

January 2019 Shutdown Zimbabwe Protests

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The January 2019 Protests was civil unrest and riots that occurred in Zimbabwe and the violent response from the government from 14 to 16 January 2019. There are different figures provided on the number of people that died but a common figure is 5, most of them from gunshot wounds and beatings by the police and Zimbabwe military.

January 2019 Protests,
Part of ZCTU Stayaway



Protestors In Zimbabwe 2019

Date	14 - 16 January 2019	
Location	Zimbabwe	
Caused by	Fuel Price Hike	
Goals	Reducing Cost Of Living	
Methods	Stayaway, Protest March, Riot	
Parties to the civil conflict		
Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions	Citizens,	Government of Zimbabwe (Police, Army)
Lead figures		
Peter Mutasa ,	Evan Mawarire ,	Emmerson Mnangagwa
Casualties		
Unknown	5 dead, several hundreds injured	1 police officer dead

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Timeline

1 - 11 January 2019

- There's an acute shortage of vehicle fuel countrywide with queues of cars waiting to fuel stretching for kilometers. See more: [Zimbabwe Fuel Shortage Crisis \(2018 - 2019\)](#)
- The government insists that there's no real fuel shortage and that the shortage has been artificially created by saboteurs, criminals, and small cars that are wasting fuel on luxury purposes.

Saturday, 12 January 2019

- On the night of 12 January, Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa announces at a press conference that the price of fuel has been increased. Blended Petrol is increased from \$1.32 per liter to \$3.31 and Diesel from \$1.20 to \$3.11. Mnangagwa is accompanied by Vice President [Constantino Chiwenga](#) and Finance Minister, [Mthuli Ncube](#). Mnangagwa says that government will ensure that businesses do not increase the price of other products in response, saying the government will provide rebates to compensate businesses for the fuel price increase.
- Analysts and Zimbabweans on social media say the move is a mistake as it will result in other products also increasing in price.
- The president flies out to Russia later starting a 5 country roadshow seeking investment.

Sunday, 13 January 2019

- The president of the [Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions](#) calls for a 3-day nationwide stayaway from 14 - 16 January 2019.
- The [MDC Alliance](#) joins in calls with the party's Youth wing urging Zimbabweans to stay away on the 3 days
- Popular [#ThisFlag](#) activist, [Pastor Evan Mawarire](#) calls on ordinary citizens to join in the stayaway in solidarity with ZCTU.

Monday, 14 January 2019

- Reports trickle in the morning saying that some roads into town are barricaded with rocks and burning tires as protestors attempt to stop anyone from going to work or school.
- Pictures from Epworth show streets with huge rocks preventing traffic flow
- A [Choppies](#) supermarket in Mabvuku is looted Later other Choppies supermarkets around the country are also looted. Protestors have a perception that the supermarket is linked to the [Zanu-PF](#) government.
- [Zimbabwe Republic Police](#) trucks are burnt in Harare and Bulawayo.
- School teachers who had reported for duty in Chitungwiza are visited by police and army who beat them resulting in the closure of the schools as both teachers and students are sent home.

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- Makoni Police Station is burnt
- A tollgate along Harare-Masvingo road after the Mbudzi roundabout is ransacked and burnt.
- A [ZUPCO](#) bus is burnt in Harare
- A Puma fuel station in Harare belonging to Zanu-PF senior member [Webster Shamu](#) is ransacked
- A Zuva fuel station in Harare is also burnt.
- A man with a gun is seen along the Bulawayo - Harare road near [Kuwadzana](#) apparently controlling traffic but some report it's not very clear what he was doing. Later a gunman is filmed shooting at targets in a residential area. It's said he was shooting at residents.
- 4 people are said to have been shot in the [Epworth](#) high-density residential area. Pictures of a woman with a deep and wide gunshot wound on the thigh circulate. Other pictures of gunshot wound victims also circulate.
- The army and police are deployed countrywide to contain the protests
- Messages circulate in the evening that the army and police intend to do overnight door to door raids especially in high-density areas to harass and arrest men.
- Pastor Evan Mawarire, thanks Zimbabweans who stayed at home, denounces violent protests and calls on Zimbabweans to stay home again the following day as per ZCTU planned stayaway.

