

## Headlines:

- **More of the Same in Zimbabwe**
- **Sinai Mosque Attack**
- **Chechnya's Kadyrov Positions for Kremlin Role**

## Details:

### More of the Same in Zimbabwe

Robert Mugabe's 37-year reign is finally over in Zimbabwe. After defying his opponents for nearly four decades, it was inevitable the famously stubborn leader would have one last trick up his sleeve. But Mugabe's time is finally up. He resigned after the Parliament began impeachment proceedings, according to Parliamentary Speaker Jacob Mudenda. Mugabe is the only leader the southern African nation has known since the end of white minority rule in 1980, Mugabe presided over Zimbabwe's fall from a promising regional powerhouse into a predatory state that serves only the most corrupt and venal. The country once exported food, but today half the rural population relies on international aid to survive. But what led to Mugabe's downfall was his dismissing of veterans of the liberation struggle from party posts in recent years and strengthening his wife and her supporters. The removal of Emmerson Mnangagwa, the vice president, was the final straw. The old guard undertook a coup and removed Mugabe. Despite talk of a revolutionary change, the reality is that the same regime continues in power. Mnangagwa was part of the regime for decades and, as head of internal security under Mugabe, responsible for some of his regime's worst brutality in the so-called Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland in 1983.

### Sinai Mosque Attack

Considerable confusion and scepticism surround the official version of the events of the 24th of November 2017. What is clear is that the al-Rawda Mosque located in the northern portion of the Sinai Peninsula was attacked by roughly 40 gunmen during Friday congregational prayers. It is also clear that the assailants who arrived in four or five pickups seemed, from the accounts of local residents, intent on maximizing the casualties of this attack. Prior to the attack they took firing positions at the main gate of the "sufi" mosque and in its 12 windows as the imam was about to deliver his Friday sermon. They then they set off explosives and sprayed hundreds of worshipers inside with bullets. They also blocked access to the mosque by torching several cars belonging to worshipers and also opened fire on ambulances as they arrived at the scene and after the initial round of killing, the assailants methodically checked their victims for signs of life and shot anyone who was breathing. Rather than being an isolated incident this horrific attack comes in the context of a growing urban insurgency against President Sisi's regime, but is made notable by the fact that the targeting of a mosque would be a significant departure from the current operational tactics of all the groups operating in the Sinai Peninsula and the wider area. When asked his opinion one of Cairo's many street vendors replied: *"We don't know who is really doing this. But I think Islamic State is actually people in the police themselves. Who else can do this?"*

### Chechnya's Kadyrov positions for Kremlin Role

Longtime Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov threatened to resign, which he periodically does when he wants something from the Kremlin. According to Kadyrov, Chechnya — an autonomous region of Russia — needed a strong leader such as himself to establish order, but now that order has been achieved he is no longer needed. He named several people capable of assuming his position were he to resign. In response, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Kadyrov's statements were nothing new, but only confirmation that he is part of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle and would do as Putin bids, even if it means resigning. For now, according to Peskov, Kadyrov will remain president of Chechnya. Kadyrov appears to be positioning himself for a larger role in Russian politics. According to rumors, a major Kremlin reshuffle will accompany Putin's almost certain victory in March 2018 and at that time major positions will be opened, including prime minister — a position that Kadyrov reportedly covets. Kadyrov has been developing ties across Russia and abroad for years, visiting former Soviet states and Middle Eastern countries trying to shore up his position.