

with Mail & Guardian

The Continent

**Samuel
Eto'o's
second
act**



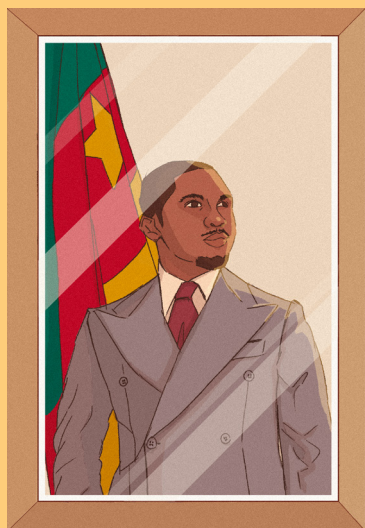
Illustration: Wynona Mutisi

Congratulations!

The Continent and Democracy in Africa are proud to announce the winners of the inaugural Prize for Comment Writing. Nearly 400 entries were whittled down to a shortlist of eight, from which our judging panel chose Andile Zulu's piece on **the problems with the prosperity gospel in Africa** as their strongest op-ed.

The reader's award – as voted for by readers of *The Continent* – went to Daniel Odido's timely argument in favour of **liberalising Africa's skies**. Congratulations to both the winners and to everyone who participated.

Huge thanks go to our stellar judging panel: Dapo Olorunyomi (Publisher, Premium Times); Denis Galava (Former Managing Editor, Standard Media Group); Idayat Hassan (Director, Centre for Democracy and Development; Fonteh Akum (Executive Director, Institute for Security Studies); Paula Fray (CEO, frayintermedia); Teldah Mawarire (Editor and human rights activist).



COVER: Samuel Eto'o, arguably Africa's best-ever footballer, began work this week as president of Fecafoot, Cameroon's football federation. To get there he ran a sophisticated election campaign – so sophisticated that it's got people wondering if he, like George Weah before him, has even grander political ambitions (p10)

Inside:

- **Style:** The best Afcon kits, ranked! (p16)
- **The rise** of legal gambling in Senegal – strictly forbidden by

the country's main religion (p20)

■ **Movies:** Postpartum depression in Lagos (p22)

■ **The Zimbabwean reporter** on trial for his journalism (p25)

■ **Analysis:** South Africa's afrophobic turn (p29)

KENYA

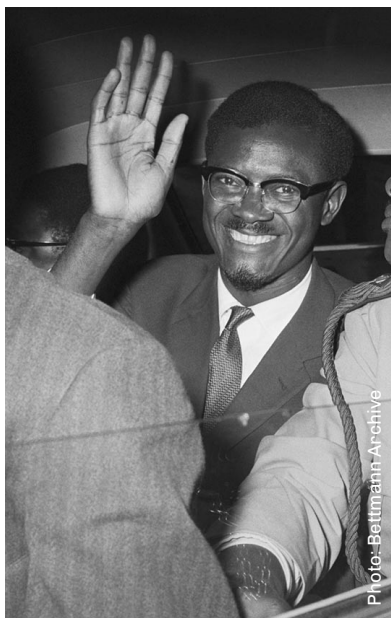
Save the trees, save the bees

The United Nations says that about 35% of pollinating invertebrates, in particular bees and butterflies, face extinction. In Kenya, scientists there say, the most significant contributing factor to this decline in pollinator populations is deforestation. “People are cutting down trees because of [human] population pressure. People want to settle, establish farms, and every time people cut down trees, this leads to a ripple effect,” said Dr Elliud Muli. He and fellow Kenyan scientists are calling for a “multisectoral approach” to saving the bees.

COVID

Children at greater risk on the continent

Children in African countries who get severe Covid are dying at a greater rate than those hospitalised in the United States or Europe, a study from the University of Pittsburgh shows. It looked at data from 25 hospitals in DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa, between March and December 2020. Of the 469 children observed on Covid wards during this period, 39 – more than 8% – died. In high-income countries, the reported rate has been 1% and 5%.



DRC

Lumumba will have to wait a bit longer before his final rest

President Felix Tshisekedi has announced yet another delay for the return of Patrice Lumumba's remains from Belgium. It was first planned for June 2021, moved to January 2022 and now to June 2022, each time allegedly because of a spike in DRC Covid cases. The remains comprise a single gold tooth that was pried out of the mouth of the first Congolese prime minister, by a Belgian official, following his murder 61 years ago. The Belgian official dissolved the rest of the body in acid.

UP NORTH

Sahara lets itself go

Temperatures fell below freezing in the Sahara desert this week, causing snow

to fall on the largest hot desert in the world. The snowfall created striking ice crystal patterns after sand dunes became partially covered. There have now been snowfalls in 2017, 2018 and 2021.



Photo: Derdour Rachid/ Shutterstock

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Flattening the energy curve

To reduce its carbon footprint, Orange Telecom will switch to powering its data centre in Côte d'Ivoire with solar energy. In a related move, a network of leading mobile telecommunications providers has established the “Global Green Networks Benchmark”, a set of standards used to grade its members on how environmentally friendly their operations are.

EAST AFRICA

Dar es Salaam rail link steams ahead

Tanzania and Burundi have agreed to build a 282km train line linking Uvinza to Gitega. In a statement, the Tanzanian finance ministry said the project would cost \$900-million, with the line carrying cargo and minerals. This stretch is part of a bigger effort by Tanzania to open up markets for its port of Dar es Salaam, with a network planned as far inland as the DRC.

