



CORRUPTION AND STATE CAPTURE

Who to Follow?



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Contents

I. INTRODUCTION 2

II. UNPACKING CORRUPTION IN ZIMBABWE 3

i) A looter continua: History of Corruption in Zimbabwe 4

ii) Whose hand is in the cookie jar?: Identifying the corrupt 7

iii) A symbiotic relationship: the nexus between corruption and authoritarianism 9

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 10

REFERENCES 10

Corruption and State Capture: Who to follow?

Introduction

Zimbabwe is ranked 157 out of 180 countries on the corruption perception index of 2020 by

Transparency International, making the country one of the most corrupt in Africa and indeed the world. According to Transparency International, corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain[<https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption>].

Other academics have also defined corruption as the violation of formed rules governing the allocation of public resources by officials in response to offers of financial gain or political support[Van de Merwe, S. (2001)].

While there are several definitions of corruption, it is clear that those engaged in it do so for private gain at the expense of the common good.

There is also a strong correlation between economic underdevelopment, poverty, inequality, social division, conflict environmental degradation, and corruption.

Countries that score lowly on the corruption perception index tend to be the poorest, unequal, violent and generally ruled by authoritarian regimes[Chang, E and Golden, M.A (2010)].

In Zimbabwe, corruption has become so pervasive in the country to the extent that it has become a daily lived reality among the ordinary citizens and the elites in the private and public sector alike.

However, the most devastating forms of corruption are those undertaken by public officials as they pilfer public resources.

The dire effect of this kind of corruption is experienced the hardest by Zimbabwe's poorest and most vulnerable demographic groups and communities.

Consequences include, but are not limited to high youth unemployment, frightening maternal mortality rate, thousands of households who go to bed hungry, under-resourced hospitals and schools as well as lack of access to basic water and sanitation facilities. In contrast, it produces obscenely wealthy elites

who live lavishly at the expense of the common good.

Since 2018, President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government has been dogged by cases of serious corruption.

It is noteworthy to state that President Mnangagwa came with a message of zero tolerance to corruption[<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/24/will-mnangagwa-deliver-on-promise-to-tackle-corruption>] yet in three years since his election, there have been dozens of cases of corruption that have not been investigated.

Two damning investigative reports have since been published in 2021 detailing how corruption and state capture have hampered the prospects of Zimbabwe's economic recovery.

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Two damning investigative reports have since been published in 2021 detailing how corruption and state capture have hampered the prospects of Zimbabwe's economic recovery.

The first report was released by the Daily Maverick titled 'Cartel Power Dynamics in Zimba-

bwe[<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/24/will-mnangagwa-deliver-on-promise-to-tackle-corruption>]' which claimed that Zimbabwe could be losing as much as half of the country's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$21.4 billion. T

he second was released by The Sentry titled 'Shadows and Shell Games: Uncovering an Offshore Business Empire in Zimbabwe[https://cdn.thesentry.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ShadowsShellGames_TheSentry_July2021.pdf]' which showed how shadowy businessman and close associate of President Mnangagwa, Kuda Tagwirei, was involved in a complex web of corruption and state capture.

It is against this context that Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) developed this paper which is a desktop review to locate who benefits from corruption and expose the relationship between corruption and authoritarian rule. This is a very important aspect as it will inform the Coalition and its membership on how to respond through advocacy initiatives that will raise a political cost to individuals and entities involved in corruption.

<https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption>

Van de Merwe, S. (2001)

Chang, E and Golden, M.A (2010)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/24/will-mnangagwa-deliver-on-promise-to-tackle-corruption>

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Unpacking Corruption in Zimbabwe

Alooter Continua: History of Corruption in Zimbabwe?

Zimbabwe obtained its political independence from Britain in 1980 and it was not long before the new government elites started to loot the state coffers [Makumbe, J (1994)].

During the war, the Portuguese slogan 'Aluta Continua' (the struggle continues) was popular to urge comrades to focus on fighting the liberation struggle but it seems after independence it transformed to 'Alooter Continua' (the looting continues).

The fact that some of the earliest corruption scandals came barely two years after independence is a testimony of the rot that was in the liberation movement top echelons.

Those who had liberated the country soon became its worst enemies, driving the economy down through massive corruption, policy inconsistencies and incom-

petence.

