

with Mail & Guardian

The Continent

Prisoner to President

Hichilema's remarkable comeback

Inside:

- **Troll armies:** How Museveni manipulates the conversation (p8)
- **Is there a doctor in the house?** Saudi woos Nigerian medics (p10)
- **Comment:** We need more women at the top table (p14)
- **Afrobarometer:** Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the most corrupt of us all? (p16)

- **Does South Africa** really have the world's highest unemployment rate? It's complicated (p19)
- **Mozambique:** As the conflict intensifies, so does mining (p20)
- **Travel:** Welcome to Africa's first underwater museum (p23)
- **Kenya:** The president is not getting his own way (p25)



COVER STORY:

The comeback king.

If at first you don't succeed... try, try, try, try and try again. It worked for Zambia's new president, Hakainde Hichilema, who won this year's presidential election at the sixth time of asking. Along the way he was intimidated, imprisoned, harassed and tear-gassed, none of which convinced him to give up. Not bad for a "simple village boy", as he calls himself – although that's not quite the whole story. (p11)



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

The thread woven by Kwame Otiende in “How Kenya’s chameleon did it” (August 21) was a concisely revealing reflection on the tenacity of the nation’s first president. Yet, I feel that some points raised in analysing the good standing of Jomo Kenyatta in the annals of African history are weak.

Kenya’s dalliance’s with apartheid South Africa didn’t involve more than trade, unlike with the Banda regime in Malawi. For much of Africa, trade with South Africa wasn’t a bridge too far.

Kenyatta was spared the indignity Western Hollywood showed to Idi Amin because unlike Amin he was an “independence leader” – a group to whom much deference is given. Unlike Amin, Jomo Kenyatta was also never a genocidal lunatic.

To the West, Jomo was boring and reliable. Perhaps much like his son today? The current presidency of his son at Kenya’s helm might well be another reason why Jomo is currently given a “free pass”?

Ian E. Cox, Nairobi

Would you like to respond to a story that appeared in *The Continent*? We welcome all feedback and critique – but please do remember to play nicely. Email us at letters@thecontinent.org. All submissions must be under 100 words and will be moderated by the editorial team.

SOUTH AFRICA

Poor Jacob Zuma goes for broke

Jacob Zuma is running out of money – but he sure has a lot of lawyers' bills still to pay. "Dear people of South Africa and the world, please lend a helping hand," asked the Jacob G Zuma Foundation in a request this week for support for the former president's legal fees. Zuma is currently in prison after being convicted of contempt of court, and faces separate corruption charges relating to a massive arms deal. If the former president really



Spare a few million?: Supporters of former president Jacob Zuma are raising funds to help pay his mounting legal bills. Photo: AFP/Getty Images

did dip his hands in the cookie jar – he denies all charges – he sadly forgot to save any for a rainy day. And now it's *pouring*.

UGANDA

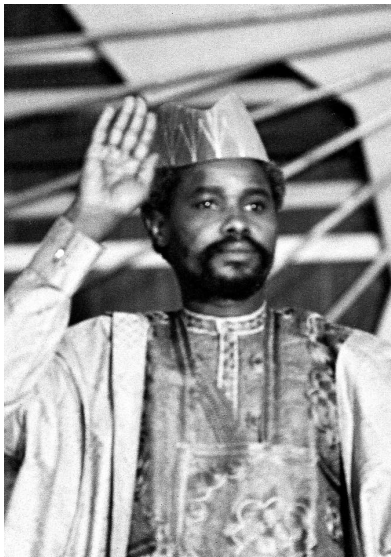
Uganda welcomes Afghan refugees

The Ugandan government confirmed the arrival of 51 Afghan refugees on Wednesday who, it is understood, will be given temporary accommodation in the country at the request of the United States, which will pay so it doesn't have to do the right thing. The welcome extended by the government of Yoweri Museveni to these refugees is in stark contrast to the failure of western nations to provide a safe haven for many Afghans attempting to flee the country after the Taliban takeover, including some who worked directly for western embassies or occupying militaries as translators, embassy staff and security.

TANZANIA

Five dead after attack in Dar

A gun battle broke out between an armed man and police outside the French Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on Wednesday. Early reports did not classify the incident as a terrorist attack. The gunman attacked two police officers, took their guns and shot sporadically towards the embassy. The inspector general of the city's police forces said that the gunman was believed to be Somali and that the attack could be linked to neighbouring Mozambique, where a jihadist insurgency is taking place. Five people died, including the gunman.



Brutal: Hissène Habré in N'Djamena in 1983. The former dictator died in prison this week, aged 79. Photo: AFP

CHAD

Hissène Habré dies in prison

Former Chadian dictator Hissène Habré died in a Senegalese prison this week at the age of 79. Doctors had been treating him for Covid-19. Habré ruled Chad in brutal fashion between 1982 and 1990, after seizing power in a coup. His administration was accused of murdering more than 40,000 people, and torturing at least 200,000 people. In 2016, after a decades-long fight for justice, Habré was convicted in a special court of charges relating to these crimes and sentenced to life in prison.

PARALYMPICS

Powerlifter Latifat Tijani bags Olympic gold

The first African gold at the Paralympic Games in Tokyo was won on Thursday by powerlifter Latifat Tijani, from Ogun State in Nigeria. She lifted 117 kilograms to claim the medal, just one kilogram shy of the world record. Her strong finish was all the more impressive given her shaky start in the final, when she struggled with her first lift of 105 kilograms. “My coach said I should go and fight for gold. I talked to myself: ‘What is wrong with you, why are you losing 105, I must catch it’. And I got it.”

KENYA

A natural census

The Kenyan government is financing a national census for the country’s animal wildlife population, which is hoped will help respective ministries to plan for the future and develop conservation efforts further. Several endangered species including the world’s last two northern white rhinos live in Kenya; and dolphins, whales and endangered turtles transit through Kenya when they migrate. The census – the first of its kind – will also provide data for the conservation of marine life.

