

African Voices

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Editorial

N. Kitikiti

Welcome to a new year of African Voices!

This month's issue focuses on the Darfur Crisis but we have some other interesting articles about the effect of the mining industry on Africa, African leaders, African football and an essay on realizing homeland. I would encourage you all to visit the savedarfur.org website to learn more about the crisis in Sudan and to contact Jimmy Longun (jlongun@macalester.edu) or Maria Patrocollo (mpatrocollo@macalester.edu) about getting involved with campus programming surrounding this issue

Thanks to all of you who contributed to African Voices! We truly appreciate your support! I would really love to receive more articles from especially our new members. This is your chance to have your voices heard.

Eniov!



Children's pictures emerge from sudan

By Jessica Mowles

In the Spring of 2005, Human Rights Watch researchers Dr. Annie Sparrow and Olivier Bercault visited Sudanese refugee camps in Eastern Chad with the intent to assess the issues of protection and sexual violence in the camps. As an afterthought, Dr. Sparrow packed crayons and paper into her bags, thinking she would ask the children to draw as the researchers talked with their guardians. Without any instruction or guidance, the children drew of their experiences in Darfur. Sparrow and Bercault noticed the exquisite, wrenching detail of the children's depictions, and began interviewing the children on just what they had drawn. They asked non-directive questions, like "What is happening here?" and got answers as graphic as, "These men in green are taking the women and the girls, they are forcing them to be wife," from Mahmoud, age 13, or "My hut is burning after being hit by a bomb... she is dead, because she has been shot in the face," from Leila, age 9.

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CHILDREN'S PICTURES EMERGE FROM SUDAN

By Jessica Mowles
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CHILDREN'S PICTURES EMERGE

By Jessica Mowles

Some drew radio transmitters and cell phones: "She wants to call the agencies for help", Doa', age 12, says of a woman she drew holding the hand of a soldier. Many children also depicted the planes and weapons used by the Janjaweed in great detail, prompting the researchers to compare the types of weapons depicted and the types received by the Sudanese government from the former Soviet Union. Interestingly, the two matched up astonishingly well, making the Sudanese government's claims of ignorance to the violence somewhat less credible.

Beyond serving as evidence in a case against the Sudanese government, the refugee children's pictures allow for communities to see the heart of this very human crisis. The children, after all, exist outside politics, economics, and world affairs; all they know is what they have experienced. The medium of crayon on paper is familiar yet made shockingly horrifying by their sketchings, drawing people further in. Sometimes, when statistics and facts can seem overwhelming, examining something as simple as the drawing of a child helps to put everything in perspective.

** To sign a student-generated petition condemning the violence in Sudan, go to www.petitiononline.com/Darfur/petition.html.

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MINING INDUSTRY TAKES TOLL ON CONTINENT

By Jessica Mowles

When we hear of Africa, we hear of the problems. The famine in Niger, the controversial genocide in Sudan, the child soldiering in northern Uganda. We don't, as frequently; hear of the causes, the roots of these problems. The global linkages between places that cause poverty in some and wealth in others are often deemed too complex, too accusatory, or too boring to accompany sensationalistic pictures of distended bellies, machete wounds, and the like. But as Macalester students, we all know that in order to fairly address the problems, we must first examine their roots.

For Africans of all regions, mining companies primarily controlled by Western interests have contributed in myriad ways to many of the overarching problems we hear of so often. For lesser developed countries, mining is usually considered an economic opportunity at first, but due to current mining technology and procedures, not to mention mining corporations' low standards for human rights, the reality is that local communities bear the costs of mining in the form of displacement, loss of traditional livelihoods, environmental damage and pollution, long-term economic problems, and deteriorating public health. The benefits of the mine usually go to the company itself and the central government, with little of the profit benefiting the host community. In Tarkwa, Ghana, a cyanide spill from a gold mine resulted in poisoned water for five villages, and combined with other factors related to the gold mine there, forced the displacement of 30,000 residents. The Tarkwa spill was one of five similar spills in Ghana over a seven-year period, contaminating untold numbers of water sources and displacing thousands.

Furthermore, competition to control gold mines and trading routes often leads to gross human rights abuses which multinational mining companies either participate in directly or exploit to their benefit. Clashes between large-scale gold miner Ashanti Goldfield and artisanal miners of the Sansu community in Ghana led to an established pattern of human rights abuses committed by the mining giant, in the form of violent attacks and murder.

