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Zimbabwe's homeless ignored

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25 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Zimbabwe's homeless ignored

BNE: The African Union has rejected international calls to intervene in Zimbabwe's campaign of slum clearance, which has left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Condemnation by U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, echoed by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, aimed at pressuring Robert Mugabe's government fell on deaf ears among African leaders. International concern is mounting at the potential humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Southern African nation. Mr. Mugabe said the operation was to clean up inner cities and eradicate criminal elements. He said the townships served as "notorious criminal hideouts and havens for black-market activities".

The "urban renewal" campaign is called Operation *Murambatsvina*, which means "cleaning up the trash". Police have torched and razed to the ground whole communities, leaving them in smoldering ruins. Two babies were crushed to death earlier this week by bulldozers. Mr. Mugabe's political opponents say the campaign is an oppressive attempt to punish the urban poor for voting against the ruling party in recent elections. Mr. Mugabe expects those evicted simply to disperse into the countryside. The African Union considers the crackdown on squatters and slum-dwellers as an internal matter that falls outside of its pan-African jurisdiction. It also said it had more pressing matters to resolve.

WARM-UPS

1. SLUM DWELLER: What must it be like to have no permanent home? What would it be like to live in a makeshift shack with no electricity or running water? Do you ever count your blessings that you have a roof over your head and don't have to worry about it being pulled down? Imagine you are a slum dweller or refugee living in a tent. Talk with other students (also slum dwellers/refugees) about your life and how you survive each day.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Zimbabwe / African Union / U.K. Foreign Secretary / Condoleezza Rice / Robert Mugabe / humanitarian crises / inner cities / the black market / trash / bulldozers / poor people

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. ZIMBABWE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Zimbabwe. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. ZIMBABWE OPINIONS: To what degree do you agree or disagree with these opinions? Change the statements so they match your own opinions and provide support for any changes you make.

- a. Robert Mugabe is similar to Saddam Hussein.
- b. South Africa should put more pressure on Robert Mugabe.
- c. The African Union is best positioned to deal with Zimbabwe.
- d. Zimbabwe should be banished from the international community.
- e. Africa has more urgent problems than poor people being evicted.
- f. America also has homeless people. The international community shouldn't single out Zimbabwe for criticism.
- g. Robert Mugabe is right when he calls America and European countries hypocrites. They have left a million homeless in Iraq.
- h. Thousands will die in Zimbabwe and the international community will do nothing, as usual.
- i. The upcoming G8 Summit will solve all of Zimbabwe's problems.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Zimbabwe's homeless asked African Union leaders for help. | T / F |
| b. Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe is deaf. | T / F |
| c. There is a potential humanitarian crisis unfolding in Zimbabwe. | T / F |
| d. Robert Mugabe said he is cleaning Zimbabwe of crime. | T / F |
| e. There is a national campaign to pick up trash in Zimbabwe. | T / F |
| f. Two babies were crushed in the demolition of people's homes. | T / F |
| g. Mr. Mugabe expects people to relocate into the heart of the cities. | T / F |
| h. The African Union said the crisis in Zimbabwe was an internal issue. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| a. intervene | intensifying |
| b. fell on deaf ears | authority |
| c. mounting | shady |
| d. eradicate | tyrannical |
| e. notorious | mediate |
| f. razed | urgent |
| g. oppressive | weed out |
| h. disperse | flattened |
| i. jurisdiction | scatter |
| j. pressing | was ignored |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. calls to | matters to resolve |
| b. fell on | unfolding |
| c. International concern | jurisdiction |
| d. the potential humanitarian crisis | intervene in... |
| e. black-market | to the ground |
| f. razed | activities |
| g. smoldering | is mounting |
| h. disperse | ruins |
| i. outside of its pan-African | into the countryside |
| j. it had more pressing | deaf ears |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD?: Circle the correct word from the pairs in *italics*.

Zimbabwe's homeless ignored

BNE: The African Union has *rejected / dejected* international calls to *internecine / intervene* in Zimbabwe's campaign of *slum / slam* clearance, which has left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Condemnation by U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, *echoed / reverberated* by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, aimed at pressuring Robert Mugabe's government fell on *deaf / mute* ears among African leaders. International concern is mounting at the potential humanitarian crisis *unfolding / folding* in the Southern African nation. Mr. Mugabe said the operation was to clean up inner cities and *elucidate / eradicate* criminal elements. He said the townships served as "notorious criminal hideouts and havens for *white-market / black-market* activities".

