

ALERT
May 2024

Forever Associates Zimbabwe

The Forever Associates Zimbabwe (FAZ) trust, set up to help the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) win the 2023 elections, was established by associates and family members of Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi, the deputy director general of the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO). Both Tapfumaneyi and FAZ deny that the CIO controls the trust.^{1,2} However, this alert provides further details about the past business dealings of Tapfumaneyi and one of FAZ's trustees that help confirm Zimbabwean media reports about the spy chief's relationship to the entity.

In particular, FAZ's official deeds reveal that its trustees and founders include Tapfumaneyi's family and associates, including Tangisai Tapera, his key ally and business partner in a past oil deal with Iran.^{3,4,5,6,7,8} In addition, the main phone number for FAZ was used in the past by a CIO officer, according to a review of several phone apps that reveal the names under which a telephone number has been saved by its contacts in users' address books, suggesting the involvement of the agency.^{9,10}

FAZ's activities—including a large get-out-the-vote operation—may have helped the ruling party win the election. Observers, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and European Union (EU) poll monitors, reported FAZ's presence at thousands of polling stations, where its reported links to ZANU-PF and the security services may have intimidated rural voters. ^{11, 12, 13} FAZ also spent at least \$4 million—a large sum of money in Zimbabwean politics—importing 160 or more Toyota Hilux pickup trucks for ZANU-PF candidates. ^{14, 15, 16} FAZ declined to comment when asked whether their activities intimidated voters or whether their spending tipped the electoral scales toward ZANU-PF. ¹⁷

FAZ and Its Founders*

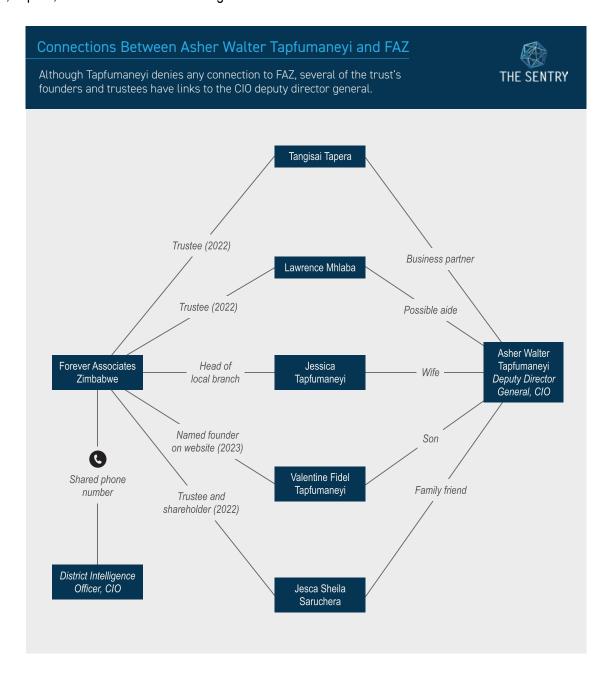
Kudakwashe Munsaka, the chair of FAZ, says that the entity is the revival of a trust first established by students in 2010 with the support of the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs (MSPA), a small ministry established during the 2009-2013 coalition period to support the then-president, ZANU-PF's Robert Mugabe. ^{18, 19, 20} FAZ was established as a youth empowerment project to access business opportunities. ^{21, 22} Munsaka said that when the MSPA was disbanded in 2014, the relationship ended and the trustees abandoned the project—only to revive the entity in 2022. ^{23, 24}

^{*}Reports by The Sentry are based on interviews, documentary research, and, where relevant, financial forensic analysis. In some cases, sources speak to The Sentry on the condition that their names not be revealed, out of concern for their safety or other potential retaliatory action. The Sentry establishes the authoritativeness and credibility of information derived from those interviews through independent sources, such as expert commentary, financial data, original documentation, and press reports. The Sentry endeavors to contact the persons and entities discussed in its reports and afford them an opportunity to comment and provide further information.

