

with Mail & Guardian

# The Continent

**A king is  
crowned**



# Inside:

- **Kenya:** More bad news for Facebook (p6)
- **Uganda:** Homophobic politicians – and their western allies (p8)
- **Sudan:** The destruction of Geneina (p12)
- **Film:** Scorsese in Lagos (p16)
- **Afrobarometer:** Only 43% have reliable electricity access (p17)
- **Boxing:** Meet South Africa's oldest champion (p18)
- **Benin:** A government silences journalism (p23)
- **Analysis:** The worrying ethnic politics of William Ruto's government (p26)

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**Bless the reign down in Africa:** Britain's new king gets to have a big (ruling) party today, and the rest of us are supposed to just forget about how his family acquired all that power and wealth (p7). In *Continental Drift*, Samira Sawlani wonders whether Chazza could learn a few things from the fashion and the fortitude of our own dear leaders (p24).



## Write for us

We want more travel pages. Tell us about your city or favourite town on the continent. Ping an email to [letters@thecontinent.org](mailto:letters@thecontinent.org)



**Balloted: Samura Kamara has been cleared to run for president.** Photo: Sefa Karacan/Anadolu Agency/Getty

## SIERRA LEONE

### When you fail to remove opponents ...

Sierra Leone opposition leader Samura Kamara has been cleared to run against President Julius Maada Bio in June's general elections. Facing trial on corruption charges, his supporters – who say the charges are politically motivated – feared that the process would be fast-tracked so he could be convicted and ineligible to stand. With the case adjourned to July, the country's electoral body confirmed that it had ratified his candidacy.

## MALI

### Drip is forever but camo is for generals

The Malian military will launch a campaign to seize military-pattern clothing from civilians on 15 May, according to the *North Africa Post*. In the aftermath of a late April airport attack that killed 10 soldiers and injured 60 civilians, the army appeared to blame the pattern of cloth worn by the assailants, saying that they used “perfidy to deceive the vigilance of the legitimate forces”. Going forward, civilians wearing camo could be prosecuted over blurring the difference between civilians and militants. The same military is happy to blur the lines between the armed forces and an elected government.

## ZAMBIA

### Who's the thief?

In a dramatic raid on Wednesday, Zambian police seized three cars from the residence of former president Edgar Lungu. His wife, Esther, told police that a month after Lungu left office in 2021, she had given her niece hundreds of thousands of dollars for safekeeping – but last year in lieu of that money's return she had accepted the now impounded cars. The complainant who prompted the police raid, a woman, said she had been forced to surrender the vehicles.

## ZIMBABWE

## Trials of Job: Sikhala sidelined

Popular opposition MP and lawyer Job Sikhala was this week convicted of “obstructing justice” when he posted a

social media video. Prosecutors claimed that when Sikhala, in the video, blamed a murder on supporters of the ruling party, he diverted a police investigation that had been focusing on other suspects. The conviction rules Sikhala out of running for office in the country’s August general election.



**Diverted: Job Sikhala (right) with former foreign affairs minister Walter Mzembi.**

Photo: Jekesai Njikizana / AFP

## RWANDA

## Heartbreak and hell in a broken climate

After days of heavy rains, the Sebeya river in western Rwanda burst its banks on Tuesday night. The subsequent flooding and mudslides killed at least 127 people, according to the government. Just before this, the country’s emergency management ministry told local *New Times* newspaper that 60 people had died in weather-related disasters since the start of the year. In neighbouring Uganda, at least 24 people have died in floods and mudslides across the country in the last 10 days.

## CABO VERDE

## Five malaria-free years and counting

Cabo Verde has not recorded a locally transmitted case of malaria since 2018 and expects to get a malaria-free certificate from the World Health Organisation by the end of the year, according to national health director Angela Gomes. Cabo Verde has received the WHO’s malaria elimination certificate twice before, in 1968 and 1983. Each time the disease returned once authorities relaxed control measures. With two malaria vaccines now available, the certification stands a better chance of holding permanently.



## BOTSWANA

## First Olympic medalist banned over unsafe drug

Nijel Amos, the first Botswana to win an Olympic medal, has been banned from competing for three years, after he tested positive for a banned experimental drug GW1516. The drug modifies how the body metabolises fat but caused cancer in rodents during the animal testing stage of its development, and is therefore considered too dangerous for human beings. Amos, who tested positive last June, won his fame in the 2012 Olympics where he took silver in the 800m event.



**Banned: Botswana's Nijel Amos wins the 800m in Monaco in 2019.** Photo: Marco Mantovani/Getty Images

## BENIN

## Make it simple and people will take care of their own business

Between 2020 and the end of 2022, young Beninese people formally registered nearly 15,900 new businesses, after the government introduced online business registration. The number of formal ventures founded by people aged between 18-30 years tripled as a result, according to *Africa Renewal*, a UN magazine. Women registered over 9,800 new businesses in this time, more than doubling the number of women-founded companies. In the old paper-and-file company registration system, it took about three weeks to register a business.

## MOROCCO

## Representation again for Amazigh indigenous people

Observed as New Year's Day by the Amazigh people of North Africa, January 13, will be observed as a national holiday in Morocco, after a declaration by King Mohammed VI this week. Amazigh kingdoms and communities thrived across North Africa and the Sahel, before being subjugated by Arab populations and then European colonialists. An increasingly energetic Amazigh movement is reversing their erasure.

