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Not clear yet if Mali or Africa on Canada's agenda for UN peacekeeping

Several top-ranking Canadian government officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, say the recent commitment of troops to UN peacekeeping missions may or may not involve action in an African.

Ottawa announced it would send 2,000 troops as contribution to its peacekeeping efforts around the world without allotting them to specific countries. It has been thought for some time that given the dire need to quell Islamist insurgents in the West African nation of Mali, coupled with the Justin Trudeau government's earlier pronouncements to get involved there, that the West African nation would be top priority of a Canadian-UN troop destination.

"We're currently in discussions with the United Nations to work out the details. We have to talk to host nations and identify locations where our capabilities can best fill UN critical capability gaps," one Canadian official said. "So the exact where and when is going to take a little bit of time to work out."

"The traditional approach to peacekeeping has focused on where. The emphasis now is on how we're engaged, not where we're engaged," said another official, according to reports in the Canadian press. They would not speak to what specific countries are under consideration.

But sources have previously said the talks include possibly sending helicopters to Mali and a rapid response force to provide additional security to the UN mission in the Golan Heights, between Israel and Syria.

The government has also reportedly eyed a contribution to the UN's new police mission in Haiti, and basing a transport plane in Uganda to help ferry troops and equipment to different parts of Africa.

By Peter Uduehi

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This man is on a mission destined to help the poor



The young man in the bicycle pictured here is on a useful mission to help the poor around him. With barely 125 USD, Frank Darko from Ghana decided to conceive and build a water bicycle for the ages for villagers who need to travel through water to school. "When it rains, it really pours and many young people without the means for extra money for transportation are discouraged from going to school," he said, adding "I was thinking a lot of how I could be of help". Darko constructed this bicycle with the aid of a propeller that could force its wheels through the river floating in water as it wades across to the other side of town. He's currently looking for financial aid to start production of his successful experiment.

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News of the African World

Ghana stakeholders discuss health issues for the future

A stakeholders meeting on the development of community scorecard to improve Ghana's health delivery service has been held in Accra.

The meeting focused on developing a quantitative scorecard to guide members of the society to rate the quality of health service they receive from the CHPS compounds, health centres, polyclinics and hospitals.

The scorecard focuses on reproductive maternal newborn child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) and malaria treatment.

In a statement at the opening of the meeting in Accra, Dr Isabella Sagoe-Modey, Deputy Director, Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), Ghana Health Service (GHS), pledged Ghana's commitment to improving health service for mothers and newborns as well as the entire country.

Dr Sagoe-Modey explained that the scorecard had various indicators to guide the GHS to know how the regions were performing against the benchmarked set.

The scorecard, she said, had been running since 2014 and had helped the GHS to know which of the indicators on the scorecard was doing well in the regions and districts.

Furthermore, she said, the scorecard was developed because the GHS wanted community participation and to allow members of the community to know the scorecard.

The African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), in a statement, pledged its continuous support for malaria control programme.

ALMA is a secretariat of African Heads of State formed to provide technical support in the fight against malaria.

How's Africa keeping up with climate change?

In countries around the world, farming households are facing the wrath of unpredictable climate patterns. This has not only resulted in hunger related deaths, but also in an increase in the number of persons living below the poverty line in many developing countries, especially in Africa where vulnerability is high.

The year 2017 saw over 30 million people facing starvation in East Africa, South Sudan, Yemen and northeastern Nigeria alone, according to reports by Oxfam International. Although these regions have experienced drought

conditions in the last three to five years, the intensity and frequency of drought have increased - along with high food losses and hunger. This has threatened the livelihoods of the 80 percent of households in these regions that directly depend on subsistence farming. Some World Bank studies in Uganda show that 10 million people slipped below the poverty line in the last five years. This situation may reverse efforts by development groups to help vulnerable populations out of poverty, especially if nothing is urgently done to reduce the effects of climate change.

As a social worker in Uganda working to improve food security and incomes among smallholder farmers, I often get the opportunity to interact with farmers and feel their frustration as their crops go to waste. My most recent visit to Magoro village, in the Katakwi District of northeastern Uganda, brought tears to my eyes. There, I met an elderly man called Okello who was emaciated, with bare bones and countable ribs visible through the tattered clothes he wore. He had tied his stomach with a piece of cloth so as not to feel hunger. "Tying my stomach keeps my intestines together and helps me not to feel hunger", he said. This part of Uganda, which was once the leading producer of beef and dairy products in the country, has lost its relevance in the livestock industry and now experiences hunger episodes every year due to frequent crop failures.

Although the Government of Uganda and numerous development partners have invested millions of shillings to boost agriculture production across the country, Mzee Okello and many others still stare at death in the face. Reports, like that published by DFID in 2008, reveal that Uganda's temperatures will rise by 1.4 oC on average by 2020 and as high as 4.3 oC by the 2080s. They serve as a call to action that we must respond to.

This should start with mapping of climate and livelihood zones such that targeted advisories and interventions can be implemented. Uganda has 38 livelihood zones mapped by looking at the uniqueness of the soils, rainfall patterns and farmer cropping patterns and behaviors. However, the agro-ecological zones as we know them today are being re-shaped by increasingly frequent extreme climate events, such as flooding and prolonged drought.

A better understanding of the new zones created by climate change would have prepared farmers to adequately cope with the prolonged dry spells - or its opposite, flooding and water logging - which have occurred since 2007. Updating agricultural zones in the face of climate change will ensure that resources are channeled towards promoting relevant enterprises that are suited to the soils and rainfall patterns for specific regions.

