

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 20 October 2013 13:53 -

The Vigil's initiative in arranging a diaspora conference in London on 24th October to discuss the future of Zimbabwe has met with predictable abuse by Zanu PF trolls prowling the internet. We think every CIO agent – when they are not out beating people up – spends his office hours in cyber disinformation in the relentless war against truth.

The chair of the conference, Ephraim Tapa, a founder member of the Vigil, came under particular fire after our last diary 'Disunited Nations' was published in the Zimbabwean. Online comments described him as a 'chancer', 'crook', 'corrupt' and 'selfish' in a clearly orchestrated attack. They must see him as a threat. (See: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/disunited-nations-zimbabwe-vigil-diary-12th-october-2013/> and http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_betrayed-diaspora-must-act-now/.)

The comments included the usual tirade against the diaspora for 'spreading a negative image' of Zimbabwe, accusing us of 'cowardice' for fleeing the country and assuring us that Zimbabwe is overcoming the problems caused by 'illegal sanctions'.

The diaspora's picture of life in Zimbabwe is more in line with the latest annual survey by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which puts Zimbabwe as 47th out of 52 African countries, in the company of countries such as Somalia and Zanu PF benefactor Equatorial Guinea . . . (The countries are ranked according to how they performed under 4 categories: safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development).

Zanu PF's latest flatulent blueprint: Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset) is no asset as far as we can see. It says: 'Government would among other things undertake a national blitz to rehabilitate water supplies, sewerage systems, roads, health facilities and schools in all urban centres, institute measures to improve processes at the Registrar General's Office by December 2013 . . .' Fat chance! (See: Economic blueprint unveiled – http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_economic-blueprint-unveiled-the-herald/.)

A friend of the Vigil, a well-known person, returned this month to Zimbabwe after an absence of 14 years. During his visit he spent time in Mutare, Headlands, Mbare and Chitungwiza. He sent us the following email: 'Kuti zvfaye . . . so so, I don't understand how these guys are running this country. Their politics is more than war, they are out of touch with reality and the 21st century. Hustling yacho is on different level altogether, eish, maone. It's the same money circulating around the country so the notes are so dirty. You can't even put that US\$ in your wallet. Manotes acho ari so thick netvsina, omg. People are suffering guys, you see that as you go kumalocation. People are not killing or eating each other, just thinking about bread and butter issues so the level of hustling is serious. Someone said to me that things are a bit worse since re-election yamudhara. But I guess many do not worry about politics or how the country is being run, they think about food, chikoro, accommodation etc. Not to mention police corruption, eish...policemen/women are some of the richest people in Zim today. They take bribe big time. A traffic policeman can make up to US \$150 in a single day. Their salaries are nowhere near what they get as bribes.'

Just back from Harare, our friend came to the Vigil and told us more of his experiences. He said Zimbabwe felt like a totally different country. He was surprised to see big diesel generators outside the shops in Harare's central business district and there were vendors everywhere – even in the leafy suburbs. Many kombis had windows which had been smashed by the police. The city was dirty and people were scared to talk. It was dangerous to take a photograph. Our friend concluded: 'the situation is desperate. Soon it will be hopeless.'

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As Zimbabwe spirals downwards the challenge facing the diaspora will be the focus of our 'Restore Zimbabwe' conference.

Other points

- A meeting of the team (Grace Nyaume, Patricia Masamba, Mary Muteyerwa and Shyllette Chipangura) that will cater for the 'Restore Zimbabwe' conference was held. A very special thank you to Christopher Kamuzonde who has a catering business and is providing all the equipment free and cooking the hot food for around 100 guests.
- It was good to see Joseph Chivayo (along with three newcomers from Leeds) waiting at the start of the Vigil to help set up. Once again he had caught the coach in Derby before 4 am.

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: 42 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **‘Restore Zimbabwe’: Zimbabwe Diaspora All-Stakeholders’ Conference.** Thursday 24th October from 9 am – 4.30 pm. Venue: the Theatre, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2 6HG. Nearest station: Bethnal Green (Central line).

- **Next Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 2nd November from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 2nd November from 6.30 – 9.30 pm. 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 Yes We Can meeting.** Saturday 16th November from 12 noon. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA.

- **Zimbabwe Association AGM.** Saturday 16th November. Guest speaker McDonald Lewanika of Crisis in Zimbabwe. Venue: Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2 6HG. Nearest station: Bethnal Green (Central line).

- **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

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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>

- **Useful website:** www.ipaidabribe.org.zw where people can report corruption in Zimbabwe.