



(An outbreak of Ebola that has claimed more than 8,400 lives in West Africa appears to be slowing down, though the battle to contain the disease is not over, the U.N. special envoy on Ebola said on Thursday.)

BURUNDI :

Remous autour de la tombe vide du roi du Burundi

15.01.2015/tdg.ch

Justice genevoise Le Burundi veut récupérer la dépouille du monarque. Sa nièce s'y oppose mais laisse une porte entrouverte.

L'affaire de la tombe de l'ex-roi du Burundi continue à déchirer sa famille. Alors que la dépouille du défunt monarque, exhumée en 2012 du cimetière de Feuillasse, à Meyrin, se trouve toujours bloquée aux pompes funèbres de la maison Murith, un procès pénal et civil a lieu à son sujet (notre édition du 9 janvier).

Une partie de sa famille (fille, petite-fille, fille d'une de ses épouses) estime que ses restes doivent être rapatriés au pays pour des funérailles nationales. Une autre (sa nièce) s'y oppose, considérant que, dans son testament, Mwambutsa IV, mort en 1977, a très clairement souligné qu'il voulait reposer à Genève, ville où il a passé les dernières années de sa vie d'exilé, et nulle part ailleurs.

Mais les vraies raisons du refus de la nièce du roi seraient à chercher ailleurs, indique une petite-fille du monarque défunt, qui a témoigné le 8 janvier devant le Tribunal de police. Sa tante chercherait à se faire valoir et élire en 2015 au Burundi. Me Vincent Spira, avocat sur le plan civil de cette nièce, la princesse Kamatari, réagit: «Ma cliente n'est candidate à aucune élection au

Burundi. Elle ne fait de la politique qu'en France, où elle est élue municipale UMP à Boulogne-Billancourt.» Pourtant, Me Alain Marti, avocat d'une autre personne de la famille de Mwambutsa IV et du gouvernement actuel du Burundi, persiste: la princesse veut s'impliquer dans les prochaines élections au Burundi, elle le dit dans la presse.

La princesse Kamatari est la seule personne de la famille royale ayant gardé des contacts avec son oncle jusqu'à la fin de sa vie, poursuit Me Spira. Elle venait le voir régulièrement à Genève, où il vivait avec sa compagne. Et elle a été «très choquée» par l'exhumation du roi. Elle ne veut pas de récupération politique par le gouvernement du Burundi.

Ne serait-elle pas satisfaite que son oncle soit honoré et fasse l'objet de funérailles nationales dans son pays? Elle n'y croit pas vraiment. «Elle sait qu'on a prévu de l'enterrer dans un terrain vague jouxtant un camp militaire, décrit Me Spira. Un lieu à l'écart, un lieu d'oubli. Où sont les honneurs promis?»

Interrogé sur ce point, Me Marti, qui a vu des photos du monument devant être érigé en l'honneur de Sa Majesté royale, le trouve «plutôt somptueux». Mais il précise que l'emplacement de la tombe pourrait changer. «Si nous étions certains que ce monarque, dont la famille a été massacrée et exilée, sera réhabilité et honoré dans son pays, qu'il aura des funérailles nationales et sera enterré dans un endroit digne de lui, nous pourrions peut-être entrer en discussion», conclut Me Spira.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa's 'ghost boy' tells of waking from coma but finding himself trapped

By Aislinn Laing/telegraph.co.uk/15 Jan 2015

Martin Pistorius spent eight years awake but unable to communicate with his family or medics, forced to watch Barney, the children's TV show, reruns

A South African man who spent eight years fully conscious but locked inside his body by a virtual coma has told how his lowest point came when his mother told him: "I hope you die".

Martin Pistorius's body began to shut down when he was 12 years old. His teachers sent him home from school with flu-like symptoms and within two years, he stopped eating, moving and thinking.

His parents bathed and dressed him each day and turned him every few hours to avoid bedsores. Doctors eventually diagnosed him with cryptococcal meningitis and said he should be kept comfortable until he died.

Joan Pistorius, his mother, was so devastated she attempted suicide. She told America's National Public Radio in a documentary, *Invisibilia*, that she told her son he should go.

"I know that's a horrible thing to say. I just wanted some sort of relief," she said. But around the age of 16, unbeknown to his family or medics, Martin Pistorius had begun to wake up. He would spend the next eight years trying to get those around him to realise.

His family continued their lives around him, going on holiday with his siblings but always returning to his bedside. Nelson Mandela became South Africa's president, Princess Diana died in a car crash - Mr Pistorius was aware of these events but unable to communicate about them.

"Everyone was so used to me not being there that they didn't notice when I began to be present again," Mr Pistorius, who wrote a book entitled, *Ghost Boy*, about his experience, told NPR.

"The stark reality hit me that I was going to spend the rest of my life like that - totally alone. It's a very dark place to find yourself because, in a sense, you are allowing yourself to vanish." His mother's words to him were his lowest point, he said.

