By Shannon Carlin
Time.com

As an award-winning actor, playwright, and women’s rights activist, Danai Gurira is the definition of a multi-hyphenate—but growing up, she had her sights set on being a social psychologist and working in public policy. “I just didn’t see how I could use the arts to contribute to society,” she says.

“I thought being an artist seemed light and flighty; I wanted to focus on the heavy stuff.”

Danai Gurira

DANAI GURIRA
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Govt engages SA, Mozambique over electricity imports; promises to add solar power to national grid by April next year

By Reason Razao

GOVERNMENT has raised electricity imports from South Africa as part of efforts to curb load shedding impacting negatively on production in industries and household usage.

The country has been experiencing at least 16 hours of load shedding per day owing to depressed power generation at Kariba dam and maintenance work at Hwange Units 7 and 8.

Responding to questions on what the government is doing to end load shedding, Minister of Energy and Power Development Edgar Moyo said the country is currently engaged in talks with neighbouring countries as part of measures to bring the electricity situation to normalcy.

Moyo added that the country is also expected to reap the solar benefits by the end of first quarter next year.

“We are also working on bringing in more inputs into the country although they are a drain on our foreign currency situation, we are currently negotiating with our neighbouring countries and we have been able to raise our imports between South Africa and Mozambique,” said Moyo.

“However, in the medium to long term, the idea is to increase our solar output because our solar is the easiest of the fruits that we have. We are looking at different independent power producers who have presented their projects and some of them are currently on-going.”

Moyo said plans were in motion to repair and service Units 1 to 6 in Hwange which have not been working.

“There is also a programme to repower Units 1 to 6 in Hwange so that we improve generation because they have outlived their life-span. So the idea is to do some repowering so that we can increase the efficiency of production of power within those units and those efforts are under way.”

Following up to the minister’s submissions the opposition Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) lawmaker and chairperson of the Committee on Energy Leslie Mhangw was told to reveal that the solar system come with a lot instability.

“In as much as you proffer solar as a solution, it comes with system instability unless you are putting batteries. So, what is the plan that will make us secure within the medium and long term,” queried Mhangwa.

Then on the issue of solar, yes, batteries are very important as a storage facility for solar to avoid the inconsistencies that come with the absence of sun during the night,” Moyo responded.

“Technologies have been developed and just last week, there was an international solar alliance assembly where these technologies were on display.”

“We made an arrangement with ISA for them to come to Zimbabwe in January to assist the country in terms of acquiring the storage facilities in the form of batteries and also to do feasibility studies, teach and power reports on the floating solars on Kariba,” he added.

According to the energy minister, whilst the country is experiencing hydrological issues in Kariba, Zimbabwe can still reap benefits from the dead water in Kariba through installing floating solar systems up there.
Opposition MP demands tabling of SADC Report on Zim’s Election in Parliament

By Anna Chibamu

A Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) legislator has demanded that the SADC Election Observation Mission (SEOM) report on Zimbabwe’s recent elections be tabled in Parliament.

Speaking on a point of national interest on Thursday, Harare East legislator Rusty Markham requested that the report be brought to the National Assembly for debate by members.

Markham had initially requested an explanation regarding the unavailability of ballot papers on polling day which resulted in urban registered voters in Harare and Bulawayo casting votes as late as 2100hrs.

“My point of national interest refers to the meeting that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission had with the international observers on 17 August 2023, before the elections. “They read out and advertised that sufficient ballot papers had been printed to the extend, on the Presidential ballot papers totaling 7.6% more ballot papers that were required were printed and ready for distribution.

“The same for the National Assembly ballot papers and Madam Speaker, for the local ballot papers, 3.5% ballot papers more than required were submitted in paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) they were ready for the elections come what may,” Markham said.

Markham added, “My request is why the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (Zec) was ready 10 days before the election but had an issue with ballot papers on election day? “For the first time in the history of this country, we ran out of ballot papers during the election, despite Zec telling us they had printed enough.

“How can the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission tell international observers we have 7.6 more and then fail by 1400hrs in the afternoon, rural and urban polling stations had run out of ballot papers? “I request your ruling on an Independent Commission or a statement from the relevant Hon. Minister to explain what happened.

Further to this, this issue amongst others were brought up in the SADC which has just recently been adopted. Can that SADC Report be laid on the table of this House so that we can debate it?” Markham queried.

The deputy speaker Tsitsi Gezi had no clear answer to the raised issues. “I advise you to put that in writing and ask the responsible Hon. Minister so that he will bring a comprehensive copy to this House. At the moment, I cannot answer to your concerns. Put that in writing and ask the Hon. Minister to respond,” Gezi responded.

However, Markham begged Gezi to make a ruling on the SADC Report being laid on the table.

“I cannot rule on the SADC Report. You know very well that I cannot do that,” Gezi responded.

The SADC Heads of State and Government approved the SADC Election Observation Mission (SEOM) report on Zimbabwe’s recent elections last week in Angola during an Extraordinary Summit which was attended by President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

President Mnangagwa has urged Zimbabweans to move past the August election and focus on the development of the nation.

CCC has, however, accused Zanu PF of blocking the recently held Extraordinary Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government from discussing the country’s contested elections adding that decisive regional action is urgently needed.

