Briefing Request — Zimbabwe, Critical Minerals and Democratic Resilience

From <garcia@internationalpolicygroup.com>
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Date 2026-07-31 15:16

2026-07-31_IPG_Zimbabwe-Transparent-Critical-Minerals_Chris-Coons_Executive-Brief.pdf (~140 KB)
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Vidya,

I am writing on behalf of International Policy Group, a Nairobi-based public-policy and governance advisory firm, to request a twenty-minute briefing with Senator Chris Coons's office and relevant Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff concerning Zimbabwe as a test case for a transparent, values-based U.S.-Africa critical-minerals strategy.

Zimbabwe possesses major reserves of lithium, platinum, palladium, chromium, and gold, yet its strategic-resource sector is increasingly shaped by Chinese commercial concentration, opaque ownership structures, Belarus-linked political-commercial networks, and institutions weakened by constitutional capture.

On July 7, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed Constitution Amendment No. 3, which abolished direct presidential elections, extended the terms of current officeholders, expanded presidential appointment powers, and altered key electoral and constitutional safeguards without a national referendum.

This constitutional rupture carries a wider geopolitical consequence. An African state with a highly educated, English-speaking population, longstanding ties to Western institutions, and a political and commercial culture historically more readily oriented toward the United States and its democratic partners is being drawn, without the consent of its people, ever more deeply into networks aligned with Russia, Belarus, and China by an increasingly anti-constitutional governing establishment.

If this trajectory consolidates, Zimbabwe could become a durable authoritarian foothold in Southern Africa—providing Moscow and its allies access to strategic resources, public-procurement systems, diplomatic influence, and vulnerable populations while narrowing the space for responsible American and allied engagement.

Senator Coons's mining-transparency and energy-security agenda offers a framework for preventing Zimbabwe's strategic capture while advancing ownership disclosure, enforceable labor and environmental safeguards, diversified investment and offtake, domestic processing, commercially viable infrastructure, community benefit, and responsible American participation.

The attached memorandum proposes:

Senate oversight and implementation measures building upon Senator Coons's China-Africa mining-transparency and energy-security agenda;
a bipartisan resolution affirming Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development;
interagency review of Chinese mineral concentration, Belarus-linked procurement and beneficial ownership, and fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabwean citizens into Russia's war against Ukraine; and
Senate principles for a modern successor to ZDERA that preserves U.S. leverage while creating a lawful pathway toward transparent investment, diversified supply chains, and shared prosperity.

Given Senator Coons's leadership on Africa, critical minerals, energy security, and democratic international engagement, we believe Zimbabwe presents a timely opportunity to translate those priorities into a coherent country-specific strategy.

I would appreciate your assistance in arranging a briefing and directing the attached materials to the appropriate foreign-policy, Africa, appropriations, and legislative staff.

Attached are the memorandum prepared for Senator Coons and an institutional profile of International Policy Group.

Regards,

Garcia Mavinga Sozinho
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Attachments:

Memorandum — Zimbabwe as a Test Case for Transparent U.S.-Africa Critical-Minerals Partnership and Democratic Resilience
International Policy Group — Institutional Profile

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/01/2026 4:15:42 AM

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vidya Neelakantan, National Security Adviser
CC: Margaret Flynn Sapia, Foreign Policy and Defense Legislative Assistant
OFFICE: Office of U.S. Senator Christopher A. Coons
FROM: Garcia Mavinga Sozinho — International Policy Group
DATE: July 31, 2026
RE: Zimbabwe as a Test Case for Transparent U.S.–Africa Critical-Minerals Partnership and Democratic Resilience

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Garcia Mavinga Sozinho is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of International Policy Group. This material is distributed by Garcia Mavinga Sozinho on behalf of International Policy Group. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

THE ASK International Policy Group respectfully requests a **twenty-minute briefing** with Senator Coons and relevant Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff concerning Zimbabwe as a test case for a transparent, values-based U.S.–Africa critical-minerals strategy grounded in constitutional legitimacy, responsible investment, African economic participation, and durable strategic partnership.

We propose three mutually reinforcing actions: (1) oversight and implementation principles building upon Senator Coons's China-Africa mining-transparency and energy-security agenda; (2) a bipartisan Senate resolution affirming Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development; and (3) Senate principles for a modern ZDERA successor that preserves U.S. leverage while opening a lawful path to transparent investment, diversified supply chains, and shared prosperity.

ZIMBABWE IS A DIRECT TEST OF SENATOR COONS'S AFRICA AND MINERALS AGENDA

Zimbabwe was the world's third-ranked platinum producer in 2024, fourth-ranked in lithium—excluding the United States—and palladium, and sixth-ranked in chromium. Mining and quarrying contributed approximately 15.4 percent of gross domestic product. In 2025, Zimbabwe exported approximately 1.13 million metric tons of lithium-bearing spodumene concentrate to China—about 15 percent of China's lithium-concentrate imports—while Chinese firms dominated the sector after approximately $2 billion in investment since 2021. [1][2]

Senator Coons's Africa and critical-minerals agenda provides a direct policy frame for Zimbabwe. His recent mining-transparency and energy-security initiatives seek to expose coercive labor and environmental abuse, strengthen strategic supply chains, and coordinate American diplomatic, development-finance, and private-investment tools. Zimbabwe is where those principles can be tested against Chinese commercial concentration, weak ownership transparency, and the need for a credible American alternative. [3][4]

CONSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY AND PARTNERSHIP RELIABILITY

On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026. It abolishes direct presidential elections; extends presidential, parliamentary, and local-authority terms from five to seven years; applies those extensions to current officeholders through 2030; adds ten Senate seats filled by presidential appointment; transfers responsibility for the voters' roll; and alters delimitation, judicial-appointment, and constitutional-oversight arrangements. [5][6]

Section 328(7) bars tenure extensions from benefiting incumbent officeholders, while section 328(9) requires a national referendum to amend section 328 itself. Amendment No. 3 nevertheless applies the extended terms to current officeholders "notwithstanding section 328(7)," without the referendum required to amend section 328 itself. A pre-enactment challenge was dismissed on procedural grounds, and the constitutional merits remain unresolved. [5][6]

A durable minerals partnership requires institutions capable of honoring licenses, contracts, labor protections, environmental obligations, community agreements, tax commitments, and public-revenue responsibilities. When incumbent authority can rewrite constitutional restraints, politically connected actors can allocate strategic assets through patronage, obscure beneficial ownership, and place rules-bound American firms at a structural disadvantage.

FROM EXTRACTION TO AFRICAN SHARED PROSPERITY

Senator Coons has consistently treated African nations as strategic and economic partners rather than merely as sources of raw materials. Applied to Zimbabwe, that principle means mineral development that produces transparent public revenue, domestic processing and value addition, skilled employment, enforceable labor and environmental standards, meaningful community benefit, and genuine Zimbabwean participation in ownership and decision-making. [3][4]

IPG's proposed American alternative would combine transparent licensing and beneficial ownership, responsible sourcing and traceability, diversified offtake, commercially reliable institutions, and development-finance tools capable of mobilizing responsible private capital. This framework would strengthen U.S. supply-chain resilience while enabling Zimbabweans to retain a fairer share of the value created by their national resources.

AUTHORITARIAN ECONOMICS AND HUMAN EXPLOITATION

The Mnangagwa government has deepened alignment with Russia and Belarus through a Belarus-linked political-commercial network spanning gold mining, agricultural mechanization, equipment procurement, and diplomatic representation. Investigations have documented senior-state relationships and offshore structures that obscure beneficial ownership and place Belarusian state-adjacent interests inside Zimbabwe's strategic-resource governance. [7]

On March 25, 2026, Zimbabwe's government acknowledged 81 known cases of fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war against Ukraine: 15 citizens had been killed, and diplomatic efforts were underway to repatriate 66 survivors. Victims were reportedly lured by false civilian-employment offers, deprived of travel documents, and coerced into combat. The clandestine methods and absence of comprehensive public accounting make the official figure a confirmed minimum and place the issue within a wider African trafficking, illicit-finance, and security pattern supporting Russia's war effort. [8]

Zimbabwe's constitutional capture also carries a wider geopolitical consequence. An African state with a highly educated, English-speaking population, longstanding ties to Western institutions, and a political and commercial culture historically more readily oriented toward the United States and its democratic partners is being drawn, without the consent of its people, ever more deeply into networks aligned with Russia, Belarus, and China by an increasingly anti-constitutional governing establishment.

If this trajectory consolidates, Zimbabwe could become a durable authoritarian foothold in Southern Africa—providing Moscow and its allies access to strategic resources, public-procurement systems,

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diplomatic influence, and vulnerable populations while narrowing the space for responsible American and allied engagement.

THE UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AND LEGISLATIVE MOMENT

The strategic objective should be neither isolation nor unconditional normalization. It should be a transparent pathway under which lawful reform unlocks responsible economic engagement.

Senator Coons's mining-transparency and energy-security agenda offers a framework for preventing Zimbabwe's strategic capture while advancing ownership disclosure, enforceable labor and environmental safeguards, diversified investment and offtake, domestic processing, commercially viable infrastructure, community benefit, and responsible American participation. [3][4]

ZDERA links stronger U.S.–Zimbabwe trade and investment ties to governance, credible elections, economic reform, property rights, and recovery of stolen assets. H.R. 5300 remains at the introduced stage after the House Foreign Affairs Committee ordered it reported, as amended. In the introduced text currently published by Congress.gov, section 303 would repeal ZDERA and replace it with a narrower compensation-related condition governing U.S. support for new or expanded IMF or World Bank funding for Zimbabwe. [9][10]

Farmer compensation and property rights remain legitimate obligations. A compensation-only replacement would leave constitutional capture, opaque ownership, Chinese mineral concentration, labor and environmental risk, politically connected procurement, Russian recruitment networks, and unequal community benefit outside the principal statutory framework for U.S. reengagement.

