

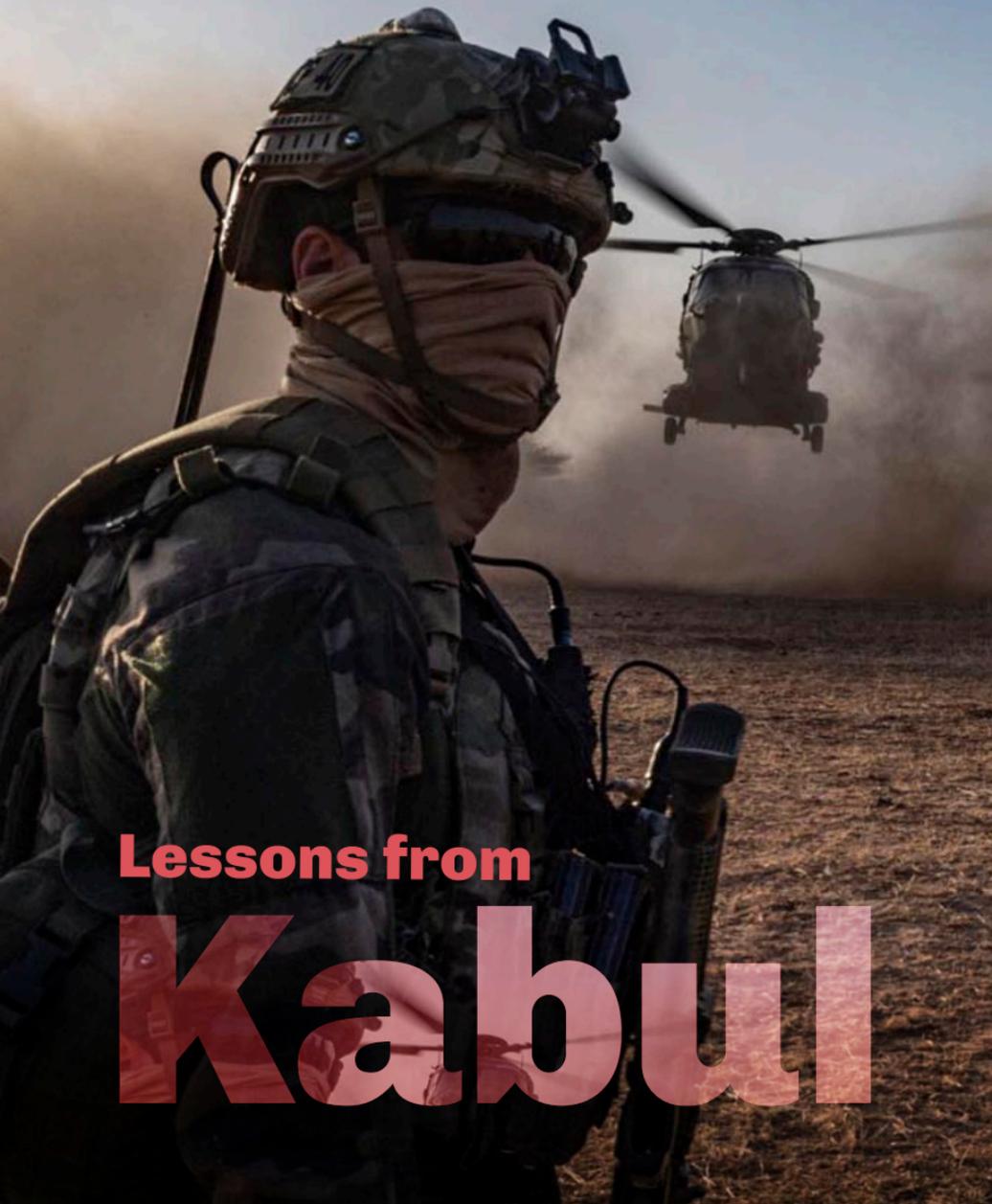
African journalism. AUGUST 21 2021 | **ISSUE 56**

with Mail & Guardian

The Continent

Lessons from

Kabul





COVER STORY: What should we learn from Afghanistan? Don't trust the West. Or anyone else, for that matter. But that's too simplistic a lesson. In Afghanistan a shell of a government was propped up by foreign goals. It cracked apart when that backing evaporated, as American interests changed. There are several African states, particularly along the Sahel where French influence is so strong, that have an elite minority being propped up by foreign powers who are there to fight 'the war on terrorism'. The similarities are striking. As are the differences. (p8)

Inside:

■ **'Blood diamond':** Will Sierra Leone's natural resources ever come out of the ground without destroying communities? (p12)

■ **The West hoards even more:** Not content with keeping all the vaccines, countries are stockpiling the drugs that might keep you when you

get Covid. (p18)

■ **Welcome to Ibadan:** Disclosure – one of us is from there. Besides being Nigeria's biggest city, it's also packed with mystery, good music and the country's premier university. (p20)

■ **How the Chameleon did it:** Jomo Kenyatta pulled off a rare balancing act to stay in power. Four-and-a-bit decades after his death, we look at how he did it. (p26)



Write for us

We want more travel pages. Tell us about your city or favourite town on the continent. Ping an email to thecontinent@mg.co.za

Africa Cup of Nations Draw

The African Cup of Nations draw took place this week, placing the 24 participating national teams in six-roster groups who will play each other in early January 2022 in Cameroon. The groups are as follows:

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
Cameroon 	Senegal 	Morocco 
Burkina Faso 	Zimbabwe 	Ghana 
Ethiopia 	Guinea 	Comoros 
Cape Verde 	Malawi 	Gabon 

GROUP D	GROUP E	GROUP F
Nigeria 	Algeria 	Tunisia 
Egypt 	Sierra Leone 	Mali 
Sudan 	Equatorial Guinea 	Mauritania 
Guinea-Bissau 	Côte d'Ivoire 	Gambia 



Photos: CAF

SPORT

AFCON groups set

The Africa Cup of Nations draw took place this week, placing the 24 participating national teams in six-roster groups who will play each other in early January 2022 in Cameroon. Delayed by Covid-19, the tournament is also being played earlier in the year because of the Qatar World Cup. Cameroon is also racing to be ready in time, having been stripped of hosting rights the last time the tournament was held, in 2019.

CAMEROON

Thousands flee to Chad

Recent clashes between fishing and herding communities in Cameroon have resulted in at least 10,000 people fleeing to Chad, the UN's refugee agency recently reported. Violence erupted last week in the Far North region of the country on land that is sandwiched between Nigeria on the west and Chad on the east. According to the agency, 85% of those who fled are women and children. Cameroon's Far North is also still battling jihadist attacks from northeast Nigeria.

