

Murky dealings surrounding bankrupt Air Zimbabwe and the newly created Zimbabwe Airways have shone a light on the corruption and deceit at the heart of the Zanu PF government.

The fiasco was brought to a head on Wednesday when a secondhand Boeing 777 arrived at Robert Mugabe International Airport from Malaysia, apparently one of four planes bought for what some reports say was \$70 million.

Transport minister Joram Gumbo said the plane belonged to Zimbabwe Aviation Leasing Company owned by Zimbabwe Airways, which is linked to the Mugabe family through the deposed president's son-in-law Simba Chikore, former boss of Air Zimbabwe. Gumbo said the money had come from the diaspora.

But a totally different picture was given by finance minister Patrick Chinamasa who was at the airport for the arrival of the 12-year-old plane. He said it had been paid for by the government. 'We kept the deal under wraps to avoid the trap of sanctions', he claimed, although Malaysia has never imposed sanctions against Zimbabwe.

Reports say President Mnangagwa ordered that the plane be parked with Air Zimbabwe's fleet while the matter is investigated. Certainly, a lot needs to be clarified. It was interesting that Mugabe's daughter Bona was at the ceremony with her husband, who was wearing the uniform of a airline captain. They are presently building a mansion on the top of a hill in northern Harare on land originally owned by the government, which had planned to build a school there.

Of course, no one expects any important Zanu PF figure to end up in jail, whatever they have done. The extraordinary indulgence shown towards former police commissioner general Solomon Chihuri proves this.

A parliamentary hearing was told this week that Chihuri had ordered the seizure of a safe containing diamonds worth millions of dollars belonging to a company which had been forced to enter a partnership with the police to mine the Chiadzwa fields. Of course, all the people in positions of responsibility at the time deny that they knew anything about the matter. Some seem to suggest they didn't know what a diamond is and they had never heard of Chihuri or the

police. Of course Chihuri himself didn't turn up at the hearing.

Now we hear of an unfolding scandal about former army commander Vice President General Chiwenga's wife Mary. It appears that she will be a busy lady, having been awarded a multi-million dollar contract 'to provide travel arrangements for the office of the president and cabinet'. Since Mnangagwa has adopted the non-stop travel agenda set by Mugabe, she will have little time left to visit the farm she recently seized from the Agriculture and Rural Development Authority, which was meant to help meet the country's demand for seeds.

Other points

- If you are interested in reading more about the mismanagement, corruption and incompetence which has brought down Zimbabwe Airways here's an article from the Zimbabwe Independent on Friday: <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/how-airzim-was-plundered-by-chefs/>

- Vigil supporters will have a busy time over the next week. The Zimbabwean Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Dr Lieutenant-General Sibusiso Moyo will be at a reception at the Zimbabwe Embassy at 6 pm on Wednesday 18th April to mark Zimbabwe Independence Day. Vigil supporters will be outside the Embassy from 5.30 pm to press our message for reforms to ensure truly free and fair elections.

- Vigil supporters will also be present at a protest outside the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in Pall Mall at 11.30 am on Thursday 19th April. We understand Foreign Minister Moyo will be attending as an observer. We will be joining Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) who are organising a protest about human rights problems in Swaziland. See 'Events and Notices' for full details.

- Moyo is speaking at the Chatham House think tank, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE from 4.30 – 5.30 pm on Monday 23rd April. Vigil supporters will be outside from 4 pm to once again press our message for reforms to ensure truly free and fair elections. For more information check:

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/zimbabwe-s-international-re-engagement-and-socio-economic-recovery>

- Thanks to those who came today and put up and took down the banners and posters, looked after the front table and handed out flyers to the passing public: Junior Madzimure, Michelle Makoni, Barnie Mandimika, Debra Ncube, Faith Ndhlovu and Siphon Ndlovu.

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: 8 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Protest at Zimbabwe House reception.** Wednesday 18th April from 5.30 pm outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London. The Embassy is hosting a reception for Zimbabwean Foreign Affairs Minister Sibusiso Moyo from 6 – 8.30 pm and we will be pressing for reforms to ensure truly free and fair elections.

- **Protest outside CHOGM.** Thursday 19th April from 11.30 – 1.30 pm. Venue: outside the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX. King Mswati III is likely to be there for the Commonwealth Summit. (19th

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April is also Mswati's 50

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birthday.) It is an opportunity to protest about human rights problems in Swaziland and the Commonwealth's failings when it comes to dealing with the country. The protest is organized by Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) and they ask that members of the Zimbabwe and Swaziland Vigils join them. For more information, check:

<http://actsa.org/actsa-takes-action-at-chogm-protest-on-swaziland-19th-april-2018/>

Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Moyo is also attending and we will press our message for elections reforms in Zimbabwe.

- **Protest outside Chatham House.** Monday 23rd April from 4 pm. Venue: Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE.

Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Moyo is speaking from 4.30 – 5.30. Vigil supporters will be outside to once again press our message for reforms to ensure truly free and fair elections. For more information check:

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- **ROHR Central London branch meeting.** Saturday 21st April from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Venue: Royal Festival Hall, Contact: Daisy Fabian 07708653640, Maxmus Savanhu 07397809056, Sipho Ndlovu 07400566013.

- **ROHR Reading branch outreach and general meeting.** Saturday 21st April. Community outreach from 11:30-1:30pm. Venue: Broad Street, Reading. Awareness campaign on human rights in Zimbabwe, General meeting from 2-5pm: Venue: The RISC 35-39 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4PS. Contact Josh 07877246251, Nicodimus 07877386792, Josephine 07455166668, Shylette 07828929806.

- **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/>

. 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/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>