

Africa Diary

News from the continent

1 December 2024 to 28 February 2025

AU COMMISSION ELECTIONS 2025



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YOUSSEUF,
DJIBOUTI



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MALIKA HADDADI
ALGERIA



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Development,
Blue Economy &
Sustainable
Environment
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VILAKATI,
ESWATINI



Commissioner:
Political Affairs,
Peace &
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[PAPS]

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NIGERIA



Commissioner:
Health,
Humanitarian
& Social
Development
[HHS]

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A. TWUM-AMOAH
GHANA



Commissioner:
Infrastructure,
Energy
[IED]

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D. MATABOLA
SOUTH AFRICA



2025

24 February: Broadcast journalist Blessed Mhlanga was jailed in Harare, Zimbabwe on charges of incitement. He had interviewed a disgruntled war veteran who had called on President Emmerson Mnangagwa to resign, accusing him of nepotism, corruption and failing to address economic issues. Mnangagwa says he will step down in 2028 after two presidential terms. However there have been calls for him to stay on to fully implement his "Vision 2030," based on "Democratic Principles, Rule of Law and Property Rights," which aims to transform the country into an upper-middle-income economy by this date.

18 February: Kenya permitted leaders of the genocidal Rapid Support Services (RSF) from Sudan to host a meeting with its allied civilian groups in Nairobi which aimed to establish a foundational charter for a "new Sudan". The conflict in Sudan has killed tens of thousands of people since April 2023. More than 12 million people – a quarter of the population – have been displaced by the fighting, including more than three million Sudanese who have fled to neighbouring countries, according to the UN. Kenya has pledged its support for peace initiatives in Sudan.

19 February: The South African government faced an unprecedented setback when its own Cabinet rejected the annual national budget moments before it was to be presented for parliamentary endorsement. The budget proposals, prepared by the National Treasury, can only be accepted, not amended by Parliament. The budget challenges are publicly disclosed in a process of world-leading transparency, but exact details are kept under wraps until Budget Day. Or, in this case, until Postponed Budget Day.

16 February: The intense, protracted conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) took a decisive turn as the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group took possession of the city of Bukavu. This followed the capture of Goma, the capital of the North Kivu Province. Rwanda and its proxy militants now control the entire Lake Kivu region. The Congolese army fled. War atrocities have been committed by all sides and civilians have been killed, injured or displaced while peace talks continue.

15 February: Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, the long-term former foreign minister of Djibouti, was elected as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), succeeding Chadian Moussa Faki. There were seven rounds of voting. He eventually defeated Raila Odinga, a former Prime Minister of Kenya who had started off as the leading candidate. The AUC is the secretariat of the African Union responsible for its day-to-day activities. The Chairperson is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and is elected for a four-year term which can be renewed once.

8 February: Sam Nujoma, former three-term founding President of the liberated Namibia, died at 95 years.

7 February: South Africa will become the 184th member country of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage after Unesco ratified its membership in January 2025. The Living Heritage Network in Africa was formed in 2003 in accordance with Unesco's Global Priorities to form a worldwide network of countries dedicated to supporting communities in safeguarding their living heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

31 January: An extraordinary summit of the heads of state and government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) "noted with concern the recent attacks by the M23 armed group and Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) on the Government Forces of DRC, the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC) and the civilian population in various areas of North Kivu." This is the first time the SADC has called out Rwanda for effectively invading the DRC with its own army.

27 January: M23, the most potent of the armed groups contending for control of the mineral-rich eastern DRC, recaptured Goma, the biggest city in the region which is on the border with Rwanda. M23 previously captured Goma in 2012, when they held it just for a few days. This time, over 700 people were reported killed, including 17 peacekeepers, as rebel forces looted and pillaged. M23 is backed by Rwanda which also has its own troops fighting alongside them in the DRC.



A miner too weak to walk is carried on a stretcher during the government's rescue operations at the unused mine in Stillfontein in North West Province after hundreds of zama zamas were trapped in the mine for many weeks with little access to water, food and medication.