ALGERIA

Mob justice after massive fires

Thirty-eight year old Djamel Ben Ismail was killed in Algeria by a group of people who believed that he was responsible for starting several of the fires that were ravaging parts of the country. The fires which were mostly in the Kabyle region claimed the lives of at least 90 people as well as olive groves and livestock. Judicial police confirmed that Ismail was wrongly accused and said that the crowd was in "collective hysteria". As of Friday, at least 61 people had been detained. Ismail's family said that he had travelled over 300km to go and help those fighting the fires.



ENTERTAINMENT

100-million ticks

Senegal-born Italian TikTok star Khaby has become only the second person in the world to amass 100-million followers on that platform. He gained that popularity by making videos where he (rather sarcastically) points out when people have overcomplicated some task.

AFGHANISTAN / UGANDA

Bomb, run, wash your hands

What to do when you've meddled in another country, failed to learn anything and then walked away, leaving chaos? When the United States did this in Vietnam, it famously took in some of the people whose lives it had turned upside down. Now, though, the supplier of global democracy (and guns and destabilisation and anti-abortion camapigns etc etc ad infinitum) doesn't want to carry the consequences of its actions. So it has found a new mode: 2,000 Afghan refugees will be hosted by Uganda, with the US covering the costs. Uganda has the highest number of refugees in Africa and has the third most globally.

HEALTH

Ebola (re)detected

The United Nations' health agency reported a second suspected case of Ebola in Côte d'Ivoire earlier this week. Close contacts of the cases have been identified and no deaths have yet been reported. It is suspected that the confirmed case is the Zaire strain that claimed the lives of 12 people in Guinea earlier this year during the four-month outbreak that ended in June. The strain has been deadly in various regions.



Strenuous strain: Between 2013 and 2016 the Zaire strain killed more than 11,300 people in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

FIGHT FAKE NEWS WITH REAL NEWS.

Disinformation is often shared on closed networks like WhatsApp. That's why *The Continent* exists. Help us fight fake news by subscribing to high quality journalism, and share that instead.



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 with 'SUBSCRIBE' in the subject box

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

Share real news.

The Continent
with MailGuardian

NIGERIA

Nigeria state oil companies replaced by private company

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company will be disbanded and replaced by a private company. The more than 50 year old company was created to manage the joint venture between the country and international oil companies. The private company will profit from Nigeria's natural resources but, if it doesn't evade taxes, will add money to the national purse that way.

FRANCE / AFGHANISTAN

Macron shows Europe's love

Afghanistan is rare in being a country that France hasn't meddled in. It left that job to its peers. Wary of an upcoming election, and thinking this means he has to run to the right, Emmanuel Macron said Europe needs to "anticipate and protect itself from a wave of migrants". The French president has also suggested that his country might be reducing its military presence in Africa. Greece's former finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis, replied with this: "The West's moral bankruptcy in Technicolor: Invade, mess up, escape, leave a human tragedy behind, wash hands!"

MALI

'Your army'

Mali's coup leader Assimi Goïta went on national television this week to, rather belatedly, explain why he took over the country (for a second time). He said: "Men and women came together to express their desire for change. The people responded massively to the call. The national army, your army, could not just wait-and-see: it therefore took upon itself its responsibilities and intervened to enable the popular desire for change to become a reality." A benevolent dictator? Sure.



Trust the army: Mali's self-elected president promises democracy.

Photo: AFP

Afghanistan

Lessons from the fall of Kabul

ANALYSIS

Aanu Adeoye

As the Taliban advanced on Kabul, the Afghan capital, news filtered out that president Ashraf Ghani had fled the country with his family. It felt at that moment like the end of the Taliban's rapid advance. Victory had been secured with minimal bloodshed, with Ghani waving the white flag as he betrayed everyone around him, and a transition that had apparently already been agreed upon.

It took a little over a week for the country to fall. As United States troop carriers lumbered into the skies – desperate people falling from them to their deaths – a new era of Taliban rule in Afghanistan began.

Twenty years after the superpower invaded the country in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks, the Taliban have returned to power, exactly where they were in 2001. And the US and Nato-backed government, propped up by hundreds of billions of dollars in aid and

foreign fighters, collapsed with little fight.

The United States, in its attempt to both be an empire and claim it wants democracy and independence for everyone, has failed in yet another country.

Watching from Africa, thoughts quickly turned to governments on the continent, especially in the Sahel, that are propped up by aid and interventionist forces. It has been a successful post-independence model for several despots.

Niger, Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso are bedevilled by serious threats from various armed and jihadi groups carrying out violent attacks. Their militaries are often supported in battle by a coalition of international fighters, particularly the French, who continue to meddle in the affairs of its former colonies.

The US and Nato-backed government, propped up by hundreds of billions of dollars in aid and foreign fighters, collapsed without a fight.

France benefits greatly from this. It's why former French President Jacques Chirac said: "Without Africa, France will slide down into the rank of a third



Outliers: A US Air Force C-17 is seen loaded with about 640 Afghans fleeing Kabul after the Taliban takeover. Photo: Chris Herbert US Airforce/AFP

[world] power.” And not just in football.

The French-led Operation Barkhane began in 2013 and has about 5,100 soldiers stationed across the Sahel region, with headquarters in N’Djamena, the Chadian capital.

The effectiveness of the mission is debatable, but it has done just enough to keep governments in power across the region (and killed a good number of civilians, despite French denials). The people of those countries may feel differently. A wave of anti-French sentiment swept across the region last year, contributing to the collapse of president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita’s government in Mali in a military coup.

Undeterred by those they are meant to serve, leaders in the region tacitly and sometimes openly welcome the help. Last week, Mohamed Bazoum, Niger’s

president, who was sworn in in April in the nation’s first democratic transfer of power, urged foreign powers to do even more to combat insurgents. “We are not satisfied with the international community as a whole in its way of fighting terrorism in this area,” Bazoum told *The Economist*. “Against the same adversary, Daesh [Islamic State], in Iraq we saw a great international coalition. But today, we are not seeing the same mobilisation through the UN, in particular.”

Bazoum wants air support and money to pay his troops.

But the appetite for such large scale interventions seems to be waning, at least if French president Emmanuel Macron’s recent statements are anything to go by. “We cannot go on stabilising zones that fall back into lawlessness because states

decide not to take responsibility for them. That's impossible, or else it is an endless task," Macron said on the eve of the G7 meeting in June.

Operation Barkhane will end soon, Macron said, and a new, smaller task force will remain to fight insurgents.

Macron's calculations are transparent. More than 50 French soldiers have died since the mission began and with a potentially tough re-election next year (possibly against the right-wing Marine Le Pen), the French president is well aware that popular opinion is against the troop deployment.

