

# Zimbabwe celebrates 41 years of independence

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Forty-one years ago the people of Zimbabwe won independence on April 18, 1980. Thousands of Africans died for it. For decades Zimbabwe's people fought for

freedom.

As a young man, Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa was sentenced to death for being a freedom fighter. He was [tortured and spent years in prison](#) after being reprieved from the gallows.

Great Zimbabwe is the country's most famous monument. Tall stone walls protected the ancient city that was nearly three square miles in size.

Capitalist robber barons lusted after the country's 150,000 square miles of fertile land and mineral wealth. The fantastically wealthy diamond and gold mine owner Cecil Rhodes invaded Zimbabwe with British mercenaries in the 1890s.

They used an early machine gun, named the Maxim gun after its U.S. inventor, to murder Africans. This didn't stop people from fighting back during the first "Chimurenga" or freedom struggle.

One of the Chimurenga's leaders, [Chingaira](#), was shot by a firing squad on Sept. 4, 1896. Facing his executioners, he declared, "It is all very well to call me a rebel but the country belonged to me and my forefathers long before you came here."

The British called Zimbabwe "Southern Rhodesia" after moneybags Rhodes, while they called neighboring Zambia "Northern Rhodesia." White settlers stole most of the land while Africans were forced by a "hut tax" and systematic violence to work for them.

This led to more than 15 years of a Chimurenga against the white settler regime of Ian Smith during the 1960s and 1970s. Guerrilla warfare was launched. Smith responded with wholesale terror that included using the biological weapon anthrax against liberation fighters.

Smith was propped up by [support from Britain](#). Big Oil outfits BP and Shell supplied

petroleum to the Smith regime in violation of U.N. sanctions.

The U.S. allowed imports of chrome from occupied Zimbabwe, which also violated U.N. sanctions. None of this prevented the white settler regime from being forced to surrender to Zimbabwe's people.

### **Celebration in Brooklyn, N.Y.**

The December 12th Movement held a rally in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 18 to celebrate Zimbabwe's independence. The revolutionary organization has always defended the African country. Its leaders supported Zimbabwe's liberation struggle for decades.

One of the D12 leaders, Field Marshal Coltrane Chimurenga, who passed away in 2019, is buried in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital. He was interred in the Harare Provincial Heroes' Acre and given a 21-gun salute by the Zimbabwean military.

Speaking in front of Sistas' Place on Nostrand Avenue at Frederick Douglass Square, D12 Chairperson Viola Plummer talked about the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe.

She stressed the need for unity and praised two leaders of the Chimurenga: Robert Mugabe, leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and Joshua Nkomo, who led the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).

These freedom fighters, both of whom have joined the ancestors, came together to form the Patriotic Front. Cuban leader Fidel Castro supported this effort and the military struggle.

After achieving independence, ZANU and ZAPU merged their organizations to form ZANU-PF (Patriotic Front) in the late 1980s.

For big capitalists in the U.S. and Europe — who've enslaved and exploited Africans

for over 500 years — Zimbabwe's unforgivable sin was taking back the land. Starting in 2000, President Robert Mugabe led the restoration of the land to Africans that had been stolen by white farm owners and ranchers.

That's what should have been done in the United States in 1865. The plantations should have been given to the Africans who worked on them — from “no see” in the morning to “no see” at night — and to Indigenous nations that the land was stolen from.

### **Fighting COVID and sanctions**

The U.S. government, which openly violated U.N. sanctions to help Ian Smith, has imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe for 20 years for liberating their land. According to a D12 leaflet, Zimbabwe lost \$42 billion because of this cruel economic blockade.

Importing medical supplies and agricultural implements has been hindered. The African Union's 54 nations have demanded the lifting of sanctions. So has AU Chair and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, and the U.N. Secretary General.

Despite these sanctions, [the country's economy](#) is expected to grow 7.4% in 2021. In his Independence Day speech, His Excellency President Mnangagwa reported on the new roads, bridges, dams and electrical plants being built. The country's “look East” policy has encouraged trade with the People's Republic of China, Iran and the Russian Federation.

Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate in Africa. Before independence, there was only one high school for Africans. Now there are many and every province has a college.

At the Brooklyn rally, Colette Pean, a D12 leader, explained how Zimbabwe was able to beat back the coronavirus pandemic. With ZANU-PF party members rooted in the countryside, as well as in the cities, the country was able to mobilize against the

virus.

Zimbabwe shut down to stop the spread. As of April 17, the country of 14 million people had [37,980 cases](#) of COVID-19 with 1,555 deaths.

In contrast, the nearly 13 million people in Pennsylvania have had over [1.1 million cases](#) and suffered nearly 26,000 deaths.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa reported that Zimbabwe launched a national vaccination program to contain the virus. Vaccines have been obtained from China, the Russian Federation and India.

Despite the slander in the corporate media, Zimbabwe is moving forward. Forty-one is a prime number. Lift the sanctions on Zimbabwe!

