

The Continent



Three stars: Tinubu's tricky first year

Photo: Benson Ibeabuchi/
Bloomberg via Getty Images



COVER: Say what you like, but one thing is not up for debate: in his first year as president of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu has been busy. When he's not meddling with the national anthem, he's implementing sweeping macroeconomic changes that are making some economists very happy – and a lot of people very poor. The data paints a mixed picture (p12) and the streets show a much darker one (p13). One thing he hasn't changed is the working environment for journalists, which remains hostile (p15).

Inside:

- **Sudan:** Refugees caught between a rock and a very hard place (p7)
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Lifesaver: A nurse prepares a shot of a new malaria vaccine being distributed on the continent, where 90% of all malaria cases are recorded. Photo: Y Chiba/AFP

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

New malaria vaccine ready to roll out

Last week, the Central African Republic became the first country to receive a new malaria vaccine. A batch of 43,000 doses arrived by air, and another 120,000 are coming soon. The R21/Matrix-M vaccine uses the body's immune system to fight the parasite as soon as it enters the body. It is different from – and much cheaper – than another promising new vaccine, the RTS,S/AS01, which is being rolled out in 10 African countries. Some 608,000 people died from malaria in 2022.

BURKINA FASO

So much for that so-called civilian transition

According to a newly-signed charter, Burkina Faso's military leaders will rule for another five years. The delay has raised concerns about the backsliding of democracy in West and Central Africa. Criticism within the country is likely to be muted, because critics of the junta keep getting conscripted and sent into conflict areas. The junta seized power in a 2022 coup and had promised to hold elections in July this year to restore civilian rule. However, it also said security considerations would take precedence.

TUNISIA

Saied rejigs cabinet ahead of elections

Against the backdrop of an increasingly tense political atmosphere, President Kais Saied has reshuffled his cabinet, removing some figures thought to be close allies. No explanation for the reshuffle was offered. Factional battles within the government have followed the arrests of the leaders of civil society groups, lawyers, and journalists. At the time of his 25 July 2021 coup, Saied had enjoyed popular support but now that has waned considerably. A presidential election is scheduled for 25 October.

ISRAEL

'She's black and African, so who cares?'

Israeli intelligence agents spied on and threatened Fatou Bensouda, the former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, according to a *Guardian* investigation. This was designed to prevent Bensouda investigating alleged Israeli war crimes on Palestinian territory. A senior Israeli spy warned Bensouda about “getting into things that could compromise your security or that of your family”. One source told the newspaper that the Mossad had no hesitation about spying on the Gambian prosecutor



Targeted: Fatou Bensouda, former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. Photo: Peter Dejong/ ANP/AFP/Netherlands OUT

because “she’s black and African, so who cares?”. The Israeli government did not respond to the *Guardian*’s specific questions, saying they were “replete with falsehoods”.

INDIA

Thermometer glitch as Delhi boils over

On Wednesday, a weather sensor in New Delhi showed a temperature of 52.9°C – the highest ever recorded in India. Some small relief for the 33-million residents of the capital came the next day, when it was revealed that the sensor was faulty, and in fact the temperature was “just” 49.1°C. India’s weather agency issued a red alert, warning of a severe risk to public safety, and construction workers were given a mandatory paid three-hour break in the hottest hours of the day. More than 37 Indian cities recorded temperatures over 45°C this week.

NIGERIA

Out with the old, in with the even older

On Wednesday, on the first anniversary of his presidency, President Bola Tinubu signed a Bill reinstating the country’s original national anthem – *Nigeria, We Hail Thee* – written by a British migrant, and adopted at independence. In 1978 then-military dictator Olusegun Obasanjo replaced it with *Arise, O Compatriots*, based on lyrics sourced in a national contest and set to music by the Nigerian Police Band. Tinubu says the old-new anthem better represents the nation’s diversity, but few of his compatriots have hailed the move.

CULTURE

SA visual artist nabs top photography prize

South African visual artist Lebohang Kganye has won the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize for 2024. Along with the prestigious honour,

Kganye receives £30,000. Awarded in partnership with The Photographers' Gallery, the prize lauds works that made the "most significant contribution to international contemporary photography". Kganye's exhibition, *Haufi nyana? I've come to take you home*, uses life-size cutouts of her family and silhouettes to explore her ancestry.



Memory installed:
Lebohang Kganye,
Mohlokmedi wa Tora
(detail), 2018. Photo:
© Lebohang Kganye,
courtesy of the artist

MONEY

Economies growing, but not fast enough

The continent's overall economy will grow by 4.3% next year, up from 3.7% this year. That's according to African Development

Bank boss Akinwumi Adesina, speaking in Nairobi this week. He noted that 10 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies are in Africa, but warned that this growth was not fast enough to keep up with Africa's rising population – double-digit growth is needed to make a meaningful difference to poverty levels.

