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Mineral Leakages Cost Zimbabwe Revenue, Jobs

More than 2,600 tonnes intercepted as authorities tighten mine-to-border surveillance and enforce beneficiation rules

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FROM FARM TO FACTORY...

President Mnangagwa Sets New Direction

FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

President Mnangagwa honours outstanding exhibitors whose innovation and excellence stood out at the 116th Zimbabwe Agricultural Show. Credit: InfoZw

President Mnangagwa Sets New Direction

President orders local processing of all agricultural produce as record-breaking ZAS 2026 showcases Government-led progress in food security, mechanisation, irrigation, technology and rural development

Kelvin Matore and Abel Karowangoro

President Emmerson Mnangagwa has placed agriculture at the centre of Zimbabwe's next phase of industrialisation, directing the country to stop exporting unprocessed produce and instead create jobs, wealth and export value through local manufacturing.

Officially opening the 116th Zimbabwe Agricultural Show in Harare, President Mnangagwa said his administration would establish Special Agro-Processing Zones in all 10 provinces as part of an accelerated programme to transform farming into a modern, technology-driven and commercially competitive industry.

The directive emerged as the defining message of the six-day Zimbabwe Agricultural Show, which closed yesterday after attracting a record 640 exhibitors and transforming the Exhibition Park into a major marketplace for agriculture, technology, finance, manufacturing and investment.

Held under the theme, "Powering Growth: Where Agriculture, Technology and Commerce Converge," the exhibition demonstrated the Second Republic's drive to connect farmers with machinery, markets, financial institutions, energy providers, processors and modern technologies.

All exhibition halls were fully subscribed, while 86 organisations participated for the first time. Foreign exhibitors accounted for 18 percent of participants, up from 11 percent last year, highlighting growing international interest in Zimbabwe's agricultural and commercial opportunities.

President Mnangagwa said agriculture was no longer simply about producing food. Under the Second Republic, it had become a strategic pillar of food sovereignty, industrialisation, exports, employment creation and rural transformation.

"Under my administration, the sector is the engine of industrialisation, driver of exports and foundation of food security and self-sufficiency, as well as empowerment and employment creation," he said.

The President said the progress recorded under the National Development Strategy 1 had established a firm foundation for accelerated development under the National Development Strategy 2 and the attainment of Vision 2030.

In a major policy direction expected to stimulate rural industrialisation, President Mnangagwa said Zimbabwe must end the practice of exporting raw agricultural products and surrendering jobs and income to foreign economies.

"Under the National Development Strategy 2, we will no longer export opportunities, jobs and value of our products, which are often exported as raw materials," he said.

"To this end, the Second Republic has set out to establish Special Agro-Processing Zones in all our 10 provinces."

The President outlined the value chains that the Government wants businesses and farmers to develop.

"We must move from raw soyabeans to cooking oil and stock feeds; raw milk to cheese and yoghurt, among other dairy products; fruits to juice and concentrates; tobacco leaf to cigarettes; cattle to leather and packaged meat," he said.

"All agricultural produce must be processed locally."

The Special Agro-Processing Zones are expected to attract investment in factories, cold-chain facilities, storage, packaging, transport and distribution.

The programme could open reliable markets for farmers while creating employment and ensuring that communities benefit from resources produced in their respective provinces.

President Mnangagwa said value addition should not be confined to large corporations in major cities. It must be expanded to villages, districts and growth points through the Government's rural industrialisation programme.

"The target is to grow the overall agro-processing share in the manufacturing sector," he said.

"This responsibility is not only for big enterprises, but must be promoted from the village level and the rural industrialisation frameworks."

The President said the Second Republic's agricultural transformation programme had delivered major milestones despite climate-related challenges, particularly the 2024 El Niño-induced drought.

Zimbabwe achieved wheat self-sufficiency in 2023, 2024 and 2025, with production reaching about 375,000 tonnes during the latest cited season.

Maize production recovered strongly from the 2024 drought to reach 2.3 million tonnes in 2025, restoring the country's Strategic Grain Reserve and strengthening national food security.

Agricultural exports now exceed US$2.1 billion, confirming the sector's growing contribution to foreign-currency generation and economic development.

The 2025/26 tobacco marketing season also produced more than 358 million kilogrammes valued at over US$892 million.

President Mnangagwa said this was Zimbabwe's second-highest tobacco crop on record. The tobacco industry supports more than 500,000 people across production, processing, transport, marketing and other services.

"I commend our farmers, extension workers, financial institutions, input suppliers and other stakeholders for these success milestones," he said.

"Well done. Makorokoto. Amhlophe, Zimbabwe."

The President said the country must build on those gains by increasing production, expanding irrigation and processing more produce locally.

The record participation at ZAS 2026 reflected growing confidence among local and international businesses in Zimbabwe's agricultural transformation programme.

The 640 participating organisations represented an increase from about 630 exhibitors last year, while the rise in foreign participation broadened opportunities for international partnerships, technology transfer and investment.

President Mnangagwa said the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show had become a strategic platform where Government policy meets practical implementation.

"These grounds of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Society provide that ecosystem where the farmer can access irrigation equipment and banks interact with new clients for Credit Guarantee Schemes," he said.

"Processors can sign contracts to fill the Agro-Processing Zones and the young talented boy or girl child can showcase his or her ingenuity, innovation and creativity, including demonstrating how to build an agri-tech business solution."

The President said the exhibition allowed Zimbabweans to witness the results of national development programmes and the innovations driving mechanisation, modernisation and industrialisation.

The show brought farmers together with manufacturers, technology companies, banks, research institutions, energy providers, telecommunications companies, processors and policymakers.

Traditional displays of crops, livestock, agricultural machinery and manufactured goods were supported by digital farming platforms, solar-powered equipment, packaging technologies, connectivity services and financing products.

This reflected the Government's position that agricultural development depends on a complete commercial ecosystem connecting production with energy, technology, finance, processing and markets.

President Mnangagwa said technology, innovation and research must become central components of Zimbabwean agriculture.

"Innovation, technology, research and development are no longer optional," he said.

"The agriculture sector has evolved to data, mechanisation and agri-technologies which ride on artificial intelligence. Faced with this reality, precision and climate-smart agriculture must be boldly embraced."

He called for the accelerated deployment of soil sensors, satellite monitoring and agricultural drone services.

These technologies can help farmers monitor crops, identify pests, assess soil conditions, manage water and apply inputs more accurately.

The President said the technologies must be supported by the digitisation of extension and agronomy services in every province and ward.

He challenged universities, research institutions, innovation hubs and industrial parks to produce technologies that farmers can use to improve productivity and household incomes.

"Applications and data from laboratories, as well as output from innovation hubs and industrial parks, must be products that our farmers can use today and in the future," President Mnangagwa said.

The Government's innovation-based education model has increasingly encouraged universities to move beyond teaching and research by producing goods and services that respond to national challenges.

The telecommunications and information technology pavilion offered practical evidence of the President's call for technology-driven agriculture.

NetOne showcased smart-agriculture SIM cards and connectivity services for agricultural drones, while Econet presented EcoFarmer, solar-powered base stations and digital services for farmers.

Telecel exhibited products aimed at cooperatives and digital market linkages.

Liquid Intelligent Technologies focused on fibre-to-the-farm and data-centre solutions that could support agribusinesses and cold-chain logistics.

Dandemutande presented enterprise connectivity and satellite systems for remote irrigation schemes, while POTRAZ engaged stakeholders on the expansion of rural broadband.

POSB demonstrated how digital banking and financial services could be connected to contract farming and agricultural production.

These exhibits showed that connectivity is becoming an essential part of modern agricultural infrastructure.

Through mobile and internet platforms, farmers can obtain weather forecasts, extension advice, commodity prices, financial services and market information without travelling long distances.

The Second Republic has placed irrigation expansion at the centre of its strategy to climate-proof agriculture and reduce dependence on seasonal rainfall.

President Mnangagwa said the Government would continue developing new irrigation infrastructure to ensure that Zimbabwe produces sufficient maize, wheat, traditional grains and horticultural crops every year.

"The overall objective is to ensure that

Mineral Leakages Cost Zimbabwe Revenue, Jobs

Abel Karowangoro

The country risks losing millions of dollars in taxes, royalties, foreign-currency earnings and local processing opportunities through mineral smuggling, as authorities recorded 18 cases involving more than 2,600 tonnes of suspected illegally or irregularly transported minerals and metal scrap between January and August 20 this year.

The Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe said the cases involved 2,654.88 tonnes of mineral material and scrap, with lithium, chrome and silica dominating the enforcement register.

The figure includes a 1,500-tonne chrome concentrate stockpile embargoed in Darwendale while investigations continue. The other recorded cases involved a combined 1,154.88 tonnes.

MMCZ general manager Dr Nomusa Jane Moyo said the suspected offences included transporting minerals without valid documentation, falsifying or misusing export papers, misdeclaring cargo and attempting to move unbeneficiated mineral ore out of Zimbabwe.

"The nature of offences included movement without valid documentation, misuse or falsification of export papers, cargo misdeclaration and attempted movement of unbeneficiated mineral ore," Dr Moyo said in the corporation's maiden Mineral Resource Accounting and Surveillance Market Update.

The intercepted tonnage cannot yet be assigned a reliable combined monetary value because mineral prices are not determined by weight alone.

The price paid by an international buyer depends on the type of mineral, its grade, chemical composition, moisture levels, impurities, processing stage, transport costs and the terms of the contract between the exporter and importer.

Lithium ore and spodumene concentrate, for example, cannot be valued accurately without laboratory results showing their lithium-oxide content and other technical specifications.

Chrome prices also differ according to grade, chromium content and whether the product is raw ore, concentrate or ferrochrome.

MMCZ did not disclose the laboratory results, declared sales prices or destination contracts for all the intercepted consignments. Any attempt to place a single dollar figure on the 2,654.88 tonnes would, therefore, be speculative.

However, the economic loss to the country can extend far beyond the value of the minerals being smuggled.

When minerals leave Zimbabwe outside official channels, the Government may lose mining royalties, corporate taxes, export-related levies and other statutory payments. The country may also lose foreign currency that should be received and recorded through the formal financial system.

Legitimate mining companies are required to declare their minerals, secure the relevant approvals, submit export documentation and comply with tax, royalty, environmental, labour and safety requirements.

Lithium transactions are also subject to a levy on gross sales value. Zimbabwe's tax reforms increased the levy on lithium and some dimensional-stone products to two percent of gross value, payable on local sales or exports.

Lithium concentrate exports resumed in 2026 under quotas and strict conditions following a temporary suspension announced in February over suspected leakages and export malpractices.

Approved exporters are required to comply with production and export quotas, publish annual financial statements, observe labour, safety and environmental standards and submit plans showing how they will establish lithium sulphate processing capacity.

Lithium concentrate exports are also subject to a 10 percent tax on gross fair-market value ahead of the Government's planned prohibition of concentrate exports from January 2027. Reuters□

A smuggler who moves lithium ore or concentrate without declaring it may be attempting to avoid those payments and conditions, giving the illegal operator an unfair cost advantage over businesses that comply with the law.

Smuggling also affects legitimate miners because illegal material can undercut formal market prices and undermine companies that have invested in licences, environmental compliance, employee protection, processing plants and proper export procedures.

The international importer may pay the negotiated commercial price for the mineral, but when the transaction is concealed or misdeclared, the correct value may not be captured in Zimbabwe.

Under-invoicing presents an additional danger. An exporter may declare a value below the actual amount paid by the foreign buyer, reducing the taxes, royalties and foreign currency recorded locally while retaining part of the payment outside the country.

Cargo misdeclaration can also involve presenting raw ore as a processed product to evade restrictions or secure lower tax treatment.

Dr Moyo said the latest cases demonstrated why authorities could no longer depend on paperwork alone.

Physical inspections and laboratory testing are required to establish whether the product inside a truck matches the description and quality stated in its export documents.

On July 27, MMCZ inspectors at Forbes Border Post intercepted a truck transporting 33 tonnes of lithium spodumene ore.

The consignment was allegedly being moved using photocopied export documents purporting to cover lithium concentrate.

The difference between ore and concentrate is important under Zimbabwe's beneficiation policy. Ore is material extracted from the ground, while concentrate has undergone processing to increase the proportion of the targeted mineral.

The matter was referred to the Criminal Investigation Department's Minerals, Flora and Fauna Unit. The agent responsible for the consignment was taken into custody pending a court appearance.

A second lithium case was recorded at Forbes Border Post on August 3.

Inspectors intercepted a consignment consisting of three tonnes of lithium ore and 28 tonnes of spodumene concentrate.

The matter was handed to the CID Minerals, Flora and Fauna Unit, and the company involved subsequently pleaded guilty to smuggling and was fined.

The latest case covered by the report occurred at Beitbridge Border Post on August 20, where officials intercepted a truck carrying 36.88 tonnes of suspected copper and aluminium scrap destined for South Africa.

The truck allegedly had no supporting documents for the cargo and had reportedly been presented at the border as an empty vehicle.

The driver was arrested under the Copper Control Act, while MMCZ collected samples for laboratory analysis.

The interception of suspected copper scrap is particularly important because criminal syndicates frequently target electricity cables, transformers, telecommunications infrastructure and railway equipment for their copper content.

Illegal copper trading can therefore impose costs on the country beyond lost mineral revenue. Stolen cables disrupt electricity, communications and transport services, while the Government, public institutions and businesses must spend money replacing damaged infrastructure.

"MMCZ maintains zero tolerance for the illegal export of minerals," Dr Moyo said.

"Our strengthened Mineral Resource Accounting is giving the country greater accountability over what is produced and exported, ensuring that Zimbabwe realises true value for its mineral wealth.

"Where discrepancies are detected, we act and work with law-enforcement agencies to protect the country's mineral resources."

MMCZ said most of the cases were detected at border posts following the deployment of permanent Mineral Resource Accounting inspectors.

Under the previous system, MMCZ did not have a permanent inspectorate presence at the country's border posts.

Inspectors now verify mineral movements, examine cargo and collect samples where technical confirmation is required.

The corporation said the system had exposed cases involving cargo substitution, incorrect export documents and raw mineral ore being presented as processed concentrate.

MMCZ is working with the CID Minerals, Flora and Fauna Unit, Zimbabwe Republic Police Intelligence, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission and other enforcement institutions.

