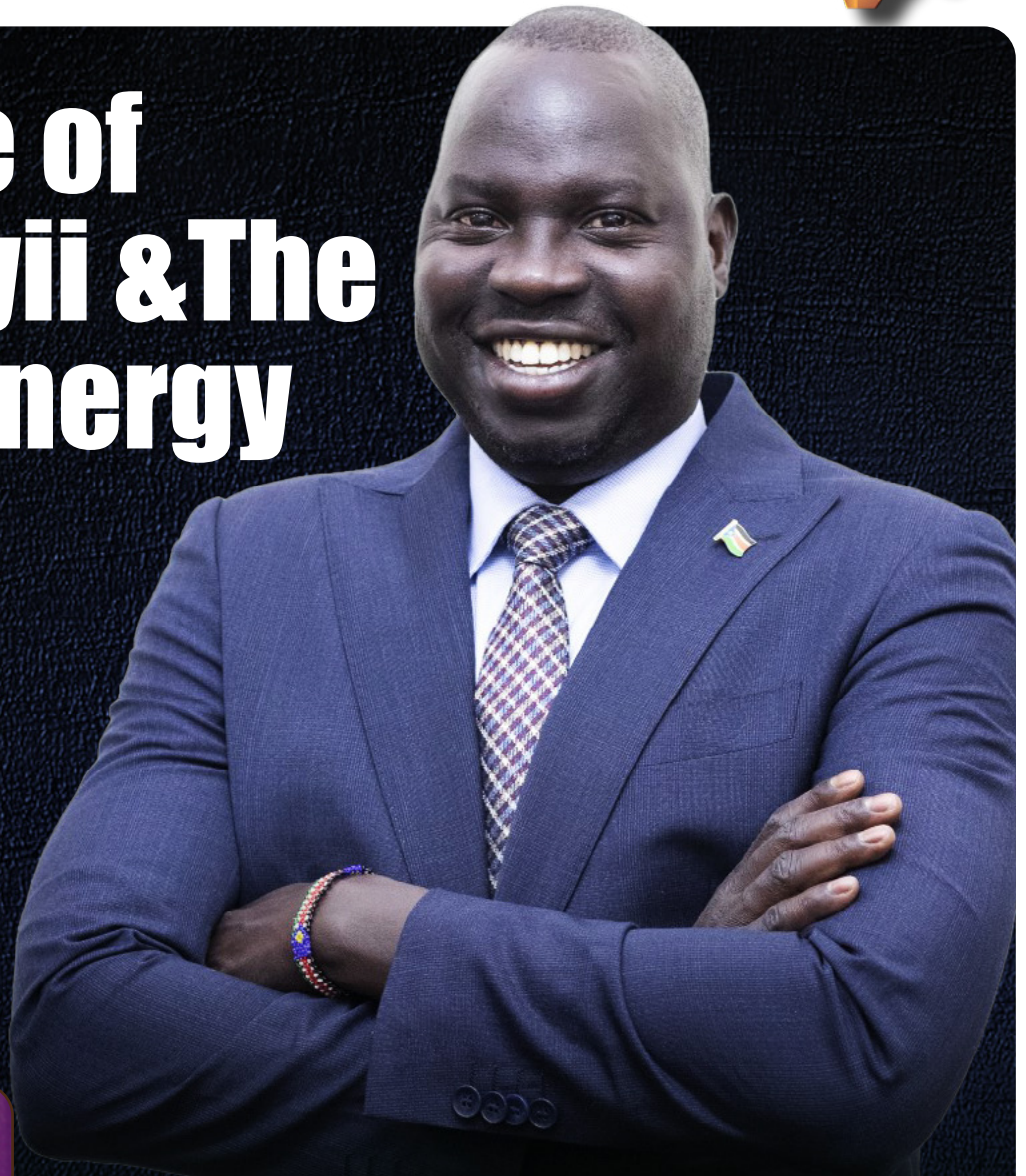




## The Rise of Akol E Ayii & The Trinity Energy Group



Insights Into The PAPSS Revolution with CEO Mike Ogbalu

- Tanzania: A Year Of Samia Suluhu Hassan
- D.R.Congo-A Grand Entrance Into The EAC
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# Obasanjo's Last Battles

By Ajong Mbatndah L

**L**ike him or hate him, former President Obasanjo remains a towering figure in Nigerian, African, and global affairs and his 85th birthday celebrated recently in his hometown of Abeokuta had ingredients that summed up the larger than life image of the leading elder statesman that he is.

A teacher, soldier, farmer, military ruler, farmer, author, prisoner, civilian president, bible scholar, Obasanjo wears a coat of many colours. As military leader, he handed over power to a civilian administration. Back to civilian life he took earnestly to farming and even has a breed attributed to him in Nigeria and many parts of Africa called Obasanjo chicken.

Hetasted life in jail, a victim of political persecution from the Abacha regime in the 90s. From prison, Obasanjo went ahead to serve as a two term President of Nigeria setting the tempo of the current democratic dispensation in Nigeria. At 85, he has seen it all, he has done it all, in all capacities, and has a vintage position to give orientation on what direction Nigeria and Africa could take, and in typical Obasanjo style, it is what he did at a symposium in honour of his birthday.

"The narrative from the non-African lens is that leadership in Africa is jaundiced and hence cannot lead us far on the path of development and progress," says President Obasanjo as he espoused on thoughts and ideas he has been trying to pitch to other statesmen across the continent on the establishment of the Africa Narrative Club or Society.

For President Obasanjo, Africa must have a better understanding of the world we live in and stop to live by and on received ideas, ideologies, beliefs and standards foreign to our culture, cherished beliefs, our philosophy and our worldview and understanding.

In a continent where old age is revered because of the wisdom that comes with it, while not a man without flaws, Obasanjo has stood out. He has been forthright in making his voice heard, he has not shied from taking leadership in speaking for

Africa when others have preferred silence. When the second term of the current President of the AfDB was under threat because of divergent views with external partners, it was Obasanjo who championed the case that clearly articulated the support of the continent for Dr Akinwumi Adesina. Most recently, when Ethiopia was at the verge of break up, Obasanjo was one of those the African Union turned to help seek a solution and broker peace with the feuding parties.

"The narrative which I assert is that every village, town, nation or region has its socio-cultural peculiarities that are best suited for the emergence of its leader and the colour of its governance. Therefore, it is erroneous to put all communities on the planet into a basket, judge and narrate their leadership, governance and development, strictly from the point of view of people from a particular section of the world. If we dig down to the taproot of the recent turmoil and political and developmental upheavals in the world today, we will find that this skewed narrative is one of its major causes," President Obasanjo said at the symposium.

While changing the narrative on Africa is something that many will agree with, it should not be interpreted as giving cover to excesses or gross abnormalities just in the name of seeing things from an African perspective. In the 2018 elections in Kenya, the African Union observer mission proclaimed the elections free and fair, only for the Supreme to annul them a few days later because of gross irregularities.

In a year where there will be elections with huge stakes in a number of African countries and at a time when key countries like Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso, talking about changing the African narrative should not in any shape or form be akin to giving a blank check to leaderships that continue to so dismally fail the continent.

Changing the narrative on Africa will not just be in words, but in actions and



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

deeds. When the public treasuries are looted with impunity by Africans in leadership, that cannot be sugar coated, when fellow Africans are victims of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, it is difficult to just sweep that under the rug, when a leader does one campaign stop and wins elections with over 80 percent of the votes, something is clearly wrong.

For the narrative to change, other elder statesmen in the mold of President Obasanjo need to get actively engaged in helping the continent meet the numerous challenges it is facing. How comes not a single elder statesman or leader across the continent has thought of wading or mediating in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon? Why are the leaders not putting out memoirs, going round the continent and sharing their experiences, serving as Ambassadors of noble causes?

As President Obasanjo continues with his reflections on the structure he has in mind, the good news is that there are already sectors where Africans are taking the lead in making the difference. We see this in the energy sector where in the midst of enormous challenges in South Sudan, Akol E Ayii has succeeded in turning Trinity Energy into a multi-billion-dollar group serving as the linchpin of business and socio-economic development in his country and others across Africa. Changing the African narrative means that instead of dwelling solely on the crisis in South Sudan, we

can also talk about the business exploits of Akol E Ayii and his Trinity Energy Group. This does not just celebrate an African success story, but his experiences and story can serve as inspiration, a template for other dynamic young Africans to emulate his example and why not do better.

There is a stronger reason to hope when Afreximbank takes the lead in putting in place the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System –PAPSS is a cross-border, financial market infrastructure enabling payment transactions across Africa. Launched in Accra recently, PAPSS has the

potential to be a total game changer for the continent when it comes to trade. Curiously, such a major development is not trending, yet in the words of the PAPSS dynamic CEO Mike Ogbalu the structure which is the fruit of a continental wide partnership between the African Union, the AfCTA and Afreximbank would be key in unlocking the huge trade potential that Africa has.

Akol and Ogbalu are part of a dynamic generation of Africans thirsting for change. In others we see flying the flag of Africa high in business, entrepreneurship, sports, entertainment, there is a reason to remain hopeful for the continent. Hopeful that the continent will get leaders whose vision is in sync with the broad aspirations of its people, hopeful that the continent will get leaders who put the interest of the people first and not theirs, leaders who do not prioritize foreign interests over domestic realities.

This issue of PAV Magazine shares the story of Trinity Energy with an interview of CEO Akol E Ayii who shares broad insights into the journey of his group, its rapid expansion, and Pan Africanist outlook to business. The issue also has an interview of Mike Ogbalu, CEO of PAPSS on the revolution that the payment system will have on trade. The issue is also complimented with stories on the electoral stakes in Kenya, Nigeria, and more. Happy reading!!!



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# Nigeria's APC: Muscling Through The Minefields

By Richard Mammah

For many within the ruling party in Nigeria, the emergence of former Nassarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Adamu as the new Chairman of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, alongside his expanded executive team of 77 members is indeed an act of relief.

Given the intrigues that have dogged the national convention process over the past two years, it is clear that the ruling party did really need this thawing. This is more so as its internal atmosphere has really been heavily poisoned by the infighting within the different camps that had emerged from within its fold in the build-up to the convention. And now that it has a breather of sorts, the onus is on it to build on it.

A lot of credit has understandably been given to the camp of President Muhammadu Buhari for engineering the current outcome. By stepping out with all of his weight to vote for the current outcome, the President has seemingly muscled in the peace within his conclave once again. But there are worries about how enduring this peace would last.

Indeed, Nigeria's ruling All Progressives Congress, APC is in a place where it should not be. It came to power in 2015 after very heavily demonising the erstwhile ruling Peoples Democratic Party, PDP. It accused the latter of corruption, incompetence, cronyism, cluelessness and every other imaginable governance misgiving under the sun. For pointing all of these out, Nigerians opted to give it the driver's seat. Alas, the APC has now ruled the country for the better part of seven years, with many Nigerians clearly unsatisfied with its offering till date.

Nowhere else does the party's Achilles heel stand out in such glaring naked light as in the matter of sustaining its own internal cohesion. Riven apart at the seams, it has taken the strong hand of its leader, President Muhammadu Buhari to keep the house together up to this



*The APC will face close scrutiny from Nigerians after two terms of office for President Buhari.*

point. But one year to the end of the Buhari presidency, many discerning observers believe that there is still no fundamental clarity as to the future of the APC outside of this factor.

According to the Nigerian constitution, to contest elections and get a chance to be elected into office, aspirants must join political parties and present themselves for election on their chosen party platforms in primaries contests before coming over to be presented by the parties as their candidates.

This presupposes the presence and smooth functioning of the party vehicles as the same constitution also permits aspirants to switch parties (which they so frequently do) when there is a situation of rancour or division within their chosen political party.

While rancour is the middle name of the leading political parties in the country, the ruling APC has had more than a fair share of it even since its inception, leading to a situation where it has had to be led by interim and caretaker administrations for almost half of its shelf life this far.

At its inception, the interim leader was Pa Bisi Akande. Akande gave way to the elected John Odigie Oyeogun who was however to be eased off the perch and replaced with former Edo State Governor, Adams Oshiomhole. In turn, Oshiomhole was also to be booted out and replaced with a

Caretaker team led by Yobe State Governor, Mai Mala Buni.

The Buni led Caretaker team, which had continued to hold the fort until recently, was clearly a stop-gap measure to allow a cooling off period before a more substantive executive would be introduced. Accordingly, it was given a six-month tenure. It finally was however to spend some two years in the saddle until it has now being eased out of the way.

Where all these leave the ruling party is that it conveys a picture of instability that does not rub off quite positively on the equally less than satisfactory performance of the government that it had also spawned. For example, as the convention was being held in Abuja, insurgents were invading an airport runway in nearby Kaduna, university lecturers were in the second month of their resumed strike action and fuel queues were still the order of the day in some towns within the country, with the general feeling being that very little attention was being paid to matters of governance.

## Roots that go deep

Analysts say that the roots of the challenges the APC is facing as a party definitely run very deep. They place it its origins in the fact that the three major tendencies that fused into the party in 2014 were actually only bonded in real terms

by a mutual desire to see off the PDP from the leadership perch that the latter had dominated since the return to democracy in 1999 and not by any quite fundamental vision for the nation and deeply shared values. This they say is why cracks had begun to show up in the APC as far back as the transition period when Buhari had been pronounced as President elect but not yet sworn in as President. The crisis continued even post swearing in on May 29, 2015 and was a major reason why it took almost a half year of waiting before the administration was able to put together its first ministerial nomination list.

Says the commentator, Rufus Eze: 'The APC is still a party of strange bed fellows. After Buhari's era, his empire will crumble with all the centers of powers taking their members with them. A smart opposition would make mincemeat of them. The party has even lost its Buhari mystique, around which the party was ostensibly built. It is an image that has been unmasked, with the leader being exposed as being incompetent and about the worst political leader in the nation's history.'

While there is no doubt that the APC may indeed really be in a tough place as evidenced for example by the fact that though it has presently survived the convention hiccups, it



still has the more critical primaries process to navigate. Indeed, on this score, the party's troubles seems to have also been compounded by the umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC which has outlined that the primaries of parties to choose their candidates for the 2023 polls process should compulsorily be held from April 4th through June 3rd.

Though the party has presently latched on the leeway provided it in the amended Electoral Act which had enormously liberalised the selection process to include the consensus option, for many a discerning observer, it is as if it the party was literally test-running this soft navigation leverage when its leaders broke into 'an executive session' during the contest for the National Executive positions and threw in the consensus card.

And what about those who feel under-served at the end of that process? Well, their options at that point may simply be to 'shape up or ship out.' But would it be that easy in the instance of the forthcoming presidential primaries should the same card be deployed? And what about the limited time duration?

Whichever way things pan out, Ahmed Balufon, an APC stalwart is optimistic.

'We will find a way around things. It is a tight calendar no doubt but I am confident that the party can still hold its presidential primaries in



APC Chieftain Bola Tinubu and Vice President Yemi Osinbajo are among the frontliners to succeed President Buhari.

particular before the mandatory June 3rd.'

Hypothetically, this should not be an all-consuming challenge for the party internally, if antecedents are anything to go by. But the stakes are indeed much higher at this point as there are far bigger personalities, larger egos and fatter interests to negotiate in particularly the instance of the presidential primaries. Truth be told the APC would need all of its wits together at this time if it s to avert an implosion.

But just looking at the face of it all, there is still that additional worry: if the APC has been in power for seven years and they are at the moment still struggling to work through the primaries process, what does that

say? Not the best place to be. Indeed.

On the other side of the pendulum, the main opposition rival, the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP is also not smelling roses on the same matter of leadership selection. While the party scraped through an equally bruising congress late last year, the debates over zoning of the presidency have also left the party in a quandary of sorts. Like is the case with the APC, the anticipation is that some of its leading lights who may get the shorter end of the stick in the forthcoming primaries may at the moment be considering alternative options. Indeed, in what appears to be a sign of things to come, former Kano Governor and Minister of Defence, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso had already moved to embrace

a nascent 'third force' political vehicle of sorts, though he later clarified that this did not mean that he had outrightly abandoned the PDP for the moment. But he had made the point. How many more such movements would we see going forward? If history is our guide? A lot. And just as we were putting the final stop to this piece, one potential game changer card was o be introduced into the PDP presidential field with the entry of the Rivers State Governor,

Nyesom Wike into the fray.

Beyond declaring aspirants on the APC/PDP divide, there is one other preliminary point even; about the differences between the two main parties in the country. For the average Nigerian voter who is expected to step out in 2023 to choose from options placed before him, the APC's brand image for example is also being denuded by a distinctiveness challenge.

One development that brings this into stark relief is the political bio of the new APC helmsman. A founding member of the main opposition, PDP at the commencement of the transition to civil rule programme in 1998, Adamu moved on to serve as two-term governor of Nasarawa State under the PDP platform. He was also to serve as Secretary of the Board of Trustees, BOT, the highest advisory body of the PDP and as an elected PDP Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2011 before his defection to the APC in 2014. Eight years later, he sits atop the saddle as APC National Chairman.

A case of Jekyll and Hyde? Well, the late Bola Ige may not have been wrong after all when he described the difference between Nigeria's original 1998 political parties as that between six and half a dozen. Sadly, not much has changed through the years. And all at the expense of hapless voters.



There maybe no honeymoon for new APC Chairman Abdullahi Adamu.





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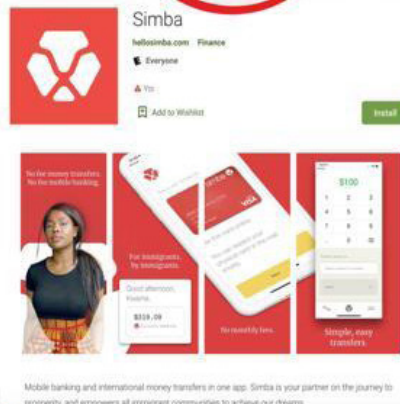
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# African Leaders Return with Same-old Regurgitated Priorities from the EU-AU Summit

By Prince Kurupati



Leaders pose for a picture at the summit that left so much to be desired. Picture Credit African Business.

Exactly 20 years ago, African leaders under the auspices of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) met for the first time with the European Union in a summit that became the very first EU-AS Summit. The first summit led to the Cairo declaration and subsequently the Cotonou agreement. The major purposes of the declaration, as well as the agreement, were to integrate African countries into the global economy while at the same time helping to alleviate poverty on the African continent. To achieve these targets, the EU and the then OAU agreed on three main practical pillars. Namely, these are development cooperation, economic and trade cooperation as well as the promotion of social and political rights covering topics such as migration, security, peace and democracy.

Soon after the Cotonou agreement, euphoria engulfed both the African continent as there was a general belief that the economic fortunes of Africa were soon to change in the process embarking on an upward trajectory. However, as the 20 years that followed have proved, the only

major positive that the EU-AU Summit has brought about relates to promises after promises. As soon as African leaders step foot in their countries after touring Europe, they all come with the same thing that is, promises and commitments. While these promises and commitments were something to celebrate in days gone by, it has now become evident that all the promises African leaders bring back are hot air. They quickly dissipate into thin air as soon as they are said and they are regurgitated again after twelve months. The cycle just keeps repeating itself.

After a two-year hiatus, African leaders once again attended the EU-AU Summit. A sense of optimism prevailed in the days and weeks preceding the summit largely owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The African populace was convinced that the pandemic and its severe impact on the African continent had enlightened African leaders about the urgent need to recalibrate the continent's economic fortunes hence return on a developmental path. To the amusement of many, however, African leaders once again returned

with nothing concrete, rather, just like the old times, they came back with loads of promises and commitments.

In an era where African economists and industrialists are pushing African leaders to revise trade agreements with the EU, African leaders during the recent summit failed to push the EU considerably to attain success. This, therefore, means as we go into the future, the unbalanced trading relationship between the EU and the AU will continue as the AU will continue focusing on exporting extractives while the EU exports finished products. Gyude Moore and Ovigwe Eguegu while writing for the Centre for Global Development perfectly described the EU-AU trade relationship saying, "While the EU is still the continent's largest export and import partner for goods in trade with Africa, the content of that trade has hardly shifted away from raw materials. Extractives still make up over 70 per cent of exports from Africa to Europe while the EU continues to subsidise agricultural and fishing industries – albeit with new labels of environmental stewardship, adding to the challenges of a myriad of non-

tariff barriers facing African products entering Europe." The two go on to state that "there is evidence that while Europe has used trade agreements to protect its intellectual property overseas, it hardly protects that of African countries."

African leaders' reluctance to force the EU to renegotiate the trade agreements may be all down to the leaders' poor work ethic as they might not favour doing arduous negotiation work. This is according to Devex which reported that some "African countries feel that they would rather be unencumbered with some of the requirements that are typically attached to the collaborations with the European Union."

Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, several European countries have embarked on drives to manufacture their vaccines. Those countries without the means to do so have thrown their weight of fellow EU countries to do so. In Africa, the question of vaccine manufacturing has been left in the hands of three countries (Morocco, Senegal and South Africa). The three unfortunately have faced severe structural and

institutional obstacles. It would seem that the EU-AU Summit was the perfect place for African leaders to voice their frustration and possible take measures to ensure that European countries opposing the waiver of intellectual property rights for vaccines change their stance immediately. Alas, African leaders just returned with promises and no guarantee of such a thing happening.