KENYA

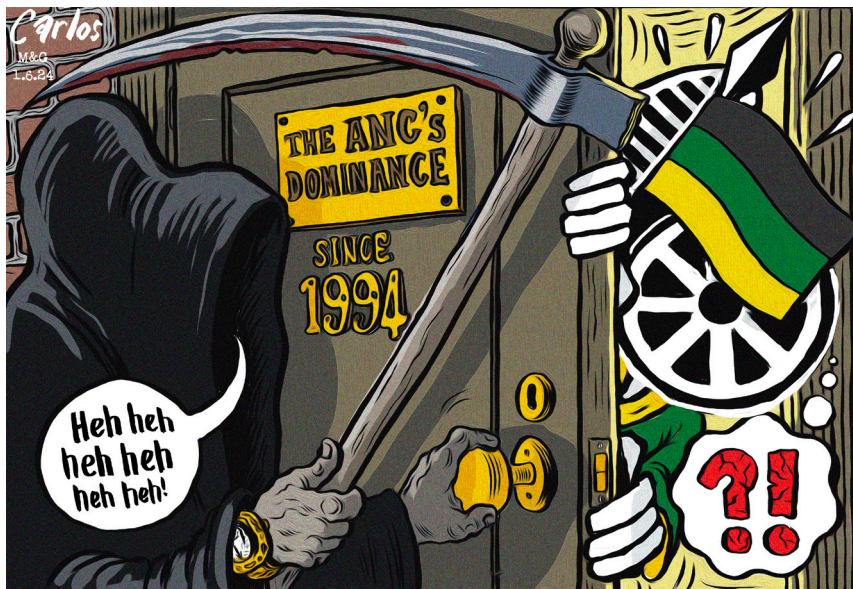
En route-o: Zero chill for 'hero' Bill

After being fêted at the White House, President William Ruto expected a heroic homecoming on his return to Kenya. Instead, he landed in a controversy over the cost of the private plane that flew him to the US and back. Ruto said the state paid only 10-million Kenyan shillings (\$77,000) to rent the plane – the rest was covered by “friends of Kenya”. He declined to identify those friends, or what they expect in return.

MALI

Senegal's Faye visits Goïta's junta

The leaders of Mali and Senegal cut contrasting figures in Bamako on Thursday. Colonel Assimi Goïta, who came to power in a coup, wore army fatigues while Senegal's new President Diomaye Faye was in a dark blue suit. The two struggled to find common ground on whether Mali would remain in the regional economic bloc, Ecowas – which would require a firm timeline for a civilian transition.



Dead reckoning: South Africa's liberation party, the African National Congress, will have to enter into a coalition with an opposition party to form a government, after failing to win an outright majority in Wednesday's national general elections.

Ethiopia

Refugees abandon UN camp in protest

Fleeing the violence in Sudan, refugees are being harassed by Fano militia.

A month-long protest by Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia's Amhara region escalated this week to include a hunger strike by some. The protesters want to be moved out of Ethiopia – where they have reportedly been attacked by Fano militias – or be allowed to return to Sudan, despite the war. The Ethiopian government has barred their mass return.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, 1,000 refugees walked out of its Awlala refugee site on 1 May, complaining of insecurity and insufficient services, and have since been living along a road nearby.

In the camp, the refugees had been subjected to shakedowns by local militia who are fighting the Ethiopia government.

The militiamen, known as Fano, stole phones and other property from the refugees, according to *Ayin Network*. This left them unable to receive remittances from family and friends, a vital economic

lifeline for the refugee community. The UN agency – which says that formal relief efforts have only received 11% of necessary funding – is struggling to supply basic services to the camp.

According to Sudanese mutual aid coordinators, this week's hunger strike is not just a protest. The homeless refugees last received food rations while at the Awlala camp and are reportedly running out of food. They have decided to leave what's left for the children, pregnant women and elderly among them. Some, however, told *Ayin* they would continue the strike even if they receive new rations – unless they are redirected to another country or allowed to return to Sudan.

The UN Refugees Agency says it is talking to the affected refugees, in the hope that they will return to Awlala camp. ■



Dire reality: Food aid is shared out at a temporary camp for refugees from Sudan. Photo: D Kitwood/Getty Images

Health

Medicine for the money, not for the 'few' lives it'd save

French drugmaker won't reopen cholera vaccine manufacturing despite global rush to save lives.

Kiri Rupiah

With at least 17 countries reporting outbreaks in the past year, the world has used up the available stockpile of cholera vaccines and new ones are not being produced fast enough.

