

After Dakar

If I were a South African

As a visitor to your country, I have followed with interest the recent initiatives made by the group of South Africans in Dakar. At last there seemed to be hope and a ray of light at the end of the tunnel! But alas, it now sounds as if the darkness will be firmly restored by more restrictive legislative measures. If I were a South African, I would weep for my country.

I am white and live in a neighbouring black country, where I have lived all my life, and we went through all this in recent years. I feel great pain and anguish for your country, all the more so because it seems that mankind refuses to learn from the tragedies of others.

Pain, sorrow and suffering cannot be measured in numbers — all humans can die only once. The loss of one person in a family is the biggest loss in the world to that family, so numbers are not the issue in matters such as these.

“Staying on” in a newly independent country teaches many lessons — colour does not rub off by association,

culture does not vanish by a change of government; a decrease in the availability of material possessions does not destroy the qualities of life which really matter; young children, given the chance, know no prejudices and mix happily in a school situation; mixed marriages are no more the order of the day than before (some will and many won't); houses in all areas now sell for five times their previous valuations; people of all people, despite their cultural differences and all have areas of common interest; life goes on, with plenty of challenges and rewards, as it has always.

Your country has the most wonderful potential for all its people, so keep the lines of communication open, talk to everyone, especially those on the “outside”. They, too, have lives and families to lose — nobody ever wins in war.

God bless your country and guide all your people to peace and unity.

Zimbabwe

Zimbo Visitor