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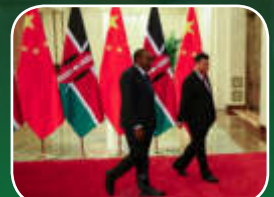
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A Sneeze From Macron with Ripples In Yaounde

By Ajong Mbatndah L

In a continent where old age is revered, the recent jabs directed by 42-year-old French President Emmanuel Macron to 87-year-old President Paul Biya of Cameroon seemed to have ruffled many feathers. Responding to questions from French based political activist Thiam Abdoulaye aka Calibro Calibri on the sidewalk of a public event in late February, Macron said he understood what was going on in Cameroon.

"I told Biya we must not meet in Lyon if Kamto is not released. He (Kamto) was freed because we put pressure," Macron said, and called on President Biya to "resolve the Anglophone problem, open up the democratic space, release all political prisoners, decentralize and respect human rights."

As the video of the surreal exchange went viral, the divergent views were symptomatic of the deep divisions in the Cameroon. Opponents of Mr. Biya especially partisans of Prof Maurice Kamto, leader of the MRC party who believe he won the 2018 Presidential elections though official results placed him second, saluted the tongue lashing from President Macron. On the other hand, die hard supporters of President Biya did not take kindly to what was viewed as an affront not just to Biya the man, but the entire country.

Within a short span, the Minister of Communications Rene Sadi, the Secretary General of the ruling CPDM Party Jean Nkuate, and the Minister of State Secretary General at the Presidency who is the closest collaborator of President Biya all issued statements to rubbish the statements from Macron. The statements were followed by questions on the true nationality and patriotism of Thiam rather than the veracity of issues he raised with President Macron. The dramatic reaction also included protest marches in the nation's capital Yaounde, and several



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

other towns in diverse regions of the country.

Like in most other former colonies of France in Africa, anti-French sentiment in Cameroon has been surging for a while now. From economic exploitation, to a monetary policy that bleeds Africa, to support for dictators and more, France is seen as playing a dubious game which keeps Francophone Africa stagnant.

While there were many who may have justifiably felt offended that Mr. Macron was condescending to the leader of an independent country, the outrage from Mr. Biya's partisans was very questionable. In the face of the controversies surrounding the 2018 Presidential elections, the congratulatory message from Macron to Biya was considered as a seal of approval by the same people.

President Biya himself is on record in the 90s for declaring himself the best student of then French President Francois Mitterrand on politics and democracy. For a President who consistently shuns regional CEMAC Forums, AU Summits, and other continental initiatives, President Biya is always quick to attend forums in France or ones initiated by the French. Indeed, the very President whose partisans took to the streets to protest the remarks of Macron is the very one who gives the real or imagined impression that the French are the ones he listens to. Mr. Macron did tell Calibro Calibri that he will have a phone call with President

Biya, and amid all the brouhahaa phone call did take place.

Prof Kamto maybe out but what was he arrested for in the first place? What purpose did his arrest serve? And what about others arrested and still in jail- from Joseph Ngalim to Mancho Bibixy, Penn Terrence, Julius Ayuk Tabe, Shufai Blaise Berinyuy Elias Eyambe, Tassang Wilfred, Beza Berist and hundreds of other Anglophones?

For his age and wisdom President Biya ought to know better. He admitted in France that he thought the former Southern Cameroons will be assimilated but it did not work. So why is it so hard to give them what they want? Why is it so hard to make concessions? Does it need the French President to tell you that releasing prisoners will ease tensions? Does it take rocket science to understand that the military solution is not working? Does it need divine wisdom to know that many of the killings are senseless and very avoidable?

For a country that is in a hole, nothing seems to amaze more than the frenzied efforts with which the leadership in Cameroon is digging deeper. At times one is tempted to wonder in what universe the leadership lives in. Is it President Biya not getting it right? Is it people in his entourage taking advantage of his advance age to foster agendas of their own in the succession battle raging behind the scenes?

If something is not clearly wrong, how can one understand that decisions from the Grand National Dialogue with all the huge sums it gulped are not been implemented? With all the flaws that the dialogue hard, many still hoped that the cosmetic measures taken could atleast slow the bleeding and show a modicum of good faith.... And what about the recommendations from the

Bilingualism Commission? And can someone explain why the momentum and dynamism that Prime Minister Dion Ngute brought in to resolve the crisis on his appointment has been tamed?

At the twilight of his long political career and at his age, many may say President Biya has nothing to lose, but his legacy is on the line. The choice to cling on the power was his, the mess created is of his making and he has to clean it up. Come to think of it in what country does it take more than 20 years for constitutional provisions to be implemented? Had the decentralization contained in the 1996 constitution been implemented, maybe the current crisis in the North West and South West Regions could have been averted, who knows how much would have changed if the constitutional clause on declaration of assets was implemented?

There is no way Mr Biya can escape blame and instead of his partisans marching to protest against the French President, there should equally put pressure on him to up his game. The crisis in the North West and South West is not something you can wish away. So much time has been wasted, it never should have gotten to this point, and while many may think it is so late to fix things, we believe better late than never. There is still much that he can do to start the healing and reconciliation if he can have the good faith, sense of justice, and fairness, and the political will that has been lacking.

This issue of PAV Magazine has a lot on Cameroon, but also from South Sudan where reason seems to have prevailed with the formation of a new peace government that is giving millions of people a reason to hope. We also bring you a report on parts of Mozambique a year after the ravages of hurricane Idai, preparations of the Commonwealth Summit in Rwanda, controversy trailing former South African President Frederik De Klerk, Africa in the corona virus crisis and more. Happy reading!!!

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New Dawn in S. Sudan after Years of Killings, Displacements and Destruction

By Deng Machol

Juba - After six years of killings, displacements and destructions, it is a new dawn in South Sudan with the formation of a unitary government by the warring parties sealing a peace deal to end the civil war.

On 21 February 2020, former South Sudanese rebel leader Riek Machar was sworn in as First Vice-President at J1 State House in Juba, after years of conflict and battle with President Kiir's government. Salva Kiir from the majority Dinka ethnic group, continues as President with Machar, a Nuer as the first Vice President.

Vice Presidents Taban Deng Gai, James Wani Igga, and Rebecca Nyandeng, the widow of South Sudan's founding father late Dr. John Garang De Mabior also took their oaths, following their appointments through presidential decree.

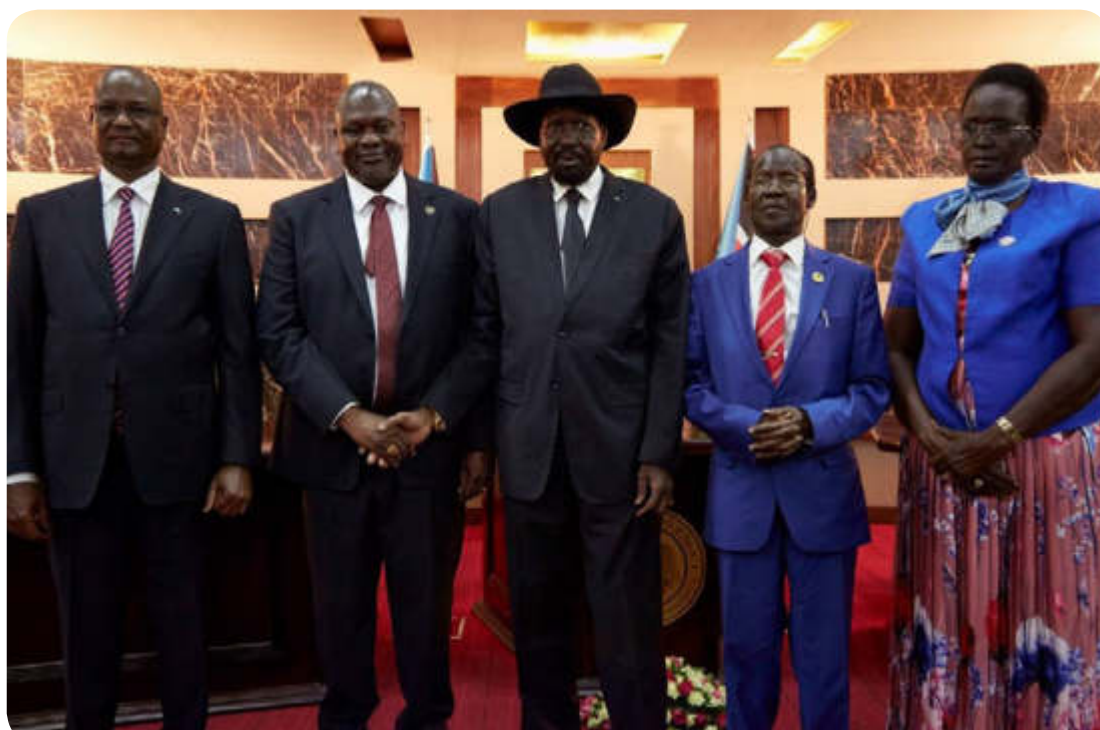
Hussein Abdelbagi Akol, was also sworn in as another Vice President through the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) ticket.

The oaths were administered by Chief Justice Chan Reech Madut, as President Salva Kiir witnessed the ceremony at the State House in the capital, Juba. High profile guests at the ceremony included the leader of Sudan General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan; the Prime Minister of Uganda, Ruhakana Rugunda; the Deputy President of South Africa, David Mabuza, and the Special Envoy of Kenya to South Sudan, Stephen Kalonzo.

It is hoped that the new unity government will bring an end to the conflict that has killed about 400,000 people and uprooted four million people both externally and internally from their homes and devastated the economy.

However, previous deals were widely heralded only to fall apart. February's ceremony took place just before the deadline for the revitalized peace agreement expired.

Under the agreement, the current



President Kiir and opposition rival Rick Machar who is now First Vice President. Both men must lead South Sudan towards peace and development after a damaging civil war.

cabinet has been dissolved to make way for more opposition members.

Despite the progress, a number of critical issues remain unresolved, including power-sharing and the integration of rebel fighters, but the two sides have agreed to form a government and address other matters later.

The deal was announced hours after the UN released a damning report accusing both sides of deliberately starving civilians during their struggle for power.

A last-minute deal on the number of states was achieved, although little progress has been made on the other issues.

The leaders had been under increased pressure in recent weeks both from regional heads of state and main donor, the United States, to form the government.

A compromise by Kiir to cut to 10 the number of states, which he increased unilaterally to 32 after independence, was seen as key in

moving towards the creation of the government.

However, the opposition remains reticent about an additional three "administrative areas" pushed through by Kiir.

Speaking after taking the oath of office, Dr. Machar said he was committed to implementing the fragile peace deal with President Salva Kiir.

"I would like to reiterate my commitment and the commitment of the SPLM/A-IO to work closely with the peace partners and particularly President Kiir Mayardit to implement the agreement in letter and spirit," said Machar.

Significance of the deal

President Salva Kiir urged South Sudanese to use the transitional period to forgive and reconcile each other, saying he would work with his Deputies to lead the country back to the path of peace and progress.

Welcoming his former foe now

ally Dr. Machar to the new unity government, President Kiir struck a deep tone of reconciliation when he asked for his forgiveness.

"We must forgive one another and reconcile. I want to reiterate here that, I have forgiven my brother, Dr. Riek Machar, I also ask for his forgiveness," said President Kiir. Machar and Kiir embraced and shook hands to show the new spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation to the people of South Sudan.

"I am inviting all the people of South Sudan to forgive one another, particularly I want to appeal to Nuer and Dinka communities to forgive and reconcile with one another. I also appeal to the people of Equatoria especially those who have experienced much of the devastation to forgive and reconcile. "I want no more bloodshed in South Sudan, and I hope I speak for all of my deputies," Kiir said.

Going further, Vice President Machar assured the South Sudanese that he and others will work together

to end their suffering. In addition to those killed or displaced, many others have been pushed to the brink of starvation and faced untold suffering, include ethnic politics.

Vice President Rebecca de Mabior called on the nation to repair the broken social fabric caused by the civil war that wrecked the country for five years.

"To preserve the peace and unity, we must achieve moral recovery, and repair the broken social fabric amongst our people," said Nyandeng.

Garang's widow further called on all South Sudanese to admit mistakes committed during the war, forgive and shun hate speech.

"Every South Sudanese must honestly admit to his or her neighbor certain wrong things we have done to each other for us to go forward. Let us stop the vitriolic words against each other, and turn the wheels of our history toward the future," she added.

Thirsty for good news, South Sudanese are hopeful that the peace deal will finally put the country back on the path of progress. Similar arrangements have failed twice since the outbreak of the civil war in 2013. In 2016 Machar narrowly escaped death at the hands of Kiir's troops while fleeing the country via the Democratic Republic of Congo.

UN experts claim the two leaders are responsible for most of the violence and disastrous economic mismanagement – particularly their alleged mishandling of oil revenue, the nation's main source of income.

As millions continued to suffer from poverty and hunger, President Kiir accused government officials in 2012 of 'stealing' an estimated \$4 billion of oil money. In a letter sent to 75 officials he urged them to return the money. It is unlikely that any of the money has been retrieved.

Cause of fighting

South Sudan became an independent state from Sudan in July 9th, 2011, marking the end of a four decade long-running civil war. But it



President Salva Kiir addressing a meeting of the new cabinet

did not take long for the promise of peace to fizzle.

Just two years after independence, the country returned to violent conflict after President Kiir sacked Machar, then the deputy president in December 2013.

President Kiir had confidently accused Dr. Machar of plotting a coup to overthrow him, something that Machar consequentially denied.

However, the conflict had ethnic undertones in the country, though based on political power dynamics.

The Dinka and Nuer, South Sudan's two largest ethnic groups, which the two leaders belong to, have been accused of targeting each other in the war, with atrocities committed by both sides.

Humanitarian Situations

South Sudan is one of the riskiest environments worldwide for humanitarian initiatives. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report released in February 2020, some 6.5 million people in South Sudan—more than half of the population—could be in acute food insecurity at the height of this hunger season and 1.3 million children will suffer from acute malnutrition in 2020.

As this new chapter begins, with

leaders committed to peace, there is hope that such suffering will be obviated, the situation will not get worse, and that South Sudan will grow towards self-reliance on food security.

In a press statement, the South Sudan NGO Forum hopes that the formation of a new Transitional Government of National Unity will allow for the easing of bureaucratic impediments, protection of humanitarian assets, and enhancing the safety of aid workers for effective delivery of humanitarian and resilience interventions and assistance.

South Sudan NGO Forum remains committed to serve persons in need and looks forward to stronger collaboration with the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity to enable members of the NGO Forum to reach the most vulnerable across South Sudan where there is need.

Hard to strike a deal

South Sudanese warring parties had been unable or unwilling to agree on the terms for the formation of a transitional government, in line with the revitalized peace agreement of 2018.

The deal was supposed to have been finalised by May 2019 but was postponed twice - the latest deadline being 22 February.

The two principals have a mutual distrust for each other, and there has not been an affable working relationship after President Kiir fired Dr. Machar in 2013.

The six-year conflict has pushed the country into a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.

In spite the international pressure, it has been difficult for the rival parties to reach and uphold a peace deal that could sturdy the world's youngest country.

Will peace deal last?

Well, there are certainly reasons to hope as it rests on the political will of the country's leaders.

Several agreements and ceasefires have been reached since the two leaders fell out in 2013, and had been violated within the months, including on power-sharing which has been at the heart of the conflict.

However, analysts and observers say the deal does not fully address the conflict elements of ethnic nationalism, illiteracy, power struggles and weak institutions of governance, which they believe; are still rife.

But this is a major step forward, as the parties agreed to form the unity government on time.

International Community Responds

In a joint statement, the governments of the United States of America; the United Kingdom, and the Kingdom of Norway, congratulated the people of South Sudan and the parties to the peace deal on the announcement of the formation of an inclusive transitional government on February 22.

“We welcome the fact that the government and opposition parties have made the necessary compromises to allow this important step. For the transitional period to be a success, a spirit of continuous collaboration, supported by the active, engaged, and free voices of citizens and civil society, must continue,” said the Troika.

Nearly nine years after South Sudan's independence, the Troika said “this is an opportunity for the political leadership to take their country forward towards prosperity and peace by making meaningful progress on security sector arrangements, the reform agenda, transitional justice and accountability, and preparations for credible and safe elections.”

The Troika further said they are

committed to working with the new transitional government, IGAD, and other regional and international partners to support the people of South Sudan in their pursuit of peace and stability.

The People Republic of China also welcomed the timely formation of a unity government in South Sudan.

“As a sincere friend to South Sudan, China will continue to support South Sudan's peace process and provide necessary help. We stand ready with the international community to make constructive contributions to peace, stability and economic and social development in South Sudan,” China said in the statement.

Unity gov't without a unified force is risky

However, the security sector poses a significant threat to the coalition government if the security arrangement is not implemented on time.

According to the peace deal, the training of the Necessary Unified Forces was to be completed during the pre-transitional period, but it is yet to start on the ground as the cantonments, training and unification of the forces is still very slow due to



With the steady return of peace, oil production is picking up again in South Sudan

lack of funding.

The implementation of the security arrangement has been one of the contentious issues between the government and the SPLM-IO.

