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# The Continent

A close-up, profile photograph of Kais Saied, the President of Tunisia. He is an older man with thinning grey hair, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a dark patterned tie. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

**'Blame  
black  
people'**

*Tunisia's president  
finds a scapegoat*

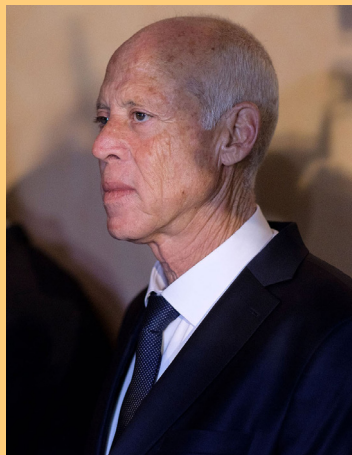
Photo: Thierry Monasse

# Inside:

- **Nigeria:** Same old story as the establishment prevails and technology fails (p7 & p10)
- **Photos:** On the trail of M23 in the eastern DRC (p15)
- **Afrobarometer:** Gender-based violence is on Sierra Leone's agenda (p20)
- **Film:** Africa's Berlinale barnstormers (p21)
- **Cricket:** Showing the men how it's done (p23)
- **Quiz:** Test your continental currency (p26)
- **Kenya's last rainforest:** Saving Kakamega (p27)
- **Drift:** Let the year actually begin (p29)

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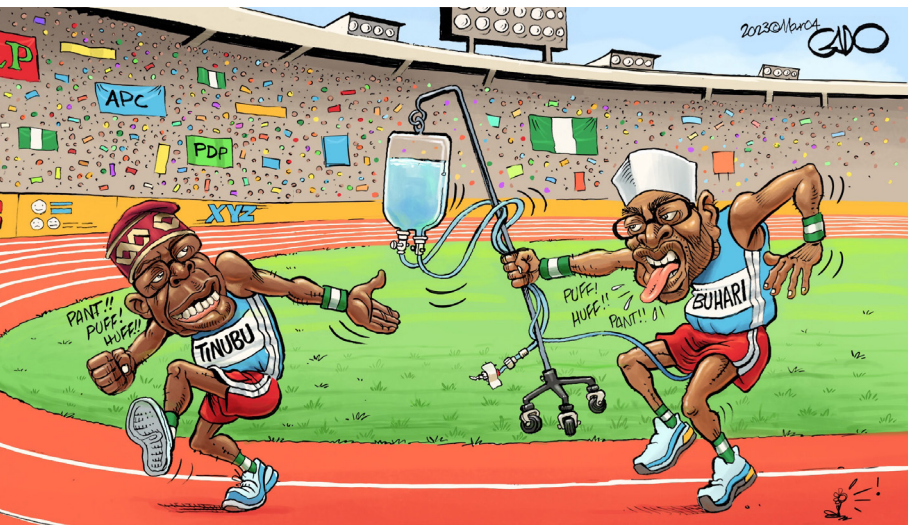


**Cover:** It is a very dangerous time to be a black person in Tunisia. The country's president has entered full conspiracy theorist/aspiring autocrat mode, and is blaming "sub-Saharan Africans" for all the country's problems. But the divide between North Africa and the rest of the continent is not as strict as he would have us believe. (p13)



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## NIGERIA - BURKINA FASO

### Envoy grilled over murdered pilgrims

Nigeria's foreign minister this week summoned Burkina Faso's ambassador over the killing of 16 Nigerians reported in mid-February. The 16 were on a religious pilgrimage from Nigeria, through Burkina Faso, to Senegal where their religious leader lives. They were shot and killed in the country's north and fellow members of the Jam'iyyatul Ansariddeen Attijaniyya religious sect say their killers were part of the Burkinabé military. Pascal Gouba, Burkina Faso's ambassador to Nigeria, says that investigations by his government point at rebel militants, reports Nigeria's *Punch* newspaper.

## RWANDA

### More deals to boot migrants signed off

On Monday, Rwanda's senate ratified extradition treaties signed with Angola and Mozambique last year, *The New Times* reports. Rwanda has extradition treaties with nine other African countries: Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. When the Mozambique treaty was signed in June 2022, Rwandan refugees there told *The Continent* (Issue 89) that they were afraid it would legalise coercive returns to Rwanda, which, they said, were already happening extrajudicially, often on accusations that targeted refugees participated in the 1994 genocide.

Photo: Botswana  
Diamonds



## BOTSWANA

### Ditch diamonds and sell the coal

People are buying fewer diamonds, pushing Botswana, the continent's biggest producer, to decrease production by 1% in 2023. Botswana's diamond trade is still growing but at a much slower pace – down from 41% in 2018 to just 8.2% in 2022. The industry is crucial but the state has a solution: sell coal instead, despite the climate implications of that move.

## ALGERIA

### Double-dipping, non-alignment or smokescreen?

Algeria announced that it will reopen its embassy in Kiev, Ukraine, which closed a year ago when Russia invaded that country. The announcement noted that this would allow for the “safeguarding of the interests of the Algerian state”. A few hours later, the secretary of Russia's security council, Nikolai Patrushev, arrived in Algeria. He promised more military co-operation between Russia and Algeria, after meeting with President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, and army chief of staff, Saïd Chengriha.

