

ISSUE: 1 APRIL-MAY-JUNE 2025

FRIENDS OF ALL AFRICA ASSOCIATION

TADD

AFRIKA



Strength Born from Unity! Africa

**FROM PAN-AFRICANISM
TO AFRICA DAY**

**A CENTURY-OLD REVENGE IN
THE SAHEL-SAHARAN REGION**

**THE PEARL OF AFRICA:
UGANDA**

**THE BRAVE MAN OF CONGO:
PATRICE LUMUMBA**

**WEDDING AND CULINARY
CULTURE IN SUDAN**

**REWRITING AFRICA'S STORY:
ABDULRAZAK GURNAH
AND PARADISE**

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“WE ALL NEED TO DO GOOD”



TADD **AFRIKA** 

VOICE OF AFRICA: TADD AFRİKA



Dr. Bilgehan GÜNTEKİN

Founder & President of the
Friends of All Africa Association
(TADD)

Hello,

On the 10th anniversary of our association's founding, we are excited and honored to address you with the first issue of the TADD AFRİKA magazine.

A new destination for everyone who wants to tell, discuss, and explore Africa; **TADD AFRİKA**.

Our magazine, published quarterly, will offer a wide range of content covering Africa's history, social structure, politics, art, and culture. Through articles, research, and compilations written by our expert and experienced authors, we will bring you the unique stories and in-depth analyses of the continent.

Since February 2015, when we embarked on the ideal of a "Fully Independent Africa," our enthusiasm and motivation have grown day by day. Our motto, "to work until the living standards of our African brothers and sisters equal ours," lives in our hearts with the same determination as on the first day.

Today, while 886 million people go to bed hungry every night, 882 million struggle with obesity. About 800 million people lack access to clean drinking water. In the modern world, while one-third of what is produced daily is wasted, half of those going to bed hungry live on the African continent.

With a land area of 30 million square kilometers, Africa is the world's second-largest landmass, comprising 54 countries and a population of 1.5 billion, holding great potential. Despite owning 60% of the world's arable uncultivated land and rich underground and surface resources, it has been condemned to poverty for centuries by many Western countries, claiming to be pioneers of democracy and human rights, through exploitation.





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Looking at countries' economic sizes today, the United States with 335 million people has a GDP of 29 trillion dollars, Germany with 83 million has 4.8 trillion dollars GDP, whereas Africa with 1.5 billion people has a total economy that hasn't even reached 3.5 trillion dollars, revealing the magnitude of injustice. The US, hosting less than 5% of the world population, owns 30% of global wealth. It is clear that this system is unsustainable. The time has come—and passed—for the world to repay its debt to Africa.

Although the 19th and 20th centuries are remembered as lost centuries for Africa, the 21st century will be the era of rise for a politically and economically fully independent Africa, where the marks of colonialism are erased. With its young population, rapidly growing middle class, and rich raw materials and natural resources, Africa is a candidate to become the shining star of the future.

Experts already describe Africa as the "continent of the century."

Despite all systematic oppression and exploitation, a new and strong Africa will rise in this century in the hands of our young, educated, and idealistic African brothers and sisters. Just as 62 years ago on May 25, 1963, African countries came together and declared to the world that they were equal and free, today they must also act in unity and solidarity. If they put aside their grievances and disagreements and develop a shared vision in political, military, and economic spheres and act together, no force can stop Africa's rise.

On this journey toward full independence of Africa, Turkey and TADD are ready to offer unconditional support and companionship. What Africa needs today is not more exploitation and pity, but new opportunities and justice. A more livable Africa is a prerequisite for a more livable world. Because Africa's tomorrow is all of our tomorrows.

In closing, I greet you all with respect and love, hoping to soon see the days when the slogans of liberty, equality, and fraternity from the 1789 French Revolution apply not only to the West but also to all oppressed regions and Africa.

Dr. Bilgehan GÜNTEKIN



COLORS OF AFRICA



Dr. Serhat ONUR

Founder & Vice President of the
Friends of All Africa Association
(TADD)

Africa is a continent full of colors with its people, nature, culture, art, history, beliefs, cuisine—in short, everything. However, due to a deliberately initiated and unfortunately still ongoing perception from the colonial era, this vast geography is presented to the world as uniform, monochrome, and single-voiced.

Even in our immediate surroundings, traces of this perception can be seen. When asking someone going to any city in Africa, “Where are you going?” the answer is simply “To Africa.” But when someone is asked the same about going to a small town in Europe, the answer is not “I am going to Europe,” but rather just the town’s name, as if it is absolutely necessary for the listener to know it, said with admiration.

However, when the subject is Africa, described by the wild West with many terms such as primitive, backward, uncivilized, barbaric, cannibalistic, and similar, a curtain seems to fall over our eyes, everything blurs, colors fade, diversity disappears, and only a large dark silhouette remains.

With this modest magazine, we aimed to slightly lift the curtain of Africa in all our eyes. Along with current topics, we will talk about many different aspects of the continent — its history, established empires, freedom struggles, ancient cultures, clothing, art, music, literature, cuisine, traditions, coffee, tea, rivers, fish, birds, trees—in short, the vibrant reality behind the dark silhouette presented to us, its unique world containing all the sounds and stories of life. Our effort is to learn Africa from Africans and to let Africans inform others about Africa.

Africa is the first land where human race began to live on Earth. Lucy, found in the Afar Region north of Ethiopia, is the oldest human skeleton ever discovered at 3.5 million years old. Africa, where humanity began, is also the continent where imperialists staged coups under the name of democracy with local puppets, incited artificial wars, made tribes that lived peacefully for centuries enemies, enslaved the natives, exploited every aboveground and underground resource — the continent where humanity ended.

Recently, changes in governance in Africa, which is not allowed to set its own game, have given us hope for the continent's future. In our first issue, we will evaluate these recent developments in Sub-Saharan Africa. Lands once condemned to colonial darkness are now taking brave steps towards self-determination. The first concrete example of these steps was the African Union Organization established on May 25, 1963, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, thanks to the efforts of Ghana's legendary leader and founder Kwame Nkrumah, who said, "Until all Africa achieves independence, our independence will have no value." The founding day of the organization, May 25, is celebrated worldwide as "Africa Day." You can read our article about May 25 Africa Day, which is also our cover theme, in the magazine.



In this issue, we will also look at Africa's health outlook, visit the Pearl of Africa, Uganda, get to know Sudan's wedding and culinary culture, listen to the story of cocoa and chocolate accompanied by African music, hear the stories of Ethiopia's champion runners, and then embark on a journey through the books of Abdulrazak Gurnah, the Nobel Prize-winning author from Zanzibar. As one of our other articles, quoting Patrice Lumumba, the leader of the Congo National Movement and first Prime Minister of independent Congo and freedom fighter, "Africa will write its own history north and south of the Sahara, and this history will be glorious and honorable. It will be taught in countries free from imperialism and its puppets."

Enjoy your reading, with hopes for humanity's new beginning on the continent where humanity began and ended.

Dr. Serhat ONUR







Prof. Dr. Ahmet KAVAS

(Former) Ambassador / Faculty Member

/ Founding President of the African

Researchers Association (AFAM)

A CENTURY-OLD REVENGE IN THE SAHEL-SAHARAN REGION

Throughout all centuries of history, especially until the mid-20th century, geography and history were among the most challenging professions within the Europe-centered research institutions. Although few written works from the Ancient to the Medieval Ages survive today, the earliest writings provide significant knowledge about humanity's past. It is no longer possible to relive the experiences of legendary figures like Ibn Battuta, Marco Polo, Piri Reis, Seyyid Ali Reis, and Evliya Çelebi, who left unparalleled marks behind.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the most important European geography and history research institutions of the 19th century left no place on earth unexplored. They essentially pioneered a new path, elevating the esteemed traditions of the past to their peak. To be the first to discover and introduce all the unknown mysteries of any landmass in the vast Pacific Ocean was a great skill. Many enthusiasts risked their lives journeying through seas, oceans, tropical forests, and deserts for this cause.