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SOUTH AFRICA

SAA to fly again

After being grounded for 15 months, aircraft bearing the livery of South African Airways will take to the skies again on September 23, the newly privatised airline announced on Wednesday. Only a handful of routes will be operational at first, with flights going from Johannesburg to Cape Town, Accra, Kinshasa, Harare, Lusaka and Maputo. The state has poured in hundreds of millions of dollars each year, a subsidy of travel for the rich that has been criticised in a country where the poor have little in the way of safe public transport.

HEALTH

Good news from malaria trial

A new approach to treating malaria has delivered promising results. After concluding a trial in Burkina Faso and Mali, researchers concluded that giving children a booster dose of a malaria vaccine just prior to the rainy season – when the disease is most prevalent – reduced deaths and illnesses from the disease by 70%. The trial, led by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, involved 6,000 children under the age of 17 months. The World Health Organisation estimates that malaria kills over 400,000 people a year.



CHAGOS ISLANDS

A stamp of approval

All post from the Chagos Islands will have to bear Mauritius stamps, as opposed to United Kingdom stamps, according to new guidelines from the Universal Postal Union. Postcards from the island have previously carried the phrase “British Indian Ocean Territory”. The United Kingdom continues to illegally occupy the islands in contravention of several United Nations decisions. The UK has said it will not relinquish its power until the islands are no longer needed for security reasons.

Psy-ops and fake-outs: How Uganda weaponised social media

Tessa Knight

Two days before presidential elections were scheduled to take place in January this year, Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni apologised for any “inconvenience” caused by shutting down access to social media and messaging apps. He blamed “arrogant” social media giants for forcing his hand, claiming Facebook and Twitter were “playing around” with Uganda following the removal of accounts belonging to employees of the ministry of information, communications and technology (ICT).

But, according to Facebook and Twitter, the ICT ministry violated their policies: while the accounts did attempt to covertly spread pro-Museveni propaganda and disinformation about opposition candidate Bobi Wine, they were removed primarily because of the tactics they used to amplify their messages.

In other words, the problem was not necessarily related to the *content* of the messages, but with the *behaviour* of the accounts behind these messages.

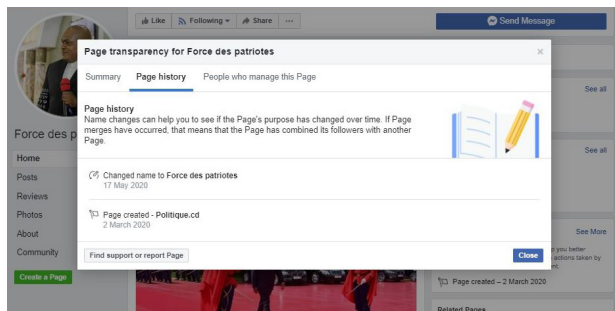
Although there has been a lot of discussion about the spread of “fake news” and disinformation on social media, it is

not only the act of posting such content that is a problem. Malign actors also take advantage of vulnerabilities in the makeup of social media platforms to manipulate everyday social media users, and ensure their agenda reaches an even wider audience.

Different social media platforms are vulnerable to different exploitations. Automated accounts or “bots” are most common on Twitter. Sock puppets, which are accounts operated by people pretending to be someone else, are found on both Twitter and Facebook. Inauthentic networks on Facebook often create fake profiles that use stolen images or artificially generated images of people who do not exist, or simply duplicate legitimate profiles. These inauthentic accounts can then be used to manage Facebook pages and groups that spread disinformation and propaganda.

In Uganda’s example, a network of fake and duplicate accounts managed pages and posted to groups, artificially boosting the popularity of pro-Museveni content. These assets were created with the specific goal of influencing Ugandan citizens ahead of the election.

Artificially increasing the popularity and reach of content using bots or



**Aliases:
Unscrupulous
agencies set
up unrelated
Facebook pages,
then change the
page identity and
content to promote
their agenda.**

inauthentic accounts is like the online version of paying people to attend a rally or protest – it makes something, or someone, appear more popular than they are. Recent influence operations conducted on the continent have successfully managed to manipulate social media to increase the popularity of a politician.

In 2020 a network of inauthentic accounts promoting Honoré Mvula, an up-and-coming politician in the Democratic Republic of Congo, set up several Facebook pages pretending to be influential figures or news organisation. The pages posted inflammatory covid-19 and political disinformation, which was shared to legitimate groups by inauthentic accounts. Real users who supported the content then followed the pages. After racking up tens of thousands of followers, the pages changed their names, deleted their previous content, and focused on promoting Mvula: the new content now reaching a wide and varied audience.

In Uganda, inauthentic accounts reached a wide audience by commenting on pages operated by opposition parties, amplifying hashtags, and sharing their

content to legitimate groups. As with the DRC, users who supported the content subsequently promoted it as well.

Facebook removed the networks in both countries. The platform removes assets – accounts, pages, groups and Instagram accounts – if they engage in an activity known as coordinated inauthentic behaviour (CIB). Simply put, if an entity works to promote its agenda by creating a network of inauthentic assets to deceive users, Facebook will remove it.

These kinds of influence operations are being conducted across the continent. From South Africa to Uganda to Tunisia, malicious actors, including local and foreign governments as well as disinformation-for-hire PR firms, use social media to spread their agenda. They work hard to create well-funded, sophisticated operations with the intention of manipulating social media users. ■

Tessa Knight researches disinformation at the Digital Forensic Research Lab

Nigeria

Is there a doctor in the house?

Saudi Arabia continued its charm offensive towards Nigerian doctors over the past week. The oil-rich nation hosted two recruitment drives – in the capital, Abuja, and in Lagos, its economic powerhouse – as it sought to entice Nigerian doctors to make the switch. Medical practitioners of all stripes were invited to partake in the recruitment exercise.

