

# The Continent

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The war about everything in Sudan



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The other Guinea-Bissau



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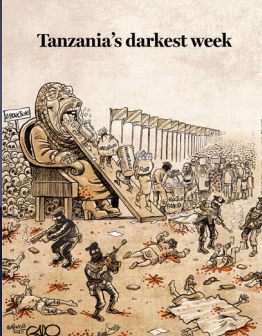
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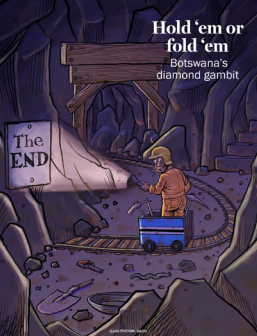
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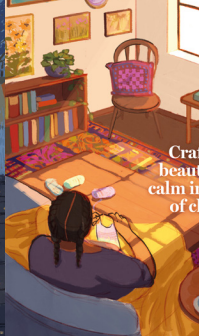
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Multinational and deadly: Zambia's latest gold rush



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# Well, that was a wild year.

AT *THE CONTINENT* we started with all sorts of plans for growth. Then the United States election happened and funding for journalism collapsed. By some estimates, the collapse of USAid and its peers meant half of all funding for global independent media disappeared overnight.

Fearing that the industry collapse could reach our own doors, we sat down at one moment in April to decide what to do. Would we publish the best newspaper possible and risk running out of money before new funding came into the ecosystem or cut costs – and quality – for a longer runway? The decision to keep going full steam (almost) turned out to be liberating. It meant we could refocus. Our readers championed us and other funders came onboard and, aided by our lean operations, we survived.

We're finishing the year in a better position than we started it.

*The Continent* now has 33,000 subscribers in 160 countries, including every country in Africa. That journalism is being shared by humans, and being taught in schools. It's being put together by a core team of 15 full-time and part-time staff. We work remotely in six countries. The 176 freelancers who allowed us to cover a quarter of the world got paid out \$109,000 in the last year. And our home, the non-profit All Protocol Observed, passed its second clean audit.

Last year was about building the structures to help sustain our journalism. This year was about survival, and

experimentation. When we write out all the things we did on top of making *The Continent*, this feeling of being stretched in all directions makes complete sense:

- Working with Tanzanian publication *Pambazuko*, we trialled *The Continent* in Kiswahili. With Egyptian newsroom Egab, we translated a special edition into Arabic. Both showed just how much work goes into making something beautiful in a different language. That's convinced us that, for now, any new newspapers will be in English.

- In South Africa in October we launched a pilot edition of a new national newspaper, *The Friday Paper*. Over a thousand people signed up for their edition. Now we're trying to solve the money part.

- In a partnership with Ghana-based Republic of Africa, we've made some merchandise. It's so pretty. We've been wearing it to work, conferences, the shops, social gatherings, exercise and all the other things. Like our design team, RoA wants Africans to expect excellence by default. But distributing is one hell of a headache. South Africa and Kenya, for example, will slap on a 40% import tax. We continue to problem-solve. And hope for the African Free Trade Area to work.

- With the Ford Foundation, we launched a new visual unit dedicated to original African photographs, cartoons and illustrations. You may have noticed just how much cooler

*The Continent* has been this year.

- Through the Media Development Investment Fund's Amplify programme, funded by the International Fund for Public Interest Media, we've been systematically looking at different ways to bring in revenue. That meant lots of behind the scenes work. More on that next year.

- As a newspaper known for the shortness of our stories, we sometimes dream of more words. To see how we can do this, we worked with GIZ and the African Union to do a series on how people cross borders. Borderlands is a template for how we can tackle big issues in detail over several months.

- On a similar note, and driven by our readers constantly asking us for more history, we ran two season-long special editions: the Museum of Stolen History and Monuments. Beautifully illustrated and tightly written, these are something we will do more of over the decades. By reclaiming African history, we're also giving educators a tool – a university in Rabat is doing a special display on the Museum series.

While all that was happening, *The Continent* continued to get stronger. In February we had on-the-ground reporting and photographs from Goma as the city fell to M23. We returned to report on the city and region. That continued focus has been a theme of the year, with Sudan and Tanzania in particular not falling off of our news agenda. A new News Editor in April meant we could do more of this, and maintain more of our sanity.

African journalism. 5 APRIL 2025 | SPECIAL EDITION

# The Continent



## The Museum of Stolen History

Illustration: Wynona Mutisi

Other nice things happened along the way:

- The world of PDF newspapers grew this year, with *Gleaner* in Malawi joining the likes of *Pambazuko* in Tanzania and *Atar* in Sudan.
- Temiloluwa Johnson, a Nigerian photographer who got her break in *The Continent* won a World Press Photo award (for work elsewhere). She told our photo editor: "Thank you for being one of the first editors that gave my stories a chance out of the local stage. It's incredible to see what 13 months of consistency can give. I'm just grateful."
- In recognition of how *The Continent* is doing quality journalism, and pioneering ways to get that to people



### **Inside Goma:**

*We commissioned Moses Sawasawa to photograph the deteriorating situation in Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the March 23 Movement rebels had seized control of the city*

directly, we had profiles published in the *Colombia Journalism Review*, *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, *NewspaperDesign* and *Al Jazeera Journalism Review*.

- *BehanBox*, a newsroom in India focused on women, is the most recent to tell us they've created production breaks thanks to us showing that it can be done. These breaks allow their team to do great work and care for their health.

- In October, we took part in the final push to create the Johannesburg Declaration, an African-driven attempt by newsrooms to get journalism included in the G20 process. The last step failed. But American newsrooms will take up the mantle next year.

- In a LinkedIn conversation, a reader talked about how much they look forward to each edition, noting that "it enriches my conversations". Another talked about the example *The*

*Continent* is setting: "It's time to slow down, pause, reflect, and return to the essence of journalism, practising it with integrity and independence, free from the pressures of algorithmic dominance."

There are more things. One of the mundane-but-important bits of work this year was in creating a Slack channel to track our impact. It's a happy scroll. But we also pride ourselves with writing short so this needs to end here.

Next year will bring more things, particularly around how people get *The Continent*. In an era where generative AI trashes the internet and truth, we're well placed to help lead the fightback by publishing quality journalism. We're pretty excited. But more of that in 2026.

Enjoy the end of this year, whether you're celebrating Detty December, shouting ke Dezemba, boss or wallowing in darkness and rain. ■



# *It is time. Help us grow by filling out The Big Annual Survey™*

**SURVEY**



**all protocol  
observed.**

*publisher of The Continent and The Friday Paper*