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U.N. Mali ultimatum taking hold

Mali says West African troops are gearing up for a military intervention in Mali after the government said it will meet a United Nations security council deadline to begin recapturing the country's north from al-Qaida-linked insurgents.

The government said a plan for military action by its army and the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) would be ready within 45 days. One senior security official told the Guardian he believed plans for the offensive would break the "vicious cycle" that has seen months of inaction and a rapidly worsening humanitarian situation in the north since rebels seized key towns following a 22 March coup.

"The government does not have one single representative in northern Mali, we have absolutely

no control of the territory," the source said.

But the UN security coun-



Deposed Malian leader President Amadou Toumani (left)

cil has given 45 days to Ecowas and Mali to present a plan for military action to recapture the north and we are confident that this will be enough time.

"Resolving this crisis is a political issue and it is never easy

to have a consensus on this kind of thing. It is even not easy to get troops from many countries to-

gether in a short time.

"The problem has been that Ecowas does not have the means to act without the international community's help, but the international community has hesitated, wanting Ecowas to take the

lead. Now I think we have broken this deadlock."

The UN resolution followed months of negotiations between Ecowas, the African Union (AU) and Mali's unpopular transitional government, which took over from a military junta that toppled the previous civilian government in March and which is supposed to hold elections by 13 April next year. The resolution also called for assistance for Ecowas troops, imposed targeted sanctions against al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and supported a negotiation process with rebel groups.

Recently the French defence minister said military action in Mali was imminent. "It's a matter of weeks; not months, weeks," Jean-Yves le Drian told France 2 television.

Continued on Next Page

Chelsea Clinton in Nigeria for health initiative

ABUJA – Chelsea Clinton was in Nigeria recently to help launch an initiative linked to her father's foundation aimed at reducing deaths of children and mothers due to diarrhea and other preventable diseases. The daughter of former US president Bill Clinton and current US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton helped launch the programme in the capital Abuja along with Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and others. Chelsea Clinton is a board member of the Clinton Health Access Initiative.

"An estimated one million mothers and children die each year in Nigeria from preventable diseases, including 100,000 deaths due to diarrhea," a statement from the Clinton Foundation said.

A range of companies and organisations have signed on to the effort that will mainly focus on increasing access to zinc and oral rehydration solutions (ORS), which the foundation said was "the most effective diarrhea treatment."

"Increasing the percent of children with diarrhea who receive ORS and zinc to 80 percent by 2015 could help prevent 220,000 Nigerian children from dying," it said.

"Zinc and ORS can prevent over 90 percent of diarrhea-related deaths and cost less than \$0.50, yet less than two percent of children in the country are currently using the complete treatment."

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation and largest oil producer, but its government is still wanting in many developmental areas including health.



Chelsea Clinton in Nigeria's capital Abuja furthering issues of her father's foundation

Senegal banned from African football

Senegal have been disqualified from the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations after a riot forced the abandonment of Saturday's home tie with Ivory Coast. It is not yet clear whether the Confederation of African Football will take further action against Senegal. The match in Dakar was called off after 74 minutes, with Ivory Coast 2-0 up on the night and 6-2 ahead on aggregate. Caf has officially confirmed the result as a 2-0 win for Ivory Coast, sending them through to next year's tournament. Senegal manager Ferdinand Coly said on Sunday that "Senegal will accept the sanctions". He also apologised to Ivory Coast. Trouble flared after striker Didier Drogba scored his side's second goal from the penalty spot. Visiting supporters were forced to leap down on to the pitch to escape as violence erupted, with home fans throwing

Continued on next page

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Senegal, Continued From Page 1

missiles, stones, bottles and firecrackers.

Ivorian players took refuge in the centre circle while the security forces used tear gas to disperse the rioting fans.

The match was suspended for 40 minutes while police tried to restore order but the referee was forced to call off the second-leg, final-round qualifier.

Caf says its decision to ban Senegal is in accordance with the provisions of article 16 paragraph 20 of their regulations of the competition, which states:

"If the referee is forced to stop the match before the end of the regular time because of invasion of the field or aggression against the visiting team, the host team shall be considered loser and shall be eliminated from the competition, without prejudice to the sanctions existing in the regulations."

Ivory Coast had already been included in the recent seedings draw for the 2013 Nations Cup, which will be held in South Africa between 19 January and 10 February.

Decline in African governance index

JOHANNESBURG — The Mo Ibrahim Foundation has released its 2012 African Governance index, an annual study that this year showed worrying slides among Africa's economic powerhouses and in Zimbabwe. The foundation was also due to announce which former African leader won the coveted \$5 million African good governance award. On that front, the foundation had a surprise.

And the world's largest prize for excellence in African governance goes to ... no one.

It's not the first time this has happened. Nor, says Mo Ibrahim Foundation board member Jay Naidoo, is it surprising.

"The award is not just for ordinary service, it is for exceptional service," said Naidoo. "And

to people.

"And the board said that it is not sufficient to say we have give the prize out, itself it's a very important and powerful political message to say that we do not believe that anyone is entitled to this prize in this year," added Naidoo.

Ibrahim, the Sudanese telecoms billionaire who started the award in 2006, said Monday in London that the prize committee refused to compromise on its standards.

The committee also declined to give an award in 2009 and 2010.

In addition to showing exceptional leadership, the award stipulates that the winner be democratically elected and that he or she leave office voluntarily after serving only a constitutionally mandated term.

Those qualities are rare among African leaders. Many of the continent's leaders serve for decades before dying in office. Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe is an example: he has led since 1980 and says he wants to stay in power.

