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Musings On Tinubu's Nigeria

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Barring some last minute dramatic or unforeseen change, former Lagos State Governor and APC Chieftain Ahmed Bola Tinubu will finally get his turn as President of Nigeria on May 29. Since the advent of the 4th republic in 1999, May 29 is the date that successive Nigerian's have been sworn to office. Tinubu's turn should the courts confirm his victory comes at a very critical time in the history of Nigeria with enormous domestic, and international challenges that will need extraordinary clairvoyance to navigate.

Contested elections are nothing new in Nigeria, but the 2023 elections exacerbated existing divisions and frustrations that Tinubu will need Solomonian wisdom to address. From appeasing the millions who wanted a different kind of leadership from what the APC Buhari led administration had offered for the last 8 years, to galloping unemployment, security challenges, energy crisis, regional conflicts and more, the challenges are enormous. Couple this with a restive generation in this social media era where every move of his will be scrupulously scrutinized, President Tinubu may not have much of a honeymoon.

All politics aside, the prayer not just for Nigerians but Africa should be for Tinubu to succeed. For a country with the incredible natural and human resources at its disposal, Nigeria should be at a radically different level than where it is today. If Nigeria does not get it right, it will be hard for Africa to get it right.

Tinubu wanted his turn, and now that he is on the verge of getting it, the only way to vindicate his supporters and win over his numerous critics is to deliver. Building on the template he over touts on transforming Lagos State when he served as governor, his own business acumen, dynamism, decades spent in the trenches of hard-core politics, are some of the serious



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

attributes that could augur well for prospects of a better Nigeria under his stewardship.

For all the strong criticism levelled at outgoing President Buhari, that he is leaving office after fulfilling his constitutional mandates is testament to the progress that Nigeria is making. When we have countries with leaders adroit at using hook and crook to remain in power for eternity, Nigeria is sending the right message to Africa that constitutional term limits must remain sacrosanct.

Even with the flaws that were highlighted in the recent elections, there were still many positives to take away from it. The vision and movement that backed Peter Obi of the Labour party resonated with many, especially the youth across Africa. Peter Obi brought more energy to the Presidential race and generated the kind of interest and excitement in the youth whose future is often at stake in most elections across the continent.

When we look at the continent and see Sudan imploding, Africa should be weary of a similar calamity befalling Nigeria someday. When you see the military rule in countries like Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, perhaps Nigerians should cherish their democratic experience more considering the troubled past they had with military rule. Costly leadership mistakes from

civilian led administrations have helped in fueling the trend in West Africa. Nigerians should jealously guide and nurture their own democratic journey and avoid pitfalls that will bait the military into having second thoughts.

For a country that flexed its muscles in restoring sanity in countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia, it is not a good sight to see Nigeria as military rule pops up. It defies logic that for a country with some of the best physicians across the globe, Nigerian leaders still go abroad to cater for their health needs. It doesn't make sense that for a country with some of the best engineers in the world and abundant resources, the energy crisis in Nigeria remain acute.

Talking about Africa's energy future, this is one of the sectors that Tinubu will have to work with other stakeholders across the continent in providing sound leadership on. In the African Energy Chamber and its Executive Chairman NJ Ayuk, he will find an ally to count on.

"Nigeria has made great strides towards creating an enabling environment for investment, implementing the Petroleum Industry Act in 2021, cracking down on illegal oil theft and incentivizing new investment and development across the oil and gas sectors. Under the Ahmed Bola Tinubu administration, we expect to see this progress continue. Representing the biggest oil producer in Africa, and yet ripe with exploration opportunities, investors are beginning to turn their eyes to the Nigerian market, and we look forward to seeing how the market grows this year and beyond," NJ Ayuk says.

Africa is finally speaking up and speaking up in a forceful way about its energy needs. With the complex mix of enormous potential, severe challenges and gapping needs, the road to energy security remains bumpy. Still, the progress is real, and the energy revolution championed by

the African Energy Chamber-AEC, is not only on course but beginning to show palpable progress, says NJ Ayuk.

Arguably the face of African Energy, NJ Ayuk has been one of the most articulate voices on energy related issues. Where others come to the continent to reap, NJ and the Chamber have continued to sow. In addition to a myriad of events partnered across the continent since the year started, Ayuk and the AEC have been on the offense hosting invest in African energy events in London, Oslo, Dubai, and Paris coming up.

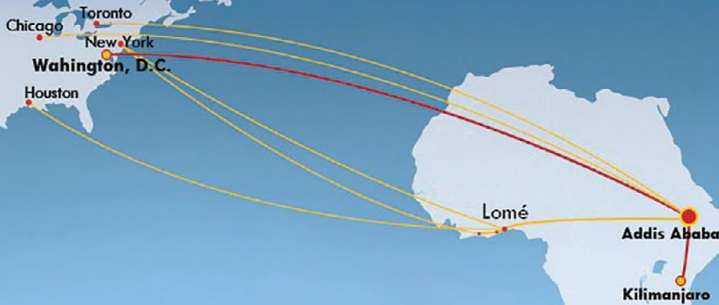
"The message we continue to drive at these forums is that Africa is open for investment, and by investing in Africa, you are not only lifting over 600 million people that currently lack energy access out of energy poverty but are financing the very resources that will drive economic growth and industrialization while stabilizing global supply chains," says NJ Ayuk.

In addition to the broad interview with NJ Ayuk on the African energy renaissance to the crisis in Sudan, peace efforts towards the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, corruption in Zimbabwe, the perils of religious fanaticism in Kenya bear an eerie familiarity to some of the issues that that will either be addressed internally in Nigeria or necessitate its take on the continental scene.

With the kind of experience, he has and with some of the brightest and smartest brains across the globe to pick from, there should be no shortage of talent for Tinubu to pick from. Will he muster the political will to do the things that will restore the greatness of Nigeria? Will he provide the kind of principled and courageous leadership that will strengthen Africa's voice across the globe? Will he go bold in bridging the cleavages that only got bigger from the elections? Expectations will be high, and for someone who has been waiting and whose turn is here, he better be ready to hit the ground running!!

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A Question Of Leadership And Respect For Africa At IGW 2023

By Samuel Ouma

African leaders called for good governance and leadership during the Mo Ibrahim Foundation Governance Weekend held in Nairobi between April 28 and April 30, 2023.

Organized by Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the three-day event brought together African political and business leaders, representatives from civil society, multilateral and regional institutions, and Africa's major international partners to discuss the continent's potential to become the best globally, not only in economic but also in governance and leadership.

"As we speak, the world is changing around us. I think everybody knows that. All of the previous assumptions are being broken. We are seeing different powers rising, tensions, camps being formed - so where exactly is Africa's place here? Europe, and the rest of the world too, should not underestimate Africa, talk down to Africa or give instructions to Africa - Don't take Africa for granted," said Mo Ibrahim, Founder and Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

Some of the leaders who graced the event included President William Ruto of Kenya, Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson of the African Union Commission, former



Mo Ibrahim and William Ruto had a rich and engaging exchange at the event.

President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger, Charles Michel, President of the European Council, Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Others were Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary General of the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie,

President Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia and Nasi Rwigema, founder and CEO of Umwuga, MIF Now Generation Network.

The leaders emphasized the need for political pluralism, constitutionalism, and adherence to the rule of law to achieve Africa's transformation goal.

According to Amina J. Mohammed, United Nations deputy secretary-general, improving governance, peace, and security in Africa will be critical to redesigning the multilateral system in the face of escalating geopolitical tensions.

"Africa is full of opportunity if only we would walk the talk with our Youth and Women. If we would organize the transformations for the world of technology, science, energy, food systems, education, social protection. Agenda 2063 has framed the vision if we come together across borders, individual interests to collective endeavours, we will accelerate our progress," said Ambassador Amina Mohammed.

"Let us not forget what provides the glue that binds us, our culture,

religions and the vibrancy of our informal sector. We can and must promote and strengthen these foundations. Above all, investing in a life of dignity leaves no room for exclusion, dissent or conflict."

Amina pointed out that the story of Africa's rise will only be continued if political leaders uphold democratic principles particular to the continent's circumstances and put its people at the heart of development strategies.

"Leadership, without strong institutions to carry the vision, rights and expectations of the people, be it public sector, private sector or otherwise, will not deliver on governance. Democracy, justice, service sectors for health, education and more that create the enabling environment are essential, and we must invest in them," she added.

"These are the foundations on which nations are built and sustained for the good of their citizenry. Indeed, wherever we have seen the deepening of democracy and the rule of law given the space to work for the people, it has



Former President Issoufou of Niger with Kenya's President William Ruto. Issoufou was honoured as The Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2021 Ibrahim Laureate. Photo credit Khalil Senosi - AP.

been because of strong institutions. This has often led to sustainable economic growth and development.”

In addition, she urged an African-led effort to address the continent's many problems, which include periodic wars, terrorism, forced migration, climate change, young unemployment, and famine.

“Owning our shortcomings and addressing them upfront. We have often created them, albeit not always by ourselves, but they are ours and clean up we must. Only we know how, and only we can. Finding the common tread to stitch back the torn but vibrant fabric of Africa. For that, we must find what binds us as a continent and that is not easy given our diverse history and sense of identity,” reiterated Ambassador Amina.

On his part, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat said strengthening robust institutions and increased transparency would be critical to fulfilling a new agenda for calm and long-term stability on the continent.

“Africa's population will more than double by 2100, its youth will be half of the world's youth. Africa, Latin America and Europe will lose about 490 million people in the same period. The result is an immeasurable potential for initiative, creativity and productive growth in all areas of human assets. This will be Africa's century,” said Moussa Faki Mahamat.

The ongoing conflict in Sudan also featured during the event with Sudan's former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok urging the international community to continue pressurizing the warring parties, Sudan's army chief, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary leader, Lt. Gen Mohamed Hamdan, to end the conflict.

“There is blame on all sides, mistakes made on all sides, but I also think from crisis comes opportunity, if our political space will learn the lesson that there is need to



Don't take Africa for granted, says Mo Ibrahim.

work together, we need to work on common denominator programmes. Politics is an art of compromise in the interests of the country,” said Abdalla Hamdok.

Under the theme: Global Africa, the event's first session focused on Africa's weight in the world, highlighting the continent's assets and potential without downplaying challenges to overcome. The second and third sessions were on the diversity of state actors and non-actors engaging with the continent, their primary areas of interest and

various modes of engagement. The fourth and last session was about Africa's place within the global governance architecture and the need and ways to amend the current model.

The 2023 Ibrahim Governance Weekend began with a leadership event in which former Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou received his 2021 Ibrahim Prize Medal in person.

During the forum, Mo Ibrahim and Kenyan President William Ruto had a one-on-one conversation about ongoing climate change, including

the importance of creating an efficient carbon market and changes to international architecture and processes. The two also addressed current political and economic conditions and possibilities.

“It is our responsibility. They say it is the wearer who knows where the shoe pinches. So, it is our responsibility to engineer the debate that will put on the table our perspective, our point of view, on what kind of financial architecture - global financial architecture - that would work not just for us but for everybody,” William Ruto.

After the one-on-one meeting between Ruto and Mo Ibrahim, there was a public concert appearing some of Africa's most prominent musicians, including Otile Brown, Nyashinski, Femi One, and Youssou N'Dour.

There were also many concurrent activities throughout the three-day event that addressed critical issues facing Africa.

This year's forum was the first physical gathering since COVID-19 hit the world in 2020.

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was founded in 2006 to emphasize the need for good governance and leadership in Africa.



A strong showing from former and sitting leaders at the 2023 Ibrahim Governance Weekend.

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DR Congo: Tshisekedi's Political Shuffle

By Jean Pierre Afadhali



Tshisekedi is back in business with Vital Kamerhe .Photo courtesy.

DR Congo's Tshisekedi have reconciled with old friends-turned-foes and rivals ahead of 20 December elections that could give him a second term in office.

Recently the Country's electoral Body-CENI announced the end of voters' registration exercise in the country and 5 countries selected for the pilot project, but the volatile eastern province is still not stable despite the deployment of East African regional force and UN peacekeeping mission that has been in the region for more than two decades. Insecurity has been cited by various observers as a major challenge for the incumbent who seeks to extend his rule.

President Tshisekedi recently appointed former Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba and Vital Kamerhe his former ally and ex- chief of staff who was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2020 over corruption. Mr. Bemba, a former warlord who was indicted by International Criminal Court, was barred from running for president in the last elections.

Some observers have noted the appointment of Mr. Bemba, Kamerhe

and others veteran politicians is a political strategy to strengthen Tshisekedi's coalition ahead of December 20 polls.

Mr. Bemba was appointed the Deputy Prime Minister for Defense in late March amid conflict in North Kivu province as M23 rebel group continues to battle government forces after seizing several towns and villages in mineral rich provinces.

"This a deeply political shuffle," Jason Stearns, director of the Congo Research Group and professor at Canada's Simon Fraser University was quoted as saying.

Mr. Kamerhe former Director of Cabinet in Tshisekedi's administration has been appointed the deputy prime minister for Economy. Mr. Kamerhe who is very popular in Eastern DR Congo had earlier been removed from Tshisekedi's government then jailed for nearly two years for corruption and embezzlement, before being acquitted.

Dr. Stearns further explained that some of new entrants in the cabinet lack expertise. He said: "Key positions are given to senior politicians who

have large constituencies to please but little expertise in their new ministries. Mr. Kamerhe is not an economist. Bemba was a rebel but has little formal military training".

The former vice president was detained for over 10 years for war crimes. He was acquitted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2018.

According to media reports, thousands of people marked on Saturday 29 March at the Martyrs stadium in Kinshasa, the capital, the official formation of the «Sacred Union », a coalition of parties supporting the candidacy of President Felix Tshisekedi to his re-election in December. «Let's be on the right side of history», or «One people, one president, one vision», could be read on banners bearing the portrait of the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, reported 'Libre Afrique', a French publication that covers Africa.

Mr. Bemba and Vital Kamerhe are now new key political figures in the Tshisekedi's coalition ahead of December polls.

Prime minister Sama Lukonde has

recently revealed that more than \$530 million have been disbursed to CENI. The Premier said despite insecurity in volatile Eastern provinces, elections will be held as scheduled.

"As far as the elections are concerned, our mission as a government was to guarantee the support of the Independent National Electoral Commission, first of all from a financial point of view and then to secure the process." Said Mr. Lukonde.

Some opposition parties are planning told demonstrations on 13 May to demand the respect of electoral calendar as provided by the constitution, the high cost of living among other issues.

Observers have termed the recent cabinet reshuffle that saw the head of state appoint former rivals and allies a political move to boost his coalition ahead of December polls.

Mr. Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, another former warlord who has extensive knowledge of the eastern part of the DRC where he is originally from, has been appointed minister for Regional Integration.

Presidential candidates are expected to be announced next October, with a final list due in November. According to analysts, one likely challenger for the presidency is Martin Fayulu, who claimed victory in the 2018 poll. Another cited politician and businessman is Moise Katumbi, former governor of the oil-rich Katanga province. Nobel peace prize winner Dr. Dennis Mukwege, a critic of Tshisekedi could either run for president or support Tshisekedi's opponents.

In 2021, President Tshisekedi announced his intention to seek a second term. According to The East African newspaper, He openly said in a public rally and during a tour of his home province of Grand Kasai last December that he was on vote-



A marriage of convenience between Tshisekedi and Jean Pierre Bemba.

seeking mission. "I have a vision for second term," he said last at the time. anticipated polls will start on 19 my country. I want to achieve it with a Campaigns for the highly November.

Appeasement In Khartoum-The Tragedy In Sudan Was Predictable

By Rebecca Tinsley

Sudanese citizens know from experience that the powerful rival military groups now bombing and shelling civilians were not likely to hand power to civilians - unless the international community forced them to.

Sudan faces massive destruction and loss of life. Local people fear that worse is to come when foreign nationals have been evacuated. Even if the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) under General Hemedti withdraw from the capital, Khartoum, they may retrench in Darfur where the fight will become ethnic. Black African civilians are arming themselves, knowing the RSF will target them, as they have since 2003.

A window of opportunity to transfer power peacefully from the men with guns (the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces under General Burhan) to civilian authority accountable to citizens is being lost. The voices of African citizens have yet again been ignored. For years, diplomats treated the architects of Sudan's decades of violence (the RSF and SAF) as their partners in the search for peace, rather than holding them accountable



Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan and his former deputy and current rival, Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. Photo credit Mahmoud Hja, Anadolu Agency via Getty Images.

for their crimes in Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan and other marginalised areas.

The Background to the Fighting

Since independence in 1956, Sudan has mostly been ruled by military juntas. The army's brutal network of security and intelligence agencies

enriched itself while trying to turn an ethnically and religiously diverse country into an authoritarian Arab-Islamist regime.

