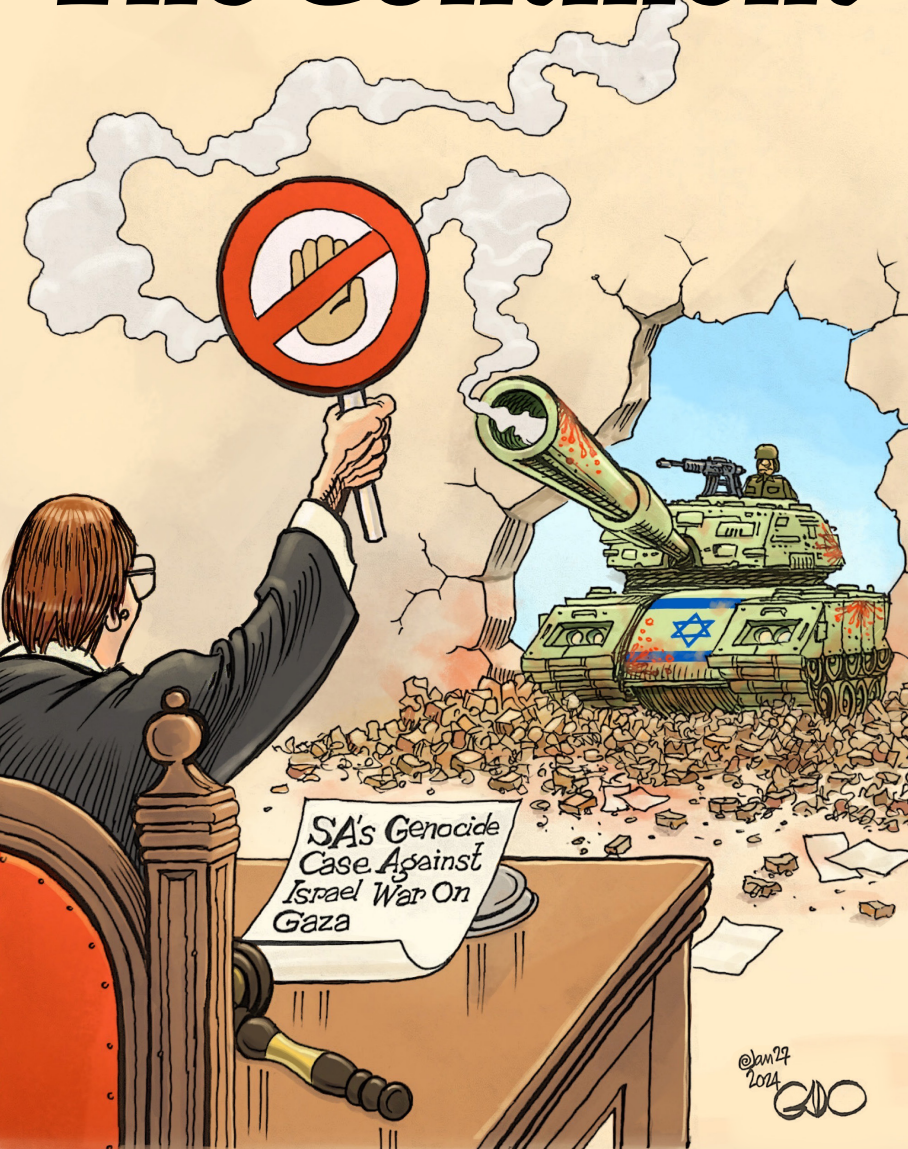


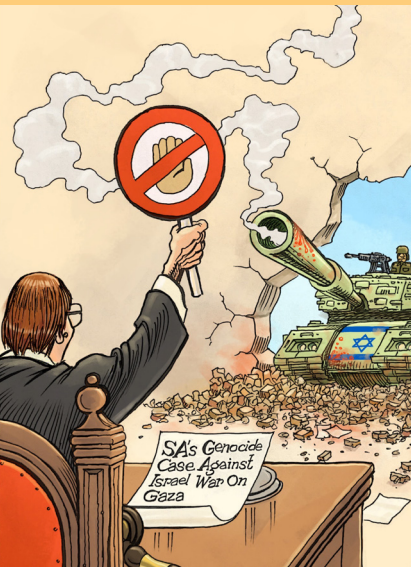
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The Continent



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THIS WEEK'S COVER STORY:

In defiance of some of the world's most powerful countries, the Republic of South Africa sued the State of Israel for genocide – and the World Court found the accusation plausible. Israel has now been ordered to halt all actions that could lead to a genocide of Palestinians. It may or may not comply, but at least we all know who stands on which side of history (p13)

Inside:

- **Journalists in jail:** There are way, way too many (p7)
- **Sudan:** Is Hemedti on a victory lap? (p9)
- **Cameroon:** The beginning of the end of malaria (p11)
- **TB Joshua:** The secrets of his enduring appeal (15)
- **Comment:** Germany has not learnt from its history in Namibia (p19)
- **Photos:** On the trail of pangolin traffickers (P21)
- **Travel:** We're at the newly-renovated Kwame Nkrumah Memorial (p24)
- **Drift:** How hard have your Afcon shocks hit? (p29)

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NIGERIA**Rescue arrives after kidnap victims killed**

Nigerian police rescued six members of a family kidnapped earlier this month but two had already been murdered by the kidnapers, who demanded a \$70,000 ransom. The Armed Conflict Location and Events Database tracked 578 incidents of abduction across the country in 2023. Nigerian data firm, SBM, tracked kidnappings between June 2022 and June 2023 and found that kidnapers had demanded \$6.4-million in ransoms in that period, receiving at least \$387,179 in confirmed payments.

ZIMBABWE**Opposition leader quits his own party**

Nelson Chamisa has unexpectedly resigned as leader of the Citizens Coalition for Change, the party that he founded just two years ago. It is Zimbabwe's largest opposition party, but in recent months has been riven by bitter infighting. "The original CCC idea has however been contaminated, bastardised, hijacked," he said, blaming the ruling Zanu-PF party for abusing state institutions to derail his party's ambitions. Chamisa did not say what he intends to do next, but indicated he is neither giving in nor giving up his political work.