”

*THE MEETING THAT BEGAN
IN BERLIN IN NOVEMBER 1884
TO DIVIDE AFRICA BECAME
KNOWN IN HISTORY
AS THE BERLIN CONFERENCE
WHEN IT CONCLUDED
IN FEBRUARY 1885.*

Among them, many who traveled to the Sahel region, south of the vast Sahara desert, called by Westerners the Sahel, in the early 1800s lost their lives pursuing their ambitions. Unlike today's information examined on computers, they lacked the courage to make bold claims about the geography's details, societies' current lives, and security issues. Moreover, information now quickly consumed, given the ease and speed of traveling by planes and modern land and sea transport to places previously reached in years but now only in days, was not available to them.

Written records contain at least three thousand years of information about northern Africa, the Red Sea basin, the Gulf of Aden, and even the coasts of East Africa. Although the Sahel-Saharan regions became satisfactorily known to the outside world in the 19th century, they remained of limited curiosity. During the 20th century, almost no place was left unexplored in these two regions. Thousands of people, starting with travelers and followed by missionaries, and enthusiasts of geography, geology, and history, flocked to settlements within the roughly 10 million km² of the Great Sahara and the Sahel region surrounding it from the south. Their drawings, alongside the information they penned, demonstrated skills that would impress even the early photographers of the period. Thanks to these drawings, we can still visualize the recent past of the region today.

More than one-third of the immense landmass exceeding 30 million km² is covered by the Sahara and Sahel regions. Early Islamic geographers named the desert part Sahra, the belt surrounding it from the

south Bilādüssūdān, the Mediterranean coast Bilādū'l-Mağrib, the Red Sea and interior Bilādū'l-Habeş, and the East African coasts Bilādū'z-Zenc. Essentially, very little unknown geography remained. The country named Egypt kept its name as Egypt for Westerners from pre-Islamic times until today. Libya, Ethiopia, Numidia, and Mauritania joined it, and later Africa was added. Over time, the last name evolved from being just a region in Tunisia to representing the entire continent over about a millennium.

”

With coastlines reaching 30,000 km, Africa attracted the appetite of all colonial powers, while it was also a great treasure waiting to be discovered in the early 19th century, particularly its interior deserts and tropical forests. Despite the mysterious geography's unknown histories, with Islam came unique centers of civilization, emerging one after another. For Muslims in the Lake Chad basin, Al-Azhar in Egypt became a center for knowledge seekers. Their returns heralded enlightenment eras for their own societies.

In the Mali Empire, centers of knowledge such as Tadmekka, Timbuktu, Gao, Djenné, Hamdallaye, and Mopti flourished one after another. Local sultanates in Niger—Agadez, Zinder, Kavar; Chad—Abéché, Kanem; Sudan—Darfur; Nigeria—Hausa states, Katsina, Kano, Sokoto, and many others—saw scholars, merchants, and art enthusiasts frequently traveling between them. Moreover, Senegal's Futa Toro scholarly region influenced not only Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Burkina Faso but also the Sahel-Saharan region. In short, a great world of knowledge and wisdom developed in the east with emirates such as Darfur, Dar Salam, Dar Sila, Darkuti, Darrunca, and Darfertit; in the west with Futa Toro and Futa Calon; and in the center with great kingdoms like the Mali Sultanate, Sokoto Caliphate, and Kanem-Bornu Sultanate.

When Europeans sent inexperienced young travelers to this deep civilization under the pretext of bringing civilization, they were not very sure if these travelers would return. Indeed, many lost their lives during long, arduous journeys and especially when their intentions were suspected upon arrival. Perhaps they made only a fraction of progress in a century. However, with their

often legendary but mixed information, they darkened the history of the Sahara and Sahel regions in unprecedented ways in the 20th century. The smallest pieces of information—names of rivers, hills or mountains, valleys, large and small communities—were combined with the unparalleled works of Muslim historians and geographers like Ibn Battuta, Ibn Khaldun, and Hassan al-Wazzan. The only thing the English, Germans, French, Italians, Belgians, Spaniards, and Portuguese could do was to register as much land as possible under their control. Standing in their way were the Ottoman Empire from the early 16th century and the Moroccan rule at Africa's northwest tip. These had to be either eliminated or neutralized. Unfortunately, the disappearance of the former from the historical scene and the occupation of the latter removed any obstacle before them.

The societies of the Sahel-Saharan region could not foresee that the bright ages of history would be combined with the dark colonialism that each step dragged behind. They opened their cities, towns, villages—in short, their entire homeland—to the first European travelers, missionaries, and even military personnel, whom they thought they could easily overcome. However, their intentions were far from what they said. From the early 1800s to the early 1900s, information about the region was recorded on maps drawn in Paris, London,

Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Lisbon, and Brussels. The Berlin Conference, which began in November 1884 and ended in February 1885, marked the division of Africa. The verbal claims of territory possession on the continent were followed by actual occupations. By 1920, a total of 85,000 km of land borders were demarcated and recorded for seven European countries. France alone drew 25,000 km, and Britain 21,000 km.

Many areas unknown to Africans became colonial property under new names. French Africa, British Africa, German Africa, Italian Africa, Belgian Africa, Portuguese Africa, and Spanish Africa existed. However, this did not last long; independence movements that began before the 1950s spread across the continent in the 1960s, and by before 1980 almost all gained independence. However, at the time of Berlin's border divisions, at least 1,000 disputes would later trigger wars among neighboring countries. Current tensions among the 54 independent African countries trace back at least 150 years to those divisions.

The Soviet Union's ambitions in Africa gradually started to resemble China's special interests. Although Moscow's efforts did not last to see the 1990s, the second Asian power has in the last 30 years openly pursued a containment policy around the continent. Due to Marxist, Leninist, Maoist, Communist, and all



Early map depicting Africa (1710)



Berlin Conference 1884-1885

Socialist movements coloring a significant part of the independence struggles, the continent could barely breathe until the 2000s. While many countries in continents predicted to never develop made progress, African countries were left in even worse conditions. One-party oppressive regimes were further plunged into darkness by military coups.

In the 2000s, economic indicators suddenly heralded a major development surge throughout Africa. If these sudden surges were to succeed, colonial-style regimes, successors of European administrators, would immediately become autonomous. Using the most advanced technology, the entire continent's topography was mapped, and astonishing mineral deposits were identified throughout the Great Sahara and the surrounding Sahel region. If civilian administrations shared these with new partnerships with emerging states of the world, Africa would emerge similar to China and India in Asia, which would severely challenge the global dominance of old continent Europe and its westernmost face, the USA. The classic methods were activated to prevent this; in the 2020s, successive coup attempts in the region were suddenly launched. However, this time those who managed the past experiences with ease encountered an unexpected situation. France was losing all the networks it had painstakingly woven for 150 years, was forced to withdraw its soldiers even from its so-called friendly

countries, closed its embassies, and stopped all commercial activities.

The lands of the Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger trio exceed 2.8 million km², with a population over 75 million. These three countries, owning four times the land of France, formed a union they called AES, the "Alliance of Sahel Countries," to escape the economic, political, military, and other crises they were trapped in. Without formally leaving the West African Economic Com-

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*TODAY,
THE ROOT OF TENSIONS
AMONG 54 INDEPENDENT
AFRICAN COUNTRIES
CAN BE TRACED BACK TO
DIVISIONS MADE AT LEAST
150 YEARS AGO.*

”

munity (ECOWAS), they officially withdrew from it on January 29, 2025, under a condition that they notify one year in advance. They are currently negotiating to include Chad.

