

It is becoming clear that there is no one in charge in Zimbabwe. There is a leadership vacuum. No sooner does one minister make a policy statement than another contradicts it.

After Finance Minister Chinamasa gave assurances that the indigenisation policy would be clarified to encourage foreign investment there was hope that one of the main obstacles to economic growth was to be removed – only for new Indigenisation Minister Christopher Mushowe to say foreign investors would be lucky to get a 49% share in their business. It could be as little as 1%. Is that clear enough Mr Chinamasa?

The other main economic problem, agriculture, is subject to the same government whims. Mugabe told the party congress last month that remaining white farmers should be driven off – only for Minister of Lands and Rural Resettlement Douglas Mombeshora to say resettled farmers were free to form joint ventures with white commercial farmers (see: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_w_zimbabwe-in-land-policy-u-turn/ – Zimbabwe in land policy U-turn). Predictably his statement was immediately rubbished by other Zanu PF elements.

With Dr Grace openly defying party policy – let alone the law – to grab ever more land in Mazowe, few investors would have much confidence in any assurances given by such a rudderless regime except, of course, for Western governments which, in spite of everything, speak blithely of ‘progress’ in Zimbabwe. The American Ambassador to Harare Bruce Wharton has tweeted ‘[Zim makes the New York Times list of places to go!](#)’ The British Ambassador to Zimbabwe Catriona Laing has picked this up and tweeted ‘Great news!’ [@BruceWharton](#) Zim makes the New York Times list of places to go!’

So the Western diplomatic community is having a whale of a time mixing cocktails in Harare. Ms Laing in her latest newsletter says: 'I have had a fascinating first three and a half months in Zimbabwe . . . a truly inspiring place (see: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/391172/UK_in_Zimbabwe_Newsletter_December_2014.pdf).

Were Mr Wharton and Ms Laing at the ZimRights meeting which gave an award to the notorious farm invader Joseph Chinotimba, who led a group which invaded the Supreme Court and demanded: 'kill the judges'? Perhaps they joined in singing for he's a jolly good fellow. (See: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201501050748.html>

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Zimbabwe: 'Chinotimba Not a Rights Defender'.
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Other points

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No one knows how many Zimbabweans are in the UK. Estimates range widely. Now the House of Commons Library has put the figure at 52,000. This, of course, will be an underestimate because 'illegals' are obviously under the radar. But it provides a considerable constituency which could help sway the knife-edge general elections in May. Zimbabweans are classed as Commonwealth citizens and can vote here because the UK government hasn't bothered to update the law since Zimbabwe pulled out of the Commonwealth twelve years ago. We urge you to express your opinions of the UK's policy on Zimbabwe in the elections.

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The car bringing the Vigil paraphernalia – a 15 year old Peugeot – barely made it. Thanks to Paul Fusire for diagnosing the absence of a fan belt! He said he got used to dealing with ropey old cars in the rural areas at home particularly using women's tights as a makeshift fanbelt. But everyone was wearing trousers so we called the AA.

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Below find our last 4 month tranche of the Zimbabwe Vigil 2014 highlights.

Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights September – December 2014

'Tax' the Mafia – Saturday 6th September: President Mugabe – having failed to sell Zimbabwe in Beijing – is now turning to street vendors in Chitungwiza to bail out his bankrupt regime: they are being told they must register to pay tax. The Vigil believes, however, that there is still an untapped source of funding available: how about cropping the Zanu PF bigwigs and their mysterious wealth? Vice-President Mujuru appears to be ready for plucking and if her rich supporter Didymus Mutasa and other cronies could also be 'persuaded' to cough up a billion dollars or so, Zanu PF could look forward to a well-fed congress. Thanks to Fungayi Mabhunu for donning our Mugabe mask for a tableau illustrating the financial desperation of the Zanu PF regime. He was shown with a bucket for donations from the passing public, flanked by posters such as: 'Bankruptcy sale' and 'Country clearance'.

A ZimAsset – Saturday 13th September: The Vigil is awed by the academic triumph of the First Lady – now to be known not just as Mother of the People but also as Doctor. And what could be more appropriate than the subject of her learned thesis 'The changing social structure of the family: the case of children's homes in Zimbabwe'. Few could deny that Dr Grace is qualified on such a subject with her vast and ever-expanding 'orphanage' holdings in Mazowe. ROHR President Ephraim Tapa, just back from 12 days in Zimbabwe, told the bi-monthly Zimbabwe Action Forum after the Vigil that he had found a dispirited people who had lost faith in politics.

