

A delegation took time out from the Vigil to go across London to the Botswana High Commission to deliver a letter of thanks to President Ian Khama for denouncing SADC's endorsement of Zimbabwe's rigged elections. The delegation carried posters reading: 'Zimbabwe Vigil salutes Botswana' and 'Thank You President Khama'.

The letter reads: *'Exiled Zimbabweans at the Zimbabwe Vigil in London were heartened to read that Botswana will refuse to participate in future SADC observer missions because of SADC's acceptance of vote rigging in Zimbabwe's elections last July.'*

We agreed with your comment on Botswana national television that the elections were neither free nor fair and that SADC has breached its own election guidelines by letting Zimbabwe 'off the hook'. Like you we fear that this makes it difficult to expect other SADC countries to abide by the election guidelines.

We note that Botswana has called for an audit of the election results but we fear this is impossible as Zimbabwe's Supreme Court has just upheld a lower court ruling that there was no urgency in hearing the MDC appeal asking the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to release the voters' roll.

The voters' roll is the smoking gun to the election rigging by Mugabe. It was expected to be

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Written by Administrator
Sunday, 02 February 2014 14:36 -

released at least one month before the elections but now, six months after the elections, its release is apparently not urgent! Mugabe has clearly decided to sit on it: he is a chicken who has laid a square egg.

We hope that Botswana will support the Vigil's demand that new elections be held in Zimbabwe that will meet the SADC election guidelines.

All freedom loving people of SADC salute you sir. You are a beacon of hope at a time when our region and continent need someone they can look up to.'

The Vigil is sending a copy of this letter to the current chair of SADC, President Joyce Banda of Malawi. We are taking the opportunity of drawing SADC's attention to the 2014 report of Human Rights Watch. The report says SADC and the AU have 'weakened international efforts to ensure restoration of the rule of law and respect for human rights' in Zimbabwe by endorsing the July elections (see: <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/01/24/sadc-au-slammed-zim-polls/> - SADC, AU slammed over polls).

But in truth the Vigil does not expect much from President Banda who has enlisted the help of the discredited Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to secure her re-election in May . . .

Other points

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There was a lively meeting of the bi-monthly Zimbabwe Action Forum after the Vigil. Among the matters discussed was a campaign to secure the diaspora's right to vote in Zimbabwe's elections. It is reassuring that our meetings are considered of such interest that the CIO bothers to attend.

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The Vigil was pleased at the wide publicity given for our demonstration outside Chatham House against the visit to London by a Zanu PF-backed delegation of Zimbabwean business leaders. It was rated by the Zimbabwe Situation website as their most read story of the week.

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We have put on our campaign page an article by Vigil supporter Wilbert Mukori on Tsvangirai's proposal for talks with Zanu PF (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/563-comment-on-tsvangirais-proposal-for-talks-with-zanu-pf>)

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We also recommend an article by another Vigil supporter Clifford Mashiri on the Chatham House meeting (http://www.zimbabwesiituation.com/news/zimsit_what-planet-is-chatham-house-on/ – What planet is Chatham House on)

and an article on corruption by Eddie Cross, MP (see: <http://nehandaradio.com/2014/01/26/greed-corruption-and-transparency-eddie-cross/> - Greed, Corruption and Transparency).

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

photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

FOR THE RECORD: 41 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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Next Swaziland Vigil. Saturday 8th February from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

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Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting. Saturday 15th February from 12 noon. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see ZAF entry above. 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 sign at street level. It's between a newsagent and Pizza Express. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

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Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 15th February from 12 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA.

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'The Rain that Washes' national tour: Fri 28 Feb – The Cut, New Cut, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 8BY; Fri 4 Apr – Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Leeds LS7 3PD; Sat 5 Apr – Selby Town Hall, York Street, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 4AJ; Sat 24, Sun 25 & Mon 26 May – Brighton Fringe Festival, Malborough Theatre, 4 Princes Street, Brighton BN2 1RD.

Booking details can be found at

www.chickenshed.org.uk/whatson

Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2013 can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/560-vigil-highlights-2013>

. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2013 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.

Zimbabwe Yes We Can Movement holds monthly meetings in London as the political face of ROHR and the Vigil.

Facebook pages:

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

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ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>

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ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights/301811392835>

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Zimbabweans United for Democracy (ZUNDE). For more information about this organisation, check: www.zunde.org .