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Zimbabwe Summary 11 September 2019

Former president, Robert Gabriel Mugabe (1980-2017), dies in a Singapore hospital aged 95. He leaves a complex legacy as a pan-Africanist freedom fighter and a brutal tyrant who oversaw Zimbabwe's political and economic decline. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Staff Monitoring Programme's quarterly review looms as parliament queries unreported and unapproved spending by the government. The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) lays charges against former vice president Phelekezela Mphoko amid continuing politically motivated arrests.

Former president Robert Mugabe dies

Zimbabwe's founding president, **Robert Gabriel Mugabe** (1980-2017), died on 6 September at **Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore** at the age of 95.¹ Mugabe's death is unlikely to change Zimbabwe's political landscape, given that his long career at the country's helm ended with the November 2017 coup.² However, his demise will contribute to the diminishing of radical revolutionary rhetoric from the ruling **Zanu-PF** party, which Mugabe symbolised. Instead, the party is likely to increasingly adopt a more conciliatory approach in a bid to attract foreign investors to Zimbabwe.

Mugabe's death followed a five month-stay in hospital for an undisclosed ailment, although he was a frequent visitor to Singapore for medical treatment during his time in office.³ His body arrived in Zimbabwe on 11 September. Mugabe's nephew and family spokesman, **Leo Mugabe**, indicated that they would bury Mugabe at his rural home in **Kutama** village in the **Zvimba District (West Mashonaland Province)**, in a private ceremony on either 16 or 17 September.⁴

Mugabe served as Zimbabwe's first post-independence leader from 1980 until his removal from office in a military coup in November 2017. This followed several months of infighting in Zanu-PF, which was divided between senior leaders loyal to then vice president, and now president, **Emmerson Mnangagwa** (2017-present), including the armed forces and war veterans, and those loyal to former president Mugabe, his wife **Grace**, the **Zimbabwe Republic Police**, and **Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO)**.

Mugabe was born in 1924 in Kutama, 80 kilometres from the capital city, **Harare**.⁵ He joined anti-colonial revolutionary activism in the 1940s, particularly during his time as a student at **South Africa's Fort Hare University (Eastern Cape Province)**, and subsequently in the 1960s when he worked as a teacher in **Ghana**.⁶ The settler colonial government imprisoned Mugabe along with other activists in 1964 for ten years, and upon his release in 1974 he fled to **Mozambique**, where he led the **ZANU** party's armed guerrilla campaign that led to independence in 1980.⁷

Under Mugabe's government, Zimbabwe experienced political instability and economic decline, with key episodes including the violent seizure of white-owned farms starting in 2000, electoral violence, and killing of opposition activists particularly between 2000 and 2008, and historic hyperinflation in

¹ NPR, 6 Sep 2019.

² Source, analyst, London

³ NPR, 6 Sep 2019.

⁴ Al Jazeera, 12 Sep 2019.

⁵ NewsDay, 7 Sep 2019.

⁶ NewsDay, 7 Sep 2019.

⁷ NewsDay, 7 Sep 2019.

2008, which reached 500 billion percent.⁸

The arrangements for Mugabe's burial have caused controversy in Zimbabwe and a political and diplomatic headache for President Emmerson Mnangagwa. The government wanted Mugabe buried at the **Heroes Acre** national monument, the burial site for political leaders who participated in the nationalist movements for Zimbabwe's independence, and who were aligned to the ruling Zanu-PF party at the time of their death.⁹ Mnangagwa conferred national hero status on Mugabe following his death, qualifying him for a state-funded funeral. There is a vacant plot for Mugabe at the Heroes Acre, beside the grave of his first wife, **Sally Mugabe**. However, Mugabe reportedly left instructions that he would prefer to be buried in his rural home in Zvimba, because he did not want Mnangagwa and his government, having forced Mugabe out of office in a military coup in November 2017, in charge of his funeral proceedings and burial.¹⁰ Had the Mugabe family allowed the government to bury the former leader at the Heroes Acre, it would have given Mnangagwa an opportunity to consolidate his political power by gaining control over the political narrative of Mugabe's removal from power and subsequent developments, and to unify the fractured ruling party.¹¹

This has left Mnangagwa in a complex political position. A Zvimba funeral may result in a scenario where visiting heads of state attend in the president's absence, if the family does not invite Mnangagwa to attend, or he will be reduced to a mere spectator, which would serve as a final, public rebuke by his former mentor.¹² Having failed to negotiate with Mugabe's family to allow the state to bury him at the Heroes Acre, this could widen the cracks in the ruling party since Mugabe still commands considerable support in Zanu-PF.¹³ The government has issued a memo to visiting heads of state advising them to leave immediately after the funeral service, signalling that it anticipates a snub by Mugabe's family.¹⁴