The opposition has also maintained that the August elections were marred by irregularities and did not produce a legitimate outcome.

Shona-speaking population growing in Limpopo, census shows

By Rendani Raliphhaswa

JOHANNESBURG - The Statistician-General, Risenga Maluleke, says Limpopo has a new language that was not captured in the Census 2011.

Presenting the 2022 Census Report to Premier Stanley Mathabatha in Polokwane, Risenga notes that the province now has Shona as a language.

He points out that the language is spoken in more than 28 000 households. The province now has a population of 6.6 million.

He has attributed the population growth to Zimbabwean migrants.

“Let’s look at this province: 55.5% speak Sepedi followed by 17.4% who speak Tshivenda, followed by Xitsonga 17.3% but there is this one which was never there before Shona 1.6%. So, the people from Zimbabwe are moving into this province and this is their first port-of-call which was never picked up in the previous Census. Now, this is what we are picking up.”

Meanwhile, Mathabatha has expressed concern about the migration of the province’s residents to provinces such as Gauteng in search of greener pastures.

“For us to curb this migration, we need to come up with a different kind of education system which will train our children to be relevant to our people and industrial battles, you see amoebas, which is not relevant to the Tubatse community, a community full of mining but we are not teaching them anything about mining and our economy, let us be relevant.”
Interview with a sommelier – Kudakwashe Elite Kashiri

By Oliver Walkey
glassofbubbly.com

IN THIS feature, I speak with a man who has helped many people to discover the vast world of Wines and Sparkling Wines, his name is Kudakwashe Elite Kashiri, let’s find out a bit about his life as a Sommelier.

Tell Us About Yourself

“Well, I go by the name Kudakwashe Elite Kashiri, but I use Elite mostly, as most people especially in my working space cannot properly pronounce my first name. I was born in Zimbabwe, in a small town called Victoria Falls, commonly known for having the 7th wonder of the world – “The Mighty Victoria Falls”, I’m sure you’ve heard of the place so many times. I am aged 26, a first born in a family of 5 and my parents are Pastors. Growing up in a family were alcohol was forbidden due to religious beliefs, I had never tasted wine my entire life until I was around 24 (without my parents’ knowledge by the way), and the only wines I was exposed to were South African since European wines are rare and expensive to purchase."

What Inspired You To Become A Sommelier?

“My interest for wine developed when I was working at a small restaurant back home called Zambezi House, unfortunately, closed down during the Covid-19 era. This all began after I came across a wine that was part of our wine list branded ‘Kumusha Wines’. The name of the wine caught my attention cause it was a shona term, which is my local language, and that was so shocking for me cause Zimbabweans are not known for wines. I got so curious and made a further research about the wine, until I knew the owner, whose name is Tinashe Nyamudoka. I had to try by all means to get in contact with him, and fortunately I managed to get access to him via Instagram. I sent him a direct message, doubting if he was going to reply, but to my surprise, he quickly responded and I introduced myself told him how I got to know about him, explained my story and we started talking. He went into detail explaining his journey as a sommelier up until he became a well known winemaker. I was so inspired by his story, and I felt very much limitless cause all along, I thought wines were for mostly Europeans. From that point, I took Tinashe as my distant mentor and whenever I need help and guidance as far as wines are concerned, he is the man I look up to. Funny enough, we haven’t met in person up to now.”

During Your Time As A Sommelier, What’s The Most Surprising Thing You’ve Learnt?

“During my time as a Sommelier, I’ve learnt that wine communicates, it’s not just an ordinary alcoholic beverage, it’s something that can create or bring back a flush back of memories. This is how I even master different wine profiles for my blind tasting. There are wines that when I taste them, they give me aromas of local fruits that I last ate years ago when I was still growing up, for example the Sauvignon Gris, it has so much aromas of a particular fruit called the Baobab Fruit that I usually ate a lot back home and also most of the Cabernet Sauvignon and Cab Francs, they take me back to the old days when we would walk in the deep forest looking for the 7th wonder of the world – “The Mighty Victoria Falls”, I’m sure you’ve heard of the place so many times. I am aged 26, a first born in a family of 5 and my parents are Pastors. Growing up in a family were alcohol was forbidden due to religious beliefs, I had never tasted wine my entire life until I was around 24 (without my parents’ knowledge by the way), and the only wines I was exposed to were South African since European wines are rare and expensive to purchase."

In Your Professional Opinion, Out Of Champagne And Prosecco, Which Do You Think Does A Better Job With Complementing A Meal?

“That’s a bit tricky, but usually in such cases, I find Champagne pairing more perfectly with any French cheese related meal especially when it’s Brie cheese. It’s mild flavor and texture complements the delicate bubbles and fruity notes of Champagne. On the other hand, I love Prosecco as an aperitif or after dinner. It kind of leaves a nice, slight sweet after taste that is more like similar to a dessert and for food pairing, depending on the Prosecco in picture, it is a good pair for rich creamy desserts like the Crème Brûlée or Cheesecakes, mostly high acidity brut and dry prosecco.”

What Advice Would You Give Inspiring Sommeliers?

