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THE IJR WEEKLY LENS

02 May 2025 Column

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ZIMBABWE CAN'T .AFFORD ANOTHER COUP. THIS TIME, NO ONE MAY COME TO SAVE IT

In November 2017, Zimbabwe experienced a surge of hope as Robert Mugabe was removed after nearly four decades in power. The military's involvement, described as a "non-coup," led to a momentary optimism that a new chapter had begun. For a brief time, it seemed that change was on the horizon. The streets were filled with excitement, and there was a glimmer of renewal. The international community, though cautious, watched with interest, some hopeful, others unsure.

However, that hope proved fleeting. Emmerson Mnangagwa, who had served as Mugabe's enforcer, emerged as the new leader, continuing many of the same practices of authoritarianism and detachment from

the people's needs. As we approach 2025, concerns about the potential for another military intervention are starting to resurface.

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A Different Context Than 2017

The situation in 2025 would not be the same as in 2017. The circumstances have changed, and the international community's stance has shifted. Public disillusionment is at an all-time high, with many Zimbabweans growing more skeptical after years of unmet promises and ongoing struggles. The idea of a military-led transition is no longer viewed as a solution—it is increasingly seen as a step backward.

If a coup were to take place, the response would likely be one of deep concern rather than support. The people have learned that changing leadership at the top, without addressing the deeper systemic issues, accomplishes little. There is a growing awareness that true transformation requires more than just a change of faces; it requires structural change.

The Challenges of Leadership

One of the most concerning aspects of a potential coup is the possible rise of Vice President Constantino Chiwenga. While he is often mentioned in discussions about military intervention, his leadership has not inspired confidence. His record lacks the vision and expertise necessary to steer the country toward stability and recovery. Surrounded by loyalists rather than reform-minded experts, his leadership could easily lead to a further entrenchment of the same problems that have hindered Zimbabwe's progress.

Regional and International Support Is Unlikely

In 2017, regional actors, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), were hesitant to label the events as a coup and worked to help Zimbabwe transition smoothly. But the goodwill and support from the region have likely run their course. A second military intervention would be difficult to justify, and Zimbabwe could face consequences, including suspension from both SADC and the African Union.

Similarly, the international community, particularly Western nations, is less likely to offer any support. The global political landscape has shifted, and the focus on African democracy has waned. Zimbabwe would likely find itself isolated, with little outside assistance if it faces another military-led regime.

A Coup Is Not a Solution

The idea that a military intervention could lead to national recovery is misguided. The military, deeply entangled in the country's economic and political challenges, cannot provide the leadership Zimbabwe needs. A coup would only accelerate the country's decline, exacerbating economic instability, deepening social trauma, and closing the door on meaningful democratic reforms.

Instead of another crisis, Zimbabwe needs a comprehensive, peaceful approach to its challenges.



A military intervention would only take the country further away from the reforms needed to restore hope and rebuild institutions.

The Path Forward: A Democratic Transition

Zimbabwe's future does not lie in a return to authoritarian rule or military-led governance. The country needs a new social contract—one built on dialogue, democratic processes, electoral reforms, and strong independent institutions. The people of Zimbabwe must have a central role in shaping their future.

It is critical that the country avoids another military intervention and instead focuses on peaceful, democratic solutions.

The international community will not intervene this time, and Zimbabweans will have to take responsibility for the consequences of any future actions. The opportunity to build something new was missed in 2017. Let's not miss it again!

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