Coming up short: Rishi Sunak pleases none of his people all of the time, but he does please all of his people none of the time. Photo: Henry Nicholls/AFP

UK**Rwanda continues to stir Sunak's pot**

The United Kingdom's prime minister, Rishi Sunak, instructed his party's parliamentary chief whip to reprimand the 11 ruling party rebel MPs opposing his Rwanda treaty. The treaty is a sleight of hand to get the UK Parliament to declare Rwanda a safe country to send asylum seekers to, despite the Supreme Court ruling that it is not. Far-right MPs in Sunak's Conservative Party, including former home secretary Suella Braverman, don't see it as tough enough, meaning the Rwanda plan remains doomed since opposition MPs tend to oppose it too.

LIBERIA

Boakai wilts on first day in the hot seat

The inauguration of Liberia's 79-year-old new president, Joseph Boakai, ended abruptly when he was led away from the podium after suffering from heat exhaustion. Boakai had taken the oath of office but was midway through his speech when he was overcome by the sweltering heat in Monrovia on Monday. His aides say he has since recovered. Boakai beat out former footballer George Weah, 57, in last year's presidential election, despite concerns voiced on the campaign trail about his fitness for office.

ZAMBIA

Seven feared dead in flooded mine shaft

At the time of going to press, seven miners who were trapped 235 metres underground on Monday morning had not yet been rescued, despite efforts by Zambian and Chinese authorities. The Chinese-owned Macrolink mine in Ndola was under construction when mud and water flooded into a shaft, trapping two Chinese and five Zambian workers. One miner managed to escape. In December, 41 miners were trapped and killed in Seseli Mine in Chingola following heavy rains and landslides.

HORN OF AFRICA

Egypt's Sisi declares Somalia port support

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said on Sunday he would defend Somalia in the row with Ethiopia over the Addis Ababa's seaport deal with Somaliland. Ethiopia wants to lease a 20km stretch of coastline for a navy base and seaport from Somaliland which considers itself an independent nation but has not been recognised by any other state since it left its union with Somalia in 1991. Ethiopia said it would consider recognising their independence claim in exchange for access to a sea port, angering Somalia. Egypt and Ethiopia have long been at

**Seaside imbroglio: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah has stuck his oar in.**

Photo: Mohamed El-Shahed/AFP

loggerheads over the Grand Renaissance dam which Cairo sees as a threat to Egyptian access to River Nile waters.



CULTURE

The Africa is strong in this year's US awards season

Two African films could win in the Best Documentary Feature category of this year's Oscars. *Four Daughters*, by Tunisian director Kaouther Ben Hania is nominated alongside *Bobi Wine: The People's President* by Ugandan filmmaker Moses Bwayo and others. *Io Capitano*, an Italian drama shot in Morocco and Senegal, is nominated for best international feature film. At the Grammys, Nigeria's Burna Boy will perform while recent top Emmy-winner, South Africa's Trevor Noah, will host. Last week Noah received an Emmy award for the final year of his stint at the satirical *Daily Show*.

MUSIC

Will the real Burna Boy please stand up

Organisers of the Grammy Awards were very excited to announce Nigerian superstar Burna Boy as one of the performers at this year's event. Unfortunately, the video they chose to make that announcement on Instagram was of someone else entirely. Was it a black man? Yes. Wearing flamboyant jewellery? Yes. Hair braided? Also yes. It just wasn't Burna Boy – who they really should recognise by now, seeing as he has already picked up 10 Grammy nominations. Also, as everyone knows, the real Burna Boy is twice as tall.

NIGERIA

The richer they are, the richer they get

Aliko Dangote is still Africa's richest person, according to the list of African billionaires released by Forbes magazine this week. This is his 13th consecutive year on top. He is worth an estimated \$13.9-billion, having added \$400-million to his fortune last year. The coming year might not be so hot, however: the Lagos offices of the cement magnate were raided by Nigeria's anti-corruption watchdog earlier this month, amid apparent tensions between him and Nigeria's new President Bola Tinubu.

GHANA

Britain to 'loan' the crown jewels it stole

In a show of goodwill, two British museums are lending the Asante jewels and artefacts back to Ghana – 150 years after they were looted. The pieces, comprising 32 items of royal regalia, will be displayed in the Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi. The museums are banned by UK law from permanently returning items to their countries of origin. The initial loan is for three years.

SOUTH AFRICA

Man arrested for deadly Joburg fire

A 29-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the devastating fire that killed 77 people in a building in central Johannesburg last August. According to Eyewitness News, the man started the fire to burn the corpse of a man that he had killed that night. He claimed to be high on crystal meth at the time. Many of the victims of the blaze were migrants from other countries in the region.



MALAWI

Great red carpet heist foiled in nick of time

President Lazarus Chakwera's red carpet was stolen while en route to Mwanza this week, ahead of a public event. "The

president uses the carpet as a cushion to avoid stepping on dirt like the rest of us mere mortals," noted Jack McBrams, a regular contributor to *The Continent*. Thankfully for the president's dignity, two suspects were swiftly apprehended after a police investigation, and the red carpet was recovered.

Eritrea

Still the #1 jailer of journalists in Africa

Within and without the borders of their home countries, African journalists face harassment, detention and death for their work.

Kiri Rupiah

Eritrea imprisons more journalists than any other country in Africa. Among them is Swedish-Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak, whose detention ranks among the longest imprisonments of a journalist in the world.

This is according to a report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an independent, non-profit organisation that promotes press freedom worldwide, defending the rights of journalists to report without reprisal.

Isaak, along with a group of over 20 senior cabinet ministers, members of Parliament and journalists, was detained without charge in September 2001 in what the United Nations described as a “draconian purge”. Isaak has been largely held incommunicado for over 20 years. His family believes he may be dead. According to Eritrea’s President Isaias Afwerki, he and his colleagues posed a threat to national security.

