

Corruption-prone Mnangagwa caught up in yet another venality case

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President Emmerson Mnangagwa

Barely before the Gold Mafia scandal has subsided, President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s association with dodgy characters is scaling new heights, with controversial tenderpreneur Wicknell Chivayo — a convicted criminal — linking him to underhand deals.

In leaked audios that have left Zimbabweans bewildered, Chivayo made disclosures linking Mnangagwa to his deals amid the scandalous US\$40 million Zec deal to supply election materials.

In one of the audios, Chivayo reveals that he has Mnangagwa in his pockets. To cement this claim, Chivayo said Mnangagwa actually calls him “my son” and receives instructions from the head of state regarding business deals.

In one of the recordings, Chivayo is heard boasting to his now estranged business partners, Moses Mpfu and Mike Chimombe, that he is untouchable because of his close proximity to Mnangagwa.

Mpfu and Chimombe were partners with Chivayo in the stinking Zec tender deal until they fell out after the pair got unhappy with how the former convict was monopolising the spoils of the juicy tender.

Chivayo got a windfall from the Zec deal worth over US\$40 million to supply election material for the August 2023 polls.

Chivayo, Mpfu and Chimombe, through Better Brands Security (Pvt) Ltd, entered into an agreement with Ren-Form CC on 13 February 2023 to participate in the election tenders.

Working in cahoots with Ren-Form officials, Chivayo later amended the agreement to remove his business partners before grabbing 66% of the payment.

“I have deals with the police, immigration and many more. Keep collecting, do not be greedy, just bring new work. There is no need to be greedy or trying aiming high,” Chivayo is heard boasting in the audio.

“I am holding this thing in my hand. When (Mnangagwa) went to Italy, I walked him to his airplane where he proceeded to bid farewell and called me his son.”

“I am inside the President’s circle. Take advantage of that, do not eat from where I would have worked or from what caused problems for us in the past.”

Before the disclosures, Mnangagwa appeared shoulder to shoulder with Chivayo, receiving Kenyan President William Ruto at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo. A day before, Mnangagwa had also appeared with Chivayo touring the ZITF exhibition stands.

During the Easter celebrations hosted by the Zion Christian Church in Mbungu, Mnangagwa again appeared with Chivayo on the podium, with social media posts suggesting they used the same presidential private jet to travel to the venue.

When Mnangagwa officially commissioned a grain milling plant in Tynwald, Harare, co-run by his younger brother Patrick and another businessman from the Midlands, Douglas Kwande, Chivayo was also in his company, with bodyguards allowing him to be in close proximity to the head of state.

Chivayo, born in 1982, has a controversial background.

After leaving school, he is said to have begun working as a wages clerk at a local bus company in Harare at the age of 15.

Later, he engaged in illegal forex deals at Harare’s Union Avenue Flea Market, whose road is now known as Kwame Nkrumah Avenue.

Subsequently, Chivayo was arrested in 2004 and in 2005 he was convicted for money laundering involving R837 000 by the High Court. He was slapped with a five-year jail term, with two years suspended on condition of good behaviour. He served three years.

In August 2018, Chivayo appeared at the Harare magistrates’ court facing four charges of fraud, money laundering and contravening the Exchange Control Act for receiving US\$5 million from the state-owned Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC) for a solar power plant project in Gwanda.

He was charged together with his company Intratrek Zimbabwe and pleaded not guilty to the charges when he appeared before magistrate Elisha Singano. He was found not guilty in the high-profile case.

In a turn of events, Chivayo approached the High Court and sued the ZPC for US\$25 million for “breach and repudiation of contract” by making claims it had been prejudiced of that money.

Justice Siyabonga Paul Msithu found for him in January last year and took a swipe at the ZPC for frustrating its contractor who was awarded a tender that was sanctioned by the country’s State Procurement Board.

Apart from Chivayo, Mnangagwa has publicly hob-nobbed with other controversial characters.

Two of Mnangagwa's close allies were in 2021 named in a landmark investigation exposing international secret deals, tax evasions and hidden wealth, adding to the growing list of his associates involved in dodgy dealings.

Last year, a four-episode Al Jazeera investigative series, Gold Mafia, exposed gold smuggling, money laundering and corruption, which revealed Mnangagwa's association with dodgy characters implicated in financial crimes.

