

# Zimbabwe: a different story

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Is Gordon Brown wrong to say that he will [boycott](#) the EU meeting in December to protest the presence of Robert Mugabe? Last night Polis heard from three Zimbabweans who all have reservations about the regime in Harare – but they were all united in saying that the British Prime Minister’s stance will only strengthen Mugabe’s hold on power.

The occasion was the premiere of Shrenik Rao’s documentary [A Bit Of Truth – Denied](#) which has some remarkable interviews with leading figures from both government and opposition. You can see clips on his [website](#).

On our panel last night exiled Zimbabwean journalist Sandra [Nyaira](#) pointed out that regional powers such as South Africa are starting to put pressure on Mugabe, but that Brown’s gesture simply gives validity to the President’s accusation of British colonialist interference. Zimbabwean political analyst George [Shire](#) also said that to ignore the appeal of Mugabe’s rhetoric on race and land reform is to ignore his popularity among Africans.

But Brown doesn’t have much choice in the face of a British media who somehow feel that the UK government can somehow unseat Mugabe. Only a few lone voices such as this [piece](#) by Marcel Berlins point out the futility of gesture politics in this case. It is a good example of how a realistic foreign policy is impossible whenever the former Empire is involved.

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