On Monday, Ibrahim singled out the 88-year-old Mugabe, saying his leadership prevented the resource-rich southern African nation from being an African powerhouse.

This year there were two popular contenders for the prize: former Zambian president Rupiah Banda, who gave up power to election winner Michael Sata; and former Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade, who gave up power to election winner Macky Sall -- though Wade notably changed the constitution to allow himself to run.

Former winners of the Ibrahim prize include Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, Festus Mogae of Botswana and the Pedro Pires, former president of the tiny island nation of Cape Verde.

The foundation also released its annual index of African governance Monday.

Naidoo started with the good news: he says the index shows there has been clear progress and improvement in African governance in the past decade. He also cited improvement in gender issues.

"The not-so-good news is the fact that the economic powerhouses of Africa, namely Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt and Kenya have shown a decline in certain sectors, particularly around the issue of law, in terms of human rights, in terms of security,"

nation, fell to an all-time low on the rankings, at 42nd place. Nigerian is struggling with the rise of an Islamist group that has killed well over 1,000 people in the past two years, many of them police and government officials.

Once again, tiny Mauritius nabbed the top spot among 52 ranked nations.

At the bottom, predictably, is Somalia. Even to a casual observer, Somalia performs poorly on all four of the foundation's four criteria for good governance: safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development.

The ranking doesn't include Mo Ibrahim's nation of Sudan, or the newly independent South Sudan. The foundation says it doesn't have comprehensive data on either nation.

Mali, Continued From Page 1

"A number of groups, hundreds of rebels, fundamentalists and those involved in trafficking arms, drugs and humans" had "sliced Mali in two", he said, describing the arid north as "a terrorist sanctuary".

France and other foreign powers, including the European Union and the Africa Command, which co-ordinates US military activity in Africa, have been keen to downplay the question of any direct use of their forces in Mali, stressing instead logistical assistance.

On Monday, EU foreign ministers agreed to support Mali's struggling army, which one official described as "poorly trained, badly equipped and poorly disciplined".

Their meeting preceded that of the Support and Follow-up Group on Mali - made up of the AU, UN and Ecowas - to flesh out a political and military strategy to end the crisis.

However if Mali meets the 45-day deadline, a second UN resolution is required before troops can be deployed.

Experts say questions remain about the role of non-Ecowas neighbouring countries, especially Mauritania, which has launched its own military intervention against al-Qaida, and Algeria, which is becoming a focal point for tackling instability in Mali and whose 800 mile desert border with Mali is seen as a major route for rebels smuggling weapons and resources into the country. Both countries held talks recently with the Africa Command head, General Carter Ham, to discuss military intervention.

"Algeria thinks of the Malian Sahara in the way that Pakistan thinks of Afghanistan - as their backyard," said Gregory Mann, an expert on Mali from Columbia University, New York. "They are not going to accept being marginalised in discussions, but questions still remain as to whether Algeria will give covert backing to an intervention."

Reports of atrocities continue to come from the north, which was initially seized by Tuareg rebels but is now in the control of Islamic extremists from foreign countries who have imposed sharia law. About a third of the area's population has fled and there are about 100,000 refugees in Burkina Faso, 100,000 in Mauritania, 30,000 in Algeria and 40,000 in Niger.

Last week a senior UN official reported that rebels were paying families around \$600 (£370) to enlist their children to fight and build improvised explosive devices, and that forced marriages were taking place in return for cash.

"Human rights violations are becoming more systematic, relating to the takeover of the radical Islamists," said the UN assistant secretary general for human rights, Ivan Simonovic. "They have now imposed an extremist version of sharia, so the population is suffering a number of human rights violations, particularly targeted at women."

The security council has called for an immediate end to targeted attacks on civilians, sexual violence, the recruitment of child soldiers and forced displacements.



More than 2,000 people attend the opening of the first congress of Morocco's ruling party since the moderate Islamists won the November polls which took place under the theme of good governance in Rabat, July 14,

the criteria that the board and that the prize committee uses, no one has exceeded and achieved exceptional service in terms of contributing to social cohesion, in terms of integrity, in terms of transparency, the way that they delivered services

said Naidoo. "And I think that's not really good news for us, because they are the ones expected to pull the African continent out of the global economic crisis."

South Africa topped the powerhouse group at fifth place. But Nigeria, the continent's most populous

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Uganda Government Rejects Criticisms of Dissent and Intolerance

Uganda's deputy Justice and constitutional minister has sharply rejected opposition criticisms that the government is intolerant of dissenting views.

Uganda's constitution protects the freedom of expression and association as well as the freedom to demonstrate peacefully.

"However, when you are doing that, do it in such a way that you do not also infringe on the rights of others," said Frederic Ruhindi. "I think that is a fair qualification within the constitution.

"The government has been tolerant," he added. "Every type of media is in Uganda. Tell me which paper has Uganda banned? They write whatever they want to write and if anybody is aggrieved by what anyone is writing, he or she goes to court, either for libel or for defamation. That's legitimate."

