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Smooth Power Transition

**Cameroon: Restructuring** ■  
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# President Conde And The Wages Of Betrayal

By Ajong Mbapndah L

For a continent hard at work to shirk negative labels that sadly still define it in the eyes of the world despite the progress, August could not have ended any better with the orderly transfer of power in Zambia, and September could not have started any worse with another military coup in Guinea. The victory of Zambian opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema at the recent elections after six previous unsuccessful attempt and the destitution of President Alpha Conde in Guinea sum up the hopes and the fears that many have for the continent.

Talk about President Conde, and it is a tale of betrayal all round. He will feel betrayed by the military chasing him out of power and destroying the established constitutional order in Guinea. As much as military rule maybe abhorred, the honest truth is that President Conde invited this onto himself. He brought this calamity to Guinea with a betrayal that reverberated across Africa in the ignoble act of changing constitutional term limits to extend his stay in power.

Other leaders might have tried the stunt in the past and gone free, but for someone with the political pedigree of President Conde, the reverence he enjoyed from years of epic fights for democracy in Guinea meant that expectations were very high for him. He had two terms of office to make a difference, to put into practice the virtues he preached in the wilderness of the opposition, to share the rosy vision for a better Guinea that he drummed for decades. He did what he could in challenging circumstances. He may have angered the former colonial masters but his pointed critiques against France endeared him to many. He got credit for handling the Ebola crisis in Guinea. His role in getting former President Yaya Jammeh to step down after losing elections spared Gambia political chaos after the 2016 elections



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

.On the core issue of democracy, a crusade he spent a lifetime fighting for, Conde goofed, and goofed big time and it is sad and pathetic that it is the third term folly that will define his political career

Nation building is an assiduous task, and one of the most endearing things to Africans is to see someone pass the relay baton. Africans will most likely recall the fact that a leader left power in a peaceful transition or respected term limits and think less of the gaping short comings displayed while in office. All that President Conde had to do at the end of his two terms was to pass on the relay baton to the next person in free and fair elections. With that, the doors of the club of Africa elder statesmen would have been opened to him- that club with revered African figures like Joachim Chissano of Mozambique, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Festus Mogae of Botswana, Sam Nujoma of Namibia, Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, Prof Peter Mutharika of Malawi and others.

Blinded by the lust for power, Conde lost his mojo, and his legacy will forever be tainted by that decision to put his personal political ambitions before that of the country. Unfortunately, he proved to be just another politician who is all talk and no action. Instead of giving people hope, President Conde gave them

just another reason to be weary of politicians. Whatever good he did or meant for Guineans got lost with the third term folly. It was indeed a suicide mission -and many will feel justified in not shedding tears for him.

Many of those people who thronged the streets of Conakry to celebrate his election in December of 2010 are amongst the same ones jubilating in unbridled ecstasy on the streets of Conakry when the military announced his ouster. In previous issues of PAV magazine, we expressed caution on the surreptitious return of military rules across the continent especially in Francophone Africa. In Chad, the constitutional order of succession was shredded so the military son of the former President could take over, and the international community did not blink. We saw the public in jubilation when the military toppled the government in Mali. With Guinea, that makes some three coups this year, and looking at disturbing trends in some countries with fragile institutions, the military may also develop an appetite for power.

For those celebrating the fall of President Conde, it is worth indicating that the military's traditional role is not the exercise of political power. The calamity and international ridicule that Guinea suffered under another military ruler Dadis Camera should remind them of the perils of trusting an angel they do not know. Let the euphoria of Conde's departure not trick Guineans into blind trust for the new military leaders. Where are there from, was the coup about putting Guinea back on the rails or a power by the military? Could people who were used by President Conde yesterday to clamp down on protesters and opponents be trusted? Considering emerging stories on the cursus of the new leader, is he worth trusting? What guarantees are in place to ensure that power speedily returns to civilians? The questions are legion, and better to start asking now

before it gets too late.

In Zambia, the orderly transfer of power is what many yearn for across the continent. Beaten in elections by the opposition challenger, President Lungu accepted the outcome and stepped aside without making a fuss. At his sixth attempt, opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema is finally on the driver's seat in Zambia. He has promised a number of changes, but like we have seen from Alpha Conde and other leaders, there is a wide gulf between promises and implementation. Unless running for Presidential office was a hobby for Hichilema, making six attempts should mean there are actually projects or a vision he had in mind to transform Zambia. Zambians have finally entrusted him with their confidence, and now is the time for him deliver.

For President Lungu, losing the elections might have been a blessing in disguise for him. Life after the presidency is far from a death sentence, former Malawian President Prof Peter Mutharika told us recently. President Lungu seems liberated and his messages on social media have drawn a huge following. For his numerous short comings, respecting the verdict from the polls did him a world of good, and maybe what many may remember him for.

Far from the maddening political scenes, it is business that is defying the odds to power Africa forward with Ecobank been a perfect illustration. From Lomé, Togo where it was launched, Ecobank has transcended the West African boundaries and is now found in some 35 African countries and counting. This issue of PAV takes a special look at the African success story that Ecobank is with Group Executive, Commercial Banking, Josephine Ankomah.

The victory of Hichilema in Zambia, the cacophony of BBI in Kenya, the challenges of regional integration in the CEMAC sub region, the travails of Zuma in South Africa and more make up the menu of the September issue of PAV Magazine—Happy reading!!—





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# Gloves Off As Uhuru - Ruto Political Marriage Ends In Acrimonious Divorce

By Samuel Ouma

The once overhyped political rapprochement between Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto is turning ugly day in day out and is irreparable owing to the recent turn out of events. The two who used to call each other brother and sometimes adorned themselves in the same attires no longer read from the same script.

Their rivalry has now hit a notch higher, with President Kenyatta asking his deputy to resign instead of criticizing the government he serves. Kenyatta said, «it would be the honourable thing that if you're not happy with it that you would actually step aside and allow those who want to move on, and then take your agenda to the people, which is what happens in any normal democracy because you can't have your cake and eat it.»

“You can't, on the one hand, say ‘I'm not going,’ and then at the same time ‘I don't agree.’ You've got to decide, because you must be principled in that endeavour. So that you don't confuse people; on the one hand you want to sing the praises of a government, that you're saying ‘we have done this’ and you want to ride on them, but yet on the other side of your mouth you're talking another language,” Mr. Kenyatta told media editors at the State House in Nairobi on Monday, August 23, 2021.

During the interview, Kenyatta, for the first time, openly talked about what might have led to the deterioration of their friendship. Kenya's Head of State said that trouble began when his deputy opposed the March 9, 2018 handshake between him and the Chief opposition leader Raila Odinga following the disputed 2017 presidential polls. According to him, the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) could have put the last nail in their coffins, noting that Ruto has been against the government's effort to unite the country by bringing the opposition leaders on board. The



*The political marriage between President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto has irretrievably broken down. Photo courtesy.*

Initiative was, on August 20, 2021, declared unconstitutional by the Court of Appeal. He accused the second in command of focusing on his presidential ambitions, something he says is his constitutional right; however, it sabotages the government development agenda.

«The issues we have been trying to solve with this BBI are the same issues that brought him and me together. So if I want to now expand that, because it has always been my agenda since 2013 to unite the people, it becomes a problem. If the divisions of 2007 brought two of us together, what is the problem if we now bring everyone on board?» He asked.

Kenyatta also dismissed rumours that he initiated the BBI to either extend his tenure, propel some leaders

to power or lock some candidates out of the 2022 presidential race. He maintained that he will relinquish power when his term expires next year August.

“I hear some people say this BBI is meant to propel Raila Odinga. Raila Odinga declared his presidency with or without BBI and he is still on the ticket. BBI has nothing to do with his candidacy or Uhuru wanting to continue because there is no clause in the BBI saying that the incumbent President is going to continue for another 10 years,» said Kenyatta.

In rejoinder, Ruto fired at his boss, telling him that he won't resign from the government, which he played a key role in winning the 2013 and 2017 polls.

«We have built 10,000 km of roads

and connected electricity and even built the railway. So why would you tell me that I cannot help the minority and mama mboga (women selling vegetables)? You should stop being contemptuous and being rude. Kenya belongs to all of us,» said Ruto.

The second in command claimed he made Odinga the Prime Minister and Kenyatta President and wondered why people are angry with him when he wants to lead the nation. He vowed not to retreat to humiliations and intimidation he has been subjected to by state machinery and Kenyatta allies.

«I don't have the luxury to surrender because I'm a man on a mission to ensure that the jobless, those who are running small businesses and farmers who are struggling become part of this nation,» said the former agriculture minister.

On the BBI verdict, Kenyatta accused courts of being misguided to halt the process, which he believes could have benefited Kenyans in various ways, like ending chaos witnessed after every election. However, he said he respects the ruling.

“So it is Kenyans who have lost. Kenyatta has not lost anything I just feel sad that we could actually, for political reasons deny our people something that would not only have improved their lives and livelihoods but make Kenya a more cohesive society,» said Kenyatta, declaring, “I don't give up, I always believe that one must fight for those things that he believes in, whether in office or not,» he noted.

On the other hand, Ruto hailed the judges for the landmark ruling terming the document dangerous. He noted that Kenya is governed by the rule of law and not the rule of men.

«The people have won, the Constitution has won and the rule of law has prevailed,» an elated Ruto said.



*Kenyatta and Ruto in happier times, divergent views on the 2022 elections contributed to the acrimonious political divorce. Photo credit AFP.*



# Zambia Writes New History

*-Long Live democracy in Africa...*

By Peter Kayula

For the first time in their history and after several attempts, Zambia's main and biggest opposition political Party - the United Party for National Development (UPND) has finally managed to take charge of the Southern African country - a great indication of success and a new beginning.

After prior years of being mired in a devastating tribal tag driven by deep-rooted ethnic perspectives during the several attempts at presidency, the party has completed a magnificent turn around that will have an enduring resonance for a generation of young Zambians.

The triumph has also incredibly meant that a solid case can be made for Zambia as being the strongest candidate for the measurement of the strength of democracy not only on the African continent but also to the world's continental champions of democracy.

Typically, apart from the complexity of "smooth transition of power", opposition political parties not only in Africa but world over hardly make any impact at taking over a sitting president, hence expectations were not sky-high, but the United Party for National Development had other ideas as they defeated the highly powered Patriotic Front Party.



Outgoing President Edgar Chagwa Lungu, right, hands over the instruments of power to his successor, President Hakainde Hichilema at his inauguration ceremony at Heroes Stadium in Lusaka, Zambia, Aug

Within the Patriotic Front Party members, many will have to argue, the loss still begs the question of just what happened.

However, Democratic Republic of Congo President and current African Union chairperson Felix Tshisekedi during the inauguration of Hakainde Hichilema as seventh President of the Republic of Zambia on August 24, 2021, admits that the elections process in Zambia demonstrates that Africa can run her own affairs.

But much of the UPND's success

has to be attributed to the principal political rival and leader of the Party Hakainde Hichilema an economist who has drawn comparisons with American President Joe Biden by defeating sitting president and the ruling Patriotic Front (PF) Edgar Chagwa Lungu in the August 12, 2021 general elections by a wide margin - one million difference.

Throughout the years Mr Hichilema has based his campaign messages on the imperatives of reforms that enhanced government

transparency and strengthened institutions against corruption, including the implementation of the Government integrated management and a dedication to engage with the youth population of the country who turned out in large numbers to vote.

But a more significant challenge now, which experts say, is just how he goes working around the mix, carrying on his shoulders a re-inspired citizenry weighed down by the COVID-19 pandemic and an unvaccinated population.

Extensively investing in the UPND structure, Hakainde Hichilema influence on his party changed their trajectory, offering a cohesive attraction of long time party members who have publically backed him in his past travails despite continuous losses. The country's second woman Vice-President, Mutale Nalumango, one of the longest serving party members of President Hichilema's generation, is a key example.

President Hichilema ascended to the liberal UPND's helm following the death of former party president Anderson Mazoka in 2016. He was on several occasions accused of being perpetually negative about everything that the then ruling Patriotic Front



Supporters of presidential candidate for the opposition United Party for National Development UPND Hakainde Hichilema celebrate in Lusaka, on August 15, 2021. Photo Marco Longari, AFP



Party was doing for the people of Zambia and arguably turning every verbal argument into a game of who is more intelligent than the other.

He was born in a village in Monze district and landed a scholarship to do a degree course – Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics at the University of Zambia (UNZA) and later on did an MBA in Finance and Business Strategy at the University of Birmingham in Britain.

From 1994 to 1998, he was at Coopers and Lybrand Zambia as the Chief Executive Officer and later on from 1998 to 2006, he was at Grant Thornton Zambia in the same capacity. He at one time served as the leader of the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) an alliance of three opposition political parties.

In the elections held on September 2006 Hichilema was raised as the candidate of the UDA and challenged incumbent President Levy Mwanawasa of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) and Patriotic Front candidate and strongman Michael Sata. Hichilema



**Presidential candidate Hakainde Hichilema won the election in a landslide, a rare feat for the opposition in Africa. Photo courtesy.**

took third place with about 25 percent of the vote.

Hichilema again stood as the UPND candidate at the 2008 elections which was called following the death of President Levy Mwanawasa. He came third with 19.7 percent of the vote.

In June 2009, Hichilema's party the UPND formed a pact with Michael Sata's Patriotic Front to contest the 2011 elections together, however,

indecision on the part candidate, deep mistrust and accusations of tribalism from both sides resulted in the waver of the pact in March 2011.

In January 2015, presidential elections, he was one of the two main candidates which he lost by a narrow margin of just 27,757 votes (1.66 percent) against the ruling party of Edgar Chagwa Lungu. He again faced Edgar Lungu as the main opposition

candidate in April 2016 presidential elections and was again narrowly defeated.

Of profound importance is the fact that Hichilema was conferred with the Africa Freedom Award by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom on October 27, 2017 in Johannesburg, South Africa. He subsequently featured on a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Television Programme HARDTalk on November 1, 2017 and was interviewed by Stephen Sackur.

A book about Hichilema's time in Prison called Hichilema's Prison Diary was released on September 2017 by a journalist Fredrick Misebezi.

Self-sustenance may be a long term goal but with investor confidence and promises of public and private support by the international community coming through, Zambia is well on its way and come 2026 should the United Party for National Development (UPND) repeat the same feat; it will be less of a surprise.

## Zambia: Key Takeaways From A Rare Opposition Landslide

By Prince Kurupati



**Persistence paid off for Mr Hakainde Hichilema as he finally won the elections at the 6th attempt.**

On 12 August 2021, Zambians went to the polls to choose their next president. There were 16 presidential hopefuls on the ballot paper including the incumbent Edgar Lungu who was looking for reelection. With the election taking place in the southern African region, a region where ruling parties hold a strong hegemony over power, history was made as the opposition candidate Hakainde Hichilema wrestled power from the ruling party.

Hichilema's victory was even sweeter as it didn't come at the expense of people's lives. Conducted in a peaceful and tranquil environment, the Zambian presidential election was devoid of any instances of electoral violence and the power transition itself was smooth. The smooth nature of the Zambian election together with the unlikely victory of an opposition



candidate inspired many people across the continent. Owing to this, many people in the aftermath of the Zambian election have concluded that there are many lessons to take from how the Zambian election was conducted. In this article, we are going to highlight some of the key takeaways from the Zambian election looking more specifically on how the victor Hakainde Hichilema succeeded.

## Threat on people's livelihoods a recipe for disaster

One of the most important lessons that can be learnt from the Zambian election is the threat on people's livelihoods is a recipe for disaster. The livelihoods of many Zambians over the past years have been threatened by two huge factors. First, there is the issue of corruption and secondly inflation. These two vices during the term of Edgar Lungu were spiraling out of control and in so doing, negatively affecting the livelihoods of Zambians chief among them the youth. Feeling threatened by the elite of the country who were enjoying a greater percentage of the Zambian cake through their connections – often corrupt – Zambian youths realized that the only way out was to change the narrative and put in power new people with new ideas and hopefully, destroy the graft connections that had made Zambia a nation for the few and elite only.

## Best way to learn is learning from past mistakes

Hakainde Hichilema's victory was sweet. However, if there is one thing that explains convincingly why Hichilema cruised to victory in this election, it's the fact that the best way to learn is to learn from past mistakes. Before this election, Hichilema had



**President elect Hakainde Hichilema flanked by two incumbent predecessors Edgar Lungu and Rupiah Banda who lost to opposition challengers.**

tried his luck for the presidential post six times before with the latest coming in the past election where he fell short to Lungu by the smallest of margins.

The first mistake that Hichilema corrected in this election was to call for unity amongst opposition parties. In past elections, the ruling party found it easy to retain power as the opposition vote was divided. However, to prevent a divided vote this election, Hichilema persuaded eight of the formidable opposition parties in the country to back his United Party for National Development (UPND).

Hichilema also moved to expand his political base beyond his strongholds. In expanding his political base, Hichilema primarily targeted the youth population as that is the majority of the voting population. The task of wooing the youth vote was made easier for Hichilema by the debilitating economic conditions in the country which sees the greater majority of youths unemployed. Promising to use his business acumen in changing the economic fortunes of Zambia for the better and in doing so

guarantee the youths and all other Zambian nationals' employment and business opportunities, Hichilema's message was warmly welcomed.

In past elections, opposition parties including Hichilema's UPND always complained of vote rigging with ballot stuffing being the most common form of rigging used by the ruling party. To ensure that this problem was tackled once and for all, Hichilema together with his supporters jealously protected the vote. This was largely done by posting election monitors and polling agents to all polling stations including those in remote areas. The polling agents remained stationed at their designated stations till all the tabulations were done and constituency results announced. By doing this, Hichilema knew that any instances of vote rigging on Election Day were eliminated.

## Lobby for strong democratic institutions

One hurdle that many opposition parties have encountered during elections is the lack of strong democratic institutions. Many a

times, incumbents are accused of abusing state institutions for their own benefit during election periods. Also, the independence of critical institutions during elections such as the Judiciary has been questioned. In between the electoral cycles, Hichilema and his party worked hard to lobby for the independence of state institutions while also lobbying for effective reforms for all institutions that have something to do with the conduct of elections in the country. The security sector in Zambia was particularly exemplary during the entire election period as it adhered strictly to non-involvement in civilian political processes.

Mainly through the conduct of correcting his past mistakes, Hakainde Hichilema paved the way for his presidential victory. The greatest lesson therefore that all political parties can learn from Hichilema and his victory is that victory is certain if lessons can be learnt from past mistakes and corrected for all future elections.

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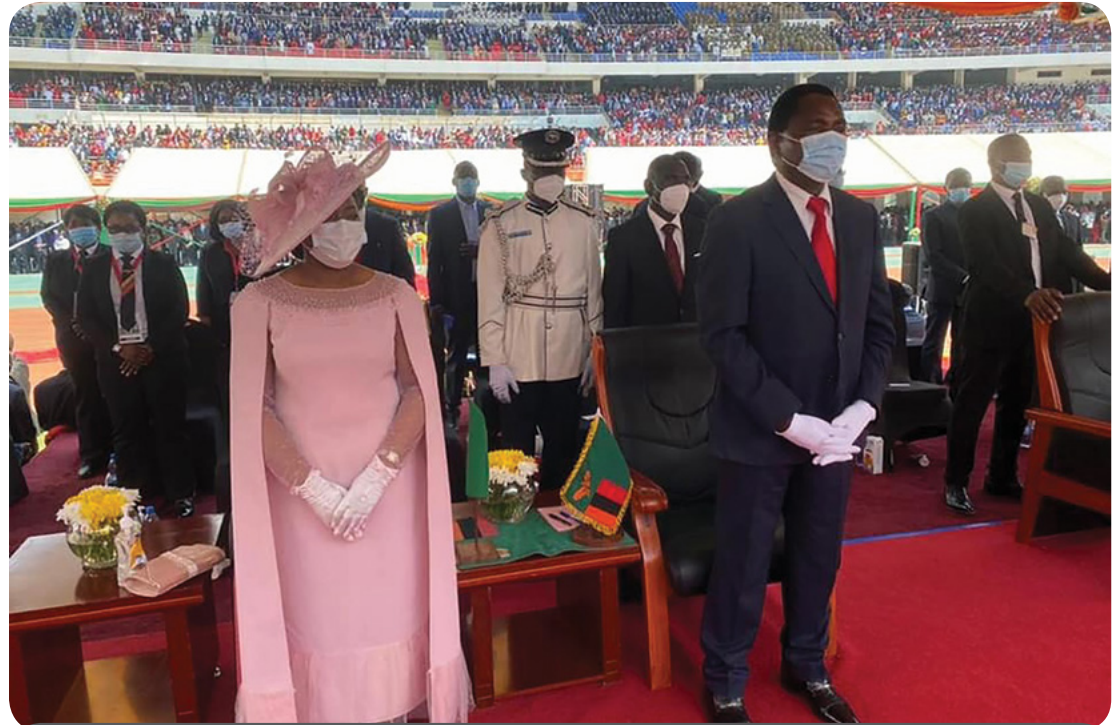
# Africa Hails Zambia's Smooth Power Transition

By Andreas Thomas

For the sixth time since its attainment of independence, Zambia recently witnessed a smooth power transition. Outgoing president Edgar Lungu suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of long time rival Hakainde Hichilema. Following the precedence set by Zambia's founding President Kenneth Kaunda in the early 90s; Lungu graciously vacated the presidency seat thus paving way for Hichilema to take the honours. Delighted by the events in Zambia, many African citizens, leaders and institutions welcomed and hailed the smooth transfer of power stating that the development should act as precedence to all other African nations.

