

Donald Trump won the US presidency partly because he persuaded ordinary Americans that there was an alternative truth to that being presented to them by the mainstream media. Anything he didn't like he dismissed as 'fake news'.

This is not a new phenomenon, as Zimbabweans must know well. Cathy Buckle talks about much the same thing in her latest letter from Zimbabwe. She says one of the largest drains on Zimbabwe's foreign exchange is the cost of subscription television services from abroad because people don't believe ZBC and are bored out of their minds by it anyway (see: <http://www.cabuckle.com/index.php?id=227>).

The government controlled press is also adept at fake news. Take Friday's report in the Herald about the UN Human Rights Council's meeting in Geneva. It begins: 'Zimbabwe scored big here when the United Nations adopted its November 2016 Universal Periodic Report highlighting the human rights situation in the country, as member-states applauded Government efforts and commitment at ensuring enjoyment of various rights by citizens.'

Talk about alternative reality! The real picture is rather different. If you look into the composition of the Council you will find that it is packed with serial human rights abusers such as North Korea, China, Iran, Belarus, Turkey, Venezuela and Cuba. There are many African member countries as well but they vote in shameless solidarity with brother Africans.

These countries predictably ignored a submission by human rights organisations expressing concern that human rights defenders in Zimbabwe 'continue to face harassment, arbitrary arrests and torture for exercising their freedoms to assemble and of expression' (see: <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2017/03/18/un-review-exposed-zimbabwes-poor-human-rights-record/>).

Also dwelling in an alternative world is former Vice President 'Dr' Joice Mujuru whose failings were forensically examined by Stephen Sackur of the BBC Hardtalk programme (see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b08hz4fw/hardtalk-joyce-mujuru-vice-president-of-zimbabwe-20042014>).

‘What a plump chicken I see before me’, he might well have thought as he plucked another feather from Mugabe’s long-time bag carrier.

What emerged from the interview was a woman whose husband had been murdered by her boss but who nevertheless chose to hang onto her job. The ancient Greeks would have seen this as a subject for a tragedy. For Zimbabweans it is just life. Joice showed herself to be lying and self-serving. She bleated: ‘I could do nothing. I was not guilty. I was only Vice President. I knew nothing. I spent my 30+ years in government only doing good for people etc.’

By the end of the interview the chicken feathers were knee deep in the BBC studio. The Vigil thinks that any group allying itself with her is taking a big risk with its credibility. And that’s not fake news.

Thanks to those who arrived early to help set up: Isaac Chawasarira, Mavis Chisvo, Elizabeth Hlebayi, Fungayi Mabhunu, Phillip Mahlahla, Rosemary Maponga, Nyarai Masvosva, Cephas Maswoswa, Tinotenda Mrewa, Roseline Mukucha, Alfredy Mukuvare, Arthur Muponda, Beverley Mutandiro, Farai Mutumburi, Patience Muyeye, Siphon Ndlovu, Tsitsi Ngoro, Casper Nyamakura, Maxmus Savanhu and Michael Sirewu. Thanks to Roseline, and Patience for looking after the front table, to Rosemary, Mavis, Isaac and Nancy for handing out flyers and selling wristbands and to Phillip, Alfredy, Cephas, Maxmus, Isaac and Casper for putting up the banners. Thanks also to Lucia Mudzimu who brought savoury snacks for the Vigil to share.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website. The facebook page for our sister organisation Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR) (<https://www.facebook.com/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights-301811392835>) has been hijacked by destructive elements from a group calling itself ZHRO. Please be advised that any postings on this page are not posted by ROHR.

FOR THE RECORD: 42 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 25th March from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX. Contact: Daisy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Siphon Ndlovu 07400566013.

- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organisation based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organisation 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.

- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 1st April from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **ROHR Fundraising Dinner.** Saturday 8th April from 6 pm to midnight. Venue: Braunstone Civic Centre, Kingsway, Braunstone Town, Leicester LE3 2PP. Tickets: adults – £15, children under 12 – £5, Children 12-17 – £10. To book tickets contact: Enniah Dube 07403439707, Yvonne Makombe 07453909247 and Moline Nyabonda 07961250525.

- **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.

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

- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2016** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/843-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2016>

. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2016 Highlights page.

- **Facebook pages:** Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwevigil> ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/> ZAF:

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