It comes at a time when the National Association of Resident Doctors have been on a nationwide strike in Nigeria since August 1, as they protest “irregular payment of salaries”, among other complaints.

A mass defection of healthcare workers should be a cause for concern for authorities. But the government does not appear to be bothered.

In 2019, when Saudi officials made a similar recruitment effort, Chris Ngige, Nigeria’s labour minister and a doctor himself, claimed that there was nothing wrong with doctors leaving en masse.

“[There is] a surplus in the medical

profession in our country. I can tell you this. In my area, we have excess,” Ngige said at the time. “Who said we don’t have enough doctors? We have more than enough. You can quote me. There is nothing wrong in them travelling out.”

But Nigeria does *not* have enough doctors: there are only 75,000 doctors registered in the country, according to the Nigerian Medical Association, the union for doctors and dentists.

According to the World Health Organisation, having fewer than 10 doctors per 10,000 people is “insufficient”. In Nigeria, there are 3.8 doctors per 10,000 people.

Additionally, the association says that more than 40,000 of its registered doctors are in fact currently working abroad.

It is not unusual for surgeries in Nigerian hospitals to go ahead with lamps and candles, and many state clinics lack basic equipment.

Saudi Arabia is not the only country where Nigerian doctors seek better conditions; they are also a staple in British, American, Canadian and South African wards.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari just returned from another medical trip to Britain, even as his office complains about the shabby state of the clinic at Aso Rock. ■

Zambia

From prison to president: Hakainde Hichilema's remarkable comeback

ANALYSIS

Simon Allison

I have interviewed Zambia's new president twice, both times at the lowest ebbs of his political career.

The first time was by telephone, in the early hours of 11 April 2017. Hichilema was at his Lusaka home, but he was in trouble. The house was surrounded by heavily-armed riot police, who wanted to arrest him. He had retreated with his wife and child into a panic room that had been installed for exactly this kind of situation. As we spoke, the police were trying to smoke them out, and Hichilema, increasingly panicked, described how tendrils of tear gas were creeping under the door frame.

"My wife is asthmatic and my child is asthmatic, they are fainting," he said. "Our eyes are swollen from the toxic gas

they have been pushing in here. We are injured, my family is injured. My workers around the homestead were tortured the whole night."

He was not sure if he would make it out alive. "This guy is trying to kill me. This guy is a dictator, a full-blown dictator."

The "dictator" in question was, of course, the president at the time: Edgar Lungu.

After his lawyers raced to the scene to negotiate safe passage, Hichilema emerged from the panic room and was duly arrested on a trumped-up charge of treason, for allegedly obstructing the president's motorcade at a cultural festival.

He was denied bail, and spent 127 days in prison before the case was dismissed. Shortly after he was released, I interviewed him a second time, this time in person at a



Let's go: Hakainde Hichilema was sworn in as president this week. Photo: AFP

hotel in Johannesburg, where he described the filthy, inhumane conditions in which he and other prisoners were kept.

“Our detention centres are death traps,” he said. “In a room like this, you have 200 inmates spending nights. So you really don’t go to sleep. You take a nap by sitting, and someone has their body inside your legs. There is very poor ventilation – something very simple to fix but it’s not there. Food, there’s no food. And when it’s there, it’s rotten beans, rotten kapenta [sardines]. Medical services are very poor. People go into prison and come out with diseases. During my stay we saw bodies being taken away, dead.”

Hichilema seemed unusually reserved for a politician, then, and tired. “There are times I feel like nobody is listening,” he said. The trauma of his time behind bars was still fresh, and he had already run for president – unsuccessfully – on five occasions. Did he have it in him to keep going?

Meanwhile, Lungu was taking full advantage of incumbency to consolidate his power. And one of Hichilema’s major financial backers confided, off the record, that they were considering switching their support to a younger, more vibrant candidate.

But Hichilema insisted he would run for president again – and that next time he would win.

He was right.

On Tuesday, at the age of 59, Hakainde Hichilema was sworn in as the seventh elected president of the Republic of Zambia. His political persistence paid off, and now he’s won the ultimate prize.

Not that it gets any easier from here.

At the Heroes Stadium in Lusaka, he delivered a careful speech, urging citizens “to put aside our election-related and other differences and pull in one direction as a country”; and thanked Zambians for putting their “trust in a simple village boy” (although this simple village boy also happens to be the second-largest owner of cattle in the country).

His ascent to the top job is a chance for Zambia to arrest the worrying slide towards authoritarianism that occurred under Lungu.

Pilato, a prominent rapper and activist who was forced into exile under Lungu’s government, said that he cried when Hichilema became president. “It felt like it was independence day,” he told *The Continent*. “It took so long, seven years of living in fear, of not knowing who to trust, where it was safe for us to go. And then that thing is no longer there.”

Pilato, a prominent rapper and activist who was forced into exile under Lungu’s government, said that he cried when Hichilema became president. ‘It felt like it was independence day.’

Hichilema beat Lungu by more than a million votes – a margin so decisive that Lungu had no choice but to accept defeat. “These guys were bad at everything, even rigging,” laughed Laura Miti, the executive director for the Alliance for Community



At last: A UPND supporter celebrates after Hichilema won the Zambian election. Photo: Patrick Meinhardt/AFP

Action, a civil society organisation that played a major role in both mobilising and protecting the vote.

Miti first met Hichilema in the mid-2000s, when she went to his house to tell him she would not vote for him. “I told him to convince me. And he did. He understood his challenges, he understood the difficulties of the opposition, he could explain his steps.”

But Lungu, who came to power in 2015 following the death in office of president Michael Sata, presented the opposition with a new set of challenges. Under his administration, opposition leaders and activists were locked up, independent media silenced, and the judiciary was hollowed out.

