

The plight of refugees has become a pressing issue around the world, compounded by a growing flow of migrants seeking a better life in developed countries.

The British weekly political journal The Spectator today came out with a leading article addressing the matter head on (<https://www.spectator.co.uk/2018/06/turning-back-boats-may-be-the-most-humane-response-to-the-migrant-crisis/>). The article criticizes President Trump's (now abandoned) policy of separating migrant children from their families but says the EU's policy towards migrants is ultimately far crueller: 'That is to tempt migrants into unseaworthy boats to cross the Mediterranean.'

The article notes that, according to the International Organisation for Migration, more than 3,000 people died last year attempting to reach European countries from North Africa by sea. It observes: 'Migrants are taking the risks because, in the vast majority of cases, their journeys are successful — and if they land, they probably get to stay.'

Overwhelmed by the estimated 700,000 people who have landed on their shores over the past few years, Italians have now elected a right wing government which recently refused to accept a charity-run ship carrying 630 migrants fished out of the sea off the Libyan coast after they had been abandoned by people traffickers.

More than three years ago, horrified by the deaths of some 700 migrants from Africa, drowned when their rickety boat capsized in the Mediterranean, the Vigil came up with a possible solution. As we put it: 'creating a UN protection zone, perhaps in north Africa, where rescued migrants could receive food and medical attention, and indeed schooling, while their asylum claims for Europe could be processed.' (See: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/683-let-them-drown-zimbabwe-vigil-diary-18th-april-2015>).

Our suggestion was picked up by the German news agency and now, thousands of deaths later, the EU has begun thinking along the same lines. If the asylum system agreed internationally is to survive it must be separated from the question of economic migration.

Other points

- As we gathered for the Vigil, reports began coming in on our phones of an apparent attack on President Mnangagwa. The reports said an explosive device was thrown towards him when he ended a rally at White City Stadium in Bulawayo. He was not hurt but about eight people were said to have been injured including Vice-Presidents Mohadi and Chiwenga. What'sApp was soon full of speculation.

- Thanks to those who arrived early to set up by putting up the banners and posters: Heath Jiri, Josephine Jombe, Jonathan Kariwo, Nyarai Masvosva, Bianca Mpawaenda, Getrude Mudede, Faith Ndhlovu, Ulibile Nkwate and Pearl Shambare. Thanks to Josephine, Bianca and Pearl for looking after the front table and to Faith, Heath, Ulibile and Isaac Chawasarira for handing out flyers.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

FOR THE RECORD: 18 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 21st July from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, Contact: Daizy 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.

Refugee lives matter – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 23rd June 2018

Written by Administrator

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- **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>