



Fears... and Hopes For Nigeria At 61



Cameroon: Inconvenient Truths With Barrister Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla

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CONTENTS

Fear As Sunset Approaches In Cameroon	2	A Mission To Unlock Africa's Wind Energy Potential With Siemens Gamesa	34
Nigeria Independence Blues	4	Nigeria Still Firmly In Mind As Okey Sam Mbonu Launches Sons Of Thunder	39
Scramble For Mt. Kenya Votes Escalates	6	Rwanda: How Rusesabagina's Trial Drew Controversy	41
White House Invitation a Huge Win for New Zambian President	9	Cameroon: Surge In Targeted Attacks On Police Officers	44
Cameroon: Gov't Announces Change In Strategy After Witnessing Dwindling Fortunes In War Against Separatists	10	South Sudan Overwhelmed By Violence, Floods And Corruption	47
Cameroon: Two years after Major National Dialogue, What Outcome?	14	African Leaders Voice Concern Over Covid-19 Vaccine Inequitable Distribution at UNGA	49
Cameroon: 'The form of the State would have been groundbreaking' - Barrister Agbor Balla on MND	15	In support of countries and communities with limited medical and logistical capacities	50
Trial over Mozambique's 'hidden debt' scandal ends, but the question remains: Where is \$2.2bn? - report	20	Everything in Place to Vaccinate Entire Adult Population – South African President	53
Heavy Taxation Choking Kenyans	22	In Era of Black Lives Matter, The Movie CRACKA is Timely- Actor Hakeem Kae-Kazim	54
African Banks Prepared to Take Lead in Africa's Post Pandemic Recovery	24	Ghana: Insights Into A Love Affair With The Middle East	56
We Seek To Build Bridges And Not Walls- Pascal Lorot On The Institut Choiseul-Africa Nexus	26	Rwanda's Company Linked To The Ruling Party To Invest \$200 Million In The Republic Of Congo	59
Zanzibar offers investment opportunities on archipelago's smaller islands	29	Accelerating Circular Economy in Africa initiative launched	60
Russia's Lukoil Finds A New Home In Senegal	31	FECAFOOT Election: The Battle Line has been Drawn	63

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Fear As Sunset Approaches In Cameroon

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Turn for the worse in the crisis in the English speaking regions of the North West and South West with separatist fighters inflicting stunning casualties on the military, incidents of civilians openly fighting with the police, images of people in the Presidents home region dismantling poorly made bridges blocking ruling party barons and government officials from visiting as they finally find a voice to vent frustration at the neglect of the region, tales and images of free for all fights, and violence during the recent elections within the local structures of the ruling party, and so on, it has been a total deluge of bad news trailing Cameroon.

Just when one thought it could not get worse, came the news and shocking images of a 5-year-old girl shot and killed in a car that was driving her to school in Buea, the capital of the South West Region. In response, the irate population descended on the gendarme officer responsible for the deed and he was beaten to death before a huge demonstration to the Governors office in protest of this gruesome killing of a school going girl in broad day light.

In power for 38 years and in his late 80s, Cameroonians are neither seeing nor hearing from President Biya who won another controversial mandate in 2018 with 71.3% of the vote despite making just one campaign stop. When President Biya was elected winner of the 2018 elections, we did opine that it may be a mandate too many with stakes that could bolster or heavily taint his legacy. At the sunset of his political career, no matter what angle one looks at it, the signs are ominous and there is every reason to be apprehensive on the future.

Top amongst the crisis facing Cameroon today is the crisis in the North West and South West regions of the country. Of recent, separatist fighters have inflicted stunning damage to the military. For a crisis that started with corporate demands from Lawyers and teachers and people marching on the streets

with peace plants, many point accusing fingers at the regime for its calamitous response which has exacerbated the crisis. This is one crisis which cannot be wished away. No matter how the regime tries to spin it, the blame falls squarely and if the buck stops with the President, then its outcome will be the defining legacy of over four decades in power for Paul Biya.

Unfortunately, the regime has been its own worst enemy in trying to solve the crisis. How comes the affable Prime Minister Chief Dr Dion Ngute is in Bamenda with peace plants talking reconciliation and how to move forward, and the military is in another part of the same region in full blown battle and with tales of houses been razed as they battle separatist fighters? With a President that Cameroonians neither see nor hear and discordant voices within the ruling apparatus, the government has not been able to articulate a coherent strategy to end the crisis, yet the most recurrent proposal has been DIALOGUE.

Two years after a Grand National Dialogue that was seen as an attempt by the President to address the issues, the results not quite to the surprise of many have failed to stem the raging crisis. For critics of the forum, its sincerity was always in doubt from the get-go. President Biya neither opened nor closed the ceremony, he never made an appearance at the Dialogue. Secondly, a good chunk of the delegates at the forum were regime adepts who had previously opined that there was no problem. Even the special status that was heavily touted as a response to the secessionist tendencies has remained largely unfulfilled.

Yaoundé keeps arguing the form of the state should not be in play, but it happens to be one of the core issues. It was Human Rights leader and former Consortium leader Agbor Nkongho Felix who warned that the federal status the Francophone ruling elite took delight in deriding may no longer



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

be there when they come begging for it. The situation is dire today and each passing day that Mr Biya fails to sue for dialogue, dialogue in the broadest and open sense, things only get worse.

At the level that it stands now, a crisis that could have been sorted easily by Cameroonians themselves now necessitates a neutral third party to mediate. Reason? The chronic bad faith of one party has led to profound distrust which is only growing by the day.

With the passing of elder statesmen like Nfon Victor Mukete, Cardinal Chrisian Tumi, and most recently Sultan Mbombo Njoya, and others, those who ought to be adults in the room are leaving the scene. At the funeral of Sultan Mbombo Njoya, it was sad to see the Senate President Marcel Niat Njifenji unable to stand up, worn out himself by age and ill health. Expected to preside over a transition in the absence of the President, many are questioning if Niat will be up to the task should the need arise.

With such an aging political class, very weak institutions that have over the years paid more allegiance to the President than the country, and the raging battles behind the scene to succeed President Biya, the worst may still be ahead for Cameroon. This will be unfortunate for a country blessed with incredible human and natural resources.

In the face of calamities befalling countries like Cameroon, it is common

to hear regime faithful blaming external actors or influence. When a constitution is passed in 1996 with clauses on decentralization and transferring more powers to the regions and for some twenty years President Biya is unable to implement it, how is that external influence? When infrastructure suffers from chronic neglect, whose fault is it? When leaders do away with constitutional term limits, embezzle public funds with reckless abandon and more, a little introspection could be helpful.

It is disingenuous to put all the blame on external influences with the kind of embarrassing shortcomings bothering on incompetence exhibited by our own leadership.

For Cameroon in case Mr Biya is still the man in charge, it is never too late to do the right thing. He inherited a country in relative peace, and it will be sad to leave it in chaos and flames. He will possibly not be standing for any elections again and all the more reason why he could take drastic measures irrespective of whose ox is gored within his party or circles to get things straight. The last ounce of energy he has left should be in seeking a lasting solution to the crisis in the English-speaking regions, a crisis he knows to the core and knows what it will take to start a healing process. It needs good faith many have not seen so far, it needs honesty that has been lacking, it needs a vision that has been missing, a political will that has been nonexistent. For the rest of his term, the crisis will remain the albatross on President Biya's neck and how he decides to address this will define his legacy.

This issue of PAV looks at the cascade of crisis in Cameroon with an interview of Barrister Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla who speaks some inconvenient truths to power. The issue also takes a look at Nigeria at 61, Ramaphosa's crusade against COVID 19 and more.

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Nigeria Independence Blues

By Richard Mammah

If Nigeria were to be a human, the country which gained flag Independence from British colonial rule in 1960 would have celebrated its 61st birthday on October 1. That indeed was the day and year of its separation from its former non-Independent status and the consequent attainment of flag Independence.

And in line with tradition, incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari dutifully read an Independence Day address on October 1.

In his address, the President, whose second and final term in office comes to a close in 20 months, urged Nigerians to continue to keep faith with the national unity project, irrespective of the many challenges that the country was being confronted with in that regard, and most notably, in more recent times. Hear him:

‘Fellow Nigerians, the past eighteen months have been some of the most difficult periods in the history of Nigeria. Since the civil war, I doubt whether we have seen a period of more heightened challenges than what we have witnessed in this period.’

He linked the challenges to the first ‘deep recession’ that had confronted his administration, security challenges in the country and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the security challenges,



President Muhammadu Buhari flanked by former leaders as he signs the anniversary register

President Buhari reported that his administration was throwing in more boots into the field in the area of policing. At the same time, he reported that the operational and combat capacity of the Navy and Air Force was similarly being boosted.

He tasked all Nigerians to eschew any actions capable of stirring crisis and insecurity and took out time to counsel the media:

‘Our media houses and commentators must move away from just reporting irresponsible remarks to investigating the truth behind all statements and presenting the facts

to readers.’

Addressing the question of the freewheeling cooperation his administration has continued to get from the National Assembly, President Buhari was effusive in his praise:

‘I salute the leadership and members of the Ninth Assembly for their patriotism, dedication to duty, candour and most importantly the dispatch with which they have enacted legacy legislations for this nation. I do not take such level of cooperation for granted and hope it continues for the overall efficiency of the Federal machinery.’

Conceding to long-expressed concerns over notably food inflation in the country, President Buhari remarked that of a truth ‘food prices have been going up.’ However, he put the blame on ‘artificial shortages created by middlemen who have been buying and hoarding these essential commodities for profiteering.’

Not many respondents however agreed with where he put the blame as they connected the challenge somewhat more fittingly with another problem he had earlier identified: insecurity.

In President Buhari’s books, he has done a lot and given his best during his time in office. So why do quite an awful lot of Nigerians not agree with

his own personal scorecard. In the same address under reference, he attempts to answer this:

‘Critics misdiagnose incremental progress as stagnation. Since coming to power, this Administration has tackled our problems head-on in spite of the meagre resources. No government since 1999 has done what we have done in six years to put Nigeria back on track.’

Some of the critics Buhari is referring to here would of course include leaders of the principal opposition party, the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP.

For them, and several others, the Independence Day speech ritual ought to be more nobly addressed by Presidents in such a way that many would not be left wondering as to what indeed it had set out to achieve.

In his own remarks on the Independence process for example, Oyo State Governor, ‘Seyi Makinde went for the jugular when he pointed out that only a restructured Nigeria will help the nation regain her past glory.

Speaking directly to one of the landmark achievement points that had helped signal some 62 years ago that Nigeria was a candidate for greatness, the governor lamented that it was most disheartening that Africa’s most populous nation, which



Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde says only a restructured Nigeria will help the nation regain her past glory.

had blazed the trail and established the first television station in Africa, was now consigned to the backwater position of relying on foreign television networks if its people must receive and use clear video signals.

According to Makinde, the clamour for a restructured Nigeria was directed at making sure we regain our lost glory and reconnect with the epochal achievements recorded by the first generation leaders of Nigeria.

"We are pushing for a restructured country because when we achieved all of these firsts, the country was not over-centralised at that time. We believe that when we push through the agenda to restructure the country, we will be in a better position for people to unleash their talents, not just the local economy, but also to place us where we really belong in the comity of nations right across Africa."

The governor was speaking at the launch of the digital broadcast channel, SATVIEW Network in Ibadan.

Makinde's counterpart in Rivers State, the feisty Nyesom Wike was even more critical.

According to him, it was plainly regrettable that 61 years after independence, Nigeria has not only become one of the most indebted countries in the world, it was imperative at the moment to embark on far-reaching measures to rescue the country from the wrong direction it is headed.

Agreeing with his colleague in Oyo that Nigeria's independence project had been consummated by seemingly patriotic, knowledgeable and compassionate leaders who had set out to build a united, peaceful and prosperous nation, he however lamented that it is now evident that most of the countries that were in the same league with Nigeria 61 years ago are today far more advanced.

He affirmed that it was also most worrisome that the National Assembly has abandoned its checks and balance role in relation to the executive, even as the judiciary had also lost its sense of courage and commitment to justice.

"In the last six years, our economy has been in tatters and gasping



Far-reaching measures are needed to rescue Nigeria from the wrong direction it is headed, says Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike.

without any realistic hopes for meaningful recovery in the nearest future.

"They, therefore, told lies when they say that our economy is growing and doing well when no one is feeling the benefits of an improving economy if any.

"Unable to mobilize sufficient domestic revenues, Nigeria is now one of the most indebted countries in the world, yet the Federal Government's appetite for more loans remains high even as we are approaching the twilight of its tenure.

"The effect of this is to mortgage the progress and wellbeing of the future generation of Nigerians with billions of debts burden in hard currencies."

"At independence, we were at par and even better in resource endowments and potential for development with our contemporaries like Malaysia, Singapore and several other countries.

"At independence and even now we are a nation blessed with very hard working and resourceful people.

"Our youths are some of the smartest people in the world, doing great exploits, flying our flag and making us proud across the world in music, dance, acting, culture, arts, sports, academics and our unique expressions and community ways of live.

"But at 61, it does not seem to me that there is anything worthy of our celebrating except, perhaps, the fact that we have remained independent and managed to struggle with our existence for all these years," Wike

lamented.

Back to the President's speech. Though conceding that the past 18 months had indeed been quite tough, the President generally still came across as one who had not gotten a handle on the issues that precipitated the toughness.

While at some point in the speech he attempted to touch on some of the challenging points, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the security challenges all across the country, he however did not go much further in the view of commentators to demonstrate that his administration was now sitting atop the challenges and that better days were in the offing.

Among others, critics have faulted the inability of the speech to speak to both the mood of the nation at the moment as well as project into the politics of the future. 'It neither correctly assessed the state of the Nigerian condition at the moment as well as stirred any reasonable level of hope in the future. It was far from great,' Aniekan Ikpe surmised.

And given that this is invariably President Buhari's final occasion to capture the national imagination in terms of commemorative speeches before the dam opens in full throttle for the medley of activities that would herald the formal beginning of succession politics in the country, there are concerns that he may very well have blown a major opportunity to speak to his legacy as a civilian president and make final amendments for perceived failings and mis-steps recorded this far.

So where lies the fault? The speech writers? The structure of government? Or the President himself? Or a bit of all of the above.

Without any doubt, part of the challenge may have to do with what some have termed the insularity of the administration. While every administration is essentially a partisan construct per se, the deeper challenge of the ruling APC is that it has become a vehicle where only a tiny segment of a tiny segment of an even tinier segment invariably hold sway.

Nowhere is this most noticeable than in the operations of the current APC-dominated National Assembly. Unlike in the first term of the Buhari presidency where there was a semblance of opposition, in the current dispensation, literally no dissenting voice is tolerated. And analysts put this at the doorstep of the current helmsmen in NASS.

The legislative analyst, Kanu Igbera is one such voice:

'As far as I am concerned the basic problem of the National Assembly is that of leadership. I guess you will agree with me on this. Perhaps it was for this reason that there have been rumours of attempts by Senators and Honourable Members who are dissatisfied with the situation wanting to effect leadership changes in the NASS leadership.'

Asked to hazard if the nation can still expect any meaningful constitutional amendments from the current legislature, Igbera responds:

"There is a correlation between this question and the first one. In the sense that the general public have this perception that the Senate President, who is the Chairman of the National Assembly is a lackey of the Executive branch of the Federal Government. Therefore, there is this general perception that the National Assembly will only do what the Executive will want them to do. Therefore, NASS cannot probably take an independent or an objective stance in the overall interest of the nation, especially in burning national issues such as restructuring, etc.'

Scramble For Mt. Kenya Votes Escalates

By Samuel Ouma

The Mt. Kenya region spans nine counties in eastern and central Kenya: Kiambu, Kirinyaga, Nyeri, Embu, Kirinyaga, Nyandarua, Laikipia, Meru, and Tharaka Nithi. Mt. Kenya East and Mt. Kenya West are the two sets of mountains that make up the area. The Meru, Mbeere, and Embu communities dominate the eastern side, while the Kikuyu community inhabits the western side.

According to the Kenya National Bureaus of Statistics (KNBS) 2019 census report, the Mt. Kenya region has over eight million people, second only to the Rift Valley. However, it outnumbers the Rift Valley in terms of voter turnout; thus, it's no surprise that it's renowned as a voting bloc in Kenya's political history. Because of its large number of electors, Mt. Kenya always has a significant impact on who becomes President of the East African country. For example, the region rallied around President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2013 and 2017, and the incumbent was re-elected.

According to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the region had 5.3 million votes in 2017. After the commission initiated a large voter registration campaign that will last for the next month, the number is expected to



Deputy President William Ruto is one of the prominent leaders courting for votes in the Mt Kenya region. Photo courtesy.

achieve a new high.

Because the region lacks a strong presidential candidate for next year's elections, it has become a hunting field for outsiders wanting to succeed President Uhuru Kenyatta. Presidential candidates have been attempting to acquire traction in the area to win the hearts of the locals. Deputy President (DP) William Ruto has presided over several fundraising events in the region, as well as political rallies and roadshows, in

an attempt to win voters. We must not overlook his frequent meetings in Nairobi's Karen house with his loyalists from the vote-rich region.

Ruto's efforts are paying off, as he has the support of a group of regional legislators like Rigathi Gachagua, Kimani Ichung'uwa, Alice Wahome, and Ndindi Nyoro among others. In early September, a group of MPs from eleven counties, including Nairobi and Nakuru, declared the second in command as their candidate in the

succession matrix.

The legislators claimed they supported DP Ruto after carefully weighing the existing presidential candidates' knowledge of regional issues, track records, and ability to serve the country. They urged Kenyans to join Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA), claiming that it is the only place where their concerns will be met.

The endorsement comes just days after a group of leaders led by Governor Kiraitu Murungi endorsed Raila Odinga, the opposition leader. The Meru Governor said that the region's authorities tried to demonize Odinga among the people to hinder him from being elected.

He remarked, «We are the same people who demonized Raila for Kibaki to win; we are the same people who demonized him for Uhuru to win.»

The legislators committed to ending the years of political misinformation directed at Raila in a region that has regularly voted against him. Since 1997, when he initially ran for President, Mount Kenya people have rallied against the AU ambassador. He has always been described as the lord of poverty, a witch doctor, and an



Governors James Nyoro (Kiambu), Lee Kinyanjui (Nakuru), Nderitu Muriithi (Laikipia) and Francis Kimemia (Nyandarua), recently pledged to back ODM leader Raila Odinga. Photo credit Twitter

anti-progressor, which has resulted in every Mt. Kenyan voting for his opponent.

"In order for us to retain our presidency in the General Elections of 2007 during Kibaki's campaign and 2017 during President Uhuru's campaign, we concocted various false tales that harmed Raila's reputation in the region," says the statement.

Hon. Kiraitu, on the other hand, indicated that the former Prime Minister had no animosity against the area, recalling his unanimity in supporting Kibaki's administration in 2002.

"Kibaki has stepped down from politics, and Uhuru will not run for President in 2022. Now is the right time to sell Raila in the region," Kiraitu said.

Odinga received an unusual welcome in central Kenya on September 27 after completing a three-day trip in the region, which political observers characterized as a success. He stopped in Chaka, Karatina, Sagana, Makutano, Witedhia, Juja, Naromoru, Karatina, Kenol, Juja, and Githurai, where he was greeted warmly. People flocked to be addressed by Odinga, also known



Elections are in Kenya often generate strong tensions.

as baba, in significant numbers (father).

He was accompanied by four governors, including Lee Kinyanjui, Francis Kimemia, Ndiritu Muriithi, and James Nyoro, among others. «Odinga's triumphal arrival into Mount Kenya» was the name given to Odinga's tour to Central Kenya.

"We need to shift the narrative. Our previous mission was to smear Raila's reputation and attack him. Governor Francis Kimemia of Nyandarua said, «I don't want to repeat those

statements.»

Odinga's presidential campaign gained a boost two days after the hero's welcome when the Mt. Kenya Foundation, a group of affluent tycoons, endorsed him. The group presented Odinga with the region's priority issues, including security, agriculture, business, water shortage, and youth unemployment.

"We want someone who will take over and ensure that the development efforts that have been started continue. Second, someone who

will not disrupt our businesses, and third, someone with whom we can sit down and come to an agreement on how to proceed," said Titus Ibuti, Vice Chairman of the Mt. Kenya Foundation.

Other presidential candidates trying to gain political forays in the region are Amani National Congress (ANC) party leader Musalia Mudavadi and Kalonzo Musyoka. However, Odinga and Ruto are set to gain more than other candidates.

Musalia Mudavadi, the head of the Amani National Congress (ANC), and Kalonzo Musyoka are two other presidential contenders who are attempting to establish political traction in the region. Odinga and Ruto, on the other hand, are expected to garner more votes than the other contenders.