But a Taliban-style takeover of the Sahel nations seems unlikely – for now – if Western nations pull out their troops. For one, the Taliban is a highly organised group in terms of geographical scope, recruitment, and external support.

The militant groups in the Sahel are a ragtag bunch, without the financial heft of the Taliban, who have made a fortune in the illicit opium and heroin trade. The Taliban also have governing experience locally and in diplomacy as they have parleyed with big powers like the US, Russia and China.

Nonetheless, the impact of Western intervention in both scenarios is worthy of comparison. The security-focused interventions fuel clientelist governments riddled with corruption and nepotism. It undermines state legitimacy, limits political dialogue and contributes to the militarisation of domestic politics.

The fall of Afghanistan is a lesson to African states that there is no shortcut to nation building. And the root causes



Flee-bag's full: A US aircraft steamrolls through a crowd of desperate Afghans in Kabul. Photo: EyePress News/AFP

that sometimes attract young men to join insurgent groups – poverty, inequality and hopelessness – cannot be resolved by the barrel of a gun.

Not that leaders on the continent are learning this lesson.

In Mozambique, an insurgency that grew out of the elites in government feasting on new gas development is being met with force. The Rwandan army has deployed, advancing rapidly to take the key northern city of Mocimboa da Praia. As *The Continent* reported last week, it is likely that the expedition is paid for by the French – a charge that country did not respond to.

It is a story so often repeated: a natural resource is found and exploited by foreign companies who then funnel money to a chosen few.

It is a story carried later in this very edition (p12). It leaves the residents of those areas, and countries, in an impossible situation. ■

Will you take the Covid-19 jab?

How big a problem is Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Africa?

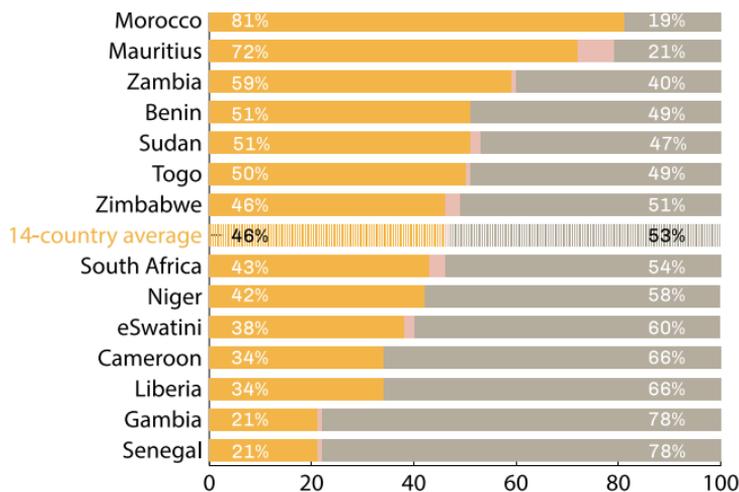
Fairly significant, it appears. Across 14 African countries that Afrobarometer surveyed between October 2020 and June 2021, fewer than half (46%) of respondents say they're "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to try to get vaccinated.

Morocco and Mauritius are outliers, with 81% and 72%, respectively, at least "somewhat likely" to bare their arms.

But majorities in eight of the 14 countries say it's unlikely. Senegal and the Gambia may have the hardest

time reaching herd immunity; in both countries, only one in five citizens (21%) are inclined to accept the vaccine. Liberians and Cameroonians (34% each) aren't too thrilled, either. And even in South Africa, the country hardest hit by the pandemic to date, only 43% say they are likely to get jabbed, while 54% express reluctance.

Why? It's complicated, no doubt. But one reason may be that only 37%, on average across the 14 countries, trust their government to make sure that a Covid-19 vaccine is safe.



Question: If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available and the government says it is safe, how likely are you to try to get vaccinated?

- Likely (somewhat/very)
- Haven't heard of COVID/Don't know/Refused
- Unlikely (somewhat/very)

Source: Afrobarometer, a non-partisan African research network that conducts nationally representative surveys on democracy, governance, and quality of life. Face-to-face interviews with 1,200-2,400 people in each country yield results with a margin of error of +/-2 to 3 percentage points.



Broken land:
Miners on the hunt for gold and diamonds are destroying land and communities.
Photo: Saidu Bah

Even at rock bottom, Sierra Leone is still digging

The arrival of foreign mining companies in Kono, a diamond-rich district in the east of Sierra Leone, had a devastating impact on the local community – and their attempts to seek justice have been frustrated at every turn.

Abdul Samba Brima in Kono

Kumaro village is in ruins. It was never an easy place to live. But at least fresh, cold water would always trickle down from the mountain to quench the thirst of its nearly 2,000 residents, and to water their crops.

That all changed three years ago, when Chinese mining company Wongor Investment and Mining Corporation

started looking for gold nearby. The source of the water was destroyed, and local lands were destroyed by mining activities.

The mine could not be reached for comment, but the residents of Kumaro have no compunctions about sharing their thoughts.

“I was happy when the company came to this town,” says Tamba Gborie, the 64-year-old chief of the village in



Mine over matter: Chief Tamba Gborie is frustrated at the land degradation taking place in his land, but there is nothing he can do about it. Photo: Saidu Bah

Kono district, in eastern Sierra Leone. “I thought they were going to do great things for this community. But since they came, they have done nothing but exploit our resources and deprive us of our source of livelihood.”

As he speaks, he gestures towards the parched, raw earth where village farms used to be.

Wongor secured the mining concession in an agreement brokered by the central government and the area’s paramount chief, ostensibly on behalf of the community. But while this may have resulted in increased tax revenue for the government, the community has been left to count the cost.

“Our wives and children have to wake up as early as 4am, to get clean water,” says Gborie. “Otherwise, they will wait until 4pm, after the mining company has completed work for the day. Can you

imagine how painful this is?”

Kumaro residents used to get by on subsistence farming and artisanal mining. But as their lands were destroyed, so too were their livelihoods.

“I cannot estimate how many acres of land I lost to this company,” says Tamba Bona, a local vegetable farmer. His father left him the land and he’s been farming for over 30 years, growing everything from rice and plantains to bananas, pumpkins and peppers. This ensured his family was fed, that he could afford school fees and also put some money aside.

He and other villagers were given some compensation by the company, but they say not nearly enough to cover the damage. Bona himself received just 9,453,000 leones (about \$950) for the four to eight hectares of land that were affected. He says he had to accept what was offered or face the prospect of forfeiting his inheritance without a cent.

‘They all left smiling’

Because Wongor has the stamp of approval from the central government, the residents of Kumaro have no faith that Sierra Leone’s legal processes will deliver justice. Instead, the first avenue to seek redress is through their own customs and traditions.

So they are waiting for the area’s paramount chief to intervene. Custom dictates that people wait for this step before fighting with the mining company.

