

The AfriFiles



Volume III - May, 2026

We Know Africa

AFCON27 Glory Magazine



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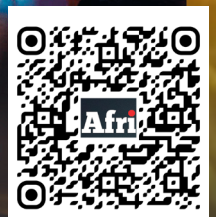
Peace is not built by words alone, it is instituted through lives restored, hearts healed...”

SLAVERY'S DEBT STILL
HAUNTS HISTORY

AFRICA'S NEW FIGHT
FOR SELF-RELIANCE

PROF GEORDAVIE

Senior Prophet and
Global Mayor of Peace





Cover Story:

The AfriFiles features Professor GeorDavie on its cover for leading a faith movement whose influence reaches beyond Tanzania to Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas. Through GeorDavie Ministries International, he champions peace and prophetic revival, social celebration and Kingdom-centered transformation. His ministry represents a Pan-African story of spiritual leadership, global mobilization and community renewal rooted in faith, identity and purpose for a changing world seeking healing and direction today.

Listen to an audio analysis- Page 7

The AfriFile Profile

The AfriFiles is the continent's flagship monthly technology-powered magazine, driven by Africa's top editors and journalists. Shared free through Emails, WhatsApp, Signal, LinkedIn, and social platforms. Here, Africa's leaders and citizens unite to tell the real stories - of victories, challenges, and futures being built. Bold, incisive, and unapologetically African. The AfriFiles delivers the insights and perspectives that shape today and tomorrow. Is printed by special request.



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INSIDE

Contents



GeorDavie
made size
over writing
books

11

Deadly
virus
exposes
African
ports

14

Africa's
new fight for
self-reliance

16

President
Tshisekedi's
third-term
shadow

18

Ramaphosa
faces his farm
reckoning

26

Mauritius'
rainbow
earths
beckon t
he world

39

East Africa
builds
Afcon
glory

44



73rd

MAURITIUS is Africa's happiest nation, ranking 73rd globally with a score of 5.939 out of 10. This is based on recent research.

146rd

SIERRA Leone is the least happy in Africa, placed 146th worldwide with 3.251 out of 10. The main reason is economic hardship.

Duterte ally seeks shelter

AS Vice President Sara Duterte faces a second impeachment battle, one of her camp's most prominent allies has sought refuge inside the Philippine Senate to avoid arrest.

Senator Ronald dela Rosa, former police chief under ex-president Rodrigo Duterte, remained in his Senate office after the International Criminal Court unsealed a warrant accusing him of crimes against humanity over the deadly anti-drug campaign.

Dela Rosa said his arrest was imminent and urged supporters to resist any transfer to The Hague.

His appearance in the Senate came amid political turmoil, as Duterte loyalists strengthened their influence in the chamber ahead of Sara Duterte's looming impeachment trial.

Global Beats



Iran war drain colours

JAPAN's snack giant Calbee will temporarily strip colour from packaging on 14 products after the escalating Iran conflict disrupted supplies of materials used in coloured ink.

From May 25, 2026, several potato chips, Kappa Ebisen snacks and Frugra cereal packs will appear in stark black-and-white designs, though the food inside will remain unchanged.

The company said the move is intended to maintain stable deliveries as shortages of oil-derived naphtha tighten the ink market. The unusual packaging shift shows how distant wars can quickly ripple through global manufacturing, affecting even supermarket shelves in Japan.

Other consumer-goods firms are also watching the supply squeeze closely as Middle East tensions persist globally today.

CIA whips US-Mexico ties

MEXICO and the United States are facing diplomatic strain after a CNN report claimed CIA officers helped facilitate the March assassination of alleged cartel operative Francisco Beltrán in Mexico.

The report said the agency's elite Ground Branch had taken part in lethal anti-cartel operations, a charge both governments rejected.

Mexico's Security Minister Omar García Harfuch said foreign agencies could not carry out covert killings on Mexican soil, while the CIA called the story false and dangerous.

The controversy comes amid heightened scrutiny of US security activity in Mexico after two American officials, reportedly CIA officers, died in an April crash following an anti-drug operation in Chihuahua, further unsettling bilateral relations.

Ancient bullet carried mockery

ARCHAEOLOGISTS in Israel have uncovered a 2,100-year-old lead sling bullet carrying what researchers describe as a sarcastic battlefield taunt.

Found near the ancient city of Hippos, also known as Susita, the projectile bears the Greek word "Learn," interpreted as "learn your lesson."

Scholars believe it may have been fired by city defenders at attacking forces during a siege in the second or early first century BCE. The bullet shows signs of impact, suggesting it was used in combat rather than ceremony.

Researchers say the inscription offers a rare glimpse into ancient psychological warfare, blending violence with dark humour, bravado and mockery from the Hellenistic world itself on an ancient battlefield.



Cartoon by Gado



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Send to editor@theafrifiles.com



In politics, if you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman - "

Margaret Thatcher was a British politician who served as a prime minister from 1979 to 1990.



Letters to the Editor

Junk foods, Africa's silent killer

Hello Editor,

THE growing consumption of junk food across Africa is becoming a serious public health threat. Fast foods, sugary drinks and highly processed snacks are increasingly replacing traditional, nutritious diets, especially among children and young people.

This trend is fuelling obesity, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, conditions once considered less common on the continent.

Aggressive marketing, urban lifestyles and the easy availability of cheap unhealthy foods are worsening the crisis. Governments, schools, families and the media must promote healthier eating habits and demand stronger regulation of harmful food products.

Africa must protect its future from preventable diet-related diseases.

Ismail Valleio,
Via email.

President Traoré's leadership Africa should emulate

Hello Editor,

BURKINA Faso's President, Ibrahim Traoré, has become a striking symbol of energetic, hands-on leadership in Africa.

His visible commitment to national self-reliance, public mobilisation and faster development has inspired many citizens across the continent. Africa needs leaders who treat national progress as an urgent mission rather than a distant promise.

While every country follows its own path, the spirit of discipline, courage, patriotism and action should be emulated.

Our continent cannot develop through speeches alone; it needs leaders willing to work relentlessly, confront dependency and place citizens' aspirations at the centre of governance.

Concerned Tanzanian Citizen,
Via email.

Animals merit Africa's compassion

Hello Editor,

AFRICA must do more to raise awareness about animal rights and the humane treatment of all creatures.

Animals are vital to our ecosystems, livelihoods and cultural heritage, yet many continue to suffer through cruelty, illegal hunting, neglect and poor protection.

Public education is urgently needed to teach communities, especially young people, that animals deserve care, dignity and freedom from abuse. Governments should strengthen laws against cruelty, while schools, media and civil society promote compassion and responsible coexistence with wildlife and domestic animals.

Protecting animals is not weakness; it is a mark of a humane and progressive society.

Julius Versie,
Via WhatsApp

Faith still holds Africa together

IN many parts of Africa, religion is not merely a private matter of prayer, worship and belief. It is a way of life. It shapes how people mourn, marry, forgive, organise, protest, give, heal and hope.

It sits at the centre of family, community and moral imagination. To understand Africa without understanding the role of faith is to miss one of the continent's deepest sources of resilience.

Across the continent, churches, mosques and faith-based organisations are often the first institutions people turn to in moments of crisis. When schools collapse, religious groups build classrooms. When clinics are distant, mission hospitals and Islamic charities provide treatment.

When communities are divided by politics, ethnicity or violence, religious leaders are often called upon to mediate. When hunger strikes, faith networks mobilise food, clothing and shelter long before official systems arrive.

This is why religion remains one of Africa's most powerful social forces. It reaches where governments are absent. It speaks in languages communities understand. It carries trust built over generations.

In villages, townships, refugee camps and cities, religious institutions do not operate as distant bureaucracies. They live among the people.

But this influence also demands honesty. Religion in Africa is not beyond criticism. At times, religious platforms have been used to divide, exploit, mislead or protect injustice.

Some leaders have commercialised faith, turning desperation into profit. Others have remained silent when power abuses citizens. In some cases, religious identity has deepened social tensions instead of healing them.

That is why the debate about religion and development must be serious, not sentimental. Faith is powerful, but power must be accountable. Religious institutions cannot claim moral authority while avoiding transparency, gender justice, child protection, financial integrity or respect for human rights. If faith is to serve Africa's future, it must be both spiritual and ethical.

Still, the larger truth remains; faith-based groups continue to play an indispensable role in peace, development and social stability.

In societies where the state is often overstretched, underfunded or mistrusted, religious networks provide continuity. They help communities survive political uncertainty, economic hardship and social trauma. They offer not only services, but meaning - and meaning matters.

Africa's development conversation is too often dominated by roads, minerals, foreign investment, elections and security. These are important. But development is also about trust, solidarity, discipline, compassion and moral responsibility. Religion, at its best, nurtures these values.

The challenge now is not to remove religion from public life, but to strengthen its best contribution. Faith leaders must defend peace over division, truth over propaganda, service over greed, and human dignity over narrow sectarian interest.

Governments, donors and civil society should recognise faith-based organisations as serious partners, while also insisting on accountability.

In a continent still carrying the burdens of poverty, conflict and inequality, religion remains one of its strongest instruments of hope, not because it has all the answers, but because millions still find in it the courage to keep building, forgiving and believing.



Simon Martha MKINA,
Editor-in-Chief





PROF GEORDAVIE

Senior Prophet and Global Mayor of Peace



By The AfriFiles TEAM – recently in Arusha

IN a world increasingly wounded by division, suspicion, spiritual emptiness and social unrest, the idea of peace can no longer be treated as a diplomatic slogan reserved for summits and official declarations. Peace must be lived.

It must be carried by men and women whose influence crosses borders, cultures, languages and generations. It must be embodied by leaders who can speak not only to the mind, but also to the human soul.

It is within this larger global search for healing, unity and moral renewal that Professor GeorDavie has emerged as a distinctive spiritual voice and a champion of global peace. To many who travel from distant nations to Arusha, Tanzania, he is more than a preacher, prophet or institutional leader.

He is regarded as a vessel of divine assignment, a man whose ministry has become a meeting point between faith, hope, restoration and international fellowship.

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From across oceans and continents, people journey thousands of miles to Arusha with hearts full of expectation.

They come from different countries, cultures, languages and social backgrounds. Some arrive after hearing testimonies of wonders, miracles and transformed lives. Others come quietly, carrying private pain, unanswered prayers and a deep longing for spiritual renewal.

Yet, despite their differences, they are united by one desire; to encounter the work of God through the life and ministry of Prophet Professor GeorDavie.



That journey itself tells a powerful story. In an age where the world is often defined by borders, visas, conflict, ideology and competing identities, Arusha has become, through his ministry, a place where people gather not as strangers, but as seekers.

The distance they travel is physical, but the deeper movement is spiritual. They come looking for healing, direction, comfort and meaning. In doing so, they demonstrate one of the clearest signs of peacebuilding: the ability of faith to gather humanity around shared hope.

Professor GeorDavie's influence must therefore be understood beyond the walls of a church or the boundaries of conventional ministry.

His work speaks to a broader vision of human restoration. Peace, in this sense, is not merely the absence of war. It is the presence of dignity, healing, compassion, order, spiritual clarity and renewed purpose.

This is the space in which his prophetic and apostolic mandate has found global relevance.

Known and honoured as the Mayor Global of Peace, Professor GeorDavie is internationally recognised by his followers and admirers as a world-renowned and award-winning servant of the Most High God.

He is also celebrated as the Landmark Prophet of the Equator, a title that reflects not only his Tanzanian and African roots, but also the global spiritual significance attached to his calling.

His apostolic and prophetic mandate extends across spiritual, humanitarian, educational, media, cultural and visionary developmental initiatives.

At the centre of this broad mandate is GeorDavie Ministries International, widely known as GDMI, the cross-cultural spiritual institution he founded and presides over.

GDMI was established for the propagation of the Kingdom of God, the administration of prophetic and apostolic ministry, and the advancement of divine leadership across nations. But its meaning has grown beyond institutional identity.

It has become a platform through which people from many nations gather, worship, learn, receive, connect and re-discover faith as a force for transformation.

The power of Professor GeorDavie's story lies not only in what he has built, but in what his ministry represents. In a fragmented world, GDMI projects a model of spiritual internationalism.

G D M I offers a language of unity in a season of loud divisions. It insists that cultures can meet





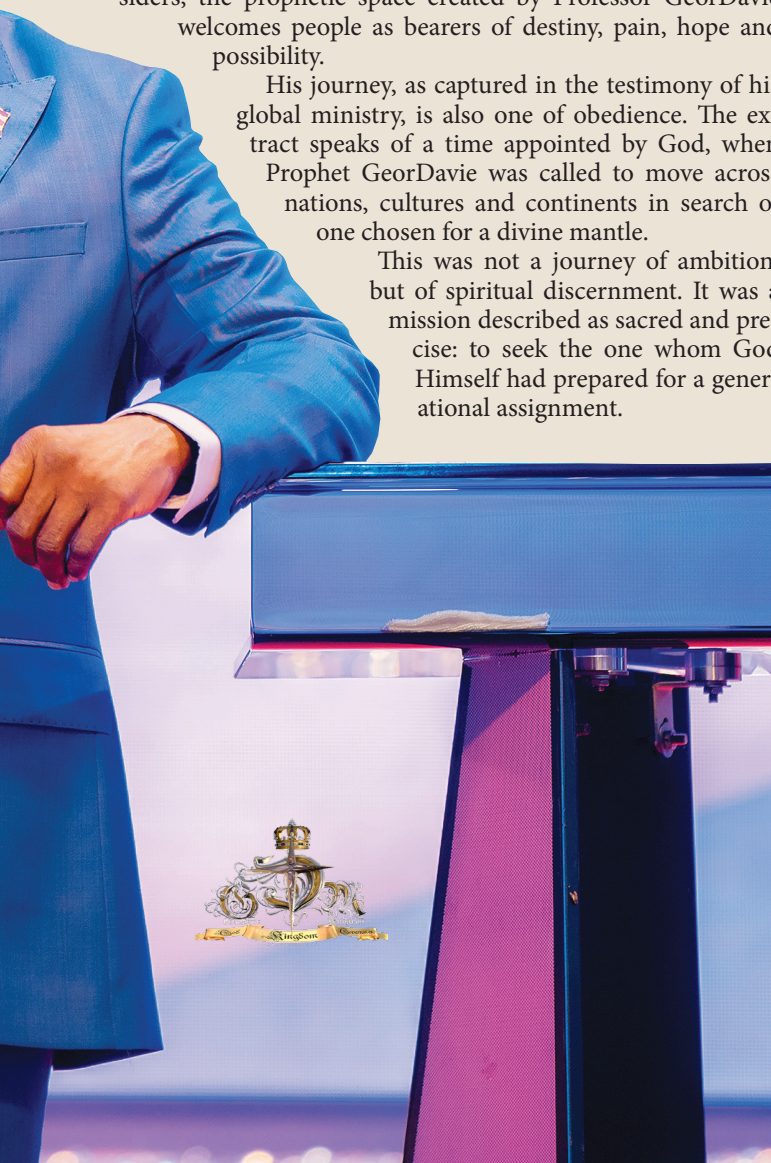
without hostility, that nations can connect through faith, and that human beings can find common ground when they gather before a higher purpose.

This is why his ministry resonates deeply with the idea of global peace. Where politics often divides, faith can reconcile. Where economies classify people by wealth and poverty, spiritual fellowship can restore human worth.

Where societies create distance between insiders and outsiders, the prophetic space created by Professor GeorDavie welcomes people as bearers of destiny, pain, hope and possibility.

His journey, as captured in the testimony of his global ministry, is also one of obedience. The extract speaks of a time appointed by God, when Prophet GeorDavie was called to move across nations, cultures and continents in search of one chosen for a divine mantle.

This was not a journey of ambition, but of spiritual discernment. It was a mission described as sacred and precise: to seek the one whom God Himself had prepared for a generational assignment.



Through cities and remote places, he prayed, discerned and waited. Many were gifted. Many were willing. But, according to the spiritual testimony surrounding this mission, the appointed moment came in Los Angeles, United States, when Professor GeorDavie encountered Kathryn Krick.

In that meeting, he recognised what the extract describes as the unmistakable markings of divine selection — a heart yielded to God and a life prepared for a greater calling.

The anointing of Kathryn Krick stands as one of the defining narratives of Professor GeorDavie's international legacy. Under divine instruction, he anointed her and imparted not only blessing, but a sacred mantle — spiritual authority and responsibility to carry forward the work of God across nations. It was a moment of transfer, obedience and destiny.

What followed, according to the testimony of this movement, became a confirmation of that spiritual act.

Kathryn Krick emerged into her calling with clarity and power. Her voice began to echo across nations. The Word of God flowed through her ministry with authority. Lives were transformed, the sick were healed, the broken restored, and countless souls drawn into the reality of God's power.

For Professor GeorDavie, this story is not presented as self-glorification. It is presented as evidence of a larger truth: that genuine spiritual leadership multiplies peace by raising others.

A true champion of peace is not one who gathers honour for himself alone, but one who recognises, empowers and releases destiny in others. In an age where leadership is often associated with control, Professor GeorDavie's example points to a different model — one of impartation, recognition and generational continuity.

This is one of the most compelling dimensions of his global appeal. His ministry is not confined to those who sit before him in Arusha.

It travels through lives he has touched, leaders he has raised, prayers he has spoken, prophetic instructions he has given and humanitarian works associated with his mission. His influence is therefore both local and international, spiritual and practical, personal and institutional.

The humanitarian dimension of his work further strengthens his image as a champion of peace. The extract notes that a good number of people, including those who are not his followers, have benefited from humanitarian assistance, including shelter, food and other forms of support.

This point is essential because peace without compassion remains incomplete. A ministry that speaks of God must also see the hungry, the homeless, the vulnerable and the forgotten.

