

Resolution on the Legal Profession in the Republic of Zimbabwe

15th Commonwealth Law Conference Nairobi, Kenya 9th – 13th September 2007

The Commonwealth Lawyers' Association is a pan-Commonwealth professional association of lawyers which includes representatives from all 53 countries of the Commonwealth.

The 15th Commonwealth Law Conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 9th – 13th September 2007 and was attended by over 1200 lawyers, judges and other legal professionals from a total of 49 different countries, 18 of which are in Africa.

The Council of the Commonwealth Lawyers' Association:

Condemned the ongoing direct and indirect attacks and harassment by the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, on lawyers in Zimbabwe, as documented in the recent report by the Law Society of Zimbabwe entitled '*Self Regulation at a Crossroads*';

Noted that these attacks on lawyers destroy the rule of law and are in direct conflict with the Commonwealth's fundamental values of democracy, good governance, human rights and respect for the rule of law;

Renewed previous calls upon the Government of Zimbabwe to respect the independence of the legal profession and the role of lawyers, as detailed in the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (adopted in 1990) and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (adopted in 1998), and to ensure that lawyers are able to access their clients without any hindrance and freely discharge their duties in the interest of effective administration of justice;

Expressed hope that the Law Society of Zimbabwe will continue to play a full part in the promotion of the rule of law;

Supported the call of the Southern African Development Community Lawyers' Association (SADC Lawyers' Association) to the Mbeki Mediation Commission to liaise with the Law Society of Zimbabwe and civil society in Zimbabwe to ensure that the outcome of the mediation leads to effective restoration of the institutions that sustain democracy and good governance;

Noted its continued support of the Law Society of Zimbabwe in their efforts to maintain the independence of the legal profession and uphold the rule of law.

Commonwealth Lawyers' Association
15th Commonwealth Law Conference
13th September 2007