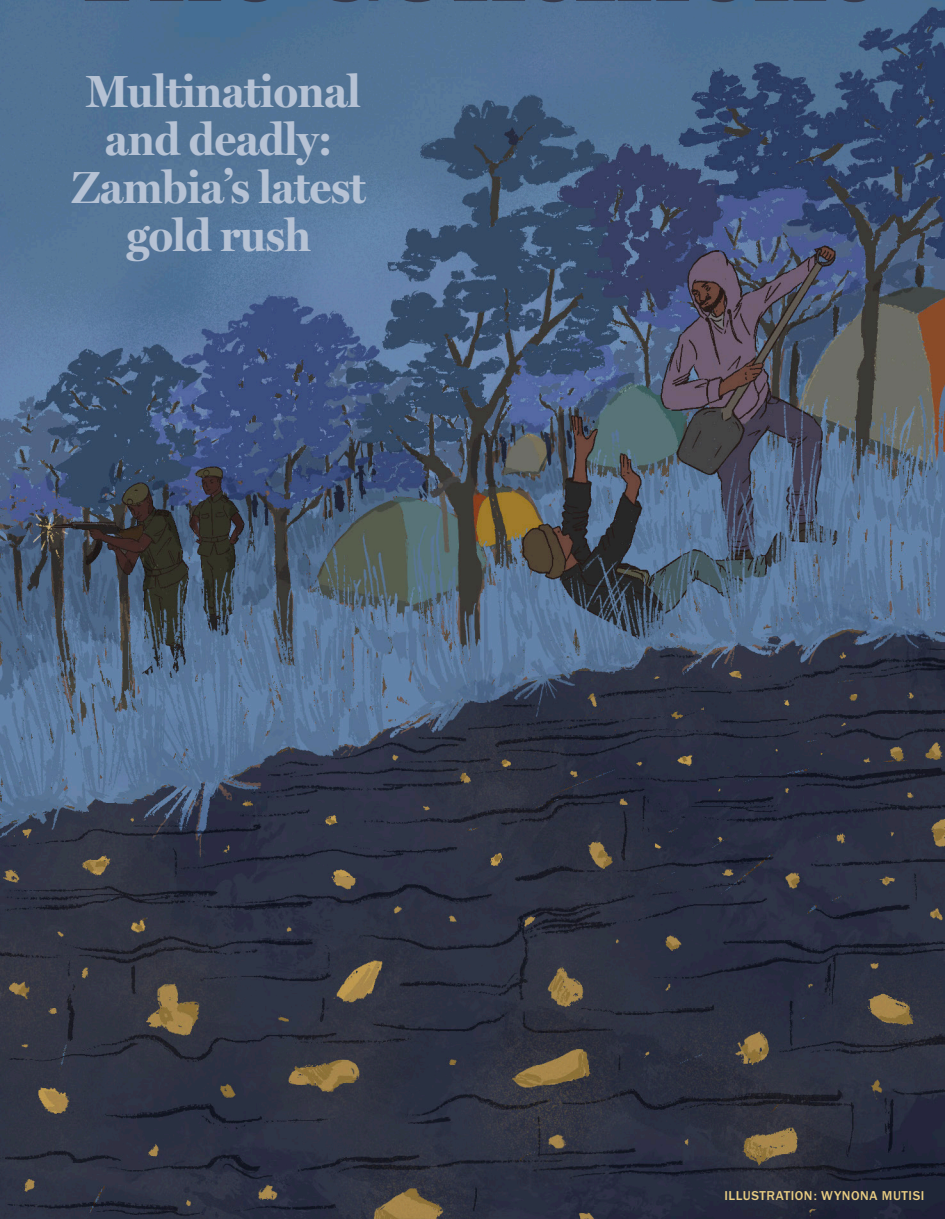


The Continent

**Multinational
and deadly:
Zambia's latest
gold rush**





COVER A farmer's accidental gold discovery near Zambia's West Lunga National Park sparked a chaotic rush, drawing in tens of thousands of people. They came from across Zambia, Africa and beyond. Violence between them and from the police has left bodies in the bush, and spread fear in local communities. Most of the gold is being sold informally to shadowy buyers. Authorities have promised to buy the gold once the miners formalise into cooperatives. But, for now, Kikonge remains a free-for-all zone where fortune and danger collide. *Read more on page 12.*

Inside

- 7 Ethiopia:** Another feminist activist forced to flee
- 8 Zimbabwe:** Cecil the Lion, all over again
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The Museum of Memory:

Our world is littered with monuments. Some seek to rewrite history. Others celebrate particular memories. They all speak to power, or the lack thereof. This week in our limited series, we profile Thomas Sankara's mausoleum in Ouagadougou. *Read on page 22.*

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THE WEEK IN BRIEF

TECH

Orange rolls out OpenAI to its African markets

Telecom giant Orange is deploying OpenAI models across its operations, including in Africa, making the company behind ChatGPT one of the first global companies to do so. This might power multilingual services, often unavailable to African customers. But indiscriminately rolling out its AI also raises concerns about data privacy, model bias, and the risk that customers may be locked into foreign-built tech systems that can be weaponised or withdrawn without local say.

