

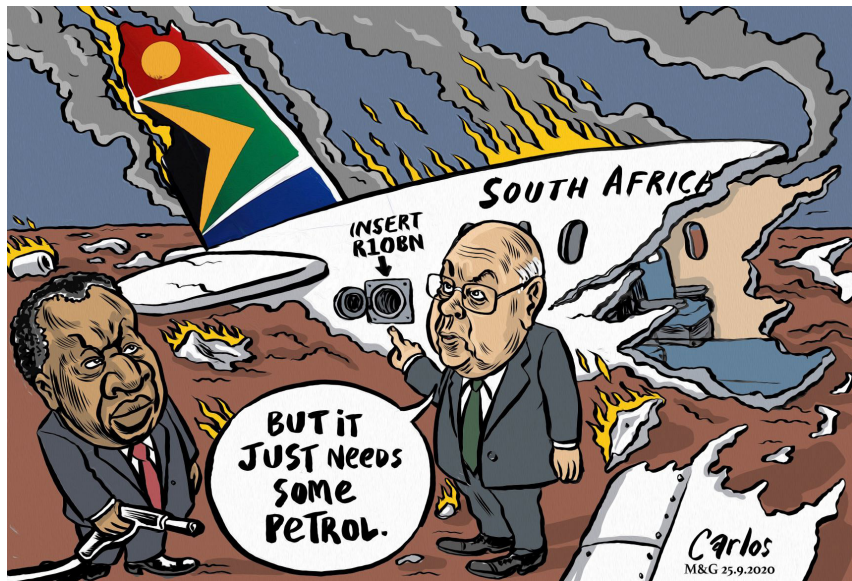
The Continent

with Mail & Guardian

Battling the Bulldozer

Tanzania's
opposition
leader on reggae,
resistance and a
decisive election





Crash landing: The fate of South African Airways is hanging in the balance. Some Cabinet ministers, especially Public Enterprises minister Pravin Gordhan (right), insist that public funds must be used to once again bail out the failing state airline, which is already in business rescue. Others, including Finance Minister Tito Mboweni (left), say that it's time to head for emergency exit. Right now, it looks like Mboweni has lost the battle, with the Cabinet committing to provide R10.4-billion in (\$600-million) to prevent the state-owned company's liquidation.

Inside:

- **COVER STORY:** An interview with Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu at his home in Dar (p9)
- The flamingos are fleeing Kenya's overflowing lakes (p6)
- **Continental Drift:** Exercise tips from Africa's presidents (p17)
- **Comment:** If Cameroon was a ship, it would be sinking, argues Maurice Kamto (p19)
- **The activists who hijacked a Cape Town mansion** (p21)

The Week in Numbers

12

The number of Chinese students studying Amharic at the Beijing Foreign Studies University. The university has just introduced a full degree course in the Ethiopian language this year, and classes began this week.

11

The number of African countries subject to arduous new visa regulations by the United States. The proposed rules affect students in particular, who will be limited to two-year visas, even though most courses are four years long.

600,000

The number of people who have been displaced by flooding in South Sudan in recent days. The Nile River has risen to levels not seen for more than a century. Hundreds of thousands more people in Sudan are also affected.



Sausage fest: Kenya's Parliament

22%

The percentage of women in Kenya's lower house of Parliament. The Constitution says that a maximum of two-thirds of any elected or appointed body can be drawn from a single gender (see p23).

6

The number of world heritage sites in Africa that could be destroyed in the near future by severe weather related to climate change, according to research published in the *Azania* journal. The sites under threat are Suakin in northeastern Sudan; Lamu Old Town in Kenya; coastal sites on the Comoros Islands; forts and castles on Ghana's coast; rock art sites at Twyfelfontein in Namibia, as well as Djenné-Djeno in Mali.

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Nigeria

Emir's death triggers a revealing tug-of-war

Shehu Idriss, the Emir of Zazzau, died on Sunday at the age of 84. He was the longest-ever ruler of the Zazzau Emirate, located within Nigeria's Kaduna State. He was just 39 when he assumed the position in 1975.

Nigeria's traditional leaders occupy an unusual position within the state: they are appointed rather than elected, and generally serve for life. Despite having no constitutional authority, their influence can sometimes exceed their elected counterparts.

"For the people of an emirate or a chieftom in northern Nigeria, and in other parts of Nigeria, the death of a traditional ruler, especially a long serving one such as Alhaji Shehu Idris, is a defining event and a major reference point in the community's history," explained columnist Mahmud Jega in the *Daily Trust*. "Elderly folks in the community define events in terms of an Emir's reign: "It happened during the



