

Letter to Zimbabwe Vigil

Written by Tichanzii Gandanga

Friday, 21 August 2009 17:20 - Last Updated Saturday, 22 August 2009 10:11

The board, staff and members of ROHR Zimbabwe wishes to extend a hand of appreciation for the immeasurable support Zimbabwe Vigil has tendered to the people of Zimbabwe in their fight for justice and freedom from the oppressive rule of Robert Mugabe and Zanu Pf. As an organization we would not have made it this far had it not been for your unwavering support which varies from international lobbying and advocacy to financial resources and moral reinforcement in the fight for the restoration of fundamental basic human rights and freedoms in Zimbabwe .

Through your concerted efforts you have stood side by side with us, provided us with the fuel to keep our hopes alive and as the board and staff of ROHR Zimbabwe we remain fully committed to the vision of seeing a prosperous, free and just national future which is conscious of and respects human rights.

Our partnership has been shaped by the shared interest of seeing peace, justice and freedom prevailing among Zimbabweans like in the case of other inhabitants of the human family in different parts of the world. As your partner in this regard we have benefitted immensely from the funding that you have made available to us. Funding remains one of the greatest challenges which threaten the existence of not only our organization but many progressive forces that are working towards the democratization of Zimbabwe.

Among other things, through your upkeep, we have been able to carry out street protests like the one in which we recently mobilized people to protest against the shadow peace days declared by Robert Mugabe as a way of forging a blanket of amnesty on the people who were responsible for the violence, torture, rape and killings of innocent people during the period preceding last year's June elections. We are also in the process of creating networks in the communities through Capacity Building and Leadership development meetings in the country's ten provinces. We believe that for a people to effectively champion the cause of defending and championing their rights it has to start from a well organized structure at community level. We are proud to announce that through your support as a partner we have so far managed to do six workshops to cover six provinces, that is Midlands

,
Bulawayo

,
Harare

, Manicaland, Mashonaland central and Masvingo respectively. As we speak there are structures in these provinces with likeminded people who are committed to the cause of fighting for a culture that respects human rights.

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Above all, the funding from the Zimbabwe Vigil has remained a pillar in so far as institutional funding is concerned. In the absence of any other funders we have managed to pay office rentals, remunerate staff, pay phone, electrical bills and sometimes acquired relevant equipment in carrying out our work. Administration expenses are at the centre of any functional organization and you have oiled our engine in that regard.

As an organization we are grateful of the publicity that has directly stemmed from our partnership. Alongside the publicity that you have enjoyed in your circles and networks you have carried our name and products to unimaginable heights especially through your well updated website and tireless innovative weekly vigils at the Zimbabwean embassy in the UK. The fruits of the impact that we have made through your assistance are evident in how our membership has soared in the United Kingdom which also interprets in a wider funding base from subscriber membership.

Most importantly is the undeniable fact that you have kept the Zimbabwean crisis on the international scene and you have also remained resolute in your realization that for Zimbabwe to be saved Robert Mugabe must go. Human rights violations are still rampant even after the formation of the coalition government between Zanu Pf and the two MDC formations. The restrictive media laws AIPPA and POSA are still hindering freedom of the press, association and assembly. Journalists continue to be harassed at the hands of the state; dozens of prisoners are dying every day in state prisons due to preventable and curable diseases like Tuberculosis and Pellagra and thousands more are languishing in jails being denied their right to trial due to the mismanagement of the Zimbabwe Prison Society.

Property rights are not guaranteed evident from the continued invasion of farms by Zanu Pf thugs, war veterans, youth militia and senior officials. The culture of impunity continues unabated not to mention the selective application of law thanks to the self proclaimed Zanu Pf attorney general Johannes Tomana.

We also note with concern that Zanu Pf and Robert Mugabe remain unrepentant and pose a stumbling block to the people of Zimbabwe's fight for democracy as shown by their sabotaging and throwing spanners at the All Stake Holders Constitutional Conference held in Harare in June 2009. Cognizant of your support, as an organization we will not tolerate any violation of human rights from the state organs hence our persistence on a national healing process that is based on truth, justice and compensation. It is our strong belief that the culture of impunity should be replaced by a system that guarantees justice for all and also that all perpetrators of human rights violations should be brought to trial.

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Since the beginning of the year 2009 we have held a number of protests. In the early stages we held weekly protests at the Rotten Row courts protesting against the continued detention of Jestina Mukoko, Gandhi Mudzingwa, Kisimusi Dhlamini and many other opposition and civic society activists who were being held for politically motivated persecution. We also intensified our grassroots based education with capacity building and leadership development workshops in Mashonaland Central, Midlands, Bulawayo, Manicaland, Masvingo and Harare. The workshops have been solely funded by the funds we have been receiving from the United Kingdom

. We have since launched the demand for truth and justice campaign with the first demonstration having been held on

the 25

th

of July 2009

in the streets of

Harare

. The demonstration was a response to the government's ill timed peace days.

We are currently running the Demand for Truth and Justice campaign where we intend to hold weekly protests (if resources permit) against the government-initiated forgive and forget position on national healing, which is bent on awarding a blanket amnesty to the perpetrators of human rights violations. The protest will be held at the parliament building every week until the government abandons their campaign which is not people centered.

We also intend to go around the country's ten provinces engaging a thousand victims of political violence collating information to do with their needs, expectations and views on national healing through interviews. We also intend to produce DVDs and audio series of interviews with the victims of political violence. Congruent to our position on national healing, we believe that victims of political violence need to be accorded a chance to tell their ordeal/story to the general public as a way for them to heal emotionally and psychologically and also expose the gravity of the evil that characterizes a reign of anarchy.

Conclusively we encourage you not to tire in your noble efforts. As a partner we reiterate our commitment to the relationship which we believe would go a long way in propelling forward the struggle for the democratization of Zimbabwe. The route to achieve democracy in Zimbabwe is hard and costly but we have a conviction that with endurance, perseverance and sacrifice we will achieve our vision. As ROHR Zimbabwe continues to grow not only in the United Kingdom

but also in the country's ten provinces,

so is the greater

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demand for support in operations. As we stand today
Zimbabwe
remains in the chains and yoke of bondage under the dictatorship of Robert Mugabe and Zanu
Pf.

Tichanzii Gandanga
Secretary General – ROHR Zimbabwe