Ethiopia and Cameroon close out the

list of the top three worst jailers on the continent. Ethiopia has been accused of going after journalists across borders, and Cameroon gained infamy last year when radio host Martinez Zongo was abducted by suspected government forces before his mutilated body was recovered days later. No one has been convicted of his murder.

CPJ says Egypt, tied with Türkiye in 2023 as the eighth-ranked global jailer, has joined Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Iraqi Kurdistan in expanding the scope of their laws to include the use of “false news, terrorism, and anti-state charges” against journalists.

As of 1 December 2023, 320 journalists around the world were in prison for their work. Last year, the top five global jailers of journalists were China, Myanmar, Belarus, Russia and Vietnam.

According to the CPJ, Israel has for the first time emerged as the world’s number one jailer of journalists. This is in addition to the more than 80 journalists who have been killed since Israel’s war in Gaza began on 7 October 2023. ■

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Sudan

The warlord's victory lap

Accusations of war crimes swirl around him but Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, whose forces have the upper hand in Sudan's civil war, is being greeted like an old friend in African capitals.



General aside: Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni delighted in entertaining Rapid Support Forces leader Mohamed Dagalo of Sudan during his grand tour.

Kiri Rupiah

Evidence is mounting of atrocities committed by forces loyal to Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti. Investigators appointed by the

United Nations Security Council are the latest group to accuse his Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group, of committing possible war crimes in Sudan.

A report by the five-member panel says that between 10,000 and 15,000

people were killed as the RSF advanced on El Geneina in Western Darfur last year. Many were members of the Masalit ethnic group. They identified at least 13 mass graves.

The RSF have been implicated in multiple other atrocities, both in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, since the outbreak of the civil war in April 2023.

The country is officially led by General Abdul Fatah al-Burhan, who controls the Sudanese army, but the RSF controls most of Darfur and key parts of Khartoum. It recently took control of Wad Madani, a major city south-east of the capital.

Hemedti was previously implicated in the genocide in Darfur in the early 2000s, where he was a commander in the notorious “Janjaweed” militia – a precursor to the RSF.

When news of the damning UN report first emerged this week, Hemedti was in Kampala, continuing his charm offensive with regional and continental leaders. It appears to be working.

The wooing began on 27 December, when Hemedti met President Yoweri Museveni at the latter’s country home in Uganda’s Kiruhura district.

He then travelled to Ethiopia to shake hands with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, before a sit-down in Nairobi with Kenya’s President William Ruto.

Next up was Djibouti’s President Ismail Guelleh, who is also chair of the Horn of Africa’s regional bloc, Igad, and then a flight to Pretoria to engage with South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa.

So enamoured was Ramaphosa that his office described the RSF leader as the



Receipts: South Africa hastily deleted its tweet calling Dagalo Sudan’s president.

Photo: X/Presidency/South Africa

president of Sudan, in a tweet that was subsequently deleted.

Ramaphosa has been heavily criticised for taking the meeting with Hemedti: it is not a good look for one to trade smiles with a potential genocidaire at the same time one is accusing Israel in an international court of committing the same crime against Palestinians.

Ramaphosa has been heavily criticised for taking the meeting with Hemedti

Hemedti returned to East Africa to meet with Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who – apparently without irony – gave him a tour of the Genocide Museum in Kigali; and finally back to Kampala to attend an Igad meeting and the Non-Aligned Movement summit.

For now, the charm offensive is over. But the war crimes appear to be continuing unhindered by regional approbrium. ■

Cameroon

Hope and hesitancy as malaria vaccinations begin

A new vaccine could eliminate Africa's deadliest disease. Cameroon is rolling it out first – and the rest of the continent is watching very, very closely.



Photo: Gavi

Dorcas Ekupe in Maroua and Justina Asishana

Doudou Esther, a mother of six children, was outside the Mouda Health Centre in Cameroon's Far North region at 7am. She was there to get her baby the new malaria vaccine – a drug

that could revolutionise the fight against malaria. "When she's fine, I'm fine too. Besides, it's free. I don't have to pay a single dime for my children to get the vaccine," Doudou told *The Continent*.

Cameroon is the first country in the world to make vaccination for malaria part of routine childhood immunisation.

Twenty other African countries, including Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, and Benin, plan to introduce the vaccination in 2024, according to Gavi, the global vaccine alliance that is supporting the roll-out of the new drug.

On Monday, in 42 high-risk districts, health authorities began administering the drug to infants under six months of age. In Cameroon, malaria infected 12% of the population between 2015 and 2022, and accounted for 30% of all doctor and health facility visits. Globally, the disease kills about 608,000 people every year. Of these, 500,000 are African children under the age of five.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, Africa director at the World Health Organisation, called the vaccine roll-out “a game changer in our fight against the disease”.

Clinical trials have proved that the vaccine works, but its success depends too on how well it is adopted on the ground. This cannot be taken for granted. In Cameroon’s northernmost region, on the edge of the Sahel, where trust in the government is low, not everyone is convinced.

“I won’t allow my daughters to get that vaccine. I didn’t allow them to take the meningitis vaccine and I won’t allow them to take this too,” said Veronique Daipa, a mother of three in the Domayo neighbourhood of Maroua, the Far North Region’s capital.

Others prefer to rely on traditional remedies. “I hardly go to the hospital. I use our local neem tree. God gave them to us in abundance. I don’t see why I should give my children vaccines. I will wait to



Malaria Vaccination in SOA District Hospital, Cameroon. Photo: Gavi

see if the vaccine has adverse effects on children before I consider it,” said fellow Maroua resident Oumoul Jamilatou.

The vaccine was tested in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania in large-scale clinical trials and pilot phases, where it was found to be safe and effective.

Tikabi Tchoboui heads the Mouda health centre in Moutourwa district, which is offering the new vaccine. “Children may have a little fever as a side effect but there is no need to worry because they will be fine,” she told anxious parents.

Dr Jean Pierre Kidwang, the head of the malaria control programme in the Far North Region, echoes this perspective, saying that substantive information was shared with community leaders who have “been mobilised to reach out to the local population to educate them”.

