

The Continent

with Mail & Guardian



The preacher, the presidents and the great escape

How Malawi's richest
pastor embarrassed
two heads of state

(Photo: ECG)

Inside:

■ COVER STORY:

Shepherd Bushiri is one of Africa's richest pastors. He is also the continent's highest-profile fugitive – much to the frustration of the presidents of both South Africa and Malawi (p16)

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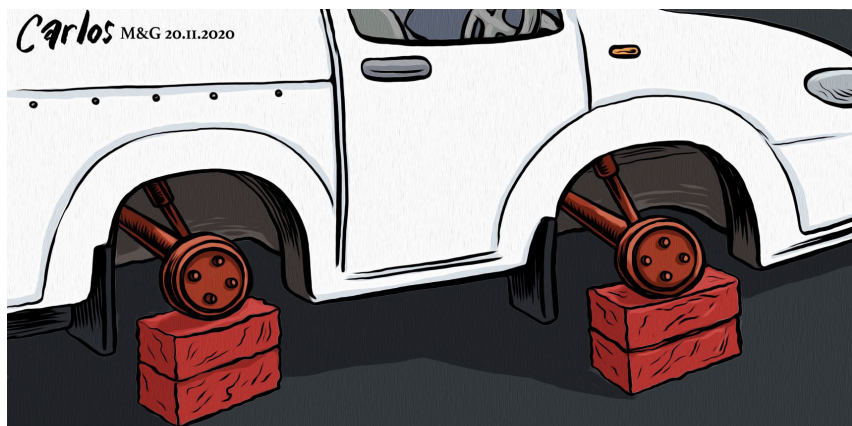
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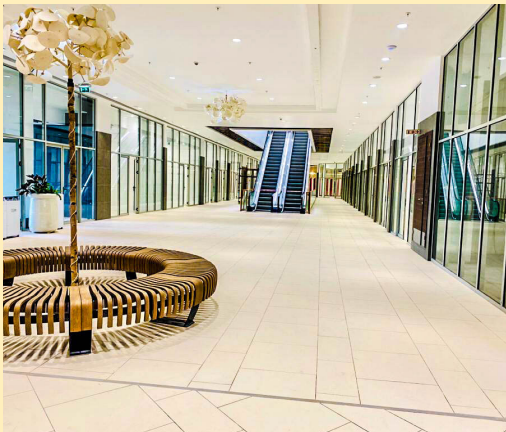
So please take a minute to fill out this survey: www.mg.co.za/TheContinent.

Answering these 10 questions will help safeguard our future. Thank you.



The Wheels of South African Justice

The Week in Numbers



25,600 square metres

The area of the Douala Grand Mall, a new shopping centre in Cameroon that is reputed to be the largest mall in central Africa. 300,000 people are expected to visit the mall every month.

\$1.1-million

The amount being invested to resurrect Cairo's 'City of the Dead'. The famous necropolis is home to thousands of tombs that date back centuries, which are now being converted into homes and shops.

30,000

The number of Ethiopian refugees who have arrived in Sudan since the beginning of the conflict in Tigray. The United Nations is planning for 200,000 refugees to arrive in the coming months.

48 days

The time since the last new Ebola case was reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This means that the 11th outbreak of the virus in the country is now officially over, and the country is Ebola-free.

6

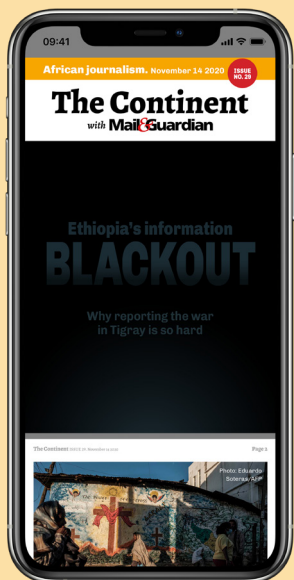
The number of new free-to-air TV licences awarded by the Zimbabwe's Broadcasting Authority. Among the beneficiaries are the state-owned newspaper group and a military company.

22 November

The date of Burkina Faso's presidential election. President Roch Marc Christian Kabore is seeking re-election, with 12 opposition candidates running against him. Kabore is the favourite, and wants to avoid a run-off.

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Kenya

Exposing Nairobi's baby black market

Refiloe Seiboko

There is a burgeoning black market for babies in Nairobi, a *BBC Africa Eye* investigation reported this week. Opportunistic sole operators and organised child trafficking syndicates are stealing children – mostly under the age of three – from roadside clinics, government-run hospitals and, particularly, from vulnerable homeless mothers.

One petty thief, who is commissioned by a local businesswoman to conduct the snatchings, charges about \$460 for girl children and about \$730 for boy children. The children are in high demand – thieves have claimed to be under pressure from their bosses to abduct more children.

After the investigation was aired Kenyan authorities have arrested seven people in connection with the crimes, including two hospital administrators, a nurse and a social worker.

There are several reasons why people might pay to have a baby kidnapped.

Sometimes women who are unable to conceive buy children in desperation. In other cases, children are bought to be used in certain rituals – and even as sacrifices. To abduct the children, traffickers often gain the trust of the mothers (perhaps offering to look after them while they attend to something), drug the mothers or entice and play with the children.

Organisations that monitor the black market and track down missing children lack adequate resources and personnel, and as such conclusive statistics are unavailable. The government has also not provided reports.

Authorities have arrested seven people so far

The issue is considerably under-reported and some believe that socioeconomics are to blame. Because most of the targeted mothers are homeless or live in abject conditions, they do not have access to information, networks or resources to get the help they need.

Another reason the trafficking of children is rampant is because of the stigma women face when they are unable to conceive. In some traditional perspectives, an African woman must be able to bear a child – particularly a son – or face banishment from her family. ■

Africa

How well is your country governed?