Source: GroundUp

24 January: Mannas Fourie, the head of South Africa's expert mine rescue company, Mines Rescue Services (MRS), told *BizNews* that the illegal miners who were rescued from an abandoned mineshaft in Stilfontein are likely to return, because there are still high-grade gold deposits in the disused mine and there is money to be made. MRS saved 246 illegal miners (zama-zamas) after a court ordered a rescue mission. Police had shut off food supplies as part of a government-planned crackdown on illegal mining in a months-long standoff in which hundreds of miners were stranded 1,280 metres underground. They were eventually hoisted up over several days using a unique mobile rescue winder capable of operating in vertical shafts up to 3,000 metres deep.

22 January: The governments of Angola, Zambia and the DRC established the headquarters of the Lobito Corridor Transit Transport Secretariat in Lobito, Angola to oversee their ambitious joint infrastructure project. Investments in new railways between the Lobito port and mines far inland will reduce transit times and logistical costs, enhancing Africa's competitive position in the global market and serving as a catalyst for intra-African trade. The Angolan transport minister, Ricardo Viegas de Abreu, commended the United States, the European Union, Italy and the United Kingdom for their support.

15 January: Frelimo candidate Daniel Chapo was sworn in as president of Mozambique following the blatantly rigged and fraudulent 2024 presidential election. Frelimo is the long-ruling governing party.

7 January 2025: John Mahama was sworn in as president of Ghana, in an election in Africa that dislodged an unpopular incumbent in a democratic poll. However Mahama is not exactly a breath of fresh air. It is his third time as President. Ghana faces its worst economic crisis in a generation, accompanied by corruption and unemployment.



"... the Africa we aspire to — a continent that is integrated, prosperous and peaceful — is within our reach." John Mahama, President of Ghana, speaking at the African Union Commission Headquarters, 16 February 2025.

2024

28 December: The “Mama Jasiri” (strong woman in Swahili) Project was inaugurated in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to promote education and employment for women. This development project, which established a workshop to produce and sell products woven out of sisal fibres, is supported by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) Türkiye has 44 embassies in African countries, up from 12 in 2008.



Türkiye’s Ambassador to Tanzania, Dr Mehmet Güllüoğlu, (fourth from the left) opened the “Mama Jasiri” Education and Production Workshop.



15 December: Leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) formally noted the withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from Africa's most developed regional trade bloc, which was founded in 1975. The three countries are run by military juntas who gave notice of their intention in January 2024, after refusing a demand that they each restore democratic rule. They formed their own regional Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in July 2024. Ecowas gave the three countries a six-month grace period from 29 January 2025 (when their membership ended), to reconsider their decision.

6 December: Attiéké, a food produced by the lagoon peoples of Côte d'Ivoire, was recognised by Unesco as part of "the intangible cultural heritage of humanity". The dish is made from steamed semolina which is produced by grinding and mixing cassava tubers grown and harvested in the area with fermented cassava. The Portuguese introduced cassava (manioc) to Africa from Brazil in the 16th century, along with maize. The introduction of these crops amounted to an agricultural revolution in Africa. Sadly, any benefits to the indigenous economy of Africa were discounted by the demands and disruptions resulting from the slave trade.

4 December: Environmental activists celebrated a South African high court ruling that the government's decision to authorise production of an additional 1,500 megawatts of new coal-fired power is inconsistent with the Constitution. The judge found that the Minister of Mineral Resources and the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa) failed to adequately consider the impact of new coal power on citizens' constitutional rights, particularly those of children.

2 December: Joe Biden became the first American president to visit Angola and the first to visit sub-Saharan Africa since 2015. President Trump was expected to visit South Africa in 2025, to attend the G20 summit, but he has said he will not attend.

2 December: The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri), a Swedish think-tank, reported that not one of the world's 100 largest arms producers has their headquarters in Africa. Despite all the wars, coups and conflicts in Africa, military expenditure on the continent totalled a mere US\$51.6 billion in 2023 - 2.1% of the world total. The combined arms revenues of the world's largest arms-producing and military services companies (the Sipri Top 100) reached US\$632 billion. Arms are used extensively in Africa but, largely, are manufactured elsewhere.