

Mugabe

“OUR CAUSE IS AFRICA’S CAUSE”

After the recent events in Zimbabwe, which saw opposition leaders beaten up by the police, and the decision thereafter by the SADC to stand by Zimbabwe, our editor, **Baffour Ankomah**, went to interview the president in the eye of the storm, Robert Mugabe. He was in fine fettle. Please turn the page.

President Robert Mugabe:
"The success of Zimbabwe is Africa's
success. So our stand, as a fight,
should be seen as an African cause"





Baffour: You had a good SADC conference in Tanzania, didn't you? One British journalist grudgingly reported that you returned to Harare with a spring in your step. Was everything hanging on this summit?

President Robert Mugabe: Well, when we went to Dar es Salaam, it was really to try and explain to our colleagues of SADC the events that happened here on 11 March, so they could get the true picture. We also wanted to explain to them, in a very clear perspective, why the actions here were not to be seen in isolation but to be read in the context where our erstwhile enemies – Britain and its allies – were actually orchestrating a situation which they believed would lead to regime change here.

This is the explanation I gave them, and I knew they would understand it. I knew that they too had been disturbed by what they had seen on *CNN*, *BBC*, *Sky News* and the other television services. But they are solid, SADC is solid; and let it not be forgotten that if imperialism and colonialism were ever solidly fought and defeated, it was here in Southern

Africa that the real fight against imperialism took place.

And so we went to Dar es Salaam not to put up a fight but to explain to my colleagues the true situation here, and they understood the explanation. In the circumstances, what they themselves thought was the right thing to do was to support us because they realised that we were besieged, and we have been besieged for a long time. Economic sanctions have been imposed on us and they have undermined our economy and our efforts to develop. And so, while the world thought Dar es Salaam would deal us a death blow [laughs sarcastically], it was they who were dealt a death blow.

Baffour: At the end of the day, the region showed solidarity with Zimbabwe...

Mugabe: [cuts in] ... It did, yes.

Baffour: But I would like you to situate the Zimbabwe case in the wider African context. Why should a Ghanaian or Nigerian or Kenyan or South African or an African-

American support Zimbabwe? Why should Africa stand with Zimbabwe?

Mugabe: Well, obviously, our cause is their cause. The success of Zimbabwe is their success. And we don't live in isolation, we are not an extension of Europe, we are part of Africa, and so really our stand, as a fight, should be seen as an African cause, and wherever we have Africans, be they in the Diaspora or in Senegal or Ghana where we first got our revolutionary drink, they should be able to understand and appreciate the war we are fighting here, and when they are disillusioned, it is our duty to remove that disillusionment and get them back on the right path as our supporters.

Baffour: You are saying that if Africa allows Zimbabwe to go down, no African country would again be able to pop its head above water. It would be like when Nkrumah was taken out, the African revolutionary fire was extinguished, and we lost the momentum for the past 40 years.

Mugabe: Sure, it would affect them too – the



“Every inch of Africa matters. If that inch loses its freedom, then the whole African continent is affected. It’s freedom minus. And you don’t want anything of that nature to happen to Africa.”

Above: Western ambassadors show where they stand in Zimbabwe – with the MDC, prompting Mugabe to say: “If you look at the stance they adopted, they were there with Tsvangirai and those they regarded as victims on Tsvangirai’s side, but they were never there with victims on our side, people who had been petrol-bombed or beaten up by MDC thugs who were in hospital. They never visited them”

whole of Africa. If you want to read Nkrumah’s own principle – Ghana would not regard itself as totally free and independent unless every inch of Africa was free. So every inch of Africa matters. If that inch loses its freedom, then the whole African continent is affected. It’s freedom minus. And you don’t want anything of that nature to happen to Africa.

