

We had a wonderful encounter with Nelson Mandela today

Written by Administrator
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We had a wonderful encounter with Nelson Mandela today. Vigil management team member Fungayi Mabhunu joined human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell at Mr Mandela's hotel in London . They were there to alert people who might have pitched up for the planned picket cancelled because of Mr Mandela's welcome comments on the Zimbabwe situation on Wednesday night. Fungayi, speaking in hastily-learned Xhosa, said how pleased he was that Mr Mandela had spoken out about Zimbabwe and asked him to continue speaking out. A surprised Mr Mandela said OK.

The Vigil had planned to picket the concert for Mr Mandela's 90 th birthday in Hyde Park on Friday but in view of his support any message that we will give will be one of gratitude that he has spoken out.

The Vigil choir sang at the annual service in support of Zimbabwean victims of torture at St Paul 's Church, Covent Garden , organised by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. It was very moving to hear the accounts of the suffering of people at home. Flowers were laid at the Embassy after the Service.

We look forward to seeing you all on Friday for the mother of all non-elections. We will be joined by members of the MDC UK and expect a large turnout. The highlight of the day will be our protest from 1 – 2 pm outside the South African High Commission. Mugabe and Grace (or people looking like them) will be accompanying a coffin with our petition asking President Mbeki to stop supporting Mugabe. The South African High Commission have agreed to accept the petition which reads: “A petition to President Mbeki of South Africa . Exiled Zimbabweans and supporters urge you to stop supporting Mugabe and allow a peaceful transfer of power from the military regime to the Zimbabwean people. Our blood is at your door.”

Our friends in Belfast also have an event tomorrow. The Bristol Vigil will hold an anti-election demo tomorrow to express their disgust.