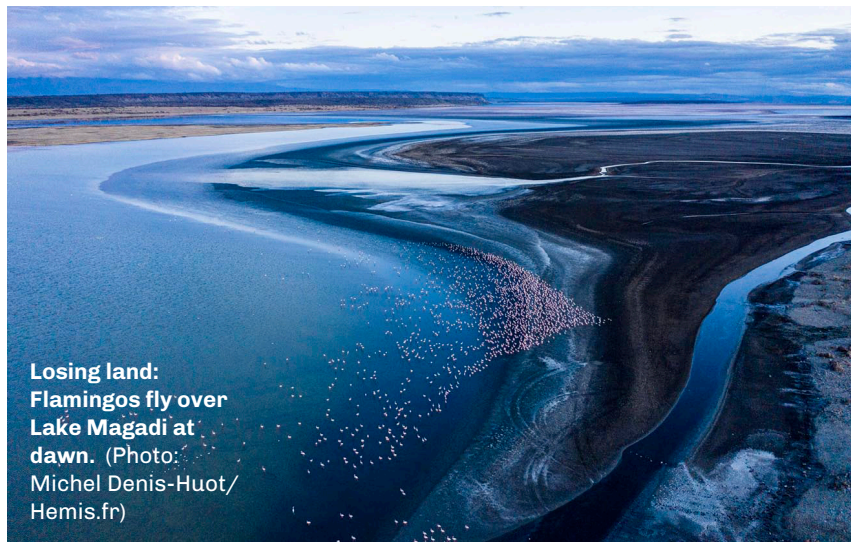
Reigning on his parade: The Emir of Zazzau in a royal procession in Zaria.
(Photo: Next24online/NurPhoto)

reign of so-and-so Emir”

The Emir was buried on Monday. By then, the politicking over who should replace him had already begun. The new Emir must come from one of the emirate's four royal houses, and the final decision rests with Kaduna state governor Nasir El-Rufai. According to *Premium Times*, El-Rufai is thought to prefer one candidate, while President Muhammadu Buhari prefers another.

In this context, the identity of the new Emir – as well as shaping the future of the region for a generation to come – will tell us a lot about the extent, or the limits, of the president's authority. ■

Kenya



Losing land:
Flamingos fly over
Lake Magadi at
dawn. (Photo:
Michel Denis-Huot/
Hemis.fr)

Rift Valley lakes swell to breaking point

Caroline Chebet

The water level in Kenya's Rift Valley lakes is continuing to rise to record levels, threatening the area's fragile ecosystems and leaving researchers puzzled.

Lakes Baringo, Bogoria, Nakuru, Elementaita, Naivasha, Turkana, Logipi and Solai have spilled over into neighbouring farms, displacing thousands of people in the process.

This has raised fears of an impending ecological disaster, even as the lakes continue to submerge schools, homes, hospitals and roads in Baringo County.

In Nakuru County, Lake Oloiden and Lake Naivasha have also merged.

"It is a disaster we are staring at. We do not know what next will happen when alkaline and freshwater lakes merge. Hundreds of people have been displaced and the water levels in these lakes are rising drastically," said William Kimosop,

Kenya's North Rift Tourism co-ordinator.

According to Sila Simiyu, a geologist, the increasing water volumes in the lakes can be attributed to tectonic plate movements and increased siltation.

The current tectonic cycle, known as near-field tectonic movement, squeezes out water from the earth's aquifers, causing the lakes to increase in volume. A tectonic cycle takes between 25 and 40 years. The current cycle started in 1996.

“Hundreds of people have been displaced and the water levels in these lakes are rising drastically”

The previous cycle, called far-field tectonic movement, caused water to drain out of the Rift Valley lakes into the earth's aquifers. It lasted from 1955 to 1995.

“The challenge is intensified by deforestation that results in siltation, displacing water that spills over,” Simiyu said.

In 1995, lake levels within the Rift were at their lowest and people could literally walk across the lake beds. What is currently happening is the reverse of that.

“The current cycle is almost at the peak ... With time, the lakes again will dry and become bowls of dust,” Simiyu said.

Joseph Edebe, a research scientist with the Kenya Wildlife Service, said the swelling of Rift Valley lakes has been exacerbated by abnormally high rainfall in the region, likely due to climate change.

“The increase in water volumes is

happening across all lakes in the region from Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The lakes within these regions are rising to the highest levels because of the above-normal rainfall experienced since May last year,” he said.

The changing conditions are leading to dramatic changes in the natural ecosystem supported by the lakes.

Saline lakes Nakuru and Solai in Nakuru County, for example, are usually home to one of the world's largest congregation of flamingos, but the changing conditions are forcing the birds to make their homes elsewhere. On the other hand, fishermen have descended on the lakes to take advantage of a sharp increase in fish numbers.

Data from Nature Kenya, Africa's oldest environmental society, confirms the decline in flamingo numbers in the Rift Valley area.

According to the latest water bird count, in January this year there were 180,000 lesser flamingos.

During the same period in 2019, there were 419,000 lesser flamingos.

“Due to increasing water levels, water gets diluted, which affects the growth of blue-green algae which the flamingos feed on. This way, the flamingos tend to move away to places where there is plenty of food,” Nature Kenya director Dr Paul Matiku said.

Paul Gacheru, a bird expert at the organisation, said that flamingoes are changing their migration patterns.

“These birds often make stopovers to look for other suitable habitats where algae grow in abundance,” he said. ■

South Africa

Mbeki unveils new school for Pan-African leadership

Refiloe Seiboko

On Tuesday the University of South Africa (Unisa) launched the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs, named after the former South African president who served from 1999 until 2008.

