

The Continent

with Mail & Guardian



**THEY SHOT HER IN
THE BACK. 36 TIMES.**



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FABRIC MAP OF AFRICA



Wear in the world

The Fabric Map of Africa was designed by Kenyan artist Priya Shah. Her company, Mia Kora, sells a range of scarves and shawls, many of which are inspired by fabrics and textiles found across the continent. "I've tried to put together a visual that best represents African textiles," Shah told *The Continent*. It is not supposed to be a comprehensive map – "There are hundreds of fabrics, there are 55 countries, you can't put everything in" – but rather an artistic illustration of the sheer wealth of this continent's textile history.

This week *The Continent* publishes our first story in Swahili. In a powerful op-ed, Nanjala Nyabola argues that Kenyan politicians are putting the country at risk by ignoring their own rules for reducing the spread of the coronavirus.

The Week in Numbers

219

The number of prisoners who escaped from a jail in Moroto, Uganda. The prisoners overpowered the guards and stole 15 AK-47 rifles and ammunition. Many fled half-naked into the surrounding countryside after removing their distinctive yellow prison uniforms.

12-million

The estimated number of South Africans who have “probably” been infected with Covid-19, according to the health minister. This is about 20% of the 58-million population. Despite this high infection rate, the country's death toll remains relatively low, sitting at 15,772 as of September 18.

5,000 Kenyan shillings

The price charged by Nairobi tailors for a new police uniform. Police uniforms were redesigned in 2018 (as modelled here by former inspector general Joseph Boinett), but not all officers got the new kit. This week police stations in Kenya's capital started sending home policemen who were not properly attired.



10 years

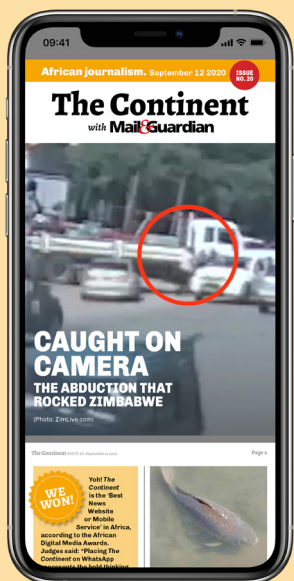
The length of the prison sentence handed down to a 13-year-old boy in Kano State. The boy was convicted of blasphemy in August, after making disparaging remarks about God during a conversation with his friend. Rights groups have called for the sentence to be overturned.

200 birr

The highest denomination bank note in Ethiopia, introduced for the first time this month. Previously, the highest denomination bill was 100 birr. The new note is part of a sweeping redesign of the currency that is supposed to prevent forgery and curb illicit money transfers.

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Mozambique



They shot her in the back – 36 times.

**Mozambican soldiers
executed an unarmed
woman on a rural road in
Cabo Delgado**

Luis Nhachote

The video is shaky, but clear. In it, a woman is walking alone on an asphalt road near the town of Awasse in Cabo Delgado province, which is the site of a growing anti-government insurgency. She is naked and unarmed. We don't know her name.

Five or six armed men enter the frame, all wearing Mozambican army uniforms. They catch up to the woman, and start to beat her with a long stick. Then one of the

soldiers opens fire. The woman drops to the ground. The others join in, riddling the woman's corpse with bullets. At least 36 shots are fired.

The soldiers turn around, and walk back to where they came from. "We've just killed Al Shabaab," one of them says. Another looks directly into the camera. He gives an ironic salute, and smiles.

A litany of abuses

Earlier in September, Amnesty International delivered a scathing report on human rights violations committed by Mozambican security forces in Cabo Delgado. Denied access to the area, its report was based on gruesome videos and images that had been analysed by researchers.

"The videos and pictures show the attempted beheading, torture and other ill-treatment of prisoners; the dismemberment of alleged opposition fighters; possible extrajudicial executions; and the transport and discarding of a large number of corpses into apparent mass graves," Amnesty said.

Mozambique's ministry of defence issued a blanket denial. It went further, suggesting that Amnesty had been fooled by "the covert and reductionist propaganda of the terrorist group operating in Cabo Delgado, which aims

to denigrate the image of the defence and security forces”.

Officially, Mozambican officials have taken a similar line in response to the video of the women being executed. Although the defence ministry condemned the images as “shocking, abusive, disgusting, horrifying and, above all, condemnable in all their dimensions”, Defence Minister Jaime Neto insisted the video was fake. He blamed “malicious people” for trying to ruin the army’s reputation.

Unofficially, however, a source within the ministry of defence told the *Mail & Guardian* that the soldiers in the video have been identified. “The case is already being dealt with internally,” said the source, who was not permitted to speak on the record. He said the woman was shot because she was suspected of witchcraft; and claimed the approach of a naked woman was a superstitious ritual that heralded an insurgent attack.

“What is wrong, stupid and reprehensible is the public execution of the woman and consequently sharing the video,” the source said.

Out of control

The insurgency in Cabo Delgado began in 2017 with an attack on a police station. Since then it has increased both in intensity and in brutality. Little is known about the insurgents or their motivations, except that they have some affiliation with the Islamic State.

