

On the shortest Saturday of the year, with darkness falling before 4 pm, and floods reported from many parts of the UK, we gathered in the rain to sing and dance outside the South African High Commission to petition President Zuma for tough action against Mugabe.

The demonstration was part of the 21st Movement Global Protest launched in January which has seen monthly demonstrations by the diaspora under the banner 'Reclaim Zimbabwe'.

The coloured lights on our portable Christmas tree illuminated posters such as 'Festivities here – bleak Christmas for Zimbabweans' and 'Deploy UN, AU and SADC election monitors right away to prevent further bloodshed'.

The petition had been signed by 5,000 people who have stopped at the Vigil outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in recent months. A glance at one page of the petition showed people from Norway, Azerbaijan, Canada, USA, Italy, Slovenia etc; we are spreading the word about Zimbabwe.

The petition was accompanied by a letter congratulating President Zuma on his re-election as ANC leader and appealing to him to intervene to force Zanu PF to comply with the Global Political Agreement that they signed up to in 2008. The letter warned: 'More than three million Zimbabweans have been forced from our country. Many of them are in South Africa. We long to

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return home but can do so only after free and fair elections have freed us from bondage. To go to elections without reforms will be a disaster for Zimbabwe and South Africa and the region as a whole. We will end up another Equatorial Guinea.'

The Vigil notes that Mugabe has been in Equatorial Guinea this month for talks with his fellow dictator Teodoro Obiang. Mugabe said the two countries were working together and were very close. Zimbabwe was even training 'security officials' from Equatorial Guinea (see: <http://panafrikannews.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/zimbabwe-cordial-relations-with.html>)

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Zimbabwe's Cordial Relations with Equatorial Guinea Grows
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The two dictators certainly have a lot in common: both have been in power for more than 30 years and they rule countries which are potentially very rich while the people live in abject poverty. Yes, Presidents Mugabe and Obiang have a lot to discuss -- mainly how to stay in power.

The BBC carried an interesting programme the other day on Equatorial Guinea, which it described as 'one of the fastest growing economies in the world but dogged by endemic poverty, corruption and political repression

(
http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01pygy5/HARDtalk_Teodoro_Obiang_President_Equatorial_Guinea/).

The French authorities this year seized property there owned by Obiang’s son (who like many of the family is a minister in the Equatorial Guinea government) on the grounds that state money had been embezzled. Among the property seized was a \$2 million wine collection in a vast Paris house thought to be worth as much as \$180 million. The building has 101 rooms, a Turkish bath, a hair salon, two gym clubs, a night club and a cinema. It had furniture worth as much as \$50 million and an art collection including pieces by Degas and Rodin and cars including a Rolls-Royce, a Maserati and various Ferraris . . . the average income in Equatorial Guinea is similar to that in Zimbabwe, little more than one dollar a day (see: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/24/world/europe/for-obiangs-son-high-life-in-paris-is-over.html?_r=0)

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A French Shift on Africa Strips a Dictator’s Son of His Treasures).

Other points

- The Vigil was disturbed by voices in Zimbabwe who say elections should be set back to 2015 or so. The plight of the miserable people of Equatorial Guinea should be warning that the situation will not improve by postponing change.

- Vigil supporters were sorry to learn of the death of Vigil management team member Fungay Mabhunu’s sister in a freak accident in Zimbabwe. She was on the pavement outside her home when an elderly lady learning to drive hit her and two others. Fungayi expressed gratitude to Vigil supporters who contributed to help his family back home.

- The Vigil has begun selling the Vigil Band’s new CD of protest songs sung at the Vigil. One of them goes: ‘Diamonds are a dictator’s best friend. Zimbabwean diamonds are supposed to be a blessing but they are a curse’.

- Martin Chinyanga asked Vigil supporters to help him lay flowers in the doorway of the Zimbabwe Embassy in memory of the Zimbabwean lady who recently died in a Kenyan prison after being deported from the UK (see: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/dec21_2012.html#Z19 – Mystery surrounds death of Zimbabwean woman in Kenya).

'Sympathy for the Devil' – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 22nd December 2012

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- Thanks to Grace Nyaumwe and Iline Manhunzi from ROHR Slough branch who sold sadza and nyama to raise funds for ROHR. Thanks also to Jonathan Kariwoh and Cephas Maswoswa who brought Christmas goodies to share at the Vigil.

- We wish all our supporters a blessed Christmas and hope for a better new year for Zimbabwe.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/> . 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 RECORD: 35 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 29th December 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

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- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2011** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-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 organization based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organization 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). To download the band's theme song Vigil Yedu visit: www.imusicafrica.com and to watch the video check: <http://ourvigil.notlong.com> . To

watch other Zim Vigil band protest songs, check:

<http://Shungurudza.notlong.com>

and

<http://blooddiamonds.notlong.com>

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

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

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- 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

- **Useful websites:** www.zanupcrime.com which reports on Zanu PF abuses and www.ipaidabribe.org.zw where people can report corruption in Zimbabwe.