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The murder of Hachalu Hundessa

How one singer's
death threw
Ethiopia into
turmoil

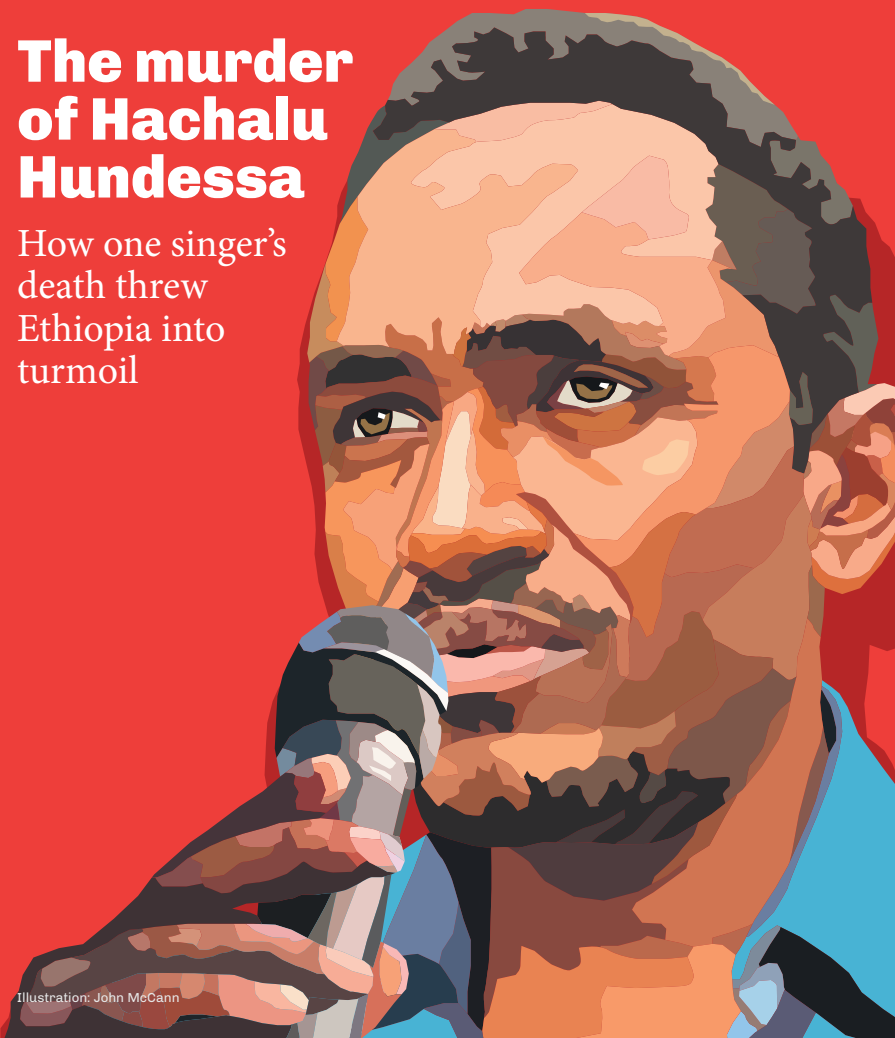


Illustration: John McCann

Abiy Ahmed's greatest test

When Abiy Ahmed became prime minister of Ethiopia in 2018, he made the job look easy. Within months, he had released thousands of political prisoners; unbanned independent media and opposition groups; fired officials implicated in human rights abuses; and made peace with neighbouring Eritrea.

Last year, he was rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his efforts in brokering that peace.

But the job of prime minister is never easy, and now Abiy faces two of his sternest tests – simultaneously.

With the rainy season approaching, Ethiopia is about to start filling the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile. No deal has been concluded with Egypt and Sudan, who are both totally reliant on the waters of the Nile River, and regional tensions are rising fast.

And then, this week, the assassination of Hachalu Hundessa (p15), an iconic singer and activist, sparked a wave of intercommunal conflict and violent protests that threatens to upend Ethiopia's fragile stability.

All this occurs against the backdrop of the global pandemic and the

accompanying economic crisis, from which Ethiopia is not spared.

All this occurs against the backdrop of the global pandemic and the accompanying economic crisis

The future of 109-million Ethiopians now depends on what Abiy and his administration do next. The internet and information blackout imposed this week, along with multiple reports of brutality from state security forces and the arrests of key opposition leaders, are a worrying sign that the government is resorting to repression to maintain control.

Prime Minister Abiy was more than happy to accept the Nobel Peace Prize last year, even though that peace deal with Eritrea had yet to be tested (its key provisions remain unfulfilled by either side).

Now Ethiopia's peace is under threat. Will Abiy's credentials as peacemaker stand up to the test? ■



The Boys Club: Notice anything missing from this picture? That's right: women. This official photograph was released on Thursday by Ahmednur M Abdi, the permanent secretary in the office of Somalia's prime minister. It shows the country's 22 ministerial director-generals, all of whom are men. With that much testosterone in the room, no wonder Somalia's government is struggling to keep the country together.

Inside:

- **COVER STORY:** A deadly week of unrest in Ethiopia – and the singer whose death sparked it (p15)
- **Report:** Who was Amadou Diallo, and why do US protesters keep chanting his name? (p21)
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- **Sport:** Are European football commentators racist? (p31)

In the headlines this week

Samira Sawlani

Malawi, Kenya and Uganda

Look, up in the sky! Is it a socially-distanced bird? Is it a lockdown-defying plane? No, it's a super display of truth, justice and the Malawian way.

Okay, maybe it's not in the sky. It's actually in the capital Lilongwe, where senior counsel Mordecai Msiskahas has turned down the role of minister of justice. He said he couldn't accept because he had represented the newly-elected President Lazarus Chakwera in the case that saw the 2019 election nullified – and he did not want it to seem like he was being unduly rewarded.

A long way from such heroism, you get gun-toting characters like The Punisher. We're not sure how we feel about him. He refuses to wear a mask, and never makes any puns at all! But we do wonder if Kenyan parliamentarian Babu Owino is a fan. He was arrested earlier this year after a video circulated of him pulling out a gun in a nightclub, following which DJ Evolve was severely injured.