Their capacity has grown markedly this year: the insurgents appear to have access to sophisticated weapons

such as heavy artillery and drones, and have sporadically been able to seize control over the strategic port of Mocímboa da Praia.

Earlier in September, Amnesty International delivered a scathing report on human rights violations committed by Mozambican security forces in Cabo Delgado

Mozambique’s defence force has appeared powerless to contain the insurgency, despite seeking assistance from foreign mercenary outfits, such as the Dyck Advisory Group and Russia’s Wagner Group.

Authorities have sought to restrict the flow of information from the region, and have arrested journalists and researchers who have got too close to the conflict.

Complicating matters further is the presence in the region of one of the world’s largest untapped natural gas reserves, expected to be worth in the region of \$60-billion. Major international gas companies such as Total have already set up operations there, and employ hundreds of private security contractors for their own protection.

Mozambican and international rights groups, meanwhile, including the National Human Rights Commission, have called for independent investigations into atrocities committed by both sides in the conflict. ■

Kenya

The US military wants to bomb Kenya

The United States military has asked for permission to carry out armed drone strikes in Kenya, according to a report in the *New York Times*. Specifically, it wants to go after Al Shabaab fighters who it believes are operating in the eastern part of the country.

Notably, it is asking permission not from the Kenyan government – although presumably that would follow – but from the US secretary of defence and, ultimately, President Donald Trump.

The US military has conducted an extensive drone war against Al Shabaab, an Islamist militant group, in neighbouring Somalia. This has dramatically escalated in intensity over the past few years (as of May 18, the Trump administration had launched 40 airstrikes in Somalia in 2020 alone).

But Al Shabaab has also struck back – most significantly, in an attack in January on a US facility near Lamu in Kenya, in which three Americans were killed. ■



(Photo: Isaac Brekken/Getty)

Uganda



The policeman and the flood

The story behind photographer Nicholas Bamulanzeki's iconic image of the policeman in the Ugandan floods

Andrew Arinaitwe

Nicholas Bamulanzeki, a photo-journalist, was sitting in his office on the fifth floor of a tower block overlooking

the Queen's Clock Tower roundabout in Kampala. Usually, the busy intersection was awash with traffic, but on this early September day it was submerged under several feet of water. The capital had been

struck by torrential rains, and this area was notorious for its poor drainage.

Bamulanzeki watched as cars struggled to make their way through the flood. “I said, ‘No, I must go down and take some pictures; you never know what I might get!’” he told *The Continent*. He grabbed his camera, put on his gumboots and raincoat, and made his way downstairs.

The policeman appeared desperate to get to the other side. After agreeing to a fee, a young man hoisted the policeman onto his shoulders and began trudging through the floodwaters

There he found cars and boda bodas (motorcycle taxis) struggling through the water. Enterprising young men were offering to carry pedestrians on their backs from one side to the other, for a fee, in Ugandan shillings, of between \$8 and \$14.

Bamulanzeki noticed a policeman entering these negotiations. He appeared desperate to get to the other side. After agreeing to a fee, a young man hoisted the policeman onto his shoulders and began trudging through the floodwaters.

“I aimed my camera at him and took the shot,” said Bamulanzeki. He was careful to make sure the policeman’s face was not visible.

“I was in the right place at the right

time. Though the policeman seemed heavy, the man who carried him did it effortlessly.”

Bamulanzeki knew immediately that he had taken an iconic photograph. “In normal circumstances, it’s the police who is supposed to assist, but this time the ordinary citizen was offering help.”

After taking a few more shots, he removed the memory card and tucked it in his pocket – just in case anyone stole his camera.

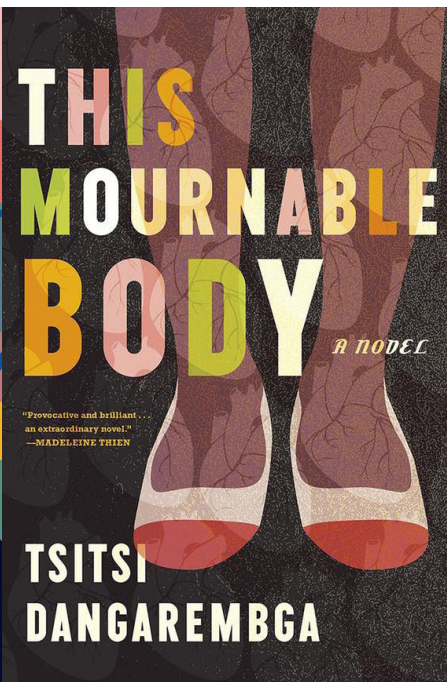
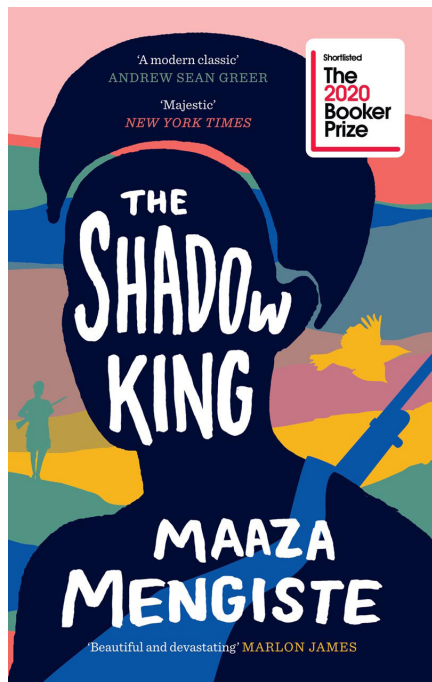
Later, when he uploaded the photo to social media, Bamulanzeki was overwhelmed at the responses. “They say one picture is worth a thousand words, but I think this picture has gone more viral than that,” he laughed.

