

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 20 May 2018 15:40 - Last Updated Sunday, 20 May 2018 15:40

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/27347152287/sizes/m/>

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The revelation that the British government is to support a loan to Zimbabwe ahead of the elections has alarmed those opposed to Mnangagwa's Zanu PF government.

Former Finance Minister Tendai Biti said foreign governments should not back such loans until credible elections have taken place. 'The elections are only a few months away', he pointed out. 'Let's see the quality of this election first'.

The opposition sees the move as further unbalancing the electoral playing field, arguing that it will give international credibility to the military regime, which has promised reforms but so far delivered little.

The British move was reported by London's influential Financial Times newspaper, which said this will be the first time the British government has been directly involved in a commercial loan to Zimbabwe's private sector for more than 20 years.

The amount involved is \$100 million and will come from the Standard Chartered Bank with backing from the CDC Group, the government's development finance institution owned by the Department for International Development. They will share the default risk on the loan facility, said to be intended to provide desperately-needed foreign exchange to struggling businesses.

CDC's chief executive Nick O'Donohoe, insisted that the move did not represent an endorsement of the Zimbabwean government. But sceptics say that, following the overthrow of Mugabe, the UK seems to be taking a pragmatic 'realpolitik' approach to Zimbabwe. This would confirm fears expressed by MDC President Nelson Chamisa during his recent visit to Britain that the British government was focusing on political stability and trade and commerce at the expense of democracy.

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Other points

- The Vigil demonstrated today in support of electoral reforms. A banner strung above the front table read: 'Free & fair credible elections in Zimbabwe'. A big thank you to Patience Muyeye who organised the protest and generously paid for the new banner and a large number of placards such as 'Electoral reforms first in Zimbabwe' and 'End corruption and state looting'.
- Thanks to those who came early to help set up: Isaac Chawasarira, Isabell Gwatidzo, Jonathan Kariwo, Tozonziani Musanhi, Patience Muyeye, Tryness Ncube and Ephraim Tapa. Thanks to Tryness, Patience and Daizy Fabian for looking after the front table, to Isaac for handing out flyers and to Jonathan, Isaac, Tozonziani, Patience, Isabell, Tryness and Ephraim for putting up the banners. A special thank you to Heather Makawa for printing flyers to hand out to the public at the Vigil.

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: 18 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Demonstration for voters' rights and voter safety in Zimbabwe.** Saturday 26th May from 2 – 5 outside the Zimbabwe Embassy. Join us to demonstrate for voter safety in Zimbabwe – no violence, no threats, no bribes, all parties able to campaign freely. For more information, contact the organiser: Esther Munyira 07492058107. This ties in with the walk to fundraise for voter education. See below.
- **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, Shyllette 07828929806 and Deborah 07578894896.
- **ROHR fundraising walk.** Saturday 9th June. This will be a sponsored fundraising walk ending at the Vigil. Proceeds will go to pre-election voter education by the Zimbabwe Peace Actors' Platform (ZimPAP). More information as plans develop. If you wish to take part or contribute, contact: Daizy Fabian 07708653640.
- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 16th June from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall. Contact: Daisy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Siphon Ndlovu 07400566013.
- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner

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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](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.

- **Cycle ride for the Human Rights Defenders' Project.** Vigil activist Siphon Ndlovu will be cycling 219 miles from 28th May – 2nd June to raise funds for the Human Rights Defenders' Project of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. Siphon will cycle through 6 cities: Luton, Cambridge, Colchester, Chelmsford, Southend-on-Sea and back to London. To donate, visit:

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

- **MDC London branch meeting.** Saturday 2nd June from 12 noon to 2 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall. For more information, contact: Sharon Moyo 07877224113 and Clemence Munyukwi 07889667686.

- **Save the Zimbabwe elephants protest.** Friday 15th June from 1 noon – 2 pm outside the Zimbabwe Embassy. One of our activists Nomusa Dube is organising a protest about the export of baby elephants from Zimbabwe to China. She asks Vigil activists to join her at this protest.

- **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>