

Vigil supporters were appalled at further reports from Libya that foreign mercenaries – said to include Zimbabwean troops – are carrying out atrocities to maintain Gaddafi in power. The reputation of Zimbabwe – already low – has been further sullied already by reports being investigated by the UN that Mugabe has broken the arms embargo on the Ivory Coast to support Laurent Gbagbo who, like himself, has refused to leave office after losing a presidential election.

With friends like Gaddafi and Gbagbo, Mugabe could well find himself arraigned before the International Criminal Court in the Hague along with like another of his friends Bashir of Sudan – especially as reports mount of increasing violence at home.

Setting up the Vigil we were immediately approached by a Zimbabwean lady visiting her daughter in the UK. Unprompted she told us of the growing violence in Zimbabwe, the mobilization of pro-Mugabe forces, the sight of lorryloads of drunken youths and the failure of the government of national unity to make real progress.

We in the diaspora are sometimes accused of being out of touch with what is going on at home – though we are all in constant contact with family and friends all over the country experiencing the daily reality of a dysfunctional state. So we were interested that our visitors shared our views: that the MDC has been hoodwinked by the illusion of sharing in government and that Zanu-PF has no intention of giving up power. Our visitors also had no confidence that South Africa would face up to the Mugabe regime or that of his prospective successor General Chiwenga.

In other words no change. Admittedly no Zanu-PF chef has yet had the gall to buy a US \$380 million yacht like the son of Teodoro Obiang, Chair of the African Union and President of Equatorial Guinea, one of the poorest countries in the world (<http://telegraph-luxury-yacht.notlog.com>).

Mugabe himself has been no slouch at abusing the state's resources. He has, for instance, dished out millions of dollars to praise singers and his repeated visits to South East Asia do not come cheap.

Vigil supporters wonder whether after three trips in two months it might not be more sensible for him to stay there . . .

Other points

- We were glad to have with us solicitor Mark Taylor who has worked so hard on Zimbabwean asylum issues. He updated us on the legal situation of Zimbabweans in the UK
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- Vigil supporter Batson Chapata introduced us to Michael Liddell, a minister from his church, who led prayers for our country.
- We were surprised to be criticized for our publicity stunt on Tuesday during which we hanged Mugabe outside the Embassy. ‘ Totally unbecoming in a society that strongly opposes the death penalty anywhere in the world’ said a correspondent. In fact we would prefer Mugabe to end his life in a Zimbabwean jail which would be a much worse fate than being hanged. Batson said the cell he was in was so overcrowded that inmates had to synchronise changing position at night!
- For a report in South Africa’s Sunday Times on our Tuesday protest, check: <http://zimdemo.notlong.com>
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- There will be a repeat showing of the Prisoners of Conscience photo exhibition ‘Mugabe’s Victims: Zimbabwe Today’ from 22nd March to 3rd April at the Woolfson and Tay gallery, bookshop and cafe,
12 Bermondsey Square
,
London
,
SE1 3UN
. Admission is free and the gallery will be open Tuesdays to Saturdays
11am – 7pm
and on Sundays from
11am – 3 pm
(closed Mondays). Nearest station: Borough. Check:
<http://poc-photographs.notlong.com>
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- Thanks to Atipa Pedzeni, Kelvin Kamupira and Josephine Zhuga for their help today at the Vigil front table and to Atipa for arranging and putting up posters.
- A lady from Egypt stopped by and asked how she could help. We told her how encouraged we were by the events in Egypt
and suggested she bring a group of her friends to the Vigil so we could express our solidarity with them.

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: 126 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 Manchester meetings.** Saturday 12th March: (committee meeting from 11 am – 1 pm, general meeting from 2 – 5 pm). Venue: The Salvation Army Citadel, 71 Grosvenor Road, Manchester M13 9UB

Contact: Delina Tafadzwa Mutyambizi 07775313637, Chamunorwa Chihota 07799446404, Panyika Karimanzira 07551062161, Artwell Pfende 07886839353, Charles Nenguke 07925146757, P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070 or P Chibanguza 07908406069. Future meetings: 16th

April, 14th

May. Same times and venue.

· **ROHR North London general meeting.** Saturday 19th March from 2 – 6 pm. Venue: Tottenham Chances, 399 High Road

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Written by Administrator

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, Tottenham N17 6QN. Station: Seven Sisters. Buses 123, 149, 259, 349, 341, 476 towards Tottenham – third stop. Contact:

V Chengaose 07956586377, Bernard Hukwa 07835323174, Ruby Chitiyo 07886998102, B Nyahwa 07534905348, Velepini Moyo 07960863128, P Mapfumo 07932216070.

· **ROHR Manchester Vigil.** Saturday 26th March from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: Cathedral Gardens Manchester City Centre (subject to change to Piccadilly Gardens).

Contact: Delina Tafadzwa Mutyambizi 07775313637, Chamunorwa Chihota 07799446404, Panyika Karimanzira 07551062161, Artwell Pfende 07886839353, Charles Nenguke 07925146757, P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070 or P Chibanguza 07908406069. Future demonstrations: 30

th
April, 28
th

May. Same time and venue.

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

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

· **‘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 “Budiriro Trust” to Emily Chadburn, 15 Burners Close, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 0QA. All proceeds go to the Budiriro 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 Mukiwa

(takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk)

if you are interested in taking part.