Family spokesman Leo Mugabe said on 10 September that the former leader died a "very bitter man" because of the military coup that his protégés had staged:

"Imagine people you trusted, people who were guarding you, looking after you, [turning] against you. He was very bitter and it dented his legacy. It was not an easy thing for him to take."¹⁵

However, Leo Mugabe denied reports that the family was engaged in a tussle with the government over the former president's burial site:

"To say there is a feud is not correct, it is not true. We have been meeting with the government and everything has been very smooth. There's understanding, there's clarity on responsibilities and therefore there's no feud whatsoever... The chiefs in Zvimba still regard him as a chief and in terms of tradition, they are the ones that determine where he is going to be buried, how he is going to be buried, the procedures that must be followed in his burial. This is a cultural thing and nobody can push the chiefs to divulge where they are going to bury Mugabe."¹⁶

Leo Mugabe said that the former president's removal from power had affected his health after leaving power:

"[The coup] was his lowest moment, that period from November 2017 up to his last day, sometimes he would just sit there. A person who was used to waking up at 4 o'clock every morning, exercises, baths, goes to work and he has the whole country to look at, and suddenly that is abruptly brought to a halt, that is bound to affect. His health deteriorated quickly [after

⁸ Reuters, 7 Sep 2019.

⁹ The Telegraph, 11 Sep 2019.

¹⁰ The Telegraph, 11 Sep 2019.

¹¹ Reuters, 10 Sep 2019.

¹² Reuters, 10 Sep 2019.

¹³ Reuters, 10 Sep 2019.

¹⁴ Reuters, 10 Sep 2019.

¹⁵ Mugabe family spokesman, Leo Mugabe quoted by BBC News, 10 Sep 2019.

¹⁶ Mugabe family spokesman, Leo Mugabe quoted by eNCA News, 10 Sep 2019.

that].”¹⁷

Former information minister **Jonathan Moyo** similarly noted the effect of the removal from power on the former president:

*“He became unusually introverted, he just became instantly withdrawn and non-engaging. He was deep in thought and palpably at a loss. He became a broken soul, an obliterated soul, and someone whose world collapsed in front of him, and left him helpless.”*¹⁸

Mugabe was among the last of the revolutionary leaders in **sub-Saharan Africa**, such as South Africa’s former president, **Nelson Mandela** (1994-1999), **Ghana**’s first president, **Kwame Nkrumah** (1957-1966), **Tanzania**’s first president **Julius Nyerere** (1961-1985), **Zambia**’s first president, **Kenneth Kaunda** (1964-1991), and **Namibia**’s first president, **Sam Nujoma** (1990-2005).¹⁹ Mugabe will best be remembered for his powerful skills of oratory, charisma, intellectual brilliance and unwavering ideology of pan-Africanism.²⁰ He is revered across some African countries for returning land to the country’s black majority, and “*standing up to*” the **United Kingdom**, the **United States** and the **European Union**’s criticism of his rule. He will also be remembered for brutal human rights abuses, extra-judicial killings, economic decay, corruption, an aloof, stubborn, and narcissistic personality, missed opportunities for political reforms, and vulnerability to manipulation during his last few years in office, which brought about his political demise. Although he served as one of the foremost leaders of the nationalist movements that brought Zimbabwe’s independence, Mugabe’s legacy is tarnished by Zimbabwe’s broken economy and political turmoil.²¹

IMF to conduct first SMP review as economic woes continue

Representatives of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** will arrive in Zimbabwe for the first review of the **Staff Monitoring Programme (SMP)** from 14-18 September, amidst worsening economic conditions and missed performance targets.²² This may delay Zimbabwe’s eligibility for access to multilateral funding from the IMF, which it requires to resuscitate the economy.²³ The SMP is an informal agreement between a government and the IMF in terms of which the international organisation monitors and supports the government’s application of a set of policies and economic performance targets, which constitute the government’s reform initiatives.²⁴

IMF officials monitor the government’s reform programme and review it on a quarterly basis.²⁵ In this case, the IMF will review Zimbabwe’s progress between May and June 2019.²⁶ The IMF focuses mainly on structural reforms that include the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, improvement of procurement and revenue management, improving the quality of political governance, human security, and social welfare, and the business operating environment.²⁷ The IMF also pays attention to macro-economic stability through fiscal adjustment, reducing the central bank’s financing of the government’s deficit, and adopting measures to facilitate the efficient functioning of market-based foreign exchange and debt markets.²⁸ If a government abides by the reform agenda and meets the agreed-upon targets, this assists with efforts to qualify for financial aid from the IMF, **World Bank** and other international organisations.²⁹

¹⁷ Mugabe family spokesman, Leo Mugabe quoted by eNCA News, 10 Sep 2019.

