

# The Continent



**The lost Lagos photos**



**Cover:** In photo studios across Lagos, forgotten in dusty back rooms, are thousands of discarded photographic negatives. A pair of photographers have dedicated their spare time to preserving, digitising and then archiving these snapshots from the city that would otherwise be lost (p15).

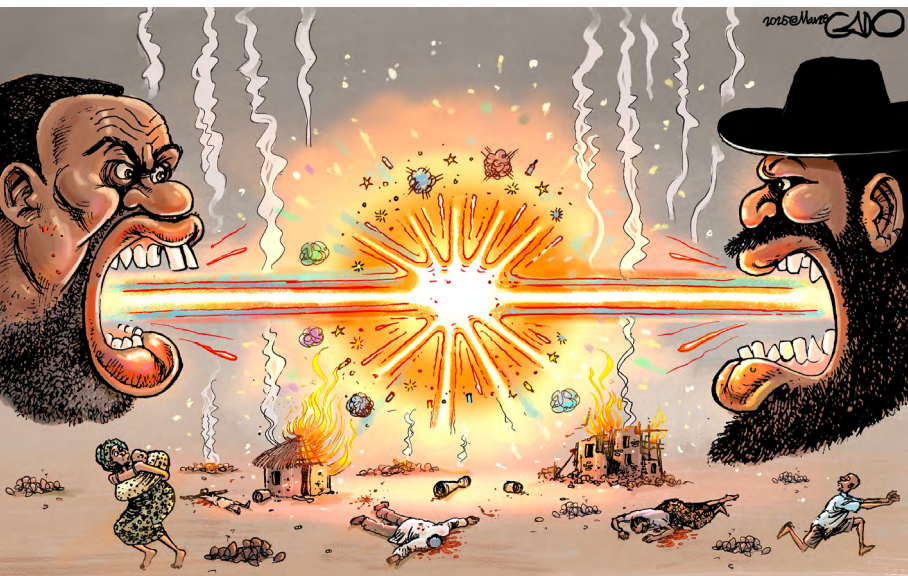
# Inside:

- **Mozambique:** When Chapo met Mondlane (p7)
- **Sudan:** The capital finally changes hands (p9)
- **South Africa:** How to handle a hostile superpower (p11)
- **Nigeria:** The evolution of a three-wheeled icon (p23)
- **Kenya:** Photos from a big melting mountain (p23)
- **Afrobarometer:** Data proves that love really does trump hate (p29)

## 30,000 subscribers:

We did it! You shared *The Continent* and got 3,600 more people to subscribe (if you are one of the new additions, welcome!). At a time when journalism is throwing itself into the clutches of dubious algorithms, you are helping us get a curated newspaper to real people in 140 countries. To celebrate, we're making our 200th edition about you. We want to hear where you go to escape. Tell us about your happy place. We're also trying to work out the logistics of getting art, shirts, hoodies and other shiny things to you.

**More details [here!](#)**



## SOUTH SUDAN

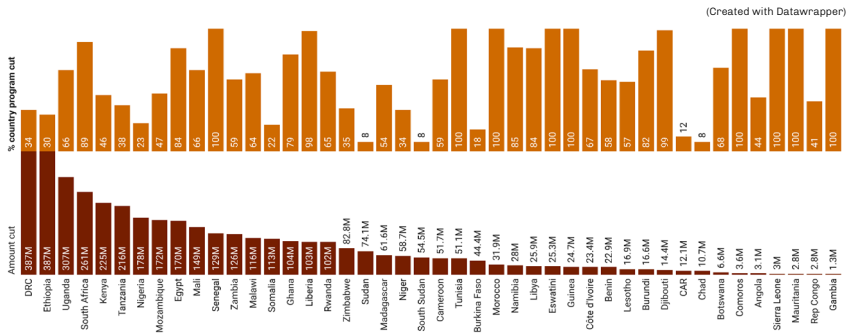
### Machar arrest puts peace on knife edge

An army convoy raided the residence of South Sudan's First Vice President Riek Machar on Wednesday evening, arresting him alongside his wife Angelina Teny. That move may be the straw that breaks the back of South Sudan's 2018 peace and power-sharing agreement, which ended a civil war that killed nearly 400,000 people. Tensions have been building between President Salva Kiir and Machar for weeks, with the president accusing his deputy of instigating violence by a militia in the country's Upper Nile State.

## ALGERIA

### Sins of the father visited on the Seine

Algeria's Parliament is drafting laws that would criminalise the actions of colonial France, *The New Arab* reports. A law was mooted in 2005, and is being revived as tensions rise. France ruled Algeria for over 130 years. It took armed rebellion, which colonial authorities tried to brutally suppress, to gain independence. The new laws would retrospectively criminalise the massacres that happened then. Paris and Algiers have been in an escalating row since July, when France recognised Morocco's sovereignty claim over Western Sahara.