IPG recommends a modern successor framework preserving compensation and property-rights objectives while adding constitutional-legitimacy benchmarks, anti-corruption and beneficial-ownership standards, responsible-sourcing requirements, labor and environmental protections, strategic-mineral transparency, competitive market access, domestic value-addition objectives, community-benefit standards, and positive pathways toward investment, debt resolution, and economic recovery.

RECOMMENDED SENATE ACTION

- **Mining-transparency and energy-security implementation** — request State Department and interagency planning that uses Zimbabwe as a priority case for examining Chinese mining entities, labor and environmental conduct, ownership structures, state-linked financing, energy and transport infrastructure, and barriers to responsible American participation.
- **Bipartisan constitutional and partnership framework** — affirm the Zimbabwean people's right to choose their leadership; defend the voter-approved 2013 constitutional settlement and referendum safeguards; protect peaceful civic participation; and recognize Zimbabweans' right to receive the full national benefit of mineral development through public revenue, value addition, employment, and community benefit.
- **Africa Subcommittee oversight and ZDERA modernization** — seek briefings from State, Treasury, Commerce, Justice, DFC, EXIM, and relevant national-security agencies on Chinese mineral concentration, Belarus-linked ownership and procurement, fraudulent Russian wartime recruitment, illicit finance, and labor and environmental risks; and establish Senate principles for a modern ZDERA successor supporting transparent reform and responsible investment.

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SELECTED AUTHORITIES

1. U.S. Geological Survey, "Zimbabwe—Minerals Information" (2024 production and GDP data).
2. Reuters, "Zimbabwe Adds Freight Rail Option to Lithium Export Gateway", July 21, 2026.
3. Office of Senator Christopher A. Coons, "Senators Coons, Sheehy Introduce Bill to Expose Chinese Forced Labor and Environmental Abuses in Africa", May 2026.
4. Office of Senator Christopher A. Coons, "Senators Coons, Ricketts Introduce Bill to Strengthen Energy Security and Critical Mineral Supply Chains", April 28, 2026.
5. Veritas Zimbabwe, "Constitution Watch 8/2026—CAB3 Published as Act" (Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026, Act No. 6 of 2026).
6. Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, § 328; Veritas, "Constitution Watch 8/2026—CAB3 Published as Act"; Human Rights Watch, "Zimbabwe Constitution Amended to Extend President's Term", July 8, 2026.
7. OCCRP, "Belarusian Elites' Golden Deal With Zimbabwe".
8. Associated Press, "Zimbabwe Says 15 of Its Citizens Killed After Fraudulent Recruitment into Russia-Ukraine War", March 25, 2026; Reuters, "African Nations Tiptoe Around Recruitment of Citizens by Russian Networks", March 2026.
9. Congress.gov, "Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001", as amended in 2018.
10. Congress.gov, H.R. 5300—Department of State Policy Provisions Act, section 303 and legislative status.

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INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE AND UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

WHO WE ARE

International Policy Group is a Kenyan public benefit organization and public-policy institution working across governance, peacebuilding and strategic advisory., peacebuilding and strategic advisory. It develops Africa-focused initiatives that strengthen public institutions, support responsible economic development and build international partnerships. IPG is governed under its constitution by a Kenyan board and led by Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo, Secretary and Chief Executive.

OUR POLICY OUTLOOK

International Policy Group regards constitutional government and economic development as mutually reinforcing. Accountable institutions protect political and property rights, while competitive markets and private enterprise convert stability into broad prosperity. Responsible stewardship of natural resources enables African states to turn national assets into enduring public value.

IPG's outlook is informed in part by Kenya's experience under President Mwai Kibaki. Macroeconomic discipline, strategic public investment and renewed domestic enterprise helped restore growth and strengthen national development. That experience demonstrates how capable public institutions and a competitive private sector can operate together as foundations of African prosperity.

STRENGTHENING UNITED STATES–AFRICA RELATIONS

International Policy Group believes that relations between the United States and Africa remain substantially underdeveloped relative to the democratic, economic and strategic interests shared by both regions. United States engagement has often been episodic and crisis-driven, leaving substantial room for stronger commercial cooperation, institutional partnership and sustained development engagement.

IPG advances a more durable relationship built on shared values, strategic understanding and practical cooperation. Such a relationship will help African countries diversify their international partnerships, strengthen their institutions and develop productive capacity. It will also give American institutions and businesses credible African partners while expanding transparent alternatives to opaque or politically conditioned arrangements.

WHY ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe's trajectory brings constitutional sovereignty and strategic-resource governance into the same urgent field. It provides an early warning for Africa: constitutional manipulation, institutional capture and opaque foreign control of strategic resources can converge to erode national sovereignty and establish a regional precedent. IPG's engagement reflects a Pan-African responsibility to safeguard constitutional sovereignty and African control of strategic assets, with Zimbabwean agency at its centre.

Through the **Zimbabwe Constitutional Governance, Institutional Continuity and Democratic Resilience Initiative** (the "Initiative"), IPG consults Zimbabwean constitutional, institutional, civic, professional and community stakeholders while independently developing responsible engagement with the United States government, democracy-support institutions and private sector. The Initiative supports peaceful constitutional participation and advances a constitutional, productive and sovereign Zimbabwe in which political and property rights are secure, domestic enterprise flourishes, and strategic mineral wealth produces domestic value, skilled employment, public revenue and community benefit.

Present conditions subject political rights, contracts, licences and economic opportunity to patronage and executive discretion. They weaken Zimbabwean enterprise, reduce the national return from strategic resources and narrow the country's choice of responsible partners. Constructive United States engagement supports diversification through transparent capital, advanced technology and wider markets.

Zimbabwean stakeholders contribute information, institutional perspectives and nonbinding recommendations. IPG independently evaluates their contributions, establishes the Initiative's policy direction and work plan, and retains sole authority over its United States engagement, including direction and supervision of its United States representative.

UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT

Garcia Mavinga Sozinho serves on the International Policy Group Advisory Council and, under a separate consulting agreement, as IPG's independent United States policy and government-relations consultant. He is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of International Policy Group, FARA Registration No. 7751. His United States engagement is undertaken on behalf of and under the direction of International Policy Group.

Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo
Secretary and Chief Executive
International Policy Group
Date: July 29, 2026

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Briefing Request — Zimbabwe, Russia's War Economy and Belarus-Linked Influence

From <garcia@internationalpolicygroup.com>
To <nick_borgaonkar@fetterman.senate.gov>
Date 2026-07-31 14:24

2026-07-31_IPG_Zimbabwe-Constitutional-Sovereignty-and-Russian-Wartime-Exploitation_John-Fetterman_Action-Memorandum.pdf (~164 KB)
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Nick,

I am writing on behalf of International Policy Group, a Nairobi-based public-policy and governance advisory firm, to request a twenty-minute meeting and policy briefing with Senator John Fetterman and the appropriate members of his legislative and Helsinki Commission staff concerning Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture, the African reach of Russia's war economy, Belarus-linked influence, and the fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabwean and other African nationals into Russia's war against Ukraine.

Activists opposing Constitution Amendment No. 3 called for nationwide demonstrations on July 31. The muted visible response occurred amid arrests and prosecutions of amendment opponents, official warnings, reported threats against political figures, and substantial security deployments that appear to have created a chilling effect on civic participation.

Zimbabwe presents a concrete test of whether the United States can defend constitutional sovereignty and democratic self-government while confronting the extension of Russia's war economy and Belarusian state-commercial influence into African political economies and vulnerable populations.

The attached memorandum explains how Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture intersects with fraudulent employment-based recruitment into Russia's war, the exploitation of Zimbabwean citizens, Belarus-linked political-commercial networks, strategic-mineral governance, and the wider defense of democratic sovereignty.

International Policy Group proposes:

a bipartisan Senate resolution affirming Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and condemning deceptive recruitment and coercion into Russia's war;
Senate and interagency examination of transnational recruitment networks, Russian counterparties, Belarusian enablement, illicit finance, sanctions exposure, and victim protection;
consultation with Helsinki Commission staff regarding the Russia- and Belarus-related dimensions of the evidence; and
a constructive United States–Zimbabwe framework combining citizen protection, transparent investment, and modernization—not simple repeal—of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act.

Given Senator Fetterman's support for Ukraine and his role on the U.S. Helsinki Commission, we respectfully request an opportunity to brief him and the appropriate staff and to discuss practical congressional options.

I would appreciate your assistance in directing these materials to the relevant legislative, foreign-policy, Helsinki Commission, and scheduling personnel.

Attached are the memorandum prepared for Senator Fetterman and an institutional profile of International Policy Group.

Regards,

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Attachments:

Memorandum – Zimbabwean Constitutional Sovereignty, Russian Wartime Exploitation, and U.S. Democratic Leadership
International Policy Group – Institutional Profile

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nick Borgaonkar, Senior Policy Adviser / Legislative Assistant
OFFICE: Office of U.S. Senator John Fetterman
FROM: Garcia Mavinga Sozinho – International Policy Group
DATE: July 31, 2026
RE: Zimbabwean Constitutional Sovereignty, Russian Wartime Exploitation, and U.S. Democratic Leadership

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THE ASK International Policy Group respectfully requests a twenty-minute briefing with Senator Fetterman and relevant Senate policy staff concerning fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabweans into Russia's war, Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture, and Belarus-linked influence. Consultation with Helsinki Commission staff would also be appropriate regarding the Russia- and Belarus-related dimensions of the evidence..

We propose: **(1)** a bipartisan Senate resolution; **(2)** Senate and interagency examination of transnational recruitment networks, informed where appropriate by Helsinki Commission expertise concerning Russia and Belarus; and **(3)** a constructive United States–Zimbabwe framework combining citizen protection, transparent investment, and ZDERA modernization.