In rural Sierra Leone, paramount chiefs are the political figureheads of their people and custodians of the land. With this comes significant authority. They are

greatly respected – and feared. They are considered to be the bedrock of political administration across the country and, once appointed, can only be removed by the president.

There is also no real oversight of their decisions and governance.

Kumaro village falls under the authority of paramount chief Bona Foamansa III, of Nimikoro Chiefdom, Kono district. He rules over a chiefdom of 157 villages, with an estimated population of 61,000.

The Continent visited Bona's home earlier this year. His white mansion looks like a palace in the middle of the forest, and it was crowded with visitors – most of whom were asking him to resolve a dispute.

Paramount chiefs are the political figureheads of their people, and are considered the bedrock of political administration across the country. There is no real oversight for their decisions.

“I have to drill deeper into the root cause of the problem and give advice to all parties involved,” he told us. “You can see that they all left smiling. We do not believe in taking conflicts to courts. Our culture and traditions do not favour that.”

When asked about the situation in Kumaro, Bona defended his right to decide how the village is developed – and indicated that he had no intention of changing his mind on Wongor.

“That is what the tradition says. This is how it has always been,” he said. “As custodians of the land, our duty is to use these lands for the benefit of our people. We have the right to allocate these lands to anyone we think can bring development to our communities.”

Bona argued that Kumaro squandered its opportunity to benefit from mining activity in the past. Artisanal and poorly-coordinated, it brought little meaningful development to the village. With Wongor, the government was getting revenue and security in the area was better.

“We are actually comfortable with this,” he said. “If I get a reputable company to give me a particular percentage that would bring development to this community, it wouldn't be good if I rejected it.”

As paramount chief, he receives part of the surface rent the government collects from the mining company. This was confirmed to *The Continent* by Daniel Lavalie, an engineer at the ministry of mines and mineral resources in Kono, who said that a percentage of the surface rent paid by mining companies is allocated to a Community Development Fund – and part of this fund is paid to the paramount chief.

Bona has publicly pledged to share 60% of the revenues that he receives from Wongor's Kumaro operation with the affected community. But villagers say they haven't seen any of this money.

'A hopeless situation'

Bona wields a lot of power in this part of the country. “The paramount chiefs command a lot of powers when it comes



Photo: Saidu Bah

to land ownership here in Kono. These excessive powers must be checked. Otherwise, they are very prone to abuse,” says Alex Komba Fomba, the Programme Coordinator for Youth Empowerment for Advocacy, Human Rights and Development in Sierra Leone, a civil society organisation based in Kono.

Fomba is from the area, and has seen time and again how local communities have been excluded from the proceeds of diamond wealth. In fact, the scars of this exclusion are visible all over the area: the dusty roads, damaged landscapes and shabby homes tell a story of exploitation and neglect.

All this is despite the fact that Sierra Leone’s diamond trade has accounted for some of the world’s biggest diamonds. All told, the country’s diamond industry has produced an estimated \$6.7-billion of the gemstones.

If anything, the presence of diamonds has been actively detrimental. Sierra

Leone’s rebel war, for example, was partly fuelled by a blood diamond trade, which provoked a major humanitarian tragedy. Some 75,000 people were killed, with half a million refugees and half of the country’s population displaced between 1991 and 2002.

“We live in communities where much is taken away, but little is given back,” Fomba says. “It feels like a hopeless situation.”

For things to change, he argues, local communities need a seat at the table. “If the people are part of the negotiations, they will give the companies terms and conditions that can benefit communities. But, these agreements are negotiated in secret.”

And when things do go wrong, communities struggle to access any form of justice. Many people are scared and overwhelmed by the complexities of the formal legal system, and distance is a major inhibiting factor – sometimes

the courts are very far from villages, and transportation is a challenge. “We know of cases that have been thrown out of court for either lack of evidence or affected families that did not show up,” says Fomba.

“We live in communities where much is taken away, but little is given back. It feels like a hopeless situation.”

That’s not the only challenge. Lawyers are prohibitively expensive, hearings are often adjourned at short notice, and community members are often scared that there may be real-world repercussions for taking on big companies, the national government and influential local figures like the paramount chief.

So instead of approaching the courts, communities usually approach the paramount chief himself, despite his potential conflict of interest, or ask civil society organisations like Fomba’s to help mediate. Fomba has led many such mediations over the years, with limited success. He says that all too often mining companies make grand promises about investing in the community – “This feels like a bait that communities can hardly resist,” – but fail to deliver.

Broken promises

Sierra Leone’s National Minerals Agency is supposed to supervise the relationship between mining companies and their primary host communities. A key part of this is ensuring that host communities are

protected, and that companies keep their promises.

And it is not just the village of Kumaro that questions whether the agency is living up to its mandate. In April this year, for example, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone completed a two-day monitoring exercise on the operations of Koidu Limited, another mining company in Kono district. Founded by a former mercenary, it is one of the largest miners in the country.

The company’s general manager, Rocco Vermeulen, told the commission that since their operations began they had met all the provisions outlined in their mining lease, sometimes exceeding those obligations.

But after investigating for themselves, the commission reached a different verdict: That the company did not uphold satisfactory safety measures for its workers; had low levels of employment for local people; and offered unsatisfactory compensation and relocation packages for people impacted by their operations.

International anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International reached a similar conclusion in a damning 2017 report.

It concluded: “The hundreds of millions of dollars generated by the extraction of diamonds continue to leave Koidu, and the country, without benefiting anyone in the community.”

It is a situation that will sound all too familiar to the people of Kumaro. ■

Burkina Faso

'Assassins' on trial

Thomas Sankara was assassinated in 1987. He had been in power for four years, after a coup put him there. Those accused of killing him will finally go on trial in October.

The then president of Burkina Faso had changed too many things and made too many enemies, particularly amongst those in the West who still sought to control Africa's future. He joined the likes of Patrice Lumumba in dying for it.

Not that his was an unblemished record. Under Sankara's presidency, those who disagreed with his path paid for it. Political opponents were jailed or killed.

His actions were both small and big, symbolic and dramatic.

On assuming the presidency, Sankara sold off his government's fleet of Mercedes and replaced them with the cheapest Renault on the market. Schools were built, land redistributed, children were vaccinated at hitherto unseen rates, farms sewn and railways extended, all while rejecting organisations such as the International Monetary Fund.

In post-colonial Africa, those were the institutions ensuring that the West still got its way.

Sankara's story has become emblematic

of the post 1960s era of Africa, where popular politicians sought to steer their countries away from foreign influence, before being murdered by people happy to replace them and then happy to return to the status quo of Western profiteering.

In Burkina Faso the Western country in question was France, the former colonial power.

The then president of Burkina Faso had changed too many things and made too many enemies, particularly amongst those in the West who still sought to control Africa's future.

