

Written by Administrator  
Sunday, 21 December 2014 14:31 -

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Picture link: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/15446482833/sizes/m/>

After learning that Zimbabwean diplomats were going without pay because of lack of funds at the Foreign Ministry the Vigil arranged an emergency Christmas food drop for Zimbabwe House in London. We left a pile of food and other supplies in the Embassy's doorway with the notice:

**Christmas Appeal:**

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Zimbabwean diplomats starving,

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Leave food for them here,

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(Sorry – no GM foods)

We also pushed under the door the following letter:

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*Dear brothers and sisters in the Zimbabwe Embassy*

*We Zimbabwean exiles in the UK who have gathered outside the Embassy every Saturday since 2002 are worried at hearing that Zimbabwean diplomats have apparently not been paid for the past 20 months (see: [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit\\_w\\_zim-diplomats-abroad-yet-to-receive-salaries/](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_w_zim-diplomats-abroad-yet-to-receive-salaries/) – ‘Zim diplomats abroad yet to receive salaries’).*

*It pains us to think of you going hungry at Christmas so we have brought some food and left it in your doorway as you have not answered your bell to us for twelve years. We trust that John the caretaker will give it to the Ambassador so that he can divide it fairly among you.*

*We know it is not much but you will understand that many of us struggle financially as we are called on to send money home to our starving families from the little we earn as, in your words, ‘bottom wipers’ in the UK.*

*We are comforted, however, that you at least have the Embassy to sleep in and do not have to make do with cardboard boxes to keep out the cold, which is the lot of some Zimbabweans here.*

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*Be assured that when Zimbabwe has received the \$50 billion or so it has claimed for damages caused by illegal sanctions, the government of his Senile Excellency will once again be able to pay your salaries.*

*Until then, we fear, there is scant hope so we suggest you apply for assistance from your nearest benefits office which we trust will smile at your request.*

*The Vigil urges you not to pursue the way of the Gambian High Commission which has been turned into a tax-free tobaccoist and has seen four of its diplomats jailed here (see: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2868771/Gambian-diplomats-jailed-running-tax-free-tobaccoist-Kensington-embassy-cheated-British-taxpayers-5million.html>).*

*Best wishes for Christmas and may 2015 bring the 2.2 million jobs promised for last year.*

We had thought of the food drop as primarily a symbolic gesture to show up the failures of the Mugabe regime, with people supplying unwanted food from their own resources. But one supporter went to the supermarket to buy food specially and another brought sanitary towels and condoms. In addition, two passers-by went and bought extra food.

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This is our 13<sup>th</sup> Christmas in the cold outside the Embassy and, despite the Herald proclaiming ‘there is hope the country will soon claim its rightful position as an economic giant in the region’, all we see is massive delusion (see: Economists hail Congress – <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-economists-hail-congress-the-herald/>).

Amid the charade of the Chinamasa budget and the Zanu PF Congress, we hear of hunger reaching further even in the towns (see: Starvation strikes Zim’s urban dwellers – <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-starvation-strikes-zims-urban-dwellers/>).

“The current inability of the economy to address people’s basic needs is leading to hunger in most urban households, with almost none of urban residents affording three meals a day nowadays,” said Philip Bohwasi, chairperson of the Council of Social Workers.

The recent budget devoted more than 80% of government revenue to Civil Service pay but every ministry, except that maintaining the President, complained they were not getting nearly enough money. The Mugabes however, gobble up money. We learn that the amount spent on them so far this year is 75 times more that the capital spending on every school in Zimbabwe ( <http://www.theafricareport.com/Southern-Africa/zimbabwes-president-mugabes-holiday-spending-under-the-spotlight.html>

— [Zimbabwe's president Mugabe's holiday spending under the spotlight](http://www.theafricareport.com/Southern-Africa/zimbabwes-president-mugabes-holiday-spending-under-the-spotlight.html)).

### Other points

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As we mentioned last week, the Vigil is supporting a protest by supporters of the Occupy Africa Unity Square Group. Details of their protest have been uploaded onto our campaigns page (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/636-occupy-unity-square-protest-zimbabwe-embassy-london-saturday-17th-january-2015-from-2-5-pm> )

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On the last Saturday before Christmas we wish all our friends a happy Christmas though for some it is tinged with sadness – Epiphania Phiri said it was the 14<sup>th</sup> Christmas she had spent without her children. Thanks to Joseph Chivayo, Roda Majoni, Paul Fusire and Fungayi Mabhunu who arrived early to help set up and to Rose Maponga for the box of chocolates.

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:** 20 signed the register.

## **EVENTS AND NOTICES:**

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**Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland

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High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

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**Demonstration in support of Africa Unity Square protester Itai Dzamara.** Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January. Further details:

<http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/636-occupy-unity-square-protest-zimbabwe-embassy-london-saturday-17th-january-2015-from-2-5-pm>

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**Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January 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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**Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF)** meets regularly after the Vigil to discuss ways to help those back in Zimbabwe to fight oppression and achieve true democracy.

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**Zimbabwe meeting in Parliament.** Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January from 3.30 – 6 pm. Venue: House of Commons. For information contact: Nicodimus Muganhu – 07877386792, Erick Eluwasi – 07532021348, Charles Ndlovu – 07413879590, Sally Mutseyami – 07448730581, Thandiwe Gwarumba - 07503512308

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**Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting.** Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 12 noon. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL.

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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 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 us.

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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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**Facebook pages:**

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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.co/pages/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights/301811392835>

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SW Radio Africa's website and sound archive is being hosted on [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org). Go to their

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site and type in swradioafrica which will link you to snapshots of their site over the years and at the top of that page a link to their website where, under podcasts, you will find the audio.