And in Dar es Salaam, President Thabo Mbeki put it very clearly. He said: *“The fight against Zimbabwe is a fight against us all. Today it is Zimbabwe, tomorrow it will be South Africa, it will be Mozambique, it will be Angola, it will be any other African country. And any government that is perceived to be strong, and to be resistant to imperialists, would be made a target and would be undermined. So let us not allow any point of weakness in the solidarity of SADC, because that weakness will also be transferred to the rest of Africa.”*

Baffour: That was quite heart-warming, wasn’t it? But upon seeing the TV pictures of Morgan Tsvangirai and other MDC leaders beaten up by the police, many people around the world are asking: “Why is President Mugabe using the police to beat up his opponents?”

Mugabe: [Laughs]. I wasn’t there. I didn’t even know they had been beaten! But if a person challenges the police, breaches law and order, and thinks the police would just look at him and shake hands with him, and say “you’ve done a good thing by tossing and pushing us around”, well, he is quite mistaken. The police are there to maintain law and order. And it doesn’t matter who, if you threaten them with force, they will answer back with force. And the police did their work.

We may regret that in doing their work, they might have exceeded the punishment they gave them. But these things happen. It happens in war, it happens everywhere. If you challenge the police, don’t think they are going to be merciful with you at all. Moreso, that Tsvangirai’s own people had earlier beaten up some policemen very badly. There was a group of policemen who were unarmed, and Tsvangirai’s people took advantage of their small number, assailed them, and beat them up very badly. They are now in hospital and I hope they would recover, and recover fully. So the police had that grudge also. They are also human beings. Let us always bear that in mind. If Tsvangirai leaves his home to come and provoke the police because his counterpart, Arthur Mutambara, had been arrested, and Tsvangirai’s people do not want Mutambara

to carry the glory of having been arrested and imprisoned, with Tsvangirai having gone home and deserted the struggle, to have that balance of honour and dishonour, and then Tsvangirai wants to correct that by going to challenge the police, at a police station, what do you expect the police to do?

If he had stayed at home, the police would never have gone to his home. But he chose to go to the police station, provoked them, there was a tussle, and they beat him up. So I am saying he was wrong. He is supposed to be a leader, aspiring to be president, and he should know how to behave. Mutambara was not beaten because he knew how to behave. Why should Tsvangirai alone be beaten, and not Mutambara?

Baffour: Again, many people were shocked to hear you tell the West “to go hang” when they criticised you personally and your government for the police action against the opposition leaders. What exactly are the British and the Americans and their Western allies doing to destabilise Zimbabwe to elicit such a response from you?

Mugabe: The sanctions. The British – since Tony Blair came to power and changed the face of the Labour Party completely in regards to relations with us – have reneged on the understanding and agreement reached at Lancaster House [in 1979] regarding the land reform programme and the compensation they agreed to pay to enable us to buy the land from their kith and kin here.

When Blair’s government decided to dishonour it, we said “well, we are also not bound by the agreement any longer, we are released from it and we should not pay any compensation to the white farmers because the funds had stopped flowing from Britain to us. And if we don’t get the funds, naturally we don’t have the capacity to compensate the farmers. And the farmers will have to deal with Britain to compensate them directly.

We will take the land and pay compensation in respect of improvements”, and that is what we have honoured. If they had built a dam, a homestead, done some fencing, we are prepared to pay compensation for those, but not the market price of the farm. That’s the responsibility of Britain. This is why Blair is angry. He thought we would tax our poor people here to buy back their own land, but we were not prepared to do that.

And what did Blair do? He doesn’t talk of that. He talks of a Zimbabwe that is breaching the tenets of democracy, human rights,



rule of law, and which is a dictatorship. But he is very much more of a dictator than any dictator I have read about in modern times in Britain and in Europe. But we always comply with the law. Since 1980, we have complied with our constitution, and every five years we go to elections – parliamentary elections, presidential elections, local government elections – and the ground is open to anyone who wants to participate in these elections, he or she is free to do so.

