

The Continent

with **Mail & Guardian**

Fossil fuel scramble

**Shutdown in Mozambique
as Uganda and Tanzania
sign up for massive oil and
gas development**



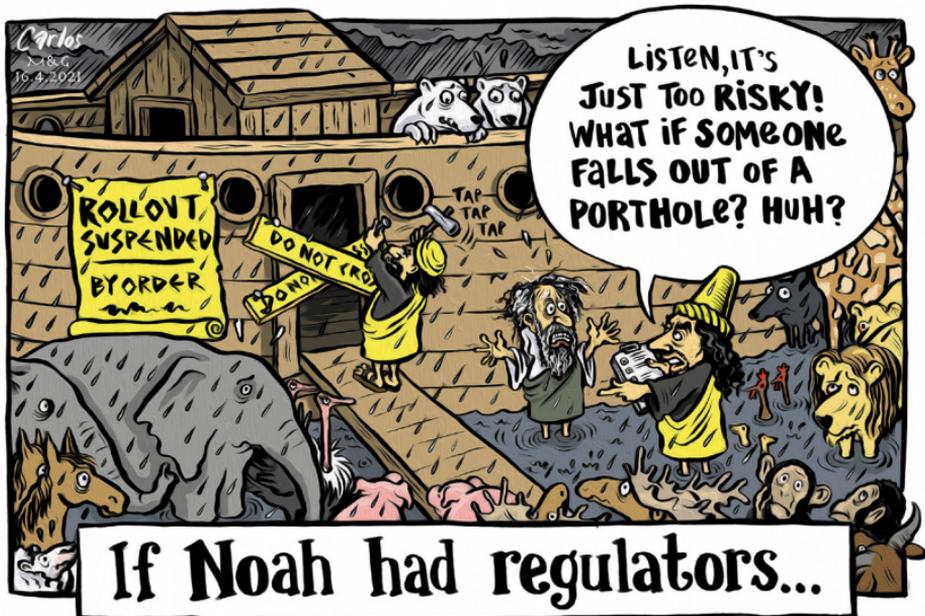


COVER: The High Cost of Fossil Fuel

After attacks near its operations in Mozambique, Total is reconsidering its future there. But to the north, Tanzania's new president is rolling out the red carpet to petroleum giants eager to tap its gas reserves, while Uganda is relishing the prospect (and pooh-poohing the risks) of an imminent oil boom.

Inside:

- **Chaos in Chad:** With the president's death, residents in the capital fear for their future (p9)
- **Everyone is a red beret:** How the Ugandan state puts iconic berets on those it wants to sentence and silence (p14)
- **Climate inequality:** As crucial climate negotiations go virtual, African states are set to lose more (p20)
- **Vaccine diplomacy:** Are the dominos about to fall, freeing up global Covid-19 vaccine production? (p22)
- **Nax Vegas:** Nakuru is more than just a stopover (p23)



The week in numbers

78,000

The age of the recently discovered remains of a small child buried in a Middle Stone Age grave in Kenya, the oldest burial site in Africa. Archaeologists believe the child was two to three years old and buried in the fetal position. Researchers said they were struck by how the grief and loss of the child was expressed in how he was buried.

25

The years in prison Dominic Ongwen was sentenced to by the International Criminal Court this week. Ongwen was kidnapped by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army at age 9, and made into a child soldier who later grew into a feared commander. In February he was convicted of 61 of 70 charges ranging from rape and sexual slavery to murder and torture.

> 1,000

The number of cases of Covid-19 reported in the Seychelles this week. The island nation has the most vaccinated population against Covid-19 in the world: 85% of the population has received the jab. In response to the new surge, authorities banned social and sports events, closed schools, instituted a curfew and told non-essential workers to work from home.



Photo:
Dhiraj
Singh/
Bloomberg)

1 billion

The number of Covid vaccines that could be produced each year if intellectual property protections are waived. This would let countries (a number of African nations among them) produce their own vaccine doses if they have the capacity.

1/3

The proportion of children found to be malnourished in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, according to Medecins Sans Frontieres, which reports "alarming" rates of malnutrition in rural areas and says not enough aid is making its way past the main cities.

Egypt

Big boat. Still stuck.

The world may have moved on but the Big Boat has not. The *Ever Given*, the large container ship that got stuck in Egypt's Suez Canal for nearly a week in March, captured the internet's attention and brought maritime trade to a standstill, costing the global sector billions of dollars.

The internet saw the funny side of the incident — but it was no laughing matter to the Egyptian authorities who barred the ship from leaving the Canal after it was freed in a rescue operation by tugboats.

A court in Ismailia, where the Suez Canal is located, ordered the seizure of the *Ever Given*; after which the ship's Japanese owner, Shoen Kisen Kaisha Ltd, filed an appeal hoping to overturn the decision.

But another court in Egypt, the Economic Court of Ismailia, has now rejected that appeal and it seems the *Ever Given* will remain in situ until an agreement is reached.

The Suez Canal Authority, the government agency responsible for the Canal, is demanding a \$916-million compensation from the vessel's owner. The compensation is expected to cover the costs of the salvage operation, lost transit



Far canal: Dear *Ever Given*, just like Barry White and Rick Astley, Egypt's never (ever) going to give you up.

fees for the week the Canal was blocked, as well as the costs of stalled traffic.

At 400 metres in length, the *Ever Given* is the size of a skyscraper and is one of the biggest container ships in the world.

At 400 metres in length, the *Ever Given* is the size of a skyscraper

It was heading to the port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, carrying 18,000 containers, when it was caught in a sandstorm on March 23.

The blockage forced some ships to take an alternate route around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope. ■

A FEW MILESTONES

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We're back.

