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Subject: Sanctions loom as pressure on Zimbabwe grows

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[IMAGE]

SANCTIONS LOOM AS PRESSURE ON ZIMBABWE GROWS

The Party of European Socialists today voiced its alarm over the situation in Zimbabwe and called for renewed international efforts "to end the oppression and unjust acts of the government."

With the imposition of sanctions by EU foreign ministers on Monday seeming inevitable, the PES sought to mobilise its allies in Africa to further increase pressure on President Robert Mugabe.

In a letter to Ousmane Tonor Dieng, chair of the Socialist International's Africa Committee, the PES said: 'Developments over the past few months and the recent increase in harshness in obstructing the preparations for the elections in March are alarming.'

The PES acknowledged unsuccessful international efforts to secure respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance.

It declared: 'We need to support democratic forces in Zimbabwe and take every opportunity to reverse the process and to guarantee fair and free elections.'

'Independent international election observers are needed and should be allowed into the country during the preparations for the elections, while they take place and during the counting of votes.'

End

For more information please phone PES Spokesman Tony Robinson on Belgian mobile



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