

# African Politics and Policy

Newsletter  
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## Editorial

African countries are confronted with several problems.

In Angola, the economy is bad, the public finances are in a mess, and from December the country is the victim of the worst epidemic of yellow fever in over thirty years now. In Burundi, the government forces and the opposition have been clashing for months- which has prompted the United Nations to send a contingent to ensure that no further violence and human rights abuses will occur.

In Cameroon, the terrorist group Boko Haram, in addition to doing the things for which is notorious, wards off farmers thus damaging the rural economy. In the Central African Republic rebel groups perpetrated some attacks to derail the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration-process necessary to the pacification of the country.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the protests against the president have intensified, and analysts fear that the country may experience a similar experience to that of Burundi. In Ethiopia citizen protests are neutralized with bloodbaths.

In Mali the peace process is struggling to make progress because of the many, too many, terrorist attacks. In Nigeria security is threatened not only by Boko Haram, but also by a group calling itself the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate, which, in the name of justice, blasts the oil fields that are a major source of country's wealth.

Somalia is devastated by the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab, while in South Sudan – despite a peace agreement between the president and the leader of the rebels – there continue to be more or less sporadic attacks, and the country's crisis is becoming increasingly more devastating.

There are obviously many problems, and they are often responsible for a food crisis that threatens millions of lives. War, however, is not one of the problems affecting Africa. Africa is hurt by terrorism, instability 'political, civil war, and by a political leadership which seems to be better suited to create problems for its citizens than to solve them.

African countries need help. Often urgent. Malawi 6 million people are food insecure. But what African countries really need is to have a better political class, a political class properly equipped to address the problems which is expected to solve—but war, though things may change, is one of them.

Riccardo Pelizzo

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### Mozambique

The Minister of Defence declared that from between July 8 and August 18, there were 17 Renamo attacks. Efforts to mediate between the government and Renamo have been so far unsuccessful. Mediators were even blamed for creating confusion Renamo leaders made clear that power sharing arrangements with Frelimo do not represent a viable option as Frelimo "is still Marxist"

### DR Congo

Opposition parties join forces and ask Kabila to step down at the end of his mandate on December 20. The tension between government and opposition is increasing. Opposition leaders have accused Kabila of high treason and opposition forces are expected to organize mass demonstrations.

Though the government released a couple of dozens of political prisoners, the opposition wants all the 112 (political) prisoners to be released.

## Lo strano caso del Gabon

By Riccardo Pelizzo

Quello del Gabon e' un caso curioso. I dati della Banca Mondiale ci dicono infatti che il Gabon e' uno dei paesi africani piu' ricchi. La Banca Mondiale stima infatti che il reddito nazionale lordo del Gabon sia stato, per il 2015, di 18810 dollari: un valore leggermente inferiore a quello registrato alle Seychelles (25760) o alle Mauritius (19290), ma superiore a quello del Botswana (15600), della Guinea Equatoriale (16450), e del Sud Africa (12830).

Che il Gabon sia uno dei paesi piu' ricchi dell'Africa Sub-Sahariana lo si evince, con maggiore chiarezza, paragonando il reddito nazionale lordo gabonese con quello del resto del continente che e' stimato in 3562 dollari. Non solo, con i suoi 18810 dollari pro capite il reddito nazionale lordo del Gabon e' superiore al valore medio del reddito nazionale lordo a livello mondiale che e' stimato in 15415 dollari.

Il fatto che il reddito nazionale lordo gabonese sia superiore alla media mondiale, a quello delle piu' ricche economie continentali, e che sia cinque volte piu' alto del valore medio registrato nell'Africa Sub-Sahariana, conferma come quella gabonese sia una delle piu' ricche economie del continente.

Ma mentre i dati della Banca Mondiale ci mostrano un Gabon fondamentalmente ricco, i dati presentati recentemente dall'Afrobarometer mostrano un quadro sostanzialmente diverso.

