

Zimbabwe: Stranded in Stasis

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°118

Johannesburg /Brussels, 29 February 2016

I. Overview

Zimbabwe is floundering, with little sign of meaningful reform and sustainable, broad-based recovery. Political uncertainty and economic insecurity have worsened; the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government has consolidated power, as the opposition stumbles, but is consumed by struggles over who will succeed President Robert Mugabe. Upbeat economic projections by international institutions are predicated on government rhetoric about new policy commitments and belief in the country's potential, but there are growing doubts that ZANU-PF can “walk the talk” of reform. Conditions are likely to deteriorate further due to insolvency, drought and growing food insecurity. Economic constraints have forced Harare to deal with international financial institutions (IFIs) and Western capitals, but to regain the trust of donors, private investors and ordinary citizens, the government must become more accountable, articulate a coherent vision and take actions that go beyond personal, factional and party aggrandisement.

Mugabe, though 92 and visibly waning, shows no sign of stepping down. His endorsement by the December 2015 ZANU-PF national conference to represent the party in the 2018 elections props up a coterie of dependents and defers the divisive succession issue. In the last year, his control has slipped as his energy and capacities diminish, but he is likely to stay in office until he can no longer function. His support for an economic and political reform agenda is tepid. He has limited criticism of reformers but has also not censured elements of his government that are critical, even hostile, to re-engagement with Western countries and financial institutions.

ZANU-PF is its own biggest threat. Its constitution is unclear about how to select a new party leader, and by extension president, if Mugabe becomes incapacitated or dies in office. That the party will not countenance open debate on this has led to incessant backroom political jockeying and unprecedented turmoil.

In December 2014, then Vice President Joice Mujuru was purged and her rival, Emmerson Mnangagwa, elevated. Since then, over 140 top national and provincial party officials linked to Mujuru have been suspended or expelled from the party, including nine of ten provincial chairpersons and senior cabinet and politburo members. Posited as necessary to end party factionalism, this instead opened a new chapter of division, as those whose interests had converged around Mujuru's removal sought advantage over each other.

Mnangagwa has strong ties with key security sector elements and is viewed by many as well positioned to maintain stability and pilot a recovery. Having slowly consolidated his position, he is firmly in charge of government business and depicted as a driving force behind re-engagement and reform. However, his command of party

structures is uneven, and his limited popularity nationally and within the party is tarnished by allegations of complicity in human rights violations. His ambition to succeed Mugabe is opposed by several senior cadres, labelled Generation 40 (G40), who represent a younger generation and have put their weight behind the increasingly influential first lady, Grace Mugabe. Her very public role since late 2014 as chair of ZANU-PF's women's league has the president's backing. Factional battles between the two groups intensified in early 2016, leaving Mnangagwa's position apparently weakened.

The economy's serious trouble is compounded by severe liquidity constraints, an enduring fiscal deficit, burgeoning domestic and international debt, multiple infrastructural constraints (including power shortages) and mixed ZANU-PF policy messages. Unemployment is rampant and food insecurity mounting. Protests spiked in 2015 and will continue.

Calls for reform and re-engagement remain focused on addressing the huge foreign debt and struggling economy. In October, IFIs accepted a plan to clear \$1.8 billion in arrears by May 2016, but this looks increasingly unrealistic, as it depends on only partially implemented fiscal policy prescriptions, including a sizeable reduction in the public wage bill and accessing a major concessional loan. Obtaining further credit will require more significant and politically sensitive reforms, for which there is limited appetite ahead of elections in 2018.

The opposition has yet to recover from devastating 2013 election losses. An early resurgence is unlikely. The largest opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T, led by Morgan Tsvangirai), has fractured further and has limited resources. Mujuru's nascent People First (PF) formation remains an unknown quantity, reportedly flirting with parties across the political spectrum. The new constitution, approved in 2013, provides a framework for civil society advocacy, but this is stymied by limited strategic vision and reduced donor support. Efforts to promote a national convergence of interests have not gained traction.

Governance deficits, political violence, corruption, electoral reform, human rights and rule-of-law violations are deep challenges that must be faced. Recent court judgments and Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission reports condemning political violence are welcome but anecdotal reactions, not remedies for systemic malpractice. International actors should seek common ground and action that addresses these sensitive political challenges and also promote an inclusive, sustainable economic recovery. Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries – South Africa, in particular – have specific interest in ensuring Zimbabwe recovers its position as a lynchpin of stability and an engine for regional development. To do so, they, the U.S., UK, China, the European Union (EU), African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) should develop an engagement framework that has clear governance and rule-of-law and financial and economic objectives and enables monitoring and assessment.

II. The Shifting Political Landscape

A. ZANU-PF Infighting

ZANU-PF factionalism took an unanticipated turn ahead of the party's 6th National People's Congress in December 2014.¹ The expected showdown between the camps of then Vice President Mujuru and then Justice Minister Mnangagwa, brewing for over a decade, did not materialise, as Mnangagwa took cover behind a forceful anti-Mujuru campaign spearheaded by Grace Mugabe.² Egged on by an influential cabal, the Mugabes concluded their interests were threatened by Mujuru's ambition.³ The campaign enlisted disaffected elements within ZANU-PF youth, women and war veteran structures. As Mujuru was publicly eviscerated, the president's silence implied tacit endorsement.⁴

Mujuru was publicly humiliated at the congress, accused of corruption and plotting regime change, even Mugabe's assassination. Though no evidence was presented, she and sixteen cabinet and deputy ministers were dismissed from party and government posts, as well as nine provincial chairpersons and other senior party officials, including political heavyweights Didymus Mutasa and Rugare Gumbo.⁵ Mnangagwa and the little known Phelekezela Mphoko were named second secretaries (and subsequently vice presidents), with rotational responsibility for chairing the party.⁶ The party's constitution was amended to change senior appointment procedures and significantly strengthen Mugabe's first secretary powers.⁷ The amended constitution has not been released; critical details on internal procedures, including how a replacement for an incapacitated Mugabe would be chosen, remain unclear.⁸

¹ The National People's Congress is the party's supreme decision-making body, responsible for policy-making and senior-position elections. It ordinarily convenes every five years. The National People's Conference meets annually to review implementation of the Congress' policy decisions. Articles 23-25, 32-34, ZANU-PF constitution.

² In October-November 2014, the first lady toured the provinces, ostensibly to thank the party for her election to head ZANU-PF's women's league but mainly criticising Mujuru. Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, Harare, 17-18 December 2014, 24 September 2015.

³ The campaign was reportedly the brainchild of the then information minister, Jonathan Moyo and former women's league boss, Oppa Muchinguri. "The defenestration of Mujuru", *Africa Confidential*, 24 November, 2014; "Coup de Grace? Plots and Purges: Mugabe and ZANU PF's 6th National Peoples Congress", Research and Advocacy Unit, 15 July 2015.

⁴ Crisis Group interview, political analyst, Harare, 16 December 2014.

