

# A WORLD IN MOTION



ISSUE 185 | 23 NOVEMBER 2017

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## THE NUMBERS:

### ZIMBABWE



21.11.2017

The date Robert Mugabe resigned, after 37 years in power



1/4

The proportion of the 40-member cabinet who were expelled on Sunday 19 November



74%

The percent of the population living on less than \$5.50 a day



89%

The level of literacy of the population

## ROBERT MUGABE RESIGNS AFTER 37 YEARS IN POWER



By Donnelly McClelland

Robert Mugabe resigned as Zimbabwe's president on Tuesday [21 November], a week after the army and his former political allies moved against him, ending four decades of rule by a man who turned from independence hero to archetypal strongman. Wild celebrations broke out at a joint sitting of parliament when Speaker Jacob Mudenda announced Mr Mugabe's resignation and suspended the impeachment procedure. People danced, and car horns blared on the streets of Harare at news that the era of Mugabe – who has led Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 – was finally over. (*The Telegraph*)

### "Only God will remove me!"

Robert Mugabe's resignation on Tuesday, in light of the preceding week's events, seemed like an abrupt capitulation for the 93-year-old statesman, the world's oldest head of state and one of Africa's longest-serving leaders. Mr Mugabe — who once proclaimed that "Only God will remove me!" — had refused to step down even after being expelled on Sunday 19 November from ZANU-PF, the political party he had led for decades. His expulsion came just days after the military moved into the capital in an apparent 'coup' that they vehemently denied was such, and the day after mass demonstrations across the nation, calling for his resignation.

Mr Mugabe was not always so unpopular; in fact, in the early years after the liberation war, he engendered hope. He reached out to the white minority, while putting a social policy into place

that benefitted the black majority who had been largely looked down upon until then.

But, in time, he became progressively dictatorial: squashing opposition, currying favour with allies and instituting policies that crippled the nation's economy. His move to expropriate farms from the white minority and give them to black citizens was plagued by accusations of corruption and cronyism. Once known as the "breadbasket of Southern Africa", Zimbabwe's agricultural production plummeted in the wake of the farm reform.

In the 2008 elections, ZANU-PF was defeated by Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in parliamentary polls, and Tsvangirai won the first-round presidential vote, but withdrew from the second round citing violence against his supporters.

In 2009, the government abandoned the Zimbabwean dollar in favour of the US dollar and the South African rand after the national currency collapsed, causing runaway inflation up to 500 billion percent. The rapidly deteriorating economy led to mass unemployment, with nearly nine out of ten of the active population out of work.

### "The Crocodile" and the road ahead

The catalyst in Mr Mugabe's demise was his dismissal of Emmerson Mnangagwa, "The Crocodile", as vice-president on 6 November, seen by many as clearing the way for the widely despised Grace Mugabe to succeed her husband as leader. Grace had also been instrumental in the dismissal of Mr Mnangagwa's predecessor, Joice Mujuru, but this time the military stepped in due to their strong ties with Mr Mnangagwa.

75-year-old Mr Mnangagwa is the most likely successor to Mr Mugabe, since his appointment as interim party head after Mr Mugabe's sacking on Sunday. He is a stalwart ZANU-PF member, and a former Mugabe loyalist with a tainted history: he is considered the architect of a bloody 1980s

# NEWS HEADLINES



Rohingya refugee children from **Myanmar** are working punishing hours for paltry pay in Bangladesh, with some suffering beatings and sexual assault, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has found. There are also documented accounts of Rohingya girls as young as 11 getting married, and parents saying the unions would provide protection and economic advancement.



Chancellor Angela Merkel said her efforts to form a three-way coalition government had failed, thrusting **Germany** into a political crisis and pushing Europe's largest economy closer to a possible new election. The pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) unexpectedly pulled out of more than four weeks of negotiations with Merkel's conservative bloc and the ecologist Greens, citing irreconcilable differences.