"The region has a wealth of experience. They are people who enjoy doing business and can make a significant contribution to the economy and the country. So, I'm not ruling out the idea," said Mudavadi on choosing a running mate from Mt. Kenya.

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White House Invitation a Huge Win for New Zambian President

By Prince Kurupati

Just after a few weeks after his election, the new Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema took the trip to the United States of America to attend the United Nations General Assembly. While over there, Hichilema managed to score a huge victory as he was invited to the White House to meet the American President Joe Biden together with his deputy Vice President Kamala Harris. Many may probably be wondering why we refer to the White House invitation as a huge victory for Hichilema. Well, in this article, we are going to expose the facts why the invitation is of great significance to Hichilema himself and Zambia in general.

International Community Recognition of Peaceful Power Transition in Zambia

The greatest significance of Hichilema's White House invitation is that it exposes the international community's recognition of Zambia's peaceful power transition. All leaders who are elected via the ballot require one thing and one thing alone soon after the election if declared victorious that is, recognition as the legitimate winner. Without this recognition as the legitimate winner, it becomes a daunting, overwhelming and at times an impossible task to implement one's vision, policies and strategies for the nation.

Strengthening Geopolitical Ties Between Zambia and the West

In recent years, more so during the tenure of Edgar Lungu, Zambia had adopted primarily the Look-East policy. Owing to this, the relations between Zambia and the US together with other Western states and institutions had become frosty. Nothing exposes this more than the expulsion of the US Ambassador some few years back. In a globalised world like the world we currently live in, it's a prerequisite that a nation enjoys cordial relations with almost all states be it those from the East or the West. By accepting the White House invitation, the new Zambia President Hakainde Hichilema demonstrated



The meeting with U.S Vice President Kamela Harris was another milestone for President Hichilema as he charts a new path for Zambia.

a keenness to work with the US and reengage with the West.

While the Zambia-US reengagement is certainly a win for Zambia, it happens to be a win also for the Biden administration. China and other Eastern nations have been slowly consolidating their bases in various African countries in recent years Zambia included. The development led the US and the West to lose ground in Africa. Its against this background that the Strategic Competition Act of 2021 was enacted by the Biden administration which aims at resetting the US African Policy. The latest developments that saw the Zambian President visit the White House certainly demonstrate a keenness by the Biden administration to reset the US-Africa relations.

Opening new avenues of trade and investment

In the run up to the Zambian election, one of the key promises from the Hichilema campaign message was that Zambia's economic fortunes had been hit hard in recent times

leading to various economic and social problems – he once elected would move quickly to correct all the wrongs and thus put Zambia back on the economic development trajectory. Soon after his election, Hichilema stated that one of the strategies he is looking at in his endeavour to change Zambia' economic fortunes for the better was to open new avenues of trade and investment in the country. The new president said he would look at both internal and foreign trade and investment opportunities. By accepting to meet with the Biden administration, Hichilema certainly took the first initiative in marketing Zambia to potential investors.

The US has already marked Africa, Zambia included as a prime investment destination. Speaking on Africa's investment potential, Congressman Gregory Meeks who is the Chairman of House Foreign Affairs Committee said, "The United States sees strengthening US-Africa economic ties as a priority. America's capital markets, pension

and investment funds, and financial institutions are leaders among their global peers, and are uniquely positioned to play a key role in meeting Africa's capital needs. In our absence, African nations will continue to seek capital, assistance, and technology from those who do not share our values and priorities for democracy, good governance, human rights, and environmental protection. America has every economic, strategic, and national security reason to prioritize our relationships with Africa."

Demonstrates Zambia's Commitment to Promoting Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance

The US in its dealings with other nations across the globe has always called for the promotion of democracy, human rights and good governance practises. Often times, when these aspects are found lacking, the US reluctantly proceeds to cooperate with a nation. By choosing to side with the US and partner with the US on various economic, political



The new Zambian President also addressed the UN for the first time during his recent trip to the USA.

and social aspects, Zambia is exposing the fact that it is willing to promote democracy, human rights and good governance practises. This certainly is something that folks in Zambia will find warming. The commitment to promoting democratic principles will certainly be something to behold for Zambia as the country in recent years was spiralling into dangerous territory with regards to the promotion of human rights. Varieties of Democracy Project based at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden ranked Zambia as one of the fastest eroding democracies in the world.

Taking into consideration the pointers above, its safe to say that Hichilema's White House invitation is certainly a win for Zambia as it heralds and ushers in a new way of doing things on various fronts be it political, economic or social. However, caution still needs to be practised as the implementation stage will make or break all that Hichilema is aiming to do.

Cameroon: Gov't Announces Change In Strategy After Witnessing Dwindling Fortunes In War Against Separatists

By Andrew Nsoseka

Events of mid-September, particularly the attacks on Cameroon's elite forces, in Bui Division, and Bamessing, in Ngoketunjia Division of the country's Northwest region that claimed the lives of at least 22 elite forces of the Rapid Intervention Battalion, best known by the acronym BIR has occasioned the government to announce a shift in its strategy to fight the separatists.

In a press release acknowledging the attacks that inflicted heavy losses on the elite forces, Cameroon's Defence Ministry said the elite forces were attacked by separatists, using improvised explosive devices (IED) s and an anti-tank rocket launcher (ATRL). The Defence Ministry's statement said the separatist in the attack, "immobilised the vehicles of the Defence Forces before opening heavy fire on the latter, who were seriously incapacitated by the



Defence Minister Joseph Beti Assomo with troops in Bamenda, North West Region. Many are beginning to question the wisdom in a military strategy as a means to end the conflict

detonation of the explosive charges." The defence Ministry in the statement also acknowledged another severe attack three days before that

of Bamessing. The statement said the Bamessing attack was "occurring barely a few days after another improvised explosive device attack

on another military convoy, on the morning of Sunday, 12 September 2021, on the Kumbo-Tatum axis, Kikaikom locality, Kumbo

Subdivision, Bui Division of the North-west Region.”

Though the Defence Ministry puts the number at 15, media reports hold that the deaths in the two attacks stand at 22, 15 in Bamessing and seven in Kilaikom where a military pickup filled with BIR officers was shattered by an IED.

The Ministry said the casualty was not limited to soldiers, as it stated that civilians also died in the process. It, however, did not say whether the civilians were those in the neighbourhood or those embedded in the military convoys.

Announced Shift In War Strategy

In its statement, Cameroon's Defence Ministry said the separatists have employed the use of sophisticated weaponry. It alleged that the separatist groups had joined forces with other similar groups which have given them the means to acquire and use sophisticated firepower. The Ministry was surely referring to the Ambazonia and Nigeria's Biafran Separatists alliance which was predicated on the exchange of weapons and personnel in their fight for independence. The deal signed by the Biafran Separatists and Ayaba Cho of the Ambazonia Governing Council forced the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to go into an anti-terrorism alliance, to make their territories hostile to separatists from both countries.

“It should be noted that intelligence services have established with certainty that the resurgence of these terrorist groups, by means of the quality of fire-power they have at their disposal and are systematically using, is largely the result of their joining forces with other terrorist entities operating outside the country's borders.” The Defence Ministry said in a statement signed by Navy Captain, Cyrille Atonfack Guemo.

Using the two deadly events, the military said the change in separatists' operations and the firepower in their keeping, has occasioned it to also up its game, and put in place, the use of superior weaponry against the Amba



Pictures circulated widely on social media recently showed Ambazonia separatist fighters in jubilation after downing military trucks.

Fighters.

“It is thus clear that the coming into play of high capacity explosives and new weapons undoubtedly enshrines a paradigm change in ongoing operations, with the Defence and Security Forces having as mission to do everything possible to restore peace and guarantee the free movement of persons, goods and capital throughout the national territory.

“In any event, the Cameroonian Army remains determined to eradicate all forms of violence in the North-West, South-West and Far-North Regions, areas in which it is now clearly established that there exist sophisticated arm links and exchanges between secessionist terrorists from the North-West and South-West Regions with external violent fundamentalist groups.” The Defence Ministry declared.

MINDEF Rolls Out Tanks

Following the release of the statement announcing a shift

and an upgrade in operations, additional troops, tanks and other sophisticated weapons were rolled out in the crisis-ridden Anglophone regions of Cameroon. Some hotspots especially the Northwest region where separatists had launched some of the most deadly strikes against government troops, saw hundreds of additional troops stationed in towns and villages. In a small like Jakiri, extra BIR soldiers sent there caused havoc, torturing locals at random, accusing them of collaborating with separatists, by sheltering and hiding them. In the first week of September, in the village of Kikaikom in Bui Division where seven elite forces were killed in an IED attack, troops descended on the village causing havoc. After the raid and shootings, pictures from there showed the village billowing up in smoke from houses burnt down by soldiers.

As tanks and other heavy fighting equipment were rolled out, it was also rumoured that the use of airstrikes against separatist targets have also

been authorised. The trick, however, is how war equipment like tanks can be used against targets like the separatists who do not use buildings or things like vehicles that could be targeted with weapons like tanks. The separatists mostly operate on foot or bikes, in small numbers, making it difficult for them to be tracked and bombarded with such weapons.

Evolution of Anglophone Crisis – from Protests, Farming Tools to Rocket Launchers, Machine Guns

When the Anglophone crisis started in late 2016, it was merely a peaceful protest throughout the two regions. It later on graduated to civil disobedience and when force was used to clamp down on protesters resulting in the death of many, dissenting voices started talking of self-defence. In this light, they employed the use of farming tools and hunting guns, mostly Dane guns, to faceoff with security forces.

In the early days, it was very costly and deadly for the fighters who were very ill-trained and ill-equipped. They also had a poor strategy, mostly sleeping in crowded camps, where they were usually overrun and killed in their numbers. In the early days, a military operation against separatists usually ended up with many casualties on the side of separatists.

Gradually, the practice of sleeping up in camps in large numbers was ended. The separatists started operating in small numbers, and also employing the services of spies, making it difficult for them to be surprised in raids. The separatists are also said to have employed the use of spies even within government forces, and as such, often got tip-offs of operations before they are carried out. As such operations to raid separatists' camps failed as the military often raided already abandoned bases as the fighters had been tipped off to escape.

Weapons Upgrade

As the fighting progressed, the separatists succeeded in smuggling a few weapons from Nigeria and other

destinations. The fighters in their planned hit and run attacks also seized weapons from soldiers which they in turn used in their operations.

The separatists too have increasingly made use of the Nigerian black market to get stocks of weapons especially as Cameroon and Nigeria share a wide and loose boundary.

Separatists too increasingly have experimented with the production of improvised explosive devices, IEDs which they have increasingly perfected with time. From just smoky explosives, the fighters now produce and use local IEDs that destroys or grounds almost every armoured vehicle in the Cameroon military's arsenal. Now armed with hand rocket launchers, the separatists are on the offensive, crippling military convoys with bombardments.

Unlike the early days of war where the military have been on the offensive, sometimes now, they are on the defensive especially as they do not master the terrain like the separatist fighters who are grouped in their various villages and towns, which they call local government areas. As such, even in towns and villages where government troops are present, their effective control is often around their bases and in any other areas around, there are exposed and vulnerable to the guerrilla attacks from separatists who easily spot and monitor them.

The war drums beaten on both sides of the conflict will only mean more dreadful days for the locals



The attacks compel the military to up its game, says Defense Ministry Spokesman Navy Captain, Cyrille Atonfack Guemo.

caught up in the fighting. As the military announces a shift in its fighting ways, the separatists too in propaganda videos say they are ready and equipped to fight the military. In a message released on social media, one of the Amba Commanders, self-styled General No Pity said he was asking government soldiers who wish to surrender, to contact him, or run away to Nigeria. The military too has been asking fighters to drop their weapons and go to the Disarmament

and Rehabilitation Centres in Bamenda and Buea.

Critics of the war, have, however, continuously advice that the two factions heed calls for genuine and inclusive dialogue as the best way out of the crisis. In his recent tours in Buea and Bamenda, Cameroon's PM, Chief Dr Joseph Dion Ngute said they have tried to hold talks with separatist leaders, but says, unlike the government, the separatists have remained resolute on their demand

for independence.

The PM in his visit to Bamenda on Tuesday, September 5, got a taste of the insecurity when his speech at the gateway in the Bamenda, Matazem was interrupted by gunshots as the military tried to ward off separatists who fired warning shots from nearby hills. The PM had to cut his speech and be guarded out of the vicinity, to the Governor's office in Bamenda.





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Cameroon: Two years after Major National Dialogue, What Outcome?

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

October 4, 2021, marked two years since the government of Cameroon organized the Major National Dialogue, MND, in the country's political capital Yaounde, a move that was aimed at addressing the issues raised by teachers and others concerning the Anglophone crisis.

Two years on, violence in the two English-speaking regions shows no sign of allowing down with security forces, separatists and civilians continue to die in a war that rages on. The recommendations from this dialogue, however, are gradually being put in place as the follow-up Committee recently unveiled several actions which have been implemented.

"The Grand National Dialogue was a publicity theatre by the Cameroonian authorities to please the international community. Any such discussion will be done on an international scene with Cameroon and Ambazonia as equal parties, where we will decide peacefully of the separation of the two countries," Eric Tatawa is noted to have said about the Major National Dialogue.

"On the part of the government, the negotiations were very frank. The only thing which was raised which had nothing to do with the demands of the teachers and the lawyers is what has come to be called secession. I do not like that word, and most Cameroonians did not even want to hear that word. People love this country and at that dialogue, we discovered that this country has more friends than enemies," former Prime Minister Philemon Yang said about the Dialogue.

Violence continues unabated

If it was the wish of members of the Major National Dialogue for the violence in the Region to subside, that was far-fetched. Since the Dialogue held, ghost towns have increased, the killing of state security forces



Personalities at the Conference Centre during the opening session of the National Dialogue, in Yaounde, Cameroon, Sept. 30, 2019.

continues and the separatist fighters, though they have lost forces remain bolded in their objectives.

More than 1,000 deaths according to the UN has been observed since the Major National Dialogue took place in 2019, a figure that shows the death rate has more than doubled than before. Though it continues to lose forces in the crisis, the Cameroon government remains ever determined to maintain its territorial integrity.

On September 16 this year, more than 15 soldiers were killed by the separatist in an ambush at Bamessing in the North West Region. "Using IED (Improvised Explosive Devices) and an anti-tank rocket launcher, the insurgents immobilized the vehicles before opening heavy fire on the latter," Cameroon's Ministry of Defense said in a statement.

On September 12, four days before the attack on soldiers in Bamessing, separatist fighters are reported to have attacked a military convoy at Kumbo with IEDs. The separatist fighters have stepped up their game

acquiring very sophisticated weapons from neighbouring Nigeria and have also succeeded in getting vehicles belonging to the defence forces.

Government accelerates measures taken at MND

One of the main recommendations of the Major National Dialogue was the reconstruction of the two Regions. The reconstruction process has been going on gradually though it has touched just the areas with relative calm. Hard-hit areas like Lebialem, Kumbo and many others are yet to witness these developments that have been made public by the government.

In a recent trip by the Committee to follow up the implementation of the Major National Dialogue, the Prime Minister Head of Government Dr Dion Ngute was asked about the reconstruction process and while citing some of the positive developments did note that it is very difficult for reconstruction to go to an area that is still facing a lot of uncertainties.

MND brings institutional changes

The acceleration of local governance was one of the major talking points and still is across the North West and South West Regions. The government has promulgated in December 2019 Law No.2019/024 on the General Code of Decentralized Local Authorities.

This paved the way for the election and setting up of Regional Assemblies and Special Status conferred to the North West and South West Regions. To ensure the proper functioning of these councils, FCFA 30 billion was allocated under instructions from the Head of State.

President Paul Biya has equally proceeded with the appointment and installation of Public Independent Conciliators of the North West and South West Regions. The National School of Local Administration was equally created to train staff in local administration.

Since the Major National Dialogue,

the government has accelerated the reintegration of ex-fighters by providing psychosocial support as well as the financing of several youth projects for the DDR centres in the Far North, North West and South West Regions. All these are relatively not enough with the ex-fighters since the Dialogue having held more than two protests in Buea calling for them to be set free and providing them with job opportunities.

The U.N. reports that the ongoing war in Cameroon's North West and South West Regions has forced more than 500,000 people to flee their homes since the conflict erupted in late 2017. Ongoing armed clashes, civilian casualties and the burning of houses, hospitals and other infrastructure are causing further displacement.

A more inclusive dialogue that takes into account both warring parties seems the only solution to the ongoing crisis. Dr Wilson Esemé (who participated in the 2019 Major National Dialogue) and the Federalist



Members of the follow-up Committee for the Implementation of the Recommendation of the MND during their second session in Buea, South West Region of Cameroon.

Movement have called for the Cameroon government to immediately facilitate the organization of an Anglophone General Conference amongst the people of the NW/SW to determine their future.

«...Such a conference will eventually lead to an agreement

to form a federation; a system of government where each state will elect their local government and take charge of their affairs to be it in the economy, internal security, public health, education, infrastructure,» Dr Wilson Said.

«The central government will be

limited to only five areas, protecting the borders; regulating trade between the states; formulating immigration policy; formulating financial policy and formulating foreign policy. It is time to end the outdated system where administrators are appointed.»

Cameroon: “The Form Of The State Would Have Been Groundbreaking” - Barrister Agbor Balla on MND

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

From September 30 to October 4, 2019, delegates from all works of life participated in the Major National Dialogue, an initiative that was aimed at addressing the issues raised by lawyers and teachers amongst others.

It is now two years since the Dialogue took place and despite several measures that have since been taking by the government to implement the recommendations, Barrister Felix Nkongho Agbor Balla has said nothing groundbreaking has since emerged since then and the form of the state would have been the groundbreaking thing.

Renowned Human Rights Lawyer and activist Barrister Felix Nkongho Agbor “Balla” was one of the attendees of the Dialogue and says he does not regret taking part in the Major National Dialogue and has called on both warring parties to



Human rights lawyer, activist Nkongho Felix Agbor was a key actor at the Major National Dialogue.

ensure children effectively go back to school, a course that he says he can give his life for.

Pan African Visions: What assessment do you make of the Grand National Dialogue two years after?

Barrister Agbor Balla: The Major National Dialogue was necessary. There had been a clamour for a Major National Dialogue from the clergy, civil society, politicians and non-state armed groups but the government took some time to call for the Dialogue. It was necessary to sit together as sons/ daughters of this country despite our differences to address burning issues that touch and concerns us as a people. It was equally necessary for us to revisit the form of the state which unfortunately was not discussed. Yes, it was good we had the Dialogue; the outline of the

deliberation may not have been what we expected but there was the need to have the dialogue.

Pan African Visions: Looking at Resolutions Taken and what has been implemented two years after, do you think it served the purpose?

Barrister Agbor Balla: The Major National Dialogue was supposed to be a means to an end and not an end in itself. I don't think anybody expected that after close to four years of conflict people will sit for a few days and have a resolution that would solve all the problems that we were facing. Some of the resolutions were good but the problem is not about the resolution, the problem is about the implementation. The core issue of the Dialogue was to talk about the form of the state; all the other things that were being discussed were not as important as putting the form of the state on the table. Unfortunately, the government was not willing and ready for us to talk about the form of the state, so, the special status came out from the Dialogue.

Let me say that the special status does not affect the form of the state. But in a situation where the government had good faith and the government was willing to implement (put the special status in place) it would have helped for the time being pending when they will be ready for us to look at the form of the state. There is nothing special about the special status because there is a whole lot of confusion in the implementation or application of the special status. The governor is still the one that controls everything; the minister of decentralization is still the boss of the regions, so it does not make a lot of sense.

At the end of the day, nothing groundbreaking has been done. I think that something groundbreaking that would have come up from the Dialogue was the form, of the state. As we speak reconstruction, yes, but there is nothing groundbreaking because it is a reconstruction as a result of the conflict; bilingualism is part of our constitution. What we have here, to be honest, is just



The Major National Dialogue is a step in the right direction; it is a means to an end and not an end in itself, says Barristor Agbor Nkongho.

decentralization where Yaounde still pull the strings.

Pan African Visions: Looking back, do you regret participating in the dialogue?

Barrister Agbor Balla: I will not regret taking part in the Major National Dialogue; let us not forget that you cannot be preaching for peace, and preaching that we should sit down and talk and they call you to talk and you do not go there to talk. Whether we like it or not, bringing some people who had not to have to sit eye-to-eye to talk helped to calm down the situation. A peace process is never done in a day. The Major National Dialogue is a step in the right direction; it is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Pan African Visions: What do you make of the tour of the Prime Minister to the North West and South West?