Its manufacture is typically demand-driven and currently only one company, EuBiologics in South Korea, makes the vaccine. A French company, Sanofi, whose India subsidiary used to make about 15% of the world's annual supply, pulled out of the supply chain in 2020. EuBiologics makes about 50-million doses a year but right now, the countries fighting outbreaks need at least 76-million doses.

Profit-driven pharmaceutical manufacturers don't invest in the vaccine because there is little money to be made

from it – the disease mostly affects poor people and isn't included in the routine vaccinations countries and global vaccine alliances buy in bulk each year.

Until recently, the vaccine's South Korean maker kept up with demand because outbreaks were rare and isolated. But extreme climate events and breakdowns in political order have driven surges across several regions and countries, including Malawi, Zimbabwe, Haiti, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Comoros, and Ethiopia. A warmer climate has also extended the lifespan of the cholera bacteria, meaning that outbreaks last longer.

Southern Africa is battling the deadliest outbreak of cholera in at least 10 years. Worldwide, according to the data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, there have been at least 150,866 cholera cases in the past year and over 1,700 have died.

In April, the WHO approved Euvichol-S, a version of the EuBiologics vaccine that uses fewer ingredients and is cheaper and faster to make.

Two companies in India and South Africa, Biological-E and Biovac respectively, are slated to begin manufacturing the vaccine but likely won't put any on the market until the end of next year. The French company, which has already built capacity, continues to stay out of it despite pleas from the WHO. ■

South Africa

Wheel-borough:
Felt queued,
might deplete
later. Photo:
Paul Botes/AFP



Coalition of the unwilling

The African National Congress will have to find coalition partners, after failing to win a majority in Wednesday's elections. With over 80% of the vote counted at the time of going to press, the ANC is on track for about 41%.

The result is lower than most polls predicted: the ANC was hurt badly in KwaZulu-Natal province, where the new party of former president Jacob Zuma exceeded expectations, garnering 13% of the national vote. This makes uMkhonto we Sizwe SA's third-largest party, behind the Democratic Alliance (currently on 22%) and ahead of Julius Malema's

Economic Freedom Fighters (9%).

In South Africa, a president must be appointed within two weeks of the election, so coalition talks will be frantic (the Netherlands, by contrast, took seven months to form a workable coalition).

The nature of that coalition could have a profound impact on the country's future: the ANC's most likely coalition partners, the centre-right Democratic Alliance or the radical left Economic Freedom Fighters, represent *very* different policy directions – and both have previously expressed reluctance to govern with a ruling party they strongly criticise. ■

WE ARE RECRUITING.



The Continent is looking for a part-time layout designer to join us for two days a week. Starting in July, the contract will run for nine months at \$1,200 a month.

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- Attention to detail
- Good communication skills and an ability to work collaboratively in a team
- Because our newsroom is remote, you'll need a computer and stable access to the internet

Bonus abilities:

- A working knowledge of Adobe Illustrator
- Any other artistic skills (like creating graphics)

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Email jobs@allprotocol.org with your CV, a portfolio and a (maximum) 100-word note on why you want to work for *The Continent*

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Tinubu's scorecard

Going by his first year in office, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is expected to continue increasing Nigeria's oil production, keep the public sector deficit down and grow the country's gross domestic product (GDP). But poverty will remain widespread, since per-capita GDP is falling rapidly. And his most dramatic policy – cutting fuel subsidies – will effectively have been rolled back by the end of this year.

ECONOMY

2022

2023

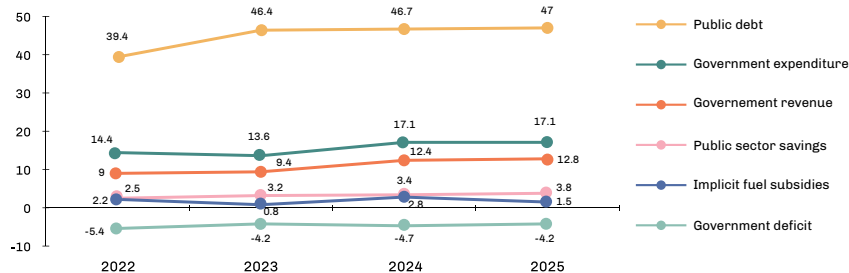
2024

2025

Nominal GDP per capita (US\$)	2,202	1,688	1,110	1,077
Annual growth in GDP	3.3	2.9	3.3	3
Oil production (millions of barrels a day)	1.38	1.5	1.65	1.65
National savings (percent of GDP)	20.2	24.1	25.8	26

Source: International Monetary Fund, May 2024

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (PERCENT OF GDP)



Source: International Monetary Fund, May 2024

SECURITY

Year before Tinubu

Tinubu's first year

Total incidents of armed violence	4674	5056
Riots and protests	1125	1086
Excessive use of force against protestors	18	17
Deaths in protests and riots	201	155
Total fatalities in armed violence	9152	9236

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Database, 30 May 2024

Good choices, bad outcomes, harder lives

Bola Tinubu's hardnose economic decisions failed to account for the impact on low-income Nigerians.