WHY THIS FITS SENATOR FETTERMAN'S RECORD

As a member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, Senator Fetterman works at the intersection of human rights, democratic sovereignty, and European security. In 2025, he helped lead a bipartisan Senate resolution calling for the return of Ukrainian children forcibly transferred by Russia and noting their exposure to trafficking and exploitation. The fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabweans represents a related dimension of Russia's war economy reaching vulnerable people beyond Europe. [5][6]

RUSSIA'S WAR IS EXPLOITING VULNERABLE ZIMBABWEANS

On March 25, 2026, Zimbabwe's government reported that 15 citizens had been killed after fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war against Ukraine and that, at that time, 66 surviving citizens remained in the conflict zone. Victims were reportedly lured by false civilian-employment offers, deprived of travel documents, and coerced into combat. [4]

The pattern connects African economic vulnerability to Russia's wartime manpower requirements. Congress should examine recruiters, financing, travel channels, document confiscation, Russian counterparties, and applicable trafficking, sanctions, and law-enforcement authorities, while expanding lawful employment and investment alternatives.

CONSTITUTIONAL SOVEREIGNTY IS HUMAN SECURITY

On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed Constitution Amendment Act No. 3. It ends direct popular election of the President, extends presidential and parliamentary terms to seven years, applies the extensions to current officeholders through 2030, expands presidential Senate appointments, transfers the voters' roll, and alters judicial and constitutional oversight. [1][3]

Section 328(7) bars an amendment extending tenure from benefiting incumbent officeholders, while section 328(9) requires a national referendum to amend section 328 itself. Amendment No. 3 nevertheless applies the extended terms to current officeholders "notwithstanding section 328(7)," without the referendum required to amend section 328 itself. [1][2][3]

The constituencies defending Zimbabwe's voter-approved 2013 settlement are asserting popular sovereignty, lawful succession, accountable institutions, civic dignity, and open economic partnership—aspirations closer to the United States than to the authoritarian model represented by Russia and Belarus.

BELARUS-LINKED NETWORKS AND STRATEGIC RESOURCES

OCCRP documented a Zimbabwean gold venture negotiated through an official Belarusian mission but structured through offshore entities obscuring politically connected ownership. During a 2023 Zimbabwe visit, Lukashenko expanded mining and procurement ties and reiterated Belarus's readiness to assist Russia. [7]

Zimbabwe ranked third globally in platinum production in 2024, fourth in lithium production excluding the United States, fourth in palladium, and sixth in chromium. Chinese firms dominate its lithium sector after roughly $2 billion in investment since 2021. A credible American alternative would combine ownership transparency, responsible sourcing, domestic processing, employment, community benefit, and stable institutions. [8][9]

THE SENATE POLICY MOMENT

ZDERA connects stronger United States–Zimbabwe relations to governance, rule of law, credible elections, economic reform, property rights, and stolen-asset recovery. H.R. 5300 remains at the introduced stage after the House Foreign Affairs Committee ordered it reported, as amended. In the introduced text currently published by Congress.gov, section 303 would repeal ZDERA and substitute a narrower compensation-related condition on United States support for new or expanded IMF or World Bank funding for Zimbabwe. Compensation is legitimate, but a compensation-only replacement would not address Russian recruitment, constitutional rupture, opaque ownership, or barriers to responsible American participation. [10]

RECOMMENDED SENATE ACTION AND HELSINKI COMMISSION CONSULTATION

- **Bipartisan Senate resolution.** Affirm Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty; condemn deceptive recruitment and coercion into Russia's war; protect peaceful constitutional stakeholders; and support affected citizens.

- **Senate and interagency examination, with Helsinki Commission consultation where appropriate.** Seek briefings from the Departments of State, Treasury and Justice and relevant security agencies concerning recruitment networks, Russian counterparties, Belarusian enablement, illicit finance, sanctions exposure and victim protection. Consult Helsinki Commission staff regarding the Russia- and Belarus-related dimensions of the evidence.
- **Constructive United States–Zimbabwe engagement.** Support ZDERA modernization that preserves compensation and property rights while adding constitutional, beneficial-ownership, human-security, strategic-mineral, market-access, value-addition, and community-benefit benchmarks.

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SELECTED AUTHORITIES

1. Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026, Act No. 6 of 2026.
2. Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, section 328; Veritas, Constitution Watch 8/2026.
3. Human Rights Watch, “Zimbabwe Constitution Amended to Extend President’s Term,” July 8, 2026.
4. Associated Press, “Zimbabwe Says 15 of Its Citizens Killed After Fraudulent Recruitment into Russia-Ukraine War,” March 25, 2026.
5. Office of Senator John Fetterman, “Fetterman, Grassley, Klobuchar Lead Bipartisan Call for Return of Kidnapped Ukrainian Children Prior to Any Final Peace Agreement,” May 22, 2025.
6. U.S. Helsinki Commission, “Commissioners”; Office of Senator Fetterman, “About John.”
7. OCCRP, “Belarusian Elites’ Golden Deal With Zimbabwe”; Associated Press, report on Lukashenko Zimbabwe visit and Belarus’s stated support for Russia.
8. U.S. Geological Survey, Zimbabwe—Minerals Information.
9. Reuters, “Zimbabwe Adds Freight Rail Option to Lithium Export Gateway,” July 21, 2026.
10. ZDERA of 2001, as amended in 2018; Congress.gov, H.R. 5300, section 303 and legislative status.

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OUR POLICY OUTLOOK

International Policy Group regards constitutional government and economic development as mutually reinforcing. Accountable institutions protect political and property rights, while competitive markets and private enterprise convert stability into broad prosperity. Responsible stewardship of natural resources enables African states to turn national assets into enduring public value.

IPG's outlook is informed in part by Kenya's experience under President Mwai Kibaki. Macroeconomic discipline, strategic public investment and renewed domestic enterprise helped restore growth and strengthen national development. That experience demonstrates how capable public institutions and a competitive private sector can operate together as foundations of African prosperity.

STRENGTHENING UNITED STATES–AFRICA RELATIONS

International Policy Group believes that relations between the United States and Africa remain substantially underdeveloped relative to the democratic, economic and strategic interests shared by both regions. United States engagement has often been episodic and crisis-driven, leaving substantial room for stronger commercial cooperation, institutional partnership and sustained development engagement.

IPG advances a more durable relationship built on shared values, strategic understanding and practical cooperation. Such a relationship will help African countries diversify their international partnerships, strengthen their institutions and develop productive capacity. It will also give American institutions and businesses credible African partners while expanding transparent alternatives to opaque or politically conditioned arrangements.

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WHY ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe's trajectory brings constitutional sovereignty and strategic-resource governance into the same urgent field. It provides an early warning for Africa: constitutional manipulation, institutional capture and opaque foreign control of strategic resources can converge to erode national sovereignty and establish a regional precedent. IPG's engagement reflects a Pan-African responsibility to safeguard constitutional sovereignty and African control of strategic assets, with Zimbabwean agency at its centre.

Through the **Zimbabwe Constitutional Governance, Institutional Continuity and Democratic Resilience Initiative** (the "Initiative"), IPG consults Zimbabwean constitutional, institutional, civic, professional and community stakeholders while independently developing responsible engagement with the United States government, democracy-support institutions and private sector. The Initiative supports peaceful constitutional participation and advances a constitutional, productive and sovereign Zimbabwe in which political and property rights are secure, domestic enterprise flourishes, and strategic mineral wealth produces domestic value, skilled employment, public revenue and community benefit.

Present conditions subject political rights, contracts, licences and economic opportunity to patronage and executive discretion. They weaken Zimbabwean enterprise, reduce the national return from strategic resources and narrow the country's choice of responsible partners. Constructive United States engagement supports diversification through transparent capital, advanced technology and wider markets.

Zimbabwean stakeholders contribute information, institutional perspectives and nonbinding recommendations. IPG independently evaluates their contributions, establishes the Initiative's policy direction and work plan, and retains sole authority over its United States engagement, including direction and supervision of its United States representative.

UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT

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Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo
Secretary and Chief Executive
International Policy Group
Date: July 29, 2026

Urgent Briefing Request — Zimbabwe Constitutional Rupture and Critical-Mineral Sovereignty

From <garcia@internationalpolicygroup.com>
To <Brandon_Gindt@cruz.senate.gov>
Cc <Arden_Hooper@cruz.senate.gov>, <Daniel_Crumpler@cruz.senate.gov>
Date 2026-07-31 13:32

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Brandon,

I am writing on behalf of International Policy Group, a Nairobi-based public-policy and governance advisory firm, to request an urgent briefing with you and the appropriate members of Senator Cruz's foreign-policy and Africa staff concerning Zimbabwe's constitutional trajectory, critical-mineral sovereignty, and the implications of expanding Chinese, Belarusian and Russian influence.

Activists opposing Constitution Amendment No. 3 called for nationwide demonstrations on July 31. The muted visible response occurred amid arrests and prosecutions of amendment opponents, official warnings, reported threats against political figures, and substantial security deployments that appear to have created a chilling effect on civic participation.

Zimbabwe therefore presents a concrete test of whether the United States can align its democratic values with its strategic interests in the conduct of foreign policy. The attached memorandum explains why that test is especially consequential in a critical-minerals jurisdiction increasingly shaped by Chinese commercial dominance, Belarus-linked political networks, and Russian security influence.

It addresses China's dominance of the lithium sector, Belarus-linked political-commercial networks, the fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabwean citizens into Russia's war against Ukraine, and the need to modernize rather than simply repeal the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act.

International Policy Group proposes:

a Senate resolution affirming Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development;
Africa Subcommittee oversight and an interagency review; and
Senate principles for a modern successor to ZDERA that preserves United States leverage while establishing a lawful pathway for responsible American commercial participation.

Given Senator Cruz's leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, we respectfully request an opportunity to brief you and the relevant staff and to discuss immediate congressional oversight and policy options.

Attached are the memorandum prepared for Senator Cruz and an institutional profile of International Policy Group.

