

Zimbabwe Vigil Diary – 10th January 2009

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 10 August 2016 21:03 - Last Updated Wednesday, 10 August 2016 21:03

A freezing Vigil – one of the coldest we can recall in the six years or so we have been protesting outside the Embassy. It was one of those days when it seemed too cold for snow, though there were fine flakes. Some passers-by came and joined in the dancing to keep warm. We were also joined for a while by a Zimbabwean farmer who was beaten up and driven off his land six years ago. He still lives in Zimbabwe and, given the weather here, is probably looking forward to going home . . .

Supporters were interested to learn from SW Radio Africa that the Mujurus' daughter, Nyasha, is apparently heavily involved in dealing in Africa's 'blood' gold on behalf of the 'family firm'. She lives in Spain with her Spanish husband . . . for the moment! It cheered us to have some of the murky dealings between our kleptocratic leaders coming out into the open.

The Vigil has long suspected that the alliances between some SADC leaders are based on corrupt financial dealings principally involving the exploitation of the benighted DRC (see: <http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/hotseat090109.htm>).

The Vigil has supported the campaign to allow failed asylum seekers in the UK the right to work. A demonstration is to be held outside 10 Downing Street on Tuesday 13th January.

For more information check: 'For your Diary' below.

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A few points from today:

- With the cold weather, some people at the Vigil were not very well but nevertheless spent the whole time with us. We salute them.
- The Reverend Bill Crews from Australia, who has been very helpful to Sekai Holland, stopped by and outlined plans to help Zimbabwe once there is a new government.

It was good to have him with us.

- A Zimbabwean couple came past who were marking their golden wedding anniversary. They were staying at a local hotel where they had spent their honeymoon.
- We were delighted to hear that Vigil team member Arnold Kuwewa's papers have finally come through.
- Word from the front table: we actually had a South African who was prepared to sign our petition calling on FIFA to move the World Cup from South Africa next year.

As mentioned last week we are publishing information about the activities last year of Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe. ROHR was founded in 2007 out of the Vigil's need for a presence on the ground in Zimbabwe to create a democratic space where people can act without fear. This week we are covering their activities in Zimbabwe for the first six months of 2008. (Next week we will report on the second half of the year). We also report on ROHR activities in the UK and South Africa last year.

ROHR in Zimbabwe

25th January – 200 ROHR activists led by Stendrick Zvorwardza demonstrated in Harare carrying banners demanding peace, justice and freedom. They were beaten up by police and Sten and others, including ROHR Chairman Tichanzii Gandanga, were arrested. (23 were seriously injured including 2 ladies with broken arms. Sten was released on Monday, 28/01.)

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10th February – Sten detained again. Text message from him to the Vigil “I have been brutalized by soldiers and arrested for saying Zanu PF is causing the suffering of Zimbabweans. I am in police custody and am in pain. Have been denied treatment. Despite all this, my spirit for fighting for our rights is getting stronger by the day.” (Sten was released a few days later but was being closely watched.)

26th April – Ephraim Tapa, President of ROHR, reported that ROHR official Tichanzii Gandanga had been abducted on Tuesday (22/04) and found in the bush 80 miles east of Harare on Thursday very badly injured. Apparently he was forced to lie down on the road and then his abductors drove over his legs four times.

3rd May – ROHR activists were at the Vigil in force to express their abhorrence at the violence being inflicted on opposition supporters. Stendrick briefed the Vigil on ROHR’s plans for actions in Zimbabwe.

18th May – ROHR activists Godfrey Kauzani and Cain Nyeve, who were abducted last week by state security agents, have been found dead in Goromonzi. Cain Nyeve's eyes were missing, suggesting that he was tortured.

21st May – ROHR has learnt with shock of the murder of Tonderai Ndira (33), one of its members, who was abducted from his Mabvuku home on Wednesday 14th May by 9 heavily armed police. Ndira was also the Provincial Secretary for Security in MDC-T.

21st May – At the burial of Cain Nyeve and Godfrey Kauzani a mob of more than 100 Zanu PF thugs drove away mourners with stones and sticks leaving behind the two coffins in uncovered graves.

22nd June – Over 300 people gathered at the Grace Ablaze Ministries International church to join ROHR in commemorating the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. ROHR pledged 30 blankets and groceries for the victims of violence who were present at the event.

ROHR in the UK

Ephraim Tapa, President, and Paradzai Mapfumo, UK Co-ordinator, have worked hard to build UK

support structures for ROHR in Zimbabwe

. They have travelled the length and breadth of the UK and launched the following branches: Bradford – 17th August, Birmingham – 13th September, Ashford -

14th September, Liverpool – 21st September, Stoke-on-Trent – 27th September, Brighton – 4th October, South West London – 19th October, Wolverhampton – 25th October, Manchester – 1st November, Newcastle-upon-Tyne – 2nd November, Coventry – 8th November, West Yorkshire – 15th November, Glasgow – 22nd November, Bournemouth – 30th November, Hatfield – 6th December, Reading – 7th December, Leicester – 13th December.