The regional grouping that Zambia is part of that is, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) hailed the smooth transfer of power in one of its member states. Speaking through the Botswana President Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi who happens to be the Chairperson of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defense and Security, SADC commended the peaceful elections that took place in Zambia and subsequently the smooth power transition. SADC also went on to call for peace as the country undergoes a transition period.

"SADC remained seized with the developments in the Republic of Zambia, and engaged key stakeholders



*Huge crowds turned up at the Heroes Stadium in Lusaka to celebrate the triumph of democracy in the peaceful transfer of power to President Hichilema.*

throughout the process, and notes that despite immense pressures from these highly competitive General Elections, political stakeholders were generally satisfied that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) was able to discharge its functions professionally... I, therefore, on behalf of SADC, wish to congratulate the President Elect Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, Leader of the United Party for National Development (UPND),

for winning the 12th August 2021 Presidential Election, as pronounced by the ECZ," Masisi said.

SADC also commended Zambian citizens for helping consolidate democracy in the country by exercising their right to vote in a peaceful and exemplary manner. In his remarks on behalf of SADC, President Masisi said "On behalf of the SADC region, I wish to congratulate the people of Zambia for consolidating democracy in their country and the region through peaceful elections. Notwithstanding, there were reported isolated and sporadic acts of violence that are regrettable... Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the people of Zambia turned out in large numbers. This is the 7th time Zambia is successfully electing a President through competitive multiparty elections since the historic 1991 polls, providing vital lessons for the region and the African continent at large."

Recently elected Malawi President Lazarus Chakwera who just like Hakainde Hichilema defeated the ruling party to claim victory in a

presidential election congratulated Zambia stating that the electoral events in the country have made Africa proud. "Those virtues have brought joy to homes at the foot of Table Mountain in South Africa, those virtues have brought joy to farmers on the banks of the Casamance River in Senegal, those virtues have brought joy to fishermen in their boats on the waters of Lake Mai-Ndombe in the Democratic Republic of Congo... this is the embodiment of the Africa we want because this here is the Africa we know ourselves to be," Chakwera said.

In a statement, the African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat warmly congratulated Hakainde Hichilema for his victory and also took time to thank outgoing president Edgar Lungu for demonstrating strong leadership and statesmanship as he graciously accepted the outcome of the election. In his statement, Moussa Faki Mahamat warmly congratulated "Hichilema upon his election as President-Elect of the Republic of Zambia following the successful



*DR. Congo President and current AU Chair Felix Tshisekedi was among the high profile dignitaries in Zambia for the installation of Hichilema.*



conduct of General Elections held on 12 August 2021". The African Union Commission Chairperson also commended "outgoing President H.E. Edgar Lungu for his tenure and demonstrating strong leadership and statesmanship through his gracious acceptance of the outcome of the elections." In his concluding remarks, Moussa Faki Mahamat thanked "the Electoral Commission of Zambia and all national stakeholders for their collective efforts in the exemplary conduct of peaceful, free and fair

elections."

On the international front, China which has enjoyed great relations with the previous Lungu administration but a tumultuous one with local Zambian citizens through its president Xi Jinping sent a message of congratulations to incoming president Hakainde Hichilema and promised to continue deepening relations between China and Zambia. In a statement, President Xi Jinping said, "I attach great importance to the development



Former Nigerian President Obasanjo answered present at the swearing in of President Hichilema. Photo credit FB.



*This is the embodiment of the Africa we want because this here is the Africa we know ourselves to be, President Lazarus Chakwera of Malawi said.*

of China-Zambia relations, value the traditional friendship between the two countries, and stand ready to work with President Hichilema to deepen bilateral cooperation in various fields, so as to bring benefits to both countries and their peoples."

Several African leaders congratulated the incoming Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema for his victory and promised to continue deepening the relations

that exist between their countries and Zambia. African leaders also took time to thank the outgoing Zambian president Edgar Lungu for ensuring a smooth power transition by accepting the outcome of the election. Among the African leaders who sent congratulatory messages to Zambia are leaders of South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.



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# The Buhari Presidency: Legacy As Albatross

By Richard Mammah



*Buhari is in a race against time to bolster a presidency that many think has not lived up to the hype. Photo courtesy.*

Sixteen months to the scheduled elections that would mark the end of his presidency, it is clear that the biggest issue on the burner for President Muhammadu Buhari is what his post-governance legacy would be. How kind would history be to the General who returned to power some 30 years after his first time out, promising to right all of the wrongs of the nation?

This much came out in his post-London session with his appointed security chiefs who he once again gave the now very familiar and oft-repeated marching order to come down hard on any and everyone that was responsible for the myriad of security challenges afflicting the nation.

According to his National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno, himself a retired General like the President and who was also a former Chief of Logistics at Defence Headquarters, Commander of the Nigerian Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Commander, Guards Brigade, Deputy Commandant, National Defence College, and Chief of Defence Intelligence, the president was very conscious of the burden of history and would not want to leave

office a failure.

But the words had scarcely left the mouth of the security chief when the news waves were rent with fresh cries over even more deaths in the Middle Belt, the North East, the North Central. Indeed in Nigeria today, it remains a continuing rage of skirmishes, rapes, kidnapping, killings and attacks with the security agencies even being caught in the cross fire and suffering occasional home run casualties.

This is exactly what happened

recently when the now ubiquitous unknown gunmen went on rampage inside Nigeria's premier Armed Forces Training Centre, the Nigerian Defence Academy, killing, wounding and abducting.

And as this piece was being concluded, fresh reports were also coming in of the killing of yet another serving military personnel, this time in his home in Kaduna.

The Economy: Beyond and between GDP Numbers

If the challenge was only on the

security front, perhaps it would not have been as dismal as many Nigerians see it. On the economic plain, the nation continues to totter. Given the scope of the economic challenges that the nation is buffeted by, even the ordinarily cheery news of some economic progression as captured in the reported declaration of profits by the oil behemoth, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and the 5 percent year on year GDP growth recorded in the second quarter of 2021 would not comfort many. This is because, looking more deeply into their realities as well as the details behind the numbers, what many discerning analysts see is not growth as it translates to an improvement in the lives and circumstances of the people at the moment, but a more broader dimension where it could be said that a semblance of pre-COVID outbreak era normalcy has indeed begun to return to the country following the lockdown and shut-ins of the corresponding period last year. This is also underscored by the fact that quarter on quarter, the real economic outcome is not a massive growth as seen in the year on year outcome but rather a dip from 0.5 to -0.7 per cent.

Another area of concern has to do with the recently signed Petroleum Industry Act. As an initiative that has



*The succession issue is one of the issues at stake as President Buhari ebbs out his second and last term of office..*

long been in the works, its passage and signing comes as a relief of sorts. However, the long drawn out implementation schedule as well as the subsisting political issues as to how the accompanying politics of NNPC unbundling and the host committee's equity and management of the Frontier Funds allocation remain grey areas to be worked out. Meanwhile, all of these continue to engage stakeholders in the midst of continuing haemorrhaging on subsidy payment, the NNPC's controversial investment in Dangote Refinery, the delays in the coming on stream of that refinery project and advancements in the broader global energy ecosystem that continue to put pressure on any reliance on and assuring viability of fossil fuel investments going forward.

## And the political firefights

Hard tough politics, which ordinarily is a popular Nigerian sport also comes into play here. While many informed Nigerians think that some more focus should have been placed by the administration on working through a more definitive constitutional remaking process as a framework for a more viable governance module for the nation, partisan politicking seem to have gotten the better part of the attention of President Buhari and his closest associates. The outcome is that even the piecemeal constitutional amendment process began several months ago is still in limbo and with



**According to National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno President Buhari is very conscious of the burden of history and would not want to leave office a failure.**

the heaping up of several contentious attachments upon its mainframe questions of enabling the process for a brand new constitution, restructuring the federation, ensuring greater fiscal federalism and the institution of state police, it is clear that the process may yet be headed for a rocky ending. Indeed, one of the more disconcerting baggage attachments is the question of state creation of new states even at a time where economic indicators demonstrate that just about a tenth of the nation's 36 states can thrive outside of 'federal subsidies' under the current fiscal arrangement.

For the commentator, Okofu Ubaku, the simple reality staring everyone in the face now as per the

Buhari presidency is that there may indeed be no legacy to rescue any more:

'Is President Buhari scoring himself high in the face of all these absurdities? Is he saying he has done well with the free fall of the Naira against the Dollar and the humongous foreign debt being incurred by his regime? Is President Buhari aware that our medical doctors are trooping out to foreign countries in what could barely pass as better deals?

Fundamentally, President Buhari even to a 10 year old has failed abysmally. Whom does the President take Nigerians for? His touted 'change' in 2015 was after all a hoax! If children in northern Nigeria cannot

go to school without the fear of being kidnapped, what would those in government say they have achieved?

If Christians in the north especially in Kaduna and Plateau states cannot go to churches and worship their God with their eyes closed in reverence what are those in government doing about sections 14 (b), 16, 17,18 of Chapter two of the 1999 ( 2011 as amended)? These are fundamental objectives of government and any regime that is averse to these directive principles is nothing short of being a failure.'

End of discussion. \_\_\_\_\_







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# Cameroon: Restructuring the Anglophone Dialogue

*‘The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war’ Norman Schwarzkopf*

Mwalimu George Ngwane\*

On September 10 2019, the Head of State, President Paul Biya in a message to the nation convened a Major National Dialogue to address the crisis in the South West and North West regions. A crisis to quote him ‘that not only jeopardize the safety and wellbeing of the population living there but also far reaching consequences for the national community as a whole’. President Biya continued ‘the entire national community has hopes that this will be an opportunity for our brothers and sisters in the North West and South West regions to close this particularly painful chapter, to forget their suffering and to return to normal life’. In his opening speech at the Major National Dialogue Prime Minister Dion Ngute challenged the attendants to ‘make history and find solutions to the problems that have separated us physically and intellectually in recent years’.

Two years after the Major National dialogue we have, as a people, reaped the psychological satisfaction that goes with talking with each other, mitigated the cacophony of violent extremism in the North West and South West regions, shown resilience in the adage that the greater the ability to handle adversity, the stronger the partnership that develops; and benefited from some institutional and structural reforms. But we are still ‘to close this particularly painful chapter, to forget their suffering and to return to normal life’. This can be understood. Dialogue is a process and not an event. Peace talks are a permanent feature in the landscape of conflict and as long as the war-rages on, the jaw-jaw must forge ahead. Some of the indicators that show that normalcy has not completely returned to the two regions are the proliferation of arms in the hands of non-state armed actors, the armed confrontation between the military and non-state armed



*None else but the government can take the initiative of a constitutional dialogue and if it does, the participants must be willing to comply and cooperate, says Mwalimu Ngwane.*

actors with innocent civilians being caught in the crossfire, the presence of the military in towns, roadblocks, arson, the timid return of schools in some rural and semi-urban areas, the religious loyalty to civil disobedience every Monday, and the presence of Internally displaced persons as well as refugees. As far as non-state armed belligerents are concerned I can categorise them into three groups – the Haram forces which have mainly financial/economic interest through kidnappings, gruesome murder, and ransom request; the Hydra forces which have an ideological interest through their quest for self-determination which sometimes vacillates between secession, confederation and federalism; and the Hybrid forces whose pendulum of interest swings between the first two.

After the 2019 Major National Dialogue there have been calls for more dialogue, something which the Head of State mentioned during his 10 September 2019 as he said ‘since

the outbreak of the crisis in the North West and South West regions, the term dialogue has never been so much talked about, used and even misused’. But were the principle of another dialogue (Dialogue 2) accepted, would it be just another format of the 2019 Major National Dialogue? I am not sure. Even if the Major National Dialogue provided a relative vista for frankness, sincerity and orientation to restoring sanity and normalcy to the fractured and fissured cohesion of the people living in the South West and North West regions, it cannot be seen as an end by itself but as an entry point into a journey, sometimes long, of conflict transformation. So before venturing into a ‘more of the same’ dialogue format, it may be necessary to evaluate the gains and gaps made during the Major National Dialogue. In his 1st August 1964 Memorandum, Bernard Fonlon declared that ‘a traveler on the road stops from time to time to look back and see the ground he has covered; merchants

close shops at intervals to take stock; and users of machines are bound to service and overhaul them now and again’. Therefore going forward I propose four models of dialogue that can be implemented simultaneously or sequentially.

## Community dialogue: the amicable

While the Hydra and Hybrid forces can be brought to the dialogue table, the Haram forces can either be confronted by the state armed actors or converted by community stakeholders. Community stakeholders include traditional, religious, security, administrative, education, youth, women, community media, and civil society groups which in their respective neighborhoods have an advocacy interest in transforming their immediate environments from conflict-prone to conflict-proof. In this vein the community creates Local Peacemaking Committees (LPC) which engage especially the Haram Forces to drop their arms as well as incentivize them with reintegration tools of development. This is what Prophet Isaiah referred to as beating swords into ploughshares. A community dialogue is a peaceful, proximity, palaver tradition that according to Dr. Dze-Ngwa Willibroad encourages community empathy, accommodation, healing, atonement and reintegration into society. Even the military are not left out as community stakeholders because as Dze-Ngwa suggests they can hold back their guns and harness or tap from their innate vocational skills (carpentry, building, engineering, medicine, teaching, sports etc) to promote community development. Local or Citizen Peacemaking is called Track1 approach as opposed to Track 11 approach carried out by the state. Community dialogue believes in promoting the culture of peace in the neighborhood through an indigenous knowledge system. As



in all traditional African societies, there exists a wealth of indigenous knowledge, norms, skills and practices which are relevant to establishing and maintaining peaceful relationships between individuals and groups to deal with differences and disputes. Like the ujamaa ideology of Tanzania, the gacaca practice in Rwanda and the ubuntu philosophy in South Africa, community dialogue is a homegrown, participative, bottom up, truth and reconciliatory therapy that seeks to provide an enabling environment for renewed collective catharsis, revived economic sharing, repaired broken bonding, and restored confidence and trust within the community. However, it must be noted that community dialogue is relevant to cessation of hostilities and agreement on mutual security but does not resolve the root cause of the conflict. As a local ownership instrument, community dialogue is only important in demonstrating that grievances can be resolved without anyone resorting to gun violence.

### Special status dialogue: the available

The Special status is the most visible and much talked about outcome of the Major National dialogue. Created by law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 of the bill to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, the Special Status of the North West and South West regions constitutes Part V of Book IV containing the operational Rules applicable to the two regions. The content of the Status has been lauded by some because it is 'a specific organizational and operational regime, based on the historical, social and cultural values of these regions, with due respect for the primacy of the state and national unity and solidarity (Section 327.2). In his credit to the content of the Status, the President of the Foundation for the Advancement of Regional Autonomy in Cameroon and policy Advocacy scholar, Azong-Wara Andrew writes 'there are merits in the Special Status which some of our Anglophone compatriots are tending



*For many analysts, the persistence of the crisis in the North West and South West of Cameroon is an indication that the Major National was not the panacea expected.*

to brush under the carpet for lack of content' (The Horizon newspaper, 12 August 2021,p.10). Meanwhile a frontline actor for Federalism Dr. Simon Munzu argues that the provisions of the Special Status do not contain anything that confers any meaningful 'Special Status on the two Anglophone regions. It is hard to see how they can lead to the resolution of the Anglophone problem' (The Sun newspaper, 5 June 2020). Indeed there have been diametrically polarized opinions on the present content of the status. Having a further discussion on it could be helpful. The format would simply be for the members of each Regional Assembly to take another critical and non-political partisan look at the Status so as to expand its administrative space and deepen its ideological content. A content that reflects the universal concept of Special Status regimes yet one that is contextualized to suit each Regional specificity and at the same time to embrace the overarching values of Education, Judiciary, Public Administration, Language policy etc. between the two regions.

### Caucus dialogue: the attainable

In this message of 10 September 2019, President Paul Biya asked 'Talking about dialogue per se, the issue has always been, with whom?' He continues 'New Information and Communication technologies, especially social media networks have unfortunately facilitated the advent of self-proclaimed leaders, extremists of all shades trying to achieve recognition using insult, threat, hate speech, violence and murder'. Two years later we now know those toiling for peace and those spoiling for war. It is now possible to separate the oranges from the grapes among the interlocutors. There are credible interlocutors or stakeholders in the domestic and diaspora scenes who can constitute themselves as caucuses to identify the problem of the conflict and draft a peace framework to resolving it. Some of the caucuses that can be considered include Delegates that can be elected from each of the two regions, Delegates as an Anglophone bloc, Delegates from the various groups in the diaspora, Delegates from some of the Affirmative Action groups that are looking for peaceful means in ending the crisis, the clergy, traditional leaders, youth groups,

women groups, rights-based groups etc. What this requires is that such caucuses be given an opportunity to hold their internal discussion meetings and come out with their blueprint or white paper for peace. It may be necessary that these caucuses with concrete agendas be invited to a multistakeholder conference to exchange views and find common ground towards a Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Again in Paul Biya's own words on 10 September 2019 'Prior to the effective holding of the dialogue, the Prime Minister, Head of Government will carry out broad based consultations to solicit a wide range of views that will serve as a source of inspiration for the conduct of deliberations'. The need to use the pyramid caucus approach which is broad at the bottom and narrow at the apex would permit Delegates to address the core and substantive root causes of the Anglophone problem that has morphed into the crisis in the two regions. Our country is host to persons who can generate public pressure for the parties to listen to the people's aspiration for peace and who can formulate a long-term agenda for restorative justice,



positive peace and harmonious co-existence in Cameroon. The caucus dialogue that moves from the micro to the macro level, believes in fixed goal but flexible method; it believes in unity of outcome but not uniformity in discussion; it believes in deep conversation based on rational thinking but not on erratic impulses and finally it believes in the protection of our bonding and not the promotion of our balkanization. Because caucus dialogue often has participants with different ideological leanings rooted in diverse interpretations of the history of the crisis, the panoply of participants need to be inspired by the following words of Nelson Mandela 'One of the most important lessons I learnt in my life of struggle for freedom and peace is that in any conflict, there comes a point when neither side can claim to be right and the other wrong, no matter how much that might have been the case at the start of the conflict'.

### **Constitutional dialogue: the affordable**

Cassam Uteem, former President of Mauritius once said that 'conflict still impugns constitution; while older constitutions were the legacy of conflict with colonialism, newer constitutions have aimed to end violent internecine rivalry between groups with comparing notions about state governance'. Constitutional dialogue is always loaded with the expectation that it will herald peace and enhance reconciliation and inclusion. The Major National Dialogue was triggered by the unfortunate events that have made and continue to make the South West and North West regions the cauldron of bloodletting and the bastion of social dislocation. The objective of a constitutional dialogue is to provide long term institutional guarantees that would both stem the tide of any crisis and forestall the eventuality of any conflict. Some politicians have been calling for another Tripartite Conference in the manner of the 31 October -15 November 1991 Tripartite conference. The 1991 Tripartite was orchestrated by grievances of



*Peace talks are a permanent feature in the landscape of conflict and as long as the war-war rages on, the jaw-jaw must forge ahead, says Mwalimu Ngwane.*

a national dimension (draft of an electoral code and access of political parties to the official media). Those grievances were expressed in nationwide Ghost town and civil disobedience campaign initiated by the National Coordination of Opposition Parties and Associations. However by the end of the Tripartite, proposals for a constitutional review were brought to the table leading to the present 1996 constitution. Can constitutional reforms through a constitutional dialogue lay to rest the subject on the form of state which was during the Major National Dialogue considered 'the elephant in the room?' Shall it vindicate Barrister Felix Agbor Nkongho's declaration on October 2 2019 during the Major National Dialogue that 'the dialogue would be pointless unless the form of state was discussed?' Shall a constitutional dialogue see the present crisis as just emanating from Teachers and Lawyers socio-professional petitions in 2016 (which petitions government has largely addressed) or shall it consider this crisis as a Trojan horse

carrying what has long been called The Anglophone problem? Shall it not be advisable for such a constitutional dialogue to allocate enough time, space and resources to answering two correlated questions: "Why is this crisis still persisting and how can it be given a sustainable constitutional solution?" Bernard Fonlon often said "a constitution is to the state what the soul is to man". None else but the government can take the initiative of a constitutional dialogue and if it does the participants must be willing to comply and cooperate. In his book "Thoughts on Nigerian constitution" Obafemi Awolowo says that the formulation of a constitution for a country is a solemn and grave undertaking. Those who are privileged to be charged with this solemn and grave responsibility need much more than mere emotional impulses and unreflective patriotic sentiments as their equipment"

My four models of dialogue are premised on the urgency of heeding to the African metaphor that says "as long as the baby is crying its mother

shall not stop singing". Whatever model or models we choose, it or they should be built upon a rock and not on sand.