It even caught the attention of opposition leader Kizza Besigye, who dubbed it “picture of the week” and tweeted: “Clearly shows a reversal of roles in Uganda. What should be (disciplined) uniformed SERVANTS turned into a LOAD of MASTERS, heavily weighing down their malnourished servants/citizens.”

“This picture is powerful, it shows that the common Ugandan is stronger than police,” said Olivia Musigo, a human resources consultant.

Kizza Godfrey, a medical laboratory technologist, offered the wry prediction that the “next day this officer will be beating that guy”.

Bamulanzeki said he would leave the interpretation of the photograph to others, however. “Some say that I am anti-government, but I was only doing my job.” ■



Big prizes for African fiction

Two of Africa's finest writers have been shortlisted for the Booker Prize, the most prestigious award in the literary world.

Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King* is set during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. It tells the story of a young woman who becomes a bodyguard for a lookalike of Emperor Haile Selassie.

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body* follows Tambudzai, the heroine of her acclaimed debut *Nervous Conditions*, as she leaves her job and descends into

middle-aged poverty. The book nearly didn't get published – it was only after Dangarembga began posting extracts on Facebook that publishers started paying attention.

"I am overwhelmed. And delighted. And grateful to everybody who has been there for me on this road," said Dangarembga. Her celebrations were short-lived, however. She was arrested in July after participating in an anti-government demonstration, and her trial began this week. ■



Lost in limbo: Police remove asylum-seekers protesting at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees offices in Cape Town (Photo: Oliver Petrie/Getty Images)

When can we go home?

How xenophobia in South Africa has robbed one young girl of her sense of belonging.

Birgit Schwarz

There is one thing 10-year-old Keshia (not her real name) wishes for with all her might: to leave South Africa for good. South Africa might be the place of her birth and the only country where she has ever lived, but she cannot call it home. When, she keeps asking, will her family finally return to the country her parents left so many years ago? A country she has never been to and knows little about but where, she is sure, they would feel welcome and safer than they do in South Africa.

Born in Johannesburg to parents who, fleeing war and persecution in the Democratic Republic of Congo, sought asylum in South Africa, Keshia already

knows what it means not to belong. Her schoolmates, for one, make sure she's put in her place and never forgets she is a *kwerekwere*, an "alien", in their eyes.

"You're so stupid," they call after her. "You just come here and do nothing."

Even though he gained permanent residency some years ago, her father, a street vendor, has yet to be issued a South African ID and finds making a living increasingly difficult as he is targeted by wave after wave of xenophobic violence.

For many African and Asian immigrants and asylum-seekers in South Africa, harassment and violent attacks are a daily reality. A new Human Rights Watch report, "They Have Robbed Me of My Life", found that, despite the launch in March last

year of the National Action Plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, little is changing. With politicians denying the xenophobic nature of attacks and stoking the fires by pandering to populist sentiments, the cycle of violence continues. Orchestrators and perpetrators of violence are rarely prosecuted.

Accused of stealing jobs and women, depleting the country's basic services, spreading diseases, and running crime syndicates, African and Asian expatriates have become the targets of hate-filled calls to action, lootings, and waves of violent attacks time and again. Hundreds have been injured and displaced; dozens have died. In a country where violent crime is an ever-present threat, unemployment is rampant, and inequality levels are among the highest in the world, refugees and migrants like Keshia and her parents have been made the scapegoats for the nation's ills and government's failure to deliver.

Keshia has almost lost count of how often her parents have been attacked, robbed, and beaten up for the sole reason of not being South African. Their efforts to seek justice have been futile. Attempts to report the attacks to the police are met with indifference at best.

Only once did detectives come to investigate: when three strangers opened fire on their home in the middle of the night and a bullet penetrated a bedroom window. The cartridge was found; the attackers, however, remain at large.

What Keshia doesn't know, and what



Hostile: Late last year, residents of Wolhuter hostel in Johannesburg looted expatriates' shops (Photo: Delwyn Verasamy/M&G)

her dad struggles to make her understand, is that although much has changed in the Democratic Republic of Congo since he fled 19 years ago, there are still armed conflicts in South Kivu, the province he is from. Massacres of civilians, fighting between militias and the army, and mass displacements remain part of people's reality in eastern Congo. This is what has stopped him from relocating his family back to his home country. But it pains him to see how severely the deep dislike of expatriates in South Africa has affected his children, especially Keshia.

"Every time my parents get attacked, it affects me," says Keshia. And with every new attack, the urge to pack up and go becomes stronger. "It will be better in Congo," she says. "They will just accept me. I just want to be normal." ■

This piece was produced by Human Rights Watch, and is based on interviews with and by Human Rights Watch fellow Kristi Ueda.