In May 2023, however, Zimbabwean media outlet The NewsHawks reported that FAZ had been set up by Tapfumaneyi, the CIO's deputy director general.²⁵ While this allegation is denied by all concerned, a trail of breadcrumbs leads to the CIO's door.^{26,27}

For example, the main phone number for FAZ was once used by one of the CIO's mid-ranking officers, according to a review of phone contact apps that store users' address books.^{28, 29}

The trust deeds for FAZ, meanwhile, point toward links with one of the spy agency's current bosses. Tapfumaneyi's earlier role at the MSPA, which had helped establish FAZ in 2010, and his longstanding relationship with one of its trustees, Tapera, are central to understanding the connection.



Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi

Described by an insider as "the ultimate ZANU patriot," Tapfumaneyi joined the liberation movement at 16, eventually retiring from the military as a brigadier general. 30, 31 He served in the CIO as assistant director, then left to take roles leading the MSPA and, later, the war veterans ministry before returning to the CIO as deputy director general in 2020. 32

During the government of national unity, established after the violence of the 2008 election, the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) controlled the Ministry of Finance.³³ To get around their rival's control of revenue and expenditure, both the military and the CIO set up a variety of joint ventures to raise off-budget funding.³⁴

Mugabe established the MSPA, with Tapfumaneyi as principal director, as a way of circumventing MDC influence over the civil



Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi, Deputy Director General of the CIO. Image: The Sentry.

service.^{35, 36} The MSPA was designed to carry out various deals away from prying eyes, according to someone in the security sector at the time.³⁷ For example, following the diamond fever that swept through eastern Zimbabwe in the late 2000s, Tapfumaneyi, his second-in-command at the MSPA, Tangisai Tapera, and lawyer Gerald Mlotshwa set up two companies—Moosejaw Enterprises and Rosy Red Capital.^{38, 39, 40, 41}

Later, Tapfumaneyi set up two other companies as part of an MSPA oil deal with Iran.^{42, 43, 44} In 2011, following a meeting with an Iranian oil minister, Tapfumaneyi wrote requesting 90,000 metric tons of fuel, with the contract to be signed by Lionshow Trading in Zimbabwe, whose directors included Tapfumaneyi and Tapera.⁴⁵ Two months later, the two set up Lionshow Resources in the United Arab Emirates: Tapfumaneyi owned 50%, and Mlotshwa and Tapera each owned 25%.^{46, 47}

When contacted by The Sentry, Tapera said that he was not at liberty to discuss any details, while Mlotshwa said that he acted in a professional capacity and was unable to answer further questions due to attorney-client confidentiality. Mlotshwa denied that he and Tapfumaneyi were business partners. Tapfumaneyi denied any illegality in any of these dealings. Descriptions of the service of the

FAZ trustees and founders

Official records for FAZ reveal that Tapfumaneyi is linked to several of the entity's trustees and founders. Tapera, Tapfumaneyi's ally, is a trustee of FAZ.^{51, 52} Another trustee is a family friend who shared an address with a member of Tapfumaneyi's immediate family.⁵³ A third trustee is someone who has the same uncommon name as an official aide to one of the two deputy directors general of the CIO—the position held by Tapfumaneyi—raising the question as to whether they are the same person.^{54, 55, 56, 57, 58} Tapfumaneyi's son is named as a FAZ founder on its website, while Tafumaneyi's wife also reportedly headed a local FAZ branch.^{59, 60}

When asked about his role with FAZ, Tapera said that he wasn't at liberty to discuss any details.⁶¹ FAZ trustees Jesca Saruchera and Lawrence Mhlaba could not be reached for comment.

