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HSRC SEMINARS

Democracy and Human Rights: A Southern African Perspective

The Zimbabwe question: land reform and the emerging state

Democracy and Governance

Hosted by : Democracy and Governance

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Location : Pretoria

Presenters : Sam Moyo, executive director, African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Harare, Zimbabwe

Peter Kagwanja, director of the Southern Africa Project of the International Crisis Group, Pretoria, South Africa

The Zimbabwe question: land reform and the emerging state

Presented by Sam Moyo, executive director, African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Harare, Zimbabwe

The presentation will examine the currently polarized debates on the Zimbabwean question in the context of southern Africa. Two competing perspectives on Zimbabwe's politics, economy and social change are examined: the civil rights view, stressing property rights, particularly of the erstwhile white landowners, based on individualism, and the nationalist view on resolving the national question in southern Africa.

The presentation will argue for the latter view, proposing that historic social injustices, current land inequalities and the failure of neoliberalism to broaden development, ignite a broadly based nationalism which seeks a political settlement redistributing resources and restructuring socio-economic relations. Attempts to 'normalize' politics, the economy and social relations, and to re-engage the 'international community', will be discussed, highlighting the impasse based on entrenched extreme positions at both poles. Given similar political settlements and limited redistribution and development in Namibia and South Africa, it can be expected that a challenging resurgence of nationalist politics will mobilize demands for redistribution, and economic restructuring, especially over land, in these states.

Sam Moyo is executive director of the African Institute for Agrarian Studies based in Harare, Zimbabwe. He has more than 25 years of research experience on rural development issues with a focus on land and natural resources management, civil society organisations, and capacity building and institutional development. His key publications, as author or editor, are *The Land Question in Zimbabwe* (1995), published by Sapos Books, Harare; *Land Reform Under Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe* (2000), published by the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala; and *African Land Questions, the State and Agrarian Transition: Contradictions of Neoliberal Land Reforms*, CODESRIA Greenbook.

Pretoria's "Quiet Diplomacy" in Zimbabwe: The Turning-point?

Presented by Peter Kagwanja, director of the Southern Africa Project of the International Crisis Group, Pretoria, South Africa

With Zimbabwe's complex crisis reaching a critical point, South Africa is re-examining the tenets of the controversial policy of "quiet diplomacy" which it has pursued since 2000. The speed of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown and intensifying political impasse are outpacing Pretoria's behind-the-scenes approach, eclipsing nationalist ties and African solidarity while the nightmare of a failed state on its doorstep looms ever larger.

South African officials point increasingly to the cross-border effects of internal unrest and economic ruin—including over 2 million refugees and spiraling insecurity. South Africa has attached governance and economic terms to its proposed credit line to enable Zimbabwe to pay IMF debts. Although Harare has paid its arrears, it has alleged that Pretoria is abetting an international plot to squeeze it economically to effect regime change. In May 2006, President Mbeki endorsed UN-led diplomatic intervention in Zimbabwe, although the parameters of the UN plan are still unclear. The question is: What policy options does Pretoria possess to avert a possible implosion in its northern neighbor?

Peter Kagwanja is currently director of the Southern Africa Project of the International Crisis Group, Pretoria, where he leads a team of researchers working on policy issues relating to peace, security and conflict prevention, and is also an Associate Researcher at the Department of Political Science, University of Pretoria. He has published widely in professional journals, edited books, reports, monographs, and reputed magazines and newspapers. He holds frequent media interviews including, most recently, with the *Economist*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Business Day* (SA), *Mail & Guardian*, *VOA*, *SABC-Africa* (TV & Radio) and *BBC*. Before joining the Crisis Group, Peter served as a Senior Researcher on peace, security, and governance with the Pretoria-

based think-tank, Safer-Africa. In 1992-2000 he served as Senior Researcher at the Centre for Refugee Studies, Moi University, where he also lectured in politics and history. He has been a Research Associate with the Kenya Human Rights Commission, is on editorial boards of leading journals, including African Affairs and Journal of African Elections, and has been an expert consultant with foundations and research institutions. He has received prestigious fellowships and grants, including a JW Fulbright Fellowship (1998-2000).