

# Dateline Africa

Events on the continent, 1 September to 6 November

*Since the last [Dateline Africa column](#) was published in the previous issue of [New Agenda](#) the continent has been wracked by newly intensified terrorist attacks in Somalia and conflicts in the Eastern DRC, far too many to be listed here. Strained mediation efforts continued – involving leaders from Angola, as well as the East African Community. The African Union has called for dialogue. Meanwhile, civilians have died, suffered and been displaced.*

## NOVEMBER

6 November: COP27 (aka the 27th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) opened in the Red Sea resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Dozens of people accused of preparing anti-government protests were arrested before the conference got underway.



2 November: In a dramatic and unanticipated development, African Union-sponsored peace talks on Ethiopia held in Pretoria ended with a

signed peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and Tigray rebels. The terrible war – with atrocities proven on both sides – lasted for two years with as many as an estimated 600,000 dead and millions more displaced.

## OCTOBER

31 October: An unknown number of African countries joined 66 countries globally (led by Cuba, a noted supporter of the anti-apartheid struggle) at the Third Committee of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly to express support for China’s position on issues related to Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Tibet and opposition to interference in China’s internal affairs. China urged countries to stop using human rights as a pretext for political manipulation, slander and rumour mongering. “What they need to do is deeply reflect on their own human rights woes, learn their lesson from the human rights disasters they have brought onto other countries and return to the right track of cooperation and dialogue”.

31 October: Eswatini and Somalia were the only African countries to add their names to a joint statement issued by 50 countries in the UN General Assembly Third Committee on the human rights situation in Xinjiang, China. The statement, delivered by Canadian Ambassador Bob Rae – another noted supporter of the anti-apartheid struggle – drew attention to evidence of the arbitrary and discriminatory detention of Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim minorities in Xinjiang which “may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity”.

20 October: 26 bodies were unearthed from a mass grave in north



Malawi. All were men, from Ethiopia, believed to be migrants who employed human traffickers to get them to South Africa. Some of the bodies showed signs of suffocation, possibly from being transported in a closed container. “Malawi is a country of transit for migrants from the Horn of Africa travelling along what is known as the Southern Route from as far north as Ethiopia in a bid to reach South Africa in search of employment,” said the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

18 October: President Brahim Ghali of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic arrived on a state visit to South Africa, triggering a negative response from Morocco, which claims the neighbouring Western Sahara – a former Spanish colony – as its own territory. Morocco has been pitted against the Algeria-backed pro-independence Polisario Front for over 50 years. Since 1994, South Africa has been a strong advocate for the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic which is a member of the African Union.

7 October: 65 parties contested the Lesotho national elections, all advocating for much the same policies and proposals. Their politics are about access to individual employment and influence and have nothing to do with the general good. Politicians have bickered for over a decade about constitutional changes to de-politicise



Source: United Nations

the police and army and curb the powers of the prime minister. The results saw a surprising win for the new Revolution for Prosperity Party, formed only in March 2022 by a millionaire businessman who sponsored lavish rallies before the poll.

6 October: Eight African countries joined 19 other members of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to reject a proposal to debate a report that condemns China and its oppression of Muslim communities in its province of Xinjiang. Somalia was the only African country and the only Muslim-majority country in the world to back the resolution. China had lobbied hard for this outcome. Only once before has a motion been defeated in a meeting of the UNHCR since it was formed in 2006.

3 October: Seretse Khama Ian Khama, a former president of Botswana, condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as an "aggressive, colonising action". "It is an unjustified attack on democracy, sovereignty and international law, and an assault on human rights," he wrote

## SEPTEMBER

30 September: A military coup broke out in Burkino Faso, the second coup in eight months. The state now controls less than half the country since militant Islamists – linked to the Islamic State group and al-Qaeda – began a campaign of attacks in 2015.

29 September: South Africa's



John Chilembwe statue in Trafalgar Square in London

National Treasury banned Bain & Company, a global consultancy, from tendering for public sector contracts for the next 10 years. The firm had been implicated in state capture and had engaged in "corrupt and fraudulent practices" in dealings with the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

28 September: A huge bronze statue of John Chilembwe, a Baptist preacher and pan-Africanist in colonial Nyasaland (Malawi), was installed on a plinth in Trafalgar Square in London. Chilembwe led an uprising in 2015 against British rule, but it was not widely supported and he was killed by the King's African Rifles as he fled towards Mozambique. The sculptor is Malawian-born artist Samson Kambalu, who is a professor of fine art at Oxford University.

28 September: Members of the ANC Youth League accepted an invitation to observe referenda in south eastern Ukraine organised by Russia to measure support for annexation of that territory by Russia. A representative of the ANCYL said they observed people participated "freely and fairly".

15 September: President João Lourenço was sworn in for a second presidential term in Angola. One of the remarkable outcomes of the close and disputed 24 August election was the victory of the opposition UNITA in Luanda, which represents a third of the electorate. The corrupt and authoritarian ruling party, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola



Angola President João Lourenço, Wikimedia Commons

(MPLA), has been in power since 1975.

12 September: 50 million people worldwide were living in modern slavery in 2021, according to a report by non-governmental organisation Walk Free. Many modern slaves are of African origin but figures are uncertain as slavery is illegal and cannot be tracked. Many are domestic and migrant workers in Arab countries and others are held in African countries such as Uganda. Forced labour and forced marriage – another significant marker for modern slavery – have increased significantly in the last five years across the world.

6 September: UK politician and former campaigner against apartheid Peter Hain wrote in a letter to US President Joe Biden that "no reputable government should do business" with the giant US consultancy Bain & Co, which admitted that it allowed "Bain's name and Bain's work to be used to support state capture" in South Africa. This followed a decision by the UK government to suspend Bain from UK government contracts for three years, on the basis that the company was "guilty of grave professional misconduct" in relation to its operations in South Africa.

1 September: Madagascan authorities confirmed police killed 19 people in a remote rural community. They fired on a crowd of vigilantes who tried to storm a police station to seize four people arrested on suspicion of abducting an albino child and murdering their mother. **NA**