Blaise Compaoré has gone down in history as the man directly responsible for the assassination. He will stand trial in the capital Ouagadougou, along with 13 other co-accused.

Compaoré seized control after Sankara died and ruled for 27 years.

He was overthrown in the 2014 Burkinabé uprising, after mass demonstrations. This after he tried to change the constitution so he could run for president again, adding to his 27 years in power.

A warrant for his arrest was issued the year after. He denies being involved in the assassination. ■

Unvaccinated, untreated: Will Africa get its fair share of Covid-19 drugs?

Just 2% of Africans have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 as cases surge, even as wealthy nations recommend booster shots. And the drugs recommended to treat the disease remain too costly.

Laura López González

A lack of access to Covid-19 vaccines has left millions of Africans unprotected against an increasingly infectious virus. Now, countries may also not be able to afford access to life-saving Covid-19 treatment.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has approved just three drugs to treat severe Covid-19.

The WHO recommends a two-drug combination of the common steroid, dexamethasone, and either the drug tocilizumab or sarilumab to treat life-threatening Covid-19. Tocilizumab and sarilumab both belong to a class of drugs called monoclonal antibodies that use laboratory-made proteins to mimic aspects of the body's natural immune response.

In some patients with serious Covid-19, the virus can send their immune systems into overdrive, damaging organs and tissue. Multiple

studies reviewed by the WHO show that tocilizumab and sarilumab — when paired with dexamethasone — can help prevent that and reduce the risk of death and ventilation in serious Covid-19 patients while also shortening hospital stays.

Limited access to even affordable Covid-19 drugs

Only 18 countries in Africa have said they are using dexamethasone — the most affordable of the trio — to treat severe Covid-19, according to a WHO Africa survey of 30 countries. A course of the drug costs about \$5.70.

Meanwhile, the WHO's Africa office cannot say whether any country has been able to roll out tocilizumab and sarilumab, which can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars per dose. And despite an expert panel in South Africa finding that tocilizumab reduced deaths in patients, the recommendation was that the drug not be used because it is

“not affordable at the current offered price”. It was the same case in Kenya, where the *Daily Nation* newspaper reported that although the country had approved tocilizumab for use in critically ill patients, it remained expensive and in short supply.

This week, tocilizumab’s maker, Roche, said it has not been able to keep up with increased demand for the drug.

Monoclonal antibodies remain too pricey for use by medical humanitarian organisation Doctors Without Borders (MSF), says senior legal and policy advisor with MSF’s Access Campaign Yuan Qiong Hu. MSF works in at least 10 countries on the continent.

“For now, this life-saving therapy is largely out of reach for African populations, at the cost of around \$2,000 per patient,” WHO Regional Director for Africa Matshidiso Moeti told journalists in July. “We are advocating for generics to be produced rapidly to make these products more affordable.”

Will patents come between patients and care?

But Hu and others fear that patent protections will likely hamper affordable, generic versions of the drugs.

Although the initial patents on Roche’s tocilizumab expired in 2017, it’s been able to extend patent protection in at least 30 countries, Hu says.

Roche spokesperson Nina Maehlitz confirms that tocilizumab is patented in four African countries. However, the company has agreed not to enforce patents on the medicine in low and

middle-income countries.

She says Roche is also willing to waive patent protection on tocilizumab in upper-middle-income countries, like South Africa, in emergency situations. Maehlitz says Roche has been in discussions with South Africa’s health department since early this year to increase access to the drug.

But the firm admits it has a limited presence in low-income countries and is willing to donate doses to the WHO’s Access to Covid-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator for distribution to developing countries.

The company maintains that 60% of its estimated Covid-19 tocilizumab supply has gone to developing countries – quadruple the amount of the drug delivered to these countries prior to pandemic.

Meanwhile, Hu says that the other WHO recommended monoclonal antibody, Salirumab, is under patent until about 2030 in many low and middle-income countries, including at least 14 African countries.

Sanofi, which distributed the drug outside the US, declined to confirm the exact number of African countries in which Salirumab is under patent.

Despite the WHO recommendation, a Sanofi spokesperson confirmed that no national drug regulator has approved the medicine as a Covid-19 treatment. Sanofi confirmed it is not looking to ramp up production of the medication beyond meeting the needs of patients that currently use it to treat rheumatoid arthritis. ■



Welcome to Ibadan

Rilwan Balogun

Located in Oyo State, south-west Nigeria, Ibadan is the country's biggest city by geographical area, spanning more than 3,080 sq.km and considered the agrarian epicentre of the region. Rich in history and legend, some of the foremost views of the city are still warped in mysterious details.

Watching uphill from a good height, there is a conglomeration of brown rusted roofs; a quick way to identify the city's core local residence, and an identity of the standard of living of most

residents. The roofs, typically well-arranged from a distant view, connect to the old existentialism of the city and the roots of its being.

Linking Nigeria's foremost commercial hub and Africa's most populous city through one of the longest road networks in Nigeria, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the city stands at a strategic position for business and commerce. Its arable lands once stood as one of Nigeria's sources of riches in its agricultural dominance in the 20th century, before the advent of petroleum.

To have a grand view of the city may take a visit to the Bower's Tower **(1)** - built in 1936, and one of the most distinct and significant points of attraction in the city touted to be the largest in West Africa. It is a historic



monument to honour the first Briton to live in the city, Captain Robert Lister Bower. While the city hardly attracts tourists these days, there's enough history behind even the smallest of its buildings.

Sightseeing

One-time the seat of power in Nigeria's old Western Region, Ibadan has age-long structures that have existed through generations, and many parts of the city still exude Nigeria's colonial years. A foremost example of the colonial fingerprints can be seen in Mapo Hall, a gigantic building of great pillars, constructed in 1929 by a colonial engineer, Captain Ross. The structure has a British feel to its presence, indicating the massive influence the colonialists had on the

One-time the seat of power in Nigeria's old Western Region, Ibadan has age-long structures that have existed through the generations.

city when they reigned supreme. The hall has played host to some of Nigeria's most significant assemblies, and is still a major political rallying point in the state.

The "Cocoa House" (2), one of the tallest structures in the city, was once Nigeria's highest view. A 23-storey skyscraper, it was the first in West Africa at the time of its construction 56 years ago. Named to instill a reminder on the source of its construction, the structure was built from the old Western Nigeria's rich agricultural

proceeds - rubber, timber and mostly cocoa. Now a shadow of its old, radiant, bubbly self, the building is gradually ripping at the seams, yet distinct enough to attract a tourist's eye.

The city is also home to Nigeria's premier university, the University of Ibadan, established in 1948 by Nigeria's colonial masters and one of the best and most revered higher institutions on the continent. Established as an affiliate of the University College London, it became independent in 1963, the same year Nigeria became a republic.

