

NEW HOPE ZIMBABWE

OPERATION MURAMBATSVINA UPDATE FOR THE 07/07/05

PLACE: EPWORTH – HARARE ZIMBABWE

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The UN ENVOY called me to update them about the extent of the situation in regard to the government's Operation Murambatsvina. They also introduced me to a South African journalist who interviewed me over the mobile phone.

The following is a summary of the effects, which the operation have brought to the people.

- The Epworth Local Board staff have been moving around continuing to mark structures that are earmarked for demolition with an X and ordering citizens to do the demolition by themselves within 24hrs. Some people who have already demolished their structures could be seen helplessly sitting in the open with their belongings pondering their fate.

I told the journalist that the situation in Epworth is quite different from that of other areas since Epworth is an area which was a rural setting which is slowly transforming into a peri-urban to urban status. Most people who stay there regard Epworth as their original home. The majority of the rest are those who migrated into Zimbabwe from neighboring countries long back before independence.

The journalist asked whether any humanitarian assistance has been provided to the families. My response to him was that the humanitarian aid in form of blankets, food, temporary shelter and relocation transport is long overdue. People are just living in open spaces without any sanitary facilities, a thing which could cause serious health hazards.

Epworth has a very high prevalence of diseases such as TB and HIV/AIDS. The bed-ridden patients are being exposed to harsh cold climate, which is resulting in 'premature' deaths.

Children also continue to suffer. They are being refused their basic child rights such as the right to education, the right to shelter, food and the right to health.

The journalist asked whether any of the Epworth residents have been ferried by the government to Caledonia. But it was sad to tell him that no one has been transported to Caledonia.

I have also reported about several churches that have been demolished. It is alleged that the churches had not presented their building plans to the Epworth Local Boards for

approval. But, the question still comes of why they have to be destroyed in such a hassle without any alternative given.

When he asked what was happening at the moment of discussion I said, people are busy destroying the structures marked X. Failure to do so they will pay Z\$1.5 million per room. I can see school children that did not go to school in anticipation for the destruction of their home and unfortunately enough some of them are well known orphans who are also staying with their grannies who do not have any source of income.

The journalist who identified himself as Obby thanked for the phone interviewed with me. He said he would call on updates here and then in order to be informed about the operation.

Meanwhile our leadership has been moving around interviewing people about the effects of **Tsunami** as the operation is locally code-named.

They have reported on the following

- a) 27 more cases of bed ridden patients
- b) Old people and children have been affected
- c) Pregnant women have not been spared
- d) The number of affected families is now up (about 9 000)
- e) 2 death cases of terminally ill patients due to exposure to cold

Additional Information

It has been reported that police have been on rampage beating innocent people at Solani shopping center in Epworth on the 05/07/05. The fracas started when the ZRP details from the Epworth station during the so-called operation Murambatsvina beat vendors who were selling vegetables at the market place. They provoked the vendors who angrily resisted and fought. Most of the vendors are women who are single parents

They are trying to honestly provide for their families most of whom are orphans. The police when they discovered that they were outnumbered by the furious vendors called the Support Unit uniformed and armed police who sealed off the roads and paths leading to and from the shopping centre. They started beating unselectively any person they came across.

About 150 people sustained various injuries, and some of them who we interviewed could not access medication at the local clinic in fear of being victimized.

Among the people beaten were women, children and old people.