Lungu empowered thuggish ruling party cadres who became infamous for beating up and extorting ordinary citizens, and he tried to rewrite the Constitution to concentrate power in the presidency.

Ironically, Lungu’s brazen attempts to retain power may have been why he lost it. All the violence and threats were very un-Zambian, said Miti, which is partly why voters turned out en masse to reject his Patriotic Front (PF) in favour of Hichilema’s United Party for National Development (UPND). Turnout was reportedly in excess of 70%.

Now it is up to Hichilema to fix Lungu’s mess – and deliver on all those election promises. “I am hopeful about him, but not half as hopeful about the party he leads,” explained Miti. “I think the UPND is the mirror image of PF. It’s formative years were very much under the influence of PF, so it learned some very bad habits. It has its own set of cadres, and its own set of people who imagine that power is a means of gaining personal wealth. So he’s going to have his work cut out for him, managing expectations within his own party and at the same time fixing a broken society.” ■

Zambia's new vice president is a good start

Nangamso Kwinana

Jubilation over the recent victory of Hakainde Hichilema in Zambia's presidential election extends far beyond that country. All over the world, especially across the continent, there is a palpable sense of hope at the prospect of more African states following Zambia into a new period of liberal democracy.

Yet even as we celebrate his momentous inauguration on 24 August, we need to talk about the place of women in this new era. Zambia, like virtually every country in the world, has a problem with gender inequality. But the swearing in of Mutale Nalumango to the vice presidency is a hopeful sign of the administration's attention to the challenges facing Zambia's women.

According to UN Women, the United Nations entity charged with championing gender equality globally, more than one in four women between the ages of 15 and 49 in Zambia reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Almost 34% did not have access to family planning resources.

Women had an unemployment rate of 13.5% – a little higher than men, with 55.9% of employed women still living

below the international poverty line. Women held only 40.5% of managerial positions and 40.3% of senior and middle management positions.

That is why, in its election manifesto, Hichilema's United Party for National Development (UPND) committed to devising a national programme for innovation that "will unleash the talents and creativity of Zambians, including the youth and women." It also undertook to prioritise jobs-rich sectors and targeted interventions for youth and women. Throughout the manifesto, the policy proposals include a specific focus on the needs of women. The party's ability to deliver on these promises will be vital for its future success.

Another especially relevant statistic in the wake of the historic election result is the representation of women in politics. According to statistics from the World Bank, only 18% of the seats in Zambia's national parliament were held by women during the previous administration. Zambia trailed neighbours Zimbabwe at 32%, and South Africa at 47%.

Fortunately, the UPND appears committed to addressing these imbalances. Not only is his vice president a woman, but he has also publicly committed to assembling a cabinet that is both competent and diverse. This expression is credible because it is backed by action predating the election.

The UPND is a member of the Africa Liberal Network, an alliance of liberal democratic political parties established

to support and empower political parties, movements, and individuals to grow their support, increase their influence in politics. One of its flagship programmes is the Africa Liberal Women Empowerment Programme, an annual academy aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of women candidates. The UPND consistently encourages aspiring women leaders to enrol in the programme, which has included exceptional young Zambian women since 2019.

The party's commitment to promoting women's leadership is also reflected in Nalumango's contribution to the Africa Liberal Network's *Initiating, Planning & Managing Coalitions: An Africa Liberal Perspective Handbook*.

In July 2021, the Africa Liberal Network officially launched the handbook at an online global summit attended by high profile international liberal leaders and politicians. The handbook was initiated to help liberal parties in Africa and around the world navigate the difficult task of building successful coalitions.

In her contribution to the handbook, the vice president emphasised the importance of diversity for developing better leaders, in particular the inclusion of women. Asked about the leadership qualities women bring to the table, she said: "Women see things from a different perspective. They tend to have more empathy and see things from the other side. This is important; when you try to understand the argument from another perspective, you are closer to reaching an agreement and an understanding."

Responding to a question about pre-

election alliances, Nalumango gave this sage advice: "Before you even speak with other parties you must have a clear analysis of what your USP [unique selling point] is. Then you must be clear about what other parties are bringing to the people. Everyone must have a clear purpose and add something to the relationship. Once you achieve this, negotiations can run smoother."

In light of Mr Hichilema's election promises, the advancement of gender equality must surely be crucial pillar of the party's unique selling point. And this will be a key metric for determining the success of his administration. Thankfully, the new administration will not face this task alone; neighbours and allies around the world are rooting for its success and ready to lend a hand.

That prominent women like Nalumango lead the party is a hopeful sign for the millions of women who voted for change. With the party's ongoing efforts to empower women leaders and Mr Hichilema's pro-woman agenda, we hope to see many more women sitting at the table in the future, backed by free, equal, and thriving women citizens, as the nation works to co-create a brighter future for all its people. ■

Nangamsi Kwinana is a political strategy and development practitioner. She has experience in human rights advocacy and community development. She is currently the executive director of the Africa Liberal Network and the lead operations manager of the Africa Liberal Women Empowerment Programme

Grease the palm to ease the grief?

Bribery by any other name – gift, *pot-de-vin*, *kitu kidogo* ... – is money out of our pockets. And quite a few of us are shelling out. Half of all Ugandans, Cameroonians, Sierra Leoneans and Guineans say they paid at least one bribe in the past year to get a basic public service from a school, health clinic, or state documents office, or to get help from or avoid a problem with the police.