## NIGERIA

### Cash-swap deadline pushed to December

On Friday, Nigeria's supreme court ruled that old bank notes will remain in use until the end of the year. In October, the central bank decided to redesign 200, 500 and 1,000 naira notes and gave Nigerians till the end of January to swap old for new. But it didn't release the new notes until mid-December, triggering long queues and fights at commercial banks and cash shortages across the country as people tried to meet the deadline. *The Continent* previously reported chaos persisted despite an earlier extension.

**ETHIOPIA****War crimes are nothing to write home about**

The Ethiopian state continues to fight the official United Nations investigation into possible war crimes in the Tigray war – crimes that have been extensively documented. Its latest move, Reuters reports, is to gather votes for a resolution to end it six months early, before the investigators submit a formal report on what they found. At the start of the inquiry in early 2021, Ethiopia tried to get it defunded in a budget committee at the



**A case to answer: A military band parades in Addis Ababa. Ethiopian armed forces are accused of committing widespread human rights violations.** Photo: Eduardo Soteras/AFP

UN general assembly, but only 27 of the 193 UN member countries voted with it.

**CABO VERDE****Russian ambassador finally takes up post after diplomatic tiff**

A two-year diplomatic impasse between Cabo Verde and Russia ended on Wednesday when Yury Materiy presented his credentials to President José Maria Neves as the islands' new Russian ambassador. In October 2021, Russia appointed Natalia Poklonskaya, a Putin loyalist who is under sanctions from Canada, the European Union, Japan, Ukraine and the US, but four months later she announced that she would not be taking up the ambassadorial post. Reports suggested that Cabo Verdean authorities had rejected her.

**KENYA****Russian embassy divebombs into ugly anti-LGBTIQ cesspit**

Kenya's highest court ruled that groups that advocate for the rights of LGBTIQ people have a right to register as NGOs, under the constitution's guarantees of freedom of association. This triggered anti-LGBTIQ statements, including from President William Ruto and opposition leader Raila Odinga. Russia's embassy in Kenya is the latest to join in, tweeting: "As long as I'm [Putin] president, we will have "dad" and "mum" and "That is only the beginning, the West will come for more." They are not the first to resort to hateful, rhetoric to distract, but they are the most invader these days.

## FRANCE

## But we'll always have Paris, right?

Amid growing anti-French sentiments on the continent, France's President Emmanuel Macron this week visited Angola, Gabon, the DRC and the Republic

of Congo. He has promised to reduce the number of French soldiers on African soil and gradually "Africanise" French military bases in Africa by co-running them with host countries. Burkina Faso and Mali have in recent years expelled French troops, and France needs influence in its former colonies to feel relevant and to create space for its companies to profit.



Photo: Ali Bongo Ondimba

## CAMEROON

## Bloodshed at a race for hope

Three explosions rocked the start of the annual "Mount Cameroon Race for Hope" in Buea, in the English-speaking south west of Cameroon, injuring nearly 20 people, including nine athletes and a baby. The region has been gripped by a secessionist war since 2017. Another explosion took place five days earlier, at a market in the capital Yaoundé, which is well away from the conflict area.

## UGANDA-DRC

## US offers \$5-million for militant leader

The US government is offering a \$5-million reward for information about the whereabouts of Seka Musa Baluku, the leader of Isis-DRC, a militant group from Uganda operating in eastern DRC. Known as the Allied Democratic Forces before aligning with Islamic State, the group has been blamed for hundreds of attacks a year and for the 2021 bombings in Kampala.

# Nigeria

## A kingmaker is king. Now what?



**Bola Tinubu has been elected as the next Nigerian president – amid low voter turnout and opposition claims of foul play.** Photo: Pius U. Ekepi/AFP

On Wednesday, ruling party candidate Bola Ahmed Tinubu was declared winner of the Nigerian presidential election, held last Saturday.

He beat opposition leader Atiku Abubakar and youth favourite Peter Obi. Hailed by local and international press as 2023's most important election (in the world), and the most unpredictable in Nigeria's history, in the end the result was "more of the same".

Tinubu, a former governor of Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos State, is a stalwart of establishment power. He earned his reputation as a kingmaker by helping many into office, including the outgoing president, Muhammadu Buhari. The opposition says it will challenge the result in court. *The Continent* asked some of our Nigerian correspondents for their thoughts on the prospect of a Tinubu presidency.

This was the worst possible outcome for anyone hoping for some kind of progress following the disastrous years of the Muhammadu Buhari presidency. We could dwell on the negatives, but I choose to focus on Peter Obi, the candidate of the Labour Party and the millions of young people who supported him and showed up to register their displeasure with the ruling class (results gave him a quarter of the vote). This was the people coming together to agree on a candidate. And their candidate, considered by the establishment to be “fringe” and with “no structure”, went on to claim key victories in Lagos and Abuja. This was not supposed to happen.

**Wilfred Okiche is a film critic and reviewer for *The Continent***

There was unusual coldness across Rivers State. Many residents did not come out to celebrate the outcome of the election and some said it did not reflect the true position of the votes. Nonetheless, much is expected from the president-elect by the masses who are pushed to the wall by insecurity, unemployment, underdevelopment, deficient infrastructure, and high inflation. Here in the natural resources-rich but derelict Niger Delta, where I have been reporting for over a decade, citizens want to see policies that will deliberately lift people out of poverty and create the environment for manufacturing to thrive. A start would be a steady supply of electricity.