¹⁸ Former information minister, Jonathan Moyo, quoted by eNCA News, 10 Sep 2019

¹⁹ Source, analyst, London

²⁰ Source, analyst, London

²¹ Source, analyst, London

²² The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

²³ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

²⁴ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

²⁵ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

²⁶ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

²⁷ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

²⁸ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

²⁹ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

The **Parliamentary Portfolio Committee (PAC) on Public Accounts** has accused the government of financial irregularities, and summoned finance minister **Mthuli Ncube** on 31 August to validate them ahead of the SMP.³⁰ This includes the government's spending of Z\$5.9 billion (\$16.3m)³¹, and planned expenditure of Z\$10,85 billion (\$29.9m) without parliamentary approval, all in addition to the **Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's (RBZ)** 2019 budget of Z\$8 billion (\$22m).³² The PAC, which former finance minister and opposition **Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)** deputy president **Tendai Biti** chairs, also accuses the government of 17 violations on public spending, where the government entered into expenditure that was neither disclosed to, nor approved by, parliament.³³

The IMF's representative in Zimbabwe, **Patrick Imam**, said that the SMP team will reduce the country's projected economic growth rate because of several factors that have weakened Zimbabwe's economy, which include power shortages and drought:

*"The team will also update economic forecasts... it is clear, compared to the projections of the original SMP, which did not foresee the severity of the drought and its secondary impact, nor the electricity shortages, that growth is almost certainly going to be revised downwards and inflation upwards compared to the original SMP forecasts. The original 2019 budget has already been superseded by the supplementary budget that was voted on a few weeks ago, so the review mission will have to recalibrate government spending forecast for year-end accordingly."*³⁴

Finance minister Ncube has also established a monetary policy committee in an attempt to meet the requirements of the SMP.³⁵ The nine-member team consists of academics, bankers, the governor, and two deputy governors of the RBZ.³⁶ The team includes former managing director of South Africa-based **Nestle SA**, **Douglas Munatsi**, founder and former chief executive officer of **ABC Holdings**, former opposition politician and economist **Eddie Cross** and **University of Zimbabwe** economics professor, **Ashok Chakravarti**.³⁷ The MPC will set a benchmark interest rate, and introduce inflation targeting.³⁸ This development comes as Ncube suspended the issuance of official annual inflation rates in February, although independent estimates indicate that the rate is currently 230 - 570%.³⁹

The **Grain Millers Association of Zimbabwe (GMAZ)** also announced on 7 September that the government had increased the price of maize and wheat by 86% and 38% respectively, which will also contribute to a further rise in inflation.⁴⁰ The **National Bakers Association of Zimbabwe** blamed the price increase on high fuel and electricity costs.⁴¹ Zimbabwe's economic woes continue largely because of the lack of external capital, a weak currency, and diminished production and exports, which largely rest on poor governance.⁴² If the government fails to generate a good record of political and economic reforms through the SMP, it will be less likely to secure the external financial support that is crucial to the revival of Zimbabwe's economy.⁴³

Former vice president Mphoko in court over abuse of office charges

Former vice president **Phelekezela Mphoko** appeared in **Bulawayo** magistrate's court on 19 August facing charges of criminal abuse of office dating back to 2016, following investigations that the

³⁰ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

³¹ USD conversions at time of writing, due to strong fluctuation in the exchange rate, may change rapidly.

³² The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

³³ The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

³⁴ The IMF's representative to Zimbabwe, Patrick Imam, quoted in The Independent, 6 Sep 2019.

³⁵ Bloomberg, 10 Sep 2019.

³⁶ Bloomberg, 10 Sep 2019.

³⁷ Bloomberg, 10 Sep 2019.

³⁸ Bloomberg, 10 Sep 2019.

³⁹ Bloomberg, 10 Sep 2019.

⁴⁰ The Standard, 8 Sep 2019.

⁴¹ The Standard, 8 Sep 2019.

