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Over 60% of migrants accepted at Canada's border posts

Over half of the migrant asylum claims heard by Canadian refugee officials this year have been successful. New figures released by the federal Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) show that of 1,572 claims heard so far, 941 have been granted. The IRB has a backlog of 12,895 cases currently pending.



Canada has seen a spike recent months of migrants crossing illegally into the country via the US and making asylum claims. Continued on Page 2..see "Canada"

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The life and times of Africa's revolutionary gadfly Thomas Sankara in Toronto stage play

By Peter Uduehi

Few people were familiar with "Upper Volta" in West Africa until it became Burkina Faso, thanks to erstwhile president Thomas Sankara who fashioned a pan-African revolutionary approach to governance. Sankara came to power in a military coup after overthrowing former colonial power France-backed Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo in 1983. Considered Africa's Che Guevara, Sankara adopted Marxist-Leninist approaches, sacked lazy and corrupt civil servants, planted millions of trees to avert desertification of the Sahel, invested heavily in education, dismantled the village feudal system, drastically lowered his pay to just \$450 a month as well as those of top-ranking government officials, preferred his motorbike for transport and, among other austere measures, employed the cheapest car (no-more Mercedes) as the official service vehicle –and without chauffeurs.

He enjoined African governments to resist paying back loans or debts to multinational companies and Western governments. Saying the poor should not be paying the rich and their former colonial exploiters. He angered former colonialist France and the World Bank and IMF who began a plot against his government ...

A didactic moment for Sankara's wife who senses that the conniving Campaore would overthrow her husband; she pleads to Campaore to desist from harming his once-dear friend Thomas




Continued on Page 2. See "Sankara"

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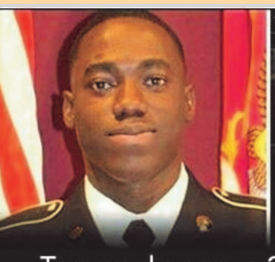


Canadians freed in Nigeria

Two Canadians and two Americans have been freed in Nigeria after their abductors lost the battle to police in an exchange of gunfire. The four men were ambushed in a forested area near the capital Abuja. Nigerian police and military forces mounted an operation that sought their location. Two of their local escorts were killed in the gun battle. Abduction for ransom is common in Nigeria as wealthy Nigerians and foreigners have become primary targets for bandits.

Mr. Trump, Methinks you're the shithole!!

Two weeks ago, a 26-year-old soldier raced repeatedly into a burning Bronx apartment building, saving four American lives before dying in the flames. His name was Pvt. Emmanuel Mensah and he immigrated from Ghana, a country Trump apparently thinks is a "shithole" that sends us their worst. Let that sink in



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Canada Migrants: Continued from Page 1

The new figures look at claims received by the IRB from "irregular border crossers" between February

IRB spokesperson Anna Pape said that refugee claims made by Americans are "by and large dependents born in the USA and accompanying parents who are alleging persecution against a different country".



In total, 652 Americans have made refugee claims in Canada this year, including 366 who made claims at an official border crossing and those who came through illegally. Between 2013 and 2016, the numbers ranged from 69 to 129.

and October of this year.

Those made by migrants from Syria, Eritrea, Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti and Turkey were the most likely to be accepted.

The IRB data confirms that Haitians are by far the biggest group of asylum seekers, filing 6,304 claims with the refugee board over that period.

However, of the small number of claims by Haitians processed so far, 298, only about 10% have been accepted. Failed claimants face removal to Haiti.

The IRB notes that the new figures represent a small sample - 1,572 of 14,467 total claims - and that "caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions regarding trends".

The Canadian Press reported that PM Justin Trudeau said on Thursday that Canada's refugee system is not meant for those merely seeking a better economic future but for those not being protected by their home country.

Many Haitians had been living in the US for years but chose to seek asylum in Canada due to fears of deportation.

The Trump administration hinted in May it would terminate a programme that gives over 50,000 Haitians in the US protection.

It was officially scrapped this week.

The programme grants temporary US visas to more than 435,000 people from 10 countries ravaged by natural disasters or war.

Canada is planning for another possible wave of migrants as a consequence of the policy change.

Canada completely lifted its own protected status for Haitians over a year ago.

In terms of numbers, Haitian migrants were followed by Nigerians, who have made 1,911 claims in Canada so far this year.

The other top countries in order are Turkey, Syria, Eritrea, Yemen, the US, Sudan, Djibouti, and Pakistan.

Canadian officials say US citizens included in the figures are mainly US-born children of migrants.

Continued from Page 1 Sankara...

and allowing his one-time friend Blaise Campaore to overthrow and kill him in 1987. Sankara was loved by the poor his country but loathed by the rich and powerful as well as the West.

His life was played out on stage in a play recently in Toronto at the Small World Music Centre Studio on Shaw Street, to an audience packed with attendees who were not even born when the Burkinabe reigned. It was organised by the African Theatre Ensemble.



Playing Sankara was Andrew Jackson

Artistic director of the ensemble Jude Idada, who also wrote the play "Sankara", says the event was not only to mark the 30th anniversary of Sankara's death, but also to remind people that Africa is replete with the history great leaders.

"People always think of Africa as devoid of exemplary leadership in its history, but here was a man from Burkina Faso who taught us that we can produce good governance and leadership and that we are capable of bringing positive change in our lives," Idada said.

Play director Chibie Okoye concurs. She says it's high-time Africans began "filtering the propaganda that keeps us away from knowing the truth about our histories". This, she said, will enable us to understand why things are the way they are in Africa, "because for too long we have been victims and enablers of a certain kind of propaganda from those who oppressed and continue to do so today. Our history need to be told objectively," she stressed.