The new alliance members in the Sahel region each have rich mineral deposits such as gold, diamonds, uranium, oil, natural gas, and lithium, which for decades were left to the mercy of international mining companies because political powers were forced to act as their puppets. For example, in Mali in 2023, 19 tons of the 65 tons of gold produced came from the Loulo-Gounkoto mine operated by the Canadian Barrick Gold. However, on January 11, 2025, about 20 soldiers from the Malian army seized three tons of gold worth \$250 million from the company and handed it over to the central bank because the company had not paid \$199 million in taxes owed to the central government in Bamako. Although the company claims that 8,000 employees will lose their jobs, it is seeking ways to keep its rights in the mine operated since 2018 by paying off its debt.

As in the rest of Africa, multinational companies that saw local administrations controlled by leftist organizations in the Sahara and Sahel regions in past years became uneasy about the Islamic awakenings since the 1990s. Suddenly, armed groups among these movements turned into uncontrollable terrorist organizations spreading across the region. Attacks on civilians and defenseless people increased. On this vast 10 million km² area, groups with different names such as Maghreb Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, the West African branch of ISIS, and many others increased their attacks everywhere. The Sahel States Alliance has now formed a joint force of 5,000 soldiers to prevent terrorist attacks.

Turkey's relations with the Sahel region countries, as

with the entire continent, revived in the 2010s with the opening of diplomatic missions. Turkish Airlines flies to over 60 destinations, covering more than 40 capitals and other important cities in 54 countries. Economic investments and humanitarian aid continue rapidly in the Sahel-Saharan countries. Particularly, procuring essential military equipment and unmanned aerial vehicles for these three countries' defense and security has made fighting terrorism manageable. If

stability is achieved in this region of Africa, it will be the biggest development surge and progress in every field of the last century. These opportunities relate to the inability to use the continent's abundant resources adequately.

Thanks to modern Turkey, the Sahel-Saharan region, which France cut off from the outside world and closely monitored in its competition with the Ottoman Empire in the early 1900s, seems to have taken revenge for the past century. ■



Prof. Dr. Ahmet KAVAS

Turkish diplomat, academic, and author.

Born in 1964. Graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Theology in 1987. Completed his master's and doctoral studies in Paris between 1989-1996 under the scholarship of the Turkey Diyanet Foundation. Served as faculty member at Istanbul University Faculty of Theology and Istanbul Medeniyet University Faculty of Political Sciences. Held positions at the Embassies of Chad and Senegal and as an advisor on African affairs at the Prime Ministry. Specializes in African studies with published books, articles, and contributions to the Islamic Encyclopedia. Currently serves as founding president of the African Researchers Association (AFAM) and faculty member at Istanbul Commerce University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Fluent in French, Arabic, and English.



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2024 yılı itibarıyla **REMS Logistics** olarak Afrika kıtasındaki lojistik faaliyetlerimizi genişletme kararı aldık.

Bu kapsamda, ilk adımımızı Gana'nın başkenti Accra'da atarak, bölgede stratejik öneme sahip bir ofis ve depo açılışı gerçekleştirdik.

Gana'daki başarılı operasyonlarımızın ardından, Fildişi Sahili'nde de lojistik hizmet ağıımızı genişletmeyi ve Afrika'daki varlığımızı daha da güçlendirmeyi hedefliyoruz. Bu yeni yatırımımız, bölgesel ticaretin gelişmesine katkıda bulunarak, hem yerel işletmelere hem de uluslararası firmalara hızlı, güvenilir ve entegre lojistik çözümleri sunmamıza olanak tanıyacaktır. Özellikle Türkiye ile Fildişi Sahili arasında sağlam bir ticaret köprüsü kurarak, ihracatçılar ve ithalatçılar için kesintisiz, güvenli ve hızlı lojistik hizmetleri sağlamayı amaçlıyoruz.

REMS Logistics olarak, Afrika'daki genişleyen lojistik altyapımız sayesinde tüccarların ve işletmelerin müşterilerine daha kısa sürede ve daha düşük maliyetlerle ulaşmasını desteklemeye devam edeceğiz. Afrika pazarındaki büyüme stratejimiz kapsamında, yenilikçi lojistik çözümlerimiz ve müşteri odaklı hizmet anlayışımızla bölgedeki ticaret ekosisteminin ayrılmaz bir parçası olmayı hedefliyoruz.

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KÜRESEL LOJİSTİK VE DIŞ TİCARET AĞI KURUYORUZ

Türkiye, Avrupa, Çin, Hindistan, Orta Doğu ve Afrika ülkeleri arasında kesintisiz lojistik hizmetleri sunarak ithalat ve ihracat süreçlerinizi hızlandırıyor, operasyonlarınızı daha verimli hale getiriyoruz. Ayrıca dış ticaret danışmanlığı hizmetimizle tedarik zincirinizi yönetiyor, küresel pazarlarda büyümenizi destekliyoruz.

GÜVENLİ VE ZAMANINDA TESLİMAT SAĞLIYORUZ

Lojistikte zaman ve güvenilirlik en önemli unsurların başında gelir. Deneyimli ekibimiz, lojistik ağıımız ve operasyonel altyapımız sayesinde ürünlerinizin hedef pazarlara eksiksiz, güvenli ve tam zamanında ulaşmasını sağlıyoruz. Depolama, gümrükleme ve dağıtım çözümleriyle lojistik sürecinizi baştan sona yönetiyoruz.

ÇİN'DEN AFRIKA'YA ÜRÜN TAŞIMACILIĞI VE TİCARET DESTEĞİ SUNUYORUZ

Afrika'nın dört bir yanına uzanan geniş müşteri ağıımız sayesinde, Çin'in stratejik ticaret merkezlerinden toplanan ürünleri entegre lojistik çözümlerimiz ile tedarik zincirinizi optimize ederek, kesintisiz bir taşımacılık ve ticaret deneyimi sunuyoruz.

TURİZM HİZMETLERİMİZLE İŞ SEYAHATLERİNİZİ KOLAYLAŞTIRIYORUZ

Uluslararası ticaret ve lojistik süreçlerinde sık seyahat eden müşterilerimize yönelik kapsamlı turizm hizmetleri sunuyoruz. İş seyahati organizasyonu: Konaklama, ulaşım ve toplantı düzenlemeleriyle iş seyahatlerinizi verimli hale getiriyoruz.

DEPOLAMA VE FULFİLLMENT İLE KAPSAMLI HİZMETLER SUNUYORUZ

Uluslararası ticaretin karmaşık lojistik süreçlerini yönetmek bizim işimiz! REMS Lojistik olarak, taşımacılıktan gümrüklemeye, depolamadan dağıtıma kadar uçtan uca entegre lojistik çözümleri sağlıyoruz.

Afrika ülkelerine hem denizyolu hem de havayolu taşımacılığı hizmeti sunuyoruz:

Denizyolu Taşımacılığı: 20'lik ve 40'lık konteyner seçenekleri ile maliyet avantajı sunan çözümler,

Havayolu Taşımacılığı: Eko ve ekspres taşıma seçenekleri ile hız ve maliyet avantajını bir arada sunuyoruz.

Dış ticaret, lojistik ve turizm alanındaki uzmanlığımızla işinizi daha ileriye taşıyoruz! REMS Logistics ile güvenilir, hızlı ve profesyonel çözümlerle tanışın.



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İbrahim TIĞLI
Journalist

FROM PAN-AFRICANIZM TO AFRICA DAY



*"The Emblem of
the African Union"*



Pan-Africanism is today the most visible symbol of international unity and solidarity. Unlike movements such as Pan-Slavism and Pan-Islamism, which struggled to transition from ideology to practice, Pan-Africanism easily evolved from thought and theoretical accumulation to organization and institutionalization. The transformation of the Organization of African Unity, founded in Addis Ababa after independence, into the African Union in 2002 demonstrates Pan-Africanism's success in practice.

