

Mugabe the issue at EU-Africa summit?

by UPI

LISBON, Portugal - The European Union-Africa Summit is set to proceed with President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and without British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Officials fear Brown's decision to boycott the two-day conference will make Mugabe the major issue, not the building of a new relationship between Europe and Africa, The Zimbabwe Independent said. No other European leaders have joined Brown. The two-day meeting was to begin with a formal dinner Friday night. Jose Manuel Barroso, head of the European Commission, criticized Brown for his decision to boycott the meeting, The Times of London said. Barroso also said European leaders at the meeting would criticize Mugabe's stand on human rights. "If you are an international leader then you are going to have to be prepared to meet some people your mother would not like you to meet," Barroso said. "That is what we have to do from time to time." The highest-ranking British representative at the conference is to be Valerie Amos, the first black woman to be a member of the cabinet, The Independent of London said. Amos, now in the House of Lords, left her ministerial post when Brown became prime minister.

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