

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/50498762011/sizes/m/>

Zanu PF has never quite got the hang of the rule of law. It believes the law is what the party says it is: after all, the party is the ruler. This is not surprising. It is a widely-held view in many countries. Certainly it's a guiding principle of nominal communist governments, even when, like China and Russia, they emerge from the communist egg as rapacious capitalists.

Recent developments in Zimbabwe feed into this narrative. Take for instance Chief Justice Luke Malaba, who several months ago ordered judges to submit all written judgments to him for approval before delivery in court. The order was swiftly withdrawn after outraged criticism from the legal profession.

But Malaba's determination to place Zanu PF at the centre of the judicial system has not diminished. Now he has suspended High Court Judge Erica Ndewere who had the temerity to grant bail recently to MDC Alliance Vice Chair Job Sikhala for allegedly inciting public violence. Justice Ndewere is said to have refused to accept Malaba's order not to grant bail. She said the constitution does not allow him this authority over her work (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/10/get-off-my-back-judge-tells-malaba/>).

It has been clear for some time that the courts are increasingly being politicised. Anyone charged with opposing the government is likely to be denied bail and held in jail for extended periods, with hearings repeatedly postponed.

The case of student leader, 22 year-old Takudzwa Ngadziore, who has been detained for the past month, has now grabbed international attention. He was arrested protesting outside a car hire company one of whose vehicles was used in the abduction and torture of another student activist Tawanda Muchehiwa.

Human rights lawyer David Coltart of the MDC Alliance said the incarceration of Ngadziore was illegal and vindictive. His alleged crime 'was to protest against a crime against humanity committed by the regime'. (See: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/oct/16/pressure-grows-on-zimbabwe-to-free-detained-student-leader> .)

President Mnangagwa has dismissed criticism of the government's human rights record, speaking of 'hostile propaganda by our detractors both inside and outside the country'. He said the government was tracking the daily movements of opponents and critics through their electronic gadgets. 'We know at this minute you were at this place and who did you make a phone call to', he said. (See: <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/mnangagwa-admits-stalking-opponents-critics/> .)

The government's mouthpiece the Herald predictably offered strong support to the government. The paper quotes Vice-President Chiwenga as saying: 'the opening of political space by

President Mnangagwa since coming to power in 2017 has resulted in an unprecedented flourish of people's liberties'. (See: <https://www.herald.co.zw/liberties-flourish-under-president/> .)

Other Points:

- An organisation representing Namibian youths has petitioned the Zimbabwe Ambassador there over rights abuses. It called on the government to uphold the rule of law and respect for human rights. 'The government of Zimbabwe must stop criminalisation of civic society work and persecution of opposition activists', it said (see: <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/namibian-youths-confront-zim-ambassador-over-state-rights-abuses/>).

- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have a virtual Vigil while the restrictions continue. We ask our activists to put on Vigil / ROHR / Zimbabwe regalia and take a photo of themselves holding an appropriate poster reflecting our protest against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The photos are uploaded on our Flickr site: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/albums/72157716509005767> . Our virtual Vigil activist today was Simbarashe Jingo who kindly contributed to Vigil funds.

- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

Notices:

- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organization based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organization on the ground in Zimbabwe which reflected the Vigil's mission statement in a practical way. ROHR in the UK actively fundraises through membership subscriptions,

- events, sales etc to support the activities of ROHR in Zimbabwe. Please note that the official website of ROHR Zimbabwe is <http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/> . Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents us.

- **The Vigil's book 'Zimbabwe Emergency'** is based on our weekly diaries. It records how events in Zimbabwe have unfolded as seen by the diaspora in the UK. It chronicles the

economic disintegration, violence, growing oppression and political manoeuvring – and the tragic human cost involved. It is available at the Vigil. All proceeds go to the Vigil and our sister organisation the Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe's work in Zimbabwe. The book is also available from Amazon.

- **Facebook pages:**

Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwевigil>

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>