silence during this episode of Zimbabwe was scandalous.

The African Heads of State who have been at the initiative of the Constitutive Act of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and NEPAD and keep the respect of values and principles contained in the founding texts of AU must put an end to abuses of any kind which these dictatorial regimes are guilty and who tarnish the image of the continent by conduct which brings us back years back.

**RADDHO invites** the 11th African Union Summit in Sharm el Sheikh to absolutely:

- ✓ **include** in its agenda the question of Zimbabwe and impose sanctions on the Mugabe regime
- ✓ **send** a fact-finding mission whose aim is to establish the liability of Zimbabwean authorities in serious violations of human rights and basic principles of democracy and the rule of law.
- ✓ engage in a serious reflection on the crisis of African democracies and leadership that is undermining the image of the continent in the world.

**Done in Dakar, June 23 2008**  
**The Président**