**Glitter gluttons:
Illegal gold-mining
goes all the way to
to the top.** (Photo:
Stephen Tsorotsi)

Inside Zimbabwe's illicit gold trade

The precious metal is one of the country's most valuable natural resources. But only a small, politically-connected cabal benefits.

**Stephen Tsoroti
and Ankita Anand**

Nestled between scenic mountains, Mazowe, 38km north of Harare, is a modest, nondescript town. Gold has been dug from the surrounding areas for more than a century, with activity rising and falling along with the gold price.

In 2018, the area was besieged by more than 100,000 artisanal miners from all over the country, all scraping the earth for

any sign of the precious metal.

It is hard, difficult work. Felix Mauto, 25, is from Madziva, a small town northeast of Mazowe.

"We heard about the gold rush and came here with my brother and two friends," he says. "We have been working in the tunnels at Jumbo Mine shafts at night. In order to get into the shafts, we pay the police a fee of US\$20, and another \$20 when we get out of the mine collieries. Sometimes our ancestors smile on us and

we get the ore that gives good money. It's hard work in the shafts, a lot happens there, but what else can we do? We need money; there are no jobs back home."

On a good day, Mauto could make up to US\$120. But the big money goes elsewhere – all the way to the top.

A murky business

Details about how the gold trade in Zimbabwe works, and who profits, are scarce. Every now and then, however, legal proceedings shed some light on a murky world that implicates some of the country's most senior officials.

In 2003, for example, current president Emmerson Mnangagwa – he was the speaker of Parliament at the time – was accused of receiving eight million Zimbabwean dollars from an illegal gold miner.

The allegations emerged during the prosecution in the high court of Mark Mathew Burden, who was accused of trading in gold without a licence.

That was nearly two decades ago, but a detective with the Zimbabwe Republic Police says not much has changed over the years.

He has asked us not to publish his name, but says he used to be stationed at the Mines and Mineral Marketing headquarters in the Msasa Industrial Area and Harare International Airport.

"The illicit dealings have been happening over the years," he says. "The actors are 'big people' who are 'untouchable.'"

He claims the gold-smuggling cartels include politicians at the highest levels in the government: "At airports, you can receive a phone call from these big people ordering you not to search their bags when they come through. Fail to conform, you are either transferred or [framed] for smuggling out contra."

This account is echoed by none other than Zimbabwe's prosecutor-general, Kumbirai Hodzi.

Much to the displeasure of the ruling



Worth its weight:
An artisanal gold miner loads up a grinding, separating and sorting machine.
(Photo: Bloomberg)

party – which has denied his claims in no uncertain terms – he says the Zimbabwean state has been captured by organised crime networks, including gold smugglers.

“Corrupt cartels, responsible for most serious organised crime, are very active in the smuggling of precious metal like gold,” he says in a telephone interview. “They make sure they are not discovered and frustrate the prosecution and the work of law agents.”

Transnational links

Once the gold ore has been illegally extracted from Zimbabwe’s earth, and once it has been processed in its mills, it must be sold and transported out the country. In return, precious foreign exchange flows in.

In 2018, gold and cash to the value of \$5-million was seized at Harare’s Robert Mugabe International Airport. It was allegedly being carried by Kamlesh Pattni, a Kenyan trader, and four others associated with the Dubai-based gold trader Suzan General Trading.

Pattni was arrested, according to police spokesperson Charity Charamba, but released without charge shortly afterwards. He denies he was ever arrested, and denies any involvement in gold trading in Zimbabwe.

But Fredrick Kunaka, an official of Fidelity Printers and Refiners (FPR) – a subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe – said that Suzan General Trading had a licence to buy gold from FPR.

“Suzan was running a small band

of dealers bringing in \$16-million to \$20-million monthly to buy gold from artisanal miners,” Kunaka told a local newspaper.

In theory, Zimbabwe has strict regulations governing the buying and selling of gold. In practice, however, these regulations are often flouted both by government and businesses.

A growing trade

In 2017 and 2018, gold production from artisanal and small-scale miners in Zimbabwe eclipsed that from large-scale miners. That trend continues: the latest gold delivery data from the FPR shows that, in 2019, artisanal and small-scale miners accounted for 63% of the total 27,650.26 kilograms of gold bought by the state entity.

This is good news for the illicit networks that benefit from small-scale mining activity; but bad news for the country, says Tendai Biti, a former finance minister and current chair of Parliament’s public accounts committee.

“The regime turns a blind eye to the illegality in the quest for foreign currency. Artisanal miners are producing more gold than companies,” he says. “They receive greater incentive from the government. Many of the big miners are now going through them.”

“There is so much corruption everywhere,” adds Biti. “As a parliament, we are overwhelmed.” ■

This feature was written with support from the Money Trail Project. It has been edited for length.



Photo: Delwyn Verasamy/M&G

Trudi Makhaya

The economic advisor to South African President Cyril Ramaphosa – and one of the youngest members of his inner circle – spoke to the *Mail & Guardian's* Tshegofatso Mathe.

Cyril Ramaphosa makes jokes. He listens also. He is very engaging and likes to consult with different people.