Backed by the Thabo Mbeki Foundation, the school seeks to advance and promote leadership, pan-African ideals and social justice, not only on the continent itself but throughout the world.

Mbeki's tenure as president, and subsequently as an elder statesman, was notable for its emphasis on pan-African values. He played a major role in the rebranding of the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union as it exists today, and was the architect of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

He has also led mediation efforts in Burundi, Côte D'Ivoire, Darfur, and Zimbabwe – though his efforts have not always been well received.

Additionally, his reluctance to respond

to the realities of the HIV pandemic during the early and mid-2000s, coupled with his willingness to entertain fringe and discredited science, earned him the label of "Aids denialist" from critics and activists.

"I'm humbled you have decided to attach my name to this important school," Mbeki noted in his address. He highlighted the importance of continental contributions to sustainable development goals, and urged universities not to simply produce corporate vassals.

"The African university must play a strategic role in helping our continent respond to major challenges by producing the men and women who will provide required intellectual leadership," Mbeki said. "The school must position itself as a home of excellence in this regard." ■



African ideals: As president, Thabo Mbeki was considered cerebral to a fault. (Photo: Gulshan Khan/AFP)



Tundu Lissu on reggae, resistance and his own resurrection

16 bullets and 27 operations later, Tanzania's main opposition leader has recovered from a brutal assassination attempt – and is now in the middle of an even bigger fight



(Photo: AFP)

INTERVIEW Simon Mkina

In the rare moments when Tundu Lissu takes a break from running his presidential campaign – the vote is just a month away – he plays Bob Marley in his study and starts to dance.

When he talks about it in our interview, he can't help but sing along. "Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights." The 52-year-old opposition leader is

a diehard fan. On his bookshelf are biographies of Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer. He plays reggae in his car on the way to campaign events, and the distinctive beats accompany him whenever he strides on to the stage to address the increasingly large crowds at Chadema Party rallies.

It's not just the music that he loves, but what it represents. Reggae is inspirational, Lissu says, and it tackles themes more urgent than ever: mercy, equality, social justice, and the struggle against dictatorship. This is a struggle with which Lissu is intimately familiar. He has the scars to prove it.

Surviving the assassination

There is heavy security outside Lissu's home in the upmarket Tegeta suburb in Dar es Salaam. Outside, three plainclothes security guards verify your details before letting you through the heavy iron gate. In the courtyard outside, another six guards search your person and your bags, checking for anything that could be used as a weapon. Surveillance cameras monitor everyone going in or out.

These precautions have not always been a feature of politics in Tanzania, which has historically been famed for its tolerance. But Lissu has every reason to be cautious. In September 2017, he returned from parliament – where he was the opposition's chief whip – to his official residence in a government compound in Dodoma, the capital. As he neared the house, two gunmen opened fire from a trailing car. Lissu was shot 16 times, and left for dead, in a hit that he believes was ordered by the administration of President John Magufuli – nicknamed “The Bulldozer” by his supporters. The government denies any involvement, describing the gunmen as “unknown assailants”.

But Lissu didn't die. His injuries were severe, requiring 27 operations, and he received medical treatment abroad. For nearly three years, he recovered in exile in Belgium. All that time, he was making plans to come back.

As he told the *Mail & Guardian* in a February 2019 interview: “I'm going back once my doctors say yes. Magufuli has to be confronted. Is it dangerous? Yes. But living in a dictatorship anywhere in the world is a dangerous business.”

He flew home in late July, to a rousing welcome from hundreds of supporters at the airport. Shortly after that, he was confirmed as Chadema's presidential nominee for the 28 October election.

It was an emotional return. “The happiness was also tinged with a sense of great sadness at the unnecessary pain and destruction wrought by five years of terrible repression.”

Lissu is not hopeful that the gunmen who attacked him will ever face



Incumbent: A supporter of President John Magufuli holds a placard aloft at a rally at Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma (Photo: Ericky Boniphace/AFP)

justice. “Our systems are so completely compromised; they’d not deal with a politically toxic case such as this one, it is very unfortunate.”

Time for change

It is not easy to gauge Chadema’s popularity, or Lissu’s chance of becoming president. Opinion polling is unreliable, and harsh restrictions on independent media make it difficult to obtain accurate information. The opposition party is running on a centre-right platform, and has promised to decentralise governance and privatise state-owned entities. It wants to reduce corporate tax and increase civil sector salaries.

What is clear is that the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi – which has never lost an election – is making it harder than ever before for the opposition. As Human Rights Watch reported earlier this month, the government has arrested more than a dozen opposition party members and blocked rights groups from observing the vote.

That’s not all, according to Lissu. He said new taxes on posters, placards and flyers have made it prohibitively expensive to print campaign materials; and that a combination of the poor economy and the repressive security environment means that fewer people are willing to be seen to donate to his campaign.

Despite all this, Lissu remains confident of victory. He believes the country has had enough of Magufuli, and is ready for a change. He is also just pleased to be back in Tanzania.

“It’s a huge relief to be back home where I truly belong,” he said. ■

Disclaimer: The author, in his capacity as the owner and editor of Mawio newspaper, was charged with sedition in 2016 for publishing remarks made by Lissu relating to the political situation in Zanzibar. The case is still ongoing. The Committee to Protect Journalists, a non-profit organisation that monitors press freedom, has described the government’s campaign against Mawio as “harassment”.



