

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/50528167481/sizes/m/>

As the year draws on thoughts are turning to the wonder of Christmas. We know President Mnangagwa is capable of anything. But the news from the Zimbabwe Mail suggested a miracle. Alas, as so often, the paper's story is nothing but hot air. Referring to the President's state of the nation address, it declared Mnangagwa was 'pregnant with the message of how Zimbabwe has achieved economic stability'.

Parliament was virtually there for the President's virtual delivery of the good news that virtually everything is getting better and better. The Mail with its worshipful report on the sacred words of the anointed leader, said they were 'warmly received by parliamentarians from across the political divide for clearly setting the path to achieve an upper middle-income economy by the year 2030'.

The grovelling Mail scribe continued 'the President was spot on in terms of the successful implementation of the economic reform agenda which has brought about development and economic stability'. The paper concluded 'the opposition concurred that national development will be in vain if we sow seeds of hatred and division'.

'We are very supportive of the President's directive to show oneness in the manner we conduct

ourselves for the purpose of building our country,' said Elias Mudzuri of the government-supported version of the MDC. For his part, the Acting Secretary General of the faction, Douglas Mwonzora, said 'we acknowledge the gains that have been made so far but let's now build on them to ensure that our citizens can also benefit'. What could Mwonzora have meant by saying 'citizens can also benefit'? What a revolutionary idea! (See: <https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/parliament-parliament/zimbabwean-legislators-across-the-political-divide-welcome-sona/>.)

One benefit announced this week has been met with scorn by civil servants, who were told the government would pay the equivalent of US \$500 towards their funeral expenses. Civil servants said they wanted a salary of that much a month rather than waiting until they were in a coffin. As it is, most civil servants earn less than US \$50 a month. Many teachers, doctors and nurses are on strike for more pay (see: <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/zimbabwe-slammed-over-plans-to-pay-500-toward-civil-servants-funerals-7025106a-4d60-5c45-9923-8b89719b7970>).

In his state of the nation address, Mnangagwa repeated his demand for an end of sanctions. But US Ambassador Brian Nichols said that the government must first implement reforms before America would lift targeted sanctions imposed on some Zanu PF members over corruption and human rights violations. He continued: 'The SADC anti-sanctions campaign, orchestrated by the government of Zimbabwe, is really an effort to distract the people of Zimbabwe from the real causes of Zimbabwe's profound problems'. (See: <https://www.thezimbabwean.co/2020/10/zimbabwe-govt-should-implement-reforms-not-stage-anti-sanctions-galas-u-s-ambassador-nichols/>.)

Other Points:

- A report by The NewsHawks says research shows that the late President Mugabe was one of the country's top land barons with 24 farms, in violation of his regime's one-man-one-farm policy. It said: 'Beneath the rhetorical veneer of a noble cause of to correct historical land ownership imbalances, there was a greedy accumulation agenda for Zanu PF elites and their cronies who amassed land but mainly failed to utilise it, spawning food insecurity and shortages'. (See: <https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/headlines/mugabe-family-amassed-24-prime-farms/>)

- 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/zimbabwewigil/albums/72157716607005896> . Our virtual Vigil activists today were Rudo Takiya and Miriam Gasho who kindly contributed to Vigil funds.

- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . 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>