He added: “The population needs to be at ease. It is just a normal vaccine like any other.” ■

The Hague

South Africa said that Israel is on the wrong side of history – and the World Court agreed

ANALYSIS

Simon Allison

The International Court of Justice has found that Israel's actions in its war in Gaza fall under the scope of the Genocide Convention. It has issued a series of provisional orders to prevent genocide from taking place. The highly anticipated judgment in the case that South Africa brought against Israel was delivered on Friday in The Hague.

The court's ruling was significant on three different fronts.

The first is legal. South Africa argued that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Israel's rebuttal was that it is merely defending itself from a brutal terrorist group, after the 7 October attack by Hamas that left 1,200 people dead.

The verdict is a qualified victory for South Africa's all-star legal team, comprising some of the country's most senior human rights lawyers. They were hoping that the court would order an immediate ceasefire. It did not. But it did conclude that South Africa's accusations

of genocide are "plausible" and ordered Israel to halt the killing of Palestinians, whom it defined as a protected group.

That the court felt the need to make such an order is damning for Israel, especially when read along with the evidence provided by the court itself. This evidence paired the scale of civilian deaths – estimated at more than 26,000 – with the dehumanising language used by some of Israel's most senior leaders. It is almost incomprehensible that a nation founded by survivors of genocide stands accused of committing that gravest of crimes. But the world's highest court has now confirmed that those allegations are plausible.

The second front is geopolitical. In taking this case to The Hague, South Africa defied not only Israel but also its backers, including the United States, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. It was brave politics. These are the most powerful countries in the western world, with enormous influence over global politics and economics. They make for dangerous enemies.

But South Africa has a bigger prize in mind. Its diplomats have long dreamed



Lawful good: South African legal expert John Dugard greets foreign minister Naledi Pandor ahead of the ICJ verdict.

Photo: Michel Porro/Getty Images

of cementing South Africa as the moral voice of the Global South, and this was the perfect issue on which to do so. In standing against Israel's ongoing atrocities, it exposed the hypocrisy of Western nations that preach human rights and democracy – but don't apply those values to Palestinian lives. This message has resonated strongly around the world, bringing South Africa widespread international support. "South Africa is now the leader of the free world," concluded the UK-based *Guardian* columnist Owen Jones.

This may be a stretch, as South Africa is itself no stranger to hypocrisy. President Cyril Ramaphosa welcomed Sudanese warlord Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, in Pretoria just a week before South African lawyers made their arguments in The Hague. Hemedti was involved in the Darfur Genocide in the early 2000s, and there is plenty of evidence that his forces are committing war crimes in the ongoing Sudanese civil war.

And South Africa's stance against Israel

is in marked contrast to its approach to the Russia-Ukraine war, where it repeatedly refrained from condemning Russian atrocities at the United Nations, supposedly in the interests of remaining non-aligned. This caused immense damage to the country's reputation.

But South African diplomats appear to have learned from that debacle, and its reaction to the conflict in Gaza was different – no doubt also influenced by the country's own lived experience of apartheid. It turns out that there is enormous power in a human rights-centred foreign policy, and South Africa's international standing now is higher than at any point since its transition to democracy – at least in the Global South.

The final front is, of course, the actual battle being waged in the streets of Gaza, where Palestinian civilians continue to die in the face of a relentless, indiscriminate onslaught. It is not yet clear whether either Hamas (who were ordered to release all remaining Israeli hostages) or Israel will abide by any part of the court's verdict. "Hague Shmague" was the immediate, dismissive response of Israel's Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. It has previously ignored the court, 20 years ago, when it ruled against Israel constructing a wall in the occupied West Bank.

But what the court in The Hague has clarified, with little room for argument, is that in this instance Israel – and its international cheerleaders – are on the wrong side of history. ■



Photo: Pius
Utomi Ekpei/AFP

TB Joshua's undying appeal

When Temitope Balogun Joshua died in 2021, he was arguably the most famous religious figure in Africa. His Synagogue Church of All Nations attracted followers from all over the continent and the world, who gave him at least \$14-million in contributions. But the late Nigerian televangelist was not as godly as he purported to be. Earlier this month, an investigation by openDemocracy

and the BBC revealed allegations of rape, enslavement and torture against him. Whistleblowers also claimed that many of TB Joshua's so-called 'miracles' had been faked. But the revelations do not appear to have dented his followers' faith. **Lydia Namubiru** spoke to several church members to understand how they they first came into TB Joshua's orbit – and why they remain there.

A woman in grief

When Rose Lungu's parents separated, she was left feeling responsible for her younger sister. Only a child herself, she couldn't help her sister's early marriage; nor seeing her sent away from the marital home after a miscarriage. Once Lungu was a bit more secure in her IT career, she set out to make it up to her. The elder sibling moved her dejected sister in with her, sent her back to school and, like a doting parent, even rewarded her with a trip abroad for a good exam result.

But this ended in abrupt tragedy when her sister died shortly after graduating from high school in 2015. About a month later, a grief-stricken Lungu – plagued by depression and nightmares – journeyed from Zambia to the Lagos compound of TB Joshua, a Nigerian televangelist whom she believed to be a miracle worker.

Nearly every TB Joshua believer speaks of a life history of exceptional hardship. They sought out the pastor during a period of deep personal crisis. The real miracle the evangelist appears to have performed is convincing them it was their encounter with him that turned the tide.

At one point during her week-long stay in Lagos – paying the church up to \$1,000 for the privilege – Joshua prayed over Lungu. She believes it made all the difference. “He touched my forehead, you know. And after that prayer, when I went to sleep, I saw a person who looked like my sister walking away from me. When I woke from that dream, I felt some peace, some relief. I could still feel the sorrow and so forth, but the grief was not as heavy as it was when I travelled there.”

For nearly a decade prior to her visit, Lungu had found herself hurrying back from her own church on Sundays to catch TB Joshua on Emmanuel TV, a television station run by Joshua's church. “I started seeing extraordinary stories unfold before my eyes,” she said.

Emmanuel TV led viewers to believe that Joshua was a spectacular miracle worker.

