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The Continent



**Inheriting
Wakanda**

Image: Marvel



Cover: *Black Panther* dared to imagine a fictional African kingdom untouched by western imperialism. It celebrated African heroism, cultures and dazzled with a showcase of Black excellence. For many it created a watershed: Before *Black Panther*, and after. It also saw African culture appropriated into a global Black narrative, from which Africans rarely profit. With the sequel coming out this week, we consider if the original film truly had a meaningful impact on the creative fortunes of the African continent. (p15)

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ETHIOPIA

Ceasefire agreed after tense summit

Two of the warring parties in Ethiopia's civil war agreed to a ceasefire this week. At African Union-brokered talks in South Africa, the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front announced a truce – although fighting persists in Tigray, for now. Not present at the talks were representatives from the Eritrean government or Amhara militias, who have been involved in the fighting. The agreement does however include provision for the opening of humanitarian access to the Tigray region, and an “orderly” disarmament of Tigrayan forces.

EAST AFRICA

Troops deployed to calm DRC conflict

William Ruto, Kenya's president, announced this week that Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda will deploy a joint force to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, to counter the various violent groups operating in that region. Kenya will command the troops. Rwandan soldiers will stay at the border as the DRC is vehemently opposed to allowing them into its territory. Leaders of the East African Community agreed in April to deploy a joint force. “As neighbours, the destiny of DRC is intertwined with ours,” said Ruto, according to the AFP news agency.



Photo: Twitter/DeBeers

AHISTORICAL

Blinded by the bling

Kenyan Oscar-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o has been named as the first-ever global ambassador of major diamond-mining company De Beers. Nyong'o said the partnership brings to life the transformative power that she feels when she wears De Beers' diamond creations, "and the pride in knowing where they come from and the good they do." No word on the company's history in pre-independence Southern Africa – it was founded in 1888 by Cecil Rhodes, who made his fortune by exploiting black labour across mines in the region, while growing Britain's colonial project. He had a country named after him, Rhodesia, before its people renamed it.

ARAB LEAGUE

Algeria summit ends without food crisis response

Leaders of the Arab League concluded their 31st annual summit on Wednesday. Delegates called for collective Arab action on shared challenges, but the meeting ended without a concrete strategy on the food crisis gripping member states. The 22-member-bloc includes Somalia, Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia which are suffering wheat shortages amid Russia's war in Ukraine. Separately, it emerged that the summit host, Algeria, is negotiating a \$12- to \$17-billion arms agreement with Russia.

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

'New' owl is old fave

Scientists now estimate that Otus Bikegila, an owl species on the island of Príncipe whose existence was long considered "rumoured" because only locals had seen it, actually has a population of 1,000-1,500. Spoken of by locals since 1928 at least, the owl's distinctive hoot was first recorded by western scientists in 2009. In the recent survey of Príncipe forests to document its population distribution, the scientists worked with a local former parrot harvester, Ceciliano do Bom Jesus, nicknamed Bikegila, and named the species after him.

NIGERIA**Lagos's fancy new port ready for riches**

Construction of Lekki Deep Seaport, Nigeria's largest port, is complete. Work by China Harbor Engineering Company

Ltd started in June 2020 and continued through the pandemic and its aftershocks. One of the largest ports in West Africa, it will handle up to 1.2-million containers a year. Lagos governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu said that it will add tens of billions of dollars to the revenues of the country, state and host communities.

**RACISM****French MP told to 'go back to Africa'**

Carlos Martens Bilongo, one of a handful of parliamentarians of colour in France, was speaking on immigration in the National Assembly when he was interrupted. "They should go back to Africa," shouted Grégoire de Fournas, a member of the far-right National Rally, the biggest opposition party. Its extreme, often racist views are supported by 18% of French voters.

VIETNAM**Stolen seal's fate unsealed in France**

At Vietnam's insistence, auctioneers in France have paused plans to sell an artefact made in Vietnam in the 1800s. The 11kg imperial seal found its way to France in the 1940s when Vietnam was run by a French puppet king (who was overthrown by a government that the United States then tried to topple). Stopping the sale might also mean a loss of tax income for the French state.

BRAZIL**Bolsanaro balked,
but Lula says hi**

Brazil's outgoing president, Jair Bolsanaro, was not interested in Africa. He visited the continent zero times, and under his watch trade volumes with sub-Saharan Africa reached their lowest level in 15 years, according to African Business. Incoming president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is already working to change this, according to sources familiar with his transition plan. "Africa will be a priority again for his government," said João Bosco of the Brazil-Africa Institute, who said that Brazil will be hoping to make up ground lost to other middle powers such as Japan and Türkiye.

DRC**Fally Ipupa concert
ends in tragedy**

Eleven people were killed in a stampede at Kinshasa's Stade des Martyrs de la Pentecôte, after a concert by superstar Fally Ipupa. The interior minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Daniel Aselo Okito, blamed organisers, saying they admitted more concertgoers than the 100,000 people the stadium was built to accommodate. "I am deeply disturbed and my deepest condolences to all the families," said Fally Ipupa after reports of the stampede emerged.