Climate adaptation programming has worked very well in countries like Brazil, where a combination of insurance subsidies and agro-climate zones (ZARC) are being used. With well-mapped soil types and rain patterns, farmers are given advisories, at the county level, on when to plant which crops and which seed types will thrive in different soils. Predictive models that give 80 percent accuracy have shown how science and technology can be leveraged to boost farmer experiences in agriculture, leading to food sufficiency and higher incomes.

This is something Ethiopia is aggressively pursuing, starting with accurately mapping climate zones and understanding of climate trends in the different Woredas (district administrative units). With the Agriculture Growth Program (AGP) targeting youth and women, Ethiopia is boosting production by working with farmer cooperatives and involving the private sector in agro-processing and marketing. This has led to tremendous increases



Africa in the climate warning age

es in production, with wheat yields in Sinana woreda tripling from 1.8 to 5.0 tons per hectare in just three years, between 2011 and 2013. Although the country experienced severe drought in the last cropping season that led to low harvests, one can appreciate the progress they are making towards achieving food and income sufficiency among farming households through this type of planning.

Countries around the world grappling with the effects of climate change need to look to some of the steps that Brazil and Ethiopia have taken as they work to support farmers facing climate change with better policies. Embracing agriculture research and the use of improved technologies for soil and rainfall mapping and modeling will be the key to providing targeted advisories to farmers. This will require training of scientists and acquisition of modern technologies that can accurately predict the fast changing climate patterns, as well as adopting tested systems of knowledge and technology transfer to the farmers.

Norman Borlaug, the American scientist who led the green revolution around the world, once said that you can't build a peaceful world on empty stomachs and human misery. Climate change is therefore a direct threat to peace as it threatens to increase poverty across the world.



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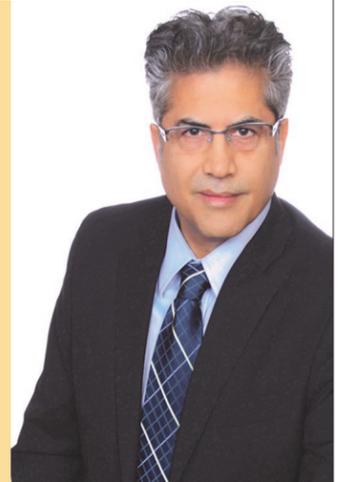
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Moral police want gay lions identified and separated



Moral policeman Ezekial Mutua now wants two male lions spotted in the Masaai Mara engaging in 'sexual contact' to be kept in isolation.

The Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) chief executive also wants the two gay lions to be subjected to scientific research to determine how they acquired homosexual behavior.

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In an interview with Nairobi News, Mr Mutua described the "love birds" behaviour as "bizarre", and although they are both visibly male, insisted that "we should all not jump into conclusions that the lions were both male".

"We (KFCB) do not regulate animals, but this is a first and interesting to hear that there are two male lions in love. Some research needs to be done. And also I wish I can get the bio to confirm the two lions were actually male, because it is not normal," he said. He further claimed that the gay lions could have learned homosexual behavior after watching a gay couple having sex in the game reserve.

"These animals need counseling, because probably they have been influenced by gays who have gone to the national parks and behaved badly. I don't know, they must have copied it somewhere or it is demonic. Because these animals do not watch movies," he argued.

Mr Mutua believes homosexuality is driven by some demonic force and "demons also possess animals".

"I mean where on earth have you ever heard something like this happening. The demonic spirits inflicting in humans seems to have now caught up with animals," he said.

He added: "That is why I will say isolate the crazy gay animals, study their behavior because it is not normal. The very idea of sex even among animals is for procreation. Two male lions cannot procreate and therefore we will lose the lion species."

The gay lions were spotted in a secluded bushy spot at the famous Maasai Mara holiday destination while behaving in a manner suggesting they were involved in a sexual contact.

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Chad faces global warming warning

Dosseye – From floods hitting refugee camps to shrinking lakes, Chad is suffering the impacts of climate change - could planting trees help?

Leila Ousmane and her 10-year-old daughter walk in disbelief atop the crumbling bricks that, until a few days earlier, formed the walls of their family home.

Heavy rains and floods in late September ravaged the Dosseye refugee camp where they live, toppling their house of mud bricks and wooden stumps into rubble.

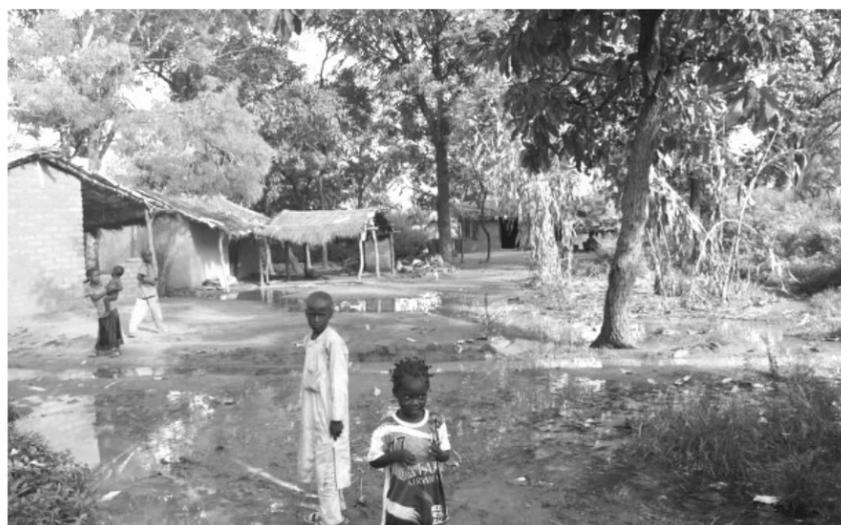
"We went to live with my neighbour," said Ousmane. "But last night, the storm made their house collapse too."