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AFCON

Women take the field

Salima Mukansanga became the first woman to referee at the men's football tournament. The Rwandan officiated Zimbabwe's win over Guinea, although the latter still qualified for the last 16 of the tournament. There are four women officiating at this year's tournament. Mukansanga also refereed at the Tokyo Olympics last year.

EGYPT

Max the minimum

Egypt will increase the minimum wage for public workers after President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi issued a directive to the country's finance ministry. As it stands minimum wage is 2,400 Egyptian pounds (\$152.50) per month and it will increase by 12.5% to 2,700 Egyptian pounds (\$171.5). After seizing power in a military coup, he has been in office since 2014 and this is his third minimum wage increase.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Blind eye to Swahili anti-gay hate speech

Global tech giants are doing little to protect vulnerable user groups here. Two reports by the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism say Google, Facebook, Amazon and Wikipedia are all barely monitoring Swahili content that touts so called "conversion therapy" against LGBTIQ+ people.

BELGIUM

Vicarious realities

The Belgian Centre for Fine Arts is holding an exhibition around the film *Kinshasa Now*. It features Congolese artists such as Freddy Tsimba, but also a virtual reality exhibition that allows visitors to "teleport" to Kinshasa in an immersive experience that puts them in the shoes of a homeless "street kid". At last count, in 2014, Kinshasa had 25,000 children living on its streets.

COMOROS

Stars fall, isle soars

There were celebrations on the streets of Moroni, the capital of Comoros, this week after the island nation beat Ghana 3-2 on Tuesday, in a shock defeat for the Black Stars that sent them home from the tournament that they have won outright four times previously.

Mali



Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta 1945-2022

Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, the former president of Mali, died at his Bamako home on Sunday morning. He was 76.

IBK, as he was universally known, was a career politician who was first voted into the presidency in 2013, in the wake of the military coup which had deposed his predecessor. He would win another election, in 2018 – before himself being deposed in a military coup.

IBK promised, repeatedly, to usher in a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future for Mali. It was his failure to make

good on these promises that paved the way for Colonel Assimi Goïta to seize power in 2020.

Goïta has since said he won't hand over power to a civilian administration until 2025 at the earliest – and a recent survey of Bamako residents suggests that the junta has plenty of support, at least in the capital.

It's hard to escape the symbolism. IBK has died, and taken the country's democratic experiment with him – flawed as both may have been. ■

Sudan

Military keeps killing

Seven more people have been killed by the army, which refuses to hand over power to civilians

Sudan was meant to be run by leaders elected by its people. This was the victory paid for with the blood of the 100 protesters shot dead in 2019 during demonstrations that brought the dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir to an end.

On Monday, seven more people were shot dead. They were protesting against the military coup that has betrayed the 2019 revolution. According to Sudan's Central Doctor's Committee, 70 people have now been killed in the peaceful protests that started in October last year and have since spread to about 30 different regions in the country.

The military seized power last October, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. It arrested the transitional civilian cabinet. When further popular protests erupted, the military responded with live ammunition, killing at least 14 people on a single mid-November day.

In an interview, al-Burhan said the armed forces would "exit politics" after



Peacelessness: An injured man is lifted to safety in Khartoum. Photo: AFP

the 2023 elections. Abdalla Hamdok, the prime minister, was then released as part of a deal that would see him stay as nominal head of state.

The United Nations and Western governments endorsed this deal – perhaps coincidentally, Hamdan Dagalo, another general, had warned that without the military in power, Sudanese migrants might flood Europe. But Sudanese people had other ideas: the protests continued.

Earlier this month, Hamdok resigned. The generals are not budging.

But the people of Sudan know the stakes. As we reported last week, one protester said: "We will continue to protest ... even if they shoot us." Another said: "I do not know what the future will be like. But we all know what future we don't want – that is why we're here." ■

Côte d'Ivoire

The Ivorian economy is back, baby (despite Covid)

The deadly 2011 conflict devastated the country's finances. A decade later, things are looking up

Côte d'Ivoire is reaping what it has sown – and clearly it sowed plenty, and then some: the national budget for 2022, published this week, showed the government has *tripled* its budget over the past decade.

In the same decade, the government significantly improved the business climate in the country. It took a risk by putting itself into debt to invest in infrastructure – including roads, urban centres and a major hydroelectric power station on the Bandama river. But it paid off: according to the IMF the Ivorian economy grew an average of 7.8% each year between 2013 and 2019, the fastest growth rate in the world.

Although the pandemic slowed things down in 2020, the economy shook it off in 2021, with GDP growth hitting a four-

year high, between March and June.

The African Development Bank predicts that it will continue to recover, “with real GDP growing by 6.5% in 2022”.

This is despite President Alassane Ouattara controversially getting a third term in October 2020. Only 54% of voters turned out, after the main opposition candidates called for a boycott of the poll.

Externally, however, Côte d'Ivoire is largely seen as politically stable. This helps it attract investors and lenders. Its construction industry in particular is newly booming. Its economy is the most powerful in the West African Economic and Monetary Union.

