

## EU backs call for deferring Zimbabwe poll

The European Union (EU) Thursday backed calls for the postponement of Zimbabwe's run-off presidential election on Friday following the withdrawal of the opposition leader from the race.

Slovenia, which holds the EU's rotating presidency, said in a statement that the presidency was 'deeply concerned by the current electoral process in Zimbabwe, which cannot credibly lead to a result that reflects the will of the Zimbabwean people'.

'Therefore, the presidency expresses its full support to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) call for the postponement of the second round of the elections,' the statement said.

On Sunday, opposition presidential challenger Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), pulled out of the race following a rising tide of violence from ruling Zanu-PF party supporters that observers said was state-sponsored.

The violence led to widespread international condemnation. President Robert Mugabe, however, insisted that the poll would go ahead, but the EU and the US warned that they saw the election as no longer valid.

On Wednesday SADC leaders called for Mugabe to postpone the election, saying that a 'cooling-off period' was needed.

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