

Stand up for sit down – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 21st November 2020

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 22 November 2020 17:16 -

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/50632633581/sizes/m/>

World Toilet Day on Friday made a bigger splash than this month's third anniversary of the overthrow of Mugabe.

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights called on the Mnangagwa government to ensure that everyone has access to a clean and safe toilet by 2030. It seems as likely to happen as the government's promise that we will by then be an 'upper middle income country'.

A recent government report said the majority of urban suburbs were exposed to drinking sewage – contaminated because of poor sanitation management by local authorities (see: <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2020/11/on-world-toilet-day-accelerate-implementation-of-measures-to-ensure-sustainable-sanitation/>).

The situation is particularly bad in Bulawayo, where taps have been dry for months and people in poor suburbs face a daily struggle to get water. Diarrhoea outbreaks are a particular threat to young children – with or without toilets.

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Bulawayo used to be an important industrial centre but it has been laid low over the last 20 years. Latest government figures show that now only 9% of Zimbabwe's exports are manufactured goods (see: <https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/economic-analysis/5-key-numbers-in-zimbabwes-new-economic-plan-show-erosion-of-a-once-solid-industrial-base/>).

We in the diaspora are glad that, despite the Covid crisis, remittances sent back home have risen sharply and now contribute some US\$658 million a year to the economy (see: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/world/africa/2020-11-19-zimbabwes-diaspora-remittances-surge-as-lockdowns-forced-use-of-official-channels/>).

An small contribution in the form of a bribe would have been made by the Malawian millionaire Propheteer Shepherd Bushiri, who abandoned his gullible flock in South Africa to escape fraud charges he was facing there. He appears to have passed through Zimbabwe back to Malawi without a problem. The MDC Alliance said this showed how easily border management could be manipulated by corruption and bribery. The Profit said he and his wife had fled South Africa for their lives. 'My wife and I strongly believe in our innocence but this cannot be proved if our lives are not preserved', he said (see: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-54990694>).

Under the Mnangagwa regime, there's been no let up in corruption. The latest scandal involves the Red Cross whose acting secretary-general has been charged with firing subordinates who had reported corruption to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

You couldn't invent it if you spent the whole day sitting on your brand new toilet – even if it was connected to a water supply . . .

Other Points:

- Three years after Mugabe's overthrow hopes for better government have faded. 'Nothing has changed. Things have only got worse', said Ibbo Mandaza, head of the Harare-based Southern African Political and Economic Series. The human rights monitoring group the Zimbabwe Peace Project says it has documented 7,962 cases of abuse of human rights in the last three years, including the abductions of about 100 activists and opposition figures by suspected state agents (see: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/21/zimbabwe-3-years-after-mugabes-ouster-in-500-words>).

- The Zimbabwe Mail says the Mugabe family's business empire Gushungo Holdings has become a pale shadow of its former self in the past three years. A reporter who visited Gushungo dairy estates in Mazowe says the once bustling dairy is now like a ghost factory. The nearby Amai Mugabe high school looked almost deserted (see: <https://www.thezimbabwe.com/business/robert-mugabes-business-empire-crumbles/>).

- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have a virtual Vigil while the restrictions continue. 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: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/albums/72157716991446723>. Our virtual Vigil activists today were Rosemary Maponga, Patience Bakasa and Lilian Kanyasa 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

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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.

- **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>