

“Inna Allah ya'muru bil 'adli wal ihsani wa i'ta'i dhil qurba,” says the Quran (16:90)

Somalia

A nation where corruption is not an unfortunate occurrence but a deeply embedded norm :



Somalia Corruption A National Disaster No One Dares Stop: The shocking truth behind Somalia's corruption crisis: a nation mired in a web of deceit and betrayal

By: Midmark Onsongo

“Inna Allah ya'muru bil 'adli wal ihsani wa i'ta'i dhil qurba,” says the Quran (16:90), “Indeed, Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin.” But what happens when the very system meant to protect its people turns into a platform for betrayal and exploitation? Somalia, a country that once harbored hopes for growth and peace, now wears the shame of being the most corrupt nation on the planet. It is an open secret, but few dare to name it out loud—until now. Imagine this: a nation where corruption is not an unfortunate occurrence but a deeply embedded norm, and where



Former Somali Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire

the idea of justice feels like a distant dream, crushed beneath the weight of greed, self-interest, and power plays. Somalia's corruption crisis is not just a matter of misused funds or diverted resources; it is a system that perpetuates poverty, breeds instability, and crushes the spirit of its people. This isn't just another scandal to discuss in the corridors of power—this is the reality for millions of Somalis whose hopes for a better tomorrow are choked out by the very individuals sworn to serve them. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2023, Somalia has yet again

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Russia and US battle for advantage in Ukraine war ahead of Trump's return

Russia and US Europe



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What will Trump 2.0 mean for Africa?

Donald Trump America



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Kenya cancels more than \$2.5bn in deals with Adani after US indictment

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UK imposes sanctions on Isabel dos Santos, Ukrainian oligarch Firtash

Labour government tightening Britain's anti-corruption

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News Backpage
At least 150 people killed in violence in Haitian capital in past week: UN



From ATACMS to North Korean Troops: How the Ukraine War Threatens Global Security

Global security faces unprecedented threats as advanced weaponry becomes a central feature of modern conflicts. The ongoing Ukraine-Russia war has not only reshaped geopolitical alliances but also raised ethical and strategic concerns over the use of certain weapons. Advanced mis-

sile systems like the American-made ATACMS, drones, and long-range artillery have changed the dynamics of the battlefield, while the potential use of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons poses catastrophic risks to humanity. Weapons such as tactical nuclear

arms, cluster munitions, and chemical agents are particularly concerning due to their indiscriminate impact and long-lasting effects. In the Ukraine-Russia war, deploying such arms would not only violate international law but also risk escalating the conflict into a global crisis. To pre-

serve global security, it is essential for world powers and stakeholders to draw clear lines on what weapons can and cannot be used, emphasizing

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Arrest warrants issued for Netanyahu, Gallant and Hamas commander over alleged war crimes

By: BBC
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- The judges said there were “reasonable grounds” the three men bore “criminal responsibility” for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity during the war between Israel and Hamas. Both Israel and Hamas have rejected the allegations.
- It will now be up to the ICC’s 124 member states – which do not include Israel or its ally, the United States – to decide whether or not to enforce the warrants.
- In May, the ICC prosecutor Karim Khan sought warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant, Deif and two other Hamas leaders who have since been killed, Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar.



Since Hamas took control 15 years ago, Gaza has endured several wars and numerous escalations of tension

Judges at the International Criminal Court (ICC) have issued arrest warrants for Israel’s prime minister and former defence minister, as well as Hamas’s military commander. A statement said a pre-trial chamber had rejected Israel’s challenges to the court’s jurisdiction and issued warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant. A warrant was also issued for Mohammed Deif, although the Israeli military has said he was killed in an air strike in Gaza in July. The judges said there were “reasonable grounds” the three men bore “criminal responsibility” for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity during the war between Israel and Hamas. Both Israel and Hamas have rejected the allegations. It will now be up to the ICC’s 124 member states –

which do not include Israel or its ally, the United States – to decide whether or not to enforce the warrants. In May, the ICC prosecutor Karim Khan sought warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant, Deif and two other Hamas leaders who have since been killed, Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar. Although Israel believes Deif is dead, the chamber said it had been notified by the ICC prosecution that it was not in a position to determine whether he was killed or remained alive. The prosecutor’s case against them stems from the events of 7 October 2023, when Hamas gunmen attacked southern Israel, killing about 1,200 people and taking 251 others back to Gaza as hostages. Israel responded to the attack by launching a military campaign to eliminate

Hamas, during which at least 44,000 people have been killed in Gaza, according to the territory’s Hamas-run health ministry. According to the ICC, the chamber “found reasonable grounds to believe” that Deif was “responsible for the crimes against humanity of murder; extermination; torture; and rape and other form of sexual violence; as well as the war crimes of murder, cruel treatment, torture; taking hostages; outrages upon personal dignity; and rape and other form of sexual violence”. It also said there were reasonable grounds to believe the crimes against humanity were “part of a widespread and systematic attack directed by Hamas and other armed groups against the civilian population of Israel”. For Netanyahu and Gallant,

who was replaced as defence minister earlier this month, the chamber “found reasonable grounds to believe” that they “each bear criminal responsibility for the following crimes as co-perpetrators for committing the acts jointly with others: the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare; and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts”. It also found reasonable grounds to believe that “each bear criminal responsibility as civilian superiors for the war crime of intentionally directing an attack against the civilian population”. There was no immediate comment from Netanyahu, Gallant or Hamas. Israeli President Isaac Herzog said: “Taken in bad faith, the outrageous decision at the ICC has turned

universal justice into a universal laughing stock.” “The decision has chosen the side of terror and evil over democracy and freedom, and turned the very system of justice into a human shield for Hamas’ crimes against humanity,” he added. Mustafa Barghouti, a veteran Palestinian politician based in the occupied West Bank, welcomed the warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant. “We also call on the International Court of Justice to expedite its ruling on Israel committing the crime of genocide,” he added, referring to a separate case currently being considered by the UN’s top court.

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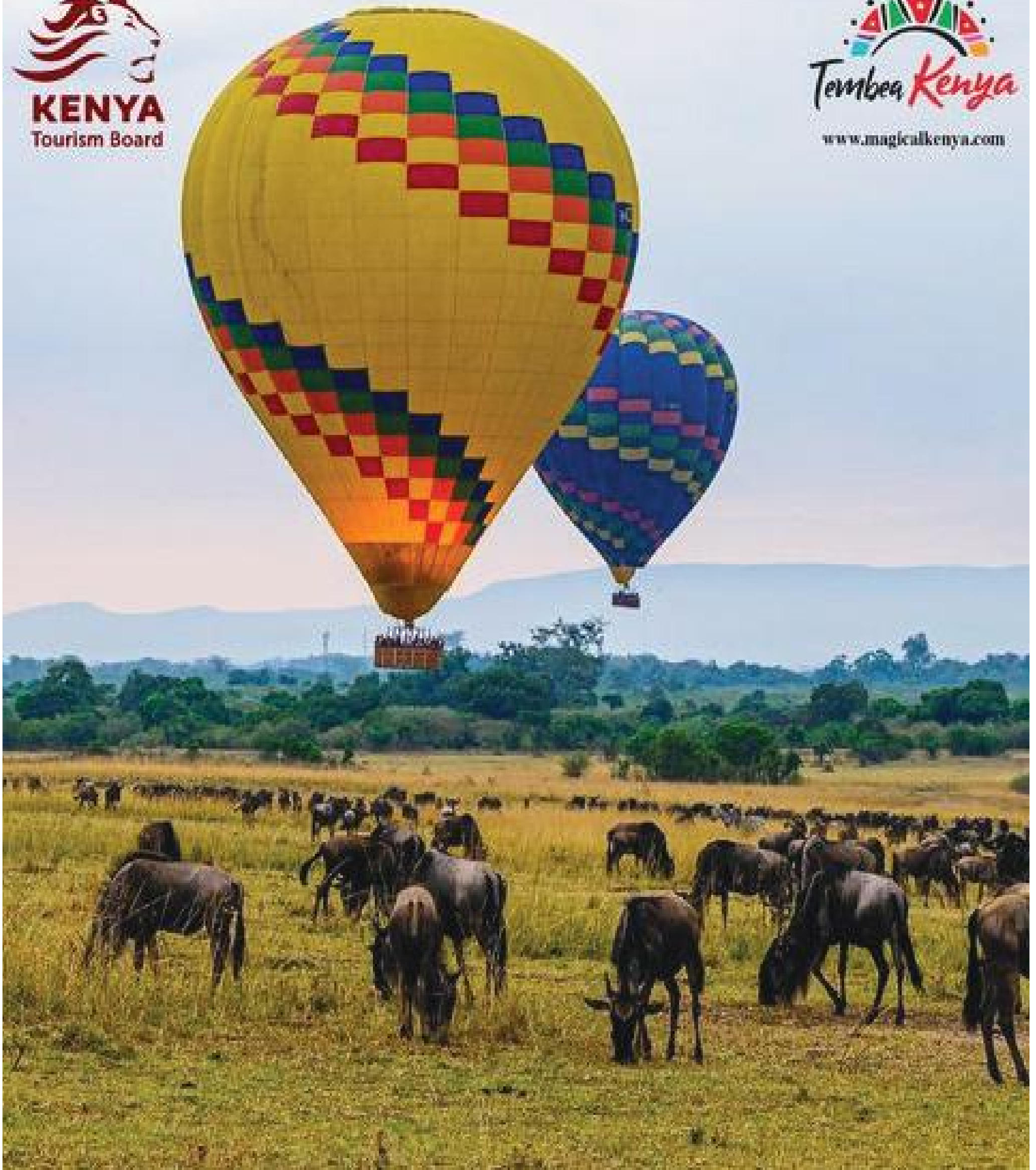
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Climate Finance

Developing Countries Reject \$250bn Offer at COP29, Insist on \$1.3 Trillion Climate Finance by 2035

By: BERNARD MOMANYI
xxxxxxxxxxxx



Worth Noting:

- The proposed \$250 billion, a modest increase from the expiring \$100 billion annual pledge agreed 15 years ago, would come from both public and private sources. Under the proposed deal, emerging economies like China would not be obligated to contribute but could make voluntary donations that would count toward the total.
- The \$1.3 trillion figure, touted as the overall goal for climate financing by 2035, includes funding for adaptation, mitigation, and loss-and-damage measures. However, delegates expressed frustration over the lack of specifics on how the money would be sourced, whether through grants, loans, or private investments.

