



(KENYA'S Constitutional Court threw out some sections of a controversial national security law Monday, but the government welcomed a ruling that leaves the "vast majority" in place."This case is about striking a balance between fighting terrorism and respecting human rights," said Judge Isaac Lenaol.)

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

Struggle heroes remains to return to South Africa

The remains of JB Marks and Moses Kotane are set to be repatriated to South Africa

JOHANNESBURG - Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa is set to visit Russia, where the exhumation and repatriation of the remains of freedom stalwarts Moses Kotane and JB Marks will take place.

They both died in a Moscow hospital after short illnesses.

Mthethwa on Monday announced the plans at The Market Theatre in Johannesburg.

Kotane and Marks left South Africa for Russia in 1963, at the request of then-ANC President Oliver Tambo, to lobby the international community to rally behind the fight against apartheid.

Mthethwa said they were two of the many fallen heroes who were not celebrated today.

"There's no doubt that we need to deepen understanding and appreciation for their contribution and role."

Their remains are expected to arrive back in South Africa next Monday.

Kotane will be reburied at his home in Phela, while Marks will be buried in Ventersdorp next month.

TANZANIA :

**Agriculture expansion in Tanzania may greatly increase human plague risk**  
medicalxpress.com/February 23, 2015

The push to boost food production in East Africa that is accelerating the conversion of natural lands into croplands may be significantly increasing the risk of plague according to a new study published online today in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (AJTMH).

Researchers studied rodents in northern Tanzania, where over the last few decades croplands have expanded by 70 percent. They found that in areas where maize production has been introduced, the number of rodents infested with plague-carrying fleas that can cause human infections nearly doubled compared to numbers in neighboring wilderness areas. Scientists also linked the maize fields to a 20-fold increase in the population of the African rat (*Mastomys natalensis*) that is a major conduit for plague and a number of other diseases, including deadly Lassa fever—an affliction often mistaken for Ebola—that has become a growing concern in West Africa.

"We found that introducing maize production in natural areas appears to create a perfect storm for plague transmission," said Hillary Young, PhD, a community ecologist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and one of the lead authors of the study. "The presence of the crop as a food source caused a surge in the population of a rat species known to carry plague. Local farmers often then store this harvested corn next to or inside their homes—baiting in the hungry field rats and increasing opportunities for human infection."

"These kinds of conditions are what breed outbreaks," Young said.

Plague is an ancient disease caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* that continues to sicken and kill people even in the 21st century. Since 2000, most of the outbreaks of plague have occurred in Africa, particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar, an island nation off the coast of Mozambique [In 2013, ASTMH published a series of infographics about plague in the first decade of the 21st century.] Just since last September, an outbreak in Madagascar led to 263 infections and 71 deaths. Plague also occurs in the USA, with a small number of cases reported annually in western states.

Plague has long been a threat in Tanzania and continues to emerge in sporadic outbreaks. From 1980 to 2011, for example, there were about 8490 cases and 675 deaths reported in the country.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), plague is treatable with antibiotics and supportive therapy but, left untreated, it is fatal 30 to 60 percent of the time.

### Rats and Expansion of Agriculture

In June and July of 2011, shortly after the typical annual peak in human plague cases, investigators studied three areas in northern Tanzania. In these areas, plague outbreaks have been documented in the past, and maize production has expanded and now abuts the boundaries of protected lands.

Young said the area of Tanzania where the study was conducted is a historic hotspot for plague, though so far there has not been an uptick in infections documented in the farming communities studied. But the researchers, which included investigators from Stanford University, Colorado State University, the Smithsonian Institution, and Tanzania's Sokoine University of Agriculture, believe all of the factors that could cause an outbreak are now in place: a population surge in rodents carrying plague and fleas capable of transmitting plague to humans, coupled with crop storage practices and rat behaviors that could increase contact with humans.

"People in these communities tend to store their maize in their houses, to protect it, but that also has the effect of attracting these rats," Young said. "The rats that persist in human areas are also particularly competent hosts for plague, as well as likely to interact with humans. Together, these changes increase the opportunities for humans to be bitten by plague-infected fleas."

### Curious Findings

One curious finding from the study was that the African rats living in the agriculture areas played host to a larger number of plague-carrying fleas than their relatives in the forest and even carried a species of plague-infected flea that is completely absent in forest rats.

The researchers also noted that the African rat, with its capacity to support large litters—the female of the species can nurse up to 14 pups at a time—is well suited to take advantage of a crop production cycle that offers opportunities for rodent populations to surge as crops mature.