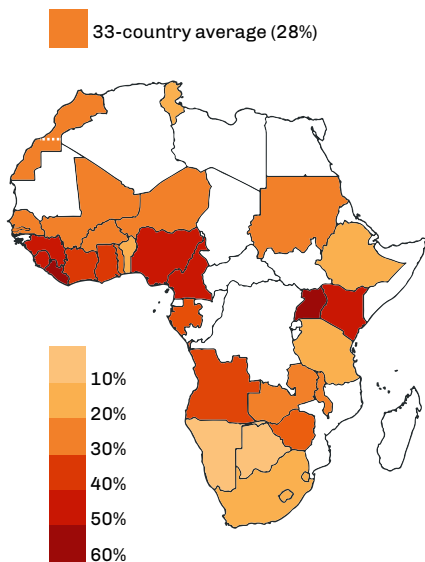
Across 33 countries, almost three in 10 respondents (28%) said they had paid a bribe. That's 28% of *all* adults, not just of those who tried to get those services. And since Afrobarometer only asked about selected services, the actual total across all public services is certainly higher.

Worse, it's the poor who suffer most: The poorest group of respondents was twice as likely (35%) as the wealthiest (17%) to have paid a bribe for services.

The problem is getting worse. Across 30 countries where Afrobarometer has data dating back to 2014/2015, the proportion of people who paid a bribe for one of these services has increased from 16% to 28%. Only two countries – Morocco and Sudan – report lower levels of corruption, while 20 countries report increases of 10 percentage points or more.

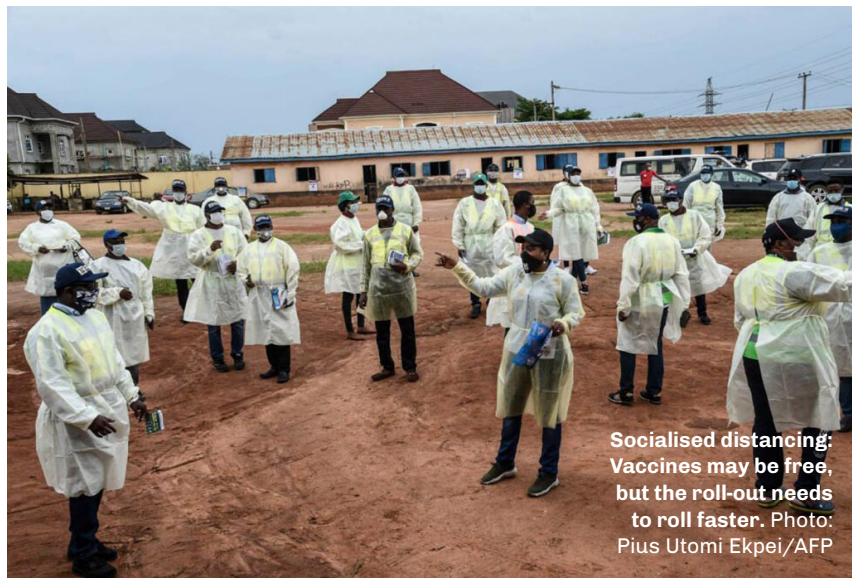
Even some former paragons of anti-corruption are falling – in Botswana and Mauritius, 0% reported paying bribes in 2014/2015, but 9% and 8%, respectively, say they paid in 2019/2021. They're still among the best performers, along with Cabo Verde (3%) and Namibia (7%). But they'd better watch their wallets.

Figure shows % of all respondents who paid a bribe in the past year to an official of a public school, public medical facility, government documents office, or police.



Source: Afrobarometer, a non-partisan African research network that conducts nationally representative surveys on democracy, governance, and quality of life. Face-to-face interviews with 1,200-2,400 people in each country yield results with a margin of error of +/- 2 to 3 percentage points.

Nigeria



Socialised distancing: Vaccines may be free, but the roll-out needs to roll faster. Photo: Pius Utomi Ekpei/AFP

The not-so-fine print

Indemnity clauses and fears of fake jabs mean Nigeria's government must do its vaccine roll-out alone

Adeola Oladipupo

Just 0.7% of Nigerians are fully vaccinated. But the county will soon start receiving almost 42-million doses of Covid-19 vaccines as it steps up its inoculation campaign. The government has acquired 60 units of U701 cold chain equipment to store the vaccines. Everything seems ready to go.

But private sector healthcare practitioners say the government's handling the roll-out on its own could complicate the vaccination push.

The government says it has good reason for going it alone – contracts. The minister of state for health, Olorunnimbe Mamora, told *The Continent* that the ministry was cautious about allowing private sector involvement because

of an indemnity clause it has with manufacturers, and because of the risk of fake Covid-19 vaccines being circulated if procurement is opened.

“The manufacturers have said that for countries to have access to the vaccines, they must sign indemnification,” Mamora said. “This means that they won’t be liable for any reaction those who took the vaccine present with. This makes the government liable.”

He added: “To be sure of the sources of the vaccines and take absolute responsibility, we go through government-to-government bilateral processes and established platforms.”

For now, this means the government is “being careful” before it involves the private sector. In the first phase of the vaccination campaign, it took Nigeria five months to exhaust the four million doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. The rollout was handled by state authorities following directives from the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, a federal government body.

Other African countries, including Ghana and South Africa, are supplementing government efforts by incorporating the private sector into different stages of their vaccination programmes. In Nigeria, where the private sector provides 70% of the country’s healthcare needs, it is a conspicuous omission.

According to Dr Egbe Osifo-Dawodu, a health policy expert, engaging private healthcare providers like hospitals and pharmacies could help reduce pressure on the federal government and ensure that

jabs are efficiently used.

“Some private sector players in Nigeria have the capacity to procure high-quality vaccines if licenced, and people who have private or state health insurance or can conveniently pay out-of-pocket could patronise them,” Osifo-Dawodu said.

For those who cannot, he said the government can then ensure people who cannot afford to buy vaccines get them for free.

Right now, Covid vaccination is free for everyone in Nigeria who wants a shot.

Clare Omatseye, president of the West Africa Private Healthcare Federation, an umbrella group of healthcare providers, told *The Continent* the “private sector could be engaged to solve inefficiencies in the vaccination value chain: from cold chain storage to macro and last mile distribution, administration and pharmacovigilance”.

