

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/50004511018/sizes/m/>

'Farcical and surreal – like a poorly scripted Mr Bean film without the comedy' was how MDC Vice-President Tendai Biti described his arrest with other party leaders last week for trying to enter their headquarters, which had been taken over by security forces in the name of a rival faction.

Even more surreal was the re-arrest of the three young MDC women, now charged with lying about being abducted and tortured by government agents – condemned by UN human rights experts who demanded to be allowed to visit Zimbabwe to assess the situation.

In the middle of all this came a bizarre news conference called by the National Security Council at which the heads of the army, police and prisons, along with the commanders of the air force and the intelligence agency, denied rumours of planning a coup against Mnangagwa.

Experience suggests that such a denial by the top brass is a sure indication that something really is up – not surprising as the country is fast running out of money and may soon have difficulty paying police and troops.

Written by Administrator

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Finance Minister Ncube and Reserve Bank Governor Mangudya were summoned to a politburo meeting to account for the financial chaos. Ncube, whose policies have run into strong criticism, is said to have protested that he is not a magician (see: <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2020/06/12/im-no-magician-ncube-to-zanu-pf/>).

Meanwhile, Biti, himself a former finance minister, has written to the World Bank welcoming assistance to Zimbabwe but warning that money must not go through the government and 'further enrich or entrench the very people who have destroyed our economy and democracy'. (See: <https://bulawayo24.com/opinion/letters/186896>).

Earlier, in an account of his arrest, he said he and his companions were accused of criminal nuisance and violating lockdown regulations by singing a song on Nelson Mandela Avenue. They were held overnight in a squalid cell without blankets or a mat to sleep on before being released on bail. 'We were relieved because, despite our terrible experience, we were the lucky ones. Many have died. Many have been tortured. And many are fearful they will become victims of this dysfunctional, anti-democratic state.' (See: <https://africanarguments.org/2020/06/09/tendai-biti-the-story-of-my-arrest-in-mnangagwa-tinpot-zimbabwe/>).

Against this background, when Mnangagwa took to the airways to announce an easing of the lockdown, the Vigil was not convinced when he said it would allow the government to continue its 'reform' agenda and promote freedom of assembly and freedom to vote in free and fair elections (see: <https://www.herald.co.zw/president-calls-zimbabwe-to-action/>).

Confidence in the government has been further eroded after it was forced to cancel multi-million dollar deals linked to one of Mnangagwa's sons following the exposure of overpricing of Covid-19 medical equipment and drugs. Zimlive says Mnangagwa's three sons with his current wife Auxillia live an opulent lifestyle: '

Their driveways are so full with luxury cars, one source said, their mother often drives away in frustration when failing to park inside.'

(See:

<https://www.zimlive.com/2020/06/13/how-zimbabwe-paid-2-week-old-company-us2m-sparking-interpol-probe/>

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Other points

- Olympic gold medallist Kirsty Coventry, Minister of Sports and Culture, seems to have been fully integrated into the Zanu PF culture. She is claiming the farm allocated to Mugabe's nephew Robert Zhuwao who is away reportedly recovering from brain surgery (see: <https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/farming-environment/zimbabwe-olympic-legend-kirsty-coventry-enters-into-farming/>)

- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have a virtual Vigil while the lockdown continues. We ask our activists to put on Vigil / ROHR / Zimbabwe regalia and take a photo of themselves holding an appropriate poster reflecting our protest against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The photos are uploaded on our Flickr site (see: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/albums/72157714704278612/with/50004511018/>). Our virtual Vigil activists today were Margaret Munenge, Garikai Mananje, Patricia Masamba and Esther Munyira who all kindly contributed to Vigil funds.

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

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 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/>

[w.rohrzimbabwe.org/](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/zimbabwевigil>

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027>

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