Barrister Agbor Balla: It was a good thing that he went to both regions because both regions are currently in a conflict situation. I think the whole purpose is to try to win the minds and hearts of the people of both regions; to explain what the government is doing but also to listen to the people. I hope that it was not some kind of people who were invited to talk to the Prime Minister and to tell him what

he wants to hear.

I hope that they had people who were honest enough to tell him that this conflict cannot be won through military confrontation, that it will be resolved politically. I hope there were people in the South West and North West who told him what was on the ground. I was not in the country when he came to the South West Region but they know my position; I have said and tweeted it that they should tell the president that it is only a political solution; you cannot win the minds and hearts of people by killing them or by bringing tanks or artillery to their region.

Pan African Visions: In the NW the Prime Minister was welcome under scary circumstances, what message should the regime get from that?

Barrister Agbor Balla: It shows that the non-state armed groups have become embolden; that they are very daring now. We have seen not just the gunshots when the Prime Minister came but we have seen for the last couple of months the killing of elite military officers and the destruction of tanks and weapons. It shows that they are serious and the conflict is taking a different dimension and that there is a need for Yaounde to sit up and realize that it is not business as usual; that they are also against a

formidable group of boys who are ready to fight and defend their lives.

Pan African Visions: You have also been a forceful voice in calling for school resumption, with the situation still so volatile in some parts, where do you situate the responsibility of safety for school goings?

Barrister Agbor Balla: The thing about school resumption or kids going to school is no brainer; it is nothing that some has to have a contrary view. I don't understand the logic of why people are preventing kids from going to school and that is something I have with some of the non-state actors who think there should be a perpetual boycott. It does not work, and I would put my life on the line to defend those kids who have to go to school because no matter the outcome of this crisis we still need our kids to be educated. If these kids are not educated, how are they going to fit in in this world where education is very important. We cannot condemn our kids to perpetual poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy.

The argument about safety; yes, some places are not safe but there are safe areas. Let us encourage kids to go back to school and it will not be done overnight. It will be a gradual process; I am impressed with what is happening this year. We have to be



For Barrister Agbor Nkongho, the International Community should go beyond urging, they should threaten with travel bans, and freezing of accounts

careful as Anglophones or Southern Cameroonians about this boycott. A couple of years ago, we used to Anglophonise Francophones through our schools but now is reversed. When we talk about the boycott, show me one person that is financially comfortable, whose kids are not going to school; they have either left the region or are in the towns and cities in the NW/SW where it is safe. At the end of the day, we have the kids of those who cannot displace them to French Cameroon or the safe areas cannot go to school. So, the conflict could still be going on but then everybody who has us at heart has to support kids to go back to school.

Pan African Visions: As a way forward, what concrete proposals do you have at the moment?

Barrister Agbor Balla: The first thing is to talk to those in control of the non-state armed groups to tell them that they should allow kids to go back to school, while CSOs also continue with the advocacy and also that there should be a safe passage for children to go back to school. In Afghanistan where there has been conflicting, kids have always been going to school. In Sierra Leone where they had the civil war, kids went to school. So, I don't see why Cameroon

is exceptional that kids should not be able to go to school.

Pan African Visions: We see a strong focus on human rights from you with CHIRDA, how is that helping in the resolution of the conflict?

Barrister Agbor Balla: advocacy grinds slowly but crises always happen because there has been a culture of impunity. By documenting you are reminding the stakeholders, the belligerent parties that someday they will be held accountable and also for institutional memories; history should remember that in Cameroon X number of people were killed and this number of people were in jail. It deters some people, not everybody and the documentation might hold if someday there is accountability at the tribunal or court for the atrocities that have been committed.

Even if there is no tribunal, when there is truth and reconciliation, some of this evidence will come up and people will have to apologise and seek forgiveness from the victims' families. It is very important for accountability; in a society where there is no accountability, impunity runs riot.

Pan African Visions: You have recently been nominated for the

2021 Human Rights Tulip, what do you make of that?

Barrister Agbor Balla: It is encouraging when some selfless work is recognized. You will remember that in 2019 I won the prize for the Best Human Rights defender in Central Africa, and I have had the opportunity because of the work I do to speak at the Oslo Freedom Forum and also to address the Canadian parliament; the UK House of Lords and the Human Rights Council. The Tulip nomination is a good thing; it encourages others that despite the difficulties and challenges we should just be resilient and continue with advocacy.

It is testimony that when you rise above partisan documentation and reporting when you try a much as possible to be neutral and be objective despite all the insults and negativity, some people will recognize it. It is an encouragement also to other CSOs and advocates in the country and all over the world.

Pan African Visions: What is your response to critics of yours who have resorted to name-calling and accusing you of abandoning a struggle you started?

Barrister Agbor Balla: Some of them make me a better person; they make me stronger, and they make

me correct some of the errors that I might have made. There is nobody that is infallible but those are people who constructively criticize. For those who are just the insults, I do not take that at heart.

I have not abandoned the struggle; I think my role has morphed into something else. Not everybody can be the head of a movement; and in a movement or revolution, there are roles for everyone. In our role as Human Rights Organization, we are documenting and monitoring the situation and doing advocacy. I do not think there is any better organization that has done the kind of documentation we have done; there are very few people that have done the kind of advocacy that I have done; from the Human Rights Council, African Commission, US Congress, the Canadian House of Commons, the African Bar Association, all the major international organizations. I have had meetings with the AU, EU, so I don't think if I had abandoned the struggle I would not have been involved.

People perhaps wanted to see me defending the separatist agenda, but we need to respect people's opinions; the fact is we led a revolution; it was not necessarily a revolution to break away from the country and I still maintain the position that I have maintained.

If you read my LLM Thesis in 1998/99 in Belgium where I argued that «Do the Anglophone Southern Cameroonians have a right to self-determination in international law» and I concluded yes, we have a right to self-determination. My conclusion was that there was a need for us to have internal self-determination which was a federation. This is the same position I held in the days of the Consortium; the same position I held during the Grand Dialogue and this is a position I am holding today. I still believe that this country whether people like it or not would one day be a federal country. It will be important for the form of the state to be debated because it can never be business as usual. So, if in that light it means I have abandoned the struggle, then the people are not reading the signals very well and are not following me.

I respect the onus of these who clamour for separation; you will not see me attack any leader who is for the separatist movement because I also believe that in our divergency we have things that we agree on; we agree that there is a catastrophe in our regions; we agree that the humanitarian situation is bad; we agree that our people should leave jail; we agree that human rights of our people should be respected and that there should be equality and the need for justice. These are fundamental issues we agree on and if we disagree on the end game of separation or federation, it should not tear us apart as brothers. The insults are not helping anybody because insults have never given people independence.

Pan African Visions: We have also noticed the passing of a generation of statesmen, Nfon Mukete, Cardinal Tumi, Sultan

Mbombo Njoya, and others, any incidence their absence could have on the quest of a lasting solution to the crisis?

Barrister Agbor Balla: You always need your patriarch. Especially from an African perspective, we need our fathers, grandfathers to be able to bring some kind of peace and harmony. Yes, losing them especially emblematic and iconic Cardinal Tumi, who was at the forefront is something that we miss. Losing Chief Mukete and Sultan Mbombo Njoya; these are people one expected them to get themselves involved but also it might be an opportunity for those who are alive especially the younger generation to seize the mantle and try to see how they can work towards having a solution.

Pan African Visions: What role do you think the international community should play at this point?

Barrister Agbor Balla: The international community is state-centric; the state is the focal point of the international community and there are lots of problems happening in the world presently. I believe that as children of the same country, we can internally find a solution but that depends on the goodwill of both parties especially the goodwill of the president and his cabinet. Yes, the international community can put some pressure but there is a lot that we have to do.

The international community should go beyond just urging that they should drop their guns; it has to start putting concrete measures in place, threatening travel bans, and freezing accounts. They could also threaten those who are committing atrocities from both sides that they will be

tried and held accountable someday because this impunity should not last forever.

Pan African Visions: Some have called for another All-Anglophone conference; do you still see its necessity?

Barrister Agbor Balla: I remember an interview I had with France24 in 2016 in which I called for an Anglophone Conference; other people picked it up and we almost had the AAGC that the government sabotaged and also some separatists who were not for it. For once, the government and the separatists were in the same position; that was intriguing. So yes, there is a need for us to still meet; there is a need for discussions to take place. In ending October CDN is supposed to hold a dialogue in Canada and some of the stakeholders will be there to see how we can agree on certain things.

What we have observed is that the violence between Anglophones is a lot and is rising and so we should not pretend. As a result of that, there is a lot of division between the South West and North West Regions. So, I think such meetings are very important.

Pan African Visions: If there is another national dialogue to resolve the crisis, what do you think should be done differently from the first one to hope for better results?

Barrister Agbor Balla: If there is another dialogue what should be done differently is that the agenda should be determined by a bi-partisan Committee; a committee made up of CSOs, religious leaders, government and the non-state armed groups. They should sit and determine the agenda; who presides should be something determined by that committee and it

should be manned by an independent person; somebody in the clergy and two vice presidents from CSOs. There should be no perception that it is tailored and controlled by the government.

They should focus on the crisis in the South West and North West; let them not devalue it by bringing other issues. This is a specific conflict because of our history that has to be solved; they should not mix it with the other problems. And the international community should guarantee that those abroad can come without any arrest but to do that government will have to show good faith by releasing the people they have detained and those who are black-listed who are abroad; there should be a general clemency/amnesty for everyone so that it will win the hearts and minds of the people and those who will not be able to come should be authorized to send their representatives who can speak on their behalf.

Pan African Visions: Any Last word or message to the main actors in the crisis as we wrap up this interview?

Barrister Agbor Balla: My message to the main actors is that they should think about the people and the population. They are there to protect the civilian population; be it the government or non-state armed groups, that whatever they are doing they should at least consider the sufferings of the people. They should their ego in front of the interest of the people and that if they are working for the interest of the people, then they should by now be finding ways to talk to each other and find a solution so that life gets back to normalcy.

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Trial Over Mozambique's 'Hidden Debt' Scandal Ends, But The Question Remains: Where Is \$2.2bn? - Report

By Jorge Joaquim

The interrogation of the former head of the Mozambican intelligence agency SISE ended without relevant data about the creation, financing and bribes involved in the 'hidden debts' companies Proindicus, EMATUM and MAM, when only one defendant is missing for the conclusion of the 19 listed for the clarification of the case.

The case centres on contracts entered into by the three state-owned companies or special purpose vehicles (SPVs) with Prinvest, to buy fishing boats, maritime patrol boats, maintenance facilities and other services, as well as the roughly \$2bn of government-guaranteed debts, arranged by Credit Suisse and VTB Capital, that the SPVs borrowed in order to pay for the contracts.

Mozambique alleges that Prinvest paid bribes to then finance minister Manuel Chang and other government officials in order to secure the contracts, amongst other claims. It also wants Prinvest to pay compensation for losses to the state arising out of the contracts. Prinvest agrees that it paid government officials, including Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi.

However, the Mozambican court only called former President Armando Guebuza entourage to answer about the 'hidden debts' case. Guebuza uses to express his indignation at the way the process is being handled by Nyusi in collaboration with the attorney-general Beatriz Buchili. Guebuza is asking why his family and people close to him during his presidency are the only ones being sacrificed or held accountable for the taking on of nearly \$2bn — deals which have been found to be illegal, by Mozambique's Constitutional Council — when his successor Nyusi and his allies also solicited or benefited from monies or assets from the scheme.

Revelations in the 2019 trial in New York of Lebanese citizen Jean Boustani, who confessed to making payments to people related to the



Guebuza government, also showed that Nyusi's presidential campaign received \$2m from Prinvest, and that the Frelimo party account received \$10m to support Nyusi's 2014 campaign. Mozambican intelligence agency SISE was aware of all operations.

The expectation was that at least the former head of SISE, Gregório Leão, would help clarify the case, but to many important questions from the court he said he could not answer because they involve «classified information» and that he could not betray the oath he took.

Gregorio's wife, Ângela Leão, admitted in court using money from Prinvest to pay for several properties in the family business portfolio, but put the blame on her contractor Fabiano Salvador Mabunda. Leão denied any connection with Prinvest, and said that her properties were paid for by her friend and contractor Mabunda, and that any responsibility should be attributed to him.

Asked by the court why Mabunda paid with money coming from Prinvest, which prosecutors said was part of millions of dollars in bribes to her husband Gregório Leão for his role in setting up the Proindicus, Ematum and MAM companies, and

requesting sovereign guarantees to borrow \$2 billion to be spent on contracts with Prinvest, Ângela Leão said it was a matter of “financial engineering” by her contractor.

“I had already given him MZN387m [roughly \$10m at the time] for payments for our properties,” she said, echoing Mabunda's claim earlier in the week that he had used other funds to make the investments that he was supposed to have made with the cash Leão had given him. “Where his money comes from, I don't know and I don't want to know,” she said.

The prosecution, meanwhile, showed an email she sent to Mabunda on the very day Prinvest sent the first \$1m tranche, asking him to confirm receipt of the amount. In response, she said she did not know the contents of the email, although she admitted that the email address was hers.

The prosecution says that the total \$9m that Mabunda received was for Gregório Leão who put his wife in charge of the operation. Ângela Leão, working with Mabunda and Prinvest's Jean Boustani, made fake contracts for work that was never performed, in order to conceal the true purpose of the payments

Earlier in the trial, Ângela Leão had also been mentioned by former SISE

project manager Cipriano Mutota, who told the court that he received approximately \$1m from Jean Boustani after Ângela told him that Prinvest was already paying money to Mozambicans involved in the project design. However, she denied ever having such a conversation with Mutota.

President Guebuza's advisers denied receiving bribes from Prinvest

Former president Armando Guebuza's chief political adviser says that the \$1.7 million he received from Prinvest was a gesture of “solidarity” from his friend Jean Boustani, in response to difficulties the defendant said he was facing at the time.

Renato Matusse is accused by Mozambique's public prosecutor of having received \$2m from Prinvest for his role as a facilitator for Prinvest's interests in Mozambique, and as an intermediary in the maritime protection project that culminated in the illegal borrowing of \$2.2 billion.

Matusse, however, denies the charge. He explained to the court that he received only \$1,660,000 from Prinvest in 2013, following a conversation he had with Boustani in 2012 in which he shared the “concerns and difficulties” he was facing.

“He sent this money voluntarily and in solidarity in the context of our friendship,” said Matusse, saying the payment was “totally separate from the maritime project.” The prosecution’s indictment is problematic, Matusse said, because he claims he had no power to influence the former head of state.

Asked why the money came from Prinvest if it was a gift from Boustani, Matusse said he could not answer because he had just given Boustani the account numbers of the people and institutions that needed to be paid on his behalf.

On the other hand, president Guebuza’s private secretary Ines Moiane admitted receiving €750,000 from Prinvest, but denied the money was linked to meetings she arranged between President Guebuza and Prinvest executives, in the context of the maritime protection project that culminated in the illegal contracting of loans worth \$2.2bn.

Moiane admitted to the court on Thursday that she arranged, inside and outside Mozambique, roughly six meetings between President Guebuza and senior Prinvest officials, including the group’s head Iskandar Sifa, but denied that she received any reward or bribes for the work.

She said that the €750,000 she

received through the company created by her long time friend Sergio Namburete referred to the sale of land owned by her to Prinvest, which at the time intended to build an apartment building in Maputo city.

«It was a private deal after a conversation between me and Jean Boustani, in one of the visits he made to President Guebuza’s office» said Moiane. «I had proposed that they build a 20-storey apartment building on my land, and in exchange give me five apartments in the building, but they refused and said they preferred to pay me in cash,» she added.

Asked by the court why the contract for sending the money to Mozambique did not mention her name or the transfer of the land, Moiane said she did not know.

The prosecution, meanwhile, showed a series of emails and documents about the marine protection project sent by Boustani to Inês Moiane’s email address, with copy or knowledge of Ndambi Guebuza, who is also a defendant in the trial accused of having received \$33m for his role in convincing his father to approve the project. Moiane said she could not answer why Ndambi was included in state affairs, and that only Boustani could answer that.

Prosecutor Sheila Marrengula



wanted to know if Ines Moiane sent emails or her affairs to President Guebuza and she replied that she did not remember. The same question was later asked by the Mozambique Bar Association, and Moiane this time answered that she never discussed the project with President Guebuza.

Moiane avoided talking about her connections with Prinvest and her role in the maritime protection project that ended up involving the “hidden debts” companies Proindicus, MAM and Ematum — only answering questions related to her receipt of the money, and what was done with it.

‘Hidden debts’ case should call more declarants

More people should be called to the trial to help clarify the so-called “hidden debts” in the case which is about to end, defendant Teofilo Nhangumele, also known as ‘Mastermind’ of the project, said. The court has already heard 18 defendants, out of the total of 19 expected, plus 75 declarants, including public officials, bankers, businessmen and others whom the prosecution believes will help clarify the case.

Nhangumele, meanwhile, said on his last day of hearing that the proceedings should include “more names” in order to reach the truth that the court says it wants to obtain with the ongoing trial.

“There is an attempt to get clarity on the case just from us,” Nhangumele said when the judge urged him to explain details around ProIndicus, the first of the three companies established by the secret services and through which they borrowed \$2 billion in the name of Mozambique. “I have looked at the court process and I honestly think that more names are missing for everything to be made clear,” he said. Strangely, neither the judge Efigenio Baptista, nor the lawyers or prosecutors asked about



those “missing names.”

One of the names that the two defendants have often mentioned, but which is not in the case file, is that of the then defence minister and current Mozambican president Filipe Nyusi.

The defendants have argued that Nyusi played a crucial role, as he led several meetings that culminated

in the establishment of Proindicus, including modifications that made Proindicus into a military project valued at \$622m, versus the initial civilian project of \$350m.

It was Nyusi who, on 21 December 2012, led the meeting that culminated in a decision that after completion of feasibility study, Proindicus should be



established; that the supply contract with Prinvest should be signed; and that potential lenders should be contacted.

On 14 January 2014, Nyusi addressed a letter to the then finance minister, Manuel Chang, informing him that Credit Suisse had been identified to finance the project, and requesting that Chang sign a state

“It was during this [Nyusi’s] era that the project had other developments until it was financed,” said Nhangumele, who consistently failed to answer some of the judge’s questions, claiming he had already been fired from the project by then, by Nyusi, for not being a member of the Mozambican defense and security forces.

Heavy Taxation Choking Kenyans

By Samuel Ouma

«There is no difference between hell and Kenya. Suffering as it was seen in the past is not dissimilar to what we are experiencing now. When I was growing up, I never imagined that one day I would be sleeping on an empty stomach. Now it’s a fact, and I can’t say I’m sorry. I’ve done everything I can, but the conditions around my family and myself, as well as other Kenyans, are heartbreaking. The rate at which food costs are rising is worrying, and the truth is that as a family, we can no longer afford particular food items since we don’t have steady sources of income,» Caroline Omollo, a resident of Thika in central Kenya, told Pan African Visions.

The mother of one is among Millions of Kenyans who cannot afford a meal due to the high expense of living brought on by hefty taxation



Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yattani.

and, in part, the Covid-19 outbreak. Her earnings are insufficient to keep up with the escalating costs of basic goods such as maize flour, cooking oil, sugar, milk, and so on. For example, a 2kg bag of maize flour used to cost less than ksh90, but now it costs more than ksh 100 (\$1). Who should be held accountable? Caroline informed us that the government is to blame because taxes have been raised.

In September 2021, the total year-over-year inflation rate, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 6.91 percent, up from 6.57 percent in August 2021. Between September 2020 and September 2021, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) reported an increase in commodity prices in the following categories: food and non-alcoholic drinks (10.63%), transportation (9.21%), and housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels (6.08%).

President Uhuru Kenyatta reduced VAT on goods and services from 16 to 14 percent, reduced Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) from 30 to 25 percent, and announced a tax exemption of 100 percent for anyone earning up to KES 24,000 (\$240) in April 2020, among other things, to cushion Kenyans against the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, President Kenyatta signed the Tax Law Amendment Act (No. 2) of 2020 in December 2020, reintroducing the 16 percent VAT. The act also increased the corporate income tax rate for residents from 25% to 30%. Many Kenyans are already suffering from job losses and a collapsing economy, and this action has just added to their misery.

Kenyans began facing even more



hardship on July 1, 2021, when the Treasury reintroduced the 16% VAT on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). The taxes were reintroduced in the Finance Act 2020; and however, due to the pandemic, implementation was postponed until the second half of 2021. The change, according to the administration, is intended to increase revenue collection. Kenyans have purchased cooking gas at prices that do not include VAT since 2016 to reduce the usage of polluting fuels like as kerosene and charcoal.

After MPs approved the bill in December 2020, Speaker Justin Muturi said, «The measures would have far-reaching repercussions on revenue collection and would severely alter the administration of the national budget.»