The IMF says the Ivorian economy grew an average of 7.8% between 2013 and 2019, the fastest growth rate in the world. In 2021 GDP growth hit a four-year high between March and June

Announcing its \$17.1-billion budget for 2022 on Tuesday, the state said it will focus on improving the living conditions of its 26-million people this year through a newly launched social programme. Even though between 2015 and 2020 there was a drop of 15% in the number of people living in poverty, that figure is still about four in every 10 Ivorians. ■



Samuel Eto'o's second act

The world-famous footballer ran a stunning political campaign to win the top job at Cameroon's football federation. Does he have his sights set even higher?

On Monday morning, Samuel Eto'o officially began a new job. At the age of 40, Cameroon's most famous son has already completed one glittering career. His magical right foot took him all the way from Ngambe, a small village in the Littoral region, into a starring role at some of the world's biggest football clubs, including Real Madrid, Barcelona and Inter Milan. At Barcelona he was part of arguably the greatest club team ever assembled, playing alongside Lionel Messi and Ronaldinho and winning two Champions Leagues and three La Liga titles in the process.



Game on: Samuel Eto'o may have hung up his boots, but he's still winning. Photo: Samuel Eto'o/Twitter

He is perhaps the greatest African footballer of all time. He won his first cap for the Indomitable Lions the day before his 16th birthday, and went on to lead the team to two Africa Cup of Nations trophies and Cameroon's first ever Olympic gold medal.

After retiring from football in 2019, he could be forgiven for sitting back in one of his four houses – he splits his time between Paris, Milan, Abidjan and Douala's New-Bell neighborhood – and admiring his many, many trophies.

Instead, the world-famous striker threw himself into the messy politics of Fecafoot, Cameroon's football federation – and, with tactical acumen reminiscent of his brilliance on the pitch, emerged on top. As of this week, he is officially the federation's new president.

But few believe that Eto'o's political ambitions will stop there.

The Continent reached out to Eto'o for comment via his foundation, Fecafoot, and a close friend, but received no response.

A natural politician

Despite his sporting pedigree, and his enormous popularity within Cameroon, no one thought Eto'o stood a chance when he first announced that he was running for the Fecafoot presidency. Except Eto'o himself, that is. "I will be the next president of the federation despite all the cheating," he said as he filed his nomination papers in November.

One obstacle in his way was his dual citizenship. Having acquired a Spanish passport during his Barcelona days, Eto'o was initially ineligible to take part. But this rule was later thrown out in court.

Another hurdle was that the position was already occupied by a powerful member of the country's ruling elite. Seidou Mbombo Njoya is royalty: a son of the Bamum Kingdom in western Cameroon, which wields enormous political and cultural power. Having assumed the position in 2018, Mbombo Njoya had no intention of relinquishing it, and enjoyed strong support from both the Confederation of African Football and Fifa, the sport's global ruling body – neither of which welcomed Eto'o's promise to clean up Cameroonian football.

Eto'o outmaneuvered the incumbent at every turn. He did it by running a sophisticated political campaign that would not have been out of place in a presidential election.

But Eto'o outmaneuvered the incumbent at every turn. He did it by running a sophisticated political campaign that would not have been out of place in a presidential election. Instead of focusing his attention on the 76 delegates who actually vote, he criss-crossed all of Cameroon's ten districts visiting schools,

community centres and army bases, charming local authorities and traditional leaders as he did so. Every moment was documented on social media. He forged alliances with prominent businessmen and key power brokers like the new Lamido (Fulani ruler) of Garoua, Ibrahim el Rachidine, who helped sway delegates to his side. And he appointed the services of a top PR consultant, who carefully framed Eto'o as a champion of the people.

"People were asking themselves: Is this guy paving his way to become Fecafoot president or the president of the republic?" said one journalist who followed the campaign closely, speaking to *The Continent* on condition of anonymity. In Cameroon, where President Paul Biya has been in power since 1982, it can be dangerous to even speculate about who might come next.

More curious still was Eto'o's energetic courting of regional leaders, who could have no influence on the Fecafoot vote. In 2021, he met with the presidents of Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mauritania and Togo; the prime minister of Côte d'Ivoire; and even Assimi Goita, the colonel who orchestrated Mali's military coup – an itinerary more typically associated with statesmen than footballers.

Seeking Biya's blessing

On December 11, with 11-million people watching on TV – the first televised election in Cameroon's history – Samuel Eto'o was elected as president of Fecafoot. Thousands of young Cameroonians gathered outside the Fecafoot headquarters in Yaoundé to cheer him on. In Eto'o, they saw hope for change.

When it comes to Cameroonian politics, and the country's octogenarian president, change is a commodity that is in short supply.

But Eto'o has close links with Cameroon's presidency – so close that online publication *Africa is a Country* once described him as a “PR pawn for the protracted rule of the country's ageing and hard-line head of state”. In 2011, in the run-up to the national election, he was among the guests invited to party with Biya and his wife at the president's residence in Mvomeka. In 2018, Eto'o enthusiastically endorsed Biya's bid for a seventh consecutive term in office, saying that he would be voting for Biya and that “the most important thing is that my brothers do like me”.

(Eto'o is not the only footballer to shill for the regime. Roger Milla, hero of the 1990 World Cup, is the president's “special goodwill ambassador”. Rigobert Song, the former Indomitable Lions captain, also parties in Mvomeka and wears ruling party attire).