\*Mwalimu George Ngwane is author of the book "Settling Disputes in Africa" (2001), Senior Chevening Fellow, Conflict Prevention and Resolution, University of York (UK) 2010, Rotary Peace Fellow, University of Chulalongkorn, Bangkok (Thailand) 2015, Commonwealth Professional Fellow, Minority Rights Group, London (UK) 2015, Bilingual Commission scholar, Cardiff, Wales 2015, United Nations Minority Rights Fellow, OHCHR, Geneva (Switzerland) 2016. He was elected Member since 2017 of the Board of Trustees, Minority Rights Group, London (UK) and Minority Rights Group, Africa (Uganda). He is also since 2021 a Senior Fellow with the United Nations Commission for Human Rights. His blog is [www.gngwane.com](http://www.gngwane.com)



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# Kenya: BBI Is Officially Over

By Samuel Ouma

**K**enyan Judiciary has once again proved to the world to be one of the independent institutions in the country and the continent by dismissing petitions challenging the High Court judgment that declared the constitution amendment bill popularly known as Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) null and void.

The petitioners were former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, President Uhuru Kenyatta, the BBI secretariat, and the Independence Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). Despite intense pressure from the political class, the court's judges stood their ground and upheld the May 13 High Court ruling that declared the push to change its laws unconstitutional.

In its ruling on Friday, August 20, 2021, a seven judge-bench led by Court of Appeal President Daniel Musinga unanimously stated that BBI was not a popular initiative as President Uhuru Kenyatta initiated it. According to the judges, the Constitution of Kenya has a basic



*Court of Appeal judges, Fatuma Sichale, Patrick Kiage, Roselyn Nambuye, Daniel Musinga(president), Hannah Okwengu, Gatembu Kairu and Francis Tuiyot put a final nail on the coffin of the BBI*

structure, which should be protected, and that public members must fully support proposals to change the structure.

Other judges were Justices Hannah Okwengu, Patrick Kiage, Fatuma Sichale, Gatembu Kairu, Roselyne Nambuye, and Francis Tuiyo. Apart

from Justice Fatuma Sichale, the remaining ones confirmed that the reforms were illegal.

"The president does not have authority under the Constitution to initiate changes to the Constitution. A constitutional amendment can only be initiated by parliament... or

through a popular initiative," said presiding President Daniel Musinga.

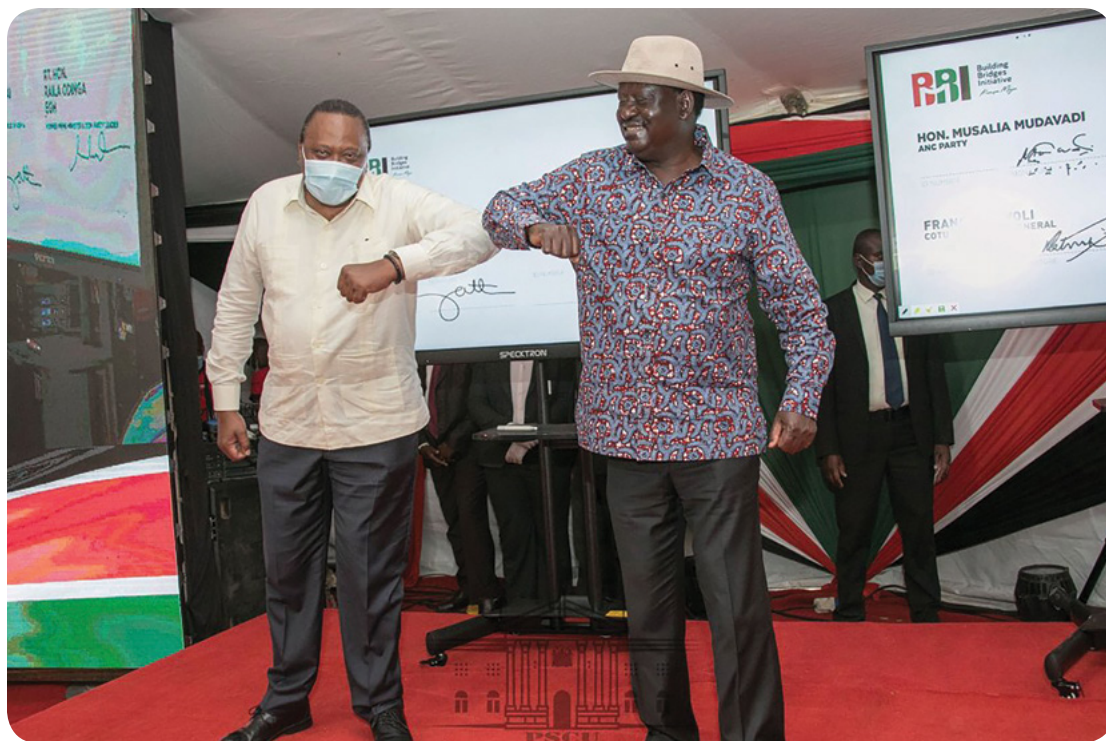
The judges also ruled that President Kenyatta can be sued in his own capacity for initiating the Bill.

The BBI steering committee that President Kenyatta appointed to oversee the process was also pronounced unlawful as the panel noted that it had no constitutional mandate under Article 257 of the Constitution.

The appellant further ruled that the Bill was not subjected to adequate public participation, with Justice Patrick Kiage saying Members of County Assembly (MCAs) rushed the process because of incentives such as car grants as if they wanted to show gratitude.

"County Assemblies did not involve resident-citizens in their counties. Some Assemblies <passed the Bill in a matter of days> without involving the citizens," said Justice Kiage.

The majority also agreed that the electoral commission lacked a quorum to verify collected signatures. IEBC had three commissioners during the verification process instead of five as required by the law. Roselyn Akombe, Margaret Mwachanya, Paul Kurgat, and former vice-chair Consolata Maina resigned from the



*Analysts see the court ruling as a big blow to the brewing bromance between current President Uhuru Odinga and opposition leader Raila Odinga.*



commission. Recently, Kenyatta nominated Juliana Wihongi Chirera, Francis Mathenge Wanderi, Irene Cherop Masit, and Justice Abonyo Nyangaya to replace them, pending vetting by the National Assembly.

The judges further barred the commission from conducting a referendum or any other process touching on the amendment of the Constitution through a popular initiative.

"A permanent injunction be and is hereby issued restraining IEBC from undertaking any processes required

under Article 257(4) and (5) in respect of constitutional amendment bill 2020," reiterated Justice Musinga.

Following the ruling, Odinga stated he will not appeal the decision in the Supreme Court, saying that BBI was never a destination but a journey in an ever-evolving way of life.

"The decision of the Court of Appeal today is remarkable as it forms part of the continuing conversation on the future of this country and the significance of our new Constitution to the political culture we and the generations that will come after us

will practice.

Likely, this is not the end of the conversation, and the parties involved will each make their own decisions on how to proceed from the decision that has been delivered today. That is welcome, as the issues involved need to be deliberated upon to the fullest extent," said Odinga.

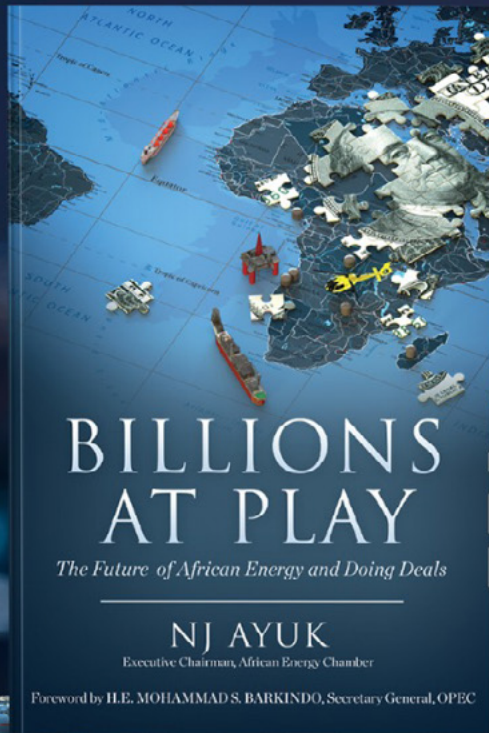
BBI was initiated by President Uhuru Kenyatta and his nemesis-turned friend Raila Odinga. It was created out of a political truce dubbed 'Handshake' following disputed 2017 presidential polls that caused the

political arrest. The initiative aimed to do away with the winner-takes-all electoral system alleged to be the primary cause of recurrent cycles of election violence. The Bill proposed the creation of the post of Prime Minister and his two deputies for inclusivity.

However, the document's critics led by deputy president William Ruto viewed it as a ploy by the president to extend his tenure in the office. Some also saw it as a power-sharing deal between Odinga and Kenyatta.

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# A Pillar For African SMEs In Ecobank

By Ajong Mbapndah L

For small and medium size enterprises across Africa, there is no better partner today than Ecobank. From its roots in Togo, West Africa, Ecobank today has banking operations in about 33 African countries and counting. It therefore came as no surprise when the Ecobank Group was named as the 2021 African SME Bank of the Year beating a host of other banks at the African Banker Awards.

For Ecobank Group Executive, Commercial Banking, Josephine Ankomah, the unprecedented challenges triggered by the COVID -19 pandemic in 2020 required resilience and innovative ways to assist SME customers survive the enormous challenges. Gracious in victory at the Awards, Josephine Ankomah lauds the tremendous work of staff, and collaboration of customers and partners in the success of the robust response provided by Ecobank to SMEs.

“Since the onset of Covid-19, the Ecobank Group has considerably ramped up investments in programmes targeting SMEs by expanding SME-focused lines of credit, providing technical assistance to SME development institutions and building SMEs’ capacity via linkage programmes in partnership with its strategic partners,” says Josephine Ankomah.

From the support to SMEs, to the promotion of gender inclusion, perspectives on the African Free Trade Agreement, corporate social responsibility, historical insights, and more, Josephine Ankomah sheds lights on operations of Ecobank which is today one of the indispensable actors in the business and development equations in Africa.

**Thanks for accepting to answer our questions, for those who are not familiar with Ecobank could you start with an introduction, and business concept or vision around the Bank?**

Ecobank is an innovation of



*Our strategic purpose which steers us towards growth and success, is to build a world-class Pan-African bank and contribute to the economic development and financial integration of Africa, says Josephine Ankomah*

our founders – members of the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). They imagined and actualized their idea of setting up a Bank that transcends country borders, in an era where most banks were either international or country based, to initially assist the business community in the West African Region and later the entire African continent.

Their aim was to break the artificial border barriers along the region and galvanize economic development and integration. A Pan African bank was consequently born dedicated to the continent and its people. The parent company of the Ecobank Group, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated is headquartered in Lomé, Togo where the visionary Togolese leader agreed to host Ecobank on behalf of Ecowas.

The dual objectives of the Ecobank Group are to enable a

modern pan-African bank to thrive and to contribute to the economic development and financial integration of the continent.

36 years on and with extensive footprint across 35 African countries in key geographical regions: Nigeria, Francophone West Africa (UEMOA), Anglophone West Africa (AWA) and Central, Eastern and Southern Africa (CESA), Ecobank is the largest Pan-African full-service banking group in terms of spread on the continent. we have banking operations in 33 African countries, representative offices in Ethiopia and South Africa, international operations in Paris (France) as well as offices in Beijing (China), London (The UK) and Dubai (The United Arab Emirates).

As a banking group, our strategic purpose which steers us towards growth and success, is to build a world-class Pan-African bank and contribute to the economic development and financial integration of Africa. Our mission is to provide

all our customers with convenient and reliable financial products and services.

As of 31 March 2021, The Ecobank Group had \$25.59billion in total assets and \$1.95billion in total equity, a customer base of over 24million, 690 branches, over 76,000 Xpress points over 2600 ATMs, over 11million Mobile App users, 40 million digital transactions, a staff strength of over 14,000 with a 54: 46 ratio of male to female employees.

The Bank is also listed on three stock exchanges: The Nigeria Securities Exchange, The Ghana Stock Exchange and the BVRM in Cote d'Ivoire. We also have Bonds trading on the London Stock Exchange.

**In what parts of the continent does Ecobank have operations in, what are some of its leading products, and what kind of clientele does the Bank cater to?**

The Ecobank Group has presence



in 33 countries on the continent, what we refer to as middle Sub-Saharan Africa (outside of South Africa). In South Africa, we have strategic partnership with Nedbank, which is also a major institutional investor in our parent company.

The Bank has a diversified business model by which we manufacture financial products and services centrally, at the Group Level, and distribute them locally through our 33 banking affiliates in the four geographical regions. Our customers are segmented in line with our three Business segments namely: Consumer Banking, Commercial Banking and Corporate & Investment Banking.

Consumer Banking caters for individuals, offering deposit, loan and payment products. We deliver our services through two consumer sub-segments - Personal Banking and Direct Banking. Personal Banking focuses on our Premier and Advantage customers with moderate to high-net worth revenues, and Direct Banking focuses on the mass market and the youth. Through these sub-segments, we serve our customers through our unrivalled footprint in Africa, leveraging digital, branch and agency channels.

Commercial Banking caters for SMEs, Local Corporates, Local NGOs, Local Government Agencies, Faith-Based Organisations, Educational Institutions, Healthcare Institutions. These customers have access to working capital financing, asset financing, business prepaid cards, digital products for payments and collections. We also offer specialized programs such as Ellevate by Ecobank our gender financing product for women owned businesses and women focused businesses.

Corporate & Investment Banking caters to Governments, Regional and Global Corporates, Financial Institutions, International Organisations. Some of the products and services on offer to our Corporate



*Josephine Ankamah says the mission of Ecobank is to provide all its customers with convenient and reliable financial products and services.*

Banking customers are Fixed income, currencies and commodities (FICC), Cash Management, Trade Finance and Services, Loans and Liquidity, Securities, Wealth and Asset Management (SWAM) and Investment Banking.

***The Ecobank Group recently won the '2021 African SME Bank of the Year' award, for its significant contribution to the development of the SME sector during the coronavirus outbreak last year, how was the award received and what does it mean for the Bank?***

We were delighted to receive this award particularly during this challenging COVID19 period. The award was in recognition of the collective hard work of all Ecobankers and our partners in responding quickly and providing the needed support to our SMEs from the onset of the COVID pandemic.

We had to rethink our business and provide innovative ways to assist our SME customers survive the difficulties brought about by the pandemic. We were also at the forefront of promoting gender inclusion at this

challenging time with a product for women owned and women focused businesses – Ellevate by Ecobank.

This award indeed serves as motivation to our staff that all their hard work in improving our products and services, providing the right level of support to our customers is appreciated and recognised. Together, we demonstrated how we can positively impact SMEs and women during a crisis period. As a Bank with a vision to promote economic development, we are proud of this achievement.

***What were some of the specific contributions that you made towards supporting or cushioning the impact of COVID 19 the SME sector?***

Our customers, particularly the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) - bore the brunt of the financial pressures as they had to contend with supply chain challenges, effects of the lockdowns on their businesses, consequently, decline in turnover, revenue loss and operational challenges in 'getting back to normal'.

Staying close to our customers and

providing them with the necessary financial and non-financial support, was critical and served to demonstrate our commitment to them. We quickly identified the most vulnerable sectors impacted by the pandemic and with an understanding of what our customers required during this difficult period, we proactively put in place mitigating actions including tenor extensions and moratoriums on interest to assist our clients manage their loan repayments. This also helped us manage our loan portfolio and avoid significant deterioration.

Our investment in technology, internet banking and digital transfers in prior years paid off making the transition from in branch services to digital quite seamless. Customers did not face disruptions in making and receiving payments for their goods and services. They were able to continue paying salaries to their employees using digital means and reducing the use of cash which could be a vector of transmission. These were some of the positive experiences. The tremendous uptake on our digital platforms and solutions was a major positive outcome.

Being mindful of the effects of the



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**ellevate**  
by Ecobank

**"The success of Ellevate will depend on our ability to understand that women are not looking for pretty products tied with pink ribbons – they are looking for insightful solutions that meet their needs as they juggle different roles".**

COMMERCIAL BANKING

*Positively contributing to the economic development and financial integration of the African continent can only be strengthened if we focus on women, says Josephine Ankomah.*

pandemic particularly on MSMEs, we partnered with AUDA-NEPAD, an African Union agency to support the agency's 100,000 MSMEs initiative. This led to the launch of the MSME Academy by both Ecobank and AUDA-NEPAD in 2020, in the midst of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective is to provide entrepreneurs, owners and managers of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) with coaching, mentoring and business skills training courses.

Ecobank has also partnered with Google to equip African SMEs with the necessary digital skills to navigate the rapidly evolving business world. The aim is to assist African businesses remain relevant and fulfil their potential by embracing digital capabilities.

***From your perspective and that of the Bank, how important are SMEs to the development of the continent, and additional support could Institutions like Ecobank, and others, governments etc provide to strengthen and support their growth?***

A lot has been said about how SMEs are critical to economic development and rightly so, because they constitute 90% of businesses on the continent. In Africa the desire and determination to start a business is not in doubt. What is needed however is the means to unlock their full potential, grow these businesses in a sustainable manner and turn them to multi-million-dollar companies in the future.

We have noted that there are three (3) key things that SMEs need namely, access to finance, capacity building and access to markets.

In terms of access to finance we continue to work at de-risking credit facilities extended to SMEs through credit guarantee schemes that can be provided by DFIs and Governments. Through these risk sharing partnerships are able to lend to SMEs against reduced collateral requirements. We are also partnering governments in our markets to deliver support to SMEs e.g., MIFA and FAIEJ in Togo.

We recognize the need to strengthen and build the capacity of business owners to ensure efficient management of funding. Between June and July this year we provided

training to over 800 SMEs under the MSME Training for Financing Programme. This programme proved to be very impactful with more than 90% of participants testifying that what they had learned would significantly help improve their business operations.

As with any major disruption, COVID 19 pandemic ushered in a period of both great risk and opportunity. One positive aspect was the exponential growth in digital payments. Business owners quickly realized the need to close the digital skills gap within their places of work for a sustainable post-pandemic recovery. This is where our partnership with Microsoft through their Global Skilling initiative successfully offered digital training to our SMEs.

Finally, access to markets. We have developed eCommerce solutions to expand market access working through partners such as iPay, DPO, Flutterwave and with Google through the Google My Business platform. With these solutions our customers benefit from enhanced visibility for their business through a digital presence. They are able to expand

their customer base with whom they can have access and interact 24/7

***May we know what specific programs or activities that the Bank has in place or has in view to empower women?***

Gender Financing is an area we are keen to support, and this led to the development and launch of our women's program Ellevate by Ecobank in November 2020.

Women constitute roughly half of the population in Africa. One in four female adults in Africa starts or manages a business, Women also invest as much as 90% of their incomes into their families and communities. So, clearly our goal of positively contributing to the economic development and financial integration of the African continent can only be strengthened if we focus on women.

Ellevate by Ecobank is now on the market as a pilot programme in a few countries. We are convinced that the needs of women entrepreneurs are largely the same across the continent and should be addressed without exception. With this in mind, we launched Ellevate by



Ecobank simultaneously in all our 33 markets. Today you will find dedicated Ellevest Desk Managers ready to attend to the needs of women all across our footprint.

The program is designed for women owned and women focused businesses. This means that any business founded by a woman or is 50% or more owned by a woman qualifies for Ellevest. A business whose management or board is made up of 20% or more women also qualifies for Ellevest. Another criteria we consider is the number of women employed. If the business employs more than 30% women it qualifies for the programme and finally companies who manufacture products specifically for women for example cosmetics, sanitary ware, mother care products also qualify for Ellevest.

The value proposition of Ellevest by Ecobank offers women an end-to-end partnership in which they gain access to financial services as well as non-financial services. This distinguishes us from other women's programs where the focus is on either financial support or non-financial support. In the case of Ecobank we are offering them both.

We are committed to meeting the needs of women businesses with tailored loan products, at favourable lending terms as well as capacity building, providing access to markets, networking opportunities and recognition.

## **Still on COVID -19, may we know what impact it had on operations and business in general for Ecobank?**

We were prepared having made significant investments in technology in the last 5 years to digitalise our operations and services. We therefore ensured that we steadfastly provided our customers with 24/7 access to their financial service's needs. For example, our call centres were open, and Rafiki, our artificial intelligence (AI) self-help bot, supported routine banking services. Our full suite of banking services remained available

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**Ecobank remains a continental leader in building partnerships to enhance and sustain SME's.**

on all our digital platforms: mobile, online, Omni Plus and Omni Lite.

In the wake of COVID-19, businesses transitioned from cash towards e-commerce and digital payments. The gradual shift from physical to digital channels among consumers accelerated with the pandemic, which has changed the way that we work in so many ways.

ATMs and call centres remained open 24/7. We ensured that customers had the full range of banking services available on our digital platforms: Ecobank Mobile and Ecobank Online available to our consumer customers, and Ecobank Omni Lite and Ecobank Omni Plus to meet the needs of SMEs and large businesses. We took the decision to waive some fees on our digital channels.

To ensure the safety of our customers we adhered strictly to guidance from WHO, governments and health agencies making it safer for our customers to visit our physical locations by providing temperature checks, crowd control, hand sanitisers and social distancing, among other measures.

Our staff were also able to work from home with very minimal initial challenges. Staff today can operate from wherever they may be.

For our communities, we contributed circa \$3 million in the form of cash, healthcare equipment and supplies and embarked on sustained and robust COVID-19 awareness campaigns across our footprint.

