

The European Union's Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Timo Olkkonen, says corruption is destroying the country. He said the international appeal for a couple of hundred million dollars to prevent mass starvation would have been met by only a fraction of the stolen money.

Mr Olkkonen told Newsday: 'Corruption has had a huge effect; you have people talking about hundreds of millions, even billions, in terms of the Auditor-General's report' (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2019/08/corruption-hurting-zim-more-eu/>).

It emerged at a parliamentary hearing this week that the Treasury is unable to account for more than a billion dollars paid under the Command Agriculture programme which is supposed to support farmers with irrigation and inputs.

The money was paid to Sakunda Holdings, a company run by the ubiquitous Kudakwashe Tagwireyi, who is said to be a key player in the country's extortionate fuel supply cartel and a conduit for funds to the army and Zanu PF bigwigs.

The extent of state capture in Zimbabwe is shown by Energy Minister Fortune Chasi's order to the country's power supply company to reverse a decision to cut off the farms of Zanu PF leaders, including Mugabe's Gushongo dairy farm, for unpaid bills. The minister said that, given the drought and food shortages, now was not the time to disconnect any farmer.

After nearly 40 years in power Zanu PF leaders have become accustomed to living off the state. They have never had to pay their bills. Like former Defence Minister Sydney Sekeramayi, who is being sued for failing to pay a \$311,000 electricity debt. The matter is yet to be set down for a hearing but no doubt Comrade Sekeramayi is busy dealing with 'the drought and food shortages'.

Observers may well conclude that, with Generals Chiwenga and Moyo still off ill, there is certainly something poisonous going on in Zimbabwe. President Mnangagwa, himself a victim of Gushongo ice cream, may again have to stop his cavalcade to buy a safe burger on the street.

Other points

- Last Sunday Vigil activists (Chido Makawa, Daizy Fabian, Dennis Benton, Ephraim Tapa, Esther Munyira, Hazvinei Sali, Heather Makawa, Isabell Gwatidzo, Margaret Munenge, Molly Ngavaimbe, Patricia Masamba, Rose Benton, Simbarashe Jingo and Theodora Mandishaya) attended a fundraising barbecue at Frinton-on-Sea. It was a very hot day and swimming in the sea was wonderful. But we were phoned by anxious relatives at the end of the day – Frinton had hit the headlines with reports of something causing swimmers to have coughing fits. Fortunately our group was unaffected. Special thanks to Daizy for salads, sadza and providing the barbecue stand, to Hazvinei for salads, to Simba for buying the meat and to Esther for organising the day.

- It was good to have with us today David Wilkins, a courageous blind journalist, who has supported the Vigil over the years. He baked us some tasty olive bread.

- Congratulations to Esther Munyira who has been appointed a Vigil co-ordinator. She has worked tirelessly organising recent events such as the walk on 27th July which was such a financial success and the beach outing to Frinton.

- Thanks to those who helped set up the front table and put up the banners today: Nathan Chiyanja, Beulah Gore, Heather Makawa, Dambudzo Marimira, Patricia Masamba, Farai Mutumburi, Hazvinei Sali, Pearl Shambare and Ephraim Tapa. Thanks to Hazvinei, Patricia and Philip Maponga for looking after the front table, to Heather, Farai and Tapiwa Muskwe for handing out flyers, to Hazvinei for drumming and to Hazvinei and Heather for photos.

- For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimb88abwevigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

FOR THE RECORD: 16 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR general members' meeting.** Saturday 14th September from 11.30 am. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, South Bank Centre, Belvedere Road SE1 8XX. Contact: Ephraim Tapa 07940793090, Patricia Masamba 07708116625, Esther Munyira 07492058109.

- **ROHR Reading branch outreach and general meeting.** Saturday 21st September. Community outreach from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Awareness campaign on deteriorating human rights in Zimbabwe. Venue: Broad Street, Reading. General meeting from 2 – 5 pm: Venue: The RISC 35-39 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4PS. Contact Nicodimus 07877386792, Josephine 07455166668, Shyllette 07828929806, Josh 07877246251.

- **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/>

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. 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/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>