

Account for Dzamara – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 10th March 2018

Written by Administrator

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The Vigil marked the third anniversary of the abduction and presumed murder of the human rights campaigner Itai Dzamara. He was an inspiration to us and not long before his disappearance he sent us this message: 'Your protest is not in vain.'

We are glad to see that Western diplomats in Harare are calling on President Mnangagwa to account for this outrage – one of the many committed by the Mugabe regime from which Mnangagwa must distance himself if he is to justify the welcome he has been given by the hopeful West.

Another decision must be to support the case for the reinstatement of the SADC human rights tribunal, closed at Mugabe's behest because it ruled against farm seizures. One of the victims, Ben Freeth, speaking in London this week, said that, if Mnangagwa is serious about rebuilding Zimbabwe, he must put in place the right foundations. One step would be to recognise the recent decision by a South African court against former President Zuma's arbitrary closure of the tribunal.

Like many others, Freeth expressed disappointment at Mnangagwa's denial of the Zanu PF violence in the 2008 elections when Morgan Tsvangirai was forced to withdraw. It doesn't bode well for democracy in Zimbabwe.

Freeth expressed alarm at the 'militarisation' of the government and of the Zimbabwe electoral commission. He said the new president had done 'some cosmetic things' but nothing to change the laws to create an enabling environment for investors.

He went on to warn Britain against a 'cosy relationship' with Mnangagwa unless he justified it by his actions and said it was not yet time for the diaspora to return. 'That time will come. We look forward to that time. But it is not yet.'

Other points

- The Vigil is to picket a conference in London beginning on Thursday which will be attended by a number of Zimbabwean ministers led by Finance Minister Chinamasa. They hope to encourage investment in Zimbabwe. We will be there to argue that investors should wait until reforms are in place in Zimbabwe. See 'Events and Notices' for further details.

- We were joined by campaigners against the sale of Zimbabwean baby elephants to China. The advice from experts is that this causes enormous suffering to these noble animals at their most vulnerable stage of life and is seldom successful. Thanks to Nomusa Dube for organising the protest. Posters showed pictures of caged baby elephants with the words 'Captivity kills. Help me!' and 'This isn't life. Alone, locked up in a concrete cage.'

- Thanks to Patricia Masamba, Netsayi Makarichi and Rosemary Maponga for looking after the front table, to Faith Ndhlovu, Tryness Ncube and Heather Makawa for handing out flyers, to Patricia, Tryness, Nomusa Dube and Thomas Chaplin for putting up the banners and to Heather for taking photos.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . 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: 20 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Zimbabwe Investment Forum: Zimdaba 2018.** Thursday / Friday, 15th / 16th March. Venue: The Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore (corner of Exhibition Road and Kensington Road), London SW7 2AR. A number of government ministers and businessmen from Zimbabwe will be attending. The Vigil will be demonstrating outside the venue from 8.30 – 11 am on Thursday 15

March. An early start is needed for us to hand out flyers to the delegates as they arrive to register. Nearest station: South Kensington – from there you can catch bus 360. For more information on the event, check:

www.zimdaba.com

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 17th March from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, Contact: Daisy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Siphon Ndlovu 07400566013.

- **ROHR general members' meeting.** Saturday 31st March from 11 am – 1.45 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX. Agenda: adoption of the ROHR 2018 programme of action and completion of appointments to the ROHR National Executive Committee. This meeting is rescheduled from the meeting on 3

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March cancelled because of bad weather.

- **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 Protest.** Thursday 19th April from 11.30 am - 1.30 pm. Venue: outside the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX. King Mswati III is likely to be in the UK for the Commonwealth Summit (19

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April is Mswati's 50

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birthday). It is an opportunity to protest about human rights problems in Swaziland and the Commonwealth's failings when it comes to dealing with the country. The protest is organized by Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) and they ask that members of the Zimbabwe and Swaziland Vigils join them.

- **The Vigil's book 'Zimbabwe Emergency'** is based on our weekly diaries. It records how events in Zimbabwe have unfolded over the past 15 years as seen by the diaspora in the UK. It chronicles the economic disintegration, violence, growing oppression and political manoeuvring – and the tragic human cost involved. It is available at the Vigil for £10. All proceeds will go to the Vigil and our sister organisation the Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe's work in Zimbabwe. The book is also available from Amazon.

- **Zimbabwe Action Forum** 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.

- **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>