

Mugabe's vultures descend on London – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 2nd July 2016

Written by Administrator

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Mugabe's Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa has admitted that Zimbabwe is broke. 'Right now we have nothing', he said on a visit to France to beg for money. Asked in an interview with Radio France International how much credit he was looking for he said 'there is no limit' (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-we-dont-have-a-penny-minister-tells-paris/>).

Chinamasa was in Paris on his way to London where he will speak at the Chatham House foreign relations think tank on Monday. The Vigil has sent the following notice to its supporters:

Zanu PF are descending on London in a desperate plea for money. Please come and join the Vigil in two demonstrations.

Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa speaks at Chatham House from 12 noon – 1 pm on Monday 4th July

Chinamasa will talk about Zanu PF's economic agenda and no doubt promise to stop looting, act against corruption and observe the rule of law. The Vigil and ROHR will hand out leaflets to people attending explaining why Zanu PF cannot be believed.

Chinamasa will be joined by billionaire Obert Mpofu and other Zanu PF gangsters at a conference in London on Tuesday 5th July

The Vigil and ROHR are picketing the conference at which Zanu PF will try to persuade the world that it is reforming and should be bailed out with Western loans. We are being joined by the MDC in the UK. We will be outside the meeting to tell any prospective investors the real reasons why Zimbabwe has run out of money and why the world should be sceptical about any assurances given by the likes of Chinamasa, Minister of Macro Economic Planning and Investment Promotion Obert Mpofu (unaccountably one of the richest men in Zimbabwe) and Mike Bimha, Minister of Industry and Commerce. They are listed to speak at the conference along with Reserve Bank governor John Mangudya.

We will hand out the following leaflet at Chatham House:

No to Mugabe's lies

Exiled Zimbabweans are picketing this Chatham House meeting at which Mugabe's Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa will try to persuade you that the ruling Zanu PF party is reforming and should be bailed out with Western loans and investment. He is part of a larger Zanu PF delegation touring Europe in a desperate attempt to raise money. The meeting comes as the bankrupt regime hopes to convince the International Monetary Fund that it is serious about implementing the constitution adopted in 2013.

The Zimbabwe Vigil is here to explain the real reasons why Zimbabwe has run out of money and why the world should be sceptical about any assurances given by the likes of Chinamasa.

The opposition MP Eddie Cross says Mugabe's actions have made it clear he has no intention of observing the constitution and points out 'the leopard that has been courting the IMF and the International Community in the past three years has not changed its spots in any way. The

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consequences for the country are disastrous. They are again taking money out of our accounts and replacing it with a worthless form of virtual money. Their economic policies are destroying what little is left of a once diversified and sophisticated economy. They are clearly not going to allow a democratic election any time soon and the wholesale theft of resources by a tiny, military and civilian clique is continuing.' (See: <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/zanupf-the-leopard-has-not-changed-its-spots>)

We draw your attention to this recent article by the Times correspondent in Harare.

'Shopkeepers struggle with 'multicurrency' Mugabenomics - Jan Raath, Harare June 27 2016, The Times

Having had triple heart bypass surgery two years ago, Stelio Haralambos, who runs a little store, ought to avoid stress. He came to what was Rhodesia in 1966 as a barber from Lesbos but switched to running a shop.

Mr Haralambos has endured a series of economic crises since independence in 1980 but nothing quite like the one now. After Zimbabwe's currency vanished in hyperinflation in 2009, the US dollar became the official money. But seven years later, and with the country importing twice as much as it exports since President Mugabe destroyed agriculture and industry, there is a shortage of greenbacks, so the central bank has introduced a "multicurrency" system.

Customers entering Mr Haralambos's store for a morning scud, Zimbabwe's soupy traditional beer, can offer payment in up to seven currencies — US dollars, sterling, Chinese yuan, Japanese yen, Australian dollars, South African rand, Indian rupees and the Botswanan pula. In the store the day's exchange rates will not have arrived so Mr Haralambos has to do the calculations. You can just about pick up the fibrillation of his heart from the other side of the scratched old glass-topped counter.

The banks have tried to ration cash at ATMs but the daily withdrawal limit dwindles steadily. Slow, winding queues are the order of the day. It is the latest absurdity created by Mugabenomics. Other countries borrow but Zimbabwe cannot. Mr Mugabe once borrowed unsustainably and, worse, he doesn't pay back.

Country people, who long for the days of the Zimdollar, have to deal with notes carrying Chinese or Japanese characters. And the township con-artists revel in the opportunity to profit from the confusion. It gets worse. The central bank governor has announced that he will introduce a "bond note", equal to the US dollar, in October. Economists are trying to find out if it will be currency, money, legal tender, negotiable instrument, treasury bill or promissory note — but the governor is not saying. The only conclusion economists can reach is that it is a piece of paper.

The reaction has been a collective nationwide, "No." The bond note is seen as a government attempt to solve the cash crisis by issuing another form of the Zimdollar, whose value will plunge instantly on appearance. No one has forgotten the instant impoverishment caused by hyperinflation as the value of hard-earned wages, income and investments shrank. Police do

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their best to boost national outrage. They have become a force of uniformed highwaymen. Anywhere you go, you risk being stopped at a roadblock. On the 275-mile stretch between Bulawayo and Victoria Falls last week, there were 16. At each one police search for faults to fine you — for not having the latest stamp on your fire extinguisher indicating its last service, for example. Zimbabwe must be the only country where you can be fined \$20 for a dirty car. I hide my cash so I can say that I can't pay.

