

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/49632396352/sizes/m/>

The British newspaper the Times has published a report on the tawdry divorce battle between Vice President Canstantino Chiwenga and his wife Marry. Zimbabweans will be familiar with the lurid account of attempted murder, voodoo and drugs. But what rang a bell with the Vigil was Marry's comment that she was doomed because of 'command justice'. (See: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/1065-marry-chiwenga-jilted-wife-off-zimbabwe-strongman-fears-for-her-life> ).

Zimbabwe has become a command state: 'command agriculture' has provided a smooth avenue for corruption, 'command economy' an equally convenient way of siphoning off the country's riches to Zanu PF bigwigs.

It has long been clear that 'free and fair elections' is an aspiration rather than the rule. In many countries elections have become a charade. The fuss over the last elections in Malawi provide bracing evidence of this. Zimbabweans are used to having 'command election results' followed by Marry Chiwenga's 'command justice' when the opposition protests.

President Mnangagwa is already preparing for the next elections in 2023, though he admitted to the Politburo this week that his government had failed and had no new ideas (see: <https://www>

[zimbabwesituation.com/news/mnangagwa-admits-failure-he-must-go/](https://zimbabwesituation.com/news/mnangagwa-admits-failure-he-must-go/)

).

The schizophrenic position of the government could perhaps explain the extraordinary behaviour of a senior Zimbabwean diplomat in the United States who has been flown home after being arrested by police while running around in the middle of the night screaming and shouting (see: <https://www.zimlive.com/2020/03/06/top-zimbabwe-diplomat-breaks-into-united-states-home-gets-immunity/>).

We can only speculate that he could have been driven mad by the US Government's decision to renew targeted sanctions imposed on some Zanu PF officials. A US statement said President Mnangagwa's government 'has arguably accelerated its persecution of critics and economic mismanagement in the past year, during which security forces have conducted extrajudicial killings, rapes, and alleged abductions of numerous dissidents.'

(See:

<https://www.zimlive.com/2020/03/04/us-extends-zimbabwe-sanctions-over-accelerated-persecution-of-critics/>

).

## **Other points**

- Zimbabwe is facing 'an economic and humanitarian crisis' says the International Monetary Fund. IMF officials recently visited Zimbabwe and complained of a lack of reforms ( <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/03/zimbabwe-in-economic-and-humanitarian-crisis-as-imf-sounds-alarm.html>

).

- On Friday Vigil activists attended churches on the World Day of Prayer, which this year

was devoted to Zimbabwe with the service written by Zimbabwean women. We were deeply touched by the support we witnessed in the UK but sorry to hear reports that the day was less successful in Zimbabwe itself. One observer complained that the service she had attended in Bulawayo had devoted most of its time to acknowledging dignitaries rather than praying for the suffering. A contact in Bulawayo said she was distressed by the politicisation of the event and what she called the corruption of the church.

- The Zimbabwe army commander Edzai Chimonyo says the military are soon to start monitoring social media, which he said posed a dangerous threat to national security. The move has been condemned by human rights groups (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/03/army-to-monitor-social-media/>)

- The Vigil today marked the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abduction by government agents of civil rights protester Itai Dzamara. He has not been seen since.

- Thanks to those who arrived early to help set up the Vigil today: Beauty Bangura, Cynthia Chibanda, Pamela Chirimuta, Rangirai Chivaviro, Enniah Dube, Daizy Fabian, Delice Gavazah, Jonathan Kariwo, Chido Makawa, Heather Makawa, Garikai Mananje, Jacob Mandipira, Joyce Mbairatsunga, Margaret Munenge, Esther Munyira, Mary Muteyerwa, Qiniso Sibanda, Ephraim Tapa, Kevin Wheeldon and Ntombizodwa Zololo. Thanks to Daizy, Esther and Margaret for looking after the front table, to Kevin, Rangirai and Jacob for handing out flyers, to Mary and Chido for drumming, to Jonathan and Chido for taking photos and to Rosemary Maponga for providing hot drinks. Thanks also to those who made posters for the Itai Dzamara protest: Garikai, Daizy, Washington Mugari and Tapiwa Muskwe.

- For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimb88abwewigil/>. Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

**FOR THE RECORD:** 26 signed the register.

## **EVENTS AND NOTICES:**

- **Living on the Edge.** Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March from 7 – 9 pm (doors open at 6 pm). Venue: Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. The event is organised by the Mike Campbell Foundation. Among the speakers are Chief Felix Ndiweni and Beatrice Mtetwa. For full details of the event check:

[https://media.wix.com/ugd/02876c\\_5b68a136280c42ebbf39f8ebbb722299.pdf](https://media.wix.com/ugd/02876c_5b68a136280c42ebbf39f8ebbb722299.pdf)

- **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>

[w.rohrzimbabwe.org/](http://w.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-3708257065885>

51/

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