

The Vigil is sorry that our brothers and sisters in Malawi will suffer for President Mutharika's hubris. Britain this week froze aid to Malawi because of its expulsion of the British High Commissioner for (privately) describing Mutharika as 'intolerant of criticism'. The Malawian government relies on foreign aid for 40% of its income, with Britain the largest donor. Finance Minister Ken Kandodo said there would have to be austerity measures but Malawi was ready to make tough decisions. We doubt that Mugabe's friend Mutharika will make the tough decision to cut down the size of his Presidential palaces. What a dreadful prospect that would be (see: Malawi to cut spending after UK aid freeze – <http://reuters-ukaidfreeze.notlong.com> ).

However the British government is only doing what we asked them to do. The Vigil has reluctantly joined a British domestic debate about foreign aid so that we can increase pressure on SADC to act honestly over Zimbabwe.

We understand President Zuma's reasons for postponing discussions on elections in Zimbabwe and hope it will give SADC leaders time to weigh objectively the counter claims: Mugabe's promise of more of the same or the MDC's promise of democracy and respect for the law.

To help focus the minds of SADC leaders the Vigil has been pushing the British government to suspend aid to countries supporting Mugabe. This is a substantial amount. Britain is one of the very few countries – if not the only one – to honour the Gleneagles Agreement of 2005 under which the world's richest countries committed themselves to giving 0.7% of their national income in foreign aid.

In Britain's case this will amount this year to £8.1 billion (rising to £11.5 billion in 2014 /15). All this is at a time of stringent budget cuts at home – pressure on hospitals and schools, job losses in public services etc etc. For instance, the Foreign Office budget is due to fall from £2.3 billion to £1.3 billion.

Of course, private aid is not included. In this field, the British people are second only to the Americans in their generosity. Here is a letter the Vigil has sent to the Defence Secretary, Dr Fox who wants a more nuanced approach to how British government aid is allocated.

Written by Administrator

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*The Zimbabwe Vigil notes with interest your recent comments and fully supports demands for a more flexible approach to the UK's overseas aid.*

*We applaud the generous aspiration behind the government's pledge to increase aid to 0.7% of GNP but we agree that the UK needs to be more discriminating on how this money is distributed.*

*We understand, of course, that you have different priorities. Of particular interest to us is budgetary aid given to member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), amounting to many hundreds of millions of pounds a year. SADC has betrayed the people of Zimbabwe by pandering to the odious Mugabe regime for the past decade.□*

*Although there are signs that President Zuma of South Africa is now of a mind to take a more robust approach to Mugabe, there are many SADC leaders who are still in the anti-British and pro-Mugabe camp. Take, for instance, the notoriously corrupt regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which will feature among the top 10 recipients of UK spending in direct aid for 2012 / 2013 at £165 million. Or take Malawi, which although this year is receiving £90 million of British budgetary aid, has recently expelled the British High Commissioner for criticising President Mutharika for being intolerant of criticism. Mutharika has made no secret of his admiration for Mugabe, naming a new highway after his idol, who in turn has given the Malawian leader a stolen farm.*

*The Zimbabwe Vigil believes that British budgetary support for SADC countries should be withheld if they act against British interests which, we have been assured, include free and fair elections in Zimbabwe.*

*It is for this purpose that we have been protesting outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London for the last nine years.*

*PS We enclose a sample page of a petition for which we are currently gathering signatures. It reads: '**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*

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*government aid to all 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.'*

cc Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, Secretary of State for International Development,  
Rt Hon William Hague MP, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs

### **Other points**

- Vigil supporters were interested to see a photograph of Mugabe falling asleep in his chair and we acted out the scene for the passing public pointing out the absurdity of such an old man standing for re-election ( Speculation mounts as Mugabe collapses – [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/may19\\_2011.html#Z7](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/may19_2011.html#Z7))

- Vigil supporters were disturbed that a former CIO torturer Phillip Machedze has been given asylum in the UK. Machedze, who admitted carrying out acts of torture 'too gruesome to recount', is now living with his wife on British Social Security benefits. Mr Justice David Archer said there was no doubt that Mr Machedze was "deeply involved in savage acts of extreme violence. Some were killed slowly and their bodies disposed of. He witnessed people with their limbs cut off." But the judge said that under the European Human Rights Convention, Machedze should be protected from torture and threats to his life if he returned to Zimbabwe.

