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Burundi president plays a football game, then jails two officials on opposite side

President Nkurunziza claims he was roughed up during game



Two officials in the northern town of Kiremba have been imprisoned after being charged by Burundian authorities for "conspiracy against the president".

Kiremba's administrator Cyriaque Nkezbahizi and his assistant, Michel Mutama were involved in arranging a football match against the country's president Pierre Nkurunziza's travelling team Haleluya FC.

A football enthusiast and evangelical Christian, Nkurunziza travels the country with his own team and choir "Komega Gusenga (which means "Pray Non-stop").

In Kiremba recently, Haleluya FC faced a local side predominantly made up of refugees from the Congo who were unaware that the country's president was playing in the game. Nkurunziza was

tackled and made to fall each time he held the ball and was not allowed to score. Reports say the president was livid. "It is common knowledge in Burundi that when the president's team rolls into your town, "you must go easy on him in particular and allow him to score as many goals as possible," one football coach is quoted as saying.

After the game, the town's administrators were arrested in what is looking increasingly telling of the way the Nkurunziza government treats its fellow citizens.

A United Nations report last year implicated President Nkurunziza and his administration in crimes against humanity. The report said government forces - but also opposition groups - had committed killings, torture and rape after violence erupted in 2015. The turmoil was sparked after President Nkurunziza decided to run for a third term. He was later re-elected in a poll that was boycotted by the opposition.

By Peter Uduehi

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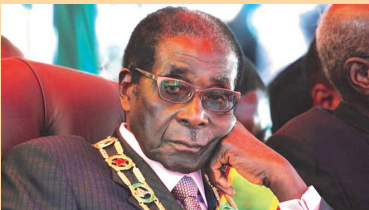
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Friends say Mugabe learning how to be normal on his birthday



There was nothing normal in the first place about Robert Mugabe as a democratic leader of his country.

The nonagenarian came to power in 1980 (when the country gained independence from Britain) promising Zimbabweans empowerment and respect considering they had been subjected to White-minority rule and apartheid for decades. Little did they know that he was going to turn democracy on its head. Reports were rife of how Mugabe tortured and jailed his opponents, atrophied a once-buoyant economy, then essentially made himself president-for-life, particularly because he was president for 37 years until his ouster in January by the army.

On his 94th birthday on February 21, his friends told reporters that they had never seen a more subdued Mugabe, a far cry from the days (as can be seen in these contrasting inserted photos of him) when he cultivated a personality cult around him; with school children celebrating every birthday of his in smart shirts emblazoned in the president's image, and larger-than-life cakes inducing dizziness at a gaze.

By Peter Uduehi



powerment and respect considering they had been subjected to White-minority rule and apartheid for decades. Little did they know that he was going to turn democracy on its head. Reports were rife of how Mugabe tortured and jailed his opponents, atrophied a once-buoyant economy, then essentially made himself president-for-life, particularly because he was president for 37 years until his ouster in January by the army.

March 21 date set for Abdi deportation case



Abdoul Abdi

Saudi-born Abdoul Abdi of Somali origins will know on March 21 from an immigration judge if he will be deported or not in a Canada Border Services Agency case.

Abdi's matter has been on since the 24-year-old was released from jail serving a five-year sentence on felony charges.

Now facing deportation as he's not a citizen, critics

charge that Abdi should be allowed to stay in Canada because he knows no other country, culturally-speaking, other than Canada. Born in Saudi Arabia, he came to Canada as a child with his mother and sister (both of them Canadian citizens) but was put in a foster home where his residency status changed; and his mother no longer had authority to file for his citizenship. Critics also say that sending him to Somalia could leave him vulnerable to the activities of ISIS-controlled Al-Shabab and other terrorist organisations.

By Peter Uduehi

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Angola: Africa's richest woman denies corruption allegations

Isabel dos Santos, the former head of Angola's state-owned Sonangol oil company, is denying her successor's allegations that she engaged in questionable business dealings related to the firm.

In a 13-page typed statement released late Sunday, Dos Santos - Africa's richest woman, with a net worth that Forbes business magazine estimates at



Angola's Isabel dos Santos

\$2.6 billion - denounced what she called "slanderous" and "defamatory campaigns" against her.

Last week, Sonangol chair Carlos Saturnino reported that an internal audit showed a transaction of \$38 million to a company based in Dubai; it had been approved by dos Santos shortly after she was removed from her post in November after roughly 16 months.

Dos Santos defended the transaction as a "totally legitimate" payment for consultancy services. She said she was fulfilling her legal obligations until her replacement could be sworn in, according to Reuters news service.

On Friday, Angola's public prosecutor's office acknowledged it was looking into Saturnino's accusations.

Dos Santos had been appointed chair of Sonangol's board by her father, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, Angola's president from 1979 until last September. She was dismissed by his successor, President Joao Lourenco, who vowed to clean up Angola's corruption-tainted economy.

The younger dos Santos' goal was to restructure Sonangol, Reuters reported last November. In 2016, she had fired Saturnino from his job as the oil company's production and exploration leader.

The 2014 nosedive in global oil prices rocked Angola, where, according to the World Bank, oil accounts for a third of gross domestic product and more than 95 percent of the country's exports. As she was leaving office, dos Santos told Sonangol staffers she had rescued the "nearly bankrupt" company by cutting costs, Reuters said.

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Returning Africa's stolen artifacts: Benin Republic shows what's possible in relation to Europe

In the 19th century, the Kingdom of Dahomey was a major West African power, boasting a flourishing slave trade with Europe and a feared corps of Amazon women warriors. Commissioned by the royal court, its art — intricate wood and ivory carvings, metalwork and appliqué cloth — stood as a potent symbol of the kingdom's might.

But by 1894, Dahomey was annexed by France after a pair of brutal wars. Its artifacts ended up in French museums and private collections.

Now modern-day Benin, the seat of the former Dahomey kingdom, may have the best chance to date of getting them back, as French President Emmanuel Macron vows to make the return of treasures from former African colonies a top priority. That vow will be

tested next week, when Benin President Patrice Talon visits France. Restitution of Dahomey artifacts is expected to rank high in (March 6) discussions between the two leaders.

"The question is to give back what has been stolen during the worst conditions of war," said Marie-Cecile Zinsou, daughter of Benin's former prime minister and president of the Zinsou Foundation, an organization in the main city, Cotonou, that promotes African art.

"It's very small for France, but for us it's everything," she said of the roughly 5,000 artifacts Benin wants back. "We have nothing left in Benin — we have copies, but no original trace of our history."

Made during a November speech in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou, Macron's restitution promise has been described as historic and even revolutionary. Over the next five years, he said, the conditions must be met "for the temporary or permanent restitution of African heritage to Africa."

"African heritage can't just be in European private collections and museums," Macron said. "African heritage must be highlighted in Paris, but also in Dakar, in Lagos, in Cotonou."