“My advise I would give to inspiring Sommeliers is passion, knowledge and hard work is the secret. You need to love what you do before anything else, then the rest will be easy.”

If You Sat Down For A Quiet Dinner, What Dish And Sparkling Wine Would You Choose To Enjoy Together?

“My all time best sparkling wine and food pairing combination is any pasta, risotto with creamy sauce especially mushroom sauce or some sea food, lobster to be specific. That would be definitely my choice on the table.)”

Thank you, Elite, for sharing your words, knowledge and experiences with us and we at Glass of Bubbly wish you the very best for the future!
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Afreximbank, Zimbabwe’s CABS sign $40 mln deal at IATF 2023 Cairo

By Agencies

THE AFRICAN Export–Import Bank (Afreximbank) has signed on Friday a term sheet for a $40 million three-year trade finance facility with a key commercial bank in Zimbabwe, the Central Africa Building Society (CABS). The deal aims to support the productive sectors in Zimbabwe.

The signing ceremony took place on the second day of the of the third Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2023) taking place in Cairo, Egypt on November 9 – 15.

Denys Denya, Afreximbank’s executive vice president for finance, administration and banking services (FABS), has signed the agreement with Mehluli Mpofu, managing director at CABS.

The agreement is integrally designed to increase the capacity in Zimbabwe’s agriculture, mining, and manufacturing sectors.

The deal is expected to impact around 573 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) over the three-year tenor, with 75 percent of these businesses made up of women and the youth in the country.

Exciting Highland Park Precinct to bring world class amenities to Harare, Zimbabwe

By APO

A SUBSTANTIAL piece of Highlands along ED Mnangagwa Road in Harare will undergo major development works over the next few years as part of a modern precinct project which will provide a further 200,000 square metres of mixed-use commercial and residential space within the suburb.

The Highland Park Precinct, which is being driven by property developers, Terrace Africa, broke ground in 2020 with the initial retail component of the masterplan (Highland Park Shopping Centre). Located seven kilometres Northeast of the Harare CBD, the precinct will stretch between Hurworth and Pevensy Roads and will feature a pedestrian-friendly design that integrates additional retail, a design quarter, multi-storey offices, hotel with conferencing facilities, medical suites and residential apartment complexes.

The development will also incorporate the latest green building standards and smart technology to ensure sustainability and security.

The Highland Park Precinct is inspired by internationally recognised examples such as Melrose Arch in South Africa as well as Canary Wharf in the UK. The precinct will lay the foundations for prospective building owners and tenants who wish to showcase their modern image and enjoy the convenience and lifestyle benefits of being part of a well-managed, secure, and maintained community.

“The essence of the precinct is to attract aspirational, future-thinking professionals such that the balance between work and play is blurred into a highly attractive and productive lifestyle alternative. Consequently, the precinct has already received substantial interest from local and international brands looking to relocate and build their premises within the node," commented Terrace Africa.

Further infrastructure works on internal roads and service connections for the precinct is expected to commence within the next few weeks, with the first multi-storey building will be commissioned before the end of 2024.

The Highland Park Precinct will include the following elements:

- The already developed first phase of the vibrant retail centre with the second phase expected to open early December 2023.
- Multiple state-of-the-art high-rise office blocks to house recognised brands, with the buildings linked by safe walkways to modern convenience amenities.
- Harare’s first retail Design Quarter which will feature over 20 lifestyle and home improvement stores focused on design and decor.
- An international hotel with all the modern conveniences to attract foreign investment including a 700+ seater conference facility.
- An open-air piazza with restaurants and family zones.
- Over 350 apartments providing residents true integrated city living.
- Modern gym and wellness centre.

The Highland Park Precinct is a testament to the positive changes implemented through the ‘Local Development Plan no. 60’ which aims to drive development along this key corridor and will support government’s strategy through ZIDA to attract international investment and strengthen the economy.

“The Highland Park Precinct is more than just a development project, it is a vision for the future of Harare. It will be a place where people can live, work, play, and connect in a modern and vibrant environment,” commented Terrace Africa.
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Zimbabwe government accused of blocking nurses from taking jobs abroad

By Thompson Reuters Foundation

MUTARE: Struggling to survive on her meagre salary, Zimbabwean nurse Jane decided to start a new life abroad but, one year after landing a job in Britain, she is still waiting to pack her bags.

Jane is not alone. Zimbabwean nurses eager to escape deepening poverty say their government is barring them from pursuing opportunities overseas as it seeks to stem a brain drain of health workers.

"The government is holding me to ransom now," said Jane, 35, who only used her first name for fear of reprisals.

"I'm really worried I might not be able to leave," added the single mother-of-three who can no longer afford to eat lunch as sky-high inflation sabotages her finances.

Nurses say the authorities are frustrating their efforts to migrate by failing to provide a crucial document confirming their professional status without which they cannot take up overseas jobs.

The Health Ministry took over the issuing of "verification letters" early last year from the Nurses Council of Zimbabwe – the profession’s regulatory body – which used to turn them around within days.

Unions in the southern African country estimate that thousands of nurses are affected.

Simbarashe Tafirenyika, president of the Zimbabwe Urban and Rural Council Nurses Workers Union, said some ministry officials were exploiting the situation by demanding hefty bribes to expedite documents.

