

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Botswana Monthly Briefing May 2026

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#### Botswana Summary 19 May 2026

*Government publishes the findings of a national forensic audit that exposes suspected corruption, fraud, and financial mismanagement amounting to an estimated P33 billion (\$2.4 billion) under the former administration. The findings are shaping up to be one of the country's biggest political scandals since independence. Botswana becomes the first African country to raise interest rates since the outbreak of the Middle East conflict, as monetary authorities seek to contain surging inflation driven largely by rising fuel costs. Botswana grants uranium prospecting licences to France's Orano Mining and is looking to fast-track the project to develop a mine and nuclear reactor as the country looks to diversify beyond diamonds.*

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#### Audit reveals massive corruption under BDP rule

The government has [completed](#) a national forensic audit that uncovered suspected corruption, fraud and financial mismanagement amounting to an estimated P33 billion (\$2.4 billion) under the former administration, a development that is shaping up to be one of **Botswana's** biggest political scandals since independence.

President **Duma Boko** (2024-present) commissioned the audit to examine government finances and state-owned enterprises over a 10-year period from 2014 to 2024, when the **Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)** governed Botswana. The BDP had ruled the country uninterrupted for 58 years before being voted out by Boko's **Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC)** in October 2024. Boko hired **United States**-headquartered **Alvarez & Marsal** to conduct the audit.

According to the audit summary, forensic investigators identified approximately P160 billion (\$11.6 billion) worth of contracts and payments exposed to serious irregularities, with an estimated P33 billion (\$2.24 billion) potentially lost through fraud, waste, inflated contracts, abuse of procurement systems, and weak oversight controls. The report [identified](#) more than 80 serious cases requiring further criminal investigation and implicated over 80 senior officials and more than 150 companies and counterparties. Among the major areas of concern highlighted in the audit were procurement manipulation, direct tendering without competitive bidding, unsupported payments, abandoned infrastructure projects, ghost workers, missing documentation, and misuse of emergency procurement procedures.

The report also pointed to systematic weaknesses in public financial management that allegedly allowed politically connected individuals and companies to benefit from state contracts with little accountability. Auditors said many contracts bypassed proper approval channels, and oversight systems failed repeatedly over several years. One of the entities specifically linked to forensic concerns was the **Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana**, where a separate forensic probe reportedly uncovered alleged ghost workers and manipulation of financial records.

The release of the audit has intensified political pressure on former presidents **Ian Khama** (2008-2018) and **Mokgweetsi Masisi** (2018-2024) and the BDP leadership, which had increasingly [faced](#) accusations of corruption and elite enrichment during its final years in power. Critics had long argued that Botswana's reputation as one of Africa's cleanest and best-governed democracies had covered growing governance failures beneath the surface.

For Boko, the audit could be a strong political weapon as his administration campaigned heavily on promises to fight corruption, recover stolen public funds, and restore confidence in state institutions.

Since receiving the report, Boko has [vowed](#) to pursue prosecutions “*without fear or favour*” and promised aggressive action against those implicated. The findings may also bring public support for the new administration, under pressure from rising economic challenges, if it succeeds in recovering lost funds. However, opposition voices have [questioned](#) whether the investigations may be selectively used against political rivals.

The audit could significantly reshape Botswana’s political landscape as the BDP, once regarded as one of Africa’s most stable ruling parties, now faces the possibility of long-term reputational damage if prosecutions proceed against senior former officials.

The scandal comes at a difficult economic moment for Botswana, which has been grappling with slowing diamond revenues, rising unemployment and pressure on public finances.

### Central bank implements interest rate hike as inflation soars

**Bank of Botswana (BoB)** (central bank) announced on 29 April it would [increase](#) the **Monetary Policy Rate (MoPR)** by 200 basis points, lifting it from 3.5% to 5.5%, making Botswana the first African country to raise interest rates since the outbreak of the conflict in the **Middle East** triggered a global energy shock, with rising fuel costs driving up inflation. The central bank said the move was aimed at curbing inflationary pressures that intensified following global oil price increases linked to the conflict.

In March, the government increased fuel prices substantially, with petrol up 33%, diesel 54%, and paraffin 81%. Botswana has a very high weight for fuel in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket and thus the impact of fuel price increases on inflation will be much larger than in many other countries.

