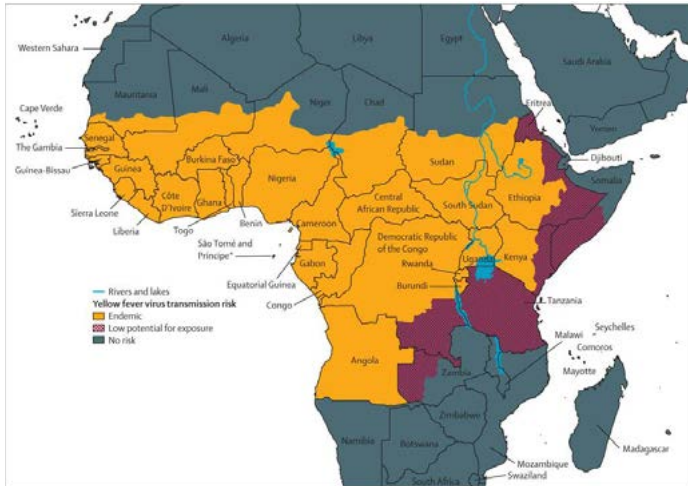


Yellow fever breaks out in neighbouring countries



Yellow fever has broken out in both Angola and the DR Congo, and the size of the outbreak has health officials concerned. Yellow fever is carried by the same variety of mosquito that also spreads dengue fever and the Zika virus, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has stated that the yellow fever outbreak in Angola could pose "a threat for the entire world". The first case

was reported in Angola in December 2015, but today 16 of 18 provinces are affected, and the virus has since spread to the DR Congo. The WHO has recorded 1,708 suspected cases in Angola, with 238 deaths, while 21 people have died in the DR Congo. In Zambia, Health Ministry acting spokesman George Sikazwe told ZANIS that government has put in place sensitisation programmes in all border districts and surrounding areas.

! Yellow fever



Yellow fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes, mainly *Aedes aegypti* (picture), although other *Aedes* and *Haemagogus* mosquitoes can serve as a vector for the virus as well. The virus is endemic in tropical areas of Africa and Latin America, but an estimated 90% of the infections occur in Africa. Transmission is carried from monkeys to humans and between fellow humans. The majority of people who contract yellow fever have mild flu-like symptoms and will recover within a few days. However, around 15% of cases progress to a second

more serious stage, which results in jaundice (hence the name), bleeding, multiple organ failure and death in about 50% of the patients. There is no cure for yellow fever. Treatment is symptomatic. Vaccination is the most important preventive measure. A single dose confers life-long immunity, according to WHO. The vaccine provides effective immunity within 10 days for more than 90% of people vaccinated and within 30 days for 99% of people vaccinated.

! ... in Zambia?

In 2011, the WHO changed its yellow fever classification for Zambia from having "no" to "low" risk of yellow fever in Northwestern and Western Provinces due a combination of historical risk and the need to ensure mapping coherence with Angola. South Africa and other countries duly started to demand vaccination certificates from Zambian travellers – thereby inconveniencing the tourism industry – which led to protests from the Zambian government. After carrying out a new survey in 2014, the WHO declared Zambia free of yellow fever in January 2015, according to the Zambia Tourism Board.

325,000 vaccinated against cholera in Lusaka

Authorities have vaccinated almost 325,000 people in Lusaka against cholera. They are targeting over 550,000 people. Authorities expect to see a reduction in new cases over the next week or so. Since cholera broke out in Lusaka District in February 2016, 789 cases have been recorded, with 15 deaths.

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Zambia is placed 40th out of 125 countries on the new Good Country Index

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Editor's note

We are less than four months away from the general elections on 11 August 2016, which will be combined with a referendum on the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, or so we have been told. Yet, we are in complete darkness as to how this will be done. The Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy, as it protects the rights of all citizens, and ensures that government does not infringe on these rights. This is where citizens are secured social justice and economic development, as the Bill of Rights upholds values of human dignity, equality and freedom. Not too much to ask for in Zambia where government sometimes forget that its role is to govern on behalf of the people rather than itself. Yet, government remains surprisingly mute on how it intends to carry out this quite challenging exercise of holding three elections (president, MPs and councillors) and a referendum simultaneously. One must hope it is not in the process of forgetting about the referendum.

