

The Mnangagwa regime has reduced workers to slaves by paying them money that is valueless, says the President of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Peter Mutasa.

He said his members were facing challenges accessing healthcare, accommodation and basic services because most of these were being pegged to the US dollar while they were earning the fast-depreciating local currency. He said the ZCTU wanted the immediate introduction of the rand as official legal tender.

Pressure to abandon the Zimbabwe dollar is also coming from business. The President of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Retailers, Denford Mutashu, said the appetite for the US dollar was very high because the local currency was too unstable for sustainable planning. One trader in Mbare said a bucket of maize was selling for US\$3 or Zim\$120.

MDC Vice-President Tendai Biti said the market had already re-dollarised and the government must recognize this instead of resisting the obvious. He pointed out that the government was itself charging for services in US dollars even though it is threatening to penalize businesses who do the same.

'You can't criminalise rational behaviour. Just like, right now, 90% of Zimbabweans are buying the US dollar on the streets. There is no amount of teargas, no amount of gun, there is no

amount of tank that is going to stop that because a human being behaves rationally. He will protect himself,' Biti said (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/02/market-rejects-zimdollar/>).

Biti, a former finance minister, accused Mnangagwa of being 'the godfather' of Zimbabwe's high level of government corruption. He said Mnangagwa's ally, business mogul Kuda Tagwirei, had 'captured' the finance ministry. 'I never thought that we could get to a situation as ordinary Zimbabweans in which we could say Mugabe was actually better. But, Zimbabweans are saying so because the level of looting under Emmerson Mnangagwa is unprecedented.'

Biti said Zimbabweans must take to the streets to demonstrate peacefully against the cartels to express their anger.

(See:

<https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-178981.html>

).

MDC leader Nelson Chamisa also called for action in the fight against corruption. He said the allegations by Prosecutor--General Kumbira Hodzi that corrupt cartels controlled the justice delivery system had confirmed state capture. 'The anti-corruption rhetoric is a mere facade designed to hoodwink Zimbabweans and the world. Over the past two years the level of corruption and state capture has escalated to obscene levels. There can not be sustainable prosperity when national wealth is in the hands of a few,' said Chamisa (see:

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202002130439.html>

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Other points

- The Vigil is not surprised by reports that Mnangagwa is not taking calls from former South African President Mbeki who has offered to mediate in Zimbabwe. He appears to be happy with

the situation in which he is in control, whatever the cost.

- Thanks to all those who braved the foul weather to help set up the Vigil today: Patricia Masamba, Margaret Munenge, Esther Munyira, Sithokozile Sikhosana, Ephraim Tapa and Kevin Wheeldon. Thanks to Patricia and Margaret for looking after the front table, to Esther and Kevin for handing out flyers, to Sithokozile for drumming and to Patricia for photos.

- Thanks to those who have contributed to the ROHR's Valentine fundraising dinner: Beulah Gore, Jane Kaphuwa, Patricia Masamba and Cephas Maswoswa. Thanks also to Patricia Masamba for her contribution to the ROHR Mtoko irrigation project.

- For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimb88abwevigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website

FOR THE RECORD: ---8 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR fundraising dinner dance.** Saturday 29th February from 6 pm till late. Postponed from 15th February because of bad weather. Venue: 38 Marcon Place, London E8 1LP. The event is in aid of women living with HIV/AIDS in rural Zimbabwe. Tickets £30. Contact: Esther Munyira 07492058107, Molly Ngavaimbe 07415443973, Patricia Masamba 07708116625 and Margaret Munenge 07384300283

- **ROHR general members' meeting.** Saturday 14th March from 11.30 am. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, South Bank Centre, Belvedere Road SE1 8XX. Contact: Ephraim Tapa 07940793090, Patricia Masamba 07708116625, Esther Munyira 07492058107.

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

- **World Day of Prayer for Zimbabwe.** Friday 6th March. This year the focus is on Zimbabwe and the service has been prepared by Christian women in Zimbabwe. The theme is 'Rise! Take you mat and walk'. Christians all round the world will be praying for Zimbabwe. Try to get your own church involved. For more information check: <https://www.wwdp.org.uk/>

- **Living on the Edge.** Tuesday 10th March from 7 – 9 pm (doors open at 6 pm). Venue:

'Reduced to slavery' – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 15th February 2020

Written by Administrator

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Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. The event is organised by the Mike Campbell Foundation. Among the speakers are Chief Felix Ndiweni and Beatrice Mtetwa. For full details of the event check:

https://media.wix.com/ugd/02876c_5b68a136280c42ebbf39f8ebbb722299.pdf

- **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>