Europe in recent times has been singing with one voice when it comes to the issue of climate change. While the climate change topic is certainly noble, it unfortunately has massive implications on developing countries chief among them African countries that still rely heavily of traditional

sources of fuel. The climate change policies that the EU is pushing for on the global stage will have massive impacts on the African economy and continent owing to the continent's overreliance on traditional energy sources. The EU-AU Summit was thus a perfect platform for the African leaders to force Europe to renegotiate the policies such that they take into cognisance Africa's current developmental path and progress. Unfortunately, no such thing happened meaning Europe will move on with its climate change policies that threaten to derail African economies.

As the EU-AU 2022 Summit came to an end on 18 February 2022, the

document detailing the resolutions agreed during the summit was released dubbed the Joint Vision for 2030 was released. Going through the document, one just gets the sense that the two parties once again made the same resolutions they have been doing since the summit's inception 20 years ago. Rather, what the document does is to push the so-called objectives, aims, and goals to a later date – in this instance, 2030. In its conclusion, the document regurgitated the same old promises saying, "We agree that the aim of the Joint Vision is to consolidate a renewed Partnership for solidarity, security, peace and sustainable and sustained economic development and prosperity for our

citizens and our future generations, bringing together our people, regions, and organisations."

To prevent the same thing from happening that is, African leaders coming back with regurgitated promises, the director-general for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) Koen Doens said that "there was a tendency to jump from one summit to the next without enough happening in-between". To prevent this, it's important "to set up a follow-up mechanism that can keep the agenda alive so that we don't forget about it until the next summit."

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# The Rise of Akol E Ayii And The Trinity Energy Group

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Arguably the biggest name in South Sudan when it comes to business with a reputation that is fast reverberating across Africa and the world, the story of Akol E Ayii is one of hard work and resilience that should serve as inspiration to the younger generation in the continent.

As Founder and Chairman of the Trinity Energy Group, Akol E Ayii has achieved the feat of growing a company from the shores of South Sudan to a continental powerhouse with solid footprints in several East African countries.

While Trinity Energy may have its roots or origins in South Sudan, Ayii is resolute in his drive to give the company a Pan African dimension. At a time when many considered South Sudan a basket case and fled the country because of political instability, Ayii and his team weathered the storm and today Trinity Energy is the market leader.

Within a ten-year span, Ayii has firmly established Trinity Energy operations in Kenya, Uganda, and DR Congo markets. Opportunities are actively under exploration in Malawi, Zambia, and Somaliland, says Ayii as he shares the story of the Trinity Energy Group, its operations, challenges, perspectives, personal experiences, vital business tips for young Africans, and more in an exclusive interview with PAV Magazine.

**Thanks for granting this interview, could we start with an introduction to Trinity Group, and how the company is doing now?**

Thank you for having me. Trinity Energy Limited (TEL) is a pan African integrated energy company founded in 2012. Upon its inception, Trinity adopted a focus on all aspects of the energy business in South Sudan to provide affordable and accessible energy solutions for the people of South Sudan. This is in addition to being a champion of local content for the South Sudan petroleum resource.



*Trinity Energy Group Chairman Akol E Ayii has turned the company into a continental giant within ten years.*

Trinity Energy is now the market leader in South Sudan accounting for up to 40% of the volumes sold.

As a further means to enhance the security of petroleum supply in South Sudan by supporting refined petroleum products supply into the country, TEL engaged with the African Export-Import Bank ("Afreximbank") in 2018 and secured a revolving Import Financing of USD 30M. The facility was subsequently enhanced to USD 50M in 2020.

Trinity Energy has to date invested over USD13 million in its current retail network in Juba and a further over USD5 million in the largest petroleum storage terminal in South Sudan. We are the leading corporate employer and taxpayer in South Sudan and are proud of the significant role we are playing in the socio-economic transformation of South Sudan.

We are now focusing on expanding our retail footprint in South Sudan to an additional 100 stations spread across various states in South Sudan over the next four years. We will also invest in an additional 150 million litres of fuel storage in order to safeguard the country against supply disruptions that are perennially being faced in the country due to a lack of adequate storage facilities. As we do this, we are also aiming to add value to the petroleum resource of South Sudan by developing the 40,000 barrels per day Paluoch refinery to locally process South Sudan's crude oil helping to unlock further significant economic and social gains for the country.

As we move towards securing energy sustainability for South Sudan, we are also diversifying our business to provide electricity to millions of South Sudanese who do not have

access to grid power. In addition, we have spelled out an ambitious pan-African growth agenda with a view to becoming a leading Pan-African integrated energy company in the next seven years.

**In which other countries does Trinity Energy Group have operations?**

As part of our Pan-African growth agenda, besides South Sudan, we have expanded and have an active presence in the Kenya, Uganda, and DRC markets. We are also exploring opportunities in Malawi, Zambia and Somaliland. Trinity Energy also has corporate presence in Dubai in line with the objective of aligning our business to global strategic alliances.

**How has the company contributed to shaping the economic and development fortunes of South Sudan?**

First, I have to mention we have received immense support from the people and government in South Sudan. This is a testament to our contribution to the socio-economic development in the country.

Trinity Energy has supplied substantial volumes of refined oil products to the Republic of South Sudan, effectively stabilising domestic supply and demand for refined oil products. Trinity Energy has invested in a robust supply chain that consists of a storage facility in Nesitu with a capacity of 6 million litres. We believe that this investment together with our social programmes and commitment to the growth of the private sector will lead to a much-needed socio-economic development in South Sudan.

Through bulk supply, door-to-door delivery, and among the widest retail networks in South Sudan, Trinity Energy ensures that the economy continues to grow by supporting the various sectors of our economy and the livelihoods of South Sudanese people.

In 2018, with the support that was

received from Afreximbank, Trinity Energy was able to stabilise the petroleum supply in South Sudan, playing a central role in addressing the fuel shortages that were hitherto faced by the country. In addition, through our efforts to supply petroleum dealers in the country, over one hundred retail petrol stations that had been closed due to a lack of consistent fuel supplies were reopened, therefore creating entrepreneurship opportunities as well as employment for hundreds of South Sudanese. This is besides the over 350 staff directly employed by the company and over 1,000 others indirectly employed.

On another front, through our sister companies, we have been able to support agricultural value chains to support food security and mobile money transfer which has helped to accelerate financial inclusion in South Sudan.

**Unlike other energy companies which fled the country during the civil war, Trinity Energy stayed, how did your company survive in those difficult moments?**

At Trinity Energy, we pride ourselves on being an indigenous South Sudan company. While the period during the conflict was a trying period for not only us, but all citizens in general, the 2018 peace agreement which culminated in the coming into place of the Government of National Unity in February 2020 has ushered in a period of peace and great optimism among the business community within South Sudan.

As a result of the peace agreement and the coming into place of the Government of National Unity, we are seeing significant development opportunities in the country, and the implementation of the peace accord has positively impacted the business environment.

**What are some of the other challenges you have faced in growing Trinity Energy to the powerhouse that it is today in South Sudan?**



**Trinity Energy has to date invested over USD13 million in its current retail network in Juba, and is the leading corporate employer and taxpayer in South Sudan, says Akol.**

There have been a few challenges but the COVID – 19 pandemic left the biggest impact in 2020 similar to other places. For South Sudan in particular, the main challenge that arose as a result of the pandemic was logistical. As a landlocked country, South Sudan sources its refined petroleum product supplies from the surrounding East African markets. These are then trucked into the country for domestic distribution. While the borders with our neighbouring countries remained open for the movement of essential supplies, delays occasioned by the need to test drivers at the borders as well as inconsistency in the application of the various safety protocols, led to significant delays in receiving petroleum products into the country. As a precautionary measure, we focused on filling our storage depot to its full capacity to mitigate major supply disruptions in the country.

**May we know the potential that the energy sector represents in South Sudan today and its contribution to the overall development of the country?**

The business environment in South Sudan has gradually improved especially in the oil and gas sector as it remains the leading contributor to the country's economy. The government is seeking to increase crude oil production from 165,000 barrels per day currently to pre-conflict levels of 350,000 barrels per day from the existing oilfields while further boosting production to

upwards of 600,000 barrels per day through opening up new areas for oil and gas exploration. This will no doubt contribute significantly to the economic growth and sustainability of South Sudan.

With the development and increased investment into the energy sector, we expect to see more citizens involved along the energy value chain as well as the creation of new opportunities in the sector. Further, South Sudan is currently the only oil-producing country in East Africa, and it holds the potential to export its expertise to our neighbouring nations who are also looking to develop their oil and gas resources.

**The Minister of Oil was in the USA recently to invite investors to take a fresh look at South Sudan. Is this a move you support, and is Trinity Energy ready to face competition from foreign firms?**

Indeed, I welcome this move and fully share his perspectives. The US has been widely involved in the process that has led to the peaceful resolution of the crisis in South Sudan, and we look forward to working with partners from the United States in developing our country.

The efforts we have made in securing energy supply in South Sudan have seen the sector open up quite significantly. Today, there are many players including foreign investors who are directly competing with us in the market. Thus, we are

not scared of competition and indeed welcome competition as it helps us continuously refine our offering to our customers while it is also good for energy security and socio-economic transformation of the country.

We also think that having foreign investors allows us to leverage their capital, technology, and expertise that we may be lacking as indigenous South Sudan companies.

**What is your position and that of Trinity Energy on the fossil fuel versus renewable energy debate?**

The energy transition is an important topic in today's world. However, in an African context, we need to be aware of the obvious challenge of energy reach and access where many still rely on traditional forms of energy such as firewood as their primary source of energy. Many of our towns and households remain unelectrified. As a continent therefore we have to put our focus currently on bridging the energy access gap. As we do this, we should obviously not lose sight of the immense resources like hydro, wind and solar that we enjoy as a country and which we can leverage in this journey of energy access. However, we must equally leverage the hydrocarbon resources that the continent also has a wealth of in driving economic growth for our people.

We do therefore need to strike a balance between energy transition and access in a continent that is still undergoing foundational development. As Trinity Energy, we recognise the importance of this balance hence as we pursue our hydrocarbon opportunities, we are also developing solar powerplants in South Sudan with our eyes open to other markets too.

**Could you shed more light on the regional expansion plans, and any other future plans of Trinity Energy you may want to share with us?**

Yes, we have expanded into three countries that are part of the East Africa Community block, that is, Kenya, Uganda, and DRC.



In support of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, we are also pursuing new opportunities in various other countries including, Malawi, Somaliland, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique in the near future.

In South Sudan, we will be constructing an additional 50 million litres of storage capacity in Koda, just outside Juba. We have also engaged Nilepet for the construction of a storage terminal in Bentiu. We target to leverage these storage facilities to supply petroleum products to neighbouring countries including Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, and the D.R.C.



**A storage facility in Juba. Trinity Energy is now the market leader in South Sudan accounting for up to 40% of the volumes sold.**

and expand further.

**The Democratic Republic of Congo recently joined the East African Economic Community, what opportunity does this admission create for African entrepreneurs like yourself?**

Of course, we all understand the tremendous opportunities across all sectors available to a market of more than 90 million people. We believe DRC's entry into the bloc opens up a great space for entrepreneurs in the bloc and beyond.

We already have had the privilege of being in the DRC and we believe and appreciate that the support we have received from the stakeholders in the country will allow us to grow

**On the leadership in South Sudan, what is your take on the direction that President Kiir is taking the country, what more could his administration do to enable Trinity Energy Group and business initiatives from other South Sudanese to thrive?**

The government of national unity has been very supportive to local entrepreneurs ensuring that we are not only operating under favourable conditions but that we are also providing required standards of products to the South Sudanese people.

The government has implemented

several reforms in the oil sector including an end to pre-financing oil sales as well as the planned environmental audit of oil-producing fields. These reforms in the oil sector are largely welcomed by Trinity Energy.

Trinity Energy believes that the reforms at the Ministry of Petroleum are aligned with the company's focus on its core objectives of helping to secure energy supply for the country. This will support economic sustainability and growth in the Republic of South Sudan in the medium to long term. It will also provide the Unity Government with a strong support structure to spur economic growth.

**To young South Sudanese, and Africans in the diaspora who see in you a success story worth emulating, any success tips you would like to share with them?**

This might sound cliché, but I would challenge them to believe in their dreams. This does not mean that the journey will be easy, but it will be worth it.

It is important for any young entrepreneurs getting into business to get a good team, both as part of their human resources and members of the board. It is very important that they connect with people who understand their vision and with whom they can work to push to achieve their goals.

**Your achievements make you an inspiration to many Africans. What remarkable event prepared you for the businessman you are today?**

I have always been driven by the passion to find solutions to day-to-day problems faced by people around me. I cannot say one particular occurrence, but I remember starting this journey as a child when I asked for a piece of land from my parents at the tender age of 5 to grow maize and sorghum so that I could support my village in getting food security. That has changed over time to the current need of ensuring there is continuous access to quality and affordable energy in South Sudan.

**Who do you give credit to? Your mother or your father? What lesson will you also pass on to your children?**

I give credit to both of them. From my father, I learned the importance of identifying opportunities and using them to help those around you. From my mother, I learned the importance of having sustainable plans for my businesses.

I hope my children will understand the importance of community and appreciate that success can only happen if they are willing to work for the community and the country while surrounding themselves with people who will keep challenging them to achieve their goals.



**With his exploits at Trinity Energy, Akol E. Ayii has a voice that matters on the African and global energy scene.**

# LONSA

## GROUP OF COMPANIES

**L**onsa, a Mauritanian corporate holding entity, is a principal investment entity investing in the energy, industrials, logistics and property sectors in Southern Africa. Lonsa was formed in 2004 and has a track record of concluding complex corporate transactions. Lonsa's principals have unrivalled experience and knowledge of working and delivering value in its chosen businesses gained by investing in excess of 2.5 Billion USD in the continent over the past 17 years. Lonsa operates from offices in Johannesburg, Harare, Ebene and London.



### Lonsa controls the following entities:



Infrastructure development



Infrastructure development



Infrastructure development



Logistics



Housing



Renewable Energy



# A Potential Game Changer For Trade In Africa With PAPSS- Mike Ogbalu

By Ajong Mbatndah L

**L**aunched recently in Accra Ghana, the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, PAPSS, could be the game changer that Africa has been waiting for to unclog and accelerate the wheel of trade in Africa.

The fruit of a partnership between the African Union, the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA, with backing of the indispensable Afreximbank, PAPSS is a cross-border, financial market infrastructure enabling payment transactions across Africa.

Unlike other African institutions that have been all bark and no bite, Mike Ogbalu, the CEO of PAPSS believes strongly that structure will be transformative for African trade in multiple ways. Speaking in an interview with PAV, Mike Ogbalu says PAPSS has been developed to provide an alternative to current high-cost and lengthy correspondent banking relationships to facilitate trade and other economic activities among African countries through a simple, low-cost and risk-controlled payment clearing and settlement system.

“What PAPSS is coming to do is to create that standard payment structure that is seamless across all the different countries, that allows all the different traditional companies including banks, and central banks to connect on the single platform. Therefore, payment can originate from Nigeria Naira and end up in Egypt and Egyptian pounds or Uganda and Ugandan shillings.” says Ogbalu.

**Could you start by telling us what PAPSS is and its historical background?**

Mike Ogbalu: PAPSS is a financial marketing infrastructure designed to solve the problem of settling transactions between African countries and to be able to guarantee seamless instant payment for transactions across the continent.



*For the AfCFTA to work it requires a continent-wide payment infrastructure and that is what PAPSS provides ,says CEO Mike Ogbalu*

It is an effort that is championed by Afreximbank, the AfCFTA secretariat and the African Union. It is a broad-based effort aimed at putting in place infrastructure that will allow payments across all of the borders that separate us, in each of our local currencies thereby reducing the hunger for third party currencies

**How does PAPSS actually work and what has the experience been like since its launch in Ghana a few months back?**

Mike Ogbalu: Ghana was such a beautiful moment; it was a proud moment for the entire continent. We had representatives from practically

all the Heads of States in Accra jointly endorsing this infrastructure and knowing how it will impact the entire continent. Again, just stepping back a little, when you talk about trade, it is about the exchange of goods and services. You find out that trade does not happen unless payment takes place. Now, the more seamless payment becomes, the more it is easy to trade, and it will increase the frequency and volume. In the past, what governments have done is look at tariffs, barriers and they have now come to that realisation that we must address the subject of payments. To be able to trade, you find businesses going to look for foreign currencies to

be able to initiate those trades.

PAPSS is that infrastructure that has been put in place to be able to address some of these historical issues that we have had. The biggest issue that we have is that we have been so balkanised; instead of being able to negotiate from the point of a single market, we are negotiating from the point of 54/55 countries who relatively do not have that much bargaining power compared to the big powers across the globe. What this payment is doing is helping to eliminate the borders that separate us as we can trade amongst each other in our various local currencies.

**Looking At the present economic dynamics in the continent, how important is a structure like PAPSS at this point?**

Mike Ogbalu: Each country sets its rules and guides how trade happens in each of those markets. In the past, you didn't have situations that had single rules that applied across the continent; what you had were bilateral relationships, for example, Nigeria says this is how I will trade with Ghana and Kenya says this is how I will trade with Uganda, and at best we have some regional efforts which a collection of countries decided that this is how we will be able to trade with each other. The AfCFTA being something of an agreement tries to put in place a continental framework for trading amongst African countries. For the AfCFTA to work it requires a continent-wide payment infrastructure.

What AfCFTA has done is to try and create a common framework for trade across Africa and therefore it requires a payment solution which means that it can guarantee a seamless means of payment across the continent. If you are a merchant in a remote area in Seychelles, and some village in Nigeria, you should be able to say this is how your payment will be received assuming your counterpart

is anywhere on the continent.

What PAPSS is coming to do is to create that standard payment structure that is seamless across all the different countries that allows all the different traditional companies including banks and central banks to connect on the single platform; therefore, payment can originate from Nigeria Naira and end up in Egypt and Egyptian pounds or Uganda and Ugandan shillings.

We have taken away the whole burden of settlement and we are now allowing different people to build solutions on top of this settlement infrastructure that we have put in place. By so doing, we can make a trade. For example, someone who buys Kende materials in Ghana can spend five to seven days confirming payments, meanwhile, to travel from Lagos to Ghana is fifty minutes and yet his payment takes three to five days.

What PAPSS is doing is to remove that burden and allow people to trade freely. The time you are using to confirm payment may be the time used to do more trade. By making it instant and in their local currency, you are allowing this guy to turn around his inventory quicker than he is doing today, and this will create a boom in the economy. PAPSS is designed to accelerate the growth of economies and accelerate the growth of intra-African trade. We are hoping that solving the payment issue will accelerate intra-African trade and boost our shared prosperity.

**You mentioned earlier that PAPSS has a connection with the AfCFTA, AU and Afreximbank, can you shed light on the nexus and what roles each of these partners or bodies is playing?**

Mike Ogbalu: Starting with AU, as you know it is that organ that brings together all the governments on the continent into a united force and can deal with issues that impact the continent. Afreximbank is a multinational trade finance institution. Afreximbank is set up to be able to facilitate trade on the continent. Its whole mission is



*We are hopeful that in the next one or two months we can announce that we have grown a network of up to ten central banks, says PAPSS CEO Mike Ogbalu,.*

looking at all the different trade value chains and seeing where it needs to intervene so that we can improve trade.

Afreximbank in driving trade now recognizes that all of the protocols that will facilitate trade have now been put together and brought under the AfCFTA. You find now that there is an alignment of what AU wants to achieve from the point of view of trade with what Afreximbank is set up to do as a foremost trade finance institution and then the work AfCFTA is to do to facilitate trade.

At the time of the founding of Afreximbank, the founders made sure that Afreximbank will create a payment platform that will facilitate trade. What you call PAPSS today is a product of active collaboration between Afreximbank, and AfCFTA and the full backing and endorsement of the AU. The AU in their extraordinary assembly in 2019 and 2020 endorsed PAPSS as the payment infrastructure for the continent. They then mandated Afreximbank to work with AfCFTA to make sure that it is delivered.

Speaking about the relationship, they have alignment in terms of

their purpose and mission and more importantly it's being a collaborative effort to make this payment infrastructure to be put in place. It has been a joint effort between AfCFTA and Afreximbank with the full backing of the AU.

**In terms of membership of the PAPSS system, what does it take to be part of it?**

Mike Ogbalu: PAPSS' journey would not have been possible without the Central Banks. They were part of the design of the bylaws, the design of all the participants and how people have access to it. It is important to note that PAPSS recognises that Central Banks have payments within their relics. It is not designed to take away any powers from central banks or dominate the central banks. We worked with the central banks to get to where we are in terms of the rollout of PAPSS. To be a member you must, first of all, recognise that PAPSS has bylaws, and these bylaws speak of the obligations of each of the parties, and the responsibilities and the benefits and these bylaws that were endorsed by the central banks. A member is required to fill out a

participation form depending on the level of participation either as a direct or indirect participant. Once you endorse the membership agreement and provide the other documentation, you must also be a licensed entity in the jurisdiction from where you are joining. Lastly, you must provide a letter of no objection from the central bank in your primary market. Those are the three critical things; your membership agreement, being a licensed entity and being able to provide a letter of no objection from the central bank where you are operating.

