

It's difficult to imagine former South African president Thabo Mbeki as Father Christmas. But we can only hope that he brought good news when he made his timely visit for separate talks with Mnangagwa and Chamisa and others.

The Vigil was critical of the deal Mbeki brokered between Mugabe and Tsvangirai in 2008 but we were just as critical of the MDC for accepting it. Nevertheless, the subsequent government of national unity turned around the economy and brought rapid growth until Zanu PF greed could no longer be contained and it rigged the 2013 elections so it could steal the new riches.

Chamisa was a member of that flawed coalition and will no doubt have learnt lessons. Certainly no similar arrangement should be accepted which would leave Zanu PF in control when they are the ones who have brought the country to the brink of catastrophe.

Mbeki too has 'skin in the game'. He left office discredited. But the abysmal Zuma circus has since then changed the focus. So Mbeki could yet rehabilitate himself with a Christmas present for Zimbabwe.

Mbeki says he will be returning to Zimbabwe soon for more talks before end of the year. We wish him well. The main obstacle is Mnangagwa who insists he will only meet Chamisa within the framework of the Political Actors' Dialogue. For his part, Chamisa said: 'Dialogue must deliver true change and real reforms. When we shake hands, let us be agreeing to truly walk in the same direction, a new direction.' (See: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2019/12/give-dialogue-a-chance-sadc/>.)

The Vigil believes a new coalition of some sort is needed to move Zimbabwe forward – but a coalition that is not one-sided like the last one. This would be a real Christmas present for Zimbabwe.

Whether it will prevail over the apparent Christmas present delivered the other day to military headquarters in Harare we don't know. This was a US\$3.4 million Bugatti Chiron, one of the world's most expensive and fastest cars. Just right for Zim roads (see: <https://www.zimlive.com/2019/12/20/worlds-fastest-car-us3-3-million-bugatti-chiron-lands-in-zimbabwe/>)

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## Other points

- Zimbabwe faces having the assets of the state mining company seized after a final appeal of the 2014 arbitration ruling failed. Companies linked to British Virgin Islands-based Amari Holdings Ltd won the right to seize assets worth \$65.9 million in compensation for Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation's cancellation of nickel and platinum ventures formed in 2007 and 2008. The ruling by the International Court of Arbitration was made after a hearing in Lusaka. The lawyer acting for Amari, Ian Small-Smith said: 'They seemingly still don't appreciate how adversely this will impact the credibility of Zimbabwe as an investment destination.' (See: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-18/zimbabwe-face-s-mining-asset-seizure-over-canceled-joint-ventures> .)

- As Vigil activists celebrate Christmas, we want you to know that the suffering people of Zimbabwe are always in our thoughts, particularly at this time.

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the front table and put up the banners: Abigail Chidavayenzi, Tendai Chigariro, Garikai Mananje, Joyce Mbairatsunga, Esther Munyira, Ephraim Tapa and Kevin Wheeldon. Thanks to Esther and Kevin for looking after the front table, to Tendai, Abigail and Esther for handing out flyers, to Delice and Garikai for drumming and to Esther and Ephraim 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:** 13 signed the register.

## EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR Valentine's fundraising dinner dance.** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020 from 7 pm till late. Venue: to be advised.

- **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>