This week NTV Kenya aired a segment featuring a gut-wrenching update on Mr Evolve's recovery, prompting many of his compatriots to express their outrage over Owino's actions. The MP was not having it and is

set to take legal action against the media house, which is better than coming out guns blazing, we guess?

Across the border in Uganda, talk is turning to the 2021 elections. President Museveni will be running for a sixth term, challenged by the dynamic duo of Bobi Wine and Kizza Besigye.

But what's really caught our attention is the news that the amazing activist and academic Dr Stella Nyanzi will be running for a seat in parliament, showing us that not all heroes wear capes – some of them wear stylish Ekitambala headwraps.

Zimbabwe

We're not saying Zimbabwe is like Gotham, but if you become known as a joker there, chances are someone with great power will pounce on you from the shadows. Just this week a 28-year-old man was arrested in Masvingo, for "insulting the president".

Meanwhile, authorities have suspended mobile money transfers and trading on the Zimbabwe stock exchange, under the cover of darkness on a Friday night. We don't think Batman's to blame, but we did hear one of his B-list adversaries may be in town – some guy called Killer Croc.



Wonder woman:
Activist Stella
Nyanzi will be
running for
parliament
 (Photo: Gael
 Grilhot / AFP)

Tanzania and Guinea

With great power comes great... repeatability? President Magufuli of Tanzania is hoping to hang onto his job after elections in October, saying he wants to finish what he started. But is he sticking to his principles, or clinging to power? Ah, what tangled webs we weave.

The opposition in Guinea, meanwhile, is not keen on a three-quel for President Alpha Conde, and is set to resume protests against him soon. He hasn't actually said he'll be running again, instead quoting the famous proverb "the party will decide". Addressing recent rumours about his health, he said: "I am fit and well and I am sure I will bury many people who wish me dead." We sure hope that isn't some eerie foreshadowing, because, well, gosh.

Gabon and DRC

The European Union has named 15 countries whose residents may travel

to the "other" continent, and the only African nations to make the cut are Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Rwanda. Gabon promptly said it wouldn't be giving any more tourist visas to EU nationals. Wakanda Forever, just not for now!

Talking of relations with former colonisers, as the Democratic Republic of Congo marked its independence, King Phillippe of Belgium expressed "deepest regrets" for the "suffering and violence" inflicted during colonialism.

Are regrets an apology? What about reparations? Is Phillippe a hero or a villain? For as long as monuments dedicated to King Leopold II remain, we think the answer is clear.

This week Somalia, Rwanda, DRC and Burundi all celebrated independence anniversaries, and so we salute those that were part of the fight against colonial rule. Never mind the comic books — if you are looking for real heroes, look no further. ■

The Week in Numbers

7

The number of times that Cameroonian activist Andre Blaise Essama has decapitated the same statue of a French war hero in Douala. He has been arrested several times for what authorities view as “vandalism”. “He is not our hero,” Essama told the BBC. “How is it that our ancestors are not represented in public spaces?”



(Photo: Christies.com)

32.6%

The estimated amount by which South Africa's gross domestic product shrank in the second quarter of this year, as compared with the same period last year, according to the country's Reserve Bank. This massive drop was caused by restrictions imposed to limit the spread of Covid-19.

1968

The year that Somalia's National Theatre in Mogadishu first opened its curtains. In the last few decades, it has been caught in the crossfire, occupied by militants and been attacked by suicide bombers. But the building has been refurbished and last week was formally reopened.

€212,500

The amount that a pair of “museum quality” Igbo statues sold for at an auction in Paris. The sale came over the objections of the head of the National Museum in Benin City, who said the objects had been stolen from southern Nigeria during the Biafran war in the 1960s, and should be returned to Nigeria.

2,500 tonnes

The amount of waste, including hazardous electronic waste, which has been illegally dumped in Nigeria and several other African countries by a criminal network based in Spain. Spanish authorities arrested 34 people this week in connection with the scam.

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Mozambique

The town at the centre of the insurgency

Luis Nachote

Last Saturday, insurgents in Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province occupied the seaside district of Mocímboa da Praia for the fourth time.

According to sources who spoke to the *Mail & Guardian*, the assault began in the early hours of the morning with attacks on government buildings and nearby soldiers.

In some areas of Mocímboa da Praia, militants distributed food to people. "The situation is complicated," said one resident. "If they are destroying things of the government and they are not killing us, we are thankful that this fight is not ours, it is theirs with the government."

Later on Saturday, helicopters with the Dyck Advisory Group – a mercenary outfit assisting the Mozambican military – fired on the town in an effort to dislodge the militants. There are conflicting reports over whether the military launched a ground offensive in

conjunction with the aerial attack.

It is thought that several dozen people were killed in the course of the day. These numbers are difficult to verify given the difficulty in obtaining reliable information from the area.

This was the second major attack on Mocímboa da Praia in less than a month, suggesting that the insurgency is gathering momentum.

It is thought that several dozen people were killed in the course of the day, but the numbers are difficult to verify

It began in October 2017 when militants occupied a police station in Mocímboa da Praia, claiming links with international Islamist jihadist groups. Since then, violence in the province has claimed the lives of more than 700 people, and displaced tens of thousands of people. The exact identity and motivations of the insurgents is not fully understood.

The area is also home to one of the largest natural gas discoveries in history, which could be worth nearly \$100-billion over the next 25 years. ■

Kenya

The DJ and the MP

Caroline Chebet

This week, a Kenyan DJ spoke publicly for the first time since being shot in January. In an interview with NTV, shortly after being released from hospital, DJ Evolve – real name Felix Orinda – appeared fragile and weak. He spoke with difficulty and was barely able to move his fingers, which he described as the tools of his trade.

“Currently, I am just here, there is nothing I can do for myself so I am fully dependent on people to do things for me,” said Orinda.

His interview has dominated headlines in Kenya, thanks to the involvement of a Kenyan member of parliament, Babu Owino (pictured). The MP has been charged with attempted murder

in connection with the incident, which occurred in a popular Nairobi nightclub. Owino has denied the charges against him, and was released on bail.

The case is yet to come to court. “Prosecution of Embakasi MP Paul Ongili Babu Owino over attempted murder of DJ Evolve has been slowed down by the inability of the victim to record a statement following the shooting which affected his speech,” Noordin Haji, the director of public prosecutions, said in a tweet.