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance is the most comprehensive dataset on governance in Africa. This year's iteration reveals a troubling trend: for the first time in a decade, the quality of overall governance on the continent has declined.

This data was compiled before Covid-19 struck, so we can't blame the pandemic. "In terms of rights, civil society

space and participation, the continent had long before embarked on a deteriorating path and the pandemic simply aggravated this existing negative trajectory," said the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

But the headline statistic is a little misleading. The large declines in some countries (Mali, Burundi, Libya, DRC, the Comoros) are actually offset by improvements in 36 others (with the most dramatic improvements coming in The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia). Taken together, this means that 60% of Africans live in a country where governance is improving. ■

Data analysed by Juliet Atallah

RANK	COUNTRY	2019 RATING (OUT OF 100)	CHANGE SINCE 2010
1	Mauritius	77.2	-0.5
2	Cabo Verde	73.1	0.2
3	Seychelles	72.3	7.8
4	Tunisia	70.4	8.2
5	Botswana	66.9	0.8
6	South Africa	65.8	-0.9
7	Namibia	65.1	3.4
8	Ghana	64.3	0.1
9	Senegal	63.2	3.3
10	Morocco	61	5.3
11	Rwanda	60.5	3.7
12	São Tomé and Príncipe	60.4	2.8
13	Benin	58.6	1.1
14	Kenya	58.5	3.7

RANK	COUNTRY	2019 RATING (OUT OF 100)	CHANGE SINCE 2010
15	Algeria	56.2	3.3
16	Gambia	55.9	9.2
17	Burkina Faso	54	1
18	Côte d'Ivoire	53.9	9
19	Tanzania	53	0.2
20	Lesotho	52.3	-0.5
21	Zambia	52	-0.8
22	Uganda	51.8	0.7
23	Malawi	51.5	-1.3
24	Sierra Leone	51	4.8
25	Togo	50.1	4.8
26	Mozambique	49	-0.2
27	Liberia	47.9	1.2
28	Niger	47.8	0.4
29	Gabon	47.7	1
30	Egypt	47.4	0.5
31	Mali	46.6	-2.5
32	Ethiopia	46.6	6.7
33	Zimbabwe	46.1	7.4
34	Nigeria	45.5	-1.6
35	Madagascar	44.4	1.7
36	Eswatini	43.8	2.5
37	Cameroon	43.5	-0.6
38	Comoros	43.2	-2.6
39	Guinea	42.5	1.3
40	Mauritania	41.6	2
41	Guinea-Bissau	41.4	2.8
42	Djibouti	41.3	2
43	Angola	40	5.4
44	Burundi	36.9	-3.6
45	Congo Republic	36.1	-0.2
46	Libya	35.2	-5.5
47	Chad	33.9	3.7
48	Sudan	32.5	2.5
49	DR Congo	31.7	-2.8
50	Central African Republic	30.7	-0.9
51	Equatorial Guinea	28.7	-0.3
52	Eritrea	25.8	-0.8
53	South Sudan	20.7	n/a
54	Somalia	19.2	5.7

Nigeria

There is nothing to see here.

The government maintains that no massacre happened at Lekki Bridge despite mounting evidence to the contrary

Tolu Olasoji

Nigeria's government is unhappy with CNN – and several local media houses.

This week, the American broadcaster ran a primetime investigation into the alleged massacre at Lekki Bridge in Lagos on 20 October. CNN used forensic video analysis to show that Nigerian army and police officers were on the scene that night, and that they opened fire on unarmed protesters.

This is contrary to the Nigerian government's official line about what happened. "Like everyone else, I watched the CNN report. I must tell you that it reinforces the disinformation that is going around, and it is blatantly irresponsible and a poor piece of journalistic work by a reputable international news

organisation," said Information Minister Lai Mohammed. The report was "fake news", he added.

But it's not just CNN. A number of reputable Nigerian news outlets have reached similar conclusions, and reported them. Several – Arise TV, Channels, and AIT – have been fined by the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) as a result. Even as the October 20 incident was unfolding, the NBC warned media organisations to "approach with restraint the use of materials from user-generated sources" intended to "embarrass" the government.

Investigations and eyewitness accounts have talked about soldiers retrieving bodies and injured protesters from the Lekki tollgate. The cases of Victor Sunday Ibanga and Wisdom Okon were highlighted by CNN. The former was confirmed dead with his body missing while the latter has yet to be seen by his relatives after attending protests on October 20.

"Our reporting was carefully and meticulously researched, and we stand by it," said CNN.

The Lekki protests were part of last month's nationwide #EndSARS demonstrations against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, a police unit notorious for harassing, assaulting and even killing civilians. The unit has now been disbanded, and judicial panels have been



Car crash: A burnt-out vehicle at Lekki Toll Gate, during a visit of the Lagos Panel of Inquiry. (Photo: Olukayode Jaiyeola/NurPhoto via Getty Images)

set up in several states to look into cases of brutality committed by their members.

The Lagos panel is also responsible for examining exactly what happened on the Lekki Bridge on 20 October. The panel will interview witnesses and trawl through CCTV footage. After Lai Mohammed's claim that "not a single family" has reported the death of a relative, the chief coroner of Lagos State issued a public call for those who have "lost loved ones between 19-27 October 2020" to come forward with evidence to aid the "identification exercise".

Already, the panel has provided more clarity. Last week, the Nigerian military admitted that they were present on the scene, despite having previously dismissed such claims as "fake news".

Lawyer Adesina Ogunlana, who represents the interests of #EndSARS protesters at the panel, told *The Continent*

that he could not comment on the veracity of any reports in the media. He did say, however, to expect more "revelations" – if the panel maintains its resolve.

Potential witnesses, however, face what Amnesty International has described as "coercive financial measures" by the Nigerian authorities.

One such measure was the blocking of bank accounts belonging to 19 individuals and a public affairs company linked to the #EndSARS protests. Among the individuals affected was Rinu Oduala, a prominent protester who also happens to be the youth representative on the Lagos judicial panel.