Negotiations at the COP29 climate conference in Baku have gone into overtime after developing nations rejected an offer from wealthy countries to provide \$250 billion annually for climate finance by 2035.

The figure, presented as part of a draft finance deal by the Azerbaijani presidency, falls far short of the \$1.3 trillion per year requested by developing nations to combat the escalating impacts of climate change and scale up carbon-cutting efforts. Developing countries criticized the offer as inadequate, with representatives from small island states describing it as “a slap in the face” and evidence of “contempt for our vulnerable people.”

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A Longstanding Dispute

The issue of climate finance has long been a contentious point in global climate negotiations. The original \$100 billion pledge was criticized for being delivered late and

primarily as loans, further indebting vulnerable nations.

Now, as COP29 seeks to establish a new global climate finance target, or New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), the divide between richer and poorer nations threatens to derail progress.

Wealthy nations argue that their \$250 billion pledge represents a significant increase, but climate experts and activists maintain it is insufficient given the growing urgency of the climate crisis.

Activists have staged protests at the conference, calling on developed nations to “pay up” and take responsibility for their outsized role in causing global warming.

What’s at Stake
COP29, dubbed the “climate finance COP,” was expected

to deliver a concrete funding framework to replace the \$100 billion target set to expire in 2025. Experts estimate that developing nations require between \$1 trillion and \$1.3 trillion annually to address climate-related challenges, including loss and damage, adaptation measures, and the transition to clean energy.

Last week, multilateral development banks, including the World Bank, pledged to boost climate financing for low- and middle-income countries to \$120 billion annually by 2030, with an additional \$65 billion from private sources. However, this still falls short of the projected needs by 2035.

Looking Ahead

Delegations are expected to continue negotiations over the weekend, focusing on unresolved issues such as

the role of developed countries in providing funding, a global goal for a just energy transition, and clear pathways for both adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Civil society groups have called on negotiators to push back against what they see as inadequate offers. “No deal is better than a bad deal,” said Jacobo Ocharan of Climate Action Network International. Meanwhile, others warn that continued delays will have dire consequences for the most vulnerable populations.

With the clock ticking, the fate of a global climate finance agreement remains uncertain, highlighting the persistent tensions between those most responsible for the climate crisis and those bearing the brunt of its impacts.

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LOUDER THAN WORDS: A Call for Action in the Fight Against Climate Injustice

By: Linet Nabwire
xxxxxxxxxxxx

As a Ugandan youth deeply invested in climate justice and gender equality, I find myself grappling with a wave of disappointment as I reflect on my absence from COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. My passion for advocacy and activism runs deep, yet I am compelled to confront a harsher reality: too often, our voices are drowned out by the very forces that endanger our planet and undermine the rights of the most vulnerable among us.

While I would have loved to stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow activists, I couldn't help but feel that my presence would have been merely symbolic. What I truly desire is a shift in the narrative—a cessation of the empty promises that have plagued climate conversations. Time and again, we witness the same old pattern: powerful nation-states and the oil and gas industry resist transformative legislation designed to curb climate impacts. Instead, they cling to the status quo, prioritizing profits over the future of our planet and the well-being of its inhabitants. In Uganda and across the Global South, the very communities that



bear the brunt of climate change are often the least represented in these high-level discussions. We are tired of being told that our stories and struggles are important. We want action—real, tangible action that leads to systemic change. That's why we, as young climate advocates, are calling for a radical rethinking of how decisions are made at these conferences. Instead of the current

unanimity model that often favors the wealthy and influential, we propose a supermajority process. This would empower diverse voices and ensure that those disproportionately affected by climate change have an equitable say in the decisions that shape their futures.

It is clear that significant commitments can easily be made within the walls of conference rooms, but

without a subsequent commitment to action, these declarations are little more than platitudes. We reject the notion that merely discussing climate change suffices to combat it. Words, no matter how eloquent, will not restore ecosystems, protect wildlife, or uplift marginalized communities struggling for their rights. The resistance from fossil fuel companies and petro-states must end.

Their relentless lobbying undermines our collective ability to address climate change

Author
LINET NABWIRE *Feminist Climate Justice Advocate*
Team Lead & Founder of Creation Care Foundation CCF

Climate Finance

3 in 4 Africans want more climate finance from developed nations: survey

By: PHIDEL KIZITO

Citizens across 22 African countries are calling on their governments to demand more support from rich and developed nations to address the devastating impacts of climate change, according to a new Afrobarometer survey.

The findings highlight growing public concern over worsening droughts and crop failures across the continent, as well as strong support for investment in climate-resilient infrastructure.

"More than three-quarters (77 per cent) of Africans say their governments should put more pressure on rich and developed countries to provide resources to help citizens affected by climate change or changes in weather conditions," the barometer stated in part.

Six in ten Africans surveyed report being aware of climate change, and a striking 81 per cent of those aware say it is worsening life in their communities.

Countries like Mauritius (95 per cent), Zimbabwe (93 per cent), and Zambia (93 per cent) report the highest levels of negative impact.

The majority of respondents say that climate-related challenges, includ-

ing droughts (59 per cent) and crop failures (59 per cent), have become more severe over the past decade.

However, opinions on the severity of floods, landslides, and soil erosion vary across the continent.

When asked who should bear primary responsibility for addressing climate change, 37 per cent of respondents pointed to their own governments, followed by wealthy countries (26 per cent) and ordinary citizens (18 per cent).

Despite this, there is a demand for collective action, with more than three-quarters (77 per cent) urging their governments to press rich nations for resources to support affected citizens.

Beyond seeking external aid, 82 per cent of Africans support government investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, such as systems to withstand extreme floods and droughts.

According to the report, this reflects a growing recognition of the need for long-term solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations.



Six in ten Africans surveyed report being aware of climate change, and a striking 81 per cent of those aware say it is worsening life in their communities/FILE



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Tourism

AirAsia X Makes History with Inaugural Flight to Nairobi, Kenya

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

• The new direct route links Nairobi to Kuala Lumpur, opening opportunities for cultural exchange and tourism growth. Kenyan travelers now have seamless access to Malaysia and the broader ASEAN region, while Malaysian visitors can explore East Africa's diverse cultural and natural attractions. In 2023, the Asia-Pacific region contributed over 320,000 visitors to Kenya, with Malaysia emerging as a key growth market. This new connection is set to boost accessibility and drive inbound travel from the region.

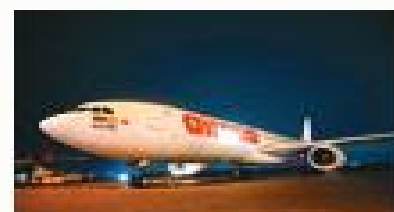
• At the official launch party on Saturday, AirAsia X CEO Benyamin Ismail shared his enthusiasm:

“This is a momentous occasion for AirAsia X as we launch our first African destination. Nairobi represents a gateway to the vibrant East African region, and we are thrilled to connect our passengers with affordable and convenient travel options.”



Kenya's tourism and travel industry achieved a historic milestone on 15th November 2024, as AirAsia X (AAX), Southeast Asia's leading low-cost carrier, launched its first direct flight from Kuala Lumpur to Nairobi. Flight D7 101, carrying over 270 passengers, received a warm reception at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) from an enthusiastic delegation led by Hon. Rebecca Miano, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, alongside officials from the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) and Kenya Airports Authority (KAA). The new direct route links Nairobi to Kuala Lumpur, opening opportunities for cultural exchange and tourism growth. Kenyan travelers now have seamless access to Malaysia and the broader ASEAN region, while Malaysian visitors can explore East Africa's diverse cultural and natural attractions. In 2023, the Asia-Pacific region contributed over 320,000 visitors to Kenya, with Malaysia emerging as a key growth market. This new connection is set to boost accessibility and drive inbound travel from the region.

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casation for AirAsia X as we launch our first African destination. Nairobi represents a gateway to the vibrant East African region, and we are thrilled to connect our passengers with affordable and convenient travel options.” This milestone underscores Kenya's strategic efforts to position itself as a premier destination beyond its renowned safari experiences. Hon. Rebecca Miano em-

phasized this sentiment at the airport reception: “Kenya is now firmly established as a global connector for travelers and investors alike. This partnership with AirAsia X goes beyond tourism—it reflects growing confidence in Kenya's infrastructure, hospitality, and its pivotal role in fostering international cooperation.” Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's vibrant capital, is a dynam-

ic city where modernity meets tradition, known for its iconic skylines, an array of local cuisines and cultural experiences. Its international airport, KLIA, was recently ranked as the second most connected airport in the world after London Heathrow by the 2024 OAG Megahubs Index. AAX and other AirAsia Group airlines operate 43% of all flights at KLIA and account for 74%

of the airport's total low-cost carrier (LCC) capacity. As Nairobi celebrates the arrival of AirAsia X, this new connection marks the dawn of a transformative era for Kenya's tourism sector, unlocking new possibilities for trade, travel, and cultural collaboration.