Le risposte fornite ad un sondaggio condotto recentemente dall'Afrobarometer ci dicono che il 74 per cento dei cittadini gabonesi si sia trovato senza cibo, senza acqua potabile e senza assistenza medica nel corso dell'ultimo anno. A questo va aggiunto che il 69 per cento dei gabonesi ha indicato di non avere abbastanza combustibile per cucinare e che il 95 per cento ha detto di non avere un reddito in denaro. Insomma, i dati dell'Afrobarometer mostrano un Gabon che non solo e' povero ma anche che, cosa pure peggiore, risulta essere il paese con il piu' alto tasso di poverta' vissuta—tasso che viene stimato aggregando le percentuali sopra citate dell'intero continente africano.

Come puo' essere che, a seconda delle stime utilizzate, il Gabon venga considerato come uno dei paesi piu' ricchi e nel contempo piu' poveri dell'Africa Sub-Sahariana?

Se escludiamo errori metodologici nella stima dei dati compilati sia dalla Banca Mondiale che dall'Afrobarometer, la risposta e' una sola: il Gabon non riesce a distribuire la ricchezza che crea. La causa di questa distribuzione ineguale della ricchezza e' l'alto tasso di disoccupazione che nel 2015 e' stato del 19.7 per cento. Un valore leggermente inferiore a quello registrato negli anni precedenti, ma sempre troppo alto.

Soluzioni magiche per questo tipo di problemi non ce ne sono, ma ci sono pero' soluzioni percorribili. La prima delle quali e' la diversificazione economica. L'economia del Gabon va diversificata, per creare opportunita' di impiego per quei lavoratori che l'economia gabonese oggi non e' in grado di impiegare produttivamente.

La diversificazione crea lavoro, e questo, a sua volta fa si' che la ricchezza che l'economia del paese e' in grado di generare venga distribuita in maniera piu' equa, contribuendo cosi' a ridurre l'incidenza di quella poverta' vissuta che oggi purtroppo e' la maggior piaga del paese.

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### Nigeria's Heritage Sites

Nigeria celebrated the 50th anniversary of Lagos State.

As part of the program, Ministry of Information and Culture organized the third festival conference under the theme "Tourism Potential in Yorubaland: Landmarks, Culture and History".

Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the Minister of Information and Culture, critically noted that in spite of abundance of qualified for UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Nigeria, only two places are recognized: Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove and the Sukur Cultural Landscape in Adamawa. But lack of proper inventory and strategic policy of development the sites, prevent National Museum and Lekki Conservation Center in Lagos, Obudu Cattle Ranch in Cross River, Yankari Game Reserve in Bauchi State, the Ikogosi Warm Spring in Ekiti, Nike Lake Resort in Enugu, Mambilla Plateau in Adamawa and the Royal Palace of the Oba of Benin in Edo attain the international recognition.

However, as noted by the Minister, the government has already recognized the importance of tourism, arts and culture as important drivers of economic development; thus, more reforms will be done in the nearest future.

## The mark of a true leader?

By Riccardo Pelizzo

After a tense electoral campaign and the election of President Magufuli, everybody thought that the Tanzanian political system was destined to undergo extensive changes. It was believed that Magufuli would reform his party from within, reform the public administration, reform the way in which the Tanzanian government works, and took serious steps to implement a credible good governance agenda. Media indicated that Magufuli's agenda included some items from the opposition's agenda and that this move could improve the relationship between government and opposition.

This is when everybody thought Magufuli was the solution to all the problems Tanzania has experienced over the past few years. He was immediately regarded as one of the wisest statesmen in the region and the press went on to argue that Western Presidents had much to learn from Magufuli.

Magufuli, in fairness, kept pushing his reformist agenda. He kept pushing for good governance. But the honeymoon ended.

