

# The Continent

with Mail & Guardian



## Nigerians fight back

(Illustration: sef Adeola)

## ELECTION SPECIAL

### TWO WEEKS, THREE KNIFE- EDGE VOTES

This October  
is election

season as voters in Guinea, Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire all head to the polls to choose a new president (or an existing president – maybe even for the third time). Scroll to p20 for an election special featuring on-the-ground reporting from all three countries. We've also got an incisive analysis, courtesy of Democracy in Africa, on what's really at stake in Guinea (p31), and an exclusive op-ed from Guinea's main opposition leader, Cellou Diallo, explaining why he's participating in this election – even when he knows he risks legitimising the president's controversial bid for a third term (p32).



This week's cover illustration was created by the Lagos-based multi-disciplinary artist sef Adeola. It was inspired by the activist Aisha Yesufu (pictured here in the photograph by Ibrahim Usman that is quickly becoming iconic). "I used her as a sort of synecdoche because a lot of Nigerian women have risen to the occasion, to both spearhead and champion the Nigerian youths' fight against police brutality," said Adeola.

## Inside:

- **COVER STORY:** Nigerians have had enough. The current protests are the biggest so far this century (p5). In a poignant essay, Elnathan John imagines what President Buhari, ill and infirm inside his presidential palace, is making of it all (p13).
- **The embassy, the spy and the hitmen:** South African diplomats flee Sudan (p8)
- **100 days later:** So far so good for Malawi's new president (p12)
- **Review:** The Girl with the Louding Voice (p17)
- **Continental Drift:** I Know What You Did Last Election (p18)

# The Week in Numbers

## \$330-billion

The amount of additional funding it would take to end world hunger by 2030, according to a new report backed by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. Currently, almost 700-million people go to bed hungry every night. Between them, the world's five richest people – all old white men – go to bed every night with more than that in their bank accounts.

## 500

The number of volunteers helping to fight the fire that is raging on Mount Kilimanjaro. "It seems the fire that was lit to prepare food for the tourists torched the dry vegetation in the area and spread quickly," said a Tanzanian official. The government has appealed for helicopters and planes with firefighting capacity to help to contain the blaze.

## 57%

The increase in suicides in Malawi so far this year, as compared with the same period last year. Experts believe unemployment and the lack of specialist support are contributing factors, and that the mental health crisis has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 180%

The drop in Zimbabwe's annual inflation rate, according to the International Monetary Fund, thanks to a stringent economic reform program. But don't convert your savings into Zimbabwean dollars just yet: inflation is still above 600%.

## 800,000

The number of new jobs promised by South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, as part of the country's economic recovery plan. The South African economy shed 2.2-million jobs in the second quarter of 2020, according to Statistics South Africa.



**Doesn't add up: Even if Ramaphosa realises his big promise on jobs, it won't replace those that have already been lost** (Photo: Delwyn Verasamy/M&G)

# FREE DELIVERY EVERY SATURDAY

**The Continent** is an award-winning weekly newspaper designed to be read and shared on WhatsApp. It showcases the best of African journalism. And it's free.



Get your copy delivered to your phone or inbox every Saturday. And if you like what you read, forward it to your friends, family and colleagues – not indiscriminately, but only with people who might appreciate it.



## HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

**Email:** [TheContinent@mg.co.za](mailto:TheContinent@mg.co.za) with 'SUBSCRIBE' in the subject box

**WhatsApp:** Save +27 73 805 6068 on your phone, and send us a message saying 'NEWS'

**Share real news.**

**The Continent**  
with Mail & Guardian

---

# Nigeria

---

## SARS has ended. But the protests have not

Tolu Olasoji

**F**ollowing the biggest nationwide protests in the history of democratic Nigeria, the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) – accused of routine harassment, torture, assault and extrajudicial executions – was officially disbanded on Sunday.

But that has not stopped the protests – or the police brutality. Thirty-two-year-old Akin Adewale was at the demonstration in Surulere, Lagos, where one person was killed after police shot live ammunition into the crowd.

“When the SARS officers fired a warning shot, I knew something was about to happen and ran inside a street opposite the police office. Then they started shooting at protesters,” Adewale told *The Continent*.

Adewale is one of tens of thousands of young Nigerians who have been protesting against police brutality over

the last two weeks. He joined the mass movement because of the harassment his younger brother has encountered at the hands of SARS, who were infamous for harassing young Nigerians. “He is a student of Yaba College of Technology and on several occasions, he has been arrested and accused of being a Yahoo boy [an internet scammer],” he said.

The nationwide protests were sparked by video footage of a young man being harassed and then killed by SARS officers in Ughelli in Delta State. They were united by a single message: #EndSARS.

On Sunday, police chief Mohammed Adamu announced that SARS would be disbanded with immediate effect. On Tuesday, he announced a replacement unit: the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), whose responsibilities include responding to robberies, rescue operations and special operations involving high-profile criminals. No members of SARS will be part of the new tactical unit. Unlike SARS, SWAT officers will not conduct routine patrols, and are also barred from unwarranted checking of phones, laptops and other devices.

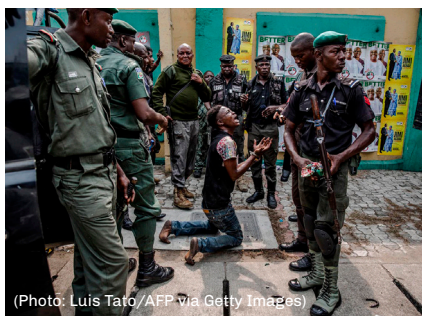
Despite these apparent concessions, the protests did not halt. If anything, they gathered momentum, with citizens demanding an end to police brutality and a broader overhaul of the police. Police



(Photo: Pius Utomi Ekpei/AFP)



(Photo: Benson Ibeabuchi/AFP via Getty Images)



(Photo: Luis Tato/AFP via Getty Images)



(Photo: Adekunle Ajayi/NurPhoto)

seem determined to prove their point. At least 10 people have been killed during the protests, according to Amnesty International, which accused the police of using excessive force against unarmed protesters.

Despite his proximity to this violence, Adewale is undeterred. He plans to attend more protests in Lagos. And, like millions of others, he has been making his voice heard on social media, using the hashtag #EndSARS. A rumour that the government planned to shut down or restrict internet access earlier this week was refuted by officials.