LIFESTYLE

Africa News

Somalia Corruption A National Disaster No One Dares Stop: The shocking truth behind Somalia's corruption crisis: a nation mired in a web of deceit and betrayal



By: Midmark Onsongo
@themtkenyatimes

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Worth Noting:

- The Somali government is a labyrinth of deceit, where politicians, businessmen, and warlords mingle in a grotesque dance of manipulation. In 2021, a report from the United Nations revealed how Somali leaders and business elites orchestrated fraudulent deals worth millions of dollars, often in collaboration with foreign interests.
- These deals are not just about pocketing funds—they are about maintaining power, buying influence, and ensuring that the system remains rigged in favor of a select few. If you doubt this, ask yourself how it is possible that Somalia, despite receiving billions of dollars in international aid, continues to rank among the world's poorest nations.
- What happens to this aid? Where does it go? The answer is in the hands of a few who use their positions for personal enrichment.

claimed the dubious title of the most corrupt country in the world, scoring a lowly 12 out of 100. This is not the first time Somalia has held this position, and at this rate, it seems unlikely to be the last. While corruption seeps into the corners of every institution, it is the government that plays the most significant role in perpetuating this vile culture. But what are the driving forces behind this scandalous reputation, and who are the people that sustain this corrupt machine?

The Somali government is a labyrinth of deceit, where politicians, businessmen, and warlords mingle in a grotesque dance of manipulation. In 2021, a report from the United Nations revealed how Somali leaders and business elites orchestrated fraudulent deals worth millions of dollars, often in collaboration with foreign interests. These deals are not just about pocketing funds—they are about maintaining power, buying influence, and ensuring that the system remains rigged in favor of a select few. If you doubt this, ask yourself how it is possible that Somalia, despite receiving billions of dollars in international aid, continues to rank among the world's poorest nations. What happens to this aid? Where does it go? The answer is in the hands of a few who use their positions for personal enrichment.

Take, for example, the infamous case of former Somali Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire. Under his leadership, reports from the World Bank and the IMF indicated a lack of transparency and accountability in the management of Somalia's financial resources. In 2020, a special UN investigation into the Somali National Army (SNA) found that military resources were routinely diverted for personal gain, leading to critical shortages in equipment and supplies for the very troops tasked with defending the nation. The investigation exposed the depth of this corruption, with military officers pocketing funds intended for soldiers, leading to a weakening of the country's already fragile defense structures.

This corruption is not isolated—it trickles down to the lowest levels of society. Somalia's police force, the judiciary, and even local ad-



Somalia's former president Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo

ministrations are rife with bribery and favoritism. In 2022, a survey conducted by the Somali Civil Society Organizations (SCSO) found that nearly 80% of Somalis had to pay bribes to get basic services, whether it was obtaining a passport, enrolling a child in school, or even receiving medical treatment. The report also revealed that 65% of Somalis felt that the police force was part of the problem, rather than the solution, as officers often demand bribes to carry out basic duties.

And yet, despite this widespread corruption, the individuals at the helm remain untouchable. It is a nation where those in power have mastered the art of evading justice, thanks to their deep ties to warlords and criminal enterprises. In 2019, Somalia's former president Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo came under fire for his failure to tackle corruption within his government. Accusations of embezzlement, mismanagement, and cronyism were leveled against his administration, but nothing came of it. Farmaajo's reign was marked by a series of shady dealings and political manipulations, including the controversial extension of his presidential term through unconstitutional means.

However, Farmaajo's failure to address corruption is not the sole reason Somalia remains stuck in this vicious

cycle. The international community, despite providing aid, has repeatedly failed to hold Somali leaders accountable. The presence of foreign forces in Somalia, particularly from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), while essential for security, has often been seen as a cover for the corrupt dealings of local leaders. The UN, along with countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, continue to funnel aid into Somalia without demanding real reforms or accountability from the government. This international complicity only strengthens the corrupt practices that have made Somalia a pariah in the eyes of the global community.

Corruption in Somalia isn't just about money—it's about the lives it ruins. It is about a system where the government has failed to provide for its citizens, leaving them to rely on the shadowy networks of warlords, tribal leaders, and criminal cartels. Somalia's weak governance and fractured political landscape create the perfect breeding ground for corruption. There are no real checks and balances, and the judiciary is compromised, with judges frequently bribed to rule in favor of the highest bidder. This creates a dangerous environment where the rule of law is absent, and justice is only for those who can afford it.

The situation is made worse by the fact that Somalia remains caught in a cycle of violence. The al-Shabaab terrorist group, an extremist organization that has plagued Somalia for over a decade, continues to thrive in this corrupt environment. The group's ability to operate freely in the country is partly due to corrupt officials turning a blind eye to their activities or even supporting them for personal gain. In fact, in 2018, the United Nations reported that Somali government officials were complicit in helping al-Shabaab fund its operations through the extortion of local businesses. This alliance between corrupt officials and terrorist groups creates an environment where lawlessness reigns, and ordinary Somalis are the ones who suffer the most.

But there is hope. There is a growing movement within Somalia to confront corruption head-on. Civil society organizations, activists, and a few brave politicians are starting to expose the rot within the system. In 2023, a group of Somali journalists bravely uncovered a massive bribery scandal involving top government officials and foreign contractors. This story sent shockwaves through the nation, and while those responsible have yet to be fully held accountable, the public's growing awareness of the issue is a step in the right direction.

Somalia's corruption crisis is not just a shame for its leaders—it is a stain on the global community. As long as the international community continues to turn a blind eye to the rampant corruption in Somalia, the country will remain in the clutches of those who profit from its suffering. It is time for the world to stop pretending that Somalia's leaders are working for the good of their people. It is time to demand real accountability and force the corrupt elites to pay for their crimes. In the words of the Somali proverb, "War isku daray ma gaadho," meaning "A problem cannot be solved by trying to avoid it." The time to confront the corruption in Somalia has come, and the world must act before the country slips further into chaos. It's not just a Somali problem—it's a global one. And until the rot is removed, Somalia will remain a nation on the brink, trapped in the cycle of corruption that has defined its existence for far too long.

This article was scripted by:
MIDMARK ONSONGO,
SGS
(Socio-Geographic Scholar)

President Ruto names 5 CSs to EPA Council with EU

By: Sharon Resian

President William Ruto has appointed five Cabinet Secretaries as members of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Council between Kenya and the European Union (EU).

In a Gazette notice dated November 22, Ruto named Prime Cabinet Secretary and Foreign Affairs CS Musalia Mudavadi, Trade CS Salim Mvurya, Treasury CS John Mbadi, Agriculture CS Andrew Karanja, and Environment CS Aden Duale to the council.

Mvurya will serve as the Chairperson.

“Pursuant to the establishment of the EPA Council in the Economic Partnership Agreement between Kenya, a member of the East African Community, on one part, and the European Union, on the other part, it is notified for the general information of the public that five appointed members of the EPA Council will be representing Kenya,” read the notice. The EPA Council is tasked with overseeing and facilitating a strong partnership between Kenya and the EU to safeguard Kenya’s interests within the agreement.

In May 2024, Kenya and the European Union signed the EPA in a

ceremony witnessed by the EU delegation in Kenya, led by Ambassador Henriette Geiger.

During the signing, President Ruto expressed optimism about the agreement, highlighting its potential to deliver significant benefits to Kenya.

In separate appointments, President Ruto named Swarup Ranjan Mishra as Chairperson of the Board of Directors at Kenya Biovax Institute Limited. Mishra will serve a three-year term effective November 22.

Chief Justice Martha Koome also made appointments within the Judiciary.

She named Willis Oduor Oluga as a member of the Rules Committee of the Judiciary and appointed Edwin Okemwa Saisi and Gladys Warigia Mwangi to the Auctioneers Licensing Board for a three-year term effective November 8.

The CJ revoked the appointment of Ericsson Obura to the Auctioneers Licensing Board.



Trade CS Salim Mvurya will serve as the Chairperson/FILE

US-Kenya

Marc Dillard Takes Charge Of US Mission In Nairobi As Whitman Departs

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Marc Dillard has assumed leadership of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi following the departure of outgoing Ambassador Meg Whitman.

Whitman, who has served as the US Ambassador to Kenya for two years, announced her departure and extended her support for Dillard, the Embassy’s Chargé d’Affaires, in his new role.

“It has been an honor to serve as the US Ambassador to Kenya for the past two years. As I depart, please join me in welcoming career diplomat Marc Dillard, who will lead the embassy as Chargé d’Affaires,” she said on Saturday.

“You will be hearing from him soon on this account.”

Dillard, who has served as Deputy Ambassador, will head the embassy until the State Department deploys a new ambassador.

Whitman announced her resignation on November 13 after two years of service in Kenya.

Her resignation follows backlash from a section of Kenyans who have called for her recall to Washington, citing her response to several issues, including her silence on matters such as perceived corruption, extrajudicial killings, and abductions—particularly after the June GenZ movement protests, during which dozens were killed by police and many more were arrested.

The criticism intensified after Donald Trump’s victory over Vice President Kamala Harris, with some on social media calling for Whitman’s immediate recall.

Dillard, who has served as Deputy Ambassador, will head the embassy until the State Department deploys a new ambassador/US Embassy Nairobi



Russia and US battle for advantage in Ukraine war ahead of Trump's return

In a matter of days US President Joe Biden's administration and Russia have made separate – but significant – moves aimed at influencing the outcome of the war in Ukraine, two months ahead of Donald Trump's return to the White House.

There is a sense of Moscow maximising its gains and of Biden abandoning long-held red lines before Trump seeks to deliver on his claim to end the war in 24 hours.

Ukraine has already acted on Biden's decision to let Kyiv fire first long-range Atacms missiles deep into Russian territory. As Kyiv struggles to hold on to its territory in the east, Biden has promised to send anti-personnel landmines too as part of new military assistance worth nearly \$300m (£239m).

