

The Vigil's petition to the EU calling for punitive action against SADC countries was presented in Brussels this week to the EU's Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Karel De Gucht (see: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/4106409524/> for picture). It was handed over by Geoffrey Van Orden, MEP for the East of England, who received it at a ceremony last month to mark the Vigil's seventh anniversary.

The petition reads: "A Petition to European Union Governments: We record our dismay at the failure of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to help the desperate people of Zimbabwe at their time of trial. We urge the UK government and the European Union in general to suspend government to government aid to all 14 SADC countries until they abide by their joint commitment to uphold human rights in the region. We suggest that the money should instead be used to feed the starving in Zimbabwe".

Our argument is that SADC countries have been derelict in their duty to Zimbabwe. Why should countries which support Mugabe's tyranny receive money from EU taxpayers? Why, for instance, should Malawi get £70 million in balance of payments support this year from the UK alone when its people face starvation because of a reckless loan to Mugabe, which predictably has not been repaid?

SADC has ordered urgent talks in Zimbabwe to resolve differences over the Global Political Agreement. But Mugabe has shown what he thinks of this by flying off to Rome with a retinue of 60 locusts to tell the UN World Food Summit how badly Zimbabwe has been treated. Will he mention that, according to the Zimbabwe Standard, the Commercial Farmers' Union predicts the worst harvest in Zimbabwe for ten years, with less than 500 tonnes of maize against national requirements of 1.8 million tonnes?

Zimbabwe Vigil Diary – 14th November 2009

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 15 November 2009 17:33 - Last Updated Sunday, 15 November 2009 17:40

There was much discussion at the Vigil of prospects for the talks and there was little optimism that they would get anywhere. There was also little gratitude to Congo and Angola for sending their professional torturers to help out the army in

Harare

interrogating soldiers accused of stealing weapons.

So what's the way forward? SADC is deluded if it thinks the West will give in to wild blackmail over sanctions and if SADC wants to avoid a meltdown in Zimbabwe it must order new internationally monitored free and fair elections, as urged by President Khama of Botswana

. If Mugabe refuses to play ball the region must let him go play ball by himself – until the world is forced to call the game off.

There was a good turnout for the Vigil despite a wet and blustery day – the most challenging conditions we have had for some time, with the wind threatening to whip away our tarpaulin at any moment.

Some points

- We were pleased to welcome Thobile Gwebu from Swaziland. She is planning a Swazi Vigil in London and she came to see how we did it. She was with us for the whole afternoon and joined in enthusiastically.

- Another visitor was Frank Johnson, our American friend who has given us trillions of Zimbabwe dollars to use for promotional purposes. Perhaps he knows that Mugabe is talking of printing Zimbabwean dollars again before the end of the year.

- Vigil supporters attended a media event in London this week for Betty Makoni, founder of Girl Child Network, who has been nominated as one of CNN's top ten heroes of 2009. Our friends Zimbabwe Broadcasting Network News covered the event. Go to

<http://www.zbnnews.com/home/index=80>

to see videos of Betty and Tare, the Zimbabwean girl who was brought to the UK

to have an operation for a severe facial tumor.

- Thanks to Caroline Rusike for her help in clearing up at the end of the Vigil. Bystanders were impressed when she carried the tables on her head to the car.

- Happy birthday to Vigil stalwarts Gladys Mapanda and Josephine Zhuga who both celebrated birthdays this week.

- 2 Vigil founder members came today after long absences: Jean-Francois Mercier, who now lives in South Africa, and Patience Chakanyuka. It was good to see them again.

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

FOR THE RECORD: 167 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

· **ROHR Derby general meeting.** Saturday 21st November from 1 – 6 pm. Venue: The Community Block, Pear Tree Community Junior School, Pear Tree Street

, Derby
DE23 8PN

. Substantive committee to be elected on the day. All ROHR interim national committee present. Free parking. Contact Tsitsi Razawe 7853508681, Chipso Nhandara 07767335586, Wonder Katurura 07858699224 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

· **ROHR Chelmsford general meeting.** Saturday 28th November. Venue: 3 Stars Trent Road, Chelmsford C M1 2LQ

. Present Amnesty International, Chelmsford Mayor, Chelmsford MP and ROHR Executive. Contact: R Mafigo 07944815190, Billy Machezano 07765459538, Martha A Magwaza 07748644911, Tendai Gwanzura 07772192679, Fungai Muzambi 07961635917 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

· **ROHR Christmas party.** Saturday 5th December 2009, time tba. Venue: Coronation Hall, Stoke Road, Water Eaton, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 3AB. Stations: Bletchley (nearest) or Central Milton Keynes

. Use Bus 5 from both stations. Parking: additional parking is available in the Veterinary Practice next door and on the gravelled area to the front of the Practice building. Further parking is available in the Plough Public House approx 100metres from the hall. Please don't obstruct the public footpath or highway or hamper access to the neighbouring properties. Contact: Martha Jiya 07727016098, Pamela Dunduru 07958386718, Jemias V Mujeyi 07534034594, Rodah Kulhengisa 07983057533 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

· **Zimbabwe Association's Women's Weekly Drop-in Centre.** Fridays 10.30 am – 4 pm. Venue: The Fire Station Community and ICT Centre, 84 Mayton Street

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

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Finsbury

Park

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

· **Strategic Internship for Zimbabweans** organised by Citizens for Sanctuary which is trying to secure work placements for qualified Zimbabweans with refugee status or asylum seekers. For information: <http://www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk/pages/Strategic.html>

or contact:

zimbabweinternship@cof.org.uk

· **Vote for Betty Makoni of Girl Child Network** as one of CNN's top ten heroes of 2009 via this link: <http://edition.cnn.com/SPE>

CIALS/cnn.heroes/