

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 11 February 2018 16:07 -

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The Vigil has launched a new petition calling on President Mnangagwa's government to account properly for Gukurahundi. The petition reads: *Zimbabwe has reportedly been encouraged by the UK Government to apply to rejoin the Commonwealth. Zimbabweans in exile in the UK, and supporters, urge the UK not to support readmission until the ruling Zanu PF satisfactorily addresses the genocide of some 20000 Ndebeles in the 1980s. A simple apology would be a start but we believe an independent truth and reconciliation process offers the best hope of healing the still bleeding wounds.*

The Vigil believes the steps taken so far by the Zimbabwean government will not adequately address the genocide, during which children were made to watch their parents being burnt alive in their homes, their remains thrown down abandoned mineshafts. The truth needs to be made public and those involved must express contrition, with reparations made to those wronged.

The new petition, which will also be posted online, joins another one we are running that calls on the British government to withhold any support for the new regime until there are free and fair internationally monitored elections. The petition to UK Africa Minister Harriett Baldwin reads: *Zimbabwean exiles and supporters welcome your visit to Zimbabwe and believe the UK has much to contribute to the country.*

The euphoria over the removal of the Mugabes has given way to realisation that nothing else has changed. The new leader Emmerson Mnangagwa spoke of democracy but also made clear his overriding allegiance to Zanu PF, which has repeatedly shown it does not believe in democracy.

We urge you to insist on free and fair elections in Zimbabwe to determine the will of the people

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before the UK offers support to Mnangagwa. In particular, we stress the importance of the following:

New voters' roll and an independent election commission, Diaspora vote, Participation of Western election observers, Opposition access to state radio and television, Police reform and the disbanding of the Central Intelligence Organisation.

The British government appears to be enthusiastically embracing Mnangagwa's government but reports suggest that other European Union countries are taking a more cautious approach, insisting on firm evidence that Zimbabwe is on the road to reform (see: <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2018/02/09/britain-eu-divided-zim-funding/>).

The Vigil believes that Zimbabwe will be helped on this road by the elevation of Cyril Ramaphosa to the South African Presidency as soon as disgraced President Zuma can be dragged out of office. Reports quote a close ally of Ramaphosa as describing Zuma as a 'monster' who 'does not care about his country, not even its people' (see: <https://city-press.news24.com/News/no-immunity-for-zuma-the-monster-but-ramaphosa-needs-to-avoid-bloodshed-20180208>).

Other points

- The South African High Court has begun hearing a case against President Zuma for his role in closing down the SADC Tribunal which dealt with human rights. Zimbabwean human rights campaigner Ben Freeth, who had successfully taken Mugabe to the Tribunal over farm seizures, reports that the hearing went well and a judgment is expected in the next three weeks (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/918-newsletter-from-the-mike-campbellc-foundation-sadc-tribunal-court-hearing-6-february-2018>).

Mnangagwa must be honest about genocide – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 10th February 2018

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- The Vigil would like to pay tribute to our friend Father Ted Rogers who died recently at the age of 93. The Times newspaper in the UK has carried an obituary which recalls him saying when he retired to England: 'After 51 years in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe I have left with three pairs of trousers, five shirts, two pairs of shoes, a four-year-old laptop and a camera,' he said. 'I am not just resigned, but peaceful and happy.' We were always happy when he joined us at the Vigil (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/919-obituary-father-ted-rogers>)

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up and stayed to the end to pack up: Abigail Chidavayenzi, Viola Chihota, Edward Ndlovu, Soneni Sibanda, Peter Sidindi, Namatirai Sithole and Ephraim Tapa. Special thanks to Edward, Peter and Ephraim for putting up the tarpaulin at the start of yet another wet, cold Vigil. Thanks also to Abigail and Soneni for taking care of the front table and to Namatirai, Faith Ndhlovu and Debra Ncube for handing out flyers.

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: 18 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 17th 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

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- **ROHR general members' meeting.** Saturday 3rd March from 11 am – 1.45 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall. Agenda: adoption of the ROHR 2018 programme of action and completion of appointments to the ROHR National Executive Committee.

- **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.

- **Mike Campbell Foundation 'Zimbabwe after Mugabe'.** Tuesday 6th March at 6.30 pm for 7 – 9 pm. Venue: the Princess Anne Theatre, 195 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LN. The event is free and tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis, email: claire@mikecampbellfoundation.com

- **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/zimbabwевigil>

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

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