Over three decades, the ruling junta of Field Marshall Omar Bashir attempted to eliminate the sizable Black African minorities living in the peripheries, (Darfur, South

Kordofan and Blue Nile) on the cheap, by arming local Arab tribes who coveted the land of Black African farmers. The junta incited militias like the Janjaweed to loot, rape and kill hundreds of thousands of Black Africans. An estimated two million died in the south which broke away in 2011 to form South Sudan: the UN



The fighting has reduced Khartoum to shadow of itself. Photo credit Reuters.

stopped counting the dead in Darfur in 2005, at the Khartoum regime's request, at 300,000.

Islamists controlled Sudan's civil service, education, judiciary, media, security services and a web of commercial interests, creating a deep state. The international community never acknowledged the Islamists' ideological motivation. Diplomats blamed climate for the "competition for resources." They also favoured the colonialist "ancient ethnic hatreds" narrative as if this absolved the international community of concern for Sudan's persecuted minorities.

The rise of Hemedti

Mohamed Hamhan Dagalo, nicknamed Hemedti, rose to power leading the Janjaweed (now called the RSF), responsible for ethnically cleansing Darfur. An Arab from the Darfur region, Hemedti made a fortune from gold mining. In 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea, Putin needed to circumvent Western sanctions. The answer was illicit gold smuggling - \$4 billion or 16 planes worth of it - from Sudan, with help from Hemedti and Yevgeny Prigozhin of the Wagner Group of mercenaries.

Partners in crime

For years, Hemedti and Burhan worked together to ethnically cleanse

Darfur. In 2019, a popular uprising on the streets of Khartoum threatened the thirty-year dictatorship of their boss, Bashir. Hemedti and Burhan astutely joined the people, overthrowing Bashir.

Then, the international community made a mistake: they believed Hemedti and Burhan when they said they would support a transition to a civilian-led government. Anyone familiar with the RSF and the SAF suspected both would never willingly hand over either their power or their grip on sundry lucrative commercial interests.

Moreover, Hemedti and Burhan knew from the flawed negotiations that gave birth to South Sudan that all they had to do was tell the international community what it wanted to hear, make vague promises they never fulfilled, and then drag out talks for as long as possible.

After the 2019 popular uprising, a worthy but powerless technocrat civilian, Abdalla Hamdok, was appointed as head of the transitional council, charged with overseeing the move from military to civilian rule. With the economy collapsing after decades of kleptocracy, Hamdok juggled the interests of Sudan's political parties, while the civil society groups (who had bravely confronted Bashir's forces on the streets)

were marginalised. However, an Empowerment Removal Committee began dismantling the Islamists grip on the deep state, charging some elite figures with corruption. This prompted Hemedti and Burhan together to stage a coup in 2021, taking control of the government.

Since then, Burhan and Hemedti have assured diplomats they would transfer power to a civilian government. They have faced no sanctions for staging the coup, dragging out negotiations, or indeed for ethnic cleansing in Darfur from 2003 onwards.

The Islamists are back

No sooner was Burhan at the helm of the transitional council, with Hemedti as his deputy, than the Islamist elite re-emerged. After the 2021 coup, the Empowerment Removal Committee members were arrested and the Islamists let out of jail.

Women were once more abused and beaten on the streets by security services and men demanding strictly interpreted sharia. The media, opposition figures, Christians and human rights advocates were once more intimidated, tortured and arrested. Hundreds were killed in Darfur as disgruntled militias took Black African land.

The international community registered muted disapproval, but did not threaten to sanction Burhan and Hemedti, or set benchmarks to guarantee a transition to civilian rule. Sudanese civil society repeatedly pointed out that without justice mechanisms there could be no sustainable peace.

When the fighting started on April 15th, Hemedti thought the people would rise up to support him, but he is as disliked as Burhan and the SAF. Both sides show contempt for civilian life. This should cause the international community to be extremely cautious allowing Burhan and Hemedti to decide Sudan's future.

The UNHCR says 100,000 Darfuris are on the road to refugee camps in Chad. Darfuri civil society fears the international community will settle for a cessation of violence in most of Sudan while Hemedti rules Darfur. Meanwhile, thousands are trying to escape to neighbouring countries. Those who remain are enduring a humanitarian catastrophe. Once the foreign nationals have been evacuated, will the international community care? African leaders, the AU and African regional organisations must come forward to advocate for Sudan's civilians.

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Sudan: Gruesome Tales From Victims Of Military Clashes

By Prince Kurupati

Often when a conflict or full-blown war erupts, the narratives around the conflict are shaped by the words, choices and preferences of the elites, media, foreign actors and other unaffected parties. The lived realities of those who are affected directly by the conflict aren't considered or minimally considered. The past few weeks in Sudan have brought about immense sorrow and pain to millions of ordinary Sudanese citizens owing to the military clashes occurring in the land. However, the realities of ordinary citizens are being overshadowed by the narratives being shaped by regional and international media outlets. To give ordinary citizens a voice, in this article, we are going to expose the feelings of those directly affected by the clashes.

An independent pro-democracy group of medics, the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors while commenting on the conflict fatalities said that there is a gross misrepresentation of the affected. In a statement, the group said the official figures put "the total number of deaths among civilians (at) 56," as of 16 April 2023, however, their observations state that "tens of deaths" among security forces have not been included in the toll. This really paints a gruesome picture when it comes to the number of fatalities.

According to Saudia, Saudi Arabia's flag carrier, the conflict seem not to know or consider non-war actors. Everything or everyone who comes in the line of fire is not being spared. This comes after a Saudia plane ferrying civilians was "exposed to gunfire damage." An evacuation plane sent by the Turkey government also caught fire in a suspected case of targeted gunfire when landing at Wadi Seyidna airport in Omdurman. This was said by the Turkish defence ministry. Fortunately, no injuries were recorded.

Just as the conflict seem not to



Nigerian students in Sudan queue up for evacuation formalities in Khartoum. Photo twitter.

respect international airlines and civilians, so too does it not respect diplomats. In a statement, the European Union's top diplomat Josep Borrell said the EU Ambassador to Sudan was attacked in his private residence. He described the attack as a «gross violation of the Vienna Convention.» He added on saying the «security of diplomatic premises and staff is a primary responsibility of Sudanese authorities and an obligation under international law.»

Ordinary citizens said the clashes are bringing the country to the ashes while at the same time forcing citizens to hide underground in fear of becoming the next statistic. A 24-year-old marketing agent working in Khartoum said «People were terrified and running back home. The streets emptied very quickly.» Another resident stated we were «trapped inside our own homes with little to no protection at all... All we can hear is continuous blast after

blast. What exactly is happening and where we don't know, but it feels like it's directly over our heads.»

Some citizens including 65-year-old Bahri resident Mahasin al-Awad said that they don't fear for their lives but rather, for the lives of the young. This is presumably necessitated by the fact that they have witnessed and survived many of Sudan's past conflicts including civil war and coups. Mahasin al-Awad said «We hear the sounds of planes and explosions. We don't know when this hell will end... We're in a constant state of fear for ourselves and our children.»

Concerns have also emerged that the military clashes will lead to spill-off vices. Already, it's been reported that several prisoners have escaped from at least eight prisons. As the prisoners enter society, they bring with them more destructive elements. Ravina Shamdasani who is the Sudan U.N. human rights office spokesperson said «We are very

worried about the prospect of further violence amid a generalized climate of impunity,» following the escape of prisoners from eight facilities.

Many have chosen to flee Khartoum going to other towns and districts while some move into neighbouring countries. This is necessitated by the fact that the epicentre of the clashes is Khartoum. Narrating the scenes he left behind as he fled from Khartoum, a 39-year-old longtime Khartoum resident said «There was smoke and fire everywhere». Reuters in a report said, «Among Sudan's neighbours, Egypt said it had taken in 16,000 people, while 20,000 had entered Chad and the U.N. refugee agency said over 14,000 had crossed into South Sudan, which won independence from Khartoum in 2011 after decades of civil war.»

A painful narrative by a doctor who cannot be named for safety reasons based in Khartoum illustrated how «a direct strike hit the maternity ward».

The doctor went on to state that «We could hear heavy weaponry and lay on the floor, along with our patients. The hospital itself was under attack.» Same sentiments were echoed by another doctor based at the same al-Moallem Hospital. The doctor said after constant bombardments, they eventually had to flee. However, they had to leave some souls behind. «Can you believe that we left the hospital and left-behind children in incubators and patients in intensive care without any medical personnel? I can't believe that I survived dying at the hospital, where the smell of death is everywhere.»

Coming perhaps as a relief to many suffering Sudanese citizens is the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment signed by the Sudanese Armed Forces Rear Admiral Mahjoub Bushra Ahmed Rahma and the Rapid Support Forces Brigadier General Omer Hamdan Ahmed Hammad. The Declaration's main objective is for the two clashing parties the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) stop attacking and impeding the rights of all Sudanese civilians as well as respect the sanctity of life. It's early days yet as the Declaration has just been signed but the commitment by leaders of both parties inspires hope that the life of civilians will be



Kenya used a plane from its airforce to transfer its nationals from Sudan. Photo credit twitter.

preserved.

In the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment, both RSF and SAF pledge to observe the following:

- Ensure that civilians are protected at all times
- Affirm the responsibility to protect International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law
- Refrain from any attack that may be expected to cause incidental

civilian harm that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated

- Ensure that checkpoints are not used to infringe upon the principle of freedom of movement for civilians and humanitarian actors
- Allow all civilians to voluntarily and safely leave areas of hostility and any besieged areas

The Declaration also touches on

the need to safeguard and protect the rights of children as well as all those in medical facilities in all aspects of need. Conclusively and arguably more important, the Declaration states the commitment to «prioritising discussions to achieve a short term ceasefire to facilitate the delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance and restoration of essential services.»

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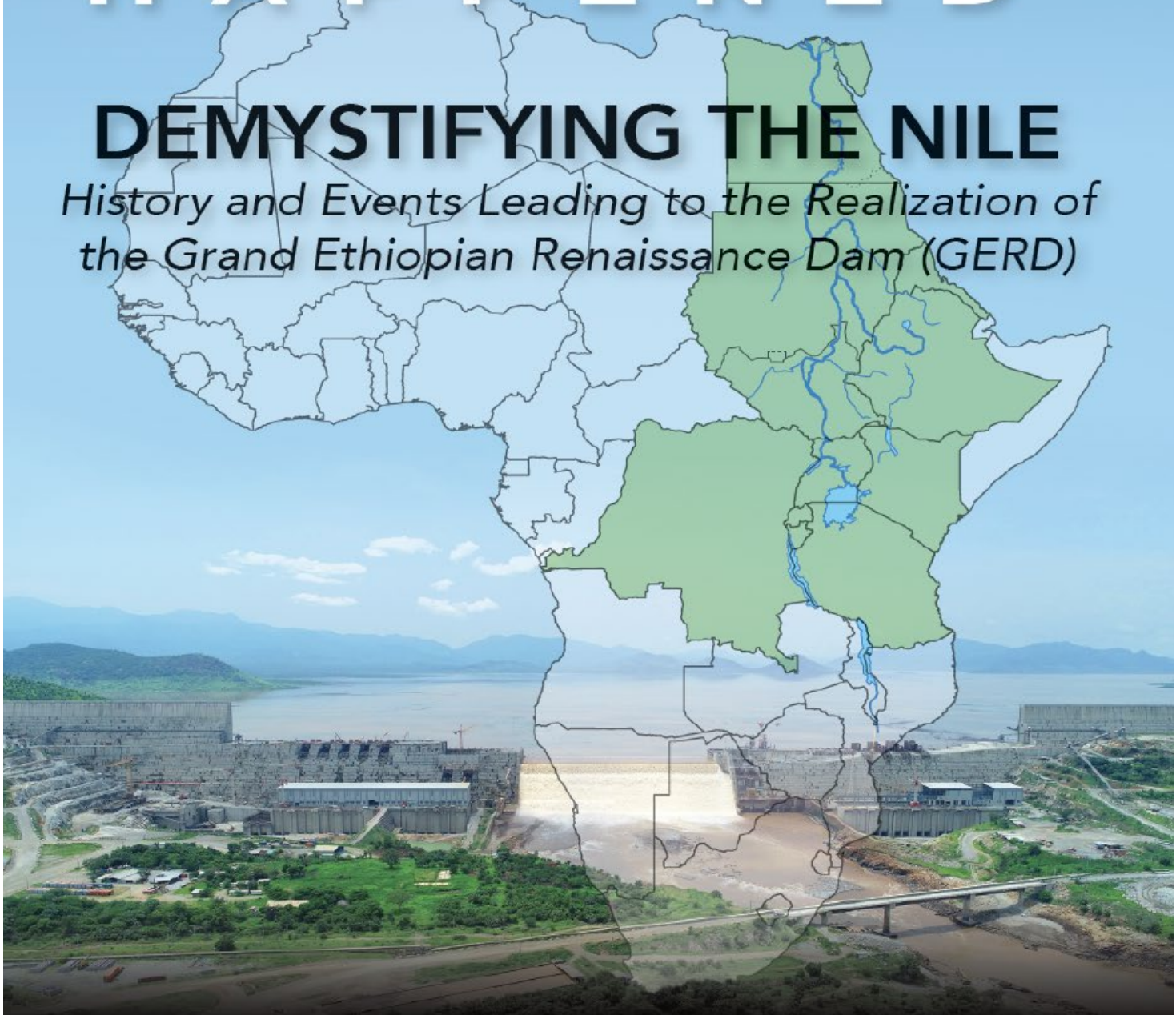
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History and Events Leading to the Realization of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)



Dereje Befekadu Tessema

NJ Ayuk On The African Energy Renaissance

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Africa is finally speaking up and speaking up in a forceful way about its energy needs. With the complex mix of enormous potential, severe challenges and gapping needs, the road to energy security remains bumpy. Still, the progress is real, and the energy revolution championed by the African Energy Chamber-AEC, is not only on course but beginning to show palpable progress, says NJ Ayuk.

Arguably the face of African Energy, NJ Ayuk who serves as Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber has been one of the most articulate voices on energy related issues. Where others come to the continent to reap, NJ and the Chamber have continued to sow. In addition to a myriad of events partnered across the continent since the year started, NJ and the AEC have been on the offense hosting invest in African energy events in London, Oslo, Dubai, and Paris coming up.

"The message we continue to drive at these forums is that Africa is open for investment, and by investing in Africa, you are not only lifting over 600 million people that currently lack energy access out of energy poverty



Progress continues to be made to unlock the full potential of the African energy market, says NJ Ayuk.

but are financing the very resources that will drive economic growth and industrialization while stabilizing global supply chains," says NJ Ayuk.

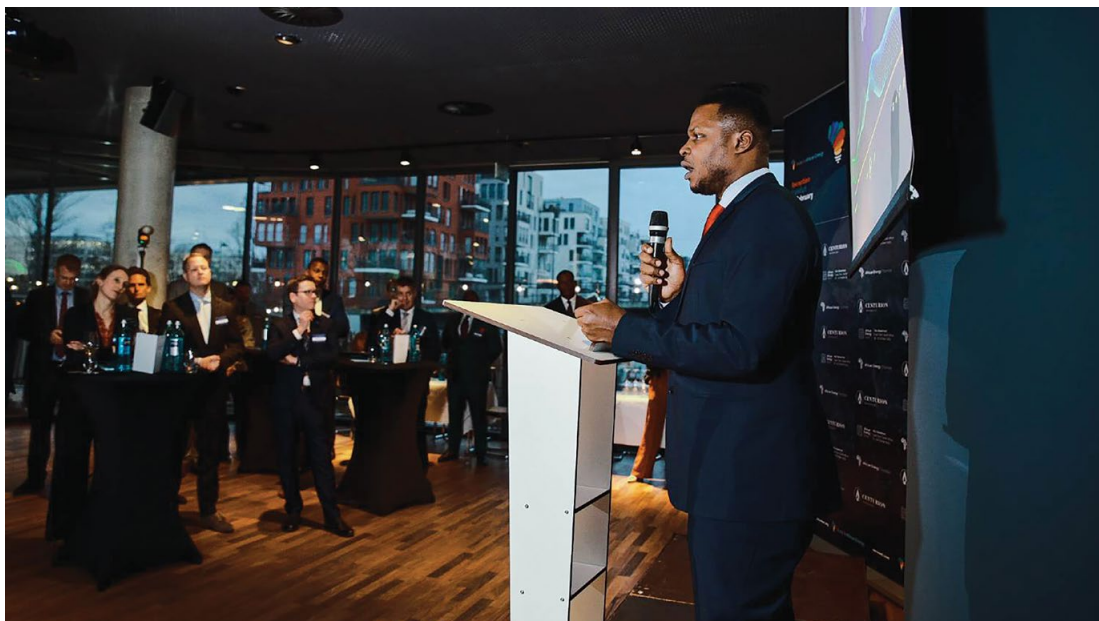
With over 600 million without access to electricity and over 900 million without access to clean

cooking solutions, Africa cannot afford to leave its oil and gas in the ground, Ayuk says. When faced with an energy crisis, Europe has once again turned to coal, and yet Africa continues to be told to abandon its oil and gas, Ayuk argues

"We will make oil and gas in Africa a success and not a cautionary tale of missed opportunity. We will develop and industrialize our economies, we will create jobs and increase revenue, and we will position Africa as global energy hub, all on the back of oil and gas," says NJ Ayuk in an interview with PAV.