The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) period saw a period of massive privatisation of public entities and austerity.

Corruption also thrived as funds from the Bretton Woods institutions found themselves in private pockets in the guise of black economic empowerment while social service collapsed and companies closed shop resulting in high unemployment.

Once corruption had taken root, the whole economy was headed for a collapse as shown by selected scandals in the following table.

YEAR	CORRUPTION SCANDAL	YEAR	CORRUPTION SCANDAL
1982	Paweni scandal – Samson Paweni was arrested following a GMB scandal involving the importation of grain for the 1982 drought. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison	2012	Marange diamonds scandal where diamonds worth billions of dollars were allegedly looted by the security organs and private diamond companies. Implicated culprits include Sam Pa, Sino-Zimbabwe Development (Pvt) Ltd and Anjin Investments (Pvt) Ltd.
1986	National Railways Housing Scandal where construction materials were overpriced and the difference looted by top executives.	2013	ZBC overpricing scandal- the CEO Happiness Muchechetere overpriced an Outside Broadcasting Van worth US\$90 000 for US\$1 million.
1987	ZISCO Steel Blast Furnace Scandal crippled operations of the country's sole steelmaker.	2014	PSMAS Mega salaries scandal involving CEO Cuthbert Dube and Board members like Presidential Spokesperson George Charamba
1987	Air Zimbabwe Fokker Plane Scandal where \$100 million was salted away through corrupt procurement.	2016	Zimdef Funds Scandal where then Minister of Higher Education used Zimdef money to purchase motorbikes for chiefs in Tsholotsho

https://cdn.thesentry.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ShadowsShellGames_TheSentry_July2021.pdf
Makumbe, J (1994)

1988	Willowgate Scandal a car purchase scandal involving top government officials who were found guilty of corruption by a Tribunal including the current Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade	2016	ZINARA Snow Graders Scandal involving procurement of snow graders by ZINARA under the instruction then Minister of Transport, Jorum Gumbo.
1989	ZRP Santana Scandal the procurement prices were inflated and top chefs lined their pockets in this corrupt deal.	2017	US\$3 Billion command agriculture scandal involving Kuda Tagwirei's Sakunda Holdings.
1994	War Victims Compensation Scandal when top officials including former Vice President Joice Mujuru (then Minister) claimed disproportionate benefits at the expense of deserving victims.	2019	Tagwirei Buys 75% of Bindura Nickel Corporation at price below the market value.
1995	GMB Grain Scandal just like the Poweni scandal, top chefs in parastatals swindled the company of millions in dubious grain sales.	2019	Tagwirei Buys 100% of Shamva, Mazowe and Redwing Gold Mines through Kuvimba Mining House and at prices way below the market valuation of the assets.
1996	VIP Housing Scandal involved VIPs in government including former first lady Grace Mugabe, grabbing houses meant for low-earning civil servants in the 'pay-for-your-house-scheme.' Other identified corrupt beneficiaries include Justice Paddington Garwe, and late former Herald Editor Bornwell Chakaodza.	2020	Landela Investments US\$54 million Zupco Buses Scandal involving Presidential advisor Kuda Tagwirei.
1999	National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM) scandal involving hundreds of millions of dollars through alleged fraudulent activities officials. When the scandal went public then Minister of Transport Enoc Chikwore resigned.	2020	Henrietta Rushwaya Gold Smuggling Scandal at the Robert Mugabe International Airport. She was arrested but the charges were eventually dropped and she counties to lead the Zimbabwe Miners Federation.
1999	Harare Airport Extension Scandal involved \$7 billion tender given to Air Harbour Technologies by the then President Robert Mugabe who was then allegedly receiving kickbacks from the company.	2021	Sale of Fidelity Gold Refinery Scandal which involves a group of shadowy local companies with the Kuda Tagwirei linked Kuvimba Mining House allegedly at the centre of the corrupt deal

2001	Harare Airport Scandal like the other airport scandal it involved further corruption including the construction of a private residence for the late former President Robert Mugabe and a \$50 000 donation to his ZANU PF party by the owner of the construction Hani Yamani.	2021	100 more buses are procured by ZUPCO through Kuda Tagwirei linked Lindela Investment which had in 2020 prejudiced the government of US\$54 million in a similar bus procurement deal
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Sources: Pindula, ACT-Southern Africa, The Sentry and Daily Maverick