**WILDLIFE****Dida, Tsavo's iconic
matriarch, bows out**

One of Africa's most famous elephants, has died. Dida's decomposed remains were found in Kenya's Tsavo East National Park this week. Kenya Wildlife Services eulogised the elephant, who was between 60 and 65 years old, saying on Twitter that she "shepherded her herd through many seasons" and was a repository of many decades' worth of knowledge. Dida was considered one of Africa's most iconic elephants for her huge tusks – so large they touched the ground – and her longevity and leadership of her herd.

THE AGENDA

US vs THEM?

◆ Bobi Wine, Kah Walla and Zachariah Mampilly are guests on **The Resistance Bureau**, discussing the not-at-all-fraught topic of America in Africa: Genuine Partners or Neocolonialism?' Register [here](#).

ON YER BIKE

◆ If you're in Harare, the NBMX Association of Zimbabwe will be hosting the **Zimbabwe National BMX Championship** at the Harare BMX Club on 11 and 12 November.

GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

◆ Calling all wine aficionados! The **International Wine Education Centre** hosts its internationally recognised wine courses at the MESH Club in Johannesburg from 9 November.

BALLOTS BOXED

◆ The **Somaliland presidential election**, scheduled for 13 November, has been delayed by two years and is now expected in November 2024.

PRIVILEGE YOUR CHECKS

◆ Get your facts straight in Nairobi, Kenya with Africa Check at the **Africa Facts Summit**. The free event will run from 7 to 9 November 2022 and will culminate with the annual African Fact-checking Awards.

NO LICKING PLEASE

◆ South Africa is putting its stamp on the **International Philately Exhibition** at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 8-12 November. The theme is 'South Africa's Road to Democracy'.

UP DOWNS

◆ The **CAF Women's Champions League** group stages are under way in Morocco, with Mamelodi Sundowns looking good to defend their crown.

INSTANT INTRIGUE

◆ Rapper Blaqbonez opens *Back in Uni* with: "All the hearts I broke in Lekki/ Only God fit to protect me". Their album *Young Preacher* came out last week.

The Agenda is a new section in *The Continent* that highlights the best upcoming music, movies, books, conferences, reports, product launches and job opportunities. We want to hear from our readers: please let us know if you or your organisation has something cool in the pipeline that our audience should know about on agenda@thecontinent.org. In some cases, we may accept payment for agenda entries (we'll make it clear when we do) – which will help us keep the newspaper free.

Climate

Pay up or shut up, say African states

In Egypt, African states plan, again, to demand recompense for the lethal pollution of the richest countries, who will, again, try to change the topic.

Sipho Kings

The climate crisis is a story of rich countries polluting and everyone on Earth paying the price. Thanks to self-interest and corrupt political systems, that pollution has not been dramatically decreased, despite half a century of scientist's warnings of catastrophe – and 28 years of international climate negotiations.

In Paris, in 2015, the world's nearly 200 countries agreed to do what they could to keep global heating to under 2°C. It has already warmed by 1.1°C with devastating consequences for places like Pakistan, where recent floods killed 1,700 people and did \$40-billion damage. Large parts of Nigeria flooded last month, while Somalia is experiencing near-famine conditions

– both crises were made more likely by climate change.

Paris was the product of rich countries demanding that the world's focus be on reducing emissions. Developing countries, which pollute very little, want equal focus to be on the damage being done as the world heats — and on adapting to that heating world. This argument is labelled as “loss and damage” in climate negotiations.

For the next two weeks, African countries and their peers working together in the G77 group of countries, plan to put extreme pressure on rich countries to pay up. The Egyptian official who heads up this COP has talked of restoring the “grand bargain” in which rich countries pay for the damage they have done.

In Libreville and Dakar earlier this year, African climate ministers agreed to be far more assertive in their demands. At COP, they will demand that, at the very least, rich countries hand over the \$100-billion a year they promised over a decade ago.

What they're up against is that any demands for money to help adapt to climate change are met with accusations that this will then water down efforts to reduce emissions, and so ensure a more deadly future.

Last month, the UN warned that the world's combined effort on reducing emissions is “woefully insufficient” and heating will reach 2.4 °C. ■

Switzerland

Jets and vaults full of Glencore's dirty money

The world's most profitable commodities trading company, Glencore, flew cash around the continent in private jets, for the purpose of bribing African officials into giving them the contracts it wanted. This week, a judge in London fined the Swiss company \$134-million for these crimes.

The company had already set aside \$140-million for fines in the United Kingdom, after it paid a \$1.1-billion fine in May to the United States and Brazil. None of this money will go to the African countries affected by this corruption.

The London court detailed nearly \$27-million in bribes in several African countries. The money was primarily used to bribe officials of state-owned companies in Nigeria, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, a prosecutor told the court. Glencore also failed to prevent the payment of bribes amounting to about \$1-million in Equatorial Guinea and South Sudan, the judge said.

Despite the fine, the shareholders of the company, which has at least 27



Shady business: Glencore is one of Switzerland's most profitable companies. It has been found to corrupt African governments, which creates profit for its shareholders.

mineral, oil and coal projects across the continent, will profit from the billions raked in by Glencore's extractive empire.

This year, the company has paid out a total of \$8.5-billion to its shareholders, after windfall profits from coal, thanks in part to the energy crisis wrought both by pandemic aftershocks and the war in Ukraine.