The scale and length of these protests is unique in modern Nigerian history. One reason why they have been so effective is that they have attracted

significant financial support. Flutterwave, a Nigerian payments startup, started an internal crowdfunding campaign; and their payments platform made it easy for supporters to make donations to a crowdfunding campaign organised by the Feminist Coalition, a newly-formed group that champions equality for women in Nigeria.

Funding in excess of \$200,000 has been raised in both cash and bitcoin, allowing protest organisers to provide medical supplies, legal aid as well as food and drinks.

Another reason, of course, is that many Nigerians have little faith in the government's promises to do better – underscored by the continuing brutality with which the protests are being met. ■

# Nigeria's queer community fights against police brutality – and for equal rights

Tolu Olasoji

Nigeria's LGBTQ+ community has been vocal at the #EndSARS protests, fighting for police brutality as well as equal rights. Members of the community say that they are easy targets for SARS operatives due to Nigeria's homophobic laws, such as the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act; and that homophobic attitudes more generally make it difficult for them to call out for help when they are being harassed.

**Members of the community say that they are easy targets for SARS operatives. Uche Uba, a model and gay man, was subjected to homophobic slurs and “called everything from prostitute and pimp to fraudster”**

Having gone through an ordeal at the hands of SARS operatives in October 2018, Uche Uba, a model and gay man, was “called everything from prostitute to pimp and then finally a fraudster”, with homophobic slurs hurled at him before

he was extorted.

On Monday, Uba protested with other queer people in Lagos. He told *The Continent* that every queer person he knows in Nigeria has either been through SARS brutality or knows someone who has.

“It was not hard being a queer person at the protest because I think this is one situation that has united people together,” Uba said. “Women, men, boys, queer people, everyone was there to end SARS and calling the justice system out ... still you could see some stares but that's fine.”

On Wednesday, however, those stares developed into an unpleasant situation for queer protesters in Abuja, who were reprimanded for flying the LGBTQ+ flag, having pro-queer inscriptions on their placards and chanting #QueerLivesMatter alongside #EndSARS.

“People were shouting things like ‘we support you but you guys are hijacking the protest,’” Nathan Shaiyen, an LGBTQ+ ally present at the protest, told *The Continent*.

This seems to have been an isolated incident, though. Overwhelmingly, the common goal has been calling for the ending of police brutality which everyone, regardless of their sexuality or class, faces in SARS. ■

# Sudan

## The embassy, the spy and the hitmen

**South Africa's deputy ambassador to Sudan is accused of orchestrating a gruesome double murder**

**Simon Allison**

**I**n Khartoum, two men were arrested earlier this year in connection with the murder of two young women. The murders were particularly brutal: one of the women had been dismembered, while the corpse of the other one had been chucked on top of a rubbish dump.

But the story that the men told the police was even stranger. As the *Daily Maverick's* Peter Fabricius reported this week: "The men claimed they had lured the women into the apartment of South Africa's deputy ambassador to Sudan and murdered them as a "training" exercise. The murders were a test to prepare them for their real assignment — to assassinate the intelligence officer at the South African embassy."

South Africa's deputy ambassador to

Sudan Zabantu Ngcobo and her partner are now under investigation. They returned to South Africa after exercising diplomatic immunity.

According to reports in the *Al-Sudani* newspaper, Ngcobo's partner was angry because the intelligence officer was harassing his wife, and wanted him killed. He allegedly approached the embassy driver — one of the men who was arrested — and offered to pay him \$50,000 if he could organise the assassination. But first he wanted proof that the hitmen were indeed capable of murder.

South Africa's department of international relations (Dirco) has declined to comment until investigations are concluded. "All I can say about this issue is that Dirco is aware of it and our police are investigating it and co-operating with the Sudanese police," a spokesperson told the *Daily Maverick*.

**"The men claimed they had lured the women into the ambassador's apartment and murdered them as a 'training exercise'"**

*Al-Sudani* reported that Sudanese investigators "were astonished by [the] serious and dangerous confessions, but they realised that it was the real motive of the crime". ■



# Cameroon

## Phone taxes just got 30% more expensive

Daniel Ekonde

Earlier this month, Cameroon's government slapped a 30% tax on any new mobile phone or tablet deemed not to have paid customs duties prior to purchase. According to Cameroon's ministry of telecommunications, most mobile phone vendors have been dodging import duties.

Yannick Selle, a phone vendor in Buea, told *The Continent* that the tax is bad for business. It has already led to confusion. "I do not know if we are the ones paying it, or our clients. I will not be able to survive if we are the ones paying this."

Selle does not buy the government's rationale for the new tax. "It doesn't make any sense. Why would the government tax only tablets and telephones? What about other electronics? It doesn't make sense at all!"

An alternative explanation is political rather than economic. Cameroon's 27-million strong population is overwhelmingly youthful, and they are



**Wrong number: Cameroonians are protesting a new 30% tax on mobile phones.** (Photo: Adrienne Surprenant/Bloomberg via Getty)

accustomed to expressing themselves on social media. But more expensive mobile phones mean less people will be able to access the internet – potentially silencing critical voices. "Social media is the only space for us now. We can't go and protest on the streets because we will be beaten up and arrested," said 18-year-old Derrick, who asked to be identified only by his first name.

Analysts such as digital entrepreneur Rebecca Enonchong have also raised concerns about the government's new online tax collection platform, and specifically about what provisions are in place to guarantee data security.

Protests against the new tax have already begun – and, fittingly, they are on social media, where #EndPhoneTax has been the top trending hashtag on Cameroonian Twitter this week. ■

# Uganda

## Bobi Wine's offices raided

**Security forces descended on opposition party offices this week, seizing documents, cash and party paraphernalia. *The Continent* visited several days later**

**Andrew Arinaitwe**

**O**mubanda affuse ensonga. In Luganda, this loosely translates as ‘The gangster has become a pain in the neck’, and is how a boda-boda driver described Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine, en route to his party’s offices in Kampala’s Kamwokya suburb.

And the driver is right, if this week’s heavy-handed raid on those offices is anything to go by: there can be no doubt that Bobi Wine – real name Kyagulanyi Ssentamu Robert – has touched a nerve. On Tuesday, with no prior warning, dozens of armed state security personnel forced their way inside. According to one eyewitness, as they did so they shouted: “Anyone with a soft heart should leave!”