The above are basic highlights of a dark history of corruption in Zimbabwe which has effectively destroyed the economy and livelihoods. From the table, it is telling that since President Mnangagwa took over after the 2018 plebiscite, his allies and associates have been at the centre of grand-scale corruption. While the total amount of money lost by the country through corruption remains con-

tested with estimates ranging from US\$1 billion per year to as high as US\$10 billion; one clear thing is that the country is bleeding[]. The “Zimbabwe is open for business” mantra has turned into a gravy train for Zimbabwe, where billions continue to be pilfered through corruption.

Unpacking Corruption in Zimbabwe

Whose hand is in the cookie jar?: Identifying the corrupt

It is important to explore and identify who benefits from the corrupt activities which are sinking the country's economy. In other words; whose hands are in the proverbial 'cookie jar'?

From the evidence available in the public domain, research papers and investigative journalism stories, it is clear that beneficiaries of corruption can be categorized into at least three areas namely; Public sector elites, Private sector actors and International handlers.

a)Public sector elites

The public sector elites include ministers, top bureaucrats, executives of parastatals, top security sector chiefs and even those in the presidency.

In Zimbabwe, these public sector elites have been the face of corruption in the country since independence.

All major scandals in the country had these top elites being prominently identified. A few examples would suffice to build a case of how these elites have had their hands stuck in the cookies jar.

The Willowgate scandal is one of the most publicized cases of corruption in post-independence Zimbabwe[<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1989/04/15/3-cabinet-ministers-quit-in-zimbabwe-as-corruption-report-is-published/31e0f5ce-269d-49b3-832c-230129816606/>].

Its historical significance is in part because of the amounts of money involved as it is also about the individuals who were engaged in this shoddy enterprise.

One such individual was Maurice Nyagumbo, a Senior Minister of State for Political Affairs and Secretary for Administration in the ruling ZANU PF party.

After being figured in the massive corruption of the Willowgate scandal he took his own life. Another example is that of the Drax International US\$28 million scandal which sucked in then Minister of Health and Child Care Obadiah Moyo[<https://www.africareport.com/30676/zimbabwe-covid-19-drugs-scandal-lays-bare-the-rot-in-the-system/amp/>].

There are many other examples involving public elites in corruption in such State institutions as the Zimbabwe Defence Industry (ZDI), Zimbabwe Republic Police vehicles scandal involving the former Commissioner General Chihuri, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe farm mechanization scandal involving hundreds of elites including clerics such as ZAOGA's Ezekiel Guti, National Railways of Zimbabwe involving former late Director Rt. Brigadier Karakadzayi, and National Social Security Association (NSSA) involving former Ministers such as Petronella Kagonye and Prisca Mupfumira. All these elites across politics, state institutions and even the church looted public funds with impunity.

Private sector actors are also involved in acts of graft which has robbed the generality of the public funds that could have been used for economic development.

b)Private sector actors

These private sector actors are often what academics refer to as politically exposed persons (PEPs) which means 'an individual who has been entrusted with an important public function'. PEPs get preferential treatment and information to outbid their competitors and in some brazen cases are just awarded tenders even when their bids have not been well or even get contracts without going to tender. A few examples will suffice.

Zimbabwe has been facing serious electricity challenges and in 2013 Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC), a subsidiary of ZESA Holdings, posted a tender for a US\$200 million 100 megawatt Gwanda solar project.

A private company owned by controversial businessmen, Wicknell Chivayo, bid for the tender and was awarded in 2015 under controversial circumstances.

After the award, Chivayo's company was immediately given a down-payment of US\$5 million without any due diligence[<https://www.herald.co.zw/news/2015/07/15/wicknell-chivayo-awarded-100-mw-gwanda-solar-project/>].

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1989/04/15/3-cabinet-ministers-quit-in-zimbabwe-as-corruption-report-is-published/31e0f5ce-269d-49b3-832c-230129816606/>

<https://www.africareport.com/30676/zimbabwe-covid-19-drugs-scandal-lays-bare-the-rot-in-the-system/amp/>

zw/5m-chivayo-payout-zpc-probes-bigwigs/amp/]].