**AID FREEZE**

# The final accounting of USAID cuts is in

A list of cancelled and retained USAID contracts presented to the US Congress indicates that at least nine African nations may have lost all projects funded by the

agency, after President Donald Trump ordered sweeping cuts. Analysis of the list by two research fellows at the Centre for Global Development shows the cuts are deepest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Uganda, South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania. Across 44 African countries, they amount to nearly \$4-billion in lost funding.

**EGYPT**

# Six Russian tourists killed in Red Sea submarine accident

A tourist submarine carrying 45 people sank in the Red Sea on Thursday. Six Russian tourists, including two children, drowned. Another 39 were rescued, authorities said. *Sindbad* was a submersible vessel that cruised at about 60-80 feet underwater to give tourists views of marine life through panoramic windows on its floor, says *The Guardian*. Egyptian authorities are investigating the cause of the disaster.

**SOMALIA**

# US-aided violence unaffected by Trump cuts

The United States military conducted “multiple airstrikes” in the vicinity of Somalia’s Golis mountains this week, killing an unknown number of people it described in a statement as “Isis-Somalia operatives”. It’s the eighth set of airstrikes that the United States has conducted in Africa this year – all in Somalia. That’s slightly more than the six reported in the first three months of 2024 and 2023.



## TUNISIA

**Saied ditches PM, quits rights court**

For the fourth time since he seized power in 2021, President Kais Saied has appointed a new prime minister. Kamel Madouri has been replaced with Sarra Zaafrani Zenzri, a 62-year-old civil servant, the second woman to hold the post of premier. The country is also withdrawing from the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Arusha-based body responsible for interpreting the African Union's human rights charter. While the country has not given a reason for leaving, Saied's slide towards authoritarianism may be a clue.



**Kais Saied: Prime ministers come and go but the throne remains the same.**

Photo: Fethi Belaid/AFP

## CHAD

**'Right to retaliate'**

Former Chadian prime minister Saleh Kebzabo has urged his country to prepare for war after a Sudanese military official Yasser Al-Atta said, on *Al Jazeera*, that airports in northeastern Chad are legitimate targets. The Chadian foreign ministry also responded saying such talk could lead to war. Numerous reports indicate that Chadian airports were used to deliver support to the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary for the war against the Sudanese military. Chad accuses Sudanese authorities of supporting insurgents in its territory, including Boko Haram militants.

## ANGOLA

**Peace out, says João**

Angolan President João Lourenço is stepping down from mediating the Democratic Republic of the Congo-M23 conflict. He was appointed by the African Union in 2022 and repeatedly pushed for direct talks between the DRC, Rwanda and the M23 fighters, in vain. His latest was failed talks last week which the presidents of Rwanda and the DRC skipped and instead met in a surprise Doha tête-à-tête on Tuesday. They called for a ceasefire which M23 ignored, advancing into Walikale, the furthest west the fighters have got since 2012. Angola is now working with the AU to find a new mediator.



**Tripoli threat: Nicolas Sarkozy with Muammar Gaddafi in Libya in 2007.**

Photo: Patrick Kovarik/AFP

## FRANCE

# You're nicked – Sarkozy's corruption trial starts in Paris

French prosecutors began laying out their case against former president Nicolas Sarkozy and three ex-ministers on Tuesday. Sarkozy is accused of entering a “corruption pact” with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2005 for a €6.5-million donation to the former’s 2007 presidential campaign. The official charges include corruption, embezzlement, illegal campaign financing, and criminal conspiracy, and if convicted the 70-year-old faces 10 years imprisonment, among other penalties. He has been under house arrest, wearing an electronic ankle bracelet since 7 February, following a separate conviction.

## SENEGAL

# Fuel subsidy cuts to hit Dakar next

After an official audit found that national debt in 2023 stood at nearly 100% of annual gross domestic product, the International Monetary Fund has paused its \$1.8-billion loan facility for Senegal. The government of the time, led by former president Macky Sall, under-reported the debt level as 74% of GDP. Senegal has since borrowed more and national debt is now estimated to be at 105% of GDP. To unfreeze new loans, Senegal may have to cut fuel subsidies among other measures, IMF official Edward Gemayel told *Reuters*.

## NIGER

# Mosque attack victims mourned

Niger observed three days of mourning ending Monday this week, after an attack on a mosque in Kokorou on Friday, which killed at least 44 people and wounded 13 others last week. The attack was attributed to the Islamic State militants. The *North African Post* reports that armed men surrounded the mosque during Friday prayers, shot at worshippers and set nearby homes alight. Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, are all led by military juntas that promised to crush the threat of insurgents in the Sahel but that goal remains elusive.