The participant will also have to pass through MANSA, which uniquely identifies each entity that connects to PAPSS. Once you can scale these hurdles, there is a technical requirement because we have an IPY stack that each entity can connect to us through. You have to have the right specs of systems; you have to be able to consume or develop APS that we provide. There is also testing and training and upon satisfaction on both sides we can take the platform to the applicant and transactions can begin. Participants can extend the channels to their mobiles, to their



ATM and whatever channel that is convenient for their customers.

*When we went through your website, we discovered that most of your early members were from West Africa, why is it so and what outreach are you doing to get central banks from the rest of Africa on board?*

Mike Ogbalu: At the onset of the rollout, it was decided that PAPSS is to demonstrate success in a region, and a region that represents the complexity that we hope to see in the rest of the African continent. We have been able to show that our system can connect into even mature and not so mature systems. Now, we have started extending into the larger African context. We have started signing MoU with some of the regional entities that exist in the continent, and we are reaching out to other central banks. We have signed new agreements with two more central banks and two more are on the way. We are hopeful that in the next one or two months we can announce that we have grown the network of up to ten central banks. We have signed an agreement with one central bank in the Southern African region; the network is expanding, and we continue to reach out to the other central banks in the continent.

It is important to note that we are not doing this for commercial benefits; the focus for us is the impact on the continent. We continue to reach out to all the key stakeholders, key markets across Africa. Now that we have been able to demonstrate that the system works in the West African region, and this is the time to connect to other central banks. We have signed an additional two that we are going to announce in due course.

*Many Africans believe part of the problem the continent faces is not just about institutions, but making these institutions work. As you interact with business and political leaders across the continent do you get the feeling that they understand the critical importance of PAPSS or the need to make it*



*That the launch was heavily attended by leading political and economic actors in the continent highlights the firm interest to see PAPSS work*

*work?*

Mike Ogbalu: When you look at the launch of PAPSS, it is not every day that you have representatives of almost all the governments of Africa gathered in a single event to lend their support. It is not every day you have almost all central banks in the same room just to give their support on a particular initiative and it is not every day that you have almost every CEO on the continent in attendance. They have understood the central role of PAPSS, and they understand that as individual service providers they have a role to play. I will say we have enjoyed good political support; we are beginning to get much more support from the regulators and the central banks, and we see a lot of enthusiasm from the commercial banks and other payment providers. So, I will say they understand the role of PAPSS, and they understand that they need to come on board for PAPSS to work.

*As we wrap this interview, any last word to banks out there which are still taking their time to come on board, and any*

*message to ordinary Africans out there on a reason to hope in PAPSS?*

Mike Ogbalu: One of the things that Africa has suffered so much from is the situation where critical decisions that affect our lives are taken on tables somewhere else outside of the continent. This is an opportunity for us to build something that we own and something that we will control. Now, payment is really at the heart of the prosperity anywhere; if you look at any country, once instant payment is launched, you begin to see its impact on the economy. Even before the advent of electronic payment, you could see the clearing of cheques take up to five days. Immediately it changed to two days you see its immediate impact in terms of the economy. When a country launches instant payments, you see the immediate impact. It is the same way payments on the continent will have a similar impact on the economy.

My message to the stakeholders is PAPSS has not been designed to cannibalise all the efforts that have been made in different parts of Africa.

It is here to compliment; we are not saying throw away the systems you have but let's bring it all together so that we can have incomparability; so that we can say to ourselves that any payment originated anywhere on the continent will arrive at anywhere on the continent in a matter of seconds.

To central banks, I am inviting you to join, PAPSS is for all of us, and our systems are governed by central banks, so as the central banks join, they will have a seat at our governing council and are able to make decisions around PAPSS.

For commercial banks, this is a big infrastructure as it will lower their cost of operations and save you for having to source effects to do transactions. To political leaders, I will say continue supporting PAPSS initiative as it is for our continent. I know they don't always agree on everything, but ours is one of those areas that they have come together and jointly endorsed as their payment infrastructure. My message is continue to support us and drive or push us until we are able to deliver this infrastructure to the continent.



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# Did Burundi's Partners Ignore The Real Situation On Ground?

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

Burundi's major western partners have recently lifted sanctions imposed on the country in 2015's political crisis saying the new government has improved the political situation, but human rights advocates maintain nothing much has changed in the east African country citing continued silencing of critics and crackdown on opposition among other human rights violations.

European Union (EU) and the United States of America, the East African country's major development partners announced the plan to end sanctions late last year. Sanctions were imposed about six years ago, when the late Pierre Nkurunziza announced his bid to run for the controversial third term. Nkurunziza's decision to seek re-election sparked protests across the country that were repressed by security forces. Hundreds of people died, while other 400,000 sought refuge in Burundi's neighboring countries.

In June 2020 President Evariste Ndayishimiye took office after the sudden death of his predecessor Nkurunziza. Mr. Ndayishimiye who inherited a country that was shaken by sanctions and marred by violence plus a failed coup under his predecessor, promised to uphold unity among Burundians and deliver peace and justice for all. Now, human rights advocates and opposition are saying nothing has changed citing disappearances, tortures, and crack down on those suspected to be supporters of rebels groups and opposition.

In early February, US Treasury department said it was ending sanctions on Gitega (political capital) citing government's reforms and willing to improve the country's situation. "The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is removing from the Code of Federal Regulations the Burundi Sanctions Regulations as



President Ndayishimiye has been working to normalize ties with international partners

a result of the termination of the national emergency on which the regulations were based." Read a note published in early February.

The note published in the Federal Register added: "President found that the situation that gave rise to the declaration of a national emergency in E.O. 13712 with respect to the situation in Burundi had been significantly altered by events of the past year, including the transfer of power following elections in 2020, significantly decreased violence, and President Ndayishimiye's pursuit of reforms across multiple sectors."

However, Human Rights Watch (HRW) is calling for renewed pressure on Ndayishimiye's government to improve the situation citing poor human rights record. In a recent article published by HRW's Africa Executive Director, Ms. Mausi Segun, she said that "Burundi's vicious crackdown never end". According to Ms. Mausi America and EU chose to ignore the situation on ground. HRW's Executive Director urged Burundi's partners to pressure the government to bring about changes.

"Instead of hoping that the

Burundian government will change its ways, the United States and the European Union should publicly push the country's leaders to take concrete and measurable steps to improve their dire human rights record," wrote the Human rights advocate in a recent detailed article on Burundi.

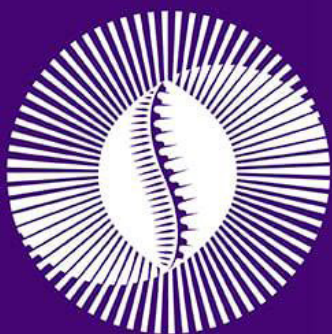
During Ndayishimiye's first visit to Europe at the just concluded EU-Africa Summit, some Burundians living in Europe demonstrated against the new administration calling for reforms, justice, the release of prisoners and action on disappearances. According to SOS Media, a Burundi's news website, demonstrators were holding placards and photos of the victims of human rights violations allegedly committed by the government. Protestors who included politicians, civil society members and ordinary Burundians denounced crimes committed in their country and criticized the EU's decision to lift sanctions against Gitega.

However, President Ndayishimiye was welcomed by other Burundians members of diaspora in a meeting where they exchanged ideas on

various issues their country face. Upon return to Bujumbura, the economic capital of Burundi, the head of state blamed Bruxelles protests on the main opposition party inside the country.

Mr. Ndayishimiye said protests were organized by National Congress for Liberty (CNL) the main opposition party led by Mr. Agathon Rwanda, a prominent opposition politician. Burundi's president downplayed the number of protesters in Bruxelles. "They were dozens of people, but they disturbed peace and security. It does not require a big number to disturb peace and security," president noted.

While new government's relations with major development partners have improved, HRW maintains that for the last year and half, Ndayishimiye's government has continued in his predecessor's footsteps. "The problem is not that the United States and the EU don't know what is going in Burundi. The problem is they are choosing to ignore it," concluded her article, the Executive Director of HRW.



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# Tanzania: A Year Of Samia Suluhu Hassan

By Prince Kurupati

Samia Suluhu Hassan became Tanzania's first-ever female president when she succeeded John Magufuli on 19 March 2021. During her inauguration speech and subsequent speeches after her elevation to the top job in Tanzania, President Hassan stated that her administration would carry on with some of Magufuli's policies while at the same time ushering in new policies. However, on the latter, President Hassan promised to undertake a series of slow-moving policy changes, particularly on the health, economic openness, political freedom and international relations front. President Hassan pleaded with the Tanzanian folks to give her ample time as the changes would take time to implement but once done, they would robustly effect real positive change. One year later after her promises, PAV looks at the work that President Hassan has managed to do.

## Successes

President Hassan assumed power at a time when the opposition political parties and civil society organisations were fighting Magufuli for enacting policies and making decisions that led to the shrinking of civic space. To change the mood of the country, President Hassan in the early days of her presidency took steps to open up the civic space. In so doing, President Hassan lifted the ban against some of the independent newspapers in the country. She also made it easier for bloggers to do their work without licenses.

To distance herself from the torturous regime of Magufuli, President Hassan distanced herself from Magufuli's dictatorial methods of using local authority leaders as enforcers of government rhetoric and propaganda. Putting this into practice, President Hassan did not interfere when the law enforcement agents and the judiciary arraigned a former district commissioner Lengai Ole Sabaya before the courts of law for openly torturing the opposition



President Samia Suluhu Hassan took the oath of office following the passing of President Magufuli

in defence of the previous Magufuli administration.

The president did show her prudent side when she engaged opposition leaders something which her predecessor abhorred. President Hassan gave her word to Tundu Lissu, an opposition leader who fled the country into exile in 2020 following threats to his life. The president also welcomed opposition leader Freeman Mbowe to the statehouse after his release from jail. Mbowe who was arrested during the reign of Magufuli spent more than 200 days in jail.

Though prudent, President Hassan has shown that she is a shrewd politician who knows how to consolidate power. The president showed that she isn't afraid to deal with the big-name politicians when she forced the speaker of parliament Job Ndugai to resign. The president also dealt with the outspoken member of parliament Humphrey Polepole shrewdly by appointing him ambassador to Malawi. In the positions that she has removed politicians, the president has been able to fill the positions with technocrats. One such example

relates to the appointment of a former journalist to lead the State House communications. By choosing to align herself with an inner circle of professionals rather than hardcore party loyalists, President Hassan has proved that she is a statesman who is more concerned with nation-building rather than consolidating power.

When President Hassan assumed power, Tanzania was one of the few countries on the globe that didn't adhere to the World Health Organisation guidelines on the prevention of Covid-19. Then former president Magufuli was adamant that Covid-19 could be curtailed only by prayer and the home remedy of steaming. Magufuli's denialism however proved to be fatal as he, later on, succumbed to Covid-19 complications. Immediately after assuming power, President Hassan reversed the country's stance on Covid-19 choosing instead to heed the advice of the World Health Organisation. As is the norm in most other countries, wearing a mask is now the norm in Tanzania. Likewise, Tanzania now provides Covid-9 data frequently.

On the economic front, President Hassan is taking steps to formalise the informal sector. A huge population of the country is employed in the informal sector and President Hassan is looking to incorporate these informal sectors into the national economy. To achieve this, President Hassan has spearheaded fair tax reforms. The reforms have seen the government authorities revise and restructure mobile money transactions which informal traders complained about for so long as a deterrent to small business growth.

## Failures

In her desire to formalise the informal sector, President Hassan has implemented some tough and strict laws which have been condemned by many workers in the informal sector. The most notable law relates to the forceful removal of street hawkers from streets without providing them with alternative operating spaces. Most of the informal traders affected by this law says that they understand where the president is coming from and they share her vision. Unfortunately, as they depend

on street hawking, they can only stop if they are given operating spaces. President Hassan's administration has been working hard to establish malls in the country but the sheer high numbers of applicants mean not everyone has been able to receive space.

President Hassan has faced criticism from some circles for favouring cosmetic changes rather than fundamental changes which bring about real change. The president's critics state that she can only receive rave reviews if she reforms discriminatory laws such as the Cybercrime Act, Media Services Act and the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act. Critics say her true measure will only come once these draconian laws are changed.



President Samia inspects a guard of honour. Photo credit Tanzania State House.

# CAPE VIII

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# Zimbabwe-Multiple Shades of A High Stakes Elections

By Prince Kurupati

The election fever has engulfed Zimbabwe. The main topic in most discussions by Zimbabweans from all walks of life at the present moment centre around the upcoming by-elections. Who among the competing contestants is going to win? Which party will scoop the most seats? Will the election be held in a free, fair and credible manner? What role are state institutions going to play in the upcoming election? Will the preponderance of the incumbency once again prove decisive in the upcoming by-elections? All of these questions occupy the minds of millions of Zimbabweans.

The election fever that has engulfed the country is so huge and magnificent that outsiders may think the upcoming elections are presidential elections. Alas, they aren't presidential elections. Rather, they are just by-elections meant to fill vacant parliamentary and council seats. Such is the importance of these parliamentary and council by-elections that the leaders of all political parties have essentially embarked on nationwide campaigns for a straight two months with no rest.

The importance of the upcoming by-elections has largely been necessitated by three factors. First, the upcoming by-elections are being touted as a window-dresser to the upcoming 2023 harmonised elections. Second, the by-elections will be the first elections that the newly founded political party Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) will compete in. third, the upcoming by-election is a litmus test for the role of state institutions in the country's elections.

In just about a year, Zimbabweans will head to the polls to choose a new president as well as parliamentary and council representatives. The 2023 harmonised election is expected



Campaign posters on display. Photo International Crisis Group.

to be hotly and fiercely contested. This largely owing to the fact that it will be the first real test of the incumbent Emmerson Mnangagwa at the polls. Mnangagwa succeeded long-time leader Robert Mugabe in 2017 after a military coup. In 2018, the country held harmonised elections and Mnangagwa won. However, Mnangagwa during the election had a lot of political support as he was viewed as a bearer of hope following the ruinous tenure of Mugabe. Unfortunately, there have been many ill-calculated moves by Mnangagwa since his ascension to power something which has led severely affected his support base. Analysts, therefore, expect that the 2023 election will prove beyond reasonable doubt that any piece of goodwill the public has entrusted in him after the deposal of Mugabe has certainly waned. In the lead up to the 2023 election, analysts say the upcoming by-elections will be a window-dresser in showing just how much Mnangagwa has lost support.

For close to two decades after independence, the ruling party in Zimbabwe ZANU (PF) enjoyed total dominance on the political scene. Things however changed in 2000 soon

after the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai. Since the advent of the new millennium, ZANU (PF) had it tough as the MDC piled massive pressure. Nearly two decades after the formation of the MDC, its leader Morgan Tsvangirai passed away. Soon after his passing, succession battles quickly ensued. On one front, there was Nelson Chamisa, a popular young man viewed as the natural successor owing to his charismatic nature by the general populace. On the other hand, were three individuals claiming the throne citing procedural and legal processes. Namely, the three are Thokozani Khupe, Elias Mudzuri and Douglas Mwonozora. In the long run, Nelson Chamisa lost the battle to lead the main MDC party thus was forced to form his party. The party he formed is dubbed CCC and it's going to participate in an election for the first time in the upcoming by-elections. Owing to the popularity of Nelson Chamisa – something already proven by the high numbers that grace his political rallies – analysts and the general public are eager to see how the newly formed CCC will perform in the by-elections.

For long, state institutions in

Zimbabwe ranging from the media talk of state television and radio broadcasters, schools particularly school heads, the military, the police, the intelligence and many other departments have been accused of aiding and abating the ruling party during national elections. In the 2018 elections, not many people paid attention to the role of state institutions owing to the prevailing euphoria over the deposal of Mugabe. Five years later, however, the euphoria has died down and everyone is eager to see a smooth election devoid of interference of external actors. The upcoming by-elections will thus to a large

extent demonstrate whether the state institutions will aid and abate the ruling party or not.

While there are key issues that the upcoming by-elections will answer, the general voting population in the country is not entirely interested in policies and substance. Rather, the voting population is sharply divided by two key factors. On one hand, there is the politics of the stomach spectrum while on the other hand, there is personality politics. A lot of people who support the ruling party to succeed in the upcoming elections as well as all other elections want to benefit from one thing or the other. Some are farm beneficiaries looking to safeguard their property while others benefit directly or indirectly from the ruling party or its policies. On the other hand, those who support the main opposition party largely do so because they are swayed by the charisma of the party leader Nelson Chamisa. While key issues are lying at the centre of the room, policies and substance will not decide the fate of the country. Rather, the need to safeguard one's interests or the charisma of the opposition leader will decide the elections.



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# Mozambique-Nyusi and Predecessor Split Over \$2.2bn Fraud Case Fraud

*Former Mozambican President Armando Guebuza and current President Filipe Nyusi have exchanged accusations in court over the \$2.2bn fraud, responsible for the biggest financial scandal ever recorded in Mozambique's history. The so-called hidden debts were contracted under President Guebuza presidency, but allegedly orchestrated by Nyusi as defense minister at the time.*

By Jorge Joaquim

Former Mozambican President Armando Guebuza says it is strange that his successor Filipe Nyusi knows nothing about EMATUM and MAM, as the current president told investigators of the hidden debts case that he can only answer partially about the ProIndicus process.

Nyusi was at the time of the contraction of the aforementioned debts defense minister and automatically head of the operative command, a group which, according to Guebuza, was delegated by him to handle all aspects relating to the design and implementation of Offshore defense company Proindicus, industrial fishing company Ematum and shipbuilding and repair company MAM.

However, speaking to the Attorney General's Office (PGR) in August 2018 at the time of the preparatory instruction of the hidden debts case now at the trial stage, Nyusi said that as Minister of National Defense (2008-2014) he never knew of the existence of EMATUM and MAM, and has no domain to what extent



*Relations have gone south between President Nyusi and former President Guebuza*

the two companies can be considered as being linked to the Defense and Security Forces.

To this extent, he said that he knows nothing about the processes of their creation, funding, and operation, so that he only became

aware of the existence of these two companies only when the matter was publicly triggered at a time when he was no longer defense minister.

Confronted with these statements, Guebuza said it was «strange» that Nyusi had said this to the PGR. «I have no comment because it is [a statement] strange,» he said on Friday as he was being heard for the second day in court. «He (Nyusi) was head of the operative command, but he says he doesn't know what happened so it is strange,» he stressed.

At the first hearing Guebuza had stated that the details of the three hidden debt companies should be given by Nyusi, justifying that as head of the operative command he dealt with all aspects together with the other members of the group, namely, the former interior minister, Alberto Mondlane and the head

of the Mozambican secret services SISE, Gregório Leão. Mondlane also said he did not know anything beyond ProIndicus.

When President Guebuza was asked if he could present any evidence indicating that Nyusi knows more details, he said that the court should request Nyusi's hearing to question him directly.

## *Nyusi responds partially on ProIndicus*

The contradiction between the statesmen extends to ProIndicus, the only company whose knowledge was assumed by most of the defendants and declarants. When asked about it, Guebuza said that its details should be answered by Nyusi from its creation and efforts to seek funding.

However, Nyusi told the PGR that as a member of the operative command and the government he never participated and never had



*President Felipe Nyusi denies any wrong doing.*

knowledge of the act that authorized the company to take on debt with the backing of the state.

He said he does not know how the process for financing the company with the Sweden bank Credit Suisse was triggered, nor does he have any knowledge of the contracts underwritten by the company to acquire equipment from the Lebanese shipbuilding group Prinvest's Abu Dhabi Mar company, and at no time was he talked about the companies in question.

He also said he had no control over how the guarantees were issued by the then finance minister Manuel Chang assuring payment of that company's debts in the event of default.

### Judge again refuses to hear Nyusi

In light of President Guebuza's declarations, associated with those of other declarants and defendants, the Mozambican Bar Association (OAM) once again requested a hearing of President Nyusi to provide clarification on the case of the hidden debts.

The judge in the case, Efigenio Baptista, refused for the third time, alleging that the case has already been sufficiently clarified, and therefore there is no need to hear



Judge Efigenio Baptista has been handling the case.

the President. Furthermore, Baptista added, the law prevents a judge from revoking previous decisions on the same application.

Baptista took the opportunity to clarify that Nyusi was heard in his office during the preparatory instruction of the process, and that when he was summoned again for the phase of adversarial hearings, he said that his version holds and therefore he saw no need to be heard again.

However, OAM questioned the trial phase itself, with the judge saying that even if it was to hear Nyusi, the

law determines that a President of the Republic must be heard only in his office and in the exclusive presence of the judge. «So even here in the court where you ask him to be heard would not be possible,» he said.