Experts believe that if realized, France's example may prove the tipping point for other former colonial powers, similarly pressured by restitution claims. But while much of Africa's cultural heritage lies outside the continent — stolen, sold or otherwise expatriated by European soldiers, missionaries and Africans themselves — returning it lays bare a tangle of difficult questions.

Who should receive artifacts that may have changed hands and borders many times over the years? Should private collections, as well as national museums be compelled to return the treasures? And would those returns be permanent or temporary? In France, repatriation may also demand changing current law that recognizes the artifacts as inalienable cultural heritage.

Skeptics argue that many African countries lack national museums or other spaces capable of housing old and fragile artifacts. And apart from a handful of exceptions like Benin, some say, few governments have mounted strong restitution campaigns.

"All these countries have so many problems to solve that it's not been the priority," according to Corinne Hershkovitch, a French lawyer specializing in the restitution of cultural goods. "But it has to be a priority if you want to make cultural heritage come back to your country."

Others say restitution discussions are taking place outside the media spotlight. Many agree returning African art will demand creative ways of thinking and pooling resources.

"The debate has started in France," said Mechthild Rössler, director of UNESCO's World Heritage Center. "Museums now need to look at their own collection and

identify pieces, which may have been trafficked illegally, or which may have come out of some dubious circumstances during colonialism. It's part of reviewing the whole colonial history."

The debate also heating is up in other European countries, which collectively house several hundred thousand African artefacts. That includes in Germany, where Berlin's museum chief wants to draw up international museum guidelines for the repatriation of African artefacts — similar to those created for the return of Nazi-confiscated art.

In Britain, Cambridge University students are calling for a bronze cockerel on the university campus to be returned to Nigeria. It is among hundreds of 'Benin bronzes' looted during colonial days whose return will be discussed by European museums during a meeting this year. Restitution also will be on the menu at yet another conference being organized in Brazzaville.

"It's a matter of justice and culture, but it's also a matter of business," said Louis-Georges Tin, head of CRAN, an umbrella group of black French associations that helped spearhead some of the repatriation demands. "You can-



not do business with African countries and be a robber at the same time."

For African countries, repatriating the artefacts carries another powerful economic argument, since they can attract sought-after tourism revenue. "Museums can be the first entry point to learn about the history and culture of these countries," said UNESCO's Rössler. "But there must also be different explanations than those given in Europe."

Beyond restituting African artifacts, Rössler also said Europe could help African countries to house them. "I have seen museums in Africa where this is absolutely possible," she said, adding that in other cases, the European Union or individual countries may offer financing. In France, the public Quai Branly Museum, which houses most of the country's colonial-era African artifacts, says it is open to restitution demands — providing proper conditions and political will exist.

"We don't return objects just to heal wounds," Quai Branly's president, Stephane Martin, told Paris Match magazine. "The people who receive them must have a real desire to do something with them."

Others argue African countries should be making those calls.

"It's our problem what to do with our heritage," said Zinsou of the Benin foundation. "It's not a question of France telling us what to do."

In 2016, Benin became the first sub-Saharan African country demanding that France return its artifacts, arguing they were important both culturally and economically. But last year, the previous French government rejected that request, arguing the pieces now were legally French property. If the Macron administration gives the green light, it may demand changing French law.

"I hope Benin will show what is possible," Zinsou said. "Even if you're a poor country, you can [repatriate artifacts] properly."

Restitution questions also are roiling private galleries and auction houses. But at his office near the Seine River, Paris gallery owner Robert Vallois is serene.

"The doors are open for discussion among people of good will," he said.

Vallois and group of local gallery owners have offered one answer to the debate. In 2015, they opened a small museum in Benin that exhibits art donated from their own collections.

"Is it a national treasure for France, or is it a national treasure for Africa?" Vallois asked. "Both. The problem is to show it to the people."

By Lisa Bryant

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Malawi: Search for new urban water sparks unease

Reporting by Charles Pensulo;

Mulanje — An effort to shore up water to Blantyre is drawing protests from people who say "we can't serve Blantyre before we serve ourselves"

With increasingly prolonged droughts threatening worsening water shortages, Malawi is moving to shore up water supplies to its cities, including building new long-distance pipelines and dams.

But a project to supply Blantyre, Malawi's business capital and second largest city, with water from the Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve, about 80 kilometres away, has drawn protests from residents, who say they need the water themselves - and they were not adequately consulted about the plan.

This month, 24 protesters were arrested and brought to court on charges related to demonstrations, blocking access to the water project site or, in



some cases, trying to release those arrested from a local police station.

All have since been released on bail.

Oscar Kachika-Phiri, a spokesman for the group, said that the move by Blantyre to tap water from the area "is going to deprive the community of a resource whose levels are already down due to climate change".

Deforestation in the Mulanje Mountain water catchment has driven a decrease in rainfall and the area's ability to hold water, he said.

He said his district already needs to ration water supplies in dry periods, and families feel the situation will get much worse if water begins being diverted to Blantyre.

"We can't serve Blantyre before we serve ourselves," the soft-spoken community representative said outside the recent court hearing in Mulanje.

Local people disrupted a planned visit to the Mulanje area by the country's water minister last year, according to local media.

However, in January, the Blantyre Water Board signed a memorandum of understand with the Mulanje District Council and others to allow the project, on the condition that the board plant trees in the Likhubula River's deforested catchment area, the demonstrators aid.

But Kachika-Phiri said some residents were under the impression the water diversion project, funded by a loan from India's Exim Bank, would not begin until after the trees were planted "to ensure we a maintain a stable water supply."

Priscilla Mateyu, a spokeswoman for the Blantyre Water Board, said the Mulanje Mountain project is only a partial answer to Blantyre's water problems, which include some townships losing access to water for several hours a day on a regular basis.

The board is also looking at tapping additional water from the Shire River as a longer-term answer to shortages, and dredging silted water storage reservoirs to increase their capacity, she said.

"The board continues to face a lot of challenges," she said in emailed comments. For instance, as a temporary solution to water shortages, it is paying about half a billion kwacha (\$690,000) every month in energy costs to pump water to Blantyre from an area called Walkers Ferry.

Tapping water from Mulanje Mountain "will ensure that some water will be supplied using gravity, thereby lessening the energy costs", she said.

The project, expected to be completed in April 2019, will ensure a stable supply of water to residents of both Blantyre and surrounding areas, she said.

"This supply will be sustainable and will also improve the healthy living of residences as people will not be drinking unsafe water from unsafe sources," she said.

She said the board had "consulted extensively" on the Mulanje Mountain project and "reached an agreement by signing a memorandum of understanding with Mulanje District Council, concerned citizens and traditional leaders within the project area to carry out the works".

"What everyone should know is that this is a very important project and will improve lives in surrounding districts (of Blantyre)," she said.