Amidst growing concern about climate change, many publicly listed companies are divesting from dirty fuels like coal that are making Glencore's abnormal profits, due to shareholder pressure.

But Glencore appears to be reducing the power external shareholders might have over its future decisions. This year it spent \$5-billion buying back shares from its shareholders. ■

Space

Kindling for the star forge

A new space telescope is helping scientists uncover the beauty and secrets of the universe's oldest celestial wonders

This picture is of the Pillars of Creation, a swirling mass of gases and dust that are helping to build new stars. Over millions of years, these start creating larger objects which eventually get heavy enough to collapse under their own weight and turn into a sun – the same process ours went through 4.5-billion years ago. The more advanced stars are the reddest parts of the photo.

It was taken by the James Webb Space Telescope, launched by Nasa late last year.

Canadian scientists this week said they had used the telescope to find the oldest cluster of stars ever discovered. Packed with millions of stars, the vast distance and speed of light mean that the pictures show the stars as they looked nine billion years ago.

By gazing back in time this way, scientists get more insight into how the universe formed after the Big Bang. ■





Leaked: What the FBI found when it investigated Rwanda

In a damning classified report, the US agency concluded Paul Kagame's government was conducting 'poison pen' operations to target dissidents abroad – confirming the claims of activists and rights groups

In 2015, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States began looking into reports that Rwandan intelligence services were targeting dissidents on American soil.

Investigators put their conclusions into a report, which was classified and distributed to top US diplomats. These have never been made public – until now.

A copy of the report was obtained by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), which shared its findings with *The Continent*.

According to the FBI, Rwanda was using its intelligence services to spread disinformation in the US about Rwandan asylum seekers and opposition members. Its tactics included “providing poison pen [intentionally false or misleading] information to US law enforcement agencies concerning alleged criminal violations through the use of double agents, as well as attempting to manipulate US government immigration law and the Interpol Red Notice System.”

President Paul Kagame’s government was – and remains – a close ally of the US, receiving plenty of diplomatic and financial support. The US is Rwanda’s largest bilateral donor, handing over \$147-million in 2021.

“It is not normal for a partner nation, and certainly not an ally, to run a poison pen operation on American soil,” said Todd K Hulsey, a retired FBI agent and counter-intelligence analyst, in response to the report’s findings.

The Rwandan government did not respond to requests for comment from OCCRP.

The FBI report said that a number of dissidents were targeted, including Paul Rusesabagina, the subject of the Hollywood film *Hotel Rwanda*, who has been credited with saving more than 1,200 lives during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Last year, Rusesabagina was kidnapped in Dubai by Rwandan intelligence agents and illegally renditioned to Kigali, where he was convicted on charges of terrorism and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

As of 2015, the FBI found no evidence of criminal activity by Rusesabagina, or by members of the opposition Rwanda National Congress. Instead, it said that Rwandan intelligence services sought to use an intermediary to plant “derogatory information” that would discredit the congress’ members, with the goal of getting them deported.

Rwanda's extradition efforts are designed to dissuade any political challengers to Kagame

British journalist Michela Wrong – author of *Do Not Disturb*, a book about the killing of a Rwandan dissident in South Africa – said that Rwanda’s extradition efforts are deliberately designed to dissuade any political challengers to Kagame. “The message is, ‘You can run, but you cannot hide. I will get you in the end.’ That’s what all these operations boil down to.” ■

The full investigation is available on the OCCRP’s website: [OCCRP.org](https://www.occrp.org)

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Nigeria

When greed governs, profits rise and buildings fall

Lagos sorely needs more housing to support its growing population, but without the state stepping up to regulate developers, defective buildings are collapsing – and killing people in their own homes



Bereft: Hundreds have been killed and thousands left homeless by the scores of buildings collapsing across Nigeria. Photo: Olukayode Jaiyeola/NurPhoto via AFP

Eric Dumo in Lagos

Adekemi Adekunle was invested in her studies at Tai Solarin University of Education in Ogun State. She worked hard. But late in the evening of the first

day of May this year, at around 10.46pm, her life came to an abrupt end when her apartment building in the Ebute Meta area of Lagos collapsed.

Adekunle and nine others in the three-storey building were killed that night, and



Ruinous:
Experts say opportunistic developers and poor oversight are to blame for the deadly collapses.

scores more were grievously injured.

Despite being marked for demolition and sealed four times by state government officials, the building stayed open. Its developer, who has yet to be publicly named but is said to be on the run following the tragic incident, circumvented the restrictions and allowed tenants back in, charging them exorbitantly for the privilege. Every time there was an order to seal the building, it would be reopened.

A resident of the area, Lanre Shobalaju, told *The Continent* that he suspected corruption was involved. “There is a chance that government officials were paid kickbacks,” he said. “The tragedy would have been averted if the tenants had been evacuated.”

Despite direct questions about such claims, government officials at the city planning agency declined to comment on allegations of corruption. But a worrying pattern has nevertheless emerged and is difficult to ignore: there’s a long list of similar disasters in major Nigerian cities

over the past few years. And it’s growing.

Local media have reported on at least 74 buildings that have collapsed in the past six years. More than 240 people have been killed and at least 260 left seriously injured.