The idea that strong unity among African communities would foster cooperation, consensus, and development remains valid even today. However, it must also be noted that Pan-Africanism did not originate on African soil. Perhaps one of the greatest handicaps of this global ideological movement is that it did not emerge from the heart of the continent; rather, its intellectual origins began in countries like the USA, UK, and France. Another issue is that it was mostly Africans educated in Western or modern styles living in the diaspora who tried to form this ideology and organization. Another problem of Pan-Africanism, despite Frantz Fanon's opposition, is that it is based on racial grounds. Like Judaism among the Abrahamic religions, Pan-Africanism offered no choice to its supporters and insisted its actors be Black.

In its emergence, Pan-Africanism was not a movement about the continent itself but encompassed Africans living across the world. Although it was a political-cultural movement against colonialism, its first congress was not held in an African city but in London, the capital of colonialism, under the patronage of an English nobleman. Nevertheless, colonialists never accepted Pan-Africanism and tried to resist it most fiercely, aiming to prevent it from becoming a movement or organization. Pan-Africanism called for resistance against all foreign dominations, belief in prioritizing African interests above all else, and action. It was founded on rebellion against the enslavement of Black peoples, racism, and political and cultural hegemony in Africa.

The African Union was established with the goal of uniting all Africans worldwide, ensuring their social, economic, and political development, and fostering unity within a common African culture. Unlike Latin communities, it prioritized African languages and

aimed to recognize traditional African languages as official, promoting their use in media and education.

Pan-Africanism emphasizes the shared history and destiny of all African countries, highlighting that the violence, oppression, integration, massacres, and similar treatments experienced during colonial encounters were alike across the continent.

It is often assumed that Pan-Africanism originated with the independence of the USA. Although this supports its connection to colonialism, it overlooks the resistance movements against colonialism within Africa itself. Indeed, resistance and freedom struggles in South Africa, Senegal, and Somalia began before the USA's independence. The USA's independence possibly inspired awakening among African descendants there, but it had no direct or indirect impact on freedom movements in Africa.

Pan-African congresses began in the 20th century. The languages used in the 1900 London, 1919 Paris, and 1921 Brussels congresses were similar. Discussions centered on combating racism, opposing colonialism, and Black people's freedom. Despite their colonial pasts, European countries were more moderate toward Pan-African ideas than the USA. Although slavery was abolished in the USA, Black people did not enjoy equal rights with Whites.

Although Trinidadian Sylvester Williams is claimed as the father of Pan-Africanism, he was more of an organizer than a thinker since he had little to say about the African continent and focused more on issues concerning Africans outside Africa.



Document: Wikipedia.org

Invitation to the Pan-African Conference at Westminster Town Hall, July 1900

One important point is the absence of Liberia—the only independent and free African state established by Black slaves from the USA—from these debates. All congresses until 1945 were held outside Africa, in the USA and Europe. While racial equality and freedom were prominent themes in USA congresses, colonialism, independence, and unity were discussed in European congresses. Marcus Garvey, the pioneer of Pan-African ideology, shifted the discourse from the USA and Europe to continental Africa, stating that Africans cannot be thought of independently from Africa and that unification must be African.

The 1945 Manchester African Congress was different as its main theme was not “rights” but the establishment of independent and autonomous states in Africa. It represented a challenge to colonialism. Even in colonial Britain, the monarchy faced opposition. The congress secretary Kwame Nkrumah expressed these views while laying the foundations for African nationalism and political awakening.

Nkrumah, like other Pan-Africanists, was educated in Western schools and inclined toward socialism. What distinguished him was the idea of the “African State.” He believed that Africans’ rights could only be achieved through statehood and unity. He envisioned a united African state including Ghana (a British colony), Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Northern Cameroon, and Liberia. However, Ghana needed to become independent and self-governing first. Inspired by the congress, Nkrumah founded the People’s Congress Party, becoming the first Black leader of Pan-Africanism and playing a major role in Ghana’s independence in 1957, the first Pan-African victory.

Nkrumah wanted to establish the “African States Union,” but this was rejected by African leaders except Guinea. After Guinea’s independence, the “Ghana-Guinea Union” was formed. The union of these two newly independent states made the idea of a “union” more appealing than a common state. Leaders of Ivo-

ry Coast, Ethiopia, and Tanzania did not favor a common African state but supported a joint organization.

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia convened leaders of 22 African countries in Addis Ababa on May 23, achieving consensus and founding the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on May 25, 1963. Though the OAU ensured broad unity of African countries, Nkrumah’s ideas were not adopted. He had advocated for a common army, citizenship, passport, central bank, and trade zone. Even today, the African Union has not reached these goals.

The OAU promoted unity and solidarity among African states, supported better living conditions for African peoples, aimed to secure their independence and freedom, opposed colonialism, and prioritized human rights under the UN. More than a structural organization, it was a

framework for mutual solidarity and cooperation. Despite supporting independence, it was ineffective in countries that gained independence later, such as Angola and Mozambique. Though claiming to value human rights, violations occurred in member states like Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda. The OAU also failed to prevent military coups; three years after its foundation, Nkrumah was overthrown by a coup, and the Ethiopian empire also ended with a coup.

Despite supporting political independence, the OAU did not end African countries’ economic dependence on colonizers. The idea of establishing a common central bank among African countries was never realized, and West African countries remained dependent on the French Central Bank.

NEW HOPES: A NEW AFRICAN UNION

Until the 2000s, the OAU remained a solidarity organization. Although neutral during the Cold War, it maintained constant relations between military coups and former colonizers. Especially in French colonial countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Togo, Gabon, and Zaïre, economic ties continued with colonial powers even after military coups.

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**GARVEY
STATED THAT AFRICANS
CANNOT THINK
INDEPENDENTLY
FROM AFRICA AND
THAT UNITY
MUST BE AFRICAN.**

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As Britain retreated during the Cold War, new global actors emerged. The USA and Russia started showing their presence, and China became influential in Africa from the 1990s. Russia-backed freedom movements in Ethiopia, Sudan (Numayri era), Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau, and US-backed internal conflicts in Uganda, Kenya, and Equatorial Guinea intensified.

Another failure of the OAU was its inability to provide solutions to African problems. It was ineffective during the Sudanese civil war, Rwandan genocide, and civil wars in Congo and Burundi. Its failure to address issues in Somalia, Niger, and Mali also led to a push for a new phase.

Three leaders stand out in the formation of the African Union: Libya's Gaddafi, South Africa's Thabo Mbeki, and Nigeria's Obasanjo. National independence war leaders have been replaced by elected or coup-installed leaders who derive their power not from independence struggles but from authority and governance stability.

While the foundations of the OAU were laid in Addis Ababa, those of the African Union were laid in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002. The African Union is essentially a continuation of the OAU, with new additions like the African Peace and Security Architecture, in-

cluding the African Standby Force, which has been regionally active, especially in Somalia, since the 2000s.

Today, the African Union is a continental and global international organization with 55 member states. Since 2023, with membership in the G-20, it has become an economic and political force internationally. The African Union's agenda now focuses on African solutions to African problems, promoting free trade, strengthening economic unions, and spreading democracy across the continent.

AFRICA DAY: A SHARED CONTINENTAL DAY

Kwame Nkrumah, dreaming of a united Africa, likely also dreamed of a shared day. The only day Africans collectively celebrate is "May 25, Africa Day." Africa Day is observed not only in Africa but worldwide. For the past decade, celebrations in Turkey have prominently featured the Friends of All Africa Association (TADD). What sets TADD apart from other celebrations is its emphasis on both local elements and Turkey's common ground. Africa Day is celebrated on May 25, marking the founding date of the OAU in 1963.