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As Human Rights Watch reports, competition between armed groups in the northeast corner of the Democratic Republic of Congo has spurred the bloody conflict that has gripped the area since the start of the Congolese war in 1998 and continues today. By not backing out of the region, Anglo Gold Ashanti supported and sustained the ethic slaughter, torture, and rape that occurred there, which directly caused the deaths of over 60,000 people.

These crimes against communities and environments are not exceptions; indeed, they are the rule when it comes to the mining industry. Current mining practices involve using poisonous chemicals such as cyanide and mercury to clean extracted gold, with spills and pollution commonplace, and the 20 tons of waste produced by making one gold ring often lands in rivers or oceans, contaminating water and food sources. When the industry's social tactics are examined, a consistent pattern emerges of disregard for community rights to free, prior, and informed consent as well as other basic human rights. Finally, Jeffrey Sachs and Andrew Warner have determined through extensive studies that the higher a country's dependence on natural resource exports, the slower the per capital growth. The finite nature of gold and other minerals continue to add to the detrimental, unsustainable long-term economic impact of mining.

It's cliché, but as students the best way to contribute is to educate ourselves on these issues so that we can make informed decisions and, in turn, inform others. One way to begin learning is to participate in or attend the events of the No Dirty Gold Campaign, which is a part of Macalester's Campaign for Global Community Survival. To bring this issue directly to Mac's campus, the campaign is hosting a documentary on the effects of mining in Choropampa, Peru on October 19th, tabling during the Family Fest weekend during which Macalester's class rings will be unveiled, and planning a Hunger Banquet in November to raise awareness of the issue. Signature cards will also be placed throughout campus for those interested to pledge their support of finding more responsible, respectful, and sustainable methods of mining. Ultimately, the No Dirty Gold campaign seeks to send this message to gold retailers, supported by thousands of student voices. Working together, we can begin to reverse this horrific situation to the benefit of communities everywhere.

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FREEDOM

**Golden sun rays rises from the East
Blood red sunrays flash to the West
Rocks rolling on medieval ragged
terrain**

**Like miser our ancestors lived with no
terror**

**With wit and joy- they worshiped
mother Earth!**

**They
worshiped cattle! They worshiped spirits! They
wandered the wilderness with contentment!
The epoch of free will and peace in their midst!**

**But their children now inhabit the
land of Sodom and Gomorrah.
Submerged in the sea of despair, they
burn in mortal fires.**

**They
shriek and haul in search of paradise.
Like lost dragon lords, they wage immortal wars.
In the darkness they drink the blood
of their ancestors.**

**Like desert lilies, their bodies are
twisted by years of war.**

**Their minds confused by too many
diluted memories,**

They wage genocide!

They wage Genocide! Genocide!

**At sunrise: the wasted remnants of men eat the soil
Their flesh sunken between fragile bones and soil.**

**With tears of pain and death, the
children weep.**

**Like ocean debris in swift current,
they have no course!**

**But: the sun still rises in their land.
The spirits of their ancestors still
dwell**

**The day will come,
Champagne in glasses,**

**They will cherish their ancestry,
The brotherhood of the spear,**

**The true spirit of their blood,
United in body and soul,**

They will see peace!

**Poem written by
Jimmy Longun Sam (Uganda/Sudan)**

SUDAN: ARE WE DRIVEN BY DESTINY?

By Jimmy Longun

I hope many of you are quite familiar with the recent developments in Sudan. A lot has been said about this country, especially on the on going violation of Human rights in the conflict stricken region of Darfur. The upheavals that have rocked Sudan are so complex and inherently rooted in the country's history that it would be a great mistake to judge the situation at face value. In order to understand the tribulations that have crippled Sudan, we need to comprehend the historical relationships and interactions among the current inhabitants of this country.

Far and foremost, Sudan, a country located in Northern Africa, is occupied by different groups of people with diverse historical backgrounds. The inhabitants of Sudan are divided into three major categories: The Northerners, who inhabit the north of the country, consist of Arab and Nubian groups; they are Muslims, speak Arabic language and follow Arab cultural patterns. The westerners occupy the western part of Sudan; they are called so because they emigrated from West Africa during the 20th century. The Southerners comprise the Nilotic and Sudanic peoples. The main ethnic groups in the south are the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Bari, and Azande.