It was in this sequence that, at OAM's request, the judge read Nyusi's brief statements made in 2018 before prosecutor Alberto Paulo. A year after that session, Nyusi promoted Paulo to the position of Deputy Attorney General of the Republic, a position he holds to this day.

### Guebuza blames Renamo for illegality of debts

The main reason to go around the parliamentary approval for the contraction of the debts of the three companies has to do with the presence of the largest opposition party, Renamo, in that body, said Armando Guebuza.

«That debt was also to acquire equipment to combat those who at that time attacked Mozambique at various points,» he said. «It turns out that part of the attackers were part of Renamo, and this party has representation in the Assembly of the Republic... how can we take an issue like this to parliament?» he asked.

«I say it would be irresponsible,» he said. «It was to open up the possibility that they [Renamo] would have all the information and that would call into question the viability of the combat plans.»

However, before that justification Guebuza made it clear that this was a decision taken at the level of the operative command. «I agreed with the plan that was given to me by the operative command,» he said.

The position contradicts Nyusi's version, who at the time of his hearing said he was unaware that the process of contracting ProIndicus would be done outside the parliament.

In fact, according to Nyusi, the rationale for the creation of



The Case has sourced a happy retirement for former President Guebuza.



ProIndicus had to do with the protection of multinationals which were engaged in the exploitation of natural resources in Mozambique, especially the Italian ENI, the American Anadarko and Kenmare.

About the mysterious \$500m of the \$850m from EMATUM, which disappeared without trace, but which was declared by SISE to have been applied to defense, mainly to combat Renamo attacks, Nyusi said that his ministry has not received even one piece of equipment. The same position was presented by his successor Salvador Ntumuke.

### Renamo joins calls for Nyusi to testify

Filipe Nyusi should be heard by the court for the sake of clarifying the hidden debts, especially after the testimonies of Former President Armando Guebuza pointing to him as knowing all details of the case, Ossufo Momade, president of Renamo, told the press.

In fact, everyone who was heard



All citizens must be equal before the law says Ossufo Momade of Renamo.

during the preparatory instruction has now been heard again in court, some already as defendants and others as declarants, with the exception of Nyusi.

Ossufo Momade is indignant about the fact and says that the truth about the hidden debts case will only be finally reached when President Nyusi

is heard again to be confronted with the new data advanced in court, especially that of Armando Guebuza who pointed to his successor as the key to everything involving the \$2.2bn fraudulent loan.

«Therefore, the President of the Republic Filipe Jacinto Nyusi must be heard because under the terms of

the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique all Citizens are equal before the Law,» said Momade.

Judge Efigenio Baptista, however, has already rejected requests for Nyusi's hearing three times, and in the last rejection he made it known that it was final and there was no more talk of the matter. Ossufo Momade believes that the court's behavior is further evidence that the Mozambican state is «totally captured by a criminal regime.»

For Ossufo Momade, Guebuza's statements blaming Renamo of avoiding the parliament, are nothing more than a «false narrative» and the hidden debts were contracted because Mozambique is an «authoritarian regime without government transparency or any mechanisms of mutual control and accountability.

«In this regime it is enough to claim the security of the state and Superior Orders from the Chief to go over the law, typical of personalized governance,» he said.

## Starving Kenyans threaten to boycott polls

By Samuel Ouma

Most Kenyans intend to boycott the general elections scheduled for August 9, 2022, if the government fails to address the high cost of living, which has left many people struggling to make ends meet.

They have expressed dissatisfaction with the steady rise in the prices of basic things, particularly food, and have threatened to boycott the upcoming elections if President Uhuru Kenyatta's administration does not cut food prices. Kenyans have taken to social media to express their displeasure with the government for failing to rein in the ever-increasing costs of essential necessities, using the hashtag #lowerfoodprices.

Before August, they have indicated that they would refrain from participating in political campaigns by not attending their rallies. If the situation does not improve, they will be forced to resort to peaceful



Presidential polls are often a source of tension in Kenya .Photo courtesy.

demonstrations as a last resort to force the government to address the issue.

«Boycotting their political meetings will be perfect,» Phyllis Kiraba Kimando.

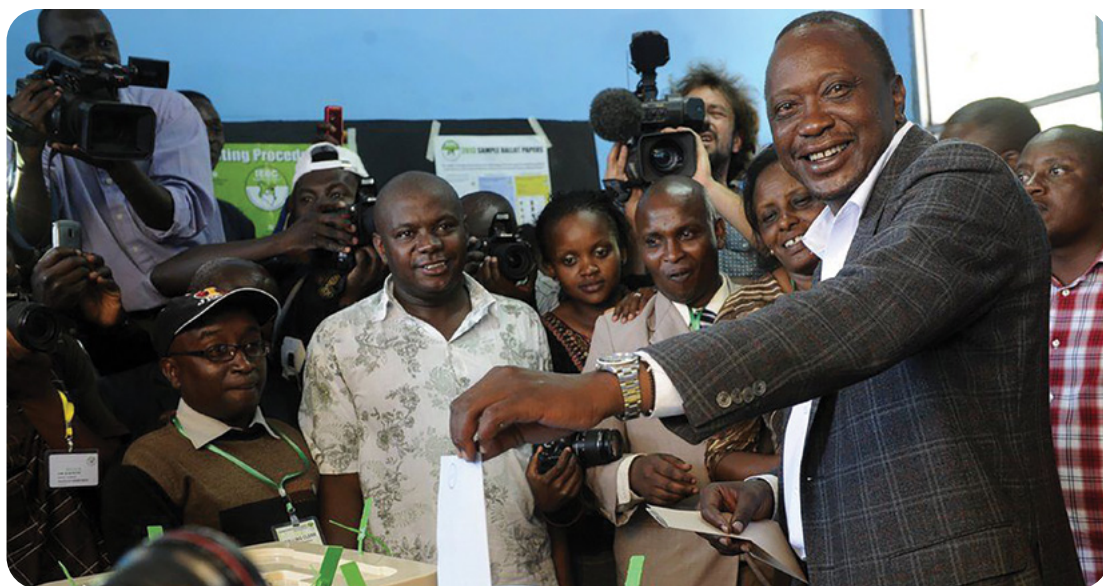
The products that are most adversely affected are maize flour, wheat, bread, sugar, milk, cooking oil, bar soaps, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and farm inputs such as fertilizers, amongst other things. Non-food goods such as gasoline, diesel, and kerosene are also impacted.

A litre of cooking oil now costs Ksh300 (\$3) from Ksh120 (\$1.2), a kilogram of sugar costs Ksh150 (\$1.5) from Ksh114 (\$1.14), a kilogram of maize flour costs Ksh125 (\$1.25) instead of Ksh90 (\$0.90), and a kilogram of milk costs Ksh60 (\$0.60) instead of Ksh50 (\$0.5). For a 6kg cylinder, the cost of replenishing Liquefied Petroleum Gas is Ksh1200 (\$12) from Ksh800 (\$8), and for a 13kg cylinder, the price is Ksh2850 (\$28.5) from Ksh2000 (\$20).

«Our elected officials have been taking us for a ride for far too long. Food costs and other commodities are rising at an unsustainable rate every day «Derrick Were, another Kenyan, made the same point.

According to enraged Kenyans, they have a legitimate reason to be dissatisfied with the growing prices of food, stressing that any genuine government should strive at all times to make basic food staples affordable to all of its people. They have asked everyone to get on board with the #lowerfoodprices movement to fight for a better future.

Allies from opposing political groups, Azimio La Umoja and Kenya Kwanza, have been slinging allegations against one another since the campaign began. They have both accused the other of being to blame for the growing costs of food products. Youth have asserted that political leaders are now politicizing the problem in order to garner political mileage, and they cautioned them not to take the lives of ordinary Kenyans



**President Kenyatta will not be eligible to run again after serving two terms. Photo courtesy.**

for granted.

«Kenyans are waking up and coming together to chart a course towards lower food prices. Along the way, political commentators seize control of the situation and transform it into a political battleground. The course's objectives might be achieved if we all voiced our dissatisfaction with the cost of living without politicizing our feelings about it,» said Sakwah Ongoma, a resident.

Raila Odinga and William Ruto, the two major contenders for Kenya's fifth president, will suffer significantly if youth boycott the poll. Over 20 million Kenyans are eligible to vote, with the majority of them under the age of 35, according to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEBC).

The two leaders have tried to salvage the situation, promising to cut food prices if elected president. However, Kenyans did not spare them, accusing them of hypocrisy.

«But how can some people blame Uhuru Kenyatta for the high cost of living while still believing that William Ruto should be the future president of Kenya? Is he not the deputy president in the current government?» Hon. Mbula Mutula inquired.

«There is no saint in this case; all politicians are complicit, even Ruto

and Raila. Kenyans should be on the lookout for wolves dressed in sheepskin,» said a resident who asked not to be named.

## **The factors that contribute to rising food prices**

There are a variety of variables that contribute to the country's high standard of living. First and foremost, the government is under increasing pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to produce more income, which has compelled it to hike taxes on ordinary household products like cooking gas, fuel, and food, among other things. For example, VAT on petroleum products and LPG was applied at rates of 8 and 16 per cent, respectively.

An increasing number of Kenyan officials are calling for the government to halt borrowing as the country's debt continues to rise. According to the most recent figures, the total governmental debt stands at Ksh11.7 trillion (about \$102.8 billion). The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund dominate Kenya's external lenders. What pains Kenyans most is that some of the loans were not used for their intended purpose; they wound up in the pockets of unidentified individuals.

In addition, the Covid-19

pandemic, which has affected tourism and exports, has caused the Kenyan shilling to lose value - by approximately 6 per cent since May 2021 - and has increased the prices of all imported commodities. Aside from disrupting global supply networks, the epidemic has made it more expensive and time-consuming to access and move products and services across international borders.

The Jubilee government and legislators are responsible for the terrible lives that Kenyans have been forced to live. Petrol prices have increased by a further Sh5 since the National Assembly passed legislation increasing Value Added Tax (VAT) on fuel to 8% and introducing the Petroleum Development Levy in 2020, all of which were approved by the National Assembly.

Furthermore, in December 2020, the National Assembly endorsed the rollback of pandemic tax relief, which would have restored taxation to pre-pandemic revenue levels. In addition to excise duty, there were levies on roads for upkeep, petroleum development levies on railroads, petroleum regulatory levies on refineries, merchant shipping levies on merchant ships, import declaration fees on goods, and VAT on goods imported into the country.

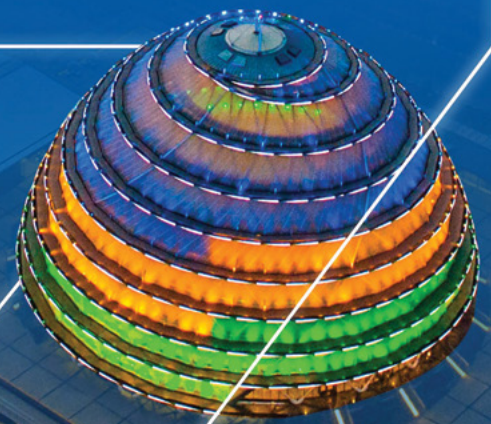


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# Kenya: Kenyatta Endorsement Boosts Odinga's Presidential Aspirations

By Prince Kurupati

**L**ate last year, long-time presidential hopeful Raila Odinga launched his fifth bid to become Kenya's president. Kenya will hold its presidential election in August this year and Odinga is hoping that the fifth time charm will prove to be the best. As is the case with the past elections that he has competed in, Raila Odinga is competing against an able opponent in William Ruto, the current Vice President. Recently, Odinga's campaign received a major boost after the incumbent president Uhuru Kenyatta endorsed him over his deputy William Ruto.

Generally speaking, President Uhuru Kenyatta's decision to endorse an 'opponent' over his deputy is rather unconventional. However, this isn't the case when it comes to Kenyatta, Odinga and Ruto. This was necessitated by the fact that in the past months and years, the relationship and friendship between Kenyatta and Odinga blossomed while that of Kenyatta and Ruto withered. Once bitter rivals, Kenyatta and Odinga in the past couple of years have developed a brotherhood which has surprised many Kenyans, especially those who witnessed first-hand the violence that characterised the past two presidential elections in which the two competed against each other.

When Uhuru Kenyatta was elected for the second term five years back, William Ruto quickly started paving the way for his future 'presidency' as he made it known that upon the end of Kenyatta's second term, he would run for the presidency. As such, during the entirety of Kenyatta's second term, Ruto was predominantly doing more campaign work than executing his executive duties. Odinga on the other hand took a 'sabbatical' after losing the election. Though he still harboured presidential ambitions, he chose to lie low for some years



*The endorsement by President Kenyatta is huge for Raila Odinga.*

before kickstarting his presidential bid towards the tail end of Kenyatta's second term in office. Odinga's decision to lay low seems to have been a masterstroke as it propelled him to be viewed as a great statesman who is interested in the development of the country rather than being a power-obsessed person who stays in a perpetual election mode.

During his endorsement, President Kenyatta said, "As they speak about Jubilee Party's death, you can also see what the party has been doing. We have been able to achieve much but there are some projects which are not complete, and hence as Jubilee, we are now coming out of the office getting into real politics... And because some were politicking while work was ongoing, we have said we want a coalition unit of like-minded parties and together we join Azimio. We have the candidate; we have the resources and the youth are together with us... We have chosen Raila

Odinga without any opposition, to be the fifth president of Kenya."

Impressed by Raila Odinga's statesmanship and abhorred by Ruto's obsession for power, Uhuru Kenyatta chose to side with his former bitter rival. To the Odinga campaign, President Kenyatta's endorsement is very significant. This largely owing to the fact that President Kenyatta comes from the Mt Kenya region, the same region where William Ruto has his strongest support base. With Kenyatta's endorsement, Odinga is likely going to divide the vote in his favour in the region and possibly wane Ruto's popularity in the region.

Kenyatta however did not endorse Odinga in his capacity only. He also endorsed Odinga via the Mt Kenya Foundation. The Mt Kenya Foundation is a group of wealthy campaign financiers who built up the war chest of President Kenyatta and his predecessor Mwai Kibaki in the past four elections. The support and

endorsement of the Mt Kenya Group thus put the Odinga campaign on a sound financial path as he is likely going to receive substantial campaign funds to conduct his campaign.

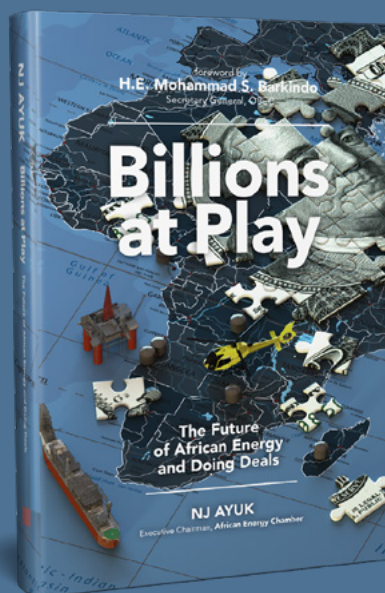
However, though the endorsement of Kenyatta certainly aids Odinga in his quest to assume power at the fifth time of asking, there is the danger that it will saddle his campaign with the baggage of the outgoing administration. Kenyatta is widely popular in the country and that has largely been the case throughout his two terms in power. However, though that is the case, Kenyatta's administration has also faced stern criticism over the years largely with regards to the country's economic policies as well as handling of graft cases. There is thus the danger that Kenyatta's endorsement of Odinga may just saddle the Odinga campaign team with such criticism.



# Billions at Play

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# A Milestone Win for Ethiopia as the Grand Renaissance Dam Start Generating Power

By Prince Kurupati

History was made on 20 February 2022, when Ethiopia started generating power at the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The massive hydropower project once it comes to completion will become the biggest hydropower project on the continent. The project was hailed by millions of Ethiopians including the country's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who described it as a key ingredient to Ethiopia's economic development. However, not many people are happy with the project chief among them Ethiopia's downstream neighbours.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister officially opened the project on Sunday 20 February in Guba, near the country's border with Sudan. The project which started a decade ago has sucked a lot of funds totalling \$5 billion. At the ceremony, the Prime Minister said that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is starting the first phase of power generation. He said the project is scheduled for completion at the end of 2024. Upon completion, the project is set to generate a total of 5,150 megawatts. At the present moment, only one of the 13 turbines is operational. The turbine had an



*Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed cuts the ribbon during the first power generation ceremony at the site of GERD .Photo credit AFP.*

installed capacity of 375 megawatts. The second turbine according to the project's schedule will become operational within months and all 13 by the end of 2024.

Addressing a jubilant crowd, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said they never intended to harm or displease anyone with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. Rather,

they embarked on the project as the government is seeking to provide power to the people without electricity in their homes while at the same time powering the countries' industries to success and growth. "Ethiopia does not intend to harm anyone rather, to provide for the 60% of the population that have never seen a bulb, as well as our mothers who carry firewood for energy," Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said.

In addition to using the electricity within the confines of the country's borders, Ethiopia is aiming to export surplus power to neighbouring as well as other regional countries. Ethiopia already has in place a grid connection with Sudan and is currently in talks with the Kenyan authorities to complete a power-purchasing deal. In due course, the Prime Minister said Ethiopia can even start exporting power outside the continent especially to Europe for the benefit of Ethiopia as well as other African countries. "We want to export energy to Europe. It is time to stop bickering and begin cooperating in a manner that will help Egypt, Sudan, other countries

and also help ourselves."

If Ethiopia's big dreams of exporting power to Europe are to come to fruition, then the country must cooperate with Egypt as it is Egypt that has the grid connection between Europe and Africa. The unfortunate thing at the moment is that Ethiopia and Egypt aren't seeing eye to eye with regards to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. When Ethiopia announced plans to start the GERD project, concerns were raised by water engineers and other actors. The concerned parties stated that the hydropower would cause severe water shortages downstream as Ethiopia diverts Nile water to fill a vast reservoir behind the Grand Renaissance Dam. As Egypt lies downstream of the Nile, it together with Sudan have been fighting the project since the day it was born.

Speaking at the official opening, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed however allayed all the fears expressed by Egypt and Sudan saying, "As you can see, this water will generate energy while flowing as it previously flowed to Sudan and Egypt, unlike the rumours that say the Ethiopian



*GERD will be a key ingredient of Ethiopian economic development ,says PM Abiy at its launch.Photo credit AFP*



people and government are damming the water to starve Egypt and Sudan”.

Previously, the three countries tried to come to a round table to discuss the issue and try and find an amicable solution. However, the best that the three could find was a stalemate. The major bone of contention and the chief reason was an amicable solution is still elusive relates to Ethiopian engineers' reluctance to state explicitly the exact amount of water required to ensure the dam's proper functioning. This has in turn made life difficult for Egyptian and Sudanese

engineers to plan their water and irrigation interests. Some interested parties expressed optimism at the start of the year that the African Union was going to address the issue during its 35th Summit scheduled weeks before the official opening of the project. Unfortunately, during the African Union Summit held on



*The massive hydropower project upon completion will become the biggest hydropower project on the continent. Photo credit Tiksa Negeri, Reuters.*

5-6 February at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, African leaders negated the issue choosing instead to prioritise and debate about security issues on the continent and the recent military coups in Africa.

While many Ethiopians and other actors in favour of the hydropower project view it as an economic success

for Ethiopia, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group William Davison says the hydropower project can also be viewed as a success on the political front. William Davison said that Ethiopia in recent times has been facing massive external pressure owing to both its persistence with the project as well as other issue affecting

the country. In light of this, it's always great for a nation to show that it's a sovereign nation that determines its destiny. William Davinson says Ethiopia's persistence with the project showcases its sovereignty and strong determination to better the lives of its people hence it's something to be proud of. "The government has propagated the idea that foreign actors are trying to undermine Ethiopia's sovereignty, so I think this will be cast as showing they are still making progress despite a hostile environment," Davinson said.

Addisu Lashitwe from the Brookings Institution in Washington seconded this saying GERD is a "rare positive development that can unite a deeply fractured country" necessitated by months of brutal conflict with Tigrayan rebels.

## Cameroon: COVID-fund, AFCON Projects Embezzlers' Files Await Biya After AFCON

By Andrew Nsoseka

After overseeing the successful hosting of Africa's biggest football jamboree, the Africa Cup of Nations, AFCON and achieving one of his greatest desires, Cameroon's President, Paul Biya is now expected to turn his attention inward, and handle hot files on pending cases of alleged embezzlement of funds meant for the fight against Covid-19 as well as other pilfered or mismanaged funds disbursed to finance AFCON 2021 projects.

In recent times, top government officials in Cameroon have been on the spotlight, for the wrong reasons. First, was the mismanagement and alleged embezzlement of funds obtained



*The response of President Biya to the myraid of problems facing Cameroon has been lethargic.*

as loans from the International Monetary Fund, IMF. The money, borrowed to finance the fight against Covid-19 and also keep Cameroon's

economy afloat was reportedly largely embezzled. According to a multitude of several local media reports, and reports from Human Right Watch,

several ministries that received chunks of the over 180 billion Covid-19 funds could not present a balanced sheet on how the money was spent. Some ministers and ministries even refused to be audited. The funds were distributed to 24 ministries for the fight against the COVID - 19 pandemic.