Following the fuel price spike, inflation rose sharply from 4.2% in March to 10.3% in April, far exceeding BoB’s earlier projection of 8.9% for the month. The latest figure also pushed inflation well above the central bank’s medium-term objective range of 3% to 6%. BoB governor **Lesego Moseki** said the sharp increase in prices was largely driven by fuel price hikes, rising public transport fares and higher medical aid premiums, all of which have fed into the broader cost of living.

The rate hike marks a major shift for Botswana, which had earlier projected inflation would remain relatively stable this year before geopolitical tensions disrupted global energy markets. However, the central bank simultaneously [instructed](#) commercial banks not to increase lending rates despite the policy tightening, saying the directive was necessary to shield households and businesses already under pressure from deteriorating economic conditions.

Botswana’s economy has been struggling under the weight of a prolonged downturn in the global diamond market, the country’s main source of export earnings and government revenue. The slowdown has weakened economic activity, reduced state revenues, and placed severe strain on public finances. The government has increasingly relied on borrowing to finance widening budget deficits amid declining mineral revenues and sluggish growth.

### Boko pushes for mineral beneficiation in new uranium project

Botswana has granted uranium prospecting licences to **France’s Orano Mining** and is now [looking](#) to fast-track the project to develop a mine and nuclear reactor as the country looks to diversify beyond diamonds to help offset the economic impacts of the downturn in the global diamond market.

Botswana’s mining cadastre portal shows that Orano has applied for licences on three pitchblende and uranium exploration blocks of about 970 square kilometres each in the western parts of Botswana. Records at the Botswana official business registry portal, the **Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA)**, show that Orano registered a local subsidiary on 10 April 2026, two days after Boko met with France’s President **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-present) and Orano officials in France on 8 April.

Boko also commented on the project on the sidelines of the **Africa Forward Summit** in Kenya, which France and Kenya co-hosted. Boko [said](#) it will not be business as usual, as the country will demand value addition and beneficiation in the uranium project:

*"This is about the country from which the uranium is produced playing a leading role in the process of extraction, in any beneficiation, and in trade and the commodity, and so this is exactly what must happen.*

He added that the government is looking to "speed up the process" so the extraction stage can be reached and then the development of nuclear reactors. Boko said the project, which he expects to be running in the next one and a half years, will include the building of a nuclear power station to generate electricity for export and power data centres. Botswana is seeking to diversify its mining sector beyond diamonds and is believed to hold uranium reserves estimated at 800,000 tonnes, including the **Letlhakane** deposit, one of the largest undeveloped uranium resources globally.

Orano's search for uranium in Botswana [comes](#) after **Niger's** military junta nationalised the **SOMAIR** uranium mine, where Orano held a 63.4% stake, and revoked cooperation following the 2023 coup. Niger accused Orano of exploitation and unfair practices, leading to the full nationalisation in June 2025 and Orano's operational exit.

## Planner

18 Jun 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Bank of Botswana (BoB)** (central bank) **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** decision

29-30 Jun 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Future of Mining Summit**

Sep 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** Mid-term budget review

## Chronology

18 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Central News.** **South Africa's** President **Cyril Ramaphosa** will undertake a state visit to Botswana from 20 to 21 May to co-chair the 6th session of the **Botswana-South Africa Bi-National Commission** alongside President **Duma Boko**;

13 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Mmegi.** Trade and entrepreneurship minister **Tiroeane Ntsima** notes that Botswana and **Rwanda** are working to revitalise economic cooperation following a significant decline in bilateral trade over the past five years;

12 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Mmegi.** **Bank of Botswana** (central bank) figures show arrears owed to the country's commercial banks rose above P8 billion (\$592.6m) for the first time in history in January, as more borrowers struggled to repay their dues;

11 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Daily News.** President **Duma Boko** (2024-present) participates in the **Africa Forward Summit**, which is being held in **Nairobi (Kenya)** and co-hosted by **France**;

8 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Reuters.** Government announces that former president, **Festus Mogaeb**, who led the country for a decade and won praise for good governance and the fight against **HIV/AIDS**, has died at the age of 86, declaring three days of national mourning;