When *The Continent* launched just over a year ago, the Covid-19 pandemic was tearing into Europe and the countries of Africa were either reacting quickly to stave off a first wave, or they just... weren't. People were falling ill, businesses – including media houses – were struggling, and journalism looked to be in a very bad place: it seemed inevitable there would be far less scrutiny of corrupt companies, ruthless regimes and unscrupulous figures.

It also seemed there would be fewer stories about the people of Africa themselves and what the world is like for those on the continent trying to get on with their lives, often with the odds stacked against them.

But this sort of journalism was too

important to abandon. So we took inspiration from news organisations such as *263Chat* in Zimbabwe and created something packed with good journalism that could be shared by anyone, anywhere.

Ten thousand of you have subscribed and shared: each edition now reaches nearly 100,000 people, and the work of 150 journalists has been read in 105 countries. Our core team is now ten people, with help from the *Mail & Guardian* newsroom and a growing number of donors. Along the way we have enraged dictators, informed people in countries denying the reality of Covid-19 and taken you into people's favourite cities. And now we're back to tell the stories of what happens next.

Welcome to Season Two. ■

Share real news

If you like our journalism, please share it with your friends and family - not indiscriminately, but with people and networks who you think might value the work that we do.



Settle down: The military's show of strength is meant to inspire confidence. (Photo: Christophe Petit Tesson/AFP)

Chad finds itself in jeopardy after Déby's sudden death

Mobey Malmalari in N'Djamena

After the president's death, N'Djamena is nervous and tense. Where possible, parents have sent their children to their home villages for safety. No one can predict what comes next, but everyone is worried.

Less than a month ago, the late Idriss Déby Itno was riding high, having secured his sixth term in office in the April 11 election with yet another landslide win. On that same day the rebels with the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT)

launched their offensive, crossing into Chad from their base in southern Libya.

Now the rebels are advancing on the capital city, and President Déby is dead. Although details of his death remain vague, a spokesperson for the army – that bloated institution through which Déby kept himself in power for more than three decades – said that the self-proclaimed field marshal, *le Maréchal*, had died from wounds sustained during an intense clash for control of Kanem province, just 300 kilometres north of the capital.

He had built his reputation on

(Photo: Christophe Petit Tesson/AFP)



personally leading his soldiers into battle, and now he had paid the ultimate price.

The news was announced on April 20, at 11 in the morning. It arrived like a clap of thunder, instantly throwing the country into chaos and uncertainty. For most of Chad's relatively young population, Déby – president since 1990 – was the only head of state they had ever known.

For most of Chad's relatively young population, Déby – president since 1990 – was the only head of state they had ever known.

Control has passed to Déby's son, the 37-year-old Lieutenant General Mahamat Idriss Déby. He is supported by

a transitional military council composed of 14 top generals, all drawn from the late president's inner circle.

The swift transition was designed to project confidence in the government, but N'Djamena residents are not reassured. There are too many unanswered questions: How did the president really die? Is this in fact a coup? Are foreign powers supporting the rebels? Will the seasoned generals in the transitional council actually listen to the young and untested Déby junior, and how far beyond the capital city does their authority extend? When will power be handed back to civilians? How will France, the colonial power that still wields outsize influence here, react to the new dispensation?

All this uncertainty manifested itself in late April as demonstrations against the transitional military council broke out in

N'Djamena and Moundou, the second city in the south, after opposition leaders called for the restoration of constitutional order. The state's response was brutal: at least six protesters were killed and several more wounded.

Only on April 27 did the nation hear from its new leader for the first time. In a televised address, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno highlighted the need for an inclusive national dialogue, national reconciliation and unity. Civil society activists and opposition leaders were uniting in dismissing these sentiments as mere window dressing. Like father, like son, they said.

Meanwhile, outside the capital, the situation has deteriorated even further. Less than a week after the president's death, the Islamist militant group Boko

Haram, whom Chad's security forces have been battling for years, took advantage of the power vacuum to launch a devastating attack on a position held by the Chadian army.

The military claims to have pushed back the FACT rebels using heavy artillery and aerial bombardment, relieving the threat to the capital itself

The attack, in the western Lac region, lasted for several hours and when it finally ended 12 soldiers and five civilians were dead, and hundreds of houses had burned down.



Lamb in wolf's clothes? The late Idriss Déby drew political strength from hands-on military experience. It remains to be seen whether his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby, can pull off the feat of filling his father's shoes. (Photo: Kenzo Tribouillard/AFP)



The military says it has pushed the rebels back with heavy artillery and aerial bombardment, relieving the threat to the capital – for now. There is little doubt the rebels, emboldened after claiming a high-profile scalp, will keep trying.

As Chad teeters on the brink, it is important to remember that the country's fate will have significant and unpredictable impacts elsewhere, especially when it comes to conflicts in neighbouring Sudan, Central African Republic, Libya and Nigeria; and in Mali, where Chadian troops make up a sizeable component of the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

This, ultimately, may be the late President Déby's most potent legacy: the fear and unease which is being felt not just in N'Djamena but across the entire region. ■

Under the rug: The military insists it's business as usual in Chad. But business and civil society are, as usual, unconvinced. (Photo: Marco Longari/AFP)

Never forget: Synna Garandi was killed during a demonstration in N'djamena on April 27. (Photo: Issouf Sanouf/AFP)



How Covid-19 threatens security and electoral democracy across Africa

Jibrin Ibrahim

More than 13 African countries are scheduled to hold, or have already held, parliamentary or presidential elections in 2021. Reflective of the democratic backsliding observed on the continent in recent years, more than a third of these polls are likely to be little more than political theatre – aimed at garnering a fig leaf of legitimacy for leaders who need to be seen to have a popular mandate.

