

MONTHLY UPDATE

IN TRANSFORMATION
INITIATIVE

17 MAY • NO 5/2021

ZIMBABWE



MAIN STORIES

Constitutional
Amendment No 2 Bill
Signed into Law

Chief Justice
Controversy

Tagwirei Again

Coronavirus

HIGHLIGHTS

- President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed the controversial Constitutional Amendment No 2 Bill into law, which gives effect to 27 changes to the Constitution and giving him unfettered powers over the Judiciary and Parliament. The Bill sailed through the Senate with a two-thirds majority of 65 to 10 after 11 senators from the Douglas Mwonzora-led MDC-T faction coalesced with Zanu-PF legislators.
- The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) appointed Justice Elizabeth Gwaunza as acting Chief Justice pending appeal by Government against a High Court ruling striking down an amendment to the Constitution which sought to extend the retirement age of senior judges from 70 to 75 years. This came after Mnangagwa announced that he had extended Luke Malaba's term of office by five years, just hours before the Chief Justice was due to retire. Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ziyambi Ziyambi said the ruling was a typical case of judicial overreach which Government would not accept.
- In December, the government announced a multibillion-dollar project called Kuvimba Mining House that would hold some of the nation's most valuable gold, platinum, chrome and nickel mines. The mining assets that form the core of Kuvimba's holdings were until recently owned by or tied to Kudakwashe Tagwirei, a politically connected businessman who was sanctioned for corruption by the United States (US) in 2020.
- Mnangagwa set up an inter-ministerial team led by Vice-President Constantino Chiwenga to take over service delivery in opposition-run councils.
- Zimbabwe came in at 103 out of 104 (1=best; 104=worst) in the inaugural Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) report.

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- The Zimbabwe Peace Project said in its April 2021 report that in April, it recorded three incidents of disruption of political events, 88 cases of harassment and intimidation and 23 cases of discrimination during aid distribution. The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) was behind 50% of all human rights violations targeting mainly the opposition MDC Alliance.
- In a scathing report, Amnesty International (AI) revealed how hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwean citizens have been left stateless in their own country.
- An “independent” commission to receive and investigate complaints from the public on acts of misconduct by members of the security services will soon be established. The commission will comprise a chairperson and four other members appointed by the President.
- The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (Zacc) submitted 32 dockets to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), nine of which are high-profile, as the dragnet closes in on senior government, police and council officials, according to Zacc chairperson Justice Loyce Matanda-Moyo.
- Police are investigating how a gold smuggler, Tashinga Nyasha Masinire, sneaked out of the Robert Gabriel Mugabe (RGM) International Airport undetected, only to be arrested in South Africa, in possession of 23 pieces of gold, worth over US\$780 000.
- As of 17 May, Zimbabwe had registered 38 560 coronavirus cases, 1 582 deaths and 36 329 recoveries. Zimbabwe has upscaled the use of antigen rapid diagnostic tests to reinforce its COVID-19 response, hitting a daily rate of 4 000 tests.
- Treasury is sticking to its economic growth estimate of 7.4%, even after Mnangagwa said the projection would have to be lowered.
- The World Bank said in its April 2021 economic report that GDP is estimated to have contracted by 8% for a second year in a row in 2020. GDP is projected to grow by 2.9% in 2021.

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- Zimbabweans in the diaspora sent home a total of ZW\$1 billion last year, the highest ever contribution made to the local economy, up from ZW\$635.7 million in 2019.
- The government confirmed that in the 2020/21 season, maize production would reach 2.7 million tons, a 199% growth from the 2019/20 season.
- Gold production fell 30% to 3.98 tonnes in the first quarter of 2021, while export earnings fell from \$226 million to \$200 million in the January–March quarter.
- The government approved a Memorandum of Understanding with Russia to facilitate cooperation between the two countries in the use of nuclear energy.
- The European Investment Bank (EIB) will inject €40 million into Zimbabwe banks for on-lending to the private sector, following a decision by the European Union (EU) member states to allow the bank to roll out the facility despite the country’s indebtedness to international financial institutions.
- Following the recent military siege on the Mozambican northern town of Palma by Islamic State-linked insurgents, Mnangagwa is said to have deployed special forces to the Cabo Delgado province.
- EU ambassador to Zimbabwe, Timo Olkkonen, warned Mnangagwa’s government against crafting repressive legislation that undermine political liberties and freedom of speech.
- Western embassies in Zimbabwe raised a red flag over the country’s continuing persecution of opposition members after incarcerated MDC Alliance Member of Parliament (MP) Joana Mamombe was denied medical treatment.

