

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/37581303460/sizes/m/>

The little-known Presidential Travel Committee (PTC) includes some of the most creative minds in Zanu PF. Apart from top presidential aides, its members include senior officials from the Reserve Bank and the Finance, Health, Foreign and Psychomotor ministries, as well, of course, as the Central Intelligence Organisation.

The committee is in almost permanent session, alert to be convened at a moment's notice when plans have to be changed suddenly. Then it's a matter of brainstorming all night. One source told the Vigil: 'Sometimes we don't know from minute to minute where we are going or how we are to get there. But thankfully money is no problem.'

Such a moment occurred last week when Mugabe decided against going to the Russian city of Sochi for a youth meeting at which he was to be honoured for 'fighting imperialism'. It was not because he is 93 years old that dissuaded him from going to the youth festival. It was because he discovered no one else would be there except kids. Grace could go instead.

It just shows how slickly the PTC operates that it was immediately able to discover from the UN website that an equally obscure meeting was being held at the same time – this one in South America, where there was every likelihood of some grownups being present.

The PTC certainly struck gold – even if only briefly. The occasion was a World Health Organisation conference in Montevideo, capital of Uruguay (population 3.5 million) called to discuss non-communicable diseases. Official Uruguayan sources said 22 health ministers were to be there, along with officials from other countries (see: <http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=19553&SEO=world-health-conference-in-uruguay-to-be-attended-by-94-countries>).

It was enough for Mugabe to fly there with 80 or so flunkies in Air Zimbabwe's remaining Boeing 767.

Mugabe's brief success – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 21st October 2017

Written by Administrator

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Overawed to have an actual president at the meeting to shake hands with host president Tabaré Vázquez, the new WHO boss, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who was apparently installed to reform the organisation, had the inspired idea of making Mugabe an honorary regional health ambassador.

Corks popped among the PTC members, conveniently all there on the trip. The honorary post is a non-event but the dopey WHO boss, who seems to be unaware of what is going on in Zimbabwe, unfortunately made laudatory comments on health provision in Zimbabwe – currently reliant on donor-funding. The remarks were immediately derided by people around the world who knew that Zimbabwe's hospitals are broke and lack medicines.

With one of the three Air Zimbabwe Boeings out of commission the two Boeings needed to take the delegations to Russia and Uruguay seem to have meant that a third aircraft had to be chartered to take Grace Mugabe to China where, for unknown reasons, she wanted to stop over on her way to Sochi (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2017/10/mugabe-grace-bleed-zimbabwe-dry/>).

Poor bankrupt Air Zimbabwe, and poor bankrupt Zimbabwe, where Mugabe's air travel expenses far exceed all expenditure on health care, And poor WHO, which immediately faced threats from irate members to withhold their contributions.

The only bright spot for the WHO is that Grace didn't go with her husband to Uruguay. Otherwise she might have been made honorary WHO ambassador for young female victims of violence by extension cords . . .

Other points

- Sky News was at the Vigil to film Mugabe (played by Fungayi Mabhunu in our mask) opening a bottle of champagne to celebrate his brief appointment. They interviewed Fungayi and Daizy Fabian about their reaction to the appointment. Another of our activists Salani Mutseyami was interviewed for an article in the Daily Telegraph (see: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/20/zimbabwean-activists-condemn-absurdworld-health-organization/>).

- We were saddened to hear that our friend and fellow activist Yvonne Bonde had passed away. Thanks to Isabell Gwatidzo who made a collection for her. We are in contact with

Yvonne's family about how the money should be used.

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up: Abigail Chidavayenzi, Tawanda Chitate, Daizy Fabian, Isabell Gwatidzo, Josephine Jombe, Jonathan Kariwo, Jane Katsonga, Sikhanyisiwe Kaziboni, Fungayi Mabhunu, Junior Madzimore, Alice Majola, Chido Makawa, Heather Makawa Chitate, David Makuyana, Theodora Mandishaya, Patricia Masamba, Nyarai Masvosva, Gladys Meck, Margaret Munenge, Patience Muyeye, Alberta Njenje, Tsitsi Nyirongo, Maxmus Savanhu and Sekai Seremwe. Thanks to Josephine, Patience, Patricia Masamba and Rumbidzayi Sambana for looking after the front table and to Daizy, Maxmus, Jonathan, Fungayi and Gladys for putting up the banners.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/> . 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: 52 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 28th October from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **ROHR National Executive meeting.** Saturday 4th November from 11 am. Venue: The Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 18th November from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX. Contact: Daisy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Siphon Ndlovu 07400566013.

- **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.

- **The Vigil's book 'Zimbabwe Emergency'** is based on our weekly diaries. It records how events in Zimbabwe have unfolded over the past 15 years as seen by the diaspora in the UK. It

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chronicles the economic disintegration, violence, growing oppression and political manoeuvring – and the tragic human cost involved. It is available at the Vigil for £10. All proceeds will go to the Vigil and our sister organisation the Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe's work in Zimbabwe. The book is also available on Amazon.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum** meets regularly after the Vigil to discuss ways to help those back in Zimbabwe to fight oppression and achieve true democracy.

- **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>