

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Zimbabwe Monthly Briefing February 2019

Zimbabwe Summary 13 February 2019

The United Kingdom (UK) formally withdraws its support for President Emmerson Mnangagwa's (2017-present) government and indicates that it will not support its application for readmission into the Commonwealth. The European Union (EU) announces that it will not extend aid to Zimbabwe until it implements reforms to uphold human rights standards. State-sanctioned violence continues in Zimbabwe, as Mnangagwa's government faces local and international criticism. The African Development Bank (AfDB) projects a positive economic outlook for Zimbabwe for 2019 and 2020, contingent upon political factors. Zimbabwe's score of 22 out of 100 in Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) remains unchanged from the 2017 CPI results, but Zimbabwe has fallen three positions in the rankings to 160th out of 180 countries surveyed.

UK withdraws its support for Mnangagwa's government ...

The **United Kingdom (UK)** government has expressed disappointment with President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** (2017-present) over human rights abuses that **Zimbabwe's** security forces have been committing since January (see below).¹ This is a setback for Mnangagwa, who has been making concerted efforts to cast himself as a reformist leader and seeking to re-engage with Zimbabwe's erstwhile international partners.² The UK's minister for **Africa, Harriet Baldwin**, condemned President Mnangagwa's government on 5 February, saying that the UK will support an extension of sanctions against Zimbabwe and will not support its bid to rejoin the **Commonwealth**.³

The UK became President Mnangagwa's leading international supporter after the coup that removed long-serving former president **Robert Mugabe** (1980-2017) from power in November 2017.⁴ Diplomatic relations between the UK and Zimbabwe had deteriorated since 2000 when the ruling **Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)** government began intensifying attacks against members of the opposition and civil society, and forcibly seizing white-owned farms ostensibly as part of land redistribution.⁵ However, since Mnangagwa ousted Mugabe as president, the UK had been lobbying international institutions on Zimbabwe's behalf, promoting its debt clearance plan and supporting efforts to secure a bailout package for Zimbabwe.⁶ The UK government jointly provided a \$100m loan facility to Zimbabwean companies in 2018, which was the first direct commercial loan to Zimbabwe in over 20 years.⁷ Baldwin visited Zimbabwe in 2018 to meet with Mnangagwa in

¹ The Independent, 8 Feb 2019.

² The Independent, 8 Feb 2019.

³ Business Day, 5 Feb 2019.

⁴ Business Day, 5 Feb 2019.

⁵ Business Day, 5 Feb 2019.

⁶ The Independent, 8 Feb 2019.

⁷ The Independent, 8 Feb 2019.

the most significant show of re-engagement since the crisis in Zimbabwe began in 2000.⁸ However, Baldwin's statement to the **International Development Committee** meeting marks a key return to tense diplomatic relations between the UK and Zimbabwe. Baldwin promised to support the **European Union (EU)**'s sanctions against Zimbabwe (see below), mainly because of impunity over human rights abuses:

*"Specifically with regard to sanctions... I think that since the recent developments there might be a case for widening it to include further individuals. We have been aware that the president has said that heads will roll. We haven't seen any specific heads rolling."*⁹

Baldwin also indicated that the UK would not provide any financial support to President Mnangagwa's government because of the ongoing state-sanctioned violence in Zimbabwe. Baldwin said the UK would not support Zimbabwe's application to rejoin the Commonwealth, from which former president Mugabe withdrew in 2003:

*"As of today, the UK would not be able to support this application because we don't believe that the kinds of human rights violations that we are seeing from security forces in Zimbabwe is the kind of behaviour that you would expect to see from a Commonwealth country."*¹⁰

President Mnangagwa dismissed Baldwin's statements, saying that the UK's position would not have any bearing on Zimbabwe's bid to rejoin the Commonwealth.¹¹

*"We apply to the Commonwealth secretariat... The Commonwealth has not told us that they are not considering our application to be reinstated. The view of one member is not the view of the Commonwealth."*¹²

President Mnangagwa's loss of UK support deals a blow to his attempts to reconcile Zimbabwe with the international community.¹³ It effectively returns Zimbabwe to Mugabe-era political isolation.¹⁴ This reduces the prospects of relatively quicker economic regeneration, since it makes it unlikely that Zimbabwe will access multilateral loans from the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank**.¹⁵ Mnangagwa's view that the UK's opposition to its application to rejoin the Commonwealth is inconsequential is largely inaccurate.¹⁶ The Commonwealth is essentially a network of former British colonies, which benefit from the UK government's patronage in the form of official development assistance and facilitation of private capital.¹⁷ It is unlikely that Zimbabwe will successfully rejoin the organisation without British support.¹⁸

... and EU will not extend aid until the government implements reforms ...

