

Military Dynamics In The Democratisation Of Zimbabwe: Demystifying The Conundrum

Daglou Makumbe

*Department of Political Studies University of the Western Cape Robert Sobhukwe Road Bellville Cape Town
Corresponding Author : Daglou Makumbe*

ABSTRACT: *In November 2017 the Zimbabwe Defense Forces staged a bloodless coup de tat that removed former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe from power, effectively ending his 37-year old rule. The army took complete control of the airport, broadcasting services, the president's residence, manned all major roads and streets in and around Harare, took control of the parliament, subjected the president to house arrest, suspended and relieved the police of their duties in an operation codenamed "Restore Legacy." The army repudiated such an undertaking as a military coup, lightly preferring to call it a bloodless correction or military constitutionalism. This act ushered in a new political dimension in the democratisation of Zimbabwe since 1980 when the country attained its independence. This paper examines and dissects how the Zimbabwean political drama unfolded and moves that the Zimbabwean scenario suffices a military coup.*

KEY WORDS *Military Coup, Robert Mugabe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe National Army*

Date of Submission: 22-06-2018

Date of acceptance: 07-07-2018

Acronyms

AU	African Union
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
G40	Generation 40
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZDF	Zimbabwe Defense Forces
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZNLWVA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

I. OVERVIEW

“The Zimbabwe Defense Forces are not going to salute, let alone tolerate a government that comes into power that has no credentials of the liberation struggle.”¹ Zimbabwe Defense Forces service chiefs-2002 election eve.

The Zimbabwe Defense Forces (ZDF) is predominantly dominated by soldiers with liberation war credentials. The army General, Lieutenant General, Major Generals, Brigadiers, Colonels, Prison Service Commander, and Police Commissioner General all has liberation war credentials. They thus serve the interests of ZANU PF rather than those of the government and people of Zimbabwe. This also means that even if the people of Zimbabwe cast a majority vote in favour of a party that is not ZANU PF (for example as they did in 2008 when they voted for MDC when it defeated ZANU PF by 65% to 35%), the army intervenes and imposes ZANU PF as the ruling party against the will of the people of Zimbabwe. This has made a mockery of the Zimbabwean elections and a dreadful miscarriage of democracy. Such undemocratic practices have also turned the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) into a highly politicized army which no longer stands as a national army but as a party (ZANU PF) army. The same army that imposed Robert Mugabe in power after being vanquished in the 2008 elections by MDC is the same army that staged a soft coup to unseat him from power unconstitutionally in November 2017. Since military coups have a notoriety of recurring and repeating

¹ This was announced by the Zimbabwe Defense Forces service chiefs, former and late army General Vitalis Zvinavashe flanked by former Air Marshal Perence Shiri and former police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri on the 2002 election eve.

themselves, we expect more of these military coups in Zimbabwe as this first coup have set a successful precedence for the army in particular and for Zimbabweans in general.

The Genesis of Robert Mugabe's Waterloo

The genesis of Robert Mugabe's political demise can be traced back to the time when he allowed his wife Grace to venture into full time politics after being elevated as the Women Affairs and Child Survival Foundation leader. When Robert Mugabe allowed his wife to venture into the political arena full time, she enjoyed proximity power to the president and started enjoying her political privileges as a *de facto* president of Zimbabwe while Robert Mugabe became the *de jure* president of Zimbabwe. When Grace Mugabe ventured into the political field full time, she became very influential and attracted the gullible ZANU PF Women's League and Youth League hence dominating the Zimbabwean political show. As the wife of the ageing Mugabe, she became very influential and powerful and could dismiss senior government and party members whom she accused of fanning factionalism in ZANU PF. Some senior political casualties who were axed by Grace Mugabe from the party and government for fanning factionalism include political stalwarts such as Ray Kaukonde, Jabulani Sibanda, Didymus Mutasa, Rugare Gumbo, Nicholas Goche, Francis Nhema, Webster Shamhu, and former Vice president Joyce Mujuru. After perpetrating these purges successfully, Grace Mugabe realized that she could rise further by pruning more senior party and government officials hence paving the way for her ascendancy to power.

Joyce Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa: Grace Mugabe's two stumbling blocks to presidency

In line with the Beijing Conference on gender representation, Robert Mugabe appointed Joyce Mujuru as Vice President of Zimbabwe in a quest to attain gender equilibrium in top government posts. For Joyce Mujuru to attain that post, she was strongly backed and recommended by her husband Solomon Mujuru, the late and former army General who had retired but maintained his influence in both the military and government circles. For many Zimbabweans Joyce Mujuru was presidential material, motherly, professional, well respected and tipped for presidency after the retirement or death of Robert Mugabe. Events reached a tragic head when Solomon Mujuru was devoured by an inferno at his Alamein Farm in Beatrice in acrimonious circumstances. Many suspected that it is top ZANU PF ministers who orchestrated the murder of Solomon Mujuru in order to constrict his wife's chances of becoming the president of Zimbabwe after Mugabe's retirement or death. The death of Solomon Mujuru was devastating, stressful and traumatizing for Joyce Mujuru as she became politically vulnerable. Grace Mugabe exploited this loophole and started to castigate Vice President Joyce Mujuru for fanning factionalism and plotting to assassinate the then President Robert Mugabe, allegations which Joyce Mujuru repudiated as a mortuary of pathological lies and a malicious vendetta of vilification and character assassination. Grace Mugabe's dominant influence made Robert Mugabe to expel Joyce Mujuru from her vice presidency post as well as from the government. Her political cabal was also axed from both government and party, and included political stalwarts such as Didymus Mutasa, Rugare Gumbo, Nicholas Goche, Webster Shamhu, Ray Kaukonde, Jabulani Sibanda and Francis Nhema. Emmerson Mnangagwa, who by then was a cabinet minister, was also influential in the firing of Joyce Mujuru as he teamed up with Grace Mugabe to influence Robert Mugabe to expel the suspected political renegades. After this political turnaround Mugabe then appointed Emmerson Mnangagwa and Phekezela Mphoko as vice presidents of Zimbabwe, with Emmerson Mnangagwa as the first vice president and Mphoko as the second vice president.

Emmerson Mnangagwa: Grace Mugabe's last stumbling block to presidency

When Joyce Mujuru and her faction (which was infamously known as the Gamatox) were axed from ZANU PF it was victory for Grace Mugabe and Emmerson Mnangagwa as this boosted their chances of ascending to vice presidency and then to presidency. When Robert Mugabe appointed Emmerson Mnangagwa as Zimbabwean vice president, this posed again as a challenge to Grace Mugabe who still was ambitious to lead the country after her husband's retirement or death. As political tensions and antagonisms began to surface between Emmerson Mnangagwa and Grace Mugabe, they each formed antagonistic political camps within ZANU PF. Emmerson Mnangagwa formed the Team Lacoste Camp, well known with its crocodile emblem and comprising such political figures as Patrick Chinamasa, Oppah Muchinguri, Obert Mpofu, Webster Shamhu, Kembo Mohadi, Joram Gumbo and Simon Khaya Moyo. Grace Mugabe on the other side formed her own political faction named G40 (Generation 40) composed of younger politicians who had no liberation war credentials. These included the flamboyant Professor Jonathan Moyo, Sydney Sekeramayi, Saviour Kasukuwere, Ignatius Chombo, Mugabe's nephew Patrick Zhuwao and second vice president Phekezela Mphoko. The G40 faction dominated the Zimbabwean political show as the members utilised their proximity power to the president to scold, lambast, vilify and lampoon members of the Team Lacoste in public meetings and rallies.

Emmerson Mnangagwa and the Zimbabwe Defense Forces: Adopting both a proactive and reactive political approach

When Emmerson Mnangagwa was allegedly poisoned through an ice cream in Gwanda at a political symposium, the ice cream was allegedly from Robert Mugabe's dairy farm. There were thus speculations that it was Grace Mugabe who had clandestinely poisoned the ice cream in order to get rid of Mnangagwa. The ice cream saga became Grace Mugabe's vilification tool to openly castigate and vilify Mnangagwa at political meetings and rallies. Grace Mugabe would incessantly castigate Mnangagwa for accusing her as a witch. This is where the Grace Mugabe-Mnangagwa feud began. When Mnangagwa realized that he was the next target of expulsion, he established an impregnable political relationship with the army chiefs. Grace Mugabe on the other hand had very bad political blood with the service chiefs whom she would castigate and undress in public, especially the then army General Constantine Chiwenga. Before his expulsion Mnangagwa sensed it and started to connive with the army in order to stage a soft coup as soon as he was expelled. Emmerson Mnangagwa was finally expelled by Mugabe in November 2017 on allegations of deceitfulness and dishonesty as well as planning to assassinate the president Robert Gabriel Mugabe. As soon as he was expelled, Mnangagwa fled to South Africa and promised that he would return to Zimbabwe in a few weeks' time to lead the country.

