

Independence Day Protest – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary – 17th April 2010

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 18 April 2010 17:41 - Last Updated Sunday, 18 April 2010 17:47

Volcanic ash from Iceland 1,000 miles to the north dropped gently on the Vigil as we marked Zimbabwe

's 30

th

anniversary of

Independence

. Despite this it was a lovely sunny day and there was a big attendance at our anniversary demonstration during which we left thirty candles at the nearby South African High Commission to remind them of their obligation to help us achieve true independence. People left the Zimbabwe Embassy in small groups carrying banners and candles and left them on the steps of South Africa House around the corner on Trafalgar Square

.

We were glad to be joined by two champions of Zimbabwean freedom: Lovemore Matombo of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and Gabriel Shumba of the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum.

Lovemore Matombo said that despite the earlier progress after independence there was still a lack of freedom in Zimbabwe. The MDC seemed to have been lulled into submission and had become a continuation of the Mugabe regime. They had betrayed the people but the ZCTU would not give up the struggle. He said Zimbabwe was a rich country which had been plundered for the benefit of the few. He added that

Zimbabwe

's diamonds alone were enough to get the economy on track. Mr Matombo lamented what he called the fragmentation of civil society in

Zimbabwe

.

For his part Gabriel Shumba advised the diaspora that there must be rule of law in Zimbabwe before they could safely go home – so they would be free from harassment, torture and intimidation. He said people in the diaspora must be given the right to vote and dual citizenship should be allowed. He insisted there should be international observers on the ground during any election. Mr Shumba stressed the need for transitional justice. He said that people could not go home to

Zimbabwe

to find the perpetrators of the violence against them were still in place. He added that another demand was that

South Africa

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must protect Zimbabweans against xenophobic violence. He said he feared a resurgence of this after the World Cup.

Another visitor to the Vigil was Mr Mugabe (alias Reginald Gwasira in our Mugabe mask). He joined us at the South African High Commission with a placard reading 'Thanks Comrade Malema'.

He reappeared later outside the Zimbabwe Embassy with a bottle of wine and large glass and a placard reading 'Here's to another 30 years'.

Other points:

- Lovemore Matombo renewed acquaintance with his fellow trade unionist and one of the Vigil founders Ephraim Tapa (previously head of the civil service union). Lovemore told Vigil supporters of the severe torture Ephraim suffered in 2002 and how the ZCTU looked after him and arranged his escape. He said Ephraim was barely alive when he was found.
- For the first time ever one of our petitions has been signed by a pigeon. He unloaded his bowels on our demand that the UK should not lift sanctions against Mugabe. It must have been a stool pigeon.
- We were all delighted by the beautiful singing of a pair of songbirds in our maple trees completely oblivious to the hubbub below them. Also oblivious to reality is the Zimbabwean coalition government which has apparently decided 'that all key stakeholders interested or involved in addressing the debt crisis in Zimbabwe, in particular the IFIs (international financial institutions, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and African Development Bank) and western countries "must overtly acknowledge that Zimbabwe is operating under economic sanctions".' <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/business/24199-zim-debt-parties-find-common-ground.html> . Presumably if they don't Zimbabwe will refuse their food to feed the starving or their medicines to save the sick . . .
- It is impossible to say how many people attended the Vigil – certainly many more than signed the register. The sound of the drums thundered down the Strand.
- It was good to be joined by Violet of SW Radio Africa, Mark and Tony of ACTSA and Tor and Wiz of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum.
- On a very busy afternoon our thanks go to those who made our 'Lights for Freedom' protest possible: Jonathan Kariwoh who looked after back table throughout and sacrificed his chance to attend the activities at the SA High Commission, Luka Phiri who ran between the Embassy and the High Commission taking the Vigil photos and Dumi Tutani who stage managed the scenario at the South African High Commission.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check the link at the top of the home page of our website.

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For earlier ZimVigil TV programmes check:

<http://www.zbnnews.com/home/firingline>

FOR THE RECORD: 225 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR South East London general meeting.** Saturday 24th April from 1 – 3 pm. Venue: 1
6 Sydenham Road
, Sydenham,
London
SE24 5QW. Contact P Chitsinde 07897000075, C Chiromo 07894586005 or 07838153217.
- **ROHR Leeds general meeting.** Saturday 24th April from 1.30 – 4 pm. Venue: Dock Green
Inn, Leeds LS9 7AB. Contact: Wonder M
Mubaiwa 07958758568, Donna Mugoni (Chair Northern Region) 07748828913, Prosper
Mudamvanji 07846621050, Beauty Sikosana 07940181761, David Munemo 07963708923 or P
Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070
- **ROHR Leicester general meeting.** Saturday 24th April from 1.30 – 5.30. Venue: St Aiden
Parish Church Hall, The Vicarage, South
Oswald Road
, New Parks,
Leicester
LE3 6RJ. Refreshments will be served. Contact C Ndoro 07833022167, D Sibanda
07901742649, P Mapfumo 07915926323/ 07932216070.
- **ROHR Glasgow relaunch meeting.** Saturday 1st May from 1.30-5.30. Venue: Woodside
Hall, 36 Glendarg Street, Glasgow, G20
7QE
ROHR Executive present to talk about the current issues in
Zimbabwe
and the
UK

Contact Kuda Mupunga 07940254328, Gugu Ncube 07534574763, Rugare Chifungo(Northern
Coordinator) 07795070609, P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070

- **ROHR Woking Branch 1st Anniversary Party.** Saturday 8th May from 3 – 10 pm. Venue:
St Pauls Church Hall, Oriental
Road
Woking GU22 7BD. Raffle for two hampers to be won. Tickets £6 adults £3.00 kids which
includes entry and meal. Contact: Mr Mudzamiri 07774044873, Jermaine 07908522992,
Sithokozile 07886203113 or P Mapfumo 07915326323/07932216070
- **ROHR Cambridge fundraising event.** Saturday 22nd May from 4 – 10 pm. Venue: Arbury

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Community Centre, Campkin Road, Cambridge CB4 2LD. African music, food and drinks hobho. Entrance fee £10 including food. Contact: Jospheth Hapazari 07782398725, Locadia Mugari 07501304116, Sibusisiwe Bafana 07765268622, Percy Marimba 07894670271 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070

• **ROHR West Bromwich Branch fundraising event.** Saturday 29th May from 1 – 11pm.
Venue: St Peters Church Hall, White
hall

Rd, West Bromwich B70 0HF. Admission £8.00 including food and drink. Contact: Pamela Dunduru 07958386718, Diana Mtendereki 07768682961, Peter Nkomo 07817096594, Godwin Kativu 07576994816 or P Chibanguza 07908406069

• **ROHR Northampton General Meeting.** Saturday 5th June at 2 pm. Venue: Carey Memorial Baptist Church

,
King Street

,
Kettering

,
Northants

,
NN16 8QL

. ROHR executive members present and guest speakers. Contact: Marshall Rusike 07833787775, Wadzanayi Mpandawana

07717795574, G

ladys Milanzi

07846 448 711,

Norian Chindowa

07954379426,

Sherry Ngaseke

07869295544 Or P Mapfumo 07915 926 323 / 07932 216 070.

• **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturdays from 10 am – 1 pm. Venue: Swazi High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB. Please support our Swazi friends. Nearest stations: St James's Park and Victoria. For more information check: www.swazilandvigil.co.uk

• **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:

Finsbury

Park

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

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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>

<http://www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk>

or

contact:

zimbabweinternship@cof.org.uk

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