

With the Mugabe regime seemingly determined to use any means to cling to power despite the deepening crisis in Zimbabwe, the outside world must be prepared to think the unthinkable.

Former Botswana President Festus Mogae was clear in an interview with a UN online publication that sovereignty has limits. He made no direct reference to Zimbabwe but his message was unmistakable. Here is part of what he had to say:

‘Sovereignty has limits like any other right. A leader cannot kill and harass his people and hide behind sovereignty. A true leader does not kill, but protects his people. We still have leaders in Africa who think they are indispensable, larger than life and more important than their countries. That must stop. If a leader loses control, the world will and should intervene to save the people’ (see: <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/good-leadership-about-people-%E2%80%93-festus-mogae> ).

But who is to intervene? South Africa cannot be expected to do anything given the corrupt and incompetent President Zuma. Anyway, the worst drought in decades has seen 5 of South Africa’s 9 provinces declared disaster areas, as well as parts of 2 others. So it is preoccupied by its own problems.

In Zimbabwe, facing a much worse situation, no food disaster has yet been declared by a

president who seems to visit his own country only for parties – such as his upcoming 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday celebrations expected to gobble up \$800,000. Not much for the Mugabes but it might have fed a lot of other more needy families. A pastor we support in Matabeleland reports: 'People are very hungry and livestock is dying. People are talking about dying. If we put mealie meal on the bus like we have always done it no longer reaches the destination because hungry people steal from the bus.'

No African country has the will or capacity to intervene to avert disaster in Zimbabwe and Mugabe's all-weather friends China and Russia will prevent any action by the UN. So it's up to Zimbabwe's real friends – the countries that keep on putting their hands in their pockets – to help in spite of Zanu PF's bile. Only this week Rural Development Minister Abednego Ncube told traditional leaders that they had not received their November and December allowances because of long gone Western sanctions (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-govt-fails-to-pay-chiefs-blames-sanctions/>).

This is the cloud cuckoo land that Zanu PF is living in, supported by back-slapping Western diplomats having the holiday of their lives. One envoy even told us: 'Zimbabwe is my dream posting'. Pardon us while we vomit.

The Vigil thinks the West must stop propping up this evil regime and instead prepare plans to avert the slide into violence borne of poverty and desperation. It should pay attention to the words of Kariba's Pastor Patrick Mugadza who came to attention for his lone protest at Zanu PF's Victoria Falls conference. Speaking after visiting the family of abducted activist Itai Dzamara this week he said: 'What is going on at the moment is that somebody is so much at work and that somebody is the devil' (see: <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2016/01/mugabe-used-by-the-devil-pastor-mugadza/>).

We fear for the safety of Pastor Mugadza.

## **Other points**

- There was a good turnout at the forum after the Vigil at which PhD student Takunda Maravanyika engaged us in a piece of political theatre as part of his studies. He said he had been inspired by coming across the Vigil by chance in 2008. His reflections on the situation in Zimbabwe and his journey in the diaspora drew enthusiastic engagement as they chimed with the experiences of so many of us.
- The Nottingham doctor who is trying to seize a farm in Zimbabwe Dr Sylvester Nyatsuro was invited to attend the forum to explain why a British citizen like himself should try and steal the property of a white Zimbabwean who had bought it with the approval of the government. He was unable to attend and we have written giving him seven days to make representations before we stage another demonstration outside his clinic.
- On our second 'bring and share' Vigil there was a large group to help to set up at the start: Mercy Bayipayi, John Burke, Percy Chagwiza, Thulani Chagwiza, Benjamin Chigamba, Mavis Chisvo, Enniah Dube, Humphrey Dube, Isabell Gwatidzo, Deborah Harry, Barbara Kachidza, Danny Kadiki, Chipo Kamhunga, Vimbayi Karumbidza, Mable Kayiya, Fungayi Mabhunu, Linton Magume, Michelle Makoni. Patricia Masamba, Nyasha Moyo, Tanatswa Moyo, Esther Munyira, Fungisai Mupandira, Catherine Musa, Casper Nyamakura, Chipo Parirenyatwa, Grace Rukure, Jennipher Sabe, Ephraim Tapa and Taurayi Tsandukwa. Thanks to Catherine and Esther for looking after the front table and to Humphrey and Linton for putting up the banners.

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

**FOR THE RECORD:** 51 signed the register.

## **EVENTS AND NOTICES:**

- **ROHR National Executive meeting.** Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016 from 11 am to 1.30 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 an optician. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.
- **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 Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February from 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see above.
- **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.

- **Monthly Itai Dzamara protest.** Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February from 2 – 6 pm outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London. The protest is to mark eleven months since Dzamara's abduction by intelligence agents.
  
- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.
  
- **ROHR Reading branch community outreach and general meeting.** Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February. Community outreach from 12 noon – 1.30 pm  
: Venue: Broad Street. Awareness campaign on deteriorating human rights in Zimbabwe.  
General meeting from 2 – 5 pm:  
Venue: RISC 35-39 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4PS. For further enquiries contact:  
Deborah Harry  
07578894896  
,  
Charles Mararirakwenda 07964731721, Joshua Kahari 07877246251, Shyline 07827493930.
  
- **Zimbabwe Yes We Can Movement** holds monthly meetings in London as the political face of ROHR and the Vigil.
  
- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2015** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/746-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2015>  
. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2015 Highlights page.
  
- **Facebook pages:**

Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwевigil>

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

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights-301811392835>