Chad, a country already beset by economic and humanitarian crises, faces another looming disaster: climate change.

It was ranked as the country most vulnerable to the effects of global warming in a 2016 index compiled by risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft. The annual ranking combines exposure to climate change with a state's capacity to respond.

While governments discuss ways to slow climate change at annual U.N. talks in Bonn from Nov. 6-17, the impacts of a hotter planet are already wreaking havoc in Chad, a landlocked Central African nation with a population of 14 million.

In Dosseye camp in the south, thousands of refugees



from Central African Republic, chased from their homes by murderous gangs since 2013, have found themselves ousted from their new homes once again - this time by extreme weather, which is predicted to get worse as the planet warms.

Ousmane's family was one of about 600 whose makeshift dwellings were flooded or destroyed in late September.

Across the region, roads and fields were submerged under water, making transport difficult and spoiling harvests.

The flood waters also increased the risk of cholera, malaria, dengue fever and other diseases, experts said.

"We see such cases (of flooding) more and more," said Ferdinand Dana Obo, who works in southern Chad for the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a religious body that does aid work.

In recent years, the rains have come earlier and lasted longer, disrupting local farming and cattle-rearing, Obo said.

The most glaring effects of climate change, however, are seen around Lake Chad, which also borders Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon. Once one of Africa's largest lakes,

its water mass has shrunk by over 90 percent in the past 50 years.

The reduction in size has disrupted the livelihoods of more than 21 million people who rely on the lake's resources for their basic needs such as fishing and growing crops.

This environmental disaster, coupled with an insurgency by Islamist militant group Boko Haram which has killed tens of thousands and uprooted hundreds of thousands, has left more than 7 million people hungry and in need of food aid across the Lake Chad basin this year, according to the United Nations.

Meanwhile in eastern Chad, alternating droughts and floods are making life even tougher for more than 300,000 refugees from Sudan and their Chadian hosts, says the U.N. refugee agency.

AFRICA VULNERABLE

Though Chad is considered to be one of the countries worst affected by climate change, in Africa it is by no means alone.

A January study by the Brookings Institute said the continent is home to seven out of ten countries projected to be hit hardest by climate change: Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Nigeria, Chad, Ethiopia, Central African Republic and Eritrea.

With 94 percent of Africa's farm produce rain-dependent, climate change is already harming harvests. Crop yields from rain-fed agriculture could decrease by up to 50 percent by 2020 with severe consequences for food security, the report warned.

Hotter temperatures and heavier rainfall mean malaria, one of the continent's biggest killers, will also spread to new areas, including the highlands of Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi, the study noted.

Rising sea levels will affect West Africa in particular, where 56 percent of GDP is generated near the coast, it added.

Every year, millions of people in Chad are unable to survive without food assistance, said Florent Méhaule, head of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the country.

Changing that will require a big push to help communities become more resilient and adapt to the effects of climate change, he said.

Chad's delegation at the Bonn climate change talks is seeking funding and technology to support such projects, said officials from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Meanwhile, on the ground, international agencies are working with Chad's government and others to try to limit the damage.

One key approach is to cultivate more trees. In the south, alongside education on environmental protection, the LWF planted 138.5 hectares (342 acres) of moringa trees this year.

Moringa, nicknamed "miracle trees" because of their numerous benefits, grow quickly, helping replace some of the native trees constantly being cut down for firewood and to clear space for agriculture.

Moringa fruit and leaves can both be eaten and help combat malnutrition and diabetes, said the LWF's southern Chad coordinator Katie Schlaudt.

The organisation is also trying to reduce tree-felling by teaching locals to use mud and metal cooking stoves that need less fuel wood to prepare a meal as they centralise heat better.

In the Lake Chad region, following a pledge made at the Paris climate change conference in 2015, the UNDP is managing a programme to plant trees on 4,000 hectares which will prevent sand sweeping across and spoiling the Sahel's fertile farmland.

It will also help communities set up small businesses, such as shops and market stalls, to boost the local economy.

But in a race against time, greater efforts are needed to stop climate change worsening hunger and poverty, experts say.

"Climate change studies project things will get increasingly hot and arid throughout the 21st century, which means lower crop yields, worse pasture - and a harder life for anyone dependent on Lake Chad," said UNDP Chad director Carol Flore-Smrecznjak.

Assignment: Ghana's Street Lawyers



Ghana's Supreme Court building in Accra

"Sir, you want a notary public? This way sir!" shouted one hawker.

"You need a will this minute sir?" enquired another.

"You want to change your name? An affidavit for you, sir? No problem, sir, five minutes sir," pleaded another "legal aide".

Welcome to the world of Ghana's "street lawyers".

Services range from complex legal contracts to witness statements

They sit in makeshift offices, moulded out of old shipping containers. For many of them an umbrella, a chair and a table are enough to form a "chamber".

Some operate under the blazing sun or in sweaty little cubicles.

