

The EastAfrican
Wilfred Edwin and Francis Ayieko
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Lawyers from East Africa and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) are seeking legal action against the Chinese government over arms supplies to Zimbabwe.

() [The East African Law Society and the Law Society of the Southern Africa Development Community] are going to engage the African Union and the United Nations, into actively addressing the situation.

The lawyers were speaking at an emergency Pan-African summit in Dar es Salaam on April 21 to discuss the election crisis in Zimbabwe.

The summit asked the African Union not to recognise results of the vote recount. Instead, it wants the continental body to appoint an independent high level Pan-African panel of eminent persons to deliver a political settlement to the country.

Saying that the electoral crisis in Zimbabwe can only be resolved through a political settlement that reflects the will of the people as expressed during the March 29, election, the meeting also wants the AU to call upon China and other countries "that are propping up the Zanu-PF regime," to desist from such actions.

It also called on the AU to openly condemn the state campaign of violence against the people of Zimbabwe for exercising their democratic rights.

The summit, called by the East Africa Law Society, brought together 105 representatives of civil society, the legal fraternity, trade unions, academia from 21 African countries.

() Civil society in East and Southern Africa has demanded a rethink of the AU approach on handling the Zimbabwe post-elections crisis, in a move that could put President Jakaya Kikwete, the current chairman of the AU in a precarious political situation, given the current continental political divide.

() [The summit participants] said that the international norm of "**responsibility to protect**" places primary responsibility in the hands of the state to protect its people from crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes.

However, where the state itself is the perpetrator of such heinous crimes, and/or where it fails or neglects to protect its people, the international "**responsibility to protect**" cannot be stopped by self-serving claims of sovereignty on the part of armed and predatory elites.

For full article, please refer to:

http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/may5_2008.html

The communique from the African Emergency Summit on Zimbabwe in Dar es Salaam on 21

April 2008 is available at:

http://www.zimbabwejournalists.com/story.php?art_id=4008&cat=4