

Something stinks – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 29th September 2018

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 30 September 2018 14:30 - Last Updated Sunday, 30 September 2018 14:30

Riot police with batons and water cannon patrolling the streets. Disease spreading. Zimbabwe is open for business they say.

The most vibrant sector of the economy disagrees. Reports say harassed street vendors are piling up stones at night to fight off attempts to shut down their activities in city centres (see: <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/09/27/zim-on-edge-as-vendors-fight-back>).

With formal unemployment estimated at 90%, street trading has been the mainspring of the economy for at least the last 20 years. Born of desperation, it is for many people the only way of scraping a living.

Now they are blamed for the failure of the state and accused of spreading cholera when decades of corruption and negligence have allowed the collapse of infrastructure and the pollution of urban water sources.

The comrades of Zanu PF have sadly neglected the poor in their bold strides towards self-enrichment. Easy enough: just don't go to the high density suburbs to be reminded of reality.

Zimbabwe's street vendors, who include university graduates, have been an innovative resource, selling almost anything. But they may have been outpaced by Zambian vendors who have found a market for crap ours hadn't thought of.

Fearing the import of cholera, our Zambian neighbours imposed a regime requiring Zimbabweans to demonstrate they were not carrying the disease. They were offered a lavatory where officials would check their stools for cholera. Laxatives were available. The easy way out was to buy Zambian stools instead.

'I paid \$5 to buy a teaspoon full of stool and it was tested and I passed through', said one

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cross-border trader (see: <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-09-28-poo-sold-at-zim-border-to-avoid-cholera-testing/>),

Latest news however is that the bottom has fallen out of the stool market. The Zambian authorities have apparently turned their nose up at it, saying the whole business stinks. Zimbabweans will be unable to afford it soon anyway because President Mnangagwa says he's going to introduce a programme of austerity to help revive the economy. Zimbabweans are well prepared for it.

Other points

- Mnangagwa was not asked to take a stool test when he went to New York for the UN General Assembly. Perhaps he should have taken a lie detector test instead. The MDC has accused him of spewing lies to whoever would listen (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/09/shameless-ed-in-un-trip-of-lies/>).
- The Vigil would add another of his lies: his demand for an end to 'illegal' sanctions. He neglects to mention that Mugabe wasted a fortune in legal costs in a failed attempt to get EU sanctions declared illegal.
- Ethiopia is sending a team to Harare to learn from ZEC how to run elections. While they are in Zimbabwe they would be better advised to consult the former Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, who advised Mugabe how to rig elections. He was given asylum in Zimbabwe which has refused Ethiopian requests to extradite him for trial.
- Thanks to those who came early to help set up the table and put up the banners: Miriam Gasho, Jonathan Kariwo, Patricia Masamba, Raymond Mashamba and Minienhle Sibanda. Thanks also to Patricia, Minienhle and Jonathan for looking after the front table and to Miriam for handing out flyers.
- For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwевigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

FOR THE RECORD: 16 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Mike Campbell Foundation – Zimbabwe: rising from the ruins?** Tuesday 9th October from 7 – 9 pm (doors open at 6 .30 pm). Venue: Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington

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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>

- **Zimbabwe Vigil's 16th anniversary.** Saturday 13th October from 2 – 5 pm outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London. Please join us to mark the Vigil's anniversary.
- **Relaunch of Reading MDC branch.** Saturday 13th October from 12 noon – 2 pm. Venue: Risk, 35-39 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS. For more information call: Deborah Harry 07578894896, Model Pamire 07737485777.

- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 20th October 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](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.

- **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>