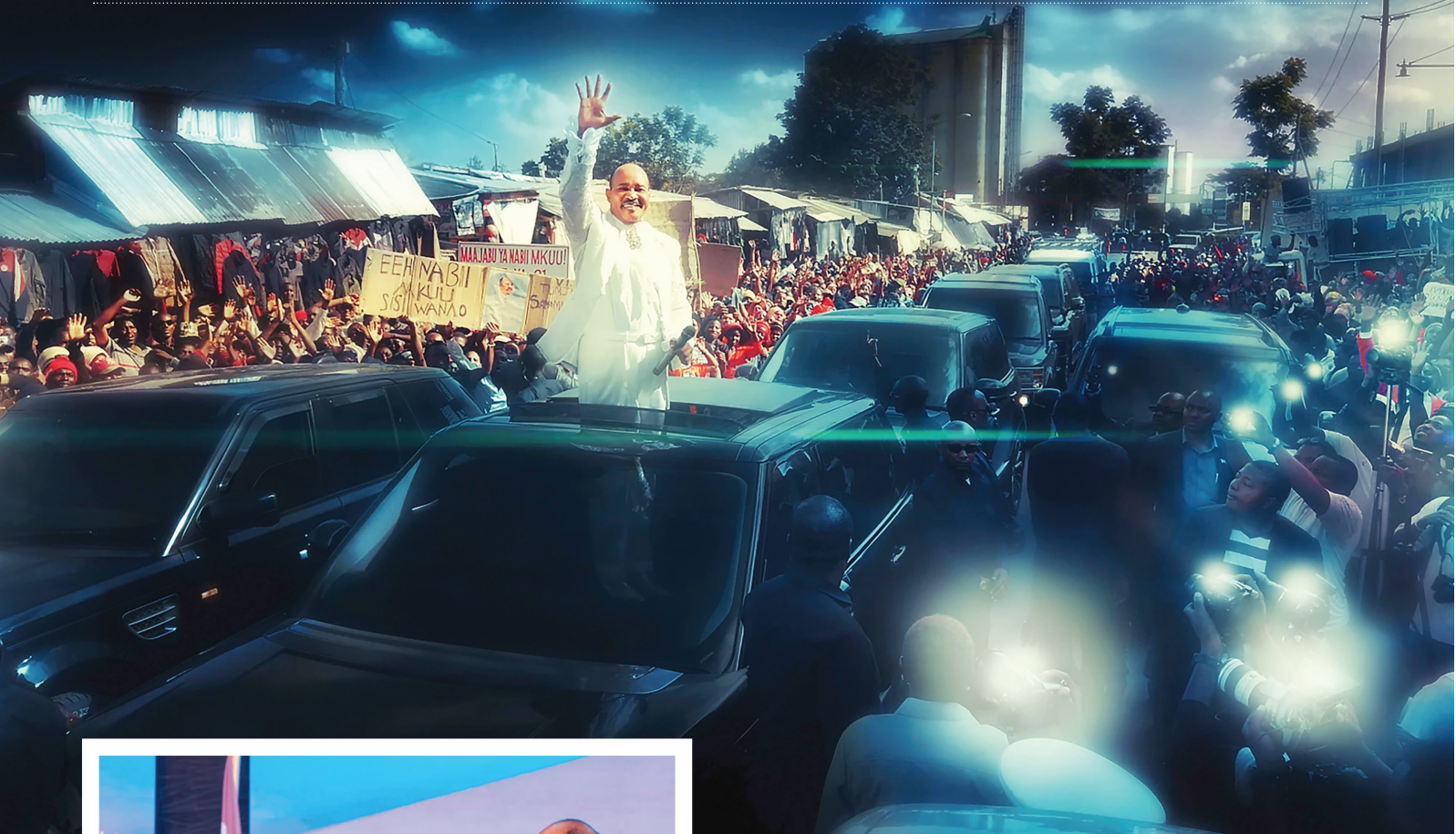
By extending help beyond the circle of followers, Professor GeorDavie's work reflects a broader moral vision. It suggests that compassion should not be limited by membership, identity or affiliation.

In practical terms, this is where spiritual leadership becomes social responsibility. Food, shelter and material assistance may appear simple, but to those in need, they are acts of dignity. They communicate a powerful message: you are seen, you are valued, and your suffering matters.

This is the architecture of peace from below. It is not always televised. It does not always appear in official communiqués.

But it changes lives. When people are fed, when families receive shelter, when the wounded find prayer, when the discouraged receive hope, when cultures meet in worship rather than suspicion, peace is being built in its most human form.

Professor GeorDavie's significance also lies in the African location of this global spiritual movement. For generations, Africa was too often portrayed as a continent waiting to receive solutions from elsewhere.



Yet the story of people travelling from across the world to Arusha reverses that narrative. It presents Tanzania not as a remote destination, but as a spiritual centre. It places Africa not at the margins, but at the heart of a global movement of faith, healing and peace.

This is powerful

It tells the world that Africa is not only a land of resources, culture and resilience, but also a continent of spiritual authority and global leadership. Through Professor GeorDavie's ministry, Arusha becomes more than a city at the foot of Mount Meru. It becomes a symbol of gathering, renewal and international spiritual connection.

In a century marked by conflict, moral fatigue and loneliness, the world needs leaders who can restore faith in humanity. Professor GeorDavie's message, ministry and humanitarian posture speak directly into that need.

His work reminds people that peace begins with inner healing, grows through compassion, and expands when leaders choose service over self-interest.

His life, as presented through this testimony, carries the marks of a man entrusted with more than a title. The title Mayor Global of Peace is therefore not merely ornamental. It reflects a mission; to gather, to heal, to unite, to empower and to point nations toward a higher standard of divine order.

The journey that began with one man's obedience has become a global movement. It continues to testify that when God sends, He also reveals; when He chooses, He empowers; and when He anoints, He establishes a legacy that reaches beyond one generation.

In Professor GeorDavie, his followers and beneficiaries see a prophet, a teacher, a humanitarian, a founder, a peace ambassador and a vessel of divine purpose.

But beyond all titles, his most enduring message may be this; peace is not built by words alone, it is erected through lives restored, hearts healed, destinies awakened and humanity gathered under the light of faith. ■



GeorDavie with wife, Anna

GeorDavie made size over writing books

By Simon Martha MKINA

THE professorial title carried by Professor GeorDavie did not arrive on a gold-plated platter. It was not handed to him as a decorative honour, nor did it emerge from mere popularity, noise, or spiritual charisma.

It was earned through intellectual labour, disciplined writing, deep reflection, and a consistent contribution to knowledge across faith, leadership, diplomacy, African unity and Kingdom governance.

In a generation where many spiritual leaders are known largely through sermons, public appearances and prophetic declarations, GeorDavie stands out as a rare figure; a prophet who has also built a serious body of written work.

His title is therefore not only attached to the pulpit; it is attached to the page. It is supported by ideas, arguments, teachings and published works that continue to speak beyond the walls of a congregation.

For Professor GeorDavie, writing is not a side activity. It is part of his calling. Through books, he documents revelation, interprets society, teaches leadership and preserves knowledge for generations.

This is what separates a momentary voice from an enduring institution. Spoken words may move a crowd for a day, but written words can shape minds for decades.

Among his notable works is *Keeping Up With God's Kingdom Government Standards*, a book that reflects his core message on divine order, moral discipline and the standards expected of those who seek to live under God's authority.

It is a work that positions faith not as emotion alone, but as governance, conduct, responsibility and structure.

In *The Kingdom Business*, he extends that vision into the marketplace, showing that enterprise, leadership and economic engagement can also be understood through a Kingdom lens.

The book speaks to believers, entrepreneurs and leaders who see business not merely as profit-making, but as service, stewardship and purpose.

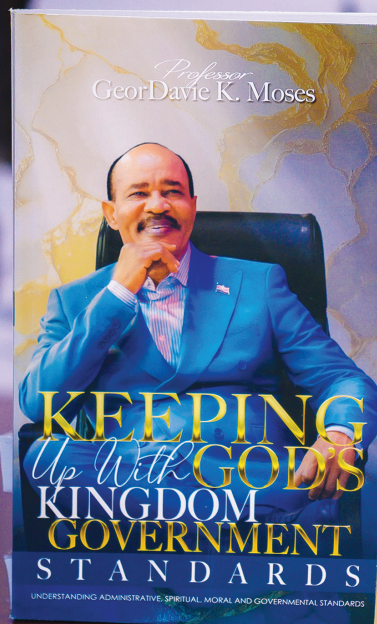
His intellectual reach is not limited to church life. In a Swahili book, *Amani na Diplomasia*, Professor GeorDavie enters the wider conversation on peace, diplomacy and human coexistence. The work reflects his image as a champion of peace and a thinker concerned with harmony among people, communities and nations.

Through another Swahili publication, *Africa Moja, Bara la Nuru*, he speaks to the continent itself. The title carries a bold Pan-African imagination; one Africa, a continent of light.

In this book, it carries a message of unity, dignity, awakening and hope at a time when Africa continues to search for stronger voices of identity and direction.

Taken together, these books demonstrate why the professorial identity of GeorDavie carries weight. He has not relied only on spiritual recognition. He has written, taught, published and contributed to public thought. His title is therefore not ornamental. It is a mark of labour.

Professor GeorDavie's journey confirms a powerful truth; real honour is not worn; it is built. ■





Africa becomes world growth engine

By Dr. Malatshe MPUMELELO

AFRICA'S 2026 growth story is no longer a footnote in the global economy.

It is becoming one of the clearest signals that the next phase of world growth will not be written only in New York, London, Beijing, Brussels or Dubai. It will also be written in Addis Ababa, Conakry, Kampala, Kigali and Cotonou.

At a time when global markets are being tested by war, oil volatility, weaker investor appetite and tighter fiscal space, several African economies are projected to grow at rates many advanced economies can only envy.

According to the IMF's April 2026 World Economic Outlook data cited in the article, Ethiopia is projected to grow by 9.2 per cent, Guinea by 8.7 per cent, Uganda by 7.5 per cent, Rwanda by 7.2 per cent and Benin by 7.0 per cent.

IMF DataMapper confirms Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda at 9.2, 7.5 and 7.2 per cent respectively, while IMF country profile data list Guinea at 8.7 per cent and Benin at 7.0 per cent.

This matters because the global economy itself is slowing. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa says Africa's economy is projected to grow by 4.0 per cent in 2026 and 4.1 per cent in 2027, compared with global output growth of only 2.7 per cent in 2026.

That gap is not merely statistical; it is strategic. It tells investors that Africa is not just recovering from old shocks. It is increasingly becoming a place where growth is being generated faster than in much of the world.

Yet the headline numbers need careful reading. Growth alone is not transformation. A country can expand rapidly while still carrying high debt, weak currencies, poor infrastruc-

ture, unemployment and poverty. The real question is whether Africa's fastest-growing economies can turn impressive GDP figures into jobs, factories, exports, tax revenue, better schools, reliable power and broader human development.

Ethiopia sits at the top of the list. Its projected 9.2 per cent expansion reflects scale, public investment, services, industrial parks and one of Africa's largest domestic markets.

With more than 120 million people, Ethiopia has the internal demand and labour force to support manufacturing, construction, agriculture and services. But the country's growth story remains complicated by inflation, debt pressure, foreign exchange shortages and the political scars of conflict.

Ethiopia's opportunity is enormous, but so is its test: it must prove that rapid growth can be stabilised, diversified and made inclusive.

Guinea's 8.7 per cent projected growth tells a different story. This is mainly a mining-driven expansion. The country holds some of the world's largest bauxite reserves, the raw material used to produce aluminium. In an age of energy transition, electric vehicles, construction and infrastructure demand, bauxite gives Guinea strategic importance.

But mining-led growth is often dangerous when it is not matched by governance discipline.

The central question is whether Guinea can use mining revenue to build roads, power systems, schools, skills and industries beyond extraction. Without that, impressive growth can become another version of the resource curse: wealth beneath the soil, poverty above it.

Uganda's projected 7.5 per cent growth is built on a broader mix: infrastructure, agriculture, services and expected oil activity. After years of preparation, Uganda's petroleum sector is moving closer to becoming a major economic driver.



Oil can lift revenues, attract investment and strengthen infrastructure, especially if linked to roads, pipelines, power and industrial development.

But oil can also distort economies, invite corruption and weaken other productive sectors. Uganda's challenge is to ensure that oil becomes a platform for diversification, not a substitute for it.

Rwanda is perhaps the most instructive case. Its projected 7.2 per cent growth is not built primarily on minerals or oil. It is built on services, tourism, finance, technology, policy stability and a deliberate effort to position Kigali as a regional business hub.

Rwanda's advantage is predictability. In a world where investors worry about sudden policy shifts, conflict and administrative disorder, Rwanda has sold itself as a place where decisions move quickly and institutions function with discipline.

That does not remove all concerns, but it explains why Rwanda continues to attract attention beyond its small domestic market.

Benin, projected at 7.0 per cent, completes the top five with a growth model anchored in infrastructure, port activity, trade and reforms. Its position beside Nigeria gives it both opportunity and risk.

On one hand, it can benefit from regional trade, logistics and cross-border commerce. On the other, it remains exposed to external shocks from its much larger neighbour.

Benin's progress will depend on whether it can keep improving ports, customs, transport networks and the business environment while expanding productive sectors that create employment.

The broader message is that Africa's growth is becoming more varied. Some economies are rising through commodities; others through services, infrastructure, logistics, finance, tourism or reform.

That diversity is important. It means Africa should no longer be understood through one narrow lens — oil, aid, conflict or minerals. The continent's growth map is more complex and more promising than that.

Still, the risks are serious. The IMF warned in April 2026 that sub-Saharan Africa had entered the year with strong momentum after posting its fastest growth rate in a decade in 2025, supported by reduced macroeconomic imbalances, rising investment and easing inflation. But it also warned that risks were mounting just as growth gains were taking hold.

Debt remains one of the biggest threats. UNECA says Africa's average public debt-to-GDP ratio was estimated at 63 per cent in 2025, with interest payments absorbing nearly 15 per cent of government revenues.

It also noted that about 40 per cent of African countries remain in debt distress or at high risk of it. These figures matter because growth financed by expensive debt can quickly become fragile.

Climate shocks are another danger. Droughts, floods and food insecurity can erase growth gains, especially in economies where agriculture still employs large numbers of people.

Oil volatility can help exporters but hurt importers. War in the Middle East can raise fuel costs, disrupt trade routes and reduce investor appetite for emerging markets. Global growth weakness can reduce demand for African exports.

That is why Africa's 2026 growth story must be treated as an opportunity, not a victory lap. Investors should pay closer attention, but African governments must also do their part.

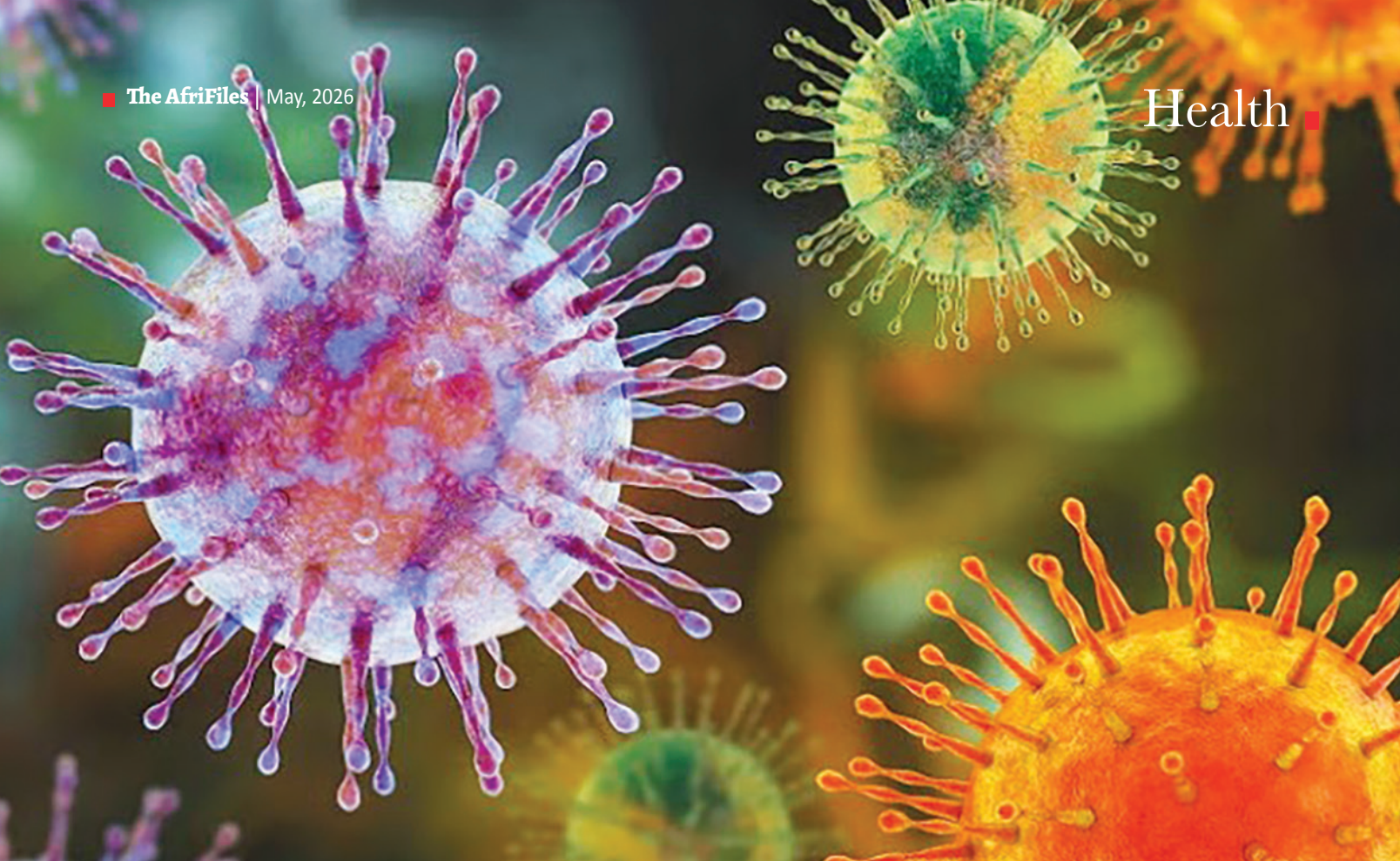
They need better tax systems, transparent contracts, stronger public finance, reliable data, deeper capital markets and clear industrial strategies. Growth must move from extraction to value addition, from ports to factories, from GDP tables to household incomes.

