

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 21 March 2021 16:51 -

'Zimbabwe has turned a corner. And whilst across the world the past year has been focused on closing – from lockdowns to closed borders – Zimbabwe continues to focus on opening up its economy, democracy and media space.' So claims self-satisfied Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube.

According to Ncube's article in New Europe: 'For many in Europe, Zimbabwe is a faraway land, tarnished by years of mismanagement and a distinct absence of freedom. But the last few years tell a truly different story. A story of reform. A story of renewal.' (See: <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/zimbabwe-is-opening-up/>.)

Many people in Zimbabwe would dispute Ncube's rosy assertions including that the 2018 elections were 'the freest, fairest and most credible and peaceful elections in Zimbabwe's history'. Among them would be former Finance Minister Tendai Biti, Vice President of MDC Alliance, who has been booted out of Parliament for campaigning for reform. Biti chaired Parliament's public accounts committee, which, he said, was about to release damning reports of corruption in several state entities (see: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-03-18-zimbabwe-mdc-alliances-biti-says-he-has-been-kicked-out-of-parliament-to-avoid-exposing-massive-corruption/>).

The party's spokesman, Fadzayi Mahere said: 'This rogue regime is employing all tactics including repressive 'patriotism' laws, dismembering parliament and arbitrary arrests to crush dissent.' About half the party's MPs have now been recalled and Mahere demanded that the government allow by-elections without delay. (See: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2021-03-18-zimbabwe-parliament-expels-six-lawmakers-as-opposition-infighting-escalates/>.)

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Mahere said: 'MPs have been selected by the people and the continued disregard for this social contract constitutes the greatest betrayal of the people. It undermines the democratic process and further weakens an already frail electoral system. Zimbabweans must not be shaken. We know worse is coming.' (See: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/03/mdc-alliance-bullish-despite-parly-setback/>.)

The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition is also critical. It says the judiciary has been 'captured' by the state: 'We are disturbed by the fact that judicial capture has contributed significantly to the shrinking of the democratic space in Zimbabwe with the State using the courts to punish dissenting voices.' (See: <https://www.thezimbabwean.co/2021/03/crisis-coalition-disturbed-by-the-continued-weaponization-of-the-judiciary-to-persecute-activists/>.)

Other Points:

- The Crisis Coalition has expressed its dismay over SADC's inaction at the Mozambiquan Islamist terrorist crisis. It appeals to the inert bloc to assist countries threatened by extremism (see: <https://www.thezimbabwean.co/2021/03/crisis-coalition-appalled-by-sadc-inaction-over-mozambican-crisis/>).

- This weekend sees the anniversary of the Vigil's lockdown. Supporters have missed seeing each other outside the Embassy every Saturday. The campaign for a free Zimbabwe continues in the virtual Vigil and we hope to be able to meet in person soon.

- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have a virtual Vigil while the restrictions continue. We ask our activists to put on Vigil / ROHR / Zimbabwe regalia and take a photo of themselves holding an appropriate poster reflecting our protest against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The photos are uploaded on our Flickr site.

- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

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Notices:

- **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 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. All proceeds 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.

- **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>