

A massive power blackout ushered in SADC's summit in Harare at which fireworks over xenophobic attacks in South Africa burst the organisation's usual backslapping bubble of hypocrisy.

Reports say President Khama left early to fly home to Botswana after joining President Zuma in asking the pointed question: 'Why are people fleeing their own countries?' lifting the lid on the forbidden topics of misgovernance and oppression.

A defensive Zuma had earlier noted that he had been told by an immigrant: 'If you raise your voice (in my country) you disappear'. Was he perhaps referring to Itai Dzamara abducted by the CIO in Harare on 9th March and 'disappeared' without trace?

In his opening speech, a floundering Mugabe said neighbouring countries should do more to prevent their people going to South Africa and urged migrants to return home.... hardly an attractive prospect for Zimbabweans.

The majority of Zimbabwean migrants, he claimed, go to work on farms – leaving unanswered the question of why they weren't working on farms in Zimbabwe. After all we are told there is yet another food shortage.

The summit was called to discuss regional industrialization strategy. Who better to pontificate on this than Mugabe given his extensive experience of destroying industry, which fell last year to 36.3% average capacity utilization. It hasn't got any better since then.

But it was not just Mugabe's blithe hypocrisy that was on parade. The South African government is itself a champion in this field. Despite its promotion of 'ubuntu' it has consistently put the interests of brother presidents above the welfare of their people.

The Vigil wrote to President Zuma when the latest outbreak of xenophobia broke out a few weeks ago warning that his support of Mugabe would inevitably mean that even more Zimbabwean refugees would flee to South Africa. We said: *'We hold South Africa responsible for the desperate situation in our country caused by your unwavering support for the oppressive Mugabe regime, publicly displayed only recently during Mugabe's visit to South Africa. We warn you that until you change sides and support instead the democratic aspirations of our oppressed people you will never see an end to the tide of refugees fleeing Zimbabwe.'*

(See:

<http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/press-releases/682-vigil-protests-17th-april-2015>

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Even Mugabe has acknowledged the truth of this, observing that many Zimbabweans were saying they would go back to South Africa despite the attacks.

Other points

- The hypocrisy of Mugabe and SADC is matched by the weasel words of the International Monetary Fund, which claims to have detected ‘meaningful progress’ in Zimbabwe (see: Zimbabwe: First Review Under the Staff-Monitor Program-Staff Report; and Press Release – <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.aspx?sk=42869.0>). Desperate Zimbabweans fleeing the country will not be persuaded that there is likely to be any progress under Mugabe despite the IMF’s diplomatic fudging.

- A meeting of the Zimbabwe Action Forum after the Vigil discussed a proposed diaspora charter. People were asked to think of themes for this for our next meeting which will discuss activism.

- The Vigil was interested to see that an idea we discussed at our last Zimbabwe Action Forum was echoed in last week’s UK Sunday Times which reported: *‘Britain has taken the lead in a push to set up ‘processing camps’ in north Africa and the Middle East to stem the tide of boat people . . . people rescued from the sea would be sent to the camps, which would also serve as first stops for those seeking asylum. They would be managed by international organisations and funded by EU states’*

(see our diary of 18

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April:

[http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/683-let-them-drown-zimbabwe-vigil-diary-18th-april-201](http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/683-let-them-drown-zimbabwe-vigil-diary-18th-april-2015)

[5](http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/683-let-them-drown-zimbabwe-vigil-diary-18th-april-2015)

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- On Thursday 30th April a group of Vigil supporters sang and danced at a fundraising event organized by the charity the Ruth Hayman Trust held at Morley College in central London. The charity provides educational grants to immigrants. The performers from the Vigil were: Cephas Maswoswa, Fungayi Mabhunu, Fungisai Mupandira, Ishmael Makina, Mary Muteyerwa, Mavis Chisvo and Patricia Masamba.

- 'Failure by the government to deliver basic services is the powder keg that will trigger an uprising in Zimbabwe', says Tendai Kwari of the UK branch of Itai Dzamara's Occupy Africa Unity Square movement. For his full article see our campaign page: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/686-failure-by-the-government-to-deliver-basic-services-is-the-powder-keg-that-will-trigger-an-uprising-in-zimbabwe>

- A Vigil supporter reports that he received the following text message from home on Workers' Day, May 1: 'Here we are celebrating Vendors' Day a brainchild of ZimAsset'.

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up: Eunice Mucherechedzo, Pearl Shambare, Joseph Chivayo and Fungayi Mabhunu and to Eunice for looking after the front table. Thanks to Epiphania Phiri and Deborah Harry for fundraising for the Vigil.

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

FOR THE RECORD: 46 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **[12 Years: Zimbabwe Association Exhibition Launch.](#)** Tuesday 5th May from 6 – 8 pm. Venue: Oxford House in Bethnal Green, Derbyshire Street, London E2 6HG. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery and shares the oral histories of Zimbabwean asylum seekers' experiences in the UK from 2001 to the present. This exhibition contains material from the Zimbabwe Association archive, an extensive collection of records of individual cases, legal documents, press cuttings, reports, correspondence, and TV and radio recordings. To book: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/12-years-zimbabwe-association-exhibition-launch-tickets-16235246058?ref=enivtefor001&invite=NzczMTg2NS9jby1vcmRpbmF0b3JAemltdmlnaWwuY28udWsvMA%3D%3D&utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=inviteformalv2&ref=enivtefor001&utm_term=attend

- **ROHR Slough Branch general meeting.** Saturday 9th May from 11 am – 1 pm. Venue: Upton Lea Community Hall, Wexham Road, Slough SL2 5JW. Contact Patricia Masamba (Chair) 07708116625, Nkosikona Tshabangu (Vice-Chair) 07926977646, Fungisai Mupandira (Organising Secretary) 07758958803.

- **ROHR Leicester branch meeting.** Saturday 9th May from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Methodist Church 10a Bishop Street, Town Hall Square, Leicester LE1 6AF. Time: 2pm – 5pm. For more information please contact Mr Linton Magume 07577555683, Mrs Enniah Dube 07403439707 and Miss Hilda Gwesele 07939126819.

- **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.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 16th May from 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. From the Vigil it's about a 10 minute walk, in the direction away from Trafalgar Square. The Strand Continental is situated on the south side of the Strand between Somerset House and the turn off onto Waterloo Bridge. The entrance is marked by a sign at street level. It's between a newsagent and an optician. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF)** meets regularly after the Vigil to discuss ways to help those back in Zimbabwe to fight oppression and achieve true democracy.

- **Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 16th May from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting.** Saturday 30th May at 12 noon. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL.

- **Zimbabwe Yes We Can Movement** holds monthly meetings in London as the political face of ROHR and the Vigil.

- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2014** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/642-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2014>
. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2014 Highlights page.

- **Facebook pages:**

Vigil: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8157345519&ref=ts>

ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.co/pages/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights/301811392835>

- SW Radio Africa's website and sound archive is being hosted on www.archive.org . Go to

the site and type in swradioafrica which will link you to snapshots of their site over the years and at the top of that page a link to their website where, under podcasts, you will find the audio.