Nigeria, like most other countries in Africa and the Global South, has been afforded little opportunity to access vaccines supply chains, largely thanks to hoarding by wealthy nations.

And the longer it takes to secure adequate vaccine stock, the more dangerous it becomes for every country on the planet, because in unvaccinated areas where it is able to spread unchecked, the virus risks mutating beyond the capacity of the current vaccines to contain it, and spreading back out into the world.

As it is, with Delta already hovering on its doorstep, Nigeria will have to vaccinate quickly indeed if it hopes to keep a lid on the highly contagious variant. ■

South Africa

The highest unemployment rate in the world? Yes. No? Maybe.

South Africa has the world's highest unemployment rate. This was the headline carried by newspapers around the world over the past week. But, as journalism so often does, the bold headlines were followed by quick disclaimers (just as we're about to do, too).

According to Statistics South Africa, the country's official bean counters, the jobless rate is 34.4%. That's 7.7-million people. But that number has gone through a bit of sifting, shaping and massaging, and filtered to exclude certain figures such as those who are unemployed but looking for work. The real percentage of people without work is 44.4%.

The "highest in the world" claim comes from Bloomberg. And they only survey 82 of the world's 195 countries – less than half. And the survey started in 2008. So the story here is really Bloomberg saying, of the four-score-and-two countries they looked at, South Africa had the worst unemployment. Which isn't necessarily

the same as being worst in the world. Not that things aren't bad. Very bad.

As in so many other countries, the rate is much higher in younger segments: 64.4% of those aged 15-24 are jobless, as are 42.9% of the 25-34 cohort.

South Africa has always struggled with high unemployment, thanks to an economy built around privileging white people and the wealthy over everyone else (this isn't rare but in this case it was enshrined in law). Since democratic elections in 1994, the state has kept its focus on privileging the few.

The claim comes from Bloomberg. And they only survey 82 countries. But that doesn't mean things aren't bad. Very bad.

Years of corruption, driven by the ruling ANC, have also done a great deal of damage to the economy. Weak leadership under President Cyril Ramaphosa is also hindering economic growth. He reshuffled his Cabinet earlier this month, but kept several ministers accused of incompetence, negligence and theft.

As the country has seen time and again, political storms lead to economic whirlpools. So the label "highest unemployment in the world" may not be technically true, but it might as well be. ■

Mozambique

Cabo Delgado is a warzone, but profiteers are doing a roaring trade

It's been four years since the insurgency began, forcing French oil giant Total Energies to stop its operations. But a recent study found that mining in the province has been forging ahead regardless.

Luís Nhachote

Last month, Maputo-based NGO the Centre for Public Integrity published a study showing that requests for mining concessions in Cabo Delgado have increased in tandem with the raging armed conflict.

The study also showed that the biggest single holder of concessions in the province is Mwiriti Mining, owned by retired general Raimundo Domingos Pachinuapa and his Iranian business

partner Asghar Fakhraleali.

Their company owns 7% of all the concessions in the province, but that figure could rise to around 10% if other mining projects where it is a shareholder are included.

Lucrative mines, with some torture

Raimundo Pachinuapa is a veteran of Mozambique's struggle for independence from Portugal, and a senior figure in the ruling Frelimo party, being a member of Frelimo's 19-strong political commission, which guides party policy on a weekly basis.

A member of the Makonde ethnic group to which President Filipe Nyusi belongs, Pachinuapa was governor of Cabo Delgado between 1980 and 1983.

His company, Mwiriti, rose to prominence after a person discovered a rich vein of rubies in 2009, in the locality of Namanhumbir, in the district of Montepuez. The find has since been described as "the most important ruby discovery of this new century" by the Gemological Institute Of America.

Soon after the discovery, Mwiriti took control of the area, and in 2011 formed Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM), a joint venture between Mwiriti, with 25%, and Gemfields, which owns 75% of the company. The mining operation occupies 33.6 hectares of land.

Despite formally having capital of just



Tents atmosphere: Temporary housing in the Napala Agrarian Centre in Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique. Photo: AFP

30,000 meticaís (around \$1,000 at the time), and without any prior capabilities for exploitation of mineral resources or experience of the international market for precious stones, Gemfields paid Mwiriti \$2.5-million for 75% in the joint venture, MRM.

Year after year MRM has been selling gems in international markets and making a huge profit. However, the mining operations have not been without controversy. Videos surfaced in 2012 following the torture of illegal miners who were digging for rubies in Nahamamumbir by Mozambique's security forces (FDS) to ensure that they cleared the area.

People in Cabo Delgado believe some of those youths who were treated so brutally in Montepuez might have been

recruited by the insurgents to join their ranks. In 2019, Gemfields agreed to pay \$7.6-million in compensation to people living around its ruby mine in Montepuez, who allege they were the victims of human rights abuses by the police and security guards employed by Gemfields.

The company agreed to make the payment without admitting any liability, though it said it had been “proactive and constructive in addressing the wider issues raised by local communities through this case.”

Later that same year, Gemfields and Mwiriti announced a new joint venture to develop gold mines in Cabo Delgado.

MRM told *The Continent* they have “investigated carefully” suggestions that their project might in some way have fed feelings of inequality and alienation

that have fuelled the insurgency – and concluded that such a suggestion is “absurd and misleading.”

“Save for the recent arrival of internally displaced persons in the ruby mining areas, the area affected by the insurgency lies in the gas project areas, not in the ruby mining areas,” the company pointed out.

Meanwhile, artisanal mining continues on MRM’s concession, despite the best efforts of police and private security to crack down on the activity. MRM said that it knew of 21 people who died while mining illegally on its concession in 2020, and a further eight by the start of August this year. Most of the deaths were due to the collapse of the mines they had dug.