## **What are some other challenges that Ecobank faces in countries where it has operations, and any plans to expand into more countries across the continent?**

Admittedly there are challenges operating in Africa, a large unbanked population high levels of poverty, unemployment etc. However, we see these challenges as opportunities to positively impact the lives of people and their communities. This is what drives us to work with partners, leverage our strength and help to solve some of these challenges. For example, our focus on women through our gender financing programme Ellevest by Ecobank will not only set us apart, but more importantly, will touch the lives of one of the most vulnerable groups in Africa by providing them with tailor-made and relevant solutions that will empower them to continue to effectively contribute to Africa's development.

The Ecobank Fintech Challenge affords us the opportunity to collaborate with Fintechs who are ready to scale. We provide them access and to 33 markets to provide payment solutions. Our own digital solutions like OmniLite, Ecobank Pay, Rapid Transfer s, Mobile App facilitate payments and collections seamlessly across our footprint and ensuring final inclusion is extended to a vast number of people on the continent

*There has been so much talk about the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, first, how does Ecobank view the AfCFTA, and what is the Bank doing to tap into opportunities that may accrue from it?*

The Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) officially became operational in January 2021 paving a way for our clients to access a unified African continental market. Africa has six major customs unions and a number of trade agreements but that notwithstanding these trading arrangements and their related costs of doing business are far from conducive to the success of entrepreneurs seeking to trade beyond their national borders.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement aims to improve cross border trade for both formal and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro-, small- and medium-sized operators and "women and youth service suppliers."

As the pan African bank with the largest footprint in Africa, we have from our inception been prepared for AfCFTA. We have the spread and the payment platform to help achieve the implementation strategies to operationalize the AfCFTA Agreement. We intend to leverage this initiative as it is directly aligned to our Group's vision of contributing to the economic development and financial integration of Africa.

AfCFTA affords as the opportunity to use our skills and immense local knowledge across 33 markets to enhance our customers' understanding of AfCFTA to enable them tap into the opportunities that this new single market covering 1,2Bn people and with a GDP of \$3,5 trillion brings.

Ecobank is able and does enable intra-Africa trade. We are the go-to Bank for AfCFTA.

## **How does Ecobank give back to the community and are there a few specific examples of**

## projects that you could share with us?

We recognize the importance of also giving back to the communities we work in and to drive social impact. Through the Ecobank Foundation, we are focused on staying relevant through social impact programmes related to health, education and financial empowerment.

The Ecobank Foundation has contributed to the NCD Alliance's Civil Society Solidarity Fund to accelerate African NCD Alliances' response to the COVID-19 pandemic for people living with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The Fund aims to ensure that the needs of people living with NCDs continue to be addressed during the COVID-19 pandemic as it strives towards achieving Universal Health Coverage, NCD prevention and control. It has awarded grants to ten NCD Alliances in Africa, of which nine are in Ecobank countries or regions: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, East Africa, Mozambique, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

Again, through the Foundation, we are collaborating with UNITLIFE, the UN initiative dedicated to fighting chronic malnutrition, to raise awareness and funds on this disease affecting a third of African children.

In partnership with Speak Up Africa and the UN hosted RBM Partnership to End Malaria we launched the Zero Malaria Business Leadership Initiative to drive private sector engagement in the fight against malaria in Benin, Senegal, Burkina Faso. This initiative is being expanded to include Uganda, Cameroon and Ghana.

The youth of the continent are important to Africa's development. In view of this the Ecobank Group has partnered with Junior Achievement (JA) Africa to mobilize over 600,000 young people across the continent and educate them in financial literacy. The partnership taps into JA's vast online community of over one million young social media followers. It seeks to grow financial inclusion for young Africans using Ecobank's mobile and digital services. By educating young people in the importance of money management skills, we aim



*As the pan African bank with the largest footprint in Africa, we have from our inception been prepared for AfCFTA, says Josephine Ankomah.*

to empower them to build a culture of savings as part of their personal financial habits.

This year, during our Ecobank Day celebrations, we will be partnering with various organisations to help raise awareness about the issue of Mental Health across Africa which has become a major concern with the rising cases of suicide, mental illnesses, stigmatisation and the general lack of understanding and compassion towards people who may suffer from mental health issues.

Through our innovative digital platform, we can help fundraise across Africa and mobilise capital in support of charities, disaster appeals, healthcare and other worthwhile causes.

*As we wrap up this interview, any major developments in the pipeline that you want to share and to potential customers out there, why should there consider Ecobank as the first choice to do business with?*

The Ecobank Group recently raised a US\$350 million Sustainability Notes. This was a landmark issue which represents the first ever Tier 2 Sustainability Notes by a financial institution in Sub-Saharan Africa. An equivalent amount of the net proceeds

from the notes will be used to finance or refinance, new or existing eligible assets as described in our Sustainable Finance Framework.

This is particularly important to us as it will help us push through our commitment to the sustainability of the continent. Our current area of focus i.e. on women, health and education can now be extended to other areas of opportunity such as affordable and clean energy, clean water and sanitation, quality education and housing. We see this as a testament to our clear strategy, solid positioning across the pan-African banking space as well as our deliberate and long-term focus on sustainable initiatives.

To all the potential customers out there, Ecobank is the leading pan African banking group with the widest footprint on the continent. A relationship with any one of our affiliates gives you access to 33 markets in Africa and a banking operation in Paris France. We highly value our relationship with our customers and work with them to consistently improve our products and services to suit their needs. In the area of digital solutions, we are pace setters as amply demonstrated during the Covid19 pandemic.

Our digital payments platform is

robust and provides ease of payment to any country in which we operate.

Finally, our professionalism, product innovation and the level of support we provide to our customers has culminated in our winning numerous awards. We were adjudged the 2021 African Banker, African SME Bank of the Year.

I will take this opportunity to highlight other awards we won recently:

**Global Finance – Best Trade Finance Providers 2021**

- Ecobank Côte d'Ivoire
- Ecobank Rwanda

**The Digital banker - Middle East & Africa (MEA) Innovation Awards**

- Outstanding Digital Transformation in Cash Management

**Global Finance – Innovators awards 2021**

- Outstanding crisis finance innovations – Ellevest by Ecobank

**Euromoney – Excellence awards 2021**

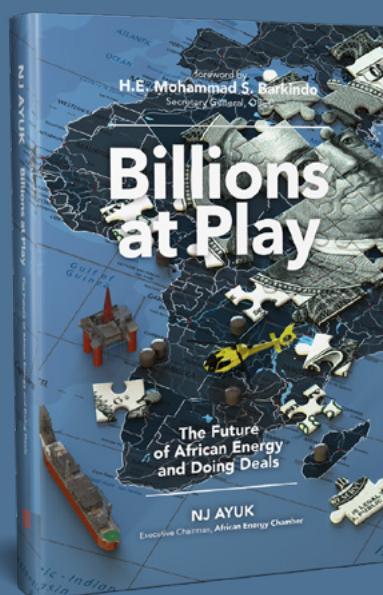
- Best Bank in Ghana – Ecobank Ghana



# Billions at Play

## The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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# Elias Mpedi Magosi Becomes The New Executive Secretary of SADC

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

**H**.E. Elias Mpedi Magosi has started from September his top-level regional job as the new Executive Secretary of Southern African Development Community (SADC). Magosi, a national of the Republic of Botswana, was sworn in as the Seventh SADC Executive Secretary at the 41st SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Lilongwe, Republic of Malawi on 18th August, 2021.

He replaces Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, whose term ended August 31. She served two 4-year terms from 2013 to 2021 at SADC Secretariat. Some of her key responsibilities, included engaging all the members as an economic bloc, overseeing, and implementing various programmes and projects in the southern African region. There were several achievements and milestones during the past eight years. The region remains stable and peaceful, notwithstanding the isolated challenges, though.

According to biographical reports from the Secretariat, Magosi, after graduating from the University of Botswana, went on to study at the University of Bolton in the United Kingdom and the Bowling Green State University in the United States.

From April 2021 to the time of his appointment as SADC Executive Secretary, he served as Acting Ambassador-at-large under the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana. Before that, Magosi was the Permanent Secretary to the President of the Republic of Botswana. As Permanent Secretary to the President, he was reporting to His Excellency, Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana.

Magosi has sound understanding



*New SADC Exec. Sec. Elias Mpedi Magosi.*

and coordination of the workings of governments, and effective linkages with political levels, private sector and academic institutions, including regional cooperation and coordination.

He has over 28 years of experience in large-scale performance and process improvement, strategic management, human resource management and change management in public, private and parastatal (quasi-government) sector organizations.

He has a strong background in restructuring, organizational redesign, planning and budgeting, and project management. He has very good skills in communication, facilitation, team development and management, strategic thinking, negotiation, advocacy and high level advisory.

In addition to these attributes,

Magosi possesses very strong skills in resourcing, coaching, performance tracking and management, and reporting. He has a passion for creating new or improve existing systems and processes to drive efficiency and sustenance. He is an ardent proponent of effective governance and prudent use of resources, and he has strong personal commitment to make a difference in the world.

With his combined educational background and working skills, expectation is very high that he has to deliver his new regional responsibilities. Notwithstanding some differences in political culture, national policies and approaches towards development issues, the history, shared principles and values, the common agenda have always enabled the region to find common

ground.

This common agenda is explicitly spelt out in Article 5 of the SADC Treaty. It aims at, among others, "promoting sustainable and equitable economic growth and social economic development that will ensure poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa.

Southern African Development Community (SADC), an organization made up of 16 member states, was established in 1980. The Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



# South Africa: Former President Zuma Freed From Jail on Medical Parole

By Prince Kurupati

**F**ormer South African President Jacob Zuma is now a free man. The 79-year old was freed on a medical parole as his health condition deteriorated soon after his incarceration. Zuma had been slapped with a 15-month jail sentence for contempt of court after failing to appear before the courts to answer to corruption charges.

The South African Department of Correctional Services through its spokesman Singabakho Nxumalo released a statement saying that former South African president Jacob Zuma had been released on jail on medical parole grounds. The statement from the Department of Correctional Services stated, "Medical parole placement for Mr. Zuma means that he will complete the remainder of the sentence in the system of community corrections."

Though released, the statement by the Department of Correctional Services stated that Zuma was required to stick and adhere to specified conditions. The former president will also be supervised by the department until the period of his jail sentence lapses. "He must comply with a specific set of conditions and will be subjected to supervision until his sentence expires," Nxumalo said.

The Department of Correctional Services stated that they took the decision to release Jacob Zuma on medical grounds as they had been "impelled by a medical report". The department stated that they parole prisoners on medical grounds when terminally ill and when "physically incapacitated... suffering from an illness that severely limits their daily activity or self-care can also be considered for medical parole."

While informing the nation about Zuma's release from jail on medical grounds, the Department of Correctional Services didn't state what Zuma was suffering from or his current condition.



**Former President Zuma had been slapped with a 15-month jail sentence for contempt of court after failing to appear before the courts to answer to corruption charges.**

The news of Zuma's release from jail was welcomed by his supporters. In an interview soon after the news of Zuma's release broke out, Mzwanele Manyi of the Jacob Zuma Foundation said that the nation of South Africa welcomes the news as Zuma's arrest had been "unconstitutional". ANC veterans also welcomed the news - just a day before Zuma's release, some of the ANC veterans attending the funeral of an ANC cadre had taken the opportunity to call for the release of Zuma.

Though Zuma's supporters

welcomed the news of his release, his critics condemned the decision. South Africa's main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance said that Zuma's release was "entirely unlawful" and that it "makes a mockery" of prison regulations. Another opposition party the Freedom Front Plus said that it was apparently clear that Zuma had received "preferential treatment" since the time he was imprisoned up to his release.

Despite his release, Zuma is still required to appear before the courts as scheduled on September 9 subject

to a medical report on his health.

South Africa has on numerous occasions released prisoners on medical parole. However, most of those released have been the elites and with the most infamous one being Schabir Shaik who was the co-accused with Zuma in the arms deal case. Shaik was paroled in 2009 on medical grounds with his medical report saying that he was terminally ill. To this day, Shaik is still alive.





# 27 Years After Creation; CEMAC Still Wanting In Commitment To Attain Set Goals

By Andrew Nsoseka

The creation of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) in 1994 was hinged on the desire to promote trade, the institution of a genuine common market, and greater solidarity among member countries which was to snowball towards helping underprivileged countries to level up with the rest, and jointly pursue their interests as one, for the benefit of all.

Close to three decades after these lofty idea to create the economic bloc came to fruition, its member states, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon have seemingly failed to live up to their commitments of collectively working to promote especially the economic wellbeing of all. When it comes to promoting inter-state trade, a common market, free movement of persons, and solidarity in things that matter, CEMAC states are still found wanting.

The CEMAC region is endowed with mineral wealth that includes deposits of oil, natural gas, gold, diamonds, manganese, uranium and others. It is also the world's second largest tropical forest zone, hosting the Congo basin forest. Agriculture



. For 27 years there has been more talk than action from CEMAC leaders.

wise, the region's enormous land and good climate, also places it amongst some of the best spots in the world where farming can be done with much ease and more returns.

The challenge for the CEMAC Region, seems to be its seeming inability to integrate and live by its set goals of being an economic and even social community. In a research piece on the subject, Scholar, Guy Marcel Nono, writing for the UNU

Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies, summarises that "In reality, the problem faced by integration in the CEMAC sub-region is not related to the quality of the treaties, but concerns the limited technical capacity, the divergent attitudes of the member countries towards regional integration and sometimes, the absence of sanctions against States which do not respect Community norms. This reality is

highlighted within the framework of this contribution with the goal of demonstrating the importance of CEMAC Member States taking their responsibilities accordingly."

Ace Cameroon Journalist, Kini Nsom writes that due to bad governance that sires an unfavourable business climate in the CEMAC region, there is lack of adequate private investments, forcing the over 42 million citizens of the economic bloc to wallow in poverty, even when in reality, it is one of the richest spots in the world, in terms of natural resources. "Intra-community trade that is supposed to trigger the free movement of goods and persons has remained timid. Suspicious rivalry, fear and individualism among member states are the obstacles that impede the free trade component. The international monetary crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have deepened the socio-economic situation of the people of CEMAC half of who live in Cameroon which contributes 28.6 percent of the region's Gross Domestic Product, GDP." Kini writes, for Cameroon's The Post.

He further notes that the community has elaborated numerous



A border check point between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea at Kiossi. Photo credit VOA.

texts to promote integration, but procrastination, inertia and other forms of delay subterfuges continue to ail their implementation. "There has been an overwhelming ideological inflation: that is a situation wherein they are many lofty pro-integration ideas and texts that tower above very little action in the field." Kini Notes.

## CEMAC's Overdependence On France, Lending Institutions

On August 18, CEMAC Heads of State held an extraordinary summit. It was chaired by its current President, Paul Biya of Cameroon. The approximately five-hour video conference was themed on "Review of macroeconomic situation of the CEMAC Zone within the context of COVID-19 and analyses of recovery measures."

During summit which was attended by officials of the World Bank, IMF, French government and the African Development Bank, President Biya expressed fears that the efforts for the region to attain its sustainable development goals may be falling short as, they are in jeopardy. The President, amongst other things, blamed the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which on its own, has not affected the sub region worse than other parts of the world. In reality, the Sub-region, like others in Africa suffered more of indirect consequences of the pandemic, because of its over dependence on foreign aid, its foreign markets and its failure to integrate which would have given it a less rocky experience in the face of COVID-19.

The conference seemed more of an avenue for the Heads of state for the CEMAC bloc, to paint a picture of how the pandemic has made life miserable for its people, and how the situation could get worse. All these, was done in an effort, to justify the need for more loans and aid, to the bloc that if well governed, could fend for itself, and not seek loans and economic favours that ties it to the apron strings of France and money lending institutions.



*The recent virtual summit was chaired by President Biya. Critics think CEMAC member states have not lived up to core commitments. Photo credit Reuters.*

Biya in his usual fashion, hailed partners like the IMF that ensured debt service suspension and allocated US 650 billion dollars in new Special Drawing Rights. He mentioned the May 18, 2021, Paris Summit on the financing of African economies and the recent Abidjan Summit during which countries with substantial reserves were urged to ensure Special Drawing Rights to African countries.

Biya said CEMAC's 2.1 percent growth rate enjoyed before 2019, was crushed with the advent of the pandemic. To him, the best way back to enjoying economic growth, is through transparency in managing public funds and ensuring a more business friendly policy in the bloc.

Another highpoint of the virtual summit, was a look at some of the bloc's ongoing and envisaged projects, for 2021-2025 which include, the construction of a bridge over River Ntem as well as the road network to ease transport and road safety on the transnational Kribi-Camop-Bata road linking Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea.

The construction of the 39km Lolabé-Campo expressway between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea; the 144km Ndende-Doussala road between Gabon and Congo; the Ndende-Dolisie Libreville-Brazzaville corridor; the Kogo-Akurenam road in the South-East of Equatorial Guinea to Gabon; and the Brazzaville-

Ouessou-Bangui corridor.

There is also the harnessing of the Chollet Hydroelectric plant with power transmission lines linking Cameroon-Congo-Gabon; the electricity interconnection network between Cameroon and Chad; interconnection of Cameroon and CEMAC countries by the optic fibre; the building of the dry port of Bekolo on the Cameroon-Bangui corridor and that at Dolisie on the Gabon-Congo corridor as well as the construction of the Cameroon-Congo inter-state university in Sangmelima. These constituted part of the priority projects that were under scrutiny by CEMAC Heads of State during the extraordinary summit.

## Lacklustre Attitude Towards Bloc's Core Goals

Despite the adoption of texts establishing a customs union with a free trade zone, there has been little action in the field to ensure that such is respected. The lack of good communication network, which includes lack of good roads, rail ways, ports and telephone networks is also one of the main reasons why the bloc is lagging in its goals. The inability of most countries in the CEMAC region to provide constant electricity is also having a negative impact on its business. The high cost of the epileptic electricity too does not make things any better for the bloc.

Due to bad governance, corruption and administrative bottlenecks many government officials in the bloc rather prefer to work for their selfish interests at the level of their countries, than to promote the bloc's core interests, especially that of free trade and common market. This makes the region business unfriendly and as such, many foreign investors are not lured in to invest.

Despite CEMAC's Investment Charter of 1999, member states have continued to maintain their autonomous fiscal and customs policies. This has continued to impede the progress of regional integration. As such international

and regional trade in the community is still bedevilled by cumbersome import and export procedures. Also, the region is still imprisoned in the neo-colonial FCFA currency that is pegged on the euro. It was formerly pegged on the defunct French Franc. As such CEMAC countries' foreign exchange assets must be deposited in the French Treasury's operating account, in return for a guarantee of convertibility.

Critics have continually campaigned, advocating that CEMAC has to liberate itself from the economic stranglehold of this currency in order to have things go its way. Unfortunately, such discussions do not appear on the bloc's agenda as the various Heads of state in the region, are more concerned with massaging egos of France, and other international bodies where they obtain loans for almost every single project. To ease movement in the bloc, there was the announcement of the creation of the CEMAC Airline, but like most projects, it has only remained on paper. Even a basic thing like the CEMAC passport is still not effective, as some member states are not living up to the agreements they signed.

With these, the economic benefits, especially those that come with a common and free market are still farfetched in the CEMAC region.





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# Sudan, South Sudan Bury Differences, Resuscitate Diplomatic Relations

By Deng Machol

Juba - South Sudan and Sudan have resuscitated diplomatic relations and agreed to reopen borders to boost fragile political, trade and free movement of its citizens after almost 10 years.

Both Juba and Khartoum said the latest deal will not only improve trade, but will also allow unhindered movement of citizens of the two countries across the border and it will reduce South Sudan over-dependency on the East African region for goods and services.

The propose of reopening the border is to allow the people to have harmoniously do trade between the two countries to improve their welfare.

The reopening of four border crossing points is slated to take place on October 1 at Jebeleen includes Jebeleen-Renk, Meiram, Buram-Tumsah and Kharsana-Panakuacis respectively.

The common border between the two foe countries has suffered shutdown, it was first closed in 2011 following post-secession, then again in 2012 disputes that include demarcation of the contested border areas and oil transit fees.

It was also entirely closed down in 2014 in the aftermath of a conflict that broke out in late 2013 in South Sudan, a crisis that pitted president Kiir and ex – rebel leader Dr. Machar's loyal against each other.

The six years threw South Sudan into a state of anarchy and has left 400,000 people dead and uprooted four million people from their homes, suffocated social services and left towns and villages plundered and destroyed.

The two foe neighbors are also still to resolve their political dispute over the contested oil-rich Abyei region, still under jurisdiction of Sudan.

After the independence of South Sudan, the two countries agreed on post-referendum relations and signed the 2012 Cooperation Agreement that



President Kiir helped in negotiating a peace agreement between warring factions in Sudan.  
Photo credit Reuters.

tackling the status of nationals of both countries in each state, border, trade and movement of goods and people across their common border, citizenship, property ownership and work includes a wide range of issues from border demarcation, oil transit fees and cooperation on central banking.

These represented many of the unresolved issues stemming from the secession of South Sudan in July 2011 from Sudan after a three decades of scorched-earth civil war.

But the cooperation agreement collapsed shortly after the foe countries went to war over the oil-rich areas of Higlig [panthou] and Abyei in 2012. The two countries have since paid little or no attention to the document.