The coronavirus context

According to the 2016 Infectious Disease Vulnerability Index 2016, 22 of the 25 countries most vulnerable to infectious disease are in Africa. But the social and economic impacts of the pandemic might end up having the greatest impact. The imposition of lockdowns has created opportunities for authoritarian regimes to restrict people's ability to engage in civic and political processes like elections.

For the most part elections proceeded as planned in 2020, even if scheduled by-elections were postponed in 11 countries – Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

But the health risks of holding those that went ahead quickly became apparent.

Restrictions aimed at limiting the spread of the virus have also had an impact on the space for political discontent.

It is not just the election campaign period that is being affected: restrictions on public gatherings can hamper voter education efforts and wider demands for greater transparency and accountability in how governments operate. That is not to say that measures to limit the spread of the deadly disease should not be in place to protect voters and candidates alike during elections, but that they must be balanced carefully with commitments to a fair and equitable process.

Growing insecurity

In contexts like Chad, Ethiopia, Libya, Niger, Burkina Faso and Somalia, the challenge of holding elections during a pandemic has been, or will be, further exacerbated by prevailing insecurity.

Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project data showed a steep upsurge in violent attacks taking place in March and April 2020 across Africa – when restrictive measures were first introduced to address the threat posed by Covid-19. This suggests that terrorist and non-state armed groups capitalised

on the pandemic to increase attacks. If these trends continue, “Africa is at risk of losing ground to violent groups following years of counterterrorism advances alongside regional and international security partners” according to experts at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

Voting amid a strong security presence can have implications for voters’ perceptions of freedom and, invariably, the responsibilities of maintaining internal security, peace, order and justice within a country lies with the police. However, due to the lack of an effective internal security mechanism, several African states regularly deploy the army to maintain internal insecurity and forestall instability. With military personnel who are usually earmarked for counterterrorism measures now being deployed, or having been deployed, to enforce lockdowns or implement pandemic response measures, in Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda and Kenya, there are concerns about an oversecritisation of key state functions, without an improvement in the prevailing security situation.

Implications for democracy

Politically, Covid-19 has created conditions that have worsened the state of insecurity on the continent. It has also affected the electioneering process and political campaigns by providing justification for leaders with authoritarian ambitions to restrict rights and oppress opposition. Selective use of pandemic control measures to restrict the ability of



Good for the goose: Covid restrictions helped ruling parties win elections, and hindered their opposition. (Photo: AFP)

opposition parties to campaign poses a threat to multiparty democracy.

While Africa has so far largely avoided the worst case Covid-19 scenario, the emergence of new variants could potentially create health, social, economic and political emergencies in the coming months and years, especially as vaccine rollouts remain slow. All with serious implications for democratic accountability.

On a more positive note, the pandemic has also increased the speed at which digital tools are being developed and deployed for democratic accountability.

Notwithstanding the challenges, these have the potential to make African elections safer, cheaper, more efficient and more accurate. ■

Jibrin Ibrahim is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Democracy and Development. This is part of a series of essays exploring the state of electoral democracy in Africa that is being run in conjunction with the Abuja-based Centre for Democracy and Development



Red flag: After making the wearing of berets a military offence, Uganda can prosecute civilians in a military court. (Photo: Sunny Sadurni/AFP)

In Uganda, it's best not to hang on to your hat

Liam Taylor in Kampala

The soldiers kidnap, blindfold, beat and interrogate you. And then they make you dress up. So say six opposition activists who were abducted by the Ugandan army. “They brought People Power berets,” recalls one, referring to the red army-style caps made popular by the singer and presidential candidate Bobi Wine. “You put it on, they photo you.”

As *The Continent* reported in March, hundreds of Ugandans have disappeared in recent months. Of the 127 who were later brought before army courts, 84 were charged with “unauthorised wearing of uniform” or “unlawful possession of government stores”, according to a list released in April by General Jeje Odongo, the minister of internal affairs. The offending item is usually the red beret, like the ones detainees are forced to pose with. Wine made the hat a symbol of resistance.

Yoweri Museveni, the president, has made it a pretext for repression.

The “ghetto president” was not the first Ugandan activist to adopt red headgear. After the 2016 election, a group linked to opposition candidate Kizza Besigye of the Forum for Democratic Change pulled on scarlet berets and branded themselves the “Red Top Brigade”. In 2017, Museveni’s supporters in parliament scrapped the presidential age limit, clearing the way for the president to run again. Opponents of the move started wearing red, symbolising the blood they would sacrifice to defend the constitution. Wine showed up to parliament in an Igbo-style red hat popular in southeastern Nigeria.

Soon afterwards the singer switched to the beret that would become his trademark. “We get inspiration from very many people,” he told the author in 2018, naming famous beret-wearers like Che Guevara, Thomas Sankara and South Africa’s Economic Freedom Fighters party. “I’ve also said it many times that ‘tuli baserikale, tulwanyisa yala’, that we are soldiers and we are fighting poverty. In every struggle, one needs to be militant.” And of course, the beret was cool. “It’s more fashionable for me to put on a beret than to put on a long sombrero like the president!”

Enterprising tailors started churning out berets: one says he was selling 400 a day. Museveni, who favours a wide-brimmed sunhat, was unimpressed with the new style. “It is the brownshirts of Hitler who used to put on berets,” he harrumphed in a speech last year.

In 2019 the army gazetted a list of military uniforms and insignia that civilians were not allowed to wear. The red beret was on it. As elections neared, the hunt for headwear became a convenient pretext for arrests. Television stations were told not to host guests who wore berets. The army and police raided Wine’s headquarters with AK-47s and heavy-duty door cutters, claiming to be looking for unlicensed hats.