Magufuli gave the impression that he was willing to 'compress' democracy in his effort to promote good governance. He gave the impression of regarding 'democracy' as a nuisance. He gave the impression of being either unwilling or unable to engage in the government-opposition dialectic that characterizes mature democracies. His remarks about the opposition became increasingly threatening, the opposition grew increasingly worried and the relationships between government and opposition deteriorated once again—a deterioration that is never good for democracy and Magufuli went from being regarded as one of the greatest statesmen in the region to being regarded as a bully.

Who knows how people will regard him once he steps down. But one thing is clear: his bully attitude, appealing at first, showed that he may not have the skills that we may need in a leader. A leader has to be bold, has to have a vision, but has also to be able to mend political fences.

And, if reports are to be believed, Tanzania seems to have found a leader with these qualities: it is the Speaker of the National Assembly, who has taken some steps to reconcile with the opposition forces. Whether he will succeed in bringing reconciliation or not is still, for the time being, up in the air. It depends on whether, among other things, he will be able to outmaneuver his deputy, lead parliament and undo what his deputy did. But what the Speaker did was to provide good leadership in this occasion. And given the turbulent times that so many African countries are living, perhaps several other African leaders should adopt this kind of leadership style.



### Nigeria: reviving the traditional festivals

During the ongoing Edinburgh International Festival Summit, Nigeria has signed a partnership agreement with the British Council to revive and preserve Nigerian traditional festivals and games.

The agreement includes the training programs on capacity building for festival managers and the special attention is paid to revive the Durbar and Argungun Festivals and traditional "ayo" game.

The Ministry of Culture and Information will sign the similar agreement with the Tony Elumelu Foundation, a prominent African philanthropic organization, which "believes that the private sector holds the key to unlocking Africa's economic potential".

## Culture and greater Africa

By Kristina Bekenova

Not once has African Politics and Policy discussed the ways for Africa to overcome the underdevelopment. However, to a surprise of the readers, solution is neither in accepting Western ideas, plans of economic regeneration of Africa presented by various international organizations, nor in commodity-based industrialization.

All Africa is need is not to waste time on creating novel approaches and not to work with strategies extraneous to the continent, but rather using advice of pan-African scholar, Prof. Ali Mazrui, who was cited many times when the experience of Ghana, Gambia or Rwanda was discussed by their leadership, “to follow a policy of indigenization”. In other words, to give culture more space to work – go beyond its ‘popular’ understanding as “mass-produced consumer and leisure goods”, but go deeper to its anthropological meaning as a source of knowledge and practices.

Rather than introducing new and exotic concepts, political, economic or social, it is much better to deep into state’s own history and culture in order to find the practices time-proved and intrinsic for its society that could create a platform of understanding and acceptance and fill the ideas with meaning and sense. Turn to culture could lead not only to more attractiveness for the tourists, but also provide a basis for political and economic changes and boost the development of cultural and creative industries: “in the cultures ... people have shown the capacity to be creative, to be active in seeking alternative solutions to various problems, and to adapt to imported ideas and objects” (Toyin

Falola, *The Power Of African Cultures*, 2008, p.2).

For example, Protais Musoni discusses how Rwandan society can benefit from Umaganuru festival, institutionalized in the 9th century and popularized by King Ruganzu II Ndoli during the 16th century. The author takes into account not only the celebration’s entertaining aspect. The Harvest festival traditionally brings all people together and through dances and songs introduces such practices and ideas of belonging (identity: we are together, it is a result of our labour), planning (open discussion: to assess the result of this year harvest and to plan how to improve the next one), sharing (how to distribute the harvest among the people). Thus, the festival favours the strengthening of civil society and social integration, ‘opens window’ for discussions and solutions.

In other words, it would be much more fruitful and productive, instead of alienating itself from its own older traditions and blaming culture as *causa prima* of the continent’s backwardness, obstacle to modernization, to turn to its culture, the mine of wisdom and information, and think how to adapt the knowledge generations have for the benefit of greater Africa. And it is important to note, that culture has already been taken seriously in Agenda 2063, where Aspiration 5 aims to promote and strength African cultural identity, values and ethics and open the era of African cultural renaissance.



