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SOUTHERN AFRICA: COLLECTIVE SECURITY LIES IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

Human rights should be on top of the agenda of an extraordinary summit of Southern Africa's heads of state, Amnesty International said on the eve of an emergency meeting that begins on Friday.

"Collective military security in Southern Africa depends on protecting fundamental human rights as much as on political cooperation and military intervention," Amnesty International said.

"Human rights are the basis of collective security, therefore the region's heads of state should make human rights prominent in the text of any resolution they adopt at this important meeting."

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has called for an emergency Summit of Heads of State for this Friday, 28 June 1996 in Gaborone, Botswana, to urgently adopt the draft terms of reference for a new "SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security".

This meeting, reportedly held sooner than expected as the political turmoil worsens in Zambia, will ratify the principles and objectives of this collective security organ. Among its proposed objectives are the promotion of political cooperation; mediation in disputes and conflicts; promotion of democratic institutions and observance of human rights; development of a collective military capacity for peacemaking within the region or elsewhere on the continent, and encourage ratification of international treaties on arms control, disarmament and human rights.

Local Amnesty International groups and sections in Botswana, South Africa, Mauritius and Zimbabwe have joined hands with human rights non-governmental organizations across Southern Africa in calling upon the Heads of State meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, to include more references to human rights into the organ's terms of reference.

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For further information on the Joint Statement by Southern African NGOs concerning SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security please contact Casey Kelso on +44 171 413 5597.