"Lessons learned from this case are also broadly important for understanding the dynamics of other zoonotic diseases in this era of rapid landscape change," the authors state.

Indeed, across sub-Saharan Africa, which possesses 60 percent of the world's arable and significant food security challenges, efforts are underway to rapidly and widely increase agriculture production as a way to address both economic and food security concerns. Among the more ambitious projects is one underway in Kenya that aims to convert one million acres (about 400,000 hectares) into

irrigated farmlands.

"This result gives us another example—as if we need another example after Ebola—of the connected world we live in. Although it's not as infectious as the Ebola virus, plague can be transmitted through human contact as well as flea bites, and we had this kind of transmission in the United States in the last century. Researching the impact of land use on both animals and humans is important for preventing and dealing with outbreaks of transmissible diseases like plague," said ASTMH President Christopher Plowe, MD, MPH, FASTMH. "In Africa in particular, food production is a critical issue. This is an opportunity for agriculture and tropical medicine to work together with local communities to benefit us all."

KENYA :

#### Kenya court cuts clauses of tough anti-terrorism laws

Date: Feb 24, 2015/newvision

KENYA'S Constitutional Court threw out some sections of a controversial national security law Monday, but the government welcomed a ruling that leaves the "vast majority" in place.

"This case is about striking a balance between fighting terrorism and respecting human rights," said Judge Isaac Lenaol.

A key clause which hands Kenyan authorities sweeping powers, including the right to hold terror suspects for nearly a year without charge, remains in place.

But clauses that threatened journalists with up to three years behind bars if their reports "undermine investigations or security operations relating to terrorism" were dismissed.

Other clauses struck out include a 150,000 ceiling on the number of refugees allowed into Kenya -- which would have led to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and other conflict-hit countries in the region.

The security bill was passed by parliament in December 2014 after a chaotic debate marked by brawls between governing coalition and opposition MPs, and was signed into law by President Uhuru Kenyatta.

But Kenya's opposition launched a legal challenge, with its leader Raila Odinga saying the ruling Monday "will go a long way in ensuring adherence to the constitution of Kenya and protecting civil liberties."

The Kenyan government has been under pressure to get tough on terrorism since 67 people were killed in September 2013 in a Shebab attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi.

The Shebab say the attacks are retaliation for Kenya's decision to send troops into Somalia in 2011 to fight the militants.

The government said it was considering an appeal to return the law as passed by parliament.

"The government remains committed to the war against terrorist and criminal organisations, and

will do everything, and use every arsenal at its disposal, to keep safe all those who live in Kenya," presidential spokesman Manóah Esipisu said in a statement.

AFP

### Kenya to start work on new northern seaport: president

Tue Feb 24, 2015 /Reuters

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Kenya will start construction work next month on a long-delayed new port to be built on its northern coast, next to the historic trading town of Lamu, the presidency announced on Monday.

The Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) project is intended to include a port, new roads, a railway and a pipeline by 2030 that will give landlocked South Sudan and Ethiopia access to the Indian Ocean.

The overall price of the project, first proposed in the 1970s, has been put at \$25.5 billion. Among the reasons for the delay are demands from landowners for greater compensation.

"Construction of the Lamu port begins next month, President Uhuru Kenyatta has announced," the presidency said in a statement, without specifying the scope of the work.

In 2013, officials said a consortium led by China Communications Construction Co Ltd had won a 41 billion Kenyan shilling (\$449 million) contract to build the first three berths of the port. There has been little sign of activity since then.

The new port at Lamu has been cited as a possible oil export terminal after commercial oil finds in Uganda and Kenya. But the pipeline could also go to Kenya's main existing port, Mombasa.

"The new port, which is part of the Lamu Port Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor project, will provide an opportunity for the exploitation of the country's maritime resources," the president told a maritime conference.

Officials were not immediately available to offer more details.

(\$1 = 91.4000 Kenyan shillings)

(Writing by Edmund Blair; Editing by Kevin Liffey)

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

### Africa's expanding farms attract more plague-infested rats

By Chris Arsenault/[uk.reuters.com](http://uk.reuters.com)/Mon Feb 23, 2015

ROME (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Converting wilderness areas into farmland in East Africa may be increasing the risk of disease epidemics, as rodents crawling with plague-carrying fleas are drawn to the harvested food.

In northern Tanzania, crop lands have expanded by 70 percent over the last few decades and the number of plague-carrying rodents in these corn growing lands has nearly doubled compared with neighboring wilderness areas, said the study published in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene on Monday.

Scientists linked an increase in corn fields – necessary to feed an expanding population – to a 20-fold rise in the population of African rats in northern Tanzania, which transmit deadly diseases to humans, including Lassa fever and plague.