It would later emerge that Chivayo had put the money to personal use and that ZESA top executives and the then Minister of Energy and Power Development,

Samuel Undenge, had corruptly influenced the awarding of the tender and processing of the down payment. Chivayo and Undenge would be arrested, with Undenge being convicted of abuse of office charges[<https://www.herald.co.zw/ex-energy-minister-undenge-jailed/amp/>]].

In 2020, the government of Zimbabwe banned private public transport operators and declared the state parastatal ZUPCO as the sole operator in the urban public transport ecosystem[<https://www.newzimbabwe.com/blow-for-kombi-operators-as-government-imposes-total-ban/>]].

The tender for procuring buses and supplying to ZUPCO was awarded to Landela Investments, a company allegedly owned by President Mnangagwa's ally and confidante, Kuda Tagwirei. Investigations by journalists show that Landela purchased each bus unit for US\$58,900 from a Chinese Bus Company, Xiamen Golden Dragon.

Tagwirei's company would sell each bus to the government at a whopping US\$212,962 making a super profit of US\$54 million from the whole deal and prejudicing taxpayers in the process[<https://www.theindependent.co.zw/mnangagwas-ally-pockets-us54m-in-fresh-bus-deal/>]].

This example shows how PEPs fuel corruption and in this case that it runs to the highest office in the land. To cap it all, it was President Mnangagwa who commissioned the buses meaning he was well aware of the corrupt deal.

c) International handlers

Public elites and private actors alone cannot be able to fleece the economy in the manner in which the Zimbabwean economy has suffered since independence.

For them to effectively undertake the movement of such big monies in the international monetary system, they would need international handlers to assist them.

The country has a history of smugglers with strong

international connections one such notorious corrupt cartel boss was John Brendenkamp[<https://allafrica.com/stories/202008060236.html>] who was involved in arms smuggling with his operations based in Zimbabwe. When Zimbabwe adopted the 'Look East' policy, it simultaneously opened its economy to corrupt cartels from the Far East especially China and Hong Kong.

The billion-dollar Chiadzwa diamond heist would not have been pulled out without the helping hand of a shadowy international criminal cartel known as the 'Queensway Syndicate'[<https://amp.economist.com/briefing/2011/08/13/the-queensway-syndicate-and-the-africa-trade>]].

Chinese businessman Sam Pa is at the centre of this group whose several companies have a track record of corrupt resource-based deals with African countries.

The flagship company is Sino Zimbabwe Development (Pvt) Ltd - a diamonds, cotton and property company in Zimbabwe. According to an investigative group, Global Witness (2012), in return for preferential access to diamonds and the cotton industry, Sam Pa and team allegedly funded the feared Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) to the tune of US\$100 million and purchased 200 trucks some of which were used by the ruling party for its operations[<https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/conflict-diamonds/zimbabwe/financing-parallel-government/>]].

The report went further to state that the US\$100 million war chest was for the CIO to fund a dedicated campaign to discredit key opposition leaders ahead of the 2013 elections.

Another recent example is the operations of Tagwirei's network of companies, captured in The Sentry Report (2021), which are registered in Mauritius, Switzerland, Seychelles, Panama, the Cayman Islands among other thriving destinations for ill-gotten money.

It is clear that without a network of international handlers and even professionals like lawyers, bankers and accountants it would be very difficult for the corrupt in Zimbabwe to get away with their loot.

This observation shall be very important when this paper provides recommendations below; it is also noteworthy that these international handlers meddle in domestic politics to undermine democracy

<https://www.herald.co.zw/5m-chivayo-payout-zpc-probes-bigwigs/amp/>
<https://www.herald.co.zw/ex-energy-minister-undenge-jailed/amp/>
<https://www.newzimbabwe.com/blow-for-kombi-operators-as-government-imposes-total-ban/>
<https://www.theindependent.co.zw/mnangagwas-ally-pockets-us54m-in-fresh-bus-deal/>
<https://allafrica.com/stories/202008060236.html>

Unpacking Corruption in Zimbabwe

A symbiotic relationship: the nexus between corruption and authoritarianism

Having explored who to follow when it comes to corruption in Zimbabwe, it is also critical to look at the nexus between corruption and authoritarian consolidation.

In other words, how does corruption stifle democracy?

