

## PRESS RELEASE

### UK announces sanctions against Zimbabwe security chiefs

[Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#) and [The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP](#)

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- Human rights violations in 2019 saw protestors killed for expressing right to free speech and protest
- Sanctions go hand-in-hand with UK efforts to hold the Government of Zimbabwe to account and to make good on its promise to deliver much-needed crucial reforms.
- Four Zimbabwean security sector chiefs responsible for serious human rights violations – including the deaths of 23 Zimbabwean protestors – have been designated under the UK's new autonomous sanctions regime, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced today.

Today's announcement ensures these individuals cannot freely travel to the UK, channel money through UK banks or profit from our economy. These restrictive measures are not targeted at, nor intended to impact, the wider economy and the people of Zimbabwe.

Following the UK's departure from the European Union and the end of the Transition Period, the UK can now pursue an independent sanctions policy reflecting our foreign policy and national security interests. Today's designations are the first the UK has made of individuals under the UK's Zimbabwe autonomous sanctions regime, which came into force at 11pm on 31 December 2020.

The new sanctions include a travel ban and asset freeze on four officials:

- Owen Ncube, Minister for State Security;
- Isaac Moyo, Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation;
- Godwin Matanga, Commissioner General of the Zimbabwe Republic Police; and
- Anselem Sanyatwe, former Brigadier General, Commander of the Presidential Guard and Tactical Commander of the National Reaction Force.

These targeted designations hold to account those responsible for the worst human rights violations against the people of Zimbabwe since President Emmerson Mnangagwa took power in November 2017.

This includes a state-sponsored crackdown against protests in January 2019 that resulted in the deaths of 17 Zimbabweans and post-election violence in August 2018 in which six protestors lost their lives.

Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab said:

“These sanctions send a clear message that we will hold to account those responsible for the most egregious human rights violations, including the deaths of innocent Zimbabweans.

These sanctions target senior individuals in the Government, and not ordinary Zimbabweans. We will continue to press for the necessary political and economic reforms that will benefit all Zimbabweans.

The UK’s autonomous Zimbabwe sanctions regime seeks to encourage the Government of Zimbabwe to respect democratic principles and institutions; refrain from the repression of civil society; and to comply with international human rights law and to respect human rights.

These sanctions are in addition to our work to hold the Government of Zimbabwe to account in implementing genuine political and economic reforms that benefit all Zimbabweans.

Contrary to claims by those who seek to stop institutional reform and respect for human rights in Zimbabwe, these sanctions will not deter investment into the country. Instead, UK investors repeatedly highlight three concerns that prevent them from investing in Zimbabwe: poorly-managed currency; arbitrary property rights and the legal system.

We will continue to support the Zimbabwean people through our aid programme, focusing on tackling poverty, humanitarian assistance, standing up for human rights and supporting Zimbabwe’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. None of this aid goes directly through Government of Zimbabwe systems.”

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The UK Zimbabwe Autonomous Regime comprises targeted travel bans and asset freezes, as well as trade restrictions on military items and items that could be used for internal repression. The regime came fully into force on 31 December 2020 at the end of the EU transition period. This is the first time that the UK has used its autonomous Zimbabwe sanctions regime to impose travel bans and asset freezes against individuals. You can find a link to the legislation here. This is a different sanctions regime to the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020 which launched in July 2020.
2. The Motlanthe Commission report found that the Zimbabwean security services were responsible for 6 deaths and 35 injuries during the 1 August 2018 protests. The report also concluded that the use of live ammunition on civilians was “clearly unjustified and disproportionate”.
3. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission’s January 28 2019 report on the response to the January 2019 fuel protests found that law enforcement agents seemed to “resort to use of brute, excessive and disproportionate force in most circumstances thereby causing avoidable loss of life and also worsening the situation”, resulting in the deaths of 17 people. A Human Rights Watch report details allegations of rape and indiscriminate door-to-door raids by the Zimbabwean security services.

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