There is a legal logic to all this. Judges have deemed it unconstitutional for civilians to be brought before military courts. But the army insists that it can still try civilians under a 2005 Act which makes it a crime to acquire military stores. Sure enough, political opponents keep getting found with military paraphernalia: some 36 members of Wine’s campaign team have been detained since December for allegedly possessing four rounds of ammunition between them. Get caught with a beret – or have one planted on you – and you can be dragged before the court-martial.

But the president’s supporters get more leeway. In April, newly-elected members of parliament from his National Resistance Movement went on a retreat. They wore army uniforms as Museveni himself led them in shooting drills. Then they went home and slept soundly in their beds. ■

Uganda trades biodiversity for fossil fuel bonanza

Maina Waruru in Nairobi

It may be late to the fossil fuel game, but Uganda is finding itself greatly excited by the discovery of some two billion barrels of recoverable oil – last month its president, Yoweri Museveni, and his Tanzanian counterpart Samia Suluhu Hassan, signed agreements with oil giant Total and China National Offshore Oil Corporation.

In Uganda, the oil projects include a network of more than 400 wells, hundreds of kilometres of planned feeder pipelines, and a new refinery in Kabaale, in the south. These will all support oil production in the Lake Albert region. An estimated 230,000 barrels a day will be transported to the planned export hub in Tanga off Tanzania's Indian Ocean coast, via the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), which is set to be the world's longest electrically heated pipeline. Construction is meant to end in 2025.

That may have a not insignificant environmental impact, however, and a coalition of groups have come together to reject the April agreement. They contend that the project threatens the wetlands and forests that support lives and livelihoods in Albertine, central and southern Uganda, as well as the wellbeing of Lake Albert itself, a transboundary lake shared

with the Democratic Republic of Congo. They are calling for the environmental and climate impacts of the projects to be evaluated before the project proceeds.

Francis Ntegyereaize of Navigators of Development Association (Navoda), a Ugandan NGO, said the proposed Kabaale refinery has led to “an unprecedented destruction of riverine forests”.

“People who moved to give way to the project in 2014 have not found new land to settle on. Some misused their money while others could not afford new parcels after land prices went up by as much as eight times between 2012-2014. This left them unable to afford new parcels, turning them into squatters cultivating on the forests and wetlands.”

Groups have come together to reject the agreement because of the potential negative impact on the environment

With displaced former land owners unable to afford land due in part to price speculators, they have encroached on protected areas, putting wildlife – including baboons, monkeys and various bird species – at risk.

At the heartland of the Tilenga project



Total recoil: The oil boom in East Africa will be great for the economy. Activists say it spells disaster for the environment. (Photo: Adrienne Surprenant/Getty Images)

in the west of Uganda is the Bulisa district, where some farmers living next to Murchison Park are unhappy. They are reeling from the impact of wells already drilled in the park, through which the river Nile travels.

Elly Munguryeki, a 35-year-old father of six, lost two acres of maize and cassava to wildlife at his farm located along the border between his village of Kilayngo and the park, about a kilometre from the Nile.

“Each night a herd of buffalo and hippos from the park would invade my farm and neighbouring plots and eat our crops until dawn. Whatever they left would be eaten by baboons and wild pigs during the day, forcing us to harvest premature crops,” Munguryeki told *The Continent*.

“We have always had a problem of human-wildlife conflict in this village, but with drilling and road construction across the park, the invasions are more

frequent. We keep reporting the losses to park authorities but nothing happens,” he added.

Maxwell Atuhura, a project officer and human rights activist at Navoda, said the government is ignoring valid questions about the impact of the ongoing development.

Uganda’s oil regulator, the Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU), disputes these claims. The government agency says it has put in place measures to address the direct and indirect impacts of the projects.

Ernest Rubondo, its executive director, said: “The PAU monitors activities in the field to ensure compliance and reduce the risk of any potential negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity. It is important to appreciate that oil and gas exploration activities were successfully undertaken within MFNP, and the integrity of the park was maintained. The aim is to ensure co-existence with Uganda’s rich biodiversity.” ■

Tanzania rolls out red carpet as Total gives up on Mozambique

Aaisha Dadi Patel

The insurgency in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province has led French energy powerhouse Total to declare force majeure – an action in law that frees parties from a contract due to extraordinary and uncontrollable circumstances – on all liquefied natural gas operations in the area.

Meanwhile, the country's northern neighbour Tanzania has restarted talks to conclude a \$30-billion agreement to begin similar operations within its own borders.

Speaking to *Bloomberg* last week, Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation managing director James Mataragio confirmed that negotiations with investors would commence immediately, with hopes that off-shore liquid natural gas extraction operations can start gearing up within the next six months.

The go-ahead in Tanzania, however, is a clear indication from President Samia Suluhu Hassan's government that the country is open for such business following the sudden death of her predecessor John Magufuli in March, who had suspended talks with international petroleum companies in 2019.

In Mozambique, Total said last week that it would be withdrawing personnel

from the country in light of "the evolution of the security situation", after suspending operations in Cabo Delgado following an assault on March 24 that saw dozens killed and many others displaced in Palma, a town near Total's Afungi site.

The attack was one of many that have taken place in the region in the past four years, amid heightened tensions and unrest linked to the Islamic State. The suspension of Total's project in Cabo Delgado – the largest single investment in Africa – has resulted in a projected \$120-billion hanging in limbo. Total's chief financial officer, Jean-Pierre Sbraire, has said the company expects the delay to last at least a year.