To unpack this question, this paper has been informed by the analysis of the actors above and again anecdotal evidence paints a clear picture that all those involved in corruption have no interest to support democratic transition and if anything, they act as active blockers of the same.

Business people who have benefitted from corrupt deals and preferential treatment from the government such as access to tenders, tax holidays, and mining concessions among other sweetheart agreements have poured in money into the ruling party[<https://www.newzimbabwe.com/green-fuel-mogul-billy-rautenbach-paying-zanu-pf-salaries-tsenengamu/>].

In the 2013 elections, the ruling ZANU PF party was heavily funded by tycoons who had links to corrupt deals such as Sam pa of the Queensway Syndicate, John Brendenkamp, Billy Ruetenbach whose Green Fuels Company has displaced thousands of villagers and maintains a corrupt monopoly on the ethanol industry.

The corrupt involvement of the military top brass in Chiadzwa diamond fields saw them eventually stage a coup de tat when the incumbent leader wanted to push them out.

In addition to this, some very corrupt individuals are appointed to top government posts and

others use proceeds of corruption to fund their electoral campaigns.

Once these have made their way to power they work to stall any prospects of accountability. An example of a beneficiary of this is current Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Frederick Shava, who was convicted by the tribunal after the Willowgate scandal yet he was appointed without regard to his checkered past.

At the international level, countries which corrupt business people are engaged in Zimbabwe such as Belarus (buses and agricultural implements), Russia (mining) and the Chinese (mining, manufacturing and many other sectors) have all tended to cooperate with the authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe.

They have openly supported and funded the ruling party to entrench authoritarian rule, as was the case in the Chinese arms shipment fiasco[<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/24/zimbabwe.china>].

It is therefore clear that corruption and the largesse it creates is the lifeblood of authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe and thus a fight against corruption is a fight for democracy.

<https://amp.economist.com/briefing/2011/08/13/the-queensway-syndicate-and-the-africa-trade>
<https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/conflict-diamonds/zimbabwe/financing-parallel-government/>
<https://www.newzimbabwe.com/green-fuel-mogul-billy-rautenbach-paying-zanu-pf-salaries-tsenengamu/>

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In the final analysis, it can be drawn from the evidence presented in this paper that corruption and state capture have hampered Zimbabwe's chance of economic recovery and democratic transition.

There exists a symbiotic relationship between the beneficiaries of corruption, local and international, and authoritarian consolidation. Therefore, if Zimbabwe is to turn the corner civic society and other democratic institutions must play their role.

The following recommendations are made for civic society, Parliament of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission. These institutions have been selected for their potential to assert a case for democracy and fight corruption:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIC SOCIETY

- Civic society must actively organize the strengthening of a vibrant grassroots-driven anti-corruption movement which can effectively show the nexus between deepening poverty, inequality and corruption.
- CiZC must lead a regional and international movement for the freezing of assets acquired by corrupt individuals and cartels. Such an international campaign must target banks, law firms, accounting firms and known business people who have operations in democratic countries but are aiding corruption and authoritarianism in Zimbabwe.
- Strengthen anti-corruption advocacy as part of demanding electoral reforms including pushing for budget caps and audit of sources of funds for presidential candidates.
- Raise awareness in communities about forms of corruption and name and shame individuals who are openly corrupt to promote a culture of transparency and accountability in Zimbabwe. Examples include

Kuda Tagwirei, Obadiah Moyo, George Charamba, Prisca Mupfumira and Petronela Kagonye among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

- Parliament must actively utilize the committee system, especially the portfolio committee on Public Accounts, to promote transparency and accountability.
- Parliamentarians must be capacitated to appreciate the impact of corruption on the lives and wellbeing of the constituencies they represent.
- Parliament must put in place legislation for the enforcement of the Auditor General's recommendations and also penalties for individuals and entities which fail to comply with recommendations within a stipulated period.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ZHRC

- The commission must undertake research work on the impact of corruption on Human rights in Zimbabwe and make recommendations to respective institutions which must address concerns they raise.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ZACC

- The commission must diligently carry out its work without fear or favour in line with legal provisions and revisit unconcluded known corruption cases from the past.
- The commission must provide an online dashboard to track court cases and providing regular updates.
- One-stop protection mechanism to ensure that witnesses feel safe to report corruption.

<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/24/zimbabwe.china>

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