

Gabon military officers declare coup after Ali Bongo wins disputed election

Seizure of power announced on television, cancelling election results that gave president third term in office

Military officers in Gabon say they have taken power and put the president, Ali Bongo Ondimba, under house arrest, as the country becomes the latest in Africa to suffer an attempted coup, only weeks after mutinous troops seized power in Niger.

A group of military personnel appeared on state television to announce they were seizing power to overturn the results of a presidential election, seeking to remove a president whose family has held power for nearly 56 years. The officers introduced themselves as members of the Committee of Transition and the Restoration of Institutions.

If successful, the coup would be the eighth in west and central Africa since 2020. The most recent one, in Niger, was in July, while the military has also seized power in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Chad.

In a video apparently from detention in his residence, Bongo Ondimba called on people to “make noise” to support him.

Crowds instead took to the streets of the capital and sang the national anthem to celebrate the coup attempt against a dynasty accused of getting rich on the country’s resource wealth while many of its citizens struggle to scrape by.

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