The joint operations have resulted in arrests, court appearances, fines, forfeiture of mineral ore to the State and the impounding of consignments.

Other undocumented minerals have been returned to their sources, while some cases remain under investigation.

Zimbabwe has tightened mineral-export regulations as part of its drive to retain more value from the country's natural resources.

The Government suspended exports of raw minerals and lithium concentrates in February 2026 after raising concerns about leakages and malpractice. Lithium concentrate exports were subsequently allowed to resume under tighter quotas and compliance conditions.

Raw lithium exports had already been restricted under the Base Minerals Export Control framework, which generally prohibits the exportation of unbeneficiated base mineral ore without written authorisation.

The regulatory approach seeks to move the country from exporting low-value raw materials towards producing concentrates, lithium sulphate and, ultimately, higher-value battery materials.

Local processing can create jobs in engineering, chemistry, transport, construction, maintenance and manufacturing. It can also increase export earnings because processed minerals generally command greater value than untreated ore.

Zimbabwe exported more than 1.1 million tonnes of spodumene concentrate during 2025, much of it destined for China, according to figures cited by Reuters.

Foreign mining companies have invested heavily in Zimbabwe's lithium industry, with Chinese firms committing substantial funding to mines and processing facilities.

The push for further beneficiation is, however, facing practical capacity constraints.

Zimbabwe's operational lithium sulphate plant reportedly does not currently have capacity to process material produced by third-party mining companies. Other processing facilities remain under construction.

Some mining companies have consequently sought additional time to comply with the planned January 2027 concentrate-export ban, arguing that processing capacity must be established before all concentrate exports can stop.

The Government has maintained that beneficiation remains necessary to increase export value and employment, while encouraging producers to accelerate investment in processing facilities. Reuters□

The challenge for authorities will be to enforce the regulations firmly while ensuring that compliant producers have clear, predictable procedures and sufficient domestic processing options.

Mining companies require certainty on export quotas, permits, taxes, laboratory testing and processing requirements to plan investments and negotiate long-term contracts with international buyers.

At the same time, weak enforcement would allow illegal operators to evade the costs borne by compliant businesses and deprive Zimbabwe of revenue.

MMCZ said it would continue strengthening Mineral Resource Accounting through inspections at border posts, monitoring at mines, intelligence-led surveillance, sampling, verification and multi-agency operations.

The corporation's statutory functions include regulating mineral marketing and exports, checking mineral quality, promoting value addition and helping collect revenue from mineral sales. MMCZ□

"The objective is to ensure that Zimbabwe can account for its mineral resources from source to market and that mineral exports comply with national laws and Government policy on value addition and beneficiation," Dr Moyo said.

The construction and upgrading of mineral-testing laboratories will also be important because Zimbabwe needs independent capacity to determine the exact grade and composition of exported ore.

Lithium-bearing deposits can contain other valuable minerals. Without proper sampling and laboratory analysis, those associated minerals could leave the country without being correctly declared or valued.

The Government and MMCZ are establishing and capacitating laboratories to improve the assessment of lithium ore and determine the appropriate royalties for the minerals contained in mixed deposits. MMCZ□

The 18 cases show that mineral smuggling is not only a border-control issue. It is a direct threat to public revenue, infrastructure, fair business competition, local processing and the country's industrialisation plans.

Stopping the illegal movement of minerals will require monitoring from the mine through transport, processing, sale and export, rather than relying on checks conducted only when a truck reaches the border.

The success of the strengthened system will ultimately depend on whether intercepted cases result in effective prosecutions, penalties strong enough to deter offenders and recovery of the financial value due to the State.

For Zimbabwe, the central issue is not merely preventing tonnes of mineral material from leaving illegally. It is ensuring that the country receives the taxes, foreign currency, employment and industrial development that should flow from its natural resources.

President Mnangagwa Sets New Direction

FROM PAGE 2

yearly we produce enough maize, wheat, traditional grains and horticulture to feed our nation and have a surplus for export," he said.

Energy companies at ZAS 2026 displayed solar-powered technologies that could support irrigation and reduce production costs.

Chinese exhibitor Guangzhou Sanjing Electric showcased photovoltaic inverters, energy-storage systems, intelligent energy-management equipment and solar pump controllers.

The solar controllers are designed to power irrigation facilities, particularly in rural areas with limited access to the national electricity grid.

The Green Indaba, held during the show, focused on drought-tolerant seed varieties, water-efficient irrigation, renewable energy and climate-smart investment.

President Mnangagwa said preparations for the 2026/27 agricultural season would continue to be guided by scientific information.

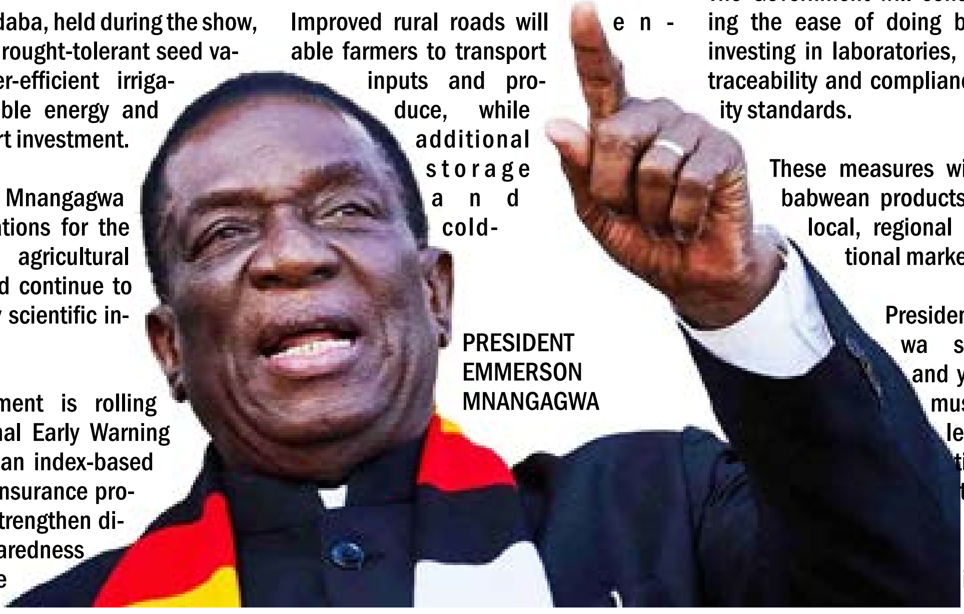
The Government is rolling out a National Early Warning System and an index-based agricultural insurance programme to strengthen disaster preparedness and reduce the burden of climate-related shocks on farmers.

President Mnangagwa said his administration was expanding the country's agricultural mechanisation capacity, with every village earmarked to access a tractor and other important equipment.

Greater access to machinery is expected to increase the amount of land cultivated, reduce labour requirements and improve the timeliness of agricultural operations.

The President said investment in roads, railways, airports, cold-chain facilities and storage infrastructure would continue because these systems are essential for agriculture and commerce.

Improved rural roads will enable farmers to transport inputs and produce, while additional storage and cold-chain facilities will reduce post-harvest losses.



PRESIDENT EMMERSON MNANGAGWA

The Government intends to integrate more than 1.8 million smallholder farmers into commercial value chains.

President Mnangagwa said contract farming, the Zimbabwe Mercantile Exchange, the Agricultural Finance Corporation and the new Credit Guarantee Scheme should be used to provide farmers with finance and markets.

Transforming smallholder farmers into viable commercial producers is expected to increase rural incomes, reduce poverty and expand the supply of raw materials required by local industries.

The Government will continue improving the ease of doing business and investing in laboratories, certification, traceability and compliance with quality standards.

These measures will help Zimbabwean products compete in local, regional and international markets.

President Mnangagwa said women and young people must become leading participants in the modernisation and commercialisation of agriculture.

"The future of farming is anchored on women, youth and the productive and entrepreneurial population of our country," he said.

The Government is establishing Youth Agriculture Entrepreneur Hubs across the provinces and broadening access to the Women in Agriculture Fund.

"To the youth and women, agriculture is the overarching business of the present and future," the President said.

"I challenge you to lead this sector, help feed the nation and produce the feedstock for our industry."

The participation of young people in agricultural technology, processing, marketing, engineering and financial services could help reposition farming as a modern and profitable profession.

International exhibitors from countries and regions including Namibia, South Africa, China, Brazil and the European Union brought an added investment dimension to the show.

Among the Chinese companies participating was Kianga Quartz Slabs, a Norton-based manufacturer producing materials for kitchen countertops, bathroom vanities, bar tops, window sills and other construction applications.

Guangzhou Sanjing Electric used the show to present renewable-energy solutions, while other foreign companies showcased irrigation technologies, agricultural machinery, seed genetics and processing equipment.

The livestock section featured cattle and rabbits, with ostriches being introduced to the exhibition for the first time.

Hoja Rabbits exhibited New Zealand Whites, Masangos and other rabbit breeds, promoting rabbit farming as an alternative enterprise for emerging farmers.

President Mnangagwa called on the private sector to take advantage of the opportunities contained in the National Development Strategy 2.

He said Government and business must establish partnerships for the local manufacture of fertilisers, livestock vaccines and other agricultural products.

Domestic production would reduce dependence on imports, strengthen value chains and support the growth of local industry.

"To our farmers, I urge you to be commercial, innovate and adopt new technology while entrenching a culture of continuous improvement, production and productivity," he said.

The President said agricultural land must be treated as a productive economic asset capable of generating wealth and supporting national development.

"Our national land resources have moved from being a form of communal entitlement or settlement to being assets of production, wealth creation and empowerment," he said.

The closure of ZAS 2026 marked the beginning of an important implementation phase for the partnerships, investment proposals and technologies showcased during the exhibition.

The success of the show will be measured by the number of business agreements concluded, technologies adopted, processing plants established and markets opened for Zimbabwean farmers.

The exhibition demonstrated that the country has the farmers, entrepreneurs, scientists, manufacturers, financial institutions and policy framework required to build a modern agricultural economy.

Under President Mnangagwa's leadership, agriculture is being positioned not only to feed the population but also to supply industry, generate exports, create employment and drive inclusive development.

The record number of exhibitors, rising foreign participation and expansion of agricultural technologies provided visible evidence of confidence in the sector.

As Zimbabwe accelerates the implementation of the National Development Strategy 2, the convergence of agriculture, technology and commerce is expected to strengthen food security, deepen industrialisation and advance the country towards an empowered and prosperous upper-middle-income society by 2030.

The message from the President was clear: Zimbabwe must produce more, process locally, embrace technology and ensure that the value created by its land benefits its people.

Govt Must Act Decisively on Gold Leakages

The interception of more than 2,600 tonnes of suspected illegally or irregularly transported minerals and metal scrap should serve as a warning that Zimbabwe must intensify its campaign against gold leakages.

Although the 18 cases reported by the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe mainly involved lithium, chrome, silica and metal scrap—and MMCZ does not regulate gold and silver—the methods detected are likely familiar across the mineral trade.

Falsified export documents, cargo misdeclaration, undocumented transportation, under-invoicing and attempts to disguise raw minerals as processed products demonstrate the determination of criminal networks to profit from Zimbabwe's natural resources.

If such methods are being used to move bulk minerals, authorities must assume that smugglers are also exploiting the portability and high value of gold.

A person cannot easily conceal 1,500 tonnes of chrome concentrate. Gold, however, can be melted, divided into small quantities and transported through airports, border posts and unofficial crossing points.

This makes the precious metal particularly vulnerable to illicit trading.

Zimbabwe cannot afford to underestimate the economic consequences. Gold is one of the country's most important sources of foreign currency and a critical contributor to mining revenue.

The Government projects gold production to rise to 55.6 tonnes in 2026, above the initial forecast of 50 tonnes, supported by strong international prices and increased production. Ministry of Finance☐

This growth presents an opportunity to strengthen foreign-currency reserves, finance national development and support the stability of the domestic economy.

But increased production will have limited national benefit if part of the gold disappears into illegal markets before reaching formal buying and refining channels.

Every gram smuggled out of Zimbabwe represents potential foreign currency, taxes and royalties lost to the country.

Gold revenue can support the construction and rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, roads, dams and other public infrastructure. It can help finance electricity generation, agricultural development and essential government services.

Leakages transfer that value from the public economy into the hands of smugglers and their international associates.

Government has made important interventions to increase formal gold deliveries, support miners and improve accountability. Rising production demonstrates that Zimbabwe's mining reforms and investment policies are bearing fruit.

However, the persistence of mineral smuggling shows that enforcement must now move beyond occasional interceptions.

Zimbabwe needs a complete system capable of following gold from the mining site to the mill, licensed buyer, refinery and export market.

Authorities should urgently introduce or strengthen a national digital gold-traceability system. Every licensed mine, milling centre, buying agent and refinery should record production and transactions through a secure platform accessible to the relevant regulators.

Production declarations should be compared with geological estimates, milling records, electricity consumption and deliveries to authorised buyers.

Unexplained differences must automatically trigger an investigation.

The Government must also extend enforcement beyond official border posts. Smuggling networks do not restrict themselves to declared commercial routes.

Airports, private aviation facilities and informal border crossings require specialised surveillance supported by intelligence gathering, scanners, trained officers and sniffer dogs where appropriate.

Law-enforcement agencies must focus on the organisers and financiers behind smuggling networks, rather than limiting enforcement to drivers and low-level couriers.

A courier caught with gold is often only the visible end of a larger operation involving illegal buyers, transporters, corrupt intermediaries and foreign recipients.

Investigations must follow the money, identify the source of the gold and expose every person who participated in the transaction.

Successful arrests must be followed by credible prosecutions. Cases cannot disappear from public attention after dramatic announcements.

Government should regularly publish information on the quantity of gold seized, the number of suspects prosecuted, penalties imposed and assets recovered.

Transparency will strengthen public confidence and allow citizens to assess whether the campaign against mineral leakages is producing results.

Penalties must also reflect the economic damage caused by gold smuggling. A small fine will not deter an organised network earning large profits from illegal exports.

Where the law permits, courts should impose deterrent sentences and order the forfeiture of vehicles, equipment, money and other assets used in smuggling operations.

However, enforcement alone will not eliminate leakages.