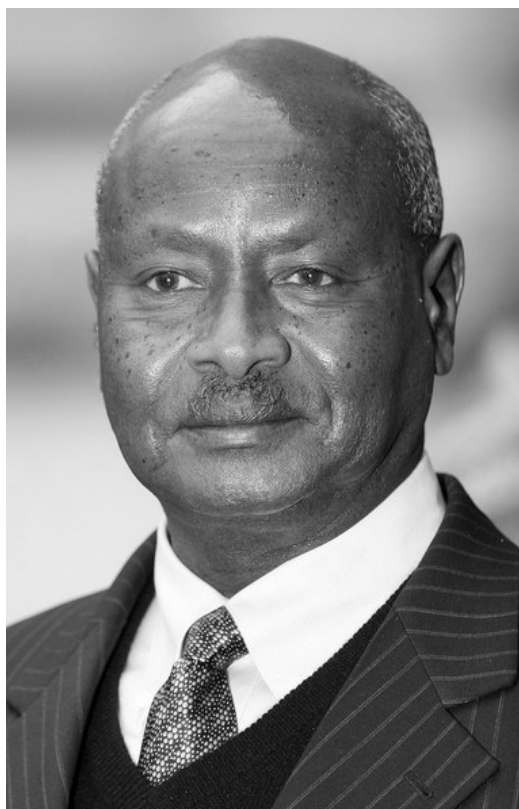
The political opposition and civil society groups have often accused the government of infringing on their constitutional rights. They contend that state security agencies frequently arrest, intimidate and crackdown on opposition protests. The government rejects their criticisms as without merit.

Ruhindi also dismissed a human rights report that President Yoweri Museveni's administration has refused to investigate the deaths of at least 40 people during two days of rioting three years ago.

In its report, U.S.-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) said the government has yet to investigate the deaths during the "Kayunga riots" despite numerous promises to do so. Human Rights Watch said a parliamentary committee examining the incident has stalled, failing to call any witnesses. No police or military members, the rights

group said, have been held accountable for the violence.

"The long government inaction on the killings of people in September 2009 is an insult to victims. Resorting to lethal force without clear justification in the face of protests is unacceptable, yet it is becoming the norm in Uganda," said Maria Burnett, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch.



Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni

On September 10 and 11, 2009, Ugandan security officials tried to prevent the cultural leader of the Buganda ethnic group from traveling to Kayunga, a town near the capital, Kampala. His enraged supporters took to the streets in protest. They threw stones and set garbage on fire.

Human Rights Watch said the military and police responded by shooting into the crowd, leaving at least 40 protesters dead.

Ruhindi said the government is working on measures to investigate the incident and prosecute those responsible.

"I wish those [accusers] could be frank enough to say that government should actually investigate all wrongdoers," said Ruhindi.

"Where in the world would you find an ordinary person hitting a policeman or policewoman? Where, other than Uganda and that person goes scot free? he asked.

Clotey interview with Uganda deputy minister Frederic Ruhindi

Rhino killings increase in South Africa

Poachers have killed a record number of rhinos in South Africa this year despite continued efforts to stop the illegal killings.

South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs says poachers have killed 455 rhinos during 2012, surpassing the 448 recorded during 2011.

The majority of the killings occurred in Kruger National Park, one of Africa's largest game reserves.

The poaching is driven by Asian demand for rhino horns, which are widely believed to have healing properties despite scientific evidence to the contrary.

South African park rangers have arrested 207 people for poaching activities this year.

The country's national parks system also reported the killing of seven poachers in Kruger National Park, the most recent coming on October 6.



Africa was once home to more than a million rhinos. The animals faced extinction 30 years ago after decades of relentless hunting. Because of conservation efforts, the number of African rhinos has risen again to about 25,000 continent-wide.

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From Nigerian Press

Bakassi sues Nigeria's federal govt.

The people of Bakassi in Cross River State have sued the Federal Government alongside President Goodluck Jonathan and Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), before an Abuja Federal High Court over ownership of the Bakassi Peninsula.

The suit was endorsed by nine executives of Free Bakassi Association, Prince Imoh Ukpa Imoh, Godwin Ukpong, Chritian A. Umoh, Anthony Achibong Ukong, Kingsley Edu, Etim Ekpeyong Ndong, Offiong Anying Ekpeyong, Bassey Okon Osua and Bassey Ikoedem Antiga. In a motion ex-parte moved by their counsel, Festus A. Ogwuche, they sought an order of mandamus that would compel the Nigerian government to by any means repossess and take full legal and administrative control of the Peninsula.

They are asking the court to make an order voiding the Green Tree Agreement which Nigeria signed with Cameroon in 2006.

They are equally seeking leave for an order of mandamus compelling the Federal Government, Jonathan and the AGF to unilaterally evoke Nigeria's obligations under the said

agreement for being invalid and in breach of Articles 1, 2, 20, 21, 22 and 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 1(2) of the UN Charter, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of indigenous people and being inconsistent with sections 1-3, 2(1) and (6), 13, 14(1) and (2)(b), 17(1), (2)(b), (c) and (d), sections 19(a) and 9d0, 21(a) of the Nigerian Constitution, among others.

The applicants said they were neither consulted nor was their consent sought before former President Olusegun Obasanjo endorsed the Green Tree Agreement. Meanwhile, Justice Gabriel Kolawole has adjourned ruling on the application till Tuesday. *From the Daily Trust*

Boko Haram suspects killed

The Joint Task Force (JTF) in Borno State Tuesday disclosed that it killed 24 suspected Boko Haram members in different parts of Maiduguri metropolis on Monday night during series of encounters with its personnel. Similarly, no fewer than 25 persons were killed and properties worth millions of naira destroyed in a renewed attack by

Fulani herdsmen against residents of Yogbo in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State on Sunday. Among those killed were children and women.

THISDAY had reported that not less than 16 explosions were heard in some part of the metropolis in the daytime even as the explosions and gun battles continued into the night.