The **European Union (EU)**'s commissioner for international cooperation and development, **Neven Mimica**, stated on 9 February that the organisation would not extend aid to the

⁸ Business Day, 5 Feb 2019.

⁹ UK's minister for Africa, Harriet Baldwin, quoted in Business Day, 5 Feb 2019.

¹⁰ UK's minister for Africa, Harriet Baldwin, quoted in Business Day, 5 Feb 2019.

¹¹ France24, 11 Feb 2019.

¹² President Mnangagwa, quote from interview with France24, 11 Feb 2019.

¹³ Source, analyst, London

¹⁴ Source, analyst, London

¹⁵ Source, analyst, London

¹⁶ Source, analyst, London

¹⁷ Source, analyst, London

¹⁸ Source, analyst, London

government of Zimbabwe until it meets specific political conditions.¹⁹ This further demonstrates the erosion of confidence within the international community in President Mnangagwa's presidency after the UK government expressed similar views (see above).²⁰ Mimica met with Mnangagwa on the sidelines of the **African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** (10-11 February) and held discussions on the state of affairs in Zimbabwe:

"We took stock of what has been achieved, and agreed that more needs to be done, [and the] EU is ready to step up its support if conditions are met."²¹

The EU's conditions mainly include upholding human rights and civil liberties, and having credible elections.²² The EU's election observer mission to Zimbabwe expressed dissatisfaction with the elections on 30 July 2018, which returned Mnangagwa to power, indicating that they were not free and fair.²³ It also indicated that the results could neither be verified nor traced, and that overall, the conditions in which the polls were held did not promote a fair contest.²⁴ However, the UK had reportedly lobbied the EU to support Mnangagwa, despite its disapproval of his election to office, and the security forces' heavy-handed response to civil unrest.²⁵

The EU's position is a notable critique of the state of affairs in Zimbabwe.²⁶ It validates the organisation's initial opposition to President Mnangagwa's controversial electoral victory, despite the UK's early support.²⁷ Mnangagwa is likely to attempt to seek support from **China** and **Russia**, although the chances of receiving substantial aid or investment are limited, given Zimbabwe's outstanding debts and the ongoing political instability in Zimbabwe, which makes it unattractive to investors.²⁸ Mnangagwa is losing political legitimacy both in the international community and in Zimbabwe, and is thus considerably weakened politically.²⁹

... as Zanu-PF government digs in amid continuing state-sanctioned violence

Officers from the **Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA)** have continued a campaign of violent attacks against civilians in Zimbabwe's urban areas after several demonstrations against economic decline in January.³⁰ This has resulted in the collapse of President Mnangagwa's campaign to re-establish diplomatic links with the international community, especially the UK, EU and the **United States (US)** (see above).³¹ The **Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum**, an umbrella organisation for Zimbabwe-based non-governmental organisations, reported that Zimbabwe has entered a "*de facto state of emergency*", as the army conducts daily assaults on unarmed civilians.³² The organisation has recorded at least 17 extra-judicial killings, 16 rapes, 26 abductions, and over 600 assaults.³³

¹⁹ Newsday, 11 Feb 2019.

²⁰ Newsday, 11 Feb 2019.

²¹ EU Commissioner for international cooperation and development, Neven Mimica quoted in Newsday, 11 Feb 2019.

²² Source, analyst, London

²³ Newsday, 11 Feb 2019.

²⁴ Newsday, 11 Feb 2019.

²⁵ Newsday, 11 Feb 2019.

²⁶ Source, analyst, London

²⁷ Source, analyst, London

²⁸ Source, analyst, London

²⁹ Source, analyst, London

³⁰ Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

³¹ Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

³² Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

³³ Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

“The violations are systematic, unleashed mainly by male perpetrators whom the victims identified as wearing either military or police attire, armed with AK rifles, and/or batons, travelling in army and police vehicles. The targets of the attacks were initially the male population in high density suburbs, but later became indiscriminate to include women and young girls.”³⁴

UK-based human rights organisation **Amnesty International** also reported that its findings reveal a state-sanctioned programme of attacks against civilians that have dashed hopes for change under President Mnangagwa’s government:

“Killings, reports of rape by military personnel and widespread arbitrary arrests of many protesters and non-protesters have cast doubts on hopes that President Mnangagwa’s government wants a better future for Zimbabweans where respect for human rights is the norm. Scores of human rights defenders, activists, opposition and civil society leaders suspected of organising protests have gone into hiding fearing for their lives as state sponsored witch-hunt continues, and several women are fearing for the worst after reportedly being raped by uniformed soldiers.”³⁵