The world has often looked at Africa through the lens of risk. In 2026, it must also look through the lens of return.

The continent's fastest-growing economies are showing that momentum exists. The decisive question is whether that momentum can be converted into durable transformation.

If it can, Africa will not merely be one of the world's fastest-growing regions. It will become one of the most important engines of the next global economy. ■





Deadly virus exposes African ports

By Nkwame AWESI

WHEN the MV Hondius dropped anchor off Praia, Cabo Verde, in early May 2026, it carried more than frightened passengers. It carried a warning.

A rare rodent-borne virus, normally discussed in laboratories and rural health bulletins, had suddenly arrived at Africa's maritime doorstep.

By May 7, the World Health Organization (WHO) said eight cases linked to the ship had been reported, including three deaths, and five had been confirmed as Hantavirus.

The strain involved was Andes virus, the only known Hantavirus species capable of limited person-to-person transmission through close and prolonged contact.

The case has exposed a difficult truth; Africa's ports are not just trade gateways; they are frontline public-health posts. Ships bring tourists, fuel, food, machinery and opportunity. They can also bring infected travellers, contaminated cargo spaces, stowaway rodents and pathogens that move faster than bureaucracy.

The Hondius incident should not be treated as the beginning of a global panic. WHO has assessed the public-health risk as low, but it should be treated as a serious rehearsal for how Africa responds when disease arrives by sea.

Hantaviruses are carried mainly by rodents. Humans usually become infected by breathing in particles contaminated with the urine, droppings or saliva of infected rodents, especially in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces.

Infection can also occur through rodent bites, though this is less common. The disease can begin like flu, fever, headache, muscle pain, abdominal discomfort, nausea or vomiting, be-

fore progressing rapidly in severe cases to breathing difficulty, fluid in the lungs, shock, kidney failure or death.

The numbers explain why health officials take it seriously. WHO estimates that Hantavirus infections range from 10,000 to more than 100,000 each year globally, with the largest burden in Asia and Europe.

In the Americas, Hantaviruses can cause cardiopulmonary syndrome, a severe lung-and-heart disease with fatality rates commonly between 20 and 40 per cent and, in some settings, up to 50 per cent.

Yet, hantavirus is not Covid-19. It does not spread easily through casual contact, crowds or ordinary breathing in public spaces.

Most Hantaviruses do not spread from person to person at all. Andes virus is the exception, but even then, transmission has been associated mainly with close and prolonged exposure, such as among household members, intimate partners or people sharing confined spaces for extended periods. That is why a cruise ship matters; it is not a city, but it is a floating closed environment.

The MV Hondius case is alarming because the ship's journey created a moving chain of exposure. WHO said symptoms among cases began between 6 and 28 April.

One passenger developed fever, headache and diarrhoea on April 6, and later died on board. A close contact disembarked at Saint Helena, deteriorated during travel to Johannesburg and died in South Africa.

Another patient was medically evacuated to South Africa and admitted to intensive care. The ship carried passengers and crew of 23 nationalities, forcing authorities across several countries to coordinate tracing, isolation, testing and repatriation.

For Africa, the risk is twofold. The first is imported human infection; a traveller boards a plane, ship or ferry while incubating the disease, then develops symptoms in another country.

The second is ecological; rodents linked to ports, warehouses, markets and ships can create local reservoirs of disease, this is not theoretical. Research has shown that African Hantaviruses have been identified in rodents, shrews and bats, and serological studies have detected hantavirus antibodies in African human populations.

One review reported a 1.0 per cent human seroprevalence rate in South Africa's Cape region among 1,442 people studied.

Ports deserve special attention. A study published in Emerging Infectious Diseases found Seoul virus, another hantavirus, in 37.5 per cent of brown rats captured at the Autonomous Port of Cotonou in Benin.

That finding matters because brown rats travel well with shipping, thrive in ports and live close to people, grain stores and waste. The study's broader implication is clear; maritime trade can move not only goods, but also rodent reservoirs and their viruses.

This is where Africa's preparedness gap becomes dangerous. Many countries have improved border screening since Ebola, Covid-19, mpox and Marburg outbreaks.

But airports often receive more attention than seaports. Port-health officers may lack rapid diagnostic tools, clear isolation areas, trained emergency teams, rodent surveillance systems or real-time links to national laboratories.

Africa CDC has recognised this weakness, warning that the movement of people, animals and goods across formal and informal points of entry increases the spread of infectious diseases and demands stronger early detection, coordination and response systems at airports, seaports, land borders and surrounding communities.

Containment begins before a ship docks. Every vessel arriving from an affected area should submit a maritime health declaration, recent illness log, rodent-control records and itinerary of passenger movements.

Port authorities should have a standing emergency plan

defining who boards the ship, who collects samples, where suspected cases are isolated, how waste is handled, and how passengers are transferred without exposing dock workers, taxi drivers, hotel staff or airport personnel.

Second, ports need rodent intelligence. Hantavirus prevention is impossible without rodent control. Warehouses, food stores, cargo yards, passenger terminals, fishing docks and ship-provisioning areas must be inspected regularly. Food must be sealed. Waste must be removed quickly. Holes and gaps in buildings must be closed.

Rodent droppings should never be swept or vacuumed dry because that can aerosolise infectious particles; contaminated areas should be dampened before cleaning.

Third, Africa needs laboratory readiness. Hantavirus diagnosis is difficult because early symptoms mimic malaria, influenza, Covid-19, dengue, leptospirosis, viral pneumonia or sepsis.

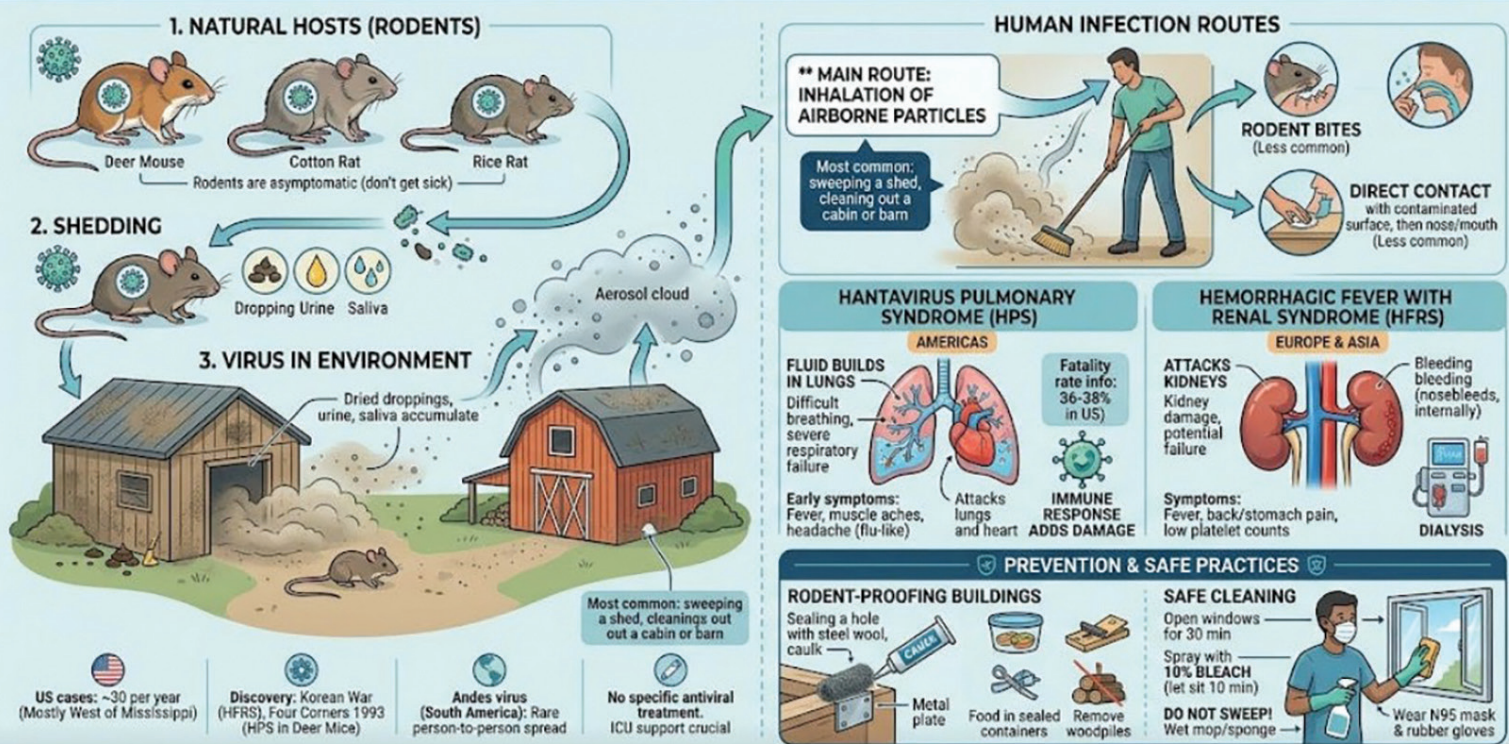
WHO says confirmation relies on serological testing for IgM antibodies or rising IgG titres, and molecular methods such as RT-PCR during the acute phase. This means countries must strengthen referral networks, sample packaging, biosafety and cross-border laboratory agreements before the next ship arrives.

Fourth, hospitals must prepare for supportive care. There is no licensed specific antiviral treatment or vaccine for Hantavirus infection. Survival depends on early recognition, oxygen support, careful fluid management, intensive care when needed, and treatment of respiratory, cardiac or kidney complications.

Finally, communication must be honest. The public should be told that hantavirus can kill, but also that it does not spread easily like Covid-19. Panic closes ports; trust keeps surveillance alive.

The MV Hondius should therefore become Africa's lesson, not Africa's nightmare. The continent does not need fear, it needs sharper port health, stronger laboratories, better rodent control, faster information-sharing and a one health system that treats humans, animals and the environment as one connected battlefield. ■

HANTAVIRUS: LIFECYCLE & HUMAN INFECTION



Africa's new fight for self-reliance

By The AfriFiles TEAM

THE Iran war has done more than unsettle oil markets. It has exposed, with brutal clarity, one of Africa's most dangerous economic weaknesses; a continent rich in crude oil, minerals, gas, sunshine, land and labour still depends heavily on outsiders for the refined fuel, fertiliser and industrial inputs that keep its economies alive.

For years, this vulnerability was discussed in conferences, policy papers and presidential speeches. But the war turned theory into pain.

As supply routes from the Middle East became uncertain, fuel prices rose, cargoes were delayed, and import-dependent African economies began to feel the cost immediately. Kenya, among the exposed economies, saw rising energy costs squeeze transport operators and households, with reporting that higher fuel prices cut deeply into the earnings of small transport workers in Nairobi, Kenya.

That is why a new wave of African self-reliance is gaining urgency. It is no longer a romantic slogan from the era of liberation politics. It has become an economic survival strategy.

From Kenya's renewed push into oil production, to Angola's Cabinda refinery, to Aliko Dangote's vast refinery and fertiliser ambitions, Africa is beginning to confront a hard truth: sovereignty without production capacity is fragile.

The contradiction is old and painful. Africa exports raw materials and imports finished products. It exports crude oil and imports petrol. It exports gas and imports fertiliser.

It produces food, yet remains exposed to global fertiliser shocks. It has ports, markets and people, yet too often lacks the factories and refineries that would allow it to capture value at home.

The Iran war has sharpened this contradiction. East Africa currently imports all of its refined petroleum products, largely from the Middle East, leaving the region vulnerable to supply disruption and price spikes, Reuters reported.

It has been also reported that the war reshaped fuel flows into East Africa, with Kenya forced to look increasingly to Europe, India and Saudi Arabia's Red Sea refineries after disruptions affected supplies from key Gulf exporters.

For ordinary Africans, these are not abstract trade routes. They become higher bus fares, more expensive food, rising electricity costs, delayed goods, pressure on national budgets and social anger.

When fuel rises, everything moves with it: tomatoes in the market, cement at the construction site, school transport, farm produce, fishing boats, generators, hospital logistics and the cost of living itself.



This is why Kenya's oil ambitions now carry a deeper meaning. The country, which depends heavily on imported fossil fuels for its energy needs, is moving again toward commercial oil production from Turkana.

Kenyan officials have said commercial production is expected by the end of 2026, with the first crude oil export targeted for December. The volumes will not transform Kenya overnight.

They remain small compared with national demand. But symbolically, they matter. They signal a country trying to move from total dependence to partial control.

Still, crude production alone is not enough. Kenya's bigger challenge is the same one facing much of Africa; without refining capacity, oil-producing countries can still remain import-dependent.

That is the tragedy Angola has lived for decades. As one of Africa's major crude producers, Angola has long exported oil while importing much of the fuel consumed by its own people. Reuters reported that Angola was importing about 72 percent of its domestic fuel consumption before the Cabinda refinery began to change the picture.

The Cabinda refinery is therefore more than an industrial plant. It is a statement. Built with an initial capacity of 30,000 barrels per day, it is Angola's first refinery since independence and is expected to reduce dependence on costly fuel imports.

The AfriFiles understands that the refinery has begun shipping fuels, helping one of Africa's biggest crude producers reduce reliance on gasoline imports. It will not end Angola's import problem alone, but it marks a shift from exporting raw crude to processing more value at home.



A view shows part of Dangote oil refinery in Ibeju, Lekki District, on the outskirts of Lagos, Nigeria.
Photo: Temilade Adelaja / Reuters.

Oil projects can damage environments and displace communities if badly managed. Large private industrial projects can also become monopolies if governments fail to regulate them in the public interest. Self-reliance must not become a slogan used to justify opaque deals, inflated contracts or environmental abuse.

Across the continent, no figure represents this industrial turn more dramatically than Aliko Dangote. His refinery in Nigeria, built at enormous scale, has become a symbol of what African industrial ambition can look like when capital, political will and market size meet.

During the Iran war disruptions, Dangote said his refinery had increased exports of petroleum and urea to African countries hit by supply problems, while operating at its maximum capacity of 650,000 barrels per day.

That matters because Dangote's project challenges a long-standing assumption: that Africa must remain a supplier of raw materials and a consumer of finished goods. His refinery says the opposite.

It says Africa can build at scale, supply itself and export to the world. It says the continent's problem is not lack of demand, but lack of industrial confidence, policy stability and financing.

Now Dangote is looking beyond Nigeria. It is reported that he is considering Kenya's Mombasa as the site of a 650,000-barrel-a-day refinery in East Africa, a project estimated at between

\$15 billion and \$17 billion. Earlier, Kenyan President William Ruto said East African countries were discussing a joint refinery that could process oil from countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. Dangote said he could replicate his Nigerian refinery in East Africa if governments supported the plan.

If such a refinery is built, it could alter the economic geography of East Africa. Instead of importing refined petroleum from distant suppliers, the region could process crude closer to home, create jobs, reduce foreign exchange pressure and build strategic reserves.

It could also strengthen intra-African trade at a time when the African Continental Free Trade Area remains more promise than reality.

But the self-reliance debate is not only about fuel. Fertiliser is equally strategic. Without affordable fertiliser, Africa's food security remains vulnerable.

Global shocks, from the Ukraine war to the Iran conflict, have shown how quickly farm inputs can become expensive or scarce. Dangote has already built a major fertiliser plant in Nigeria, designed to produce three million tonnes of urea a year, and Ethiopia later signed a \$2.5 billion agreement with Dangote Group to build a fertiliser plant in Gode with annual output of three million metric tonnes.

This is a crucial frontier. Africa cannot claim food sovereignty if its farmers depend on imported fertiliser priced by wars and shipping disruptions thousands of kilometres away.

Fertiliser production, fuel refining, agro-processing and regional transport corridors are not separate issues. They are the architecture of economic independence.

Yet the road to self-reliance will not be easy. Refineries are expensive. Fertiliser plants require gas, infrastructure, skilled labour and stable regulation.

Oil projects can damage environments and displace communities if badly managed. Large private industrial projects can also become monopolies if governments fail to regulate them in the public interest. Self-reliance must not become a slogan used to justify opaque deals, inflated contracts or environmental abuse.

There is also a climate dilemma. Africa needs energy security, but it must avoid locking itself permanently into old fossil-fuel dependence while the world moves toward cleaner technologies.

The smarter path is balanced; refine where necessary, invest in gas and fertiliser where strategic, but also accelerate solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and battery storage. Real self-reliance means not being trapped by any single source, whether Middle Eastern fuel, imported fertiliser, foreign loans or one billionaire's industrial empire.

The lesson of the Iran war is therefore larger than fuel. It is a warning that Africa's economic model remains too exposed to distant decisions. A blockade, a war, a shipping crisis or a diplomatic rupture can quickly become a bread-and-transport crisis in African cities.

Africa's answer must be production. Build refineries. Build fertiliser plants. Build storage. Build regional value chains. Build ports that serve African industry, not merely exports of raw commodities. Build policies that reward local manufacturing and punish wasteful dependence.

For too long, Africa has been told to integrate into the global economy mainly as a supplier. The Iran war has reminded the continent that integration without resilience is dangerous.

The future belongs not to countries that merely import what they need, but to those that can produce, process, store and trade on their own terms.

Africa's new self-reliance push is not isolationism. It is maturity, it is the recognition that political independence must now be matched by industrial power. ■

President Tshisekedi's third-term shadow

“ I did not ask for a third term,..but if the people want me to have a third term, I will accept.”

By Lammie ISMAIL

Democratic Republic of Congo President Félix Tshisekedi has thrown his country into a fresh political storm after publicly opening the door to a possible third term.

This move that opposition figures fear could test the limits of the constitution and revive memories of Congo's past electoral crises.