What prompted Biden's change of heart appears to have been the arrival of thousands of North Koreans deployed to the front line, which the US sees as a "massive escalation".

But Russia's President Vladimir Putin has ratcheted up the tension still further by loosening the conditions of use for Russia's nuclear weapons. That "effectively eliminates" defeat on the battlefield, claims Moscow.

One Russia commentator suggested Putin might view the current situation as an "in-between" moment that gives him the sense he has the

upper hand in Ukraine.

At the start of this week, Russia launched its biggest aerial attack on Ukraine for almost three months. Amid fears of a renewed strike on Wednesday, several Western embassies closed their doors.

"It's all connected," says Mykhaylo Samus, head of the New Geopolitics Research Network in Ukraine. He argues Russia has been stockpiling hundreds of Iskander and Kinzhal missiles for weeks to enable it to carry out strikes and thus send a psychological message ahead of the transfer of power in Washington DC.

Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, may have been spared on Wednesday, but the message got through.

"Everything is about preparing for a strong position for talks with Trump, to understand Russia is not going to make compromise and everything depends on [Ukraine's President Volodymyr] Zelensky."

"There's clearly an effort ahead of Trump to maximise their standings," agrees Jade McGlynn, from the war studies department at King's College London. She is highly sceptical that a deal with Putin is possible – and that ultimately his aim is to subjugate Russia's south-western neighbour.

War in Ukraine



Fraud

Adani Charged in The US Over Fraud Amid Kenya Airport Deal Controversy

By: Agencies

Indian billionaire Gautam Adani and other executives have been charged in the United States over their roles in a multi-billion-dollar fraud scheme.

Adani, who is seeking mega deals in Kenya, was indicted by the US Department of Justice, alongside his nephew Sagar Adani, of orchestrating a bribery scheme involving more than \$250 million in payments to Indian government officials to secure solar energy contracts.

"These bribes were used to deceive investors and banks, raise billions of dollars, and obstruct justice," stated Lisa Miller, Deputy Assistant Attorney General.

The solar contracts were expected to generate over \$2 billion in profits over a 20-year period. Investigators allege Adani personally met with government officials and engaged in extensive efforts to conceal the bribery scheme.

Evidence includes cellphone records, PowerPoint presentations, Excel spreadsheets, and photographs documenting bribe payments and

concealment strategies.

In Kenya, Adani has bagged multi-billion energy and infrastructure deals, in what has sparked major controversies.

The DOJ alleges the fraudulent scheme targeted US investors, enabling Adani Green Energy Ltd. to raise \$175 million under false pretenses. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has also filed parallel charges against Adani executives and Cyril Cabanes of Azure Power Global.

This isn't the first controversy for Adani. In January 2023, US-based Hindenburg Research accused Adani of "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud." The report led to an \$80 billion decline in Adani's net worth, though his fortune currently stands at \$85.5 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Adani, often seen as an ally of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has denied all allegations, calling the Hindenburg report "nothing but a lie."



Gautam Adani.

NEWS PAPER



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WORLD

From ATACMS to North Korean Troops: How the Ukraine War Threatens Global Security



By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

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North Korean Troops

Worth Noting:

• Allowing Ukraine to use Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) to target deep inside Russian territory could provoke a stronger response from Russia, potentially escalating the conflict. This risks drawing NATO or other actors such as South Korea and Taiwan into a broader war.

• North Korea deploying weapons and personnel to Russia introduces another unpredictable player into the conflict, intensifying fears of an expanding alliance between anti-Western states. This increases instability in Europe and Asia.

• While North Korea's lack of combat experience is a liability, it is also a reminder of the unpredictable nature of the conflict. For NATO and Ukraine, this is an opportunity to exploit weaknesses while remaining vigilant against surprises. By highlighting North Korea's involvement, Ukraine can strengthen its case for continued global support, while NATO can underscore the broader threat posed by authoritarian alliances.

the importance of restraint in this volatile conflict.

The escalation in Ukraine, involving advanced weaponry and increasing alliances, carries significant implications for global security, U.S. politics, and geopolitical alignments.

GLOBAL SECURITY RISKS Escalation to a Larger Conflict

Allowing Ukraine to use Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) to target deep inside Russian territory could provoke a stronger response from Russia, potentially escalating the conflict. This risks drawing NATO or other actors such as South Korea and Taiwan into a broader war.

North Korea's Role

North Korea deploying weapons and personnel to Russia introduces another unpredictable player into the conflict, intensifying fears of an expanding alliance between anti-Western states. This increases instability in Europe and Asia.

North Korea's military participation in the Ukraine conflict raises important questions about its capacity and impact. While their involvement could escalate tensions, it also presents vulnerabilities that NATO and Ukraine might exploit.

Lack of Combat Experience

North Korea's military has not engaged in significant combat since the Korean War in the 1950s, meaning: Outdated Tactics: Their battlefield strategies may be antiquated, developed for conflicts vastly different from modern warfare. This lack of adaptation could be a major weakness.

Logistical Challenges: North Korea's military is built for defense rather than expeditionary missions. Operating in a foreign theater like Ukraine could strain its already limited resources and logistics.

Morale and Training: Prolonged combat often reveals cracks in underprepared forces. North Korean troops may struggle to adapt to the realities of modern, high-intensity warfare against a battle-hardened Ukrainian military supported by NATO intelligence and weapons.

Strategic Opportunities for NATO and Ukraine

North Korea's inexperience can provide several advantages for NATO and Ukraine:

Exposing Weaknesses: Ukrainian forces, experienced in modern warfare, can exploit North Korean errors in tactics, positioning, and coordination.

Global Messaging: North Korea's involvement bolsters Ukraine's narrative that it is defending against not just Russia but an authoritarian

bloc. This could galvanize more international support for Ukraine.

Straining Russia: The reliance on North Korean troops and weapons underscores Russia's growing desperation. NATO can highlight this to emphasize Russia's diminishing power and legitimacy on the global stage.

The Wildcard Factor: North Korea's Unpredictability

Despite these shortcomings, North Korea's involvement is not without risks:

Unorthodox Tactics: North Korea is known for its unconventional and often brutal strategies. Their troops may bring an element of unpredictability that complicates Ukrainian defenses.

Political Calculations: The willingness of North Korea to escalate could embolden other states, such as Iran or Belarus, to increase their support for Russia.

Potential for Escalation: North Korea's presence could provoke stronger responses from neighboring countries like South Korea or Japan, creating regional tensions that distract from NATO's focus on Ukraine.

While North Korea's lack of combat experience is a liability, it is also a reminder of the unpredictable nature of the conflict. For NATO and Ukraine, this is an opportunity to exploit weak-

nesses while remaining vigilant against surprises. By highlighting North Korea's involvement, Ukraine can strengthen its case for continued global support, while NATO can underscore the broader threat posed by authoritarian alliances. However, underestimating North Korea's willingness to defy norms could lead to miscalculations, making caution essential.

GLOBAL TENSIONS

The involvement of countries like North Korea and Iran (allegedly supplying drones to Russia) complicates efforts to resolve the conflict diplomatically, pushing the world closer to proxy wars or direct confrontations.

DANGERS TO THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

While this is happening during the Biden Administration, the conflict has implications for Trump, especially as he won for re-election and will resume presidential duties soon.

Criticism of Biden's Foreign Policy: Trump might attempt to leverage the situation to criticize Biden's decisions, more especially allowing Ukraine to use ATACMS, portraying them as reckless or escalatory. However, this could backfire if the public views the situation as a justified defense of

Ukraine. Trump's Russia Stance: Trump's previous leniency toward Russia could be seen as controversial, especially if Russia's actions become increasingly aggressive and destructive. This might alienate some voters who voted for Trump and also who favor a tougher stance on Russia.

Potential Fallout from Alliances: If the U.S. is drawn further into the war, any missteps (e.g., increased casualties or economic strain) could be used against Biden. However, Trump's past admiration for Putin might raise questions about his ability to address such crises effectively.

CAN TRUMP STOP RUSSIA WITHOUT USING FORCE?

Trump has often positioned himself as a dealmaker, claiming he could negotiate peace in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. His ability to stop Russia without force would depend on several factors:

Diplomatic Leverage: Trump has previously emphasized personal relationships with leaders like Vladimir Putin. As he is re-elected, he might leverage these ties to negotiate a ceasefire or peace agreement. However, such negotiations would need

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WORLD

From ATACMS to North Korean Troops: How the Ukraine War Threatens Global Security

By: Silas Mwaudasheni Nande
@themtkenyatimes

Contd from Page 14



North Korean president

Worth Noting:

- **Checks and Balances:** While the president holds nuclear authority, the decision process involves multiple layers of consultation with military and national security officials. A preemptive or aggressive strike on a nuclear-armed state like Russia would face significant resistance and nuke-retaliation.
- **Trump's Approach:** Trump has historically avoided direct military confrontations, often advocating for strategic deals over force. His administration would likely pursue diplomatic or economic measures before considering any military options, let alone nuclear strikes.
- **Trump's reputation as a negotiator** might offer a chance to de-escalate tensions with Russia, though the success of such efforts would depend on balancing power dynamics and upholding international principles. Nuking Russia, however, is not a viable or realistic solution, given the catastrophic consequences it would entail. Diplomacy, coupled with calculated pressure, remains the most plausible path to peace.

to balance Ukraine's sovereignty with Russia's territorial ambitions, a delicate and contentious process. Economic Pressure: Trump could focus on imposing or maintaining sanctions against Russia, targeting its economy and key industries while simultaneously using incentives like lifting certain sanctions in exchange for concessions. Coalition-Building: Trump might aim to rally nations, including China or other influential powers, to pressure Russia diplomatically. However, his "America First" approach may limit multilateral support. Risk of Appeasement: Critics argue that Trump's approach might prioritize ending the conflict over upholding Ukraine's territorial integrity, potentially leading to concessions that embolden Russia.