A powerful earthquake struck near the **Iran-Iraq** border, killing more than 500 people and injuring thousands of others in the world's deadliest earthquake so far this year. The quake, recorded at 9:48 pm on Sunday 12 November, was felt as far away as Turkey and Pakistan. The epicentre was near Ezgeleh, Iran, about 220 km northeast of Baghdad, and had a preliminary magnitude of 7.3 on the Richter scale.

crackdown on opposition supporters that claimed thousands of lives in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. However, in a 2010 interview, he claimed to be a born-again Christian who was transformed.

Mr Mnangagwa's close ties to the military remains a deep concern for the future, especially if Zimbabwe is to move away from a one-party-dominated state towards greater representation in government. The manner in which the military manages to withdraw its influence from the current leadership transition process, and Mr Mnangagwa's ability to draw multiple 'voices' into the political mix, will be strong indicators of Zimbabwe's future trajectory.

## FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Zimbabwe is approximately 50-60 percent Christian (mostly Anglican), and believers have been calling out to the Lord for breakthrough for many years. But, in time, these calls for changes in society became more pointed and their proponents more outspoken. One such pastor was Evan Mawarire who, in 2015, began to address societal ills and political woes from the pulpit, and in 2016 launched the #ThisFlag movement with a passionate video that went viral and ultimately led to his arrest. He had reached a point at which his government's indifference to the suffering of the people could no longer be tolerated, and he addressed them head-on. He became deeply convicted that his Biblical mandate as a pastor needed to include

challenging corruption, injustice and poverty within his community.

Many were encouraged by Mr Mawarire's boldness, and publicly called for the government to respect the rights of citizens and uphold the rule of law. During the current leadership crisis, it was again a united body of believers (evangelical, Catholic, charismatic and ecumenical Protestant leaders) who spoke with an attitude of hope: "We see the current situation not just as a crisis in which we are helpless; we see the current arrangement as an opportunity for the birth of a new nation." In a joint statement, they appealed to Zimbabweans to pray, to remain peaceful and calm, and to respect human dignity. They also called for a transitional government of national unity and an openness for dialogue. They emphasised again the Church's mandate as a giver of hope and a conduit for the healing of the nation.

The peaceful manner in which this crisis has been dealt with is largely a testament to the prayers of hundreds of thousands of believers, and a faithful Father. Many Zimbabweans have found their voice and will no longer be silenced, but they have also boldly taken up their mantle of responsibility towards the building of a better, more inclusive nation.

**PRAY > For Zimbabwe's new leadership > For transformation within the government > For believers to be active agents of change in their communities and society**

## LEBANESE CRISIS AFTER PM'S SHOCK RESIGNATION



By Mike Burnard

In one of the most dramatic developments of 2017, the tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran was once again highlighted by the resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister, Saad Hariri. Mr Hariri made his announcement from Saudi Arabia, the country that acts as his political backer. The resignation of the prime minister is being seen as part of the wider regional struggle between Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia and Shia-dominated Iran. For now, Lebanon is uncomfortably centre stage and Mr Hariri's unexpected announcement has the potential to launch the region into another proxy war, destabilising the region and affecting millions of already vulnerable people. (BBC News)

### Possible proxy war

With the Islamic State (IS) "defeated" in Iraq, analysts are wary of celebration as new political

shifts have already threatened possible new conflicts in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The age-old Islamic proverb now comes into play: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." The fact that IS – which forged old rivalries into new friendships – has now been "destroyed" will allow old animosities to resurface once again. The long-simmering rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is currently threatening to boil over once again, this time with Lebanon in the crossfire.

The religious conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran has been fought for centuries, with proxy wars waged all over the Arab world, most recently in Yemen. The possibility of another such proxy war in Lebanon therefore does not come as a surprise, but rather as expected, with Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps leading the attack via Hezbollah, which is both politically and militarily invested in Lebanon. Conflict in Lebanon would not only affect the one million plus Syrian refugees that have already fled a war, but would also force Israel to act, on the side of Saudi Arabia, against Iran.

In response to the growing crisis, US Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson warned "against any party, within or outside Lebanon, using Lebanon as a venue for proxy conflicts or in any manner contributing to instability in that country". The statement left analysts guessing as to whether the US would intervene in the situation in order to

# NEWS HEADLINES



Donald Trump has declared his 12-day Asia tour a “tremendous success”, claiming that “**America** is back” as a global leader. He claimed to have unified the world against the North Korean nuclear weapons programme, paved the way for a “free and open Indo-Pacific”, and insisted on “free and reciprocal” trade relations with the Pacific Rim.