The people who offer legal services here are mainly commissioners for oaths, paralegals or letter writers.

However, a few claim to be qualified lawyers, with conventional offices situated elsewhere.

But it is hard to see how the General Legal Council of Ghana would allow a trained lawyer to practise in this kind of environment because it has a reputation of strictly supervising legal practice in Ghana.

Commissioners can see up to 20 clients a day in their street chambers

The commissioners for oaths come complete with old-school typewriters and photocopying machines that a museum would happily buy for exhibition.

The typewriters are useful because there is no electricity.

Despite the modest setting, legal services, ranging from a one-page witness statement to a complex contract, are processed efficiently and at a pocket-friendly rate.

'Go find a toilet'

Clients can be seen waiting patiently on wooden benches, while some of the instructions to the legal experts are pushed through the High Court perimeter fence for quick action.

The business here is so informal that as one paralegal was attending to me, a man inside the court compound unzipped his trousers without warning and let off a jet of urine.

We were only alerted to this when the wind gently blew the contents of his bladder through the wire mesh fence and into our faces.

The agitated legal assistant seated next to me quickly rolled up a document and started banging on the fence yelling to the man: "Go find a toilet!"

"In this informal setting, the legal assistants might easily be mistaken for hair-dressers who chat and gossip incessantly "

Jacob Quaye is a commissioner for oaths operating in his makeshift chambers. He is a retired clerk of the court and believes his services are important.

"What we do here lessens the burden on the court registrar," says Mr Quaye.

"People come to us because our services are efficient and affordable. It's a profitable job too," he adds.

Tax hike

By 11:00 Mr Quaye had served 10 clients. On average he attends to around 20 a day.

Charges run from as low as five Ghanaian cedis (\$1; £0.50) to swear an affidavit to 1,000 cedis for "Letters of Administration".

But for Margaret Mensah whose "chambers" are not far from Mr Quaye's, business is not so great.

She says sometimes she does not any get customers at all and blames this on "Goro boys".

This is the term used in Ghana for middlemen or brokers, who are present in almost every area where public services are offered.

Street legal teams offer affordable and speedy services

"There are times you just come and sit the whole day, and get nothing, because Goro boys are standing around taking over our work," Ms Mensah says.

Some of the commissioners have raised concerns about an increase in taxes, which they say threatens their job.

They told me they used to pay an annual tax of 230 cedis, but this has now more than doubled, to 530.

In this informal setting, the legal assistants, who draw up the documents, might easily be mistaken for hair-dressers who chat and gossip incessantly - but they know their work and they make things happen.

The Supreme Court of Ghana is the highest judicial body in the country

In a country where it is estimated that more than half of the official legal market is controlled by four major firms, not everyone can afford the services of their posh air-conditioned offices.

And so legal business in the open streets and under the roofs of hot metal containers is thriving.

In the 30 minutes that it took to prepare and execute my documents, my elderly legal expert had also served five other clients.

Alexander Kyei Frimpong, who came to a commissioner for oaths to get a letter to withdraw a case from court,

told me the services were "cool and very helpful".

He explained that they reduce the burden of going through long bureaucratic procedures to get the same thing done at the registrar's office.

That is the world I know in my country, Kenya, where visiting a lawyer is a rather sombre affair, carried out in a sombre environment, and followed by a bill that immediately sobers up your mind.

It is not a place for idle talk. To see the lawyer, you have to pass through a handful of secretaries and assistants.

Charges for street lawyers can be as low as \$1

But on the streets of Accra, you can walk directly to a legal expert or commissioner for oaths dozing off the effects of the hot sun, who immediately offers you space on a rickety wooden bench and business begins.

When Kenya needed its services the most - to try and bring sanity to the electoral process by delaying the recent re-run of the presidential election - the Supreme Court could not raise enough judges to form a quorum. Perhaps the highest court in Kenya should borrow a leaf from Ghana and try a bit street justice?

Ethiopia Airline Set to Begin Daily Flights to Zanzibar

TOURISTS' arrivals into Zanzibar Islands are set to increase, thanks to the introduction of Ethiopian airlines daily flights to Zanzibar via Kilimanjaro International Airport from December this year.

This was announced by Ethiopian Airlines Sales Manager (Zanzibar) Mr Mohammed Mansour after Africa's First Ethiopian B787-9 Dreamliner landed at Zanzibar's Abeid Amani Karume International Airport (AAKIA) which is signalling increased tourist travellers to the Islands.

Currently, Ethiopian Airlines is operating twice weekly direct independent flight to operate every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Ethiopian Airlines is still striving for the steady growth and enhancement of African Tourism by stretching its wings to various tourist attractions in the African Continent time to time and year after year.

He said the Ethiopian Airlines, the fastest growing and the leading airline in Africa, is arguably the first African Carrier to receive this B787-9 Dreamliner, the youngest and most modern operating fleet.

Mr Mansour said "Ethiopian Airlines is deploying the Dreamliner fleet which is an integration of design and technology with unique features of biggest windows in the sky, high ceiling, less noise, distinctive lighting, and higher air humidity."

He said Ethiopian airlines is expanding routes network to widely introduce Africa and its untapped tourist attractions to the rest of the world to further redefine passengers' travel experience on board Ethiopian.

The airline started operation in Tanzania about two decades ago and it is one of the competitive planes in the African region.

Commentary

Will other African countries follow Burundi's example to leave the ICC?