# Kenya

## Facebook moderators form a union

**Workers take the fight to Meta and its subcontractor**

**Mukanzi Musanga in Nairobi**

**O**n Labour Day, Daniel Motaung watched with elation as 150 fellow content moderators declared they are now a union. “It is an incredible moment for me,” he told *The Continent* – the culmination of years of work.

The South African started as a content moderator in March 2019. The job advert was for call-centre agents. But his role was to sift through gruesome Facebook content, ranging from child abuse to beheadings, and take it down so users were not exposed to that trauma. Psychological and other support was only superficial, he said, so he set about organising his colleagues into a union at Sama, the agency contracted by Meta, Facebook’s owner, to do the work.

Shortly afterwards, Sama fired him.

In February 2021, he went public but that only seemed to make things worse

for those still at the company. “Sama’s management clearly wanted to know who was speaking to journalists,” a moderator who was still on the job told *The Continent*.

Surveillance within the office increased and supervisors were escalating employee errors to management much more frequently. The moderators were scared that Motaung’s whistleblowing would cost them their jobs.

Last year, after Motaung sued Meta and Sama, staff started getting short contract extensions – a few days instead of the typical one-year renewals. On 10 January, Sama said that it would not renew its content moderation contract with Meta.

The company initially told moderators that their own contracts would end the next month. But with the Nigerian election creating a deluge of misinformation, it extended their employment to the end of March before letting 260 moderators go en masse.

“The mass sacking was the trigger that eventually united everyone,” Frank Mugisha, one of the content moderators, told *The Continent* at Monday’s union declaration. They are now going to contest their treatment. Sama told *The Continent* that employees were informed of the job requirements, and that “at any point, even during employment, they could opt out”. Meta argued in court that it can’t be sued in Kenya ■

# Britain

## Time to turn that crown upside down

**By donning a second-hand hat, a 74-year-old man is about to become monarch of a small island kingdom**

### Sipho Kings in Europe

“You can shove your monarchy up your arse,” sang the supporters of Celtic football club in Glasgow last weekend. It is safe to say that there are few people in Scotland who will be obeying the official exhortation to swear “true allegiance” to their new head of state.

King Charles III is the newest head of an unelected family that has ruled the country and its empire for generations – term limits don’t apply here – and who built their wealth on empire, slavery, mass killings, weaponised rape and the calculated devastation of entire cultures.

British taxpayers will pay \$130-million for the pleasure of watching his coronation which just 9% of them “care a great deal” about, according to the latest YouGov poll.

Over the centuries, the British royal family have made Africans – and other

imperial subjects – pay a far higher price.

Not that it is easy to pin down the details. While England has records of who lived in what village in 1068, its empire was quick to destroy the histories of those it colonised. These could then be overwritten with Protestant orthodoxy and white exceptionalism, banning things like queer love, once part of Africa’s cultural fabric.

It has worked hard to forget the details of its past. In Kenya, colonial officials burned 3.5-tonnes of documents that allegedly detailed atrocities by British forces. With their history overwritten, Africans are left rebuilding, and contesting the dominant, Western narrative of Africa as a self-inflicted basket case.

The family that drove this generational injustice has held on to what it stole, refusing to acknowledge responsibility, or make things right. At this weekend’s coronation, far from hiding its sordid history, the family’s ill-gotten gains will take centre stage.

Charles and his wife will wear crowns with hundreds of precious stones plundered from around the world. The largest, the Star of Africa, is embedded in the royal sceptre, the symbol of his sovereignty over country and commonwealth. It’s the world’s largest diamond, a “gift” in 1905 from South Africa, which England had just conquered.

The blood of Africans flows deep behind the glitter of gold leaf. ■

# Uganda



## The western conservatives who set up the anti-gay bill

**American citizens are key partners in the ultraconservative politics responsible for Uganda's new anti-gay law, which sets the death penalty for homosexuals. The US has condemned Uganda but remains silent on its own citizens.**

**Khatondi Soita Wephukulu  
in Kampala**

**O**n Tuesday, Uganda's Parliament passed a largely unchanged version of the country's harsh anti-gay bill. It

allows for life imprisonment and the death sentence, in some cases. The law is an evolution of legislation originally introduced by colonial authorities. A previous incarnation, dubbed the "Kill the Gays" bill, was struck down by Uganda's

Constitutional Court in 2014.

Rights campaigners in the country say the current incarnation is the culmination of more than a decade of collaboration between Ugandan elite interest groups and American ultraconservatives. They say any international condemnation of the law should also target the Americans involved.

“What I would expect [the West] to do right now is hold themselves accountable,” said Twasiima Bigirwa, a feminist writer. “This is not only a Ugandan problem. The kind of hate that we’re seeing in this moment is really inorganic. It’s been brought and stirred up by outsiders, and those outsiders need to be held accountable,” she added.

## The Americans

Nonprofits registered in the United States and two American citizens have been linked to the political organising that set the stage for the bill, according to an investigation by UK-based openDemocracy. Sharon Slater, the head of a US-registered nonprofit known as Family Watch International, is one of the two. She is an active organiser in a collective of over 150 ultraconservative campaigners in Uganda, who convene and strategise in a private WhatsApp group.

The deputy speaker of Uganda’s Parliament, Thomas Tayebwa, has called the group “my ideological home”. It was in this group, on 25 January this year, that he wrote: “I think the ground is now ripe to re-table the anti-homosexuality bill.”

