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Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front

Guns against Zimbabwe

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We welcome and support the decision by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union for their workers neither to unload nor transport the shipment of Chinese-made armaments destined for Zimbabwe. This is a very encouraging sign of working class solidarity and internationalism, and we hope that such actions will indeed prevent this weapons consignment from reaching its destination - the Zimbabwean Defence Force. ---- At the same time, if the transport workers should fail, if President Robert Mugabe's friends should find a way to bypass their resistance, all who stand with the Zimbabwean people should be ready to take a stand. Should the action taken by Satawu fail to prevent the armaments from being transported across South African territory to Zimbabwe, we call on all progressive elements across the country to intervene.

The Working Class Takes a Stand: Stop Chinese Arms Shipment to the Zimbabwean Regime!

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On 29 March 2008, parliamentary, presidential and local elections were held in Zimbabwe. This represented the last-gasp attempt of the Movement for Democratic Change to oust the 28-year-old regime of incumbent President Robert Mugabe, after a series of contestations since 2000 had resulted in an impasse.

The results of the parliamentary election show that the MDC has a narrow majority, but the results of the presidential election have been unaccountably delayed ? presumably to allow Mugabe's regime to reassert its authority over the masses of the people who have been brutalised and impoverished.

These facts are well known to the world's progressive forces and to those who struggle for economic, social and political justice and equality. Now, in the hour of Mugabe's ultimate betrayal, a new threat has arisen in the form of a shipment of Chinese armaments ? including rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47 assault rifle rounds and mortars ? which, we fear with justification, will be used to forcibly suppress the democratic forces in Zimbabwe, and could lead directly to the murder of thousands of Zimbabwean people.

We are fully aware of the heroic resistance of the Zimbabwean people to racist domination and their successful defeat of the regime of Ian Smith in 1980. This resistance was both pluralistic via the guerrillas of both Zanla and Zipra, and multiracial ? even if the majority of white "Rhodesians" chose to abandon their country after independence.

But we are equally aware of the grievous injury done to the cause of the people by Mugabe's paranoia over the years ? even if this paranoia was well-founded on apartheid attempts on his own life ? and the dead of Matabeleland [1] and the displaced of Operation Murambatsvina [2] cry out for social justice.

Now, with the whole world watching ? and the Southern African Development Community vacillating as predicted in its usual ineffective "engagements" ? Mugabe has again stolen not only a march on the opposition, but the future of his people.

Journalists are being expelled and election observers have already fled the roost, allowing blood to flow in the streets unseen and unchecked: scanty reports now emerge of torture, murder, evictions, dispossessions and beating.

And now we have caught, red-handed, a Chinese shipment of arms to this regime, a regime that by all accounts is in terminal decline, with the highest inflation rate in the world and an elite that is already displaying the most grotesque elements of social decay imaginable.

We call on all progressive groups, organisations and individuals to physically prevent, whether peacefully or with necessary force, the shipment of arms to one of the world's most despised pariah dictatorships. This call extends to the progressive world community to do whatever they can to bring this to public attention and to prevent possible massacre.

This could include:

- * Targeting and putting pressure on South African Port Authorities not to allow the consignment to come onto land.
- * Targeting South African, Chinese and Zimbabwean embassies and diplomatic missions with pickets, protests and other non-violent direct actions - against representatives of these governments - and not the ordinary citizens of these states. (We will not tolerate any actions against Chinese, Zimbabwean or South African people on the basis of their ethnicity and/ or nationality).
- * Gathering intelligence about the whereabouts, planned route and mode of transport for the armaments, and publicising these.
- * Blockading these routes in a non-violent manner with an eye to preventing the armaments from reaching their destination.
- * Blockading the South African border with Zimbabwe should the armaments reach it.
- * Supporting and sustaining the transport workers in their refusal to unload and transport the weapons.
- * Defending the transport workers and anyone else who faces repression as a

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result of their efforts to stop the weapons reaching their destination.

* Link this struggle directly to global opposition to China's campaign to suppress the Tibetan people and turn the 2008 Olympics into a replica of the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany ? where nationalist sporting events were used as a cover for gross human rights abuses.

What we know:

* A Chinese ship, An Yue Jiang - owned by the parastatal Chinese Ocean Shipping Company - carrying armaments destined for Zimbabwe has anchored at Durban harbour.

* The shipment contains almost three million rounds of ammunitions for small arms and AK-47s, about 3 500 mortars and mortar launchers, as well as 1 500 rockets for rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and is valued at R9,88million.

* The ship's cargo documentation was allegedly finalised just 3 days after the Zimbabwean elections.

* The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union has refused to unload or transport the arms consignment, although this does not mean someone else won't.

* About 10 Chinese soldiers armed with pistols have been seen with Zimbabwean military officials in Harare.

THIS SHIPMENT WILL BE STOPPED BY THE DIRECT ACTION OF THE PEOPLE!

MUGABE WILL FALL! BUT WE, THE AFRICAN PEOPLE, WILL STAND IN HIS STEAD!

Footnotes:

[1] The Matabeleland Massacre, between 1982 - 1983 was an attempt by ZANU-PF on the ethnic cleansing of people of the Ndebele ethno-political group living in the Matabeleland region. An estimated 20 000 people were murdered.

[2] Known in English as Operation Drive Out Trash, Operation Murambatsvina was a large scale government campaign to forcibly clear out slum areas, effectively displacing an estimated 2.4 million people. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Murambatsvina

<http://www.zabalaza.net>

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