**Ann Godwin is a correspondent for the *Guardian Nigeria* based in Port Harcourt**



**Cut it out: Posters of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and other APC stalwarts. Photo: Michele Spatari/AFP**



For many, it is very odd that Tinubu will be addressed as president. The results of the elections have elicited anger, disappointment, frustration, and despair. The results are not a reflection of the will of the people. Tinubu's presidency will only be a reflection of Tinubu's Lagos, which was characterised by chaos, cronyism, corruption and arrogance. If you think Nigeria can't get worse than Buhari, think again. With Tinubu, a new vulture circles Nigeria, laying bare not a country, but a carcass.

**Socrates Mbamalu is a political analyst and the editor-in-chief of *Aso Times***

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Leadership, especially on a national level, is a culmination of experience, past antecedents and an overview of the leader's general disposition. Tinubu was introduced to a vast majority of Nigerians as the governor of Lagos State; and then as the godfather to other political heads. The running theme of his leadership philosophy, from what is publicly available, is thuggery, use of force, corruption, poor urban planning and nepotism over merit. A Tinubu presidency, to me, appears to be a combination of all of these on a wider, national scale. It is a scary prospect, but one that might be softened with the hope that perhaps he will put quality people in his cabinet who will do good work in certain areas. I am not optimistic.

**Anita Eboigbe is the Operations Lead for *Big Cabal Media***

It was a keenly contested election and a hard-fought win. With Tinubu emerging as the winner, I sincerely hope to see him work on the security infrastructure. I have covered areas affected by insecurity for the past five to six years and hope that during Tinubu's administration, those who have been displaced will have a chance to return to their homes and live without fear. During his visits to Niger state, Tinubu showed concern about the plight of these displaced people and promised to find ways to reduce insecurity. There was little insecurity for him to deal with when he was the governor of Lagos state – but Nigeria is much larger and he needs to make security a priority.

**Justina Asishana is the Niger State correspondent for *The Nation* based in Minna**



**Left on reed: Supporters rally for Bola Tinubu, now president-elect of Nigeria. Photo: Getty Images**

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# Nigeria

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## A tech experiment gone wrong

**Two new technologies were supposed to make the election more efficient, transparent and credible. It didn't work out that way.**

**Adebayo Abdul Rahman in Ibadan**

**W**hen Davidson Nosayaba, a civil servant in Edo State, rose from his bed in the wee hours of Saturday 25 February, he had a fairly clear idea of how the day ahead would go. He would go to his polling station at Uhumwonde local government, cast his vote, watch the vote count in the evening and see the result uploaded straight on to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for regional and national tallying.

Even though election officials only arrived at around 10am, not 8.30am as scheduled, his day went according to plan, with the added bonus that his preferred presidential candidate won his polling station. “At that moment I just left the polling unit and joined others to celebrate,” he told *The Continent*.

But that night, when the state level result trickled in, he was surprised by the figures recorded for some candidates. So he doubled back to check the INEC’s Results Viewing Portal (IREV). “That was when I discovered there was a problem. My polling unit is 3, Egbede ward 10,

Uhumwonde, but the result sheet uploaded for us was for a polling unit at Benin Technical College. So if the results on the portal are inaccurate, how did they arrive at a winner?” he said.

Before this election, INEC introduced two technology systems that were expected to improve the credibility of the voting exercise. The Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) was supposed to identify each voter and prevent multiple voting. The IREV was supposed to make results transmission fast and transparent. In many cases, they caused more confusion either because electoral officials used them wrong or refused to use them at all.

Izuchukwu Nwagbara, a 25-year-old lawyer, cast his vote in Lagos. All day, there were skirmishes at his polling station but the trouble reached a climax after votes were counted. INEC officials announced that they forgot to carry the result sheet and so could not record and upload to IREV. “We told them to let one of the officials go and bring the result sheet from their office. They initially refused. Hours later one of them went

but she never returned. At around 8pm, a military truck came to pick up the presiding officer,” Nwagbara said.

When the result for his polling unit was uploaded on the IReV portal, Peter Obi, the candidate seemingly favoured by Nigeria youth, had 77 votes and not the 112 that Nwagbara says was announced in real time. “I feel very disappointed,” he told *The Continent*.

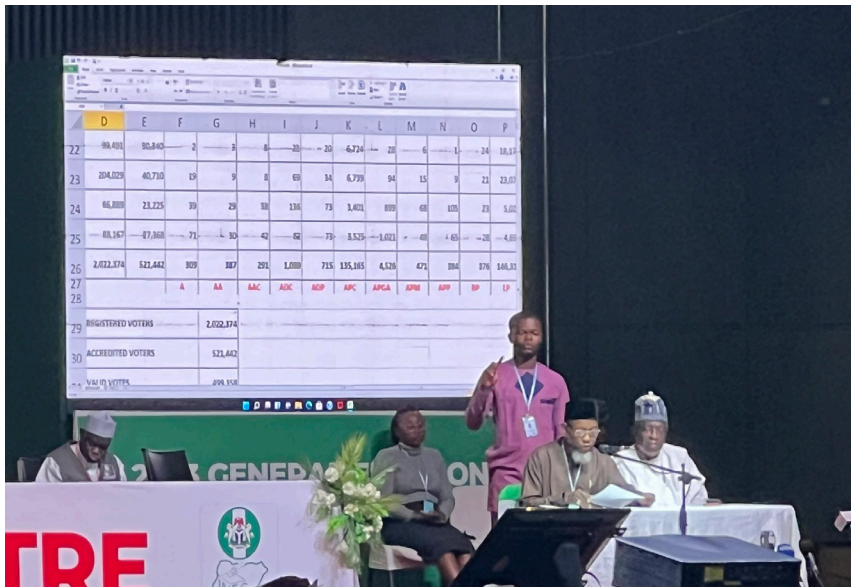
“INEC over-promised but under-delivered,” said Hassan Idayat, director of the Abuja-based Centre for Democracy and Development. “The mishandling of logistics and failure to upload results on the result viewing platforms blighted the outcome itself. Nigeria will need to

