

Zimbabwe Vigil Diary – 13th June 2009

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 14 June 2009 14:24 - Last Updated Sunday, 14 June 2009 14:32

After a week of unrelentingly bad news about Zimbabwe on the BBC, we arrived to scenes of Murambatsvina outside the Zimbabwe Embassy – a couple of down and outs basking in the sun surrounded by all their worldly possessions. Our problems were further compounded by the tardiness of the water board in removing their scruffy paraphernalia from our space between the four maple trees and two lamp-posts. But the sunshine cheered us up.

Vigil supporters discussed the forthcoming visit to the UK by Morgan Tsvangirai. He is to speak at 1 pm at Southwark Cathedral in South London next Saturday, 20th June and we agreed to be there before the Vigil to greet him with our banners 'No to Mugabe. No to Starvation' and 'End Murder Rape and Torture in Zimbabwe'. These have been our messages since the start of the Vigil seven years ago and it is distressing that they are as valid now as ever.

We will of course have the Vigil as normal and perhaps the Prime Minister may drop by – he is very welcome.

There was talk that Tsvangirai would be accompanied to the UK by two Zanu-PF ministers, Foreign Minister Simbarashe Mumbengengwi and the Minister of Mines Obert Mpofu. Both of them are on the targeted sanctions list and the Vigil approached the Foreign Office to protest at granting visas to these two Mugabe cronies.

We wrote: 'Dear Mr Miliband – We urge the UK government not to grant visas to Zimbabweans on the EU travel sanctions list. There are suggestions that two Zanu-PF leaders are to be part of a delegation led by the Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai this month.'

These officials, ZANU PF Foreign Affairs Minister Simbarashe Mumbengengwi and Obert Mpofu, ZANU PF's Minister of Mines, are deeply compromised.

We see no reason why they should be allowed to visit Europe

. The coalition government has clearly devolved responsibilities: Mugabe's Zanu-PF retains control of the military, the police, the judiciary, home affairs, the central bank, agriculture and information while the MDC is responsible for service delivery. Mr Tsvangirai does not need to be accompanied by Zanu-PF people on his begging mission to the West.'

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The Vigil has been assured that Mr Mpofu will not be part of the delegation. Our assumption is that Mumbengengwi will be allowed in under a dispensation allowing for 'dialogue'.

The Vigil does not accept the case for relaxing targeted sanctions against Mumbengengwi. But we think he makes a better companion for the Prime Minister than Tsvangirai's niece Dr Arikana Chihombori who accompanied him to the inauguration of President Zuma.

As you may know she is an American citizen and has a large medical practice in the US

where she has lived for 30 years. Nevertheless, she has seen fit to try to dispossess a Zimbabwean farmer for her holiday home.

Various points arise, among them the fact that Zimbabwe does not allow dual citizenship so how does she qualify for an 'offer letter'? The Vigil sent the following message to the US State Department 'Could the US Administration question Morgan Tsvangirai about his niece Dr Arikana Chihombori, who is a resident and has a medical practice in

US

Antioch

Tennessee

? She was chosen by Tsvangirai to accompany him recently to the inauguration of President Zuma of

South Africa

yet she is reportedly trying to seize a productive farm in Zimbabwe

like one of the Mugabe cronies (

<http://www.zwnews.com/issuefull.cfm?ArticleID=20968>

).'

We trust that the matter was taken up when the American administration talked to Tsvangirai. There are suggestions that Tsvangirai has been seriously embarrassed and his niece has apparently put a hold on her land grab.

Returning to the BBC's coverage of Zimbabwe, Vigil supporters watched the video of Sekai Holland being interviewed by BBC reporter Mike Thomson in which she spoke of plans to assassinate MDC ministers.

On the basis of this video and our knowledge of the BBC, we find her backtracking rather embarrassing.

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

FOR THE RECORD: 215 signed the register.

FOR YOUR DIARY:

· **Central London Zimbabwe Forum.** Monday 15th June at 7.30 pm. Has the MDC abandoned democratic change for fulltime statesmanship? Jason Matewu MDC-UK Organising Secretary debates with Innocent Chofamba Sithole former editor of the Daily Mirror

. Venue: downstairs at the

Bell and Compass,

9-11 Villiers Street, London, WC2N 6NA, next to Charing Cross Station at the corner of Villiers Street and John Adam Street.

· **Tsvangirai at Southwark Cathedral.** Saturday, 20th June from 1- 3 pm. Venue:

Southwark Cathedral,

London

SE1 9DA. Nearest station:

London

Bridge

. For directions check:

<http://cathedral.southwark.anglican.org/visit/how-to-find-us>

· **Service of solidarity with the torture survivors of Zimbabwe.** Friday 26th June from 7 – 8 pm. Venue: Southwark Cathedral. This is the 8th year the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum has marked UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. For more information, visit:

<http://www.hrforumzimbabwe.com>

[mzim.com](http://www.mzim.com)

· **Zimbabwe Vigil Forum.** Saturday 27th June at 6.30 pm. Upstairs at the Theodore

Bullfrog,

John Adam Street, Lon

don

WC2N 6HL.

· **ROHR Leeds general meeting.** Saturday 27th June from 1.30 – 5.30 pm. Venue: Dock

Green Inn,

Leeds LS9 7AB. Contact: Wonder M

Mubaiwa

07958758568, Donna

Mugoni

07533

259373

or B Sikosana

07940181761.

· **Zimbabwe Vigil Forum.** Saturday 25th July at 6.30 pm. Upstairs at the Theodore

Bullfrog,

John Adam Street, Lon

don

WC2N 6HL.

· **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

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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).