

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 09 March 2014 17:33 -

Rumours that the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has agreed to fund statues of Mugabe costing some \$5 million have been dismissed in London. DFID has been one of the most generous donors to Zimbabwe, recently contributing another \$10 million for basic education because of Mugabe's failure to come up with the money. The Vigil believes, however, that because Mugabe is still on the EU's targeted sanctions list it will be impossible for DFID to agree to pay for the statues.

Reports say local government minister Ignatius Chombo is behind the statues project. He is said to have commissioned North Korea to build two bronze sculptures of Mugabe; the bigger one costing \$3.5 million is to be erected in Harare and a smaller one costing a mere \$1.5 million is apparently to be put up in Mugabe's rural home in Zvimba. The larger statue is said to be 'the height of five men standing on top of one another' – an appropriate tribute to Mugabe.

Mugabe has reportedly insisted that the statues be erected only when he is dead but they are said to be on standby ready for delivery at a moment's notice. North Korean cargo planes are believed to be on 24 hour readiness (see: <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/news/zimbabwe/7073/4/5million-for-mugabe-statues.html> – \$5million for Mugabe statues).

The Vigil notes that publicity about Chombo's championing of the Mugabe monuments comes as the minister is being subjected to increased scrutiny by the CIO about how he acquired the vast wealth exposed in his divorce case (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit/chombo-under-graft-probe/> – Chombo under graft probe).

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It is believed that, if donor funding for the statues fails to materialise, Chombo will be able to deflect this scrutiny by offering to contribute something from his own voluminous pockets. A generous gesture like this might counteract the criticism in the Herald, which laid into Chombo on Friday with an editorial noting sarcastically ‘No one in Zimbabwe’s public office has ever done anything wrong. Everything bad about the economy, infrastructure, water, electricity, education, health and sport is as a result of some natural cause or sanctions. Our public officials are, apparently, hardworking angels who have never put a foot wrong and we should all be eternally grateful that they take their precious time to serve us – for hefty salaries, of course.’

(See: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_dr-chombo-the-ball-is-in-your-court-the-herald/

– Dr
Chombo, the ball is in your court | The Herald).

As far as the hefty salaries are concerned, the Vigil fears that little action will be taken by Prosecutor-General Johannes Tomana. He says the salaries may be immoral but so what: they are not against the law. Red-faced chief executives and other Zanu PF robber barons may be persuaded to help pay for the statues now that they have escaped prosecution. Perhaps they could sponsor a finger or an ear or the trademark glasses . . .

The UK government might think it has got away with refusing to pay for Mugabe’s statues but Prosecutor-General Tomana says that, despite Zimbabwe being bankrupt with only \$0.5 million in the bank, it will continue to fund the legal action against the EU for imposing sanctions (see: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_mega-earners-to-go-unpunished/

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Mega earners to go unpunished).

Other points

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Vigil supporter Wilbert Mukori says people who have looted the economy will not be allowed to keep their ill-gotten wealth (see: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/572-mugabe-extravagance--wilbert-mukori>).

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We were delighted to be joined by our supporter Deborah Harry who has been released from detention. She was taken to the airport to be deported but at the last minute there was a reprieve.

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: 41 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 15th March from 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see ZAF entry above. 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 sign at street level. It's between a newsagent and Pizza Express. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

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ROHR Reading branch general meeting. Saturday 15th March from 2 – 5 pm. Venue: RISC 35-39 London St

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Reading,
Berkshire RG1 4PS

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For further enquiries contact:
Nicodimus Muganhu (Chairman)
07877386792

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Charles D Ndlovu (Organising Secretary) 07413879590

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Mary Eluwasi (Vice Organising Secretary) 07888310582

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Next Swaziland Vigil. Saturday 22nd March from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

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'The Rain that Washes' national tour: Fri 4 April – Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Leeds LS7 3PD; Sat 5 April – Selby Town Hall, York Street, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 4AJ; Sat 24, Sun 25 & Mon 26 May – Brighton Fringe Festival, Marlborough Theatre, 4 Princes Street, Brighton BN2 1RD.

Booking details can be found at
www.chickenshed.org.uk/whatsson

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Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2013 can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/560-vigil-highlights-2013>

. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2013 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:

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>