But Britain and the United States read a completely different picture. Election results that are accepted by Africa as valid, they reject. They reject them because they think they are at the top of the world.

Baffour: Regarding the Americans, what has changed? I remember you telling me in our first interview in 2002, that the Americans were quite helpful in the early days...

Mugabe [cuts in] ... Yes, the [Jimmy] Carter regime.

Baffour: So why are the Americans now funding regime change activities here to

“The police are there to maintain law and order. And it doesn’t matter who, if you threaten them with force, they will answer back with force. And the police did their work.”

get you out of power. For the first time, they publicly admitted in an official State Department report released in Washington on 5 April 2007 that they have been sponsoring regime change in Zimbabwe, by supporting the opposition, NGOs, the trade unions, the private media, even religious groups, who are working to discredit your government. So why has there been this about-turn?

Mugabe: This is what America has always been. Yes of course, they gave us that assistance during Carter’s administration, because they didn’t want a failure of our constitutional negotiations which were taking place in Lancaster House in London in 1979. But as



soon as Carter was out and Ronald Reagan had come in, the funds were stopped, because they said we were communists. They accused me of being a communist. But they never, never really approved of a solid African government, a government that stands on its own. They were behind Nkrumah's fall, and they have been behind the fall of other governments – in Latin America, everywhere. So we don't trust them. They just don't want a strong government, a government that lives by the truth and wants to help its own people, they don't want that.

Baffour: Is that why you told them to go hang when they criticised you for the police action against the MDC leaders?

Mugabe: Well, if they don't accept the truth, they should go hang; they can go hang!

Left: Morgan Tsvangirai attends court on 13 March after he was beaten by the police two days earlier. Below: Police constable Rushwaya (with 20% burns) receives treatment after her home at the Marimba Police Camp was petrol-bombed by suspected MDC activists on 12 March 2007



Baffour: Knowing the enemy is half the battle won, they say. You know that they are sponsoring the opposition, and there has been violence blamed on the opposition of late. So what is your government doing to control the opposition violence? I find that on Saturday 14 April, they are calling another camouflaged “prayer meeting” in Bulawayo, which their own advertisement calls a “rally”. What is the government going to do?

Mugabe: Well, if it is a prayer meeting by a church within the precincts of a church and they actually pray, we have nothing against it. But if it is going to be a camouflage of a political meeting, the police are there to stop it. We will not brook that; definitely we will not brook any camouflages.

Baffour: Are they not baiting you so that you have another 11 March incident?

Mugabe: Who is baiting us? Of course if they breach the law, the police will be there. The opposition can do another 11 March incident, certainly if they do a repeat, and if they dare challenge the police, they will get more Tsvangirais beaten up.

Baffour: And the international community will criticise you again.

Mugabe: Yes, yes. The same old thing, we will go round and round again. But as long as we feel we are right, fine. They say might is right, we say right is might.

Baffour: I have always wondered why African countries allow Western ambassadors the latitude to behave the way they have done in Zimbabwe recently, when their countries do not allow our ambassadors to dabble in their internal affairs. Why are we allowing them to behave the way they do in Africa, especially their recent behaviour here? Why?

Mugabe: Well, we don't allow them but they assume that because they represent big countries, therefore they have the right to dictate anything to us, even the right to play the hypocritical game with us. If you look at the stance they adopted, they were there with Tsvangirai and those they regarded as victims on Tsvangirai's side, but they were never there with victims on our side, and that is the people who had been petrol-bombed or beaten up by MDC thugs who were in hospital. They never visited them.

They took food to Tsvangirai and the others

in hospital, the ambassadors carried the food themselves to Tsvangirai and his people, but they wouldn't do the same to those injured on our side. So there you are, we don't trust them. They are just a bunch of hypocrites. It is as if they come from a very dark continent where hedonism is still the order of the day. They like to talk of Christianity as having been established in Europe, but they don't practise it any more.

