

Annan: Africa must oppose 'wrong policies'

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LONDON (AP) -United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said African leaders must speak out against what he called the wrong policies of any governments on the continent.

Annan told the Financial Times in an interview it was vital for African countries to break their silence to protect the continent's credibility in the eyes of the world.

"What is important — and what is lacking on the continent — is (a willingness) to comment on wrong policies in a neighboring country," he said before attending a summit of the Group of Eight (G8) top industrialized nations in Scotland.

Annan did not name Zimbabwe in the interview, but a special representative of the U.N. secretary-general is assessing Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's demolition of shanty towns that human rights groups say has

made 300,000 people homeless.

African leaders have been criticized for a reluctance to speak out against Mugabe.

"I've often tried to tell them they cannot continue to treat these situations as purely internal. It starts as internal but it becomes a regional problem," said Annan.

"Nobody invests in a bad neighborhood, and if you have just one or two countries behaving that way, that hurts everybody."

A leading Zimbabwean churchman urged G8 leaders on Wednesday to make action by African states against Mugabe's government a precondition for more debt relief and aid.

"The international community has done little to prevent Mugabe's excesses and it is time to act," said a report co-authored by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of



Maidei Chimwe, a resident of the squatter camp Porta Farm, has her midday meal in the ruins of her destroyed house, near Harare on Tuesday. The Zimbabwe government continues the countrywide 'Operation Restore Order' demolition of 'illegal' structures. The operation has left an estimated 1 million people homeless.

Bulawayo, Pius Ncube.

On Tuesday, South African President Thabo Mbeki, criticized at home and abroad for so-called "soft diplomacy" on Zimbabwe, said he and Annan had agreed to wait for a report by Annan's envoy on the demolitions before deciding on a course of action.

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Egypt protesters urge Mubarak resignation

CARIO, Egypt (AP) Around 300 activists from various political groups protested Egypt's rising unemployment on Wednesday and called on President Hosni Mubarak to resign.

Circled by almost the same number of riot police standing shoulder-to-shoulder as well as some pro-Mubarak protesters, demonstrators waved banners and chanted anti-Mubarak slogans in the crowded lower-middle-class Cairo district of Imbaba.

Dozens of police trucks were stationed in most of the streets surrounding and leading to the protests.

Carrying Egyptian flags and waving a red banner depicting the leftist revolutionary Ernest "Che" Guevara, demonstrators shouted, "Oh Hosni Mubarak we are bankrupt. What did you do with our money?"

The unemployment rate is officially 9.9 percent, but unofficial estimates put it as high as 25 percent.

Plainclothes police were interspersed between protesters, discouraging the public from joining in and monitoring journalists covering the protest.

Some residents watched the two-hour protest from their balconies, while others stood nearby watching silently.

Mohammed Abdel Rahman, 23, a fruit vendor, said he was too afraid to join in.

"We have to tell the truth, all the country is unemployed and not working... We want something new to happen," he said.

Others didn't approve of the protesters' harsh criticism of Mubarak.

"What did Mubarak do to them? Everything he's done has been good," said Salah Qutb, 50, who identified himself as a bank manager.

Since Mubarak's surprise announcement on Feb. 26 that he wanted multi-candidate presidential elections, and ordering parliament to make the necessary constitutional changes, pro-reform demonstrations have become an almost weekly event.

Political activists complain that Mubarak's reforms are only cosmetic, made to improve his image and ensure his rule.

Mubarak, 77, has been in power since 1981, and is expected to run in upcoming presidential elections expected in September.

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