

The Vigil resolved to challenge the British government to throw its diplomatic and financial muscle behind our campaign to ensure that the elections planned in Zimbabwe next year are free and fair. Our argument is that, having decided to end its moratorium on sending home failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers, the British government has a moral responsibility for their safety.

The Vigil has pointed to clear evidence that a new wave of violence is being prepared – indeed is already underway – to bludgeon Zanu PF back to power.

Mugabe says he wants elections by the middle of next year. Tsvangirai says ok but that international observers and peacekeepers must be in place well beforehand. We believe the British government can help here.

The Vigil has gathered many thousands of signatures for the following petition to the United Nations: 'We call on the Security Council to ensure that the next elections in Zimbabwe are free and fair. We look to the United Nations to supervise the electoral process and the handover of power to a new government and believe peace-keeping troops will need to be in place before, during and after the polling.' We are waiting for a suitable occasion to present this petition.

Unfortunately South Africa has been elected again to serve on the Security Council and lost no time in announcing that it will continue to protect Mugabe. We urge the

UK

to step up pressure on SADC to take steps to ensure the Zimbabwean elections meet regional guidelines – with the threat of suspending aid if they once again turn a blind eye to a stolen election. Is there a SADC country that doesn't receive scores of millions of pounds in direct aid every year from

UK

taxpayers? After the recent budgetary cuts in the

UK

many people will be asking why we should give this money to countries supporting the Mugabe tyranny.

On a lovely autumn day, when we largely escaped the threatened deluge, supporters signed the following petition to the Home Secretary, Theresa May: 'We the undersigned, members of the

Zimbabwean Diaspora in the UK and sympathisers, express our grave disquiet at the UK government's announcement that failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers are to be deported – even before the hearing of a test (country guidance) case is concluded.

Our view is that the situation in Zimbabwe

is not suitable for the return of exiled Zimbabweans, especially those who have shown their rejection of the Zimbabwean regime by applying for asylum in the UK

. In particular, we are aware of continuing widespread acts of political violence by Zanu PF agents who enjoy immunity from prosecution. We fear the situation is likely to worsen given plans to hold new elections next year.'

The petition is to be presented at a demonstration to be held on Wednesday at Lancaster House in London before a meeting to be addressed by a senior Home Office official, Mr Phil Douglas. Ironically it was at Lancaster House that the Independence Constitution was agreed under which Mugabe came to power in 1980.

Zimbabweans have been advised by Mr Douglas that he would like questions in advance and the meeting will last one hour – a tight time-frame for Zimbabweans! He has been advised of the following questions:

1. Why in your letter to Zimbabweans do you speak of 'the indiscriminate violence which marred the elections of 2008'? This is a complete travesty of the truth. The violence was not indiscriminate: it was directed by Mugabe and his thugs against the MDC.
2. In your letter, you say "There is no doubt that political persecution and abuses of human rights persist in Zimbabwe. However, these abuses are more targeted than previously and not all Zimbabweans are equally affected.' What is meant by 'more targeted' - opponents of Mugabe? Some of these opponents are in the UK trying to get asylum - the very people you propose to send home.

Other questions which could be asked are:

1. If it so safe to send back Zimbabweans why has one of the Vigil inspirers, Roy Bennett, recently taken political asylum in South Africa even though he is supposed to be the Deputy Minister of Agriculture?
 2. The Archbishop of Canterbury's office says two Anglican bishops in Zimbabwe have been threatened with assassination and may have to flee the country. Will the British government send them back to Harare?
- ?

Other points

- Sarah Harland of the Zimbabwe Association updated supporters on what was happening with the Zimbabwe country guidance case. She said the three judges have indicated that their deliberations are unlikely to be completed until the beginning of December and, subject to appeals, their ruling may be pushed back to January or February.

The Home Office statement of 14

th

October said that there would be no forced removals of failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers until the court decision.

- Thanks to Josephine Zhuga for taking charge of the petition to the Home Secretary. She will take it to the demonstration at Lancaster House on Wednesday to collect more signatures. Thanks also to Kelvin Kamupira for helping at the back table.

- We enjoyed delicious muffins at the Vigil kindly brought by Debra Mutepeya and Alena Jali of Wolverhampton. They donated all the proceeds to the Vigil.

