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Snubbed by most regional leaders, Emmerson Mnangagwa parties on with ex-adversaries instead

Еммерсон Мнангагва, якого нехтує більшість регіональних лідерів, натомість тусується з колишніми противниками

Президента Зімбабве Еммерсона Мнангагве приведено до присяги на другий термін. Лише троє із 16 глав держав Співтовариства розвитку півдня Африки (САДК) були присутні на інавгурації. Поряд із президентом ПАР Сирілом Рамафосою, у Харар здійснили поїздки Філіпе Ньюсі з Мозамбіку та Фелікс Чісекеді з Демократичної Республіки Конго. Інші країни САДК направили міністрів закордонних справ та посланців у Зімбабве. Набравши 52,6 % голосів, Е. Мнангагва протягом наступних п'яти років керуватиме країною, що зіштовхнулася з одним із найвищих у світі рівнів інфляції, слабкою економікою та кризою корупція. Але для Е. Мнангагви Зімбабве перебуває на підйомі. «Зімбабве, безперечно, знаходиться на підйомі. Наша філософія національного розвитку – «країна будується власним народом» – і надалі залишатиметься маяком нашої політики, орієнтованої на інтереси людей, заснованої на панафриканських цінностях та нормах», - зазначив президент.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/snubbed-by-most-regional-leaders-emmerson-mnangagwa-parties-on-with-ex-adversaries-instead-20230904>

Only three out of 16 Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state attended Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa's inauguration in Harare on Monday, but that did not stop the party.

Along with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, those who made the trip to Harare were Mozambique's Filipe Nyusi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Felix Tshisekedi.

Other SADC countries sent foreign affairs ministers and envoys stationed in Zimbabwe.

Deemed hostile, Zambia's president, Hakainde Hichilema, dispatched his foreign affairs minister, Stanley Kakubo.

Former Zambian president Edgar Lungu also attended the ceremony alongside China's vice president, Han Zheng and former Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano and Belarus' deputy prime minister, Petr Parkhomchuk.

Botswana's Mokgweetsi Masisi did not attend. Instead, he chose to travel to the Africa Down Under (ADU) conference in Australia.

At the inauguration, he was represented by his envoy stationed in Harare.

Mnangagwa won an election flagged as a flawed process by the SADC Election Observer Mission, the African Union, and other international missions such as the European Union and Carter Center.

With 52.6% of the vote against main rival Nelson Chamisa's, of the Citizens Coalition for Change, 44%, Mnangagwa will for the next five years be in charge of a country faced with one of the world's highest inflation rates, a failing economy, and corruption.

But for Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe is on the rise.

"Zimbabwe is surely on the rise. Our national development philosophy, 'a country is built by its own people' shall continue to be the beacon of our pro-people policies anchored on pan-African values and norms.

"This philosophy sums up our sovereignty as well as the collective duty and obligation we have to develop the country and the African continent," he said in his inauguration speech.

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Despite relatively few regional and international guests, in his speech, Mnangagwa said he would like to work with those who accepted his friendship.

"We stand ready to welcome those nations who want to work with the new Zanu-PF government to build lasting partnerships to make the world a better place.

"We look forward to joining both traditional and emerging global institutions that accept our hand of friendship."

Old school reunion

Having been the late president Robert Mugabe's personal aid since the late 1970s, Mnangagwa is the only one in government who has been a Cabinet minister since independence in 1980.

But in November 2017, he took over through a coup and cemented his first term with a disputed victory in July 2018.

During that time, the late Mugabe and his family were not pleased with the Mnangagwa administration.

But with Mnangagwa entering his second and last constitutional term, the Mugabes were on hand to congratulate him.

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa inspects t
President Cyril Ramaphosa looks on during Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa's inauguration ceremony in Harare on 4 September 2023. (Photo by Zinyange Auntony / AFP)
Former first lady Grace Mugabe made her first public appearance since her husband's funeral in September 2019. She was accompanied by her daughter, Bona, and son Robert Tinotenda Junior.

Conspicuous by his absence was Chatunga Bellarmine, who many say is the apple that fell closest to the tree.

They were not the only Zimbabweans from the former aristocracy at the ceremony. There were also former vice presidents Joyce Mujuru and Phelekezela Mphoko.

Mujuru was fired by Mugabe and replaced by Mnangagwa. Prior to that, they were fierce rivals in the succession race.

Mphoko, then a co-vice president with Mnangagwa, was retired by the coup that catapulted the latter to the presidency.

In Gabon, a different script

Also on Monday, the military in Gabon inaugurated General Brice Nguema.

He took over soon after President Alian Bongo was announced as the winner of the presidential polls.

Like Mnangagwa in Zimbabwe, Nguema has always been close to power.

He is reportedly Bongo's cousin, and his rise to become the head of the elite Republican Guard was through family ties.

His proximity made it easier to assume power and the swearing-in ceremony was a military affair.

Unlike in Zimbabwe, where it is known the next elections will not have Mnangagwa, who will have finished his second constitutional term in five years, it is unknown when Gabon will return to civilian rule.

There would, said Nguema, be no rush.

This despite unified voices from opposition parties urging the junta to restore democracy.

Like Mnangagwa, Nguema's civilian supporters were on display in celebration.

The BBC reported that, unlike in Zimbabwe, where the opposition did not attend, in Gabon, some ministers from Bongo's administration attended the ceremony.

However, they were booed by civilians who supported the coup.

As the former colonial power France battles to maintain its sway on the continent, Gabon is the sixth country in Francophone Africa to fall to military rule in the last three years.