Regards,

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Attachments:

Memorandum — *Zimbabwe's Constitutional Rupture, Critical-Mineral Sovereignty, and U.S. Strategic Competition*
International Policy Group — Institutional Profile

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Brandon Gindt, National Security Advisor
CC:	Arden Hooper, Legislative Aide; Daniel Crumpler, Director of Scheduling
OFFICE:	Office of U.S. Senator Ted Cruz
FROM:	Garcia Mavinga Sozinho – International Policy Group
DATE:	July 31, 2026
RE:	Zimbabwe's Constitutional Rupture, Critical-Mineral Sovereignty, and U.S. Strategic Competition

FARA DISCLOSURE
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THE ASK International Policy Group respectfully requests an urgent briefing with Brandon Gindt and the appropriate members of Senator Cruz's foreign-policy and Africa staff concerning Zimbabwe's constitutional trajectory, critical-mineral sovereignty, and the implications of expanding Belarusian and Chinese influence.

We propose: (1) a Senate resolution affirming Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development; **(2)** Africa Subcommittee oversight and interagency review; and **(3)** Senate principles for a modern replacement to ZDERA that preserves United States leverage while opening a lawful pathway for responsible American commercial participation.

WHY ZIMBABWE MATTERS TO AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY

Zimbabwe was the world's third-ranked platinum producer in 2024, fourth-ranked in both lithium—excluding the United States—and palladium, and sixth-ranked in chromium. Mining and quarrying contributed approximately 15.4 percent of gross domestic product. In 2025, Zimbabwe exported approximately 1.13 million metric tons of lithium-bearing spodumene concentrate to China—about 15 percent of China's lithium-concentrate imports—while Chinese firms dominated the sector after approximately $2 billion in investment since 2021. [1][2]

The strategic question is whether China will consolidate another important African mineral jurisdiction while American firms face substantial barriers created by opaque licensing, politically connected ownership, uncertain contract enforcement, and concentrated offtake. Chairman Cruz has stated that United States policy in Africa must counter China's malign activity and that critical-mineral partnerships can bring greater prosperity to Africans while strengthening America's strategic position. [3] Zimbabwe is a concrete test case.

IPG's proposed American alternative would combine transparent licensing and beneficial ownership, responsible sourcing and traceability, diversified offtake, domestic processing, enforceable anti-corruption safeguards, community benefit, and commercially stable institutions.

CONSTITUTIONAL CAPTURE IS A MARKET-ACCESS PROBLEM

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On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026. It abolishes direct presidential elections; extends presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years; and applies those extensions to current officeholders through 2030.

It adds ten Senate seats filled by presidential appointment; transfers the voters' roll to the Registrar-General; creates a new delimitation commission; and alters judicial-appointment and constitutional-oversight arrangements under the voter-approved 2013 Constitution. [4][5] Section 328(7) bars tenure extensions from benefiting incumbent officeholders, while section 328(9) requires a national referendum to amend section 328 itself. [6]

Amendment No. 3 nevertheless applies the extensions to current officeholders "notwithstanding section 328(7)," and no referendum was held. A pre-enactment challenge was dismissed on procedural grounds, and the constitutional merits have not been finally adjudicated. The resulting legitimacy dispute is immediate and unresolved. [4][5][6]

For American firms and Zimbabwean citizens, constitutional capture is also a market-access and economic-opportunity problem. Kleptocratic state actors that evade constitutional restraints and align with similarly opaque foreign regimes can allocate contracts, licenses, ownership and strategic assets through patronage rather than fair competition—placing rules-bound U.S. firms at a structural disadvantage and denying Zimbabweans a fair share in their own economy. [7]

ZIMBABWE'S RUSSIA–BELARUS WAR-ECONOMY ALIGNMENT

The Mnangagwa government has deepened Zimbabwe's alignment with Russia and Belarus through a Belarus-linked political-commercial network spanning gold mining, agricultural mechanization, equipment procurement, and diplomatic representation. Investigations have documented a network tied to senior state relationships and sustained through offshore structures that obscure beneficial ownership, placing Belarusian state-adjacent interests inside Zimbabwe's strategic-resource governance. [7]

On March 25, 2026, Zimbabwe's government acknowledged 81 known cases: 15 citizens had been killed after fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war against Ukraine, and diplomatic efforts were underway to repatriate 66 survivors. Victims were reportedly lured by false civilian-employment offers, deprived of travel documents, and coerced into combat. Given the clandestine recruitment methods, the absence of comprehensive public accounting, and the opacity of a captured state apparatus, IPG assesses that the reported figure likely understates the true scale of the recruitment network. [8]

Zimbabwe is part of a wider African recruitment pattern. Reporting from Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, and other states indicates that civilian-employment or training offers have been used to move African citizens into Russian military service; Ukrainian authorities have estimated that more than 1,700 Africans from 36 countries are fighting for Russia. The issue therefore warrants treatment as a continent-wide trafficking, illicit-finance, and security network supporting Russia's war effort. [8]

This extends the alignment from the exploitation of Zimbabwe's natural resources and public procurement systems to the exploitation of vulnerable citizens, consigning Zimbabwean lives to the Kremlin's war machine, eroding national sovereignty, and advancing Russian aggression in direct conflict with U.S. national-security interests.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE MOMENT

ZDERA links stronger U.S.–Zimbabwe trade and investment ties to progress on governance, credible elections, economic reform, property rights, and recovery of stolen assets. Repeal would remove the principal statutory framework connecting political reform to constructive economic reengagement. H.R. 5300 remains at the introduced stage after the House Foreign Affairs Committee ordered it reported, as amended, by a 27–24 vote. In the introduced text currently published by Congress.gov, section 303 would repeal ZDERA and substitute a narrower compensation-related condition on U.S. support for new or expanded IMF or World Bank funding for Zimbabwe. [9][10]

Farmer compensation and property rights are legitimate obligations, but they cannot prevent Chinese mineral consolidation, expose illicit ownership, discipline politically connected procurement, or secure meaningful access for United States firms. A compensation-only replacement could normalize Zimbabwe's economy without changing who controls its strategic assets.

Zimbabwe policy cannot be reduced to compensation while Chinese firms dominate lithium, Belarus-linked networks remain embedded in its political economy, and Zimbabwean citizens are exploited by recruitment into Russia's war. [7][8][10]

RECOMMENDED SENATE ACTION

- **Senate resolution on constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development.** Affirm the Zimbabwean people's right to choose their leadership; defend the 2013 constitutional settlement and referendum safeguards; protect journalists, lawyers, students, veterans, civic leaders, and other peaceful participants in constitutional debate; and affirm the right of Zimbabweans to receive the full national benefit of mineral development through public revenue, domestic value addition, employment, and community benefit.
- **Africa Subcommittee oversight and interagency review.** Request briefings from the Departments of State, Treasury, Commerce, and Justice and relevant development-finance, law-enforcement, and national-security agencies concerning Chinese mineral concentration, Belarus-linked procurement and beneficial ownership, continent-wide fraudulent recruitment networks supporting Russia's war, illicit finance, sanctions evasion, victim protection, and barriers to responsible American participation.
- **Modernize rather than simply repeal ZDERA.** Establish Senate principles preserving compensation and property rights while adding constitutional, anti-corruption, beneficial-ownership, strategic-mineral, market-access and community-benefit benchmarks, together with positive pathways toward lawful investment, debt resolution, and economic recovery.

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SELECTED AUTHORITIES

1. U.S. Geological Survey, Zimbabwe—Minerals Information.
2. Reuters, "Zimbabwe Adds Freight Rail Option to Lithium Export Gateway," July 21, 2026.
3. Office of Senator Ted Cruz, "Sen. Cruz, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, Meets with African Ambassadors," February 20, 2025.
4. Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026, Act No. 6 of 2026.
5. Human Rights Watch, "Zimbabwe Constitution Amended to Extend President's Term," July 8, 2026.
6. Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, section 328; Veritas, Constitution Watch 8/2026.
7. OCCRP, "Belarusian Elites' Golden Deal With Zimbabwe"; Associated Press, report on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's visit to Zimbabwe.
8. Associated Press, report on fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabwean citizens into Russia's war against Ukraine, March 25, 2026; Reuters, "More Than 1,700 Africans Fighting for Russia, Ukraine Says," February 25, 2026; Reuters, "African Nations Tiptoe Around Recruitment of Citizens by Russian Networks," March 15, 2026.
9. Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001; Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act of 2018.
10. Congress.gov, H.R. 5300, introduced text, section 303, and legislative status.

FARA DISCLOSURE
Garcia Mavinga Sozinho is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of International Policy Group. This material is distributed by Garcia Mavinga Sozinho on behalf of International Policy Group. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE AND UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

WHO WE ARE

International Policy Group is a Kenyan public benefit organization and public-policy institution working across governance, peacebuilding and strategic advisory., peacebuilding and strategic advisory. It develops Africa-focused initiatives that strengthen public institutions, support responsible economic development and build international partnerships. IPG is governed under its constitution by a Kenyan board and led by Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo, Secretary and Chief Executive.

OUR POLICY OUTLOOK

International Policy Group regards constitutional government and economic development as mutually reinforcing. Accountable institutions protect political and property rights, while competitive markets and private enterprise convert stability into broad prosperity. Responsible stewardship of natural resources enables African states to turn national assets into enduring public value.

IPG's outlook is informed in part by Kenya's experience under President Mwai Kibaki. Macroeconomic discipline, strategic public investment and renewed domestic enterprise helped restore growth and strengthen national development. That experience demonstrates how capable public institutions and a competitive private sector can operate together as foundations of African prosperity.

STRENGTHENING UNITED STATES–AFRICA RELATIONS

International Policy Group believes that relations between the United States and Africa remain substantially underdeveloped relative to the democratic, economic and strategic interests shared by both regions. United States engagement has often been episodic and crisis-driven, leaving substantial room for stronger commercial cooperation, institutional partnership and sustained development engagement.

IPG advances a more durable relationship built on shared values, strategic understanding and practical cooperation. Such a relationship will help African countries diversify their international partnerships, strengthen their institutions and develop productive capacity. It will also give American institutions and businesses credible African partners while expanding transparent alternatives to opaque or politically conditioned arrangements.