This year's theme for Africa Day is "Justice," focusing on achieving justice for people of African descent. Today, justice is one of Africa's main challenges. The legacy of colonial destruction remains in many African countries. Namibia still bears scars of German

genocide; Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad still show traces of French injustices.

African countries first gained freedom, then independence. They established their own institutions and developed their economies. Now it is time for justice for Africa... ■

İbrahim TIĞLI

Began journalism at the Dünya Bülteni news site under Akif Emre's management. Served as a reporter in Cape Town, South Africa for TRT Türk. Participated in the establishment of Anadolu Agency's Africa editorial office and served as Africa News Director in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Has written articles on Africa for Yeni Şafak newspaper and Gerçek Hayat magazine. With over five hundred articles, he continues his career as an independent journalist. Founder of the English-language Wall Africa Journal and Turkish-language WAJ TÜRK news sites.



Dr. Ensar KÜÇÜKALTAN

*Director of International Human
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BRAVE MAN OF CONGO:

PATRICE LUMUMBA

*Lumumba has inspired both anti-imperialist
rhetoric and Pan-African thought through his life and
assassination.*



Photo: Wikipedia.org

25 Temmuz 1960 – Başbakan Lumumba
New York'taki BM Genel Merkezi'nde



Photo: UN Photo/MB

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*AFRICA
IS A CONTINENT
SELF-SUFFICIENT
IN ALL
SOCIOLOGICAL
REALITIES
RELATED TO
HUMANITY
THANKS TO ITS
HISTORICAL
FIGURES.*

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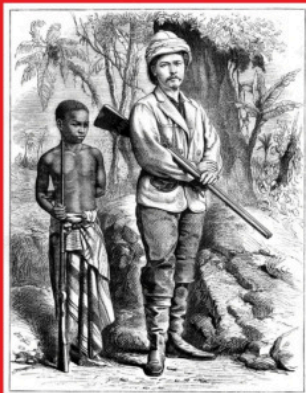
Africa is a self-sufficient continent in every respect. This is not limited to its rich mineral resources like gold and copper, natural beauties, or fertile agricultural and livestock outputs. Throughout history, with its significant figures, Africa has also been self-sufficient in all sociological realities concerning humans. The fact that this richness is sometimes ignored even by some Africans themselves has been one of the reasons why true popular heroes of the colonial and post-colonial era were less known.

Patrice Lumumba was one of them. He struggled against the dark colonial mindset of his time. This struggle bore its first fruits but ended with his assassination in early 1961. Those disturbed by him vanished from history, but Lumumba is still remembered today.

To understand Lumumba's life, who met a similar fate as Sankara, it is appropriate to first look at the colonial period that began in Congo and how the system formed there. This region is not only rich in underground resources but also of such international importance that Africa's partition was taken to an international congress.

A VALUABLE BASIN AND THE STRUGGLE TO POSSESS IT: CONGO

Henry Morton Stanley was the person who made the colonial discovery of Congo possible. Stanley was an adventurer and a New York Herald reporter. He was a missionary and explorer assigned to find the missing David Livingstone in Africa and first reached Zanzibar. He found Livingstone in Ujiji, located near today's Democratic Republic of Congo-Tanzania border. After returning to England, he planned a second expedition to Africa following Livingstone's death.



Henry Morton Stanley

On his second expedition, he explored the source of the Nile and determined that Lake Nyanza was the source. Along the present-day Uganda borders, he met King Mutasa of Buganda, who, influenced by Stanley's anti-Islam propaganda, burned about seventy Muslims alive from October 1875 to March 1876. Stanley then headed to the Congo basin and discovered its wealth. After receiving a warm welcome from Congolese people, he envisioned great riches and stated:

"I see in every sincere local face a promise of help to escape current inefficiency; I regard him as a strong-armed farmer's child with respect. He is a future member of the soldier-worker ranks. If I can get enough from his class, the Congo basin could become a boundless, productive garden."

Stanley systematically detailed valuable woods, ivory, and minerals. He estimated about fifteen thousand herds and two hundred thousand elephants in the Congo basin, each carrying about twenty-three kilograms of ivory, worth about five million pounds. After failing to interest the British, he turned to Belgian King Leopold II,

who accepted the proposal and took necessary steps to acquire Congo. Stanley secured agreements from locals, often without their full understanding, by getting their X mark on contracts. By 1884, Stanley boasted at least five hundred treaties and reported founding the first capital of Congo, Léopoldville (today Kinshasa). Leopold's control over Congo quickly expanded, and colonial abuses, including enslavement of Congolese on their own land, began.

As colonial competition increased and Western powers vied for dominance in Africa,

a need emerged to regulate territorial divisions more clearly, leading to the organization of an international conference that shaped Congo's future until independence.

DIVIDING OTHERS' LANDS: THE BERLIN CONFERENCE

The Berlin Conference was held from November 15, 1884, to February 26, 1885, resulting in a treaty with seven sections and thirty-eight articles. It accelerated colonialism's pace and destructive power in Africa.



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*THE BERLIN CONFERENCE,
HELD FROM
NOVEMBER 15, 1884, TO
FEBRUARY 26, 1885, PRODUCED
A SEVEN-SECTION, THIRTY-
EIGHT-ARTICLE AGREEMENT.*

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Its primary purpose was to prevent interference in each other's "sovereignty" rights among European powers and avoid conflicts or wars over newly acquired territories. Led by Germany, the conference ended the war over Congo Basin and allowed colonization to continue as a natural process. Participants included Germany, USA, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, England, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway, and the Ottoman Empire.

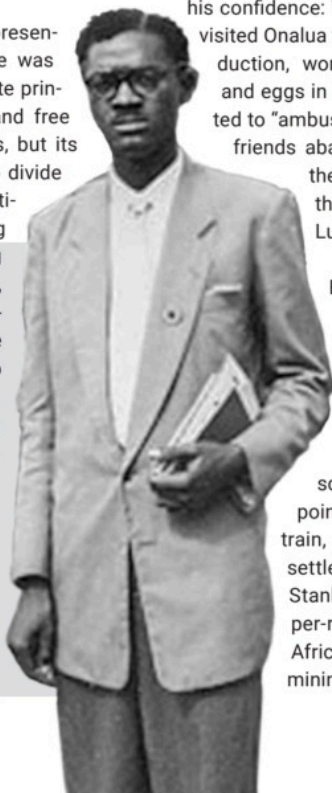
The language used in the conference presentation was important. The conference was officially presented as a way to promote principles like establishing trade zones and free movement to avoid upsetting Africans, but its real aim was to implement the plan to divide and exploit Africa. The most critical article concerning Congo was establishing the Free State of Congo and leaving ownership to King Leopold of Belgium, a shameful event remembered alongside the king's atrocities and Congolese suffering. Ignoring Africa's ownership led to increased exploitation, slavery, and missionary movements. Congo was later taken from Leopold's personal property and given to Belgium, turning exploitation from personal rule into organized plunder.

**STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM
AND LUMUMBA**

Patrice Lumumba was born on July 2, 1925, in the village of Onalua in Kata-

ko-Kombe. He belonged to the Tetela ethnic group and grew up speaking Tetela. He witnessed colonial exploitation closely, which troubled him from a young age. Under Leopold's orders, people in Katako-Kombe worked on fields and production sites while missionaries' influence increased. Those seen as insufficient workers faced harsh pressures and punishments.

Lumumba showed a dominant character even in childhood. A story told by two childhood friends shows his confidence: When the colonial representative visited Onalua to inspect cotton and rubber production, worried villagers offered chickens and eggs in apology. Lumumba secretly plotted to "ambush the man" with two friends. His friends abandoned him, but he confronted the white man alone. Impressed, the representative wanted to meet Lumumba's father.