"We found that introducing maize production in natural areas appears to create a perfect storm for plague transmission," Hillary Young, a University of California professor and a lead author of the study, said in a statement.

"Local farmers often ... store this harvested corn next to or inside their homes - baiting in the hungry field rats and increasing opportunities for human infection."

In Tanzania alone, plague caused about 675 deaths from 1980 to 2011, the study said, and these numbers could rise as new wilderness areas become farmland and rat populations increase.

Though less deadly than Ebola or other epidemics, plague – caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* is fatal in more than 30 percent of cases if left untreated, the study said.

As Africa's population soars, and food demand increases, scientists, farmers and politicians will have to balance the need for more farmland with concerns over the spread of disease, scientists said.

## Face à la menace islamiste, des milliers d’Egyptiens fuient la Libye

Par RFI /24-02-2015

Plus de 4 000 Egyptiens ont fui la Libye depuis vendredi pour échapper aux menaces de mort dont ils font l'objet de la part des milices islamistes. Un retour qui se fait par la frontière terrestre dans l'Est libyen et via la Tunisie à l'Ouest. Cette fuite est consécutive à la publication d'une vidéo montrant 21 Egyptiens coptes égorgés par des jihadistes se réclamant du groupe Etat islamique et aux raids de représailles de l'armée de l'air égyptienne qui ont suivi.

Avec notre correspondant au Caire, Alexandre Buccianti

Les travailleurs de la Vallée du Nil qui fuient la Libye se sentent transformés en proies des milices islamistes qui contrôlent la majorité du territoire. Un pont aérien de la compagnie Egyptair a commencé à rapatrier gratuitement un millier de fuyards depuis vendredi à partir de la Tunisie. Des bus ont été envoyés à la ville frontalière égyptienne de Salloum pour rapatrier les travailleurs vers leurs villages.

Une cellule de crise a été créée par le ministère du Travail. « La ministre a tenu une réunion avec le ministre de la Jeunesse, des hommes d'affaires et des responsables d'ONG pour trouver d'urgence des emplois pour les rapatriés, indique le directeur général des travailleurs égyptiens à l'étranger. Une manière d'adoucir leur retour forcé vers la patrie. »



Mais la tâche pourrait s'avérer pharaonique puisqu'on estime les travailleurs égyptiens en Libye à près de 800 000.

### Ebola drug shows some promise in first tests in West Africa

02/23/2015/Associated Press

SEATTLE — An experimental antiviral drug shows some early, encouraging signs of effectiveness in its first human test against Ebola in West Africa, but only if patients get it when their symptoms first appear.

A study of the drug, favipiravir, is still in early stages in West Africa, and too few people have been treated to really know whether the drug helps. Other factors, like better health care, may be making a difference, and there was no comparison group of patients who got no treatment or a different drug.

Results for the first 69 adults and teens in Guinea were released Monday. Among those who got the drug when virus levels were still low, survival was 85 percent. That seems better than the roughly 70 percent survival for patients treated in the same clinics two months before the study began, researchers said at the Retrovirus Conference in Seattle.

The drug made no difference for those who got it later. Unfortunately, the median time of symptoms when patients sought care was five days, and the infection often is well established by then.

“We have preliminary evidence” that favipiravir may be effective, says a statement by Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, which helped fund the work. “If these results are confirmed by the ongoing clinical trial, it will be the first-ever treatment to be deployed against this deadly disease during the current outbreak.”

The current Ebola outbreak is the largest in history. There have been nearly 23,000 cases and nearly 9,000 deaths, mostly in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, the World Health Organization estimates.

There are no specific medicines or vaccines to fight the virus, though some experimental ones are being tested. Favipiravir, also known by its brand name, Avigan, is made by a Japanese company, Toyama Chemical. It was approved in Japan last year for treating flu and tests suggest it also may work against other viruses.

A French nurse who got Ebola while volunteering in Africa for Doctors Without Borders was treated with favipiravir and recovered.

The new study was launched in December in two Ebola treatment units in Guinea run by that aid group. Others involved in the study include the aid group Alliance for International Medical Action and INSERM, the French public health agency.

Even doctors involved in the study acknowledge that more research is needed to determine the drug's safety and effectiveness.

In some previous Ebola outbreaks and even in this one, survival has improved as time goes on and cases are detected and treated sooner, and more care becomes available. In December, doctors reported that survival among nearly 600 recent Ebola patients in Sierra Leone was about 70 percent, compared to only about 26 percent earlier in the outbreak. Among those treated more recently,

survival was over 76 percent.