In Tanzania, firms involved in discussions on the proposed fracking project in Lindi, in the south of Tanzania – and just 190km from Palma – include Shell, Exxon, and Norway's Equinor.

Frederik Grootendorst and Mette Halvorsen Ottoy, the country managers for Shell and Equinor respectively, penned an op-ed published in Tanzanian newspaper *The Citizen* in April, urging the country to act.

"A huge opportunity for Tanzania to benefit from its rich gas resources is within its grasp," they wrote. "2021 must be the year when action is taken to conclude the negotiations" ■

Will the next climate summit be a virtual disaster?



(Photo: Africa News Agency)

Sophie Mbugua in Nairobi

Already delayed by a year, the crucial next round of global climate change negotiations is again running into trouble.

The negotiations – set to take place in Glasgow, Scotland, in November – are a centrepiece of international diplomacy. United States President Joe Biden has put the climate at the heart of his discussions with other leaders, and other countries are following suit.

Though the climate emergency has taken a back seat to the Covid-19 pandemic over the past year, the threat posed by global warming has not waned.

Far from it. According to the 2020 Emissions Gap Report by the UN

Environment Programme (UNEP), temperatures are expected to increase by 3°C this century.

The Glasgow summit is expected to address several contentious issues. For African nations, chief among these is the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage. This would see rich countries, responsible for most of the world's carbon emissions, paying for the damage it causes.

“Our people’s lives and their livelihoods are at stake,” Dr Nurul Quadir of Pakistan, a member of the Least Developed Countries climate negotiating group, told *The Continent*. “Small island states are sinking, and droughts are worsening, homes and crops are washed



Hot air: The COP25 summit in 2019 made little progress. Now, the stakes are higher than ever. (Photo: Entrance Ecosystem Marketplace)

away by heavier rains. Millions are at risk from glacial lake outburst of floods, which could wash away whole communities.”

With Covid still at the forefront of global concern, the UN’s Secretary General António Guterres has proposed that the summit take place virtually. But for nations in Africa, where stable electricity and video-quality internet can often not be guaranteed, this could entrench existing disadvantages.

Zimbabwe’s James Murombedzi, an expert in public policy, said: “We are vulnerable: we don’t have the resources to address the climate impact, and [if Glasgow goes ahead virtually] we won’t have the resources to participate equally in the construction of the global response.”

Furthermore, Dr Quadir explained that in-person meetings allowed for formal and informal negotiations and conversations in the hallways enriching

the quality of negotiations.

Tanguy Gahouma, of the African Group of Negotiators, agreed that a virtual setting would prove challenging for the African Group members seeking to participate in the meetings fully and actively — not just because of technical issues but also because the lack of in-person engagement made coordination and participation difficult. However, he did note that virtual meetings would mean fewer carbon emissions caused by the summit itself.

During the 2019 round of discussions at COP25 in Madrid, Spain, 26,706 delegates were registered to participate.

Of those, 13,643 people represented specific governments; 9,987 were either scientists, non-governmental organisations or business groups (often considered observer organisations), and 3,076 journalists. ■

One step closer to a billion Covid vaccinations a year

The decision by the United States to support waiving intellectual property protections on vaccinations may help persuade others like the European Union to follow suit. But the US position falls far short of supporting the AU-backed Covid-19 waiver currently on the table.

Laura López González

The United States will support waiving intellectual property (IP) protections on Covid-19 vaccines to allow the world to ramp up production, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced Wednesday.

“The administration believes strongly in IP protections, but in service of ending this pandemic, supports the waiver of those protections for Covid-19 vaccines,” Tai said in a statement. “This is a global health crisis and the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures.”

The world can currently produce about 3.5-billion Covid-19 vaccine doses a year, multiple sources have told *The Continent* — it will need four times this capacity to inoculate the world’s adults against Covid-19.

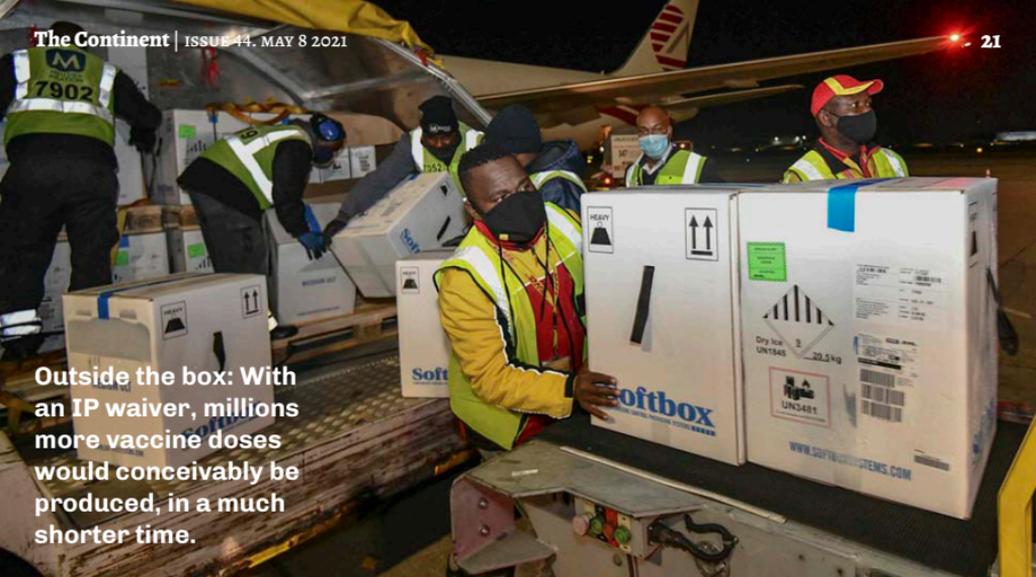
But the world could make an additional one-billion jabs a year if it could harness untapped vaccine manufacturing capacity in countries such as Bangladesh and

Canada, according to Brajendra Navnit, India’s World Trade Organisation (WTO) representative.