Gas prices have risen by 31.8 percent as a result of the new taxes. Pan African Visions conducted a spot check and discovered that refilling a 6kg gas costs more than ksh 1000 (\$10), 13kg more than ksh 2000 (\$20), 22kg more than 3500 (\$35), and 50kg more than 8500 (\$85). The prices vary according to the brands.

Total sells a 6kg gas for ksh 3990

(roughly \$40) from ksh 3000 (\$30), a 13kg for ksh 7560 (approximately \$76) from ksh 6300 (\$63), and a 22kg for ksh12280 (approximately \$123) from ksh11435 (\$114) in Nairobi.

The new tax was enacted when crude oil prices had reached unprecedented highs, provoking widespread outrage. Prices of petrol, diesel, and kerosene have increased by as much as Ksh7 per litre, according to the latest update from the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA).

Petrol prices jumped by Ksh 7.58 per litre, diesel prices rose by Ksh 7.94, and kerosene prices rose by Ksh 12.97 per litre. In Nairobi, a litre of petrol costs Ksh134.72, a litre of diesel costs Ksh115.60, and a litre of kerosene costs Ksh110.2.

Petrol costs Ksh132.46 in Mombasa, diesel costs Ksh113.36, and kerosene costs Ksh108.57.

EPRA attributed the rise in fuel prices to higher expenses for landed petroleum products, including a 0.72 percent increase in landed super petrol, a 4.81 percent increase in diesel, and a 0.96 percent increase in kerosene.

The same month, the government adjusted Excise Duty on Airtime and Telephone services to 20 from 15 percent, forcing the network providers to review their products and services pricing to reflect the changes. For instance, voice calls by Safaricom are now priced at Ksh.4.87 per minute in peak hours and Ksh.2.50 per minute in off-peak hours from a lower Ksh.3.50 and Ksh.1.80 respectively.

Meanwhile, the effective charge for transmitting a single short message is Ksh.1.20, down from 87 cents. In the meantime, the cost of browsing on airtime (without bundles) rose at a similar rate to the cost of voice calls.

According to a joint report by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), Kenya is the most heavily taxed country in the East African Community. The paper echoes the OECD's «Secretary General's Report to Ministers 2018» published in 2018. Kenyans, after South Africans and Swazis, are the most taxed in Africa, according to an OECD analysis.

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African Banks Prepared to Take Lead in Africa's Post Pandemic Recovery

By Prince Kurupati

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has seriously affected Africa's growth trajectory. While the pandemic has certainly led to unprecedented global health, social and economic crises, sub-Saharan Africa has been the worst hit. Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 experienced the worst underperformance ever recorded with a growth rate of -1.9%. This further compounded by an increase of 32 million people now living in extreme poverty. In light of this, calls have been made for the continent to seek flexible fiscal instruments for effective and efficient recovery policies. In response, African Banks have heeded the call and have expressed their preparedness to take lead in Africa's post pandemic recovery.

According to Duarte Pedreira who is the head of emerging and frontier markets at Crown Agents Bank, the Covid-19 pandemic may just be the catalyst for Africa's economic revolution. For long, Pedreira argues that Africa has been plagued by "the old trading models that externalised value creation, forced the exportation of unprocessed commodities and importation of value-added goods." However, the Covid-19 pandemic may just be the tide that dramatically changes Africa's economic outlook as Africa will be forced owing to trade and travel restrictions to focus on production and manufacturing.

"The paradigm is shifting. Its no longer about foreign entities coming into Africa to buy commodities, take them out and export them back to Africa as value-added goods. Now, it should be about production of value-added goods in Africa, for them to be distributed in Africa. It becomes a privilege to have access to this newly created trade area, which is second only to the WTO in terms of size," Pedreira said. On this front, Pedreira said that the now operational African Continental Free Trade Area together



with various financial institutions on the continent will need to take lead to ensure that financial resources the room is provided for the robust take off of Africa's production and manufacturing industries. Pedreira went on to state that the Crown Agents Banks is already working to make this a reality.

Bleming Nekati who is the chief trade finance officer for the African Development Bank stated that the damage caused by the corona virus pandemic is clearly evident. However, instead of focusing on the damage caused, Africa now needs to look ahead to the future in order to start shaping the continent's post pandemic recovery. On this front, Nekati said the African Development Bank has already taken some key steps. Some of these include putting in place "a US\$10bn facility that we call the Covid-19 Rapid Response Facility... aimed at helping a number of countries that are constrained by the fiscal challenges that have emerged" as well as the "US\$3bn Covid-19 social bond." Apart from the fiscal solutions, Nekati said the African Development Bank is also taking steps to deepen "capital markets, providing technical assistance and support, so the continent can have the technical

skills that are needed in this space."

Trade commissioner for Africa working for the UK Department for International Trade Emma Wade-Smith said that the Covid-19 pandemic has clearly laid bare the need for "economic reforms, an improved business environment, tackling market access barriers to enable more companies to grow, create jobs and trade across national borders in Africa." On this front, there is need to deepen resilience, promote sustainability, inclusion and greener growth across various sectors on the continent. Financial institutions should play a leading role on this front and the action taken by the London Stock Exchange working with various stock exchanges in Africa is a move in the right direction as it deepens resilience in African capital markets.

The senior manager overseeing structured trade and commodity finance in the Southern Africa region for the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) Victor Mashoko said that trade finance will play a critical role in Africa's post pandemic recovery process. "Trade finance has a big role to play on the continent. In particular keeping the trade of goods and services flowing presents not

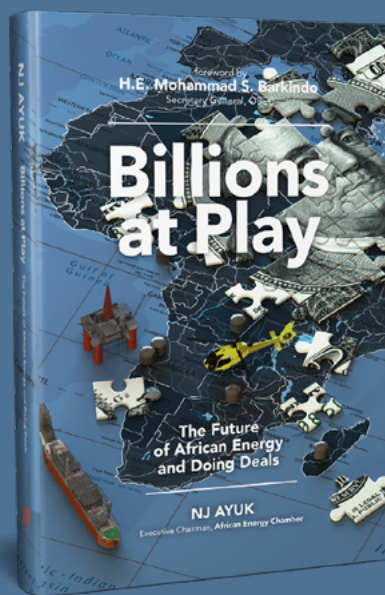
only an economic but also a social imperative to preserve livelihoods of millions on the continent. Pre-Covid, the trade finance gap in Africa was estimated to be about US\$1bn, and the industry has a role in reducing the gap. Trade finance will also play a role in providing instruments, in sectors like health and medical supplies that have expanded dramatically following the onset of Covid," Mashoko said.

The sentiments echoed by Mashoko with regards to the significance of trade finance in Africa's post-pandemic recovery process were reinforced by Tedd George who is the chief narrative officer for Kleos Advisory UK. George weighed in saying, "The real economy of Africa is driven by SMEs, and 90% of SMEs are primarily involved in retail and trade, so if you can boost trade, you can boost the real economy. What's interesting is that any effort to do that always results in better economic growth and more opportunities for entrepreneurs. Trade can drive a very different agenda. Increasing transparency and accountability, while stamping out fraud, environmental damage and forced labour; all of these things come from a trade agenda."

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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We Seek To Build Bridges And Not Walls- Pascal Lorot On The Institut Choiseul-Africa Nexus

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Our ambition is to take on Africa with confidence and optimism and to showcase the formidable assets this continent has, says Pascal Lorot Chair of the Institut Choiseul, a leading French think tank with focus on economic governance, leadership and networking.

With the Choiseul Africa Business Forum 2021 coming up on the 24 and 25 November, Pascal Lorot fielded questions from PAV on the booming ties between the Institute and Africa, with special emphasis on the Choiseul 100 Africa, an annual ranking that identifies the 100 most talented economic leaders under 40 years old.

Could we start with an introduction of the Institut Choiseul that you lead, when and why was it founded?

The Institut Choiseul is an independent think tank founded in 2010 focusing on economic governance, leadership, and talents networking. We produce studies, particularly young leaders' rankings, and organize high-level business events with the ambition to create dialogue spaces at the crossroads of the political and institutional worlds, of the economic scene and the sphere of ideas, to inform debates on today's key challenges.

In the context of the 21st century, how do you situate the importance of Institut Choiseul?

In an ever-changing world, characterized by the emergence of new players and the shift of power relations and value chains, Institut Choiseul aims at giving visibility to decision makers. Thanks to our reports and high-level events, we strive to feed the collective intelligence and to give operational knowledge to those who shape the economy. Adaptability, reactivity and anticipation are indispensable



Pascal Lorot is Chair of the Institut Choiseul, a leading French think tank with focus on economic governance, leadership and networking.

qualities for who wants to be competitive.

Moreover, Institut Choiseul projected itself internationally at an early stage, taking an interest in Africa and Russia. Our objective is to work towards the creation of a new type of business dialogue between France and these actors in a context that challenges us to explore new forms of bilateral cooperation. Nowadays more than ever, it appears necessary to build bridges and not walls.

May we know the nature of relations or ties between the Institute and Africa?

The Choiseul Africa initiative was launched in 2014 with the creation of the Choiseul 100 Africa, an annual ranking that identifies the 100 most talented economic leaders under 40 years old. Our ambition was to take on Africa with confidence and optimism and to showcase the formidable assets this continent has. More than a ranking, the Choiseul 100 Africa has become one of the most influential pan-African networks of the young generation comprising 400 active

members spread out across 46 of the continent's 54 countries.

Throughout numerous encounters organized alternately in France and in Africa, systematically following an invitation from the heads of State and government (Algeria, Angola, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Morocco, etc.), the Choiseul Africa network has become a platform of synergies and exchange between the political and economic spheres at the highest level, implementing projects that are structural for the continent.

One of your leading programs is the Choiseul Africa Business Forum, can you shed light on it for us?

The Choiseul Africa Business Forum is an event dedicated to the development of business opportunities in Africa and with Africa, as well as to the sharing of experiences and the deciphering of trends in the African business environment. Taking place in the city of Nice, the forum is an opportunity for both business communities and international senior executives to meet the soaring Africa. It's a place

of interactive encounters, which provides a space for discussion around operational and multisectoral workshops on several topics.

How long have the Choiseul Africa Business Forums been going for, and may we have an idea on the profile of people who typically attend?

The Choiseul Africa Business Forum was launched October 2019 and comprised around 25 operational working sessions and 110 speakers selected with care for their expertise. The event gathered close to 600 African and European leaders among the most influential of the private, public and institutional spheres of these two continents: corporate leaders, international funders, heads of government and ministers, representatives of the African and European business communities. More than 50 countries and nationalities were represented at this Forum.

We understand that the Choiseul Africa Business Forum 2021 will take place on the 24

and 25 November, how are the preparations going and what should participants expect?

The preparations are going smoothly. For this new edition, we are collaborating with European and African high-level key players, most of them renewing their trust after the success of the first edition. Many leaders from both continents have already confirmed their presence. They are enthusiastic to meet again after these long months of sanitary crisis. We have built an ambitious program that should please them.

For businesses and people out there who are hearing about the Choiseul Africa Business Forum for the first time, can you make a pitch to them on its importance and what they stand to gain from attending it?

The Choiseul Africa Business Forum has two main specificities. The first one is high-level networking, as our teams pay much attention to the selection of profiles attending. Thus, the participants will have the opportunity to meet key players in their respective fields and the finest minds of the young African generation who are driving the continent's innovation. Furthermore, during the event, speech is given to Africa and more than 80% of the speakers will come from the continent to provide



Pascal Lorot with Tanzanian business magnet Mohammed Dewji one of the high profile names on previous Choiseul 100 Africa lists.

us with high value-added insights on African business.

Let's talk about Choiseul 100 Africa which is focused on young African talent. The next edition of the ranking is expected to be announced in December 2021. What criteria is typically used in the selection of those who make it on Choiseul 100 Africa, and may we have a few prominent names across

the continent who made it in previous selections?

To rank the selected profiles, several criteria are taken into account such as standing and reputation, background and skills, current position and functions, influence and networks, potential and leadership. Our methodology aims at representing all African regions and as many countries as possible to showcase the gems all over the continent, as well as all value-creating sectors (16 sectors).

rankings so far across different sectors and regions, all of them comprising prominent personalities. For instance, Emmanuel Macron topped the two first editions of the French ranking in 2013 and 2014. He attended many Choiseul meetings and even hosted our African laureates when he was the Minister of Economy. We always try to bring together the Choiseulians from different countries or sectors to decompartmentalize the business word.



Our ambition is to take on Africa with confidence and optimism and to showcase the formidable assets this continent has, says Pascal Lorot seen here in a visit to Nigeria

Selecting a few names is naturally a difficult task but we can quote Sami Agli (Algeria), Head of the Algerian employers' organization, Mohammed Dewji (Tanzania), CEO of MeTL and youngest African billionaire, Vera Songwe (Cameroon), the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Kabiru Rabi (Nigeria), Managing Director of Bua Group, or Rania Al-Mashat (Egypt), the minister of International Cooperation. We have launched at total of 8

Any last word as we wrap up this interview, any major developments or projects in coming up that you would like to share?

We have new ambitions for 2022. We wish to strengthen our notoriety in English-speaking Africa and create more business connections between France and this part of the continent. We are working towards the organization of an event in Africa and are currently in touch with several countries which would like to welcome us. Finally, we aspire to connect all our networks (Africa, Russia, France) to create a unique meeting platform of young business leaders on a worldwide scale.



Zanzibar Offers Investment Opportunities On Archipelago's Smaller Islands

In groundbreaking move to further attract foreign investors, government opens up ten island paradises for holistic development projects



Bawe Island Zanzibar.

14th September 2021 – The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar is opening up ten of the archipelago's idyllic smaller islands for high-end investment and development opportunities.

The programme, which is being implemented by the Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA), further builds on the Zanzibarean government's strategy to attract foreign investment by granting interested parties Strategic Investment Project (SIS) status.

The rollout of the SIS initiative, which offers stakeholders a host of residential and investment benefits, has already received an extremely favourable response from the international investment community since coming into effect in July.

Among the incentives are a residency permit that authorises real estate buyers, along with their partners and a maximum of four

children under the age of 20, to live in the country after purchasing a property.

There is also a 50 percent exemption on capital gain on purchased properties, 100 percent foreign ownership, 100 percent exemption from worldwide income for foreigners and the added benefit of no minimum stay being required.

The government's decision to extend investment opportunities to ten smaller islands falling outside Zanzibar's main islands of Unguja and Pemba, is based on its vision for diversification of high-end investments.

The smaller islands or islets, boasting pristine beaches, fertile soil, abundant marine resources and populations eager to work on potential developments, are ideal for specialised investment projects, according to ZIPA executive director, Shariff Shariff.

"The small islands surrounding Zanzibar are major assets that have

enormous potential for both investors and the island's residents," Shariff says.

The ten islets each possess their own unique characteristics, thereby offering diverse selling points and opportunities for potential investors.

Changuu (Prison Island)

The 11.27ha islet is located about 5.6km from Stone Town, and is surrounded by shallow coral reefs. It boasts a mix of indigenous and introduced vegetation, giant tortoises, 110m of idyllic beach and a natural tidal pool.

Bawe Island

Located just south of Changuu, the 35ha islet is known for its spectacular sunrises and sunsets. About seventy percent of the islet is conserved as forest while the remaining 30% is used for tourism purposes and by local fishermen. Bawe is known for its colourful coral reefs and

excellent snorkeling and pristine 550m beach. It could also soon be declared part of the Zanzibar Town Islands Marine Conservation Area.

Chumbe Island

Lying south-west of Unguja Island at the edge of the Menai Bay, Chumbe is praised for its rich marine biodiversity. It comprises 17ha of conserved forest, 55ha of coral reef sanctuary on the west part of islet, and 2.44ha which have been allocated for the development of eco-tourism operations. Both protected areas were formally registered by the IUCN World Conservation Monitoring Centre in 1995. The islet boasts a magnificent beach, a lighthouse and small mosque. A rare coconut crab, *Birgus latro*, is a must-see for wildlife lovers.

Kwale Island

This 50ha islet in Menai Bay lies about 4km off the western coast of Unguja. Some 390m of white

sandy beach is complemented by a natural lagoon, and coral rag bush. It is paradise incarnate and is used as the major fish camping site for local fishermen from Unguja.

Misali Island

The 9,000ha islet is relatively undisturbed compared to others parts of Zanzibar and Tanzania, and as such possesses incredible terrestrial and marine life, and is an important nesting site for turtles. Diving, snorkeling, swimming, boating and scientific research are permitted. In the extractive zone, all legal fishing is permitted and two areas - Mbuyuni and Mkwajuni - have been designated as fishers camping areas.

Njao Island

Njao islet lies on the northwest coast of Pemba Island and has an estimated area of 474ha. The islet is characterised by its rich, fertile soil, making it ideal for agriculture. Most of its inhabitants are involved in fishing activity.

Matumbini

The 80ha piece of land is found south of Pemba island, and has huge potential for fishing tourism, including game fishing.

Pamunda A & B

Located in the west of the archipelago, the islets possess white beaches, a natural lagoon, and coral rag bush. They are used as the



Changuu Island Zanzibar.

major fishing camping site for local fishermen from Unguja and are famous tourist attractions.

Chapwani

The 5ha island is situated northwest of Stone Town and can be reached by boat in just 15 minutes. Chapwani has an untouched beach and a spectacular reef filled with starfish and multi-coloured corals.

Z a n z i b a r ' s government recognises that these islets possess sensitive ecosystems and are already home to thriving fishing and agricultural communities. As such, potential developments require careful planning, handling, guidance and oversight, and potential investors will need to adopt a holistic approach in implementing future projects.

Says Shariff: "Our investors

Expressions of Interest should provide information demonstrating that they possess experience and the ability to develop, operate and manage investment projects.

"They should also demonstrate financial capacity, and skills in conserving environments, biodiversity, cultural heritage and community development. Interested Investors should specify the intended small island/islands for investment and provide detailed information on the kind of high-end investment intended."

Expressions of Interest must be submitted with the receipt of a US\$1,500 non-refundable payment (Account name ZIPA, PBZ Account A/C No. 0400424000, Swift Code PBZATZTZ) at Maruhubi Complex, Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority Head Office, Malawi

Road, Room Number 223 or via email: islets@zipa.go.tz (PDF format).

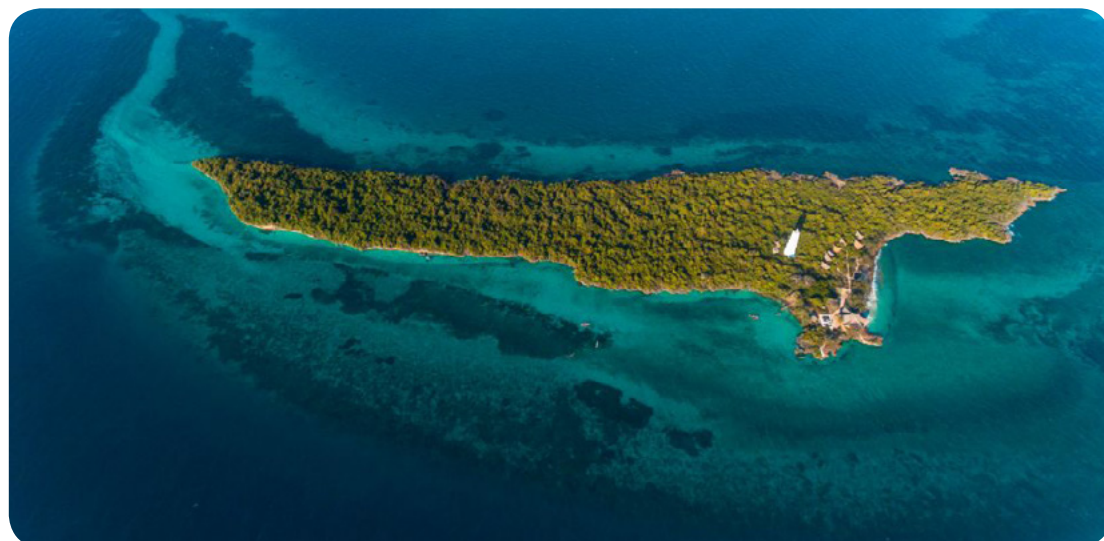
The deadline for submission of Expression of Interest is 30 September 2021 at 10am (Eastern Africa Time).

Short-listed prospective investors will be contacted to proceed with other application procedures.

Further information can be obtained by visiting: <https://www.zipa.go.tz/islands/> or emailing islets@zipa.go.tz

About Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority:

Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA) is a semi-autonomous government institution which is responsible for the promotion and facilitation of investment in Zanzibar. It acts as a one-stop-shop for investors to collect and submit documents and gain approval needed to establish investment projects on the island. To date, ZIPA has approved 761 investment projects with capital in excess of \$7,17 Billion. The island's tourism industry (which includes hotels, restaurants, tourism support and sports activities) leads in new development projects, representing 61,7% on all projects. Several countries with substantial investment in the island include the United States of America, Kenya, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.



