

A detailed report published by South Africa’s online publication Maverick Citizen examines the extent of the corruption which has reduced Zimbabweans to poverty and despair.

The paper speaks of a network of cartels plundering the country. It defines cartels as arrangements ‘characterised by collusion between the private sector and influential politicians to attain monopolistic positions, fix prices and stifle competition’.

The activities of cartels involved ‘abuse of power by office holders as a means to generate ill-gotten profits for themselves and their cronies’. As if to highlight this, we learnt this week that known crook Henrietta Rushwaya has been reinstated as president of the Zimbabwe Miners’ Federation (see: <https://www.zimlive.com/2021/02/09/zimbabwe-miners-federation-re-instates-henrietta-rushwaya-as-president/>).

Rushwaya, who is close to the Mnangagwa family, was sacked after being arrested at Harare airport trying to smuggle gold to Dubai. She said she had picked up the heavy bag loaded with gold ingots by mistake instead of the light bag with her knickers in. An easy mistake to make! She was released on bail unlike opposition activists who rot in prison awaiting court hearings on trumped-up charges.

The massive scale of what is described as ‘state capture on steroids’ is documented in the

Written by Administrator

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lengthy report, which names President Mnangagwa as one of the bosses who run lucrative cartels in a wide range of commodities.

The report says Zimbabwe may be losing up to half its GDP (the annual value of goods and services produced) through corrupt economic activity, including US\$3 billion in gold and diamonds smuggled out of the country every year.

It cites an illicit payment of Zim\$3.3 billion made in 2019 to Sekunda, a fuel company owned by Kudakwashe Tagwirei, an ally of Mnangagwa. Sekunda was supposed to receive only Zim\$330 million and the shortfall was met by the central bank printing money, causing a massive overnight devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar. (see: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-02-09-how-cartels-operate-and-their-impact-on-the-people-of-zimbabwe/>).

The Maverick Citizen editor says the report ‘provides a post mortem on the cancer that killed the Zimbabwean dream of freedom and independence’.

Jim Risch, a senior member of the US Senate foreign relations committee, said it ‘exposes the destructive effects that elite cartels play in robbing the country’s future . . . the Zimbabwean people deserve better’.

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Peter Hain, a former British cabinet minister, describes the report as ‘explosive’ while the MDC Alliance senator David Coltart tweeted: ‘if you are puzzled why such a wealthy country, with such intelligent, well-educated people can be so poor then read this report’. (See: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-02-10-daily-maverick-report-on-zimbabwe-state-capture-gains-international-attention/>.)

Other Points:

- A convicted criminal has been appointed the new foreign minister in replacement for General Sibusiso Moyo who died recently of Covid 19. The new minister is Frederick Shava who as a government minister in the 1980s was jailed for involvement in the notorious Willowvale car scandal. Mugabe ordered his release after he spent one night in jail (see: <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/zimbabweans-fume-as-fraud-accused-shava-is-appointed-foreign-minister/>).

- The Zimbabwean journalist Hopewell Chin’ono has been named joint winner of an African journalism prize following his exposures of government corruption in the procurement of Covid 19 medical equipment (see: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/zimbabwe-journalist-wins-award-for-exposing-corruption/2142796>).

- The UN Human Rights Office says it is concerned about reports that the Zimbabwean government is using the pandemic as a pretext to clamp down on freedom of expression (see: <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/un-concerned-as-zim-uses-covid-19-as-excuse-to-stifle-dissent/>).

- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have a virtual Vigil while the restrictions continue. We ask our activists to put on Vigil / ROHR / Zimbabwe regalia and take a photo of themselves holding an appropriate poster reflecting our protest against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The photos are uploaded on our Flickr site.

- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

Notices:

- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organization based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organization on the ground in Zimbabwe which reflected the Vigil's mission statement in a practical way. ROHR in the UK actively fundraises through membership subscriptions, events, sales etc to support the activities of ROHR in Zimbabwe. Please note that the official website of ROHR Zimbabwe is <http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/>

. Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents us.

- **The Vigil's book ‘Zimbabwe Emergency’** is based on our weekly diaries. It records how events in Zimbabwe have unfolded as seen by the diaspora in the UK. It chronicles the economic disintegration, violence, growing oppression and political manoeuvring – and the tragic human cost involved. It is available at the Vigil. All proceeds go to the Vigil and our sister organisation the Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe's work in Zimbabwe. The book is also available from Amazon.

- **Facebook pages:**

Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwevigil>

ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>

ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>