# Mozambique

## Maputo's hot heads begin to cool

**A late-night meeting may yet help to lower simmering tensions.**

**Luis Nhachote in Maputo**

Late on Sunday night, Mozambican President Daniel Chapo finally met opposition leader Venâncio Mondlane. The meeting, at the Joaquim Chissano International Conference Centre, was the first time the two men spoke directly to each other since last October's disputed national election. The electoral commission certified Chapo as the winner. But observers pointed to widespread irregularities. Mondlane claimed victory and mobilised national protests that turned deadly when the state started firing.

A source told *The Continent* that the United States and European Union ambassadors in Maputo worked with Mozambican academics and church leaders to arrange the meeting, which remained uncertain until the last moment.

Details of what comes next have not emerged. But in the days afterwards,

Mondlane spoke of an agreement to guarantee medical assistance for the injured, compensate relatives of the dead and pardon those arrested in the protests.

Chapo's statements about the meeting were less specific and didn't mention any guarantees. "It was a good, positive meeting and it will stabilise Mozambique politically, socially and economically," he told journalists the following day.

The meeting was seen as necessary for lowering the country's political temperature. The protests have made the country ungovernable for the ruling Frelimo party, which also fears that the chaos jeopardises international investment.

Plataforma Decide, a Mozambican NGO, says that at least 353 people have died since October, including around two dozen children. The government confirms 80 deaths and says that 1,677 commercial establishments, 177 schools and 23 health centres were damaged by the demonstrators. ■



# Cameroon

## Islamic State kill scores in Lake Chad attacks

**Dorcas Ekupe in Maroua, Far North Region**

**A**t least 12 Cameroonian soldiers were killed in a Tuesday morning attack on an army base in Wulgoy, Borno State Nigeria. Several others were wounded. The attackers are believed to have been fighters of the Islamic State of West Africa Province – a splinter faction of Boko Haram.

The Cameroonian soldiers were operating in Nigeria as part of the Multinational Joint Task Force, a pool of about 10,000 soldiers from the states in the Lake Chad basin: Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, fighting insurgent groups in the area. Many of the groups are linked to “jihadist” causes and groups.

The execution of the Tuesday attack affirms the growing fear that insurgent groups around the lake are receiving external support. The attackers used drones to gather intelligence before launching a ground invasion into the army base where they burned vehicles and made off with ammunition.

“The advanced weaponry they increasingly have at their disposal is largely due to their apparent alliance with

powerful transnational criminal entities,” said a statement from the Cameroon government after the attack.

Days before the attack, militants from the splinter group killed dozens of farmers in Tumbun Kanta and Kwatar Yobe in Nigeria “with accounts ranging between 40 and 100 dead” according to *AFP*. In neighbouring Niger on Friday last week, militants from the same faction attacked a mosque in Kokorou at prayer time, killed at least 44 people and wounded 13 others.

The United Nations estimates that the Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, has caused 350,000 deaths in the Lake Chad region and displaced three million people. ■



**Slain: Soldiers carry the remains of fallen comrades at a funeral in Yaoundé.** Photo: Reinnier Kaze/AFP



# Sudan

## SAF retakes Khartoum

**T**he head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, entered the country's very symbolic presidential palace on Wednesday. It was his first time back since April 2023, when the civil war broke out. "Khartoum is now free," he declared to the cheering band of soldiers around him.

SAF fighters routed Hamdan Dagalo's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) from the palace late last week. Dagalo's paramilitary occupied the palace at the start of the war. This week, SAF also retook control of Khartoum's main international airport,

overran the biggest RSF base in the capital, and pushed the paramilitaries out of the Yarmouk factory – Sudan's largest arms factory.

The SAF declared itself to be in full control of the capital on Thursday even though some RSF fighters remain in pockets of Omdurman, one of the three cities that make up the capital. Many Khartoum residents took to the streets to welcome SAF, following two years under RSF which is notorious for atrocities, looting and occupation of civilian homes.

The Sudan war is now likely to centre around the Darfur region in the west of the country, which the RSF almost completely controls. That's unless the belligerents see the dramatic changes on the front that have happened since late February as a sign to embrace peace talks. ■



**We're back:**  
People  
celebrate on  
street after  
the army  
deepened its  
control over  
Khartoum.

Photo: Ibrahim  
Mohammed  
Ishak/Reuters

# Love *The Continent*? We deliver!

Get your weekly fix of the very best African journalism by subscribing (for free!)