But with the then two – day visit of Sudan's Prime Minister Dr. Abdalla Hamdok to South Sudan last month (August) turned a new page, to revive the agreement and the bid to restore the cross-border trade.

The Prime Minister was then accompanied by a number of ministers with aims to discuss the implementation of 2012 Corporation Agreement.

However, Dr. Hamdok, doubled up as the chairperson of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and his counterpart president Kiir has discussed key issues including the reopening of borders between the two countries and the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and the 2018 revitalized peace agreement.

In a joint communiqué issued, South Sudan and Sudan engaged in candid discussions on all aspects and fields of cooperation.

Khartoum, Juba agreed on reviewing and following up the implementation of all agreements of cooperation through a timed roadmap by the ministries of foreign affairs of the two countries.

The borders are expected to open in about two months.

On other issues, they agreed to continue discussing agreements on trade and economic free zone and transit arrangements.

And also, the resumption of cargo and passenger movement by land transport, river transport and railways.

The two countries decided to remove all barriers hindering bank

transactions and opening of branches of banks from each of the two countries in the other.

On the oil and gas, the two sides agreed on establishing a joint strategy in the fields of oil and gas.

This is to follow up mechanisms and strengthening coordination and cooperation to optimize utilization of resources and productivity in the sectors.

The countries also agreed to resume the technical cooperation between the two foreign ministries and train South Sudanese diplomats at the Centre for Diplomatic Studies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sudan.

The discussion was centered on how best the two countries can promote the bilateral issues and cooperation agreements and implement those which are not implemented.

"Our aim is to establish good and true relations as brothers and sisters of one nation in two countries," said Dr. Hamdok in Juba. We are capable of achieving these issues; trade, security, border, education, health and the four freedoms because we have already been cooperating and working together as South Sudanese and Sudanese," he added.



Sudan has also assured the reentry of Sudanese commercial banks into the South Sudanese market.

Sudanese commercial banks were forced to leave South Sudan after independence because they practiced Islamic banking system whereas South Sudan was using a conventional system.

Governor of the Central Bank of South, Al Fateh Hussein Al Abiddeen Mohammed, "The agreement aimed at the exchange of experience between the two banks and to share the experience of Sudan on economic stability, including the exchange rate. All the other long processes that we are about to follow up with the international organizations."

Sudan is looking at opportunities of expanding trade for its' economic survival and this is the same with South Sudan, which the oil has been a major source of revenue for the two countries is no longer viable. They have no option but to reopen the borders to be able to raise revenue.

### Hails the deal

Both the Sudanese and South Sudanese nationals have hailed the deal reached between the two sisterly countries, it will boost trade and strengthen bilateral relations between the former civil war foes.

"South Sudan and Sudan are like umbilical twins, and you could see into it that any crisis that happens in one country will automatically affect the other country," said Dr. Abraham Kuol Nyuon, political analyst told the Juba Echo.

"The reopening of the border crossing points between Sudan and South Sudan is going to increase relations and widen the market for good and trade volume between the two countries," Joseph Atem told Pan African Visions, businessman in Juba.

The observers, however cautioned the leadership of the two countries to first undertake sensitization of the masses along their common border to avoid future conflicts over land.

### Renewed ties

Sudan and South Sudan have been



*The oil rich Abyei region remains a torny issue.*

on a path of bridging the differences and fixing the diplomatic ties since the transitional government steered by Sudan's Prime Minister Dr Hamdok came into existence a years ago.

Meanwhile, former Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir helped mediate peace between President Kiir and his now First Vice President Riek Machar paving way for the signing of the 2018 revitalized peace deal to end more than six years of conflict since outbreak in December 2013.

On the other hand, President Kiir helped mediate peace deal between the Sudan transitional government and various rebel groups leading to the signing of the final peace deal in October 2020 in Juba, ending years of internal violence in Sudan.

However, Dr. Hamdok has never looked back and has been advocating for a good relationship with his counterpart President Salva Kiir-led administration since making a maiden official visit to Juba on September 13, 2019.

"I am very delighted to be here in my second home, Juba. We are looking for a very strategic, very distinguished relationship between our two nations, and the sky is the limit for this relationship," Hamdok told the press on his earliest Juba visit, 2019. "We hope to have a very prosperous relationship that will address issues of trade, the border issue, oil, free movement of our people between the two countries and

all these agendas."

These renewed diplomatic relations initiatives have worked in turn resuscitated economic ties and help in fixing the bilateral trade between the foes countries.

In January, South Sudan hosted a Sudanese expo where young Sudanese traders came to showcase the merchandise in Juba and networked with the locals to team up in setting up businesses.

Speaking during the launch of the exhibition, First Vice President Dr Riek Machar called for the removal of barriers that prevent trade among the Sudanese and the South Sudanese.

"We want the implementation of the four rights so that our people will be able to trade together, to settle and work anywhere in the two countries," said Machar.

### Let stop harboring rebels

Both the Khartoum and Juba were in supporting rebels against each country, but with the latest deal, the two countries would be very beneficial in improving bilateral relations and security.

Since 2012, Juba and Khartoum have been trading accusations that each was hosting rebel groups – as each provided military and logistical support for the rebels.

However, President Kiir said the two countries should discourage armed rebellions by not supporting and harboring their leaders.

"We must refrain from providing military or logistical support to such destructive groups," president Kiir told Dr. Hamdok during a high-level bilateral meeting in Juba. Adding that the two governments should ensure no one threatens peace in their respective countries.

Prime Minister Hamdok reiterated his government's readiness to address issues that are beneficial to both Sudan and South Sudan.

"We are serious to address all the issues that are for our benefit and also need to give example to the rest of the world," said Hamdok. South Sudan and Sudan need to work together and develop our countries

In October, last year, Juba and Khartoum signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Khartoum for joint military and defense cooperation. The deal includes training, peace promotion, support and disaster management as well as combating cross-border crimes, smuggling, human trafficking and combating the activities of anti-peace elements.

Kiir said that border security cooperation between the countries will help to prevent rebels from both countries who engage in subversive activities from benefiting from logistical support.

"I want us to have strong security-related cooperation on the border. We must not allow those who rebel against any of our two countries to cooperate in our territories," said Kiir.



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# Instability Remains Rampant In Eastern DR Congo Despite State Of Siege

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

Despite hopes that the state of siege government imposed would bring stability in the volatile Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, insecurity remains rife in North Kivu and Ituri provinces amid increasing deadly rebel attacks that have resulted in massacres of hundreds of civilians.

DR Congo president Felix Tshisekedi decreed the state of siege on April 30 this year that placed two provinces under military rule and promised major military operations in the restive provinces located in the troubled East of the mineral-rich country to root out foreign and local armed groups that have terrorized the region for about two decades. Experts say 122 armed groups operate in the volatile region posing constant instability.

Now, three months after the state of siege was announced many observers agree security has not improved as armed groups continue to carry out massacres without tangible military operations against them. Many expected the country's armed (FARDC) and its allies included UN peace forces would neutralize rebels but the stage of siege has been renewed five times without



*DR Congo President Felix Tshisekedi decreed the state of siege on April 30 this year that placed two provinces under military rule.*

major changes in unstable region. The notorious Ugandan rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) that officials say are linked to Islamists groups has carried out several attacks including one in a mosque and some suicidal attacks in a church in Beni town, in North Kivu province.

"Despite what the Congolese authorities announced, there have

been few military operations since the onset of the state of siege, and civilian security has deteriorated in North Kivu and Ituri provinces," said Pierre Boisselet, Coordinator of Kivu Security Tracker (KST), an organization that maps violence by state forces and armed groups in Eastern DRC in a blog post published in mid-June.

The KST noted that the data it collects showed the situation was still volatile after the state of siege came into force on 6 May. The security watchdog stated that the civilian security had gotten worse in North Kivu and in Ituri province. At the time the KST had recorded the death of at least 223 people in May compared to 198 in April.

However, the Congolese government had been announcing victories since the region was placed under military rule, observers say the claimed victories were not proportional to the worrying situation on ground. Some of the announcement authorities made include the regaining of control of roads, freeing localities, neutralizing the members of ADF armed group among others.

As of 5 August armed groups operating in the two provinces had killed 485 civilians according the data from the Kivu security barometer. Nice Muganda, a political scientist and University lecturer in North Kivu said nothing has changed since the new security measures were





announced. "Nothing has changed. Nothing new has been accomplished," Muganda was quoted as saying by Le Monde, a French news outlet.

ADF, the most active rebel group has continued to carry out deadly attacks killing civilians in Beni and other parts of Ituri province. The latest attack happened on 1 Sept. in Beni killing four people, taking

dozens in hostage and burning vehicles in ambush of a convoy. According to Reuters, FARDC freed 50 of hostages at the time, the operations were ongoing to recover the remaining captives from Ugandan Islamist group.

Some observers have said undisciplined elements of FARDC, lack of logistics, underfunding and

limited number of soldiers have hampered the state of siege in Eastern DR Congo leading to what some have called a "failure". Meanwhile, local media have reported the country's armed forces will soon deploy the canine battalion to fight ADF group in Ituri and North Kivu.

"I am coming from Kisangani to attend the graduation of the canine

battalion that will back our armed forces that are in operations in Ituri and North Kivu," lieutenant General Jean Claude Yav, the Deputy Chief Staff of FARDC was quoted as saying.

The DRC army have said 128 militias have been killed included 32 fighters from the Islamic rebels since the state of siege started.

## Cameroon: As Another School Year Begins, Will Smoking Guns Give Anglophone Children A Break?

By Andrew Nsoseka

It is yet another school year almost five years after the Anglophone crisis started, and pupils and students in Cameroon's Anglophone regions are still amongst the hardest hit in the war of independence. In the troubled two Anglophone regions where separatist fighters are battling government forces to create a new state called Ambazonia, most children have had their lives distorted, education halted, and for many who attempt, they risk ending up molested, dead or wounded, either from targeted attacks, or stray bullets from gunfights along the streets.

When the crisis which later morphed into a civil war started, schools and courts were the first sectors to be grounded by the leaders of the disgruntled Anglophones at the time. Teachers led by Tassang Wilfred, who is now serving a life sentence after he was arrested in Nigeria, repatriated to Cameroon and found guilty of terrorism related offences, quickly grounded schools. Since then though the leaders later said schools could resume, it has been one academic year after another that campaigns for effectively school resumption have been carried out with little or no success in most areas of the troubled regions, especially the suburbs.

For the most part of the school unfriendly environment from early 2017 to about 2019, the anti-school campaigns were spearheaded by separatists who crippled schools, as a means of making a point that all was not well in the Anglophone



Government Bilingual High School, Jakiri, in Cameroon's Northwest region, now turned to a field where animals are fed.

regions. The focus on schools soon took centre stage when the Cameroon government also tried to use the operation of schools in some areas in Anglophone regions to say that their functioning meant normalcy has returned and the separatist agenda subdued. This prompted anti-school activities from separatists who then took aim at students and teachers. As such, many teachers and students were targeted and mostly flocked or detained for days by the fighters. In other cases, their school items were seized and set ablaze. This forced those who could, to relocate their children to French speaking regions of the country, where they could go to school undisturbed.

Along the line, the separatists discovered that the anti-school

campaign had become very unpopular among Anglophones as many children of school-going age were idle at home, losing many years of the time there should have used advancing their education. As such, separatist leader after separatist leader started endorsing a school friendly approach, calling on fighters loyal to them not to disturb school going children. They however, still maintained that their greenlight was only for private and confessional schools, and that government-run schools were still banned. This has even made the situation very dicey for teachers who taught in government schools, as many have had to run to Francophone zones where they now teach in private English schools that are fast growing there.

### *Dicey Situation Of School Reopening Despite Greenlight From Warring Parties*

However, the situation of Schools in Anglophone Cameroon is still very volatile even as the separatist fighters and leaders have endorsed school resumption. The argument with most parents, have been what the fate of their kids will be in a situation where they are trapped because of a gunfight between government forces and separatist fighters. Even so, the campaigns by many for the warring sides to respect schools as protected or sanctuary areas seem to have fallen on deaf ears. In several localities, both government and separatist fighters are using schools as bases from where they operate. This thus makes such

areas legitimate targets in war, by virtue of the fact that it houses and serves as a base for one camp or the other. The running gun battles which are in many cases taken to living quarters and towns, is also another demoralising factor for parents who are been campaigned to let their children study.

Earlier on, on August 20, 2021, a skirmish between separatists and government soldiers in Kumbo, a town in Cameroon's Northwest region proved how deadly it could be for children in school, when the two parties decide to brawl just anywhere, including areas where teaching and learning are ongoing. During the gun brawl, bullets were also rained on a school compound, St Theresa School, STS in Kumbo. This led to the killing of a class three pupil, Sinclair Shalanyuy. Two other pupils were also wounded, and taken to Shisong Catholic Hospital in Kumbo. The others only survived because they respected the drills, as they all went belly flat on the floor when they heard sounds of gunshots. After the incident, government soldiers and the separatist fighters pointed accusing fingers at each other.

Days later, a similar incident repeated itself, this time around, in a church, in Bali, Northwest region on a Sunday, leaving a Presbyterian Church Christian dead, and its pastor and one other Christian wounded. Though affecting a church, it only showed the disregard of the two parties for protected spaces. The Church shooting was blamed on the



*School buses in GBHS Jakiri abandoned on its overgrown campus, as a result of the Anglophone crisis.*

military by the church authorities, but as expected, military high command in Yaounde denied it and rather blamed it on separatists, who on their part, like the church, blamed state forces for the recklessness.

While other schools will fail to resume because of insecurity, others will not resume because of the lack of structures. Rights organisations have documented that over 400 villages have been razed down, including school structures in Anglophone Cameroon, by government soldiers who are clamping down on separatists. Blanket actions and punishments account for the mass action that often live communities in fire.

Talking about the possibilities

and constraints regarding school reopening in Anglophone Cameroon, Akem Kelvin Nkwain, Human Rights Officer at the Centre For Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, CHRDA, stated that "It is regrettable that the domain of education has been used as a weapon of war in the Anglophone Crisis, preventing children from going to school for over five years and counting. Another school year is about to start and yet no concrete measures are being taken by parties to the conflict to ensure that schools can effectively resume in all subdivisions in the troubled two regions. In the last academic year some factions of the separatist movements called for school resumption and schools in safer towns opened their doors and the school year went smoothly well although an unfortunate incident happened in Kumba with the massacre of at least 8 school children in Mother Francisca International College by unidentified gunmen.

"As an organisation, it is our hope that schools resume effectively in all the subdivisions of the Anglophone communities, and in the days ahead, the Centre

for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) as we already started in 2019 will be launching a special Back to School campaign." He said.

Akem further stated that any group that opposes education in any form is violating children's right to education, recognised in a number of international conventions such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognising the right to free and compulsory primary education for all and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' Article 26, amongst others.

Drawing from conflicts in other countries, the Human Rights defender said "Even in other countries hit by serious armed conflicts like Syria, there has never been a day children were prevented from going to school. Why is our situation different in Cameroon when we have just an armed conflict of low intensity? The armed separatist fighters must be educated to stop any forms of attacks and reprisals on students for attending school and defying school boycott calls. The intention is not for security of the children, but they use them as leverage in their fight against the state of Cameroon which is an abuse on children's right. The children are likely to face these attacks only if they are targeted by parties to the conflict as was the case



*SW Governor Okalia Bilai makes a round of schools this Monday, September 6.*



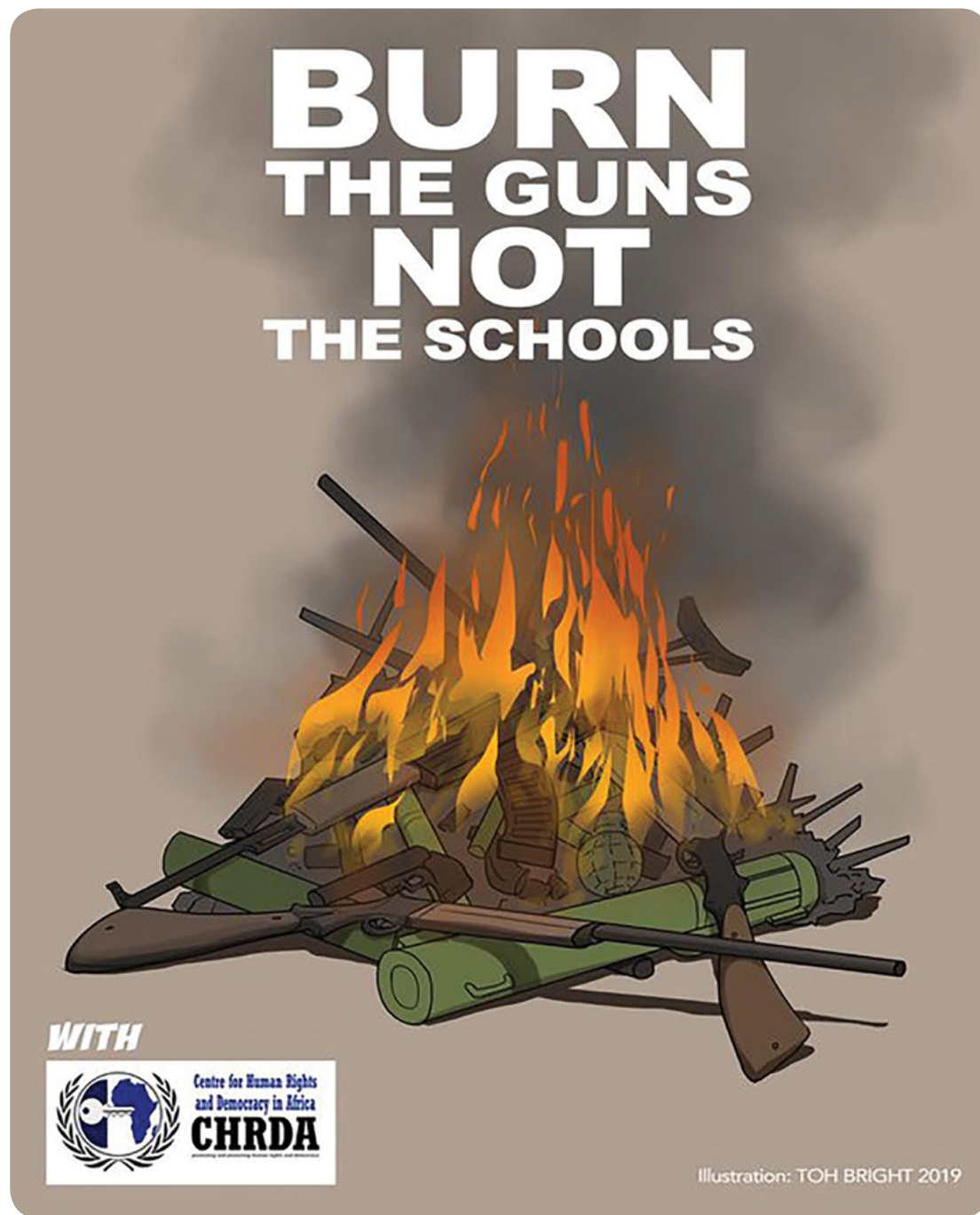
in Limbe last year where students were stripped naked in class and the structure burnt and they were forced to flee home, and again only when attacks are conducted close to school environment and students exposed to the dangers of stray bullets. But in all we still encourage parents to send their children to school especially those in safer areas."

On his part, one of the separatists leaders, Mark Bareta in s tweet, frowned at some of his colleague leaders of the various factions of the separatist groups, who are again issuing warnings against school reopening.

"I am surprised that some groups of Ambazonians within the ACT platform are sending a statement decreeing No School In Ambazonia. In 2021, some groups are still on this same policy. It is utter gibberish. No School in Ambazonia should NOT be a polic. These groups wait few days to school resumption and start sending policy statements, then put the blame on Cameroun. We should grow from this myopic view or ways of fighting for Independence. Take note I was one of the champions of this policy. But we are in different phase now" Bareta said in a series of tweets on the issue. It will again be seen, whether the two parties in conflict will prioritise the needs of leaners, by not only declaring that schools can operate, but also going on to ensure that schools are maintained as safe areas in times of fighting.

### Anglophone Education Subsystem: An Efficient Board In Times Of Distress

Though mired in an over five year armed conflict, the Anglophone education system and its officiating institutions still standout when it comes to management, efficiency and transparency. Examination Management Boards like the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board, CGCEB that manages end of course examinations still do it perfectly well, with little delays, or shady ways compared to other bodies that do same for French Speaking part of the Country. For instance, when it comes to



*CHRDA has called on separatist to allow for effective back to school this year.*

management of exams, the GCEB faces little problems like leaking of examination questions.

The GCEB has stood out when it comes to management of examination results. Prior to the social media age, the GCEB published its results in Newspapers where candidates and their parents could easily get their results. The results were also read over local and national radio stations. With the coming of mobile phones, the GCEB tried the option of giving results through contacts which candidates used to register

their exams. That was short-lived due to the increased use smart phones. Now the Board releases results through its website, where they are quickly downloaded and in a matter of minutes, circulated on social media and candidates get their results by simply typing their names on the PDF document.