This is probably not accidental, but it turns out that Sudan is the biggest country in Africa. Besides its size, this country is endowed with a lot of natural resources: Copper, salt, Manganese, Gypsum, Mica, and above all, enormous petroleum deposits. The country is predominantly agricultural, though much of the farming is subsistence. In the late 1950's, Sudan's economic development was described as excellent and no doubt in the 21st century, Sudan should have inevitably featured in the list of the most developed African countries. Unfortunately, Sudan has done nothing in developmental terms other than witness its economy crumble to dust. Rather than being named as agent for development in this increasingly globalized 21st century, Sudan is instead accused of: Human rights abuse, ethnic cleaning, terrorism and so forth. It seemed that the different groups of people inhabiting Sudan initially lived in harmony and, certainly, they could have devoted themselves to developing their country and share its fortune. Something definitely went wrong, what was it?

Just as I had mentioned earlier, the various groups of people inhabiting Sudan indeed lived in harmony, until the colonization era. In the later stage of the industrial revolution, the idea to colonize Africa was not only confined to European countries but also some African countries. The two countries that strived to control Sudan during the colonial era were Egypt and Britain. The ill-assorted interaction between these two colonizers did not only set the country into disarray, but also created tribal, ethnic and racial hostilities whose negative repercussions have haunted the people of Sudan until the 21st Century. During the period of colonization of Sudan, Britain and Egypt had series of disagreements especially on how to get the most out of their power. In the attempt to stamp their authority over Sudan, Britain and Egypt had different priorities; the latter was interested in Islamization of Sudan and the former took a more subtle strategy to divide and dominate. At the dawn of the 20th century, Britain instituted a policy of isolating Southern Sudan by administering it separately from the North, and as we shall see later, this was indeed the beginning of the inevitable: an acrimonious relationship between the South and the North whose devastating consequences will rock Sudan in the years to come.

After enduring almost five decades of colonial rule, Sudan finally gained independence in 1956. But this was not all, the initial hostility between the North and South had filtered deep in the heart of those who inhabited southern Sudan, and no doubt, they did not welcome the arrival of the so called 'unprecedented freedom'. During this period, Khartoum was established as the administrative headquarter, and when Sudan gained independence, the Southerners feared that the Muslim North would dominate the new nation. The Muslim North had been very notorious, especially in its policy to Islamize and implement sharia law in the South. The southerners did not like this, and with no hesitance, they picked up their rifles and vehemently revolted against the North.

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HOW FAR CAN AFRICAN LEADERS GO?

BY DOROTHY GONDWE

We, Africans value two important things in our lives, pride and integrity. This could be controversial in a number of ways but my purpose for the above statement is not to exclude certain groups of people but rather to approach the standpoint of most of our African leaders.

We all know how HIV has devastated our economies, our political spheres, our social conducts and the list is endless. One of the major areas that HIV and AIDS have largely affected in our countries is our morals. How have our morals changed since the endemic swept our nations? Have we taken any responsibility towards serving our large infected populations?

It took African governments a considerable period of time to respond to the problem of HIV and AIDS and address it as a national crisis and dilemma. Almost all SADC member countries have addressed the problem in one way or the other as a national crisis that needs intervention from the most influential facet of our countries, our governments. Since political sphere largely affects other spheres of development in African countries, the significance of political leaders' involvement in the education, training and treatment programs are crucial in order to bring about a change to the social and moral patterns that contribute to a rise in HIV infection rates.

As a result, HIV and AIDS became a political debate as to whether leaders should personally participate in the national efforts by being more open about the issues concerning HIV and AIDS. Several leaders of African countries mostly hit by the syndrome have had several approaches about the issue of openness.

In Tanzania, President Benjamin Mkapa continues to urge people to visit HIV testing centers and actually wait for their tests results! There has been a trend where people take HIV tests and disappear before receiving their tests results perhaps from the fear of learning their HIV status. The testing centers are established in all the 25 regions in the country and testing is free for all people below 21 years of age. The president has also established an exclusive evening news program once a month dedicated to addressing to the public the development of the efforts by local HIV education and awareness groups as well as the status of

the government's efforts towards getting free anti-retroviral treatment to reduce the symptoms and pain for the infected.

In Uganda, active efforts by President Yoweri Museveni have paid their dues as the rates of infections fell as a result of increasing governmental and public efforts. There have been similar efforts and projects in other countries south of the Sahara that I won't mention here because of the time and space but the above serve as examples. Now what I am I getting at here?