"It is terrifying," said one resident of the Gwange area in the northeastern city of Maiduguri. "We sat up the whole night because of gunshots and explosions. Everybody is inside because it is not safe to venture out."

Residents said the military then swarmed the area, engaging suspected Boko Haram in running gun battles through the night and into Tuesday.

"A bomb has just gone off not far from my house. I am now crouched behind my couch," said the resident, who asked to not be named.

Another resident of the area said he and his neighbours have "been indoors since Monday evening."

Suspected Islamists "were chased by soldiers through this neighbourhood while the explosions and shootings continued through the night," he said, also requesting anonymity.

Last week, residents claimed as many as 30 people were killed during a rampage by soldiers after a bomb attack that left at least three troops dead in Gwange, although the military denied the allegation. The military has not yet commented on reports of the latest violence.

Spokesman of the task force, Lt Col Sagir Musa, in a statement in Maiduguri, said the sect members attacked JTF locations in Zannari ward and Lagos Street along Gwange on Monday night leading to the confrontations.

According to him, rocket propelled gre-

nades and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were used by the insurgents in the attacks.

"The terrorists used civilian residences, homes as launching areas for the attacks at different times on Monday night, 2012. All the attacks were repelled, 24 terrorists were killed," Musa said in the statement. The JTF spokesman claimed that no civilian casualty was however recorded but added that a soldier was wounded during the attack.

According to him, one RPG purpose machine gun, seven AK 47 riffles, one FNC rifle, 24 assorted empty magazines, 950 assorted ammunition, two pistols, large quantity of assorted IEDs materials and several bows, arrows and cutlasses were recovered from the attackers. "The atmosphere in Maiduguri has been normalised since the early hours of Tuesday (yesterday) as people are going about their normal businesses," he added. Musa warned residents to desist from allowing their homes to be used as launching pads for attacks on troops and civilians, saying such action would be dealt with appropriately. An eye witness in Yogbo who said the killings occurred at about 7 am when most of the residents had gone to church, said residents' attention were drawn to the tragedy by the cries of children being murdered by Fulani marauders who disappeared immediately after perpetrating the cruel act.

Consequently, thousands of residents have fled the village to Makurdi, the state capital, to seek refuge elsewhere. But police spokesman, Daniel Ezeala, told journalists that the force had deployed troops to the area to forestall further attacks.

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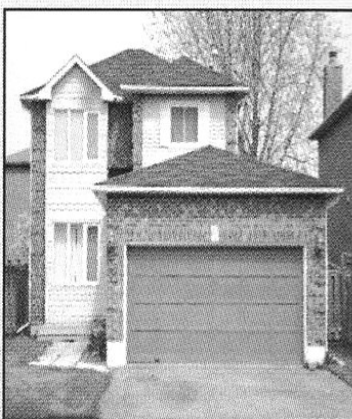
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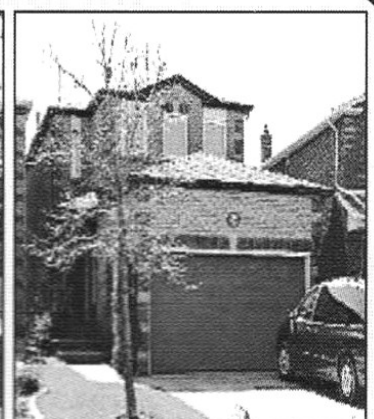
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UN condemns Guinea-Bissau military base attack

The United Nations condemns an attack on a military base in Guinea-Bissau which resulted in numerous deaths, a spokesperson for the world body announced today.

"We are appealing for calm and calling on all in Guinea-Bissau to resolve differences by peaceful means, including through inclusive dialogue," the spokesperson added in a statement responding to a question asked during today's daily press briefing held at UN Headquarters in New York.

In the statement, the spokesperson noted that the United Nations regretted the loss of life and was following the situation in the African country closely.

According to media reports, six people were killed yesterday following a gun-battle between Government forces and unspecified armed elements at an air-force base in Bra,



Guinea Bissau forces on full alert

seven kilometres outside of the country's capital, Bissau.

Guinea-Bissau has a tumultuous history of coups, misrule and political instability since it gained independence from Portugal in 1974. Most recently, rogue soldiers seized power in a military take-over which came just days ahead of the country's 22 April presidential run-off election, prompting calls from the international community for the return to civilian rule and the restoration of constitutional order.

Against that backdrop, ongoing advocacy and mediation efforts, spearheaded by the UN Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the African Union, have been aimed at reviving dialogue between the country's political players.

In his statement, the UN spokesperson added that the United Nations would continue to work with Bissau-Guineans and international partners to implement the Security Council's resolution 2048, adopted in May this year, in which the 15-member body demanded immediate steps to restore and respect constitutional order, including a democratic electoral process.

France to send drones to Mali to repel jihadists

France is to send surveillance drones to back up west African intervention in northern Mali and is meeting top US diplomats in Paris this week to discuss the fighting the Islamist presence there, the AP news agency reports.

Citing an anonymous source in the French Defence Ministry, AP says that France plans to move two surveillance drones to west Africa from Afghanistan before the end of the year as part of an increasing role in the Malian conflict.

France is not believed to have any armed drones.

Hundreds of jihadists arrived in northern Mali over the weekend to help fight a military intervention there, according to residents, Malian security forces and Islamists.

The Tuareg separatist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad denied the report, however.

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson and other American diplomats are meeting their French counterparts for two days in Paris, starting Monday.

