

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Zimbabwe Briefing October 2025

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#### Zimbabwe Summary 17 October 2025

*Zimbabwe's ruling party, ZANU-PF experiences an internal power struggle that is turning into a national crisis as President Emmerson Mnangagwa (2017-present) manoeuvres to extend his grip on power. However, vice president Constantino Chiwenga has publicly accused Mnangagwa's inner circle of large-scale corruption and party capture. South Africa further extends the Zimbabwean Exemption Permits (ZEPs) by another 18 months. The United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs chairman, Brian Mast, introduces a new bill in the US House of Representatives, seeking to repeal the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA), the sanctions statute first enacted in 2001.*

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#### Internal ZANU-PF tensions rise

The ruling party, **ZANU-PF**, is undergoing its most intense internal power struggle in years as President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** (2017-present) seeks to consolidate his power. However, vice president **Constantino Chiwenga** has publicly accused Mnangagwa's inner circle of large-scale corruption and party capture.

In a leaked dossier tabled to the ZANU PF's decision-making body, the **Politburo**, on 17 September, Chiwenga accused businessman **Kudakwashe Tagwirei** of looting roughly \$1.9 billion via deals involving the state, such as a stake in **Kuvimba Mining House**. Tagwirei is Mnangagwa's ally and advisor, who the **United States (US)** [sanctioned](#) for corruption. The dossier also accuses a broader network including **Wicknell Chivhayo**, **Scott Sakupwanyana**, and **Delish Nguwaya** of misappropriating over \$3.2 billion of state resources. Chiwenga [argued](#) that these actors are using these funds to capture Zanu-PF structures, influence state institutions and push a '2030 Agenda', which many perceive as a bid to extend Mnangagwa's tenure.

In response, Mnangagwa first removed or demoted several figures seen as aligned with Chiwenga, including retired brigadier-general **Ezekiel Zabanyana** from administrative structures of the party. Mnangagwa also replaced long-serving secretary-general **Obert Mpfu** with **Jacob Mudenda**, a perceived Mnangagwa loyalist. The controversy has been further inflamed by lavish gestures from business figures close to Mnangagwa. Tagwirei, whose ambition to ascend to the party central committee has so far been blocked by Chiwenga, [donated](#) over \$21m worth of vehicles to ZANU-PF central committee members - raising concerns among Chiwenga's camp about how wealth is being used to shape internal party loyalty.

During the annual ZANU-PF conference, currently underway in **Mutare**, Mnangagwa and his allies [accused](#) Chiwenga of attempting to "undermine a constitutionally elected government" and "incite despondency". Mnangagwa's rebuttal - contained in a document authored by ZANU-PF's legal secretary and justice minister **Ziyambi Ziyambi** and presented to the Politburo on 14 October - marks the most direct confrontation yet between the two men who jointly led the 2017 military intervention that ousted former president **Robert Mugabe** (1986-2017). Ziyambi, tabling Mnangagwa's response, described Chiwenga's document as fundamentally flawed, treasonous, and lacking appreciation of party procedures and the national constitution. In his document, Chiwenga opened his remarks by invoking the November 2017 coup that brought the pair to power. But Mnangagwa's camp shot back that the vice president was trying

to monopolise credit for the coup, denying that only a few individuals sacrificed their lives for Operation Restore Legacy. Ziyambi [responded](#):

*“Zimbabweans from all walks of life rose and participated. Let us acknowledge the collective effort and desist from claiming heroism for work done by many.”*

The annual conference comes at a time when Mnangagwa loyalists are reportedly mobilising delegates to pass resolutions supportive of extending his influence, possibly using proxies to advance the 2030 Agenda beyond his current constitutional term. Chiwenga's dossier challenged that agenda openly.

The Mnangagwa-Chiwenga rift within ZANU-PF marks an inflection point signalling a perilous moment for Zimbabwe. It demonstrates that the transition from the Mugabe-era was not a shift towards democracy, but a recalibration of power within the same political structure.

