

## ZIMBABWE

**Capital** Harare

**Population** 12.52 million

**Literacy Rate** 90.7%

**Infant Mortality Rate** 29.5 per 1,000 live deaths<sup>1</sup>

**Life Expectancy** 44 years old<sup>2</sup>

**Total Refugees** 22,449

**Total Asylum Seekers** 1,404<sup>3</sup>

**Asylum Seekers in South Africa** 7,783<sup>4</sup>

**Percent of People Living under the Poverty Line** 68 percent<sup>5</sup>

**GDP per Capita** \$314<sup>6</sup>

After a particularly violent liberation struggle against the colonial government, Robert Mugabe was elected President of Zimbabwe in 1980 and remains in power today. His Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) regime is characterized by corruption, economic instability, violence, oppression and widespread human rights abuses.<sup>7</sup> In the 1990s, his land redistribution policy of reclaiming white-owned farms to be allocated to black Zimbabweans was the catalyst for the near-collapse of the economy<sup>8</sup> and the world's highest inflation rate, which in 2008 reached 231,000,000 percent.<sup>9</sup>

In 2008, a Presidential election was held in which Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, won. However, because Tsvangirai did not by a wide enough margin, a run-off election was held. The election was condemned by the international community as neither fair nor free and to further de-legitimize the election, Tsvangirai withdrew his candidacy. International pressure mounted against Mugabe's regime and he consented to a power-sharing agreement, installing Tsvangirai as the Zimbabwean Prime Minister.<sup>10</sup>

Violence, intimidation and oppression against the Zimbabwean people continues, with complete impunity. Supporters and suspected supporters of the opposition party have been killed, tortured, detained indefinitely or beaten.<sup>11</sup> In February of 2011, 45 Zimbabwean activists were detained and tortured for watching television footage of the popular revolutions against the oppressive regimes in Egypt and Tunisia.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> World Fact Book: Zimbabwe, CIA. 2011.

<sup>2</sup> World Development Indicators: Zimbabwe, World Bank. 2010.

<sup>3</sup> 2010 Statistical Snapshot: Zimbabwe, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2010. Data reflects total refugees and asylum seekers as of January 2010.

<sup>4</sup> 2005 Statistical Yearbook: South Africa, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2007. Zimbabweans immigrating to South Africa aren't considered refugees because it is perceived that they are coming in pursuit of employment or for other economic reasons. It is estimated that there are about 1.5 million Zimbabweans living in South Africa total. This number includes those living in South Africa with a work or study permit, a 90-day visa or with no documentation.

<sup>5</sup> World Fact Book: Zimbabwe, CIA. 2011. Data is based off internationally recognized poverty line of \$1.25 a day.

<sup>6</sup> 2009 Indicators on Income and Economic Activity, United Nations Statistics Division. 2010.

<sup>7</sup> World Report 2011: Zimbabwe, Human Rights Watch. 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Country Profiles: Zimbabwe, BBC. 2011.

<sup>9</sup> McGreal, Chris. "Zimbabwe's Inflation Rate Surges to 231,000,000%." Guardian. 9 October 2008. Web.

<sup>10</sup> Country Profiles: Zimbabwe, BBC. 2011.

<sup>11</sup> 2009 Human Rights Report: Zimbabwe, U.S. State Department. 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Bell, Alex. "Gwisai and Other Detained Activists Granted Bail." All Africa. 16 March 2011. Web.