"Every time she looked at me, she could see only a cruel parody of the once-healthy child she had loved so much." The turning point came, he said, because of his desperation to escape the daily reruns of *Barney*, the children's television programme about a purple dinosaur, in front of which he was placed by staff at the care home where he spent his days.

"I cannot even express to you how much I hated *Barney*," Mr Pistorius told NPR.

He taught himself to tell the time by the sun so he could work out when he would be able to escape from the cartoon marathon.

Eventually, when he was 25, one of the therapists that worked with him picked up on his almost imperceptible smiles and nods, and asked for him to be referred for further tests.

"Happiness surged through me. I was Muhammad Ali, John McEnroe, Fred Trueman. Crowds roared their approval as I took a lap of honour," Mr Pistorius said.

In the years that followed, Mr Pistorius learned to use a computer to communicate, taught himself to read and write and trained as a web designer.

In 2008, he met his wife Joanna, a social worker living in the UK, and fell in love.

"I'd experienced love as a boy and man, as a son, brother, grandson and friend, I'd seen it between others and I know it could sustain us through the darkest of times," he said. "Now it was lifting me closer to the sun than I ever thought I would fly."

Today, the couple live in Harlow, Essex and Mr Pistorius speaks through a voice synthesiser and moves in a wheelchair.

South Africa power blackouts problematic for ANC as poor claim unfair targeting

By Geoff Hill - Special to The Washington Times/Thursday, January 15, 2015

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — As schools reopen here in the coming days after the Christmas break, South Africans are braced for a surge in the power cuts that have plagued the country since early December, and the rolling blackouts could spell trouble for the ruling African National Congress at the ballot box.

During the week, schools, factories and offices will move to full capacity, drawing on an already-fragile national grid. And in the heat of the Southern Hemisphere summer, air conditioners will be turned on full blast.

A state-owned company, ESKOM, has the monopoly to produce more than 95 percent of the nation's electricity but, since 2008, a lack of maintenance and delays in opening new plants have led to a growing gap in supply. Last week large swaths of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and the capital Pretoria were left in the dark as ESKOM cut transmission for hours at a time to prevent a collapse of its network.

Residents in poorer areas, a constituency likely to be fiercely contested in upcoming elections, claim they have been unfairly targeted.

“Our lights go off for many hours, sometimes all night,” said Charlotte Ngwenya at Olivenhout, a sprawling settlement with hundreds of wood-and-iron shacks halfway down the 40-mile highway between Pretoria and the commercial base of Johannesburg. “People are poor here, and no one cares if we are in the dark,” she said.

Mrs. Ngwenya works as a cleaner in the plush suburb of Waterkloof north of Pretoria, where diplomats and government ministers enjoy large homes with lawns and swimming pools.

“In Waterkloof, the lights can go off for a short time, but it's not often,” she said.

ESKOM insists the cuts are done fairly and without targeting any population group.

Polls suggest the ruling African National Congress is less popular than at any time since former President Nelson Mandela led the party to power in 1994. With municipal elections due in 2016, analysts say the ANC could lose Johannesburg and Pretoria to the opposition Democratic Alliance, which, in 2011, won the city of Cape Town and increased its number of councilors in towns across the country.

The business community is also weighing in on ESKOM's woes. Vusi Khumalo, president of the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said Wednesday that companies are “gravely concerned about the [perilous] situation in which ESKOM finds itself.” Many heavy industrial customers of ESKOM say they have been struggling to cut their own energy demands in recent years, and even brief power outages can translate into major delays for mine and factory operators.

“The potential impacts that [the blackouts] will have on business, business confidence and consumers alike is inestimable,” Mr. Khumalo warned in a statement.

Seeking subsidies

ESKOM has asked the government for a \$4.3 billion subsidy to help deal with the demand, but Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene — who presents his budget to Parliament next month — said a

government handout is not the answer.

“We are extremely concerned with what is happening at ESKOM,” he told reporters, adding that he expected the state-owned entity to be run on business lines, “generating a profit through sales.”

But with several of its coal-fired plants undergoing maintenance, ESKOM can only meet the demand via a diesel backup system that generates power at four times the sale price — a price that is capped by legislation.

On Jan. 9, Public Enterprises Minister Lynne Brown warned that, if the cost-price mismatch continues, “ESKOM will run out of money by the end of January.”

The government hopes to change the law so that private investors can generate power and sell it via the national grid, though the move is opposed by unions, who would rather see essentials such as water and electricity in public hands.

And while South Africa enjoys an average level of sunshine comparable with Texas, solar cells are expensive, and panels are subject to import duties and sales taxes. However, in poor areas, the government provides families with free solar geysers for hot water.

ESKOM is not the only state enterprise in arrears. Industrial unrest shut down the post office for much of 2014, leaving it short of income, while South African Airways has run up debts of around \$1.5 billion.