Army spokesman Major-General **Douglas Nyikayaramba** denied claims that the army was behind the human rights abuses.³⁶ He also indicated that the army would remain deployed in the streets throughout the country until the **Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)** confirms that it has succeeded in restoring peace and order.³⁷

There have also been revelations that some of the attackers are members of the Zanu-PF youth league, who obtained military gear to conduct systematic attacks against civilians.³⁸ Police arrested Zanu-PF activist **Shepherd Magorimbo** on charges that he committed robbery against civilians while clad in military fatigues.³⁹ Magorimbo reportedly revealed to court prosecutors that he received the military uniform from Zanu-PF’s offices, along with other Zanu-PF youths in January.⁴⁰ The revelations emerged as UK-based academics testified before the **Parliamentary Committee on International Development** that there is evidence of divisions within the security sector, with factions supporting different agendas.⁴¹ **University of London**-based professor, **Stephen Chan** said,

“The government’s response has been clumsy, and it seems... that what we have is not just a government response to the issues, but a divided government response... there seems to be a divided approach to [the] protest[s], [and] the security forces themselves seem to be divided. It is not about the issue of interest rivalry, but a true reflection of division within the system.”⁴²

Chan also indicated that the brutality of the attacks was intended to forestall any possibility of future unrest:

“This was a great deal [of violence, intended to] send warnings ... that there should not

³⁴ Excerpts from a report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, quoted by Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

³⁵ Excerpts from Amnesty International statement, quoted by Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

³⁶ Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

³⁷ Daily News, 10 Feb 2019.

³⁸ The Standard, 10 Feb 2019.

³⁹ The Standard, 10 Feb 2019.

⁴⁰ The Standard, 10 Feb 2019.

⁴¹ Newsday, 8 Feb 2019.

⁴² Excerpts from Professor Stephen Chan’s submission to the UK Parliamentary Committee on International Development, quoted by Newsday, 8 Feb 2019.

be unrest in the future, the beatings are systematic to ensure that you are left with wounds to tell a tale to relatives, friends, and so on.”⁴³

President Mnangagwa dismissed the accusations of systematic human rights abuses, claiming that the political unrest is a well-orchestrated plan to oust his government from power.⁴⁴ In an interview with **France24** on 11 February, Mnangagwa accused unnamed foreign governments of channelling financial resources, and directing the activities of local NGOs to destabilise the country through civil unrest.⁴⁵ He also said that the government had taken note of several foreign nationals who arrived in Zimbabwe to coordinate the civil unrest, and had submitted their passport details to the respective embassies, requesting explanations on their purposes of travel to Zimbabwe.⁴⁶ The ongoing political violence reveals the army’s relative autonomy from the presidency, given that the attacks on civilians only serve to jeopardise Mnangagwa’s presidency.⁴⁷

AfDB projects economic growth in Zimbabwe in 2019 and 2020

The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** has projected that Zimbabwe’s economy will grow by 4.2% in 2019 and 4.4% in 2020.⁴⁸ This will provide a measure of validation for President Mnangagwa’s government, which currently faces local and international criticism for violent attacks against civilians and failing to establish a coherent and effective economic policy package (see above).⁴⁹ The AfDB’s 2019 **Africa Economic Outlook** indicates that the mining and agricultural sectors will account for much of the economic growth, accompanied by both public and private investment.⁵⁰ However, the AfDB says several risk factors may undermine the projected economic growth:

“Policy-related macroeconomic instability, lack of funding, land tenure, and investment regulations, high input costs and outdated machinery, inefficient government bureaucracy, and inadequate infrastructure (particularly energy) remain key challenges for private sector development. The country has one of the most youthful populations, with the population ages 15-34 accounting for more than 36% of the total population. However, most young people remain unemployed and resort to informal trading.”⁵¹

Zimbabwe has strong potential for economic growth, and this includes vast natural resources, public infrastructure, and a skilled labour force, albeit with limited availability of capital and unstable politics.⁵² Although the AfDB’s projections paint an encouraging picture of Zimbabwe’s economic futures, this is contingent upon political factors.⁵³ The current confusion and division in the upper echelons of Zanu-PF causes political uncertainty and undermines policy coherence.⁵⁴ Mnangagwa’s political isolation because of state-sanctioned violence in Zimbabwe also makes it less likely that investors would view Zimbabwe as a

⁴³ Excerpts from Professor Stephen Chan’s submission to the UK Parliamentary Committee on International Development, quoted by *Newsday*, 8 Feb 2019

⁴⁴ *France24*, 11 Feb 2019.

