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'No one feels safe in Zimbabwe.'

NAT HENTOFF

The BBC's Mike Thomson, in a series of reports from Zimbabwe in early June, spoke to "a Zimbabwean mother and (13-year-old) daughter who are still too afraid to return home after being abducted and repeatedly raped by militiamen from President Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party a year ago." (Its symbol is a clenched fist.) Their fear has not lessened despite the new alleged "power-sharing" coalition between Mugabe and the Movement for Democratic Change's Morgan Tsvangirai.

Also still fearful is a woman, Patience, whom Thomson described as carrying a large book with "the names of people tortured, killed, raped or maimed by Zanu-PF mobs last year." Mortuary officials, hospital officials and court clerks covertly helped compile the list.

Thompson asked Patience what would happen if she brought this crimes list to the police or the Ministry of Justice so that those responsible would be prosecuted. (In this "coalition" government, Mugabe is still in tight personal control of the police, the spy service, the criminal justice system and the media.)

Looking Thomson straight in the eye, Patience answered his question: "I would be killed, even torn to pieces. I definitely believe that."

Explaining the sureness of her conviction, Thomson explained: "She believes they are desperate to destroy evidence like this, which, she says, could put them in court should President Mugabe eventually be forced from government."

Even Mugabe's rapists and murderers do not feel safe in Zimbabwe.

Thomson, who had reason not to feel safe himself in this police state, spoke about the incriminating evidence to the Movement for Democratic Change's Sekai Holland, whose rawly ironic title in this coalition government is: "Minister of State for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration." Ms. Holland has had acute personal experience in the need for healing since she herself had been beaten so viciously by Mugabe's Zanu-PF surrogates that she was hospitalized for weeks.

"No one feels safe in Zimbabwe. No one," she said, adding that, "different members of the MDC are getting phone calls from people who give the names of people who are going to be assassinated (by clenched-fisted Zanu-PF monsters)."

"I think," the minister of State for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, continues, "there is a department which meets to plan the survival of Zanu-PF as a ruling party. We are told they do have a list of people they will kill."

There have been many such fulfilled execution lists in the 29 years of Robert Mugabe's reign of horror.

Also interviewed by Thomson in his report was Harare University professor of Politics, John Makumbe.

He predicts:

"If the inclusive government does not work, we are going very close to Somalia. We are going into the scorched earth policy. That is what Mugabe is going to do. Destroy everything in the name of ideology,

destroy everyone."

Who is going to stop him? The United Nations is as preeningly hollow as ever.

President Obama is concerned. On June 12, meeting with the Zimbabwe's purported "power-sharing" prime minister, Morgan Tsvangirai at the White House, Obama - as described in a June 13 New York Times headline - "chided" Mugabe. Rather mildly, Obama said of Mugabe that he "has not acted oftentimes in the best interest of the Zimbabwean people and has been resistant to the kinds of democratic changes that need to take place."

Obama added that he was expecting Tsvangirai to "continue to provide us with direction in ways that he thinks we can be helpful."

But, as Robert Rotberg - president of the World Peace foundation and director of the Harvard Kennedy School's Program on Intrastate Conflict - says bluntly (Boston Globe, June 13):

"Mugabe, insufferably confident and arrogant at 85, hardly wants to be upstaged by his much younger prime minister. He seeks to protect himself and his security cronies from being investigated for corrupt dealings and human rights abuses. The destruction of a prosperous, largely democratic Zimbabwe happened on their watch. The blood of thousands is on their hands."

Back in Zimbabwe, Thomson is told by a 20-year-old survivor, Tapfuma (who, with his mother, had been beaten unconscious by the Zanu-Pf and will not go home under the new coalition government): "Zanu-PF, the people who did this, are still out there. They are still wearing their T-shirts."

Even Tsvangirai, desperately seeking foreign investors in his broken country, is so fearful they will reject any aid reaching Mugabe that on PBS's "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer" (June 11), Tsvangirai said:

"I think that the new political dispensation represents a new Zimbabwe, which is looking forward to reconstruction, to reconciliation, and economic recovery."

How Mugabe must have smiled when told about that painfully false homage.