Tanzania Elections

Forming a united front is not so easy

ANALYSIS

Simon Allison and Simon Mkina

Tanzania's ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi, has been in power longer than any other ruling party in Africa. Given its dominance, the only way the opposition is going to remove it from office is by forming a united front.

The electoral calculus is obvious. Splitting the opposition vote means that the election is lost before it even begins. But by joining forces, the opposition poses a real threat to the ruling party.

Just look at the example of Malawi. In 2019, two major opposition leaders ran against the president. They both lost. Had they combined their votes, they would have won. That election was annulled shortly afterwards due to electoral irregularities, and the opposition got a chance to do it all over again this year. This time they made sure not to repeat their mistake. Running on a joint ticket, the opposition secured a convincing victory, and are now in power.

But joining forces is easier said than done. In an interview, Tundu Lissu, leader of Tanzania's largest opposition party Chadema, said that electoral regulations

have been designed to make it harder to form coalitions. "It's the law here that any electoral coalition must be approved or rejected, by the registrar," he explained. "But before he makes his decision, the registrar, an appointee of the president, must be availed of all information concerning the coalition, which he cannot be trusted not to share with the ruling party and our other enemies."

Zitto Kabwe, who leads Tanzania's second-largest opposition party, ACT-Wazalendo, told *The Continent* that coalition talks are also often derailed by personality clashes, and disputes over positions. "From my experience, it is more to do with the ego of leaders. The short-sightedness of opposition leaders, not seeing a bigger picture. Not seeing what we are fighting for. People see things in a prism of posts rather than the cause."

Kabwe said he is determined not to let his own ego get in the way of an opposition coalition. He has already stepped aside once before, when he endorsed former foreign minister Bernard Membe as his party's presidential candidate. And he is now preparing to do so again.

Zitto Kabwe, who leads Tanzania's second-largest opposition party, says that talks are often derailed by personality clashes, and disputes over positions

"Outside the alliance, both of us will be beaten by Magufuli. Inside an



United front: Only by joining forces with fellow (and rival) opposition leaders did Lazarus Chakwera – pictured here with his wife at a campaign rally – become Malawi’s President Lazarus Chakwera. (Photo: Gianluigi Guercia/AFP)

alliance, even if we don’t have all those bigger posts, you are able to grow, and re-energise, ready for the next fight.”

Jeffrey Smith, founding director of Vanguard Africa — which has advised activists and opposition campaigns in Cameroon, the Gambia, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe — said: “This is going to sound mundane, but quite honestly the biggest challenge that I have seen and I have worked to try and assuage over the years has been the petty, often personal political differences that inhibit various individuals and opposition

parties who essentially agree on 99% of the issues.”

To defeat Magufuli, Tanzania’s opposition leaders will have to overcome these differences – and fast. Having missed the deadline to form a formal coalition, this is likely to take the form of an ‘endorsement’, where one leader tells his followers to vote for the other leader.

Sources close to the senior leadership of both Chadema and ACT-Wazalendo have told *The Continent* that these negotiations are at an advanced stage, and to expect an announcement soon. ■



(Photo: Ross
Frylinck)

Falling in love with an octopus

Every day for a year, Craig Foster spent two hours trailing a wild octopus through the chilly Atlantic waters off South Africa's Western Cape. The pair formed an unlikely bond. Foster earned the animal's trust, and was repaid in turn when the octopus gave him extraordinary, never-seen-before glimpses into her daily life. A new documentary lets us witness these scenes too: we watch the octopus hunt; we watch her lay eggs; and we watch her evade the jaws of a hungry shark.

Exquisitely shot underwater in the Great African Sea Forest, *My Octopus Teacher* has already earned both local and international plaudits, and inspired humorous parodies. Watch it, and you

will emerge with a profound appreciation for the extraordinary intellect of these eight-limbed animals; and a deep respect for the incredible wealth of this world's underwater life. ■

The pair formed an unlikely bond. Foster earned the animal's trust and was repaid in turn when the octopus gave him an extraordinary glimpse into her daily life

My Octopus Teacher is available on Netflix.

Stop being Coconut Heads!

REVIEW: EMMERSON – 9 LIVES

Abdul Brima

Emmerson Amidu Bockarie – known simply as Emmerson – is one of Sierra Leone's most prominent singers. He is the founder and CEO of his own record label, Sugar Entertainment, and a perennial thorn in the flesh of the politicians he targets so relentlessly in his lyrics.

He began his musical career in 2002, becoming an instant fan favourite for the way he ridiculed the country's corrupt leaders. One of his earliest albums, *Borbor Bele*, remains the bestselling in Sierra Leone's music recording history.

Over the years, his songs have promoted social reforms and the fight against corruption. The intelligence and creativity at the core of his songs set him apart from other songwriters.