RWANDA

Give us your migrants, your huddled convicts?

Rwanda will accept some 250 migrants deported from the United States under a new deal with the Trump regime, spokesperson Yolande Makolo posted on X. She said they would receive job training, healthcare and housing. The US is leaning on African countries to take deported immigrants marked as “dangerous criminals”. Eswatini and South Sudan have already taken in 13 between them. In 2022 Rwanda struck a similar deal with the United Kingdom but it was scrapped before it took effect.



PHOTO: FRAZER HARRISON

Why try hide it? Tyla's 2023 song *Water* has more than 1.1-billion streams on Spotify.

MUSIC

Tyla in hot water over Grammy-winning hit

South African pop star Tyla is being sued by two songwriters, Olmo Zucca and Jackson LoMastro, who claim they were not properly credited for their work on her Grammy-award winning hit *Water*. The two are also suing Sony Music Entertainment, seeking royalties, including a 12.5% publishing royalty – a share of income earned when a song is played, streamed or licensed, *News24* reports.



ETHIOPIA

Human traffickers sentenced to death

Ethiopia has sentenced five people to death for human trafficking, the first time the country has handed down such a punishment for this crime. The five were found guilty of running smuggling operations along the so-called eastern route used to smuggle people to the Gulf states. The ruling comes after more than 140 Ethiopian migrants drowned off the coast of Yemen last week. Death sentences are legal in Ethiopia, although they are rarely handed down. The last

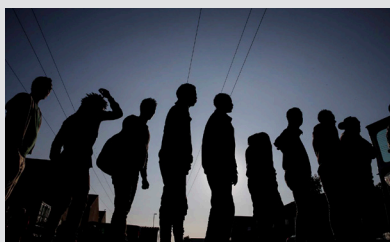


PHOTO: REUTERS

Bitter journey: Ethiopians and Eritreans queue at a migration centre in Calais, France.

known execution took place more than a decade ago.

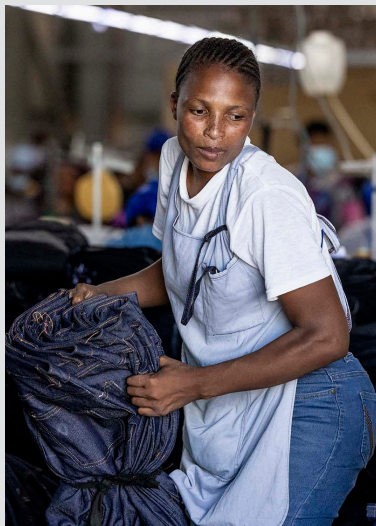


PHOTO: ROBERTA CIUCIO/AFP

Good jeans? The Afri-Expo Textile Factory in Maseru is – or perhaps was – Lesotho's largest employer, with 35,000 workers.

LESOTHO

US tariff reprieve is too little, too late

A last-minute United States tariff cut has come too late to save Lesotho's textile sector, industry players say. The tariff – initially set to rise to 50%, the highest of any US trading partner – was reduced to 15% in a recent executive order by President Donald Trump. But months of trade uncertainty have already taken a toll, with cancelled orders and job losses, *Reuters* reports. Lesotho's factories produce clothing for major US brands like Levi's and Walmart.

GHANA

Cabinet minister killed in helicopter crash

Ghana's environment minister Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed, former defence minister Edward Omane Boamah and six other people died in a helicopter crash on Wednesday. The military aircraft disappeared from radar after departing Accra at about 9am local time, en route to Obuasi in the southern Ashanti region. The cause is under investigation. Ghana's government described the crash as a tragedy and declared three days of national mourning from Thursday, *Africanews* reports.