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WHY ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe's trajectory brings constitutional sovereignty and strategic-resource governance into the same urgent field. It provides an early warning for Africa: constitutional manipulation, institutional capture and opaque foreign control of strategic resources can converge to erode national sovereignty and establish a regional precedent. IPG's engagement reflects a Pan-African responsibility to safeguard constitutional sovereignty and African control of strategic assets, with Zimbabwean agency at its centre.

Through the **Zimbabwe Constitutional Governance, Institutional Continuity and Democratic Resilience Initiative** (the "Initiative"), IPG consults Zimbabwean constitutional, institutional, civic, professional and community stakeholders while independently developing responsible engagement with the United States government, democracy-support institutions and private sector. The Initiative supports peaceful constitutional participation and advances a constitutional, productive and sovereign Zimbabwe in which political and property rights are secure, domestic enterprise flourishes, and strategic mineral wealth produces domestic value, skilled employment, public revenue and community benefit.

Present conditions subject political rights, contracts, licences and economic opportunity to patronage and executive discretion. They weaken Zimbabwean enterprise, reduce the national return from strategic resources and narrow the country's choice of responsible partners. Constructive United States engagement supports diversification through transparent capital, advanced technology and wider markets.

Zimbabwean stakeholders contribute information, institutional perspectives and nonbinding recommendations. IPG independently evaluates their contributions, establishes the Initiative's policy direction and work plan, and retains sole authority over its United States engagement, including direction and supervision of its United States representative.

UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT

Garcia Mavinga Sozinho serves on the International Policy Group Advisory Council and, under a separate consulting agreement, as IPG's independent United States policy and government-relations consultant. He is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of International Policy Group, FARA Registration No. 7751. His United States engagement is undertaken on behalf of and under the direction of International Policy Group.

Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo
Secretary and Chief Executive
International Policy Group
Date: July 29, 2026

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/01/2026 4:15:45 AM

Briefing Request — Zimbabwe as a Values-Based U.S.–Africa Critical-Minerals Test Case

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To <samantha_schifrin@booker.senate.gov>
Cc <veronica_duron@booker.senate.gov>, <stefan_suric@booker.senate.gov>
Date 2026-07-31 13:44

2026-07-31_IPG_Zimbabwe-Values-Based-Critical-Minerals_Cory-Booker-SFRC-Africa-Subcommittee_Action-Memorandum.pdf (~170 KB)
2026-07-29_IPG_Institutional-Profile-and-US-Engagement-Statement.pdf (~88 KB)

FARA DISCLOSURE: This material is distributed by Garcia Mavinga Sozinho on behalf of International Policy Group. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

Samantha,

I am writing on behalf of International Policy Group, a Nairobi-based public-policy and governance advisory firm, to request a twenty-minute briefing with you and the appropriate members of Senator Booker's foreign-policy and Africa staff concerning Zimbabwe as a test case for a values-based United States–Africa critical-minerals strategy.

Activists opposing Constitution Amendment No. 3 called for nationwide demonstrations on July 31. The muted visible response occurred amid arrests and prosecutions of amendment opponents, official warnings, reported threats against political figures, and substantial security deployments that appear to have created a chilling effect on civic participation.

Zimbabwe therefore presents a concrete test of whether the United States can align its democratic values with its strategic interests in the conduct of foreign policy. That test is especially consequential in a critical-minerals jurisdiction increasingly shaped by Chinese commercial dominance, Belarus-linked political networks, and Russian security influence.

The attached memorandum builds upon Senator Booker's call for a comprehensive U.S.–Africa critical-minerals strategy that protects American interests, reflects American values, strengthens African partnerships, empowers local economies, and creates durable opportunities for American companies and African partners.

International Policy Group proposes:

a bipartisan Senate resolution affirming Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development;
Africa Subcommittee oversight and an interagency review; and
Senate principles for a modern successor to ZDERA that preserves United States leverage while opening a lawful path to responsible investment and shared prosperity.

Given Senator Booker's leadership as Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, and his prior engagement on Zimbabwe and critical-minerals policy, we respectfully request an opportunity to brief you and the relevant staff and to discuss immediate congressional and policy options.

Attached are the memorandum prepared for Senator Booker and an institutional profile of International Policy Group.

Regards,

Garcia Mavinga Sozinho
Policy and Government-Relations Consultant
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Attachments:

Memorandum — Zimbabwe as a Test Case for a Values-Based U.S.-Africa Critical-Minerals Strategy
International Policy Group — Institutional Profile

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/01/2026 4:15:46 AM

MEMORANDUM

TO: Samantha Schifrin, Defense and Foreign Policy Adviser
CC: Veronica Duron, Chief of Staff; Stefan Suric, Scheduling Director
OFFICE: Office of U.S. Senator Cory A. Booker
FROM: Garcia Mavinga Sozinho — International Policy Group
DATE: July 31, 2026
RE: Zimbabwe as a Test Case for a Values-Based U.S.–Africa Critical-Minerals Strategy

FARA DISCLOSURE
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THE ASK International Policy Group respectfully requests a twenty-minute briefing with **Senator Booker's office and relevant Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff** concerning Zimbabwe as a test case for a U.S.–Africa critical-minerals strategy grounded in constitutional legitimacy, transparent investment, community benefit and durable partnership.

We propose three mutually reinforcing actions: **(1)** a bipartisan Senate resolution on Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development; **(2)** Africa Subcommittee oversight and interagency review; and **(3)** Senate principles for a modern ZDERA successor that preserves U.S. leverage while opening a lawful path to responsible investment and shared prosperity.

ZIMBABWE IS THE VALUES-BASED TEST CASE

Zimbabwe was the world's third-ranked platinum producer in 2024, fourth-ranked in lithium—excluding the United States—and palladium, and sixth-ranked in chromium. Mining and quarrying contributed approximately 15.4 percent of gross domestic product. In 2025, Zimbabwe exported approximately 1.13 million metric tons of lithium-bearing spodumene concentrate to China—about 15 percent of China's lithium-concentrate imports—while Chinese firms dominated the sector after approximately $2 billion in investment since 2021. [1][2]

At the July 30, 2025 Africa Subcommittee hearing on critical minerals, Ranking Member Booker framed the competition as a crisis of both capacity and credibility: the United States requires a comprehensive strategy that reflects American values, protects U.S. interests, strengthens African partnerships, empowers local economies, and creates durable opportunities for American companies and African partners. Zimbabwe is where those propositions meet. [3][4]

CONSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY AND PARTNERSHIP CREDIBILITY

On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026. It abolishes direct presidential elections; extends presidential, parliamentary, and local-authority terms from five to seven years; applies those extensions to current officeholders through 2030; adds ten Senate seats filled by presidential appointment; transfers the voters' roll to the Registrar-General; and alters delimitation, judicial-appointment, and constitutional-oversight arrangements. [5][6]

Section 328(7) bars tenure extensions from benefiting incumbent officeholders, while section 328(9) requires a national referendum to amend section 328 itself. Amendment No. 3 nevertheless applies the extensions to current officeholders "notwithstanding section 328(7)," and no referendum was held. A pre-enactment challenge was dismissed on procedural grounds, and the constitutional merits remain unresolved. [5][6]

A minerals partnership rests on institutions capable of honoring licenses, contracts, environmental obligations, labor protections, community agreements, and public-revenue commitments. When incumbent authority can rewrite constitutional restraints, politically connected actors can also allocate strategic assets through patronage, obscure beneficial ownership, and place rules-bound American firms at a structural disadvantage. [6][7]

FROM EXTRACTION TO SHARED PROSPERITY

Ranking Member Booker has emphasized that Africa must be treated as a rising economic force and long-term partner. Applied to Zimbabwe, that principle means mineral development that produces transparent public revenue, domestic value addition, skilled employment, community benefit, responsible labor and environmental practice, and genuine African participation in ownership and decision-making. [3][4]

IPG's proposed American alternative would combine transparent licensing and beneficial ownership, responsible sourcing and traceability, diversified offtake, commercially stable institutions, and development-finance tools that crowd in responsible private capital. This framework would strengthen U.S. supply-chain resilience while enabling Zimbabweans to retain a fairer share of the value created by their national resources. [3][4]

AUTHORITARIAN ECONOMICS AND HUMAN EXPLOITATION

The Mnangagwa government has deepened alignment with Russia and Belarus through a Belarus-linked political-commercial network spanning gold mining, agricultural mechanization, equipment procurement, and diplomatic representation. Investigations have documented senior-state relationships and offshore structures that obscure beneficial ownership and place Belarusian state-adjacent interests inside Zimbabwe's strategic-resource governance. [7]

On March 25, 2026, Zimbabwe's government acknowledged 81 known cases of fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war against Ukraine: 15 citizens had been killed, and diplomatic efforts were underway to repatriate 66 survivors. Victims were reportedly lured by false civilian-employment offers, deprived of travel documents, and coerced into combat. The clandestine methods and absence of comprehensive public accounting make the reported figure a confirmed minimum and place the issue within a wider African trafficking, illicit-finance, and security pattern supporting Russia's war effort. [8]

THE SENATE LEGISLATIVE MOMENT: MODERNIZE ZDERA

ZDERA links stronger U.S.–Zimbabwe trade and investment ties to governance, credible elections, economic reform, property rights, and recovery of stolen assets. H.R. 5300 has been ordered reported, as amended, by a 27–24 vote of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, while Congress.gov and GovInfo continue to publish only the introduced text. Section 303 of that published text would repeal ZDERA and replace it with a compensation-related condition on U.S. support for new or expanded IMF or World Bank funding for Zimbabwe. [10][11]

Farmer compensation and property rights remain legitimate obligations. A compensation-only replacement would leave constitutional capture, opaque ownership, Chinese mineral concentration, labor and environmental risk, politically connected procurement, and unequal community benefit outside the central statutory framework for U.S. reengagement. [11]

Ranking Member Booker provides direct institutional continuity on Zimbabwe. As ranking member of the Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee, he participated in its 2017 hearing, *The Future of Zimbabwe*, and its 2018 hearing, *Zimbabwe After the Elections*. Those proceedings centered constitutional democracy, credible elections, the rule of law, economic recovery and conditions for renewed U.S. engagement. The 2026 rupture reactivates that established oversight framework while bringing strategic-mineral competition more directly into the policy equation. [9]

IPG recommends a modern successor framework that preserves compensation and property-rights objectives while adding constitutional, anti-corruption, beneficial-ownership, responsible-sourcing, strategic-mineral, market-access, labor, environmental, and community-benefit benchmarks.