Owners in hiding

In 2019, Mwiriti earned \$17.9-million from auctioning rubies in Singapore, while Gemfields took the largest share, with \$71.5 million. In June 2014, MRM sold rubies for a total of \$33.5-million at an auction in Singapore.

Mwiriti has come a long way from the company registered to offer services in the areas of building, sale of foodstuffs, office equipment, general trading and lobbying. It was only in 2009 that it included in its business portfolio the “prospection, research, exploitation of mineral resources, including import and export”.

But the CIP report raises another concern: the company has apparently shifted ownership of its mining concessions offshore, to a mysterious company called Nairobi Resources Holding, domiciled in Mauritius – known

as “Africa’s tax haven”.

That means, CIP pointed out, that “it becomes difficult [to] identify the beneficiaries of the concessions, which can be Mozambicans in conflict of interest,” or even “with power and political capacity to influence the dynamics of the sector for their own benefit”.

Where owners of Cabo Delgado’s mining concessions can be identified, however, the names of powerful families such as Chipande, Chissano, Talapa, and Waty crop up – “easily identifiable with the country’s political elite”, as CIP says, showing that “a good portion of the concessions is owned by politically exposed people or directly linked to influential individuals from the Frelimo party, in power since Mozambique’s independence.”

Mwiriti issued a statement following CIP’s report, saying that the use of offshore structures was perfectly legal, and mining activities are still carried out in-country. CIP’s researchers suggested, meanwhile, that the lack of transparency over who really owns mining concessions “may be behind land conflicts” in Cabo Delgado – and that publishing the names of beneficial owners “may minimise the occurrence of the reported and future conflicts.”

But if greater transparency only reveals the true extent to which Mozambique’s riches are concentrated in the hands of a privileged few, then deeper changes will be needed to overcome the resentment that is contributing to unrest in Cabo Delgado. ■



Africa's first underwater museum set to open next year

Gitonga Njeru

An hour's drive north of the Kenyan city of Mombasa, you will soon be able to find a curated space where scuba divers can explore shipwrecks that have been sitting on the ocean floor for up to 600 years.

Once the continent's first sub-aqua museum opens, it will span a 137 kilometres of coastline, from the tourist town of Lamu in the north to Malindi further south.

The various wrecks within its limits were discovered by a team of 22 Chinese and Kenyan archaeologists. The interest of the former stems from shipwrecks dating back to the Ming Dynasty that ruled China from 1368 to 1644 AD,



Bloop: Kenya plans to give new meaning to the term 'tourist dive'

during which period an almost mythical treasure fleet from China traveled the Indian Ocean. The vessels were thought to be double the size of any other recorded wooden boat.

While little evidence of the fleet remains, recent DNA testing in the area

attests to stories of a handful of survivors from the wreck of a Chinese vessel who swam ashore.

Legend has it that the shipwrecked Chinese killed a python after it attacked a village and as a result were allowed to stay and marry local women, creating an African-Chinese community whose descendants still live in the area.

Divers can also expect to see submerged artwork that highlights other aspects of the area's maritime history, including the slave trade that blighted East Africa's shores across the centuries.

Cesar Bitu, a lead archaeologist on the project, said the museum would preserve important Portuguese and Arabic shipwrecks, one of which, a Portuguese wreck, will be a central point of the museum. Bitu said the underwater displays will include iron ship-making tools and concrete artefacts.

"The museum, once fully operational, will also showcase and demonstrate the interaction between art and environmental science in a unique way," Bitu explained. A large part of the project also has to do with the sea environment in that part of Kenya.

The East Africa coast already sports an underwater hotel, however, located off Tanzania's shores, while a second is planned for Mombasa, and the region is also growing in popularity with tourists because of its beaches and the warm Indian Ocean.

But curating history underwater is novel development: Whereas diving around shipwrecks is far from new, re-charting their stories and journeys

across the ocean only really started this millennium.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), records only 11 underwater museums in the world – most of them in North America and Asia.

According to Bitu, the archaeologist, another African underwater museum project is underway in Alexandria, Egypt, and the head of Unesco, Audrey Azoulay, revealed that South Africa, Angola, Senegal, Ghana and Morocco could also be planning to launch their own underwater museums.

In Kenya's Kilifi County, where the museum is based, Governor Anderson Kingi said tourists were already beginning to visit the underwater site, which is already partially operational.

People are coming because it's beautiful, Kingi added: "The site has some of the rarest marine ecosystems in the world". It is then a bonus that tourists can now come and "witness many of the events that took place in the ancient world".

The museum is expecting between 90,000 and 200,000 visitors a year, spurred by tourism from China as that country expands its cultural and economic interests in Africa – with a little help from some ancient local legends. ■

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Kenyan judges burn Odinga and Kenyatta bromance, and their bridges

Scovian Lillian

The Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) pushed by leading figures in the Kenyan government is dead in the water. On August 20, a seven-judge bench of the court of appeal upheld the prior judgment of the high court that the initiative was unconstitutional and unlawful.

The ruling represents a damaging defeat for the political forces behind BBI, including President Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga – former rivals who are now allies after their infamous “handshake” in 2018.

Although each judge gave an individual verdict, the majority (six of the seven) had concluded that a constitutional change initiated by the president did not represent a popular initiative and was therefore unconstitutional. As Justice Patrick Kiage put it: “The process was null and void ; in the end I am happy we have kept the Constitution sound and safe.”

Although the conclusion was almost unanimous, and consistent with the high court, it nonetheless elicited a range of

responses across the political spectrum.

Deputy President William Ruto, who sees BBI as part and parcel of his marginalisation within the Jubilee Party following Kenyatta and Odinga’s rapprochement, welcomed the news. “This [is] the second time our courts have pronounced themselves on this matter; on both occasions our courts were bold, clear, and unmistakable,” he said.

By contrast, Odinga said he respected the judgment but also that this was not the end of the journey.