Could we start by getting a synopsis of the African energy scene at this point of the year, what has changed, what is working and where are we still facing stiff challenges?

We are seeing a lot of exciting developments across the African energy sector in 2023. From ambitious exploration campaigns in Namibia, the DRC and Sierra Leone, to large-scale infrastructure projects in Angola, Uganda and Mozambique, to forward-focused local content laws and business practices continent wide, progress continues to be made to unlock the full potential of the African energy market. However, we are still faced with supply shortages,



By investing in Africa, you are lifting over 600 million people that currently lack energy access out of energy poverty and building pillars that drive economic growth, says Ayuk to investors.

the overreliance on imports and price volatility. These challenges can all be addressed with investment and an increase in exploration.

The African Energy Chamber has been on the offensive with key events in London, Germany, and Dubai, what is the message you are taking to partners and how is this being received?

At its core, the Invest in African Energy roadshow connects African policymakers with global investors. The message we continue to drive at these forums is that Africa is open for investment, and by investing in Africa, you are not only lifting over 600 million people that currently lack energy access out of energy poverty but are financing the very resources that will drive economic growth and industrialization while stabilizing global supply chains. For too long, Africa's oil and gas resources have remained untapped. The forums are aimed at turning this trend around, providing new opportunities for mutually beneficial collaborations between African and global players.

For a continent with such high potential but with critical needs, how is this new approach of hosting events and networking with international stakeholders likely to impact the energy fortunes of the continent?

It is through these types of events that Africa will secure the financing it needs to develop its entire energy



Under the leadership of NJ Ayuk, the African Energy Chamber and Afreximbank signed an MoU to boost African Energy Investments at AEW 2022.

value chain. Africa's energy needs primarily come down to investment. We have the resources; we have the political will; and we have a capable workforce. These forums take Africa to the world. We provide the opportunity for global investors and project developers to directly connect with African energy leaders, enabling new deals to be signed, while advancing already forged ties between companies and financiers active on the continent. What's more, these forums lay the foundation for discussions, deals and project launches that will take place at this year's African Energy Week (AEW) conference. We are starting the conversation now.

At the last African Energy Week, a number of blockbuster deals were signed, and the Chamber signed an MoU with the Afreximbank, any insights on these are playing out?

We had a number of industry-advancing deals signed during last year's edition of AEW, including the AEC's memorandum of understanding signed with the Afreximbank, and already, we are seeing progress. The Chamber continues to engage with the Afreximbank to increase private sector investments across Africa's oil and gas industry. The Afreximbank partnered with the AEC for the Invest in African Energy Forum in London, driving discussions and connecting European investors with African projects. Other deals such as between Amni International and the Afreximbank; Sasol and AMCO; Technip Energies and NAMCOR; and Moneda Invest Africa and NAMCOR are beginning to take shape. We are excited to hear about their progress during this year's AEW.

One of the key reports issued this year by the African Energy Chamber was on electricity in South Africa, how bad is the situation at

the moment and how could the report help the government of President Ramaphosa to better handle the crisis?

South Africa's energy crisis continues to cause significant impacts on the economy, with the country experiencing between 4.5 and 6 hours of regularly scheduled rolling blackouts per day. The South Africa-focused report offers an overview of the energy industry, and serves as a guide to the current challenges and upcoming opportunities across the power generation sector. The report helps every energy stakeholder, from government to project developers to financiers to policymakers, by providing the information the country needs to make informed decisions on the power market.

NJ Ayuk is out with a new book-A Just Transition: Making Energy Poverty History with An Energy Mix, what is the message you sort to convey and how has the book been received across Africa and the energy world at large?

'A Just Transition: Making energy poverty history with an energy mix' highlights, in no certain terms, just how fatally the International Energy Agency's ambitious green energy

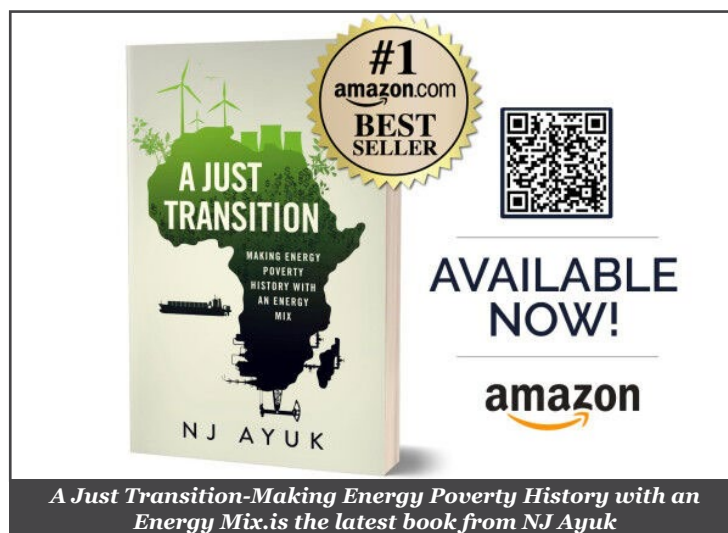


We provide the opportunity for global investors and project developers to directly connect with African energy leaders, says NJ Ayuk on the AEC global offensive.

policies are stifling and crippling the energy economies of Africa. The book explored a number of key themes, diving into the prospect of a prosperous future for African nations and the obstacles that continue to impact development. The book was met with critical acclaim, and merely days after it was published, it shattered records to become a number-one bestseller across multiple Amazon categories. This alone speaks to the impact the book continues to have.

Earlier in the year as well, Gabriel Obiang Lima, one of the most vocal voices on the energy scene switched Ministerial portfolios in Equatorial Guinea, is there any impact this has had on the energy debate and how are relations shaping up with his successor Antonio Oburu Ondo?

Equatorial Guinea's objectives remain the same: to develop a thriving regional energy hub in the country on the back of natural gas. Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima played an instrumental part in securing new investment, kickstarting development while driving the message that gas is good for Africa. Antonio Oburu Ondo brings to the position a wealth of experience, having previously served as Managing Director of GEPetrol, the national oil company. As such, he too is expected to play an instrumental role as he leads the Ministry to realize the country's energy sector and wider



national development agenda.

In Nigeria, could we get your take on how the Buhari administration fared on the energy scene and what needs to be done by the new administration led by Ahmed Bola Tinubu to better improve the energy fortunes of that country?

Nigeria has made great strides towards creating an enabling environment for investment, implementing the Petroleum Industry Act in 2021, cracking down on illegal oil theft and incentivizing new investment and development across the oil and gas sectors. Under the Ahmed Bola Tinubu administration, we expect to see this progress continue. Representing the biggest oil producer in Africa, and yet ripe with exploration opportunities, investors

are beginning to turn their eyes to the Nigerian market, and we look forward to seeing how the market grows this year and beyond.

May we know how preparations are going for the African Energy Week 2023, any incentives or direct pitches you may want to make to potential partners and stakeholders to make the trip to Cape Town in October?

Preparations are well underway for the 2023 edition of AEW. The conference represents the biggest energy event on the continent, and this year, we are once again supported by a suite of high-level partners and sponsors. This year promises to be even bigger and better than before, with even more deals signed, partnerships forged and project developments kicked off. Still under a mandate of making energy poverty

history by 2030, AEW 2023 will proudly take place under the theme, 'The African Energy Renaissance: Prioritizing energy poverty, people, the planet, industrialization and free markets.' The conference speaks for itself: if you want to sign deals, come to AEW.

The next stop of the invest in African Energy events comes up in Paris on June 1st, may we know what motivated the choice of Paris, how important is the event and what should participants expect?

The Invest in African Energy Forum in Paris offers an exciting program of high-level keynote addresses, market-focused panel discussions and presentations by both African energy leaders and global stakeholders. For years, France has played an instrumental role in helping Africa unlock the full potential of its energy sector, with companies such as TotalEnergies, Technip Energies, Perenco, Engie, EDF and others driving successful project developments. The choice of Paris lies in the country's commitment to Africa's energy future, and the Forum will not only build on existing Africa-Europe ties but drive new levels of cooperation.

As we wrap up this interview, any other message that you will want to send to the world from an African perspective on energy stakes and prospects?

With over 600 million without access to electricity and over 900 million without access to clean cooking solutions, Africa cannot afford to leave its oil and gas in the ground. When faced with an energy crisis, Europe has once again turned to coal, and yet Africa continues to be told to abandon its oil and gas. We will make oil and gas in Africa a success and not a cautionary tale of missed opportunity. We will develop and industrialize our economies, we will create jobs and increase revenue, and we will position Africa as global energy hub, all on the back of oil and gas.



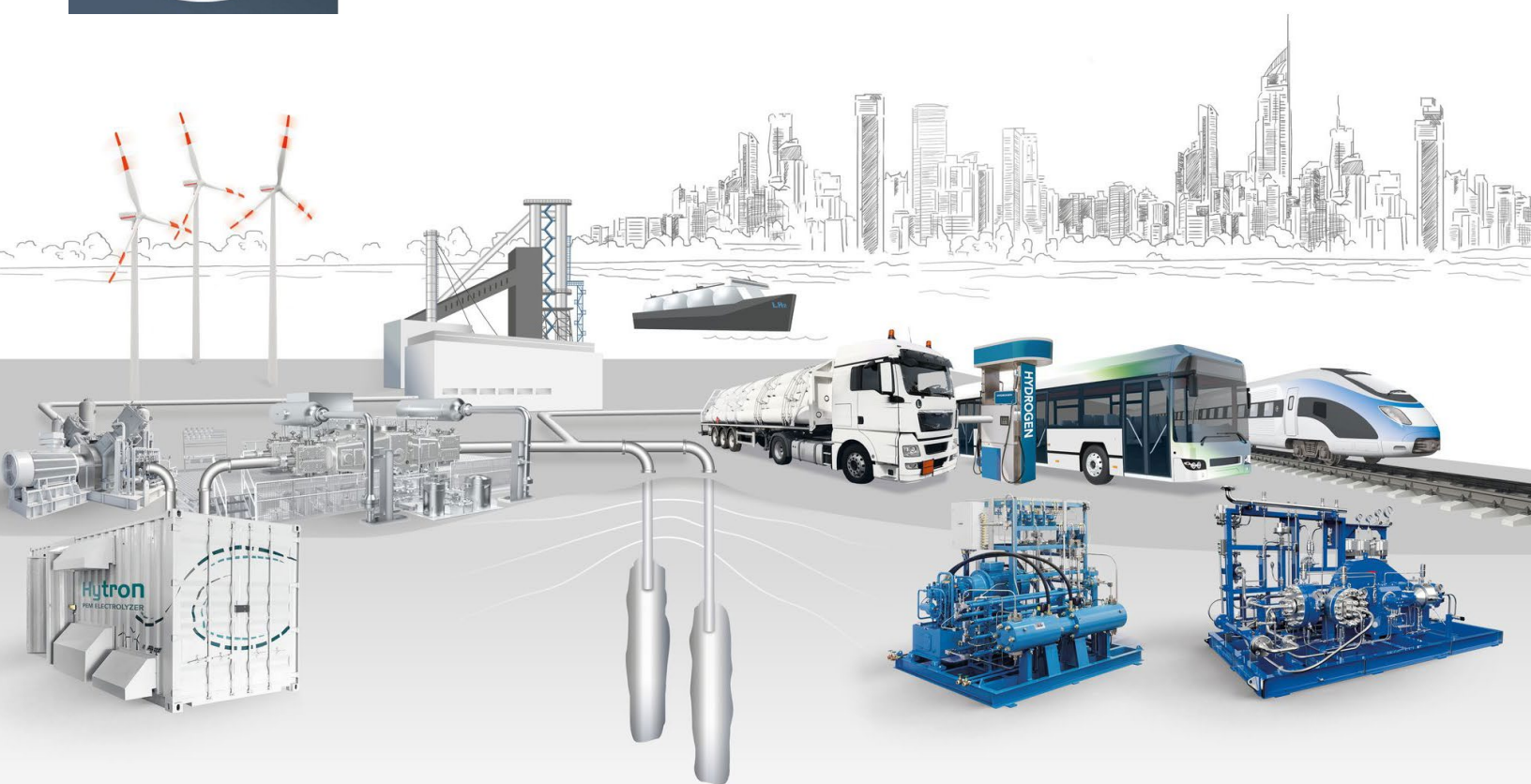
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Mozambique: Waiting For The Gas Boon

Mozambique announced at the end of April the discovery of new gas reserves amid hesitation by oil companies to resume old projects that were already under construction but stalled due to terrorist attacks. The Mozambican authorities guarantee that conditions are already in place to restart oil and gas exploration activities, but the companies say they are still carrying out independent assessments. On the other hand, although sporadically, terrorist attacks continue in the gas-rich province of Cabo Delgado.

By Jorge Joaquim

New oil and gas prospecting areas in Mozambique are showing preliminary signs of potential for exploration. The country's National Petroleum Institute announced at the end of April the discovery of natural gas in a research well, drilled by the South African company Sasol, in Inhassoro district, in the southern province of Inhambane. It is the second well drilled by Sasol and the first well drilled in the same area gave negative results. The wells were drilled as part of Sasol's contractual obligations.

The INP statement said that Sasol will continue work to assess the scale of the new discovery, and its commercial viability. The well was drilled between 25 March and 5 April, and reached a depth of 1,934 metres.

The concession contract for research and production of hydrocarbons in the onshore area was signed on 17 October 2018. Sasol holds a participating interest of 70%, and Mozambique's publicly owned National Hydrocarbons Company ENH holds the remaining 30%.

Sasol has been operating in Mozambique since 2004, and operates the Pande and Temane onshore gas fields in Inhambane. It runs the gas



processing plant at Temane, from which gas is transported by pipeline to South Africa. Some of the gas is taken from the pipeline for industrial use in southern Mozambique, including the production of electricity.

The drilling does not stop here. Italian oil company ENI is preparing to deploy the first exploration well in an area off the coast of Angoche in

Nampula province. The West Capella drilling platform, owned by Aquadrill, and contracted by the concessionaires to prospect in the area, is already in Mozambicans waters and is about to reach the site of the research well.

This development follows the completion of a first assessment of petroleum potential in the concession area, an activity agreed with the government in December 2018. The well drill activity to investigate the presence of hydrocarbons in Tertiary turbiditic complexes was expected to start in April.

This is the first exploratory drilling in this part of the Mozambique Basin, which occupies both central and southern parts of the coastal plain of Mozambique and will greatly further the collection of geological information and the assessment of the region's petroleum potential.

gas projects

Mozambique already has natural gas reserves that are among the largest in the world, in the Rovuma basin in the north of the country and also has deposits under exploration in Inhambane province, in the south. The Rovuma project, led by Total, was the largest private investment in Africa until it was suspended in March 2021 due to terrorist attacks in Cabo Delgado – some claimed by the 'jihadist' group Islamic State.

Mozambique's President Filipe Nyusi has called on Western energy companies to resume work in Cabo Delgado Province, saying security has improved around the town of Palma. Addressing the 2023 Mozambique Gas & Energy Summit in Maputo at the end of April, Nyusi assured foreign investors the security situation in troubled northern Cabo Delgado Province had improved.

He said locals were returning to the town of Palma and other areas they



Oil giants reluctant to resume

had abandoned because of terrorist attacks. Nyusi urged Western energy companies to do the same. He said the success in combating the terrorists in the districts of Mocimboa da Praia and Palma improved stability since the attacks on the town of Palma.

“The working environment and security in northern Mozambique makes it possible for Total to resume its activities at any time,” he said.

In March 2021, France’s Total Energies halted exploration of a major gas field and a \$20bn plant in northern Mozambique after terrorist attacks.

In the same view with Nyusi’s speech, Australian mining company Syrah Resources, which exports graphite for electric car batteries from Balama district, recently said in a statement that the security environment in Cabo Delgado province has generally improved since 2022.

In March 2023, the French giant’s Italian subcontractor, Saipem,



announced preparations to resume work, saying it had been informed that «safety has improved.»

