

Vigil supporters – like everyone else here – have been closely following the UK’s general elections, which left none of the three main parties with an overall majority in Parliament. A bit like

Zimbabwe

? Surprisingly, Zimbabweans have the right to vote in parliamentary elections here (though citizens of even EC countries can’t). The loophole for Zimbabweans is that the British government has yet to update the legislation which allows Commonwealth citizens to vote – even though Mugabe took us out of the Commonwealth in December 2003!

Many Vigil supporters voted and some even campaigned for the rival parties. We were interested in the different attitudes towards immigration, which became a main issue in the election campaign. Up to half a million people a year have apparently been settling in the UK in recent years leading to fears of being “swamped”. There are, by all accounts, more Zimbabweans in the

UK

than there ever were British people in Zimbabwe

The immigration question was at the heart of a meeting in London on the Monday before the elections. It was attended by many Vigil supporters. All three party leaders answered for their policies. Vigil people were particularly keen to see Nick Clegg of the Liberal Democrats, who has come to the Vigil. One of the questions raised was about the welfare of children detained with their parents in immigration centres and there were promises to look into this. Despite the unity government, Zimbabweans make up one of the biggest groups of asylum seekers in the UK

The whole exercise had much to teach us about how to resolve differences. But it made us depressed about the situation in Zimbabwe where a defeated President has refused to surrender power and the former opposition seems increasingly schizophrenic. Vigil supporters wondered how else to interpret Tsvangirai’s recent comments at the meeting in

Dar es Salaam

of the World Economic Forum on

Africa

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He was reported as saying that, given the chance again, he wouldn't have joined the coalition government but went on to maintain that Zimbabwe's political crisis 'no longer exists'. At the same time he admitted that, even though the principals had received a report on the SADC-facilitated talks weeks ago, they had not yet met to discuss it.

Well we – on an surprisingly cold day for May but thankful that the threatened rain failed to materialise – have just about given up on the interim government. We are settling down in the UK and its becoming ever more difficult to think of going back. New elections, free and fair, as soon as possible are what we want.

It lifted our spirits to welcome back Father Bernard, a Jesuit priest who has helped so many of us. He unfortunately has dislocated his shoulder and had to use a walking frame. We pray for his early recovery.

The Vigil has had an email from James Chidakwa, friend and fellow activist of Tonderai Ndira who was brutally murdered two years ago in Zimbabwe

. Tonderai was abducted on

13

th

May 2008

and his body was identified in the morgue on 22

nd

May. In a BBC report (

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7416933.stm>

), his brother describes Tonderai's body: "His jaw was shattered, his knuckles broken, a bullet hole below his heart, many many stab wounds and a large hole at the back of his head which seemed to have been caused by a hammer." Other reports state t

hat he had been shot in the heart, with multiple stab wounds, his eyes gouged, his tongue cut out, and his neck, skull, jaw and knuckles broken. James has let us know they will be holding a commemoration for Tonderai on 14 / 15 May. The Vigil joins with Tonderai's family and friends in remembering and honouring this brave activist.

There will also be a memorial in London, check our 'Events and Notices' section.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/> . 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:** 147 signed the register.

### EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Tonderai Ndira Memorial.** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May from 6.30 – 11 pm. Venue: Inn on the Green, 3-5 Thorpe Close, London

W10 5XL. For more details and RSVP:

<http://www.facebook.com/p.phpi=100000726715549&k=Z6E3Y5PYSY6BZFMJWDXXYVWTQ6BAX53FU3GV&oid=106630222713433>

- **ROHR Harlow general meeting.** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May from 1.30 – 5.30 pm. Venue: Perry Road Harlow CM18 7NP

. Substantive committee to be elected and ROHR President and ROHR Executive present. Contact: L Kashangura 07506481334, Blessing Office 07759884633, Bothwell Nyemba 07725208657, Grace Kachingwe 07529524965 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070

- **ROHR Cambridge fundraising event.** Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May from 4 – 10 pm. Venue: Arbury 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 North London General Meeting.** Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May from 1:30-5:30. Venue: Tottenham Chances, 399 High Road London N17 6QN. Closest Tube -Seven Sisters. From Seven Sisters towards Tottenham three stops on buses

**123,149,256,349,341 and 476**

, ROHR Executive and Guest Speakers in attendance. Fundraising raffle and draw.

#### Contact

Bekithemba Nyahwa

07534905348

, Nobuhle Ndlovu

07949588597

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Wellington  
Chinombe  
07529290157

,  
Chipo Denenga  
07960761122  
, P Mapfumo  
07915926323.

· **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 5<sup>th</sup> June at 2 pm. Venue: Carey Memor  
ial 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.

· **OTIENO by Trevor Michael Georges.** A contemporary reworking of Shakespeare's  
Othello, set against the continuing deprivation of present-day  
Zimbabwe

. From Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>

May – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>

June at  
7.30 pm

, matinees 3 pm. Venue: Southwark Playhouse, Shipwright Yard (Corner of Tooley St. &  
Bermondsey St.),

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London

SE1 2TF. For tickets

ring

020 7407 0234 or book online

[here](#)

· **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](http://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 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](mailto:zimbabweinternship@cof.org.uk)

· **Motherland ENT's videos** of the Vigil 24/04/2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvwikOhO3Fk> & <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7qqXJ7jfVY>