SOUTH AFRICA

Pig-farm murder trial begins in Limpopo

Two men – farm owner Zachariah Olivier and worker William Musora – are on trial for allegedly killing two women whose bodies were fed to pigs. Maria Makgato and Lucia Ndlovu were reportedly searching for food on a Limpopo farm in August 2024 when Olivier allegedly shot them, the *SABC* reports. A third man, Adrian de Wet, walked free on Wednesday after turning state witness, reportedly telling prosecutors that he was forced to dispose of the bodies. The two face murder and attempted murder charges, and Musora also faces an immigration charge.

ZAMBIA

Don't panic, it's only mostly life-threatening

Zambia has rejected claims of dangerous pollution in the Copperbelt mining region, the *BBC* reports. On Wednesday, the US embassy issued a health alert and withdrew staff from Kitwe and its surrounds, citing contamination of water and soil with hazardous and carcinogenic substances linked to a spill at the Sino-Metals mine. (See *The Continent* #194, 15 March 2025). Government spokesperson Cornelius Mweetwa hit back, saying there was “absolutely no need” to press the panic button.

UNITED STATES

Stay out, leave fast or pay dearly

Starting on 20 August, Zambians and Malawians who wish to visit the US must pay visa bonds of up to \$15,000. The US said it would keep the funds if they overstay or seek asylum. Meanwhile, it has stopped processing visa applications from Zimbabwe entirely. The US has also banned visitors from Chad, Eritrea, Libya, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Congo, and cut visa options for people from Burundi, Sierra Leone, Togo, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda.

NIGERIA

Bird smugglers' wings clipped in Lagos

Customs officials at Lagos airport have seized more than 1,600 parrots and canaries being sent to Kuwait without the required permits. It is one of the country's largest bird-trafficking busts. The shipment, which included ring-necked parakeets and yellow-fronted canaries, was intercepted on 31 July. Nigeria is a major hub in global illegal wildlife trafficking, valued at an estimated \$8-billion to \$10-billion a year, *Africanews* reports. The confiscated birds have been handed over to Nigeria's National



PHOTO: REUTERS

Perch's price: *The illegal trafficking of wildlife is valued at more than \$8-billion, globally.*

Park Service for care and eventual reintroduction into the wild.

NEWS

ETHIOPIA

Feminist activist flees after cyber harassment

Activists believe the state is complicit in wave of misogyny.

SAMUEL GETACHEW IN ADDIS ABABA

ONE of Ethiopia's most prominent feminist activists, Jordin "Jordi" Bezabih, has been forced to flee the country after a co-ordinated cyberbullying campaign in which her private accounts were hacked. Her intimate videos and text messages were then shared online.

Bezabih, 34, is an outspoken advocate for women's equality. She was one of the most active critics of the narratives spun around the death of model Keneni Adugna, who fell from a balcony in March in suspected domestic violence.

Activists like Bezabih are increasingly a target. Last year, another self-identified feminist, Lella "Emama Fishka" Misikir, left Ethiopia after receiving a torrent of death threats.

The people who harass them tend to link feminism to the "promotion" of same-sex relationships and claim they

are working against Ethiopia's religious culture and tradition.

This narrative plays powerfully in one of Africa's most socially conservative societies. In a country in which same-sex relations are criminalised and punishable by up to 15 years in prison, being accused of homosexuality can be devastating. It forces many people to abandon activism or flee.

Activists believe state-affiliated actors are either complicit in this harassment, or have turned a blind eye as Bezabih was targeted by constant co-ordinated campaigns. Before her private messages were leaked, police detained Bezabih and confiscated her phone.

Even officially, the Ethiopian government is increasingly leaning into perceptions that homosexuality is spreading and a danger to the country.

It has instructed hotels to deny perceived same-sex couples services, arrested some people deemed to be gay, and conducted random raids to search for gay people.

These actions appear to be a response to a new wave of feminist activism in which young people use social media, particularly TikTok, to make bold demands for freedom of expression, sexuality and women's rights.

Bezabih's online activism and sexually charged self-expression was at the crest of this wave. ■

ZIMBABWE

Cecil 2.0: Another research lion killed by trophy tourists

Defenders say trophy hunting benefits conservation, but others warn of the risks it poses to ecosystems and communities.

KIRI RUPIAH

NAMED “BLONDIE” by researchers, a five-year-old Zimbabwean lion was struck down in his prime by a trophy hunter. He was a dominant male with 10 cubs in Zimbabwe’s Hwange National Park. His death risks destabilising his pride and increasing human-wildlife conflict in the area.

Blondie was part of a research study aiming to reduce human-wildlife conflict by understanding lion behaviour.

