

Condolence message by His Excellency the President following the death of David Martin, Harare, 21st August, 2008.

I learnt with sadness of the death on Saturday of David 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 peoples' struggles, a rare type of journalism that broke free from the empire to connect organically with the freedom struggles in our region and their aftermath. During our liberation struggle, I met David 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. 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 eternalizing moments of our struggle through searching publications.

He did not tire.

Together with his partner Phyllis Johnson, David offered himself for the daunting fight against apartheid and its destructive destabilization of our region. The two's contributions, both by way of exposing the dirty and destructive hand of apartheid in Southern Africa, especially in Mozambique, and by way of building support for independent Southern Africa's integration effort through the then Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), remain salutary. Indeed, his Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre to this day remains with this regional integration focus.

David hated journalism of the empire. David hated anything that belittled the African cause and African 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 on my own behalf, I want to express my deepest condolences to Phyllis Johnson and to 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.

✠

R.G. Mugabe
President of Zimbabwe