Government must ensure that formal gold-marketing channels remain attractive, accessible and efficient, particularly for artisanal and small-scale miners.

Miners are more likely to sell through official channels when payments are prompt, pricing is transparent and buying centres are located close to production areas.

Delays, complicated procedures and significant differences between official and illegal-market prices can create incentives for side marketing.

The Reserve Bank has previously acknowledged that gold deliveries respond to payment conditions and exchange-rate incentives. Effective policy must therefore combine tough enforcement with a commercial system that gives miners compelling reasons to sell legally.

Artisanal miners should not be treated automatically as criminals. They are major contributors to national gold production and support thousands of families and communities.

Government should accelerate their registration, provide accessible mining permits and improve their access to finance, equipment, geological information and safe processing technologies.

Formalisation would make it easier for authorities to monitor production while giving miners legal protection and access to official markets.

Licensed gold buyers must also face tighter scrutiny. Their purchases should be matched against deliveries, payments and stock records.

Buying licences should be suspended or cancelled where operators fail to account for gold passing through their businesses.

Government must also strengthen oversight of milling centres, where gold can be diverted before reaching official buyers. Millers should maintain verifiable records showing the identity of miners, ore processed, recovery rates and the destination of recovered gold.

The fight against leakages will require close cooperation among Fidelity Gold Refinery, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, Zimra, the Zimbabwe Republic Police, the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, immigration authorities and border agencies.

No single institution can defeat organised smuggling while operating in isolation.

Zimbabwe should also deepen cooperation with neighbouring countries and major international gold-trading centres.

Smuggled gold ultimately enters another market. Information sharing can help authorities identify suspicious buyers, trace payments and recover proceeds moved across borders.

The Government must confront corruption wherever it appears. Mineral smuggling on a significant scale is difficult to sustain without information, protection or deliberate failure by individuals positioned along the supply chain.

Border officials, police officers, regulators or politically connected individuals found protecting smugglers must face the full force of the law.

No person should be considered too powerful to investigate.

Whistleblowers within mining companies, buying networks and government institutions should be protected and rewarded for providing credible information that leads to the recovery of smuggled gold or public funds.

Zimbabwe has declared that its natural resources must benefit its people. That principle cannot be realised while gold disappears through illicit channels.

The country possesses the mineral wealth required to support industrialisation, infrastructure development and Vision 2030. What is required is uncompromising accountability from the mining site to the final buyer.

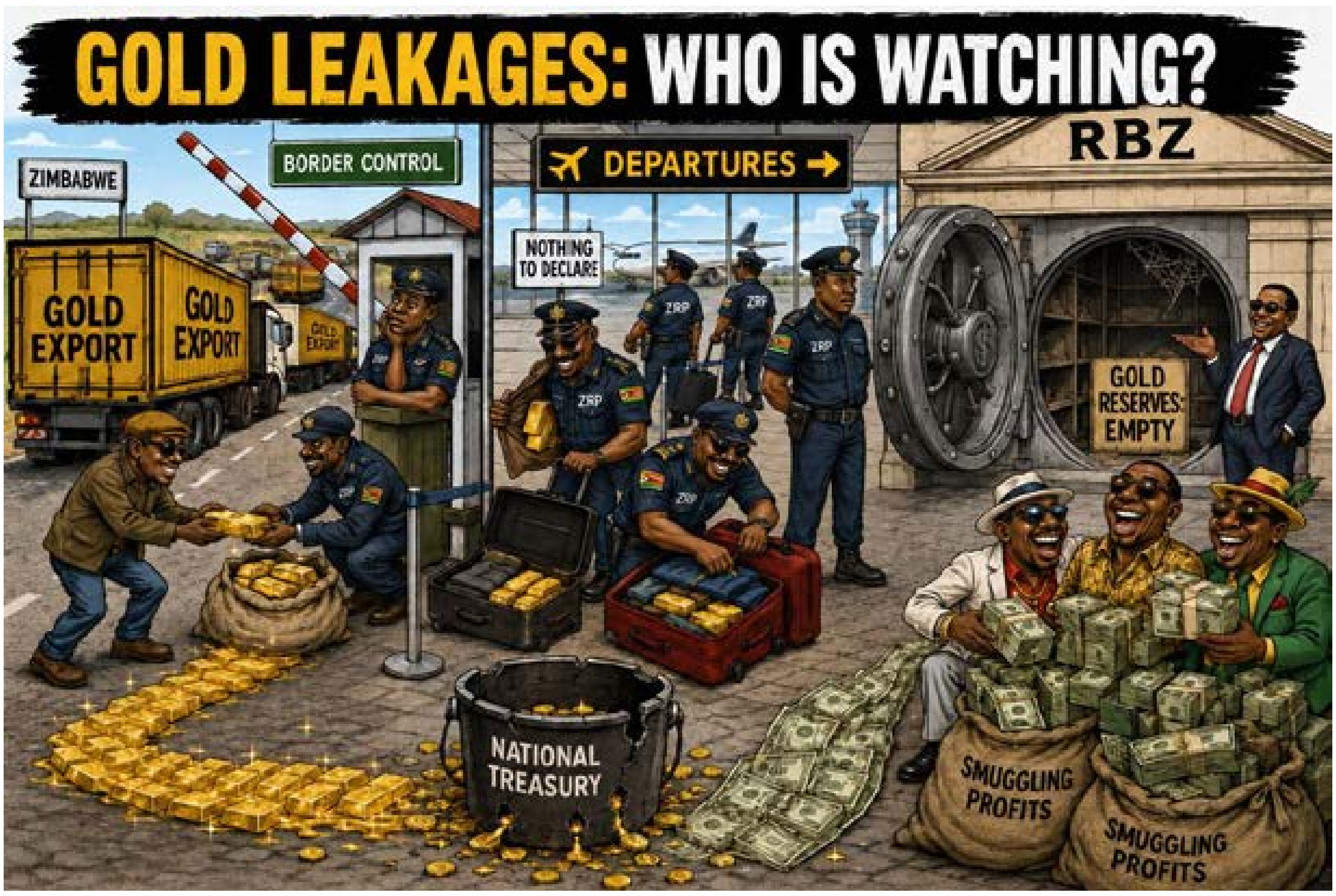
The Government has demonstrated its commitment to curbing leakages through stronger mineral accounting, permanent inspectors at border posts and multi-agency enforcement operations.

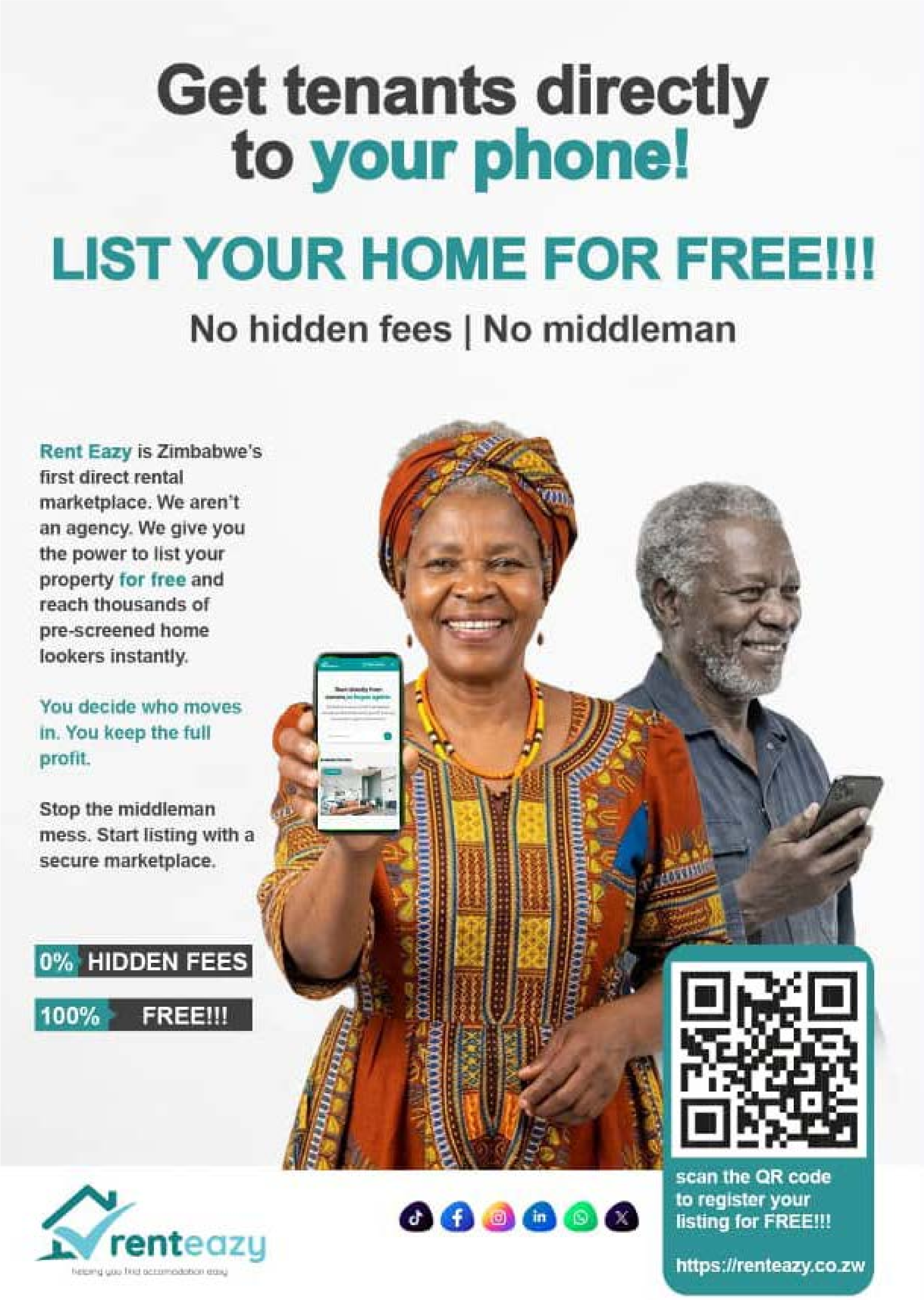
Those measures should now be expanded into a relentless national campaign against gold smuggling.

Zimbabwe must know how much gold it produces, who buys it, how it is transported, where it is refined and how much money returns to the country.

Anything less leaves national wealth vulnerable to organised criminal networks.

The time for fragmented responses has passed. Government must shut down gold-smuggling routes, prosecute the powerful figures behind them and ensure that every lawful ounce contributes to Zimbabwe's development.

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Zimbabwe exits World Bank fragility list, but debt arrears still block fresh loans

By Hurumende News Desk

Zimbabwe has been removed from the World Bank Group's classification of fragile and conflict-affected economies, marking an improvement in the country's international institutional standing, although outstanding debt arrears continue to prevent access to normal World Bank financing.

The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion announced on Friday that the reclassification took effect on July 1, 2026, under the World Bank's revised framework for the 2027 financial year.

Finance Minister Professor Mthuli Ncube described the development as an important milestone in Zimbabwe's economic and institutional transformation.

"Zimbabwe is no longer on the list of countries that are classified as fragile and conflict-affected economies," Ncube said in a statement dated August 28.

The World Bank now maintains separate classifications covering countries affected by widespread organised political violence and those experiencing institutional fragility.

According to the Treasury, the public Fragility, Conflict and Violence List identifies countries where organised political violence affects at least 20 percent of the population. The Institutional Fragility List covers eligible countries with a Country Policy and Institutional Assessment score below 3.0.

Zimbabwe's absence from both lists could improve perceptions of its political and institutional risk, which have weighed heavily on investment and commercial financing decisions.

The Government said the development could strengthen investor confidence, support infrastructure partnerships and complement the country's ongoing arrears-clearance, debt-relief and restructuring process.

Treasury attributed the reclassification to improvements in economic management and public institutions. It cited real gross domestic product growth of 8.3 percent in 2025, annual ZiG inflation of 2.9 percent in August 2026 and tighter fiscal and monetary policies.

It also pointed to Zimbabwe's score of 62 out of 100 in the 2025 Open Budget Survey, saying the country's budget transparency rating had risen by 39 points since 2017.

However, removal from the fragility classifications does not constitute debt forgiveness, a sovereign credit-rating upgrade or an immediate restoration of World Bank lending.

The World Bank's Zimbabwe country overview□ says its lending programme remains inactive because of arrears. Its engagement is consequently limited mainly to technical assistance, advisory services and analytical work.

Zimbabwe must therefore clear or restructure its arrears before it can regain access to regular concessional financing from the institution.

The country has accumulated substantial external obligations to international financial institutions and other creditors, limiting its access to affordable long-term capital and forcing the Government to rely heavily on domestic borrowing and alternative financing arrangements.

The World Bank has warned□ that Zimbabwe's public debt remains unsustainable and in distress, with external arrears continuing to restrict affordable financing and crowd out spending on infrastructure and essential public services.

For ordinary Zimbabweans, the reclassification will have limited immediate effect unless it is followed by debt resolution, sustained currency stability, new productive investment and employment creation.

Its longer-term significance will depend on whether the Government maintains policy consistency, strengthens governance and converts improved international perceptions into tangible investment and development financing.

"Government remains committed to implementing the reforms necessary to consolidate macroeconomic stability, strengthen governance, improve the investment climate and advance the Structured Dialogue Platform on arrears clearance and debt resolution," Ncube said.

The delisting is therefore a diplomatic and institutional gain for Zimbabwe, but the more difficult task of settling its debt arrears and restoring full relations with international lenders remains unfinished.


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MORE BABIES, STRONGER ZIMBABWE?

Chinomona Ignites Population Debate

ZANU PF Women's Affairs Secretary says the country needs future farmers, health workers and soldiers, but economic pressures are driving couples towards smaller families

Takudzwa Karowangoro

Zimbabwe must begin treating population change as a serious national development issue, ZANU PF Secretary for Women's Affairs Mabel Chinomona has said, warning that declining fertility could eventually weaken the country's workforce and affect critical sectors such as agriculture, healthcare and national security.

Chinomona called on Zimbabwean women to reconsider the widespread use of family-planning methods and have more children, arguing that the country requires a large and productive population to sustain its future.

The Senate President made the remarks during a ZANU PF Women's League event in Murehwa West constituency, where she linked childbirth to the country's long-term human-capital requirements.