rebuild trust in the electoral process.”

Both major opposition parties have rejected the result of the election.

And with their trust in the system broken, nearly a week after the election, some Nigerians are still questioning even the most basic data point: how many people voted. According to the results released by INEC, less than 30% of the registered voters showed up to vote.

Voter turnout was 35% in 2019 and 43% in 2015. Yet in the run-up to this election, more than 10-million additional voters registered and on election day, many remarked – especially on social media – about how high the voter turnout was. ■



**Portal or pothole? Politicians and observers monitor INEC's Results Viewing Portal, which some election workers said was unreliable at nest.** Photo: INEC Nigeria

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# Tunisia

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## The Tunisian president's war on sub-Saharan Africans

As he tightens his iron grip on power, President Kais Saied has launched dangerous, unfounded attacks against migrants

### NEWS ANALYSIS

According to Tunisia's President Kais Saied, the biggest problem facing his country is not the deteriorating economy, or the chronic unemployment, or his own efforts to consolidate power within the office of the presidency, which has been described by his critics as a lurch towards authoritarianism.

Instead, Tunisia's greatest threat comes from a "criminal arrangement" to "change the demographic composition of Tunisia" by flooding the country with refugees and migrants from sub-Saharan Africa.

President Saied has offered no evidence for this claim, which echoes the so-called

"Great Replacement" conspiracy theory popular among far-right and white supremacist movements in Europe and North America. The premise here is that there is a deliberate effort to eradicate white populations by replacing them with non-white populations.

"Hordes of illegal immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa are still arriving, with all the violence, crime and unacceptable practices that entails," the president said on 21 February, calling on security forces to "quickly put an end to this phenomenon".

The consequences of the president's words for the country's estimated population of 21,000 African migrants were brutal and immediate. "Saied's scapegoating statement ... has opened a floodgate of racialised terror and violence in Tunisia that previously bubbled just beneath the surface," reported *New Lines* magazine. "Reports filled social media and private WhatsApp groups of the targeting of Black people – whether from sub-Saharan countries or black Tunisians – with verbal and physical abuse."

Yasin Ahmed\*, a refugee from Darfur who lives in Tunis, told *The Continent* that the country had, overnight, become dramatically more hostile to black people. "Yes, being black, you feel fear always, especially at night," he said. "Some people throw stones at you, sometimes they call you a monkey. My friends have been beaten. There is a lot of discrimination,



### Lost in the mail: A 1961 stamp celebrating Africa Day

and I can't describe it all to you because I can't stand it when I talk about it."

Some migrants have reported being fired from their jobs, and at least 1,000 have been kicked out of their homes. Hundreds of people have sought protection outside the Tunis embassies of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Mali, and the office of the International Organization for Migration. Various African states are chartering flights home for their citizens.

### A dangerous divide

Saied was elected president in 2019, and in 2021 enacted what political scientists describe as a "self-coup" – he used the Covid-19 pandemic to dismantle democratic protections and seize what are effectively dictatorial powers. In the past weeks, these powers were used to arrest prominent critics and opposition leaders.

"The political witch-hunts and racist manhunts are two sides of the same coin: a new, dangerous, and highly destabilising dictatorship is consolidating itself in Tunisia," said Monica Marks, a professor of Middle East politics at New York University Abu Dhabi. "Saied has no economic plan, and Tunisians' standard of living is in freefall. So he's scapegoating journalists, judges, lawyers, political critics, and the bodies of the most vulnerable – including black immigrants and refugees."

While doing so, the president is exploiting a familiar, populist fault line. His political allies, the far right Tunisian Nationalist Party, use the term *ajasiyin* – derived from the Arabic for 'Africans south of the Sahara' – as an insult. For them and for the president's other supporters, "to be Tunisian is to be Arab and Muslim, all of which are antonymous to being African," writes Shreya Parikh in the *Review of African Political Economy*. "By extension, to be Tunisian is to not be Black."

Not everybody is buying what the Tunisian president is selling. Civil society groups have condemned the president's anti-African rhetoric, and mobilised to support migrants in need of assistance.

Last Saturday, hundreds of protesters marched through central Tunis chanting "no to racism". *Esperance de Tunis*, the country's oldest and most successful football club, last month released a limited edition "Africa kit" in what appears to be a pointed symbol of solidarity.

