

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/50551886306/sizes/m/>

The first curious thing about the Henrietta Rushwaya case is how she got the job of President of the Miners' Federation after a stint as boss of the Football Association ended in disgrace over the fixing of international matches. Of course having connections with the Mnangagwa family wouldn't have been a handicap . . .

Curiouser was the brazen confidence with which she tried to smuggle 6 kgs of gold bars in her hand baggage onto a plane for Dubai at Harare airport. Only someone who knew everything had been fixed would have displayed such élan. After all it wasn't a small Grace Mugabe- type diamond ring. It was a pretty hefty weight: some 14 bars of gold valued at US \$330,000.

Even curiouser was that the first police report made clear that they were ready for her. a detective stationed at the airport told the Mail and Guardian that well-connected travellers often turned up with treasures to smuggle abroad. 'You can receive a phone call from these big people ordering you not to search their bags', he said. Senior police officers and state security officials have also been arrested in connection with the case, accused of trying to whisk her through the diplomatic route, evading national security checks.

They include Steven Tserayi, one of Mnangagwa's security aides, who said he'd been asked to

escort Rushwaya to the airport. Also arrested was an associate of Rushwaya at the Miners' Federation, Gift Keraka, who told police that the gold she was carrying belonged to Mnangagwa's wife Auxillia and her son Collins.

Curiouser and curiouser was that the state initially agreed to Rushwaya's release on bail when she first appeared in court – only later to change their mind. At the same time the Prosecutor-General denied being in a relationship with Rushwaya . . .

Like Alice in Wonderland, Henrietta Rushwaya must have wondered whether she had taken the wrong potion: in the elite or out, bigger or smaller? One moment among the elite and the next in a cell.

It suggests that the regime might have concluded that corruption should be limited to the upper levels only. A difficult decision, admittedly. It will involve sacrifices by lower level thieves. But they must draw comfort from the assurance that it is all for the sake of Zanu PF.

Being as superstitious as most people, the Vigil noticed that the number of gold bars found in Rushwaya's handbag was 14 – and 14 was the number of people who apparently watched the all-night musical extravaganza put up on Zanu PF's facebook page last weekend to rally people against Western sanctions. Alas, the 'cream of the country's musical talent' was snubbed . . . (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/1104-zimbabwe-presidents-relative-arrest-at-airport-after-gold-bars-found-in-handbag>).

Other Points:

- The cabinet has given the go-ahead for legislation that would make it a crime for activists to make ‘unsubstantiated claims’ of human rights abuses, hold anti-government protests that could draw international attention or speak with foreign governments without state approval’. The Director of Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Blessing Vava, said: ‘It’s a calculated attempt to silence critical voices and part of a broader agenda to entrench a de-facto one-party state’. (See: <https://wtop.com/africa/2020/10/zimbabwe-cabinet-approves-proposal-to-criminalize-protests/> .)

- 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/zimbabwevigil/albums/72157716691887711> . Our virtual Vigil activist today was

Deborah Harry who kindly contributed to Vigil funds.

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

Correction: The Times report we quote wrongly said 14 bars of gold were involved. This should have been 4 bars. The actual weight of gold was correct.