Government to own embassies

Zambia's foreign missions will in the future be allowed to acquire mortgages in respective host countries for embassies, consulates and houses for diplomatic staff in order to cut high rental costs. Zambia spent K14.7 million on rentals in the first quarter of 2015.

US ambassador's house renovated

Zambia has just concluded the rehabilitation of the residence of Zambia's ambassador to the US (\$1.3 million) and a second house (\$221,655) both located in Washington DC. Neither of the properties has been rehabilitated since they were purchased in the early 1960s. The embassy (picture) is still undergoing rehabilitation.



Diplomats with skills

Minister of Foreign Affairs Harry Kalaba told the Daily Mail that government is formulating the Foreign Service Bill with the objective of ensuring that staff in the foreign service are qualified to do their job. It was uncertain how high in the ranks the new bill would go. Currently, all diplomats are handpicked by the president.

13 opposition parties endorse Lungu

Thirteen minor opposition parties have endorsed the candidature of President Lungu (PF) in the general election in August 2016. The parties have formed the National Opposition Alliance (NOA) together with the ruling PF party to campaign for Lungu's re-election. But NOA wants more than that: "This is beyond just endorsement, but an adoption which will see a long-term working relationship with PF, while maintaining our individual political parties' identity and ideologies," the alliance's president Edwin Sakala stated.

Party	Leader	Political presence
Zambia Direct Democracy Movement	Edwin Sakala	177 votes in the 2011 election for the national assembly.
Christian Democratic Party	Daniel Pule	Established in 2013. Contested the 2015 presidential by-election, achieving 3,293 votes.
Zambia Development Conference	Joseph Sichivula	The party's founder, Dean Mungomba, came second in the presidential elections in 1996. Founded 1995, then disbanded to join alliance in 1999, but later re-established as the Zambia Development Conference.
New Congress Party	Peter Chanda	Established before 2006, but no political presence.
National Party	Richard Kambulu	Established in 1993. 193 votes in the 2011 election for the national assembly.
Citizens' Democratic Party	Not clear	Established 2010. 168 votes in the 2011 election for the national assembly.
Party for Unity, Democracy and Development	Not clear	Established in 2006, but no political presence.
Humanity Party	Faustina Chileshe	Established in 1997, but no political presence.
United Party for Democracy and Development	Not clear	308 votes in the 2011 election for the national assembly.
National Democratic Party	Not clear	Established in 1992, but no political presence.
Common Cause Democracy	Not clear	Established in 1996, but no political presence.
All People's Congress Party	Nason Msoni	Contested presidential election in 2006, coming 5th with 20,921 votes. In 2011, garnered 139 votes in the election for the national assembly.
Peoples Redemption Party	Not clear	Established in 2007, but no political presence.

Sampa's party deregistered for good

The Supreme Court has upheld the High Court's decision to uphold government's decision to deregister former PF MP Miles Sampa's new Democratic Front (DF) party over an ownership dispute. Soon after Sampa launched the DF in January 2016, lawyer David Chanda claimed that he was the rightful owner of the party. Sampa's party was seen as a threat by the ruling PF party, as it appeals to stalwart supporters of the late President Sata. Sampa is yet to comment.

PF official arrested for assaulting journalists

Police have arrested PF youth chairman in Petauke, Jay Banda, for assaulting two journalists – Peter Sukwa (Post) and Kelvin Phiri (Feel Free) – in Eastern Province in December 2015. The journalists were trying to verify reports that the ruling PF party was handing out NRCs to Malawians, but were both beaten up, and Sukwa was also abducted, urinated in the mouth and almost set alight. PF Vubwi Chairman Michael Tembo was arrested earlier.