The government, which has also doubled the
document application fee to $300, did not respond to requests for comment, but ministers have repeatedly voiced concern over the exodus of doctors and nurses abroad.

Vice President Constantino Chiwenga, who has announced plans to criminalise the foreign recruitment of health staff, says it is wrong that Zimbabwe spends vast sums training health workers only for them to be poached by richer countries.

But nurses say it is unfair for the government to stop them leaving when many of them earn less than $100 a month.

Red list

More than 4,000 health workers, including more than 2,600 nurses, left Zimbabwe in 2021 and 2022, according to official statistics.

Traditional destinations include Canada, Australia and Britain where the starting salary for a nurse is about £28,400 ($34,490).

The World Health Organization this year added Zimbabwe to a “red list” of countries with pressing health worker shortages.

In 2020, Zimbabwe had 2,1 nurses and midwives per 1,000 people, less than a quarter of the number in Britain, according to the latest World Bank data.

Britain, which relies heavily on overseas trained nurses to plug its own staff shortages, has stopped actively recruiting from Zimbabwe. However, this does not prevent nurses applying for jobs directly.

More than 4,330 nurses trained in Zimbabwe are registered with Britain’s Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

A spokeswoman for NMC said it was aware of the issue with verification letters in Zimbabwe although some were still coming through.

Union president Tafirenyika said nurses were also migrating without verification letters to do non-nursing jobs.

He said some were even taking short first aid courses in order to get an internationally recognised “nurse aid” certificate – a route to less skilled jobs in health and social care.

Strike ban

Jane, who has 10 years’ experience, works at a hospital in the capital Harare. But her $200 monthly salary does not cover her bills so she also sells clothes and perfumes online.

Other nurses she knows juggle hospital shifts with selling clothes and groceries illegally on the streets where they are often chased by police.

“They endure all this to put food on the table,” Jane said. “Some nurses spend the whole day without eating anything at work.”

A significant problem for nurses is that their salary is paid in a mix of US dollars and Zimbabwean dollars.

With most shops and businesses charging in US dollars, nurses have to convert the portion paid in local currency, which has plunged in value this year.

Jane said 5% of her salary vanished in bank charges and a quarter went on commuting to and from her home in Harare’s outskirts.

Thousands of nurses and doctors went on strike last year demanding a major pay raise and calling for their wages to be paid entirely in US dollars.

In January, Zimbabwe banned healthcare workers from striking for more than three days, introducing penalties of up to six months in jail.

Patients pay for own drugs

Nurses said they were also frustrated working in a broken health system with little opportunity to further their careers.

Hospitals not only lack equipment, including ventilators and X-ray machines, but even painkillers and rubber gloves can be in short supply.

Nurses said patients often had to buy their own drugs.

"The situation is really pitiful," said Jane. “There’s no equipment for some procedures leading to a lot of cancellations.

“Women are delivering babies without linen and have to sleep on the floor after giving birth. There is no lignocaine (local anaesthetic) if they need stitches so they have to buy it themselves.”

Tanaka, 28, who works at another Harare hospital, is also demoralised.

“It’s tough to ask patients to buy their own drugs – imagine, even paracetamol!” she said.

“We work without PPE (protective clothing). I fear for my health. Enough is enough.”

Tanaka had hoped to relocate to Britain in the summer after receiving a job offer last year but is still awaiting her verification letter.

“I was afraid when they said they want to bring in a law to bar us from going. That is scary,” said Tanaka, who only gave her first name.

Migrating is not cheap.

She has already spent $1,200 on taking a professional exam required to be able to work in Britain and on other expenses.

She also needs to pay for an English language test and TB test but has put these on hold amid uncertainty over whether the government will issue her document.

Tanaka, who has a 5-year-old daughter, knows life in Britain is expensive – average monthly rents top £2,000 in parts of London – but she says she cannot afford to stay in Zimbabwe.

“I take home a paltry $200. It’s not enough to feed my family or even buy clothes for my kid. I have no choice,” she said.
Beitbridge women use poverty relief funds to start thriving businesses

By UNICEF

Jacqueline Mbedzi's face lights up when she talks about how she built her thriving business from monthly payments under a programme meant to alleviate poverty among Zimbabwe's vulnerable households.

Mbedzi, a single mother of two from Beitbridge, high-density suburb of Duhlívhadzimu, is one of many beneficiaries of the Emergency Social Cash Transfer (ESCT) programme implemented by UNICEF, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and World Vision with financial support from the governments of Sweden and Germany that have seen a significant turnaround in their lives.

The programme was rolled out to help reduce food insecurity and improve dietary diversity and maternal and child health outcomes of vulnerable households in Zimbabwe, whose situation was worsened by the outbreak of COVID-19 three years ago.

After enrolling on the programme last year, Mbedzi persuaded her three friends, Constance Ndlovu and Nyarai Sithole, also from Duhlívhadzimu, to start a savings club from the ESCT monthly payouts to raise capital to start their businesses.

The project had been on hold until she started a savings club with her friends using the ESCT payouts.

‘At that time, I could not even afford a bag of cement, but UNICEF’s intervention was the turning point for me as I am now building my shop,’ Mbedzi said.