She initially stepped down from the panel as a result, but has now returned.

Other protesters have had their passports seized, or even faced arrest.

On November 7, Eromosele Adene, a key figure at #EndSARS protests in Lagos, was arrested by a convoy of police at his Lagos home. The 27-year-old was reportedly linked to calls for renewed protest and was charged with criminal incitement, cyberstalking, provoking breach of public peace, and conduct likely to cause the breach of peace.

"They came to my house to pick him up that Saturday morning," his sister Onome Adene told *The Continent* just hours before his release on bail November 19. "Since he's been taken away, it's been shocking for the family and it's been devastating. It's been a huge blow."

"I'm out on bail, we are just getting started! A better Nigeria is our goal!" tweeted Eromosele Adene shortly after his release. ■

Uganda

'One of the darkest days in our history'

Andrew Arinaitwe

At least 29 Ugandans were killed by security forces on Wednesday as police cracked down on supporters of Kyagulanyi Ssentamu Robert, better known as opposition presidential candidate Bobi Wine.

The opposition leader was arrested on Wednesday, allegedly for contravening Uganda's Covid-19 regulations by holding a rally, as he was preparing to speak in Luuka District in the east of the country. A rally conducted by President Yoweri Museveni on the same day in the north-eastern town of Moroto was allowed to continue undisturbed.

"Be non-violent, be non-violent!" Bobi Wine shouted as hundreds of police officers dragged him into a waiting police truck. "We are not slaves."

His supporters responded, "Bamutte! Bamutte!" – a Luganda phrase that translates as, "Release him!" This chant was picked up across districts in the east and also the northern parts of the country, and in the capital Kampala, as thousands of people protested the arrest of the



In flames: A barricade in Kampala.

(Photo: Badru Katumba/AFP)

opposition leader by burning tyres and barricading streets.

"What they have seen is the people's power," one protester told *The Continent*. "Tuli wamu no omubanda, tuli wamu naye," said another ("We are with the gangster, we are with him").

The protests were met by a massive and heavily-armed deployment of police and military in major cities. "This is a war-like situation, so the army has to deploy," said Brig Flavia Byekwaso, a military spokesperson. Live ammunition and teargas was used to disperse the protests, with lethal consequences.

Bobi Wine remains in prison at the time of publication. "It is one of the darkest moments in Uganda's turbulent history," said Professor Ndebesa Mwambutsya, a history lecturer at Makerere University.

Two other presidential candidates have suspended their campaigns in solidarity with Bobi Wine ahead of elections early next year. ■

A message for Bobi Wine: 'We should be telling people to prepare for popular revolt'

Opposition leader Tundu Lissu thought he could win the Tanzanian election. He tells **Simon Allison** what went wrong

Tundu Lissu's mistake was to start hoping.

Hope was not an emotion he was expecting to feel when he returned to Tanzania after three years of exile in Belgium. On the plane home in late July, Lissu kept thinking about how difficult it was going to be to unseat President John Magufuli.

He knew that Tanzania's political opposition, of which he is a stalwart, has been relentlessly persecuted over the past five years. That the media has been muzzled. That the electoral commission is compromised and parliament neutralised. "There was every reason to think we were down and out," he said in an interview with the *Mail & Guardian*.

But then he got off the plane and thousands of people were waiting to greet him outside Dar es Salaam's Julius Nyerere International Airport. They were carrying placards and flags and shouting his name. And he thought to himself, maybe this time it will be different.

A few days later, he was confirmed



(Photo: Kenzo Tribouillard/AFP)

as Chadema's presidential candidate, and started campaigning in earnest. Everywhere he went, there were more people, in their thousands and tens of thousands, hanging on to his every word. The atmosphere was electrifying. He had never seen anything like it before.

"I have participated in these election fights since 1995. I have played a central role in these fights. And I can tell you without fear that I have never seen Tanzanians this happy or optimistic as during these months," he said.

It helped that Lissu was enjoying himself, despite the relentless schedule and the long hours travelling. He is a career politician and exile was lonely. "Being able to go over the country, speaking to people, looking into everybody's eyes. People tell me they are shocked by my resilience. But I was happy. Just mixing it with my people."

Yet everywhere he went, his scars went with him, beneath his clothes: the 16 bullet wounds courtesy of unidentified gunmen who opened fire on him outside his official parliamentary residence in the capital Dodoma in 2017. He survived – after being flown to Belgium for emergency medical care.

Forlorn hope

Now he is back in Belgium, in exile once again, and he can't believe he was so naive. He no longer feels hopeful.

"How could we have expected less? How could we have entertained the thought that we could have a chance at a free and fair election?"

Even before the electoral commission

started to release the results, Lissu and his team knew that things were not going as expected.

"The moment polling started we knew we were in serious trouble. Our polling monitors were denied access. There were policemen bringing in ballot papers. There was violence in Zanzibar, which started the day before. There was violence on the mainland. We had reports of vigilante groups beating up people outside polling stations," Lissu said.

"The moment polling started we knew we were in serious trouble. Our polling monitors were denied access."

"It's difficult to explain. It wasn't a shock; we had expected trouble. Rigging. Magufuli has been rough. But we did not expect this rigging to be on such a grand scale."

Official results were announced that Friday. Magufuli won in a landslide, with 84% of the vote. The ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party – which has never been out of power in Tanzania – also swept up nearly all of the seats in parliament, including some that have historically been opposition strongholds.

The moment the results were released, Lissu's police protection unit disappeared, because he was no longer a presidential candidate. He received two phone calls that day from anonymous callers. Death threats.

"They told me 'we are coming after you

and the orders are to deal with you once and for all,” he said.

In the days that followed, he sought refuge at a friend’s house and eventually at the residence of the German ambassador. He was followed by plainclothes police officers wherever he went, and even briefly detained. He believes it was only thanks to the presence of German diplomats, who followed him to the police station, that he was released.