Blantyre is not the only major Malawian city looking for new supplies of water. As droughts strengthen across southern Africa, in line with predictions about expected impacts of climate change, Malawi's capital Lilongwe also is planning a project to pipe in water from Lake Malawi.

Joseph Magoya, a local programme officer at Water for People, a U.S.-based water charity, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that water has gradually been running short in Malawi's cities as a result of growing urbanisation.

Blantyre currently has 730,000 people, about 70 percent of them living in informal homes where access to water has been growing more difficult, according to Water for People figures.

Ironically, more high-intensity rainfall and flooding

- also a result of climate change - are adding to the city's water shortage problems, he said, by washing out water systems and by leading to alternate floods and dry periods on rivers supplying water to the city.

Germany halts power project in Uganda

German government development bank, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), has withheld a Shs35 billion grant for Nyagak III hydropower project in West Nile.

State minister for Energy, Simon D'Ujanga, attributed KfW decision to the delay by the project's developer - who was supposed to raise debt finance to build the Shs70 billion-project - to reach financial close.

Consequently, KfW, which had set aside €8 million (about Shs36 billion), of the \$19.39 million (Shs70 billion) required for the project, decided to channel its money elsewhere.

"Nyagak III has a 'problem'. KfW have withdrawn their support for this project," Mr D'Ujanga told the House Committee on National Economy on Wednesday, March 7 in Kampala. "The reason is that the loan has taken long; we got a partner who took long to do financial closure."

Mr D'Ujanga did not name the developer. And, the Daily Monitor could not immediately establish the name of the developer.

Different sources last year put the blame on Parliament, which for the better part of the last quarter focused the Constitution Amendment Bill No. 2 of 2017, a bill whose objective was majorly to lift the age limit for presidential candidates - so that President Museveni can continue contesting for the position.

When members of the committee on national economy, which combs through all foreign loan requests, should have deliberated on the loan, they were instead either 'consulting' on the amendment bill or being talked to by their respective whips.

Parliament has since passed the bill and President Museveni assented to it. Now that KfW has withdrawn its support, Mr D'Ujanga said the government is mulling over 'how to cover the gap'.

Mr D'Ujanga was responding to Ayivu County Member of Parliament (MP) Benard Atiku and Mwenge South MP Aston Kajaras' questions about electricity projects.

Meanwhile, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has given Uganda up to March 30 to accept a \$125.1 million (about Shs453 billion) loan from Japan to improve the Kampala Metropolitan Electricity Transmission system.

Lawrence Bategeka, the vice chairperson of the committee, said: "The funders are saying their fiscal year [will] end March 30. They are wondering whether [Uganda] is still interested in this [loan] facility."

Inside West, North & Africa

New demands for return of girls removed again by Boko Haram

Calls for the immediate rescue of the 110 schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram in Dapchi, Yobe State, featured prominently as Nigeria celebrated International Women's Day yesterday.

The President's wife, Mrs. Aisha Buhari, summed up the pleas with the charge: "Leave our daughters alone! Leave our daughters alone! Leave our daughters alone!"

She noted that "as a mother," she shared the "sorrow and

has made that promise and all senators are in agreement. They have concurred. It is the right thing to do, and it is way overdue."

According to her, "The United Nations has made it very clear that when progress and empowerment is anchored on women, there would be a more progressive society. Everybody should press for women to emerge, not just politically but in every

Some international media outlets had initially reported that Bashir Saleh had been in South Africa for about six years and was wanted by France.

It was reported he was wounded on Friday evening - some media reports said he was shot while at home, while others said he was shot while being driven near OR Tambo International Airport.

The French publication Le Monde reported that he was wounded after arriving from a trip to Zimbabwe.

On Wednesday, national police spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Katlego Mogale confirmed in a statement that the man was attacked on the evening of February 23 by a group of armed suspects on the Atholl Oakland off-ramp.

Fleeing off with a laptop

"Using a hammer one of the suspects broke the window of the vehicle, opened the door and pulled the victim out of the vehicle," she said.

"The suspects allegedly shot the victim before fleeing with his laptop. The victim was taken to hospital for medical attention."

She said a case of armed robbery and attempted murder had been opened for investigation by the national investigating unit.

The suspects were believed to be aged between 30 and 35.

South African police had been aware of Saleh's presence in South Africa since at least 2013. Former president Jacob Zuma had also apparently been aware that he was in the country.

'Zuma suggested SA can't monitor Saleh'

In June 2013 then DA MP Tim Harris issued a press statement saying Zuma "made a shocking admission in his response to parliamentary questions in the House...

when he suggested that South Africa is not able to monitor or prevent the movement of" Saleh in and out of the country.

At the start of June 2017 the United Nations Security Council issued a report by a panel of experts on Libya.

This panel was tasked with, among other matters, monitoring the political transition in Libya.

It identified a bank branch in South Africa and Saleh as being involved in transfers of millions of dollars to a bank in Kenya.

'\$800m payment authorised in SA'

"The panel has obtained documentation indicating that two large transfers were possibly made in the second half of 2011 on behalf of the Libyan Africa Investment Portfolio (LYe.002, listed since 17 March 2011), between bank accounts in South Africa and Kenya. The total amount transferred to an account at a branch of the CFC Stanbic Bank branch in Kenya was USD 800 000 000," the panel's report said.

"Documentation received by the panel shows payment authorisation by Bashir Saleh al-Shrkawi from a branch of the Standard Bank South Africa (sic)."

Saleh is also known as Bashir Saleh al-Shrkawi.

In 2013 DA MP Dianne Kohler Barnard claimed Saleh had been seen several times in South Africa.

One of these occasions was at the Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) summit in Durban earlier that year.

She said the DA would ask the Portfolio Committee on Police to provide clarity on why Saleh, who was on Interpol's most wanted list, had not been arrested while in the country.

According to a set of parliamentary questions and replies dated June 25, 2013, then police minister Nathi Mthethwa had confirmed he had been informed of Saleh's presence in the country in February 2013.

Asked at the time why Saleh had not been arrested, Mthethwa replied: "The Interpol Red Notice is not an international arrest warrant which allows for immediate arrest. Once a fugitive is detected, a provisional arrest warrant should be requested and provided through Interpol channels, followed by original documentation between the competent authorities through diplomatic channels.

"Requests for clarity on whether this specific person is still wanted and to provide the required documentation were sent through the Interpol communication channel to Libya. These requests are still to be answered. There is no extradition treaty in place between Libya and South Africa."



agony of the parents," expressing her earnest desire that efforts by government for the girls' release would yield speedy results.

At the National Centre for Women Development in Abuja, Mrs. Buhari stressed that for Nigeria, the day must reflect the nation's pain and sorrow, following the Chibok abduction, and now Dapchi's.