Pelumi Salako in Lagos

When Bola Tinubu became Nigeria's president a year ago, he inherited a weak economy from his predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, whom he succeeded as head of both the state and the ruling All Progressives Congress party.

The government was spending the equivalent of 2.2% of its national gross domestic product on fuel subsidies to keep pump prices low and oil barons rich, and the naira was being artificially propped up, which discouraged foreign investors. Hard decisions had to be made.

"This meant that any honeymoon period would be short [for Tinubu]," said Afolabi Adekaiyaoja, a research analyst at the Abuja-based Centre for Democracy and Development.

Tinubu did not ask for a honeymoon. On his inauguration day on 29 May last year, Tinubu went off script to announce that he was cutting the fuel subsidy. His government now spends well under half



Fuelling dissent: A demonstrator in Lagos protests against the economic policies of President Bola Tinubu in February. Photo: Benson Ibeabuchi/AFP

of what his predecessors did on those subsidies. The president has also allowed the naira to float – driven by market forces, rather than artificial interventions, it is now selling at 1,400 against the US dollar, up from 462 a year ago.

Macroeconomists approve of Tinubu's choices. The International Monetary Fund projects that the Nigerian economy will grow by 3.3% this year, up from 2.9% in 2023. But on the streets, sentiments run in the opposite direction. A litre of fuel now sells for 850 naira, up from 239 naira last May. Food prices have increased by 38%, because a weak naira has made imports like fertilisers, wheat and rice more expensive for local businesses.



Market forces: Vendors sell fresh produce on stalls at Utako Ultra Modern market in Abuja. Photo: KC Nwakalor/Bloomberg via Getty Images

“It has not been easy. We thought we were getting a government that would transform the situation but what is happening now does not meet our expectations,” said Titilayo Owolabi, a 25-year-old mother of two.

Owolabi runs a shop selling foodstuffs in Apapa, the port area in Lagos. Last year a derica (measuring bowl) of rice sold for 500 naira (\$0.34) but now she offers it at 1,200 naira (\$0.82). With customers unable to afford her goods, Owolabi’s income has nosedived. She used to make about 50,000 naira (\$34.22) in daily sales but hardly gets a quarter of that now.

Food and fuel have become prohibitively expensive and many Nigerians can no longer afford the basics. Hunger protests have broken out in major cities like Lagos, Ibadan and Kaduna. Some people resorted to looting trucks and warehouses for food.

Owolabi began rationing food in her own household. “My children’s lunch bag

used to be filled with food and snacks,” she explained. “But nowadays I put a 100-naira biscuit in the box and I tell them to manage it.”

Like Owolabi, 55-year-old mechanic Adeleye Adeoye has seen his income fall to a quarter of what it used to be. He often sits idly at his workshop for hours, waiting in vain for customers to bring their cars in for maintenance. He went from making about 20,000 naira per day a year ago to 5,000 naira – on a good day.

Analysts fault Tinubu’s government for failing to plan for short to medium term social protection programmes that would have reduced this pain.

“You want leaders who realise that there is a human cost to policymaking. And unfortunately it didn’t happen. If the government prepared for the aftereffect of these policy moves, it did not show it,” said Ikemesit Effiong, a partner at Lagos-based risk advisory firm, SBM Intelligence.

“You want leaders who realise that there is a human cost to policy making. And unfortunately it didn’t happen.”

A cash transfer to 15-million vulnerable households was not launched until October, and by the end of February only about 20% of the targeted households had received the benefit.

Low-income households have been left hoping for divine intervention. “Everything is in God’s hands now,” said Owolabi. “If He decides to change our situation through Tinubu, then things will ease up.” ■

Under Tinubu, journalists are as unsafe as ever

Attacks on journalists have intensified under Tinubu, with national police officers often acting as guns-for-hire for powerful people.

Abdullahi Jimoh in Lagos

On a hot afternoon earlier this month, five rifle-wielding men approached Daniel Ojukwu on a street in Lagos, flashed a remand warrant bearing his full name, and bundled him in their vehicle. They were Nigerian police officers from Abuja. He is an investigative journalist.

At the State Criminal Investigative Department in Panti, Yaba, in Lagos State, the men handcuffed Ojukwu from behind and emptied his pockets. They didn't let him call his lawyer or family members. Instead, they held him in a police cell for several days.