It stated that during the Transitional Period, the incumbent President Kiir will remain, President and Commander-in-Chief of the national army, whereas the SPLM/A-IO leader, Dr. Machar will command the SPLM-IO forces until the overall unification of the forces.

Of recently, President Kiir said that the government will provide protection to all the opposition leaders in Juba until the process of forming a Unified Force is accomplished.

Analysts and observers warn that failure to unified forces on time could lead to a repeat of 2015 when a unity government was formed without unifying the government and opposition forces.

Political Analyst Dr. James Okuk, Senior Researcher at the Centre for Policy and Strategic Studies in South Sudan, said the formation of a coalition government without unified forces

is risky to the fragile peace process, urging the parties to take it seriously and speed it up quickly to save further disagreements.

“These are the tasks that should have been finished in the pre – transitional period – the fact that they have been pushed to the transitional period is overloaded the activities of the transitional period, and it remains risky to run the transitional period without it. The security arrangement must be speeded up, particularly the unification of necessary forces so that you can avoid any trouble which might come so you can have a people that are protected by unified forces rather than many forces with different commands,” Dr. Okuk told Pan African Visions.

According to the political analyst, it has not been a wise idea to establish a government without settling the security arrangement.

Dr. Okuk further said once the security issues are settled, the leaders need to focus on reforms because the time for war has brought in a lot of frivolities and a lot of corrupt practices and this need to be really controlled and managed this time around.

IGAD Free Machar

In the aftermath of the coalition government, IGAD – the peace broker said First-Vice President Dr. Machar was now a free man and should enjoy



President Kiir and opposition rival Rick Machar who is now First Vice President. Both men must lead South Sudan towards peace and development after a damaging civil war

the full rights and freedoms of a South Sudanese citizen.

The IGAD Special Envoy Dr. Ismail Wais said the SPLM-IO leader is no longer under house arrest and does not need to seek permission from the regional body to travel.

The IGAD regional bloc transferred Machar from South Africa's detention and placed him under detention at his residence in Khartoum, Sudan in 2018, following the renewal of violence in 2016, to limit his role in the conflict.

According to the revitalized peace deal, the Transitional Period shall run for thirty-six months. The RTGoNU is expected to hold elections sixty days before the end of the Transitional Period in order to establish a democratically elected government.

President Kiir has expressed hope that the transitional three-year period will pave the way for refugees and internally displaced people to return to their homes.

Although much has happened since July 9, 2011 when the South Sudanese flag was raised for the first time, South Sudanese still hope for a country of peace, justice, and prosperity.

But the question is would this peace deal hold? Because you can't rule out disagreement in politics, as it is part of politics but how the rival leaders manage the disagreements is what makes it different in South Sudan. Therefore, the hopes for lasting peace are still on the shoulders of the country's leaders especially on how they will handle political disagreements. If peaceful, then there



Pope Francis kissed the feet of South Sudanese Leaders during a peace retreat at the Vatican last year.

will be prosperous South Sudan soon. On the other hand, the unresolved issues in this peace deal, need a lot of political will, and also a lot of trust from the rival leaders in order to end the country's long suffering.



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Mozambique: Idai tracks are still visible, one year after the cyclone passed

By Jorge dos Santos

Although a year has passed since cyclone Idai hit Mozambique and southern Africa on the night of 14-15 March, the traces of destruction are still visible, in a context where more cyclones are predicted to appear from this month onwards. Food aid needs remain a reality in the central province of Sofala and people are living in makeshift homes.

Pan African Vision made a trip to Beira City, the epicentre of the destruction by cyclone Idai that affected 1.8 million people, displacing more than 480,000 people and causing the destruction of an area of over 3,000 km². According to official data, 762 people died, including the son of our interviewee Antonio Mateus.

«He was only 27 years old,» said Mateus, father of two other children. «I wish him well wherever he is,» he added, sitting on a tire laid by one of the aid organizations after it was damaged. «I took advantage and use it as a chair because I have nothing. I've lost everything».

Mateus said his son was dragged by the force of the waters coming from the sea towards the coastal neighborhood called «Praia Nova» where he lived. «His friends told me that he even tried to run away, but he couldn't».

Mateus' house was two bedrooms and a living room, but it was completely destroyed by Idai, the strongest cyclone to hit Mozambique. He then went to live in a local school that had been transformed into a resettlement centre, but in January it was deactivated and those affected had to return to their homes, but no conditions were created for that.

«Practically what they gave us was a tent, hygienic material, 25kg of rice, 5L of oil etc» said Mateus stating that when the resettlement centre was deactivated they were guaranteed regular food assistance, something that is not happening.



The damage is still perceptible . Photo Jorge dos Santos Pan African Visions.

«If it was just to depend on that help, we wouldn't be here anymore. We would be starving to death,» he said adding that access to food aid has been limited, difficult and in some cases accompanied by corruption schemes.

The response to the disaster has been insignificant from the Mozambican authorities. There are still many people in need of help to cope with daily life, one year after they lost almost everything.

Carlos Niquice is resident in neighborhood «Bairro da Manga» and lives in a room whose roof is a tent offered by the United Nations.

«The cyclone destroyed another part of the house and only left me with this room as you can see» he said. «To this day I still can't afford to buy adequate cover so we sleep under that canvas.

«It's a real hell when it's hot,» he lamented.

A primary school called «12 de Outubro» in the city of Beira is one of the most populated in the provincial capital and was also one of the most destroyed by cyclone Idai. There are still tented classes there, damage

persists as in most of the educational establishments in that area.

Donors have not yet made all the money available

In June last year, Mozambique raised about \$1.2bn of the \$3.2bn officially indicated as the necessary amount for the project to rebuild the points affected by cyclones Idai and Kenneth, in the center and north of the country respectively.

Despite the successful mobilization, the reconstruction phase of housing, buildings and public infrastructure has not yet begun. The Mozambican authorities speak of donor demands for many documents to disburse the funds.

«It is important that we find the way out so that the year 2020 is the year of effective start of reconstruction actions on the ground» declared the Minister of Public Works, Housing and Water Resources, Joao Machatane. Last year there were only emergency actions that cost around US\$162 million, for this year the prospect is to invest US\$189 million.

«The fact is that many funds have

been announced and agreed upon, but are conditioned to other phases such as the bidding process and project studies,» said a person from the reconstruction office attached to the Ministry of Public Works. «That means implementation will still take some time,» he admitted.

The historic problem of corruption in Mozambique is making donors more rigorous in the process of disbursing the agreed amounts. The failure to account for the use of the monetary amounts donated immediately after Cyclone Idai cast doubt on the response to the transparency emergency.

«The Government should make available information on all aid received in connection with

the cyclone Idai, whether financial or via donated goods, and other extreme events of

the same nature and size that will occur,» said Egas Jossia, analyst at the think tank Center for Public Integrity.

«It is necessary to create an audit or internal control entity in the institution that receives and manages the donations,» he said in an interview

with Pan African Visions.

While this is not happening, the populations affected by the cyclones are living in precarious houses and depending on a food of humanitarian aid that has not been widespread.

Demand is so great that the World Food Programme has admitted to having to cut food rations due to a lack of funds. The organization says it is urgently mobilizing a total of \$120m to support the victims.

Some populations with agricultural fields had been distributed seeds for cultivation and to minimize hunger, but the recent floods in the area have again complicated the lives of the inhabitants and expectations for future harvests.

Forecast of more cyclones

Mozambique is constantly affected by various disasters caused by natural factors such as floods, drought, cyclones and earthquakes. Some of these phenomena are cyclical character, while others are occasional. This is influenced by factors such as subtropical anticyclones of the Indian Ocean, the Intertropical convergence, Southern African thermal depressions and the passage of fronts cold in the south about the climate of the country.

The rainy season, which began last

December, is bringing heavy storms to the country. Myrta Kaulard, the United Nations chief in Mozambique, said her organization is preparing to respond to a «very strong» cyclone season in the coming months.

The National Institute of Meteorology confirmed to Pan African Visions the alert referring to the possibility of three cyclones in the current rainy season, affecting the provinces of Zambezia and Nampula, considered prone to natural phenomena.

«This makes these populations much more vulnerable than in past years. We are very concerned. The predictions are frightening and this is a very strong challenge. So we are very concerned,» said Myrta Kaulard.

The predictions of more victims are clear. After the deactivation of reception centres, many people have returned to risk areas once resilient homes in safe areas have not been allocated.

«What they assigned us was land with nothing» said a resident of the coastal and troubled «Praia Nova» neighborhood.

«They went to put us in a place without water, school, road... we prefer to come back»



Families still need a lot of aid to meet food needs. Photo Jorge dos Santos .Pan African Visions.



The people think that the Government has not done enough to improve their plight. Photo Jorge dos Santos. Pan African Visions.

Botswana leaders' fight blights Africa's democracy poster child

By Khonani Ontebetse

Botswana's reputation as one the least corrupt countries on the continent is under renewed scrutiny as the tension between the immediate former and current administration boils over.

There are no indications that former Botswana President Ian Khama and his chosen successor and current President Mokgweetsi Masisi may find themselves sitting side-by-side as part of their reconciliation efforts.

This was not helped by Khama's decision late last year to quit the ruling Botswana Democratic Party



The fight between former President Ian Khama and current President Mokgweetsi Masisi is threatening the image of Botswana as a leading democracy in Africa.

(BDP) which was founded by his

father in the 1960s and has been ruling the southern African nation since independence from Britain in

1966.

It is understood that hopes of Khama and Masisi smoking a peace pipe were dashed when Khama

founded the Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF) together with some disgruntled BDP members, a few months before the general election last year.

Initially, the rumblings of displeasure and growing agitation behind the scenes between the two men was swept under the carpet a few months after Khama handed his chosen successor the baton. Masisi's administration tried to play down the tension between

the two men. But it exploded into the public domain during the build up to the October general election held last year when Khama accused Masisi of

failing to provide effective leadership.

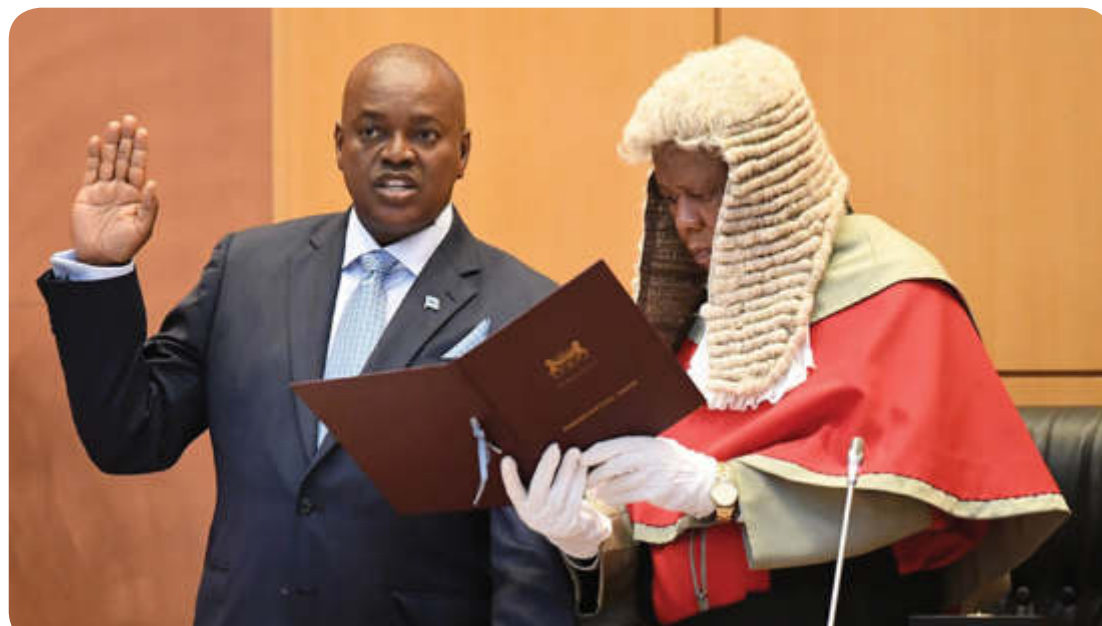
Masisi and Khama have never made the reason for their fallout public except that the latter accused the former of reversing some of his policies such as the hunting ban and alcohol levy. On the other hand, Masisi accused Khama of trying to force him to do him favours which were outside the precincts of the law.

"I have met a couple of times with the mediators and expressed my sentiments regarding the conflict with Masisi, but I have never received any feedback following our meetings," he was quoted as saying in March this year.

For his part, Masisi has since informed Parliament that relations between him and Khama is so bad that he has asked former president Festus Mogae and former Speaker of the National Assembly Patrick Balopi to mediate between them, but to no avail.

The tension between the two men took a new twist late last year, when Khama and some BPF members did not attend Masisi's inauguration. Before that, at one point Khama even advised opposition coalition Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) leader Duma Boko to investigate what the BPF termed grand election fraud that was allegedly done by the BDP in last year's tightly contested election. Prior to the poll day, Khama even campaigned for the UDC and opposition in general as he sought to oust Masisi whom he also accused of being undemocratic and drunk with power.

While the BDP won the general election after securing 38 of 57 seats and UDC garnering 15 seats, BPF three seats and Alliance for Progressives managing one seat, Khama and UDC insisted that the elections were rigged. The UDC even went to the extent of challenging the outcome of the general election as it accused the BDP of rigging the election aided by the Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) and the Independent Electoral Commission. The UDC petitioned the High Court lost the case on technical grounds as among other things it did



President Masisi is firmly in control and is expected to deliver positive results. Photo AFP.

not file the petitions within 30 days as prescribed by the law.

Still the UDC and Khama insist that the elections were rigged, something that observers say makes it difficult for Khama and Masisi to reconcile.

Recently, Khama reacted angrily to thin veiled insinuations by Masisi that he is the invisible hand behind the escalating rhino poaching crisis in the country. Khama said Masisi was to blame because when he occupied office, he withdrew arms of war from the anti-poaching unity on the grounds that it was illegal for the unit to be armed with such guns.

Masisi's government has also taken a decision to sideline Khama as former head of state who should be invited to important and official government events. Under normal circumstances, former heads of states are invited to come and commemorate special events such as the annual commemoration of the fallen heroes and heroines that is organized by the Botswana Defence Force and the Office of the President.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Office of the President extended invitation to Khama just like it happened last year.

In a previous interview with this reporter last year, Khama said over the phone "I was not invited. I don't understand why I was not invited because as a former commander of

the Botswana Defence Force it is within my right," he said. Khama added that does not necessarily mean that not being invited would stop him from commemorating the fallen heroes.

While President Masisi officiated at the commemoration of the fallen heroes and heroines at the Central Business District by laying a wreath for the fallen BDF heroes and heroines, Khama also had a parallel commemoration whereat he as was accompanied by his younger brother and former Tourism Minister Tshekedi Khama. Tshekedi has also quit the BDP and he is representing BPF in Parliament.

While former president Khama was in March this year quoted as having adopted a reconciliatory tone, he had used the commemoration of the fallen heroes and heroines to take a swipe at Masisi's administration.

"We will continue fighting to restore democracy in Botswana," Khama told his audience, mostly former soldiers from his influential tribe called Bangwato.

Last year BDF spokesperson Tebo Dikole confirmed that the former President was not invited. When asked why they did not invite Khama since he was not only a former president but also former commander of the armed forces, Dikole explained that the designation of former

president precedes that of former commander hence the reason Khama did not receive an invitation.

Commenting on the ongoing feud and reports of escalating corruption, political analyst, Mpho Mojaki said "Botswana has long been regarded as a diamond –rich nation, corruption-free, democratic, prosperous, and peaceful. Smooth transfer of presidential power, meaning that the incumbent vacates office a year before his chosen predecessor occupies office and normally that is before the general elections." He added that "with these tension and other cases of corruption, the country's image is at risk."

As the tension between Khama and Masisi rages on, they have also been linked to a \$25 USD million money laundering case. The prosecution claims that the money siphoned off from the National Petroleum Fund was meant to build fuel storage facilities across the country but was diverted by the former Directorate of Intelligence and Security Isaac Kgosi to buy military equipment from Israel. Some of the accused persons who had acted as middleman have since claimed that Khama and Masisi benefitted from the money. The two men have since distanced themselves from such accusations.

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South Africa: "I am not afraid of jail" - Zuma

By Prince Kurupati



Former President Jacob Zuma maybe out of power but he remains an influential factor in South African politics.

Former South African president Jacob Zuma whilst addressing his supporters recently at the OR Tambo International airport soon after landing from Cuba said that he is not afraid of jail. Zuma made the remarks following speculation from the media suggesting that he had taken a trip to Cuba as a way of resisting arrest.

According to the medical note that his lawyers submitted to the Pietmaritzburg High Court, Jacob Zuma took a trip to Cuba to seek medical attention and could not travel back to South Africa for a pre-trial hearing on corruption charges because he was too ill. The Pietmaritzburg High Court however issued a warrant of arrest citing that the medical note presented to them was unconvincing. The Court's decision made many from the media, the ruling ANC party and the general populace to believe that Zuma's trip to Cuba was all part of a plot to resist arrest.

In front of hundreds of his supporters who welcomed him under the banner of the Radical Economic Transformation (RET), Zuma said

that, "I am not afraid of jail. I have been to jail during the struggle. There is no longer any space for democratic debate. The only space there is for court arguments by lawyers. That is not democracy."

Zuma is facing corruption and money laundering charges that date back to the arms deal of the 1990s. He is also facing charges of corruption during his time as the president as he is accused of using favoritism to award lucrative government tenders and deals to the Gupta family.

While the notion of 'innocent until proven guilty' stands in South Africa, many especially the media aligned to white monopoly capital in the country believe that Zuma is guilty on all counts of corruption and thus if he manages to stand in court, the only outcome will be a conviction. Those who are of this view therefore view Zuma's trip to Cuba to be a tactic meant at resisting arrest.

The charges that Zuma is facing also stipulate that he appears before the Zondo Commission of Inquiry into State Capture. The Zondo Commission of Inquiry into State Capture is a body set up to investigate

issues of corruption and underhand dealings that were experienced during the tenure of Zuma's presidency. As he was the man behind the wheel at the time, many believe that Zuma had something to do with state capture or at the very least he knows what was going on and as such, should appear before the Commission to share with the commissioners, the government and the whole country what he knows.

To those who were or are doubting the real intention behind his trip to Cuba, Zuma said there is nothing more to it than seeking medical attention. "I am really sick," is all that the former president had to say. In as much as the statement alone could be unconvincing to many, Zuma's stature during his address proved that he was not himself, he looked a bit jaded and tired. Furthermore, when he removed his dark glasses explaining to his supporters that he hasn't lost his eyesight, those closest to him could easily see the swelling around his eyes.

Among the hundreds who took time to welcome Zuma at the airport were former North West premier Supra Mahumapelo, former finance

Minister Des Van Rooyen, Ekurhuleni mayor Mzwandile Masina, Free State chairperson Sam Mashinini, and Umkhonto weSizwe Military Veterans' Association (MKMVA) president Kebby Maphatsoe and the Association's spokesperson, Carl Niehaus.

Speaking at the welcoming ceremony, former North West premier Supra Mahumapelo said that those who want to see Zuma behind bars must let the law take its course. "Due processes must be taken" before any conclusions are drawn. Former finance minister Des Van Rooyen chipped in saying "We were told that Zuma was the cause of the weak economy, we were told we are the contributors of the plummeting rand. Look now, unemployment is high, poverty is on the rise and state-owned enterprises are struggling, so South Africans are being taken for granted."

Van Rooyen went on to state that most of those who oppose Zuma from the ANC are in bed with 'white monopoly capital' and are being used as pawns in the battle to safeguard and protect wealth accumulated during the Apartheid era. Zuma

according to Van Rooyen is nothing more than a scapegoat used by the current administration to shy away from its failures. The constant court actions including the recent warrant of arrest against Jacob Zuma are all a plot to divert South Africans from real issues affecting the country.

Independent analysts claim that the emergence of RET and the arrival of Jacob Zuma is a calculated move meant at consolidating resistance to Cyril Ramaphosa ahead of the ANC's national general conference set to take place in June. Former finance minister Van Rooyen said that during the ANC's 54th elective conference in 2017, many people were 'bought' to elect Ramaphosa. "They are buying people left, right and center. We



Former president Jacob Zuma at the Zondo Commission of Inquiry into State Capture, July 2019. Photo Tiso Blackstar Group, Thulani Mbele.

have seen what happened at Nasrec, The evidence is there, even today, and they said numbers don't lie. the poor soul Mkhwebane has been

victimized because she revealed his (Ramaphosa) funders."

Though the RET is slowly gaining recognition and traction, the ANC according to a senior member who spoke to the City Press on condition of anonymity was "correct in adopting the resolutions it did at Mangaung and Nasrec to fight corruption." The people who are part of the RET who include Bongani Bongo and Mosebenzi Zwane all have pending cases. According to the anonymous source, the RET with Zuma at the apex is just being used as a symbol of division for those who are in trouble with the law.

Cameroon's Simmering conflict: Ngarbuh massacre makes world headlines is it Fading Too Soon?

By Amos Fofung

Less than a month after the gruesome killing of over 32 civilians, among them pregnant women and children in Cameroon's restive North West region, the incident, like many others, is gradually been swept under the carpet of history like it never happened.

Just like the Pinyin massacre, the kidnapping of school-going children and brutal beheading and amputation of dozens of civilians and administrators in the war-torn English-speaking regions (also known as Anglophone regions), seems to go unnoticed.

In a February 14, 2020, military raid, at least 27 persons were killed in Ngarbu, a village in Donga Mantung division of the North west region. The death toll rose to 32 the next day registering at least 14 children.

Allegedly committed by members of the Cameroonian armed forces, the killings received worldwide condemnation in the days that



Memorial ceremony held on February 21, 2020 at the Saint Theresia Cathedral in Kumbo, North-West region, Cameroon, for victims of the Ngarbuh massacre. Photo HRW.

followed. But with each passing day, the steam boils down receiving less attention and calls for an impartial investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators.

With damming human rights reports from the United Nations, US Department of States and human rights organizations like Amnesty International, Cameroon sure doesn't know how to keep a low profile.

Acknowledging that the killings in Ngarbuh were committed by military forces during a raid on separatist fighters after they killed and beheaded a soldier and ran into the remote village, the military went as far as announcing that nine soldiers had been arrested in connection to the killings.

The government of President Paul Biya, separatist leaders, human rights

organization and world leaders have unanimously condemned the action urging full investigation. One thing they all can't seem to find common grounds in is assessing how many lives were lost in the raid.

Discrepancy in figures

Government ministers have in an attempt to downplay the casualties in Ngarbuh stated that only five to seven civilians were killed during the raid which they added took place at night making it difficult for soldiers to differentiate between civilians and

separatist fighters.

Humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, and OCHA put the death toll at twenty-two a figure international media including Al Jazeera, France 24 and CNN all agree with.

The local media in Cameroon, however, reveals that the casualties are way higher than what is been

reported. A Bamenda-based reporter in whose region the killings took place insist that the death toll is at least 32 after other corpses were later discovered from burnt houses.

The Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, CHRDA headed by former UN legal adviser, Nkongho Felix Agbor, an organization that has been critical in reporting and documenting the atrocities of the Anglophone crisis wrote that; "We have received with shock the gruesome murder of at least 27 lives, alleged to have been committed by the State Defense and Security forces... among the victims are pregnant women and children, who were not only shot with live bullets at close range but were equally burnt to ashes by the elements of the State militia that carried out the operation."

"CHRDA condemns in the strongest terms this barbaric and atrocious act of the soldiers as it is a blatant violation of International Law and the most sacrosanct principle of the right to life."

The organization did announce it was launching an investigation into the Ngarbuh killings alongside others committed by both separatists and government soldiers this year.

UN, Commonwealth, US... mount pressure on Cameroon

In three independent outings, top diplomats from the United Nations, Commonwealth, and United States, have in strong terms condemned the brutal killing of some 32 civilians last week in Ngarbuh, Donga Mantung Division, Northwest Regions of Cameroon.

United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres called on the government of Cameroon to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident that caused the lives of over thirty-two civilians among them children and pregnant women, and ensure those responsible are held accountable.

Taking to his twitter account, US Secretary of State for African Affairs, Tibor Nagy wrote; "we condemn the killings of civilians in Ngarbu, NW Region of Cameroon, and offer condolences to the victims' families. We call on the government

to authorize an independent investigation, ensure safety of witnesses, and bring perpetrators to justice."

He urged that there is a need for the violence to stop.

Commonwealth Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland, February 18, issued a press statement, condemning the massacre of civilians in Ngarbuh, Donga Mantung Division, Northwest Regions of Cameroon.

She also called for an impartial investigation so that the perpetrators of the act can be identified and held accountable.

US diplomat wants ICC to indict Biya regime over alleged crimes against humanity

Erstwhile United States Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State in charge of African Affairs, Herman Cohen, has prayed the International Criminal Court, ICC, to urgently investigate the Biya regime for alleged crimes against humanity committed in the troubled Anglophone regions.

The former US top official took to social media during the week to launch the appeal following the brutal killings including pregnant women and children in the locality of Ngarbuh in Donga Mantung division.

"In the wake of this massacre of civilian women and children in Northwest Cameroon's Ntumbaw-Ngarbuh village, I call on the International Criminal Court to investigate Paul Biya's regime for crimes against humanity," the diplomat wrote on Twitter.

Thousands dead

Conflict between Cameroon's army and separatist fighters seeking to form a breakaway state called Ambazonia began after the government cracked down violently on peaceful protesters complaining of being marginalized by the French-speaking majority in 2016

The conflict has forced half a million people to flee and presented President Paul Biya with the biggest threat in his four decades of rule.

The four-year conflict has claimed more than 3,000 lives and forced more than 700,000 people to flee their homes.



Following global outcry, President Biya ordered for an inquiry into the massacre.

The war in Anglophone Cameroon's Anglophone crisis is deadlocked. What started as a civil society protest has escalated into a full-blown armed conflict. Failed talks and the unwillingness of separatist leaders and the government of Cameroon to make a concession and broker for peace now threatens Cameroon right at the core.

Cameroon has been embroiled in a deepening secession crisis as fighters in its English-speaking regions attempt to break away from the country's French-speaking majority and establish their state: Ambazonia.

On September 10, 2019, Paul Biya, the country's octogenarian president, announced his intention to start a national dialogue to resolve the crisis. It was the first time Biya publicly acknowledged the disturbances in the country's Anglophone regions, whose

inhabitants make up about one-fifth of the population.

Over a third of people in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest regions, where most Anglophones live, now require humanitarian assistance. The conflict has killed 2,000 people and left more than 500,000 internally displaced. In the areas most affected, it has radically disrupted everyday life, with 40 percent of health care centers and 80 percent of schools still shuttered. On occasion, classrooms have been repurposed as bases for armed separatists, and children fear gunfire on their way to school.

With killings multiplying day-in-day-out, getting both parties on the dialogue table seems to drift further away with the humanitarian crisis hitting hard on the argil population.

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Malawi: Controversies reign supreme over court orders

...Mutharika denies to assent electoral bills, not firing electoral commissioners

By James Mwala

The Southern African nation is still struggling with an unprecedented wave of political and legal turns.

As it is, fresh elections are expected in May yet there stands an appeal for the polls order.

Although the Supreme Court is due to hear the appeal on 15th April, parties are engaged in what would definitely be understood as campaign.

This follows the throwing out of an application to stay the 3rd February nullification order by the court.

In the fresh election order, the Constitutional Court ordered for the adoption of the 50+1 election law, a move that has currently seen parties forming alliances.

First is was the ruling Democratic Progressive Party which is led by President Peter Mutharika and United Democratic Front led by son to former Malawi President Atupele Muluzi.

Now, the petitioners in the presidential case, the country's oldest party, the Malawi Congress Party led by Lazarus Chakwera has announced of an alliance with the UTM whose leader is Saulos Chilima whose position as Vice President of the country came to life following the nullification of the 2019 elections.

At the moment, the Malawi Electoral Commission has also come under fire for hiring South African law firm Mboweni Maluleke Inc Attorneys for the case.



As the legal tango rages on Peter Mutharika remains in power. Photo Thoko Chilondi ,AP.

Malawians who took to the social media feel the fee in the region of MK 600 Million is too high for the public pulse.

However, Mutharika has denied to assent to the electoral bills and also denied to fire Malawi Electoral Commission commissioners.

The civil society has since ignited plans to stage another wave of demonstrations over these developments.

Meanwhile, the Commission has indicated that the old Electoral laws would be in use now that Mutharika has not assented to the ones passed in parliament recently.

The Jane Ansah led Commissioners is being slammed for running a fraudulent election although it is still

appealing against the ruling.

Thus far, Ansah has indicated that the Commission will be engaging electoral stakeholders over matters to do with elections management.

However, legal expert, University of Malawi Law Professor Garton Kamchedzera risks being impeached over the situation.

Mutharika's Spokesperson Mgeme Kalilani said the Presidents finds it ironic to fire the commissioners yet they also oversaw the voting into power of Members of Parliament and Ward Councilors.

He added that the parliament overstepped its mandate to tackle pieces of legislation that the President had not assented to.

With this, Mutharika said there is

need for the three arms of government to have distinct jurisdictions.

He also said that the recent recommendation by the Public Appointments Committee does not hold water because the processes that led to the inquiry of the commissioners was questionable.

However, Kamchedzera is quoted as saying is at risk of being impeached.

"So if he fails to assent to the bills, he will be in precarious situation and he will be tantamount to the breach of the constitution making himself impeachable," said Kamchedzera.

While slamming at his critics recently, Mutharika said he would even go ahead to 'deal' with all of them.

Few weeks ago, Human Right Defenders Coalition leaders Timothy Mtambo, Gift Trapence and MacDonald Sembereka were arrested.

They are being accused of inciting violence for announcing they were mobilising people to march to seal state houses.

As it is, the political landscape has been crippled down by uncertainties resting on what will transpire in the next few months for the country.

Experts describe the current political situation as one of the worst the country has been into.



F.W. de Klerk Walking in the Shadows of Apartheid

By James N. Kariuki*

South Africa's latest spectacle was last week's ninety-minute delay of the presidential state of the nation address (SONA.) The contentious issue was that F. W. de Klerk, the country's last apartheid state president, was seated in the public gallery of Parliament. His presence deeply bothered members of the red uniformed Economic Freedom Fighters, the EFF.

Before President Cyril Ramaphosa started his address EFF leader, Julius Malema objected to de Klerk's presence arguing that it imposed a contradiction to the extent that parliament is the ultimate embodiment of democracy. Yet, he continued, de Klerk was a criminal, a murderer and a racist to the core. The EFF would not share the same space with him in that forum; he needed to be evicted.

The underlying issue here is that South Africans do not agree on the simple question: who/what brought about the demise of South Africa's draconian system of apartheid thirty years ago?

Obviously, Malema and his followers are reluctant to confer credit to de Klerk for the feat that required great skill, courage and strength. Having grown up in South Africa as a white person, he automatically benefitted immensely from apartheid as he climbed all the way to its top. In 1989 he assumed the presidency of that system of racial discrimination, white privilege and supremacy. It is hardly absurd that some still wonder: How could a man who benefitted so much from apartheid turn around and spearhead its demise?

Given the choice, Julius Malema and his followers would rather attribute credit for the change to the African friends who extended a helping hand to the South African liberation forces that fought apartheid from inside and outside the country. Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, Cuba's Fidel Castro and



Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk hold their hands high as they address a huge crowd of people in front of the Union Building after the first presidential inauguration on May 10, 1994. REUTERS Juda Ngwenya.

others, though generally portrayed as controversial, were friends-in-need to the extent that they were openly part of the global anti-apartheid forces.

For a while apartheid was distinctly under siege. Countless critics abhorred it on the grounds of racial solidarity. Tanzania's Julius Nyerere spoke for many in stating that it was morally unacceptable to condemn a people "for being born who they were." Against this attitude, anti-apartheid sentiments gathered momentum worldwide.

By the late 1980s, apartheid was clearly on the back foot. International sanctions were in place, domestic violence engineered by 'clandestine' liberation movements was rampant; the republic was in disarray. Why

then didn't the forces of liberation come to the rescue? Apartheid was armed to the teeth. Experts estimate that apartheid South Africa could have survived military intrusion for 5 to 10 years. Would there be a South Africa left after ten years of constant warfare? In the days to come, Nelson Mandela himself reminded his people that they were not dealing with a defeated enemy.

There was only one person in South Africa (and the world) positioned to formulate and implement a non-violent route to fundamental change in apartheid South Africa. That person was none other than F.W. de Klerk. He opted for dialogue and negotiations rather than violence. As President he had an advantage over

and above everybody else: he was positioned to communicate with the opposing forces from the ANC to the far-right Afrikaners who were most threatened by his project.

Three months into his presidency, de Klerk launched his project. Nelson Mandela was released from prison, all banned political parties were legalized and secret delegations were dispatched out of the country to undertake secret talks with the exiled leaders of ANC leaders.

To the EFF, conferring credit to de Klerk for the peaceful transfer of power was hardly a significant achievement. In a vindictive mindset, what matters is that de Klerk is alleged to have been a murderer and a subsequent apologist for apartheid. It was deceptive that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Nelson Mandela (1993) for embarking on the democratic route. Indeed, the logic continues, de Klerk should return the award to the Nobel Prize Committee and should be stripped of presidential benefits at home.

But to the neutral observer, de Klerk's greatness did not come from his assessment of apartheid's qualification as a social-economic order. That greatness came from accepting that, no matter how enticing it seemed to the Afrikaner community, apartheid's time had come to an end; it must be dismantled.

Regardless of what drove de Klerk to action, he was successful.

And ending apartheid peacefully was no easy matter. Those who remember those days insist that the alternative to talking and negotiations "was too ghastly to contemplate." For this, South Africans owe de Klerk a debt of gratitude equivalent to what African-Americans owe Abraham Lincoln for abolishing slavery.

* James N. Kariuki is a Kenyan Professor of International Relations (Emeritus). He comments on public issues in various international publications. He runs the blog Global Africa at www.panafricanvisions.com



Walter Sisulu and wife Albertina, with Winnie Mandela and Nelson Mandela at a rally to celebrate the release of Mandela from jail in 1990. Photo Courtesy.

EFF Pressures Government and De Klerk to Apologize Over Apartheid Comments

By Prince Kurupati

South Africa's past just like that of many other African countries is still raw. The Apartheid era though it crumbled over 20 years ago still remains fresh in the minds of all South Africans. Black South Africans and black sympathetic as well as repentant white South Africans view the Apartheid era as a dark era that should be remembered at all times as a crime against humanity. Supremacist as well as unrepentant white South Africans do however view Apartheid differently, to them Apartheid was an era in which South Africa rose prominently notably on the economic front and it is the era that laid the foundation and propelled South Africa to become an economic giant both on the African continent and globally.

The diverse views that are held by different South Africans make any form of contrition, forgiveness, and reconciliation difficult. When one group states its position, that position is quickly denounced by the opposing group. This impasse therefore is inhibiting South Africa to reconcile and unite and move beyond the issue of race and class. In the past month, a case in point relating to this surfaced and it served as an example of how South Africa is polarized on the issue of Apartheid. This issue relating to the comments made by the last white president of South Africa, FW de Klerk, the government's initial response and the response of the third largest political party in the country, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

South African national broadcaster, SABC at the start of the month of February invited FW de Klerk to an interview as a way of commemorating his 1990 speech. During the interview, the former president was asked to share his views on Apartheid (the legalized discrimination against non-white people) specifically, to confirm



Julius Malema of the EFF led the charge in calling for De Klerk to apologize.

if Apartheid was a crime against humanity.

In his response, FW de Klerk refused to accept that Apartheid was a crime against humanity. To classify a crime as a crime against humanity, FW de Klerk said there should be a high number of casualties. In the case of Apartheid, only a few deaths occurred directly as a result of the discrimination and as such, Apartheid does not qualify to be classified a crime against humanity. The former president did however acknowledge that Apartheid was indeed a crime and for that, he apologized for the role he played during the Apartheid era as the president.

As a way of commemorating FE de Klerk's 1990 speech in which he announced reforms that marked the unbanning of the ANC, the SACP and several of their leaders including South Africa's first black president Nelson Mandela, the ANC took the decision to welcome FW de Klerk to the House of Assembly. Though noble, the decision was nonetheless

puzzling. This owing to the fact that the man whom they invited had recently made some polarizing comments on national television. ANC's decision to invite FW de Klerk at first seemed to be a non-issue as only a few individuals questioned the reasoning behind it. This probably owing to the fact that FW de Klerk in recent times has been a peripheral figure in the country hence only a few paid attention to his comments on national television.

However, as FW de Klerk's polarizing comments seemed to pass unnoticed, everything changed on the day of the State of the Nation address. As Cyril Ramaphosa was delivering his speech, the leader of the EFF, Julius Malema interrupted the speech stating, "We have a murderer in the house." Malema went on to state that in our midst, we have an "apartheid apologist...with blood on his hands." Malema's comments led to serious confrontations and confusion in the House of Assembly with the president only resuming his speech an hour and

half later.

Malema's stunt in the House of Assembly paved the way for more backlash against FW de Klerk and the ANC government which had invited him to attend the State of the Nation address. FW de Klerk's decision to issue a defiant statement via his charitable foundation did not help matters as it only angered and fuelled more backlash. In his defiant response, FW de Klerk said that the attempts to classify Apartheid as a crime against humanity was simply an agitprop project initiated by the Soviet Union meant at portraying South Africa's painful history in a black/white, good/evil framework.

FW de Klerk in a later interview with the BBC went further to defiantly state that his comments over Apartheid were in line with the views of the international community. After the UN general Assembly declared that Apartheid was a crime against humanity, several countries including the US and the UK both of whom are permanent members of the Security

Council voted against approving this description.

In the wake of his defiant response, several prominent South Africans took turns to aim attack at the former president in support of the EFF. Archbishop Desmond Tutu through his foundation called on FW de Klerk to withdraw his comments citing "It is incumbent on leaders and former leaders of the white community, in particular, to demonstrate the courage, magnanimity and compassion necessary to contribute to societal healing." Prominent journalist Carol Paton said "De Klerk soaked up the glory and the money on the speaking circuit when he should have repented every single day." Political commentator Somadoda Fikeni said "Sadly, FE de Klerk, his foundation, and the behavior of some of our white compatriots of even trying...to justify the systematic destruction of black lives for generations, has opened old wounds at the time when many are questioning the very democracy and its liberation dividends."

Constitutional expert Pierre de Vos weighed in saying "Far too many white South Africans...continue to deny the full horror of Apartheid. They refuse to admit that they or their parents actively, or tacitly, propped up the system and still reap



It is incumbent on leaders and former leaders of the white community, in particular, to demonstrate the courage, magnanimity and compassion necessary to contribute to societal healing.

the benefits bestowed on them by that system." Professor and expert on International Law, Philippe Sands said "It is unarguable and hopeless to claim today that Apartheid is not, and has never been a crime against humanity."

The backlash aimed at FW de Klerk in the wake of his comments made the ANC to quickly revisit its decision to embrace the former president as it was too receiving condemnation for inviting FW de Klerk to the House of Assembly. To distance itself from FW de Klerk and from his comments, ANC stated that the former president's comments are a "blatant whitewash which...flies in the face of our commitments to reconciliation

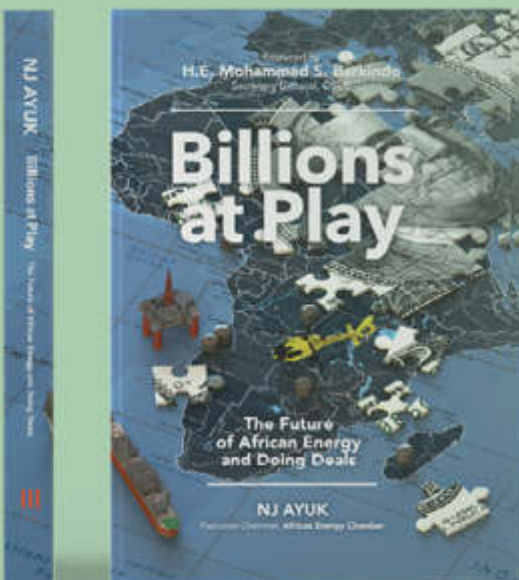
and nation building."

FW de Klerk himself had to make a major u-turn as he ended up withdrawing his comments acknowledging that his comments about Apartheid had been "totally unacceptable." "I agree with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Foundation that this is not the time to quibble about the degrees of unacceptability of Apartheid. It was totally unacceptable. The FW de Klerk Foundation has accordingly decided to withdraw its statement of 14 February unconditionally and apologizes for the confusion, anger, and hurt that it has caused." The statement went on saying FW de Klerk Foundation supports the 1994

Statute of Rome provisions which described Apartheid as a crime against humanity.

In as much as FW de Klerk's decision to withdraw his comments was welcomed by many, the EFF viewed the withdrawal as a publicity stunt meant at garnering support. In a statement, the EFF said "As the EFF, we reflect the apology as one that lacks sincerity and relevance, as the individual who was the source of these hateful views remains unrepentant on his comments and avoids accountability by using a foundation which bears his name," The EFF went further stating that South Africa finds itself in the quandary it is in today because of acceptance of apologies without justice. For true reconciliation to be achieved, the party said men who perpetuated unspeakable crimes against black people like De Klerk – must face the might of the law.

EFF's pronouncements were also echoed by the ANC through its spokesperson Pule Mabe who said. "The sincerity of Mr. de Klerk's apology will be tested by his posture to selflessly commit both in words and in deeds towards the advancement of the ongoing reconstruction and development project through nation building in his local community."



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Sabelo Mbokazi: A Mafia Group is Running the AU Recruitment Process

AU Chairperson Faki Mahamat accused of Cronyism and Corruption by AU Staff

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Staff of the African Union, AU have accused its Chairperson, Moussa Faki of cronyism and corruption in the appointment of officials while noting that a mafia group is running that same recruitment process.

According to the staff, the mafia group is hell-bent on destroying the administrative function of the Commission and bringing it to its knees, with the support of AU Chair.

In an interoffice Memorandum signed by Sabelo Mbokazi, President of the AU Staff Association titled Save African Union Commission, Dismantle the Rampant Corrupt Recruitment and Appointment Cartel; AU Commission chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat is accused of involvement in a “mafia-style” cartel that operates with impunity at the highest levels of the institution.

The memo was written in the wake of an extraordinary meeting of the AU Staff Association, which was held on February 28. The meeting was called to discuss long-running grievances about the working conditions of staff at the AU Commission, which functions as a secretariat for the continental body.

The appointment of a Head of Human Resource Management without the due recruitment process...is regarded by staff as the manifestation of glaring cronyism and total collapse of leadership. They noted that with the AU Chair sitting at the helm of the organization, the rules have been indiscriminately flouted and chaos prevails both at the headquarters and Regional offices.

In particular, staff raised concerns about the fact that senior appointments are routinely made without following due process. They claim that the recent confirmation of a Head of Human Resources Management was unlawful.

“The vexing question is what logic was used by the Chairperson



Chairman Faki is accused of cronyism and corruption in the appointment of officials.

to confirm a staff member who was pushed through the back door to act in such a key administrative position without even conducting interviews and without relevant expertise (qualification) and experience? Has this organization fallen so low,” the President of the AU Staff Association questioned.

“The confirmation of ‘cronies’ without qualifications, without interviews and without following due to recruitment processes” has turned the AU Commission into “a den without rules, characterized by arbitrary administrative decisions and impunity, which is manipulated by mafia characters.” “The staff cannot sit and watch few individuals

destroying and paralyzing the commission,” they said.

The staff expressed profound dismay that instead of saving the organization as the Chairpersons, He has “succumbed to the corrupt cabal and clandestinely signs to recommend unlawful, irregular, “confirmation” of the acting Head of HRM incumbent...”

They have called on the Chairperson to reconsider what they term “illegal confirmation” by rescinding or altering the recommendation. “If you do not, your unlawful action will relegate you to becoming a willful accomplice with the mafia which has created favouritism backdoor...” Sabelo Mbokazi said. “... The

Commission leadership has to act swiftly to dismantle the cartel that is handling the recruitment and put some control.”

AU commission Chair Faki declined to comment but his spokesperson, Ebba Kalondo, said as quoted by M&G: “The chairperson has always engaged on organizational issues. In fact, he is the one who instituted the forensic audit currently under way in the organization, amid other actions.”

This is not the first time the AU Chairperson Moussa Faki and other senior leadership has been accused of corruption. In a November 2018 letter to the Ghanaian president his deputy, Thomas Kwesi-Quartey, accused Faki of nepotism for appointing an “old crony” to a plush ambassadorial post. “This was “not good governance,” Kwesi-Quartey said.

Ahmat Awad Sakine, a Chadian diplomat, was appointed as the AU’s permanent representative to the European Union in September 2017. Smail Chergui, the African Union’s peace and security commissioner, allegedly signed Sakine’s letter of appointment, as reported by M&G.

He, however, denied the allegation saying: “As you know, commissioners have no admin responsibility ... the office of Brussels is not under my authority ... So this matter is simply impossible.”

In February 2018, a member of the AU’s advisory board on corruption resigned, claiming that no effort was being made to fight corruption at the heart of the organization.

In late 2018, a panel of inquiry was established by the AU to investigate allegations of sexual harassment within the organization. The panel found that sexual harassment was rife within the organization, but its findings went much further: it named at least 40 individuals who were implicated in serious allegations of fraud, corruption, nepotism, sexual assault, and sexual harassment.



story 9 2 Pic 2. The memo says Chairman Faki AU has turned the AU Commission into “a den without rules.jpg

Cameroon: Ruling CPDM Party Continues with Obese Majority In Controversial Elections

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Following the proclamation of the February 9, Municipal and Parliamentary elections in Cameroon, the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) has exercised its stronghold in the parliament, and councils. The party got 139 seats out of the 167 seats available at the National Assembly.

The NUDP came second with Seven seats, while Cabral Libi's PCRN got Five seats, positioning itself at the third position alongside the SDF Party. The CDU has Four seats, FSNC got three seats. The election turnout was considerable low with just 45.9% turn out.

Since the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1990, only seven opposition parties out of over 253 registered political parties have been represented in the 180-seat National Assembly. Biya's CPDM has won absolute majority since 1990, and continues to use the machinery of the state to guarantee a single-party type of political domination.

The February Nine elections were important to renew the legitimacy of Parliament and municipal councils in the wake of a new decentralization that is expected by many citizens. Unfortunately, the current political and security climate might make that difficult — leaving a permanent marker in how the country is governed.

The victory of the ruling party has thus given them another impetus to drive their agenda they wish to and not taking into consideration the plight of every day citizens of the country. With their majority in the councils and parliament, many are hoping that their representatives will do more in bringing to an end the Anglophone crisis which has caused material, financial, and human losses.

The downfall of the SDF Party

The President may just be giving a life wire to the SDF Party with election rerun in some areas of the North West and South West Regions.



President Paul Biya voting during the Municipal and Legislative elections. File photo.

The President of the Republic in a communiqué dated March 6, called elections rerun across eleven constituencies in the North West and South West Regions have been programmed for March 22, 2020.

The SDF party filled a petition against the CPDM, Elections Cameroon, ELECAM and the Ministry of Territorial Administration, MINAT. The party called for a partial cancellation of elections arguing that insecurity, low voter turnout in both Anglophone regions because of tense security atmospheres and ELECAM's violating the electoral code by grouping several polling stations into polling centers thereby making it difficult for voters to identify their polling station, marred the process.

Many political observers have noted that the election rerun may just be an opportunity for the SDF Party to gain more seats that will allow them to form a parliamentary group. Others say it is just a ploy for the ruling CPDM Party to allow the SDF Party to win the contested seats.

The last elections saw the SDF

party dropping from second to third, picking just Five seats at the National Assembly. Last Parliamentary election in 2013 saw the SDF picking up 18 seats. With this number of seats, Ni John Fru Ndi's party losses the possibility to form a parliamentary group, except the situation changes after the election rerun in the North West and South West Regions.

SDF's poor showing in the twin elections can be downed to numerous factors, with the Anglophone crisis top of the pile. Prior to the elections, many politicians of the party was threatened by separatist fighters not to take part in the elections and many had to abandon the contest. With its stronghold in the North West and South West Regions, it was virtually impossible for the party to have a strong showing in the elections.

The fighting has forced about 40 000 people to seek refuge in Nigeria and over 450 000 have been internally displaced. This situation accounts for the 2018 presidential election turnout of just 5.36% and 15.94% of voters in the North West

and South West Regions respectively, according to ReliefWeb.

Efficiency of MRC Party's boycott of twin elections

Another opposition party that is still going strong despite having no seat in the National Assembly or at the councils is the MRC Party of Maurice Kamto, who boycotted the February nine Municipal and Legislative elections.

The party through its leader Maurice Kamto -who finished in second place during the 2018 Presidential election — has been calling for opposition political parties not to take part in the twin elections until President Biya addresses the Anglophone crisis.

Cameroon's leading opposition political parties remain ambivalent regarding their participation in the polls. They legitimately criticize the electoral law and the government's control over the elections' governing bodies. However, they know that boycotting the polls can affect them negatively.

Their call for boycott was however

not respected by majority of the parties, with even the leading opposition at the time, SDF deciding to take part in the election with disastrous consequences.

The participation of majority of the parties in Cameroon shows that the MRC Party is yet to rubber stamp its influence in the country. The party, however continues to pull a handful of supporters at each gathering, showing that their influence is still there though they did not participate in the elections.

Many political observers say the MRC deciding to boycott the twin elections was a missed opportunity for the party to gain a considerable number of seats at the National Assembly and at the councils. Through its representatives, the party could change how politics is done and bring to debate at the National Assembly, the Anglophone crisis which the ruling party has decided to ignore.

Speaking on that issue, the Minister of Territorial Administration, Atanga Nji said "the calls for boycott made by leaders of political parties who lacked the courage to confront the electorate in the legislative and municipal elections were largely ignored by the vast majority of Cameroonians.

"At the close of the polls, it is clear that the boycott calls made by ill intention political and lamed terrorists did not have any impact on the population. The terrorists are hence reduced to social media propaganda and manipulation to influence weak minds."

Despite not taking part in the Municipal and Legislative elections, the MRC Party continues to gather support from Cameroonians, and International community. It is rare to see a politician or political party that boycotts and election are still continues to pull massive crowd at each gathering.

The party through its leader Maurice Kamto has continued to hold the government accountable for all its misdeeds especially the issue of the Anglophone crisis. In a crowd pulling meeting at the MRC Littoral Regional Headquarters, Maurice Kamto said his mission is to transform Cameroon and give a deserving living condition to Cameroonians. He has promised a change in the lives of Cameroonians youths, who he says deserve better than what they are currently faced with.

The leader was recently in Europe, and the American continent trying to get up support from International



The last twin elections of February 9 saw low turnout across the North West and South West Regions.



Maurice Kamto and his MRC Party boycotted the elections.

community. He has berated the failed to decree a national day of Cameroon government saying it mourning in honour of the Ngarbuh-Ntumbaw victims. is heartless and a disgrace for the government of Cameroon to have

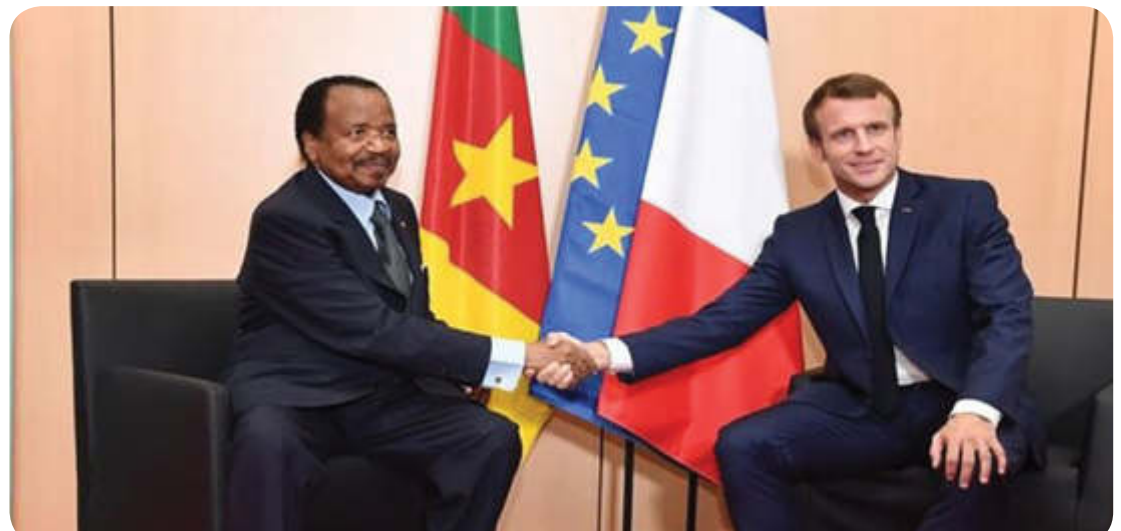
Cameroon goes head-on with France, demands Macron stops 'colonial-styled' intervention

By Amos Fofung

Dating as far back as the colonial days, Cameroon has had a complex relationship with France. The two countries share historical, linguistic and cultural ties and many Cameroonian elites have studied and lived in France.

Cameroon is France's largest recipient of foreign assistance and one of its biggest trading partners in sub-Saharan Africa, with French companies maintaining a strong presence in the Cameroonian economy. France also has robust military-to-military relations and people-to-people ties.

The bromance between the two states lasting some six decades, (since



While President Biya did not respond directly, senior government and ruling party officials issued statements more or less critical of Mr Macron.

Cameroon gained independence in 1960) has been dwindling for some years now but recently it might just have hit a new low.

It's an open secret that Cameroon's president Paul Biya is gradually drifting from France and embracing China as an economic and development partner.

In the early 2000s there was hardly a mega project, be it the construction of bridge, dams, highway or ports that was not handed to a French company. That's not the case today.

The five-starred flag of China can be seen hanging on almost all major projects in Cameroon. And then, there is the Bollore crisis.

Bollore is a French owned market-oriented Transport and Logistics company operating across Africa. In Cameroon, it manages all the sea ports and rail transport sector. Cameroon wants this to stop and suspended the company's activities at the Douala sea port handing it to Swiss firm Terminal Investment Limited (TIL). And yes, Bollore did sue the government of Cameroon. The case is still pending in court.

This is just one among the numerous trade-wars and economic clashes Cameroon now faces with France as the Central Africa economic giant tries to breakaway.

That however, does not account for the current feud between the two.

The February video

On Feb. 22, a video went viral on social media showing French President, Emmanuel Macron, telling a Cameroonian activist in Paris that he had pressured Biya to release opposition leader, Maurice Kamto from jail.

Kamto was released in October last year after spending nine months in jail in connection with post-election protests. He claimed he was the actual winner of the October 2018 presidential election and led protests when the Constitutional Council gave the victory to Biya, who has been president since 1982.



Protesters march in Yaounde with messages hostile to Macron and the French. Photo credit Polycarp Essomba, RFI.

"I told Biya we must not meet in Lyon if Kamto is not released. He (Kamto) was freed because we put pressure," Macron told the activist.

Macron said he was aware of the violence going on in Cameroon's English-speaking regions and called on his Cameroonian counterpart to quickly "resolve the Anglophone problem, open up the democratic space, release all political prisoners, decentralize and respect human rights."

He went ahead to say that he would make a phone call to Biya to force him to release all other political prisoners in the country.

A huge slap to the face of the African autocrat who reigns with fear not just in Cameroon but across Africa.

Though President Paul Biya never commented publicly to Macron's remarks, his surrogates fought the war on his behalf.

Cameroon's Minister of Communication René Emmanuel Sadi avoided criticizing French authorities, merely requesting that they "help Cameroon handle the problems it's currently facing." In a statement, the government affirmed that it "intends to retain control of its destiny." He urged that "foreign friendly countries" should desist from listening to activists whose aim is to

tarnish the reputation of Cameroon."

Issa Tchiroma Bakary, a Minister and opposition leader of the Alliance for Democracy and Development one of the parties forming the presidential majority, berated Macron and denounced his "prejudicial comments that attack the honor and dignity of Cameroon's president."

During a televised discussion, political scientist Mathias Eric Owona Nguini said with irony that "Macron's remarks aren't worth a micron."

University of Yaounde international relations expert Elvis Ngole Ngole said Biya and Macron should talk so they can smooth over relations. «Because of Cameroon's geo-strategic position, I think France has a lot to benefit by keeping relations between herself and Cameroon,» he said.

Supporters as well as member of his political party all took turns to lecture Emmanuel Macron on democracy urging him to stop interfering in the polity of Cameroon.

Cameroonians protest 'colonial attitude' of French President

French President Emmanuel Macron's remarks that he pressured Cameroon's President Paul Biya to release an opposition leader was not well received by a handful of Cameroonian youths who did not fail

to show their frustration.

Groupings of more than 100 youths rallied in front of the French Embassy in Cameroon's capital demanding an apology from the French president.

Alex Ndoumbe, a 30-year-old teacher, said they are not happy with Emmanuel Macron's criticism of human rights in Cameroon and President Paul Biya's handling of Anglophone rebels.

«We are protesting against what president Macron said concerning our country and mostly, a president of his caliber, he was not supposed to speak like that against a respectful country like Cameroon. A country which fought for its independence since 1960. What we want from Macron is to ask for forgiveness to the president of the country and also to the entire nation of Cameroon. We will sleep here because we want him to ask for forgiveness immediately,» said Ndoumbe in an interview with VOA.

Brandishing placards and chanting slogans the youths said: «We will not give up our country for France... Cameroon is an independent country and can solve its problems. We don't need France to tell us what to do and what not to do.»



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Daniel Arap Moi: Most hated President in Kenyan history

By Samuel Ouma

In early February, 2020 Kenyans were in mourning mood following the demise of their ex-President Daniel Arap Moi. The second President of Kenya breathed his last breath on February 4 after long unknown sickness though reports had indicated that he had been suffering from breathing complications.

He was laid to rest on February 12 at his Kabarak home located in Nakuru County, Northwest of Nairobi in the Great Rift Valley.

Moi, who died at the age of 95 rose to power in 1978 and ruled the African country for more than two decades. He joined the Parliament in 1955 and later founded Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), an opposition party which brought together minority communities which had lost an election to Kenya African National Union (KANU) headed by the Kenyan first President Jomo Kenyatta.

Moi decamped to the government which saw him being appointed the Vice-President. When Kenyatta unexpectedly died he took over as the Head of the State until 2002 when he peacefully relinquished power.

The former president's death elicited mixed memories across the country. According to his critics Moi was an autocrat who ill-treated those who oppose him.

Torture

During his 24-year-rule, he was accused of gross violation of human rights by both local and international organizations. Amnesty International Kenya said that Moi's tenure was marred with unlawful detention and torture.

Nairobi's Nyayo House, was the secret torture chamber. Political opponents, human activists, journalists, students and academicians were the most affected. They were stripped naked, mercilessly flogged and clobbered before being locked in a waterlogged cell.

The room was described as dark,



A checkered legacy for Daniel Arap Moi the second President of Kenya.

filled with cold water and seats. Some also said that the house basement had many cubicles separated by one long corridor.

Some of the survivors such as the opposition leader Raila Odinga, Timothy Njoya, retired preacher at Presbyterian Church of East Africa and Koigi Wamwere, former human activist, politician, journalist have narrated the unspeakable experience.

«I was almost killed at All Saints Cathedral. They left me for dead and I was being taken to the mortuary until a doctor insisted I should be taken to the intensive care unit at Nairobi Hospital. «I had a broken skull which was a centimeter from touching the brain. I had a fractured wrist. All four fingers on one hand were broken. I had to go to Canada for treatment. According to the doctor, I had 52 injuries on my body including many broken ribs,» narrated Rev. Timothy Njoya.

«The blows to my head dazed me and I fell to the floor. And, as I lay there, Rono (security officer) and the others jumped on my chest and my genitals,» Raila Odinga mentioned in his book, The Flame of Freedom.

«We had long and short calls in the same water, which we also drank when thirsty,» state Koigi Wamwere.

Politics

Politically, Moi instigated ethnic hatred that is now a menace in the African country. He played one community against each other for his political gain. As a result of his action deadly ethnic clashes were witnessed in the country during 1992 and 1997 polls. Several people lost their lives and property of untold value was devastated.

He sowed ethnic hatred which is still hampering the country's unity. Negative ethnicity is one of the main challenges bedevilling Kenya after corruption. He also carried crackdown on those leaders and their supporters who were spearheading for democracy. Those who took to the streets to force the government to accept multi-party politics were brutally beaten and detained by the security officers.

Reports state that Moi also used state money to buy politicians and used them to destabilize the opponents. He was fond of enticing a political figure with unlimited

amount of money and once his goal was achieved, he dumped him and looks for someone else.

The issued funds were donated to churches, schools and in fundraising to gain to political mileage, a political practice which is going on in this age and era. Moreover, unfair distribution of national resources by Moi's administration has emerged as the one cause of constant conflicts witnessed among Kenyans. He favoured some regions at the expense of others.

Economy

The economy was at its deathbed when he handed over power to his successor Mwai Kibaki. When he took power economic growth was at 6 per cent, a number that dwindled to 0.6 per cent by 2002 when his rule came to an end.

Poor economy was caused by his biased policies which favoured himself and his cronies when it came to distribution of health, constant drought, ethnic clashes and Gulf war witnessed in 1991 that led to an increase in oil prices.

Deaths

During Moi's era there were scores

of assassinations which are yet to be resolved. Some of the high profile people alleged to have been killed by the regime were ex-Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Ouko, John Kaiser, a Catholic priest, Titus Adungosi, University of Nairobi student leader and Alexander Kipsang Muge, Anglican Bishop among many others.

On the other hand, he promoted education by rolling out free milk program to all public schools to keep students in school.

"Every student was looking forward to going to school to get the milk; other than the milk there was the good education, those are the good memories I have of him," stated one Kenyan.

He has been commended for keeping the country intact during



President Uhuru Kenyatta paying his respects to Arap Moi.

mayhem.

"During his stewardship, we all know the turbulence that the country went through. That the country held together is a credit we must not deny him," according to former minister and Bungoma Senator Moses Wetangula.

He scored high in women empowerment program, anti-poaching fight, re-a forestation, revival of the collapsed East African Community and finally fought for the formation of the common market for Eastern and Southern African country.

Many Kenyans especially those who existed during his rule expressed their dissatisfaction with his leadership noting that he brought miseries to a number of people.

Kigali is ripe for CHOGM 2020

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

From government top officials to motorcyclists in the outskirts of Kigali, preparations are underway to host the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2020 (CHOGM).

The country of a thousand hills as nicknamed by its people, Rwanda streets will be flocked by over 8000 participants from 22 to 27 June 2020.

It is one of biggest forums that Kigali will be host since Rwanda committed itself to becoming a hub for meetings.

New roads are being constructed in Kigali others being renovated or expanded.

Last year, Government approved a budget of 20 billion Rwandan francs (about 21 million USD) aimed at CHOGM preparations including 10 billion francs (about 10 million USD) that is being used to expand parking space for aircrafts at Kigali International Airport and passengers lounge at the terminal.



People are being mobilised over hygiene in order to prepare for CHOGM.

Kigali Vice Mayor in charge of Urbanization and Infrastructure, Dr Nsabimana Ernest recently told local media that all new roads are expected to be completed by April this year.

"Construction works are going well though we are experiencing heavy rains and relocating population", he said

Apart from infrastructure, security also has been tightened. Security

personnel both public and private are being trained in different aspects.

Currently about 800 private security personnel are benefitting from the training in areas such as search techniques, luggage scanning, searching vehicles, and using modern security gadgets, among others.

Population mobilized

Byukusenge Emmanuel, is a motorcyclist who Pan Africa Visions

met at an English training school in Kigali where he is learning basics of English.

His target is CHOGM where he intends to earn much through communicating well with his English speakers clients.

"It has been difficult when we meet foreigners who want our service, and we end up being paid less because we failed to bargain. We are expecting much from this language center."

The center in which Byukusenge studies from is one of three that have been established in Kigali by Rwanda cooperative of

Motorcyclists (Ferwacotamo) to train its members and equip them with right skills that will enable them to render services to CHOGM participants.

Coordinator of Ferwacotamo, Ngarambe Daniel said, setting up a training center will help their members not only during CHOGM 2020 but also after.

“There was a time a foreigner would approach a motorcyclist and they failed to bargain because they don’t understand each other. Language would become a barrier. That’s why we established language centers”.

Motorcyclists are common in Kigali, because there are faster during traffic jam than public buses.

Rwanda promised that there will not be any problem relating to accommodation or hotel rooms for CHOGM participants.

By May 2019, Rwanda was counting more than 8,000 hotel rooms and new hotels have been coming in ever since.

United Kingdom High Commissioner to Rwanda, Jo Lomas by the end of February told The New Times that Rwanda is on the right track when it comes to CHOGM preparedness.

“What I see is a huge amount of hard work going into this. This is in different aspects, the building of roads, preparation of personnel, government officials working on details of logistics and accommodation, those who are building hotels among others. Four months to go, there is still work to be done” she said

“But we are on the right track.



New roads are being constructed in Kigali in preparation of CHOGM.

There will be challenges for anyone organizing such a summit. It’s a huge logistical challenge but I have to say that Rwanda is making good progress,”She added

On 9th March 2020, with High Commissioners from Commonwealth member countries and Diplomatic Corps to celebrate the Commonwealth

Day in Kigali, Rwanda’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Vincent Biruta promised that CHOGM participants will have an unforgettable stay in Kigali.

“In less than four months, the Commonwealth family will gather in Kigali. Rwanda is ready to host you. The Government and the people of

Rwanda are committed to make the delegates’ experience enjoyable and unforgettable”, he vowed.

June 2020 meeting will focus on connecting, innovating and transforming. The theme for the meeting is ‘Delivering A Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming’.

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IMF Claims Zimbabwe Secretly Printing Money

By Prince Kurupati

At some point in the recent past, everyone in Zimbabwe from the toddlers to the elderly were all billionaires and in some instances trillionaires! The surprising thing however was that in spite of being billionaires and trillionaires, the general populace in the country were living in dire conditions some would say in absolute poverty.

The reason behind all this was as a result of the government's printing machines at the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe's central bank whose main task among many others is to print money. In face of high poverty levels, high levels of unemployment, depressed economic growth and low levels of local and foreign investment, the Zimbabwean government from 2005 to around 2008 decided to print more money as a panacea to then prevailing economic and social challenges. The government in its reasoning thought that by printing more money, it would on the economic front alleviate liquidity challenges, boost the country's economic fortunes and pave way for economic development while on the social front, it thought that printing more money would help it garner more support from the electorate as everyone would be able to access cash whenever one is in need of it.

Though the government's reasoning was 'sincere', the decision it took brought about disastrous results. In fact, the decision to print more money did not address any of the challenges it was meant to tackle but rather, it exacerbated the challenges even more. Printing more money led inflation figures to increase exponentially. As of 14 November 2008, Zimbabwe's annual inflation rate was 98.7 sextillion percent! This basically rendered



the country's currency useless as a billion dollars could not buy even a loaf of bread. The net result of all this was that the investment drive which the government aimed at attracting did not bear any fruits, the poverty levels that the government aimed at decreasing actually increased so too was the high unemployment levels. The political support that the government also aimed at garnering also decreased meaning that the solution of printing money had been a total failure.

The failure of the solution, that is, printing more money, many would think is supposed to be lesson to the Zimbabwean government that printing more money is not actually a panacea to economic challenges. Rather, as was the case in 2008, printing more money does not help in any way but it actually worsens a situation. The Zimbabwean government however seems to not have grasped this lesson if anything is to be taken from the report by the Financial Times that the Zimbabwean government is secretly printing

money.

In the Financial Times report, Joseph Cotterill states that after one year of the IMF monitoring programme in Zimbabwe in which the IMF pledged to dispense economic advice to the Zimbabwean government meant at addressing economic imbalances and tackling macro-critical governance weaknesses, the head of the IMF mission to Zimbabwe Gene Leon took time to reflect on the progress done in the past year. Gene Leon said that minimal success had been achieved. In light of the relaunch of the local currency, the IMF head said that the Zimbabwean government did relaunch the local currency as per the advice of the IMF but the local currency programme as a whole was 'off-track'. This as a result of "uneven implementation of reforms, notably delays and mis-steps in FX and monetary reforms."

Whilst the IMF explicitly stated that uneven implementation of reforms, notably delays and mis-steps in FX and monetary reforms

were responsible for the failure of the local currency, investigations done by the Financial Times revealed that the greatest concern by the IMF was that of secret money printing. The report alleges that the IMF learnt of secret money printing by the Zimbabwean government in a move meant at providing subsidies to gold producers. According to a senior Zimbabwean government official who spoke to the Financial Times, the gold subsidy scheme was intended to support miners who are required by the central bank to convert much of their US dollar export earnings at the official exchange rate. Since the US dollar is worth far more on the street, the miners were losing money and the subsidy aimed to reduce this

loss and discourage producers from selling their gold on the black market.

The IMF therefore believes that the failure of the local currency to revamp the country's economic fortunes hinges on over-printing of money done in secret. Printing more money led to the local currency to lose 90 percent of its value against the US dollar in a 12 month period since its reintroduction. The IMF according to the report said that money supply growth in 2019 far outpaced an IMF target of 10 percent, reaching 127 percent by the end of the year.

The Financial Times report also states that the IMF is aware of efforts and activities by the Zimbabwean government to inflate exchange rates. In September 2019, the Zimbabwean government received warnings from the IMF over payments at inflated exchange rates made by the central bank to Sakunda Holdings, a fuel importer owned by an ally of President Mnangagwa.

As to be expected, the Zimbabwean government through the Reserve Bank Governor John Mangudya has

refuted the allegations citing the Financial Times report as malicious, misleading and calculated to tarnish the image of the central bank. "As stated in its Monetary Policy Statement of February 17, 2020, the bank reiterates that the growth in money supply, or more specifically reserve money in 2019, was a result of subsidies on fuel, electricity and grain and government expenditure... The contribution of the gold sector incentive scheme was very minimal to the growth of reserve money. It is also mischievous to allude to 'secret money printing' as there is no secrecy in the payment of the gold incentive scheme by the State, through the bank."

Though the central bank refutes the Financial Times report, it fails to adequately and satisfactorily explain

why the supply rate grew 250% last year to \$35 billion, with a further 31.42% year to date increase by the end of February 2020. This alone suggests that there is some element of truth to the Financial Times report and if that's the case, then the hyper inflationary environment of 2008 may be on horizon in the near future.

As a show of defiance, the Zimbabwean government in the wake of the Financial Times report stated that it is seeking to craft



Finance Minister Professor Mthuli Ncube.

measures to continue monetary reforms without IMF oversight. If this is indeed the case, then there is cause for concern for the general populace in Zimbabwe as the country might revert back to the ugly days of 2008.

China-Kenya relations: Who is fooling who?

By Samuel Ouma

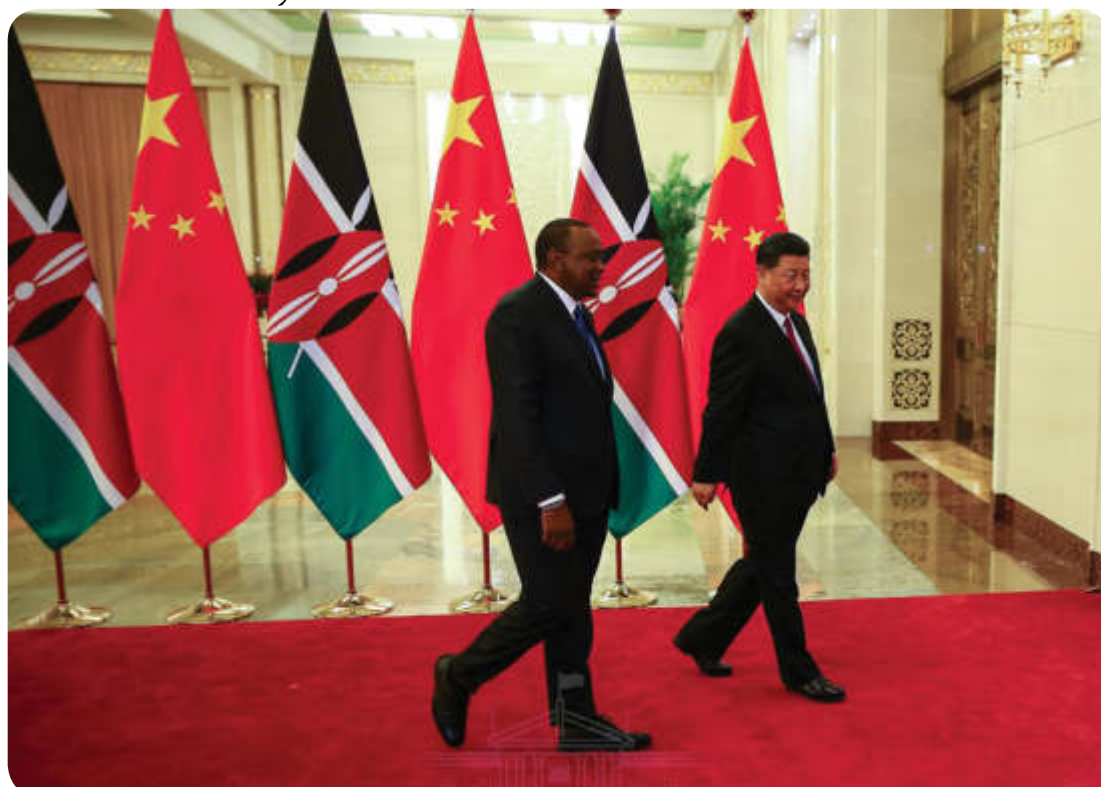
Kenya is one of the destinations of Chinese nationals in the last few years. As a result of strong bilateral ties between the two countries the population of China citizens in Kenya have soared.

They can be spotted in any place in the entire country with the majority working in the Chinese companies and industries as constructors, engineers, technicians etc.

We cannot dispute the fact that China has played significant role in infrastructure development in the East African country. China Wu Yi, Shengli Engineering and Sinohydro companies were awarded contract to construct modern Thika Superhighway, the biggest in East Africa.

The \$360 million project has improved transportation of goods and people within Kenya and her neighbours. Several roads have also been refurbished under China's Belt and Road Initiative, a multi-billion dollar project which aims at enhancing regional cooperation and connectivity.

In 2014, Exim Bank of China signed a contract with Kenya to fund



President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping have signed a number of deals.

the 90 per cent construction of the largest infrastructure in the country since independence, Standard Gauge Railway (SGR). The first phase of SGR connecting the Indian Ocean city of Mombasa to Nairobi was completed in 2017 at a cost of \$3.2 billion.

The second phase running from Nairobi to Rift Valley via Naivasha, North West of Nairobi was also launched last year by President Uhuru Kenyatta. The construction cost \$1.5 billion. The biggest headache for Kenya is payment of loan which is soaring.

The African country's appetite for China loan has been on rise despite warnings from the West. Kenya owes China \$9.8 billion according to The Economist, the third largest in the continent behind Angola and Ethiopia which are first and second respectively.

Recently reports emerged that Kenya is in the verge of losing key strategic assets like Mombasa port and Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to the Asian country after it defaulted in paying SGR loans as per the agreement. However, Kenyan government rubbished such emerging reports.

China has infiltrated the continent outdoing Africa's longstanding trade partners such as US, Germany, France and India. The Chinese government act of issuing loans and aid to African countries caused fear among the West as the struggle on who controls the continent's economy is ongoing.

Former US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had asked Africa to examine the kind of deal they sign with China.

"We are not in any way attempting to keep Chinese investment dollars out of Africa, they are badly needed. However we think that it is important for African countries to carefully consider the terms of these investments.

"We witness the model that the Chinese follow, they do not bring



A Chinese contractor walks at the site of the Nairobi Thika highway project near the Kenyan capital Nairobi. Photo Reuters.

significant job creation locally, they do not bring training programmes that enable Africans to participate more fully in the future and often times, the financing models are structured in a way that the country when it gets into trouble financially loses control of its own infrastructure or resources," reiterated Tillerson.

Apart from huge debts, Chinese nationals have been accused of mistreating Kenyan especially those who work for them and subject them

too to inhuman treatment.

Early last month a Chinese hotel head chef was captured on a camera footage whipping a Kenyan worker for allegedly reporting to work late. In the video the worker is shown pleading for forgiveness while the Chez Wou restaurant head chef asking which part of the body to cane.

In 2018 another Chinese national was deported after he was captured on video calling Kenyans including President Uhuru Kenyatta.

"Every one, every Kenyan... like a monkey, even Uhuru Kenyatta. All of them," said Liu jiaqi, the deported man.

In the same year, reports emerged how Kenyans working at SGR were mistreated. It was alleged the Chinese were replacing Kenyan workers with their colleagues; Kenyans were prohibited from using the same vehicle and table in a restaurant with their China counterparts. Kenyans were reportedly paid meagre wages less than a quarter of what one Chinese earned.

Kenyan government further banned trade in donkey meat and skin following extinction threat from the Chinese market. High demand of donkey products in the market resulted into rise of theft of the animals plus an increase in the number of donkeys slaughtered in 4 legal Kenyan abattoirs.

Donkey meat and skin are used for various purposes in China ranging from producing snacks, beauty products, sex-stimulants, anti-ageing products to traditional medicine known as Ejiao.

Ejiao consists of gelatine that is extracted from boiled donkey's hides.



Kenyan truck drivers protest a government decision that seems to back Chinese influence in the country.



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KIZITO EULOGY: Could we defend and show love to our beloved ones when they are still alive?

I wish all these powers and advocacy comments, messages and chats were conveyed while late Mr. Kizito Mihigo was in jail alive.

By Mohammed M. Mupenda



Kizito Mihigo was found dead in a police cell.

The Rwandan musician first became a star as a gospel artist in the Roman Catholic Church, hit his popularity climax in 2011 with the genocide commemoration song «Twanze gutoberwa amateka» and was since then being invited to perform in the presidential events until April 2014 when he published the song «Igisobanuro cyurupfu/ the meaning of death» which was considered by Rwandan authorities as trivializing the Genocide against the Tutsi.

It was early Monday morning the United States time when I received the press release announcing that Mr. Kizito Mihigo has committed suicide while detained in Rwandan police cells. Personally, I never believe in any news unless I have crosschecked the facts with reliable sources.

The time I woke up and I never got chance to sleep again, because many chats, messages and calls were pumping in my phone all asking me

if I believed that Kizito committed suicide while a big number claimed that he was assassinated as his predecessors who died in police detention in the past years.

I kept checking and went through people's WhatsApp status, his songs and photographs were mostly shared and the same was on Facebook. In fact, "RIP Mr. Kizito Mihigo was a norm on all social media." The rest of the days were taken by growing shock, accusations and then grief and the pain that is inevitably birthed from that unfortunate mix of emotions.

I went down the Facebook rabbit hole of any post on his death, scrolled through many that kept trickling in by the hour with everyone sharing their shock but none offering answers to the question that most had on their minds, what happened?

This was the time I noticed love from people towards the late Kizito, but it served less. The person who was either assassinated or committed

suicide would love to witness the sympathy, love, advocacy messages, comments for any lawsuit, petitions and more while alive but it never happened when he was jailed for four years until he was released on Presidential pardon along with Mrs. Victoire Ingabire, the most prominent Rwandan opposition leader.

The superpower countries, the international community, the people's power did almost nothing when he was detained and this was the best time for him and justice if it was to prevail.

Dissidents, human rights bodies and media went on to report and many people around the world started asking Rwanda government for independent investigation but Rwanda as an independent country could hardly accept claims from those who want to undermine its institutions regardless of their powers. It happened and the country refused any external interference

about someone who reportedly committed suicide.

My reflection was, these people would always mind when people are alive, threatened, harassed, victimised, detained and advocate for their freedom and release when they are not already dead, but look, they come up with sympathy for someone who will never notice whatever goes around or resurrect him. A friend was like, Kagame killed many but will never survive this, and I was like who tells you that? Late Brig. General Patrick Karegeya was strangled in Michelangelo hotel in South Africa and the same claims and call came in but it didn't shake Rwanda government, probably due to the fact that most of African governments are powerful and propaganda does much to diffuse the situation.

I believe that the person commits suicide because, it is too much on him/ her during that time. Late Kizito needed people to talk to by the time

he was in that situation; I assume Mr. Kizito was feeling the same but he never got chance to speak to people to counsel and comfort him about the situation he was going through.

Rwanda government should also mind about its police cells that has taken a number of public figures, officials, doctors, lawyers and more from Rwandan society. This is because, we have a number of people who died in similar circumstances and police reported to have committed suicide though none woke up to protest or ask for independent inquiry as it was the case for Kizito.

Should we say that people are not equal? No, my belief is that they are equal though we don't consider it.

Back in 2015, Mr. Kizito was sentenced for 10 years over plotting to kill Rwandan Head of State, and this has never been a minor crime anywhere if he did so. But those who went ahead to exploit his death never minded about our politics, whenever you try to kill Head of State and caught before doing it, you will automatically go to prison or get killed in any way but it never happened to late Kizito Mihigo. Early last month, reports came in saying that he was trying to cross to Burundi illegally.

This time, I acknowledged the



Known as the apostle for reconciliation, Kizito Mihigo helped composed the Rwandan National anthem.

inside pain, frustration and dilemma Mihigo was facing as I noticed that he wasn't free in a country and he wanted to be free outside of the country and he sadly never got luck of doing it but during his arrest I doubted the voice of someone who spoke on behalf of Kizito that he was almost going to cross wondering how the person read Kizito's mind and knew the time,

hours, minutes and seconds he was going to cross the border.

When he was detained, few people spoke but when he was found dead in police custody, the world and all those who don't agree with Rwanda government brought it down in any media channel that served nothing to him and family.

We do have many incarcerated

people such as Ben Rutabana, Commissioner of Rwanda National Congress who left Belgium last year to Uganda and until now none of his relatives, friends and family knows his whereabouts. Any crime or accusations against him would be brought to court of law. This means that if he is alive and well none knows where he is and the situation he is living, it could be absurd if he passes away and the same people bring it down to Facebook and other social media channels; this propaganda has taken a number of people to always protest any time we no longer have the relatives, friends and beloved ones.

I have always wished to advocate for the living who are illegally detained, not until they are dead by either committing suicide or being killed and the people start making cases including advocating and politicking what will never hold accountable those who involved in the killing. Note that governments have always been powerful until they are no more.

*Mohammed M. Mupenda is a news correspondent and freelance reporter, who has written for publications in the United States and abroad. He is also a French and East African language interpreter.



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Beyond policy and public investment: the SDG imperative for business

By Karnika Yadav *

There is only one road left to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set for Africa for 2030 and that's through sustainable businesses. For the sluggish progress to date has been primarily a consequence of 'putting all our eggs in one basket' and expecting the state to deliver the SDGs, which it cannot.

A prime obstacle in that is finance. The SDG Center for Africa estimates the financing gap to achieve the SDGs is running at between \$500bn and \$1.2tn a year. That is simply beyond the reach of the public sector, with the Center estimating that delivering basic state functions of health care, education, water, energy, and road infrastructure requires more than 50 per cent of the GDP of most African countries.

However, for the private sector, pursuing the 2030 goals of eradicating Africa's hunger, poverty, and inequality and improving healthcare will deliver its own rewards, creating business opportunities worth more than a trillion dollars a year, according to United Nation estimates.

In the absence of that private sector mobilisation, progress remains achingly slow.

The 2019 Sustainable Development Goal Three-Year Reality Checker Report found only five countries in Africa - Seychelles, Mauritius, Morocco, Egypt and Algeria - that had met the SDG target of three per cent poverty by 2015.

Yet the problem is substantially one of mindset. For, while achieving the right policies and public investment is necessary for delivering the SDGs, we need to abandon the idea that it is enough and focus more rigorously on developing SDG aligned businesses.

It is not viable to expect nation states to achieve a tax take, or a debt load, of 50 per cent of GDP to deliver basic services when the continent is home to a vast informal sector that contributes no government revenue

at all. That 'basic needs' bill is just unmeetable without a leap forward in business and GDP growth.

And just as public sector SDG success depends on private sector take-off, so too does the private sector's success.

Investing in SDG-focused businesses, calculates the UN, would create over 85 million jobs in Africa by 2030, which would in turn create new consumers and new markets.

Indeed, even relatively small investments in SDG-focused businesses can produce huge returns. For instance, investing in agriculture technology to reduce food waste could generate \$57bn a year in additional revenues, based on evidence from Rwanda, where small metal silos or plastic crates have reduced post-harvest losses by over 60 per cent and increased smallholder farmers' incomes by more than 30 per cent.

If private businesses collaborate with local governments to provide larger infrastructures, such as ports, oil and gas extractives, power plants and automotive, shared revenue of over \$296bn could be generated and nearly 16 million jobs, according to the UN's estimates. There could be further benefits too from using local materials for such works.

Likewise, providing affordable housing, clean water and sanitation, infrastructure and energy solutions, such as solar lanterns and improved cooking stoves to urban dwellers, has a potential revenue value of \$214bn a year and could create over 32 million jobs.



Karnika Yadav is Associate Partner Business Consulting and Research, Intellecap Advisory Services Private Limited.

Such growth is typical for businesses focused on achieving SDGs. Indeed, research conducted by the Business and Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC) shows that business that is focused in SDG areas also achieves more value locally.

For instance, reports the BSDC, 71 per cent of the value of food and agriculture businesses is retained in developing countries, 60 per cent of health and wellness businesses, 54 per cent of energy and materials, and 54 per cent of the value of upgrading and developing new cities.

Overall, business models that are directed towards achieving Africa's SDGs have proven to work to the benefit of both consumers and businesses, which is why they lie at the heart of all we are doing at Intellecap and at next week's 7th Sankalp Summit for entrepreneurs in Nairobi.

Our initiatives to support private sector SDG initiatives include research, partnerships and projects spanning ideal adaptive technologies, such as rural solar mini-grids; private sector capacity building among communities displaced by projects such as the Olkaria geothermal plant; and assisting small producers into value addition and niche markets, in tea, in bamboo, and multiple other high potential areas.

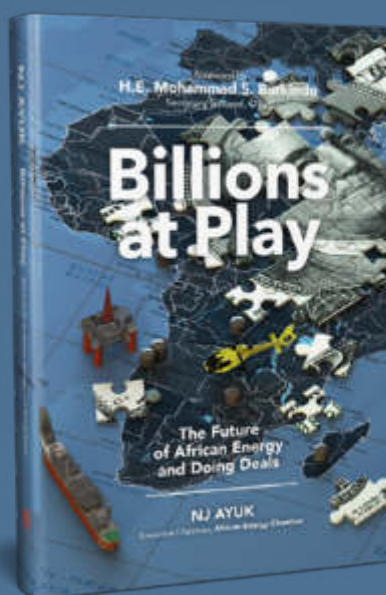
We have no doubt that without a recalibration of our private sector SDG efforts, the 2030 goals for Africa will go unmet, whereas if we now see and seize this opportunity, no African will be left untouched by the benefits borne of SDG-focused entrepreneurs.

*Associate Partner - Business Consulting & Research, Intellecap Advisory Services Private Limited

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy
and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



"There is no stone left unturned in Mr. Ayuk's analysis of Africa and OPEC."

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Secretary General, OPEC.

"Billions tells us the answer lies in the abundant, accessible and affordable natural gas reserves that dot the continent."

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Energy analyst and Editor

"Ayuk sees opportunity all around him, and he realizes that appropriate development will solve many of the continent's challenges, including power generation."

ANN NORMAN

General Manager
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Africa's Preparedness in Face of COVID-19

By Prince Kurupati

The wave of colonization in Africa happened partly because the African continent was backward and thus there was a need for the continent to be civilized so as to allow it to catch up with the rest of the world. This of course coming from a Euro centric view whose authenticity and rightness is up for debate.

In as much as the Euro centric view justifying African colonization is a debatable and contentious issue, in recent times, there has been ample evidence on different fronts that the African continent indeed lags behind in comparison to other continents. Talk of politics, Africa still has the largest number of countries under oppressive rule; economically the continent is falling further behind in terms of industrialization and technological innovation to other continents while socially, the mere fact that Africa still experiences high mortality rates from infectious diseases like malaria and typhoid exposes Africa's backward nature.

Africa's backwardness makes it a danger to its inhabitants when negative forces emerge such as the corona virus (COVID-19). Originating in China, COVID-19 has spread far and wide to all corners of the world



Ghana airport officials . Photo credit Reuters.

and there is a great fear that if it's not combated, almost every region in all countries will be ravaged by the virus. Looking at other continents, the rapid spread of the virus is ominous but not so much as is the case with Africa. This simply as a result of better emergency facilities and resources.

Driven by the desire to better understand Africa's level of preparedness and vulnerability in face of COVID-19, a team of investigators recently conducted a

modeling study and they shared their findings in The Lancet. The study measured each country's capacity to handle the virus based on State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting (SPAR) Index, which includes 24 indicators of capacity to deal with the virus. Vulnerability was measured based on the Infectious Disease Vulnerability Index (IDVI). Each indicator ranged from 0 to 100, measuring increasing capacity and decreasing vulnerability. The study

overall did outline that Africa lags behind to other continents in terms of preparedness and vulnerability but there is something to smile about for Africans.

One of the researchers, Chiara Poletto who is based at the Pierre Louis Institute of Epidemiology and Public Health said that, "I believe that the biggest take away from the research is that the African countries with the highest risk of importing COVID-19 are also the ones more prepared to deal with cases."

To put into perspective Poletto's sentiments, the only way that COVID-19 can permeate through the African borders is if people from outside the continent who are infected travel into Africa and fails to be detected at ports of entry. Generally speaking, high volumes of African people who travel the world are people from economically stable countries such as South Africa and North African nations. As these people reside in countries that have a better economic standing, it in turn means that their home nations have the ability to put in place monitoring mechanisms meant at detecting any cases of COVID-19.

The study revealed that the highest importation risk was identified in



Currently 33 of 47 sub Saharan African countries have testing facilities, up from only two in January.

Egypt, Algeria, and South Africa, which had SPAR scores of 87, 76, and 62 respectively and IDVI scores of 53, 49, and 69, followed by Nigeria and Ethiopia, which has moderate SPAR scores of 51 and 67, respectively, but high vulnerability, with IDVI scores of 27 and 38. Official government statements and reports does show that the study proves the exact situation on the ground as South Africa has to date confirmed 3 people who tested positive to COVID-19. North African nations have also used their resources to detect cases of COVID-19. As of 24 February 2020, Algeria had confirmed 17 cases of

COVID-19, Egypt had detected 3 cases, and Morocco had detected 2 cases and Tunisia one case.

Poletto's sentiments also means that African nationals living in poor countries that are most vulnerable owing to poor facilities and resources need not worry much about COVID-19 as importation of the virus will probably be detected by other capable countries. This owing to the fact that most arrivals by plane from any corner of the world will pass through any of Africa's major international airports such as those in South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Egypt before they proceed to

their home country. At these major airports, all travelers are tested and those detected and confirmed positive will be quarantined till they are deemed safe. Effectively, this in turn helps in preventing the rapid spread of the virus into vulnerable African countries.

While acknowledging that help is needed by all countries on the African continent in regards to combating COVID-19, Poletto did say that urgent help should be directed to the poorer countries that are at medium risk of importation. "However, some countries are at medium risk of importation and present low level of

preparedness and high vulnerability. Resources should be prioritized toward these countries. Onward transmission potentially occurring in countries with weaker health systems is a major public health concern."

Countries in need of help should receive support that enables them to heighten surveillance, rapidly identify suspected cases, put in place quick patient transfer and isolation mechanisms as well as rapid diagnosis, tracing, and follow up of potential contacts.

SAFCOIN expands to Nigeria, Uganda

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SAFCOIN continues its mission to bring the power of cryptocurrency to more people in Africa, while reducing transaction costs and promoting job creation.

9 March 2020 – SAFCOIN, an exclusive African cryptocurrency, is now available in Nigeria and Uganda, allowing the unbanked to participate in the digital economy, helping small businesses to establish an e-commerce presence with no

start-up costs, and empowering more Africans to access global work opportunities through MobiJobs. Africa.

Launched in South Africa in 2018 after a successful Initial Coin Offering (ICO), SAFCOIN is built on its own decentralised blockchain, which is protected by a network of miners. The SAFCOIN Exchange supports trading in SAFCOIN, Bitcoin, and money trading pairs.

It is also one of the first cryptocurrencies in the world to offer mobile money deposits, as well as card and bank deposits.

"This is significant, since 62% of sub-Saharan Africans are unbanked," says SAFCOIN CEO Neil Ferreira.

"Users can add funds to their SAFCOIN wallets through mobile money networks including Paga, MTN, and Airtel. Aside from not needing a bank account, the SAFCoin

payment gateway facilitates these transactions securely and with very low – or no – transaction fees. This is because SAFCoin eliminates financial intermediaries, which drastically reduces the cost of sending and receiving digital money."

Mobile money mecca

Africa is the world leader in mobile money. There are 100 million active mobile money accounts on the



SAFCOIN. The crypto-currency for Africa, by Africans.

Decentralized internet money open to anyone on the continent, controlled by you.
Fuelled by Blockchain technology.

SAFCOIN. The crypto-currency for Africa, by Africans

continent. In 13 African countries, over a third of adults are active mobile money users, representing 45.6% of the region's population. This is expected to rise to 66% by 2025.

The proliferation of mobile money accounts throughout Africa supports SAFCOIN's mission to demystify cryptocurrency and blockchain technology, and to empower more people to be part of the global digital currency revolution and Africa's cryptocurrency history.

Empowerment through education

"Blockchain technology is still confusing to many Africans and is preventing its widespread adoption. It's a relatively new concept for many people, who don't know how to invest, where to invest, or what cryptocurrency to invest in," says Ferreira.

"We have two goals. First, we want to simplify the cross-border payment processes between African countries, by eliminating red tape and bulky transaction processes. We hope to see SAFCOIN become an Africa-wide accepted form of payment that boosts trade between countries."

"Second, we believe that everyone in Africa should have an opportunity to understand and trade with cryptocurrency, and we want to educate them on the power of this alternative asset class and the opportunities it creates. To this end, we will soon open call centres and walk-in centres in Kampala and Nigeria, where users can learn how to trade with SAFCOIN cryptocurrency, on the exclusive SAFCOIN Exchange and on local and international exchanges."

He adds, "From our experience in South Africa, these centres have been instrumental in helping people far beyond cryptocurrency. They've offered support with setting up email accounts, joining online banking for the first time, and accessing mobile applications, bringing more people into the digital economy."

Jobs for Africa

These centres will also provide assistance with MobiJobs, Africa's first blockchain-powered micro jobs platform, aimed at connecting businesses and gig economy workers across Africa, for free.

MobiJobs lets start-ups and SMEs

list jobs, search freelancer profiles, and establish an online presence without set-up, hosting, or development costs. It also lets freelancers market their skills, build their experience, and "buy" listed jobs, even if they don't have a bank account. There are no joining, account, or transaction fees, and jobs are paid for in SAFCOIN, via the SAFCoin payment gateway.

SAFCoin aims to simplify and reduce the cost of e-commerce trading. It provides an easy way for users to make online payments using SAFCOIN – for free. It also serves as a cheaper, easy alternative for micro traders and small businesses to trade online and access a larger, more dispersed market.

"For businesses, it means frictionless trading across borders. For individuals, it means being able to send money home without paying any transaction fees. Cryptocurrency has the potential to radically transform trade, and SAFCOIN is proud to be part of that revolution," says Ferreira.

To learn more about SAFCOIN or to create an account, visit <https://www.safcoin.africa>

or download the SAFCOIN app for Android or iOS. About SAFCOIN

SAFCOIN is a cryptocurrency founded by Africans, for Africans. Launched on 13 December 2018, following a successful ICO between July and October 2018, SAFCOIN is now available in South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, and Nigeria, for Fiat deposits, transactions, and withdrawals.

It aims to promote social and economic growth across the continent, by becoming the chosen source of trading currency across Africa, through e-commerce payments and remittances.

SAFCOIN supports a wide range of payment methods, facilitated through SAFCoin, a bespoke cryptocurrency payment gateway that charges zero transaction fees for SAFCOIN payments and a low 2% for Bitcoin payments. This makes SAFCoin more affordable than other payment gateways.

The SAFCOIN cryptocurrency is a POW coin that's mined on a Script algorithm.

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Alarming Situation In Cameroon Calls for Urgent Dialogue-Former Indomitable Lions Skipper Enoh Eyong

By Ajong Mbapndah L

In the face of growing chaos and increasing tales of massacres, former Indomitable Lions Assistant Captain Enoh Eyong says inclusive dialogue is very necessary for peace to be restored in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

Speaking in an interview with PAV, the typically calm and levelheaded player says it is impossible to remain indifferent to the gory tales coming out of the English-speaking zones of Cameroon daily.

“While we all may have valid reasons to keep fighting to defend our political causes, we should know that human lives are being lost, villages are being burnt, destinies are being destroyed and families are being displaced,” Enoh lamented.

A former alumnus of the University of Buea, and first Cameroonian to play for Dutch and European powerhouse Ajax Amsterdam, Enoh says it's time to go back to the values that build every nation which are love, respect and hard work.

“My appeal is for a sincere dialogue to be called where all parties are



My position is that of peace, and there cannot be peace without dialogue ,says Enoh Eyong in discussing the chaos in the English Speaking regions of Cameroon.

fully represented, and everyone should come with the willingness to restore peace, and find a long-lasting solution that is convenient for all parties,” says Enoh in the interview which starts with his football career before proceeding to the crisis in the North West, and South West Regions

of the country.

Greetings Enoh Eyong and thanks for granting this interview, as a household name in football, we start with that and your career, are you still in active football and how have things been for you in the last

few years?

Greetings and it's an honour to get to speak to you. Yes, I am still in active football. Though on a low key, I have been playing for the last year and half in Cyprus

You were a regular fixture in the national team for close to ten years and then nothing was heard about you, considering that some were banned, others withdraw themselves from selection, and others forced out, may we know under what terms or conditions your international duties for Cameroon were ended?

Well it's simple, the coach present at the time didn't call me up which means he didn't see my presence necessary or valuable to the team, I was never suspended, neither did I withdraw myself ,I want to believe it was just a time for me to move on, and allow the next generation to also represent the national colours

You participated at several editions of the African Nations Cup and the about two editions of the world cup, can you shed light on some of the positives and negatives that came out of



Taking on German star Mesut Ozil as Samuel Eto'o watches, Eyong regrets not winning any trophies with the Indomitable Lions.

these experiences?

Well the positives are enormous, I got to play with some of my childhood heroes like Rigobert Song, Samuel Eto'o, Geremi Njitap and others. Also, for me to participate in the first ever World Cup hosted on African soil was historic. The negative is that I never got to win any major trophy and make the country proud, coupled with some of the internal issues that we experienced within the squad.

What is your general reading of the state of the indomitable lions in particular today, and Cameroon football in general?

As for the national team, I think we lack consistency and for the Cameroon football in general we have lost the basic foundation and structure of developing home-grown players. There is no proper youth competition in place for the continuous supply of young talents. This is evident in the gap which is open when the old players are transitioning. Sometimes it will take about 10-15 years before another solid team will be put in place, just because there is no proper structure to produce continuity at high level.

You played for several clubs across Africa and in Europe, what does it take to have a successful professional career?

The answer to this question is not a one size fits all because each player who has succeeded will tell you their journey was unique. Yet, there are standard principles one must put in place to make it at such a high level. To make it, you need determination, hard work, discipline, perseverance, dreams and a bit of luck or whatever you call that extra thing to be. For me, my faith in God has been a huge part of my success.

We often hear tales of racism, managers exploiting young footballers, and so on, what advise do you have for young Cameroonians and Africans who would want to emulate the kind of career you and other successful footballers have had?

Racism is real, you will need to build a strong personality to rise above it. Managers are exploitative,

but not all. You need to pray to meet an honest one, and also do your due diligence and not just fall for anyone who presents fairy tales to you and your family.

May we know of any post football plans that you have, when your career ultimately ends, what will Enow be working on?

As for post football plans, I will keep things very quiet for now as I want to catch up some time with my family and will slowly gear towards the things I have in mind. One thing is sure though, I would like to help the next generation of young players coming up with my wealth of experience, and knowledge through management and agency services alongside some coaching work.

As we do this interview, the political situation in Cameroon is dire, and many are still in profound shock with the massacres reported in Ngarbuh in the North West Region of Cameroon, what is your reaction to this?

It was very shocking to hear of the Ngarbuh incident, day to day you wake up thinking things will get calmer and the government will procure a solution, but it seems like we are only digging deeper into the black hole of violence and bloodshed. I am really short of words, and my heart goes to all those who have lost loved ones during this Ngarbuh incident and the other incidents that have taken many lives untold.

In general, what does Enow Eyong make of the crisis in the North West and South West regions of the country, is there

any position that you have?

My position is that of peace, and there can't be peace without dialogue. I still don't understand how we came to the point as African people of the same geographical location to be killing one another. The present situation is the responsibility of all, and the solution can't be superficial, it's going to take intense work to calm things down. Many people are bitter, some don't trust anymore, others have experienced betrayal, there is no convincing leadership voice to calm down the waters, there is no concrete vision and action step

presented to give hope to the masses, there is confusion in the air, and the government has lost grip of the situation. My position once more is that of dialogue, that there be an all-inclusive dialogue where all parties concerned are well represented with the focus being how to solve the crisis and restore peace back to the masses who continue to be the biggest casualties

We saw former Indomitable lions player Bernard Tchoutang speak out on the massacre in Ngarbuh, we have read reports of others like Ngadeu Ngadjui



To make it, you need determination, hard work, discipline, perseverance, dreams and a bit of luck says Enow who was the first Cameroon football to play for Dutch and European power house Ajax Amsterdam.

making donations to groups involved in humanitarian work to cushion the impact of the crisis on displaced persons, is there anything that you have done at your level to help out and should the influential voices in sports, music and so on not speak out louder in pushing for a solution to the crisis?

Well on my part I have been involved in a few projects with some IDP persons in different areas of the country and working with some Foundations on the ground. I don't believe in putting everything you do especially helping those in need on social media. I believe more influential voices should speak up and many have spoken in their own way, but if done with a united front I believe the impact would be stronger and greater. The reality is that everyone is careful on what they say and how they say it because of how sensitive things are, because what you say could be wrongly interpreted.

Talking about the kind of frustrations that have pushed English speaking Cameroonians to the current state of affairs, did you experience them during your stint in the National team?

Well, during my time at the national team, I didn't really experience any situation that got me frustrated or felt any sense of bias based on which area I came from.

Coming from the affected regions, do you have colleagues of yours both within the national team, and from



I appeal for peace, I appeal for DIALOGUE, says Enoh who also plied his trade in the English Premiere League with Fulham.

countries and clubs you have played who try to find out about these sad developments back home from you?

I have been in touch with a few national team players who are all concerned like myself about the current situation back in Cameroon. As for my colleagues at club or other countries, I don't believe they are fully aware of the situation in Cameroon as it has not been pushed in the mainstream news platforms as it ought to

As we wrap up this interview, any special appeal you will

want to make to the actors in the struggle both the Cameroon government, international community and the advocates for separation?

My appeal to the Cameroon government, the international community and the advocates for separation is that, while we all may have valid reasons to keep fighting to defend our political causes, we should know that human lives are being lost, villages are being burnt, destinies are being destroyed and families are being displaced. Violence will always breed violence; war will always breed

war. Enough lives have been lost and enough destinies have been shattered, it's time to go back to the values that build every nation which are love, respect and hard work.

My appeal is for a sincere dialogue to be called where all parties are fully represented, and everyone should come with the willingness to restore peace, find a long-lasting solution that is convenient for all parties. I appeal for peace, I appeal for «DIALOGUE».

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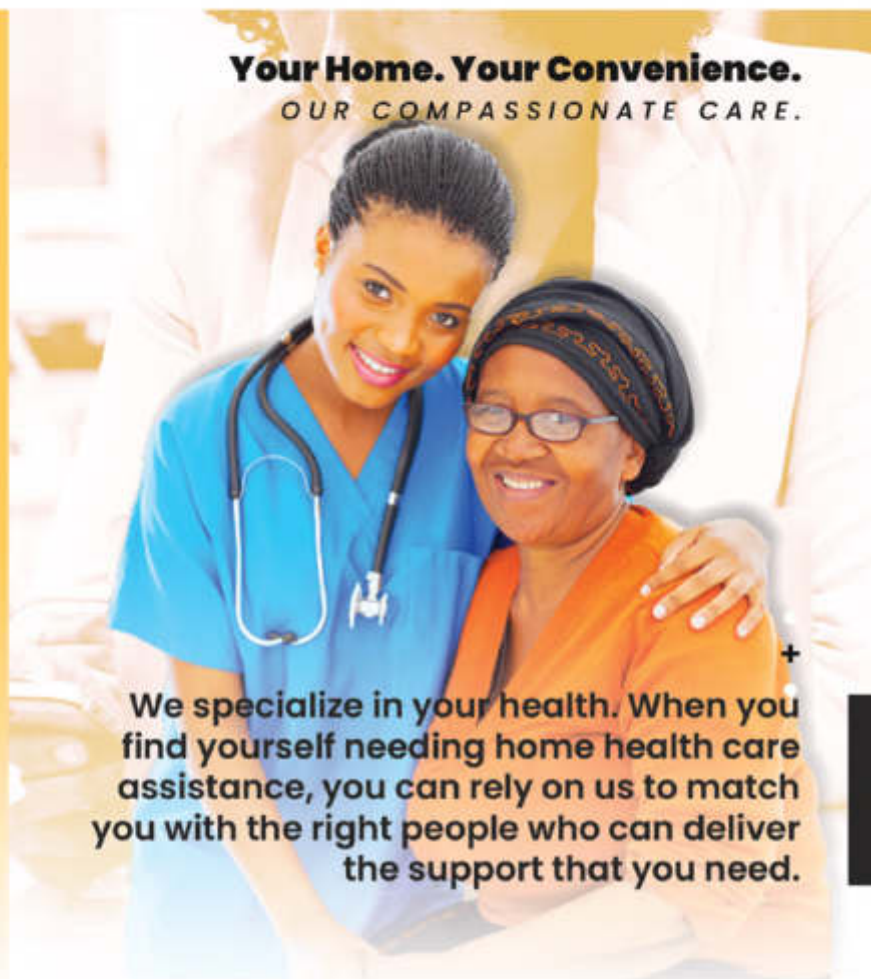


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Insight Into The Rainbow Model For Sports and Development

By Ajong Mbapndah L

While many young stars view the exploits of superstars like Didier Drogba, Samuel Eto'o, Patrick Mboma, Sadio Mane and others in awe and will like to emulate them, the complex dynamics and structures of football management in Africa make the odds very slim. In structures like the Rainbow World Group, Africa is coming to terms with the fact that beyond entertainment, sports can be a critical ingredient in sustainable development and that talent can be programmed to succeed.

With stakes in energy, telecoms, sports and media, the Rainbow World Group is impacting lives in a positive way with creating jobs and driving prosperity across Africa. PAV caught up Rainbow Founder and CEO Kingsley Pungong, and James Woods-Nkhutabasa Regional Director, Rainbow Sports to get insight into the operations of the group and its sports section which is shaping up to be a reference in Africa.

Could we start this interview by getting an introduction of the Rainbow World Group in general and Rainbow football in particular?

Rainbow World Group (RWG) is a diversified holding company with interests in sports, investments and trading in Africa. It is a Pan-African proprietary investment company which is driving development within the African continent, as well as globally. We specialize in building and growing businesses that last. Our investments in Sports, Media, Energy, Telecoms, just to cite a few, are helping to create jobs, build economies, drive prosperity, and eventually transform lives of ordinary people in Africa.

Rainbow football on the other hand is a division of RWG, which focuses its investments in the football industry. Rainbow football operates a global sports management company covering the entire sports value chain including but not limited to



Rainbow Founder and CEO Kingsley Pungong is taking the lead when it comes to blending sports and development in Africa.

sports marketing and management, sports franchise ownership, sports financing and consulting. In regard to the sports franchise ownership, we currently own Rainbow Football Club in Cameroon and MFK Vyškov in the Czech Republic.

Rainbow football explores specific opportunities pertaining to on-field talent which can be integrated within its parent company and serves as a link between Africa and the rest of the world in activities such as talent identification, retention, development and management.

In what parts of Africa do you have operations?

Africa generally is our home of operations where we then extend

these operations globally. We are currently pursuing projects with international partners in sub-Saharan Africa. Our specific focused operations at the moment are found in Cameroon, Tanzania, DRC, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Gambia, Kenya, Benin, while we also have satellite operations in other African nations. Malawi is also a terrain our group has an interest in on the football front and other areas of investment.

What does football represent for Africa today and how could it be a factor in building a better future for the continent?

Football is the most popular sport in Africa just as it is in the world. It is embedded in the social realities of the

continent and it is played, watched or followed almost everywhere in the continent. This tells you the level of attachment and passion we Africans have with this beautiful game. This therefore represents a form of HOPE for Africa. Young people use it to dream of a better future for the continent.

Through football a lot can be achieved that can change the narrative of the African continent. Due to the love and association to the sports of lots of African, it can be used as an educational portal for the young African population, as well as it can be used to bring infrastructural development in most areas of the continent. For example, football instill a lot of relevant life skills in those involved that it can be transferred into other works of life. Discipline, Leadership, teamwork, are just some of the very important skills gotten out of the game that can be further enhanced in the youths of the continent if this game is factored in properly in the building of the continent. That is why we at Rainbow Football, are putting in place an educational program which will have a high level of impact in the youths of our operating areas that will help in their future development and hence leading to a better future of the continent in its own small way.

May we know how you identify the talents that you work with?

Well the identification of gifted and talented young players requires specialist knowledge of the game and a deep understanding of athletic potential, psychological profiling and motivation. We have drawn upon knowledge from the growing body of research and expertise gathered throughout football and other professions to aid the identification of talented and gifted young people and have built a leading understanding of its potential to support our recruitment process.

We possess ties to a strong and

extensive network of scouts, coaches, club and academy owners across Africa. In addition to our own scouting team and processes, we are often contacted when promising players show themselves.

Furthermore, we host open trials across Africa which gives recruiters significant access and exposure to unseen talent that can emanate from areas across the region. We then supplement the on-ground presence with extensive video review analysis.

That's how we identify the talents we work with. I believe that our strong competitive advantage is our ability and willingness to scout in places that which scouting organizations will not go to or may not know exist nor have easy access to get there.

When you identify the talents what next, what is it Rainbow does to help have successful careers?

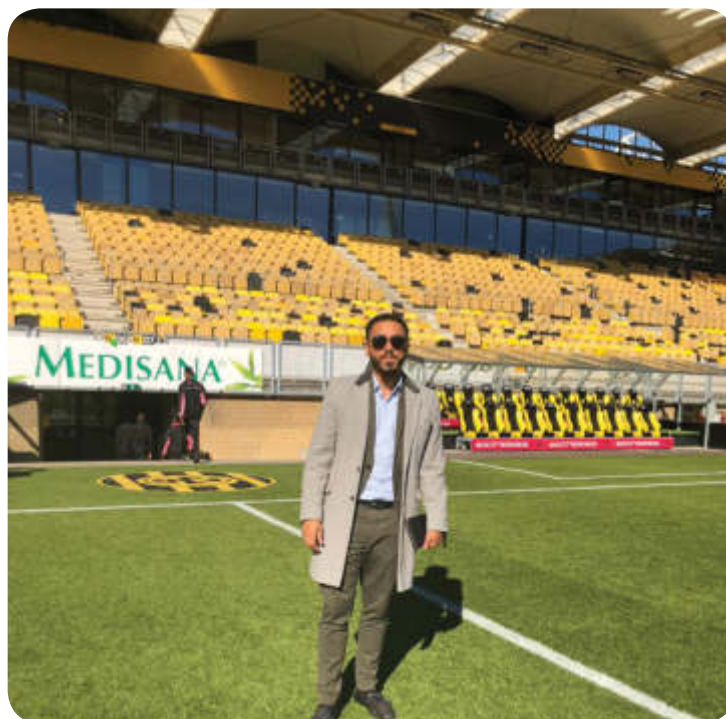


Founder and CEO Kingsley Pungong is committed to making young African talent emulate the example of icons like Didier Drogba in optimising their full potential.

When a talent is identified, the next step is to figure out where the player can be placed in order to have a successful career. Nonetheless, we undergo a couple of procedures in house to make sure all is in order before having them move.

When this happens, the player is signed to one of Rainbow's teams through a standard FIFA approved player contract where they either play for the team or gets loaned/ transferred to a professional club in our network of club contact, either in the USA, Europe, China (Asia) or Latin America. This helps to give the players further exposure in terms of visibility and development to attract top clubs.

Younger players (U18) are sent into academy structures to complete their secondary education (a key component that we value) and for further development of their already strong football skills where they will



James Woods Nkhutabasa is Regional Director at Rainbow Sports. The outfit is slowly but steadily expanding its operations to all corners of Africa.

become eligible to play professional football upon graduation, given they will have reached 18 years of age.

May we know some of the famed football products or stars that you can use to show case the success of Rainbow?

Sure, we have a few famed players, though I can say most of our players do pretty well for their clubs and country and are still young with a very bright future ahead of them.

There is Christian Bassogog who plays in the top flight Chinese Super League, for Henan Jainye, and for the National team of Cameroon. He was best player of the 2017 African Nations Cup. He is one of the best forwards in his league.

There is Nohou Tolo, who plays for Seattle Sounders and Cameroon U23 National Team; Olivier Mbaizo for Philadelphia Union and Cameroon U23 national Team; Brian Anunga for Nashville SC; Alfusaaney Jatta for Saalfelden in Austria and The Gambia; Michee Ngalina for Philadelphia Union; Oyongo Bitolo who plays for Montpellier in France and Cameroon's National side; Yamikani Chester who spent 2019 at North Carolina FC and joined Las Vegas Lights for 2020 – he

is star player for the Malawi National side. These are just few of the ones I can mention now and definitely in the near future most of our players will be top stars as a number of them have already attracted interest from clubs in top European and Asian leagues.

When Rainbow is placing a player with a foreign club what criteria is taken into consideration...the USA major league is not the most competitive, the Chinese league may be flowing with money but still not the most mediatized, so do prioritize monetary gain or an avenue where the player will grow in talent and career like Europe?

Our major concern is the player's future development as we know how to ensure they develop in the right infrastructure, by doing so there is a higher likelihood of a successful career. However, we have a strategic approach to player placement across the global ecosystem and take certain key factors into consideration.

The key factors we look are:

- Fit into its "Growth and exposure" strategy,

- The style of play; which club does the players style of play fit with?
- Player's interest: where the player's desire lies,
- Status of the transfer window as it differs by country,
- The Demand available, and
- The Economics of the opportunity for the player, the club and our company.

As earlier mentioned, we host African combines twice a year to give teams from around the world access to players in our network. This often leads to deals for players being made during and immediately after these events.

For those aspiring to have successful careers and benefit from the expertise of Rainbow, what recommendations or advice do you have for them?

In our experience we have worked with all sorts of players, partners, clubs and affiliates. We have a well-informed understanding of what kind of player is going to make a successful career or not. Thus, the advice we give to aspiring talents is that they should be focused on their dream, be determined, have a strong work ethic and be disciplined. Talent is just about 20% of what a player needs to be successful. Those who keep a level



Indomitable Lions star and AFCON winner Christian Bassogog is one of the success stories of Rainbow Sports.

head and work harder achieve a very successful career.

May we know some of the challenges that you typically face?

When you are working in the African space, this is one aspect you can not miss in your operations. However just like any other operations we have numerous issues we get to deal with in order to achieve our goals on a daily basis.

Firstly, the lack of investment at the grassroots level makes it challenging for the development of top talents that can compete at the global stage. Very few academies or organizations really invest or have the resources to invest rightly in player development at the grassroots level. As such you come across talents who require a lot more effort to be ready for the big stage.

Another major challenge is the lack of sporting/football

infrastructure to support the countries' football development or level of competitiveness. Take for example Cameroon which has been a top football country for decades but it is only now that we can boast of a couple top level football stadia only because we have to host the 2021 African Nations Cup, which was even withdrawn in 2019 because the infrastructure was not ready.

These are just some of the challenges with a lot more that we have to deal with like corruption, lack of integrity and incompetence as well.

There have been complains that the quality of the game in Africa as dropped and most young African footballers only dream of playing in Europe with some staking all to get out of the continent only to end up frustrated, what is it Rainbow is doing or thinking of doing to strengthen the domestic leagues or grow local talent in Africa?

It is true that the quality of the game has dropped and it's partly due to the reasons I mentioned earlier. The best talents are taken out because they can't be rewarded well in their countries as such the quality of play is not top.



Malawian star Yamikani Chester is part of the Rainbow franchise.

What we need to do is to think about working together as actors in the industry to create avenues to further develop talents locally and hence the game within the continent. That is why in our own capacity at Rainbow football, we are taking steps towards this because we believe there is a bright future for the game in Africa.

We have developed a process to promote and support the development of a world leading talent identification, recruitment, mentoring and management system which we call the RAINBOW WAY. It aims to deliver an environment that promotes excellence, nurtures talent and systematically converts these talents into professional players capable of playing first team football at the highest levels of the global game.

We are also thinking of investing heavily in football clubs to create

top level professional clubs which will permit for top talents to still be held within the continent and achieve their career goals of making a living out of the game. This we hope will attract top talents as well with push the governments and other actors in the industry to put heads and hands together to build a better future for the game within the continent. Investment in football on the continent is often left to the government, which cannot sustain the sport hence why we see ourselves and a key player and catalyst in investing, supporting and enhancing the already existing structures, driving forward a robust commercialization of the sport and also attracting more involvement from the private sector.

How do you see the future of the game in Africa, and what more does Rainbow envisage to continue playing a leading

role?

The future of the game in Africa is very bright. Just as many European nations have been running back to invest in other sectors in Africa termed Neocolonialism, so to there will be opportunities in football. Due to its low development at the moment, it can only get more attention for future development.

We are proud of having built the most extensive pan-African talent recruitment network. Successful talent identification and recruitment of players of all ages is vital to the future development of African football. This is a pivotal aspect of the Rainbow Way. Talent identification is a fundamental concern for African football and its youth development system. The Rainbow Way through its management, coaches and support staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis the identification of the very best talent

on the continent. Its core strength is in yielding opportunities to generate attractive risk-adjusted returns in a complex and challenging yet lucrative region while at the same time contributing to the socio-economic development of the continent.

At Rainbow Football, we believe exceptional youth talent is central to the creation and the advancement of a better positioning of the African contribution to the world's leading sport. Through the Rainbow Way, we plan to continue developing independent decision makers through the education provided that will ensure support to players to be able to achieve their full potential both in and out of the game. These tools will go a long way in contributing to the development of the future of African football.





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