Owino has denied the charges against him

While DJ Evolve recovers, his life permanently altered by the incident, Owino appears to be going about his life as usual, even teaching online lessons for students who can’t attend school because of the pandemic. This has sparked criticism that Kenya’s judicial system favours the rich and powerful.

Human rights activist David Kuria said that it has taken too long for the prosecution to take up the matter. “What does it mean when suddenly the life of a bubbly 25-year-old is interfered with? When he has to fully depend on others and can barely speak and is immobile? It calls for sobriety in handling issues and speedy justice,” he told the *Mail & Guardian*. ■



Uganda



Pioneer: Susan Okalany is the only woman shortlisted (Photo: supplied)

Top judge up for chief prosecutor job at ICC

Andrew Arinaitwe

While working as a public prosecutor in the early 2000s, Susan Okalany realised that many of the cases being dealt with in Uganda's courts involved crimes against women, such as rape and sexual assault. And yet there was no unit dedicated to the prosecution of these crimes.

"It didn't exist. So I made it," Okalany – now a high court judge – told the *Mail & Guardian*. After extensive lobbying, a department of gender, children and sexual offences was created within the public prosecutor's office. Okalany, naturally, was appointed to head it.

The formidable 51-year-old legal

practitioner, who speaks five languages, is now in the running for another big job: chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. This week, her name was included on a shortlist of just four people being considered to take over from current chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda when her term expires in June 2021. One hundred and 44 people applied for the position. Okalany is the only woman in contention.

Okalany made her name on the international stage when she prosecuted the perpetrators of the 2010 twin terrorist attacks in Kampala. She had taken over the case when the original prosecutor, Joan Kagezi, was assassinated, amid fears for her own safety. She was not daunted. "I said yes, I will handle it," she said. "I am just a courageous person, it's in my blood."

Handle it she did, securing convictions against seven of the accused. For her efforts she was named the 2017 Prosecutor of the Year by the International Association of Prosecutors, for her "outstanding performance domestically and internationally in the fight against terrorism, by leading the team who performed the first successfully prosecuted case in Africa". ■



Photo story

Burna Boy wins big – again

Kiri Rupiah

Nigerian Afrobeats star Burna Boy took home his second consecutive BET award on Sunday, when he won the Best International Act for 2020.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the awards were held virtually. The Nigerian megastar beat out the likes of Inno\$B from the Democratic Republic

of Congo, South Africa's Sho Madjozi, UK acts Dave and Stormzy, and France's Ninho and S.Pri Noir.

Accepting his award from supermodel Naomi Campbell, Burna Boy said: "I just want to take this opportunity to say that sometime around 1835, there was a mission to turn Africa and the nation of Africa into the dominating nation. Now is the time to return and go back to the royalty that we were. In order for black lives to matter, Africa must matter." ■



Burna Boy for Beginners

All the songs you need to know on one handy playlist: <https://bit.ly/BurnaPlaylist>

Yvonne just dey fresh anyhow

Refiloe Seiboko

In an African family you've got four choices of career: doctor, lawyer, engineer, disgrace to the family."

This sentiment, relayed by British comedian Gina Yashere during a stand-up bit, is invoked by Yvonne Orji during her trailblazing new comedy special *Momma, I Made It!*

Orji is one of the breakout stars from the American television network HBO's hugely successful series *Insecure* and is using the popularity she has garnered to make strides in the comedy scene. And snagging a one-woman stand-up special is the exact Nigerian overachieving she is happy to poke fun at in her special.

Using her background as a Nigerian-American born to immigrant parents, Orji dances – literally – back and forth between her two identities and perspectives as a product of grassroots, developing world culture and polished, developed world ways of life.

She colourfully illustrates the difference between her two worlds by employing a zestful ability to imitate both family members and countrymen, as well as several vignettes of her most



recent visit to her family's home in Lagos, Nigeria.

She's not shy to go at common stereotypes of her people, relaying a hilariously vivid account of her regular haggling of vendors at Nigerian marketplaces. "\$50,000? Me? A whole me? If I pay you this much money, will your son come and marry me?"

In *Momma, I Made It!* Orji is entertainingly charismatic and her personality is exuberant. She dances, sings, mimics to a tee and exhibits exactly why the world needs more specials like hers – in the process, exemplifying why "black girl magic" became a thing in the first place. ■

Momma, I Made It! will be available to stream on Showmax from July 6

Lagos weddings lose their soul as Covid-19 hits

Nigeria is having to do without a central part of its culture. **Bolu Akindele**

Yemisi Ajejo and Charles Isidi had been planning their wedding long before they became officially engaged in December last year. “We had already settled on a wedding date before there was an official ring-giving,” Yemisi tells *Mail & Guardian*. “The ring was just symbolic for us.”

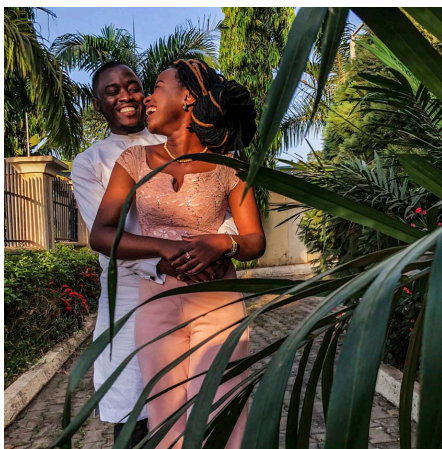
They had scheduled their wedding for April and by February, the couple were all set for their big day. This has always been Yemisi’s dream – to tie up all the loose ends regarding her wedding months before the date. “I couldn’t really think of anything that could stop us from getting married,” Yemisi says.

Then the coronavirus hit Nigeria.

The best-laid plans

“I actually felt like we would still be able to get married in a month’s time,” Charles says. But the number of infected cases continued to increase.

In March, three weeks after the first



Love on hold: Charles and Yemisi had planned their wedding long before the official date but are still waiting to get married (Photo: supplied)

confirmed Covid-19 case, Lagos State government immediately placed a ban on all forms of public gatherings.

Two weeks until their wedding, the number of cases had doubled, many parts of the country were on lockdown and the government had placed a ban on all inter-state travel and domestic flights.

So they suspended their wedding.

