

As the military junta in Zimbabwe intensifies its onslaught against the MDC and civil liberties, the Vigil has relaunched our petition calling for penalties against SADC countries for failing to honour their undertaking to protect Zimbabweans, millions of whom are suffering at the hands of the rampaging regime.

SADC agreed to guarantee the coalition deal it foisted on the MDC two years ago but has repeatedly failed to hold Zanu PF to account for its refusal to implement the agreement.

The military junta has now decided to bludgeon its way to another election victory before Mugabe dies – no time obviously can be wasted – in the confident expectation that Africa will once again rubber stamp a bogus election.

The Vigil believes that there is no point in appealing to the African Union; it is rapidly backtracking on its vote for democracy in Libya. We also have little confidence in the United Nations, which we believe will have no interest in Zimbabwe until there are tanks firing in Harare.

So who are we to look to? The European Union gives billions of pounds a year to the SADC circus. The UK alone, for instance, gives some £80 million a year to support the government of Mugabe's friend President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi. We want this money suspended until SADC governments meet their obligations. Here is what we are demanding: ‘

**A Petition to European Union Governments:**

We record our dismay at the failure of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to help the desperate people of Zimbabwe at their time of trial.

We urge the UK government and the European Union in general to suspend government to government aid to all 14 SADC countries until they abide by their joint commitment to uphold human rights in the region. We suggest that the money should instead be used to feed the starving in Zimbabwe.’

As we met outside the Zimbabwe Embassy, some quarter of a million of people demonstrated in London against austerity cuts in the national budget. We believe that the UK government can avoid some of these cuts by withholding funds from the Swazi paedophile King Mswati and Mugabe's other derelict SADC friends. The Vigil was encouraged by comments this week by

UK Foreign Secretary William Hague, who warned Mugabe to take heed of events in the Middle East and promised that the UK would use its international clout to seek sanctions against countries that protect corrupt dictators and ensure those responsible for human rights abuses face the International Criminal Court.

### **Other Points**

- Mr Hague was speaking at a forum on African development organized by the Times newspaper. We noted particularly the following figures: Zimbabwean GDP £4.64 billion and population 12 million against South Africa's GDP of £507 billion with a population of 49 million. To spell it out, the GDP per person in South Africa is 25 times as big as the GDP per person in Zimbabwe. When Mugabe came to power Zimbabwe was an economic power in Africa . . . .
- It was good to have with us Sarah Harland of the Zimbabwe Association and her daughter Louisa. Sarah spoke to supporters about the new ruling on sending back to Zimbabwe failed asylum seekers. We were reminded that Louisa when she was very young came up with the slogan: 'Wake up world! Zimbabwe is Dying' which the Vigil has used since we started.
- The Vigil works closely with the Zimbabwe Association and Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe but we are not part of any larger grouping. We put this on record because there are suggestions that we are taking part in a so-called Zimbabwean government in exile.

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:** 164 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.
- **Central London Zimbabwe Forum.** Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30 pm. Speaker: Rindai Chipfunde-Vava, Director of Zimbabwe Elections Support Network. Venue:  
The Cole Room, Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, London SW1H 9BN (020 7227 4900).  
Nearest station: St. James' Park.

· **ROHR Wolverhampton general meeting.** Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Venue: Heath Town Community Centre, 208 Chevril Rise, Wolverhampton WV10 0HP. Contact Tsvakai Marambi 07915065171, Florence Munemo 07901733634, Flora Nyahuma 07900036702, P Chibanguza 07908406069. **ROHR**

**Woking general meeting.**

Saturday 2

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April 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.

· **ROHR Manchester meetings.** Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April: (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 meeting: 14

th

May. Same times and venue.

· **ROHR Manchester Vigil.** Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April 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 demonstration: 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/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](mailto: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](http://www.tht.org.uk) ). Please contact the co-ordinator Takudzwa Mukiwa ( [takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk](mailto:takudzwa.mukiwa@tht.org.uk) )

if you are interested in taking part.