A shortfall in vaccine production is just one of the reasons why South Africa and India proposed, last October, that the WTO waive IP protections on goods such as Covid-19 medicines, tests and vaccines for a limited period of time to allow the world to control the pandemic. A waiver like this would apply not only to patents but also protections on manufacturing know-how and allow the world to produce more of these goods, proponents say.

Still, many vaccines experts and pharmaceutical companies have argued that waiving IP rights alone is not enough to allow for more production. This could be especially true if companies are not willing to share the technology used to make the new vaccines, much of which is not publicly known.

South Africa’s WTO representative, Xolelwa Mlumbi-Peter, says they are not entirely wrong: “We [South Africa and India] also agreed that IP is not the only



Outside the box: With an IP waiver, millions more vaccine doses would conceivably be produced, in a much shorter time.

barrier, but IP is one of the significant barriers [against efforts that would] unlock production.”

The US supports a waiver, not necessarily South Africa's waiver

Tai says the US is now committed to advancing discussions on waiving IP rights on Covid-19 vaccines at the WTO. Her statement says nothing of Covid-19 medicines or tests.

Fatima Hassan is the director of the South African advocacy organisation Health Justice Initiative. She says that when Tai's statement broke late Wednesday night, many activists' initial shock and joy was quickly replaced with questions.

“This is a significant shift because it's the first time one of the bigger economies and countries of the group that was initially blocking [the waiver] have course-corrected,” Hassan says. “But why is it only vaccines, what about the other technologies?”

In the US, President Joe Biden's support for any form of a waiver remained unknown to many within his Democratic party a day before the announcement. Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky admitted earlier this week that even though it seemed an increasing number of Democrats supported the idea, divisions within Biden's party remained.

Meanwhile, South Africa and India are currently revising the waiver proposal to include a specific time limit on just how long the countries propose to waive intellectual property rights based on the latest epidemiological information, Mlumbi-Peter said this week.

The WTO is expected to meet to discuss the waiver in July. Hassan says that if WTO negotiations move forward they should be transparent and swift.

“Between the time the waiver was first proposed and now, about 2.2-million people have died. The delay has cost us. We need to get to [advanced] negotiations now.” ■



Welcome to **Nakuru**

For our second reader submission, Sharon Tonui tells us why this transit town for many travellers in Kenya is worth an exploratory pause.

Getting around

Traffic in Nakuru is fair compared to Nairobi. The primary means of transportation in Nakuru are matatus (vans), tuk-tuks, boda-bodas and cabs. When getting into or leaving town, use the affordable matatus or the buses which cost between 50 to 100 ksh (\$0.50 to \$1) for most areas. The tuk-tuks and boda-bodas are an excellent way to get around town and navigate

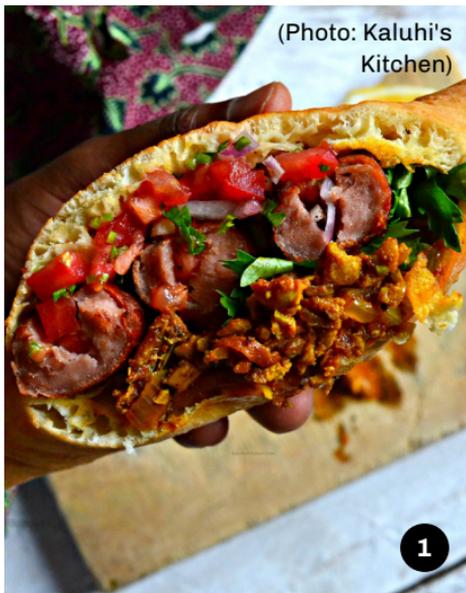
traffic if you're in a hurry.

Cabs in the town are not expensive and suitable for when you do not want to take public transport. The city is safe, and you can usually walk around without interference.

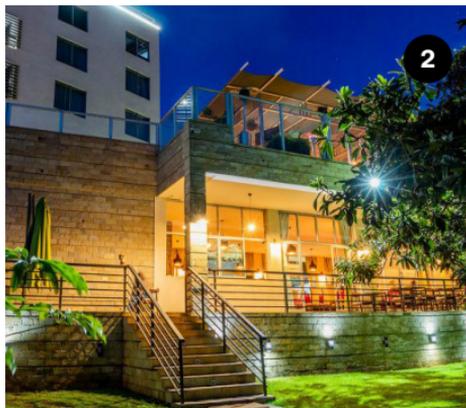
Food, drinks and nightlife

While you enjoy your fantastic trip to Nakuru and take in the sights and sounds of this beautiful town, it would be a crime not to grab a good meal and a decent drink to crown your trip. Thanks to its cosmopolitan atmosphere, Nakuru's dining options cover the cuisine spectrum, from indoor to outdoor, and from international delights to the superb local fare.

In Nakuru, you'll find street food has been turned into an art form: get yourself a nice Smokie pasua or Sausage pasua (**1**) with kachumbari (sausages with tomato and onion salad), which goes for 30ksh (\$0.30), or a piece of mutura or a beef samosa (\$0.50).



(Photo: Kaluhi's Kitchen)



Nakuru also has a vibrant nightlife – that's why it's also called Nax Vegas.

If you are a fan of nyama choma (roasted meat), Nakuru has you covered with some of the best meat in town from the likes of Jimmy's Choma Bites and Hygienic Butchery.

