

# MANGAGWA: The Two-Headed Beast at the Root of Zimbabwe's Crises

*How the fusion of Emmerson Mnangagwa's raw executive power and Nick Mangwana's propaganda apparatus has created a single, self-reinforcing system of authoritarian capture — and why understanding 'Mangagwa' as one organism, not two men, is essential to understanding every crisis Zimbabwe now faces.*

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## A NOTE ON THE COINAGE

*In our CAB3 report, we accidentally collapsed 'Mnangagwa' and 'Mangwana' into a single portmanteau: Mangagwa. We have decided to keep it — not as a correction oversight, but as an analytical coinage. It captures something true that no other single word does. Mangagwa is not two men. It is one organism: raw executive power fused with its own propaganda apparatus — the fist and the glove, the crime and the alibi, the smuggling network and the spin cycle.*

## SECTION I

### The Coup That Called Itself a Liberation

The Mangagwa organism was born in the early hours of 15 November 2017, when tanks rolled through Harare and General Constantino Chiwenga — with Mnangagwa's full knowledge and complicity — removed Robert Mugabe from the presidency he had held for 37 years. It was dressed up almost immediately as a 'military-assisted transition' — a coup that dared not speak its name.

Mnangagwa arrived back from South Africa, where he had fled after being fired by Mugabe, to assume the presidency. He stood before Zimbabwe and the world and made promises. Democracy. Reform. Anti-corruption. An economy 'open for business.' The past years, however, have been marked by increasing repression, a closing of civic space, a lack of reform, severe corruption and a deteriorating economic crisis.

Nick Mangwana was there at the inception, and has been there every single day since — on X, on state television, in press releases — to explain, justify, deflect and, when necessary, fabricate. When the coup needed to become a 'transition,' Mangwana provided the language. When the rigged 2023 election needed to become a 'democratic mandate,' Mangwana provided the spin. And when a US Midwest community hall needed to become a Zimbabwean public consultation, Mangwana provided the AI image generator.

## SECTION II

### Personally Sanctioned — and Still in Power

**Let us state this plainly, because it is extraordinary and the world has not sufficiently registered it: Emmerson Mnangagwa became the first sitting head of state to be designated under the United States' Global Magnitsky Programme — the flagship American tool for holding the world's worst human rights abusers and corrupt actors accountable.**

<b>11</b> individuals personally sanctioned by the US under Global Magnitsky, including Mnangagwa himself, his wife, his VP and senior officials	<b>3</b> companies sanctioned — including Sakunda Holdings and Fossil Group, the financial engines of the looting cartel	<b>1st</b> sitting head of state ever designated under the Global Magnitsky Programme — a historic disgrace that Mangwana called 'a great vindication'
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The US Treasury was specific about what he had done. As president, Mnangagwa enriched himself through gold and diamond smuggling networks and used his power to provide a 'protective shield' to criminals facilitating these illicit markets. He directed Zimbabwean officials to facilitate the sale of gold and diamonds in illicit markets and solicited bribes in exchange for his influence and protection.

His wife Auxillia was sanctioned alongside him. His son David was appointed Deputy Finance Minister after his 2023 re-election. His nephew Tongai became Deputy Tourism Minister. Another son, Emmerson Jr, is also under US sanctions due to his links with Kudakwashe Tagwirei. This is not governance. It is dynasty-building on a foundation of looted national resources.

***"It's rare that you see a government say that sanctions on the sitting president is a victory for the government."***

*— Matthew Miller, US State Department Spokesperson, responding to Nick Mangwana's claim that the sanctions were 'a great vindication of President Mnangagwa's foreign policy' — March 2024*

That exchange is Mangagwa in its purest form: the crime, and the spin, operating as a single reflex. Mnangagwa commits the act that triggers the sanction. Mangwana reframes the sanction as a triumph. The international community is left staring at the wreckage of irony, trying to find the handle.

### SECTION III

## **The Crony Architecture: Tagwirei, Chivayo and the Looting Cartels**

Kudakwashe Tagwirei is a close ally of Mnangagwa with a longstanding association with Zanu-PF. He has provided high-value gifts to senior government members to gain access to resources and exerts significant control over major sectors of Zimbabwe's economy. His firm Sakunda Holdings received treasury bills at favourable exchange rates while running the Command Agriculture programme — a programme ostensibly designed to feed Zimbabwe's people. The food did not arrive. The money did.

Wicknell Chivayo, an ex-convict with close government ties, was awarded a Zimbabwe Power Company tender to construct a solar project in 2015 at a cost of \$172 million. Ten years later, the project has not seen the light of day. The money is gone. The solar panels are

not there. The lights go out in Zimbabwean hospitals. Children study by candlelight, when there are candles.

The concentration of power is further illustrated by the emergence of interest groups — Teachers4ED and Nurses4ED, named after the president's initials — that specifically support the president rather than the party. Public servants, dependent on an impoverished state salary, are organised into fan clubs for a man whose inner circle is looting the treasury that pays those salaries. This is the Mangagwa system in its grotesque entirety.

#### **THE MANGWANA RESPONSE TO THE CHIVAYO SOLAR SCANDAL**

*When Chivayo's unbuilt \$172 million solar project became a subject of public outrage, Mangwana offered no investigation, no accountability, no prosecution. He continued to post supportively about 'Vision 2030' and Zimbabwe's 'macroeconomic stability.' The pattern is consistent: Mangwana never acknowledges a crime. He reframes it, deflects from it, or simply posts about something else.*

#### SECTION IV

## **The Legal Architecture of Repression**

The Mangagwa organism does not rely on crude violence alone — though there is plenty of that. It has built an entire legal infrastructure of repression, piece by piece, since 2017.