Recently I came across an article on the BBC news African news section that was entitled "Zambia leader rejects HIV order". This was very intriguing to me as far as my interests in governments' intervention in HIV and AIDS crisis is concerned.

Apparently according to BBC, President Levy Mwanawasa of Zambia rejected the Zambia Medical Association (ZMA) pledge for presidential candidates to reveal their HIV status to the public. The ZMA arguments are on the basis of the decreased performance of the candidates infected with HIV in the presidential office once elected.

The first reaction we all probably have here is, 'that's unethical and discriminatory'. Unsurprisingly, that was exactly Mwanawasa's reaction towards the pledge.

His arguments were largely on claims of violation of medical ethics and issues of privacy and voluntary testing. This is perfectly understandable as far as privacy is concerned and anybody being in his position would probably hold the same views especially for such a pledge coming from doctors.

Playing devil's advocate is not my aim here but I am concerned about the consequences of President Mwanawasa's reaction to the public. What does this say about the motivation and dedication that president Mwanawasa is willing to give his country in times when the government claims to be at the forefront and the model for people's motivation to visit testing centers? How does his reaction affect the political sphere's dynamic in terms of opposition political parties counter reaction? What does this say about the government officials currently infected with HIV?

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SUDAN: ARE WE DRIVEN BY DESTINY (*CONTINUED*)

In the years following the country's independence, the Muslim North ran the political and economic machinery of Sudan. The increased domination of the South by the North led to the formation of the Sudan people's Liberation Army (SPLA), a movement meant to liberate Southern Sudanese from the stringent and overwhelming law of sharia [a.k.a, tooth for tooth, eye for eye]. The southerners' strive for irredentism, social equality and economic emancipation led Sudan to one of Africa's longest fought Wars. The Sudan people's Liberation Army led by their charismatic leader John Garang de Mabiior, fought for the rights of the Southern Sudanese. The consequences of this War were immense as more than 2 millions Sudanese perished and several million others displaced into neighboring countries.

Some of us might wonder why the War took so long and why the two sides could not come to an amnesty. One of the reasons was because the Sudan people's Liberation Army had long lost trust in the Muslim North, apparently because of their lack of credibility. For many years, the Northerners had been exploiting Sudan's oil resources at the expense of the disenfranchised South. The Southerners did not believe in negotiations anymore and hence was the 21-year-old War that ended this year in January; after a comprehensive peace agreement was signed in Nairobi.

When many Southern Sudanese had already given up any hopes of ever having peace again, a comprehensive peace agreement was signed to end the 21-year-old war. On receiving the good news, they rejoiced and celebrated in emblematic style. But the questions now is- will this mark the era of peace for Sudan? The answer to this question is certainly no because even now, there are still conflicts between the Muslim North and people in other parts of the country, especially in the Darfur region of western Sudan. The main cause of the conflict between the Muslim North and people in the Darfur region is not different from the one I had elaborated earlier. The conflicts between the other groups and the Muslim North closely follow the same pattern: economic exploitation and under- representation in governmental affairs. Like the South, the western Sudan region of Darfur had been neglected for many years. They have been regarded as second-class citizens by the Muslim North and therefore ostracized from the main stream governing system. With increased pressure from the UN, Sudan [the Muslim North] is now accused of arming predominantly Arab militias called the 'Janjaweed' to attack villages belonging to civilians in Darfur. The so-called 'Janjaweed' militias are known to have committed a string of atrocities: slaughtering men, raping women and vandalizing property. These accusations are truly undeniable given the historical pattern of conflicts

between the domineering Muslim North and the other inhabitants of Sudan. The intention to crush down the rebellion in Darfur is one way the Muslim North has been involved in 'ethnic cleansing' over the years

What is actually more annoying is the fact that these claims are piled on Sudan as a whole- not particularly on the Muslim North. Rather than strengthening ties with other African countries like Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya etc, Sudan has instead had a lot to do with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria and Iraq. The United States has especially been critical of Sudan's ties with some of these Middle Eastern countries on grounds of terrorism. Due to increased suspicion about Sudan, in 1998, the US bombed a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, suspecting it of manufacturing chemical weapons. Seriously, being a Sudanese, I feel betrayed when such accusations are heaped on one's country. Did we choose to be branded as 'enemies of global peace' or is it just fate?

