

LONGEST SERVING AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE

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Africa is home to many of the world's longest-ruling Heads of State. They have held onto power for many years and show no signs of stepping down anytime soon. This practice of holding on to power for longer terms which runs through several years perhaps 20, 30 or even 40 has sparked concerns.

The record-breaker is Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who ruled for 44 years before being overthrown in 1974. Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi held sway for almost 42 years. He was killed in 2011 as protests rule mushroomed into armed conflict.

Gabon's Omar Bongo Ondimba had been at the helm for 41 years when he died in June 2009.

Angolan leader Jose Eduardo dos Santos stepped down in September 2017 after 38 years in charge. Never democratically elected, the former Marxist rebel died in July 2022 at 79.

Former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who died in September 2019 almost two years after being forced to step down, held office for more than 37 years.

In Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, who came to power in a coup in June 1989, remained in charge for 30 years until the military overthrew him in 2019. In Chad, Idriss Deby Itno ruled for 30 years from December 1990 until his death in April 2021. He was succeeded by his son, General Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno.

Others are:

Paul Biya – Paul Biya is one of the oldest presidents in Africa, born on 13

February 1933. He has served as a Cameroonian president since 6 November 1982. Paul Biya is second Africa's longest-serving president and the longest non-royal serving leader in the world. He is 90 years old.

Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo – Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea has been in power since 1979, making him the longest-serving African president. In the early years of his rule, President Obiang was known for being a brutal dictator. He is 81 years old. He is the longest-serving President of any country ever and the second-longest consecutively serving current non-royal national leader in the world (after Paul Biya in Cameroon).

Denis Sassou Nguesso – Denis Sassou is also one of Africa's longest-serving Presidents. He has been the President of the Republic of the Congo for 36 years. He first came to power in 1979 and has since been re-elected three times. Sassou is among the oldest head of state in Africa at 79.

Yoweri Museveni – Yoweri Museveni has been the President of Uganda for 34 years. He first came to power in 1986 and has since been re-elected three times. Museveni is the third oldest head of state in Africa, at 78.

Isaias Afwerki – Isaias Afwerki has been the President of Eritrea for 27 years. He first came to power in 1991 after leading the country's independence movement from Ethiopia. Afwerki has since been re-elected twice. He is 77 years old.