She therefore unveiled the 'Leave Our Daughters Alone' theme, which she described as a strong call for an end to all abductions, urging the media to spread the message, and governors' wives to do the same in their various states.

Earlier, the wife of the Vice President, Mrs. Dolapo Osinbajo, congratulated women as they marked the day. She, however, regretted that the celebrants in Nigeria were witnessing the worst times.

At another event to commemorate the day, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said: "Such abductions are a blow to the efforts to increase girls' education. And especially for Dapchi, this is an attack on the efforts to ensure more women take on science courses."

Guterres, who was represented by the Director, United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Ronald Kayanja, said the organisation was committed to zero tolerance of sexual harassment and has mapped out plans to improve reporting and accountability.

Giving credit to women who have stood out in the fight for equality, he said: "The activism and advocacy of generations of women has borne fruit. There are more girls in school than ever before; more women are doing paid work and in senior roles in the private sector, academia, politics and in international organisations, including the United Nations."

Also, the House of Representatives yesterday reiterated its call for the prompt rescue of both the Dapchi and Chibok girls.

While adopting a motion by Mrs. Stella Ngwu, Speaker Yakubu Dogara expressed the chamber's readiness to partner the executive arm of government to pass the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill.

The lawmakers also resolved to boost support for women in their campaign for gender mainstreaming and parity in the country, and mandated the committee on Women Affairs and Social Development to ensure compliance.

"I am saddened that while some of the abducted Chibok girls are still in captivity, another set of school girls in Dapchi were abducted. Nigeria women have also been the worst victims of violent activities of herdsmen. Many have been killed, raped and widowed, and have lost children and property," Ngwu said.

The Senate on its part said it would give priority attention to the issue of 35 per cent affirmative action, particularly in the appointment of women.

Former Aviation Minister, Senator Stella Oduah, who disclosed this to journalists said a revised version of the bill would be voted upon, passed and sent to State Houses of Assembly. The bill seeks 35 per cent representation in federal ministerial appointments and 20 per cent at state level.

Last year, the proposal failed at the upper legislative chamber, as it garnered only the votes of 49 senators, instead of the 73 required to ensure the success of the bill.

Oduah, who is also the Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Women Affairs, said: "The President of the Senate

way. Therefore all activities that have to do with women must be brought to the front burner. That should be everybody's campaign."

In her remarks, the National Women Leader of the Peoples Democratic Party, Hajiya Mariya Waziri, challenged the President Buhari-led government to demonstrate responsibility and sincerity of purpose by prioritising the rescue of the girls. She added: "Our plan is to produce an action plan that will not only guarantee the vote and mandate of women for 2019, but also develop their capacity and willingness to foster and support an enduring democratic process in favour of our great party. Our women should take ownership of the global vision of the party and not only be expectant of 'stomach infrastructure' that is not responsive and relevant to achieving enduring political sustainability."

Still on the Women's Day, the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) yesterday restated its commitment to promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

At the fourth edition of the NSE International Women's Day symposium, themed: 'Press For Progress', the Chief Executive Officer Oscar Onyema noted: "It is saddening that with over 100 years of devoting a day to celebrating the achievements of women and discussing steps towards achieving gender parity and social justice for women, the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its 2017 Gender Gap report averred that our dream of achieving parity across gender requires more than 200 years to become a reality."

He said: "As one of Africa's foremost institutions and member of the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative (SSEI), we are deeply committed to leveraging our position to accelerate the achievement of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number Five, which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030."

Besides, the United Labour Congress of Nigeria (ULC) called on tiers of government, institutions and organisations to remove all vestiges of gender alienation and change leadership recruitment process in the country.

ULC President, Joe Ajaero, noted: "It is unacceptable to say that while we are battling for the release of Chibok girls, there is the kidnap of another set of girls, over a hundred. The chief security officers of some agencies should have resigned from their positions.

There is no explanation to it because if you move to places in Nigeria where there is no war, at every two kilometers, you would see checkpoints, yet an operation that lasted over three hours or more took place.

It is unheard of. If there is a conspiracy in the highest quarters, the chiefs of the army and all the security agencies should tender their resignation."

Ghadaffi's former bodyguard shot in robbery

Slain Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi's banker, linked by the United Nations to the payment of \$800m (about R9.3bn at the current rand/dollar exchange rate) into a bank account in Kenya from one in South Africa, was wounded in a shooting in Atholl Oaklands, northern Johannesburg, police confirmed on Wednesday.

Around Africa

Kenya president Uhuru meet rival Odinga, pledge to unite country after bitter election

Kenya's unpredictable political environment was jolted Friday after President Uhuru Kenyatta and his main political challenger, Mr Raila Odinga, held a surprise meeting whose planning and organisation will go down as one of the best-



kept secrets of the recent political developments. Even though Mr Odinga did not publicly recognise Mr Kenyatta as the duly elected President, only referring

to him as "my brother", the handshake that followed their joint statement on the steps of Harambee House was an indication that the closing of ranks between the two most antagonistic political families could be in the offing. However, the short-lived honeymoon was further jolted when Mr Odinga's allies said they had been kept in the dark about the talks.

So secret was the organisation of the meeting that sources have told the Saturday Nation that not even Mr Kinuthia Mbugua, the man who handles the President's diary as Comptroller of State House, knew of its planning.

So was Interior minister Fred Matiang'i and the Deputy Chief of Staff, Mr Njee Muturi, both who were at Harambee House. They, too, looked on in shock as Mr Odinga and his entourage arrived at the Office of the President and went straight to the President's second floor office.

On the other hand, Mr Odinga's entourage to the meeting consisted of lawyer Paul Mwangi, who served as his adviser on constitutional matters when he (Mr Odinga) served as Prime Minister, the Minority Whip in the National Assembly, Mr Junet Mohammed, Mr Odinga's daughter Winnie and spokesman Dennis Onyango.

Sources have told the Saturday Nation that the President arrived at his office at about 9am but did not as much as hint to his aides the purpose of his early arrival in an office he hardly visits.

Mr Odinga later made his way in at about 10.30am.

Those who sat in the meeting included President Kenyatta and Mr Martin Kimani, on the one side, and Mr Odinga, Mr Junet, Mr Mwangi and Ms Winnie on the other.

The talks lasted for two and half hours. When the leaders emerged to make a televised address, they told the nation of their desire to work together to halt the country's descent following a divisive general election last year.

"We must confront and resolve our differences," Mr Odinga said, referring to the President as "ndugu yangu (my brother). We want to unite Kenya."

UNITY

When it was his turn to speak, President Kenyatta said that he and Mr Odinga had come to a common understanding that Kenya was greater than any one individual.

"We will begin the process of bringing our people together," he said and pledged talks on what ails the country and find solutions.

"The future must be dictated by the stability of our country," he said.

It was the first time the two leaders were meeting after the divisive 2017 elections that was characterised by personalised attacks, violent protests and the nullification of the outcome of the first presidential election by the Supreme Court.