Baffour: Are there any concrete sanctions that your government could take against such diplomatic misbehaviour, because I think the Geneva Conventions do not allow such behaviour by diplomats in the domestic affairs of countries to which they are accredited.

Mugabe: Well, yes. We have read them the riot act, and if they continue to do that, we will certainly kick them out of the country. It doesn't matter who it is. If America wants a man like Christopher Dell [their ambassador] to remain here, then he's got to behave because we will not brook further nonsense from him.

Baffour: Everywhere else, when a country is under siege by foreign powers, as Zimbabwe now is, the opposition closes ranks with the government and fight the siege together. In Zimbabwe, it is the other way round. Have you tried to get your opposition to sit down and think this through?

Mugabe: The opposition is an extension of imperialism, they are agents of imperialism; they are not home-grown opposition people, they were put together as an opposing package by the British, the three parties in Britain – the Labour Party, Conservative Party and the Liberal-Democrats – established the Westminster Foundation Fund, and it was on the strength of that fund that the MDC was formed. They chose the leaders, and they had to come from the labour movement. Tsvangirai became the president of the new movement, and they took Welshman Ncube from the university to become secretary-general. But now they have split into two, and we think they can even split into four, and like the amoeba go on multiplying until they come to nothing.

Baffour: Do you think they are incorrigible because they are agents of imperialism?

Mugabe: I think the Tsvangirai's side is the one which is just incorrigible, completely



incorrigible. They don't know what politics means really. That in politics, it is not just the negative and negative and negative that you go by, there must also be positive acts, and but no, as far as they are concerned, they would not deal with the government, they would not recognise President Mugabe and so on. Why have they adopted this negative attitude? Because that's what their masters tell them to do. That is precisely what Blair does. He would not talk to me; he would run away from me as if I am a man-eater.

Baffour: He would not shake your hand.

Mugabe: [Laughs]. He won't shake my hand.

Baffour: But Jack Straw, when he was foreign secretary, once shook your hand.

Mugabe: Well, he shook my hand by mistake and he regretted it. I don't know how many times he had to wash his hands after that. [Laughs].

Baffour: Coming back to the opposition, the SADC says dialogue is the best way out. Are both sides ready to give dialogue a serious chance this time around?

Mugabe: Dialogue with people who wouldn't dialogue? We have been open to dialogue, in fact, with my permission, the govern-

ment has been in dialogue with those in the MDC who, before the split, wanted to have a dialogue with the government, Welshman Ncube and others, and they have been talking about the way forward, and what they regard on their side as areas of the constitution that need amending. In 2000, we put forward a draft constitution which they rejected, and now they want that document reinstated, to become the constitution of the country. And we are saying "no, you rejected it, we put it to the people and the vote was lost by 1,000. And that's it." Yes, constitutional amendments can be proposed certainly, because we too would like to see certain amendments; we want to enhance the composition of our parliament, we want also to harmonise the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, and in the process reduce the presidential term from six years to five years. And we have agreed that elections must be held next year, because the current presidential term ends next year. So we will combine the presidential and parliamentary elections which we used to hold separately.

Baffour: There are reports saying that the MDC is not quite ready for elections next year.

Mugabe: Ready or not ready, we will have elections next year. Mind you, it is the prerogative

of the president to call elections any time. But in this particular case, a presidential election is constitutionally due in March or soon after March, because the current presidential term ends in March. So we must go to elections then. If they are not quite ready, well, hard luck. They must get ready. In politics you must stay ready.

Baffour: What if they come and say, "we are not ready, can we please have the elections some time after next year?"

Mugabe: So you are not ready and you think in politics we should wait for you, to enable you to take your time? It is when we judge that you are not ready, and we can take advantage of your being unprepared, that we perform best, isn't it? These are tricks of electioneering and it's done all over. But anyway in this particular case, they knew that the presidential election was due in March next year – they have had six years to prepare, surely they must be able to do something!