SAA flies the world’s longest nonstop route, between Johannesburg and Washington’s Dulles airport, but the state-owned carrier’s level of debt has left it unable to purchase a new and more fuel-efficient fleet of planes.

President Jacob Zuma is expected to include ESKOM and SAA in his state-of-the-nation address in February, but a small opposition party that favors even greater state control of the economy has threatened to disrupt the speech.

The radical Economic Freedom Fighters, led by Julius Malema, won 6 percent of the vote in last year’s general election, running on a platform of nationalizing banks, mines and land.

Mr. Malema has been vocal in demanding that President Zuma return some of the \$2.3 million in state money used to upgrade his private home. A recent debate in Parliament was abandoned when EFF members chanted at the president, “Pay back the money.” The protesters say they plan a repeat next month unless Mr. Zuma explains how and when he intends to reimburse the treasury.

The EFF claims much of the failure at entities like ESKOM is due to government corruption and mismanagement.

South Africa already has one nuclear power station, with plans for eight more at a cost of \$50 billion, though a proposal for bids has yet to be announced.

Meanwhile, ESKOM has turned to local radio, Twitter and Facebook in a bid to encourage South Africans to limit consumption and ease the strain on the power grid — including a suggestion that customers turn off their swimming pool filters at night.

But in Olivenhout, Mrs. Ngwenya said that only shows how out of touch the government has become.

“Most people who live near me are unemployed,” she said. “Our kids don’t have enough to eat, and ESKOM talks about swimming pools. They only worry about the rich and, when power is short, they just cut us off.”

South Africa's Foschini buys Britain's Phase Eight

Fri Jan 16, 2015/Reuters

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - South Africa's Foschini Group said on Friday it had bought the holding company of British retailer Phase Eight for 238 million pounds (\$361 million), a deal that gives it access to European markets.

"The Foschini Group announces it has entered into an agreement to acquire 85 percent of Poppy Holdco Limited, which trades as Phase Eight," the company said in a statement.

(\$1 = 0.6587 pounds)

Papers in Kenya and South Africa Say Sorry for Running Charlie Hebdo Cover

David Stout @david_m_stout/time.com/Jan. 15, 2015

Reprinting triggered an uproar from Islamic communities

Kenya's the Star and South Africa's the Citizen issued apologies this week for reprinting the controversial new cover of Charlie Hebdo, after publication triggered an uproar from Muslim readers.

“The Star sincerely regrets any offense and pain caused by the picture and we will bear Muslim sensibilities in mind in the future,” read a statement from the Kenyan paper.

The country's media regulator reportedly summoned the Star's owner after levying accusations that the paper published indecent images and had acted in an unprofessional manner, according to the BBC.

Earlier this week, editors at the Citizen claimed the publication of the cover had been an “oversight” and was not fueled by malicious intent.

“The Citizen would never intentionally offend anyone's religious sensibilities, especially in the manner used by Charlie Hebdo magazine, several of whose staff members were murdered last week,” read an editorial published online.

The cover of the first issue of Charlie Hebdo since gunmen went on a shooting spree in its Paris offices earlier this month shows an illustration of Muhammad with a sign saying, “I Am Charlie.” The headline reads: “All Is Forgiven.”

The issue of whether to run or not run the cover has spurred a furious debate among media outlets over whether the printing of images of the Prophet, which most Muslims find offensive, is justifiable.

TANZANIA :

Telecoms Firm Tigo Tanzania To Launch Streaming Music Service

January 15, 2015/afkinsider.com

East African telco Tigo Tanzania has announced the launch of a music streaming service that will provide Tigo customers access to over 36 million songs.

According to a statement Tigo Music provides access to unlimited music to customer's smartphones and was formed in partnership with Deezer. Tigo brand manager, William Mpinga said through pre-paid data bundles from January 24, Tigo customers will be able to access more than 36 million tracks, including African and Tanzanian artists.

Mpinga added that Tigo would also be sourcing new and local content through a new venture with the digital music company, Africa Music Rights, which funds, acquires and manages music rights across the African continent.

In the statement Mpinga said Tigo Music would allow local artists the opportunity to earn extra payment from their songs listened to through the service.

KENYA :

Four hours of outage disrupts services, power restored countrywide

By Standard Reporter/Friday, January 16th 2015

Nairobi, Kenya: A major power blackout hit the country early Friday morning following technical hitches at the Kenya Power stations.