‘I am doing this so my children have an inheritance when I die.

‘Together with my friends, we research fast-moving goods for resale so our businesses flourish.

‘I rent a shop in my rural area and from the little that I get I make sure that I at least buy two bags of cement a month for the builders back home.’

She attributes her business success to the mentorship she received from World Vision after enrolling on the ESCT programme.

Thanks to World Vision, UNICEF

Mbedzi religiously keeps records of her transactions to monitor the progress of her business and to avoid eating into her capital reserves.

‘I am so thankful to World Vision and UNICEF for what they have done for my family,’ she said.

“They have given me dignity and I promise that I am not looking back.”

Jacqueline Mbedzi (right), a single mother of two from Beitbridge’s high-density suburb of Duhlívhadzimu, persuaded her three friends Constance Ndlovu (left) and Nyarai Sithole (middle), also from Duhlívhadzimu, to start a savings club from the ESCT monthly payouts to raise capital to start their businesses, UNICEF/Zimbabwe, 2023/Kudzai Tinago

UNICEFZimbabwe/2023/ Kudzai TinangoForistance Gumbi (40) of Duhlívhadzimu West, who used her monthly US$52 ESCT payout to start a mobile vending business where she sells clothes at cattle sales in rural Beitbridge.

Gumbi also joined a savings club in her neighbourhood and is now able to take care of her cancer stricken husband and their two children.

“My husband suffered a stroke and has cancer on his leg and he just returned home after about three months as he was receiving treatment for his condition,” she said.

“During that time I had to make sure that he has food and other provisions. I also had to take care of other responsibilities at home.

“When I was enrolled into the programme, I used the money to start a vending business and I am very grateful to World Vision and UNICEF for giving me the capital and the confidence to do something to sustain my family.”

Women capable of being breadwinners

Gumbi encouraged other women facing similar challenges to believe in themselves as “women are also capable of being breadwinners” like in her case where she is able buy food for her family, pay rentals and send children to school.

Ellan Tisó, a mother of three from Beitbridge’s Mfelandawonye high density suburb, said she used the US$52 ESCT payout to pay school fees for her children and to buy food for the family.

“Initially I was getting US$48 and later it was increased to US$52,” Tisó said.

“This money helped us a lot to pay for the children’s school fees and we would not struggle to have food on the table.

“People were able to find means to survive and those that were running small businesses such as vending got a boost from the cash transfers and they have improved their livelihoods.

“They also managed to send their children to school as they were able to pay school fees on time.”

He attributed the success of the programme to the collaboration between government departments, the local authority, UNICEF and World Vision.

“We appreciate the efforts by our government and its international partners such as World Vision and UNICEF in assisting vulnerable communities,” Mungodzwa said.

“We had other departments such as the Department of Social Development, Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Beitbridge Municipality as well as the local residents association that assisted us to go deeper into areas with the most vulnerable people.”

JACQUELINE Mbedzi’s face lights up when she talks about how she built her thriving business from monthly payments under a programme meant to alleviate poverty among Zimbabwe’s vulnerable households.

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“Initially I was getting US$48 and later it was increased to US$52,” Tisó said.

“This money helped us a lot to pay for the children’s school fees and we would not struggle to have food on the table.

“People were able to find means to survive and those that were running small businesses such as vending got a boost from the cash transfers and they have improved their livelihoods.

“They also managed to send their children to school as they were able to pay school fees on time.”

He attributed the success of the programme to the collaboration between government departments, the local authority, UNICEF and World Vision.

“We appreciate the efforts by our government and its international partners such as World Vision and UNICEF in assisting vulnerable communities,” Mungodzwa said.

“We had other departments such as the Department of Social Development, Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Beitbridge Municipality as well as the local residents association that assisted us to go deeper into areas with the most vulnerable people.”
Zimbabwe must rise again

By Bafana Phalane

ZIMBABWE stands as a beacon of hope for all countries trying to escape the Western hegemony of power. The history of Western power play in Africa is a complex and controversial discourse spanning centuries. The 19th century marked the beginning of a profound colonial history whose repercussions would be felt decades and probably many centuries after. This was a period of significant oppression, European countries such as Belgium, France, Britain and Portugal were some of the most brutal colonial powers.

Zimbabwe endures various sanctions imposed by the West over several reasons such as irregularities in politics, economic activities, and human rights. President Robert Mugabe’s regime was heavily criticized for human rights abuses, some critics pointed to irregularities in election processes, political violence and suppression of political opposition. The land reform program implementation was also one of the events that led to sanctions, land reform commenced in the early 2000s. This was often considered to have been a violent process by those who sympathized with the white farmers. Some Western countries raised concerns about these events and eventually started calls for sanctions.

The collapse of the economy sparked an internal controversy, some of Mugabe’s allies heavily criticized the decision to seize land but that did not stop Mugabe from carrying the plan forward. Before we blame Mugabe for Zimbabwe’s woes, we need to explore the reasons that led to the implementation of the land reform policy. The land question in Zimbabwe is a colossal discourse dating back to the colonial era when the country was still known as Rhodesia. The British colonial rulers dispossessed fertile lands from indigenous Africans and bequeathed it to European settlers, this resulted in a severely imbalanced society caused by inequitable distribution of land. Robert Mugabe’s government encountered mounting pressure from the black majority to address these historical injustices, especially the inequalities caused by historical land dispossession. This was promised by Robert Mugabe at the dawn of independence in 1980. Mugabe’s government made a promise to carry out land reform to correct the past injustices. The cries of the people were justified.