In Africa’s most populous country weddings are not just a celebration of conjugal matrimony. They are the cementing of tradition and the creation of new relationships. They’re where children look forward to monetary gifts from aunts, where old colleagues and relatives reunite and where family members hope to out-dress each other.

Weddings have earned their space in the social life of Nigerians. The wedding industry in Nigeria has become the subject of lifestyle brands, documentaries, comedy skits, Nollywood's highest-grossing movies, a plethora of songs and even BuzzFeed listicles. All of that thriving culture hit a brick wall in the face of the coronavirus.

Economist Fadekemi Abiru says the million-dollar Nigerian wedding industry has become a major source of employment and income for many small- and medium-scale businesses. In 2017, a mobile toilet startup company reported that weddings accounted for 40% of its revenue.

The country has begun the first phase of reopening its economy, and weddings are making a slow, less extravagant return to the Nigerian psyche. In April, Pastor Bolaji Idowu of Harvesters International Christian Centre posted a picture of a marriage ceremony he officiated at over the video-conferencing app Zoom. It was the first virtual wedding in the history of the church. There has been a surge in the number of live-streamed weddings as coronavirus cases in Nigeria continue to increase and events are still required to adhere to physical-distancing rules.

'New normal'

It's been more than three months since Charles and Yemisi saw each other – the longest they've been away from each other since they began planning their wedding.

The lockdown found them in different

states of the country. "Considering we should be living together, it's not been the easiest thing," Yemisi says. "The next time I see [Charles], I'm just going to hug him till my body enters his body."

The couple has set a new date for their wedding, and they hope their family and friends can travel to attend their wedding. Planning a wedding that reduces the possibility of any health risk for the attendees is a burden because it involves a total redesign of their event.

"The typical partying, dancing, hugging – would we still have that?" Yemisi says. "To be honest, I don't know. But at least, we are getting married." ■



READER PIC

One of our readers, Mbah Drusilla Engonwei epse Ndikum, from Yaoundé, Cameroon sent us this photo of her wedding to Ndikum Lordson a few weeks ago. "I wanted to ensure that I could use my wedding to sensitise people on the measures to prevent the spread of this virus even during marriage celebrations." (Photo: Suh Pivagah Emmanuel)

The assassination of Hachalu Hundessa

A week of violent unrest has left Ethiopia in turmoil



Song of injustice: Hachalu Hundessa in the music video for his hit *Maalan Jira*

MONDAY

At about 9.30pm, on the southern outskirts of Addis Ababa, not far from where the capital city ends and the state of Oromia begins, a man was gunned down. His name was Hachalu Hundessa. He was a famous musician, and an Oromo rights activist. He was 34 years old.

His body was rushed to the nearby Tirunesh Beijing General Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

TUESDAY

Overnight, in several towns in Oromia, thousands of young people took to the streets to express their outrage over Hundessa's murder. Such was the degree of Hundessa's popularity and influence. Much of the outrage was directed against the government, which has historically marginalised the Oromo people.

In the morning, thousands of people flooded the streets around Addis Ababa's St Paul Hospital where a post-mortem examination was being

carried out. As his coffin left the hospital, the vehicle carrying it was surrounded by young men and women.

After some confusion, Hundessa's body was eventually taken to the Oromia Cultural Centre in central Addis Ababa, and then moved to Ambo, Hundessa's home town, according to the *Addis Standard*.

This impromptu funeral procession was broadcast live on the local Oromia Media Network (OMN). Shortly afterwards, police ransacked the broadcaster's offices and detained several staff members.

"The police have rounded up our journalists and destroyed property at our Addis Ababa headquarters," Kitaba Megersa, an OMN board member, told the *Mail & Guardian*. "A few of our employees escaped police but others were arrested either during the raid on headquarters or out in the field while covering the mourning."

Thirty-five people were arrested, allegedly for attempting to take custody of Hundessa's body to bury it in Addis Ababa. Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba, both high-profile Oromo opposition leaders, were among those detained. Their arrests sent shockwaves across the country because of their almost unparalleled influence among opposition candidates.

In an effort to prevent further unrest, the government imposed an internet blackout on the country. The *M&G* was (and remains) unable to email, message or WhatsApp sources within Ethiopia.

But news spread regardless. Protests continued across Oromia. In Adama, several buildings were set on fire. In Harar, a statue of Ras Makonnen – an Ethiopian emperor and father of Haile Selassie – was toppled, the *Addis Standard* reported.

That evening, gunshots and three explosions were heard in Addis Ababa. Police said that several suspects in Hundessa's murder had been arrested.

Violent unrest and clashes between protesters and security forces persisted.

In Addis Ababa, "gunshots echoed through many neighbourhoods and gangs armed with machetes and sticks roamed the streets. Six witnesses described a situation pitting youths of Oromo origin against some of the city's other ethnic groups, and both sides skirmished with police," according to Reuters journalist Dawit Endeshaw.

That afternoon, police confirmed that 81 people had been killed in Oromia, including three members of security forces. More had died in Addis Ababa, but were not included in this count.

Eskinder Nega, a prominent journalist and activist, was arrested. He

Internet blackout: Ethiopians gathered in Minnesota on Tuesday to protest the death of Hachalu Hundessa. As a result of the internet blackout imposed by the Ethiopian government, The M&G was unable to obtain verified photographs of the protests happening within Ethiopia
 (Photo: Stephen Maturen/Getty/AFP)



runs an advocacy group opposed to the radicalisation of Oromo youth, whom he compares with Rwanda's Interehamwe – a paramilitary group that helped to carry out the country's genocide.

At a stadium in Ambo, Hachalu Hundessa was laid to rest. Security was tight across the city and most mourners were prevented from attending. At least two people died in scuffles as they attempted to get inside the stadium.

"Hachalu is not dead. He will remain in my heart and the hearts of millions of Oromo people forever," said his wife, Fantu Demisew Diro, in a short speech. "I request a monument be erected in his memory in Addis where his blood was spilt."

Police have confirmed that 10 people, including two police officers, were killed in Addis Ababa this week and that scores more have been injured. Additionally, 250 vehicles were damaged and 20 were set on fire.

Anecdotal reports suggest that calm is returning to Addis and Oromia, but these claims are difficult to verify due to the ongoing internet shutdown.

