



City of Pittsburgh

510 City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Text File

Introduced: 6/24/2008

Bill No: 2008-0549, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, leaders of Zimbabwe's security forces known as the "Joint Operations Command" under command responsibility of Robert Mugabe are orchestrating and carrying out a campaign of murder, torture and political violence since the March 29 elections in which neither new majority party leader and first place finisher Morgan Tsvangirai nor second place finisher Mugabe obtained the majority vote needed for victory; and

WHEREAS, Human Rights Watch reported this month that youth militias and army-sponsored gangs in anticipation of a run-off election between Tsvangirai and Mugabe, and under the direction of the Joint Operations Command, have killed dozens of MDC organizers, tortured or beaten hundreds more, displaced thousands from their homes, killed and maimed livestock, and engaged in gross intimidation tactics that have resulted in a political climate of fear and terror; and

WHEREAS, opposition leaders, human rights advocates, election monitors, and others advocating peacefully for a free Zimbabwe continue to be abducted, imprisoned or detained, including Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), Tendai Biti of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and human rights lawyer Eric Matinenga; and

WHEREAS, the government of Zimbabwe has maliciously limited the ability of humanitarian groups and non-governmental organizations to deliver critical aid to populations already suffering under escalating hyperinflation, massive food shortages, and high rates of HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, the people of Zimbabwe, despite widespread brutality and intimidation, have continued to courageously speak out against the violence, to demand that their voices be heard, and to push for free and fair elections despite the ruling party's brutal attempts to silence them; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has called for the immediate cessation of violence and has urged the U.N. Security Council to address the Zimbabwe crisis and to support a resolution which respects the will of the Zimbabwe people; and

WHEREAS, the use of violence and intimidation is abhorrent to the values of the residents of the City of Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, freedom from fear, torture and inhumane treatment is an inherent right of all human beings; and

WHEREAS, the international community has resolved that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government and that every person has the right to freedom of speech, belief and association;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh urges international leaders and regional organizations such as the African Union and the South African Development Community to condemn the violence occurring in Zimbabwe and to take all necessary action to ensure that the will of the Zimbabwean people is honored, including establishing the foundation for peaceful and fair elections; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh declares this Friday, June 27 to be "Zimbabwe Freedom Day" and in so doing proclaims Pittsburgh's solidarity with those in Zimbabwe fighting peacefully for their freedom; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh encourages other cities around the United States and the world to join in this proclamation of solidarity and to declare this Friday as "Zimbabwe

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