This is so unlike that for the French education System, Office du Baccalauréat du Cameroun, OBC, that manages similar examinations for the Francophone part of Cameroon. Here, the OBC, rather sells the results

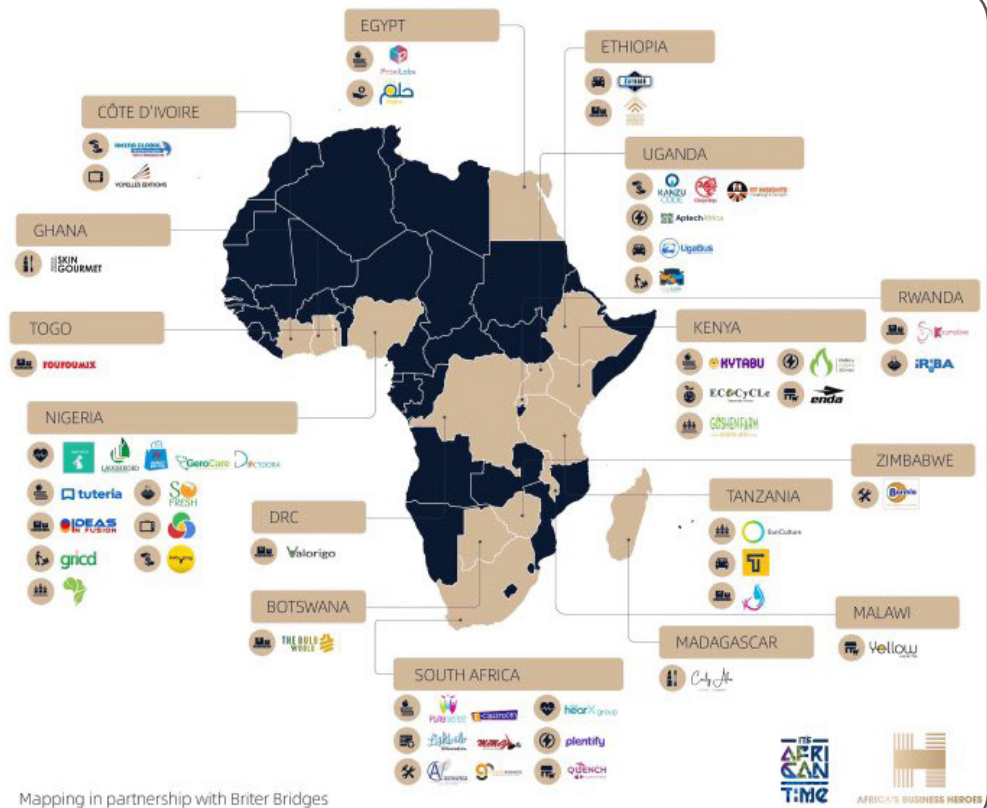
to Telecommunication Networks in the Country. The Candidates are rather sent SMS' asking them to type a code and pay a sum to the Telecommunications Network, before the company can send them their own results. Even after paying, candidates and their parents often have to wait for several hours, or even days, before the congested systems can provide the results. As such, even in distress, the Anglophone Subsystem still towers above that of the French side of the country.

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# Top 5 Corruption Scandals That Rocked Akufo-Addo's Government

By Maxwell Nkansah

The fight against corruption in Ghana has a rather long way to go and will always spark debate, the Akufo-Addo government, like previous ones, have been rocked by corruption scandals.

Having assumed office in 2017 with the promise of being an anti-corruption crusading party, the governing New Patriotic Party under President Akufo-Addo has also received their fair share of scandals.

While the debate for whether corrupt officials who amass huge wealth illegally are thoroughly punished when found culpable by the state is out there in the public, the corruption epidemic does not seem like one that would end any time soon.

My research has compiled this piece of some top-five corruption scandals that have hit the Akufo-Addo government since its coming into office.

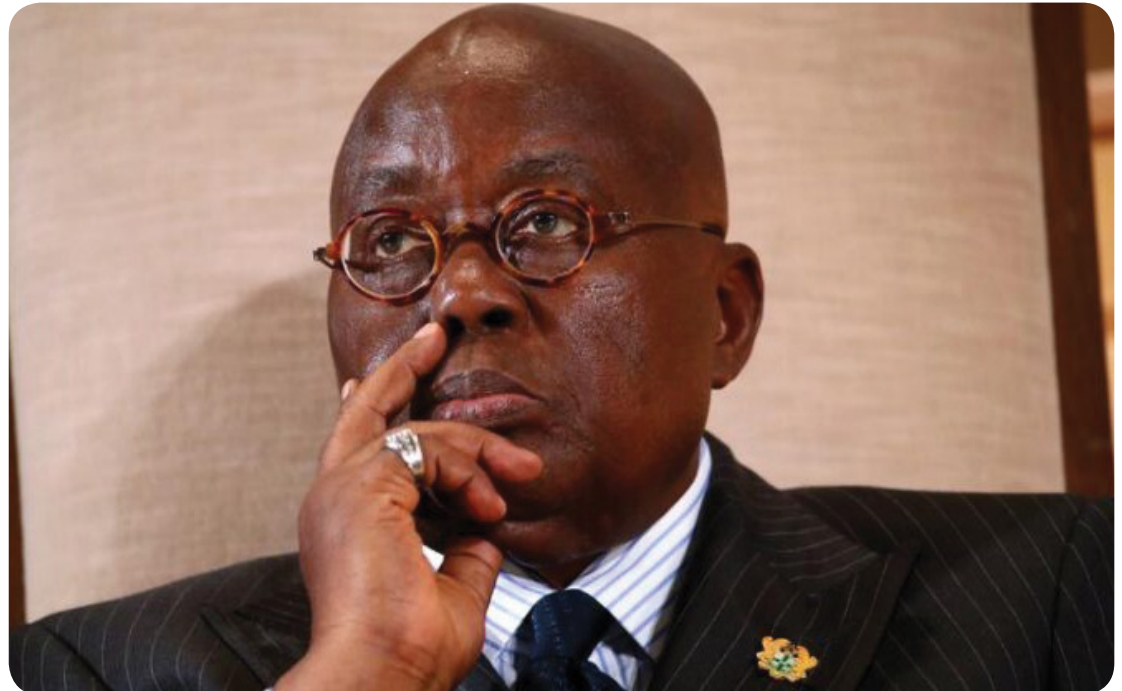
It is important to note that though some names have been cited in the corruption scandals, some have been cleared of wrongdoing, while others are still at various stages of investigation by Committees with others have resigned from their position.

## Sputnik V deal

The most recent of the scandals that has rocked the Akufo-Addo administration is the botched Sputnik V vaccine deal.

The matter came to light after a Norwegian news outlet, Verdens Gang, reported that Ghana, through the Health Ministry, had requested to purchase the doses of the Sputnik V vaccine through two businessmen who were selling it at high price of US\$19 per dose instead of the US\$10 per dose on the international market.

The outlet revealed that the Government of Ghana was using the services of middlemen to procure some 3.4 million doses of the Sputnik V vaccines produced in Russia which



*For all the hard work, the Akufo administration has been dogged by its fair share of corruption scandals. Photo Reuters, Denis Balibouse.*

prompted calls for the deal to be terminated.

Health Minister, Kwaku Agyeman-Manu is said to have paid more than US\$2.8 million to an intermediary businessman named, Sheikh Al Maktoum, for the procurement of vaccines only to be provided 20,000 doses out of an initial first consignment of 300,000 doses.

This further raised a lot of questions of the minister's actions which sparked widespread condemnation as he was subjected to the court of public opinion with many calls for him to resign.

Parliament, however, instituted an ad-hoc committee where the minister formally admitted he did not seek cabinet and parliamentary approval prior to engaging the middlemen for the procurement of Sputnik V vaccines.

The Dubai-based businessman, Sheikh Maktoum on his part agreed to refund an amount of US\$2,470,000 of the US\$2.8 million paid to him after the health minister in a letter, made a request for a refund of the

money

With growing calls for the minister to resign came a two week leave request which was granted by the Chief of Staff, for the minister to attend to some 'personal issues'.

The ad-hoc committee of Parliament probing the matter is however yet to conclude on its findings as at the time of filing this report.

## PPA boss

Another scandal that has rocked the ruling government is that of the former Chief Executive Officer of the Public Procurement Authority.

Agyenim Boateng Adjei was first suspended by the president after it emerged, through an investigative piece put together by ace journalist, Manasseh Azure Awuni that he was involved in procurement misconducts and selling of government contracts using a private company.

In the documentary, Agyenim Boateng admitted that he was a 50% shareholder of the said company named Talents Discovery Limited but

indicated that he had duly declared his interests to the PPA board.

The piece also found that the private company had been awarded a number of key government contracts through restrictive tendering.

After widespread condemnation of Agyenim Boateng's acts, he was, following his suspension, referred to the Commission for Human Rights Administrative Justice and Office of the Special Prosecutor for two separate probes. One of which involved potential acts of corruption and the other on conflict of interest

After the two probes were conducted, a report by CHRAJ was submitted to the president who quickly terminated Agyenim Boateng's contract for engaging in the illegal acts.

CHRAJ, in its report, concluded that on the totality of the evidence, Agyenim Boateng had put himself in a position where his personal interests conflicted with the performance of his functions as CEO and board member of the PPA.

Portions of the report further stated



*The ad-hoc committee of Parliament probing the Sputnik vaccine scandal is yet to conclude on its findings.*

that the sacked PPA boss could not explain the source of what is termed as “Unexplained Wealth” as large volumes of financial transactions had passed through his bank accounts between March 2017 and August 2019.

CHRAJ further stated that Agyenim Boateng Adjei handled large volumes of cash exceedingly in excess of his known income as CEO of PPA.

GH¢800,000 allocated for development of a website

A shocking incident occurred at the Ministry of Special Development as a whopping amount of GH¢800,000 were alleged to have been quoted in its budget for the designing of a website in 2017.

Though the sector minister, Mavis Hawa Koomson, later admitted the said amount was an oversight and was rather supposed to be GH¢80,000, the Minority in Parliament mounted pressure for her to resign.

Ranking Member of the Finance Committee in Parliament, Cassiel Ato Forson, described Hawa Koomson as grossly incompetent as he said she

justified her explanation based on the reaction to public outcry of the revelation.

What committee considered that it is GH¢800,000, certainly not GH¢80,000. A formal communication on the findings of the alleged scandal is still yet to be provided as at the time of filing this report.

#### **Kelni GVG deal**

In June 2018, the Ministry of Communications had entered into an agreement with a Haitian company named Kelni GVG, to monitor the revenue and calls operation of telecommunications companies operating in Ghana for 10 years.

Policy think-tank, IMANI Ghana had said Kelni GVG had already been paid huge sums of dollars for no initial work done. IMANI argued that Afriwave and the National Communications Authority had the requisite capacity to conduct the revenue assurance and calls monitoring exercise hence there was no need to engage another company

to do same.

It also emerged that KelniGVG which was particularly known for the supply of building material and groceries had no specific office locations, a non-functioning website and reliable contacts for the project. The US\$178 million deal sparked debate and was subsequently subjected to a Parliamentary probe where the sector minister, Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, was summoned by Parliament to respond to questions over the deal.

Despite various petitions to get the Courts to intervene in the controversial deal of Kelni GVG deal, the contract was however approved with the deal currently in operation.

Kroll and Associates, Domelovo saga

In 2019, Former Senior Minister, Yaw Osafo-Mafo and four other officials at the Ministry of Finance were cited by then Auditor-General, Daniel Domelovo for their involvement in the Kroll and Associates saga.

The Auditor General in a report

concluded that the aforementioned breached the Public Procurement Act that culminated in a US\$1 million payment to the UK-based firm for no work done. Daniel Domelovo indicated that Senior Minister, Yaw Osafo-Mafo had on numerous occasions failed to provide an actual proof of work done by Kroll and Associates Limited.

This resulted in a legal but public battle between Daniel Domelovo and Yaw Osafo who was surcharged along with four others by the A-G who also recommended the disallowance of the payment of the US\$1million to Kroll and Associates of which the Ministry of Finance had paid.

The Auditor-General was later abruptly asked to proceed on leave by President Akufo-Addo to take his accumulated leave. Domelovo a few days to his return was asked to leave his post on reasons that he had attained the statutory retirement age and questions over his nationality.

\*Adapted from Ghanaweb \_\_\_\_\_





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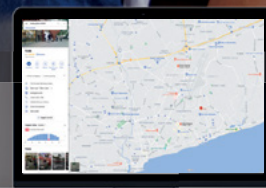
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# It's March 2022

## COVID-19 'hits' logistics and transport Africa Forum

By Peter Kayula



# The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport's Africa Forum, which was supposed to be held in Accra, Ghana to spell out clearly the role of the Logistics and Transport industry in the monumental African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), has been pushed to March next year.

The postponement comes in view of the COVID-19 pandemic which has necessitated travel restrictions world over. The West African country of Ghana was supposed to host the 2021 major continental event under the umbrella of the CILT Ghana from 12th August – 14th August 2021.

However, logistics experts and trade analysts have welcomed the postponement with dismay recommending their variants to the host institution - The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport - to quickly explore alternative usage of technology tools for meetings as Africa seriously faces a wave of a thicket of reduced market restrictions in the logistics services sector.

Further, the transformative potential of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement will, in an exceptional measure, depend on the free flow of goods across borders – which only the logistics sector can help unlock., compounded by

the continent's \$130-170 billion infrastructure gap which remains a stubborn engagement process to reducing logistics costs.

From a global perspective, the Africa region represents a number of disparate and relatively small markets, whose aggregation is complicated by physical and institutional barriers, such as distance, the poor quality of the infrastructure, and continued intra-regional policy and regulatory discrepancies, despite a number of trade facilitation initiatives.

Earlier this year, the International Vice-President (IVP) and Chairman of the Africa Forum, Dr Newton Demba, announced the mandate in the Bulletin of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport that Ghana will host the 2021 major continental event under the umbrella of the CILT Ghana from 12th August – 14th August.

The Forum typically brings together all Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport member countries in Africa and other members across the world, to network and discuss pertinent supply chain, logistics and transport issues affecting the African continent.

The AfCFTA project is the historic agreement that has created the world's largest free trade area since

the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is premised on the assumption that it will bring Africa to the world stage as one block, one continent and speaking with one voice towards achieving the agenda 2063 goals - the continent's blueprint and masterplan for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future.

However, many Africa trade and investment analysts are warning that although millions of poor people in Africa stand to benefit from a continental trade initiative that has been hailed to culminate into a huge market for Africa, countries would have to put in place measures to guarantee the protection of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and infant domestic industries when the agreement is implemented.

They mainstreamed huge reservations that that the Free Trade agreement would expose the Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and infant domestic industries to stiffer competition and as such, there is need to develop the capacity for the private sector to improve on quality and supply chain management.

It is not surprising that members of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport geared up for three days of insightful discussions and business negotiations to shape the

future of logistics and transport in Africa sure to benefit an already maturing economic region.

Among the papers to be presented at the forum include, Overview of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), The Critical Role of African Ports in the Realization of the AfCFTA, Borderlessness in The Advent of the AfCFTA: The Way Forward.

While topics for panel discussions will navigate on: Governance and Leadership: The Role of Transport and Logistics in the Sustainable Implementation of The AfCFTA.

The other one is, Technology and Telecommunication: The Role of ICT in Enhancing Logistics and Transport Efficiency and Optimization.

Anchored under the theme, "Sustainable Implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement: The Role of Logistics, Transport and Industry," the Africa Forum could have seen the launch of the CILT International Business Forum a new platform to promote the ethos of Cross Border business exchange and develop international business opportunities between the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport members.

The Forum is also seen as a unique opportunity to promote





modern transportation and logistical networks processes and organizational innovations such as just in time approach to supply chain management in a more systematic and coordinated way.

The move represents significant milestone in the steady process of deepening Africa's economic integration. It also compliments similar efforts in other parts of Africa and underscores determination

among key players in the private sector to expand prospects for prosperity.

Reliable transportation is absolutely critical for growth and innovation in Africa's agriculture and

agribusiness. Sufficient roads, rail, seaports and airports are essential for regional trade, international exports and cross border investments.

## Rise in Ebola Cases Threatens to Derail Covid-19 Containment Measures in West and Central Africa

By Prince Kurupati

Already reeling under the effects of the devastating corona virus pandemic, countries in West and Central Africa now face the prospect of yet another pandemic. In recent times, there have been reports of new Ebola cases being recorded. Cote d'Ivoire has already declared an outbreak of Ebola while Guinea has detected a case of Marburg virus disease.

The fight against Covid-19 on a continental level in Africa has picked up significantly in recent times. This according to several reports has largely been necessitated by faster, efficient and effective vaccine purchases and shipments. A recent WHO report painted a positive picture on Africa's fight against Covid-19 stating "Vaccine shipments to Africa have picked up with the COVAX Facility delivering almost 10 million doses to Africa so far in August (2021), that is nine times what was delivered in the same period in July. The African Union has so far delivered 1.5 million doses to nine countries. Since June, the number of doses administered per 100 people in



sub-Saharan Africa has almost tripled from 1.2 per 100 people to 3.4 per 100 people."

The positives Africa has recorded in its fight against Covid-19 however are under threat owing to the emergence of other pandemic. Most notably is the Ebola outbreak in West

and Central Africa. On August 14, 2021, Cote d'Ivoire became the first country in the West African region to declare an outbreak of Ebola. The declaration came after a positive case was confirmed with three other suspected cases and 131 contacts listed. The confirmed case in Cote

d'Ivoire is of a Guinean woman who traveled to Abidjan. Though Guinea hasn't of yet declared an outbreak if Ebola, it earlier on, on 9 August, 2021 had detected a case of Marburg virus disease. The Marburg virus disease is in the same family as Ebola.

While the detection of the Ebola

and Marburg virus disease cases is certainly worrisome, what even more ominous is the fact that these first cases all have origins in a locality in southern Guinea close to the border with Liberia and Sierra Leone. There is thus the fear that the cases may not just have originated in Guinea and spread to Cote d'Ivoire but may also have spread to the neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone or even further.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti who is WHO's Regional Director for Africa expressed concern over the detection of the Ebola and Marburg virus disease cases saying they threaten to derail the positives that Africa was recording in its fight against Covid-19. In a statement, Dr Moeti said, "These new outbreaks are a clear reminder

that other health emergencies are not taking a back seat just because we are busy battling a global pandemic." Dr Moeti went further to state that vigilance is of extreme importance at this point in time so that all successes recorded so far in the fight against Covid-19 cannot be lost. "We must remain alert and quick to respond so that other dangerous diseases are denied the chance to spread and cause further devastation," Dr Moeti said.

Though there is no evidence at the present moment to suggest that the rise in Ebola cases in West and Central Africa are directly affecting the fight against Covid-19, in the weeks since the first case of Marburg virus disease was detected and subsequently the Ebola virus, there

has been a resurgence in the number of positive Covid-19 cases in West Africa. According to a recent WHO report, "nine of the 23 countries experiencing resurgence are in West Africa. Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Nigeria are experiencing a surge in cases and all three countries are tackling other outbreaks."

Even more worrisome the WHO report states that the number of Covid-19 fatalities in West Africa has increased. "COVID-19 fatalities in West Africa over the past four weeks increased by 193% from 348 in the previous four weeks to 1018 in the week ending on 15 August. Although the case fatality ratio, or the proportion of people diagnosed with the disease who have died stands at 1.4% - below the continental average

of 2.5% - it is higher than the previous two waves in the sub-region, a sign that health systems are feeling the strain of a heavy caseload," WHO report.

To further compound the danger, Dr Moeti said that World Health Organization assessments of the functionality of health systems in West Africa are even more fragile than those in other sub-regions. "We are particularly concerned about West Africa and we can expect the pressure of COVID-19 to hit health services harder and faster... In addition to the strain of COVID-19, come Ebola and other outbreaks. Fighting multiple outbreaks is a complex challenge."

## Cameroon: Religious Authorities Caught In The Crossfire Of Worsening Anglophone Crisis.

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

«Whatever the church does, whatever the church says, either the government accuses the church of supporting the boys or the boys accuse the church of supporting the government,» Bishop Michael Bibi once said.

This statement was made by one of the religious authorities in Cameroon and his statement cannot be far from the truth. Religious authorities in recent times have been targeted as both warring parties accused the church of supporting the other.

«The Church is sandwiched between the government and the Boys,» Bishop Michael Bibi, formerly of the archdioceses of Bamenda and now the Bishop of Buea said in the past as reported by RFI.

It should be noted that since the crisis degenerated in early 2017, Christians of various denominations including religious leaders have been targeted across the North West and South West Regions. The Catholic Church like the Presbyterian Church has also been affected as its leaders have been threatened, detained and

even killed.

The recent attack this August 22 at the Presbyterian Church Ntanfoang, in Bali subdivision (seat of the Bali Presbytery) has been greatly condemned in an attack that saw the pastor wounded while one of the faithful was killed.

Rev Voma Simon Montoh was wounded while Grace Titalabit was killed. Reports coming from the North West indicate that it was the military that fired indiscriminately while others have accused the separatist fighters in the Region.

Rt Rev Fonki Samuel, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in a communiqué on the killing of one of his faithful said: «We, therefore, condemn in strongest terms this unnecessary and inhumane treatment meted on God's children by those who are supposed to protect



Rev Voma Simon, pastor of PC Ntanfoang in Bali being carried after a stray bullet hit him.



them. We call on both parties to cease fire unconditionally especially on Sundays and that a proper investigation is conducted by the government and other international bodies and those responsible be brought to book.» Rt Rev Fonki Samuel who is the President of the Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon said.