U.I as it's fondly called in Nigeria, has produced some of Nigeria and Africa's finest personalities including legendary prolific writers – late Chinua Achebe and the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, Prof. Wole Soyinka amongst many others.

An example of the city's pure greenery is seen at the Agodi Zoological and Botanical Gardens, now known as Agodi Gardens. Established in 1967, the garden is a 150-acre expanse of land constructed for human pleasure. Its beautiful vegetation and tranquility makes it a fantastic site for family outings and picnics. After bad flooding in 1980 shredded the garden of its serenity of old, it was reconstructed in 2012 by the state government.

Another awesome experience is visiting Bower's Tower. The tower has no road accessible by car but has a footpath for visitors. Standing on a hill, it gives a clear picture of what the whole city looks like and gives a great appreciation of the city's unique beauty.



Photo: Tope Oriola

Getting around

A tourist's entry into Ibadan gives an insight into the mode of transportation, with myriads of vehicles, known as "Micra" - a very small car made by Nissan mostly serving as taxis. Call them "movers and shakers" and you won't have missed a step. The drivers are notorious for breaking traffic rules at whim. While they may constitute frustration to other road users, their presence and actions will be a funny sight to see for neutrals.

Grabbing a bite

Locals typically queue at Shoprite's for their share of the bakery's daily bread. But for a real taste of the city, the most famous meal is amala and gbegiri (3) (local names for yam flour and bean soup). Ose-Olohun is probably the most famous for this dish.

Locally known as "Amala Skye" due to its close proximity to Polaris Bank (formerly Skye Bank), the canteen is



Photo: Bodijamarket.ng

well-known and is an important port of call for tourists to the city. For foreign cuisines, there are various other kitchens including those owned by the city's biggest and best hotels.

City vibe check and nightlife

Friday is the busiest day of the week in the city and probably reflects the city's energy the best. From the hustles and bustles of the day, where local traders visit various markets (4) to sell their wares, thronged by voices of dissenting and bargaining buyers, to the rush of the largely Muslim populace to observe the day's Jumat prayers. Then the night takes its place with loud sounds from the clubs.

Although, Ibadan, in contrast with Lagos, doesn't have excellent nightlife. With most inhabitants being traders and artisans, the city's residents largely stay in aged communities. There are other developed parts of the city, with state of the art structures and people who have an air of modernism. This gives the city a hint of club culture.

Music that represents the feel of the city

The most notable genre of song listened to by most Ibadan locals is "Fuji music" - a Yoruba-themed genre of music with lots of drumming. Ibadan locals worship their favourite Fuji stars and hold them dearly. A vast majority of the musicians in this genre have at one time or the other passed through the city during their training. The elderly locals also love to listen to Apala music - a genre of music that reigned in Western Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s. There's the love for Afrobeats from the city's growing young population while the many hills are naturally inviting to churches who find a difference in prayers on an elevation.

Favourite time of the year

For visitors Ibadan is a good place to visit throughout the year, but the city feels better during the rainy season as the dry season comes with dry spells. ■



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!

South Africa

Who is impregnating South Africa's schoolgirls?

Kiri Rupiah

In April 2021, Johannesburg's late mayor, Geoff Makhubo made a shocking claim on Twitter: "SA has been confirmed to be the rape capital in the world." The claim has been debunked by Africa Check.

But this was the head of South Africa's largest city, who went on to tell his followers that women born in South Africa had a greater chance of being raped than learning to read. This was according to Interpol, he added.

This Tuesday, that province's department of health revealed that 23,226 girls became pregnant in the year between April 2020 and March 2021. Over 900 babies were delivered by girls between the ages of 10 and 14.

The uproar was swift but tellingly devoid of any mention of the men who were involved in the conception of these children. In one instance, a well-known media personality lamented the "abdication" of talk of the birds and the

bees by parents onto teachers. However, he missed a glaringly harrowing fact – these pregnancies were not immaculate in nature.

And sex with a person under the age of 16 is a crime.

In South Africa, the age of consent is 16 years, regardless of gender and sexual orientation. Between two children, the age of consent is 12 years. This means that someone under the age of 12 is incapable of consenting.

The absence of consent to sexual intercourse is the basis of the crime of rape.

Over 900 babies were delivered by girls between the ages of 10 and 14. The uproar was swift but tellingly devoid of any mention of the men who were involved in the conception of these children.

Startling facts and figures about sexual assault, rape and femicide are often used to highlight what some call the country's "war on women". They also mirror the violence perpetrated against children.

Over 42,000 rapes were reported in the year from April 2019 to March 2020. Children are being raped and are giving birth as a result. Yet it is still children on whom we lay the blame for these statistics. Not the perpetrators. ■

THE QUIZ

0-4

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

5-7

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

8-10

"I consider myself a monument of African renaissance."

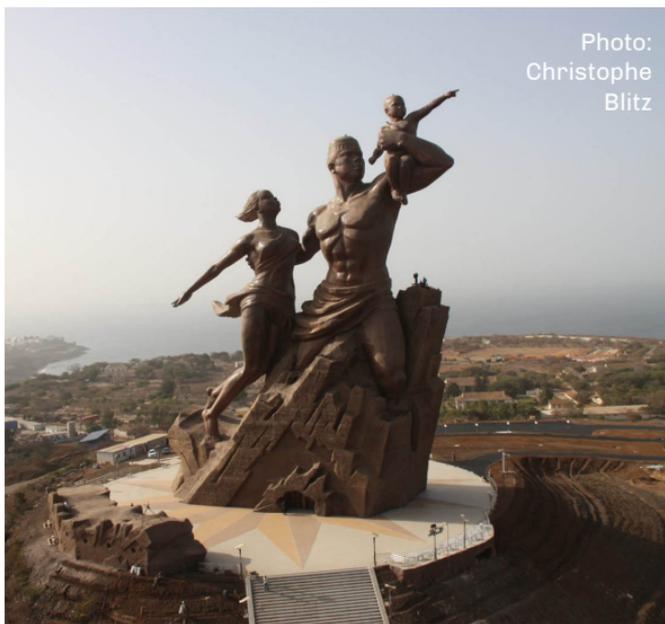


Photo:
Christophe
Blitz

- 1_ In which country will the next Africa Cup of Nations be held?
- 2_ Which country has the United States asked to take in Afghan refugees?
- 3_ Who is the outgoing president of Zambia?
- 4_ Who is the incoming president of Zambia?
- 5_ How many schoolgirls were kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2015?
- 6_ Which currency is used in Niger?
- 7_ True or false: J.R.R. Tolkien was born in South Africa.

