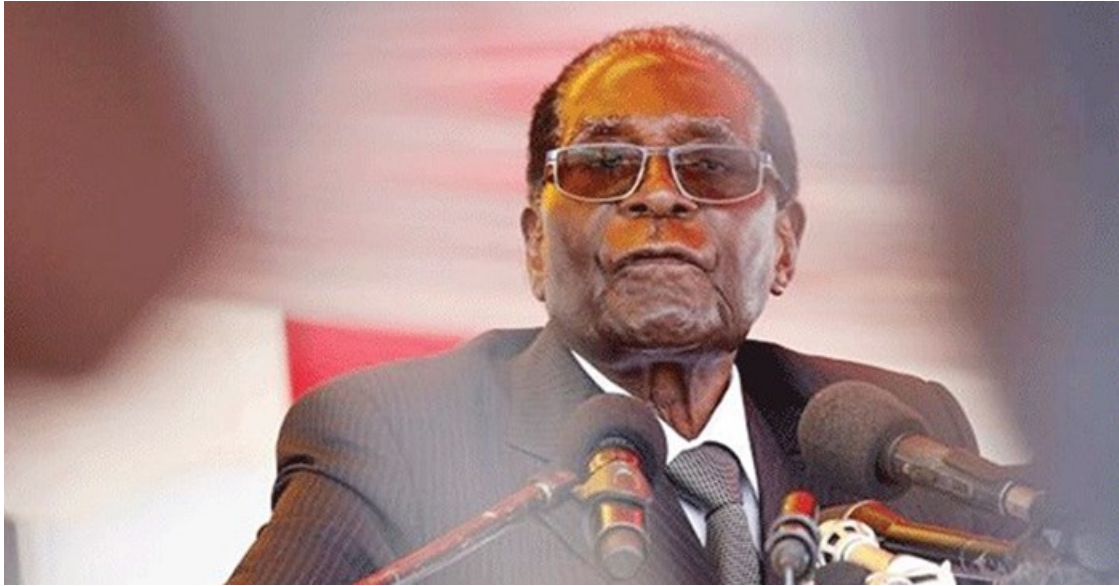


Where did Zimbabwe's diamond money go?

By [Sebastian Mhofu](#)

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Lawmakers in Zimbabwe are preparing to summon ex-president Robert Mugabe to answer for his management of the diamond sector, which he nationalised in 2016.



Zimbabwe's ousted president, Robert Mugabe. Photo: Bulawayo24

Mugabe announced the state seizure two years ago on Zimbabwe state TV, saying, "There has been a lot of secrecy ... and we have been blinded. We have not received much from the diamond industry at all."

Foreign mining companies operating in the country were quick to challenge the stop-work orders in court, and some cases are still pending.

But analysts question Mugabe's 2016 assertion that as much as \$15 billion in diamond revenue was missing, and it was the fault of the foreign companies.

Now, the parliamentary mines committee wants answers.

"He must be able to tell the country where he got these figures from," the head of the parliamentary committee, Temba Mliswa, said. "It is not witch hunting."

"If there is anything parliament is doing, [it is] to support the executive to ensure that the economy has to pump through a

process where minerals are accounted for. You got to bring closure to this. And you must also understand that it would be unfair for people to say he [Mugabe] is too old, when he could have been the president right now."

Miswa says the committee also plans to summon former vice president Joice Mujuru, as well as current Vice President Kembo Mohadi.

Mugabe's 37 years in office came to an abrupt end last November, when he resigned under pressure from the army. Popular anger over the failed economy had been mounting for several years.

In 2010, Global Witness began voicing concern about abuses and mismanagement in the country's diamond sector. Last year, the global anti-corruption watchdog presented evidence connecting state security agencies and ruling party elites to diamond mining and smuggling.

Alice Harle of Global Witness welcomes parliament's plan to question Mugabe.

"If he does testify, it will be difficult to see how much he is prepared to reveal," Harle said. "If Zimbabwe's diamond money is to benefit Zimbabwean people in fighting poverty and driving development, it is essential that the sector is open to scrutiny. A lot of the problems around the industry are directly related to how opaque the sector is."

Current Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa spent decades by Mugabe's side, serving in various official roles as one of his closest allies. The ruling ZANU-PF has chosen Mnangagwa as its candidate for the July elections.

Reacting to the news that parliament would summon Mugabe, presidential spokesman George Charamba said that parliament can summon anyone, except a sitting president.

Source: *Voice of America*

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