But in the recently-released BBC documentary, former workers at Joshua's church own up to having falsified these miracles. Lungu dismisses the documentary as “a scandal” and “full of lies” – even though she had only one face-to-face encounter with Joshua.

It was through watching Emmanuel TV that Lungu first made contact with the church. “After some of these preachings, there were numbers on the screen. When you called, sometimes you actually spoke to somebody. Like a helpline.” The people on the line would also invite callers to become money-contributing partners. “They would say, ‘Okay, you send the money like this,’” said Lungu. That's how she started sending between \$50-\$100 a month to Joshua's ministry. She still does, when she can.

The man of many miracles

Childhood wasn't easy for Benjamin Akhiwu, growing up in his father's polygamous homestead in northern Nigeria. As the child of neither wife, he was allotted a life of hardship and poverty. When he was 12, he had a dream in which God showed him a guardian angel who would provide for him.

By 2000, Akhiwu was working as a junior doctor for the Nigerian Air Force in Jos when he heard patients make an extraordinary claim: that they had been cured of HIV by watching Joshua on television.

Akhiwu had a more pressing problem: money. “I was working for peanuts,” he said. He travelled nearly 1,000km by road to Joshua’s compound looking for his own miracle.

“When I got there, I explained to them my problems. One of the ushers laughed and told me that God had already answered my prayers and that it will be difficult for me to see the man of God,” he recalls. Angry about the wasted journey, he left the compound. But when four of his residency programme applications were accepted a month later, he concluded

that the God of TB Joshua had worked for him. He bought a satellite TV dish and started watching Joshua’s broadcasts religiously.

Eight years later he became a paying partner. Although he visited the church a few times and testified to credit Joshua for this or that, Akhiwu didn’t get the prophet’s personal attention until 2014. He had just returned from a fellowship in Germany and testified about it in church. The evangelist asked to meet him.

“On my way back to the airport to fly back to Jos, I got a phone call from Wiseman Christopher [one of Joshua’s closest colleagues] that Daddy wants to see me immediately. That was how my relationship with Daddy started,” he says.

Many of Joshua’s loyalists refer to him as Daddy.



Believers: Followers of Temitope Balogun Joshua hold a candlelight vigil in Ikotun, Nigeria after his death in 2021. Photo: Adekunle Ajayi/NurPhoto via Getty Images

Akhiwu says Joshua handed him an envelope containing 200,000 naira (about \$1,200 then) in their first meeting. “I was confused. I hadn’t asked him for money. He said, ‘No, no, no, no, no, no, take it. This is a gift from God. And that I want to be seeing you every month in church.’”

Akhiwu says that after that meeting, Joshua’s ministry often paid for tickets for him to come down to Lagos from Kano where he worked. They would put him up in the best rooms in the church compound and the prophet gave him money amounting to millions of naira. Akhiwu came to see Joshua as the guardian angel that he had been promised in his childhood dream.

Akhiwu and his wife would testify frequently to Joshua’s miracles on those trips. In one testimony published by the church, he said he survived an ambush by armed bandits on the road to Kano. Their bullets failed to hit his car because he was carrying bottles of water anointed by Joshua, he claimed.

In our interview with him, he said the anointed water helped him survive a plane crash. His wife, Hellen, a paediatrician, testified in the church in 2015 that Joshua helped her pass her board exams after four unsuccessful attempts; and in our interview she said his blessing also helped her carry a pregnancy to term for the first time after several miscarriages.

The miracle of whiteness

John Ugbaje was in his early 20s and in the congregation of a similarly charismatic Nigerian televangelist, Chris Oyakhilome. Other clergy in Nigeria’s Christian

community had dismissed Joshua as a fraud, but not Oyakhilome. It was here that Ugbaje heard something that intrigued him.

“Reverend Tom, that is Pastor Chris’s younger brother, said that ‘those of you travelling abroad to impress the whites, somebody is in Nigeria and they want to meet him.’”

Ugbaje was intrigued. Who was the man to whom white people came? Soon after, he found the Emmanuel TV channel on DStv.

What he saw was a man beating all the odds. His miracles were very strange, and had alienated him from the Nigerian Christian establishment who feared his power came from voodoo practices. There was an actual tree growing in his church. His English was faltering and he often just spoke Yoruba. But sure enough, there were white people in his congregation.

“I said to myself, ‘these white people are very wise. They are not moved by prosperity messages because they are already prosperous in their nations. So for them to keep on coming, something is happening. People are being healed; people are being delivered. That is why they will go and come back.’ That was my conviction,” said Ugbaje.

He has been a part of the congregation since, and has sent regular partner payments since 2008.

He says he still does. ■

Reporting for this story was supported by openDemocracy, an independent UK-based media outlet that also supported the BBC investigation into TB Joshua’s legacy.

Germany has learnt nothing from its terrible history

Henning Melber

On 12 January 1904, the Ovaherero paramount chief, Samuel Maharero, ordered his people to rise up against the colonisers who had occupied their land and renamed it “German South West Africa”. In response, the German military commander Lothar von Trotha issued an extermination order, prompting Nama communities, led by Hendrik Witbooi and Jacob Marengo, to join the resistance.

Von Trotha’s forces brutally implemented their extermination orders. By 1908, an estimated 80% of the Ovaherero had been wiped out. So too had 40% of the Nama. The mortality rate was especially high among women and children who were forced into concentration camps. Damara and San communities – considered collateral damage – suffered a similar fate.

This was the first genocide of the 20th century. It took more than a century for Germany to even acknowledge the crimes, and only in 2021 did the European country offer any form of apology. That apology came with caveats, however, to prevent legal culpability and head off calls for reparations.

Nonetheless, under enormous diplomatic pressure, it was preliminarily accepted by the Namibian government,

whose special envoy initialled it in a “joint declaration” with Germany.

Germany thought that it had drawn a line under this ugly chapter in its history. It was wrong. The declaration was rejected by most parties in Namibia’s National Assembly, and by the main agencies of the descendants of genocide victims – who were excluded from the negotiating table. The Herero paramount chief, Vekuii Rukoro, termed it “an insult”.