Zimbabwe under a military coup

I will define a coup de tat (or a putsch) as an unconstitutional and illegitimate change of government that is detrimental to democracy, municipal and international law. A military coup manifests itself in two different ways: a bloody coup or a bloodless coup. The Zimbabwean soft coup started around 13-14th of November after the army General Constantino Chiwenga returned from China where he had met Mnangagwa to deliberate on the modalities of the coup. The Zimbabwe National Army staged a military coup in favour of Emmerson Mnangagwa because:

- 1)- Grace Mugabe was allegedly dividing the party hence becoming a political nonsense.
- 2)- Her lack of respect for the army and senior party and government officials annoyed many who were now viewing her as a political virago. She could undress her fellow party and government opponents in public like children and this posed a threat to national peace and security.
- 3)- She had completely overridden Mugabe and had become the *defacto* president of Zimbabwe, instructing Mugabe who to appoint, suspend, promote or fire.
- 4)- Her gargantuan appetite for presidency was seen by many as a form of political manipulation since she enjoyed proximity power. She wanted to be the next president of Zimbabwe so that she could safeguard her family's wealth, investments, thwart any possible prosecutions that she could possibly be implicated in as well as her husband's.
- 5)- Grace Mugabe had galvanized Zimbabwe into a Mugabeist fiefdom whereby her relatives had been allocated key government and parastatal posts. Her daughter Bona had been appointed as the director of the state-owned Empowerment Bank, and her son in Law Simba Chikore had been appointed as Air Zimbabwe managing Director. Mugabe's nephew Patrick Zhuwao had been appointed as a Minister of Youth while his other nephew Ignatius Chombo had been appointed as Minister of Finance.
- 6)- Grace Mugabe's disrespect for those who had liberation war credentials infuriated the army and war veterans. The fact that ZANU PF purges were only targeting those with liberation war credentials made many war veterans and soldiers with liberation war credentials to seek revenge and retribution if Emmerson Mnangagwa was expelled.

This paper thus supports the view that it is Grace Mugabe who played a pivotal role and an architect in the political demise of herself and of Robert Gabriel Mugabe.

Anti-Mugabe march to State House: Saturday 18 November 2017. Who marched and who benefited?

War veterans, ZANU PF youths and supporters from different provinces came and marched on this fateful day to state house in a bid to make Mugabe resign from presidency. But the bulk of the people who marched were opposition supporters, especially Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters who constituted about 98% of the marchers. The opposition marchers had numerical superiority over all other marchers because all Zimbabwean urban areas are predominantly MDC from council, mayoral, senate and parliamentary seats. The opposition dominates in the urban areas since 2002. It is against this backdrop that there is no gainsaying that the majority of the marchers were MDC supporters who had seized such an opportunity to change the status quo. MDC had failed to unseat Mugabe in 2002 general election which was marred by violence perpetrated on opposition supporters by ZANU PF. It had also failed to unseat Mugabe in 2008 when it trounced ZANU PF in a free and fair election, humiliating and thrashing ZANU PF by 65% to 35%. It is reported that Mugabe had succumbed to defeat and wanted to step down and hand over power to Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC leader), but was compelled to stay in power by his cronies such as Emmerson

Mnangagwa, Didymus Mutasa and the army. When ZANU PF learnt of its electoral defeat in 2008, it played some cheap mind games, instituting a rigorous verification process and taking almost a year to announce the results. The process was so arduous and boring that ZANU PF could take almost a month to announce the results of a single constituency after its verification process. When ZANU PF was vanquished, they engaged the army, ZANU PF youths and war veterans to intimidate, coerce torture, amputate, beat and assassinate opposition supporters in the rural areas. The scale of atrocities and crimes against humanity were more rampant and severe in the rural areas where ZANU PF took advantage of the vulnerability of the rural populace as well as the rural people's ignorance, ignorance to their rights such as freedom of choice, assembly, political affiliation as well as legal representation.

Since 1980 Mugabe's weapon and intimidator tool has been the army which could threaten wars on Zimbabwean civilians, intimidate, coerce, torture or murder suspected opposition supporters. The MDC, having failed to replace Mugabe after defeating him in the 2008 democratic election due to army resistance found an opportunity this time to join and support the war veterans, army and ZANU PF youth league in the November anti-Mugabe march. For the first time MDC supporters, the army, war veterans, ZANU PF youth militia and other ZANU PF supporters were on the same side sharing time and space together and having unity of purpose. The MDC, realizing that the once closest allies (army and Mugabe) were now foes collaborated with the army, ZANU PF youth league and war veterans in the march to remove Mugabe. The march, which compelled Mugabe to resign after which a parliamentary impeachment motion was in process, was a great victory for the MDC in particular and the opposition in general. This was also a great victory for the opposition because ZANU PF cornerstone and stalwart (Robert Mugabe) who had desperately solidified the party for 37 years and who had posed as the major stumbling block to the opposition's ascension to power had now fallen.

Does the Zimbabwean scenario suffice a military coup?

The ZNA's takeover was a military coup and there is no gainsaying it. This is because: The army evacuated everyone at the state broadcasting services, both radio and television and it took control of the broadcasting system. From then onwards it is the soldiers who were broadcasting. The army also took control of the airport and controlled all the activities there, manning it securely. In a dramatic televised statement in the early hours of Wednesday morning, the army spokesman denied that a military takeover was underway. But the situation bore all the hallmarks of a coup: The military was in control of state television in Harare, there was a significant military presence at the international airport, and Mugabe has not been seen in public.² The army also took control of the national parliament, arrested police support unit officers who were manning it after they had tried to resist orders from the soldiers. The army also guarded the support unit headquarters in Chikurubi to make sure that no police officer of the support unit branch gets access to arms at the armory. The Zimbabwean military is in charge of a paramilitary police support unit depot in Harare and has disarmed police officers there. They are now in charge of all armories, all gates and roads leading in and out of the camp. Arcturus Road (which leads to the camp) is closed and all Support Unit details with guns have been disarmed.³ The army also imposed strict restrictions on the police and prison service and the officers were virtually under house arrest. All police officers' duties were suspended and army officers were the ones who were executing the duties such as manning roadblocks and maintenance of peace and order. Military took control of key places; parliament; airport; presidential palace; manned all major roads leading to the capital city and searched people and vehicles. Police was suspended as the military manned roadblocks and executed all police duties. The police were no longer to be seen anywhere.

The ZNA placed former president Robert Mugabe under house arrest where he was severely restricted. He was instructed on what to say or answer even when answering a phone call from his fellow counterpart former South African President Jacob Zuma, concerning his safety during the coup process. Mugabe and Grace's luxurious Borrowdale mansion was under siege from the military. The presence of four tanks and a platoon of soldiers stationed outside this mansion was enough to signal to Zimbabwe's only leader since independence in 1980 that the end is nigh. Since then he had been largely captive and, on a few occasions he left his home, he was subjected to thorough security checks, some of which were humiliating.⁴ Mugabe's security was shaken to the core when his house was put under siege. He was reduced to a prisoner. His movements were now limited. The army was clearly in control after tanks took positions at strategic places at Blue Roof.⁵ As the

² McKenzie, D., Swails, B., and Dewan, A. 2017. "Zimbabwe is under military control after army seizes power from Mugabe." *CNN*, November 15.