⁵ Mutasa, for years a close Mugabe associate, was minister in the presidency and ZANU-PF secretary for administration. Support for Mujuru was the basis for his dismissal, but insiders say ambition for the top job was also a factor. Crisis Group interview, ZANU-PF politburo member, Harare, 19 December 2014. Gumbo was a veteran ZANU-PF leader and party spokesman.

⁶ Since the 1987 Unity Accord one of the two vice presidents has come from the former ranks of the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU). The 2014 party congress abolished the chairman post and demoted the incumbent, Ambassador S.K. Moyo, to party spokesman. Moyo, once seen as a strong contender for second secretary, was considered close to Mujuru, but, with Defence Minister Sydney Sekeremayi (and others), reportedly avoided her fate by apologising to Mugabe. "Groveling saves Sekeremayi, Khaya", *NewZimbabwe.com*, 14 January 2015.

⁷ "Draft resolutions of Zanu-PF Congress", *Sunday Mail*, 7 March 2014. This includes power to name the second secretaries who later became vice presidents. Legal questions remain about the amendment process and appointments. "Robert Mugabe Way: Constitutional Amendments and ZANU PF's 6th National People's Congress", Research and Advocacy Unit, 25 February 2015.

⁸ Crisis Group interviews, Harare, 23-25 September 2015. Section 26(2) of the amended ZANU-PF constitution provides that an extraordinary session of the congress "may" be convened "in the event

ZANU-PF's new political commissar (responsible for organisation and mobilisation of party structures), Saviour Kasukuwere, began the restructuring process; the new provincial leaders were instructed to conduct elections at district, branch and cell levels.⁹ Ostensibly intended to strengthen the party, the process has been disruptive and divisive.¹⁰ Between March and June 2015, the politburo expelled or suspended over 140 members.¹¹ Factional developments continued to dominate, including worrying undertones of ethnic mobilisation.¹² Mugabe's belated calls for unity and threats against factionalists at the year-end conference are expected to exacerbate matters further.¹³

Mnangagwa slowly consolidated his position, especially over government business and state infrastructure. However, he was promoted by Mugabe, not elected by the party and has no automatic right to replace him. With Mugabe still in charge, he must build support while piloting reform.¹⁴ The party censured several of his senior allies before the national conference, and the push for gender representation in the praesidium by the women's league and the "Generation 40" (G40) grouping of younger politicians appeared designed to check his rise.¹⁵

There have been three cabinet reshuffles since the 2014 congress, the most significant in September 2015, when fourteen additional ministers were appointed; there

of a vacancy ... in the Office of National President requiring the party to nominate a successor". How this session would be constituted and its procedures are unclear. Crisis Group Skype interview, Zimbabwean analyst, 13 November 2015.

⁹ "Zanu-PF begins restructuring", *The Herald*, 27 January 2015.

¹⁰ Crisis Group Skype interviews, Zimbabwean political analysts, Harare, 10, 12, 19 February, 23-25 September 2015. This plays out in party structures, including youth and women's leagues, war veteran groups and traditional leadership structures, "Mnangagwa faction purges traditional leaders", *The Zimbabwean*, 14 May 2015.

¹¹ "ZANU-PF suspends 39 officials", *Financial Gazette*, 6 June 2015. This was recommended by the national disciplinary committee, chaired by Vice President Mphoko and including the party secretaries for legal affairs, Patrick Chinamasa; commissariat, Saviour Kasukuwere; security, Kembo Mohadi; women's affairs, Grace Mugabe; and youth, Pupurai Togarepi. "Politburo order Mutasa probe", *The Herald*, 29 January 2015.

¹² "The shifting sands of Zanu (PF) factionalism", *The Zimbabwean*, 1 October 2015; "Factionalism tearing Zanu PF apart: Grace", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 20 November 2015; "Factional wars play out at Zanu PF conference", *The Standard*, 13 December 2015. Crisis Group interviews, Zimbabwean political analysts, Harare, September 2015; Takura Zhangazha, "Zimbabwe's crouching ethnicity, hidden tribalism in succession/coalition politics", *Nehanda Radio*, 26 October 2015; "AMH Voices Mugabe will be cautious with decisions", *NewsDay*, 14 December 2015. The long-term dominance of Mugabe's Zezuru (one of several Shona speaking peoples) is threatened by the prospective elevation of others, in particular Mnangagwa (a Karanga).

¹³ "President slams factionalism ... 'Divisive elements will be expelled'", *Chronicle*, 12 December 2015. Allegations of factionalism, disloyalty and political ambition have become powerful tools with which to contain, silence and sideline rivals. Crisis Group correspondence, Zimbabwean political analyst, 28 December 2015. Mugabe called for an end to the use of no-confidence votes to attack opponents, but it has continued. "Grace tears into Mnangagwa allies in Manicaland", *The Zimbabwean*, 31 December 2015.

¹⁴ This gives his detractors opportunities to frustrate his ambition. Crisis Group interviews, September-October 2015.

¹⁵ "VP Mnangagwa allies booted from Zanu-PF's Womens' League", *NewZimbabwe.com* 8 December 2015; "Mutsvangwa suspended", *The Herald*, 14 December 2015; "Zanu PF factionalism worsens as more Mnangagwa allies bite the dust", *Voice of America (VOA)*, 18 December 2015. "G40 campaigns for Madzongwe to be VP", *Nehanda radio*, 4 January 2016. G40 arose after the 2013 election and increased its profile ahead of the December 2014 congress.

are now 72 ministers and deputy ministers.¹⁶ However, Grace Mugabe has not been given a formal position, as many had predicted, but instead is presented as a national, unifying leader: an extension of the president himself.

The party retains a veneer of national unity, and though Mugabe and others speak of factionalism, other senior leaders forcefully refute their complaints.¹⁷ State media celebrated the national conference's theatre and endorsement of Mugabe as the 2018 presidential candidate. Everyone in the party claims fidelity to him; accusations of disloyalty are routinely made to undermine opponents. The media is used to pursue agendas, float accusations and distribute misinformation.¹⁸ Nevertheless, there are many fluid internal fault lines, and ever more citizens believe the divisions cannot be bridged.¹⁹

The impact on and position of the security sector is uncertain.²⁰ The purges have reportedly exacerbated divisions in its ranks;²¹ several security chiefs faced removal for alleged links to Mujuru, but this has not transpired.²² The defence forces commander, General Constantine Chiwenga, has traditionally been fiercely loyal to Mugabe but is also reportedly close to Mnangagwa.²³ This has exacerbated factional tensions. The recently established war veterans ministry and the appointment of military officers to an array of senior civil service posts appeared to reflect a commitment to keeping

¹⁶ The cabinet expansion came a week after the IMF expressed satisfaction at government efforts to reduce expenditure. "Mugabe shuffles cabinet again", *iolnews*, 12 September 2015. Ostensibly balancing intra-party interests, it consolidated Mnangagwa's support. "Mnangagwa smiling after Mugabe's cabinet reshuffle", *NewsdzeZimbabwe*, 13 September 2015. Crisis Group interviews, Harare, 23-25 September 2015. Mugabe at the same time appointed his own nephew, Patrick Zhuwao, youth and indigenisation minister; his implementation of indigenisation laws has further undermined confidence in reform. Crisis Group telephone interview, Zimbabwean economist, 20 January 2016.