Keep your friends close:
Eto'o peers over President
Biya's shoulder. Photo:
Cameroon Presidency

Before launching his bid for the Fecafoot presidency, Eto'o sought the blessing of Biya, who he refers to as his "father". Biya gave it, but attached one condition, according to the magazine *The Africa Report*: Eto'o's political ambitions must go no further. Biya is thought to be grooming his son, Franck Biya, to succeed him, and does not need a wildly popular football star to get in the way.

A shiny distraction

Earlier this month, the Africa Cup of Nations kicked off at Yaoundé's shiny new \$326-million Olembe Stadium (also known as the Paul Biya Stadium). Cameroon's hosting of the tournament is three years late, delayed first due to security concerns and then because of the pandemic. Finally, however, President Biya got his moment in the international limelight, waving regally to his subjects as the presidential motorcade did laps around the pitch.

It was easy to forget, amidst all the exuberance and flag-waving, that this is a nation at war with itself. For the last five years, a bitter conflict has raged between Biya's security forces and separatists from Cameroon's Anglophone regions (English speakers make up about 20%

of the country's population, and have been historically marginalised). At least 4,000 people have been killed, and a million more forced from their homes. A generation of children have been denied access to education. Both sides have been accused of war crimes including extrajudicial killings and sexual assault.

For the last five years, a bitter conflict has raged between Biya's security forces and separatists from Cameroon's Anglophone regions

The separatists have pledged to disrupt the tournament, and have made good on that promise: shots were fired to disrupt a Malian team practise, while Gambia's team bus was near the scene when a homemade bomb went off in the town of Buea, injuring three police officers. "Do not put football fans' lives at risk thinking Africa's most corrupt regime will guarantee security," said a spokesperson for the rebels.

Samuel Eto'o has carefully steered clear of the conflict – pretending, for the most part, that it doesn't exist. In 2018, he announced a plan to tour schools in the conflict-affected areas, but was forced to cancel after a public outcry from Anglophone leaders who saw it as an endorsement of the regime's brutal approach.

But a clearer endorsement came in January last year when Eto'o visited



Eto'o poses with the notorious Rapid Intervention Brigade.

Photo: Samuel Eto'o/Twitter

a battalion of the Rapid Intervention Brigade, or BIR – the elite military unit that reports directly to Biya himself. The BIR is one of the key ways that Biya keeps himself in power, and it has been repeatedly implicated in human rights abuses including torture, assault and the indiscriminate killing of civilians.

Eto'o is a fan. “Had the pleasure of spending time in Maroua with my brothers and sisters in the army and witnessed their discipline, professionalism and selfless commitment to putting their lives on the line for our country,” he tweeted. “Good luck to the BIR and to those who fight for the honor of 237!” (+237 is Cameroon’s dialling code).

Monsieur le Président

As the crowds cheered Biya on Afcon’s opening day, Eto'o was conspicuously absent from both the ceremony and the television coverage. He was spotted walking alone in a tunnel into the stadium, without any escort or protocol. Later, a video emerged of him speaking to his long-time friend Fally Ipupa, the Congolese singer who performed at the ceremony. Fally said he was going to give Eto'o a shout-out on stage, but Eto'o told him not to. “No, please, I don’t want any problem. There’s just one president and he’s here today.”

But not everyone is so circumspect. “Wherever Samuel Eto'o goes these days, everyone calls him president. We don’t know whether they are referring to him as Fecafoot president or president of the republic,” said the veteran journalist.

Either way, and no matter how loudly Eto'o affirms his loyalty, Paul Biya will be watching his back very closely indeed. If Samuel Eto'o is as skilled at politics as he is at football – and the early signs suggest that he is – then the president might just have something to worry about. ■

Afcons come and Afcons go, but kits stay with us forever*

*Some for good reason, others not so much. Here are our top 10 standout kits from this year's tournament, very much in order. With thanks to our friends at AfroBallers for the images.



Guinea-Bissau

No other team has clusters of graphic diamonds scattered on their jerseys so ... yay individuality! And local designers!



Zimbabwe

It's a choice. And it's memorable. Bright, busy, colourful and ... a choice.



Cameroon

Cursed with the proverbial African colourway, the Indomitable Lions' kit isn't exactly roaring with revolution – but it works.



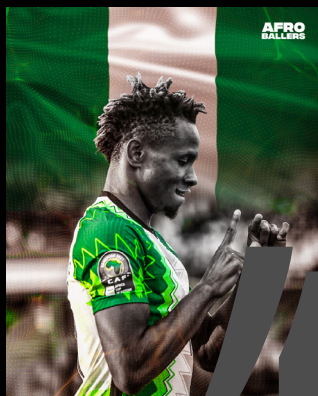
Morocco

Deep red is a continental favourite and the Atlas Lions' touch of palmy green from their flag complements it really well.



Tunisia

The Eagles of Carthage don't have a lot of colour palette competition so the runway was open for them to stand out. Although they've not gone out of their way to be innovative, the simplistic red-and-white gives it a classy look.



Nigeria

Let's just get this out of the way: the 2018 Super Eagles World Cup jerseys cannot be topped. Nigeria peaked. That being said, this year's is still original, eye-catching and one of the standouts.



Mali

The prominent eagle on Les Aigles' jersey is such an eye-catcher and is a welcome innovation of the red-green-yellow colourway.



Côte d'Ivoire

The Elephants have a lot going for them because of the simple fact that they're not competing with any other teams in terms of colour palette. The vibrant orange makes them more visually exciting than any opponent.