"Women, please stop using family planning; please go and give birth," Chinomona said.

"Our soldiers are now few; we need farmers, doctors and nurses while you are busy swallowing those pills.

"We are supposed to build this country, yet you find children of this generation saying a single child is enough. How many siblings do you have?"

Her remarks have reignited a sensitive but important national conversation about Zimbabwe's changing fertility patterns, the economic pressures facing families and the kind of support that would be required if the country wants couples to have more children.

Although Chinomona's appeal focused heavily on women, decisions about childbirth are influenced by a much wider set of factors, including household income, employment, housing, education, healthcare, migration and the participation of fathers in raising children.

The debate, therefore, extends beyond whether women should stop taking contraceptives. It raises a more fundamental question: is Zimbabwe creating economic and social conditions in which people feel secure enough to raise larger families?

Fertility has fallen, but Zimbabwe is not disappearing

Zimbabwe's fertility rate has declined significantly from the levels recorded around independence and during the early 1990s, when an average woman could have approximately six children during her lifetime.

World Bank data places Zimbabwe's total fertility rate at about 3.7 children per woman in 2024. While that is substantially lower than historical levels, it remains above the replacement fertility level of roughly 2.1 children per woman.

The replacement rate is the average number of children required for one generation to replace itself in the absence of migration. This means Zimbabwe is not yet experiencing the extremely low fertility levels troubling countries where

the population is already shrinking.

Zimbabwe's population stood at 15,178,957 during the 2022 Population and Housing Census, according to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency. Young people aged between 10 and 35 constituted about 46 percent of the population.

The immediate concern, therefore, is not that Zimbabwe has run out of young people. Rather, it is whether the country is properly planning for changes in family size, migration, life expectancy and the future balance between children, working adults and elderly citizens.

A falling fertility rate can bring benefits when accompanied by improvements in education, health and employment. Families with fewer children may be able to invest more in each child, while women may have greater opportunities to complete their education, pursue careers and participate in economic activity.

However, if fertility continues falling for several decades while large numbers of skilled young people leave the country, Zimbabwe could eventually face shortages of productive workers and a growing burden of supporting an ageing population.

That is why Chinomona's remarks, although controversial, point towards a demographic issue that requires careful national planning.

Why Zimbabwe must focus on population trends

Population size and structure affect almost every area of national development.

A country needs enough teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers, farmers, police officers, soldiers, technicians and entrepreneurs to sustain its institutions and economy. It also needs taxpayers and productive workers to finance public services and support citizens who can no longer work.

If the number of economically active people declines in relation to children and elderly people, pressure increases on working households and the State.

Zimbabwe must also consider the effects of outward migration. Thousands of citizens have moved to countries such as South Africa, Botswana, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States in search of employment and better living conditions.

Many of those leaving are trained professionals in healthcare, education, engineering, finance and other specialised areas. Their departure can weaken the country's skills base even where the overall population continues growing.

It may consequently be insufficient to encourage more births without addressing the conditions that push existing workers out of the country. A child born today will require approximately two decades of healthcare, nutrition, protection, education and skills development before entering the professional workforce.

Increasing births without investing in those services could produce a larger population without delivering the productive workforce Chinomona says Zimbabwe needs.

Agriculture needs a new generation

Chinomona specifically identified agriculture as one of the sectors that will need more people.

Agriculture remains central to Zimbabwe's economy, supplying food, raw materials, employment and export earnings. However, the future of the sector cannot depend only on having more people available for manual labour.

Zimbabwe needs a new generation of trained, technologically capable farmers who can use mechanisation, irrigation, climate information, digital platforms, biotechnology and modern business practices.

Rural-to-urban migration has also left some communities with ageing farming populations. Many young people do not view farming as an attractive career because of limited access to land, finance, machinery, reliable markets and agricultural insurance.

A larger youthful population would benefit agriculture only if young people are equipped and given genuine opportunities to participate.

A national population strategy should, therefore, be linked to land access, agricultural colleges, affordable financing, irrigation development, mechanisation and secure markets for produce.

Healthcare faces workforce pressure

Zimbabwe also needs to secure the future supply of doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, laboratory scientists and other healthcare professionals.

The country trains health workers who are recognised internationally, but the sector has suffered from migration as professionals pursue better remuneration and working conditions outside Zimbabwe.

More births alone will not solve shortages in the health sector. The country must retain the healthcare professionals it already has while investing in the education of future generations.

Hospitals, clinics, maternity facilities, training institutions, medicines and staff accommodation would all require expansion if Zimbabwe deliberately pursued a higher birth rate.

Maternal healthcare would be especially important. Encouraging women to have more children without ensuring access to safe pregnancy services, skilled birth attendants, emergency obstetric care and postnatal support could expose mothers and babies to avoidable risks.

Population policy must therefore be grounded in the health and dignity of women rather than simply viewing them as a source of future workers.

National security and public institutions

Chinomona also warned that the country requires future soldiers.

Defence forces, the police, prisons, emergency services and other national institutions rely on a steady supply of physically fit, educated and disciplined recruits. A shrinking pool of young people can eventually make recruitment more difficult.

However, modern national security increasingly depends on advanced skills, including cybersecurity, engineering, intelligence, aviation, medicine, communications and drone technology.

Zimbabwe does not merely need more citizens. It needs healthy, educated and highly skilled citizens who can operate within a rapidly changing security environment.

The emphasis should consequently be on both numbers and quality.

Why younger couples are choosing smaller families

The decline in fertility is not simply the result of women "swallowing pills." It reflects profound changes in Zimbabwean society.

More women are pursuing secondary and tertiary education, entering professional careers and delaying marriage and childbirth. Couples are also becoming more conscious of the financial responsibilities associated with parenthood.

Food, rent, transport, school fees, uniforms, healthcare and digital learning tools all place pressure on household budgets. Parents are frequently expected to pay additional levies and meet other educational expenses throughout a child's schooling.

Unemployment and informal employment have also made household income less predictable. Young adults may delay marriage or childbirth because they do not have stable employment, secure housing or adequate savings.

For many couples, having one or two children is not necessarily a rejection of family life. It can be a decision based on what they believe they can responsibly afford.

Chinomona acknowledged the need for the Government to support parents.

"We will ask that the Government assist in raising our children. There is a country that is now paying women to give birth," she said.

She also dismissed fears about feeding larger families.

"Some of you are worried about what those children will eat, but that is never an issue, as children will eat what you eat at your homes."

Yet nutrition is a major part of childhood development. What a child eats can affect physical growth, learning ability, immunity and long-term productivity. A population policy must therefore place food security and child nutrition at its centre.

Family support could change the conversation

If Zimbabwe wants families to have more children, encouragement must be accompanied by practical assistance.

Some countries experiencing very low fertility offer child grants, tax relief, paid maternity and paternity leave, subsidised childcare, housing assistance and free or heavily subsidised education. Such policies reduce the cost borne by individual families.

Zimbabwe does not currently have a comprehensive child-support system comparable to the incentives available in some countries.

Government assistance could include strengthening free maternal healthcare, expanding early-childhood development centres, improving school infrastructure, providing affordable housing and protecting working mothers from discrimination.

Paid maternity leave remains important, but fathers must also be given time and responsibility to participate in childcare. Population growth should not leave women carrying the entire physical, emotional and financial burden of raising families.

Support should also reach women working in the informal economy, where many do not have access to formal maternity benefits or employer-supported medical insurance.

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Family planning remains a right

While Chinomona's call has opened an important discussion, family-planning services remain essential to public health.

Contraception allows individuals and couples to decide whether and when to have children and to space pregnancies safely. It can reduce unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions and health risks associated with pregnancies occurring too close together.

Calls for more births should not result in coercion, the withdrawal of contraceptive services or pressure being placed on women to have children against their wishes.

Reproductive decisions must remain with individuals and families after receiving accurate health information.

A national pro-family policy and access to family planning are not necessarily contradictory. Government can make it easier for people who want children to have and raise them, while protecting those who wish to delay, space or limit pregnancies.

The demographic dividend is not automatic

Zimbabwe's youthful population presents an opportunity often described as the demographic dividend.

This occurs when the proportion of working-age adults grows relative to dependants, potentially increasing production, household savings, investment and economic growth.

However, the United Nations Population Fund☐ warns that this benefit is not automatic. It depends on sustained investment in education, healthcare, skills development, job creation and good governance.

A large generation of young people without jobs, quality education or opportunities can deepen poverty and social instability instead of accelerating development.

Zimbabwe must therefore avoid reducing population policy to a campaign for more births. The country needs a coordinated plan covering every stage of life—from safe pregnancy and early-childhood nutrition to schooling, vocational training, employment and retirement.

Focus must also turn to migration and retention

Zimbabwe's demographic future will be shaped not only by births and deaths, but also by migration.

If the country trains doctors, nurses, engineers and teachers who subsequently leave because of poor working conditions, encouraging families to have more children will not by itself solve workforce shortages.

Improved salaries, housing, equipment, career-development opportunities and stable public services could help retain skilled citizens.

The diaspora should also form part of the strategy. Zimbabweans living abroad contribute through remittances, investments, knowledge and professional networks. Policies that make it easier for them to invest, return or temporarily serve in the country could strengthen the national skills base.

A national conversation is needed

Chinomona's remarks should provide an opening for a broader and evidence-based population debate involving Government, women's organisations, health professionals, economists, religious leaders, young people and families.

The country must determine what size and structure of population it expects over the next 20, 30 and 50 years and how it will provide the required schools, hospitals, housing, water, energy, jobs and food.

Zimbabwe needs people to produce, innovate, pay taxes, defend the country and care for future generations. It also needs every child born to have a realistic chance of becoming healthy, educated, skilled and economically productive.

The national focus should therefore not be limited to persuading women to give birth. It must include building an economy in which couples can raise children without being pushed deeper into poverty.

Zimbabwe's real demographic challenge is not simply how many children are born. It is whether the country is prepared to invest in them—and whether those children will grow up with enough opportunity to build their lives at home.

Epworth's 16,000-Household Dilemma

Local authority targets homes on wetlands and unplanned land as demolitions spread and Zimbabwe intensifies its war against land barons.

Takudzwa Karowangoro

About 16,000 households living on wetlands and other unplanned land in Epworth face possible relocation as the local authority confronts a housing crisis shaped by rapid urban growth, weak planning and the illegal sale of residential stands.

For thousands of families, relocation could mean leaving homes built over many years, often with life savings and money earned through informal work or employment abroad. For Epworth Local Board, however, allowing settlements to remain on wetlands, road reserves and land designated for public infrastructure would perpetuate environmental damage and make the provision of water, sewerage, roads, schools and clinics increasingly difficult.

Epworth Local Board Town Secretary Dr Wilton Mhanda said the authority had begun identifying families living in environmentally sensitive and unplanned areas while awaiting approval of its master plan.

"We have about, plus or minus, 16,000 households on wetlands or unplanned areas," Mhanda said.

"Currently, what we are doing is discouraging any further development on wetlands or unplanned areas."

The board has begun an enumeration exercise to establish who occupies the affected land, how long they have lived there and the scale of the relocation challenge.

"What we have done is to enumerate those people who have been settling on those wetlands for quite some time," Mhanda said.

The local authority hopes approval of its master plan will unlock land to which affected households can be moved. The proposed sites would have to be properly planned and capable of receiving basic services.

"What we are looking forward to is the approval of our master plan so that we can create space where we are going to relocate them from wetlands or any other unplanned areas," he said.

"They can then settle in new areas that are approved and where acceptable services can be provided."

Relocation, however, will be neither cheap nor simple. Moving 16,000 households would require large tracts of suitable land, roads, water infrastructure, sewerage systems, schools, clinics and public transport. It would also require a transparent process to determine eligibility and prevent land barons from taking advantage of the programme.

The announcement comes as demolitions and threatened evictions have returned to the centre of Zimbabwe's housing debate. During 2026, structures have been demolished or targeted in parts of Budiriro, Epworth, Mbare, Harare South and Goromonzi.

In Murombedzi, Mashonaland West, images circulated during August showing houses being brought down as the campaign against unplanned settlements extended beyond the country's major cities. The full number of affected households and the legal status of individual properties were not immediately clear.

Unplanned houses occupying wetland areas in Epworth. The local authority says approximately 16,000 affected households could be relocated once its master plan is approved.

Harare City Council has also identified more than 100 settlements regarded as illegal or irregular. The local authority says land barons have increasingly used forged documents and organised occupations during weekends and at night, erecting structures quickly before enforcement teams can intervene.

Council has warned that invasions of land in low-density suburbs will not be regularised under the guise of housing cooperatives or pay schemes. Officials argue that allowing such occupations to remain would encourage further land grabbing and deprive cities of space reserved for schools, clinics, roads, recreational facilities and other public services.

Harare has previously said it holds more than 37 High Court orders covering over 5,000 structures in areas that include Kuwadzana, Budiriro, Glen View and Mabvuku. Some planned demolitions have, however, been delayed or halted following Government intervention and legal challenges.

The debate is not simply about whether structures were built without approval. It is also about how so many families were allowed to buy stands, build houses and sometimes pay rates before being told that their homes were illegal.

Some affected residents say they bought stands from housing cooperatives, property developers or individuals who claimed to be working with councils and Government departments. In certain cases, families were shown allocation documents and receipts that they believed were genuine.

The victims often discover the truth only when authorities issue notices or arrive with demolition equipment. By that stage, the people who sold the land may have disappeared, leaving residents to carry the financial and emotional cost.

This has raised questions about the role of corrupt officials who allegedly enable illegal allocations by providing inside information, issuing questionable documents or ignoring construction until settlements become too large to control.

In February, the Sunday Mail reported that demolitions affecting Budiriro 4, Epworth, Mbare and Harare South had exposed what it described as an "eviction economy", in which land barons and corrupt officials profit while families are left with the losses.

Government has declared war on land barons and illegal settlements. An operation launched in 2024 resulted in 3,775 arrests by February 12 of that year, with 985 convictions recorded and thousands of cases still pending at the time. Arrests were reported in Masvingo, Mashonaland West, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South.

The arrests demonstrated the national scale of the problem, but demolitions have continued, suggesting that enforcement alone has not dismantled the networks responsible for illegal land sales.

