

Lacoste, Zanu-PF Faction

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Lacoste

Team Lacoste, which unofficially gets its name from the [Lacoste clothing label](#) and even uses its crocodile symbol is a group of Zanu PF politicians in Zimbabwe who, from 2015, were believed to be working to ensure that one of the Vice Presidents of Zimbabwe, [Emmerson Mnangagwa](#) succeeds President [Robert Mugabe](#) as president of Zimbabwe. The faction was also working to frustrate the efforts of a rival faction called [G40](#) which was believed to be fronting the First Lady, [Grace Mugabe](#), for succession. As the question of Mugabe's succession heated in 2016, party members believed to supporting Mnangagwa in the succession race were seen at events posing for pictures wearing T-shirts labelled “Team Lacoste” in January 2016. Their T-shirts had a crocodile emblem painted in national colours — a move that reportedly indicated that the faction now had its own symbols outside of the usual party wear. ^[1]

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Source of Name

It is not clear who started with the use of the clothing label Lacoste or the crocodile trademark to refer to the Mnangagwa faction. It was chosen however because of the crocodile symbol because Mnangagwa is referred as the Crocodile in Zimbabwe apparently due to his involvement with the crocodile gang during Zimbabwe's Liberation war. The Shona word *ngwena* is usually used to refer to him.

Mnangagwa has said himself about his nickname:

"You know the trait of a crocodile, don't you? It never hunts outside water. It always goes into the water to catch its prey. It never goes in the villages or in the bush looking for food. It strikes at the appropriate time. So a good guerrilla leader strikes at the appropriate time. That's the import of the nicknames we give each other"^[2]

Mnangagwa Dissociates From Lacoste Faction

In late July 2016 After [Mandi Chimene's](#) accusations of him being the leader of the [Lacoste](#) faction of the [ZANU PF](#). He only replied to the allegations saying

he is not concerned by those who "bark" endlessly and that instead their "barking" gives him more energy.

His explanation was,

"A lot of things have been said about me. But I did not respond because that is not how we do things in ZANU PF. Leaders do not wash dirty linen in public. There are platforms for that like central committee and politburo that is why I did not respond and kept quiet. However, President Mugabe exhorted leaders to respond when they are accused, to refuse false allegations so that people know the truth," said Mnangagwa.

The Crisis which was escalating out of control and could result in the loss of his job and in his speech he wanted to clarify direct emphasis that although oppositon rival factions such as [G40](#) are trying to exploit him due to their own agenda's, He also went through the struggle alongside Mugabe and he cannot betray his "Father and Principal Mentor."

"I don't know what their aim is or who is sending them but they cannot just wake up and start spreading these falsehoods. There is someone behind them. But the truth shall come out." said the VP

Mnangagwa's message is directed at both Mugabe and his detractors in the succession battle. To Mugabe, he is saying we have come a long way. I have trusted and protected you in my role in security. I am loyal and I cannot betray you now.^[3]

Prominent Individuals Linked to Team Lacoste

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- [Christopher Mutsvangwa](#) - leader
- [George Charamba](#)
- [Victor Matemadanda](#)
- [Caesar Zvayi](#) (The Herald Editor)
- [Energy Mutodi](#)
- [Justice Mayor Wadyajena](#)
- [Munyaradzi Kereke](#)
- [Johannes Tomana](#)
- [Monica Mutsvangwa](#)
- [Josiah Hungwe](#)
- [Prisca Mufumira](#)

Other people associated with Lacoste

- [Douglas Mahiya](#)
- [Constantino Chiwenga](#)
- [Trust Mugova](#)

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References

1. [Team Lacoste goes for broke](#), *Daily News*, Published:26 January 2016, Retrieved: 19 February 2016
2. [Alex Magaisa, Interview with "The Crocodile": Insights from Mnangagwa's recent interview](#), *AlexMagaisa.com*, Published:4 September 2015, Retrieved: 19 February 2016
3. [\[1\]](#), *??*, Published:2016/08/01, Retrieved: 2 Aug 2016