

John Williams, Chair of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption

Augustine Ruzindana, Chair of African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption

**Statement at Global Forum V on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity –
Johannesburg, South Africa April 3rd, 2007**

Johannesburg, South Africa- At this Global Forum V Conference on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, I believe we have an obligation, not only to discuss ways to combat corruption, but also to speak out on the subject when it confronts us before our eyes. For some, fighting corruption and safeguarding integrity is not an abstract debate. Their very lives are on the line.

I am the chair of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC). I am joined by Augustine Ruzindana who is chair of our African chapter, the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption, Our mission is to make parliaments work better as institutions of democratic oversight of government. One of the principal tenants supporting that mission, is peer support for parliamentarians and others who are putting their lives on the line to fight corruption, safeguard integrity and stand up for their people.

Next door in Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the opposition MDC party, Willias Madzimore, Member of Parliament and Chair of APNAC's Zimbabwean chapter, and others, are being imprisoned, beaten and intimidated as a warning to others who want to speak out against the governing regime.

It is time that each and every one of us who believe in good governance and the rule of law, stand up in support of the people in Zimbabwe who are going miles beyond words of condemnation from a safe haven, and are now in considerable danger because they are exercising their democratic right to speak out against their government.

For some, free speech can come at a great price.

The democratic institutions in Zimbabwe have failed. Mr. Mugabe is no longer constrained and held accountable by the parliament, the judiciary and the people of Zimbabwe.

The world has an obligation to ensure that democracy and prosperity return to the people of Zimbabwe. I therefore call on the African countries to lead an international effort to plan now for the rebuilding of the institutions of parliament, the judiciary and government in Zimbabwe, to ensure that the current tyranny by Mr. Mugabe does not continue, or continue with his successor.

Strong leaders who are not constrained by strong institutions are dictators. We've seen it in Zimbabwe, we've seen it elsewhere. We've seen enough to know that lack of accountable governance destroys lives, destroys prosperity and destroys nations.

I therefore call upon the world to act now, to help the parliament and people of Zimbabwe develop the capacity to hold their government accountable, and to help rebuild the institutions of governance and accountability in Zimbabwe.