If you're looking for a chilled spot to have dinner or a romantic time with a good view of Nakuru and the lake, head to The Alps hotel **(2)** near the Menengai crater in Milimani. The hotel has a beautiful rooftop bar that offers a range of drinks, a fantastic menu and has the best nighttime view. I would recommend the naan and butter chicken, which will cost you around 1,000ksh (\$10).

Nakuru also has a vibrant nightlife scene – that's why it is also called Nax Vegas. There are so many entertainment spots and nightclubs that are usually packed during the weekends – pandemics allowing, of course. For good music and good vibes,

visit 7D, Culture Mambo and SEBS.

For coffee, you won't want to miss the JAVA coffee shop at the Westside Mall. The strong scent of coffee and freshly baked pastries will keep you coming back for more. Grab a mocha for 350ksh (\$3.50) and a nice piece of their chocolate fudge cake 250ksh (\$2.50).

Sightseeing

The big lure for travellers in this neck of the woods must surely be the Nakuru National Park **(3)** – home to endangered white and black rhinos and all the regulars at the local watering hole, from antelope, baboons and buffalo to lions, giraffe and zebra. The whole A to Z, right there! You can visit the park for 1,000ksh (\$10) for citizens, or \$60 for foreigners.

If you head to the Menengai crater, you'll get to see the single largest



(Photo: Kenya Geographic)



(Photo: Maroa Nelson)

surviving volcanic crater in the world. You will be charged an entrance fee of 200ksh for citizens and \$10 if you're visiting from abroad.

Lord Egerton's castle (4) is 14km outside of Nakuru town. The castle has a rich history and tells the painful story of Lord Egerton, who built the castle for the woman he loved, but when she came from Europe to see it, she rejected it and called it a small house.

For more adventurous souls, Hell's Gate reserve may prove appealing, as

you cycle the paths less travelled with your friends (and other wildlife), or just find a nice spot for a picnic after a but of a hike in the gorges. This also inspired parts of the *Lion King*.

Before you leave, head to the Maasai Market to pick up a souvenir or two. Perhaps some beaded Maasai jewellery – or even a pair of handcrafted shoes. The market is full of colour and craft, and showcases truly beautiful pieces created by local communities.

Best time of year and a song for the city

It's hard to top December in Nakuru: the town buzzes with activities, events and festivals, and catches the Christmas bug early, so if you are a big fan of getting out and about, I recommend the end of the year to you.

More than anything else, the vibe of the city is captured by Sauti Sol's *Live and Die in Africa* ("I wanna live and die in Africa ... there is no place i'd rather be...") – not just because of the passion the people have for their home, but also because Nakuru has some of the best of what Africa has to offer in terms of nature and the friendliness of the people. Once you check out Nax Vegas you'll never want to leave.

Sharon Tonui is a freelance writer and a travel enthusiast



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!

THE QUIZ

0-4

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

5-8

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

9-12

"I put the 'Who, me?' in AU."

- 1_ Idriss Déby Itno recently passed away. He was the president of which country?
- 2_ Name the Ugandan rebel commander who was found guilty of war crimes including murder and torture this week?
- 3_ Which island nation has the highest rate of Covid-19 vaccination in the world?
- 4_ Which country's courts are handling the Ever Given containment ship debacle?
- 5_ Mansa Musa was the emperor of which country's empire?
- 6_ Which Rift Valley lake is famous for its flamingo population (pictured)?

- 7_ Cabo Delgado is a province in which country?
- 8_ Which country is bordered by Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo?
- 9_ True or false: Tigray is the northernmost region of Ethiopia.
- 10_ On what date is Africa Day being observed this year?
- 11_ The Organisation of African Unity was established on May 25 1963. What does the continent celebrate on that date?
- 12_ What is the present-day name of the Organisation of African Unity?



(Photo: JacadaTravel.com)

How did I do? WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to +27 73 805 6068 and we'll send the answers to you

The anointing of Mahamat Idriss Déby reflects dynastic politics in francophone Africa

Mbulle-Nziege Leonard

The sudden death of Chadian president Idriss Déby on April 19 sent shockwaves throughout the region. Déby had ruled Chad with an iron fist since 1990, and had been re-elected for a sixth presidential term the day before he was killed.

In the immediate aftermath of his death, his 37-year-old son, General Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, was appointed head of state by the Transitional Military Council that he himself chairs. This directive was in contravention of the constitution, which stipulates that the president of the national assembly should have been the one to take power.

At face value, the accession of Déby son to the presidency may appear to be an anomaly. However, within the Francophone African political landscape, father-son presidential successions have become an established mode of political transition over the past 20 years. The recent incarnation of this trend started with the appointment of 29-year-old Joseph Kabila as president of the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2001, following the assassination of Laurent-Désiré Kabila. This trick was repeated

in 2005, upon the death of Togolese president Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who ruled Togo for 37 years. With the help of the military, his son Faure Gnassingbé Eyadéma was quickly sworn in as president, even though the constitution required Eyadema to be succeeded by the president of the national assembly. In 2009, Gabon's El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba passed away after holding the presidency for 42 years. Though it was not orchestrated as swiftly as in the other cases, he was ultimately succeeded by his son, Ali Bongo Ondimba, a former singer, who replaced him after winning a flawed election in 2009.

In the aftermath of his death, Déby's son was appointed head of state by the Transitional Military Council, of which he is chairman. This directive contravenes the constitution

Family political dynasties are not exclusive to Africa, of course. One can think of the Park family in South Korea,



Heir-raising: Mahamat Idriss Déby's elevation is consistent with patterns of patriarchal authoritarianism.