*"African News in quick bits."  
As per the Big Annual Survey 2024*



Get it every Saturday morning on Whatsapp by clicking [this link](#)

You can also sign up on email ([read@thecontinent.org](mailto:read@thecontinent.org)), Signal, or Telegram (+27738056068)

**Share real news.**

**The Continent**

# Navigating the new world order



The United States is reframing South Africa as a pariah state. Pretoria has other ideas.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

Simon Allison

Notwithstanding the odd corruption scandal, and the country's reputation for violent crime, South Africa's leaders have spent most of the last three decades basking in international adulation. Nelson Mandela, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Desmond Tutu, multiracial democracy, *Invictus*: the story of the Rainbow Nation, and how it rose from the bitter ashes of history's most sophisticated white supremacist state, is the model of what a peaceful political transition should look like.

South Africa is not used to being the bad guy.

And yet, in Donald Trump's White House, that is the narrative being spun by the president and his closest allies – including South Africa-born billionaire Elon Musk, who is using the unprecedented power of his personal social media platform to amplify baseless conspiracy theories about a “white genocide”.

South Africa is too close to Iran, they claim. South Africa is supporting Hamas and undermining the state of Israel. South Africa is killing and otherwise persecuting its white minority, specifically its Afrikaner white minority – who, by the way, are welcome to seek asylum in the United States even as immigration agents are rounding up and deporting as many non-white immigrants as possible.

The aggressive rhetoric from senior American officials is reflected in equally aggressive policy. All aid to South Africa



**Got out: Expelled ambassador Ebrahim Rasool.** Photo: Gianluigi Guercia/AFP

has been suspended by executive order. South Africa's ambassador to the United States was expelled. And this week, as seen in a draft federal memo that was leaked to *Bhekisisa*, South Africa – like China – is being labelled a “country of concern” by the US State Department. That's just one rung above countries like Iran and North Korea, who the US considers pariah states and excludes from international financial systems. If hostilities continue, could this be South Africa's fate? And just how badly would it devastate Africa's largest economy?

### A different destination

These questions – unthinkable mere months ago – have thrown South Africa's political and commercial classes into panic. How, exactly, should President Cyril Ramaphosa respond to a hostile, racist superpower?

In foreign policy circles, there are two broad schools of thought. The first is that the United States is too powerful and too



important to South Africa's economy to risk any further punitive measures, and can be appeased by rapidly changing foreign policy priorities.

“Ramaphosa may simply be overwhelmed or asleep at the wheel,” wrote the Brenthurst Foundation's Greg Mills and Ray Hartley in a scathing commentary that laid all the blame for the current debacle on the president's doorstep.

These policy changes would include cutting relations with Iran, and keeping China and Russia at arm's length. Dropping the case at The Hague against Israel. Scrapping the Expropriation Act, even though – contrary to far-right hysteria – the new law simply brings South Africa in line with best practice in the rest of the world. Sending a white, conservative man to lead the embassy in Washington DC. Pledging fealty to Trump and the greatness of the America that he is making. And then maybe South African companies will retain preferential access to the American market, aid funding will resume, and sanctions will be avoided.

**SA can't halt “white genocide” because no such thing exists, except in the imaginations of white supremacists.**

It is a big maybe. There is no guarantee that these kinds of concessions will change the tone of the engagement from the White House. And there is one concession, arguably the most important of them all, that South Africa simply cannot make: It cannot halt the “white genocide”,

because no such thing exists, except in the imaginations of the white supremacists in Trump's inner circle. And the racists really need to keep the “white genocide” story alive in order for their ideology to make any sense at all.

“The South African case is important because it plays a central role in global white supremacist claims,” wrote Nicky Falkof, a professor of the University of the Witwatersrand, in *The Conversation*. “These mythologies claim that white South Africans, specifically Afrikaners, are the canary in the coalmine: that the alleged oppression they are facing is a blueprint for what will happen to all white people if they don't ‘fight back.’”

South Africa's other option? Defiance.

On this, the country has recent form. South Africa's case against Israel at the International Court of Justice – accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza – positioned it as one of the few countries in the world willing to take the fight to Israel and its western allies, despite the considerable diplomatic and economic risk.

“Trump's attempts to bully us into withdrawing or muzzling ourselves must fail. Maintaining our solidarity is not simply about principles – it is also about our relationship to history,” wrote Sisonke Msimang, the writer and activist. “In these turbulent waters, we head for a different destination than the one America threatens.”

In this approach, South Africa would lean into its long-professed commitment to non-alignment and the promotion of human rights – notwithstanding its

uneven application of these standards in places like Zimbabwe and Sudan – to make itself a kind of moral conscience for the Global South.

America's recent shift towards authoritarianism and Europe's struggles to contain far-right parties with similarly anti-democratic aspirations create room for a new leader of the "free world".