They will discuss intelligence-gathering and security in the Sahel.

The French defence official told AP that Washington has "conferred to us the role of leader" in the crisis.

France, the former colonial ruler of Mali, has airpower and hundreds of troops in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad and Gabon, which were also once French colonies, French and US officials said, while the US has only trainers and advisers on temporary missions, according to Africom, the US military Africa command based in Stuttgart, Germany.

France is also reported to have special forces in the region and to have contracted out surveillance of Mali to a private company.

US awareness of Islamist presence in the Sahel has increased since the attack on its consulate in Benghazi, Libya, which saw the US ambassador and three other Americans killed and Washington has started satellite and spy-flight surveillance to track rebel movements.

France and the UN, which ordered secretary general Ban Ki-moon, want west African countries to organise a direct military intervention in northern Mali,

where armed Islamist groups have taken control following Tuareg separatist rebellion.

President François Hollande has promised not to send French troops while offering logistical support and training to the west African force.

Paris has resumed military cooperation with Bamako, suspended after March's military coup there, including sending military advisers, Sahel special envoy Jean Féliw-Paganon said late on Sunday.

Hollande is anxious to avoid direct intervention for several reasons:

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has threatened to kill six French hostages if France sends in the troops;

On his recent trip to Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo he promised to turn his back on Françafrique - a policy often denounced as neo-colonialism;

After the Afghan and Iraq wars France, like other countries, prefers to leave local forces to intervene in hot spots.

Chancellor Angela Merkel on Monday said that Germany would be prepared to train Malian troops and provide logistical support and European Union members are considering a non-combat training mission.

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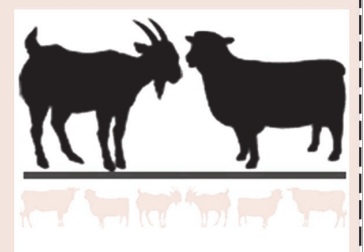
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FELABRATIONS!

Afrobeat king the late Fela Anikulapo Kuti from Nigeria had many thousands of faithful fans around the world celebrating his life in what they called "Felabrations" on October 15, his birthday. He would have been 74 years old. Fela is renowned for his jazzy-funk rhythms dubbed "Afrobeat", which he described as "a whole continent in motion". His music inspired many great artists like Miles Davis, Prince, James Brown, Manu Dibango, Parliament Funk, Ojays, Carlos Santana, Jay-Z, Hugh Masekela and many others who have witnessed his life played out in a current Broadway Musical Fela! Fela can best be described as multi-instrumentalist musician and composer, pioneer of Afrobeat music, human rights activist, and political maverick.

Well, African World's Peter Uduehi caught up with Fela while on tour of the United States in 1989 and from his notes, had this interesting outlook...

Notes From A Reporter's Journal, By Peter Uduehi

I first saw Fela Kuti perform, like many of his adoring fans did, at his enormously popular club called the African Shrine in Lagos. That was in 1979. It would take ten more years to catch up with him, this time as a freelance journalist in New Orleans, where the Afrobeat music king performed two nights at the historic Tippetinnas Lounge. It was as close as I could get to him, in a dressing room that he loathed and didn't hesitate, as usual, to lambaste whoever was responsible for leading him into such a dungeon – a ramshackle back room filled with graffiti and smelling like a hobbled, dingy annex to the city's oldest nightclub. "Look where they have brought us in to perform. What kind of place is this?" he pondered aloud.

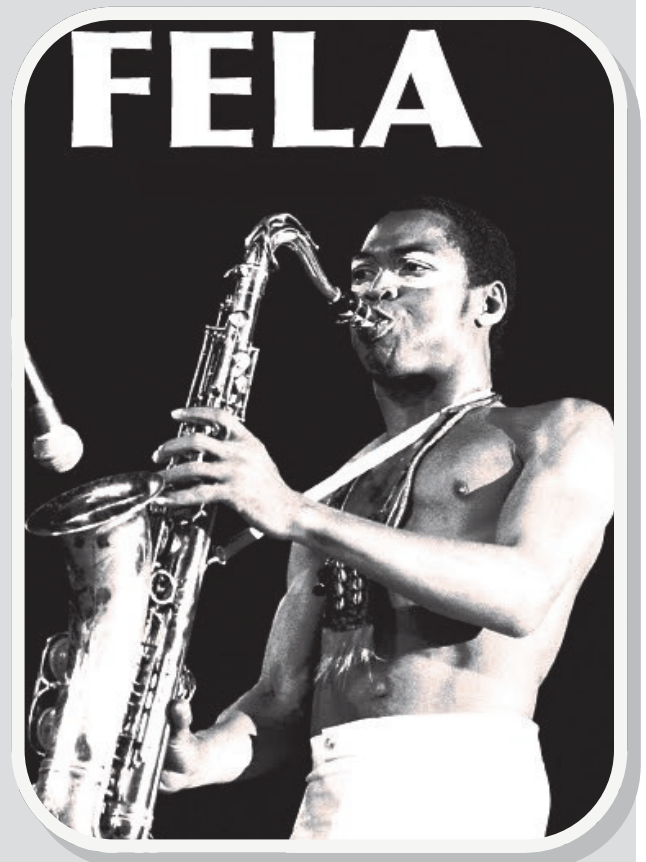
But more thrilled by the idea of a possible interview than his annoyance with Tippetinnas's dilapidating ambiance, I quickly asked for one on a radio station I worked for at the time. He declined due to timing, but told me he would be available to talk to me for print at his hotel, which meant I could publish his comments in any of the newspapers I was stringing for in the city. However, I never had the opportunity to publish his views in the New Orleans press because I left the city for good to live in Houston the same day Fela and his band concluded their tour in the Louisiana town. Coincidentally, we met again in Houston because it was going to be one of his next dates a few days after I left New Orleans. Another point to note is that, because of my love for Fela's musicianship, I decided to treat him and his band to a hearty Nigerian meal in New Orleans, dipping into my meager earnings to cook *fufu* and *egusisoup* (laced with fish and hen parts) for more than twenty of them. I thought they would enjoy the little delicacy having being away from Nigeria for at least a month touring the world. They were quite appreciative, with some of them struggling through the line to give themselves an enthusiastic helping of the Nigerian staple. Fela was very peeved when told his entourage stressed through the queue to the food cauldron. "Stupid," he called one of them, as he brought everyone to order. Fela himself liked the meal and had a good portion.

