

Panic in the air – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 21st July 2018

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 22 July 2018 18:29 - Last Updated Sunday, 22 July 2018 18:29

While the MDC announces a round-the-clock vigil for electoral reforms outside the offices of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the main concern of Zimbabweans in the UK seems to be not the looming election but their fear of being deported from Britain.

Some 70 Zimbabweans gathered at Downing Street on Wednesday to petition the Prime Minister not to send them back to Zimbabwe. This came after our Vigil last Saturday drew only a handful of people in its protest against electoral irregularities – a far cry from the 1,000+ people who joined us outside the Embassy to celebrate the ousting of Mugabe last November.

Some Zimbabweans here are paranoid about having to return to Zimbabwe, for economic reasons or fear of the unknown. We don't expect this to change much even if Nelson Chamisa wins the election. This seems theoretically possible given the latest Afrobarometer poll but ignores the likelihood of Zanu PF cheating its way back to power. Most people in the diaspora of course support Chamisa – but they are also financially supporting families back home and are aware of the parlous state of the economy, with the US dollar now impossible to get from banks and trading at a vast premium to the ersatz bond equivalent.

Zimbabwe may be, as President Mnangagwa proclaimed, 'open for business' but there is little confidence among the diaspora that this amounts to anything in terms of jobs, at least in the short term, given the endemic corruption.

The downside of last November's coup dawned slowly on the diaspora: now monster Mugabe has gone perhaps so has the main reason for their being given asylum. Unsubstantiated rumours now abound that the Home Office is working with the Zimbabwe Embassy to facilitate their return home. There is panic in the air.

Other points

- The Zimbabwe Vigil will be marking Zimbabwe's election day with a mock poll. We will be outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London from early to late on Monday 30th July. Please come and join us to cast your vote.

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up: Brian Tawanda Chitate, Jonathan Kariwo, Marian Machekanyanga, Heather Makawa, Michelle Makoni, Patricia Masamba, Gladys

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Mpanda, Pearl Shambare, Bigboy Sibanda and Ephraim Tapa. Thanks also to Michelle, Pearl, Heather and Patricia for looking after the front table, to Jonathan, Ephraim, Tawanda, Heather and Marian for putting up the banners and tarpaulin and to Heather, Chido Makawa and Tawanda 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: 14 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Zimbabwe Vigil's Mock Election.** Monday 30th July from early to late outside the Embassy.

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 18th August 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.

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

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

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