Perhaps the president's populist message is not quite as popular as he would like to think. ■

## PHOTO ESSAY

# On the trail of M23

Over the past year, the M23 rebel movement has captured vast swathes of territory in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, even advancing towards Goma, the regional capital. The rebels claim to be protecting the region's Kinyarwanda-speaking population, but the Congolese government say that they are a military proxy for the Rwandan government. Both rebel and government forces have been accused of committing serious human rights violations, and the East African Community has deployed an intervention force to prevent the situation from deteriorating even further.

**Moses Sawasawa** has been following the story closely.



## Kanyarutshinya, 1 November 2022

*A United Nations truck burns after being set on fire when a group of civilians attacked a convoy, amidst rising frustration at the advance of the M23 rebels. The attack took place after false rumours circulated which suggested that the UN were helping to transport the rebels.*



### **Goma, 7 November 2022**

*Young men attend their first military training at a base in Goma. The military has signed up 3,000 new recruits to fight the rebels who, according to the DRC and some international agencies, are supported by Rwanda, which denies these allegations.*



### **Goma, 12 November 2022**

*Soldiers from the newly constituted East African Community Regional Force arrive at the international airport. The force is being led by soldiers from Kenya. As per an agreement with the Congolese government, the force can number between 6,500 and 12,000 troops and its mandate must be renewed every six months.*





### **Rumangabo, 6 January 2023**

*M23 rebels prepare to leave an army base that they had previously captured, just 35 kilometres outside of Goma. Their retreat was secured as part of a ceasefire with the East African Community Regional Force. Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi has said that this retreat was largely ceremonial, and that the rebels have occupied territory elsewhere to compensate.*



### **Rumangabo, 6 January 2023**

*A soldier with the East African Community Regional Force guards the army base after the departure of the M23 rebels.*



### Rutshuru, 6 January 2023

*A house that was destroyed during clashes between the Congolese army and the M23 rebels. The fighting has displaced more than half a million people in the past year.*



### Goma, 18 January 2023

*Residents of Goma protest against the planned arrival of South Sudanese troops, who will be joining the Kenyan soldiers as part of the East African Community Regional Force. Protesters say that the regional force has not done enough to combat the rebels, and that the Congolese army is capable of defending itself. Security forces used tear gas to break up the protest, and arrested 12 people.*



**Bulengo, 27 February 2023**

*Like always, the people who pay the price of war are the civilians who are caught in the middle – this time between government forces on the one side, and the M23 rebels on the other.*

# Gender violence on Sierra Leone's agenda

For International Women's Day on 8 March, we spotlight a country where women's rights, particularly their right to be free from violence, have led the news.

In 2019, in the wake of a horrific attack on a five-year-old girl, Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio declared rape a national emergency. An amended sexual offences act toughened sentences, established a model court to fast-track justice, and provided for one-stop centres where survivors can receive free services.

Afrobarometer found that 93% of Sierra Leoneans approved of the declaration, but 71% felt more needed to be done. Gender-based violence is the most important women's rights issue

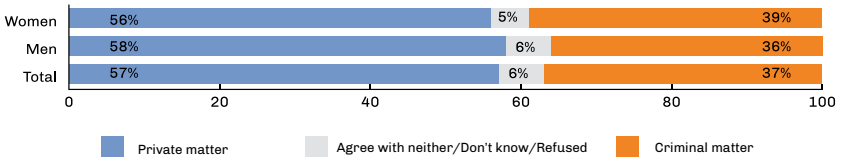
citizens want the government and society to address, out-polling unequal access to education and a scarcity of women in influential government positions.

"Society" is an important actor, alongside the government, when it comes to slow-to-change attitudes. A majority (57%) of Sierra Leoneans – including 56% of women – see domestic violence as a private matter to be handled by the family. Only 37% consider it a criminal matter.

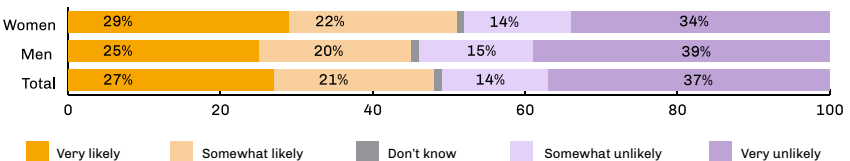
Almost half (48%) say a woman who reports gender-based violence to the authorities will likely be criticised, harassed, or shamed by the community – one reason many of these crimes are never reported or punished. ■

## Response to violence against women | Sierra Leone | 2022

Is domestic violence a criminal or private matter?



Will a woman who reports gender-based violence be criticised, harassed, or shamed?



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.



*All the Colours of the World are Between Black and White.*  
All images: Berlinale

## Africa shines again at the Berlinale

**After a subdued presence since 2019, filmmakers from the continent gave a strong showing at the 73rd edition of the Berlin International Film Festival**

### Wilfred Okiche in Berlin

**O**f the A-list film festivals the Berlinale, which ran from 16 to 26 February, is perhaps the most welcoming of global diversity and, through several initiatives, has often supported African filmmakers and their projects.

But even an institution with this much intention will have its blind spots. There has, for instance, been no African title in the festival's main competition since 2019. This year was no different even though South African John Trengove (*Inxeba*) directs American stars Jesse Eisenberg and Adrian Brody in the toxic masculinity competition entry *Manodrome*.

Other parts of the Berlinale are less bleak: In the Panorama section, which embraces titles threaded with queer, feminist and political thought, the Nigerian film *All the Colours of the World are Between Black and White*, directed by Babatunde Apalowo, made a big splash.

