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Anyone really hoping for a turnaround in the Zimbabwean economy will be dismayed by the comment by local government minister Ignatius Chombo. Speaking after a meeting with a 19-strong British investor delegation, he said there had been ‘some little unpleasant disagreements’ (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-british-investors-clash-with-chombo-over-mugabe-succession-nehanda-radio/> – Who we vote for in Zimbabwe is our business, minister tells British investors).

Of course, Chombo is unaccountably rich enough not to personally care a fig about foreign investment – but it is certainly not government policy to tell possible investors to go to hell. The problem is that Zanu PF just can’t do anything else; it is in the party’s DNA (Deluded National Arrogance).

Chombo was outraged that the naïve British investors wanted to know where Zimbabwe is going. What a stupid question. None of your business, Chombo snorted, displaying the acute business sense which has made him a multi-millionaire with properties harvested nationwide from his local government portfolio. For details of Chombo’s wealth see, for instance: <http://nehandaradio.com/2011/11/10/minister-chombo-brags-about-his-riches/>

It is to get rid of Chombo and his ilk that a wide range of diaspora groups are joining forces at the Vigil on Saturday 21st February to demand that the illegal regime steps down to allow a peaceful end to the economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe.

The occasion is Mugabe's 91st birthday which comes at a time when his physical and mental decline has become an international joke. Everyone knows that his dozing off and memory failures have allowed screaming Grace to assume an unconstitutional regency role marked by increasingly arbitrary and paranoid decisions.

'Robert Mugabe's last birthday in office' is the theme of next week's protest, which has been organised by Makusha Mugabe of MDC T. The gathering will be addressed by people including Wilbert Mukori of the Zimbabwe Social Democrats who says: 'People must understand that doing nothing is no longer an option; it is doing nothing that has led the nation into this mess and doing nothing will leave only one way out – a violent revolutionary route' (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/658-robert-mugabes-last-birthday-in-office> . Also see: <http://www.changezimbabwe.com/index.php/news-mainmenu-2/1-latest/5236-worldwide-mugabe-must-go-protests-on-saturday>).

The organisations taking part are: Zimbabwe Vigil, MDC-T UK (also USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa), Zimbabwe African People's Union UK (ZAPU-UK), Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR), Occupy Africa Unity Square (OAUS UK), Zimbabwe Yes We Can, Zimbabweans United for Democracy (ZUNDE), Zimbabwe Social Democrats and the Swaziland Vigil.

While we protest outside the Embassy, Mugabe will apparently be tucking into elephant steaks at a birthday party at the Victoria Falls (see: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20150213-row-over-elephant-menu-mugabe>).
Zanu PF caterers have ordered two elephants. At least one will be needed to satisfy Mr Chombo's jumbo appetite alone. – Row over elephant on menu at Mugabe's 91st birthday party

Other points

We wrote last week about the campaign for a UK parliamentary debate on Zimbabwe. People in the UK who haven't yet written to their MP about this might like to send one of the choice of letters offered on our campaigns page. Of course, you can alter them as you wish. But the matter is urgent: we want a debate and the sooner you contact your MP the better (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/659-letters-to-mps-re-parliamentary-debate>).

Dancers at the Vigil practiced the Mugabe fall for our tableau next week on his birthday when Mugabe himself will magically materialise (with, this time, Zimbabwean carers around to stop him falling to his knees). As they rehearsed falling the dancers sang 'Mugabe achiti buu – kudonha' ('Mugabe falling like a tree').

When we arrived at the Vigil we were surprised to see a gentleman having a haircut and shave in our space. He was a homeless man being taken care of by a Muslim community support group www.whoishussain.org . They were also providing food on Valentine's Day. They were very friendly and shared their food with us.

Thanks to Helen Rukambiro, Rachel Mudzimba, Yvonne Shingirirayi Bonde, Eunice Mucherechedzo, Nkosana Ncube, John Burke and Fungayi Mabhuu for arriving early to help set up and to Epiphania Phiri for bringing Valentine's Day chocolates.

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: 19 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

Robert Mugabe's 'last birthday in office' protest. Saturday 21st February from 2 – 6 pm outside the Zimbabwe Embassy, 429 Strand, London WC2R 0JR. Many Zimbabwe diaspora groups are taking part. Please come and join us.

Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 21st February from 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. From the Vigil it's about a 10 minute walk, in the direction away from Trafalgar Square. The Strand Continental is situated on the south side of the Strand between Somerset House and the turn off onto Waterloo Bridge. The entrance is marked by a sign at street level. It's between a newsagent and Pizza Express. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF) meets regularly after the Vigil to discuss ways to help those back in Zimbabwe to fight oppression and achieve true democracy.

Next Swaziland Vigil. Saturday 21st February from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

ROHR Slough Branch general meeting. Saturday 21st February from 11.30 am – 2 pm. Venue: Upton Lea Community Hall, Wexham Road, Slough SL2 5JW. For further information contact: Patricia Masamba (Chair) 07708116625, Nkosi Tshabangu (Vice-Chair) [07535942709](http://www.whoishussain.org) ; Fungisai Mupandira (Organising Secretary) 07758958803.

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Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting. Saturday 28th February at 12 noon. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL.

Zimbabwe Yes We Can Movement holds monthly meetings in London as the political face of ROHR and the Vigil.

ROHR Reading Branch general meeting and outreach. Saturday 28 February from 10.30 am – 5 pm. Venue: RISC 35-39 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4PS. For further enquiries contact: Information and Publicity Officer: 07888310582.

The Rise and Shine of Comrade Fiasco, a play by Zimbabwean writer Andrew Whaley showing at the Gate Theatre, 11 Pembridge Road, London W11 3HQ from 26th February to 21st March. The theatre has given the Vigil flyers with a promo code for discounted tickets of £5 until 14th March. These can be picked up from the Vigil. Check: http://www.gatetheatre.co.uk/events/all-productions/the_rise_and_shine_of_comrade_fiasco for more information and to book. <http://www>

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.

Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2014 can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/642-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2014>. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2014 Highlights page.

Facebook pages:

Vigil: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8157345519&ref=js>

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

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.co/pages/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights/901811392835>

SW Radio Africa's website and sound archive is being hosted on www.archive.org. Go to the site and type in swradioafrica which will link you to snapshots of their site over the years and at the top of that page a link to their website where, under podcasts, you will find the audio.