2

Cape Verde

At risk of being reductionist ... Tubarões Azuis' attire is just cool. The largely unexplored deep blue is refreshing and a welcome variation. Is the shark imprint a bit too on the nose? Sure. But, come on, it's still cool.

**Ghana**

Gone prematurely and unceremoniously from the tournament but not forgotten are the Black Stars. It's distinctive. It's fresh. Home. Away. Warm-up. All of.

Senegal



Flutter by: Many Senegalese claim they have to gamble to feed their families.

Photo: Azil Momar Lo/The Continent

So sorry, God, gambling wins

In a country with high levels of poverty, betting is a crucial source of last resort income. It's also completely forbidden in Islam. In a country where 95% are Muslim, that makes for tension and acrobatic feats of justification, writes Azil Momar Lo in Rufisque

When Dickori Baldé wakes up, like yesterday and the day before, he thinks about what boxes to tick with his pen. Like many Senegalese men his age, the 65-year-old retiree has only one way to feed his family: betting.

But gambling and Islam do not mix.

At the betting office of Lonase – the state-owned national lottery – in the city of Rufisque, Baldé pre-emptively answers *The Continent's* question on this, volunteering: “This [betting] is an emergency solution. Something we can't do without. We are all aware of what the religion says.”

“Islam firmly opposes betting under all its forms,” admonishes sheikh Oumar Diallo. He is an imam of a mosque in Parcelles Assainies, one of the 19 counties of Senegal's capital, Dakar. In a country where at least 95% of the population are Muslim, this proscription is a thorn in the side of many bettors.

Diallo sees sports betting as a gateway as people get used to “an easy way of earning money”.

But survival is at least as big a consideration in a country where nearly half of the population lives in poverty.

And, while Islam forbids gambling, the Senegalese government allows it. Lonase is the licensing authority. It tells *The Continent* that it “partners” with betting agencies, like Sunubet, Premier Bet and 1XBet.

Serigne Mor Mbaye, a Senegalese

psychologist and sociologist, lists sports betting among other last resort steps as “survival strategies to satisfy the needs of large families”. The other strategies include drug dealing, counterfeiting money and sexual exploitation.

Baldé has two wives and nine children. A retired conductor in the trucking industry, he spent 28 years working back and forth between Senegal and Mali. Now he says he wouldn't be able to take care of his family if it wasn't for his daily luck on horse races.

Sitting besides him is his 59-year-old friend, Idrissa Sèn, a father of five who says, “God may help us at any time with random money.”

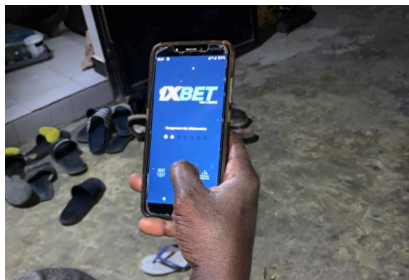
At the bricks and mortar Lonase betting office, most customers are elderly. But that doesn't mean the youths bet any less. With mobile phones and internet, betting anywhere is the new deal. And Senegal has one of Africa's highest internet penetration rates, with 89% of people connected and almost all of those connecting through mobile internet.

The country is also football mad, in no part thanks to its often competitive national men's team.

Mouhamed Diop has installed the 1XBet app on his phone. “The money comes real quick and no one can see or judge you,” he explains. The Chelsea fan is 30 and in 2019 completed his studies in electromechanics at CNQP, the national school for professional qualifications.

Diop has completed two internships but has yet to find a paying job.

“At my age, I can't ask anyone for money,” he confides. “If you do not have



All bets are off: Parifoot, or sports betting, is strictly forbidden in Islam.

Photo: Azil Momar Lo/The Continent

a job, your only way out is parifoot.”

Parifoot is the local word for football and sports betting. But this is “just a temporary solution until I find something better.” He hastens to add: “I don't bet during Ramadan.”

In a sentiment regularly echoed in Senegalese betting circles, Diop believes that the money you win from betting is illicit – since Islam forbids the act – and he does not invest it, even if that might help wean him off the habit. He once won 500,000 CFA (\$870).

In response to questions from *The Continent*, a Lonase spokesperson suggested that, “not only are these bets a challenge for these young people, but they provide them with interesting profits to solve their daily problems.”

Diallo, the imam, thinks the betting culture “perfectly fits the government's plans”, however.

Or, rather. its lack of plans: “A bettor can sit in the same place idling from 8am to 10pm, having no time to follow the government's actions or to think about ways to move on with their life.” ■



The silent and shadowy blues of motherhood

Wilfred Okiche

The birth of a child is usually a joyous, momentous occasion. But the central couple in the poignant drama *For Maria: Èbùn Pàtàkì* find the opposite to be the case for them. After a rather traumatic labour, Derin (Meg Otanwa), a first-time mother, cannot quite bring herself to bond with her newborn. She stares morosely and helplessly, through no fault of hers, unable to give the baby the nurturing that they demand. The people around her, from her husband Fola (Gabriel Afolayan) to mother-in-law (Tina Mba) are well-meaning but impatient and ultimately

unable to help as she sinks further into the depths of melancholia.

Shot in both English and Yoruba, the film is anchored by a quietly effective, hair-raising performance by its lead, Otanwa. Revealing new dimensions to her talent, she speaks a thousand words with merely a glance and is able to demonstrate a world of pain with her body language. It helps that she is working with Damilola Orimogunje, a feature-length debuting director who is surprisingly intentional about every creative choice from the framing of the shots to the overall look of the film.

