

Overcoming fear – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 13th May 2017

Written by Administrator

Monday, 15 May 2017 10:44 - Last Updated Monday, 15 May 2017 10:44

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/33827923133/sizes/m/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/34637827325/sizes/m/>

Supporters of Restoration of Human Rights gathered at the Vigil to give a send-off to ROHR activist Siphon Ndlovu who will be cycling through England for seven days to raise funds for the Zimbabwe Peace Actors' Platform (ZimPAP). Siphon will cover 324 miles from Nottingham to London, calling at Leicester, Birmingham, Oxford, Southampton, Reading and Slough.

ZimPAP was formed by ROHR International together with 18 other Zimbabwean civil society organisations, including Heal Zimbabwe, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and Amnesty International. Its aim is peace-building and the prevention of violence around next year's elections.

ROHR President Ephraim Tapa was enthusiastic about the initiative, which he said would curb voter manipulation by encouraging co-operation across the political divide to overcome fear.

During the week Ephraim and others from the Vigil and ROHR had a meeting in London with visiting Senator Michael Carter of MDC T, which discussed ways of reassuring rural voters that they could safely support the party of their choice.

Senator Carter was impressed by the success of the ZimPAP programme in Mashonaland East and suggested that people from the urban areas should be sent to cover all rural polling stations, before, during and after the voting to counter intimidation.

Senator Carter, his wife Judy, as well as two sons and a grandson, joined us at the Vigil and were given a warm welcome, especially when they spoke Shona and joined in the singing and dancing.

Senator Carter was given a Vigil cap. He encouraged us to continue our work and said, though we had all been naïve about how difficult change was going to be, we should be confident that it

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would come. The problem was the fear in the rural areas which needed to be overcome. Judy Carter went on to say how important the diaspora had been and said 'Don't give up. You have kept your relatives alive.'

We all wished Siphon well as he set off on his bike to catch his train to Nottingham. To sponsor Siphon please visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/siphon-ndlovu> and to follow his journey check the ROHR facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

Other points

- The Vigil was not surprised that Zanu PF wants to abolish dual citizenship which has been provided for in the vaunted 'new' constitution of 2013. Registrar-General Tobaiwa Mudede said dual citizenship posed 'security challenges' and made it clear the government regards the constitution as a pick-and-choose document (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-govt-to-abolish-dual-citizenship/>).

- Japanese expert on Zimbabwe, Ken Yamamoto, says that if Zimbabwe had proper leaders it could have been the Singapore or South Korea of Africa by now with a \$100 billion economy. GDP this year is estimated at below \$15 billion (see: <http://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-110217.html>).

- Former Finance Minister and presidential candidate Simba Makoni dismissed Mugabe's recent denial that Zimbabwe is a fragile state. Makoni said the economy was collapsing: 'Government can't pay its workers. Hospitals and schools are sustained by donors. We have the highest ratio of graduate informal traders in the world,' Makoni tweeted. 'Up to one third of the population are economic refugees. It is estimated that approximately three million Zimbabweans are living in South Africa, many of them illegally. Public infrastructure is decrepit and dysfunctional. National roads are pot-holed. For nearly 20 years, people who fed themselves before have survived on food aid. The economy shrank to 40 per cent of its size in 10 years,' he said (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-mugabe-also-fearful-makoni/>).

- Thanks to those who arrived early to help set up: Vimbayi Chambara, Muchineripi Chigwedere, Mavis Chisvo, Isabell Gwatidzo, Josephine Jombe, Fungayi Mabhunhu, Thomas Machingauta, Alice Majola, Netsayi Makarichi, Heather Makawa, Theodora Mandishaya, Nyarai Masango, Rachel Mudzimba, Roseline Mukucha, Alfredy Mukuvare, Charles Mupawose, Mduduzi Ndlovu, Tsitsi Ngoro, Casper Nyamakura, Tawanda Rusape, Rumbidzayi Sambana and Pearl Shambare. Thanks to Roseline, Mavis and Cathrine Musa for looking after the front table, to Rumbidzayi, Sihle Sibanda, Esther Munyira, Isaac Chawasarira, Flemming Diza and

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Rosemary Maponga for handing out flyers and selling wristbands and to Alfredy, Vimbayi, Casper, Charles and Mduduzi for putting up the banners.

- Thanks to those who contributed to our fundraising efforts for the ZimPAP project: to Daizy Fabian, Etines Kapiya and Rosemary Maponga making, bringing and serving food, to Margaret Munenge for providing bottles of water and to Isabell for collecting for Siphos bike ride.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website. The facebook page for our sister organisation Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR) (<https://www.facebook.com/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights-301811392835>) has been hijacked by destructive elements from a group calling itself ZHRO. Please be advised that any postings on this page are not posted by ROHR.

FOR THE RECORD: 50 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR Southampton branch meeting.** Wednesday 17th May from 3 – 5 pm. Venue Frog and Parrot Pub, 166 Above Bar Street, Southampton SO14 7DU. Ahead of the meeting at 2 pm, the branch will be welcoming Siphos bike ride into Southampton in front of the Guildhall, West Marland Road, Southampton SO14 7LP. Contact: Ben Semwayo (Chair) 07401611932, Reuben Waretza (Publicity and Advocacy) 07946607617 and Cecil Shumba (Secretary) 07575954654.

- **ROHR Reading branch outreach and general meeting.** Saturday 20th May. Community outreach from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm: Venue: Broad Street, Reading. Awareness campaign on deteriorating human rights in Zimbabwe. General meeting from 2 – 5 pm: Venue: The RISC 35-39 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4PS. Contact: Sihle Sibanda 07985712749 (Deputy Chair), Alice Shimika 07462067504 (Secretary), Charles Mararirakwenda 07964731721 (Organising Secretary).

- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organisation based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organisation 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.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 20th May from 6.30 pm. Venue: The Royal

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Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX. We will move to the RFH at the end of the Vigil at 6 pm.

- **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.

- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 27th May from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

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

- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2016** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/843-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2016>

. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2016 Highlights page.

- **Facebook pages:** Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwevigil> ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/> ZAF:

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