³ This was said by an army source who told Reuters on that fateful day. Cited in Osborne, S., Kentish, B., and Batchelor, T. 2017. "Zimbabwe: Robert Mugabe under house arrest after military seize Harare but deny coup-as it happened." *The Independent Online*

⁴ Mpofu, B. 2017. "Under Military Siege for seven days." *Zimbabwe Independent*, November 24 to 30, p.4

⁵ *Ibid*, 4

drama unfolded and the military made it clear to him that it was in charge, his wife Grace, accused by many of triggering her husband's demise, remained holed up in the mansion despite false social media reports that she had fled to Namibia or China. She only experienced limited freedom of movement on Monday morning around 11am when her white Land Cruiser V8 was escorted by two army Mercedes sedans to her Mazowe empire.⁶ Other Zimbabwean coup casualties include former finance minister Ignatius Chombo, former minister of youth and Mugabe's nephew Patrick Zhuwao and former minister of higher and tertiary education Professor Jonathan Nathaniel Moyo. First to be under siege was finance Minister Ignatius Chombo's house in Mt Pleasant around 1130pm. By midnight, four tanks comprising Russian and Chinese built T69 and T72, headed to Mugabe's mansion. Mugabe's military men, the Presidential Guard Brigade, headed by Chiwenga's confidante Nhamo Anslous Sanyatwa, had been briefed of the operation, which was later codenamed "Operation Restore Legacy."⁷ Mugabe's chief security man, Central Intelligence Organisation director in charge of security, Albert Ngulube, had been seized by the army and there was a blackout on the security situation. His motorcade also arrived at the Blue Roof, but could not leave without orders from Defense House.⁸

The president, who is also the commander in chief of the Zimbabwe defense forces as stipulated by the constitution of Zimbabwe, was not the one who deployed the military in strategic positions such as parliament, broadcasting services, airport, roads and streets as well as other strategic positions. It is the army generals who executed such duties and hence this act also suffices a military coup. Constitution of Zimbabwe Section 213 of Amendment NO. 20 (2013) entitled "Deployment of Forces" stipulates that, (i) Subject to this Constitution, only the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Forces has power-a) to authorize the deployment of the Defense Forces; or b) has power to determine the operational use of the Defense Forces.⁹ Since the above functions were executed by the military chiefs and not the president, such an undertaking was tantamount to a military coup.

The Zimbabwean military seized power in Zimbabwe stating that it was targeting criminals around Mugabe who were causing social and economic suffering. The army however used a fig leaf reason by denying that it was a coup yet the undertaking bore all the characteristics of a military coup. The army stated that the undertaking was not a coup de tat but was a "bloodless correction."¹⁰ We wish to make it abundantly clear that this is not a military takeover. We are only targeting criminals around (Mr. Mugabe) who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice. As soon as we have accomplished our mission, we expect that the situation will return to normalcy.¹¹ Major General Sibusiso Moyo also announced that all leave for the Zimbabwe defense forces had been cancelled and all soldiers had to return to the barracks expeditiously with immediate effect. Chris Mutsvangwa, a Mnangagwa ally and a leader of the ZNLWVA (and now an advisor in the office of the president) described the move as a 'bloodless coup,' and praised the ZNA. We salute the patriotic and gallant forces of Zimbabwe for once again coming to the decisive rescue of the nation. The populace has long suffered under a self-saving dictatorship that had become an oligarchy with dynastic delusions.¹² The Zimbabwean coup de tat and the subsequent fall of Robert Mugabe were also celebrated in London in the House of Commons. Boris Johnson, a United Kingdom Foreign Secretary described Mugabe in the House of Commons as a power hungry despot who would not be missed. This House will remember the brutal litany of his 37 years in office. The elections he rigged and stole, the murder and torture of his opponents, the illegal seizure of land, leading to the worst hyper-inflation in record history measured in the billions of percentage points, and forcing the abolition of the Zimbabwean dollar.¹³ All these above developments that transpired in Zimbabwe constitute characteristics of a military coup and therefore this paper asserts that the Zimbabwean scenario suffices a military coup and therefore Mnangagwa government is tainted with illegality in both municipal and international law.

The Zimbabwe National Army: Coumaflagging the military coup

The ZNA tried by all diplomatic means to coumaflage the coup to make it appear as if the people of Zimbabwe are the ones who had driven Mugabe out of power in scenes reminiscent to the March Of Women or

⁶ Ibid, 4

⁷ The ZNA reiterated that this operation was purely a party (ZANU PF) clean up exercise and had nothing to do with the government.

⁸ Ibid, 4

⁹ *Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment NO. 20, (2013), Section 213*

¹⁰ Osborne, S., Kentish, B., and Batchelor, T. 2017. "Zimbabwe: Robert Mugabe under house arrest after military seize Harare but deny coup-as it happened." *The Independent Online*

¹¹ A televised speech by retired Major General Sibusiso B. Moyo, Chief of Staff Logistics (now minister of Foreign Affairs). Cited in Ibid, 10

¹² Cited in Ibid, 2

¹³ Cited in Ibid, 2

the Storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution but it was apparently obvious that the coup could not be coumaflaged. Retired General Chiwenga had already hinted that army intervention was imminent due to the infighting that was transpiring in ZANU PF. The army in general and Chiwenga in particular were continually seething over Mugabe's notorious tendency of sacking only those members with liberation background from ZANU PF. We must remind those behind the current treacherous shenanigans that when it comes to matters of protecting our revolution, the military will not hesitate to step in.¹⁴ The ZNA also tried by all means to coumaflage the coup by avoiding at all costs to use the term "coup" throughout this whole military drama, preferring to use other lighter terms such as military constitutionalism or military correction. For the army, all these political maneuvers which limited Mugabe's movements, effectively putting him under house arrest, were some form of "military constitutionalism" and not a coup.¹⁵ Zimbabwe Defense Forces Chief-of-Staff (Quarter Master) Major General Sibusiso Moyo said that the military intervention was done in order to avoid the infighting in ZANU PF from escalating, on the night the army took control on 8 November. What the Zimbabwe Defense Forces is doing is to pacify a degenerating political, social and economic situation in our country which if not addressed may result in a violent conflict... To members of all defense forces, all leave is cancelled and you are all to return to your barracks...¹⁶ In a desperate bid to coumaflage the military coup the army, war veterans and ZANU PF youths instigated the populace to organise a march to the state house so that the world could see this mega presidential demonstration. The army assured the marchers that this time they will not bash or shoot the demonstrators but will instead protect them. For the first time since 1980 when Zimbabwe attained its independence the army was not against the people, sharing time, space and goals with the people.

The army was only Coumaflagging its coup. It had almost completed its task of seizing power and wanted to use a fig leaf statement that it is the people of Zimbabwe who had expelled Mugabe, just like what happened in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In essence, it is the army that had accomplished the task. On that fateful day pugnacious Zimbabweans marched to the state house with placards and were demonstrating. Others marched directly to the presidential palace in Borrowdale, popularly known as the 'Blue Roof.' This was done with the assistance; support and authority of the army in order to coumaflage its coup, in order to give the world a false psychological blanket that it was the demonstrating Zimbabweans that had expelled Robert Mugabe. Clandestinely, it was the army that had staged a coup and was only masquerading and legitimizing it by coumaflagging it with demonstrating Zimbabweans.

Emmerson Mnangagwa: A president of the army and not of the Zimbabwean people

Emmerson Mnangagwa was imposed as an interim president through a military coup by the army. He was not democratically elected through an election and hence was imposed. The removal of Robert Mugabe was therefore unconstitutional, illegitimate and tainted with illegality both in municipal and international law. Against this backdrop, Emmerson Mnangagwa is thus a president of the army and not of the Zimbabwean people.

The rationale for the Zimbabwean military coup

Grace Mugabe had developed a gargantuan appetite of firing only those ZANU PF officials and ministers with liberation war credentials in a bid to promote her faction of the Generation 40 who had no liberation war credentials. This infuriated the war veterans, officials and ministers with liberation war credentials as well as soldiers. The war veterans and soldiers with liberation war credentials were envisaging a 'bedroom coup' by first lady Grace Mugabe. Grace Mugabe was vying to succeed her husband Robert Mugabe. To pave the way for Grace, Mugabe sought to expel all those stalwarts who were a threat to his wife's ascension to powersuch as former vice president Joyce Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa. The Team Lacoste, war veterans and army, composed of members with liberation war credentials saw Grace Mugabe in particular and the G40 in general as a threat that needed to be abruptly stopped before the December 2017 ZANU PF congress.

As Grace intensified her push to be appointed vice president to replace Mnangagwa and possibly replace Mugabe as president, the military intervened, initially warning against the purging of party members, particularly with liberation war credentials.¹⁷ After ZANU PF Youth League attacked Zimbabwe Defense Forces Commander General Constantino Chiwenga for the statement, accusing him of treasonable conduct, military commanders took over government operations in the early hours of Wednesday morning last week in an operation code named "Restore Legacy," which they said was meant to weed out criminals around Mugabe and

¹⁴ Nevett, J. 2017. "Tanks roll into Zimbabwean capital as Robert Mugabe faces military coup." -Published on 14 November 2017.

