

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/51243664770/sizes/m/>

In Zimbabwe beggars apparently can be choosers. While people all over the world clamour for vaccines against the Covid 19 pandemic, Zimbabwe has turned down a donation of 3 million doses.

The vaccines were to have been delivered by the African Export-Import Bank which, under a deal with the African Union, will pay for 220 million doses. Zimbabwe's rejection of its allocation is not a problem for the African Union, which can simply reallocate the vaccines to other countries. But it certainly is a problem for the people of Zimbabwe.

As leaders of the world's major democratic countries met in the UK it was estimated that less than 1% of vaccinations have been in Africa. The 'Group of Seven' democratic powers agreed to donate hundreds of millions more vaccines, but it is doubtful whether Zimbabwe can pick and choose.

It has been suggested that the reason Zimbabwe turned down the donation was because the vaccine offered was made by Johnson & Johnson in the UK, which is one of the world's leaders in vaccinations. In a letter to the African Export-Import Bank, the Zimbabwe government said it was analysing possible side effects of the vaccine.

Finance Ministry secretary George Guvamatanga also said the country does not have facilities to store the vaccine at 2 – 8 degrees Celsius. But Dr Norman Matara, of the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights, said the Johnson & Johnson vaccines were stored at the same temperature as China's Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines, which Zimbabwe has been using since February.

Dr Matara said that, in addition, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine only required one dose while the Chinese vaccines needed two.' So, we do not get it why they would reject those vaccines.' He could have added that the Chinese vaccines have proved less efficacious than Western alternatives.

Political commentator Rejoice Ngwenya said poor relations between Zimbabwe and the UK was the main reason the donation was rejected, he said it was tragic when citizens were under threat. 'I really think that the ZANU-PF government should desist from politicizing these issues and get out of its arrogance to ensure the safety and security of citizens of Zimbabwe is safeguarded.'

The government says it still has vaccines it has obtained from China, Russia and India but many places have run out of vaccines and there was a protest last week at the country's main vaccination centre in Harare (see: <https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/zimbabwe-rejects-donation-covid-19-vaccine-amid-shortages>).

Other Points:

- The European Union says it cannot fully engage with the Zimbabwean government unless it implements far-reaching political and economic reforms. After a meeting in Harare with the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Minister Frederick Shava, the EU said it had expressed concern over curtailed democratic space in Zimbabwe over the last year and reports of continued violations of human rights such as enforced disappearances and lengthy unjustified detentions, the arrests of journalists and other limitations to freedom of expression and the media (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/06/no-reforms-no-ties-renewal-eu-tells-ed/>).

- One the two MDC Alliance activists freed from prison after ten years for a crime they did not commit, Tungamirai Madzokere has told Newsday about the harrowing treatment they underwent. His sleeping space was so small he could not turn over. Many people died because of the poor diet and harsh conditions and others went insane (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/06/mdc-jailbirds-recount-tale-of-horror/>).

- Many Vigil activists will welcome the opportunity to remember 7-year-old Jesse Tafara Gwatidzo (who passed away last month. Jesse's 'Celebration of Life' ceremony will be held on Friday 25 June at Beckenham Cemetery. Funeral at 1.15 pm and Burial at 2 pm. For more details: <https://jessegwatidzo.muchloved.com/> . All are welcome.

- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have a virtual Vigil while the restrictions continue. We ask our activists to put on Vigil / ROHR / Zimbabwe regalia and take a photo of themselves holding an appropriate poster reflecting our protest against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The photos are uploaded on our Flickr site: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/albums/72157719401084339/with/51243664770/> . Our virtual Vigil activist today was Grace Munyanyi who kindly contributed to Vigil funds.

- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

Notices:

- **Jesse's 'Celebration of Life' Ceremony. Friday 25th June at Beckenham Cemetery, Elmers End Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4TD. Funeral at 1.15 pm and Burial at 2 pm. For more details:** <https://jessegwatidzo.muchloved.com/>

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- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organisation based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organisation 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 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. All proceeds 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.

- **Facebook pages:**

Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwevigil>

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

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