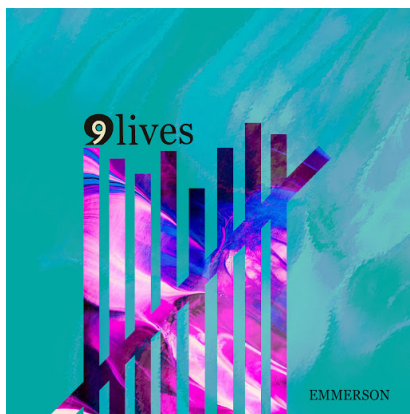
Emmerson began his musical career in 2002, becoming an instant fan favourite for the way he ridiculed the country's corrupt leaders

Emmerson released his latest album last month, the much-anticipated *9 Lives*.

As expected, it was an instant hit. The first single was *Kokonat Ed* – coconut head – which speaks to the social and economic hardships that Sierra Leone is currently experiencing, while referencing the tribal and regional tensions which plague the country's politics. The title is a jab at Sierra Leonean voters – coconut heads – who keep choosing corrupt and incompetent public officials, and it warns the country's youth – the PlayStation Generation – to learn from these mistakes.

The song reminds voters that politicians always make grand promises that they do not keep, and asks them to reason wisely when it comes time to cast their ballot.

Politicians may not like Emmerson, but he is a hugely popular because his songs have historically spoken truth to power, and give voice to the voiceless. His new album is no exception. ■



Political hit man: The latest album from Sierra Leone artist Emmerson



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

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

- 1.** What is the name of the song Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte collaborated on, which means "angel" in Swahili?
- 2.** Where is colonialist Cecil John Rhodes buried?
- 3.** Which country, in 1981, became the last state in the world to abolish slavery?
- 4.** Only one sovereign African state uses Spanish as an official language. Which one is it?
- 5.** Which African diasporic religion, developed in Cuba between the 16th and 19th century, has roots in

- West African traditional beliefs and Catholicism?
- 6.** The Okavango Delta is located in which country?
 - 7.** Goodluck Jonathan was the former president of which country from 2010 to 2015?
 - 8.** What is the capital of Sudan?
 - 9.** Who is the current chairperson of the African Union?
 - 10.** TP Mazembe is a football club from which country?
 - 11.** Which east African country is split by the Great Rift Valley?
 - 12.** What is the capital city of Egypt?

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

"My ancestors send me Wikipedia links in my dreams."

African aerobics

Samira Sawlani

This pandemic has taken a terrible toll on lives, economies, international geopolitical relationships — and also on our waistslines.

With sport cancelled and gyms closed, the most exercise some of us have done is changing our duvet. Which, as you know, is so traumatic that we need to rest for a whole week afterwards.

So thank goodness for our leaders, who are so determined to set a good example that they just keep running and running and running.

Marathon man

Keeping fit is important, but athletic competition during the pandemic is another story – which is why the Olympics were cancelled, after all. That must be why so many of our presidents prefer to run on their own.

Uganda's Yoweri Museveni started his presidential ultramarathon 34 years ago and, sure, he has seen rivals join the race over the years, including Kizza Besigye and now Bobi Wine. But for some reason his opponents keep having to take breaks — often in jail cells.

This week activist, academic, Kampala women's MP candidate and noted Museveni critic Dr Stella Nyanzi was arrested alongside her colleagues at the



Strongman: This photo of Tanzanian President John Magufuli doing push-ups was distributed by his campaign team in 2015

Busia border. She's since been released, but it's a reminder that when he's running, Museveni insists on socially distanced solitude out on the open road.

Strong as a bull (dozer)

President John Magufuli was spotted doing push-ups again the other day at a packed campaign rally, with election fever running high in Tanzania. (We just hope it's the *only* fever going around.)

He must be very self-motivated, as he doesn't seem the type to let a personal trainer point out his flaws. This week, Tanzanian political activist Fatma Karume was bulldozed out of her law

firm and struck off the advocates' roll after critiquing Magufuli's form and technique.

The gloves are off

In Kenya, boxing appears to be all the rage, inspired by the intense sparring between President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto – to the exclusion of all else. Which is a shame, considering the things that have occurred nearby while they're distracted.

For one, a video circulated of a woman giving birth right outside Pumwani Hospital in Nairobi after she was reportedly refused entry into the facility. Authorities should be ashamed. And the police have also been getting out of hand – four NGOs have filed a case against the state on behalf of victims of police brutality. Let's not even mention the PPE scandal.

Yes, in boxing it's important to focus on your opponent. But in life it's important to not let your house burn down around you. Perhaps Kenyatta could learn a thing or two about boxing *and* life from Kenya's women activists, who are able to keep things together while punching above their weight. They have been fighting for

representation for a long time, and this week landed a solid right hook when the chief justice, David Maraga, wrote to the president, advising him to dissolve Parliament over its gender imbalance.

Maraga cited the lawmakers' failure to meet a constitutional requirement that "not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender".

Herd impunity

Exercise can feel like you spend all your time counting: calories burnt, kilometres run, reps done and, in the case of senior government officials in South Sudan, money siphoned from the treasury.

This week the UN Commission on Human Rights announced that a number of high profile members of the government have embezzled at least \$36-million in public funds.

It gets worse. The same report said some of these leaders were involved in sexual exploitation, abuse and the rape of young women. For years similar reports have been emerging from South Sudan with little action taken so, if anything is truly being exercised here, it is impunity.

