

With millions of Zimbabweans facing starvation, hospitals and schools collapsing in the rubble of the economy and civil servants rejecting a 98% pay rise as inadequate, President Mnangagwa is reported to be going ahead with a plan to buy fighter aircraft from Russia in exchange for minerals.

It is not clear what threat the planes are supposed to protect us from. Perhaps it is the Zimbabwe Council of Churches which has warned the government of 'all out chaos' if things continue as they are. 'Instability will grow and the state will need to use heavy repression to quell dissent due to the painful economic experiences' it predicted. It said dialogue in the country was the only viable option (see: <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/churches-warn-of-civil-unrest-if-govt-does-not-address-economic-challenges/>).

More likely the arms purchase from Russia reflects the government's increasing reliance on anti-Western autocratic regimes. This was seen in the recent vote at the United Nations on a resolution seeking to protect Rohingya Muslims from army atrocities in Myanmar (formerly Burma).

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya had to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh after their villages were burnt down by soldiers, accompanied by rapes and arbitrary arrests, tortures and deaths in detention. Perhaps Zanu PF identified themselves with Myanmar's military government given President Mnangagwa's role at the centre of the Gukurahundi genocide. Zimbabwe was one of only nine countries to vote against the resolution, which was passed with an overwhelming majority.

'Shameful', said MDC Secretary for Education Fadzayi Mahere. 'Ours is a government that has no moral or legal difficulty with soldiers killing civilians'. Exiled former minister Jonathan Moyo said: 'The lie of a new dispensation in Zimbabwe is exposed. Zimbabwe did not vote at the UN with its SADC neighbours, not with its African Union comrades and not with the Commonwealth it is so desperate to rejoin.' (See: <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/politicians-rights-defenders-express-shock-over-zims-support-of-rohingya-muslims-suppression/>).

Mnangagwa is now on three weeks' leave – perhaps it's so he can spend time on his farm

calming down his wife Auxillia, who has fallen out with the Herald's former acting editor Tichaona Zindoga, who accused her of being publicity-hungry, demanding to be followed everywhere by a dedicated media team from the Herald and the ZBC to report on her do-goodings.

Zindoga, who was fired by the Herald last October, said: 'It makes one uplifted when you can no longer be associated with such garbage (see: <https://www.zimlive.com/2020/01/08/publicity-hungry-auxillia-mnangagwa-branded-herald-editor-snake-in-the-carpet/>).

### **Other points**

- The Italian football authority La Liga says it is 'extremely disappointed' that more than 1,000 footballs it donated for the development of grassroots football in Zimbabwe appear to have been misappropriated by ZIFA's former chief Philip Chiyanga (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/01/la-liga-angry-over-missing-donated-balls/>).

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the front table and put up the banners: Patience Chimba, Yvonne Jacobs, Josephine Jombe, Jonathan Kariwo, Charles Mararirakwenda, Patricia Masamba, Lucia Mudzimu, Washington Mugari, Margaret Munenge, Ephraim Tapa and Kevin Wheeldon. Thanks to Josephine, Margaret and Patricia for looking after the front table, to Yvonne, Kevin, Bigboy Sibanda, Simon Nyanhi and Beverley Mutandiro for handing out flyers, to Jonathan, Delice Gavazah, Mary Muteyerwa and Chido Makawa for drumming, to Lucia for leading the singing, to Jonathan for photos and to Rosemary Maponga who, on her birthday, brought hot drinks and cakes.

- Thanks to those generous activists who have contributed to ROHR's Mtoko Irrigation Project: Patience Chimba, Pamela Chirimuta, Simbarashe Jingo, Dambudzo Marimira, Margaret Munenge, Molly Ngavaimbe, Ephraim Tapa and Kevin Wheeldon.

- 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:** 32 signed the register.

### **EVENTS AND NOTICES:**

- **ROHR general members' meeting.** Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January from 11.30 am. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, South Bank Centre, Belvedere Road SE1 8XX. Contact: Ephraim Tapa 07940793090, Patricia Masamba 07708116625, Esther Munyira 07492058107.

- **ROHR Valentine's fundraising dinner dance.** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 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://ww](http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/)

[w.rohrzimbabwe.org/](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-Intern](https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/)  
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ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>