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Foreign affairs minister Harry Kalaba resigns, citing “swelling” corruption in President Edgar Lungu’s (2015-present) government. Zambia-based Ngonye Power Company Ltd will develop a 34 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant in the Lusaka South Multi-Facility Economic Zone. United States (US)-based RD Global plans to partner with Japan-based Mera Group Corporation to develop a manufacturing plant of energy renewable projects. Protests occur at a Lusaka township over the government’s imposed restrictions that attempt to curb a deadly cholera outbreak.

Foreign minister Kalaba resigns due to “swelling” corruption in Lungu government

Harry Kalaba resigned as foreign affairs minister on 2 January due to “swelling” corruption in President **Edgar Lungu’s** (2015-present) government.¹ Kalaba wrote on social-media platform **Facebook**,

“We cannot proceed to manage national affairs with cold indifference when the levels of corruption are swelling and being perpetrated by those who are expected to be the solution.”²

Reports of corruption have increased since Lungu took office, including state procurement of 42 firetrucks for \$1m each, a \$1.2 billion road project and the purchase of 50 ambulances for \$228m.³ **Transparency International’s** country representative, **Reuben Lifuka**, said Kalaba’s resignation vindicates many who have expressed concern about corruption levels.⁴

Zambian political analysts believe Kalaba’s resignation was intended to apply pressure on Lungu.⁵ Media sources have reported that Kalaba, whom former President **Michael Sata** (2011-2014) appointed foreign affairs minister in 2014, wished to succeed Lungu as president of the ruling **Patriotic Front (PF)** party and to run in the 2021 election.⁶ However, Lungu has stated that he plans to remain as the PF leader for the 2021 election.⁷ Zambia’s constitution allows for only two terms for presidents. Lungu’s critics argue that his first term began when he replaced Sata, who died mid-term, and his second term began when he was elected in 2016. Lungu argues that his first term only began once elected and has warned the constitutional court against trying to stop him from running in 2021 (see *ARC Briefing Zambia November 2017*). **University of Zambia** lecturer **Lee Habasonda** said

“...people have started realising that they will not get nominated as long as Lungu insists on standing.”⁸

Beyani Choolwe, a political scientist from the **University of Zambia**, concurs:

“Kalaba is seen as a possible candidate for the 2021 president elections. This can only happen if Lungu steps aside.”⁹

¹ News24, 3 Jan 2018.

² News24, 3 Jan 2018.

³ News24, 3 Jan 2018.

⁴ News24, 3 Jan 2018.

⁵ EWN, 3 Jan 2018.

⁶ News24, 3 Jan 2018.

⁷ News24, 3 Jan 2018.

⁸ EWN, 3 Jan 2018.

Kalaba has not disclosed whether he has presidential aspirations but he is viewed as a likely candidate:

*“Kalaba was seen... as a sober figure within the ruling PF and many looked to him as a possible and suitable successor to President Lungu in 2021... Kalaba has been viewed as one of the founders and a senior member of the ruling PF and was instrumental in the ascendancy of President Lungu after Sata’s death. Kalaba was prominent in the cohort of ministers who blocked then vice- and acting president, **Guy Scott** (2014-2015), from imposing another candidate to succeed Sata other than Lungu. For all his effort, Kalaba expected Lungu to reciprocate and Lungu does not seem willing to do this.”¹⁰*

Kalaba may have also resigned before Lungu replaced him as foreign minister:

“Kalaba’s performance as foreign minister and lack of corruption added to his reputation. This separated him from Lungu who has been consistently viewed as a corrupt president in public. Kalaba was therefore perceived as the biggest political block to Lungu’s 2021 presidential bid.”¹¹

Kalaba’s resignation has had mixed reactions from PF members. **Jacob Chilufya**, the PF youth chairperson in **Luapula Province**, called Kalaba a ‘**Judas Iscariot**’ and stated he should resign.¹² However, **Sylvia Masebo**, a PF member of parliament (MP), described Kalaba’s decision to resign as “noble”:

“The levels of looting and gross mismanagement of state resources that we are currently witnessing under Edgar Lungu’s regime is disheartening and unprecedented and threatens national security and unity. [Kalaba’s] decision to resign ... should be commended by all patriotic Zambians regardless of political affiliation.”¹³

Kalaba will remain as MP for **Bahati**,¹⁴ which he has represented in the national assembly since September 2012,¹⁵ although some PF members believe he should also resign as MP.¹⁶

Renewable energy surge

Zambia has increased its focus on renewable energy sources and supplies in an attempt to become a regional hub for renewable energy equipment, as well as a model for other **African** states looking to increase their energy reliance on renewable sources. Zambia-based **Ngonye Power Company Ltd** will develop a 34 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant in the **Lusaka South Multi-Facility Economic Zone**, according to reports on 14 January.¹⁷ Ngonye Power Company, a joint venture between **Italy**-based **Enel Green Power** and Zambian state-owned **Industrial Development Corporation**, will receive funding from the public and private sector, including \$2.8m from the **World Bank** which approved the funding on 21 December.¹⁸ The World Bank guarantee will leverage approximately \$48m in private sector-led investment to support the project.¹⁹ World Bank country manager **Ina Ruthenberg** said the Ngonye project would increase and diversify Zambia’s renewable energy generation capacity and support the government’s objective of diversifying the electricity generation mix to shield the country from climate-induced shocks.²⁰

⁹ Anadolu Agency, 3 Jan 2018.

¹⁰ Source, political analyst, Zambia.

¹¹ Source, political analyst, Zambia.

¹² Zambia Times, 3 Jan 2018.

¹³ Independent, 3 Jan 2018.

¹⁴ Zambia Times, 3 Jan 2018.

¹⁵ Journal du Cameroun, 3 Jan 2018.

