

A proper Zimbabwean-style summer storm gave us our biggest drenching in the 9 years and 10 months we have been protesting outside the Embassy. Ominous clouds gathered followed suddenly by lightning and deafening claps of thunder and torrential rain. We must be doing something right to be punished like this, we thought, as we desperately poked the tarpaulin to prevent heavy pools of water bringing it down.

Huddled under this flimsy protection, with no chance to engage hurrying passers-by, we had the opportunity to discuss various things including the daft constitution and the outcome of a survey of voting intentions in Zimbabwe which showed Mugabe ahead of Tsvangirai.

It is difficult to take seriously a poll of only 1,198 Zimbabweans – about 0.01% of the population – especially when 47% of them said they would not vote or say who they would vote for. So it boiled down to about 370 people who said they'd vote for Mugabe against 210 for Tsvangirai. Not particularly convincing, but the survey appears to have spooked the MDC, vulnerable to charges that its leadership has become too preoccupied with the trappings of power at the expense of the party's principles.

We at the Vigil sense that cynical changes are taking place. We see people – black and white – returning to Zimbabwe (maybe just on visits) reporting on the big money sloshing about in Harare and talking wide-eyed about the opportunities for wheeler-dealers. There is a feeling that – never mind the people at the bottom of the pile – anyone with any sense should join in the corruption and thieving.

The latest article by the Zimbabwean economist Eric Bloch suggests that there has been no real economic recovery in Zimbabwe (see: [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/aug24\\_2012.html#Z20](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/aug24_2012.html#Z20) – The myth of economic recovery) and the

Zimbabwean newspaper helps explain what is going on, giving details of Zanu PF people who are now buying private planes etc, (

<http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/analysis/60310/how-they-got-filthy-rich.html>

– How

they got filthy rich). So it seems that Zimbabwe is becoming a frontier society where the majority live in poverty and the favoured few are astronomically wealthy,

acting with impunity in a gangster state and preparing the ground to steal another election . .

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We agreed to discuss this matter at the Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF) after next week's Vigil. Here are some of the questions we hope to address:

- What is the future for human rights activists in Zimvigil and our associates ROHR and Zimbabwe We Can (ZWC) who are campaigning for the people of Zimbabwe?
  
- What about corruption in NGOs, churches?
  
- Is a generation of parentless children growing up with no knowledge of their indigenous culture – the culture of care for family and community?
  
- Zimbabweans in the UK diaspora still seem to regard getting their papers to stay here as the main prize. But once they get their papers some seem to travel back and forth from Zimbabwe. What's going on?
  
- The only thing that will change things in Zimbabwe is for the mindset of the people to

change – to really want fairness and be prepared to fight for it. How can we make this happen?

- Why are the MDC and civil society in Zimbabwe, as well as donors, so surprised by Zanu-PF rewriting the constitution? Why has so much time and money been spent on the useless constitution-making process when any new government will rewrite it when they get into power? Surely these resources could have been better spent on preparing Zimbabwe for fair elections – updating the electoral roll etc.

### Other points

- It was good to be joined by Geoff Hill, the Zimbabwean journalist and author and friend of the Vigil, who is over from South Africa. He spoke to us about the anger there at the massacre of workers at the British-listed Lonmin mine. He said President Zuma had made a big mistake by not going to meet the miners, allowing the floor to be taken by renegade youth leader and Zanu PF-sponsored Julius Malema. Geoff agreed to join us at next Saturday's forum.
- During the week members of the Vigil, ROHR and ZWC took part in a demonstration outside the High Commission of Mozambique (the new SADC chair) in support of the 21st Movement Free Zimbabwe Global Diaspora Movement (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/437-memo-to-mozambique--21st-august-2012> ).
- We noted the following encouraging message on the Zimeye blog: 'Vigil members: Well done for your good work in diaspora, and thank you for the letter for the new SADC chair which has evidently hit a raw nerve with the fake CIOs on this forum. Let's keep the pressure on, you are doing a great job over there.'

**FOR THE RECORD:** 48 signed the register.

**EVENTS AND NOTICES:**

· **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September from 6.30 – 9.30 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. Directions: The Strand is the same road as the Vigil. From the Vigil it's about a 10 minute walk, in the direction away from Trafalgar Square. The Strand Continental is situated on the south side of the Strand between Somerset House and the turn off onto Waterloo Bridge. The entrance is marked by a big sign high above and a sign for its famous Indian restaurant at street level. It's next to a newsagent. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

**Future special ZAF meetings:**

Saturday 13

<sup>th</sup>

October when we mark the 10

<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the Vigil and Saturday 10

<sup>th</sup>

November when our special guest will be Ben Freeth.

These two meetings will take the place of the regular ZAF meetings in October and November. Both events at 6.30 pm at Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see entry above.

· **Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September from 10 am – 1 pm. Venue: Swazi High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

Please support our Swazi friends. Nearest stations: St James's Park and Victoria.

[www.swazilandvigil.co.uk](http://www.swazilandvigil.co.uk)

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· **The Rain that Washes showing at the Lounge, Leicester Square Theatre, from**

**Monday 17**

**<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7 pm.**

**Check:**

<http://leicestersq>

[uaretheatre.ticketsolve.com/shows/126523428/events](http://uaretheatre.ticketsolve.com/shows/126523428/events)

or phone the booking line:

08448733433 for specific dates and to book tickets, 'Instantly plunged into a young man's compelling story of growing up in turbulent Zimbabwe, we live and breathe his extraordinary journey from innocence to escape, finally returning to his homeland to witness the greatest betrayal of all . . . Inspired by a series of interviews between Zimbabwean Christopher Maphosa and writer Dave Carey, *The Rain That Washes* is a true story that is poignant, political and most of all. personal'.

- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2011** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/th-e-vigil-diary/363-vigil-highlights-2011>

Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2011 Highlights page.

- **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. Please note that the official website of ROHR Zimbabwe is <http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/>

. Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents the views and opinions of ROHR.

- **ZBN News.** The Vigil management team wishes 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://ourvigil.notlong.com>

- To watch other Zim Vigil band protest songs, check:

## Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 25th August 2012

Written by Administrator  
Sunday, 26 August 2012 14:54 -

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and

<http://blooddiamonds.notlong.com>

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

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

· To sponsor the Mike Campbell Foundation expedition 'Sailing across the Makgadikgadi Pans' which will raise money for the work of the Foundation, go to [www.justgiving.com/Mike-Campbell-Foundation](http://www.justgiving.com/Mike-Campbell-Foundation)

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· **Useful websites:** [www.zanupfcrime.com](http://www.zanupfcrime.com) which reports on Zanu PF abuses and [www.ipaidabribe.org.zw](http://www.ipaidabribe.org.zw) where people can report corruption in Zimbabwe.