The "urban renewal" campaign is called Operation 'Murambatsvina', which means "cleaning up the trash". Police have *flashlights / torched* and razed to the ground whole communities, leaving them in *smoldering / simmering* ruins. Two babies were crushed to death earlier this week by bulldozers. Mr. Mugabe's political *proponents / opponents* say the campaign is an *impressive / oppressive* attempt to punish the urban *poor / poverty* for voting against the ruling party in recent elections. Mr. Mugabe expects those evicted simply to *disperse / dispense* into the countryside. The African Union considers the *crackdown / crack up* on squatters and slum-dwellers as an internal matter that falls outside of its pan-African jurisdiction. It also said it had more *pressing / pushing* matters to resolve.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'deaf' and 'ears'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD?: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the relationship between each of the pairs of words?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT ZIMBABWE SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Zimbabwe and Robert Mugabe.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| • intervene | • renewal |
| • homeless | • smoldering |
| • echoed | • crushed |
| • deaf | • oppressive |
| • unfolding | • disperse |
| • notorious | • jurisdiction |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did you have a clear idea from the headline what this story was about?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the story?
- c. Are you interested in what Robert Mugabe is doing to his people in Zimbabwe?
- d. How often do you read the news about Africa / Zimbabwe?
- e. What do you know about Robert Mugabe?
- f. Is Mr. Mugabe a hero for championing black African rights?
- g. Is the African Union correct in saying the forceful eviction of hundreds of thousands of poor people is an internal matter?
- h. Thabo Mbeki said the world should focus not on Zimbabwe but on the Congo, where 3 million have died. Is he right?
- i. Do you think Mr. Mugabe is really on a crime prevention campaign?
- j. What African matters are more important than those in Zimbabwe?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What is your opinion on the slum clearances in Zimbabwe?
- d. Are comparisons between Robert Mugabe and Saddam Hussein fair?
- e. Should the international community step in and oust Mr. Mugabe?
- f. Will the upcoming G8 Summit help Zimbabwe's poor in any way?
- g. Should South Africa help its neighbour more?
- h. Why do you think Robert Mugabe has banned the BBC from reporting inside Zimbabwe?
- i. Should Mr. Mugabe be tried for crimes against humanity?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think conditions are like for millions around the world who are homeless, without jobs and don't have enough food and water. Talk about the things we take for granted in the table below. Do you count your blessings you have these things? Think of two hardships you would experience without these things.

THINGS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED	HARDSHIPS WITHOUT THESE THINGS
Electricity	1. 2.
Clean water	1. 2.
Three meals a day	1. 2.
Freedom	1. 2.
A home	1. 2.
Jobs	1. 2.
Honest political leaders	1. 2.
Democracy	1. 2.
Other _____	1. 2.

Change partners and compare the hardships you discussed previously. Which hardships are the greatest?

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Zimbabwe's homeless ignored

BNE: The African Union has rejected international calls to intervene in Zimbabwe's _____, which has left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Condemnation by U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, _____ U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, _____ Robert Mugabe's government _____ among African leaders. International concern _____ potential humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Southern African nation. Mr. Mugabe said the operation was to clean up inner cities and _____. He said the townships served as "_____ and havens for black-market activities".

The "urban renewal" campaign is called Operation *Murambatsvina*, which means "cleaning up the trash". Police have _____ to the ground whole communities, leaving them _____. Two babies were crushed to death earlier this week by bulldozers. Mr. Mugabe's political opponents say the campaign is _____ to punish the urban poor for voting _____ in recent elections. Mr. Mugabe expects those evicted _____ into the countryside. The African Union considers the _____ and slum-dwellers as an internal matter that falls outside of its pan-African _____. It also said it had more pressing matters to resolve.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Robert Mugabe's Operation *Murambatsvina*. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. I'M LUCKY: Write an essay explaining why you are lucky. Describe all of the things you are fortunate to have that millions around the world do not have. Explain the main points of your essay to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

4. DIARY / SCHEDULE: Imagine you are a slum dweller or a refugee living in a tent. Write your diary / journal entry for one day in your life. Read your diary/journal to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. F c. T d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. intervene	mediate
b. fell on deaf ears	was ignored
c. mounting	intensifying
d. eradicate	weed out
e. notorious	shady
f. razed	flattened
g. oppressive	tyrannical
h. disperse	scatter
i. jurisdiction	authority
j. pressing	urgent

PHRASE MATCH:

a. calls to	intervene in...
b. fell on	deaf ears
c. International concern	is mounting
d. the potential humanitarian crisis	unfolding
e. black-market	activities
f. razed	to the ground
g. smoldering	ruins
h. disperse	into the countryside
i. outside of its pan-African	jurisdiction
j. it had more pressing	matters to resolve

WHICH WORD?:

Zimbabwe's homeless ignored

BNE: The African Union has **rejected** international calls to **intervene** in Zimbabwe's campaign of **slum** clearance, which has left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Condemnation by U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, **echoed** by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, aimed at pressuring Robert Mugabe's government fell on **deaf** ears among African leaders. International concern is mounting at the potential humanitarian crisis **unfolding** in the Southern African nation. Mr. Mugabe said the operation was to clean up inner cities and **eradicate** criminal elements. He said the townships served as "notorious criminal hideouts and havens for **black-market** activities".

The "urban renewal" campaign is called Operation 'Murambatsvina', which means "cleaning up the trash". Police have **torched** and razed to the ground whole communities, leaving them in **smoldering** ruins. Two babies were crushed to death earlier this week by bulldozers. Mr. Mugabe's political **opponents** say the campaign is an **oppressive** attempt to punish the urban **poor** for voting against the ruling party in recent elections. Mr. Mugabe expects those evicted simply to **disperse** into the countryside. The African Union considers the **crackdown** on squatters and slum-dwellers as an internal matter that falls outside of its pan-African jurisdiction. It also said it had more **pressing** matters to resolve.