Each incident displaces scores of households, given that so many involved multistorey residential buildings in urban areas. In April 2022, Olasunkanmi Habeeb Okunola, a visiting scientist at Brookings Institute in the United States published a study examining 167 building collapses that happened in Lagos between 2000 and 2021. He found that at least 6,000 households had been displaced as a result. Lagos accounts for nearly four in every 10 building collapses in Nigeria, according to 2019 data from the Building Collapse Prevention Guild, an advocacy group of building professionals.

More people, worse policies

In the last 20 years, Nigeria’s economy and population have grown rapidly, creating a demand for housing. Local governments

have failed to match this demand with government housing or adequate oversight of the real estate developers who have stepped in to fill the gap. Developers appear to be able to construct substandard buildings and rake in rental income from people desperate for accommodation, with authorities either not aware or looking the other way.

A year ago, on 1 November, a multi-storey building, housing luxury flats in the Ikoyi area of the city came down, killing 44 people, including the developer. It sparked a wave of outrage across the country, yet led to precisely zero prosecutions. Ten more buildings have collapsed since then – most of them in Lagos. .

According to building expert Emmanuel Oluwaseyi, both government and real estate developers are to blame.

Oluwaseyi said the buildings collapsed because of “bad design, overloading of

the bearing capacities of buildings; failure to obtain approved drawings; the use of defective materials; poor workmanship; and illegal conversion of existing structures”. He added: “The regulation of standards and the prosecution of defaulters is abysmal.”

Kehinde Osinaike, the general manager of the official agency that issues physical planning permits in Lagos, said the state was prepared to “wield the big stick” on errant real estate developers who put the lives of people at risk for selfish gains, saying that in the past officials have tried “civility” – to no avail.

“We are going to instruct our legal team to proceed with arresting these unrepentant developers,” he said.

A bold commitment, but one that echoes the official but ultimately empty promises that have followed every building collapse of the past decade. ■



Crushed: Each collapse is followed by empty vows to crack down on developers.

Photo: Lasema

Wakanda's real legacy is a new Black pantheon

Black Panther was hailed as a defining moment for Africa's creative landscape. But did it really change anything? Hell yeah it did.

Wilfred Okiche in Lagos

The year was 2018 and it was all anyone could talk about. *Black Panther*, the 18th film in the box-office dominating, culture-colonising behemoth that is the Marvel Cinematic Universe, was punching above its considerable weight. The Ryan Coogler-directed Afrofuturistic extravaganza, starring the late Chadwick Boseman and Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o among a host of familiar names, shattered earnings records on the way to a massive global \$1.3-billion haul.

As it did so, it quickly became a cultural touchstone. Africa was having a moment.

The film dared to imagine a fictional African kingdom untouched by western imperialism, with a pantheon of African heroes. Its celebration of African cultures, and dazzling showcase of Black excellence,



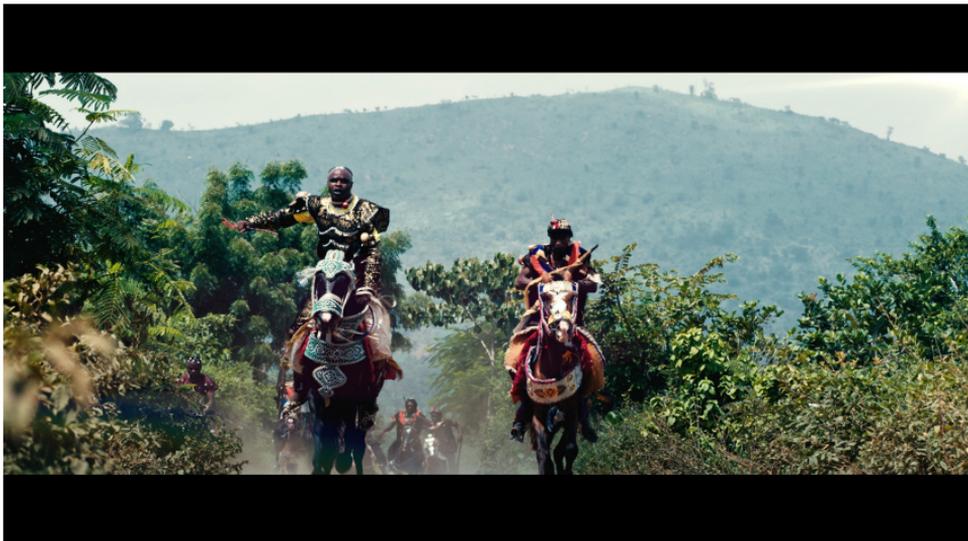
on and off screen, was heralded as an important new chapter in the ongoing struggle for positive representation.

In terms of how Africa and its diaspora are perceived on the world stage, it seemed like a watershed moment: before *Black Panther* and after, with the latter seen as a new bright new era for African film-making and popular culture.

In retrospect, that feels like an awful lot of responsibility to be placed on just two hours and 15 minutes of light entertainment that remains, at its heart, a Hollywood blockbuster produced by one of America's biggest corporations.

Black panache

Four years later, as the world prepares to



Dark horse: *King of Thieves*, a period drama set in the fictional Kingdom of Ajeromi, was an unexpected box office success

revisit the Kingdom of Wakanda in the sequel *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, now is as good a time as any to revisit the impact and legacy of the original on this continent's entertainment and cultural architecture.

