

*Harare, 27 march, 2001*

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH KABILA, PRESIDENT OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE.**

- Your Excellency Comrade Robert Gabriel MUGABE, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe,
- The Honorable Emmerson MNANGAGWA, Speaker of Parliament,
- Honorable Ministers,
- Members of Parliament,
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Comrades and Friends,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and a privilege for me to have an opportunity to speak to the people of Zimbabwe through their elected representatives gathered here in this august Assembly.

First, allow me to convey to you the greetings from the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo to their brothers and sisters of Zimbabwe, and second allow me to express the gratitude of the people of Congo for assisting them at a time when their existence as a Nation is threatened by the war of aggression imposed on them by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

My thoughts go to the Zimbabwean families whose relatives and loved ones lost their lives, fighting for the national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of Congo. To those who lost their loved ones, I present my heartfelt condolences. They did not die in vain. It is my profound conviction that they died for a good cause.

Your intervention, along side Angola and Namibia, prevented chaos and subsequent bloodshed in the Congo and in the continent a consequence of a programmed destabilization, unleashed against backdrop instability in the great lakes Region.

Your Excellency,

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the role that the Allied Forces play in my country.

Zimbabwean, Angolan and Namibian Forces are in the Democratic Republic of Congo, at the invitation of the legitimate Government of my country.

They are there as SADC Forces, according to our regional Organization Charter that allows the Organization to respond to calls from a Member State under threat from foreign aggression, which is the case in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It was at a Summit in Victoria Falls that SADC Heads of States unanimously approved the Allied Forces

intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo to fight along side the Congolese Armed Forces against the armies of invasion and occupation from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

For your memory, various Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council especially Resolutions 1234, 1304,

1332 and 1341 make a clear distinction between invited and uninvited forces in the conflict of the Democratic Republic of Congo. My Government and myself reject the propaganda of those who equate the presence of Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia in the Democratic Republic of Congo to that of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, countries that have violated International Law, the OAU and the UN Charters.

I would also like to stress the role that Zimbabwe, under the leadership of H.E. President MUGABE, has played for the liberation and the dignity of the African continent. Zimbabwe was active in the Front line States; a body credited for having fought and defeated the Apartheid regime in Namibia and South Africa.

Under the leadership of H.E. President MUGABE, Zimbabwe effectively contributed to end the war in Mozambique with the only purpose of having Mozambicans regain peace, stability and development.

President MUGABE's efforts to resolve the conflict that opposed Libya to the International Community will be remembered for years to come by the people of that country.

It is in this very spirit that decided to commit himself to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. That commitment was done following the principles that govern SADC, the OAU and the United Nations. Our organization responded decisively to avert chaos in Lesotho under the leadership of South Africa. In West Africa, without the intervention of the ECOMOG under the leadership of Nigeria, Sierra Leone would still be in a state of anarchy that shames the African Continent. Further a field, the International community did not hesitate to stop the invasion of Kuwait by troops from Iraq. Actions of this nature are to be applauded because they prevent anarchy. That is why, the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo will never forget what Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia are striving to achieve for them.

Your Excellency,

My people and myself are very appreciative of the fact that, despite the overall bad economic climate that prevails in our region, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia came to the Democratic Republic of Congo to help defend the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of my country. We all know that some economic problems have been created by hidden forces that do not appreciate the African solidarity that Allied countries have demonstrated. It is however, my strong belief that these are temporary problems that will be overcome.

To alleviate them, I invite and encourage a mutually beneficial economic cooperation between our two countries. I have no doubt whatsoever that if we stand together, we will

resolve most of our economic and financial shortcomings. Let us be encouraged by our mutual projects like SEN GAMINES which promises to bear fruit in the near future. The Joint Ventures between our two Governments are not to be confused with the looting of the mineral resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo as it is the case in the occupied zones of our country. My intention is to intensify and strengthen bilateral cooperation between Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Other projects that have already started on a strong footing include the Joint Venture between the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe and the "*Regie des Voies Aeriennes*", its Congolese counterpart, the Air Zimbabwe and the "*Lignes Aériennes Congolaises*" project, the National Railways of Zimbabwe and the "*Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer du Congo*", the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply

Authority and the "*Société Nationale d'Electricité*", to name just a few I am convinced that. The cooperation between our parastatals will strengthen and make them more competitive in the region.

I invite therefore Experts from both sides to come up with new creative projects that will benefit our two countries and people. The volume of Trade must be intensified and for that purpose, We must accelerate the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding which includes free trade and circulation of goods and people between our two countries. The relationship between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe in particular and the whole SADC region in general must be a good example of integration and South-South Cooperation.

Your Excellency,

As the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, I will work for the promotion of fundamental liberties and for the strict respect of Human Rights. I will continue with efforts to democratize the DRC, a country that should be strong enough to assume its rightful role in Central Africa, in SADC, in the OAU and in the world. To accomplish that, we will consult the Congolese people so that they can decide on their own destiny. Democracy must and will prevail in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Your Excellency,

These essential democratic rights cannot be attained with occupation forces continuing to challenge the whole world by their persistent occupation of the DRC, looting the resources of the Congo and violating Human Rights.

I believe that the UN Resolution 1341 adopted on February 22 this year is an important step in the search for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As for the peace process, the disengagement and its sub-plans signed in Kampala and Harare, I am glad to note that encouraging signs have been reported on the front lines, except for a few cases of violations in the northern part where the enemy attempted to gain ground during the disengagement operations.

Reports from MONUC Officials indicate that the cease fire is holding. We invite the UN to continue with the deployment of more observers who will, in turn, supervise a total and an

unconditional withdrawal of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Concerning the withdrawal of all foreign forces, I believe the process should strictly be done according to the UN Resolutions 1234, 1304, 1332 and 1341 that ask uninvited forces to withdraw first. Troops from Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia will withdraw when the objectives that brought them to the Congo have been fulfilled.

As for the Inter Congolese Dialogue, I am happy to report that consultations are in progress to bring together Congolese from all political tendencies to iron out their differences and put the interests of our nation first.

Former Botswana President, Sir KETUMILE MASIRE visited Kinshasa recently. I believe that in the days to come, he will conclude all preliminary talks with interested parties and set a date for the commencement of the intercongolese dialogue.

As far as the Government is concerned, we are ready to meet with our brothers and sisters who were led astray and armed by the forces of occupation, the internal and external non-violent opposition as well as representatives of Civil Society as provided for by the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

Your Excellency,

I would like to conclude my address by encouraging you, Honorable Members of Parliament, to convey to your respective constituencies, the real reasons of Zimbabwe's intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The people of Zimbabwe should know that this is basically an act of solidarity among Africans and an act of respect for our mutual responsibility within SADC, our regional organization. Zimbabweans have all reasons to be proud of what they have accomplished in the DRC.

Through this act, the people of Zimbabwe and their leader, His Excellency President Robert Gabriel MUGABE, have proven to the world that they are respectful of fundamental principles that govern civilized States.

By coming to the rescue of the Democratic Republic of Congo, you have reinforced SADC, the OAU and the UN by sending a clear signal that no one can violate international law without facing an appropriate response.

The people of the Congo will never forget.

Long Live Zimbabwe!

Long Live the Democratic Republic of Congo!

I thank you.