

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 16 March 2014 15:34 -

As Zimbabwe sinks back to the stone age those of us driven into exile can only shake our heads in resignation at the relentless idiocy of our rulers. One brief announcement summed it up: 'To make way for the Zim Asset Awareness Seminar, neither the National Assembly nor the Senate will meet on 12th and 13th March'.

The announcement explained: 'The objective of this seminar is to raise awareness among Members of Parliament on the economic trajectory that the Government will take in the next five years as defined in the ZIM ASSET blueprint and their roles as legislators in the economic transformation of Zimbabwe'. (See: Bill Watch – Parliamentary Committees 12/2014 of 7th March

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<http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/bill-watch-parliamentary-committees-122014-7th-march/>

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Zim Asset was cobbled up, we understand, by 'Professor' Jonathan Moyo to bamboozle voters in last year's elections. To pretend it is a viable plan offering a way out of our difficulties is, in the Vigil's view, to plunge down the rabbit hole into Wonderland. Zim Asset is merely a wish list, rather like the letters children write to Father Christmas. But perhaps Zanu PF believes in Father Christmas . . .

Zanu PF's detachment from reality was shown in another announcement – that Zimbabwe is to review a tourism agreement with China signed in 2006. Despite the red carpet being laid out for them, only 5,000 Chinese visited Zimbabwe in 2012. And that is out of 83 million Chinese tourists who ventured abroad that year. Tourism Minister Mzembe says he is off to China next

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month to ‘find a way of mainstreaming them to our destination’ so that they can, no doubt, admire the old colonial infrastructure, the thriving farms and factories, the state of the art schools and hospitals, and perhaps pick up some ivory . . . (See: Zimbabwe seeks to review China tourism agreement – http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_zim-seeks-to-review-china-tourism-agreement/).

An insight into the true dimension of Zanu PF’s Alice in Wonderland delusion is given by the party’s spokesman Rugare Gumbo: ‘It’s wrong for anyone to attribute corruption to the President. The problem affects everybody and he cannot deal with everything. It’s also wrong to say that the President can’t address the problems of corruption. They can’t be solved by one person, but a collective of people. He has the politburo and Cabinet to deal with such issues. Everyone is fighting corruption and it should be everyone’s responsibility.’ Well that’s sorted then. (See: Mugabe too old to fight corruption – http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_mugabe-too-old-to-fight-corruption/).

Other points

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The Vigil ran a petition today calling on the Home Secretary to stop the deportation of our supporter Try Mahachi. Here is the text of the petition: *Try Mahachi is a committed activist against human rights abuses and for democracy in Zimbabwe. He has regularly attended the Zimbabwe Vigil and is a leader of our protest activities: singing of protest songs, praying for the suffering people in Zimbabwe, engaging with the public to keep them informed of events in Zimbabwe. All in all he is a high-profile activist who is likely to be known to the authorities in Zimbabwe. He is currently in Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre and has been told he will be forcibly deported back to Zimbabwe on 27*

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March. We appeal to the Home Secretary not to send him back to a country where he could face abuse for his opposition to Mugabe and the Zanu PF regime.

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The question of asylum was brought up at a meeting after the Vigil of our bi-monthly Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Ben Semwayo reported on a meeting of the National Coalition for Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC) at which he represented the Vigil. The NCADC has invited Zimbabweans to take part in a demonstration next week (see: Events and Notices). We would point out that the Vigil is about human rights abuses in Zimbabwe and is not an asylum organisation though we support asylum claims by Vigil people on the grounds they may face persecution at home because of their activism. We also have reservations about the NCADC demand that anyone should be allowed to come to the UK. We are disturbed, for instance, by the number of Mugabe supporters here in the UK and wonder how they got leave to remain. These are the people who support the illegal regime in Zimbabwe which has forced our supporters to flee to the UK. The ZAF meeting agreed to step up monitoring of Zanu PF events in the UK and also to keep a watch on the white supporters of Mugabe who might visit here, such as the Olympic swimmer Kirsty Coventry.

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A suggestion from the ZAF meeting was that we should ask our sister organisation ROHR Zimbabwe to try to monitor what happens to Zimbabweans who are deported home from the UK. We realise that many people do not want to have their names mentioned for fear of reprisals and we will of course respect this but we need evidence to support the claims of Vigil asylum seekers that they will be in danger if returned home.

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Martin Chinyanga as part of his 'diaspora feels it' campaign laid flowers on the doorstep of the Embassy in mourning for our brothers who died hiding from the South African police down a mineshaft.

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

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FOR THE RECORD: 40 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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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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NCADC Protest. Saturday 22nd March. Meet in Parliament Square at 11 am to assemble for a rally in Trafalgar Square. Check: <http://www.ncadc.org.uk/m22/> for further details.

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ROHR Executive Meeting. Saturday 5th April at 12 noon. 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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Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 5th April from 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see entry above.

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'The Rain that Washes' national tour: Fri 4 April – Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Leeds

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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

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.

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>

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