Speaking during a nationally televised press conference in Kinshasa last week, Tshisekedi insisted he was not actively seeking to extend his rule. But his carefully chosen words carried unmistakable political weight. “I did not ask for a third term,” he said, “but if the people want me to have a third term, I will accept.”

The statement immediately sharpened debate over whether constitutional reform being discussed by his allies could eventually weaken the country's two-term presidential limit.

Tshisekedi, first elected in 2019 after the long rule of Joseph Kabila, is currently serving his second and constitutionally final mandate, which is due to end in December 2028.

His remarks have therefore landed in a highly sensitive political environment, where any suggestion of extending presidential tenure is viewed with suspicion by opposition leaders, civil society groups and citizens still scarred by previous delays in democratic transition.

The Congolese leader tried to separate the third-term question from the push for constitutional changes. He said any revision would require a referendum and insisted it “must not be linked to any third term.”

But in a country where constitutional engineering has often been viewed as a gateway to power retention, his assurance has not calmed fears. To critics, the danger lies not only in what Tshisekedi said, but in the political door he has now left open.

His comments also came against the dark backdrop of war in eastern Congo, where the government is battling the Rwanda-backed M23 rebellion and other armed groups.

Tshisekedi warned that the 2028 elections could be difficult to hold if the conflict remains unresolved, a statement that opposition figures are likely to interpret as another possible route to extending his stay in office.

The east of the country remains trapped in violence, displacement and regional rivalry, making insecurity both a genuine national crisis and a dangerous political argument.

At the same press conference, Tshisekedi welcomed recent United States sanctions against former President Kabila, presenting them as validation of his government's long-standing claim that Kabila has supported forces destabilising eastern Congo.

Washington accused Kabila of providing support to armed groups linked to the conflict, including M23 and its political-military network.

For Tshisekedi, the sanctions strengthen his case against a powerful predecessor. For his opponents, however, the bigger question is whether the president is using war, reform and anti-Kabila rhetoric to shape the ground for a longer presidency.

Congo now faces a defining test; whether constitutional debate will deepen democracy, or become the latest African story of power refusing to leave on time. ■

President Félix Tshisekedi.
Photo: Courtesy of Britannica.



The AfriFiles. Almost Everywhere!



at Cultural Heritage in Arusha



The AfriFiles in Dodoma, Tanzania



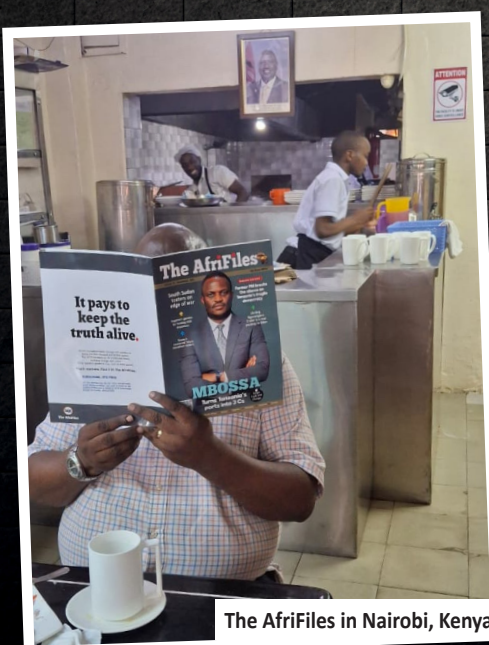
in Salt Lake City, USA



on a SLC, USA supermarket shelf.



at Smith's Market Place, SLC, USA



The AfriFiles in Nairobi, Kenya



On Tanzania's SGR train



in a tourist hotel, Arusha

Slavery's debt still haunts history

Africans were
chained into slavery.
Photo: Getty Images

It has once again become clear that the United States, the United Kingdom and other European states feel no remorse for their historical role in the global slave trade, nor intend to apologise for it.

By Ali BILGENOGLU

A historic vote at the United Nations General Assembly on March 25, 2026 reopened one of the world's deepest moral wounds.

A draft resolution submitted by Ghana, recognising the Transatlantic Slave Trade as the gravest "crime against humanity," was adopted by 123 votes in favour, with 52 abstentions and three countries voting against.

Resolution A/80/L.48 condemns the forced displacement and enslavement of millions of Africans over nearly 400 years as one of the greatest injustices in human history. It calls on UN member states linked to the slave trade to issue official apologies, contribute to a reparations fund, and return African artefacts and national archives looted or held in Western institutions.

Its political and moral significance is immense. Yet the most telling debate has not been about the resolution's substance, but about the reluctance of some Western powers to support it.

The United States, the United Kingdom and several European states, whose economies and institutions were shaped by slavery, remain unwilling to confront that history through

apology or reparative action.

For more than four centuries, from the early 16th century to the late 19th century, Europe and the Americas stood at the centre of the largest system of forced migration and human trafficking ever known. An estimated 13 million Africans were uprooted through the so-called Triangular Trade. Around 2.5 million are believed to have died during capture, forced marches, sea crossings, disease, violence and inhuman treatment.

The Triangular Trade was as brutal as it was profitable. European merchants carried manufactured goods; weapons, textiles and alcohol - to Africa. Enslaved Africans were then transported across the Atlantic in the Middle Passage under horrific conditions.

Finally, raw materials produced by their forced labour; sugar, cotton, coffee and tobacco, were shipped back to Europe, feeding factories, banks and markets.

This cycle devastated Africa while enriching Europe and America. Africa lost millions of its strongest and most productive people. Communities were emptied, economies disrupted, traditional industries weakened and generations broken. Meanwhile, slave labour fuelled plantations in the Americas and supplied raw materials that powered European industrial growth.

The economic foundations of modern capitalism cannot be separated from this history. In *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams argued that profits from the slave trade helped finance Britain's Industrial Revolution. Joseph Inikori, in *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England*, similarly showed how slave-produced goods expanded shipping, banking, insurance and industrial markets.

The institutional traces remain visible. Lloyd's of London, one of the world's oldest insurance markets, grew partly from the need to manage maritime risks associated with long-distance trade, including the slave economy.

Major port cities such as Liverpool and Bristol were transformed by wealth generated through slavery. Docks, customs houses, commercial buildings and civic institutions were financed by merchants and families whose fortunes were tied to human bondage.

The United States tells a similar story. The plantation economy of the South, built on enslaved African labour, produced tobacco, rice and cotton on a scale that fed global markets. The industrial and financial institutions of the North also benefited through trade, credit, insurance and manufacturing. Modern American capitalism grew not beside slavery, but with it.

Africa paid the heaviest price. In *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney argued that colonialism and the slave trade systematically drained Africa of human capital, distorted its economies and locked it into dependency.

The removal of millions of people, many of them aged between 15 and 45, weakened agriculture, crafts, family formation and social continuity. The result was not only demographic loss, but long-term economic injury.

Modern economic research supports this argument. Nathan Nunn's study, *The Long-Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades*, found that African regions most heavily affected by slave raiding and trafficking are today among the continent's poorest. His work links historical extraction to present-day inequality, showing how slavery destroyed trust, weakened institutions and deepened structural poverty.

The contrast is striking. Regions such as the Slave Coast, including parts of today's Benin and Nigeria, and areas such as Angola, Congo and Sierra Leone, suffered intense human

The return of stolen artefacts and archives is equally important. These are not decorative objects. They are fragments of memory, identity and sovereignty. Their continued detention in Western museums and institutions reflects the unfinished business of empire.

extraction. More geographically protected areas, including Botswana, were less exposed and later showed comparatively stronger stability. History did not end; it continued to shape development.

That is why the UN resolution matters. It is not merely symbolic. It asks the world to recognise that the slave trade was not an unfortunate episode, but an organised crime against humanity whose consequences remain alive in global inequality, cultural dispossession and institutional memory.

An apology alone cannot repair centuries of theft, death and humiliation. But refusal to apologise deepens the wound. Reparations are not about punishing today's citizens for the crimes of their ancestors. They are about acknowledging that nations, institutions and economies still benefit from accumulated historical injustice.

The return of stolen artefacts and archives is equally important. These are not decorative objects. They are fragments of memory, identity and sovereignty. Their continued detention in Western museums and institutions reflects the unfinished business of empire.

The slave trade has already been judged by history. The question now is whether the nations that profited from it have the courage to face that judgment honestly. Ghana's resolution has placed the matter before the world again. Those who supported it chose memory, justice and conscience. Those who opposed or avoided it also wrote their names into history.

Africa is not asking the world to rewrite the past. It is asking the world to stop denying it.

This opinion piece was first published by TRT-Africa. It has been edited to fit into The AfriFiles standards and space. ■



United Nations vote on declaring the transatlantic slave trade as the gravest crimes against humanity. This picture was taken on March 25, 2026 in New York City. Photo: Bianca Otero/Zuma Press Wire/dpa.



A star home side view

High-rise living homes block diseases

By The AfriFiles REPORTER

IN many Tanzanian homes, malaria prevention begins long before a child lies under a mosquito net. It begins at the doorway, at the window, under the roof, around the compound, in the water container, and even in the design of the house itself.

For decades, families have been told to sleep under treated nets, clear stagnant water, spray houses and seek early treatment. Those messages remain vital. But new evidence from Tanzania now suggests something even more powerful; the home can either invite disease in, or help keep it out.

A three-year trial published in *Nature Medicine* found that children living in specially designed two-storey “star homes” in Tanzania had sharply lower rates of malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections compared with children living in traditional mud-and-thatch houses.

The trial involved 110 star homes and 513 traditional homes, with children under 13 followed over three years. Children in the improved homes had 44 percent less malaria, 30 percent less diarrhoea and 18 percent fewer acute respiratory infections; children under five were also taller for their age.

The message is simple but profound; better housing is not just architecture; it is public health.

The star home idea was shaped by one important question; how do mosquitoes enter homes, and how can houses be designed to stop them? The answer was not only found in medicine, but in walls, doors, windows, ventilation and sleeping space.

The homes were built with screened openings to allow air in while keeping insects out, self-closing doors, raised sleeping areas, cleaner floors, rainwater harvesting, safer sanitation, and cooking areas designed to reduce smoke exposure.

For families living in new high-rise, two-storey or modern-designed homes, the lesson is clear. A taller house alone does not defeat malaria. What matters is whether the house is designed and managed to reduce mosquito entry, prevent breeding and protect children during the hours when mosquitoes bite.

Malaria remains one of Africa’s most persistent killers. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported an estimated 282 million malaria cases and 610,000 deaths globally in 2024, with the African region carrying the greatest burden.

Children remain among the most vulnerable because their immunity is still developing. In Tanzania, where malaria transmission varies by region and season, the family home remains one of the most important battlegrounds.

In a modern high-rise or two-storey home, prevention should begin with barriers. Windows should be screened with strong mesh and repaired immediately when torn. Doors should close properly, preferably with automatic closing springs, because one door left open at dusk can undo the protection of the whole house.

Ventilation holes, ceiling gaps, roof openings and spaces around pipes should also be sealed or screened. Mosquitoes do not need a grand entrance; they need a gap.

Children's bedrooms deserve special attention. Where possible, children should sleep on upper floors because some malaria-carrying mosquitoes tend to fly and rest closer to ground level. But height is not enough.

Each child should still sleep under a long-lasting insecticide-treated net, especially during rainy seasons and in high-transmission areas. Treated nets remain one of the most effective malaria prevention tools, and WHO identifies insecticide-treated nets as a key intervention in areas of intense transmission.

The tragedy in many homes is not that families lack knowledge, but that daily habits weaken protection. A net may be available but folded in a corner because the room is hot.

A screened window may exist but be left open because airflow is poor. A door may have a spring but be tied open during evening cooking. A balcony may look beautiful but hold buckets, flowerpots and containers full of rainwater. Malaria prevention is defeated not only by poverty, but also by small acts of neglect.

This is where family discipline becomes lifesaving. Parents, guardians, older siblings and domestic helpers must treat mosquito prevention as a nightly routine. Before sunset, doors should be closed, nets checked, water containers covered, balcony drains cleared and children called indoors.

In many households, children play outside until late evening, exactly when mosquitoes become active. A modern house should therefore have safe indoor play space, good lighting and airflow so that children are not forced outside at the most dangerous hours.

Clean water and sanitation also matter. The Tanzanian Star Home study is important because it did not look at malaria alone. It showed that better houses can reduce multiple childhood illnesses at once.

Rainwater harvesting, covered storage, clean floors and fly-proof latrines helped reduce exposure to diarrhoeal disease. This is crucial because a child weakened by repeated diarrhoea or respiratory infection is less able to thrive. A healthy home is not merely mosquito-free; it is clean, ventilated, dry and safe.

Families in high-rise homes should be especially careful with water storage. Rooftop tanks, balcony drums, construction containers, blocked gutters and open buckets can become breeding sites.

Mosquitoes breed in standing water, and in urban settings they often exploit what families forget: a broken pipe, a flower vase, a clogged drain, a discarded tyre, a small pool under an air conditioner outlet. Every week, families should inspect the compound from roof to ground. If water stands, mosquitoes will come.

Indoor air also affects children's health. In homes where cooking is done indoors with charcoal or firewood, smoke can worsen respiratory infections. The star home design included a cooking area intended to reduce smoke exposure.

For families, this means kitchens should be well ventilated and, where possible, separated from children's sleeping areas. A house that keeps mosquitoes out but traps smoke inside has only solved half the problem.

Modern housing also demands shared responsibility. In flats and high-rise buildings, one careless household can en-

Rainwater harvesting, covered storage, clean floors and fly-proof latrines helped reduce exposure to diarrhoeal disease. This is crucial because a child weakened by repeated diarrhoea or respiratory infection is less able to thrive. A healthy home is not merely mosquito-free; it is clean, ventilated, dry and safe.

danger many others. If one family leaves stagnant water on a balcony, the mosquitoes may not respect the walls between apartments.

Building managers should ensure regular drainage, waste collection, gutter cleaning, maintenance of screens, and safe lighting in corridors and staircases. Malaria prevention in such settings becomes a community contract.

Yet housing should never replace medical vigilance. When a child develops fever, chills, vomiting, weakness or unusual tiredness, parents should seek testing and treatment quickly.

Prevention reduces risk; it does not abolish it. Delayed treatment can turn a preventable illness into a fatal emergency.

The deeper lesson from Tanzania's new housing evidence is that disease prevention must move beyond posters and clinics. It must enter the work of builders, architects, local governments, landlords, parents and communities.

A house should not be judged only by beauty, tiles, height or paint. It should be judged by whether it protects the child sleeping inside.

For families, the fight against malaria is therefore both simple and serious: screen the windows, close the doors, use treated nets, clear stagnant water, cover stored water, keep children indoors at dusk, ventilate kitchens, maintain sanitation and seek early treatment.

A high-rise home can be a fortress of health, but only if its design is matched by daily discipline.

As Durham University's Steve Lindsay put it, "Building better can turn a dangerous home into a safe one." That sentence should travel far beyond the laboratory.

In every Tanzanian home, it should become a family rule: the safest house is not the tallest or most expensive, but the one that gives children the best chance to sleep, grow and live free from preventable disease. ■



A normal village house in many poor African countries, is one of the reasons of diseases spread. Photo: Ali Ihsan Ozturk/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Mali's stability myth falls apart



President Assimi Goïta

By Siaka NOUHOUM

THE fall of some major town of Kidal, Aguelhok and Tessalit is more than another rebel advance in Mali's long northern war.

It is a warning that the country's post-coup promise of order has cracked. When Assimi Goïta and his fellow officers seized power, they presented themselves as soldiers of national rescue; tougher than civilians, closer to the people, and capable of restoring territorial integrity.

Today, the same regime faces military, political and psychological tests from the north it claimed to have reclaimed. Mali's junta took power after the 2020 and 2021 coups, promising to restore security.

The Tuareg-led Front de libération de l'Azawad has chosen its language carefully. By speaking of self-determination rather than immediate secession, it is trying to broaden its appeal beyond fighters and old separatist networks. Yet this message carries contradictions.

Many communities in Azawad remember earlier cycles of rebellion, jihadist occupation, army retaliation and broken peace deals. They may welcome Bamako's retreat, but they may not automatically trust a movement advancing alongside jihadists.

That uneasy alliance is the first sign of what may happen next; fragmentation. Mali is no longer facing one rebellion with one demand. It is facing overlapping wars; Tuareg nationalism, jihadist expansion, local grievances, military rule and foreign intervention.

Each force may temporarily weaken Bamako, but they do not necessarily share the same endgame. If northern towns fall faster than new governance structures emerge, civilians may

again be trapped between competing armed authorities.

The second sign is the weakening of the junta's strongest claim; security. The military government expelled old Western partners, embraced Russian support, and sold sovereignty as a battlefield doctrine.

But the killing of Defence Minister Sadio Camara, pressure around Bamako and retreat from symbolic northern positions suggest that firepower alone cannot produce legitimacy. A regime built on the promise of control becomes vulnerable once it cannot control events.

The third sign is political hardening. Goïta's refusal to compromise may satisfy a nationalist public mood in Bamako, but it narrows the space for negotiation.

As insecurity spreads, the junta may respond with arrests, censorship and harsher military operations. That could deepen resentment, especially among communities already suspicious of state forces and foreign fighters.

The fourth sign is regional danger. A weakened Mali can unsettle the wider Sahel, particularly Niger and Burkina Faso, which share similar military-led politics and security partnerships. If Bamako is forced into talks from a position of weakness, insurgents elsewhere may test their own governments.

Mali was expected by junta supporters to become more stable under soldiers who promised discipline, sovereignty and strength. Instead, the country now risks becoming a warning to the Sahel; a new regime can replace an old order without resolving the grievances that broke it.

If the blockade tightens and rebels push south, inclusive talks may no longer be a diplomatic option. They may become the last instrument left to prevent the state from shrinking before its people. ■

Resource nationalism tests investor confidence

By The AfriFiles REPORTER

MOZAMBIQUE is entering a decisive moment in the management of its natural wealth.

The proposed changes to mining and petroleum laws are being presented as a patriotic correction; more state control, stronger local benefits, greater domestic processing and a bigger national share from resources long dominated by foreign capital.