Zimbabwe faced severe economic challenges towards the late 1990s, skyrocketing altitudes of poverty and unemployment were starting to be a thorn to Mugabe’s regime. The Western-sponsored political rivals were also gaining traction, the Western propaganda machinery was in full swing, and international blackmailing was used by the Western bloc to put pressure on Mugabe. Robert Mugabe was left with no chance but to give the people what they wanted, land. Land seizing from the white farmers was a response to
the events by the embattled struggle hero. Mugabe was swiftly losing popularity; commercial farms were then seized by Mugabe’s government to appease the disenfranchised black population and to trounce the ever-growing political opposition. All these efforts did not achieve the intended outcome for Mugabe. The government continued to endure a popularity decline, and the West took advantage of this situation and further aggravated it, employing media, and sanctions to depose Robert Mugabe once and for all. Western involvement in African countries has never helped Africans instead it has worsened African problems.

The West is to blame for the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe, the economic decline broke the social fibre. Families and communities were broken as millions left the country to find opportunities elsewhere. Some reports state that about 30 percent of Zimbabweans live outside Zimbabwe. The West should be called out for all the atrocities they commit worldwide. Neo-colonialism is in full swing, and developing countries are primary targets of the West. The situation in Zimbabwe is a perfect example of neo-colonial pressure, these are Western tactics to maintain white economic dominance. Robert Mugabe heavily criticized the former prime minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair for interfering in Zimbabwe’s internal affairs including funding opposition parties and promoting regime change. Mugabe referred to Blair as “an international terrorist”. The diplomatic tension between the UK and Zimbabwe continues to this day. Like many victims of the West, Zimbabwe will rise and its people shall be free from the shackles of the West. President Emmerson Mnangagwa often echoes positive sentiments on the economic situation. African renaissance is imperative now more than ever.

The West’s involvement in foreign governments should be rejected with the contempt it deserves. The Zimbabwe situation should be a mirror we use to judge ourselves. When we allow the enemy to come in between us the repercussions will surely be profound. Africa belongs to Africans so are her minerals and all its riches.

Bafana Phalane is a South African public policy analyst with interests in climate change and social justice.
Author Tsitsi Mapepa Shares Her Zimbabwe With the World Through Debut Novel ‘Ndima Ndima’

By Nadia Neophytou
okayafrica.com

THERE is much to adore about Tsitsi Mapepa’s debut novel, Ndima Ndima. There’s Nyeredzi, the headstrong young girl with a vivid imagination who readers follow over the course of a decade as she grows up in a burgeoning suburb of Harare. There’s her mother Zuva, a steadfast role model whose words both calm and inspire those she meets. And there’s Zimbabwe itself, from its rich red soil to its Msasa trees, lovingly described by Mapepa with every stroke of her pen.

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Ndima Ndima is told through vignettes revolving around the Taha family. The novel alternates between Zuva’s perspective and that of Nyeredzi, who is her youngest child, as it details their relationship not just with each other, but with Zimbabwe itself – its culture, its past and its future.

At the core of the book is Nyeredzi’s yearning to know more about her ancestors, something the Zimbabwe-born author herself learned more about during the course of writing it. “I grew up Christian, so I wasn’t really exposed to the kinds of things that Nyeredzi is exposed to,” she tells OkayAfrica, over Zoom from Auckland, in New Zealand, where she lives. “Writing this book sort of closes that gap between me and my ancestors; where you feel like you’re reaching out to a part of yourself that you haven’t been able to reach before.”

Mapepa wrote the novel during the lockdown of 2020, when she was completing her Master’s in Creative Writing at the University of Auckland. While juggling homeschooling her three children and her studies, she carved out time in the wee hours of the morning to write. Last month, she was awarded a residency at her alma mater’s inaugural Writers’ Room where she’ll be able to develop more of her ideas at a much more acceptable time of day.

Mapepa spoke to OkayAfrica about her writing process and making up words for her novel.

The interview has been edited for length and clarity.
OkayAfrica: This is your debut novel – how long had it been in your mind to write?
Tsitsi Mapepa: Since I was young, I’ve been the kind of girl who observes things from afar. [In the book], each story is like somebody trying to tell a story of a thing that they may have witnessed, or maybe things that they have just created. But most of it comes from the things that I used to observe when I was young. Way back, just before I started school, I told my mom that I wanted to be a writer. This was after I had heard Tsitsi Dangarembga on the radio – my mom used to call me, and say, ‘Come listen to Tsitsi Dangarembga on the radio.’ One day, I told her that I wanted to be a writer. But then when I was in primary school, I forgot about it. I was thinking of becoming a pilot, or becoming a nurse or a designer, all these other things.

And then when I was in high school, my writing came back. That’s when I started writing poetry and short stories. I tried to write a novel, which I never finished. But this is how it went. So most of the stories that you see in the book, they are the stories that I’ve been wanting to tell since way back.