Ntege Williams – better known as Kyuma Kya Yesu, or Heavy Metal Jesus

– is a National Unity Platform security volunteer at the office. He was there when the police arrived, but was powerless to stop them. “The police outnumbered us,” he told *The Continent*. “I was up and down and could not monitor them alone, they came with those in plain clothes, those in police uniform and those in the army.” He instructed his colleagues to observe the police carefully; he was worried that they might install secret cameras or plant poison.

Officially, the purpose of the raid was to seize the party’s distinctive red t-shirts and berets, which apparently bear too much resemblance to Ugandan military uniforms. The government banned the wearing of red berets in September last year, claiming that its use was reserved exclusively for the military. “Due to continued illegal use of military and police stores and other military/police patented designs, a joint operation is ongoing to recover the same from the public,” said army spokesperson Brigadier General Flavia Byekwaso.

But according to Wine and other opposition party officials, the security forces also seized cash and nomination forms. They claim this is designed to prevent him from running for president against Yoweri Museveni in next year’s election, as the nomination forms contained signatures supporting his candidacy. The police have denied that

any cash was taken.

Wine was not at the offices when *The Continent* visited on Thursday. His wife, Barbra Kyagulanyi, said that he was doing fine, but declined to comment further.

Francis Zaake, an opposition member of Parliament, arrived at the office in the afternoon, straight from accepting the party's nomination to run for Parliament in Mityana municipality. He walks with crutches after being tortured in detention earlier this year (he was arrested for distributing food to his constituents in April, in what police said was a violation of Covid-19 restrictions).

"It is sad that the police, supposed to protect us, instead stole our stuff, and it's



**Office politics: Security forces raid the National Unity Platform headquarters, in this photograph released by the party.**

not the first time. They did the same thing to me, but one day this will come to an end," said Zaake. "They took our money, our t-shirts and our signatures. This should be the last time they provoke us because when you hold a nose for a long time, it bleeds." ■

## Meet the president formerly known as Yoweri Museveni

On October 6, Uganda's president changed his name by deed poll.

"I formally and absolutely renounce and abandon the use of the names, Yoweri Museveni, Yoweri Tibahaburwa Museveni and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and assume and adopt my full name Yoweri Tibahaburwa Kaguta Museveni," he stated in a sworn affidavit. (As radio host Brian Mulondo noted: "Tibuhaburwa" essentially means 'not to be advised'. I wonder what the 1,000 presidential advisors are for.")

The president is one of at least five Ugandan politicians to change their names by deed poll in the last few

weeks. This includes his main rival in next year's election, who henceforth shall be officially known as Kyagulanyi Ssentamu Robert – although most people call him Bobi Wine.

The recent spate of name changes is no coincidence. New electoral regulations state that candidates' names on their identity documents must match up exactly with the names on their academic records, or they risk being disqualified. According to the *Daily Monitor* newspaper, hundreds of Ugandans are scrambling to legally change or confirm their names to ensure they are compliant with the new law.

# Malawi

## 100 days in, the new president is off to a good start

Golden Matonga

**I**n June this year, President Lazarus Chakwera was swept into power on a huge wave of euphoria, winning the election at the second time of asking – after the first vote had been annulled due to widespread irregularities.

But now he has to fix the mess made by his predecessor – and deliver on his own pledges, most notably the promise to create “one million jobs”.

Chakwera has so far sought to make good on these promises, although he has pleaded for patience. Notable accomplishments so far include investigations and arrests of members of the old regime implicated in corruption scandals, and the beginning of a reform process aimed at trimming the president’s own powers.

Chakwera has also appeared in Parliament, where he took questions from lawmakers – a duty disregarded by most

of his predecessors. He is good at it, too.

“He outwitted them [opposition lawmakers] so much that the fear now is that it’s the opposition MPs who will not want him to be coming to Parliament,” said Boniface Dulani, a political scientist at the University of Malawi.

But Dulani also warns this could all prove to be a false dawn, and that it’s too early to pass any verdicts.

And, indeed, the first 100 days have not gone by without controversy. Chakwera has been sharply criticised for the family ties in his cabinet, and for failing to include enough women appointments.

Overall, however, Chakwera’s first 100 days in office have been greeted with optimism. “We have seen relative calm in the country and, in large part, it’s because of the level of contentment with the new administration,” said Dulani. ■



**So far, so good: Chakwera's enthusiastic supporters are generally pleased with their leader's first 100 days.** (Photo: Amos Gumulira/AFP)

# Our merciful Nigerian father

Elnathan John

(Illustrations: sef Adeola)

**I**t is five in the morning, and dawn has found you still staring into the void in this gaudy villa built to separate you from the populace, to protect you from coups, and most importantly to protect you from the news. You are a simple man and do not care much for these luxuries. You hardly even like embroidery on your caftans.

But this time the news has crossed the many aides and associates paid to shield you from information, and to your horror, you read that the world is watching what is happening on the streets of Nigeria. Protests against police brutality. Protests that refuse to end. You know you will soon receive a call from the Americans to find out what is going on, and what you are doing about it. You do not like that they always want to do something about everything. Your style is different. Sometimes it is better to sit, watch, and do nothing. Nature has a way of restoring the balance of things.

You know because you are president again, after you tried unsuccessfully, three times. Three times after your friends, also dictators, said you were too much of a dictator and kicked you out of power in 1984.

These days, your aides have to bring you a chair when you perform the fajr prayers alongside a few trusted men in the villa. Like them, you place your hands over your chest, you focus on the ground, say the words of prayer, silently. Unlike them you cannot bow or kneel or prostrate. Unlike them you cannot fold your body to make sure your forehead, nose, palms of both hands, knees, and both toes are touching the ground. That is why you need to sit to pray. And because Allah is merciful, He allows for this, for people as incapacitated as you are.

Unlike Allah, humans are not merciful. They want you to bow. To kneel. To prostrate. They want you to bow to pressure to scrap this unit of the Nigerian Police – this Special Anti-Robbery Squad, which they call SARS – which people say have been murdering innocent young

people. They say people disappear, young men with dreadlocked hair, with tattoos, or even just carrying a laptop in a backpack. But you know Nigerians and how they exaggerate. You cannot be sure it is anything more than the overzealousness of a few bad eggs.

