

REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON OUR CURRENT SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE

Pastoral Statement of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference

Following the Ongoing Events Since Wednesday 15 November 2017

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The Church has keenly and prayerfully followed the recent tense events in the country. The Church has also observed the increased economic hardship for ordinary Zimbabweans. The atmosphere has drastically deteriorated culminating in the current intervention by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces. Let us pray for our country as we continue to watch developments carefully.

We, your Shepherds, encourage those central to these delicate processes (particularly the Zimbabwe Defence Forces and the political leadership) that they maintain the best interests of the nation as a priority and continue to work tirelessly for a peaceful end to the crisis and to speedy return to normalcy and Constitutional order.

Let us be mindful of the fact that besides those who took action and those involved in the ongoing delicate process the entire population is concerned about the process as well as the future of the country. Beyond this crisis a sustainable normalisation of Zimbabwe can only be achieved through a people inclusive and participatory process in a democratic way. The governance of Zimbabwe in any transition that may be adopted must embrace all Zimbabweans in their diversity and their oneness. The nation needs to develop a culture of free and fair elections, referenda and consultations.

All life is precious. The preservation of lives must be paramount and for that, it is essential that peace, law and order be maintained especially in these most delicate times. We ask that everyone exercises great restraint and patience in these tense times and that the people refrain from all lawlessness or any mass action that might worsen the situation.

We also implore all opinion leaders, all media, and the entire population to refrain from conduct and utterances that increase tension, engender hatred or inflame emotions. We discourage sensationalism, false news and all forms of hate media as these pose a grave danger to the peacefulness of the ongoing process and sustainability of peace.

Let us take note that those accused of crimes must at all times be accorded due process and protection of the law and that the role of the Civil Courts as independent arbiters continues unhindered as per the Constitution and as promised by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.

Let us as one family continue to pray for a peaceful and just outcome to the present situation in our country. Let us join in daily prayers for our nation individually and collectively.

+Michael D. Bhasera, Bishop of Masvingo and Apostolic Administrator of Gweru (ZCBC President)

+Robert C. Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare and Apostolic Administrator of Chinhoyi (ZCBC Vice President)

+Alex Thomas, Archbishop of Bulawayo (ZCBC Secretary/Treasurer)

+Albert Serrano, Bishop of Hwange

+Paul Horan, Bishop of Mutare

+Rudolf Nyandoro, Bishop of Gokwe