

# What's new in Africa?

Weekly newsletter of the Polish Center for African Studies  
29th week of 2015 (13.7 – 20.7.2015)

## Top story of the week

### Chad: 25-Year Fight to Put Former U.S.-Backed Habré On Trial

13 July 2015

"An interminable political and legal soap opera" is how South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu described 25 years of back and forth in the quest to bring former Chadian dictator Hissène Habré (1982-1990) to trial for crimes against humanity. His trial, set to open on July 20, will be the first by an African Union-backed court. It will also be the first time that a former African president is brought to trial in another African country for massive human rights abuses. This is a major turning point in the turbulent history of international justice in Africa. The story of the hunt for Hissène Habré is a remarkable reflection on a chaotic international justice process that started in the 1990s and in which the quest for justice was mixed with pragmatism and Realpolitik. It also brings up all the questions related to justice without borders in a world where crimes abound and their perpetrators are rarely punished.



Read more [here](#)

## Other stories

### **Nigeria: Suicide Bomber Kills Civilian JTF Member in Maiduguri** 13 July 2015

A suicide bomber in a bus killed one member of Nigeria's civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) at the main checkpoint on the outskirts of the northeastern city of Maiduguri. There was no immediate claim for the attack, but it bore the hallmarks of Islamist militant group Boko Haram. Maiduguri, the state capital of Borno, is the birthplace of the jihadi sect. A JTF member at the scene said that after passengers had left the bus, the driver drove forward to another inspection point at the Njimtilo checkpoint in the southwest of the city where he detonated the bomb. Three civilians were injured.

Read more [here](#)

### **First sub-Saharan Starbucks to open in South Africa** 14 July 2015

Sub-Saharan Africa will get its first Starbucks next year, as part of a new deal between the US coffee giant and a South African franchiser. The first branch is due to open in Johannesburg in 2016, with more locations to follow, its partner Taste Holdings said in a statement. Starbucks, which has 22,000 outlets worldwide, will face local competition. Global brands are increasingly entering the African market to take advantage of the continent's growing middle class. Starbucks already sources a considerable amount of coffee it sells worldwide from farms in sub-Saharan Africa.

Read more [here](#)

### **Central African Republic: Report - European Firms Helped Fund CAR Civil War** 15 July 2015

European firms and governments are playing a significant role in the funding of conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR) through aid and the timber trade, according to a new report. The NGO Global Witness has calculated that in 2013, around 3.4 million euros (\$3.74 million) was paid to rebels as bribes, to pass roadblocks, for armed escorts and for the protection of logging sites.

Read more [here](#)

## **Somali al-Shabab commanders 'killed in drone strike'**

**16 July 2015**

At least two senior commanders from the Islamist militant group al-Shabab have been killed in a drone strike in south-west Somalia, residents say. Several loud blasts were heard in the town of Bardere at dawn and the bodies were found later, they said. The al-Qaeda-linked group has not yet commented, but a source in the group told a BBC reporter that those killed were al-Shabab commanders. The names of the commanders believed to have been killed are Ismael Jamhad and Jama Dere, a Somali military officer travelling with the African Union troops in the area has told the BBC. African Union troops have been in the country since 2007 helping various UN-backed governments fight al-Shabab.

Read more [here](#)

## **Cameroon bans Islamic face veil after suicide bombings**

**16 July 2015**

Cameroon has banned the wearing of full-face Islamic veil, including the burka, in the Far North region, following two suicide bomb attacks. Two women dressed in the religious garments blew themselves up on Sunday in Fotokol, killing 13 people. The governor of the mainly Muslim region said the measure was to prevent further attacks. Last month, Chad announced a similar ban after suspected Boko Haram militants attacks in its capital. Both Cameroon and Chad neighbour Nigeria, where the Boko Haram Islamist group has been based - and both have suffered attacks by the insurgents.

Read more [here](#)

## **Zambia: Journalists Arrested in Zambia for Publishing Allegedly Classified Documents**

**16 July 2015**

Zambian authorities have arrested two journalists and accused them of publishing classified documents, according to news reports. The Committee to Protect Journalists condemns the arrests and calls on Zambian authorities to release them immediately. Police said the charges were in connection with a letter the journalists published in The Post. The letter, written by Zambia's anti-corruption commission, had allegedly been sent to Zambian President Edgar Lungu, informing him of an inquiry into allegations that one of his aides had taken a bribe from a Chinese company seeking to operate in the country. The journalists' lawyers have applied for bail, which will be ruled upon on Friday, according to reports. Both M'membe and Funga were summoned by police for questioning in May, but were not arrested at the time, according to reports.

Read more [here](#)

## Ghana: Christians rally against same-sex relationships 16 July 2015

Ghana's Christian Council has denounced same-sex marriage, saying it is a mistake for countries to adopt and approve the practice. The Christian umbrella group that unites some 15 churches in the West African nation wants the government to take a definite position on the issue and repel attempts by powerful countries that seek to foist, what they call, "gayism" on Ghana. The council enjoined political leaders not to compromise on the country's cultural values and also urged Ghanaians to resist any temptation from any country or individual that tries to influence legalising same sex in Ghana. Following the US's endorsement of same-sex marriage in June this year, many Ghanaians have expressed resentment at the practice, describing it as un-Biblical, un-Christian and, therefore, un-African. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons in Ghana face legal challenges.

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## Did you know that?

### Timbuktu mausoleums in Mali rebuilt after destruction 19 July 2015

Fourteen mausoleums in the city of Timbuktu in northern Mali have been rebuilt, three years after they were destroyed by Islamist extremists. The reconstruction was carried out by local stonemasons working for the UN's cultural organisation, Unesco. On a visit to the city, Unesco's chief said she wanted those responsible for the destruction to be brought before the International Criminal Court. The entire city of Timbuktu is listed as a World Heritage Site by Unesco.



Read more [here](#)

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