

The diaspora was surprised to learn from the Primary and Secondary Education Minister, Lazarus Dokora, that Islam was Zimbabwe's biggest religion in 1980 and was the country's 'designated' indigenous faith. According to Dokora, Christianity was only the fourth religion when Mugabe took over, behind not only Islam but Judaism and Hinduism as well.

One would have thought that a minister of education would know what he's talking about. But we in the diaspora don't remember many Muslims around when we were driven out of Zimbabwe by Zanu PF's misgovernance. Precious few Jews either, for that matter, though there were certainly Indians. There were, of course, strong African traditional beliefs but it was Christianity that was the prevailing faith – and that was even before the spectacular rise of the Profit Ministries.

It's the time of year when Christians start thinking of 30 pieces of silver. The Vigil suspects Lazarus Dokora wouldn't even rise from the dead for that. But he's getting millions for selling out the country.

The learned minister said he has managed to get a 'loan' of \$20 million from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to build the first 17 of 2,000 Muslim schools planned for Zimbabwe. Money was being raised from other 'international partners' for 66 other Muslim schools, the sites for which had already been chosen (see: <https://www.zimeye.net/zimbabwe-islamic-state-minister-dokora-gets-20mil-for-muslim-schools/>).

OPEC's dominant member is Saudi Arabia which from its bottomless oil wells finances Muslim schools in the West and is known for promoting Islamic fundamentalism of the type adopted by the bloody Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabaab in Somalia. Is this what we need in Zimbabwe? China's offer to build a university in Zimbabwe is problematic enough.

According to a survey by AfrAsia Bank, Mugabe has reduced Zimbabweans from comparative prosperity seventeen years ago to being among the poorest people in Africa (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-zimbabweans-ranked-among-the-poorest/>).

Yet he is on course to be re-elected next July even if dead.

The people are cowed and defeated. There was only a small turnout for the rally in Harare on Wednesday of the National Electoral Reform Agenda despite promises of a big crowd (see: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-nera-demo-crowd-appalling/>).

The opposition seems to be relying on Zanu PF internal fighting and the collapse of the economy for their road to power. But they mustn't build their hopes on this. Zimbabwe is going cheap and there are plenty of buyers around, as Dokora has discovered.

Thanks to those who arrived early to help set up: Vimbayi Chambara, Isabell Gwatidzo, Fungayi Mabhunu, Phillip Mahlahla, Roseline Mukucha, Alfredy Mukuvare, Margaret Munenge, Mduduzi Ndlovu, Pretty Okechukwu and Ephraim Tapa. Thanks to Roseline and Sandra Kudenga (who opened the Vigil with prayer) for looking after the front table, to Isaac Chawasarira for handing out flyers and selling wristbands and to Phillip, Mduduzi, Alfredy, Vimbayi and Fungayi for putting up the banners. Thanks also to Isabell for bringing snacks for everyone and to Heather Makawa for selling ROHR fundraising raffle tickets.

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: 25 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 15th April from 6.30 pm. Venue: The Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX. We will move to the RFH at the end of the Vigil at 6 pm.

- **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 Nottingham meeting:** Saturday 15th April from 2.30 – 5 pm. Venue: Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum, The Sycamore Centre, 33a Hungerhill Road, Nottingham

NG3 4NB.

- **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.

- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 15th April from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 22nd April from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: 4th floor, Blue Side, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX. Contact: Daisy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Siphon Ndlovu 07400566013.

- **ROHR National Executive meeting.** Saturday 6th May from 11 am. Venue: The Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX.

- **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>