

MDC supporters appear in court

Twenty-seven members MDC members appeared in court today (Monday) on violence charges after post-election protests that triggered a security crackdown. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, declared winner of the historic first elections since the downfall of Robert Mugabe, has vowed to protect rights since his re-election but the opposition say their members have been targeted. A report on the [News24](#) site notes that **police with assault rifles were on duty in the court precinct, with a truck of other officers stationed outside**. Prosecutors opposed bail, saying the accused – 19 men and eight women – were linked to the deaths of six people when the army opened fire on opposition supporters last Wednesday. Mnangagwa has accused the MDC of fomenting the unrest, but also said he would set up an independent commission to investigate the killings. The MDC Alliance is this week likely to file a petition against Mnangagwa's victory in the Constitutional Court, which could delay his inauguration. Chamisa told the [The Times](#) that his supporters are ready to go onto the streets, but he is wary of the repercussions. 'People are calling on me, wanting me to give the signal to go to the streets but I am worried there will be massive bloodshed,' he said.

[Former head of South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission \(IEC\)](#), retired Justice Johann Kriegler, said that while the Zimbabwe elections result may be genuine, the ruling Zanu-PF's pervasive influence was a critical factor. The MDC-Alliance says the polls were rigged and they will challenge the results in court. 'The first victim of an election is always the truth,' Kriegler, Freedom Under Law chairperson, reportedly told [The Citizen](#). Kriegler headed the IEC, which oversaw the first South African democratic election in 1994. 'I don't think the result is at all surprising considering the stranglehold Zanu-PF has had on the country during its administration and rule of communities in particular,' he said. **'The fact that the MDC presidential candidate received more than 44% of the vote is remarkably good,'** he added. The US believes the election was marred by violence in the aftermath of the vote but calls on the winner to show 'magnanimity' and the opposition to show 'graciousness in defeat'. A report on the [News24](#) site notes that US State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert said the vote 'presented the country with an historic chance to move beyond the political and economic crises of the past and toward profound democratic change'.