

New Year message from ROHR Zimbabwe founder Ephraim Tapa

Written by Ephraim Tapa
Thursday, 05 January 2012 22:16

The year 2012 is now here and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, our Patron and leadership, I wish all our valued members, stakeholders and sympathisers a happy and productive 12 months ahead and the years to come.

For ROHR Zimbabwe, 2011 was a very difficult year that threatened to destroy the organisation but for the resilience of its leadership and indefatigable passion and commitment of its membership. The story of ROHR's survival would not be complete without mention of our sister organisation, the Zimbabwe Vigil, which ensured ROHR was able to meet its obligations all the way through.

That said, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and all leadership, I wish to register our profound regret at the inconvenience our members, supporters and sponsors went through during this troubled period. This was about power and control where former members sought to either gain control over the organisation or destroy it following their suspension for various constitutional breaches.

As for me personally, it was the most humbling and traumatic experience in my life as an activist. I am happy that, as 2011 closed, we managed to get the organisation re-registered with the office of the Registrar of Deeds in Harare and with it, the resolution of all ROHR Zimbabwe governance issues.

Thus we enter 2012 with confidence and focussed on the cause of human rights. I therefore want to thank you all for the patience, trust and commitment you showed during the difficult and sad episode in the history of ROHR Zimbabwe. Allow me to assure all and sundry that ROHR Zimbabwe remains focussed on and committed to the cause of human rights and democracy in Zimbabwe.

ROHR Governance Concerns

Following reports that ROHR Zimbabwe's registered Deeds had gone missing at the Registrar's office in Harare, I am pleased to advise that the registration has now been re-instated under Notarial Deed No MA1385/2011 with Ephraim Tapa as Founder and Board Chair, Mr Tichanzii Gandanga, Mr Ray Muzenda and Ms Brilliant Dube as Trustees. In addition to the Notarial Deed, ROHR has a constitution signed by all its trustees and which governs its operations at the membership level. This puts paid to all concerns around governance.

New Year message from ROHR Zimbabwe founder Ephraim Tapa

Written by Ephraim Tapa

Thursday, 05 January 2012 22:16

In the UK, ROHR is registered as a non-profit making organisation (limited by guarantee) and this means the name ROHR Zimbabwe is not available for whatever use by anyone without the approval of directors. It is therefore illegal for anyone (individual or institutional) to purport to operate under the ROHR Zimbabwe label, for there can only be one ROHR Zimbabwe from an organisation point of view.

ROHR Zimbabwe goes International

In 2010, the original Board of Trustees took a position to internationalise ROHR Zimbabwe with a view to accommodate other nationalities into our membership and widen the scope of our mandate and appeal. I am pleased to advise that that resolution has been given effect. According to our registration the organisation is, from now on, to be known as ROHR Zimbabwe International or ROHR International or simply ROHR. All other appropriate changes will be made in due course.

Head Office New Address

Due to prohibitive costs, ROHR head office has moved from 5 Normandy Drive, Alexandra Park, Harare to 13 Series Road, Highlands, Harare, Zimbabwe.

New Membership Cards

In order to reflect the changes, a new membership card will be issued to replace those currently in circulation. This will also help us in conducting our membership audit. As you will be aware, the membership of many of us has either lapsed or become dormant. All relevant stakeholders will be advised of this update. Members are expected to keep their subscription fees up-to-date, all of which should be paid into the organisation's bank account.

Membership Activism

Many of our members have neglected the cause of human rights because of the challenges to do with life in the UK on successful regularisation of stay. I however would like to take the opportunity to salute those who have remained active and focussed on the Zimbabwe problem. Branches that easily come to mind include Manchester, Woking, Wolverhampton, Bournemouth and revived Leicester. I now call upon all branches to resume ROHR activities in this struggle for human rights. In the next few days, I expect branches to email their proposed meeting dates (calendar of events) to Rose Benton (co-ordinator@zimvigil.co.uk) for publication on the ROHR website. Please do not forget to copy those emails to ephtapa@yahoo.co.uk

New Year message from ROHR Zimbabwe founder Ephraim Tapa

Written by Ephraim Tapa

Thursday, 05 January 2012 22:16

UK Executive

When the UK executive was re-constituted, it was agreed that its mandate would include the revival of structures in the UK, bringing stability and growth to ROHR, fundraising for human rights programmes in Zimbabwe and awareness raising on the human rights crisis in Zimbabwe. These fundamentals have suffered while we have been dealing with the malicious slander by some former board members and their efforts to fraudulently takeover the organisation. This resulted in a lot of energy being directed towards rebutting allegations about irregularities in the handling of ROHR finances. These allegations were totally rejected at a verification exercise by the ROHR UK Executive which established there was NO abuse of funds whatsoever. Instead, it is an established fact that I, as founder of the organisation, have subsidised ROHR operations from its inception to this day and all for the cause of human rights. I salute those who have continued to commit their resources and time for the cause of human rights. I also salute the Zimbabwe Vigil management for their sterling efforts in keeping the project afloat.

Sadly, it was at the height of this confusion and time of heated feelings, that the UK Chairperson, Mr Anywhere Mungoyo, tendered his resignation citing personal commitments. Ms Valerie Chengaose also asked to be excused from her national fundraising responsibilities citing immigration rules. Without an effective head to captain the ship, the ROHR UK Executive has become non-functioning. It has therefore been necessary to dissolve the ROHR UK Executive with immediate effect.

Efforts are now underway to get the Executive up and running again. To bring back a semblance of organisation and order in our operations, all ROHR branch chairs and the co-ordination team, are to report directly to me with immediate effect until a new Executive is in place.

Upcoming Meetings

To help reconstitute a new UK executive, all those who held positions in the now disbanded executive and members interested in serving at the national level are invited to a meeting on 4th February 2012 to be held probably in London (details to be confirmed) to chart the way forward.

This meeting will be followed by a leadership forum comprising all ROHR branch executives on 3rd March 2011 (details to be confirmed) that will aim to strengthen the UK Executive and consolidate the 2012 programme of action. That programme will include branch audits and renewal of committees, among other things.

New Year message from ROHR Zimbabwe founder Ephraim Tapa

Written by Ephraim Tapa

Thursday, 05 January 2012 22:16

Press Releases

In the meantime, no press releases shall be made without the sanction of the President, who remains the chief spokesperson of ROHR according to the Constitution and the Deed.

Co-ordination Team

In effort to bring more effectiveness, accountability and stability to the organisation, the co-ordinating team and their roles will be re-arranged. Members will be advised in due course.

Support for Immigration Matters

ROHR still operate a centralised system where letters of support for activist asylum seekers can only be originated from the President's office. To maintain the integrity of the system and / or forestall any possible abuse, all letters bearing my name shall be personally signed by me. Appropriate stakeholders, including the Home Office, will be duly advised. Please note that only deserving cases (genuine and consistent activists) will be supported by ROHR.

Please feel free to contact me either by email or on my mobile as given on the official ROHR website, to further discuss or clarify any of the contents of this communique.

Wishing you all the very best. Thank you.

Ephraim Tapa
Founder and Board Chairperson
ROHR Zimbabwe International