Mhanda urged prospective home-seekers to approach Epworth Local Board before paying for residential stands.

"On issues relating to what we may call land barons, what we have done is to engage the community and advise them not to listen to those people," he said.

Residents, he added, should not be lured by land barons and risk losing money they may never recover.

"The only authority that can assist them on housing is the local authority, which is Epworth Local Board," Mhanda said.

The environmental case for relocating households from wetlands is strong. Wetlands store and filter water, reduce flooding and help replenish underground water supplies. When they are occupied, buildings and roads compact the soil, while waste and sewage can contaminate water sources.

The danger is particularly serious in communities without proper drainage and sewerage. Nearly 500 Epworth houses were reportedly affected by flooding and other environmental hazards during a recent wetland-related incident, affecting more than 2,000 people.

Authorities argue that preventing construction on wetlands is therefore necessary to protect both the environment and the people who might otherwise be exposed to flooding, collapsing structures and disease.

Yet the humanitarian cost of relocation cannot be ignored. A house regarded by planners as an illegal structure may be a family's only home and largest lifetime investment. Demolition can leave children without shelter, disrupt schooling and destroy livelihoods carried out from residential properties.

Zimbabwe's Constitution provides protection against arbitrary eviction. Section 74 states that no person may be evicted from their home or have it demolished without a court order issued after all relevant circumstances have been considered.

In a case involving Budiriro 4, the High Court ruled that the City of Harare could not rely solely on municipal by-laws to destroy homes. The court held that a court order must first be obtained, even where the structures are considered illegal.

This means authorities must balance enforcement of planning and environmental laws with constitutional protections, adequate notice and consideration of the circumstances facing affected families.

Relocation rather than immediate demolition could offer a more humane solution, but it will only work if alternative land is genuinely available and serviced. Families will also require clear information about where they are moving, when the process will begin and whether they will receive legal tenure at the new sites.

The Government has also pursued regularisation as an alternative where settlements do not occupy wetlands, road reserves or land required for public facilities. In December 2025, authorities identified 30 informal settlements for regularisation, including parts of Epworth, Harare South, Caledonia, Victoria Range in Masvingo and Seke Farm under Chegutu Rural District Council.

Regularisation can protect families from eviction while allowing authorities to introduce roads, water, sewerage and proper ownership records. It cannot, however, be applied everywhere. Homes built on flood-prone wetlands, railway reserves, road corridors and sites intended for schools or clinics may still have to be moved.

The Epworth programme will therefore test whether Zimbabwe can address illegal settlements without repeating cycles in which poor families lose their homes while the people who sold them the land escape accountability.

For the programme to gain public confidence, the local authority will need to publish a clear relocation plan, identify the affected areas, explain the selection process and ensure that every household is treated consistently. Residents must also be allowed to present documents and challenge errors before any action is taken.

At the same time, investigations should follow the money paid to land barons. Arresting illegal occupants while failing to prosecute those who organised and profited from the settlements would leave the central cause of the crisis untouched.

Epworth's 16,000 households are caught between two difficult realities. Their homes cannot remain indefinitely on environmentally sensitive or unplanned land, but removing them without suitable alternatives would deepen an already serious housing crisis.

The success of the relocation programme will not be measured by the number of structures cleared. It will be measured by whether families are moved lawfully and humanely to serviced land—and whether the land barons who sold them a false promise are finally held accountable.

JETOUR Drives into Zimbabwe with a new SUV Line-Up

The Chinese automotive brand JETOUR has officially entered the Zimbabwean market, unveiling a range of SUVs in Harare as it seeks to establish a strong foothold in the country's growing automotive sector.

The launch, held at The Birds at 30 in Borrowdale was headlined by JETOUR South Africa Vice President Becks Chen, who told the audience that Zimbabwe represented an important new market for the brand's global Travel Plus strategy.

Chen noted that the first JETOUR vehicle arrived on Harare's streets last year.

He said that the company's Travel Plus strategy was built around connecting its products with consumers' lifestyles through vehicles focused on comfort, intelligent technology and adventure, supported by a wider service ecosystem.

JETOUR currently has more than 2,000 sales and service networks across more than 100 countries and regions. Chen shared that the company has four global research and development centres, six design studios, a 4,000-member innovation team, 19 production bases and eight global subsidiaries covering regions including Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

The company's international expansion has also been accompanied by growing recognition for its vehicles, with Chen highlighting the JETOUR T2's 2026 South African Car of the Year award as a major milestone for the Chinese automotive manufacturer.

At the Harare launch, the company said its Zimbabwe strategy will extend beyond vehicle sales to include community development and youth-focused initiatives.

JETOUR Zimbabwe representatives said the company understood the requirements of local motorists, seeking to offer vehicles capable of combining urban comfort with the demands of Zimbabwe's diverse road and terrain conditions.

The company unveiled several models, including the JETOUR Dashing, X90 Plus, T1 and T2, with the Dashing receiving particular attention during the technical presentation.

The X90 Plus was presented as a seven-seater SUV designed to provide premium comfort for families and long-distance travellers, while the T1 and T2 were positioned as more rugged models featuring off-road capability, distinctive geometric styling and premium interiors.

For Zimbabwe, the company placed strong emphasis on after-sales support, announcing a 10-year or one-million-kilometre engine warranty.

The warranty, according to the company, will be supported by spare-parts availability and certified technicians based in Harare. Chen said JETOUR South Africa was holding more than US$3 million worth of spare parts in its warehouse, with emergency parts expected to reach Harare within three days.

JETOUR currently has one showroom and two service stations in Zimbabwe, with plans to expand its footprint to other cities countrywide.

The newly introduced 2026–2027 JETOUR Dashing was showcased as a major offering for Zimbabwe's urban SUV market.

Available in Prestige and Prime variants, the Dashing is powered by a 1.5-litre turbocharged direct-injection petrol engine paired with a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission and two-wheel drive.

The vehicle produces 125 kilowatts of power and 270 Newton-metres of torque, while its combined fuel consumption is rated at 6.8 litres per 100 kilometres, with carbon dioxide emissions of 158 grams per kilometre.

The Dashing measures 4,590 millimetres long, 1,900 millimetres wide and 1,685 millimetres high, with a 2,720-millimetre wheelbase.

Its luggage capacity ranges from 486 litres to 977 litres with the rear seats folded in a 60/40 configuration.

The model comes with 19-inch wheels fitted with 55-profile tyres, which the presenter said were selected with local road conditions in mind.

The upgraded Dashing also features heated and ventilated front seats, dual-zone climate control, eight Sony speakers, a panoramic glass sunroof and quad brushed-aluminium tailpipes.

Sporty red accents have been added to the front, sides and rear of the vehicle, while buyers can choose from colours including Jet Slate Grey, Onyx Black, Glacier White, Forest Green, Ash Grey and Crimson Red.

On safety and driver assistance, the Dashing features a Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance System, driver, passenger and curtain airbags, a 540-degree panoramic-view camera, front parking sensors and intelligent automatic low- and high-beam headlights.

The vehicle also has rear privacy glass extending from the B-pillar backwards.

The launch marked a significant step in JETOUR's Zimbabwe expansion strategy, with the company seeking to build its presence not only through its vehicle range but also through an expanded dealer, service and community network.

Chen said the company will continue working with their Zimbabwean customers and communities as it develops its local operations.

"In Zimbabwe, for Zimbabwe, be Zimbabwe," he said, reaffirming JETOUR's intention to establish a long-term presence in the country.

The launch signals the brand's ambition to compete in Zimbabwe's SUV market by combining relatively accessible luxury, technology, warranty support and a growing after-sales network under its broader Travel Plus vision.

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Health Ministry, Cimas Push Healthcare Innovation From Ideas To Impact

The Ministry of Health and Child Care and Cimas Health Group have called for stronger collaboration to turn Zimbabwean healthcare innovations into practical, affordable and accessible solutions, as the third edition of the Cimas Healthathon attracted a recorded 372 submissions from across the country.

Speaking at the grand finale of the Cimas Healthathon 3.0, Dr Celestino Dhege, representing the Minister of Health and Child Care, said the healthcare innovation must ultimately be judged by the difference it makes to ordinary people, particularly communities that remain underserved.

"Innovation is not only about technology or software. It is about finding new and better ways of doing things," Dr Dhege said.

He said that innovation could take the form of new healthcare financing models, smarter referral pathways, locally manufactured diagnostic tools or medicines, or community health workers reaching villages that conventional clinical services struggle to reach.

"The real measure of innovation lies with the outcomes we deliver to our people, to our population," he said.

Dr Dhege challenged innovators to ensure their solutions improved access, reduced healthcare costs, help health workers to perform their duties more effectively and extended quality healthcare to people previously left behind.

He said Zimbabwe still faces significant access barriers, particularly in rural and underserved communities, and urged innovators to "design for the many, not the few".

"Equity must be at the heart of every solution we develop," he said, warning that sophisticated innovations that remained inaccessible to the majority of Zimbabweans could not be considered complete solutions.

Dr Dhege also called for greater private-sector participation in healthcare, saying that the government could not transform the health system on its own.

He urged the private sector to invest in healthcare innovation through capital, expertise, infrastructure, technology and capacity to test, refine and scale promising solutions.

The call extended to academia, healthcare professionals, medical aid societies, technology companies and development partners, with Dr Dhege stressing the need for a coordinated health system rather than institutions working in isolation.

He also called on doctors and medical aid societies to rebuild trust and resolve longstanding disputes over tariffs, co-payments and delayed settlements.

"Doctors and medical aid societies are not adversaries. You are partners serving the very same patient," he said.

Dr Dhege further invited healthcare funders, providers, actuaries, technologists, academics and innovators to contribute to the proposed National Health Insurance for Zimbabwe, which he described as central to the country's journey towards universal health coverage.

Against this policy backdrop, Cimas Health Group chief executive officer Mr Vuli Ndlovu said the dramatic growth in the Healthathon participation demonstrates Zimbabwe's depth of talent and creativity.

Ndlovu said the initiative had grown from receiving only six submissions more than five years ago to nearly 400 entries this year.

"What excites me even more is what they represent. They represent young people who looked at a problem and decided not to walk away," he said.

He said that the submissions represented innovators who were choosing to spend their evenings and weekends developing solutions rather than merely discussing Zimbabwe's challenges.

Ndlovu said the geographic spread of the entries was equally significant, demonstrating that innovation was not confined to Harare, universities or established institutions.

"Innovation has got no address," he said, "solutions can emerge from classrooms, hospitals, rural clinics, healthcare workers, software developers or ordinary people who have experienced a problem and decided to act."

However, he cautioned against celebrating ideas without following them through to implementation.

"Ideas are important, but ideas alone do not change lives," he said. "What changes lives is when an idea becomes the solution. When a solution becomes the product then the product reaches a patient."

Ndlovu challenged this year's finalists to continue refining their concepts beyond the competition.

"Do not fall in love with your solution. Fall in love with the problem," he said, motivating the innovators to listen to patients, healthcare workers and communities and remain willing to adapt.

The depth of the competition was reflected in the range of solutions developed by the Top 10 finalists.

Among the most striking was Silica Guard, developed by Panashe Chandiwana and Takudzwa Mukaro, which ultimately won the competition.

The innovation targets healthcare challenges facing Zimbabwe's artisanal miners through a mobile and artificial intelligence-assisted screening and referral platform.

The system is designed to enable trained village health workers to screen miners using mobile phones, classify health risks and generate appropriate advice. Where a miner is suspected of having a serious condition, the platform can facilitate referral to a health facility and track whether the patient reaches hospital.

The innovators also proposed creating a database of artisanal miners, a highly mobile population that can be difficult for conventional health systems to monitor.

Importantly, the team said the system was not intended to replace doctors, but to identify people who need medical attention and ensure they reach healthcare professionals at the right time.

Dr Dhege said he was particularly impressed by Silica Guard's focus on developing a healthcare solution for artisanal miners and invited Chandiwana and Mukaro to present their innovation at the Ministry of Health and Child Care offices.

Another finalist, Grip-Co, tackled a different but equally pressing access challenge which is rehabilitation.

The team highlighted research indicating that 78 percent of patients in northern primary healthcare settings did not have access to rehabilitation beyond primary care, while shortages of physiotherapists and occupational therapists meant some patients could access rehabilitation only once or twice a month.

For patients required to travel, transportation costs could add another barrier.

Grip-Co proposed a lightweight wearable glove capable of capturing movement data, supported by an ESP32 embedded system, to make rehabilitation more measurable and support monitoring between clinical appointments.

The project illustrated the Healthathon's emphasis on solutions designed around actual patient experiences rather than technology for its own sake.

The competition also produced innovations across other areas of healthcare, including screening, diagnostics, preventive and rural healthcare, rehabilitation, data protection, emergency response and chronic disease management.

The judges said that the projects were assessed on whether they addressed genuine healthcare problems, attempted to provide workable solutions, improved access, had potential to reduce healthcare costs and demonstrated originality.

They also emphasised collaboration, urging participants to view the Healthathon as the beginning of an innovation journey rather than its conclusion.

One example involved a proposal to use the WhatsApp platform to improve access to treatment for sexually transmitted infections, which raised challenges around prescription requirements and anonymity. Judges suggested that the concept could potentially be combined with another team's work on redacting sensitive information to produce a stronger future solution.

The emphasis on collaboration mirrored Ndlovu's broader message that healthcare challenges are too complex for one institution to solve alone.

He said government, private healthcare providers, medical aid societies, universities, healthcare professionals, technology companies and innovators ultimately converge around one objective which is helping people to live healthier and longer lives.

Ndlovu also challenged the sector to think beyond "patient experience", arguing that illnesses affect families and communities as well as individuals.

"It's not about patient experience, it's a human experience," he said.

The Healthathon culminated in Silica Guard taking first place and winning US$3,500, with the Runtime Terrors coming second and receiving US$2,000, while Blood Geo Alert Team finished third.

For Dr Dhege, however, the awards represented only one stage in a much larger national effort.

He urged participants who did not win to continue refining their ideas, testing them, finding partners and pursuing implementation.