The East African reported that Ethiopia's government is blaming "unnamed external forces and local opposition figures" for the unrest. The Nairobi-based newspaper says that Egypt is on Ethiopia's list of suspects: the two governments are in the middle of a bitter diplomatic dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which is due to start filling this month (Egypt is concerned the dam will impact its access to Nile River water).

There is no evidence which points to Egypt's involvement. At this point, it is not clear who assassinated Hundessa. "I don't have any suspicion, and I don't want to speculate, because it's not helpful in any way. It has to be

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

somebody with the motive, the means and opportunity, you can imagine there are many suspects,” said Mehari Taddele Maru, a professor at the European University Institute and a technical committee member of the Tana High-Level Security Forum.

One thing that is clear is that his death was a trigger for underlying tensions. “There are grievances which go back decades, even centuries, among the Oromo community,” Laetitia Bader, Human Rights Watch’s Horn of Africa director, explained. These grievances have not changed and are rooted in historic and ongoing marginalisation and discrimination – which fuelled widespread protests in 2014 and again in 2017.

It was these protests that brought Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, from the Oromo community himself, into power in 2018. “There was a honeymoon period in which the promises that the new government was making were enough. That shifted because the reforms aren’t going ahead as quickly as before, but also we have definitely seen a return to abusive practices in much of Oromia,” Bader said.

Rashid Abdi, an independent political analyst, said that Abiy struggled to deliver on his promises to the Oromo community without alienating other communities. “Progressively Abiy took his eye off the ball completely, consumed by foreign affairs, and ignored rising tension within the Oromo heartland. Radical leaders like Jawar Mohammed came to be seen as leaders of the Oromo cause.”

Abdi added: “Ethiopia is in a serious crisis and it’s difficult to know what will happen. Things are getting uglier by the minute ... The ethnic dimension, this can quickly escalate.” But just because it can, doesn’t mean it will, he said. “Ethiopia has been through a lot: revolution, wars, famine. It’s a very strong state, resilient and it has a tendency of pulling back from the brink.”

Timeline compiled by Simon Allison and Zecharias Zelalem

The voice of the Oromo revolution: Who was Hachalu Hundessa?

Zecharias Zelalem

Hachalu Hundessa – aged just 34 when he was killed – was a larger than life figure, popular for his outspokenness and his use of music to advocate

for the rights of the Oromo. The country's largest ethnic group has endured systematic repression by the central government for much of Ethiopia's modern history.

In the 2000s, the government incarcerated thousands of Oromo people, including Hundessa. He spent five years in prison after being accused of links to a banned political party, until a judge ruled that he be released due to insubstantial evidence. He was given no compensation for his wrongful imprisonment.

While behind bars, along with hundreds of other young men like himself who were imprisoned on trumped up charges, Hundessa became convinced that amplifying the plight of the Oromo through his music was his true calling.

His 2015 hit single *Maalan Jira* epitomised his vision. The song is catchy, with a vibrant beat for those who don't understand the Afaan Oromo language. But to understand the words is to recognise his status as a master lyricist. Behind the uplifting tune is a lament of historical injustices suffered by Oromo farmers over half a century.

While behind bars, Hundessa became convinced that highlighting the plight of the Oromo was his true calling

The release of the single came shortly after the announcement of an expansion of Addis Ababa into surrounding areas. The plan did not include compensation for the inhabitants of these areas. The issue was so charged that it sparked a wave of protests. Oromo people took to the streets of towns and villages to call for the cancellation of the plan, singing along with Hundessa as they did so, galvanised by his lyrics and melodies that pulled on their heartstrings.

Elsewhere in the country protests ignited, primarily in the Amhara region. With the nation brought to a standstill, it became impossible for the status quo to remain. These political pressures are ultimately what catapulted Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed – himself Oromo, albeit affiliated with the ruling party rather than the political opposition – into office.

In 2017, Hundessa released the song *Jirra*, which translates to “we are here”, and was far more uplifting than his previous hit. He celebrated gains made by Oromo society as a whole, and paid tribute to the sacrifice that it took to come this far.

As renowned Oromo scholar and Keele University lecturer Awol Allo described it, *Jirra* “embodied a newfound collective optimism, a feeling that Oromo culture is no longer in jeopardy, and a sense that the Oromo society is finally in the middle of a robust ascendancy”.

Hachalu is survived by his wife and three children. ■

SO, YOU THINK YOU'RE A REAL PAN-AFRICAN?



Take this quiz to find out how well you really know our continent

1. Which landlocked country can be found in South Africa?
2. What is the continent's largest lake and the world's second largest freshwater lake?
3. Nouakchott is the capital of which country?
4. Singer, songwriter and activist Angelique Kidjo is from which country?
5. In which country might you be able to visit the Zuma Rock?
6. Which country has had more than 350 elephants mysteriously die over the past two months?
7. Which city is known as the "Geneva of Africa"?
8. Where can one visit the House of Slaves and the Door of No Return?
9. Where do rooibos leaves grow?
10. Which tree is known as the king of African trees?
11. Which West African president has been in power since 1982?
12. Which Afrobeats star recently won the best international act at the BET Awards for the second consecutive year?

How did I do?

WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to +27 73 805 6068 and we will send you the answers immediately.

0-4

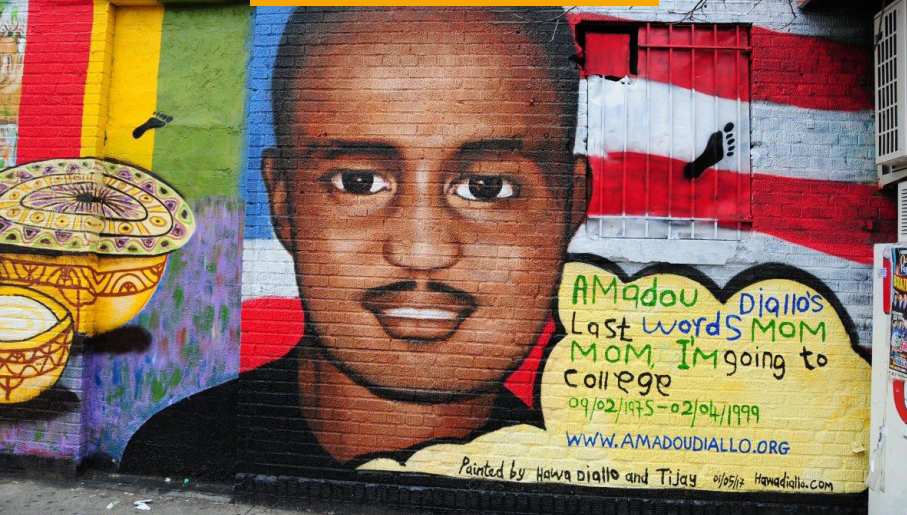
"I think I need to start reading more newspapers."