Chatham House demo – Tuesday 16th September: People running away in fear: it must have seemed like old times for Deputy Foreign Minister Christopher Mutsvangwa. Except this time it was the former CIO agent doing the running when he arrived with Embassy flunkies to give a talk at the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House.

They tried to sneak into the building through a side door but Vigil demonstrators got there first and blocked Mutsvangwa's entry, demanding to know what he was doing in London. By the time he got into the building he was visibly shaken.

Tables turned – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 20th September 2014: Following the demo on Tuesday the Vigil took the opportunity to remind the world of Musvangwa's violent background and our annoyance that Chatham House takes every opportunity to invite Mugabe representatives to tell the world how wonderful he is.

Zanu PF's forked tongue – Saturday 27th September 2014: The Vigil notes Mugabe's restatement of his attitude towards the 'evil' donors who are trying to educate our children, maintain a health service and feed the starving. Mugabe told the UN General Assembly that, for daring to empower her people, Zimbabwe had become a victim of 'the evil machinations of Western countries'. Mugabe's rant exposed the hypocrisy of Deputy Foreign Minister Mutsvangwa who, according to the Herald, voiced a very different view of the West when he spoke at Chatham House. He was quoted as saying: 'why not do once again what Cecil Rhodes did in 1890 when he brought capital and business to Zimbabwe'..

Stop the tanks – Saturday 4th October: Anyone who has seen pictures of the teeming crowds of pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong will be impressed by their courage. A photograph of an unarmed student standing defiantly in the path of a tank sent to put down a protest in Beijing 25 years ago has become an icon of courage.

We at the Vigil welcome Tsvangirai's statement that he is to exercise his constitutional right and take to the streets to protest about the

failure of the Zanu PF regime. Will he be the man to stop the tanks?

The Vigil was graced by the presence of Dr Mugabe in her splendid new academic robes. She carried posters such as 'Let me lead you to the promised Guccis'.

Charity meeting – Wednesday 8th October: The Vigil was represented at a charity meeting in London on a wet evening to hear a talk by former Education Minister David Coltart. We were unhappy when the chairman announced he didn't want any questions of a political nature as there was a lot we wanted to ask.

Let them eat yoghurt – Saturday 11th October: On the Vigil's 12th anniversary we were blessed with a warm and sunny afternoon. We were not surprised by remarks by Dr Grace who told a rally in Gweru: 'Nobody will remove me from the farm which I took. Blood will be spilt if anyone attempts to remove me from that farm . . . Women, we need land, so let us take it. Even if we don't farm on the land, that is not a problem as long as you have it and it's yours.' At a rally in Harare she said: 'Nobody is buying my yoghurt. Business is very bad because of sanctions. You can't even find a person who can buy a packet of milk'.

Cognitive dissonance – Saturday 18th October: The British government has expressed concern at the lack of progress in reforming the electoral process in Zimbabwe. It says the newly passed Electoral Amendment Act still contradicts the new constitution, with no sign of further amendments being planned. The Foreign Office's comments come as the European Union is apparently preparing to make further concessions to Mugabe next month, despite Zanu PF's failure to allow free and fair elections and respect the rule of law. The Vigil's view of the situation in Zimbabwe is apparently far too negative according to a columnist of the London Times, Matthew Parris. who has had another happy holiday there and says ' Zimbabwe is a safe and ordered place with a stable economy: one of Africa's more advanced countries.'

Normalising the abnormal – Saturday 25th October 2014: The Vigil seldom agrees with The Herald but we do have some sympathy with the paper's scepticism about the naïve remarks about Mugabe by Britain's new Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Catriona Laing. 'Obviously he's an iconic figure', she told The Herald.

Commenting on the interview, the Herald argued that Britain and the West

had to go down on their knees and show real repentance for the terrible things they had done to Zanu PF.

Leadership paralysis – Saturday 1st November: The Vigil can't get excited about the EU's decision to lift sanctions. We were told this was coming some time back. We simply point out that the sanctions were imposed because of Zimbabwe's rigged elections and lack of respect for the law. This has not changed and the EU knows it, though they talk blithely about 'progress' . . .