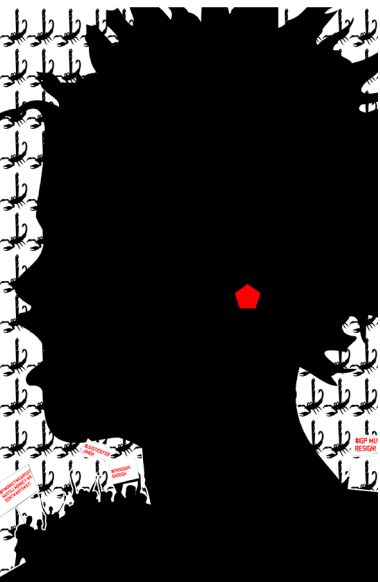
You cannot verify the authenticity of all the stories of brutality, of extortion, of extrajudicial killing, of rapes, of kidnaps, of enforced disappearances. But that is not even the point. The point is, if God allows you to sit instead of kneeling, to sit instead of prostrating, why do mortals want to bend you to their will?

The Inspector General of Police had announced the scrapping of SARS and its replacement with a Special Weapons and Tactics Unit. Still they protest. Why do they not trust you? And why aren't they working? Or out farming? You remember raising a ruckus after the Commonwealth Business Forum in London, when you called them lazy people who want to "sit and do nothing, and get housing, healthcare, education free". Look at them now.

You sit still as you receive your cocktail of pills alongside a light breakfast, which is all you can manage these days. People need to be patient. Like you were patient when they refused to allow you to become president in 2003, 2007, and 2011.

You sit still as you receive your cocktail of pills alongside a light breakfast, which is all you can manage these days. People need to be patient. Like you were patient when they refused to allow you to become president in 2003, 2007, and 2011.

As you wait for the universe to restore the balance of things you admire the inventiveness of your supporters. Even when you were a military dictator (oh how you miss those days) it would not have occurred to you to hire thugs in Lagos and Abuja to attack and destroy the property of peaceful protesters. Or to block the payments being made



to a bank account set up to support the protests. Especially in Lagos, you admire how efficiently thugs were moved using vehicles belonging to the government, to the protest venues, wielding sticks, knives and machetes.

Even though you do not always agree with Lagos, you marvel at how inventive they are.

Do they realise that after all the mayhem you can send in the army to shut it all down and declare curfews? Is that what they want? What is it they want exactly?

You have asked who the leader of the protest is. Your aides have trawled the streets, online chatrooms, Facebook and Twitter. Nothing. The initial attempts to get a few known faces to sabotage the protests did not work. You are shocked that even the men who normally do not like the feminists are donating to the Feminist Coalition and supporting the many women on the frontlines.

But you believe in the power of silence. And of sitting still. Your friends, employees and allies may be deploying physical and verbal violence against protesters, but you will sit still. You will wait. The UEFA Champions League resumes on October 20. Chelsea, Barcelona and Manchester United all have games that day – it should give you some respite.

You will wait for other government officials to try what they can. For the police to try water canons, bullets, brutality and arrests. For some of your supporters to try threatening the women in the Feminist Coalition. You will wait as people loyal to you try to infiltrate the groups organizing the protests and try to disrupt it from within. For cheaply acquired thugs to scare protesters away. And after all is said and done, like the father you are, you will step in, mercifully, your arms outstretched, and promise to deal decisively with all those who have broken the law.

When you do, you hope your impatient people – and especially the sanctions-wielding Americans who don't know how to sit still – can see how merciful you are. ■

*Elnathan John is a Nigerian novelist, satirist and lawyer. He is the author of Born on a Tuesday and Be(com)ing Nigerian.*





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

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

1. Which country is holding presidential elections on October 18?
2. True or false: Alassane Ouattara is the president of Guinea.
3. Name a country where people speak Wolof.
4. In which country is Table Mountain located?
5. What does the now dissolved Nigerian police organisation SARS stand for?
6. Which one of the following lakes do not make up part of the Great Rift Valley: Lake Bogoria, Lake Kariba or Lake Nakuru?
7. Which area in Tanzania is recognised as a World Heritage Site?
8. What is the continent's wealthiest country according to GDP?
9. Which country's flag features a lone white star in the centre of a powder blue background?
10. Saadeddine Othmani is the president of Morocco. True or false?
11. South African DJ Master KG's global hit has an accompanying dance routine. Is it called the #JerusalemChallenge or the #BethlehemChallenge?
12. N'Djamena is the capital of which country?

## 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 stand with #EndSARS!"



# A louding new voice in fiction

Tshegofatso Mathe

**I**n her debut novel *Abi Daré* uses pidgin English to tell a powerful story of Adunni – a 14-year-old girl who fights to become what her mother counselled her to be, a girl with a voice.

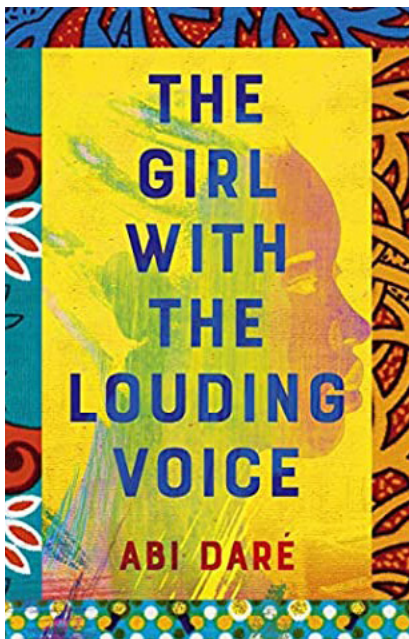
When Adunni's father marries her off, she becomes the much older Morufu's third wife.

But she wants an education – “a louding voice”. Adunni does not forget her mother's final words to her; that having an education can open her life to many possibilities.

Adunni promises herself that “I don't just want to be having any kind voice ... I want a louding voice.” In an interview with Penguin Random House, Daré explained that for Adunni, having a louding voice means to refuse to be silenced by a society – particularly one that only sees her as being good enough for marriage.

For readers who are not familiar with pidgin, it might be difficult at first to get into the story. But Daré deliberately writes in this way to show that proficiency in English does not equate to intelligence.

While Adunni works as a servant in Lagos, she teaches herself to read and learns complex English words. Soon Adunni is able to use grammatically correct English, and Daré's writing style evolves



to demonstrate this.

The book explores patriarchy, child sex trafficking, physical and emotional abuse, pregnancy-related death and male infertility through weaving in the stories of other women.