After investigations, Cameroon's Audit Bench of the Supreme Court confirmed fears of the shady deals that were carried out by some ministries, officials, and contractors in the way projects related to the fight against Covid-19 were handled. The Audit Bench revealed that there were several cases of overbilling, failure to follow the procedure in the award



of contracts, existence of fake contracts, favouritism, conflicts of interests and several rule violations. There were also cases of funds disappearing between the Ministry of Finance and some ministries that were to receive the funds and fight the spread of the disease in their various domains.

Concerning misused funds, Cameroon's Supreme Court summoned some ministers and high-ranking officials who were grilled on the use of the funds, but still little has filtered out to the public. One of the conditions for the FCFA 180 Billion loan was that the money was to be managed transparently, and details of such made public knowledge, but by far, it has rather been very secretive. Even after wide condemnation after revelations of mismanagement many ministries especially those manned by Biya regime bigwigs refused to be audited.

One of the many shady stories that baffled Cameroonians, was the disappearance of FCFA six Billion between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Higher Education, MINESUP. The bulk of the FCFA 6 billion allocated to MINESUP, was supposed to be distributed in both material and monetary form to all State Universities and other legalised higher education institutions in the country under the ministry, for the fight against COVID-19.

As regard the situation of MINESUP, the report of the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court was not clear on the situation of the funds supposedly allocated to the Ministry. The Audit Bench said in its report that no trace of the FCFA 6 billion that the Government allocated to MINESUP, was found in the ministry. This instead seemingly misled the Special Criminal Court and people that had access to the report, to think that the money was embezzled at MINESUP.

The audit report sparked off anger at MINESUP. Top officials of the Ministry fumed that the audit report which failed to clearly state



*The AfCON is now a distant memory with the country facing uncertainty on multiple fronts.*

that MINESUP had not received the COVID-19 funds that were allocated to the Ministry, fuelled the rumour that went viral, that the Minister of Higher Education, Prof Jacques Fame Ndongo, who is also the National Communication Secretary of the ruling CPDM, had embezzled the FCFA six billion.

Several of such cases may be uncovered, but the interest of many Cameroonians is identifying why, where and how money meant to save Cameroonians facing a deadly pandemic ended up in private accounts, or somewhere else.

## Similar Story With AFCON Projects

Similarly, there have been reported cases of mismanagement of funds meant for the realisation of AFCON 2021 projects. Like the case of Covid-19 funds, there are several reported cases of overbilling. There are also cases of some ministers withdrawing contracts from those they don't favour, and handing them to companies they favour, which considerably slowed down the pace of the work, and in some cases, resulted in the works not being done or completed before the commencement of the football tournament. During several evaluating field trips officials

of the Confederation of African Football, CAF expressed worry about the pace of work. Also, there were projects with inflated costs that baffled many who were quick to compare it with what happens in other countries that have carried out such projects.

One of the AFCON 2021 projects that many are still expecting many answers to be provided, is a road project that was meant to ease traffic in Cameroon's economic capital, Douala, during and after the football tournament. After several controversies and delays, seizing and awarding contracts to companies they will gain from, the ministers involved and their favourite contractors could not realise the project. To ease traffic in Douala, the government had opted to rehabilitate the East Entrance into the city. The stretch is a 20kilometre stretch on national road number 3.

Due to financial constraints, the government divided the project into two phases. The first phase, covering 12 kilometres was constructed to the tune of FCFA 39.4 billion borrowed from the French Development Agency. It was done by a French company, Razel. The second phase was delayed due to the government's inability to raise funds. In the end, it was awarded to a Chinese company,

WIETC-CRCC 14. After a few months, the Minister of Public works who was out to settle scores with the former Minister Delegate at the presidency, Abba Sadou decided to withdraw the contract from the Chinese company. Personally, he wanted to hand the project Razel, a French company. The Chinese group had requested 33 billion for the project, but the French Company asked for 43 billion. Finally, the Minister's ploy paid off, but he gave the contract to an Italian company, Magil instead.

After that, Cameroonians were surprised when a presidential decree emerged to the effect that Cameroon was obtaining a loan of 88.8 billion for phase two of the project, which was initially awarded to the Chinese company that started works at FCFA 33 billion. The French contractor asked for 34billion and, as such many were surprised when the cost magically jumped to over 88 billion when a third company came up. In vain, many questions were asked but no convincing answer was ever provided why the cost had been inflated to more than double the real cost of the project.

## Will Biya Wade in?

Like the COVID-19 funds, mismanagement and embezzlement



scandals, the President seemed more determined and focussed on first ensuring that the basics were ready for the AFCON tournament to take place before he could later clean house. In his 2021 end of year address to the country, President Biya said the management of public finances must be enhanced, and that

it will be done by fighting corruption and embezzlement of public funds. "All those found guilty of financial malpractice or illicit enrichment will face the consequences before the competent courts," he said

Now that the football tournament is over and several questions remain to be answered regarding the misuse

of public funds meant to fight the pandemic and also finance projects meant for the construction and upgrading of infrastructure for the just-ended AFCON, many expect Biya to handle the hot files. As such, some ministers and state officials may soon join some of their counterparts who are now languishing in jail for similar

deeds. At the level of some parastatals like the Cameroon development corporation, some of the officials are already answering questions for alleged mismanagement or embezzlement.

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# Guinea-Conakry: NDI Sets Out Recommendations For Smooth Transition

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Following a seven days technical assessment mission to Conakry, Guinea, the National Democratic Institute, NDI, has called on Guinea's Transition authorities led by Transition President, Col. Mamadi Doumbouya, to release a transition timeline "to provide more clarity and focus on actions by government entities, political parties, civil society and other stakeholders that will enhance confidence and citizen participation, and hence guarantee the success of the transition."

From March 9-15, the technical assessment mission to Conakry, Guinea had the mission to gauge citizens' priorities during Guinea's transition process following the coup d'état of September 5, 2021, and to explore possibilities for technical assistance to civilian-led institutions and civil society organizations working to ensure an inclusive, transparent and credible transition.

The delegation has called on the Transitional Council to initiate and maintain a robust, nimble and inclusive consultation process among the major stakeholders without duplicating transitional institutions and/or their competencies, to foster better and stronger lines of



Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya reviewing the recommendations with Dr Christopher Fomunyoh of the NDI.

communication with political and civic stakeholders.

«Prioritize reforms that would demonstrate the military's public commitment to return the country to civilian, democratic rule, and establish consensus around significant issues that will be better dealt with long-term by the elected executive and

legislative branches of government,» NDI said in a report.

To political parties, the NDI called on the Transitional Council to "Engage vigorously in the transition and conduct a critical assessment of the roles and responsibilities of political parties in building and safeguarding democracy, and educate members and

Alioune Tine, director of Afrikajom Center (Senegal); Ms Ulrike Rodgers, NDI program director for Francophone West Africa; Mr Kevin Adomayakpor, NDI resident director in Burkina Faso; and Mr Paul Komivi Sémeko Amegakpo, NDI resident director in Guinea.

NDI's visit coincided with several actions taken by Guinean stakeholders that could enhance the Transition's credibility. These include a declaration signed by 58 political parties and associations demanding greater transparency and inclusiveness in the transition process; national outreach by the CNT across all regions of the country to gather citizen opinions on the constitutional review process; and an announcement by the Transition government of plans to launch national consultations by March 22, to harness citizen input into critical aspects of the Transition.

Despite notes of optimism, the delegation identified potential flashpoints that could revive political tensions and perhaps violence, if not



The NDI recommendations include a call to the military leaders to use the transition period to revive internal democracy within parties.

speedily addressed such as a lack of clarity on the transition timeline, and order of priorities during the transition period. Many Guineans complained about recent actions by transition authorities that contradict earlier declarations in fall 2021.

While members of other transition bodies are known, including Cabinet ministers and CNT Councilors, membership of the military's central decision-making organ, the National Committee of the Rally for Development (CNRD), remains unknown. Many Guineans stated that it is unreasonable to expect citizen buy-in for decisions made by a body whose membership is unknown. Such opacity is generating growing mistrust and a potential lack of accountability that could weaken national and international confidence in the transition process.

The delegation also noted a very low level of women's representation and inclusiveness within Guinea's transition institutions. The CNT has 24 women (out of 81 members); however, only one of eight governors is female, and out of 33 senior divisional officers (prefects) and 304 sub-divisional officers (sub-prefects), none is a woman. Also, the participation of women in the transitional government is low.

NDI has called on the media to contribute to awareness raising,



The NDI Delegation urged Transition President, Col. Mamadi Doumbouya, to release a transition timeline.

civic and voter education, and encourage citizen engagement during the transition; Avoid exacerbating existing political and ethnic polarization, and spread of misinformation, and promote respect for professional standards and ethics and Seek entry points to help develop, update, and promote legislation protecting the freedom of expression and the media, and the right to information.

Guinea has a long history of defending its rights and freedoms. They have always opted for a democratic path when offered alternatives. The NDI delegation hopes that the voices of the proud people of Guinea will be respected so the ongoing transition is peaceful, transparent, and inclusive and facilitates the timely emergence of a legitimate, representative and democratically elected government.

#### Brief background on NDI

NDI is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that works in partnership around the world to strengthen and safeguard democratic institutions, processes, norms and values to secure a better quality of life for all. NDI envisions a world where democracy and freedom prevail, with dignity for all.

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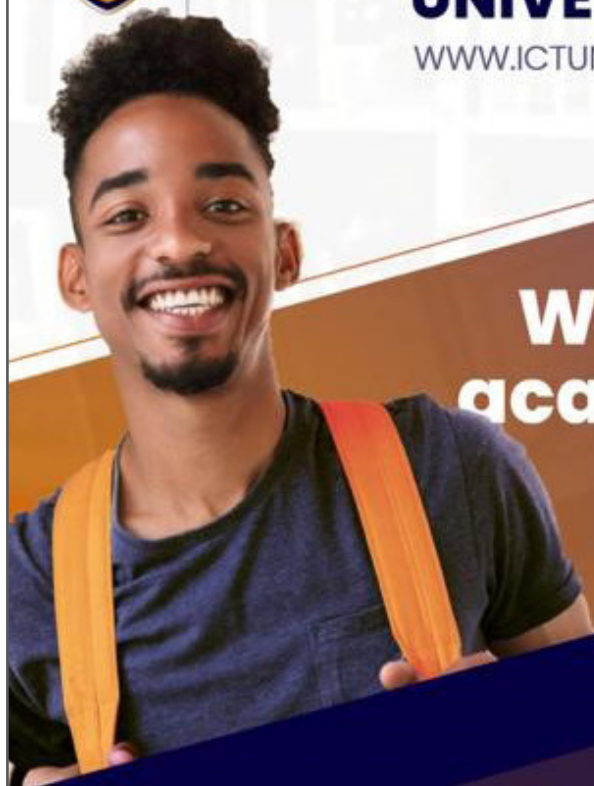




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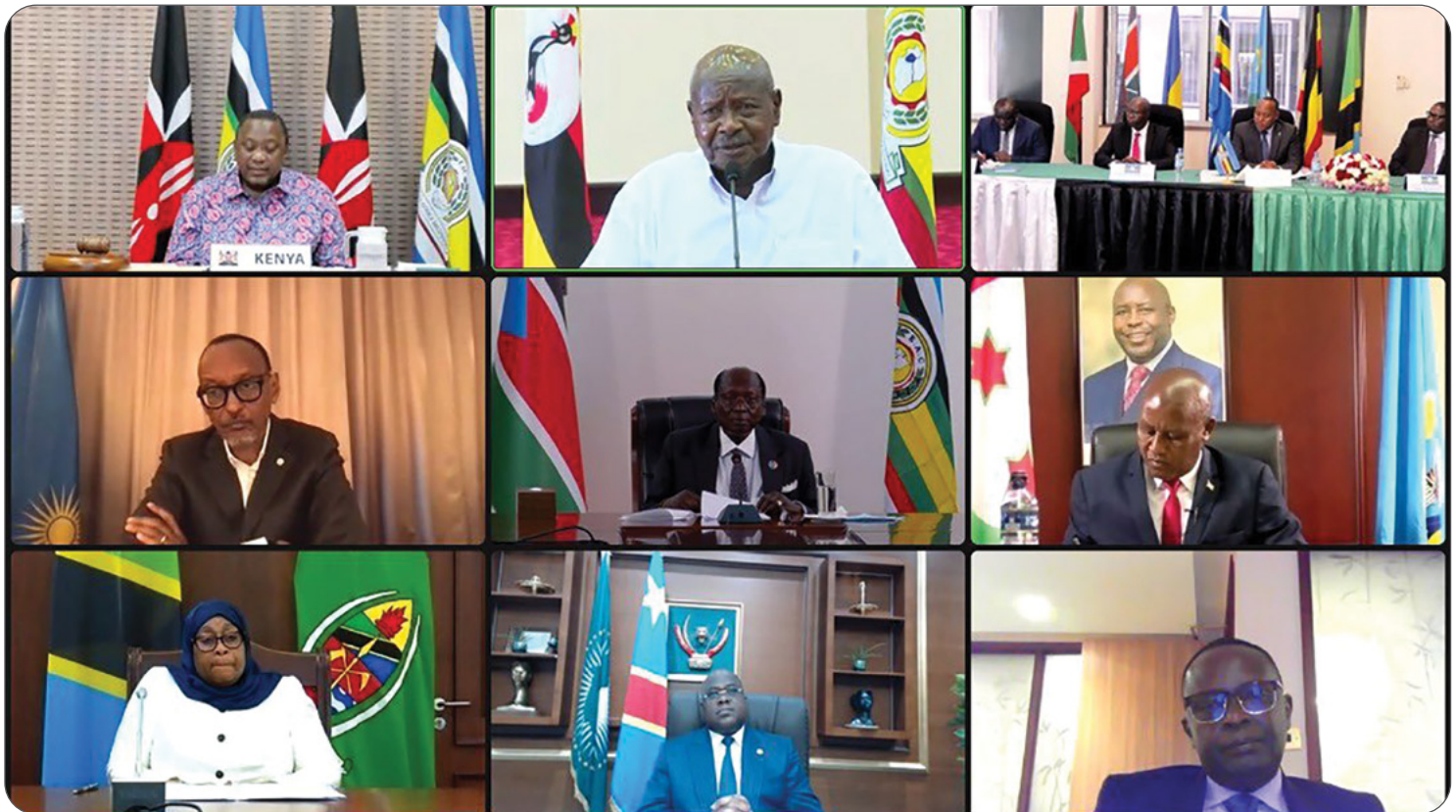
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# What Does D R Congo's Admission To Join EAC Mean?

By Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti



EAC Heads of State officially admitted the DRC into the East African Community.. Photo credit twitter.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has today joined the East African Community (EAC) becoming the seventh Partner State in the block.

The admission was announced in the Summit of EAC Heads of State at their 19th Ordinary Summit held on Tuesday, 29th March, 2022. It follows the recent recommendation by the Council of Ministers.

The Chairperson of the Summit, Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of Kenya informed the meeting that DR Congo had met all the set criteria for admission as provided for in the Treaty for the establishment of the EAC.

"We have concluded the regional processes for admitting new members as provided for in our rules of procedure," said President Kenyatta.

"Admitting DRC into EAC is historic for our Community and the African continent at large," he added.

He stressed that the admission demonstrates the agility of the Community "to expand beyond

its socio-cultural boundaries to new people and trade-centered partnerships and collaboration, thus increasing trade and investment opportunities for the citizens," added the Chair.

President Kenyatta said that he was looking forward to the DRC signing the Treaty of Accession before the stated date of 14th April, 2022.

The Summit took the decision to admit DRC into EAC after adopting the report of the Council of Ministers that had recommended the same.

Welcoming his country's admission into the EAC, DRC President Felix Tshishkedi termed it a historical day for DRC, stating that it paves the way for the harmonization of the country's policies with those of the EAC.

President Tshishkedi said that DRC was looking forward to increased Intra-EAC trade and reduction of tension amongst the EAC Partner States.

"It is the desire of DRC to see the creation of a new organ in the EAC that is solely focused on mining,

natural resources and energy that will be based in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo," he said.

In his remarks, Uganda's President, Hon. Yoweri Museveni said that DRC joining the Community was an event of great significance, adding that he had personally been waiting for the last 60 years for DRC to reconnect with EAC.

"DRC has strong historical, social and cultural links with EAC Partner States. It is the onus of the EAC to now work on restoring peace and stability in Eastern DRC, a fete we can achieve by working together," he added.

On his part, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda hailed the EAC Council of Ministers and the Summit for fast-tracking the entry of DRC into the EAC.

"I call upon EAC Organs and Institutions to accelerate the integration of DRC into the Community. Rwanda is committed to support the process," he stated.

Speaking at the event, Tanzania's President H.E Samia Suluhu Hassan

observed that DRC has a long historical relationship with EAC.

President Samia expressed hope that DRC would ratify the Treaty of Accession to ensure full integration of her people into the bloc and reaffirmed Tanzania's commitment to the integration process in East Africa.

On behalf of Burundi's President H.E Evariste Ndayishimiye, Vice President Prosper Bazombanza hailed DRC President Felix Tshishkedi for the admission of his country into the Community.

"EAC projects and programmes are vital and their implementation critical for the integration process. As we move towards the Political Federation, we need to strengthen our efforts to protect our borders against terrorism, piracy and other transnational crimes," said the VP, as he reiterated Burundi's commitment to constructively contribute to promoting peace and stability in the region.

Speaking on behalf of South Sudan President H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit,

Hon. Barnaba Marial Benjamin, the Minister for Presidential Affairs, hailed the entry of DRC into the EAC.

Hon. Benjamin said that his country had fallen behind in its contributions to EAC due to the prolonged armed conflict in the country and the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The President has cleared the way for all outstanding contributions to the Community," said the Minister, even as he praised efforts to employ South Sudanese nationals into EAC Organs and Institutions.

Addressing the Summit, EAC Secretary General Hon. (Dr.) Peter Mathuki, said that the admission of DRC into the EAC comes with

increased GDP and expanded market size making EAC a home to about 300 million people, which would be mutually beneficial to the people of both EAC and DRC by providing employment and investment opportunities that come along with this new development.

"The EAC now spans from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean making the region competitive and easy to access the larger African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)," said Dr. Mathuki.

"With lower tariffs on goods and the removal of trading restrictions among Partner States, we anticipate that goods and services will move

more freely. With a larger market, manufacturers in the EAC, whether large, or SMEs, will benefit from economies of scale, making them increasingly efficient and competitive," he added.

The Secretary General invited the Private Sector to work closely with the Public Sector to tap the benefits of the entry of the central African nation into the bloc.

Further, Dr. Mathuki said that DRC's entry also requires integrating the EAC's trade infrastructure, intermodal connectivity, One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), and trade systems to reduce trade time and costs, adding that enhancing trade

facilitation will enable formal and informal cross-border trade along the region's transport corridors.

Upon ascension to The Treaty establishing the East African Community and depositing of the instrument of acceptance with the Secretary-General, DRC will join EAC's cooperation in all the sectors, programmes and activities that promote the four pillars of EAC Integration. Collaboration in these areas will help us achieve the Community's objectives as set out in Article 5 of the EAC Treaty.

## Obasanjo: A legend at 85

By Richard Mammah

It does not matter any more that former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo has since admitted that he does not really have precise records of his birth date. But once every year, on his presently adopted day in March, the crowds gather. And the controversial trendsetter that he is, the ensuing discussions almost always tend to focus on topical concerns in relation to Nigeria and Africa, two issues that are dear to the subject's heart. It was not any different this year as he marked his 85th birthday in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

For whatever it is, Obasanjo has indeed found himself somewhat in the centre of the Nigerian story for decades. And this goes as far back as the events that terminated the country's First Republic. His bosom friend, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu was at the centre of the first coup detat in the history of Nigeria. He was equally the one that Col Philip Effiong surrendered to on the field of combat at the close of the Nigeria



*We must change the narrative on the continent, says Obasanjo, as he moots another pet project the Africa Narrative Club or Society. Photo courtesy.*

Civil War. He thereafter went on to serve as Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, military President and two-time civilian president. And he has continued to be a go-to person in the emergence of almost every government in the current Republic.

Nigeria has evidently been good to him.

At the birthday congregation this year, the discussion was formally advertised as an international symposium in Abeokuta to mark his 85th birthday.

But it ultimately came down to locating the discourse within the context of the very significant political transition process that is presently underway in Nigeria.

Not one to mince words, Obasanjo threw his hat into the ring and counselled on the need to not toy with some of the relatively fixed variables in the Nigerian political space such as power rotation, federal character and related balancing objects.

According to the former President, federal character, rotation and "such other measures are meant to help our nation-building process and more sure-footedly move Nigeria forward," counselling that "riding over these measures rudely, shoddily and roughly cannot augur well for our nation-building process and progress."