However, disagreements between TotalEnergies and its contractors over costs is a major obstacle for the resumption of the LNG project at Afungi, Total CEO Patrick Pouyanné told investors at the end of April. Some contractors are being “unreasonable”, according to Pouyanné, who said Total will not pay “undue costs” for the suspension of the project. He

insists that contractors can only return if they charge the same price as when the project was halted two years, and do not raise their prices.

Terrorists attacks continue

Although insurgents remain active in Cabo Delgado, clashes with security forces in the greater part of the province have subsided. Troops from Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community have helped retake towns from the

insurgents but have not been able to contain or end the fighting.

Villagers who had been returning to some areas of the province after earlier jihadist attacks have been forced to flee again. Meanwhile, the population of Palma district, in the far north of Cabo Delgado, where liquefied natural gas projects are planned, remains in an extremely precarious situation.

Islamist terrorists have been striking at the northern province of Cabo Delgado since October 2017. These raids have displaced over a million people from their homes, provoking a humanitarian crisis. Terrorism has spilled over the provincial boundaries, with occasional attacks in Niassa and Nampula.

While the attacks continue, the International Monetary Fund expects TotalEnergies to start producing LNG in 2027, with the neighbouring Area 4 project led by ExxonMobil to follow in 2029, according to an economist from the IMF’s African department, Thibault Lemaire.

Cameroon: Diplomatic Brawl Over Chad Oil Pipeline Deal

By Andrew Nsoseka



General Mahamat Deby of Chad was received by President Biya in March 2023.

Since April 20, 2023, diplomatic relations between Cameroon and its landlocked sister nation, Chad, have been at a record low, with Chad recalling its Ambassador to Cameroon as a sign of its biggest protest against Cameroon for refusing to align with Chad over the latter’s decision to object ExxonMobil’s sale of Chad oil pipeline shares to Savannah Energy PLC.

To transport its oil resources to the market, Chad, which is a landlocked country with no oil refinery in place, decided to strike a deal with international oil dealer, ExxonMobil and Cameroon to construct a pipeline. The Cameroon-Chad Pipeline was constructed, to transport crude oil from landlocked Chad to Kribi Seaport in Cameroon, from where it is collected and transported to various

buyers around the globe. The pipeline was constructed and run by COTCo, an affiliate of ExxonMobil. COTCo owns and operates 903 kilometres of Cameroon's section of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, as well as the Kribi I floating storage and other related facilities run under the deal in Cameroon.

Just a small portion of the pipeline is in Chadian territory. The shareholders were Chad, the owner of the oil, ExxonMobil the funder of the pipeline construction, and Cameroon, where most of the pipeline was to be constructed through, into the seaport, still in Cameroon.

Along the line, ExxonMobil decided to pull out of the deal. As such, in 2020, it decided to officially declare its intention to sell its shares in the deal. Then, the President of Chad was the late Idriss Deby Itno, father to the present military leader General Mahamat Deby, who took over after his father was killed on the frontline against rebels in April 2021. He now runs Chad as the Chairman of the Transitional Military Council.

Then, Chad had no objections and ExxonMobil announced that it was in talks with a British Company, Savanah Energy PLC, and Chad still had no objections. This went on till late Idriss Deby Itno died, and even under his son who unconstitutionally was made leader of the Military government set up in Chad after his father's death.

In May 2021 after the change in leadership following Idriss Deby's death, a meeting was organised with stakeholders of ExxonMobil and the Transitional Military Council in Chad. The meeting is said to have gone on well, with the new leadership accepting and endorsing the deal. It also had in attendance, stakeholders from Savanah Energy PLC, the new partner that was to take over ExxonMobil shares.

Later on, Chad started backing out of the deal, allegedly saying it preferred a different oil company to buy over shares of ExxonMobil. This however is said to have come only when ExxonMobil had sold its shares to Savanah Energy PLC. Rumour was



Ferdinand-Ngoh-Ngoh in suit was sent to Chad with a special message for General Mahamat Deby.

that a French company later became interested in taking over, but this was reportedly when ExxonMobil had pulled out, and the deal was done. Chad went on to vigorously oppose the coming in of Savanah Energy, though without clearly saying why.

Brawl With Cameroon For Going Ahead With Savanah Energy As Earlier Agreed

In its opposition to the coming in of Savanah Energy, Chad had expected Cameroon, its sister nation, and partner in the oil pipeline deal to support her in standing against Savanah Energy. This did not happen as Cameroon went on to recognise and work with Savanah Energy PLC. This angered Chad's leader, Mahamat Dedy who had expected some solidarity action against Savanah Energy PLC, from Cameroon. However, Chad was still hopeful that Cameroon might turn around and endorse her new stand.

On April 19, 2023, Cameroon went on, according to its local laws, to acquire shares in Savanah Energy PLC. According to Cameroon's domestic law, the Government owns part of every company that operates in the oil sector inside Cameroon's territory. Thus on April 19, Cameroon's National Hydrocarbons Company went ahead to sign a XAF

26 Billion deal that bequeathed 10 percent of Savanah Energy's affiliate, Savanah Midstream Investment Limited, SMIL created to run the Cameroon Oil Transporting Company S.A, COTCo deal, to the Cameroon government. Andrew Knolt, CEO of Savanah Energy signed the deal for his company, while Adolphe Moudiki, CEO of Cameroon's National Hydrocarbons Company signed on behalf of Cameroon.

This action sparked a diplomatic crisis, and on April 20, Chad's Military Leader recalled Chad's Ambassador to Cameroon in protest. This sparked a lot of reactions, with opposition leaders in Chad and Cameroon coming in to condemn their countries, in what seemed like a clout to gain some relevance even without understanding the whole story of what had transpired. As such it looked like a play to gain some relevance

On Wednesday, April 26, 2023, Cameroon dispatched its Secretary General at the Presidency, Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh to Chad, with a sealed message from President Paul Biya. After delivering the message and having an audience with Chad's Mahamat Deby, Ngoh Ngoh in a brief media outing tried to assure that things were fine and under control between the two countries. However,

it remains to be seen whether Chad will go ahead, and follow Cameroon in doing business with Savanah Energy, or whether Cameroon will back off and support Chad in getting a new partner for the project.

So far, the Central African Republic's President came to Cameroon at the end of April for what Cameroon's Presidency described as a working visit. However, many sources claim that the was coming in as the CEMAC leader, to talk with Cameroon's Biya, in order to mediate between the two leaders. The outcome of ongoing overt and covert talks to find a way out of the diplomatic brawl is still awaited by Chadian and Cameroonian nationals who have over the years seen their two countries collaborate on several projects.

If a peaceful outcome is not arrived at, the two countries will be in for a long brawl, given that as a landlocked country, Chad depends on Cameroon for several of its deals, including the importation and exportation of its projects that pass through the sea. Cameroon will also stand to lose a lot from the revenue it makes from Chad through its business deals and services rendered to Chadian nationals.

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Sub-Saharan Oil Producers are Building Momentum

In the AEC's newly released outlook report, "The State of African Energy Q1 2023," much of the remaining oil this year will come from sub-Saharan countries like Gabon, Chad, Congo, Ghana, and Equatorial Guinea

By NJ Ayuk*

Sub-Saharan countries are playing an increasingly prominent role in African oil production this year.

OPEC members Nigeria and Angola remain among the continent's top producers. In fact, they, along with Libya, Algeria, and Egypt, will account for 80% of African oil output in 2023.

But, as noted in the African Energy Chamber's (AEC's) newly released outlook report, "The State of African Energy Q1 2023," much of the remaining oil this year will come from sub-Saharan countries like Gabon, Chad, Congo, Ghana, and Equatorial Guinea. Let's examine recent oil industry developments in each of these countries in greater detail.

Gabon

Since the 1950s, oil exports from Gabon have accounted for a majority of the nation's GDP. After seeing a peak in 1996, a price crash in 2014, and a natural decline in production that collided with the widespread havoc that COVID-19 wreaked on the global oil sector, recent developments in the Gabonese oil market could potentially bring about the return of more prosperous times for the country's oil producers.

The unexpected oil market disruptions induced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and other economic shifts have inadvertently created new opportunities for Gabon, and a series of regulatory changes have revitalized foreign interest in the country's fossil fuel resources.

President Ali Bongo Ondimba's administration aligns with the AEC's position that Africa can simultaneously work to lessen the effects of climate change and transition to renewable energy sources while promoting economic growth through continued oil and gas development.



Gabon's efforts to protect its rainforests from deforestation and degradation were recognized when Gabon became the first African nation to receive payment from the UN's Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI). At the same time, Gabon sought to maintain its rank as the fifth largest sub-Saharan oil producer by opening new licensing rounds for shallow and deepwater drilling and reorganizing the Gabon Special Economic Zone (GSEZ), easing customs compliance and offering tax advantages to foreign investors. A new hydrocarbons code also

offers international oil companies better returns on exploration and production (E&P) investments made in Gabon.

Although Gabon's oil production failed to achieve its target rate of 220,000 barrels per day (bpd) by 2023, it did reach 200,000 bpd in April, a marked improvement over the 180,000 bpd rate noted in 2020.

While much of the work underway to raise this production rate comes in the form of mature or marginal oil field redevelopment led by Perenco and BW Energy, the region saw a total of 18 new appraisal and exploratory

wells drilled between 2022 and 2023.

If the Gabonese government continues its push to attract foreign investment and further offshore deepwater exploration, the country will remain on a promising path toward game-changing discovery and profitable development.

Chad

With 2022 oil production averaging 69,000 bpd into May, Chad saw an increase to an average of 92,000 bpd for the second half of that year, accompanied by PetroChad Mangara's (PCM) export of its first

barrel of oil to the Chad-Cameroon pipeline in July.

These developments came after Perenco's acquisition of PCM and with support from the Société des Hydrocarbures du Tchad (SHT) and Chad's newly appointed Minister of Petroleum and Energy, H.E. Djerassem le Bemadjiel.

Under the new minister's guidance, considering his background as a trained geologist, his experience working for the oilfield services company Schlumberger

Limited, the Djarmaya refinery, and as an adviser on oil inspection for President Idriss Deby, Chad's oil and gas sector stands ready to grow into a prosperous future in support of the national economy.

Landlocked Chad holds approximately 1.5 billion barrels of crude oil reserves and relies on pipelines for export. Chad recently signed on to a project to erect a network of three multinational pipeline systems linking 11 different countries to multiple refineries, storage depots, liquefied natural gas terminals, and gas-fired power plants. The project has an expected completion date in 2030 and should prove to reduce Chad's dependence on imports of refined petroleum products.

Going forward, the AEC recommends that Chad continues to seek foreign investment and public-private partnerships to develop its sizeable hydrocarbon and renewable resources with an aim toward reducing energy poverty and fostering economic growth.

Congo

As sub-Saharan Africa's third largest oil producer holding 2.9 billion barrels of proven reserves engaged in an offshore extraction rate of 336,000 bpd, The Republic of the Congo, or Congo Brazzaville, is always looking to scale up its output.



After improving the fiscal terms for operators and opening a total of 28 blocks in licensing rounds between 2015 and 2019, Congo has attracted numerous global energy majors, including TotalEnergies, Perenco, Chevron, Eni, and Lukoil.

As of April 2023, the Congo is nearing closure on a new production-sharing deal with Chevron and Angola's Sonangol EP concerning an offshore oil block shared by both countries.

Ghana

Ghana has become one of the most attractive prospects in the sub-Saharan region, having taken a highly engaged approach to securing financial backing for its numerous energy project proposals.

The Petroleum Commission of Ghana intends to increase E&P within the country's borders as it considers allocating new offshore blocks and conducts a review of operator fiscal terms to ensure they encourage the development of new global partnerships. By potentially offering a sliding taxation scale, on which ultra-deep wells would see the lowest tax rate, Ghana stands to position itself as a lucrative prospect for international oil companies looking to invest.

In addition to introducing plans for a \$150 million logistics hub in Ghana,

the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) also intends to begin drilling operations in the Voltaian Onshore Basin by early 2024.

Furthermore, AFC Equity Investment's recent takeover of Aker Energy's stake in the Deepwater Tano Cape Three Points (DWT/CTP) Block off Ghana's coast marks the start of redevelopment efforts for the ultra-deepwater Pecan oil field and its estimated reserves of 450 million barrels of oil equivalent (MMboe) to 550 MMboe, which have been on hold since the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020.

Ghana will showcase these various proposals at African Energy Week (AEW) 2023 in Cape Town from October 16-20, 2023, taking advantage of the industry's premiere conference for networking and investment opportunities.

Equatorial Guinea

In February 2023, the Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea signed three production-sharing contracts with Panoro Energy and the Africa Oil Corporation, starting a new chapter of exploration and production for the West African nation.

Block EG-01 went to Panoro Energy, fortifying its partnerships

with six other oil and gas wells in the neighboring Ceiba Field and Okume Complex. The block borders Block G, which holds more than one billion barrels of oil reserves.

The Africa Oil Corporation secured an 80% share in blocks EG-18 and EG-31, with GEPetrol holding the remaining 20% interest.

The following month, the Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons also approved a Plan of Development (POD) for the Venus discovery in Block P off Equatorial Guinea's coast. Along with partners VAALCO

and GEPetrol, Atlas Petroleum International Limited will begin drilling the first of two wells on the site in 2024, with an expectation of first oil in 2026. Upon completion of the \$310 million project, the developers anticipate that the Venus discovery will produce roughly 15,000 gross b/d of oil over a 25-year production lifespan.

These production-sharing contracts reflect Equatorial Guinea's positive movement toward advancing the country's oil and gas industry and adding a welcome boost to its economy.

While the whole of Africa deserves to benefit from its oil reserves to a much greater degree, progress is underway. Massive foreign investment and substantial infrastructure developments are necessary to realize Africa's full potential in the global oil economy. At the same time, we must recognize the contributions of these smaller, sub-Saharan producers who are doing their part to keep pace with the effort to achieve that greater goal.

For more information about our upcoming report, visit <https://EnergyChamber.org>.

*NJ Ayuk is Executive Chairman, of the African Energy Chamber

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Unlocking The Potential Of Intra-African Trade: The AfCFTA And South Africa



South Africa's fifth Investment Conference, the culmination of a five-year investment drive, just took place in mid-April at the Sandton Convention Centre. The goal of raising over R1.2 trillion (\$70bn) set by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018 was expected to be met.

This event was the most ambitious investment undertaking in democratic South Africa and involved the participation of major corporations

within the country, as well as interest from around the world, including members of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Middle East, Canada, Belgium, Turkey, China, Germany, and the Czech Republic, among other nations.

Moreover, attention was increasingly focused on the potential of the continent as a massive market and source of investment in the near future, as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) takes shape. The week following the

investment conference, the AfCFTA Secretariat and the Government of South Africa will host the AfCFTA Business Forum in Cape Town, billed as the continent's largest such event. This underscores South Africa's emphasis on the AfCFTA.

The private sector was the focus of the forum, with areas of interest including agro-processing, automotive, pharmaceuticals, transportation and logistics, and digital trade, which have been favored by investors in the past four editions

of the South African Investment Conference.

According to InvestSA, the main organizing body of the South Africa Investment Conferences, last year's event resulted in R367bn (\$21bn) of new investment commitments. This brings the country closer to its five-year investment target of R1.2 trillion (\$70bn), with R1.4 trillion (\$78bn) in commitments since the first conference in 2018.

Investment opportunities span across several sectors, including infrastructure development, healthcare, real estate, logistics, agri-processing, food and beverages, automotive, and creative and artistic industries. Additionally, electricity generation is a promising area of investment as South Africa aims to increase capacity to 6,800 MW within the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme and the Just Transition to Green Energy.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have been particularly devastating for small and medium-sized enterprises. This was exacerbated by the energy crisis and other external global shocks. Despite these challenges, South Africa has demonstrated resilience, thanks to its strong financial foundation,



President Ramaphosa addressing the South Africa Investment Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, on April 13. Photo courtesy.

which includes the continent's largest banks and most liquid stock market, a highly skilled and educated workforce, and effective management in its mining, automotive, pharmaceutical, and agri-processing sectors.

Investment Drive and Promising Opportunities

The prevailing opinion is that the worst is over for South Africa, and the country is once again poised to climb and reclaim its position as Africa's most successful economy in the coming years. During last year's conference, President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged the country's many challenges, stating, "I am not here to pretend that these challenges are not real," but he pledged to address them to the best of his ability. This honest acknowledgment of problems resonated with investors, and this year's commitments are expected to exceed the initial target of R1.2 trillion.

South Africa's sophisticated and advanced economy, as well as its commitment to developing and expanding its ITC and electronics sectors, positions it favorably to benefit from the constantly evolving technological revolution. As the world resumes travel, the country's well-developed and diverse tourism, hospitality, and conferencing sectors are poised for a significant revival. Additionally, the country's world-class hard and soft infrastructure makes it a preferred gateway to the rest of the continent for many multinationals.

