

Bloodless Coup in Zimbabwe

Why in news?

\n\n

\n

- The military in Zimbabwe launched a coup on November 15.
- The motive is claimed to target “criminals” surrounding long-time popular leader Robert Mugabe.

\n

\n\n

Who is Robert Mugabe?

\n\n

\n

- Mr. Robert Mugabe has been at the helm in Zimbabwe’s politics for 37 years, since its independence from British rule in 1980.
- At 93, Mr. Mugabe is the world’s oldest head of state and also the last of Africa's generation of state founders who still wield power.
- His lengthy rule has been marked by brutal repression of dissent, mass emigration, vote-rigging and economic collapse.
- Despite this, he is popularity among the masses is relatively high and has seen him in wield near total control.
- His poor health has fuelled a bitter succession battle as potential replacements jockey for position.

\n

\n\n

What triggered the current stand-off?

\n\n

\n

- Recently, Mr. Mugabe sacked long-time ally and Vice-President Emmerson

Mnangagwa.

\n

- Notably, he was widely expected to succeed the Mr.Mugabe and take control of the ruling ZANU-PF party.

\n

- This move was seen as an attempt to install his Mr.Mugabe's wife Grace (52) for succeeding to the helm.

\n

- Mr. Mnangagwa fled the country after his dismissal and many long term regime loyalists are said to have sided with him.

\n

- Days later, the Army warned Mr. Mugabe to exhibit restraint in a series of political purges, which wasn't heeded to.

\n

\n\n

What is the state of the Zimbabwean economy?

\n\n

\n

- Mr.Mugabe's populist land reforms of 2000 saw black Africans seizing large tracts of agricultural land from the European settlers.

\n

- These moves led to a production collapse in agriculture and eventually plunged the country into an economic crisis.

\n

- Millions of economic refugees have streamed out of the country, mostly to neighbouring South Africa.

\n

- Eventually in 2007-08, the country saw hyper-inflation that forced the abandonment of the local currency and a switch to dollars.

\n

- In 2016, fears of economic downturn reappeared with inflation rating at around 50% for a month.

\n

- Notably, the sacked vice-president Mr.Mnangagwa is said to have been planning to revitalise the economy through radical measures.

\n

- He is even said to have vouched for rectifying the mistakes of the radical land reforms and patching up relations with the World Bank and IMF.

\n

\n\n

Is it an actual military coup?

\n\n

\n

- Though the action is in effect a bloodless coup, the Zimbabwean military chose to call it a bloodless political correction.
- Considering Mr.Mugabe's popularity with the masses, it is also not clear whether this military action would end to his reign.
- The main goal of the generals appears to be 'preventing Mugabe's 52-year-old wife Grace' from succeeding him.
- But irrespective of the outcome, it is likely to mark the end of the total dominance of the country by Mugabe.
- Notably, even the main opposition MDC party calling for civilian rule to be protected.

\n

\n\n

What next?

\n\n

\n

- Various countries have asked its nationals in Zimbabwe to stay cautious due to the prevalent uncertainty.
- Mr.Mnangagwa's promised return would be a major event.
- The actions of the ZANU-PF's party youth wing, which is aligned to Ms.Grace is also being closely watched.
- The army has promised to retreat as soon as its stated vision has been accomplished.
- Further actions of the military would decide the direction the current turmoil would take.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu, Business line

\n\n

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering