

Zanu PF at Chatham House – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 26th April 2014

The Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, known as Chatham House, claims to be an objective and independent-minded think tank. It is nothing of the sort, judging by the Vigil's experience of how it deals with Zimbabwe.

Chatham House misses no opportunity to give a platform for Mugabe's propaganda. It has been happy to host, among others, the smarmy Zanu PF minister and part-time farm looter Walter Mzembi, who declared that Mugabe was misunderstood. Then there was the British academic Joseph Hanlon who said after an exhaustive few weeks' research that land reform in Zimbabwe was a success (and that Mugabe was misunderstood). There followed a ZAnu PF business delegation who said, guess what? Mugabe is misunderstood!

Chatham House has just published a long report on Zimbabwe by Knox Chitiyo and Steve Kibble entitled *'Zimbabwe's International Re-engagement: The Long Haul to Recovery'*. It comes as no surprise to the Vigil, given the involvement of Dr Chitiyo, that the report concludes that Mugabe is misunderstood. Dr Chitiyo is, after all, a former senior lecturer in History and War Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. So he should know.

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 27 April 2014 16:44 -

The report betrays its bias from the outset: 'A landslide victory by the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) in Zimbabwe's elections in 2013 resulted in its comprehensive recapture of the state. The endorsement of the results by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the African Union (AU) and the UN confirmed ZANU-PF's grip on power. It also symbolized Zimbabwe's re-admittance into the international community . . .'

The Vigil is not sure what the authors mean by 'confirmed Zanu PF's grip on power' – rubber-stamped would be at least more literate. As for the assertion that this so-called endorsement 'symbolized Zimbabwe's re-admittance into the international community' we at the Vigil scratched our heads over this. What on earth does it mean? Have they been welcomed back to the UN? We thought they had never been expelled. Have they been given money by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund? No they still owe them billions. The short answer is, like so much else in the report, nothing but dubious assertions rather than facts.

Along with Botswana, the Vigil is convinced that the elections were comprehensively rigged and that Zanu PF has no mandate to govern Zimbabwe. Who is Chatham House trying to fool? We hope to have an opportunity to ask them. Chitiyo is to take part in a discussion on the report at Chatham House on 14 May. The Vigil was interested to note that he is to be joined by Dr Miles Tendai, lecturer in African History and Politics at Oxford – conveniently another Zanu PF supporter who also believes that Mr Mugabe is misunderstood. (Attendance is by invitation only. You can apply to go to the meeting through this link: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/events/view/199120>).

A Zimbabwean journalist based in the UK, Makusha Mugabe, notes the naïve tenor of the report: 'The recommended international engagement, including removal of remaining sanctions

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and targeted measures on President Mugabe and his wife and on defence equipment, cannot happen if it is contingent on improvement of the governance and human rights situation, because the violations are directly related to power retention. Without the ill-governance and the human rights violations Zanu (PF) would not retain power . . .’ For the full article, check:

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[hatham House Zimbabwe Report: Much Ado About Nothing](#)

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<http://www.changezimbabwe.com/index.php/news-mainmenu-2/1-latest/5001-chatham-house-zimbabwe-report-much-ado-about-nothing>

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. You can access the full report via this article.

Other points

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Vigil supporter Wilbert Mukori led the Vigil’s complaint to the BBC about its recent fawning TV interview with Mugabe. We are awaiting their response (see: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_mugabe-bbc-interview-an-insult-to-suffering-zimbabweans/)

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Mugabe BBC interview an insult to suffering Zimbabweans).

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As we mentioned at our last Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF) on 12th April, we will be discussing at ZAF on 3rd May forming a steering committee to carry forward the diaspora’s engagement with the emerging new political force in Zimbabwe following the breakup of MDC T.

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This meeting will also be discussing sending a delegation to the Home Office about Zimbabwean asylum issues. We are particularly concerned about reports of the bullying attitude of Home Office case workers.

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Thanks to Helen Rukimbiro and Fungayi Mabhunu for coming at the start to help set up.

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

FOR THE RECORD: 32 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 3rd May from 6.15 pm. This meeting will discuss sending a delegation to the Home Secretary, Theresa May, to present a petition on the asylum issue. It will also form a steering committee to carry forward the diaspora's engagement with the emerging new political force in Zimbabwe. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. 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 Executive Meeting. Saturday 3rd May at 12 noon. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first

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floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. The Strand is the same road as the Vigil. For directions see ZAF entry above.

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Next Swaziland Vigil. Saturday 3rd May from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

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ROHR Birmingham Branch general meeting. Saturday 10th May from 1 – 5 pm. Venue; Malaika House, 81 George Street, Lozells B19 1NS. For more information contact Chairperson Thandiwe Gwarumba 07503512308; Secretary Janemary Mapfumo 07412310429; Info & Publicity Team Tino Mashonganyika 07463272078 & Tecla Bandawe 07450507650

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ROHR Southampton Branch general meeting. Saturday 10th May from 1 – 5 pm. Venue: Age Concern Building 20 Romsey Road, Eastleigh S050 9AL. For further enquiries contact: Sally Mutseyami (Chair) 07448730581, Wellington Mukucha (Vice Chair), 07450264733, Sekayi Mwenye (Secretary 07428570134, Chipso Mtetwa (Organising Secretary) 07403341214.

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Zimbabwe's International Re-engagement: The Long Haul to Recovery. Wednesday 14th May from 10 – 11 am. Venue: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE. To register interest in the meeting, check: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/events/view/199120>

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Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting. Saturday 17th May at 12 noon. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL.

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ROHR Reading Branch outreach and general meeting. Saturday 24th May. Times: outreach 11 am

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5 pm

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Venue: RISC

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35-39 London St
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Reading RG1 4PS

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For further enquiries contact:
Charles D Ndlovu (Organising Secretary)
07413879590

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Mary Eluwasi (Vice Organising Secretary)
07888310582

,
Nicodimus Muganhu (Chair) 07877386792

,
Shylette Chipangura (Secretary) 07828929806.

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‘The Rain that Washes’ national tour: Sat 24, Sun 25 & Mon 26 May – Brighton Fringe
Festival, Marlborough Theatre, Brighton BN2 1RD. 4 Princes Street,

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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:

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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>