On paper, this sounds like economic sovereignty. In practice, it may become a test of whether Mozambique can demand more from investors without frightening away the very capital it still needs.

The timing is delicate as Mozambique holds some of the world's largest gas discoveries in the Rovuma Basin, with major LNG projects involving Eni, TotalEnergies and ExxonMobil at different stages of operation, resumption or planned investment. Coral Sul is already operating, TotalEnergies' Mozambique LNG has been resuming after years of suspension linked to insecurity in Cabo Delgado, and ExxonMobil's Rovuma LNG remains tied to a major final investment decision.

That is why the new laws matter far beyond parliament. They will help determine whether Mozambique becomes a serious energy and mining power, or another African state trapped between resource nationalism and investor hesitation.

The state's ambition is understandable. Mozambique has watched huge extractive projects generate expectations without transforming ordinary lives. Gas-rich Cabo Delgado remains marked by insecurity, displacement and poverty.

Civil society groups have long warned that resource wealth

can deepen inequality where governance is weak, revenues are opaque and communities see little benefit.

The government's response is to demand a larger national stake. Under the petroleum revision, at least 25 per cent of oil and gas production, including LNG, is to be allocated to the domestic market, while condensate would be channelled fully into national use. The law also introduces a "free carry" model, allowing the state to participate in projects without contributing capital during risky exploration phases.

Politically, this is powerful, it tells citizens that Mozambique will no longer remain a spectator while foreign companies extract wealth. It also gives the government a language of sovereignty at a time when public trust is fragile.

But economics is less forgiving than politics. Investors calculate risk, cost and legal certainty. If the wording of the law is unclear on who pays for domestic gas, how force majeure costs are treated, or what happens when projects are suspended, companies may delay decisions, demand higher returns, or redirect capital elsewhere.

That is the danger. Mozambique wants more value from its resources, but if the rules appear unpredictable, the country could lose both revenue and credibility. The strongest law is not necessarily the toughest one; it is the clearest, most enforceable and most trusted.

Mozambique needs reform, but reform must be disciplined. State participation, local content and community benefit-sharing are legitimate. Yet they must be matched with transparency, competent institutions, security in project areas and predictable contracts. Otherwise, the new laws may create the opposite of what they promise: not sovereignty, but uncertainty. ■



Mozambican President Daniel Chapo.
Photo: Office of the President





Where danger lies

Ramaphosa may survive a vote mathematically, but he could still fall politically. If enough ANC MPs, alliance partners, veterans, provincial power-brokers or coalition allies conclude that he has become a liability, resignation could become the cleaner option.

In most African countries, parties often protect presidents until the cost of protection exceeds the cost of sacrifice.

The third circumstance is coalition pressure. South Africa is no longer governed by the old ANC dominance.

The post-2024 political order depends on negotiation, compromise and fragile arrangements with other parties. If the Democratic Alliance, smaller coalition partners, or influential opposition forces decide that Ramaphosa's continued leadership damages the credibility of government, they may not need to impeach him to weaken him.

They can slow legislation, harden oversight, withdraw cooperation, or publicly demand conditions for continued support.

The fourth circumstance is market and investor confidence. Ramaphosa's political brand has long rested on stability, constitutionalism and reform.

He presented himself as the antidote to the corruption scandals of the Jacob Zuma years. If the Phala Phala inquiry destroys that moral contrast, his reformist image collapses.

Investors can tolerate political noise; they fear prolonged uncertainty at the top of the state. Should the inquiry begin to paralyse cabinet, weaken budget credibility, delay reforms, or raise questions about

succession, business pressure could quietly intensify.

The fifth circumstance is public fatigue. South Africans face unemployment, crime, poor services, inequality, infrastructure decay and persistent mistrust of political elites.

Many citizens may not follow every legal detail of Section 89, but they understand a simpler question; why was a sitting president keeping large amounts of foreign cash at a private farm? In a country still scarred by corruption, that question has emotional power.

If the committee hearings become televised theatre, public opinion could turn from curiosity to anger.

The sixth circumstance is opposition unity. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) brought the case that revived the process and has demanded immediate action.

Other opposition parties are likely to use the inquiry to frame Ramaphosa as a president who escaped accountability only because Parliament protected him in 2022.

If the opposition succeeds in making Phala Phala not just a scandal, but a symbol of elite impunity, the pressure will widen beyond Parliament.

The seventh circumstance is succession politics inside the ANC. Ramaphosa's enemies within his own movement may see the judgment as an opening.

South African presidents are not removed only by courts or voters; they are often weakened first by internal party calculations. If factions believe the ANC can rebuild itself faster without him, Phala Phala may become the instrument for a managed exit.

Still, Ramaphosa is not finished as impeachment is difficult. It requires a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, and analysts still see his removal as unlikely because the ANC retains enough seats, and coalition partners may not want to destabilise government.

The process may also take months, giving him time to manage the politics.

But survival is not the same as strength. The judgment has changed the terrain. Ramaphosa can no longer rely on the buried memory of 2022. He must now survive a process he once avoided.

In the end, the question is not only whether Cyril Ramaphosa can legally remain president. It is whether he can continue to govern with moral authority while an impeachment committee interrogates the private scandal that has followed him for years.

If the inquiry produces serious new evidence, fractures ANC discipline, shakes coalition confidence, or turns public patience into outrage, resignation may no longer look like surrender.

It may look like the only remaining way to protect the presidency from the president's own unresolved story. ■



President Ramaphosa



A man passes by a destroyed tank on the main street of Edaga Hamus, in the Tigray region, in Ethiopia. Photo: Yan Boechat/VOA

Tigray gamble tests Addis authority

By Salma DAWITT

THE resurrection of the Tigray People's Liberation Front's pre-war legislative council is not just a domestic Ethiopian dispute, it is a regional tremor.

Reinstalling Debretsion Gebremichael as Tigray's regional president on May 5, 2026, the TPLF has made its boldest challenge yet to Addis Ababa's authority since the Pretoria peace agreement ended the 2020–2022 war.

The AfriFiles has reported that the move restores the old regional government, creates a rival authority in Tigray, and threatens the fragile post-war order.

The timing is deliberate as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed faces elections on June 1, 2026, while his government is already stretched by insecurity in Amhara, Oromia and the unresolved Tigray question.

The African Center for Strategic Studies warned earlier this year that Ethiopia's elections would be held amid persistent fighting and risks from spoilers, while Human Rights Watch reported continuing armed hostilities in Amhara and parts of Oromia, alongside renewed tensions in Tigray.

This is the opening the TPLF appears to be exploiting. Its calculation is that Addis Ababa may be too politically exposed, militarily stretched and diplomatically constrained to launch a full confrontation before the election. But that gamble is dangerous.

The federal government may see the restoration of Tigray's pre-war institutions as a direct rejection of the Pretoria frame-

work, which created an interim administration until elections could be organised.

Eritrea now returns to the centre of the equation. During the Tigray war, Eritrean forces fought alongside Ethiopian federal troops, and Washington later imposed sanctions on Eritrean military and ruling-party-linked targets over their role in the conflict.

The US State Department said in 2021 it designated Eritrean government and ruling party-linked targets, while the US Treasury sanctioned Eritrea's army chief over alleged serious human rights abuses in Tigray.

Yet geopolitics is shifting. Reuters has reported that Washington is preparing to lift Eritrea sanctions as Red Sea tensions and disrupted oil and shipping routes reshape regional calculations. Human Rights Watch has criticised any easing of sanctions without accountability for abuses in Eritrea and Tigray.

That creates a hard reality for Abiy. If Eritrea is rehabilitated because of Red Sea strategy, Asmara gains leverage. If Tigray reasserts political autonomy, Mekelle gains bargaining power. If conflict spreads, Ethiopia's election loses credibility.

The country expected to stabilise after the new regime may instead face renewed fragmentation; a contested north, an overstretched army, a nervous neighbour and an election conducted under the shadow of war.

The question is no longer only whether the TPLF can back its political gamble militarily, it is whether Addis Ababa can still hold Ethiopia together without reopening the battlefield. ■

Orphaned Bumpy finds human love

By John WAMALWA

AT the edge of Lake Oloiden in Naivasha, Kenya, a tiny newborn hippo remained beside a body that would not move.

He nudged his mother with his blunt nose, called out and waited for a response that would never come. By the time rescuers arrived in early May 2026, the calf was alone, confused and vulnerable — a baby born into the wild, but suddenly left without the one protection that mattered most.

The calf, later named Bumpy, was rescued on 2 May 2026 by the Kenya Wildlife Service Vet and Capture team after reports of an orphaned infant hippo at Oloiden Resort.

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust says his mother had likely been dead for more than a day, possibly after a territorial fight. Conservationists believe she may have died protecting him, a tragic possibility in hippo society where violence between dominant males can place calves at risk.

What followed has turned Bumpy into an international symbol of tenderness, trauma and survival.

After a difficult rescue, the SWT/KWS Rift Valley Mobile Vet Unit transported him to Nairobi, where Sheldrick Wildlife Trust took over his care.

That first night, the tiny hippo was fed warm milk, wrapped in a red blanket and placed beside Keeper Simon, who slept on a mattress on the floor so the frightened calf would not feel abandoned again.

From that moment, Bumpy attached himself to his human

rescuers. He followed them closely, grunting and honking softly, as if trying to replace the lost rhythm of his mother's presence.

For a species whose young stay pressed close to their mothers, often spending long hours in water, that bond is not sentimental decoration; it is survival.

The next day, Bumpy was flown by helicopter to the Trust's Kaluku sanctuary near Tsavo East National Park. There, he now receives round-the-clock care, spends time in a shallow pool and rests beside keepers who remain constantly near him. The Trust says Kaluku is suitable because the nearby Athi River is home to resident hippo pods, giving Bumpy a possible path back to a wild future when he is old and strong enough.

His story has touched many because it reverses the usual image of the hippopotamus. Adult hippos are among Africa's most powerful and dangerous animals, territorial and capable of immense force. Yet Bumpy appears as something else: fragile, grieving and desperate for contact.

The challenge ahead is long. Raising an orphaned hippo can take years, and human care must slowly prepare him for life among his own kind. At Kaluku, another young orphaned hippo, Musumbi, is already under care, though the two are being kept apart for now.

For now, Bumpy is safe. His mother's death began the story in sorrow, but his rescue has given it a different ending; not captivity, but recovery; not spectacle, but patient conservation. ■



Bumpy the hippo resting with a caretaker after his rescue.
Photo: Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

Africa should fill the global leadership void



African heads of state and government pose for a group photograph at the opening of the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in 2022.

By Graca MACHEL

GLOBAL superpowers are repeatedly and deliberately violating the laws and norms that underpin international peace and stability. This has profound consequences for African lives, security, and prosperity.

Africa should step into the dangerous leadership void created by their sustained disregard for international law. This is the moment for African leaders to defend a just global order.

Our continent is beset by crises, from the horrific civil wars in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the layered impacts of the conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine. These crises are compounded by climate change and unequal global systems.

They all call for bold and principled global leadership to forge lasting solutions grounded in equality among nations and guided by respect for human dignity and rights and the rule of law.

When our leaders gather in Nairobi next week for the Africa Forward Summit hosted by presidents William Ruto of Kenya and Emmanuel Macron of France, they should seize the moment to speak with one voice to defend rule of law as the principle guiding international affairs.

That principle is currently under severe strain. But two examples illustrate Africa's potential for moral leadership on the world stage: Gambia's case over Myanmar's alleged genocide against the

Rohingya and South Africa's case against Israel's alleged genocide in Gaza.

Both are under way in the International Court of Justice. Regardless of the outcomes, they shame those who believe in "might is right" while demonstrating respect for international due process.

African leaders need to engage not just internationally, but also nationally and regionally, where laws and rights are violated with near-total impunity.

We need look no further than Sudan. War has displaced almost 14-million people, about one-third of the population.

Sudan's social fabric, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and economy have been devastated. The belligerents all but ignore international humanitarian law. As so often, women and girls have been disproportionately targeted, by rampant conflict-related sexual violence.

This catastrophe has been prolonged by fragmented and insufficient resolve to address the conflict.

This has normalised violations without consequence, eroding not only Sudan's future, but the credibility of international and regional legal systems.

African leaders can and should stand up for Sudan, through robust regional and international diplomacy. They must demand protection for Sudanese civilians, a humanitarian ceasefire, and an end to the conflict.

Silence in the face of such suffering is complicity.

'Might is right' is wrong

Africans know better than most what it means to live in a "might is right" world. We have lived through centuries of colonial oppression, dictatorships, militarism, and violent extremism, so our leaders' voices must be loudest in calling for a reformed international order, rooted in equality, universal human rights, and the rule of law.

We once stood united against grave injustices. History calls on us to carry those legacy forwards, rising with moral authority and responsibility to confront today's affronts to human dignity.

I have every confidence that Africa can meet this moment.

Nearly 20 years ago, after the 2007/8 post-electoral violence in Kenya, I saw first-hand the courage of ordinary citizens, particularly women, in demanding accountability and a return to the path toward justice.

In my mediation work with my dearly missed African brothers Kofi Annan and Benjamin Mkapa, I was impressed by the determination of Kenyan women and youth at every level of society.

They stood against political violence and impunity to demand the protection and defence of the institutions, and people, who work to uphold rule of law. Their example is just as relevant today.

All political stakeholders – in civil society, media, government, and elsewhere – have a common responsibility to ensure that the lessons of the past are learned and applied. The courage of those Kenyans demonstrates how to do so.

The Africa Forward Summit and this geopolitical moment demand more than statements of intent. They call for action to uphold the rule of law, protect human dignity, and redefine what principled leadership looks like in our time. ■



The writer is the deputy chairperson of The Elders, an independent collective of global leaders she co-founded with Nelson Mandela. She was Mozambique's first education minister and First Lady there and in South Africa. This article was first published exclusively by The Continent.



**FORWARD
SUMMIT** AFRICA - FRANCE PARTNERSHIPS
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MAY 11-12, 2026 NAIROBI, KENYA



Botswana's President Duma Boko, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Felix Tshisekedi, Lesotho's King Letsie III, France's President Emmanuel Macron, Kenya's President William Ruto and Comoros' President Azali Assoumani pose for a Family photo following the closing plenary at the Africa Forward summit in Nairobi on May 12, 2026. Photo: Ludovic MARIN / AFP via Getty Images



Health insurance AI punishes the poor

By Africa Uncensored TEAM

ALMOST every day, Grace* sits in people's homes and asks them questions that range from the odd to the intrusive. What type of toilet do you use? What is your roof made of? Do you own a radio?

She helps the occupants enter the answers to these questions - pit latrine, iron sheet roof, no radio — into a digital questionnaire on their phones.

Since there are dozens of these questions, it can be a lengthy process. People are often confused, uncomfortable even.

Some feel like they are under investigation. But finally, when the form is complete, a number comes back. That number, calculated by an artificial intelligence model, is the sum the household must pay that year for public health insurance.

Grace, mother of ten, has spent more than 30 years volunteering, first with her church and more recently as a community health promoter — one of roughly 100,000 government volunteers embedded across Kenya to deliver basic health services.

She helps dozens of people each week register with the Social Health Authority (SHA), the centrepiece of President William Ruto's sweeping overhaul of Kenya's public health insurance system.

She works in Embakasi, a crowded mix of informal settlements on the eastern edge of Nairobi, where she visits hawkers, day labourers and the unemployed.

"We grew up trying to make ends meet," she said. "I started struggling at a young age. So when I see someone suffering it touches me."

Many of the people she sees are living in a way she recalls from her youth. Some have no savings, others live on the street. These are exactly the people the government promised would benefit the most from the AI-driven health reforms; those with the lowest incomes, who were supposed to be charged the minimum premium, or have their costs covered entirely.

"They thought it was something that would help them," Grace said.

The reality Grace sees on the ground is entirely different.

The people she registers are some of the poorest in Nairobi, yet the majority are charged premiums that are out of reach. She has watched families struggling to feed themselves charged a sum they could never hope to afford.

She has also seen critically ill people who cannot get treat-

ment because they have not been able to pay the amount the AI system says they should.

"People are dying, people are suffering," Grace said.

Grace has found herself on the frontlines of a radical experiment; using AI to determine how much Kenyans should pay for health care.

Since its launch, SHA has been met with a barrage of criticism for setting unaffordable or incomprehensible premiums. Africa Uncensored, in collaboration with the investigative newsroom Lighthouse Reports and The Guardian, has spent months trying to find out why.

Reporters used a combination of access-to-information requests and government data to reconstruct how SHA designed the means testing system, spoke to inside sources about its implementation, and obtained a previously unreported document describing where it went wrong.

The government says that SHA's means testing tool is a fair and objective way to calculate how much people need to pay for access to healthcare. But our findings reveal in unprecedented detail how, from the start, it was designed to systematically overcharge the poorest Kenyans, while undercharging the wealthiest.

Consultants brought in to work on the system described it as inequitable in ways which fundamentally could not be corrected. At best, they proposed waves of tinkering which they said could lead to marginal improvements.

But the government pressed ahead anyway.

SHA did not respond to a detailed list of findings and questions. Likhita Banerji, head of the Algorithmic Accountability Lab at Amnesty International, who has studied the use of AI by governments, said; "Instead of fixing previously intractable problems, these systems have often had the opposite effect."

"Marginalised communities have suffered some of the sharpest consequences of AI being introduced into key public sector functions," she said. "The result is more punitive conditions for those living in poverty."

Across the world, algorithms now determine who should receive a loan for a house, be hired for a job, or sentenced for a crime. Increasingly, AI is promoted as the answer to long-standing social challenges. Often it is used to make decisions about particular groups of people. In Kenya, for instance, AI systems are used to determine eligibility for student loans and food subsidies.

But SHA is different. It is the first system intended to assess virtually every household in the country. And, given how it governs access to healthcare, its decisions can have life or death consequences.