By 23 March, the bill had been fast-

tracked and passed through Parliament.

It was then sent to President Yoweri Museveni, who met with Slater, who lobbied for an exemption clause for LGBTIQ+ people who are subjected to conversion therapy – a set of discredited practices that attempt to change a person’s sexual orientation. The tweaks that Museveni sent back to Parliament mentioned that he considered the idea but dropped it because it would cost the government money.

A 2020 investigation by openDemocracy found that Family Watch International had, for a decade, been coaching high-ranking African politicians, and religious and civic leaders to oppose comprehensive sexuality education across the continent. In the WhatsApp group, Slater messages Ugandan legislators to urge them to lobby for Uganda to oppose UN resolutions that include LGBTIQ+ inclusive language.

Family Watch International told US website Fronteras that it does not support the final version of the Uganda bill. Slater told openDemocracy that aspects of the story put to her were “either false or misleading or both” but that she needed more time to explain why.

Another US citizen, Tim Kruetter, who represents the US-registered Fellowship Foundation in Uganda, is an active player in an influential group called the “National Prayer Breakfast”, which has been described in the US and abroad as an incubator for ultraconservative agendas.

Fox Odoi, the only MP to vote against the bill on Tuesday, said in an interview that in Uganda, the prayer breakfast was





**The King & LGBTIQ+: Activists protest outside a meeting between King Charles and Commonwealth leaders in London in March.** Photo: Mark Kerrison/In Pictures/Getty Images

“the initial entry point” for people who “introduced that ideology of hate”.

The ideology came with money, with Odoi pointing to fellowships in expensive hotels, attended by elected officials, and trips for them to places like Jerusalem.

Kruetter told openDemocracy that he has served as a link to help Ugandans attend the National Prayer Breakfast in the US, but that “the story that I am somehow behind the recent bill in Uganda’s Parliament is false” and added: “I do not speak on the topic of homosexuality.”

Ugandan politician David Bahati has cited US prayer breakfast figures as the inspiration for a similarly harsh anti-gay bill he drafted in 2009. Parliament passed that bill in late 2013; Uganda’s Constitutional Court annulled it in early 2014, but it formed the basis for the amended bill tabled this year.

Frank Mugisha, a Ugandan rights campaigner and head of Sexual Minorities

Uganda, a local LGBTIQ+ group, said: “The US government has done nothing to stop its citizens from exporting hate.”

Asked about this, the US government sent a statement, which ignored the involvement of American individuals and nonprofits. Instead, it said the bill would “deter” foreign investors, companies and tourists. A US government HIV/Aids initiative, which gives Uganda about \$400-million in aid a year, has indefinitely deferred planning for activities in the country beyond 2023.

The bill will now be sent back to Museveni to either sign into force or to veto – but, if he sends it back to Parliament again, a two-thirds majority of the legislators are constitutionally empowered to override his decision and pass the law without his assent. ■

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*A version of this article was originally published by openDemocracy*

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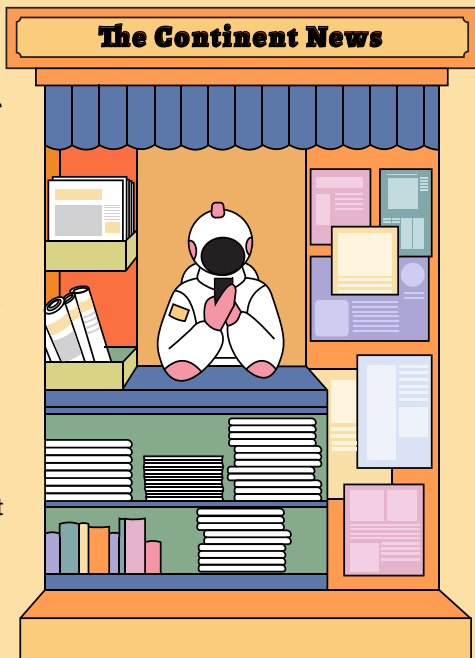
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# Sudan



**In ashes: The remains of an IDP camp in Geneina.**  
Photo: Ayin/Social media

## Geneina is a ghost town

**It took more than a week for the fighting to reach Geneina, in Sudan's far west. But when it did arrive, it did so with such destructive force that the town is now a shell of its former self. More ominously still, local police have called on civilians – including children – to arm and defend themselves.**

### Ayin Network

**T**he conflict in Sudan broke out on 15 April. So far, it has killed at least 528 people and dispelled the hopes of many Sudanese to obtain democratic, civilian rule.

Rival security forces – on one side the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), the national army; and on the other the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a powerful paramilitary group – are fighting to seize control of the country, with civilians caught in the crossfire.

While most news reports have focused on the ongoing fighting in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, at least 10 other towns have experienced intense violence.

One of those is Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state, 1,500km from Khartoum. Residents told *The Continent* they are now living in a shell of a town, with looted shops, empty government buildings, and the stark absence of any security forces to protect them.

**A local doctor's union estimated 191 people died in Geneina in the fighting last week, but residents say the number continues to grow as injured civilians succumb to untreated injuries.**

In Geneina, the conflict really began on the morning of 24 April, as residents woke to gunfire and a huge plume of smoke over the El Jamarik neighbourhood that quickly spread to the city's main police station.