There isn't a simple relationship between lockdowns and the severity of the [economic] decline. What complicates the picture for South

Africa is that we were already in recession when Covid-19 hit and our public finances were in a poor state. This means that what should have been a temporary shock could have long-term consequences.

A focused recovery plan, with emphasis on infrastructure, energy security, progressively greening our economy, trading with our continent, underpinned by structural reform, will guide us as we rebuild the economy.

I'm 42 years old. I had just turned 40 when I was appointed. Growing up as an only child in a close-knit family, I was the fly on the wall in my grandmother's and mother's social circles. So I don't see age. It is an honour to have been given the space to take on such a role at my age.

These are my five favourite books. Bessie Head's *Maru*. It is a moving book that shows the pervasiveness of prejudice. Phyllis Ntantala's *A Life's Mosaic* is a beautiful autobiography from the perspective of a politically engaged, educated, black South African woman. J M Coetzee's *Disgrace* – for challenging me to engage with a fundamentally different view of the South African project. Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* – for the scale of the story and its artistry. And Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence* – for capturing the nuances of class and place.



(Photo: AFP)

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

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

1. Yamoussoukro is the capital of which country?
2. Adama Barrow is the president of which country?
3. True or false: British singer-songwriter Freddie Mercury was born in Zanzibar.
4. Which country's national football team is called Bafana Bafana?
5. Tunisia gained independence from which country in 1956?
6. True or false: Zebras are native to Africa.
7. What currency would you use in Tanzania?
8. What is the continent's largest city?
9. Who was the first prime minister and president of Ghana?
10. Which Zimbabwean artist famously made the songs *Neria* and *Todi*?
11. The Congo rainforest covers most of the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. True or false?
12. Was Yaya Touré or Yahya Jammeh the former president of The Gambia?

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

"National borders limit my movement, not my mind."

Love is in the air...

Samira Sawlani

Or is it just hayfever?

It's spring, south of the equator, and love is in the air. Even those of us further north are feeling the waves of romance wafting up on southern winds.

Or maybe it's pollen? With all the sniffles we're hearing, either everyone's got hayfever or they're allergic to love – and that won't do! So if antihistamines don't work, then a full course of communication, kindness and understanding might be just what the doctor ordered.

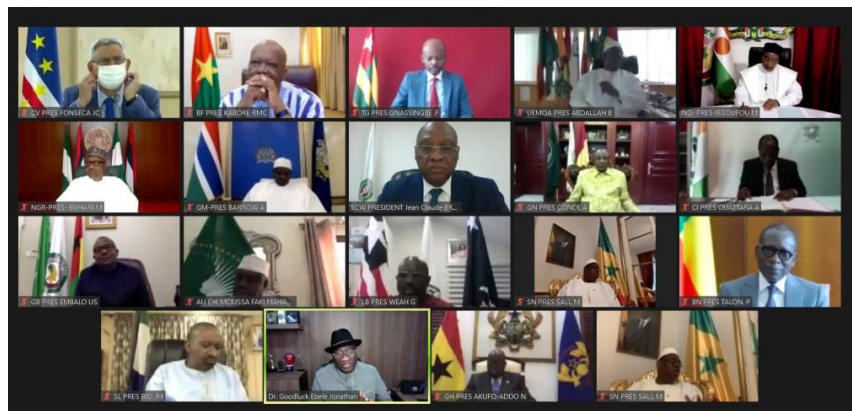
Unfortunately, some of our favourites forgot to refill their prescriptions, and this has led to tears, tissues and tantrums.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the electoral commission has cleared only four out of 44 candidates to run in this year's election. They include President Alassane Ouattara, who is vying for a third term, but not Guillaume Soro, the rebel leader turned prime minister.

Love is blind (could be the allergies), but is it also deaf? Because Soro doesn't seem to have heard the commission's message and is insisting his candidature remains "firm and irrevocable".

Echoes of love

The southern winds don't seem to be reaching Mali. This week the country's



Zoom diplomacy: Ecowas leaders discuss Mali's fate at a summit in August

military junta met with Ecowas leaders, and asked them to consider easing sanctions.

The bloc's response? "Nope!" Instead, they reminded Mali that it had missed the deadline by which a civilian-led transitional government should have been elected. And then they offered the junta another seven-day deadline, along with threats of even more severe sanctions.

Feelings no doubt rather hurt, the junta replied that while they do see where Ecowas is coming from, they're going back to their first love - the people of Mali, most of whom (they say) want a military-led transition.

But has anyone ever actually met these ardent supporters of theirs? Or is this an "I really do have a boyfriend, but you can't meet him because he's, uh, travelling/busy/chained up in the basement" sort of situation?

We're in this together

For long-term partners, this is a time to rekindle the romance. Or at least take a break from the shouting, the subtweeting, and, in the case of Tanzania and Kenya, the cross-border travel war.

It began when Kenya announced that travellers from certain countries would be exempt from a 14-day-quarantine on arrival. Tanzania was conspicuously absent from the list, and promptly announced that Kenya would be sleeping on the East African couch for the foreseeable future, slapping a travel ban on Kenyan airlines.

So Kenya grumpily released a new list, and bless their hearts and Cupid's

arrow, there was Tanzania's name. All was forgiven.