Orimogunje is clearly influenced by modern classics such as Andrew Dosunmu's *Mother of George* and Wong Kar-wai's *In the Mood for Love* and together with cinematographer David Wyte, adopts the dark photographic palette and striking shot compositions that make these films memorable. But this is no mere exercise in stylistic imitation as the film is able to convincingly marry its emotional and narrative impact with its technical choices, surviving even sound challenges.

For Maria: Èbùn Pàtàkì is a moody, realist chamber piece that makes the most of obviously limited resources. Orimogunje delivers an immersive and engrossing piece of art house cinema. One that paints with shadows and silences, a convincing and heartbreaking picture of postpartum depression. ■

For Maria: Èbùn Pàtàkì is now streaming on Netflix

The digital gender divide

As we saw on last week's Afrobarometer research, if you live in a rural area, you may well be on the wrong side of Africa's digital divide.

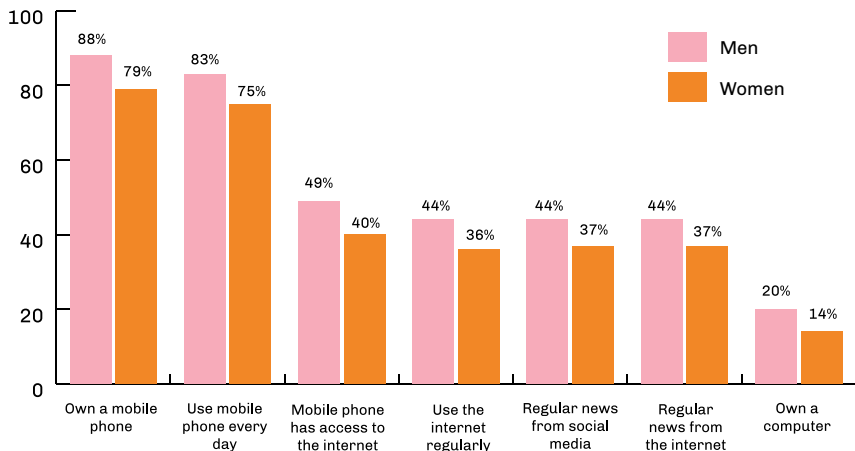
The same is true for being a woman, in a rural area or not. Women consistently trail men on key indicators of digital access. On average across 34 African countries that Afrobarometer surveyed in 2019/2021, women are six to nine percentage points less likely than men to own a mobile phone and use it daily, to have internet access via smartphone, to use the internet at least a few times a week,

to get news regularly from the internet and social media, and to own a computer.

And the gap may be growing wider: Although the share of women who use the internet at least a few times a week has tripled over the past decade, men's use has increased almost as dramatically.

Given the importance of information and communications technologies as avenues for people to assert their rights and to benefit from social, economic, and political opportunities, increasing women's digital engagement must be a priority for all governments. ■

Digital divide by gender | 34 countries | 2019/2021



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 +/- two to three percentage points.

THE QUIZ

0-3

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

4-7

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

8-10

"If this quiz was actually football I'd be in Cameroon right now."



1_ Nouakchott is the capital of which country?

2_ Who is the president of Liberia?

3_ What does the "A" in AFCON stand for?

4_ Which former football player has won the CAF African Player of the Year a record four times?

5_ What is the name of Ghana's men's national football team?

6_ What is the demonym for people from Equatorial Guinea?

7_ Snow fell on which desert this past week?

8_ Which ground-

dwelling apes live in the tropical forests of equatorial Africa?

9_ What is the official language of Cape Verde?

10_ The Chutes de la Lobé (pictured) are the only waterfalls that plunge directly into the ocean. In which country are they located?

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**

I was jailed for doing journalism – and the nightmare is far from over

Eight months ago, my government arrested me after I worked with two colleagues from *The New York Times* on a reporting trip in the country.

Jeffrey Moyo in Harare

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Fifty-five journalists were killed last year. Far more are abused and bullied by officials and corporations that do not want them to tell the truth. For regimes that need to control information to stay in power, reporters are a variable they often seek to silence. In Africa, journalism is being silenced by the collapse of newsrooms; by elites buying news media and guiding coverage; by threats; and by hostile acts. At least 75 journalists are in prison across Africa. Zimbabwe's government is no stranger to strangling journalism. Reporters Without Borders ranks it 130 out of 180 countries for media freedom. Last year, it arrested journalist Jeffrey Moyo on flimsy charges. Media freedom advocates have accused the government of trying to suppress his work, and that of the US journalists he was working with. This is his story.*

Last May, I drove 440km from Harare, the Zimbabwean capital, to Bulawayo, the country's second largest city, to meet two colleagues from *The New York Times*. Christina Goldbaum and Joao Silva were flying in from South Africa for a reporting trip of several days.

It would prove to be an ill-fated expedition.

I was outside Bulawayo's Joshua Mqabuko International Airport when Silva and Goldbaum landed that afternoon. "Hello Jeff, the customs officials are not letting us in," Goldbaum told me on WhatsApp.

I had earlier picked up their accreditation cards from the Zimbabwe Media Commission. These are a work permit required for both foreign and local journalists.

I now waited outside the airport with the hard copies.

The airport officials would not accept their soft copies and a customs official escorted Silva to fetch the hard copies.