The next day, residents said that Arabic groups aligned with the RSF attacked camps for internally displaced people, burning the shelters to the ground; and then targeted other areas. Musa Haroun, a community leader at the Aba Dhar camp for internally displaced people, confirmed that the gunmen attacked gatherings of the displaced in the city centre, forcing thousands of civilians to flee across the nearby border to Chad.

Without any police or other security forces in the capital city, Haroun added, the armed militias were emboldened to invade the city market and government institutions in an unprecedented manner.

Outmanned and ill-equipped, local police called on civilians, particularly the Masalit ethnic group from displaced camps, to arm and defend themselves against the RSF-aligned militias. This is an echo of an ugly history: in the late 1990s, security forces created civilian militias in Darfur – the Janjaweed – to counter rebel groups, which later morphed into the RSF.

“Children are carrying arms,” says Inaam El Nour, a Geneina resident and director of the Women for Change organisation. El-Nour says she understands why the police armed civilians but also fears the long-term consequences.

A local doctor's union estimated 191 people died in Geneina in the fighting last week, but residents say the number continues to grow as injured civilians succumb to untreated injuries.

“The health situation is catastrophic,” Dr Tahani al-Habeeb tells *The Continent*. “There are no health services.”

The city's main hospital, Geneina Teaching Hospital, has been shut for 10 days after mass looting. The medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières has had to stop all activities in the state except for in neighbouring Kereinek Hospital.

“They robbed [Geneina Teaching] hospital, including the blood banks and x-ray laboratory. The ministry of health was burnt down, cars stolen. Even the doctors' living quarters and cars

were not spared,” Tahani adds. “They have destroyed the entire health sector completely.”

### Living in the aftermath

The sound of gunfire has diminished in Geneina, but few residents venture into the streets, despite the pressing need for food and water. Water relies on electrical supply in Geneina, residents say, and both remain suspended since the conflict started. While most markets remain ransacked and abandoned, some smaller markets in the outer northern areas of Geneina are open. But reaching these basic markets is a risk.

Even worse, few Geneina citizens can afford even basic necessities amidst

skyrocketing inflation. Prices of bread, for instance, have doubled, while purchasing a kilo of meat, resident Shifa Adam says, is quadruple the price.

“Going to the market to purchase even the most basic items is now a challenge,” admits Geneina resident Hassan Ali (his name has been changed on request). “Everyone treats you with suspicion... they associate you with the armed groups even if you are just looking for bread.”

Ali, an engineer with no affiliation to the warring parties, says other residents automatically link him to the RSF-aligned militias simply because he comes from is of Arabian ethnicity.

The opposite, El-Nour says, is also true. RSF-aligned militias have targeted

**Basic needs:  
Geneina residents  
risk violence to  
queue for water**  
Photo: Ayin/Shifa  
Adam





**Taking flight: Sudanese refugees after crossing the border into neighbouring Chad.** Photo: Gueipeur Denis Sassou/AFP/Getty



black civilians with no connection to the conflict. “Currently, anyone with a dark skin tone feels animosity towards lighter tones and vice-versa.” El-Nour adds.

## Uncertain futures

But many residents also believe the conflict is being fuelled by outside political forces and recall a more harmonious past between Geneina’s diverse communities.

Haroun Muhammed, a resident of Al-Salam neighbourhood in Geneina, a place where the conflict displaced have sought shelter, is convinced state actors fuel the conflict to achieve temporary, personal gains at the detriment of the citizenry. “Since the beginning of the conflict, all security services disappeared – it’s as if they wanted conflict to burn all the neighbourhoods of the city.”

Acknowledging that outside actors are behind the conflict, analysts say, may be

the first step in quelling tensions.

Darfur’s other major cities, El-Fasher, Nyala, and al-Daem, are relatively calm.

“In El-Fasher and Nyala local leaders with leverage were able to enact these ceasefires and, most important, make them hold,” says Kholood Khair, managing partner of a Sudan-based policy think tank. “We are not seeing this in Geneina because the successive rounds of recent fighting have upset the social balance there so much, that I am not sure any side can feasibly negotiate a ceasefire.” ■

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*This report was written for The Continent by Ayin Network, an independent Sudanese media house that focuses on under-reported and marginalised communities within the country. Since the recent conflict broke out, it has continued to publish despite the extreme challenges faced by its reporting staff.*



## Mean streets, true tales and prime stakes

Osiberu invokes Scorsese in critique of Lagos chaos

Wilfred Okiche

**A**fter years of playing catch up against Netflix and Showmax, Amazon Prime steps into the continental arena with *Gangs of Lagos*, the hyperstylised, ultraviolet gangster thriller co-written, produced and directed by Nigerian filmmaker Jáde Osiberu.

Billed as the first Prime Video Original from the continent, *Gangs of Lagos* is also the first product of Osiberu's three-year deal with the streaming studio.

*Gangs of Lagos* spins an epic yarn, spanning decades and accommodating a variety of colourful and entertaining characters. Osiberu, perhaps the most exciting filmmaker in Nollywood today, dreams up a vision of street life in Lagos rooted in everyday reality but untethered by logic or reason. She makes her own rules, and her characters move and breathe depending on the needs of the screenplay's dense plotting.