Set in Lagos, the intimate drama follows two men struggling with their romantic attraction in a hostile environment. "In a way it is a personal story because it is one of unrequited love and almost everyone can relate to that," Apalowo told *The Continent* in Berlin.

Screenings at the Berlinale were sold out, and it was the surprise winner of the festival's queer film prize: the Teddy

Award for best feature film.

Panorama's audience prize in the fiction category went to *Sira*, directed by prolific Burkinabè filmmaker Apolline Traoré. The survival thriller stars newcomer Nafissatou Cissé in the titular role as a young nomad with an unbreakable spirit. Cissé's *Sira* seeks revenge after her family suffers a brutal attack on their way to her wedding.

The film positions itself as a feminist counterpoint to male-dominated reporting from the Sahel region, and boldly takes a stand against Islamist terror while tackling thorny issues like the weaponisation of sex – against both women and men – during periods of conflict. “I just wanted to tell the world what happens in my country and perhaps give some hope to the people,” Traoré said.

Another drama about a bride in distress was also on show, this time in the Forum, a section independently curated as part of the festival.

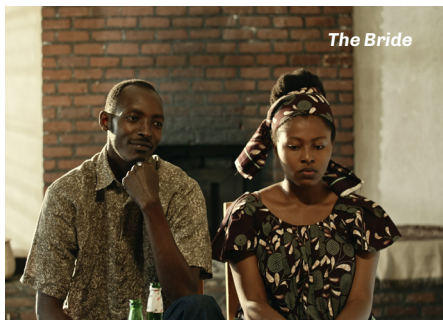
From Rwanda comes Myriam U Birara's *The Bride*. Receiving a special mention by the jury awarding the best first feature award of the festival, it is a stark and provocative period piece set a few years after the Rwandan genocide.

Eva (Sandra Umulisa), a bright young woman with big dreams, is kidnapped and raped. This assault is revealed to be part of a traditional practice known as Guterura – weaponised to replace lives lost in the genocide – in which the woman is forced into marriage with her abductor after terms are negotiated by both families.

On the documentary side, first time feature director Thierno Souleymane



*Sira*



*The Bride*

Diallo presents a rare film from Guinea: *The Cemetery of Cinema* traces the history of film in Guinea while documenting the filmmaker's search for *Mouramani*, a lost classic from 1953 believed to be the first film ever made in the country. Diallo's complex and surprisingly emotional journey takes him across Guinea but also to France as he considers the colonial and structural histories that afflict the archiving of film on the continent.

In *A Golden Life*, Boubacar Sangaré follows a group of kids as they labour at a gold mine in southern Burkina Faso. Sangaré, who himself worked in the mines, follows his subjects for years, finding the humanity in them as they work under precarious conditions. ■

# Proteas continue women's winning streak

On Sunday, South Africa's women's cricket team did something that their male counterparts have never managed: competing in a World Cup Final



Fielding dreams: South Africa's women cricketers soared at the World Cup, forging a fierce future for themselves and the sport alike. Photo: Mike Hewitt/Getty Images

## Firdose Moonda

**O**n a buzzing Saturday morning, hundreds of people queued on Campground Road in Cape Town's southern suburbs to buy tickets to the Women's T20 Cricket World Cup final,

despite also having the Formula E Grand Prix and Thandiswa Mazwai's play *Letter to Azania* to choose from.

It was the first time in South Africa's history that any senior cricket side – men's or women's – had reached the final of a World Cup in 12 attempts and this



**Howzat!**  
Ayabonga Khaka  
celebrates the  
wicket of Hayley  
Jensen of New  
Zealand. Photo:  
Getty Images

one had done it at home.

They had also done it by overcoming obstacles, on the field and off, that could have caused any other team to implode. Unlike their male counterparts, the South African women's team are not the products of elite schools – and as a result are the most diverse national side on display. Their World Cup squad includes a veteran bowler from the Cape Flats, Shabnim Ismail; another from the village of Middelrift in the Eastern Cape, Ayabonga Khaka; and a third from an Afrikaans community in the Eastern Cape, Marizanne Kapp. That trio grew up playing with boys – and beating them – long before the idea of women's cricket became professional.

In 2014, South Africa contracted its first women's players, which meant that Laura Wolvaardt, who opens the

batting, could choose a career in cricket over a medical degree; and spin bowler Nonkululeko Mlaba, from the Ntuzuma township in Kwa-Zulu Natal, can now earn a living that lifts her family into better economic circumstances.

Cricket has provided a second sporting life for Tazmin Brits, whose journey to the 2012 Olympics for the javelin event was cut short by a car accident that put her in hospital for two months. It's been nothing short of inspiring to witness her return as a cricketer playing a leading role in South Africa's World Cup campaign.

After losing the tournament opener to Sri Lanka, an unfancied side who have only beaten South Africa three times in 13 matches before, South Africa needed to win at least two of their remaining group matches to advance to the semifinals.

They beat New Zealand and



Bangladesh to set up a final four clash with England, a team that had beaten them in all three of their previous knockout meetings. South Africa put together the perfect game and won by a close margin to set up a date with destiny against Australia in the final.