**South Sudan** President Salva Kiir’s government is using food as a weapon of war to target civilians by blocking life-saving aid in some areas, United Nations sanctions monitors told the Security Council in a confidential report. During 2016 and 2017, the UN monitors said a military campaign by government troops in the north-western town of Wau and surrounding areas in Western Bahr el-Ghazal targeted civilians on ethnic grounds and displaced more than 100,000.



**Spain**’s Constitutional Court officially annulled the Catalan parliament’s unilateral declaration of independence. The Madrid government sacked Catalonia’s president and dismissed its parliament hours after the region declared itself independent with 70 votes for, 10 votes against and after lawmakers from three national parties walked out of the vote.

prevent another outright conflict in the Middle East.

## Israel vs. Hezbollah

When it comes to Saudi Arabia and Iran, Israel is one country that stands to either win or lose everything. Israel has long been actively warning the world about Iran, and has fought against Hezbollah various times in the past. Iran unable to launch a full-scale attack on Israel, so their ‘extended arm’ of Hezbollah fighters is used to threaten Israel. With internal reform in Saudi Arabia currently taking precedence over foreign affairs, Israel is probably Saudi Arabia’s best hope of countering the Shia threat from Iran. Ofer Zalberg, a Jerusalem-based analyst for the International Crisis Group, suggests that “there are now those in the region who would like Israel to go to war with Hezbollah and fight a Saudi war to the last Israeli,” adding that “there is no interest in that here [Israel].”

With significant backing from the US and elsewhere, Israel would most probably survive a war with Hezbollah, but at a very high cost. Findings by the *New York Times* suggest that Hezbollah now has more than 120,000 rockets and missiles, enough to overwhelm Israeli missile defences. Many of them are long-range and accurate enough to bring down Tel Aviv high-rises, sink offshore gas platforms, knock out Ben-Gurion Airport or level landmark buildings across Israel.

## FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Lebanon remains one of the most strategic nations in the region from a mission perspective, with strong, vibrant and active churches spread

throughout the nation. Lebanon is the only Middle Eastern country where Christians were once dominant and still retain considerable political power, serving as a beacon of hope for all Christian minorities in the Middle East. Lebanon’s political system is unique in the region: the president must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament a Shiite Muslim. Parliament is divided into equal halves of Christian and Muslim representatives, and Lebanon ranked third in the ‘Middle East Democracy Index’ for 2016.

According to Interserve, a mission organisation working in Lebanon, belonging to a particular faith confession is more than having certain theological beliefs – it’s having a certain social identity. A big part of social life is based on belonging. Conversion to another faith therefore equals disloyalty, and those who convert are generally banished from their families. However, unlike any other nation in the region, Lebanon’s citizens are not prevented under civil or criminal law from converting from one religion to another, including from Islam to Christianity.

Lebanon currently hosts the largest refugee population per capita in the world, with more than 1.5 million refugees from Syria, Palestine and Iraq. This makes it a highly strategic nation for the expansion of the Gospel and the Kingdom, and in need of much prayer from the Body of Christ at this critical time.

**PRAY > For greater unity within the Lebanese government > For Lebanon to stand strong in the face of external pressures > For believers to boldly bridge societal divides**

## THE CHALLENGES IN POST-IS IRAQ



By Andrew Richards

**G**overnment forces wrested back the final piece of the Islamic State’s self-declared caliphate in Iraq, the country’s military said, reclaiming the small town of Rawah near the border with Syria. The Islamic State extremist group, which at its peak in 2014 held about a third of Iraq, including large cities such as Mosul, Tikrit and Fallujah, is now scattered and severely diminished. With the loss of Rawah, the militants no longer can claim to hold territory in Iraq and are quickly ceding ground in Syria, as well. Still, Iraqi officials warn, the Islamic State poses a threat as it turns to more-traditional terrorist tactics. Since losing its de facto capital of Mosul in July, the group has been able to stage deadly suicide bombings,

and its gunmen have struck civilians throughout Iraq. (*Washington Post*)

### Challenges of “de-radicalisation”

With the Islamic State (IS) officially “defeated”, the new question is how to “de-radicalise” those who lived under its tyranny for three years. With thousands of IS family members now having to live in a post-IS Iraq, the challenge is now the “rehabilitation” of those who wholeheartedly believed in and carried out IS’ violent ideology.