This is a powerful debut novel told in the spirited voice of a young Nigerian woman who is determined to see her dreams coming into fruition – no matter the amount of painful detours she encounters along the way. ■

# A nightmare in State House

Samira Sawlani

In some parts of the world, October is synonymous with what is supposed to be the scariest holiday of them all: Halloween. That got us thinking about what exactly constitutes horror for some of our favourite leaders.

Is it the threat of running out of teargas? Is it the spectre of those agents of Satan otherwise known as human rights activists, infecting the minds of the people with dangerous notions of freedom and democracy? Or is it the idea of other presidents, in other countries, making headlines for fighting against corruption rather than using public funds for their intended purpose – weeks-long luxury stays in exclusive hotels in Switzerland?

In some countries, of course, the authorities have no qualms about dishing out a little horror themselves. This week we've seen more than our fair share.

In Uganda, the office of presidential candidate Bobi Wine was raided by security forces. According to Wine, they seized important documents, including nomination forms, and seized cash that was supposed to pay for those nominations ahead of next year's election.

Also taken was opposition party paraphernalia, including their trademark red t-shirts and berets. The police spokesperson said that such uniforms

“are a preserve of the armed forces”. We think that President Yoweri Museveni was just looking for a costume to wear to the African Union's annual Halloween party.

## The life and death of the party

Speaking of parties: members of Kenya's National Assembly decided to spend less time on legislating this week and more time on getting their dance moves right for the *Jerusalema* Challenge. The MPs were hard at work during rehearsals and will release the video on Tuesday. And if that is not enough to give you the chills, few of them were wearing face masks.

## Kenyan MPs spent the week getting their dance moves right for the *Jerusalema* Challenge

Ironically, for Master KG – the South African musician who created *Jerusalema* – the party was cancelled. He was due to perform in Ndola this weekend, at a “Covid Sensitisation” rally organised by Zambia's ruling party. But the event was cancelled after vocal protests from both local artists, who thought his fees would be better spent on them, and from public health professionals who thought

**PF COPPERBELT PROVINCIAL MOBILISATION COMMITTEE**

INVITES YOU TO...

**A COVID-19 SENSITISATION RALLY****MAIN SPEAKER : HON. BOWMAN LUSAMBO MP**

VENUE: MUSAKASONKA STADIUM - NDOLA

TIME : 09:00hrs

DATE : SATURDAY 17th OCTOBER 2020



ENTERTAINMENT BY

**MASTER KG****MAFIKIZOLO****YO - MAPS****CHANDA NA KAY**

TO BE HELD UNDER STRICT COVID -19 GUIDELINESS

**Demobilised:  
The Covid  
sensitisation  
sensation that  
wasn't**

that maybe a mass gathering was not the smartest way to educate people about the dangers of a virus that thrives in mass gatherings.

### **I know what you did last election**

A more conventional horror movie is unfolding in Guinea, where President Alpha Condé is running for an unpopular third term in office, consequences be damned. Earlier this week the main opposition candidate, Cellou Diallo, was blocked from holding a rally in Kankan by supporters of the president. Days later the president himself arrived in the same region, and told supporters: "I don't want to leave Guinea to thieves and liars. I'm counting on the youth."

Presumably he will not be counting on the young men and young women who make up the bulk of the 90-plus people who were killed by his security forces when they exercised their constitutional right to protest against his re-election bid.

Making this story all the more

terrifying is that President Condé has spent decades of his career in the political opposition, fighting against authoritarianism. Maybe if you spend too much time around monsters, you eventually become one.


Another all-too real horror show is Nigeria's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), the notorious police unit accused of human rights abuses including extortion, assault and extrajudicial killings. Nationwide protests against SARS specifically and police brutality generally have been met, in some places, with yet more police brutality. But they have also succeeded in getting SARS formally disbanded, and protesters are not giving up yet.

If anything, the wave of resistance appears to be gathering more momentum with every passing day. Now, that is the kind of threat which should keep our leaders awake at night, sweating and wondering when their time will come. ■



## The October election season

**In the next two weeks, three African countries will head to the polls to choose their next president. In each country, the incumbent is seeking to retain office – even when, as in the case of Guinea and Côte d’Ivoire, it appears to violate constitutional norms. Our correspondents are following the campaigns closely.**



**Guinea elections**  
October 18 2020

# Guinea is on the verge of yet another false dawn

*Guinea's election pits President Alpha Condé and his Guinean People's Assembly against Cellou Dalein Diallo, a former prime minister and leader of the main opposition party, the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea. The opposition attempted to present a united front on polling day, but Diallo withdrew from the opposition coalition and has decided to go it alone. There is one issue, however, that has dominated the run-up to the vote: Condé's controversial decision to run for a third term in office. As journalist Sidy Yansané explains, Guineans have watched this movie before – and it did not have a happy ending.*

**P**erhaps the most striking image from Guinea's electoral campaign was when President Alpha Condé was interviewed by France 24, at his palace in Sékoutoureyia in the capital, Conakry. The head of state turns 83 next March, and on camera he appeared greatly diminished, both physically and intellectually.

He struggled to keep his eyes open, and was unable to suppress a persistent grimace. During the interview, the president found it difficult to express himself, especially concerning recent events. He was most comfortable dwelling on the past, raising his voice and cutting off the two interviewers to lecture them in the pedagogical tone for which he is famous, and for which he is nicknamed 'the Professor' (he began his career teaching law at the Sorbonne in Paris).

Fifteen minutes into the interview,

the thought occurred: if Condé is re-elected on Sunday, will he be yet another Guinean president who dies in office?

Despite his advanced age, and despite having already served two terms in office, Condé was seemingly unable to find a successor in his party, the Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée. To allow himself to run again, he altered the country's Constitution to remove the provision on term limits. This sparked fierce protests from both opposition parties and civil society organisations, which spilled over into massive demonstrations in which hundreds of thousands of citizens took to the streets, all shouting amoulanfé ("this will not pass" in Sousou, one of the four main local languages).

The brutal response from state security forces caused dozens of deaths.

Condé's record during his decade in power is mixed. He strengthened some



**Hopeful: Supporters of the main opposition candidate, Cellou Dalein Diallo, at a campaign rally in Conakry (Photo: John Wessels/AFP)**

aspects of the country's democracy, including opening the space for free media and releasing political prisoners. And thanks to his economic policies, Guinea is now the third-largest producer of bauxite in the world.

