

## Zim sanctions discussed at SA, Bulgaria meeting

PRETORIA: The issue of Zimbabwe, in particular the lifting of sanctions imposed by the European Union on that country, emerged in discussions between South African Foreign Affairs Minister, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma and the Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ivaylo Kalfin late last week.

By [Bathandwa Mbola](#) 16 Feb 2009

Minister Dlamini Zuma hosted Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kalfin for bilateral political, economic and trade discussions at the Presidential Guesthouse in Pretoria on Friday, 13 February 2009. Kalfin arrived in South Africa on Thursday for a three-day official visit to the country.

The visit is within the context of South Africa's priority to consolidate bilateral political, economic and trade relations with the European Union of which Bulgaria is a new member, with a view to strengthening North-South co-operation.

"...As you know, the European Union works collectively. We did suggest it would be good if Minister Kalfin could assist us in the discussions in the European Union but he can obviously not take a decision here as single member because there are 27 member states," said Minister Dlamini Zuma.

South Africa which is also the chairperson of the SADC has been urging foreign investors, multilateral agencies and international donors to acknowledge the positive developments taking place in Zimbabwe and help rebuild that country.

Kalfin said the international community had expected the creation of a government reflective of the Zimbabwean people.

"I think that what we have now is the best possible option - an inclusive government and this government should receive very clear signals that if it proceeds in the right direction, economic reforms and democratic processes in the country, international support will be encouraged.

"I absolutely agree with Minister Dlamini Zuma and I think that the European Union has good reason to react positively. It is very important and we are going to pay very close attention to the developments in the country," said Kalfin.

The deputy minister further noted former President Thabo Mbeki's efforts in this regard.

Zimbabwe has been slapped with sanctions, including mostly travel and restrictions to finances. The International Monetary Fund's withdrawal of support in Zimbabwe was seen as a cue for other multilateral financial institutions to freeze credit lines to Zimbabwe.

The global lender suspended Zimbabwe's voting rights in 2003, barring it from participating in IMF decisions, as the country fell behind on paying its arrears to the fund.

While the country averted expulsion from the IMF, the fund has maintained its suspension of financial and technical assistance.

This, together with other illegal sanctions, inevitably resulted in the economic situation deteriorating.

The African Development Bank and the World Bank have already expressed interest in assisting Zimbabwe and have said, in a joint statement, that the broad-based agreement represented a potential opportunity for the country.

Zimbabwe's new cabinet, under the new government of unity, was on Friday sworn into Parliament in Harare. Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara were earlier sworn in as Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively, while Robert Mugabe will keep his presidential title.

The two ministers also discussed the economic crisis. According to Kalfin this was important "to meet with different countries especially South Africa so that we can have a common ground for common actions to address the crisis."

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