- 8_ True or false: Marabou storks can be found north of the Sahara.
- 9_ Essence, a Billboard Hot 100 featured song, is by which Nigerian artist?
- 10_ What is the tallest statue on the continent? (Bonus: In which city is it?)

HOW DID I DO?

WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to +27 73 805 6068 and we'll send the answers to you!

Would you like to send us some quiz questions or even curate your own quiz? Let us know at TheContinent@mg.co.za



13th December 1963:
Kenyatta and the Duke
of Edinburgh in Nairobi
during independence
celebrations. Photo:
Keystone/Getty Images

How Kenya's chameleon did it

On the 43rd anniversary of Jomo Kenyatta's death, **Kwame Otiende** looks at how he managed to survive in such a turbulent time, as Africa grappled with independence and its colonisers.

I recently came across a Newsnight archive feature on the 1980 Rhodesian (now Zimbabwe) elections. The hopefulness of newly independent Africans – optimistic of the future and Robert Mugabe's potential. Many white Rhodesians were, however, visibly angry and scared.

At the close of the report, the anchor offers consolation: "remember Jomo Kenyatta who was loathed and feared by Kenya's whites as the Mau Mau leader and

became the father of one of Africa's most harmonious multi-racial societies."

Yet Kenyatta's rule was plagued with corruption, political assassinations and violence committed against his own citizens. How did he become both a darling of the West and a hero of Afrocentric scholars?

Jomo Kenyatta's life is a study in political astuteness, incredible luck and demagoguery. From the outset, young Kenyatta seemed to possess wily political

awareness. While working at an early age as a carpenter's apprentice, store clerk and water meter reader, the future president changed his name from Johnstone Kamau to Johnstone Kenyatta.

The name also works as a play on the words Kenya and taa (light), meaning "light of Kenya" – no coincidence. When he later moved to London, he would assume "Jomo" in the place of Johnstone, reincarnating himself as Jomo Kenyatta, the African independence leader.

Kenyatta's rule was plagued with corruption and violence. How did he become both a darling of the West and a hero of Afrocentric scholars?

He realised how powerful-sounding Africanised names would be beneficial in his political career, decades ahead of African leaders like Zaire's Mobutu (full name Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu waza Banga,) who would ride the wave of bombastic-sounding name changes in the late 1970s. His natural ability to manage his public image was key to the way he is remembered today.

After taking over the reins at the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) in 1927, he would then travel to the United Kingdom, where he fell in with a communist crowd. After a short break studying in Russia, he moved back to London, gaining degrees at both UCL and London School of Economics, where he published his celebrated (if nostalgic)

thesis on the Agikuyu culture, *Facing Mount Kenya*.

Returning to Kenya in the early 1930s, he found a country where politics had moved forward, and the Kikuyu were even more agitated about land issues. A political chameleon, his communist association and experience as leader of the long-standing colonial agitator, KCA, would win him support of the radicals. At the same time, his social "finesse" and academic credentials could woo the constitutional (democrat) factions.

Advancing in age, he utilised African respect for the elders to place himself as the sole leader of the independence movement. This grew to the extent that when he was arrested by colonial authorities, "no uhuru (freedom) without Kenyatta" was the clarion call across the board.

Yet, it's after independence that the real Kenyatta emerges.

As leader of the Kenya African National Union, he won the 1963 election and took up the position of prime minister. Under his lead, Kenya moved from a colony to a republic.

The country's first president must have learned something in his Western sojourn. He came back with a big appetite for land. His family, friends and other hangers-on engaged in rapacious grabbing of lands then-owned by the departing British settlers. The practices of the former oppressors seemed to come easily.

Kenyatta also presided as the disappearances and deaths of politicians began to take place: first was Pio Gama Pinto and then, famously, Tom Mboya

and JM Kariuki. This coincided with an increasing dissent within the ruling national union party.

He also abused traditional systems to ensure fealty.

With freedom won, Kenyatta's government had to tackle the Mau Mau freedom fighters, who had fought the British and now came back to a life without jobs or land. For them the only tenable difference was that the overlords had changed; it was no longer the British lordling over the country's wealth, but the nouveau riche.

So, as the promise of land redistribution faded away, the president drew on the famed oathing of warriors. This tribe-wide oath (sometimes forced) saw people swearing to always support him as their leader.

Beyond Kenya's Central Province, Kenyatta did not hesitate to use violence to quash any rumblings of discontent. Most notable was the five-year-long Shifta War against Kenyan Somalis that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands.

Outside of the country's borders, and as colonialism fell, Kenyatta sang the tune of "African solidarity" without ever rocking the boat on the international stage.

He was also one of the few African leaders to continue relations with apartheid South Africa. An early ally of Israel, unlike then-African governments, he even provided Kenyan airports and airspace for the 1970s Israeli raid on Entebbe in neighbouring Uganda.

Yet, there were no sanctions for Kenyatta, no gruesome Hollywood epics



Jomo Kenyatta is led into a courthouse, charged with leading the Mau Mau Rebellion. Photo: Stroud/Express/Getty Images

detailing the rollercoaster ride that took him from shamba-boy to a London socialite; rebellion in the forests to Benz-driving fatcat; to paranoid megalomaniac, ally to apartheid and finally ruthless oppressor.

Instead, he is remembered as a pan-Africanist leader. Why?

This requires much deeper research.

It may very well have to do with his constant shedding of his skin. Thanks to his knack of being able to read the signs and reinvent himself, he saved himself from the fate of numerous independence leaders who were killed or overthrown in later years, dying in office of a heart attack.

Kenyatta was, and remains, a vital ally and "anchor state" to the West; these foundations were laid by Kenyatta, and perhaps as a token of thanks, he has been spared the indignity of exposure by Western popular culture in a way that Idi Amin was not. ■

Kwame Otiende is a Kenyan entrepreneur and political analyst/commentator

Zambia 2021: The voice of the people triumphs once more

Ernest Chanda

Zambia joined the small handful of African countries that have experienced three transfers of power via the ballot box when President Edgar Lungu conceded defeat to long-time opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema early this week.

But the process was far from straightforward, and a smooth transition may not have happened if Hichilema had not won by a massive margin – 2,810,757 votes against Lungu’s 1,814,201. The landslide win emboldened the Electoral Commission of Zambia to declare him the winner and forced government leaders hoping to overturn their defeat to give up.

This was important because the election was conducted under the most difficult conditions in the country’s history.

First, the civic space was greatly diminished, as Lungu used the Public Order Act and police to deny the opposition space to mobilise. Second, the country witnessed growing lawlessness

and violence, predominantly from ruling party supporters. Third, the elections were held during the coronavirus pandemic, which was politicised as the electoral commission shut down rallies – and Hichilema was consistently blocked from campaigning in key areas – while Lungu continued campaigning by holding government meetings and “inspecting” development projects, activities that were not prohibited. Fourth, Lungu sought to divide the country that Kaunda had managed to unite by playing the “tribal” card, hoping to stigmatise Hichilema and fragment the opposition.