Both local schools were missionary-run, offering limited education. Lumumba started primary school at a Catholic missionary school, but left due to conflicts with a teacher, who then gave negative references to the next school he attended. A key turning point was moving to Stanleyville by train, where he found employment, settled, and dreamed of the future. Stanleyville was critical, linking copper-rich Katanga province to South Africa by rail and expanding diamond mining. By 1930, Congo produced at

least 50% of the world's industrial diamonds. Cotton was also promoted as a profitable export by colonial rulers. Near WWII's end, Congo produced 73% of global cobalt and 15% of copper supply.

Stanleyville became known as a place where Congo's independence stirrings were heard. Harsh working conditions led to growing labor rights demands. Labor demands under colonial rule clearly implied sovereignty demands. The 1941 strike spread widely to Elisabethville. The government's military intervention and wage promises failed to end the strike, resulting in casualties. Strikes continued intermittently, and Stanleyville became Lumumba's place of growth and awareness.

After improving his poor French, Lumumba started writing for periodicals like *La Croix du Congo*, *L'Af-*

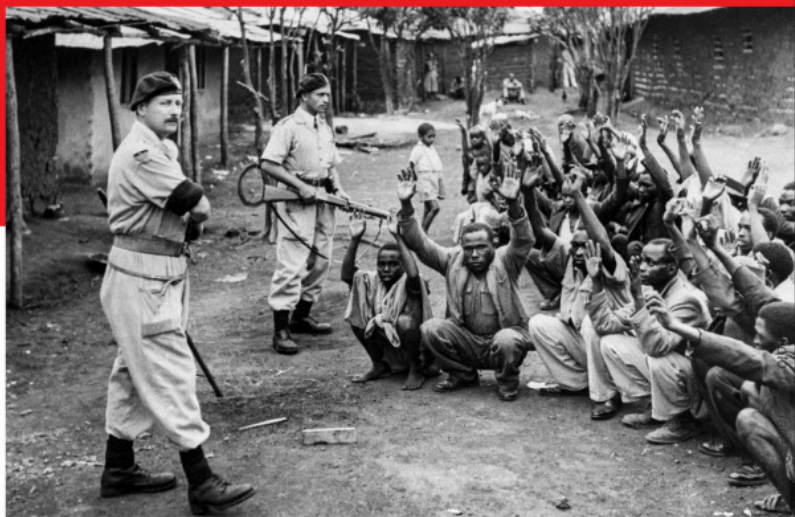
government-sponsored tour, meeting King Baudouin. His participation in many organizations and rhetorical skills marked him as an exceptional intellectual. In his earlier letter, he noted that both Congolese and Belgians treated him differently. His turn to anti-colonialism, imprisonment, and highest-level racial abuse made him a leading independence advocate.

His next stop after Stanleyville was Léopoldville, where he became more politically active. He worked as a beer seller, praised the Polish beer he sold, and developed eloquence. His political network grew as he debated in bars and halls. Lumumba joined the Congo National Movement (*Mouvement National Congolais*; MNC) and was elected chairman on October 10, 1958.

This city, where Congo's independence events ignited, and the MNC, which developed a new discourse with

rique et le Monde, and *La Voix du Congolais*. His writings stressed harmony between Black and White rather than just colonial opposition. A white woman called him a "dirty monkey" in his country, strengthening his belief that Africans should overcome their timidity.

Lumumba later reached *évolué* status, a title given to the black middle class proving "civilization" by passing an exam, reflecting colonial paternalistic attitudes. Belgium was said to have "educated" its "child" until it was ready for independence. Lumumba owed his skills and education to Belgians. In 1954, he was elected president of *Association des Évolués de Stanleyville* (AES), one of Stanleyville's key organizations. In 1955, he visited Belgium with *évolués* on a



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*LUMUMBA WITNESSED
THE COLONIAL
EXPLOITATION PERIOD
CLOSELY AND WAS
DISTURBED FROM A
YOUNG AGE.*

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in Brussels in January 1960. Six months later, on June 30, Congo gained independence but soon descended into chaos. After the army Force Publique mutinied, violence spread nationwide. The unrest targeted colonists' citizens, leading Belgium to send troops. In clashes at Kabalo, Belgian troops tried to rescue civilians but fought Force Publique. On July 11, 1960, Katanga declared independence under Tshombe, who was immediately supported by Belgium more than Lumumba. The main reason was fear Lumumba would nationalize mining companies in Katanga and transfer key economic assets to Congolese.

Lumumba, hold great significance. Lumumba rose to respect among colleagues and was invited to the Sixth Pan-African Congress in Ghana, where he said:

"This historic conference that brings us together with qualified leaders of all African countries and the world shows us one thing: Despite borders and ethnic differences, we share the same conscience, the same spirit washed by suffering day and night, and the same desire to make Africa independent..."

In 1959, Congo's independence process accelerated, and Lumumba's growing nationalist and anti-colonial rhetoric increasingly unsettled Belgians. Belgians hoped a more moderate and "Western-friendly" Tshombe could form a government. They began supporting Tshombe and his party CONAKAT in Katanga. The Belgian government aimed to secure economic interests in this mineral-rich region by sending weapons, manpower, and financial aid.

The turning point in decolonization was the European anti-colonial uprising in Léopoldville on January 4, 1959, which led to many African deaths after security forces intervened. Politically divided between three leaders, the Belgian government invited nationalist groups to a Round Table Conference

In the following months, internal conflict worsened with foreign involvement. Katanga's independence was followed by South Kasai's. These developments increased pressure on Lumumba. Western countries wanted a leadership change in Congo, seeing negotiations with Tshombe and Lumumba as fruitless. They claimed the process, which started with questions over Katanga's mineral wealth sharing, continued with Lumumba's "communist" and "radical" loss of control. Pressure on President Kasavubu led to Lumumba's dismissal on September 5, 1960, causing turmoil and the death of a beloved leader. Young Chief of Staff Mobutu, with close Western ties, arrested Lumumba fleeing Léopoldville and handed him to Katangan sep-



LA QUESTION DU CONGO. — L'UN DES MOMENTS DE LA CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE DE BRUXELLES

1884 Berlin Conference

Photo: face2faceafrica.com



arartists. Lumumba was killed on January 17, 1961, his body lost, and his death covered up. Belgium and the USA, blamed for his death, were never held accountable due to lack of evidence. The last photo shows Lumumba with ministers in separatist Tshombe soldiers' hands. Though in power only six months, Lumumba remains a power partner in Africans' struggle against his enemies' hopes. ■

Dr. Ensar KÜÇÜKALTAN

Born in Üsküdar, Istanbul. Since 2012, he has worked professionally in various humanitarian aid organizations and coordinated field operations. He managed civil society projects and conducted academic research in many African countries. He has served as consultant and board member in various NGOs. His work focuses on Africa-China and Africa-Russia relations, Pan-African thought, soft power, development, civil society, and political tendencies in Africa. Previously served as General Coordinator at Africa Coordination and Training Center. He has published six books and continues to write in think tanks and media. Currently Director of International Human Academy (IHA) and General Manager of Eighth Continent Consulting Company.

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ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES IN AFRICA¹

¹ This article draws on the book "Health Profile of Africa," published in 2022 by the Department of Public Health, Hamidiye Faculty of Medicine, Health Sciences University, edited by H. Hüseyin Eker, Serhat Onur, and M. Emin Yıldırım.



