

## A voice silenced – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 9th August 2014

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 13 August 2014 20:27 - Last Updated Wednesday, 13 August 2014 20:27

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This weekend marks the end of SW Radio Africa which has been broadcasting high quality journalism to Zimbabwe for thirteen years. Coming at a time when the independent press at home is facing a growing financial squeeze, the Vigil believes the loss of this voice is a tragic blow to democracy.

Supporting a peaceful democratic transition is proclaimed as one of the main objectives for Zimbabwe of the UK's Department for International Development, which must have given our country well over a billion dollars of aid during the lifetime of SW Radio Africa. It's a pity DFID didn't see fit to provide money to keep the radio station going as it filled the prescription for this.

The Vigil has often expressed our reservations about DFID's aid to Zimbabwe. It is difficult to argue against propping up Zimbabwe's health and education sectors but there is no doubt that foreign aid helps maintain the Mugabe regime in power, if only by relieving it of the responsibility to itself provide constitutionally mandated services.

Then, of course, there is the crucial question of corruption. DFID argues that it keeps a rigorous eye on how its money is spent, but much of it is channelled through multilateral organisations such as UNICEF. We notice that this week Education Minister Lazarus Dokora was caught out misappropriating a truck supplied by UNICEF . . .

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As Zimbabweans know, corruption is total in Zimbabwe and we believe that all too many NGOs and other agencies have learnt, for their own purposes, to live with it – to the prejudice of their role and the detriment of good governance.

When SADC meets at the Victoria Falls this month to crown Mugabe will the assembled heads of state care that his Deputy Chief Secretary Ray Ndhlukula has ignored a high court order and taken over a farm from its white owner (although he apparently already has a farm)? The fact that it means the end of a rare pedigree herd is incidental.

The Vigil notes that Mugabe is off to Beijing soon to exchange Zimbabwe for a Chinese takeaway. But, however much he gets, it will make little difference to the lives of ordinary people as it will all be stolen. This will be done efficiently: Zanu PF Secretary for Administration Didymus Mutasa says he knows of no other country as well-governed as Zimbabwe.

### **Other points**

- The Vigil is glad to hear that the EU Ambassador to Harare Aldo Dell’Ariccia has ended his posting. No doubt he will feel bereaved being deprived of proximity to his hero Mugabe. We also learn that a new British Ambassador has been appointed to Harare. She is Catriona Laing and worked in DFID so perhaps she will have better access to the money bags.

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Thanks to Joseph Chivayo, Epiphania Phiri, Aivet Phiri, Zodwa Ndlovu and Musa Sibanda who were there at the start to help set up. Thanks also to Helen Rukambiro for looking after the front table.

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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:** 16 signed the register.

### EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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**ROHR Central London Branch general meeting.** Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August from 12 noon. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL.

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**ROHR Southampton Branch general meeting.** Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Age Concern Building, 20 Romsey Road, Eastleigh S050 9AL. Special guest speakers. Contact: Sally Mutseyami (Chairperson) 07448730581, Wellington Mukucha (Vice Chairperson), 07450264733, Sekayi Mwenye (Secretary) 07428570134, Chipo Mtetwa (Organising Secretary) 07403341214.

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**Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 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 30th August at 12 noon. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL.

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**Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September from 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. 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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**ROHR Executive Committee meeting.** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September from 12 noon. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA.

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**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.

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**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.

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

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**The Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF)** meets twice a month after the Vigil to discuss ways to help those back in Zimbabwe to fight oppression and achieve true democracy

### Facebook pages:

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

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

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