This ongoing tension brings significant uncertainty not only for the party but for the country, as political risks are heightened, which will have repercussions on the country and the economy. If Mnangagwa suppresses dissent aggressively, excluding or marginalising Chiwenga's allies, there is a possibility that could fuel an internal backlash. Conversely, allowing public airing of grievances threatens the perception of unity that the government has long used to reassure investors and foreign partners.

For foreign firms, the visible infighting increases the risk of sudden policy shifts, contract cancellations, or inconsistent enforcement. Agreements that previously depended implicitly on 'friendly' relationships within government might lose protection if the patron networks are disassembled. With Mnangagwa seeking to secure control beyond 2028 (the end of his second term) through constitutional or party mechanisms, there is a risk of legal ambiguity, contested legitimacy, or even constitutional crisis.

The battle between Mnangagwa and Chiwenga appears to be a zero-sum game for control of the party and the state. Whether this conflict leads to a decisive victor or a protracted and destabilising cold war within the government, hope for a stable, prosperous, and democratic Zimbabwe is under threat. The party's internal decay is a national crisis in the making.

### South Africa extends Zimbabwe permits

**South Africa** has again extended the **Zimbabwean Exemption Permits (ZEPs)**, giving the roughly 170,000 to 180,000 permit-holders extra time to remain legally in the country while wider immigration reforms are finalised. The permits were due to end next month but they have been [extended](#) until May 2027. The move, which the South African department of home affairs described as an administrative and policy necessity, has calmed immediate uncertainty for many families and employers but has also reignited a heated political debate over immigration, jobs and public services.

Officials say the extensions are pragmatic - many ZEP holders work in essential but informal and semi-formal sectors (domestic work, agriculture, small trade, construction) and removing their legal status abruptly would cause social and economic disruption. The department has pointed to ongoing consultations with the **Immigration Advisory Board** and a still-unfinished process of issuing replacement permits and clearer visa categories, meaning many ZEP holders would otherwise be left in limbo.

In the short term, the extension delivers legal certainty as permit-holders cannot be detained or deported on account of their status while the directive is in force, which eases pressure on overstretched courts and detention facilities and maintains labour supply in low-wage sectors. Economically, employers and small businesses that rely on ZEP labour avoid sudden disruptions to production and household economies.

However, extending permits hands the opposition and anti-immigrant movements fresh ammunition to argue the government is failing South Africans on unemployment and crime, fuelling tensions that can spill into xenophobic incidents.

Opposition South African political party, **ActionSA**, publicly denounced the extension as “*indecision and weakness*”, [saying](#) South Africans deserve clear timelines and tougher immigration enforcement rather than rolling renewals. Other political figures and commentators argued the government should prioritise unemployed citizens and target employers that hire undocumented workers. Anti-immigrant groups such as **Operation Dudula** and similar vigilante outfits have reacted angrily to extensions in the past, staging protests and sometimes intimidating foreign-run businesses and communities; civil-society actors including the **South African Human Rights Commission**, have had to intervene to prevent vigilantism from escalating into violence or unlawful evictions.

For Zimbabwe, the extension is a relief and a diplomatic win as Zimbabweans living in South Africa form a large migrant community whose welfare has cross-border repercussions. Zimbabwean authorities and ruling party figures [welcomed](#) the reprieve, framing it as humane and stabilising for families who send remittances home and who might otherwise face deportation to a country with fragile public services. The **United Nation’s (UN) International Organization for Migration (IOM)** [reported](#) in 2023 that the South Africa to Zimbabwe corridor has emerged as the largest inbound remittance route in the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** region, with an average of three million transactions and \$296m annually between 2016 and 2021.

### US Congress Moves to repeal ZDERA sanctions on Zimbabwe

The US **House Committee on Foreign Affairs** chairman, **Brian Mast**, introduced a new bill in the US **House of Representatives** on 17 September, seeking to repeal the **Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA)**, the sanctions statute first enacted in 2001 and amended in 2018. Under the proposed legislation, the US [would](#) lift longstanding legal barriers constraining Zimbabwe’s access to international finance and investment, provided Zimbabwe meets strict conditions, particularly on compensating dispossessed farmers.

ZDERA was originally enacted to penalise the Mugabe regime for human rights abuses, undermine democratic institutions, and isolate Zimbabwe economically. For years, the law blocked US support for Zimbabwe through multilateral institutions, limited access to capital, and imposed restrictions on certain officials.

