

Military Coup In Gabon President Under House Arrest

Why In The News?

- A Group Of **Senior Military Officers In Gabon** Announced They Have Seized Power In The Capital In Order To Overturn The Results Of The Recent Election And Remove A Leader Whose Family Has Held Power For **Almost 56 Years**.
- This Came Within An Hour After **President Ali Bongo Ondimba** Was Announced As The **Winner Of The Presidential Polls**, Which Took Place Over The Weekend.



A 'coup' in Gabon: Who, what and why?

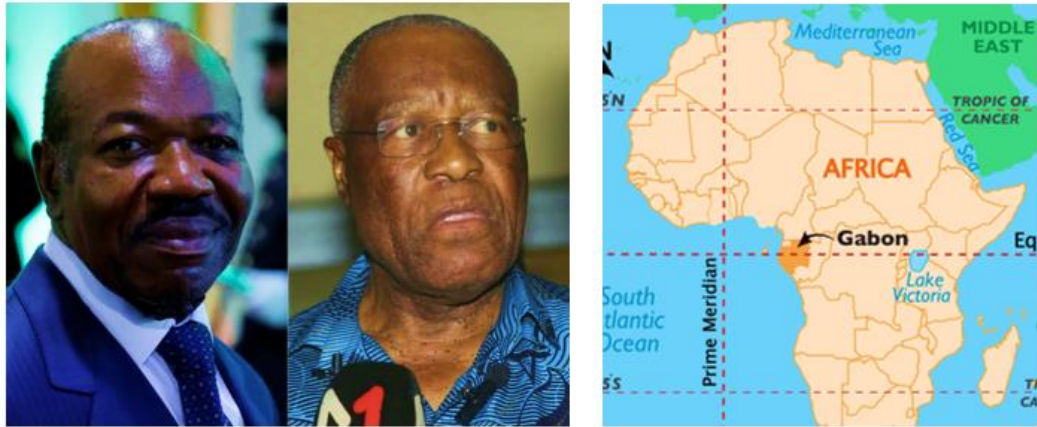
Soldiers in Gabon announced the cancellation of recent election results and the dissolution of state institutions.



What Do We Know?

- On Saturday, **August 26, Gabon Went To The Polls** For The Country's Presidential Election. Early On Wednesday, **August 30**, The Country's National Electoral Authority Announced That Bongo, Who Had Been **In Power For 14 Years**, Was Re-elected For A Third Term With **64.27 Percent Of Votes Cast**.
- Soon After, A **Group Of Mutinous Soldiers** Appeared On State Tv Saying They Were Seizing Power, Cancelling The Election Results And **"Putting An End To The**

Current Regime". Bongo's Main Challenger, Albert Ondo Ossa, Got 30.77 Percent Of The Vote, The Electoral Authority Said.



Who Is Behind The Ongoing Coup Attempt?

- The Soldiers Who Seized Power Said They Were Speaking On Behalf Of The **"Committee For The Transition And Restoration Of Institutions"** And Announced The Annulment Of The Election And Closure Of All Borders.
- They Also Announced The **Dissolution Of Institutions Of State** Including "The Government, The Senate, The National Assembly, The Constitutional Court, The Economic, Social And Environmental Council And The Gabonese Elections Centre".
- One Officer Read A Joint Statement On TV Channel Gabon 24, While About A Dozen Others Stood Silently Behind Him In Military Fatigues And Berets. They Included Army Colonels, **Members Of The Elite Republican Guard**, Regular Soldiers And Others.



Situation In Gabon

- Gabon Is A Small State In **Central Africa** That Has Been Ruled By The Same Family For More Than **55 Years** Since Its **Independence From France In 1960**. It Is One Of The Richest Countries In Africa In Terms Of GDP Per Capita, Thanks Largely To Oil Revenues And The Small Population Of 2.3 Million.
- In The 1970s, The Country Discovered **Abundant Oil Reserves Offshore**, Allowing It To Build A Strong Middle Class. **Oil Accounts For 60 Percent Of The Country's Revenues**. But A Third Of The Population Still Lives Below The Poverty Line Of \$5.50 Per Day, According To The World Bank.

What About President Ali Bongo Ondimba?

- Gabon's Coup Leaders Have Said **Bongo Is Under House Arrest** And One Of His Sons Has Been Arrested For "Treason". Bongo, 64, Took Over When His Father Omar Died In 2009 After Nearly 42 Years In Power.
- **Bongo Senior, Who Took Office In 1967**, Had The Reputation Of A Kleptocrat - One Of The Richest Men In The World, With A Fortune Derived From Gabon's Oil Wealth.
- In October 2018, **President Bongo Suffered A Stroke** That Sidelined Him For 10 Months. The Episode Stoked Claims He Was Unfit To Rule And Fuelled A Minor Attempted Coup.