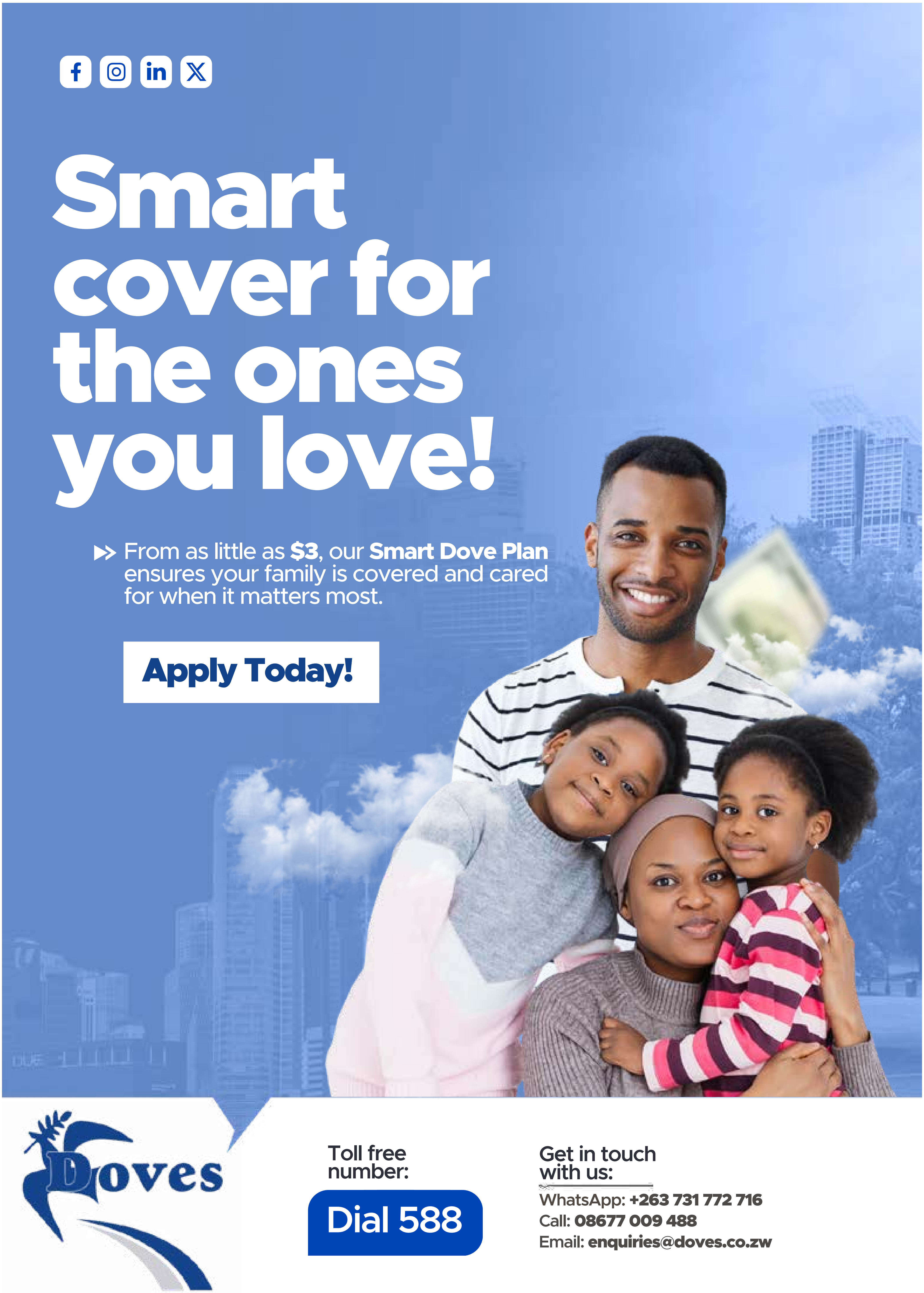
"This is the beginning, not an end," he said.

He called for the government, the private sector, academia, innovators and communities to work together towards a health system capable of serving the country aspires to build by 2030 and beyond.

Ndlovu echoed the message, saying the real test of the Healthathon would not be what happened on the stage, but what happened after it.

The challenge now is to ensure that Zimbabwe's growing pool of health innovators has the partnerships, investment and institutional support required to transform promising ideas into solutions that can ultimately reach the people who need them most.

Position 1 - SilicaGuard
Position 2 - Runtime Terrors
Position 3 - Blood Geo Alert
Position 4 - the interns
Position 5 - mambokadzi
Position 6 - girls who code
Position 7 - Iango
Position 8 - chengetai health
Position 9 - Grip co
Position 10 - Team Viva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No Retreat on Lithium Export Ban

Minister Kambamura rejects calls for an extension as producers race to complete processing plants before the January 2027 deadline.

By Shyline Majaji

Mines and Mining Development Minister Polite Kambamura has maintained that Zimbabwe will proceed with its January 2027 deadline for ending exports of lithium concentrates, despite concerns that some local processing plants may not be completed on time.

The policy forms part of the Government's broader mineral-beneficiation strategy, which seeks to move Zimbabwe away from exporting raw and semi-processed minerals towards producing higher-value products locally.

Under the transitional export regime, lithium producers have been allocated export quotas while being required to demonstrate progress towards constructing domestic processing facilities. A 10 percent export tax on lithium concentrates also remains in place ahead of the proposed full ban.

Several producers are developing facilities that would convert lithium concentrate into lithium sulphate, a higher-value intermediate product used in the manufacture of battery-grade lithium chemicals.

However, some mining companies have reportedly requested that the deadline be moved from January to June 2027, arguing that large processing plants require more time to finance, construct, commission and bring into full production.

Minister Kambamura rejected immediate calls for an extension, saying producers had received sufficient notice to prepare for the new requirements.

"The January 2027 deadline is still on. We cannot talk of extending right now. We would like to urge all producers to stick to that deadline," Kambamura said.

"The producers were given notice in June 2025. This is an 18-month period to January 2027."

Bikita Quota Raises Questions

The Government's firm position comes amid scrutiny over an additional export allocation granted to Bikita Minerals, which is owned by China's Sinomine Resource Group.

Bikita Minerals received an additional quota to export 300,000 tonnes of lithium concentrate, bringing its total allocation for 2026 to 500,000 tonnes. The company had initially received approval to export 200,000 tonnes in April.

The additional allocation allows Bikita to continue generating export revenue while developing a lithium sulphate plant with a planned annual production capacity of 100,000 tonnes.

However, the plant is reportedly expected to be completed around the middle of 2027—several months after the Government's January deadline. This has prompted questions about whether the authorities may eventually adopt a case-by-case approach for companies that demonstrate substantial investment and credible construction progress.

Kambamura insisted that producers must accelerate their projects if they are to comply with the policy.

"They have to run with pace. They have to construct a lithium sulphate plant," he said.

The Government may need to demonstrate that export quotas and any future exemptions are administered transparently and consistently. Clear criteria would help prevent perceptions that certain producers are receiving preferential treatment while others face stricter enforcement.

Processing Investments Take Shape

Zimbabwe currently has one operational lithium sulphate plant at Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe's Arcadia operation.

The facility, developed by Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt through an investment estimated at US$400 million, has an annual production capacity of 50,000 tonnes. It shipped its first lithium sulphate products in April 2026, demonstrating that local processing is technically achievable when sufficient capital and infrastructure are available.

Other projects include Sinomine's planned facility at Bikita Minerals and Sichuan Yahua's development at Kamativi. A processing project is also planned at the State-owned Sandawana operation, although it remains at an earlier development stage.

These investments could help Zimbabwe retain more export earnings, create skilled employment, support local suppliers and establish a foundation for participation in the international battery-materials industry.

Zimbabwe exported more than 1.1 million tonnes of spodumene concentrate to China in 2025, underlining the mining industry's

continued dependence on selling concentrate rather than more valuable processed products.

"We are leaving no stone unturned so that the Government will continue to benefit immensely from our lithium resources," Kambamura said.

Lessons From Indonesia

Zimbabwe is not the first mineral-producing country to restrict raw exports to encourage domestic processing.

Indonesia imposed restrictions on exports of unprocessed nickel ore and enforced a full ban from January 2020. The policy helped attract major investments in smelters, stainless-steel production and electric-vehicle battery facilities.

Indonesia's Ministry of Investment reported that the value of the country's nickel-derived exports rose from about US$3.3 billion in 2017 to US$33.8 billion in 2022. The policy is widely credited with transforming Indonesia from a supplier of raw nickel ore into an important centre for processed nickel and battery-related investment.

However, Indonesia's experience also provides warnings for Zimbabwe. The expansion of smelting generated concerns about pollution, deforestation, worker safety and dependence on coal-powered electricity. The European Union also challenged the export restrictions at the World Trade Organisation.

A World Bank study found that Indonesia's policy increased domestic value added in exports but also produced efficiency challenges, including the entry of smaller and less productive downstream companies.

The lesson is that an export ban can attract processing investment, but it must be supported by reliable electricity, transport infrastructure, skilled workers, environmental safeguards and predictable regulations.

Botswana Retains More Diamond Value

Botswana provides another important African example, although its approach to diamond beneficiation was driven mainly through agreements, domestic supply arrangements and partnerships rather than a straightforward export ban.

The country pushed for more diamonds to be sorted, valued, cut and polished locally instead of exporting the entire production in rough form. It also negotiated the relocation of De Beers' international sales activities from London to Gaborone.

According to the World Bank, Botswana's beneficiation programme had created close to 3,000 direct jobs in 16 cutting and polishing factories by 2010. It also supported skills development and strengthened Gaborone's position as an international diamond-trading centre.

Botswana's experience shows that beneficiation can deliver employment and skills when the Government works with investors and secures access to raw materials for local processors. It also shows that processing must remain commercially competitive, particularly during periods of weak international demand.

Namibia Takes Similar Path

Namibia introduced restrictions on exports of unprocessed lithium, cobalt, manganese, graphite and rare-earth minerals in 2023.

The policy was intended to encourage processing, employment and greater domestic participation in critical-mineral value chains. The Namibian policy closely resembles Zimbabwe's approach, but it is still too early to describe its economic results as a complete success. Its experience nevertheless demonstrates that mineral-rich African countries increasingly want to retain more value from resources required for the global energy transition.

For Zimbabwe, the challenge will be to move beyond simply prohibiting exports and create the conditions necessary for a competitive processing industry.

Benefits Must Be Balanced Against Risks

Supporters of the January 2027 deadline argue that repeatedly extending it could weaken the policy and encourage producers to delay their investments. A firm deadline may place pressure on companies to mobilise capital and complete processing plants faster.

Local beneficiation could create employment, increase tax revenue, develop technical skills and enable Zimbabwe to earn more from each tonne of lithium it exports. It could also stimulate supporting industries in engineering, transport, chemicals, construction and energy.

However, an export ban introduced before sufficient domestic processing capacity is available could leave producers with stockpiles they cannot sell. This could reduce production, foreign-currency earnings and Government revenue while threatening jobs at mines that do not have access to operational processing facilities.

Lithium prices have also experienced significant volatility, raising questions about whether every proposed plant will remain commercially viable. Processing lithium into higher-value products requires substantial capital, dependable electricity, water, specialist skills and access to international markets.

The Government will therefore need to monitor construction progress closely while maintaining consistent rules. A transparent assessment framework could measure each producer's expenditure, construction milestones, environmental compliance and expected commissioning date.

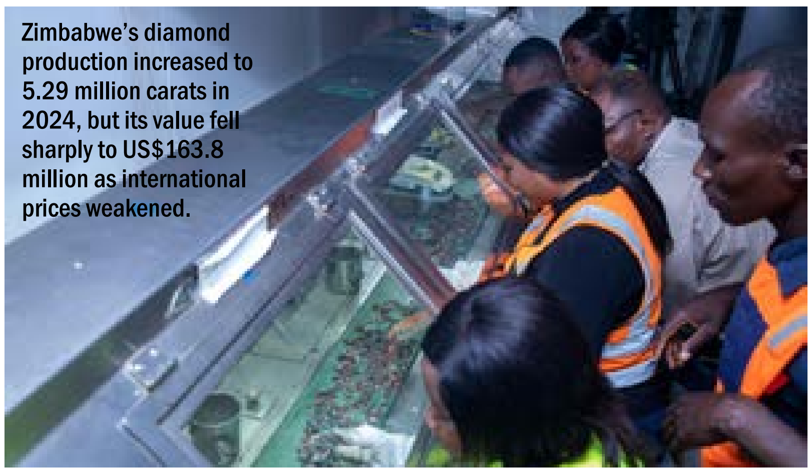
The success of the policy should ultimately be judged not only by the number of plants constructed but also by the jobs created, taxes paid, skills transferred, local companies supported and additional export value retained in Zimbabwe.

As January 2027 approaches, the Government faces a delicate balancing act: it must maintain enough pressure to prevent further delays while ensuring that the transition does not disrupt production or undermine investor confidence.

International experience shows that beneficiation can deliver significant economic benefits, but an export ban alone is not enough. Zimbabwe's ambitions will depend on whether it can combine firm policy with reliable infrastructure, transparent administration, environmental protection and commercially sustainable processing operations.

More Diamonds, Less Money

Zimbabwe's output rises by 19 percent as production value plunges by 61 percent



Zimbabwe's diamond production increased to 5.29 million carats in 2024, but its value fell sharply to US$163.8 million as international prices weakened.

By Hurumende Business Desk

Zimbabwe's diamond industry is producing more stones but earning significantly less from them, exposing the sector to falling international prices and declining returns.

Figures from the Kimberley Process show that the country produced 4.46 million carats valued at US$423.6 million in 2022. By 2024, production had increased by nearly 19 percent to 5.29 million carats, but its value had fallen by 61 percent to US$163.8 million.

The average value per carat dropped sharply from US$94.95 in 2022 to US$30.94 in 2024. The figures suggest that increased production has not been enough to compensate for the declining value of Zimbabwe's diamond output.

The poor performance has continued to weigh on diamonds' contribution to the country's mineral exports.

During the first half of 2026, diamonds generated US$43.3 million and accounted for just 1.71 percent of the US$2.532 billion in mineral exports facilitated by the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe.

Other minerals delivered considerably higher returns during the same period. Platinum group metals matte generated US$859.1 million, spodumene concentrates earned US$672.8 million, while PGM concentrates contributed US$347.6 million.