Nigerian filmmaker Kenneth Gyang believes *Black Panther* has had a net positive effect, particularly in Nollywood, where his production company Cinema Kpatakpata operates.

**Nigerian filmmaker
Kenneth Gyang believes
Black Panther has had
a net positive effect,
particularly in Nollywood**

Proof of this? The local box office. This year, the highest grossing Nigerian

films at the box office are *Brotherhood*, a busy crime thriller, and *King of Thieves*, an ambitiously flawed period epic. Both are departures from the comedies that would usually dominate. Since the 2016 box office success of the romantic comedy *The Wedding Party* and its sequel the next year, executives have been reluctant to spend big bucks on anything that doesn't guarantee big returns – read: star-heavy comedies. Until Wakanda came to town.

Gyang tells *The Continent*: “*Black Panther* showed Afrocentric stories can rake in big money when treated with care. Nollywood now understands that we can export our cultures via sleek, universal stories with beautiful production values. Film execs and producers are not as afraid to take risks. This helps filmmakers tell the stories they care about and with the right budgets.”

From Nollywood to Hollywood, comics to television, *Black Panther* may have helped revive a wave of storytelling focused on the cultures of Africa and its diaspora. Disney announced a collaboration with Pan-African comic and entertainment company Kugali to create *Iwájú*, an animated science-fiction series set in a futuristic Lagos. HBO Max and Cartoon Network are making a 2D-animated adaptation of *Iyanu: Child of Wonder*, a graphic novel written by Roy Olupe that is steeped in Yoruba culture. And Los Angeles-based Emagine Content inked a production deal with Nigeria's Vortex Corp to adapt its catalogue of African superhero and fantasy comic titles for film and television.

It is hard to imagine any of this happening before *Black Panther*.

Black panacea

An even more direct link can be drawn to *The Woman King*, starring Viola Davis, which owes its entire existence to *Black Panther*. The real-life Agojie warriors that are the subject of this film are the basis for *Black Panther's* fictional Dora Milaje.

Damilare Akintunde, a film business journalist and content lead for Shock, a platform that monitors industry trends, agrees the film has been “a blessing” for the African creator.

“Black Panther is the cultural and business reference point that creators can use when pitching executives and investors. Its success means that African stories can be the money maker. And everyone loves a money maker.”

For Oge Obasi, a producer whose

upcoming feature *Mami Wata* is inspired by the myth of the legendary marine spirit of the same name, this interest in Africa contrasts with Hollywood's fixation on sequels and prequels.

“Even though one might say that *Black Panther* was shot from a Western perspective, it represents just an iota of the stories that abound in Africa. We need to take advantage of this to tell our own unique and authentic stories that are original and rooted in culture, mythology and spirituality.”

We need to take advantage of this to tell our own unique and authentic stories

Not everyone is on board with the “Black panacea” narrative, however.

Linking the film to a boom in creative agency for African filmmakers is a bit of a reach, says Nyambura Waruingi, a filmmaker and curator. “I don't see how it has created opportunities within the film industry in Kenya. Maybe in South Africa, has been a part of the production industrial complex, sure.

“The question becomes, are you a production company that is participating in revenue share or co-productions at the level where you are making money off the intellectual property that you develop together?”

Black pandering

With Wakanda forever reimagined in the wake of the untimely passing of the first film's lead Chadwick Boseman, the



Balancing act: Beyoncé's *Black is King*, a visual album, was celebrated for its glamorous portrayal of African culture, but also criticised for trading in stereotypes. Photo: Parkwood Entertainment

franchise continues to serve as a rebuke to conventional depictions of Africa and the diaspora. Even more fascinating are the attempts to build bridges and renew bonds within both communities.

Just look at the soundtrack for the sequel: Barbados-born superstar Rihanna released her first new music in six years for it, performing a ballad penned by Nigerian afrobeats star Tems (it may be no coincidence too that the stunning global rise of Afrobeats came in the wake of *Black Panther's* success). There are also credits on the album for contemporary acts like Sampa the Great, Rema and Amaarae.

In general, Africa seems to figure more prominently in the rollout of *Wakanda Forever*. Lagos is hosting the African

premiere with director Coogler expected to appear. This may be cynical: the African market is large and largely untapped, and represents a major growth opportunity for Disney. It can also be argued that it fits into a wider, more troubling pattern of African culture being appropriated into a global Black narrative from which Africans rarely profit (see Beyoncé's *Black is King* for a case in point).

But optimists might differ, choosing to see the ways in which the creative economies on the continent are being stimulated and promoted on the global stage. Either way, it's happening – and Africa's creative landscape will never be the same again.

Wakanda forever, indeed. ■

Who can you really trust these days?

Who do you trust more, your neighbour or your uncle? The army or the president? A religious leader or someone from another religion?

When Afrobarometer asked citizens in 20 African countries in 2021/2022 how much they trust different groups of people, relatives came out on top.

On average, 61% of Africans say they trust their family members “a lot,” in addition to 22% who trust them “somewhat.”

