

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/33844045238/sizes/c/>

Today the Vigil presented a petition to the UK Prime Minister's residence urging her to insist that President Mnangagwa accounts for the Gukurahundi genocide.

The petition reads: *'Zimbabwe has reportedly been encouraged by the UK Government to apply to rejoin the Commonwealth. Zimbabweans in exile in the UK, and supporters, urge the UK not to support readmission until the ruling Zanu PF satisfactorily addresses the genocide of some 20000 Ndebeles in the 1980s. A simple apology would be a start but we believe an independent truth and reconciliation process offers the best hope of healing the still bleeding wounds.'*

You may ask why at this time, amid Zimbabwe's economic woes, with ever rising prices and climatic turbulence threatening lives and crops, the Vigil chooses to make Gukurahundi our challenge to the UK government. Well, the reason is that it is an open sore which the Ndebele people will never forgive until there is a genuine apology and compensation. Until this is forthcoming our country will always be divided.

This division extends to the Zimbabwean community in the UK. An Ndebele group sometimes demonstrates alongside us outside the Embassy, but they refuse to join us. Their protest involves only one issue: Gukurahundi – even after the lapse of more than 30 years.

South Africa, after the end of Apartheid, set the pace for reconciliation with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission. After listening to the evidence of the aggrieved, it was able to offer amnesty to those who admitted their fault and repented in public.

Two years ago, before he was overthrown, Mugabe set up the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission but its progress has been slow and it lacks the independence and the wide remit of its South African counterpart. Bulawayo-based civil society organizations comprising the Matabeleland Collective want the remit of the Commission to be widened and have demanded the release of two government reports on Gukurahundi which have been kept secret. Even the chair of the Commission Mr Justice Nare says he has been unable to get hold of the reports (see: <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2019/04/26/gukurahundi-pressure-grou>

[ps-demand-truth-from-mnangagwa/](https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2019/04/26/survivors-want-gukurahundi-perpetrators-prosecuted-nare/) , <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2019/04/26/survivors-want-gukurahundi-perpetrators-prosecuted-nare/>

and

<https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-160903.html>

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Retired Justice Nare says that some feel that people should be prosecuted for having played a role in Gukurahundi and that there should also be compensation. It is clear that if the Commission is to resolve what Mugabe spoke of as a 'moment of madness', it will need considerably more resources. The United Kingdom and the United States, which both failed to respond adequately to the genocide, may well see their way to helping finance the Commission if they were assured of its independence.

### Other points

- A big thank you to Esther Munyira for organising the presentation of the Vigil petition to 10 Downing Street – from arranging police permission to leading the group to Downing Street and liaising with the police on site. Thanks to the other petitioners: Miriam Gasho, Casper Nyamakura, Marian Machekanyanga and Joseph Simbarashe Jingo for taking the petition into Downing Street. Thanks also to those who stayed behind to look after the Vigil: Patience Muyeye, Jonathan Kariwo and Ephraim Tapa.

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the front table and put up the banners: Miriam, Joseph Simbarashe, Jane Kaphuwa, Jonathan, Marian, Esther, Tapiwa Muskwe, Mary Muteyerwa, Patience, Casper, Sikhumbuzule Sibanda, Ephraim and Reuben Waretsa. Thanks to Patience and Jonathan for looking after the front table, to Jane and Alice Majola for handing out flyers and to Casper, Jonathan, Tapiwa, Reuben, Patience, Richard Munyama, Heather Makawa and Tatenda Mandiki for photos.

- 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:** 37 signed the register.

### EVENTS AND 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

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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/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>