If *Gangs of Lagos* has a lead, it is Obalola (Tobi Bakre), a street urchin born into a life of crime and looking for a way out. His voice narrates the events of the film just like a character from a Martin Scorsese movie. Indeed, the great American director casts a large shadow over the film as Osiberu borrows from his work in *Goodfellas* and *Gangs of New York*. Add in other influences like Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund's *City of God*, as well as the Coen Brothers' *Fargo*, and it is a testament to Osiberu's fine instincts that her film comes across as a respectful homage rather than cheap knockoff.

Osiberu is often credited for her eye-popping visuals (*Isoken*, *Sugar Rush*) but not for her shrewd ability to observe the interiority of Nigerian living. Beyond the overreliance on spectacle, *Gangs of Lagos* is perhaps most eloquent as a critique of the dysfunction and rottenness that has been normalised as a routine part of the Nigerian experience. ■

# Off the grid, but not in the dark

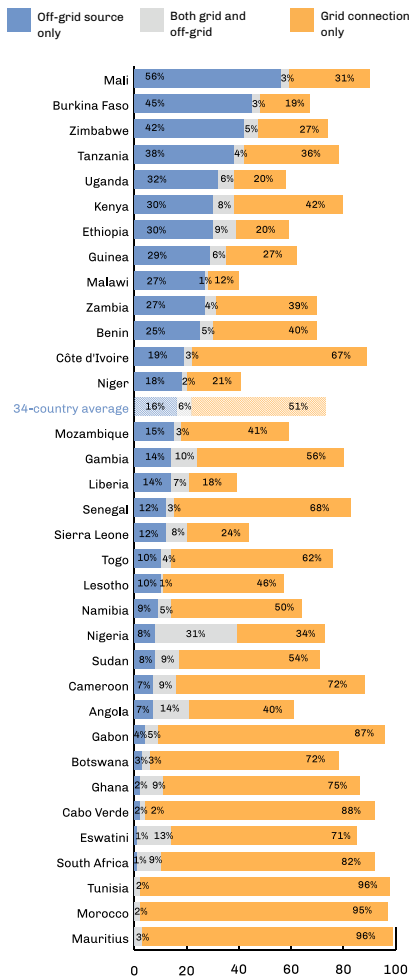
**L**oadshedding, blackouts, power outages. A dark subject, unless you have an off-grid source of power. On average across 34 countries, Afrobarometer found that almost one in four households use electric power from a source other than the national grid – either as their only source (16%) or as a supplement to the mains (6%). Only 43% of all respondents report enjoying reliable electricity from the grid. Among those with off-grid power, the most popular is solar panels (62%), followed by generators (16%), batteries or power banks (9%), hydro (4%), biogas (2%), and wind (1%).

Mali is the only surveyed country where a majority (56%) rely exclusively on off-grid sources. But off-grid sources are also more popular than the grid in Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Guinea, and Malawi.

Reliance on off-grid sources is rare in Mauritius, Morocco, Tunisia, Eswatini, Cabo Verde, and Ghana – all countries where more than eight in 10 citizens are connected to the national grid.

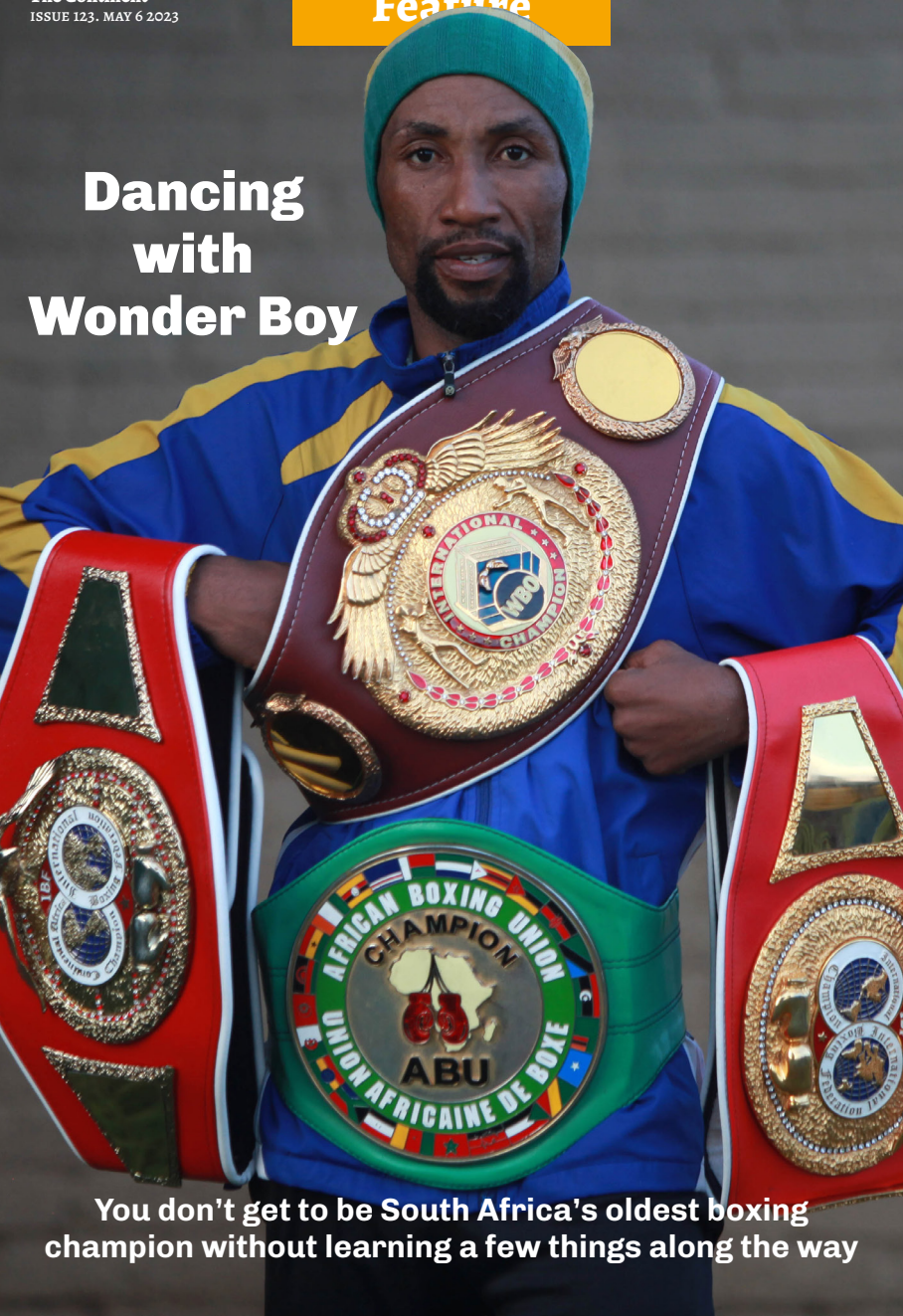
As of May-June 2021, it was also rare in South Africa, though Afrobarometer's Round 10 survey will tell us whether that's changing amid the country's daily struggles with loadshedding. ■

