

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
DOROTHEA GIBSON

January 2018

[www.kas.de/suedafrika/](http://www.kas.de/suedafrika/)

## Is Zimbabwe Really in a Post-Mugabe Era?

SAIIA- SEMINAR WITH PROF. BRIAN RAFTOPOULOS

On Wednesday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2018, Prof. Brian Raftopoulos, formally Professor for Development Studies at the University of Zimbabwe and currently the Director of Research and Advocacy in the Solidarity Peace Trust, gave a presentation on the events leading to the resignation of Zimbabwe's former president Robert Mugabe and the country's future political and economic outlook. The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), a highly rated think tank specialising in International Relations issues and long-term partner of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, hosted the event in Cape Town.

### Resignation of President Mugabe

Prof. Raftopoulos started his presentation by talking about the events leading to the resignation of former President Robert Mugabe on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2017. After years of economic downturn, an unstable currency system and political turmoil characterized by corruption and putting personal above state interests, the conflict that triggered the resignation of Mugabe was the dismissal of former Vice President

Emmerson Mnangagwa in early November 2017. The dismissal of Mnangagwa, who was a leading figure during the liberation war of Zimbabwe and former confidante of Mugabe, was in response to Mnangagwa disagreeing with the executive power given to First Lady Grace Mugabe and her so called 'G40' faction. After this, the military, which is tied through personal connections to Mnangagwa and whose leaders expected a gain in power through the fall of Mugabe, started the operation "restoring legacy", which amounted to the resignation of Mugabe. The operation was accompanied by public demonstrations pro-Mugabe-resignation. Raftopoulos commented that the protestors claiming "Mugabe must go" were Zimbabweans of all races, signalling strong unity among each other and with the military – calling it a "military love affair". Despite the eight days lasting unrests, Mugabe still refused to resign, unwilling to see his loss of political control. As a consequence of this an impeachment process was started, but only became effective when Mugabe finally announced his resignation

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

DOROTHEA GIBSON

January 2018

[www.kas.de/suedafrika/](http://www.kas.de/suedafrika/)

through his parliament speaker (The Guardian, 2017). Although the process was titled as a constitutional intervention, Raftopoulos said, it indeed was a coup d'état and a military takeover.

### **The New Leader Emmerson Mnangagwa**

Mnangagwa, who was a leading figure during the Rhodesian Bush war, had several Cabinet positions as member of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and had been Vice President under Robert Mugabe since 2014. He is now current President of Zimbabwe. Raftopoulos noted that especially Mnangagwa's strong ties to the military have brought him to this position. In consequence of his strong military connections it is not surprising that he appointed former army boss Constantino Chiwenga and veteran politician Kembo Mohadi as Vice Presidents among others (Reuters, 2017).

### **The Post-Mugabe Era**

So how will the post-Mugabe era look like? Raftopoulos clearly analysed that Mnangagwa appears to be very keen on integrating Zimbabwe back into the world economy and will focus on bringing jobs to Zimbabwe. World leaders on the other hand are pleased that Robert Mugabe's rule has ended. Therefore Mnangagwa can expect open doors and a willingness by the international community to engage in discus-

sions and negotiations. He is working on the EU and UK to drop sanctions against Zimbabwe, finding financing and attracting foreign direct investments from Western countries and China. Furthermore, he has made it his goal to compensate white farmers, whose farms had been expropriated under Mugabe. Raftopoulos states, that Mnangagwa is speaking the language of strengthening reforms, stabilising the country and fighting corruption. However, Mnangagwa addresses the topic of corruption highly ambiguously. He is giving tax defrauders the opportunity to bring their cash back to Zimbabwe within the next three months without being prosecuted. If they do not do so, they will face legal consequence. This ruling however does not apply to him and his cabinet. Raftopoulos said that a corruption network probably still affects the whole of the military.

### **The Opposition Party MDC-T**

Also the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC-T), is more than relieved to see Mugabe gone. Raftopoulos negated rumours of mixed government of ZANU-PF and MDC-T members, as the momentum for the ZANU-PF is strong now and they need to establish themselves as the ruling party. The interests of the ZANU-PF are focused on strengthening their own party and building a strong profile. Moreover, Raftopoulos noted that the ZANU-PF is incor-



**Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung**

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung  
e.V. Europäische und Inter-  
national Zusammenarbeit

Auslandsbüro Südafrika  
KAS Liaison Office Cape Town  
36 Long Street, 6. Stockwerk  
P.O. Box 5294  
Kapstadt 8000, Südafrika

Telefon: +27 (0)21 422 3844  
Fax: +27 (0)21 422 1733  
Email: [info.kapstadt@kas.de](mailto:info.kapstadt@kas.de)

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

DOROTHEA GIBSON

**January 2018**

[www.kas.de/suedafrika/](http://www.kas.de/suedafrika/)

porating a lot of goals and policy suggestions from the MDC-T into their own programme. This will make it difficult for the MDC-T to establish an opposition profile and find financial support.

### **Résumé by Prof. Raftopoulos**

Although the new government under Mnangagwa is perceived as a symbol for a new and better Zimbabwe, there is a lot of damage control that needs to be done. Mnangagwa seems to be keen to establish strong economic relationships with major economic players, such as the UK and China, and to bring more jobs to Zimbabwe. As one measure to fulfil this goal, Mnangagwa has already announced to relax the ownership law on forcing foreign companies to cede 51 per cent of their businesses to black Zimbabweans or the government in all industries (except for specific sectors of the mining industry).

One of the most important upcoming challenges for Mnangagwa will be whether he will legitimately be elected as President of Zimbabwe in the second half of 2018. Now it is his time to prove himself: If he manages to bring economic growth to the country within the first half of 2018, his chances to win the elections and become President of Zimbabwe will increase highly.



**Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung**

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung  
e.V. Europäische und Inter-  
national Zusammenarbeit

Auslandsbüro Südafrika  
KAS Liaison Office Cape Town  
36 Long Street, 6. Stockwerk  
P.O. Box 5294  
Kapstadt 8000, Südafrika

Telefon: +27 (0)21 422 3844  
Fax: +27 (0)21 422 1733  
Email: [info.kapstadt@kas.de](mailto:info.kapstadt@kas.de)