

There are big issues facing leaders at the African Union Summit in Johannesburg's salubrious Sandton. But the Vigil believes that AU Chair Mugabe is not the person who can deal with them.

The theme of the meeting is worthy: 'Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063'. Mugabe will no doubt make some appropriate noises although he is certainly doing his best to prevent a woman taking over from him. But, to be frank, there is a possibility that he may not still be around in 48 years' time.

Women's empowerment is the public face of the summit. But behind closed doors more immediately troubling problems will be raised – apart from the unexpected legal threat to Sudan's President al-Bashir. The headline issue is the resurgence of xenophobia in South Africa but in reality this has already been exhausted at the SADC Summit in Harare six weeks ago when President Zuma asked plaintively why the incompetence of Zimbabwe and other sanctimonious neighbours was forcing their peoples to seek El Dorado in South Africa, causing unrest among the natives (see Vigil diary of 2nd May: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/687-a-feast-of-hypocrisy--zimbabwe-vigil-diary-2nd-may-2015>).

The Vigil hopes AU leaders will address the broader question of the global migration crisis. Surely this is something of particular concern to Africa? If the AU is to play any meaningful role, apart from working out what the position of women will be in 2063, it should discuss the implications of this mass exodus and come up with ideas on how they can encourage people to stay at home and develop the continent rather than fleeing to the West.

Apart from the refugees from the ferment in the Middle East and Afghanistan / Pakistan, and the steady exodus from impoverished drowning countries like Bangladesh, there are many countries in Africa where the main goal in life is to escape to Europe. These include not only the hellhole of Eritrea but even our biggest nation, Nigeria.

The Zimbabwean economist and opposition MP Eddie Cross has been looking at the migration statistics for Zimbabwe. In brief, he says that if the growth trend at independence had continued our population would now number 30 million. The latest census puts in at 13 million. Where are the missing 17 million? Mr Cross suggests that some 10 million are essentially victims of the incompetent Zanu PF regime. The other 7 million – half the current population – have simply got up and gone (see: <http://www.eddiecross.africanherd.com/> – The collateral damage of poor governance – 06/06/2015).

With some half a million desperate people – mainly young men – gathering on the shores of North Africa who are prepared to risk their lives with unscrupulous people smugglers in the hope of getting to Europe, and – closer to us – thousands trying to smuggle themselves clinging to lorries and trains from Calais to Britain, the Vigil thinks that the African Union should 'make a plan' to minimize the suffering and look at the costs and benefits of migration.

Why, for instance, should Britain's National Health Service recruit doctors and nurses from the third world, where they are desperately needed? Should not the developed countries at least compensate the countries of origin for the costs of training these recruits? We believe that a dialogue between Africa and Europe on migration is long overdue.

In a BBC radio discussion of the issue, an Oxford professorial fellow on third world issues, Paul Collier, said Europe does not have a moral duty to fulfil the dreams of migrants (see: Moral Maze 10/06/2015 – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05xh31j>). Maybe not, but the Vigil thinks there are obligations. We have put forward our own suggestions for a way out of this impasse, involving UN protection zones in areas of conflict where migrants could be looked after while their asylum claims are assessed (see Vigil 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)

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Other points

· Apart from the low turnout at the by-elections boycotted by the MDC-T, the most notable thing for us at the Vigil was the frank comment made by a relative of the suspended Zanu PF Harare provincial chairman Amos Midzi, whose body was found at his farm last week. The relative said: ‘As you know for long Cde Midzi was more than a political godfather of Harare, he was a revered person. He used to control most land deals and housing co-operatives in the process pocketing good money, but after being kicked out of the party, that became impossible’

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Gamatox, Weevils clash at Midzi funeral –

<http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/gamatox-weevils-clash-at-midzi-funeral/>

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· Prayers were said at the Vigil for the missing human rights activist Itai Dzamara. We were interested to see the following comment by a Zimbabwean foreign affairs official: ‘ Our embassies are under a lot of pressure, particularly in South Africa and the UK. There are demonstrations over Dzamara on a daily basis and the situation is bad in Britain because police in that country have given the demonstrators the greenlight to do as they please’ (see: <http://nehandaradio.com/2015/06/07/missing-dzamara-haunts-mugabe/>)

). We relayed the comment to a contact in the police. His response was:

‘Do as they please?’ Well within reason. If letting people safely gather in a public place to express (within the confines of legislation) a view is to allow someone to do as they please then regrettably I’ll have to plead guilty I suppose. What’s the penalty?

The Vigil is to hold a protest on 11

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July to mark 4 months since Dzamara’s abduction by the CIO.

· Today at the Vigil we launched our new petition: ***‘To the UK Prime Minister: Exiled Zimbabweans, supporters and friends, at the Vigil outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, record our disgust at the anti-white rants of Zimbabwe’s illegitimate President Mugabe. We wish to affirm our unwavering support of Zimbabwe’s constitutional requirement for non-racism.’***

We have arranged to present the petition to 10 Downing Street at 4 pm on Saturday 27

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June. Logistics for the day are to be discussed at the Zimbabwe Action Forum after the Vigil next Saturday.

· We were joined by members of our sister organization the Swaziland Vigil who had earlier managed to confront the Swaziland High Commissioner on her way to the Trooping the Colour ceremony, demanding to know why there was no democracy in Swaziland. We have received an email from the Zimbabwe Youth Forum demanding the release of Swazi human rights activists. We have passed this on to the Swaziland Vigil.

· We were entertained by the sight of more than a hundred naked cyclists on their annual ride through London. The ride was to demonstrate the vulnerability of cyclists. It certainly demonstrated the necessity of clothes.

· Thanks to those who arrived early to help start the Vigil: Charity Jere, Epiphania Phiri, Nobukhosi Moyo, Kudzai Mujawo, Fungayi Mabhunu, Mary Muteyerwa, David Kadzutu and Peter Sidindi. Hats off to Kudzai who caught the coach in Middlesbrough at 11.30 on Friday night arriving in London at 5 am. She spent Saturday afternoon at the Vigil and was to catch her coach at midnight and would arrive back in Middlesbrough at 5.30 am.

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

FOR THE RECORD: 36 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 20th June 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.
- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 20th June from 12 noon – 2 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. Contact: Chair: Fungayi Mabhunu 07907089899, Organising Secretary: Mavis Chisvo 07944612944.

- **ROHR Middlesbrough General Meeting.** Saturday 27th June from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Teesside University, Student Centre, Clarendon Building TS1 3BA. For more information please contact Angeline Huni (Chairperson) on 07871367239
Levinia S Ncube (Secretary) 07404772407, Ndumiso Ncube (Organising Secretary) 07532080247.

- **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.w.rohrzimbabwe.org/>
· Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents us.

- **Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting.** Saturday 27th June 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.

- **Presentation of petition to 10 Downing Street.** Saturday 27th June at 4 pm. Logistics for the day are to be discussed at the Zimbabwe Action Forum after the Vigil on Saturday, 20th June

- **Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 27th June from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **Vigil's Itai Dzamara Protest.** Saturday 11th July from 2 – 6 pm. The protest is to mark 4 months since Dzamara's abduction by the CIO.

- **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.