



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 October 1982

New Times

Prime Minister
To see.

Zimbabwe

A.F.C. 12/10

In your letter of 11 October you asked for an account of the latest situation with regard to the Zimbabwean Air Force detainees.

Mr Nott spoke to Mr Mugabe on Saturday 25 September, about the allegations of torture and brutality by the Zimbabwean security authorities towards the detainees. He drew attention to the effect that these allegations were having on public and parliamentary opinion in this country and the difficulties this might cause for HMG over the provision of assistance to the Zimbabwean Armed Forces. Mr Mugabe denied that there had been any maltreatment of detainees or that statements had been obtained under duress. But he said the truth would be established when the cases came to court.

Despite Mr Mugabe's denial the High Commission believe that the torture allegations are true. This is supported by the findings of a white Zimbabwean doctor who examined Air Vice Marshal Slatter and Wing Commander Briscoe. We have heard * ~~~~~ * that Mugabe has now seen an authoritative medical report of the torture, but it is not clear whether he was aware of this when he met Mr Nott.

The High Commission in Harare reported on 11 October that the seven whom we believe to have been tortured have now appeared before magistrates and are on remand. Several other detainees have been released. The detainees are unlikely to come to trial much before early February. According to one of the defence lawyers, the Zimbabwean Attorney General intends to indict the detainees by mid-November, principally on charges under the Law and Order Maintenance Act. A delay of four months in bringing cases to trial is not unusual or excessive in the Zimbabwean legal system. The lawyer acting for Air Vice Marshal Slatter and Air Cdr Pile has told the High Commission that there are no real grounds for complaint at this stage although he intends to press the Attorney General to make haste. Meanwhile, the detainees continue to be remanded about once a fortnight but bail has been denied.

/The High

* ~ * Passage deleted and retained
under Section 3(4).

Wayland

4 December 2012



The High Commission's legal informant has said that some of the detainees are beginning to recover from their ordeal. Air Vice Marshal Slatter and Wg Cds Briscoe were said to be in quite high spirits. The condition of Flight Lt Lloyd however is causing concern.

The High Commission are, of course, continuing to monitor the situation closely.

/ I enclose copies of the record of Mr Nott's conversation
/ with Mr Mugabe on 25 September and of the letter Mr Nott subsequently sent. The passage in the draft letter to Councillor de Lisle has been cleared with Mr Nott's office.

A copy of this letter and its enclosures goes to Richard Mottram (MOD).

Yours ever,
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

Zimbabwe
vb

18 October 1982

Kidnapped Tourists in Zimbabwe

The Prime Minister was grateful for your letter of 15 October, the contents of which she has noted.

AJC

R.B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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RECEIVED IN REGISTRY NO. 37		
5 OCT 1982		

copy to (Consular D.)
EG/O.

Sy S U. S. C.
AFZ
BMATT

RECORD OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF ZIMBABWE

1. The Secretary of State called on Mr Mugabe at his residence in Harare at 8.30am on Saturday 25 September. He was accompanied by the High Commissioner and the Commander of BMATT; the Zimbabwean Minister of State for Defence, Dr Sekeramayi, joined Mr Mugabe after the meeting had begun.
2. During the initial courtesies Mr Mugabe asked about the Prime Minister's visit to China, of which he had heard on the BBC World Service that morning. He also inquired about the Falkland Islands and commented that the situation there was "now much better than before".
3. Mr Nott said that he was impressed by what had been achieved in Zimbabwe in amalgamating three armies into one and was glad that BMATT had been able to play a part in this. He said that HMG were ready to continue to provide help over military and perhaps air force training insofar as they could. He commented that the latest suggestion by the Zimbabwe Army Commander - that BMATT should run a series of courses for Zimbabwean instructors - sounded sensible. Mr Mugabe said that he was 'extremely' pleased with the help which BMATT had provided and certainly hoped that it would continue. He had noted General Nhongo's proposal for training instructors: it was alright, but it would be necessary to ensure also that BMATT had the ability to follow up training in the units [possibly a reference to keeping BMATT training coordinators attached to Brigade Headquarters as at present]. Above all, he hoped that BMATT would be kept at a strength sufficient to provide an influence throughout the army. He asked what the current strength was and indicated satisfaction with the reply of "about 90".
4. Turning to the air force, Mr Mugabe said that he was dumbfounded by the sabotage of aircraft at the Thornhill base. He knew there had been disloyal elements in the air force at independence, but he could not understand how those who still remain could have acted as they did. However it was clear from their statements that, although there had been South African backing, senior air force officers had been involved. Mr Nott said that there was considerable concern in Britain over the allegations which have

/appeared

appeared recently that air force officers had been tortured during interrogation. There was also concern about allegations of brutal behaviour by the army towards civilians. Public and parliamentary reactions in Britain could make real difficulties for us in the context of our involvement with military and police training and efforts to provide help for the air force. Mr Mugabe replied emphatically that there had been no mistreatment of prisoners and no duress had been applied to the air force officers under interrogation; their statements were made voluntarily. When one read the statements they were so detailed and so similar as to make clear that they must be both true and given voluntarily.