¹⁵ Ibid, 14

¹⁶ Ibid, 14

¹⁷ Kuwaza, K. 2017. "ZANU PF gets new lease of life." *The Zimbabwe Independent*, November 24 to 30, p.4

prevent the political situation degenerating into violent conflict.¹⁸ The military is also endowed with such powers by the constitution of Zimbabwe whenever it perceives that political discord within a country may turn into a violent conflict hence threatening the country's peace and security. This is cited in Section 212 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment NO. 20 (2013), entitled "Function of Defense Forces" which stipulates that, "The function of the Defense Forces is to protect Zimbabwe, its people, its national security and interests and its territorial integrity and to uphold this constitution."¹⁹

Why military coups occur

Military coups occur for various reasons, and here are some of them;

- a)- Autocratic Rule-Autocratic rule sometimes breeds military coups when a leader's subordinates become fed up of one's autocratic tendencies, for example Louis XVI's ancient Regime in France. Historian David Thompson says that the king's word was the law. The king would say, "The thing is legal because I wish it."²⁰ Such autocratic tendencies may lead to disillusionment and hence coup de tats.
- b)- Economic Backwardness-economic retardation sometimes cause coups, such as when a country is sliding back to the murky waters of inflation, debt, corruption, poor living conditions and poverty. Zimbabwe is one such banana republic that possesses all the above characteristics which are a harbinger for a military coup.
- c)- Corruption-many African states are in the top 20 in the Transparency International corruption rankings. States such as Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Malawi, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo are notoriously known for corruption. Zimbabwe's current interim president Emmerson Mnangagwa is incessantly calling on his corrupt cabinet ministers and other ZANU PF officials that he inherited from the Mugabe regime to return all the funds they externalized out of the country in corrupt proportions. This anti-corruption exercise may be nugatory since it is reported that those corrupt ZANU PF officials and ministers are also calling on Mnangagwa to lead by example and return the funds that he himself allegedly externalized first, and then others would emulate him.
- d)- Abuse of institutions of democracy-many African leaders abuse state institutions for their own expediency and political survival whilst they are occupying the highest office. Robert Mugabe is such leader who abused state institutions through electoral fraud, torture and murder of opponents using the police and army, clinging to power even after the 2008 electoral defeat by MDC and gerrymandering of constituencies for his own party advantage, as well as perpetrating genocide in Matabeleland and Midlands at the hands of 5 Brigade in the 1980s.
- e)- Overriding the law and the courts-elites in most African countries belonging to ruling parties are above the law and are never found culpable. In Zimbabwe, for example, the president appoints and fires judges. In the 2000s Robert Mugabe fired all white judges who were sitting on the high court bench for their dissenting judgments on the land issue, such as Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay, Justice Smith, Justice McNally, Justice James Devittie, Justice McDonald and Justice Blackie, replacing them with black judges whom he could tell what to do. ZANU PF officials and ministers are far above the law as they perpetrate horrific acts such as electoral fraud, murders, tortures and genocides with impunity.
- f)- Tribalism and nepotism-The Shonas dominate in the Zimbabwean political landscape and are numerically superior to the Ndebeles. This means that there will never be any president of Zimbabwe from the Ndebeles since they are the minority. The Ndebeles shun the Shonas for the genocidal acts perpetrated in Matabeleland and Midlands in 1985 in an operation code named "Gukurahundi," literally meaning "Clean up the filth." Currently the ZNA Commander General is Ndebele (Philip Valerio Sibanda) and may seize this opportunity to turn the tables on the Shona-dominated government by staging a coup and changing the status quo.
- g)- An imminent bedroom coup-In the Zimbabwean 2017 scenario an imminent "bedroom coup" caused a soft coup. Mugabe at 93 had been incapacitated by age and his wife was running the political show in Zimbabwe. She could appoint and fire ministers, especially those with liberation war credentials. To the war veterans and the army, this smacked a bedroom coup that needed to be stopped before it escalates. This made the army to stage a military coup in order to stop Grace and expel her and his husband from the political landscape.
- h)- Ignoring army grievances-Ignoring the grievances of the army was Robert Mugabe's undoing and led to a military coup. The army was complaining that ZANU PF purges were only targeting officials with liberation war credentials and Mugabe seemed not to take heed of such grievances. His wife's party purges continued unfettered, and became a concoction for a military coup.

¹⁸ Ibid, 17

¹⁹ *Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment NO. 20 (2013), Section 212.*

²⁰ Thompson, D. 1983. *Europe since Napoleon*. London: Longman

Dead Celebrations

Zimbabweans might live to regret in the long run why they were overexcited by the fall of Robert Mugabe. Emmerson Mnangagwa might be equal to Mugabe or even worse than Mugabe. Just like in the Mugabe era, nothing might be achieved by the Mnangagwa administration. This is because the Mnangagwa government is manned with the same old, residual, corrupt, outdated, recycled and anachronistic ministers and officials who constitute almost 80% of the administration. Most of these incompetent officials, including Mnangagwa himself, have worked with Mugabe for 37 years bleeding the country and plunging it into economic malaise through mismanagement and unproductive policies. Secondly, it is only a part of ZANU PF (the G40) that has been axed from the party and government and what remains is another part of ZANU PF (Team Lacoste) which will likely continue with perpetuation of corruption, mismanagement, patronage, nepotism and incompetence. Thirdly, having worked with Mugabe for more than 20 years as his personal assistant and for another 37 years as one of Mugabe's cabinet ministers bleeding the country, hardly can Mnangagwa come up with any new or sound policies since he has been groomed to suffocate the country and has fitted well into his master's shoes. I therefore find nothing really to cherish about the expulsion of Mugabe because the system remains. This is just new wine in old bottles because Mugabe is gone but the same incompetent, corrupt and rotten system of ZANU PF still remains in place. Zimbabweans in general and the army in particular should have removed ZANU PF and its whole workforce (the system) instead of Mugabe only (the symptom). There was thus a need of the overthrow of the whole social order in order to replace it with a completely new order. In the French Revolution for example, it made no sense to overthrow Louis XVI and replacing him with another monarch, Louis XVIII. There was thus a need of instituting a complete overhaul of the system of monarchical rule.

Change of names of presidents, names of ministers and ministries does not lead Zimbabwe into economic prosperity, but a change of the whole system may revamp the economy. Very soon the hopeful, ravenous and expectant Zimbabweans will be disillusioned and only to discover that change of a person and not of a system does not lead to prosperity. Political analyst Doctor Ibbo Mandaza warns Zimbabweans against getting overexcited about the sudden and tumultuous unfolding of the Zimbabwean political events. It makes sense to forget everything else and focus on this historic moment, but at what cost to the broader pro-democracy, human rights, state accountability, comprehensive state reforms, ending impunity and transparent natural resource governance? Have we or are we in danger of donating a political kidney to a ZANU PF that was on its death bed and, in essence, adding more years to its lifespan as a governing party? There is a belief among those, either looking for jobs or that have been promised jobs, to seek to normalize the abnormal. Indeed, Mugabe must go, but, more fundamentally, the system must go!"²¹ Zimbabweans in this Mugabe coup case have thus managed to cure the symptoms and not the disease.

Operation Restore Legacy: Ego-centric ZANU PF does it alone

Self-centered ZANU PF showed political immaturity by failing to form an inclusive government after the military coup. An inclusive government would be representative and attaining credibility, transparency, accountability, and recognition. Selfish ZANU PF repudiated the noble idea of forming a coalition government. Patrick Chinamasa, the ZANU PF minister of finance was assertive in rejecting the idea which many had hoped for. What happened today has nothing to do with the opposition. It has nothing to do with the national government; we are cleansing our own party. We are correcting our own mess; we are the majority in parliament. We can expel the president alone and we are the ruling party, so where does a coalition come in, we do not need them.²² However, Godfrey Kanyenze, an economist, castigates Chinamasa for political selfishness and argues that it was going to be sound, noble and credible if an inclusive government was formed rather than for self-centered ZANU PF to go it alone. Chinamasa's way is fraught with problems and is not sustainable. It will only lead us into a *cul de-sac*.²³

The Zimbabwe National Army setting a very bad precedence

The Zimbabwe National army has been very detrimental and retrogressive in the democratisation of Zimbabwe as it has set a very bad precedence. In 2008 the army was instrumental in making Robert Mugabe to cling to power after an electoral defeat by the MDC. In November 2017 the army again staged a military coup which imposed Emmerson Mnangagwa as the interim president of Zimbabwe, removing Mugabe

²¹ Mandaza, I. 2017. In Kuwaza, K. 2017. "ZANU PF gets new lease of life." *The Zimbabwe Independent*, November 24 to 30.