¹⁷ "No factionalism in ZANU PF, says SK Moyo", *NewsdzeZimbabwe*, 5 June 2015; "No divisions in ZANU PF, says Mnangagwa", *NewsdzeZimbabwe*, 20 December 2015.

¹⁸ "Peace on the floor at Zanu-PF conference", *Chronicle*, 12 December 2015. "Moyo faces chop", *The Zimbabwean*, 16 June 2015. Media manipulation and "brown envelope" journalism (cash for favourable coverage) is widespread. Crisis Group email correspondence, Zimbabwean media specialist, 15 January 2016.

¹⁹ Crisis Group interviews, Harare, 23-25 September 2015.

²⁰ Most believe Mugabe's continued tenure is partially based on strong relations with "key sections of the security establishment". "Beyond the 2013 and 2014 Zimbabwean Deluge: Zimbabwe Scenario Analysis", PACT, February 2015, p. 8.

²¹ "Infighting divides security sector", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 5 June 2015. State intelligence played a central role in the removal of Joice Mujuru, but also demonstrated divided loyalties. Military Intelligence supported Mnangagwa, while elements of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) supported Mujuru. Blessing-Miles Tendi, "State Intelligence and the politics of Zimbabwe's Presidential Succession", *African Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2016).

²² This includes Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri, Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) Director General Happyton Bonyongwe, Airforce Chief Perence Shiri and Prison's Commissioner General, Major General (Rtd.) Paradzai Zimondi. "Major cabinet reshuffle looms; Chihuri and Bonyongwe face the boot", *Zimbabwe Daily*, 6 April 2015; "Mnangagwa demands security purges", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 22 May 2015. Mugabe has appointment and dismissal powers and an option to not renew annual contracts. Several senior security personnel attached to ZANU-PF's commissariat, including Air Vice Marshal Henry Muchena and former CIO Deputy Director Sydney Nyanhongo, were dismissed by Kasukuwere as he stamped his authority on the party's commissariat. "Zanu PF fires 'pro Mujuru' army chiefs", *NewsDay*, 15 April 2015.

²³ "Chiwenga endorses Mnangagwa", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 September 2012; "Chiwenga introduced as Zanu PF's commissar", *Nehanda Radio*, 9 March 2015; "Chiwenga backs Mnangagwa bid", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 6 November 2015. Crisis Group interview, security sector experts, Harare, 23 and 25 September 2015.

the defence forces onside.²⁴ As government struggles to pay civil service salaries, the security forces are prioritised.²⁵ But factional dynamics are playing out among Mugabe's traditional allies, too. In an unprecedented criticism at the December conference, the president admonished security force chiefs for involvement in factionalism and railed against special treatment for war veterans.²⁶

New discord erupted shortly after Mugabe's return from holiday in late January, as ministers and senior officials associated with respective factions attacked each other through the media.²⁷ Grace Mugabe launched a thinly veiled attack on Mnangagwa, security force and war veteran elements, prompting an abortive protest by war veterans aligned with Mnangagwa that was brutally crushed by riot police.²⁸ Mugabe's subsequent condemnation of War Veterans Minister Chris Mutsvangwa, a key Mnangagwa ally, and silence with respect to his wife's criticism of the security chiefs, was interpreted as evidence of a weakened vice president.²⁹ It has also heightened speculation that Mugabe intends to shake up the military command – reportedly smarting from the first lady's attacks³⁰ – and concerns that if this sector is not well-handled it could destabilise the situation further.³¹

1. Mujuru – fight or flight?

Following her expulsion, Mujuru spent much of 2015 deliberately out of the public arena. She initially denied the allegations against her, declaring her loyalty to ZANU-PF and Mugabe, but subsequently apologised to citizens and said the party was losing its way.³² She founded People First (PF) as a project to tackle ZANU-PF misrule

²⁴ Crisis Group interview, former ZANU-PF politburo member, Harare, 24 September 2015. "Militarisation of foreign service continues", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 7 April 2015. The military also has greater representation in the reconfigured party structures. Crisis Group correspondence, political analyst, Harare, 20 April 2015.

²⁵ It is likely, however, that some from the very large security sector will be cut. "Govt lay off soldiers, police", *Newsday*, 18 December 2015. Detail on the security force audit is not public. The army is estimated to have 40,000 members, and the police 55,000. An unknown number of former youth militia are also believed to be on the payroll. The total may be as high as 300,000, including over 150,000 "members" (including informers and sources) of the internal intelligence wing, the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), whose secret budget is run from the president's office. Crisis Group telephone interview, Zimbabwean security expert, 19 January 2016.

²⁶ "Robert Mugabe warns Zimbabwe security services", BBC News, 11 December 2015; "Mugabe rant against war vets raises eyebrows", *The Standard*, 20 December 2015.

²⁷ "George Charamba vs Jonathan Moyo war erupts", Nehanda Radio, 29 January 2016; "Mutsvangwa, Moyo verbal tiff escalates", *The Herald*, 5 February 2016.

²⁸ "Police hammer Team Lacoste", *Daily News*, 19 February 2016.

²⁹ "Mugabe fed up with Mutsvangwa", *Daily News*, 21 February 2016. The arrest of Prosecutor General, Johannes Tomana, another Mnangagwa ally, has raised concerns about political interference, not for the first time. "Johannes Tomana: The curious case of Zimbabwe's prosecutor general", Alex Magaisa: Cutting-edge analysis and critical insights into Zimbabwean Law and Politics (www.alexmagaisa.com), 3 February 2016. "ZANU PF infighting: Is this the endgame for Mnangagwa?", *Zimbabwe Daily* (www.zimbabwedaily.com), 21 February 2016.

³⁰ "Grace angers army chiefs", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 19 February 2016; "Mugabe, military showdown risky", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 19 February 2016.

³¹ "Zimbabwe opposition leader says Mugabe has secret successor", VOA, 24 February 2016.

³² The accusations included conspiracy, corruption and criminal abuse of office, colluding for regime change and orchestrating factionalism. "Zanu-PF expels Joice Mujuru. Slew of allegations cited. Plots traced back as far as 2004", *The Herald*, 3 April 2015. "Press Statement by former Vice President Joice Mujuru", 3 March 2015. She then promised to fight her expulsion. "Mujuru says she re-

and in September 2015 launched its framework for political and economic reform.³³ In January 2016, she actively consulted in the provinces. However, the scale of her support is moot. Many believe she retains substantial backing within party and state structures. This appears insufficiently organised to present a viable alternative to ZANU-PF, although anecdotal evidence of her organisational base generates “considerable anxiety” within it.³⁴

Inconclusive consultations about potential alliances with both opposition and ZANU-PF elements have continued.³⁵ This has compounded factional dynamics within the ruling party, and the ongoing purge of her alleged allies fuels speculation that some ZANU-PF legislators are again considering joining her. Political exile can have serious consequences.³⁶ Few ZANU-PF dissidents have contested by-elections as independents. People First’s imminent formal registration as a political party may change the calculus, but as long as Mugabe is at its helm, a formal ZANU-PF split appears unlikely.³⁷

jects expulsion from Zanu PF”, NewZimbabwe.com, 9 April 2015. “I’m sorry – Joice Mujuru”, *Daily News*, 1 June 2015.