He added some more meat:

"From personal experience and clinical observation, there is no substitute for steady and uncompromised process of nation-building as we have had in some



notable examples in the past that have stood us in good stead.”

“We have a lot to learn from the events of the last almost 24 years, and God is not to blame if we fail.

“It would appear that we are not getting our priorities right, and that can spell doom on our country if we fail to do what we should do for nation-building in terms of fundamentals of equity, justice, common ideals, popular education, shared values, mutual respect and equality of opportunity anchored and propelled by leaders across the board that are persons of integrity, honour, morality, competence, great virtue, courage to do what is right, humility and ability to put a team together and work with them in selfless devotion and service with the fear of God.”

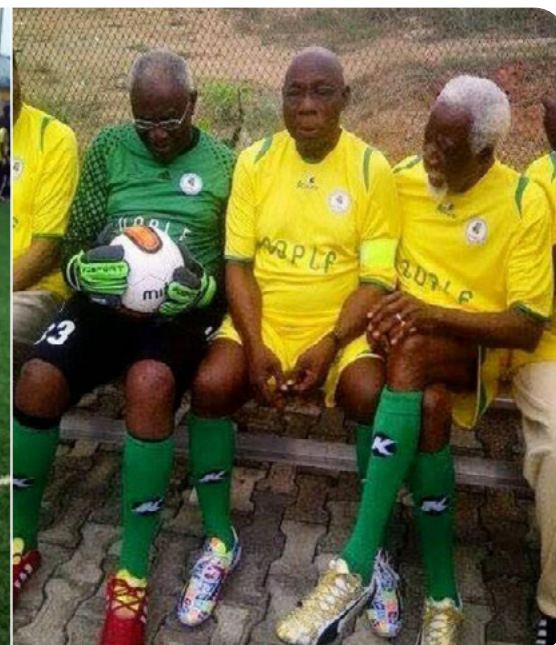
Tracing one particular example that occurred while he held forth as military head of state in 1979, he observed that that particular transition which was concluded with the duo of the Northerner, Alhaji Shehu Shagari and the ‘Biafran’ Dr. Alex Ekwueme emerging on a joint ticket as President and vice president within less than 10 years of the close of the Nigerian civil war was a most important development for the consolidation of national unity and the process of nation-building.

“Sustaining the declaration of the victory of Shagari by the National Electoral Commission when Shagari had majority of votes and clear one-third of votes cast in twelve states as against six states by Obafemi Awolowo, which was also sustained and certified by the court and endorsed for implementation by our military administration, was also part of the process of our nation-building.”

Coming over to the events of the current democratic experiment, he also noted that the circumstances surrounding his emergence as civilian president were also notable.

“Voting for me by other Nigerians in 1999, when Afenifere and the Yoruba substantially voted against me strengthened our nation-building process.

“As continuation of that process, PDP adopted rotation and sharing



*A football match was part of the festivities to celebrate President Obasanjo at 85. Photo courtesy*

formula for six key party political offices and government offices among the six geopolitical zones, which stood the country and the party in good stead.

“It was the PDP policy that made it inadvisable to have candidate from the South to succeed me after my eight years in office as President.

“I was succeeded by Umaru Yar’Adua from the North. When Yar’Adua died in office, the nation-building process made us to follow the constitution and for Jonathan to step in, contrary to the desire of some people from the North, who agitated otherwise.

“I have been at the giving end and at the receiving end of contribution to the nation-building process, and I know that if we derail from nation-building process with solid principles, Nigeria will be shipwrecked.

“I will, at this juncture, leave it to fair-minded Nigerians who believe in the continuation of the process of nation-building to decide which way Nigeria should go.

“I have always maintained that if we look hard widely and fairly and we bring objectivity, national interest and patriotism to bear and which must be spiced with equity, integrity, performance, then no region or zone should claim to have monopoly of Nigerians that can lead us along the

path of nation-building on the basis of justice, fast economic development, inclusive growth, shared value and our rightful place in the global division of labour and decision making process.

“If we are going fault finding zonally or regionally, no region or zone can claim absolute innocence. And federal character is a very important and perfect instrument of nation-building in our Constitution.”

Done with the broad spectrum, the retired general now zeroed in on the ‘who’ subject. Here however, he was to be less categorical, though he equally left his audience with some probable hints as to what was inadmissible by him.

“When we have adequately taken care of nation-building measures, especially management of our unity, and taken care of every anomalous situation and performance or lack of it that have put us in political, security, economic and solid quagmire situations that we find ourselves, then we must zero on personalities.

“Each contender must be properly x-rayed and profiled from birth, and Nigerians must be educated to be able to make a choice that will be in the national interest and propel Nigeria forward.

“Such a person will have to lead what remains of the nation to courageously continue on the path

of nation-building as a national team leader, no matter on what platform he or she assumes leadership. No one can do it alone.

“We must, however, stop sacrificing character, track records and performance on the altar of ethnic, regional or religious jingoism. As the watchman counts on daybreak, so too do I count on Nigerians and Nigeria to bring forth that person.”

This notwithstanding, the former President would not shy away from pointing out the stark reality that time may indeed be running out on the nation and her peoples, more so if the right choices are not made this time around.

“If in 2015 Nigeria was seventy-five per cent a country and fifty per cent a nation, today, Nigeria will not be more than fifty per cent a country and twenty-five per cent a nation.

“The task of reversing the trend is beyond one personality, one political party or all political parties; it is beyond professional and commercial politicians alone. It demands and requires all hands on deck.

“I mean Nigerians in all walks of life – politicians, community leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, diplomatic leaders, leaders in the academia, leaders in all aspects of government life and leaders in other aspects of the civil society.





The high profile guests included a number of State Governors and AfDB President Dr Akinwumi Adesina.

"Nigeria is tottering, and for as long as we continue to put the cart before the horse, it cannot be well. Or put another way, for as long as we continue to do the same thing over and over again, the result will not be different.

"If the drift is not halted, the remaining twenty-five per cent of Nigerian nation will be dissipated in no time and Nigeria will not be a country but countries and will never be possible to be a nation again.

"That will be a monumental tragedy for Nigeria, Africa, the black race and humanity.

"Since 1999, we have changed from one political party or another. We have manoeuvred and manipulated to the point that election results are no longer reflections of the will of the people, and we seemed to

be progressively going back rather than going forward politically, economically and socially.

"We have activities without requisite actions and personnel to move us forward. If we continue in the same pattern of recycling, sweet-word campaigning, manoeuvring without substance of integrity, honesty, patriotism, commitment, outreach, courage, understanding of what make a nation and what make for development, we will soon have to say goodbye to Nigeria as a nation."

Tributes came from President Muhammadu Buhari, several Nigerian governors, political players, the President, African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Akinwumi Adesina, and numerous African leaders.

In his own tribute, Adesina enthused:

"Your selflessness toward causes in Africa as well as global issues have always shown that your heart and passion are to drive transformation and seek solutions to pressing development challenges facing Africa and developing nations.

"Anyone that knows you would immediately wonder how someone at your age can work several times harder than people who are half your age.

"Your passion and commitment to the younger generation are further exemplified by your always finding time and resources to encourage and support the youth, especially in agriculture.

"You have remained engaged with former Heads of State and Government across Africa, to relentlessly find solutions to

challenges and mediate to resolve conflicts."

The message from President Muhammadu Buhari was not less complimentary.

He described Obasanjo as 'a study in patriotism, leadership and courage, leading the country to democratic government in 1979, and taking over the reins of power as elected President in 1999' and equally affirmed that 'the former President's influence continues to resonate beyond the country, extending to the international community and multilateral institutions.'

The keynote address at the event was delivered by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and the session was chaired by His Excellency, Nicephore Soglo, former President of the Republic of Benin.

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## Cameroon: Verdict on Ngarbuh Massacre still awaited Two Years on

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Following international pressure and an admission of guilt on the part of Cameroon's security forces, the President of Cameroon Paul Biya announced a commission of inquiry into the incident on March 1, 2020. Sadly, it is two years now since that commission was announced and nothing concrete has been made regarding the trial of some twelve (12) individuals who are on trial.

According to media reports, the trial of those arrested began on December 17, 2020, before the Yaounde military court. The defendants include two soldiers: a sergeant and a first-class soldier of the 52nd Motorized Infantry Battalion, BIM, a gendarme, a former separatist fighter, and 17 ethnic-Fulani vigilantes, who remain at large. They have been charged with murder, arson, destruction, violence against a pregnant woman, and disobeying orders, Human Rights Watch reported.

Research by Human Rights Watch research concluded that government forces and armed ethnic Fulani killed 21 civilians in Ngarbuh on 17 February 2020, including 13 children and a pregnant woman, burned five homes, looted scores of other properties, and beat residents in a reprisal operation

against the community suspected of harbouring separatist fighters.

«Whichever group has done this has threatened that there will be more violence ahead,» he said. «The people we've spoken with are extremely traumatised and didn't expect this,» James Nunan, an official from the UN's humanitarian coordination agency Ocha said.

Senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch Ilaria Allegrozzi said: «When the trial started, it was welcomed as a step toward justice and tackling impunity for military abuses in Cameroon's Anglophone regions.» «But two years after the massacre, victims and their families are still awaiting justice, while security forces have continued to commit serious human rights violations.»

The killing of women and children in Ngarbuh was greatly condemned by the national and international community including the UN Secretary-General, Britain, France and one of the renowned human rights defenders in the country Barrister Felix Nkongho Agbor Balla.

Regarding the killing, French president Emmanuel Macron promised to «exert maximum



One of the grave sites of those killed in Ngarbuh. The verdict of those on trial is still awaited two years in.

pressure» on Biya to end «Cameroon's intolerable human rights violations.» Since that call in 2021, it seems the French president has forgotten about his promise as the rate of human rights violations at the hands of Cameroon's security forces is increasing by that day.

Lawyers for the victims and their families told Human Rights Watch that sections 177 and 189 of Cameroon's Criminal Procedure Code provide the possibility that a magistrate could go to Ngarbuh and

collect testimony from witnesses. But instead, lawyers said, courts have used section 336 of the Criminal Procedure Code to allow criminal proceedings to be heard and determined without witnesses present.

«Testimonies of administrative and military authorities, who serve as prosecution witnesses, in this case, try to show that those killed in Ngarbuh were separatist fighters and not civilians,» said Barrister Menkem Sother, one of the family members' lawyers. «It looks like the goal of the investigation will be to show that the Cameroon security forces only killed separatist fighters in Ngarbuh and that the killing of any civilians was the work of vigilantes.»

«If the parties are not satisfied with the judgment and the case is referred to the appeals court, the review will be carried out by the same judge,» said Barrister Richard Tamfu, one of the family members' lawyers.

«This is a blatant violation of the right to appeal to an impartial tribunal as set out in the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa, judicial impartiality is compromised if «a judicial official sits as a member of an appeal tribunal in a case which he or she decided or participated in a lower judicial body.»

For the past five years, Cameroon's



Inhabitants called for an end to the killings that are going on in the North West and South West Regions following a memorial held in 2020. File photo.



security forces and separatist groups have been engaged in a war that has seen thousands of people killed and others displaced. The violence in the South West and North West Regions has claimed more than 3,000 lives and caused the displacement of over 730,000 civilians.

"The lack of justice for the

killings of civilians in Ngarbuh and the recurring military abuses are avoidable consequences of the failure to ensure effective investigations and prosecutions," Allegrozzi said. "Cameroonian authorities should rein in their security forces, ensure an end to abuses, and guarantee that those most responsible for the Ngarbuh

killings, as well as other serious abuses, are held to account in fair and effective trials."

And with the days go by it is yet to be seen if the verdict of those who were arrested and on trial will be ever made. Even if it is, would it have been a fair one when according to Human Rights Watch, there is

«limited opportunity for access and participation by victims» families, the lack of probative witnesses, and the fact that senior officers with command responsibility have not been arrested or charged?»

## In The DRC Everything Is A Priority-Q and A With Former Human Rights Minister Andre Lite Asebea

By Ajong Mbapndah L

For Andre Lite Asebea former Minister of Human Rights in the D.R. Congo, everything in the country is a priority. While there have been some changes since President Tshisekedi took office, Andre Lite Asebea says the country is vast and the challenges enormous.

In a Q and A with PAV. Andre Lite Asebea comments on the general state of affairs in his country, his ministerial experience, political ambitions and more.

**Could we start with an overview of your time as Minister of Human Rights, what that experience was like and what you accomplished?**

First of all, I must say that holding a ministerial position in the Government of the Republic was a new experience for me. It was therefore necessary to succeed in this challenge. Otherwise, everything was easy because the portfolio that was entrusted to me was compatible with my profile as a lawyer. With my collaborators in the cabinet as well as those in my administration, including the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, a partner of the Government, we did many things. For example, the implementation of Transitional Justice (an imperative for a country where international crimes have been recurrent for more than twenty years), the timely monitoring of cases of serious human rights violations, co-facilitating the return of the DRC to the Agoa and more



*In The DRC everything is a priority ,says former Human Rights Minister Andre Lite Asebea.*

**Can we get your assessment of the Tshisekedi administration?**

I cannot make such an assessment as the mandate given to President Tshisekedi is still in progress. However, it should be noted that there have been many reflections since then. We are now waiting for the results of these reforms in the framework of the improvement of the living conditions of the population. Certainly, there are some that could give their results in the medium and long term.

However, the Congo is a continental country with several challenges that had become structural. It will still have to wait. Nothing will be done by magic wand. Everything is a priority.

**What is the difference between the current situation and that of 2019, when President Tshisekedi took office?**

In 2019, as before this period, the DRC is facing terrorism in the east of the country. Add to this the activism of domestic and foreign armed groups.

All this, despite the reinforced presence of United Nations contingents. Several actions are being carried out, particularly on the military level. With the establishment of a state of siege over the entire provinces of North Kivu and Ituri. With the Lord's help, we believe that peace has been restored in this part of the country, willingly or not, despite some difficulties faced by our forces, following an asymmetric war in an environment where international humanitarian law must also be observed. That is the complexity of the situation.

**How are the mining reforms initiated by the previous administration continuing with the current administration and what progress are we seeing in the sector?**

It is worth noting that the key reforms of the previous administration, such as the revision of the Mining Code, have been preserved so far. However, with regard to certain mining agreements concluded by most during the war; there would have been discussions for their rebalancing... We are waiting to see what happens next.

I told you earlier, that the Congo is huge. It's still early to describe the situation on these different aspects. At the end of 2022 or the beginning of 2023, we could be in a position to give an objective opinion on this subject.

**Have you seen any improvements in President**

**Tshisekedi's promise to end corruption and mismanagement of state resources?**

There are some positive signals. But much remains to be done.

**In about two years, President Tshisekedi's term will end. Is the electoral body strong enough, or are the necessary reforms in place to make it strong enough to hold free and fair elections for all citizens?**

I cannot take a position on such a question. Because the only way to evaluate the current election administration is by the test of facts. Not otherwise.

**As for your own future, what are the plans for your new party and what role do you want it to play in the future of the country?**

It is to bring God back to the center of all governance issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the only one capable of getting us out of the ignominy of poverty. This is abnormal for a country with



*Despite the enormous challenges, Andre Lite Asebe believes that the future of the D.R. Congo is very bright*

immeasurable natural resources.

**What role do you want him to play in building the future of the D.R. Congo?**

To contribute to its development as much as possible, through the precepts and ordinances of God.

**What is the relationship**

**between President Tshisekedi and his predecessor, the former President Kabila?**

They have normal relations.

**At the end of this interview, what gives you hope for the future and what are your fears for the D.R. Congo?**

There is nothing to worry about because Congo, our country belongs to God. The future of Congo will be bright despite the difficulties that our country has been facing for several decades. This is the promise that we have received from God and in which we believe.

## Rasha Kelej: A Trailblazer for girls' Education, Women Empowerment

By Boris Esono Nwenfor



*Senator Dr Rasha Kelej has been a dependable partner on women empowerment in Africa.*

Leading one of the most important foundations in the world and the most influential in Africa, Merck Foundation, Dr Senator Rasha Kelej has certainly come a long way in establishing the Foundation to where it is.

In her drive to promote girls' education and the empowerment of women, Dr Kelej has created the African Community of Art and Fashion with the set objective to be the voice of the voiceless and break the silence about many social and health issues in Africa and create a culture shift together. Dr Rasha Kelej strongly believes that fashion and art should have a purpose beyond entertainment and look good.

And ahead of the 37th edition of the International Women's Day, this



March 8, 2022, Dr Rasha Kelej who was named one of the Most Influential Africans in 2019, 2020 and 2021 has opened up on her journey from Egypt to the United Arab Emirates and to be the CEO of Merck Foundation. She has encouraged women that when they make it in life, they should not forget to support others around them.

## ***Tell us about yourself, your journey towards becoming the CEO of Merck Foundation?***

Rasha Kelej: I was born in Egypt, a simple girl who wanted one day to change the world and be successful; I spent most of my life in the United Arab Emirates, between Dubai and Abu Dhabi. I became a pharmacist and then I got my MBA from Scotland.

I was always determined to make an impact in the world. I believed in our Africa's potential and African talents and capabilities, but I realized that there are many challenges in the continent with regards to proper access to patient care, education, information and change of mindset, which I wanted to find a way to address effectively in a new and creative way.

I joined the international healthcare industry in 1994 then started establishing Merck Foundation in 2012. After many years, I finally broke the glass ceiling and became the CEO of one of the most important foundations in the world and the most influential in Africa, and led its establishment and creation and implemented its program myself for the first two years before I got the team that helps me execute and follow up now.

Being in this position, I genuinely feel that it is now my turn to support other women to reach their potential. Empowering women is in the spirit of everything I do personally or professionally.

## ***Tell us about your signature "More Than a Mother" Campaign. How did it start and how did it reach where it is now?***

Rasha Kelej: I initiated the «More Than a Mother» campaign in 2015,



***Senator Dr Kelej is never shy of embracing causes that will make a difference in the lives of women.***

it aims to empower infertile and childless women through access to health, information, education and change of mindset. It defines interventions to break the stigma around infertile women and raises awareness about infertility prevention, management, and male infertility.

In partnership with 20 African First Ladies who work closely with us as our Ambassadors and together with the Ministries of Health, Information, Education & Gender, Media & Art, this campaign also provides training for the Fertility specialists and Embryologists in their countries to build and advance Fertility care capacity in Africa, Asia and developing countries. I am proud that we have provided more than 370 scholarships to doctors from 37 countries, to advance women's health, Reproductive and Sexual care and Fertility Care Capacity in Africa and developing countries. However, Merck Foundation has provided more than 550 scholarships out of a total 1200 to female doctors in 42 countries, these are scholarships of one-year diploma and two-year

master degrees in underserved and critical specialities such as; Respiratory Care, Endocrinology, Fertility, Cardiovascular Preventive, Oncology and more to empower women in STEM.

We also support childless women by helping them start their small businesses. It's all about giving every woman the respect and the support she deserves to lead a fulfilling life, with or without a child.

I also started the initiative to train media. We have, so far, trained over 2000 media representatives from more than 35 countries, to raise community awareness and break the infertility stigma around women and support girls' education and address other social issues related to women's empowerment such as Gender Equality, Girls' Education, Stopping GBV, Ending Child Marriage and Stopping FGM.

We have launched new initiatives as part of "More Than a Mother" COMMUNITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN and I believe it is creative and out of the box, such as;

- Media Recognition Awards, Fashion Awards, Film Awards and

Song Awards

- I have Produced and directed songs with local artists to address the cultural perception of infertility and how to change it. More than 25 songs have been created in English, French, and local languages in countries such as Sierra Leone, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Burundi, Rwanda, Gambia, Malawi, Liberia, Mozambique, Uganda. We are proud that we have special three songs created, composed, and sung by The President of Liberia, H.E. Mr GEORGE WEAH and the daughter of President and First Lady of Burundi and even the former First Lady of Burundi. for More Than a Mother campaign to break the stigma around infertility and infertile women in particular.

## ***We have heard about the new TV show you are coming up with, can you talk about it***

Rasha Kelej: I have created our African Community of Art and Fashion with Purpose. We will soon be launching a television program that is going to be the coolest in Africa. It is set to be the voice of the voiceless and break the silence about many social

and health issues in Africa and create a culture shift together. I strongly believe that fashion and art should have a purpose beyond entertainment and look good. They can contribute to sensitizing our communities about different social and health issues such as ending FGM, ending child marriage, stopping GBV, breaking Infertility stigma, supporting Girl Education, Diabetes awareness and healthy lifestyle, and more

We would want to know about your efforts towards supporting girls' education in Africa

Rasha Kelej: I strongly believe in girl education and also that education is one of the most critical areas of women's empowerment. When girls are educated, they can raise strong families, communities and countries. I realize there's a need for more support as there are many brilliant girls out there who are struggling financially and socially to meet their educational needs. Therefore, we started «Educating Linda», a pan African program that helps young girls who are unprivileged but brilliant to continue their education. The spirit of the project is to provide an opportunity for such girls to pursue their dreams and reach their potential through access to education. In partnership with African First Ladies, we have been contributing to the future of 100's of girls by providing support in partnership with the African First Ladies through providing scholarships and grants that can cover school fees, school uniforms and other essentials including notebooks, pens and mathematical instruments. Moreover, we provide 3,000 sets of essential school items for girls' schools to many countries yearly.

