

The Vigil wonders why the Reserve Bank did not ask Zanu PF to take ‘a haircut’ rather than squander five million dollars on its extravagant ‘National People’s Conference’ at Goromonzi. A feast of hundreds of cattle and goats, thousands of chicken and 8 tonnes of maize was provided for the 7,000 delegates while the people starve.

We say ‘a haircut’ because the Reserve Bank’s monetary policy committee apparently wants to reject the majority of government debts. The idea is that, for instance, Zimbabwe may pay only 5% of the US\$60 million which it owes South African Airways, which is now itself facing financial challenges (see: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-09/south-african-airways-may-only-get-5-of-money-owed-by-zimbabwe>).

The Vigil doubts that this will smooth the borrowing path for the planned new version of Zimbabwe Airways, let alone encourage South Africa’s ESKOM to resume its charitable power supplies to Zimbabwe.

But the focus was at Goromonzi High School, where locals watched in awe as Zanu PF bigwigs turned up in their expensive sports utility vehicles. One said ‘if the conference was open to us we would attend and also have a taste of the nice food that we have not eaten for so long. We would at least forget our hunger for those two days.’ (See: <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2019/12/13/zanu-pf-banquet-in-deep-sea-of-poverty/>).

A Newsday editorial observed of Zanu PF: ‘They are just functioning according to their default mode — as they have always done even under the late former President Robert Mugabe — to feast and make merry while the rest of the population wallows in abject poverty. (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2019/12/editorial-zanu-pfs-opulence-amid-famine-should-not-be-surprising/>).

A close observer of Zimbabwe, Professor of World Politics at the University of London, Stephen Chan, said ‘in almost all countries in the world, during times of austerity, all political parties would hold their conferences with a reduction in expensive provision. They would do that to show solidarity with a nation going through hard times.’ (See: [h](https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2019/12/13/zanu-pf-indaba-a-jamboree-in-the-midst-of-biting-)
<https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2019/12/13/zanu-pf-indaba-a-jamboree-in-the-midst-of-biting->

[hunger/](#)

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Other points

- A prospective investor planning a US\$250 million solar project in Zimbabwe – surely a good thing – got the go-ahead from the government in July. Then his problems began. Officials started demanding a share in the project, so the whole thing is stalled. This typical story is given extra force by appearing in the government mouthpiece the Herald (see: <https://www.herald.co.zw/sa-investor-makes-bribery-claims/>)

- Progress is also stalling on Zimbabwe's application to rejoin the Commonwealth after the British Ambassador said Zimbabwe was failing to implement key reforms. Deputy Information Minister Energy Mutodi responded on twitter that Zimbabwe didn't care, adding 'the game of endless reforms is shameful' (see: <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/mutodi-thumbs-nose-at-british-over-zim-commonwealth-snub/>)

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the front table and put up the banners: Patience Chimba, Enniah Dube, Jonathan Kariwo, Chido Makawa, Rosemary Maponga, Patricia Masamba, Benjamin Molife, Washington Mugari, Margaret Munenge, Esther Munyira, Molly Ngavaimbe, Hazvinei Sali, Ephraim Tapa and Kevin Wheeldon. Thanks to Margaret, Hazvinei and Molly for looking after the front table, to Rosemary and Kevin for handing out flyers, to Chido and Delice Gavazah for drumming and to Patricia, Hazvinei and Jonathan for photos. It was good to have Enniah with us after a long illness.

- 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: 20 signed the register.

EVENTS AND 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 Vigil:** <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwevigil> ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

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