

Zimbabweans in UK say 'Don't send us back to Mugabe'

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 23 October 2010 20:58 - Last Updated Saturday, 23 October 2010 21:04

FROM THE ZIMBABWE VIGIL / THE ZIMBABWEAN DIASPORA IN THE UK

MEDIA NOTICE – 24th October 2010

Zimbabwean exiles in the UK are to stage a demonstration against deportations at a meeting to be addressed by a senior Home Office official at Lancaster House in London on Wednesday, 27th October.

Ironically it was at Lancaster House that the Independence Constitution was agreed under which Mugabe came to power in 1980.

The Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK has been shocked by the British government's sudden ending of the moratorium on sending home failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers – even before the outcome of its own legal test case on the general safety of returns to Zimbabwe

Ephraim Tapa, a prominent Zimbabwean human rights activist in the UK, said 'It is deeply disturbing that the British government seems to have predetermined the outcome of the court case. We did not expect this in the UK'

Mr Tapa was sceptical about the findings of a British mission to Zimbabwe this year which found that 'Zimbabwe is for many people a safer and better place to live than it was in 2008'. Mr Tapa said 'the stolen elections of 2008 were drenched in blood. New elections are planned for next year and we expect similar bloodshed unless peacekeepers are sent to the country.'

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'It is not an opportune time for the UK government to change its policy and the Zimbabwe Vigil is particularly disappointed that Foreign Secretary Hague has not honoured his promise to the Vigil that there would be no change in policy towards Zimbabwe'.

The demonstrators will present a petition to Mr Phil Douglas, the UK Border Agency's Director of Appeals and Removals, who is to address a meeting at Lancaster House from 5 – 6 pm to discuss the resumption of enforced returns to Zimbabwe

Date: Wednesday 27th October 2010 from 2 – 6 pm.

Venue: Lancaster House, Stable Yard, St James, London SW1A 1BB

Contacts:

Ephraim Tapa, President, Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (07940 793 090)

Jeff Sango, Chair, MDC UK South East District (07776 271 436)

Stanford Biti, Chair, MDC UK Southend Branch (07411 769 573)

Regis Manyanya, Nottingham Zimbabwean Community Network (07878 449 544)

The petition reads: '**Petition to the Home Secretary, the Honourable Theresa May:** We the undersigned, members of the Zimbabwean Diaspora in the UK and sympathisers, express our grave disquiet at the UK government's announcement that failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers are to be deported – even before the hearing of a test (country guidance) case is concluded.

Our view is that the situation in Zimbabwe

is not suitable for the return of exiled Zimbabweans, especially those who have shown their rejection of the Zimbabwean regime by applying for asylum in the UK

. In particular, we are aware of continuing widespread acts of political violence by Zanu PF agents who enjoy immunity from prosecution. We fear the situation is likely to worsen given plans to hold new elections next year.'

To attend the meeting at Lancaster House registration is required. If you wish to attend, please e-mail Sandra.Goppy@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk with your full name, affiliation and questions. Entry to the event will be refused to those who have not registered. To ensure as many questions are dealt with on the day, the organisers welcome questions in advance.

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