Toronto to bid for 2016 football World Cup

Toronto mayor John Tory is putting his weight behind the bid for the city to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Canada, the U.S. and Mexico are momentarily concerting in a bid against Morocco to bring FIFA's World Cup to North America in 2026.

"Hosting the FIFA World Cup is a once in a generation opportunity to showcase Toronto to the world," Tory said in a media release.



If the three-country bid - known as U n i t e d 2 0 2 6 - is successful, Canada and Mexico would host 10 games each and the U.S. would host the other 60. FIFA will announce the winner in June.

A successful bid would cost Toronto between \$30 million and \$45 million, but in his news release, Tory called the idea "irresistible."

"I think if you ask the taxpayers...they'd rather have the money go to that than anything else we do," Tory told the Toronto Star.

Several cities in Canada including Toronto, Edmonton, Montreal and Vancouver as well as 28 in the US and Mexico are all being considered as hosts. As for Canada, the allotting of the venues of the game will be made known in 2021.

A recent Ipsos online survey found that 76 per cent of Canadian responded affirmatively to hosting the what has been considered the most beautiful game ever.

The women's version of the FIFA World Cup was hosted by Canada in 2015 around the same time that Toronto hosted the 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games. The city also hosted the 2017 Invictus Games.

As a host country, Canada, currently ranked 95th in the world, would also automatically qualify for the 48-country 30-day event. Russia hosts this year's World Cup, Qatar hosts the 2022 event.

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Ethiopia: Lake Tana: How an Invasive Weed Is Threatening Its Survival

Lake Tana is the largest lake in Ethiopia and the second largest in Africa. In recognition of the lake's rich biodiversity and significant cultural heritage, UNESCO added the lake to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves in June 2015.

Lake Tana covers an area of 3,000 square kilometers, while its catchment area covers 15,000 square kilometers. Four major rivers feed into the lake, including Gilgel Abbay, which flows from the south, Gumera and Rib from the northeast and Megech from the north. Gilgel Abbay, widely regarded as the source of Abbay (Blue Nile), originates from the Ghion spring, which is considered holy. The Tana basin connects about two million people, the majority of whom subsist on agriculture, while the two largest cities in the Amhara region, Bahir Dar and Gondar, lie within the basin.

Lake Tana harbors dozens of medieval island monasteries. These monasteries represent important religious sanctuaries, centers of traditional learning, and core tourism destinations. The lake is also rich in bio-diversity. It is home to a large species of fish and birds, many of which are endemic to the lake. Moreover, the lake occupies an important place in the country's plan for economic development. The water from the lake is utilized for hydropower generation and supports large-scale irrigation schemes in the lowland agricultural areas. The lake, thus, is at the nexus of a complex web of political, economic and socio-cultural interests.

Even though Lake Tana is central to the country's aspiration for socio-economic transformation, its haphazard management by government authorities raises critical questions. A case in point is the Chara Chara wier and the Tana Beles hydropower project. While the Chara Chara wier was constructed around 1995, at the mouth of the lake, to regulate its volume for downstream hydropower generation; the Tana Beles hydropower project was completed in 2010, and relies on water diverted from the lake through underground tunnels. The diverted water, after hitting the power turbines, is discharged to the Beles River basin, which is used to irrigate state owned sugar plantations. It should be noted that the Beles River basin lies outside the Lake Tana basin system. One shocking consequence of these projects has been the defilement of the majestic Tis Issat Falls (The Blue Nile Falls). Since the natural flow of the water is now tightly regulated at the Chara Chara wier, the Tis Issat Falls, located 30 kilometers downstream, has lost its natural spectacle, and with it, its enormous tourism potential and iconic status as one of the enduring symbols of the country. Locals have suffered dire economic consequences as a result. According to a report from the International Water Management Institute, the extraction of large volume of water from the lake has caused the water level to drop below the recommended level, thus precipitating extensive environmental and economic disruptions.

The drawdown of the lake led to the desiccation of reed beds and consequent loss of breeding habitat for fishes. It also made transportation on the lake difficult. Several boats have sustained damages, others have sunk, after hitting rocks exposed to the surface of the lake due to the receding waters. The extreme contraction of the lake has also damaged the papyrus beds that grow around the lake, which represent an important source of livelihood to the Negede people. Papyrus reeds are used to make marketable products such as tankua (canoes), baskets and mats. The drawdown diminished the wetlands around the lake, and encouraged recession rice farming, thus contributing to the growing pollution of the lake. These multifaceted crises reached their climax when a large swath of the lake's shores was invaded by water hyacinth in 2011/2012. Water hyacinth is an aggressive invasive weed that surfaces on water bodies, such as lakes, rivers, and dams. Research conducted on its productivity shows that it can reproduce itself every two to three weeks depending on the nutrient condition of the water body. The weed can grow up to a height of 1 meter. It has no known direct food value to wildlife, and hence is regarded as a pest. If left unchecked, water hyacinth can cover entire water bodies by forming thick floating mats. Fully developed water hyacinth mats block waterways rendering water transportation and fishing difficult. Water hyacinth also adversely affects freshwater ecology. The mats limit circulation of air and water, thereby diminishing the level of oxygen in the water, which, in turn, threatens the survival of aquatic ecosystems such as fish. The mats also hinder the passage of sunlight beneath the water surface, thus obstructing the photosynthetic activities of underwater plant species and degrading the biological diversity of the lake. Reduction of biological diversity transpires a cascading effect on aquatic animals, which depend on plants for shelter and nesting. In particular, the fish stock, deprived of oxygen and food, could vanish from the lake, thus forcing the

fishing industry--a permanent scene of the lake for millennia - to come to an abrupt end. Because the weed is highly competitive, it easily interferes in the biodiversity of the wetlands beyond the lake, thus disrupting wetland agriculture and livestock rearing. The weed's high water content means also that it expedites the evaporation of water from the lake's wetland, thereby contributing to a further contraction of the lake's areal extent.