### Ethiopia’s Film Industry

With the growing number of films come to screens on the weekly basis, film industry not only contributes to the development of cultural and creative sector of the country, but also could change the “tarnished image” of Ethiopia, that would be associated not only with drought and hunger but rather with changes, economic and cultural.

Now, the various movie industry stakeholders, including ministries and are reviewing the film policy that will “address shortcomings and empower the sector to play its due role in building the nation’s image and earning considerable income, ... to boost culture and gender diversity, exploration of historical and societal issues, among others”. To achieve these goals and successfully implement changes, the training and education programs will be taken seriously.



## ZANU (PF)'s Legitimacy Crisis

By Steven Machaya

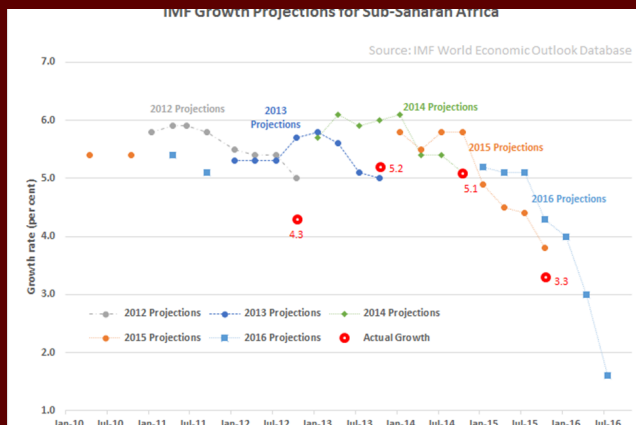
The current government's troubles are symptomatic of a regime that has failed to gain acceptance both internally and externally. ZANU (PF)'s resort to violence as part of its electoral strategy is well documented and between 1980 and 2013, no election in Zimbabwe has been held under conditions that could be described as free and fair, the only distinguishing factor being the variations in the intensity of the violence and intimidation. Continued systematic use of violence, intimidation and rigging has run its full course and there is no way a government that continues to rely on unorthodox means to retain power can continue to enjoy 'widespread acceptance' both internally and externally. ZANU (PF) claims people will always stand by it in spite of attempts by its detractors to effect regime change but deepening factionalism in the party in which the Vice President and second secretary of the ruling party, Emmerson Mnangagwa, has been publicly attacked more than twice for leading a factional group and the demands by the main body of the war veterans association that Robert Mugabe must step down is enough evidence to show that the ruling party indeed is under stress. Mnangagwa chose to remain silent while the war veterans clamored for his elevation to the party's top post, leaving many inside and outside speculating his complicity in the current drive within ZANU (PF) to force Mugabe to step down.

Mnangagwa participated in the marathon constitutional changes that gave Mugabe the sole right to choose the party's two deputy secretaries who invariably become the country's two vice presidents in the event of Mugabe winning an election. The previous arrangement, in which the vice president had to win the vote of at least six out of the ten provinces, meant that the winning vice president did not owe his position to Mugabe but to the people, making him/her very powerful. The constitutional changes now mean that Mnangagwa owes his position, not to the people but Mugabe. While this plot worked towards Mnangagwa's elevation and Joice Mujuru's demotion, and eventual expulsion, Mnangagwa knows very well that he holds the vice presidency at Mugabe's pleasure-he can be dismissed at any moment if Mugabe feels like it. Mnangagwa is a victim of his own making.

Mugabe knows how to play his cards and will continue to do so as long as he is alive.

If the push comes to the shove, Mnangagwa's expulsion will do some damage to the party but as usual, when the dust settles, it will be business as usual within the party's structures. This is because ZANU (PF) (and Mugabe) has ways of building leaders political statures and destroying them at will when their actions are deemed dangerous. Many people hoped that ZANU (PF) would be left very weak with Mujuru's expulsion but that has since not materialized. Mnangagwa could become another disgruntled opposition leader alongside Mujuru. There are many within ZANU (PF) who are eyeing that position and are ready to sing praises for Mugabe for them to get that position ZANU (PF) is more than a political party, it is a movement and movements do not die with their leaders but will continue to live whether in a weakened state or otherwise.