- A wonderful mime artist, a Marcel Marceau look-alike, came by with a bunch of flowers and spent some time with us. He seemed to symbolise the fragile situation in Zimbabwe

- It was good to see Joan Weir from Edinburgh who dropped by on her way to the Britain Zimbabwe Society AGM. She has organised Zimbabwean events and protests in Edinb

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in the past.

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 THE RECORD: 169 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

· **ROHR Wolverhampton relaunch meeting.** Saturday 30th October. Venue: Heath Town Community Centre, 208 Chevril Rise, Wolverhampton WV10 0HP. Contact P Chibanguza 07908406069, P Nkomo 07817096594, P Dunduru 07958386718, D Mtendereki 07771708800 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 /

07932216070.

· **ROHR Bournemouth general meeting.** Saturday 30th October at 3 pm. Venue: East Cliff United Reformed Church opposite ASDA Store, oldenhurst Road

,
Bournemouth

,
BH8 8AW

. Contact Sekai Mujeyi 07772211220, Sledge Bova 07788850146, Tari Mashawi 07843614091, or Abi Nzimba 07780831455.

· **Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) Conference.** Saturday 30th October at 2 pm. Venue: Unite (the Union), 128 Theobald's Road, London WC1X 8TN.

The conference on

'Gender and Development in Southern Africa

' will be addressed by

Stephen Lewis

who is a former Special UN Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa

, former Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF and was the Canadian Ambassador to the UN. He has been outspoken on violence against women in Zimbabwe

. He is currently the co-director of AIDS Free World which you may know from its work on gender and violence in

[Zimbabwe](#)

. For more information about registration, see:

http://www.actsa.org/page-1421-Annual_General_Meeting.html

· **Zimbabwe Association AGM.** Sunday 31st October from 1 – 4 pm. Venue: St James Church Hall, 11 Prebend Street / corner of Packington Street, London N1 8PF. Guest speakers: Mike Kaye, Still Human Still Here Campaign and Lucia Dube, Chair, Zimbabwe Diaspora Focus Group – 'How to work together as a diaspora?' RSVP:

Zimbabwe

Association, Development House,

56

-64 Leonard Street,
EC2A 4LT

,
info@zimbabweassociation.org.uk

,
www.zimbabweassociation.org.uk

, Tel: 07846859200, Fax: 020 7549 0356.

• **ROHR North London branch anniversary and fundraising.** Saturday 6th November
from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Tottenham Chances

399 High Road

, Tottenham N17 6QN. Station: Seven Sisters. From Seven Sisters catch buses towards
Tottenham – third stop. Buses: 123, 149, 259, 349, 341, 476. Contact: G

Mapanda 07556586377, V C

hengaose 07956586377, B Hukwa 07835323174, Ruby Chitiyo 07886998102, V Moyo

07960863128, P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070. Refreshments available. Raffle. ROHR

UK

executive attending.

• **ROHR Bournemouth Anniversary and Christmas Party.** Saturday 20th November from
2 – 10 pm. Venue: Strouden Community Hall,

Bradpole Road

,
Strouden Park

BH8 9NY

near Castle Point shopping Centre. Music, sadza, maguru, brai, drinks, beer etc. Contact Sekai
Mujeyi 07772211220, Sledge Bova 07788850146, Tari Mashawi 07843614091, Abi Nzimba
07780831455 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070

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

• **Vigil Myspace page:** <http://www.myspace.com/zimbabwевigil> .

• **‘Through the Darkness’, Judith Todd’s acclaimed account of the rise of Mugabe.** T
o receive a copy by post in the UK please email confirmation of your order and postal address
to

ngwenyasr@yahoo.co.uk

and send a cheque for £10 payable to “Budiro Trust” to Emily Chadburn, 15 Burners Close,
Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 0QA. All proceeds go to the Budiro Trust which
provides bursaries to needy A Level students in

Zimbabwe

• **Workshops aiming to engage African men on HIV testing and other sexual health
issues.** Organised by the Terrence Higgins Trust (www.tht.org.uk). Please contact the
co-ordinator

Takudzwa

Mukiwa

akudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk

if you are interested in taking part.