No reparations accompanied the apology, and no serious effort has been made to return land to the communities dispossessed during the genocide – this land remains overwhelmingly in the hands of white settlers.

Even the Namibian government was unsatisfied, and was pushing to renegotiate the terms of the joint declaration before ratifying it.

Then came Israel’s war in Gaza – and Germany’s vociferous support for a military action which has so far claimed the lives of at least 26,000 people, mostly civilians. The war has been waged with such brutality that South Africa officially accused Israel of committing genocide in a case at the International Court of Justice.

On 12 January 2024 – 120 years, to the day, since the beginning of the war that precipitated Germany’s genocide in Namibia – Germany announced that



Seltsame Frucht: A German picture postcard depicting a 'Hanging Party' from about 1896, in which 312 Herero people were hanged by German soldiers and settlers to instil fear in local communities. Photo: Underwood Archives/Getty Images

it would intervene in the court case in The Hague: not to protect civilians from further attacks, but instead to defend Israel's right to "defend itself" after the attacks by Hamas on 7 October last year, in which approximately 1,200 people were killed and 240 people taken hostage.

Germany, despite its public shows of remorse, has learnt nothing from its history – as Namibia's President Hage Geingob was quick to point out, in an uncharacteristically blunt outburst: "The German government is yet to fully atone for the genocide it committed on Namibian soil ... Germany cannot morally express commitment to the United Nations convention against genocide, including atonement for the genocide in Namibia, whilst supporting the equivalent of a holocaust and genocide in Gaza."

Geingob's strongly-worded reaction reflects the feelings of many Namibians. These feelings have their roots in the decades of discrimination and racism inflicted on Namibia by Germany – which, symbolic moral gestures aside, Germany

has made no real effort to redress.

In stark contrast, Germany has turned its feelings of guilt over the Holocaust into uncritical loyalty to an Israeli government. Notwithstanding the horrific massacres committed by Hamas on 7 October, one evil crime cannot excuse another evil crime. Two wrongs do not make a right. "Never again" should mean never again. Instead, after committing two genocides in the 20th century, Germany risks facilitating another one in this century.

For Namibia, ratifying the joint declaration should no longer be an option. But this may, perhaps, be the moment to pressure Germany further to make real amends for its past mistakes – and, this time, to include the communities of victims in the negotiations; and to make sure that substantive reparations are firmly on the table. ■

Professor Henning Melber is associated with the University of Pretoria, the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein and the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala. As a son of German immigrants to Namibia, he joined Swapo in 1974.



PHOTO ESSAY

Saving the pangolin

Photos: Shiraaz Mohamed

Every year, 2.7-million pangolins are stolen from Africa. These endangered animals are trafficked to Asia, where there is a lucrative black market for pangolin flesh and for their scales, which are ground up into a powder that supposedly cures a wide range of ailments.

Occasionally, however, anti-trafficking authorities catch a break – and are able to stop the traffickers in their tracks. These rare pictures were captured during a successful raid last year by South African police.

The pangolins pictured here

received medical treatment and then rehabilitation by veterinary professionals. They are the lucky ones.

Other pangolins – trafficked by criminal gangs alongside mandrax, heroin, cocaine, rhino horn, ivory and blood diamonds – endure horrifying conditions as they are moved between continents.

They are stored in hot, confined areas, sometimes with their limbs severed to prevent escape; some are doused in petrol, or other substances with strong odours, to avoid detection by anti-poaching sniffer dogs.



Top: Conservationist Emma de Jager interacts with a rescued pangolin at a secure location in Limpopo, the northernmost province in South Africa.

Bottom: A rescued, anaesthetized pangolin is tube-fed at a veterinary medical facility in Limpopo.



Top: An alleged pangolin poacher is handcuffed after trying to sell a pangolin to undercover operative Ray Jansen in a sting operation outside Pretoria, Gauteng.
Bottom: Officials prepare to transport a rescued pangolin to a medical facility. Faces have been blurred to protect the identities of some of the officials.



Photo: Audrey Donkor

TRAVEL

The Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park

The space dedicated to Ghana's first president has been recently revamped, writes Audrey Donkor in Accra

A visit to the recently refurbished Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park in downtown Accra should top the itinerary of any visitor to Ghana. The 5.3-acre site is the final resting place of Osagyefo (“saviour”) Dr Kwame Nkrumah – Ghana’s first prime minister and president, and the great pan-Africanist who was voted “Man of the Millennium” by BBC Africa listeners in 1999.

In the park stands an imposing marble-clad mausoleum, in the shape of Akan swords turned upside down – a symbol representing peace in the local Akan culture. The mausoleum’s design also

symbolises a truncated tree. It reflects the unfinished work of Nkrumah, who was deposed in a military and police coup in 1966. Inside lie the graves of Nkrumah and his Egyptian Coptic Christian wife Fathia Rizk. Even in marriage, Nkrumah honoured African unity: tying the knot with Fathia became a new bridge between North Africa and the rest of the continent.

You’ll find the newly expanded museum at the rear of the mausoleum. Take a walk through the audio-visual tunnel that now surrounds the old museum, and you’ll see images on the walls of the tunnels of Nkrumah with

Photo: Getty Images



Photo: Audrey Donkor



Top: Dr Kwame Nkrumah declares independence from Britain in 1957. Below: It was the 1950s – of course the presidential ride was a Cadillac!

other world leaders, including Patrice Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Soviet Union's Nikita Khrushchev. The walls also show quotes from some of Nkrumah's famous speeches, which reveal his ideological leanings and wariness of neocolonialism.

A screen at the end of the tunnel plays a recording of Nkrumah declaring Ghana's independence in 1957 at the very site of the memorial park, which at the time was a sports field favoured by polo-playing British colonists. An exit to the side leads to an astro turfed balcony with

a ceiling-to-floor image of Nkrumah in that historic moment, flanked by his fellow party leaders. Go ahead and pretend you too declared independence alongside Nkrumah, and take a snap of yourself next to the iconic image.