By **Duncan E Omondi Gumba**

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been authorised to begin investigations into alleged crimes against humanity in Burundi between 26 April 2015 and 26 October 2017.

The recent decision by the ICC judges of the pre-trial chamber came just two days before Burundi's formal withdrawal from the ICC took effect. The ruling could deter other African countries that have threatened withdrawal, as it sends the strongest signal yet that any such move is unlikely to stop proceedings already undertaken by the court.

The decision, which has drawn sharp reaction both for and against, allows prosecutor Fatou Bensouda to investigate state officials as well as the ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) party leadership and youth.

The youth, known as 'Imbonerakure', allegedly launched a widespread and systematic attack against Burundian civilians after the declaration in April 2015 of President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in office.

The intensity of atrocities that include murder, imprisonment, torture, enforced disappearance, persecution, rape and other forms of sexual violence has relented somewhat, but civilians opposed or perceived to be opposed to the ruling party continue to be targeted.

Burundi decided to withdraw from the Hague-based international court to protest against the investigation of its leaders. Its withdrawal from the ICC took effect on 27 October, a year after it issued a notice to the United Nations (UN) secretary-general as required by Article 127 of the ICC's Rome Statute.

This made it the first out of the 123 state parties to the Rome Statute to take the step since the African Union (AU) adopted a non-binding strategy urging members to collectively withdraw from the ICC. It accused the court of focusing on prosecuting African leaders.

'The withdrawal of one state ... is a setback in the fight against impunity,' warned Senegal's Justice Minister and President of the Assembly of ICC State Parties Sidiki Kaba. His statement expresses the underlying concern that other African states may follow Burundi's example.

Senegal, together with countries like Nigeria, Botswana, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Tanzania, oppose the notion of withdrawing. But with Burundi having made good its threat to leave, there are concerns that some African governments will be emboldened to seek withdrawal despite civil or legal barriers. A number of African states including Gambia, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia have over the past two years threatened to pull out.

Gambia and South Africa formally notified the UN of their intention to withdraw last year. South Africa became the first of the 34 African states to formalise its withdrawal bid in October 2016 but had to revoke it in February after its high court blocked the process. In February, Gambia reversed its withdrawal notice issued in November 2016 by former dictator Yahya Jammeh, who in December last year lost elections to Adama Barrow.

Rights groups accused Jammeh - who mockingly called the ICC the 'International Caucasian Court' - of leading a regime that tortured and killed opponents during his 22-year rule.



Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza

Kenya's threat to withdraw is led from the top by President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto, who both faced indictment by the ICC before their cases were dismissed in 2014. Kenya's withdrawal process is yet to go before Parliament, where a bill has been tabled for debate.

The ruling coalition has won a majority in the country's bicameral legislature and could easily pass the bill. However, the country's judiciary has recently displayed assertiveness that could lead to a collapsed process similar to the South African bid.

Like Kenyan politicians, leaders in Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia support their countries' withdrawal from the ICC. They claim the court has unfairly targeted African leaders and doesn't respect the sovereignty of African states. But with strong opposition from citizens who favour continued membership of the ICC, they're likely to be cautious to avoid a potentially embarrassing collapse of the withdrawal bids.

Namibia's cabinet supports collective withdrawal by AU states. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's stance on the ICC remains hostile even though Attorney General William Byaruhanga in April said his country hadn't made any attempt to withdraw from the Rome Statute. Zambia's government abandoned its withdrawal bid after its citizens rejected it during a nationwide consultation.

Some of the withdrawal bids are likely to give in to pressure from the international community and civil society organisations. African and international organisations have expressed doubt over the proposed AU alternative of an African Court to try international crimes. They question the capacity of governments across the continent to prosecute serious crimes.

The outcome of the next withdrawal bid by an African government will depend on the influence wielded over public opinion by ICC sceptics who - like Rwandan President Paul Kagame - believe the

court is about 'politics disguised as international justice', or its proponents. Supporters of the ICC include retired Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, who believes that 'African leaders behind the move to leave the ICC are effectively seeking licence to kill, maim and oppress their people without consequences'.

Allan Ngari, an international justice expert at the Institute for Security Studies, says although 'the momentum for withdrawal dissipated, especially after the January 2017 AU summit', the decision to pursue investigations against Burundi state officials 'will once again bring old contentions to the fore at the January 2018 summit, with Afri-

can states maintaining attacks on the ICC for interfering with peace processes'.

Jitters sent by the ICC pre-trial chamber ruling are evident in reactions by Museveni and Tanzanian President John Magufuli.

Other observers believe that perhaps the ICC sceptics are simply seeking dialogue on reforms that would improve the court, which has the potential to deliver justice when national courts lack the capacity or will to prosecute.

The AU ICC 'withdrawal strategy' presented a new avenue for dialogue as much as it urged withdrawal.

A debate on reforms could placate the AU and its members. But it is unlikely to convince them to let justice be delivered without political interference on a continent that continues to suffer some of the worst crimes against humanity.

Duncan E Omondi Gumba, Regional Coordinator, EN-ACT project, ISS Nairobi

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Libya devoid of abused black migrants due to CNN slavery auctions report

From This Is Africa, Hilversum

Protesters gathered outside the Libyan Embassy in central Paris following an exclusive CNN investigation into migrant auctions in Libya.

The same happened in other capitals around the world following that report which enhanced the need for indispensable journalism, debunking myths floated by the ilk of Donald Trump who rails against what is printed about him as "fake news"...