Once his family and employers tracked him down, Ojukwu was flown from Lagos to a detention facility of the Cybercrime Center in Abuja. "Both Lagos and Abuja cells were horrible," Ojukwu told *The Continent*. "I felt ill many times."

After pressure from Nigerian journalists at home, civil society and the United States-based Committee to Protect Journalists, Ojukwu was set free after nine nights in detention.

Ojukwu's detention was the 45th attack on the media since President

Bola Tinubu became president last May. About 62% of these attacks were by state security, according to Edetaen Ojo, who leads Media Rights Agenda, a Nigerian press defence organisation.

Ojukwu's detention was the 45th attack on the media since Tinubu became president. It is estimated that 62% of these attacks were by state security.

Despite promising to uphold press freedom in a meeting with newspaper owners last December, Tinubu's record is on track to be worse than his predecessor Muhammadu Buhari, whose administration arrested 189 journalists over its eight-year tenure, according to a Global Rights report.

According to the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development, between 1986 and 2023, 1,034 Nigerian journalists have been detained. That makes the 28 attacks on journalists by state security over the first year of Tinubu's administration equal to the annual average of the last 38 years, some of which were under military rule. ■

Stealing the American dream – one bicycle at a time

Immigrant app-based delivery workers in New York City receive less than minimum wage, and are easy targets for criminals.

Maurice Oniang'o in New York

On a chilly Saturday morning, a man with a blue helmet raised over his forehead sits on a bench in the middle of Broadway, one of New York City's major thoroughfares. Two unique tribal marks etched on his chin are a clue about where he was born 31 years ago, and where he was raised: Tenkodogo, Burkina Faso. He has been working as an app-based food-delivery worker here in the Big Apple since June 2022.

Illiace Zabsonre is one of more than 65,000 delivery workers in New York, most of them immigrants, most from Latin America, some from Africa. With each order, they skilfully weave through the high-traffic labyrinth of America's most populous city at a breathtaking pace. "Countdown begins the moment your phone pings," says Zabsonre.

Each stop brings anxiety about a delivery worker's nightmare: bicycle theft. Zabsonre first suffered the occupational hazard last October in Manhattan.

"I had two orders to deliver," he says. "I parked the bicycle in front of the building and locked it in front of the doorman."

He secured the bicycle by threading the lock through both the tire and mid-frame but did not fasten it to anything fixed. When he returned, it was gone. In the few minutes he was inside the building, the thief must have picked up the bicycle, lock and all, and carried it away.

"It was worth \$1,800," he says. "A huge setback for me." Zabsonre supports a wife and child back in Burkina Faso. When he lost the bicycle, he had to pause sending back any funds until he made the money back. "I now must double my efforts."

Regarded as independent contractors, delivery workers make less than the New York City minimum wage of \$15 per hour – \$14.18 per hour with tips, and \$7.09 per hour without, according to a 2022 study. After expenses, they take home about \$11.12 per hour with tips and \$4.03 per hour without. Some make even less, according to the study.

"It was not always like this," says Salifou Diallo, a restaurant delivery worker, originally from Conakry, Guinea. Diallo is in his mid-forties. In 2020 and 2021, he earned about \$1,200 each week but his earnings have dropped significantly due to increased competition. "Today I make



Mean streets: Salifou Diallo has had to replace five stolen bicycles using funds intended to support his family back in Guinea.

Photo: Maurice Amanya Oniang'o

\$600, sometimes less,” says Diallo, who works for 12 hours a day. This translates to approximately \$7.14 per hour, less than half of the minimum wage. “You can barely survive on it.”

Diallo pays \$850 per month for his room in a shared apartment in the Bronx and sends a quarter of his earnings back to Guinea to support his wife, two children, and his mother.

Things might get better. Last year, New York City passed a new minimum wage law mandating that app companies must pay city delivery workers a minimum of \$17.96 per hour, in addition to tips.

Bicycle theft compounds the tight financial situation: Diallo has lost five electric bicycles in the past two years, causing him losses of roughly \$10,000. He replaced three with his modest savings and turned to credit for two.

The most recent theft took place after a delivery in the Bronx. Sitting down to eat at midday, Diallo parked his bike and sat on a bench next to it. Two men approached him. “They sprayed

something in my eyes and nose,” Diallo says. He fell unconscious and when he woke up, his bicycle was gone.

Neither Zabsonre and Diallo reported the thefts; they felt nothing would come of it. Other delivery workers stay silent as they lack the necessary documentation to work in the country, and fear that filing a police report would lead to deportation.

“To report, the bicycle has to be registered in your name,” says Serigne Sarr, a delivery worker from Senegal.