West Kenya and North Rift Regions were, however, not affected by the blackout as they were on supply from Turkwel, Sondu and Sang'oro power stations and from Uganda. The outage affected some police operations that rely on power supply. Some hospitals that do not have standby power supply were also affected. A big section of Nairobi region and its environs was hit by the blackout causing outrage among residents who woke up to darkness. Some of the took to twitter to air their views:

"@Maxonairo: Blackouts have become so common in Kenya, it's like someone is always playing with that ON/OFF switch. @ KenyaPower" "@hmmuigai: If you dint experience a power outage this morning at around 4am, you don't live in Kenya." "@odhiso88: @ KenyaPower how can we be in darkness for 24hrs? Are you people serious?" "@Robert_Lunalo: I don't blame @ KenyaPower. They're doing their job. If you have enough resources to give them competition please do. We need better service." "Kenya Power had by 7:50am, restored power supply to all parts of the country following the partial national blackout that occurred at 3:39am," said Kenya Power in a statement. The power supplier said the partial blackout was due to a major system disturbance on the Olkaria-Nairobi 220kV transmission line and that the cause of disturbance was being investigated. Kenya Power said that at the time of the outage, the Olkaria line was carrying 63 percent equivalent to 540MW of demand at the time. Power blackouts have been persistent in the past weeks, affecting business

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Ebola outbreak 'slowing down' in West Africa

15 Jan 2015/Source:Reuters

UN special envoy says there has been a significant drop in the number of cases after locals adopted safer practices.

An outbreak of Ebola that has claimed more than 8,400 lives in West Africa appears to be slowing down, though the battle to contain the disease is not over, the UN special envoy on the virus has said.

"The change in behaviour that we've been hoping for, working for, anticipating, is now happening everywhere," Dr David Nabarro told Reuters news agency in an interview on Thursday.

"The facilities to treat people are available everywhere," he said. "Safe burial teams are providing safe and dignified burial services everywhere and the result is that we're seeing the beginnings of the outbreak slowing down."

The worst epidemic of the virus on record has infected about 21,200 people in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea since it was detected in March, according to the World Health Organisation.

The government of Liberia said earlier on Thursday that it could be free of the virus by the end of next month after success in curbing transmission.

It said the country had only 10 confirmed Ebola cases as of January 12.

"It's an incredible drop," Nabarro said, adding that he believed the Liberian figures were "absolutely correct."

Nabarro described "a remarkable collective change in patterns of behaviour" and said Liberia had "come to terms with the reality that the outbreak of Ebola is being driven by the way in which people behave."

More than 3,500 of the 8,400 dead were from Liberia.

The hemorrhagic fever is spread through contact with bodily fluids of infected people or the highly contagious body of someone who has died of the virus. Nabarro said burial practices that involved people touching and cleaning bodies of Ebola victims had helped fuel the outbreak.

"Death-related practices in the region had been responsible for a quite dramatic spread of the virus," said Nabarro. He said that as people realised the dangers they adopted safer behaviour that led to a drop in infections.

The three hardest-hit countries now have the capacity to quickly set up mobile centres to handle localised outbreaks.

"Those who are involved in the response have worked out that they can organise rapid mobile responses in case there's a flare up anywhere, so they can set up small temporary treatment facilities wherever they are needed," Nabarro said.

He said that the support of the US, British and French military, which built treatment centres in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, had also played a crucial role in containment efforts.

Africa lacks vision in fight against terror

16 Jan 2015/Martin Ewi/mg.co.za

The continent's leaders have not shown enough commitment to combating the scourge.

It has now become fashionable, each time a terrorist attack occurs in Europe or America, for Africans to make comparative analyses between European and African responses, often accusing the former of indifference.

After the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing in which three people perished, many were furious over the media attention the incident received compared with the much more deadly attack in Baga, a remote northeastern city in Nigeria, where Boko Haram militants massacred 260 people in a ferocious shoot-out with government security forces but which did not make front-page news in the global media.

Last week this debate resurfaced as several people interrogated the swift and frenzied international response to the Paris killings while a deadlier massacre in Baga was ignored.

Questions have been raised over the controversial participation of African presidents in the Paris unity march against terrorism.

The contrast between the media's response to the two incidents has fomented sentiments of double standards. The editor of a Cameroonian website, Cameroononline, kicked up a storm when he said that, since the life of a European is worth more than that of the African, he as an African cannot become "Charlie" – the slogan used to show solidarity with Charlie Hebdo, the satirical French weekly newspaper whose staff were killed in cold blood last week.

In my view, no matter how genuine the claim of double standards may be, it distracts us from fully comprehending the real challenge that we face in combating terrorism in Africa.

Problem lies with Africans

We may blame Europe and the United States for not supporting Africa, but the problem lies with Africans. African leaders have not demonstrated enough commitment to the business of combating terrorism. This, among other reasons, contributes to how outsiders treat us and why terrorism continues to devour our communities.

As Africans, we seem misled by the altruistic belief that others will genuinely act in our own interests, while failing to understand that the world is governed by selfish human nature and that each person is the master of his or her own destiny. Europe will only help us if it is for its self-interest and convenience.

Terrorism has never been given serious consideration by our leaders and complacent populace.

When the US called for a global war against terrorism at the dawn of the new millennium, our leaders resented and rejected it as a Western-imposed agenda to distract us from our core objective of development.

By turning our backs on terrorism, under the false pretext of development, we invited terrorists and gave them refuge in our backyards.