5-8

"I can't wait to explore more of this continent."

9-12

"I think Geneva is the Arusha of Europe."



Harrowing heritage: A mural honouring Amadou Diallo, a Guinean immigrant living in the United States, who was killed by the NYPD in 1999 (Photo: supplied)

Amadou Diallo's legacy lives

The Guinean man was killed by NYPD officers 21 years ago. Today protesters still invoke his name as they fight for justice. **Nick Roll**

As Tanya Thorpe watched the protests against George Floyd's killing spread across the United States, even up to her own relatively conservative neighbourhood, she thought about the first time she went to a protest, over the shooting of an immigrant named Amadou Diallo.

"That was the first time I saw something and felt like I had to be there," she said.

Diallo, born to a Guinean family in Liberia in 1975, was unarmed and in his

apartment building when he was shot dead by police officers in New York City in 1999. The trial of the police officers was moved to Albany near where Thorpe lived. She attended a protest during the trial, hopeful that justice would be served.

"My young, naive self thought maybe this time there will be a conviction; something will happen, something will change," Thorpe said.

Twenty-one years later, Americans are still protesting police killings of black

people, and the damage that systemic racism has wrought on the black community. A trial followed Diallo's shooting, although not one of the police officers who shot him was convicted of any crimes, and one of them remained on the force until 2019.

But Diallo's death has not been forgotten. Instead, his name has been invoked in recent weeks together with other black Americans killed by the police since.

Many of the systems and tactics that killed Diallo are still in place

Diallo was on the stoop of his apartment building at night when four plain-clothes officers got out of their unmarked car and approached him after deeming him suspicious. They said they thought he reached for a gun after retreating inside the building, although he turned out to be pulling out his wallet, presumably to show the officers his ID. Forty-one shots were fired.

After his death, he was described in *The New York Times* by neighbours and relatives as a "shy, hard-working man with a ready smile, a devout Muslim who did not smoke or drink". Speaking to television station CBS last week, Diallo's mother, Kadiatou Diallo, described speaking to her son just before his death. He told her he had just saved enough money to start college.

"As the mother of Amadou Diallo, having to suffer my loss on February 4

1999, my wound was opened again," she said, on hearing about Floyd's death. "Retelling [Amadou's] story today is breaking my heart."

A mural of Diallo was painted in the Bronx after his death in 2001, and in 2017 a second version was painted, this time by Hawa Diallo, a Mauritanian immigrant and artist. Amadou Diallo's legacy was still resonating as the country saw more than 1,000 people killed by police that year.

Amadou Diallo's death inspired some police reforms, at least in New York City, but those reforms weren't enough to stop the killings of others in the city who have died since.

Much of the overall policing systems and tactics that killed Diallo are still more or less in place across the country. These systems have become the target of protesters aiming to defund police departments and pump their budgets into social services, rather than incremental policing reforms.

Diallo's name lives on, from the street in his neighborhood named after him to the foundation his mother started in his name that gives out college scholarships. It also lives on for Thorpe, as part of a larger process of remembering and celebrating African-American history.

"Some people are just now learning about Emmitt Till," she said. "They're just learning these names and these stories. There's a reason why we say, 'Say their names,' at least in our community, and it's because, you know, we're told that once you stop talking about somebody, that's when they're really gone." ■

Graphic: JOHN McCANN



Finding the balance

In this essay, novelist **Elnathan John** discovers an unlikely calm in the midst of, and perhaps because of, the upheaval that surrounds us.

You are here in this room, 45 square metres, warm, thankful that your concerns are only the concerns of half the world and that somehow, in this pandemic you are able to escape, into a world full of worry. You can blend in, not having to expose the wounds that you have because everyone around is bleeding. If someone had told you it would take a pandemic to feel normal again, you would have called them a dreamer.

You know a couple of people

stranded in Berlin and cities around, trapped by restrictions that either do not allow them to leave the cities they visited or return to the cities they came from. Every day they scour the news for word that they can finally escape this overextended trip, back to their lives, or to what used to be their lives.

You have always worked from home so there is nothing to run to or hope for, no normalcy to reminisce about. Only your mind, from which there is no escape. When you first moved to Berlin from Abuja, you traded the sound of generators for the almost imperceptible hum of room heaters. Open sewers for paved streets, heavily spiced meals for bland food. Traded love for the promise of love, warm weather year-round for grey winters and a spring that cannot decide if it wants to be chilly or warm. Family and loved ones for the cold distance of a larger, richer, wilder city. And always you weighed it on a scale. What you had gained versus what you had lost.

You did not wish for much, just for the things you had given up to be at least matched by the things you wanted to give up and what you gained in their place. This is what you have always wanted: that after every storm, you are able, somehow, to find balance.

Often you dream of your time in Abuja, your favorite Nigerian city. The city which built and broke you.

You think of your favorite place there, where you often found escape – the hills around the dam that is the source of the city's drinking water a few kilometers from the capital.

It was on the outskirts of Abuja that the perfect metaphor for how you felt presented itself to you. It was there, dancing delicately on the edges of that almost-still body of water called Usuma Dam: empty plastic bottles and cans of soft drinks, polythene bags, disposable cups and plates, a condom wrapper torn in a way that suggested urgency, a lone leg of worn-out slippers.

The word that first presented itself to you was flotsam. But then you thought, flotsam refers to debris and wreckage from a ship so, technically, the detritus from people picnicking at the dam isn't flotsam. But you liked the word, so you used it anyway. Flotsam, you said out loud.

That is how the city made you feel then – floating, aimlessly in a place with no soul, no flow, no character to its movement, nothing organic about its development. Flotsam, because you felt like you had fallen off the grid and couldn't say what you had been doing there for six years since you moved from your home city, Kaduna, to go to law school and then work as a lawyer. Flotsam, because much of the wealth Abuja boasts of felt like the debris from a country wrecked by open theft and corruption – the luxury cars, the gaudy mansions.