(Photo: Christophe Petit Tesson/ AFP)

the Bush, Clinton and Kennedy clans in the United States, as well as the Nehru-Gandhi family in India, each of which has influenced national politics over generations. Nevertheless, the dynastic successions stand out within the context of Francophone Africa, because of the blatant way in which clearly stipulated succession rules are violated in order to keep power in the family.

Worryingly, there now appears to be a widely understood formula that is being used to legitimise the accession of these *filis à papa* (daddy's boys). This includes grooming them to take up strategic positions in the ruling party, cabinet and, in some cases – as with Eyadéma and Bongo Ondimba junior – gifting them an electoral mandate as a

member of parliament. Providing them with military experience, like Joseph Kabila and Mahamat Idriss Déby, is also a common strategy, which is often crucial in ensuring the support of the security forces for dynastic succession.

These cases of “family fortunes” will not be the last. In Equatorial Guinea, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema, who has been in charge since 1979, has used the aforementioned blueprint to position his son Teodorin Nguema Obiang Mangué to replace him. Obiang Mangué, who has been charged with various acts of financial malversation by several overseas courts, is currently the country's first vice-president.

In Congo-Brazzaville, Denis Sassou Nguesso, who has ruled for 37 years over two periods, has made his son Denis Christel Sassou Nguesso deputy managing director of state oil firm SNPC – though the younger man has denied harbouring any presidential ambitions.

Father-son successions are rooted in patriarchal authoritarian politics in which one man holds too much power for too long. They risk exacerbating personal politics and weakening key institutions, further delegitimising the government and fueling conflict and instability. ■

Mbulle-Nziege Leonard is a doctoral candidate at the University of Cape Town and a research analyst at Africa Risk Consulting. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa.



There's no place like home



Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

You are nothing if not astute, dear reader. It will not have escaped your notice how keenly we have missed you. Our dedication to you almost matches how dedicated rich countries are to protecting the vaccine patents of Big Pharma! But while their dedication to profit may have waned unexpectedly this week – at last! – we know you know ours never will.

That said, some of our favourite leaders have been putting us to shame, by going the extra mile to secure their people's favour.

Patrice Talon, for example, who squeezed himself and his finely tailored suits into a second term in Benin's presidency with a 86% share of the electoral vote. Or President Denis Sassou-Nguesso of Congo Republic, who won himself a fourth term with 88.4% of the vote. Not to mention Djibouti's over-achieving Ismail Omar Guelleh, who scored a fifth term with an electoral "share" of no less than 97%.

No doubt they were inspired by the late Idriss Déby of Chad, who as you know sadly departed this earthly realm just one day after securing his sixth term.

But then we I think we can all agree

that he died like he lived: sleeves rolled up, standing shoulder to shoulder with his men on the front line, crushing any who dared oppose his rule.

The heir, apparently

Any aspiring multi-term leader would be envious of Déby's legacy: He has left his successor an administration perfectly geared up to stifle the opposition, shut down protest and share Chad's precious teargas reserves, no matter the cost.

The successor in question? No less than his own son. Monarchy is an unusual choice for a democratic model. But if the UK, Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden get to have heirs and your graces, then why shouldn't the throne pass to Mahamat Déby, after all? Apart from the usual constitutional reasons, obviously.

Clearly his father's son, L'il Déby immediately swung into action. In no time at all, the constitution was suspended and he was leading a transitional military council that promised elections would most definitely, almost certainly, take place within 18 months. Probably.

When opposition and civil society groups pointed out that Chad is not *actually* supposed to be a monarchy, his response was the epitome of restraint and compassion, suggesting that maybe his detractors were tired and just needed a bit of a rest.

Oh, wait no, not "a bit of a rest".

It says here they needed "arresting"?

Hmm. That does seem more accurate considering that hundreds are now behind bars and five people are dead after protesting the suspension of the constitution.

Refuge refused

Before we went on break, we mentioned here how the government of Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta had once again issued an ultimatum calling for the closure of the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps.

Since then the administration has had a chat with the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, somehow getting them to agree that "refugee camps are not a long term solution to displacement".

And, so, Kenya continues to insist that both camps will close by June 30, 2022.

But what will become of the 433,765 people who, for want of a better world, still call it home?

Home is where the art is

Displacement – by famine, flood or war – throws the very idea of what "home" is into question. Home is meant to be a refuge, surely? But sometimes it's a return, too – like the repatriation of the Benin bronzes that are finally going home.

Authorities in Germany have announced plans to repatriate legendary artworks from the Kingdom of Benin (which by now we all know was actually in Nigeria, not the nation of Benin), that were looted during the colonial era.

While talks continue regarding the return of the precious sculptures, perhaps a certain artifact-hoarding museum in

London may want to enter the chat?

We'll leave you for now with a rare ray of light. Remember the Ebola outbreak that poured oil on the fires of the pandemic in the Democratic Republic of Congo when it flared up in February?

As of this Monday past, it's officially over. ■



Virus begone: Before Covid-19 even had a name, many countries were already acquainted with the horrors of deadly viruses. So when Ebola broke out in the DRC in February, authorities acted quickly, and now the outbreak is officially over. (Photo: Michael Duff)

Samira Sawlani is a journalist and analyst with a focus on East Africa. She holds an MA in international studies and diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies, and previously worked in the humanitarian aid sector.

THE BIG PICTURE

Holy flock: Swallows are seen flying over a holy site in Soutadounou, on the Niger river, where Sufi Adama Yalcouye decided to build a mosque for the Sufi community in Bamako, which he led until his death in 2016. His adherents are required to behave in a morally upright manner and with respect for all religions, which they observe by incorporating many symbols from other faith and traditions, including the Christian cross and animist iconography. (Photo: Michele Cattani/AFP)



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