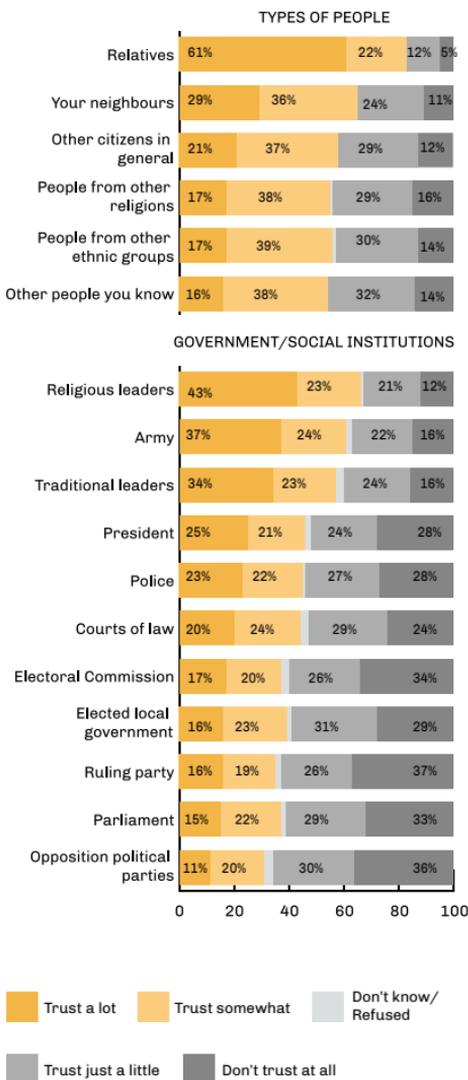
Nobody else comes close.

Just 29% trust their neighbours “a lot”, while other citizens in general are highly trusted by just 21%.

When it comes to government and social institutions, religious leaders (43%), the army (37%) and traditional leaders (34%) lead the way, ahead of presidents (trusted “a lot” by 25%, on average), the police (23%) and the courts (20%), and far ahead of Parliament and political parties.

Total mistrust (“don’t trust at all”) is consistently higher for political and state officials (24%-37%) than for regular people like your neighbours (11%), other citizens in general (12%) and people from other religions (16%).

How much do you trust? | 20 African countries | 2021/2022



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 +/- two to three percentage points.

PHOTO ESSAY

In Johannesburg, love triumphs over fear

On Saturday, Pride of Africa returned to Johannesburg, South Africa for the 33rd time to celebrate and affirm this continent's queer communities.

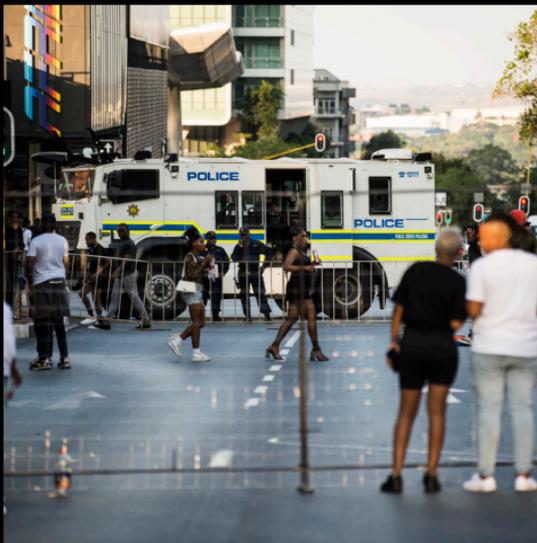
This was just days after the United States embassy issued a warning to South Africa to be on high alert for a potential terror attack in the Sandton area of the city, where the event was to take place. Organisers decided to go ahead and police and security forces were deployed in strong numbers to protect the thousands of people who attended. No terror attacks were reported.

Delwyn Verasamy in Johannesburg









In Ethiopia, 'African solutions for African problems' gives perpetrators a free pass

The ceasefire lacks any commitment to justice for the victims and survivors of the conflict in Tigray

Muleya Mwananyanda

Nearly two years ago, Habtom* lost four family members in a massacre in Axum, a city in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region. Once famous for its ancient obelisks and religious monuments, it is now synonymous with bloodshed. Hundreds of people died when Eritrean soldiers went on a two-day rampage in November 2020, shooting at unarmed civilians on the streets and going from house to house killing men and boys.

This was no isolated massacre. All areas affected by the conflict, which began two years ago on 3 November 2020, have become scenes of unspeakable crimes, including shocking numbers of rape and sexual violence, perpetrated by all parties to the conflict.

Women's bodies have been turned into battlefields. Letay* – a 20-year-old woman who was gang-raped in Western Tigray by Amhara militia – said: "They raped me one after the other. I don't know if they realised I was pregnant. I don't know if they realised I was a person."

Women in the Amhara region were

also raped by the Tigrayan forces who controlled the town of Nifas Mewcha in mid-August 2021. Fourteen survivors told Amnesty International that they were gang-raped.

The Ethiopian government imposed an information and communication blackout, shutting down internet access across the Tigray region.

Despite this, information about the atrocities continues to find its way to the outside world. Some reports are made at great risk by courageous individuals who continue to document violations against the civilian population; but some atrocities are documented by the perpetrators themselves.