MARILYNN MARCHIONE, AP Chief Medical Writer

UN/AFRICA :

UN scientists say climate change dims Africa's progress

English.news.cn/Xinhua/2015-02-24

NAIROBI, Feb. 23 (Xinhua) -- Scientists from the UN affiliated Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said on Monday that climatic shocks remain a mortal threat to Africa's socioeconomic progress.

The climate scientists who met in Nairobi for an outreach forum said that recurrent drought cycles, floods and infectious diseases have become a common phenomenon in Sub-Saharan Africa due to global warming.

"Africa's higher vulnerability to negative impacts of climate change has placed new hurdles in its quest to grow the economy and eradicate chronic poverty, hunger and disease," Vice Chair of the IPCC Ismael El Gizouli told the meeting in Nairobi.

Scientists presented findings of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) that was released in November 2014.

According to the report, human actions have fuelled carbon emissions that are to blame for rising global temperatures.

El Gizouli emphasized that adoption of green technologies, climate smart agriculture and sustainable consumption practices were key to manage the impacts of climate change in Africa.

"African countries should choose a low carbon development path that promises evenly distributed prosperity and healthy of the population. This goal can be achieved through smart policies, legislation and domestic financing," El Gizouli told reporters.

The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report states that climate change will aggravate hunger, water stress and spread of infectious diseases across Sub-Saharan Africa.

According to El Gizouli, extreme weather events have displaced millions of people in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region.

"It is appropriate to say that climate change is a security threat in fragile African states already engulfed in endemic challenges like poverty, disease, hunger and loss of natural capital," said El Gizouli.

Climate change has negatively impacted on productive sectors of the economy across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Scientists said that agriculture, tourism, forestry and energy sectors were in peril due to climatic shocks.



African countries have agreed on a range of action plans to strengthen response to climate change.

Alice Kaudia, Kenya's environment secretary, revealed that countries in the region are harmonizing policy and legal frameworks to boost climate resilience.

"We have agreed on a collective approach to respond to climate change. The African group of negotiators is united in the quest for a binding climate treaty later this year," Kaudia said.

Editor: Mu Xuequan

US/AFRICA :

**US security chief warns shoppers after terror threat**

22 February 2015/bbc.com

US Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson has urged people to be vigilant following a terror threat to Western shopping centres, including one of America's largest malls.

He said he took the threat by the Somali-based group al-Shabab seriously.

In a video, the group urged followers to carry out attacks on shopping centres in the US, Canada and the UK.

Al-Shabab was responsible for the 2013 attack on Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi that killed 67 people.

Mr Johnson told CNN that the threat was part of "a new phase" of terrorism in which attacks would increasingly come from "independent actors in their homelands".

"Anytime a terrorist organisation calls for an attack on a specific place, we've got to take that seriously," he said.

But Mr Johnson added that he was not advising people not to go to the malls named by the militants.

In the video, a man with a British-sounding accent and full face covering calls on supporters of al-Shabab to attack "American or Jewish-owned" Western shopping centres.

He specifically mentions Minnesota's Mall of America - the second-largest US shopping centre - and Canada's West Edmonton Mall, as well as London's Oxford Street and the UK capital's two Westfield shopping centres.

Co-ordinates for the various targets were listed on the screen as they were described.

The BBC's Naomi Grimley in Washington says it is possible that the video is part of a rivalry between al-Shabab, which is linked to al-Qaeda, and Islamic State, which has dominated media coverage recently.

UK police said they were aware of the video and assessing the contents.

Both Mall of America and West Edmonton Mall have issued statements saying they were implementing additional security measures.

Minnesota is home to a large Somali population and a Minnesota man was indicted last week on charges of conspiring to support Islamic State.

Police and security services in Canada, France and Denmark have been on high alert recently following attacks by so-called "home-grown" terrorists inspired by groups such as al-Shabab and Islamic State.

CANADA/AFRICA :

#### **AFRICA OIL CLOSES US\$125 MILLION BROKERED PRIVATE PLACEMENT**

February 23, 2015 /Source: Africa Oil Corp./globenewswire.com

February 23, 2015 (AOI–TSX, AOI–Nasdaq Stockholm) ... Africa Oil Corp. ("Africa Oil" or the "Company") is pleased to announce that it has closed the US\$125,000,000 brokered private placement, previously announced on February 13, 2015. An aggregate of 57,020,270 common shares, issued at a price of SEK 18.50 (Cdn \$2.74(1) equivalent) per share for gross proceeds of SEK 1,054,874,995, or US \$125,000,000 equivalent, (the "Offering") have been released to investors.