Zambia is a good global citizen

Zambia is placed 40th out of 125 countries on the Good Country Index. This new index seeks to measure how much each country contributes to the planet and to the human race, relative to its size in GDP. It uses 35 datasets from the UN and other international organisations to list a country according to whether it is a net creditor to mankind, a burden on the planet, or something in between. The index looks at 7 categories (science and technology, culture, international peace and security, world order, planet and climate, prosperity and equality, health and wellbeing). Top-5 countries are Ireland, Finland, Switzerland, Netherlands and New Zealand. Bottom-5 are Libya, Vietnam, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Angola.

More at <http://goodcountry.org/index/overall-rankings>

Kwacha - world's best performing currency!

The Kwacha has gone from being the world's third-worst performing currency in 2015 to the best this year, out of 150 currencies tracked by Bloomberg, following its rapid appreciation over past weeks. According to government, the appreciation is all due to its own wise interventions. According to the opposition, it is caused by government manipulating the economy, either by pumping in foreign currency or by pulling out Kwacha. Either way, the Kwacha is now depreciating again. After having almost breached K9.0 per US dollar, it is currently trading at K9.3.

Moody's downgrades Zambia

The international rating agency, Moody's Investors Service, has downgraded its sovereign credit rating for Zambia from B2 to B3, and changed its economic outlook from 'stable' to 'negative'. Moody's last made changes in September 2015, when it downgraded Zambia from B1 to B2, but changed its economic outlook from 'negative' to 'stable'.

Moody's explained that this week's downgrade was driven by greater-than-anticipated fiscal slippages in 2016, leading to material liquidity pressures and significant challenges to finance the budget deficit. It also highlighted the prospect of further deterioration in Zambia's debt matrix in a lower growth environment, with the government debt likely to exceed 60% of GDP by 2018. Sustainable fiscal consolidation will be challenging against the background of persistent structural weaknesses, particularly electricity shortages and low copper prices. Moody's latest growth projections assume just 3-3.5% growth in 2016.

At the last downgrade in September 2015, government told investors to ignore the "unsolicited credit downgrade", explaining that it only has contracts with the other two rating agencies, Fitch and Standard & Poor's. However, government's efforts to downplay Moody's downgrade only attracted tut-tuts from analysts, and spurred the Kwacha's depreciation - just like now (see above). This time, however, government chose to not query the downgrade.

Moody's this week also lowered Zambia's long-term foreign-currency bond ceiling to B1 from Ba3, its long-term foreign-currency deposit ceiling to Caa1 from B3, and its long-term local-currency bond and deposit ceilings to Ba2 from Ba1.

Quotes on donors



The continuous criticism that is coming from the opposition on the issues of mealie meal is a shame, because some of them are involved in the scams. We have information that they are involved in the smuggling of the commodity, so that they can portray the country as if there is [food] insecurity when there is enough.

Minister of Tourism and Arts Jean Kapata accusing the opposition of being behind the shortage of mealie meal (Daily Mail 18).

The issue of amending the Public Order Act has been on the lips of many stakeholders in the country, and oftentimes the nation is told it will be amended, only to hear that the piece of legislation is good in its draconian form. It is now becoming increasingly difficult to believe there is enough political will to amend the POA. If the latest pronouncement by the Minister is to be taken seriously there is need for his Ministry and that of Justice to share with the nation a concrete roadmap on how the POA will be amended.

Southern African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (SACCORD) Director Boniface Cheembe expressing what many commentators fear (Lusaka Times 15). Last week, Home Affairs Minister Davies Mwila stated that government was ready to present a bill to amend the controversial Public Order Act (POA).

Our people, in Zambia and the DRC, share common traditions, cultures, blood and bilateral relationships. We have come to talk about trade in maize and mealie meal. As you know, maize is our staple food for both Zambia and the DRC. As such, [DRC] President Kabila has tasked me to come and find a solution on how best we can be trading in essential commodities, especially maize and mealie meal.

Congolese Mines Minister Martin Kabwelulu appealing to President Lungu to relax its restrictions for export of maize and mealie meal (Daily Nation 20).

