Zimbabwe’s homeless ignored

URL:  http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0506/050625-zimbabwe.html

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25 June, 2005
Zimbabwe’s homeless ignored

BNE: The African Union has rejected international calls to intervene in Zimbabwe’s campaign of slum clearance, which has left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Condemnation by U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, echoed by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, aimed at pressuring Robert Mugabe’s government fell on deaf ears among African leaders. International concern is mounting at the potential humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Southern African nation. Mr. Mugabe said the operation was to clean up inner cities and eradicate criminal elements. He said the townships served as “notorious criminal hideouts and havens for black-market activities”.

The “urban renewal” campaign is called Operation Murambatsvina, which means “cleaning up the trash”. Police have torched and razed to the ground whole communities, leaving them in smoldering ruins. Two babies were crushed to death earlier this week by bulldozers. Mr. Mugabe’s political opponents say the campaign is an oppressive attempt to punish the urban poor for voting against the ruling party in recent elections. Mr. Mugabe expects those evicted simply to disperse into the countryside. The African Union considers the crackdown on squatters and slum-dwellers as an internal matter that falls outside of its pan-African jurisdiction. It also said it had more pressing matters to resolve.
Zimbabwe’s homeless ignored – 25 June, 2005

WARM-UPS

1. SLUM DWELLER: What must it be like to have no permanent home? What would it be like to live in a makeshift shack with no electricity or running water? Do you ever count you blessings that you have a roof over your head and don’t have to worry about it being pulled down? Imagine you are a slum dwelling or refugee living in a tent. Talk with other students (also slum dwellers/refugees) about your life and how you survive each day.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

   Zimbabwe / African Union / U.K. Foreign Secretary / Condoleezza Rice / Robert Mugabe / humanitarian crises / inner cities / the black market / trash / bulldozers / poor people

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. ZIMBABWE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Zimbabwe. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. ZIMBABWE OPINIONS: To what degree do you agree or disagree with these opinions? Change the statements so they match your own opinions and provide support for any changes you make.

   a. Robert Mugabe is similar to Saddam Hussein.
   b. South Africa should put more pressure on Robert Mugabe.
   c. The African Union is best positioned to deal with Zimbabwe.
   d. Zimbabwe should be banished from the international community.
   e. Africa has more urgent problems that poor people being evicted.
   f. America also has homeless people. The international community shouldn’t single out Zimbabwe for criticism.
   g. Robert Mugabe is right when he calls America and European countries hypocrites. They have left a million homeless in Iraq.
   h. Thousands will die in Zimbabwe and the international community will do nothing, as usual.
   i. The upcoming G8 Summit will solve all of Zimbabwe’s problems.

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BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article’s headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):
   a. Zimbabwe’s homeless asked African Union leaders for help. T / F
   b. Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe is deaf. T / F
   c. There is a potential humanitarian crisis unfolding in Zimbabwe. T / F
   d. Robert Mugabe said he is cleaning Zimbabwe of crime. T / F
   e. There is a national campaign to pick up trash in Zimbabwe. T / F
   f. Two babies were crushed in the demolition of people’s homes. T / F
   g. Mr. Mugabe expects people to relocate into the heart of the cities. T / F
   h. The African Union said the crisis in Zimbabwe was an internal issue. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:
   a. intervene intensifying
   b. fell on deaf ears authority
   c. mounting shady
   d. eradicate tyrannical
   e. notorious mediate
   f. razed urgent
   g. oppressive weed out
   h. disperse flattened
   i. jurisdiction scatter
   j. pressing was ignored

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):
   a. calls to matters to resolve
   b. fell on unfolding
   c. International concern jurisdiction
   d. the potential humanitarian crisis intervene in...
   e. black-market to the ground
   f. razed activities
   g. smoldering is mounting
   h. disperse ruins
   i. outside of its pan-African into the countryside
   j. it had more pressing deaf ears

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WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD?: Circle the correct word from the pairs in italics.

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BNE: The African Union has rejected / dejected international calls to internecine / intervene in Zimbabwe’s campaign of slum / slam clearance, which has left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Condemnation by U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, echoed / reverberated by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, aimed at pressuring Robert Mugabe’s government fell on deaf / mute ears among African leaders. International concern is mounting at the potential humanitarian crisis unfolding / folding in the Southern African nation. Mr. Mugabe said the operation was to clean up inner cities and elucidate / eradicate criminal elements. He said the townships served as “notorious criminal hideouts and havens for white-market / black-market activities”.