Following the results, Lissu’s police protection unit disappeared because he was no longer a presidential candidate

“The fact that the German diplomats intervened took the wind out of their sails. Our security forces are always so scared of diplomats, especially Western diplomats,” said Lissu. “They are not all that clever. I don’t know who trains them.”

Exactly two weeks after the vote, Lissu boarded a plane and returned to his lonely exile in Belgium. His wife had flown out ahead of him. His children are in the United States, staying with friends while they try to complete high school. “My small family has been dispersed around the world,” he said.

Popular revolt

Looking back, Lissu cannot see how the election could have played out any other way. “Given what happened on election day, I don’t think the outcome could have been different,” he said. “Unless the people

of Tanzania were to go into the street in their millions.”

“We have to learn from what we have done. What we could have done differently. Instead of telling people to vote, we should be telling them to prepare for popular revolt. To mobilise better, to take matters into their own hands.”

Others need to learn too. In neighbouring Uganda, opposition leader Bobi Wine – who was arrested while campaigning on Wednesday this week and remains in jail at the time of publication – is trying to unseat President Yoweri Museveni in next year’s presidential election, and Lissu sees plenty of parallels. His advice to the Ugandan opposition leader?

“To mobilise for rebellion. For popular revolt. These dictators will not allow themselves to lose an election. We have to find ways of toppling them in popular revolt. It is Tahrir Square. Magufuli and his ilk will not allow popular elections. So democracies will have to be built through popular power.”

This may not be news to Bobi Wine, who last month released a new song called *Bullet or Ballot*. In it, he sings:

“And if it takes a revolution, freedom will have to come/ By the ballot or the bullet, Let thy will be done.”

For Lissu, attention now turns to his own uncertain future. “I have to pick up the broken pieces,” he said. “I see myself working very actively internationally. Dictators have to be fought not just in their country but also internationally. The world should pay close attention to Tanzania.” ■

Davido's *A Better Time* syncs to the protest beat

Timileyin Omilana

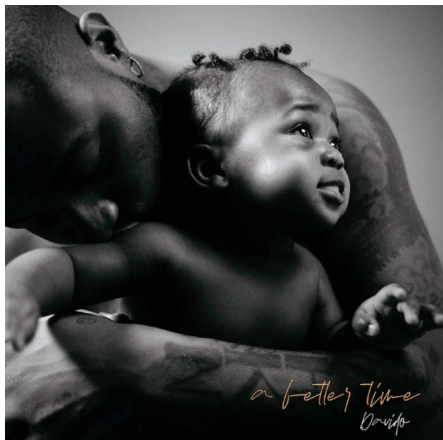
When Davido released *FEM* in September, he did not know the song would become a soundtrack to the #EndSARS movement against police brutality in Nigeria. Roughly translated, *Fem* means “shut up”, and it was played on repeat at protest centres across the country.

Although he could not have predicted the dramatic and deadly protests, this offered further proof that Davido is a hitmaker with lyrics that can easily get stamped on people's psyche.

FEM is from Davido's fourth studio album *A Better Time*. Released last week, it has already been streamed more than 100-million times – the fastest an African album has ever reached this milestone.

The album is a mix of afrobeat, afro-house and dancehall, and was clearly produced with hopes of dominating the international space.

The 17-track collection features Nigerian artists such as Tiwa Savage, Bella Shmurda, and fellow DMW artist Mayorkun. American heavy-hitters Nicki



Global warning: Davido's latest effort, which is sonically African and international, shows why he is one of Africa's greatest musical exports

Minaj, Lil Baby, Nas and Chris Brown also feature on the album, which is heavy on steel drums, synths, and horns.

It opens with the familiar *FEM*, followed by *Jowo*, where Davido mixes the sounds of a tender piano and soft drums much like he did on his 2019 megahit song *Fall*.

Something Fishy, *Heaven* and *The Best* featuring Mayorkun feel like inevitable hits already, while *Holy Ground* featuring Nicki Minaj and *So Crazy* with Lil Baby are likely to resonate with international audiences.

Is this album an improvement on its predecessor, entitled *A Good Time*? Perhaps. Either way, we can expect that the *Best* time is still to come. ■

The Green Turtle who came back from the dead

Sheree Bega

Bob the Green Turtle loves peppers and back scratches. He enjoys a cuddle too, says Talitha Noble, one of his main carers at the Two Oceans Aquarium in Cape Town.

“He is such an incredible turtle – he is just a little bit of extra work,” says Noble, the conservation co-ordinator and head of turtle rehabilitation.

The endangered turtle, who was named Bob because he liked to bob in his tank, was brought to the aquarium in November 2014 after he was discovered

stranded on rocks at the De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Wounds on the underside of his shell – his plastron – became infected and caused meningitis. Bob became blind and suffered brain damage.

Three months after Bob’s arrival, he pooped out a pile of plastic: pieces of balloons with their strings still attached, a ribbon and black bags that he had mistaken for food in the ocean.

“It’s unfortunately an issue we see with a lot of our turtles who have ingested plastic. Even the ones who survive, it’s probably a very big contributor to them being so sick,” said Noble.

Slowly, and with lots of care, Bob’s wounds began to heal. But he still needs plenty of treatment before he can be released back into the wild. His carers are currently raising funds for his rehabilitation – and urging people to think carefully before using any disposable plastic. ■



Photo: Jean
Tresfon/
2OceansAquarium



Diplomatic incident:
President Chakwera meets
President Ramaphosa last
Friday (Photo: GCIS)

Shepherd Bushiri's miraculous, mysterious disappearance

The influential prophet skipped bail last week – sparking a diplomatic row and infuriating the presidents of Malawi and South Africa

Golden Matonga and Godfrey Maocha

At first, Lazarus Chakwera's visit to South Africa, the regional superpower, seemed to be going really well. Malawi's newly elected president had a good meeting with his counterpart, Cyril Ramaphosa, in Pretoria last Friday, and signed an important economic co-operation deal.