Government coffers are nearly empty. Civil servants' paydays have been repeatedly postponed since late last year and the 40,000-strong army, as well as the police and prison service, were told last week that paydays had been pushed back by two weeks.

This week the government was due to present its plan to repay \$1.8 billion to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, which would, theoretically, have allowed Zimbabwe to start borrowing again. However, Algeria, which was to have lent \$1 billion, has backed off. Not that Mr Mugabe seems to care. He said last week that the cash crisis, "is a temporary problem which should be behind us soon",

Mr Haralambos would best be advised to retire to Lesbos.'

Don't prop up the Mugabe regime

Other Points

- A meeting of the Zimbabwe Action Forum after the Vigil agreed that any loans to the Mugabe regime should be regarded as 'odious debt' and repudiated by any legitimate Zimbabwean government.
- The meeting congratulated our sister organisation Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe for their protest at Beit Bridge against the import ban. They said police permission had been refused but we advised them to go ahead anyway as the constitution only required the police to be informed of a demonstration.
- There were celebrations at the Vigil today. Immaculate Tshuma who was so nearly deported was back with us and Chipo Parirenyatwa brought a magnificent cake to share for her birthday. Other food contributions came from Beauty Nyandoro (drinks and crisps) and Zenzo Siziba (doughnuts). Praisego Moyo contributed chocolates and mini-cheddars to the lucky dip.
- Thanks to those who came early to help set up: Kevin Gondo, Isabell Gwatidzo, Barbara Kachidza, Etines Kapiya, Jonathan Kariwo, Fungayi Mabhunu, Tafadzwa Allen Madzivadondo, Phillip Mahlahla, Patricia Masamba, Cephas Maswoswa, Roseline Mukucha, Alfredy Mukuvare, Mduduzi Patrick Ndlovu, Chipo Parirenyatwa, Tawanda Rusape, Benjamin Semwayo. Alice Shimika and Immaculate Tshuma. Thanks to Roseline for looking after the front table, thanks to Phillip, Alfredy, Cephas and Mduduzi for putting up the high banners and to Chipo P for selling the wristbands. Chipo along with Isabell and Barbra sold raffle tickets for the ROHR fundraiser.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website. For videos of Vigils and other events,

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check the ROHR facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/www.rohrzimbabwe.org/videos?fref=photo>

FOR THE RECORD: 43 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa speaks at Chatham House. Monday 4th July from 12 noon – 1 pm. Venue: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE. Join us at 11.30 to hand out flyers to those attending the meeting.

- Protest at Zimbabwe Conference 2016 'Rebooting and Rebuilding'. Tuesday 5th July from 8 am onwards. Venue: outside DLA Piper UK LLP, 3 Noble Street, London EC2V 7EE. For more information: <http://africa-confidential-meetings.com/>.

- Zimbabwe Play: Workshop Negative by Cont Mhlanga. Wednesday 6th July to Saturday 9th July at 7.30 pm + 3 pm performance on Saturday. Venue: Gate Theatre, 11 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill, London W11 3HQ. The play is a response to the aftermath of Zimbabwean independence. Its comic and controversial approach led to it being banned by the Mugabe government in 1986, a challenge to artists' freedom of expression. For more information and tickets check: www.gatetheatre.co.uk/events/all-productions/tangle_presents_workshop_negative

- Monthly Itai Dzamara protest Saturday 9th July from 2 – 6 pm outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London. The protest is to mark sixteen months since Dzamara's abduction by intelligence agents.

- Swaziland Vigil. Saturday 9th July from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- ROHR Central London branch meeting. Saturday 16th July from 11 am – 1 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see below.

- ROHR National Executive meeting. Saturday 16th July from 1 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. For directions see below.

- ROHR Slough fundraiser. Saturday 16th July from 6 pm till late. Venue: Sharks Bar, Wexham Road, Slough SL2 5HS. Tickets £15. Money raised will go to books, food and school fees for Zimbabwean children in rural areas. Contact: Patricia Masamba 07708116625, Fungisai Mupandira (07721383165 and Iline Manhunzi 07824886092).

- 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 us.

- Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 16th July from 6.15 pm. 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

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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 a shop. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

- Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF) meets regularly after the Vigil to discuss ways to help those back in Zimbabwe to fight oppression and achieve true democracy.

- ROHR Reading branch summer national fundraiser. Saturday 30th July from 2 pm till late. Venue: Pakistani Community Hall, London Road, Reading RG1 3PA. Contact: Nicodimus Muganhu 07877386792, Charles Mararirakwenda 07964731721, Joshua Kahari 07877246251, Shyllette Chipangura 07828929806, Deborah Harry 07578894896, Sihle Sibanda 07985712749.

- Vigil and ROHR Brighton to London Walk. Friday 12th August to Saturday 13th August. The theme of our fundraising walk is 'Mourning the death of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe'. The walk will end around 3 pm at the Vigil. If you wish to participate or sponsor the walkers contact info@zimrohr.org. More information to be provided as plans develop.

- Zimbabwe Yes We Can Movement holds meetings in London as the political face of ROHR and the Vigil.

- Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2015 can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/746-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2015>

. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2015 Highlights page.

- Facebook pages:

Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwевigil>

ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF-490257051027515/?fref=ts>

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