Zambia has indicated to us that they would certainly be interested in discussing and pursuing an IMF-supported programme, and we remain open to beginning those discussions. We have in the context of these spring meetings had our usual discussions that we do with all country authorities including Zambia. And we expect that those preparatory discussions will be a good underpinning for ultimately preparing a programme that the Zambians would want to take forward, but we don't see the full preparation of that programme until the fourth quarter of this year, after the elections in Zambia.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Director of the African Department Antoinette Sayeh on the side-lines of IMF's Springs Meetings in Washington, US (Lusaka Times 17).

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Ritual killings lead to xenophobic attacks

The discovery this week of another man believed to have been ritually killed (see Fact Box) led to widespread riots in Lusaka, including looting of shops and houses belonging to foreigners, as residents vented their fear. A Rwandan man was burned to death, and a Zambian man was beaten to death.

The unrest took off on 16 April in Chunga Township, when residents protested against the police's failure to bring the perpetrators to book. The protest was reportedly sparked by a rumour that police had arrested two people in connection with the ritual killings.

Government suggested that the opposition was to blame for the killings, with President Lungu supporting the notion on 17 April, when he explained that the police had arrested four suspects: "Those sponsoring killings for political powers to go to State House will now be exposed following the arrest of four people with human ribs and organs in Lusaka," Lungu said, according to the Post.

And the Daily Mail in its editorial on 18 April accused either "business people eager to get rich quickly", "miracle-seeking pastors who need magical powers" or "foreigners from countries that practise ritual killings" of being behind the killings, expressing what many people believed.

That same day, pandemonium broke out in several townships. The riots started in George and Zingalume Townships in Lusaka West, but quickly spread to neighbouring Matero. Residents looted shops and houses belonging to Rwandans in particular. Foreigners took refuge at police stations, while some brave residents sought to protect their shops and the police post in Zingalume from being vandalised for the second time (the police post was set on fire in March after the discovery of the first four bodies). The riots spread to Mandevu, Chipata, Chaiza and Kabanana Townships in the north, and there were also reports of unrest in Lilanda and Chunga in the west and in Garden Township in town.

Some residents said they were tired of living in fear, while others complained that Rwandan nationals were taking all the business opportunities. One rumour claimed that human body parts had been found in a shop belonging to a Rwandan. Another suggested that the police had arrested a foreign national for the ritual killings, but then let him go. The police clarified that the foreigner had been arrested for breach of peace and had been released after paying a fine. The police also warned people against spreading false rumours on the Internet, explaining that this was a scheme used by criminals to loot shops belonging to both foreigners and Zambians. They denied that a nurse had been arrested, that a baby or body parts had been found in a fridge belonging to a foreign national, and that chloroform had been used.

In the evening on 18



April, Home Affairs Minister Davies Mwila stated that the police had deployed enough officers to end the violent attacks. "Today has been a very sad day for our country. Contrary to the false rumour being spread by criminal elements, the police have been working around the clock to bring the killings to an end. The anti-social and criminal conduct seen in the high-density areas north and west of the city of Lusaka must come to an immediate end. We must avoid taking the law into our own hands".

However, on 19 April, residents in 10 Miles north of Lusaka, in Bauleni and Chainta to the east, and in Chawama to the south also rioted and looted shops belonging to Rwandan and Burundian nationals, while unrest resumed in some of the townships first affected.

Accordingly, government had to call in the army. President Lungu made a special order to deploy 440 soldiers to patrol the affected townships. Lungu threatened "drastic measures" if the riots were politically instigated. This was after PF Secretary General Mumbi Phiri alleged that the main opposition UPND party was inciting Zambians to rise against foreigners by claiming that foreigners were helping the ruling PF party rig the up-coming election (see page 6).

The attacks were reminiscent of those carried out on foreigners in South Africa in the beginning of 2015, which almost resulted in a diplomatic crisis, as neighbouring countries had to evacuate their citizens from South Africa. Commentators in Zambia were therefore quick to condemn the violence, including the Human Rights Commission, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the Law Association of Zambia, the Council of Churches and the opposition in the form of Hakainde Hichilema (UPND) and Edith Nawakwi (FDD).

The police first apprehended 4 people in connection with the ritual murders. The 4 were found in possession of articles that are being subjected to forensic examination to determine whether they were human flesh or not. Later, the police apprehended another 7 people. 2 of the arrested people are foreigners.

