

A bridge too far – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 5th January 2013

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 06 January 2013 15:24 - Last Updated Sunday, 06 January 2013 15:24

The first Vigil of the new year was auspicious if only because it didn't rain! We have just dried out after last week which ended the wettest year since English records began. That was a long time ago.

But cold water was thrown over our hopes for a better year at home with a report in the Zimbabwe Independent that Tsvangirai had agreed with Mugabe that whoever loses the Presidential election will accept defeat (see: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jan5a_2013.html#Z1 – Mugabe, Tsvangirai strike poll pact). If Tsvangirai thinks Mugabe is serious we are in big trouble.

With Mugabe taking a month's holiday at this supposedly critical time, it seems clear to us that Zanu PF has no intention of implementing the reforms agreed for free and fair elections. The general expectation here in the cold is a repetition of 2008 and another GNU to enable the looting to continue.

The exiled writer Chenjerai Hove also sees no improvement on the election situation of 2008. 'Mugabe's party has not changed its approach one inch' he says. 'As the country faints under heavy economic and political burdens, the politicians would rather punch the air with empty slogans and worthless promises that are so unrealistic that even illiterate villagers wonder how a politician can be so dumb as to promise a bridge where there is not even a river' (see: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jan5_2013.html#Z18

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imbabwe's war of empty slogans).

Other points

- We hope the Vigil's gloomy view of the prospects for 2013 is wrong. But it may be better than the prophecy of church leader Makandiwa who says great things are on their way and people will be so empowered that many would import cars. 'You think you have seen congestion. No you have not; keep your eyes open and see what will be happening. Because of the grace coming upon people, driving shall be difficult in Harare.' We thought it was bad enough already. (see: Makandiwa sees gold rush – http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jan4_2013.html#Z11).

- Today we begin a review of Vigil highlights of 2012, covering the first half of the year (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/463-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-january--june-2012>). It shows our concerns have hardly changed: getting action from South Africa and putting pressure on SADC members. Last year we had the easy targets of Mswati III of Swaziland and Sata of Zambia, Mugabe's other praise singer in SADC. We are also helping the Zimbabwean global diaspora's monthly protests and have launched the Zimbabwe Action Forum to plan ways forward to achieve democracy in Zimbabwe. (The second half of the Vigil's 2012 highlights will be included in next week's diary.)

- Thanks to everyone who sent new year greetings. We particularly liked this one from Zimbabwe: 'May ur happiness increase like fuel prices in Ghana. Your troubles fall like Zimbabwean dollar. May your love and joy increase like corruption in Nigeria. May your enemies struggle like they need American visa. Have a blessed prosperous New Year.'

- A Nigerian man came and signed our petitions and said how Africa was full of leaders who clung to power until they were carried away in a coffin.

- 2013 promises a busy time for the Vigil and ROHR. The Central London branch of ROHR is to hold a meeting after the Vigil on Saturday 12th January at 6.30 pm. It was felt that this branch should play a central role in the Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). The first ZAF meeting in 2013 would be held after the Vigil on Saturday 19th

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January at 6.30. ROHR Birmingham is to meet on Saturday 26th

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January and ROHR Coventry branch is to be launched on Saturday 2nd

February. See: Events and Notices for details.

· Vigil management team members Ephraim Tapa, Rose Benton and Fungayi Mabhunu thanked supporters for their committed activism in 2012 and spoke about the need for continued activism in a year when elections were likely. After the shock of Bernard Hukwa's suicide in 2012 they stressed that supporters should share their anxieties with others at the Vigil who might be able to help and that asylum seekers should read the flyer available at the Vigil with information on asylum matters supplied by the Zimbabwe Association.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website – they cannot be downloaded from the slideshow on the front page of the Zimvigil website.

FOR THE RECORD: 51 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

· **Leeds protest against deportation of failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers. Monday 7th**

January from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue:

UKBA, Waterside Court, Leeds LS4 2QB. Contact: Kevin Ngwenya 07717206366.

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- **ROHR Central London Branch meeting. Saturday 12th January from 6.30 pm.** Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. The meeting will take place straight after the Vigil. Directions: The Strand is the same road as the Vigil. From the Vigil it's about a 10 minute walk, in the direction away from Trafalgar Square. The Strand Continental is situated on the south side of the Strand between Somerset House and the turn off onto Waterloo Bridge. The entrance is marked by a big sign high above and a sign for its famous Indian restaurant at street level. It's next to a newsagent. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn. Contact: Fungayi Mabhunu 07746 552 597.

- **Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 12th January from 10 am – 1 pm. Venue: Swazi High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

Please support our Swazi friends. Nearest stations: St James's Park and Victoria.

www.swazilandvigil.co.uk

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 19th January from 6.30 – 9.30 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see entry for ROHR Central London branch above.

- **ROHR Birmingham Branch Meeting.** Saturday 26th January. Further details as they become available.

- **Launch of the ROHR Coventry Branch.** Saturday 2nd February. Further details as they become available.

- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2011** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/th-e-vigil-diary/363-vigil-highlights-2011>

Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2011 Highlights page.

- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organization based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organization 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. Please note that the official website of ROHR Zimbabwe is <http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/>. Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents the views and opinions of ROHR.

- **ZBN News.** The Vigil management team wishes 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). To download the band's theme song Vigil Yedu visit: www.imusicafrica.com and to watch the video check: <http://ourvigil.notlong.com>. To watch other Zim Vigil band protest songs, check: <http://Shungurudza.notlong.com> and <http://blooddiamonds.notlong.com>.

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

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

- **Useful websites:** www.zanupfcrime.com which reports on Zanu PF abuses and www.ipaidabribe.org.zw where people can report corruption in Zimbabwe.