

The newish American Ambassador to Harare, Peter Harry Thomas Jnr, has quickly got the hang of Mugabe, speaking this week of his 'wicked sense of humour'. Commenting on Mugabe's 'invisible sanctions' mantra, Mr Thomas showed he had come to realise that the President is a joker (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/04/23/us-ambassador-denies-targeted-sanctions-hurting-ordinary-citizens/>).

Hans Christian Anderson's 'The Emperor's New Clothes' is a story about a vain emperor who is tricked into wearing what he is told are clothes that are invisible to those who are stupid. Everyone raves about his clothes until a child cries out 'he isn't wearing anything at all'.

It often takes an outsider to say that the emperor has no clothes. People were merely puzzled as Mugabe bowed to a picture of himself at his Independence Speechday. They pretended not to see he was exposing himself (see: <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-28808-WATCH+Mugabe+bows+to+own+portrait/news.aspx>).

Zanu PF supporters didn't dare see the humour when Mugabe told them that the economy was on a rebound, with firms reopening for business and creating jobs. They didn't even laugh when he said: 'My government is determined to translate political independence into meaningfulness by attending to the socio-economic needs of our people'.

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Even claims that bankrupt parastatals such as Air Zimbabwe and National Railways of Zimbabwe had come out of the woods, failed to draw a smile, let alone his comment that 'progress has been made in the development of social infrastructure in health, education and housing'. Nobody laughed when he promised to improve the well-being of government workers so that they can earn salaries above the poverty datum line. Perhaps they did not get the 'wicked' joke that he has promised the International Monetary Fund to halve the government wage bill this year.

There was not even a giggle when he concluded 'one of the greatest tributes we can pay to Zimbabwe is to shun corruption, regionalism and nepotism' (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-economy-on-rebound-mugabe-newsday-zimbabwe/>).

Mind you many people also didn't get the joke when he promptly flew off to the United States for the ceremonial signing of the UN climate change agreement and droned on as usual about sanctions when signatories – mainly lower-ranking officials – were supposed to keep their remarks to 40 seconds.

But those at the UN meeting realized that Mugabe had not travelled all the way to New York for a mere 40 seconds . . . he and his cronies no doubt had serious shopping to do for some more new clothes.

Other points

- Chris Foxon, the producer of a play about Zimbabwe 'After Independence' is visiting the Vigil on 30th April between 4 and 5 pm to tell us about the play which opens in London next month. For details see 'Events and Notices'.
- Thanks to those who arrived early to help set up: Alfredy Mukuvare, Cathrine Musa, Chipo Parirenyatwa, Eletha Mpofo, Eva Sanyahokwe, Fungayi Mabhunu, Michael Sirewu, Phillip Mahlahla, Portiah Tobaiwa, Roseline Mukucha and Traiphine Maguwu. Thanks to Roseline, Cathrine, Portiah and Traiphine for looking after the front table and to Chipo for her usual efficient selling of wristbands and raffle tickets for the ROHR Birmingham ball. Thanks also to the team putting up the high banners: Phillip, Michael and Alfredy.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

FOR THE RECORD: 31 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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- **ROHR Birmingham Branch Independence Ball.** Saturday 30th April from 3 pm till late. Venue: Centrala, 4 Minerva Works, 158 Fazeley Street, Birmingham B5 5RT. African cuisine, £20 a head, children free. For more information, contact: Gladys Muduve 07956 430115, JaneMary Mapfumo 07412 310429 and Tecla Bandawe 07450507650.

- **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.

- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 30th April from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **Monthly Itai Dzamara protest** Saturday 7th May from 2 – 6 pm outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London. The protest is to mark fourteen months since Dzamara's abduction by intelligence agents.

- **ROHR National Executive meeting.** Saturday 7th May from 11 am to 1.30 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see below.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 7th May 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 an optician. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

- **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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- **Nottingham demonstration against farm looting Zimbabwean doctor.** Friday 13th May from 12 noon – 3 pm. Venue: outside The Willows Medical Centre, Church Street, Carlton, Nottingham NG4 1RJ. The Vigil and ROHR are continuing the campaign to have Dr Nyatsuro's British citizenship revoked. More information to follow.

- **ROHR Reading branch community outreach and general meeting.** Saturday 21st May 2016. Community outreach from 11.45 am – 1.30 pm: Venue: Broad Street. Awareness campaign on 'Mugabe must go'. General meeting from 2,30 – 5 pm:

Venue: RISC 35-39 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4PS. For further enquiries contact: Nicodimus Muganhu 07877386792, Charles Mararirakwenda 07964731721, Joshua Kahari 07877246251, Shylette Chipangura 07828929806, Deborah Harry 07578894896, Sihle Sibanda 07985712749.

- **Play: 'After Independence'.** 4th – 28th May at the Arcola Theatre, 24 Ashwin Street, London E8 3DL. The play is by May
Sumbwanyambe and tackles the issues of independence and government in Zimbabwe. More information is available here:
<http://www.arcolatheatre.com/event/after-independence/2016-05-04/>

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

- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2015** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/746-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2015>
. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2015 Highlights page.

- **Facebook pages:**

Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwевigil>

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

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