A total of 257 residents were arrested for riotous behaviour.

62 shops were looted, but some goods have been recovered.

2 people died in Kanyama. 1 Rwandan man was burned to death, while 3 Zambians were badly beaten, and 1 of them has since died.

! The killings

A total of 6 young men have been ritually killed in Lusaka in the last month:

1-4. George Township: Four male bodies are found with missing ears and genitals on 17 March. Two of the victims are identified as Alex Zulu, 21, and Alias Phiri, 18.

5. Lilanda Township: The body of Amon Sichamba, 21, of Zingalume Township, is found with missing heart, ears and genitals on 6 April. The body parts were later found by a church in Lilanda.

6. George Township: Anthony Mwaba, 30, of George Township, is found without heart, ears and genitals on 16 April.

Ritual killings are not a new phenomenon in Zambia. In 2015, within the space of one month, a man in Kitwe was murdered and had his rectum and armpit skin removed, a teenage girl was killed in Kapiri Mposhi and had her tongue and breasts removed, and an albino woman was found murdered in Lundazi with both hands cut off and several teeth extracted. Body parts are typically used by traditional healers or witchdoctors for medicines alleged to attract money and power. Ritual killing is a common practice across sub-Saharan Africa with regular reports from Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Tanzania and Malawi. Ritual killings, which are closely linked to superstitious mind-sets and beliefs, are rooted in poverty and poor education.

More than 300 people from Rwanda, Burundi and the DR Congo sought protection at Saint Ignatius Catholic Church in Lusaka. One Congolese man, Jose Umugwaneza, expressed surprise to see few individuals fanning the riots, arguing that Zambians were good and peaceful people. President Lungu visited the church, and apologised for the attacks.

Price control on mealie meal?

President Lungu told people at a political rally in Chipata that government would sign a Statutory Instrument (SI) on 18 April to regulate the price of mealie meal, but nothing more has been heard of the SI.

GBM's trucks impounded

Government's maize anti-smuggling security team has in Mkushi impounded "trucks carrying thousands of bags of mealie meal" belonging to Arizona Transport, owned by Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba (GBM), former PF minister, current UPND vice-president. Citing "sources", the Daily Mail explained that the mealie meal was being transported during the prohibited time. Government recently imposed a ban on transport of mealie meal from 18:00 to 06:00.

Two political giants in TV debate?

UPND vice-president Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba (GBM) has agreed to meet Chief Government Spokesman Chishimba Kambwili in a live TV debate on political issues between heavyweights (both are big around the girth). Kambwili came up with the idea, after he turned down GBM's offer of a beauty contest. He scheduled the debate for 21 April at the New Government Complex in Lusaka, but GBM has objected to the venue for security reasons.

GMO food in Shoprite

The National Bio-safety Authority (NBA) has allowed Shoprite to import foodstuffs that may contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs), in this case soya, reported the Daily Mail. Foodstuffs include bacon, chocolate, Robertson's spices, Aromat seasoning, Knorr soups and Pronutro cereals.

PELUM objects to genetically modified cotton



The Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Association (PELUM) is objecting to possible field trials with genetically modified cotton in Zambia. In 2013, the Cotton Development Trust applied to the National Bio-Safety Authority for permission to carry out field trials in Zambia. It is still awaiting approval, but has expressed optimism that it will be granted. However, PELUM is concerned about the increasing pressure from multinational companies in Africa, arguing that genetically modified crops are threatening small-scale farmers and food security in Zambia (see Fact Box).

! Bt cotton

Bt cotton is a genetically modified cotton variety, which is producing its own insecticide. The toxins are produced thanks to inserted genes from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). The main pests in commercial cotton are lepidopteran bollworms, which are killed when they eat the genetically modified cotton. This eliminates the need to use large amounts of broad-spectrum insecticides, proponents argue, while opponents point out that Bt cotton is ineffective against many other pests, and that Bt resistance does develop. Proponents have also highlighted the higher yields, but opponents point out that the quality (ginnery ratio) may suffer. BT cotton has exploded globally, but some developing countries have struggled to adopt the variety, with Burkina Faso recently abandoning Bt cotton. The technology is prone to failure in the absence of very specific and onerous management techniques unsuitable to smallholder farming communities in Africa. Seeds must be re-purchased every year, potentially crippling small-scale farmers with debt; refuge strips of non-Bt cotton must be planted, a lot of extra work for no return; and Bt cotton needs greater amounts of water and fertilizer.