After establishing its caliphate in Iraq, IS actively focused efforts on the ideological brainwashing of children and teenagers through an education system designed to create future fighters that were unquestioningly obedient - schools and training camps were modeled on the IS way of thinking. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy conducted a study in 2016 that examined IS textbooks, and found that children were being taught how to identify “unbelievers” and what measures should be taken against them. Even the study of mathematics and chemistry involved an IS twist.

## FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

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Ideological brainwashing was not limited to children; hardcopy and online publications and various media productions targeted the rest of the caliphate's population, over and above the radical sermons given in mosques. Weekly newspaper and radio broadcasts were focused on recruiting new fighters (both regional and foreign), with the result that more than 40,000 foreign nationals joined the caliphate from 110 different countries.

### Continuing global reach

With IS now having lost all its strongholds in Iraq and Syria, the group has moved from a physical caliphate to a more undefined 'global caliphate' that requires only an internet connection to spread its ideology. As foreign fighters are returning home, the potential reach of IS around the world is now more cause for concern. According to an article in LobeLog (which focuses on US foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East), IS has "capitalised on the world's evolving propensity to integrate online activities with real-world activities". The article continues: "Social media has had an incredible multiplying effect on radical messaging, and IS has had great success publishing online, which has resonated particularly well with disenfranchised Muslims and youths, inspiring some to act on inspiration and guidance received online. IS has exploited their search for meaningful identity by promising to restore their dignity so that they may find personal fulfilment and purpose."

A recent example of how IS uses social media to further its cause and to inspire attacks on the West is an online video that called on supporters to attack Pope Francis and the Vatican. "We will have our vengeance, we will arrive in Rome," the jihadists said in the video. Analysts suggest that the use of "Rome" could mean "West", and that attacks could be expected throughout the 'Christian' world.

**PRAY > For wisdom for the Iraqi government as they attempt to rebuild communities > For Iraqis returning to their homes, that communities will be united and reconciled > For believers to be bearers of hope and ambassadors of peace and reconciliation as they re-establish themselves**

## FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

According to the International Organisation for Migration, more than 1.5 million refugees have returned to liberated Iraq after fleeing the conflict that started in 2014. These returning refugees face demolished villages and a lack of electricity and sanitation, and often find that even though IS has been defeated, militias still control the liberated cities under the guise of 'protecting villages from a possible IS resurgence'. Former refugees are also concerned that neighbours were once IS supporters, and find it hard to reconcile with them. Of those returning to the Nineveh plains, most are Christians who are returning to the absolute destruction of homes and churches. In towns such as Qaraqosh, IS attempted to remove any evidence of Christianity.

The "de-radicalisation" of IS sympathisers cannot be achieved without a Christian presence in the country, and it therefore becomes critical that Christians do return and invest in the future of the country. Kent Hill, the executive director of the Religious Freedom Institute, connects regional stability with the continued presence of minority groups: "Removing the presence of Jews, Christians, Yazidis and other minorities from the Middle East would destroy the region's rich culture. This impoverishes the dominant culture, and the sad truth is that societies that cannot tolerate diversity within their own backyard inevitably become a threat to their neighbours as well."

Amidst all the uncertainty, Hill reminds believers that the key is faith: "We must not give up hope. Surely, there have been times when we have all been tempted to despair, and yet, history and our faith teach us that despair and hopelessness are not Christian virtues. Dry bones do live again. The Cross reminds us that what seems to be the end may well be just a necessary path to Resurrection Sunday. Despite this very dark time, Christians will almost certainly survive, and God willing, one day thrive again in the home of their ancient faith."

## AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS



### CATCRACKERS

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