When will our leaders prove to us that keeping the country in shape is about more than running for office, or from responsibility? It's about working hard to carry the heavy burdens of leadership, of service and of justice. Yes, we need you fit – for office. We need you fit to lead. ■

Running out of steam: Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta will not be eligible to contest the 2022 polls



Graphic: JOHN McCANN



Cameroon is a ship without a captain

Maurice Kamto

Cameroon is bleeding. The people are exasperated and exhausted. The dictatorial, increasingly repressive regime of Paul Biya – one of the longest-ruling leaders in all of Africa – seems not to care about this predicament.

Daily, the situation in our beleaguered country grows worse. Cameroon is adrift, like a ship without a captain, sailing listlessly amid the ever-cascading waves that collectively batter us.

It is for these reasons that this week –

the third anniversary of the outbreak of mass violence in our Anglophone regions – Cameroonians took to the streets to once again chase our destiny by means of peaceful demonstrations, calling on Biya and his corrupt ruling cabal to step down from the offices they no longer respect or deserve.

As Cameroonians prepare for further peaceful protests, we are concerned about the potential for a violent response from the state. Our placards and chants have been met with gunfire in the past, and with beatings, burnt villages, torture and extrajudicial executions, as well as rape as a weapon of war against our female colleagues.

Free speech and the freedom to demonstrate are protected by Cameroon's Constitution – and duly recognised in regional and international conventions

to which our country has signed up – yet these basic rights are not respected in practice.

The awakening of the Cameroonian spirit, and our peoples' reclamation of its freedom, are not very different from similar battles that have been fought elsewhere, such as apartheid-era South Africa, and in segregationist America.

We are concerned about the potential for state violence. In the past our placards and chants have been met with gunfire, beatings, torture, extrajudicial executions and rape

No banning or outlawing of any movement has ever prevented a committed people from demanding or attaining their freedom.

This is especially so in a context, like Cameroon, where avenues for political change have been systematically nullified through shambolic elections and the shameful persecution of critics of the regime.

In Cameroon today, the nexus between the unending civil war in our Anglophone regions and the imperative of new leadership in our capital city is clear. The Anglophone crisis is part of a deeper cancer in metastasis. The humanitarian disaster is a symptom, a horrific one, of a deeper problem of governance. And the longer that

deeper problem goes unaddressed by Cameroonians and their international allies, then the longer the Anglophone crisis will linger. And the more people will die.

Because I have encouraged my compatriots to exercise their democratic rights, I know that I may be targeted and arrested by authorities, as has become the norm. But now, more than ever, the people must speak up against injustice.

The people of Cameroon need international support. Their struggle needs the attention a humanitarian crisis of this magnitude deserves. As of this writing, for example, the United Nations conservatively estimates that the ongoing conflicts in our country have killed more than 3,000 people and displaced nearly 700,000 more in the Anglophone regions – about 20% of Cameroon's total population.

The situation facing our country is dire, but it is not beyond repair.

Inspired by the words of the great Nelson Mandela, our people are saying: "Never again shall it be that our beautiful land of Cameroon experiences the oppression of one by another. Let freedom reign. And God bless Cameroon." ■

Maurice Kamto is the president of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, the country's main opposition group. He spent nine months in prison in 2019 after being charged with sedition, insurrection and inciting violence for organising anti-government protests. He is a professor of law and was a member and president of the International Law Commission of the United Nations



Occupied: A group of queer black activists has taken over a beach mansion in Cape Town.
(Photo: David Harrison/M&G)

The artists who hijacked a mansion

An activist art collective has occupied a luxury home in Cape Town – and they are refusing to leave

Lester Kiewit

From outside there's not much to write home about. The exterior of the five-bedroom home fits right in with the other suburban homes on the quiet street in Camps Bay – one of the most exclusive neighbourhoods not just in Cape Town, but on the African continent.

But once the large electronic gates open, it is clear that this is something special. The house appears to sink down a steep cliff, and the lush forest garden boasts magnificent views over the Atlantic Ocean. It features a sun deck, an outdoor pool and a hot tub.

On Airbnb, the house can be rented by wealthy holidaymakers for R16,000 (\$940) per night. But its current occupants are not paying anything at all.

They describe themselves as an “art collective of queer black and coloured activists from the working and middle class”. (In South Africa, “coloured” is the name that a now-distinct ethnic group descended from colonial settlers, Malay slaves and indigenous Bantu and Khoisan people use to identify themselves.)

They say they are occupying the house in solidarity with landless people and

against economic inequality.

The group includes writers, photographers, filmmakers and social justice activists. “The majority of people will not have access to and will never own property here...we do want to occupy spaces that are, firstly, unoccupied; and, secondly, spaces we are told are not for us,” said the collective’s spokesperson, Xena Ness.

The group said it accessed the house by renting it through a website. Once inside, and after several days, they told the rental agent about their protest, and that they would not leave. “We chose this property because it feeds into the profile of rich, foreign ownerships...the 0.05% of our society who are high net-worth individuals,” Ness said.