RECOMMENDED SENATE ACTION

- **A bipartisan resolution on constitutional sovereignty and responsible mineral development** — affirming the Zimbabwean people's right to choose their leadership; defending the 2013 constitutional settlement, referendum safeguards, and peaceful civic participation; and recognizing Zimbabweans' right to receive the full national benefit of mineral development through public revenue, domestic value addition, employment, and community benefit.
- **Africa Subcommittee oversight and interagency review** — requesting briefings from State, Treasury, Commerce, Justice, DFC, EXIM, and relevant law-enforcement and national-security agencies on Chinese mineral concentration, Belarus-linked procurement and beneficial ownership, fraudulent wartime recruitment networks, illicit finance, diplomatic capacity, and barriers to responsible American participation.
- **Modernization of ZDERA** — establishing Senate principles that preserve compensation and property rights while integrating constitutional legitimacy, anti-corruption, responsible sourcing, labor and environmental safeguards, strategic-mineral transparency, competitive market access, and positive pathways toward investment, debt resolution, and economic recovery.

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SELECTED AUTHORITIES

1. U.S. Geological Survey, "Zimbabwe—Minerals Information" (2024 production and GDP data).
2. Reuters, "Zimbabwe Adds Freight Rail Option to Lithium Export Gateway", July 21, 2026.
3. SFRC, "Critical Minerals: Finding Opportunities for U.S.–Africa Partnerships", July 30, 2025.
4. Office of Senator Cory Booker, critical-minerals hearing video.
5. Veritas Zimbabwe, "Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act No. 6 of 2026" (Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026).
6. Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, § 328; Constitution Watch 8/2026; Human Rights Watch, July 8, 2026.
7. OCCRP, "Belarusian Elites' Golden Deal With Zimbabwe"; Associated Press.
8. Associated Press, report on fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabweans into Russia's war, March 25, 2026; Reuters, African recruitment-network reporting, February–March 2026.
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10. Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, as amended by the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act of 2018.
11. Congress.gov, H.R. 5300—Department of State Policy Provisions Act (§§ 303–304, 314; ordered reported 27–24, Sept. 18, 2025).

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INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE AND UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

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OUR POLICY OUTLOOK

International Policy Group regards constitutional government and economic development as mutually reinforcing. Accountable institutions protect political and property rights, while competitive markets and private enterprise convert stability into broad prosperity. Responsible stewardship of natural resources enables African states to turn national assets into enduring public value.

IPG's outlook is informed in part by Kenya's experience under President Mwai Kibaki. Macroeconomic discipline, strategic public investment and renewed domestic enterprise helped restore growth and strengthen national development. That experience demonstrates how capable public institutions and a competitive private sector can operate together as foundations of African prosperity.

STRENGTHENING UNITED STATES–AFRICA RELATIONS

International Policy Group believes that relations between the United States and Africa remain substantially underdeveloped relative to the democratic, economic and strategic interests shared by both regions. United States engagement has often been episodic and crisis-driven, leaving substantial room for stronger commercial cooperation, institutional partnership and sustained development engagement.

IPG advances a more durable relationship built on shared values, strategic understanding and practical cooperation. Such a relationship will help African countries diversify their international partnerships, strengthen their institutions and develop productive capacity. It will also give American institutions and businesses credible African partners while expanding transparent alternatives to opaque or politically conditioned arrangements.

WHY ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe's trajectory brings constitutional sovereignty and strategic-resource governance into the same urgent field. It provides an early warning for Africa: constitutional manipulation, institutional capture and opaque foreign control of strategic resources can converge to erode national sovereignty and establish a regional precedent. IPG's engagement reflects a Pan-African responsibility to safeguard constitutional sovereignty and African control of strategic assets, with Zimbabwean agency at its centre.

Through the **Zimbabwe Constitutional Governance, Institutional Continuity and Democratic Resilience Initiative** (the "Initiative"), IPG consults Zimbabwean constitutional, institutional, civic, professional and community stakeholders while independently developing responsible engagement with the United States government, democracy-support institutions and private sector. The Initiative supports peaceful constitutional participation and advances a constitutional, productive and sovereign Zimbabwe in which political and property rights are secure, domestic enterprise flourishes, and strategic mineral wealth produces domestic value, skilled employment, public revenue and community benefit.

Present conditions subject political rights, contracts, licences and economic opportunity to patronage and executive discretion. They weaken Zimbabwean enterprise, reduce the national return from strategic resources and narrow the country's choice of responsible partners. Constructive United States engagement supports diversification through transparent capital, advanced technology and wider markets.

Zimbabwean stakeholders contribute information, institutional perspectives and nonbinding recommendations. IPG independently evaluates their contributions, establishes the Initiative's policy direction and work plan, and retains sole authority over its United States engagement, including direction and supervision of its United States representative.

UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT

Garcia Mavinga Sozinho serves on the International Policy Group Advisory Council and, under a separate consulting agreement, as IPG's independent United States policy and government-relations consultant. He is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of International Policy Group, FARA Registration No. 7751. His United States engagement is undertaken on behalf of and under the direction of International Policy Group.

Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo
Secretary and Chief Executive
International Policy Group
Date: July 29, 2026

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/01/2026 4:15:46 AM

Constituent Briefing Request — Zimbabwe, Russia–Belarus Influence and ZDERA Modernization

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Date 2026-07-31 13:53

2026-07-31_IPG_Zimbabwe-Russia-Belarus-and-ZDERA-Modernization_Brendan-F-Boyle_Action-Memorandum.pdf (~138 KB)
2026-07-29_IPG_Institutional-Profile-and-US-Engagement-Statement.pdf (~88 KB)

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Gianluca,

I am writing on behalf of International Policy Group, a Nairobi-based public-policy and governance advisory firm, to request a twenty-minute meeting and policy briefing with Congressman Brendan F. Boyle and relevant members of his staff concerning Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture, the African reach of Russia's war economy and Belarus-linked influence, critical-mineral governance, trade, and multilateral finance.

Activists opposing Constitution Amendment No. 3 called for nationwide demonstrations on July 31. The muted visible response occurred amid arrests and prosecutions of amendment opponents, official warnings, reported threats against political figures, and substantial security deployments that appear to have created a chilling effect on civic participation.

Zimbabwe presents a concrete test of whether the United States and its transatlantic partners can defend constitutional sovereignty while countering the extension of Russia's war economy and Belarusian state-commercial influence into African political economies and strategic-resource systems.

The attached memorandum explains how Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture intersects with fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war against Ukraine, Belarus-linked procurement and beneficial-ownership networks, Chinese mineral concentration, multilateral finance, and the future of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act.

International Policy Group proposes:

congressional affirmation of Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and popular consent;
modernization—not simple repeal—of ZDERA; and
coordinated democracy-support, multilateral-finance, trade, and transatlantic engagement addressing the African reach of Russia's war economy and Belarus-linked influence.

As a constituent residing in Pennsylvania's Second Congressional District who has known Brendan since earlier in his political career, I would welcome the opportunity to reconnect with him through this substantive engagement.

Given Congressman Boyle's leadership in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the House Budget Committee, the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee, and the Congressional World Bank Caucus, we respectfully request an opportunity to brief him and the relevant policy staff and to discuss practical congressional options.

Attached are the memorandum prepared for Congressman Boyle and an institutional profile of International Policy Group.

Regards,

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Attachments:

Memorandum — Zimbabwe's Constitutional Rupture, Russia-Belarus Alignment, and ZDERA Modernization
International Policy Group — Institutional Profile

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gianluca Nigro, Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative Director
CC: Scott Heppard, Chief of Staff
OFFICE: Office of Congressman Brendan F. Boyle
FROM: Garcia Mavinga Sozinho – International Policy Group
DATE: July 31, 2026
RE: Zimbabwe's Constitutional Rupture, Russia–Belarus Alignment, and ZDERA Modernization

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Garcia Mavinga Sozinho is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of International Policy Group. This material is distributed by Garcia Mavinga Sozinho on behalf of International Policy Group. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

THE ASK International Policy Group (IPG) respectfully requests a twenty-minute briefing with Congressman Boyle and relevant policy staff concerning Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture, the African reach of Russia's war economy and Belarus-linked influence, critical-mineral governance, trade, and multilateral finance.

IPG proposes: (1) congressional affirmation of Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and popular consent; (2) modernization—not simple repeal—of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act; and (3) coordinated democracy-support, multilateral-finance, and transatlantic engagement addressing the African reach of Russia's war economy and Belarus-linked influence.