³³ Dr Joice Mujuru, “Blueprint to Unlock Investment and Leverage for Development (Build)”, 8 September 2015. Despite denials, the initiative worries some in ZANU-PF. Crisis Group interviews, 23–25 September 2015.

³⁴ Crisis Group telephone interview, ex-ZANU-PF politburo member, 1 October 2015.

³⁵ The nascent PF claims it will work with the opposition, but not the current ZANU-PF leadership. Crisis Group interview, Didymus Mutasa, 24 September 2015. However, the opportunity for an alliance between disaffected Mujuru supporters and MDC formations in parliament, has now passed. Derek Matyszak, “With friends like this, who needs enemies? New Alliances – A Mujuru fight back strategy”, unpublished briefing, 19 November 2015. Mujuru is likely to try to keep her options open with respect to ZANU-PF, as what remains of her support base remains within the party. Crisis Group telephone interview, opposition political leader, 1 October 2015. Media speculation that elements in ZANU-PF have been reaching out to Mujuru has been rejected. “Mujuru turns down Zanu PF”, *Daily News*, 8 February 2016; “Robert Mugabe’s Zanu PF in new mammoth crisis”, *The Zimbabwe Mail*, 21 December 2015; “Mujuru rattles jittery Zanu PF”, *Daily News*, 2 January 2016.

³⁶ “Mujuru MPs face the gun as Zanu PF purges them to slow down People First”, *Daily News*, 28 January 2016. Amos Midzi, who was removed as Harare provincial chair ahead of the 2014 congress, committed suicide shortly after being suspended from Zanu-PF for five years. The censure compounded his financial woes. “Events preceding Midzi’s fateful day”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 19 June 2015. In January 2015, Themba Mliswa, ex-Mashnaland West provincial chairman and Mutasa’s nephew, was arrested on charges of possessing seven AK47 assault rifles. The case was dismissed, which he said was evidence of its political motivation. “Themba Mliswa acquitted”, *NewsdzeZimbabwe*, 15 May 2015. The courts are reportedly being used to harass opponents. Crisis Group interview, former ZANU-PF politburo member, Harare, 24 September 2015. Mujuru released a statement noting: “The law, as I have discovered, is used, not as an instrument of justice, but as a blunt weapon for silencing dissenting voices”. “Coups: Where is the court case? Asks Mujuru”, *NewZimbabwe.com*, 1 June 2015. Information Minister Jonathan Moyo downplayed the allegations as “political banter”. “Zimbabwe: Bye-bye unity”, *Africa Confidential*, 29 May 2015, p. 5. The potential threat of legal action remains an important deterrent. “Court orders Mujuru to pay \$1.5 million”, *The Herald*, 7 November 2015.

³⁷ “Mujuru moves to register People First”, *Daily News*, 29 January 2016. When ex-ZANU-PF politburo member and Finance Minister Simba Makoni broke ranks in 2008, other senior members surprisingly did not follow. Many more are now affected, but ZANU-PF will keep a door open for reintegration. Crisis Group Skype interview, political analyst, Harare, 12 June 2015.

The ruling party has invested heavily in recent by-elections.³⁸ Its clean sweep was facilitated by the boycott decision of the opposition MDC.³⁹ Independent candidates, except for the expelled parliamentarian Themba Mliswa, were routed. Monitors say campaigns were “characterised by threats, intimidation, physical violence and vote buying”, a familiar carrot and stick combination.⁴⁰ Violence was most prevalent in Mliswa’s constituency.⁴¹ Former party insiders caution a weakened ZANU-PF will employ “well known thuggish tactics” when it feels challenged.⁴² Several incidents of abduction and assault, including the well-publicised disappearance of activist Itai Dzamara, have sent a clear signal to opponents.⁴³ ZANU-PF and associates allegedly are the primary perpetrators, but internal division means many victims are now also party members.⁴⁴

2. Mnangagwa’s prospects

Mnangagwa’s chance of succeeding Mugabe improved following Mujuru’s exit, but evolving factional dynamics within ZANU-PF, especially since the beginning of 2016, confirm that this is by no means guaranteed. The president spent much of 2015 on SADC and African Union (AU) duties, while Mnangagwa was given greater responsibility for government and party affairs. This reinforced the understanding that he is the senior vice president. His hardline reputation commands respect and in some quarters fear.⁴⁵ Portrayed as a strong leader who can do business with “East and West”,

³⁸ Despite its existing parliamentary majority and budget constraints, both vice presidents and many senior ZANU-PF members were involved in the campaign to ensure dominance. “Rattled Zanu-PF goes for broke”, *Daily News*, 9 June 2015.

³⁹ The MDC-T expelled 21 parliamentarians who joined MDC Renewal (see below). Since July 2013, there have been 24 by-elections, all won by ZANU-PF, which now holds 175 seats against the MDC-T’s 34. One further by-election is pending. “Party seat share in parliament”, The Election Eye, Election Resource Centre, January 2016.

⁴⁰ Stephen Jakes, “June 10 by-elections campaigns marred with threats and intimidation – ZPP”, Bulawayo24 News, 17 May 2015. ZANU-PF election rallies claimed economic resurgence was around the corner. “Bulawayo poised for industrial revival”, *The Sunday Mail*, 7 June 2015. Mnangagwa was accused but denied reports of using food aid during the campaign to influence voters, “Mnangagwa in parly U-turn”, *Daily News*, 11 June 2015.

⁴¹ “By-elections: Hurungwe West most violent”, NewZimbabwe.com, 10 June 2015. There is also evidence of post-election violence against Mliswa’s supporters. In a rare positive development, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission conducted an investigation that supported Mliswa’s allegations. Crisis Group correspondence, political analyst, Zimbabwe, 17 June 2015; “ZHRC orders Chihuri to investigate human rights violation cases”, *NewsDay*, 27 August 2015.

⁴² “Zanu PF plotting brutal campaigns”, *Daily News*, 13 April 2015. People First coordinators are under surveillance, sometimes intimidated or attacked. Crisis Group correspondence, human rights monitor, 20 January 2016; “Mujuru supporter’s home razed down”, *Daily News*, 28 January 2016. The ruling party can also activate coordinated campaigns as it demonstrated in Hurungwe West. Crisis Group interview, security sector expert, 23 September 2015.

⁴³ Dzamara, who had staged protests in the centre of Harare calling for Mugabe to go was abducted in broad daylight in March 2015 by unidentified security elements. The state denies responsibility. “Where is Itai Dzamara?”, *Daily Maverick*, 10 September 2015.

⁴⁴ Crisis Group interviews, human rights experts, Harare, 23 September 2015. There is also intra-opposition violence. There were clashes when MDC-Renewal split from MDC-T in late 2014 and more recently between elements for and against the by-elections boycott.

