

You would have to have a heart of stone not to laugh at President Mnangagwa assuring the people that everything is on course for Zimbabwe to be a middle-income country within 10 years.

In his latest state of the nation address he blamed people's suffering on 'illegal' sanctions, the weather, the Covid-19 pandemic and western attempts to undermine his government.

He was particularly annoyed with what he called 'destructive terrorist opposition groupings' whom he accused of working with foreign detractors who, he said, fear the 'inevitable imminent success of our reforms'.

Nevertheless, these 'dark forces' would be overcome and progress would continue and corruption ended. 'Now is the time to look forward, as one people – a united people. Let us press on with vigour and hope; hand-in-hand, in unity and love nothing is impossible. Forward ever, backward never.' (See: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/1091-president-mnangagwas-address-to-the-nation-> .)

In the light of the President's criticism of the West it was somewhat surprising that they featured at the top of a list of donors to help Zimbabwe deal with the pandemic. Finance Minister Ncube said more than \$200 million had been received - \$45 million from the UK alone.

One of the 'dark forces' mentioned by Mnangagwa was no doubt the anti-government grassroots campaign #ZimbabweanLivesMatter. Novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga, out on bail after being arrested for taking part in a street protest on 31st July, said: 'I was in the holding cells with two men who had been tortured. One has severe kidney damage . . . I am just grateful the world has taken the [#ZimbabweanLivesMatter] message seriously. Things seem to be coming to such a head now that it is impossible to look away.'

The hashtag campaign appears to have unnerved the regime. The journalist Mduduzi Mathuthu told the BBC in a phone interview from the hiding place in which he took refuge after being told the police were looking for him, that his nephew was subsequently abducted and dumped on the roadside with extensive bruising, huge sub-cutaneous tissue damage and acute kidney injuries.

Mathuthu said: 'Instead of listening to the legitimate concerns raised by so many Zimbabweans, President Mnangagwa has . . . discarded the last veneer of a reformist,' He added: 'His shock troops have their marching orders and we should brace for a brutal campaign against those demanding change.' (See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-53665900> .)

### **Other Points:**

- Zanu PF is particularly vicious to defectors. The journalist Hopewell Chin'ono, who supported Mnangagwa when he took over from Mugabe but later wrote articles exposing government corruption, has now been removed from remand to Chikarubi maximum security prison awaiting trial for inciting violence.
- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have a virtual Vigil while the lockdown continues. We ask our activists to put on Vigil / ROHR / Zimbabwe regalia and take a photo of themselves holding an

appropriate poster reflecting our protest against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The photos are uploaded on our Flickr site.

- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

### **Events and Notices:**

- **ROHR's Fundraising Walk for Freedom.** Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August. A 20 mile walk starting at Redbridge Station IG4 5DQ at 9 am and finishing at the Zimbabwe Embassy in London. For more information, contact: Esther Munyira 07492058107, Rangarirai Chivaviro 07378429599 and Benjamin Molife 07490909900.

- **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/>

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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>