The investigation showed that different gold smuggling syndicates looting gold and salting away proceeds to offshore accounts have one common thread — links to Mnangagwa.

Main characters in the film, who sucked Mnangagwa into the vortex of action, include his own envoy and ambassador-at-large Uebert Angel, a self-styled prophet who is a key interlocutor throughout the documentary.

Other characters apart from Angel (Diplomatic Mafia), were Rikki Doolan (Diplomatic Mafia), Ewan Macmillan (Mr Gold), Kamlesh Pattni (Gold Dealer Brother Paul) and Alistair Mathias (Gold Trader — The Architect).

Mnangagwa's wife Auxillia, the Family Lady, and his gold baron Pedzai "Scott" Sakupwanya (New Mr Gold) kept the President firmly at the centre of action in the last episode.

Main actors who exposed Mnangagwa:

Alistair Mathias — The Architect



Alistair Mathias

"There is no president or head of state that either of us cannot get to on this continent. Next door Swaziland (Eswatini), the King (Mswati III) is a friend of mine. Zambia's President (Hakainde Hichilema) is a close friend of my friend. DRC Congo, the President (Felix Tshisekedi) has invited me several times to come and build a refinery," he says, adding: "Ghana's President (Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo) is a good friend of mine." "He was my lawyer. (South African President) Cyril Ramaphosa here, I know him. I know his kids.

“In Zim, ED (President Emmerson Mnangagwa) is my partner. I can’t say it in public because he is sanctioned.”

Kamlesh Pattni — Gold Dealer



Kamlesh Pattni — Gold Dealer

“This is his (Mnangagwa’s) number. I call him Tembo (elephant in Swahili),” Pattni says. At that point one of the Al Jazeera undercover reporters says: “You WhatsApp him?”

“I always give him how much we have done... Yeah, he has to be informed. I was just writing him a message here,” he adds, showing the reporters WhatsApp messages he exchanged with Mnangagwa. One of the undercover reporters appears to be stunned and asks: “This is the President’s number. Direct to the President?” Pattni responds: “Yes directly . . . I have to inform him. He has to be informed. I’ve informed him what is happening in Tanzania, that we are putting up [a] gold coin factory in Bulawayo.”

Pattni shows multiple photos of him with Mnangagwa, while offering to set up a meeting between the Chinese mafia (undercover Al Jazeera reporters) and the President. And then the bombshell drops as Pattni, who almost bankrupted Kenya in the 1990s through a gold scandal which cost the Kenyan Treasury US\$600 million, reveals he makes payments to Mnangagwa as “appreciation” every two weeks through his younger brother to sustain the network.

“This is like the norm of life. The incentives, the fees... the appreciation,” Pattni says. “Every two weeks, Swetang, my brother is there. Every fortnight, he is there at the State House (Harare). We always contribute our appreciation.”

At this point one of the reporters asks: “To Mnangagwa?” And Pattni says: “To the King himself. When you work, you must always have the King with you. The President.”

Ewan Macmillan – Mr Gold

Macmillan claims Mnangagwa is his business partner and gets protection from him. “The good news is that whatever I told him (Mnangagwa), he did. You know that (asking Mathias)? . . .

When I was getting hurt I said ‘you have got to stop it here, here, here and he did it, he did it. Within two weeks, he fixed everything.

“You know (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe governor John) Mangudya’s problem. I said to him (Mnangagwa), ‘Mangudya, I think he is dirty. You need to find him out. ED went and fixed him’.” However, Macmillan’s links to Mnangagwa come at a price. “You pay a guy money every month. You just get a partner and pay the guy so much money a month and he just sits back. He is happy, doesn’t care. That’s what happens,” he says.

In Episode 2, Macmillan says: “I did 60 days in prison and my partner is . . . the President!”

Their relationship has not always been smooth. When Macmillan was arrested, Mnangagwa told him to shut his mouth. “He was my partner, my exact partner. He said to me, don’t open your mouth. Your life will get worse than it is,” Macmillan recalls. “I said f**k, are you kidding me.”

Over the years, their ties broke but when they met at a dinner they quickly reconnected.

“I walked in and he (Mnangagwa) said, ‘good to see you, my old friend’,” Macmillan says. “And I said ‘very good to see you and well done on your position’.”

Macmillan and Emmerson Jr



Ewan Macmillan

Macmillan has deep ties with the Mnangagwa family. These days he is close to the President’s son Emmerson Jr.