Suddenly, it does not feel that far-fetched to imagine a near future where South Africa – with its lauded constitution and vigourously independent judiciary – is among the leading voices when it comes to the protection of civil liberties and democratic space. (*Editor's note: It is no accident that The Continent is published from South Africa, which offers some of the world's most comprehensive legal protections for independent journalism.*)

Tellingly, this argument is not just coming from within South Africa. A version of it is also being made by Binaifer Nowrojee, the president of the Open Society Foundations. Open Society is one of the biggest funders of civil society around the world, and has had to rethink its approach to philanthropy and social change in the wake of Trump's re-election. Nowrojee outlined some of its strategy in a set of three major speeches in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria earlier this month.

Doing so in South Africa was a deliberate choice, Nowrojee told *The Continent*, a conscious attempt to view the world from the perspective of South Africa and the Global South. And given the difficult diplomatic terrain South Africa finds itself, it was also an act of solidarity.

"The world as we knew it in terms of power centres is shifting. We've gone from the Pax Americana to a multipolar world," Nowrojee said. "It's going to mean that the kind of bullying we've seen recently from the United States is going to diminish, as countries find alternative ways of trading and dealing with each other ... There are great opportunities for Africa to engage."

As risky as it is to defy the world's pre-eminent superpower, South Africa's leaders may not be left with much choice. This week, Trump announced the appointment of a new ambassador to Pretoria. It is unlikely to calm the troubled waters. As Peter Fabricius observed in the *Daily Maverick*: "South Africa's already rocky relations with the US are likely to get rockier with President Donald Trump's nomination this week of the conservative media critic and ardent pro-Israeli sympathiser Leo Brent Bozell III as his ambassador to South Africa."

South Africa's ruling party – Africa's oldest political party – has already defeated one white supremacist state. Can it stand firm against another one? ■



**My volk, Marelize: Some white Afrikaners go pro-Trump.** Photo: Marco Longari/AFP

PHOTO ESSAY

# Old Lagos, new light

In studios across the city, negatives lay gathering dust. Now those forgotten negatives are being developed – bringing Lagos’s history into focus.



*Aina Street, Shogunle, Lagos, 1974. Courtesy Lagos Studio Archives.  
Copyright © Abi Morocco Photos*

## Paul Botes

**W**hen Karl Ohiri asked to see the archives of an old studio photographer who worked in Owerri, the capital of Imo state, he got a startling response. “I burnt them.”

Visiting other studio photographers in Lagos, he kept getting the same response: they had all destroyed their negatives. Digital photography had rendered them expensive and obsolete. Even knowing that, learning of their burning was jarring.

“I was concerned that parts of Nigeria’s social history could be permanently erased,” Ohiri told *The Continent*. So he decided to do what he could to archive studio photography

that showed the lives and styles of local Lagosians – snapshots of the city that would otherwise be lost.

Enlisting the help of the local photo community, he amassed thousands of negatives. Many had been poorly stored and had deteriorated substantially in the city’s humidity. Some were delivered in old rice sacks, full of rat droppings. Riikka Kassinen partnered with him on the effort in 2022. Their joint venture, *Lagos Studio Archives*, now has hundreds of thousands of old, forgotten negatives.

Dating the archives accurately has proven a challenge, as many of the negatives were kept or retrieved without dates. Karl and Riikka have relied on fashion from the time and



---

**Aina Street,  
Shogunle, Lagos,  
1979. Courtesy  
Lagos  
Studio Archives.  
Copyright © Abi  
Morocco Photos**



occasional photographs with books, magazines or calendars in them.

Many of the bodies of work are orphaned as the photographers have since passed away. One collection that stands out is the Abi Morocco Photos, consisting of more than 5,000 negatives. Mostly photographed in black and white on medium-format

cameras, and dated, the collection came from a joint venture between Funmilayo and John Abe, a husband and wife team. Ohiri and Kassinen met the couple in 2020 and developed a close friendship.

Abe, a studio photographer, met Funmilayo, also a photographer, in 1973. She would use his darkroom.



**John Abe and Funmilayo Abe, Alagbado, Lagos, 2024. Karl Ohiri/Riikka Kassinen, Courtesy Lagos Studio Archives. Copyright © Lagos Studio Archives**

They talked about their shared passion for photography. Shortly after, they decided to join studios under John's name, *Young Abi Morocco Photos*. ("Young" was dropped after a few

years when a friend joked that Abe was getting on in age).

Abi Morocco Photos was located on the bustling Aina Street, in the north of Lagos, for 18 years. It then moved



**Ajisejiri Street in Shogunle, Lagos, 1976. Courtesy Lagos Studio Archives.  
Copyright © Abi Morocco Photos**

to nearby Shogunle – equally busy and bustling – for another 18 years.

The studio was popular, and the couple expanded their practice to include studio portraiture, commissioned home and street portraiture, celebrations and funerals.