The investment drive is a crucial component of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan announced in 2020. Many of the projects, particularly in infrastructure and power generation, will not only stimulate growth but also spread it into some of the most marginalized areas of the country, creating sustainable industries with high employment potential.

South Africa's Potential for Green Energy Amid Energy Crisis



The goal of raising over R1.2 trillion (\$70bn) set by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018 is in sight. Photo Courtesy.

South Africa's vast natural resource reserves, which include gold, iron ore, platinum, manganese, chromium, copper, uranium, titanium, and coal, make it a significant global source of essential industrial inputs. However, the country's inability to keep pace with the rapidly growing energy demand has prevented it from fully exploiting its potential.

However, even this energy crisis creates opportunities, and a plan is underway, with financial backing from several developed countries in Europe and the Americas, as well as the African Development Bank, to transition to greener energy. Norwegian company Scatec has committed to investing R16bn (\$900m) in a solar power plant located in the Northern Cape. InvestSA reports that Scatec will also allocate a portion of its pledge to the production of biogas, photovoltaic generation capacity, and lithium battery technology, which are expected to dominate South Africa's energy generation landscape.

In addition to renewable sources such as wind, solar, and biomass for power generation, the government places significant importance on hydrogen to help decarbonize the economy. The Hydrogen Society Roadmap is a coordinating framework that aims to facilitate the integration of hydrogen-related technologies across various sectors of the economy.

Major Commitments in Key Sectors Despite Challenges

Despite facing significant challenges, the IMF predicts that inflation peaked in 2022 and the path to full recovery has begun. The demand for commodities and mineral inputs is expected to increase, and major pledges towards mineral beneficiation have been made, including R12bn (\$670m) from Implats, R11bn from African Rainbow Minerals, R10bn from Anglo American, and R9bn from platinum miner Sibidelo. The automotive industry, one of South Africa's critical manufacturing hubs, has also made substantial commitments.

Ford pledged R16bn (\$900m), Tshwane Automotive R2bn, Africa Auto Group R550m, BMW R800m, Volkswagen R350m, Daimler Trucks & Buses Southern Africa R190m, Wheel Assemblers R180m, and Fromex Industries R102m. According to InvestSA, the investment drive in the automotive industry "is a catalyst for smaller industry players – predominantly black-owned – to announce ventures within the automotive supply chains, from tyres, to batteries, to components and assembly facilities."

Vodacom, South Africa's telecommunications giant, has committed R50bn (\$2.8bn) to its fixed and mobile networks over a five-year period. Planned reforms in this sector are expected to see the entry of

more players.

During the 2022 investment conference, President Ramaphosa expressed particular pleasure with the investment in the country's creative arts. "Our creative industries have been given a significant boost by multimillion rand investments in film and television production by the world's largest media companies like Warner Media and Netflix. After nearly 15 years in the making, the eThekweni Film Studio in KwaZulu-Natal will soon become a reality following a R7.5bn (\$420m) investment from Videovision Entertainment." Netflix pledged R929m, while Warner contributed R350 million.

Ramaphosa summed up one of the primary objectives of the investment drive, stating, "Over the last five years, some R32bn has been invested in nearly 800 black industrialists and entrepreneurs through funding initiatives within the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, with close to 120,000 jobs either saved or created."

The positive response to the fifth edition of the SAIC is a clear indication that the country's most significant and most innovative enterprises have renewed their faith in the potential of one of Africa's and the world's most extraordinary countries. The country is preparing for many more investment pledges, including around the intra-African trade opportunity.

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South Africa Says No to Starlink

By Prince Kurupati

Cutting off lines of communication is one strategy that authoritarian leaders use to advance their otherwise unscrupulous agendas. In the current Russia-Ukraine war, Russian President Vladimir Putin at one time tried to jam network communications in Ukraine to isolate the country. However, thanks to the ingenuity and innovativeness of Elon Musk and his Starlink internet technology, Putin's plan didn't work. Musk's Starlink has since spread to many countries across the globe as about 4,238 satellites have been launched in 80 blast-offs in the past few years.

Surprisingly though, South Africa, Elon Musk's country of origin hasn't yet embraced Starlink nor is it showing any signs of doing so in the immediate future. More puzzling is the fact that South Africa is one of the leading economic and industrial giants on the African continent hence many expected it to be the leading country in embracing Starlink. This is necessitated by the fact that Starlink thanks to its affordability and low latency technology would significantly aid development in the country.

Noting the missed opportunities that have passed by owing to South African authorities' reluctance to embrace Starlink, the main opposition party in the country Democratic Alliance (DA) through its MP Dianne Kohler Barnard asked Communications Minister Mondli Gungubele why South Africa has a "service date unknown at this time" tag when it comes to receiving Starlink internet when all its neighbouring countries, as well as most African nations, are expected to receive Starlink internet this year or next year.

In his response, the Communications Minister said that Starlink had not yet satisfied the



Starlink has not yet satisfied the regulatory requirements to enter as a service provider, says Communications Minister Mondli Gungubele.

regulatory requirements to enter as a service provider. The minister said "In order for Starlink to operate in South Africa, they require... Individual IECS/IECNS applicants or licensees to have a minimum 30% equity ownership held by persons from historically disadvantaged groups".

Additionally, the minister said they had not yet received any application from Starlink. «The authority (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, ICASA) has advised the minister that such applications have not been received from Starlink to date. It is, therefore, not true that the government is blocking the operation of Starlink in South Africa... Any interested party wishing to apply for a licence, including Starlink, may through appropriate channels, approach the authority with its application and comply with the prevailing legislation in the country.»

The response by the Communications Minister has led the DA and many South Africans to conclude that the country's authorities simply don't want Starlink to work in the country. As stated by MP Barnard, South

Africa's government's refusal to exempt Starlink from the strict entry requirements is a testament to how it wants to control the flow of information. "It is simply laughable that an international multibillion-dollar company must hand over at least 30% of its equity to the ANC government to operate a much-needed service within South Africa," MP Barnard said.

While the Telecommunications Act require telecommunication operators to have a BEE partner, MP Barnard said that the benefits derived from welcoming Starlink are much higher and more effective to the emancipation of ordinary citizens as compared to the trickle-down benefits that a black empowerment group will cede to marginalised South Africans. On this basis, the country ought to embrace Starlink.

Adding on MP Barnard's argument, the DA and other ordinary citizens say the impasse between Starlink and the South African government over the ceding of 30% shares to black empowerment groups shows how BEE legislation is stunting investment, holding back innovation, limiting business and inhibiting education in rural areas. They argue that availing

highly affordable high-speed internet (up to 500 megabytes per second) that won't go down even during the country's endless rolling blackouts does more to the empowerment of ordinary citizens mainly those in rural and remote areas than ceding shares to BEE groups which at times are prone to abuse by the elites and connected individuals.

Echoing the same sentiments, Adegunle Agbetiloye said the benefits derived from embracing Starlink are simply immeasurable. «In a world that is increasingly connected through technology, access to high-speed internet is essential for development

in the coming years. Starlink could help spur entrepreneurship and innovation in the country by providing high-speed internet. This could lead to the development of new businesses and industries, creating jobs and boosting the economy. Already, South Africa belongs to the top four African countries that receive the most funding in the tech ecosystem. The country could be more with adequate infrastructure," Agbetiloye said.

Moving into the future, MP Barnard said she will immediately write «to the Minister to amend these regulations (telecomms entry requirements) to remove the archaic, irrational and ridiculous hurdles to progress.» At the same time, she said with the help of her party the DA, she «will ask both Elon Musk's office and Space X to make an application to the ANC government to provide these services within South Africa and pressure the ANC into allowing our people to join the rest of the world online and not become the digital pariah of not only our continent but the rest of the world.»

Cameroon: Customers Take Aim At MTN and Orange Over Costly Services

By Andrew Nsoseka

Frustrations against poor network services coupled with what many Cameroonian celebrities and citizens describe as extortionist rates for internet and call services pushed many to engage in an online protest that finally forced the Cameroon government to take actions aimed at calling the service providers to order.

Over the years, Cameroonians have been groaning over poor telephone network services. From terrible call quality to painfully slow and epileptic internet services, Cameroonians have endured it all. This has dragged on for a while and with no service provider making any efforts to better their services, Cameroonians have had very little to rely on. With government regulatory services seemingly in complicity or slumber any complaint against such services has over the years not been given any listening ear.

This however changed when Cameroonian celebrities led an online protest codenamed "Airplane Mode". For several days, the celebrities led Cameroonians in to switch their phones to Airplane Mode every day from 12 PM to 2 PM as a way of protest. The protest was against the high cost, and the slow services provided. They also complained that internet services bought are often very slow, and end up expiring when they have not been used by the subscriber.

Celebrities who publicly refused to be part of the online protest had some negative impact on their fan base as many saw their followership dwindle. Such celebrities and social media influencers also received scathing criticisms for refusing to stand up



for positive change. Since the protest was launched, many took it as a tradition to announce online every day at 12 PM, that their phones will be on Airplane Mode and will only be turned on after 2 PM. Accompanying messages always called on friends and colleagues to only call after the two-hour protest has expired at 2 PM.

Many questioned how the concerned companies would be affected, but the aim seemed to have been to send a direct message, and not cripple any of the concerned companies, given that none of the companies was offering anything better than the other, and were almost seen as cooperating with each other when it came to the quality of services offered.

Cameroon's Ministry of Post and

Telecommunications, MINIPOSTEL off the services offered. One major decision taken during the emergency meeting was that users who fail to use their subscribed call and internet services due to poor network from the company will be reimbursed by the concerned company.

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications also stated that a timeframe had been set up for companies and their partners to step up the quality of their services and that there will be followed up to ensure that consumers receive quality services which they pay for.

Though a lot of reassurances were given by the Ministry after the emergency meetings, the companies concerned also tabled their own challenges faced. Issues like the quality of fibre optic provided and the numerous accidents and incidents were blamed on government agencies by the companies who said they

were helpless when it comes to some of such challenges.

Though a lot of assurances were given on both sides, Cameroonians still remain sceptical given that many resolutions of such or similar meetings are hardly followed to the letter as promised when the issues are still hot on the government's plate. Many too are a little optimistic given that this involves private companies and not much of the side of government and since it just has to bark orders to the companies, the government may actually follow up, especially as it was so speedy in summoning the companies to call them to order.

Telecommunications, MINIPOSTEL could no longer ignore the protest that was gaining traction. As such, on April 25, 2023, Cameroon's Minister of Post and Telecommunications, Libom Li Likeng summoned officials of MTN Cameroun as well as Orange Cameroon, the major players in the sector, to an emergency meeting at her ministry, to address the issue of consumers dissatisfaction with the quality of services offered by the two outfits. The Country's Telecommunications Regulatory Agency, best known by its acronym, ART was also part of the meeting.

At the end of the meeting with the two telecommunications companies in Cameroon, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications said engagements had been taken to better

A stylized map of New Jersey is the central focus, rendered in a vibrant green. The map is layered with various icons: three wind turbines of different sizes are positioned in the upper left; three solar panels are in the upper right; a black silhouette of a cargo ship is to the left of the map's center; and a black silhouette of a power plant with cooling towers is at the bottom. The title 'A JUST TRANSITION' is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the middle of the map. Below it, the subtitle 'MAKING ENERGY POVERTY HISTORY WITH AN ENERGY MIX' is written in smaller, bold, white capital letters. At the very bottom, the author's name 'NJ AYUK' is displayed in large, bold, black capital letters.

A JUST TRANSITION

MAKING ENERGY
POVERTY
HISTORY WITH
AN ENERGY
MIX

NJ AYUK

Kenya: Reeling From The Shakahola Massacre

By Samuel Ouma

Studies show that Africa is the most religious region globally, with several people practising traditional indigenous African religions, Christianity and Islam. Religion is highly regarded in the continent because it is believed to provide a sense of purpose, meaning, and community.

Religion also provides a framework for living a good life and treating others with respect and compassion. It further includes consolation and comfort through trying times, giving one a sense of assurance and hope in the face of difficulty. It can also act as a source of moral instruction and ethical standards.

Religion further contributes to forming cultural identity, fostering social cohesiveness, and uniting people via shared rituals and traditions that give them a feeling of purpose and belonging. Additionally, it influences how cultural values and beliefs are expressed through art, music, and literature. Furthermore, religion can inspire acts of charity and humanitarianism that advance social justice and assist the less fortunate. For instance, religious organisations frequently support communities through difficult times and fight for the rights and welfare of underrepresented groups.

However, religion has been and still is misused across the continent. There have been instances of religious leaders or organisations stealing money or property from people throughout Africa. For instance, some pastors have promised financial benefits or healing in exchange for alms or gifts. These guarantees might not hold true, and the money raised might be spent on selfish objectives instead of the intended ones.

Also, there have been instances of people posing as religious leaders or prophets and persuading people to pay them cash or valuables in exchange for blessings or spiritual services. These people could employ underhanded methods to prey on their victims' gullibility and



Investigators exhuming bodies at Shakahola Forest.

confidence.

Besides using religion by most pastors to defraud believers, cases of manipulation and control have also been reported. Most individuals have been brainwashed through guilt and terror. Threats of punishment or eternal hell are sometimes used by religious leaders to influence the actions and beliefs of their followers. As a result, people may feel compelled to follow the dictates of their religious leaders without question, leading to

the development of a culture of fear and shame.

Isolation and indoctrination are two other ways religion can be used to brainwash people. Some religious groups may choose to isolate themselves from mainstream society to control the information and beliefs that their followers are exposed to. Individuals may find it challenging to create their own thoughts and beliefs when they are only exposed to the teachings of their religious leaders.

The latest case is of a Kenyan pastor Paul Nthenge Mackenzie who forced his followers to starve to death to meet Jesus in the coastal area of Kilifi. Mackenzie, the founder of the Good News International Church, is said to have persuaded people to his views and engaged them in fasting, eventually encouraging them to starve themselves to get to heaven faster.

After the followers died, he allegedly buried them in a nearby forest known as Shakahola, which has since been declared the crime scene by the local authorities. So far, more than 100 bodies have been exhumed from the 800-acre forest land, with the majority being children. The search and rescue mission is ongoing, with reports indicating that more than 300 people associated with the cult church are still missing.

"Following the incident in Shakahola, Kilifi County where several followers of the Good News International religious sect have died, at least 360 people are still missing. Out of those reported to be missing, 198 are children," said the Kenya Red Cross Society.



Homicides transporting victims bodies from Shakahola.

The initial autopsies performed by the country's government Chief pathologist Johansen Oduor on ten bodies revealed that most of them died of malnutrition.

«Generally, most of them had features of starvation. We saw individuals who had no food in the stomach and the layer of fat was small in the stomach, but their liver was fatty, indicating starvation,» said pathologist Oduor.

Some died as a result of Asphyxiation, a condition in which the body lacks the necessary amount of oxygen, resulting in suffocation.

«Two of them had cyanosis- a bluish discoloration of fingernails and by inference, we can confirm that it was caused by asphyxiation,» added Oduor.

Kenyan police stormed the forest on April 14 after receiving information about the cult from residents and human rights activists who discovered that several people were going missing in the Malindi area.

He was arraigned in court on May 2 and charged with conducting dubious actions that have led to his followers fasting to death. He was released on the grounds of lack of sufficient evidence. However, the preacher was arrested immediately after his release.

Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary Kithure Kindiki proposed that Mackenzie be charged with terrorism and genocide at the International Criminal Court. Mackenzie's actions, according to Kindiki, amount to genocide, and the cleric should be taken before The Hague-based court to answer for his misdeeds.

«It is possible to charge him with genocide at the ICC. We are also pursuing his known associates,» reiterated Kindiki.

On his part, Kenya's President William Ruto compared the controversial

pastor to a terrorist who deserved to be imprisoned.

«Mr Mackenzie, who acts as a pastor, is in fact a terrible criminal. Terrorists use religion to advance their heinous acts. People like Mackenzie are using religion to do exactly the same thing,» said Ruto.

Also arrested in connection to the disturbing deaths is televangelist Ezekiel Oduor, an alleged ally of Mackenzie. Oduor, who pastors the New Life Prayer Centre in Malindi, the coastal part of the country, is accused of aiding and abetting the alleged crimes.

According to the police, several deaths have been reported on Ezekiel's premises, and some have been documented in morgues that may be related to him. His church was also closed to pave the way for investigations.

«We have closed down the prayer center moving forward. Whoever is in there has been cleared out. We will be giving you updates as we progress with investigations,» said the police.

Also closed are the television stations linked to the two controversial pastors by the Communication Authority of Kenya. According to the authority, World Evangelism TV, owned by Oduor, was found to have broadcast inappropriate exorcism content during the watershed period, as well as 12 other violations, whereas Mackenzie's Times TV is said to have aired inappropriate exorcism content and violated 17 other broadcasting license conditions.

