

November 15, 1974
Letter, Kenneth Kaunda to J.B. Vorster

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THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

15th November, 1974.

Dear Mr Prime Minister,

We have now reached a very decisive stage in our common endeavour to chart the course which we must take to build peace and prosperity in Southern Africa based on freedom and justice for all. Your contribution so far has been commendable. In the execution of our problems, President Nyerere, President Khama, President Samora Machel and I have had opportunity to meet Mr. Joshua Nkomo, Rev. Mbabangi Sithole and Bishop Muzorewa together with their Lieutenants. Our discussions on the future of Rhodesia and Southern Africa in general have been extremely useful.

I am now happy to tell you that these leaders, despite their long periods of detention, share our concern on the future of Southern Africa. They, like all of us, desire peace as an essential prerequisite for peace and development. They feel the need and urgency to establish lasting peace based on justice and they expressed their total commitment to work for it.

To this end they have expressed their readiness to end the current armed conflict and to opt for a political solution provided such a solution is based on acceptable terms. So they are prepared to negotiate and work out the future of Rhodesia with Mr. Smith. But they have also left us in no doubt about their determination to fight on and even intensify their armed struggle if the terms are not acceptable. They are united.

We discussed with them the framework which originally was put forward by you through Mark Chona and George Chipampata. This framework has been examined. Although there is no commitment on their part, there is an acceptance in principle that it can form a basis in a further search for a concrete formula which will give Rhodesia the peace it needs. Mr. Nkomo, Rev. Sithole and Bishop Muzorewa, as leaders of the African people in Rhodesia, are united in their declaration that a Government based on majority rule will not humiliate anyone or any section of the Rhodesian community regardless of historical experience. Their

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His Excellency Mr. J.B. Vorster,
Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa,
PRETORIA.

immediate task is to look to the future, restore order, strengthen racial harmony and build confidence among all the people of Rhodesia in the future of their country. They are keenly aware of their responsibility towards peace and stability in Southern Africa.

So we have discovered that there is a lot of good will in these leaders and their lieutenants which should nourish the efforts in the building of a new Rhodesia.

Now it is up to Mr. Smith to cross the Rubicon of Rhodesian constitutional development. The time for parity has already passed. Now we have to go beyond parity if we are to succeed in ending the war in Rhodesia. If this principle is accepted, then anything beyond parity is negotiable. To this end we have already convinced the leaders concerned on the question of a "Qualitative Franchise". This issue is obviously at the root of the problem. We have all to face practical realities in order to facilitate a peaceful solution in Rhodesia.

We have not gone into any details regarding the question of "Qualitative Franchise". This is a matter for Mr. Smith and the African leaders in question. But we believe that an acceptable formula can be found which will satisfy all parties to the current conflict and guarantee the interests of the Rhodesian whites.

We on our part in Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia, like other countries in Africa would not naturally recommend the acceptance by O.A.U. of any formula that does not go beyond parity. But we are prepared to assist in advising the African leaders to also face certain realities. Already we have urged them to desist from armed struggle if negotiations are possible and to accept a formula which falls short of One Man One Vote as long as its results go beyond parity.

So having gone this far, I earnestly urge you to use your influence on Mr. Smith to cross at this opportune moment the Rubicon of Rhodesian political development. I have full confidence that having done so he will find that the African leaders are reasonable and co-operative. They will readily join hands in the common endeavour of building Rhodesia anew.

Consequently, having had positive discussions with the legitimate and authentic leaders of the African people, time has come for Mr. Smith to initiate action to create the right political atmosphere in Rhodesia.

In accordance with our November programme, he should now move to release all political detainees and political prisoners, remove restrictions on the movement of leaders, lift the ban on ZAPU and ZANU and all the other measures which are outlined in the programme. The Liberation Movements will respond and desist from their armed struggle in order to give the new political situation time to mature.

I trust that this next move can now be taken.

On the recent events at the United Nations involving the suspension of South Africa's participation in the current Session of the General Assembly, I can only say that I understand your feelings. This is a period of great challenges for South Africa, challenges which require men of great courage to face them. I do not doubt your faith and hope for the future as demonstrated by some of your actions recently in an effort to remove areas of conflict and widen those of understanding. Hence I have indicated the urgency in dealing with such clear issues as Rhodesia and Namibia so that your country is no longer associated with controversial areas outside her borders. I have no doubt that your contribution to the establishment of genuine peace based on freedom and justice in Rhodesia would make the assurances you have given to the world more credible and would strengthen the efforts of those who wish to make your task easier to accomplish in the interests of all.

I sincerely hope that we can quickly remove Rhodesia and Namibia out of the way before the 30th General Assembly of the UN. No doubt if the problem of Rhodesia had been settled and the programme of self-determination in Namibia already clear the events at the UN would I believe have taken a different turn.

However, what is important is now the future. On our part, we have a total commitment to peace and we will continue to work for peace, and for the elimination of the current problems.

Let me end by expressing our appreciation for your role in facilitating the recent meetings between us and the African leaders of Rhodesia. It is my belief that this contribution will in future bear fruit.

Yours sincerely,

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA