



Changing Direction For A Sinking Ship



**President Lazarus Chakwera
On Building The Foundation For
A New Malawi**

**Cameroon: Global Outrage
over School Killings But No
Affirmative Action**

**#EndSARS: And The
Nigerian Youth Spoke
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A Scar On The Global Conscience From The Kumba School Massacre

By Ajong Mbatndah L

Six in number, young, promising, eager to learn at all cost in the face of incredible political, and security challenges whose big and noble dreams ended prematurely in a classroom attack at the Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy in the town of Kumba,

Cameroon, on Saturday 24 October. Though no group has officially claimed responsibility for the barbaric act, the government was quick to accuse the separatist Ambazonian fighters, while on the other hand, the leadership of some the Ambazonian groups in the diaspora pointed accusing fingers at the Cameroon government as perpetrators of the crime.

Like many other parts of the English speaking parts of Cameroon, Kumba, the economic hub of the South West region has experienced episodes of fighting between the conflicting parties in the simmering conflict, but the killing of students was beyond the pale.

The sight of weeping families, and dazed denizens was painful to watch. In the face of the national and international outpouring of grief and condemnation, the question on most minds was how many more will have to die before the world gets serious about seeking a lasting solution to the crisis in the English speaking regions of Cameroon.

For some four years now, education in the two English speaking regions of the Cameroon has been anemic, over a million people are displaced internally and externally, the economy of the two regions decimated, and when you factor in the alarmingly high death toll and the gruesome human rights abuses, the conclusion is that this is a crisis that has been consciously or unconsciously neglected by the rest of the world.

When the Ngarbuh massacre took place in the North West Region on 14 February 2020 resulting in the murder of at least 22 civilians by

Cameroonian soldiers and Fulani extremists, many had hoped that this will jolt the conscience of the international community to get more involved in the quest for a lasting solution. Though the government for once owned up to the crime with a promise to punish the culprits in the Ngarbuh massacre, not much has been heard about it, and here we are with students killed in a classroom.

For the last four years, the international community has done nothing but pay lip service. From the African Union, to the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and other international bodies, little has been done from them to push the Cameroon government to seek alternative means to resolving the conflict as the military option has shown its limits.

In his 80s, President Paul Biya has neither been seen nor heard. Not one serious national address on the conflict, not one visit to the regions in conflict, not a meeting with the leadership of the Anglophone separatists. When he settled on a Grand National Dialogue last year, the Anglophone problem neither got the attention needed or the solutions expected. A year after that Forum, the resolutions that were billed as solutions to the problems in the English-speaking regions have not been implemented.

When the world expresses shock and consternations at the barbaric killing of students in Kumba, a little introspection on what has been done to help bring about a solution to the crisis in Cameroon could help. A little reflection on what could be done to ensure that there is a solution, one that takes into consideration the legitimate concerns of people who feel that the international system got them into the caustic arrangement that is a core part of the crisis. The



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

international community must go beyond lip service and encourage genuine dialogue to resolve the issue instead of waiting for the next calamity.

To the celebrity voices on the international scene, to the elder statesmen that the continent has, Olusegun Obasanjo, Thabo Mbeki, Joachim Chissano, to the men of God whose following seems to be incanting ridiculous prophecies on the U.S elections, Cameroon is begging for attention. Add your voice in the quest for a lasting solution, bring pressure to bear on international community to sit up and address the crisis in Cameroon.

The conflict in Cameroon did not start today, it has been in many phases, with President Biya himself been a key actor in some of the phases. We have opined before that this is one crisis he cannot wish away. Failure to resolve it will sum up is the circa 38 years he has spent at help of Cameroon. At the sunset of his political career, there is not much he has shown in terms of genuine concern and political will to resolve the crisis that never should have gotten to where there are today and it is about time the world gives the crisis in Cameroon the necessary attention

it deserves to get a solution. The world owes that to the memory of the Kumba kids, those of Ngarbuh, and the multiple thousands who have died from the Anglophone crisis sustained efforts to address the conflict and bring back peace.

Leadership is something that we have frequently harped on and in this issue of PAV magazine, there is much on that in multiple facets. As he breezes past the symbolic one hundred day in office, President Lazarus Chakwera fielded questions on the Malawi he met, and the foundation of the new Malawi he is building.

On constitutional shenanigans to terminate constitutional term limits which seems to be en vogue in many parts of Africa, as long as I live and breathe, that will never happen here, President Chakwera states emphatically. Heartwarming to hear from him considering the chaos and tensions that the issues of term limits are generating across the continent with Cote d'Ivoire been one of the countries this issue of PAV covers.

Headlines have been dominated by the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria which have drawn international attention within a short period. The kind of engagement seen in Nigeria should be inspiring to other Africans with genuine grievances. The Nigerian Youth have spoken very loud and clear and if President Buhari and his government do not listen, there will have themselves to blame for the consequences. This issue of the magazine also delves into the End SARS imbroglio in Nigeria.

The issue equally takes a look at the re-election of President Magufuli in Tanzania, the kick off of Building Bridges for a better political path forward for Kenya by its leaders, humanitarian crisis in Mozambique and more. Happy reading!!!



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#EndSARS: And The Nigerian Youth Spoke

By Richard Mammah

Nigeria has been in the prime spot of the global news arena for the better part of the month of October. Concern has revolved essentially around the conduct of its security services and more particularly, the now disbanded Special Anti Robbery Squad, SARS of the Nigerian Police Force.

In its present outburst, the issues began in Ughelli, a formerly sleepy Niger Delta town. It was an incident where operatives of the unit chased a youth to his hurt. But like a wildfire the #EndSARS protests have spread across the nation and on to other parts of the world.

But the #EndSARS issues are not the first set of security challenges that have put the nation on edge in relation to the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. Even in the north where the president has fairly considerable support, security challenges are quite troubling. The Islamist insurgency ravages the North East and bandits and kidnappers are commonplace in the North West and North Central. Little wonder then that while the majority of the protesters in the South of the country were pushing for an end to what had clearly come to register as a rogue police unit, from the North there was corresponding demand for greater security action against banditry, kidnapping and the Islamist insurgency so as to achieve a #SecureNorth. Though some were inclined to see both expressions as antithetical, a closer look will bring the issue to the same point: the Buhari administration has simply and squarely not lived up to one of its cardinal campaign-era promises: to make Nigeria safer.

Matter of Economics

Compounding the challenge has been the parlous state of the economy. Before COVID-19, the Nigerian economy had been gasping for breath. Indeed, it had slipped in and out of recession and was growing at about two percent just before COVID-19 happened.



With #EndSARS disgruntled Nigerians may have finally found their voice. Photo credit Pius Utomi Ekpei, AFP.

In prosecuting a lockdown and also sustaining a delay in providing support for businesses in the country, the COVID season has now added an additional burden and the economy is on the throes of recession and stagflation. As at H1 2020, GDP was reeling at -6.1 percent while inflation surged to 13.71 percent in September 2020.

No will to act

Indeed, part of the concern at the moment is that there is little national consensus to address the twin issues of poor economic development and insecurity. And many in the country blame President Buhari's attitudinal disposition for this. It is also very clearly one of the fuels in the current crisis.

Quite problematically, each time the issues are raised, the administration goes into deflection mode, arguing that the problems predate its emergence and that it should rather be commended for making the best of an already worse situation. At the beginning of its first term in office this was tolerated. But

now having completed one term and also covered some 35 percent of the allotted time for its second and final term in office, many are inclined to conclude that the administration can simply not do the job.

And the youth can take it no more

One of the dimensions of the #EndSARS protests has had to do with the youth that had hitherto been considered and written off as lazy, but who have now clearly been seen as stirring

Across the spectrum, the young protesters stirred and rose to the occasion with one quite notable element being the active engagement of celebrities and upwardly mobile youth.

Nowhere was this more visible than in the Lekki toll gate sector of the protests where several notable celebrities came out to fully identify with the protests.

Creativity and Innovativeness

With the avalanche of celebrities, professionals and activists that lent

their weight and support to the protests, it actually came across as indeed a quite strong generational statement and one that was laced with elements of integrity, empathy, humanity and resourcefulness.

When suspected supporters of the status quo hired thugs to disperse protesters, they rose to the challenge by hiring heavy-muscled private security guards. When the poor showed up at the protest grounds, they moved to set up food kitchens to feed the hungry. For the injured, medical teams were on ground and there were also evacuation ambulances to ferry injured people for expanded medical attention where the need arose. And to demonstrate their environmental sensitivity, the protesters had clean-up teams that ensured regular cleaning of the protest grounds on a daily basis. For a country that has been seemingly afflicted with politicians and public officials who routinely observe the social contract in the breach, this was indeed a wow moment.

Pan-African and International

dimensions

For a long time, Africa has been waiting on Nigeria to put its acts together. And as the crisis deepened, many Africans were bothered and messages of solidarity kept trickling in from all over the continent for the protesters. It was for some an extended a moment of continental resurgence. Many Africans were glad that the Nigerian youth were stirring. They were getting their hopes revived once again about the stirring of the great African hope.

Notably also, the broader international community also took notice. From the UN to the AU, to ECOWAS and on to the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, there were expressions of concern. Nigerians in the Diaspora and African communities all across the continent and beyond as well as officials and governments of multilateral organizations and nations responded by continually and consistently asking the Buhari administration to listen to and respond to the demands of the protesters.

And then government responded

When the government announced that it was accepting the demands of the protesters, some thought that was all of the matter. But the protesters were not satisfied. Recalling several



The #ENDSARS protests went viral and drew global attention to Nigeria.

previous promises by government to act in the past that had not been followed through, they insisted now on seeing that the promised change would immediately take effect.

The insistence was quite strong and it pointed to exactly how much trust capital the government currently has with its young people.

Interestingly, this erosion of trust capital is something that would ordinarily trouble any democratic government. This is more so when it was youth power that was chiefly mobilized to help President Buhari defeat the previous incumbent, Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 polls. Now with the young people literally

moving against the administration, it is being suggested by some analysts that the young people may indeed be on the path of advancing Nigeria's second independence move. And interestingly young people were at the forefront of the first.

Negatives: Of thugs and hoodlums

Another side of the Nigerian youth was also to be paradoxically seen in the course of the protests. While the public saw an engaging vibrant, empathetic, politically conscious and mobilized youth at work, there was also the deviant youth who were mobilized to carry out attacks on protesters or was negatively engaged in the looting and burning of public and private assets, or the busting of detention centres.

And the President responds

The politics of the President's response has indeed come to constitute a significant part of the assessment of the crisis. For a while, he preferred to let aides communicate his reactions on the crisis to the public.

But with the insistence of the protesters and other well-meaning Nigerians that he address the issues publicly and personally, President Buhari finally made a broadcast.

While accepting that the choice to demonstrate peacefully is a

fundamental human right, he however also went ahead to note that in taking up that choice the protesters should be mindful of a corresponding responsibility to respect the rights of others and do all they do in conformity with the law.

He also underscored that his administration was committed to extensive police reforms but also asked the youth and the nation to note that the promptness with which the administration had acted on the subject of their demands should not be construed as an act of weakness.

He expressed his sadness over the sorry state of affairs at the moment in the country but equally counseled Nigeria's neighbours and the international community who had made comments on the crisis that they ought to seek to know all the facts before rushing to make pronouncements.

He requested the protesters to take advantage of the administration's youth oriented programmes like N-Power and other Social Investment engagements and urged them to not allow themselves to be used to truncate the nascent democracy in the country saying that to do otherwise would be to undermine national security. He then urged them to discontinue the protests and get off the streets.

So what happened at Lekki?



Scenes of looting and violence have marred the good intent of the protests in some cases.

If many expected that the President's address would clear some of the ambiguity about what exactly had happened at the Lekki Toll Gate in particular where the military has been alleged as having been involved in shooting on protesters, they were to be disappointed. They have continued to go elsewhere to find those answers.

The Buhari style

Analysts say that the best way to address the President's response to the crisis is to try to situate it within the context of the Buhari style. Say, Barrister Andy Ekiugbo:

'This President is not a talker. Frankly, he does not have the gift of the garb. He really cannot persuade anyone from the soapbox. If he has any strengths, they are elsewhere.'

That is not all as some other commentators say that there is equally something quite distant about the president in his human and governance relations. Says Okofu Okotete:

'He is cold, too cold for my liking. He comes across as detached, almost unemotional; almost unfeeling.'

Beyond this chapter

Just before Nigeria's 2019 polls took place, a new legislation dubbed #NotToo YoungToRun came into effect. It was the fruit of the long drawn agitation by youth activists for the lowering of the age range within which people could make a bid for elective positions in the land.

In signing the bill into law, President Buhari had jokingly remarked that although he was giving his assent to the bill, he hoped that it would only come into effect as it has to do particularly with the topmost

office in the land, after he would have won the 2019 elections. The young people who were present at the session laughed over this rare attempt by the President at cracking a joke and moved on. Now, with the massive show of youth power that has been seen in the streets of Nigeria in the past two weeks and with the basic fact that about 70 percent of the Nigerian population is under 40 years, has the day of youth power come? Would a youthful successor replace the current president in 2023? Time will tell.

A Turning Point For Protests in Nigeria with End SARS-Veteran Journalist Chido Onumah

By Ajong Mbapndah L

The End SARS protests have redefined the nature of protests in Nigeria, says veteran Journalist, writer and media trainer Chido Onumah. In an interview with PAV, Onumah opined that the protesters have largely achieved their aim which was to register their displeasure about the state of Nigeria using End SARS as the pivot.

"The End SARS protests have redefined the nature of protests in Nigeria. For one, it has galvanized young people and shown them the power of organisation and solidarity," says Onumah.

While the Nigerian government may have succeeded in tainting the protest with unfounded claims that it was a movement of young people from the Southern part of the country eager to remove President Buhari, the last may not have been heard from the protesters, Onumah said.

"I think overall the protesters achieved their aim, which was to register their displeasure about the state of the country using End SARS as the pivot. They must go back to re-strategise, build a pan-Nigerian coalition that addresses the major concerns of young people and citizens across the country and present a minimum agenda for the transformation of the country, an agenda that speaks to unity, freedom,



The End SARS protests have redefined the nature of protests in Nigeria, says veteran Journalist Chido Onumah.

equality and opportunities for all Nigerians wherever they may be in the country," said the highly respected media personality.

Thanks for accepting to answer our questions Chido Onumah to discuss the current situation in Nigeria and the End SARS demonstrations. Could we start with a historical context, when and why was SARS created and

what did it do wrong to incur the wrath of Nigerians?

The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was set up in response to the spate of armed robberies in Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria, in late 1992. The history of SARS is reflective of its operation which was the cause of nationwide protests recently. Its history is rooted in the violence which has been the hallmark of not just the Nigerian State and its security

apparatuses, but many of the neo-colonial states in Africa.

SARS has its origin in the confrontation between the Nigeria Army and the Police. Following the death of a senior army officer at a police checkpoint in Lagos in September 1992, the army went after any police personnel they could find. Many police officers allegedly resigned while others abandoned their duty posts and stations for

fear of their lives. The violence the army visited on the police led to a breakdown of law and order and the collapse of law enforcement in the state for weeks. After the army ended its onslaught, the police returned to the streets and had to deal with an increase in the crime rate. SARS was a quick response to this crisis. Because there were anti-robbery squads in existence, "special" was added to SARS to distinguish it from these other anti-robbery squads.

Gradually, the operations of SARS extended beyond Lagos to other parts of the country. Almost from the outset, SARS became notorious for abuse of rights of suspects and detainees, but it wasn't until about a decade ago that these atrocities attracted media and public attention. With the expansion of technology and social media in the country also came the problem of online crimes, the advance fee fraud or 419 as it is known in Nigeria. SARS took up the task of dealing with this scourge. SARS operatives, many ill-trained and poorly remunerated were unleashed on universities and cities across the country.

Rather than dealing with the problem, typical of law enforcement in Nigeria, they became the problem, extorting money from suspects, detaining people illegally, and sometimes executing suspects for failing to meet their financial demands. They also became pawns in the hand of politicians and influential members of society who used them to settle personal scores or advance their political and economic interests. Because it had special (no pun intended) power being that its leadership was answerable only to the Inspector General of Police, its operatives became law unto themselves.

May we know how the End SARS protests started, what was the final straw that pushed Nigerians on the kind of protests that we are experiencing today?

The crisis has been brewing for long. As I mentioned, for about a decade now the atrocities of the SARS unit have been the subject of social media commentary and reports of



The response of President Buhari portrays a leader who is out of touch with the realities of his country, says Chido Onumah

groups like Amnesty International. But the buildup to the current protests started in 2017 when some activists launched a campaign on Twitter to end SARS and reform the Nigeria Police. In 2017, a petition signed by over 10,000 people was submitted to Nigeria's National Assembly calling for a total disbandment of SARS. After the social media uproar, there were peaceful protests in cities across Nigeria.

The latest round of protests started in early October, first on Twitter and spilling over to the streets of major cities across the country after reports of the shooting of a young man in the south-south part of the country by SARS officers. Let us not forget that in September, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) had planned nationwide protests against the insensate increase in the price of petrol and electricity which was called off to the chagrin of young people across the country after the NLC reached an "agreement" with the government. Before the increase in the cost of petrol and electricity, Nigerians had been complaining about poverty, corruption, insecurity, kidnapping, etc. The End SARS issue was just a trigger to propel young people who have been used—used as political thugs during elections—and abandoned by successive governments in Nigeria.

Who exactly are the people leading the protests, who speaks for the protesters?

They call it a "leaderless revolution."

Perhaps, that explains why it was sustained for so long. In the past when we had protests led by organised labour or members of civil society there were reports that government would pay off the "leaders" of such protests and after a few days, the protests fizzled. The protesters didn't want to hear the word "leader." It was a collective action. They didn't want to be betrayed by so-called leaders. Of course, there are a few young people who because of their social profile or celebrity status are known across the country and around the world who directed the protests or presented demands to the authorities.

Overall, the peaceful protests remained leaderless, and the young people managed to make it work. Unfortunately, rather than government protecting the peaceful protesters, they hired other young people to disrupt the process and cause mayhem. That was the genesis of the violence and breakdown of law and order that the country witnessed in the last one week. Those hired by the State to disrupt the protests were so emboldened that they started burning cars and buildings while the security operatives watched. It created an opportunity for a lot of young unemployed youths who live on the streets to take advantage of the chaos to cause more destruction.

In Lagos, the deployment of soldiers who were seen in a video shooting at unarmed protesters at the Lekki toll gate was the trigger of the state-wide violence and destruction that followed. Seeing that security

operatives had applied lethal force and subsequently abandoned their role to protect lives and property, enraged citizens took a cue and embarked on large scale destruction of public and private property, including forcibly raiding government warehouses where they helped themselves to all sorts of food items meant for distribution as palliatives to the people to cushion the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but wickedly shut away by state officials.

There have been reports and counter reports on casualties, what are your own sources on the ground telling you about exact figures on casualties?

We do not have the exact figures. That will become clear in the weeks ahead when many of the judicial panels of enquiry set up by state governors submit their reports and they are made public. For now, the reports on casualties are sketchy and many can't be independently verified. But from initial reports in the media, clearly many protesters were killed and injured.

We have also heard incidents of a high court burnt in Lagos, buses burnt, prison breaks, etc., what impact do you think this could have on the true intent and purpose of the End SARS protests?

It is unfortunate that the peaceful protests took a violent turn. But the State should be held culpable, first for instigating counter protests and then standing idly by when there was a breakdown of law and order. There were things security personnel could have done to stop the violence without causing deaths or injuries. But they just watched and, in some cases, participated in the "looting" that occurred.

Clearly, the destruction was not carried out by the End SARS protesters. These were peaceful, focused, and organised protesters whose comportment was widely commended. The destruction was carried out by the precariat, victims of the violent onslaught of the Nigerian state over the last 60 years of political

independence. Those who have lived on the fringes, who felt marginalised and left out of the prosperity and opportunity that the enormous wealth the country should have created. The End SARS protesters are organising online and offline and strategising on how to turn their efforts into a political movement that not only seeks to hold the government accountable but one whose members can run for political office.

What do you make of the way the Buhari administration has handled the crisis, did the speech of President Buhari help in anyway?

Perhaps, it would have been better if President Buhari didn't make that broadcast. It was anti-climactic. People were expecting him, literally begging him, to address the country which would have assuaged feelings in the first few days of the protests, but he remained impervious to the anger and later death and destruction around him. And when he decided to speak, more than two weeks after the protests started, he did not address any of core issues around the protests. His insensitivity riled the protesters. President Buhari's obliviousness is on a different level.

Following the broadcast, videos started circulating on social media to the effect that the person that spoke was not President Buhari and that the "real" President Buhari passed away in 2017 during one of his many medical trips to the UK. Because of the hollowness of the speech, it was drowned in conspiracy theories. Of course, it was President Buhari that spoke in a recorded broadcast to Nigerians on October 22. Unfortunately, we are dealing with an enfeebled president who is utterly out of touch with the mood of the country.

There are some who feel that the politics of 2023 may be playing a role in the End SARS protests, any currency to this school of thought?

Everything in Nigeria today is linked to the politics of 2023. The End SARS protests have nothing to do with the politics of 2023 but a lot to do with the



Nigerian music star Wizkid right, leads the End SARS protest in London. Star power was on full display during the protests in Nigeria and across the globe.

crisis of poverty, underdevelopment, and abuse of Nigerians by the State and its institutions. Of course, there are elements who want to take advantage of the protests to further their personal and political interests. As I noted earlier, the anti-SARS sentiments have been on for many years. It was only a matter of time.

We understand a number of businesses belonging to APC kingpin Ahmed Bola Tinubu have been destroyed, any reason why he is targeted?

Tinubu has come out to say he does not own some of the businesses linked to him that were destroyed. The jury is still out on that and why these businesses were targeted. What we know, which is unfortunate, is the destruction of media houses belonging to Tinubu—The Nation newspaper and TV Continental. We hope the panel set up by the Lagos State Government can find answers to some of these questions. I have my doubts though. The state government is deeply enmeshed in the mess. Take the question of who invited the military. First, we were told by the military that it was fake news and that the military was not involved in the Lekki shooting. The Governor of Lagos State denied sending in the military. Now, the military says it was invited by the governor. It is hard to know what to believe. The governor has many questions to answer.

A number of sports, music and Nollywood stars have fully embraced the End SARS movement, what impact has their presence had on the protests?

The impact has been huge. It gave traction to the process. It reassured citizens, particularly the downtrodden who were the catalysts of protests in the past that the "rich also cry." In this case, the middle class. Usually, protests start in low income neighbourhoods and it is easy to quell them because those involved are not "influential" or "important" people. This time, the centre of the protests was Lekki, the neighbourhood of the nouveau riche. The involvement of celebrities and Nollywood stars brought international attention to the protests and the violent attempt by state to shut down the protests. Those outside the country led protests in different cities around the world and those in the country were at the forefront of the protests. The country hadn't witnessed anything like that.

How should voices that are out for genuine change and reforms guard against opportunists trying to hijack the movement? We now see people, especially politicians, who have been part of the problems in Nigeria speaking in support of End SARS. Should they be trusted?

This was part of the concerns of the protesters. They are aware of

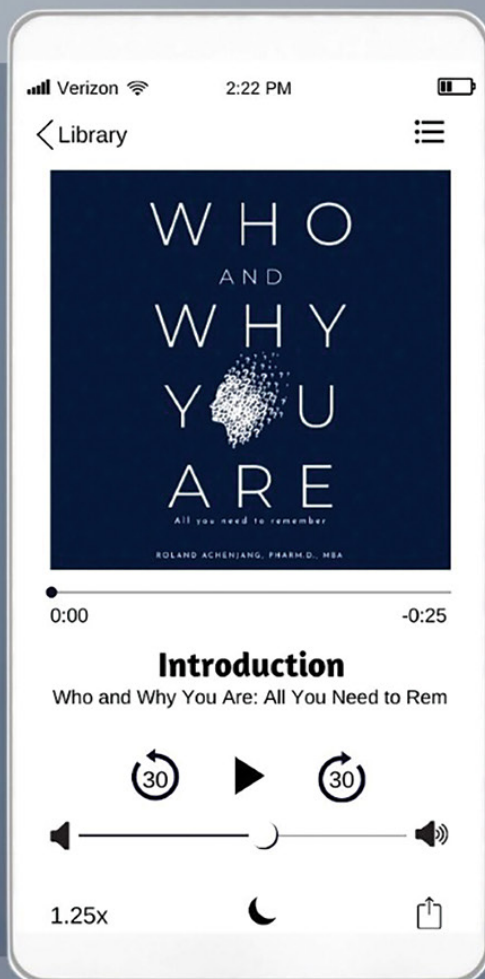
this and are not taking any chances. Many of the politicians speaking out are trying to save face. Nigerians know the enemies of the people, those who feed fat on the misery of citizens and on the underdevelopment of the country, those who earn hundreds of millions every year for doing nothing, those who abuse their office and public trust, and those who steal directly from the people in the name of governance. For these groups, their comeuppance is near. Nigeria isn't going to remain the same after the End SARS protests. People are ready for real change and they know they can attain it when they work together with determination.

We end with a look at the future. How far could the End SARS protests go, and what future do you see for the country?

The End SARS protests have redefined the nature of protests in Nigeria. For one, it has galvanized young people and shown them the power of organisation and solidarity. Of course, there are concerns and still plenty of work to do. Nigeria is a deeply divided country and one of the things government tried to do during the protests was to get other young people to break ranks. Government not only pushed the narrative that the protests were carried out by young people in the southern part of the country and that it was an attempt to remove President Buhari (a northerner) from power, they recruited other young people to disrupt the protests and instigate violence. The State did all it could to play up the fault lines in the country.

I think overall the protesters achieved their aim, which was to register their displeasure about the state of the country using End SARS as the pivot. They must go back to re-strategise, build a pan-Nigerian coalition that addresses the major concerns of young people and citizens across the country and present a minimum agenda for the transformation of the country, an agenda that speaks to unity, freedom, equality and opportunities for all Nigerians wherever they may be in the country.

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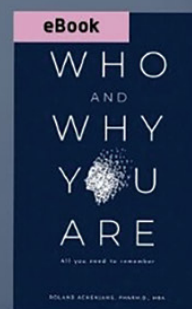
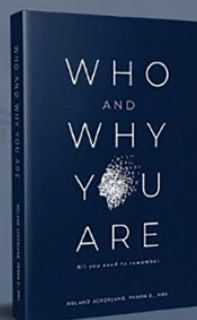


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We Are Laying The Foundation For A New Malawi-President Chakwera

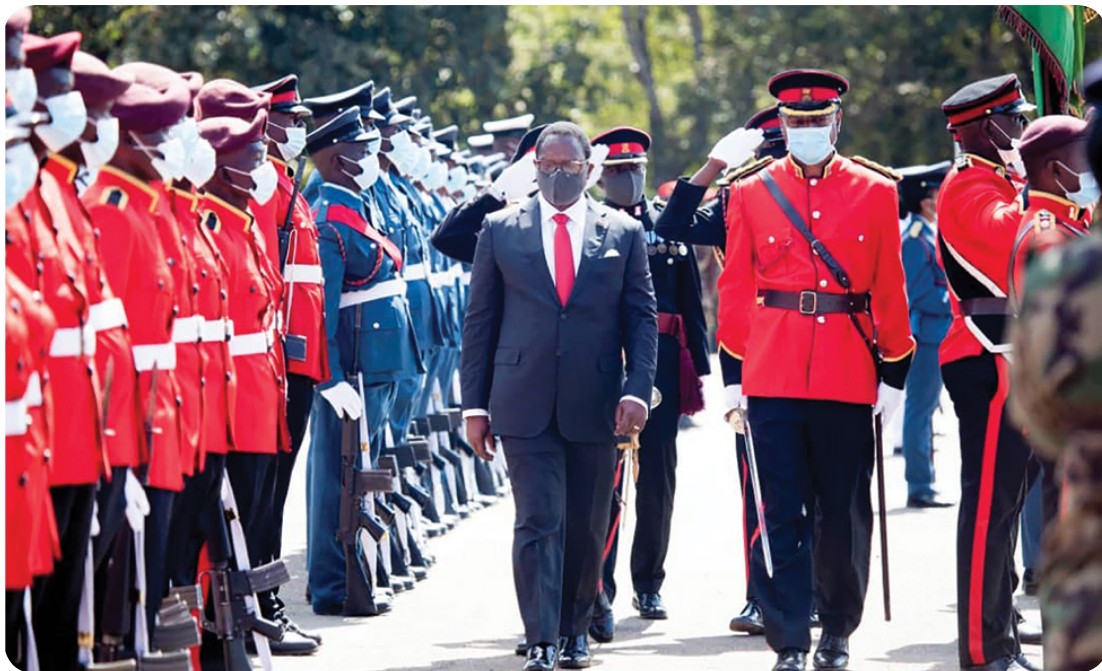
By Ajong Mbapndah L

The success of Malawians, their prosperity, their aspirations fulfilled, their future ensured, their country secured, and their lives assured, is what must define the success of this administration, says President Lazarus Chakwera. Responding to questions from Pan African Visions on the first hundred days of his administration, President Chakwera says the focus has been on laying a solid foundation for an efficient machinery to deliver change that Malawians want.

"Ours is a system that needs an overhaul. That's why we are talking of changing direction for this sinking ship which had been weighed down by greed, nepotism, corruption, executive arrogance and all the economic atrocities that were committed by a cartel of state criminals," President Chakwera said.

Describing the evils as deeply entrenched, President Chakwera says it will take a collaborative effort to uproot them and his administration was resolute on putting the right people in the right places to get Malawi back on the rails.

President Chakwera thanks for accepting to answer our questions, your presidency has recently clocked one hundred



Ours is a system that needs an overhaul and that is why we are talking of changing direction for this sinking ship , says President Chakwera.

days, may we know how Malawi is faring under your leadership?

President Chakwera: What the first hundred days of my Administration have sought to do is to turn Malawi around, to change course. My first task was to put up a team of ministers that would understand and implement the Tonse philosophy of shared responsibility, shared accountability, and shared prosperity.

The values of that philosophy are outlined in my Super High 5 agenda, whose tenets are Servant Leadership, Uniting Malawians, Prospering Together, Ending Corruption, and the Rule of law. Over the past three months, we have focused on laying these foundations across the public sector so that we have an efficient machinery for delivering the change Malawians want.

weighed down by greed, nepotism, corruption, executive arrogance and all the economic atrocities that were committed by a cartel of state criminals. These evils were deeply entrenched and went on for so long that it will take a collaborative effort to uproot them. But we are resolute, and we are on course with putting the right people in the right places to get the country back on track.



President Chakwera receiving the sword of office as Commander in Chief of the Malawi Armed Forces. Malawians must put all hands-on deck to root out the evils of corruption, he says.

In what shape did you meet the country when you took over, and what are some of the concrete measures you have taken to get Malawi back on the rails?

President Chakwera : I said this when I was giving the State of the Nation Address in parliament, that by way of diagnosis, my Administration believes that the Executive is too powerful, the Judiciary is too underfunded, the Legislature is too subservient, and all three are too corrupt. Ours is a system that needs an overhaul. That's why we are talking of changing direction for this sinking ship which had been

How is your administration coping with the ravages of COVID-19?

President Chakwera: The COVID-19 pandemic is such a colossal challenge that requires not just domestic unity, but also global unity and innovative solutions. It has ravaged our health system and caused deep economic harm to our nation. Malawi, being one of the Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Countries is among the hardest hit.

As a country, we have made efforts to contain the disease from spreading, to disseminate messages of awareness, and to sustain economic activities., ensuring the pandemic



On the disturbing trend of leaders changing constitutional term limits, as long as I live and breathe, that will never happen here, President Chakwera says emphatically.

does not wipe out our socio-economic gains of the last few months.

It will interest you to learn that Malawi issued a Statement on 25th September, 2020, to the United Nations, which highlighted the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in terms of: high risk of debt default; worsening trade competitiveness; supply chain disruptions; and a constrained informal working sector. The Statement further appealed for enhanced international support towards the LDCs and debt cancellation ultimately and an extension of the debt moratorium in the meantime.

In short, we know that there are short and long term implications that come with COVID-19 and my government continues to deal with both. So far, we are thankful to God that our efforts are yielding fruit.

What is your response to criticism that your cabinet is a family affair with relatives appointed as Ministers and the bulk of the cabinet from the Central region which is your fief?

President Chakwera: When I came up with the list of names, marital status, religion, and tribe were not considerations. All I consider was whether these Ministers have the capacity to deliver results and the public credibility to have a following for their example of hard work. I

believe that a just society is not only one in which familial, regional, and marital ties do not qualify you for service, but also one in which those ties do not disqualify you for service. The only thing that counts is merit.

Let us talk about some of the promises you made, and we start with fighting corruption, just how bad was corruption in Malawi when you took office and what progress has been made in fighting it?

President Chakwera: Like I have said somewhere before in this interview, our society is deeply entrenched in corruption and that it will take all of us to cooperate in order to deal away with this beast.

In the first place, we must equip with enough resources the arms and organizations that are concerned with fighting corruption, such as the Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Police Service and all others. My Administration has already fulfilled this promise in the recent budget allocation that was presented and approved by the National Assembly.

Secondly it is to allow all the bodies that fight corruption to function independently, to make sure that there is no interference from the Executive or any other arm of government. I am glad that, the Anti-Corruption Bureau for example, is now able to carry out its work without interference.

We have seen several officials

from the previous administration arrested, how will corruption cases be handled in a way that Malawians do not see it as a witch hunt of the previous administration?

President Chakwera : As long as there is independence in the bodies that are mandated to fight corruption, as long as we follow the rule of law, as long as there is no interference from any arm of government, people will eventually realize that

there is no witch hunting in our fight against corruption.

One of the promises you made was to meet regularly with opposition leaders to get their input on running the country, may we know how many times President Chakwera has met with the opposition and how useful their proposals have been?

President Chakwera: This is an ongoing process, and we are on course to set up the first meeting with the Leader of Opposition before the end of the year. So far, I have already met with the Secretaries General of opposition parties and well as various senior members of the same to get their views on board. In that regard, I can assure you that we have met and continue to meet with the opposition, and we are resolute in making sure that we are servant leaders who put Malawi first.

What plans do you have to strengthen the electoral system and institutions in a way that under your leadership and going forward Malawi will not experience rigged and flawed elections again?

President Chakwera: We are putting in place plans to ensure the independence of the Malawi Electoral Commission. One of them is to ensure that there is no

obstruction to the electoral reform Bills that were passed by Parliament recently, and that we continue to propose legislative amendments aimed at enhancing Parliament's independence in handling matters of elections and reducing the President's power to obstruct its functions.

President Chakwera is known to be a man of strong religious beliefs, what role are your Christian values playing in influencing your policy choices and the direction of Malawi under your leadership?

President Chakwera: The Super Hi5 agenda is the blueprint for the Tonse government development agenda. This template is not a biased agenda that leans on religion or party affiliation. It is a template that suits all Malawians from all walks of life. As a Christian, one thing I need to continuously remember is that I represent people of diverse backgrounds, that is the reason why the Super Hi5 makes sense; Servant Leadership, Unity, Prospering Together, Ending Corruption, and upholding the Rule of Law. All our policies must be guided by this template. My faith guides me to remain strong in delivering this agenda.

What is the reaction of President Chakwera to penchant for African leaders to abrogate constitutional term limits to remain in power?

President Chakwera: As long as I live and breathe, that will never happen here.

With all the promises you made to Malawians and the great ambitions you have, what will be your definition of a successful presidency?

President Chakwera : I am here to serve Malawians, nothing more, nothing less. The success of Malawians, their prosperity, their aspirations fulfilled, their future ensured, their country secured, their lives assured, is what must define the success of this administration.

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Cameroon School Killings: Another Heinous Crime, Mammoth Condemnations, National Mourning, No Affirmative Action

By Andrew Nsoseka



The gruesome killing of innocent students sparked national and international outrage.

Cameroonians and the international community, were again plunged into mourning, after unidentified gunmen stormed Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy in Kumba, Southwest Region of Cameroon, on Saturday October 24, killing eight school children and injuring about 12 others in the process.

The gruesome act occasioned the declaration of national day of

mourning by President Biya who decreed that "Saturday, 31 October 2020, is declared a day of national mourning in memory of the victims of the attack, on 24 October 2020, of the Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy school complex in Fiango, Kumba, Meme Division."

The day of national mourning, was solemnly observed throughout Cameroon, with the national flag, flying at half mast, and prayer ceremonies held in memory of the

victims of the school attack.

Both Government and Separatists have distanced themselves from the October 24 killings, an incident that drew wide condemnation nationally and internationally. So far, no one or group has claimed responsibility for the act, as the known belligerents in the Anglophone crisis, government forces, and separatist fights, are both shirking away from the act, and blaming each other.

The victims of the school attack that

happened at about midday, were aged between 10 and 12.

Reports say the gunmen, came in on four motorbikes, entered a classroom and shot several students. Some of the children jumped down the first floor in an attempt to escape, and many were injured in the process.

In a statement that evening, Government spokesperson and Minister of Communication, Mr Rene Emmanuel Sadi, said separatist fighters, popularly called Amba Boys, are responsible for the 'abominable act'

"The Government of the Republic wishes to once again take the entire Cameroonian people as witness, and firmly denounces all these fellow citizens, who, lurking in the shadows abroad, in their host countries, mastermind these unspeakable assassinations and fuel the climate of insecurity in the North West and South West Regions," Sadi said, on Sunday.

In another statement which appeared to be shirking off government's responsibility to protect the schools as promised at the start of the 2020/2021 Academic Year in Cameroon, the Communication



The killings have raised more questions than answers on security measures that the government has in place for students in the restive NW and SW regions of the country.

Minister and government spokesman claimed that the school was operating without authorisation and knowledge of local government officials, who were supposed to ensure its security in the crisis ridden area.

“It should however be noted with regret that the «Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy,» only launched its activities at the start of the 2020/2021 school year, without the knowledge of the competent administrative authorities and could not benefit from the same security measures enjoyed by other schools in the Mémé Division.” Minister Sadi said.

The Minister’s claim was however dismissed by fact checkers and locals who say the school has been operating even before the beginning of the crisis. Locals also faulted the Divisional authorities for claiming not to have known that the school was operating, when they patrol the area, and see students studying or moving around on campus.

Separatists deny responsibility

After the Cameroon government through its communication Minister denied claims that the act was carried out by government forces, separatist leaders in their dispersed ranks and groups, also came out, denying allegations by government spokesman that the act was carried by separatist fighters, whom the Minister referred to as “terrorists”.

In a statement, a pro-separatist group, known as the Southern Cameroons Civil Society Consortium, SCACSC, said: “The inhumane act perpetrated on school children is one too many coordinated by the Cameroon Government apparatchiks for political and nefarious ends.”

Another separatist activist, Eric Tataw, in a video over social media, declared, “The Cameroon military killed those children. What is the reason for any Amba boy to go into a school campus and kill children?” he asked.

In communities, the divide over who carried out the killings is also wide, with accusing fingers pointed at both parties. While sympathisers of the government point accusing fingers at separatists, those who sympathise with the separatists are also pointing accusing fingers at government forces.

School campaigns in Anglophone Cameroon

The crisis in Cameroon, that have dragged on for over four years now, started with a call for school boycott, which went on, until 2020, when most separatist fighters and leaders in their different ranks and factions, called for it to be dropped. The 2020/2021



Inhabitants of Kumba took to the streets to protest the killings.
Photo Josiane Kouagheu, Reuters.

academic year, was thus expected to be a smooth one, with the two warring factions giving a greenlight for schools to resume. The Kumba school killings thus came as a great shock to many, as both parties had openly advocated for effective school resumption. Many were in great shock, given that the Kumba killings, which are so far, the most horrific attack on a school, only came when both armed factions greenlighted the option for schools to reopen.

In an audio message released after the killings, a separatist kingpin, self-styled “General Mirror”, operating within the town where the incident

happened, and controlling all separatist units therein, said, the act was never carried out by his fighters. Remarking that he rarely speaks on social media because he does not like social media, he said, they joined the “Revolution”, because they wanted to liberate their people from the Cameroon government.

“What happened at Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy, has broken my heart, and that is why I could not talk to you immediately it happened. My brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers, I have come this morning to say we don’t kill our own. Only Cameroon soldiers carry out such massacres. I believe you all saw what happened in Ngarbuh, Small Babanki, Muyuka and many other places... we the restoration forces don’t kill babies. We don’t kill children. We don’t kill innocent civilians, except those who are enablers for the Cameroon government” he said.

The Communication Minister, on his side, has stated that, “the Government strongly refutes these false allegations as well as the subterfuge and other manoeuvres of the said armed bands, who are unscrupulously tending to push the blame of all sort of atrocities against the populations of the North-West and South-West Regions, like the horrific attack of today, on



images of the six students killed in the attack. Photo credit BB.



The government organised a funeral for kids. A year after the national dialogue, resolutions that were touted as solutions to the crisis have not been implemented.

the Cameroonian Armed Forces, through endless campaigns of false propaganda through social media.” He said.

In some of their outings, the separatist factions have advocated for an international fact-finding mission to investigate and uncover those behind the act. On its part, the Cameroon government promised to hunt down separatists who were initially accused by the government, as those behind the killings.

Women protest killings, call for peace

Following the killings and condemnations, women groups marched in the South West, North West, Littoral and Centre regions of the country. The women in the protest, advocated for an end to the killings, and called for peace.

In its issue Number 02037 of Friday October 30, The Post Newspaper, in its editorial headlined, “Stop The War: Hired Protesters, Commercial Mourners Cant End Cameroon’s Bloodbath”, decried that rather than put in efforts to end the war, the government was rather paying some women groups to decry separatist activities and call for ‘peace’.

“We cannot go anywhere when we remote-control people to demonstrate in the streets, asking for peace while we hold tenaciously the fort of our belligerent option. Thus, all those who poured into the streets in Kumba, Yaounde, Bamenda and other places, staged what looked like scenes in Nollywood movies. There were actors and actresses who did a good drama for the gallery and for the entertainment of their sponsors in high places. Otherwise, how come the authorities were so collaborative and protective of those demonstrators in a country where every protest march is cracked down with military cruelty?” The paper editorialised.

Artists advocate for right to education

After the school attack and condemnations that that followed suit from various stakeholders, artists in Cameroon, who, just before the attack had launched an online campaign, #Endanglophonecrisis, calling for an end to the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, were not indifferent.

On social media, several artists in Cameroon, clad in school uniforms, to advocate the right of children, to be educated. The move of the artists,

is became an advocacy campaign for all belligerents to observe and respect the right of children to be educated.

The campaign by artists, has largely been online, using social media platforms, where they reach to their many fans, who in turn relay and spread the call to end the crisis, as well as promote and encourage pupils and students to return to school.

The initiative to launch campaign was brought up by artist Jean Jules Kenfack best known by his artist name, Maalhox. It was launched under the banner of the Cameroon Movement for Artists. With the initiative, a host of high profile Cameroonian entertainers rallied at the Lyceé Bilingue Essos-Yaounde, to give a boost to the campaign, and an end to the crisis.

Condemnations galore, with no affirmative action

After news of the incident spread like wildfire, politicians, traditional rulers and other personalities of high standing in Cameroon all came out to condemn the act. The international community too also came up strongly against the attack on schools. Even Pope Francis also condemned the act.

While some went to urge both

parties to come to a negotiation table, in order to settle differences and end the war, others simply ended at condemning. Critics have however faulted both the government, separatists, and other national and international bodies and personalities, for doing nothing concrete to push both parties to a negotiation table.

The Kumba incident, is not the only one, as several massacres and atrocities have been carried out, both by government forces and separatist fights, some which are caught on tape, and others investigated and unveiled, while some, like the Kumba incident are hardly investigated, and are easily swept under the carpet, until the next one happens and condemnations will again pour in.

A national dialogue organised by the Cameroon government about a year ago, yielded no fruits, and the war went on unperturbed. The government has been accused by many, of having organised a monologue, as mostly government officials, flunkies, and a few critics were in attendance, with the separatist fighters, who were the main actors, all absent.

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Ivory Coast Heads Into Crisis As Opposition Groups Create National Transitional Council

By Alexandre Nhampossa

There is an environment of uncertainty in Ivory Coast just days after voters went to the polls. This comes after protests in August left a dozen people dead and more than 100 injured. Roadblocks and burning cars were to be seen at the time, and now things are not good again. Two days after the October 31 presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire, the Ivorian opposition announced on Monday evening the creation of a National Transitional Council.

Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara has won a third term in office with 94.27 percent of the vote, the electoral commission announced, after a bitter election which sparked deadly violence and which opposition voters boycotted. Independent candidate Kouadio Konan Bertin came in second with 1.99% of the votes, ahead of the other two candidates who called for a boycott, former President Henri Konan Bédié (1.66%) and former Prime Minister Pascal Affi N'Guessan (0.99%). The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has three days to forward these results to the Constitutional Council, which has seven days to validate them or not.

Côte d'Ivoire's basic law establishes a maximum of two mandates, but the Constitutional Council considered that with the new Constitution adopted in 2016, the presidential term counter was reset to zero. This led to surprises within the opposition.

Victory celebrations appeared muted, with only small crowds gathering in the pro-Ouattara neighborhoods of Abidjan. Pockets of unrest, some vandalised voting material and closed polling stations were reported mostly in opposition strongholds during Saturday's election.

Following a meeting of key opposition parties, the group, which considers the new mandate «unconstitutional» and no longer



A group supporting Ivorian political opposition protests against a third term for President Alassane Ouattara in Abidjan on Oct. 15. ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP via Getty Images.

recognises Ouattara as president, announced that it is setting up a «National Transition Council» to form a «transitional government». Following the results, thousands of citizens have taken to the streets in protest. These riots continue and many Ivorians fear further violence.

Pascal Affi N'Guessan, one of the top opposition candidates who later boycotted the vote, said that Henri Konan Bedie, the country's 86-year-old former president, would head up a council of transition. A new transitional government then will be formed and tasked with preparing «the framework for the organization of a fair, transparent and inclusive presidential election,» he said adding that «keeping Mr Ouattara as head of state could lead to civil war.»

The ruling party reacted, through

its executive director. Adama Bictogo considers this «unacceptable» and calls on the government to take a firm stand. «We consider this to be a mistrust of the authorities and that it is unacceptable. We therefore call for firmness on the part of the government, but above all we call for the application of the law vis-à-vis the opposition. «According to Adama Bictogo, the opposition wants to «drag the country into an artificial crisis and chaos.»

Tensions surrounding the vote

Tensions surrounding the vote have raised fears of post-election violence in the West African country, where more than 3,000 people died in 2010-2011 when then-President Laurent Gbagbo refused to concede defeat to Ouattara. The opposition

says more than 30 people have died in violence related to Saturday's vote. Security forces in Ivory Coast dispersed opposition supporters with tear gas as protesters erected barricades in another part of Abidjan on Tuesday after President Alassane Ouattara was declared the winner.

Abidjan, the country's economic capital, was calm on Monday with no sign of protests. But tensions were still high in Daoukro, an opposition stronghold 235 kilometres (146 miles) north of Abidjan, where protesters had set up barricades to blockade roads.

The U.N. refugee agency, meanwhile, reported that as of Tuesday more than 3,200 Ivorians had fled to Liberia, Ghana and Togo fearing post-electoral violence. The agency says most of the new arrivals are women and children from Ivory Coast's west and southwest regions. Among them, it says are former Ivorian refugees who had recently returned to their home country. Now, they have been forced to flee again.

A number of Ivorian political forces excluded

International election observers had said that a significant portion of the population did not vote, compared to previous presidential elections. «The process excluded a number of Ivorian political forces and was hampered by an active boycott,» it said in a statement issued with the South Africa-based Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA).

African Union observer mission said the election was «generally satisfactory» despite lack of consensus. In contrast, the US watchdog the Carter Center said «The overall context and process did not allow for a genuinely competitive election.»

The Ivorian NGO Indigo, which had deployed nearly 1,000 observers in 750 polling stations throughout the



Anti-riot police used tear gas to disperse protesters in Abidjan.

country, noted that “the election was marred by violence and did not favor the massive and serene expression of the population.

Observers also noted that the turnout at the polls showed strong disparities across the country, with relatively high rates in the north and lower rates in the center and west, and were variable in the south of the country.

The National Council for Human Rights (CNDH), on the other hand, believes that “except for a few incidents reported in some areas, the



The election was marred by violence and did not favor the massive and serene expression of the population, some election observers said.

elections were conducted honestly in acceptable conditions and in serenity thanks to the involvement of the security forces deployed for the security of the elections,” according to its president, Namizata Sangaré.

Forty out of 44 candidates were disqualified without being entitled to an effective remedy, as the decision rejecting their candidacy was final. Out of the four qualified candidates, only Alassane Ouattara and Kouadio Konan Bertin campaigned. _____

President Lungu Reflects on Zambia At 56

By Prince Kurupati

24 October, 2020 was the day that the Republic of Zambia turned 56. To celebrate the 56th anniversary of the country, Zambia President Edgar Lungu addressed the nation calling for all Zambians to reflect on the country’s glorious past which has necessitated all citizens to enjoy peace, unity and tranquility.

In his independence celebrations day speech going by the theme ‘ONE LAND, ONE NATION – BUILDING OUR FUTURE, PROUD AND FREE’, President Lungu’s main message called upon all Zambian nationals to reflect on the country’s past – a past which saw fearless and revolutionary cadres face the mighty of the white minority settles all in the aim to acquire sovereignty.

President Lungu’s opening remarks saw him reiterating the fact that Zambia is a sovereign state owing to the dedication shown by fearless revolutionary cadres who fought in the liberation war against the white minority settlers. He also called upon all Zambian nationals to jealously guard the country’s political and economic independence. “Zambia shall forever be one country, one nation, indivisible and belonging to all of us as its citizens. It does not matter where one comes from, what language one speaks, what faith or political persuasion one holds, we all have a stake in our country.”

Reflecting on the Past

Looking back at Zambia’s past, President Lungu said the freedom and



President Edgar Lungu addressed the nation calling on Zambians to reflect on their glorious past.

independence that the country enjoys today came as a result of the selfless nature of all those who sacrificed their lives in the liberation war to ensure that future generations enjoy a life of peace, unity and tranquility. He stated that even though divisions could be created on ethnic and tribal differences, the revolutionary fighters regarded each one as brothers and sisters and thus were able to cooperate with each other to fight against the common enemy that is, white minority settlers.

“When the founders of this nation waged the struggle for independence, it did not matter which rivers they crossed, which valleys they walked through or which mountains they climbed during the march to

freedom...What mattered was their common purpose and desire to free this country from colonial rule...They came together, regardless of their differences, because they wanted this country to be free from colonial rule and free from exploitation, they embraced the motto of ‘ONE ZAMBIA, ONE NATION’ because they understood that in unity there is strength.”

President Lungu called upon all Zambian nationals to copy the selfless nature of the liberation war heroes and heroines as the country’s future hinges upon the cooperation of all Zambians towards one common goal.

As the liberation war heroes and heroines took to the battlefield to face the mighty forces of the white settlers,

they did not think of the prevailing situation in their communities, rather they envisioned a future where everyone in the country had the same opportunities regardless of skin colour or the area they hail from. In the same vein, President Lungu said that today, all Zambians have to consider future generations in everything that they do. He said that “Our generation and those to come have a lot to learn from that selfless generation, a culture of hard work, dedication, resilience, sacrifice and a sense of responsibility.”

Looking back at Zambia’s political past after the attainment of independence, President Lungu said the country has come a long way. Political transitions have occurred from a plural political landscape at independence to a one party participatory democracy in 1972 up until 1990 when the nation adopted the multi-party democratic system. The President said the latest multi-party democratic system has proved that it’s an effective political system capable of ushering in a great developmental trajectory. He thus urged all Zambians to embrace it and to safeguard it as it possesses the keys to unlock Zambia’s unfulfilled political and economic potential.

Whilst reflecting on Zambia’s economic prospects, President Lungu also called upon all Zambians to appreciate the free market economy which the current administration has been pursuing. “Our economy

continues to be liberalized and more and more of our people continue to take advantage of the available economic opportunities, we have Zambian entrepreneurs owning and growing their own business under our liberalized and enabling environment."

Aspirations for the Future

Looking forward to the future, President Lungu said the country's economic fortunes are very promising. The President was particularly in awe of the country's human resource base which he said was the key in transforming the country's economy.

"Our country's population has grown from four million in 1964 to an estimated 18 million. Our population has been a catalyst for development. It is our trained and skilled Zambians working in industry, hospitals, schools and contributing to the development and well being of our country...They are beneficiaries of education attained at great cost to the nation since independence and they are paying back to their country by working hard and contributing to the national coffers."

President Lungu also praised the impact of new technology which he

said had simplified the lives of all Zambians and in doing so changed the way in which Zambians conducted their business. "In our continuous effort to build our future, the country has embraced technological advancement; we are increasingly becoming a digital society, with the mobile phone becoming part of lives. To achieve this status, my government has invested heavily in digital technology with state firms like the Zambia National Broadcasting Services (ZNBC), Zamtel and Zesco leading the way."

In his concluding remarks,

President Lungu reiterated that all Zambians of today need to emulate the selfless nature demonstrated by the liberation war heroes and heroines. "As I conclude, let me reiterate that our freedom would not have come about without the sacrifices of our forefathers and mothers, they laid a firm foundation upon which to build our nation. For that we are grateful. It is now up to our generation to take advantage of the equal opportunities that Zambia offers to all of us. Let us make the most of these opportunities inherent in our freedom and sovereignty."

Tanzania's Magufuli Wins Elections With Landslide Amid Fraud Allegations

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

President John Pombe Magufuli and his ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) have won October polls with a major victory in elections the opposition say were marred by fraud and irregularities while some diplomats raised concerns over the credibility of the polls.

The just concluded elections were hotly contested with the opposition led by Tundu Lissu who survived an assassination attempt three years ago hoping to unseat President Magufuli, while the incumbent and his party CCM were determined to win re-election for the second term. Campaigns were largely peaceful but with sanctions on some opposition leaders over alleged campaign's rules breach, seen by some as tactics to derail opposition campaign.

The Tanzania elections body declared Magufuli winner with 84 percent of votes, a landslide victory that will allow him to govern the East African country with confidence, despite accusations of irregularities that include ballot stuffing, the denial of their representatives to be in some polling stations and others from the opposition. The Chadema, main opposition party's candidate Tundu Lissu got 13 percent of the vote.

«Whatever happened yesterday was not an election, and thus we do



The landslide victory will allow President Magufuli to govern the East African country with confidence

not recognize it. We do not accept the result,» Lissu was quoted as saying adding "opposition election monitors had been barred from entering polling stations and faced other interference."

The polls marked by few international observers and limited foreign media accreditations were hindered by Internet restrictions that made it hard for many internet users to access social media platforms shortly before, during, and after elections.

However, The East African Community (EAC) led observation mission said in a preliminary statement that Tanzania's polls that took part on 28th October were largely peaceful. Former Burundi president Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, the head

of the mission said in a statement that "voting proceeded smoothly in most polling stations observed, with NEC [National Elections Commission] officials demonstrating good levels of competence and compliance with the mandated procedures,".

The EAC mission which comprised 59 Observers arrived in Tanzania on the 21st October, 2020 and deployed on the 26th October, 2020 to observe the final stages of campaigns, polling preparations and election day proceedings.

However, the opposition maintains the polls were not fair and has continued to call for the indefinite peaceful demonstrations, a move that appears to have resulted in the arrest of key opposition leaders including the defeated Chadema's presidential

candidate Lissu and Freeman Mbowe who is the party's chairman.

"We are calling on our members and other citizens who contested the results to take part in indefinite peaceful demonstrations," said Mr. Mbowe

Mbowe was also briefly arrested and released. In addition to opposition's fraud accusations the United State of America, one of Tanzania's key development partners raised concerns over election

credibility. The US embassy in the country said there were "credible allegations of significant election-related fraud and intimidation" in the 28 October elections.

However, the US subsequently congratulated Tanzanian people for exercising their democratic rights in the just concluded polls while maintaining possible sanctions for some individuals who were allegedly involved in election fraud and violence.

In the semi-autonomous Island Zanzibar that forms the United Republic of Tanzania, the ruling party's candidate Hussein Ali Mwinyi won the elections that were marred by violence and with dozens of opposition supporters death, according to ACT Wazalendo, one of

major opposition parties.

Calls for "peaceful" protests

The October polls left the opposition powerless after losing key strongholds. The only opposition MP-elect who won a seat in parliament Ms. Aida Kenan hinted late October she was ready to relinquish her win in defense of "democracy", reported The Citizen, the private owned newspaper in Tanzania.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lissu who had urged international community not to recognize elections outcome is still calling for nationwide indefinite "peaceful" demonstrations, but the police have warned that such protests will not be allowed saying criminal activities and those involved will be dealt with according to the law.

"According to Tanzanian laws, protests are legal as long as they notify police within 48 hours," said Lissu in an interview, adding that many opposition leaders have been arrested across the country.

"Protests will continue until we



Opposition leader Tundu Lissu says the polls were rigged, but regional leaders think otherwise and have congratulated President Magufuli for his victory.

get the independent elections body," stressed the opposition leader.

While the opposition continues to contest results, some of Tanzania's neighbors have congratulated President Mugufuli for winning the just concluded polls. Burundi's Evariste Ndayishimiye was the

first to congratulate his Tanzanian counterpart followed by Uganda's Yoweri Museveni and Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta.

Despite opposition's irregularity accusations backed by US that cited "credible allegations", The East African country's election body has

reacted defending the process of General Elections and the results saying in a statement that they were free and fair.

Director of Elections Wilson Mahera said on 3 November that "The commission has observed with serious concern a widening attempt by some actors both locally and internationally to paint Tanzania's 2020 election results to be anything but free and fair."

"The 2020 elections have adhered to all local and international laws, principles and guidelines for holding democratic elections, and therefore stand by the final election outcome as announced."- noted the elections agency.

However, the commission seems to agree on some issues raised during the polls, saying it "will equally work on all areas where legitimate matters of concern have been raised so as to improve the conduct of the democratic elections in Tanzania in the future".

Kenya Kicks Off Building Bridges

By Samuel Ouma

"The question at hand and one requiring a constitutional consensus is, therefore, this: How do we resolve the winner-take-all situation within a context of competitive politics as required by democratic practice? And how do we ensure we fulfil our democratic credentials without ripping apart the diversity of our nation-state? This question of 'us' versus 'them' must come to an end," said President Uhuru Kenyatta on October 22, 2020, after he and his handshake brother Raila Odinga received Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) Report.

The BBI project is the brainchild of the Handshake between President Kenyatta and Raila, seeking to resolve political animosity by doing away with the winner-takes-it-all dispensation and instead creates a



President Uhuru Kenyatta .DP William Ruto, and opposition leader PM Raila Odinga at the official launch of the Building Bridges to a United Kenya Taskforce Report. Photo PSCU.

room for inclusivity in the governance system.

During the March 9, 2018, famous handshake the duo agreed on nine issues to be addressed to achieve a united nation. They include corruption, lack of a national ethos, divisive elections, devolution,

safety and security, responsibilities and rights, inclusivity, shared property and ethnic antagonism and competition.

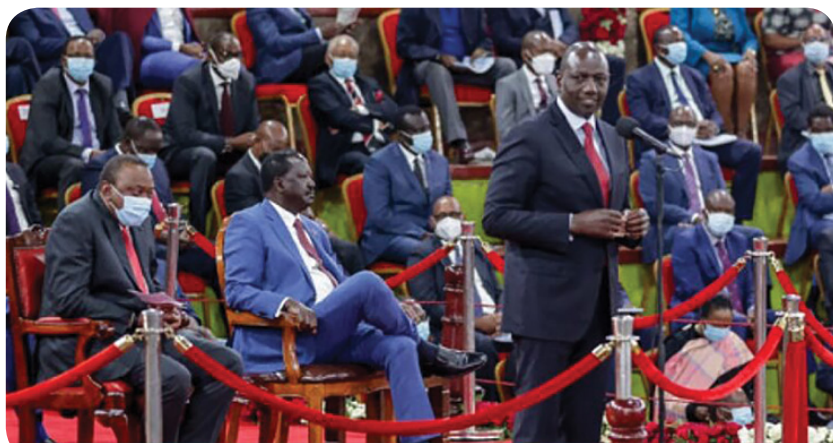
After collecting views from the public for more than a year across the 47 counties, the BBI task force submitted its final report.

"The steering committee humbly submits this report, as per its mandate, to the government so that the Kenyan people can see reflected at them their stories, desires and frustrations turned into instruments of change," said the taskforce.

The document recommends far-reaching political, social and economic reforms. The report proposes the return of Prime Minister's post with his two deputies. The PM will be nominated or appointed by the President from the party or coalition with the majority in

the National Assembly. He or she will be the leader of government business in the Parliament.

"Stakeholders submitted that the new executive structure, being more inclusive, will not generate the same bitterness and tension as we see when the fight is for the position of the



Deputy President William Ruto also poked holes in the BBI report citing proposed changes he is uncomfortable with including the expansion of the executive.

President,» the report says.

The steering committee also calls for an introduction of a new house power structure that includes the PM, Deputy PMs and the leader of the official opposition and increase in the number of MPs from the current 349 to 360. The report wants the creation of mixed-member constituencies that would be represented by more than one legislator in a bid to meet the gender parity rule.

To ensure women are well presented, the implementation of the document will see the election of a woman Senator in every county bringing the total number of Senators to 94 from the current 47. The posts of nominated Senators and woman representative are also to be scrapped.

BBI report proposes that Cabinet Secretaries revert to be called Cabinet Ministers appointed from among lawmakers and the harmonisation of the salaries of the three arms of government, the executive, judiciary, legislature and state corporations and commissions.

The team also proposed the establishment of the office of the Judiciary Ombudsman to improve Judiciary's accountability. He or she will be nominated by the president and approved by the Parliament. His or her role is to receive complaints about judges, magistrates, registrars and other judicial officers and conduct inquiries into them before submitting the report to President and Parliament.

The report further proposes numerous changes in the management structure of the Independent Electoral

and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). The commission on several occasions has faced allegations of bribery and biasedness. The taskforce wants the current officials to be sent home before the next polls and vetting of current senior officials.

Additionally, it proposes that all IEBC officials to be hired on a three-year contract and can only be renewed based on their performance. It also recommends that returning officers be hired through a similar process to the one used for commissioners.

«The taskforce recommends that we go to the next election with a clean slate to strengthen faith in the IEBC,» it says.

The report has met the demands of the healthcare workers following the proposed creation of the Health Services Commission that will be tasked with making recommendations to government on the management of medics. Recruitment, deployment and discipline of medics will be in the hand of the commission.

The document also recommends increased cash to the counties from the current 15 to 35 per cent as well as the creation of a Ward Development Fund and allocates it 30 per cent of the total revenue set aside for development.

To achieve a strong economy, it calls for a 50-year growth plan with the focus on industry and agriculture. BBI report also recommends the implementation of policies that would make it easy to start and run businesses including reduction of tax.

Despite all these proposed changes, the president will remain the head

of the document on Monday, October 26, termed the report «an excellent document» but proposed various amendments to the report.

Some of the contentious areas which the leaders want to be changed are the proposed appointment of a Judiciary Ombudsman by the president and the role of Senate. On Ombudsman, ANC party leader Musalia Mudavadi said the independence of Judiciary will be interfered with if the appointment is made by the head of state. He also wants the Senate to be strengthened for the sake of the devolution.

«The document has good provisions that need to be enacted as soon as possible but there are few areas that require refining.»

«It would be good to make the Judiciary more independent. To enhance the independence of the Judiciary, the appointment of the Ombudsman should be done by the Chief Justice, not the head of state,» he said.

«The role of the Senate has been degraded. The Senate is the anchor of devolution and thus should be strengthened. This area requires a review,» he added.

The Deputy President William Ruto also poked holes in the BBI report citing proposed changes he is uncomfortable with including the expansion of the executive.

«We need to operationalise the Judiciary fund that is already in the Constitution so that the Judiciary can establish more courts, hire more judges and more staff so that more Kenyans can have access to justice,» Ruto said.

state and government Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. He or she will be elected by people and must garner 50 per cent plus one of the total cast votes and 25 per cent in a number of the 47 counties.

The document also proposes retention of the present two-term limit for the President.

Key leaders who addressed the delegates during the official launch

«On the matter of the judiciary allow me to say that there is a huge space to have an improvement on the proposal that has been made... Having an ombudsman appointed by the Executive into the Judiciary is a derogation from the independence of the institution.»

«The President will appoint the PM and the two deputies from the winning coalition. And then we will have the runners up being the leader of the opposition. The question I am asking myself is, have we sorted out the winner-takes-all question?» he asked.

He further questioned the proposal to have political parties participate in the appointment of the IEBC officials.

«How fair will be a league where the referee is appointed by teams and not all the teams? How fair will this league be?» Ruto posed.

On his part, the African Union Infrastructure envoy Raila Odinga said BBI outcome is a gift he and President Uhuru Kenyatta would want to bequeath Kenya's future generations.

«The plenty to be found within our borders as said in the National Anthem will not drop like manna from heaven but through the sweat of our people whom we want to empower through the BBI,» he said.

The president said, «There are things that we don't want to own up to, but the fact is that we are a tribal society. We pretend that we are national leaders, but when the time comes we switch to vernacular. I have also been part of that in elective politics. We are all part of this mess, but we pretend what great national leaders we are...» He had asked Kenyans to read every detail of the report and back it fully and to MPs, he appealed to them to throw their weight behind the report when it is tabled in the Parliament.

«The BBI seeks to end the 'do or die' attitude at the polls. The fear of losing and what the winner will do to you as you will be a nobody. The BBI and handshake is meant to stop this and enlarge opportunity for all, in a win-win formula,» he reiterated.

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Losing Candidates Sworn in as MPs in Zimbabwean Parliament

By Prince Kurupati



Thokozani Khuphe is the Opposition leader in Parliament.

The essence of elections is for the electorate, the people to vote and choose the candidate that they think will best represent their interests when elected. The candidates maybe running for a council/municipality seat, Parliament seat, Senate seat or the presidential sit. Regardless of the electoral method in use, the general rule is that the candidate (in first past the post system) or the party (in proportional representation system) that garners the most votes will be sworn into office. However, something bizarre recently took place as the losing candidates in an election saw themselves being sworn in to the House of Assembly.

The Genesis

The last Harmonized Election that took place in Zimbabwe was conducted in 2018. The election saw the electorate vote for three candidates in one go – one vote went to the candidate running for an urban/rural council seat, the second vote went to the candidate running for the House of Assembly while

the last vote went to the candidate running for the presidential seat.

The overall winner in the presidential race as announced by the chief elections body, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) was Emmerson Mnangagwa (50.8%) from ZANU (PF), the party that has ruled Zimbabwe since the country attained its independence in 1980. The runner up in the presidential race was Nelson Chamisa of the Movement for Democratic Change Alliance (MDC-A) with 44.3% votes. 23 presidential candidates ran for the presidential seat – apart from the leading candidates Mnangagwa and Chamisa, all the other presidential candidates failed to garner more than 5% of the total votes.

When it came to the House of Assembly race, the revolutionary party ZANU (PF) won convincingly as it garnered two thirds of all National Assembly seats. ZANU (PF) won 145 seats out of the 210 contested seats. The 'main' opposition led by Chamisa came in second with 60 seats.

While everything looked straightforward after the

announcement of the results, trouble soon arose when another MDC faction, MDC-T stated that the Alliance led by Chamisa had effectively dissolved soon after the 2018 elections. As such, there was no longer a party by the name MDC-Alliance meaning all candidates who had been elected on the MDC-Alliance ticket now represented their 'individual' parties. The MDC-Alliance was an alliance of several parties established before the 2018 election with the main aim of removing ZANU (PF) from power. After the MDC-T said the MDC-Alliance had effectively dissolved, it meant that all candidates now represented their individual parties instead of the 'defunct' MDC-Alliance. MDC-T also stated that Chamisa agreed to be part of the MDC-Alliance as a candidate representing MDC-T and as such, all MDC-Alliance MPs who won the 2018 election were effectively MDC-T members.

Not surprising, Chamisa quickly took the legal route as he challenged the assertion by the MDC-T that the MDC-Alliance was now defunct as it had served its purpose. Chamisa

argued that the MDC-Alliance was now a political party on its own and was very much different from the MDC-T. To support his argument, Chamisa said both the MDC-Alliance and the MDC-T had held two separate Congresses where party leaders were chosen who would lead the two parties for the next 5 years. Chamisa was convinced therefore that by holding two different elective congresses, MDC-Alliance and the MDC-T had effectively demonstrated that they were two different political animals and thus they were independent from each other.

Upon hearing the two arguments from the MDC-Alliance as well as the MDC-T, the courts ruled that both arguments by the MDC-Alliance and the MDC-T were flawed. The Courts ruled that the only way forward was for the MDC-T to revert back to the 2014 structures and afterwards hold an elective congress that would lead to the emergence of new leaders. The Courts' ruling therefore meant that the MDC-Alliance at law was no longer recognized as its leaders were also part of the MDC-T 2014 structures.

Using the Court's ruling, leaders from the current MDC-T structures concluded that no one had the right to belong to two political parties. As such, those who aligned with the MDC-Alliance were asked to revoke their allegiances to the MDC-Alliance and rather swear allegiance to the MDC-T. This move therefore led to the clashes between the leaders of the MDC-Alliance led by Chamisa and the leaders of MDC-T led by Khupe and Mwonzora.

With the law on their side, the MDC-T leaders issued an ultimatum to all those who aligned with Chamisa starting that refusal to cross the floor to their side will see them being recalled from the party and in turn from their elected positions as they no longer represented the interests of the party. Acting on the

ultimatum, the MDC-T has indeed recalled several MDC-Alliance councilors as well as Members of Parliament.

The New Legal Route into Parliament

Having made the recalls, a vacuum was now left in the Council as well as the House of Assembly. What this therefore meant was that by-elections had to be conducted for new candidates to be elected who would replace the recalled councilors and MPs. As fate would have it however, the novel corona virus pandemic was causing havoc and the feasibility of conducting by-elections in a time where large gatherings was prohibited was questioned. Some argued that by-elections were still safe to hold as the authorities would just enforce safe practices. However, others said there was danger of spreading the virus even more if by-elections were to be conducted. The government in the end supported

the latter and passed a Covid-19 regulation that temporarily banned all election activities in the country.

With a vacuum left both in urban/rural councils as well as the House of Assembly and the ban on all electoral activities, the question many were left wondering over is – how will the recalled candidates be replaced. The Courts found an easy way of nominations. The parties that had been wrecked by the recalls

were the ones to submit names for nominations. As the MDC-T claimed that all the MDC-Alliance who had won during the 2018 elections was in actual effect MDC-T members by law, it is the MDC-T which forwarded names for nomination. Among the names nominated was that of Thokozani Khuphe, the candidate who competed in the 2018 presidential race. Thokozani Khuphe's nomination passed smoothly and she

was duly elected as a Member of Parliament recently – she also now holds the post of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament. Khuphe was sworn in with several of her loyalists.

Elections? For What Purpose

The whole scenario which led a losing presidential candidate to be sworn in as a Member of Parliament has left many wondering. The big question is – why really should people worry about going to the voting booths when the candidates they choose to represent them can be recalled and are replaced by candidates that they didn't vote for. Why go to elections when the Courts have the power to remove elected candidates from their positions. In an era where voter apathy is increasing, what does the recalls mean for those who already have distrust for the country's electoral system.



President Mnangagwa addressing the Zimbabwean Parliament.

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2 Years Later - Zimbabwean MP Erroneously Declared Winner Still in Parliament

By Prince Kurupati

Mistakes do happen from time to time. Some mistakes may be rectified easily without many consequences while others may have disastrous consequences even if they are rectified. In Zimbabwe, the body responsible for all national electoral activities made a huge error when it announced the wrong winner for a House of Assembly seat.

After the people had cast their votes in the 2018 harmonized election, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) undertook the process of compiling and tabulating all election results before announcing the winners. When it came to tabulating the results for the Chegutu West constituency parliamentary seats, the numbers showed that Gift Machoka Konjana of the MDC Alliance had won the elections. However, something bizarre happened (some would call it a mistake) as the ZEC on national television announced that the duly elected member of Parliament for the Chegutu West constituency was Dexter Nduna from ZANU (PF).

As ZEC had clearly displayed the numbers polled for both Konjana and Nduna but had somehow made an error in announcing the name of the rightful winner, many thought that it was just a matter of making another statement to the effect that an error had been made and the rightful winner was Gift Machoka Konjana instead of Dexter Nduna but alas, that was not the case.

As many would soon learn, such a mistake could not only be corrected by the word of mouth but had to be corrected by the Courts – this despite the fact that evidence of a false declaration was clear for all to see.

Having heard that the only route to have Dexter Nduna removed from Parliament as he was in actual effect an election loser, Konjana did approach the Electoral Court a few



MP for the Chegutu West constituency Dexter Nduna from ZANU ,PF.

weeks after the erroneous declaration. Representing Konjana, Advocate Tererai Mafukidze argued that the Electoral Court had to move swiftly in correcting a clear and obvious mistake done by ZEC. Electoral Court judge Justice Maryimba-Dube ruled that Advocate Mafukidze's petition against Nduna was fatally defective solely on account of being brought on notice.

With the petition dismissed by the Electoral Court, Advocate Mafukidze and Konjana took the matter up to the Supreme Court. At the Supreme Court, Advocate Mafukidze argued that Justiceimba-Dube erred by declining to exercise discretion to condone non-compliance with its rules upon erroneously finding that the electoral law does not vest in it the competence to regulate its process yet section 171(9) of the Electoral Act vests such competence. Furthermore, Advocate Mafukidze stated that it was grave injustice that Justiceimba-Dube did not consider the merits of the case even though ZEC acknowledged under oath the error of declaration. Essentially, Advocate Mafukidze asked the Supreme Court

to set aside Justiceimba-Dube's earlier judgment and allow the petition to be heard on merit by a different judge.

The Supreme Court however is taking its time to make its judgment on the case and to this day, the man who was erroneously declared the winner of an election is still in Parliament and enjoying all the benefits that come with being a member of parliament.

The snail's pace that the Supreme Court is moving with has not however disheartened or deterred Gift Konjana from working for the people who placed their confidence in him during the 2018 elections. In an interview with a local Zimbabwean news outlet, Gift Konjana had this to say, "My case is still before the courts in the Supreme Court. I will continue to fight as a matter of principle. The stakes are high, but still, I am determined. I pray that one day I will get justice...However, this is not in any way stopping me from executing my mandate as a people's MP. I continue to be proactive in the constituency. I have a number of initiatives that I am carrying out. Am happy that am still

connected with the grassroots."

Speaking on ZEC's error, the Election Resource Centre (ERC Africa) said "The case of the 2018 Parliamentary election results for Chegutu West reinforce the legal and institutional weaknesses associated with elections in Zimbabwe. Election laws need to be strengthened on how mistakes can be rectified and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission needs to set up administrative measures to resolve disputes."

ERC Africa said the onus to have the error rectified did not just lie with the erred party that is, Gift Konjana but the whole constituency has a responsibility to demand their vote to be heard. The only way to do so is to petition the Courts to rectify the matter by overturning the decision made by ZEC. "The people of Chegutu must seek remedy to their tragedy through leading the demand for electoral reforms so that their vote is not compromised in the future. They must demand strong laws and strong institutions to make their future vote count."

Nigeria: Nigeria Police Use Excessive Force Against Protesters, Amnesty International Report Reveals

By Mohammed M. Mupenda

While the pandemic is wrecking economies and taking people's lives across the world, Nigerian police are busy victimizing, harassing and killing citizens.

A fortnight ago, Amnesty International Nigeria bureau reported that at least 12 people were killed during protests, hundreds of protesters injured and arrested as sponsored thugs unleashed violence on peaceful protesters.

After a few days, local media reports and other sources revealed that the number of deaths would have gone up to 50 though many went unreported.

Protests began nearly two weeks ago with calls for the Sars police unit, which had been accused of illegal detentions, assaults and shootings, to be disbanded.

"Nigerian security forces must immediately end the intimidation, harassment and attacks on peaceful protesters," Amnesty International Nigeria said early October.

The protests started about two weeks ago to demand an end to police brutality, with mainly young people using the social media hashtag #EndSars rally people to demand the closure of the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (Sars).

Series of reports released by Amnesty International including November 2014, saying that 'Welcome to hellfire': Torture and other ill-treatment in Nigeria' that revealed that torture and other ill-treatment is widespread and routine in military and police custody across Nigeria. The 2016 report shows that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was responsible for widespread torture and other ill-treatment of detainees in their custody. While, June 2020 report shows that SARS continues to commit human rights violations with total impunity.

Despite the release of these reports, pledges of reform by the Federal Government were unmet, reports



Amnesty International Nigeria bureau reported that at least 12 people were killed during protests.

show that SARS officers continue to commit human rights violations with impunity.

This has sparked the protests on the streets of major towns and cities across 21 states of the country, demanding an end to police brutality, extrajudicial executions and extortion by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian police tasked with fighting violent crimes.

"Stop killing our dreamers, end SARS," that is a slogan to most youth protesters who have taken it all on the streets.

But protesters have been met with violence and excessive use of force.

Police are still using excessive force on peaceful protesters, leading to injuries and deaths in Lagos, Ughelli, Abuja and Ogbomosho, throws through the window claims of any commitment to ending violations of human rights by Nigeria police, report indicates.

Firing live ammunition, water cannon, throwing tear gas into crowds, beating and arresting protesters is contrary to the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 [as amended] and international standards.

The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are guaranteed

by the Nigerian Constitution and it is completely unacceptable for the police - whose duty is to protect lives and property and uphold the rule of law - to use excessive force against protesters.

The Nigerian authorities must immediately direct all security forces to protect peaceful protesters and refrain from attacking them.

"We call on the Nigerian authorities to listen to the demands of their people and promptly, thoroughly, impartially, effectively and transparently investigate all cases of human rights violations by the police, including the unlawful killings of the #EndSARS protesters" said Osai Ojigbo Director of Amnesty International.

The protests have also been backed by top U.S. Senator, Mark Warner, global celebrities such as Twitter founder Jack Dorsey, US rapper Kanye West, footballers Mesut Ozil and Marcus Rashford as well as Nigerian superstars Davido and Wizkid.

In response to the nationwide protests, the Inspector General of Police on 11 October 2020, dissolved the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and called for the immediate

redeployment of all SARS officers to other units.

Anyone suspected to be responsible must be brought to justice in fair trials. Law enforcement officials must comply at all times with international human rights standards on policing, in particular the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, and in particular must respect, protect and ensure the rights to life, liberty, personal security and physical integrity and to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Nigeria President appeared on television to calm the situation and promised that all would be solved but he also warned protesters.

"This government will not allow anybody or (any) groups to disrupt the peace of the nation," he warned in his televised address, urging protesters to "resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy."

"For you to do otherwise will amount to undermining national security and law and order," he said. "Under no circumstances would this be tolerated."

The unit formed during military rule in 1984, was accused of extortion, torture and murder.

Nigerians are skeptical of authorities' pledge to end police atrocities because the past claims of reforming SARS have turned out to be empty words.

President Buhari dissolved the unit on 11 October.

But the demonstrators called for more changes in the security forces as well as reforms to the way the country is run.

Mr Sanwo-Olu has said that criminals have hijacked the protests.

Reflections by Renée

"SƏN RISE"

Renée Dugué

Giver of light
Sən Rise
Giver of life
Sən Rise
The source we need
Sən Rise
To feed our seed
Sən Rise
Illuminator of the soul
Sən Rise
Without you here the world is cold
Sən Rise
To the world magnificent
Sən Rise
To the world, you are a gift
Sən Rise
All life needs you
Sən Rise
You are the truth
Sən Rise

Without you Sən this world would not be
There would be nothing to see
Everyday open your eyes
Everyday Sən rise

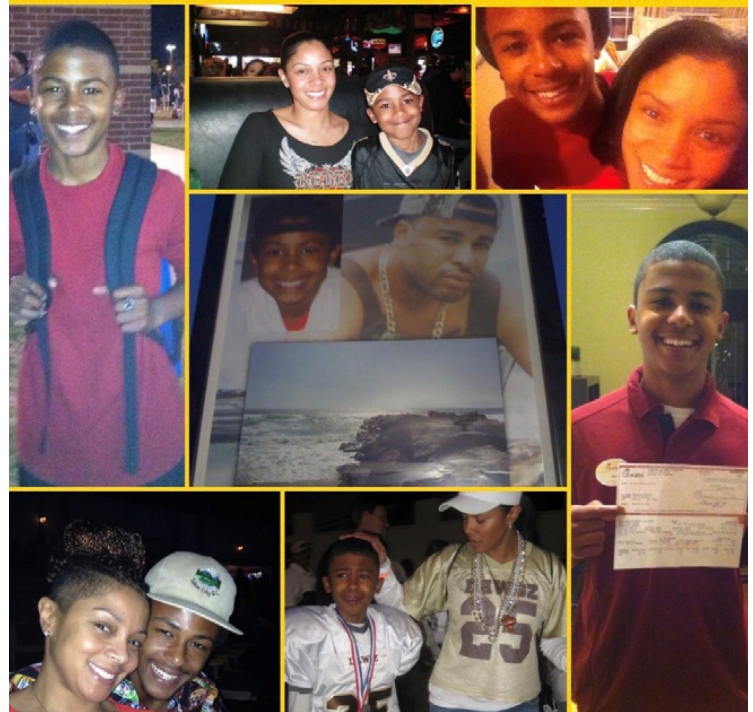
Twenty-two orbits ago today
You sent you to shine the way
The light, the match, you were the spark
The flame, the fire, light in the dark

Sən rise, Sən shine, Sən dance, Sən sing
Sən lead, Sən follow, Sən take, Sən bring
Sən laugh, Sən cry, Sən love, Sən feel
Sən beam, Sən grown, Sən burn, Sən heal

Twenty-two times you've circled you
On your journey for the truth
Stay the course and you will see
You possess the light you seek



Inspired by René Michael, currently incarcerated in Hou., TX, this piece was included in a letter written to him during her trip to Buea. Mrs. Renée ensured departure to be in the same city to wish him a Happy Birthday on Feb. 6. They celebrated God's grace and mercy in allowing him to see another year, even if spent behind bars.



Renée & René Dugué, Mother, Son, and Father, Terence "Sporty T" Vine, deceased. c. 2010-18

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE A MOTHER WITH A PURPOSE

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

As I conclude this five article series on Renée Michelle Dugué, whose French name literally translates as "Reborn Of God From The Land Across The Water," I am reminded of just how much more she is than my initial thoughts. At first glance, meeting her in January, I made assumptions that quickly faded away. This traveler, survivor, healer, writer and mother, is incredibly so much more than meets the eye. I asked Mrs. Renée to share her why, specifically regarding her nonprofit Reborn & Rising.

She told me, the mission and vision was born out of the pain experienced when her son's father was murdered. Only ten years old at the time, her namesake, René Michael Dugué, and she struggled desperately to move forward without his Dad. While there were organizations that offered counseling throughout the grieving period, there were none that had any programs in place to address the combination of issues Lil René faced, with regard to the loss of a parent due to homicide, specifically addressing the unique needs of a "Black" boy in America with any extended projects to ensure developed and sustained healing. "We know too well that nothing can erase the pain of losing a parent this way or any other. Our desire is to empower youth to find strength in their shared experiences and rise above the pain to choose life." Crucial to Reborn & Rising's program is promoting psychological treatment by professionals experienced in African psychology methodology as developed by Dr. Wade Nobles and support by a "Village" who embrace traditional African wisdom traditions.

As the pages turn on Mrs. Renée Michelle Dugué and Reborn & Rising, I will be right there. I follow her daily WALK4WATER campaign, inspired to see her using her voice and doing the work to fulfill her divine purpose. I am motivated to walk my path and journey from desire to purpose, and to rise beyond my wildest dreams.

SHE'S TRULY
REBORN & RISING



Uncertainty Looms Over Fate Of 80 Cameroonians Deported From USA

By Amos Fofung

Little over two weeks since over eighty asylum-seeking Cameroonians were deported from the United States and handed to Cameroon government officials, their exact location remains unknown.

The eighty-one deportees were dropped off at the Douala international airport into the waiting hands of Littoral Governor, Samuel Iyaha Diboua, accompanied by armed-to-the-teeth forces of law and order.

Pan African Visions has it on very good authority that most of the Cameroonians repatriated by the US government are escapees civil servants among them teachers, medical doctors, and even soldiers who had defected from the army. The returnees, this reporter confirmed, also include supposed supporters of Cameroon's separatist movement who fled into America with hopes of seeking political asylum.

Since the deportation on October 14, 2020, our US-based office has been in constant communication with our staff and other journalists in Cameroon with hopes of following up on what is next for the deportees. At the time of this report, no one has been able to pinpoint their exact location after they were received at the airport with long coaches and dozens of security operatives.

Many fear that the government of Cameroon, known for its brute treatment of separatist supporters might have ferried the deportees into police custody, at least those who's file indicated they were fleeing cause of their allegiance to the non-state arm group.

This reporter has been hinted that the escapee soldiers and governments might also be grinding their teeth at a detention facility in Douala while waiting to take their turns at the various courts (military court for escapee soldiers and civilians for non-security personnel) to justify why they should be readmitted into Cameroon.



Upon arrival, the deportees were packed in a guarded hall at the Douala airport and tested for covid-19. This was the last time the deportees were seen in public.

The deportation, we gathered is the first of many planned by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, an agency within the Department of Homeland Security.

Rights group, Amnesty International, in a statement, said it was worried about the fate of the immigrants once they returned to Cameroon.

Its fear, the body stated, was due to Cameroon's crises including the armed conflict in the North West and South West regions and the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North region of the country.

"Given the current conditions in the country, it is extremely likely that anyone who is returned to Cameroon will face a high risk of being detained, beaten, disappeared, tortured, or possibly even killed," Amnesty International USA's deputy director of Advocacy and Government Relations,

Adotei Akwei, opined. Citing the COVID-19 pandemic as another issue, the deputy director explained that the Cameroon community in the US was willing to receive and cater for the immigrants.

The United States of America, Adotei added, "... has both a legal and a moral imperative to welcome those fleeing conflict and persecution to the country: Cameroonians have established vibrant and thriving communities in the United States and people in this country are eager to welcome their new neighbors to safety".

A handful of US congress members hold a similar view to that of Amnesty International. Senator Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, and Senator Karen Bass of California expressed their discontent with the US Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, ICE on Tuesday.

In a letter, they were categorical that more needs to be done on the part of the US to respect refugees and asylum seekers. They went ahead to shed more light on more Cameroonians waiting to be deported by the Trump administration "...it is unclear whether the travel documents for the 200 Cameroonians slated for removal are similarly affected, these are serious allegations and must be investigated thoroughly..."

"... We urge you to halt the removal of Cameroonians until a fair, thorough, and transparent investigation into the allegations outlined in this very troubling complaint is complete," Bennie Thompson and Karen Bass added.

In another letter to ICE, Ilhan Omar, Cedric L. Richmond, and Joaquin Castro, all Members of US Congress, reiterated the need for their government to give the immigrants a listening ear. The plight of Cameroonian immigrants they explained is not limited to repatriation, but also poor treatment under ICE detention.

Despite the pressure, the US government pulled on with the deportation.

Media organs cite Bryan Cox, a spokesman for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, stating that the agency does not make comments on its ongoing operations, including deportations until they are completed.

"ICE is firmly committed to the safety and welfare of all those in its custody ... ICE provides safe, humane, and appropriate conditions of confinement for individuals detained in its custody," he said Tuesday

Note that, the plan that carried Cameroonians also included some Congolese who were equally sent packing by the Trump administration.

The US is believed to have deported the immigrants from Cameroon and Congo for lack of adequate paperwork justifying their claims and for illegally



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ICE, escorted a flight with approximately 100 African asylum seekers to their home countries, where they could face immediate arrest and death.

entering the US.

The immigrants, like many others, are understood to have gotten into the US through Mexico after passing through the dreaded Darién Gap in

South America, a tedious journey few ever get to make successfully. Upon arrival, some are said to have expressed their support for the separatist cause in the North West

and South West regions, citing them as the reason why they left and returning would be deadly for them.

Since receiving the deportees, the Cameroon government has however

made no official statement over what will become of them or their exact location giving rise to conspiracy theories.

Mozambique Faces Worst Humanitarian Crisis Due To Terrorist Attacks, Now Expanded To Tanzania

By Jorge Joaquim

When armed attacks began in Mozambique in October 2017, the local authorities did not take the matter very seriously. They saw the assault on a local police station and the killing of police officers as just another crime. The attacks continued and the authorities' position has always been to demoralise the situation. The chief of police even publicly declared that the 'bandits' had seven days to surrender to the authorities or else they would all be arrested and punished. Three years have passed since the first attack and in Mozambique alone more than 2,000 people have been killed. The government's classification of the attackers has changed from 'evildoers' to 'terrorists', and they are already expanding their armed incursions into Tanzania.

Between October 2017 and October 2020, the insurgents have carried out more than 600 attacks in the central and northern districts of Cabo Delgado province, causing more than 2,000 deaths, of which more than 60% are civilians. Apart from their barbarity, the most visible face of the attacks in Cabo Delgado is the growing number of internally displaced people, which reached more than 300,000 by the end of September 2020. According to the Mozambican think tank Centre for Public Integrity (CIP) that is about 13% of the entire population of the province.

Massive attacks against districts in Cabo Delgado province have contributed to the rapid increase in the number of displaced people in Mozambique, in the last two years, 2019 and 2020. Data from CIP indicates that by late 2018, in the entire country there were about



15,000 people displaced internally by the armed conflicts in Cabo Delgado and in the central region. By 19 October 2020, the total number of displaced people in the country reached 424,202, because of the intensified armed attacks in Cabo Delgado and also in the central region. Thus there has been an increase of more than 2,700% in the number of displaced people, in just two years.

The flood of internally displaced people caught the Government completely unprepared, and the situation of humanitarian crisis is visible in the places where the displaced people are accommodated.

Hence two separate groups arose of internally displaced people. On the one hand, the majority who took shelter in the homes of welcoming relatives, and, on the other, those who are in centres for the displaced set up for this purpose.

The situation of the displaced will tend to worsen in the coming days, particularly if the government is unable to hold back the intensification of attacks in the central and northern districts of Cabo Delgado.

The historic neighbourhood of Paquitequete is the main point of entry for internally displaced people arriving from the coastal regions of Quissanga, Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia and Palma districts. They arrive at the fishing port on sailboats after long days sailing at sea.

Many of the displaced who arrive at Paquitequete are seeking to locate the house of a relative or acquaintance who lives in Pemba. After spending about 48 hours, in the open, on the waterfront, the displaced manage to locate their relatives, friends and acquaintances and are received into their houses. Most of them stay in Paquitequete, known as the neighbourhood of the Kimwanis. Some young volunteers, mostly students in Pemba, work relentlessly to assist the newly arrived IDPs with water, food, and to finding shelters.

In Paquitequete, at least one in every two households is hosting people displaced by the war. Some houses hold more than 30 people. The aid is distributed only to the displaced people. The households who accommodate them are

not considered, which causes conflicts since most households in Paquitequete are very low income, and welcoming people displaced by the war increases the household expenditure.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said many of the displaced people arriving in Pemba were fatigued, dehydrated, hungry and suffering from various diseases.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said many of the displaced people arriving in Pemba were fatigued, dehydrated, hungry and suffering from various diseases. These include diarrhea and malaria. Three women went into labour on the boats. They have nothing to even wrap the baby, since they fled the war and went out with only a capulana around their bodies, so they often carry the babies in plastic basins.

The main needs of the people arriving have been identified as clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), food security, health and protection, especially related to child protection and gender-based violence.

The Islamic insurgency in the northern Cabo Delgado feeds upon the region's relative isolation from the rest of the country, a large disenfranchised Muslim population, extreme poverty, and marginalized economic development that embraces illicit activities. The government has had difficulty maintaining sustainable physical linkage with the north which contributes to its isolation.

From 'evildoers' to 'terrorists'

Authorities meanwhile confirm an increase in the number of attacks

in Cabo Delgado. Armindo Ngunga, Secretary of State in the province acknowledged in a conversation with journalists on 20 October that there has been an intensification of terrorist attacks in recent months.

"It seemed to be an action which could eventually be overcome in a short time. That is why we, at that time, called these guys evildoers. [They] have been growing in terms of performance, which worries us. Especially the refinement with which they carry out their barbarities," Ngunga explained, adding that since March this year, "the matter has got worse, because they started to attack not only administrative posts and villages, but also some district capitals in the central and northern regions of the province".

The Defence and Security Forces in the region have intensified

operations in order to restore peace. However, according to the State's representative in the province, this has not prevented people from moving to areas considered safer, such as districts in the south of the province.

In the attacks, villages have been burnt down and people beheaded. The militants have also killed government soldiers before retreating into the bush. The fighting in Cabo Delgado has so far involved less sophisticated tactics and weaponry. The militants are known to use mobile phones to communicate and motorcycles to move from one point to the next.

Mozambique-based terrorists spread attacks to tanzania

The terrorists based in Mozambique conducted a major attack on the Tanzanian town of Kitaya on 15



October, capturing an armoured personnel carrier and killing at least two people.

A communication from the Islamic State group claimed the attack had hit a barracks of "the Tanzanian Crusader army". Video footage has emerged on social media and messaging apps, showing armed men shouting in Swahili that they are Al Shabaab from Mozambique, now attacking Tanzania.

The Islamic State statement claims a tank was captured in Kitaya, which sits on the Tanzanian side of the

Rovuma River which forms the border between Tanzania and Mozambique. One of the videos appears to show the men with an armoured car.

The videos suggest a political angle to the attack, which came two weeks ahead of the Presidential election in Tanzania. One video shows an apparent insurgent tearing a poster of Tanzanian President John Magufuli.

The terrorists based in Mozambique executed six villagers in a Tanzanian border village on November 13, marking the first reported cross-border attack in this conflict. The attack was unsophisticated but is an early warning of the threat that they could pose to Africa's sixth-largest country.



Dilemma Over How Rwanda Will Grow Cannabis Without Consuming It

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

In early October 2020, Rwanda made a surprise announcement that it has already approved regulatory guidelines on cultivation, processing and export of high value therapeutic crops which includes cannabis.

The surprise is against Rwanda's long stand on the use of cannabis, where existing laws punish bitterly anyone who gets caught producing, selling, trafficking or consuming cannabis. Anyone convicted can get over 20 year jail sentence.

Rwanda explained that the approval of cannabis cultivation is mainly for export and it will be used

in medicinal research and medicinal industries, however economic profits are also the target.

Clare Akamanzi, Chief Executive Officer for Rwanda Development Board recently told the national broadcaster that, there is a huge economic profit from growing cannabis for export.

"If you look at the revenues we expect to get from some of these crops that might be licensed, you can get up USD 10 million from one hectare, if you compare that to flowers for example, if you grow flowers on hectare, you expect to get USD 300 000, it is a huge difference" she said.



Cannabis has been illegal in Rwanda.



Clare Akamanzi, Chief Executive Officer for Rwanda Development Board says, there is a huge economic profit from growing cannabis for export

She said that many countries around the world are gradually allowing medicinal cultivation of these crops to support medical research and economy, chances that Rwanda does not want to miss.

The global market for medical cannabis is currently estimated at \$150 billion and could reach \$272

billion in 2028, according to Barclays Bank.

Rwanda is one of developing countries whose economy mainly relies on agriculture and tourism.

Akamanzi said that Rwanda wants to raise its economic revenues by amassing these new opportunities.

"It is also one that can bring income

and revenue to the country, can create jobs, it is very timely. Rwanda doesn't want to miss this important growing, useful industry", she said.

Though cultivation has been approved, she added that there will be tight control and security around the growing of cannabis in Rwanda to avoid any leakage to local market.

Any investor who will be permitted to grow such crops, must present security guidelines which will be approved by local security organs.

"Not only are we regulating how you import the materials for planting whether it is seed or others, we are regulating how you cultivate these crops, how you handle post-harvesting, how you ensure quality of products, temperature, storage, waste disposal, all that is part of the regulatory framework" Akamanzi assured

"You will be required to have a very strong security program that has to be approved by our security organs. That security program is going to be highly implemented. There will be no way that it can leak out of the farm to go to the domestic market or for wrong users", she added

To ensure cannabis farm security, investors will be asked to have CCTV Cameras, watch towers, street lights, human security among others.

Akamanzi said that they are discussing with potential investors who showed interests into the business, but they first have to pass through tight screening to be licensed.

Rwanda National Police announced that as long as the law prohibits the illegal growing, consumption or selling drugs including cannabis, the culprits will be arrested.

"The existing laws must be respected, if there come changes people will follow new ones", Commissioner of Police, John Bosco Kabera told local media.

It is not clear where cannabis will be grown so that it will never go on local market as Rwanda is one of densely populated countries around the world.

Rwanda joins other African countries that have already legalized cannabis including South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Uganda among others.

Cameroon: Cases Of Rape Increasing At An Alarming Rate

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Violence against Women and Girls has become a new normal, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These past months have been trying for the society with reports of sexual violence committed on women, girls and babies as young as 6 months.

Sadly, more cases of sexual violence/rape go unreported as some families and communities practice a culture of silence or indifference about sexual violence/rape leaving the victims traumatized.

Child sexual abuse is a widespread problem. "The phenomenon has become so rampant that women now live in constant fear for themselves and their children. It happens in schools, in cars, in parks, in uncompleted buildings, in homes. Perpetrators have no regard for age or social status," a communiqué from

the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, CHRA stated.

"Boys will be boys", "she was drunk", "women say no but they mean yes", "the way she dressed was asking

for it", all these and many more are statements made to justify rape. Such statements according to gender experts will continually sponsor rape culture in our communities if nothing

is done. "Nothing justifies rape! It is a crime, which has devastating effects on its victims," Kum Gilian said.

"The issue of girls dressing indecently does not call for them to



be raped. What about guys who dress indecently are they being raped too? Or what about a six month or one year child, was she indecently dressed before she was raped?" she pondered

This year alone, more than eight cases of rape have been reported within a span of a few months. A 17-year-old girl identified as Minette Fosting was reportedly raped to death in Douala, Littoral region of Cameroon. According to reports Minette was found beside a construction site in Logpom not far from her family house alive but in a critical condition early Wednesday, September 30.

The results sources say revealed that the teenage girl was suffering from vaginal discharge, vulvar secretions and dehydration suggesting signs of

forceful recent sexual intercourse, an interpretation supported by the family. Despite the care administered on her, Minette succumbed to her condition.

Law enforcement officers on January 7, 2020, arrested and detained a class six teacher of primary school Bonabome in Ndobo, a locality in Douala Four Subdivision, Littoral of the Central African country.

Kounj Jean Marie, Commander of the Gendarmerie Research Unit, Bonaberi where the teacher was detained said the suspect was presently behind bars for allegedly raping minors of his primary school whose ages range from 10 to 14 years.

Buma Kevin had raped a total of eighteen (18) young girls in the school, the Commander said, adding

that during the question and answer session with the Gendarmes, Kevin admitted to all accusations.

Rape is a serious problem that can have lasting, harmful effects on victims and their families, friends, and communities as a whole. "As in society at large, this particular form of sexual abuse and violence against women in Cameroon persist, for many reasons, including the failure of adequately holding perpetrators accountable, that is, the (often correct) assumption that reporting a rape case to law enforcement won't result in prosecution, the pattern of victim-blaming, patriarchal attitudes, stigma, and widespread ignorance and apathy where some claim 'it is not my business'. These all contribute to underreporting and the perpetrators

go free, waiting for their next victim," CHRDA stated.

Observers say there needs to be strong enforcement of the laws regarding sexual assault in the country. They say the perpetrators should be punished and not allowed to go free if some of them have money to buy their way out. "If a man has been caught raping a child, the man needs to be giving life sentence," a parent said.

"I think there is a fault somewhere. Either they are doing it for money rituals or some kind of manipulation from somewhere whether knowingly or unknowingly. The government, church, judicial authorities need to see how to redress this situation."

Education, Courtship, Family, and Africans Abroad.

By: John Nkemnji, Ph.D*.

Africans abroad face social, cultural, racial, and climatic challenges. Despite this reality, Africans struggle to migrate from their home countries to Europe or the USA. Life in the new society obligates immigrants to educate themselves, become productive community members, and sustain themselves with jobs. Africans who migrate abroad as single people face the challenge of looking for a compatible spouse. African immigrant's adult children face a similar challenge. I am curious to find out how lovebirds connect.

In Africa, it is customary for extended family members to help single people find a spouse; however, it is not the same or that easy for Africans abroad. Securing a soulmate abroad presents difficulties. Unlike educational attainment, which is an individual effort, educated Africans have not fared well in marriage and family life. The legal marriage age is 18, and in Africa, a delay in marriage for females is typically by choice and not because of the scarcity of candidates or external circumstances.

Marital challenges are more complicated for female immigrants, since the ratio of beautiful queens to



Prof John Nkemnji.

male counterparts is about ten-to-one. It seems this is a longstanding imbalance and could be why

polygamy is accepted in Africa over polyandry. In African tradition, wealthy men marry multiple wives

as a status of wealth and power. The more wives a noble has, the more his wealth grows. The traditional housewife and children work the farms, feed the families, and earn some income by selling produce for daily consumption (buyam, sellam). Christianity discouraged that practice but gave rise to flirting.

Companionship and childbirth are reasons for marriage. However, some females seem constrained by what they refer to as their "biological clock." It is challenging for a single mother working 7 days a week to secure a spouse, so many older working-class ladies are single parents. As a consequence of supply and demand, some people give up on the idea of marriage and become content with their jobs. There is a time for everything. Don't be too impatient.

The struggles for daily survival abroad make it difficult to court and vet partners. In Africa, selecting a spouse is usually a collective family affair as families stay in close quarters and know each other. The youth attend school around the same city and intermingle both in and out of school. They know each other even when they are not dating or looking for a spouse. There are opportunities

to socialize and be friendly at both the individual and family levels abound. During the search for a spouse, everyone in the family gives advice and consent. However, communities believe that some family's children are bad for marriage. Such families are blacklisted because of prior marital problems or other cultural taboos like wariness of witchcraft, genetic illness, violence, or mental instability. It is believed that fruit does not fall far from its tree.

Females undergo greater scrutiny in courtship. Some ladies are described as church-girls and others as club-girls (pious and party mates). The church-girls are usually simple (not flashy), have less expensive taste, and are recommended as the type that will make good housewives. Neighborhood bachelors know and respect them and their families. Church-girls easily find husbands locally because of extended family vetting and recommendation. However, if no bachelor from the community is available, a bachelor from abroad could ask for their hand in marriage. The reverse is not usually

true – ladies hardly go home to get married and bring husbands abroad.

Sometimes women like Abishiola, a Nigerian nurse character on TV, end up with partners from different ethnic backgrounds. Interracial and international marriages are on the rise. The single immigrant sometimes marries an available spouse to have children for the impatient grandparents inquiring to see grandchildren. Some marriages without children end up in divorce because of pressure from extended family members.

The African diaspora is scattered across the nation and lacks extended family support. Due to the struggles and challenges of surviving abroad, there are few opportunities for singles to meet, socialize, and know each other. Before COVID-19, professional, cultural, and educational associations brought immigrants together. Such groups are few and expensive to join and do not provide adequate opportunities for members to get acquainted and vet partners for successful marriages. They are unlike dating services, but offer the

opportunity for members to write, publish, or put out their identity/candidature on their social media platforms, directories, or almanacs. Eligible singles on the market are plentiful and keep growing with the influx of youth from Africa. For cultural reasons, African immigrants are not comfortable using dating services (Blackpeoplemeet, EliteSingles, eHarmony, and others).

Once you are engaged, develop a bond of trust and respect for each other and know that married life is good but has its twists and turns. Never get engaged, thinking you will change your spouse, instead learn to tolerate, forgive, and compromise. Many African marriages end in divorce because couples went in blindly or overtime, undergo a cultural transformation. If you seek a partner, be genuine, and set reasonable expectations before you tie the knot. Keep an open mind and a support network. Know that beauty may attract the eye, but it is character and personality that will keep you together. Stand out as a candidate by doing something praiseworthy, an act

of kindness, volunteerism or other accomplishment, for the community and humanity. It is good to be patient and outgoing and to know that no two persons reason and behave the same.

Unlike their colleagues from Asia, African immigrants do not have strong cultural and social ties imported from the continent. Keep in touch with your immigrant communities and not blindly follow materialism. Spend quality time with your family. Inform the families back home to let you enjoy your new marital home and not make unreasonable demands. Respect the laws in your host country and keep learning and growing together. Good luck to all lovebirds on the market and same to those who are already building their lives together.

Dr. John Nkemnji is Professor Emeritus, Educational Technology. He is an educational consultant and a proponent for life-long learning. The views expressed in this article are based on experience with Cameroonian, Nigerian, Ghanaian, and Kenyan modern courtship - true of most Christian and Muslim African States.

African Countries Urged To Prioritise Mental Health Needs

By Wallace Mawire

African countries have been strongly urged to prioritise mental health needs which are reported to be still lagging behind.

World Health Organization (WHO) Zimbabwe Country Representative, Dr Alex Gasasira in a statement read on his behalf by Dr Debra Machando, Clinical Psychologist at the WHO office in Zimbabwe, mental health needs in the African Region are reported to be significant. The statement has been made in commemoration of the World Mental Health Day for 2020 and to put the issues on the spotlight.

It is reported that 15 African countries are among the top 30 globally for suicide per 100,000 people.

According to Dr Gasasira, although many countries have developed national mental health policies, the availability of services is often limited



WHO Zimbabwe Country Representative, Dr Alex Gasasira

to specialized institutions in capital cities. "Globally there are nine mental health workers per 100,000 people. In the African Region, this falls to 0.9, and among this workforce one third are non-professional workers, meaning there is a severe shortage

of psychiatrists and psychologists in African countries," he said.

It is further added that employment data continue to show widespread unemployment and very limited access to inclusive community environments and services for adults

with severe intellectual disabilities.

In celebration of World Mental Health Day 2020, this year's theme is "Move for Mental Health: Let's Invest" to advocate for increased international and domestic financing for mental health and well-being.

Dr Gasasira says that this investment is urgently needed. He says that globally, one in four people will be affected by a mental disorder at some point in their lives, and in the WHO African Region, government expenditure per capita on mental health is less than 10 cents.

It is added that most mental health services are paid for directly by patients and their carers. For low-income households and other vulnerable groups, the cost of the essential care can cause financial hardship.

"In working together to attain universal health coverage, we must

ensure people affected by mental health issues, such as people with intellectual disabilities are not left behind," he said.

In Zimbabwe, commemorations to mark the day were held at L'Arche at Waterfalls in Harare. The organization's mission is to foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of its members which resonates well with the move to invest in mental health, according to the WHO Representative.

Dr Gasarisa also said at the commemorations that at WHO they are working with the government to review mental health legislation and related policies, and to build capacities using the Mental Health (MH)-Gap approach, a task sharing strategy where primary health care workers are trained and then supervised in managing common mental disorders.

It has also been reported that in Zimbabwe was selected to be part of the WHO Director-General's Special Initiative for Mental Health to strengthen these services. A national assessment of the mental health services was carried out in 2019 and virtual consultations to develop a plan of action have so far engaged over 100 stakeholders.

According to Dr Gasarisa, in the context of COVID-19, they are working with the government of Zimbabwe and other partners to include mental health care as part of continuity of essential health services, and are providing psychosocial skills training for first responders.

It has also been reported that in a survey led by WHO and UNICEF in East and Southern Africa, responders reported depression and anxiety, especially when working in high-

risk settings or without personal protective equipment.

According to the WHO Representative, in response, they have developed a guide for responders to be able to recognize signs of distress in themselves, their colleagues and those they interact with. The guide provides self-help techniques, and tips on listening, de-escalating tense situations, and referrals.

In a global survey led by WHO on mental health and COVID-19 between June and August, 2020, 27 of 28 African countries that responded, indicated mental health and psychosocial support was included in the national COVID-19 response plan, but only 17 had funding for the planned activities.

"This reaffirms the importance of this year's theme of investing in mental health. There has been a call for governments, partners and communities to promote social interventions, such as equipping caregivers with the knowledge and resources to better support people with mental health conditions," Dr Gasarisa said.

WHO said that in Zimbabwe it applauded the initiative by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in partnership with L'Arche to create communities with a culture of shared lives between people with and without intellectual disabilities.

Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in Zimbabwe, Professor Paul Mavima said that he was aware that some persons with intellectual disabilities have dual conditions that include cerebral palsy, epilepsy, depression, anxiety disorders and autism.

Furthermore, identifying co-occurring conditions among persons with intellectual disabilities may

be difficult, for example it may not be easy to recognize depression that occurs among persons who experience challenges with verbal communication," he said.

He added that, it was important to note that in spite of all these challenges, and in partnership with the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, there were organizations of persons with disabilities, that include L'Arche Zimbabwe, that diligently seek to address the needs and concerns of persons with mental disabilities.

He added that disability in Zimbabwe is commonly associated with witchcraft, evil spirits and the breaking of traditional taboos.

"It is therefore common to find that mothers who give birth to children with disabilities are blamed for breaking some taboos during pregnancy, or of practicing witchcraft or of having maiden families that have evil spirits that would have caused the disability of the child. Such mothers are often abandoned by their partners or husbands, thereby leaving the mothers to fend for themselves and their children," he said.

He added that some mental health challenges in infants may be prevented by ensuring that mothers stick to a balanced diet during pregnancy, or desist from taking alcohol during pregnancy, but some mental disabilities such as autism and Down Syndrome are genetically oriented, hence it may not be the choice or fault of the mother.

The stigma and isolation that mothers experience due to misconceptions that surround mental disability within families and communities, may result in some of them acquiring mental health

challenges that in turn result in them abandoning their children with mental disabilities in unsafe places," he said.

In Zimbabwe, according to the Minister, the role of Social Workers in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, is to work hand in glove with relevant stakeholders that include other organizations to ensure that children and adults with disabilities including those with mental disabilities have access to all social services and adequate psychosocial support.

He added that as the world including Zimbabwe, moves from exclusion to inclusion, the days of tying persons with mental disabilities with ropes or locking them up in homes and keeping them in isolation should be a thing of the past.

He added that Zimbabwe is adopting the present day international best practice, that sees persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities living together in communities where they share life together as one family, as exemplified by the scenario that is modeled at L'Arche-Zimbabwe.

"The bottom line is that young people and adults with mental disabilities alike, do not just want to be integrated but they want to belong, and a community environment that satisfies their desire for belonging is likely to go a long way in enhancing their health and well-being," He said.

He added that as a society, there is need to refrain from engaging in practices that perpetuate the stigmatisation of persons with disabilities, and should recognize their contribution, accept difference, encourage disclosure, challenge negative attitudes and behaviour and seek to support and empower them.

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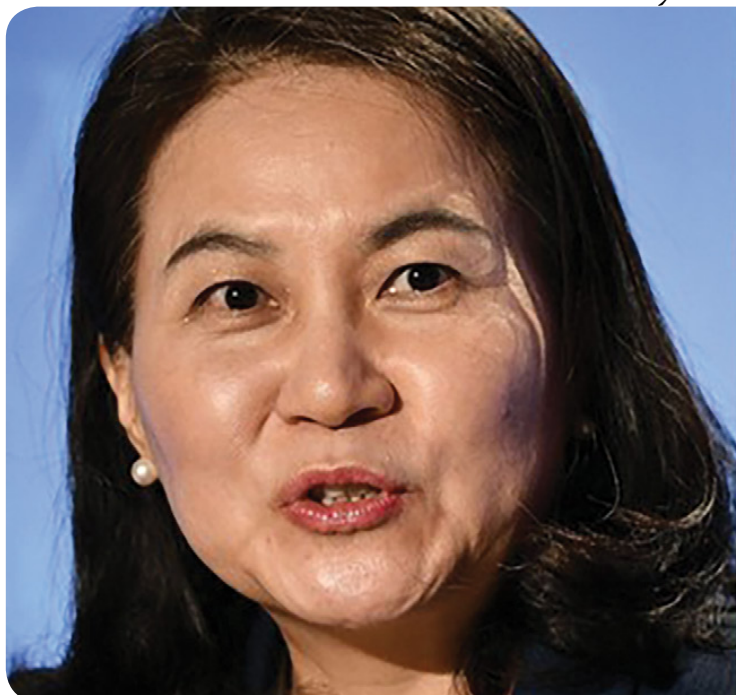
A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Ethiopian



Africa Stands Behind Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala As She Inches Close To Being WTO's First Female Leader

By Amos Fofung



African backed Ngozi Okonjo Iweala is tipped as favorite to run the affairs of the global trade body.

Africa as a continent is galvanizing support behind their candidate, Nigerian-born Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as she seeks to break a 25-year deadlock and becoming the first ever woman to oversee global trade.

Yes, for the first time in its 25-year history, the World Trade Organization, WTO, will be led by a woman. The field of candidates vying to become the next director-general of the WTO later this year has been reduced to Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and South Korea's Yoo Myung-hee.

One of them will replace Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down a year earlier than planned in August after the WTO was caught in the middle of an escalating trade fight between the United States and China.

Okonjo-Iweala is an economist and former finance minister of Nigeria. She spent 25 years at the World Bank, rising to become the organization's managing director of operations. In 2018, she was named to the board of social media giant, Twitter. She also chairs the board of Gavi, an

international organization that aims to bring together the public and private sectors to improve access to vaccines.

Okonjo-Iweala will face off against Yoo, who is the first woman to serve as South Korea's trade minister.

The next director general of the WTO will assume control of an organization that has struggled to prevent trade spats among member states, most notably the United States and China. She will also be forced to grapple with fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, which slammed trade and triggered a deep global recession.

Whoever becomes the next global trade boss, will see their mandate depending largely on the outcome of the US presidential election in November.

This is because, President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized the WTO and undermined its mission by imposing tariffs on allies including Canada and Mexico, as well as China, the world's second biggest economy and a rival of the United States. Trump has blocked the appointment of key

personnel to the WTO, hobbling the organization.

Okonjo-Iweala, who hails from one of the few parts of the world where free trade is ascendent, told CNN in August that trade would play an important role in the recovery from coronavirus.

With results set to be announced between October 28th and November 7th, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is already tipped as favorite to lead the WTO established in 1995 with the aim of promoting open trade for the benefit of all.

Haven put in decades into global finance, business, trade and economy, there is no gainsaying to the fact that Okonjo-Iweala masters the art of negotiating trade deals and will do a great job administering rules for international trade, resolving disputes and setting standards among the organizations 164 members.

According to business giant, Bloomberg, the U.S. and Europe are heading for a clash over their preferred candidates to lead the World Trade Organization as the selection of the first woman to run the

referee of global commerce enters a pivotal phase.

"The European Union is inclined to support Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and may sign off on that position by early next week... Other observers say the Trump administration is leaning toward South Korea's Yoo Myung-hee. Meanwhile, China's preference and those of other major economies like Brazil and India remain unclear," they said.

In a separate interview, Okonjo-Iweala is quoted to have said "...It's true I am not a WTO insider but that's a good thing. We need someone who knows trade but brings a fresh pair of eyes.

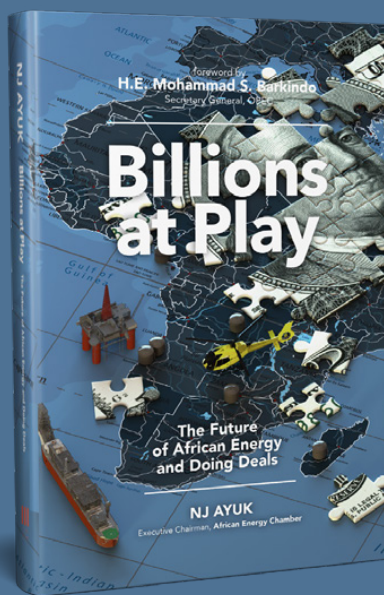
"There are a lot of people with technical skills at the WTO. There is no shortage of trade skills but the problems are there and they are getting worse. Something else is needed, strong political skills, someone able to engage leaders in a substantive way."

Africa's candidate, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is tipped as favorite to run the affairs of the global trade body

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Tensions Rise between White Farmers and Leftist Political Party EFF over Farm Killings in South Africa

By Prince Kurupati

Just like any other country the world over, South Africa finds itself battling against the novel corona virus pandemic. Measures taken by the South African government to combat the spread of the virus have certainly been paying dividends as the country is slowly opening up the economy while the number of daily infections is gradually decreasing. While the progress being made in combating the corona virus comes as good news, the country has however witnessed the emergence of a new social pandemic. This new social pandemic relating to the increase in farm murders.

Since the start of this year, several news outlets in South Africa have been reporting about sporadic cases of farm murders. In numerous instances, the perpetrators are reported to be white farmers with black farm workers on the receiving end. There are also a few revenge cases reported as black farm workers have been reported to have killed white farm owners often in a



brutal manner.

For long, the victims both the whites and the blacks only vented their anger and frustration over the farm

murders in silence. Of the few who vented their anger publicly, they only did so on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. However,

that all changed in the past couple of weeks as a standoff between white farm workers and supporters of the leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) clashed outside a courthouse.

The tense standoff which occurred in the South African town of Senekal attracted the attention of local as well as international media as over 100 police officers had to be deployed to guard against the flaring up of the tensions into a full blown 'war'.

An estimate of around 250 white farmers gathered outside the courthouse in South Africa's Free State province protesting the killing of Brendan Horner, a white farm manager on October 1, 2020. As they protested, the white farmers held placards that denounced the police stating the country's police was not doing enough to protect white farmers who have been under siege mostly from the supporters of the radical EFF party.

The white farmers once they had gathered witnessed over a thousand of the EFF party supporters approach the courthouse to support Sekwetjie Mahlamba and Sekola Matlaletsa,



Members of the Economic Freedom Fighters protest outside the magistrates court in Senekal, South Africa, Friday, Oct. 16, 2020, where two suspects were to appear on charges of killing a white farmer in the area. Photo Themba Hadebe, AP

the two charged with the murder of Brendan Horner. The EFF supporters sang revolutionary songs as they approached the courthouse. The sea of red as most of the supporters were clad in EFF's red uniforms and berets held placards calling for South Africa's land to be returned to its 'rightful' owners – black people.

As the EFF supporters reached the courthouse, several police cars quickly built a buffer between the white farmers and the EFF supporters thereby preventing any sort of physical confrontation from occurring between the two groups. As the court proceedings took place inside the courthouse, different individuals from both groups took turns to address their colleagues. The leader of the EFF, Julius Malema was one of those who addressed the EFF gathering stating with much conviction that South African land will in the near future return to its 'rightful' owners.

Malema also said that Mahlamba and Matlaletsa were being harshly treated because they were blacks – he said if there were white, like other white farmers who have been charged with murder cases, they would be treated better. In reference to a small group of white farmers who stormed the courthouse in an initial hearing on the case and proceeded to burn a police vehicle, Malema said that their actions were taken lightly owing to the colour of their skin.

"Today, none of the white people that violently stormed the courts and burnt the police vehicle have been arrested." Malema's remarks were regarded as violence inciting language by the main opposition



What happened in Senekal shows just how easily the tinderbox of race hatred can be ignited,said President Ramaphosa.

party, the Democratic Alliance. The Democratic Alliance later on filed charges against Malema for inciting violence. Speaking in response to the charges, Malema said, "If standing up to a white man makes me a thug, I'm a proud thug. If standing up to a white man makes me a fascist, I'm a proud fascist."

The police had to act as the buffer between the two groups till the end of day when the two groups started to disperse. While no physical confrontation occurred between the two groups, the implications of the incident showed that going into the future, the rising tensions over farm murders will not just end with individual anger on the part of the victims but may transform into a full blown conflict that will claim many lives as the victims and their sympathizers target revenge.

The present dilemma regarding the farm murders is that the South African government insists that there is no sort of thing as targeted farm murders whether its white farmers on the receiving end or black farm workers. This, in turn, has led the government to take a lackadaisical approach in tackling the scourge which will ultimately in the near future break the prevailing social fabric that exists in farming communities.

The tense standoff between white farmers and the EFF supporters forced the country's president Cyril Ramaphosa to issue a statement. In his statement, the South African president said the issue of farm murders must not be taken exclusively but rather, it must be addressed as part of a bigger crime problem. "Those people who think that farm attacks affect just a small part of our

population are wrong. The farming community is an integral part of our economy."

In his statement, the South African president also warned that some elements may use the standoff to stir race hatred. "What happened in Senekal shows just how easily the tinderbox of race hatred can be ignited. As a nation, we must resist any attempts to use crime on farms to mobilize communities along racial lines."

The standoff has also rejuvenated the question of land expropriation without compensation. The EFF has been calling for land expropriation without compensation as a great deal of South Africa's best farmland is owned by white farmers following the eviction of black farmers when the country was still under white minority rule.



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Africa Has Immense Potential For Barely Utilized Photovoltaics: According To Intersolar Solarize Africa Market Report 2020

By Wallace Mawire

Africa has immense potential for photovoltaics which has barely been utilized up until now. But a pioneering spirit is spreading across the continent, with many countries paving the way for ambitious photovoltaics projects. This is the conclusion of the Intersolar Solarize Africa Market Report 2020, prepared by the Becquerel Institute and the German Solar Association (BSW-Solar) with support from Intersolar Europe, the world's leading exhibition for the solar industry.

The report analyzes the market conditions in 16 African countries and presents multiple potential scenarios for the future. It was first introduced to the public at the Global Solar Council Virtual Forum, which took place on October 27 and 28, 2020, and is now available for free download.

It is reported that electrification and renewable energies are right at the top of the political agenda in many African countries. And yet, the actual rates of installation in the past year remained low. With around 6.6 gigawatts (GW), the continent is only home to around one percent of the PV capacity installed worldwide as of the end of 2019. While the use of photovoltaic technology continues to rise globally, almost no new solar systems are being set up in the sunniest regions of the earth.

The Intersolar Solarize Africa Market Report 2020 takes a closer look and presents an analysis of the market in select African countries, for the first time including Senegal, Mali, Uganda, Madagascar, Kenya and Tunisia. The report investigates the various phases of the

photovoltaics markets for 16 African countries as well as their individual regulatory conditions and potential for photovoltaic installations. It also issues a clear call to utilize the potential that already exists.

It is added that closer observation shows that there is plenty happening on the continent. Many countries have projects in the pipeline, some on a significant scale, and the underlying political conditions are improving all the time.

For instance, Algeria is planning to install photovoltaic systems with a combined capacity of 4 GW by 2024, while the end of 2019 marked the completion of Egypt's Benban Solar Park. With a total installed capacity of 1.5 GW and six million photovoltaic panels, Benban is the largest solar park in Africa and amongst the biggest in the world. And Egypt is planning to install another 3.5 GW of solar energy capacity by 2027. Kenya had plans to set up commercial PV installations with a total capacity of 500 megawatts (MW) as of 2019 and contracts were recently finalized to build a solar park of the same size in Mali. "Africa is on the threshold of a

major transformation, which can best be described as a kind of wave that just keeps swelling. We are excited to see what will come next," says David Wedepohl, CEO of the German Solar Association (BSW-Solar).

The report presents four potential scenarios for the future of photovoltaics in Africa. The "policy-driven" and "business as usual" scenarios are based on the various countries' current expansion goals and assume cumulative photovoltaic capacity of approximately 70 GW by 2030. More probable is the "solarize Africa accelerated" scenario, which presumes that photovoltaics in Africa will develop broadly in the same way as in other parts of the world, giving 170 GW of installed capacity by 2030. The central assumption of the fourth scenario – the "solarize Africa paradigm shift," which builds on the current atmosphere on the continent – is that the African markets are in some respects skipping over the fossil fuel age altogether. It combines the installed PV capacity with the targets laid out in the Paris Agreement. With a cumulative

capacity of 600 GW by 2030, this scenario envisions Africa as a very important region on the future global PV market.

It is added that since half a billion people in sub-Saharan Africa live without access to electricity, this year's report analyzes the competitiveness of standalone local power grids, or microgrids, for the first time. It is estimated that Africa makes up about half of the world market for these grids. Clean and reliable electricity is key to improving economic and societal conditions in

African countries.

This year's report also considers the potential offered by combining solar energy and water for the first time. A billion people in Africa do not have access to clean drinking water. Water desalination and purification plants as well as pump units powered by photovoltaic systems are needed as one of the building blocks of a safe and environmentally friendly water supply. The lack of clean water is thus also a driving factor for photovoltaics deployment worldwide – while photovoltaics forms part of the solution to the many challenges present in this area. One example of the rise in innovative solutions for water and photovoltaics in Africa can be seen in Kenya. A solar-powered microgrid desalination plant on the coast supplies 25,000 people with fresh water every day. Floating photovoltaic installations are also already in use in parts of Africa.

On November 10, 2020, Intersolar Europe will introduce the Intersolar SOLARIZE study during its webinar "Africa on the rise," taking place as part of the digital event series "The smarter E goes digital."



Africa holds a massive untapped potential for the development of the photovoltaics market.

Upskilling Exporters & Reskilling Manufacturers in Africa

By Naseem Javed*



Naseem Javed is a corporate philosopher and Chairman of Expothon Worldwide

New African leadership is emerging, influenced by global pandemic recovery, optimizing entrepreneurialism to new heights while creating upskilling of exporters and reskilling of manufacturers. The question is how to create tidal waves of change on a large national scale. Today, nation-by-nation, mobilization of entrepreneurialism on digital platforms of upskilling exportability and reskilling manufacturers is a new science and an art.

The Difficult Questions: How to start such mandates, when 50% of frontline teams already need 'upskilling' while 50% of the back-up teams need 'reskilling' so what is required to open constructive discussions leading to workable and productive programs? Each stage challenges competency levels and each stage offers options to up skill for better performances. Talent gaps need fast track closing and global-age skills need widening. This is all about embracing global age skills, and by passing old lingering systems and thinking.

The future economies will start by

getting National Export Promotion Agencies, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and midsize economic developments department heads to engage in bold and open regular debates. The arrival of Virtual leadership and Zoomerang culture is a gift from pandemic recovery, acquiring mastery. Today, impact is now forcing institutions to become active accessible players to deliberate wisdom from the comfort of their homes round the clock events.

New mandates appearing; globally speaking offices losing their centrality, now it is more about intellectual deployment and execution of ideas with live virtual based execution bringing diverse groups of decision makers from faraway places all on one digital platform. All big and small organizational structures either Public or Private Sector enterprises both must deliver super speed execution and efficiencies on digital platforms. The world of 200 nations, 10,000 cities and 5,000 cultures are all almost accessible based on the intensity of digitization. Top frontline management must pass tests to ensure new special demands on

skills and thinking capable to deploy a master agenda. Creating powerful flat meritocratic-based organizations is the new challenge. Collaborating with global nations with high quality exportability is the new demand. Deeper studies are mandatory. Pandemic with new wisdom arrived like a message in a bottle on the shores of collective humankind goals, now shaking down gigantic physically visible economic structures, exposing invisible debt structuring, challenging illusionary successes and depleted progress of humankind.

Become Innovation-crazy: Complex problem solvers emotionally bonded to innovative thinking, almost crazy observing and analyzing problems seeking automated solutions with extreme scalability. Ask questions, search for light under the sun and acquire understanding of darkness in a darkroom. Innovation is all around us, we have to learn to see it. Magic hidden in our inquisitiveness needs strength to deny status quo and demand change. Love your surroundings, acquire training on self-discovery to become like diamond-grinding on skills; all

rounder, multifaceted, highly focused but reflective in all directions, tough, crystal clear, valuable and shiny, not just any stone, but a diamond always grinding to perfection.

National Mobilization of SME: Identify 1000 to 100,000 small and midsize entrepreneurs within a nation, and create a national agenda to quadruple their performance on innovative excellence and exportability. Deploy digitization of top national trade associations and chambers of commerce to upgrade to excellent digital platforms so that their entire membership can skate nationally and globally displaying their goods and services. Study how Expothon is placing 25,000 SME+MFG on digital platforms of «upskilling», we will add another 100,000 and soon take it to one 1,000,000. This project is a global example and working model that we hope to engage 50 selected groups from the current pool of 11,000 Chambers and 100,000 Trade Associations.

Special Event Series: Expothon is also planning a "Special Senior Level 3-Hour-Webinar-Workshop-Serie" to create detailed and pragmatic discussions with powerful debates on specific solutions. The «National Mobilization of SME via Upskilling on Exports» calibrated for the selected 100 Chambers and 100 Special Trade Association heads across the world and gatekeepers of commerce of selected countries.

The rest is easy.

*Naseem Javed is a corporate philosopher, Chairman of Expothon Worldwide; a Canadian Think tank focused on National Mobilization of Entrepreneurialism Protocols on Platform Economy and exportability solutions now gaining global attention. www.expothon.com email: nj@expothon.com



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Cameroon's Second Largest Employer, CDC Wobbles Towards Extinction

By Andrew Nsoseka

Administrative indifference from the Cameroon government, as well as personal egoism, and other ills have placed one time prestigious employer, and second largest employer after the Cameroon Government, the Cameroon Development Corporation, CDC, in its dying throes.

The CDC whose woes predate the Anglophone crisis, has been placed in a very tight spot, with the Anglophone Crisis that has raged on for over four years, making things worse for the giant agricultural corporation, as most of its activities have been halted from time to time, or entirely stopped in unstable areas.

Government officials on their part, have seemingly failed in their duty to protect, maintain and ensure the survival of the agricultural giant, in an era rife with unemployment, which has on its part, lured thousands of youths to join the separatist movement in Anglophone regions of Cameroon. Rather than salvage what is left of the corporation, government Ministers and officials, have rather brazenly joined other unscrupulous individuals, to plunder the corporation and make away with what they can.

A scheme said to be aimed at giving land of the corporation back to the indigenes, who are predominantly Fako natives, has seen thousands of hectares taken from the agricultural giant, and most chunk of it has ended up in the hands of administrators. The crisis which started in 2016, also saw alleged separatist fighters attacking workers of the corporation for not respecting separatists imposed lockdowns. This discouraged many from working, and also forced the corporation to shutdown most of its farms, and factories. Due to the crisis, the workers have gone for years without pay, and with the farms not very functional, the land surrendering racket moved on, with administrators



CDC oil palm plantations, now, part of the land is privately owned by local administrators or sold out, at the expense of CDC and natives.

and traditional leaders chipping away the CDC's lands and making billions from it sales, to the detriment of the CDC and indigenes to whom the land is guised to have been surrendered to.

Consequently, following recent workers' protests, founded on an imminent demise of the corporation, a flurry of orders were recently issued, restricting what had become a spate of expropriation of huge hectares of CDC lands by speculators and other Shylock interests. The big question however, is whether someone really cares whether the CDC carries on as a going concern or dies off like many other enterprises upon which the economy of the former West Cameroon was hinged.

From the look of it, the action from Yaounde may be tantamount to buying time for the sting to wear off before the "CDC auction bazaar" is resumed like before. For one thing, many such orders have been issued in the past, only to be surreptitiously dumped in the dustbin or casually cancelled with indifference by the same pen that issued them. Law courts have gone back on their own learned decisions, consequently throwing back CDC interests to the wolves without appeals or petition

from vested litigants or defendants.

It is feared that the recent cancellation by way of Ministerial orders of "CDC land surrender" may also be just a facade. This is because, as at Friday, September 11, effective felling of CDC palms was still ongoing at Bimbia. Those carrying out the act were protected by heavily armed gendarmes who chased away CDC guards and dared anyone else that to question the dastardly act. As it stands, a rather helpless CDC may have to wait, pray and hope for yet another Ministerial order to arrive from Yaounde, most probably only after many hectares of palms in their most productive stage must have been destroyed.

It is becoming more and more evident, going by official approach to its dilemma that the Cameroon Development Corporation, CDC, the much touted second-largest employer after the State, has been abandoned to wear out. After all, in its time of great difficulty, it has, unlike many other State Corporations, been shamelessly, if not callously ignored, with administrators rather trying to pluck what they can, as the corporation rapidly dwindles in its fortunes, leaving its over 20,000

workers and teeming numbers of dependents in the lurch.

With its troubles that were sparked by a global economic meltdown and exacerbated by the armed conflict in the English speaking Regions of Cameroon, where the CDC is situated, political gladiators and economic predators could be rightly said to be just waiting in the wings to see the giant corporation fall and shatter for them to pick up the pieces like was the case with the Marketing Board and Cameroon Bank, to name but these. Unlike other corporations like the national oil refinery, SONARA where Ministers and other ranking officials trooped in, and its workers are still paid even though it is no longer functional; the national airlines company, CAMAIRCO, that has, to put it bluntly been a company of flying coffins, but government pumps in funds to sustain it, the case of the CDC is different; state authorities are rather helping themselves with what is still left of the ravished and looted corporation, even as it still could be brought out of its comatose state to revert to its traditional role of providing succour to the thousands of families that have depended on it over many decades.

Dubious Land Surrender, Scheming Maftas

The Fako Land Surrender scheme, which was sugar-coated as an initiative to surrender part of the CDC's land to natives who originally owned the land, for them to expand their villages and settle, turned out to be a well-mapped out bogey by corrupt, overbearing administrators, as well as gullible traditional rulers, and chiefs of doubtful origins and credibility posing as representatives of the locals. It has been established that inexistent villages were created by certain local administrators, and in complicity with some local chiefs and in some cases, purpose-made chiefs enthroned by local administrators and top government functionaries were brought to front as representatives of the locals. Once the land was allocated by government officials, who often do so without consulting the CDC, the administrators collect a huge chunk of it, and the leftovers given to the Chief for his troubles. The Chiefs then proceed to sell what is left, after the administrators would have taken the big bite.

More often than not, the locals emerge the highest losers, even though the land is surrendered on the pretext that it is for them. Talking over a TV programme on a local TV channel, My Media Prime, one of the front line lawyers and Fako native, Barrister Ikomi Ngongi, who is fighting to reclaim surrendered land from administrators and traditional rulers who have turned the scheme into a thriving racket, revealed that for the over 4,000 hectares of surrendered land, Fako natives have not received up to 500 of them.

"In fact, Fako people have not received up to 20 hectares put together," he said, alleging that most of the land is in the hands of non Fako indigenes, whom he insisted are administrators who pulled the strings behind the scenes, and at the end, owned lands bigger than that owned by entire villages. To him, rather than surrender land to the wrong

hands, the land could be retrieved and kept under the CDC's custody, for better use and management, and not plundered by administrators for personal gain.

Speaking at several instances since the Fako land saga started, Barrister Ikomi Ngongi has faulted officials, right from the Southwest Governor, Mr Okalia Bilai, his subordinates, to the Senior Divisional Officers, Divisional Officers and dubious or fake chiefs and even court officials, whom he states are all part of the scheme to fraudulently take and own the thousands of hectares of surrendered CDC land, to the detriment of the locals, who are supposed to be the bona fide beneficiaries.

In some cases, traditional rulers have ended up in legal battles with their subjects over land. Often, some have been accused of selling all the surrendered land, and then encroaching into that originally owned by natives, of course, with the backing of all powerful local administrators.

Anglophone Crisis Putting Final Nail of the CDC's Coffin?

Though effectively grappling with already compromising corporate challenges, the CDC has been hard hit by the ongoing Anglophone crisis. With workers often coming under

attack orchestrated by suspected separatists, several production units and farms have been completely abandoned. Even with its well known attribute as the largest employer after the State, the CDC and its workers don't benefit like other individuals and smaller companies, from any form of security protection.

Unlike most State Corporations where security is ever available, the case of the CDC is different, as workers are always left at the mercy of attackers, who hit and escape at will, thus discouraging most from risking to work. What now appears to be calculated administrative negligence, has cost the CDC lots, including human life as many activities have been grounded, except for the ever-ready land surrender schemes, machinated of course by Shylocks who should rather have been working to ensure the CDC's survival, especially as communities, thousands of families and the economy of the Region and country at large still depends on the tottering giant for survival.

CDC, Its People, Impact on Generations

The CDC, unlike many other state corporations, has a history and part played in the lives of many. For those who lived out the heydays of the

corporation, they narrate stories of communities, with social amenities, hospitals, schools, clubs and others that were enjoyed by CDC workers and the communities hosting them. Even books and literary art pieces have been produced by children who lived and were educated thanks to the CDC. In some prose, like "The Good Foot", written about life in the CDC, one can through the narrations, picture a corporation which was at the centre of survival for many. A CDC which is not only regarded as a corporation, but a life wire and even community where many can trace their origin and growth.

Will the CDC Be Abandoned Like other West Cameroon Corporations?

With the openly displayed culpable negligence of certain officials in particular and the government in general, having elected not to make the survival of the CDC concern, let alone a priority, many fear that it most likely to go the way of the Cameroon Bank, the crumbled Government Technical College Ombe, POWERCAM, Tiko Airport, West Cameroon Lottery, West Cameroon Development Agency, the Department of Marketing and Inspection, West Cameroon Marketing Board and many more, that were vibrant, but have now been selectively consigned to the compost heap of history.

In the context of the Anglophone Crisis and rife unemployment, many working-age men and women continue to be lured to the waiting arms of separatists and criminal gangs, to be able to make a living or feed their starving families.