The Vigil believes that Britain is already infested by enough Zanu PF supporters without inviting the whole CIO to come over here to take advantage of free housing, medical attention, education and living expenses (see:

<http://uktelegraph-ciograntedasylum.notlong.com>

- Joke of the week: the Daily News says that nearly 700 officials involved in the Constitutional Outrage programme – many of them illiterate (including some MPs) have cost more than US \$4 million in the last two weeks doing nothing except run up hotel bills (see:

[http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/may21\\_2011.html#Z11](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/may21_2011.html#Z11)

– Copac officials blow up US\$4m).

- Zimbabwe Vigil dancers performed at a Community Event for Adult Learners' Week at City and Islington College in North London. Thanks to Dumi Tutani, Farai Marema, Wendy Ziyambi, Edna Mdoka and Moses Kandiyawo for a lively and much appreciated performance that helped to spread the awareness of Zimbabwe's human rights abuses.

- Our condolences to Vigil team member Patson Muzuwa whose mother died in Zimbabwe this week. A collection was made for Patson and Vigil supporters signed a sympathy card for him.

- Thanks to Mercy Muranganwa (who has been coming at our 2 pm start and staying till

the end) for her help over the past few weeks with the register and setting up the Vigil. Thanks also to ROHR members (Paradzai Mapfumo, Lorraine Zakeyo, Emmaculate Mabaya, Christopher Bvumai Chibumbu, Shoriwa Mutandiro) who once again supplied soft drinks for thirsty Vigil supporters.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website – they cannot be downloaded from the slideshow on the front page of the Zimvigil website. For the latest ZimVigil TV programme check <http://www.zimvigilv.com/>

**FOR THE RECORD:** 96 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.
- **ZBN News.** The Vigil management team wish to make it clear that the Zimbabwe Vigil is not responsible for Zimbabwe Broadcasting Network News (ZBN News). We are happy that they attend our activities and provide television coverage but we have no control over them. All enquiries about ZBN News should be addressed to ZBN News.
- **The Zim Vigil band** (Farai Marema and Dumi Tutani) has launched its theme song 'Vigil Yedu (our Vigil)' to raise awareness through music. To download this single, visit: [www.imusicafrica.com](http://www.imusicafrica.com) and to watch the video check: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QukqctWc3XE>
- **ROHR Manchester Vigil.** Saturday 28th May 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, P Mapfumo 07915926323/07932216070 or P Chibanguza 07908406069.
- **ROHR Nottingham general meeting.** Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: St Saviours in the Meadows Church, Arkwright Walk, Nottingham NG2 2JU. The church is just a few minutes' walk from the train station. ROHR National Executive members will be attending to discuss the abuse of human rights and political situation in Zimbabwe. Contact: Allan Nhemhara 07810197576, Mary Chabvamuperu 07412074928, Christopher Chibumbu 07775888205, P Chibanguza 07908406069 or P Mapfumo 07915926323 / 07932216070.

- **ROHR West Bromwich general meeting.** Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May from 12.30 – 4 pm. Venue **St Peters Church Hall,**

**Whitehall Road, B70 0HF, West Bromwich.**

ROHR President, National Executive members and a well-known lawyer present. Contact: Pamela Dunduru 07958386718, Peter Nkomo 07817096594, Diana Mtendereki 07771708800, Paradzai Mapfumo 07915926323 or Phylis Chibanguza 07908406069.

- **ROHR National Fundraising Event. Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June from 12 noon till late.**

**Venue: St Peters Church Hall, Whitehall Road, West Bromwich B70 0HF. Come and enjoy African dishes and music while donating to a good cause.**

**Admission fee £8 includes a plate of food and a soft drink. Raffle tickets on sale @ £1.**

**Contact: Peter Nkomo 07817096594, V J Mujeyi 07403446696, Tsvakai Marambi 07915065171, Solomon L Matshoba 07733741065, P Chibanguza 07908406069, R Chifungo 07795070609 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](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.