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Will Al Ghurair print ballot papers?

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) clarified that it would award the contract for printing of ballot papers for the general election in August 2016 to Al Ghurair Printing & Publishing LLC in Dubai – irrespective of protests from the opposition – if none of the other bidders objected by 21 April. “We did everything according to the Zambia Public Procurement Act, and the laws are clear. From the shortlisted firms, we came down to two, and Al Ghurair Printing & Publishing LLC of Dubai was recommended by the commission,” ECZ Director Priscilla Isaac told ZNBC.

However, another bidder has in fact objected, at least according to the Post, which quoted from correspondence between Ren-Form CC Printing Company of South Africa and Isaac. Ren-Form on 11 April: Al Ghurair’s bid is double the price of Ren-Form’s. Isaac on 14 April: Ren-Form was non-compliant with regards to binding and finishing as well as other specifications. Ren-Form on 15 April: we comply 100%, and even go beyond paper specifications (all details at <http://www.postzambia.com/news.php?id=17483>). There were a total of 13 bidders. Ren-Form was the cheapest at \$1.7 million. Al Ghurair bid \$3.6 million, while the most expensive bidder, Printfloor Private Limited bid \$9.1 million.

The opposition has expressed concern about Al Ghurair, arguing that they were involved in the elections in Uganda in February 2016, which were marred by allegations of irregularities. In fact, the UPND has written to the ECZ to object to the choice of Al Ghurair.

UPND accuses government of rigging

Douglas Syakalima, advisor to UPND president Hakainde Hichilema, has accused the ruling PF party of planning to rig the general elections with the help of foreign advisors. Syakalima told the Post that the advisors include Chris Rugari of Uganda, Adi Timor and her husband Isaac Livni of Israel and General Wesley Clark of the Enverra Global Voice Group in the US. He encouraged Zambians to effect a citizen’s arrest on the quartet.

Sources at State House confirmed that President Lungu had been visited by Rugari and Livni, supplying the Post with their phone numbers, after which the Post called Rugari and Livni, who both denied any involvement.

The ruling PF party was not amused. Its deputy spokesman Frank Bwalya challenged the UPND to report to the police any foreign national allegedly involved in rigging. He also told the Daily Mail that UPND’s continued talk of rigging is a recipe for violence, while PF Secretary General Mumbi Phiri took it one step further: “We have already witnessed foreign nationals who have become victims of violence following a series of ritualised murders, and Mr Siakalima is inflaming the emotions of Zambians to arrest our brothers and sisters of foreign origin. It is unacceptable and unfortunate,” she told the Daily Nation.

UPND takes Grade 12 to court

The main opposition UPND party has sued the state in the Constitutional Court, asking it to interpret the Grade 12 requirement in the new Constitution. Last week, the state asked the High Court in Ndola to do the same, arguing that a higher qualification should allow a person to stand for a political office. The new Constitution requires that all MPs and local government councillors must possess a minimum qualification of Grade 12, or equivalent, but many of the existing politicians do not possess a Grade 12 certificate, although some of them have similar or higher qualifications.

EIU predicts HH will win

The respected Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) has predicted that opposition UPND president Hakainde Hichilema will win the election in August 2016. In its forecast report for April, the EIU writes that the defections to UPND of former PF Vice-President Guy Scott and the late President Sata’s nephew, former PF minister Miles Sampa, “will help UPND win the elections”, adding that the PF “is likely to be unseated without backing from more than Mr [Nevers] Mumba’s faction within the MMD”.