The figures underline the reduced importance of diamonds within Zimbabwe's mineral export basket, despite the country possessing substantial deposits and maintaining relatively high production levels.

Zimbabwe's diamond producers are not alone in facing falling prices. The international rough-diamond market has been weakened by subdued consumer demand, excess inventories and growing competition from laboratory-grown diamonds.

De Beers reported that its average realised rough-diamond price fell by 32 percent to US$105 per carat during the first half of 2026. Its consolidated rough-diamond sales revenue declined by 23 percent to US$1.31 billion over the same period.

The weakness in the international market has placed producers under pressure, particularly as mining, security, electricity, equipment maintenance and labour costs remain high.

This creates a difficult position for Zimbabwean producers. Increasing production may raise operating costs without necessarily improving earnings when prices per carat continue to fall.

Zimbabwe currently applies a 10 percent royalty on the gross fair-market value of diamonds. Because the royalty is calculated against the value of production, Government collections naturally decline when prices and overall production value fall.

Producers, however, continue to incur largely unchanged operating costs, raising debate over whether the current royalty framework is sufficiently flexible to respond to changing market conditions.

One proposal under consideration is a tied or variable royalty arrangement. Under such a system, the 10 percent rate could remain in place during strong market conditions, while lower rates would apply when agreed price, investment or beneficiation thresholds are met.

Supporters argue that a flexible system could provide relief to producers during periods of weak prices while encouraging them to invest in production and local processing.

Similar approaches are used in other diamond-producing jurisdictions. South Africa applies a variable diamond royalty ranging from 0.5 percent to seven percent, while Canada's Northwest Territories uses a graduated system under which royalty obligations increase as the value or profitability of a mine rises.

However, reducing royalties would carry risks for the Treasury, particularly when public revenue is already under pressure. Any flexible arrangement would require clear rules and transparent monitoring to prevent companies from understating the value of production or using weak market conditions to avoid their full obligations.

The decline in diamond earnings has also renewed attention on Zimbabwe's limited cutting and polishing capacity.

A large share of the country's diamonds continues to leave in rough form, limiting the value retained through local processing, jewellery manufacturing and associated services.

Although Zimbabwe has established facilities and introduced policies intended to promote beneficiation, utilisation of the available capacity remains limited. Cutting and polishing operations require specialist skills, dependable electricity, suitable technology and access to competitive international markets.

A tied royalty system could make reduced rates conditional on measurable commitments by producers. These could include increased production, investment in mine development, employment creation, skills transfer or the supply of diamonds to domestic cutting and polishing companies.

Such an arrangement would ensure that any reduction in Government revenue is matched by identifiable economic benefits instead of becoming an unconditional concession to mining companies.

The sharp fall in diamond values presents Zimbabwe with a difficult balancing act. The Government must protect public revenue while ensuring that producers remain commercially viable during an extended downturn in the international market.

Rising output alone will not revive the sector if the value earned from every carat continues to fall. Its long-term recovery will depend on stronger international demand, improved operational efficiency and a credible strategy for retaining more value from diamonds before they leave Zimbabwe.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Record Tobacco Crop Reaches 358.4m kg as Prices Fall 25%

By Hurumende Business Desk

Zimbabwe delivered a record 358.4 million kilogrammes of tobacco by August 18, 2026, but farmers received substantially lower prices than during the previous marketing season.

The average selling price declined by 25 percent from US$3.32 per kilogramme in 2025 to US$2.49 this year, reducing the financial benefit of the increased production.

Marketed volumes rose by approximately 4.4 million kilogrammes from the 354 million kilogrammes sold during the comparable period last year. This represented an increase of just over one percent, while the average price declined by US$0.83 per kilogramme.

The figures present a mixed outcome for growers. Zimbabwe produced and marketed more tobacco, but the sharp fall in prices meant that farmers earned less for every kilogramme sold.

The Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board attributed the price decline to increased supply from other major tobacco-producing countries, high stocks carried over from previous seasons and subdued demand on the international market.

“International supply conditions, higher carry-over stocks and subdued demand have affected tobacco prices during the season,” TIMB said.

By July 31, tobacco sales had reached 357.1 million kilogrammes, confirming the 2026 marketing season as Zimbabwe’s second consecutive record crop. Sales had generated approximately US$882 million by that stage.

The latest record comes as Zimbabwe continues to expand production under the Tobacco Value Chain Transformation Plan 2, which targets annual output of 500 million kilogrammes by 2030.

Reaching that target would require the country to increase annual production by more than 140 million kilogrammes over the next four years. However, the decline in prices demonstrates that higher output does not automatically result in improved earnings for farmers.

Production costs remain an important concern, particularly for growers who depend on expensive inputs, contract financing and hired labour. When market prices fall, farmers may struggle to cover their expenses even after producing a successful crop.

The weaker prices received at the marketing floors have coincided with stronger activity in the export market.

Zimbabwe exported 138.25 million kilogrammes of tobacco worth US$791.85 million by August 19, 2026. This produced an average export price of US$5.73 per kilogramme.

Export volumes increased by 39 percent compared with the corresponding period in 2025, while the average export price rose by four percent.

The difference between the US$2.49 average marketing price and the US$5.73 export price does not necessarily represent an immediate profit for merchants. The two figures relate to different stages of the tobacco value chain.

The tobacco sold internationally may include stocks purchased during earlier marketing seasons, as well as leaf that has undergone grading, processing, blending, packaging and transportation. Export prices also incorporate costs that are not reflected in the amount paid directly to farmers.

Nevertheless, the difference illustrates the additional value that can be generated after tobacco leaves the marketing floor. It strengthens calls for Zimbabwe to process more of its tobacco locally instead of relying heavily on exports of raw or partly processed leaf.

Zimbabwe marketed a record 358.4 million kilogrammes of tobacco by August 18, 2026, although the average price paid to farmers declined by 25 percent to US$2.49 per kilogramme.

Industry estimates put cigarette-manufacturing capacity utilisation at approximately 27 percent, while cut-rag processing capacity is operating at around 24 percent. These figures suggest that much of the country’s installed processing capacity remains underused.

The Government has proposed the establishment of tobacco-focused special economic zones to attract investment in processing, cigarette production and other downstream activities.

Greater local processing could create employment, strengthen supporting industries and allow Zimbabwe to retain a larger share of the revenue generated by its tobacco crop. However, this would require investment, dependable electricity, competitive financing and access to regional and international markets.

Tobacco remains one of Zimbabwe’s most important agricultural exports and a major source of income for thousands of small-scale farmers. Its continued expansion has been supported by contract farming, increased participation by indigenous growers and improved access to production inputs.

However, the 2026 season has shown that production records alone cannot guarantee better livelihoods. Farmers’ viability will depend on the relationship between prices, production costs, debt obligations and the share of export value that ultimately reaches growers.

Zimbabwe has produced another record tobacco crop, but the 25 percent decline in the average selling price has taken some of the shine off the achievement. The industry’s next challenge is to translate rising volumes into stronger and more sustainable returns through fairer marketing outcomes, improved productivity and greater domestic value addition.

AU demands justice after South Sudan ambush kills two UN peacekeepers

Seven others injured as mounting attacks place peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and civilians in grave danger

Abel Karowangoro

The African Union has demanded an immediate investigation into an ambush that killed two Ethiopian United Nations peacekeepers and injured seven other people in South Sudan's volatile Jonglei State.

Unidentified armed assailants attacked a United Nations Mission in South Sudan patrol travelling towards Pajut, a remote area where insecurity and poor road infrastructure have made the movement of civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers increasingly dangerous.

The seven injured comprised three Ethiopian peacekeepers, two members of the South Sudan National Police Service and two UNMISS civilian employees, according to the United Nations.

A Quick Reaction Force was deployed to secure the scene and support the emergency response following the attack.

No organisation had claimed responsibility by the time of publication, while the identities and motives of the assailants remained unknown.

The UN reported that the ambush occurred on Monday, August 24, while an African Union statement issued on August 28 referred to the attack as having occurred on August 25. Both organisations confirmed the same casualty figures and location.

AU demands investigation

African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf strongly condemned the attack and called on South Sudanese authorities to identify and prosecute those responsible.

"The AUC Chairperson pays tribute to the two Ethiopian peacekeepers who tragically lost their lives and the seven injured, helping to promote peace and stability in South Sudan," the African Union said in its statement□ .

Youssouf extended condolences to the Ethiopian government and the families, colleagues and friends of the two deceased peacekeepers.

He reaffirmed the AU's commitment to supporting South Sudan as the country seeks a credible democratic transition and sustainable peace.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres also condemned the killings "in the strongest possible terms", warning that attacks deliberately directed against UN peacekeepers may constitute war crimes.

"All attacks on peacekeepers must be promptly investigated, and those responsible must be effectively prosecuted and held accountable," the UN Secretary-General said□ .

UNMISS head Anita Kiki Gbeho described the targeting of personnel deployed to support South Sudan's peace process as unacceptable.

Human life must be protected

United Nations peacekeepers patrol South Sudan, where two Ethiopian peacekeepers were killed and seven other people injured after unidentified gunmen ambushed a UNMISS patrol in Jonglei State. Picture: UNMISS/United Nations

Beyond the diplomatic condemnations, the attack represents the loss of two human lives and has left seven other people carrying physical and psychological injuries.

The deceased peacekeepers were not merely statistics in another report about African conflict. They were individuals with families and communities who had deployed far from home to help protect civilians and support peace in a country still struggling to escape cycles of violence.

Their deaths underline the responsibility of South Sudanese authorities, political leaders, community leaders and armed groups to respect the sanctity of human life.

Peacekeepers, police officers, humanitarian personnel and civilians must not be treated as expendable casualties of political disputes, communal conflict or competition over territory and resources.

The protection of life must remain the first obligation of every government and security institution. Where attacks occur, condolences alone are insufficient. They must be followed by credible investigations, arrests, fair prosecutions and measures preventing similar violence.

Failure to hold the perpetrators accountable could encourage further attacks and deepen a culture of impunity.

Attack raises war-crime concerns

Peacekeepers deployed under the UN flag perform duties that include protecting civilians, supporting humanitarian access, monitoring human rights and assisting efforts to implement peace agreements.

They are protected under international law. Intentionally directing attacks against personnel involved in a peacekeeping mission may constitute a war crime when those personnel are entitled to the protection given to civilians.

The UN Security Council has demanded a full, transparent and immediate investigation, warning that impunity for attacks against peacekeepers is unacceptable.

It also expressed alarm over persistent armed and intercommunal violence in Jonglei State and its impact on civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel.

The latest attack reportedly brought the number of peacekeepers killed by militias globally since the beginning of 2026 to nine, according to information released through the UN.

The killings therefore extend beyond a single security incident. They challenge the international system established to protect personnel sent into dangerous environments to prevent further bloodshed.

If armed groups can kill peacekeepers without consequence, communities relying on their protection become even more vulnerable.

Civilians face the greatest danger

Although the ambush targeted a UNMISS patrol, civilians continue to suffer the greatest consequences of South Sudan's instability.

Violence can force families from their homes, separate children from their parents, disrupt food production and prevent communities from accessing healthcare, education and markets.

Insecurity along roads also restricts the delivery of food, medicine and other essential supplies to isolated communities.

Peacekeeping patrols help deter attacks, investigate reported violence and maintain access to areas where the state has limited capacity. An assault against such a patrol can consequently reduce protection for entire communities, not only UN personnel.

The attack also sends a threatening message to humanitarian organisations whose workers already operate under extremely difficult conditions.

When roads become unsafe, aid agencies may suspend or restrict operations. The people who ultimately suffer are civilians facing hunger, displacement, disease and flooding.

UN reporting has previously shown the devastating effect of South Sudan's violence on ordinary people. In one documented period, UNMISS and the UN Human Rights Office recorded hundreds of civilians killed or injured as armed and intercommunal violence spread through affected areas.

Fragile peace under renewed pressure

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 but descended into civil war in December 2013 following a political dispute between President Salva Kiir and his then deputy, Riek Machar.

The fighting fractured the country along political and ethnic lines, killed thousands and displaced millions of people.

A revitalised peace agreement signed in 2018 reduced large-scale fighting and created a transitional government. However, the agreement has faced repeated delays and significant provisions remain incomplete.

Armed confrontations, political tensions, communal attacks and weak state institutions continue to threaten the transition.

Jonglei is among the states repeatedly affected by intercommunal violence, revenge attacks, cattle-related conflict and armed activity. Its vast territory, limited infrastructure and difficult terrain make it challenging for authorities and humanitarian organisations to reach threatened communities quickly.

The ambush demonstrates how fragile the security situation remains beyond major population centres.

Justice must go beyond statements

The condemnations issued by the AU, UN and international partners are important, but their effectiveness will ultimately be measured by what happens next.

South Sudanese authorities must establish who carried out the attack, how the assailants obtained information about the patrol's movement and whether any security failures exposed personnel to avoidable danger.

The investigation should be independent, transparent and capable of producing evidence that can withstand scrutiny in court.

Authorities must also strengthen security along major humanitarian and peacekeeping routes without using the incident to justify abuses against surrounding communities.

Collective punishment, arbitrary arrests and reprisals would place more innocent lives at risk and undermine the search for justice.

Political and community leaders should use their influence to prevent retaliation, support investigators and promote dialogue between communities living in conflict-affected areas.

The lasting tribute to the two Ethiopian peacekeepers would not be found in statements alone, but in the arrest and lawful prosecution of their killers, stronger protection for those serving under the UN flag and renewed action to protect every human life threatened by South Sudan's continuing violence.

Jah Prayzah Electrifies Glamis Arena at ZAS 2026 Closing Ceremony

Takudzwa Karowangoro

Zimbabwean music superstar Jah Prayzah delivered a high-energy performance at Glamis Arena on Saturday night, bringing the 2026 Zimbabwe Agricultural Show to a spectacular close.

The award-winning musician took to the stage during the closing ceremony of the agricultural showcase, sending thousands of fans into a frenzy with a selection of his popular songs.

Dressed in his trademark stylish outfit, Jah Prayzah immediately commanded the stage as the crowd sang along to his hits, creating a vibrant atmosphere at Glamis Arena.

His performance provided a fitting entertainment finale to the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show, which brought together farmers, businesses, exhibitors, government officials and members of the public for a week-long celebration of agriculture and commerce.

