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## Zimbabwe: President Mourns David Martin

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Martin died at his Harare home on Saturday after severe respiratory complications.

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Policy Implementation Minister Cde Webster Shamu announced that President Mugabe yesterday indicated that Martin would be accorded a State-assisted funeral in recognition of his works.

Details of funeral arrangements will be announced in due course.

In his condolence message yesterday, Cde Mugabe said he learnt with sadness of the death of Martin after a long fight with cancer. "For Southern Africa, especially for us who were involved with liberation movements, David Martin remains a symbol of journalism wedded to people's struggles, a rare type of journalism that broke free from the empire to connect organically with freedom struggles in our region and their aftermath," said Cde Mugabe.

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The President said during the liberation struggle, he met Martin on many occasions to share reflections on the ongoing fight against British settler colonialism.

"He broke past the perfunctory bond that links a journalist to a source. He embraced the cause of the Zimbabwean people, something very few journalists of Western, let alone British stock, were prepared to do," he

said.

"I am sure this uncharacteristic level of empathy with liberation movements in the region mirrored a deep humanity which put the quest for human justice above loyalty to one's country. After our independence in 1980, he came to live with us, nay, lived as one of us, devoting his precious time to eternalising moments of our struggle through searching publications. He did not tire."

Cde Mugabe said Martin, together with his partner Phyllis Johnson, offered himself for the daunting fight against apartheid and its destructive destabilisation of the region.

He said the two's contribution, both by way of exposing the dirty destructive hand of apartheid in Southern Africa, especially in Mozambique, and by way of building support for independent Southern Africa's integration efforts, through the then Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (forerunner to Sadc), remained salutary.

Martin's Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre to this day, Cde Mugabe said, remained with a regional integration focus.

The President further said Martin hated journalism of the empire and anything that belittled the African cause and rights.

"Yes, David believed in shared humanity which all imperious, race-based systems are wont to undermine. He understood our fight for our land. He supported that fight.

"We salute him for all that, hoping it teaches all of us, black and white, and offers a rich legacy to which our common humanity can lay claim, that our enlightened conduct can enhance and enrich.

"On behalf of the party, Zanu-PF, Government and my own behalf, I want to express my deepest condolences to Phyllis Johnson and all those who knew and respected the late departed's values and goals.

"He will forever remain dear to us, as one who joined our freedom struggle through the use of his pen as a fighting sword. May his soul rest in eternal peace."

Martin penned over 20 books that include *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, *The Chimurenga War* (1980), *The Chitepo Assassination* (1985), *The Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa At War* (1986 updated as *Frontline Southern Africa* in 1989), *Apartheid Terrorism*, and *The Destabilisation Report*.

Martin, who was born in the United Kingdom, always credited his education to the decade he spent working in the media in Tanzania in the 1960s. Tanzanian founding president Cde Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, his close friend and third president of Tanzania Cde Benjamin Mkapa and others influenced him.

Martin was also inspired by the liberation leaders and movements based there, including Cde Eduardo Mondlane and Cde Samora Machel of

Frelimo in Mozambique. During the liberation struggle, Martin met and interviewed President Mugabe on many occasions.

Martin was a writer and photographer, and later in life, a publisher. In the 1970s, in Lusaka, he was Africa correspondent of The Observer in London and was often quoted in the media, including the BBC.

Martin also played a leading role in exposing apartheid South Africa's destabilisation in the region in the 1980s and played a unique role in presenting the African perspective internationally and was well respected as a fair and balanced reporter.

He also wrote the first expose of the reality of General Idi Amin in Uganda in 1974 and the first report by the International Commission of Jurists on Uganda, which eventually led to the withdrawal of international support to Amin.

His retirement project was dedicated to creating better understanding of people and places through tourism, by writing and photographing area-specific, pocket-size "Into Africa" guidebooks.

Martin also produced more than 20 books on all of Tanzania's national parks, as well as Zimbabwe, Victoria Falls, Hwange, Kariba and Vumba.

Relevant Links  
Southern Africa  
Zimbabwe

He was co-founder of Zimbabwe Publishing House, the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre, the India Musokotwane Environment Resource Centre for Southern Africa, and the Zimbabwe

International Book Fair. Martin was a trustee of the Josiah Tongogara Legacy Foundation.

He had two major operations for cancer in 2004 and this year, as well as surgery in 2006 to repair broken bones in his shoulders. Cde Shamu and members of the board of the Sardc, of which Martin was a founding member, have also expressed sorrow over the prolific writer's death.

Martin is survived by his partner of 32 years, Phyllis, and a son Tony, who lives in Perth, Australia. Yesterday some senior Government and military officials visited Martin's home to pay their condolences.