

Virus of ignorance and bigotry – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 26th December 2020

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 27 December 2020 16:28 - Last Updated Sunday, 27 December 2020 16:28

The reaction to Britain's offer of enough vaccine for 3 million Zimbabweans, reported in the government newspapers, has shown that Covid 19 is not the only virus to be feared. An equally fatal one is the virus of ignorance and bigotry – just as dangerous and infectious.

The Herald says the vaccine offer was made by British Ambassador Melanie Robinson at a meeting with the Minister of Health, Vice President General Doctor Chiwenga.

Being a Zanu PF paper, readers' comments on the article were predictably hostile. 'UK is not a country to trust . . . the British are bitter about the land issue and have a score to settle . . . a good way is to wipe out the black population and destroy our government and make us dependent on them', read the first.

'If you live in Britain you will understand the true evil ways of the English. Don't accept these tainted vaccines from Britain', read the next comment.

And so they continued: 'Zimbabwe should not put their hopes up for this promise. It's all sweet talk'. On and on: 'When it's ready they should test their own people first.' The next comment continues this line: 'They want to use Zimbabweans for trial. We are not mice.' And the next: 'Be careful this donor syndrome will eradicate the black race from the face of the earth.'

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The next comment had an appropriately seasonal ring: 'Wake up my people, how can you take a cure from Satan and his seed?' And then on to sanctions: 'We are under British sanctions and yet they pretend they are our friends . . . and care about our health. This vaccine is bad news.' (See: <https://www.herald.co.zw/just-in-uk-offers-to-vaccinate-zimbabweans-against-covid-19/> .)

The comments were universally negative. Poor Ambassador Robinson. It's a tough task getting a regime kept in power by propaganda to change its ways. It's not enough to point out that the UK is one of the most generous donors to Zimbabwe and is keen to encourage bilateral trade while Zanu PF continues to excrete its manufactured paranoia virus.

Ambassador Robinson's job is to explain that bigotry cannot be turned on or off like a tap if Zimbabwe is to build a relationship with the West. But, of course, the Zanu PF regime has more important priorities: money and power . . .

It's 18 years now since the Vigil started and we still live in hope of a free Zimbabwe. Anyway, we wish a better 2021 for all Zimbabweans and advise everyone to have the vaccine. Britain has already started a vaccination programme with more than half a million people vaccinated in the last couple of weeks.

Other Points:

- John Sparks of Sky News gave a graphic account of the suffering of a Zimbabwean student at the hands of the authorities for daring to stand up for freedom (see: <https://news.sky.com/story/zimbabwe-kidnapped-tortured-and-humiliated-one-students-fight-for-freedom-12168501>).
- 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.
- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . 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:**

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

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

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