

To boldly go where we have gone before: that is the trajectory we appear to be on for the next five years of Zanu PF rule. Bon voyage!

The Vigil is, of course, sorry at the failure of the MDC's court challenge to the presidential election. We are convinced it had a good case but believe the result was sadly predictable. The Vigil has already expressed our disquiet that the MDC went into the elections without getting the reforms it had been insisting on.

Some respected voices suggest that a corner has been turned since Mugabe was overthrown and that the new regime is somehow more democratically inclined. The Vigil is skeptical. It's still a Zanu PF government, whether or not the military is in charge.

It will now no doubt explain that the shootings in Harare were really by unknown, probably opposition elements and try to persuade the West that really all is well.

Judging by the statement by Britain's Africa Minister Harriett Baldwin after the constitutional court hearing, London will go along with that (see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-on-the-zimbabwean-elections> ).

Some observations by the Zimbabwean wildlife painter Larry Norton.

*In the midst of the confusion there are things I am certain of:*

- *That when hundreds of thousands of people marched in November 2017 it was not in support of Mnangagwa or Chiwenga or ZANU or Chamisa or MDC. It was to rid the country of the despotic Mugabe. It was with a deep hunger for relief from tyranny, corruption and economic hell.*

- *That when soldiers opened up it was an attempt to bring back the fear that lurks beneath the sunlit skin of the country. A vicious and desperate attempt at reminding us that there are consequences for daring to believe that this country can be free of the people and things we have come to despise.*

*There are a few things I wonder about:*

*- If someone wins a national election, even with a narrow margin, how is it that there is barely a sign of celebration or cars hooting in the streets of the entire country? Personally, I saw nothing. The day after the midnight announcement by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's Chairperson Chigumba, of a Mnangagwa victory, a dark depression seemed to pervade the land.*

*- How does the opposition get blamed for what happened with the unrest in Harare and no one is publicly charged, as yet, for instructing the army to open fire with live rounds on unarmed civilians? The elephant in the room remains. Who ordered this?*

*- How is it, that since the events of November and promises of uprooting of corruption in 100 days, we have had a cabinet which includes the ex-minister of mines Obert Mpofu, who was interrogated by parliament over the disappearance of \$15 billion of diamonds, (a figure confirmed by Mugabe's own admission) who is now acting minister of Home Affairs. How does a minister of mines not know where \$15 billion of diamond revenue went? How has the same minister been able to acquire so many properties, reported to be in his name, in Victoria Falls and Bulawayo? This would be an incredible fiscal achievement on a ministerial salary.*

*- Why was it so difficult for Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, if they were balanced, to provide full information before the election, on the voters roll and polling stations. Why was this of so little importance to observers?*

*- Why does Chigumba, the ZEC Chairperson, assume that we will simply believe what she says without full evidence of the results including all V11 forms?*

*- What prompted the circus, when the MDC Alliance were about to address to the world's press at the Bronte Hotel and the occasion was shattered by the sudden appearance of Riot Police in full gear. It broke up in panicked disarray . . . only for the participants then to be reassembled and told its all fine, carry on?*

Thanks to those who came early to help set up the table and put up the banners and the tarpaulin in the rain: Deborah Harry, Josephine Jombe, Selina Kudita, Marian Machekanyanga, Rosemary Maponga, Margaret Munenge and Ephraim Tapa. Thanks also to Josephine, Margaret, Deborah and Rosemary for looking after the front table, to Marian for handing out flyers and to Selina and Nyarai Masvosva for taking pictures and Beverley, Siphon and Chido for drumming and leading the singing. It was good to be joined by Jean-Francois Mercier, one of the founders of the Vigil who now lives in south Africa.

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 beach barbecue.** Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> August. Venue: Frinton Beach CO13 9DN. Food and transport provided. Bring your own drinks. Tickets: £20 adults, £5 children. For more information, contact: Daizy 07708653640, Max 07397809056 and Esther 07492058107.

- **ROHR National Executive meeting.** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September from 11 am. Venue: The Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX.

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall. Contact: Daizy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Siphon Ndlovu 07400566013.

- **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.

- **Mike Campbell Foundation – Zimbabwe: rising from the ruins?** Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October from 7 – 9 pm (doors open at 6.30 pm). Venue:

Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. Speakers include: Kate Hoey MP (Chair), Ben Freeth MBE, Fergal Keane OBE, Archbishop Sentamu, Chief Felix Ndiweni and Gift Konjana. To book, visit:

<https://event.bookitbee.com/18402/my-first-event-1347?preview=y>

- **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/zimbabwевigil>

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>