

There was a lot of space in Parliament when Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube delivered his budget. This was partly because the opposition was boycotting the occasion but mainly because of the surprise announcement that he was to send a satellite into orbit.

‘The budget has set aside resources for research and development programmes, including the launch of a space satellite. I repeat, including the launch of a space satellite,’ Ncube announced.

Then we began to suspect an empty space between the ears of the wizard economist who has returned Zimbabwe to hyperinflation, poverty and starvation but wants to play with rockets.

Some at the Vigil remembered when a Zambian would-be astronaut only got as far as the upper branches of a nearby tree. Zimbabweans sniggered then. We are not sniggering now.

This space breakthrough promises to be as important as the discovery of diesel flowing from the rocks in Chinoyi which took in a gaggle of credulous Mugabe ministers. Perhaps we have been wasting our time on industry and agriculture and stuff like that and have now found our destiny: a small step for mankind but a giant leap for Zimbabwe.

Why should we spend all day queueing for a few of the new Zimbabwean dollar notes when they can hardly buy anything – and when the new currency can easily be obtained from black market dealers who mysteriously have loads of it.

When he came down to earth, spaceman Ncube had some useful advice for the ordinary starving Zimbabwean, quoting Nobel-winning economist Amartya Sen: ‘Human development is about expansions of citizens’ capabilities to fend for themselves.

In other words, look after yourself. The government doesn’t have space for you.

Other points

- Thanks for further contributions to the purchase of a gazebo to shelter the Vigil from rain from: Miriam Gasho, Simbarashe Jingo, Josephine Jombe, Jane Kaphuwa, Joyce Mbairatsunga, Benjamin Molife, Lucia Mudzimu, Fungisai Mupandira and Beverly Mupandiro.
- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the front table and put up the banners: Delice Gavazah, Rosemary Maponga, Washington Mugari, Esther Munyira, Tapiwa Muskwe and Kevin Wheeldon. Thanks to Rosemary and Delice for looking after the front table, to Patience Chmba and Tendai Chigariro for handing out flyers, Mary Muteyerwa, Margaret Munenge and Delice for drumming and to Jonathan Kariwo for photos.
- 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: 19 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR Reading Christmas Party Fundraiser.** Saturday 30th November from 6.30 – 11 pm. Venue: The Spice Oven Buffet Restaurant, 2 – 4 Church Street, Reading RG4 8AT. Theme: to restore dignity to the suffering people of Zimbabwe

Tickets: £20 per adult, free entry for children under 5 years.

For more information, contact: Deborah Harry 07578894896, Nicodimus Muganhu 07877386792, Joshua Kahari 07877246251, Josephine Jombe 07455166668.

- **ROHR fundraising dinner dance in aid of women living with HIV/AIDS in rural Zimbabwe.** Saturday 7th December from 7 pm till late. Venue: Lee Chapel South Community Centre, The Knares, Basildon SS16 5SA. Formal dress code. Tickets £30. Contact organisers: Esther Munyira 07492058109, Simbarashi Jingo 07722998848, Rangarirai Chivaviro 07378429599 and Patience Chimba 07896496379.

- **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/>

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