²² Chinamasa, P. 2017. In Kuwaza, K. 2017. "ZANU PF gets new lease of life." *The Zimbabwe Independent*, November 24 to 30.

²³ Kanyenze, G. 2017. In Kuwaza, K. 2017. "ZANU PF gets new lease of life." *The Zimbabwe Independent*, November 24 to 30.

unconstitutionally. The Supreme Court of Zimbabwe ruled that the intervention of the army in Zimbabwean politics was lawful. This shows how biased and patronized the Zimbabwean judiciary is, and how such a verdict can and should be challenged in a court of law. The Zimbabwean judiciary is not independent at all as it serves the interests of the executive. There are no checks and balances as the president appoints and dismisses the judges. There is no concept of separation of powers as the president dominates the tiers of the state. The retrogressive actions of the army are likely to be felt this year when Zimbabwe is holding harmonized elections in the last quarter. There is a possibility that even if the opposition wins the 2018 elections the army will intervene and stage another electoral coup de tat to make Emmerson Mnangagwa stay in power against the will of the Zimbabwean people as it did in 2008. In the eve of the 2002 elections the Zimbabwe Defense Forces service chiefs announced on state television that, "The Zimbabwe Defense forces are not going to salute, let alone tolerate a government that comes into power that has no credentials of the liberation struggle."²⁴ The actions and utterances of the Zimbabwean army makes a mockery of elections because if the army does not salute or tolerate a government that has no liberation war credentials then one is compelled to ask why Zimbabweans would go for elections? This has made many Zimbabwean youths to be reluctant to register to vote or even to go to cast their votes because they complain that even if they exercise their democratic right and vote for a party that is not ZANU PF (like what they did in 2008 when the majority voted for the MDC), the army will still make such victory null and void in favour of ZANU PF which has liberation war credentials.

Current Power Dynamics in Zimbabwe

Real power in Zimbabwe currently is with the Zimbabwe National army. The army was instrumental in Mugabe's 37 year-political survival in power. Even when Robert Mugabe was defeated in a democratic 2008 election by the MDC, the army was instrumental in launching terror and intimidation campaigns in the rural areas on behalf of ZANU PF. The army was also instrumental in advocating for a re-run which kept Mugabe in power. The ZNA is thus a highly politicized and compromised army. Since former army commander general Constantino Chiwenga, former Major General Sibusiso Moyo and former Air Marshal Perence Shiri have hung up their military boots, they also risk a military coup from the same army that they used to topple Mugabe from power. Empty promises, failure to deliver, corruption and incompetence may make the army to be disillusioned and plot another coup to remove Mnangagwa, Shiri and Chiwenga and other retired generals who constitute the current government. While the present cabinet was installed by the army, the army thus remains the powerful force which can change the status quo, determining how the country is to be governed. Since the coup leaders (Chiwenga, Shiri and Moyo) are now retired, they thus have no direct control of the army any longer and may face a military coup if the defense forces become disgruntled and disillusioned.

The Zimbabwe Defense Forces and the democratisation of Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean army is a compromised army because it is a politicized army. It is more of a ruling party army (ZANU PF) than a national army. In 1985 the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) report that about 20 000 people were massacred by the ZNA's Korean-trained 5th Brigade in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in a draconian operation codenamed "Gukurahundi," literally meaning, "Clean up the filth."²⁵ In 1999 the Zimbabwe National Army, war veterans and ZANU PF youths were instrumental in orchestrating the violent farm invasions, ravishing villages, farms, torturing, murdering and expelling commercial white farmers from their farms. In 2002 the Zimbabwe National army, war veterans and ZANU PF youths were at the core of pre-electoral violence in the rural constituencies of Zimbabwe such as Gutu, Buhera, Mudzi, Mt Darwin and Chikomba when they killed, amputated, tortured, arrested and ransacked opposition supporters. This made the High Court of Zimbabwe to nullify some of the constituencies due to widespread violence. On the eve of the 2002 elections the service chiefs, namely the former and late army Commander General Vitalis Zvinavashe, former Airforce Commander Perence Shiri and former Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri appeared live on national television announcing that the Zimbabwean Defense Forces were not going to salute, let alone tolerate a government that comes into power that has no liberation war credentials. This became clear that such an army was not representative and universal but was a ZANU PF-partisan army rather than a national army. Such statements also made a mockery of the impending elections and sending waves of consternation to the political fraternity in the entire civilized world. If the army did not tolerate any political party that did not have any liberation war credentials then one wonders what the purpose of conducting the elections was. Such unprofessional and unethical statements are also

²⁴ This was announced by the Zimbabwe Defense Forces service chiefs, namely the former and late army commander general Vitalis Zvinavashe, Former Air Marshal Perence Shiri and former police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri.

²⁵ Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), 1985. *Breaking Silence: Building True Peace. A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and Midlands*.

tantamount to electoral coup and hence a dreadful miscarriage of democracy and constitutionalism. When ZANU PF was defeated in a free and fair 2008 election by the MDC by 65% to 35%, the army was instrumental in asserting its repudiation of the MDC victory, procrastinating the announcement of election results, forcing Mugabe to play mind games with the people and the opposition and forcing an electoral run off. On the road to the re-run of the 2008 elections the army, war veterans and ZANU PF youths set up torture camps and bases in rural areas such as in Buhera and Gutu misinforming, intimidating, torturing, evacuating, marauding and murdering suspected MDC supporters. The army completely repudiated being ruled by a political party with no liberation war credentials. In November 2017 the ZNA was at it again when it staged a coup in favour of Emmerson Mnangagwa, removing its longtime ally Robert Gabriel Mugabe. These developments have shown that in Zimbabwe it is not about elections, democracy or the will of the people but about what the military wants or wishes. The role of the military, to a greater extent, has therefore been detrimental to the democratisation of Zimbabwe.

Militarization of the Zimbabwean cabinet

The cabinet that was formed by the putschists is predominantly military in outlook. Emmerson Mnangagwa, a former soldier, heads the military cabinet as the head of state, government and commander in chief of the Zimbabwe defense forces. Mnangagwa is deputized by the former and retired general Constantino Guvheya Chiwenga who recently hung up his military kit when he was re-deployed as the country's vice president and minister of defense. Major General Sibusiso Moyo also hung up his military kit and was re-deployed as the minister of foreign affairs. Air Force commander Perence Shiri also hung up his military kit and was re-deployed as the minister of lands and agriculture. Retired Major General Enkelbert Rugeje was awarded the post of ZANU PF Political Commissar, and other key posts awarded to former soldiers who were Mnangagwa allies in the military coup (such as Victor Matemadanda and Chris Mutsvangwa who were awarded the posts of special advisors in the office of the president). All these deployments were not based on meritocracy but on one's role and participation in the November 2017 military coup. This is also in line with ZANU PF's fundamental principle of awarding individuals according to loyalty and not according to competency or meritocracy.

The Zimbabwean bloodless coup not a stand-alone

The Zimbabwean soft coup is not a stand-alone as it did not break any new ground. There are several similar sporadic bloodless military coups that took place worldwide. Due to the current unfortunatemilitary development that bedeviled Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa now joins the political bandwagon of world coupists who are scattered around the globe. In Egypt in 1212 for example after the election run off the two antagonistic political parties claimed victory each, one led by Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood and the other one led by Ahmed Shafiq. Mohammed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood asserted that it had won 51.8% of the votes whilst Shafiq's party claimed to have amassed between 51.5 to 52% of the votes. Then, Egypt's Supreme Council of Armed Forces issued a constitutional declaration that gave the military the authority rather than either of the two candidates, leading to cries of a political coup de tat, also known as a coup.²⁶ In a similar incident in Fiji in December 2006 the Fiji military also staged a coup de tat. In September of the same year in a coup episode that had the support of the Thai people, a military coup removed the Thai Prime Minister from power. Thaksin Shinawatra, the Thai Prime Minister, was in New York City preparing to address the United Nations General Assembly as the Thai Prime Minister when he was removed at home by a coup de tat. In a televised address, Shinawatra demanded that General Sondhi Boonyaratkalin, leader of the Thai military, orchestrator of the coup and self-appointed acting prime minister, surrender himself. The TV address ran short. The Thai military, suddenly in charge of all media outlets, cut him off mid-speech. The coup was a success.²⁷ Similar to the Zimbabwean soft coup, the Thai top military junta took control of the Prime Minister's residence and all government strategic institutions such as the parliament, state house and broadcasting services.