An opaque formula

In October 2023, President Ruto addressed a crowd at a football stadium in the highland's town of Kericho, to address a key election pledge. Every citizen, he announced, would soon have access to affordable healthcare. "No Kenyan will be left behind."

Parliament had just passed a law establishing SHA. It replaced the National Health Insurance Fund, an aging bureaucracy that had existed in various forms since 1966 and had fallen deeply into debt.

The old system placed almost all of the national health burden on salaried employees, who paid for it via deductions, while a small number of informal workers bought their way in for a flat fee of 500Ksh a month.

Under the new system, SHA registration would be mandatory and annual health insurance contributions would depend on income, with those who earned more paying more and those earning less paying less.

The problem is that the Kenyan government does not know what most of its people earn. The formal sector, representing salaried workers with payslips, accounts for just 17 percent of the work force. The other 83 percent work in the informal economy, with no reliable income records.

Some months after Ruto's speech, Dr. Brian Lishenga found himself in a conference room in Naivasha, listening to government officials and international donors discussing how to solve that problem. As Chairman of the Rural and Urban Private Hospitals Association of Kenya, Lishenga had a front row seat at SHA's creation. He wanted to understand how the government planned to get the country's tens of millions of informal workers to pay into the system.

“

It could as well have been written in ancient Egyptian,” Lishenga said. “So, I don’t think anyone paid attention to this formula, because it was meant to be consumed by mathematicians and statisticians and, you know, technical people. But in a real sense, that formula had a huge impact on real people’s lives.”

“How are you going to determine contributions for this big pocket?” he wondered. “That’s the first time I hear ‘proxy means testing’ — and I got curious.”

Although he didn’t know it at the time, what Lishenga was hearing was a longstanding — and controversial — idea that economists have been toying with since the 1990s. It offers a way of solving hard questions about how much people earn. Instead of asking for an income figure, the theory goes, you collect other data — what their house is made of, what they own, where they live and work — and use this to predict their income.

The approach has spread. Across Africa, Asia and Latin America, proxy means testing algorithms have become a popular way to determine which households are ‘poor enough’ to receive cash transfers, food subsidies and other social benefits, often with the backing of the World Bank or other international donors.

In March 2024, the government published a formula in the Kenyan Gazette, enshrining the new tool in law. But behind the forest of statistical symbols and mathematical notation, the true meaning was unclear.

“It could as well have been written in ancient Egyptian,” Lishenga said. “So, I don’t think anyone paid attention to this formula, because it was meant to be consumed by mathematicians and statisticians and, you know, technical people. But in a real sense, that formula had a huge impact on real people’s lives.”



Protesters make signs with their arms in front of Kenya police officers during a demonstration in Nairobi on 18 June 2024. Photo: Luis Tato/AFP via Getty Images.

Inside the system

The published formula provided little insight into how the system was actually meant to work, referring only broadly to “household-specific and individual-specific indicators.” But what these are, and how they would be used, was not publicly disclosed.

Africa Uncensored and Lighthouse Reports submitted requests to SHA under the Access to Information Act, a law that gives Kenyan citizens the right to see information held by government agencies.

When SHA failed to respond, we complained to the Ombudsman. Forced to comply, SHA sent us a 10-page document listing the indicators, and explaining how they could be converted into numbers to feed into a machine learning system. This system would then predict people’s incomes.

It did this by comparing the inputs it received to an older dataset, a survey of Kenyan households carried out in 2020. The indicators — floor material, marital status, owning a radio, and 40 other things intended to capture how people live — are what Grace, the community health worker, fills into the form each day for her clients.

We obtained a copy of the 2020 survey from the Kenyan Bureau of Statistics. Armed with this and the list of indicators, we were able to rebuild, and test, the system which SHA had disclosed to us.

The formula assigns each indicator a value and then adds them together to estimate a family’s income, like a receipt. We ran a series of tests to see how its predictions compared to the actual data it was trained on.

What we found was stark. The formula contained an in-built flaw: it would overpredict poor people’s incomes and underpredict rich people’s incomes. It misclassified many actually poor people as living above the poverty line, meaning their SHA contributions ended up higher than they should be.

David Khaoya was one of the early developers of the means

testing system. In 2023, before the formula was published in the Gazette, he was working as a health economist for Palladium, a consultancy funded by USAID that advised the Ministry of Health during the initial design of the tool. He described how, faced with the formula’s inevitable flaw, its designers needed to make a choice.

They could try to correctly classify poor households, but this meant underestimating the income of rich ones. Or instead, they could focus on correctly classifying rich households, which meant increasing the number of poor households whose income is overestimated.

Faced with that choice, Khaoya said, the government decided to prioritise the wealthy being correctly assessed, even if that meant overcharging the poor.

“If you identify a richer person as poor and therefore ask him to pay less, this person will never own up and say look, I’m actually supposed to be paying more,” Khaoya said.

Instead of this, he suggested, it made sense to minimise the number of rich people being identified as poor, knowing that this meant more poor people would be identified as rich. But, he added, these wrongly-classified poor people would be able to appeal and get the mistake corrected.

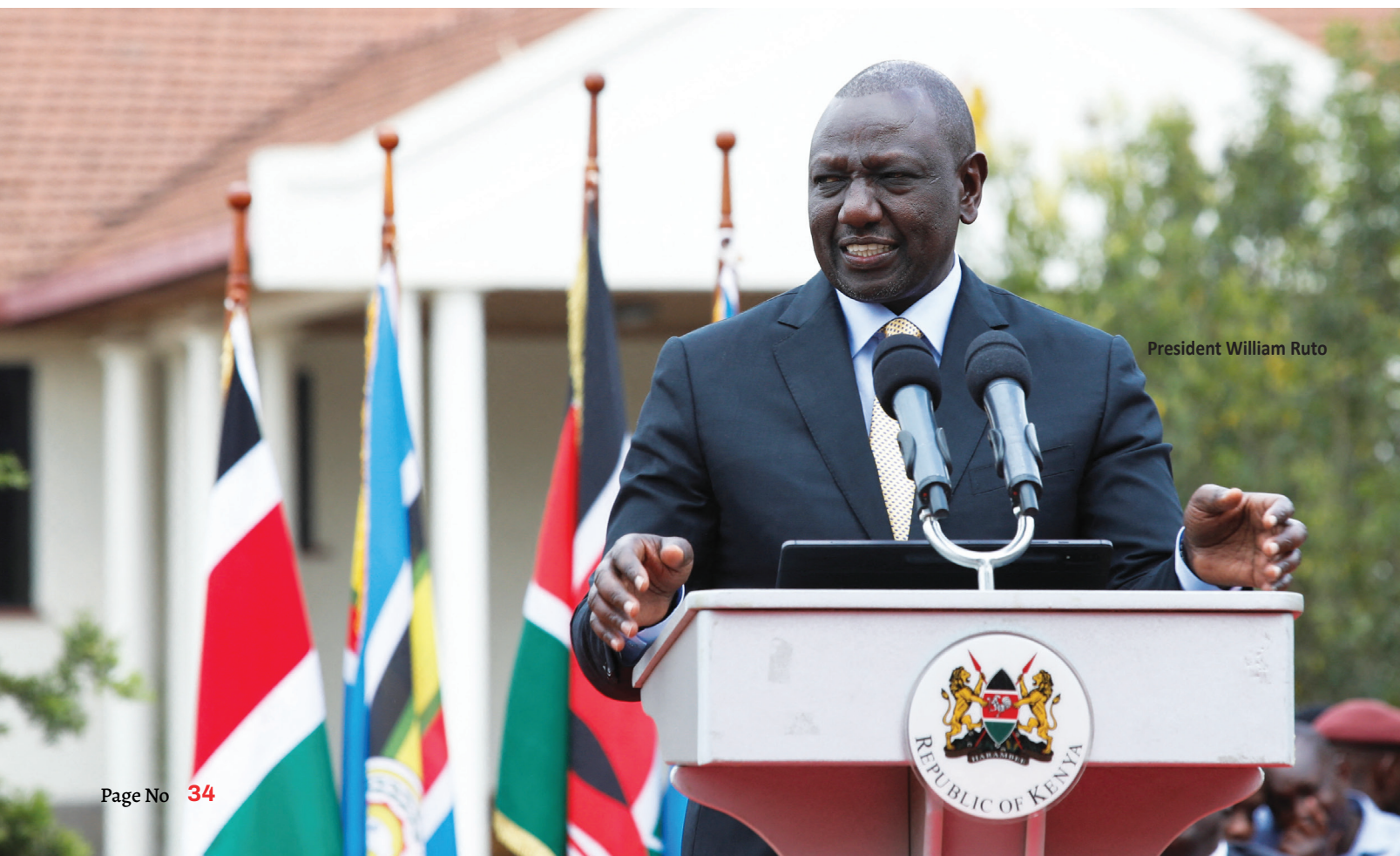
Highly likely to miscalculate

As SHA’s October 2024 rollout neared, however, a new report into the system that Khaoya worked on painted a bleak picture of how this formula would play out in real life. We obtained a copy of this report, the contents of which have not been revealed to the public until now.

The report, by international data consultancy IDinsight, followed months of scoping the AI system that SHA had built.

SHA’s system, the report found, was “inequitable, particularly for low-income households”.

The survey used as a basis for determining wealth was flawed because it “over-represents middle-income households and has very few data points from poverty pockets.”



President William Ruto



A patient at Kenyatta National Hospital.
Photo: Courtesy.

It was also “out-of-date with the current socio-economic condition,” given the “multiple economic shocks” that had affected Kenyans between 2020, when the data was gathered, and 2024.

Unless new training data was used, the report found that the system was “highly likely to miscalculate means and the corresponding contributions, particularly for low-income households”.

No new training data was available, however. So the consultants recommended “focusing on risk management in the short term.”

This meant tinkering with the system to try to get it to behave differently, while “creat[ing] a mechanism to allow Kenyans to contest unfair and inequitable predictions from the model.”

After months of work, the consultants delivered their final verdict at the end of September, just days before the system’s rollout.

They had carried out their own data survey and they said they had found a way to mitigate the worst outcomes, if the system was adjusted with various tweaks. But by their own estimate this was limited to “a slight overall increase in model performance, with a 7% improvement in predictions for low-income households.”

“We do not guarantee overall model improvement for immediate rollout,” they concluded. And in the absence of “nationally representative current data” they also warned that they could not provide “values for accuracy, specificity, or sensitivity;” in other words, they were not in a position to say exactly how their new model would perform.

“

We do not guarantee overall model improvement for immediate rollout,” they concluded. And in the absence of “nationally representative current data” they also warned that they could not provide “values for accuracy, specificity, or sensitivity;” in other words, they were not in a position to say exactly how their new model would perform.

We ran a series of tests on the adjusted AI system proposed in the consultants’ report. Our findings were striking. The changes did not improve the system’s accuracy.

In some cases, they actually made things worse. More than half of poor households were now significantly overcharged. Some, which should have been charged the lowest rate of 300Ksh, were charged 800 or more. ■

This investigation done by Purity Mukami, Joy Kirigia, Gabriel Geiger, Tomas Statius, Naipanoi Lepapa, was written in collaboration with Africa Uncensored and Lighthouse Reports.

Sudan turns children into propaganda

By Special CORRESPONDENT

IN Sudan's brutal civil war, even childhood is being weaponised. Boys who should be in classrooms, playgrounds or family homes are appearing online in military uniforms, carrying weapons, standing beside commanders and celebrating battlefield victories.

They are called "lion cubs" - a name meant to suggest bravery, loyalty and future power. In reality, it exposes one of the darkest faces of the war: children being turned into fighters, mascots and viral propaganda.

A joint investigation by Bellingcat and Radio Dabanga found that child soldiers linked to both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces have gained viral fame on TikTok, with some videos attracting millions of views.

The boys are shown posing with fighters and senior officials, making threats, delivering motivational messages and, in some cases, appearing armed. Experts warned that such visibility makes war look normal, heroic and attractive to other young people.

This is no longer only battlefield recruitment. It is digital recruitment. The child soldier is no longer hidden in the bush, camp or checkpoint. He is edited, posted, praised and algorithmically rewarded.

A boy with a gun becomes content. A child near a battlefield becomes a symbol. A traumatised minor is repackaged as a warrior-influencer.

That is what makes the Sudan case especially dangerous. The war is not only destroying homes and cities; it is reshaping childhood imagination.

When children see other children celebrated online for

carrying guns, the line between victimhood and aspiration begins to blur. Fame becomes a weapon. Likes become applause for militarisation.

Bellingcat said it flagged 12 TikTok accounts that had posted viral child-soldier content. After journalists contacted the platform, TikTok removed seven accounts, and later removed the remaining active accounts after publication.

But the investigation also found that content was being reshared across hundreds of accounts, with some posts and sounds spreading widely beyond the original uploaders.

The scandal lands in a country where children are already paying an unbearable price. UNICEF reported that at least 160 children were killed and 85 maimed in Sudan between January and March 2026, a 50 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2025.

More than five million children have been displaced since the war began, while the UN has verified more than 5,700 grave violations against children.

The humanitarian picture is even wider. UNICEF says 33.7 million people in Sudan, including 17.3 million children, need life-saving support in 2026.

Conflict has displaced 9.5 million people, more than 21 million face acute food insecurity, and 12.4 million children need protection services.

Sudan's "lion cubs" are therefore not entertainers. They are evidence. Evidence of a war that has consumed childhood, law and shame.

Removing accounts is necessary, but not enough. The world must confront the armies, militias, platforms and political forces that allow children to be used twice — first as soldiers, then as spectacle. ■

Kids with guns are recruited to kill. Photo: Getty Images - 4631319341.





Malema addresses a strong crowd at an EFF rally in Johannesburg last June, 2025.

Photo: Frennie Shivambu/Gallo Images via Getty Images.

Malema defies anti-African xenophobia

By Johnson WILLIAMS

JULIUS Malema's stand against xenophobia in South Africa is not a passing political slogan. It is one of the clearest tests of his Pan-African politics; defending fellow Africans even when doing so may cost him votes, popularity, and support among angry citizens looking for scapegoats.

At a time when South Africa is again witnessing anti-migrant anger, Malema – a leader of Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), has chosen a dangerous but morally powerful position.

Several African countries recently warned their citizens in South Africa to be cautious after attacks targeting foreigners, with migrant rights groups saying immigrants are being blamed for unemployment and economic hardship.

The AfriFiles has learnt that South Africa's unemployment remains above 30 per cent, creating fertile ground for politicians and vigilante groups to redirect public frustration towards vulnerable African migrants.

Malema's argument is simple but sharp; attacking Zimbabweans, Nigerians, Ghanaians, Tanzanians, Malawians or other Africans will not create jobs, build factories, reduce crime, or restore dignity to poor South Africans.

In a recent address, he challenged the logic of violence, asking how many jobs were created by marching, closing shops and beating people. He rejected the claim that African

Malema is telling South Africans that the enemy is not the struggling African selling goods in a township shop, but the economic system that leaves millions landless, jobless and desperate.

migrants are responsible for South Africa's economic pain, insisting that the real causes lie in structural inequality, historical dispossession, and failed economic transformation.

This is why his position matters. In many societies, xenophobia grows when leaders are afraid to tell citizens the truth. It is easier to blame the foreigner than to confront corruption, unemployment, poor governance, weak borders, collapsing services and the unfinished business of apartheid.

Malema is telling South Africans that the enemy is not the struggling African selling goods in a township shop, but the economic system that leaves millions landless, jobless and desperate.

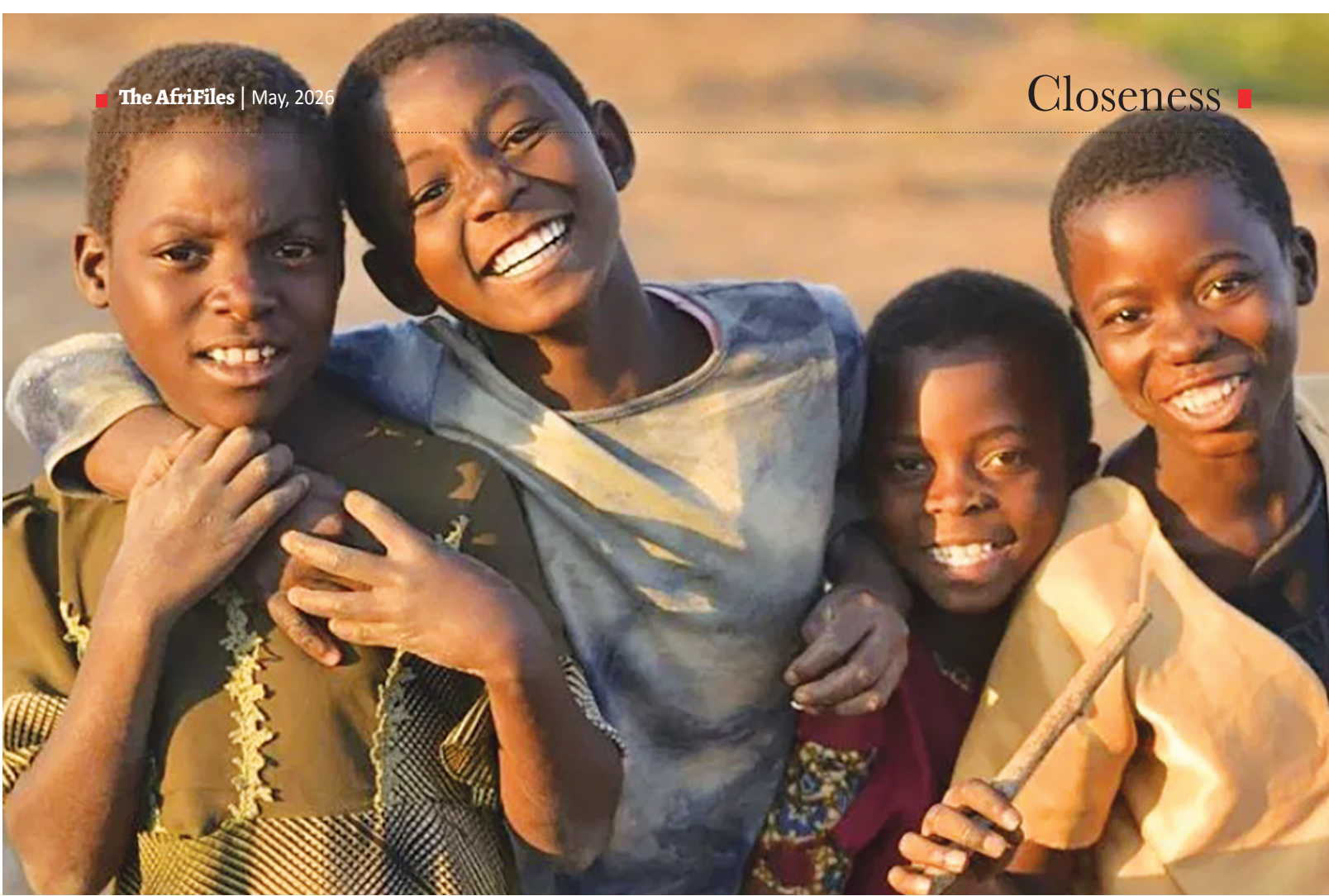
His message is not new as in 2019, Malema told xenophobic voters to keep their votes, saying the EFF – his party, did not want support from people who hated fellow Africans.