Sarr was at a busy intersection in Harlem, where many delivery workers from Senegal, Mali, Mauritania and Guinea congregate. Most of the workers at this intersection speak French or Arabic, and their mother tongues, which include Wolof, Mandinka, and Fula.

Sarr says bicycle thefts aren’t just a daytime concern – some of his colleagues have had their bicycles stolen in front of their apartments at night.

“You lock your bike securely and go to sleep. When you get back in the morning, the bike is not there.” ■



PHOTO ESSAY

The Escape

*It's not easy being young in today's Tunisia. Among youth under 24, unemployment hovers around 40%. They have come of age in a decade marked by political instability, economic crisis and social inequality. **Zied Ben Romdhane**'s photography, which won the Africa long term project category in the 2024 World Press Photo Contest, explores the lives of young Tunisians as they make do with a reality that falls far short of the democracy, social justice and freedom of expression that the 2011 revolution demanded.*

Photos: © Zied Ben Romdhane Magnum Photos,
Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, AIM LAB







Should we prioritise employment or the environment? Yes.

World Environment Day (5 June) isn't a bad time to recall that Africans overwhelmingly (78%) say their governments need to do more to limit pollution and protect the environment.

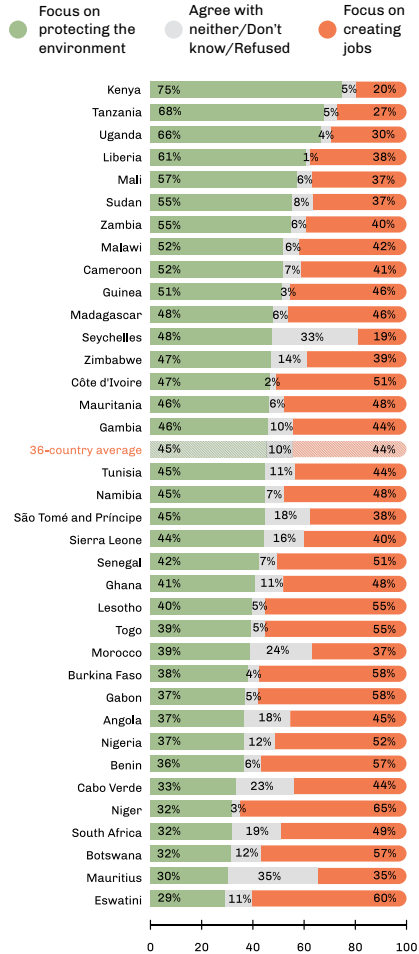
Or to face the fact that doing more may require some tough choices.

What if, for example, the choice pits economic development and jobs against laws protecting land, air, and water?

When Afrobarometer asked Africans in 36 countries, they split right down the middle: 45% gave priority to jobs and incomes, while 44% prioritised protecting the environment. Environmental protection was a slam dunk in Kenya (75%), Tanzania (68%), and Uganda (67%). Jobs and incomes were the clear favourite in Niger (65%) and Congo-Brazzaville (64%). But most countries were more conflicted.

Maybe it's a false choice: What use is an income without a livable environment, or a pristine habitat without food on the table? In real life and policy making, as poverty, pollution, and climate change tighten the screws, the numbers suggest conversations to have, and that creative solutions are needed. ■

Should the government prioritise jobs or the environment? | 36 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 1,200-2,400 people in each country yield results with a margin of error of +/- two to three percentage points.



A billion-naira blockbuster

Nigeria's first film to gross \$1-million could have used some nips and tucks – but all's well that ends well.

Wilfred Okiche

Nollywood reached a new highwater mark early this year when *A Tribe Called Judah*, the latest comedy by superstar Funke Akindele, became the first local film to top one-billion naira at the box office. Only Marvel's *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* had previously

managed this feat. Akindele, who co-directs and co-writes her projects, is Nollywood's most bankable name, as evidenced by the runaway hits *Battle on Buka Street* (2022) and *Omo Ghetto: The Saga* (2020).

You know what to expect from a Funke Akindele film: big-hearted takes on low-income class culture that play well to practically every demographic. Akindele's star persona – solidified since 2008 when her *Jenifa* became a runaway hit – has been sharpened to portray characters that are as boisterous as they are relatable.

A Tribe Called Judah is in conversation with Akindele's previous outings. She leads an ensemble cast, playing Jedidah Judah, a put-upon single mother of five down-on-their-luck adult sons. In a running gag that also works as a marketing tool, all of Jedidah's five sons are fathered by men from five different tribes. When she develops a chronic ailment, her brood must rally together to find the resources that will keep her alive. If this involves stealing from a crime lord, then so be it.

After a corny but effective introduction, *A Tribe Called Judah* soon loses pace amid repetitive scenes. There simply isn't enough engaging material to justify its 134-minute runtime. That said, the film does pick up about halfway in, with a heist sequence that is handled with surprising vigour and efficiency and then powers its way to a rather satisfying climax.

