

'Tunisian President forced from power after 23 years' was the news at the Vigil. It was a tail-between-the-legs exit for Mafia boss Ben Ali after an eruption of street anger over oppression and corruption. The sudden collapse of another African dictatorship cannot be good news for the Mugabe Mafia. If Ivory Coast is the writing on the wall then Tunisia is the wall collapsing. Wh
o will be next?

The Vigil believes there is a thirst for democracy in Africa. We certainly don't believe that human rights is a lost cause – the argument advanced in the Times of London by commentator Matthew Parris, who was incidentally educated in Zimbabwe

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He said how shocked he was to hear a group of new wave Chinese students 'making it plain they simply did not understand talk of democracy'. He concluded 'our era of Western liberalism is drawing to a close'

(
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/article2848532.ece>

)

.
A Times reader replied 'so young Chinese do not comprehend democracy – well, they have never experienced it'. The writer (David Hope-Robertson) continued 'The war against human rights abuses, the degradation of women and the oppression of citizens by totalitarian regimes is one of attrition, waged by exposing the injustices over and over, by measured reason and sometimes by ridicule. It will never entirely be won, yet to concede the fight is to empower the abusers. It may sometimes feel that we are waging a pointless battle, that no progress is being made against those who believe they have a right to control their fellows but change can come, and suddenly. Who could imagine how swiftly Ceausescu would fold or the Argentinean generals be stripped of their power?' Or Ben Ali for that matter

On another gloomy day with a biting wind, we were out again in support of human rights. Does Matthew Parris suggest we should stop? This is not the message we get from Zimbabwean victims of human rights abuses, some of whom join us on Saturdays.

We at the Vigil are not remote from the struggle and this week had to call for police help for only the second time in our eight years outside the Embassy. This time it was a demented

pro-Mugabe Caribbean shouting abuse. We have tolerated him for years but he is now becoming a serious nuisance. The last time we had to call for police help was when Tsvangirai's uncle Hebson Makuvishe, now Ambassador to Germany, tried to hijack the Vigil.

Other points:

- Glad to have with us Ben Semwayo who has written an article 'Zimbabwean Opposition Unite' which has been published on Zimbabwean media sites. If you haven't read it check: http://changezimbabwe.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3304&Itemid=2
- We were also glad to see Caroline Witts, a long-standing supporter, who comes regularly all the way from Exeter in Devon to help out on the front table explaining the Zimbabwe situation to the passing public.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check <http://www.zimvigil.tv/>

FOR THE RECORD: 79 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.
- **ROHR Newcastle general meeting.** Saturday 22nd January from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Warwick Court, Warwick Street,

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Written by Administrator

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Gateshead

,
Tyne
and Wear NE8 1EY. 3 mins walk from the
Gateshead Interchange
opposite
Gateshead
Civic Centre
and Gateshead
Police Station

.
Free parking
available. For directions please contact Susan Ndlovu
07767024586

, Allen Chamboko

07500246416

, Kuda Derera

07411337933,

Rugare Chifungo (Coordinator)

07795070609 or P Chibanguza (Coordinator) 07908406069.

• **ROHR Manchester Branch Demonstration/Vigil.** Saturday 22nd January from 2 – 5 pm.

Venue: Cathedral Gardens

Manchester

Manchester City Centre

(map:

<http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/maps/cathedral-gardens-map.html>

).

Contact: Delina Tafadzwa Mutyambizi 07775313637,

Artwell Pfende 07886839353, Chamunorwa Chihota

07799446404

, Panyika Karimanzira

07551062161.

• **ROHR Nottingham general meeting.** Saturday 29th January. Venue: St Saviour's

Community Hall, Arkwright Walk,

Nottingham

NG2 2JU. Contact Allan Nhemhara 07810197576, Mary Chabvamuperu 07412074928 ,

Christopher Chibumu 07775888205, P Chibanguza 07908406069 or P Mapfumo

07915926323 / 07932216070.

• **ROHR Ashford general meeting.** Saturday 5th February, Venue: the Star Pub, Ashford,

Kent TN24 8PA opposite Liquid Night Club off Hythe Road, 5 mins walk from Ashford

International Station. ROHR executive members present. Contact Danmore Munyuki

07535213801, Munyaradzi Badze 07709317869, Egbert Mtengwa 07985592931 or P Mapfumo

07915926323/07932216070.

• **ROHR West Bromwich general meeting.** Saturday 5th February from 1 – 5 pm. Venue:

St Peter' Church Hall,

Road, West

Whitehall

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Bromwich

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. For more info contact

Pamela Dunduru 07958386718, Peter Nkomo 07817096594, Diana Mtendereki 07771708800, Phylis Chibanguza 07908406069 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070.

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

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

· **‘Through the Darkness’**, Judith Todd’s acclaimed account of the rise of Mugabe. To receive a copy by post in the UK please email confirmation of your order and postal address to ngwenyasr@yahoo.co.uk

and send a cheque for £10 payable to “Budiro Trust” to Emily Chadburn, 15 Burners Close, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 0QA. All proceeds go to the Budiro Trust which provides bursaries to needy A Level students in

Zimbabwe

· **Workshops aiming to engage African men on HIV testing and other sexual health issue** s. Organised by the Terrence Higgins Trust (www.tht.org.uk). Please contact the

co-ordinator

Takudzwa

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[akudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk](mailto:takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk))

if you are interested in taking part.