According to local sources, water hyacinth was first observed on Lake Tana at Chera kebele of Dembya woreda around 2011/2012 (2004 E.C.). By 2015, a significant swath of the lake's northern and northeastern shores could be seen covered by water hyacinth. Estimates suggest that the weed currently covers 25,000 hectares of the lake. Recent media reports suggest that the weed is spotted on the Abbay River as far as the edges of the Tis Issat



Falls, demonstrating the weed's capacity to expand itself to new areas.

Fragmented efforts to control water hyacinth have been going on since 2012. These efforts were mainly focused on mobilizing affected farming communities to uproot and dispose the weed manually. Needless to say, these efforts were utterly ineffective in terms of controlling the spread of water hyacinth. The crisis, despite its catastrophic consequences, did not enter public consciousness until very recently. Credit must be given to the Amhara Mass Media Agency for bringing the issue to a wider audience. They have broadcasted a series of news reports, interviews, and documentaries about the invasion of the lake by water hyacinth. These programs have been crucial in informing the public about the scale of the problem. As awareness grows, people soon start to talk about water hyacinth and Lake Tana. Environmental activists, civic society groups, singers, poets, writers, and ordinary citizens alike have all expressed their concern about the precarious condition of the lake. The issue has garnered substantial coverage both on mainstream and social media. This growing activism seemed to have registered with the government, especially at the regional level, as efforts to remove the weed have gained traction in recent weeks. A series of mass mobilizations was organized, some by government authorities, others by civic society and volunteer groups, to dispose the weed using manual labor. Besides these mass mobilization campaigns, three state universities located around the lake, namely Bahir Dar University, University of Gondar and Debre Tabor University, have been taking various initiatives to tackle the problem. Bahir Dar University is working in collaboration with a local engineering firm to build a customized mechanical harvester for removing the weed. Researchers at the university are breeding flies and studying the possibility of applying a biological control mechanism against the weed. The Geospatial center at the university is helping the effort by providing essential information about the growth and movement of the weed using reconnaissance survey and remote sensing techniques. University of Gondar, on its part, is building a mechanical harvester in house. The regional government has recently formed a high-level steering and technical committee to follow up the issue. The Environment, Forest and Wildlife Protection and Development Authority of the Amhara Regional State seems to be the main body tasked with coordinating the ongoing mass mobilization of the public to remove water hyacinth using manual labor.

Conspicuously absent from the picture are the various federal level agencies working on water and environment related issues, such as Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, and Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resource Development. Although these government institutions are, in one way or another, involved in the sustainable management and utilization of the country's natural resources, their silence while the largest lake in the country is mired in a grave environmental crisis raises questions. Their inaction casts doubt on the commitment of the federal government to rescue the lake.

Generally, ongoing efforts to control water hyacinth are incommensurate with the scale of the problem. They are marked by poor mobilization of resources and lack of coordination and decisive leadership. The inaction of federal agencies, which are better placed to deal with the problem both financially and technically, has exacerbated the problem.

There are three established methods of dealing with water hyacinth: biological, chemical and mechanical. The biological control is based on introducing specialized insects to the weed infested area. The insects selectively consume water hyacinth and are believed to die subsequently. The chemical option involves applying herbicides that can kill the weed, whereas the mechanical option involves deploying specialized machines to chop, harvest and dispose the weed. The chemical option is the least desirable as the chemicals used to kill the weed could pollute the freshwater of the lake and adversely affect its ecology. The chemicals could also enter humans via the food chain, and precipitate health problems.

Likewise, the biological option might produce unforeseen consequences. Because insects behave unpredictably, one cannot be certain that they will not compete with or even kill other native insects that serve as a source of food for fishes. In the worst-case scenario, the biological mechanism could pose direct health risks to humans and livestock. Moreover, it is a slow process, and might take decades before it could sufficiently remove water hyacinth from the lake.

Therefore, the least costly and the safest control mechanism seem to be the deployment of weed harvesting machines. This is a relatively straightforward approach, in which specialized mechanical harvesters are deployed on the lake to remove the weed and dispose it safely. Yet, the authorities have made little progress in this regard. The motive for not buying and deploying mechanical harvesters so far is not clear.

A simple Google search returns a large number of suppliers with price tags ranging from \$30,000 to \$100,000. These machines cost far less than the V8 Toyota Land Cruisers that most senior government officials use for daily commute. The delay in deploying the machines is impeding the ability to control the weed at an early stage. Each day that passes without taking meaningful action against the weed is potentially fatal for Lake Tana. Although efforts by domestic engineering firms to create local capabilities for building harvesting machines is commendable, the idea of leaving the fate of the lake in the hands of these tentative experimentations seems naïve at best and irresponsible at worst.

We believe the invasion of Lake Tana by water hyacinth is the culmination of a plethora of environmental crises that have been afflicting the lake for years. Projects have been implemented on the lake haphazardly, without fully assessing their environmental and social consequences. When negative impacts transpire due to poor project planning or implementation, appropriate mitigation measures are rarely taken. In recent years, the lake has come under increased strain from population growth, intensive agriculture, rapid urbanization and growing infrastructure development schemes. These challenges suggest the need to adapt a sustainable and integrated way of managing the lake's resources.