The way that you do it, it’s almost like vignettes that come together to tell the whole story – what was your process like writing Ndima Ndima?
I don’t write things in order, honestly speaking. I was jumping here and there. If I thought of something I wanted to write about, like womanhood, then I’d jump straight away to write about that. But I definitely made sure that it linked to something from the previous stories, like [the chapter titled] “The Return” was linked to [the chapter titled] “The Call of Ancestors.” So I was trying to make these things link, and make sure the reader won’t get lost while reading it. It’s beautiful to see the relationship between Zuva and her daughter Nyeredzi develop – it’s based on a personal relationship or is it observational, from a relationship you’ve seen?
I would like to say yes and no. These stories have been taken from my life, yes, but also, at the same time, most of the things in this book, I’ve created them. But when it comes to the characters, I took them from the people I respect; people who are very close to me. I wanted to show the relationship that I have with them, and remember them and keep them in my heart forever through the words I write on the page.

In writing Ndima Ndima, it’s like you create a tribute to not just Zimbabwe but to being a Zimbabwean outside of the country, living away from your home country. I’m always homesick. Honestly speaking, I’m always homesick. The landscape of [New Zealand] is different to the one of Zimbabwe. So I was trying to put down an image that is unknown to some of my readers, and trying to relive the moments that I had when I was growing up. Writing this was like me reaching out to something that is missing inside my soul. It was so fulfilling when it comes to the country, living away from it. These stories have been taken from my life, yes, but also, at the same time, most of the things in this book, I’ve created them. But when it comes to the characters, I took them from the people I respect; people who are very close to me. I respected those people, so I wanted to show the relationship that I have with them, and remember them and keep them in my heart forever through the words I write on the page.

The book starts in the early ‘90s, dips back into the Second Chimurenga War in the ‘60s, and ends in the mid-2000s – had you intended from the start to cover this time period and inject some history into the story?
I know the ‘90s very well, better than any other time because I grew up during that time, and so I wanted to put things that I am familiar with in the book. I’m writing fiction, but it’s realistic fiction. So when it comes to the ‘60s, I had to do research about that. I’ve always been fascinated about that time, and I had the idea at the last minute to use the viewpoint of a woman [who is a soldier in the war].

What do you enjoy about writing?
When I’m writing I weigh a lot of things and think of a better way to communicate with the world. My aim is mainly to change how people perceive things worldwide. We are not always on the same page, and I know it takes time for people to accept change or even change. My words only ask the reader’s empathy and understanding, with the hope that one day we’ll view things the same way and be kind to one another.
Zimbabwean truckers head to court to stop unlawful ‘purging’ by SA employers

By Ciaran Ryan

JOHANNESBURG - Several Zimbabwean truckers rushed to the Durban High Court this week seeking an urgent interdict to stop their employers terminating their employment on the grounds that they are illegal immigrants.

The respondents in the case are the employer, Image Freight Logistics, the ministers of Transport, Labour and Home Affairs, and the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI).

The case was brought by the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit Holders Association (Zepha) and 11 truck drivers who say their employer advised them by WhatsApp message that they were effectively fired by the employers, is that affected ZEP holders and their dependents would be destitute and in dire straits.

“Both the police and the Department of Home Affairs are independent and operate strictly within the parameters of applicable statutes, none of which delegate the NBCRFLI with any power,” says Advocate Simba Chitando, who is representing Zepha in court.

“Please note that you do not have a valid work permit. Therefore, you are not legal to drive (sic) a South African truck.

“Take note, that if you are currently doing a trip, it will be your last one,” reads the WhatsApp message sent by the employer on 28 October.

Bargaining council circular

This follows a circular by the industry bargaining council on 24 October calling on employers to stop hiring foreign truck drivers because it is not a scarce skill, and would help to address unemployment and curb unrest.

“The industry bargaining council has no authority to enforce immigration laws or to assume the powers of the police,” says Advocate Simba Chitando, who is representing Zepha in court.

“Both the police and the Department of Home Affairs are independent and operate strictly within the parameters of applicable statutes, none of which delegate the NBCRFLI with any power. The courts have made it clear that ZEP holders and their dependents are not undocumented migrants and have a lawful right to live and work in South Africa.”
Renowned US-based artist Nora Chipaumire named visiting professor at German university

By Agencies

UNITED STATES-BASED Zimbabwean artist Nora Chipaumire has been named Valeska Gert Visiting Professor at Freie Universität Berlin for the 2023/2024 winter semester.

The internationally renowned dancer and choreographer will be showcasing her artistic work in two public events at the Akademie der Künste to celebrate her artistry. The first of these will be held on October 24, 2023, where she will examine dance in the university context. The event will be in English and is free of charge. Members of the public are warmly invited to attend.

Chipaumire was born in 1965 in what was then known as Umtali, Rhodesia (now Mutare, Zimbabwe). A four-time Bessie Award winner and proud recipient of the 2016 Trisha McKenzie Memorial Award for her impact on the dance community in Zimbabwe, Chipaumire was also nominated for a NAMA Award as an exiled Zimbabwean making an impact on the arts at home and abroad in 2020.