*THE HIGH RATES OF MATERNAL AND
CHILD MORTALITY IN AFRICA INDICATE
THE INSUFFICIENCY OF ACCESS TO
HEALTH SERVICES.*



Cause of malaria disease: mosquito

Africa is the second largest continent in terms of area and population density. It covers 25% of the world's land and houses 15% of the global population. Despite being one of the richest geographies in natural resources, Africa is the least developed continent. According to the United Nations Human Development Index 2019, all of the bottom 20 countries and 39 of the last 50 countries are in Africa. The World Bank predicts that if no measures are taken to boost the continent's economic development, nine out of every ten poor people globally will be African.

While the global population growth rate was 1.1% in 2020, Africa's was 2.7%. Africa's rapid population growth is largely due to the lack of birth control. In 1980, the fertility rate was 6.6 live births per woman; in 2017, according to WHO data, it decreased to 4.5. Despite a recent decline, Africa still leads the world in population growth rate. Average life expectancy, which was 46.7 years in 2010, has visibly increased to 56.5 years by 2021.

Despite recent relative improvements, health indicators in Africa remain below desired levels. For example, under-five child mortality was 156 per 1,000 live births in 2000, falling to 76 in 2018. Although this decline is positive, it is still more than eight times higher than Europe's rate of 9 per 1,000 in 2018. Maternal mortality

fell from 857 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 525 in 2017, but this remains approximately 40 times higher than Europe's rate of 13 per 100,000 in 2017. The WHO's acceptable maternal mortality rate is 70 per 100,000 live births. Only three small island nations in Africa—Cape Verde, Seychelles, and Mauritius—meet this standard. The 25 countries with the highest maternal mortality rates globally are in Africa. Sierra Leone has the highest maternal mortality rate at 1,360 deaths, while Finland has the lowest with just 3 deaths per 100,000 live births.

The very high rates of maternal and child mortality demonstrate insufficient access to healthcare. Immunization services, health workforce, and maternal and child health infrastructure are among the critical deficiencies. These problems are largely rooted in economic challenges. Per capita health expenditure is very low in African countries. For example, it is about 15 USD in Congo, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, compared to around 9,000 USD in Norway, Switzerland, and the USA.

In terms of infectious diseases, Africa exceeds global averages significantly. Although malaria cases have decreased recently, malaria remains one of the most serious health problems. The number of malaria cases in Africa is approximately 76 times the global average. In 2018, malaria prevalence was 229 per 1,000 in Africa compared to 3 per 1,000 worldwide. In 2020, Africa recorded 228 million malaria cases (95% of glob-

al cases) and 602,000 deaths (96% of global malaria deaths). Children under five accounted for 80% of malaria deaths in Africa in 2020. Sadly, one African child dies from malaria every 30 seconds.

Similarly, tuberculosis and HIV cases are most prevalent in Africa. According to 2021 data, 70% of people worldwide living with HIV and Hepatitis C are in Africa. Poor access to safe drinking water, lack of sanitation infrastructure, and inadequate environmental health services play a major role in the spread of infectious diseases across the continent.

There is a notable shortage of health facilities, equipment, and personnel across Africa. According to the 2022 Africa Health Atlas, 67.1% of health services are delivered by traditional and spiritual healers. A 2022 WHO survey covering 47 African countries showed basic health services are provided by only 1.55 healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, midwives) per 1,000 people, compared to a global lower limit of 4.45. Africa has 1 doctor per 3,324 people, whereas Europe has 1 per 293. Some specialties are particularly scarce; for example,

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ACROSS ALMOST ALL OF AFRICA, POOR ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER, LACK OF SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE, AND INSUFFICIENT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN SPREADING INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

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Photo: Al-amin Muhammad/pexels.com

An African woman carrying water for kilometers every day.



there is 1 psychiatrist per 500,000 people, 100 times below WHO recommendations.

Nurse availability is similarly low: 1 nurse per 985 people in Africa vs. 1 per 123 in Europe. According to the 2022 WHO Africa survey, there are 12.9 nurses per 10,000 people in Africa, compared to over 80 in Europe and America. Only Seychelles, Namibia, Mauritius, and South Africa have met this threshold.

Looking at individual countries' health workforce and infrastructure: In Ethiopia, the African Union headquarters and the continent's second most populous country, there are 7.7 doctors per 100,000 people (2018 data), with 8,395 active physicians (5,867 general practitioners, 2,528 specialists). In 2014, there were 349 surgeons, 147 gynecologists, and only 44 anesthesiologists. By 2017, there were 0.076 psychiatrists per 100,000, 1.6 dentists per 100,000 (1,745 total), and 3.6 pharmacists per 100,000 (3,907 total). Nurses and midwives number 86 per 100,000, with 77,931 nurses and 16,159 midwives (2017 data).

Uganda had 16.8 doctors per 100,000 in 2017, with 4,290 general practitioners, 710 specialists, and only 284 dentists (2019 data). The country employed 63,450 nurses and midwives, equating to 123.8 per 100,000.

Tanzania's 2016 data show 1.4 doctors and 58.4 nurses and midwives per 100,000—well below the Sub-Saharan African average of 15 doctors and 72 nurses per 100,000.

Nigeria, one of Africa's most populous and developed countries, had about 30 doctors per 100,000 in 2017, totaling 39,210 doctors. Dentists numbered 2,773 (2 per 100,000). There were 168 nurses and midwives per 100,000, with a total of 213,425.

Niger, one of the world's poorest countries, had only 813 doctors (2016 data) and just 18 dentists. Nurse and midwife numbers (4,898 total) vary by region; for example, 13 of the 18 dentists are in the capital Niamey, while many cities have no dentists.

Africa faces deep challenges in health workforce, infrastructure, education, health literacy, infectious disease prevention, and maternal-child health. Although difficult to solve in the short and medium term, these problems are expected to diminish as the continent develops. ■



A local dentist in Niger with rusty pliers.

Dr. Serhat ONUR

Urology (MD), Public Health (PhD)

Born in Burdur in 1970, graduated from Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Medicine in 1991. Named "Doctor of the Year" in 2012 by the Ministry of Health for voluntary health services in Africa. Retired from public service in 2022 and started private sector work. Completed PhD on "Female Genital Mutilation in Africa with a Focus on Somalia" in January 2025. Vice President of the Friends of All Africa Association (TADD) and Canveren Eller Association. Board member of Dersaadet Association and member of African Researchers Association (AFAM), Turkish Urology Association, and Urological Surgery Association. Has traveled 33 times to various African countries for voluntary health work. Actively participates in symposiums and workshops on voluntary health activities and conducts talks in higher education institutions. Writes the monthly "Cities of Africa" series in the City and Culture Magazine. Has published many articles on Africa and health, and contributed as editor and author to the book "Health Profile of Africa." Author of "The Possessed of Üsküdar" and "The Tradesmen of Üsküdar." Married with two daughters.



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Uganda, a landlocked country mostly bordered by lakes, is a fertile and rich nation with natural resources such as copper, cobalt, hydroenergy, limestone, salt, gold, oil, arable land, and a variety of fruits.



Yusuf MUGOYA

*General Coordinator of Student Affairs,
Bab-ı Âlem International Student Association*

THE PEARL OF AFRICA **UGANDA**



U Located in East Africa on the equator, Uganda is described as the “Pearl of Africa,” a unique country reminiscent of paradise with its natural beauty, cultural richness, ethnic diversity, and hospitable people. Its tropical climate, fertile soils, and strategic geographic location have made Uganda a center of attraction for both locals and visitors. This article examines Uganda’s natural wealth, culture, history, and modern life in detail.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF UGANDA AS A PARADISE

The intense interest shown historically and presently by missionaries and other foreign groups in Uganda (formerly Buganda) highlights the country’s importance. This importance relates primarily to its location and natural wealth. Situated in East Africa, Uganda borders South Sudan to the north, Tanzania and Rwanda to the south, Kenya to the east, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, surrounded by the Great Lakes region. Three lakes named Edward, Albert, and Victoria encircle Uganda. Although landlocked, Ugan-

da’s extensive lake shores and rich natural resources—including copper, cobalt, hydroenergy, limestone, salt, gold, oil, and fertile lands—make it a productive and wealthy country. Surrounded by plateaus and mountains, Uganda is famous for its various water bodies, dense forests, and savanna grasslands. Uganda is one of six African countries on the equator. The region, characterized by tropical climate, generally has rainy seasons and two dry seasons (December–February, June–August); the northeast is semi-arid. The country covers 241,551 km², with one-sixth of this area consisting of water. These features contribute to Uganda’s title as the “Pearl of Africa.”

