



MAIN STORIES

Road to Elections: Current State of Play

HIGHLIGHTS

- Addressing Zimbabwean students in St Petersburg, Russia at the end of July, President Emmerson Mnangagwa stated that Zanu PF would romp to victory, riding on a crest of deliverables and no meaningful opposition. On 2 August, Mnangagwa said Zanu PF, had liberated the country through blood. Therefore no one had the right “to claim this crown,” except for Zanu PF.
- Opposition leader Nelson Chamisa launched his "For Everyone" election campaign on 16 July. Chamisa promised to tackle corruption and end the ruling elite's misuse of the country's mineral resources.
- The Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) claimed that Mozambique's ruling Frelimo party deployed a vigilante group in some parts of Manicaland Province, where it is allegedly threatening businesses and opposition supporters.
- Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a report issued on 3 August that rights critical for Zimbabwe's election, such as to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, are imperilled. Violence, intimidation, harassment, and repression linked to Zanu PF and aimed principally at CCC members and civil society activists have restricted civic and political space, it added.
- A new Afrobarometer survey revealed that at least 70% of Zimbabweans are afraid of becoming political violence victims during the upcoming general elections.
- In a statement on 1 August, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) expressed concern over political tensions triggering physical and cyber-attacks against women ahead of the elections. ACHPR said the attacks were targeting voters and members of opposition political parties.

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- Ahead of the elections, army officers on leave have been called back to the barracks. “Mnangagwa wants the army back to the barracks to protect himself and coup-proof his vulnerable government,” one report said.
- A Bulawayo High Court judge disqualified 12 parliamentary candidates of the main opposition CCC from participating in the polls. On 3 August, a panel of three Supreme Court judges made a unanimous decision to set aside the Bulawayo High Court ruling.
- The Supreme Court dismissed exiled former cabinet minister Saviour Kasukuwere’s appeal of a High Court decision to disqualify him from contesting in the polls. Kasukuwere has appealed to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to rescue his presidential bid.
- According to the results of an Afrobarometer survey, 35% of eligible voters intend to vote for Mnangagwa while 27% plan to vote for CCC leader Nelson Chamisa. According to results of a poll conducted by Zambia-based Elite Africa Research (EAR), published in July, Chamisa and his CCC will win elections by a margin of between 8% and 9%.
- On 14 July 2023, Mnangagwa assented to the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Amendment Act being gazetted with the inclusion of a new clause (Section 22A) which criminalises “campaigning” against the country.
- A joint investigative report by The Sentry and Open Secrets exposes how Zimbabwean presidential adviser and business tycoon Kudakwashe Tagwirei – the subject of numerous corruption allegations – was able to move suspect funds from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) to the City of London using a combination of fronts, apparently false invoices and offshore financial façades.
- Mnangagwa declared a state of disaster in Harare province due to rubbish piling up in streets.



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- Zimbabwe's economy is projected to grow by 5.3% in 2023, better than initial estimates of 3.8%, on the back of improved farm yields, better electricity supply, and strong mineral prices, according to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.
- Zimbabwe's GDP grew by 6.2% to \$56.1 billion during the first quarter of 2023 when compared to \$52.8 billion recorded in the same period last year, according to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat).
- Zimbabwe's trade deficit narrowed to US\$85.1 million in June 2023, representing a 56.6% drop from US\$196 million recorded in May 2023, according to data released by ZimStat.
- South Africa's Moti Group said a Chinese company with which it had planned to develop a \$1-billion lithium processing plant in Zimbabwe was halving its stake in the venture, dealing the project a blow.
- Mnangagwa voiced support for Russia's special military operation in Ukraine. Mnangagwa said that his country was food-secure but was grateful for an offer of free grain from President Vladimir Putin at the Russia-Africa summit in St Petersburg.
- Putin reportedly handed Mnangagwa a presidential helicopter, as a show of their close ties.
- Zimbabwe applied to join the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), Mnangagwa said during a bilateral meeting with Putin in St. Petersburg.
- Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi was welcomed in Zimbabwe by people singing songs criticising the West. Raisi was greeted by Mnangagwa, who thanked the Iranian leader for showing "solidarity." About 12 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to strengthen bilateral ties were signed.

