

Well we had a brilliant party even if Mugabe didn't. A big crowd turned out for our mock 85th birthday celebrations for Mugabe – though his main bash has been delayed until 28th February. The word is that his goons have had difficulty extorting the money required.

The Vigil worked on the basis of a report in the London Times saying that Mugabe's party organisers had ordered 8,000 lobsters and 4,000 portions of caviar to be washed down by 2,000 bottles of champagne and 500 bottles of whisky. We had Vigil management team member Fungayi Mabhunu wearing our Mugabe mask and waving a M
ethuselah of champagne (6 litres for the information of those who don't move in lavish Zanu-PF circles). He stood in the doorway of the Embassy with his consort Grumpy Grace (brilliantly played by Emily Gurupira), dripping with diamonds and perched on designer shoes as she scowled at the TV cameramen covering the Vigil. Afterwards she headed off to Harrods to do some shopping armed with a fat cheque from the UN.

Supporters held up posters saying 'Mugabe spends US\$200,000 dollars while his people starve' and 'Zimbabwean life expectancy: men 37, women 34, Mugabe 85+'.

Thanks to Mai Mutandira who led prayers and to the usual stalwarts: Arnold Kuwewa, Chipso Chaya, Sue and Francesca Toft for their efficient management of the Vigil. Thanks also to those who led the music: Moses Kandwayo and Jerry Mtotela (drums) and Patson Muzuwa, Jenatry Muranganwa and Dumi Tutani (singing and dancing).

Others who helped with the media event were Agnes Zengeya, Lovemore Mukyani, Batson Chapata, Kimpton Samkange, Reginald Gwasira, Eunita Masolo, Yvonne Masendu, Esther Magenya, Pattie Williams (for the Mugabe presents of cholera, starvation and corruption) and Dennes Sibanda (security).

Apologies if we have left people out but we are grateful for everyone's help at a demonstration which drew lots of attention.

Today saw the launch of another Zimbabwe Vigil in the UK – this time in Newcastle. We wish them success and will give every support.

The Vigil welcomed news that the UK government has offered a lifeline to elderly British

nationals in Zimbabwe. Many of these people have seen their Zimbabwean pensions disappear through inflation. One thing we can reassure them about is that they will be in good hands as many carers employed to look after elderly people in the UK are Zimbabweans also driven out of their country by Mugabe.

A couple more points:

- A vigil management member was asked about the way forward for Zimbabwe and suggested support for ROHR.

The dumbfounded person had difficulty hearing in the midst of the exuberant gathering and said 'War? – not war!'

- Everyone who signed the register were angry that they have not been included in the bloated new government. 'This is discrimination. If they don't give us cars and allowances we will stop coming to the Vigil. Then where would they be?'

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/>

FOR THE RECORD: around 360 signed the register but many more attended and even though we kept two registers going not everyone was able to sign.

FOR YOUR DIARY: -████████ Central London Zimbabwe Forum. Monday, 23rd February at 7.30 pm.

Abel Chikomo, Director of Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, fesh from Zimbabwe

will report on recent developments including the continued abuse of detainees' human rights.

NB different venue: Development House,
56-64 Leonard St

,
London
EC2A 4LP

. Nearest tube station
Old Street

. From Exit 4 head down
City Road

and take the first left into
Leonard Street

.

Worldwide Day of Prayer for Zimbabwe. Ash Wednesday (25th February) at Southwark Cathedral, SE1 9DA

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York

have designated Ash Wednesday as a Worldwide Day of Prayer for the people of Zimbabwe

. At the services during the day special prayers will be offered each hour on the half hour. The Bishop of Southwark will preside and preach at the 5.30pm

Choral Eucharist in special recognition of the links between the Diocese of Southwark and four of the dioceses in Zimbabwe

. For more information check:

<http://www.southwark.anglican.org/cathedral/lent/shrove.htm#prayerday>

. Contact: Steve Harris, Diocesan Communications Officer, Tel: 020 7939 9437, 07949 679401. Email:

steve.harris@southwark.anglican.org

• **Next Glasgow Vigil.** Saturday 28th February, 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Argyle Street Precinct. For more information contact: Patrick Dzimba, 07990 724 137, Tafadzwa Musemwa 07954 344 123 and Roggers Fatiya 07769 632 687.

• **ROHR Birmingham Chapter general meeting.** Saturday 28th February from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: 28 Handsworth New Road B18 4PT. The meeting will be attended by a well known lawyer. Contact: Emnah Zibgowa 07846005120, Des Parayiwa 07815565335, Rebecca Mlambo 07817585742 or Tsitsi Mavhura 07932477842

* **ROHR Chelmsford launch meeting.** Saturday 28th February from 1.30 – 5.30 pm. Venue: Springfield Parish Centre, St Augustine's Way, Springfield

, Chelmsford

, CM1. Contact: Billy R Machezano 07908332724/07765459538, Robert Mafigo 07944815190, Tendai Gwanzura 07961702832 or Faith Benesi 07958650670.

* **ROHR Woking launch meeting.** Saturday 7th March from 1.30 – 5.30 pm Venue: Station Pub, 12 Chertsey Road

, Woking

GU21 5AB. Contact Thandi Mabodoko 07886619780, Sithokozile Hlokana 07886203113 or Siduduzile Sibanyoni 07588745353.

• **ROHR UK Chair's meeting.** Saturday 14th March from 12 noon. Venue to be advised. Contact Ephraim Tapa 07940793090 or

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Written by Administrator

Sunday, 22 February 2009 18:11 - Last Updated Sunday, 01 March 2009 16:03

Paradzai Mapfumo

07915926323 or 07932216070

· **Zimbabwe Association's Women's Weekly Drop-in Centre. Fridays** 10.30 am – 4 pm.

Venue: T

he Fire

Station Community and ICT Centre,

84 Mayton Street

,
London

N7 6QT, Tel: 020 7607 9764. Nearest underground:

Finsbury

Park

. For more information contact the Zimbabwe Association 020 7549 0355 (open Tuesdays and Thursdays).