The lion wore a GPS collar that sent data to researchers at Oxford University’s Wildlife Conservation Research Unit. His killing revives memories of Cecil the Lion, who was killed by another trophy hunter in 2015, sparking global outrage.

“[Blondie] was a breeding male in his prime, making a mockery of the ethics that ZPGA [Zimbabwe Professional Guides Association] regularly espouses,” said Simon Espley, chief executive of tour company Africa Geographic, which sponsored the collar the lion wore.

Killing a dominant male lion



PHOTO: OWEN GROBLER/SEARCHING FOR SPOTS

destabilises its pride by triggering a succession struggle. To eliminate rivals, male lions kill male cubs and some lionesses are displaced. The latter have been known to then turn on livestock in nearby community lands.

Trophy hunting is banned in countries like Kenya, but legal in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana. Supporters of regulated hunting argue that the industry funds conservation projects.

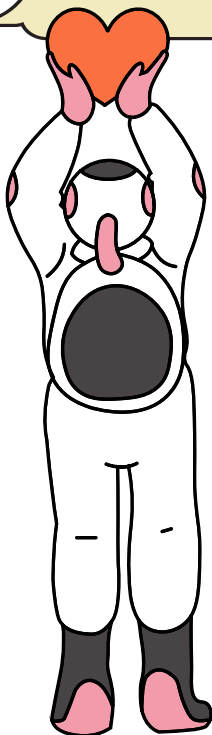
At the privately owned Buby Valley Conservancy, for example, hunting revenues are credited with enabling the creation of one of Africa’s largest black rhino populations. ■

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EGYPT

‘Heretical’ Shia shed disfavour as winds of war shift prejudices

Shared outrage – and anxiety – over Israel and Gaza is easing anti-Shia sentiment in Egypt, but broadening the surveillance of Iranian Jews.

HAIDAR KANDIL IN CAIRO

IN A MODEST Cairo apartment, Mohamed Youssef scrolls through his phone, amazed that speeches by Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei are circulating widely on Egyptian social media for the first time.

Iran’s support for the Palestinian cause in Gaza and the recent escalation in its long-standing conflict with Israel have brought unexpected visibility – and even adoration – to the country’s sidelined Shia minority.

“People who once whispered ‘Iranian agent’ when I passed now stop to discuss resistance,” Youssef says. He has also noticed mainstream Egyptian media has been giving airtime to Shia religious festivals, unthinkable a few years ago.

In Egypt, where most people are Sunni Muslims, dominant narratives have long painted the Shia sect as heretic. “Wahhabism promoted false concepts about Shia – that we believe in a different Qur’an, worship Ali ibn Abi Talib or don’t perform hajj to Mecca,” says Amani al-Washahi, an Amazigh-Egyptian writer and activist. Iran, the world’s only Shia-majority country, was targeted.

The spread of anti-Shia narratives intensified under the Muslim Brotherhood, which governed Egypt from 2012 to 2013. Egypt’s Shia Muslims – estimated at one million – were accused of loyalty to Iran, mocked for their rituals and excluded from public discourse. The 2013 lynching of Shia cleric Hassan Shehata marked the height of this extremist turn.

But since Iranian missiles started flying towards Israel in October 2024, the narrative has shifted. The intense 12-day Israel-Iran-US war in June prompted even more public pride in the Shia. “My daughter can finally talk about Imam Hussein’s martyrdom at school without fear,” says Youssef, referring to a grandson of Prophet Muhammad whose killing galvanised his sympathisers to form their own sect, Shia, which evolved some unique rituals.

This shift, says al-Washahi, is helped by the comparatively muted reactions to Gaza in Sunni-majority countries



Rapprocheable: Cairo's Al-Hussein mosque, named for Prophet Mohammad's grandson, a key Shia figure.

like Jordan and Saudi Arabia. However, despite growing popular sympathy, Egypt's Shia community continues to face systemic discrimination, including security harassment for open worship, al-Washahi says. "The [most] they can do is commemorate religious occasions through social media," she says.

Not everyone is dropping anti-Shia sentiments. "Oh God, let the oppressors fight each other and bring us out safely," says Mohamed Abu Ismail, who identifies as Salafi, a conservative Sunni movement known for its staunch opposition to Shia Islam.

While Egypt's Shia enjoy a reprieve, Iran's 15,000-strong Jewish community faces intensifying persecution. Human rights groups report that Iranian security

forces have summoned dozens of Jewish families for questioning about contact with relatives in Israel.

While Egypt's Shia enjoy a reprieve, Iran's 15,000-strong Jewish community faces intensifying persecution.