⁴² Source, analyst, London

⁴³ Source, analyst, London

Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) conducted.⁴⁴ The ZACC is facing criticism for politically motivated arrests, since it has mostly targeted top government officials who are perceived as loyal to former president Mugabe.⁴⁵ The ZACC accuses Mphoko of ordering the release of former **Zimbabwe National Roads Administration (ZINARA)** officials **Moses Juma** and **Davison Norupiri** from police custody in 2016 following their arrest on accusations of criminal abuse of office.⁴⁶ President Emmerson Mnangagwa reconstituted the ZACC in July and appointed foreign affairs minister **Sibusiso Moyo's** wife, **Loice Matanda-Moyo**, as the chairperson of the commission.⁴⁷

Mphoko was part of the **G40** faction, led by former first lady Grace Mugabe, and was allegedly involved in plans for Grace to succeed Mugabe.⁴⁸ Investigators from the ZACC attempted to arrest Mphoko at his house on 16 August but he refused to accompany them to a police station.⁴⁹ Mphoko's daughter, **Siduduzo Mphoko**, accused the ZACC of pursuing political vendettas under the guise of anti-corruption investigations.⁵⁰

Mphoko has denied the accusations, claiming that his actions as vice president were a result of instructions that he received from former president Mugabe's office:

*"The presidency is an institution, in that case it was [former] president Mugabe, myself, and [then vice president] Mnangagwa. There were a lot of people who were coming to us to inform us of what was happening, requesting the intervention of the presidency. In situations of that nature, there were some cases which were referred to me [by former president Mugabe], some cases were handled by Mnangagwa."*⁵¹

President Mnangagwa's government has pursued politically motivated arrests using the ZACC since its formation, pointing to a systematic settling of scores against former President Mugabe's allies. The ruling Zanu-PF regime has a deep-set culture of corruption and nepotism, which Mphoko implicitly admitted to having been a part of and acted in accordance with.⁵² The politically motivated nature of the ZACC reflects the continuation of the culture of impunity and "rule by law" in Mnangagwa's government, using the law to target political rivals, instead of the rule of law, in which the laws of the country are applied fairly without regard to political affiliation or other considerations.⁵³

Planner

28 Oct 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** International Conference on Human Rights and Human Dignity;
 21 Apr 2020 **Bulawayo (Zimbabwe)** Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Business Days;
 30 Apr 2020 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** Harare International Festival of the Arts;
 June 2023 **(Zimbabwe)** General elections;

Chronology

10 Sep 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Bloomberg*. Finance minister **Mthuli Ncube** establishes a Monetary Policy Committee in an attempt to comply with the requirements of the **International Monetary**

⁴⁴ Xinhua, 21 Aug 2019.

⁴⁵ Xinhua, 21 Aug 2019.

⁴⁶ The Standard, 21 Aug 2019.

⁴⁷ The Standard, 21 Aug 2019.

⁴⁸ Xinhua, 21 Aug 2019.

⁴⁹ Zimlive, 16 Aug 2019.

⁵⁰ Xinhua, 21 Aug 2019.

⁵¹ Former vice president Mphoko, quoted by The Standard, 21 Aug 2019.

⁵² Source, analyst, London

⁵³ Former vice president Mphoko, quoted by The Standard, 21 Aug 2019.

Fund (IMF) Staff Monitoring Programme;

10 Sep 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Anadolu Agency*. The state-run **Grain Millers Association of Zimbabwe** raises bread prices by 39%, as power shortages and drought drive up inflation;

9 Sep 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *The Herald*. President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** sends a team led by vice president **Kembo Mohadi** to **Singapore** to facilitate the repatriation of former president **Robert Mugabe's** body to **Zimbabwe**;

8 Sep 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *The Al Jazeera*. Former president **Robert Mugabe's** family reportedly feuds with the government over the former president's burial site;

8 Sep 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Timeslive*. **The Elders** group of leaders arrive in Zimbabwe to meet with President **Emmerson Mnangagwa**, opposition **Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)** leader **Nelson Chamisa**, and civic society groups to push for dialogue;

6 Sep 2019 **Singapore (Singapore)** *NPR*. Former **Zimbabwe** president **Robert Mugabe** dies at **Gleneagles Hospital** aged 95;

6 Sep 2019 **Beijing (China)** *The Zimbabwe Independent*. Vice president **Constantino Chiwenga** undergoes an operation as part of medical interventions to aid his recovery from suspected poisoning;

6 Sep 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *The Zimbabwe Independent*. Officials from the **International Monetary Fund** will arrive on 14 September to review Zimbabwe's progress with reforms as part of the **Staff Monitoring Programme (SMP)**, amidst parliament's concerns over irregular public spending;

23 Aug 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *The Guardian*. Comedienne **Samantha Kureya** goes into hiding following abduction and torture by suspected state security agents, as government targets critics of President **Emmerson Mnangagwa's** government;

21 Aug 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Reuters*. The **Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC)** lays charges of criminal abuse of office against former vice president **Phelekezela Mphoko**;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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