We also support and empower women in the areas of Science and Technology. Under-representation of women still exists in these fields, even though women have made tremendous participation and progress in their careers. Every year, we conduct the «Merck Foundation Africa Research



Summit" in partnership with African Governments and African Union Scientific, Technical and Research Commission. Moreover, as I mentioned before, more than 550 out of 1200 scholarships we provided for young doctors through Merck Foundation were for female doctors, which is a huge milestone.

## How according to you educating girls can make a difference?

Rasha Kelej: Educating a girl means changing the world — not just her world, but the world she lives in. Education is the key to unlocking access to economic opportunity and other life-giving resources for millions around the world. Educated girls grow into women who are empowered to care for themselves, their families, and their communities. When you invest in a girl, the dividends are immeasurable.

In my opinion, education is also a strong strategy to stop child marriage, GBV, FGM and STDs. I also believe that Girl education is the best vaccine for HIV. So educating girls can make

a big difference.

## You have also launched storybooks, what are they about?

Rasha Kelej: Together with our partners, the African First Ladies, we have launched many Children's storybooks that we created to address key social issues such as ending child marriage, stopping GBV, supporting girl education, and breaking Infertility stigma. I invite all Africans to read them on our website [www.merck-foundation.com](http://www.merck-foundation.com)

We have distributed thousands of copies of these storybooks in African schools. Our storybooks address a wide range of social and health issues including breaking infertility stigma, supporting girl education, ending child marriage and Stopping GBV. The storybooks have been localized for each country to have a better connection with the young readers. The inspiring storybooks released are:

«Educating Linda» and «Ride into Future» emphasize on the importance of empowering girls

through education,

«David's Story» — emphasizes strong family values of love and respect from a young age which will reflect on eliminating the stigma of infertility and resulted in domestic violence in the future,

«Jackeline's rescue» focuses on the importance of Girls' Education and highlights the immoral practices of society including child marriage and the dowry system and

«Not Who You Are» to teach boys to love and respect their future wives and eliminate domestic violence.

## What is your message for all African women on this International Women's Day?

Rasha Kelej: I would like to tell every woman to believe in herself and be confident at every step of her life. Passion, hard work, putting heart, soul & mind in everything is the success factor. Also, as I always emphasize, when you make it in life, do not forget to support others around you! \_\_\_\_\_



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76045-010-10

**Hydromophone Hydrochloride 2 mg/mL INJ SOL**

Amended: 50 Dispensed: 500

Starting Count	After Dispensing (Amended)
5,000	4,550
Original Count	Amended Count
500	50
Rx Number	Patient
1568537-09710	Caleb Montrose
Reason	Alibi
Recorded incorrect quantity	Jeff M.
Yesterday, 11:53 by Anastasia S.	Yesterday, 11:53

### Recent Activity

for Hydromophone Hydrochloride 2 mg/mL INJ SOL

RECORDED	ACTIVITY	STARTING	COUNT
Today, 15:53 Anastasia S.	Dispensed	630	100
Today, 14:12 Jeff M.	Dispensed	20	20
Tues, 14:09 Anastasia S.	Received	30	30
Jun 2, 13:45 Jeff M.	Lost/Stolen	15	15
May 27, 11:01 Jeff M.	Amended	15	15

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	ACTIVITY	STARTING	COUNT	ON-HAND	
fate 60 mg TAB 25	Dispensed	630	-100	530	***
ugh PATCH 98	Dispensed	20	-20	40	***
Today, 14:09 Anastasia S.	Fentanyl 87.5 ug/h PATCH 0378-9127-98	Received	30	30	60
Today, 13:45 Jeff M.	Oxycodone HCL and APAP 2.5/300 mg TAB 72245-193-03	Lost/Stolen	15	-15	0

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# DR Congo: A Resolve To Fight Poverty From Kikwit Women Associations

By Badylon Kawanda Bakiman

Women associations in Kikwit city, in the south-west of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are increasingly using appropriate local technology to reduce poverty and improve their well-being and that of their families.

"Thanks to the sale of the products that we manufacture in our structure, I manage to pay for the schooling of the children, to buy clothes, to pay the rent and to face several needs... Things that were not possible at the time when I was not yet in the circuit of appropriate technology», Justine Kakesa, president of the Dynamics of Congolese female youth (DJFC, section of Bandundu), a non-governmental organization based in Kikwit declares, happy.

A few meters behind the DJFC office, hubbub emerges: it is the Kikwit 2 market dotted with various items, including those exhibited by women. They manufacture several products: samosas, varnishes, polishes, improved soaps, improved breads, tangawishi wine...

For example, samosa, which is an edible product made from beef, wheat flour, and onions, is one of the products that brings money into the association's coffers, explains Kakesa.

She adds: "We make it three times a week. One time equals the quantity of a bucket...that quantity sold brings in

at least \$60, or \$180 for all three quantities."

Kakesa indicates that the DJFC now has 238 members in the city of Kikwit alone, not including women members from other districts and localities in Bandundu province.

"With us, all women members gradually achieve their economic empowerment. They have created their own jobs by making orange juice, peanut-based milk, etc.," says Wivine Messa, president of the "Federation of cooperative organizations of mothers", a platform of more than 10 women's cooperative organizations.

As for her, Clotilde Kangamukaba, supervises more than 50 women and young girls: «The appropriate technology saves women from poverty which is, for me, a defect», she says.

For more than three years, these women's associations have not folded their arms and have been using local techniques to produce food and obtain income to support their families. "It is, in fact, a set of specific techniques, methods and processes which consist in transforming or manufacturing products based on certain local materials by combinations. This technology has tended to gain momentum lately,"



A group of women selling.

says Jean Mbwengele, a development technician at Kikwit.

According to a report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) a few years ago, most people in the DRC live on less than a dollar a day. The women of Bandundu believe that by fighting against poverty with their meager resources, they are trying, in their own way, to meet a challenge facing their entire country.

"By doing this, we also want to achieve the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) especially the one that talks about the fight against poverty. Our platform has 90 women's associations scattered across the province" says Marie-Josée Ikwomo, secretary of the National Union of Women (UNAF, Bandundu branch).

She declared that among the products that the UNAF transforms, there are bactrioles, perfumes, liqueurs, cakes (cakes), margarines, samosas... "We make the cake six times a month and 60 cakes per session made from sugar, wheat flour, eggs, milk, and yeast. We sell it for 50 Congolese francs, or 0.055 dollars," says Ikwomo, adding that it is "different from the imported cake which costs 1,500 FC, or 1.5 dollars in stores."

Every morning, from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., a special market is

organized in front of the communal house of Kazamba where men and women display or buy all kinds of products, including those made using local technology.

"Once in possession of my income, I often try to deposit part of it in a savings and credit cooperative where I opened an account last year. If necessary, I make a withdrawal", testifies Jeanne Mpilinkwomo, of the Gathering of the women of Bandundu, in the commune of Lukolela.

For her part, Blandine Mungwi, of the DJFC, said: "I manage my earnings in a group of rebates or mutual insurance. Currently, our mutual has 12 people.

"Our association strives to exhibit and sell its products four times a week... Today, I have already sold two sachets of 48 improved soaps each. An improved soap costs 100 FC, or \$0.11. It is cheaper compared to the imported shiny soap which costs 250 FC, or 0.27 dollars", explains Olga Mapasa, vice-president of the Association of Kazamba mothers. This association, she says, has about 78 members, adding that those who buy their products resell them in their areas further afield.

"Mothers must be encouraged for their actions. I often buy their products and it is at a good price. This is how a country can develop," said Sylvain



A few women after a meeting.

Mwashi, a resident of Kazamba, after buying improved bread and margarine at the town's morning market.

"Before manufacturing our products, we follow a series of training courses.

Without this, the products will not be of good quality", underlines Célestine Lembagusala, president of the Network of committed women of Kikwit, which includes more than 30 women's

organizations.

"I can only congratulate the women for the efforts they combine... They are also actors of development» Brigitte Mukwa, head of the gender, family and

child department of Kikwit city says.

## End of An Era As Legendary Ethiopian Airlines CEO Steps Down

By Prince Kurupati

Legendary and iconic CEO of Africa's largest airline Ethiopia Airlines Tewolde GebreMariam handed in his early retirement letter recently. In the letter, Tewolde GebreMariam cited ill health as the reason he is stepping down earlier. The Board of Management of Ethiopian Airlines Group accepted Tewolde GebreMariam's retirement letter and heaped praises on the stellar work that GebreMariam did over the course of his 37 years of service at Ethiopia Airlines.

In a statement released Ethiopia Airlines soon after the Board of Management of Ethiopian Airlines Group accepted Tewolde GebreMariam's retirement letter, the Board said, "The Board in its ordinary meeting held on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 has accepted Mr. Tewolde's request for early retirement". The statement went further saying Mr Tewolde GebreMariam "has been under medical treatment in the USA for the last six months. As he needs to focus on his personal health issues, he is unable to continue leading the airline as a Group CEO, a duty which demands closer presence and full attention round the clock. Accordingly, Mr Tewolde GebreMariam requested the Board of Management of Ethiopian Airlines Group for early retirement in order for him to focus his full attention to his medical treatment."

The Board took time in its statement to heap praises on the stellar work that Mr Tewolde GebreMariam achieved during his tenure as Group CEO at Ethiopian Airlines. "Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam led the Airline for a decade with remarkable success reflected in its exceptional performance in all parameters including but not limited to exponential growth from 1 billion USD annual turn-over to 4.5 Billion, from 33 airplanes to 130 airplanes and from 3 million passengers to 12 millions passengers (pre-COVID)," the statement said.



*Thanks to the astute management of Tewolde GebreMariam, Ethiopian Airlines is today a highly respected global player in the world of aviation. Photo courtesy.*

The statement went further to heap more praises on Mr Tewolde GebreMariam saying, "Under his leadership, the airline group has grown by four-fold in all measurements building more than USD 700 million worth of vital infrastructure like Africa's biggest hotel, Cargo terminal, MRO hangers and shops, Aviation Academy and Full Flight Simulators. The Board, the Senior Management, employees and the whole Ethiopian Airlines family express their gratefulness for his contribution and wish him full recovery soon."

At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic when the airline industry was pushed into a hole, several airlines downscaled their operations while others were forced to close shop completely. However, Ethiopian Airlines under the management of Mr Tewolde GebreMariam managed to remain afloat. Mr GebreMariam and the Ethiopian airline used the pandemic as a catalyst to the airline's diversification exercise. The diversification exercises several passenger planes refitted into

cargo carriers. The diversification exercise during the trying Covid-19 pandemic necessitated Ethiopian Airlines to climb to the apex of the biggest carriers in Africa. Post Covid-19, Ethiopia Airlines was the continent's fifth largest carrier after South African Airways, EgyptAir, Royal Air Maroc and Kenya Airways. However, post pandemic following the decline of other carriers, Ethiopian Airlines emerged as the biggest carrier on the continent as measured by turnover.

The Board of Management of Ethiopian Airlines Group did not waste any time in appointing a successor to Mr Tewolde GebreMariam. The man whom the Board trusted with carrying over the excellent work that was being done by Mr Tewolde GebreMariam is Mesfin Tasew. Mesfin Tasew is the former CEO of Asky Airlines in Togo.

The praises for the stellar work done by Mr Tewolde GebreMariam did not come just from the Ethiopia Airlines Group but from the wider aviation industry. Speaking following the retirement of Mr GebreMariam, the

head of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) Abderahmane Berte said "I pay tribute to the work of a man who has led Africa's largest airline for over 11 years... Under his leadership Ethiopian Airlines became the largest African airline. A position maintained for many years... For the sake of history, I also note the important role of Ethiopian Airlines as one of the founding companies of AFRAA."

A source who spoke to the Africa Report anonymously praised Mr Tewolde GebreMariam saying, "Ato Tewolde was a game changer in African aviation. He bumped Ethiopian Airlines into the new century with a solid and steady hand, expanding the airline in terms of scope and profits beyond what was thought possible in Africa... His agility was apparent in Ethiopian's stunning quick turn once the pandemic decimated passenger traffic by quickly converting passenger aircraft to freighters, earning the awe and admiration of business leaders worldwide. Honestly, his handling of ET during the Covid was spectacular."



Foreword by Samuel Eto'o Fils

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# Africa Feels the Heat of the Russia-Ukraine War as Basic Commodity Prices Rise

By Prince Kurupati

The Russia-Ukraine war is geographically taking place thousands of kilometres away from the African continent. However, the ripple effects of the war are evident on the continent as they are affecting African consumers. In the past few weeks since the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, many African consumers have had to pay more than normal when purchasing basic commodities such as bread and fuel.

Russia and Ukraine are giants when it comes to the global fuel and wheat supply chain. Owing to the two countries' supremacy in the global supply chain, they inadvertently rank as the leading exporters of fuel and wheat to most African countries. In Africa, countries that are heavily reliant on Ukrainian wheat are Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, Tanzania, Algeria, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe. In the case of Egypt, the country imports 90% of its wheat from Ukraine. According to data from theConversation, "Ukraine exported US\$2.9 billion worth of agricultural products to the African continent in 2020. About 48% of this was wheat, 31% maize, and the rest included sunflower oil, barley and soybeans."

Likewise, Russia also has a major influence on the fuel global supply chain. In Africa, several countries rely on Russia when it comes to fuel imports. Soon after Russia invaded Ukraine, the price of oil sharply rose. As is the norm when the price of oil rises, the ripple effects had far-reaching consequences on other commodities. Chief economist at Citadel Investment Services Maarten Ackerman warned South Africans to brace for higher petrol prices for the foreseeable near future as South Africa relies heavily on oil imports. "Oil is South Africa's biggest import item, so the immediate impact on consumer's pockets will be higher petrol prices," Ackerman said.

The escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict thus disrupts this

global supply chain something which has severely affected the economies of most African countries. To compound the matters for African countries, the Russia-Ukraine war coincided with the drought in South America and the rising demand for grains and oilseeds in India and China. This, therefore, means that there is a huge demand for the limited global wheat supplies. This demand in turn necessitated the sharp increase in commodity prices on the global market. To meet the prices, suppliers and merchants in Africa have passed the burden of exorbitant prices to the consumer.

Owing to the disruptions in the global supply chain of key commodities, there were fears by many Africans that key commodities may soon disappear from shop shelves. However, Wandile Sihlobo who is the chief economist of the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz) allayed the fears saying that the disruptions in the global supply chain won't lead to the shortage of

basic commodities in shops at least in the near future. What will happen however is that consumers will pay more than they used to pay for the same commodities. "For South Africa in the near term, it might not be affected through shortages of supplies, but what we will see is an upside risk on the food price inflation side as it continues to add to the global price surge. It would depend on the length of the conflict as well as the scale of the disruption on trade," Sihlobo said.

While Africa is largely faced with the challenge of importing commodities from Russia and Ukraine, a new dilemma has also emerged for some countries most notably South Africa. Russia is one of the major importers of South African citrus fruits. In 2020, Russia accounted for 7% of South Africa's citrus exports in value terms. In the same year, Russia accounted for 12% of South Africa's apples and pears exports. The disruptions in the supply chain as necessitated by the

Russia-Ukraine war have thus posed a danger to South African farmers and industrialists.

Dr Mark Ellyne the Adjunct Associate Professor of Economics at UCT (retired) however said the Russia-Ukraine conflict may leave some positive footprints to Africa. Dr Ellyne said this focusing particularly on possibly shifting supply chain patterns. It is Dr Ellyne's conviction that the conflict in Russia and Ukraine will lead to shifts in patterns of global trade. As such, Africa at the end of the day might create new synergies with other trading partners. In a statement, Dr Ellyne said, "War raise uncertainty and uncertainty and future risk dampens consumers' demand. A European war is also likely to reduce trade flows and incomes from the various sanctions imposed. Thus, there is also likely to be a certain rearrangement of trade patterns owing to sanctions on Russia and a fall in Ukrainian exports."



# Malawi's Devasting Floods Leave Thousands Destitute

By Joseph Dumbula

By dawn, the family of Martin\* not real name is forced to live in a house that is all watered: With part of the walls down. This is obviously the start of an unnormal life. But they learn later that over hundred thousand others are in similar situation due to cyclone Ana in their district of Nsanje and Chikwawa which lie down the Shire River, Malawi's largest river.

This is just at the start of the year and President Lazarus Chakwera by the 26th of January 2022 has now declared a State of National Disaster. According to the Department of Disaster, by the end of the month of January, 221,127 thousand households covering slightly below a million people are already displaced.

In Malawi, largely, the flooding situation hits the two districts due to their topography and positioning. But other upper districts of Thyolo, Phalombe, Mulanje, Blantyre and some parts of Lilongwe.

In his interaction with Pan African Visions, Martin while carrying his two-year-old girl recollects how their area was flood free until when trees around the area were massively cut by people for charcoal.

This comes as no strange talk as Chakwera and the ministry of



natural resources have led extensive campaigns to plant more trees.

"We are affected by our own deeds. Of course, this is a natural disaster only seen by expert forecasts but not measured in its impact. We should've kept the trees. We are living in utmost regret." Says Martin.

Although this is the case, people

in the districts have not fallen short of hearing messages to relocate to presumably upper lands.

As noted by Amos Zaindi, Country Director Care International Malawi, the latest effects of the cyclones including Gombe accord authorities an opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions with the

communities for them to relocate.

"Look, it would appear that authorities are missing some point. I would feel that there is need to involve the people into why they must really move out" said Zaindi.

In its findings, the Pan African Visions has through this interview with some victims learnt that people are contented in living in some flood prone spaces because the lands are by far fertile and due to some unexplained cultural reasons.

But for Dr. Yanira Mtupanyama, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change, there is also a view of slight or extensive ignoring of early warnings that are routinely provided during rainy seasons.

"At the Malawi Red Cross Society, we are also intensifying persuasive messages which should ensure that some population of the people relocates to upper land based on the effects floods have had on people." says Cecilia Banda, Disaster and Mitigation Specialist for the Malawi Red Cross Society which has also been running national and global





appeals for support.

In a different view, Zaindi, argues that there is need to look for longer term-sustainable solutions and focus efforts on risk management in order to minimize the level of impact when disaster strikes.

Fast forward in March 2022, it is reported widely that over fifty have died while over twenty are missing and this triggered continued assistance has been given to victims, a thing Martin says has also caused dilemma on the part of the people.

"Authorities here tell us that there are some people who are taking this as an opportunity to get money in the camps. There are some of us in camps who are really feeling the pinch. This is a bad mentality" says Martin.

According to UNICEF, the situation has also triggered a health view with illnesses like malaria and cholera heavily recorded in affected district.

For Martin and other victims, provisions of mosquito nets and chlorine is the only feat that would go a long way in ending their plight.

Internally, there has been a joint \$30 million appeal that the United Nations has issued meant to reach out to half a million people with UNICEF stating that \$ 8 million will be channeled to meet needs of women and children (faced with malnutrition threats).

The effect has also simmered through to other sector like education



where government entities state that lessons for over three hundred thousand students have been disrupted due to damaged classrooms and affected homes.

In an interview with another victim, who we will only identify as Vincent\*, it is learnt how socially, it has been distressing for people to live in camps.

"You can just imagine how all of a sudden, these floods have forced

us to be living with numerous other families together in this shed. No access to conjugal rights, no time to talk about private matters with our spouses." He says.

Random Google searches have also put it that under such circumstances, children have a likelihood of having a stinging psychological effect in their lifetimes.

In camps in Nsanje, there are also people from Mozambique who have been forced to leave their homes due to similar situations emanating from the Ruo and Shire River.

In his speech, leader of the institute of disaster in Mozambique Luisa Celam Meque after visiting camps in Malawi, countries are also uniting properly to protect their people as slightly a thousand of Mozambique are living in about five camps in Malawi.

The latest situations come at the back of remarks made by

President Chakwera at the CoP26 in Scotland in November last year that developing nations are requiring developed nations to provide emissions cut commitments to tame effects of climate change.

Developing nations including Malawi whose leader made the speech as SADC President, developed nations have not yet fulfilled the pledge of \$1 billion made over five years ago.

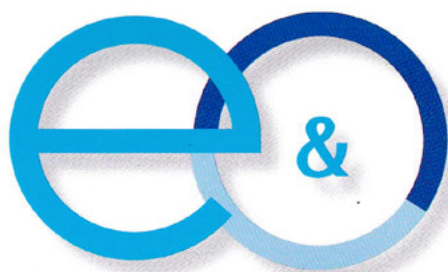
"When the nations we lead ask, what exactly is the point of this conference?" what they are really asking is this: What is the point of having you go to CoP on our behalf' he is famously quoted.

But the question for families of Martin\* and Vincent\* along with thousands of others impinged by these effects of climate change remains: Does it really require such conferences a lot without implementation of programs for people to wait to be cushioned and prevented from such situations?