At about 1pm, Chakwera returned to the Sefako Makgatho presidential guesthouse to rest before his flight home on a chartered Malawi Airlines Bombardier Q400. *The Continent* had accompanied Chakwera on his flight into South Africa, and was at Waterkloof Air Force Base with Malawi's advance delegation when things started to go wrong.

Chakwera's excitement, and that of his entourage, turned first to anxiety and then to outrage as they learned that the advance delegation had been accosted by policemen at the airport, and denied access to the plane.

The police were looking for controversial self-proclaimed "prophet" Shepherd Bushiri, reputed to be among the wealthiest religious figures in Africa. Bushiri and his wife had been charged in South Africa with fraud, but were released on R200,000 (\$13,000) bail. That morning, they disappeared.

Bushiri is one of Malawi's most famous sons, and the police thought that Malawi's president might be helping to smuggle him out. They were willing to break diplomatic protocol to check if Bushiri was on the plane.

As it happened, the police were wrong. At that point, the Bushiris were already in Lilongwe; later, they would announce their escape to the world. "Our coming to Malawi ... is a tactical withdrawal from the Republic of South Africa, solely meant to preserve our lives," said Bushiri in a statement. "We have to be alive to testify."

After a delay of nearly 10 hours, Chakwera and his team were finally allowed to fly back to Lilongwe. Chakwera was furious. His diplomatic triumph had turned into a major diplomatic incident; and, once again, he found himself at odds with Bushiri, despite their shared background in Malawi's evangelical community.

Ramaphosa too was left red-faced. The president has made clamping down on corruption a cornerstone of his administration, and targets do not come much more high-profile than Bushiri. His escape reflected poorly on South Africa's ability to enforce its own rules.

The rise of one of Africa's wealthiest pastors

Shepherd Huxley Bushiri was born on 20 February 1983 in Malawi's northern district of Rumphi. Growing up, he was an average student, but he was always driven by his Christian faith.

One of his former teachers at the Moyale Barracks community day secondary school said that Bushiri did not pass his high school exam at the first attempt. "He was too much into SCOM [Students Christian Organisation of Malawi] activities," the teacher recalled. "He was staying with his brother Misheck and was a member of the Central Africa Presbyterian church. How he became a prophet is a mystery."

A childhood friend, who asked not to be named, said that he remembers Bushiri as being secretive, creative and prone to prayer.

"Of course, Bushiri was always a prayer man, such that he can leave you concentrating on books and he goes out for a prayer arrangement.

You could tell he was so much into religious things. Behaviour-wise I don't think I remember him picking a fight with anyone, apart from if friends provoked him. However, you could not trust him fully because he appeared very secretive," said the friend.

Bushiri began his ministry in Mzuzu, the country's third-largest city, and he made a name for himself among university students for his spiritual counsel on love and relationships. Even then he seemed to attract scandal, and was accused of impregnating a woman in his congregation. These accusations were later dismissed by a court.

From these beginnings, Bushiri built one of the largest, most influential and most lucrative ministries in Africa – the Enlightened Christian Gathering. This growth was fuelled by the “miracles” he claimed to perform: curing HIV, making the blind see, uplifting the impoverished and, on occasion, walking on air.

At the same time, he was accumulating enormous wealth, investing tithes from churchgoers into everything from hospitality and real estate to transportation and mining. Bushiri's net worth is thought to be more than R1-billion, and, unlike Malawi's president, he has his own private plane.

But controversy was never far behind. Bushiri was in the headlines in 2017 after the Botswana government imposed visa restrictions on him, because the local branch of his church had failed to submit audit accounts. He has been repeatedly implicated in adultery, and in 2019 he was accused by two churchgoers of rape (allegations that he strongly denies).

Question marks also surrounded how he was able to grow his fortune so quickly. One notable critic is Lazarus Chakwera's son. In 2017, Nick Chakwera sharply criticised Bushiri on social media for exploiting his congregation to make a profit.

Both Chakweras are major figures in Malawi's evangelical church movement, and Bushiri did not take kindly to the rebuke. “My warning is going to [Lazarus] Chakwera because I expected him, as a man of God and also a politician, to realise that his son has made a mistake,” said Bushiri at the time. “He should tell his son to leave me alone.”



Turning a prophet: Shepherd Bushiri, seen here with his wife Mary, is thought to be the wealthiest pastor in Africa.

(Photo: Emmanuel Croset/AFP)

Sin and repentance

It was in South Africa that Bushiri's controversial commercial activities appear to have finally caught up with him. After a years-long investigation, the Hawks – the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation – arrested Bushiri and his wife Mary last month. They were charged with fraud and money-laundering worth more than R100-million.

In a statement, one of Bushiri's alleged victims, Felicia Sibeko, said she had invested R130 000 in Bushiri's gold, forex and commodities scheme. "Ever since the investment, my life has been ruined. He has made me and many others promises of huge returns, something which didn't happen," she said. "Instead, I got nothing but lies and promises ... I have become a laughing stock in my community. When people see me they laugh, and say I believed and prayed with Papa Bushiri and he took my money."

Bail for the couple was posted at R200 000 each. Undeterred by losing R400 000 between them, Shepherd and Mary Bushiri fled the country last Friday. It is still not clear how exactly they were able to cross South Africa's borders – though we can rule out Chakwera's jet.

But if Bushiri was expecting a warm reception at home, he may have miscalculated. On Monday, Malawi's police issued a warrant for the arrest of Bushiri and his wife. On Tuesday, they raided their house, but did not find them. On Wednesday, having run out of options, the Bushiris turned themselves in. On Thursday, a magistrate ruled their arrest by Malawi police unlawful, and they were released without further charge.

