

It's been a problem for at least 20 years. Despite all the efforts of successive presidents, some Zimbabweans are still apparently dissatisfied. They just don't know what's good for them.

One hesitates to call them greedy but as Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube pointed out this week: how can someone given US \$3.68 to feed their family for a month be poor? As he put it, the cushion extended by government to vulnerable groups had made an 'instant impact' and thus eliminated poverty. 'When you are given your mealie meal you are no longer extremely poor in that moment.' (See: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/10/ncube-scoffs-at-poverty-reports/>.)

Ncube was responding to a World Bank report showing growing poverty in Zimbabwe. The UN estimates about 60% of the population will not have enough food by December. The population of Zimbabwe is about 17 million so if everyone could receive US \$3.68, according to Ncube's reckoning, the country would be released from extreme poverty 'in that moment'. (Never mind the other moments in the month!) The bill would be some US \$65 million but perhaps Mnangagwa could contribute this from his private resources acquired after 40 years of hard graft . .

This would show that the departing Ghanaian Ambassador, Eric Odious Anim, was not as gullible as he seemed when he declared that Zimbabwe was on the right path: 'Zimbabwe under the leadership of President Mnangagwa is on the road to recovery. What matters is to get all the people of Zimbabwe to buy into the vision of the leadership so that you make progress.' (See: <https://www.herald.co.zw/zim-on-the-right-path-says-ghanaian-envoy/>.)

To help people 'buy into that vision' Zanu PF proposes to bring in a new law called the Patriot Act under which 'conduct such as private correspondence with foreign governments or any officer or agent thereof will be prohibited, including false statements influencing foreign governments, or any other such conduct aimed at undermining the country.' (S

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<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/zimbabwe/new-law-zimbabwe-ban-criticism-of-government-why/>

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'Patriots' are already at risk of arrest if they criticise the government. Witness the treatment of 22-year-old Bulawayo student Tawanda Muchehiwa, kidnapped by state thugs, members of the notorious Ferrets, and tortured and sexually abused over three days on suspicion of helping organise an anti-government protest (see: <https://news.sky.com/story/zimbabwe-student-thought-he-was-going-to-die-after-abduction-by-state-security-services-12099212>

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The Patriot Act would certainly endanger Catholic Bishop Mupandasekwa of Chinhoyi who has called on people to pray to God (surely a 'foreign government') to soften the hearts of Zimbabwe's leaders. He said the 'so-called liberation party' had brought independence but now was refusing the masses freedom. 'Our children are not going to school, except the few lucky ones. Our sick are not being treated in our hospitals. And yet our leadership see their policies as right and good. What blindness is this?' (See: <https://zwnews.com/catholic-bishop-attacks-mnangagwas-tyrant-leadership/>

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## **Other Points:**

- Coincidentally, there has been a farm invasion in Chinhoyi. This time the dispossessed owner is ironically a Zanu PF MP. Some 150 settlers have moved onto his farm. They say they want to plant crops. Is that unpatriotic? (See: <https://www.herald.co.zw/150-settlers-invade-chiyangwa-farm/>.)
- Chinese insurance firms are refusing to underwrite infrastructure projects in Zimbabwe because of the Zimbabwe government's failure to co-operate. Apparently the construction of the US \$68 million Kunsvi Dam has stalled because the government has not come up with a US \$10 million commitment fee. The dam is seen as a solution to Harare's water supply problem (see: <http://www.newsdezimbabwe.co.uk/2020/10/top-chinese-firms-dump-projects-in-zimbabwe/>).
- On 12<sup>th</sup> October it will be 18 years since the Vigil started. 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.
- Thanks to those who raised sponsorship money for the ROHR and Vigil Fundraising Walk of 29<sup>th</sup> August: Jacob Mandipira £50, Joyce Mbairatsunga £48 and Molly Ngavaimbe £50.
- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

### Notices:

- **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.
- **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:**

## Living for the moment – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 10th October 2020

Written by Administrator

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

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