Russia's Lukoil Finds A New Home In Senegal

By Kester Kenn Klomegah



President Putin of Russia with Senegalese President Macky Sall. Russia has been slowly but steadily expanding its presence in Africa. Photo credit Sputnik.

Undoubtedly, a number of Russian companies have largely underperformed in Africa, which experts described as primarily due to multiple reasons. Most often, Russian investors strike important investment niches that still require long-term strategies and adequate country study. Grappling with reality, there are many investment challenges including official bureaucracy and technical hitches in Africa.

Lukoil, the largest Russia's oil company, has had a long history, going forth and back with declaration of business intentions or mere interest in tapping into oil and gas resources in Africa. In the past, Lukoil have said in separate reports about its business deals in a number of African countries including Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. These are coastal countries on the

Gulf of Guinea (Atlantic Ocean) in West Africa.

Besides technical and geographical hitches, Lukoil noted explicitly in its official reports that «the African leadership and government policies always pose serious problems to operations in the region.» It said that the company has been ready to observe strictly all of its obligations as a foreign investor in Africa.

Lukoil has moved to Senegal. Predominantly rural and with limited natural resources, Senegal is classified as a heavily indebted poor country, with a relatively low Human Development Index. Most of the population is on the coast and works in agriculture or other food industries. Other major industries include mining, tourism and social services.

Energy is produced by private operators and sold to the Senelec

Energy Corporation. According to a 2020 report by the International Energy Agency, Senegal had nearly 70% of the country connected to the national grid. Current government strategies for electrification include investments in off-grid solar and connection to the grid. Senegal has a population of approximately 15.9 million.

In spite of that, business is business. Quite recently, Lukoil, one of the largest Russia's oil companies, publicly declared that it finally concluded an agreement with Cairn Energy PLC to acquire a 40% interest in RSSD (Rufisque, Sangomar and Sangomar Deep) project in the Republic of Senegal for \$300 million in cash.

The agreement provides for potential bonus payment to Cairn Energy PLC of up to \$100 million after the commencement of

production. The transaction is subject to customary conditions, including the approval by the Government of the Republic of Senegal.

The blocks of the project covering 2,212 sq. km are located on the deepwater shelf of the Republic of Senegal 80 km from the shore with the sea depth of 800-2,175 meters. The blocks include two discovered fields: Sangomar and FAN.

The Final Investment Decision (FID) on the Sangomar field was taken early 2020 and the field development has begun. According to the Company's estimates, the recoverable hydrocarbon reserves of the Sangomar field total approximately 500 million. The field is planned to be launched in 2023, with designed production level of 5 million tons of crude oil per year, according to reports.

The RSSD project is currently



The project reinforces our presence in West Africa, says Vagit Alekperov, President of PJSC Lukoil.

implemented under a production sharing agreement. Woodside is the project's operator with 35% stake. Other participants are FAR (15%) and state-owned company Petrosen (10%).

«Entering the project with already explored reserves at early stage of their development is fully in line with our strategy and allows us reinforcing our presence in West Africa. Joining the project with qualified international partners will allow us to gain additional experience in development of offshore fields in the region,» said Vagit Alekperov, President of PJSC Lukoil.

Early 2020, precisely on January 28, during a briefing with President Vladimir Putin on the annual work performance and activities of the Lukoil holding, Vagit Alekperov noted the unique window of opportunity that opened up after the summit held with African countries late October 2019 in Sochi, Russia.

«In fact, we are beginning to work actively in West Africa: we have

started working in three countries and another four have offered to launch joint work. This is unprecedented. This summit gave an impetus to Russian companies to work in one of the most promising markets: West Africa,» he told Putin in the Kremlin.

After Putin noted that it was surprising that African colleagues had asked only for collaboration and nothing else, Alekperov reassured that «today, it is not just a declaration, but these are real projects: in the Republic of the Congo, in the Republic of Ghana, we are now looking at a number of other countries in the region, and in Cameroon.»

Its media release shows that Lukoil's portfolio is quite extensive. It works in 32 countries worldwide, conduct geological exploration both in the West and in Africa.

For now, in Africa, it has only one success story. For the past ten years, Lukoil operates in the Republic of Ghana where it focuses on upstream exploration. The reserves evaluated on the blocks proves to be sufficient

for the industrial development.

On the opposite side, Russian news agencies reported that Lukoil exited projects in Côte d'Ivoire, where it had led exploration in the deep offshore. The company confirmed the information about leaving the projects to local Russian media, TASS News Agency.

As far back in August 2015, Lukoil also pulled out of the oil and gas exploration and drilling project that it had begun in Sierra Leone. According to Interfax, a local Russian Information Agency, the company did not currently have any projects and has backed away due to poor exploration results in Sierra Leone.

It reported that drilling in West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, did not bring Lukoil the expected results, as preliminary technical results did not demonstrate commercial hydrocarbon reserves. According to official reports, Lukoil has been active in a number of countries with a high level of political and economic risks that could

significantly complicate the work of the company in the region.

For Lukoil, while such a task of exploring the shores of the continent is daunting, it is necessary to make its own stimulating story in the media. Particularly at this time, when there are negative perceptions and skepticism in the local African media, it is also an opportunity to build bridges of corporate image, in spite of the competitive business environment, Russia still has much to offer Africa.

Russia's Lukoil is one of the world's biggest vertically integrated companies for the production of crude oil and gas, and their refining into petroleum products and petrochemicals. The company is a leader on Russian and international markets in its core business and its key mission is to harness natural energy resources for human benefit and supports long-term economic growth, social stability, prosperity and progress in the regions where it operates.



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A Mission To Unlock Africa's Wind Energy Potential With Siemens Gamesa

By Ajong Mbapndah L

When it comes to wind energy in Africa, Siemens Gamesa is not only a pioneer in the continent but has remained the undisputed leader. With an installed capacity of almost 4 GW, in countries such as Morocco, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Tunisia and Algeria, Siemens Gamesa has more than 52% market share on the continent when it comes to wind energy.

"The ultimate solution to Africa energy development is not necessarily from a single energy source," says Marcel Cabral, Head of Sales for Africa at Siemens Gamesa. Speaking in an interview with Pan African Visions, Cabral says Africa boasts a broad range of renewable energy resources, from wind and solar to geothermal and hydropower and its future prosperity requires a change from the current total reliance on conventional energy sources.

"We think that Africa could truly benefit from the post covid recovery with cleaner energy sources with wind energy playing a prominent role, and Siemens Gamesa is determined to lead this energy revolution," says Marcel Cabral.

Thanks for accepting to grant this interview could you start with an introduction of Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy?

Siemens Gamesa has been a pioneer of the wind industry for more than 40 years. It employs today more than 25,000 colleagues, who work at the center of the global energy revolution to tackle the most significant challenge of our generation: the climate crisis. It has today a leading position in onshore and offshore wind market as well as in service for wind turbines. Our aim is to build and deliver powerful and reliable wind energy solutions in strong partnership with our customers. It means that we run a global business with local impact. So far, we have installed close to 115 GW



Africa could benefit from the post covid recovery with cleaner energy sources , and Siemens Gamesa is determined to lead this energy revolution," says Marcel Cabral

worldwide.

How long has Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy been in Africa and in what parts of Africa do you do business?

In fact, 33 years ago, we were the first manufacturer to provide wind energy on the continent. The very first turbine was installed in 1989 in Somalia. Today, with an installed capacity of almost 4 GW, in countries such as Morocco, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Tunisia and Algeria, we have more than 52% market share on the continent. In 2017, we established the first blade factory in the entire MEA (Middle East and Africa) region in Morocco, Tangier, employing 600 employees today, of which more than 95% are local work force.

Specifically, and most recently, our large presence in the continent can be outlined as follows:

Egypt represents the largest and most rapidly evolving market for us today in terms of opportunities in Africa, with an installed capacity of 1,435 MW. Just this month, we completed the completion of our 250 MW West Bakr wind farm in partnership with Lekela Power. It represents the second private wind farm in the country.

In South Africa, ahead of schedule and just before the lockdown caused by Covid-19, we were able to complete two projects totaling 250 MW thanks to a major team effort.

In Morocco, we commissioned the 180 MW Midelt wind farm, part of the integrated 850MW program.

In Mauritania, our team completed the installation of 39 turbines for our 102 MW Boulénouar project.

Finally, we are very proud of both our recent market breakthrough: the 59 MW first wind project ever in Djibouti and the 100 MW Assela wind

project in Ethiopia.

Looking at the development trends and dynamics in Africa, how important are the services and products of Siemens Gamesa?

Africa is still heavily dependent on fossil fuels, representing 50% of the African energy mix, oil & gas as well as coal. Not only has bioenergy's share in the overall energy mix barely changed over the last 25 years, but it continues to dominate the primary energy mix, accounting for 60% of total energy use in the region and constituting a huge challenge to the continent. As a result, the adoption of renewable energy proffers a huge opportunity for most African countries seeking energy independence, reduction of exposure to unreliable energy imports and attainment of a state of energy security.

That said, the ultimate solution to Africa energy development is not necessarily from a single energy source, but rather a combination of several sources. Africa boasts a broad range of renewable energy resources, from wind and solar to geothermal and hydropower and its future prosperity requires a change from the current total reliance on conventional energy sources.

For that matter, a successful renewable energy transition needs a decent network development, appropriate policies to support a strong expansion of clean energy and emphasis on energy efficiency improvements. Countries like Morocco, Egypt and South Africa have demonstrated that this is possible through the launch of several programs combined with attractive incentives for the private sector and renewable energy targets aiming to become less dependent if not at all on imports of resources.

We think that Africa could truly benefit from the post covid recovery with cleaner energy sources, and

specifically wind energy, playing a prominent role. And we are determined to lead this energy revolution.

May we know the wind power potential of the continent and what advantages if any it may have over more touted forms of energy like Solar?

According to a study released in 2020 by International Finance Corporation, Africa's total potential equals about 180,000 TWh/year which can largely cover the entire continent's electricity demand. The wind resource is surprisingly distributed as per the following:

27 countries on their own could satisfy the entire continental electricity demand (17 of these have average capacity factors over 30%)

Many countries with no projects yet benefit from great potential:

Algeria: 24,980 TWh (34% in high wind)

Tanzania: 1,564 TWh potential (12% in high wind)

Malawi: 322 TWh potential (7% in high wind)

Namibia: 4,399 TWh (3% in high wind)

Nigeria, Cameroon, Mozambique, Ivory Coast ...

It is true that wind brings more benefits in comparison with Solar; wind produces at night and is



Siemens Gamesa has been a pioneer of the wind industry for more than 40 years.

less prominent on land. However, I believe that both technologies are complementary rather than opponents.

Can you cite us examples of countries in Africa that are tapping into the rich potential of wind energy?

Currently some of the markets with the strongest potential resources in wind power are Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Djibouti. Without any doubt, we are well aware of the important role wind energy

can play in powering Africa's growth, including job creation and industrial expansion, which is why, as a market leader, we are keen on marking our footprint further with the aim to help the continent accelerate its clean energy transition and stimulate economic growth in a sustainable manner.

In terms of cost, how affordable is it to harness wind energy and what kind of partnerships,

and opportunities are readily available with Siemens Gamesa for countries that are interested?

Currently, wind together with solar, are the most affordable energy sources, compared to gas, coal and nuclear. However, it requires a good planning of the electrical grid. A 2020 Nuclear Energy Agency and International Energy Agency study reports that levelized costs of renewable and nuclear energy generation are falling below that of fossil fuels.

In most of the represented countries, the levelized cost of energy for renewables is expected to be lower than that of coal- or gas-powered plants. For example, in the United States, onshore wind and solar power are expected to be, at an assumed emissions cost of \$30 per ton of CO₂, the least expensive to operate, followed by natural gas, offshore wind, nuclear and coal. In China and India, utility-scale solar power is reported as the least-cost option, followed by onshore wind and solar.

Nevertheless, these "cheap" affordable sources are of course dependent on the CO₂ emissions policy. In addition, they can be used only if conveniently integrated in the



Egypt represents the largest and most rapidly evolving market for Siemens Gamesa today in terms of opportunities in Africa, with an installed capacity of 1,435 MW.

electrical grid thanks to long term planning, investment and most important point, a clear political will to change the energy landscape.

So, the progress of a country towards a significant renewable energy share is a broader process than just looking at a specific wind farm or a solar plant.

In this context, Siemens Gamesa's role is only one of the soldiers of the clean energy army that should be raised by a country to address the renewable energy revolution.

We are strongly committed to tackle the world's biggest challenge and work relentlessly on bringing key players onboard, like international agencies, resource assessment specialist and grid planning specialists.

What role do you think Green Energy could play as Africa struggles to recover from the damage caused by COVID-19?

The energy sector is severely challenged by this crisis, which has slowed transport, trade and economic activity. With border closures and health emergency states, it has surely impacted our operations worldwide, and so therefore also in Africa.

While Siemens Gamesa has been focused towards business continuity supportive to our customer and stakeholder needs, it also has been involved in its commitment to improve lives through renewable energies as part of the immediate response to the COVID-19 outbreak. For this purpose, we have joined several calls to actions to urge governments to put the renewable energy sector at the heart of any recovery plans displayed as followed:

IRENA's Coalition for Action Calls for Green Recovery Based on Renewables, where we are putting forward recommendations on how governments can ensure a rapid and sustained economic recovery that aligns with climate and sustainability objectives.

The Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) "Green Recovery Industry" statement with an aim to lay out the key policy actions that must be put into motion to renew energy



According to a study released in 2020 by International Finance Corporation, Africa's total potential equals about 180,000 TWh per year

infrastructures.

The "Uniting Business and Governments to Recover Better" initiative, as signatories of the Science based targets initiative (signatories since Sep 2018) and UN Global Compact (Feb 2005)

The Green Recovery Alliance, where signatories are committed to support post-pandemic "stimulus transformation plans" that put the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss at the center of Europe's economic policy.

The RenewAfrica initiative where we remain committed to accelerate Africa's sustainable energy transition, which is aligned with the EU-Africa Strategy on Africa presented by the European Commission and the

European External Action Service on 9 March 2020.

We strongly believe that by making the energy transition an integral part of the wider recovery, we can achieve a more resilient and inclusive future for Africa.

In terms of the manpower needed for projects, what is Siemens Gamesa doing to create an African skill set to participate or handle some of the projects?

We are as local as possible when executing a project and when maintaining our wind turbines.

For example, in all the wind farms installed in Africa, when maintenance contracts are long term (>5 years),



Siemens Gamesa is as local as possible when executing a project and maintaining its wind turbines, says Marcel Cabral.

our Service team is 100% local.

Siemens Gamesa South Africa has a dedicated team focused on assisting and consulting entrepreneurs to establish businesses who can serve the company and other OEMs wind projects locally and sustainably. This approach of inclusion is generating a positive relationship between communities to and with the wind farms and most importantly jobs. The same effort as part of the overall business strategy is targeting to build up a South African supplier base for components and services required for the installation and maintenance of the wind farms.

Just to name some examples, components such as towers, cables, structural components for towers and foundations, fluids such as oil and other lubricants, transportation and work force have been localized nearly to 100%.

Nevertheless, we should not hide the reality: very few African countries are offering the needed volume to develop a local knowledge. With less than 10 project per year for 54 countries, you cannot expect to create a wind economic sector. That is why we urge the government to strongly push for the renewable energy development

There are other companies in the continent doing the same thing as Siemens Gamesa, or that may be coming in because of the potential, can you make the pitch as to why Africans should privilege business and partnership with Siemens Gamesa?

We are offering solution as good as any of our competitors, so the difference lies on the fact that we have been the first in the wind sector to bet strongly on Africa.

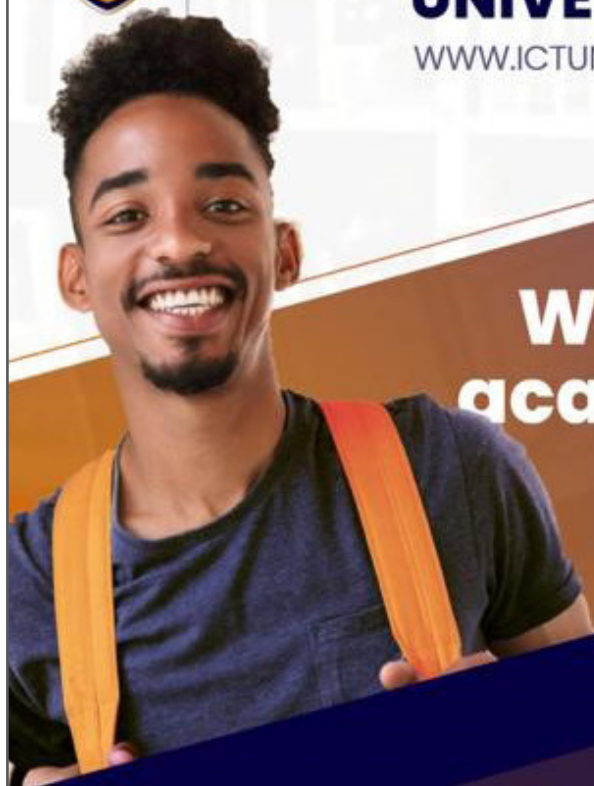
We are installed in 11 countries essentially with local resources and we have by far the biggest experience in complex countries like the African ones offering tailored products. That's why we are the natural choice for Africa



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Nigeria Still Firmly In Mind As Okey Sam Mbonu Launches Sons Of Thunder

By Ajong Mbatndah L

Far from allowing the COVID-19 confinement period to go to waste, the astute Nigerian Lawyer and Politician Okey Sam Mbonu put it to proper use with the publication of his first book *The "Sons of Thunder-An American Odyssey"* (SoT).

Recently, Mbonu, a former Presidential hopeful in Nigeria was joined by special guests at an exclusive resort in the Maryland suburbs for the U.S launch of the book. The guest list included high profile personalities like Prof Kingsley Moghalu, a former Deputy Chair of the Nigerian Central Bank and Presidential hopeful himself.

Beyond the book and the success of its launch, the big elephant at the event was the angst over precarious socio-economic and political developments in Nigeria as the sun slowly sets on the second and last term of President Buhari.

"Ordinary Nigerians are approaching their limits of tolerance, and somethings will snap and go into self-correction mode over the next one year or so," says Okey Sam Mbonu in an interview with Pan African Visions.

Accusing the bulk current of leaders of sleaze, Okey Sam Mbonu charges that the next president of Nigeria would need to be free of existing corruption baggage from the get-go as he mulls another presidential run to replace Buhari.

Sons of Thunder your first book is out, what finally pushed Okey Sam Mbonu into the world of publishing?

Okey Sam Mbonu: Well, this literary work has been long in coming, because I have been writing short stories worthy of publication since about age 12. However, as a multi-talented youth, one finds oneself trying out various career tracks, until one or two of them become dominant and takes a life of its own.



The book is the first foray into publishing for Okey Sam Mbonu.

What is the book about and when are the seminal messages you seek to share with readers?

Okey Sam Mbonu: The *"Sons of Thunder-An American Odyssey"* (SoT), is an anthology of Poetic Stories from socio-politics to spirituality, captured in a poetic rhythm. It is Art, Motivation, & Entertainment. It features the seminal works "Freedom", "Across the Potomac", "Faking in LA", "Frenemies", "Unity", "The Traitor", and others. The book captures my sojourn in the United States, and around the other 4 major continents, including Africa, Asia, and Europe over the past two decades. It is now on sale on Amazon worldwide.

The unique thing about the "SoT", is that the book is one of the few 21st Century works that is being rendered via Print, eBook, Audio, and Short Films! Thus, we are breaking new

grounds here, because ordinarily, it takes a while for a Book to go from print to Film.

How did your own checkered political experiences have in some of the content that you share?

Okey Sam Mbonu: At least fifty percent of the poetic stories are derived from my actual and practical socio-political experiences, including the vicious underbelly of emerging democracies, and also US socio-political issues. I wrote about the political treachery you can only learn on the fields, and not in political science classrooms, and also the highs and lows of the process. The book is full of intrigues, entertainment, and deep reflections, rendered in a simple, and easy to digest format.

May we get some of the feedback you have received from readers?

Okey Sam Mbonu: The work has received some interim phenomenal reviews, featuring phrases like, "utterly awesome", "inspiring", "powerful verses", "deep and cerebral", and "A must read". Reviews are still pouring in as at press time.

For those who are interest in procuring copies of the book, where can they get copies?