It appears that Sudan's good image has now been ruined. People's opinions of Sudan are now guided by: their perception of Sudan's relationship with the Middle East, the dogmatic stand of the government to perpetuate human suffering, especially in Darfur, and many more. In one of the Human rights journals, Sudan was cited by the UN Human rights commission for human-rights violations, condemned for supporting terrorism abroad, and accused of ethnic cleansing in its fight against the south. Now that the UN has actually failed to solve the on going conflict in Darfur, what then could be the solution? To be honest, the UN can continue to pile sanctions on Sudan and call them all sorts of names, but this will never change the situation. The only people who can establish tranquility, harmony and trust in Sudan are the Sudanese themselves. The current government has to everyone give equal rights to every one of her citizens: politically, socially and economically. In this way, we will escape the potent and irresistible muscle of destiny.

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HOW FAR CAN AFRICAN LEADERS GO?

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In attempting to answer the above questions let start with asking ourselves as to who qualifies as a good leader. At least the shortest description of a good leader is the one who values responsibility, obligation, and has 'exceptional' dedication to the course of his nation. Most importantly, a good leader is one that is a good example to the people. Primarily, that is the central reason why people chose one candidate over the equally politically sound opponents.

To answer the first question above, Mwanawasa clearly does not go out of his way to make a difference by declaring that he will never publicly reveal his HIV status. He is clearly not a good example in advocating his own government's efforts towards the HIV national crisis. Yes, we all have to play our part and clearly any one leader does not have to do what he thinks is unethical. At the same time we should be aware of the level of the crisis. The HIV crisis has reached a level where we need genuine extra efforts from our leaders not just for the sake of the popularity.

For either political reasons or obligation the opposition political parties have endorsed the pledge. Therefore, to answer the second question above, President Mwanawasa's reaction will most likely affect his standpoint from the public's viewpoint and favor his opponents'. As much as we do not like to think that HIV and AIDS will be used as a political tool to win popularity from the public during presidential campaigns, we are already in a stage where we cannot prevent that from happening.

However, the most important issue that I find in this BBC article is the need to critically analyze the ZMA's claim in what Prof. Samatar would call 'scholastic detail'. There could be a long tail of reasons as to why ZMA put forward a proposal that they know would jeopardize their work ethics. It is possible that the present government officials who are infected by the virus spend large lump sums of money for treatment abroad. This laundering of the public's funds for personal interests might have been the reason for the doctors' outcry. It seems to me leaders use the implication that the more money they spend for extravagant checkups and treatment abroad, the better they serve their countries. What about hundreds of thousands of people dying in the villages because they do not have the opportunity to get the basic treatment let alone extravagant one?

Another possible reason is that, clearly doctors know the efforts HIV infected people have to put towards maintaining their health. One of those requirements is to be able to balance strenuous work schedules and enough rest that is important for a healthier life. Political endeavors require a lot of traveling and long hours of work, which are likely to impair performance. Once performance is impaired, milestones set for the term of the presidency are unlikely to be met. Of course there has been countless number of times when goals declared at the beginning of the new presidency terms have not been met. It is especially significant now that African countries improve their economic well-being because countries are losing the labor force to HIV and AIDS. Millions of orphans left behind from parents who die of the disease cannot get their basic needs and opportunities such as education. Governments are better off doing their best when they can and to do that, as we can begin to see, needs an extra dimension of commitment and obligation.

I will leave this column with a statement that our governments should start to take responsibility for their own people. Pride and integrity comes in abundance when we successfully accomplish a rather difficult milestone. I think that milestone should be to give the people of Africa the reason to trust their leaders again by their genuine commitment towards the eradication of the most deadly roadblock to our total emancipation, HIV and AIDS.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4294088.stm>
Thursday, 29 September 2005.

For more information visit
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm>

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REALIZING HOMELAND

By IHOTU ALI

I grew up with an understanding of Nigeria only as clear as a few moments of video footage, and I could not conceive of its image beyond the three-by-five inches captured in a handful of water-stained photographs. Nigeria was the homeland of my father and would have been mine as well, if it weren't for an unfortunate turn of events that sent us rushing back into the security of the United States.

I was raised as an American and, besides the occasional goat meat cooking in our kitchen and the vague sense that my father spoke with an accent, I had no reason to contest that fact. I never learned more than a few phrases in my father's native tongue, and although we took family pictures in traditional Nigerian dress, I never learned to tie my own headscarf.