"Remember I am not a gentleman," he said jokingly, a reference to his much-publicized tune *Gentleman* that lampooned Africans who pretend, supplant and confuse the mores of their native origins with European colonial attitudes and ways. I must say I was absolutely impressed by the humility

and free-spiritedness with which he succumbed to a surprise dinner from a man he was meeting for the first time and whose only connection to him was that he hailed from his country. Most mega stars and celebrities would have squirmed or showed signs of unrestrained apprehension and timidity at anyone they had just stumbled into. But Fela understood quite well that it was an African thing to be honoured in that fashion. Meanwhile, I quickly seized the opportunity of an interview with him, engaging him for two hours on his music, lifestyle, women, politics, and just about everything he had done since his Anglican-priest father and pace-setting revolutionary mother gave birth to him on October 15, 1938. He asked me to bring him whatever amount of marijuana I could give him as a present on my way to his hotel suite. I showed reluctance on that, telling him I couldn't guarantee finding it because I don't smoke. It would have been unethical as a reporter, not to mention my aversion to cannabis-ingestion. Knowing full well how much he loved to smoke the drug, Fela gracefully sensed and accepted my position, and then said: "you look like a nice person, and it would not matter if you bring it or not. I just want us to talk so you can understand where I'm coming from with my music and message."

If you thought he was a disorganized, brain-warped and pot-smoking radical bordering on lunacy and without affection for the things he espouses in his music, think again. Fela was as organized in thought as his Afrobeat invention is; a keenly sharp individual who took note of every detail he discussed with you. At the end of our interview, for example, he told me he was very impressed when I told him in a straightforward manner that I could not oblige to his request. "I wish most of our so-called politicians were straightforward in Africa. It will be the best place to live on earth," he chided. For so many years, his candour and constructive criticisms won him adoring fans, and it was easy to see why. "People used to dance to my music while at the same time listen to the message in the music; I believe music without a message or African philosophy is not my style. That's not what I am about.

"This is why music is about feelings and the senses," Fela explained, noting that he was aware that "some of my fans say that I have allowed the message to overshadow and dominate the elements of my music. But you see, my brother, both have always been present in my music, but what is probably not there so much as before is the fast pace to make you dance as fast. But what you must understand is that ...the bastards who are our so-called leaders have become stronger in their wicked ways. So also I have no choice but to increase the volume of my noise against these soldiers and corrupt politicians," he said. Some of the re-



leases criticized as lacking luster with the step include *Look and Laugh*, *Perambulator*, *Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense*, *Beasts of No Nation*, and *ODOO*; all of them suffused with great delivery of subversive messages but considered by many not to be of major partying value like *Shakara*, *Lady*, *No Bread*, and many others in the classic genre.

Vintage Fela bopped, weaved, entertained in regal fashion, lectured and danced. He goaded people in authority because he felt it would be an effective tool to correct a whole lot of discrepancies in modern African societies, "not because I hate authority but because power should be used to help your people". Twice he said, he thought of committing suicide because he felt there was really nothing to live for as an ambitious African, and also because he felt he was fighting alone without much support from the Nigerian frightful masses. "After all I have had the opportunity to swim in money but I chose not to because money cannot be a man's central focus in life," he said. "Our entire culture as a people," Fela opined, "is not progressing. We do not do enough research in medicine, the arts, and in the spirit, and I tell you, my brother, we can achieve great things if we think correctly. African people have the soul and spirit to do anything. It's like football. We must develop our own way of playing soccer. African man must dance with the ball. That's our rhythm," he joked. On a serious note, he said, "If others choose to do as we do, that's okay, but we must develop our own style instead of following what everybody does. Look at Egypt. I am talking about ancient Egypt. That was *Blackism*. Look at those achievements", he sermonized. As an inventor, he said he could relate perfectly to the creative juices that flow through every human being but that these musings have remained dormant as a result of fright and "leadership breakdown in Africa".