Most critically, the government must consider the competing interests of the various stakeholders of the lake during project planning. Decisions should not be finalized at the top and forced down to local communities through political coercion. Instead, affected stakeholders should be given meaningful space to articulate their interests at the earliest stages of project planning. Government bodies have the responsibility to protect the interests of vulnerable groups, such as farmers, fishermen and inhabitants of the island monasteries whose livelihood depend on the survival of the lake. Likewise, environmental conservation efforts need to be scaled up in the Tana Basin. Adequate resources must be allocated, and conservation works should be implemented in an integrated and sustainable fashion. There are established environmental conservation and water management practices from which the government can draw lessons, such as Best Management Practices (BMP). The government continues to receive huge sums of money from donors for environmental and natural resource management projects. Part of this money should be earmarked to sustainably manage Lake Tana and its vast resource base. It is also worth considering establishing a separate government body, preferably at the regional level, that regulates, coordinates, and integrates conservation, infrastructural development, and investment activities around the lake. By managing the lake's resources responsibly and sustainably, it could be possible to meet the pressing demands of economic development while also safeguarding the lake's long-term survival. AS

Inside West, North & East Africa



Thousands prepare for Raila Odinga swearing in

Different oaths for presidency taken in Kenya

Nairobi — NASA leaders and supporters have been allowed to assemble at Uhuru Park for the planned swearing-in of Raila Odinga.

Sources in the security sector say the decision was reached to avoid violent scenes as a result of confrontation with the police after NASA leaders insisted on swearing-in Odinga and his running mate Kalonzo Musyoka at the historic park.

By early Tuesday morning, dozens of youths had started arriving at the park, with no police presence visible.

Nairobi Police chief Japheth Koome had on Sunday warned that no gathering would be allowed to take place at the park.

Meanwhile, police have detained six buses ferrying NASA supporters from Mombasa after many of the passengers were found without Identity Cards.

Ethiopia is fastest growing economy in east Africa

Growth in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to accelerate to 3.2 per cent this year from 2.4 per cent in 2017.

But the forecast for faster growth will depend on a firming up of commodity prices and reforms.

According to the latest Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report released by the World Bank last week, growth in the region is estimated to have rebounded to 2.4 per cent last year, after slowing sharply to 1.3 per cent in 2016.

"However, despite the pickup, growth will remain below the rates seen prior to the global financial crisis, partly reflecting the struggle faced by the region's larger economies to boost private investment," the report says.

In the region, the economic is expected to expand at a solid pace, helped by robust investment growth. Ethiopia is expected to have the highest growth of 8.2 per cent followed by Tanzania at 6.8 per cent; Rwanda at 5.9 per cent, Kenya at 5.5 per cent and Uganda at 5.1 per cent as inflation eases.

"Among East African countries, Ethiopia is likely to remain the fastest growing economy, but growth is expected to soften as it takes measures to stabilise government debt. Growth is expected to recover in Kenya, as inflation eases, and to firm up in Tanzania on strength-

ening investment growth," the World Bank says.

The Bretton Woods institution is also warning that that excessive external borrowing without forward-looking budget management could worsen debt dynamics and hurt growth in many countries.

"Excessive external borrowing, in the absence of sound

forward looking budget management, could worsen debt dynamics and cause economic instability.

Reforms to contain fiscal deficits and rebuild buffers are particularly needed in in the non-resource-intensive countries in East Africa where government debt is high and rising," it says.

With the increase in sovereign bond issuance in recent years, a sharp increase in global interest rates could also complicate debt dynamics in the region.

In the long run, World Bank says, a sharper-than-expected slowdown in growth could damage prospects for gains in per capita incomes and poverty reduction.

Other downside risks facing the regional economies include a pro heightened political and policy uncertainty, which could further hurt confidence and deter investment. in some countries.

Morocco: Exchange rate regime reform is a "sovereign decision", says Governor

Rabat — The reform of the exchange rate regime, which is a "sovereign" decision made by Moroccan authorities, was developed in coordination with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and Bank Al-Maghrib (Morocco's central bank), Governor of Bank Al Maghrib, Abdellatif Jouahri, said here on Wednesday.

Speaking at a joint meeting of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the House of Advisors (upper house) and the Finance and Social Development Committee of the House of Representatives (lower house), Jouahri stressed that the reform of the exchange rate regime was not "imposed by an international financial institution and was not made under the pressure of a currency crisis, as is the case in several countries".

In this regard, he pointed out that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has constantly raised the question of the reform of the exchange rate system at the annual consultations under Article 4 (since 1998), recalling that the World Bank has also mentioned the reform of the exchange rate system since the mid-1990s, and also in its report on the Moroccan economy of 2006.

Jouahri said that Bank Al Maghrib took the

necessary time to conduct the necessary studies and analyses, learn about experiences in this area and evaluate the impact of this reform on the economy and the purchasing power of the citizens, in coordination with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, adding that all stakeholders have been involved in a transparent way to ensure the success of this reform.

Governor of Bank Al-Maghrib made it clear that there will be no devaluation of the dirham, stressing that this new regime is not related to the floating of the dirham.

Regarding the impact of the reform on the economy and the purchasing power of citizens, Jouahri noted that the scenarios developed by the Central Bank and the Ministry of Economy and Finance indicate, on the basis of available data and of a possible devaluation of the dirham of 2.5%, that the impact of the reform on growth in 2018 will be positive and will reach + 0.2%.