⁴⁵ *France24*, 11 Feb 2019.

⁴⁶ *France24*, 11 Feb 2019.

⁴⁷ Source, analyst, London

⁴⁸ Africa Development Bank’s 2019 Africa Economic Outlook

⁴⁹ Africa Development Bank’s 2019 Africa Economic Outlook

⁵⁰ Africa Development Bank’s 2019 Africa Economic Outlook

⁵¹ Excerpts from Africa Development Bank’s 2019 Africa Economic Outlook

⁵² Africa Development Bank’s 2019 Africa Economic Outlook

⁵³ Source, analyst, London

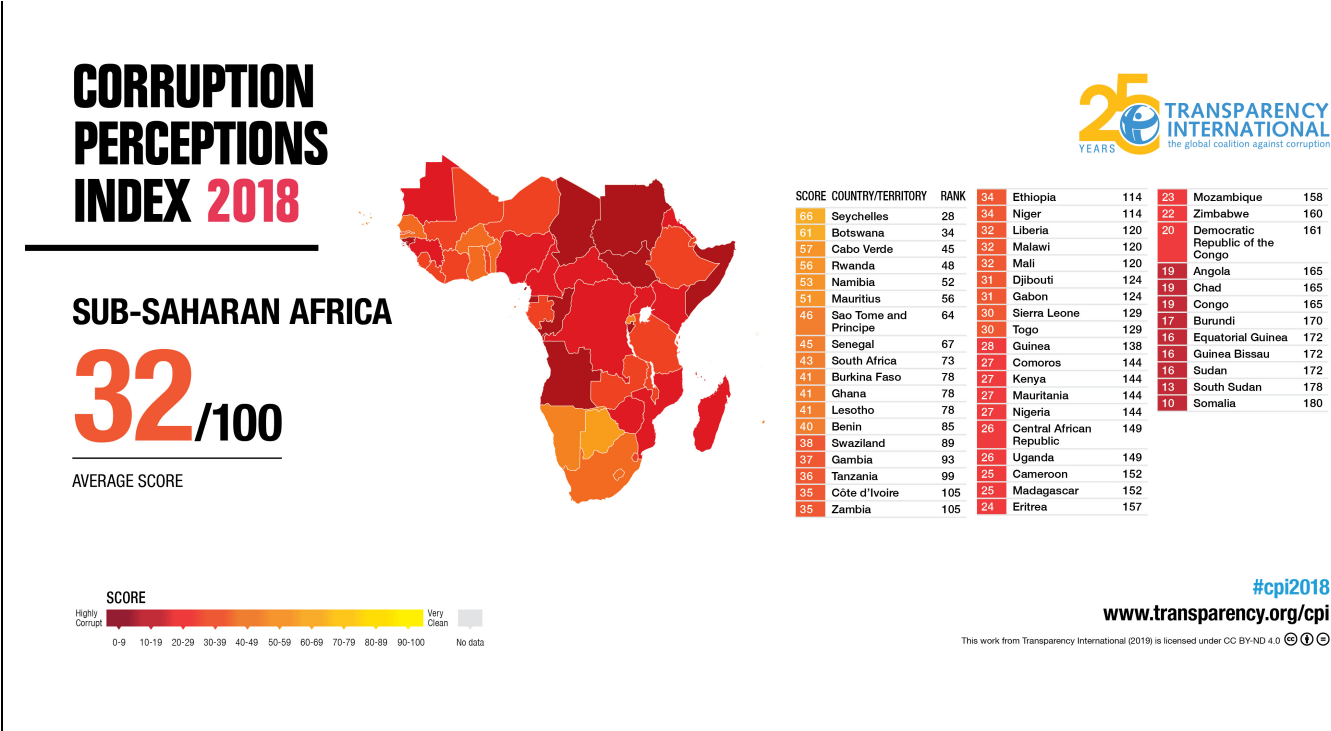
⁵⁴ Source, analyst, London

viable investment destination.⁵⁵

Corruption in Zimbabwe is also a deterrent to potential investors and a drag on the economy. Although Zimbabwe’s score in **Transparency International’s 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)** has barely changed in the past five years, its ranking has dropped from 157th out of 180 countries surveyed in 2017 to 160th place in 2018.⁵⁶ The index, which is designed to give a sense of public sector corruption, rates countries on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).⁵⁷

TI CPI Rankings for Zimbabwe ⁵⁸					
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Ranking	160/180	157/180	154/176	150/168	156/175
Score (out of 100)	22	22	22	21	21

Zimbabwe ranks well below its regional counterparts and below the sub-Saharan average of 32 points. This results mainly from its protracted political instability, especially since 2000, which undermines the effectiveness of public institutions. The structure of Zimbabwe’s government also influences the high level of corruption. Zanu-PF has been in power since 1980, and has enjoyed relatively unchallenged and arbitrary control of the three tiers of government (executive, judiciary and legislature). This limits transparency and accountability, creating conditions for corruption to thrive.