Those who did not have the opportunity to sit down and talk with Fela, but had an earful of his lyrical compositions would think the self-styled chief priest was racially motivated. Of course not; otherwise how do you explain the fact that one of his best friends, and one-time band member who insisted on understudying the Afrobeat superstar, was the white British

Continued on next page
as "Felabrations"

Felabstractions

Continued from previous page ...

renowned drummer Ginger Baker. "I simply used certain examples of our colonial past to drive home some hard facts, and particularly because Britain and America or white people in general have become an integral part of our history as a people. I believe in my Blackness," Fela stressed, "and I have studied it, and if a man is first not proud of himself how can he be proud of others. I just want my people to progress like other people. And there's nothing wrong with that." Whether you agree with him or not one thing is clear: Fela matters today because he gave us the language to describe ourselves, as "zombies", as "shakara" people, as "kpansa kpansa", as "authority stealing", as "BBC" (Big Blind Country), as "Alhaji...which means "a Stranger" in his own country, as "dem-all-crazy" ("Democracy"), as "Mattress", as "Jenku-oku", as "Follow-follow", as "yellow fever", as "beasts of no nation", and so on. He predicted a lot of things and events that have come to pass like the magic words of a prophet. Fela told us in 1976 in his song *Army Arrangement* that people everywhere are so fed up with politicians that they will either have to revolt en masse or bodyguards will take on the unenviable task by helping citizens assassinate their bad heads of government. It happened in 1980 with the assassination of Anwar Sadat of Egypt at the hands of his security detail. The recent revolution that befell Sadat's protégé Hosni Mubarak is further evidence of Fela's predictions; not to mention Tunisia's president Ben Ali who fled the country after an uprising early this year. Libya's Col Muammar Gadhafi has faced a similar challenge.

Fela also said in the same song that "one day go be one day for those wey dey steal money for government". Translated, it reads like this: "one day shall come when Africa's corrupt leaders, no matter how powerful they think they are, will be held to account in public". Since Fela's death in 1997, Nigeria's powerful elite was shaken up when for the first time a civilian government headed by Olusegun Obasanjo (himself a member of the elite) commissioned an anti-graft agency called Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (the dreaded EFCC) headed by a no-nonsense lawyer-police officer, who probed high-ranking

public officials alleged to have committed egregious financial crimes against the state. Their net included a disgraced police boss Tafa Balogun who stole millions of dollars. He was sacked summarily and jailed. He was also forced to pay back millions of dollars of his loot. What the EFCC did on Balogun in 2005 was an absolute coup of immense proportions because no-one in Nigeria thought that a *big man* could be so humiliated in a country where the huff and puff of an influential figure was enough to send the average citizen squirming. This was the hope Fela provided us in his songs. They were songs of freedom of sorts.

The same punishment is being meted out against Ben Ali and Mubarak who is said to have amassed billions of dollars of his people's money in Swiss banks and around the world.

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Emergency Report

Mali crisis worsens, foreign fighters, al-Qaeda move into towns to ready themselves

Foreign fighters have arrived in a town in northern Mali, Gao's exiled mayor has told the BBC, confirming reports of an influx of jihadists to the north.

Sadou Diallo said between 60 and 100 Algerians and Sahrawis had come into the town about four or five days ago.

A resident in Timbuktu told the AFP news agency on Monday that Sudanese Islamists had arrived over the weekend. Plans are under way for military intervention after Islamists took over northern Mali earlier this year.

Two weeks ago, the UN Security Council gave the regional bloc Ecowas 45 days to draw up a plan with the details of its offer to send 3,000 troops to the vast desert region.

The Islamist groups and Tuareg rebels took control of northern Mali following a coup in March.

The junta seized power, accusing the government of failing to deal effectively with a Tuareg rebellion that had started in January - but Islamist groups then took advantage of the chaos and seized all the region's major towns, including the historic city of Timbuktu.

The Islamists, who have since fallen out with their Tuareg allies, have imposed a harsh interpretation of Sharia in the areas they control - there are reports of people being stoned to death and having their limbs amputated. 'Koranic students recruited'

Mr Diallo told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme the foreign fighters were lightly armed and had arrived in Gao on 93 trucks.

"They were identified as coming mainly from Western Sa-

sect in surrounding villages and all young people from the Koranic schools in the area have joined Mujao... not because they support the group, but because they've lost hope after seven months of suffering, they're unemployed;

consider them idolatrous.

Meanwhile, the UK says it could help to provide training for the West African military intervention.

Stephen O'Brien, the UK special envoy to the region, said

after his return from discussions in Mali with the government and its international partners that if the crisis in the north was left unresolved the region could provide a new base for terror networks.

"Al-Qaeda in the [Islamic] Maghreb, which



Foreign fighters have arrived in a town in northern Mali, Gao's exiled mayor has said, confirming reports of an influx of jihadists to the north.

hara and Algeria. They seem to be instructors. They bring small arms with them, not heavy weapons," he said, adding that one or two of the fighters were from Sudan.

"They don't live in the town, they come in during the day, they don't harm the population, they just go about their business and leave at night."

Mr Diallo, Gao's elected mayor who was speaking from the capital, Bamako, said that the Islamist group controlling the town - the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao) - had also recruited 200 students from local Koranic schools.

"There is a radical Muslim

they can't resist," he added.

He said Mujao paid them between \$300 (about £190) and \$400 a month.

Earlier a security official told AFP news agency that hundreds of Sudanese and Sahrawi fighters had arrived in the region.

An resident in Timbuktu told the agency on Monday that "more than 150 Sudanese Islamists arrived in 48 hours".

"They are armed and explained that they had come to help their Muslim brothers against the infidels," the agency quoted him as saying.

Timbuktu is where centuries-old shrines to Islamic saints, revered by Sufi Muslims, have also been destroyed by the Islamists, who

has activities in the area, is growing in both capability and ambition, and if we don't act there is a very real threat of further attacks in Africa, and eventually Europe, the Middle East and beyond," AP news agency quotes him as saying.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle has pledged similar support and voiced similar concerns.