For instance, in Mahbere Deگو, a locality near Axum, soldiers from the Ethiopian National Defence Forces filmed themselves shooting and killing civilians. The gruesome video later went viral.

Despite the rising death toll and evidence of continuing grave violations by all parties to the conflict, an effective response from the international community, particularly from African leaders and the African Union, is

desperately missing.

This is largely because of the international community's insistence on "African solutions for African problems".

For African leaders and the African Union, this means the jealous guarding of a skewed vision of sovereignty, even if it has so far meant blocking justice for victims and survivors of the northern Ethiopian conflict.

This was made clear in a vote on 7 October in a resolution to renew the mandate of International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, which was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2021. All African member states, except Malawi, voted against renewing the commission's mandate.

Victims and survivors looking to the African Union's Peace and Security Council for hope have so far been disappointed by the body, which has the mandate of preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in Africa.

The ceasefire deal brokered in South Africa this week is a step in the right direction. But the signing of the agreement for permanent cessation of hostilities between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front in northern Ethiopia should have been accompanied by a clear, measurable, and transparent commitment to justice for survivors of the conflict.

Provision ought to have been made – and guaranteed by all parties – for unfettered access for human rights investigation mechanisms (such as the United Nations-mandated human rights commission on Ethiopia) to ensure

justice and accountability for victims and survivors of atrocious crimes in the two-year conflict.

Amnesty has repeatedly documented widespread unspeakable abuses by all parties to the conflict, and these cannot be wished away.

Yet the accord fails to offer a clear roadmap on how to ensure accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and it overlooks the rampant impunity in the country, which could lead to violations being repeated.

The Ethiopian government must with immediate effect facilitate unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid towards Tigray, so that thousands of people faced with starvation and medical needs can get the assistance they need.

The African Union cannot continue to drag its feet while the conflict in northern Ethiopia creates a worsening humanitarian crisis for millions of people, who face starvation, displacement and rampant human rights violations.

Thousands of survivors, like Letay and Habtom, are still seeking justice and redress, which may only come through independent and credible investigations into the atrocities they and their loved ones suffered.

Their calls for justice and accountability must not go unheeded because of the international community's empty and self-serving refrain of "African solutions for African problems". ■

**Names have been changed. Muleya Mwananyanda is the director for East and Southern Africa, Amnesty International.*

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

"You can lead a president to snacks, but you can't order them to go."

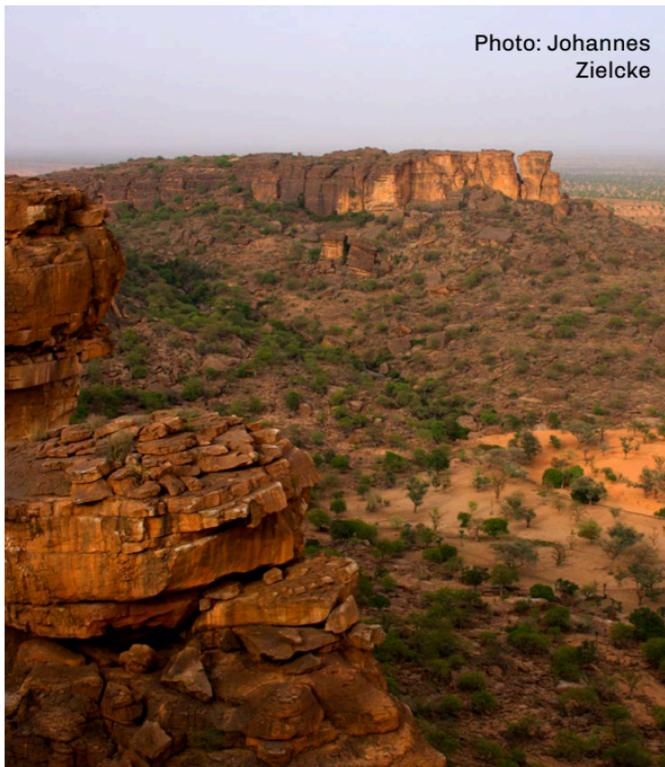


Photo: Johannes Zielcke

- 1_** In which country is the Bandiagara Escarpment found?
- 2_** Who was Kenya's first Olympic gold medal winner: Eliud Kipchoge or Wilson Chuma Kiprugut?
- 3_** In which country was Elon Musk born?
- 4_** The "Eagles of Carthage" are which country's men's national football team?
- 5_** Faure Gnassingbé is which country's president?
- 6_** What is the demonym for people from Niger?
- 7_** Fally Ipupa N'simba is the birth name of which Congolese musician?
- 8_** In which year did the Tigray War begin?
- 9_** Which Kenyan actress recently became the global ambassador of De Beers Group?
- 10_** True or false: Lesotho just inaugurated a new monarch.

HOW DID I DO?

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

Blowing out the candles



Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

Beloved readers, it is your humble columnist's birthday, and she would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing support and love.

Turning a year older has led her not only to speak about herself in the third person – which her editors say she can do but just this once, okay? – but also to be in awe of some of our longstanding leaders. Many of them are octogenarians who have been in power for decades, yet she, less than half their age, is already exhausted and quite frankly ready to retire.

(This comes as news to her editors, who after reading this have mailed her to ask if she needs to talk about anything?)