Finance Minister Chinamasa says the indigenisation law is to be clarified to encourage foreign investment but everyone knows that no decisions are being taken while Zanu PF tears itself apart.

Even though the EU seems to be waiting unto Mugabe's 91

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birthday before it lifts the travel sanctions on him and his clever wife, the old idiot popped up at the Vigil as part of Grace's 'meet the people' tour. He was suitably attired for Halloween and accompanied by three weevils disguised as devils.

Vigil supports meeting – Tuesday 4th November: Vigil supporters turned up in force to sing and drum at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The occasion was an evening devoted to Zimbabwe organised by the Mike Campbell Foundation. Mr Campbell, a commercial farmer, died in 2011 as a result of injuries caused by his abduction and torture by Mugabe's supporters. Speaking for the Vigil, Ephraim Tapa told the large audience that the EU's re-engagement with Mugabe was depriving civil rights activists of support.

EU betrays Zimbabwe – Saturday 8th November: Zimbabweans exiled in the UK are to deliver a petition to the Prime Minister's official residence at 10 Downing Street on 15

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November following the EU's lifting of sanctions.

Fungayi Mabhunu, a spokesman for the Vigil, said: 'We are protesting at the EU's spineless capitulation to Mugabe even though he has made no reforms whatsoever . . . Now the new EU Ambassador says he 'had a lovely chat with Mugabe'. It is sickening. Mugabe has turned the country into a death camp.'

Appeasing a dictator – Saturday 15th November: Vigil supporters toyi-toyed to Downing Street singing 'Vigil Yedu'. We displayed our banner: 'No to Mugabe, No to Starvation' while a delegation was admitted into the Prime Minister's residence to hand over a petition signed by some 12,000 people who had passed by the Vigil. When the delegation returned to the Vigil we launched a new petition:

A petition to the

European Union:

With Zimbabwe's new constitution being disregarded by Mugabe, we deplore the EU's scramble to re-engage with his illegitimate regime. We call on the EU, and the UK in particular, to insist that: the constitution is implemented, the rule of law is respected, the voters' roll is made available for public scrutiny as constitutionally required and the diaspora be allowed to vote.

Lies and hypocrisy – Saturday 22nd November: Vigil founder member Ephraim Tapa, speaking outside the South African High Commission in London, appealed to South Africa to reverse its policy and stand with the people of Zimbabwe and support our demand for democracy and human rights. He was speaking as Vigil supporters delivered a letter to the High Commission about the findings of the South African Judicial Observer Mission sent to report on the 2002 Zimbabwe elections. This report has now been released on the instructions of the South African Constitutional Court after having being suppressed by the Pretoria government. As long suspected, the report concludes that the election could not be considered free and fair. Ephraim said: 'If the report had been published at the time perhaps we would have got rid of Mugabe a long time ago'.

Six impossible things before breakfast – Saturday 29th November: As Chinamasa delivered his fantasy budget, the Vigil turned to Alice in Wonderland for an insight into what is going on in Zimbabwe. After all, like Alice in the book, we are in a world where we are required to believe six impossible things before breakfast. Take these quotes: 'We are not a basket case', 'Zimbabwe's economic prospects are weighed down by sanctions', 'Corruption has been caused by sanctions' 'The exposure of corruption in the media is the work of subversive elements', 'ZimAsset is the answer to our problems' and 'The Khampepe Report (on the 2002 elections) is a mere private opinion'. In this topsy-turvy world it seems that Joyce Mujuru is cast as Alice eating cake until she grows too big and Queen of Hearts Grace orders: 'Off with her head and the heads of all her supporters'.

Who cares about food? – Saturday 6th December: We are told that providing bread and circuses was the way Roman emperors kept the people satisfied. The Vigil thinks that Emperor Mugabe, despite his sweaty Oscar-worthy performance at the party congress, has fallen short in the bread department. Circus-wise he's done well. Now the congress is over, Mugabe can take his usual well-deserved holiday until his birthday celebrations in February while the purged leadership gets on with the goal of the congress: 'Accelerated implementation of ZimAsset'. But since this programme is complete fantasy, all it requires is a letter to Father Christmas.

