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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

16 November 1983

Dear Greville,

Thank you for your letter of 3 November about the position of the Jewish community in Zimbabwe.

I understand your fears that the difficult state of relations between Zimbabwe and Israel might have repercussions on the treatment of Jewish residents. In general the Zimbabwean Government have a good record of religious tolerance, and as far as I am aware the Jewish community is well treated. But I understand the concern of your Council lest such a trend should develop.

I shall certainly bear in mind your suggestion that this concern might be brought to Mr. Mugabe's attention during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Obviously I would only speak to him as you suggest if I felt at the time that the effect would be helpful. I can assure you that the Zimbabwean Government are already fully aware of the importance we attach to reconciliation between all the various groups in their country.

Yours ever
Raymond

The Honourable Greville Janner, QC, MP.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 November, 1983

Type letter pl.

DR 17/11.

Jon Janner,

/ As you requested, I enclose a draft reply to the letter to the Prime Minister from Mr Greville Janner about the Jewish community in Zimbabwe.

Although the fears expressed by Mr Greville Janner are understandable, there is to the best of our knowledge little substance to them (as he himself seems to accept). Like most other African countries, Zimbabwe's relations with Israel are poor. In particular, the Zimbabwean Government believe that Israel has given military training to South Africa and pre-Independence Rhodesia. Bishop Muzorewa was arrested ostensibly on the grounds that he had been involved in clandestine activities against the State as proved by his recent visit to Israel (though the real reasons for his arrest are more likely to be irritation over some of his recent statements). There have also been press reports that in a broadcast the week before the Bishop's arrest Mr Mugabe described the Israelis as 'the hated Jews'.

However we have no knowledge of any discrimination against or ill-treatment of Jewish residents in Zimbabwe. Mr Janner's letter accepts that there is a good chance that the Zimbabwean Government will not indulge in official anti-Semitism. Nevertheless we have asked our High Commissioner in Harare to look into the position.

Mr Janner asks that the Prime Minister should, if the appropriate opportunity arises, let Mr Mugabe know of the concern of the Commonwealth Jewish Council about the situation of Zimbabwe's Jewish community. The Foreign Secretary has considerable reservations about this, unless an opportunity occurs naturally. Mr Mugabe would be bound to react angrily over what he would almost certainly see as an unwarranted interference in his country's internal affairs, particularly given that we have no real grounds or evidence to raise it. Moreover for the Prime Minister to raise the issue could conflict with our efforts to put our bilateral relations back on an even keel and thus enhance the prospects for the early release of the air force officers. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is

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a risk that any approach would be more likely to have
a harmful than a helpful impact on the Jewish community.

Yours

R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles
10 Downing Street

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DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM: Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

TO: Hon Greville Janner QC MP
 President
 The Commonwealth Jewish Council
 BCM Box 8242
 LONDON WC1N 3XX

Your Reference

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

SUBJECT:

Thank you for your letter of 3 November about the position of the Jewish community in Zimbabwe.

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Enclosures—flag(s).....

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