He urged South Africans to love other Africans as themselves and warned that without African unity, the continent would remain vulnerable to exploitation by global powers.

That is a rare political gamble. Many leaders bend when mobs become loud. Malema appears ready to lose political ground rather than support the humiliation of Africans by their own brothers and sisters. This gives his anti-xenophobia stance its moral weight.

South Africa has legitimate concerns about immigration, crime, documentation and public services. But no national problem is solved by mob justice. Once a society normalises hatred against outsiders, it eventually turns that hatred inward.

Malema's warning is therefore bigger than migrants. It is a warning about the soul of South Africa, and the future of African solidarity. ■



Africa's quiet friendship recession

By Isabella MANGTSHE

THE continent, Africa has long been celebrated as a continent of community; extended families, neighbourly courtyards, village gatherings, crowded weddings, church fellowships, football grounds and the everyday habit of people checking on one another.

Yet, beneath that familiar warmth, a quieter crisis is emerging, a friendship recession, marked not by the absence of contacts, but by the thinning of deep, dependable human bonds.

The phrase “friendship recession” gained prominence in Western social debate to describe the decline of close friendships.

In Africa, the pattern is not yet measured in exactly the same way, but the warning signs are increasingly visible through rising loneliness, weaker social support and growing emotional isolation, especially among young people.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2025 that about one in six people globally experiences loneliness, while the rate rises to 24 per cent in low-income countries, among those aged 13 to 29, between 17 and 21 per cent reported feeling lonely.

This matters profoundly for Africa, where friendship has traditionally functioned as a social safety net. A friend was not merely someone to share laughter with, but someone to help find work, offer counsel during grief, raise children communally, or stand beside a family in crisis.

As urbanisation accelerates, livelihoods become more precarious, and digital life absorbs more attention, many Africans are surrounded by people yet increasingly starved of meaningful connection. That is the paradox of the modern age; more

messages, fewer conversations; more followers, fewer confidants.

The evidence among adolescents is particularly sobering. A Tanzanian study of 2,449 in-school adolescents found that 17.4 per cent experienced loneliness, with higher risks among those facing hunger, anxiety, truancy, tobacco use and physical fights.

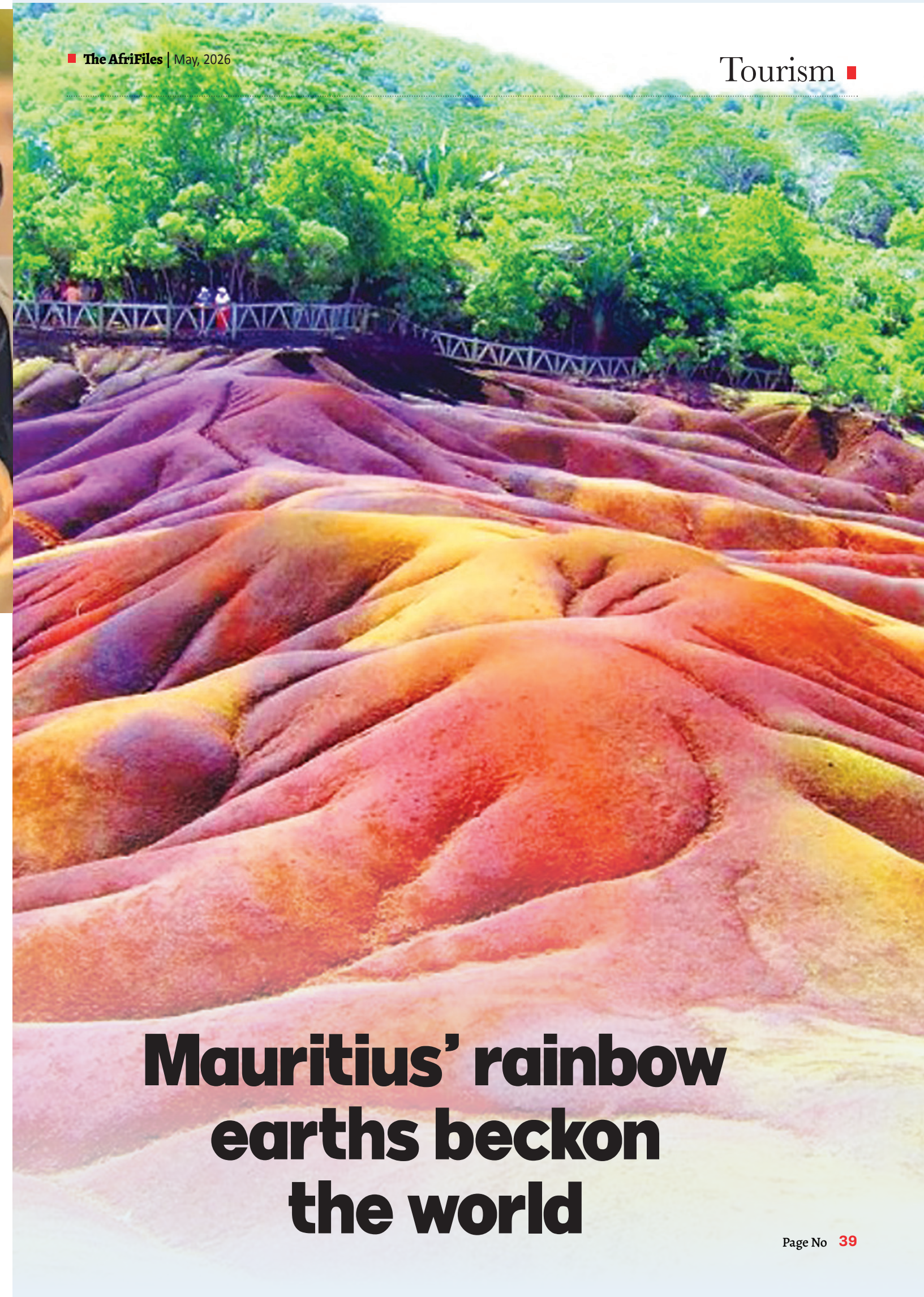
Across eight sub-Saharan African countries, researchers found that lonely adolescents were significantly more likely to report suicidal ideation, while those with peer support or at least one close friend had lower odds of such thoughts.

The friendship recession, therefore, is not a soft lifestyle concern, it is a public-health, social-cohesion and development issue. A society in which people feel unseen and unsupported becomes more anxious, less trusting and more vulnerable to despair.

WHO has urged governments to treat social connection with the same seriousness as physical and mental health, calling for stronger policies, better measurement and community-based interventions.

Africa does not need to abandon modernity to recover friendship, but it must resist a future in which convenience replaces presence and digital proximity disguises emotional distance. Schools need stronger counselling and peer-support clubs. Workplaces should rediscover humane social spaces. Families and communities must protect rituals that bring people together without agenda or transaction.

The continent's friendship recession is still reversible. But only if Africa recognises that development is not merely about roads, towers and data speeds. It is also about ensuring that, in a crowded world, people still have someone they can truly call a friend. ■



Mauritius' rainbow earths beckon the world

Mauritius' rainbow earths beckon the world

By The AfriFiles REPORTER

THERE are destinations that invite a holiday, and there are others that stir the soul. Mauritius belongs unmistakably to the latter.

Floating in the Indian Ocean like a jewel polished by sun, sea and centuries of cultural exchange, the island has long seduced travellers with its turquoise lagoons, white-sand beaches, refined resorts, mountain silhouettes, fragrant cuisine and warm, plural identity.

Yet beyond the postcard perfection lies a wonder so rare, so visually arresting, that it seems to have been painted by nature in a moment of extravagant imagination; the Seven Coloured Earths of Chamarel.

In the lush south-western highlands of Mauritius, the landscape suddenly changes character. Green hills roll gently in the distance, tropical vegetation frames the horizon, and then, almost theatrically, the earth rises in soft undulating dunes of red, brown, violet, green, blue, purple and yellow.

This is Chamarel's celebrated geological masterpiece, a natural canvas that has become one of the island's most iconic attractions and one of the most unforgettable sights in the Indian Ocean.

To stand before the Seven Coloured Earths is to witness geology becoming art. The dunes are not man-made, not dyed, not arranged for spectacle. Their brilliance is born from Mauritius' volcanic origins.

Over time, basaltic lava weathered under tropical conditions, while erosion left behind mineral-rich deposits of iron and aluminium oxides. These elements are responsible for the vivid palette that visitors see today, an astonishing natural phenomenon in which the island's ancient story appears, quite literally, in colour.



What makes Chamarel irresistible is not merely its beauty, but its mood. The colours seem to shift with the light. Under a clear morning sky, the dunes glow softly; later in the day, the reds deepen, the purples intensify and the ridges appear almost sculpted. The site rewards patience.

It asks visitors not to rush, but to look, absorb and marvel. In a world of hurried travel, Chamarel offers something increasingly precious: a moment of stillness before a wonder that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.

The coloured dunes themselves cover about 7,500 square metres, while the wider Chamarel 7 Coloured Earth Geopark is designed as a fuller nature experience that blends scenic discovery, conservation and geological education.

It is a destination that speaks to several kinds of traveller at once: the honeymooner seeking romance, the family chasing wonder, the photographer pursuing the perfect frame, the nature lover drawn by rare landscapes, and the curious visitor eager to understand how islands are formed.



Yet Chamarel is not a single-stop attraction. It is part of a larger sensory journey through one of Mauritius' most enchanting regions. Nearby, the Chamarel Waterfall plunges dramatically through dense greenery, widely promoted as the island's tallest single-drop waterfall at about 100 metres.

Its sheer descent, misty force and surrounding forest create a striking contrast with the dry, mineral-rich dunes. One moment, the visitor is contemplating quiet bands of colour in the earth; the next, they are facing the muscular movement of water carving through volcanic terrain. Together, these two attractions form one of Mauritius' most memorable nature circuits.

The geopark also adds a gentle touch of wildlife charm through its tortoise park, where giant tortoises move with the slow, dignified pace of another age. For children, this is often a moment of delight; for adults, it adds warmth and variety to the visit.

Chamarel thus succeeds in turning a sightseeing stop into a layered experience - scenic, educational, family-friendly and deeply photogenic.

For the international traveller, Mauritius is especially compelling because it compresses extraordinary diversity into an island that remains easy to explore. Official tourism materials describe it as large enough for adventure, yet small enough for visitors to do much in one holiday.

That means a traveller can wake to the sound of the ocean, drive through sugarcane fields and mountain roads, visit Chamarel's coloured earths and waterfall, taste local cuisine shaped by multiple communities, and still return to the coast for sunset. Few destinations offer such variety with such grace.

The appeal of Chamarel also fits beautifully into Mauritius' growing reputation as a destination for meaningful, nature-conscious travel. The geopark presents itself not simply as a place to view a marvel, but as a site committed to education, environmental care and the preservation of biodiversity.

Its sustainability programme has received recognition in Mauritius' tourism sector, reinforcing the message that wonder and responsibility can travel together.

In an age when travellers increasingly search for experiences that feel authentic, visually unforgettable and emotionally resonant, the Seven Coloured Earths offer exactly that. They are not merely an attraction to tick off an itinerary; they are an image that stays in the mind long after the journey ends.

Visitors may come to Mauritius for the beaches, the lagoons and the luxury, but Chamarel gives them a story to carry home; a story of volcanic fire cooled into colour, of nature turning chemistry into poetry, and of an island that still knows how to astonish.

Mauritius has many faces; elegant, adventurous, multicultural, sunlit, serene. At Chamarel, however, the island reveals one of its most magical identities.

It becomes a gallery without walls, a geological theatre, a dreamscape under open sky. For tourists seeking more than rest, for those craving beauty with meaning, travel with memory, and landscapes that feel almost unreal; the Seven Coloured Earths of Chamarel are a summons impossible to ignore. ■



China opens, Africa weigh risks

By Dr. Ahmed MASMEZY

THE decision of China to remove tariffs on imports from 53 African countries from May 01, 2026 has been welcomed across the continent as a bold opening of the world's second-largest economy to African goods.

Beijing presents the policy as a gesture of shared development, a chance for African producers to reach more Chinese consumers, and a corrective to an increasingly protectionist global trading system.

Yet, behind the diplomatic applause lies a sharper question; will this truly help Africa industrialise, or will it deepen a familiar pattern in which the continent ships out raw materials while richer economies sell back finished goods at far higher value?

Impossible to ignore now

China's implementation of zero tariffs came days after the European Parliament, on 28 April 2026, approved tougher rules that could eventually withdraw trade preferences from developing countries deemed uncooperative on migrant readmissions.

It also arrived amid the continuing fallout from Washington's tariff offensive, launched in April 2025, which hit a number of African economies and cast uncertainty over long-standing market access arrangements.

In that climate, Beijing's message was carefully calibrated; while the West is attaching conditions and raising barriers, Chi-

na is opening its market.

On paper, the offer is significant, as China had already granted zero-tariff access across all tariff lines to 33 least-developed African countries from December 2024.

The May 2026 expansion brought in another 20 non-LDC African states, including larger economies such as Kenya, Egypt and Nigeria, under a two-year preferential arrangement while China pursues longer-term economic partnership agreements.

Beijing says the policy will help African products such as cocoa, coffee, avocados, citrus fruits and wine, some of which previously faced Chinese tariffs of 8% to 30%. The first shipment to benefit was 24 tonnes of South African apples clearing customs in Shenzhen on the very first day.

For African exporters, this is not trivial as tariffs can make the difference between being competitive and being priced out of a major market. A tariff-free Chinese market could benefit agricultural exporters, niche food producers, mineral processors and manufacturers that are already capable of meeting Chinese standards.

Countries with stronger export logistics and organised value chains, such as South Africa, Kenya, Egypt, Morocco and Nigeria, may move quickly to seize the opportunity.

The policy could also encourage Chinese importers and investors to source more African products, particularly in agriculture and agro-processing.

But a tariff cut is not a development strategy. The uncomfortable fact is that Africa's trade with China is already deeply unequal.

China-Africa trade reached a record US\$348 billion in 2025. China imported US\$123 billion from Africa; by subtraction, it exported about US\$225 billion to the continent, a US\$102 billion surplus in Beijing's favour.

That imbalance matters. By contrast, one recent estimate says the European Union runs a US\$24 billion trade deficit with Africa, while official U.S. figures show the United States had a US\$2.6 billion goods trade deficit with Africa in 2025.

These comparisons do not automatically make Europe or America better partners, but they expose the scale of China's advantage in the relationship.

The structure of that imbalance is more important than the number itself. Africa's exports to China remain heavily concentrated in oil, copper, cobalt, iron ore, bauxite and other raw or semi-processed commodities, while Chinese exports to Africa are dominated by machinery, electronics, vehicles, manufactured inputs and consumer goods.

A major China-Africa economic bulletin found that between 2000 and 2022, 89% of Africa's exports to China were extractive products. Even if the precise share changes year by year, the underlying pattern remains unmistakable; Africa supplies industrial inputs; China captures much of the value-added manufacturing margin.

This is where the zero-tariff offer becomes more complicated. If the new policy simply increases Chinese purchases of African copper, crude oil, cobalt, bauxite and unprocessed agricultural commodities, Africa may export more without becoming richer in any transformative sense.

Export volumes may rise, but job creation, industrial depth and technological capability may not. In the worst case, tariff-free access could reinforce the extraction model: African countries earn foreign exchange today while surrendering tomorrow's manufacturing opportunities.

That is why many African governments are increasingly insisting on local beneficiation, mineral processing, and value addition before export, as seen in Guinea's pressure for local bauxite refining and broader debates around cobalt and battery minerals.

Tariffs are the only obstacle?

Many producers will still struggle with sanitary and phytosanitary rules, product standards, packaging requirements, weak logistics, costly shipping, unreliable energy and limited access to trade finance.

Afreximbank estimates that Africa faces an annual US\$100 billion trade finance gap, restricting the ability of small and medium-sized firms to scale and participate in international commerce.

The International Trade Centre has similarly pointed to limited business information, poor cross-cultural market knowledge and gaps in sanitary agreements as obstacles to ex-



President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping poses with President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania

panding African exports to China.

In other words, China may open the door, but many African businesses still lack the tools to walk through it.

There is also a geopolitical dimension. Beijing's tariff move strengthens its claim to be Africa's more dependable economic partner at a time when U.S. trade policy has become more disruptive and EU preferences appear more conditional.

Analysts at the Institute for Security Studies argue that China's offer has powerful optics but may not dramatically alter African trade unless accompanied by broader changes in investment, infrastructure, industrial policy and value-chain integration.

They also note that a substantial share of African exports to China was already entering duty-free before 1 May, meaning the headline may be more politically potent than economically revolutionary in the short term.

Is this the super deal?

So, is it a win-win? Potentially, but only under strict conditions. It is a win if African countries use the policy to export more processed cocoa instead of cocoa beans, refined minerals instead of ores, packaged foods instead of bulk crops, textiles and light manufactures instead of raw fibres.