As I have argued elsewhere, ZANU (PF) is getting ready for an election that will for the first time see the party winning a 'clean' election in which international observers from the European Union and other previously hostile groupings will be invited. Mugabe is ready to run for the 2018 elections without the help of the war veterans because violence and intimidation is out of question therefore, their services won't be required. The international community will be put in a corner in which they will be forced to declare the election as free and fair and therefore, accord the current regime the legitimacy it so desperately needs leading to the lifting of sanctions. By this time, Zimbabweans ought to be aware that Mugabe is capable of pulling a last minute surprise to outwit the opposition and steal the election from right under their noses. In part, lack of unity among opposition political parties will be decisive in determining the outcome of the 2018 elections and given the current trends, the likelihood of a coalition of the opposition appears to be very distant.



## IMF revises growth projections for Sub-Saharan Africa

By Omer F. Baris

In its regular and official World Economic Outlook (WEO) update in July 2016, the International Monetary Fund has substantially revised the economic growth projections for Africa. While the projections for world output growth has also been revised down, the most significant reductions in the predicted growth was observed for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The IMF announces its economic growth projections for the current and upcoming years on a quarterly basis (January, April, July, and October). In its most recent July WEO update, IMF expects world economy to grow by 3.1 per cent in 2016, revised down from 3.2 per cent (April 2016 WEO projection) and further down from 3.4 per cent (January 2016 projection). In January 2015, initial projection for 2016 world output growth was at 3.7 per cent. For Sub-Saharan Africa, the revisions have been more dramatic. The initial projection in January 2015, announced at 5.2 per cent, was cut down by 1.2 points to 4.0 per cent earlier this year in January 2016. Another 1.0-point cut was announced in April 2016. Now, as of July 2016, IMF says, Sub-Saharan economic growth will be as low as 1.6 per cent in 2016.

To be sure, we have checked the recent history of IMF projections, to observe that revisions of this magnitude, both in absolute and relative terms, were not recorded earlier. Another interesting observation was to see that IMF projections were close to the actual growth rate when the actual growth rate hovers around 5.0 percent. That is close to the potential growth rate in the region and

it is always safe to keep projections at this level, even one makes random predictions. Not surprisingly, IMF's initial projections, which are announced five years in advance, tend to confirm this trend.

The reason for the revision is the lower commodity revenues, IMF puts forward on page 4 of the WEO Update report. Interestingly enough, and perhaps controversially, the IMF also states that "higher oil prices are providing some relief to Russian economy". That's the same report, same page, just a paragraph earlier.

IMF expects Sub-Saharan African growth rate to recover up to 3.3 per cent next year, but that projection has been revised down as well. Previously, 2017 growth rate was predicted at 5.5 per cent in April 2012, 4.7 per cent in January 2016 and 4.0 per cent in April 2016.

## South Sudan's Problems

As we have documented in previous posts, the political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is taking a turn for the worst.

South Sudan needs help.

The US government suggested UN to send 4000 troops. This is a good move. But South Sudan problems are multifaceted and efforts to address and possibly solve these problems have also to be multifaceted.

South Sudan needs to be pacified and the UN troops could be instrumental in pacifying the country. But South Sudan also needs food and medical assistance. More importantly South Sudan needs accountable and responsive political leadership.

In the absence of better political leaders, South Sudan's structural problems cannot be fixed.