You had always wanted to climb the hills around the dam but they always looked too steep – not something any of the shoes you had could execute. You had always skirted about the hills enough to contemplate the magnificence of the view and experience the thin freshness that you imagined the air up there must have. Skirting, another metaphor for how you lived, never really going the whole way.

Skirting. Like when a lovely journalist you barely knew asked you to be spontaneous and come with her on a long road trip and you said you'd think about it. You packed a bag but thought: "What if I have an accident? There are always accidents on Nigerian roads. What if there are people killing people on the roads?

These things happen..." Skirting. Enough thought about being spontaneous to contemplate what nice things could happen, enough to pack a bag and feel the rush of blood to your head, but not enough to leave the house.

The dam was always lovely on weekdays because there was no noise or activity, no lovers looking for a quiet place to fondle, nothing to upset the balance of things. Only glossy colourful wild lizards you thought might be five-lined skinks with bright blue tails and olive-to-brown striped bodies. As you hoped to see a snake or monkey, you walked trying not to upset the balance of things. You always walked gently, so as not to scare all the life creeping and crawling because you realised



Still existence: 'The last time you were at the dam you decided that you were tired of skirting, of being afraid to die' (Photo: Mirella Mahlstein)

you were in their space.

Sometimes a city does this to you – makes you forget whose space you are in. Or maybe it is Nigeria, where personal space means little, where a passenger can start screaming in the name of Jesus in a crowded bus, or your neighbour who is fasting can play Quranic recitations loud enough to give you a headache.

These days, as the pandemic imposes physical distancing restrictions on people in many parts of the world, you think this might be one positive thing for your home country: that perhaps, finally, your countrymen might think more about personal space, about speaking without always touching, about not instinctively reaching, uninvited, for the bodies of strangers.

You think in particular of the last time you were there at the dam, years ago. You stared at an empty bottle of wine between two large rocks up on the side of one of the hills, imagining two people, or three, sharing a bottle, passing it around, laughing, maybe smoking. You looked around for cigarette butts that might tell stories. You were careful not to leave behind anything because these bits of trash upset the balance of things.

That last time, you decided, after torturing yourself with thoughts of all the things that could happen – sliding down a slippery part of the rock and scraping all the skin off your body, tripping and plunging down to

the rocks below or just losing breath and collapsing after reaching the top – that you were tired of skirting, tired of being afraid to die, tired of feeling like flotsam, tired of being afraid to upset the balance of things in your life.

And so you started climbing, slowly at first, crouching, walking sideways, gauging the steepness and then increasingly, more confidently, taking bigger strides, straightening. Halfway up and panting, you realised that most of the steepness was imagined.

At the peak, you found it all undisturbed. No debris. Even more five-lined skinks. And air – the quality of which you could not remember breathing. Before Abuja hardened you, you might have cried. This is beautiful, you said to yourself even though “beautiful” seemed like such a bland word to describe this. You stopped trying to describe it. You took it all in.

You knew that you had not just discovered the meaning of life and yes, your problems would still be there when you got back down. But in that moment you felt walls and fears shatter inside you. Fear of uncertainty. Fear of death. And as you climbed down you thought of all the things you needed to do which might upset the balance of things but would stop you from just floating aimlessly: write more about your dead brother, trust someone, love

without fear.

Now in Berlin, you are back there. Floating. Skirting. You had figured out one city, learnt its mould, its tone, its cadences, swayed to its rhythm and rebelled against it, knew its contours by heart – you could trace it blind – then left it, traded it for a new one, a bigger one, a colder one, a more functional but far less friendly one, where you did not know what bumps were ahead or if your shock absorbers could take it.

You have become a child again, learning what words mean in a new language. You are learning what a smile means on German faces, what a straight, cold face means. You are figuring out the difference between racism and the cultural rudeness of Berlin. You are learning what it means when people in the shops have no desire for chit-chat or pleasantries. And you wonder where you fit in all of this.

You float. You skirt. Again.

Many days you want to scream, to leave your body and examine it, to escape into knowing. Knowing what existing in this city means. What love means in this city. What a touch means. What a smile means. What it means to say no, to say yes, to say maybe.

And now, as everyone reels from the uncertainties of this pandemic which has changed the face of cities and towns and countries, which has changed land and air and sea, a

strange calm sluices over you. For a few moments you find yourself able to escape into this chaos, into a sea of familiar feelings and worries: people unable to recognise their cities and hometowns, people unable to recognise their own lives as they lose jobs or have to work differently, as they are stuck in their homes with partners and children and parents they have to endure.

Everywhere there are people unmoored – you see it in their eyes as they queue in grocery stores trying to make sure they have enough toilet paper and non-perishable food items. You see it in the urgency, in the unquestioning compliance with rules as they keep 1.5 meters away from potential carriers of the virus, as they find ways of not touching door handles and other surfaces.

For the first time in a long time you feel at home in this city and in the world, where everyone seems to be floating, looking for balance. And because you know it is all temporary, you will try, with this calm to find that balance, so that when it all goes back to normal, when everyone goes back to prioritising profits and greed, arranging trysts with their lovers and reconnecting with their barbers and hair stylists; when they feel safe enough to angrily bump into each other on the train, when the mourning stops, you will have to find home again, you will have to find balance. ■

Why merging DFID and the FCO will echo British imperialism

Aikande C Kwayu

On June 16, United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the merger of the Department for International Development and Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This is an important development because the way aid is managed has massive implications for how the UK relates to recipient countries – and how this relationship is understood.

My book *Religion and British International Development Policy* looks at the UK's management of aid through the framework of party politics. This is an important lens because each major political party in the UK – Labour and Conservative – manages aid differently.

In 1975, Labour introduced a Ministry for Aid but without cabinet status. Under Conservative party rule from 1979 to 1997, aid was relegated to a small unit within the FCO and used to further political objectives during the Cold War. In 1997, when Labour won power, a growing recognition of the need for development expertise led to DFID being established with the core aim of eliminating global poverty.