«Following an extensive review of content aired by the two stations between January-April, 2023, the Authority established that the TV stations violated broadcasting

standards requirements and license conditions,» stated the Communication Authority of Kenya.

Reports indicate that Mackenzie had a criminal record dating back to 2017 when he was accused of radical teachings that saw students skip school, claiming education is ungodly. When he faced trial in 2018, he disputed the charges and was released on a Ksh500,000 (\$3672.4) bond.

On March 17, 2023, he was apprehended again after several of his members,

including two boys, allegedly fasted to death under his orders. He was released on Ksh10,000 (\$70).

Meanwhile, Kenya's Senate formed an 11-member committee to probe the role played by controversial pastor Mackenzie in the mysterious deaths of his followers. The committee will also determine the number and activity of religious leaders in the country and their registration and compliance status through the office of the Registrar of Societies.

It will also make further recommendations that will prevent religious organisations from indoctrinating their adherents to extremes, such as radicalisation and spiritual and financial exploitation.

«In the exercise of its oversight function, the Senate resolves to establish an ad-hoc committee to investigate the circumstances leading to the death of the followers of Good News Church,» Majority Whip Boni Khalwale noted.

Individuals must critically assess the doctrines and practices of their religious organisations and leaders and seek knowledge from a range of sources to create their own thoughts and convictions. People can be protected from being brainwashed or influenced by religious leaders through education and awareness.



Pastor Ezekiel Oduor (In white) in Police Custody.



Pastor Paul Mackenzie.

The African Union at 20

African perspectives on progress,
challenges and prospects



Edited by Wafula Okumu and Andrews Atta-Asamoah

Cameroon-Defying The Odds In Peace Building For Esther Omam

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Esther has negotiated humanitarian access into some of the most remote and dangerous pockets of the Anglophone Crisis and in 2019, she successfully persuaded key non-state armed group leaders to lift a three-year school ban. Despite threats, rumour-mongering, and kidnappings, Esther has remained steadfast in her commitment to humanitarian and peacebuilding work because in her words:

"This is a passion; you don't do it for money. You do it because you are interested in saving lives, causing change, and leading social healing so that the wounds, pain, and suffering of your people are relieved," she says.

"Women peacebuilders run to the problem when everyone else is running away," said ICAN's CEO and Founder, Sanam Naraghi Anderlini. This statement could not be truer of award-winning Cameroonian peacebuilder, Esther Omam. Esther's career has seen her go from development worker to humanitarian responder to mediator and peacebuilder, in the South-West region of Cameroon.

Pan African Visions Magazine caught up with Esther Omam who is the Executive Director of the NGO, Reach Out Cameroon, a member of the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth, MWC, and became a member of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership, WASL, in 2020. She sheds more light on her organization and ways the ongoing crisis in the North West and South West Regions can be resolved.

Tell us who Esther Omam is and what made you enter the humanitarian field.

Esther Omam: I am just an ordinary woman like any other woman. I do ordinary things for ordinary people. I am Njomo Esther Oma, the Executive Director of ReachOut Cameroon whose humble beginnings informed the path for



Esther Omam, Executive Director of the NGO, Reach Out Cameroon.

which I have chosen today. The many inequalities suffered by women which I also suffered, especially the girl child. The patriarchal nature of our society, where the boy is privileged over the woman, the levels of poverty which we went through, looking at the high levels of illiteracy and the bridge in communication between generations. All these made me get into the path of development and today, humanitarian and peace work.

Can we get an insight into what Reach Out Cameroon is all about?

Esther Omam: Reach Out is an accredited national NGO, whose humble beginnings started in 1996 and got its legal status in the year 2000. We work to support other privileged groups, issues of health, human rights governance, and wealth creation using a community-centred approach and advocacy.

How impactful has the organization been looking at the priority areas?

Esther Omam: It is not for us to say, it is for the ordinary people who have

been benefiting from our services to talk about the impact of our work. Reach Out so far has been able to cover all six divisions of the South West Region, carrying livelihood programs, health and closer to the people. We have been working in some of the remote communities, all of which the government's policy has little or no impact at all. We have been able to access some of those communities and rekindle hope and make them believe that we are there to complement the government's actions, for whatever we do, whatsoever CSOs do is to complement the government's actions. We have given voices to the women and the girl child. We have improved the girl child's education. Healthwise, we have worked with health centres trying to bring in innovative ways of handling tropical diseases, primarily, improving healthcare.

We have worked within the humanitarian context, bringing relief aid to internally displaced persons in the hubs where they were settled. Besides the humanitarian aid, we carry out trauma healing sessions, making them know that all is not lost,

there is hope. We have been ensuring that there is protection for all those abused in one way or the other in the area of gender-based violence. As a result, we have put in place a peace house with a brave space, that brave space is what we called a safe space where survivors of violence can come and get counselling, all the support they need to boost their morales before taking them back to the communities that they come from or new communities they want to settle.

We have helped Internally displaced persons get accommodation, especially those who were homeless and try to bridge the gap between them and the host communities, making sure that they understand the need for social cohesion and living together, preaching the message of non-violence in the various communities where we go to. We have been able to help more than 600 thousand internally displaced persons and other vulnerable persons will not be a lie because we have the data, we even had to empower other NGOs to be helping through us.

Besides humanitarian support, creating roads for other

humanitarians to get into the various communities as we did in the early beginning and today, we have so many NGOs, international organizations which came and rely on what we had as information data and they have implanted themselves well trying to help our communities to stabilize. We have caused engagement at local, regional, national and international levels, making partners and the international community know that we are a people who have their issues, and if they can help both the communities and the government address some of these issues, that will be good.

We have been trying to strengthen community systems and then we vulgarize that concept and I am happy that today, localization is very effective, many people are embracing it. We started it and tried to blow the trumpet for people to know that there is a need to localise if we want to stabilize our communities, this is what we have done. We have been able to economically empower internally displaced persons using our poverty graduation programs, and take their levels from where we met them initially to where they can start earning incomes.

Like any other venture, there are challenges. What are some that Reach Out has encountered in the course of carrying out or providing these services?

Esther Omam: You will agree with me that we cannot do all that we have achieved without having challenges. We have been working a lot to see that our communities stabilise and that our people are catered for and as a result of doing this, we find ourselves in a very highly polarized environment, where everybody thinks it is all about money, they should access it also through a competitive way by mudslinging, backstabbing. We have issues with ever-growing beneficiaries who need our support but with limited finance. We have the issue of the inaccessibility of the places we go to, our means of transportation get broken all the time and we find it difficult at times to get to the remoteness part because of that.



To resolve the conflict in the NW-SWRs, is not just to go and sit somewhere in Yaounde and start talking about it, it is to start talking to ourselves, Esther Omam says.

We have other communities that live in wetlands, to get to them you will have to use the maritime road which is not easy. We have issues of safety and security in terms of protection of our staff and ourselves. One of our cars was burnt down and our children and staff have been kidnapped on several occasions.

When we talk about challenges, we have communication issues, and the misconception of who humanitarians are, and why we do what we do and this at times also poses a threat to what we do. We have threats coming from left to right and we try to advertise and preempt some of these by putting out there a clear communication about who we are and who we represent and what we do.

Let us talk about the ongoing crisis in the North West and South West Regions. In 2018, you created the South West-North West Women's Taskforce, SNWOT to address the crisis. How has this effort fared?

Esther Omam: A lot has happened since the creation of SNWOT. It is in this same office that I invited four women to join me so that we can put in place the South West-North West Women's Taskforce following the vision which I had

about the ongoing conflict and the many deaths, kidnappings and pains that we caused them. We started the movement with women and it grew to become a voice to reckon with in the country and beyond and as a result many other networks have been born. These networks have been born because they want to also contribute to addressing this same issue, though in different ways but they follow the same purpose. The women's voices have contributed enormously in making the government realize its stance and the non-state armed groups also realized their stance making them understand that there is a need to build common grounds where we can sit and interact.

Women contributed a lot concerning the Major National Dialogue. The very first event of civilian action which was held was that of the women here in Buea and the North West. All that we asked for was the need to have an inclusive dialogue and we had the Major National Dialogue which was held in Yaounde. The Dialogue was held as a result of the women's call and if education is going back to normalcy today is because women worked a lot in the background to reverse the rate of solarization, which we had by meeting the government and non-

state armed group leaders and try to give them the women's position with regards to the pains that they were causing to our children. This has helped in increasing school attendance. You have communities which are stabilizing today as a result of women who are at the forefront of even building bridges of peace rather than violence. Remember that women were the first voices to be heard at the level of the UN Security Council through a person when my organization spoke about the humanitarian crisis in Cameroon.

You once carried out peacebuilding activities during the Bakassi conflict. How does this compare with the current crisis in the North West and South West Regions?

Esther Omam: There is no comparison to make but there are lessons to draw and learn on the approach to resolving the current crisis. Why I say there is no comparison is because the crisis in Bakassi was a conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon, these are two different countries and that is why all of us could pull our energy and support for our government because we considered Nigeria as the enemy who was coming to create havoc in

our country and we gave our all as an organization. The outcome of that work is seen today through the women who have become leaders in their communities, leading as mayors, some were senators, municipal councillors and female entrepreneurs as a result of that. This was a good lesson learnt and this informed us that this conflict is not between Cameroon and another country but it is Cameroon versus Cameroon, it is brothers within a country fighting each other.

This crisis is not a country versus another country, it is Cameroon as an entity with its citizens fighting each other, where there is complexity in resolving the conflict. If you look left is a brother, you look right is a brother, who do you support and who do you condemn? The only way is to draw lessons on what happened in Bakassi, bridge bridges of hatred, create common grounds for people to start talking and then strengthen community systems by reinforcing localization for better stability.

You have been distinguished with several awards, from the outstanding Humanitarian Peace Award, and Best Peace Advocate, listed in 2021 among Cameroonians who moved Mountains. How do these awards strengthen the work you do?

Esther Omam: When people get awards it should call for rejoicing. These awards should not be a source of rejoicing but a source of reminding us how far we have gone in addressing issues related to this crisis which has taken so many lives in our various communities, has made our communities bleed and has rendered vulnerable our people, making them lose the sense of belonging. There would not have been any awards if there was no conflict. It is a result

of our determination, and our commitment to say we contribute to ending this dirty war that has led our efforts are being recognized.

As a peacebuilder and negotiator, what will you promise as a means to solve the present crisis?

Esther Omam: We have so many things to do, peace is never achieved in a day, nor is it achieved through one solution as people think. Peace is a long road and a chain of actions which are interwoven and no one should try to separate one aspect within that connection. To achieve peace requires a chain of action, it is about taking actions and reflecting and going back to actions. It is about action, reflection and action and many initiatives have been going

on at community and local levels, national and international levels and we need as of these. We talk about inclusive dialogue, yes, there is a need for inclusive dialogue but it is not just about dialogue it is also about many other things. We have our communities which have been dislocated, who have lost cultural values and many others.

We need to reinstate that within the communities so that they can now see themselves in the mirror which they used to look at before as the owners of the land. There is lots of healing that needs to be carried out, there is a need for lots of community dialogue before even claiming to go to any dialogue at the national or international level. People are hurting, frustrated, in pain and devastated by all that has taken place. Let us retract a little bit,

think, come back and talk to one another. To resolve this conflict is not just to go and sit somewhere in Yaounde and start talking about it, it is to start talking to ourselves.

Cameroonians do not have the culture of talking to themselves; we must try to rekindle the hope of the people first before even talking about external solutions. external solutions are good but you go externally when you have tried all possible means within and it does not work. Have we tried when everybody is disgruntled in our families and communities? Have we carried out a perception index to know how the people feel, and what the people think about the saga? It is not just one particular aspect of solving the crisis. Every one of us at our local levels needs to build peace.

The solution to this crisis does not lie in the hands of the government nor the hands of the non-state armed groups. The solution lies in the hands of all of us. It is us against the I and this is what has made us to be at the point where we are today because people refused to look in the mirror and see beyond the mirror, people refused to see the voices of the unheard millions.

We all are the solution to this problem, the moment we start accepting that I am because you are, then we will start resolving this conflict.

What has been the hallmark of your career?

Esther Omam: I have contributed my little quota in stabilizing communities in this country and these two restive North West and South West Region. I have contributed my little quota in giving women voices and enforcing the women's peace and security agenda. I have contributed my little quota by making sure that people know the difference between credible civil society and non-governmental individuals.



Right to left, PAV Cameroon Correspondent with Estrher Omam, Executive Director of Reach Out Cameroon after an insightful interview.

Órama -South Africa, We Are Finally Here!

Exciting news as the board of Órama Corporate Services, your Pan African management company headquartered in Mauritius, is proud to announce the official launch of our new office and presence in the bustling city of Sandton, Johannesburg - South Africa. The decision to expand our operations to South Africa's economic powerhouse has enormous benefits both for the company and its clients at large.

This expansion presents an opportunity for growth and profitability. Sandton is one of the most prosperous areas in South Africa and accommodates several multinational conglomerates. This new office will provide Órama access to a wide range of potential clients and markets, thereby broadening our business portfolio. It gives us the opportunity to mitigate the potential risks associated with a stagnant market. It also sets in motion our long-term plans to expand into new markets and serve clients better.

"South Africa and Mauritius share a very special relationship from time immemorial and we are very excited about this great news as we have been planning and expecting this for a long time. We know the South African terrain and market very well as most of our team members visit on several occasions to service our clients amongst other purposes. Our office is also strategically located in the prime area in the heart of Sandton with close proximity to the Gautrain station, the Radisson Blu Gautrain Hotel and the Nelson Mandela Square which is amongst the safest areas and easily accessible to our clients and employees. South Africa has one of the busiest and developed international airports (O.R Tambo International airport) with great connectivity and serves as a major transit point for most of our clients who are traveling

to various jurisdictions and that enables clients connecting flights to easily and quickly stop over at our office to discuss business" ... says Keseena Chengadu, CEO of Órama Corporate Services.

Most importantly our clients will benefit from the expansion, both in terms of services and convenience. Sandton is a focal point for international business in Africa, and the launch of a new office creates a stronger local connection and enhances our relationship with domestic clients. It is an opportunity for clients to communicate with our professional's face to face rather than online or via mail. They will enjoy a more personalized experience while Órama can tailor its services more effectively to each client's individual needs.

In addition, the expansion to South Africa opens up a range of new opportunities for our clients, allowing them access to potentially lucrative new markets. Mauritius has always been the gateway to Africa and our presence on ground means clients who wish to expand operations in South Africa can also rely on us for first-hand experience on regulatory structures. A company that is managed in a country with an

excellent economic reputation and expanding into another prosperous territory immediately gains more credibility in those markets. This will provide clients with a broader reach and potentially bolster their future growth trajectories.

Furthermore, this allows Órama access to a larger pool of talents, which can lead to the incorporation of newer technologies and more experienced staff. Since Sandton is a hotspot for African trades and industries, the new office will allow the company to recruit diverse talents with extensive experience with knowledge of the African markets. This, in turn, is expected to lead to the development of new cutting-edge technologies and innovative solutions beneficial to our clients, setting the company apart from its competitors.

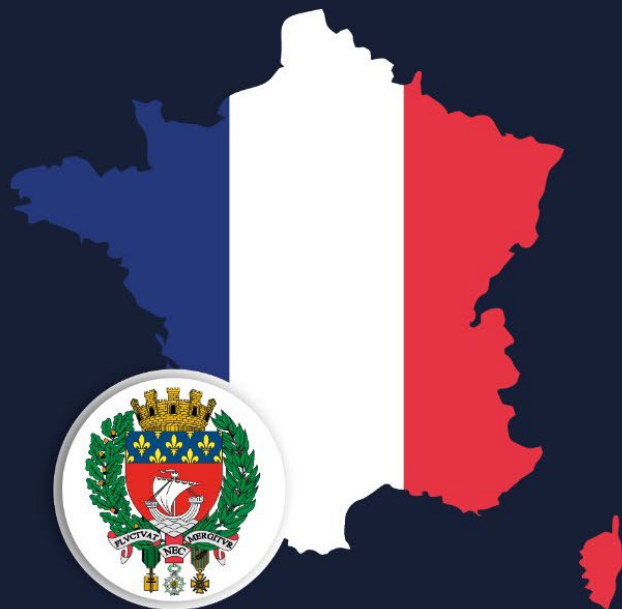
Órama Corporate Services (Órama) is a management company licenced by the financial service commission of Mauritius - the regulatory authority of corporate entities in Mauritius. Management Companies (MCs) are service providers which help businesses to grow internationally by using Mauritius as an efficient platform. - Órama has a strong Pan-African leadership accompanied with a vision

dedicated to helping businesses in Africa and take advantage of Africa's very own reputable International Financial Center- Mauritius. The island enables a sustainable business growth and efficiently, to different jurisdictions tax efficiently, courtesy of the Several double taxation avoidance treaties and Investor Protection Agreements that Mauritius has in place as well as the sophisticated tax regime, presence of internationally recognized financial institutions, strong banking infrastructure and its internationally compliant regime amongst others. These advantages enable investors in Africa to easily access capital and business support through a number of investment vehicles and regulatory policies conducive to thrive businesses.