The common shares were placed through a syndicate comprising Dundee Securities Europe LLP and Pareto Securities, who together acted as joint bookrunners (the "Joint Bookrunners"). A cash commission equal to 4% of the gross proceeds of the Offering was paid to the Joint Bookrunners.

Net proceeds of the private placement will be used for ongoing exploration, appraisal and development activities in East Africa, as well as for corporate development and general working capital purposes.

Subject to applicable securities laws, common shares issued to residents outside of Canada pursuant to the Offering may not be sold, transferred or otherwise disposed of on the TSX or, except pursuant to an exemption from prospectus requirements under Canadian securities laws, to any person in Canada or otherwise into Canada for a period of four months plus one day from the date of the closing of the Offering.

The securities offered have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or applicable state securities laws, and may not be offered or sold in the United States absent registration or an exemption from such registration requirements. This press release shall not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy nor shall there be any sale of the securities in any jurisdiction in which such offer, solicitation or sale would be unlawful.

#### About Africa Oil

Africa Oil Corp. is a Canadian oil and gas company with assets in Kenya and Ethiopia as well as Puntland (Somalia) through its 45% equity interest in Horn Petroleum Corporation. The Company is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and on Nasdaq Stockholm under the symbol "AOI".

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

**Africa Focus: African experts refute the West's defamation on China's aid in Africa**  
Feb 24,2015/Xinhua

NAIROBI, Feb. 24 (Xinhua) -- African experts and scholars have acclaimed China's aid to boost the development of the African continent as the West's fantastic theories like "neocolonialism" and "China is exploiting Africa's resources" are floating up.

"When the West labels Chinese aid and infrastructural projects in Africa as neocolonial it is a question of sour grapes," Professor Munene Macharia, Lecturer of International Relations with Kenya-based United States International University, told Xinhua in an exclusive interview.

China has long been helping Africa with infrastructure development and has completed 1,046 projects, including railways with a total length of 2,233 km and highways with a total length of 3,530 km in Africa, making a significant impact on Africa's economic development and tangible contributions to improve living and working conditions.

Macharia said the West has been in Africa for a long time but has never made development of Africa's infrastructure as a priority, adding that the West is not happy that China is assisting Africa to overcome one of its biggest challenges that it faces today.

Experts agreed that Africa has a huge infrastructure deficit as a result of years of under investment in this sector, saying Africa's rapidly growing population has outstripped government's ability to provide infrastructure at the same pace.

Official statistics showed that two-way trade volume between China and Africa exceeded 200 billion U.S. dollars for the first time in 2013, and China has been Africa's largest trade partner for the past five years in a row.

"China is cooperating with Africa, giving a prior attention to the continent's infrastructural development, without which there cannot be a meaningful economic and social development," said Fantahun Haile-Michael, African Union's Project Coordinator.

Haile-Michael noted China's cooperation with Africa is growing day by day with the focus on Africa's priority areas of peace and security, infrastructure development, education and health sectors of social area among others.

A report from the International Monetary Fund showed that Sino- Africa cooperation has

contributed more than 20 percent to Africa's economic growth.

"China's aid and infrastructural projects in Africa are made on the basis of mutual understanding between China and Africa. The projects are in line with Africa's national priorities. The projects are not a form of Chinese domination of Africa as they based on win-win propositions," said Gerishon Ikiara, Lecturer of International Economics with University of Nairobi.

Ikiara, who is also the ex-Permanent Secretary with Ministry of Transport and Communications, said the Western nations only develop infrastructure in Africa that helped to ship Africa's resources to the West.

Denise Kodhe, Analyst and Director General of the Institute for Democracy and Leadership in Africa, said neocolonialism is a term used by the West in reference to the relation to China's cooperation with Africa.

"The term is neither here nor there because nobody has a right to decide for Kenya or Africa who to cooperate with or who their friends should be as clearly stated sometimes back by the late president of South Africa Nelson Maadiba Mandela," Kodhe added.

As the world's second largest economy, China bears due responsibility by offering medical aiding to African countries.

In 2014, China provided its aid in the first time and so far has sent successively several medical teams and batches of emergency aid worth a total of 700 million yuan (around 112.2 million U.S. dollars) to the epidemic-hit countries, becoming one of the biggest donors to the infected areas and playing an important role in containing the epidemic.

However, experts also called for more people to people communication between the two countries.

"It is important for China to make itself understood by ordinary Kenyans and Africans," Kodhe said, adding that China should not only focus its relation with Kenya and Africa based on government to government but also more on people to people basis to create a better understanding.

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 24 Février 2015... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 24/02/2015