

MONTHLY UPDATE

IN TRANSFORMATION
INITIATIVE

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ZIMBABWE



MAIN STORIES

State of the Nation
Address

First Lady Implicated
in Gold Scam

HIGHLIGHTS

- Delivering his State of the Nation Address, President Emmerson Mnangagwa urged the international community to lift sanctions immediately. He also threatened to ban some non-government organisations that he accused of operating outside their mandates.
- First Lady Auxillia Mnangagwa stands accused of participating in a gold smuggling syndicate involving a senior ruling party official and her husband's aides.
- A planned amendment to the Criminal Law Act will make it illegal for Zimbabweans to have unauthorised communications with foreign governments or to make unsubstantiated claims of torture or abduction or to protest during international events or visits.
- Mnangagwa introduced the Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Bill to crack down on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that criticise his government. However, the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) have all dismissed suggestions that sanctions are to blame for Zimbabwe's economic crisis, saying corruption was the biggest problem.
- As of 9 November, Zimbabwe had registered 8 531 coronavirus cases, 253 deaths and 8 005 recoveries. Zimbabwe is currently in an indefinite lockdown.
- The World Bank said in its October 2020 economic report that the COVID-19 pandemic is pushing Zimbabwe deeper into recession, with GDP expected to contract by 10% in 2020. GDP is projected to grow by 2.9% in 2021. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Zimbabwe's economy would contract by 10.4% this year, much higher than its earlier prediction of 7.4%.

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- The National Development Strategy (NDS), expected to usher in "an era of sustained and shared socio-economic growth in line with Vision 2030", will soon be unveiled by Government. The strategy will replace the Transitional Stabilisation Programme inaugurated by the Mnangagwa administration in 2018.
- Experts are warning that Zimbabwe's appetite for Chinese loans is pushing the country's foreign debt to unsustainable levels. According to former finance minister Tendai Biti, Mnangagwa's government contracted \$2.5 billion in external debt between July 2019 and July 2020. This has pushed Zimbabwe's external debt to \$4.8 billion.
- Mnangagwa sent a congratulatory message to new US President-elect Joe Biden saying he looked forward to working with him to improve cooperation between the two countries.
- The US and EU embassies in Zimbabwe said the anti-sanctions day held in the country was a distraction from the real issues. UK ambassador Melanie Robinson argued that sanctions could not be blamed for the situation Zimbabwe finds itself in.
- The UK is considering a new regime of sanctions against Mnangagwa's government over failure to address human rights violations and corruption.
- Zimbabwe asked South Africa to extradite former minister Saviour Kasukuwere, to be tried for abuse of power when he was a public officer. Zimbabwe is awaiting South Africa's response.

