

After nearly 18 years of weekly protests outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London the Vigil could not take place this Saturday because of the highly contagious coronavirus. With the death toll from the disease mounting exponentially, the UK government has banned public gatherings, closed cafes and bars and advised that social interaction and travel be kept to a minimum. Scientists and medical experts here say conditions may be relaxed in four months but warn that it may be a year before normal life resumes.

Vigil activists want to continue the campaign for a better Zimbabwe and the Vigil is looking at ways we can do this without physically meeting on the street. We are particularly anxious to continue fundraising for our sister organisation Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe.

We will keep you informed through the Vigil diary, which will continue to comment on how we see the situation in Zimbabwe, which appears to be reaching another crunch point with the arrival of the coronavirus, apart from the ever-devaluing currency and ever-rising inflation (now put at over 1,000% by American observer Professor Steve Hanke).

All shall be well says President Mnangagwa but can you trust his word? He has just flown off to Namibia for the inauguration of President Hage Geingob despite having said the government would observe a travel ban (See: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/10/365721/World/Africa/Zimbabwe-president-defies-own-travel-ban-over-coro.aspx>).

This week he also banned all public gatherings attended by more than 100 people but the next day he addressed a rally attended by thousands of supporters (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/03/ed-breaks-own-covid-19-decree/>

).

Earlier he told visitors to his farm: ‘At this farm, we have plenty of livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and countless poultry. From all those we eat whatever we want when we feel like’ – this despite recently telling Zimbabweans to eat vegetables and potatoes because ‘meat is not good for you’ (see: <https://nehandaradio.com/2020/03/14/i-eat-plenty-of-meat-at-my-farm-mnangagwa-tells-starving-villagers/>

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At least Mnangagwa is consistently inconsistent!

Other points

- Latest developments in the government corruption saga: former boss of the Zimbabwe National Road Authority Frank Chitukutuku faces losing six houses, a fleet of cars and several companies. He is accused by the National Prosecuting Authority of approving questionable contracts that prejudiced Zinara of US\$39 million in connivance with rural district officials and road engineers (see: <https://www.herald.co.zw/zinara-corruption-saga-opens-can-of-worms/>).

- Former Local Government Minister Ignatius Chombo has been luckier. It seems he will escape a charge of criminal abuse of office because a crucial document is ‘missing’ (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/03/ex-minister-chombo-off-the-hook/>

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- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil

photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

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](http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/)

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. 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>