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President Robert Mugabe in Harare

AP photo

NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMPLETED 3 WEEKS AGO AND COUNT IS STILL OUT

In case you haven't been following the day-by-day saga in Zimbabwe since the national elections, following are some of the highlights.

It appears that Robert Mugabe and his party lost the presidency and control of the Lower House, as well. The Upper House was split almost evenly between Mugabe supporters and his opposition.

As of today, the government has not released the election results. Mugabe has forced a "recount" in all districts that voted against him; clearly he is attempting to rig the election. The recount should be finished this week. Mugabe seems to believe that by refusing to release the votes he can remain President. So much for the idea of free elections.

My guess is that when the election results are reported, a number of the districts voting against Mugabe "will be found to have missed a large number of positive votes," and Mugabe will emerge as the winner, or close enough for a runoff with the opposition candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai.

To prepare for a possible runoff Mugabe already has turned loose his "military veterans," who support him because of his handouts to them, to burn the homes and physically harm many of those known to have supported the opposition. At least ten people have been killed, many others severely beaten, others have been kidnapped and/or are missing, and many are in hiding.

The day after the election Mugabe ordered an emergency supply of ammunition, guns, mortars and other military supplies from China. The shipment arrived in South Africa, where it was to

be shipped by land to Zimbabwe. After the dockworkers refused to unload the ship in Durban it left port and is believed to currently be on its way to Angola. While international pressure to stop the shipment is building, it is not clear that Angola will refuse the shipment.

Mugabe has accused Tsvangirai of treason for wanting to change the regime and wanting to bring white people back into the country, destroying all the "progress" Made in his 28-year presidency. It is hard to believe that some Zimbabweans actually believe him, despite the fact that a loaf of bread costs 55 million Zimbabwe dollars. Twenty years ago, the same amount of money would have purchased a huge estate, a beautiful home and all the amenities that went with it...now, only a loaf of bread. That hardly is progress.

So far, the Mugabe-appointed Zimbabwe Supreme Court has fully supported Mugabe and his delay in releasing the election results. Mugabe is giving all the appearances of a dictator who is refusing to give up his power.

The positive news is that many leaders in neighboring countries, along with the United Nations and most major Western powers, are pushing for an early release of the votes and a peaceful transition. What impact they have on Mugabe remains to be seen. There seems to a complete stalemate in the country at the moment.

Please keep the country, its leaders and all our Christian friends in Zimbabwe in your prayers.

2008 SUMMER MISSION UPDATE

Despite the problems within Zimbabwe our Creekside Mission Team consisting of Steve Phillips, Larry Broughton and George Bragg, along with Robert Reese, are still planning to visit Zimbabwe and participate in the Leaders and Pastors Bible School in Gwandavale, leaving June 19 and returning July 2. Should the situation in the country deteriorate to the point that participants in the Bible School cannot travel to Gwandavale, the Bible School and mission trip may be postponed. Meanwhile, please continue praying for the mission and the team members, as they prepare for the trip.

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