Teusday, 15 January 2019

- Reports say that the army and police visited houses in several high-density residential areas breaking in and randomly assaulting young men and arresting them. RThese raids are continuing into the day.
- Reports circulate in the morning that the government intends to block access to social media apps and sites. Several people report not being able to access WhatsApp and Facebook
- Subscribers of Zimbabwe's largest mobile internet provider [Econet](#) report that the provider has blocked access to the whole internet. Later NetOne and Telecel subscribers also report that they can't access the internet at all. It is feared that a total internet shutdown has been ordered by the government.
- At around 12 midday, providers that still had some access, ZOI and Liquid Telecom also shut down the whole internet, plunging Zimbabwe into an internet blackout.
- Meanwhile reports continue to says that the army is doing door to door raids in various high-density suburbs, destroying property and arresting young men.
- Later that evening, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting [Energy Mutodi](#), says that the internet has not been blocked at all and that it really is just congested. This is proven to be a lie a day later when Econet Wireless reveals that they were ordered by the government to shut the internet down.
- Most businesses are closed and people stay at home, mostly in fear of the retribution by army and police.

Wednesday, 16 January 2019

- Econet Wireless sends an SMS message to its subscribers saying notifying them that the internet is down because of a government order received from the Office of the President.
- Pastor Evan Mawarire is arrested on charges of inciting public violence
- Zimbabwe spends the second day under the internet blackout.

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- Reports of army and police beating Zimbabweans in door to door raids continue
- At 3PM President Emmerson Mnangagwa posts a message on social media from Russia saying that his roadshow is necessary for an economic turnaround, says that Zimbabweans are free to protest and that they should do so peacefully. He also says that economic progress is being made even though it's not always visible.
- At about 5PM the internet is restored, however access to social media is still blocked.
- the government orders the internet providers to block access to Virtual Private Network (VPN) services in order to prevent Zimbabweans bypassing the social media blockade.

Thursday, 17 January 2019

- The social media blockade continues
- the Zimbabwean government finally admits that it blocked access to the internet. Says it was necessary given a threat to national security.
- A report in the government-controlled publication The Herald, says 3 people died, 30 vehicles were burnt and that 600 people were arrested.
- Pastor Evan Mawarire has an additional charge of treason brought against him - subverting a constitutionally elected government.

Friday, 18 January 2019

- Evan Mawarire is denied bail and is remanded in custody to 31 January 2019
- [Beatrice Mtetwa](#), Mawarire's lawyer says that there's a deliberate ploy by the justice system in Zimbabwe to deny justice to the people arrested for Shutdown Zimbabwe protests. Says human rights lawyers are also being deliberately stretched to deny justice to protestors.
- Government says that about 700 people have been arrested so far for Shutdown Zimbabwe
- [Zimbabwe Youth Alliance](#) president [Kumbirai Learnmore](#) Magorimbo appears in court facing charges of seeking to subvert a constitutionally-elected government after he allegedly posted messages on his Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp walls, inciting workers to take part in the stayaway.
- In the evening of the 19th, [Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe](#) (ARTUZ) President, [Obert Masaraure](#) is abducted from his home in Harare. His organisation has been protesting against the government since before the ZCTU Stayaway.

Saturday, 19 January 2019

- It emerges that ARTUZ president, Obert Masaraure, was handed over to the police as they bring him to court on charges of treason - Subverting a constitutionally elected government.
- Police and Military do a joint press conference where they announce that there are civilians who are in possession of police and military uniforms and that some of these individuals are former force members who "retired, deserted, absented themselves without official leave". They also say that these individuals are committing crimes.
- Rumours emerge that there's a group of Zanu-PF senior members led by [Chris Mutsvangwa](#) who are plotting to remove Mnangagwa from the presidency through impeaching and other processes.

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Sunday, 20 January 2019

- Mnangagwa is reported to have abandoned his trip and now making plans to come back home. He is expected in the country within 24 hours.

21 January 2019

- Zanu-PF politician Mayor Justice Wadyajena says that some Zanu-PF senior members plotting to impeach President Mnangagwa threatened to kill him and harm his family for not supporting them. Former Deputy minister Terrence Khupe says he has faced similar threats. Both indicate that the plot has been foiled.
- Mnangagwa returns to Zimbabwe at midnight

22 January 2019

- President Mnangagwa says he has opened up for dialogue with other leaders over the crisis faced by Zimbabwe
- President Cyril Ramaphosa calls for the lifting of sanctions against Zimbabwe

Deaths

- Tanaka Bushu
- Kelvin Tinashe Choto
- Noah Sahombe - 02 February 2019 at Parirenyatwa Hospitals from injuries sustained in an assault
- Alexio Maune - ZRP constable killed by protestors on 14 January 2019.

Pictures



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January 2019 Protests



January 2019 Protests, a woman is carried in a wheelbarrow after being shot on the thigh by police, army



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Tyre burning during January 2019 Protests



Tyre burning during the January 2019 Protests



Street Barricading during the January 2019 Protests

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Marchers during the January 2019 Protests



Pastor Evan Mawarire is arrested on 17 January 2019 Protests. He's later charged with treason.

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