CAN TRUMP NUKE RUSSIA?

While technically, the U.S. president has the authority to order the use of nuclear weapons, using them against Russia is extraordinarily un-

likely for several reasons: Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD): A nuclear strike on Russia would almost certainly provoke a devastating retaliatory strike, leading to catastrophic loss of life globally. Global Condemnation: Using nuclear weapons would isolate the U.S. diplomatically, destroy alliances, and erode its moral standing on the global stage. Checks and Balances: While the president holds nuclear authority, the decision process involves multiple layers of consultation with military and national security officials. A preemptive or aggressive strike on a nuclear-armed state like Russia would face significant resistance and nuke-retaliation. Trump's Approach: Trump has historically avoided direct military confrontations, often advocating for strategic deals over force. His administration would likely pursue diplomatic or economic measures before considering any military options, let alone nuclear strikes. Trump's reputation as a ne-

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HOW FAR COULD THIS WAR GO?

The trajectory of this conflict depends on several factors: Western Commitment: Continued support from the U.S. and NATO is crucial for Ukraine. If this falters, Russia could gain ground and most regions in Ukraine could soon be the Russian territory. Russia's Response: If Russia feels existentially threatened (e.g., by attacks on its territory), it might escalate to unconventional weapons, including nuclear threats. If it deems it fits, Russia could nuke Ukraine if that is the

last option Russia could take. Russia does not have fear to nuke Ukraine and anyone who comes in the way. Third-Party Interventions: The involvement of countries like North Korea, Iran, and potentially China could transform the war into a global conflict. A prolonged war could stretch resources, deepen humanitarian crises, and destabilize global markets.

POSSIBLE COUNTRIES ALIGNING WITH RUSSIA

Countries that might align with Russia include: North Korea: Already providing weapons and personnel, North Korea is deepening its ties with Russia in defiance of the so-called international norms. The North is hungry to detonate and Rocket Man (in Trump's voice) is ready and willing to destroy. Iran: With ongoing tensions with the U.S., Iran has supported Russia with drones and could strengthen its military ties further. China: While cautious, Chi-

na remains aligned with Russia economically and politically, viewing the U.S. and NATO as strategic adversaries. Countries like Belarus, Syria, and possibly some in Africa (with close ties to Wagner and Russian investments) may also side with Russia. However, many nations are likely to remain non-aligned to avoid jeopardizing their own security and economic interests.

CONCLUSION

The war in Ukraine risks becoming a larger, more dangerous conflict if diplomatic solutions are not pursued. While this poses challenges for the Biden Administration, it also puts global peace and security at stake. A protracted war would test alliances, strain economies, and potentially reshape the global order, with significant consequences for all involved nations.

America

What will Trump 2.0 mean for Africa?

By: AFP
xxxxxxxxxxxx

What does US president-elect Donald Trump's imminent return to the White House mean for Africa, a continent which he largely dismissed in insulting terms during his first presidency.

Despite the undiplomatic rhetoric, most observers don't expect Trump's re-election to make much difference to US-Africa ties, and it may provide opportunities for some.

Africa is well-used to being ignored by US policy makers, or to being treated as a pawn in the larger struggle for influence between Washington and Beijing, and lately Russia too.

Outgoing leader Joe Biden has not yet visited Africa as president, having rescheduled a trip planned to oil-exporter Angola in October. He will now visit next month.

If any African leaders were feeling tired of the West's lectures about rights and the rule of law, they might appreciate Trump's bluntly transactional approach to international relations.

And, if Trump's White House doesn't want to work with the governments of what he once reportedly called "shithole countries", the continent now has more options for international partners. China is investing in infrastructure while cornering access to key minerals; Russia provides mercenaries to several regimes; and the Gulf states and Turkey are gaining in influence.

"If he wants to work with Africa as a friend of Africa, we will welcome him and work with him," former Kenyan premier and veteran politician 79-year-old Raila Odinga said of Trump's return.

"If he does not want to work with Africa... Africa has got other friends," said Odinga, one of four candidates vying to replace Moussa Faki Mahamat as chair of the African Union Commission.

- Trade war? -

The incoming US president is openly hostile to multilateral bodies like the UN and AU and prefers to seek influence through bilateral deals with favoured strongmen.

Trump's declared plan to levy tariffs on imports to the United States may hurt some



Republican presidential nominee and former U.S. President Donald Trump takes the stage following early results from the 2024 U.S. presidential election in Palm Beach County Convention Center, in West Palm Beach, Florida, U.S., November 6, 2024.

African exporters, especially if he fails to renew the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Enacted in 2000, the law is due for renewal next year. It provides duty-free access for some products from 32 sub-Saharan African countries, last year totalling \$9.7 billion in value.

But the bigger impact of Trump's tariff policies would be a trade war with China, and this could end up having a larger effect on ties with Africa.

The United States and its western allies are competing for influence with China's investment programme, and many African capitals are happy to play both sides against each other.

This year, for example, Biden's Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Angola to tout US investment in the Lobito Corridor, to build rail access to Atlantic ports for mines in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

But if Trump's confrontational winner-takes-all style leads him to pressure Africa to eschew Chinese investment and to pick a side, his

bluster may fall on deaf ears. Mukhisa Kituyi, a Kenyan politician who served as secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, said Africa had no business taking sides.

"We don't want people to just say: 'Stop China to grow in Africa.' Who wants America to grow in Africa?" he asked.

"It is absolutely none of the business of Africa whether America feels that it has slowed down China," he insisted, suggesting the United States try to match China's investment levels.

With several senior African leaders joining Biden at the G20 summit this week in Brazil, will the Trump era be business as usual? Perhaps, but any turbulence in the world economy could have stark consequences for Africa.

In a note last week for Capital Economics, economist David Omojomolo warned Trump's protectionism would lead to a stronger dollar, making it harder for some African economies to access world capital markets.

Energy giants Angola and Nigeria "could also be hurt if Trump's support for US oil and gas supply leads to lower global prices".

Some Africans, especially Nigerians who were cryptocurrency pioneers during Trump's first term, hailed a surge in bitcoin prices on his re-election and want him to roll back Biden-era regulation.

- US isolation? -

Despite the potential raw economic opportunities of a Trump presidency, Africa is still unlikely to see the world through Washington's eyes. South African leaders responded with scorn during their May general election after a white-led opposition party suggested bringing in American poll observers.

Never in the country's 30-year history of democracy, they noted, had a party rejected an election result nor stormed parliament, as Trump supporters did when he lost the 2020 vote to Biden.

And many Africans cheered South Africa when it brought a case to the International Court of Justice in

The Hague, accusing Israel of genocide.

Washington condemned the move and Trump's incoming administration has signalled that it will staunchly back Israel in its conflict with the Palestinians.

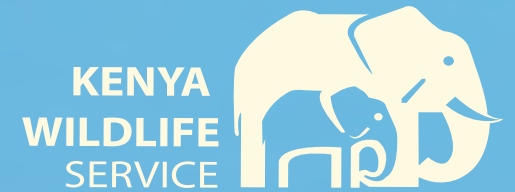
The rift over Israel is just one of the disputes that could accelerate Africa's slide towards the camp of Washington's opponents.

South Africa, Egypt and Ethiopia are now members of the BRICs group -- with Brazil, China, Iran, Russia, India and the UAE -- and Nigeria is pushing to join.

Analysts like the Egmont Institute's Reinhold Brender have warned that the West cannot allow Trump's America First policies to push the continent closer to Russia and China, through organisations like the BRICs.

Worth Noting:

- **Outgoing leader Joe Biden has not yet visited Africa as president, having rescheduled a trip planned to oil-exporter Angola in October. He will now visit next month.**
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Kenya cancels more than \$2.5bn in deals with Adani after US indictment

The deals had been sharply criticised over lack of transparency and value for money.

By: Reuters

The deals had been sharply criticised over lack of transparency and value for money.

Kenyan President William Ruto has ordered the cancellation of a procurement process that had been expected to award control of the country's main airport to India's Adani Group after its founder was indicted in the United States.

Ruto made the announcement on Thursday in his state of the nation address.

Under the proposed deal worth nearly \$2bn, the Adani Group was to add a second runway at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and upgrade the passenger terminal in exchange for a 30-year lease.

Ruto also said he was cancelling a separate 30-year, \$736m public-private partnership that an Adani Group firm signed with the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum last month to construct power transmission lines.

"I have directed agencies within the Ministry of Transport and within the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum to immediately cancel the ongoing procurement," Ruto said, attributing the decision to "new information provided by investigative agencies and partner nations".

Ruto's announcement was met with

thunderous applause and cheers from lawmakers in parliament, where he gave his address. The deals have drawn sharp criticism from many politicians and members of the public over concerns about a lack of transparency and value for money.

Representatives from the Adani Group did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

US authorities said in the indictment on Wednesday that group founder Gautam Adani, one of the world's richest people, and seven other defendants agreed to pay about \$265m in bribes to Indian government officials.

The Adani Group denied the allegations and said in a statement that it would seek "all possible legal recourse".

Protests

The Adani Group made the airport proposal in March under a procedure that circumvents competitive bidding, but it did not become public until July through a leak on social media.

A Kenyan court temporarily blocked it in September in response to a lawsuit arguing it did not offer taxpayers value for money.

Senior government officials, including Ruto, had repeatedly defended the deals despite allegations made in



Despite criticism, senior Kenyan government officials, including President William Ruto, had defended the deals with the Adani Group [File: Simon Maina/AFP]

2023 by US short-seller Hindenburg Research – denied by the Adani Group – of improper governance practices at the company.

As late as Thursday morning, Energy Minister Opiyo Wandayi told senators he expected the transmission lines contract to go ahead because

there was no bribery or corruption involved in its awarding.