With regard to inflation, Jouahri said that in the extreme case we should expect an additional inflation of 0.4% to reach a rate of 2% in 2018 (or even 1.9%) according to the scenario of the Central Bank. He gave the example of the price of hydrocarbons, including diesel, which will record an increase of 0.15 dirhams per litre, from 9.6 dirhams/litre to 9.75 dirhams/litre.

Since the implementation of this reform on Monday, the exchange rate of the dirham on the foreign exchange market has remained between -0.3% and + 0.3%, although the volatility has been widened to + 2.5%, he noted, adding that the exchange rate of the dirham against foreign currencies remained at the same level as before the reform.

The move to a flexible exchange rate regime will strengthen Morocco's economy and support the structural policies carried out by the government, he affirmed, adding that this reform will strengthen the ability of the Moroccan economy to cope with international monetary crises.

Gambia: Truth Commission would uncover Jammeh abuses

Gambia's truth commission bill, to be debated recently, is an important opportunity to shed light on human rights violations committed during the rule of former President Yahya Jammeh, Human Rights Watch has said. The National Assembly should amend the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission bill to prohibit amnesties for those responsible for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, rape, or torture, in accordance with international law and practice.

"Gambia will greatly benefit from a truth-telling process that shines light on Jammeh's abuses," said Jim Wormington, West Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. "Gambian victims deserve a truth commission that gives them a platform to tell their stories and lays the groundwork for those most responsible for grave crimes to face justice."

Will Kagame's plans work for Africa?

Opinion by Fred Muvunyi

For the first time, Rwandan leader Paul Kagame will chair an African Union summit



Rwanda president Paul Kagame

after he was elected in July 2017 by his peers to take over from Guinea's president Alpha Conde. Many Africans across the continent have high expectations of Kagame. During his twelve months

in office as AU chair, he hopes to ensure that the organization becomes self-funded. This can be achieved with the help of a tax of at least 0.2 percent on certain imports. However, so far, only twenty member states have signed up for this mechanism.

Despite massive income from its natural resources like oil, gold, wood and tropical fruits, the continent is cash-strapped and has no means to fund its peacekeeping operations. For now, Africa cannot operate without the support of the United States and the European Union. Only in 2016, donors covered 70 percent of the AU's operational budget. This is ridiculous for an organization that seeks to become a supranational bloc designed in the image of the EU.

While I believe that seeking to become self-funding is a good idea, I would have liked to see African leaders initiating a reform to reorganize the entire continent into a coherent social-political bloc. An organization that respects political rights and fundamental principles which will leave, at least, every African proud of contributing to the development of the continent. The money will not quell the endless conflicts on the continent, which are caused by greed for power and failure to share the available resources equitably.

Another critical issue is that African leaders have different political ambitions which stand in the way of the goal of a large-scale revamping of the continent. Within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for example, leaders are striving for greater democracy and upholding the rule of law and are slowly getting rid of dictatorship. However, in eastern Africa and the Great Lakes region in general, they're taking a different route.

Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, Rwanda's Paul Kagame, Burundi's Pierre Nkurunziza, Sudan's Omar al Bashir and DR Congo's Joseph Kabila are all holding tight to power. In general, greed for power is hindering Africa's progress - leading many, if not most, Africans to envy life in the West.

It breaks my heart each day that thousands of African migrants drown in the Mediterranean Sea while at the same time our young people are being sold off in the Maghreb like merchandise. Pouring salt on to the wound, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called African migrants living in his country 'infiltrators' who deserve to be sent back home, and the US president Donald Trump sees them as people from a s***hole continent.

Can Kagame resuscitate our dignity? I have my doubts. Kagame has developed a strong reputation internationally, as a technically efficient leader during his tenure as president of Rwanda. He claims to have made progress not only on economic growth and poverty reduction, but also in maternal health care and taking significant strides in uniting a once divided nation.

Many Africans envy Rwanda for having a leader like him. But there's a lot more that can be said. Kagame has been cutting corners on democracy. The majority of his opponents are in exile or jail while others have been mysteriously killed. To coin a phrase: Asia has tigers but now Africa has a lion.

Can Kagame impose a Rwandan model of governance on the entire continent? It remains to be seen what he can do, given that most African leaders are not used to short-term plans. Ironically, that's the reason they stay in power for decades with the hope that they can ultimately deliver on their promises. We should know more when Kagame delivers a major speech at the UN General Assembly later this year.

Despite the many critical issues still hampering the continent, dawn is coming. For the first time, the AU leaders are sitting without longtime rulers Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and Angola's Eduardo dos Santos.

The dramatic departure of Mugabe in late 2017 was widely welcomed by many Africans and the world at large. This raised hopes among many young Africans who had never imagined him stepping down. It was the biggest news in my lifetime, too.

In Angola, newly elected leader Joao Lourenco is dismantling a family-based power structure set up by his predecessor, dos Santos, who served as

president for nearly four decades. President Lourenco has fired the former leader's daughter Isabel as head of the national oil company Sonangol. It remains to be seen whether the new leader will go on to tackle corruption comprehensively or consolidate his control over the levers of power and public wealth.

Sudan: Darfur war crimes suspect arrested

Sudan has arrested a militia chief described by a human rights group as "the poster child for Janjaweed atrocities in Darfur" - nine years after he was appointed as a government aide.

Musa Hilal was arrested by Sudan's counter-insurgency forces after fierce fighting near his hometown in North Darfur.