But he has also failed to deliver on his many promises (so many that some young people refer to him, ironically, as "Papa Promise"), especially when it comes to service delivery and economic development. In a recent evaluation report, the Association of Bloggers of Guinea found that the president had fulfilled just 13% of the pledges he had made. "On education, town planning and industry, the failures are significant," said the association's president Alfa Diallo. At the mass demonstrations, popular

discontent focused mainly on the continuing struggles to access electricity and the dire lack of roads.

During the campaign, the president's team glossed over these failures. "The government's electoral campaign lingered less on its mixed record and was content to scold opponents," said Kabinet Fofana, the director of the Guinean Association of Political Science. Fofana said that Condé's desire to remain in office was driven by powerful business interests who could lose out under a different administration. In other words, Condé does not necessarily have strong popular support, although in the absence of reliable opinion polls this is difficult to measure.

Against this backdrop, tensions



**Third time lucky: The president's supporters don't mind that he changed the Constitution to allow himself to run again** (Photo: John Wessels AFP)

are running high. "With the complete lack of trust between political figures, I fear renewed violence after Sunday's vote," said Fofana. These concerns were echoed last week by Fatou Bensouda, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, in an official statement. "As in previous elections, where similar episodes of violence broke out, I call for calm and restraint from all political actors and their supporters," she said.

These are dangerous days for Guinea, but the country has been here before – as Condé well knows. He was a political exile under the "revolutionary dictatorship" of Ahmed Sékou Touré, the first strongman

of an independent Guinea. He was a political prisoner under the decades-long military regime of General Lansana Conté.

Yet he appears to be following the same authoritarian path forged by his predecessors. His frail television interview even recalled Conté's last years, when the general was so infirm that during the 2003 presidential vote he did not have the strength to leave his vehicle, and the ballot box had to be brought to him.

Conté died in office in 2008. Sékou Touré died in office in 1984. Is Guinea doomed to repeat history once again?

"There is a form of continuity in governance," observed the philosopher Amadou Sadjo Barry, a professor at the Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, a college in Quebec. "Behind democratic formalism, authoritarian practices persist. Since the death of Sékou Touré, politics has no longer been linked to the organization of society and individual progress."

This trend persists despite Guinea's significant mineral wealth, which contrasts so sharply with the country's extreme and widespread poverty. "We are in decline because this authoritarianism has failed to bring economic development and meet people's aspirations," concluded Barry. So far, the Guinean people have been offered little hope that the elections on Sunday will arrest that decline. ■

*Writing exclusively for The Continent, Guinea's main opposition leader Celou Diallo argues that the result of Sunday's election will determine the country's future for generations to come. See p32.*

Tanzania elections  
October 28 2020

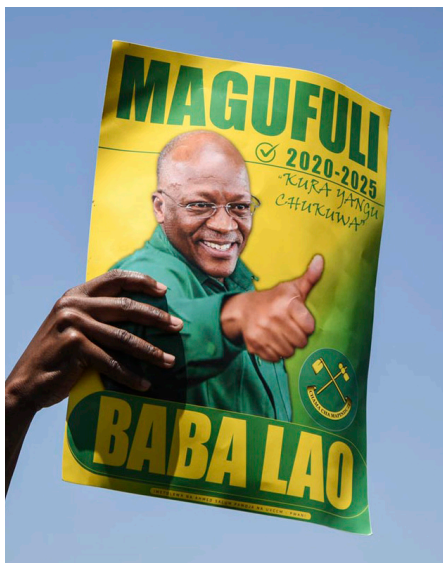
# Advantage Magufuli as the president exploits his incumbency

Simon Mkina in Dar es Salaam

Tanzania's election is scheduled for October 28, and although there are 15 parties in contention only two have any real chance of victory.

Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the ruling party since independence in 1961, has never lost an election. It is led by incumbent president John Magufuli who is running for a second term in office. Hoping to upset their dominance is Chadema, the main opposition party, who is fielding charismatic parliamentarian Tundu Lissu as its presidential candidate.

The ruling party's campaign has been very loud and very visible. President Magufuli's face and the party's signature green-and-yellow colours can be found on posters, leaflets and billboards across the country, and coverage of his campaign dominates the news. It helps, of course, that the media space is tightly controlled by the government and its allies. Influential artists and actors, including Diamond Platinumz, Ali Kiba and Harmonize have endorsed his bid for re-election.



**Thumbs up: The country is blanketed by posters in support of President Magufuli** (Photo: Ericky Boniphace/ AFP)

You have to look hard to find any sign of Chadema's blue-and-white, either on the streets or on the airwaves. The opposition party has complained that new taxes have made it significantly more





**Popular appeal: Chadema's rallies are just as large as those of the ruling party** (Photo: Ericky Boniphace/AFP)

expensive to produce electoral materials, and that the media landscape is biased against it. Despite these challenges, Lissu can pull a crowd: Chadema rallies are just as full as those for the ruling party. And on social media, where – despite its best efforts – the government has less control, it is clear that the opposition enjoys significant popular support.

Working in Chadema's favour is an informal deal it has struck with the third biggest party in the country, ACT-Wazalendo, led by Zitto Kabwe. ACT-Wazalendo is asking its supporters to vote for Lissu; in exchange, Chadema has endorsed ACT-Wazalendo's candidate

to lead Zanzibar (the island is a semi-autonomous region with the Tanzanian federation).

The question now is whether this united opposition front will be enough to unseat a sitting president who is strategically exploiting all the advantages of incumbency. Take the ballot paper itself, a sample of which was released by the electoral commission this week. Usually, the names of candidates are ordered alphabetically, but this time it is supposed to be random. Sure enough, CCM and Magufuli are first, while Chadema and Lissu are last. That's quite the coincidence. ■

Côte d'Ivoire elections  
October 31 2020

# Despite boycott, the president presses ahead with controversial vote



Confident: A rally of ruling party supporters in Abidjan (Photo: Jessouf Sanogo/AFP)

## Leanne de Bassompierre in Bouaké

**W**ith two weeks to go before Côte d'Ivoire's presidential election, campaigning is now officially underway. Incumbent Alassane Ouattara, who is seeking a controversial third term, kicked off his campaign with a rally in the central

city of Bouaké on Friday.

However, the vote was thrown into turmoil when opposition parties called for its supporters to boycott. "What's underway is not called a presidential election. It's called a coup, a hold up or a sham," Ivorian Popular Front presidential candidate, Pascal Affi N'Guessan told reporters on Friday.