George Kamau, a Kenyan lawyer specialising in public procurement, said the Adani Group might go to arbitration to challenge the cancellations, especially of the transmission lines deal, which had already been

signed.

"That said, any dispute resolution framework ... is likely to lean towards the state, considering the fact that the deal has been cancelled on the basis of integrity issues," he said.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe opposition leader found guilty of attending 'unlawful gathering'

Court convicts Jameson Timba and 34 activists after five months in pre-trial detention.

Court convicts Jameson Timba and 34 activists after five months in pre-trial detention.

A Zimbabwe court has convicted an opposition leader and 34 activists on charges of participating in an unlawful gathering, more than five months after they were taken into pre-trial detention.

Jameson Timba, interim leader of a faction of the splintered Citizens Coalition for Change opposition party, and the activists face up to five years in prison or a fine.

Sentencing is set for next week, Webster Jiti, one of the defence lawyers, said.

The court on Friday acquitted 30 others who had been detained with Timba.

Police arrested the activists on June 16 at Timba's residence in the capital, Harare, and charged them with disorderly conduct and participating in a gathering with the intent to promote violence, breaches of peace or bigotry. The court in September acquitted them of the disorderly conduct charges.

Their lawyers said they were at the house for a barbecue to commemo-

rate the Day of the African Child, a calendar event of the African Union. Timba and the others were among the first of about 160 opposition figures and activists to be rounded up before a July summit of the 16-nation Southern African Development Community in Harare.

Amnesty International described the detentions as "part of a disturbing pattern of repression against people exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression".

The rights group called for an investigation into allegations that some of the activists were tortured while in police detention.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who promised democratic reforms after taking over from longtime ruler Robert Mugabe in a coup in 2017, denied those allegations but has also repeatedly warned the opposition against inciting violence.

Mnangagwa's ZANU-PF party has been in power since independence in 1980 and is accused of stifling dissent.

Source: News Agencies



Opposition leader Jameson Timba of the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) party and 34 activists face up to five years in prison or a fine [File: Philimon Bulawayo/Reuters]

YOUR OPINION IS INVALUABLE

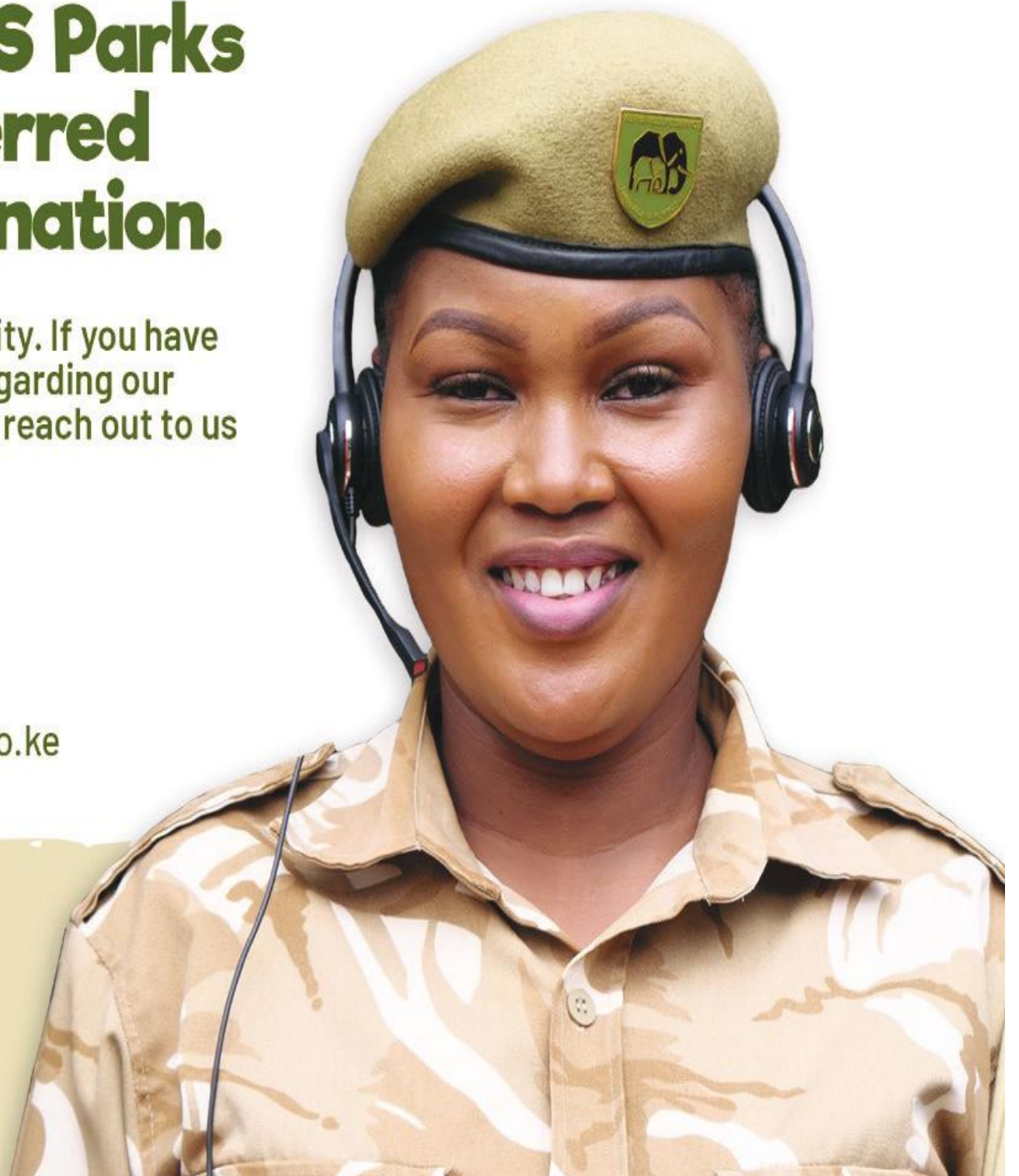
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Diaspora

UK imposes sanctions on Isabel dos Santos, Ukrainian oligarch Firtash

The measures are a part of the Labour government tightening Britain's anti-corruption sanctions regime.

By: Diaspora Times Team
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

The United Kingdom has barred Angolan billionaire Isabel dos Santos and Ukrainian oligarch Dmytro Firtash and frozen their UK assets, the government announced, in what it said was part of a new crackdown on "dirty money".

The measures on Thursday were the first step in tightening Britain's anti-corruption sanctions regime as promised in July's election, the Labour government said.

"These unscrupulous individuals selfishly deprive their fellow citizens of much-needed funding for education, healthcare and infrastructure – for their own enrichment," Foreign Secretary David Lammy said in a statement.

Dos Santos, whose father Jose Eduardo dos Santos served as Angola's president for 38 years until 2017, is Africa's first female billionaire and has faced corruption accusations in Angola and elsewhere for years. She denies the allegations and says she is the target of a long-running political vendetta.

She was sanctioned by the United States in 2021 for "involvement in significant corruption" and is barred from entering the country. Britain said dos Santos abused her positions at Angolan state oil firm Sonangol and telecoms company Uni-



Isabel dos Santos, daughter of Angola's former President and Africa's richest woman, reacts during a Reuters interview in London, Britain [Toby Melville/Reuters]

tel to embezzle at least 350 million pounds (\$440m).

Dos Santos lost an appeal to overturn an order freezing up to 580 million pounds of her assets in September as part of a lawsuit at London's High Court brought by Unitel. Global police agency Interpol has issued a red notice for her.

In a statement cited by the Reuters news agency, dos Santos said that the British

sanctions were "incorrect and unjustified".

"I was not given the opportunity to defend myself against these allegations," she said. "I intend to appeal and I hope that the United Kingdom will give me the opportunity to present my evidence."

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Firtash is wanted by Ukrainian and US authorities on suspicion of embezzling nearly \$500m involving Ukraine's gas transit system. He says the charges are without legal foundation.

He is currently in Austria fighting extradition to the US.

In June 2021, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a decree imposing sanctions on Firtash, including the freezing of his assets and withdrawal of licences from his companies, after accusing him of selling titanium products to Russian military companies.

Britain said Firtash had extracted "hundreds of millions of pounds from Ukraine through corruption", and hidden tens of millions of pounds of ill-gotten gains in the UK property

market alone.

Britain also sanctioned his wife Lada Firtash, who it said held UK assets on his behalf including the site of the old Brompton Road rail station of the London Underground.

Latvian businessman and politician Aivars Lembergs, who was put on a US sanctions list in 2019 for alleged corruption, was also sanctioned, as was his daughter Liga Lemberga. The British government said Lembergs had "abused his political position to commit bribery and launder money."

Lammy said the penalties were the start of a crackdown.

"I committed to taking on kleptocrats and the dirty money that empowers them when I became foreign secretary, and these sanctions mark the first step in delivering this ambition," he said.

Source: News Agencies

Worth Noting:

• Dos Santos lost an appeal to overturn an order freezing up to 580 million pounds of her assets in September as part of a lawsuit at London's High Court brought by Unitel. Global police agency Interpol has issued a red notice for her.

• In a statement cited by the Reuters news agency, dos Santos said that the British sanctions were "incorrect and unjustified".

• "I was not given the opportunity to defend myself against these allegations," she said. "I intend to appeal and I hope that the United Kingdom will give me the opportunity to present my evidence."

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Dmytro Firtash, one of Ukraine's most influential oligarchs, at a trial in Vienna, Austria [File: Samuel Kubani/AFP]

Diaspora

How America hands power from one president to the next

Donald Trump, who won the November 5 U.S. election, must wait 76 days to become president again.

By: VOA
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In July, Keir Starmer became British prime minister just one day after his party swept parliamentary elections.

Donald Trump, who won the November 5 U.S. election, must wait 76 days to become president again.

What gives?