Órama has a vision of how businesses should grow in the 21st century, and shares the belief that people, entrepreneurs and corporations are the tools the world needs to build true sustainability. We are working to build a free-trade continent that can regain its influence within global markets, and provide its entrepreneurs, companies and investors with the opportunities to thrive and shape a prosperous future.



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June 1st 2023

Kenneth Kaunda and the Genesis of the Decolonisation Process in Zimbabwe and South Africa

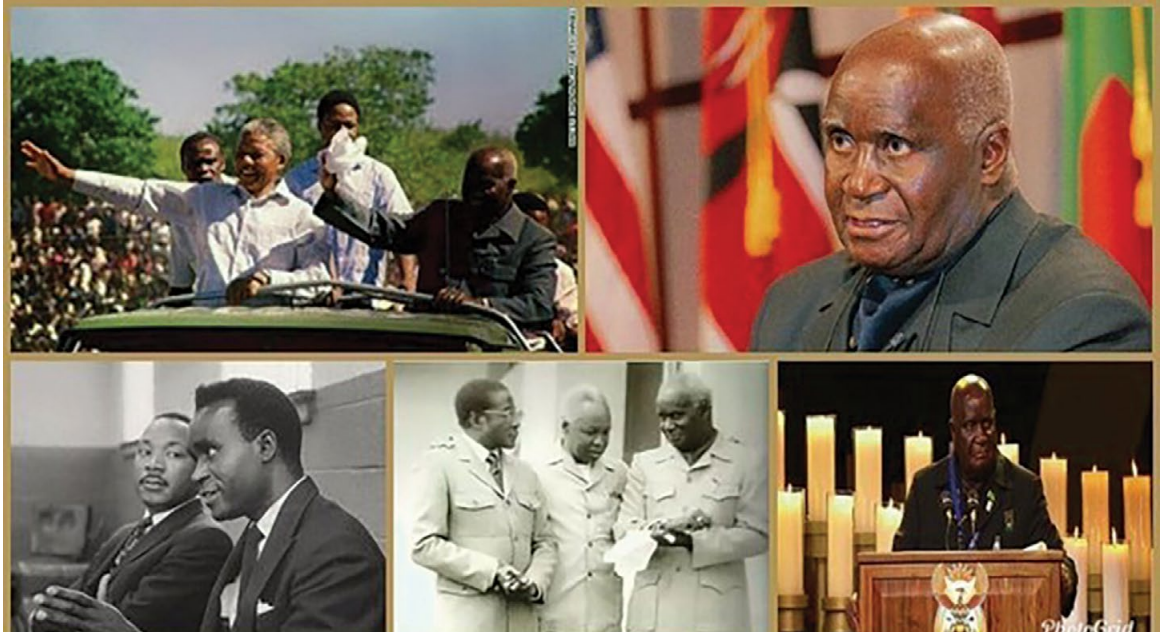
By Prince Kurupati

On 28 April 2023, Zambians from all walks of life remembered the country's founding father, Dr Kenneth Kaunda. Kaunda was the first president of post-colonial Zambia and also one of the very first presidents to relinquish power peacefully following elections. To celebrate these and many other achievements of Kaunda both in pre and post-colonial Zambia, prominent persons from Zambia, members of the diplomatic corps from all over the world and the general citizens gathered at the University of Zambia to celebrate the 99th birthday of Kenneth Kaunda National Day.

Delegate after delegate, Dr Kenneth Kaunda was showered with praises for the work he did for the country. His contribution during the liberation struggle, as the first president of the country and as a trusted counsel after relinquishing his post as president were all highlighted as huge contributions which have helped shape Zambia into what it is now.

However, a more telling and perhaps different perspective on Dr Kenneth Kaunda was shared by Rt. Revd. Dr. Musonda Trevor Selwyn Mwamba is the President of the United National Independence Party (UNIP). In his address, Dr Mwamba alluded to the fact that the end of white colonial rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa began in earnest at the Zambian State House in 1979.

Recollecting the events of 1979 when he was still a student at the University of Zambia, Dr Mwamba said that the year Zambia hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. In attendance at the meeting were several heads of state including the Queen who attended despite efforts by then



Zambia's founding President Kenneth Kaunda remains an iconic figure in the African independence struggle.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to dissuade her from doing so owing to security threats posed by ongoing liberation struggles in neighbouring Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Also in attendance was the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Sir Shridath Ramphal who in later life according to Dr Mwamba relayed how on Saturday, August 4 1979, Dr Kenneth Kaunda opted not to take a vacation on the weekend break day in the Commonwealth to Victoria Falls as did several other leaders. Rather, he and the President Nyerere of Tanzania and Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher, Malcolm Fraser of Australia, and Michael Manley of Jamaica stayed behind at the State House in Lusaka to discuss the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

To Sir Shridath, "The President's (Kenneth Kaunda) study 'retreat' had been carefully orchestrated. President Kaunda was superb; and so was everyone else." Dr Kaunda had deliberately decided to find personal time with the British Prime Minister

and other like-minded leaders to lobby the British government to end white colonial rule in Zambia's neighbouring countries.

The results of the study 'retreat' as Sir Shridath terms it were immense and positive. Dr Mwamba states that «At the end of the day they had an Accord that led to the Lancaster House Conference and Zimbabwe's Independence – which in turn led to Mandela's freedom, the end of apartheid and the Independence of South Africa. It was all conceived on that Saturday in the small study in State House.»

Looking at how things unfolded in Zimbabwe and South Africa soon after the 1979 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Dr Mwamba's recollection of the events in 1979 does hold water. In Zimbabwe, the leaders of liberation movements Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo, Abel Muzorewa and then-leader Ian Smith all agreed to come to the round table with the British government at now what is affectionately dubbed the Lancaster House talks. The Lancaster House talks paved the way for the

first elections in Zimbabwe which catapulted Robert Mugabe to the position of Prime Minister (and later President). It is also the Lancaster House talks which necessitated the fall of the Union Jack on 18 April 1980 hence signifying the independence of Zimbabwe.

Though South Africa did not attain its independence as soon as 1980 like Zimbabwe did following Dr Kenneth Kaunda's 1979 study 'retreat' at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, its path to freedom became much more pronounced. This of course necessitated by the release of Nelson Mandela from prison on 11 February 1990 after 27 years behind bars. Subsequently was the fall of Apartheid and then the country's independence in 1994.

In his concluding remarks, Dr Mwamba aptly described and honoured Dr Kaunda saying «President Kaunda's life was informed by values, the values of love, of justice, of peace; so his legacy is assured because his life embodied the values of the golden rule».

To this day, it's the values first laid

out by Dr Kaunda which guide Zambia both in her domestic and foreign policies. The values of peacemaking, love and unity. In his country, Dr Kaunda demonstrated these values. In the Southern African region, Dr Kaunda's role in the decolonisation process demonstrates these values. On the African continent in general, Dr Kaunda's strong pan-Africanism commitments demonstrate these values. In the world at large, Dr Kaunda's role in the Non-Aligned Movement are a testament to these values. It's for this reason that Zambia since independence up to this day maintain one position which is, « Zambia will maintain friendly relations with all countries not hostile to her, irrespective of their political ideologies».



Bishop Trevor Mwamba believes it is critical for Zambians to emulate the kind of integrity that graced the life of late President Kenneth Kaunda

The Real Benefits of the Iconic Mauritius Global Business Company to African Businesses

By Michael Adjei*

Mauritius has become the go-to location for businesses in Africa looking to establish their presence in the global market. The Global Business Company (GBC) framework was introduced in Mauritius in 1992 and has proved to be a significant advantage for African businesses locating themselves in Mauritius. Despite its small size, the paradise nation has managed to develop a thriving offshore financial centre. The benefits of GBC's are not only limited to Mauritius, but also extend to other African businesses.

One of the key components of the Mauritius International Financial Centre is the famous Global Business Company (GBC). The GBC is a legal entity established under Mauritian law that allows foreign companies to set up business operations in Mauritius and take advantage of the country's favourable tax and regulatory environment as well as its several multilateral treaties. Over the past decade, the GBC has become an increasingly popular option for African businesses looking to expand their international operations. In



this article, we will explore the real benefits that the GBC framework provides to African businesses.

The GBC framework in Mauritius offers a wide range of structural and financial benefits to businesses. One of the significant benefits includes tax incentives. Mauritius offers a favourable tax environment to businesses which are comparatively lower than other tax jurisdictions,

providing a competitive advantage to businesses. GBC's are subject to a low corporate tax rate of 15%, with no capital gains or withholding tax on dividends. This has attracted both local and foreign investors looking to set up headquarters or regional offices in Mauritius. The tax benefits have a direct impact on profitability and ultimately lead to increased revenue for businesses operating

from Mauritius.

Additionally, investors benefit from the country's Double Taxation Agreements (DTA's) that the government has entered into with over 45 countries, including most African nations. The DTA's ensure that investors are not taxed twice on the same income therefore, companies operating in Mauritius can avoid paying taxes on their profits

twice – both in Mauritius and in their home country. This advantage makes Mauritius an attractive location for African businesses looking to expand their international footprint. Additionally, Mauritius does not have any capital gains tax, which makes it an attractive location for investment activities. These tax benefits have been a major draw for African businesses, many of which are looking to optimize their tax structures.

Another advantage of the GBC in Mauritius is the country's regulatory environment. The Mauritius Financial Services Commission regulates the GBC, ensuring that it operates in a fair and transparent manner. The Commission also provides oversight for other aspects of the financial center, including banking and insurance services. This regulatory oversight has helped to build confidence in the system and attract a steady stream of foreign investment.

The GBC in Mauritius also provides a convenient gateway for African businesses looking to access international markets and vice versa, making it an important gateway for

trade and investment. The country has strong economic and cultural ties with Asia, particularly India and China. Companies operating in Mauritius can take advantage of these relationships to expand their reach into new markets. For example, an African company with operations in Mauritius can use the GBC to establish a presence in India, which has a rapidly growing consumer market. This kind of expansion can help African businesses to diversify their revenue streams and reduce their reliance on domestic markets and vice versa. This has made Mauritius an attractive destination for multinational corporations looking for a base to expand their operations in Africa.

One example of a business benefiting from setting up a GBC in Mauritius is African Infrastructure Investment Managers (AIIM). AIIM is a subsidiary of Old Mutual Investment Group and is one of Africa's leading infrastructure fund managers. In 2018, AIIM set up a GBC in Mauritius to act as the fund manager for its third infrastructure fund. The GBC provided AIIM with

a tax-efficient structure and access to Mauritius' extensive network of double taxation treaties. This has allowed AIIM to raise capital from a range of investors across the globe and ultimately invest in much-needed infrastructure projects in Africa.

The GBC framework is one of the most flexible legal frameworks in the world, giving companies the freedom to tailor their business structure to their unique requirements. As a result, businesses can adopt hybrid structures and combine the benefits of onshore and offshore structures.

One of the main reasons behind the growing popularity of the GBC in Mauritius for African businesses is the ease of doing business in Mauritius. According to latest reports, Mauritius has been ranked 13th out of 190 countries globally for ease of doing business and Number 1 in Africa by the World Bank in 2020, indicating the business-friendly environment while demonstrating the government's commitment to creating an attractive and business-friendly environment for foreign investors. Additionally, the country has excellent infrastructure supporting businesses, including a

well-established legal, banking and accounting system, stable political environment, and skilled labour force.

African businesses in Mauritius are also benefiting from the country's strategic location. Situated between Asia and Africa, Mauritius provides businesses with a gateway to the fast-growing Asian market. The country's time zone also allows businesses to operate efficiently in both Africa, Asia and the rest of the world.

The number of GBCs in Mauritius has been growing steadily, with over 12,000 GBCs registered in the country as of 2020. Furthermore, the volume of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Mauritius has been increasing over the years, with the country being the third-largest investor in India. In 2021, Mauritius received FDI inflows worth \$375 million, a testament to the country's attractiveness for global businesses.

To learn more about Mauritius, contact Órama Corporate Services for more information.

* Michael Adjei is International Business Development Executive at Órama.

Zimbabwe: Matters Arising From Gold Mafia Documentary

By Prince Kurupati

2021 global gold export and import stats state that Switzerland was the world's largest exporter of gold. Switzerland pocketed nearly \$87 billion in gold revenue. Following behind were the UAE, the US and the UK. Juxtapositioning the gold export and import stats with gold production stats, Switzerland, the UAE, the US and the UK rank among the lowest producers of gold. This, therefore, begs the question, how come there is a big discrepancy between gold production and earned revenue from gold exports? An answer to this – maybe just partly – can be denoted from the recently released Gold Mafia documentary by leading global media house Al Jazeera.



For the past three years, Al Jazeera's in-house investigative unit undertook an undercover operation into Zimbabwean gold. The results of

the operation were released via a four-part documentary titled Zimbabwe's Gold Mafia. All four episodes of the Gold Mafia documentary were aired

on the Al Jazeera English channel as well as on Al Jazeera's official YouTube page.

Posing as investors looking

to partake in Zimbabwean gold dealings albeit fraudulently as the main objective was to launder dirty money, the Al Jazeera investigative unit approached top officials from the Zimbabwean government including the Presidential Envoy and Ambassador At Large for the country of Zimbabwe to Europe and the Americas, Uebert Angel. From the deliberations with the officials, a lot of dirt was unravelled.

In his response to the undercover «investors», Uebert Angel stated that moving money and smuggling gold was not a big issue. Thanks to his elevated status in government and as a member of the diplomatic community, he can pass many borders and obstacles without any troubles. Angel was also forthcoming with info on other partners that help smuggle gold and move money around the globe with ease, particularly from Africa to the Middle East - UAE to be specific.

Responses from Angel and other interviewed personnel in the documentary showed that much of Zimbabwean gold is being exported by launderers. The proceeds, instead of finding a way to government coffers, end up in the personal accounts of launderers. This trade model has made many unscrupulous individuals multi-millionaires at the detriment of millions of Zimbabweans whose lives could significantly be impacted positively if the gold was sold as per expected standards and the returns channeled towards good causes.

Two of the launderers who spoke with the Al Jazeera undercover investors said that their preferred destination for Zimbabwean gold is Dubai. «It all comes out of Dubai. It's all Dubai, Dubai, Dubai, Dubai,» Ewan Macmillan, one of the launderers said. Macmillan said once the gold reaches Dubai, it's refined and rebranded as Dubai gold.

The Gold Mafia documentary substantiates Zimbabwe's persistent low ranking on corruption indexes and the like. In 2022, Transparency International scored Zimbabwe 23 out of 100 on its Corruption



Current sanctions are making it difficult for Zimbabwe to sell her gold legally hence the use of alternative third parties ,says government spokesperson Nick Mangwana.

Perception Index. This in essence proves the prevalence of endemic corruption in the country.

In its response to the Gold Mafia documentary, Transparency International said there is an urgent need to combat corruption in Zimbabwe as «the documentary exposes incidences of alleged under-invoicing and under-declarations by registered gold dealers to Fidelity Printers and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, alleging even higher losses than previously assumed. This reduces the country's ability to build critical infrastructure and support the needs of the population or respond to urgent challenges.»

A multi-sectoral and cross-border intervention is needed if the corruption exposed by the documentary is to be combated according to Transparency International. This is necessitated by the fact that the documentary exposed how the money laundering and gold smuggling gangs legitimise their operations by opening shelf companies in secretive jurisdictions.

Content from the documentary has angered many Zimbabweans. Instead of the country's gold being exported per set standards in the process helping the country gain much-needed revenue to address issues of

great concern to the general citizenry, it's only the elite and connected who continue to prosper and live large in a sea of poverty. An outraged vendor who spoke to Al Jazeera reporters after the airing of the documentary said, «When we were growing up, we were told of how the colonial regime of Cecil John Rhodes to Ian Smith looted our country's resources and externalised them to the United Kingdom. Now, we are witnessing the same process save for the fact that this is being done by our elected Black leaders.»

Soon after the airing of the documentary, Zimbabwe government spokesperson Nick Mangwana said the current sanctions imposed on the country are making it difficult for Zimbabwe to sell her gold legally hence the use of alternative third parties. «Countries under sanctions have to find ways of circumventing the sanctions... This may mean having to procure supplies through third parties or sell in a grey market,» Mangwana said.

