

If the British government has any strategy to ensure that the promised elections in Zimbabwe are free and fair it is not letting on. That's the conclusion reached by Vigil supporters who attended a meeting at the Chatham House think-tank in London addressed by the Minister for Africa, Henry Bellingham, and the British Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Mark Canning.

The Chatham House rule, under which remarks are not attributed, was lifted for the occasion. There was no need: Chair Robin Niblett summed the speakers up as tiptoeing and cautious.

There was nothing that wasn't diplomat-speak except, perhaps, the observation by the Ambassador that he had little doubt that most of the high grade diamonds from Marange were 'going out of the back door'. But that's pretty obvious.

Apart from that, no one – including the third member of the panel Zimbabwean academic Knox Chitiyo – had anything to say except blithe platitudes: the unity government is making a difference, the economy is looking up, violence is down. In fact, there has been 'remarkable progress', according to Her Majesty's Ambassador – though he admitted that the 80 – 90% of people unemployed might not notice.

The panel was asked by Geoff Hill of the Washington Times whether there could be an election or hand-over of power given Zanu-PF's control of the police, army, CIO and youth militia. The Ambassador dodged it by saying he didn't know when the election would take place

Gerry Jackson of SW Radio Africa stood up and asked, to applause, about the increasing violence in rural areas being reported to them by their contacts every day and the desperation of people to ensure that their vote was not a death sentence.

Zimbabwe Vigil Diary –13th November 2010

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 14 November 2010 18:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 18 November 2010 17:23

Minister Bellingham, who had spoken of an improvement in the human rights situation, was stung to say that the UK wants a comprehensive election monitoring system – ‘but it’s not for us to say how it should be organised’ His main interest, it appeared, was how Britain could boost trade.

It was, all in all, a chilling experience of backslapping hypocrisy. Diplomacy used to be defined as being sent abroad to lie for your country. Now you only have to go to Chatham House in St James Square

Further light on the meeting was cast when we learnt that an honoured guest was Zanu-PF’s Tourism Minister Walter Mzembi, in London to launch an attempt to attract visits by rich, fat and stupid murungus. Mzembi, a firm supporter of the army’s involvement in politics, was delighted by the supine gushing of Canning and Bellingham.

He told NewZimbabwe (see:

<http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-3793-Mzembi+UK+tourism+charm+offensive/news.aspx>

) the meeting was ‘a sign that the British are now ready to engage constructively’ and ‘they want to be less critical of Zanu-PF and President Mugabe’.

A different view of the situation in Zimbabwe was given by the President of ROHR Ephraim Tapa when he spoke at the Vigil. He warned Vigil supporters that Mzembi’s friends in the army were openly campaigning for Mugabe and were launching a new terror campaign ‘Operation Dimbura Musoro’ (headless chickens). The targets, he said, were already being identified for decapitation. Their headless bodies would be returned to their families. (see: Beheading Operation Launched To Terrify Zim Villagers - http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/nov12_2010.html#Z6). Ephraim said Zimbabweans in the UK were being sold down the river by a British government more interested in trade than principle.

Other points

- Not only should Zimbabweans in the UK be sent back home but, according to a Conservative Party legislator, Mugabe should be allowed to take their place and be given honourable retirement in Britain! (For he’s a jolly good fellow)
- Good to hear again from embattled Zimbabwean farmer Ben Freeth. ‘Well done in keeping things going’, he said. ‘I am trying to use what limited influence that I have got to get Morgan

and Arthur and every single MP that cares to write a letter to the Secretary General of the UN asking for the UN to have a Peace Keeper force on standby in the light of what they expect to happen with elections next year'. Ben added

'How do we get Morgan and Arthur to act though? If they as the majority in the Zimbabwe Government were to write the letter with the signatures of the majority of MPs, the UN would have more difficulty in denying the people of Zimbabwe protection.'

- We shared a cake to celebrate the birthday of Josephine Zhuga our front table lady.
- Many thanks to Audrey Marere who brought us a new tablecloth for our front table – we are now much smarter.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/> . For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check the link at the top of the home page of our website.

FOR THE RECORD: 146 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.

- **Talk about the situation in Zimbabwe and achievements of the Zimbabwe Vigil.** Monday 15th

November from 6.30 – 8.30 pm. Venue: Commonwealth Club 25 Northumberland Avenue WC2 – downstairs room is booked in the name of Jane Grant. Speaker: Josephine Zhuga of the Vigil. Organisers: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

- **ROHR Manchester Branch Inaugural Vigil.** Saturday 20th November from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Cathedral Gardens, Manchester City Centre (map:

<http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/maps/cathedral-gardens-map.html>

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07775313637

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07551062161

• **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, braai, drinks etc. Contact Sekai Mujeyi 07772211220, Sledge Bova 07788850146, Tari Mashawi 07843614091, Abi Nzimba 07780831455 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070

• **ROHR Peterborough general meeting.** Saturday 20th November from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Millfield Community Centre, 3

New England

Complex,

Lincoln Road

,
Peterborough

PE1 2PE

Contact Alista Mabiya 07724540506, Bertha Chiyangwa 07883820641, Nyarai Maziso 07732545514 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070.

• **ROHR Yorkshire general meeting.** Saturday 20th November. Venue: Dock Green Inn, A Shley Road

,
Leeds

LS9 7AB. Contact

Chinofunga Ndogo 07877993826, Prosper Mudamvanji 07897594874, Wonder Mubaiwa 07958758568, Donna Mugoni 07748828913

• **Launch of ZimVigil TV website.** Friday 26th November. Thanks to Dr Tim Rusike of ZBN News who is setting up a new website:

www.zimvigiltv.com

in gratitude to the Vigil for allowing him to work at the Vigil to develop ZBN News.

The website will be managed by a team selected by the Vigil and will have space for videos, picture gallery, community area and blog.

• **ROHR Woking Christmas Party.** Saturday 4th December from 2 – 10 pm. Venue: The

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Church House, Oriental Road, Woking GU22 7BD. Contact Isaac Mudzamiri 07774044873, Thandiwe Mabodoko 07552402416, Thoko Khlokanka 07886203113 or P Mapfumo on 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 ([\[akudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk\]\(mailto:akudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk\)\)](http://t</div><div data-bbox=)

if you are interested in taking part.