It is a win if China's market access is matched by Chinese investment in African factories, standards laboratories, cold chains, logistics corridors and skills development. It is a win if African governments negotiate collectively, align the opportunity with the African Continental Free Trade Area, and avoid competing against one another merely to ship out more unprocessed wealth.

But it becomes another chapter in exploitation if Africa celebrates tariff-free access while neglecting the deeper economics of trade. A continent cannot industrialise by exporting the ingredients of other nations' prosperity.

The true test of China's offer will not be how many tonnes of African goods reach Chinese ports in 2026, but what kinds of goods they are, how much value is added in Africa before shipment, how many jobs they create, and whether the trade deficit begins to narrow.

China has opened a door, now Africa's task is to ensure it does not walk through it carrying only raw materials on its back. ■

The writer is a foreign economies expert based in Cairo, Egypt. He writes in his personal capacity, and his views do not necessarily reflect those of any institution or associate he engages.





Benjamin Mkapa Stadium -Tanzania

East Africa builds Afcon glory

By The AfriFiles REPORTER

WHEN the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) comes to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in 2027, it will not arrive merely as a football tournament.

It will arrive as a continental audit of East Africa's ambition, its infrastructure, its hospitality industry and its ability to turn a sporting festival into a lasting development legacy.

The TotalEnergies CAF Afcon - Pamoja 2027 will open on 19 June 2027 and conclude on 17 July 2027. CAF has described it as historic because it will be the first Afcon hosted by three countries, and the first time the competition returns to the East African region since Ethiopia hosted it in 1976.

CAF says the tournament presents a rare opportunity to reach more than 400 million people across East Africa.

That word - Pamoja, Swahili for togetherness, now carries the weight of delivery. Across Nairobi, Kampala, Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Zanzibar and Hoima, the race is no longer about bidding documents. It is about concrete, roads, airports, hotels, power lines, training grounds, media facilities, security systems and the ordinary fan experience.

CAF's inspection programme has already mapped the scale of the task. In Tanzania, inspectors listed Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam, Samia Suluhu Stadium in Arusha, Amaan Stadium and Fumba Stadium in Zanzibar among the key sites.

In Kenya, the inspection programme included Kasarani Stadium, Nyayo Stadium, Talanta Sports Stadium and training grounds such as Ulinzi Sports Complex and the Kenya Academy of Sports.

In Uganda, CAF scheduled visits to Mandela National Stadium, training sites and Hoima City Stadium.

Kenya carries some of the most visible construction pressure. Nairobi is expected to be one of the tournament's strongest urban hubs, supported by hotels, airports, media houses, business services and a large football public.

The country is constructing Talanta Sports City while upgrading Kasarani and Nyayo. Kenya's Ministry of Defence has said these stadium projects, under its supervision, are progressing at different stages towards readiness for Afcon.

Recent CAF-linked inspections have also brought some relief to Nairobi. Pulse Sports Kenya reported that CAF officials praised the progress of stadium renovations and infrastructure projects, with Talanta Sports City, Kasarani and Nyayo among facilities assessed.

The delegation also reviewed training grounds, accommodation, transport connectivity and logistics — proof that Afcon readiness is not judged by stadium beauty alone, but by the entire tournament ecosystem.

In Uganda, preparations are being framed as a whole-economy project. The government says Uganda will host matches at Mandela National Stadium in Namboole and Hoima City Stadium, supported by eight training facilities that must be completed by January 2027.





Uganda expects between 500,000 and 650,000 visitors during the competition, a figure that explains why the country is investing beyond football pitches.

The figures are significant as Uganda has approved UGX 1.35 trillion for infrastructure, logistics and operations linked to CHAN 2024 and Afcon 2027, with an additional UGX 905 billion approved for critical inter-sectoral needs.

Funds have been earmarked for hotels in Hoima and Masindi, selected roads, hospital upgrades, sanitation, electricity lines, water-grid capacity, ICT infrastructure and destination marketing.

Transport is central to Uganda's plan. New Vision reported that selected roads will take UGX 213.76 billion, while UGX 184.9 billion has been allocated for a passenger terminal and UGX 101 billion for hotels in Hoima and Masindi.

Uganda has also committed to waiving visa fees for visitors for a three-month period around the tournament and is discussing a special joint Pamoja visa with Kenya and Tanzania to ease fan movement.

Tanzania, meanwhile, appears to be moving with strong state direction. The country's 2026/27 sports-related budget shows how Afcon has become a national development project, not merely a sports event.

Tanzania's Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports unveiled a Sh 525.33 billion budget, with 87.22 per cent directed towards sports and Sh 458.19 billion earmarked for development projects, especially stadiums and training facilities.

The centrepiece is Benjamin Mkapa Stadium – in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's flagship venue, which is undergoing major renovation.

In Arusha, a modern 32,000-seat stadium is under construction, designed to spread hosting capacity beyond Dar es Salaam and allow northern Tanzania to benefit from the tournament economy.

Training facilities including Gymkhana Grounds and Major General Isamuhyo Stadium have also been identified, with authorities targeting August 2026 for completion and testing.

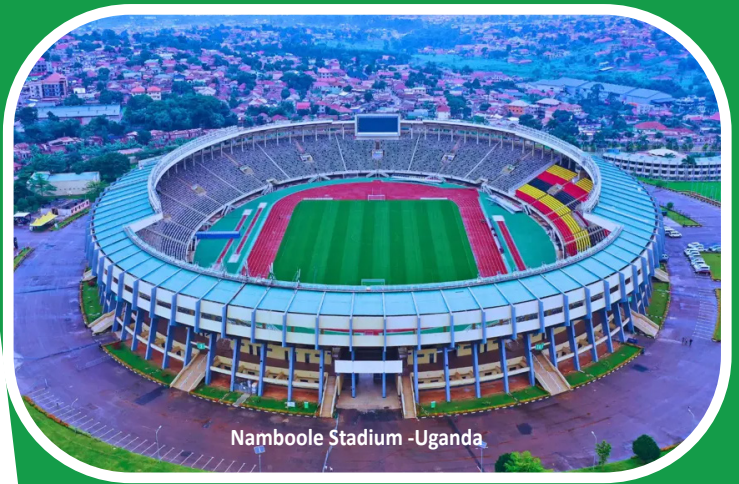
But Afcon is unforgiving. A completed stadium without smooth roads, reliable airports, adequate hotels, medical systems, accreditation centres, security plans and fan transport is still incomplete.

Analysts have warned that Afcon is far more demanding than CHAN because it requires international-standard accommodation, seamless transport, stronger media operations and a wider network of facilities.

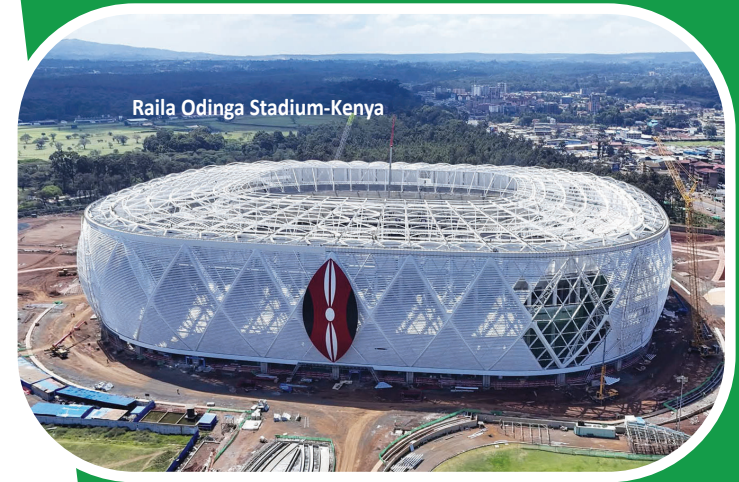
That is why the coming months are decisive. The hospitality sector must not wait for government alone.

Hotels must upgrade rooms, internet, catering, booking systems and multilingual guest services. Transport operators must prepare safe, reliable links between airports, hotels, training grounds, fan zones and stadiums.

Cities must think about signage, sanitation, emergency response, traffic management and night-time economy.



Namboole Stadium -Uganda



Raila Odinga Stadium-Kenya



Amaan Stadium-Zanzibar



Samia Stadium -Tanzania

There are concerns

Earlier reports suggested CAF and football officials were worried about readiness and possible delays.

Yet CAF president Patrice Motsepe later insisted the 2027 finals would go ahead as planned in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, arguing that East Africa must be given the opportunity to develop football infrastructure rather than leaving major tournaments only to countries with existing facilities.

That is the true meaning of Pamoja 2027. It is not only about hosting Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, Morocco, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda or other African giants. It is about proving that East Africa can organise, build and deliver together.

If Kenya completes its stadiums, Uganda links Hoima and Kampala with stronger services, and Tanzania turns Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Zanzibar into polished football destinations, Afcon 2027 will leave more than memories.

It will leave roads, jobs, hotel upgrades, stronger tourism brands and a new belief that East Africa can host the continent at scale.

Although, the whistle will blow in June 2027, but the real match is already underway. ■



Mogae: The giant fallen oak

By Simpson MANTIGABANE

BOTSWANA is mourning the death of former President Festus Gontebanye Mogae, a statesman remembered not only for leading his country with discipline and calm, but also for standing at the forefront of one of Africa's bravest public-health battles.

Mogae died on 8 May 2026 at the age of 86, closing a life of public service that stretched from the civil service to the presidency and later to continental statesmanship.

President Duma Boko, in a moving national address, described Mogae as a "giant fallen oak" and a devoted patriot whose leadership elevated Botswana's standing in the world. He said the former president had served the republic with honour, integrity and extraordinary diligence, and declared three days of national mourning in his memory.

In another tribute, Boko said Mogae carried out the duties of office with "dignity, with finesse, with amazing humility."

Those words capture why Mogae's death feels deeply personal to many Batswana. He was not a flamboyant politician, nor a leader who sought attention through spectacle. His strength lay in steadiness, intellect and a quiet seriousness about national duty.

As Botswana's third president, serving from 1998 to 2008, he inherited a country confronting a devastating HIV and AIDS crisis and chose not to look away. Instead, he made the epidemic a defining national priority.

Under his leadership, Botswana launched free public access to antiretroviral treatment in 2002, one of the earliest and

most ambitious programmes of its kind in Africa.

Mogae spoke openly about the epidemic when stigma remained powerful and denial still cost lives elsewhere. UNAIDS later credited him with championing an inclusive HIV response built around treatment, fighting stigma and ending discrimination. His courage helped alter the country's trajectory and saved countless families from despair.

Mogae was also an economist and institution-builder. Before becoming president, he served as governor of the Bank of Botswana, finance minister and vice president.

During his decade in office, he was widely recognised for prudent economic management, democratic continuity and a peaceful transfer of power at the end of his constitutional term.

In 2008, he received the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, honoured for safeguarding Botswana's stability and prosperity during a period of national vulnerability.

Yet beyond awards and offices, Mogae's legacy is rooted in human impact: the patients who lived longer because treatment reached them; the families who saw leadership speak truthfully about fear and illness; the citizens who watched a president leave office without clinging to power.

He embodied a form of African leadership that was firm without arrogance and dignified without distance.

As Botswana prepares to lay him to rest, President Boko's eulogy will likely endure as the nation's collective farewell.

A great tree has fallen, but its shade remains — in Botswana's democratic traditions, in its public-health courage and in the memory of a leader who proved that integrity can be a lasting form of power. ■



Taiwo Oyedele

Finance minister eyes economic turnaround

By Dennis NGUELLA

NIGERIA'S new Finance Minister, Taiwo Oyedele, walks into office carrying one of the toughest economic briefs in Africa; raise far more money for government without crushing citizens already battered by inflation, poverty and the harsh aftershocks of reform.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's decision to replace Wale Edun with Oyedele on April 21 was officially framed as part of a cabinet reshuffle, with the presidency saying Edun had resigned on health grounds.

But politically, the move looked bigger than a routine change of personnel. It marked a shift from a finance minister who had defended painful macroeconomic reforms to a tax technocrat expected to make those reforms deliver visible results.

The current minister, previously Minister of State for Finance, replaced Edun as Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy.

Oyedele is not arriving as a stranger to Nigeria's fiscal crisis. A former senior PwC figure and chairman of Tinubu's Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, he helped lead efforts to simplify Nigeria's crowded tax system, including proposals to reduce more than 60 federal and state taxes to fewer than 10.

His appointment therefore sends a clear signal; Tinubu wants revenue, discipline and reform packaged in one office.

The ambition is bold. Oyedele is expected to help double federal revenues, broaden the tax base and reduce Nigeria's dependence on borrowing.

But that mission collides with a painful national reality. The World Bank says poverty remains widespread in Nigeria, with more than 60 percent of Nigerians estimated to have lived below the national poverty line in 2025, while food inflation has hit poor households hardest.

That is the central dilemma of Oyedele's tenure. Nigeria needs more tax revenue to build roads, fund schools, pay salaries, support healthcare and reduce debt pressure.

Yet millions of citizens already feel overtaxed by life itself: expensive food, unstable power, costly transport, weak wages and a currency that has lost much of its purchasing power. A finance minister who simply raises taxes may balance the books but deepen anger on the streets.

His real test, therefore, is not taxation alone. It is trust.

To transform Nigeria's economy, Oyedele must convince ordinary Nigerians and investors that revenue reform will be fair, transparent and growth-oriented.

That means taxing wealth and profits more efficiently, reducing harassment of small businesses, closing leakages in public agencies, improving customs and oil-sector collections, and showing citizens what their taxes deliver.

Tinubu's broader reforms - including fuel subsidy removal and currency devaluation, were designed to stabilise the economy but also worsened the cost-of-living crisis for many households. Oyedele now inherits the political consequences of that pain.

If he succeeds, Nigeria could move from fiscal survival to economic rebuilding. If he fails, Tinubu's reform agenda may be remembered not as transformation, but as hardship without reward. ■

Lagos red carpet catches fire

By Agather OLULEME

THE capital city of Nigeria, Lagos did not merely host an awards ceremony this year; it staged a continent-wide spectacle of glamour, ambition and creative confidence.

At the 12th Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA), held at Eko Hotel and Suites in Lagos, celebrities, filmmakers and digital creators arrived as though the red carpet itself was a grand film set.

The ceremony celebrated excellence in African film, television and digital storytelling, bringing together some of the continent's brightest entertainment voices.

But before the trophies spoke, fashion had already taken command.

The red carpet became a runway of drama. There were sweeping trains that demanded their own space, sculptural gowns that looked closer to architecture than clothing, shimmering fabrics that caught every flash of the camera, and theatrical designs that turned simple arrivals into unforgettable entrances.

AMVCA has grown beyond an awards night. It is now one of Africa's biggest cultural stages, where style, cinema, celebrity and national pride meet under one bright Lagos sky. For many stars, being remembered as best-dressed matters almost as much as hearing their name called on stage.

This year's event again proved that African entertainment is not only telling powerful stories on screen; it is also defining global style with confidence.





Designers used the moment to show imagination, craftsmanship and boldness. Actors and creators used fashion to express identity, personality and status.

Every pose, every gown, every bead and every dramatic sleeve carried a message: African glamour is no longer waiting for international approval.

At AMVCA, the continent dressed like it knew the world was watching. And indeed, it was. ■

All photos by Gift Ufuoma / BBC



Journalist being harassed by police officers in Uganda. Photo: Courtesy.

Stop hunting the truth-tellers. NOW

By Julietha KAMANA

JOURNALISM is not a crime. Yet across the world, journalists are increasingly treated as enemies for doing what societies desperately need; asking questions, exposing abuse, documenting suffering and holding power to account.

They are killed in war zones, jailed under fabricated charges, beaten while reporting protests, abducted by armed groups and harassed online by organised mobs. The message behind each attack is brutally simple: be silent, or be silenced.

The scale of the assault is alarming. The Committee to Protect Journalists recorded 129 journalists and media workers killed in 2025, the deadliest year since it began tracking such deaths in 1992.

In the same period, 330 journalists were imprisoned worldwide as of December 1, 2025, many facing broad “anti-state” accusations such as terrorism, extremism or threats to national security. These laws are increasingly weaponised not to protect citizens, but to punish scrutiny.

This crisis is no longer confined to openly authoritarian states. It is spreading through democracies, fragile states and conflict zones alike.

Reporters are being assaulted by police, harassed by politicians, denied access to information, sued into exhaustion and branded traitors for investigating corruption or abuse.

Reporters Without Borders says global press freedom has fallen to a 25-year low, a chilling sign that repression is becoming normalised rather than exceptional.

The killings are only part of the story. Imprisonment is another form of erasure. A journalist behind bars cannot interview witnesses, examine budgets, uncover mass graves or challenge official lies.

A newsroom under threat begins to self-censor. A society denied independent journalism begins to live on rumours, propaganda and fear. That is why attacking journalists is never merely an attack on individuals; it is an attack on the public’s right to know.

Impunity makes the danger worse, UNESCO says that between 2006 and 2025, more than 1,800 journalists were killed worldwide, with nearly nine out of ten cases remaining judicially unresolved.

When killers are not prosecuted, governments and armed actors learn that silencing the press carries little cost. The next bullet, detention order or midnight raid becomes easier.

The world must stop treating these attacks as routine headlines. Governments should repeal laws used to criminalise journalism, investigate attacks promptly and protect reporters covering elections, protests and conflicts.

Courts must defend press freedom rather than rubber-stamp political persecution. International bodies should impose consequences on regimes and militias that target the media. News organisations must invest more seriously in safety, legal defence and trauma support for their staff.

Most of all, citizens must understand what is at stake, when a journalist is silenced, corruption grows bolder. When a reporter disappears, victims lose a witness. When truth is intimidated, lies govern freely.

A world that claims to value democracy, justice and human dignity cannot stand by while journalists are hunted.

Stop killing them. Stop jailing them. Stop assaulting them. Let them work. Let truth breathe. ■

The writer is a human right defender based in Kampala, Uganda.



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