

Vigil supporters were overjoyed by news that management team member Luka Phiri has been granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. His face told everything: a beaming smile. Luka has had a long struggle to get his papers, mostly because he arrived in the

UK

on a

Malawi

passport. Despite all the evidence that he is Zimbabwean the Home Office detained him in January 2009 and threatened to deport him to

Malawi

. The Vigil and others organised a successful campaign to secure his release.

Luka is a long-time Vigil supporter and a committed activist in the fight against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. He also works for the Zimbabwean refugee organisation the Zimbabwe Association which has made him invaluable at the Vigil for his unstinting help and advice to other asylum seekers. Together with Vigil co-ordinator Dumisani Tutani he walked 55 miles in one day, leaving Brighton at 5 am and arriving at the Vigil in the evening in

support of tumour sufferer

Tare

Mapungwana, who was in

London

for an operation.

When the news of his successful asylum appeal got out, Luka tells us he received emails from 3 MPs who had been campaigning for him. There were messages of congratulations from Vigil supporters all over the country. Luka said 'Thank you so much to the Vigil'.

Like so many others, Luka finds it difficult to see any future in Zimbabwe. There is a French saying which sums up the situation there: 'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose' (the more things change, the more they stay the same).

For us at the Vigil the past week has borne this out (again). The South African mediators have visited Harare to discuss the road map to fresh elections, a process which needs to be followed to create 'a conducive environment for elections' in the words of President Zuma's adviser, Lindiwe Zulu. The upshot of the visit is the startling conclusion that Zimbabwe's governing parties must implement the power-sharing agreement before organising fresh elections . . .

What a brilliant idea!

It means there will be no change. Everyone knows Mugabe will never implement the agreement and yet South Africa continues to feed this illusion. The Vigil knows believes the road map will mean nothing unless South Africa is prepared to put muscle behind it – and there has been no sign of that. Meanwhile, one of the best-endowed countries in the world remains one of the poorest. The 2011 index of economic freedom reports that Zimbabwe is 178th

out of 179 countries surveyed, losing out only to Mugabe's mentor North Korea

.

Other points

- Management team member Patson Muzuwa warned supporters against increased Zanu PF activity in the UK.

- Our pro-Mugabe ranter was waiting for us at the start of the Vigil with his life-size punchbag topped by a mask of Bush and with his loudspeaker system blaring. We decided ignoring him was the best policy and half way through the Vigil he decided to leave it for another day after having a pee against the wall of nearby Ryman's stationers.

- We were happy to be joined by Stephen Hulcoop of the Paraclete Christian Network International who has just returned from doing Christian work in Zimbabwe.

- A large group of students from the School of Oriental and African Studies joined us. They were working on a presentation on migration and how it affected the Zimbabwean community in the UK

- They sent us an email in which they said: 'Thank you very much for today. We learned a lot, and you made us feel very welcome there.'

- Vigil team member Moses Kandiyawo brought his twin to the Vigil in the form of fellow team member Dennis Benton in flat cap and plastic dreadlocks. The joke started a few weeks ago when Dennis arrived at the Vigil in a flat cap and found that dreadlocked Moses was wearing one too.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check <http://www.zimvigil.tv/>

.

FOR THE RECORD: 114 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 Nottingham general meeting.** Saturday 29th January. Venue: St Saviour's Community Hall, Arkwright Walk, Nottingham NG2 2JU. Contact Allan Nhemhara 07810197576, Mary Chabvamuperu 07412074928, Christopher Chibumbu 07775888205, P Chibanguza 07908406069 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

· **ROHR Ashford general meeting.** Saturday 5th February, Venue: the Star Pub, Ashford, Kent TN24 8PA opposite Liquid Night Club off Hythe Road, 5 mins walk from Ashford International Station. ROHR executive members present. Contact Danmore Munyuki 07535213801, Munyaradzi Badze 07709317869, Egbert Mtengwa 07985592931 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070.

· **ROHR West Bromwich general meeting.** Saturday 5th February from 1 – 5 pm. Venue: St Peters Church Hall, Whitehall Road, West Bromwich B70 OHF00-1700hrs. For more info contact Pamela Dunduru 07958386718, Peter Nkomo 07817096594, Diana Mtendereki 07771708800, Phylis Chibanguza 07908406069 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070.

· **ROHR Woking general meeting.** Saturday 5th February from 2 – 6 pm, Venue: Woking Homes, Oriental Road

,
Woking

,
GU22 7BE

. Contact, Isaac Mudzamiri 07774044873, Sithokozile Hlokana 07886203113, Saziso Zulu 07861028280 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/zimbabwevigil> .

· **'Through the Darkness'**, Judith Todd's acclaimed account of the rise of Mugabe. To receive a copy by post in the UK please email confirmation of your order and postal address to

Zimbabwe Vigil Diary – 22nd January 2011

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 23 January 2011 17:33 - Last Updated Sunday, 23 January 2011 17:38

ngwenyasr@yahoo.co.uk

and 0send 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 issue** s. Organised by the Terrence Higgins Trust (www.tht.org.uk). Please contact the co-ordinator Takudzwa
Mukiwa ([t](mailto:takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk)
akudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk)
if you are interested in taking part.