⁴⁵ Some hold him responsible for the 1980s killings in Midlands and Matabeleland, when in charge of internal security, and the 2008 election violence, as ZANU-PF’s campaign manager. Crisis Group interviews, Zimbabwean political analysts, December 2014, September 2015. Also known as Ngwenya (the crocodile), he has a reputation – considered both a strength and weakness – for keeping

Western diplomats consider him vital for navigating economic and political reforms.⁴⁶ He was instrumental in gaining support for the strategy of Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa and Reserve Bank Governor John Mangudya to clear debt arrears and the accompanying economic reform agenda that donors received enthusiastically on the margins of the IMF and World Bank Group's October 2015 annual meeting in Lima.⁴⁷ Internally, however, the situation is more uncertain. Grace Mugabe in particular is poised to influence how Mnangagwa's political future plays out.⁴⁸

3. Grace Mugabe and the G40

Regarded by some as a political lightweight without an independent base, the 50-year-old Grace Mugabe has seen her influence increase significantly over the last eighteen months. Some view her as the country's most powerful politician and believe she is being groomed as "mother of the nation" to succeed her husband, others that she simply is being used to impede Mnangagwa.⁴⁹ Though her husband elevated her to the party politburo, she has not been appointed to cabinet as many predicted. She publicly eschews factionalism and is presented as a unifying leader but has been divisive, shielded from criticism by virtue of her proximity to the president.

Grace Mugabe is publicly supported by the party's women's league, which she heads, the G40 group of younger politicians and Vice President Mphoko.⁵⁰ However, it is unclear how deep that support is.⁵¹ The G40 is a loose grouping linked to key party leaders, including Political Commissar Saviour Kasukuwere, Youth and Indigenisation Minister Patrick Zhuwao and Higher Education Minister Jonathan Moyo, whose ambitions are cloaked behind support for the Mugabe brand. Whether this extends to promoting Grace as a serious succession candidate is moot; these leaders' primary interest is retention and consolidation of their own influence and curtailing Mnangagwa's.

his counsel and watching and waiting for his opportunity. His supporters are known as the "Lacoste" Team (the clothing manufacturer with the crocodile label).

⁴⁶ Crisis Group interviews, Harare, September 2015. He has a strong team of businessmen and professionals advising him on economic policy and as acting finance minister, 1995-1996, demonstrated some competency. Crisis Group interviews, Zimbabwean economists, Harare, December 2014, 23-25 September 2015. Perceived favourites to succeed Mugabe have also fed into factional dynamics and led to allegations of external interference. Blessing-Miles Tendi, "The UK need to stay out of Zimbabwe's succession politics", *African Arguments*, 11 February 2016.

⁴⁷ The "Lima Strategy Document" agreed at this meeting has not been publicly circulated but is described on p. 11.

⁴⁸ Crisis Group telephone interview, political analyst, Harare, 15 March 2015; "Beyond the 2013 and 2014 Zimbabwean Deluge: Zimbabwe Scenario Analysis", draft report, PACT, February 2015, p. 7. "Grace making waves in Zimbabwean politics, first lady currently the most powerful politician in Zanu PF", *Associated Press*, 6 January 2015.

⁴⁹ "Grace making waves in Zimbabwean politics", *op. cit.* Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, Harare, 17-18 December 2014, 24 September 2015.

⁵⁰ "Ambitious Zanu-PF faction upstages Mnangagwa", *Daily News*, 17 May 2015; "G40, Mphoko gang up on Mnangagwa", *Daily News*, 24 May 2015; "G40 campaigns for Madzongwe to be VP", *Nehanda Radio*, 4 January 2016.

⁵¹ Countrywide rallies contrived to build her image as mother of the nation belie deep tensions within the party and security sector. Overt criticism is tempered, as it is considered disloyal to the president. For the moment, she is expected to continue building her political identity as inseparable from her husband's. Crisis Group interviews, December 2015-January 2016.

gagwa's.⁵² Robert Mugabe's occasional tacit support for the G40 reflects his selective engagement in factional struggles.⁵³

B. *Opposition Doldrums*

The main opposition MDC-T remains fragmented. Its former secretary general, Tendai Biti, and treasurer general, Elton Mangoma, broke ranks with Tsvangirai to form MDC Renewal in August 2014. Mangoma split from that party in June 2015 to establish the Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe. That September, MDC Renewal relaunched itself as the People's Democratic Party. MDC-T remains the dominant opposition party, with more support than other MDC groupings combined, but the developments echoed the 2005 split from the original MDC by Welshman Ncube and have undermined confidence in all the opposition parties, both domestically and internationally.⁵⁴

With limited resources and competing interests, the weakened opposition cannot present a unified strategy for credible policy alternatives in parliament or to the public and is excluded from current re-engagement initiatives. Efforts to promote an opposition "convergence platform" continue but have not gained significant traction. The emergence of People First may be a chance to come together but could also reinforce the trend of fragmentation since the 2013 election.

III. Limited Recovery and Reform

A. *Economic Stasis*

Mugabe's endorsement of reforms in his August 2015 state of the nation address and as he opened parliament the following month was interpreted as a "symbolic tipping point" that boosted reformers' confidence.⁵⁵ The World Bank and IMF have offered support for the Lima Strategy Document and, although others are less certain, are confident the government is committed to reform.⁵⁶ The Lima document, which has

⁵² "Ambitious Zanu-PF faction upstages Mnangagwa", *Daily News*, 17 May 2015; Crisis Group interviews, political analysts, 23-25 September 2015.

⁵³ The G40 is described by some as "Gushongo 40"; Gushongo is Mugabe's Shona totem name, also meaning crocodile. His apparent support of the re-engagement and reform agenda is contradicted by his tacit support for the populist positioning around the public wage bill and controversial indigenisation provisions.

⁵⁴ "Zimbabwe's opposition distrusted, does not offer viable policy options", News Release, Afrobarometer, 21 May 2015. The MDC-T rejects this: "We are the most popular – MDC-T", *The Zimbabwean*, 8 May 2015. Survey conditions are problematic but results are sober indicators of the challenges opposition parties face. Crisis Group correspondence, former MDC-T adviser, 12 May 2015. "Beyond the 2013 and 2014 Zimbabwean Deluge", op. cit., p. 3. "Opposition split annoys electorate", *Financial Gazette*, 11 June 2015.

⁵⁵ Crisis Group interviews, Western diplomats, Harare, September 2015. Avoiding any criticism of the West, this was a change for Mugabe and, by sketching needs – from dealing with institutional dysfunction to endemic corruption – an implicit acknowledgment of past failure. His delivery was not enthusiastic, and he has not punished party leaders who have criticised the reform agenda.