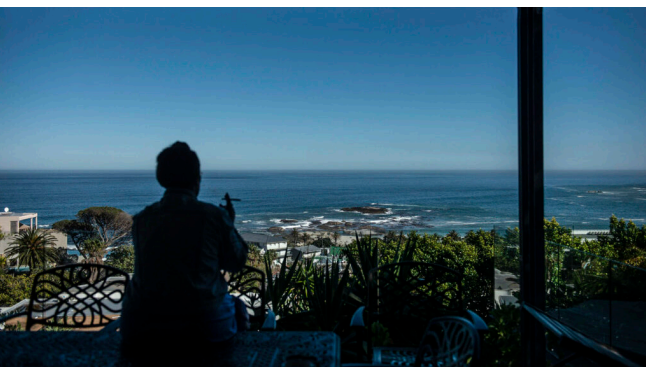
Inside, the home looks like the lived-in digs of students or young professionals. The only sign that the seven occupiers won’t be leaving voluntarily is a rope, tied to a kitchen door, fastened to a kitchen counter. A generator has pride of place close to the communal meeting table. Next to it is a jerrycan of petrol. This is in

case the electricity supply is cut.

The occupation of the holiday home follows protests where housing activists have drawn attention to the impact of the national lockdown on South Africans’ ability to pay their rent and mortgages.

The *Mail & Guardian* understands the home’s owner was at first sympathetic towards the occupying forces, but has since had a change of heart: Turnkey 365 Property Management has given the group until the end of the week to vacate the house.

“The guise under which the guests secured the booking has not only been dishonest, but their indefinite occupancy and refusal to allow staff onto the property has led to many staff unable to perform their duties, resulting in a further compromise on their livelihoods and ability to support their families. In addition, much-needed future bookings are being compromised, resulting in a further setback for a small company already suffering and attempting to recover from the throes of Covid-19,” said the company’s Gabi Van Wyk. ■



Point of view:
The Cape Town house is normally rented out at nearly \$1,000 for just one night.
(Photo: David Harrison/M&G)

Gender inequality triggers a political crisis in Kenya

Scovian Lillian

Kenya's Chief Justice David Maraga has advised President Kenyatta to dissolve parliament. Why? Because MPs have repeatedly failed to meet the constitutional requirement to introduce legislation to ensure that no more than two-thirds of the legislature are of the same gender.

Enshrined in the 2010 Kenya Constitution, the implementation of this rule would significantly increase the proportion of women Members of Parliament, which currently stands at just 22%.

How did we get here? The drafters of Kenya's new Constitution did not fill in all the blanks. In the interests of expediency, in some cases they stated key principles and mandated MPs to design and pass the necessary enabling legislation.

This has caused problems in some areas, with critics alleging that legislation has been watered down – against the spirit of the Constitution – to enable the

president to reassert direct control of areas like policing and security.

Gender equality has fared even worse, with no legislation passed at all. The Supreme Court initially facilitated this before the 2013 election by ruling that the two-thirds clause could be deferred.

But under different leadership – and with Maraga's term in office coming to an end – the Court has adopted a very different position, using its power to try to force change.

So what happens next? Kenya's political leaders will argue that it makes no sense to dissolve Parliament and trigger fresh elections during a pandemic. But the Supreme Court has legal and political authority. Given this, MPs may promise to speed through legislation and hope to be forgiven. The problem with this is that it is not clear how a quota can easily be introduced in Kenya's first-past-the-post electoral system.

If MPs do have to face the public again, past experience suggests that around 40% will not return. Maraga will be unsympathetic to their plight, however, having written that “We must never forget that more often than not, there is no gain with pain”. ■

Scovian Lillian is a freelance journalist and PR Enthusiast based in Nairobi Kenya. This article was produced in partnership with Democracy in Africa.



The hidden debt crisis that crippled Mozambique's economy

As justice for perpetrators remains elusive, the big question is: Does Mozambique have to repay the money?

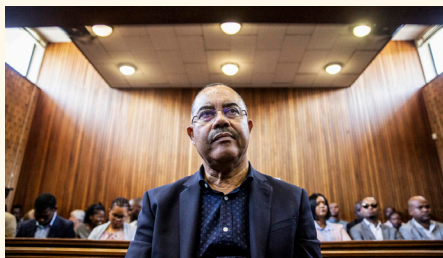
Luis Nhachote

In 2016 it emerged that Mozambique, under former President Armando Guebuza, had taken on more than \$2-billion in debt that it had not declared. This “hidden debt” scandal plunged the country into an economic crisis, and made life even more difficult for ordinary Mozambicans.

Making things worse yet is that this money was squandered on graft and ill-conceived projects, such as a fleet of tuna fishing boats that were not fit for purpose. Currently, the boats are rusting in Maputo's harbour: a powerful symbol of corruption and poor governance, for which no one has yet been held responsible.

There have been some attempts to prosecute implicated individuals, taking place in courtrooms in Mozambique, South Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom, but these have been frustrated by legal technicalities and global politics.

In December 2018, for example,



In the dock: Former finance minister Manuel Chang awaits extradition to either Mozambique or the United States. (Photo: Wikus De Wet/AFP)

former finance minister Manuel Chang was arrested at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. This prompted a flurry of activity from Mozambique's attorney general, who initiated prosecutions against several lower-ranking individuals. Chang himself is now stuck in the middle of a bitter extradition battle between Mozambique and the United States, who both claim to want to prosecute him.