But in March 2024, former president **Joe Biden** (2021-2025) terminated the national emergency underpinning the Zimbabwe sanctions programme, revoking the Zimbabwe-specific executive orders. Simultaneously, the US pivoted to a more targeted approach, [continuing](#) to sanction individual Zimbabwean figures under the **Global Magnitsky Act** for corruption and rights abuses.

**Brian Mast**, a republican from **Florida** and chairman of the house foreign affairs committee, has now introduced an omnibus bill that proposes broad changes to US foreign policy, from how its citizens engage hostile foreign entities to stepping up its economic interests in Africa.

Included in Mast’s bill is a proposal to drop ZDERA but maintain that US support for international credit to Zimbabwe would still be on condition that Zimbabwe fully pay former farmers, displaced under Zimbabwe’s fast-track land reform programme, \$3.5 billion under the **Global Compensation Deed (GCD)**. Another proposed condition is that compensation must be paid in hard currency, not Zimbabwean government securities. If Zimbabwe fails, the US [would](#) be mandated to withhold any support via the **World Bank** or **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.

The move reflects shifts in US strategy toward Zimbabwe, opens fresh opportunities in bilateral relations, but faces multiple political and practical obstacles. If successfully enacted and complied with, the repeal would lower a major barrier to Zimbabwe's re-entry into broader global financial markets. Zimbabwe could regain access to World Bank and IMF programmes and draw in foreign investment more confidently. That in turn could help revive Zimbabwe's stalled economy, facilitate debt relief, and ease financing for infrastructure and social programmes.

Diplomatically, the repeal would represent a reset as it would help normalise US-Zimbabwe engagement, allow higher-level visits, re-expand technical cooperation, and possibly lead to more robust US development assistance. It could also provide political legitimacy to calls in Zimbabwe for accountability, transitional justice, and governance reform. On the other hand, the US could also gain access to Zimbabwe's vast critical mineral resources.

### Planner

Nov 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** 2026 National Budget announcement

Dec 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (central bank) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** decision

28 May 2027 **(South Africa)** Expiry of special residence permits for Zimbabweans living in South Africa

### Chronology

14 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Newswire**. National data agency **Zimstat** says in its **2024/2025 Post-Harvest Survey Report** that maize production for the 2024/25 season reached 1.8 million tonnes, nearly triple the 635,000 tonnes harvested last year, but well below the 2.3 million tonnes that the government had forecast;

13 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) New Zimbabwe**. Zimbabwe's largest independent asset manager, **Imara Asset Management**, warns that ending the use of the **United States (US)** dollar by 2030 could undermine the country's current economic stability;

13 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Zimbabwe Mail**. The **Confederation of Zimbabwe Retailers (CZR)** has voiced strong opposition to a proposal by the **Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI)** to impose stricter import controls, warning that such measures could exacerbate existing economic challenges and hurt consumers;

13 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Zimbabwe Mail**. The **Chinese** embassy in Zimbabwe has issued an advisory to its nationals, urging them to conduct thorough due diligence and comply strictly with Zimbabwean laws, following increasing calls for responsible business practices that align with local laws and community expectations;

13 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Herald**. Lands, agriculture, fisheries, water and rural development deputy minister **Davis Marapira** says Zimbabwe's crocodile farming industry generated an average of \$36m in export earnings over the last 24 months;

13 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Zimbabwe Mail**. Police arrest a **Chinese** national following the fatal shooting of a Zimbabwean worker at a gold mine in **Mutoko**, an incident that has reignited public outrage over allegations of violence and exploitation by Chinese mining companies operating in the country;

11 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe) Herald**. **Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ)** (central bank) is undertaking a comprehensive review of transaction costs and digital payment

infrastructure as part of ongoing efforts to promote the use of the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) and strengthen confidence in the local currency;

10 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. Government confirms it granted prescribed asset status to 11 applications valued at \$248.56m in the half-year period to June 30, 2025;

10 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. **Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ)** (central bank) reports export receipts reached \$10.3 billion in the first nine months of the year, a historic high that signals strengthening foreign currency inflows and provides the economy with a solid foundation for stability and growth;