Trustees of FAZ and directors and shareholders of FAZ's associated company

Original FAZ Trustees (Trust Deed 2010)	Present-Day FAZ Trustees (Deed of Change 2022)	Forever Associates Zimbabwe Pvt Ltd Shareholders and Directors (2022)
Kudakwashe Munsaka	Kudakwashe Munsaka	Kudakwashe Munsaka (20%)
Tangisai Tapera	Tangisai Tapera	
Kudzaiishe Mangidza	Brenda Nyika	Brenda Nyika (60%)
Fungai Jonga	Jesca Sheila Saruchera	Jesca Sheila Saruchera (20%)
Gillian Shambare	Nicksha Chipfakacha	
Trinity Ncube	Sharon Chiwara	
Farai Mutamangira	Lawrence Mhlaba	
Winifilda Chirango		

The presence of several of Tapfumaneyi's contacts as trustees or founders is indicative of a link, if not between the CIO and FAZ, then at least between Tapfumaneyi and FAZ. Tapfumaneyi has said: "I have nothing to do with Forever Associates Zimbabwe, either personally or officially." When contacted by The Sentry, Tapfumaneyi denied any wrongdoing "relating to ZANU PF; nor Forever Associates Zimbabwe (FAZ) and what you allege to be its links to me, which links have absolutely no foundation in law." ⁶³

FAZ declined to identify its funders, claiming that it is financed by "well wishers who prefer not to be named." Munsaka told The Sentry that FAZ's "hope and plan, however, is to be 100% self-funded and self-sufficient in the medium to long term once our businesses are fully established, operational and profitable."

Tapfumaneyi's ties to FAZ raise the question of whether, rather than being funded by anonymous well-wishers, the ZANU-PF affiliate is financed by the state security agency. Indeed, Tapfumaneyi's past actions and statements indicate that although he is a civil servant, his loyalties lie with ZANU-PF.

While still at the MSPA, for instance, Tapfumaneyi solicited a campaign donation on behalf of ZANU-PF, as first jointly reported by the BBC, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, and the University of Bath. The joint investigation found that in 2012, he reportedly asked for between \$300,000 and \$500,000 in exchange for releasing three prisoners charged with illegal surveillance. 66, 67, 68, 69 The inmates were the directors of a Zimbabwean security company that had been subcontracted by a South African corporate intelligence firm working on behalf of a giant tobacco multinational. Leaked documents reveal that Tapfumaneyi suggested money would ease the path to their release: "With the upcoming [2013] elections a donation ... to ZANU PF would pave the way for negotiations to continue." There is no direct evidence that the bribe was actually paid. Tapfumaneyi denies wrongdoing and told journalists he had no knowledge of the events. The tobacco company said that it maintained the highest standards of corporate conduct.

In 2013, Tapfumaneyi told the Financial Times, "The security apparatus of Zimbabwe is subordinate to the civilian authority. As much as it influences opinion within the civilian authority, within ZANU PF, it also follows what ZANU PF will do." He continued. "Whatever ZANU PF decides, is what will be done."

The role of FAZ in the 2023 election seems to continue Tapfumaneyi's tradition of blurring the line between party and state.

Forever ZANU-PF

After having been initially set up in 2010, the FAZ trust reemerged in 2022, first reportedly playing a role in ZANU-PF candidate selections and then campaigning nationally in advance of the August 2023 elections.^{75, 76, 77, 78, 79}

FAZ disavows violence, and for those unfamiliar with Zimbabwe, much of what it does could seem uncontroversial.⁸⁰ Its mainstay is what it calls intimate voter contact: knocking on doors to gauge the level of support for ZANU-PF, texting and phoning registered voters, and distributing leaflets.^{81,82} On election day, FAZ set up tables near polling stations and asked people how they voted.⁸³ In some other countries such as South Africa and the United Kingdom, this practice—so long as it is not within the boundaries of the polling station—is also commonplace: a party will record its "promises" from previous canvassing and later knock on the doors of those who have not yet voted as part of a get-out-the-vote campaign.^{84,85}

Gathering voter data might be normal electioneering elsewhere, but it has sinister overtones in a country with recent memories of violent campaigns against opposition voters, such as 2008's "Operation Makavhoterapapi?"—broadly translated as "Operation Where Did You Put Your Cross?" In the run-up to the second run-off ballot in the 2008 election, security forces and ZANU-PF militias attacked MDC supporters: up to 200 were killed, 5,000 were beaten and tortured, and 36,000 had to flee their homes. The People voted the wrong way, so people must be beaten thoroughly so that no one will ever vote MDC again, said ZANU-PF leaders in one town, according to witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch.