8 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Mmegi.** Court of appeal reserves judgment in the long-running dispute over the sale of **Mupane Gold Mine**, which is under liquidation, giving hope to creditors that the matter is moving closer to being settled after extensive delays;

6 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana) Daily News.** **Rwanda's** President **Paul Kagame** arrives in Botswana on a state visit with the two countries signing six bilateral agreements to strengthen ties and boost trade and economic growth;

6 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. The outbreak of **Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)** in **Zone 11** has brought to a standstill the rollout of the first phase of the **Milk Valley Expansion Project** in **Lobatse**, where a consignment of heifers expected to arrive from **Brazil** has been temporarily halted;

5 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. President **Duma Boko** doubles down on the government's plan to establish a constitutional court, insisting the move is non-negotiable despite growing public debate over its timing and cost;

1 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. **Russia**, through its embassy in Botswana, says that it has not forced any Botswana citizens or any Africans to the **Ukraine** warfront, saying all those who joined them in the war did so voluntarily;

1 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Government intensifies efforts to transform Botswana into a 24-hour economy, with extended liquor trading hours emerging as one of the first major policy experiments aimed at reviving nightlife and boosting tourism;

1 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **Ukrainian** government, through its embassy in Gaborone, says it has engaged its special services to help locate Botswana citizens who are reported to be missing on the frontlines of the war with **Russia**;

1 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Botswana officially removes the colonial-era laws that criminalised same sex relations from its **Penal Code**, years after the high court struck them down as unconstitutional in 2019, with the court of appeal upholding the ruling in 2021;

1 May 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Shortage of medicines in Botswana's public health facilities continues, with patients saying the crisis has now deepened to unbearable levels;

30 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. **Competition and Consumer Authority (CCA)** brings a legal suit against **Botswana Insurance Company** and **South Africa**-headquartered **Old Mutual** for allegedly participating in a long-running scheme to impose mark-ups on spare parts, dictate labour costs to auto-body repairers, and force repairers to buy parts only from their preferred suppliers;

30 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Botswana establishes a specialised commercial court in a bid to improve the country's investment climate and clear congested civil cases rolls;

29 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Vice president and finance minister, **Ndaba Gaolathe**, arrives in **Nigeria** to hold talks with businessman, **Aliko Dangote**, who is currently looking to list his oil refinery giant in more stock exchanges across the continent;

27 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Botswana is preparing to roll out a groundbreaking injectable HIV prevention drug, lenacapavir, as part of a major international push to expand long-acting prevention tools;

27 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. The **Competition and Consumer Authority** blocks **Debswana Pension Fund**'s proposed acquisition of a 50% stake in **Bona Life Insurance**, ruling that the deal would substantially lessen competition and deepen concentration in the financial services sector;

24 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** expects the local economy to grow by 4.7% this year, an estimate even higher than the government's own projection of 3.6%;

23 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **World Bank** has identified critical structural gaps in Botswana's tourism sector, warning that the country's heavy reliance on high-end wildlife tourism, weak infrastructure, and slow diversification threaten long-term growth and competitiveness;

23 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. Attorney general **Dick Bayford** calls for urgent legal reforms in Botswana's mining sector, warning that the country faces a critical moment in its economic trajectory;

22 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. Botswana is set to roll out a nationwide vaccination campaign using the novel oral polio vaccine type two to boost population immunity and prevent potential outbreaks after the detection of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type two in neighbouring countries, including districts bordering Botswana;

22 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The country's largest private sector lobby group, **Business Botswana**, proposes a review of the exchange rate, temporary suspension of certain levies and subsidies as well as a review of certain import restrictions, as possible solutions to the ongoing fuel price crisis;

21 Apr 2026 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. **Botswana National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Report** indicates that between 2020 and 2024, Botswana recorded 1,003 cases of employee theft totalling over P380.4m (\$27.3m), yet authorities managed to restrain only P5m (\$359,000) and officially confiscate P887,000 (\$63,600);

13 Apr **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Reuters*. President **Duma Boko** clinches multiple agreements with **Oman**, including on mineral exploration, oil storage infrastructure and renewable power, during a visit to the **Gulf** nation;

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