⁵⁶ "Doing Business 2016 – Measuring Regulatory Quality and Efficiency", World Bank, 2016. Having reopened offices in Harare after fifteen years, the IMF has been upbeat about government adherence to the voluntary Staff Monitored Program (SMP). "Statement at the end of an IMF Staff Visit to conduct the Second Review of Zimbabwe's Staff-Monitored Program", press release, 9 September 2015. A final SMP assessment in March 2016 is expected to be positive and keep up mo-

not been released to the public, sets out strategies for clearing external debt arrears to IFIs, with a complementary economic reform agenda and a general commitment to aligning laws to the new constitution, ensuring the rule of law and improving transparency and accountability.⁵⁷

The economy is acutely stressed. To access new credit, Zimbabwe must find a viable way to repay \$1.8 billion of debt arrears to the World Bank, African Development Bank and IMF by May and continue to comply with the extended Staff Monitored Program (SMP), an informal agreement between the government and IMF. This does not entail financial assistance or endorsement by the IMF Executive Board, but is necessary to convince Paris Club creditors that Harare is indeed “walking the talk”. The deal’s delicate trajectory also necessitates accessing an almost \$900 million concessional loan, believed to be from Algeria.⁵⁸

Setting out and implementing a broader framework of reforms, beyond a narrow economic focus, is thus now critical but remains frustrated by selective commitment to the reform agenda and limited transparency.⁵⁹ Re-engagement by external actors should include political dialogue, but this is impeded by outstanding restrictions and sanctions.⁶⁰ Major constituencies inside and outside Zimbabwe are sceptical of government will and capacity; progress is insufficient to justify a presidential waiver of U.S. sanctions that would enable access to much needed credit lines.⁶¹ Realistically, advances will be incremental and tempered by ZANU-PF dynamics. Over time, however, a more transparent, robust engagement, anchored in confidence of greater commitment on the part of the government, is essential. The government has ample opportunity to address an array of obvious political and economic deficits and con-

mentum for re-engagement. Crisis Group interviews, Zimbabwean economists, January 2016. The plan was widely supported by diplomats in Harare and tacitly by the opposition. Another view is that “there is little sign of a genuine change in the administration’s prioritisation of its political agenda over economic management, or its broadly wary – or downright hostile – approach to foreign investors and international financial institutions”. “Zimbabwe Country Report 4th Quarter 2015; Outlook for 2016-2020”, Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 5. Crisis Group email correspondence, Zimbabwean economist, 11 February 2016.

⁵⁷ “Zimbabwe: Strategies for clearing external debt arrears and the supportive economic reform agenda” (“Lima Strategy Document”), Government of Zimbabwe, September 2015.

⁵⁸ There is little detail on this potential loan, believed to have been agreed between Presidents Bouteflika and Mugabe sometime in 2014 or 2015. Whether Algeria can afford to risk lending to Zimbabwe, especially at a concessional rate and in a context of its own austerity demands, remains to be seen. Crisis Group correspondence, Zimbabwean economist, 8 February 2016.

⁵⁹ Crisis Group interviews, economists and diplomats, Harare, 23-25 September 2015. “Zim, EU sign five financial agreements”, *The Herald*, 29 September 2015. “Zimbabwe on last legs”, *NewsdzeZimbabwe*, 7 January 2016; Ken Yamamoto, “Nowhere to run for Mugabe as things fall apart”, *NewZimbabwe.com*, 5 January 2016.

⁶⁰ EU restrictive measures are likely to be rolled over in February for a further year. These have been drawn down considerably, with most suspended, but active sanction against the Mugabes and Zimbabwean Defence Industries remain in place.

⁶¹ Section 494 of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (2001) requires U.S. representatives in IFIs to vote against extensions or new lines of credit if improved conditions around the rule of law, including “respect for ownership and title of property, freedom of speech, an end to lawlessness, violence and intimidation sponsored, condoned or tolerated by the Government of Zimbabwe, the ruling party, and their supporter or entities” are not evident. In addition, Zimbabwe must have held a presidential election that “is widely accepted as free and fair”. Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (2001) – ZDERA.

cerns. Public release and consultation around the implementation of the Lima Strategy Document would be a helpful starting point.

Conditions on the ground are grim for the vast majority, and there are growing fears of a new recession.⁶² Just 700,000 from a population of thirteen million have formal jobs, less than at independence.⁶³ Diaspora remittances provide a critical safety net for many and inject important cash into the economy.⁶⁴ Deteriorating social and economic conditions have led to protests and security crackdowns in recent months.⁶⁵ Threats to deploy the military to remove illegal street vendors in Harare did not materialise, and the government says it wants only to apply the law. Critics, however, believe local ZANU-PF heavyweights are trying to extract formal or informal rents.⁶⁶ Further protests are likely, as expected further cuts in the formal job sector take hold, and survival options become increasingly constrained. Nevertheless, the eruption of a “Zimbabwe Spring” is unlikely.⁶⁷

Agriculture faces serious difficulties; poor rains and a cut in subsidies mean food must be imported this year and prices for staples will continue to increase.⁶⁸ In the months ahead, millions will require food aid, which should be monitored to prevent political manipulation of its distribution.⁶⁹

⁶² Falling commodity prices have significantly reduced revenue, forcing the government to cut its budget; a strengthened U.S. dollar has undermined competitiveness; the manufacturing sector is contracting; the trade deficit is worsening (now over \$3.3 billion); the cost of borrowing is double the regional average; domestic and foreign debt is estimated at \$8.3 billion. “Zimbabwe: Business pins hope on debt clearance”, *The Standard*, 10 January 2016. “Zimbabwe swaps hyperinflation for deflation with use of US dollar”, *Financial Times*, 25 January 2016.

⁶³ “Zimbabwe’s formal employment plummets to half-century low”, Bloomberg News, 7 October 2015.

⁶⁴ “Diasporans prop struggling economy”, *Financial Gazette*, 18 June 2015. The weakening South African rand has reduced purchasing power of remittances, adding further pressure.

⁶⁵ “Violence erupts in Chitungwiza”, *The Herald*, 6 January 2016. “Zimbabwe riot police brutalise protestors”, *NewsDay*, 4 January 2016. In 2015, taxi drivers clashed with police in Bulawayo and students with riot police in Harare; farmers protested tobacco prices, disrupting auctions.

⁶⁶ Similar reasons were given during the controversial 2005 “Operation Murambatsvina” settlement clearing, when over 700,000 lost their homes. Violence and intimidation have accelerated as government funds shrink. Crisis Group correspondence, political analyst, 13 May 2015; civil society activist, Harare, 16 June 2015. Proposed revival of ZANU-PF’s youth service program has generated further concerns about intentions to strengthen controls on the ground. “Fear grips opposition parties as Zimbabwe plans to revive feared youth militia”, VOA, 30 December 2015.

⁶⁷ “ZCTU says 2015 was the worst year, government should brace itself for protests in the New Year”, NewZimbabwe.com, 20 December 2015. Deteriorating conditions, especially rising food prices will provoke demonstrations, but do not lend to a growth in organised resistance. “Zim opposition talks of protests, little sign of action”, *Daily News*, 10 February 2016.