You'll gain a more intimate knowledge of Dr Nkrumah inside the old museum. Observe his personal belongings (including his piano) and furnishings from his presidential residence. And read the chronology of his life from his birth in 1909 at Nkroful in the Gold Coast (renamed Ghana after independence), through to his political activism and achievements as head of state, until his eventual demise in Romania in 1972.

You might feel as though you've seen enough at this point, but there's still more to take in – including the statue of Nkrumah that was vandalised during his overthrow. And don't forget the new Freedom Wall, primed for Instaworthy photos of yourself alongside Nkrumah's varied countenances, not to mention the trees planted by visiting world leaders.

Finally, relax and enjoy the audiovisual show at the musical fountains in front of the mausoleum.

Rates for visitors to Ghana are 100 cedis (\$8) for adults, 60 cedis (\$5) for tertiary students and 30 cedis (\$2.5) for children. ■

Audrey Donkor is a writer and global affairs analyst from Ghana

Do you want to show us around your town or city?

Send an email to read@thecontinent.org and we'll be in touch!

Public schools make the grade – for adults, anyway

Public education in Africa faces plenty of challenges – and we’re not talking about homework or exams – but for most African adults, decent treatment by school officials is not one of them.

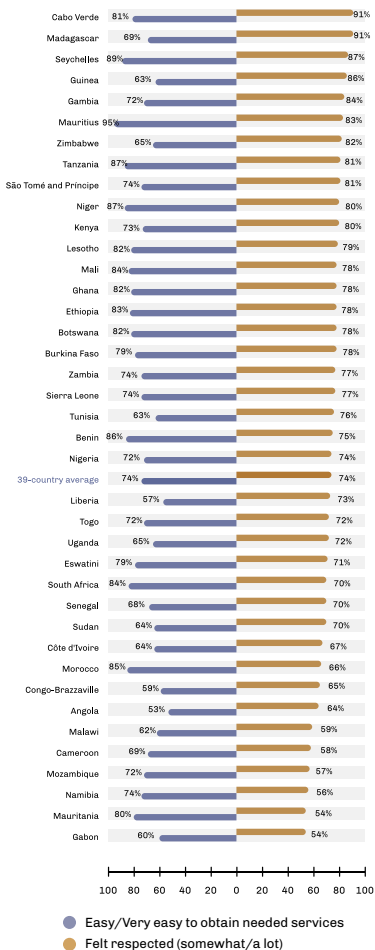
Based on national surveys in 39 African countries, three quarters (74%) of adults who had contact with a public school during the previous year say they found it “easy” or “very easy” to obtain the services they needed.

And the same proportion (74%) report that they were treated with respect (“somewhat” or “a lot”) by the teachers and other school officials they dealt with.

As always, some countries score better than others, from percentages in the 50s in Angola, Gabon, and Mauritania to the 90s in Mauritius, Cabo Verde, and Madagascar. But while that leaves plenty of room – 26 percentage points, on average – for improvement, it’s notable that majorities in every surveyed country offer favourable reviews of their interaction with the public schools.

One caveat: Since Afrobarometer limits its surveys (for now) to adults, we’re not sure how the kids feel about “easy” and “respectful”. ■

Interaction with public schools | 39 African countries | 2021/2023



Note: Includes only respondents who had contact with a public school during the previous 12 months.

Source: Afrobarometer is 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 +/- two to three percentage points.



New year, new hue

Alice Walker's classic
novel finds a new voice in
Ghanaian director's film

Wilfred Okiche

Blitz Bazawule was hesitant to take on his latest big-screen project. “*The Color Purple* is sacred ground. You don’t just show up to it with nothing to offer and nothing to contribute,” the Ghanaian director said on the American morning television show *The View*.

Bazawule (*The Burial of Kojo*, Beyoncé’s *Black is King*) was right to be hesitant. *The Color Purple*, a seminal novel by American black feminist Alice Walker, carries a lot of cultural weight.

The book won a Pulitzer Prize in 1982; a film adaptation directed by Steven Spielberg was critically acclaimed and nominated for an Oscar; and a smash

Broadway musical production that followed in 2005 won a Tony award.

The story of Celie and Nettie, growing up in the south at the turn of the 20th century, gave voice to the struggles of African-American women.

The sisters lose their mother, are done wrong by the men in their lives and get separated, perhaps forever. Celie is only able to survive these traumas by strength of will she gets from writing secret letters to God.

Bazawule’s version is a big screen adaptation of the stage production, complete with its vibrant musical numbers and devotion to bombast, but he definitely contributes a few updates of his own to *The Color Purple* lore.

In Bazawule’s version, the celebration of sisterhood is at the core and he reimagines a more cheerful worldview for Celie. The musical background translates well to the material as Bazawule and his collaborators survey the history of African-American music, drawing from negro spirituals, gospel, jazz and the blues.

Surprisingly, though, Bazawule is not as interested in the portions of the story set in Africa.

He also steers the film away from the formal strictures of the Spielberg film and opens up a sense of dramatic interactivity that is often present in Black films from Africa and its diaspora.

So don’t be surprised when you find yourself singing along or talking back to the characters on the screen. This is that kind of movie. ■

THE QUIZ

0-3

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

4-7

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

8-10

"This quiz is way easier if you read *The Continent* each week."



- 1_ Which country is the island of Annobón (pictured) part of?
- 2_ Who was Ghana's first prime minister and president?
- 3_ True or false: Sudan has never won the men's Africa Cup of Nations.
- 4_ Alassane Ouattara is which country's president?
- 5_ Rwanda was first colonised in 1899. Which country colonised it?
- 6_ What is the capital city of The Comoros?
- 7_ True or false: Abdel Fattah El-Sisi is Algeria's president.
- 8_ Does Namibia have a) only a president; b) a president and a prime minister; or c) just a prime minister?
- 9_ Joseph Boakai is which country's president?
- 10_ Which country recently became the first to roll out a malaria vaccine programme for children?

HOW DID I DO? WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to +27 73 805 6068 and we'll send the answers to you!

Another week of shock, betrayal, broken hearts and broken promises.