Britain's opposition party, like its counterparts in some parliamentary democracies, runs a "shadow government" that is ready to seize power after winning an election.

The United States has no such system. America's president-to-be starts from scratch, tasked with filling posts for a sprawling government bureaucracy with a nearly \$7 trillion budget and 3.5 million civilian and military personnel, including thousands of presidential appointees.

"It is a mammoth task to get ready to govern," said Valerie Smith Boyd, president of the Center for Presidential Transition.

The presidential transition — those critical 11 weeks between Election Day in November and Inauguration Day in January — is a cornerstone of American democracy. The period is designed to ensure a seamless and peaceful transfer of power from one administration to another.

"The idea is that they should come into their jobs and be ready to work on day one," said Michael Shurkin, a director at consultancy 14 North Strategies who worked as a CIA analyst during the transition from George W. Bush to Barack Obama in 2008-09.

The transition period used to be even longer — four months — and a rather low-key event throughout most of America's history, according to historian Russel Riley. Riley has traced the earliest mention of the phrase "presidential transition" to 1948, arguing in *The Washington Post* that the process took on greater significance in the 1960s because of "the risks to a presidency — and indeed to the nation — of not having the newcomer and his team fully prepared from day one to meet the world's challenges."

Tradition and law

Today, the transition is a highly elaborate, formalized

process, governed as much by tradition and custom as by laws and regulations.

"It's very much the customs and habits that candidates and the federal government do," said Derek Muller, a Notre Dame law professor and expert on presidential transition.

Some of the traditions are largely symbolic.

For example, there's the post-election White House meeting between a sitting president and a president-elect.

President Harry Truman is credited with encouraging this tradition by inviting Dwight Eisenhower, a bitter political rival, to the White House after Eisenhower's 1952 victory.

The example was followed by every president since, except for Trump after his 2020 defeat.

Other practices are more consequential.

In a tradition that dates to 1968, the president shares a copy of his daily intelligence briefing document — the President's Daily Brief — with the incoming commander-in-chief.

Neither practice is written into law, but much else about the transition is legally mandated. The Presidential Transition Act of 1963, updated over the years, formalizes some of the processes and mechanisms for a peaceful transfer of power. Among other things:

Six months before the election, the president establishes a transition coordinating council, while each federal agency designates a transition director.

By September 15, agency heads must lock in succession plans for noncareer employees.

By October 1, the General Services Administration — the federal government's landlord — enters into agreements with transition teams before providing them with office space and other resources.

Although these are recent additions to the law, an orderly presidential succession has been the norm through most of American history. Then came the rupture of 2020: Trump, then running for reelection, claimed voter fraud and refused to concede.

President Joe Biden was initially denied the daily



President Joe Biden meets with President-elect Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House, in Washington, Nov. 13, 2024.

intelligence briefing, and it took the GSA three weeks to "ascertain" him as the winner. Breaking with tradition, Trump didn't invite Biden to the White House and left Washington without attending his inauguration.

With Trump swiftly declared the winner of this year's election, the pendulum has swung back toward established protocol.

On Wednesday, Biden hosted Trump at the White House, where they posed for the cameras and pledged a smooth transition. The White House called their two-hour meeting "very cordial, very gracious and substantive."

Filling 4,000-plus jobs

A White House meet-and-greet isn't the president-elect's main mission.

Topping the list of priorities: staffing a new administration. The incoming administration must fill more than 4,000 positions, with 1,200 requiring Senate confirmation, according to the Center for Presidential Transition. Current political appointees typically resign before or on the day the incoming president is inaugurated.

This massive recruitment effort takes time and resources. Candidates for political positions must be interviewed, vetted and in some cases receive top-secret security clearances.

While presidents-elect typically name a few dozen key players by Inauguration Day, most appointments come after they take office.

Trump has already picked key administration officials: chief of staff, national security adviser, CIA director, director of national intelli-

gence, attorney general, secretary of defense and secretary of state. More top-level personnel announcements are expected in the coming days and weeks.

But while these announcements dominate the news cycle, the real work of presidential succession often takes place behind closed doors.

Agency-level teams from both administrations work quietly to share information and orchestrate the complex handover.

"This is what's happened time and time again, with the Republican exception of 2020-2021," Shurkin said in an interview with VOA.

"The intention is to make sure that certainly people in, let's say, the more vital elements of the government, particularly, say, Defense or CIA ... don't show up looking around and asking, 'What is this? What's your job? How does anything work?'"

The extent of ongoing coordination between the Trump and Biden teams remains uncertain. Biden has ordered his administration to facilitate a smooth handover, but Trump's team has missed key deadlines for agreements with the White House and GSA, making it difficult for federal agencies to fully share information with it.

Muller said that while Trump's team might have privacy concerns, these delays carry real risks.

"If you're not able to access those federal agencies, you might come in a step slow about how you're supposed to take over the apparatus of the federal government," Muller said in an interview.

'Lame duck' period

The presidential transition is sometimes called the "lame duck" period because the outgoing president has diminished influence as he awaits the incoming president's inauguration.

While the sitting president keeps full powers, including the pardon power, until January 20, the ability to implement major policies and decisions is limited.

This creates a high-stakes chess game in domestic and global affairs. Allies and rivals alike must thread the needle between current and future administrations. Foreign governments, especially those with critical ties with the U.S., must walk a diplomatic tightrope.

The diplomatic dance has already begun. While foreign governments maintain relations with U.S. embassies, Muller noted that foreign leaders are already reaching out to Trump "to feel him out in some of his positions, to think about how things might look under a new administration."

Earlier this week, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto called Trump and suggested the two meet in person.

"You're dealing with some significant changes about how the United States is going to govern, and so it's a delicate balancing act for those foreign government leaders in the international context," Muller said.

Worth Noting:

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Biden allows Ukraine to use US arms to strike inside Russia

Ukraine plans to conduct its first long-range attacks in the coming days, the sources said, without revealing details due to operational security concerns.

By:Reuters
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Joe Biden and Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Fasano, Italy, June 13, 2024. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

Worth Noting:

- There was no immediate response from the Kremlin, which has warned that it would see a move to loosen the limits on Ukraine's use of U.S. weapons as a major escalation.
- Vladimir Dzhaharov, first deputy head of the Russian upper house's international affairs committee, said Washington's decision to let Kyiv strike deep into Russia could lead to "World War Three".
- "The West has decided on such a level of escalation that it could end with the Ukrainian statehood in complete ruins by morning," Andrei Klishas, a senior member of the Federation Council, Russia's upper chamber of parliament, said on the Telegram messaging app.
- Ukraine's first deep strikes are likely to be carried out using ATACMS rockets, which have a range of up to 190 miles (306 km), according to the sources.

President Joe Biden's administration has allowed Ukraine to use U.S.-made weapons to strike deep into Russia, two U.S. officials and a source familiar with the decision said on Sunday, in a significant reversal of Washington's policy in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Ukraine plans to conduct its first long-range attacks in the coming days, the sources said, without revealing details due to operational security concerns. The move comes two months before President-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan. 20 and follows months of pleas by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to allow Ukraine's military to use U.S. weapons to hit Russian military targets far from its border. The change comes largely in response to Russia's deployment of North Korean ground troops to supplement its own forces, a development that has caused alarm in Washington and Kyiv, a U.S. official and a source familiar with the decision said. Zelenskyy said in his evening address that the missiles would "speak for themselves." "Today, many in the media are saying that we have re-

ceived permission to take appropriate actions," he said. "But strikes are not made with words. Such things are not announced." The White House and U.S. State Department declined to comment. There was no immediate response from the Kremlin, which has warned that it would see a move to loosen the limits on Ukraine's use of U.S. weapons as a major escalation. Vladimir Dzhaharov, first deputy head of the Russian upper house's international affairs committee, said Washington's decision to let Kyiv strike deep into Russia could lead to "World War Three". "The West has decided on such a level of escalation that it could end with the Ukrainian statehood in complete ruins by morning," Andrei Klishas, a senior member of the Federation Council, Russia's upper chamber of parliament, said on the Telegram messaging app. Ukraine's first deep strikes are likely to be carried out using ATACMS rockets, which have a range of up to 190 miles (306 km), according to the sources. While some U.S. officials have expressed skepticism

that allowing long-range strikes will change the war's overall trajectory, the decision could help Ukraine at a moment when Russian forces are making gains and possibly put Kyiv in a better negotiating position when and if ceasefire talks happen. It is not clear if Trump will reverse Biden's decision when he takes office. Trump has long criticized the scale of U.S. financial and military aid to Ukraine and has vowed to end the war quickly, without explaining how. A Trump spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment. But one of Trump's closest foreign policy advisers, Richard Grenell, criticized the decision. "Escalating the wars before he leaves office," Grenell said, in an X post responding to the news. Some congressional Republicans had urged Biden to loosen the rules on how Ukraine can use U.S.-provided weapons. Since Trump's Nov. 5 victory, senior Biden administration officials have repeatedly said they would use the remaining time to ensure Ukraine can fight effectively next year or negotiate peace with Russia from a "position of strength".

