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**NDI CONDEMNS VIOLENCE, CALLS ON INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO
TAKE ACTION IN DEFENDING RIGHTS OF ZIMBABWEANS**

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today condemned the Mugabe regime’s ongoing campaign of violence against the people of Zimbabwe.

“The international community, including regional organizations and neighboring countries, must take immediate action to defend the people of Zimbabwe against attacks on their sovereign right to choose their own leaders and widespread brutality against the population,” former Secretary of State and NDI Chairman Madeleine K. Albright said. “The current government of Zimbabwe has forfeited all rights to conduct a presidential election in the country. The safety of Zimbabweans must be assured and elections should proceed only under a transitional government and robust international supervision.”

Security of the person is a prerequisite for anyone to exercise freely their right to choose who shall hold elected office. There is no free will when large segments of the population have a gun – or club – pointed at their head and the heads of their family members. There can be no real election when the opponents’ supporters are killed, when so-called “no-go zones” prevent campaigning, when the media is controlled and manipulated by the government, when the secretary general of the opposition party is jailed and facing bogus treason charges and when the opposition presidential candidate is frequently detained and faces immediate death threats.

It has been widely reported that over 80 opposition supporters have been killed, over 200,000 people internally displaced, more than 20,000 houses destroyed and over 10,000 people injured and maimed in the ongoing wave of brutality. In addition, Zimbabwean election monitors have been killed, attacked and intimidated, and their activities have been severely curtailed.

These horrific conditions have led to the justifiable decision by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to withdraw from participation in the run-off presidential election scheduled for June 27.

The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide by promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information is available at www.ndi.org.

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