There is also the problem of the failure to act in solidarity in the fight against terror on the continent. How many African countries have provided moral and political support – not to mention military and other material – to Nigeria and Cameroon or to other African countries such as Kenya, Sudan, Algeria, Libya and Egypt, which are all facing terrorism in one form or another.

That record of support is shambolic and shameful. It was France that helped put together a coalition, made up of neighbouring countries to fight Boko Haram, by hosting a summit in Paris. There is no culture of collective security in Africa.

We cannot help ourselves but we want others to help us. We wait all the time for Europe to take the initiative for us before we put together an intervention force under the rubric of peacekeeping, which often comes too late and too insignificant to make an impact. When it suits us we cry for African solutions to African problems but if it is to blame, we point fingers at Europe.

The attitude of our leaders is also shameful. To understand why the world responded swiftly and decisively to the Paris attacks and not to the Baga attacks, one needs to compare the attitudes of the two presidents of Nigeria and France. President Goodluck Jonathan did not immediately condemn the Baga attacks or visit the tragic scene or even mobilise his countrymen to condemn the attacks. How then can the international community respond or show solidarity? It is like asking a stranger at a funeral to cry more than the bereaved.

Jonathan's attitude reflects the nonchalant approach to terrorism in Africa and the ambivalence with which our leaders treat the issue.

On the other hand, French President François Hollande was quick to portray the Paris attacks as an assault on all French people, their jealously guarded liberty and freedoms – the key defining elements of the French way of life, culture and identity as a nation.

The attacks were projected as not merely attacks on the weekly newspaper and a Jewish supermarket, but attacks on France as a nation, thus turning them into a national tragedy.

Fighting terrorism in Africa

While the president and his government were busy mobilising their peers in other countries and strategising the French response to the attacks, the French people did not sit and wait for their government to come and tell them what to do. They took to the streets, orchestrating the largest people's protest in French history. As a result, European leaders, the world media and the international community as a whole responded in a befitting manner. How then do we expect same reaction for Baga?

The Paris terrorist attacks have exposed huge gaps in Africa's efforts to fight terrorism.

The response of the global media and the international community at large to incidents of terror is often dependent on the response of the nation under attack.

After the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2013, which killed at least 67

people, the nation, led by President Uhuru Kenyatta, rose united to condemn the killings. This also resulted in extensive coverage of the attack by the global media.

When Nigerians took to the streets en masse to protest against the kidnapping of young Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram in April 2014, the international community came out in full support of Nigeria's efforts. The global media also accorded priority to the issue for nearly a month.

These examples seriously undermine the claim of double standards. What this tells us is that we as Africans must first play our part before expecting others to play theirs.

Fight terror with revolution

16 Jan 2015/Shadrack Gutto/mg.co.za

Boko Haram's brutal attacks must spur the continent to action.

In 2008 I attended the African Peer Review Mechanism in Borno State, Nigeria. During that time I experienced the part of the country that is currently under siege by Boko Haram.

I have felt pain in my heart at the ongoing atrocities committed by Boko Haram, especially since the barbaric kidnapping of the 200 girl children from school in 2013.

One cannot help but ask where the leadership is in the federal and state governments, religious formations, media and communities, and from the intellectuals in the area where these atrocities are taking place.

The killings are happening in the same country that, in 2013, overtook South Africa as the largest economy in Africa. What is surprising is that ordinary Nigerians are being terrorised and criminally abused in a country that was the bulwark of the Economic Community of West African States monitoring and observation group that contributed significantly to the defeat of the terrorists in Sierra Leone – the Revolutionary United Front – that were assisted by Charles Taylor's tyrannical regime in Liberia and a network of international illegal diamond traders.

In the wake of the attacks, many have wondered why leadership and statehood in Nigeria is apparently getting weaker despite the country going through the motions of holding regular elections in at least the last two and a half decades? Military barracks are being overrun by the rebels and soldiers desert frequently.

One problem lies in Boko Haram developing beyond just being a Nigerian phenomenon to a cross-border contagion that operates in several neighbouring countries including Cameroon and Chad.

It also needs to be appreciated that formations such as Boko Haram and the manner of their operations are not new in Africa. They are akin to the externally-supported military destabilisation that countries such as Angola and Mozambique experienced. They are also reminiscent of other destabilisation activities that involved the use of mercenaries.

One of the central questions that need to be asked is who is funding, training and arming Boko Haram? There appears to be little or no effort focused on tracking the sources of the arms and other hardware used by Boko Haram. The militaries of Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon must be better integrated with their police and military intelligence. Communities on the ground must also form part of military intelligence in armed conflict situations.

Boko Haram's stated objectives are twofold: secede from Nigeria and create a theocratic Islamic "caliphate" in the northeastern part of the country, which may extend to parts of Niger and Cameroon.

This alone should awaken leaders in Africa and spur them to take collective action against Boko Haram in line with the provisions of the Constitutive Act of the African Union as war crimes and crimes against humanity are being committed at random by Boko Haram.