Is this rallying enough to make up for the first hour of bloat? The record box office numbers seem to suggest so. ■

THE QUIZ

0-3

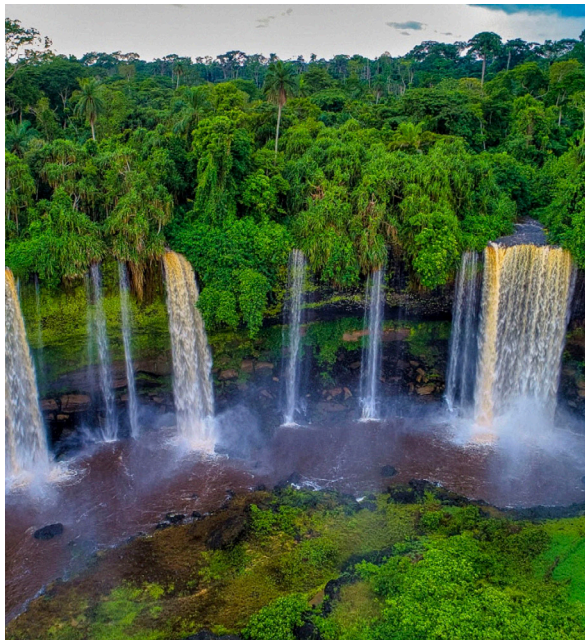
"I think I need to start reading more newspapers."

4-7

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

8-10

"Those waterfalls are great, they deserve some extra TLC."



- 1_** Agbokim Waterfalls (pictured) are found in Cross River State. Which country is that in?
- 2_** In which year did Bola Tinubu take presidential office?
- 3_** Rafah is on the border of which African country?
- 4_** How many islands and islets make up the Cabo Verde archipelago?
- 5_** True or false: English is one of the official languages of the multi-islanded country?
- 6_** Which African country held its general elections on 29 May?
- 7_** What is Algeria's full official name?
- 8_** Name the African diplomat who served as secretary-general of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006.
- 9_** How many times has an African served in that position?
- 10_** Ibrahim Traoré is which country's transitional president?

HOW DID I DO? WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to **+27 73 805 6068** and we'll send the answers to you!

June is here, reader, which means we'd better start getting the hang of 2024. It's okay – we'll mark the past six months off as a dress rehearsal. We were just warming up. But now? Now we're on it.

Ish.

As part of this new month, new us plan, we've decided that want to become a little more social, make some new friends, paint some towns red and trip the light fantastic.

Wait, hang on a moment. We've just been reliably informed that this bold new course of action would require us to physically leave the house! So we're bumping the whole idea of it back to the planning subcommittee for review.

Phew. That was a close call! But of course it got us thinking about how our lovely leaders go about making friends – and what manner of person they would have to be.

Do they have a shoulder to cry on when they accidentally sample their own supply of tear gas? Who do they call on when they need advice on how to change the constitution? To whom can they turn for unconditional love and support when they are being shouted at by surprisingly cross taxpayers for using their money to

buy a plane ticket or the judiciary? It's lonely at the top, so we hope they have at least one bestie each, ideally the kind that doesn't stab you in the back at the next election – metaphorically or literally!

Of course the best kind of friend is one who supports you in all your endeavours, including overthrowing a government. Just ask the cast of *Keeping Up With The Coupdashians!*

This week's episode comes to us from Burkina Faso where the military government's rule has been extended by five years. The new transition charter was signed by its transitional president – or, as he is apparently now known, “President of Faso” – Captain Ibrahim Traoré, was a result of a “national consultation”, and

allows for elections to be organised within the next five years “if the security situation allows it”.

That's pretty good news for Traoré, who some might say is the living embodiment of “the security situation”. And he does seem to be enjoying the job, after all! Best of all, he's given himself permission to vie for the presidency himself when elections do finally take place, which is very thoughtful of him.

Someone who seems to have the

Friends to the end



CONTINENTAL DRIFT
Samira Sawlani

kind of friends we can only dream of is Kenya's President William Ruto. You may remember that Billy recently flew out to the US in a private jet with his entourage, hung out with Genocide Joe and the gang, and a good time was had by all! Well, all except for Kenyans back home who are stressing about the new taxes that the government has put on the table, and are looking askance at certain flights of fancy.

Following criticism over his chosen mode of transport to the US, Billy revealed that the private jet was "offered by friends of Kenya at a relatively low cost" – believed to be the government of the United Arab Emirates. Thus the Ksh10-million paid from the Kenyan kitty was "the most efficient and economical way".