9 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. Vice president **Constantino Chiwenga** reaffirms government's commitment to ensuring that the country's mineral wealth benefits all citizens, emphasising that Zimbabwe is "*open for business, not for extraction*";

9 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Newsday*. Tobacco industry representatives confirm the industry harvested a record-breaking 354,881,661kg of tobacco in 2025, earning \$1.18 billion, the first time that growers have earned over \$1 billion;

9 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Newswire*. **Jersey-based Caledonia Mining** says it is still to decide by year-end whether to build its new **Bilboes** gold project in phases – potentially halving the original plant size to curb equity dilution and limit financial risks;

8 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Zimlive*. Information minister **Jenfan Muswere** announces that the cabinet has approved sweeping cuts to business licence, permit and levy fees in the retail and wholesale sectors as part of stated efforts to reduce the cost of doing business and boost competitiveness;

8 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. **ZB Bank** becomes Zimbabwe's first bank to receive Sustainability Standards Certification, marking a major milestone for the financial sector's integration of sustainability principles;

7 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *New Zimbabwe*. **Harare Residents Trust (HRT)** director **Precious Shumba** says the government's delay in releasing the commission of inquiry report, delivered to President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** in June, into the operations of **Harare City Council** is undermining efforts to combat corruption within the city administration;

6 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. Public consultations for the 2026 national budget, due to be announced in November, start, with legislators from the portfolio committee on budget, finance, economic development and investment promotion engaging citizens across the country to gather input;

6 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Zimbabwe Mail*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** forecasts Zimbabwe's economy will grow by 6% this year, buoyed by a strong agricultural season, record-high gold prices and sustained remittance inflows;

1 Oct 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *New Zimbabwe*. Information, publicity and broadcasting services minister **Jenfan Muswere** confirms the government's decision to reserve quarry and granite mining exclusively for local investors;

30 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. Zimbabwe is drafting a new **National Trade Tariff Policy**, expected to accelerate industrialisation and attract investment by creating a structured, transparent and predictable tariff system;

28 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. Foreign minister, **Amon Murwira**, notes in his speech to the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** that Zimbabwe's reforms and

targeted investments have driven consistent 6% GDP growth and improved livelihoods across key sectors such as agriculture, mining, tourism and manufacturing;

26 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Zimbabwe Mail*. **United Kingdom-based Kavango Resources Plc** lists on the **Victoria Falls Stock Exchange (VFEX)**, becoming the bourse's 17<sup>th</sup> listing, a move that signals growing international confidence in Zimbabwe's economic reforms and mineral potential;

26 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. **Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe** (central bank) **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** maintains the bank policy rate at 35%, resolving to continue to "stay the course" of the current monetary policy stance during the next quarter to anchor price and exchange rate stability in the economy;

23 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** declares a one-month national firearms amnesty, allowing Zimbabweans to surrender unlicensed or illegally held guns and ammunition to the police, following a rise in firearm-related crimes, often linked to unregistered weapons;

22 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Newswire*. Zimbabwe's biggest new industrial investment, the **Dinson Iron and Steel Company**, takes its first major production pause since commissioning started last year, with the company shutting down its plant for a scheduled maintenance programme running from 11 September 11 to 11 November;

19 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Reuters*. Finance ministry forecasts the economy will by 6.6% this year, higher than an earlier projection of 6% due to a larger tobacco harvest and this year's rally in the global gold price;

18 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. Energy ministry reports Zimbabwe has agreed on a \$455m, 15-year concession deal with **India's Jindal Steel** for the refurbishment of the 920MW **Hwange** thermal power station;

15 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. Zimbabwe's sole authorised buyer, **Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR)**, notes gold production surged 23% year-on-year in August, reaching 4,189 tonnes, driven mainly by artisanal and small-scale miners who contributed 78% of total output;

15 Sep 2025 **Harare (Zimbabwe)** *Herald*. **World Platinum Investment Council** reports platinum output rose 9% year-on-year in quarter two to 137,000 ounces, reaching a quarterly all-time high;

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Please contact us by email [info@africariskconsulting.com](mailto:info@africariskconsulting.com)

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