Finally, the government took two decisions around voting day that caused deep consternation among opposition leaders and supporters. Days before the polls, the military were deployed around the country in an unprecedented move, sparking fears that the security forces would be used to repress post-election protests. Then, on election day itself, the government shut down access to social media apps such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, as high turnout indicated that they were on the way out, further increasing political tensions.

**The election was
conducted under the most
difficult conditions in the
country’s history.**

So how did the United Party for National Development (UPND) win against these odds?



Red is led: Hichilema supporters celebrate in Lusaka.
Photo: AFP

Importantly, the opposition got off to a good start by teaming up with 10 partners to form the UPND Alliance. This helped to boost support for Hichilema in parts of the country outside of his “heartlands” – a trend begun in the elections of 2015 and 2016. The UPND and civil society groups such as Christian Churches Monitoring Group also did a good job of protecting the vote, reducing the scope for electoral fraud.

Hichilema’s cause was helped by Zambia’s economic difficulties, which convinced a wide range of voters that change was essential. Lungu’s increasingly authoritarian and irresponsible rule played into these trends, so that the election was not UPND vs the government, but the people vs the president. Efforts at voter-bribing and divide-and-rule politics only hardened popular support for the opposition.

Against this backdrop, Hichilema’s landslide victory emboldened democratic institutions to stand up and be counted, and represents a real mandate for change. It also means that the new president is well aware that his tenure will be evaluated in terms of how he performs on the economy, on reducing corruption and on his promise to give the Zambian people back their rights and liberties.

Perhaps most importantly, Lungu’s defeat will be a constant reminder to the new government that the Zambian people have the power to change the government – and if they believe the UPND has let them down, they know how to use it. ■



Ernest Chanda is a journalist and an editor of Zambia’s independent newspaper, The Mast. This analysis is produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa

At a loss for words



Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

Reader, we heard the magic words.

Not an “I love you” from the object of our affections, but words more transcendent, words both rare and as reassuring as they were unexpected.

“I will comply,” said Edgar Lungu, president of Zambia. “I will comply with the constitutional provisions for the peaceful transition of power and would like to congratulate my brother, the President-Elect, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, for becoming the seventh president.”

Oh, the goosebumps we’re feeling, as the country prepares to usher in a new era after an election which saw a whopping voter turnout of over 70%, with young Zambians leading the charge.

At a subsequent tête-à-tête between the incumbent and his successor-elect, Lungu was heard telling Hichilema, or “HH” as he is popularly known, that he can call him any time, before qualifying that “the number is on and off but you can try”.

To be honest Mr Lungu, you’ve said quite enough.

Don’t call us

Unlikely to be taking any calls is Blaise

Compaoré, the former president of Burkina Faso, whose trial for the murder of Thomas Sankara is expected to begin soon – on October 11, prosecutors said this week.

However, it may have to proceed without the man of the hour himself: Compaoré remains in exile in Côte d’Ivoire, and considering the commitment of many of our leaders to “Man-Africanism” (as friend of *The Continent* Nanjala Nyabola calls it), we wouldn’t recommend holding one’s breath waiting for Ivorian authorities to extradite him.

That said, should Compaoré not wish to rely on the “bro code”, he could always ask the Kenyan police force for tips on evading justice. Last week saw funerals take place for Benson and Emmanuel Ndwiga – just 22 and 19 years old, respectively. Their bodies had been found at a morgue, just days after they were arrested in Kianjokoma, in eastern Kenya, for breaking curfew.

Six police officers accused of killing them appeared in court this week, but there is little hope that justice will be served: data shows that police killings rarely lead to convictions.

Word from our sponsors

In Uganda, the government of President Yoweri Museveni this week announced its intention to take in 2,000 refugees from Afghanistan at the request of the United

States. The news has been welcomed by some; others are nonplussed by the arrangement, coming as it does amid much criticism of the sponsoring nation's alarmingly alacritous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Western nations are already known for buying up other countries' carbon offsets – are they now paying proxies to take on their geopolitical responsibilities? Subcontracting their guilty consciences to third-party providers?

Perhaps that's too cynical. Maybe instead of dwelling on yet another attempt by the West to have someone else clean up its mess, we should rather focus on Uganda's generosity in giving refuge to those fleeing Afghanistan.

Perhaps Uganda's minister for gender, Betty Amongi, might stand as a beacon of solidarity?

On closer inspection, perhaps not. On Wednesday she shared a photo on Twitter of some women from Afghanistan, writing "I have seen our Ugandan men praying for safe landing of Afghanistan refugees, and sharing various photos of ladies as below. They are promising total support and co-operation with the government this time on this project! Hope it's not [the] Stingy Men Association."

We don't know what has left us more horrified – the lack of empathy, the trivialising of a crisis which has left millions terrified for their own fate and that of their loved ones, or the implied threat that once they arrive they will be shared out among a delegation of eager men.

Just a reminder to Ms Amongi that

while sticks and stones may break our bones, words like yours break our hearts, and we worry they will lead to far worse than broken bones.

When words fail

While our thoughts are with the people of Afghanistan – those desperately seeking refuge, as well as those determined to stay – there has been some worrying news closer to home.

The troubles plaguing the Sahel, for example, continue to exact a grievous toll on ordinary people. In Niger, unidentified gunmen attacked a village in Tillaberi, killing 37 civilians. Thirteen of the casualties were just teenagers, aged between 15 and 17. Meanwhile, in Burkina Faso, another 30 civilians, 14 soldiers and three volunteers were killed when armed attackers ambushed a convoy in the country's north.

Meanwhile this week Côte d'Ivoire reported its first case of Ebola since 1994: an 18-year-old who had recently arrived from Guinea. Health authorities in Guinea (who themselves have only just reported their first-ever case of the deadly Marburg virus), immediately began contact-tracing and sent over Ebola vaccines to the Ivorians, who amid their ongoing Covid-19 challenges, will now surely be bracing for even worse.

Our leaders could learn a thing or two from our healthcare workers, not least that their words speak to little more than their own lack of character, while the actions of those who dare to see and serve the humanity in others speak loudest of all. ■

THE BIG PICTURE

Seedlings of faith: Elder Ras Lojuron Jaden prays with the Rastafari Society of Kenya at Oloolua Forest in Ngong, southwest of Nairobi, as they prepare to plant trees in commemoration of the birthday of Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican black empowerment activist. Although Garvey was not a Rastafarian, he is considered to be one of the religion's prophets, because it was his ideologies that eventually grew into the Rastafari faith. Photo: Tony Karumba/AFP



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