In their joint statement, the two leaders expressed their desire to set aside their differences and rebuild the nation and make it responsive to the urgent need for prosperity, fairness and dignity for all Kenyans.

"The two leaders have been competitors and even used hard language at times but they have always been friends and respected one another as individuals and leaders," the statement read by Mr Odinga said.

DIVISIONS

They regretted that Kenya was today being defined internationally by its negative politics, pointing out that violence and corruption are the main characteristics by which Kenyans are defined by the international community.

"There are changes that are required in our system of governance for us to succeed and we have been in the process of reform to deal with them for the last twenty years," Mr Odinga said.

"Yet, despite all the reforms, we continue to have deep and bitter disagreements. Ethnic antagonism and divisive political competition have become a way of life."

The two leaders agreed to rollout a programme that will implement their shared objectives revolving around the war on corruption, ethnic antagonism and competition, lack of national ethos, inclusivity, devolution and divisive elections as part of the grand scheme to unite the country.

In implementing the programme, the two agreed to set up an office and retain a retinue of advisers to assist in the implementation.

INCLUSION

They picked Mr Martin Kimani and Mr Paul Mwangi to oversee the establishment of the programme.

"The two leaders urged the Kenyan public to overcome the negative cycle by acting on the understanding that elections on their own are not solution to our national challenges," they said, while pleading with the nation to faithfully adhere to the Constitution, halting antagonism and profiling and ensuring

the promotion of inclusivity.

When he learnt about the meeting, Deputy President William Ruto congratulated the two for rising above divisions.

"Congratulations Pres. Uhuru and Raila for being statesmen," Mr Ruto said on his Twitter handle.

"You have risen to the moment for Kenya and against hate, negative ethnicity and division. The unity, stability and transformation of Kenya supersedes all other partisan interests. Wangwana mbarikiwe mpaka mshangae (may you be abundantly blessed)."

It later emerged that Mr Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement has organised a Parliamentary Group meeting for Monday next week in which it is expected that the talks between the two leaders will feature prominently.

Mr Kalonzo, Mr Mudavadi and Mr Wetang'ula also said they would meet with Mr Odinga on Monday to discuss the talks.

Drunk with power, African presidents fight term limits

Africa has the world's most youthful population. It also has the world's oldest and longest-serving heads of government. Though African countries form 28 per cent of the members of the UN, it is over-represented in presidential gerontocracy.

On the list of the world's 10 longest-serving leaders, seven are African. The rest of the world contributes only Iran's Ali Khamenei, (37 years), Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev (34 years) and Cambodia's Hu Sen (34 years).

In the multi-party era, 15 of Africa's 54 heads of State and government - in Ethiopia, Libya, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia, Zimbabwe, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, Uganda, Swaziland, Sudan, Chad and Eritrea - held or have held power for more than 20 years.

By the time of his death in 2012, Meles Zenawi had been Ethiopia's prime minister for 21 years. Muammar Gaddafi, overthrown in 2011, had ruled Libya for 42 years as had Omar Bongo of Gabon who died in 2009. Lansana Conte served for 24 years as president of Guinea, till his death in 2008. Joao Bernardo Vieira, 'God's gift to Guinea-Bissau', in his own words, ruled for 31 years before his own soldiers killed him in 2009. Yaya Jammeh was forced out in early 2017 after running The Gambia for 22 years. Until he was ousted in a palace coup late last year, Robert Mugabe, 93, was the world's oldest head of State. He had been in power for 37 years.

There are still many long-serving leaders in power, especially along 'Africa's Crescent of Dictators', the arc of repression that runs from Equatorial Guinea in the armpit of Africa across Cameroon, through Chad via the Sudan to Eritrea on the Red Sea.

Dinosaurs in Equatoria: Is age just a number?

Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Equatorial Guinea's 'god', according to a 2003 broadcast, overthrew and executed his uncle, Francisco Macias Nguema, the country's first president, in August 1979. Thirty eight years later, he is Africa's - and the world's - longest-serving leader. He may be around awhile yet: He won a fifth seven-year term in 2016 and is keeping it all in the family. In 2012, he appointed his son, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangué, as Equatorial Guinea's first vice-president. Next door in Cameroon, Paul Biya - who is facing his most serious political crisis yet - has been in power for nearly 36 years. He has ranked near the top in almost every list of the 'World's Worst Dictators' that has been published since 2005. In Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon's neighbour to the East, Denis Sassou Nguesso has now served 34 years in two different stints, from 1979 to 1992 and then again since 1997. He repealed term limits in 2015, was re-elected in March 2016 for another seven-year term and, though he would 80 in 2023, he is likely to run again when the current term expires.

Idriss Deby has ruled Chad, another of Cameroon's neighbour, for 28 years. He won a contentious fifth term in 2016. Without term limits, he could keep running till he dies. In the Sudan, Omar-al-Bashir has been in power for 29 years having come to power in a coup in June 1989. Issaias Afewerki has been Eritrea's President for 25 years. Barring a rebellion or death, he is unlikely to be leaving soon. He was first elected president - by the national assembly - in 1993 and since then no presidential election has been held in Eritrea. An election was scheduled but not held in 1997.

In East Africa, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has ruled for more than 32 years. He was re-elected to a fifth term in February 2016. In southern Africa, King Mswati III of Swaziland, Africa's only absolute monarch, marks 32 years in power this year. These numbers mean that since the mid-eighties one in four heads of government in Africa has served more than 20 years.

Constitutions in Exile: Who ate presidential term limits?

The constitutions made in the 1990s were meant to support the new, still fragile democracies. Robust Bills of Rights, rule of law, checks and balances and term limits for presidents were meant to secure freedoms and institutions from attack by rapacious autocrats. They have not worked, especially on term limits. In Namibia and Burundi, incumbents exploited ambiguities in law to extend their terms. Elsewhere, they have just repealed the term limits.

In Namibia in 1999, President Sam Nujoma finagled an extra term by arguing that his first term, from 1989, did not qualify because he was not directly elected. Parliament made changes in response but applied these only to him and the 1999 election alone. Nujoma tried but failed to remove term limits again in 2004.

Burundi's president Pierre Nkurunziza argued much the same

when he sought a third term in 2015. Since he, too, was not directly elected for his first term, 2005 to 2010, he said that term did not count.

In Guinea in 2001, President Lansana Conte scrapped a 1993 clause that limited his tenure to two five-year terms. Conte also extended the length of a term from five to seven years. The opposition rejected the results but Conte contested and won a third term in 2003, claiming 95.6 per cent of the votes. He died in office in 2008.