Baffour: Now they are talking about a new constitution – their major bone of contention is a new constitution – and they say you cannot write a new constitution and get it approved by the people between now and March next year.

Mugabe: But you don't just conceive a con-

Left: Mugabe: "The Americans are even more blatant about the economic sanctions. They imposed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act in December 2001, which effectively imposed stringent economic sanctions on us" Below: The British ambassador to Zimbabwe, Andrew Pocock, is the new face of British policy in the country. "We don't trust them," says Mugabe. "They just don't want a strong government, a government that lives by the truth and wants to help its own people, they don't want that"

stitution, who are you? The majority of the people support the ruling party, that's why we are ruling, and the majority of the people have not demanded a new constitution. However, the government is prepared to offer amendments if the opposition want amendments to the constitution. We will discuss them in the context of what we ourselves are proffering.

Baffour: So you are saying a fresh constitution is out of the question?

Mugabe: Out of the question, certainly! Our current constitution has undergone various amendments and there is no way a fresh constitution can be written between now and March. The opposition must have a mandate from the people for that kind of thing to happen, and they haven't got it. They are a minority party and they can't call the tune.

Baffour: Did it shock you when you heard Prof Arthur Mutambara, the leader of the other MDC faction, say at a press conference in Harare in reaction to the SADC summit, that (his exact words were) "the transformation of the police into a criminal, sadistic, brutal force is worse than anything we ever saw under the [Ian] Smith regime"?

Mugabe: Of course that's rubbish, pure rubbish! The Smith regime killed, imprisoned, and kidnapped people; they bombed and thousands died. We have treated them with kid-gloves really. You cannot continue to tease the police and lure them in the way they have done, and expect them not to take action against you. They have been very patient, our police, to tell you the truth. They have been very, very patient with them. And so Mutambara's remarks are quite ill-placed. Of course they are political remarks.

Baffour: Talking about kid-gloves, it is interesting that in Zimbabwe the more you bring out the kid-gloves, the more the international community paints you as a despot, some have even called you a Hitler.

Mugabe: I was Hitler from even before independence in 1980 because of the party that

I belonged to. We were fighting the whites and it was not Smith the Hitler, it was we who were fighting the Hitlerite system who were called Hitlers.

Baffour: Talking about the party you belong to, Zanu PF, in 2002, at our very first interview, you said if the party found a successor, you would retire and go and write your books. You have since won one presidential election and have just been nominated for another one. Does it mean the party has not yet found a successor? And for how long can you go on?

Mugabe: Well, for as long as I can go and for as long as the party wishes me to go. That's the combination. And if the party says stand, it means the party has not found a successor. We will find a successor in due course.

Baffour: We hear stories about divisions in Zanu PF, and about some within the party having allied themselves with the British and so on. So, what is really going on in the party?

Mugabe: The party is very united, and you



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heard voices outside the country, especially in Britain, talking of a central committee that was going to be the nemesis of this man, Mugabe. They were going to deal with him. But they did not deal with me, they dealt with the British.

Baffour: So the stories about the divisions in the party are not true?

Mugabe: Well you get points of view which may be opposed, and that's what you get in any political grouping, it happens everywhere. It's a healthy point of view. But there are no divisions in Zanu PF of the nature that really worries the party. You may get an individual who deviates here and there in terms of his outlook because he has become more materialistic. Yes, you get all that, but these things happen everywhere. But the main body of the party is very solid.

Baffour: So all these stories about coups and people planning coups are just fantasies?

Mugabe: Oh come on, we are talking of a country with an army that has established its name, and not only have we fought against the Rhodesians here, we've gone to secure the Mozambican issue you remember, we've also been to various other places, to DR Congo and so on, and two of our commanders were chosen by the UN to command its forces in Angola. It is a solid and well trained army, they are very professional. Talking of a coup is just trying to suggest that they should think of a coup but they will dismiss it as nonsense and completely unbecoming.

