

The prospect of yet another SADC meeting on Zimbabwe did nothing to keep us warm. It was impossible to find anyone at another crowded Vigil who had any faith in the pompous, hypocritical, self-serving, blustering, craven half-wits at the SADC Summit.

It was felt that if SADC was serious about saving the region from a contagious failed state it would hand back its mandate to the AU with a recommendation that new elections be held under UN supervision.

We at the Vigil are resigned to SADC admiring the new 100 trillion Zimbabwe dollar notes, blaming the donor nations for Zimbabwe's inflation rate of 6.5 quindecillion novemdecillion percent . . . and recognizing Mugabe as President despite the conclusion of SADC's own observers that last year's elections were not free and fair.

Many passers-by stopped to sign our petitions, particularly the one demanding action against SADC countries because of their failure to uphold their obligations to Zimbabweans. The Vigil wants the European Union to stop handing over billions of Euros in aid to SADC countries who support Mugabe. We want this money to be used instead to finance refugee camps for Zimbabweans in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique where our people can seek refuge and find things no longer available in Zimbabwe such as food, shelter, health care and education.

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Given the global economic recession we expect growing support for any moves to cut aid to Mugabe's regional cronies.

A few points:

- Apologies that Patson Muzuwa and his Umbane troupe did not appear today. There was a misunderstanding and they say they will be coming next week. Some people apparently came specifically to hear them (we know of someone who was emailed by a contact in Australia about it). Despite Patson's absence we had some wonderful singing and dancing led by Jenatry Muranganwa and Dumi Tutani which made up for the absence of Umbane.
- Highlight of the day was the 'Tweed Bicycle Ride'. To our astonishment hundreds of cyclists rode past wearing tweed clothes.
- We phoned Luka of the Vigil management team who is still in detention in Dover. The phone was passed to Jenatry at the centre of the Vigil who led a song for him. The phone was then passed around to many of his friends so he could talk to them all. Apparently the Archbishop of York's Office contacted the Zimbabwe Association and wrote to Phil Woolas, MP, Minister of State (Borders & Immigration) Home Office on behalf of Luka. Luka's bail hearing is on Wednesday and we hope he will be released then.
- It was good to hear from Patrick Dzimba, Co-ordinator of the Glasgow Zimbabwe Vigil. He reports that the first Glasgow Vigil of 2009 on 17th January was well-attended and was followed by their AGM.
- WOZA Solidarity have been in touch with us. They plan to hold a demonstration ahead of the Vigil from 12 to 2 pm on Saturday, 14th February.

They are awaiting the outcome of the trial of Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu before deciding the theme of their protest.

We will keep you informed.

- We have been contacted by the Reverend Bill Crews of the Exodus Foundation (www.exodusfoundation.net). He is a friend of Sekai Holland and his organisation helped her to escape from Zimbabwe

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after her appalling treatment in March 2007.

He is looking for ways to help Zimbabwe post-Mugabe and asked us for contacts to work with.

For latest Vigil pictures check our pictures page.

FOR THE RECORD: 235 signed the register.

FOR YOUR DIARY:

- **ROHR Manchester General Meeting.** Saturday 31 January 2009 at Salvation Army Citadel, Street, Manchester M13 9UB from 1330 – 1730hrs. Contact Moses Nyagodzi 07778547971, Mike Kanyepi 07500696527 or Mr Madzonganyika 07747141835.
- **ROHR Wakefield Members Meeting.** Saturday 31 January 2009 at 4 Celandine Close, Carlton Glen, Pontefract, Wakefield, WF8 2SL. Contact Mugoni 07748828913, B Sikosana 07940181761, P Karuwa 07908075149.
- **ROHR Brighton General Meeting.** Saturday, 31 January 2009. Venue and time to be announced. Contact Siniki Dube 07824668763 or Phyllis Chibanguza 07908406069

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- **Next Glasgow Vigil.** Saturday 24th January, 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Argyle Street Precinct. For more information contact: Patrick Dzimba, 07990 724 137 , Tafadzwa Musemwa 07954 344 123 and Roggers Fatiya 07769 632 687
- **‘The Agony of Zimbabwe, What Chance for Change?’** Monday 9th February, 6.45 – 8.45 pm
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Talk by Christina Lamb Foreign Affairs Correspondent for the Sunday Times. Hosted by Friends of Le Monde diplomatique. Venue: the Gallery, 70/77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ (near Farringdon Tube station).

For more information check:

<http://monde-diplo-friends.org.uk/calendar.htm>

- **WOZA Solidarity Protest.** Saturday, 14th February, 12 – 2 pm, outside the Zimbabwe Embassy, 429 Strand , London WC2R 0JR.

- **Zimbabwe Association’s Women’s Weekly Drop-in Centre.** Fridays 10.30 am – 4 pm. Venue: The Fire Station Community and ICT Centre, 84 Mayton Street , London N7 6QT, Tel: 020 7607 9764. Nearest underground: Finsbury Park . For more information contact the Zimbabwe Association 020 7549 0355 (open Tuesdays and Thursdays).