

UK Zimbabweans petition Zuma – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 21st January 2012



Exuberant Zimbabweans from all over the UK gathered outside the South African High Commission in London calling on President Zuma to force Zanu PF to implement the Global Political Agreement signed more than three years ago.

The High Commission is normally closed on a Saturday and we were encouraged that the South Africans opened it for the delivery of an MDC petition by Adella Chiminya – to the accompaniment of a blaring vuvuzela. (Adella is the widow of activist Tichaona Chiminya who was burnt to death by Zanu PF in 2002.)

The Chairman of MDC UK Tonderai Samanyanga read out the petition, which reflected the demands of the MDC in the diaspora, not only in the UK but around the world.

The posters on display summed up the message: 'Free and fair elections please, Security reforms now, Stop Zanu PF from stealing our diamonds, We demand a new and clean voters' roll, Diaspora vote now, We say no to stolen elections, Media reforms now, Monitoring forces six months before and after elections, Mugabe and junta must go now, SADC scored zero' etc.

The difficulties facing all those opposed to Zanu PF were illustrated by Vigil management team member Fungayi Mabhunhu. Wearing our Mugabe mask, he carried a blunt message 'Vote MDC and die'.

MDC and Vigil supporters returned to the Zimbabwe Embassy to dance and sing to the Vigil drummers with renewed enthusiasm to work together for change.

As far as the Vigil is concerned, we support the aims of the MDC but hope this demonstration is a wake-up call not only to President Zuma but to the MDC leadership in Zimbabwe. Zanu PF is currently in a minority in both Houses of Parliament: we can't believe that the MDC cannot take advantage of this rather than pretend to govern the country.

Other points

- A big vote of thanks to Josephine Zhuga and Dambudzo Marimira who missed the buzz of the protest outside the South African High Commission to keep the Vigil going outside the Zimbabwe Embassy. Thanks also to Wellington Muringai for looking after the back table.
- Thanks to photographer Russell Pollard who took photos of the protest which can be viewed on this link: <http://russellpollard.photoshelter.com/gallery/Anti-Mugabe-Demonstrations-21-1-12/G0000d884BkbzKu4>. (They are copyright so if you want copies you will need to contact Russell.)

For latest Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/>. Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website – they cannot be downloaded from the slideshow on the front page of the Zimvigil website.

FOR THE RECORD: 207 signed the register but many did not sign and we estimate there were well over 300 people present.

EVENTS AND NOTICES:

- **Zimbabwe Vigil Highlights 2011** can be viewed on this link: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/363-vigil-highlights-2011->. Links to previous years' highlights are listed on 2011 Highlights page.
- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organisation based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organisation 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 the views and opinions of ROHR.

- **ZBN News.** The Vigil management team wishes to make it clear that the Zimbabwe Vigil is not responsible for Zimbabwe Broadcasting Network News (ZBN News). We are happy that they attend our activities and provide television coverage but we have no control over them. All enquiries about ZBN News should be addressed to ZBN News.
- **The Zim Vigil band** (Farai Marema and Dumi Tutani) has launched its theme song 'Vigil Yedu (our Vigil)' to raise awareness through music. To download this single, visit: www.imusicafrica.com and to watch the video check: <http://ourvigil.notlong.com>. To watch other Zim Vigil band protest songs, check: <http://Shungurudza.notlong.com> and <http://blooddiamonds.notlong.com>.
- **ROHR general meeting.** Saturday 4th February 2012 from 1 – 4 pm. The meeting is being called to elect a new UK Executive. All ROHR members and those interested in joining ROHR are welcome to attend. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel (first floor lounge), 143 Strand, London WC2R 1JA. Directions: The Strand is the same road as the Vigil. 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 big sign high above and a sign for its famous Indian restaurant at street level. It's next to a newsagent. Nearest underground: Temple (District and Circle lines) and Holborn.
- **First Joint ZimVigil, ROHR and Zimbabwe We Can Forum.** Saturday 4th February from 6.30 – 9.30 pm. Venue: Strand Continental Hotel, 143 The Strand, WC2R 15A. For directions see above entry. Future joint forums to be held after the Vigil on the first Saturday of each month.
- **Vigil Facebook page:** <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8157345519&ref=ts>.
- **Vigil Myspace page:** <http://www.myspace.com/zimbabwевigil>.
- **'Through the Darkness', Judith Todd's acclaimed account of the rise of Mugabe.** To receive a copy by post in the UK please email confirmation of your order and postal address to ngwenyasr@yahoo.co.uk and send a cheque for £10 payable to "Budiriro Trust" to Emily Chadburn, 15 Burners Close, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 0QA. All proceeds go to the Budiriro Trust which provides bursaries to needy A Level students in Zimbabwe.

Vigil co-ordinators

The Vigil, outside the Zimbabwe Embassy, 429 Strand, London, takes place every Saturday from 14.00 to 18.00 to protest against gross violations of human rights in Zimbabwe. The Vigil which started in October 2002 will continue until internationally-monitored, free and fair elections are held in Zimbabwe. <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk>.