Internationally, the crimes being committed by the terror that is Boko Haram also ought also to be addressed by Nigeria and the international community as they are covered by a number of international treaties or agreements, among them the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions.

It is only this week that the chairperson of the AU Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, issued a statement condemning the atrocities being carried out by Boko Haram and promising action.

But this is rather late in the day because many months have passed since Boko Haram's kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls who have yet to be rescued. The Peace and Security Council of the AU should have acted much earlier.

A lot is being said about the discrepancy between the lukewarm responses of African leaders to the atrocities being committed by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the vocal and vigorous outrage following the recent horrific killing of 17 people by terrorists in France.

The difference says a lot about us as Africans and how we still view ourselves as less valuable than our former colonisers. Colonialism, including its apartheid variant, was not just about political domination; it was political, economic, social, cultural, spiritual and mental. It will take generations to undo. This is the agenda for Africa's renaissance.

The same applies to the former colonisers. As long as Africa and Africans have no political and real economic power, and as long as we continue to imitate our former colonisers in ways of thinking and doing things, they will continue to regard themselves as superior to us. The false consciousness of superiority was ingrained in them from the time they enslaved us and then colonised us. There is need for holistic and multidimensional revolution.

Boko Haram Attacks in Nigeria Weigh on Rating, Moody's Says

By Rene Vollgraaff/businessweek.com /January 16, 2015

Attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria are adding pressure to the nation's credit rating as plunging oil prices undermine growth in Africa's largest economy, according to Moody's Investors Service.

The violence may be "weighing on investor demand for Nigerian assets at the moment," Matt Robinson, manager of the Africa sovereign ratings team at Moody's, said by phone from London yesterday. "We're certainly seeing pressure on the currency, we're seeing pressure on Nigeria's bond prices, so it's one of an array of downside risks."

Nigeria, Africa's biggest oil producer and most populous nation of more than 170 million people, will hold elections next month in the face of increasing violence by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram. Its attacks during a six-year campaign to impose Islamic law in the country has led to the deaths of more than 13,000 people, according to the government.

Moody's rates Nigeria's debt at Ba3, the three levels below investment grade, with a stable outlook.

A halving in the oil price since June last year has undermined Nigeria's economic outlook, weighing on the nation's credit rating quality, Robinson said. Windfall gains from higher oil prices in previous years weren't necessarily saved in the sovereign wealth fund, he said.

Oil accounts for 75 percent of government revenue in Nigeria. The central bank devalued the currency for the first time in three years in November as foreign-currency reserves declined. The naira has fallen 14 percent against the dollar on the interbank market since the start of last year and was trading at 185.65 as of 8:30 a.m. in Lagos, the commercial capital.

"The extent to which we see the precipitous decline in oil prices will dampen growth prospects" in Nigeria, and other crude producers, including Angola and Gabon, and put pressure on public finances, he said.

Financing the budget deficit in Nigeria is easier than in some other African oil producers because the government has a deeper domestic market to tap, Robinson said.

International force mulled to fight Boko Haram in Nigeria

Thursday, January 15, 2015/Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — As Islamic militants from Boko Haram step up attacks in Nigeria that have led to the slaughter of more civilians, there is increasing talk that international military action, possibly including a multinational force, may be needed to help crush the insurgency in Africa's most populous country.

The debate has taken on new urgency since Jan. 3, when Boko Haram extremists swept into the northeastern town of Baga in Borno state, overran a military base and, according to witnesses, killed hundreds of civilians in the days that followed. It was one of the most brazen assaults since militants kidnapped nearly 300 girls last year, setting off an international outcry.

Amnesty International has released satellite images showing widespread destruction — with about 3,700 structures damaged or destroyed — but the horrifying picture of the attack is incomplete because aid workers, journalists and others cannot reach the Boko Haram-controlled area. Extremists, who encountered resistance from civilian militias in Baga, systematically slaughtered civilians in what analysts believe was retaliation for their defiance.

Boko Haram's message, according to analyst Matthew Henman, was: "If you organize these militias against us, this is the response that you will receive."

President Goodluck Jonathan, who is running for re-election next month, visited Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, on Thursday in his first trip to the northeast since a state of emergency was imposed in May 2014.

His office said in a statement that he met with troops involved in fighting the extremists as part of his "surprise visit." He also visited hundreds of civilians who were staying in a camp in Maiduguri after fleeing Baga.

Nigeria's neighbors are already being shaken by Boko Haram's territorial expansion. Niger, Chad and Cameroon have seen flows of refugees into their countries. In the case of Cameroon, there even have been some cross-border attacks.

Boko Haram is believed to funnel fighters and equipment across borders; previously, a multinational garrison in Baga was tasked with thwarting frontier smuggling and, increasingly, the activities of Islamic insurgents.

"It's a double win" for Boko Haram, which now has greater border mobility and has stripped its military opponents of an important outpost, said Henman, manager of IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre in London. He said the Nigerian extremists are likely aware of the gains in Iraq and Syria by the Islamic State group, and may "see similar potential for themselves."