A sell-out crowd of 13,000, many of them moms and daughters, greeted South Africa at Newlands on the big day and passionately sung the national anthem with them. Moved to tears, Kapp quickly shook off all distractions to help restrict Australia to a gettable total of 156. In the end, however, it proved just a little too much after all and South Africa lost the final to a team that holds a record six titles – but they, and women's cricket on the continent, won everything else.

Just before the senior World Cup, the inaugural under-19 girls' World Cup was held in Potchefstroom and

Benoni and featured 16 teams. One of them was Rwanda, in their first World Cup appearance, who went on to beat Zimbabwe and West Indies. Their seam bowler, Henriette Ishimwe, became only the second under-19 girls bowler to take a hat-trick – three wickets in three successive balls. The tournament is a big stepping stone for girls who want to make the step up to senior international sport.

### **A sell-out crowd of 13,000, many of them moms and daughters, greeted South Africa at Newlands on the big day**

In 2023, women will take part in cricket, football and netball World Cups – in what what could well end up being regarded the biggest year in women's sport to date. ■



Pro-Tea:  
No seat was  
empty at the  
World Cup  
final. Photo:  
IOC via Getty  
Images

# 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

"The views are pretty good from up here on the summit."

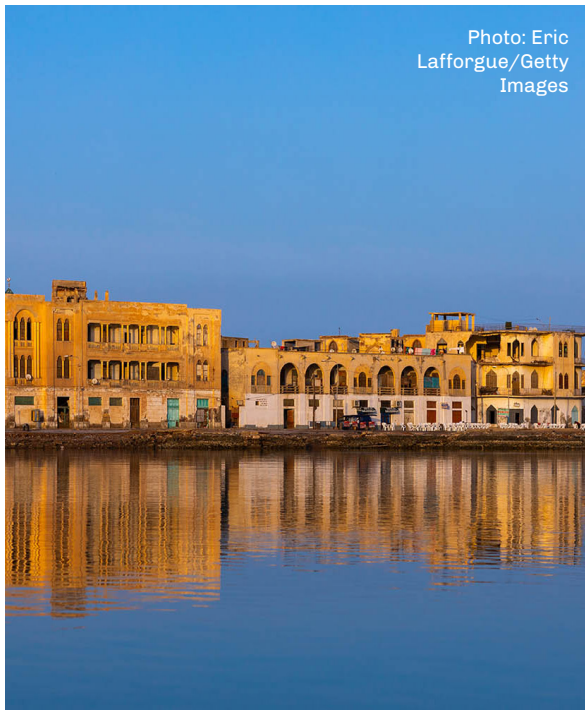


Photo: Eric Lafforgue/Getty Images

- 1\_** Mount Kenya is the third highest mountain in Africa. True or false?
- 2\_** Which political party does Bola Tinubu belong to?
- 3\_** Is cholera a viral or bacterial disease?
- 4\_** What is the demonym for people from Gabon?
- 5\_** Which area is also known as the Somali Peninsula?
- 6\_** Mokgweetsi Masisi is which country's president?
- 7\_** Kais Saied has been president of Tunisia since October of which year?
- 8\_** Massawa (pictured) is a port city in which country?
- 9\_** Which former Zambian president changed the country's name from Northern Rhodesia?
- 10\_** Which currency does Mali use?

## HOW DID I DO?

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

# Saving Kenya's last rainforest

Women are leading communities in Kenya to save Kakamega forest – and making money along the way



Honey, I'm home:  
Beehives belonging  
to the Shamiloli  
Conservation Group.  
Photo: Michelle Atieno

**Michelle Atieno**

**K**akamega forest, the only surviving rainforest in Kenya, is the easternmost remnant of the prehistoric Guineo-Congolian Forest. Listed in 2010 by Unesco as a World Heritage Site, it's a unique sanctuary for a remarkable diversity of endemic birds, insects and over 380 plant species, many of which are not found anywhere else in Kenya.

The community living adjacent to Kakamega forest heavily depends on it for timber, fuel wood, herbal medicines,

building materials and other resources for daily life. But high levels of poverty often mean that the resources are getting depleted in an unsustainable manner.

“During my early days in this area, the forest was very thick. That has really changed,” says conservationist Maridah Khalawa. “We have lost a number of very important trees like the Kumulembe tree that we used to treat a number of diseases, including ulcers.”

Khalawa believes there is a way for communities to both protect and profit from the forest, so she founded the Muliru

Farmers Conservation Group. Rather than cut down trees, the group has beehives in the forest and they harvest honey every three months, demonstrating that communities can benefit from the forest while conserving it.

To use medicinal trees, the group promotes an ethical harvesting procedure: barks, leaves and root parts can only be harvested from mature trees so as not to interfere with the growth of younger ones.

Agnes Mulimi, head of Shamiloli Forest Conservation Green Growers, works with a philosophy similar to Khalawa's in leading her group's agroforestry and reforestation effort.

The all-women group was founded in 2000 and formally registered in 2015. It trains its members on alternative means of forest income and distributes tree seedlings to encourage reforestation.

Mulimi shows *The Continent* Blue Gum and Cyprus seedlings that the group has planted for free distribution in the community. "We give people these seedlings for free and also offer planting advice," she says. "We are against wasting even a single tree."

When women are active conservationists, government forest officers allow them to grow crops in the forest as long as such planting does not require cutting down the trees. The Shamiloli group grows camphor basil and sells it to a factory managed by Muliru Farmers Conservation Group.