5. Mr Nott said that he was glad to hear what Mr Mugabe had said. It would help him in dealing with questions in Britain, but he repeated that concern there was widespread. Mr Byatt said that most of the air force officers under interrogation were Zimbabwe citizens but one, Flt Sgt Lochran, was a mono UK citizen. Sgt Lochran had now been cleared of suspicion and released but he thought Mr Mugabe should know that Lochran had reported to the High Commission that, in the course of his interrogation, Lochran had been threatened by his interrogators with physical violence to "make him confess". This might be relevant to the cases of the other suspects. Mr Mugabe repeated that there had been no mistreatment of prisoners but went on to say that, if his police had misinformed him on this point, then the fact was sure to be established when the cases of the air force officers came to court. He then asked whether, if it were established that the air force officers had been guilty of sabotage but had also been subjected to torture, opinion in Britain would be more concerned about the torture or the sabotage which caused it. He appeared to be surprised by Mr Nott's reply that the torture would cause more concern because opinion in Britain would regard sabotage as a matter to be dealt with by a court and by punishment inflicted by a court. He repeated that public concern in Britain about torture could make real difficulties for HMG over assistance to the Zimbabwe armed forces, and he therefore hoped that the allegations could be swiftly resolved.

6. As to the sabotage, Mr Nott said, we were discussing with the Zimbabwe air force and Ministry of Defence how we might be able to help over the provision of 6 Hunter aircraft to replace those destroyed. This might be done either by sale or by lease. Dr Sekeramayi interjected that the terms offered seemed very generous, but that sale might be more economic for Zimbabwe since the

/aircraft

CONFIDENTIAL

aircraft would be needed for at least 4 years). Providing personnel would be much more difficult. The RAF, because of its other commitments, had few to spare. They might be able to find a dozen or so to help initially with maintaining the Hunter aircraft, but more than that would be impossible. For other technical personnel, therefore, he hoped that a solution might emerge from the discussions which he understood were going on on the commercial side with IMS and Airwork. Mr Mugabe said that he was most grateful for our readiness to help and agreed that discussions over lease or sale of Hunter's should continue.

7. In conclusion, Mr Nott thanked Mr Mugabe for receiving him on a Saturday morning and said that he hoped that the CGS, who was due to visit Zimbabwe in a week's time, would be able to have discussions in more detail.

30 September 1982

25th September 1982

On my departure, I wanted to write and thank you for your courtesy in seeing me this morning on my short visit to Zimbabwe. I was also grateful for the opportunity to meet your Minister of State - and the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force.

I was so glad to hear about your satisfaction with the work being carried out by BMATT. We are, of course, happy to discuss changes to the arrangements which would benefit your Armed Forces.

In our talks, I told you that I might be asked on my return about recent allegations in the British press of maltreatment of Air Force detainees. I will be very much assisted in responding to any questions on this subject by your re-assurance that Air Force detainees will be brought to trial soon. This will establish the facts publicly and help to allay concern in Great Britain.

I regret that I have not been able on this visit to spend more time in Zimbabwe. But, even in my short stay, I have been able to see something of the progress Zimbabwe has made under your Government.

John Nott

The Hon R G Mugabe

DRAFT: ~~minute~~/letter/teleletter/despatch/note
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Councillor Julian de Lisle
Leicestershire County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester LE3 8BR

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 29 September to the Prime Minister about the detention of Zimbabwean Air Force personnel. I have been asked to reply.

CAVEAT.....

The Prime Minister is aware of allegations that some of those detained in connection with the sabotage attack at Thornhill airbase last July have been tortured. A number of them, including a British national, Sergeant Lochran, have now been released. The British High Commission have made a formal protest to the Zimbabwean authorities about the ill-treatment of ^{Sgt} Lochran. Those still held are either Zimbabwean citizens or dual nationals. The British Government therefore have no formal authority to intervene on their behalf. Nevertheless, the Zimbabwe Government have been left in no doubt about our concern that detainees, wherever they are held, should be treated humanely and fairly.

*TKK.
A.S.C. 19/10.*

Enclosures—flag(s).....

During his visit to Harare on 25 September, the Secretary of State for Defence, John Nott, raised the question of the detainees. He said that whilst

/HMG

HMG recognised that this is essentially an internal matter for Zimbabwe, we are concerned about allegations that some of those detained have been ill-treated. He was given to understand that the detainees would be brought to trial soon, and we understand that several of them have since been remanded after appearing before a magistrate.

I would like to assure you that our High Commission in Harare will continue to keep a close watch on developments in this case, which we very much hope will be satisfactorily resolved.

A. J. C. ¹²/₆



The National Archives

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Prime Minister Zimbabwe



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE *RF*
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
 Telephone 01-~~330 78122~~ 218 2111/3

MO 25/2/23/2

28th September 1982

Dear Francis,

MALTREATMENT OF AIR FORCE DETAINEES IN
ZIMBABWE

When he was in Harare last Saturday, the Defence Secretary raised with both Mr Mugabe and Dr Sekeramayi, the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's office, the question of maltreatment of Air Force detainees. He was given the assurance that the detainees will be brought to trial soon (though he is extremely sceptical that this will prove to be the case).

Mr Nott felt he should record his concern over this problem and did so by incorporating the point in the attached letter to Mr Mugabe, which was delivered yesterday.

Records of his discussions in Harare will follow shortly.

I am copying this letter and its attachment to John Coles (No 10).

Yours etc,

Richard Mottram

(R C MOTTRAM)

F N Richards Esq

25th September 1982

On my departure, I wanted to write and thank you for your courtesy in seeing me this morning on my short visit to Zimbabwe. I was also grateful for the opportunity to meet your Minister of State - and the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force.

I was so glad to hear about your satisfaction with the work being carried out by BMATT. We are, of course, happy to discuss changes to the arrangements which would benefit your Armed Forces.

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The Hon R G Mugabe