There can be little doubt about the US's appetite to convict Chang: the country



Fishy business: One of Mozambique's ill-fated tuna boats implicated in the hidden debt scandal (Photo: Charly Triballeau/AFP)

has already tried Jean Boustani, who was a salesman for the firm that built the tuna fishing boats. He was found not guilty. But it is far from clear whether Mozambican prosecutors would be serious in their efforts to prosecute Chang, given that he might implicate even more senior members of the country's ruling elite.

In 2019, South Africa's former justice minister Michael Masutha ruled that Chang should be extradited to Mozambique. But this decision was swiftly overruled by his successor, Ronald Lamola, who described it as "irrational". Chang, in the meantime, is languishing in a cell in Modderbee prison, cut off from all the financial and emotional support he enjoyed back home in Mozambique.

Paying back the money

An even bigger question mark surrounds the fate of the debt itself: if it was contracted corruptly, does Mozambique really have to pay it back? Mozambique's Constitutional Council says no. It found last year that, ultimately, the loans were not constitutional. Mozambique's government

is also making this case in the London high court, because the debts were contracted through the London offices of the banks involved. Naturally, the main debtors – including Credit Suisse and VTB Bank – are opposing their application. They want their money back.

Debt campaigners in both Mozambique and the United Kingdom have supported the Mozambican government's position, saying that the perpetrators of the corrupt deals must be punished, and that ordinary Mozambicans should not have to repay a debt that was never legally incurred.

Before making its decision, the court wants to hear from key players in the scandal – including former president Guebuza, who is described as "a relevant person to help clarify the case"; and Guebuza's eldest son, Armando Ndambi Guebuza, the former director of the State Information and Security Services.

Credit Suisse has also requested – in a document seen by the *M&G* – that current President Filipe Nyusi appears in court "to answer for his irregularities".

Nyusi has yet to respond.

The hearing is scheduled for January next year, and its ruling could have major consequences far beyond Mozambique's own borders – especially if the court finds that Mozambique does not have to repay the debt.

On one hand, this could pave the way for other countries to cancel debts that were entered into under illegal circumstances.

On the other hand, it could also make it much harder for countries to access lines of credit in future. ■

PHOTO ESSAY

Omar Badsha: Recording the roles of the ordinary



Memorial service for anti-apartheid activist Victoria Mxenge, University of Natal, 1986

Omar Badsha is an iconic South African photographer and activist. He co-founded the non-racial Afrapix photographers' collective in the early 1980s, and for the past two decades has been chief executive of the South African History Online (Saho) website – the largest independent history education and research institute in the country.

But the news is not good: "We are on the verge of closing down, broer," Badsha told the *M&G's* Niren Tolsi. The pandemic has hit hard. Funding has dried up and Saho, which needs R3.5-million a year to

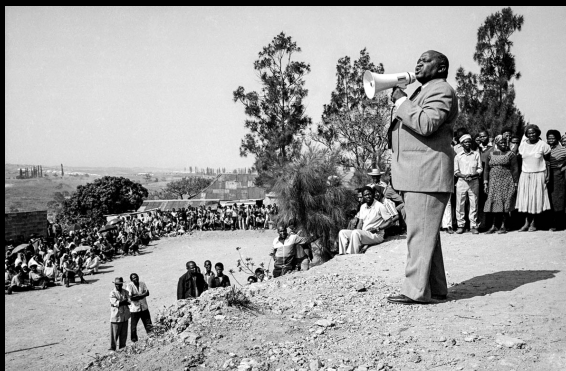
survive, has hobbled through much of 2020 with the assistance of volunteers. It can't for much longer.

Badsha wants President Cyril Ramaphosa to adopt Saho as a special project of his office until it becomes self-sufficient in two years' time.

Milan Kundera's observation that the struggle against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting may be trite, but it seems ever more relevant in an interregnum slowly forming against the backdrop of a pandemic.

If this generation is to respond to its calling, rather than betray it, then history, and organisations like Saho, are essential. ■

**Rogers Ngcobo,
an Inkatha
Freedom
Party leader,
addresses
residents of
Amouti, 1982**



**Funeral of
Sthembiso
Nzuza and
Moses
Ramatlotlo,
members of
the ANC's
armed wing,
killed in a clash
with police,
KwaMashu,
1984**





**Sushila Gandhi,
Verulam,
KwaZulu-Natal,
1981**



**Trade union
leader
Sam Kikini
addresses
striking
workers, YMCA
Hall, Durban,
1981**

**Children at
funeral of
Msizi Dube,
Lamontville,
1983**



**Students
organising a
protest against
the massacre of
ANC members
and Lesotho
citizens,
Lamontville,
KwaZulu-Natal,
1984**





The Big Picture

On guard: In the village of Wadda, in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ituri province, mediation efforts were under way last week to persuade a local militant group to lay down their arms. These militants are standing guard as their leaders meet with the former warlords who are steering the mediation.

(Photo: Alexis Huguet/AFP)

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