⁶⁸ The El Niño drought affects all of Southern Africa. “Drought stricken Zimbabwe to import maize”, Reuters, 5 January 2016. Year imports likely will top 700,000 tonnes as needs increase. “Zimbabwe: Food aid requirement figure hits three million”, *The Herald*, 30 January 2016. There are also serious distribution challenges. Crisis Group correspondence, agricultural experts, January 2016. A bucket of maize cost \$3 in September 2015, and \$10 by late January. “The untold story of starvation, neglect in Muzarabani”, *The Standard*, 14 February 2016.

⁶⁹ Crisis Group Skype interview, Zimbabwean political analyst, 12 June 2015. Monitors reported food and farming input distribution “remains highly politicised”. “Monthly Monitor”, Zimbabwe Peace Project, March 2015, p. 2; “Mujuru supporters denied food aid”, *NewsDay*, 3 February 2015; Mnangagwa, who chairs the cabinet committee on food security, insists there will be no discrimination in distribution. “No to food discrimination”, *Chronicle*, 19 June 2015. Allegations persist. “Zanu-PF politicises food aid in Chimanimani”, *The Standard*, 13 December 2015.

The government has ambitious public spending plans but limited financial options.⁷⁰ High recurrent spending – dominated by the civil service wage bill – means there is little left for expanding social services and capital investment. Efforts to control the wage bill have become a litmus test of government resolve but continue to be frustrated by political interests.⁷¹

The economy is further hampered by massive power constraints, compounded by reduced generation from the Kariba and Hwange stations due to low water reservoir levels.⁷² Many companies rely on expensive diesel generators, curbing their competitiveness.⁷³ Businesses must also navigate political patronage networks and donations to ZANU-PF activities. Assessing who can provide protection and access to opportunities has become much more complicated.⁷⁴ Several companies have been accused of supporting Mujuru and allegedly harassed and punished for this.⁷⁵ Recovery options are limited unless the government can secure new funds, which requires putting in place a credible plan to clear its arrears.⁷⁶ Even if this happens, a long and difficult road lies ahead in the current international economic climate.

⁷⁰ Domestic debt has risen dramatically due to short-term treasury bills issued to pay the civil service and local debts. “Treasury Bill issuance spike by over 100%”, *The Zimbabwe Mail*, 10 February 2015. Having generated at least a further \$1.2 billion debt, there is little confidence in these bills or that government will honour repayment. Crisis Group telephone interview, economist, Harare, 4 June 2015; Skype interview, businessman, 1 October 2015.

⁷¹ The wage bill rose from \$381 million in 2009 to \$2.2 billion in 2015, due to employee and salary growth the government knows is unsustainable. “No pay rise for civil servants”, *NewsdzeZimbabwe*, 28 May 2015. Over 80 per cent of the budget is wages and salaries. Unpublished report, IMF-civil society meeting, Harare, 6 March 2015. Private sector loans have been accessed to help cover costs. “Econet bails out government with US\$30 million”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 4 March 2015. In April, Finance Minister Chinamasa announced suspension of civil service bonuses but Mugabe reversed this the next week. “Cash strapped government postpones pensioners pay”, *NewZimbabwe.com*, 28 May 2015. An audit of ghost workers by the previous government, under MDC-T auspices, was ignored. Renewing it would signal reform commitment. Crisis Group Skype interview, businessman, 29 April 2015. The government has not kept a promise for civil service cuts (a core of its debt payment strategy), and struggles to meet wage commitments. “Civil service salary crisis to persist”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 8 January 2016. A staffing audit reportedly underway needs to include the security sector, but no detail has been released. “Govt lays off soldiers, police”, *NewsDay*, 18 December 2015.

⁷² Power stations generate less than 1,000MW against peak demand of 2,200MW. “Power crisis to worsen as Kariba levels plunge 17 percent”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 11 December 2015. Chinese President Xi Jinping’s December visit expedited infrastructure investment plans, including a new major station, but it will not go online for years. Interim steps will likely include surplus power from South Africa, which is struggling to meet its own demand. “Eskom in ‘secretive deal’ to provide power to Zimbabwe”, *African News Agency*, 4 January 2016.

⁷³ Local industry, struggling due to low demand, antiquated machinery and a liquidity crunch, has blamed load-shedding and high energy costs for compounding its challenges. *Ibid*; Crisis Group telephone interview, Zimbabwean economist, 4 June 2015.

⁷⁴ Crisis Group Skype interview, businessman, 1 October 2015.

⁷⁵ Parliament has questioned several executives about funding Mujuru supporters. “Zimbabwe: Triangle grilled over Bhasiskiti, Mavhaire alleged connection”, *The Herald*, 21 March 2015; “Ziscosteel, Essar deal Mujuru’s project, says Mutsvangwa”, *The Standard*, 17 May 2015. “How government scuttled Essar deal”, *The Standard*, 20 December 2015.

⁷⁶ Repayments in the first half of 2016 are a major challenge, aggravated by disagreement within ZANU-PF over efforts to renew ties with international financial institutions. “Mugabe party said to be split over international lending ties”, *Bloomberg News*, 25 November 2015. The government claims major new investments from China and Russia, but details are in short supply. Xi Jinping’s visit firmed up agreements from Mugabe’s 2014 Beijing visit, but China is not providing a bailout,

B. *Constructive Engagement and Prospects for Reform*

Considerable effort, in particular by EU member states, has gone into building constructive relations with the government. While Brussels is giving support, it has made only limited progress in developing the political dialogue that has been envisaged as accompanying development assistance.⁷⁷ A multi-donor program provides development aid through the UN Assistance Framework.⁷⁸ An array of projects, from rehabilitating court infrastructure to support for small and medium enterprises is underway. In addition, major donors continue to underwrite critical humanitarian help,⁷⁹ but international actors can do only so much. Political and policy uncertainty stymies reform prospects.⁸⁰

Since the 2013 elections, Zimbabwe has not been on SADC's crisis agenda or a focus of attention from South Africa. Both have remained silent on the ongoing deterioration. Mugabe's chairmanship of SADC (August 2014 to August 2015) scuppered any hope the regional body would re-engage. Instead, an entrenched mythology that the 2013 elections generated adequate legitimacy has been perpetuated. No connection is made between current challenges and the absence of reform that both South Africa and SADC pointed to ahead of those elections.⁸¹

Legal reform is a pressing concern.⁸² A General Laws Amendment (GLA) Bill was introduced in May to align 126 statutes with the 2013 constitution but is yet to be final-

even if some debt has been symbolically waived. Ken Yamamoto, "President Xi Jinping visit – Connect the dots before popping the champagne", *NewZimbabwe.com*, 30 November 2015; Welshman Ncube, "Of mega deals and mega poverty", *ibid*, 11 December 2015. Brazil and India give targeted support in the agricultural and power sectors.

⁷⁷ Crisis Group Skype interview, EU lobbyist, 8 October 2015. After lifting the Cotonou Agreement's Article 96 "appropriate measures" in November 2014, the EU allocated €234 million in the 11th European Development Fund (2014-2020). Five agreements were signed as part of the normalisation process. "Government of Zimbabwe and European Union sign €89 million for health, agriculture and institution building", European External Action Service, 28 September 2015. Support on jointly-agreed projects does not mean direct funding of government. EU development assistance provides for an accompanying political dialogue, but progress has been limited. Crisis Group telephone interview, political analyst, Harare, 19 January 2016.

