

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/34751372666/sizes/m/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/34741893446/sizes/m/>

The Zimbabwean diaspora gave ROHR activist Siphon Ndlovu a hero's welcome when he arrived at the Vigil after a marathon seven-day bike ride through England to raise money to stop political violence in Zimbabwe and teach people in the rural areas what their voting rights are.

Siphon braved roads flooded by heavy rain on his 324 mile ride from Nottingham to London, which took in six other towns. He said some of the roads were like rivers. The weather took a toll on his bike and also his phone, which he was relying on for navigation.

Fortunately members of Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe were waiting to meet him at the end of each day and they arranged to have the bike fixed and lent him a phone, as well as organising food, dry clothes, a hot bath and a place to sleep.

Siphon's toughest day was on the long stretch from Oxford to Southampton when he was lashed by rain all day. ROHR supporters were following his progress closely and, when he was still 20 miles from Southampton, ROHR President Ephraim Tapa sent encouragement: 'Go on soldier. We are with you all the way.' On the next leg to Reading ROHR women waited for six hours in the drizzle to welcome Siphon.

Siphon's welcome at the Vigil began with a prayer of thanks for his safe return led by Sister Bev Mutandiro. Daizy Fabian, Chair of ROHR Central London branch, said how important his contribution to the peace project was. She said ROHR and the Vigil must continue to support efforts for peace, justice and freedom in Zimbabwe. Vigil co-ordinator Rose Benton praised Siphon for his determination in completing his challenge through a very tough week. The way ROHR and the Vigil had rallied around to support Siphon showed that there was a strong family feeling in the group.

The money raised by the bike ride will support the Zimbabwe Peace Actors' Platform (ZimPAP), which aims to train 100,000 civilian peacekeepers and overcome fear and intimidation during next year's elections. To sponsor Siphon, visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/siphon>

dlovu

In one of the latest reports of pre-election violence, the MDC T Vice-President Thokozani Khupe said police officers fired teargas when she was attending a voter registration campaign meeting at a supporter's home in Lupane Ward 9. 'It was during that meeting that police attacked us unprovoked,' she said.

MDC T spokesperson, Obert Gutu said the unwarranted crackdown justified calls for outside intervention in the 2018 elections. He said the attack on Khupe and party supporters was evidence that Zanu PF, aided by a partisan police force, was not ready for a free and fair election. 'This is a harbinger of what awaits us. As we go towards 2018, Zanu PF will use all methods to push the country to a pre-determined electoral outcome and without SADC, the African Union and the United Nations we are never going to have free and fair polls,' he said (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2017/05/20/police-attack-khupe/>).

The discovery of more graves in Gokwe dating from the 2008 election violence underlines the importance of action to support peaceful elections this time. Midlands MDC T Senator Morgan Komichi told the Senate that he had just been shown the newly-discovered graves in various locations and local people were fearful because they associated elections with violence. He said violence was structural because it was ingrained in the procedures and administration of elections. 'This can be removed from our society if we all agree that we are denouncing violence.' (See: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit-m-more-mass-graves-discovered/>).

Thanks to all ROHR members who turned out to welcome, support and send Sipho safely on his journey in the towns he visited:

- **Nottingham:** Chamunorwa Chisuko and Sally Mutseyami
- **Leicester:** Christopher Kamuzonde, Enniah Dube, Moline Nyabonda and Yvonne Makombe.
- **Birmingham:** Tecla Bandawe, Mercy Chapepa, Thandiwe Gwarumba, Gladys Muduve, Rumbidzai Mudyandzo and Tarisai Murwira
- **Oxford:** George Chinamhora
- **Southampton:** Ben Semwayo, Jacob Mandipira, Maxmus Savanhu, Hildah Mudzinganyama, Chipu Mtetwa and Nontokozo Ncube
- **Reading:** Shylette Chipangura, Deborah Harry, Alice Shimika and Josephine Jombe
- **Slough:** Fungisai Mupandira, Patricia Masamba, Iline Manhunzi, Anna Mwanza and

Nkosikona Tshabangu

- **London:** Daizy Fabian, Mduduzi Ndlovu, Maxmus Savanhu, Nyarai Masvosva, Cephas Maswoswa, Edward Ndlovu, Margaret Munenge, Fungayi Mabhunu, Catherine Musa, Cecilliah Phiri, Shepherd Nyamandi, Ishmael Makina, Charles Mupawose, Bernie Mandimika, Eletha Mpofo, Bev Mutandiro, Faith Ndhlovu, Rumbidzayi Sambana, Roseline Mukucha, Phillip Mahlahla and Alfredy Mukuvare.

Special thanks: to Sally Mutseyami of ROHR's publicity department for ensuring that the information about the bike ride got as wide circulation and publicity as possible, to Ben Semwayo who lent his phone to Siphon and to Notokozo Ncube who paid for Siphon's dinner and drove Ben to his house to fetch the phone, to Chris Kamuzonde who paid for a hotel room for Siphon in Leicester, to ROHR Birmingham for taking Siphon out to a meal after he had been greeted at the Vigil and to Rumbi Sambana for making the 'Welcome back Siphon' poster.

Other points

- It was good to have Cephas Maswoswa with us. He thanked everyone for their support for him when he lost his 22-year-old son.
- Thanks to those who arrived early to help set up: Lizzie Dziruni, Daizy Fabian, Phillip Mahlahla, Nyarai Masvosva, Eletha Mpofo, Roseline Mukucha, Margaret Munenge, Charles Mupawose, Edward Ndlovu and Caroline Witts. Thanks to Roseline, Eletha and Cathrine Musa for looking after the front table, to Faith Ndhlovu, Alice Shimika and Cathrine for handing out flyers and selling wristbands and to Phillip, Charles, Edward, Nyarai, Daizy, Margaret Alfredy Mukuvare and Mduduzi Ndlovu for putting up the banners. Thanks also to Nyarai for bringing cakes to share.

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/> . 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: 36 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Swaziland Vigil.** Saturday 27th May from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.
- **ROHR National Executive meeting.** Saturday 3rd June from 11 am. Venue: The Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX.
- **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.
- **Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF)** 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.
- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2016** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/843-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2016>
- . Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2016 Highlights page.
- **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>