In Chad, Déby promised in 2001 that he would leave office in 2006 when his second term ended. He pledged never to "change the Constitution" to stretch his term. His only interest, in this his "last mandate" was, he said, to "prepare Chad" for a change of government. In 2005, he scrapped term limits. He contested and won elections in 2006, 2011 and again in 2016. On his victory in 2016, he promised a return to term limits implausibly decrying a "system in which a change in power becomes difficult". Déby said that he had deleted term limits in 2005 because the "life of the nation was in danger". Like Déby in Chad, Mamadou Tandja of Niger, told Le Monde, a French newspaper, in 2007, that he would retire in 2009 when his term ended. He repeated the promise to Nicolas Sarkozy, the then French president, in March 2009. A year later, however, the ruling party did a volte-face, drafting changes to extend by three years both Tandja's and the National Assembly's terms. The changes ran foul of the constitution, which barred the government from amending term-limits. Tandja said he "could not ignore the people's call" for a third term and tried to skirt the legal obstacle by making a new constitution without term-limits. Beaten back by the constitutional court, he dissolved the National Assembly, called fresh legislative elections and scheduled a referendum ahead of a presidential election in 2010. The constitutional court frustrated this plan too and Tandja now dissolved the government. In February 2010, he was ousted in a coup and was detained as Niger prepared for fresh elections in 2011. In Togo in 2002, Étienne Gnassingbé Eyadéma, president for 35 years, hurriedly removed the term limits under which he was due to retire in 2003. At the same time, he lowered the minimum age for President from 45 to 35 years which made it possible for his son, Faure Gnassingbé, then 36, to qualify to be president if Eyadéma were to die. He contested and won the 2003 election but died in office two years later. The Speaker of the National Assembly, Fambare Ouattara Natchaba, should have taken over in acting capacity for 60 days. However, he had travelled abroad. The army put the younger Gnassingbé, now 38, in power to give Togo stability, they said. The next day the National Assembly elected Fauré its president, clearing his path to the presidency in a move the African Union described as a coup.

In Cameroon, Paul Biya, Africa's second longest serving president, removed term limits in April 2008. Anti-government protests followed, especially in the western, English-speaking part of Cameroon, but Biya survived to win another seven-year mandate in 2011.

In Burkina Faso in 2005, Blaisé Compaore announced that he would be seeking a third term. Though he came to power in the 1989 coup in which Thomas Sankara was killed, he was first elected in 1991. His 1998 term should have been his last if a 2000 amendment limiting the president's tenure to two seven-year terms was applied. Compaore argued - and the constitutional court agreed - that the 2000 term-limits were not retroactive. He ran and won comfortable majorities in 2005 and 2010. But a 2014 attempt by the ruling party to force a referendum to remove term limits altogether provoked violent protests. Like Mamadou Tandja four years earlier, Compaore dissolved the government and imposed emergency rule. On the very day that he abandoned plans to remove term limits, he was ousted by the military.

In 2012 in Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, a two-term president much praised for his progressive rule, also tried to extend his tenure. He made his first moves in 2008, when his party changed the constitution to return Senegal to a seven-year presidential term which had been scrapped in 2001. Though this would not have extended Wade's 2007-2012 term, it applied to any new term that Wade sought in 2012 and beyond.

In 2009, Wade announced that he would run for a third term in 2012. Though violent protests broke out in Dakar, Wade ran. He did not win in the first round. In the run-off, the opposition united against him and voted for Macky Sall, the current president.

In Djibouti, President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh is a nephew of the previous president, Hassan Guelleh Aptidon who retired in 1999 after 22 years in power. Omar Guelleh was the sole candidate in the 2004 elections. On assuming office, he promised that he would not seek a new term when his six years ended in 2010. When that time came, however, he reneged on that pledge, amended the law and on winning a third term promised yet again that this would be his final term. It was not to be. He ran again in 2016 and won, this time with 87 per cent of the vote.

In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni has twice battled and twice won campaigns against constitutional limits on his tenure. Last year, the NRM-dominated parliament scrapped a 75 years age limit that the constitution placed on the President, allowing Museveni, 74 this year and already in office for 32 years, to seek a sixth term in the elections due in 2021. Museveni had already scrapped the two-term limit in 2005. And so goes the story of term limits. Like other constitutional restraints in Africa, term limits are not safe from repeal. In countries where these limits are still respected, it is probably because presidents have no power to repeal them, not because they lack the desire to stay in office longer.

Again, US Secretary Tillerson Warns Nigeria, Other African Countries Against Chinese Loans

From Nigeria's This Day newspaper: Okechukwu Uwaezuoke with agency report

U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Rex Tillerson has counselled Nigeria and other African countries not to forfeit their sovereignty when they accept loans from China, the continent's biggest trading partner.



Tillerson, who spoke in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Thursday on the first leg of his African visit, said the U.S. was not trying to keep Chinese dollars from the continent but it was important for African countries to consider the terms of the agreement and not forfeit their sovereignty.

Tillerson is using his first diplomatic trip to Africa to bolster security alliances on a continent increasingly turning to Beijing for aid and trade.

He may also seek to smoothen relations after U.S. President Donald Trump reportedly dismissed African nations as "shithole countries" in January.

Trump later denied making the comment.

"We are not in any way attempting to keep Chinese dollars from Africa," Tillerson told a news conference in the Ethiopian capital.

"It is important that African countries carefully consider the terms of those agreements and not forfeit their sovereignty." The U.S. is the leading aid donor to Africa but China surpassed it as a trade partner in 2009.

Beijing has pumped billions into infrastructure projects, though critics have warned that the use of Chinese firms and labor undermines their value.

Tillerson said Chinese investments "do not bring significant job creation locally" and criticised how Beijing structures loans to African governments, reported the AFP.

If a government accepts a Chinese loan and "gets into trouble," he said, it can "lose control of its own infrastructure or its own resources through default". But he did not give specific examples.

However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who was visiting Zimbabwe Thursday, told reporters that it was inappropriate for Tillerson to criticise China's relationship with African countries.

"It was not appropriate to criticise the relations of his hosts — when he was a guest there — with another country," he said. Earlier this week, Tillerson had criticised "China's approach" to Africa which he said encouraged dependency through "opaque contracts" and "predatory loan practices".

But the Chinese government on Tuesday dismissed the U.S. criticism of low interest loans to the continent on the grounds that it had driven some sub-Saharan African countries deeper into debt.

According to the Chinese government, Tillerson's remark was "totally out of line with the truth".

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Mr. Geng Shuang said China hopes that other countries will do more good for Africa's development and treat China-Africa cooperation in a fair and objective manner.

"Such remarks are totally out of line with the truth," Geng told a news conference.

"The debt of some African countries is the result of long-term accumulation instead of a recent appearance. China is not the main creditor of African countries," he said.

The spokesman said it was hard for Africa to realise industrialisation and modernisation without financial guarantees.

Geng said China's financing support to Africa was mainly in infrastructure and production areas.

"Chinese companies have built a lot of highways, railways, ports, airports and communication facilities, greatly improving Africa's economic development environment and helping Africa attract foreign investment.