Baffour: The opposition newspapers have been reporting that your "exit plan strategy" is to increase the seats in parliament, so that after you are re-elected next year, you will then resign after a few months or so, or at least within a year, and then use the expanded parliament (which will act as an electoral college under the new constitutional proposals), to appoint a successor of your choice. Is that really the game plan?

Mugabe: [Laughs]. No, that's how people make judgements on certain proposals we've put forward. But we are not looking at things that way. A successor will come but not as a product of an enhanced parliament. We want to increase the membership of parliament because we feel that it is long overdue and some of our constituencies are far too large, especially the rural ones, they cannot be covered by one person that easily. This is all it amounts to.

And of course we also feel that time has now come, we are 27 years old as an independent country, and we have had 150 members in the lower house of parliament for quite a long period, and since we are looking at putting up a new parliament house, it should be designed not with 150 in mind but 210. That's how we are looking at the future.

Baffour: The Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter on Easter Sunday criticising your government. You are a Catholic yourself, were you in church?

Mugabe: Well, I was away then. I arrived on Easter Sunday morning.

Baffour: So you didn't hear the criticisms levelled against you and your government?

Mugabe: No, no, not in church. If I had gone to church and the priest had read that so-called pastoral letter, I would have stood up and said nonsense. It is not something spiritual, it is not religious, the bishops have decided to turn political. And once they turn political, we regard them as no longer being spiritual, and our relations with them would be conducted as if we are dealing with political entities, and this is quite a dangerous path they have chosen for themselves.

I am going to talk to some of them. As for Pius Ncube [the archbishop of Bulawayo], he has long been a lost bishop, he thinks he is close to God, that's why he says he is praying for me to die. But unfortunately God has not listened to him for all this duration. I don't know how many times a day he is saying that prayer: "Please God, take that man Robert Mugabe away from us".

I have said it once at a Catholic gathering that being a bishop does not place one next to God, nor does it make one a chosen person for sainthood. No. A bishop can go to hell while an ordinary person goes to heaven depending on the character of the person. Well, I don't want to say much about the bishops now, I will say much when I meet them.

But for our bishops, this is a sad, sad story. The whole of this pastoral letter is political nonsense. If you read it, there is no reference at all to what has actually led to our current situation. Yes granted, they refer to the hardships that our people are going through. Yes, there are hardships, but tell me even with these hardships we have maintained a solid educational system, a solid health system, yes there are shortages of drugs, but we've tried to maintain our population together.

The droughts are not caused by bad gov-

ernance, it's the mercies of the Good Lord that we would be lacking in those days of drought. And when we have droughts, we have never allowed our people to die, never!

We have said the church and state must work hand in hand, but if this is going to be the partner that the Catholics want us to have, then obviously they must know that we will reciprocate as politicians.

Baffour: Talking about the droughts reminds me of the economic sanctions imposed by the West on your country. For a long time, your government played down the effects of the sanctions. Now the cat is out of the bag. So tell me, what is the real impact of sanctions on Zimbabwe? There are people out there who don't believe that there are any economic sanctions imposed on your country.

Mugabe: The sanctions have had tremendous impact on us. Mind you when we took over in 1980, our economy was aligned to the West. And most of the fertile land was in the hands of the Europeans as well as the manufacturing and mining sectors.

We differ with Blair and Blair decides to fight us using political, diplomatic and economic instruments. He doesn't talk about the difference between us as being the land issue and the compensation from Britain that they have dishonoured.

No, he refers to good governance, human rights, rule of law. He then persuades the members of the European Union to think in the same way. And they agree, after being persuaded by Britain to do so, to impose sanctions on Zimbabwe, and they say these are "personal sanctions" targeted at the leadership.

This is rubbish. But in the meantime what do they do? They influence other countries to cut their economic ties with us. In other words, the soft loans, grants and investments that were coming our way, start decreasing and in some cases actually petering out.

