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Namibia's National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) calls upon the international community, led by the United Nations, to take urgent and appropriate measures in order to prevent the current Zimbabwean situation from unraveling and cascading into a crisis with unforeseeable consequences for human security in that country.

"We are increasingly becoming gravely disturbed by reports out of Zimbabwe on the intensification of hostile posturing and other belligerent activities by pro-Mugabe paramilitary groups, on the one side, and, on the other side, by the systemic crackdown on media workers and associated civil society actors. This state of affairs suggests that President Mugabe is intent on embarking on a wholesale assault on the population while at the same time ensuring that this does not become known to the international community", warned NSHR executive director, Phil ya Nangoloh, in the Namibian capital, Windhoek, this morning.

As envisaged in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document of the United Nations, the international community has the prime **responsibility to protect (R2P)** populations from imminent and massive human rights abuses and other humanitarian crises, such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

R2P

is a new international doctrine obliging the international community to intervene in order to prevent gross human rights abuses once a State fails in its duty to protect and shield its own population from grave breaches of international law.

Hence, as an early warning signal, NSHR is calling upon the international community to intervene now in Zimbabwe before it is too late.

Governments should no longer be allowed to hide behind the citadel of the waning doctrine of sovereignty and non-interference merely to shield perpetrators from punitive measures. Since the Matabeleland massacres in early 1980s, it has increasingly become clear that the government of Zimbabwean President Mugabe has become a danger to human security in all material aspects and respects.

(...) NSHR welcomes the fact that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on April 7 2008 had already expressed concern that the Zimbabwean electoral authorities had failed to release the results of the recent presidential election. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had called upon the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to discharge their responsibility and release the results expeditiously and with transparency.

"However, as a concerned African civil society actor, we are very stunned by the deafening silence on the part of our own SADC and AU mechanisms in the face of impunity on the part of President Robert Mugabe and his cabinet contrary to the principles consecrated in NEPAD and the AU Constitutive Act. Where is our own Africa?" asked ya Nangoloh.

NSHR is, nevertheless, very encouraged by media reports this morning that South Africa's

ruling ANC President Jacob Zuma has criticized the delay in publishing the results of presidential elections in Zimbabwe. Zuma lamented ZEC's failure to announce the election results and reportedly pointed out that the current Zimbabwean situation has become an international issue".

"If the failure by the international community to prevent the 1994 Rwandan genocide, despite clear indications to that effect, was not a good enough reason to trigger the international community into action, then no clearer indications of imminent violence in Zimbabwe would", noted ya Nangoloh.

Press release available at:

<http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/protect090408.htm>

See more on the call of the opposition in Zimbabwe to stop the bloodshed at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/09/zimbabwe.southafrica>