

Vigil supporters have been watching the unfolding revolution in North Africa with fascination – but with little expectation of a similar street uprising in Zimbabwe

Why are we different? Zimbabweans too are victims of a brutal and corrupt regime. Perhaps the problem is the poor quality of opposition leaders . . .
But then they are not opposition now are they?

Certainly it doesn't seem so from the vacuous answers Morgan Tsvangirai gave at the Davos meeting of world movers and shakers (see: <http://www.cathybuckle.com/index.php?id=24>). What are your feelings about a free and fair election being possible he was asked. The Prime Minister replied that as long as the AU and SADC played their part then the “Zanu PF dirty tricks will be minimized.” Asked about the 51% indigenisation of businesses, Mr Tsvangirai said changes had been made to the law, plans were being drawn up and that it was not a compulsory takeover but one of mutual agreement. Asked about land reform and if farmers were going to be able to return to their properties to farm, Mr Tsvangirai said: “that is gone, we are past that.”

Mr Tsvangirai's comments were unlikely to attract investment from the assembled world bankers. But then Tsvangirai is hardly a mover and shaker. He doesn't seem to have noticed that the cabinet has not met since December – not that it makes any difference as he has no power of any consequence. Two years in government and the shambolic constitution-making process is a year behind schedule. And (big revelation!) nothing has been done about the rotten voters' roll with thousands of people older even than Mugabe.

As we gathered on an icy day in London, we were worried by the supine reaction of the MDC leadership to the mounting evidence that the military have already launched a terror campaign to maintain the Mugabe mafia in power. As day by day more violence is reported, a senior officer, Air Vice-Marshal Henry Muchena, has apparently told local Zanu PF leaders in Mashonaland West that soldiers are taking charge of the party's election campaign. It is expected that some 80,000 soldiers, war veterans and youth militia – about the same number as the estimated ghost workers in the Zimbabwe civil service! – are being deployed to intimidate MDC supporters in a campaign even more bloody than the 2008 presidential run-off.

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 30 January 2011 12:33 - Last Updated Sunday, 30 January 2011 12:38

What is the MDC leadership doing to counter this? The Vigil suggests a massive demonstration during the visit to Zimbabwe planned by an African Union mission to assess the electoral conditions. If the police clamp down on this demonstration it will be in the full sight of Africa

. We propose a march to the hotel to welcome the delegation.

Or will the MDC leadership follow Malawi's example and spend their energies outlawing farting?

(Check: <http://www.nyasatimes.com/national/malawi-%E2%80%98farting-crime%E2%80%99-makes-british-headlines.html>

and

<http://www.nyasatimes.com/national/farting-to-be-punishable-by-local-courts.html>

.)

Other points

- Vigil management team member Luka Phiri was invited to an annual lunch at the Anne Frank Trust on Holocaust Memorial Day which was addressed by former South African President F W de Klerk. Check <http://www.annefrank.org.uk/node/256> for a photo of Luka standing next to Mr de Klerk.
- It was good to welcome Vigil supporter Richard Tarvinga's two young sons (12 and 7 years) who have just arrived from Zimbabwe. They start English school on Tuesday. (They were not impressed by the weather!)
- A supporter who works for Lonrho and in the past has given us a bundle of Zimbabwean \$100 trillion notes came by. He recounted a joke about the note which he was told in Harare in 2009 – 'the pictures on the note are all symbolic: the waterfall symbolizes the direction of the economy, the big load of bull is a symbol of government policy and the balancing rocks are symbolic of what you have in your head if you think you can buy anything with this!'
- There has been an explosion of technology at the Vigil thanks to ZimVigil TV. Supporters can watch themselves on a television screen as they dance and sing and before they leave they can pick up a DVD of the action.
- The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum are inviting some people from Zimbabwean civil society to the UK who are keen to visit the Vigil. On Saturday 19th February we hope to host Okay Machisa, the Executive Director of Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights), Kucaca Phulu, Chair of ZimRights and possibly Gabriel Shumba of Zimbabwe Exiles Forum and Gideon Shoko of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trades Union. We are hoping they will bring to the Vigil photos of victim of political violence which are part of Zimrights' 'Reflections' photo exhibition with which they are touring Europe
-
- The television in the Zimbabwe Embassy was showing the tourism film 'Zimbabwe: World of Wonders' - one wonder being that a holiday resort can be invaded on the pretext of acting for the government's policy of taking over businesses . . .

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

For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check <http://www.zimvigilTV.com/> .

FOR THE RECORD: 114 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 Ashford Kent 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 Peters Church Hall, Whitehall Road, West Bromwich B70 OHF00-1700hrs. For more info contact Pamela Dunduru 07958386718, Peter Nkomo 07817096594, Diana Mtendereki 07771708800, Phylis Chibanguza 07908406069 or P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070.
- **ROHR Woking general meeting.** Saturday 5th February from 2 – 6 pm, Venue: Woking Homes, Oriental Road, Woking, GU22 7BE. Contact, Isaac Mudzamiri 07774044873, Sithokozile Hlokana 07886203113, Saziso Zulu 07861028280 or P.Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070.
- **Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Meeting.** Monday 21st February at 7.30 pm. Venue: offices of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Development House,

Zimbabwe Vigil Diary – 29th January 2011

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 30 January 2011 12:33 - Last Updated Sunday, 30 January 2011 12:38

56-64 Leonard Street

,
London

EC2A 4LT. Nearest tube:

Old Street

. Speakers:

Okay Machisa and Kucaca Phulu of ZimRights.

· **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

Takudz

wa Mukiwa

(
takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk)

if you are interested in taking part.