Opinions on the virtues of the substance of the proposed reforms are also polarised. BBI’s proponents claim it would boost political stability by creating more positions for senior leaders – such as prime minister and two deputy prime ministers – while channelling more money to the 47 counties and so deepening devolution. But critics see it as a way of creating even more costly political positions, enabling the rich to get richer at the expense of the poor.

Given Ruto’s current strategy of appealing to Kenya’s self-made “hustlers” to help him defeat Kenya’s vastly wealthy “dynasties”, a similar dynamic is likely to characterise next year’s election campaign. ■



Scovian Lillian is a freelance journalist based in Nairobi. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa

THE QUIZ

0-4

"I think I need to start reading more newspapers."

5-7

"I can't wait to explore more of this continent."

8-10

"Like the ocean, my mind is deep, strong, and full of sunken treasures"



- 1_ What is the world's largest freshwater lake?
- 2_ Which country is the largest cocoa producer?
- 3_ Hwange National Park is the largest natural reserve of which country?
- 4_ True or false: Mohammed Salah was born in Algeria.
- 5_ True or false: The United States recently requested that Burundi temporarily take in Afghan refugees.
- 6_ Powerlifter Latifat Tijani became the first African to win gold at the Paralympics. Which country does she represent?
- 7_ Hissène Habré passed away this week. He was once the president of which country?
- 8_ The Pan-African Highway was a proposed road that would link which two cities?
- 9_ In which country will you find the only two northern white rhinos left in the world?
- 10_ True or false: It is possible to go dolphin and whale watching only in southern Africa.

HOW DID I DO?

WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to +27 73 805 6068 and we'll send the answers to you!

Would you like to send us some quiz questions or even curate your own quiz? Let us know at TheContinent@gg.co.za

Out with the old



Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

As Hakainde Hichilema was sworn in as president of Zambia, the country breathed a sigh of relief. And not just his supporters, we suspect.

On the podium near Mr Hichilema sat outgoing president Edgar Lungu. What would be going through your head, we wonder, if you were in his shoes. The imminent joys of life after high office? The prospect of sleeping in late, not having to wear suits, or needing to make small talk with the frankly ungrateful members of the populace who booted you out? Relief at not having to exchange any more asinine pleasantries with the blonde, dishevelled mess of hair belonging to the prime minister of your country's erstwhile coloniser?

Perhaps you might allow yourself to daydream of a stroll in the garden to smell the flowers (ah, is that the lingering scent of weaponised mace you smell? It really brings a tear to the eye, doesn't it?).

Freedom at last. Whether that will include freedom from responsibility for any awkward human rights violations in Zambia's recent past remains to be seen, of course.

While dignitaries of many different flavours were at the inauguration, it was especially refreshing to see how many opposition leaders from across the continent were in attendance. Equally exciting to see was Mutale Nalumango being sworn in as vice-president: Another woman in leadership! We love to see it.

Making waves

Throughout history African women have led the way in so many different spheres – as freedom fighters, homemakers, political leaders, writers, musicians, mothers, scientists and more besides. And, of course, as athletes.

This week saw 14-year old Ugandan swimmer Husnah Kukundakwe become the youngest person to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics. Following her Paralympic debut, she said she hoped that people back home who watched her compete would see how important it was to give children born with disabilities a chance.

There are however occasions where a woman being in leadership does not always translate to the empowering of other women. This week, for example, saw backlash grow against President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania following her comments on women footballers.

Addressing the under-23 men's football team, President Hassan had spoken of the challenges athletes face after their

careers end, calling for more funding and support. And then, bizarrely, she went on to disparage women footballers, saying, “for those with flat chests, you might think they are men, not women”, before lamenting their supposed lack of marriage prospects.

Some body shaming, a little sprinkle of patriarchal oppression, and a huge dollop of internalised misogyny. If scoring goals for the wrong team was the goal then she certainly hit the back of the net.

We are not cheering. For her, anyway. We *are* cheering all women and girls out there who want to venture on to the field and kick a football about, or who want to wear make-up and look fabulous, or just stay indoors and read... simply put: Ladies, do whatever the hell you like!

No cheers in Algiers

Make-ups and break-ups are par for the course, when it comes to relations between countries – and even within governments. But keeping those you are breaking up with under house arrest is more than a little bit creepy.

Ecowas’s court of justice has written to the government of Mali demanding an explanation regarding “violations of the rights and freedoms” of former transitional prime minister Moctar Ouane and former transitional president Bah Ndaw, who were both removed from their roles by coup leader and now current president, Colonel Assimi Goita. The two reportedly remain under house arrest and have filed an appeal through their lawyer.

Also not cheering (or at this stage even talking) are the governments of Morocco



Swim star: Ugandan swimmer Husnah Kukundakwe, 14 years old, made a splash at the Tokyo Paralympics. Photo: Paralympics/Twitter

and Algeria, after the latter announced that it was severing diplomatic relations with its neighbours.

Algeria’s minister of foreign affairs accused Morocco of “hostile actions”, allegations the latter described as “false and absurd ... and completely unjustified”.

Algiers, you see, has accused Rabat of spying on Algerian citizens using Pegasus, the notorious spyware created by an Israeli company that has been found to have infected the phones of journalists, opposition politicians and activists around the world. Algeria also claims that Morocco is supporting one of the groups allegedly involved in the recent forest fires in the country.

Tensions between the two countries have been simmering for a while, but it seems this latest round was the final straw.

And, just like poorly chosen words of Samia Suluhu Hassan, that breaks our heart. ■

THE BIG PICTURE

Pooling resources: Senegal's capital, Dakar, floods during the July to October rainy season. Many areas in the rapidly expanding city are on flood plains, and infrastructural countermeasures such as water pumps and culverts have been installed, but the flooding is relentless, and seems to be getting worse each year. (Photo: Seyllou/AFP)



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