The two parallel experiences underscore a longstanding feature of prejudice and sectarianism in the Middle East: today's heroes can quickly become tomorrow's suspects, and vice-versa, as political winds shift. ■

This article is published in collaboration with Egab

REPORT



PHOTOS: STAFRANCE ZULU

Zambia's gold rush: A lucky strike turns lethal

Drought forced a group of farmers out of their homeland. Squatting near Zambia's West Lunga National Park, one of them unexpectedly struck gold, setting off a deadly international frenzy.

PAMELA KAPEKELE IN MUFUMBWE

THERE IS GOLD in the ground and death in the air. At the site of Zambia's latest gold rush in the remote forest-fringed communities of Dengwe and Kikonge, Mufumbwe district, the stench of rotting bodies hangs thick. Thousands of young men and women rush about in the bushes, simultaneously searching for quick wealth and trying to avoid Zambian police.

Depending on who you ask, the death in the air was caused by the police or by gangs – or both. It began in early June, when a short, shaky video posted to Facebook showed a farmer striking gold near the West Lunga National Park. Within a week, more than 20,000 people had arrived in the area. They came from other parts of Zambia – Lusaka, Kitwe, Kabwe – as well as other countries – Tanzania, Rwanda, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and even China – a local leader said. By day three, the police had arrived.

Local leaders were caught off guard. The farmers in the forest, driven out of the Tonga areas of southern Zambia by drought, had been an issue – but only because they were squatting in the buffer zone of a protected area. The local chiefs had given them an ultimatum to leave. But, with the gold discovery, their incentive to stay had skyrocketed and thousands more people were pouring in.

Danger from all sides

Police presence has brought little order. The area still lacks basic amenities like toilets, safety gear and emergency-

response services. Instead, the police stand accused of themselves being fortune-seekers. “The police are here but they are not stopping anyone. They’re collecting,” one miner said.

Multiple miners and residents told *The Continent* that officers demand a daily fee of 100 kwacha (about \$5) from each person to allow them access to the goldfields.

Samora Robson Kayombo, spokesperson for a local chiefdom, said the police were collaborating with some of the mining gangs. “During the day they chase miners, but at night, they are part of the mining operations,” he said.

Former Mufumbwe MP Steven Masumba backed these claims, telling the *Daily Revelation* that some officers collect up to K15,000 per day.

Multiple miners and residents told *The Continent* that officers demand a daily fee of K100 (about \$5) from each person to allow them access to the goldfields.

Inside the goldfields, death appears to come from all directions. Miners say anyone who strikes big risks being attacked – by police, gangs or fellow miners.

“They hit my friend in the stomach with a pick,” said miner Mutinta Kayongola. “The jerabos use shovels on anyone who they think is getting too much gold.”

Jerabos are informal mining bosses



Unpaved with gold:

After a short video appeared on social media in June, showing a farmer striking gold near the West Lunga National Park, the once nearly deserted area has been flooded with prospectors, artisanal miners, vendors, gangsters – and even opportunistic police.

PHOTOS: STAFRANCE ZULU

typically from Zambia's Copperbelt. "They came with people from [the] Copperbelt and now they are in charge. If you don't pay, you don't mine," said a 23-year-old miner from Kaoma who asked not to be named.

In several interviews, miners in Kikonge described an emerging hierarchy in which newcomers must pay the jerabos or risk being chased away – sometimes violently.

The jerabos operate in loosely connected networks, determining who gets to dig where and enforcing their decisions with hired muscle.

Police spokesperson Rae Hamoonga

said the police officers went to the district to restore order and ensure public safety, but some of the deaths in Kikonge have occurred during their operations.

In a recent confrontation between police and the miners, an unarmed woman walking with her husband was shot dead. Her image – shared widely online – became a symbol for the violence in the area. Police have not revealed who shot her.

On 30 July, four young men died under unclear circumstances. At the Mufumbwe mortuary, *The Continent* saw three of the bodies brought in. The

fourth was collected by family members.

Police have arrested dozens of suspected miners – charging them with unlawful mining and disorderly conduct – and immigration forces detained 21 others, reportedly including 17 Tanzanians, two Indians, and two Chinese nationals.

According to Kayombo, the arrests may have simply entrenched gang control. “Most of those still mining are outsiders. Our people were scared when they saw police and moved out of Kikonge and Dengwe. Jerabos are used to fighting with the police,” he said.

Kayombo estimated that about 30,000 people were still in the bushes.