In the balance: Jeffrey Moyo is charged with infringing Zimbabwe's immigration act on behalf of journalists from *The New York Times*. Photo: *The New York Times*

Soon after, I was called inside to see the senior immigration officer. He said he wanted to compare their cards with my own to establish their authenticity.

He then took down my personal details, including home address and phone number. I offered to give him the contact of the official from the Zimbabwe Media Commission from whom I got the cards, Thabang Farai Manhika. He's responsible for processing accreditation for all journalists in Zimbabwe.

My colleagues were cleared, given seven day visas and off we went.

Three days later, at 7am, I was getting back from fetching our car from the parking lot of the Meikles Hotel in Harare when I spotted Goldbaum and Silva confidently showing the same

accreditation cards to men in plain clothes.

They later turned out to be officials from the immigration department.

Soon after, I was called inside to see the senior immigration officer. He said he wanted to compare their cards with my own to establish their authenticity.

One of them then came and asked where we were going and why. I told him we were going to see a feeding scheme for the poor, run by women in a town called Chitungwiza. He went

Far-fetched: Moyo was driven 440km to Bulawayo to face charges.



back to my colleagues, who were still being interviewed by two other officials. We were then ordered to drive to the immigration headquarters in the capital where further interviews were held.

This was on a Saturday – not a working day for most government departments.

The immigration department offices looked deserted. I kept being asked about the accreditation and went as far as showing the receipts of payment. Then a senior immigration official arrived and we were ushered to his office where he apologised for the inconvenience caused to us. He said that because of the suspicions that had emerged about the manner in which the accreditation was obtained, he had no option but to cancel my colleagues' visas and send them back to their countries.

Goldbaum and Silva did not argue with the order. They booked their flights out

while we were still in the office and I drove them to the airport after.

I drove back home wondering what was in the offing for me.

A few days later, I got a call and was asked to report to a compliance office so I could sign a document which the immigration officials had forgotten to have signed when they deported my colleagues. After consulting with Goldbaum, I refused.

Over two weeks later, three men hammered at my gate. They turned out to be detectives from Harare Central Police Station's Anti-Terrorism Unit, who said they wanted to interview me at their offices. I called my lawyer and refused to go in their unmarked Mercedes-Benz, driving my own car instead.

At the police station, my interrogation started well before my lawyers arrived and continued when they got there. I was

taken into a dingy police cell and detained overnight. The following day, when I was meant to appear at the magistrate's court in the capital, I was instead driven 440km by the arresting officers to Bulawayo.

Manhika, the registrar from the media commission who had given my *NYT* colleagues their accreditation, was with me as co-accused.

We were caged overnight at Bulawayo Central Police Station and then charged for allegedly infringing upon Section 36 of the country's immigration act. The charge was that I had lied about the accreditation and had given authorities fake accreditation for Goldbaum and Silva.

That day, my new home became Bulawayo Prison.

The charge was that I had given the authorities fake accreditation for Goldbaum and Silva. That day, my new home became Bulawayo Prison.

Once known as Grey Prison, it is an ancient stone structure that opened up as a colonial prison in 1897.

Cell 33, the receiving cage I spent the first night in, was infested with lice and had urine all over the concrete floor on which dirty and torn up prison blankets were strewn. It was a chilly night. Fellow new inmates scrambled for bits of blanket. I didn't get any. Deep in the night, one kind inmate offered me a torn piece of blanket.

At my bail hearing, the magistrate said I was a flight risk because I had connections outside the country. She even went as far as claiming I was a threat to national security – because I worked with my deported colleagues to interview locals without the approval of the country's minister of information. I was stunned. Allegedly, the sovereignty of the country was at stake because of my actions!

For 21 days, Bulawayo prison was my home. I slept on the concrete floor and ate the staple forced on every Zimbabwean prisoner: plain porridge without sugar for breakfast; thick pap (maize meal) and unsalted, boiled dried spinach and vegetables for lunch; and pap again with unsalted boiled beans for dinner. Early in my stay, a prison nurse slapped me across my face as I was moving my body a bit while she tested me for coronavirus, claiming I was wasting her time.

Eventually, I was granted bail, but the case against me has continued. Since June last year, I have travelled 7,040 kilometres, in 16 trips, to and from Bulawayo, for court dates. My trial, which only started last week on January 11, will resume on Valentine's Day. The *NYT* is supporting me with legal and other costs.

I feel fearful, anxious and often despondent because of this case hanging over me. My family fears the most for me and gets so worried each time I go to court, unsure if I would return or get shoved in jail again.

For the love of God! Media freedom is hanging on the Calvary cross in Zimbabwe! ■

Et tu, Julius? SA's red beret brigade turns on foreigners

Chipo Dendere

The past decade has seen worrying levels of anti-foreigner hate speech and violence in South Africa. According to the African Centre for Migration and Society, there were more than 40 attacks on foreigners in eight of the past 13 years – and more in 2019 than any year in the last 10 years.

In this dangerous tinderbox, Julius Malema – the populist leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters – made a name for himself as a pan-Africanist voice preaching unity. But those days are gone.

Malema and the EFF have now joined the anti-black immigrant chorus, particularly demonising those from countries such as Zimbabwe. This has included visiting businesses they suspect of hiring more foreigners than South Africans. Although Malema and the EFF claim that their target is employers, their actions suggest otherwise. By identifying how many non-South Africans work at a certain restaurant they focus attention on them, while fuelling anti-immigrant rhetoric online, putting lives at risk.

