

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/40761784825/sizes/m/>

Vigil activists outside Chatham House with British Ambassador to Zimbabwe

Campaigning outside Zimbabwe House on a chilly, overcast day was no compensation for missing Thomas Mapfumo’s Saturday concert at Glamis Stadium in Harare – his first home gig for 17 years.

What was a compensation, however, was the typically forthright interview he gave to the Daily News in which he dismissed the presidential transition from M to M as ‘cosmetic changes’ and called on young people to ‘rise and stand up’ to claim their country.

‘The people want a good leader — a man who is not a thief, a man who does not steal from the people, a man of the people, a man who will stand for the people, a man who will stand for the poor,’ he said.

Mapfumo added that it was impossible for the current leaders, in the twilight of their careers, to clear up the mess they had created in nearly four decades. ‘After 14 years away in the US, I come back to see people living in squalor, people are selling anything on the street and everywhere there are potholes. Amidst the poverty, you have others smartly dressed in suits and driving beautiful cars,’ he said. (See: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/mapfumo-bl-asts-ed-government/>).

‘Cosmetic changes’ is the message the Vigil gets from family and friends in Zimbabwe. Nothing has improved except the banditry of police road blocks which even the Zanu PF government realized was deterring tourism and prospective investors. The MDC MP Eddie Cross points out that, despite the promises of the new regime, ‘not a single significant case of corruption has been initiated’.

He goes on: ‘The Army may be back in the barracks but believe me their control over most of what is going on in Government has not changed at all, in fact it may be more open and pervasive. We are headed for a “smart election”, not free and fair in the conventional sense but one which will be controlled and directed by the same team that won the 2013 elections. Its

outcome is being predicted with total certainty as being a two-horse race with Emmerson Mnangagwa the clear winner, Nelson Chamisa a close second and the also rans miles behind.

'But I think they will be able to claim after the election that the "people have spoken". The fact that they had their hands tied behind their backs, were subjected to a constant steam of propaganda and their basic needs delivered on a "command basis" by the military in mufti, will be very difficult to see and the international Community will begin to recognise the new regime once it takes over.' (see: <http://www.eddiecross.africanherd.com/180426.html>).

Other points

- Vigil activists were outside the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House on Monday to give an alternative view to people attending a talk by the Zimbabwean Foreign Affairs and International Trade Minister General Sibusiso Moyo. The meeting was attended by British Ambassador to Zimbabwe Catriona Laing, who accepted one of our flyers and stopped to discuss the situation. Thanks to those who took part in the demonstration: Bianca Mpawaenda, Dennis Benton, Patience Muyeye, Patricia Masamba, Rose Benton, Rosemary Maponga, Sharon Moyo and Tozonziani Musanhi.

- The Vigil believes that Mnangagwa's mantra 'Zimbabwe is open for business' will not amount to much if a report in ZWNNews is correct and the butcher of Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile Mariam, has been appointed special adviser to Vice President General Chiwenga. Mengistu, wanted for genocide, has been sheltered in Harare by Zanu PF since 1991 (see: <https://zwnnews.com/ethiopian-murderer-mengistu-is-now-chiwengas-advisershocking-details-revealed/>).

- The Vigil is sceptical about reports that the Zimbabwean diaspora is flooding home for medicinal purposes (see: <https://www.herald.co.zw/govt-legalises-mbanje-farming/>).

- Thanks to those who came early to help set up: Jonathan Kariwo, Michelle Makoni, Barnie Mandimika, Rosemary Maponga, Bianca Mpawaenda, Fungisai Mupandira, Sally Mutseyami, Jennifer Senzere and Pearl Shambare. Thanks to Rosemary and Bianca for looking after the front table, to Pearl, Michelle, Jennifer and Simon Nyanhi for handing out flyers and to Jonathan, Barnie, Jennifer, Pearl, Rosemary and Bianca for putting up the banners.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

FOR THE RECORD: 17 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 19th May from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm.
Venue: Royal Festival Hall, Contact: Daisy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Siphon Ndlovu 07400566013.

- **ROHR Reading Fifth Anniversary celebration.** Saturday 26th May from 2 pm till late.
Venue: Pakistani Community Hall, London Road, Reading West RG1 3PA. There will be food, drinks, music, games, prizes and raffle and ROHR Reading will be presenting food donations to local food banks. Contact: Nicodimus 07877386792, Josephine 07455166668, Shylette 07828929806 and Deborah 07578894896.

- **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/>

[w.rohrzimbabwe.org/](http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/)

. Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents us.

- **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>