Their energy (the leaders, not the editors), their commitment and their determination to remain in office is truly inspiring – where do they get the motivation from? You might say it's the money, the fancy properties, the designer clothes and the VIP treatment. But your columnist believes it's all for love!

(Love for all these things she mentioned, no doubt, plus access to wealth and power.)

Birthdays are a time for reflection and



Tall orderer: Equatorial Guinea's prez, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo.

Photo: Twitter/PresidencyZA

new beginnings, neither of which we suspect Equatorial Guinea's president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, is particularly interested in.

The country will hold its elections on 20 November, and the 80-year-old, who is the world's longest standing leader, will be vying for a sixth term as he looks to extend his 43-year rule. In the meantime, his government closed all land borders until after the polls, to "prevent the infiltration of groups who may attempt to destabilise the campaign" and "ensure the safety of all candidates". Yikes!

Apparently, the safety of human rights activists and opposition group members

is not as much of a priority. According to reports, in the lead-up to the polls members of the banned Citizens for Innovation party have been detained, including its leader Gabriel Nse Obiang Obono – alongside human rights activists like Anacleto Micha Ndong Nlang – supposedly after authorities an opposition plot to carry out attacks in the country.

Despite all, it seems President Obiang does like a bit of a challenge after all. So he's magnanimously agreed to appear on the ballot alongside two other candidates – Esono Ondo and Monsuy Asumu – from the few opposition groups that have somehow not been banned yet.

Cancel couture

Your columnist has been planning a birthday party – to which you were all of course invited – alongside all the most fashionable leaders from across the continent, however, she sadly had to cancel on account of the continued tensions between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This week Kinshasa announced that it was expelling Rwanda's ambassador Vincent Karega, giving him 48 hours to leave the country. Kinshasa continues to accuse Kigali of supporting the M23 rebel group. In response Rwanda said it "regretted" that the DRC continues to "scapegoat Rwanda to distract from its own governance and security failures." This then prompted the DRC to tell its new ambassador to Rwanda to hold off on presenting his credentials to Rwandan authorities.

She whose column this is could not

possibly invite one and not the other, and if both turned up there'd be trouble as soon as the DJ played *Murder on the Dancefloor*, so she had no choice but to cancel altogether.

Sorrow in Somalia

Devastating news from Mogadishu, where 120 people were killed in twin explosions in Mogadishu earlier this week, and hundreds were injured. For decades we have heard members of the international community use the word "resilient" to describe the people of Somalia, and while the country continues to display resilience with grace, its people deserve to live in a safe and secure environment. Our thoughts are with all those affected.

Meanwhile, the family of British-Egyptian activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, who remains in jail in Egypt say he will stop consuming all food and water from 6 November, as world leaders gather in Egypt for the COP27 Climate summit. It is our hope that world leaders will put pressure on Egyptian authorities to release Alaa – and others like him.

Finally, on a more positive note, following peace talks in South Africa, the Ethiopian government and Tigray People's Liberation Front forces have agreed to a tense truce – which we hope will lead to the true end of their two-year conflict, which has left thousands dead, and driven millions from their homes.

Will the truce hold?

Your columnist certainly knows what she'll be wishing for when she blows out the candles on the cake her editors are almost certainly baking for her as she writes this. ■

For LGBTQ+ refugees, Kakuma is not a safe space

Discrimination and displacement make a deadly combo

Emmanuel Kiyimba

Many people know that Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya has over 20,000 refugees from countries including Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. What many people do not know is that at least 650 of those refugees belong to the LGBTQ+ community. As a double minority we face double persecution, both from fellow camp members and the authorities.

We are discriminated against by doctors at the government hospitals where we are supposed to get free treatments, so we have to go to expensive private clinics. We are regularly attacked by our straight refugee neighbours and homophobic and transphobic locals.

We are living in poverty and many are malnourished. Our shelters are set on fire, we are attacked with machetes at night, lesbians are raped and we suffer stonings and beatings.

On the night of 15 February 2021, four gay men were set ablaze in their bedding as they slept in an open yard.

Three were rushed to hospital, seriously burned. The worst attack so far took place on 19 June 2020 when at least 31 LGBTQ+

refugees required hospitalisation. The injuries that day included deep cuts on their bodies, broken limbs, heavy blood loss and head injuries.

Despite supposedly enjoying rights just like any other camp member, we do not get help from those mandated to protect us. This means we have to take turns staying up all night just to guard against violent attack. After we have been beaten and returned from hospital, we receive no counselling for the trauma we have suffered.

It might sound like nothing can be done. But this is not true.

The UNHCR, the United Nations' refugee agency, should stop failing in their responsibility to protect basic human rights.

The most obvious way to do this is to move us to a safe country where we will not face such discrimination. Having fled our homes, it is surely not too much to ask that we do not face violence every day in our place of refuge. ■



Emmanuel Kiyimba is a resident of Kakuma Refugee Camp. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa

The Big Picture

Photo: Aubin Mukoni/AFP

End of the road: Kanyaruchinya residents tear apart a vehicle belonging to Monusco, the United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The truck was torched by angry residents, amid a continuing influx to the UN-supported town of refugees from across the region, who have been displaced by the deadly clashes between DRC government forces and M23 rebels.



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