The ruling PF party was obviously not impressed. PF Secretary General Davies Chama called the prediction “mere speculations”. And State House went even further: President Lungu’s spokesman Amos Chanda pointed out that the EIU had got its predictions wrong in the four previous elections: “In 2006, they predicted a PF win, but PF lost. In 2008, they predicted UPND would win, but MMD won, and PF was second. In 2011, they predicted a win for RB (...), but RB lost, and PF won. In 2015, they predicted an easy opposition victory (...) PF won,” he told the Daily Mail. He argued that the EIU’s analyses were based on the premise that “a western leaning capitalist-thinking candidate must win”.

Chanda is not entirely correct. The EIU releases regular bulletins and its predictions tend to change. Take 2011 as an example. In May, four months ahead of the general elections, the EIU predicted that the elections “could result in a transfer of power from the president, Rupiah Banda [RB]”, but in August, one month ahead of the elections, it stated that they “are slightly more likely to deliver a victory to the president, Rupiah Banda”. Michael Sata of PF won.

There are currently just fewer than four months to the general elections on 11 August.

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Nchito fails to halt tribunal

Suspended Director of Public Prosecution Mutembo Nchito has lost a renewed application for judicial review of the tribunal set up by President Lungu to investigate him in May 2015. Nchito, a close ally of the late President Sata, is accused of having acted in his own interest in cases involving himself and a business partner. Nchito has made several attempts in court at stopping the tribunal, so far in vain.

LAZ gets female president

Lawyers in Zambia have elected Linda Kasonde as new president of the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ). Kasonde beat two other contenders, Sydney Chisenga and Kafula Mwiche, to become the association's first female president. Kasonde takes over from George Chisanga. Eddie Mwitwa was elected vice-president. LAZ represents the legal profession in Zambia, and often comments on current affairs.

Police search UPND lawyer

Police have searched the business premises of lawyer Martha Mushipe, who is associated with the main opposition UPND party, after a five-day standoff over the legality of the search. Police were looking for seditious documents linking UPND to plans to use violence to win the general elections, but none were found, reported Lusaka Times.

Bus licences suspended... for 2 days

The Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) has suspended the operating licences of Mazhandu Family Bus Services and Wada Chovu Bus Services for one month. The companies were ordered to take all their drivers for driving lessons and tests before the suspension can be lifted. However, two days later, Minister of Transport and Communications Kapembwa Simbao re-instated the licences after representation from the bus operators. He called for a meeting with all stakeholders. The two companies were involved in accidents earlier this month, resulting in 7 and 25 people dying, respectively.

Ex-railway boss in corruption probe

The Anti-Corruption Commission has confirmed that it is investigating former Zambia Railways CEO Muyenga Atanga on unspecified allegations. Atanga's two-year rule, which lasted until June 2015, was marred by corruption allegations. In 2014, Atanga suspended two directors and two employees, unofficially because they had leaked information about mismanagement of funds at Zambia Railways. Atanga is the husband of Bridget Atanga, the ruling PF party's former deputy secretary general under Sata, but she has since joined the main opposition UPND party.

Lusaka roads due for upgrade

The Road Development Agency (RDA) has told the Daily Nation that some of the major roads in Lusaka in urgent need of repairs, such as Lumumba Road, Mungwi Road, Mukwa Road and parts of Kabwe Road, are earmarked for complete rehabilitation under the Lusaka 400 (L400) Road Project. Lumumba Road is even scheduled to be expanded to six lanes. Phase I of the project is supposed to be concluded by the end of July 2016, after which RDA expects Phase II of the 4-year L400 to commence. However, RDA Spokeswoman Loyce Saili did not comment on funds available.

The Lusaka City Council has embarked on routine road maintenance and street light installation throughout the city.



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Only 48 elephants in Sioma Ngwezi National Park



The Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) has long been considered one of the last strongholds of the African elephant – with as many as 250,000 elephants. But the latest statistics from the Great Elephant Census, an ambitious elephant-counting project, paints a grim picture in KAZA TFCA's Zambian portion. "The Kwando area of southwestern Zambia is experiencing the worst poaching of any major savannah elephant population," said the project's coordinator Mike Chase.