The arrest was carried out by the Rapid Support Forces after the death of 10 of its members, including a commander, on Sunday, the Sudan Tribune reported.

He has been accused of being a leader in the pro-government Arab Janjaweed militia, which carried out a campaign of ethnic cleansing in Darfur in 2003 and 2004.

His militia were blamed for pillaging, rape, and scorching of villages in Darfur.

But Mr Hilal

told the BBC's Panorama programme in 2004 the accusations levelled at him had been "exaggerated". "Where are the graves and the bodies? Yes, there is death in this war. It is not as they exaggerate," he said.

In 2008, he was made an aide to Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, leading Human Rights Watch to hit out at the decision, labeling him the "poster child for Janjaweed atrocities in Darfur".

However, relations have soured in recent years, according to reports.



Musa Hilal in 2013

Australia warns Commonwealth athletes against overstaying after game's end in April

Australia has warned any athletes who overstay their visas during April's Commonwealth Games will be dealt with firmly.

"Australia's reputation of being tough on border security and cancelling visas of people who don't abide by Australian laws won't be compromised," said Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton. "Visitors are expected to abide the conditions of their visa and there are penalties for those who do the wrong thing."

Australia has long struggled with athletes attempting to stay in the country.

In 2000 it hosted the Summer Olympics and in 2006 the Commonwealth Games, which resulted in multiple overstays and asylum requests.

After the 2006 Commonwealth Games, 45 athletes from countries including Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Bangladesh attempted to stay in the country.

Australia has tough immigration laws that have resulted in hundreds of people being detained in remote island camps, where reports of suicide, abuse and ill-treatment are widespread.

It is not known how many athletes might try to stay this year, but the games - which run from 4 April to 15 April - are expected to bring thousands of people to Australia.



Liberia: President George Weah vows to abolish racist law

Liberia's new president, George Weah, has said he is looking to abolish a "racist" law which restricts citizenship to black people only.

The former footballer said the clause - which has existed since Liberia was founded by freed US slaves in 1847 - was "unnecessary, racist, and inappropriate for the place that Liberia occupies today in the comity of nations".



He said the original intention to create "a refuge and a haven for freed men of colour" after fleeing the United States was not applicable in today's society.

What's more, Front Page Africa reported, he added:

It contradicts the very definition of Liberia, which is derived from the Latin word 'liber', meaning 'liberty'."

In his first annual State of the Nation address, Mr Weah noted that another clause, which bans foreigners owning property, was also harmful to Liberia's economy, while he said he hoped to lift a ban on people having dual-nationality.

Mr Weah also promised to slash his own pay by 25% immediately - an announcement met with cheers - as he issued a stark analysis of Liberia's prospects:

Our economy is broken; our government is broke. Our policy is in freefall, inflation is rising, unemployment is at an unprecedented high and our foreign reserves are at an all-time low."

The new president ran on a platform of promising to improve Liberia's economy, but has said he cannot do it without the support of the people.

From Kenya press Agency

Israel prime minister reassures Kenya of partnership

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said his country is set to intensify its cooperation with Kenya, especially in the areas of security and agriculture.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said his Government believes in the advancement of Africa and was ready to work with Kenya and other countries to help them achieve their goals.

The Israeli Prime Minister was speaking at State House, Nairobi, during a luncheon hosted by President Uhuru Kenyatta and First Lady Margaret Kenyatta in honour of visiting Heads of States and heads of delegations.

"This is my third visit to Africa and second to Kenya, we believe in the future of Africa, we love Africa and I would like very much not only to cooperate but also with the African Union," said the Israeli Prime Minister.

The Israeli Prime Minister also held bilateral talks with President Kenyatta, which focused on deepening cooperation in trade, security and agriculture.

The Prime Minister said it was because of his country's desire to work with Africa that his government was seeking to be given an observer mission status in the African Union.

"I hope we will all find away to help Israel have an observer status in the African Union because we can help build a better future for Africa," The Israeli PM said.

He said challenges of terrorism facing the world could only be tackled through cooperation between governments.

"If we work together we will defeat the barbarians. Our people deserve better lives and we can provide that for them," said the Israeli PM.

The Israeli leader said his country is ready to use its advanced technology in various fields of human endeavour to ensure African countries achieve their development goals.

He said through its technological advancements in water, agriculture and power generation Israel would want to partner with the countries of Africa in achieving their goals.



"Israel is working in water, agriculture, cyber security in information technology, in every field of human endeavour. We believe we can better lives for our people everywhere but first in Africa," he said

The Israeli leader congratulated President Kenyatta for his re-election, saying the mandate given to him by Kenyans accords him the opportunity to improve the lives of all citizens.

He assured President Kenyatta that he would partner with him in achieving development goals for the nation.

From The Citizen newspaper

Germany donate two million euros to Tanzania park

Germany has contributed euro 2 million (about Sh5.2 billion) to World Food Programme (WFP) in order to maintain food assistance for almost half a million refugees and asylum seekers residing in Tanzania and Rwanda.

WFP operations in Tanzania and Rwanda each received euro 1 million from the contribution.

A statement released on Wednesday, November 29, stresses that there is urgent need for international support for refugees in Tanzania and Rwanda.

German ambassador to Tanzania Detlef Wächter said, "Being one of the largest international donors, it is our country's duty to help and support the effort of host countries and international agencies in this humanitarian crisis. We hope our financial support helps WFP to overcome the current critical funding shortage."

In Tanzania, the German contribution was used to purchase maize meal, which is included as part of monthly food rations that consist of pulses, salt, vegetable oil and a fortified porridge.

