

## Mugabe faces challenge from within

by UPI

HARARE, Zimbabwe -- A former finance minister in Zimbabwe said he planned to challenge President Robert Mugabe in the March 29 election as an independent. The former finance member and senior member of Zimbabwe's ruling party, Simba Makoni, said, "I offer myself as candidate for the office of president," the BBC reported Tuesday. The Zanu-PF party endorsed Mugabe in December but Makoni said he is challenging Mugabe on behalf of the Zanu-PF amid rumors a challenge would come from within Mugabe's own party. Makoni blamed Zimbabwe's leaders for the 26,000 percent rate of inflation, saying, "I don't share the widely held view that these hardships are a result of failure of national leadership and that change at that level is a prerequisite for change at other levels of national endeavor." The BBC said Makoni is running as an independent, so he won't have access to state or other resources for his campaign. He also lacks grass-roots support, the BBC said.

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