N'Guessan and fellow opposition candidate Henri Konan Bédié have repeatedly called for a postponement of the polls over what they deem Ouattara's unconstitutional bid for a third term, but the ruling party maintains a new Constitution adopted in 2016 reset the clocks and that the election will take place regardless of whether they participate.

In Bouaké, to an audience of traditional leaders, Ouattara insisted the elections will go ahead: "I hear people say that there should be a dialogue. But the dialogue has already taken place. Let's go to the elections. There will be no postponement, no transition. I read that heads of state must come here [to mediate]. I have them every day on the phone. They have work at home. Nobody's coming here to negotiate anything."

Ouattara is dead set on a first round victory, in which he will need to convince more than 50% of the country's nearly 7.5-million registered voters to support him.

While the official campaign period runs from October 15 to 29, Ouattara has been on the road for weeks, personally announcing a 21% increase in the price paid to cocoa farmers at the start of the main harvest on October 1 in the capital Yamoussoukro and inaugurating several infrastructure projects, the cornerstone of his presidency. Locals joke that he would probably attend a random baptism if invited.

Yet in a country where the median age is 18.9 years old, both the 78-year-old incumbent and his octogenarian main rival, Henri Konan Bédié, 86, will have to entice a growing youth population with their electoral promises.

Ouattara's camp maintains he is in good physical condition, keeping fit by walking and doing aquabike exercises in the swimming pool. But his health is a relevant concern: after all, the sudden death of his chosen successor Amadou Gon Coulibaly this July is what led Ouattara to announce his candidacy a month later. ■



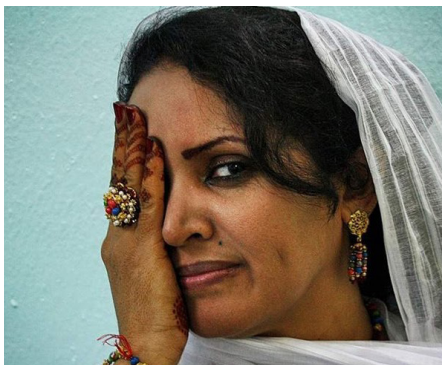
**Boycott:** Opposition parties are urging their supporters not to participate in the vote (Photo: Sia Kambou/AFP)

# Mekfoula Mint Brahim

**Mekfoula Mint Brahim is a Mauritanian activist who fights against religious extremism and discriminatory practices. She is a powerful advocate for gender rights and women's empowerment, and was recognised this month with the prestigious Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk. She spoke to *The Continent*.**

**I am a woman who faces a lot of discrimination** in society. I am a chemist by training, but I faced a lot of problems from men who worked with me. It was not just because I was a woman, but also because I only spoke Arabic, not French. They were attacking me as if I didn't deserve the position. They were annoyed that I was their boss.

**I grew up** in a house of seven siblings, and my mother was the only person who was making a living for the family. I got used to this idea where the woman was the head of the family.



**Even though there is a feminist movement** in Mauritania, the country has become more conservative. I refuse the idea, imposed by TV channels financed by Gulf countries, that women don't belong in society. Social media is opening up new spaces to have these conversations which is good. But unless I see real change in the next five years, I will not keep being hopeful.

**People are not used to women speaking out about rights.** They try to slander and arrest me. They try to stop me from working. I have been arrested twice. Someone tried to kill me in 2017. He was jailed, but only for five years. The sentence does not fit the crime.

**I belong to the Bedouin community.** Maybe my strong determination to live freely comes from the fact that the Bedouin always live in open spaces.

# The albatross around Amina Mohamed's neck

**Despite plenty of high-level experience, the Kenyan diplomat is tarnished by her campaign against the International Criminal Court**

**Isaac Otidi Amuke**

**T**here are just two candidates still in the running to be the next director-general of the World Trade Organisation. Kenyan diplomat Amina Mohamed, who mounted a strong campaign for the position, is not among them.

This is a second high-profile snub, coming after her 2017 defeat by Chad's Moussa Faki in the race to lead the African Union Commission. She was, at various points, considered a frontrunner for both roles. So what went wrong?

Starting off as a legal advisor in the ministry of foreign affairs in Nairobi in 1986, Mohamed – who received a masters in law from the University of Kiev – moved to Kenya's mission to the United Nations in Geneva in 1991, before joining Kenya's delegation to the UN in New York in 1997.

It was while serving as Kenya's permanent representative to the UN in Geneva from 2000 to 2006 that Mohamed first made inroads within the WTO. She served as chairperson for the Africa Group in the WTO's Human Rights



**Amina Mohamed during her unsuccessful job interview at the WTO in Geneva (Photo: Fabrice Coffrini/AFP)**

Commission, chaired the WTO's Trade Policy Review Body and its Dispute Settlement Body, and became the first woman to chair the WTO General Council.

As the clamor for a woman and preferably an African to lead the WTO gained momentum, the contest was

often narrowed down to Mohamed and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's former minister of finance. On paper, other than being one of Africa's top diplomats – having been the first woman to chair the International Organisation of Migration, and having sat on the boards of several major UN bodies – Mohamed had the added advantage of being a serving member of cabinet as Kenya's minister for sports. However, it is this ministerial role – and her close ties to Kenya's political elite – that may have doomed her bid for the top job in both the WTO and the AU.

## **Post-mortems of her failure to win that race suggest her active role in the highly contentious ICC issue may have been a liability and lost her support from other African countries**

When President Uhuru Kenyatta took office in 2013, at a time when he and his deputy William Ruto were facing crimes against humanity charges at the International Criminal Court, he went out shopping for an experienced diplomat, one who could do Kenya's bidding against the ICC.

Mohamed, at the time serving as the UN Environmental Program's deputy executive director, was a natural choice.

As minister for foreign affairs, Mohamed became the diplomatic face of the two suspects, invoking the

Rome Statute as she went after the ICC. Eventually, the court dropped both cases – a major diplomatic win for Mohamed, for which she was rewarded by President Kenyatta with strong support for her AU bid. But post-mortems of her failure to win that race suggest her active role in the highly contentious ICC issue may have been a liability, and lost her support from other African countries and from within the broader international diplomatic community.

After her defeat, Mohamed had appeared to have exhausted her usefulness to President Kenyatta. No longer keen on deploying her where she fits best, in February 2018 Kenyatta moved Mohamed to the education ministry. Struggling and out of place, she was made minister for sports a year later, another ill-fitting portfolio. It is during this time that the WTO opportunity arose.