Against this backdrop, the influence of FAZ in the 2023 elections took several forms.

First, FAZ contributed to an atmosphere of surveillance, undermining the secrecy of the ballot box and creating the potential for reprisals. For example, one voter told human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), "Villagers in ward 11 have been summoned by the FAZ chairperson who is in ZANU-PF regalia and he is telling people that they are going to vote for ZANU-PF whilst writing down their names in a book. It seems like people have been told that a register with their names will be available on the election day and each person with their name written in the book will be voting for ZANU-PF." SADC election observers noted reports that FAZ had deployed to around 36,000 villages. EU monitors found that FAZ had set up ZANU-PF exit poll surveys in the vicinity of polling stations in about one in five of the wards they observed. Most EU EOM observers received reports of FAZ actively intimidating voters throughout the campaign, especially in rural areas," the EU Election Observer Mission noted.

Another complaint made to NGOs was that voting data could be used to withhold state-distributed seed and fertilizer, an important tool of persuasion in rural areas: "FAZ exit poll registers are now being used to determine who receives agricultural inputs ahead of the farming season. This is happening in the entire constituency except a few wards with more opposition members who are resisting this move. There has also been a lot of threats with some village heads being threatened with dismissal as they did not arrange for assisting people to vote in their villages." This would not be the first time that the distribution of state resources by ZANU-PF was used as a method of influencing the rural vote. After the 2018 election, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission found "partisan distribution of farming inputs under the Presidential Inputs Programme, partisan distribution of food aid, [and] threats of violence and intimidation" by officials.

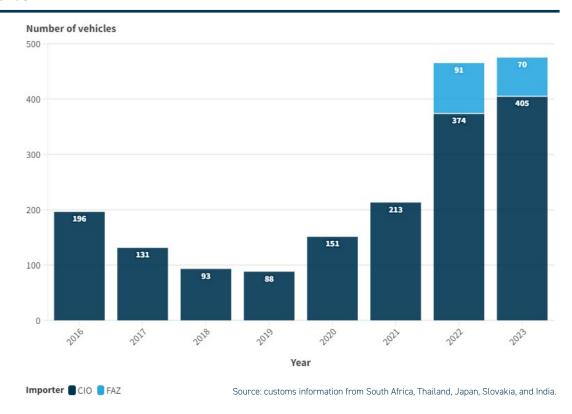
Finally, FAZ campaign expenditure may also have tipped the scales toward ZANU-PF. The NewsHawks, the Zimbabwean media outlet that first broke the story, reported that FAZ had received \$10 million from the government "in preparation for elections." It is not possible to directly compare ZANU-PF's election spending with that of the opposition, as political finances are not transparent in Zimbabwe. However, some of FAZ's spending on vehicles can be compared with the



official amount of state funding received by an opposition party. Since October 2022, FAZ has imported 160 Toyota Hilux pickup trucks for \$4 million—a level of spending eight times more than the \$500,000 public party funding received by the opposition.^{96,97}

How FAZ Used its Funds

Since October 2022, FAZ has imported 160 Toyota Hilux pickup trucks for \$4 million.



FAZ denies all wrongdoing and, when asked, described The Sentry's statements as attempts to caricature the organization.⁹⁸

The CIO also ramped up expenditure before the elections, spending \$23 million on 780 vehicles since January 2022, almost as much as the \$25 million spent from 2016 to 2021. 99 In the past, the CIO has allegedly used similar vehicles in the beating and intimidation of opposition supporters. 100

Recommendations

The government of Zimbabwe

The government of Zimbabwe should cease using state resources to favor one party.