Hamoonga said allegations against the police would be investigated “if evidence is presented”. But local leaders are demanding that both the miners and the police leave to allow calm to return.

Minister promises order – eventually

Zambia’s minister of mines, Paul Kabuswe, visited the area last week. He acknowledged that the government had yet to produce a mineral register covering the whole country.

In its absence, he said, “We’ve just let our small-scale farmers discover minerals and, when they do, they invite others and the rush begins.”

In the current chaos, most of the gold that is mined is sold informally – often for cash and to middlemen suspected of acting on behalf of foreign buyers. Some buyers come in unmarked vehicles and leave quickly, avoiding attention. “They

flash dollars and buy,” said one trader.

Kabuswe said the government would not stand for it. “We will not allow gold to slip through our fingers and be bought cheaply by people who smuggle and don’t pay tax,” he said. “We want to secure the place. This is the country’s wealth ... All this wealth belongs to Zambia.”

In the current chaos, most of the gold mined is being sold informally – often for cash and to middlemen suspected of acting on behalf of foreign buyers.

In a meeting with traditional leaders, which *The Continent* attended, the minister outlined a plan to formalise operations, beginning with forming local miners’ cooperatives that will be trained in safe mining practices.

The state investment company will anchor this effort, buying gold directly from the cooperatives.

The minister also said that the government would now map the whole country for mineral prospects so it can properly plan for and structure future mining operations.

That’s the long-term plan.

In the meantime, Kikonge remains a free-for-all theatre of exploitation, where opportunity is intertwined with danger as young men dig for fortune while syndicates and shadowy figures quietly take the prize. ■

PHOTO ESSAY



Nigeria's never-complete highway has barely begun

The road from Ibadan to Ilorin is paved with good intentions but, 46 years in, some tarmac would be nice.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: SOGO OLADELE

ABRAHAM WAS on a trip to Benin in 2001 when he heard construction had begun on the 135km Ibadan-Ilorin dual-carriageway back home in Nigeria. It felt like the end of a long wait that had begun in 1979, when

president Olusegun Obasanjo, who at the time was the military head of state, flagged the road construction as an emergency. Today, 24 years after official construction began, Abraham's import business is long dead and he now sells

palm wine along the highway. Asked if he thought construction of the Ibadan-Ilorin highway would be completed any time soon, he simply laughed.

The highway is part of a trans-Saharan road network that is meant to facilitate trade between Nigeria, Niger and Algeria. It's barely car-worthy, but you know you are approaching a terrible patch when you see hawkers ahead. They know the condition of the so-called highway will slow you down enough to shop as you go.

Nothing, however, prepares you for competing for slippery road space with heavy-duty trucks on the Oyo-

Ogbomoso section, which remains untarred although it has been under construction for two and a half decades. Filled to the brim with goods, the trucks sway from left to right, trying to maintain balance between potholes.

Sometimes the back half of a truck is levered into the air as the front slips down, and it sways under the weight of its load. Onlookers tense up in anticipation of what happens next: the unbalanced truck tips over, and they swoop in to scoop up its spilled treasure.

Sunny days are easier on the trucks but terrible for people. Thick dust encases everyone who stands or lives



Tanks for nothing: Freight lorries bypass a broken-down truck in the middle of the old road in Oda Oba.

by the roadside, settling on faces like unwanted makeup.

It's hard to pin down why the Ibadan-Ilorin highway has remained unfinished for so long.

Or is it? In March 2025, Public Works Minister David Umahi yanked the project from RCC, a local company that had little to show for the 18.5-billion naira it has received in public contracts since 2001 to build this section of the

road. A new contract, for a reported 147.9-billion naira, has since been awarded to JRB Construction, a solar company with little experience in road construction.

While the project drags, travellers are taking huge risks just using the road. Jomiloju Oni says she hopes for only one thing on her weekly commute from Ibadan to Ogbomoso: to get there in one piece. ■



But I cannot lie: A vehicle overloaded with foam navigates the Oyo-Ogbomoso highway in Oyo State.



The bucket stop's here: A trader takes shade beneath a tree, watching traffic shudder along the highway.



Run and dusted: Children cross the highway to fetch water from a nearby well in Idi-Emin.



Branch manager: A driver ferrying firewood confers with vendors about the state of the road.



Pathing grade: Pupils from Adetunji Baptist School wait to cross the road in Adetunji village.



Sidetracked: Mohammed Gana inspects his truck after it took a tumble navigating around a pothole.



Pour shape: A man splashes water on the road to reduce dust kicked up by truck traffic.