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said he and British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond discussed a special initiative to deal with Boko Haram, but he did not elaborate.

Speaking in Sofia, Bulgaria, Kerry said Boko Haram is "without question one of the most evil and threatening terrorist entities on the planet," and that the killing in northeastern Nigeria is a "crime against humanity" and must be addressed.

The United States and other countries offered training and other assistance to the Nigerian military after Boko Haram seized 276 girls from a boarding school in April, but most of them remain missing.

The deployment of a multinational force to fight Boko Haram does not appear imminent and would take considerable political will, in addition to needing a green light from a Nigerian government that has appeared leery at times of perceived foreign meddling. However, a United Nations official said Wednesday there will be a meeting Jan. 20 in Niger's capital, Niamey, to explore the idea of a regional force to confront Nigeria's militants.

Neighboring governments are reportedly talking about sending about 3,000 troops to the West African nation, with a mandate to recover territory from Boko Haram, the U.N. official said on condition of anonymity because the diplomat was not authorized to disclose private discussions. The operation would be supported by the African Union and potentially "blessed" by the U.N. Security Council, the official said at U.N. headquarters in New York.

Regional leaders pledged to cooperate against Boko Haram at an October meeting in Niger.

There are precedents for military intervention in African conflicts. In 2013, France sent troops to battle Islamic insurgents in Mali after the government there asked for help. African Union troops have retaken territory from al-Shabab fighters in Somalia in past years.

Nigeria's conflict has been seen in some circles as a local problem, keeping it relatively low on the international agenda. Its military has struggled with corruption, low morale, equipment shortages and allegations of human rights violations. Jonathan has played down the fight with Boko Haram in his campaign for re-election.

Any nations that send forces to Nigeria would do so after deciding it is in their self-interest, said Jens David Ohlin, a professor at Cornell Law School in the United States. Nigeria, he said, faces the "classic conundrum" of a nation that needs help but worries intervention will threaten its sovereignty.

"In a situation like this, there has to be some kind of international response," Ohlin said. "That's the only way to stop it."

UN/AFRICA :

Ebola outbreak in West Africa appears to be slowing down: U.N.

By Louis Charbonneau and Michelle Nichols/Reuters/Thu Jan 15, 2015

UNITED NATIONS

(Reuters) - An outbreak of Ebola that has claimed more than 8,400 lives in West Africa appears to be slowing down, though the battle to contain the disease is not over, the U.N. special envoy on Ebola said on Thursday.

"The change in behavior that we've been hoping for, working for, anticipating, is now happening everywhere," Dr. David Nabarro told Reuters in an interview.

"The facilities to treat people are available everywhere," he said. "Safe burial teams are providing safe and dignified burial services everywhere and the result is that we're seeing the beginnings of the outbreak slowing down."

Nabarro declined to predict when the outbreak of the virus could be definitively over.

The hemorrhagic fever is spread through contact with bodily fluids of infected people or the highly contagious body of someone who has died of the virus. Nabarro said burial practices that involved people touching and cleaning bodies of Ebola victims had helped fuel the outbreak.

The worst Ebola outbreak on record infected about 21,200 people in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea since it was detected in March, according to the World Health Organization.

The government of Liberia said earlier on Thursday that it could be free of the virus by the end of next month after success in curbing transmission. It said the country had only 10 confirmed Ebola cases as of Jan. 12.

"It's an incredible drop," Nabarro said, adding that he believed the Liberian figures were "absolutely correct." Nabarro described "a remarkable collective change in patterns of behavior" and said Liberia had "come to terms with the reality that the outbreak of Ebola is being driven by the way in which people behave."

More than 3,500 of the 8,400 dead were from Liberia.

Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea now have capacity to quickly set up mobile centers to handle localized outbreaks.

"Those who are involved in the response have worked out that they can organize rapid mobile responses in case there's a flare up anywhere, so they can set up small temporary treatment facilities wherever they are needed," Nabarro said.

He said the U.S., British and French military, which built treatment centers, had played a crucial role.

"This external help was absolutely vital in bolstering and supporting the capacity of the people in

the country to make the changes," Nabarro said, adding that "much of the external help came from within Africa."

Asked about lessons to be taken and suggestions that the WHO had been slow in sounding an alarm about Ebola, Nabarro said: "I hope that the result of this epidemic and the investigations done ... will better enable us to work out the way in which to predict" an outbreak.

Chinese battalion to be deployed to Juba – UN

by: APA/date : January 16, 2015

700 Chinese peacekeepers will be deployed to the South Sudanese capital Juba, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) announced on Thursday. UNMISS said in a statement that a battalion of Chinese peacekeeping troops expected to deploy this month will be stationed in the capital.

The Chinese battalion will be responsible for protecting the civilian population in Juba especially those living near the UN compound.