Zimbabwean electoral law should be updated to introduce campaign expenditure limits; establish public registers of

political donations and expenditure by parties; and extend spending limits and the requirement to register donations and expenditure to party affiliates and other entities who are acting in concert with, or otherwise supporting, a party's election campaign.

Banks and commercial counterparties

Banks and firms doing business with the FAZ trust and company should conduct enhanced due diligence consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. They should look into the ownership structure of the entity to identify and mitigate risks associated with the direct or indirect support for a state security agency whose members are accused of human rights abuses and undermining democracy.¹⁰¹

Endnotes

- 1 Forever Associates Zimbabwe response to The Sentry, June 24, 2023.
- Joseph Cotterill and Kudzanai Musengi, "The Shadowy NGO Accused of Manipulating Zimbabwe Election Process," Financial Times, August 16, 2023, available at: https://www.ft.com/content/b66cae06-a0da-4dbf-ae69-d91a40e69c89
- The first FAZ trust deed (2010) lists the following trustees: Kudakwashe Munsaka, Winifilda Chirango, Kudzaiishe Mangidza, Fungai Jonga, Gillian Shambare, Trinity Ncube, Farai Mutamangira, and Tangisai Tapera. In 2022, there was a deed of change, and Winifilda Chirango, Kudzaiishe Mangidza, Fungai Jonga, Gillian Shambare, Trinity Ncube, and Farai Mutamangira resigned as trustees. Brenda Nyika, Jesca Sheila Saruchera, Nicksha Chipfakacha, Sharon Chiwara, and Lawrence Mhlaba were appointed as new trustees. Thus, the trustees during the 2023 election were Kudakwashe Munsaka, Tangisai Tapera, Brenda Nyika, Jesca Sheila Saruchera, Nicksha Chipfakacha, Sharon Chiwara, and Lawrence Mhlaba. In addition, the associated company Forever Associates Zimbabwe Pvt Ltd had three shareholders when it was formed in 2022: Brenda Nyika (60%), Jesca Sheila Saruchera (20%), and Kudakwashe Mvula Munsaka (20%). The directors of the company were the same three shareholders, while the company secretary was Brenda Nyika. See:
 - Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, Forever Associates Zimbabwe notarial deed of trust, February 9, 2010, reviewed by The Sentry in 2023.
 - Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, Forever Associates Zimbabwe deed of name change, November 4, 2022, reviewed by The Sentry in 2023.
- 4 Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, "Forever Associates Zimbabwe (Private) Limited," June 2, 2022, reviewed by The Sentry in 2023.
- For a list of "founders" naming Valentine Fidel Tapfumaneyi, see:

 Forever Associates Zimbabwe, "About Us," available at: https://web.archive.o0rg/web/20230627041330/https://faztrust.com/about/
- Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, Forever Associates Zimbabwe Notarial Deed of Trust, February 9, 2010, reviewed by The Sentry in 2023.
- 7 Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, Forever Associates Zimbabwe Deed of Name Change, November 4, 2022, reviewed by The Sentry in 2023.
- A Lawrence Mhlaba was named as an aide to the deputy director general in the president's department when attending a UN event. In addition, someone with the same name traveled in Mugabe's entourage. See:
 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, "Provisional List of Registered Participants," November 2021, p. 843, available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/PLOP_COP26.pdf
 - United States Department of State, "61st UN General Assembly: High Level Attendance and Requests for Meetings," July 31, 2006, available at: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06HARARE963 a.html
- 9 Forever Associates Zimbabwe, "About Us," available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20230627041330/https://faztrust.com/about/ (last accessed January 2024).
- The Sentry analysis of phone numbers associated with Forever Associates Zimbabwe using CallApp, Numbuster, CallerID, and PIPL, January 2024.
- 11 Southern African Development Community Electoral Observer Mission, "Report on the 2023 Harmonised Elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe," September 25, 2023, p. 23, available at: https://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas-d/files/ZIM%20SEOM%20FINAL%20-REPORT%20SUBMISSION.pdf
- European Union Election Observer Mission, "Zimbabwe 2023 Final Report," November 17, 2023, pp. 5, 18, 34, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/EU%20EOM%20ZWE%202023%20FR.pdf
- 13 CIO400 Research and Advocacy Unit, Counselling Services Unit, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Veritas, and Heal Zimbabwe, "A Consolidated Report on Pre and Post Organised Violence and Torture During the 2023 Harmonised Elections in Zimbabwe,"