Highweigh star: A driver inches his overloaded car past roadside observers.



Treacherous tracks: Vehicles navigate through the mud, and around one another, after night rains.



LIMITED SERIES

The Museum of Memory

HOW WE CHOOSE TO REMEMBER

CURATED BY SHOLA LAWAL
ART DIRECTION BY WYNONA MUTISI



PHOTO: KÉRÉ ARCHITECTS

The Thomas Sankara Mausoleum

BURKINA FASO

THE Thomas Sankara Mausoleum in Ouagadougou is like a fantasy Wakanda building come to life. Clean lines, V-shaped pillars, earthy colours and local laterite bricks combine in an eye-shaped structure that nods both to indigeneity and cutting-edge science.

Its orange mud bricks are a hallmark of Diébédo Francis Kéré, the Burkinabé architect who designed the building. In 2022, Kéré became the first African to win the Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Commissioned by former president Marc Christian Kaboré, the mausoleum was unveiled in May this year. It's part of a wider effort to honour the legacy of Burkina Faso's most famous son: former revolutionary leader Thomas Sankara, who led the country between 1983 and 1987.

At 32, Sankara rose to power after a coup in what was then Upper Volta. During his four years in power, he set out to rid the country of foreign aid and corruption, and foster self-sufficiency.

He shunned the International Monetary Fund and launched agricultural projects to promote local food production. He built schools, railways and roads, distributed vaccines to children across the country, and abolished forced marriages and female circumcision. Then he renamed the country Burkina Faso – the land of upright men – and wrote its national anthem.

Sankara stood out internationally for his charming oration and his bullish stance against the dominant capitalist order. He railed against supporters

of apartheid South Africa (including the United States), the oppression of Palestine, and French neocolonialism.

His fiery speeches won over many Burkinabé and Africans in general, who labelled him “Africa’s Che Guevara”. Foreign powers like the US and France – and officers in his own cabinet – were not amused. Sankara made enemies with neighbours, too. Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi and Liberia’s Charles Taylor were rankled by his refusal to let Burkina Faso become an arms corridor between their countries. Côte d’Ivoire’s Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a close ally of France, did not care for him either.

Rights organisations faulted Sankara for prosecuting and detaining dissenters. Aid cuts weakened the country economically, denting local support.

Ultimately, it was factions in his government who would unravel the revolution. Sankara was assassinated, along with 12 others, in a coup led by his friend and deputy Blaise Compaoré on 15 October 1987.

Compaoré ruled for 27 years. His bid to run for president again in 2014 triggered fierce protests across the country. He fled to Côte d’Ivoire and, in absentia, was found guilty of the 1987 assassinations in 2022 and received a life sentence.

Only after his fall could Burkinabés memorialise Sankara properly.

Honouring him in a way that measured up to his legend was difficult. In 2020, Burkinabé artist Jean-Luc Bambara was forced to rework his 2019 bronze sculpture of the icon. Burkinabés had criticised the figure for bearing no resemblance to their beloved Sankara. Bambara said high temperatures in the Sahelian country had melted the cast.

The mausoleum was built near that statue and marks Sankara’s final resting place. Inside, his marble tomb is flanked by the smaller tombs of his 12 slain companions. The structures are arranged in an arc, inspired by the sun’s path as it rises. Over each tomb a small opening allows in light during the day and seems to extend the skies right down to the concrete casings. At night, the same openings allow light to escape from the hall, making it visible from outside.

An ambitious memorial complex, also by Kéré, will surround the mausoleum. It will include an amphitheatre, teaching facilities and a 100m-tall tower. Kéré, speaking to *The Guardian*, said the mausoleum would not only mark the tragedy, but would also be a space for Burkinabés to partake in joyful activities, from studying to holding weddings. ■

Illustration note by Burkinabé illustrator El Marto: *The Thomas Sankara Mausoleum is not a place of death. It feels alive. When I enter, I don’t feel sadness – I feel strength. Francis Kéré made a place that gives hope, not sorrow. Even with the memory of a tragic event, the light and the space make you want to stand up and do great things. Sankara did so much in just four years – he still inspires us. In this illustration, I didn’t only want to draw a building. I wanted to show what Sankara stood for: music, farming, cinema, justice, energy. I tried to imbue this image with life and hope – like the mausoleum itself.*



EL MARTO.

THOMAS SANKARA MAUSOLEUM

ILLUSTRATION: EL MARTO

DATA

Mind the age gap

AFRICA'S young people will determine its future. So ahead of International Youth Day (12 August), we're asking: How many young Africans get involved in civic and political affairs?