⁵⁵ Source, analyst, London
⁵⁶ www.transparency.org
⁵⁷ www.transparency.org
⁵⁸ www.transparency.org

Planner

23 Apr 2019. **Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) Business Days;**

12 Jun 2019. **Harare (Zimbabwe) Sign Africa Expo;**

17 Jul 2019 **Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) Mining Engineering and Transport Expo (MINENTRA)**

June 2023. **(Zimbabwe) General elections;**

Chronology

12 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Daily News.** The ruling **Zanu-PF** party has reportedly begun purging senior officials who are viewed as disloyal to President **Emmerson Mnangagwa**;

12 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Times Live.** The **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** issues a statement supporting President **Emmerson Mnangagwa's** government, calling for the removal of sanctions;

12 Feb 2019 **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) Daily News.** President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** defends the army, arguing that non-governmental organisations and unnamed foreign agents are fabricating reports of human rights abuses;

11 Feb 2019 **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) France24.** President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** accuses foreign governments of conducting a regime change operation against his government;

11 Feb 2019 **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) NewsDay.** **European Union (EU)** commissioner **Neven Mimica** reveals that the EU will not provide any aid or support to **Zimbabwe** until the government meets specific conditions, including ending human rights abuses;

11 Feb 2019 **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) RFN.** President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** dismisses the **United Kingdom's** formal decision not to support **Zimbabwe's** application to rejoin the **Commonwealth**;

10 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Reuters.** Teachers suspend their five-day national strike, but warn they could strike again;

10 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe) The Standard.** A ruling **ZANU-PF** party activist in police custody reveals that the party has been giving party youths army uniforms, who then attack other unarmed civilians;

10 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Daily News.** Local and international human rights organisations condemn the **Zimbabwe National Army's** systematic attacks on unarmed civilians;

8 Feb 2019. **London (United Kingdom) Newsday.** **United Kingdom (UK)**-based academics **Stephen Chan** and **Jocelyn Alexander** tell the **UK Parliamentary Committee** on International Development that **Zimbabwe's** security services are sharply divided;

7 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe) IOL.** **Zimbabwe**-based mining company **RioZim** suspends operations at three gold mines due to a lack of foreign exchange;

6 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Al Jazeera.** Despite fears of violent reprisals by security

forces, some public school teachers begin a nationwide strike to be paid in **United States** dollars rather than government bonds;

6 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *BBC*. Opposition **Movement for Democratic Change Alliance** leader **Nelson Chamisa** boycotts a summit with President **Emmerson Mnangagwa**;

5 Feb 2019. **London (United Kingdom)** *BusinessDay*. **United Kingdom (UK)'s Africa** minister, **Harriet Baldwin**, says that the UK will not support **Zimbabwe's** readmission into the Commonwealth because of ongoing human rights abuses;

5 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *IOL*. A teachers' strike receives a poor turnout due to fears of security force reprisals;

4 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *NewsDay*. Vice-president **Constantino Chiwenga** receives treatment in **South Africa**, the second time in four months;

4 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Reuters*. Mines minister **Winston Chitando** reports that the central bank will introduce a monetary policy tool to alleviate foreign currency shortages;

1 Feb 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *DefenceWeb*. The **Apex Council**, which represents 17 public sector unions, decides not to strike due to fears of violence;

31 Jan 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *New Zimbabwe*. Authorities issue an arrest warrant for former finance minister **Ignatius Chombo** after his failure to show for a corruption trial on 30 January;

30 Jan 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Reuters*. The government negotiates with public sector unions to attempt to stop a national strike which could result in more civil unrest;

29 Jan 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *BusinessTech*. The government allows companies and individuals to transfer **United States** dollars to try to end the economic crisis;

28 Jan 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. The government plans to release a \$60m house facility for civil servants as part of its non-monetary incentives;

21 Jan 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Reuters*. **South Africa** reportedly turned down a **Zimbabwean** request for a \$1.2 billion loan in December;

21 Jan 2019 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Reuters*. Lawyers' groups challenge the internet shutdown in the **High Court**;

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