South Africa is expected to file a request for extradition, however, which the Bushiris have vowed to oppose, though they have not said on what grounds. "We don't know which treaty they will use ... it will be pre-emptive to cite the grounds [on which] we will challenge extradition, but we will definitely challenge it," said their lawyer, Wapona Kita.

This means the case could drag on for some time, if the example of another high-profile extradition saga is anything to go by. It took six years of protracted legal battles before Malawi was able to extradite Misozi Chanthunya from South Africa; the case went all the way to the Supreme Court of Appeal. In the end, however, justice was served, and Chanthunya was convicted of murder.

Bushiri's profile – and his enormous popularity – makes his case a little different. For President Chakwera, the political calculation is tricky: the risk of alienating Bushiri's many supporters must be weighed against the dangers of angering the regional superpower.

At this stage, only one thing is certain: Bushiri is going to be a headache for the president for a long time to come. ■



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

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

1. Where is the Okavango Delta located?
2. Which country's name is a clipped compound of "Zanzibar" and "Tanganyika"?
3. Hage Geingob is the president of which country?
4. Are the Comoros Islands (pictured) volcanic?
5. What is the name of the first Tuareg feature film, released in 2004, by Bettina Haasen?
6. Which British rapper shares a name with a state in the North West zone of Nigeria?
7. Which country shares its name with its own capital city?
8. Ghana, the Central African Republic and Niger are holding general elections in December. True or false?
9. What are people from Equatorial Guinea called?
10. Who is the host country for the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations?
11. Which central African capital was formerly called Léopoldville?
12. Women's rights activist Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was the mother of which legendary Nigerian artist?

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 granny's jollof rice is better than your granny's jollof rice"



Welcome to Lagos!

Journalist **Tolu Olasoji** takes us around Nigeria's busy, bustling and stressful commercial capital

There's a strong chance that if you've come across a piece about Lagos, it described the city's vibrancy and the ubiquitous yellow and black buses, among other things. However, what it probably skipped – perhaps for aesthetic reasons – is that Lagos is *stress*.

Certainly, Lagos is all of those other alluring adjectives, but to elide its stressful nature would be disingenuous.

Here, people are hardworking, warm, cool, receptive and willing to help. As an introduction, however, it's important to understand that most times the term "sorry" is used in place of "excuse me", mostly as a

conversation starter. "Sorry" is an acknowledgement of the frustration that is likely to be Lagos.

How do you get around town?

Lagos is home to 21-million people and almost everyone is on the move. It is said Lagosians live in traffic and at work, and only ever visit their homes. The time spent on the road is ridiculous.

In busy Ikeja, I do grocery runs and restaurant stops on foot – to make up for a sedentary lifestyle. For other excursions, ride-hailing services such as Uber, the Bus Rapid Transit system or the famous yellow-and-black buses are available.

Best snacks and bars

In Lagos, you'd reap the benefits of getting accustomed to street food, which is abundant. From Suya (kebab) to Bole (roasted plantain) to Puff-Puff (fried dough) and so on. Also, there are a great many affordable local restaurants that serve local delicacies – with their upscale counterparts mostly providing fine dining with fusion, gourmet and intercontinental dishes.

As for bars, you're spoilt for choice. Local pubs abound. But be warned: at upmarket locales, a mojito won't cost less than \$6.

Favourite restaurant

Many restaurateurs use "bistro" to attract the purses of Gen Zs and millennials – with more attention on social media-ready spaces as bait for pricey meals. For me, a balance between aesthetics and culinary quality has my attention.

Yellow Chilli **(1)** and Westgate Restaurant **(2)** are two spots you should check out. The former's homely feel, serenity and Jollof Rice Fiesta **(3)** – a signature dish that has diced chicken, shrimp, unshelled prawns fused in jollof rice and costs a moderate 4,000 naira (\$11) – keeps me coming back.

At Westgate Restaurant **(2)** try the delicious Pounded Yam with Afang or Fisherman's Soup – two Southern Nigerian delicacies. Meals are accompanied by a small bowl of chicken pepper soup and toast as



starters, and fruits as desserts. They cost less than 4,000 naira.

Tourist attraction

Murals, sculptures, visual arts and other forms of artistic expressions beautify Lagos. Art galleries like



Nike Art Center (4) are a delight and are mostly free. The island also has a coastline of beautiful white sand beaches.

City vibe check

We have the mainland – home to a lot of industrial areas and most people below the upper-middle class – and the island, the affluents' abode. As you'd expect, the most populous city in Africa is multicultural and has a huge expat presence.

Lagosians express themselves through fashion: colourful, smart, local, avant-garde, bold or gender-bending. The fashion scene is thriving!

The city is lively – with everything from posh beach clubs and nightclubs, nightlife is a delight. Owambe – parties that involve an array of food, music, dancing and colour – hold it down on weekends. Ain't no party like a Lagos party!

Favorite time of the year

With the laid-back approach to work during the yuletide season, comes Detty December, the most fun part of the year.

Every day, youngsters are ready to vibe and the IJGBs (I Just Got Back) – holidaying diasporans, especially from the United Kingdom and the United States – are in the city to enjoy its culture, lifestyle and cuisine.

Lagos is unarguably Africa's entertainment headquarters. There are myriad year-end shows, house parties and a lot more Jollof and chicken to go around during Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Of course, more fun activities means ... more traffic. Buckle up!

One song that represents the feel of the city?

"Sweet pass sugar oh eh wo," sings Teni in an ode to the centre of excellence, eponymously titled *Lagos*. The musician gushes about her love for its food, culture, coastal line and good life which makes for a captivating Lagos anthem. *Pray for Me*, a soulful rendition by Darey Art Alade characterises Lagos' potential for growth.

You would enjoy a trip here – but brace for stress too!



Do you want to show us around your town or city?

Send an email to thecontinent@mg.co.za and we'll be in touch!

