

SECRET



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 August 1982

Dear John,

*The reports of
killing of 2 white
tourists discounted
yesterday?
not*

MF

*I have asked the F/C.O.
to deal, in their next letter, both
with the hostages and the entirely
separate question of the dead
tourist.*

Zimbabwe: Kidnapped Tourists

Last Friday's reports that the hostages had probably been killed have now proved false. You will wish to know the latest information that we have from Zimbabwe.

MF

The Zimbabwe forces continue to search an area near Bulawayo; but there has been no definite intelligence on the whereabouts of the terrorist group and their hostages since the trail went cold on 25 July. However, coordination of operations now seems to be much improved and the Minister in charge is reported to have taken a grip of the situation.

The present operation is likely to be called off on 3 August if no contact is established by then. Activity would then concentrate on gathering intelligence on which to base future search operations.

If the terrorists are found to have crossed into Botswana, it is possible that the government of Zimbabwe would ask permission from the government of Botswana for Zimbabwean forces to go after them. We have warned our High Commissioners in Gaborone and Harare that, in such a case, a specific request would be required from the Botswana

Passage deleted and retained under Section 3(4).

Wayland

4 December 2012

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

SECRET



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>946</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Minute from Coles to Prime Minister dated 2 August 1982.</i>	
CLOSED FOR YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	<i>4 December 2012 C. Wayland</i>
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PRIME MINISTER



Michael Latham rang on behalf of his constituent, a Mr. Jones, whose son and daughter are amongst the three tourists missing in Zimbabwe reported in The Telegraph yesterday (not those taken hostage). Mr. Latham wished you to know of his great concern. I undertook that we would keep closely in touch with the Foreign Office on developments in the case, and in particular to ensure that everything possible was being done. I understand, however, that the three tourists involved have been missing for well over two weeks now.

Timothy Flesher

1 August 1982



Prime Minister

AM

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

30 July 1982

Dear John,

Zimbabwe: Kidnapped Tourists

You will have seen various press reports suggesting that either all or some of the tourists kidnapped by Zimbabwe terrorists have been killed. The latest information we have from Major Lamb, * is as follows. *

The Zimbabwean forces came upon six of the terrorist band yesterday. In a fire fight, five of the terrorists were killed and one severely wounded. During the course of the latter's interrogation he said that 'six graves for white bodies' were dug on 29 July and gave vague indications of the area. The Zimbabweans launched a search operation for the site during the course of today, but found no evidence to corroborate the story of the hostages' deaths. The search has now been called off until first light tomorrow.

Major Lamb's feeling is that the story is, unfortunately, likely to prove true. The circumstantial evidence the terrorist gave regarding hearing shots and digging graves appears only too likely. We understand that the Zimbabweans will be issuing a press release this evening which will confirm that they have received information which points towards the fact that the hostages have been killed, but goes on to add that they have been unable to find the physical evidence to support this.

The reason that the press have been able to produce stories so rapidly is due to the fact that media representatives are inside the Zimbabwean army search headquarters and we understand that the army are communicating by radio en clair.

~ Passage deleted and retained under Section 3(4).

AWayland
4 December 2012

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

Yours over,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

Zimbabwe

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 July 1982

Zimbabwe: Kidnapped Tourists

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of your letter of 29 July.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

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Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



The National Archives

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