In April 2025, Mnangagwa signed the Private Voluntary Organizations Amendment Act into law, sharply curtailing freedom of association and expression. The new law empowers authorities to deregister and seize the assets of nongovernmental groups deemed to be acting in a 'politically partisan manner,' with little to no judicial recourse. It allows authorities to monitor NGO operations, scrutinising ownership structures, funding sources and affiliations. Violations can result in criminal prosecution with penalties of heavy fines or imprisonment.

In 2023, the Patriotic Act — signed personally by Mnangagwa — contained provisions imposing life imprisonment, the death penalty, termination of citizenship and suspension from voting for those deemed to have undermined 'national interests.' The High Court later struck down the most extreme penalties as unconstitutional — but only after the law had already done its work of terrorising civil society into silence.

In June 2024, the National Army commander publicly stated that in future elections, people would be marched to polling stations to vote for Zanu-PF, 'whether you like it or not.' This was said openly, on record, to the media. No retraction followed. No accountability was demanded by a judiciary that Mangagwa has thoroughly captured.

#### SECTION V

## **The Human Cost — Paid by Those With Nothing**

While the Tagwireis and Chivayos accumulate billions, a cholera outbreak beginning in February 2023 resulted in over 28,500 cases and nearly 600 deaths across all ten provinces by 2024 — a direct consequence of failed governance, inadequate water and sanitation systems and corruption that diverts resources away from essential services.

Hospital wards have virtually nothing except the beds patients sleep in and the dedication of hardworking nurses and doctors. Every single pill — from simple painkillers to life-saving

antibiotics — must be purchased. Every lab test must be paid for privately. A poor villager in rural Zimbabwe, with no money to purchase medication or pay for tests, is simply left to die.

For nearly three decades, Zimbabwe has faced an economic crisis characterised by high food prices, loss of currency value and low wages. Millions of Zimbabweans have left for neighbouring countries and Europe. The diaspora that reads ZHRO's reports, that sends remittances home to keep families alive, that carries Zimbabwe's future in their qualifications and energy — they left because Mangagwa made staying impossible.

*"When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers. In Zimbabwe, the people are the grass."*

— Tendai Ruben Mbofana, Zimbabwean commentator

## SECTION VI

# Six Simultaneous Crises — One Common Root

The Mangagwa organism is not the cause of one crisis. It is the cause of all of them, simultaneously, by design. Each crisis feeds the next: economic collapse justifies emergency powers; emergency powers suppress the opposition that might demand accountability; suppression of accountability enables more looting; more looting deepens the economic collapse.

<p><b>CONSTITUTIONAL</b></p> <p>CAB3 would end direct presidential elections, extend terms to 7 years, redraw constituency boundaries and return the voters' roll to a biased registrar. The 2013 Constitution — won through a decade of popular consensus — dismantled by decree.</p>	<p><b>ECONOMIC</b></p> <p>Hyperinflation returning. The ZiG currency failing. Tagwirei's cartels looting billions through Command Agriculture and state contracts. A \$172m solar project commissioned in 2015 — still not built. The lights go out in hospitals.</p>
<p><b>HUMANITARIAN</b></p> <p>28,500+ cholera cases and nearly 600 deaths from a preventable outbreak. Hospital wards with no medication. Children studying under trees. 2.6 million people, including 1.7 million children, in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.</p>	<p><b>DEMOCRATIC</b></p> <p>The Patriotic Act. The PVO Amendment Act. Abductions. Beatings. Journalists jailed for 71 days without trial. Army commanders threatening to march citizens to polling stations 'whether you like it or not.'</p>
<p><b>DIASPORA</b></p> <p>Millions have left — to South Africa, the UK, Europe, North America. They send remittances that keep families alive. They carry Zimbabwe's future in their qualifications. They left because Mangagwa made staying impossible.</p>	<p><b>DYNASTIC</b></p> <p>Son David: Deputy Finance Minister. Nephew Tongai: Deputy Tourism Minister. Son Emmerson Jr: US-sanctioned. Wife Auxillia: US-sanctioned. This is not a government. It is a family business built on a nation's stolen resources.</p>

## SECTION VII

# CAB3: The Culmination of Everything

Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3 is not a policy disagreement. It is the logical, inevitable culmination of everything above. Mnangagwa — personally sanctioned by the United States, implicated in gold and diamond smuggling, builder of a dynasty from state resources — wants to remain in power until 2030 and beyond. CAB3 is the mechanism. The four-day

'consultation' was the performance. The AI-generated smiling crowd was the proof that the performance had occurred.

The man who chaired the cabinet meeting approving his own term extension is the same man whose VP threatened to march citizens to polling booths by force. The same man whose army beats lawyers in Harare and abducts students from lecture theatres in Chinhoyi. The same man whose spokesman posts fabricated images of American community halls as evidence of Zimbabwean democratic participation.

**What is needed now — before 16 May 2026, when CAB3 goes to Parliament — is coordinated, escalating, loud international pressure. Diplomatic isolation. Asset freezes beyond those already in place. A clear signal to every institution, every bank, every international body that does business with Harare.**

#### ZHRO CONCLUSION

**Mangagwa is not a government. It is a criminal enterprise wearing a government's clothes. It commits atrocities in the morning and generates the alibi by lunchtime. When Mnangagwa loots the gold, Mangwana calls it macroeconomic stability. When Mnangagwa beats the lawyers, Mangwana calls it security. When Mnangagwa rigs the consultation, Mangwana posts an AI image of happy Americans and calls it democratic processes in action. The international community sanctioned the president. Now it must act on that sanction — before CAB3 makes permanent what began as a coup in November 2017. Loudly. Now. #Mangagwa.**

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