

**In, Zimbabwe churches, firms, and opposition feel vulnerable after Mugabe victory
Many citizens and groups worried about Mugabe's promise to usher in 'the final phase of the liberation struggle.'**

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10 August 2013

BOSTON-

Editor's note: A previous version of this article focused primarily on churches in Zimbabwe and relied, mistakenly, on a wire report that was dated. The Monitor regrets the error.

The atmosphere in Zimbabwe after the reelection of strongman Robert Mugabe is not one of great celebration, but of tension.

Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, the main challenger, says he will not join in a new governing coalition but is contesting the credibility of the July 31 vote in court.

Fears are on the rise in the capital of Harare, reports say, that under one-party rule, a host of Mr. Mugabe's old partners, cronies, henchmen, and friends will start to come out of the woodwork to take advantage of the hour.

Reports are starting to surface that women, especially in rural areas, who worked against Mugabe's fifth consecutive term are already beginning to be quietly targeted if they are not sufficiently joyful about the outcome. Refugee centers in Harare are reporting a rise of civilians coming from the countryside.

Foreign-owned banks, mines, and businesses have heard that, to fulfill a campaign promise made by Mugabe, their assets may be seized and restructured into a majority national ownership arrangement. Officials from Mugabe's Zanu PF party speak of new forms of "wealth transfer." Mines and banks in the nation have an estimated value of \$9 billion.

Churches, particularly those with overseas ties or universalist views, have often been in an ambiguous relationship with the Mugabe regime – Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and evangelicals alike.

And there is concern that Mugabe's notorious "indigenization" policy that led to "land reform" in the past decade, which involved the chasing of white farmers off their land, will begin to take hold in the urban areas and infrastructure of Harare and Zimbabwe. "Indigenization" was part of the leader's campaign promises.

Earlier this week, in a speech on "Heroes Day" before a gathering of veterans who fought for independence, Mugabe affirmed the policy:

"We will do everything in our power to ensure our objective of total indigenization, empowerment, development and employment is realized," he told the crowd, adding that reforms favoring black Zimbabweans make up the "final phase of the liberation struggle" and a "final phase of total independence."

But Mugabe may have a different overall intent, described this way by Richard Dowdon, director of the Royal Africa Society in London:

I also suspect Mugabe will now go into reconciliation mode as he did after his first ... election victory of 1980 and again after he brutally crushed the Ndebele uprising in the mid 1980s. Now he will deploy his considerable charm and hold out a hand to African and western governments that have criticized him in the past. At home he may offer posts in government to MDC leaders, maybe even to Tsvangirai himself. He may not fully implement the indigenization program which demands that black Zimbabweans must own 51 percent of all foreign-owned companies...

Whatever the 89-year old Mugabe may or may not do himself, however, some observers, like The Christian Science Monitor's Mxolisi Ncube, point to the retribution that is cranking up in the countryside, far from what even feeble media there are in Harare and far from the NGOs.

He notes that Amnesty International has already reported that women in rural areas, particularly activists, were "forced to flee their homes in Mashonaland Central Province" during violence started by Mugabe allies.

Some church clergy, particularly Anglicans, have been under attack in Zimbabwe for years as part of Mugabe's longstanding tryst with the West and its institutions of influence.

Some Anglicans are concerned about Nolbert Kunonga, a defrocked Anglican bishop who stumped for Mugabe and last week called him a leader "sent from God," may use the emotion around the landslide vote as an opportunity to seize property associated with the Church of England.

A recent Facebook posting by the Anglican diocese in Harare reads:

Anglicans across Zimbabwe must remain aware that the disbarred bishop intends to feature prominently in Church affairs and cause confusion, and is reportedly being revived by some evil forces who believe in his crusade to repossess our properties using the Constitutional Court. This is informational, for your knowledge, but remain prayerful. Victory is ours! We must not forget the pain. Anglicans are forgiving.

Several years ago Mr. Kunonga, who is US educated, told [The New York Times](#) that he is a "superior person" to the other members of the Anglican clergy, and made subtle threats against the chief Anglican bishop in Harare.

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