



MAIN STORIES

**Belarussian President
Visits Zimbabwe**

**PVOs Amendment
Bill Passed by Senate**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko visited Zimbabwe and the two countries signed several agreements. It is alleged that Zimbabwe's honorary consul to Belarus Alexander Zingman, a close associate of President Emmerson Mnangagwa and Lukashenko, was the biggest winner in trade agreements signed by Harare and Minsk.
- The Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs) Amendment Bill now awaits Mnangagwa's assent to become law after it was passed by the Senate. The legislation makes it a criminal offense for Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) to support or oppose political parties or candidates in any election.
- According to the 2022 Mo Ibrahim Index on African Governance (IIAG), published in January 2023, Zimbabwe was placed 29th on overall governance out of 54 African countries (1=best; 54=worst). The IIAG is published every two years. Zimbabwe was ranked 33rd in 2020.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU's) 2022 Democracy Index ranks Zimbabwe 132 out of 165 countries (1=best; 165=worst) with a score of 2.92 (1=worst; 10=best), the same as in 2021, putting it in the category of a "Authoritarian Regime."
- On 14 January, police assaulted members of the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) and ultimately arrested 26 individuals while they were attending a private meeting in Budiriro, Harare. They were granted bail on 27 January 2023. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) condemned the assaults and arrests.
- Police arrested a suspect allegedly involved in an attack on elderly CCC members in Murewa North, Mashonaland East Province on 7 January 2023. A video of the beatings went viral with youths seen assaulting and interrogating the elderly women and men for attending a CCC gathering.

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- HRW said in its 2023 World Report that the human rights climate in Zimbabwe deteriorated in 2022 without the government taking any meaningful steps to uphold rights and ensure justice for serious past abuses primarily committed by state security forces.
- Zimbabwe is ranked 157 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI: 1=clean; 180=highly corrupt), the same as in 2021.
- The African Development Bank (AfDB) on 19 January 2023 released its new biannual publication, “Africa’s Macroeconomic Performance and Outlook” for 2023/24. The AfDB projects growth at 2.8% in 2023 and 2.9% in 2024.
- The World Bank said in its January 2023 Global Economic Prospects (GEP) that growth is projected at 3.6% in 2023, the same as projected in the June 2022 report.
- The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) cut its policy rate by 50 percentage points to 150%, driven by a downward trend in inflation since late last year. Monthly inflation fell to 1.1% in January from 2.4% in December, while yearly inflation dipped to 229.8% from 243.8%.
- The country recorded a trade deficit of US\$1,96 billion for the period between January and November 2022, which is an increase from the US\$1,4 billion recorded during the same period in 2021.
- Zimbabwean-listed companies fear the country’s upcoming elections will disrupt business due to the highly charged electoral and polarised political framework, as well as possible policy uncertainties that could reverse volume and revenue-growth prospects.
- Presidential spokesperson, George Charamba, has jumped to defend the new Health Services Amendment Act, which blocks public health workers from striking, saying the law was made to protect citizens.



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- The Zimbabwe Defence Industries (ZDI) has allegedly been granted a special permit by the government to export raw lithium.
- State-owned Kuvimba Mining House (Kuvimba) is banking on its mining proceeds to revive the defunct steelmaker, Ziscosteel.
- The upcoming general elections in Zimbabwe should be a highlight of the country's willingness to re-join the Commonwealth but so far, nothing is pointing in that direction, according to Sonny Leong, a British Labour Party legislator. Liberal Democrat Baron Jonny Oates said severe damage would be done to the Commonwealth's reputation by readmitting Zimbabwe.
- Finance and Economic Development Minister Mthuli Ncube said the government is ready to put forward US\$20 million to partner investors willing to invest in a lithium battery manufacturing project. Ncube was speaking at the official launch of the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Zimbabwe.
- Zimbabwe will facilitate the return from South Africa of holders of the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP), due to expire on 30 June, Zimbabwean Ambassador David Hamadziripi said.
- President Cyril Ramaphosa, speaking during the ANC's 111th anniversary, called for an end to sanctions against Zimbabwe, saying that it is one the reasons its citizens flood into South Africa.
- The CCC has sent an appeal to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU) and will also lobby international organisations to intervene on political violence as the country heads for polls.