## Sources of electricity, on the main grid and off-grid | 34 countries | 2019-2021



**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.

# Dancing with Wonder Boy



You don't get to be South Africa's oldest boxing champion without learning a few things along the way



## Words and photos by Oupa Nkosi in Johannesburg

**O**n the eve of last month's title bout, 43-year-old Bongani "Wonder Boy" Mahlangu was feeling confident – but not overconfident. "A hungry lion that is too hungry will make mistakes. Just be hungry normally, as if you don't want something, but you know that you want it," he explained.

The Friday night fight took place on 21 April in Johannesburg's SABC Renaissance Centre. The atmosphere was feverish. At stake was the South African junior featherweight belt, and the pretender to Mahlangu's throne was the young upstart Mduduzi Mzimela – an astonishing 17 years younger.

Despite the age gap, it was the Wonder Boy who danced and floated around the ring. In the fifth round, when Mzimela ran out of patience and made an ill-judged forward lunge, Mahlangu spotted the gap and landed a left cross to the youngster's chin that left him motionless on the floor, gasping for air.

The referee did not bother with the mandatory count before ending the match, and medics rushed in to treat Mzimela.

The Wonder Boy was, once again, the oldest champion in South Africa.

Addressing the crowd, who were stunned by the result, a jubilant Mahlangu said: "The biggest mistake these young boys make when they fight me is that they look at my age and ignore that I have been



**Iron fist:** Bongani 'Wonder Boy' Mahlangu during the fight that he won in the fifth round with a knockout against Mduduzi Mzimela in Johannesburg.





**Fight night: Bhekizizwe 'The Skeleton' Maitse with his trainer Sandile Mahlangu during a break in the fight he won on points against Ontiretse Seleke in the featherweight division held at Auckland Park, Johannesburg in March.**

around for many years and everything that I do from training to the actual fight is informed by my experience.”

His son, 21-year-old Bheki “The Skeleton” Maitse, won on points in his featherweight division match-up on the same night.

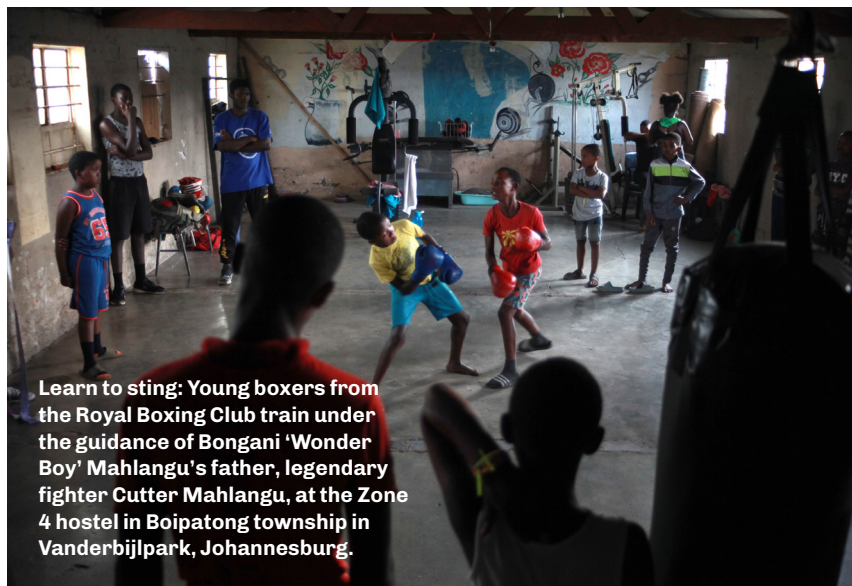
### **A long fight**

As a seven-year-old, Mahlangu was always getting into trouble for beating up other kids in Boipatong, a township 75km south of Johannesburg. It was his father, Joshua “Cutter” Mahlangu, who first took him to the gym in 1986. This was partly to keep him out of trouble, and partly because boxing ran in the family: Cutter was himself a legendary boxer, an extraordinary achievement in a time when black excellence was vehemently

suppressed by the apartheid government. Nonetheless, he could not make a living from the sport, and was forced to find employment to feed his family. He is now retired but keeps fit by transporting school kids and coaching young aspiring boxers.