They had a Vespa motorcycle with Abi Morocco Photos emblazoned on the windshield and travelled all over Lagos to commissions or when delivering prints. Both often worked late into the night, making prints in the darkroom, their home adjoining the

studio. John retired in 2006, and with it, the studio. Funmilayo continued photographing until 2021.

Karl and Riika recount that John, who passed away last year, regarded photography as an important educational tool for preserving history and stories, and shared their passion in keeping Nigeria's social history alive.

He and Funmilayo were enthused that their work might play an important part in Nigerian photographic history and that their archive would be protected for future generations. ■



**Aina Street, Shogunle, Lagos, c. 1970s. Courtesy Lagos Studio Archives.  
Copyright © Abi Morocco Photos**



---

**Aina Street,  
Shogunle,  
Lagos, c.1970s.**  
Courtesy  
Lagos Studio  
Archives.  
Copyright © Abi  
Morocco Photos



---

**Aina Street,  
Shogunle,  
Lagos, 1976.**  
Courtesy Lagos  
Studio Archives.  
Copyright © Abi  
Morocco Photos



---

**Shogunle,  
Lagos, c.  
1970s.  
Courtesy  
Lagos Studio  
Archives.  
Copyright ©  
Abi Morocco  
Photos**



---

**Aina Street,  
Shogunle, Lagos,  
1979. Courtesy  
Lagos  
Studio Archives.  
Copyright © Abi  
Morocco Photos**



---

**Aina Street,  
Shogunle, Lagos,  
1979. Courtesy Lagos  
Studio Archives.  
Copyright © Abi  
Morocco Photos**



---

**Blazer Boy with Phone, circa  
1990s. Courtesy Lagos Studio  
Archives.**



Far to go? A minibus converted to run on compressed gas.  
Photo: Olympia De Maismont/AFP

# The road to Lagos' climate-friendly future has potholes

Some keke drivers find relief in compressed natural gas. For others it's more of a bellyache.

## Adio John in Lagos

**T**he keke tricycles that buzz on the streets of Lagos have been looking a little different of late. Underneath the operator's seat, where a tool box once sat, a gas cylinder now rests. Many have responded to a push backed by President Bola Tinubu to switch to compressed natural gas, a fuel that does less to drive the climate crisis than petrol and diesel – and is cheaper at the pump.

Price, more than concern for the climate, has been the major driver for switchers. Petrol now retails at around 960

naira (\$0.60) per litre – nearly triple what it was before May 2023 when the Nigerian government stopped subsidising pump prices for refined fossil fuels.

“I used to spend nearly everything I made on petrol. Now I take something home,” said Obawunmi Oladele who switched to a natural gas-powered tricycle four months ago. He got it through the national association of tricycle owners and operators. “With ₦1,600 (\$1), I can fill the tank and work all day,” said Yusuf Akinpelu, another operator.

But there's a catch: Lagos has just only a handful of natural gas filling stations

and given its infamous traffic jams, keke drivers spend hours just getting to the nearest station. “It’s stressful. We’re losing hours we should be working,” said Kunle, who asked to be identified only by his first name. He said that on some days, he spends four hours just getting to a station and lining up to refuel.

Government restrictions keep keke operators out of the central business areas. They operate on the outskirts of Lagos, in suburbs like Ipaja, Abule-Egba and Alagbado. The Agidingbi station located in Ikeja, the state capital, is 17km away from Alagbado. Even in good traffic – and that is hardly ever a thing in Lagos – it would take nearly 40 minutes to go between the two. “The distance and the queues are killing us,” said Oladele.

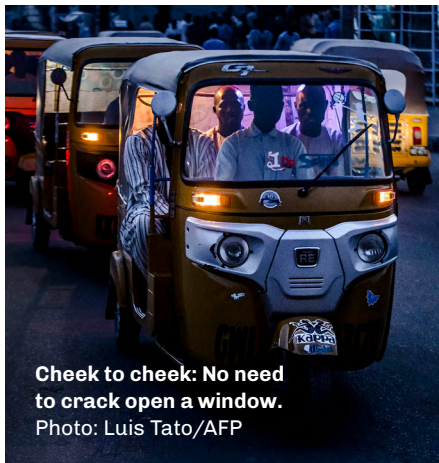
As more keke powered by natural gas hit the roads, long queues at the two gas stations are becoming routine.

The federal government has said it is aware of the challenge and plans to build more stations through its presidential natural gas initiative.

Tinubu launched the initiative in 2023, to provide “succour to Nigerians” who were reeling from soaring fuel prices after he removed subsidies. It intends to convert 200,000 tricycles and buses to natural gas by 2027, a goal that requires \$250-million invested in related infrastructure.

His administration gave itself until the end of 2024 to pilot the switch operation on a smaller budget of \$24-million. But people who switched immediately found that they needed the big-budget infrastructure.

Then there’s the ownership issue.