These are the days of miracle and wonder and naps

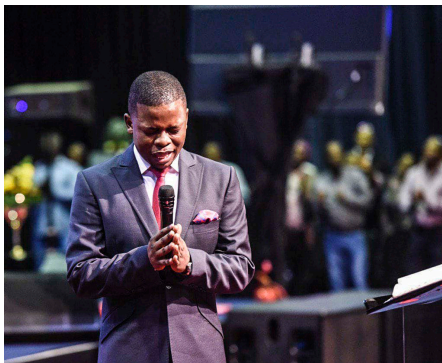
Samira Sawlani

The trouble with beauty sleep is that sometimes you get caught napping. On one hand, there's nothing like the power of zZz to rejuvenate body, mind and spirit. On the other hand, "well rested" is just a few letters away from, well, "arrested".

One moment a pastor might be counting sheep on his soft cotton sheets, enjoying the profits of his labour; the next he's behind bars for fleecing his flock: a prophet who somehow failed to foretell a stretch of hard labour in his own future.

What pastor that might be, we do not know. It certainly isn't Shepherd Bushiri, the uncontested superstar of entrepreneurial evangelism, whose divine teleportation out of the clutches of the South African police into the warm embrace of his motherland Malawi was nothing short of miraculous.

If anyone was caught napping there, it was the judge who granted the good Shepherd and his wife Mary bail after they were arrested for fraud and money-laundering. The court somehow thought they wouldn't be a flight risk, despite it being widely known - and infamously broadcast on Zimbabwean television - that Bushiri is perfectly capable of actual gravity-defying flight.



Counting sheep: Prophet Shepherd Bushiri is prone to bouts of levitation

The government in Malawi was no doubt astonished at the seemingly miraculous appearance of its Prodigal Son in its midst - or perhaps it would have been, were it not already up in arms about the treatment of President Lazarus Chakwera by South African authorities.

The visiting leader was subjected to "improper treatment" - with authorities declining his entourage permission to leave South Africa until they'd all turned out their pockets to prove they weren't trying to smuggle the missing Bushiri out of the country in their hand luggage or overhead compartments.



Everyone was expecting Chakwera's visit to be a diplomatic snooze-fest, but what a song and dance it turned out to be!

Ingrate expectations

There'll be no dancing to the songs of Tshala Muana in the Democratic Republic of Congo any time soon. The legendary singer was arrested just hours after authorities banned her song *Ingratitude*, which was seen as chiding President Félix Tshisekedi for turning his back on his mentor, former president Joseph Kabila.

The 62-year-old singer denied this interpretation after her release, which came after an intervention by Kabila's party, so we're not sure how Tshisekedi's people dreamed these accusations up.

Much sweeter are the dreams of the country's doctors and nurses now that the Ebola outbreak in Équateur Province has been declared to be over. We hope they get the rest they deserve – if we're looking for real miracle workers, it's these health professionals who have been battling

Ebola, measles and Covid-19, all at the same time.

Wine stops, woe returns

For those Ugandans who have been lucky enough to get any rest this week, waking up has been as frightening as any nightmare.

First opposition candidate Bobi Wine was arrested again for violating Covid-19 measures as he continued campaigning ahead of the January elections. Then his supporters began to protest, demanding his release. This in turn was met with an overwhelming show of force by police and soldiers. Tear gas and live ammunition soon made their appearance, and grievous injury and casualty followed inexorably in their wake.

But suffering has not just been the province of viruses and violence. Senegal has been grieving: its youth marked a day of mourning this week to remember the 140 souls who drowned when their ship went down just off the coast. They were aspiring migrant workers, seeking an opportunity to make a better life for themselves after losing hope at home. And now their own lives are lost.

In grief and in anger, young demonstrators rallied under the hashtag #lesenegalendeuil, beseeching the Senegalese government to help them find work and perhaps just a hint of hope. Anything, just as long as it's not more... nothing.

They're not alone. It's been a long, locked-down year of loss and languor.

That time is past.

Now it's time to wake up. ■

China blamed for Zambia's debt, but the West's banks and agencies enabled it

Grieve Chelwa

On November 13, Zambia became the first African nation in the Covid era to default on its external debt payments. The default was triggered by the inability of the government to arrive at an agreement with holders of \$3-billion of its external bonds (so-called Eurobonds). The government was requesting a six-month extension in interest payments that were due a month ago, a request that was turned down by its bondholders.

After having much of its external debt written off in the mid 2000s as part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative, Zambia began to unsustainably accumulate new debt in 2012. The new debt cycle was facilitated by the country getting a sovereign debt rating in 2011. The rating was bestowed by the international ratings agency Fitch, which, at the time, considered the country to have a “stable” outlook in so far as the risk of default was concerned.

With Fitch's blessing secured, dollars began to flow into Zambia, heralding the era of the international financialisation of the country. In September 2012, Zambia issued its first Eurobond worth

\$750-million to much fanfare on Wall Street. This bond issuance was so oversubscribed that two additional bonds totalling \$2.25-billion were issued in 2014 and 2015, bringing the total bond outstanding to \$3-billion.

Zambia has, over the past two years or so, featured prominently in international debates concerning its level of indebtedness. What is inexcusable is the government's reckless accumulation of external debt, which has increased by more than 1,000% since 2011. Most Zambians agree that there is little to show for all this debt except for an economy that is teetering on the brink.

Most Zambians agree that there is little to show for all this debt except for an economy that is teetering on the brink

What is also inexcusable is just how reckless, ideological and dishonest much of the international debate has been. It has proceeded as if its ultimate goal was to force the country into a situation of debt distress.



Copper bottoming: Demand for Zambia's copper has declined during the pandemic, causing job and foreign exchange losses. (Photo: Per-Anders Pettersson/Getty Images)

For starters, the subject of the actual level of debt that Zambia owes has been hotly debated in the Western press.