WHY ZIMBABWE MATTERS TO CONGRESSMAN BOYLE

Congressman Boyle's responsibilities place him at the intersection of the principal issues presented by Zimbabwe. He serves as Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee, as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and its Trade Subcommittee, as co-chair of the Congressional World Bank Caucus, and as Lead Democrat for the U.S. delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. [1]

Zimbabwe is an African test of whether constitutional capture will permit authoritarian state-linked networks to control strategic resources, public procurement, multilateral reengagement, and market access while drawing vulnerable citizens into Russia's war against Ukraine. The constituencies defending Zimbabwe's voter-approved 2013 settlement are asserting popular sovereignty, lawful succession, accountable institutions, civic dignity, and open economic partnership—aspirations closer to the United States and its democratic allies than to the authoritarian model represented by Russia and Belarus.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL RUPTURE

On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed Constitution Amendment No. 3, abolishing direct presidential elections, extending presidential, parliamentary, and local-authority terms from five to seven years, and applying those extensions to current officeholders through 2030. The measure also expands presidential appointment authority and restructures electoral, judicial, and constitutional-oversight institutions established under Zimbabwe's voter-approved 2013 Constitution. [2][4]

Section 328(7) bars an amendment extending tenure from benefiting incumbent officeholders, while section 328(9) requires a national referendum to amend section 328 itself. Amendment No. 3 nevertheless applies the extensions to current officeholders "notwithstanding section 328(7)," and no referendum was held. A pre-enactment challenge was dismissed on procedural grounds; the constitutional merits have not been finally adjudicated. [2][3][4]

For Congressman Boyle, the relevant question is whether Amendment No. 3 weakens electoral choice and institutional oversight in ways that give Belarusian and Russian-aligned actors greater access to Zimbabwe's mining, procurement, transport, agriculture, and trade sectors—and greater influence across Southern Africa. [5]

STRATEGIC MINERALS, TRADE, AND MULTILATERAL FINANCE

Zimbabwe ranked third globally in platinum production in 2024, fourth in lithium production excluding the United States, fourth in palladium, and sixth in chromium. Mining and quarrying contributed approximately 15.4 percent of gross domestic product. [5]

In 2025, Zimbabwe exported approximately 1.13 million metric tons of lithium-bearing spodumene concentrate to China—about 15 percent of China's lithium-concentrate imports—while Chinese firms dominated the sector after approximately $2 billion in investment since 2021. [6]

This concentration raises urgent questions of transparent licensing, beneficial ownership, domestic value addition, employment, community benefit, diversified offtake, and meaningful access for U.S. firms. The terms of any future U.S.-supported economic reengagement will determine whether new capital broadens opportunity or reinforces existing control over Zimbabwe's strategic assets.

RUSSIA–BELARUS WAR-ECONOMY ALIGNMENT

The Mnangagwa government has deepened Zimbabwe's alignment with Russia and Belarus through a Belarus-linked political-commercial network spanning gold mining, agricultural mechanization, equipment procurement, and diplomatic representation. Investigations have documented a network operating through senior state relationships and offshore structures that obscure beneficial ownership, placing Belarusian state-adjacent interests inside public procurement and strategic-resource governance. [7]

On March 25, 2026, Zimbabwe's government reported that 15 citizens had been killed after fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war against Ukraine and that, at that time, 66 surviving citizens remained in the conflict zone. Victims were reportedly lured by false civilian-employment offers, deprived of travel documents, and coerced into combat. [8]

This extends the pattern from the exploitation of Zimbabwe's natural resources and public procurement systems to the exploitation of vulnerable citizens, consigning Zimbabwean lives to the Kremlin's war machine, eroding national sovereignty, and advancing Russian aggression in direct conflict with U.S. national-security interests.

For Congressman Boyle, this is a direct extension of the Ukraine and democratic-resilience portfolio: Russia's war effort and Belarusian state-commercial influence now reach into African political economies, strategic-resource systems, and vulnerable populations.

THE HOUSE LEGISLATIVE MOMENT

ZDERA links stronger U.S.–Zimbabwe trade and investment ties to progress on governance, credible elections, economic reform, property rights, and recovery of stolen assets; repeal would remove the principal statutory framework connecting political reform to constructive economic reengagement. [9]

H.R. 5300 remains at the introduced stage after the House Foreign Affairs Committee ordered it reported, as amended, by a 27–24 vote. In the introduced text currently published by Congress.gov, section 303 would repeal ZDERA and substitute a narrower compensation-related condition on U.S. support for new or expanded IMF or World Bank funding for Zimbabwe. [10]

Farmer compensation and property rights are legitimate obligations, but a compensation-only replacement cannot prevent Chinese mineral consolidation, expose opaque ownership, discipline politically connected procurement, or secure meaningful access for American firms. The resulting path toward multilateral reengagement could confer international legitimacy and fresh capital on a captured authoritarian political economy without changing who controls Zimbabwe's strategic assets, unless a successor framework also addresses constitutional legitimacy, ownership transparency, and competitive market access. [10]

RECOMMENDED CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

- **Congressional resolution on Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty.** Affirm popular sovereignty and the voter-approved 2013 constitutional settlement; defend referendum safeguards, civic freedoms, and peaceful constitutional activity; and recognize the right of Zimbabweans to receive the full national benefit of mineral development.
- **Modernization rather than simple repeal of ZDERA.** Work with House Foreign Affairs Committee colleagues on amendment or successor language connecting compensation and economic reengagement to constitutional legitimacy, anti-corruption safeguards, beneficial-ownership transparency, strategic-mineral diversification, competitive market access, and protection against exploitation connected to Russia's war.
- **Multilateral-finance and trade review.** Through the World Bank Caucus, Budget Committee, and Trade Subcommittee, examine whether proposed IMF or World Bank engagement would support transparent reform and broad-based recovery or consolidate opaque political-commercial control over Zimbabwe's strategic assets.
- **Democracy-support and transatlantic engagement.** Consult the National Endowment for Democracy, National Democratic Institute, and International Republican Institute concerning Zimbabwean-led constitutional and civic-resilience initiatives; and raise the African reach of Russian recruitment and Belarusian state-commercial influence through the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's work on democratic resilience, supply-chain security, and support for partners facing Russian aggression.

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SELECTED AUTHORITIES

1. Office of Congressman Brendan F. Boyle, "Committees and Caucuses"; "Boyle Introduces Bipartisan Legislation Prohibiting a U.S. Invasion of a NATO State", Jan. 13, 2026.
2. Veritas Zimbabwe, "Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act No. 6 of 2026" (Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026).
3. Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, § 328; Veritas Zimbabwe, Constitution Watch 8/2026.
4. Human Rights Watch, "Zimbabwe Constitution Amended to Extend President's Term", July 8, 2026.
5. U.S. Geological Survey, "Zimbabwe—Minerals Information" (2024 production and GDP data).
6. Reuters, "Zimbabwe Adds Freight Rail Option to Lithium Export Gateway", July 21, 2026.
7. OCCRP, "Belarusian Elites' Golden Deal With Zimbabwe"; Associated Press, "Belarus' Lukashenko Visits Fellow Russia Ally Zimbabwe".
8. Associated Press, "Zimbabwe Says 15 of Its Citizens Killed After Fraudulent Recruitment into Russia-Ukraine War", Mar. 25, 2026.
9. Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, as amended by the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act of 2018.
10. Congress.gov, H.R. 5300, section 303 and legislative status.

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INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE AND UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

WHO WE ARE

International Policy Group is a Kenyan public benefit organization and public-policy institution working across governance, peacebuilding and strategic advisory., peacebuilding and strategic advisory. It develops Africa-focused initiatives that strengthen public institutions, support responsible economic development and build international partnerships. IPG is governed under its constitution by a Kenyan board and led by Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo, Secretary and Chief Executive.

OUR POLICY OUTLOOK

International Policy Group regards constitutional government and economic development as mutually reinforcing. Accountable institutions protect political and property rights, while competitive markets and private enterprise convert stability into broad prosperity. Responsible stewardship of natural resources enables African states to turn national assets into enduring public value.

IPG's outlook is informed in part by Kenya's experience under President Mwai Kibaki. Macroeconomic discipline, strategic public investment and renewed domestic enterprise helped restore growth and strengthen national development. That experience demonstrates how capable public institutions and a competitive private sector can operate together as foundations of African prosperity.

STRENGTHENING UNITED STATES–AFRICA RELATIONS

International Policy Group believes that relations between the United States and Africa remain substantially underdeveloped relative to the democratic, economic and strategic interests shared by both regions. United States engagement has often been episodic and crisis-driven, leaving substantial room for stronger commercial cooperation, institutional partnership and sustained development engagement.

IPG advances a more durable relationship built on shared values, strategic understanding and practical cooperation. Such a relationship will help African countries diversify their international partnerships, strengthen their institutions and develop productive capacity. It will also give American institutions and businesses credible African partners while expanding transparent alternatives to opaque or politically conditioned arrangements.

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WHY ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe's trajectory brings constitutional sovereignty and strategic-resource governance into the same urgent field. It provides an early warning for Africa: constitutional manipulation, institutional capture and opaque foreign control of strategic resources can converge to erode national sovereignty and establish a regional precedent. IPG's engagement reflects a Pan-African responsibility to safeguard constitutional sovereignty and African control of strategic assets, with Zimbabwean agency at its centre.

Through the **Zimbabwe Constitutional Governance, Institutional Continuity and Democratic Resilience Initiative** (the "Initiative"), IPG consults Zimbabwean constitutional, institutional, civic, professional and community stakeholders while independently developing responsible engagement with the United States government, democracy-support institutions and private sector. The Initiative supports peaceful constitutional participation and advances a constitutional, productive and sovereign Zimbabwe in which political and property rights are secure, domestic enterprise flourishes, and strategic mineral wealth produces domestic value, skilled employment, public revenue and community benefit.

Present conditions subject political rights, contracts, licences and economic opportunity to patronage and executive discretion. They weaken Zimbabwean enterprise, reduce the national return from strategic resources and narrow the country's choice of responsible partners. Constructive United States engagement supports diversification through transparent capital, advanced technology and wider markets.

Zimbabwean stakeholders contribute information, institutional perspectives and nonbinding recommendations. IPG independently evaluates their contributions, establishes the Initiative's policy direction and work plan, and retains sole authority over its United States engagement, including direction and supervision of its United States representative.

UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT

Garcia Mavinga Sozinho serves on the International Policy Group Advisory Council and, under a separate consulting agreement, as IPG's independent United States policy and government-relations consultant. He is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of International Policy Group, FARA Registration No. 7751. His United States engagement is undertaken on behalf of and under the direction of International Policy Group.

Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo
Secretary and Chief Executive
International Policy Group
Date: July 29, 2026

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Briefing Request — Zimbabwe Constitutional Rupture, Human Trafficking and ZDERA Modernization

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Date 2026-07-31 14:01

2026-07-31_IPG_Zimbabwe-Constitutional-Rupture-and-ZDERA-Modernization_Christopher-H-Smith_Action-Memorandum.pdf (~156 KB)
2026-07-29_IPG_Institutional-Profile-and-US-Engagement-Statement.pdf (~88 KB)

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John,

I am writing on behalf of International Policy Group, a Nairobi-based public-policy and governance advisory firm, to request a twenty-minute meeting and policy briefing with Chairman Christopher H. Smith and relevant Africa Subcommittee staff concerning Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture and its implications for democratic legitimacy, United States critical-mineral security, human trafficking, and authoritarian state-linked influence in Southern Africa.