Also, the much-heralded initiative of Cameroon's President Biya, to encourage farming as a means of economic empowerment, has been turned into a big joke because the state has failed to bail out and ensure not just the survival, but the renaissance and upgrading of the CDC, as the country's lone agro-industrial giant.



Helicopter sprays CDC banana plantations in its haydays, now partly ruined or abandoned due to negligence and Anglophone crisis.



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Whether the illness is acute, chronic, or advanced, our services help clients recover from life's major and minor health problems in the comfort of their own homes.

You are Important to Us **Services we offer**

Reliant Home Health, Inc. offers convenient and quality services, all delivered to you at the comforts of your home.

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- + Personal Care
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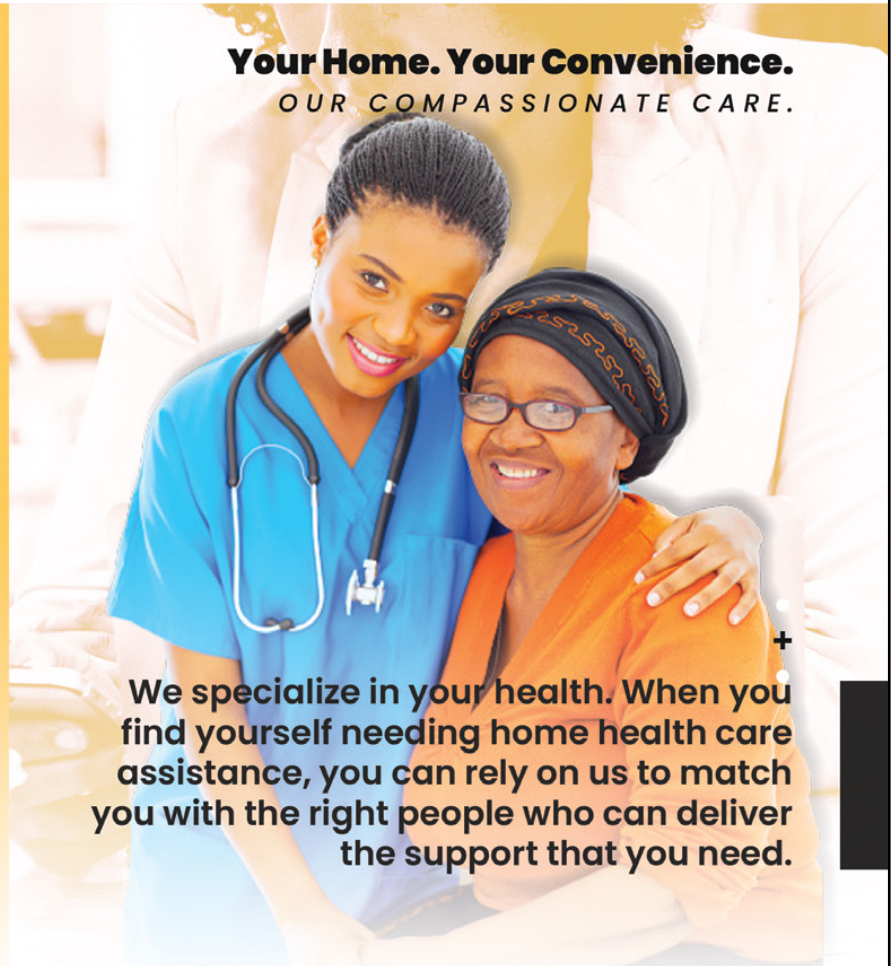


OUR TEAM

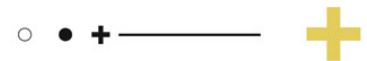
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- Medical Social Workers

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- Patient morale is better at home, resulting in shorter recovery time



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The Senesie Foundation Joins The Development Train in Sierra Leone

By Amos Fofung

As way of complementing government's Free Quality Education, the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation based in the United States of America has donated 80 million Leones worth of school materials to vulnerable children in ten schools through its youth Empowerment Project learning material support to the less privilege in Moyamba District, Southern Sierra Leone.

The donation targeted ten schools in the Moyamba District with each of the school receiving one hundred bags and one hundred books as part of the one thousand vulnerable school children targeted as a way of helping them with school materials.

Prior to that the Foundation led its CEO Francis Senesie with support from his wife Wendy Senesie had donated an assorted consignment of Personal Protective Equipment to help some communities cope with the COVID 19 pandemic.

With the development challenges facing Sierra Leone, the Senesie Foundation is angling to be a key partner in complementing efforts from the government. Discussing the Foundation in an interview with PAV, Francis Senesie, a graduate of Howard University in Washington, DC, says plans are in gestation to expand its initiatives and projects to other parts of the country.

Could we start with an introduction of the Senesie Foundation that you lead, when was it created and what is its mission?

The Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation is a charitable organization based in United State of America with an establishment in Sierra Leone. The purpose of the organization is to intervene in the lives of



Education is of importance not just to the young people we seek to uplift, but also for the future of Sierra Leone, says Francis Senesie.

vulnerable children, youth and vulnerable women (aged) through education and also the provision of individualized rehabilitated services such as counselling and pro poor activities.

The Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation has a vision to develop children, youth, and women to contribute to chiefdom, district and national development.

The mission of the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation is also to actively engage the children, youth, women in social life and innovative approach in developing themselves.

By doing so, they continue in building and sustaining development in line with our motor which is developing the community to develop the nation.

Since its creation, what are some of the achievements that the Senesie Foundation has registered since its creation?

The creation of the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation in June 2020 coincided with the Covid 19 pandemic which affected the vulnerable and the country at large. Though young, the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation deemed it necessary to join the Sierra Leone

Government in fighting the pandemic. In fighting the covid 19, the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation provided assorted food items, face masks, infrared thermometers, and sanitary supplies to more than hundred (100) families and households in Moyamba District. These items were distributed under the supervision of the stakeholders in District.

Recently the Foundation made a huge donation estimated at 80 million Leones worth of school materials to vulnerable children in ten schools in the Moyamba district, Southern Sierra Leone, can you shed some light on this?

In October 2020, the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation donated over Eighty Million Leones (80,000,000) worth of school materials to ten schools in the Moyamba District in the Southern Region Sierra Leone. This was done as way to complement the Government of Sierra Leone flagship programme which is the Free Quality Education launched by His Excellency Retired Julius Maada Bio. Education is something we cherish, and we believe

that with our contribution, we can complement the worthy efforts that the government is putting in.

May we know why you focused on education and Moyamba district?

Education is of importance not just to the young people we seek to uplift, but also for the future of the country. With education, opportunities are opened for young people who can in turn contribute to building a better Sierra Leone. Moyamba District is just a starting point. We had to start from somewhere,



School children in the Moyamba district, Southern Sierra Leone pose with bags and books donated recently by the Senesie Foundation.

and considering the educational challenges facing the Moyamba District, we believe that from that we can slowly but steadily expand to other parts of the country.

What mechanisms do you have in place to ensure that the donations get to those in need and are used for the intended purpose?

We worked with authorities in the District in compiling the list of vulnerable and needed pupils who got support from the Foundation. The process was open and very transparent. Those kids are the future Teachers, Doctors, Engineers, Nurses, and so on. This is just the beginning and there is much more that will be coming from the Senesie Foundation in the years ahead.

At what point should other parts of Sierra Leone expect to benefit from such initiatives from the Senesie Foundation?

The other parts of the Country in Sierra Leone expect benefit from the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation as soon as possible. We decided to start it at this level because there is an adage which says that a little drop of water makes a mighty ocean. Charity begins at home and ends abroad. Whatever initiatives you are embarking on start with your very self. Definitely we will get to the other parts of Sierra Leone, it will just be a matter of time.

Looking at the current situation

or state of Sierra Leone, in what way do you think Foundations like yours and others could help in meeting the development needs of the country?

There are lots of ways in meeting the development of Sierra Leoneans especially when the country is going through economic challenges. As I mentioned earlier, during COVID 19, we contributed safety material to people. The government cannot be expected to do everything for the people. We must do our part and Foundations like ours can contribute in small and modest ways to support government action in making a difference in the lives of our people. There are other Foundations doing great work, and we encourage others to take other initiatives that could help bring development to the people of Sierra Leone especially those in the rural areas of the country. Because we knew that the Covid 19 might have affected the parents in terms of business, farming and education, the Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation thought it wise to come to the aid of the parents in providing learning materials in order to cushion the challenges.

What are some of the challenges that the Senesie Foundation has faced in its mission so far?

As a young Foundation, the start is certainly always challenging. The Senesie Youth Empowerment Foundation went through a lot of



Wendy Senesie is part of the Foundation management working on resources for bigger projects.

odds during the distribution of the learning materials to the beneficiaries, especially when the programme took place during the raining season. To access these areas during the raining season it was exceedingly difficult, but due to an incredibly good team spirit, my staff were able to navigate their way to various locations. Challenges will always be there, from funding of our projects, to expansion to other

parts of the country and so on, but the Foundation will be up the task. Where there is the will, there will always be the means. Our Foundation is resolute in its commitment to make a difference in the lives of young Sierra Leoneans and contributing in its own modest quota in the overall development of that great, beautiful and promising country.

Any projections for the future, what should the people of Sierra Leone expect from the Senesie Foundation and its leadership?

Our journey of a thousand miles has just begun. We will continue to build on the successes of our recent initiatives, work on putting in place our structures across the country and expanding our programs. The vision of the Foundation is big and there is still much work needed to put everything in place. Definitely expect the Foundation to shift gears when it comes to its engagement with your people. You should also expect to see programmes of the Foundation expanding slowly but steadily to other Districts across Sierra Leone.





734 Coffee

734 Coffee is organic Ethiopian coffee sold in ground and whole bean form. The name "734" relates to the geographical coordinates of Gambela, a region in Ethiopia where more than 200,000 South Sudanese citizens have taken refuge.

Coffee from the Gambela region is lauded for its rich flavor - medium bodied with hints of caramel, spice and berries with a smokey chocolate aftertaste. 734 contracts with co-op coffee growers in Gambela who employ South Sudanese refugees providing both a sense of purpose and a steady paycheck. At the core of 734 Coffee is the promise to tell the story of the world refugee crisis and give new hope for economic prosperity for Sudanese refugees. 734 Coffee contributes to the Humanity Helping Sudan Project, the organization leading the fight to move the needle forward on self-sustainability for Sudanese refugees contributing 80% of all profits to refugee education and training projects in Gambela.

The Mission is Personal

Founder of 734 Coffee Manyang Reath Kher's earliest memories are of war. At the young age of 3, Manyang became a refugee of the Sudanese civil war. He is one of The Lost Boys, a group of 20,000 Sudanese boys who were displaced and orphaned. Manyang's father was one of the two and a half million people killed and he was separated from his mother and sister. For 13 years he lived in refugee camps along the Sudanese and Ethiopian border, where homelessness, hunger, fear, and abuse were part of his everyday life. But he was one of the lucky ones, at the age of 17, Manyang was brought to America where he learned English and eventually enrolled in college receiving his degree in May of 2016. He started Humanity Helping Sudan to improve the lives of Sudanese refugees. By launching 734 Coffee, Manyang is bringing his own American dream to life of creating a sustainable enterprise that both employs and empowers our refugee brothers and sisters.

Partner With Us

734 Coffee is seeking local and national distribution opportunities. By supporting 734 Coffee you are not only providing your customers with an exceptional sipping experience, you are taking a stand for those who have lost their homes, but not their hope.

For More Information

Team@hhsproject.org
734coffee.com

Cameroon: Intermediate Lions Coach Sack Three Months to CHAN 2021

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Some one year 11 days to the date of assuming office, Head Coach of the Intermediate Lions of Cameroon Yves Clement Arroga has been relieved from his position. The release signed by the Minister of Sports and Physical Education Prof. Narcisse Mouella Kombi stated that the coach had not met with the goals set for him.

Yves Clement Arroga has faced growing criticism since Cameroon suffered a surprising defeat against Panthère of Nde and followed it up with back-to-back draws against the senior national selection of South Sudan. In all, Yves Clement Arroga has been in charge of Cameroon in 11 games, losing just once in that time and recorded four wins.

In a press release signed by the Minister of Sports and Physical Education Narcisse Mouelle Kombi it stated: "It was decided as a precaution, to place the selection of the Indomitable Lions A <under the responsibility of Mr Ndtoungou Mpile Martin, acting head coach."

Yves Clement Arroga was appointed Intermediate Lions coach on October 11, 2019, to lead the baby lions to the CHAN that was scheduled for 4-25 April 2020. However, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the competition which Cameroon is scheduled to host was pushed forward to 2021.

Before Arroga's departure, he had invited 28 players to camp in preparation for the tournament from October 26. It is unclear if the players will move to camp as planned in the current situation or not.

The Africa Nations Championship, CHAN is a competition for players plying their trade in their home leagues. The 6th edition will run from January 16 to February 7, 2021.

Lack of solidarity amongst others has been cited as the reasons why Arroga was dismissed from his function. Very often the players play



62 year old football tactician, Martin Ndtoungou Mpile is the new head coach of the Intermediate Lions appointed some three months to the 2020 CHAN.

for the coach, and the coach plays for the players. Unfortunately, this is not what has been seen in Indomitable Lions A <squad. In a disjointed game sprinkled with flagrant casualness, the beasts have let go of their master.

The former head coach, Yves Clement Arroga appointed to replace Rigobert Song Bahanag is temporarily placed under the services of the Cameroon Football Federation, FECAFOOT.

These are the results of the preparatory games of the Intermediate Lions led by Yves Clement Arroga:

Cameroon A' 1-1 Dragon Yaoundé

Cameroon A' 3-1 Léopard

Cameroon A' 1-0 Avion

Cameroon A' 2-0 Bamboutos

Cameroon A' 2-0 Chad

DR Congo A' 0-1 Cameroon A'

Congo A' 1-1 Cameroon A'

Cameroon A' 0-0 Rwanda Á

Cameroon A' 0-1 Panthère

South Sudan 0-0 Cameroon A'

Cameroon A' 0-0 South Sudan

Martin Ndtoungou Mpile, New Head Coach of the Intermediate Lions 62-year old football tactician, Martin Ndtoungou Mpile is the new

head coach of the Intermediate Lions. The renowned football coach and a no-nonsense man in football in the country were designated to his new functions after a crisis meeting between the Minister of Sports and Physical Education and the Cameroon Football Federation, FECAFOOT.

He will be assisted in his functions by Emmanuel Ndoumbe Bosso, one-time coach of the Intermediate Lions and present Coach of Coton Sports of Garoua, who from today is the first deputy coach of the Indomitable Lions.



Former coach of Intermediate Lions, Yves Clement Arroga.



David pagou, Coach of PWD Bamenda is the second in command for the Intermediate Lions.

David Pagou, Head Coach of the reigning champions of the 2019-2020 Elite One championship, PWD of Bamenda is the second deputy coach of the team. Clement Assimba is the Goalkeeper Coach and Herve Mamoune is the Physical Trainer of the team.

The new team has been giving two critical tasks; build a winning team

and winning the CHAN 2021. The first challenge will not seem to faze the new team as the new staff have in its midst men who perfectly master the Cameroonian championship.

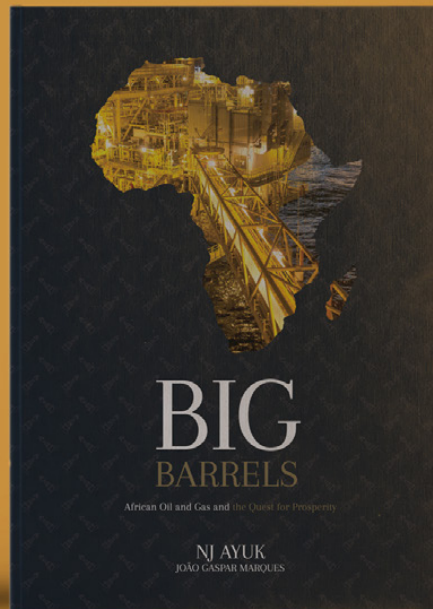
The next big task for the team is winning the competition on home soil. Winning the competition at home will have to be done, which is not impossible, although Cameroon

has difficulty winning competitions at its facilities.

Cameroon will be making its fourth appearance in the competition. The country has reached the quarter-finals on two occasions; in 2011 and 2016, failing to go beyond that.

16 teams have qualified for the final tournament. Tunisia qualified for the tournament but withdrew in January

2020. On 20 January 2020, Libya, which was eliminated by Tunisia in the qualifying round, were invited to take part in place and given a deadline of 28 January 2020 to decide whether to participate. Libya decided to accept the invitation. Tunisia was banned from the next edition of the African Nations Championship.



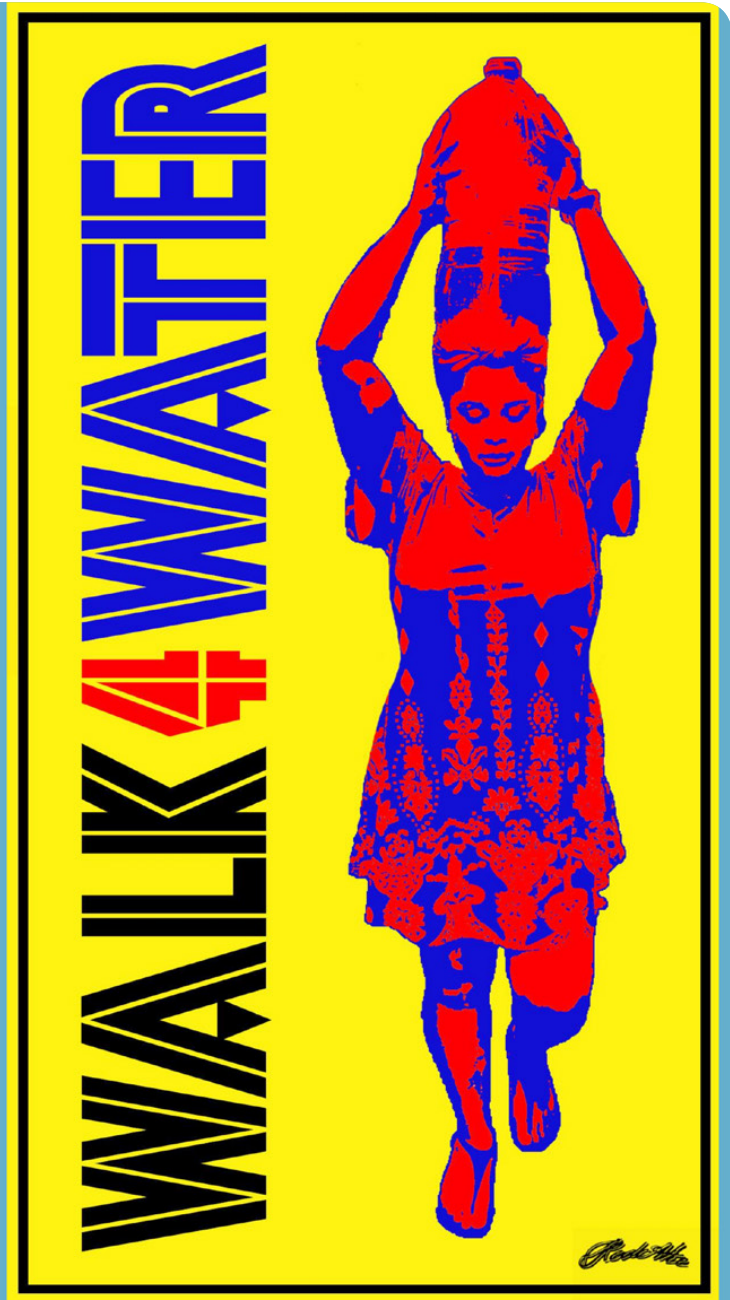
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