

1st May – May Day – is celebrated around the world to honour workers. Indeed, Zimbabwe calls it Workers' Day. But the MDC says it should now be rebranded Vendors' Day instead.

MDC spokesman Obert Gutu says there is nothing to celebrate given the depressing state of the economy. Zanu PF, he pointed out, had failed to create the 2.2 million jobs it promised at the 2013 elections. Instead it had created 2 million 'vendors and loafers'.

An equally gloomy view came from People's Democratic Party's spokesman Jacob Mafume: 'The nation is facing insurmountable challenges underlined by a decaying economy, high unemployment and total collapse of service delivery, a ravaging drought and general hopelessness among the generality of the people,' he said. 'About 98% of youths are in the informal sector, 60% of the industries which we had operating in 2010 have shut down, 83% of our people live on less than \$1 a day and our women still die while giving birth because our hospitals lack basic facilities and medicines.' (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/04/29/workers-day-reduced-vendors-day/>).

Even people in work are suffering from the economic meltdown as banks struggle to find cash. As Radio Voice of the People puts it 'it's déjà vu again' with many workers reliving the nightmare of 2008 when banks imposed daily cash withdrawal limits (see: <http://www.radiovop.com/index.php/national-news/13676-only-hard-decisions-can-save-zimbabwe-from-cash-crisis.html>).

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 01 May 2016 13:50 -

Back then the financial collapse led of course to the South African-brokered coalition government which pulled the country back from the abyss but saved Mugabe. The Vigil fears that this time Britain and the international community will come to the rescue of Mugabe with mad new lending to a totally corrupt and self-serving regime which will steal every cent of it with no prospect at all of repayment or the money being used to benefit the people at large.

The announcement this week of a conference to be held in London in July to discuss a proposed deal between Mugabe and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank confirms the Vigil's suspicions that once again the UK has misread the situation in Zimbabwe. You could say it is déjà vu yet again.

Former finance minister Tendai Biti's People's Democratic Party has accused the British Ambassador in Harare, Catriona Laing, of lobbying the US State Department to support Mugabe's bid for renewed IMF funding, warning her that appeasing Zanu PF is 'tantamount to riding a leopard (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-bitis-pdp-blasts-pro-zanu-pf-brit-envoy/>).

What does Ms Laing think that Mugabe's gang will do with the money apart from paying the Israeli Nikuv company to rig the next elections as usual? Wouldn't it be better to wait until Zanu PF actually implements the new constitution and better still after free and fair elections before they give Zimbabwe more money. As it looks at the moment there are strong indications that Zanu PF will again resort to violence in the run up to the elections in 2018 (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-zanu-pf-threatens-bloody-2018-polls-newsday-zimbabwe/>).

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The Vigil notes that the London conference is to be attended by monstrous minister Mpfu, who is suspiciously wealthy. He will no doubt be addressing the meeting about ethics. We see that one of the people involved is Knox Chitiyo of the London think tank Chatham House. The Vigil doesn't think of him as an objective academic but we accept he has 'inside' knowledge of Zanu PF.

The Vigil will be waiting for them outside the venue. With tickets priced from £425 to £625 (if you want to kiss Mpfu) we will have to be outsiders.

Other points

- It was good to have Chris Foxon of Papatango Theatre Company with us. He is the producer of the Zimbabwean based play 'After Independence' by May Sumbwanyambe. He plans to come to our forum after the Vigil next Saturday 7th May to discuss a collaborative event with Vigil supporters after a performance of the play. The play runs from 4

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– 28

th

May at the Arcola Theatre in Dalston. For more information see 'Events and Notices'.

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up: Nancy Makurira, Simon Mambongo, Roseline Mukucha, Alfredy Mukuvare, Cathrine Musa, Newman Richard, Jennipher Sabe, Eva Sanyahokwe and Michael Sirewu. Thanks to Roseline and Cathrine for looking after the front table and Simon, Alfredy, Newman and Michael for putting up the high banners.

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: 32 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

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- **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.

- **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. Tickets are available from the Box Office: 020 7503 1646 or online from:
<http://www.arcolatheatre.com/event/after-independence/2016-05-04/>

- **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.
Contacts for the Nottingham protest: Chamunorwa Chisuko 07832927609
, Enniah Dube 07403439707, Sally Mutseyami 07448730581, Fungayi Mabhunu 07907089899, Rose Benton 07970996003.

- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 14th May from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 21st May 2016 from 12 noon – 2 pm. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL. Contact: Fungayi Mabhunu 07907089899, Mavis Chisvo 07944612944.

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· **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, Shyllette Chipangura 07828929806, Deborah Harry 07578894896, Sihle Sibanda 07985712749.

· **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>

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

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