The spokesperson for the ruling party Zanu (PF) was also bullish saying, «The country's detractors, who coalesced around George Soros and his Open Society Institute of Southern Africa are clearly miffed and

terribly disappointed that Zimbabwe has reverted to and resurrected gold as the reference anchor of the US Dollar.»

The government of Zimbabwe has since climbed down on its bullish response. Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said that the government takes all allegations of money laundering and gold smuggling seriously. «Government takes note of a documentary titled Gold Mafia, currently being serialised by an international broadcasting channel which purports to expose a network of alleged money laundering and gold smuggling in Zimbabwe... «Government takes the allegations raised in the document seriously and has directed relevant organs to institute investigations into the issues raised therein. Any person found to have engaged in acts of corruption, fraud or any form of crime, will face the full wrath of the law.»

Afterwards, the government through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Financial Intelligence Unit froze the Zimbabwean accounts of several individuals implicated in the documentary pending further investigations.



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Mugabe's Widow Docked In Diamond Smuggling

By Prince Kurupati

A documentary done by Al Jazeera's investigative unit as part of its undercover operation into Zimbabwean gold has unearthed a can of worms. Several top officials have been implicated in gold smuggling and money laundering. However, in a surprise revelation, the widow of Zimbabwe's one-time leader Robert Mugabe was fingered as a key participant in some of the vices. Most surprisingly, the revelations state that Mugabe's widow Grace did her deeds without the knowledge of her husband.

While narrating his part in the smuggling of goods through Zimbabwe's main airport Robert Gabriel Mugabe Airport, Cleopas Chidodo who is CAAZ security manager (Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe) said that he has helped many people move goods illegally through the airport. One of these is the former First Lady Grace Mugabe.

Explaining the security protocol at Zimbabwe's port of entry/exit, Chidodo said the First Family, as well as the First Family's entourage, are exempt from security checks. He said that this is laid out in the Airport Security Program (ASP) which states that anyone designated as a VVIP are exempt from searches. Foreign as well as local diplomats (those holding diplomatic passports) are also considered VVIP.

Owing to their elevated status, Chidodo said oftentimes, "There will be guys from the president's office. They come and they say they want to talk to the supervisor. I'm called then they say 'My friend, we are from the first family. Don't worry about the ... So, there is nothing you can do. Oh, very often, very often.'"

The most smuggled goods by Grace Mugabe were ivory and diamonds. «She wanted to take things out and Mugabe did not know. They would go out there and kill elephants and stuff like that, poachers. And then they would prepare the ivory... If the ivory came, and the supervisor is asking some questions the people will say 'it's for the first family' and no one will ask.»



The documentary paints former First Lady Grace Mugabe as a culprit in dubious practices.

When it comes to diamonds, Chidodo said Grace largely used them for money laundering purposes. «If he is travelling with his family then the president and his family are not searched. Then they select some nice diamonds to put in the plane. The plane will go there and take diamonds, come to the airport and it goes straight to Dubai... No papers, so they were making money, Grace, yes Grace Mugabe. It comes (the plane) to the airport and then they say this plane is for the first family. You see, so they made a lot of money," Chidodo said.

After the revelations exposed by the Al Jazeera documentary, several individuals including the Zimbabwe government spokesperson Nick Mangwana tried in vain to calm and divert attention from the exposed shenanigans saying the country had to look for alternative ways of exporting its products owing to sanctions placed on the country. Mangwana said Zimbabwe was finding it hard to sell its gold on the international market legally. The same applies to ivory exports as Zimbabwe is banned by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) from selling its ivory and has so far accumulated huge stocks of ivory.

Though the government spokesperson tried to defend the allegations of smuggling and money laundering activities exposed in the Gold Mafia as nothing but a strategy to circumvent trade and export embargoes, many Zimbabweans who expressed their views on social media platforms said if willing, the government could have taken steps to establish trade relationships with foreign parties legally other than to leave connected individuals take the onus and enrich themselves by taking control of the country's resources.

Masimba John Manyanya an independent economist weighed in saying that the utterances of circumventing trade embargoes as espoused by the government spokesperson are erroneous. Rather, the main problem facing the country as evidenced by the Al Jazeera documentary is corruption. «We can't blame sanctions when the biggest sanction we have is corruption by those in power. Zimbabwe is losing over a billion US dollars every month due to these illicit financial flows if we are to go by what the government is saying. Former President Mugabe said that US\$15 billion from diamond proceeds cannot be accounted for

up to this day yet we want to blame sanctions for economic problems of our own making," Manyanya said.

The government has since climbed down on its earlier bullish response to the Al Jazeera expose. Addressing a press conference, Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said that the government takes all allegations of money laundering and gold smuggling seriously. "Government takes note of a documentary titled Gold Mafia, currently being serialised by an international broadcasting channel which purports to expose a network of alleged money laundering and gold smuggling in Zimbabwe... "Government takes the allegations raised in the document seriously and has directed relevant organs to institute investigations into the issues raised therein. Any person found to have engaged in acts of corruption, fraud or any form of crime, will face the full wrath of the law."

It's yet to be seen however how the Zimbabwean government will respond to the security breaches at the main ports of entry that have necessitated unscrupulous individuals to smuggle the country's precious resources.

Time to Clarify What African Leaders Want from Russia

By Kestér Kenn Klomegâh



Russian President Putin with African leaders .Photo courtesy.

From various interpretations, Russia is taking advantage of the past Soviet-era connections, Africa's growing dissatisfaction and disappointment with the Western world, but its economic influence remains marginal compared to other key foreign players. Despite the fact that Western and European are experiencing falling influence, they are still far ahead of Russia, especially considering its global status. China is the main player in the continent.

Russia has sought to convince African leaders, the elites and the middle class over the past years of the likely dangers of neocolonial tendencies perpetrated by the former colonial masters and the scramble for resources on the continent. Obviously, Russia has taken the most difficult task, reminiscent of the Cold War, particularly in the 1980s when East-West confrontation reached its heights leading finally to the collapse of Soviet in 1991.

Some international and African experts and even political leaders

seriously argue that the best way to fight neocolonialism is to invest in order to jostle for economic influence. Russia has highly criticized foreign players, including the United States and European Union members. On the other side, Moscow believes that it is open to cooperation with everyone for mutual benefit, while it seemingly deepens differences there, which threatens African unity.

In practical terms, Russia's policy largely has numerous setbacks and potholes, but officials have now began acknowledging them step by step. The most common attitude is too loud noise on its dream, characterized by anti-Western confrontations, of return to Africa. Results from policy initiatives are relatively little, invisible across Africa. Russia's approach brings only little concrete results relating to badly needed economic development and its African partners.

Nevertheless, trying to understand whether Russia is a developing development-oriented policy towards Africa, it simply necessary to list

development projects that it has undertaken and completed since Soviet collapse. Russia hoped to be part of Europe, and develop trade from Lisbon to Vladivostok, that has been the popular post-Soviet dream. It has even reflected in foreign travels within the spectrum of its population. Moscow today is still not a popular destination for Africa's 380 million middle class.

The first such summit was held in Sochi from October 2019 under the motto "For Peace, Security and Development" which attracted a large number of African representatives. As Russia prepares to strengthen its overall corporate economic profile during the next African leaders summit in July 2023, many Russian policy experts are questioning bilateral agreements that were signed, many of them largely remained unimplemented, with various African countries.

At the prestigious Moscow-based Institute for African Studies, well-experienced policy researchers such

as Professors Vladimir Shubin and Alexandra Arkhangelskaya have argued that Russia needs to be more strategic in aligning its interests and be more proactive with instruments and mechanisms in promoting economic cooperation in order to reap the benefits of a fully-fledged partnership.

"The most significant positive sign is that Russia has moved away from its low-key strategy to vigorous relations, and authorities are seriously showing readiness to compete with other foreign players. But, Russia needs to find a strategy that really reflects the practical interests of Russian business and African development needs," said Arkhangelskaya, who is also a Senior Lecturer at the Moscow High School of Economics.

Currently, the signs for Russia-African relations are impressive – declarations of intentions have been made, a lot of important bilateral agreements signed – now it remains to be seen how these intentions and

agreements entered into these years will be implemented in practice, she pointed out in an interview.

The revival of Russia-African relations have to be enhanced in all fields. Obstacles to the broadening of Russia-African relations have to be addressed more vigorously. These include, in particular, the lack of knowledge or information in Russia about the situation in Africa, and vice versa, suggested Arkhangelskaya.

It plans to hold the next African leaders summit in July, despite the fact that it has not implemented already signed 92 bilateral agreements and largely not delivered on its words concerning engagement in various economic sectors in African countries. There have been several development-oriented initiatives over these years, without tangible results. Over the years, attempts have been made to understand Russia's financial capabilities and inconsistent approach in implementing bilateral policy projects in Africa.

As expected, these weaknesses were compiled and incorporated in the Situation Analytical Report by 25 policy researchers headed Professor Sergey Karaganov, Faculty Dean at the Moscow's High School of Economics. This 150-page report was presented in November 2021, which offers new directions and recommendations for improving policy methods and approaches with Africa.

Another policy report titled 'Ways to Increase the Efficiency of Russia's African Strategy under the Crisis of the Existing World Order' co-authored by Professors Irina O. Abramova and Leonid L. Fituni castigated or reprimanded authorities who are squeezed between illusions and realities with

policy ambitions in Africa. Against the backdrop of geopolitical changes and great power competition, Russian authorities really need to have an insight understanding into the practical investment and economic possibilities in the continent.

The authors said that "it is time for Russia, which over the past 30 years has unsuccessfully sought to become part of the West, to abandon illusions and reconsider its foreign economic and foreign policy strategy, reorienting itself to states that are turning from outsiders into significant players in the international political and economic space and are willing to interact with our country on a mutually beneficial and equal basis."

In addition, the report underlined the fact that the Russian elite demonstrates a somewhat arrogant attitude towards Africa. High-ranking officials have often used the phrase 'We (that is, Russia) are not Africa' to oppose attempts to change the status quo, to change approach towards Africa. Despite the thoughtless imposition of the idea of Africa as the most backward and problematic region of the world in Russian public opinion, qualified Africanists, including Western experts, call Africa the continent of the 21st century, attributing this to the stable growth rates of the African economy over the past 20 years and the colossal resource and human potential of the African region.

The report acknowledges the fact that African countries consider Russia as a reliable economic partner, and it is necessary interacting with African public and private businesses on a mutually beneficial basis. In this regard, Russian initiatives should support by real steps and not be

limited to verbal declarations about the "return of Russia to Africa" especially after Sochi gathering which was described very symbolic.

The authors, however warned that failure on Russian side to show financial commitment, African leaders and the elites from the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone will still be loyal and inseparably linked by nostalgic post-colonial master relationship. And relates to furtherance of economic investment and development, education and training – all to be controlled by the former colonial powers, as African leaders choose development partners with funds to invest in the economy.

In the wake of changing conditions and challenges in Africa, foreign partners are constantly reviewing their economic prospects and robustly investing in order tackle long-term sustainable development goals, while African countries are making their choices based on their development needs. The result is that observers and opinion-makers struggle to understand the nitty-gritty of who is playing at what, where and how.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has severally reminded that the African direction is one of Russia's priorities, and further praised Africa for its contribution to the development of a fairer and more democratic polycentric (multipolar) world order and to the settlement of current problems. "Russia actively contributed to the independence of African countries and the development and strengthening of their states. Today, we maintain friendly relations that are spearheaded into the future," he noted.

On taking partnership with Africa

to a new level, he unreservedly said: "African countries play a prominent role in international affairs and take an active position in solving topical issues of modern world politics and economics. Progress in the economic and social spheres, improving the quality of life on the African continent contributes to this."

In his view, "this new stage and this new quality of relations should be based on common values, support for values of justice, equality and respect for the rights of nations to independently choose their future. It is within this framework that Russia continues to coordinate positions at international platforms and makes joint efforts in the interests of stability on the African continent.

Unlike Western countries, European Union members and Asian countries which focus particularly on what they wanted to achieve with Africa, Russia places anti-colonial fight at the core of its policy. In short, Russia knows what it wants from the continent: access to markets, political support and general influence. Now it is time for African leaders to clarify what it wants from Russia in return, in the lead-up to the July 2023 Russia-Africa summit

Russia-African relations are based on long-standing traditions of friendship and solidarity created when the Soviet Union supported the struggle of the peoples of Africa against colonialism, racism, and apartheid, protected their independence and sovereignty, and helped establish statehood, and built the foundations of the national economy, according to historical archival documents.

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Tanzania-Windfall From Samia's Royal Tour Film

By Prosper Makene

Just one year after Tanzania President Samia Suluhu Hassan launched a historical documentary called 'The Royal Tour', exposing the beauty and tourist destinations of Tanzania, the country has seen a sharp increase in tourist arrivals. The East African country recorded a total of 1.4 million tourists between January and December 2022. The figures mark a 57.7 per cent increase when compared to the 620,000 tourist arrivals of the year prior to the launch of the film.

The Royal Tour film premiered first in New York on April 18th, 2022, and in Los Angeles on April 21st, 2022. The Royal Tour has since been unveiled at various cities in Tanzania, including Arusha, Dar Es Salaam, and Zanzibar.

As the tourism arrival stats have more than surpassed the initial projections, tourism authorities in the country have heralded President Hassan for starring in the documentary as the main character. Thanks to her role in the film, President Hassan showed the world that, Tanzania welcomes and embraces people of all kinds. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism Dr Hassan Abbas said of the president's



President Samia in Royal Tour Film.

role in the documentary, her influence attracted "a total of 1.2 billion people around the globe" to notice Tanzania with most of them planning trips to visit its top destinations.

As stated by the Public Broadcast Services, 100 million people have watched the film, five million people watched it through social media, 20

million watch it through Apple TV and Amazon Network and 50 million watched it via Chinese social networks platforms.

Furthermore, on the international front, the film managed to receive rave reviews. Permanent Secretary Abbas speaking at a press conference in the country's capital Dodoma

said "Within the period of one year, the film has managed to go through international records and was named in high positions by three international rating firms involved in content rating due to the quality of its content."

Moving into the future, the Tanzanian government will not rest on its laurels despite the huge success of the film. Along with the film's success, the Tanzanian government pledges to continue implementing various projects to promote tourism destinations so as to achieve the set goal of reaching five million tourists per year as well as accumulating an income of Tsh 6 trillion per year. The pledge is very much feasible and highly realizable owing to the film's early success. According to the Permanent Secretary, "Between March 2022 and March 2023, tourism income has increased to Tsh5.8 trillion from 3.3tri/- recorded a year before the launch of the documentary."

"The private and public sector's investment has also increased of which a total of eight contracts worth Tsh 11trillion were signed in the



Tourists landing in Kilimanjaro International Airport.



Tourists looking at lions in one of Tanzania's national parks.

United States shortly after the launch of the Royal Tour film in 2022," Dr Abbas said.

Tanzania is the second African country to release a Royal Tour film. Rwanda is the first to produce a Royal Tour film. Of the nine Royal Tour films ever produced including those from other parts of the world, the Tanzanian film has the highest viewers/ acceptance rate of 81 per cent, it is estimated that approximately two people in each facility in the United States big cities have watched it.

During the one-year after Royal Tour film, the number of international flights coming to Tanzania has also

increased whereby in Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) flights have increased from 6,115 flights in 2021 to 7,850 flights in 2022, equivalent to an increase of 28 per cent.

Meanwhile, Qatar Airlines has had nine flights but now they have 12 flights, KLM had five flights and now they have six, but we also have new airline firms such as Euro Wing Discovery airline that started coming to the country directly from Frankfurt Germany.

Tanzania and the best tourism destinations

Tanzania is one of the best tourist

destinations in the world where visitors can enjoy a varied range of recreational activities ranging from mountain climbing, wildlife safari, cultural exploration, snorkelling, kayaking, and chilling on idyllic sandy beaches of the Indian Ocean.

Among the top destinations featured in the Royal Tour include the great Serengeti, Mount Kilimanjaro, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Lake Manyara, Mkomazi National Park, the cleanest beaches of the Indian Ocean as well as stunning destinations like Dar es Salaam and Arusha, the safari capital in Tanzania.

The Royal Tour showcases a handful of thrilling destinations where visitors

can plan a trip. It summarizes the Mother Nature of Tanzania in one-hour and if you wish to enjoy this splendid country, consider planning a visit.

In the film, you view some real movements made by wildlife and ethnicities. You will see the Ngorongoro Crater, the world's largest intact caldera and the Serengeti National Park, the spectacular destination for a wildlife adventure.

A great attribute for all tourists planning to visit Tanzania is that it recently removed travel restrictions for tourists who choose to spend their precious holiday time in the untouched Mother Nature. _____



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