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Nigeria: Boko Haram suicide bomber kill, injure worshippers in church again

Nigerian authorities say eight people were killed and 100 more injured when a suicide bomber attacked a Catholic church during morning services, raising fears of renewed sectarian violence in the volatile city of Kaduna.

About 20 minutes after the bombing a woman weeps outside the partially destroyed church.

"I am feeling bad already," she said.

While police try to clear the area, she says she lost



Church ripped apart by suicide bomber in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria recently

brothers and sisters in the morning attack.

Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency spokesman Yushau Shuaib said a suicide bomber rammed his car into the barriers surrounding the church.

The rescue operation was initially delayed, he added, as angry residents attacked emergency vehicles and fights were reported between Christians and Muslims. He said the city is now calm and heavily secured.

Reporters at the scene said after the attack Christian and Muslim youth took to the streets in the surrounding area, guarding their neighborhoods. He says now residents are mostly at home, scared.

The chairman of the Kaduna State chapter of the Youth Christian Association of Nigeria, Diji Haruna, says he was two kilometers away when the bomb exploded. He rushed to the scene where he saw three other buildings damaged by the force of the blast.

Haruna says the attack also damaged efforts to end sectarian violence in Kaduna, a city in Nigeria's "Middle Belt," that is divided like the rest of the country, with mostly Muslims in the north and mostly Christians in the south.

"What happened in the church today is amazing, after all the efforts to see how Kaduna can live in peace," he said. "As far as we are concerned this is a terrible situation. This is a step 10-times backwards for Kaduna State."

Human Rights Watch says sectarian violence has claimed thousands of lives in Nigeria in the past decade. After a Kaduna church bombing in June, nearly 100 people were killed in clashes between Muslims and Christians.

No one has claimed responsibility for the latest bombing, but it is similar to others attributed to an

Islamist militant group known as Boko Haram, which says it wants jailed members freed and the implementation of Islamic law.

Boko Haram has been blamed for 1,400 deaths in the past three years. The group claims attacks on churches, security forces, government buildings, schools, communications networks, newspapers, and the local U.N. headquarters.

Sidebar!

Business activity slows in Northern Nigeria

In northern Nigeria, business activity has slowed, largely due to insecurity. The 2011 World Investment Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says that the Nigerian economy has lost over six billion dollars [N1.3trillion] as a result of attacks by the Islamic radical group Boko Haram.

The Center for Research and Documentation in the northern city of Kano attributes the threat to a drop in earnings for nearly all businesses in Kano State.

Today, a new program is looking for solutions to the challenges facing state businesses. It's called ENABLE, or Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment. The project is a collaborative effort between the Kano-based center and the UK's Department for International Development

The program encourages and facilitates communication between the private sector and government ministries. And, it helps provide access to legal, policy and regulatory information to stimulate an informed dialogue.

Umar Ibrahim Yakubu is the executive director of the center, which is located along Sokoto road in the government reserved area of the northern Nigerian town.

As for the state's business environment, he said, "We discovered that 97% of businesses were negatively affected by the security problem. Some of them had to close down, some of them had to retrench some of their workers, and some of them had to cut down in the number of hours of operation."

Yakubu said the research covers businesses across various sectors including manufacturing, commerce, hospitality, and crafts and trade. The study's findings were disseminated in a seminar to stakeholders, the private sector and the government. It aims to solicit their input and devise ways of addressing the challenges.

"An agreement was reached," he said, "that the government will work closely with business organizations to see how these problems will be resolved to bring back business [and trade] to Kano state."

Some businessmen support the police presence, including 55-year-old trader Alhaji Kabiru Isa Mai Sabulu. He sells sugar, beverages, rice, spaghetti and other imports mostly from Asia.

Sabulu defends the police presence, saying it helps protect businesses, travelers and the public. In his opinion, insecurity can not stop trade and commerce in Kano. Even with the heavy security check points, he said people continue to come to Kano from different parts of Nigeria and neighboring countries for various business transactions.

Alhaji Ali Madugu is Vice President of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria and Managing Director of Dala Foods -- producers of a variety of tea and beverages in Kano.

He said businessmen should learn to keep their businesses moving despite the security challenge, but called on authorities to relax the tough stop and search measures at check points.

"All the shops and businesses close to [near] police formations were closed down," said Maduguru. "Since January 2012 up until today, nothing is operating there."

He said business will return if police stations around markets and commercial areas are closed or moved. He suggested that the police should go back to their old locations so business activity could improve.

The study notes that security is not the only problem affecting Kano's business owners.

It found that the area is also affected by an erratic power supply as well as a lack of credit and inconsistent government policies.

Ahmed Rabi, the president of the Kano Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture said the situation "is being compounded by the continuing inadequacy in the infrastructure requirements for power, water, access roads, rail services, airport services and even telephone access....Hardly anyone is happy."

"We discovered that 97% of businesses were negatively affected by the security problem. Some of them had to close down, some of them had to retrench some of their workers, and some of them had to cut down in the number of hours of operation."

- Umar Yakubu, executive director of The UK's Department for International Development in Kano

The Kano official said there are many other issues at play as well. They include unfavorable exchange rates for investors, high interest rates that make it hard to get loans, the banks' inability to offer financial assistance, the failure of non-bank financial institutions to support development of industry and commerce, and lack of support by government to encourage business activity.

Rabi suggested one way to revive the economy is to implement Vision 20:2020, Nigeria's long term development plan designed to propel the country into the world's top 20 economies by the end of the decade.

One of the plan's goals is to promote an efficient and globally competitive, private sector that will facilitate the growth of businesses and investments.

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