Difference between a coup, revolution, impeachment and a recall

The term coup de tat, which is a French term meaning "strike to the state" or "blow to the state", is different from a revolution. In a revolution there is mass rising by the masses in order to overthrow the existing social order in an attempt to replace it with a completely new order. It is thus a cultural, social, economic, political and ideological strategy that seeks to transform society in all categories. In a coup there is some Eliticism whereby a small elite group within the government, usually the military stages a coup and takes the nation by surprise. In most cases, it is as much a shock to the people as it is to the deposed leader.²⁸ When

²⁶ Layton, J. 2012. "What happens in a coup d'état?"

²⁷ Ibid, 2012

²⁸ Ibid, 2012

loyalties at the top echelons of government power are divided, this may lead to a bloody coup since there will be heterogeneous interests. When loyalties at the top echelons of state power are united and homogeneous in nature, there will be a likelihood of a bloodless coup since there will be no divergent interests, as in the Zimbabwean soft coup. A coup is thus unconstitutional and illegitimate as it unseats a democratically elected leader by surprise which is detrimental to both municipal and international law. Military coups often suffer from legitimacy crisis as the resultant governments are not recognised world over. A coup is staged expeditiously and has an element of surprise in it. The putschists usually take control of strategic government establishments such as buildings and imprisoning the head of state (if he is around) or deposing the leader and sending him/her to exile. The coupists then take control of the media, declare themselves in control and manage the flow of information through media manipulation and control. In some cases the leader of the coup takes temporal control as the head of state (sometimes the temporal power ends up not being so temporal) or simply appoints someone until a new head of state can be chosen through an election. An impeachment is a constitutional and legal procedure of removing a president from office, which are *intra vires* state constitutions. When for example the United States Congress impeaches a president and removes him from office that is not a coup because that impeachment is a constitutional and legal procedure set forth in the United States Constitution as a legitimate way of removing a president from office. In a recall a party (whether a ruling or an opposition) simply relieves its leader of his/her duties due to some misdemeanors behaviour such as corruption or nepotism. They thus instruct the leader to relinquish duties as the head or nominated leader of the party such that he/she ceases to represent the party as the head. If that recalled leader is a head of state and government it means that he/she will then be a president of the country and not the leader of the party. He/she will thus be a hanging president and it will be easy to impeach such a president. A recall is a constitutional and legal procedure which is different from a coup. South Africa is one country that is very popular when it comes to recalling leaders. Former President Thabo Mbeki was recalled by his ruling African National Congress (ANC) before the end of his second term and was replaced by former President Jacob Zuma who was again recalled in 2018 before the end of his second term.

Coups are usually, but not always military in nature. There are some coups which are non-military, for example Gaius Julius Caesar took control of Rome in a military coup but was later assassinated by his fellow senate members at the Capitol in 44BC. Just like the Zimbabwean coup some coups are very popular, for example the Napoleonic coup of 1799 which brought Napoleon 1 to power. Such coups are mostly effective and bloodless especially if the leader is found to be incompetent, ineffective or corrupt. Augusto Pinochet ascended to power in Chile under similar circumstances. Chile's Chamber of Deputies, much like a parliament had asked the army to remove president Salvador Allende from power before the occurrence of the coup in 1973. Sometimes bloodless coups are not always bloodless, for example when Napoleon Bonaparte disbanded the French parliament, his soldiers threw several members through the windows, and Augusto Pinochet's soldiers killed Allende when they removed him from power. Pervez Musharraf rose to power in Pakistan through a bloodless coup. Musharraf was the highest ranking military official under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. When conflict erupted and Sharif ordered the military to remove Musharraf (who was out of the country) from his post, the military refused to obey the order. On hearing the news, Musharraf immediately boarded a plane and headed back to Pakistan, but Sharif would not let him land. The military, loyal to Musharraf, removed Sharif from power so that Musharraf's plane could land in Pakistan. Musharraf immediately took control of Pakistan, while Sharif settled into exile in Saudi Arabia.²⁹

Emmerson Mnangagwa joins other world coupists

Emmerson Mnangagwa now joins the world political bandwagon of coupists. Such current putschists who seized power the Mnangagwa way are Said bin Taimur who replaced Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said in Oman in 1970; President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo who replaced Francisco Macias Nguema in Equatorial Guinea in 1979; President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda who replaced former President Tito Okello in 1986; President Omar al Bashir who replaced former President Sadiq al-Mahdi in Sudan in 1989; President Idris Derby Itno who replaced former President Hissene Habre in Chad in 1990; Prime Minister Hun Sen who replaced Norodom Ranariddh in Cambodia in 1997; President Denis Sassou Nguesso who replaced Pascal Lisouba in the Republic of Congo in 1997; Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama who replaced Laisenia Qarase in Fiji in 2006; President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz who replaced former President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi in Mauritania in 2008; President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi who replaced former President Mohammed Morsi in Egypt in 2013; Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha who replaced Yingluck Shinawatra in Thailand in 2014; and President Mohammed Ali al-Houthi who replaced Abd Rabbur Mansur Hadi in Yemen in 2015.

²⁹ Ibid, 2012

Emmerson Mnangagwa: More to gain with plotting than with patience

ZANU PF had no succession plan and Robert Mugabe wanted to die in office. This is because at 93 years old Mugabe was to contest again as the ZANU PF candidate in the 2018 elections and had already been endorsed by all the Zimbabwean provinces as their presidential candidate. Robert Mugabe was however caught in the unenviable position of either passing on the presidential button to his wife Grace whilst he was still alive (which he didn't want because he wanted to die in office), or to die first then Grace would succeed him (which he didn't want because his death would complicate Grace's ascendancy to power since she would become politically vulnerable just like the Joyce Mujuru scenario). It seems however that Robert Mugabe wanted to pursue the latter option. In line with ZANU PF officials' notorious tendency of clinging to power the then Women Empowerment minister Oppah Muchinguri had remarked that, "The late vice President Joshua Nkomo died in office and the late vice President Simon Muzenda died in office and the late vice President Joseph Msika died in office and the late vice President John Nkomo died in office. Therefore President Robert Mugabe should be allowed to die in office." When Joyce Mujuru was subsequently expelled from her vice Presidency post through the diabolical influence of Grace Mugabe and Mnangagwa, Robert Mugabe elevated Mnangagwa to the post of vice President but Grace Mugabe was the one who was wielding considerable power and becoming the defacto Zimbabwean president. When relations between Grace Mugabe and Mnangagwa began to take a nosedive, Mnangagwa knew that he was the next target of expulsion in order to pave the way for Grace Mugabe's ascendancy to vice presidency in the forthcoming December 2017 ZANU PF congress. Mnangagwa adopted a proactive and reactive approach, conniving with the army and plotting a coup in the event that he is expelled. Mnangagwa had long sought this coup with the army generals and only his expulsion by Mugabe and his wife would become the match that would light the bonfire. As had been anticipated Mnangagwa was fired by Mugabe and his wife from the government and party and just under three weeks Mnangagwa ignited the long plotted coup which removed Mugabe. Since Mnangagwa knew that Mugabe would never relinquish power as long as he is alive and also knowing that Grace was hijacking the clear and procedural presidential succession plan which was supposed to cede the reigns to him after Mugabe's death, Mnangagwa thus had more to gain with plotting with the army than with patience.