¹⁶ Source, political analyst, Zambia.

¹⁷ ESI Africa, 14 Jan 2018.

¹⁸ ESI Africa, 14 Jan 2018.

¹⁹ ZNBC, 21 Dec 2017.

²⁰ ESI Africa, 14 Jan 2018.

Additionally, **United States (US)**-based **RD Global** plans to partner with **Japan**-based **Mera Group Corporation** to develop a manufacturing plant of energy renewable projects in Zambia, according to reports on 12 January.²¹ RD Global and Mera Group chose Zambia due to its geographical position in southern Africa.²² The target market for the renewable energy products will be small-scale farmers, miners and entrepreneurs that are off the national grid.²³ Production is scheduled to roll out mid-2018.²⁴ Mera Group's business development adviser, **Rune Gunnar Dige**, says the company plans to develop an economic base in Zambia that will include an assembly factory and support neighbouring markets with solar LED charging solutions:

*"We will lend our equipment, expertise and innovative designs to a department of the university to further develop innovations truly intended for Zambia."*²⁵

Riots follow heavy-handed government response to cholera outbreak

Protests have occurred at a township in **Lusaka** since 12 January over the government's imposed restrictions that are attempting to curb the deadly cholera outbreak in Zambia that has claimed 70 lives since September.²⁶ The outbreak, which the government originally attributed to contaminated water, was actually due to contaminated food at **Hungry Lion** fast-food restaurants, owned by **South Africa**-based **Shoprite**.²⁷ In response to the outbreak, Lungu's government forcibly closed all Hungry Lion restaurants and deployed the military to fight the outbreak which has spread from Lusaka, particularly in areas with poor sanitation, into rural areas around the country.²⁸ Schools and other restaurants have closed, and government has banned large public gatherings and street vending. Some areas, such as the township of **Kanyama**, which was blamed as the epicentre of the outbreak,²⁹ have refused to comply with the interventions, which led government to impose a 6pm to 6am curfew for residents on 7 January to quell the outbreak.³⁰ While government relaxed restrictions in parts of Lusaka on 14 January, the restrictions and curfew remained in Kanyama.³¹ The curfew led to riots in Kanyama on 12 January, as residents protested the closure of markets, where the majority of residents sell goods to earn money.³² Police arrested 55 people and one police officer was injured during the riots.³³

The government has been criticised for its heavy-handed response, focusing on containing the spread rather than fixing the structural issues:³⁴

*"The government response to the outbreak has been inadequate as it only centred on cleaning the market places and destroying makeshift market stalls... but the township areas, which are said to be the focal points for cholera, remain dirty and unserved."*³⁵

"We have a cholera response that has not tackled even one structural problem. Nothing has been said about toilets in informal settlements, markets and the central business district; nothing about a functional garbage collection system, or the debilitating water shortages all over Lusaka. Not a single minister has mentioned the hunger that must be ravaging the homes of people who

²¹ CNBC Africa, 12 Jan 2018.

²² CNBC Africa, 12 Jan 2018.

²³ CNBC Africa, 12 Jan 2018.

²⁴ CNBC Africa, 12 Jan 2018.

²⁵ CNBC Africa, 12 Jan 2018.

²⁶ News24, 15 Jan 2018.

²⁷ The Citizen, 5 Jan 2018.

²⁸ The Citizen, 5 Jan 2018.

²⁹ News24, 14 Jan 2018.

³⁰ EWN, 8 Jan 2018.

³¹ Reuters, 14 Jan 2018.

³² EWN, 12 Jan 2018.

³³ EWN, 12 Jan 2018.

³⁴ Business Live, 18 Jan 2018.

³⁵ Source, analyst, Lusaka

are not selling [in markets] or show that anyone in government is concerned about what they are eating.”³⁶

Opposition leader **Hakainde Hichilema** has attributed the cholera outbreak to government corruption:

“If the \$42m that they spent on firefighters was used to improve sanitary conditions in Kanyama there would not have been cholera. The PF has been behind this creation of [an] unsanitary environment because of corruption.”³⁷

Planner

2021 (**Zambia**) Scheduled presidential elections;

Jan 2018 (**Zambia**) Political dialogue between President **Edgar Lungu** and opposition leader **Hichilema Hakainde** scheduled to begin;

Chronology

18 Jan 2018 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Your Industry News*. The **Zambian Development Agency** issues a invitation for a majority stake in the **Indeni** refinery in **Ndola** (Zambia);

17 Jan 2018 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Xinhua*. Government bans public servants from using social media to air grievances about the government;

16 Jan 2018 **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)** *Washington Post*. **Ethiopian Airlines** will relaunch Zambia’s national carrier, **Zambia Airways**;

16 Jan 2018 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Newsday*. Zambia plans to revive plans to construct the **Lions Den to Kafue (Zimbabwe)** railway line;

14 Jan 2018 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *ESI Africa*. **Ngonye Power Company Ltd** will develop a 34 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant in the **Lusaka South Multi-Facility Economic Zone**;

12 Jan 2018 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *CNBC Africa*. **United States (US)**-based company, **RD Global**, plans to partner with **Japan**-based, **Mera Group Corporation**, to develop a manufacturing plant of energy renewable projects;

7 Jan 2018 **Kanyama (Zambia)** *EWN*. Government imposes a curfew on **Kanyama** township residents to quell the outbreak as residents continued informal street vending and public gatherings;

3 Jan 2018 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *News24*. Foreign minister, **Harry Kalaba**, resigns due to “swelling” corruption in President **Edgar Lungu**’s (2015-present) government;

³⁶ **Laura Miti**, executive director of the **Alliance for Community Action**, quoted in *Business Live*, 18 Jan 2018.

³⁷ *Business Live*, 15 Jan 2018.