In Rwanda, the contribution was used mainly to purchase maize and beans for monthly food distributions. WFP Rwanda also purchased fortified porridge, sugar and micronutrient powders to support the most vulnerable people who are in need of a particular diet.

In both countries, WFP provides supplementary food for pregnant and nursing women, children under the age of five, hospital in-patients and people receiving treatment for HIV/Aids and tuberculosis.

These targeted feeding programmes provide much needed nutrition through additional foods such as fortified porridge or micronutrient powders.

These food items are important in the fight against stunting and undernutrition in children, and they boost the immune systems of vulnerable people. WFP also provides hot meals to refugees who are in transit and reception centres.

"WFP is grateful to Germany, which over the last five years has been one of our largest donors and has cemented its commitment to humanitarian efforts in Tanzania, the region and around the globe," said WFP Tanzania Country Representative Michael Dunford.

"The continued support from Germany has been crucial in meeting the food needs of men, women and children who have fled their homes."

Since an upsurge of unrest in Burundi in 2015, over 258,000 refugees have crossed into Tanzania, making it the largest recipient of Burundian refugees in the East African region. Tanzania currently hosts over 317,000 refugees in three camps, which is an unprecedented five-fold increase compared to the refugee population two years ago. Rwanda currently hosts 172,000 refugees in six camps. Of these, 87,000 are Burundian, with 55,000 residing in Mahama camp, who are wholly dependent on assistance to meet their food needs.

"WFP is now able to continue to provide food to children as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women in refugee camps, thanks to the German contribution," said Jean-Pierre de Margerie, WFP Rwanda Country Director and Representative. "As refugees have limited access to income generating activities in Rwanda, food assistance remains critically important."

The increasing influx of people into both countries has resulted in greater resourcing needs for WFP to meet the basic food needs of refugees. Since February, due to funding shortfalls, WFP in Tanzania has had to reduce food rations to 72 percent of the minimum 2,100 kilocalorie requirement.

To restore full rations and meet the food needs of refugees in both countries, WFP needs an additional \$29 million for its operations in Tanzania and \$10 million in Rwanda between now and April 2018. If additional funding does not come forward, WFP may be forced to reduce rations further.

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Opinion: By Peter Uduehi

How not to introduce Canadian resident Abdoul Abdi to terrorism

Twenty-four-year-old Abdoul Abdi, whose formal citizenship is Somali but currently lives in Canada as a resident, faces deportation to Somalia.

Abdi was rearrested recently by agents of the Canada Border Services Agency on his way to a halfway house shortly after his release from prison. Apparently he was bound for rehabilitation into Canadian society.

Abdi, who went to prison for four years for, among other crimes, aggravated assault, has had a chequered past before his brush with the law. Born in Saudi Arabia, a place not particularly known for a nuanced approach to naturalisation matters, Abdi found himself in Djibouti as a refugee before coming to Canada with some members of his family at the age of six. While here, he was taken into custody at the age of seven by child protective services and moved around 31 placements without ever being adopted by anyone. His aunt, responsible for his move to Canada, eventually became a citizen but was disallowed from filing for Abdi's citizenship as she no longer was his legal guardian.

Many concerned voices are currently calling on the government to spare Abdi the misfortune of deportation to Somalia, a place riddled with

lawlessness and where he has little to zero affinity.

They are right. Firstly, much of Abdi's ties are now largely Canadian as most of his family members live in Canada as citizens. Secondly, given his obvious uncanny background, especially upbringing woes, it is perfectly reasonable to assert that life has not been kind to Abdi. It is probably responsible for his unseemly mobile course and eventual collisions with the law. Thirdly, it's important that the Canadian government abide by its own declarations on human rights as well as its commitment to the charter of the United Nations Human Rights Commission to which it's a signatory; and not just paying lip service to that charter. Fatouma Abdi, Abdoul Abdi's sister recently posed a question from an audience to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Nova Scotia about her brother, asking if he would intercede to make sure Abdoul is not deported. The PM simply gave the usual official line that the law should take its course. But these are stubborn times we live in considering the desperation of groups like Isis and others of its ilk.

And that brings us to the last and most important reason Abdoul Abdi should not be deported back to Somalia: taking a huge risk on the in-

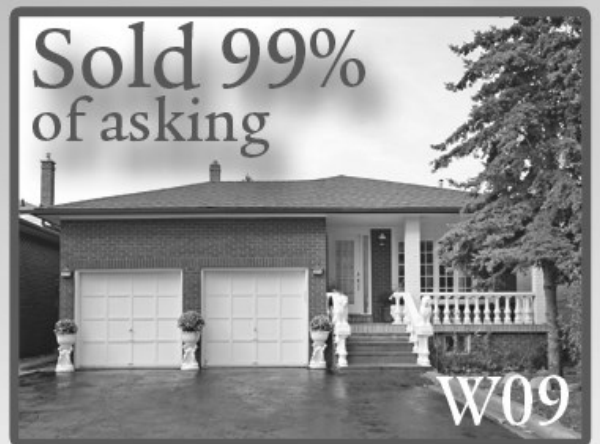
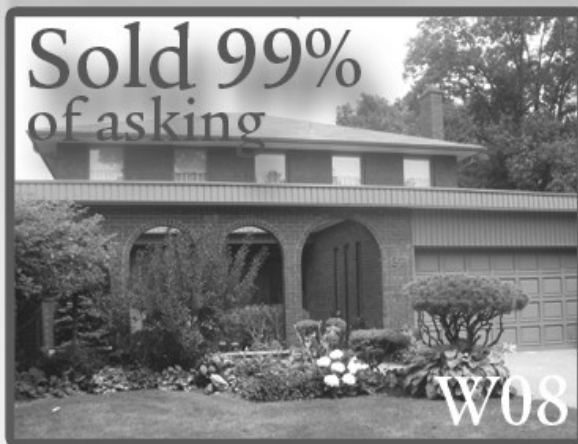
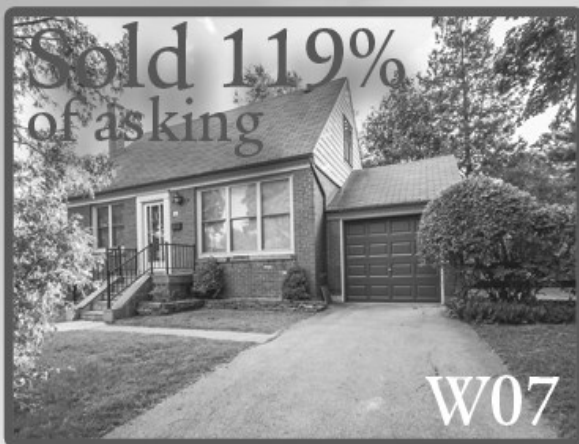
clination of terrorists.