Ans: A simple search on Amazon.com, for "Okey Samuel Mbonu" will bring folks face to face with the book. or they may follow the below amazon link: https://www.amazon.com/Sons-Thunder-Okey-Samuel-Mbonu/dp/Bo8KQBYM2D/ref=sr_1_2?crid=34JQMR7MHQOXN&dchilid=1&keywords=okey+samuel+mbonu&qid=1633548156&sprefix=Okey+Samu%2Caps%2C159&sr=8-2

What is your reading of political developments in Nigeria today?

Okey Sam Mbonu : Nigeria is currently on a fast descent to unknown territory. Security has become a nightmare, not just in Nigeria's restive Northeast and Northwest, where Boko Haram and Bandits reign, but now in the venerable Southeast and Southwest regions, which provide the bulk of the material resources that the elites feed on, with voracious frenzy.

Even as a new-generation candidate, and I belong to a forum of former Presidential Candidates and Aspirants, where we brainstorm on national issues; we find that the nation is so skewed along north-south and religious lines, that a major socio-cultural shakeup will need to happen, among the populace, for the nation to thrive. What Nigerian masses miss, is that there are actually just two tribes in Nigeria, i.e.: the less than one million thoroughly corrupt leaders of the past 20 years, versus the 200

million other Nigerians, who wake-up and hustle all day, and live from hand to mouth.

Nevertheless, southern Nigeria is thriving with a default evolving economy, while many parts of northern Nigeria are suffering from the crushing load of too many mouths to feed, and a relentless hold on the economy by the regional leaders. Banditry and Boko Haram are clear evidence that an unscripted revolution started way before now, and many of these areas are now designated no-go areas, with their elites escaping to the Capital Abuja, where they barricade themselves in high-end mansions, and perhaps corner over 50 percent of the nation's available police force for protection. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that Bandits maybe closing in on the capital. 2023 will be a major test of sovereignty in Africa's most populous republic.

As critical as you are, what are some of the things that President Buhari got right?

Okey Sam Mbonu: Well, President Buhari may have kept some public sleaze at bay, by holding in-check, many federal public servants in Abuja, who were previously on a corruption rampage in the capital, where mid-level public servants under Mr. Jonathan, would just embezzle hundreds of millions of USD under

their agency, without fear of prosecution. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), under Mr. Bawa, may have become more effective in the past one year, since a new Chairman was appointed to replace a controversial past chairman Mr. Magu, who has been accused of substantial corruption.

Politics in Nigeria has been dominated in the last couple of decades by the APC and the PDP, do you think the presence of a third vibrant front will be beneficial to Nigerian politics?

Okey Sam Mbonu: Yes, if the new front is populated with a mix of old-hands and new-generation candidates, ideally tested in the global arena, like some of my colleagues with global credentials. However, the two dominant parties APC & PDP may undergo substantial shakeups internally, that the newly emerged status may provide the populace themselves direct and indirect opportunities for change. That moment may be close.



I wrote about the political treachery you can only learn on the fields, and not in political science classrooms, says Okey Sam Mbonu.

As President Buhari's second and last mandate grinds to an end, what kind of qualities or profile do you think the next Nigerian leader must have?

Okey Sam Mbonu: The next president of Nigeria would need to be free of existing corruption baggage from the get-go, or else they

will not have the moral fortitude to fight corruption. 98% of the current leaders are entangled with sleaze, even if they have cleverly maneuvered their way around the current court system in Nigeria, to remain out of jail. However, ordinary Nigerians are approaching their limits of tolerance, and somethings will snap and go into self-correction mode over the next one year or so.

You were in the running for the last election, does Okey Sam Mbonu still nurse Presidential ambitions, and will he be in the running to replace President Buhari?

Okey Sam Mbonu: There's a good chance that I'll be in the race. Our campaign team is gathering substantial feedback on the ground and building the necessary relationships for a more formidable run, via the primaries of whoever emerges the next two big parties. This time, my team's efforts may be channeled differently than in the last run. We're getting stronger by the day.



The next president of Nigeria would need to be free of existing corruption baggage from the get-go, says Okey Sam Mbonu who has not ruled out another presidential run

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Rwanda: How Rusesabagina's Trial Drew Controversy

By Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti



Mr Rusesabagina was slammed with a heavy jail sentence on terrorism charges . Photo credit AFP.

Few trials in recent times have attracted the kind of local and international attention in Rwanda as that of Paul Rusesabagina who previously became famous thanks to the Hotel Rwanda film that depicted him as a hero who saved the lives of over 1000 people during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis.

Rusesabagina who lived in Belgium and USA for years became a critic of the Rwandan government years back and could be heard on several platforms publicly bashing the Kagame administration.

He later, according to several accounts formed The Rwandan Movement for Democratic Change (MRCD in French acronym) which later had The Forces for National Liberation (FLN, also in French) as its military wing.

The arrest

Rusesabagina was arrested in August 2020 by the Rwandan government when the Private Board he had boarded from Dubai landed to the Kigali International Airport.

The Private Jet was initially

boarded to take him to Burundi's capital city of Bujumbura where he had a meeting according to Rusesabagina and his lawyer. When he got out of the plane, still thinking he had landed in Bujumbura he was handcuffed and taken to police custody.

Following the arrest, Rusesabagina, his family and some international networks announced that he was abducted and illegally detained, allegations the government of Rwanda denied saying that Rusesabagina brought himself to Rwanda and was arrested on terror related accusations.

Seven month-trial

Rusesabagina was tried along with 20 other suspects accused of terror related crimes committed in separate periods where FLN attacked civilians via Nyungwe forest, killing innocent people, injuring others, and looting property.

All the suspects were arrested in separate operations including those arrested in DR Congo forests and were brought to book during the same trial with Rusesabagina.

They were tried by the High Court Chamber for International and Cross-border Crimes, a trial covered abundantly by both local and international media.

Besides, the lengthy trial of more than seven months was attended by dignitaries including Ambassadors and country representatives .It is worth noting that Rusesabagina denied being a Rwanda but rather said he had a Belgium nationality who was abducted and illegally detained and prayed the court to release him.

The court however denied the allegation and said it had the obligation to try anyone who committed the crime on Rwandan soil and decided to continue the trial.

Rusesabagina pulled out of the trial and decided not to attend any court session as he expected no fair trial.

The court proceeded with the trial in the presence of Rusesabagina's co-accused and on 20, September 2021; handed a 25-year-jail term after it found him guilty of terror related crimes. Specifically, the Court found Rusesabagina guilty of creating and committing acts of terrorism.

At least nine unarmed civilians lost their lives in militia attacks claimed by FLN, the military wing of Paul Rusesabagina's MRCD political coalition. Rusesabagina's trial attracted controversy between his supporters and those who thought he had committed serious crimes. Some believed it was the right sentence while others thought he was criminalized due to his criticism against the government.

"The lengthy trial of 21 members of FLN has exposed the terrorist activities of the armed group led by Rusesabagina. The evidence against the accused was indisputable, and Rwandans will feel safer now that justice has been delivered," said Yolande Makolo, the Government of Rwanda's spokesperson.

"The trial has been a long and painful ordeal for the victims of FLN attacks, particularly for those who were called upon to testify. Our thoughts are with these brave witnesses, and the family and friends of the victims," she added.

Sarah Jackson, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for

East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes questioned the merits of the 25-year jail sentence handed to Paul Rusesabagina .

«Amnesty International noted numerous fair trial violation - including Rusesabagina's arrest under false pretences and unlawful transfer to Rwanda, enforced disappearance and incommunicado detention following his rendition to Rwanda,” Sarah said.

«These fair trial violations must be effectively remedied. Victims and survivors of attacks attributed to the National Liberation Forces deserve justice,” Sarah added.

«Fair trial violations in the case were a disservice to the course of justice and to the victims and survivors of the attacks for which Rusesabagina and others were accused of being responsible.» Noted Sarah.

According to accounts, both by witnesses and his co-accused, Rusesabagina co-founded the MRCD coalition that had political oversight over the militia group whose



*The trial and fate of Paul Rusesabagina has drawn considerable international attention.
Photo credit REUTERS ,Clement Uwiringiyimana.*

operational bases oscillated between Burundi and DR Congo. At least nine people were killed during the attacks by FLN.

Documents submitted to the court by the prosecution pinned Rusesabagina on coordinating

the purchase of armed and other military-grade merchandise which were then used to launch attacks on Rwandan territory, killing civilians. Former FLN spokesperson and Rusesabagina's deputy Callixte Nsabimana, alias Sankara, one of

the defendants who pleaded guilty, was sentenced to 20 years in prison, with the other defendants receiving sentences ranging from three to 20 years.

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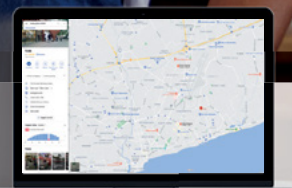
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Cameroon: Surge In Targeted Attacks On Police Officers

By Andrew Nsoseka



A video widely circulated on social media showed a policeman in an all out fight with a civilian in Douala, the economic capital.

Of recent in Cameroon, anti-police sentiments have ushered in an ugly trend, whereby police officers on traffic control and posts stationed around the country are increasingly being battered by citizens.

The disturbing trend peaked in August this year, as incidents of citizens beating up police officers as well as other law enforcement officers became widespread, animating Cameroon's social media space, to the amusement of many who are increasingly developing anti-law enforcement officers' sentiments. In very extreme cases, some road users have been seen in videos, running over police officers with their cars. The attacks are mostly blamed on bullying, forceful extortion of bribes, little disagreements on traffic control, and sometimes payback for old-dated victimisation.

Videos of such scenes are usually filmed by bystanders and uploaded on social media, and such usually trend for days, before the next incident, maybe more cruel, funny, or

entertaining is uploaded. At one time, it became some sort of an experiment of who can land the deadliest blow or punishment on a law enforcement officer. Though such assault on the law enforcement officers usually ended up with the aggressor punished, many still disturbingly embraced the trend.

Police Officers Paying Price For Regime's Unpopularity?

The present regime, Biya regime governing Cameroon, has been in place for close to four decades, and have largely succeeded by using law enforcement officers to clamp down on dissenting voices. As such, with things quickly falling apart and the regime increasingly becoming unpopular throughout the country, the use of police and other law enforcement forces to hold the grip of the country and keep it together has mostly been the only working solution. In this light, force has been employed even on the most peaceful dissenting voice in Cameroon, to keep things in control.

Firstly, in Anglophone regions of

the country now in a five-year and ongoing war, when the crisis started as protest marches, law enforcement officers were drafted and they reigned terror on protesters, killing some, maiming others and imprisoning a majority, for merely protesting peacefully.

Later on, after the October 7 presidential election in Cameroon, during which one of the candidates Maurice Kamto declared that he won, law enforcement officers were again drafted and used to quell protests. Kamto party's Cameroon Renaissance Movement protest were often met with brute force and the imprisonment of hundreds, most of who are still in pre-trial detention years after, for merely protesting.

In other situations, the police and gendarmes have been seen involved in human rights abuses, especially severe torture of suspects in their custody. In exchanges with citizens, most officers, probably taking advantage of their privileged position as a corps holding the country together and most relied on by the

ruling class, have not spared the opportunity to brag how they can get away with anything.

These, and many more have only helped to build bitter sentiments against the law enforcement officers. As such, when some citizens decided to humiliate officers or attack them, film the acts and upload on social media, many others were emboldened and picked up the trend.

Also, many citizens who are following up developments in the war against separatist fighters in Anglophone regions have seen how vulnerable law enforcement officers can be when challenged. Before 2016, it was unthinkable for a civilian to even be rude to a police officer, talk less of a gendarme or army officer. The government had known this and used it to its advantage, to silence dissenting voices. As such when something like the Anglophone crisis started, law enforcement was immediately unleashed to brutally subdue it. When it failed and the crisis prolonged years after with several casualties on the state forces,

many started to question their perceived mightiness. This too helped to embolden them to start standing up to the officers when tensions or disagreements pop up.

The use of law enforcement officers in almost every circumstance has rather made many Cameroonians perceive the corps as a private militia of the ruling establishment. In several cases, it suffices for a high ranking official to have a disagreement with a citizen, and then order for his or her arrest. Such incidents are usually meant to show off their power and often end with the less influential or downtrodden humiliatingly detained for weeks without cause. Also, in cases where two persons disagree, justice often swings in favour of the one who pays more bribes, or the one who knows someone in high places. These and many more have only helped in antagonising the citizens against law enforcement officers.

Minster Of Territorial Administration Wades In To End Assault Of Officers

To end the frightening trending practice, Cameroon's Minister of territorial administration, Paul Atanga Nji alongside the Delegate



There seems to be a strong crisis of confidence in relations between the police and civilians.

General of National Security, Martin Mbarga Nguete organised a press conference on September 10, 2021, during which he empowered regional Governors to sanction assaulters of law enforcement officers.

"Regional Governors have now been given strict instructions on

how to handle irresponsible persons who attack police officers on duty... such disrespectful and derogatory behaviours towards security officers shall be sanctioned accordingly as provided for, by the law," Minister Atanga Nji told the press.

He went on to cite provisions of

the law criminalising assaults on law enforcement officers. He used the event to remind citizens to file complaints against police officers, instead of assaulting them.

However, even after the Minister and the delegate for National Security rounded up their press conference sounding warnings, the acts continued, as more officers were assaulted, and the acts taped and uploaded on social media.

The only way of the scourge, seemingly, is to build back the trust lost by law enforcement officers. As such, beyond words, they have to act in ways that can earn back their lost respect in the eyes of citizens. Threats to use more lethal force has failed to deter many from refraining from the acts, as they now seemingly believe that all can bleed, including law enforcement officers. As proven in the case of the Anglophone crisis, the threat or use of force can only help to deteriorate the situation, especially when instead of backing away, citizens are finding a way of resorting to jungle justice which massages their egos as a means of getting back to those making life uncomfortable for them.



Regional Governors have now been given strict instructions on how to handle irresponsible persons who attack police officers on duty, says Territorial Administration Minister Paul Atanga Nji

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South Sudan Overwhelmed By Violence, Floods And Corruption

By Deng Machol

Despite the peace deal, South Sudan continues to be “overwhelmed” by violence, floods and corruption, endangering efforts from East Africa’s youngest nation to establish lasting peace and get on the road to sustainable development.

Since independence, South Sudanese have experienced alarming levels of violence which have destabilized communities with many living in abject poverty. However, the 2018 revitalized peace deal inked by president Salva Kiir and his rival, Deputy President Dr. Riek Machar has elapsed without security arrangements.

Tragically, these delays of security arrangements as stipulated in the fragile peace deal have resulted in the country entering a new period of extreme violence and insecurity due to the proliferation of armed groups across the country.

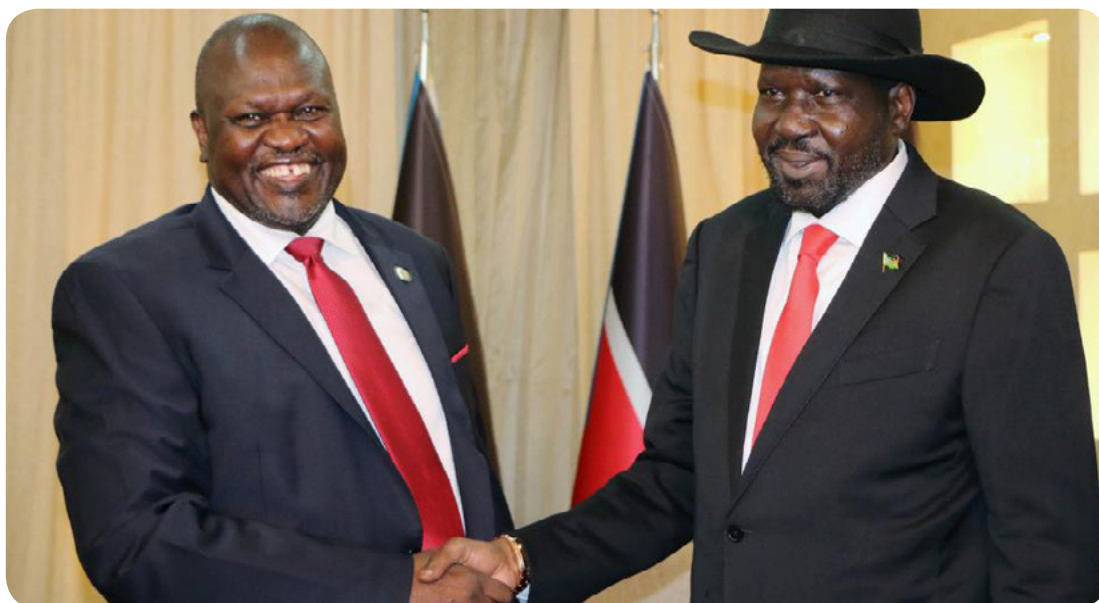
The current situation is thus precarious and risks returning South Sudan to renewed cycles of armed conflict and community-based militias who were responsible for almost all killings, injuries, abductions and sexual violence.

Beyond Juba, widespread lawlessness and violence has intensified, with devastating effect on the people of South Sudan.

The death toll from the violence continues to rise, and more than 4.3 million people have been displaced. Eighty percent of the population is said to be living in extreme poverty, with more than 7.2 million said to be food insecure, according to the UN.

The security situation in South Sudan is extremely precarious as the SPLM IO of Dr. Machar has been considerably weakened by ongoing defections of key IO Commanders including most recently that of General Simon Gatwech to join General Johnson Olony.

Several clashes between the two factions in the Upper Nile region



The promise of a prosperous South Sudan was truncated by a vicious feud between President Kiir and Deputy President Salva Kiir.

left many dead and displaced, with the number of civilian casualties estimated to be more than 300.

These fresh clashes in Upper Nile and Western Equatoria States pose a threat to the fragile peace deal in the country.

Massacre in Tambura

Between June and August this year, more than 200 civilians were reportedly massacred in the deadly ethnic conflict in Tambura in Western Equatoria, with women and children reportedly raped and sexually violated before being murdered.

The reported number of people displaced by the conflict is said to be between over 100, 000 with thousands fleeing to neighboring Western Bahr el Ghazal State, and Ezo County.

Reports indicate that thousands of others have fled to Yambio town and other parts of South Sudan. Many people have also fled to the Central African Republic.

Around 2500 IDPs are reportedly under the protection of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The UNICEF has also reported

on the increased number of unaccompanied and separated children following the Tambura violence.

The UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan said it is armed forces -sponsored’ violence, that triggered the deadly violence between the Azande and Balanda tribes.

The Commission has also said that the bodies of civilians killed were left to decompose on the outskirts of Tambura, without a proper burial.

The UN Commission on Human Rights Ms. Yasmin Sooka says some of the victims – mostly women and children – were “raped and sexually violated before being murdered”.

“The conflict in Tambura, between the Azande and Balanda communities, is said to have been fueled by armed forces belonging to the South Sudan Peoples Defense Forces, and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army in Opposition both of whom are supplying arms and ammunition to the Azande and Balanda tribes, respectively,” said Sooka in her ongoing address to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland last month.

The emergence of an ethnic conflict

in Western Equatoria is alarming, for an area that has in recent years not witnessed such ethnic violence.

The Commission notes that 9 of the 10 States in South Sudan are experiencing alarming levels of conflict. The violence in Warrap and Lakes states are of particular concern. No part of South Sudan has been left unscathed and the number of unlawful killings in Central Equatoria is also on the increase and is second only to Warrap in terms of scale.

According to the Commission, political elites are reported to be active participants and enablers of the violence.

«Any government which does not prioritize the protection of the rights of citizens cannot expect to enjoy internal or external legitimacy,» argued Sooka. «South Sudan’s leaders need to renew their commitments to pursue the prosperity and safety of their citizens; respect for rights and accountability for violations, and reconciliation are necessary elements which are long overdue. Otherwise, the cycles of violence and violations in South Sudan will continue.»

Edmund Yakani, Executive Director of Community for

Empowerment Organization (CEPO) said the «transitional government is yet to announce intervention strategies to end the Tombura's deadly ethnic clashes».

«The situation is calm, but it is easy to break again for violence,» said Yakani.

Meanwhile, the CTSAMM urges the peace granters (IGAD and R-JMEC) to double their efforts in pushing parties to the deal to ensure cessation of hostilities across the country.

«CTSAMVM calls on IGAD and R-JMEC to urge the parties to agreement to ensure their forces do not get involved, and that all stakeholders work for a peaceful resolution,» said Maj. General Teshome Gemechu Adire, CTSAMVM chairperson.

Human rights crisis

The chairperson of the Commission of Human Rights in South Sudan, Ms. Sooka, underlined that since last March, the human rights situation in the country had deteriorated considerably and that a human rights crisis of «epic» proportions is unfolding in a dramatic way.

She noted that there has been an increase in extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances and torture as well as rape and conflict-related sexual violence.