November 2023, available at: https://researchandadvocacyunit.org/report/a-consolidated-report-on-pre-and-post-organised-violence-and-torture-during-the-2023-harmonised-elections-in-zimbabwe

- 14 The Sentry analysis of customs data from South Africa and Thailand, 2022-2023.
- 15 The Sentry analysis of customs data from South Africa and Thailand, 2022-2023.
- To place FAZ's spending in context, in 2023, ZANU-PF benefited from just over US\$1 million in public funding (1 billion Zimbabwean dollars [ZWL]), while the opposition MDC received almost US\$500,000 (ZWL\$449,550,000)—eight times less than what FAZ spent on vehicles (US\$4 million). As the Citizens Coalition for Change was ostensibly a new party, it did not receive public funding, which is allocated according to a party's proportionate previous electoral success. See:

Government of Zimbabwe, General Notice 372 of 2023, Disbursement of Money to Registered Political Parties, available at: https://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/GN%202023-372%20Disbursement%20of%20Money%20to%20Registered%20Political%20Parties.pdf

- 17 Forever Associates Zimbabwe response to The Sentry, March 2024.
- 18 The Sentry interview with an anonymous source, 2023.
- 19 Forever Associates Zimbabwe response to The Sentry, June 24, 2023.
- 20 Forever Associates Zimbabwe, "About Us," available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20230627041330/https://faztrust.com/about/ (last accessed January 2024).
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- Office of President and Cabinet, Press release announcing Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi's appointment as deputy director general in the President's Department, January 15, 2020.
- 31 The Sentry interview with an anonymous source, 2023.
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- Office of President and Cabinet Press release announcing Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi's appointment as deputy director general in the President's Department, January 15, 2020.
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- 38 Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, "Moosejaw Enterprises (Private) Limited," May 11, 2000, reviewed by The Sentry in 2024.
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- The Sentry interview with an anonymous source, 2023.
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- 49 Gerald Mlotshwa response to The Sentry, March 2024.
- Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi response to The Sentry, March 2024.
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- 52 Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, Forever Associates Zimbabwe Deed of Name Change, November 4, 2022, reviewed by The Sentry in 2023.
- Names of the trustee and daughter have been withheld. See:
 - Zimbabwe Registrar of Companies, Forever Associates Zimbabwe Notarial Deed of Trust, February 9, 2010, reviewed by The Sentry in 2023.
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 - United States Department of State, "61st UN General Assembly: High Level Attendance and Requests for Meetings," July 31, 2006, available at: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06HARARE963 a.html
- The Forever Associates Zimbabwe website lists the following personnel: Dr. Bongani Ngwenya, CEO/Founder; Kudakwashe Mavula Munsaka, Chairman; Gillian Shambare, Founder; Kudzaiishe Mangidza, Founder; Fungai Jonga, Founder; Samson Mangozhe, Founder; Trinity Mashava, Founder; Valentine Fidel Tapfumaneyi, Founder; Brighton Mubaiwa, Founder; Ruvimbo Tambara, Founder; and Trinity Mashava, Founder. See:
 - Forever Associates Zimbabwe, "About Us," available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20230627041330/https://faztrust.com/about/
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