Wither SADC and AU

Both SADC and AU failed to intervene expeditious to salvage Mugabe from the impending catastrophe. The two continental organisations were impotent to restore legitimacy and to stick to their ethos and values of punishing unconstitutional and illegitimate changes of governments. Surprisingly the AU and SADC quickly endorsed Mnangagwa as a successor of Mugabe and de jure president of Zimbabwe, the antithesis of what they were supposed to do. But sources claim that the veteran politician spilled the beans and told the AU envoy that he was pushed out by the military, which imposed Mnangagwa as the successor. Well-placed sources told *Newsday* Mugabe disclosed to the AU envoy that he was forced to resign by the military that now controls the ruling ZANU PF and government structures. He reportedly said the process that removed him from power was a coup.³⁰ Moussa Faki Mahamat, the AU Chairperson remarked that Africa was satisfied that the transition was peaceful and "it is the responsibility of the AU to support and accompany countries in such situation in order to make sure that there is peace and stability in the country and all others have to respect the sovereignty of the country."³¹ He added that, "If there is any unconstitutional change of governments, then we have our own instruments; we have rules that apply in the case. We are here to support the country in the transition and this transition has been publicly supported by the people of Zimbabwe."³² Both AU and SADC failed to salvage Mugabe and restore legitimacy and constitutionalism in the wake of the Zimbabwean coup de tat. Former South African President Jacob Zuma, who had sent an envoy to negotiate and who was more likely to salvage Mugabe from this political quagmire, was also on political doldrums at home and was subsequently recalled by his African National Congress party three months later (February 2018). Mugabe was unfortunate in this whole episode because no one wanted him internationally, from the Bretton Woods institutions, the International Community and even some African states such as Botswana. No one therefore at 93 years old and having ruled Zimbabwe for 37 years bothered help him.

Britain: Glorifying an illegitimate government

Britain glorified an illegitimate government by sending an envoy to witness the inauguration of Emmerson Mnangagwa who had seized power through a military coup. Britain, which always wanted Mnangagwa to replace Mugabe, sent its Minister of African Affairs Roy Stewart to attend the new president's

³⁰ Mushava, E., and Muchenjekwa, K. 2018. "I resigned for peace's sake: Mugabe." *News Day*, February 21, p.4

³¹ Mahamat, M.F. 2018. In Mushava, E., and Muchenjekwa, K. 2018. "I resigned for peace's sake: Mugabe."

News Day, February 21, p.4

³² *Ibid*, 31

inauguration and re-engage.³³ Stewart said the resignation of Mugabe, following his ruinous 37-year rule, would give Zimbabwe the opportunity to set its fragile economy on a firm growth trajectory. For Britain in particular and the International Community in general, it is thus not about Mnangagwa illegitimacy but about Mugabe's international unpopularity.

Zimbabwean economy in a Lazarus Moment

The Zimbabwean economy is in a 'Lazarus Moment,'³⁴ in a state of economic demise. However, it is capable of being revived if external interventions are initiated and corruption, mismanagement and nepotism eradicated. A close Mnangagwa official remarked that, "The economy has been exposed to external shocks giving rise to inflation and lack of investor confidence. Systematic and immediate interventions have to be made quickly. As an economy operating in a multicurrency system, nominally dollarized economy in other words, we have many problems including liquidity crunch, cash shortages, diminishing net capital flows and an expansionary fiscal stance which has generated the acute cash shortages that has prompted the use of bonds notes; a quasi-currency instrument amid imposition of controls over capital and current account transactions." From the time Mnangagwa took over in November, cash shortages have worsened than during Mugabe's era. Zimbabwe has almost stopped functioning and the government cannot pay its public servants timeously. Bonuses are paid the following year on a staggering basis and Zimbabweans are starting to be disillusioned as the government fails to establish anything positive. Mnangagwa "100 Days" which he had promised to revive the economy and improve the cash crisis which has irked Zimbabweans day and night, have been a nightmare and a mere talk show of promises without any positive or tangible results. With reengagement with creditors delayed, access to external financing is limited, and the fiscal deficit is being financed by domestic borrowing at an unsustainable pace. We need to address these issues through a new economic recovery plan and policy framework that speaks to creating a friendly business environment and attracting Foreign Direct Investment.³⁵

Mnangagwa ZANU PF: Cannibalizing from the opposition campaign manifesto

The opposition MDC has been an ally of the western world since its formation in 1999. This is because it adopted pro-western policies which Mugabe's regime had condemned and done away with. ZANU PF under Mugabe had withdrawn from the Commonwealth of nations in 2003, had embarked on violent farm invasions from 1999, had repudiated compensating white farmland which it had violently seized from the white farmers and had rigged the 2008 elections. Mugabe had also been notoriously known for throwing verbal tantrums at the western leaders such as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and former American President George Bush when they condemned him for poor governance, corruption and dictatorship in Zimbabwe. Mugabe had infamously said, "Tony Blair, keep your Britain and I will keep my Zimbabwe... What I want to tell the gay governments of Tony Blair and George Bush is that Zimbabwe is not an extension of the British Empire. Zimbabwe cannot be ruled from London and Zimbabwe will never be a colony again."³⁶ Mugabe had also dubbed the 2002 election as an "Anti-Blair Election." The opposition MDC had advocated for compensation of white farmland that had been forcibly taken by ZANU PF under Mugabe, the return of Zimbabwe to the Commonwealth of Nations, return to rule of law including conducting free, fair, regular and credible elections. Mnangagwa government, realizing that Mugabe's policies were suicidal, has adopted a pro-western policy which is aimed at reviving the economy. Mnangagwa is thus cannibalizing on the opposition manifesto and western stance. Firstly, he reiterated that Zimbabwe will rejoin the Commonwealth of Nations, a strategy which the MDC had advocated for since Zimbabwe's exit. Secondly, the Mnangagwa government has promised to provide some compensation to white farmers whose farms and properties were violently destroyed or seized by ZANU PF war veterans and youth militia in the violent farm invasions that rocked Zimbabwe from 1999. The President has also on top of undertaking to dispatch technical teams to London to kick start comprehensive talks-reminded Prime Minister Theresa May's administration of its colonial obligation to provide compensation to white farmers affected by Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme.³⁷ Thirdly, Mnangagwa is promising a free, fair and credible election in 2018, a strategy that has been incessantly advocated for by the MDC since its formation in 1999. Providing white compensation for their lost farms and properties as well as conducting free, fair and credible elections is hoped by the Mnangagwa regime to bring some financial resuscitation to the ailing Zimbabwean economy which is in a Lazarus Moment. However, in as much as Mnangagwa is made several empty trips to the west in particular and globally in general, the western world will never inject their finances in

³³ Mambo, E. 2017. "Mnangagwa plans major policy shift." *Zimbabwe Independent*, November 24-30, pp.1-2

³⁴ (Adopted from the Bible: Lazarus, who was dead and buried, was later revived by Jesus)-A state of economic demise. However, this state may be capable of being revived if external interventions are initiated.

³⁵ Ibid, 33

³⁶ Part of Robert Mugabe's United Nations General Assembly address in 2000.

³⁷ Bwititi, K. 2018. "Zimbabwe returns to Commonwealth fold." *The Sunday Mail*, February 4, pp. 1 and 5.

Zimbabwe and support it directly at this time since it is an illegitimate government that came to power through a military coup. Issues of corruption, mismanagement and accountability that are a characteristic of ZANU PF may also deter investor and donor confidence. The world thus waits to witness free, fair and credible elections in Zimbabwe so that the International Community, donors and the Bretton Woods Institutes can intervene financially when they are satisfied with the quality of democracy in Zimbabwe. The upcoming elections are a major milestone for the people of Zimbabwe. When I met President Mnangagwa, I said my government welcomed his commitment to hold credible, peaceful, free and fair elections monitored by international observers.³⁸ Mugabe's ZANU PF had long barred international observers to monitor and observe elections, inviting SADC observers only whom he could bully into submission. As a central plank of this, they discussed the importance of the elections later this year being peaceful, credible, free and fair. Minister Baldwin welcomed the President's commitment to invite international observers from the EU and UN as well as SADC and AU.³⁹ If Mnangagwa succeeds in reviving the Zimbabwean economy before the elections and bringing back cash in the banks in form of United States Dollars, taking back the Zimbabwe to the Commonwealth of Nations and compensating white farmland and properties, he would have succeeded in pre-empting the opposition and boosting his chances of winning the elections.