A dozen Black African men were seen being sold at an auction outside of the Libyan capital of Tripoli. Some of them were auctioned off for as little as \$400.

After obtaining footage of an auction, CNN's Nima Elbagir and her crew went to Libya in October to investigate further. During this investigation, CNN witnessed a dozen men being sold at an auction outside of the Libyan capital of Tripoli. Some of them were auctioned off for as little as \$400. Ultimately, CNN was told of auctions taking place at nine locations throughout Libya, but many more were believed to take place each month.

The footage led to a protest in Paris outside the Libyan embassy. During the march a placard reading "No to slavery in Libya". Tens of thousands fleeing conflict or searching for economic opportunity cross into Libya each year, looking to be smuggled across the Mediterranean Sea.

The United Nations estimates there are 700,000 migrants in Libya, and for years those who have crossed the Mediterranean have shared stories about beatings, kidnapping and enslavement.

"It's not about color," the woman at the protest said. "This goes beyond color or religion. This is about humanity."

Read: Remembering slavery: Recognising legacy and contributions of people of African descent

"We have to mobilize. We can't let this kind of thing happen," one protester told France 24 at the rally. "Did we really need to see such shocking pictures before taking a stand? I don't think so."

"How can it be that in the 21st century, we're selling human beings like merchandise?" one woman at the Paris protest said. "I cannot get my head around that!"

"Priorities of the investigation are not only to convict those responsible for these inhumane acts, but also to identify the location of those who have been sold in order to bring them to safety and return them to their countries of origin," Anes Alazabi, an official with the agency, told CNN.

The information is not however new. Early last year the International Organization for Migration (IOM) revealed African migrants are being sold in Libyan 'slave markets' after being held for ransom. The migrants trying to reach Europe tell harrowing stories, experiences of forced and hard labour, malnutrition and sexual abuse. Some migrants have been captured and killed by smugglers and militia groups, who conduct the slave trade.

"Apparently they don't have money and their families cannot pay the ransom, so they are being sold to get at least a minimum benefit from that," said Head of the IOM's Libya mission, Othman Belbeisi, to reporters in Geneva.

The UN says more than 150,000 people have made the journey in the past three years, and a number of fatalities have been recorded in 2016. More than 5,000 people died, or were presumed dead, while an unknown number perish during their journey north through the Sahara desert.

The expose is not the first that CNN has done. In 2012 they did an investigative story that showed that an estimated 10% to 20% of the population lives in slavery despite abolishing slavery on 1981 as the last country in the world to banish the practice. In fact, slavery although abolished in the country was only made illegal in 2007. Although this move criminalized the act of owning another person by the time the story was done only one case has been successfully prosecuted.

nationals, in captivity in Libya (at the very moment I'm talking to you). What are you waiting for before you respond and intervene? But what are you waiting for?!

"This cry of the heart is not a call to violence, but I ask all Africans and all those who have been shocked by this act that constitutes a crime against humanity to assemble at all Libyan embassies in their respective countries, until the total liberation of all captives in Libyan territory."

Blondy is on record to have called on the A.U. to address issues of rising conflict across the continent. He is also a U.N. Ambassador for Peace for his native Ivory Coast.



Ivorian musician Alpha Blondy

Alpha Blondy speaks out on slavery allegations in Libya

Yamoussoukro – Legendary Ivorian reggae musician, Alpha Blondy, known in private life as Seydou Kone has again waded into the debate for sub-Saharan African leaders to help protect their citizens wherever they find themselves.

His recent call is on the African Union and the west Africa regional bloc, ECOWAS, to take decisive action on migrant abuse in the north African country of Libya, failure for which civil society must stand up to fill that role.

Blondy was reacting to a recent investigative piece by American channel, CNN, on the strife and hustle that migrants in the country suffer at the hands of their captors and traffickers.

In a Facebook post titled "To Presidents of the African Union and ECOWAS," he wrote a message in French - a translation of which is as follows.

"Let me apologize for telling you that we are Africans who count on you to defend us and to protect us, we are surprised and amazed at your silence over the dismal, humiliating and unacceptable situation that your nationals, brothers, sisters, our sons and daughters are sold as slaves in Libya (a member of the African Union).

"You and your information services must have seen CNN reporting on a 'slave auction' of your

The last time he spoke to Africanews in an interview last year, he bemoaned how the political bloc had looked on as foreign forces entered Libya and joined rebel groups to kill then leader Muammar Gaddafi.

"I am very disappointed by the fact that the African Union allowed Colonel Gaddafi to be killed," he said.

"The African Union exists but it is France that has to protect Mali. What is the role of the the African Union if the African Union is not capable of defending the African interest? What is their role?"

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Robust tax collection forecast for Mozambique ahead

The Mozambican Tax Authority (AT) forecasts tax collection in 2018 of 222 billion meticaïs (about 3.73 billion US dollars), excluding payments from the foreign investment mega-projects.

In 2017, the AT collected 202.25 billion meticaïs which was more than 8.5 per cent greater than its initial target.

Speaking at a Maputo press conference on Tuesday, after a meeting between the AT and Maputo business people, the general inspector of taxes, Augusto Tacarindua, said that the AT could very well exceed its target for this year too, since it is currently updating its data base of taxpayers.

He announced that as from 1 February the AT will fine all taxpaying businesses that fail to issue invoices or receipts. But the likelihood of any serious implementation of this threat is minimal - AT documents show that in the last quarter of 2017, out of 3,924 taxpayers, only 704 issued invoices.