The Government's intolerance of criticism has also led to a brutal attack on fundamental freedoms and the suppression of dissent, using excessive force against civilians, she said.

According to the UN Mission in South Sudan, (UNMISS), the three-month period saw 585 people killed, 305 injured and thousands forcibly displaced throughout the country – particularly in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

Despite the myriad of allegations of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, progress in the fight against impunity has

been minimal.

The Commission warned that the humanitarian community in the country is increasingly under ambush and attack across the country, resulting in the suspension of their activities and the relocation of aid workers, desperately in need of services.

Since March this year, humanitarian workers, serving the community, have been ambushed and their convoys attacked in at least eight of the ten states in South Sudan.

South Sudan was ranked seventh among 8 countries in the world with the worst humanitarian crises.

US\$73 million taken

Ms. Sooka however also maintained that the country's leaders have continued to divert «staggering amounts of money from the country's public coffers, something that undermines human rights and

endanger people's security in the fragile country.

According to investigations carried out by the Commission, which are only a «tip of the iceberg,» more than \$73 million was been siphoned since 2018 by political elites. She also noted that this figure is only a fraction of the overall amount looted, as South Sudan's ruling elites had diverted more than \$4 billion, since 2012 – the year after independence.

This includes significant sums of money required to deal with the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. Cases of corruption, including embezzlement, bribery, and the misappropriation of funds, have involved senior politicians and government officials, international corporations, and multinational banks.

In some instances, the proceeds were used to purchase high-end real estate in foreign countries.



Refugees in Ayilo gathering for WFP rations .The Humanitarian crisis in South Sudan remains of great concern.Photo credit Karen Coates.

«Corruption has become endemic and rapacious,» said Sooka.

South Sudan Auditor General Steven Kilona Wundu also echoed that millions of IMF funding were diverted to individuals.

South Sudan received \$52.33 million in November 2020 meant mainly for payment of salaries amid the economic setback caused by the covid 19 pandemic. But the country's elites have denied it.

Floods

The 2021 flooding levels in the country were alarming in seven of 10 states including Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, Western Equatoria, and Upper Nile.

According to UNOCHA, more than 466,000 people in South Sudan have been affected by flooding in areas along the Nile and Lol rivers and Sudd marshlands since May, and 22 of the country's 78 counties are impacted.

Many people had reportedly succumbed to heavy flooding with thousands of households destroyed. The floodwaters have resulted to water-borne diseases such as typhoid, diarrhea, and cholera, malaria, and bilharzia infections.

In South Sudan, the floodwaters continue rise and rivers deluge farmland, swallowing up livestock.

South Sudan has faced a series of economic and political crises, and is struggling to recover from the aftermath of a country's civil war that left nearly 400,000 people dead and uprooted four million people from their homes

Although, a power-sharing deal between President Kiir and his deputy Machar still largely holds, it is repeatedly tested, with little progress made in fulfilling the terms of the fragile peace deal. Despite been a very oil rich country, the people of South Sudan are yet to see any major change in their lives from the oil proceeds.



Thatched huts surrounded by floodwaters are seen from the air in Old Fangak county, Jonglei state, South Sudan.Photo credit Maura Ajak,AP.



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African Leaders Voice Concern Over Covid-19 Vaccine Inequitable Distribution at UNGA

By Prince Kurupati

The latter weeks of September 2021 saw world leaders from various countries across the globe gather in Washington, US to attend the United Nations General Assembly. Owing to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, some world leaders addressed the General Assembly virtually. Amongst the African leaders who addressed the General Assembly, one topic remained a constant that is, the wide disparity in accessing Covid-19 vaccines.

Leader after leader from African countries that attended the General Assembly lamented the little access to the Covid-19 life-saving shots stating that the lack of access was not due to shortage of the vaccines but rather, the inequitable distribution of vaccines. This according to many leaders who addressed the General Assembly has made Africa to lag behind in terms of the percentage of vaccinated populations something which in the long run will end up disrupting and slowing down Africa's recovery plans from the pandemic.

In his speech, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said that in light of the devastating Covid-19 pandemic, "the greatest defence that humanity has" are the vaccines. Unfortunately for Africa, access to this great defence is very much limited and a great cause of concern. "It is, therefore, a great concern that the global community has not sustained the principles of solidarity and cooperation in securing equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines... It is an indictment on humanity that more than 82 per cent of the world's vaccine doses have been acquired by wealthy countries, while less than 1 per cent has gone to low-income countries," Ramaphosa said.

To address the inequitable

distribution of the vaccines, President Ramaphosa called for the temporary waive of certain intellectual property rights established by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) so as to allow more countries more so low to middle income countries the opportunity to produce their own Covid-19 vaccines.

The sentiments echoed by the South African President were also reinforced by his Namibian counterpart President Hage Geingob who said the Covid-19 vaccines inequitable distribution is akin to "vaccine apartheid". The Namibian President said that it was appalling that while many people in low to middle income countries were yet to receive their first doses, some wealthy nations are already talking about booster jabs. This showing that they have unrestricted access to the vaccines. Some of the countries that have already began administering booster jabs include the United States, Israel, Germany, France and

the United Kingdom.

Angolan President Joao Lourenco weighed in on the argument by President Geingob saying the administration of booster jabs by wealthy nations clearly showcases the shocking disparity between some nations and others with respect to accessing Covid-19 vaccines. "These disparities allow for third doses to be given, in some cases, while, in other cases, as in Africa, the vast majority of the population has not even received the first dose."

According to Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, while wealthy nations may hoard the vaccines and use their financial muscle to access the vaccines easily, success in totally eradicating Covid-19 will only be achieved once everyone is safe. The Zimbabwean President said that no one is safe until everyone is safe when it comes to the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, instead of hoarding vaccines, it's much safer and

more important to ensure that there is a general balance when it comes to vaccine distribution and administration worldwide. In his pre-recorded address, President Mnangagwa said, "The hoarding and inequitable distribution with the resultant uneven vaccination patterns across the globe is not acceptable... Vaccine nationalism is self-defeating and contrary to the mantra that no one is safe until everyone is safe."

The cries by African leaders must be heard according to Benido Impouma, a programme director with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Africa programme. In a statement, Impouma said that though the cases have been on a downward trend in recent weeks in Africa, the shortage of vaccines makes the emergence of a 4th wave on the continent

inevitable and once it happens, indications are that it will be more devastating than all the other waves. "Fresh increases in cases should be expected in the coming months... Without widespread vaccination and other public and social measures, the continent's fourth wave is likely to be the worst, the most brutal yet," Impouma said.

The UN in response to the cries of vaccine inequitable distribution in the past called for dose-sharing. This entails wealthy countries that have access to large quantities of vaccines donating them to countries in need. By the time the 2021 General Assembly commenced, the UN health agency said that only 15 per cent of promised donations had reached the intended beneficiaries. The UN thus implored the wealthy nations to make good on their promises to ensure that those in need in low to middle income countries can receive Covid-19 vaccines.



The global community has not sustained the principles of solidarity and cooperation in securing equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines , says South African President Cyril Ramaphosa



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HOPE Consortium accelerates global vaccination through rapid deployment of medical and logistics staff in Africa

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Nigeria, September 2021 – Abu Dhabi's HOPE Consortium, which offers one of the most capable and effective vaccine supply chains in the world, has extended its value proposition to include in-country vaccination services across Africa with the aim of accelerating global immunisation and eliminating vaccine wastage.

The new solution is unique in the COVID-19 immunisation space as it combines end-to-end vaccine delivery with rapid on-ground deployment of medical and logistics experts, staff and equipment. The combined service will enable countries and communities with limited medical and logistical capacities to absorb the delivered vaccine supplies and inoculate their populations safely and efficiently, with minimal disruption to operations of the local health delivery services.

The HOPE Consortium has partnered with Via Medica International Healthcare, a leading

global health care provider with a strong track record in international medical support work to deliver the services. Working together, the partners are combining the HOPE Consortium's unique end-to-end supply chain solution with Via Medica's proven capability to deploy on-ground medical experts, immunisation management teams, and equipment.

In Africa, the partners have already begun implementing stage one of the programme, which includes assessing existing on-ground logistics and medical capabilities and infrastructure, and initial deployment of a mobile team of 15 members. The team includes doctors and nurses that work to establish local immunisation hubs needed to coordinate the administration of the vaccines, maintain patient records and track the progress of national vaccination efforts, in strict adherence to local patient privacy regulations and requirements.

In the second stage, the programme will be scaled up to include a team of up to 40 members tasked with setting-up regional vaccination centres equipped with medical equipment and supplies, storage freezers for vaccines and power generation units. Two fully equipped mobile vaccination vehicles, airlifted from Abu Dhabi, will augment the team's reach beyond the established regional vaccination centres.

The partners are also deploying logistics experts to ensure that the sensitive vaccine supplies are stored and handled in the required storage environments, thus minimising the risk of vaccine wastage. In order to "future proof" the effort, the HOPE Consortium's team will be training the local medical and logistical staff to ensure that the country's immunisation drive can continue on an efficient course.

Robert Sutton, Head of Logistics Cluster, Abu Dhabi Ports, said: "The launch of our in-country support

service is a recognition that delivering vaccines alone is simply not enough, and that we need to go one step further. While the global community stands united in our common need for the vaccines, many parts of the world may not have the capacity nor expertise to absorb these sensitive supplies safely and efficiently. This leads to potential vaccine wastage which is a major problem at a time when the global demand greatly outstrips the global supply. This is why together with our partners at Via Medica, the HOPE Consortium is working closely with countries and communities on-ground to deliver a sustainable immunisation solution that ensures that every vaccine delivered is a vaccine administered.

"The introduction of the service is a clear demonstration of our commitment and capability to deploy our resources rapidly and develop a coordinated, collaborative and scalable model that will help inoculate those in need regardless of where in

the world they may find themselves. We look forward to working with other partners, countries and communities in delivering on our common goal of mass and equitable global immunisation.”

Speaking on the partnership, Frank Ludick, CEO-International of Via Medica, said: “We are pleased of our partnership with the HOPE Consortium and the opportunity to bring our expertise and innovations to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. We aim to counter the risks associated with a pandemic like COVID-19 through our rapid medical deployment teams, in-country temperature control procedures, and robust and integrated IT systems. Combining the HOPE Consortium’s unique logistical capabilities and geographical proximity to 3.6 billion people, with Via Medica’s capabilities as a last mile provider, we are mitigating potential vaccine spoilage and ensuring that vital vaccine supplies can reach the global community in the time of need.”

The HOPE Consortium is a public-private partnership that has evolved into a leading international effort, broadening its global transport and delivery of all kinds of vaccines capabilities by attracting new partners including Agility, Aramex, Bolloré Logistics, CEVA Logistics,



DB Schenker, DHL, FedEx Express, Expeditors, Hellmann, Kuehne + Nagel, MICCORSA Global, UPS, and Via Medica.

About The HOPE Consortium:

The HOPE Consortium is an Abu Dhabi-based public-private partnership offering a unique end-to-end supply chain solution capable of delivering large quantities of COVID-19 vaccines, from production

to those in need, anywhere in the world, safely, transparently and efficiently.

The HOPE Consortium has pooled the collective expertise of its partners to provide multi-faceted logistics services to handle transport, demand planning, sourcing, training, and digital technology infrastructure, to facilitate vaccine availability across the world.

Comprising of leading Abu Dhabi

entities, the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi Ports, Etihad Cargo, Rafed, SkyCell, and Maqta Gateway, as well as a wide body of global logistics players, the HOPE Consortium is developing capacity to transport, store, and distribute 18 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses per annum.

The HOPE Consortium’s founding partners consist of the Department of Health Abu Dhabi, Etihad Cargo, Abu Dhabi Ports, Maqta Gateway, Rafed, and SkyCell.

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Everything in Place to Vaccinate Entire Adult Population - South African President

By Prince Kurupati

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa recently stated that his country is ready to vaccinate the entire adult population. The South African President said that measures have been taken by his government to ensure that the entire adult population in the country receives a shot of the life saving Covid-19 vaccine.

Answering to questions during a Question-and-Answer session in the South African House of Assembly, the South African President said that his government has worked tirelessly in recent months and its efforts have paid dividends as the country has managed to source Covid-19 vaccines which can be administered to the entire South African adult population. Ramaphosa said that the projections at the current moment point to December as the period by which the entire adult population may all have been vaccinated – albeit considering the willingness of the population to receive the jabs.

With regards to the issue of willingness of citizens to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, President Ramaphosa said that the vaccine is not mandatory. However, in order to ensure that the country quickly recovers from the pandemic, it's important for all citizens to consider getting vaccinated. "if we can vaccinate a large proportion of our population, particularly the adult population, by December, we can avoid another devastating wave of infections and restrictions on the economy... Those who refuse to be vaccinated are increasing the risks for all of us, not only for further resurgence of infections, but of prolonged economic hardship and lack of recovery," Ramaphosa said.

Ramaphosa went further to state that South Africa should heed to science when it comes to the fight against Covid-19. He stated that rumours should be shunned at all cost as they may lead to loss of lives. "Let us live up; to be a nation that does



President Ramaphosa was among the first South Africans to take the COVID 19 vaccine. Photo credit twitter.

things on the basis of science and on the basis of facts and knowledge... We could be a nation that relies on rumour and rumour that vaccines don't work, and I don't think South Africans, we want to be defined as a nation that just relies on rumours," he said.

A few weeks after the South African President gave a promising response with regards to the country's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and vaccine administration, Ramaphosa further relaxed the country's Covid-19 restrictions. The move was widely regarded as a clear testament to the truthfulness of Ramaphosa's sentiments that the country is on the right path in regard to vaccine distribution and that the entire adult population (if willing) may be fully vaccinated by December this year.

In his address to the nation announcing the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, President Ramaphosa said that "To date, we have administered over 17 million vaccine doses. Over 8.6 million people are fully vaccinated, which is more than one fifth of the adult population." Current population statistics in the country state that

the country has a population of over 60 million. In order to reach the country's target of vaccinating the entire adult population by December, President Cyril Ramaphosa said that his administration will need to "administer an additional 16 million vaccine doses this year, which amounts to around 250,000 first dose vaccinations every single workday of every week until mid-December."

As a way of achieving the vaccination target, President Ramaphosa said that his administration is launching the Vooma Vaccination Weekends campaign. He said that his administration has noted the difficulties encountered when it comes to vaccinating the public during weekdays especially those who go to work. As such, starting from the weekend of October 1st, the Department of Health will be setting up mobile vaccination sites in priority districts in each province. For the success of this programme, President Ramaphosa called upon leaders from "across the political spectrum, civil society, religious leaders, traditional leaders, labour and business" to mobilise communities to stay safe and get vaccinated.

The recent relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in South Africa saw the country move from Adjusted Alert Level 2 to Level 1. The move according to President Ramaphosa was a direct response to the success the country has recorded in its Covid-19 vaccine administration drive together with efforts to boost economic activity in the country.

Some of the measures that will apply as part of Alert Level 1 include the reduction of curfew hours (curfew now starting at 12 midnight until 4 am), an increase in the number of people gathering indoors from 250 to 750 and those gathering outdoors from 500 to 2000, an increase in the number of people attending funerals, night vigils and after funeral proceedings from 50 to 100 and the resumption of alcohol sales for both off-site and on-site consumption adhering to normal license provisions. President Ramaphosa however advised the nation that the wearing of masks in public places is still mandatory, and failure to wear a mask when required remains a criminal offence.

In Era of Black Lives Matter, The Movie CRACKA is Timely- Actor Hakeem Kae-Kazim

By Ajong Mbapndah L

A present-day white supremacist is mysteriously transported back into an alternate past where African Americans rule the land and whites are enslaved is the storyline in CRACKA, starring the British-Nigerian actor Hakeem Kae-Kazim.

"The issues in the movie are very important to the current climate and what has been going on in society over the past few years, especially with the Black Lives Matter movement," says the high-profile actor in a Q & A with Pan African Visions.

Hello Hakeem, thank you for taking the time to be interviewed by us. Could you please introduce the film CRACKA for us?

Cracka is a story which is set in a world where the history and story of America is subtly reversed.

How did you land the role and what were some the things you found exciting about it?

The producer and director got in touch and offered me the character of Dex. The reversal of the slave narrative peaked my interest and I wanted to know and see where this journey would take not only the character but also me.

In the contemporary world of today, how important are the issues raised in the movie?

The issues in the movie are very important to the current climate and what has been going on in society over the past few years, especially with the



The issues in the movie are very important in context of the Black Lives Matter movement and other issues says Hakeem Kae-Kazim. Photo credit Julia Janse Van Vuuren.

Black Lives Matter movement. This film is incredibly timely and relevant.

May we know some of the other members of the cast and how you got along with them?

Lorenzo who I play opposite is a wonderful guy. We got on very well along and I got on with other cast

members and have remained post friends with everyone.

What were some of the challenges that you faced in playing the role?

The main challenge for me was trying to understand the soul of a man who would do unspeakable things to his fellow human.

In terms of other movies, you have starred in, how do you rate CRACKA?

Cracka rates very highly due to the political and racial nuisances it attempts to address.

The movie is tipped by some for an Oscar, are you excited about the prospects?

Absolutely! Any movie that is tipped for an Oscar makes it even more exciting and makes the journey some much more worthwhile.

In terms of the movie career, how challenging has it been for Hakeem Kae-Kazim to get to the top?

I am still trying to get to the top, so it is very challenging, but it is an extremely enjoyable journey.

For young Africans out there who see in you a role model and would want to emulate your success, any vital tips for them?

Work harder, focus on what you want to do in the business and hone your craft. You have to work harder than hard.

What next for Hakeem Kae-Kazim CRACKA, any other big projects coming up?

I am currently working on the TV production on Dangerous Liaisons in Prague, Czech Republic and please look out for the upcoming feature on Robert Mugabe. The film is called Mugabe, which is about the life of Robert Mugabe, it will hopefully be in cinemas soon.

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Ghana: Insights Into A Love Affair With The Middle East

By Maxwell Nkansah

Ghanaian migration to the Middle East became prevalent in the 1980s, with many male professionals migrating to work in the Saudi Arabian petrochemical industry. The number of Ghanaians migrating to the Middle East has increased significantly between 1990s to the present. This increase has been facilitated by the proliferation of labor recruitment agencies in Ghana, licensed and unlicensed, that recruit migrant domestic workers for both internal and external placements.

Data from the Ghana Labor Department, for instance, indicates that recruitment agencies have increased from three registered/licensed agencies in the mid-2000s to nearly 200 recruiting domestically and another 43 recruiting for employment abroad. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are also many individuals and syndicates that operate as recruiters in the migration industry. Often, potential migrants depend on these middlemen, popularly referred to as 'connection men', to secure travel documents and other forms of travel assistance.

Popular countries of destination are Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait and Jordan. Data indicates that 3,755 Ghanaian workers were recruited



by private employment agencies to these countries excluding Jordan in 2020. In 2021, the total number of migrants to the four countries and Jordan was 5,372, representing a 56 per cent increase in the flow of labor to the region. The number of Ghanaian workers recruited by private employment agencies to the region within the first five months of 2017 was 1,589. Ghanaian domestic workers also migrated to Bahrain,

Iraq, Iran, Oman, and Lebanon.

The Embassy of Lebanon in Ghana, for instance, issued 1,500 and 2,000 visas in 2016 and 2017 respectively. The majority of persons recruited for employment in the Middle East are female (82 per cent) domestic workers. Of the interviewed domestic workers, 79 per cent were between 20 and 34 years old. The average age in the countries of destinations was 32 in Saudi Arabia and 30 in Kuwait

and Qatar. The majority of returnees were not married (65 per cent). 57 per cent of the migrants were Christians and 43 per cent were Muslims. Given that 17.6% of Ghana's population is Muslims, it can be suggested that this group is significantly represented in the number of Ghanaians who migrate to the Middle East to work as domestic workers.

Interviews revealed that the decision to migrate to the Middle East as domestic workers was predominantly made by the domestic workers themselves and those economic factors were the overwhelming motivation for migration. In fact, 96 per cent of respondents indicated that they migrated to search for jobs/better job opportunities, with many reporting having no jobs in Ghana, coming from an underprivileged background, and not having access to income generating activities. Others indicated that they migrated as a result of peer influence, or due to the desire to have the 'been abroad' label, oftentimes associated to real or perceived higher social prestige.

With regards to the preferred country of destination, the domestic



workers interviewed revealed that this played a limited role in their decision to migrate. In some cases, prospective migrants received visas for countries that were not the ones previously indicated by their agents. Even in such cases, given the lack of familiarity with the Middle East, the prospective migrants did not question the change, and assumed that the new country had been selected for the availability of employment opportunities. The lack of knowledge on migration issues has consistently been a major challenge to potential migrants since they become vulnerable and are exposed to all forms of risk. Some migrants did not have any knowledge about the Middle East countries, and heard about them for the first time through their recruiters.