My American mother raised me during the latter half of my adolescence and thus hopes of eventually learning to prepare fufu and draw soup, learning the Idoma language, and how to tie a beautiful headscarf slowly faded with time. I lived a more or less "American" life, and only distantly remembered Nigeria as the setting for stories of my grandfather, the chief of Ichama, or of "NEPA" who "takes the light." Nigeria was the place of my earliest, foggiest memories.

On the morning of December 14, 2004, my brother and I boarded a plane that took us first to Amsterdam, Holland, where I used non-American currency for the first time, and then we continued to our final destination: Abuja, Nigeria. The reality of Nigeria was overwhelming: the white linoleum floors of the airport, the dark-lipped smile of the immigration officer, the warm winds of midnight, the arms of my cousins, aunts, uncles, and distant "others" that embraced me with equal intensity. They told me stories of my childhood as I tried to memorize their names, and they told me over and over again: *Welcome to your homeland.*

I spent four weeks in various areas throughout southern Nigeria, and when I returned I realized that I could not package and communicate my experience to everyone who asked. I had returned with certain novelties, such as a newly braided head of hair and gifts and jewelry from merchants on the Lagos beach, but didn't tote the

elated sentiments of a typical study abroad returnee. The trip had been monumental in the sheer fact that I hadn't seen my father's homeland since before the coming of my first tooth, but the experience had been less "life transforming" than it was "life affirming."

Being in Nigeria had given life and depth to the people and places of my treasured photographs and allowed me to learn the sound of the voices of my family. I did not experience culture shock – I had known many of the cultural traditions – but the vibrant colors and lively movements of the Omabe masquerade dance delighted me, since I had only witnessed such a performance in faded photographs. Everything felt vaguely familiar, as if I had experienced it already, and despite knowing America as the land of my birth and of my adolescence, I realized that Nigeria was also my homeland.

I had always felt uncomfortable referring to Nigeria as "back home," as my father did. I felt I had been too Americanized, I didn't know the customs and couldn't speak the language, and I had been away from the country far too long to consider it my home. However, I came to realize that it is not the number of years spent so much as the strength of bonds cultivated that tie a person to a home. My return to Nigeria revived bonds that had laid dormant for years, and offered me an experience of ease, comfort, and an underlying sentiment of *Welcome to your homeland.*

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GERMANY WORLD CUP 2006: THE COUNTDOWN

BY JIMMY LONGUN

When many soccer countries all over the world were struggling to book their places in the 2006 World cup in Germany, African countries were also embroiled in what could be termed as the most captivating soccer drama of all time. This Saturday, the 8th Oct 2005, was not only historic but also an apocalyptic milestone that marked the down- fall of the so-called African soccer giants.

Gone are the days when few countries dominated African soccer: Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, to mention but few. At the beginning of the 2006 World Cup qualification season, it was too easy to predict which countries will make it to Germany. However uninformed you might be, you will just have to be a fool not to put your bet on Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa. However, this did not turn out to be the case, as the 8th Oct 2005 brought many surprises to the African continent.

I will try to give a brief overview of my point- for those of you who are not familiar with the World Cup qualification criteria. Well, vying countries are divided into groups; and as far as the African draw is concerned, only one country in each of the four groups of about five countries is allowed to represent the continent in the World Cup.

To begin with, the Group Three of the World Cup qualifiers was the most dramatic of all. In this group, Cameroon was tipped to top the group but the last day of the qualifiers proved to be a shattering shock to the indomitable Lions who had been the African soccer kings for as long as I could remember. Over the entire season, Ivory Coast had been rubbing shoulders with Cameroon, but the so-called Indomitable Lions (the Cameroonian national team) were complacent to notice the threat posed by these rising stars. Little did Cameroon notice that the Ivory Coast team is indeed the team that is tipped to win the 2006 World Cup in Germany. Flavored with the talisman ship of Chelsea's Didier Drogba and Arsenal's Kolo Toure, the Ivory Coast soccer team is considered as one of the deadliest teams in the forth coming World Cup. In an earlier encounter, Cameroon had won against Ivory Coast and therefore the indomitable Lions were only left

