

As regional leaders prepared for the SADC meeting in Windhoek, Vigil supporters were disturbed to read the comments on Zimbabwe by South Africa's top foreign ministry official, Aya nda Ntsaluba. He said: “

Zimbabwe

is on the correct path. . . The overwhelming picture is favourable.”

The Vigil believes Mr Ntsaluba's picture can only be seen with head buried in the sand – but then there is plenty of sand in Namibia. He further observed that Zimbabwe was "beginning to use its natural resources to improve the lives of its people". About time, some would say. But if he was referring to the Marange diamonds it will be news to Finance Minister Tendai Biti, who has said publicly that the Treasury has received no revenue from the diamonds. Not one dollar. Mr Ostrich Ntsaluba's comments deflated hopes that the Southern African Dictators' Club would take any steps to honour its commitment to ensure that Mugabe observes the abortive GPA. As one Vigil supporter said “They can't manage their wives, let alone Mugabe”.

The Vigil believes that it is long past time for the international community – or the small part of it that cares about human rights – to take a tougher approach to the SADC countries. It could, for instance, take a closer look at the nasty regime in

Swaziland

(which can always be relied on to support Mugabe).

A strong supporter of the Zimbabwe Vigil has been a Swazi lady Thobile Gwebu, who in January started a Vigil outside the Swaziland High Commission in London in protest at human rights abuses in her homeland. We were shocked that the UK Home Office has seen fit to detain her for immediate deportation – shocked in particular that the Home Office is concentrating on asylum seekers instead of dealing with clear abuses of the immigration / visa system reported at length in the Times this week, a much bigger problem.

Vigil supporters signed the following petition for immediate dispatch to the Home Office:

Petition to the Home Secretary

UK to deport Swazi Activist

The most prominent Swazi pro-democracy activist in the UK, Thobile Gwebu, has been detained by the UK

immigration authorities and is due to be deported as a failed asylum seeker on Tuesday 17

th

August at 20.30

Thobile is the co-ordinator of the Swaziland Vigil which has been campaigning for human rights outside the Swaziland High Commission in London since January, see: www.swazilandvigil.co.uk .In May the Swazi Times quoted her extensively in an article about the Swaziland Vigil. The paper also interviewed a Swazi government minister about the the UK

protest. This means that Thobile is known to the Swazi authorities as a pro-democracy activist and the Swazi authorities have made clear their attitude to dissent.□

The Zimbabwe Vigil strongly believes that Thobile will be at considerable risk if returned to Swaziland.□ It is Africa's last absolute monarchy and is under Africa

's longest-running state of emergency. We quote Thobile's own words: "Exiled Swazis and supporters urge the UK

to put pressure on the absolute monarch King Mswati III to allow political freedom, freedom of speech, the rule of law, respect for women and affordable AIDS drugs in Swaziland

." The Zimbabwe Vigil is appalled that her asylum claim has been turned down and that she is to be handed over to this medieval despot, who would like to spend the country's meager revenues on a Boeing to fly his 14 wives to the fleshpots of the world.□

Supporters of the Zimbabwe Vigil urge the Home Secretary to intervene so that further consideration can be given to Ms Gwebu's case

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Thanks to Luka Phiri of the Vigil management team and Vigil supporter Eunita Masolo who dropped everything to visit Thobile at the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre on Friday and take her thoughtful necessities and further thanks to Luka who is faxing our petition (signed by more than 300 people this afternoon!) to Theresa May, the Home Secretary. Luka was an ideal person to visit Thobile as he has been in the same position. His visit gave her great comfort.

Other points

- The sight of the day was Vigil Co-ordinator Dumi Tutani circling the Vigil on one of the bicycles now rented out by the London authorities, who have installed a bicycle rank next to the Vigil.
- Thanks to Kelvin Kamupira who took charge of the back table with the merchandise and register today.
- Everyone signed Francesca Toft's birthday card. She turned 20 yesterday and after many years with the Vigil has become very popular and is always a great help in looking after children.
- Vigil supporters were interested to see the article by Eric Bloch on Mugabe's recent outburst (Zim: A man-made economic hell) that

the West could go to hell. Mr Bloch said this was an invitation to the West to remain in

Zimbabwe

, which Mugabe has made a hell!

<http://www.theindependent.co.zw/opinion/27621-eric-bloch-zim-a-man-made-economic-hell.html>

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

. For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check the link at the top of the home page of our website.

For earlier ZimVigil TV programmes check:

<http://www.zbnnews.com/home/firingline>

FOR THE RECORD: 155 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

· **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organisation based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organisation 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

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· **ROHR Liverpool Vigil.** Saturday 21st August from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Church

Street

(Outside Primark),

Liverpool

City

Centre. For details please contact: Anywhere Mungoyo

07939913688, Trywell Migeri 07956083758, Panyika

Karimanzira 07551062161. Future demonstration: 4

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September. Same time and venue.

· **ROHR Chelmsford general meeting.** Saturday 21st

August from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: 23 Widford Close,

Chelmsford

CM2 8TA. Contact: R Mafigo 07944815190, F Muzambi

07879916275, Martha A Magwaza 07748644911, Tendai

Gwanzura 07772912679. All invited and braai party afterwards.

· **ROHR Harlow general meeting.** Saturday 4th September from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: St James and St Lukes Church, Perry Road

,
Harlow

CM18 7NP

. Contact: Clement 07879123783, Bothwell 07725208657, Ilyod 07883695970, Paradzai Mapfumo 07915926323.

· **Ministering to the Diaspora: a case study of Zimbabweans in Britain.** Wednesday 15th September from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm. Venue: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, SS Philip & James Church, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HR. A conference to help identify unique needs, the services Christian organizations are offering and can offer (but are not), identifying what more needs to be done and how this might be achieved, and drawing up a co-ordinated action plan. For more information, contact:
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or phone 01865 882 421

· **Vigil Facebook page:** <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8157345519&ref=ts>

· **Vigil Myspace page:** <http://www.myspace.com/zimbabwevigil>