

Vigil Diary 01-11-08

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 01 November 2008 00:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 09 November 2008 22:34

A soaking Vigil saw us crowded under the tarpaulin all afternoon, singing and dancing to keep warm. Despite the rain, people still stopped to sign our petitions, though with the end of British Summer Time, it was dark well before the Vigil ended.

Vigil supporters were shocked by the murder of Osborne Kachuru of our partner organisation Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR). He was beaten to death at ZANU PF's offices in Fourth Street, Harare, after a peaceful demonstration during the SADC talks on Monday. We are told that the Zanu PF political commissar Eliot Manyika was responsible and the Vigil swears to leave no stone unturned to make sure he eventually faces justice.

As we feared (see last diary) the SADC meeting yielded nothing. The deceitful SADC communiqué falsely claimed that the only point of dispute in the power-sharing talks was who would hold the Home Affairs Ministry. It is clear that the Troika was only interested in bullying the MDC and keeping Mugabe in power.

The Vigil has little confidence that a SADC Summit will take a different view even though Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania are likely to be less cowed by Mugabe. It was thought the one ray of light from the Harare meeting was that the new South African leadership seems to be aware of the desperate situation in Zimbabwe. We look to them to force Mugabe to honour the power-sharing agreement and, if he doesn't, support the call by Botswana for new elections.

We were sad to hear of the death of Vigil supporter Tapiwa Machedema in a hospital in Wolverhampton. She was only 29 and left a 4-year-old child. We observed a minute's silence followed by a prayer from Rugare Chifungo. We also took a collection for funeral expenses.

Happier news came from Caroline Witts who comes to the Vigil all the way from Devon and sells for Vigil funds eco-friendly hessian bags advertising the Vigil. She sent two of these to the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, who has shown great concern for Zimbabwe. She received a letter from him saying "The people of Zimbabwe continue to be in my prayers, and I thank you too for all your work and concern."

The Vigil message continues to spread. A Canadian group has contacted us with a view to working together and our attention was also drawn to a picture of the Vigil in a Guatemalan newspaper. While we are thinking of South America, a group of Venezuelans stopped by. They said they knew what was happening in Zimbabwe – and complained that their President was "just the same"!

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Finally, we are pleased to announce that the new ROHR website (www.rohrzimbabwe.org) is now live thanks to the hard work of David McAllister who is also working to refresh the Vigil website.

For latest Vigil pictures see the link in the updates column.

FOR THE RECORD: 103 signed the register.

FOR YOUR DIARY:

- * **Central London Zimbabwe Forum.** Monday, 3rd November at 7.30 pm. Tahera Patel, solicitor at Copperstone Solicitors, will talk about asylum issues. Venue: Downstairs at the Bell and Compass, 9-11 Villiers Street, London, WC2N 6NA, next to Charing Cross Station at the corner of Villiers Street and John Adam Street.
- * **Next Glasgow Vigil.** Saturday, 8th November 2008, 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Argyle Street Precinct. For more information contact: Patrick Dzimba, 07990 724 137.
- * **ROHR meeting in Coventry.** Saturday, 8th November 2008, 13.30 – 17.30 pm. Venue: Jassy Mood, 18 Gosford Street, Coventry, CV1 5DL. For more information contact Nashe 07788 560 068, Sam 07861 206 785, Christine 07958 560 094 or P Mapfumo on 07932 216 070 or 07533 831 617.
- * **ROHR meeting in West Yorkshire.** Saturday, 15th November 2008, 13.30 – 17.00 pm. Venue: Celandine Close, Carlton Glen, Ponterfract, Wakefield WF8 2SL. For more information contact Donnah Mugoni 07748828913, E Mkwaira 07780808101, B Sikosana 07940181761 or P Mapfumo 07533831617 / 07932216070.
- * **Zimbabwe Association's Women's Weekly Drop-in Centre.** Fridays 10.30 am – 4 pm. Venue: The Fire Station Community and ICT Centre, 84 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT, Tel: 020 7607 9764. Nearest underground: Finsbury Park. For more information contact the Zimbabwe Association 020 7549 0355 (open Tuesdays and Thursdays).