For the past two years, the Great Elephant Census has flown surveys covering 460,000 kilometres across 20 African countries in a first-ever effort to reliably count 90% of savannah elephants (not to be confused with West Africa's forest elephants).

The results for Zambia, released in March, show that overall elephant numbers in the country are stable. But in the southwest, especially in the 5,000 km² Sioma Ngwezi National Park, the decline has been catastrophic with an estimated drop in elephant numbers of 95%.

The Great Elephant Census counts both live elephants and elephant carcasses to establish a carcass ratio. A ratio below 8% allows a population to remain stable, but in Sioma Ngwezi, the census recorded 48 live elephants and 280 carcasses, equivalent to a carcass ratio of 85%. By comparison, the ratio in Tanzania and Mozambique, which have seen drastic and well-publicised population declines, is around 40%.

Poachers operate with impunity in Sioma Ngwezi because there isn't much human activity in the form of tourism, research or anti-poaching. In addition, poachers have an easy escape route. "Within a matter of minutes they can be in four different countries, knowing that local law enforcement officials will not pursue them across international borders," Chase said.

And it's not just the elephants that are in trouble. The aerial survey showed that clear-cutting of centuries-old teak forests is occurring in the park on a devastating scale. "Illegal logging is (...) turning the Sioma Ngwezi forests into deserts".

Chase believes that the high poaching levels, coupled with habitat loss, have forced most of Sioma Ngwezi's remaining elephants to migrate to the safety of neighbouring Botswana.

KAZA TFCA is under the direction of the Peace Parks Foundation. This multinational governmental and private enterprise organisation promotes biodiversity, job creation through nature conservation, and regional peace and stability through the establishment of cross-border conservation areas.

Peace Parks has lauded KAZA TFCA as one of the great "African successes", southern Africa's "premier tourist destination for viewing elephants" and "the vehicle for socioeconomic development in the region". And when Deputy Minister of Tourism Patrick Ngoma opened the Sioma Ngwezi Park headquarters in January 2016, he highlighted the "successes that have been brought about by the law enforcement authorities in combating poaching".

However, KAZA TFCA is seemingly suffering from the lack of political cooperation – and could do with a multinational armed force to stop criminal activity.

Source: Adam Cruise/National Geographic – read the full article at <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160406-elephants-wiped-out-alarming-scale-Southern-Africa>

! KAZA TFCA

The Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) straddles five countries – Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. It includes 36 national parks, game reserves, community conservancies and game management areas. In Zambia it encompasses the Sioma Ngwezi and Kafue National Parks as well as Lake Kariba and Victoria Falls. It is hoped that the KAZA TFCA and its associated single-visa system will attract millions of tourists, create employment for thousands of people and stimulate socio-economic development. The KAZA TFCA has been underway since December 2006, when the ministers responsible for tourism in the five participating countries signed a memorandum of understanding about its creation. The hub of the KAZA TFCA is the Victoria Falls, with Katima Mulilo in Namibia as its administrative centre.

KAZA visa resumes after half year without stickers

Government has explained that the issuance of the KAZA uni-visa will resume on 1 May 2016, after authorities ran out of stickers in November 2015.

... and more news

Permanent Secretary dies

General Education Permanent Secretary Chishimba Nkossa has died in Lusaka after a short illness.

Expat drowns in river

A 30-year-old South African man has drowned in Kwando River in Shangombo District, Western Province. The man was operating an excavator, which plunged into the river, after the riverbank collapsed. He was working for Clay Disposal Zambia Limited, which is developing the Shangombo-Rivungu Canal for cross-border transport between Zambia and Angola. His name was withheld as the next of kin had not been informed.

Jailed 15 years for defilement

Faindani Banda has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for defiling a 7-year-old girl in Kitwe in January 2015, reported the Post.

Don't call your neighbour a prostitute!

Theresa Lupiya of George Township in Lusaka has been charged K5,000 for undressing her neighbour, Nokutula Mbewe, in public and for calling her a prostitute. Mbewe allegedly believed that Lupiya was having an affair with her husband, reported the Times of Zambia.

Zambia Weekly

... for busy people

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