In 2018, the London-based *Africa Confidential*, which anonymously publishes whistleblower-type reports on the African continent, ran a series of articles claiming that Zambia was hiding the true amount of its external debt and that the actual number had reached 100% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Given the size of the country's GDP in 2018, *Africa Confidential* was suggesting that the Zambian government owed a total of \$27-billion, an implausibly large number that has since been shown to be false. *Africa Confidential*, however, has

yet to issue a retraction for its reckless coverage from 2018, coverage which has coloured how Zambia's debt situation is viewed locally and abroad.

Second, many in the Western press and governments, as well as international multilateral agencies, blame China for Zambia's debt problems.

The *Financial Times* ran an editorial in October effectively blaming China. The *Economist* has also pushed this line and so has the United States government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF has, behind the scenes, made the restructuring of Chinese debt a precondition for balance of payments support to the country.

To be sure, Zambia has borrowed

substantial sums from China. According to the ministry of finance, the country owes about \$3-billion to China (although there is some debate about the exact amount). But the lion's share of Zambia's external debt stock is owed to Western and Western allied institutions.

Data from the World Bank shows that of the \$11-billion the government owed external creditors at the end of last year, most of it (about 70%) was owed to entities allied to or headquartered in the West.

These include the World Bank, the IMF, commercial banks and hedge funds. Only China and (reluctantly) the World Bank and IMF have given Zambia some debt relief this year.

Western commercial banks and hedge funds, which together hold about \$5-billion (or 50%) of Zambia's external debt, have not batted an eye. It is worth remembering that Zambia's debt problems started with the issuance of Eurobonds in 2012 that were swept up by Western banks and hedge funds.

Another angle to the China story concerns misleading reports about Zambia pledging vital national assets as collateral in exchange for Chinese debt. *Africa Confidential* published a report in 2018 claiming that the national electricity utility, Zesco, was about to be taken over by China because it had been pledged as collateral.

This story, too, has since been refuted by the Chinese and Zambian governments but not without the story growing its own legs and the false list of pledged national assets extending to

include the national broadcaster and the national airport.

China wants to win friends across the African continent, but grabbing sovereign assets is not the way to do it. Beijing knows better than to do that.

Another angle to the China story concerns misleading reports about Zambia pledging vital national assets as collateral in exchange for Chinese debt

Zambia's current debt situation is concerning and is largely a result of the careless stewardship of the nation's finances by the government. But that is not the only lesson to draw from this situation.

The country is being used as fodder in a geopolitical battle raging between the West and China.

The West, worried about its waning influence on the African continent, is carefully spinning a narrative, with Zambia as ground zero, that doing business with China is fatal.

The truth is much more complex than this narrative.

And caught in the middle of it all are the lives of Zambians who have now become the proverbial grass in the big ideological tussle of our times. ■

Grieve Chelwa is from Zambia, and teaches economics at the Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town

War returns to Western Sahara

The Saharawi Collective

Known as Africa's Last Colony, Western Sahara is the last remaining item on the United Nations' decolonisation agenda in Africa. Occupied by Morocco, the people of Western Sahara have been denied the right to determine their own future. Now, following a 29-year ceasefire, war is back.

On October 21 this year, Saharawi people blocked a road in the southernmost part of Western Sahara built by Morocco in 2002.

On November 13, the Moroccan government began a military offensive to reopen it.

To understand why the territory has returned to conflict, it is essential to start by looking at the poisonous legacy



(Photo: Saharawi Tank Division 2010)

of colonial rule and 30 years of broken promises.

A Spanish colony until 1975, Western Sahara first saw guerrilla war between Spanish forces and the indigenous Saharawi, represented by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia El-Hamra and Río de Oro (Polisario), in 1973. When Spain handed power to Morocco and Mauritania, the Saharawi took up arms once again to defend themselves from their neighbours' invading armies.

Mauritania withdrew from the war in 1979 and recognised the Saharawi people's state, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, but Morocco and the Polisario Front remained at war until a UN-OAU brokered ceasefire was agreed in 1991.

The ceasefire agreement promised a referendum in which the Saharawi would decide their fate, either choosing to be part of Morocco, an autonomous region in Morocco, or an independent state. A UN mission (Minurso) was set up to carry out this referendum, but nearly 30 years later, it has yet to take place.

Frustrated with the UN's procrastination and the continued Moroccan military occupation, Saharawi people blockaded the road in El Guerguerat partly because it was built in breach of the ceasefire agreement and partly because it is strategically important – including for the transfer of plundered natural resources.

For Saharawis the road symbolises Rabat's failure to respect the 1991 agreement, and by blocking it they sent a clear message to the UN and to Rabat: we

have had enough.

Shortly after the protests began, POLISARIO received reports that Rabat was planning to use force on protestors to reopen the road. It responded by stating that the "entry of any Moroccan military, security or civilian personnel into the Liberated Territories of Western Sahara will be considered an aggression and the end of the ceasefire agreement and the outbreak of a new war".

A UN mission was set up to carry out the referendum, but nearly 30 years later, it has yet to take place

When Rabat responded by launching a military offensive, Saharawi authorities evacuated the civilians, before the two armies exchanged warning shots. Angered that Morocco had moved against civilian protesters, Polisario declared that "war has started" because "the Moroccan side has liquidated the ceasefire".

If the past 50 years have taught us anything it is that conflict will be hard on the Saharawi people, but that true and lasting peace will only come when they are listened to and their hopes and dreams are respected. ■

The Saharawi Collective is a group of citizen journalists working to provide a platform for the voices of Western Sahara. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa





The Big Picture

Displaced: People in Bijombo, in South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, line up ahead of a visit from the country's defence minister. They have all been forced out of their homes by conflict in the region. Fighting between armed groups in the area has destroyed more than 100 villages since February 2019. (Photo: Alexis Huguet/AFP)

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