⁷⁸ \$400 million was given, 2012-2015, and \$1.6 billion is projected for 2016-2020 to support development priorities in the government's Zim-Asset policy framework. "Enhancing development partnership in Zimbabwe", press release, UN Development Programme, 6 May 2015. A \$2 million project to support parliament and the auditor general was begun in May.

⁷⁹ "US provides additional \$5 million in humanitarian assistance", *The Zimbabwean*, 19 January 2016; "European Union unveils \$4.5 million for tackling severe drought in Zimbabwe", VOA, 28 January 2016.

⁸⁰ Crisis Group interviews, Zimbabwean analysts, civil society actors, March, April 2015. Jeffrey Smith, Todd Moss: "Ominous warning signs resurface in Zimbabwe", *Foreign Policy* (online), 3 June 2015; George F. Ward, "Political Instability in Zimbabwe", Council on Foreign Relations, 2015. Warnings of instability are linked to a regime-change agenda; substantive concerns are ignored. "Tsvangirai in the US to get funding", *The Herald*, 23 March 2015. Increased Chinese pressure for economic reform is felt to have influenced ZANU-PF's direction change. Crisis Group interviews, Harare, 23-25 September 2015. "Zimbabwe Country 4th Quarter 2015 Report, Outlook for 2016-2020", Economist Intelligence Unit, pp. 3, 7.

⁸¹ Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°95, *Zimbabwe's Elections: Mugabe's Last Stand*, 29 July 2013, p. 3.

⁸² "Priorities for the Harmonisation of Legislation with the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe", Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, May 2015. A few constitutional court decisions have struck down detention laws and child-marriage provisions, but reliance on court remedies exposes the slow pace of legislative reform. "Brace for more constitutional court challenges warns Biti", *NewZimbabwe.com*, 21 January 2016.

ised. Inadequate public participation and the retention of contentious laws on socio-economic, civil and political issues are key indicators of a lack of reform.⁸³ The government has also not adequately addressed calls for electoral reform, based on observations and recommendations from SADC and the AU before and after the 2013 polls, raising concern that the 2018 vote is likely to be controversial. Election provisions in the GLA Bill are inadequate; ideally the Electoral Act should be replaced.⁸⁴ Hesitant progress toward instituting democracy-supporting bodies, including the national peace and reconciliation, anti-corruption and human rights commissions, reflects both government priorities and resource limits.⁸⁵

Selective implementation of existing laws and politicisation of the criminal justice system make Zimbabwe the worst performer in Africa according to the 2015 Rule of Law Index.⁸⁶ Uneven rule-of-law application and political interference also undermine attempts to revive agriculture.⁸⁷ Few are willing to invest to enhance production. Some remaining white farmers and business owners were harassed because they were allegedly “protected” by Mujuru loyalists.⁸⁸ Government investigations also confirm corruption in the land resettlement program.⁸⁹

⁸³ These include the Public Order and Security Act, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Broadcasting Services Act. “Statement on the General Laws Amendment Bill”, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, 24 May 2015. Crisis Group interview, legal expert, Harare, 23 September 2015. The bill is currently before the parliamentary legal committee.

⁸⁴ “No election reforms Mnangagwa tells Tsvangirai”, *NewZimbabwe.com*, 2 June 2015. Crisis Group Skype interviews, domestic and international election experts, 18 February, 16 June 2015; “Zimbabwe needs new electoral law: Veritas”, *The Zimbabwe News*, 8 May 2015. Crisis Group correspondence, domestic and international election experts, 2015–2016.

⁸⁵ Crisis Group interviews, email correspondence, civil society, legal experts, December 2014, April, May 2015. For over two years, the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) has been without appointed commissioners, its secretariat accused of turning away whistle blowers and allegedly responsible for massive financial irregularities. “Zacc finances a mess: Auditor General”, *NewsDay*, 18 August 2015. In December, the president’s office announced it would again supervise ZACC. A National Peace and Reconciliation Commission Bill was gazetted in December, almost three years late. The constitution gives the commission a ten-year mandate that began in 2013. “NPRC delay a deliberate ploy to expire body”, *NewsDay*, 12 June 2015. The “point man” on reconciliation, Vice President Mphoko, has been criticised by ZAPU colleagues for supporting government denials of state responsibility for the 1980s massacres in Matabeleland and the Midlands. “Gukurahundi: VP Mphoko at it again”, *NewZimbabwe.com*, 14 May 2015; “Mphoko unfit for national healing”, *Nehanda Radio*, 17 June 2015.

⁸⁶ It ranked 100th of 102 countries. “Rule of law Around the World”, *worldjusticeproject.org*.

⁸⁷ Land reform issues (legal tenure, unpaid compensation) are compounded by abuses in monthly reports on farm disruptions compiled by the Commercial Farmers’ Union of Zimbabwe. A spike in violent evictions, illegal occupations and vindictive prosecutions since 2015 raises further questions about government’s commitment to the rule of law.

⁸⁸ “Mugabe threatens to kick 163+ white farmers out of Zim”, *The Zimbabwean*, 1 March 2015; “Mugabe threatens to take over white-owned safari”, *Business Day*, 1 March 2015. “Zanu PF in fresh farm, mine invasions”, *NewsDay*, 11 May 2015. Many remaining white farmers and conservancy owners survived through ties with powerbrokers that were upset by the ZANU-PF purges. Crisis Group correspondence, Zimbabwean farming expert, 18 May 2015. “Zimbabwe’s Mnangagwa reveals ‘secret’ support for white farmers”. *The Telegraph*, 14 January 2016.

⁸⁹ “Pilot land audit confirms farm seizure corruption”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 19 June 2015. Mnangagwa promised to limit the number and size of farms. “Mnangagwa warns Zanu-PF bigwigs”, *Chronicle*, 9 June 2015. Existing limits have been selectively enforced. Promised audits have been frustrated, further undermining government credibility. “Zanu PF bigwigs, securocrats thwart US\$35m land audit”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 6 November 2015; the land audit will now only ex-

IV. Conclusion

Zimbabwe has been trapped in a political and economic crisis of varying intensity for over fifteen years. Political dynamics, compounded by massive debt, policy incoherence and low domestic and international confidence, frustrate economic recovery. The few positive trends do little to improve the lot of most citizens or provide confidence in processes to build a constitutionally-rooted social contract. Efforts to develop and support reforms are tempered by the nonagenarian president's incumbency. Lack of leadership, combined with infighting across the political spectrum, but especially within ZANU-PF, has complicated and further blunted the ability to address multiple challenges. External support, from both West and East, as well as regionally, is essential to aid recovery but can be of only limited benefit if promised political and economic reforms are not implemented.

Johannesburg/Brussels, 29 February 2016

Appendix A: Map of Zimbabwe



International Crisis Group/K0/January 2016. Based on UN map no. 4210, Rev.1 (January 2004).