## Togo: Hotel Le Lac

Hotel Le Lac is an ideal setting for rest. Well planted on Lake Togo in Agbodrafo, historic town not far from Aneho town, southern Togo, the Hotel offers a great relaxing environment to its customers and visitors with direct access to Lake Togo. With all attraction. It includes 40 rooms, very wide, well air-conditioned, comfortable, carefully maintained Rooms with beautiful restoration with delicious foods, modular conference center. Relaxing areas, well-appointed leisure, offering a beautiful views of Lake with a dynamic and well trained staff, the welcome is assured. The service is excellent. The Hotel Le Lac is a tropical paradise.

Joshua Agblewonou



## Conversation with Marchal Ujeku on Nkombo Music

Isolated from the rest of Rwanda, Nkombo islands, surrounded by the Lake Kivu, still very well preserve its unique culture. In addition to its geographic location, that makes island not easily accessible, the language the local people speak is different from common to Rwanda Kinyarwanda language. But various festivals are created exactly with this purpose in mind: to make cultures closer and understandable to each other.

Umuganura Festival, recently held in Rwanda, became an astounding stage for young singer from Nkombo islands Marchal Ujeku, who introduced to the international audience his Nkombo-style music. Marchal Ujeku decided to devote his life, inseparable with music and arts, to elevate and expose his culture to the outside world.

Nkombo people are very culture-centered and hard-working people; over 90% of population depend on aquatic business such as fishing, and the rest – on agriculture. For the past few years, Nkombo area is prone to modern developmental infrastructure. However, the traditional culture is still in the veins and blood of these amazing people, and you can easily admire it in the video made by Marchal Ujeku in his song “Musisemisemi”, where the local people enthusiastically agreed to participate. The song “Musisemisemi” which literally means do not just talk, talk or rumormongering reveals the importance and the value of women in the society, “the lady who has grown

up well both morally and culturally is always profitable for a society”.

An original mix of traditional and modern components in Marchal’s music is his competitive advantage on the Rwandan market, where unfortunately the tendencies to copy Western music prevail. But, in spite of the challenges the music industry face, there is talent and potential of the African music. And Marchal is a great example: no financial problems, no environmental problems, no language barrier stopped this young Rwandan-Nkombo singer to make an attempt by preserving traditions to change the modern music ecosystem, where “music is the language that we all can speak”.

Kristina Bekenova

## Corruption in Malawi

Whistle blowing is an essential element for any successful anti-corruption strategy and activity.

Without whistle-blowing in fact it is nearly impossible to detect instances and cases of corruption.

Whistle-blowing is important and whistle-blowers should be protected.

In Malawi, however, a whistle blower (who denounced a massive corruption problem in public hospitals) was arrested and re-arrested for speaking out loud against corruption.

This is not how you fight corruption. Authorities in Malawi should actually change course of action—otherwise the level of good governance in the country will never improve and the country’s developmental goals will not easily be achieved.

## Guinea: protests end in death

Nearly half a million people took the streets in Conakry to protest against the government.

The protest was nearly perfectly peaceful. But clashes between protesters and police forces in a near neighborhood led to increasing tensions between the two clashing parties, a shot was fired, and an innocent – who was minding his own business and was not even part of the protest- lost his life.



### Art Exhibition

The *BIG* works of *BIG* Ugandan artists is displayed at the *BIG* exhibition in the renewed Afriart Gallery, Kampala from 12<sup>th</sup> August till 9<sup>th</sup> September.

For more information please visit

<http://afriartgallery.org/>

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## Announcements

Fabrique du Politique (Université Paris Diderot) and the Laboratoire de recherches sur les cultures anglophones (LARCA) is announcing call for papers for the conference “Student movements and (post-)colonial emancipations: transnational itineraries, dialogues and programmes”, which will be held on 9th December 2016 at Université Paris Diderot. Please submit the abstracts (in English or French) to [meigs@univ-paris-diderot.fr](mailto:meigs@univ-paris-diderot.fr) due to 20th September. More information at <https://africanwords.com/2016/08/14/cfp-student-movements-and-post-colonial-emancipations-9-december-2016-paris-deadline-20-september-2016/#more-12498>

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