

News that the British government had sent officials to Zimbabwe to assess conditions there for the return of failed asylum seekers was the talk of the Vigil. Fears were expressed that the team from the Foreign Office and UK Border Agency would not get a true picture of the situation: the continuing political violence despite the so-called unity government, the partisan application of the rule of law and renewed hate speech.

Would the officials even venture into the wretched rural areas?

Patson Muzuwa of the Zimbabwe Association, which helps asylum seekers, was at the Vigil as usual: he criticised the British government for not sending an independent team to Zimbabwe. It turned out that another person at the Vigil had worked for the Zimbabwe prison service and had seen MDC people arrested for no reason, tortured and jailed. She confirmed that, in the last elections, prison workers had been forced to vote for Zanu PF.

The Vigil understands the problems facing the British government over the 20,000 or so failed asylum seekers from Zimbabwe. We know these include economic migrants and even Zanu PF supporters (some of them relatives of party chefs!). We have no brief for these people. But if the UK ends the moratorium on sending home failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers we urge it to make absolutely sure that no opposition activists are included. The Vigil has evidence that they are still in real danger.

To declare our own interest: the Vigil is not an asylum organisation but writes letters about the activism of supporters to help them in their asylum claims. We are sometimes astonished at how asylum tribunal judges can misdirect themselves on questions that could be established without doubt. For instance some judges have assumed that the Vigil is part of the MDC, others that photos on our website can be put on by anyone and the site is therefore open to abuse. One judge even questioned whether the Zimbabwean newspaper circulated in Zimbabwe! (This is of significance because the Zimbabwean newspaper reports our activities.) Asylum judges have also insisted that our supporters should have membership cards for the Vigil. We have never issued these – we keep a register and log attendance on our attendance database. Another judge said erroneously there are many other demos like ours with photographs of supporters on the web.

Zimbabwe Vigil Diary – 21st August 2010

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 22 August 2010 16:29 - Last Updated Sunday, 22 August 2010 16:35

This is not the case. Anyone who takes the trouble to scan the web on this matter will see that photographs of the Vigil appear on many other websites but they are clearly photos of the Vigil.

There is no other regular Zimbabwean demonstration anywhere in the world apart from the Vigil.

These elementary shortcomings underline our reservations about the asylum process – reinforced when we see action taken against our supporter Thobile Gwebu, a Swazi lady who launched a Vigil outside the Swazi High Commission in London but was recently detained for deportation (see our last diary). She is a clear-cut case of someone who would be at risk if sent home and we are glad to say that her deportation was halted although she is still in detention.

Following the SADC meeting in Namibia, the Vigil ventures to make the following offer to the British government: if SADC's demand is met that the Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe

is implemented in one month we will end our Vigils and eat our banners (and all go home...).

We are sure that this will not happen as Mugabe rubbished the SADC meeting as soon as he got back to

Harare

. See: 'Mugabe refuses compromise until western sanctions lifted'

http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/aug21_2010.html#Z1

. We never cease to be astonished how MDC leaders delude themselves, see:

<http://www.theindependent.co.zw/comment/27699-comment-sadc-summit-churns-out-more-deception.html>

Another point – Sympathy on the demise of the SADC legal tribunal, which has been suspended because it ruled in favour of dispossessed farmers (hang the messenger!). See Events section for another showing of Mugabe and the White African.

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.

For earlier ZimVigil TV programmes check:

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

FOR THE RECORD: 170 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

· **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organisation based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organisation on the ground in Zimbabwe which reflected the Vigil's mission statement in a practical way. ROHR in the UK actively fundraises through membership subscriptions, events, sales etc to support the activities of ROHR in Zimbabwe.

· **'Mugabe and the White African' screening.** Thursday 26th August at 7.30 pm. Venue: the Rich Mix Cinema, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road

,
London
E1 6LA

Q&A session with Director Lucy Bailey.

The organizers are keen Zimbabweans should attend. For tickets: 020 7613 7490, boxoffice@richmix.org.uk

· **ROHR Liverpool Vigil.** Saturday 4th September from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Church Street (Outside Primark), Liverpool City

Centre. For details please contact: Anywhere Mungoyo 07939913688, Trywell Migeri 07956083758, Panyika Karimanzira 07551062161.

· **ROHR Harlow general meeting.** Saturday 4th September from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: St James and St Lukes Church, Harlow Perry Road, CM18 7NP

. Contact: Clement 07879123783, Bothwell 07725208657, Ilyod 07883695970, Paradzai Mapfumo 07915926323.

· **ROHR Manchester general meeting.** Saturday 11th September from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: The Salvation Army Citadel, Grosvenor Road 71

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Manchester

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. ROHR Founder, National Chairperson and executive members present. Contact Fenny Nyatsanza 07886310005, P A Karimanzira 07538534375, Charter Madzivanyika 07747141835 or A Mungoyo on 07939913688

· **Ministering to the Diaspora: a case study of Zimbabweans in Britain.** Wednesday 15th

September from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm. Venue: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, SS Philip & James Church, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HR. A conference to help identify unique needs, the services Christian organizations are offering and can offer (but are not), identifying what more needs to be done and how this might be achieved, and drawing up a co-ordinated action plan. For more information, contact:

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,
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· **Vigil Facebook page:** <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8157345519&ref=ts>

· **Vigil Myspace page:** <http://www.myspace.com/zimbabwewigil>