As it would appear, with threats of more cyclones, households in such areas have it all to face, or relocate, or wait for assistance or make a bold step on their own to conserve the environment.

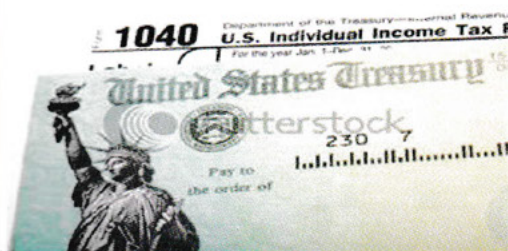






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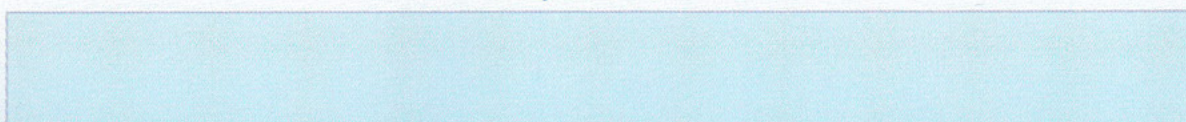
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# Amid Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Africans Considering Increased Business With Europe

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

Russia has evaded neighboring Ukraine located in the Eastern Europe. As one of the former Soviet republics looking to climb unto global stage and steadfastly develop the future, it therefore sets ambition to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Union. On the other hand, these two directions of its ambitions have angered Russia. As already known, Ukraine is in Eastern Europe and shares a border with Russia. It used to be part of the Soviet Union but became an independent country in 1991.

Under the directorship of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and approved by the both Federal Council and the State Duma, Russian collective made the decision to hold a special military operation in response to the address of leaders of Donbass and Luhansk republics, both in eastern Ukraine. Putin launched the «special military operation» repeating a number of unfounded claims, alleging that Ukraine's democratically elected government had been responsible for eight years of genocide.

Putin feverishly seeks to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine. The results of the waging war on Ukraine, Russia has to suffer from a raft of sanction imposed by various foreign countries including the United States, Canada, Britain, European Union and down to Australia. The results of the waging war on Ukraine.

While the sanctions take its bites and associated snow-balling effects, it has opened huge significant potential opportunities for a number of African countries. In the first place, researchers at Oxford Economics Africa believe that Russia's invasion of Ukraine could increase wheat prices in Angola and Mozambique, but the rise in oil and gas prices benefits the finances of these two African countries.

«Both Angola and Mozambique have a very limited level of trade with



Sonatrach CEO Toufik Hakkar says the firm was ready to pump additional gas to the EU from its surplus via the Transmed pipeline linking Algeria to Italy..

Russia and Ukraine; Angola imports wheat and yeast from Russia, while Mozambique imports a significant amount of wheat and a small amount of refined oil from Russia,» Oxford Economics Africa analyst who follows these two African economies told Mozambique News Agency.

«It appears that, at least for now, Angola is generally benefiting from higher oil and gas prices, which are partially driven by the conflict,» Gerrit van Rooyen said in remarks from Paarl, South Africa. Higher oil prices are positive for government revenues,» the analyst added. If the rise is sustained, «this could increase investment in Angola and lower debt levels faster than previously anticipated.»

«If gas prices remain high due to the conflict, this will be positive for investments in Mozambique's liquefied natural gas [LNG],» his analysis continues, since «the profits

from the natural gas in the Rovuma basin could be greater than the risk of armed extremist insurgency in the region.»

Despite the benefits for the public accounts of the two Portuguese-speaking states, van Rooyen points out that, for the average citizen, the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Higher oil and wheat prices could be bad news for consumers, as inflation, which is already high in these countries, particularly in Angola and it is, however, expected to increase more than initially expected.

Monitoring media reports have indicated that a few oil and gas producing African countries have the possibility, if well-exploited, to supply Europe. For example, Algeria's state energy firm is ready to supply Europe with more gas in view of a possible decline due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Sonatrach CEO Toufik Hakkar said the firm was ready to pump additional gas to the EU from its surplus via the Transmed pipeline linking Algeria to Italy. Sonatrach is «a reliable gas supplier for the European market and is willing to support its long-term partners in the event of difficult situations,» Hakkar said, and was reported by the daily Liberte.

Hakkar nonetheless said this would be contingent on the availability of a surplus of gas or liquefied natural gas [LNG], but have to fix its «contractual engagements» with the importing partner for the supplies to the European market.

Nonetheless, Algeria could only compensate for the decline in Russian gas supply by offering a maximum of two or three million additional cubic meters. Algeria plans to develop new reserves of shale gas. In January, Sonatrach said it would invest US\$40 billion into oil exploration,

production and refinement, as well as gas prospecting and extraction, between 2022 and 2026.

Arguments whether Africans can take advantage to increase their business, especially in oil and gas, are still varied. «For Africa it's a gain, it's an opportunity, it presents that window of opportunity for African countries to see how they can increase their production capacity and meet the need of global demands of crude oil,» says Isaac Botti, a public finance expert told Voice of America.

However, Africa's production combined accounts for less than a tenth of total global output. Nigeria is Africa's largest producer of oil followed by Libya. Other notable producers are Algeria and Angola.

Algerian state-owned oil and gas giant said it would supply Europe if Russian exports dwindled as a result of the crisis, Botti noted and added that it's a good example for other African nations. «We need to develop our capacity to produce locally, we need to look at various trade agreements that are existing,» he said.

For years African oil producers including Nigeria have been struggling to meet required daily output levels. Many experts, including Botti, worry strongly that African producers may struggle to fit into the big market with increasing global demands for crude oil.

Instead of African business to the United States and Europe, some researchers and experts have shown concern about the level of impact of Russia-Ukraine conflict on Africa. Admittedly, they noted in their separate discussions that the war in Ukraine could further push oil prices up and increase inflation in Africa.

From an African agriculture perspective, the impact of the war will be felt in the near term through the global agriculture commodity prices channel. A rise in prices will be beneficial for farmers, especially for grain and oilseed farmers, the surge in prices presents an opportunity for financial gains.

In his research analysis, Wandile Sihlobo, Senior Fellow

at the Department of Agricultural Economics, Stellenbosch University, wrote that some countries on the continent, such as South Africa, benefit from exporting fruit to Russia. In 2020 Russia accounted for 7% of South Africa's citrus exports in value terms. And it accounted for 12% of South Africa's apples and pears exports in the same year - the countries' second largest market.

But from Africa's perspective, Russia and Ukraine's agricultural imports from the continent are marginal - averaging only US\$1,6 billion - in the past three years. The dominant products are fruits, tobacco, coffee, and beverages in both countries. Every agricultural role-player is keeping an eye on the developments in the Black Sea region. The impact will be felt in other regions, such as the Middle East and Asia, which also import a substantial volume of grains and oilseeds from Ukraine and Russia. They too will be directly affected by the disruption in trade, according to Sihlobo.

There is still a lot that's not known about the geopolitical challenges that lie ahead. But for African countries there are reasons to be worried given their dependency for grains imports. In the near term, countries are likely see the impact through a surge in prices, rather than an actual shortage of the commodities. Other wheat exporting countries such as Canada, Australia and the US stand to benefit from any potential near term surge in demand.

«The last time we had a windfall from oil prices related to war was in 1991, during the Gulf War. We know it will directly impact the price of crude oil. The revenue may increase, but since we have shifted oil investment to multinational companies, they are more likely to reap greater revenues than the country itself.» Professor Abdul-Ganiyu Garba of the Department of Economics Ahmadu Bello University Zaria said.

«If there is an increase in crude oil prices, it means inflation will grow globally, the cost of most of our imports will also rise, which

will transfer to the domestic crisis,» the Nigerian economist added. Commodity prices have skyrocketed in many African countries, making life more challenging for millions of people.

«People start starving once these countries fight because they [global powers] presented themselves to African countries as mother countries,» Dox Deezol, a South African entrepreneur and artist in Johannesburg, told DW.

As a member of BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa] -- the world's five emerging economies -- South Africa was relatively silent when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. However, the South African government has urged restraint this time.

«South Africa is integrated into the global economy. So the war's impact on the global economy, as we have seen in the soaring prices of oil and energy generally, will affect South Africa because when the world sneezes, South Africa catches a cold,» Professor Siphamandla Zondi, an international relations expert and head of BRICS studies at the University of Johannesburg, told DW.

It's not just the oil prices that could impact Africa. For example, there is significant agricultural trade between African countries and Russia and Ukraine. Some say Africa's trade with Russia and Ukraine could also be at stake. In 2020, African countries imported agricultural products worth US\$4 billion from Russia. Wheat accounted for approximately 90% of these imports. Egypt was the largest importer, followed by Sudan, Nigeria, Tanzania, Algeria, Kenya, and South Africa.

Similarly, Ukraine exported agricultural products worth US\$2.9 billion to Africa in 2020. Wheat accounted for roughly 48% of this, maize 31%, and sunflower oil, barley, and soybeans accounted for the remainder. The ongoing war could affect supply chains and raise the cost of imports. It is also unclear what effect the sanctions imposed by the US and its allies on Russia will have on Africa-Russia trade relations.

The repercussions of the conflict are readily felt in other economic sectors. Media reports indicated tourism and aviation business are also negatively affected. In terms of education and training, many African governments, ministries and departments struggle to evacuate their students and nationals from the war-torn Ukraine. From basic research for this article, Ukraine has emerged as a choice destination for African students, especially in the fields of medicine and engineering.

According to Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science, some 180,000 international students study in Ukraine with the largest number from India, followed by Morocco, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ghana. Nearly all African foreign ministries have expressed their deepest displeasure over the violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and categorically blamed Russia for creating instability in the world.

While looking the future African business to the United States, Europe and Asia, the current Chair of the African Union and President of Senegal, Macky Sall, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, have expressed their extreme concern at the dangerous situation created in Ukraine. They called on the Russian Federation and any other regional or international actor to respect international law, the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine.

The Chair of the African Union and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission urged Russia and Ukraine to establish an immediate ceasefire and to open political negotiations without much delay. It should be under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to preserve the world from the consequences of planetary conflict, and in the interests of peace and stability in international relations in service of all the peoples of the world. Some tough actions are expected from the Security Council of the United Nations.



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# FIFA Qatar World Cup-Indomitable Lions Coach Rigobert Song Passes Litmus Test

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

“Song must go” “He is not competent” “Why did we sack Conceicao” these were just some of the bullet points that Cameroonians had prepared for Head Coach Rigobert Song if the Indomitable Lions had failed to qualify for the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup, something which would have been on two consecutive editions having missed out in Russia.

In what has been termed «the Miracle of Blida», the Indomitable Lions produced an outstanding performance that saw them on the cusp of defeat only for them to power their way to victory with arguably the last kick of the game from Karl Toko Ekambi.

Heading into this encounter, Cameroon knew only a victory will guarantee their place in Qatar having lost 1-0 to Algeria on home soil, four days earlier. And the tides were in favour of Cameroon as Choupo Moting scored Cameroon's first goal in the 22nd minute. If the game



As Coach Rigobert Song defied the odds to qualify Cameroon for the Qatar 2022 World Cup.

had ended like this, extra time and penalties would have had to decide the encounter.

Touba had other ideas as she found the net for the Algerians at the 118 minutes of play. The Desert Foxes

at this stage was on the first flight to Qatar looking at the aggregate situation. Kal Toko Ekambi had other ideas though.

The Lyon forward who with Vincent Aboubakar led Cameroon

to third place at the 33rd edition of the Africa Cup of Nations scored at the 120+4mins this March 29 at the Stade Mustapha Tchaker to send Cameroonians to rapture, even those who had bashed Rigobert Song and Samuel Eto'o had to concede that at the moment it is all behind the Indomitable Lions and the rebuilding process currently going on.

“You did the job, but I am a very big dreamer,” Samuel Eto'o, President of the Cameroon Football Federation, FECAFOOT said after the dramatic night in Algeria.

“I am not going to Qatar to go out in the first round. We will go to Qatar with a different mentality. If the others can win, why not we. We will not go to Qatar for Walk.”

What will Cameroon do without “Dependable” Fai Collins?

If Cameroon is in the Qatar expedition, then it is down to one player, Fai Collins or as he is fondly called in the Cameroonian circles, “Dependable” Fai. It was his fast-thinking cross into the Algerian penalty box that met the head of Ngadui-Ngadeu which fell to Toko Ekambi for the goal.

Fai Collins' run didn't just start



Rigobert Song is definitely turning doubters to his favour at the national team.



from this two-legged encounter with Algeria but he is amongst the few players in the present Lions consistently consistent den. Selecting the first eleven any day any time, you will hardly miss out on the right-back position occupied by Fai Collins.

Stretching back to former coach Antonio Conceicao, Fai Collins was one of the first names on the list even among ordinary Cameroonians. In crosses were very handy at the AFCON as he supplied Vincent Aboubakar for the majority of his goals and also had more goal contribution than anybody for Cameroon at the AFCON.

### A new beginning for Rigobert Song

The former Under 23 Indomitable Lions coach who is Cameroon's all-time appearance maker with 137 appearances was appointed coach of the national team, taking over from Antonio Conceicao, with the latter having guided the Indomitable Lions to third at the just concluded Africa Cup of Nations hosted by Cameroon. After failing to pick the crown on home soil, there have been countless speculations on whether or not Conceicao will be maintained with the Cameroonian public split in their decision.

«The Cameroon Football Federation announces to the public opinion and the family of port, the end of the contract of Coach Antonio Conceicao. This is an opportunity to thank him and his staff for the work done within our National Selection,» FECAFOOT President Samuel Eto'o said in a communiqué.

«The upcoming deadlines for our National Team require new orientations and a new breath. We wish him all the best in the future.»

Coach Rigobert Song is assisted in his functions by Sebastien Migne, who reports had earlier stated was in the running for the top job in the country. Kalla Raymond has been appointed team manager, while Souleymanou is the goalkeeper trainer.



Rigobert Song won the 2000 and 2002 African Cup of Nations with Cameroon.

The sacking of Conceicao also comes at a time when the executive committee of FECAFOOT had given Samuel Eto'o 72hrs which was later extended for him to decide on the fate of the Portuguese coach. The deadline requested by the FECAFOOT president elapsed last week Wednesday and there had been reports that the president has maintained Conceicao which has now proven to not be the case.

### What pedigree for Rigobert Song?

Known for his defensive skills, Rigobert Song usually played as a centre back for most of his playing career but he could also operate right back. He was the captain for the indomitable Lions in five AFCON tournaments but played in a total of

eight.

In 2009, Rigobert Song who had never been on the bench for his national team in some eleven years was dropped as captain by new coach Paul le Guen, in favour of Samuel Eto'o, something that caused a stir according to media reports. Both players did iron out their differences before the appointment of Samuel Eto'o to the FECAFOOT presidency.

Despite his glittering football career, Rigobert Song has not yet hit the pinnacle of coaching the various selections of the country has begun with Cameroon A from 2016 to 2018. He was then appointed caretaker coach of the senior team back in 2018 before taking the position of the Under 23 side in 2018 until his appointment to the top job in Cameroon.

His team participated in the 2019

Africa U-23 Cup of Nations but couldn't write any good experience from that participation. If he is thus to succeed in this new adventure, he will certainly need the backing of the federation and the Ministry of Sports (which he already has) and the entire football family who will see him as someone who hasn't been at the top level of coaching in the country.

Rigobert Song has passed the first milestone in his coaching career and the next big push is for the team to do well at the November edition of the Qatar World Cup. What Song should understand about Cameroonians is that their patience is very thin, and despite them being with him now, can easily turn at the slightest defeat or poor result from the national team.

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# A Triumph for African Coaches in World Cup Qualifiers

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Cameroon, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco and Senegal will all be representing Africa at the upcoming FIFA Qatar World Cup in November after sealing their respective qualifications. The highlight of this is that four of the five national teams will be represented by nationals in Rigobert Song, Aliou Cisse, Jalel Kadri and Otto Addo.

The excelling of these coaches presents a shift in the managerial path for the continent's national federations who are shifting from foreign base coaches to home-grown or nationals. Surprisingly, three of the national teams in Cameroon, Ghana and Tunisia had done a managerial change following poor performances or the failure to win the competition. In the case of Cameroon, the coming of Rigobert Song was received with mixed emotions looking at his limited managerial career.

Pan African Visions takes an in-depth review of what transpired on the last day and which countries will be involved in the sporting jamboree.



Aliou Cisse has been the coach of the Teranga Lions of Senegal since 2015.

## Ghana is back on the big stage after time in the wilderness

After an eight-year absence, Ghana claimed a berth at the World Cup for the fourth time by holding Nigeria to a 1-1 draw in Abuja. Captain Thomas Partey opened the scoring in the 10th minute before William Troost-Ekong

equalised from the penalty spot 11 minutes later. There was no further change to the scoreboard, and with the first leg having finished 0-0, the Black Stars qualified for Qatar 2022 courtesy of the away goals rule.

Ghana coach Addo, who is a former international and a part of the Black

Stars 2006 World Cup team, hailed his players for their determination to clinch the slot.

«I'm delighted, exhausted, it was a tough match and we fought our way through», Otto Addo said in a post-match interview.

«We had big problems, especially in the first half, and through some changes, the players gave their tactics very well and still they [the Nigerians] had some good chances.»

«Our goalkeeper was there when we needed him and we had a little bit of luck also because if you see the chances the Nigerians were better», Addo added.

«I feel a bit pity for them (Nigeria) but this is football, sometimes and we fought our way through», the Black Stars coach said.



Ghana coach Otto Addo stunned critics with the qualification of the Black Stars.

**African Champions Senegal makes successive FIFA World Cup berth**

Defending AFCON champions Senegal will be making back-to-back

appearances at the FIFA World Cup after getting the better of Egypt yet again.

Senegal won the second leg of the African play-off 1-0 in Diamniadio thanks to a fourth-minute goal from Boulaye Dia and the teams finished level at 1-1 on aggregate after extra time. Only four of the nine penalty takers were successful with captain Kalidou Koulibaly and Saliou Ciss missing for Senegal and Salah, 'Zizo' and Mostafa Mohamed for Egypt.

"It was important to get off to a good start, something we had not done in Cairo," said Senegal coach Aliou Cisse.

«This team is better equipped (than the one which qualified for the 2018 finals). We (should have been) able to qualify in the regular time given the chances we missed.»

## Morocco makes sixth World Cup appearance

Morocco was heavily criticised by their fans for their ineffective first-leg performance against Congo DR in Kinshasa that ended 1-1, but the team bounced back impressively in Casablanca to defeat Les Léopards 4-1 and ensure their place at the upcoming FIFA Qatar World Cup.

An Azzedine Ounahi brace and additional goals from Tarik Tissoudali and Achraf Hakimi propelled the Atlas Lions to the World Cup for the sixth time in their history and for the second time in a row. The Congolese fans will need to wait till at least the next qualifying campaign to enjoy a World Cup adventure – something they have not experienced since 1974.

## Tunisia qualifies for the sixth AFCON



Jalel Kadri replaced Mondher Kebaier at the Tunisian dugout.

Despite drawing 0-0 at home with Mali, Tunisia advanced to the World Cup for the sixth time in their history, and the second consecutive tournament. The Eagles of Carthage had put in a solid performance in the first leg of the tie, earning a 1-0 victory in Bamako in a match notable for Moussa Sissako's unfortunate own goal. New Tunisia coach Jalel Kadri, appointed at the end of January, can now look forward to leading his charges at a World Cup. Mali, meanwhile, whose hopes of competing at the tournament proper for the very first time have now been dashed, may well regret not being taking a more adventurous approach in Rades.

Mayhem in Ghana v Nigeria clash leaves one dead

The longest-serving member of the CAF Medical Committee, Dr Joseph Kabungo was on duty in Abuja for the

second leg encounter between Nigeria and Ghana this March 29, which ended 1-1 but Ghana went through to the Qatar World Cup on the away goal rule.

After the referee's final whistle, Super Eagles fans streaked onto the pitch and started wreaking havoc. Videos circulating online show the Nigerian fans throwing chairs, destroying the dugouts and breaking through the barriers around the inner perimeter at the MKO Abiola stadium. Police officers are said to have used teargas to disperse the irate supporters.

Dr Joseph Kabungo, a Zambian medical practitioner, is reported that have lost consciousness after he was beaten and stepped on as fans try to make their way out of the stadium due to a stampede, Sports Brief reported.

«Sad news: I understand that an official for the Super Eagles of

Nigeria v Ghana Black Stars match (not a referee or assistant referee) died in Abuja today (March 29),» British-Nigerian journalist Osasu Obayiuwana wrote on his Twitter account as confirmed by Sports Brief.

"CAF is deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Zambian medical doctor and CAF Doping Officer, Dr Joseph Kabungo," a statement from CAF said.

"Dr Kabungo passed on while he was on duty as a FIFA Doping Officer at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ qualifier match between Nigeria and Ghana in Abuja, Nigeria on Tuesday night, 29 March 2022.

«President Dr Patrice Motsepe and the CAF family convey deepest condolences to the family of Dr Kabungo and Football Association Zambia (FAZ).»

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