

<http://citizen.co.za/news/news-eish/1503759/mugabe-should-be-home-with-grandkids-as-he-is-caught-napping-during-wef-africa/> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/34109018380/sizes/m/>

President Mugabe laughed at the suggestion that Zimbabwe is a fragile state. The question was put to him on Thursday at the World Economic Forum on Africa held in Durban.

'That isn't true', he snorted. 'Zimbabwe is the most developed country on the continent after South Africa. We have a bumper harvest, not only of maize but also of tobacco and many other crops. We are not a poor country.'

Mugabe's head then slumped on his chest as he returned to dreamland – before he could be told of the violent clashes on the tobacco sales floors in Harare, where riot police fired teargas at desperate farmers demanding payment for their crops. They complained 'hurumende yedu haichadi vanhu yakutirwisa Smith aiva nani' (The government is now fighting us; the Smith regime was better.) See: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-police-tear-gas-bash-tobacco-farmers/>

Predictably, President Zuma jumped in to support Mugabe's fantasy, ignoring a report last week from the AfrAsia Bank which said Zimbabweans are among the poorest people in the world. It put Zimbabwean wealth per person last year at US\$200. By comparison, wealth per capita in Botswana was US\$6,700 and Zambia US\$1,200. The report noted that, back in 2000, Zimbabwe was one of the wealthiest countries in sub-Saharan Africa but now lagged well behind.

An exasperated denunciation of Zimbabwean political apathy came from Linda Masarira, a supporter of our sister organisation Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe. She asked: 'Why are Zimbabweans pretending that everything is ok. Today Mugabe is lying in South Africa. We all know it is a lie. We are the laughing stock of the world.' See: <https://www.facebook.com/lindatsungiriraimasarira/videos/700015266867611/>

Linda said on Facebook: 'We all have to stand up for our rights. Why are you not doing anything? Let us show Zanu PF and the world that we are fed up.'

Linda knows to her cost the perils of confronting the regime, having spent many months in jail for protesting against injustice. She has been campaigning with Patson Dzamara, brother of the murdered activist Itai. Patson is reported to have been moved to an intensive care unit of a Harare hospital after being jailed again last week (see: <http://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-s-c-national-byo-109784.html>).

## Other points

- 'To save Zimbabwe, do something' was also the message from the Zimbabwe Action Forum held after the Vigil. Ephraim Tapa, President of ROHR, announced plans for a peace demonstration in Harare's central business district at the end of May. He said it was part of an initiative by the Zimbabwe Peace Actors' Platform (ZimPAP) which groups 19 civil society organisations, including ROHR, and launched a successful programme in Mashonaland East Province last month. Ephraim said: 'As ROHR International, we stand against violence and political manipulation deployed against the people of Zimbabwe. We stand in support of free democracy and therefore offer ourselves as the voice of the people. We aim to nip electoral violence in the bud . . . Once fear is defeated, Zimbabweans will be able to vote freely.'

- One person who is doing something is Vigil activist Siphon Ndlovu who is to cycle from Nottingham to London, taking in six other cities on the way in a 324 mile sponsored ride from 14<sup>th</sup>

– 20

<sup>th</sup>

May in support of ZimPAP. To sponsor him please visit:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/siphon-ndlovu>

- Vigil and ROHR supporters arrived drained following a night without sleep spent comforting our friend Cephas Maswoswa who lost his 22-year-old son last week when he died in intensive care in a Johannesburg hospital. Cephas' loss resulted in extraordinary support from the Vigil and ROHR both financially and in caring. The solidarity of the Vigil and ROHR family was shown in the generosity and kindness of our activists. Cephas and his family were visited and comforted by our supporters on three occasions during the last week. All too many Zimbabweans in the diaspora have felt the bitter pain of losing loved ones. Only recently Jonathan Kariwo lost his brother and today we heard that Mavis Chisvo lost her only sister very suddenly, thought to be from malaria. We took a collection for her.

- Thanks to those who arrived early to help set up: Mavis Chisvo, Isabell Gwatidzo, Phillip Mahlahla, Nyarai Masvosva, Eletha Mpofu, Roseline Mukucha, Margaret Munenge, Farai Mutumburi and Tawanda Rusape. Thanks to Roseline, Cathrine Musa and Elizabeth Hlebayi for looking after the front table, to Nancy Makurira, Abigail Chidavayenzi and Faith Ndhlovu for handing out flyers and selling wristbands and to Phillip, Nyarai and Tawanda for putting up the banners. A special mention of Phillip who apart from clearing up the Vigil at the end helps the Muslim group that takes over from us to set up their food tables to feed the homeless.

- Special thanks to Rumbidzayi Sambana who went out of her way to collect the Vigil drum to take to the all-night wake for Cephas's son. Also to Isabell Gwatidzo for taking charge of the collections for Mavis and Cephas. Thanks to Elizabeth Hlebayi who brought a smart new shaker for the Vigil, much needed as our shakers keep disappearing.

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:** 39 signed the register.

## **EVENTS AND NOTICES:**

- **ROHR National Executive meeting.** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May from 11 am. Venue: The Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX.

- **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 13<sup>th</sup> May from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF).** Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May 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

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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>