It was also his father that gave Wonder Boy his nickname, after seeing the amazing things that this son could do in the ring.

It was only when he won his first medal in 1991 that Mahlangu started to take the sport seriously. “This changed everything to me because it showed that I could achieve more in life,” he told *The Continent* in an interview at his family home in Boipatong. He shows off a cardboard box of memorabilia overflowing with trophies and championship belts. As an amateur, he competed in the 2004 Summer



**Learn to sting: Young boxers from the Royal Boxing Club train under the guidance of Bongani 'Wonder Boy' Mahlangu's father, legendary fighter Cutter Mahlangu, at the Zone 4 hostel in Boipatong township in Vanderbijlpark, Johannesburg.**

Olympics in Athens; as a professional, he has picked up the IBF International super bantamweight title, the WBO International super bantamweight title and the WBA Pan African bantamweight, among others.

Despite this success, he never got sponsorship and, like Cutter, worked as a forklift operator for packaging company Nampak. On the days he boxed or travelled for the national team, he did not get paid.

"Everything comes from our pocket and these are the issues that kill the boxing profession," said Sandile Mahlangu, who is Wonder Boy's brother and manager. Sandile said that boxing standards in South Africa – once a heavyweight of the sport – have dropped in recent years.

To address this, the two brothers

opened the Wonder Boy Boxing Club in 2015 in Boipatong, just a stone's throw from their home. They are proud to have produced four professional boxers already, including Bongani Mahlangu's son Bheki.

"Sport builds character and discipline. Today most youth are into drugs and alcohol, however boxing protects these youngsters from that," said Sandile.

Bheki started boxing in 2014 and turned professional last year. He is grateful for all that he has learnt from his father. "My dad is also my friend and he's the only one that understands me more than anyone," said the young man.

The Wonder Boy has said that he intends to keep fighting – and winning – until he is 50. The tale of the tape so far suggests that it would be foolish to bet against him. ■

# 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 more I come to see of Moroni, the more it floats my boat."



- 1\_ Which country has Moroni as its capital city?
- 2\_ True or false: Congo Republic and the DRC have both a president and a prime minister.
- 3\_ Name the artist whose song *Calm Down* reached number six on Billboard's Hot 100.
- 4\_ "Somalian" is the demonym for people from Somalia. True or false?
- 5\_ Ismail al-Azhari served as which country's first prime minister from 1954 to 1956?
- 6\_ Abedi Ayew, known as Abedi Pele, played football for which country's national team?
- 7\_ What is the nickname of Cameroon's national men's football team?
- 8\_ King Charles III first visited South Africa in which year?
- 9\_ Which region of Africa are the Amazigh people from: southern, northern, eastern or western?
- 10\_ Rwanda is often referred to as the land of a thousand \_\_\_\_\_.

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

# We lodged a complaint against the government of Benin at the United Nations – this is why

Flore Nobime  
and Olivier van Beemen

**E**nough is enough. We – Flore Nobime from Benin and Olivier van Beemen from the Netherlands – have filed a complaint with the Human Rights Council of the United Nations against the government of Benin for arbitrary detention.

Here's what happened: Last year, we were visiting the surroundings of the Pendjari National Park in northern Benin for research on the relations between the people and the park, managed by the South Africa-based organisation African Parks. In the town of Tanguiéta, we were arrested – for an identity check.

Despite being cleared by the district attorney and having signed a document that our arrest had ended, we were not free to go. Without being charged, we were put on a transport to the criminal police squad in the city of Parakou, where we were accused of espionage.

We would be summoned to the Economic Crime and Terrorism Court, an institution created in 2018 to fight corruption and terrorism, but often considered a tool to crack down on political opponents and other critical

voices. Two days later, with the help of the Dutch embassy in Benin, Nobime was free to go, while Van Beemen was expelled and put on the first plane to Europe.

We reported on this for *The Continent* in issue 86 of May last year.

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the Human Rights Council is currently looking into our case and will give the government of Benin an opportunity to respond. After its investigation, the council will publish the opinion that the experts of the working group will issue.

If it finds that the government of Benin indeed deprived us arbitrarily of our liberty – as it previously concluded with politician Reckya Madougou and journalist Ignace Sossou – it will give the government recommendations to remedy the situation.

Not so long ago, Benin was seen as a model democracy in Africa, where peaceful regime changes had been the norm since 1990, and civil liberties were highly respected. But with the election of Patrice Talon in 2016 this has rapidly changed. He muzzled the press and banned the opposition – and made it very difficult for journalists to do their job. ■

# Take a reign check



## Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

This week's column is coming to you live from the United Kingdom where preparations for the coronation of King Charles III – or Chazza as his mates down the pub call him – are under way.

Yes there is a cost of living crisis, yes people are struggling to make ends meet, yes many are struggling to afford the basics such as food and electricity, but why not spend millions of pounds of taxpayers' money to watch someone stick a funny hat on some bloke's head?

If you are reading this from any of the former colonies and have not been invited, fret not, no doubt many of the items "borrowed" from your ancestors will be present so, hey, consider yourself represented!