The crowd danced and sang throughout the performance as Jah Prayzah showcased his blend of contemporary Zimbabwean music and traditional sounds.

The 2026 edition of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show featured exhibitions from various sectors, with the event providing a platform for businesses and farmers to showcase products, services and innovations.

Jah Prayzah's energetic set capped a night of entertainment and celebration, leaving fans at Glamis Arena with a memorable finale to this year's show

ZIFA suspends two referees over controversial PSL decisions

Takudzwa Karowangoro

The Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) has suspended Premier Soccer League referees Quedsani Dirwai and Magare Mhaka for six matchdays following controversial decisions that were deemed to have influenced the outcomes of two league matches.

The suspensions cover Matchday 27 to Matchday 32, ruling both officials out of PSL assignments during a crucial stage of the season.

ZIFA imposed the sanctions after considering reports submitted by match commissioners following matches officiated by the two referees on August 1, 2026.

Dirwai was sanctioned over his handling of the Scotland FC versus MWOS FC encounter at Rufaro Stadium, while Mhaka was punished for decisions made during the FC Platinum versus Simba Bhora match at Mandava Stadium.

According to ZIFA, match commissioners identified incorrect decisions in both encounters and concluded that the calls had influenced the final results.

"The Zimbabwe Football Association confirms the suspension of Premier Soccer League referees Quedsani Dirwai and Magare Mhaka from officiating PSL matches for six matchdays, from Matchday 27 to Matchday 32," ZIFA said in a statement.

"The sanctions follow reports submitted by match commissioners regarding matches officiated by the two referees on 1 August 2026.

"Dirwai was sanctioned following his handling of the Scotland FC versus MWOS FC match at Rufaro Stadium, while Mhaka was sanctioned following the FC Platinum versus Simba Bhora match at Mandava Stadium.

"In both instances, the match commissioners reported incorrect decisions deemed to have influenced the outcome of the respective matches."

Second Six-Match Ban for Dirwai

The latest punishment is particularly significant for Dirwai, who has now received a second six-match suspension from the national football governing body.

Last season, he was suspended for six matches after his performance in the FC Platinum versus Dynamos encounter at Mandava Stadium came under scrutiny.

The repeated sanction is likely to intensify debate over refereeing standards in Zimbabwean football. Officiating decisions have frequently attracted criticism from clubs, coaches and supporters, particularly in matches involving teams battling for the championship or fighting relegation.

With the PSL season entering a decisive period, incorrect refereeing decisions can have serious consequences for clubs seeking crucial points and improved positions on the league table.

ZIFA's action signals its determination to hold match officials accountable when their decisions are found to have materially affected games. It also places renewed pressure on the association to strengthen referee training, assessment and supervision to improve consistency across the domestic league.

The suspensions are expected to increase scrutiny of match officials during the remaining fixtures as clubs continue their battles at both ends of the PSL table.

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The technology could also improve the commercial appeal of the domestic game.

Sponsors and broadcasters are generally attracted to competitions that are professionally organised, properly televised and regarded as credible.

VAR requires multiple camera angles and organised broadcast production, potentially encouraging improvements in the television coverage of local football.

Better broadcasts could help the PSL reach supporters beyond the stadium, increase advertising opportunities and strengthen the commercial value of club sponsorships.

Match footage could also support coaching, player analysis, disciplinary hearings and referee development.

However, the technology must be introduced with realistic expectations.

VAR does not guarantee perfect decisions. It depends on the quality of camera footage, the competence of officials and the correct application of the protocol.

Poor training can produce long delays and inconsistent interventions, frustrating supporters and disrupting the flow of matches.

ZIFA must therefore place referee training at the centre of the rollout.

Officials should spend substantial time working with simulators, recorded matches and controlled test games before the technology is introduced competitively.

Players and coaches must also be educated.

Only the referee is allowed to initiate an on-field review, while players who aggressively demand reviews or make the television-screen gesture can be disciplined.

Supporters will need stadium announcements or clear signals explaining when a review is taking place and what decision has been reached.

Transparency will be important in building public confidence.

ZIFA should regularly update stakeholders on the installation timetable, the technology provider, training process, FIFA approval and competitions in which VAR will be used.

The association should also publish a clear implementation policy before the first official match.

The investment comes at a time when Zimbabwean football is attempting to rebuild its governance, infrastructure and international standing.

The country has immense football talent and a passionate supporter base, but its development has been restricted by administrative disputes, deteriorating stadiums, limited funding and inconsistent commercial structures.

The partnership between Sakunda and ZIFA shows that corporate investment can help address some of those problems when projects are tied to clear development goals.

The National Sports Stadium is scheduled to lead the implementation before the end of 2026, giving Zimbabwean football an important test case.

If the installation, training and approval processes are successfully completed, Rufaro and Barbourfields are expected to follow by March 2027.

The rollout should eventually expand beyond the three venues if Zimbabwe wants VAR to become part of regular domestic football rather than a technology reserved for a small number of matches.

Other regions will also need suitable stadiums, improved broadcasting facilities and trained personnel.

For now, the project gives Zimbabwean football an opportunity to move closer to international standards and rebuild trust in decisive match incidents.

Its success will depend on more than the arrival of cameras and monitors.

It will require proper governance, certified equipment, trained officials, reliable infrastructure, transparent rules and funding for long-term operation.

If those elements are delivered, the Sakunda-ZIFA partnership could mark a genuine turning point—one in which Zimbabwe moves from debating controversial decisions without evidence to reviewing them through technology recognised across world football.

VAR will not solve every problem in the national game, but its introduction can improve fairness, strengthen refereeing, enhance broadcasts and restore confidence.

For players, coaches and supporters who have endured years of disputed decisions and inadequate infrastructure, the message is significant: Zimbabwean football is preparing to join the modern era.

Sakunda Takes Zimbabwean Football Into VAR Era

Three-stadium technology rollout promises fairer decisions, stronger refereeing and renewed international credibility, but installation alone will not complete the transformation

By Kelvin Matore

Zimbabwean football is preparing to enter the Video Assistant Referee era after Sakunda Holdings committed to funding the installation of VAR technology at three of the country's leading stadiums in a landmark partnership with the Zimbabwe Football Association.

The project will see VAR facilities installed at the National Sports Stadium, Rufaro Stadium and Barbourfields Stadium, giving Zimbabwe the technical foundation required to use video reviews during major domestic and international matches.

The National Sports Stadium is expected to become the first venue to receive the technology, with installation targeted for completion before the end of 2026.

Rufaro Stadium in Harare and Barbourfields Stadium in Bulawayo will follow, with the full rollout expected to be completed by March 2027, according to the initial Hurumende report□ .

The partnership represents one of the most significant technological investments in Zimbabwean football and could fundamentally change how major matches are officiated.

It could also strengthen efforts to restore confidence in refereeing, improve the country's ability to stage high-profile fixtures and prepare local match officials for assignments at CAF and FIFA competitions.

For decades, disputed goals, penalties, red cards and offside decisions have dominated debate in Zimbabwean football.

Some controversial decisions have triggered protests, accusations against match officials, disciplinary cases and confrontation among supporters.

VAR will not eliminate every disagreement. However, it will give referees access to video footage when potentially match-changing incidents may have been missed or incorrectly judged.

Under the partnership, Sakunda Holdings will finance the technological infrastructure while ZIFA will be responsible for integrating the system into the country's football and refereeing structures.

The project builds on Sakunda's investment in the refurbishment of the National Sports Stadium, where the company financed the installation of bucket seats, pitch rehabilitation and other improvements intended to restore the venue to international standards.

Those interventions contributed to the rehabilitation of a stadium that had previously struggled to meet the requirements for hosting top-level matches.

The VAR project extends Sakunda's support beyond physical refurbishment into the specialised technology now associated with elite football.

It also demonstrates the role the private sector can play in rebuilding Zimbabwe's sporting infrastructure at a time when the cost of modern stadium development places considerable pressure on public finances.

VAR operates through cameras positioned around the stadium, with match footage transmitted to trained video officials in a Video Operation Room.

The VAR team communicates with the referee through a headset and can recommend a review where it identifies a clear and obvious error or serious missed incident.

The final decision remains with the referee.

Under the International Football Association Board protocol, VAR is primarily used for decisions involving goals, penalties, direct red cards and cases of mistaken identity.

A referee may accept factual information from the video team or examine footage on a pitch-side monitor before making a final decision.

The underlying philosophy is "minimum interference, maximum benefit." VAR is not intended to re-referee every challenge or replace the authority of the match official.

It is designed to intervene only where a serious error may have changed the outcome of a match.

For Zimbabwe, the immediate benefit could be greater protection for referees in high-pressure fixtures.

Match officials frequently make decisions within seconds while following play at speed and dealing with obstructed views, crowd pressure and player appeals.

A referee can miss an incident without being incompetent or dishonest. VAR provides a second opportunity to examine the most serious decisions using different camera angles and replay speeds.

This could be particularly valuable during major Premier Soccer League matches, cup finals, international qualifiers and CAF inter-club fixtures.

Matches involving Dynamos, Highlanders, CAPS United, FC Platinum, Ngezi Platinum Stars and other leading clubs frequently attract significant public attention.

A disputed penalty or disallowed goal in such fixtures can affect championship races, relegation battles, continental qualification and the financial future of clubs.

The presence of VAR could help ensure that the most consequential decisions are supported by the best available evidence.

It could also reduce some of the accusations of bias and match manipulation that arise whenever a referee makes an unpopular decision.

Technology will not silence every critic, because some decisions remain matters of interpretation. Two qualified officials can watch the same challenge and reach different conclusions about whether the contact was sufficient to justify a penalty.

VAR is most effective when the original decision contains a clear and obvious error. It is not intended to overturn a referee merely because an alternative interpretation is possible.

The technology could nevertheless improve accountability because disputed incidents would be recorded, reviewed and assessed through an established procedure.

Zimbabwean referees would also benefit professionally.

CAF and FIFA increasingly appoint officials with experience in video-assisted matches. Local referees who are not exposed to the technology may be placed at a disadvantage when seeking selection for major continental and international tournaments.

CAF has expanded its use of VAR across its major competitions as part of efforts to improve the quality and credibility of African refereeing.

The confederation used VAR in every match at the Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon and has continued training referees, VAR operators and match commissioners. CAF□

Giving Zimbabwean officials regular access to VAR equipment would allow them to learn how to communicate with video officials, conduct on-field reviews and apply the protocol under match conditions.

The country could eventually develop its own pool of certified VARs, assistant VARs, replay operators and technical personnel.

That would improve Zimbabwe's representation in continental competitions while reducing dependence on foreign expertise when VAR is used locally.

The project could also support Zimbabwe's ambition to host more international football.

However, the installation of VAR must not be confused with complete stadium certification.

CAF and FIFA inspect several aspects of a venue, including the playing surface, dressing rooms, floodlights, media areas, spectator seating, security arrangements, emergency services and access control.

A stadium does not automatically become eligible to host international matches merely because it has VAR equipment.

The technology will nevertheless add an important layer to the ongoing refurbishment of the National Sports Stadium and the broader modernisation of Rufaro and Barbourfields.

CAF has repeatedly emphasised that member associations need compliant stadiums if national teams and clubs are to play continental matches at home.

For Zimbabwean supporters, hosting matches locally has emotional and economic importance.

When the Warriors or local clubs are forced to play home fixtures outside the country, supporters lose the opportunity to watch their teams while ZIFA and clubs lose gate revenue, sponsorship exposure and home advantage.

Local hotels, transport operators, food vendors and other businesses also lose income generated by international match days.

VAR-equipped and fully compliant stadiums would strengthen Zimbabwe's case when bidding to host qualifiers, regional competitions and other important fixtures.

The choice of the National Sports Stadium, Rufaro and Barbourfields provides geographical and historical significance.

The National Sports Stadium remains the country's flagship sporting venue and the traditional home of the Warriors.

Rufaro Stadium is closely associated with the history of domestic football and has hosted generations of leading clubs and players.

Barbourfields is the centre of football in Bulawayo and one of the country's most respected venues, known for its passionate supporters and rich sporting atmosphere.

Installing the technology in both Harare and Bulawayo could prevent the rollout from being concentrated entirely in the capital.

However, the initial restriction to three stadiums will present a policy challenge for ZIFA and the Premier Soccer League.

If VAR is used at some league matches but unavailable at others, clubs could question whether the competition is being officiated under equal conditions.

A disputed incident at a VAR-equipped stadium may be reviewed, while an identical incident at another venue would depend solely on the on-field officials.

ZIFA and the PSL will therefore need to determine whether VAR will initially be used only for selected matches, cup finals and international fixtures or whether its introduction will be delayed until a broader and consistent competition framework is ready.

The rules must be communicated clearly to clubs, referees, players, coaches, broadcasters and supporters before the system is activated.

FIFA does not permit a competition organiser simply to purchase equipment and begin using VAR.

The organiser must complete the Implementation Assistance and Approval Programme and receive written permission from FIFA.

The process includes technical preparation, referee education, simulator training, non-live trials, live match testing and final approval.

Since the 2022/23 season, VAR systems used in official competitions must also be certified under FIFA's global quality programme. The technology is tested for video quality, timing, synchronisation and transmission delays. FIFA□

This means the Sakunda-funded equipment must form part of a wider implementation programme led by ZIFA.

The association will need to work with FIFA, CAF, the PSL, broadcasters and an approved technology provider.

Cameras must capture the required angles, while the communication system linking the referee and Video Operation Room must function without interruption.

A pitch-side Referee Review Area must be installed and protected from players, officials and spectators.

Reliable electricity, backup power and stable communications will be essential.

A power failure, camera malfunction or broken communication link during a major match could prevent the system from operating and create further controversy.

Zimbabwe must therefore invest not only in purchasing the equipment but also in maintaining it.

Technicians will be required to inspect the cameras, monitors, servers, headsets, replay systems and communication equipment before every match.

Stadium staff, security personnel and broadcasters must understand their responsibilities.

The long-term operating costs must also be addressed.

Sakunda's investment may cover installation, but ZIFA and competition organisers will need a sustainable model for staffing, maintenance, software, certification, training and replacement of equipment.

Possible funding sources could include sponsorship, broadcasting agreements, competition income, match levies and support from FIFA development programmes.

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