«We pray that God will confront all families who have lost loved ones and property in this protracting conflict, especially to that of our beloved sister in Christ, Grace Titalabit who was murdered in cold blood. We also pray for an immediate end to the embargo on automobiles that have been placed on the innocent civilians in Bali, who have been reduced to trekking for long distances whether for medical reasons or to buy or to feed their families.»

According to Rt Rev Fonki Samuel, who is also the President of the Cameroon Inter-Religious Dialogue, what is even disturbing is the fact that both the government security forces and the separatist fighters are unyielding to the numerous calls for peace and have both taken up arms against their people.

«Those who suffer the most are the innocent civilians whose freedom has been stifled by the numerous lockdowns and ghost towns. The innocent civilians are targeted by both parties; they are usually arrested and detained unlawfully, injured, murdered, kidnapped for ransom, molested and raped, and children are denied the basic right to education,» Rt Rev Fonki Samuel added.

Defence Ministry said attribution is «nothing but a hoax»

The Ministry of Defence has described the attribution of the indiscriminate shooting in Ntanfoang, by Cameroon's defence and security forces as «nothing but a



Rt Rev Fonki Samuel, moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

hoax, an absolute hoax».

Ntonfack Guemo Cyrille Serge, who is the Head of the Communication Division at the Ministry of Defence said the «sad event in Bali was the result of failed cohesion and coordination among the elements of the same criminal terrorist faction which has now been identified and which is known as the Buffalo's Fighters of Bali.»

The Head of Communication at the Ministry of Defence went further to state that during the shooting which began with the separatist fighters in the area, a worshipper was unfortunately murdered, the celebrant seriously injured, while another sustained a minor injury on the foot.

«The first ballistic observations clearly show that all the victims

were hit by shot and buckshot, local weapons produced illegally by the terrorist,» Ntonfack Guemo Cyrille said.

«Likewise the search undertaken enabled the Defence and Security forces to neutralize on the spot several improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including one that the assailants had used to break through the main entrance to the workshop located at the heart of the junction and facing the church, inside which had been implanted a sophisticated device for the manufacture of IED and the calibration of ammunition and local guns.»

The news of the killing in Bali has been condemned by opposition politicians and even those of civil society. «News of worshippers in a Church in the North West Region of

Cameroon, being shot is just beyond my grasp,» Akere Muna, former presidential candidate tweeted.

«This is who we have become! Sacrilegious behaviour is now the new frontier! My heart bleeds for the victims, their families and the people of Bali.»

«Taking away one's life is a crime against humanity, worse still; doing so in a place of worship, a temple of individual refuge and a sacred gathering place is a despicable act. We strongly condemn such extractions regardless of whoever the perpetrators are because no citizen should ever be subjected to such inhumane crimes,» Hon Joshua Osih, 1st vice president of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party said about the attack of the church in Bali.

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# The Albino Puzzle Continues In Malawi

## ...Activists slam govt over ineffective commissions of inquiry

By Joseph Dumbula



APAM President Ian Simbota says the association has demanded an investigation into the killing of Muhama and a probe into how the cases continue to surge.

One morning, this month in Kachere Township, in Malawi's commercial city of Blantyre, by passers are alerted of a body whose parts have been chopped off. They notice it is of a person with albinism, who was later identified by police as 21-year-old Ian Muhama. It marks the resurfacing of attacks of persons with albinism in the country, a feat that is continuously not being done away with.

Despite being gruesome in nature, the incident reminds the Southern African nation that earlier this year two other people with albinism were attacked; a 12-year-old in Machinga district, who survived abduction and a 26-year-old man, Saidi Futon Dayton, who went missing on January 27.

So far, over 170 people with albinism have been killed or abducted in the country over the past seven years, which has rung fears and continued fears not just among the community but all stakeholders.

In some cases, grave robbers have exhumed corpses to retrieve albinos' bodies.

After this latest case, the United Nations called on Government to fully implement the National Action Plan on Persons with Albinism.

The body said urgent action is required to ensure that persons with albinism are able to fully access their human rights and that this criminal practice is fully eliminated in Malawi.

This however comes at a time when the Association of People with Albinism in Malawi (Apam) has been challenging government to end the attacks.

Its president Ian Simbota said the association has demanded an investigation into the killing of Muhama and a probe into how the cases continue to surge.

Simbota, feels police are not doing as much work as he is quoted by a local newspaper "It looks like police wanted to hide some information

because they were not willing to share information,"

Although earlier this year, the High Court in Zomba, sentenced three people to life imprisonment with hard labour for killing a man with albinism, Fletcher Masina, in 2016 in Ntcheu District, APAM feels not more has been done.

Since 2014, there have been cases of attacks, abduction and killings of albinos in Malawi in the wake of rise of superstitions that albino body parts are used to make people successful and rich as assisted by witch doctors.

Malawi Police Spokesperson, James Kadadzera has been heavily quoted as saying police remain vigilant to end the case.

However, questions have risen on the effectiveness of commissions of inquiry that government has been instituting before.

For instance, earlier this year, President Lazarus Chakwera thrashed an inquiry into abductions

and killings of persons with albinism instituted by former president, Peter Mutharika saying it failed to establish perpetrators and market of the human tissues.

"The investigations were not conclusive enough to find where the market for bones of person with albinism is. The report was not conclusive enough in finding out who are the people at the centre of the malpractice. The President will institute another committee that will deal decisively on this matter," local station Zodiak quoted the State House as having said.

Now, as stakeholders touch base on how to end the entire fiasco, it remains very gloomy on when such incidents will end and perhaps, for the lives lost, it would appear that the writing on the wall doesn't look visible enough for Malawi to turn the tables.

# In Nigeria Today, There's No Easy Walk To Freedom

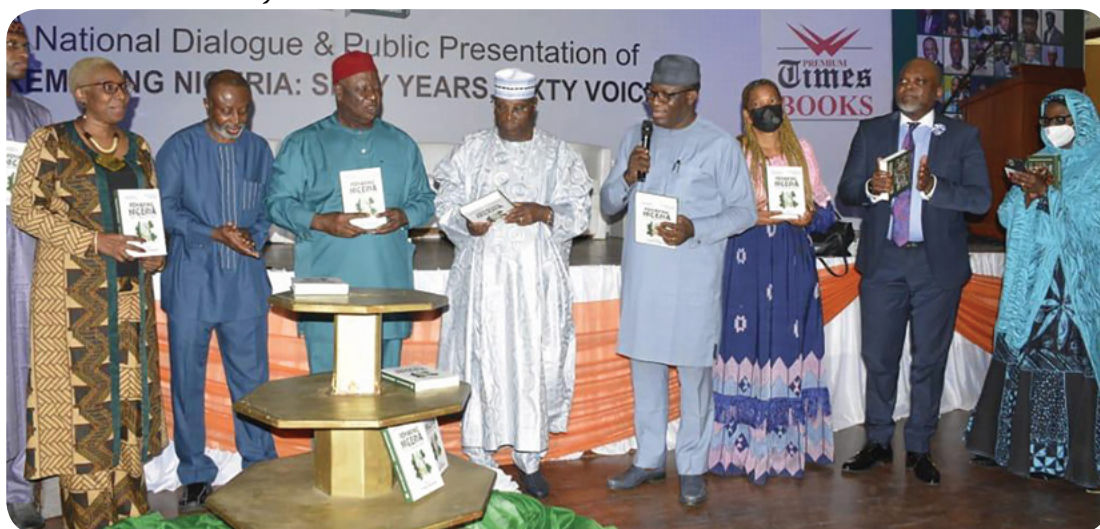
By Richard Mammah

When participants at the Colloquium on Remaking Nigeria gathered at the Yar Adua Centre in Abuja recently, many discerning polity watchers could tell that the event was definitely going to be more than a mere book presentation; and that it was indeed going to be a platform to the interrogation and dissection of what some commentators continue to refer to as 'the crisis of Nigeria.' And that surely was what it came to at the end of the day.

In its bare frame, the session was woven around the public presentation of the book, *Remaking Nigeria: Sixty Years, Sixty Voices*. Edited by the journalist and activist, Dr. Chido Onumah, it explores a wide range of concerns and reflections on the many failings and further possibilities on the path of Africa's most populous nation and largest economy by GDP.

A compendium that captures the expressions of writers that range from the likes of Fisayo Soyombo to Hafsat Abiola, Moses Ochon, Ohimai Amaize, Chika Unigwe and on to Oluseun Onigbinde and Majeed Dahiru, the book is a rich assemblage of cross-cutting views and viewpoints that speak to the heart of the Nigerian condition while also proffering solutions for their resolution.

On the podium at the presentation event to discuss the issues raised in the book were former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim and



*The book launch was graced with the presence of high profile personalities.*

Ekiti State Governor and Chair of the Nigerian Governors Forum, Dr Kayode Fayemi.

Equally on the panel were ex-lawmaker and former Nigerian ambassador to Ethiopia, Nkoyo Eyo-Ita and School of Policy and Governance Chair, Aleroy Ayida Ootobo.

There were also panelists from the midst of the contributors to the book, including Tope Fasua, Dike Chukwumerije and Chris Ngwodo.

As the occasion proceeded, Atiku recalled his having being invited five years earlier by the same editor of the book to present an earlier publication that had touched on related challenges of nation building, *We are All Biafrans*. He lamented that between then and the present time of this new engagement, things had

surely gone from bad to worse, to the extent now that the nation was almost now being defined by a worsening crisis of insecurity.

On his part, Fayemi, while agreeing with the postulations of many of the contributors in the text that indeed there was a crying need to tinker with the current structure of relations in the federation, also went on to caution that this be done in such a way and manner that would not result in throwing the baby away with the bath water.

Commending the initiative of putting together the book and organising the colloquium, Anyim praised 'Team Chido' for undertaking what he described as a most critical citizen-led attempt at discussing the challenges of the country and seeking out solutions for them. He called for more of such engagements going forward.

Nkoyo Eyo-Ita raised questions about the continuing inability to fully integrate women and women's issues in the overall nexus of national development in the country, pointing out that this continues to be a drawback point.

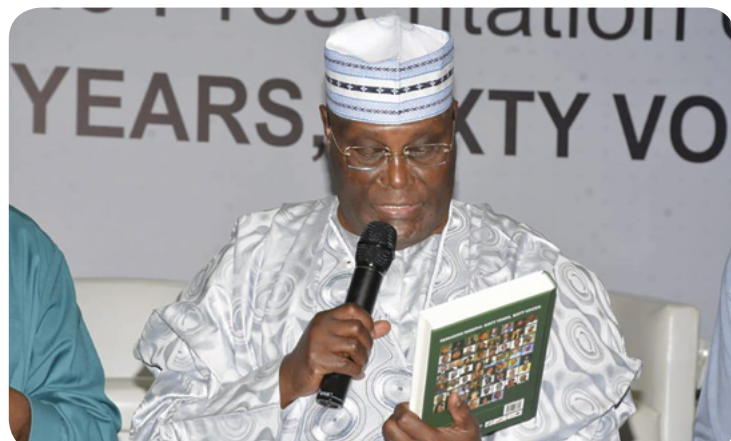
And on her part, Ayida-Otobo called for a wholesale paradigm shift that would lead in the emergence of a new generation of better informed, more conscientious and patriotic set of political players that would be more in tune with the core of the

developmental aspirations of the mass of the Nigerian people and placed in a better frame to address them.

Playing the devil's advocate, the reviewer, Mahmud Jega, chose to contest a number of the premises raised by several of the contributors, arguing that perhaps their relative youthfulness was indeed a blinker on their sights. According to him, in reading some of the lines from the text, they tended to sound as if they were referring to distant, chaotic spaces like Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia. He could indeed have a point in calling for a greater sense of critical moderation but the evidence on the ground in the country at the moment surely belies the fact that 'there is indeed fire on this mountain.'

And for a country caught in such a gargantuan web of challenges of all sorts at the moment, it is indeed imperative that its writers and thinkers rigorously dissect the crises and help chart a pathway to rejuvenation. Otherwise, they themselves would then be accused of pandering to Afghanistanism.

In Nigeria today, there is evidently no easy walk to freedom. But then the freedom march has to go on in the hope that somehow, somewhat, both a will and a way would be found to set the bumbling African giant on its feet once again.



*Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar admiring the work of Chido Onumah.*





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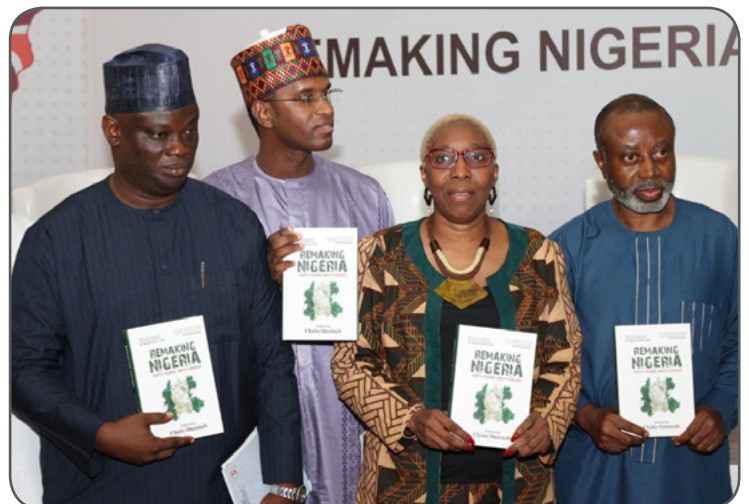
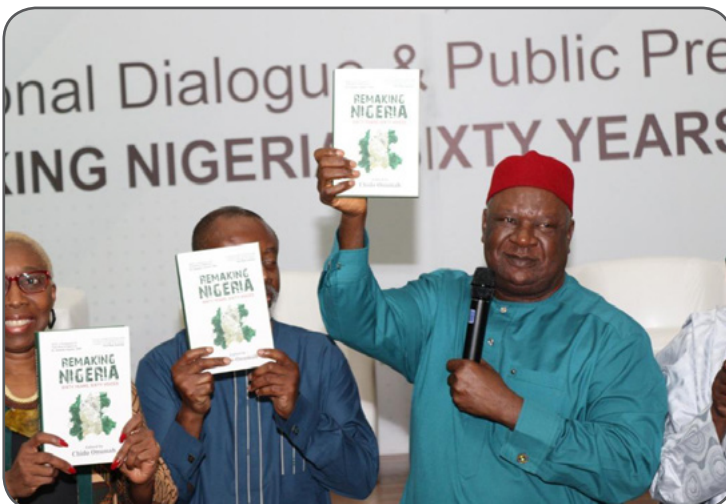
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## When The Remaking Nigeria Train Made Landfall At Abuja

The clamour for restructuring of the Nigerian federation got some added fillip recently when the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy, AFRICMIL and partners hosted a National Dialogue and Public Presentation of the book, *Remaking Nigeria: Sixty Years, Sixty Voices*.

The occasion was graced by a throng of dignitaries, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim and Chairman, Nigerian Governors Forum and Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi. PAV shares pictures from the event









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# What Did Abiy Ahmed Want From Kagame?

By Maniraguha Ferdinand



President Kagame welcoming Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Kigali on 29th August 2021 Photo from Urugwiro Village.

On 29th August, Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed made an abrupt Two-day visit to Kigali, to discuss with Rwandan President Paul Kagame on a number of issues.

The visit followed the one-day visit that Abiy had made to Uganda, where he met President Yoweri Museveni whom they discussed few hours before heading to Kigali.

The outcome of Abiy and Kagame's discussions were not communicated publicly but analysts assume that war in Tigray was on agenda.

It has been ten months since a war erupted in northern province of Tigray in Ethiopia, where Tigrayans rebels have been fighting Federal government army, to have their own autonomy.

Hundreds have died while thousands of people were forced to flee their homes. Abiy's army has been accused of human rights violations which could be termed war crimes.

Apparently, the war is not going to end soon. Tigrayan People's

Liberation Front (TPLF) vowed to continue fighting.

Kigali based analyst, Dr Ismael Buchanan who also teaches political science at the University of Rwanda, said that Tigrayan problem could not have missed during the discussions between Abiy and Kagame.

"Maybe Tigray was not the only problem that made Abiy fly to Kigali, but It has not missed on the agenda. Ethiopia has a real threat, and it could not be surprising if he came to ask help. Both countries have signed a number of agreements, so they can build on that."

Ethiopia and Rwanda have signed some agreements in legal, media, tourism, sports, security among others.

Rwanda has been using security agreements that she signed with its friendly countries, to send troops in those countries where security issues are ripe.

In July this year Rwandan troops were deployed in Mozambique to combat insurgent groups that has

ties with terrorist groups in northern Province of Cabo Delgado.

Last year, Rwandan troops also were deployed in Central Africa Republic to help Mozambican army to regain regions that had been taken by rebels.

For Buchanan, "It doesn't mean Rwanda is going to send its troops in Ethiopia immediately, but It could happen."

Teddy Kaberuka, Kigali based economy analyst, said that Rwanda and Ethiopia have economic agreements that have been lagging behind these past years. Abiy's visit could revive them.

He pointed at massive hydroelectric dam which is being built on the River Nile between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. It has been causing disputes among those countries.

This \$4.7 worth dam is estimated to generate more than 6,000 megawatts. It is Ethiopia's bid to become Africa's biggest power exporter in the region.

Rwanda had planned to import

energy from Ethiopia, but the deal slept since 2017 when the standoff with neighboring Uganda was starting. Ethiopian electricity to Rwanda would pass via Uganda.

Kaberuka said that as long as the dam is being constructed, the deal between both countries could be resumed.

"It would be beneficial for Ethiopia. Its reserve these days are diminishing, so exporting energy would be important", he said.

Both countries also have signed agreements in areas such as aerial transport. Ethiopian carrier, Ethiopian Airlines have a weekly flight to Kigali, but Rwandan RwandAir has not started its flights in Ethiopia.

Abiy's visit could open such opportunity for RwandAir, Kaberuka added.

Some also think that Abiy want to play a mediator between Rwanda and Uganda, to end misunderstanding that has lasted for four years.

# An Insight into Russia's Economic Presence in Africa

By Kester Kenn Klomegah



The Association of Economic Cooperation with African States (AECAS), established under the aegis of the Secretariat of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum (RAPF), has held a special meeting of the working group on financing projects with participation of the leading Russian companies and banks.

The key topic was to find an effective system of financing projects and devise ways to support investment in Africa. Lack of systematic state support and low-key interest from Russian financial institutions, among other factors, have been identified as the part of Russia's weak economic presence in Africa.

Financing projects in Africa is one of the important keys and, at the same time, the most difficult issue for major Russian companies attempting to expand to Africa, and the financial instruments at their disposal are insufficient, according to Anna Belyaeva, Executive Director of the Association of Economic Cooperation with African States.

«We explicitly understand that the current funding mechanisms are

not enough. We have analyzed the experience of European and Western colleagues from developed countries, our direct competitors in Africa: all of them already have mechanisms and funds focused on Africa,» she said.

In order to raise the post-Soviet economic influence, Russians have been making efforts directed at identifying a structured finance mechanism for mega infrastructure projects and in such areas as nuclear power and energy, natural resources exploration and to significantly increase trade with Africa.

For instance, the United States, European Union members, Asia countries such as China, India and Japan, have provided funds to support companies ready to carry out projects in various sectors in African countries. Some have publicly committed funds, including concessionary loans, for Africa.

During the last Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Chinese President Xi Jinping said «China will expand cooperation in investment and financing to support sustainable development in Africa. China

provided US\$60 billion of credit line to African countries to assist them in developing infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing and small and medium-sized enterprises.»

It fully understands Africa's needs and its willingness to open the door to cooperation in the field of scientific and technological innovation on an encouraging basis. The method for financing the building of infrastructure is relatively simple. In general, governments obtain preferential loans from the Export-Import Bank of China or the China Development Bank, with the hiring of Chinese building contractors.

The Chinese policy banking system allows leading Chinese state-owned enterprises to operate effectively in Africa, with the majority of these active in infrastructure and construction in Africa. China has always been committed to achieving win-win cooperation and joint development with Africa. Russia could consider the Chinese model of financing various infrastructure and construction projects in Africa.

Official proposals for all kinds of support for trade and investment

have been on the spotlight down the years. In May 2014, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov wrote in one of his articles published on the ministry website: «we attach special significance to deepening our trade and investment cooperation with the African States. Russia will provide African countries with extensive preferences in trade.»

Lavrov wrote: «At the same time, it is evident that the significant potential of our economic cooperation is far from being exhausted and much remains to be done so that Russian and African partners know more about each other's capacities and needs. The creation of a mechanism for the provision of public support to business interaction between Russian companies and the African continent is highly on the agenda.»

After the first Russia-Africa Summit in the Black Sea city, Russia Sochi in October 2019, Russia and Africa have resolved to move from mere intentions to concrete actions in raising the current bilateral trade and investment to appreciably higher levels in the coming years.

«There is a lot of interesting and



demanding work ahead, and perhaps, there is a need to pay attention to the experience of China, which provides its enterprises with state guarantees and subsidies, thus ensuring the ability of companies to work on a systematic and long-term basis,» Foreign Minister Lavrov said.

