

## Vigil mourns Pachedu – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 20th January 2018

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 21 January 2018 15:11 - Last Updated Sunday, 21 January 2018 15:11

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/38902790575/sizes/m/>

The Vigil was in mourning for Roy Bennett who encouraged us to mount our public protest outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London in 2002 and who remained a constant support in the many years since then.

Roy and his brave wife Heather, who died in a helicopter crash in the United States on Wednesday, were true heroes in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. A farmer elected to parliament for the new MDC in 2000, he was an eloquent opponent of the Mugabe regime, partly because he was a fluent Shona speaker with devoted local support for a democratic, non-racial future.

Today we particularly remembered the time that he and Heather put on our t-shirts and joined in the singing and dancing at the Vigil. In those darkest of times he said the Vigil was 'a fire in Mugabe's bum'. He was speaking shortly after his release from an horrendous spell in prison. But whatever happened to him he retained a deep love of Zimbabwe and faith in the future of Zimbabweans.

In recent years he had been farming in Zambia but, with the overthrow of Mugabe, we had hopes he would return to Zimbabwe and help turn around farming in the country, given President Mnangagwa's promise of a new beginning and free, fair and credible elections.

We will all miss his advice in this time of change. Mnangagwa has rejected Mugabe's counter-productive populist policies such as indigenization, and says he will allow Western observers for the elections. But the Vigil is not persuaded by his appeal to 'let bygones be bygones'. If the nation is to be healed there must be a full truth and reconciliation process, however painful this may be.

Roy expressed his joy at the ousting of Mugabe in an interview with CNN (See: <http://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2017/11/21/intv-amanpour-roy-bennett-zimbabwe.cnn>). He said never before had he been so proud to be a Zimbabwean. He added that Mnangagwa and Chiwenga were Mugabe's accomplices and were hated by the people. They must apologise

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and introduce reforms. The genie had been let out of the bottle and never again would there be a dictatorship in Zimbabwe.

But there were few signs of repentance in a lengthy interview Mnangagwa gave this week to the London Financial Times (see: <http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/opinion/transcript-financial-times-interview-mnangagwa/> ).

### Other points

- Three ROHR branches had meetings / outreach today: Central London, Leicester and Reading. For photos of the Central London branch meeting check: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/albums/72157668701180979> and for photos of Leicester's outreach by Enniah Dube and Yvonne Makombe check: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/albums/72157664903892178>

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up and stayed till the end of the Vigil to help pack up: Daizy Fabian, Isabell Gwatidzo, Jonathan Kariwo, Alice Majola, Chido Makawa, Heather Makawa Chitate, Theodora Mandishaya, Rosemary Maponga, Patricia Masamba, Margaret Munenge, Esther Munyira, Siphon Ndlovu, Morella Nhau and Maxmus Savanhu. Thanks also to Rosemary and Margaret for looking after the front table, to Jonathan, Siphon, Maxmus, Tawanda Chitate, David Makuyana and Isabell for putting up the banners and tarpaulin and to Heather for handing out flyers and taking extra photos.

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:** 27 signed the register.

**EVENTS AND NOTICES:**

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February 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 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 from 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.

- **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>