Senile Mugabe not voice of Zimbabwe – Saturday 13th December: The Vigil has delivered a letter to the Ghanaian High Commission in London apologising for the insulting remarks about Ghana made by Mugabe. We are particularly concerned because senile Mugabe is the President-elect of the African Union and is bringing the whole of Africa not just Zimbabwe into ridicule. Speaking at Zanu PF's Congress, Mugabe said: 'I have been to Ghana, 1958 – 1960, and when you look at them now and compare their present situation to that which existed in the 1960s, no change. There might be more people yes. There may be one road from the airport that has been well done. That's about all. No change.' Confirmation of Zanu PF's popularity in the UK came in a report in The Herald about corruption in the selling of Zanu PF membership cards. Zanu PF says about \$400,000 can't be accounted for and cites, as an example, that South Africa received 3,000 cards but 2,881 of them had yet to be accounted for. In contrast, 'the United Kingdom received an equal number but sold all the 3,000 cards'.

Food for Embassy – Saturday 20th December: After learning that Zimbabwean diplomats were going without pay because of lack of funds the Vigil arranged an emergency Christmas food drop for Zimbabwe House. We left a pile of food and other supplies in the Embassy's doorway with the notice: **Christmas Appeal:** Zimbabwean diplomats starving, Leave food for them here, (Sorry – no GM foods).

We had thought of the food drop as primarily a symbolic gesture to show up the failures of the

Mugabe regime, with people supplying unwanted food from their own resources. But one supporter went to the supermarket to buy food specially and another brought sanitary towels and condoms. In addition, two passers-by went and bought extra food.

Shot in the foot – Saturday 27th December: The new indigenisation minister Christopher Mushowe has clarified the indigenisation policy which has been blamed for scaring off desperately needed foreign investment. Mushowe told the Herald that 49% was the maximum allowed for foreign shareholding and 51% was the minimum for the indigenisation holding: ‘ So it's not cast in concrete that it's 49 percent, it can be one percent because it is the maximum and 51 percent can be 99 percent because it's the minimum’.

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: 23 signed the register.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

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Demonstration in support of Africa Unity Square protester Itai Dzamara. Saturday 17th January. Further details:

<http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/636-occupy-unity-square-protest-zimbabw>

[e-embassy-london-saturday-17th-january-2015-from-2-5-pm](#)

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Zimbabwe Action Forum (ZAF). Saturday 17th January from 6.15 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. From the Vigil it's about a 10 minute walk, in the direction away from Trafalgar Square. The Strand Continental is situated on the south side of the Strand between Somerset House and the turn off onto Waterloo Bridge. The entrance is marked by a sign at street level. It's between a newsagent and Pizza Express. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.

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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.

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Parliamentary Meeting to discuss the current situation in Zimbabwe. Monday 19th January from 4 – 6 pm.

Venue:

Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House. Bridge Street, London SW1A 2LW.

Map Link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/QxoRW>

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Nearest Station:

Westminster.

The meeting has been arranged by Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West at the request of the Reading branch of the Zimbabwe Vigil's sister organisation Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHRZ). It is an open meeting for all Zimbabweans and a chance to discuss Zimbabwean issues with UK MPs. We suggest you arrive early (around 3.30 pm) so you can clear security by the start of the meeting.

For information contact: Nicodimus Muganhu – 07877386792, Erick Eluwasi – 07532021348, Charles D Ndlovu – 07413879590, Sally Mutseyami – 07448730581, Shylette Chipangura – 07828929806, Tino Mashonganyika – 07463272078.

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Next Swaziland Vigil. Saturday 24th January from 10 am to 1 pm outside the Swaziland High Commission, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB.

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Zimbabwe Yes We Can meeting. Saturday 31st January at 12 noon. Venue: The Theodore Bullfrog, 26-30 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HL.

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Zimbabwe Yes We Can Movement holds monthly meetings in London as the political face of ROHR and the Vigil.

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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.

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Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2014 can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/campaign-news/642-zimbabwe-vigil-highlights-2014>

. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2014 Highlights page.

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Facebook pages:

Vigil: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8157345519&ref=ts>

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

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.co/pages/ROHR-Zimbabwe-Restoration-of-Human-Rights/301811392835>

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SW Radio Africa's website and sound archive is being hosted on www.archive.org . Go to their site and type in swradioafrica which will link you to snapshots of their site over the years and at the top of that page a link to their website where, under podcasts, you will find the audio.