According to Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Ministry would continue to provide all-round support for initiatives aimed at strengthening relations between Russia and Africa. «Our African friends have spoken up for closer interaction with Russia and would welcome our companies on their markets. But much depends on the reciprocity of Russian businesses and their readiness to show initiative and ingenuity, as well as to offer quality goods and services,» he stressed.

Senator Igor Morozov, a member of the Federation Council Committee on Economic Policy, and Chairman of the Coordinating Committee on Economic Cooperation with Africa, noted during one of the meetings that in conditions of pressure from sanctions, it has become necessary to find new markets, new partners and allies for Russia. «This predetermines the return of Russia back to Africa, makes this direction a high priority both from the point of geopolitical influence and in the sphere of trade and economic context.»

«It is important for us to expand and improve competitive government support instruments for business. It is obvious that over the thirty years when Russia left Africa, a number of countries such as China, India, the United States and the European Union have significantly increased their investment opportunities there in the region,» Morozov stressed.

With a renewed growing interest in the Africa, Russians are feverishly looking for establishing effective ways of entry into the huge continent. As result, Senator Igor Morozov unreservedly suggested creating a new structure within the Russian Export Center – an investment fund, explaining further that «such a fund could evaluate and accumulate concessions as a tangible asset for the



**Russian President Putin meeting with African leaders. His country is showing greater interest in the continent.**

Russian raw materials and innovation business.»

His Coordinating Committee has the responsibility for adopting a more pragmatic approach to business, for deepening and broadening economic collaborations and for the establishment of direct beneficial contacts between entrepreneurs and companies from Russia and African countries.

The Coordinating Committee for Economic Cooperation with African States was created in 2009 on the initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation and Vnesheconombank with support from the Federation Council and the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. It has had support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy and Trade, the Ministry of Natural Resources, as well as the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

President of the Russian Chamber of Chamber and Industry, Sergei Katyrin, added his voice for establishing a finance mechanism, saying «the primary task now is to accelerate Russia's economic return to African continent, from which we practically left in the 90s and now it is

very difficult to increase our economic presence there in Africa.»

According to Katyrin, Russia's economic presence in Africa today is significantly inferior in comparison to the positions of leading Western countries and BRICS partners. «It's time to overcome this yawning gap. Today, we face a difficult task to ensure the activities of Russian entrepreneurship on the African continent in the new conditions, taking into account all the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.»

Katyrin, in addition, said «we need a state financial mechanism to support the work of Russian business in Africa otherwise it will be very difficult to break through the fierce competition of Western companies with such support. We need to focus on those areas where we can definitely count on success.»

According to UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2020, the top five investors in the African continent are European Union (Netherlands, France, Germany, the United Kingdom), the United States and China. There are also the Gulf States, United Arab Emirates and Turkey consistently playing active roles in various spheres on the African

continent.

In practical reality, introduction of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), gives an additional signal for foreign players to take advantage of this new opportunity in Africa. It aims at creating continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business people and investments in Africa. As trumpeted, the AfCFTA has a lot more on offer besides the fact that it creates a single market of 1.3 billion people.

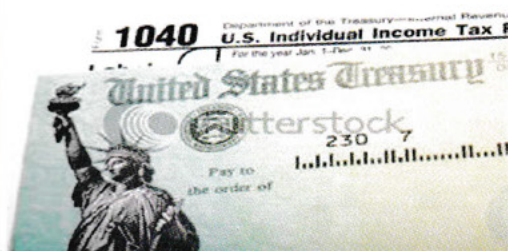
Notwithstanding the setbacks down these years, Russians are still full of optimism. That said however, Russia has its own approach towards Africa. It pressurizes no foreign countries neither it has to compete with them, as it has its own pace for working with Africa.

With the same optimism towards taking emerging challenges and opportunities in Africa, Russia has to show financial commitment and deliver on its pledges especially now when the joint declaration adopted from the first historic Summit held in October 2019 ultimately sets the path for a new dynamism and provides impetus for raising to a qualitative level the existing Russia-Africa relations.



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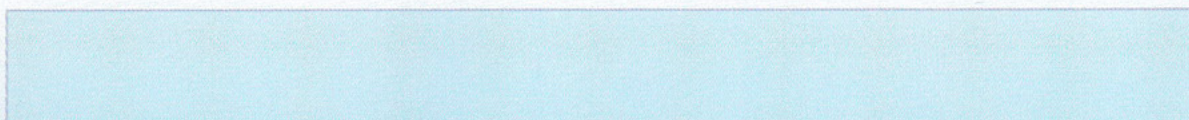
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# Russia Needs A Comprehensive African Agenda and Economic Diplomacy

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

The scramble for the multidimensional control of the African continent by global players is a geopolitical reality. In order to be part of this geopolitical arena, foreign players have been devising different mechanisms for revitalizing partnership and strengthening cooperation with Africa, says Dr. Babafemi A. Badejo, Professor of Political Science/International Relations at Chrisland University, Abeokuta, Nigeria and former Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia.

Many foreign players and investors are now looking forward to exploring several opportunities in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), he adds. With an array of economic activities undertaken currently in various sectors, building media network is one of the instruments for consolidating their influence, and broadly boost the understanding of their products, image and business services among the large spectrum of the population.

During the interview with Kester Kenn Klomegah from IDN-InDepthNews, Professor Babafemi A. Badejo says Russia needs a comprehensive African agenda and a well-defined approach with its economic diplomacy, it has to take hyperbolic steps in raising its economic influence in Africa.

Comparatively not much of Russia's image is promoted by the media in Africa, he adds, and suggests that Russia could similarly use the media to do more advisory services for its companies, and secondly design public outreach diplomacy (people-at-large oriented activities) that could help change negative perceptions and common skepticism among the estimated 1.3 billion population in Africa. Here are the interview excerpts:

How would you characterize



Professor Babafemi Badejo.

the media landscape, what foreign players are consistently teaming up with African partners in the media sphere in the continent?

The traditional media has followed the dictates of the world power distribution in the large part. In this respect, the colonial domination of the past has remained very relevant in almost all of the African territories. This has been especially so in sub-Saharan African countries that kept the metropole languages as their respective lingua-franca. The United States as a dominant power had the initial advantage of partaking of English being a language of communication in much of Africa. It went on to add social and technological prowess to dominate traditional and new media especially the social media of today.

Do you think that the media be part of a decisive factor in building effective bilateral ties for foreign players with Africa?

The media as a major aid to conceptualization of reality will always play a decisive role in building bilateral ties among players at the international level. This is irrespective of whatever language is used as a

medium of interaction. As a matter of fact, the media is a critical tool in the expression of diplomacy, especially unofficial interactions between states.

Which global players are very keen here, adding an additional dimension to development, especially utilizing it to boost their image across Africa?

The modern scramble for Africa is on. Many major powers, including the five permanent members at the UN Security Council and many emerging powers are struggling for a piece of the Action in Africa. Getting a piece of what Africa has to offer is more important than any power wanting to develop Africa. It is a case of each attempting to maximize the media for their greatest good.

What issues are currently encountered in the formation of the modern media landscape, and the prospects for collaboration in the information sphere?

Technological advantage of the West and the dominant position of many Western corporations providing information services will, for long, shape the media landscape in Africa. Others are not necessarily locked out. Counter efforts to the hegemonic choke hold could involve

building partnerships with African entities on information flow with local African media outlets.

Regional and national regulations, socio-cultural and languages dynamics, ideologies are some issues that affects prospects for collaboration in the media landscape. But today's technologies are bridging the language divides. Others are moving beyond their respective zones of language comfort to build popular soft power attributes and affect with the African people.

Considering what you have told us, above, what role and place would you assign Russia the information space of Africa today?

The Soviet Union as a post-Second World-War major power had a major media influence in Africa. However, this major influence did not move to Russia as the main successor state to the Soviet Union. It did not move to other states in the cluster either. It remains extremely easy for the US or the West in general to use a large media presence to define so much in the African space with respect to media and information flow. The new tech giants being American has helped and continue to deepen the

Western information hold on Africa. This choke hold has made bilateral interaction between the West and Africa much easier than it would have otherwise been. In the information space, Russia could be at the front of offering viable alternative solutions.

What role can African media play in promoting Russia's image in Africa, and what could be the expectations from Russia as it plans to host the second African leaders' summit (2022) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

Russia's gradual engagement can be boosted by African media popularizing and boosting knowledge on such engagements by Russia. Hosting the next summit in Addis

Ababa would feed very well into popularizing Russia's efforts at engagement with African leaders. However, promoting relations with the continent of Africa would require more than a one-off event with African leaders who have varying levels of legitimacy from performance or lack of it in their respective countries.

The Russian desire to engage more with Africa should go beyond the notoriety of the AK-47, general arms sales and involvement on wars to realize peace in Africa. African media should have the opportunity to report more about Russian corporate presence in Africa and their added value to the realization of the

sustainable development goals in Africa. This corporate presence can support the building of the media image of Russia in Africa through involvements with people-at-large oriented activities.

So many Russian speaking African experts who were trained by the Soviet Union can still bolster a Russian re-engagement with Africa through many activities that are reported using media that link Russia with the many countries in Africa. This will be beyond a focus on the African Union or support to African governments at the United Nations, which support are hardly known about by the people of Africa given

the weak media engagement.

Interestingly, and at the current moment, not much of Russia's image is promoted by the media in Africa. At best, it is Western perception and narrative of Russia that pervades the African media. Russia needs to do more in using media to tell its own story and interest in Africa. The socio-cultural and language barriers need to be cracked. In this final analysis, Russia has to make consistent efforts in building its media network that could further play key role in strengthening relations with Africa.

## Roadmap For African Countries To Formulate Energy Codes For The Buildings Sector Initiated

By Wallace Mawire



### Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction

**A**frican countries have been urged to formulate energy codes for the building sector to enable reduction of emissions.

The call has been made as part of Africa's roadmap for transforming the buildings and construction sector.

According to the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, the large housing backlog and growing demand in Africa can be viewed as both a huge challenge and a tremendous opportunity to expand economic activity and create millions of jobs.

It is also reported to be an opportunity to transform the sector into a resource efficient, resilient and low emissions sector.

Also according to Jonathan Duwyn, Programme Officer, Buildings and Construction Cities Unit, Energy and Climate Branch, Economy Division at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in 2018, the African buildings sector accounted for 61% of final

energy use and 32% of energy related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, excluding emissions from

manufacturing building materials.

It is reported that the Paris Agreement Goals cannot be achieved without decarbonising buildings. It is also added that most countries in Africa do not have energy

#### codes for buildings.

Building energy codes are reported to be a key instrument to reduce emissions from the buildings sector.

Duwyn says that to date, most African countries at least 68% mention buildings, although most National Development Commitments

(NDCs) still do not include explicit actions to address buildings sector energy use and emissions.

He says that the Africa roadmap aims to support governments in their NDC development by providing an illustration of the pathway towards a zero-emission, efficient and resilient building stock.

He adds that half of the buildings standing in 2060 have not yet been built.

Duwyn says that the current housing backlog in the African continent accounts for at least 51



million units, with large variations across countries.

It is added that in Africa, rapid population growth and urbanization is increasing demand for new buildings and infrastructure.

Floor area in Africa is expected to double between now and 2050, over 90% of which will be in the residential sector.

In the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) region, population is projected to increase by 100 million over the next two decades and will require an additional 800 000 housing units each year.

It is added that the large housing backlog and growing demand in Africa can be viewed as both a huge challenge and a tremendous opportunity to expand economic activity and create millions of jobs.

And an opportunity to transform the sector into a resource efficient, resilient and low emissions sector.

It is also reported that only Morocco and Tunisia have mandatory building codes in place that cover the entire buildings sector. Ghana and Nigeria

have codes that cover part of the sector, Egypt and South Africa have voluntary codes, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, the Gambia, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda are developing building code standards. The remaining 38 countries in Africa are reported to yet implement building energy codes.

It is added that most African countries have referenced buildings/construction in their NDCs, but most lack a commitment to net zero and concrete targets and measures.

According to World Bank, the total investment potential for clean energy based on existing national climate commitments in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa is nearly \$783 billion, with buildings and transportation accounting for about \$652 billion and renewable energy generation for about \$123 billion.

Duwyn outlines key actions which he says need to be put in place such as developing local roadmaps, developing and implementing mandatory building energy codes, avoiding need for space cooling,

having governments lead by example on public procurement and reducing embodied carbon.

Policy makers are urged to develop performance-based building codes and consider including into NDCs elements such as passive design to reduce cooling demand, resilience, life cycle approaches and low-carbon materials.

For designers such as planners, architects and engineers it is reported that the key to achieving efficient, low-carbon, cost-effective housing lies in the design stage, which in turn can be most influenced by building codes. It is added that national NDC buildings and construction roadmaps should be modelled on GlobalABC roadmaps and applying GlobalABC's guide for incorporating buildings actions in NDCs. It is reported that a toolkit is under development.

It is reported that Vietnam and Cambodia will be the first pilot countries to use the tool kit for energy building codes which is under development. It is also added that the NDC roadmap translates the NDC

building sector targets into tangible targets and measurable actions, they also help identify common goals, targets and timelines for key actions across eight key activities.

Governments are also reported to provide orientation and guidance to key stakeholders which include academia and civil society based on the roadmap. The NDC roadmap is considered to be a steering instrument, subject to regular revisions, precisions and updates.

It is also reported that a key challenge in developing national roadmaps is lack of data.

It is added that the process for developing energy codes should be a country driven process, implemented by a national team, with stakeholder involvement, alignment with national development objectives, building on and strengthening existing and planned national buildings and construction activities, bringing together all efforts under one umbrella to enhance synergies and coordination and striving towards implementation of the NDCs.

## TotalEnergies AFCON 2021: Cameroon Aims For Sixth Title

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The Indomitable Lions of Cameroon will be gunning for their sixth title in the upcoming TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) after the draw for the competition was made.

The draws for the competition that took place August 17 at the Yaounde Conference Centre saw the country placed in Group A alongside Ethiopia, Cape Verde, and Burkina Faso. The opening game comes up on January 9, 2022, with Cameroon facing Burkina Faso.

The Indomitable Lions head into the 33rd edition of the AFCON looking for their sixth title after winning it back in 2017 with a late Vincent Aboubakar goal enough for the country to beat Egypt 2-1.

Speaking during the draw ceremony, Confederation of African Football, CAF, Dr Patrice Motsepe



CAF President Patrice Motsepe was in Yaounde for the AFCON 2021 Draws.

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
 CAMEROON  BURKINA FASO  ETHIOPIA  CAPE VERDE	 SENEGAL  ZIMBABWE  GUINEA  MALAWI	 MOROCCO  GHANA  COMOROS  GABON
GROUP D	GROUP E	GROUP F
 NIGERIA  EGYPT  SUDAN  GUINEA-BISSAU	 ALGERIA  SIERRA LEONE  EQUATORIAL GUINEA  CÔTE D'IVOIRE	 TUNISIA  MALI  MAURITANIA  GAMBIA

said: «We have to be very focused and make African football amongst the best in the world. We are confident that it will succeed in the medium and long term. Africa will see amongst some of the exciting and world-class football. Cameroon has a proud history and we could not have chosen a more beautiful country.»

Dr Patrice Motsepe added that Cameroon hosting the competition has always been the plan and was surprised when people were writing that Cameroon was not ready looking at the pace at which the country had been going infrastructure-wise.

«Cameroon is plan A and B and there is no other plan and tonight we are here to show the world that indeed Cameroon will make the people of Africa proud. I hope that I am not going to be asked again. The competition is going to be exciting,» Dr Motsepe said.

Cameroon faces tricky opponents

The Indomitable Lions will face teams that he has encountered in the past with the country having a better record amongst the other teams. However, these countries are no push-overs and have caused great miseries for the Indomitable Lions

in the AFCON and FIFA World Cup qualifiers in the past.

In the Stallions of Burkina Faso, Cameroon faces a side that he has encountered on nine previous outings with the Indomitable Lions having the better of the results on four occasions, three of the victories came in friendly encounters. There have been four draws and Burkina Faso getting one victory.

Cameroon has failed to defeat Burkina Faso for the past six years with Burkina Faso beaten Cameroon back in 2018 in an international friendly (Burkina Faso 1-0 Cameroon). The last AFCON meeting between both sides came in 2017 and even then it was a draw; a result that shows that the Stallions are no pushovers.

Ethiopia is another side that Cameroon will have to contain if they are no move on to the next stage of the competition. The Walias are making their third appearance at the AFCON in Cameroon and the first in eight years.

The Walias had to power their way into the AFCON in a group that contained Madagascar, Niger and Ivory Coast. Despite their 3-1 defeat to Ivory Coast on the last day, Ethiopia

still went ahead after Madagascar was held by Niger.

Cameroon and Ethiopia will be meeting only for the third time in their history with the last two meetings coming far back at the 1970 AFCON and the 2016 CHAN. At the 1970 AFCON, Cameroon ran out 3-2 victors while during the 2016 CHAN, both sides played out a 0-0 draw.

The final opponent for Cameroon, Cape Verde, will be arguably the toughest of all the other teams. This is because both sides will be meeting again after Cape Verde and Cameroon were in the same Group for the AFCON qualifiers. Cameroon topped the group while Cape Verde came in second.

The Blue Sharks will be meeting Cameroon for the seventh time and in the previous six games, Cameroon picked up three victories to Cape Verde's two. Cameroon has failed to beat Cape Verde since 2012 when the country defeated Cape Verde 2-1 after the Blue Sharks had defeated the Indomitable Lions 2-0 that same year.

At the AFCON competition, Cape Verde has a better record than Cameroon (2 wins to Cameroon's

1). The famous victory for Cape Verde came during the 2021 AFCON qualifiers where Cape Verde won Cameroon 3-1 to reignite their chance of qualifying for the Cameroon expedition.

Defending champions Algeria gets the Elephants

The Desert foxes of Algeria will be hoping to retain the title they won in 2019 in Egypt. The country has been placed in Group E, one of three groups that could be titled as «Group of death» alongside Sierra Leone, Equatorial Guinea and Ivory Coast.

With star players, Riyad Mahrez, Islam Slimani, Sofiane Feghouli, the country will again be amongst one of the favourites to come away with the title.

The elephants of Ivory Coast are hoping for a better performance next year after the previous two editions of the competition have did not go to plan. In 2015, Ivory Coast went all the way and captured only their second AFCON, with the team that contained the great Didier Drogba.

Sierra Leone and Equatorial Guinea complete Group E and these teams are no pushovers. They are bound to cause upsets when the competition



gets underway.

It is a tricky group – Ghana's Asamoah Gyan

Speaking during the draw ceremony, former captain of the Black Stars of Ghana Asamoah Gyan said the group that his country is in is a tricky one looking at the calibre of teams.

«It is a tricky group. Morocco, I think they conceded just one goal in the qualifier which statistically, they are one of the strongest in the group,» Asamoah Gyan said in his reaction to the draws conducted.

«I will be rooting for my country. Everybody who has qualified is coming to win; we do not know what is going to happen and statistically, we are out there. We just have to stay focus and do what we can do to qualify from the group and see what happens.»

«Without the group, you cannot think about winning the cup. We have to make sure we qualify from the group stages and we think about



Five time champions Cameroon will be seeking to win the trophy for the first time on home soil.

winning,» Gyan added.

It has been quite a long time that the Black Stars of Ghana last won the Africa Cup of Nations; the last being in 1982 when the country defeated Libya on post-match penalties. The

country has finished runners-up twice in this decade losing to Egypt in 2010 (against Egypt) and again in 2015 (against Ivory Coast).

The TotalEnergies AFCON will begin January 9 and will run until

February 6, 2022, across venues in Yaounde, Douala, Baffoussam, Douala, Garoua and Limbe/Buea.



The Indomitable Lions of Cameroon are in Group A alongside Burkina Faso, Cape Verde for the upcoming AFCON



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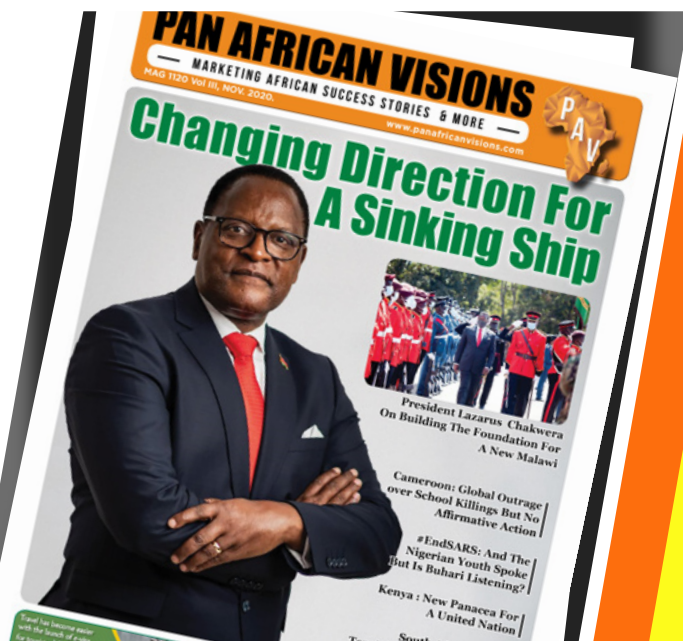
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