ZANU PF faces a tough 2018 election

With the military government failing to deliver Zimbabwe from the current economic predicament ZANU PF faces a tough 2018 election from a rejuvenated opposition MDC. Joyce Mujuru's Zimbabwe People First Party as well as Retired Brigadier Ambrose Mutinhiri's New Patriotic Front is also not to be ignored since they are likely to cause electoral havoc by eating away a large number of voters who were previously ZANU PF. Since these two opposition leaders are offshoots from ZANU PF, they are likely to cannibalize voters from it such that a clear victory will be difficult for ZANU PF. Joyce Mujuru is likely to win many votes and she is also likely to enjoy a 'sympathetic vote' from many supporters over the way she was expelled from ZANU PF as well as from the way her husband was killed. Apart from having the potential to win her Mt Darwin constituency, she also has many supporters in the country who were previously ZANU PF but followed her when she was unfairly dismissed from the party. The MDC, which is now headed by the energetic, young, hardworking, eloquent, elaborate, motivating and vivacious Nelson Chamisa, is likely to cause a lot of problems for ZANU PF. Having won the elections in 2008 and having tasted victory, the MDC is still very much politically alive and active and commands a lot of support especially in the urban areas. According to the Zimbabwean electoral law, a candidate has to win 50% + 1 vote in order to be the outright winner in a presidential election. ZANU PF may find it a mammoth task to accomplish such victory considering the powerful three opposition parties that are on the electoral field. Since ZANU PF completely knows that it may not achieve outright victory, it is likely to use the same old tactics of either employing some Israeli electoral rigging agents such as MOSAD or NIKUV, or it will use the soldiers to stage an electoral coup as it did in the face of electoral defeat in 2008 when it was defeated by MDC. The soldiers will simply repudiate a new leadership and a new party with no liberation war credentials and that will be that. Considering that the army is the one which staged a coup which removed Mugabe and replacing him with Mnangagwa, they are still likely to refuse electoral defeat and continue imposing Mnangagwa on the people of Zimbabwe in electoral coup proportions. Apart from utilising the army, ZANU PF has a myriad of diabolic ways such as using its frenetic and vociferous youth league and war veterans to intimidate, miseducate, kill or torture opposition elements in the rural areas as it always does in order to 'win' the elections.

Since chiefs have already been cajoled with luxurious cars, it is a tactic to whip them in line with ZANU PF. The chiefs will in turn whip the village heads who in turn will whip the masses in line with ZANU PF. In the rural areas due to ZANU PF intimidator tactics no one votes independently but is told whom to vote for (voting without choosing). Despite his countless regional and international trips to unveil and advertise his economic and foreign policies which are west-friendly, Mnangagwa has failed to bring anything positive to the ailing Zimbabwean economy. The cash crisis has even become worse than in the Mugabe era as many banks become completely dry. Since ZANU PF has a notoriety of rigging elections over the years, this time it is now caught in the unenviable position of either conducting free, fair and credible elections and risk losing to the opposition MDC, or rigging and risking legitimacy crisis from the International Community. In this regard ZANU PF is likely to pursue the latter option. After all, Mnangagwa and the ZDF cannot stage a military coup in order to hand over power in six months' time after electoral defeat.

³⁸ Ibid, 37

³⁹ Ibid, 37

Foreign policy construction versus foreign policy confusion

From 1999 Robert Mugabe's foreign policy was pro-eastern and was very assertive in his stance. He adopted the 'look east policy' and identity construction at home. He was an advocate of black empowerment, indigenization, and African issues of sovereignty, independency and self-determination. Mugabe even codenamed the 2002 election as an 'anti-Blair' election and became an antagonist of the west and an ally of the east. He adopted a radical Marxist-Socialist-Communist-Leninist principle aimed at promoting his domestic and foreign policy as well as garnering popular support at home. Mnangagwa has seemingly adopted a faceless foreign policy as he looks both east and west, casting doubts as to whether Zimbabwe is now for sale. He wants now to engage with the west but at the same time he is an admirer of Deng Xiao Ping on one side and sending a delegation to North Korea to establish relations with Zimbabwe on the other. The implications for 'Zimbabwe open for business mantra' cast controversy on whether this is re-engagement or whirlwind, and may make him a caricature of the former incumbent.

Some justification for the Zimbabwean military coup

1)-Robert Mugabe had plagued the country into an economic malaise, for example a)-There was a severe cash crisis in the banks (which has even got worse under Mnangagwa regime), corruption by his cabinet (which was almost wholly inherited by Mnangagwa); b)-Nepotism-Mugabe had placed his relatives in key and strategic government posts as well as in parastatals. Grace Mugabe, apart from being the Child Survival Foundation leader and head of the ZANU PF Women's League, was to be elevated again to the vice presidency post in the ZANU PF December 2017 congress; c)- Patrick Zhuwao, Mugabe's nephew, apart from deputizing and heading various ministries, had been sworn in as Minister of Youth; d)- Bona Mugabe, Mugabe's daughter, had been assigned the post of head of the Empowerment Bank; e)-Simba Chikore, Mugabe's son in law and husband to Bona, had been rewarded the post of head of Air Zimbabwe, the national airline.

2)-Mugabe had no clear succession plan. He wanted on one end to die in office and on the other end to pass the presidential button to his wife Grace whilst he was still alive. When Grace became the defacto head of state and government, firing ministers and other ZANU PF officials, the war veterans and army generals interpreted this to be a bedroom coup and reacted swiftly to eschew it from escalating.

3)-Instead of Robert Mugabe leading the country, it was actually Grace who was running the Zimbabwean political show, instructing Mugabe when to drive, when to accelerate, slow down, indicate, turn or stop.

4)-Mugabe had politically and economically quarantined Zimbabwe, relegating it to global isolation by his decision to make Zimbabwe quit the Commonwealth of Nations in 2003. He had also continually lashed at the western folk, lambasting and lampooning the International Community and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

5)-Mugabe had plunged the country into economic decadence by his chaotic land reform programme which was conducted violently, disorderly and in a vindictive and malicious manner. This land grab programme seized farms from the white commercial farmers without any compensation. This led to targeted or smart sanctions from the west hence widening the isolation rift of Zimbabwe from the International Community.

6)-Electoral Fraud-Mugabe clung to power and used the army, ZANU PF youths and war veterans to intimidate, coerce and torture MDC supporters in the 2008 elections. After the 2008 electoral defeat Mugabe maintained his toehold on power and forced a re-run and an inclusive government.

7)-Investor unfriendly policies-Mugabe had devised a vindictive and insipid investor policy whereby any investor outside Zimbabwe or who is not a Zimbabwean would remit 51% of his/her profits to the state. This scared away investors and had abrasive effects on the already ailing economy. His indigenization policy was nugatory and by the time the coup was staged it was in the red and hanging in the balance.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1)- Heads of states should not stay in power for too long (not more than two terms).
- 2)- The tinkering, massaging and doctoring of constitutions to extent presidential terms should not be tolerated by legislatures and masses.
- 3)- Political bootlicking should be prohibited since it leads to megalomaniacal tendencies.
- 4)- Military coups should be punished by SADC, AU, NATO, or UN as they are unlawful and the resultant governments illegitimate. Although a military coup may be a way of getting rid of a notorious dictator, the method is however tainted with illegality.
- 5)- African Union and SADC should graduate from being mere talk organisations, forums and idealistic organisations and become realistic organisations with action and punitive abilities when they are confronted with catastrophic scenarios such as the Zimbabwean one. Currently, the two toothless organisations look like 'all petrol but no machine.'
- 6)- The International Community should not condone military coups even if an unfavorable dictator is ousted from power. The ousting of an infamous dictator cannot justify the method (coup).

- 7)- National armies should not be politicized. Politically-charged armies pose a serious threat to peoples' rights and plunge peoples' liberties into jeopardy.

III. CONCLUSION

Summatively, this paper concludes that the Zimbabwean scenario was tantamount to a military coup as it bore all the characteristics of a coup de tat. Former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe did not resign of his own accord but was forced to resign at gun point by the military. The political demise of Mugabe was engineered by his wife Grace who had overridden Mugabe, antagonizing with the army and war veterans hence becoming a harbinger for perpetual political discord between the three. Mugabe wanted to create a dynasty in Zimbabwe to maintain his legacy, safeguard his family and its properties as well as insulating himself from prosecution after relinquishing power. ZANU PF internal power struggles between the Team Lacoste and the G40 did not help the country in any way as the infighting was retrogressive and repugnant in the eyes of the Zimbabweans. The new ZANU PF government headed by Mnangagwa has also failed to ameliorate Zimbabwe economically as Zimbabweans become disillusioned and frustrated; casting fears that the party may be in danger of being administered by flap doodlers. Due to strong and forceful opposition parties in Zimbabwe, this paper foresees another inclusive government in 2018 as there is no likelihood of an outright winner in the forthcoming elections.

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