

## Vigil Background

Written by Administrator

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During visits in summer 2002, both Roy Bennett, MDC MP and Tony Reeler of the Amani Trust suggested a regular vigil against the illegitimate regime in Zimbabwe as an effective way to raise awareness in the UK to the plight of the Zimbabwean people, and cited the hugely successful pickets outside South Africa House during the time of apartheid. As a result the Central London Branch of the Movement for Democratic Change set up the Zimbabwe Vigil. The Vigil was launched on 12 October 2002 and has been held every Saturday since.

We welcome new members.

- We meet whatever the weather!
  - Our colourful posters and banners and the singing and dancing draw lots of attention.
  - We hand out information flyers and newsletters.
  - Our petitions, which focus on human rights abuses and the suppression of democracy in Zimbabwe, have people queuing up to sign them.
  - Our main petition calling on the UN Security Council to send a team to Zimbabwe to investigate human rights abuses, was presented in great style in February, when it had reached around 16,000 signatures: one signature every 20 seconds. We are still collecting signatures for this petition.
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- Other petitions we have submitted:
    - protest at World Cup cricket matches in Zimbabwe,
    - a call for the continued suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth.