

Panic buying hits Harare as Zimbabweans fear food shortages with shops no longer able to import products because they have run out of US dollars

- **Retailers in Harare have reported panic buying as food shortages continue**
- **Zimbabwe is amid an economic crisis and has few foreign currency reserves**
- **Retailers are finding it difficult to import stock as they lack foreign currency**
- **Planned protests against new taxes in Zimbabwe have been banned by police**

Daily Mail by [Darren Boyle for MailOnline](#)

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Zimbabweans are facing long queues for food and fuel as shops are running out products as the nation's economic turmoil continues.

Police have banned planned protests by labour unions against price hikes and a tax on money transfers.

Prices of basic goods like cooking oil and flour have shot up since a 2 per cent tax was imposed on October 1. Businesses and ordinary people have objected to the tax, arguing that it eats into earnings while funding profligate government spending.



Shops in Zimbabwe have run short of products as a result of economic turmoil in the country



Labour unions are planning mass protests against the collapse, including a two per cent tax which has been blamed on the rapidly increasing price of basic goods like cooking oil



The lack of foreign currency in Zimbabwe means manufacturers cannot import basic commodities worsening shortages

Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) president Peter Mutasa told reporters that the labour body had called for a strike on Thursday over the tax.

ZCTU is also protesting a central bank decision to separate cash U.S. dollars and foreign inflows from dollars in the local banking system, known as 'Zollars'.

Police spokesman Paul Nyathi said the protest would not be allowed to go ahead because of a standing order outlawing public gatherings in the capital after a cholera outbreak that has killed 50 people and infected more than 10,000 others.

The opposition has accused law officers of selectively applying the ban, saying supporters of President Emmerson Mnangagwa have been allowed to hold rallies in the capital while those for the opposition have been stopped.

With post-election violence two months ago in mind, the government appears resolved to keep a lid on demonstrations in opposition urban strongholds fearing they could spiral into violence, analysts say. Six people died in that violence which followed an army crackdown.



Petrol stations in Harare have run out of fuel as retailers can no longer pay for imports



Long queues have been reported outside filling stations as Zimbabweans desperately fill up their cars before stocks run out



The panic buying has seen people arrive at filling stations carrying jerry cans, pictured

Although the labour movement has been weakened over the years due to high unemployment, it still maintains strong links with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, whose supporters would be likely to take part in the protests.

Nyathi said 'the cholera outbreak is not yet over, particularly in Harare' and warned potential protesters that 'if anything turns nasty those organising the demonstrations will be held responsible'.

Zimbabwe's Vice President Kembo Mohadi later told reporters that the government had deployed monitors around the country and that oil firms and sellers of basic goods who hike prices or demand dollar payments would lose their licence.



Even Kentucky Fried Chicken in Harare was forced to close due to the ongoing shortages

Some business are now demanding US dollars only while others have suspended sales as the value of Zollars and the surrogate bond note currency have plunged on the black market.

After losing their savings to hyperinflation in 2008, worried citizens are stocking in basic goods while others buy bricks and shares on the stock market to preserve the value of money in their banks.

Zimbabwe, which adopted the US dollar after hyperinflation left its own currency worthless in 2009, is gripped by acute shortages of cash dollars.



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Pharmacist Lukmore Bhunu said many essential drugs were no longer available



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Stores have reported panic buying with people stocking up with basic foodstuffs



Some Zimbabwean businesses will only accept US dollars in an effort to import more stock

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6258967/Panic-buying-hits-Harare-Zimbabweans-fear-food-shortages.html>