

STATEMENT ON RHODESIA BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR IAN
GILMOUR MP, LORD PRIVY SEAL, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON
TUESDAY 15 APRIL 1980

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Rhodesia

With permission Mr Speaker, I shall make a statement on Rhodesia.

Rhodesia will come to independence as Zimbabwe on Friday 18 April. Her Majesty The Queen will be represented at the independence celebrations by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales. My right honourable and noble Friend will represent the Government. My right honourable and noble Friend the Governor of Southern Rhodesia will leave Salisbury on Independence Day. Britain is thus about to terminate its constitutional responsibility for Rhodesia and to transfer power to a Government freely elected, under British supervision, by the Rhodesia people. I am sure that the House wishes the new country every success.

The Government look forward to working closely with the Government of an independent Zimbabwe headed by Mr Mugabe. I am pleased to announce that, subject to Parliamentary approval, we intend to commit, over three years, aid totalling 75 million pounds to Zimbabwe. The aid to be given within this total commitment includes a seven million pound grant for urgent post-war reconstruction; an allocation of five hundred thousand pounds for joint funding with British

/voluntary agencies

voluntary agencies of projects which they undertake in Zimbabwe; contributions to our share of expenditure through any extension of the Lome Convention to Zimbabwe and to the special appeal of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; and further humanitarian assistance.

The bulk of the 75 million pounds will be devoted to a substantial bilateral aid programme which will be allocated in agreement with the Zimbabwe Government. A mission from the Overseas Development Administration will visit Zimbabwe shortly after independence for talks with incoming Ministers to identify projects. At the request of the new Government we are providing assistance with police training, broadcasting, the civil service and the foreign service. We are also providing, separately from the aid programme, assistance with the training of the future Zimbabwe army.

Because of the marked extent to which the aid programme is already committed over the next two years, and in order to minimise the impact of this very substantial pledge to Zimbabwe on the level of UK assistance to other countries, my right honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has agreed exceptionally that there should be made available from the public expenditure contingency reserve a sum of eight million pounds in 1980/81 (with consequent adjustment of the cash limit) and of seven million pounds in 1981/82.

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We welcome Zimbabwe's accession to the Commonwealth as the forty third member. This calls for further legal provisions. An Order under the Zimbabwe Act will be laid before Parliament in draft in the next two days for approval by resolution. The principal purposes are to continue the application of certain United Kingdom laws in relation to Zimbabwe notwithstanding its change in status. Similar provision has been made for the application of United Kingdom law in respect of other republics within the Commonwealth.

The Zimbabwe Act 1979 granted an amnesty in United Kingdom law for political offences connected with UDI.

A similar amnesty was granted in Rhodesian law, and has subsequently been extended by the Governor in a general pardon covering all political offences up to the elections.

Now that full amnesty has been granted to all those responsible for the situation which led to the imposition of sanctions, the Government feel that it would no longer be appropriate for any further prosecutions to be initiated for sanctions offences.

The measures applying sanctions in United Kingdom law have of course been revoked. I am informed by my right honourable and learned Friend the Attorney General that only one case, an appeal, is at present before the courts, and that no other prosecutions are pending. The amnesty will not reopen past judgments. An order will be laid before Her Majesty in Council in due course to give effect to this decision.