The perception that a dedicated aid agency was distributing funds on the basis of need not self-interest enhanced

the UK's soft power. Along with public support for aid, this encouraged the Conservative Party to maintain DFID and commit to the UN 0.7% of GNI aid budget target. But it has been clear for some years that senior Conservatives, backed by the right wing press, want UK money to be used to more explicitly further “national interests”.

From 2015 onwards the aid budget was allocated across a number of other departments including Defence, Trade and Investment and the FCO. Now that this trend has culminated in the scrapping of DFID, the UK is losing the friendly face of its engagement with Africa. For many years, DFID has played a lubricating role, enabling the UK to push its interests without being seen to operate on the basis of realpolitik. Engaging with African countries through the singular lenses of foreign policy is likely to revive memories of British imperialism. ■

Aikande C Kwayu is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This analysis was produced in partnership with Democracy in Africa





No opposition: Recently sworn-in Évariste Ndayishimiye believes there should be no opposition parties in the country (Photo: Tchandrou Nitanga for AFP)

Burundi's new president and his dangerous beliefs

Thierry Uwamahoro

Two glaring absences marked the swearing-in ceremony of Burundi's new president, retired army general Évariste Ndayishimiye. The first was understandable. The second, not so much.

The first absentee was that of the late president Pierre Nkurunziza's widow. The inauguration festivities occurred while Denise Nkurunziza was still mourning her husband who wouldn't be buried for another week. The second absentee was the leading opposition leader Agathon Rwaswa and runner-up in last month's presidential poll.

It has been speculated that Rwaswa,

who still serves as the vice-president of the National Assembly, was not invited to the inauguration.

Other presidential candidates, who barely registered at the ballot box, congratulated Ndayishimiye on his election, but Rwaswa challenged the official results in court, alleging serious irregularities.

Rwaswa, having exhausted the sole legal appeal available, respected the Constitutional Court's decision that granted the presidency to Ndayishimiye. However, he maintains the win was fraudulent.

Rwaswa's position irked Ndayishimiye,

who has previously accused his leading political opponent of being a tool of colonialists.

These terms, “colonialists” or “tools of colonialists”, have become very convenient terms in recent Burundian politics. Ndayishimiye’s party has used them to target those who, in the ruling party’s eyes, have committed the highest forms of treason against the country. And their version of treason includes peaceful protests.

Ndayishimiye’s inaugural speech heavily featured those despised colonialists. The new president surmised that nearly the entire political opposition in Burundi is made up of colonialists’ tools.

“Opposition should disappear in Burundian political lexicon,” Ndayishimiye argued in his inaugural speech. “What is a political party that doesn’t agree with the government? What other government does it serve?” he asked.

Clearly, in his mind, to be a political opponent, one must be serving a foreign government, ergo betraying his country. (In Kirundi, “opposition” is translated as “those who do not agree with or speak the same language as the government.”)

The long list of Ndayishimiye’s colonialists’ “useful idiots” include leading civil society organisations and all of those who protested former president Nkurunziza’s controversial third term. Hundreds of thousands of those remain exiled following the Nkurunziza regime’s bloody repression.

Ndayishimiye’s views are dangerous

and antithetical to pluralistic political competition in a supposedly democratic state.

There have been several reports of a group of ruling party youth – the notorious Imbonerakure – performing violent acts against opposition supporters, particularly Rwasas, over the years and throughout the country with total impunity.

By Ndayishimiye othering a large segment of Burundians, he signals to the Imbonerakure that their acts of violence toward “colonialists’ tools” are state-sanctioned or at least justified.

Predictably, Ndayishimiye’s words have not reassured those who felt hopeful in the new regime. So much for political opening.

Judging by the opening salvo, it seems Ndayishimiye, who like Nkurunziza is ironically said to be a “unifier” in the party, might be following in his predecessor’s footsteps. There are also many who had given him the benefit of the doubt, until he appointed Alain Guillaume Bunyoni, a notorious police general under United States sanctions for human rights violations, to the powerful post of prime minister. But his inaugural speech was already problematic.

Ndayishimiye has a long list of economic projects. This is laudable. But should he choose to persist with the same violent and divisive politics that failed many of his predecessors, his economic plan won’t flourish either. Seven years just began. He has time to reset course for the better. ■

The racial bias in European football commentary

White players are 'smart' and black players are 'strong'. Luke Feltham

When an English-speaking commentator praises a footballer's intelligence, there is a 62.6% chance he is referring to a player with a lighter skin. This is just one of the stark findings of a study into racial bias in football in Europe.

The study by Danish research firm RunRepeat analysed 2,073 statements made by English-speaking commentators during 80 matches in Europe's big four men's leagues in the 2019/2020 season.

When looking at athletic abilities the disparity was even greater

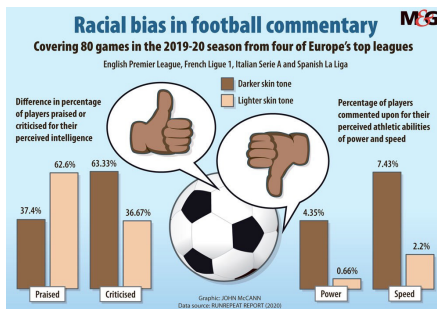
The researchers labelled players as having a lighter skin tone or darker skin tone based on the data found in video game *Football Manager 2020*.

They found that lighter skin tone

players were praised for their mental attributes. They were significantly more likely to receive a positive remark on their intelligence (62.60%), versatility (65.79%), quality (62.79%) and work rate (60.40%). By contrast, darker skin tone players received 63.33% of the criticisms made about intelligence.

When looking at athletic abilities the disparity was even greater. The majority – 86.76% – of positive comments about power were directed at the darker skin tone group and they occupied a 84.17% margin in the speed category.

The results of the study paint a very different picture to that which European leagues are now trying to portray. In every Premier League game since its resumption during the Covid-19 pandemic, teams have taken a knee in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, while all teams have emblazoned the wording on their kits. More often than not, the commentators remark on what a "powerful statement" it is. ■





The Big Picture

The Great Presidential Palace in the Sky: Pierre Nkurunziza, the late president of Burundi, was laid to rest on June 26. His state funeral was held at the Ingoma stadium in Gitega, the capital, with thousands in attendance. A week earlier, his successor, Évariste Ndayishimiye, was inaugurated in the very same stadium. (Photo: Tchandrour Nitanga via AFP)

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