Then there are the couples who never fight, not even about whose turn it is to do the dishes. Like Yahya Jammeh, the former Gambian dictator, and his wife Zinab. Mrs Jammeh has drawn the ire (and the sanctions) of the US government for standing by her man, and also for doing his laundry.

Specifically, they say, for laundering his dirty money through her charitable foundation. His fortune, in her hands - isn't that romantic?

Till death do us part

As much as we believe in romance, we must not let ourselves be fooled. It's not love when it's one-sided. It's not love when it's forced. And it's not love when women are assaulted, raped and murdered.

Listening is important. In Liberia, President George Weah listened to women protesting against sexual assault. He declared rape a national emergency, and appointed a special prosecutor to lead the charge against the scourge.

Justice is just as important. In Somalia, 11 people were arrested for the assault of 19-year-old Hamdi Mohamed Farah, who was gang-raped and thrown off a building in Mogadishu.

Will there be justice in Mozambique? Where a horrendous video has surfaced, in which a naked woman is seen running from men in military uniform, before being shot 36 times.

Spring is in the air. But how can we love when our hearts and bodies are broken?

How can we love if we are dead? ■

Kila Mtu Ila Wanasiasa

Nanjala Nyabola

Wiki iliyopita wanasiasa Wakenya kutoka kila kambi maarufu waliwajumuisha wafuasi wao katika mikutano ya dharura ili kueneza maoni yao kuhusu hali ya siasa nchini na uchaguzi ujao. Hadhara hizi zilikusanyika barabarani na sokoni; kila kiongozi akiwashauri waliokusanyika kwamba mpinzani wake ndiye anayechafua siasa wala sio yeye mwenyewe.

Hasa ukizingitia ukosefu wa barakoa katika hadhara hizi, ungedhani kwamba Kenya imeepuka tandavu ya korona linaloathiri dunia yote.

Lakini licha ya mwenendo wa wanasiasa, Wakenya wengi wameathirika, miongoni mwao watu takribani elfu sita na hamsini waliofariki hadi sasa. Isitoshe, harakati za kufungua shule, mikahawa, na hoteli nchini zimesababisha matatizo ya kisiasa na kijamii kama njaa na ukosefu wa ajira. Kwa mfano, wizara ya utalii ililalamika kwamba wageni nchini wamepunguka kwa takribani asilimia 91% mwaka huu; tatizo kubwa kwa nchi yenye uchumi unaotegemea utalii sana.

Hata hivyo wanasiasa Wakenya wameamua kwamba siasa ndio muhimu zaidi nchini, ndiposa wameendelea kukusanyisha wafuasi wao licha ya

mikutano kupigwa marufuku.

Lengo ni kuwasihi wananchi waunge mkono kura ya maoni kuhusu Katiba kama njia pekee ya kuunganisha Wakenya baada ya mizozo ya uchaguzi wa 2017. Zaidi ya hayo, wamependekeza Katiba ibadilishwe ili wengi miongoni mwao waweze kujiunga na serikali.

Kinachoudhi ni kwamba Wakenya wengi wamedhulumiwa na sheria zinazolenga ukomeshaji wa janga la korona. Katika vijiji na vitongoji nchini watu wasiopungua 15 wameuawa na polisi katika hatua za kueneza kanuni hizi.

Hadi leo, ni mwanasiasa mmoja tu aliyeadhibiwa kwa sababu alivunja sheria hizi. Naye Johnson Sakaja, Seneta wa Nairobi, alitumia picha za hadhara hizi kujitetea katika mtandao wa Twita, akilalamika kwamba inaonekana kwamba yeye pekee ndiye anayefaa kufuata sheria.

Kwa kutofuata sheria walioziunda wenyewe, wanasiasa wa Kenya wanaashiria kwamba korona sio kitu muhimu, na wanawapa wananchi leseni ya kutokiri ushauri wa wataalamu.

Hali hii inaweza kuchangia kusambazwa kwa ugonjwa huu ambao hadi sasa hauna dawa wala kinga, isipokuwa utiifu kwa maagizo ya wataalamu. ■

Nanjala Nyabola ni mwandishi na mchambuzi wa siasa anayeishi mjini wa Nairobi, Kenya.

Why shouldn't Côte D'Ivoire's president run for a third term?

When his handpicked successor died suddenly, President Alassane Ouattara decided that he would run for a third term in office. This decision has been controversial, to say the least. His supporters argue that he is well within his rights to do so, while his critics say that he is risking the country's fragile stability for his own gain.

In this debate, three West African writers – Véronique Tadjo from Côte-d'Ivoire, Tierno Monémbo from Guinea and Eugène Ebodé from Cameroon – argue against the president's decision. Their remarks are in *italics*. Writing in defence of the president is Issiaka Konaté, the director-general of the Direction Générale des Ivoiriens de l'Extérieur, a government department. His comments are in **bold**.

From the moment the Constitution was disregarded, and the red line drawn by the national conferences of the 1990s crossed, the die was cast. We fear the worst. And there is a name for that worst: the single party, the monochrome assembly, the president-for-life.

Since postcolonial times, Africa and its leaders have been typecast in a uniform mould. Its leaders have been characterised as incorrigibly corrupt and incompetent, self-serving dictators who will do anything to cling on to power. But it would be amiss and ahistorical to argue that this blanket assessment is an accurate picture of all the countries that constitute the continent.

