

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/46465386134/sizes/m/>

Lawyer and former education minister Dave Coltart has appealed to the world to take action to halt the Mnangagwa regime's terror tactics against the opposition MDC.

Senator Coltart was commenting on a statement by the MDC's Manicaland spokesman Trevor Saruwaka, who said heavily armed soldiers had abducted two brothers who were MDC officials. One was Robert Saunyama, known as Jack Roberts, who was a parliamentary candidate in last year's elections. The other was his younger brother Danmore Saunyama, a ward councillor.

The statement said about eight soldiers arrived in Zimunya Township in Mutare South in an unmarked Toyota double-cab truck. 'They forced their entry into Jack's house where he was hosting his brother who was visiting him with his wife and that of his other brother, Jericho. The soldiers started assaulting the wives of the three brothers and their children, together with Clr Danmore. All this while four soldiers were training their guns on Jack Roberts threatening to shoot him should he attempt to fight them. The victims of this barbaric military brutality bled profusely and suffered various degrees of injuries. The soldiers then bundled the two brothers and took them to an unknown destination.'

Saruwaka's statement continued: 'What is clear from this incident is that Zimbabwe is descending into a dark period of kidnappings, abductions, beatings, murders and extrajudicial killings. The dark days of Gukurahundi and 2008 run-off killings are upon us once again.'

Coltart said the modus operandi was identical to that used in those days: 'relatively low ranking, unknown second or third tier leaders were then systematically abducted and disappeared. In that way the regime can decimate the structures of the opposition without too much negative publicity.' Senior leaders who had 'strong name recognition' were dealt with more carefully by harassing them through the legal system.

'It is time for the world to act. And those apologists of the regime need to make a decision - are they going to continue supporting this regime? If they do they will inevitably be tainted and become complicit themselves for the crimes against humanity being committed . . . We all have

a duty to shout from the rooftops against these crimes; if we all don't do this they will continue and indeed escalate.' (See: <https://www.facebook.com/david.coltart/posts/10156282468062613>).

The army has of course dismissed allegations of systematic brutality by soldiers. It has announced it is to conduct countrywide door-to-door searches to look for army regalia allegedly used by rogue elements to commit crimes – a move dismissed by the MDC as a cover-up. Nelson Chamisa's spokesman said: 'They can't expect us to believe that state security agents were robbed of their own uniforms. Even the government-controlled Herald reports: 'Last week, a Harare man, Shepherd Magorimbo, admitted in court to terrorising residents while wearing a military uniform he got from the Zanu PF headquarters. "We were given the uniform at the party office," he told the Harare magistrate's court.' (See: <https://www.heraldlive.co.za/news/world/2019-02-22-zim-army-targets-military-apparel-used-by-criminals/>).

Other points

- People confused by the government's new move to deal with the currency crisis should read Cathy Buckle's latest letter (see: <https://www.thezimbabwean.co/2019/02/the-rtgs-s-moke-screen-where-are-all-our-us-dollars/>). It is just over two years since the bond notes were introduced. Here's what the Vigil diary noted on 26th November 2016; 'The Reserve Bank has announced that it is to release its monopoly money on Monday – widely seen as the final nail in the coffin of the Zimbabwe economy . . . The Reserve Bank says \$10 million of bond notes in denominations of 2 dollars and 5 dollars are to be issued along with \$2 million worth of \$1 bond coins. But few believe it will stop there. Because Zimbabweans have lived through this asset-stripping before, they know exactly what to expect. Savings will be wiped out by rapidly depreciating Micky-mouse money for the benefit of the elite which will externalise the remaining US dollars in the country.'

- With the theme 'living legend', well-heeled guests attended a lavish 95th birthday party at Mugabe's luxurious Borrowdale mansion. The living legend criticised the heavy-handed way the military was treating people. The man behind Gukurahundi said 'Let us not be killers of our own people'.

- Last week Nomusa Dube and others joined us at the Vigil to protest about the sale of Zimbabwean baby elephants to China and the likelihood of the proceeds being used to fund the security forces' violation of human rights in Zimbabwe. She has written an article about this – see: <https://africanelephantjournal.com/the-link-between-the-sales-of-baby-elephants-and-human-rights-abuses-in-zimbabwe/>.

- We had a wonderful new banner at the Vigil today: 'No to military dictatorship in Zimbabwe'. A very big thank you to Esther Munyira for her hard work sewing the banner. Thanks to those who contributed to a new portable table for the Vigil: Shylette Chipangura, Esther Lockett, Cephas Maswoswa, Joyce Mbairatsunga, Rachel Mudzana, Lucia Mungwari

and Fungisai Mupandira.

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the front table and put up the banners: Shyllette Chipangura, Josephine Jombe, Cephas Maswoswa, Joyce Mbairatsunga, Agnes Mukumba, Esther Munyira, Fungisai Mupandira, Tapiwa Muskwe and Ephraim Tapa. Thanks to Josephine, Shyllette and Agnes for looking after the front table and to Bigboy Sibanda and Esther for handing out flyers.

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

FOR THE RECORD: 18 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR general members' meeting.** Saturday 9th March from 11 am. Venue: Royal Festival Hall. Contact: Ephraim Tapa 07940793090, Patricia Masamba 07708116625.

- **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/>

[w.rohrzimbabwe.org/](http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/)

. Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents us.

- **MDC Reading Branch restructuring meeting.** Saturday 23rd March from 12 noon – 4 pm. Venue: Risk. 35-39 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS. Contacts: Charles Mararirakwenda 07588275745, Josephine Jombe 07455166668, Deborah Harry 07478894896.

- **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 for £10. 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/zimbabwevigil> ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

ZAF:

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