'WAY TOO LATE'

The U.S. believes more than 10,000 North Korean soldiers have been sent to eastern Russia and that most of them have moved to the Kursk region and have begun to engage in combat operations. Russia is advancing at its fastest rate since 2022 despite taking heavy losses, and Ukraine said it had clashed with some of those North Korean troops deployed to Kursk. Stretched by personnel shortages, Ukrainian forces have lost some of the ground they captured in an August incursion into Kursk that Zelenskyy said could serve as a bargaining chip. "Removing targeting restrictions will allow the Ukrainians to stop fighting with one hand tied behind their back," Alex Plitsas, senior non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council, said. "However, like everything else, I believe history will say the decision came way too late. Just like the ATACMS, HIMARS, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Abrams tanks and F-16. They were all needed much sooner," he added. Despite Zelenskyy's pleas, the White House had been reluctant to allow U.S.-sup-

plied weapons to be used to strike targets deep inside Russia for fear this could ratchet up the conflict. Republican U.S. Representative Mike Turner, who chairs the House Intelligence Committee, said in a statement that Biden's decision was long overdue and that there were still too many restrictions on Ukraine. But he added: "This first step will put pressure on Vladimir Putin as President-elect Trump returns to the White House and works to end this war." Kyiv's other allies have been supplying weapons but with restrictions on how and when they can be used inside Russia, out of concern such strikes could prompt retaliation that draws NATO countries into the war or provokes a nuclear conflict. Poland's foreign minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, also called the move a response to North Korea's involvement. "President Biden responded to the entry of North Korean troops into the war and the massive Russian missile strike in a language that V. Putin understands - by removing restrictions on Ukraine's use of Western missiles," Sikorski said on X.

How could US-China rivalry in Africa play out under Trump 2.0?

By: VOA
xxxxxxxxxxxx



FILE - U.S. President Donald Trump, right, chats with Chinese President Xi Jinping, on Aug. 31, 2019, in Beijing

Worth Noting:

- “It was the Trump administration that was the first to kind of recognize the existential threat that China poses,” Nagy told VOA.
- “We were on the front lines of that in Africa, and we saw what the Chinese were doing,” said Nagy, who also served as the U.S. ambassador to Guinea and Ethiopia during the administrations of presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.
- Nagy told VOA he does not think the incoming Republican administration will neglect Africa because it sees China as a threat to U.S. interests there. He also said the continent is a major source of critical minerals attractive to both superpowers.
- Nagy credits the first Trump administration with introducing policies on the continent intended to counter China’s influence.
- “We had ... the right focus because we made it about the youth. You know, our premise was that Africa is going to be undergoing a youth tsunami with the population doubling by 2050. And that more than anything, what the youth really wanted was jobs,” he said.

President-elect Donald Trump talked tough on China during his campaign, vowing to impose higher and sweeping tariffs on imports from the Asian giant. Beijing will now also be closely watching the incoming administration’s movements further afield, in Africa, where U.S.-China rivalry is high.

Experts disagree on what a second Trump term will mean for Beijing’s ambitions on the continent, with some saying it could be a boon for China – Africa’s biggest trade partner – if the U.S. pursues an isolationist, “America First” agenda that mostly ignores the region. But Tibor Nagy, who served as Trump’s Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 2018 to 2021 has a different perspective. He said Trump grasped how powerful a player China had become on the continent.

“It was the Trump administration that was the first to kind of recognize the existential threat that China poses,” Nagy told VOA. “We were on the front lines of that in Africa, and we saw what the Chinese were doing,” said Nagy, who also served as the U.S. ambassador to Guinea and Ethiopia during the administrations of presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Nagy told VOA he does not think the incoming Republican administration will neglect Africa because it sees China as a threat to U.S. interests there. He also said the continent is a major source of critical minerals attractive to both superpowers.

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To this end, Nagy says, the first Trump administration set up Prosper Africa in 2018, an initiative designed to assist American companies doing business in Africa, and he expects the incoming administration will remain engaged there.

“Africa remains very much the front lines,” he said. “The United States is extremely concerned about our strategic minerals, and when a hostile power has a lock on strategic minerals, that’s really not very good when you need the strategic minerals for your top-end technology and for weapon systems.”

But Christian-Geraud Nema, Africa editor for the China-Global South Project, is skeptical and said a second term for Trump could be an opportunity for Beijing.

“Looking at his first term, Trump didn’t show much interest in Africa, which is likely to be the case still now,” he told VOA.

“Only a few countries will matter — countries whose resources or position matter to the U.S. national security interests.”

“China will have room to maneuver and increase its influence in so many ways,”

he added.

Yun Sun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, echoed this.

“I doubt that Africa will be a featured priority for Trump,” she told VOA in an emailed response, adding that the United States’ absence on the continent “will boost the prominence of the Chinese position by its presence.”

Lobito corridor future

Views on how successfully President Joe Biden’s administration has engaged with Africa are also mixed. Many analysts said regardless of whether the Democrats or the Republicans are in office, the continent is usually an afterthought in U.S. foreign policy, which does not differ much from one administration to the next.

The current administration said it was “all in on Africa,” when Biden hosted dozens of heads of state at his first African Leaders Summit in 2022, an event seen as an attempt at reasserting U.S. influence in the face of a rising China.

Yet, “African leaders or the African Union were not consulted about the agenda of the 2022 US-Africa Leaders Summit. This was also the case with the US’s Africa strategy,” wrote Christopher Isike, the director of African Centre for the Study of the United States at the University of Pretoria, in an article co-signed by Samuel Ojewole, political science post-doctoral research fellow at the university

While Trump never traveled to Africa as president, top Biden administration officials did visit the continent,

including the vice president. Biden is also expected to travel to Angola before the end of his term in December.

Under Biden, the U.S. agreed to develop the Lobito Corridor and Zambia-Lobito rail line, a project described by the State Department as “the most significant transport infrastructure that the United States has helped develop on the African continent in a generation.”

The rail line is seen as part of a transcontinental vision connecting the Atlantic and Indian oceans.

The undertaking is to be financed through a joint agreement calling for the U.S., African Development Bank, Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and the European Union to support Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zambia.

Observers see it as an attempt to compete with Chinese President Xi Jinping’s global infrastructure project the Belt and Road Initiative, which has built railways, ports and roads across Africa.

There is concern among some analysts that Trump could pull back from this.

“Existing bilateral and multilateral business partnerships ... such as the Lobito Corridor ... might wane significantly during the next Trump administration,” said Oluwole Ojewole, a Nigerian analyst with the Institute for Security Studies, in an email to VOA.

“When that happens China will gain significant mileage in areas where the US Government’s exit creates a

vacuum on the continent,” he added.

But Nagy disagreed, saying the Lobito Corridor is the “kind of project which would have come right out of the Trump administration.”

Therefore, there’s likely to be continuity, he added, noting: “The deal is done. Again, I can’t speak for President Trump, or the people who are going to be coming in ... but it’s logical.”

‘Other Friends’

When asked how African leaders will navigate the next Trump administration, Sun said they could play the U.S. and China against each other.

“Africa could highlight its role in the US-China great power competition in order to strengthen its position in the US grand strategy,” she said in an email to VOA.

But she is doubtful African leaders will take that route because it “will carry the effect of being forced to choose, which I doubt that Africa will want to do.”

However, at least one African politician has already alluded to this option.

Kenya’s Raila Odinga, who is in the running to take over as chair of the African Union Commission next year, was blunt in his assessment of how African governments would handle a more isolationist U.S. under Trump.

“If he does not want to work with Africa,” Odinga told Agence France-Presse last week, “Africa has got other friends.”

At least 150 people killed in violence in Haitian capital in past week: UN

Soaring violence in Port-au-Prince since last week has left at least 150 people dead, bringing the number of deaths in Haiti this year to over 4,500, the United Nations said Wednesday.

By: AFP
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Worth Noting:

- Well-armed gangs control some 80 per cent of the city, routinely targeting civilians despite a Kenyan-led international force that has been deployed to help the outgunned police restore some government order.

- “At least 150 people have been killed, 92 injured and about 20,000 forced to flee their homes over the past week,” Turk’s statement said.

- In addition, “Port-au-Prince’s estimated four million people are practically being held hostage as gangs now control all the main roads in and out of the capital”.

- The Haitian capital has seen renewed fighting in the last week from Viv Ansanm, an alliance of gangs that in February helped oust former prime minister Ariel Henry.

- Turk said that at least 55 per cent of the deaths from simultaneous and apparently coordinated attacks in the capital resulted from exchanges of fire between gang members and police.



A distressed woman is being assisted when angry civilians burnt the dead bodies of suspected gang members, after an attempted overnight attack by gangs on the affluent hillside suburb Petion-Ville sparked a violent civilian response, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Nov 19. -- REUTERS PIC

Soaring violence in Port-au-Prince since last week has left at least 150 people dead, bringing the number of deaths in Haiti this year to over 4,500, the United Nations said Wednesday. “The latest upsurge in violence in Haiti’s capital is a harbinger of worse to come,” UN rights chief Volker Turk warned in a statement. “The gang violence must be promptly halted. Haiti must not be allowed to descend further into chaos.”

Violence has intensified dramatically in Port-au-Prince since November 11, as a coalition of gangs pushes for full control of the Haitian capital.

Well-armed gangs control some 80 per cent of the city, routinely targeting civilians despite a Kenyan-led inter-

national force that has been deployed to help the outgunned police restore some government order.

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capital resulted from exchanges of fire between gang members and police.

He also highlighted reports of a rise in mob lynchings. Authorities said Tuesday that police and civilian self-defence groups had killed 28 gang members in Port-au-Prince after an overnight operation as the government seeks to regain some control. Last year, in a gruesome chapter of the vigilante reprisals, a dozen alleged gang members were stoned and burned alive by residents in Port-au-Prince.

The UN rights office said the latest violence brought “the verified casualty toll of the gang violence so far this year to a shocking 4,544 dead and 2,060 injured”.

The real toll, it stressed, “is

likely higher still”.

In addition, an estimated 700,000 people are now internally displaced across the country, half of them children, it said.

Turk warned that “the endless gang violence and widespread insecurity are deepening the dire humanitarian crisis in the country, including the impacts of severe food and water shortages and the spread of infectious diseases”.

This was happening “at a time when the health system is already on the brink of collapse”, he said, adding that “threats and attacks on humanitarian workers are also deeply worrying”.

“Gang violence must not prevail over the institutions of the State,” he said, demanding “concrete steps ...

to protect the population and to restore effective rule of law”.