

The European Union says nothing is happening in Zimbabwe about reforms. EU Ambassador Timo Olkkonen insisted: 'We want to see a faster pace in implementing reforms'. Olkkonen noted that the recommendations of the Motlanthe Commission into the post-election shootings in Harare and the recommendations by various election commissions had been ignored.

He observed that if there had been a functioning, viable agricultural sector Zimbabwe would not need outside support. 'Likewise in the economic sector what we are seeing is a result of years and years of mismanagement and it requires a head-on tackling of issues such as corruption'.

The ambassador repeated the need for political stakeholders to come together to talk about how to go forward as a nation. But, despite the deepening economic crisis, this seems to be as far away as ever. MDC leader Nelson Chamisa has just returned from a visit to South Africa where he had talks with senior government officials and former President Mbekei.

Chamisa said he had told them that the situation in Zimbabwe was threatening to degenerate into complete chaos unless there was immediate intervention. He reported Mbeki as saying that there was a shared anxiety in the region and on the continent and that he would be coming back to Zimbabwe soon to resume the talks he'd begun there last month.

The Zimbabwean Foreign Ministry is meanwhile briefing emissaries from the controversial Political Actors' Dialogue (POLAD) made up of leaders of fringe opposition parties, who are being sent on visits to several countries. Chamisa has refused to take part in POLAD, claiming it is unrepresentative and a government stooge (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/01/eu-be-moans-slow-pace-of-reforms/>).

Two influential US senators have called on their government to update sanctions against Zimbabwe. They said: '*While the United States has been the top provider of humanitarian and development aid to meet the needs of Zimbabwe's people, the government of Zimbabwe has implemented a misinformation campaign blaming the country's woes on targeted sanctions . . . given the developments in Zimbabwe over the last two years, we urge you to consider enhancing the tools at your disposal, including the use of targeted sanctions, to incentivize changes in behaviour by the government of Zimbabwe.*' (See: <https://ihare.com/us-calls-for-more-sanctions-on-zim/>).

Other points

- Given the high unemployment rate, it seems odd that – as reported by the Masvingo Mirror – there is a critical shortage of maids, posing a problem for working mothers in particular. There is a similar shortage of farm labourers caused by mass emigration. Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions' President Peter Mutasa said the local currency had lost so much value that maids found it pointless to work for RTGS \$100, which is now only worth US\$5. For an insight into how Zanu PF has exploited the currency crisis to enrich itself see the article by Thandekile Moyo: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-01-28-zimbabwes-economy-is-run-by-master-criminals-who-are-fleeing-the-poor/>

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the front table and put up the banners: Happy Chazuza, Jonathan Kariwo, Godfrey Katerere, Rosemary Maponga, Washington Mugari, Esther Munyira, Tapiwa Muskwe, Mary Muteyerwa, Ephraim Tapa, Kevin Wheeldon and Nattalie Zvoma. Thanks to Rosemary Maponga and Farai Mutumburi for looking after the front table, to Kevin, Nattalie, Esther and Elleriah Saili for handing out flyers, to Mary, Delice Gavazah and Ephraim for drumming and to Jonathan for photos. Thanks also to Rosemary for bringing tea, coffee and cakes.

- 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: 18--- signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR general members' meeting.** Saturday 8th February 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 15th February from 6 pm till late. Venue: 38 Marcon Place, London E8 1LP. The event is in aid of women living with HIV/AIDS in rural Zimbabwe. Tickets £30. Contact: Esther Munyira 07492058107, Molly Ngavaimbe 07415443973, Patricia Masamba 07708116625 and Margaret Munenge 07384300283.

- **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

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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.

- **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>

The Vigil, outside the Zimbabwe Embassy, 429 Strand, London, takes place every Saturday from 14.00 to 17.00 to protest against gross violations of human rights in Zimbabwe. The Vigil which started in October 2002 will continue until internationally-monitored, free and fair elections are held in Zimbabwe. <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk> .