Tacarindua also threatened fines for printing companies which print invoices without due authorisation, and for taxpayers who use invoices printed by unauthorised printing companies, or who use electronic mechanisms for issuing invoices without due authorisation.

During the meeting, some participants complained that the AT sometimes sends three or four brigades to a company to carry out the same kind of inspection, within a short space of time. Such overlapping audits, said businessman Antonio Langa, make it difficult to deal with the documentation that should be presented.

"In the same year we receive four audit teams and they are not coordinated", he said. "When the first time arrives we hand over all the material, and before we can adjust the other papers another team arrives. This complicates our activities".

AT chairperson Amelia Nakhare admitted that what is laid down in the legislation is different from the reality found on the ground. Nonetheless, she urged her audience to obey fiscal laws scrupulously, otherwise they risked being penalised.

Morocco, China sign economic pact

The negotiations include input by Israel to the welfare of the refugees, such as accommodation and wellbeing.

"I think what we are looking for is for any migrant coming to settle here to have the minimum basics to have housing, to be able to stay in the country long enough while finding a job or setting up a business. We expect everyone to have a minimum

of shelter. We do not envision people to come here and stay in camps. We envision giving them a normal life," she said. The number of immigrants from Israel that could be resettled in the country is around 10,000. "I do not have the numbers but from the discussions with Israel a while back, it had to be something around 10,000 or a bit more than that and we were comfortable with that," Mushikiwabo said. This would not be the first time that Rwanda is taking in immigrants or asylum seekers, including from Asian countries, according to the minister. "We have a very progressive and open policy when it comes to people living and settling in this country. We are very aware of the financial burden and the need for people to have a good life. To a certain measure within what we have. Nobody should feel like they have no country to live in, especially those who are close to us," Mushikiwabo added.

Most of the illegal immigrants in Israel that are being considered are from Sudan and Eritrea.

Rabat – Morocco and China have agreed to set up an economic zone in Morocco's northern city of Fez, offering a platform for boosting bilateral cooperation in various industries, local media reported Monday.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Fes-Meknes Regional Investment Center and the China Industrial Cooperation Association, the financial daily L'Economiste reported.

The deal aims to establish an economic zone as a platform to attract Chinese investments in the fields of automobile, aviation, agriculture, health and renewable energy, the report said.

Bilateral economic cooperation between Morocco and China has been growing steadily since the establishment of a strategic partnership during the Moroccan king's visit to China in May 2016.

Since then, Morocco has witnessed a wave of Chinese investment in the country, especially in the areas of infrastructure construction and industrialization.

In June 2016, Morocco granted Chinese citizens visa-free entry to the North African kingdom.

Tunisia: Suspected Islamist arrested

A suspected Islamist militant wounded two policemen with a knife near the parliament in Tunis on Wednesday and was later arrested, Tunisia's Interior Ministry said. It was a rare incident in a country that has improved security since deadly attacks in 2015.

The assailant was known to authorities and said after the attack that he considered the police to be "tyrants," the statement said. One of the policemen was taken to hospital for treatment after being wounded in the neck, while the other was only lightly wounded, it said. "I saw a young man with a thick beard trying to kill a policeman. He put the knife in his neck before he was pursued by a second policeman," a witness told Reuters. "He shouted, 'Allahu Akbar,' ['God is greatest'] as he attacked the policemen."

The Interior Ministry said Wednesday's sus-

pect had confessed that he "adopted Takfiri thought three years ago and believes that killing security forces is a form of jihad." "Takfiri thought" refers to a view that Muslims should proclaim other Muslims to be infidels and justify attacks against them.

Large numbers of police were deployed to the Bardo square in the aftermath of the attack, a witness said. Blood could be seen on the ground in the square. The square is opposite the parliament building and close to the Bardo museum, where 21 people, mostly European tourists, were killed in an attack by three gunmen in March 2015.

A security source told Reuters the attacker was 25 and from Ettadamen, one of the largest, poorest suburbs of Tunis. One of the attacker's neighbors told Reuters that the attacker was the youngest of six brothers and also had a sister "who works in the parliament's administration." Colonel Major Khelifa Chibani of Tunisia's national guard named the attacker as Zied Gharbi. Security forces raided his house and confiscated his personal computer and other items, he said.

Sofian Sliti, a spokesman for judicial counterterrorism investigations, said that "the attacker planned to join terrorist groups in Libya."

As well as the Bardo killings, Tunisia suffered two other major attacks in 2015, one against tourists at the beach resort of Sousse and the other against presidential guards in the capital.

The 2015 attacks severely damaged the economy, which has a large tourism sector at its Mediterranean beaches. Since then, security has been boosted at strategic sites while authorities have cracked down on militants, dismantling dozens of cells.

Tunisia was the only Arab country where a long-serving leader was toppled in the region's 2011 uprisings without triggering civil war or large-scale violence. Tunisian democracy activists who kept dialogue open between Islamists and secularists were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.

Zambia Denies Threats to Artist

Lusaka – The imprisonment of a medical doctor for creating a fake social media account lampooning the president and persecution of an artist behind the release of material criticising President Edgar Lungu are latest demonstrations of the Zambia regime becoming increasingly tyrannical.

Award-winning satirical artist and hip hop musician, Fumba Chama, has fled the country to an unknown destination after alleged death threats from ruling Patriotic Front (PF) leaders enraged by his latest hit song condemning rampant corruption in the Southern African country.