Truth be told, we thought it would be a formal affair, but Chazza is big into recycling (and not just of the Habsburg genes) and is going to be wearing some hand-me-downs for the affair, including a ceremonial dressing gown worn by his granddad and great-granddad, not to mention that big tea-cosy of a hat he got from his mum.

Not quite sure that headpiece is going



**Up Chuck! King Charles III's big day is finally here.** Photo: Dan Kitwood/Getty

to cut it on the world stage, to be honest. If he was serious about it, he should have signed up for an episode of *Autocrat Eye for the Colonial Guy*, and taken some tips from our faves.

### Lesson one: Dat hat

Many of our leaders have serious hat game, after all. Take Presidents Museveni and Kiir, for example (no really, please take them), who are rarely seen without their stunning headgear.

The Coupdashians in Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea specialise in bespoke tailoring for the unelected – their military chic might not be Chazza's usual look, but it sure beats a manky bathrobe! Wouldn't hurt to borrow a beret or three from



Mamady, Assimi and Ibrahim. Taxpayers come and go but drip is forever!

Lesson two is all about showing off your sidechick. Yes we've heard the stories that this whole fandango is just a ploy to force people to say "YAS KWEEN" to Camilla, and Nigerian mums especially are Di-till-I-die, but a boss-man who does not bring the bling for his babe is like a factory full of teargas without any protesters to spray: Useless.

### Speaking of which

Lesson three: Silence the critics. Democracy for what? You're the king! Stop letting anti-monarchists run wild in your streets! We're sure our Coupdashians would be more than happy to send over tear gas samples to guest star on the Chaz & Camz show. It'd be a top-tier power move.

## Democracy for what? You're the king! Stop letting anti-monarchists run wild in your streets!

And hey, if you fancy going the extra mile and blocking the internet or social media, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan have got your back. Or if you just want to keep your critics in the dark, give Cyril Ramaphosa a call in South Africa, and he can help you switch off the lights. (Might be best to keep tabs on your brother if you go that route. Who knows what mess Handy Andy will get into next if he thinks nobody's watching.)

And as for all this freedom of the press

and human rights nonsense... it might be too late to rein it in, but now you'll get to *reign* it in! No need for lessons from the continent for that though: Suella Braverman and Priti Patel are less than a hop, skip and a jump away.

Lesson four: Never step down.

Ever! Quitting while you're ahead is for prime ministers and popes, not presidents and kings.

Make sure to check in with presidents Paul Biya of Cameroon (via Geneva of course) or Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea, because while some of us were ready to pack it in as soon as we hit 30, these guys are still going strong.

In later years, should you and Camz ever be asked whether you will step down to make way for William and Kate, you can probably get away with a simple shrug and a demur "The people want me to stay, what can I do?" or, if it's more serious, perhaps trot out the old favourite: "The good pastor called me today from his private plane saying he had a vision from God stating that I must continue as king or the world will crumble. Who am I to disobey God?"

And if the kids are *really* getting uppity, you can always trot out the evergreen Ugandan proverb: "Not now Muhoozi, Daddy's busy!"

Ultimately, the real lesson Chazza needs to learn is to relax and enjoy it. Even if the worst happens, and the monarchy is abolished, it will all be okay. You'll shake it off and move on.

After all, there are plenty of other fishy despots in the autocracy. ■

# Ruto's Kenya slides straight back to ethnic exclusion in governance

**The country's new leaders deny ethnic prejudice in their appointments, but the facts say otherwise**

**Darmi Jattani & Oscar Ochieng**

**D**espite suggestions that the 2022 elections saw less overt “tribal” politicking, ethnic politics continues to play a prominent role in Kenya. This is well demonstrated by the appointments that were subsequently made by the country's new president, William Ruto, which were dominated by individuals and groups aligned to the winning party.

Responding to public outcry, Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua came out in defence of patronage and clientelism. He argued that not only would the government reward supporters disproportionately, but that this was legitimate. In Gachagua's framing, the government should be understood as a corporation whose supporters are the big – and legitimate – shareholders.

Such comments don't just serve to

encourage damaging winner-takes-all politics, they also run counter to the country's Constitution and legal system.

As in previous governments, the impact of this approach is stark. Of the 51 principal secretaries announced, 13 (25%) are from Ruto's Kalenjin community and 13 (25%) from Gachagua's Central Kenya region. This means that half of all principal secretary appointments went to just two ethnic groups, in a country with more than 40.

In response, the Law Society of Kenya argued that the list lacked gender, ethnic and regional balance, contravening the Constitution, which states that the composition of the national executive shall reflect the country's regional and ethnic diversity.

The concept of diversity and inclusivity are not simply abstract principles – they matter for national unity and ensuring that the country does not return to the political violence of 2007/8.

It is therefore critical that civil society pushes the courts to ensure that these rules are implemented. If this is not done, the stakes of the next election will be higher than ever, increasing the risk of another contested outcome, and further political instability. ■

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*Darmi Jattani is a Master of Economics student at Kenyatta University. Oscar Ochieng holds a bachelor's in Communication & Sociology from University of Nairobi. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa*



# THE BIG PICTURE

So far so good: Supporters of AS FAR cheer during the CAF Champions League quarterfinal match against Algeria's USM Alger in Rabat last weekend. AS FAR won 3-2 on a penalty shot by Mohamed Rabie Hrimat in extra time.

Photo: Fadel Senna/AFP via Getty Images



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