Alassane Ouattara's plan to seek a third term is a very bad sign for the future of democracy in Africa.

Regrettably, the gains that Côte d'Ivoire has made are being threatened by inaccurate reporting of recent political developments in the country. Much of the international media reportage on Côte d'Ivoire has defaulted to explaining away the presidential succession in Côte

d'Ivoire as another example of power-hungry leaders overstaying their welcome.

The Ivorian president is reneging on the promise he made on March 15 to step down from power and thus he is strangling the Constitution of his country, bending it to his own personal ends. Constitutional interpretations are flying and the disagreements among jurists from all sides about the legality of this move have plunged democracy's supporters into unprecedented turmoil.

On August 6, Ouattara invoked force majeure, recanting his earlier promise to retire. Fearful of a repeat of the tumult that accompanied previous transitions of power in 1993, 1999-2000 and 2010-11, Ouattara sacrificed his personal reputation for the good of Côte d'Ivoire.

Right now, in this moment, let us express our condemnation loudly and clearly. Let us refuse any suggestion of a third term here or anywhere else in Africa! Let us remember that Nelson Mandela, after all the sacrifices he made for his people, promised to serve only one term – and he kept that promise, despite the pressures brought to bear on him from all sides.

We need to acknowledge the predicament that Ouattara faced last month in the face of the unexpected demise of the prime minister, the vacuum left by his departure and a set of new challenges that threatened

to undermine the country's socioeconomic gains.

It is clear that, if it succeeds, this new attempt to usurp power in Abidjan will serve as a model for others. Into what abyss have we been thrown? Into one that denies any future to our youth, now sacrificed by an oligarchy without opposition or challengers. If we do not take care, soon presidents will not be content just to modify our Constitutions, they will make lawlessness, or rather the lack of power-sharing, the standard of our civic life.

Genuine leaders are occasionally forced to take unpopular decisions, irrespective of public opinion or international criticism. ■



Alassane Ouattara: Uneasy is the head that wears the hat. (Photo: Issouf Sanogo)

These are edited extracts from comment pieces published on the Mail & Guardian.

Is it America's policy to destabilise Africa, or is it sowing chaos by accident?

COMMENT

W Gyude Moore

Mediators are supposed to maintain a certain distance from the protagonists to any dispute. But this principle is seemingly lost on United States treasury officials leading the current “negotiations” among Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia over water usage on the Nile and the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam.

After being invited to lead the talks by Egypt, one would expect the US to ensure it is perceived as an honest broker, a disinterested third party.

But this was not to be.

Disappointed that this complex water rights problem did not immediately resolve itself, the US government took sides – announcing that it would punish Ethiopia by cutting \$200-million in aid, making an already unstable situation even more volatile.

Elsewhere in the region the US continued this ahistorical approach when it introduced a potentially destabilising dynamic to Sudan's fragile transition. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo flew into Khartoum last month with a massive ask: that Sudan regularise relations with Israel.

The transition under way in Sudan was expensive, paid for in the lives and blood of ordinary Sudanese. Pompeo's request

trivialises their sacrifice.

There are other puzzling recent policy decisions: the refusal to sign up to Covax, the effort to create a pool of promising vaccine candidates and guarantee access to successful vaccines to every country in the world; the US ambivalence towards the African Continental Free Trade Area; and plans to withdraw US military support from the Sahel.

One would expect the US to act as an honest broker. But this was not the case

Taken in total, these policy outcomes raise questions about the true intent and objectives of US foreign policy in Africa.

It is entirely plausible we are witnessing not a deliberate, comprehensive, coherent strategy but rather the result of haphazard transactional choices based on perceived short-term wins. Either justification is deeply regrettable.

Whatever process produces these policies, it is now time to ask if US foreign policy in Africa is creating, not preventing, instability. ■

W Gyude Moore is a senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, and a former minister of public works in Liberia. This has been edited for length.

Why Ethiopia needs more than elections to survive

Yohannes Woldemariam

The coronavirus pandemic has been manipulated by many leaders to postpone elections, and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is no exception.

Unlike many of his counterparts, however, Abiy has found his authority limited by political divisions and Ethiopia's federal political system. The Tigray People's Liberation Front, a dominant political force until Abiy's rise to power, declared it would defy him and hold elections in the Tigray region. Why did this happen? And what does it mean for the future of Ethiopia?

TPLF leaders had three possible motivations: to signal their opposition to Abiy's reconfiguration of the government under his own political vehicle, the Prosperity Party; to prove that elections can be held safely and hence further undermine Abiy's reputation; and to precipitate a confrontation with the federal government to justify conflict with neighbouring regions – after stating that any interference would constitute a “declaration of war”.

The ironic thing is that when the TPLF held sway within the government its reputation was as an expert at electoral

manipulation, not a defender of credible polls. It did not even need to rig the elections of September 9, however – they were a foregone conclusion. None of the smaller groups that ran had a chance.

The TPLF's victory needs to be understood carefully, though: it was more a vote against Abiy and the region's loss of influence than a ringing endorsement of the party. The general sentiment in Tigray is that the TPLF broke key promises in power, but is now the only force capable of protecting Tigrean interests.