“I can put you straight in touch with him, that’s no problem, he’s a friend of mine,” Macmillan says. The gold dealer narrates how he once rescued Emmerson Jr from debt through an expensive watch stolen from his father, the President, bragging about his fancy luxury watches.

“I have the steel Daytona, I have the Submariner, I have the gold Submariner, I have two Presidents,” Macmillan says, referring to his catalogue of Rolex watches.

Then came a shocker: “This is between us. I have Mnangagwa’s gold-studded President,” Macmillan said.

“The son ran into debt and had to pay the debt off so he gave me the Rolex. I paid the debt off, and he said, ‘Please don’t tell my dad’, and I think, ‘F**k, man, you’re joking. I’ve got the dad’s watch’.”

Then “Prophet” Angel also brings the First Lady into the fray.



Eubert Angel and President Emerson Mnangagwa

“Eh Mai. Mai Vangu. Murisei (My mom, how are you)?” Angel says.

“Remember those people that want to move cash? They would want to know are we providing the planes or they provide the planes?”

Auxillia responds: “You should ask father about this. How should I know? Let me get hold of him.”

Angel continues: “I’ll see to it. I’ll see him at 6PM, and I will present to him. I will present it to him. Then you will discuss which plane he uses, his or their own. But, it is not a big deal? Sometimes he will be busy. We spoke about it. So I am just going to present it today.’ Auxillia interjects: “Aiwa enda unodzokorora futi. No, go and have that conversation again.”

Unrelenting, Angel says: “But is it doable, it’s achievable? It won’t be difficult. But please don’t be annoyed with me, I could tell when you were annoyed.” With that it becomes clearer Mnangagwa is the centre of gravity in the operation.

In 2021, two of Mnangagwa’s close allies were also named in a landmark investigation exposing international secret deals, tax evasions and hidden wealth, adding to the growing list of his associates involved in dodgy dealings.

These were his then deputy chief secretary for Administration and Finance Martin Rushwaya who is now the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet to whom he is related.

Mnangagwa’s close business ally Billy Rautenbach was the second one.

The two were exposed in what was dubbed the Pandora Papers, an investigation conducted by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) — an ensemble of 600 journalists from 150 media outlets in 117 countries.

They went through more than 11.9 million documents leaked from 14 offshore financial services firms. ICIJ found that 35 heads of state and government and more than 300 politicians have set up offshore structures and trusts in tax havens from the British Virgin Islands, Panama, Seychelles, to Hong Kong and Belize.

There were emails, memos, incorporation records, share certificates, compliance reports and complex diagrams showing labyrinthine corporate structures. ICIJ reported that Rushwaya created Greatgem Corp in the Seychelles in 2010 with the help of a Moscow law firm.

The company was accused of facilitating the Zimbabwean military's secret diamond dealings and off-budget financing.

Rautenbach, who was Mnangagwa's ally even during the days of the Democratic Republic of Congo war in which they were both mentioned in reports as having looted diamonds from the country, was accused of hiding his wealth in an offshore family trust under the guise of it being payment to his wife for her contribution in building the family wealth.

"In 2013, one of Zimbabwe's richest men and arguably one of the most controversial business figures in Southern Africa, Muller Conrad 'Billy' Rautenbach, donated multimillion-dollar financial investments in his coal and ethanol businesses to his wife. This restructuring was explained by the need to 'compensate' her for her role in building the family's wealth," the AmaBungane Centre for Investigative Journalism report reads.

Mnangagwa also seems to have an appetite for opaque deals from shady shelf companies and dodgy businesspersons, including British-registered Coven Energy Limited, which was awarded a US\$1.3 billion deal to build Zimbabwe's second fuel pipeline.

It was then revealed that the company was incorporated on 25 August last year, with assets amounting to £100. Coven Energy's name has been added to the list of foreign companies awarded massive projects with no traceable track record.

Since Mnangagwa's ascension in 2017, many of the companies that have signed mega-deals have either been connected to the President, his family or cronies in government. Nothing much has come out of the deals partly because of the questionable track record of the "investors" involved.

During the start of his tenure, Mnangagwa claimed he had clinched US\$11 billion worth of business commitments, the bulk of which were murky deals, spearheaded by dodgy characters.

Source: The News Hawks

<https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/opinion/corruption-prone-mnangagwa-caught-up-in-yet-another-venality-case/>