

Vigil supporters – like people all over the world – have been transfixed by the drama in Egypt. The sudden arrival in Cairo 's Tehrir Square of violent provocateurs of the corrupt and oppressive Mubarak regime made us feel quite at home.

Suddenly the absurdity of Mugabe was thrown into clear focus – 87 this month yet seeking re-election for another term: another botoxed octogenarian with dyed hair unable to loosen his claws on power, even to caress his gold bars . . .

Vigil supporter Peter Chareka told us how he was at the Harare meeting in 1986 launching the 21 February Movement – the Mugabe youth organisation which has degenerated into the green bombers. He recalled: 'During an interview with the ZBC on his birthday, Mugabe was asked what he wanted to do when he got older. He promised to retire completely from politics. He said "I can't wait to enjoy life as an ordinary citizen". I was nearly 15 years old and I looked up to him. He promised to write a book about his life. Up to now I have not read a single page . . .'

The Vigil was well-attended despite the absence of a group of supporters from Luton who were unable to join us because of demonstrations there over Islamic fundamentalism (see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-12372713>

). Vigil supporter Hellena Gus

inyu sent the following email: 'I am writing this on behalf of all our Vigil supporters in Luton

who couldn't come to the Vigil this Saturday due to the protest in Luton

by the English Defence League against Islamic power. The roads are blocked and buses have been told to use another route and the violence with Muslims has already started. But we know those who are attending the Vigil will be doing it on our behalf".

As we mark the 2nd anniversary of the formation of the 'government of national unity' we were encouraged to see a note of honesty at last from the MDC's Co-minister of Home Affairs, Theresa Makoni. Revealing the impotence of the MDC in government, she said 'most times you write letters but nothing happens . . . (see: <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news040211/>

[mugscanstop040211.htm](#)).

We Zimbabweans in the UK pay loads of taxes some of which goes to help people at home through the UK

's Department for International Development – about £100 million this year. We are glad to see that the British Embassy in Harare

is being more outspoken about Zanu PF's abuse of this aid. (See: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/feb5_2011.html#Z2

- Zanu (PF) Behaviour 'Depressing': UK Embassy

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Other ponts

. We were joined by Italian freelance journalist Max Santalucia. He has sent us a link to his article about the Vigil which appears in French on a blog of the international news site

France

24 –

<http://atlas.blogs.france24.com/article/2011/02/04/la-protestation-infinie-0>

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. Today we were visited by members of the Zimbabwe Diaspora Focus Group: Thamsanga Zhou, Lucia Dube and Martin Chinyanga. Thamsa

nga addressed the Vigil stressing how important it was to attend the Vigil and that all Zimbabweans in the diaspora should work together for an end to human rights abuses in

Zimbabwe

and for free and fair elections.

.████████ Have a look at our new website www.zimvigil.tv.com

Past video diaries have been uploaded on the ‘Vigil Diary’ link including key events such as the demonstration when Zuma visited the South African Embassy, the Vigil’s 8

th

anniversary, the protest at Lancaster House etc. The latest video diaries are uploaded on the home page.

.████████ Sue Toft on our front desk says a man who dropped by told her that he had met Mugabe as an 8 year old when his parents went to Harrods department store. He said; ‘I shook his hand but now I wish I had kicked him in the shins’. If the EU lifts sanctions this month he may yet have the chance to do so . . .

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/>

For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check

<http://www.zimvigil.tv.com/>

FOR THE RECORD: 113 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **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
- **Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Meeting.**
Monday 21st February at 7.30 pm. Venue: offices of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street,
,
London
EC2A 4LT. Nearest tube:

Old Street

. Speakers:

Okay Machisa and Kucaca Phulu of ZimRights.

- **ROHR Bournemouth general meeting.** Saturday 26th

February from 2 – 5.30 pm. Venue: East Cliff Reformed Church opposite ASDA store, Holdenhurst Road

,
Bournemouth
BH8 8AY

. Contact: Sekai 07772211220, Sledge 07788850146, Abi 07780831455, P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

- **ROHR Bristol general meeting.** Saturday 5th

March from 1.30 – 5.30 pm. Venue:

St Joseph

's
Presbytery
Church

,
232 Forest Road

, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3QT. Contact: Ronald Oputeri 07791109394, Bridgita Mubaiwa 07789084534, Cecilia Ndlovu 07740122687 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070

- **Vigil Facebook page:** <http://www.facebook.com/gr>

[oup.php?gid=8157345519&ref=ts](http://www.zimvigi.com/oup.php?gid=8157345519&ref=ts)

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- **Vigil Myspace page:** <http://www.myspace.com/zimbabwevigil>
- **‘Through the Darkness’**, Judith Todd’s acclaimed account of the rise of Mugabe.

To receive a copy by post in the UK please email confirmation of your order and postal address to ngwenyasr@yahoo.co.uk and send a cheque for £10 payable to “Budiriro Trust” to Emily Chadburn, 15 Burners Close, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 0QA. All proceeds go to the Budiriro Trust which

provides bursaries to needy A Level students in Zimbabwe

- **Workshops aiming to engage African men on HIV testing and other sexual health issues.**

Organised by the Terrence Higgins Trust (

www.tht.org.uk

). Please contact the co-ordinator

Takudzwa Mukiwa

(

takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk)

if you are interested in taking part.

Vigil Co-ordinators

The Vigil, outside the Zimbabwe Embassy, 429

Strand

,

London

, takes place every Saturday from 14.00 to 18.00 to protest against gross violations of human rights in Zimbabwe

. The Vigil which started in October 2002 will continue until internationally-monitored, free and fair elections are held in

Zimbabwe

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<http://www.zimvigil.co.uk>

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