Don't worry, we're not talking about another coup – or about the International Court of Justice, which was only due to announce its verdict on provisional measures against Israel after this column's deadline.

No, we mean of course the Africa Cup of Nations. Hosts Côte d'Ivoire losing 4-0 to Equatorial Guinea; Ghana's Black Stars crashing out; and Algeria being defeated by Mauritania!

The shocks have hit harder than Billy Ruto's economy hit our wallet, although admittedly with fewer cards left in the red.

While we've been sat indoors in Nairobi stuffing our faces and switching between the Africa

Cup of Nations tournament and every telenovela going, some of our leaders were dressed to the nines as they attended the inauguration of Liberia's new president, Joseph Boakai.

After 79-year-old Joseph was sworn in, he gave a speech in which he said he had come to "rekindle hope", and "build a new Liberia" and would tackle corruption, improve service delivery, education and

roads. As his speech went on, it became increasingly clear that he could not, and after it was clear that he was faltering, he was escorted off stage by his aides. By now we're quite used to leaders struggling to keep their promises, but struggling to even make them is a little surprising. His office has since said that this was due to exhaustion as a result of the heat, and that

he is now "perfectly fine".

Opponents who argued against voting for Boakai due to his advanced age may have felt a few schadenLOLS as he cut his speech short, but we at *Drift* think it's been an increasingly rare pleasure to see a peaceful transfer of power. So welcome to the gang Joseph Boakai. We hope to see you soon at the African Union parties, group

therapy sessions, and annual football match. (So if you could tell them to let us in that would be great. Our membership card keeps getting lost in the post!)

While Liberia's electoral cycle has wrapped up, Senegal is counting down to its own polls, which are scheduled to take place next month. The country's Constitutional Council has released the final list of candidates who will be vying

Joseph's amazing technicolour dream vote



CONTINENTAL DRIFT

Samira Sawlani



Hang in there, kid: Joseph Boakai (just 72 years old at the time) casts his ballot in the Liberian elections of 2017. Photo: Stringer/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

for the presidency, but notably absent from their number are opposition figure Ousmane Sonko and Karim Wade, the son of former president Abdoulaye Wade.

Authorities cited Sonko's six month suspended sentence for defamation as the reason behind his disqualification, while Karim Wade having dual nationality (which he says he has renounced) was their reason for keeping him off the ballot.

Macky Sall announcing that he would not run for a third term earned him some praise, but whether these elections will be considered "free and fair" remains to be seen: Human Rights Watch have already accused authorities of targeting opposition leaders, journalists and activists ahead of the polls.

Staying with West Africa, the latest episode of *Keeping Up With The Coupdashians* comes from Guinea, and we have a cast member update! Coup

leader and transitional prime minister Mamady Doumbouya held a gathering for members of the defence forces, where his guests called for him to be elevated from colonel to general. Apparently he was initially quite reluctant about it all, but not wishing to fail in his duties as host, ultimately allowed himself to submit to their wishes.

General Doumbouya's graciousness is almost as high as that of the British Museum and The Victoria & Albert Museum in the United Kingdom, who have agreed to "lend" back to Ghana the treasures looted from the Asante court during Britain's imperial banditry era.

Imagine someone stealing your car and then lending it back to you!

Anyway we'll stick this gesture in the same box as all the feminists outraged over Margot Robbie not being nominated for an Oscar, yet keeping shtum over Israel's war in Gaza, where women are using cloths from tents as sanitary towels.

We end this week's column sending solidarity to women in Kenya who this Saturday will be leading nationwide protests against femicide. The statistics regarding women killed by their current and former partners, by strangers – by *friends* ffs – are horrifying. The victims are too often let down by the media, the police and the justice systems.

Kenyan women are once again saying enough is enough, and so they are taking to the streets. We at Drift stand with them. This is not about "a few bad eggs", this is not about the choices made by women. Wake up and smell the misogyny. ■

Rebottling spoiled wine

Zuma and his uMkhonto WeSizwe party will struggle to pass themselves off as the clean slate on which frustrated SA youth can project their aspirations

Sikelelwe Mtshizana

Projections that the African National Congress will lose its absolute majority of the vote in 2024 have created fertile ground for the rise of opposition parties. Among them is uMkhonto WeSizwe (MK), launched in December 2023 by former South African president Jacob Zuma. MK is not currently on the ballot and Zuma was twice elected as president, and so is constitutionally barred from running again. But the emergence of MK has generated considerable attention.

The name uMkhonto WeSizwe (Spear of the Nation) implies the party is the latest manifestation of the former paramilitary wing of the ANC – of which Zuma was a member during the struggle against apartheid – and that it will therefore adopt a more radical approach to issues such as racial equality and land redistribution.

The promise of a more radical approach may entice some young South Africans who are frustrated with the slow pace of post-apartheid change.

Accusing the government of having “declared war against black professionals and intellectuals”, Zuma appears alive to those frustrations.

But one reason for the slow pace of

change has been the ANC corruption. Zuma himself stands accused of rapidly accelerating the process of “state capture” and was jailed for contempt of court in 2021 after refusing to testify before a panel investigating wrongdoing during his tenure.

The MK movement – before it became a political party – has also struggled to form a clear post-apartheid identity. It has been accused of xenophobic violence and silencing critics of Zuma and his allies with intimidation. This raises fears that the main difference between the new party and the ANC lie not in land or economic policy, but rather its greater willingness to use undemocratic methods to secure power.

Rather than ushering in a new era of clean and accountable government, the erosion of the ANC’s electoral dominance may lead to an increasingly fractious and unpredictable form of politics in South Africa. ■

Sikelelwe Mtshizana is a political studies Master's student specialising in international relations at the University of Cape Town. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa



THE BIG PICTURE

Pier pressure: Children play in the water near the harbour in the Comoros capital Moroni. Comoros leader Azali Assoumani was re-elected on 14 January with 62.97% of the vote. Not that many people voted, partly due to a boycott by some opposition parties: turnout was a whopping 16%.

Photo: Olympia De Maismont/AFP



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