"I emphasise that the Chinese side attaches great importance to the sustainability of Africa's debt," Geng said.

He said China was insistent that large-scale infrastructure and industrial development in Africa go hand in hand, and that attention should be paid to both the economic and social benefits of projects and increasing African countries' ability for independent and sustainable development.

"We have done our best to avoid increasing Africa's debt burden," he said.

Many African governments enjoy close ties with both Washington and Beijing.

Kenya, for example, inaugurated a \$3.2 billion railway funded by China last year. For the last three years, Kenya has received more than \$100 million annually in U.S. security assistance.

Asked about Tillerson's criticism of China's approach on the continent, Kenya's foreign affairs minister Monica Juma said:

"This country is engaging with partners from across the world driven by our own interests and for our own value."

Tillerson arrived in Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous nation, on Wednesday and visited the African Union headquarters.

The complex was funded and built by China and is seen as a symbol of Beijing's thrust for influence and access to the continent's natural resources.

Ethiopia is home to some of Beijing's biggest investments, from a railway to Djibouti that opened last year to factories and industrial parks.

Ethiopia's prime minister resigned suddenly last month and a state of emergency was imposed but protests in the restive Oromia region have continued.

Tillerson said after meeting his Ethiopian counterpart Workneh Gebeyehu that the answer to political turmoil in Ethiopia was greater freedoms and said the state of emergency should be lifted as quickly as possible.

Tillerson reiterated previous calls for African states to cut ties with North Korea. North Korea has more than a dozen embassies on the continent.

The Trump administration has said that Pyongyang earns hard currency from arms deals with African governments and the trafficking of wildlife parts from Africa.

Tillerson was due to fly to Djibouti, host to military bases owned by the U.S., China, Japan, France and Italy.

He will then visit Kenya, a key U.S. ally in the fight against al-Shabaab Islamist militants in Somalia, before traveling to Chad and Nigeria, which are also battling to contain Islamist insurgents.

Analysts have said Trump has focused mainly on security concerns in Africa at a time when China, Turkey and other nations are ramping up diplomatic and business links.

"When you look at the set of countries that are being visited I think it kind of reinforces the perception that security, indeed, is the overwhelming focus," said Brahim Coulibaly, director of the Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings Institution.

Meanwhile on Wednesday, the U.S. government announced \$533 million in humanitarian assistance for African nations facing life-threatening food insecurity and malnutrition.

Tillerson announced the grant, saying it will support safe drinking water programmes, emergency healthcare and hygiene programmes to treat and prevent the spread of disease, and reunification of families separated by conflict.

From this donation, South Sudan was allocated the highest amount of funds totaling to \$184 million for emergency food and nutrition assistance to help the nation's vulnerable populations.

Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria and nations in the Lake Chad region, affected by ongoing conflicts or prolonged drought would also benefit.

According to a statement issued by the U.S. State Department, a swift influx of assistance from the U.S. government, along with that of other donors, was helping to improve humanitarian conditions in all of these African countries.

It noted that it was up to the leaders in these countries, particularly in South Sudan, to stop the violence and put the welfare of their citizens at the forefront of their actions.

The U.S. government also reiterated calls to all warring sides in South Sudan to allow aid workers safe and unhindered access to civilians in need.

More than 7 million people in South Sudan risk facing severe food insecurity in the coming months without sustained humanitarian assistance and access, three UN agencies said in a report last week.

Last month, 5.3 million people were already struggling to find enough food each day and were in "crisis" or "emergency" levels of food insecurity, according to an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report that was recently unveiled.

Jointly issued by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), the new report warned that progress made to prevent people from dying of hunger could be undone, and more people could be pushed into severe hunger and famine-like conditions from May-July if assistance and access were not made.

Ghana: To improve land rights, start with women

From Thompson Reuters Project:
By Nana Ama Yirrah

Successful farming is a question of amassing and applying knowledge, adapting your approach to the ecological systems that confront you, and persevering in the face of new obstacles.

For women farmers in Ghana and elsewhere in many other parts of Africa, this reality is mirrored in their struggle to secure their rights to the land that they work.

It is a struggle I know all too well.

My mother, my siblings, and I all toiled over the years to develop a cocoa farm on my father's land in the eastern region of Ghana. When the trees started producing, my father's family took over the farm and have been harvesting and selling the produce for their benefit. Because my mother has no legal title to the land, she cannot share in the profits.

And yet, as a woman, when you insist on having your

name included in property documentation and registration, you are labelled as being troublesome. You are arrogant. There is an assumption that land registered in your husband's name is intended for the entire family, and pushing past that assumption means you don't trust your husband, your husband's family, and even your community to do the right thing and respect your rights.

Having those rights enshrined on paper is such an inconvenience to everyone else. But for women, it often means the difference between earning a living and depending on the charity of others to survive. Even I, an educated woman and a trained professional in the legalities of land ownership, have struggled to get my title deed registered in both mine and my husband's names. As several recent reports have made clear, hunger is on the rise in Sub-Saharan Africa - in contrast to global trends - as conflict and climate change limit how often families have enough to eat. According to the United Nations, women, girls and ethnic minorities are most at risk of hunger, which causes nearly half of deaths in children under the age of five.

There is practical evidence on the ground that land rights are just as important as any other farming tool. If women worldwide had the same access and rights to productive resources as men - which is directly influenced by the recognition of property rights - they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent. Instead, women farmers in Africa currently produce between 13 and 25 percent less than their male counterparts.

If you talk to anybody in the land sector in Ghana, they say they are interested in protecting women and protecting their rights, but the structures in place - especially customary systems - make it challenging for women to defend their rights. It's not that the law itself defines a different set of rights for men than for women, but the problem is in the way the law is interpreted and applied.

A recent study of 30 low- and middle-income countries confirmed this. The 11 African countries in the study provided the most consistent affirmation of women's property rights and greatest recognition of women's community-level dispute-resolution rights, but inheritance rights were not as strong. These systems make it more likely that women need to rely on their relationships with men to access, and benefit from, property. In Ghana, the current system that is in place to register land ownership is very complicated, best suited for those in urban areas who are using their land for housing purposes. This kind of documentation does not suit the smallholder farmer in the village: the process is too expensive and too difficult. For women, it becomes almost impossible, which is why any solution for securing land rights must indeed start with women.

In northern Uganda, where researchers piloted a different approach to women's land rights, women's meetings were instrumental in teaching them about their rights to land. Facilitators engaged with groups of women to encourage them to voice their experiences, allowing them to support each other and build their confidence and capacity to exercise their rights. As a direct result, almost a third of the participants (32.5 percent) accessed more land.

When women are educated, and understand their land rights, they can advocate for themselves.

If my mother had known how to exercise her rights, the blood, sweat and tears that we all shed on my father's cocoa farm would have benefitted our future, and not our distant in-laws.