**Cheek to cheek: No need to crack open a window.**  
Photo: Luis Tato/AFP

Most operators don’t own tricycles and instead rent one from the association.

“We pay ₦23,000 a day. Sometimes I take home just ₦2,000. It’s like I’m working for them,” one renter told *The Continent*. “The daily payments erase the benefit of cheap gas,” said another renter. “We’re working 12, 14 hours just to break even.”

Still, with inflation soaring and jobs scarce, few can walk away. “Man must work. We can only manage it and hope things get better,” said the second renter who spoke to *The Continent*. Neither wanted to be identified by their name.

Asked what getting better might look like, the renters looked to the government for a new kind of subsidy – underwriting the cost of the tricycles such that the keke owners and operators association can improve payment terms at which operators can buy their vehicles outright.

For now, the gas cylinder beneath the driver’s seat carries promise and struggle in equal measure. ■



## PHOTO ESSAY

# Breaking the ice

All Photos: Luis Tato/AFP

**M**ount Kenya, Africa's second-highest peak, is one of only a few mountains with glaciers on the continent. But the glaciers are shrinking, and they are shrinking fast. Scientists fear that it could turn ice-free as soon as 2030, which would make it one of the first to do so in modern times. Lewis Glacier, the most studied, has lost over 90% of its mass since 1934, according to the World Glacier Monitoring Service. This dramatic loss is driven by rising temperatures and declining

rainfall, both tied to climate change.

The mountain is an ancient extinct volcano, and its peak measures 5,199m. Around it is Mount Kenya National Park, a 700 sq km world heritage site that is home to delicate ecosystems. The glaciers' disappearance threatens water sources for millions, impacting farming, hydroelectric power and biodiversity. The loss also endangers local economies that depend on agriculture and ecotourism tied to the mountain's unique ecosystem. ■



**Cold shoulder: Mount Kenya, Africa's second-highest peak, is home to rapidly shrinking glaciers that are vital for nearby ecosystems and communities.**



**Thaw point: Lewis Glacier, the most studied, has lost over 90% of its mass since 1934, according to the World Glacier Monitoring Service.**



**Peak loss: This dramatic loss is driven by rising temperatures and declining rainfall, both tied by experts to climate change.**





**Bucks stop here: The glaciers' disappearance threatens water sources for millions, impacting farming, hydroelectric power, and biodiversity.**



---

**High and dry:**  
The loss of the glaciers also endangers local economies that depend on agriculture and ecotourism tied to the mountain's ecosystem.



**Slippery slope: A long-disused mountain hut sits at the foot of Point John at Mount Kenya National Park.**



**This way up: Mountaineer and professional guide Charles Kibaki Muchiri, 50, observes the shrinking ice of Lewis Glacier near the summit of Mount Kenya.**



## Sex and ethnicity: The marriage story

**N**ine out of 10 Africans say they wouldn't mind living next door to people from a different ethnic group, an expression of social tolerance we've reported before.

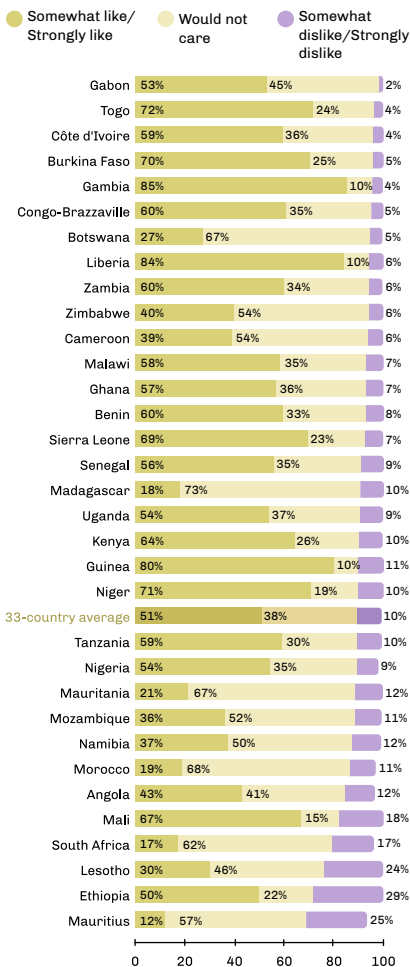
But while most endorse "love thy neighbour", what about love even closer to home? How would people feel if members of their family married outside their ethnic group?

On average across 33 African countries, Afrobarometer surveys find equally high levels of openness to this kind of ethnic inclusion: 89% of respondents voice no objection, including a majority (51%) who say they would "like" or "strongly like" such a match.

Only one in 10 (10%) object to an interethnic marriage within their family. Individuals without formal schooling are twice as likely as those with university education to disapprove (14% vs. 7%).