Already, there have been anti-

immigrant marches, including one led by Nhlanhla Lux of Operation Dudula, which removed traders from a Soweto bus rank. In doing so, they misidentified some South Africans. The Patriotic Alliance, which claims that the city council in Johannesburg is hiring illegal foreigners, spent a day harassing government employees. The scenes are reminiscent of colonial-era labour inspectors who routinely harassed Africans in settler colonies, including from South Africa, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Malema's U-turn seems to have little to do with policy or the economy, and appears to be motivated by the fact his political momentum has stalled. He is now worried about losing out to parties such as ActionSA, which has gained ground with its anti-immigrant agenda. Now he is selling out the goals of the liberation struggle in a desperate attempt to not be outmanoeuvred by rival political leaders.

In reality, immigrants from African countries are not the problem, which lies in a combination of high corruption, low productivity, and elusive economic growth. Blaming immigrants will not solve the country's issues – but may well trigger another outbreak of xenophobic violence. ■

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Pack your bags, team



Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

How are you coping with the January Blues, dear reader? Here at Drift HQ January 2022 is already giving March 2020 a run for its money as the longest month ever recorded. Although technically it's still March 2020 BC (Bloody Covid) so perhaps we do need to recalibrate our calendrical indignation.

But yikes, December was certainly expensive, and the bill is due! Unlike some of our governments, not all of us are able to bounce back from the fiscal graveyard with a miraculous multibillion-dollar bailout from the World Bank. So it's been a quiet January. The kind where we have no option but to spend all our time daydreaming about potential holiday destinations when we win the lottery!

But where to? The United Kingdom? A country which currently embodies the phrase, "Elect a clown, expect a circus"?

Serbia? To spend a little time with Novak Djokovic who has been deported from Australia, following treatment which the Serbian president described as "torment and torture"?

No word from him or Novax on the rights abuses refugees and asylum seekers

in Australia are facing every day.

Or perhaps Abu Dhabi, which is where former president of Guinea, Alpha Condé, has travelled to this week. The country's military junta recently said Monsieur Condé, still technically under house arrest, could go abroad for medical treatment, but only under armed guard. Also he has to come back within 30 days, unless he has a doctor's note booking him off detention.

Coups are so considerate these days! Back in the old days they'd just stick your head on a spike to warn everyone else not to try anything clever. Thank goodness for progress.

The United Kingdom? A country which currently embodies the phrase 'elect a clown, expect a circus'?

Spike or not, bumping into him on holiday doesn't sound like a whole heap of fun, so perhaps we *won't* make like Fred Flintstone and have an Abu Dhabi do.

When it comes to travelling, there are those among us at *The Continent* who are prone to flooding our social media with photos from every minute of our holiday. After all, did it really happen if we didn't take a selfie?

So Burkina Faso may well be off the menu, then, after the government imposed

a ban on the company formerly known as Facebook, rendering all within its borders instantly Insta-less. When asked about this grave imposition of uncivil unliberty, the government cited vague “security” reasons and it being in “the national interest”. Which as you know translates into normal language as, “Yeah y’all can Zuck right off.”

Bit rude. Meanwhile, you know who won’t be planning any trips to Timbuktu any time soon? France, that’s who. And other European states underwriting the regional block on the country.

Last week thousands of cross Malians took to the streets in support of the government (imagine!). Or possibly in support of the “government”. Depends how you feel about coup leaders, to be honest. The protesters (Supporters? What universe are we even living in these days?) demanded that foreign powers, especially France, must stay the heck out of Malian affairs. Maybe not Russia though. They can stay. The EU responded with okay, blam, sanctions! As if the pandemic hadn’t made everyone used to isolation anyway.

Sigh. Things are getting serious too quickly. And deadly. Maybe travel isn’t such a good idea. Maybe we should think about getting our houses in order first.

We’re aghast at the news in Kenya, for example, where activist Boniface Mwangi has posted on his social media about bodies being discovered in River Yala.

One citizen, Okero Kite, said he has removed 31 bodies from the river since July 2021. And the 10 he found on one day in October were “neatly packed and sealed like a parcel.”

Documented by Mwangi and human



Hospital pass: Alpha Condé has been booked off sick from house arrest.

rights organisation Haki Africa, the story once again highlights the terrifying situation around extrajudicial killings and disappearances in the country.

And lastly let us not forget those who are having to travel but who would really rather not. At other times we might have meant refugees displaced by war, famine, drought or volcano explosions... but this time we’re actually talking about Ghana’s Black Stars, poor dears.

No “Partey” for the Ghanaians this tourney, alas: the goliaths of African football fell to the Comoros, the newly minted island-style giant-killers of the season.

We were also overjoyed at Equatorial Guinea’s win over current trophy holders Algeria. These victories and the entire tournament are a lovely reminder of the wealth of talent on the continent – and not just the players: this week Rwanda’s Salima Mukansanga made history as she became the first woman referee to officiate an Africa Cup of Nations match.

At least *some* of us are going places. ■

THE BIG PICTURE

Holy splash bash: Ethiopian Orthodox worshippers are sprinkled with water in the compound of Fasilides Bath during the celebration of Timkat, the orthodox equivalent of Epiphany, in the city of Gondar. Photo: Eduardo Soteras/AFP



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