Activists opposing Constitution Amendment No. 3 called for nationwide demonstrations on July 31. The muted visible response occurred amid arrests and prosecutions of amendment opponents, official warnings, reported threats against political figures, and substantial security deployments that appear to have created a chilling effect on civic participation.

Zimbabwe presents a concrete test of whether the United States can align its commitment to constitutional government and human dignity with its strategic interests in critical minerals, democratic resilience, and resistance to Russian, Belarusian, and Chinese authoritarian influence.

The attached memorandum explains how Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture intersects with Chinese dominance of the lithium sector, Belarus-linked political-commercial networks, and the fraudulent recruitment of Zimbabwean citizens into Russia's war against Ukraine.

Under the trafficking framework Chairman Smith helped establish through the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, the recruitment of citizens through false employment offers, confiscation of travel documents, and coercion into combat warrants examination as trafficking in persons and forced labor.

International Policy Group proposes:

a congressional resolution affirming Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and popular consent;
modernization—not simple repeal—of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act; and
coordinated Africa Subcommittee oversight, executive engagement, democracy support, and responsible private-sector engagement.

Given Chairman Smith's leadership on Africa, human rights, trafficking in persons, religious freedom, and Zimbabwe policy, we respectfully request an opportunity to brief him and the relevant Subcommittee staff and to discuss immediate congressional options.

Attached are the memorandum prepared for Chairman Smith and an institutional profile of International Policy Group.

Regards,

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Attachments:

Memorandum — Zimbabwe's Constitutional Rupture, ZDERA Modernization, and United States Strategic Interests
International Policy Group — Institutional Profile

MEMORANDUM

TO: John McDonough, Legislative Director
ATTENTION: Mary McDermott Noonan, Chief of Staff
OFFICE: Office of Congressman Christopher H. Smith Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa
FROM: Garcia Mavinga Sozinho – International Policy Group
DATE: July 31, 2026
RE: Zimbabwe's Constitutional Rupture, ZDERA Modernization, and United States Strategic Interests

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THE ASK International Policy Group respectfully requests a **twenty-minute briefing** with Chairman Smith and relevant Africa Subcommittee staff concerning Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture and its implications for democratic legitimacy, United States critical-mineral security, and authoritarian state-linked influence in Southern Africa.

We propose three mutually reinforcing actions: (1) a congressional resolution on Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty and popular consent; (2) modernization—rather than simple repeal—of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act; and (3) coordinated executive, democracy-support, and responsible private-sector engagement.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL RUPTURE

On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026 (Act No. 6 of 2026). It abolishes the direct popular election of the President in favor of selection by a joint sitting of Parliament; extends presidential, parliamentary, and local-authority terms from five to seven years; and applies those extensions to current officeholders, prolonging the present presidential and parliamentary mandates from 2028 to 2030. [1][4]

It adds ten Senate seats filled by presidential appointment; transfers voter registration and custody of the voters' roll from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to the Registrar-General; assigns delimitation to a new commission; and alters judicial-appointment and constitutional-oversight arrangements established under Zimbabwe's voter-approved 2013 Constitution. [1][4]

THE REFERENDUM SAFEGUARD

Section 328(7) of Zimbabwe's Constitution bars a constitutional amendment extending the tenure of a public officeholder from benefiting a person already holding that office. Section 328(9) requires a national referendum to amend section 328 itself. Amendment Act No. 3 nevertheless applies the seven-year terms to current officeholders "notwithstanding section 328(7)," and no referendum was held. [1][2][3]

The resulting dispute concerns whether incumbent terms and the administration of democratic authority may be rewritten without the popular consent protected by the Constitution. A pre-enactment challenge was dismissed by a Zimbabwean court on procedural grounds, and the constitutional merits have yet to be finally adjudicated. [3][4]

STRATEGIC MINERALS AND MARKET ACCESS

Zimbabwe was the world's third-ranked platinum producer in 2024, fourth-ranked in lithium—excluding the United States—and palladium, and sixth-ranked in chromium. Mining and quarrying contributed approximately 15.4 percent of gross domestic product.

In 2025, Zimbabwe exported approximately 1.13 million metric tons of lithium-bearing spodumene concentrate to China—about 15 percent of China's lithium-concentrate imports—while Chinese firms dominated the sector following approximately $2 billion in investment since 2021. [5][6]

This concentration raises urgent questions involving transparent licensing, beneficial ownership, public revenue, domestic value addition, employment, community benefit, and diversified market access for responsible United States firms.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING INTO RUSSIA'S WAR

Zimbabwean citizens have been subjected to fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war against Ukraine. On March 25, 2026, the government acknowledged 81 known cases: 15 citizens had been killed, and diplomatic efforts were underway to repatriate 66 survivors.

Given the clandestine recruitment methods and absence of comprehensive public accounting, this figure likely represents a confirmed minimum. Victims were reportedly lured by false civilian-employment offers, deprived of their travel documents, and coerced into combat. [7]

Under the trafficking framework Chairman Smith helped establish through the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, this exploitation of vulnerable citizens warrants examination as trafficking in persons and forced labor. [8]

It extends the pattern from the exploitation of Zimbabwe's resources and public procurement to the exploitation of its people, consigning Zimbabwean lives to the Kremlin's war machine, eroding national sovereignty, and advancing Russian aggression against United States national-security interests.

THE LEGISLATIVE MOMENT: MODERNIZE ZDERA

ZDERA links stronger United States–Zimbabwe trade and investment ties to progress on governance, credible elections, economic reform, property rights, and recovery of stolen assets. Repeal would remove the principal statutory framework connecting political reform to constructive economic reengagement. [9]

As of July 28, 2026, H.R. 5300 had been ordered reported, as amended, by a 27–24 vote of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, while Congress.gov and GovInfo continued to publish only the introduced text. Section 303 of that published text would repeal ZDERA and replace it with a compensation-related condition governing United States support for new or expanded IMF or World Bank funding for Zimbabwe. [10]

Farmer compensation and property rights represent legitimate obligations. A compensation-only replacement cannot prevent Chinese mineral consolidation, expose opaque ownership, discipline politically connected procurement, or secure meaningful access for American firms. It could normalize Zimbabwe's economy without changing who controls its strategic assets.

Elsewhere, H.R. 5300 addresses United States commercial competition in Africa, China-related strategic risks, Belarusian authoritarianism, and Russia's war against Ukraine. Zimbabwe is where these concerns converge: Chinese firms dominate its lithium sector; citizens have been fraudulently recruited into Russia's war; and a Belarus-linked political-commercial network tied to senior state relationships has used offshore structures to obscure beneficial ownership and embed Belarusian state-adjacent interests in public procurement and strategic-resource governance. [6][7][10][11]

International Policy Group recommends that Chairman Smith and the Africa Subcommittee advance a successor framework that preserves compensation and property-rights objectives while adding constitutional, anti-corruption, strategic-mineral, beneficial-ownership, and competitive-market-access benchmarks.

RECOMMENDED CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

• A resolution on Zimbabwean constitutional sovereignty — affirming popular sovereignty and the 2013 constitutional settlement; defending civic freedoms, referendum compliance, and peaceful constitutional activity; recognizing the right of Zimbabweans to receive the full national benefit of their mineral resources; and expressing concern over fraudulent recruitment into Russia's war and opaque foreign state-linked arrangements.

• Review and modernization of ZDERA — establishing a modern replacement framework integrating compensation and commercial engagement with constitutional, anti-corruption, illicit-finance, strategic-mineral, beneficial-ownership, and competitive-market-access benchmarks.

• Africa Subcommittee oversight — examining Zimbabwe's constitutional rupture, restrictions on civic space, the treatment of peaceful constitutional actors, the political economy surrounding strategic minerals, and Russian, Belarusian, and Chinese state-linked influence.

• Coordinated executive engagement — requesting State Department monitoring of constitutional repression and civic-space restrictions and Treasury and interagency examination of credible evidence concerning corruption, illicit finance, sanctions evasion, trafficking networks, and foreign state-linked commercial arrangements.

• Democracy-support and responsible private-sector engagement — consulting Zimbabwean-led constitutional and civic-resilience actors and engaging responsible United States critical-minerals supply-chain stakeholders regarding transparent licensing, traceability, domestic value creation, community benefit, and diversified market access.

Respectfully,

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SELECTED AUTHORITIES

1. Veritas Zimbabwe, "Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act No. 6 of 2026" (Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026).
2. Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, § 328.
3. Veritas Zimbabwe, Constitution Watch 8/2026: "CAB3 Published as Act," July 8, 2026.
4. Human Rights Watch, "Zimbabwe Constitution Amended to Extend President's Term," July 8, 2026.
5. U.S. Geological Survey, "Zimbabwe—Minerals Information" (2024 production and GDP data).
6. Reuters, "Zimbabwe Adds Freight Rail Option to Lithium Export Gateway," July 21, 2026.
7. Associated Press, report concerning Zimbabwean citizens fraudulently recruited into Russia's war against Ukraine, March 25, 2026.
8. H.R. 3244, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, sponsored by Representative Christopher H. Smith; Pub. L. 106-386.
9. Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, as amended by the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act of 2018.
10. Congress.gov, H.R. 5300—Department of State Policy Provisions Act, §§ 303–304 and 314; ordered reported 27–24, September 18, 2025.
11. OCCRP, "Belarusian Elites' Golden Deal With Zimbabwe" (Pandora Papers); Associated Press, "Belarus' Lukashenko Visits Fellow Russia Ally Zimbabwe."

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UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT

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Dr. Kenneth Otieno Orengo
Secretary and Chief Executive
International Policy Group
Date: July 29, 2026

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