The “urban renewal” campaign is called Operation ‘Murambatsvina’, which means “cleaning up the trash”. Police have flashlights / torched and razed to the ground whole communities, leaving them in smoldering / simmering ruins. Two babies were crushed to death earlier this week by bulldozers. Mr. Mugabe’s political proponents / opponents say the campaign is an impressive / oppressive attempt to punish the urban poor / poverty for voting against the ruling party in recent elections. Mr. Mugabe expects those evicted simply to disperse / dispense into the countryside. The African Union considers the crackdown / crack up on squatters and slum-dwellers as an internal matter that falls outside of its pan-African jurisdiction. It also said it had more pressing / pushing matters to resolve.
AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words ‘deaf’ and ‘ears’.
   • Share your findings with your partners.
   • Make questions using the words you found.
   • Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.
   • Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
   • Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD?: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the relationship between each of the pairs of words?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT ZIMBABWE SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Zimbabwe and Robert Mugabe.
   • Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
   • Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
   • Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:
   • intervene
   • homeless
   • echoed
   • deaf
   • unfolding
   • notorious
   • renewal
   • smoldering
   • crushed
   • oppressive
   • disperse
   • jurisdiction

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DISCUSSION

STUDENT A’s QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

a. Did you have a clear idea from the headline what this story was about?
b. Did the headline make you want to read the story?
c. Are you interested in what Robert Mugabe is doing to his people in Zimbabwe?
d. How often do you read the news about Africa / Zimbabwe?
e. What do you know about Robert Mugabe?
f. Is Mr. Mugabe a hero for championing black African rights?
g. Is the African Union correct in saying the forceful eviction of hundreds of thousands of poor people is an internal matter?
h. Thabo Mbeki said the world should focus not on Zimbabwe but on the Congo, where 3 million have died. Is he right?
i. Do you think Mr. Mugabe is really on a crime prevention campaign?
j. What African matters are more important than those in Zimbabwe?

STUDENT B’s QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

a. Did you like reading this article?
b. What did you think about what you read?
c. What is your opinion on the slum clearances in Zimbabwe?
d. Are comparisons between Robert Mugabe and Saddam Hussein fair?
e. Should the international community step in and oust Mr. Mugabe?
f. Will the upcoming G8 Summit help Zimbabwe’s poor in any way?
g. Should South Africa help its neighbour more?
h. Why do you think Robert Mugabe has banned the BBC from reporting inside Zimbabwe?
i. Should Mr. Mugabe be tried for crimes against humanity?
j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
c. Was there a question you didn’t like?
d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
e. What did you like talking about?
f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
g. Which was the most difficult question?
SPEAKING

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think conditions are like for millions around the world who are homeless, without jobs and don’t have enough food and water. Talk about the things we take for granted in the table below. Do you count your blessings you have these things? Think of two hardships you would experience without these things.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THINGS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED</th>
<th>HARDSHIPS WITHOUT THESE THINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean water</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three meals a day</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A home</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest political leaders</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Change partners and compare the hardships you discussed previously. Which hardships are the greatest?

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LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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**BNE:** The African Union has rejected international calls to intervene in Zimbabwe’s _______ __ ___ ________, which has left an estimated 1.5 million people homeless. Condemnation by U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, _______ __ U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, ______ __ ________ Robert Mugabe’s government ______ __ ____ ____ among African leaders. International concern __ ________ __ ___ potential humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Southern African nation. Mr. Mugabe said the operation was to clean up inner cities and _______ ________ ________. He said the townships served as “________ _______ _____ and havens for black-market activities”.

The “urban renewal” campaign is called Operation *Murambatsvina*, which means “cleaning up the trash”. Police have _______ __ ____ to the ground whole communities, leaving them __ ________ _____. Two babies were crushed to death earlier this week by bulldozers. Mr. Mugabe’s political opponents say the campaign is __ ________ ________ to punish the urban poor for voting _______ __ ____ _____ in recent elections. Mr. Mugabe expects those evicted _______ __ ________ into the countryside. The African Union considers the _________ __ _________ and slum-dwellers as an internal matter that falls outside of its pan-African _____________. It also said it had more pressing matters to resolve.
HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google’s search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Robert Mugabe’s Operation Murambatsvina. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. I’M LUCKY: Write an essay explaining why you are lucky. Describe all of the things you are fortunate to have that millions around the world do not have. Explain the main points of your essay to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

4. DIARY / SCHEDULE: Imagine you are a slum dweller or a refugee living in a tent. Write your diary / journal entry for one day in your life. Read your diary/journal to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?
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ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F  b. F  c. T  d. T  e. F  f. T  g. F  h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. intervene  mediate
b. fell on deaf ears  was ignored
c. mounting  intensifying
d. eradicate  weed out
e. notorious  shady
f. razed  flattened
g. oppressive  tyrannical
h. disperse  scatter
i. jurisdiction  authority
j. pressing  urgent

PHRASE MATCH:

a. calls to  intervene in...
b. fell on  deaf ears
c. International concern  is mounting
d. the potential humanitarian crisis  unfolding
e. black-market  activities
f. razed  to the ground
g. smoldering  ruins
h. disperse  into the countryside
i. outside of its pan-African  jurisdiction
j. it had more pressing  matters to resolve

WHICH WORD?:

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