

# Press release: Minister for Africa's statement on the situation in Zimbabwe, January 2019

I have been following the events in Zimbabwe over the last week with growing concern. I summoned the Zimbabwean Ambassador to the United Kingdom to attend the Foreign Office on 17 January to discuss the situation.

Since the weekend there has been widespread unrest and a heavy security force response, with several people killed and many injured.

While we condemn the violent behaviour of some protestors, and unlawful acts such as arson and looting, we are deeply concerned that Zimbabwe's security forces have acted disproportionately in response. In particular, there are disturbing reports of use of live ammunition, intimidation and excessive force.

In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe shut off access to the internet on 15 and 16 January and continues to block a number of social media sites.

We call on the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure its security forces act professionally, proportionately and at all times with respect for human life and constitutional rights. We further call on the Government of Zimbabwe to investigate all allegations of human rights abuses. We also urge the reinstatement of full internet access, consistent with citizens' constitutional right to freedom of expression.