Chamba Fumba, aka Plato

In the song "Koswe Mumpoto" (rat in the pot), which supporters of Lungu said was an attack on the president and his cabinet, the musician who performs as Pilato, denounces leaders for behaving like rats that steal food and loot things that they do not need.

However, the Zambian High Commissioner to South Africa, Mr Emmanuel Mwamba vehemently dismissed the claims as "untrue", "baseless" and "unfounded".



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South Africa: Did political unrest, crime cost SA 2023 RWC?

1995 Rugby World Cup winning Springbok Kobus Wiese believes that political unrest and crime statistics contributed to South Africa losing the 2023 Rugby World Cup to France.

Now 53, the former giant of a lock was as shocked as anybody to learn on Wednesday that the 2023 showpiece will be hosted in France, despite World Rugby having recommended South Africa as the preferred host nation just two weeks ago.

"When World Rugby announced us as the preferred nation it was a done and dusted deal," Wiese said.

"It's a huge blow ... a huge loss to South Africa and it's very unfortunate."

Wiese, who started the 1995 World Cup final against the All Blacks at Ellis Park, is of the firm belief that South Africa could have pulled off another spectacular tournament.

"We've got the track record. We've had the Rugby World Cup and the Soccer World Cup and we've hosted the most successful events in history, financially," he said.

"The only thing that comes to mind is the current situation in our country, unfortunately. The very high levels of crime ... that probably counted against us in the end."

After the World Rugby recommendation, Ireland wrote a letter to the game's governing body raising concerns over the safety issues that may arise in hosting a World Cup in South Africa.

For Wiese, that played a massive part.

"The political unrest in our country definitely counts against us," he said.

"The extremely high levels of crime and murders must count against us. It's one of the very big things that World Rugby looked at.

"There are a lot of people coming into the country for a World Cup and they need to be safe. In my opinion, that is the deciding factor."

By the time the 2023 World Cup arrives, it would have been 28 years since Wiese and his Springbok team-mates in-

SPORT

spired a nation and the world by lifting the Webb Ellis Cup on home soil.

Rwanda qualify for CHAN

Rwanda has qualified for the 2018 African Nations Championships (CHAN) finals



tournament on the expense of Ethiopia after both teams played out a goalless draw in the second leg of their Play-off qualifier on Sunday at Kigali Stadium.

Amavubi booked their last available ticket thanks to their 3-2 first leg victory last week in Addis Ababa. The finals will be played February 4.

Ethiopia, who came into the match knowing that only a 2-0 victory would secure them qualification, dominated the proceedings for large spells but failed to beat goalkeeper Eric 'Bakame' Ndayishimiye.

Adugna Enock, Mohamed Messud and Samson Tilahun missed chances for the visitors while Justin Mico, Abeddy Biramahire and Eric Rutanga failed to use their chances in the first half, for Amavubi.

For the first time, APR FC didn't have a single player in the Amavubi starting eleven while reigning Azam Rwanda Premier League champions Rayon Sports had seven players in the starting list.

In the second half, Antoine Hey brought on APR midfielder Muhadjir Hakizimana for Rayon Sports' Djaber Manishimwe while Maxime Sekamana replaced the ineffective Police FC forward Abeddy Biramahire.

In the first leg, Abubakher Sanni and Aschalew Girma netted for Ethiopia while Eric

Rutanga, Hakizimana and Biramahire scored for Rwanda.

The away victory gave Rwanda qualification for the third time, to the finals of Africa's second biggest international competition, which is reserved for players, who feature in their respective domestic leagues.

Now settled, North Africa dominate Africa qualifi- er to Russia World Cup

As things now stand, North Africa will supply three teams to this year's world cup finals in Russia with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia leading the way.

The other teams will be two West African teams, Nigeria and Senegal.

It will be Nigeria's sixth outing to the world cup and Senegal's second, having reached the quarter final stage in Japan in 2000.

With West and North Africa dominating Africa's football history, what do you think is the reason behind this historical fact? Jot us a line at

info@africanworldnewz.com...

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Peter Uduehi

Reporters

Kpokumo Semai

Edwin Njo

Phyllis Ojeah

Contributors

The Great Dr. Chigbo

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Jude Akan

Doh Ndatu

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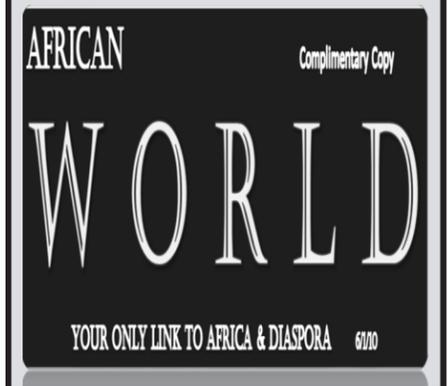
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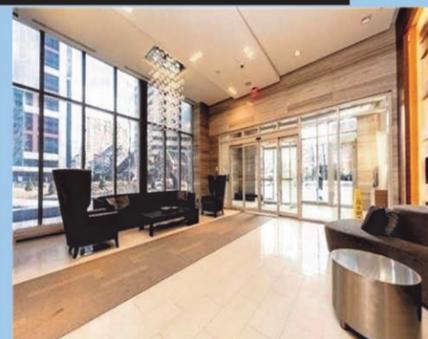
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