

## Tsvangirai must lead any Zimbabwe unity government: EU

Zimbabwean opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai should lead any government of national unity, European Union (EU) officials said in Brussels Wednesday, without clarifying what the bloc would do if this were not the case.

'It is essential that the will of the Zimbabwean people be reflected. In the first round of the presidential election (March 29), Morgan Tsvangirai won a majority of votes with 47 percent,' European Commission spokesman John Clancy said.

'That is why any unity government must include Morgan Tsvangirai as prime minister or head of government with the necessary abilities to ensure reforms can take place,' he said.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has told African Union leaders that he is open to talks with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) on a unity government, according to South African President Thabo Mbeki.

Mbeki, whom the AU has endorsed to continue as mediator in Zimbabwe, was speaking after an AU heads of state summit in Egypt Tuesday ended with a call for a government of national unity in Zimbabwe.

Despite Mugabe's spokesman George Charamba Tuesday ruling out a Kenya-style unity government Mbeki said: 'No, there was no objection.'

'He was fully supportive of the cooperation and dialogue between Zimbabwe's political parties to find solutions to the challenges they face,' Mbeki told South African radio.

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has ruled out joining a government of national unity with Mugabe as leader.

'We stand for a transitional government led by Morgan Tsvangirai which would allow us to create the environment for free and fair elections,' Tsvangirai's spokesman George Sibotshiwe told South African radio.

Mugabe was sworn in as president for another five years Sunday following a run-off presidential election he alone contested.

Tsvangirai took the most votes in the first round of voting in March but boycotted the run-off over a spate of state-backed militia attacks on his supporters.

The AU summit neither endorsed nor discredited Mugabe's victory grab.

The comment reinforces the EU's line that Friday's presidential election run-off in Zimbabwe, in which incumbent President Robert Mugabe was the only candidate after violence forced Tsvangirai to withdraw, was not a valid vote.

However, Clancy stressed that any sanctions other than the arms embargo and travel bans and asset freezes currently imposed on regime members would have to be decided by EU member

states.

'All options are on the table,' he said.

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