As the world becomes smaller through technology, you better believe that groups like Al-Shabab in Somalia are interested in what the fate of Abdoul will be moving forward; especially as he would be basically left to cater for himself if deported to a country like Somalia where he has nary a familiarity. It's essential to protect youths like Abdoul from the likes of Isis, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabab who are constantly looking for new recruits for their nefarious activities. It has been argued in some quarters that if he's deported, he will surely be condemned to disconnection, loneliness, lonesomeness, disconsolation, despair, disillusionment, disappointment, disenfranchisement, depression, and disenchantment; all factors that play into the hands of terrorist groups. It is reasonable to postulate, without mincing words, that Abdoul is the kind of youth that Al-Shabab will be targeting for membership. We are not saying Abdoul will willingly fall into the terrorist den, but better safe than sorry. We should never give terrorists any more reason than they already can muster to infiltrate our young minds. Abdoul can be spared their contrivances.

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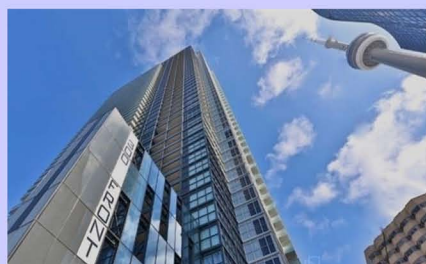
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Aiyegbeni hangs boots

Former Super Eagles forward, Yakubu Aiyegbeni, has retired from professional soccer on his 35th birthday.

Yakubu, who played his club football at Portsmouth, Everton, Middlesbrough and Blackburn Rovers, made 250 Premier League appearances and scored 96 goals in a career spanning 20 years. He also featured three times for fourth-tier side Coventry City this year before being released. "I would like to officially announce my retirement from professional football today," Yakubu told Sky Sports yesterday.

The powerful striker scored 21 goals in 57 appearances for Nigeria and took part in four Africa Cup of Nations as well as the 2010 World Cup. "The Yak... is 3rd best all time scorer of the senior national team. Thank you for the memories," the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF) tweeted.



He was top scorer for Chipolopolo at the current African Nations Champions (CHAN), bagging three goals before Zambia were ousted in the quarter finals.

Pirates say he is expected to join them next week.

The club thanked Zanaco for their co-operation in the transfer.

"We are delighted to have finally secured the services of Augustine," Pirates Floyd Mbele said on their website.

"He is an accomplished player who has all the qualities to make an immediate impact at the club."

Swede is Nigeria women's new football coach

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) says it has signed an agreement with top Swedish football coach, Thomas Dennerby, to take the role of Head Coach of Nigeria's senior women football team, Super Falcons.

The contract also enables Dennerby to come into the job with an assistant, Mr. Jorgen Petersson, another highly experienced Swedish coach nominated by Dennerby himself.

Dennerby, who spent nine years with Hammarby IF of Allsvenskan and played in the European Cup in 1983 and 1985, won 34 caps for Swedish junior teams between 1975 and 1981.

He coached the Swedish Women's Senior Team between 2005 and 2012, during which the team played at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics and the 2007 and 2011 FIFA World Cup finals, winning bronze at the latter tournament.

He also served time as youth coach for Stockholm FA and worked in various capacities for former club Hammarby between 1993 and 2001.

More recently, he did scouting and analyses for the Swedish FA at the 2013 and 2017 European Championships, the 2016 Olympics and the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada.

Zambia's Mulenga moves to Orlando Pirates in South Africa

Zambian international forward Augustine Mulenga is to move to South Africa's Premier Soccer League (PSL) to play for Orlando Pirates.

The former Zanaco star has signed a three-year deal with the Soweto Giants.



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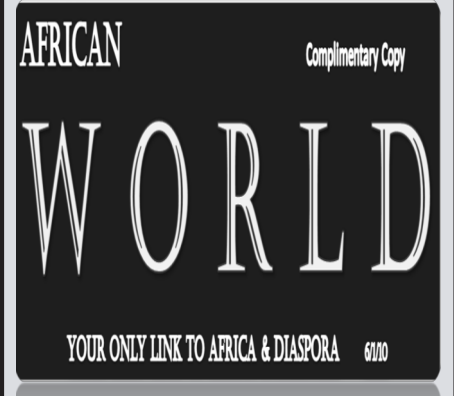
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