The other economical approach would have been to cut down the size of your delegation, jump on a KQ flight and get on with it, but all right and okay, Billy the Kidder, you do you. And Kenya can do some democracy about it later.

Amid it all there have been reports of rifts between Ruto and his deputy, Rigathi Gachagua, which reminded us of something a former British politician once told us: "Decoys and distractions are a government's number one strategy to keep the populace from demanding accountability."

Talking of distractions, this week, Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu signed into law a Bill which changes the country's national anthem from *Arise, O Compatriots* to the previous national anthem *Nigeria, We Hail Thee*.



No messo, no Faso: Captain Ibrahim Traoré is all about security. Photo: Olympia de Maismont/AFP

Insecurity, economic woes and a cost of living crisis are just some of the challenges that the country is grappling with. If Tinubu has any friends left it might be time for them to stage an intervention and have a little chat about priorities!

While we felt great joy this week seeing South Africans queuing to vote in their election, we end today's *Drift* on a sombre note. The footage from Rafah this week has us lost for words as Israel continues to carry out its genocide despite orders from the ICJ to halt its actions.

News from Sudan is little better with Doctors Without Borders warning of a "bloodbath" under way in El-Fasher, and the UN has warned that child malnutrition in the country "is at emergency levels."

Your reminder, please, that friendship is a doing word. Keep talking about Palestine and Sudan – we can *not* let our friends down. ■

The not-so-secret ploy for presidential perpetuity

Zimbabwe's president is working with 'opposition' leaders to extend his time in office.

Clemence Manyukwe

In a development that will send shockwaves throughout the country, it has emerged that Zanu-PF has hatched a plan to ensure that President Emmerson Mnangagwa is not forced to step down when he completes his second term in 2028. Instead, the ruling party is set to do a backroom deal with leaders from within the Citizen's Coalition for Change (CCC) party to form a "unity government" and delay the parliamentary and presidential elections. This would in effect extend the term of all sitting politicians.

Mnangagwa, who has failed to deliver on his early promises of change, would remain in power without explicitly stating that he wishes to break the Constitution for a third term in office. Postponing legislative elections will allow all sitting MPs to retain their positions, and defer costly electoral fights. This will be particularly attractive to those CCC leaders who have taken over the party by stealth and are accused of being government pawns.

Sources close to the talks say that Mnangagwa is also hoping that an inclusive government would bolster his

flagging legitimacy. A unity government would extend Zanu-PF's patronage and influence to its allies within CCC, and potentially win over some opposition legislators who continue to oppose the government. This would be critical given that any proposal to enable Mnangagwa to remain in power will result in further divisions within the opposition, and a popular outcry.

The process may be led by CCC's self-appointed secretary general Sengezo Tshabangu. Since his emergence from obscurity, Tshabangu has played a key role in undermining opposition unity and momentum, "recalling" many elected CCC leaders and then allowing Zanu-PF to win the resulting by-elections, despite the protestations of the CCC's then-leader Nelson Chamisa and his allies.

In particular, Tshabangu appears keen to see the formation of a unity government that would create jobs for himself and his allies.

Since Chamisa quit the CCC earlier this year, the influence of Tshabangu – now a senator himself – has expanded,



Assets on the line: Zimbabwe's ruling and 'opposition' parties have finally found common ground: protecting the status quo. Photo: Zinyange Auntony/AFP

and he has made it clear that he intends to lead negotiations with the government. In particular, Tshabangu appears keen to see the formation of a unity government that would create jobs for himself and his allies. Tshabangu's position is unsurprising, given that many Zimbabweans believe he is a government plant.

But it also seems to be the position of other opposition stalwarts such as Welshman Ncube, who is currently the acting CCC president. In recent interviews Ncube has made it clear that he would be open to the idea of a unity government, and that nothing is off the table in terms of negotiations with Zanu-PF.

Ironically, the greatest challenge to Mnangagwa's plans may come from his rivals within Zanu-PF. If the man known as "The Crocodile" extends his stay in State House indefinitely, it will thwart the

presidential ambitions of others, such as Mnangagwa's deputy and former army general, Constantine Chiwenga. In March Mnangagwa's biographer, Eddie Cross, stated that Chiwenga knew that he was never going to be president "even for five minutes".

Chiwenga may still want to see power rotating, however, as may others in Zanu-PF and the army who have been disappointed by Mnangagwa's leadership. Given the CCC's compromised state, they may just represent the best hope for preserving the country's multiparty system. ■



Clemence Manyukwe is a Zimbabwean freelance journalist. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa

THE BIG PICTURE

Hoof it: A rider on the trot in Orania, the Afrikaner-only town in South Africa founded in the last years of apartheid to conserve off-brand, non-British coloniser culture.

Photo: Marco Longari/AFP



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