

As we mourned the death of Nelson Mandela, the Vigil was shocked to learn that the UN has apparently agreed to divert some of the aid going to help Zimbabwe's starving people to help pay for the illegal regime's pie-in-the-sky economic development plan. Speaking after a meeting with UN officials in Harare, the deputy chief secretary to the president, Dr Ray Ndlukula, said: 'The United Nations country team in Zimbabwe and the government have agreed to scale down on humanitarian activities and integrate humanitarian work into recovery and development.' – in other words, cut down help for the poor and spend aid money as we tell you (see: <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-12-06-00-zim-asks-for-un-bailout/> – Zimbabwe asks for UN bailout).

The Vigil is opposed to giving the Mugabe regime any say in how international aid to Zimbabwe is used because there is clear evidence of Zanu PF's corruption, including the systematic theft of the diamond revenues which should fund its economic plan. We call on the UK government not to allow any of its aid to be diverted for Mugabe's political purposes and, indeed, to step up surveillance to make sure that British aid is not hijacked by Zanu PF supporters and denied to opponents of the Mugabe regime.

The Vigil is sending the following open letter to the UK's International Development Secretary, who is in charge of the enormous £10 – £11 billion aid budget – among the largest in the world.

Dear Ms Greening

Mugabe grabs aid money – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 7th December 2013

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 08 December 2013 19:39 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 December 2013 19:39

Zimbabweans exiled in the UK applaud the UK's generous aid to our country. Our people have benefitted greatly from it. But we are alarmed by reports that the UN has agreed to reduce its humanitarian programmes in Zimbabwe and instead divert the money to prop up the Mugabe regime's back-of-the-envelope Zim Asset economic development plan.

The UN agencies and its development partners provided \$426 million last year under the Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF). The programme has provided food assistance for 1.4 million people, medicines to 90% of health facilities, the distribution of school textbooks as well as other help such as agricultural inputs. It is now proposed that some of this money should help finance government plans.

The Zimbabwe Vigil is opposed to giving the illegal regime any say in how international aid to Zimbabwe is used as there is clear evidence of its corruption and its hijacking of diamond revenues.

We appeal to the UK government not to allow any of its aid to be diverted to prop up the Mugabe regime and, in particular, we call on it to exercise vigilance to stop aid being denied to opponents of the Mugabe regime.

Our concern has been heightened by a report in the Daily Mail today that your own audit

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department has found that UK tax money has already gone to the Zimbabwe regime in spite of insistence that this would not be the case (see: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2518131/UK-government-gave-80-000-taxpayers-money-Zimbabwe-government-contravention-rules.html> - U K government gave £80,000 in taxpayers' money to Zimbabwe government in contravention of its own rules).

The main focus of our day was the death of Nelson Mandela and we recall how we helped prompt him to disown Mugabe. It was back in 2008 when he visited London to celebrate his 90th birthday. Vigil supporters and others confronted him with a banner saying: 'Mandela ignores Mugabe's terror. Shame / Mandela speak out. Support a free Zimbabwe'. That very evening he spoke of a failure of leadership in Zimbabwe (see diaries of 25 and 26 June 2008 – <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/diary-archive/119-vigil-diary-archive-june-2008>).

Singing to the accompaniment of one of our drums, a large group of Vigil supporters joined mourners outside the nearby South African High Commission. 'ANC betrays Mandela' was one of our condolence messages left at South Africa House. We were embarrassed that the Zimbabwe flag continued to fly at full mast at Zimbabwe House when flags across London were at half-mast to mark Mandela's death. The truth is that Mugabe was jealous of Mandela which Fungayi Mabhunu illustrated by wearing our Mugabe mask and carrying the following posters: 'Mandela "too saintly"' (a Mugabe quotation) and 'Hate not Love'.

After the Vigil, supporters went down the road to the bi-monthly Zimbabwe Action Forum where we were pleased to be joined by John Huruwa and Alson Gwelo of the UK branch of newly-formed Zimbabweans United for Democracy (ZUNDE). They expressed willingness to work with us to secure change in Zimbabwe.

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The meeting was chaired by Wilbert Mukori, who reported on his recent visit to the Hague to attend a meeting of the Zimbabwe Europe Network. He said the EU wanted to lift sanctions and they were prepared to accept the elections even though they knew they were rigged. (For Wilbert's thoughts on Mandela's Legacy see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/552-thoughts-on-mandelas-legacy> .) Political analyst Clifford Mashiri said that the EU should demand that the diaspora be given the vote before lifting the sanctions.

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: 40 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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Next Swaziland Vigil. Saturday 28th December from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 **Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.**

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Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 18th January 2014 from 6.15 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.

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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.

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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.

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Facebook pages:

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

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

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

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Zimbabweans United for Democracy (ZUNDE). For more information about this organisation, check: www.zunde.org .

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