We need more outreach, in each and every community, to make sure that women know and understand their rights to be able to exercise them. Only then can we take advantage of their potential as farmers and bring about lasting change and economic empowerment for all.

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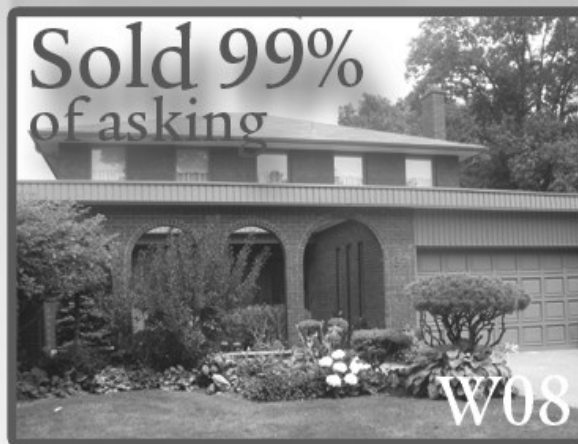
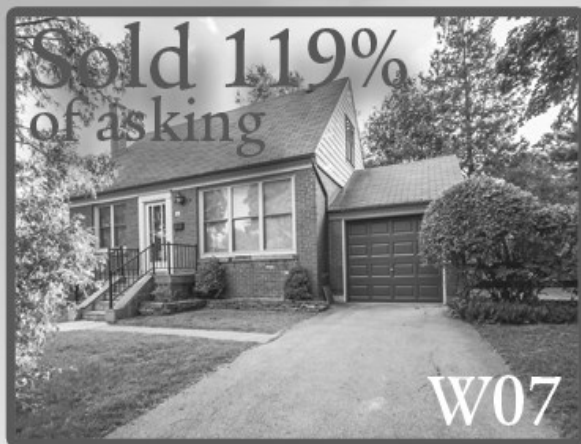


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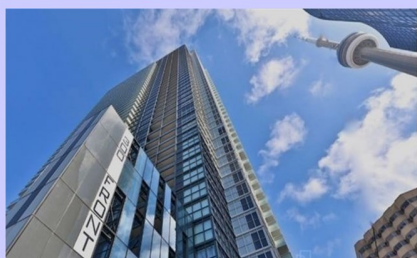
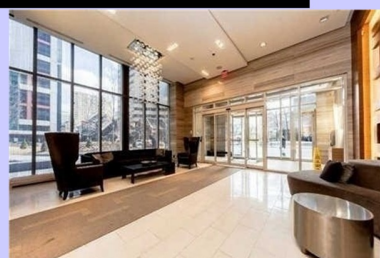
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Toronto FC adds Congolese international Chris Mavinga to defence

Chris Mavinga, a rising Congolese international, is Toronto FC's new addition to its defensive line-up.

A former one-time Liverpool defender, 25-year-old Mavinga represents the Democratic Republic of Congo at the international level. Recently, he played in League 1, France's top division and was on loan with ES Troyes AC. Mavinga grew out of France's football academy system and had played for both Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool during his early days.



Mavinga in form

Cameroon advertise head coach post and appoint Belinga on interim basis

The vacant Cameroon head coach's job has been advertised by the Normalisation Committee running Cameroon's football federation (Fecafoot).

The 2017 Africa Cup of Nations champions are seeking to fill the role made vacant when Hugo Broos departed at the end of his contract last month. Fecafoot wants a top foreign or local coach who has a "good record and has won national or international titles as a player, club coach or national coach."

They are also seeking a candidate "with good character and in good health" who also has a 'good knowledge of African football.' But in an apparent bid to give their hunt significant impetus, Fecafoot has made it clear that the incoming coach must live in the country.

Those who believe they fit the bill are invited to submit their applications



Cameroon's interim coach Alexander Belinga

at the Fecafoot secretariat in Yaounde or via email before the 24 March deadline.

A shortlist of three candidates will be finalised by an appointed commission, before a successful coach and assistants will be announced. Five-time African champions Cameroon have already announced that Alexan-

dre Belinga will take interim charge while the search continues for a long-term successor to Broos, who has since been appointed as sporting director at Belgian top side Oostende.

The 65-year-old former Belgian international led the Indomitable Lions to a surprise triumph in the tournament in Gabon at the start of last year. However, a poor performance at the Confederation Cup in Russia in mid-year followed by failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup turned some elements of public opinion against the Belgian.

Whoever comes in will have only eight months to work with the team before the 2019 Nations Cup tournament starts on home soil. Fecafoot say that candidates seeking to fill the vacant post must satisfy the following conditions (translated from French):

Holds a national or foreign trainer diploma obtained as a result of coaching (Federal License A, CAF License, UEFA License, Professional License or any other equivalent recognised diploma);

Must be of good character.

Must be physically fit and in obvious good health.

Must have a good experience at top professional clubs or national team.

Must have a good record (national or international titles won as a player or club coach or national coach.)

A good knowledge of African football.

Be willing to reside permanently in Cameroon during the duration of the contract.

Have a good knowledge of computer tools (Word, Powerpoint, Excel software etc.)

Have a great capacity for adaptation and ability to work in a team.

Have a perfect command of the French or English language.

Have a good contact in the professional football community.

Mhlengi Gwala: Chainsaw attack athlete wants to compete again

A South African athlete who was attacked by a gang who tried to saw off his legs has told the BBC he hopes to compete again after his recovery.

Mhlengi Gwala was attacked at gunpoint on Tuesday while doing triathlon training in Durban.

Mr Gwala says the attackers tried to cut his legs below the knees then left, leaving him to crawl to a road for aid.

A crowdfunding campaign launched in response has raised more than \$53,000 (£39,000) for his medical treatment.

Speaking to the BBC's Focus on Africa programme from his hospital bed, Mr Gwala described being dragged at gunpoint into bushes while cycling in the early hours of one morning last week.

"Then they start the chainsaw," he said. "One man was holding my back, and another was holding my legs. And the other one cuts in [with the chainsaw]." He said he had tried to call police and a friend but could not get an answer.

"So I crawled to the road and then I stopped a car, and that car took me to hospital," he said.

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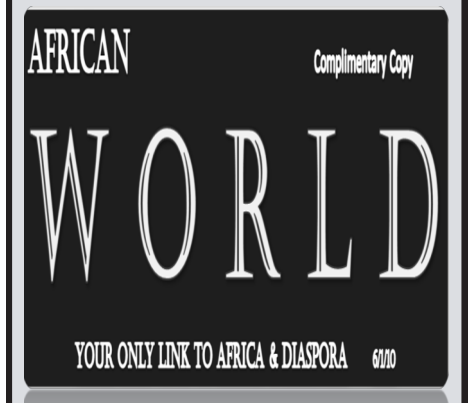
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