Then they interfere with even our friends in the East and try to persuade them to reduce their relations with us. In some cases, they do stupid things like intercepting ships carrying fuel destined for Zimbabwe. They say "we will pay you 50% more if you divert this fuel from Zimbabwe and sell it to us". That has happened, they've done so. They have also approached India, China and other countries...

Baffour: [cuts in]. These are the British?

Mugabe: The British, they are doing it quietly.

Baffour: And they are the same people who are saying you are a bad manager of the economy?

Mugabe: Yes, yes! They have done that quietly and they are still doing it. Apart from that they have imposed a ban on spare parts for us. There are no spare parts, they say, for our weapons, planes and other machinery that we had bought from them in the past. And these are spare parts we need for our industries, factories and mines.

The Americans are even more blatant about the economic sanctions. They imposed the *Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act* which they passed into law in December 2001, which effectively imposed stringent economic sanctions on us.

They then went on to interfere with the international financial institutions, so that even though we have paid our debts to the IMF, they still say the IMF should not give us the balance of payment support that we

"The opposition is an extension of imperialism ... they were put together as an opposing package by the British."

deserve. And even though we are members of the World Bank, and we have complied with their rules, they have also imposed sanctions against us.

Then the signals to the rest of the world that Zimbabwe is under sanctions, that rings bells and countries that would want to invest in Zimbabwe are being very cautious. They say "ah, we can't go to this country". And we are being dragged through the mud every day on *CNN*, *BBC*, *Sky News*, and they are saying to these potential investors, "your investments will not be safe in Zimbabwe, the British farmers have lost their land, and your investments will go the same way". Pure rubbish, but these messages ring bells in the minds of even our friends. And so the sanctions have wreaked quite some havoc on our economy.

But when we noticed that this was the situation, we looked at our own friends in the developing world, and we adopted the *Look East Policy* – we said "fine, let's deal with the East; we are now happy that we are getting



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some investments from there". We have also looked at ourselves and said, "we are fighting a war, let's use our resources as judiciously as we can. We have good agriculture; we may not have good rainy seasons all the time, but when we have them, let's produce abundantly, and help our farmers". We have been sustaining our farmers as best we can, especially the small farmer, with seeds and other inputs. We will continue to do that, and also to our manufacturing and mining sectors. Fortunately we have natural resources, lots of minerals in the ground, and we are tapping these resources. Though we would want to have huge volumes of foreign currency which would enable us to get back to where we were, but as they drip in, we live from hand to mouth.

But the situation is much better. We have organised ourselves, we talk to various groups in industry, and even to the workers and we are trying to get a *social contract* in place. We are happy that the majority of the workers do listen, and do want a social contract. The employers are also willing. So we are moving forward in this united way. We are working on an economic turnaround programme, and I think it is working.

Baffour: I was going to ask you about the way forward, but you have covered the ground with that answer. So let me ask you my last question. What message do you have for the constituency outside Zimbabwe – the African diasporic communities around the world who may have become disillusioned after seeing the TV footage of Morgan Tsvangirai & Co beaten up by the police?

Mugabe: The message is that when they are affected by events of that nature, they should always talk to us, and even visit us. If they don't

have the means, we will provide the means for them to come and study the situation, understand it and get to know what really would have happened. If they had come, I would have taken them to see the victims of Tsvangirai's thugs, what they did to the police and innocent people who are now in hospital or just been discharged from hospital. The houses they destroyed, the petrol bombs they have thrown, and the damage they have wreaked by these petrol bombs, and what the police have since discovered – the arms, the training abroad, and so on.

All these things are going to be revealed in court. If our friends in the diaspora came here, we would expose them to this knowledge, and they would be able to judge things for themselves. Yes, here and there, they might say, "oh, the police were guilty of excesses", but I think on the whole the police acted correctly. ■ NA

(See the special supplement on Zimbabwe, starting on page 49.)