Afrobarometer conducted surveys between late 2021 and mid-2023 in 39 African countries. We find that, on average, 18- to 35-year-olds are less involved than their elders on nine metrics of citizen engagement.

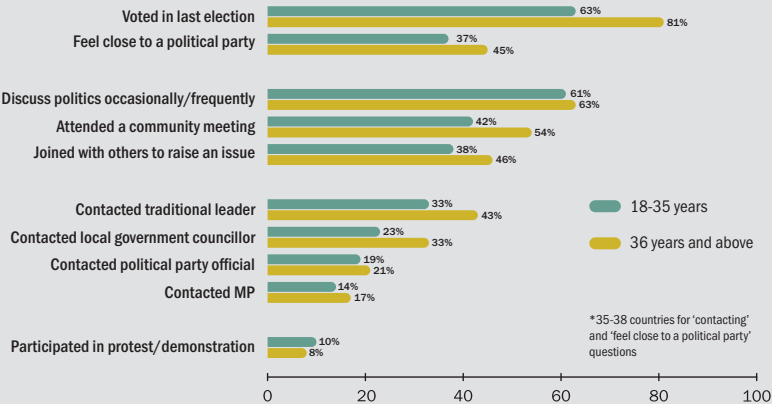
Young people are 18 percentage points less likely to have voted in the last election, even if they were old enough at the time. They are also less likely to

attend a community gathering (-12), contact a traditional leader (-10), reach out to a local government councillor (-10), join with others to voice their concerns (-8), and express affinity with a political party (-8).

There are slight differences in the frequency of discussing politics (-2) and in rates of contacting MPs (-3) and political party representatives (-2).

Only when it comes to hitting the streets are youth more likely to get involved (+2). But when they do, they can make a real difference, as Kenya's Gen Z protesters have shown. ■

Citizen engagement | youth vs non-youth | 39* African countries | 2021/2023



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.



REVIEW

JACQUELINE NYATHI



Society, sisterhood and self

Growing up is difficult
enough. Protecting family
secrets makes it harder.

SISTERHOOD is at the heart of Iryn Tushabe's *Everything is Fine Here*. Set in Uganda, it explores the relationship between Aine, who's just finishing high school, and her sister Mbabazi.

Aine is as naive about the world as you might expect her to be, and appears to be in the habit of exposing secrets – either without meaning to, or while hoping for the best. Like the fact that her older sister Mbabazi is bae'd up – with a woman – in Uganda, infamous for its anti-homosexuality laws.

Everything is Fine Here doesn't take on so much the macro politics as it does the personal ones: how Aine's indiscretion affects her family and her relationship with Mbabazi. And if that isn't enough for readers, she also goes on a grand adventure one memorable night.

The vivid descriptions of the locations in the novel contrast semi-rural small-town living with life in the big city, Kampala. Descriptions of life at Pike Girls' School will be familiar to anyone who went to boarding school.

The novel is full of heart and wonderful characters, and Tushabe accompanies its main themes of sexuality, family (chosen family included) and coming of age with a close and moving study of bereavement.

Everything is Fine Here is excellent modern African literature that scores highly in the “not about war, poverty or Aids, please” category, making the point that African lives have complexity outside tired stereotypes – there's so much more to see. Tushabe's novel shows it, while remaining an emotionally astute, fun and engaging read. ■

The Quiz

- 1 The Sanganeb Lighthouse (*its pier pictured below*) of the Red Sea is found in which country?
- 2 The naira replaced which currency in 1973?
- 3 Is the Central African Republic a coastal or landlocked country?
- 4 What was Burkina Faso's previous name?
- 5 After a coup, who became president of the country in 1983?
- 6 Sam Matekane is which country's prime minister?
- 7 Sauti Sol is a band from which country?
- 8 Which island country is closest to Réunion Island?
- 9 What is the name of the largest city in Senegal?
- 10 *Todii* and *Neria* are songs by which Zimbabwean musician and rights activist?



HOW DID I DO?

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

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

"All lighthouse studies should be pier-reviewed before they're published. (This one's rather good.)"

PHOTO: PRISMA BILDAGENTUR/
UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY
IMAGES

Big Pic

Golden age: Faid Kassime (centre), accompanies a gold dowry to his wife's family home in Moroni, Comoros – as part of *Grand Mariage* rites held years after an initial *Petit Mariage* seals a couple's union.

PHOTO: MARCO LONGARI/AFP



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