with Egypt to beat so as to be guaranteed a place in the 2006 World Cup. When Cameroonians thought they had built a soccer dynasty, the day 8th Oct 2005 will go down into the history books as one of the most disturbing days in the country's soccer history. The day the Indomitable Lions hosted Egypt for their last qualifiers game in the nation's capital Yaoundé, thousand of Cameroonian soccer fans were eager to watch their heroes tear the Egyptians into shreds. The Egyptian coach had earlier on warned that Cameroon will never be allowed an easy passage into the World Cup, and as arrogant as it sounded, the Indomitable Lions indeed struggled to beat Egypt. The Cameroonians were held to a draw and Ivory Coast's 3-1 win over Sudan automatically guaranteed them a place in Germany. Ivory Coast's qualification at the expense of Cameroon did not only deliver a lethal message to the already dumbfounded Cameroonian soccer fans but also inflicted a thunderous blow that sent the Indomitable Lions sprawling down the rungs of the 2006 World Cup qualification ladder.

In Group Four, Angola qualified at the expense of Nigeria, despite Nigeria's 5-1 thrashing of Zimbabwe in the nation's capital Abuja. The shocking exit of Nigeria from the 2006 World Cup wrecked havoc among the Nigerian soccer players. Stars like Bolton Wanderers' J. J Ochoka are threatening to hang up their international careers in the midst of growing frustration.

In Group Two, Ghana booked a deserved place in Germany at the expense of the massive and seemingly wavering South Africa. The likes of Ghana's Michael Essien and Sulley Muntari were enough to extinguish South Africa's hopes of reaching Germany in 2006. The South African's were only left to rue over wasted opportunities as the Ghanaian Stars cruised to a comfortable 4-0 victory over Cape Verde. The South Africans will be hosting the 2010 world Cup, and it's disgraceful that they could not qualify for the 2006 one, not even Madiba could rescue them. Another conspicuous turning point in the World Cup qualifiers was witnessed in Group One when Togo ended Senegal's unflinching saga to book their first ever appearance in the World Cup.

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GERMANY WORLD CUP 2006: THE COUNTDOWN (Continued from Page 9)

It's really hard to believe what has just happened. The seemingly probabilistic reshuffling of the African World Cup qualifiers to Germany is a warning signal that it's high time the African Soccer giants rolled up their sleeves and start kicking butt again. This is no surprise; many people around the world are only familiar with countries like Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and probably South Africa, when referring to African Soccer. When asked to enumerate the top African countries as far as soccer is concerned, one's failure to include Cameroon, Nigeria and Senegal in the list is like forgetting about Brazil in the domain of world soccer champions.

Nonetheless, did the 8th Oct 2005 only mark the downing of the African soccer giants or it's a revolution that will sweep through the entire soccer world? Well, for the past decade, African countries have been sputtering to bring the World Cup trophy to the African Continent but to no success. The likes of Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa and Senegal have all been going to World Cups only to bring back nothing with them other than their drums and ornamented beads. Now that the world has witnessed the revolutionizing soccer events that have swept the African continent, will this mark the beginning of the rising World heroes? As each second ticks away, I can't wait to watch what would be described as 'the revenge' by the African continent. In the spring of 2006, Germany will be plunged into a rhapsodic hysteria, as each continent will strive to have a share of the aluminiferous trophy.

Whether or not African countries will prove to be a threat in 2006 World Cup is yet to be seen; but I can only keep my fingers crossed as the lone stars of the Continent sharpen their spears-ready to take on any country- whether it's Brazil or Argentina or Germany, we will win this time!



AFRICAN NEWS IN SHORT (from

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/default.stm>)

AU peacekeepers seized in Darfur

A group of peacekeepers and diplomatic envoys are kidnapped in Darfur, but some of them are later freed.

Liberia backs ballot over bullet

Placards not guns define Liberia's post-war election campaign.

Botswana denies removing Bushmen

Botswana denies it has been forcibly removing some of the last Kalahari Bushmen from ancestral land.

Mass Migration

Africans brave razor wire and bullets to get toehold in Europe.

Tsunami "not toxic" for Somalia

United Nations says that there is no evidence that the Indian Ocean tsunami spread illegally dumped nuclear and toxic waste on Somalia's Coast.

Africa Aid Packages to be checked

Promises of aid to Africa will be checked in a new annual review, the Africa Partnership Forum has agreed. Members have met in London to discuss how to ensure pledges made for improving the continent are met. The report will examine what aid has been handed over and give updates on development goals and African governments' promises to make changes. The forum - involving G8 and African nations - agreed the first edition would be published in October 2006.

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