Ironically, when the TPLF held sway within the government its reputation was as an expert at electoral manipulation

What happens next? Abiy will come under renewed pressure to hold national polls. He has carefully avoided outright confrontation so far, but other trigger points for conflict lie ahead, especially if he moves to deprive the TPLF of funding. This reveals an important truth: Ethiopia needs more than elections. Only a genuine process of national reconciliation and inclusive dialogue will give this remarkably diverse and divided country a chance of survival. ■

Yohannes Woldemariam teaches International Relations and follows developments in the Horn of Africa region closely.





Quashed: The top brass of the South African National Defence Force has been sitting on alarming reports of a possible serial rapist attacking women at one of its bases in the Western Cape. (Photo: Gallo)

The South African military's serial rape problem

A *Mail & Guardian* investigation reveals that South Africa's National Defence Force has been keeping quiet about the possibility of a serial rapist on one of its bases. This is the latest in a string of similar incidents.

Sabelo Skiti

On a military base in Saldanha, in South Africa's Western Cape province, a suspected serial rapist has been targeting women in uniform since 2017. Despite the threat to personnel, no investigations have been carried out and victims have instead been discredited and shamed, according to sources who

spoke to the *Mail & Guardian*.

The chaplain at the base, Nicolene Herbst, has filed a grievance against the commandant, Brigadier-General Gerald Pharo, alleging that he intimidated and threatened her when she refused to identify one victim to him.

"Experience with the [commandant] has shown that where I do provide him with the identity of complainants and

other parties involved in matters such as sexual harassment, for example, those members are called in and informed that the [chaplain] has said that he/she is harassing students.”

Pharo denies these allegations.

The base is home to the prestigious Military Academy, where future officers for all branches of service are trained.

Instead of investigating the alleged incidents, the South African National Defence Force opened an inquiry into Herbst's complaints. It concluded that “the system failed” the rape victims – one of whom had since died by suicide – and “there were too many distractions, where the command group lost sight of the main issue [the alleged rape].”

These latest revelations come as President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that three new Bills would be introduced in Parliament to tackle the gender-based violence in the country – a scourge that appears to be a particular problem within the armed forces.

Last year, the *M&G* reported that as many as 41 incidents of rape and sexual assault had been reported within the defence force community in the preceding 18 months. Prosecution of some cases yielded punishments as lenient as a R5,000 (\$310) fine.

South African soldiers also have a poor record in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they form part of the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

According to the deputy spokesperson for the secretary general of the UN, Farhan Aziz Haq, since 2015 there have been a total of 92 allegations of

sexual exploitation and abuse recorded in the DRC. Of these, 34 involved personnel from South Africa – more than a third of all the cases. These cases include allegations of rape, transactional sex, sexual abuse and exploitative relationships. The situation is so serious that at one point the United Nations threatened to expel South African personnel from the mission.

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This pattern of abuse prompted Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula to deploy a three-person task team to review all cases of sexual exploitation and abuse involving members of the armed forces. But it is not clear whether the case of the alleged serial rapist at the Military Academy has even been referred to this task team.

When approached by the *M&G*, the defence force said that it could not comment because Herbst's complaint was now before the military ombud. ■

This investigation has been edited for length.

25 years of progress, halted

Development has been set back by two decades thanks to the pandemic, says the Gates Foundation Goalkeepers report

Simon Allison

The Sustainable Development Goals are the United Nations' grand plans to solve global inequality. If these goals are met, by 2030 there will be no poverty; no one will go hungry; and we will all have access to quality education, healthcare and employment, while breathing clean air in a world at peace with itself.

It is a beautiful dream, but it has never been further away. This week, the Gates Foundation released its annual Goalkeepers report, which tracks progress towards these goals.

"I knew it was going to be bad," said Cheick Oumar Seydi, the foundation's Africa director, in an interview with the *Mail & Guardian*. But he wasn't expecting it to be this bad.

The headline findings include:

- In nearly every indicator, progress towards the goals has halted or reversed this year;
- Extreme poverty has increased by 7%. That's an additional 37-million people living on less than \$1.90 a day. This reverses a 20-year streak of positive progress; and

- Vaccine coverage – a good proxy for the effectiveness of health systems – is dropping to levels last seen in the 1990s. "In other words, we've been set back 25 years in 25 weeks," the report says.

The primary reason for these dramatic reversals is, of course, the Covid-19 pandemic, which – in addition to being a public-health emergency in its own right – has devastated primary healthcare systems, tanked the global economy, shut down schools all over the world and forced millions to go without food.

"The ripple effects of Covid-19 have stopped 20 years of progress," the report concludes. ■



Food for thought: A fruit market in the Lugbe district of Abuja, Nigeria. (Photo: KC Nwakalor/Bloomberg via Getty Images)



The Big Picture

All at sea: Migrants and refugees enjoy the water near Mytilene, on the Greek island of Lesbos, on September 12 – just days after a fire destroyed their temporary homes in the Moria refugee camp. Efforts to find new shelters for the more than 11,000 people affected have not been successful. Local authorities have continued to resist plans to rebuild the camp, while European countries have refused to resettle them. (Photo: Angelos Tzortzinis/AFP)

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