

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO ZIMBABWE

CANADA

Free and fair democratic elections

- Pre- and post-election periods in Zimbabwe have been characterized by excessive and officially-sponsored violence, torture and intimidation. The violence included murder, rape, dismemberment, beatings, destruction of homes and other property, detainment and more. These abuses are clearly indicated in reports by election monitors, human rights and civil society organizations and church groups. While election commissions may have a responsibility to organize free and fair elections as efficiently as possible, they have no mandate or resources to cope with widespread violence in pre-and post-election periods. **What steps will the Government of Zimbabwe take to ensure that voters in upcoming elections in Zimbabwe may cast their ballot without fear of pre- or post-election reprisals for having done so? What is Zimbabwe doing to ensure conditions in the country are conducive to genuine and fair elections, free of violence, intimidation and harassment?**

Rule of Law

- Canada regrets that efforts undertaken by Zimbabwe's parliament to amend the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) have been thwarted. We note that when the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act was amended a few years ago, onerous provisions regarding journalist accreditation which had been repealed, continued to be enforced, resulting in media coverage of the 2008 harmonized elections that was biased in favour of the party in power. We also note reports of the selective application of laws for political purposes, so that they do not apply equally to all citizens. In several cases of abductions, torture, fire bombings and murder, the police allegedly refused to take action, disclaiming any mandate in instances of political violence. Until such issues are satisfactorily addressed and resolved, the rule of law will be absent from Zimbabwe. **What is the Government of Zimbabwe doing to modify and approve the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), amongst other legislation, to ensure that there is genuine freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression? What action is the Government of Zimbabwe taking to prevent its laws from being selectively enforced to reflect political bias?**

Security Sector Reform

- Security Sector Reform is one aspect of the Global Political Agreement that has not yet been addressed. Reports of violence, intimidation and abuse by the military are widespread, and as recently as June of this year, senior military figures have stated that the security forces and President Robert Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF are inseparable. We note that violence has been constant throughout the power-sharing period and is increasing in the build-up to elections. **How will Zimbabwe ensure that the security sector is restricted from any partisan activities, and that it uphold the Constitution of Zimbabwe and respect whomever wins future elections and forms the next government?**