Chipaumire has also been honoured by arts communities around the globe, having received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (2021), a Guggenheim Fellowship (2018), a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant (2016), a Doris Duke Artist Award (2015), and a Princeton Hodder Fellowship (2014).

In the opening event of Nora Chipaumire's Valeska Gert Visiting Professorship on October 24, 2023, at the Akademie der Künste, the renowned dancer and choreographer will critically address dance in the university context and explore self-examination, reflection, and transformation through physical manifesto.

In the subsequent conversation with Lucia Ruprecht and Lindsey Drury, Chipaumire will discuss her artistic practice of Nhaka and how it informs her decades of work in many university-led initiatives – often as the only person of colour (or African), or artist of colour, present.

As Chipaumire writes, “In an era when study, knowledge, and the role of the university as a place to gather are being questioned and queried, one could also ask: what about the artist as guest in these fundamental institutions? What is expected from them, what should their role be? How does the artist enhance the interrogations and make way for other unexplored mindsets and thoughts?”

As Valeska Gert Visiting Professor, Chipaumire will be collaborating with master's degree students in the dance studies program on her long-term research project “Nhaka,” a technology-based practice and process to her artistic work. She explains, “Nhaka (inheritance, legacy – in Shona language) is an anistim de-colonial practice and theory that I have been cultivating. The work and philosophy owe its genealogy to Shona culture and Shona spiritual practices. I have been decoding, recoding, and coding strategies on how to discipline and build the physical body, in hopes of developing an organism that can reflect and produce gestures that expand our understanding of the human and the relationship of the human organism with the natural and spiritual world.”

The closing event of chipaumire’s Valeska Gert Visiting Professorship will take place on February 6, 2024. The Valeska Gert Visiting Professorship is hosted jointly by Freie Universität Berlin's master's degree program in dance studies, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and the Akademie der Künste (AdK).

The visiting professorship takes its name from Valeska Gert (1892–1978), one of the most innovative and prominent avant-garde dancers of her time, whose work was heavily influenced by the city of Berlin. The professorship's namesake stands for dancers and performers who show great potential and are leaving their mark on the world of dance.
Coventry elected to IOC executive board

SEVEN-TIME Olympic medalist Kirsty Coventry was elected in an unopposed race for a spot on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Board at the annual IOC session last month in Mumbai, India.

Coventry was voted in by a 71-9 margin, with two abstentions. The 40-year-old from Zimbabwe had previous experience on the Executive Board as chair of the IOC Athletes’ Commission from 2018-21. After her stint with the IOC Athletes’ Commission, Coventry was approved as a full member of the IOC in 2021. She also works on planning committees for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics. According to InsideTheGames.com, Coventry is considered “a likely contender to succeed Thomas Bach as IOC President in 2025,” but some are calling for an Olympic Charter amendment that would allow Bach to run again despite the established term limits.

Coventry, who won the 200 back at both the 2004 and 2008 Olympics, is responsible for all-but-one of the country’s Olympic medals all-time; the other was a gold medal in field hockey at the 1980 Olympics. A five-time Olympian for Zimbabwe, she retired from swimming in 2016 following the Rio Games and began a career in politics, becoming Zimbabwe’s Minister of Youth, Sport, Arts, and Recreation in 2018.

Coventry joins the IOC Executive Board featuring Robin Mitchell (Fiji), Denis Oswald (Switzerland), Nenad Lalovic (Serbia), Ivo Ferriani (Italy), Mikaela Cojuangco Jaworski (Philippines), Gerardo Werthein, (Argentina), Kristin Kloster (Norway), Emma Terho (Finland), and Prince Feisal Al Husein (Jordan). Coventry is the only representative from Africa.

Coventry had a busy month of October as she was also one of the headliners of the 2023 International Swimming Hall of Fame class along with Michael Phelps.
FORMER Zimbabwe national football player and head coach Rahman Gumbo has died aged 56, with the local football fraternity mourning one of the country’s leading figures in the game.

A legend in Zimbabwe football, Gumbo had a successful coaching career spanning over two decades where he has coached and won a lot of silverware with countless clubs locally as well as in the region.

Gumbo, who was an integral member of one of Zimbabwe’s most successful Warriors squad which was popularly known as the Dream team collapsed at his home in Palapye, Botswana on Thursday and passed away at a Francistown hospital on Friday.

The Warriors legend was the head coach of Botswana Premier League side Morupule Wanderers before he was shown the exit door last week.

Gumbo’s last local top-flight job was in the domestic Castle Lager Premiership with the relegated Gweru-based die TelOne in 2019 while he has also had stints with Highlanders, CAPS United, FC Platinum, Chicken Inn, and other clubs in South Africa and Malawi.

However, it was in Botswana where Gumbo had become a very familiar face in recent years after several stints in the Botswana Premier League having coached some of the top teams in that country such as Township Rollers, Gaborone United and Mochudi Centre Chiefs.

In fact, the Zimbabwean gaffer, who holds the distinction of having won league titles in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi, won the Botswana league title with Township Rollers in 2010.

Gumbo also coached the senior national team, the Warriors. He initially held the national team coaching job in 2005 but was subsequently dismissed following a 3-0 loss against Nigeria in addition to two other separate stints in 2012 and June 2019.

By Sports Reporter