They will be carrying out patrols in and around Juba, escorting humanitarian relief supplies, and guarding UN assets.

It will be the first ever deployment of Chinese troops under a UN peacekeeping mission.

About 350 Chinese engineers, medical workers, and other non-combat personnel already serve in the UNMISS base in Wau, Western Bahr al Ghazal State, according to the statement.

The Chinese soldiers' presence are part of an upsurge in peacekeeping troops which now numbers 12,500 which was authorized by the UN Security Council in December 2013 shortly after the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan.

A few days ago, the Chinese government sponsored a peace conference on South Sudan in Khartoum, Sudan during which both sides recommitted themselves to a ceasefire following weeks of renewed hostilities.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

Australian nurse treating Ebola patients in west Africa airlifted to UK

Daniel Hurst/theguardian.com/Friday 16 January 2015

An Australian nurse has been airlifted out after an incident while treating Ebola patients in Sierra Leone

An Australian nurse has been airlifted to Britain after an incident while treating Ebola patients in west Africa.

Foreign affairs officials said the nurse had not been diagnosed with Ebola, but was transferred from Sierra Leone as a precautionary measure.

The nurse was working at a treatment centre funded by the Australian government.

Australia's foreign affairs minister, Julie Bishop, said the transfer was triggered by "a low-risk clinical incident" and the nurse would now undergo a 21-day observation period in the UK.

"The nurse was transferred to the UK consistent with the guarantees secured by the Australian government as a condition to establishing the treatment centre," she said.

"The Australian-funded Ebola treatment centre has strict infection prevention protocols in place, and the safety of staff and patients is paramount."

The government announced in November it would provide \$20m for a private company, Aspen Medical, to run the UK-built medical centre in Sierra Leone – one of the countries worst affected by the Ebola outbreak.

The 100-bed facility is at Hastings Airfield, close to the capital Freetown.

In late November, 17 health workers left Australia to make their way to the treatment centre.

Australia sent a second group of workers when the centre opened in mid-December.

At the time the government said the clinic had begun operation with five beds "in line with best practice" and would gradually scale up to full capacity of 100 beds.

It would operate "under strict guidelines to ensure infection control procedures are working effectively and trained staff and safety practices are in place".

Bishop said on Friday the centre was currently operating at a capacity of 38 beds, which would likely rise to 50 by early February. She said 18 patients had recovered and been discharged.

EU/AFRICA :

Le corps du touriste français décapité en Algérie a été retrouvé
15.01.2015/RTS.ch

L'armée algérienne a retrouvé la dépouille du Français Hervé Gourdel, qui avait été enlevé puis décapité en septembre par des djihadistes alors qu'il randonnait en Algérie.

Le corps du touriste français Hervé Gourdel a été retrouvé par l'armée algérienne près du lieu où il avait été enlevé puis décapité en septembre par un groupe djihadiste, ont annoncé jeudi des sources

sécuritaires.

Après plus de trois mois de recherches, le corps enterré sans tête a été découvert dans la montagne d'Akbil, à 160 km au sud-est d'Alger, où le guide de montagne avait été enlevé par Jund al-Khilafa ("les soldats du califat"), selon ces sources.

3000 soldats déployés

L'armée avait lancé 3000 soldats sur les troupes de Jund al-Khilafa après l'exécution de l'otage français.

Hervé Gourdel, guide de haute montagne de 55 ans originaire du sud de la France, avait été enlevé le 21 septembre en représailles à l'engagement de la France aux côtés des Etats-Unis dans les frappes contre le groupe jihadiste Etat islamique en Irak.

CHINA/AFRICA :

Wang Yi: Be Supporter, Builder and Promoter of China-Africa Friendship

2015/01/14/fmprc.gov.cn

On January 13 local time, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, accompanied by Foreign Minister Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo and Minister of Higher Education Jacques Fame Ndong of Cameroon, visited the Confucius Institute at the University of Yaounde II, receiving warm welcome from the teachers and students.

Wang Yi expressed that as a bridge, the Confucius Institute has consistently spread the friendship between China and Africa. Chinese education is the key to the door for youths to understand China. Youths are the future of a country, and Cameroonian youths studying Chinese here lays a better foundation for their devotion to China-Cameroon friendship and their beautiful life in the future. Wang Yi said that I just asked Foreign Minister Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo why so many Cameroonian youths are willing to study Chinese, and he told me that because China is a major country and their good friend. The words were very plain and also very sincere. I was happy and touched by the words and felt more a responsibility. We should step up our efforts to let Cameroon youths not only know that China is a major country, but also feel that China is a responsible and friendly major country which is willing to share weal and woe and advance hand in hand with African friends. We will not only make over 8000 Cameroonian youths who are studying Chinese know that China is a good friend, but also let more and more youths of various African countries consider China as a good friend which they can trust, rely on and open hearts to. Therefore, starting from me, every one of us should be supporter, builder and promoter of China-Africa friendship and make unremitting efforts toward this goal.

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

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