A migrant worker in ordinary circumstances voluntarily moves to a place in search of work. In Ghana there are 139 million migrant workers who move from villages to cities each year to work in construction, manufacturing, hospitality, textiles, domestic work and industry. Here, the motivation to move from villages to cities is voluntary internal migrants move to secure a better livelihood. When a migrant worker returns to her village upon the completion of employment, the decision to do so is voluntary as well.



Migrant workers were seen marooned along their journey back in places that were neither their place of work nor their homes, where they could receive any food or shelter. Affect the social and economic conditions of millions of daily wage workers in the country. However, the Ghana flight of millions of migrant workers from cities to their villages posed an unprecedented humanitarian challenge that grabbed the world's attention. The

media extensively reported on the conditions of migrant workers, who were stranded around the country without food or shelter, struggling to survive and return to their villages.

There have been different types of abuses that many Ghanaian migrant domestic workers in Gulf States face; the Government has placed a temporary ban on the recruitment of Ghanaian domestic workers to Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, in collaboration with the Government of Canada and UNICEF, launched the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking in Ghana, 2017–2021.

The National Labor Migration Policy was validated in December 2018 and approved by the Cabinet in 2020. The policy is expected to be a framework that guides the management of labor migration within, into and out of Ghana. The Government of Ghana was supported in the development of a National Migration Data Management Strategy to improve access to quality, credible, timely and disaggregated migration data to support evidence-based policymaking and implementation.

With support from ECOWAS and the Spanish Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration commissioned the development of the Diaspora Engagement Policy in 2015 to enhance the participation of Ghana's diaspora community in the development in Ghana. A National Migration Platform was set up within the Foreign Ministry in 2017 to promote safe and orderly migration from Ghana, among other objectives, with collaborating partners.



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Congo: \$200 Million Investment From Rwandan Company Linked To Ruling Party

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

Crystal Ventures, a firm affiliated to Rwanda's ruling party, Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) is set to invest \$ 100 million in industrial zone in the Congo Republic, one of the biggest investment projects outside the East African country, signaling the rise of a business venture that has dominated various sectors of the country's economy in more than two decades.

The RPF's investment arm that is a key player in various businesses in Rwanda has committed to inject to \$ 200 million to infrastructures' development in Congo's Maloukou industrial zone, about 60 kilometres from the capital Brazzaville, executive director Jack Kayionga revealed.

The latest investment project announced in the third-largest crude oil producer in Africa is among Crystal Ventures' major deals outside Rwanda in recent years making it a big boost to one of economies worst hit by Covid-19 pandemic according to the World Bank. The Bretton wood institution reported earlier this year that the country's GDP was estimated to drop by 0.2 percent in 2020 due to the global pandemic.

Mr. Kayionga was quoted as saying



Once the agreement is signed, we will initially provide an investment of about \$100 ,says Mr. Kayionga.

on 1st October during a visit in Congo Brazzaville that "Once the agreement is signed, we will initially provide an investment of about \$100 million

to secure the site, rehabilitate it and finalise the work of connecting the road, electricity, water and internet networks,".

The firm's CEO also revealed that \$ 100 million will be used to fund the establishment of a dry port, the construction of a city and a training centre. The Rwanda's investment company hopes its project once complete will attract additional investment in the Republic of Congo.

According to Reuters, Congo's government has struggled to attract investors to the 25-square mile industrial site since it was commissioned in 2018. It is reported that its 16 factories, initially designed for manufacturing construction materials, have never been fully electrified.

"Through this initiative, we are directly entering a fairly concrete phase of foreign investment. This is in line with the framework of the five-

year term that we are beginning, « the Congolese Minister of International Cooperation and the Promotion of Public-Private Partnership, Denis Christel Sassou Nguesso was quoted as saying.

Crystal Ventures was established in 1995 almost a year after The Genocide against Tutsis, hence leading in various areas of the small country' economy that was ravaged by the war and the genocide. The ruling party's investment arm is a major player in dairy, road infrastructures, telecom, banking, real estate, construction, hospitality, private security among others.

According to media reports, Crystal Ventures, formerly Tri-Star investment is the second employer after the government with the capital estimated at \$ 500 million and a portfolio of leading brands in various businesses.



Through this initiative, we are directly entering a fairly concrete phase of foreign investment says the Congolese Minister of International Cooperation Denis Christel Sassou Nguesso

Accelerating Circular Economy in Africa initiative launched

By Wallace Mawire

The Accelerating Circular Economy (ACE) Africa project which aims to support the growth of circular economy businesses in Africa has been launched.

On 24 August 2021, the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Africa) and the University of Stellenbosch LaunchLab held a virtual launch of the ACE Africa Project.

The launch provided an opportunity to learn more about the project, the incubation programme and the application process.

It provided an opportunity for those who either are planning on applying for the incubation programme or want to know more about the initiative's circular economy action and learning events.

The ICLEI are pioneers of urban sustainability and was founded in 1990, with the idea that a single municipality has a significant impact and that cumulative local actions can achieve tangible improvements in global sustainability.

It is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development and is active in more than 100 countries.

According to ICLEI, a circular economy is a growing area of interest for achieving sustainability across multiple sectors. According to the organization, it has become clear that, in Africa, the private sector is leading the transition to a circular economy.

It is reported that with a focus on the intersecting areas of food, health and climate change, the initiative will guide entrepreneurs and new start-ups through an incubation programme and provide a platform for exposure to and interaction with mature circular economy businesses, funders and government officers.

It is added that the desired outcomes are to support a number of businesses to mature and contribute to improved innovation ecosystems for circular economy, and to provide



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guidance to local governments on how to improve or support innovative businesses that enhance circular development.

According to Daniel Adeniyi, Professional Officer: Urban Systems for ICLEI Africa due to limited skills and technical resources in Africa, start-ups and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) need to be upskilled in running sustainable businesses with a life-cycle perspective. He also said that there are limited understanding of the scope of the Circular Economy opportunities.

"Most businesses and cities focus on waste management, while circularity embraces wider opportunities," Adeniyi said.

He highlighted the need for the Circular Economy to engage social justice imperatives. He adds that

equitable distribution and access to resources are vital and need to be prioritised. He also emphasised the need for an enabling environment for growing small scale Circular Economy businesses including access to networks and resources. Other issues include the unavailability of small grants and constraints relating to the regulatory environment.

According to the Accelerating Circular Economy Africa project rationale, circularity a circular economy is an economic system of closed loops in which raw materials, components and products retain as much value throughout their lifecycle.

The Circular City Action Framework initiative provides urban change-makers with five complementary strategies to support more circular systems.

It is action based to provide users with concrete strategic directions, showcases desired outcomes of each strategy, addresses the different roles that local and regional governments play and can be applied to all production, consumption and waste management processes.

The Stellenbosch University LaunchLab mission is to transform seemingly impossible ideas into world shaping businesses.

Founded in 2015, Stellenbosch University LaunchLab is Africa's leading University-backed incubator.

According to the university, they exist in the 0 to 1 stage of business development turning University Technology Transfer and various early-stage ideas into viable businesses. They are thematic commercial and impact investors and



venture capitalists investing much needed human capital into their companies.

Focus is on areas such as climate where they want to ensure the African demographic dividend happens in a sustainable manner covering aspects such as clean energy infrastructure, education and sanitation.

In the Agri sector they focus on the use of innovative data deploying data science techniques to help African farmers increase productivity. They deploy precision agriculture drone technology and satellite-based 4th Industrial Revolution. In the food sector they want to assess how to positively affect climate and health through better, more sustainable food systems. In the health sector, they want to assess how to use Africa's unique DNA data set to create virologic solutions for the continent using Genomics African Virology Big Data initiatives.

It is reported that by 2025 the university hopes to be the world's go-to destination for globally conscious start-up activities.

They hope to be the place that all the world's creatives, techies, and big thinkers need to go in order to build the hard thing.

The overall aim of the launched

initiative is to unlock the potential of the circular economy in Southern Africa by supporting the growth of circular businesses with a focus on the intersecting areas of food, health and climate change, to incubate and upskill start-up companies, entrepreneurs and small businesses with a focus on the circular economy, provide a platform for exposure to and interaction with, mature circular economy businesses, funders and government officers and provide guidance to local governments on how to improve or support innovative businesses that enhance circular development.

The projects are to be implemented in African cities from 2021 and will be implemented in three phases.

The first phase will focus on broadening the understanding of circular development, inviting start-ups and entrepreneurs into the incubation programmes and upskilling the chosen companies. Phase two supports the growth and development of the start-ups and further circular economy businesses through a year-long action and learning festival.

The festival will bring together circular economy businesses and stakeholders for co-learning and

sharing and includes webinar presentations, match-making opportunities, business showcases and city-to-city and city-to-business exchange events.

Phase three is expected to document the learnings that have emerged throughout the project and to develop guidance documents, policy briefs and action plans which identify key opportunities and actions for supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses to contribute to African cities' strategic priorities and wider goals of food security, climate resilience, health and wellbeing and circular development.

According to ICLEI, the circular economy is a system of resource management which ensures continuous use of materials, goods, energy and waste. It is reported to be an economic system of closed loops in which raw materials, components and products retain as much value throughout their lifecycle.

The economic system is reported to require investment in renewable energy and resources, new design thinking and early-stage mitigation.

It is added that in a circular economy where growth exists, regeneration is also vital.

It is further added that in many

urban African contexts, the adoption of circular solutions has focused largely on recycling, but it is added that achieving a circular economy can be done through various interventions and strategies.

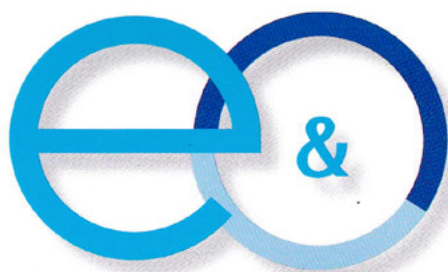
ICLEI reports that with Circle Economy and Metabolic, have developed a Circular City Actions Framework which suggests a range of strategies and actions to support circular development at the local level.

The key strategies are reported to include recover, rethink, regenerate, reduce and reuse.

It is added that the strategies have been used to frame an ACE Africa catalogue of business actions to inspire and guide entrepreneurs, as part of the 'Circularity is ...' Campaign.

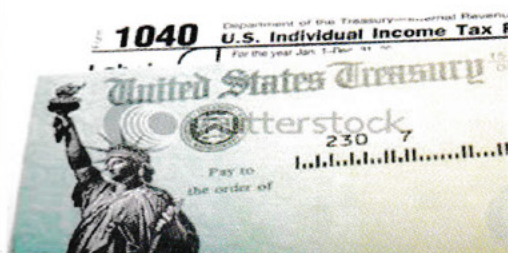
The Circularity is ... Campaign is also reported to be a catalogue of intervention ideas which start-up businesses can adopt as business strategies or incorporate into their existing business models.

It is added that the campaign aims to show that the circular economy is wider than waste management and recycling and has many strategies and actions that aim to support circular solutions to resource management.



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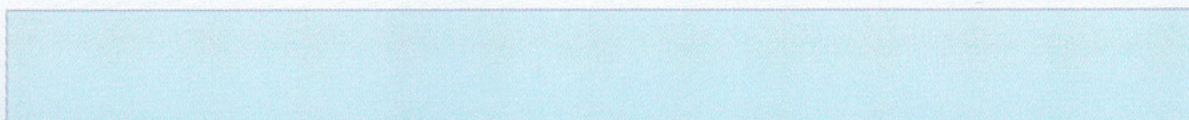
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Cameroon: Battle Lines Drawn In Leadership Race For Football Association

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The race for who becomes the new president of Cameroon's Football Governing body, FECAFOOT, has been going on for weeks now with the various candidates looking to woo delegates that will eventually vote them to office.

Early this year, the Court of Arbitration for Sports, CAS, annulled the process which led to the election of the current executives at Tsinga, thereby ordering fresh elections at the Football house.

All was almost set for the elections this December 2021 with veritable challengers like the celebrated Samuel Eto'o, Maboang Kessack, Jules Denis Onana and Souleymanou Abdou vying to challenge incumbent Prince Seidou Mbombo Njoya.

On Friday, September 21st, the divisional elections were held across the national territory with the two prominent candidates in Samuel Eto'o and Prince Seidou Mbombo Njoya voting in their respective divisions to secure status as delegates.

The election that was to take place in December 2021 sources say will



For the past years, elections to Cameroon's Football Governing body, FECAFOOT, have been cancelled due to irregularities.

not take place but will instead be held after the AFCON. This is to ensure that the organization of the upcoming competition goes on smoothly and successful. The final verdict on this election is expected soonest.

Dual Nationality conspiracy?

Many sports analysts have noted that if Samuel Eto'o is disqualified

as a candidate for the upcoming FECAFOOT election, it will not be because of his dual nationality but because of a well-planned "conspiracy" against the former Indomitable Lions striker.

«People with dual nationality will not be candidates for the election of the president of the Cameroon Football Federation, FECAFOOT,»

Robert Schlick, chairman of the FECAFOOT Electoral Commission said.

Samuel Eto'o holds a Spanish passport which came about in his playing days at FC Barcelona, and according to the Electoral Commission, those with dual nationality will not be candidates.

Analysts have questioned why dual nationality players are allowed to play for the national team but when it comes to positions that becomes a problem. The incumbent Seidou Mbombo Njoya has also rebuff the decision of the electoral commission but it is still uncertain if those who are looked at having dual nationality will be allowed to stand for the election when the list of candidates is made public before the year runs out.

A look at some of the candidates

Seidou Mbombo Njoya

His election to the post of president of the Cameroon Football Federation, FECAFOOT, may have been cancelled but that has not stopped the incumbent from relaunching his endeavours to pick up the position yet again.

Son of the late Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, 60-year-old Seidou



Seidou Mbombo Njoya is looking to maintain his status as FECAFOOT president after last election was cancelled.

Mbombo Njoya is one of the thirty or so princes and princesses of the Bamoun people.

Seidou Mbombo Njoya is the strong candidate amongst the rest to become the president. It is reported that most of the delegates to vote in the upcoming election are in support of the incumbent, though with elections, things can change even right inside the voting room.

Mbombo Njoya became the president of FECAFOOT in December 2018, with the support of no one else but Samuel Eto'o, though reports hold the two have since fallen out.

Before becoming FECAFOOT president, Mbombo Njoya was a development manager at FIFA and was a member of the Disciplinary Committee of CAF under the leadership of Issa Hayatou. He has also been the promoter of Federal Sporting FC du Noun, President of Yaounde Gulf Club, 2nd and 1st Vice President of the Cameroon Professional League (2011-2013 and 2013 respectively) amongst others.

In March 2021, Seidou Mbombo Njoya became vice-president of CAF.

Samuel Eto'o

In his prime, Eto'o was regarded by pundits as one of the best strikers in the world, and he is regarded as one of the greatest African players of all time, winning the African Player of the Year a record four times: 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2010.

Eto'o began his youth career at Kadji Sports Academy before moving to Real Madrid in 1996. He will then go on loan to Leganes, Espanyol before settling in Mallorca where FC Barcelona will come calling.

His impressive form saw him notched 130 goals in five seasons and also became the record holder for the most appearances by an African player in La Liga. With Ronaldinho, Messi and Thierry Henry, Eto'o won multiple awards before moving on to Inter Milan in 2009 for another impressive career.

In Inter Milan, Samuel Eto'o became the first player to win two European continental trebles and is the fourth player in Champions League history to have won the

trophy two years in a row with different teams and in 2015 received the Golden Foot Award.

For the Cameroon National Team, Samuel Eto'o was part of the team that won the Gold Medal at the 2000 Olympics. He followed that up by winning the 2000 and 2002 Africa Cup of Nations and is the all-time leading goalscorer with 18 goals. Eto'o participated in four World Cups for his country without great success.

Samuel Eto'o is the leading goal scorer for his national team with 56

goals and the third most capped player with 118 appearances. He announced his retirement from the national team in August 2014 and at the club level on September 7, 2019, after playing for Qatar SC.

Since leaving football, Eto'o has been carrying out various philanthropic works through his foundation and also involved in the creation of the sports betting website, Betoo. He has equally visited various sporting Ministries across the continent and leaders as he looked to launch his bid for the FECAFOOT presidency.

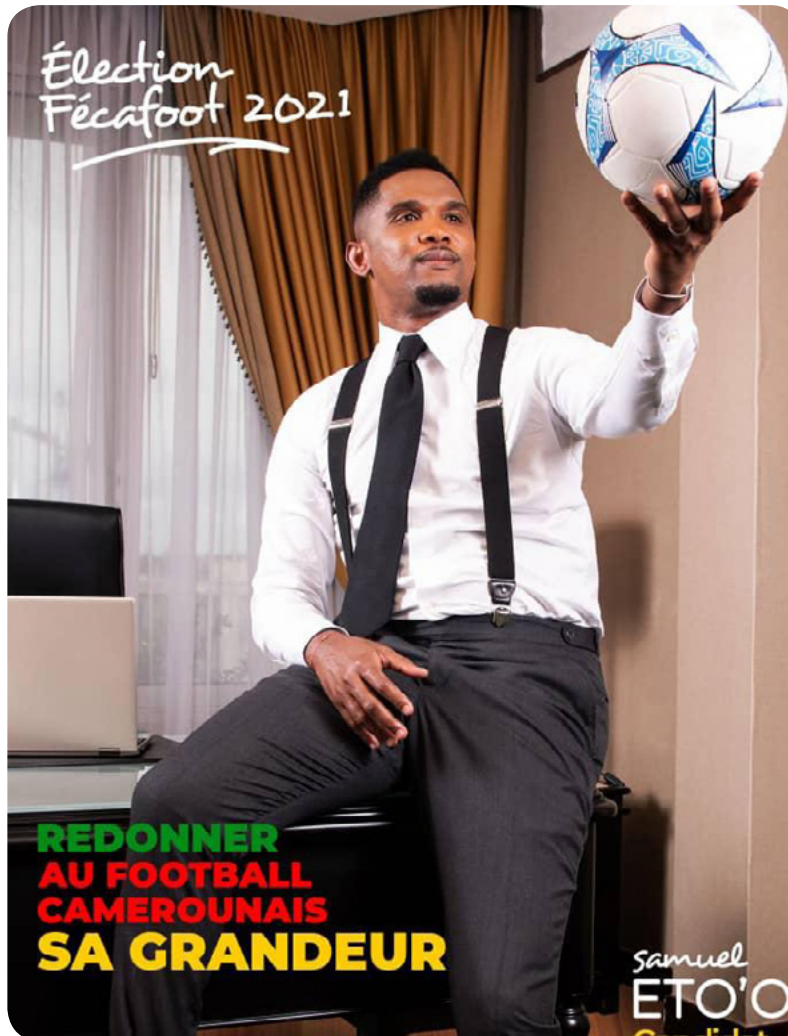
In management, Samuel Eto'o is a novice but he believes his vast experience in the football scene is enough and he is out to bring change in Cameroon football and the management of finances.

Jules Denis Onana

Jules Denis Onana has vast experience in the management of football in the country has been at the helm of Elite 1 team Canon Sportif de Yaounde. The defender is also a former FIFA Player's agent and is currently the Director of the newly constructed Olembe Stadium that will host the opening and closing games of the AFCON.

Jules Onana participated in the 1990 FIFA World Cup for Cameroon and played three matches; against Romania, the USSR and Colombia. He also participated in the 1990 and 1992 Africa Cup of Nations.

His career spanned some 14 years beginning his career with Canon Yaounde (1988-94); Aigle Nkongsamba (1995); Blagnac FC (1996); Persma Manado (1997-2000); Persis Solo (2001) and Pelita Krakatau Steel (2002). He won the Cameroon championship in 2001 and also the Cameroon Cup.



The candidature of Samuel Eto'o has generated a lot of excitement across the country.

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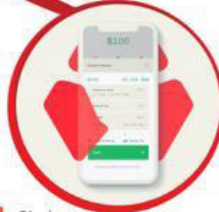


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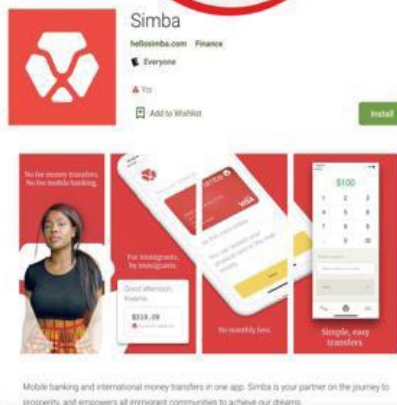


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