

It's not surprising that Belgium should be leading the call to lift sanctions on the Zimbabwe mafia. A country whose best-known modern artwork is Marcel Duchamp's pisspot could hardly be expected to have much to say about freedom, justice and democracy. Certainly, the Belgians didn't pay much attention to these values when they urinated over the 'Belgian' Congo setting a standard of rapacious cruelty unmatched by any other European colonizer.

The Vigil expects Belgium's diamond thirst to prevail and that the EU will lift the remaining targeted sanctions. After being told that – despite being the major donors to Zimbabwe – they would not be allowed to observe the elections they blithely said the EU would be guided by SADC as to their credibility. Well, SADC leaders ignored their own election guidelines and closed their eyes to all the evidence, hailing the blatantly-rigged elections as a triumph for Mugabe and going on to choose him to chair the organisation next year.

Even President Zuma's advisor Lindiwe Zulu has seen the glittering light reflected by the diamonds and is now calling on the West to be nice to Mugabe and, furthermore, close down 'pirate' radio stations. Perhaps Mugabe was more justified than we thought in calling her 'an idiotic street woman'. Idiotic, certainly, otherwise she would know that the West cannot close down radio stations operating perfectly legally or they would have to close down the BBC World Service. Street woman? – well, Zulu has now jumped into the same bed as Mugabe . . .

So what difference will it make if the sanctions are dropped? Well, it will legitimize Zimbabwe's stolen elections. But Africa and much of the world have shown that they are quite happy with stolen elections – or Assad's use of banned chemical weapons, for that matter.

The Vigil thinks that one positive outcome of the end of sanctions could be that Mugabe would have to find another excuse for the cataclysmic failure of his governance of Zimbabwe. When he came to power Zimbabwe was the second biggest economy in SADC. Now it is one of the poorest. Previously despised Zambia now has a GDP three times as big.

What worries us most in the diaspora is that the UN says it will have to feed a quarter of the rural population in the coming months. This is at a time when the UN says it is running out of money to feed desperate Syrian refugees.

The Vigil has an idea for the British government. Why not feed the starving people in Zimbabwe with money from the \$1 billion or so it donates to SADC countries every year? These countries have shown they want to help Mugabe. This would allow the UN to devote its scarce resources to the urgent needs of the suffering people of Syria.

After the Vigil many supporters went on to our bi-monthly Zimbabwe Action Forum at which we discussed plans for an all-stakeholders' meeting of the diaspora to be held in London. It was agreed the initiative would be called 'restore Zimbabwe' and it was proposed that the diaspora should be invited to coalesce around ideas such as:

- Scrapping indigenisation and encouraging foreign direct investment.
- Giving freehold title to farmers to enable them to get bank loans or sell their properties

(economists say this would at a stroke stimulate agriculture).

- Nationalising the diamond mines.

- Privatising the parastatals.

- Requiring senior elected and non-elected leaders to disclose their assets.

- Replacing the judiciary and reforming the police and armed forces.

It was agreed that the conference should be an all-day event on a weekday in the last part of October. The date would be set depending on availability of key speakers.

Thanks to Joseph Chivayo, Helen Rukambiro, Deborah Harry and Fungayi Mabhunu for their help in setting up the Vigil Thanks also to Helen for looking after the register and merchandise throughout the Vigil.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

FOR THE RECORD: 47 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting.** Saturday 21st September from 12 noon. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. 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.
- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 21st September from 6.30 – 9.30 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA.
- **Zimbabwe Vigil's 11th Anniversary.** Saturday 12th October.
- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2012** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/467-vigil-highlights-2012>
. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2012 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.

- **Facebook pages:**

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

- ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>

- ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights/301811392835>

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

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