Others, like the Valonji Women Group in the Shinyalu area, are working to reduce household consumption of forest resources like firewood. The group



**Oven-ready: Rosemary Ongachi (right) of the Shitiki Borders Conservation Group with the lightweight portable stoves they make.** Photo: Michelle Atieno

makes and sells energy efficient stoves that preserve heat because they are moulded from clay and therefore use less firewood than the traditional three-stone open fireplaces that area residents typically use for cooking. They also have 23 beehives for additional income, harvesting about 12kg of honey every three months, which they sell at 1,100 Kenyan shillings (\$8.61) per kilogram.

With the support of conservation scientists and state initiatives, the ingenuity and the longevity of these women's groups' efforts stand as strong arguments for what Inger Anderson, executive director of the United National Environmental Programme, said at the 66th UN Status of Women meeting last year: "We have had enough of male-dominated solutions. A just transition to a green, sustainable future requires gender-responsive approaches." ■

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# Beware the idiots of March

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## Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

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Reader, it's March. How could this be? We do not know. Time is a mystery. But one thing we *do* know is that March means a fresh start.

Everyone knows January and February are just a dress rehearsal for the new year – January with its financial headaches and February with its romantic heartaches. But March? March is when it all kicks off.

Some countries have even made March the official beginning of their fiscal or tax years (happy new year to all who celebrate!) But for the rest of us the spirit of renewal is strong, too, which means it's time to clean out those wardrobes, block that person who won't text you back, and get a makeover!

Those among us from Nigeria will certainly know this. After last week's election, it's a case of out with the old, as 80-year-old President Muhammadu Buhari's incumbency comes to an end. That said, for many in the country, the "in with the new" corollary isn't exactly inspiring optimism.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu was declared winner of the election with 37% of the vote, and not everyone is happy with

the result. The Labour Party, whose presidential candidate, Peter Obi, ran an impressive campaign, is set to challenge the election result in court.

At a press conference Obi said: "We will explore all legal and peaceful options to reclaim our mandate. We won the election, and we will prove it to Nigerians."

Following the vote, European Union observers said that "lack of transparency and operational failures reduced trust in the process and challenged the right to vote". Ouch.

African Union observers were a little kinder, suggesting that "despite the challenging economic, operational and security environment, the elections were generally well administered in a transparent and peaceful atmosphere".

Whether the evidence provided by the opposition – alongside alleged discrepancies, logistical challenges and "technical glitches" – will be enough to nullify the polls remains to be seen.

Either way, Nigeria would do well to consider what has been described as its low voter turnout. While this may be due to logistical challenges such as the naira shortage, it also suggests voter disenfranchisement.

Dismissing it as "voter apathy" is not enough: when people choose not to vote that sends a message of its own: they either don't trust the system or the

candidates, or they no longer feel like their vote will change anything.

On a sidenote, former presidents Thabo Mbeki, Uhuru Kenyatta, Ernest Bai Koroma and Joyce Banda all headed up various observer missions to the country, showing us the fun things you can do once you leave office: travelling; hanging out with fellow formers; exploring new places; sharing in all the highs of election fever; and then leaving all the political hangovers behind when you're bundled into the bus and shuttled back to the retirement village.

### The name's not Ouaga-DON'T-go

On to the latest episode of *Keeping Up With The Coupdashians*, as we check in on Burkina Faso, which is really taking the “out with the old” theme to heart.

This week the Burkinabè government denounced the 1961 military assistance agreement signed with France and ordered the “final departure of all French military personnel serving in Burkinabè military administrations.”

No wonder Emmanuel Macron is back in the neighbourhood attempting a little makeover of his own. Prior to his trip, he unveiled France's new “Africa strategy” (le sigh), saying that France must show “profound humility” towards Africa and that there would be a reduction in French troops on the continent.

It's been a stressful time for old Manny Macron with the military coups in Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso and a rise in anti-French sentiment in some countries. Guess renewal slaps different when you're the one added to someone's



**Much adieu: Burkinabè protesters call for the exit of France's ambassador and military.** Photo: AFP via Getty Images

“does not spark joy” pile.

Fresh starts may be in season, but perhaps a few makeovers are in order.

Tunisia's President Kais Saied recently called for a crackdown on undocumented migrants, accusing “hordes of illegal immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa” of bringing violence and crime to the country and seeking to change Tunisia's demographics – which, wow. Just... wow.

Surprising precisely nobody, migrants have been a target of violence since his remarks, and many have been evicted from their homes, lost their jobs, and even detained. Meanwhile, countries such as Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire have begun to repatriate their citizens from Tunisia.

At least racism isn't universal: many Tunisians have taken to the streets denouncing Saied's comments, a reminder that the spirit of Pan-Africanism lives on.

So when it comes March makeovers, we suggest it's time Tunisian authorities take a long hard look in the mirror. ■

# The Big Picture

Photo: Michele Spatari/AFP

Those sums of beaches: Land in Lagos is a hot commodity. This includes its beaches, most of which now charge a hefty entry fee – official or otherwise. But as the couple pictured might tell you, inconspicuous side entrances often offer un-tolled access. The beach below, near the Naij fishing spot, has no official name, but we've heard it referred to as the, uh, Mr Nollywood Beach. Hey Lagos, does that check out?



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