

Vigil supporters ended another busy week picketing the (hopefully) farewell reception given by Swazi King Mswati who was squandering more of his country's meagre resources on a lavish visit to London for the Royal Wedding.

No sooner had we ended our regular Saturday Vigil outside the Zimbabwe Embassy than we were off to join our fellow human rights campaigners of the Swaziland Vigil outside the Four Seasons Hotel in Mayfair. Guests appeared uncomfortable when they saw the protest. The Swaziland High Commissioner Dumsile T Sukati jumped out of her car and hurried into the building.

Despite the failure of our appeals to the British government to withdraw the invitations to the Wedding extended to Mswati and the Zimbabwe Ambassador Gabriel Machinga, we were compensated by the widespread publicity for our joint human rights cause, which has been given new impetus by the unrest in North Africa.

Many observers expressed outrage that the two were present in Westminster Abbey on Friday. The Times newspaper spoke of the 'pew of evil' (unfortunately a pew ignored in the non-stop BBC television coverage).

Explaining the decision not to withdraw the Zimbabwean Ambassador's invitation, the Foreign Office said in a letter to the Vigil 'Thank you for your letter of 20th April 2011 about the invite of the Zimbabwe Ambassador Gabriel Machinga to the Royal Wedding. Representatives from all countries that the UK has working relationships with have been invited to the Royal Wedding. The UK has contact with all parties subject to the Global Political Agreement, and this includes contact with the Zimbabwean Embassy in the UK.'

The Vigil, of course, is not persuaded by this blather but we do have some sympathy with the Foreign Office over its unravelling Africa policy, fraying not only on the edges but also in the middle. The plaintive remark by the expelled British High Commissioner to Malawi ('I was only doing my best . . .') was a sadly inadequate comment on the delusional behaviour of Mugabe's disciple President Mutharika, incensed by being criticized for being intolerant of criticism . . .

The Vigil noted how swiftly the wedding invitation to Malawi was withdrawn and we wait with interest for the threatened ‘wider consequences’ the Foreign Office will visit on the sorry Malawian victims of Mutharika’s psychopathic petulance.

The Nyasa Times reports that the Malawi government was already looking to ‘secretly borrow’ from AIDS funds to finance its deficit in the development budget (see: <http://www.nyasatimes.com/national/malawi-wants-money-for-arvs-to-finance-budget.html>

) and there has certainly been strong domestic criticism of what has been described as the President’s slavish devotion to Mugabe’s anti-West agenda threatening to take Malawi back to ‘the dark ages of a one party system’ (see: <http://www.nyasatimes.com/politics/malawi-ruler%e2%80%99s-%e2%80%98obsession-with-mugabe%e2%80%99-condemned.html>

).

The Vigil understands the British government’s dilemma on how to continue support for our Malawian brothers without propping up this Mugabe clone but we are mindful of suggestions in the British parliamentary debate on Zimbabwe on 28th April (see: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/apr30_2011.html#Z18

) and the voices cautioning against dishing

out aid money through paunchy, self-serving NGOs (not to mention feeding succulent AIDS funds).

As we gathered outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in the warmth of the Royal Wedding in support of our suffering families in Zimbabwe, we were sorry to hear that the Vatican had thrown open its doors to arch-hypocrite Mugabe on one of his monthly \$3 million trips abroad. One of our generous supporters expressed his sadness at this. The Vigil respectfully sends its greetings to our dear Catholic friend, the former Archbishop of Bulawayo Pius Ncube, whose visit to the Vigil some years back remains an ever-present inspiration.

Other points

- Long-term supporter Agnes Zengeya brought her small son to the Vigil for the first

time.

· It was good to have Margret Tandi with us. She was a loyal supporter until she suffered a stroke late last year and we are glad she is now well enough to come to the Vigil again. Once again thanks to Edna Mdoka for her help on the front table.

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

. For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check <http://www.zimvigiltv.com/>

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FOR THE RECORD: 87 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.

- **ZBN News.** The Vigil management team wish to make it clear that the Zimbabwe Vigil is not responsible for Zimbabwe Broadcasting Network News (ZBN News). We are happy that they attend our activities and provide television coverage but we have no control over them. All enquiries about ZBN News should be addressed to ZBN News.

- **The Zim Vigil band** (Farai Marema and Dumi Tutani) has launched its theme song 'Vigil Yedu (our Vigil)' to raise awareness through

music. To download this single, visit website:

www.imusicafrica.com

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· **ROHR Harlow general meeting.**

Saturday 7

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May from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Sherards Hatch Nursery, Ployters Road, Harlow CM18 7PS. MP Mr Robert Halfon, ROHR President, UK National executive and a well-known immigration lawyer will be present. Contact Bothwell Nyemba 07725208657, Grace Kachingwe 07405637283, Aleck Kayima 07961907097, Lloyd Kashangura 07506481334 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

· **ROHR Woking general meeting.**

Saturday 7th May from 2 – 6pm. Venue: Woking Homes, Oriental Road, Woking, GU22 7BE. Contact, Isaac Mudzamiri 07774044873, Sithokozile Hlokana 07886203113, Saziso Zulu 07861028280 or P.Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070.

· **ROHR Manchester meeting.** Saturday

14th May:

(committee meeting from 11 am – 1 pm, general meeting from 2 – 5 pm). Venue: The Salvation Army Citadel, 71 Grosvenor Road, Manchester M13 9UB.

Contact: Delina Tafadzwa Mutyambizi 07775313637, Chamunorwa Chihota 07799446404, Panyika Karimanzira 07551062161, Artwell Pfende 07886839353, P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070 or P Chibanguza 07908406069.

· **ROHR Nottingham general meeting.**

Saturday 28

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May from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: St Saviours in the Meadows Church, Arkwright Walk, Nottingham NG2 2JU. The church is just a few minutes walk from the train station. ROHR National Executive members will be attending to discuss the abuse of human rights and political situation in Zimbabwe. Contact: Allan Nhemhara

07810197576, Mary Chabvamuperu

07412074928, Christopher Chibumbu

07775888205, P Chibanguza 07908406069 or
P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

· **ROHR West Bromwich general meeting.** Saturday 28th May from 12.30 – 4 pm. Venue

St Peters Church Hall, White Hall Road, B70 0HF, West Bromwich.

ROHR President, National executive members and a well-known lawyer present. Contact: Pamela Dunduru 07958386718, Peter Nkomo 07817096594, Diana Mtendereki 07771708800, Paradzai Mapfumo 07915926323 or Phylis Chibanguza 07908406069.

· **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.

To 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 issue**

s. Organised by the Terrence Higgins Trust (www.tht.org.uk).

Please contact the co-ordinator Takudzwa Mukiwa (

takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk)

if you are interested in taking part.