As Nigeria's Muhammadu Buhari promised to make whatever calls and write whatever letters needed to see Okonjo-Iweala clinch the job, Mohamed may once again have underestimated the damage her role in castigating the ICC did to her otherwise impeccable diplomatic career. It did not help that President Kenyatta was less enthusiastic than Buhari in his lobbying for her, or that the European Union was suspicious that she would go easy on Kenya when it came to upholding trade obligations. ■

*Isaac Otidi Amuke is a Kenyan writer and journalist.*

# Will Guinea's election change anything?

**Mbulle-Nziege Leonard**

**G**uinea goes to the polls on 18 October. Despite a crowded field, only two men can win the presidency: 82 year old President Alpha Condé of the Rassemblement des Peuples Guinéens and 68 year old Cellou Dalein Diallo of the opposition Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG). So what is likely to happen on Sunday, and how important are the elections for Guinea's future?

Few expect the election to be free and fair. Condé is only able to run because he fixed a constitutional referendum to remove presidential term-limits, and leaders who do that are rarely willing to lose power. Protests against his power grab organized by the Front Nationale pour la Défense de la Constitution – a collective of civil society groups and opposition parties – have been brutally repressed. According to Amnesty International, over 50 people lost their life at the hands of the security forces between October 2019 and July 2020.

After initially supporting an election boycott, leading opposition parties including the UFDG decided to participate at the last moment. The

campaign has become increasingly bitter ever since, with major disagreements over the state of the electoral register and the independence of the electoral commission fueling political and ethnic tensions.

While both candidates claim to have a national voter base, Condé derives most of his support from the Malinke and Soussou communities, while Diallo is predominantly backed by the Peul (Fulani). As tempers flare, both candidates stand accused of using hate speech on the campaign trail.

**Few expect the election to be free and fair. Condé is only able to run because he fixed a constitutional referendum**

The most likely outcome is that President Condé will “win” a disputed and controversial poll, triggering further demonstrations. That will increase the pressure on the international community to intervene, but the leverage of Western donors has declined during the Condé presidency. With China, Russia, Turkey and the Gulf states becoming increasingly important political and economic players, Condé is unlikely to be pressured into reform. ■

*Mbulle-Nziege Leonard is a doctoral candidate at the University of Cape Town and a research analyst at Africa Risk Consulting.*



# Guinea's future hangs in the balance

## It's time to stand up and demand change

**Cellou Diallo**

**O**n Sunday, over five million of my fellow countrymen and women will queue at the polls to determine our destiny. The choice that lies in our collective hands will dictate the future of Guinea for generations to come. We can choose, on the one hand, six additional years of political repression, social division and poverty; or we can stand up, together, and unite to choose the alternative: a road that is paved on a foundation of justice, the rule of law, respect for basic freedoms and the necessary reforms that will uplift our country out of the crushing poverty that is holding us back.

Over the course of the past 10 years, our people have suffered. They have suffered due to a lack of political leadership that is now ingrained in the DNA of our country's ruling party and further embodied by President Alpha Condé, a man who recently upended our Constitution and engineered a self-serving scheme to stay in power for an unconstitutional third term.

Guineans did not take this assault on our values lightly. We took to the streets in the thousands to demand a new path, standing firm and brave, reimagining what it means to be responsible citizens refusing to accept the unacceptable status quo. We withstood teargas and batons, bullets and beatings. And we have the scars and grief to show for it. Local civil society groups have put the death toll at 92, though my own party officials put the number at well over 200.

The ruling regime has demonstrated a willingness to cross every conceivable line to remain in power and entrench misrule.

But, in a world that today is preoccupied by a global health pandemic and democratic backsliding across the board, rarely do events in our small country cause alarm. Those who have ruled over us in Guinea – often violently and with no accountability – have drawn strength from this lack of oversight. They have grown emboldened in the darkness. But this is where our global allies in the struggle for democracy and respect for human rights can play their part. This is where the readers of this article can enter the picture.

We need your eyes and your voices to let our leaders know that they are no longer operating in the shadows. We must let the political elite know, loud and clear, that the world is watching, that there will be consequences for their abuses. This is especially important given that our country will not have outside election





On the trail: Diallo campaigning in the Gueckédou region

monitors and poll watchers who would otherwise help to raise the necessary alarms.

By even standing in the upcoming election, some will claim that I am legitimising President Alpha Condé's unconstitutional actions. Some will argue that I should not contest in an already flawed and unfair election – one that has been called a charade by my fellow citizens and outside observers due to a range of concerns, including clampdowns on the free press and civil society, a lack of citizen access to polling stations, and a slipshod voter registration process that leaves many Guineans unable to cast a ballot. Then, there is of course the specter of President Condé himself labeling this election a “war” between himself and my campaign.

But despite the immense difficulties before us today, bowing on the sideline would not bring the change in Guinea that we need and deserve. Standing down would merely cement another six years of

corruption and hardening dictatorship – it will also encourage other would-be dictators elsewhere. And this outcome is intolerable.

Should the country elect me this weekend, my commitment to the Guinean people will be founded on freedom, unity and the fostering of equity.

Our priorities will be to invest in basic infrastructure by leveraging our immense natural resource wealth, which has been sabotaged, stolen and disrespected by our current leaders; to establish good governance as the operating norm; establishing access to quality education and healthcare for all so that we can build a lasting and sustainable workforce to be proud of; and quite simply, to bring Guinea back into the community of democracies by ending our forced membership in the club of authoritarians and anti-democratic thugs. ■

*Cellou Diallo leads Guinea's main opposition party, the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea.*



## The Big Picture

The salt miner: Hanifah Niwaga stands next to a salt pan in the town of Katwe in Uganda. Salt farmers tend to their salt pans daily, monitoring and creating the conditions that prepare salt for harvest. A combination of high temperatures and saline water make the lake perfect for salt farming, but because of the water's salinity the farmers must dress in extra clothing and take care to remain hydrated as they go about their work. This photograph won the overall prize at the 2020 East African Photography Awards. (Photo: Kuloba Peter Tera)

*The Continent is produced with the Mail & Guardian, Africa's leading independent newspaper, and upholds the M&G's strict editorial standards. It is published by the Adamela Trust, a not-for-profit organisation founded by M&G journalists that is dedicated to fostering quality journalism. For queries and complaints, or to make a donation, please contact [TheContinent@mg.co.za](mailto:TheContinent@mg.co.za).*