

We expected passers-by to ask why we were still protesting outside the Embassy now that the MDC has agreed to join the Mugabe government. Most people who stopped to talk to us seemed well-informed about developments and no-one was surprised the Vigil was continuing. Certainly, our supporters turned out in unprecedented numbers and few of them had any confidence that the deal would work, given Mugabe's failure to honour his undertakings in the power-sharing agreement of last September.

We expect to see Morgan in London soon on a begging mission. We believe there is a lot of support for extra humanitarian assistance but that he will face an uphill battle to get serious economic aid. The UK and the US have already made clear that they will wait and see before committing real money. In other words they will have to be satisfied it will not drain into the hands of the Mugabe cronies. This means the new government will have to prove a willingness to respect the rule of law: we do not believe that Zanu-PF has any idea what that means.

We accept that there may be secret understandings between the parties that we don't know about. Indeed, the bewildering policy flip-flops by the MDC would suggest that this is the case. But how do we know? Anyway, when Morgan comes to London we at the Vigil will still be protesting outside the Embassy with our banners 'No to Mugabe. No to Starvation' and 'End Murder, Rape and Torture in Zimbabwe'.
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' If he drops by the Embassy it will be the nearest he has come to us in our 6+ years here.

As Chipso Chaya and Arnold Kuwewa of the Vigil management team said 'we feel betrayed'. Patson Muzuwa, also of the management team, certainly drew strong support when he declared 'We don't want power-sharing, we want Mugabe to go'. Patson was introducing the dance troupe 'Umbane' who, despite the icy weather, donned traditional tribal costumes and entranced us with their close harmony Zimbabwean songs and athletic dances. Grateful thanks to the 6-man troupe: Sandile Mpande, Muzomkhulu Ndlovu, Christopher Moyo, Jeremiah Mutotela, Innocent Hlongwane and Owen Ncube.

The Vigil bought a cake to celebrate the return of Luka Phiri of the Vigil management team and the Zimbabwe Association who was released this week after being detained prior to threatened deportation. He joked that at least he was warmer in detention. Luka said he was deeply touched at the support he had received from the Zimbabwean community at large. For our part we were delighted to have back with us someone Fungayi Mabhunhu of the management team

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Written by Administrator

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described as a true revolutionary, working so hard for all Zimbabweans.

Ironically, the announcement of the unity government might cut the ground from under the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK. We fear the Home Office may say 'The opposition is now in government. You must return home and rebuild your country'. The Vigil will fight to stop people being sent home until the situation allows it.

The consensus from the Vigil is that a few months will show whether the unity government is working. In the meantime we have suspended our petitions targeting South Africa and SADC in favour of the following petition to the UK government: "In the light of the Zimbabwean power-sharing agreement, we call on the UK government to withhold development aid to Zimbabwe until it is clear that it will benefit the people rather than the corrupt Mugabe regime.'

For latest Vigil pictures check our pictures page

FOR THE RECORD: 290 signed the register.

FOR YOUR DIARY:

* **Next Glasgow Vigil.** Saturday 7th February, 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 Harlow Launch Meeting.** Saturday 7 February. Venue: St James and St Luke's Church, Perry Road, Harlow, CM18 7NP from 1 – 5 pm. Contact Clements Kuda Sabau on 07765831500 / 07853205523, Esther Makamo 07507949023, Lloyd Kashangura 07506481334 or P Mapfumo on 07915926323 or 07932216070

* **'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>

* **WOZA Solidarity Protest.** Saturday, 14th February, 12 – 2 pm, outside the Zimbabwe Embassy, 429 Strand

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London

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* **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).