At least four-fifths are open to the idea in 29 of the 33 countries. The only countries where more than one in five respondents voice opposition to an interethnic union are Ethiopia (29%), Mauritius (25%), and Lesotho (24%) – but even there, large majorities say they have no problem with it. ■

### Attitudes toward interethnic marriage | 33 African countries | 2021/2023



**Source:** Afrobarometer is a non-partisan African research network that conducts nationally representative surveys on democracy, governance, and quality of life. Face-to-face interviews with 1,200 to 2,400 people in each country yield results with a margin of error of +/- two to three percentage points.



**Book Review**  
Jacqueline Nyathi

## Gloom to manoeuvre

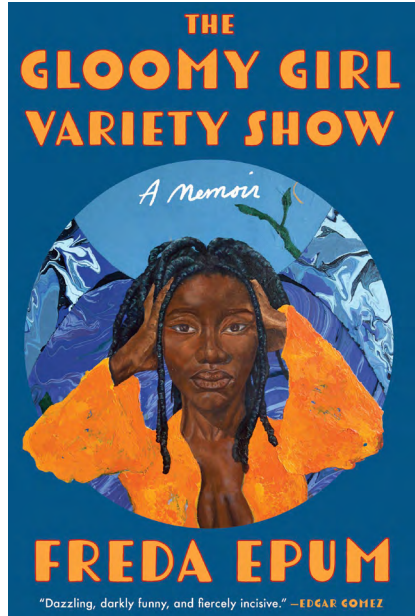
Poetry, photographs, essays and art reviews make this fizzy memoir a structural delight.

**F**reda Epum's sparkling memoir deals with messy life; she's not afraid to dive into its gory intestines. Switching between first and third person (and occasionally second), it describes the highs and lows of growing up Black in the mostly white Tucson, Arizona; mental illness; unemployment; and, finally, happiness.

At the centre of *The Gloomy Girl Variety Show* is Epum's longing for home. It begins with a dream of "a fully furnished home with a great stove to cook family recipes, large windows to look out at the landscape, a couch to fall asleep on, a bed to lie in for hours, a bathtub to soak my pain away," and ends with a description of the first home she owns.

In between, an existential searching for what home even means. "I am without my own definition of home," she says.

A first generation Nigerian-American who learnt to mispronounce her surname for the comfort of those around her, Epum grapples with the dislocation pain of a



third-culture kid. "I resented my parents, grateful for their sacrifice but bitter about what I'd been deprived of: a sense of self," she says.

She muses on her relationship with food, memories of hospital admissions for mental healthcare, and sessions with therapists and psychiatrists.

The memoir includes a stellar essay on "corpsing" and "terminal Blackness". She ponders the expectations of motherhood, the burden of capitalism, and art. And she tells us how she finds love.

Epum may call herself a gloomy girl, but she is cool to hang out with in these pages. Her memoir is lively, sometimes sad, and always vulnerable. And she is upbeat, if somewhat wry. It's a raw, beautiful and deep work. ■

# THE QUIZ

**0-3**

"I think I need to start reading more newspapers."

**4-7**

"I can't wait to explore more of this continent."

**8-10**

"Knowledge is ID'ing the elephant in the room. Wisdom is building a smaller doorway."

Photo: AFP



- 1\_** Which gulf is Cameroon located on?
- 2\_** What is the currency of Sierra Leone?
- 3\_** True or false: Libian is the demonym for people from Libya.
- 4\_** True or false: Djibouti is part of the Sahel.
- 5\_** Asmara is which country's capital?
- 6\_** Pointe-Noire is the second largest city of which country?
- 7\_** What is Cabo Verde's capital city?
- 8\_** The village of Aït Benhaddou (pictured) is a world heritage site in which country?
- 9\_** What is Eswatini's former name?
- 10\_** Who wrote the 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart*?

**HOW DID I DO?** WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to [+27 73 805 6068](tel:+27738056068) and we'll send the answers to you!

# THE BIG PICTURE

Beginners pluck: Young students practice the traditional 10-stringed lyre known as the begena, which is central to Ethiopian Orthodox prayers, at Eman Begena School in Addis Ababa.

Photo: Luis Tato/AFP



The Continent is a member of the Press Council of South Africa. This means we adhere to its Code of Ethics. It also means that there's an independent body you can reach out to with a complaint about our reporting. That process is on their website — [www.presscouncil.org.za](http://www.presscouncil.org.za).

**all protocol observed.**

*publisher of* **The Continent**

The Continent is published by All Protocol Observed, a not-for-profit based in South Africa. Our home is dedicated to creating a space for African journalists to do quality journalism, which we then get to you wherever you are. For suggestions, queries, complaints, or to make a donation, please contact us at [read@thecontinent.org](mailto:read@thecontinent.org)