In addition ROHR held a protest outside the Catholic Cathedral in Birmingham on 4th May and had an audience with Archbishop Nichols, who expressed his support. The new ROHR website was launched on 1st November – thanks to David McAllister for his hard work on this.

ROHR Liverpool's weekly protests started on 15th November.

ROHR in South Africa

May – Ephraim Tapa, ROHR President and Vigil founder member, visited Johannesburg at the invitation of South African activists who wanted to join up with the ROHR project.

On 17th May he reported to the Vigil on his visit.

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He said he had made contact with many Zimbabwean exiles and told us of the difficulties of their lives there.

People without papers were constantly stopped by the authorities and money demanded. In the case of women who had no money they were often raped. He said that for Zimbabwean women the formula was: no papers + no money = rape. Zimbabweans in South Africa were very keen to start a ROHR protest group.

10th December – ROHR Zimbabwe SA Chapter was joined by comrades from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to mark World Human Rights Day. They protested against the rising spate of abductions, torture, arbitrary arrests and abuse of civic leaders, members of the opposition and ordinary Zimbabweans. They also protested against the SADC resolution on both Zimbabwe and the DRC, arguing that the regional leaders had chosen to stand in solidarity with dictatorships against defenceless citizens. About 700 activists were at the Union Building gardens to hand over a petition to SADC chairman and SA President Kgalema Motlanthe.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/>

FOR THE RECORD: 190 signed the register.

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FOR YOUR DIARY:

· **Citizens for Sanctuary Campaign for Zimbabweans to be allowed to work.** On Tuesday 13th January

they will be handing over Zimbabwean CVs to

10 Downing Street

. 10.30

meet in the chapel at Methodist Central Hall (Storey's Gate, London

,
SW1H 9NH

) for a briefing

.
12 noon

assemble in Richmond Terrace opposite

10 Downing Street

.
Photocall at 12.30 and at

12:45

a delegation of six Zimbabweans will enter

Downing Street

and deliver a

dossier of CVs

collected from Zimbabweans in the

UK

who have skills that are going to waste and want to work. For more info

contact Jonathan Cox, Lead Organiser,

Citizens for Sanctuary

Campaign: 07919 484 066 and

Chipo Chaya of the Zimbabwe Vigil: 07904 395 496.

· **ROHR Launch Meeting in Northampton.** Saturday 17 January at Alliston Gardens

Community Centre,

2 Adelaide Street

,
Northampton

NN2 6AR

from 1330-1730hrs. Contact Anthony Chimimba 07799855806, Shenete Vushe 07818661362,

Angeline Nehanda 07915085123. N

· **Next Glasgow Vigil.** Saturday 17th January, 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Argyle Street Precinct.

For more information contact: Patrick Dzimba, 07990 724 137

, Tafadzwa Musemwa 07954 344 123 and Roggers Fatiya 07769 632 687

· **ROHR Newcastle General Meeting.** Saturday 24 January at 61 Bishops Benwell NE15

6RY

Newcastle from 1400 - 1730 hrs. Contact:

Linda Chingwinyiso 07894142263, Joseph Madziva 07905850073 or Fadzai Mudekwa

07727221873.

· **Unite Zimnite.** Saturday 24th January at 7 pm. King's College London's student-led

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charity Project

Zimbabwe

is holding a fundraiser for

Zimbabwe

. The event is an African themed open mic night with over 8 acts coming to perform.

Money raised will go towards their MedYouth Project, a life skills programme being taught to school children in

Bulawayo

next summer. Venue: Function Room, Walkabout,

Temple

. Cost: £10/£5NUS. For more information, check:

<http://www.kclprojectzimbabwe.blogspot.com/>

· **‘The Agony of Zimbabwe, What Chance for Change?’** Monday 9th February, 6.45 – 8.45 pm

Talk by Christina Lamb Foreign Affairs Correspondent for the Sunday Times. Hosted by Friends of Le Monde diplomatique. Venue: the Gallery, 70/77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ (near Farringdon Tube station).

For more information

check: <http://monde-diplo-friends.org.uk/calendar.htm> .

· **Zimbabwe Association’s Women’s Weekly Drop-in Centre.** Fridays 10.30 am – 4 pm.

Venue: T

he Fire Station

Community and ICT Centre,

84 Mayton Street

,
London

N7 6QT, Tel: 020 7607 9764. Nearest underground:

Finsbury

Park

. For more information contact the Zimbabwe Association 020 7549 0355 (open Tuesdays and Thursdays).