ORIGIN OF THE NAME UGANDA AND THE UGANDAN PEOPLE

The name Uganda originates from the Buganda tribe, one of the Bantu ethnic groups who migrated from the forests of Cameroon and Zaire and settled in the western, southern, and central parts of the country. Uganda’s strategic location along the Rift Valley in Central Africa, and its favorable climate above 1200 meters elevation, made it an attractive center for Afri-

“

UGANDA HOSTS OVER 50 ETHNIC GROUPS.

”

can farmers and herders by the fourth century. These advantageous climatic conditions attracted farming communities who gradually established tribes and kingdoms. Explorers searching for the source of the Nile discovered the well-organized Buganda Kingdom located in central Uganda, along the equator, near the Nile's source at Lake Victoria. The kingdom's strategic position—bounded by Lake Victoria in the west, Mabi-ra Forest in the east, and Lake Kyoga in the north—contributed to its formation. Kampala, Uganda's capital, serves as the country's political and commercial hub. The international airport is in Entebbe, nearby.

FIRST FOREIGNERS TO ARRIVE IN UGANDA

Understanding Uganda's current situation requires knowledge of the political, cultural, and educational struggles and changes in the region. Beginning in the 1840s, Muslim Arab traders arrived first, followed by two rival missionary groups: the Anglican Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholics (White Fathers). Their arrival triggered rapid and profound changes in religious life, even causing the collapse of traditional beliefs. The historical development of Christian missionary work in Uganda and its societal impact involved rapid spread of Christianity through education, health, and economic activities initiated by missionaries and colonial authorities. This process led to deep social, cultural, and political transformations. Religious debates among foreign groups deeply influenced Uganda's politics; religious identities became key in political divisions and social dynamics. Over time, the church became more than a place of worship, exerting influence in education, health, and the economy, shaping society's overall structure. Uganda's current religious, political, and educational institutions trace their roots to missionary activities widespread in the late 19th century.

CULTURE AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN UGANDA

Uganda hosts over 50 ethnic groups, contributing significantly to its cultural richness and diversity.

The largest ethnic group, the Baganda, represent the Buganda Kingdom in central Uganda. This kingdom's cultural contributions—traditional music, dance, storytelling, and crafts—form the foundation of Ugandan culture. Other ethnic groups such as Banyoro, Basoga, Iteso, and Acholi also offer unique cultural elements across Uganda's regions. Official languages are Swahili and English, alongside many local languages like Luganda, Acholi, and Western Nilotic languages, which play important roles in daily life. Uganda leads in traditional crafts such as basket weaving, wood carving, beadwork, and traditional clothing design, all visible in local markets as part of the cultural heritage. Music and dance hold a significant place in Ugandan life, with performances using traditional instruments like drums, xylophones, flutes, and maracas integral to celebrations and ceremonies. Ganda dances and folk songs reenact social stories and historical events.

UGANDA'S RICH CUISINE

Ugandan cuisine is based on natural and fresh products. Matoke, a dish of cooked bananas, is a staple. Rolex, a chapati wrap filled with eggs and vegetables, is one of the most popular street foods. Tilapia fish from Lake Victoria is a national pride. Local beverages such as passion fruit juice, banana beer, and herbal teas complete Uganda's distinctive culinary offerings.

RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE OF UGANDA

Religion plays a vital role in Ugandan society. About 60% of the population are Christians, split roughly



Photo: livestockfish



equally between Catholics and Protestants. Religious holidays such as Uganda Martyrs' Day hold great significance for the Christian community. Muslims make up about 14% of the population (according to 2014 census data). The Uganda National Mosque in Kampala is an important symbol for the Muslim community. Traditional African religions continue in rural areas through ancestral worship, harmony with nature, and herbal healing practices.



Photo: pixabay.com

TOURISM VALUES AND POTENTIAL IN UGANDA

Uganda's unique natural beauty and national parks attract nature lovers worldwide. The Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to mountain gorillas, hosting about half the world's gorilla population. Murchison Falls National Park, with impressive waterfalls on the Nile and abundant wildlife, draws many visitors. Queen Elizabeth National Park is a safari haven with lions, elephants, and hippos. Uganda offers adrenaline seekers activities like rafting, trekking, and chimpanzee watching. Experiences like rafting on the Nile or trekking the Rwenzori Mountains are unforgettable. The Rwenzori

Mountains, one of Africa's highest and Uganda's natural wonders, feature snow-capped peaks and tropical forests. Albert and Victoria lakes are notable not only for beauty but also fishing and ecotourism. Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake, is among the two largest freshwater lakes globally. Kampala city, on its shores, offers tourist attractions. Hosting over a thousand bird species, Uganda is also a birdwatcher's paradise. Kibale Forest and Kazinga Channel are prominent bird-watching sites.

PEOPLE AND POPULATION OF UGANDA

Family is the foundation of Ugandan society. Solidarity and collective living prevail in villages. Ugandans are known for their hospitality and warm, sincere approach to guests. Most people engage in agriculture and livestock farming. Coffee and tea are significant exports. As of 2024, Uganda's population is approximately 48 million, mostly young, making it one of the world's youngest populations. Though many live rurally, urbanization in cities like Kampala is rapidly increasing. Football is the most popular sport, with the national team called Uganda Cranes. Uganda is also renowned for world-class long-distance runners. Cricket, a colonial legacy, is popular especially among the youth.



Photo: Pixabay / Irenekooler

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN UGANDA

Uganda's education system is liberal, including both private and public institutions. The public sector, a segment of the economy providing essential state functions, offers services benefiting all members of society (e.g., public education). An effective, motivated, and well-trained public service is key to Uganda's development. Good governance is critical for sustainable development, economic growth, and social welfare, making qualified and dedicated public servants a strategic priority.

Since independence from Great Britain in 1962, Uganda has undergone various reforms in education, establishing commissions and committees to monitor and improve educational goals.

Uganda's education covers primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, offering both academic and technical education. Primary education usually spans seven years (P1 to P7) for ages 6 to 12, ending with the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE).

Secondary education has two levels: four years of lower secondary (O level) and two years of upper secondary (A level), for ages 13 to 18. Successful lower secondary students receive the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE); upper secondary graduates receive the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE).

Tertiary education includes universities, business colleges, technical colleges, and teacher training schools. Admission to universities and business colleges requires UACE certification. Technical and vocational colleges train artisans, technicians, and skilled workers, offering intermediate programs for primary graduates and advanced programs for O level graduates. Prospective primary school teachers attend

teacher training after O level; secondary school teachers after A level. A non-formal education system also serves disadvantaged children and youth.

FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS IN UGANDA

Muslim communities in Uganda celebrate Ramadan and Eid al-Adha enthusiastically and traditionally. Approximately 14% of the population are Muslim. Uganda Martyrs' Day on June 3 commemorates Christian martyrs. Christmas celebrations are vibrant and traditional, reflecting Uganda's cultural richness and strong religious bonds. Christmas is one of the most important religious and social events, marked by family gatherings, church visits, special meals, and community activities. Uganda gained independence from Great Britain on October 9, 1962, a major national holiday celebrated with great enthusiasm. The Bayimba International Arts Festival is a significant event combining music, dance, and art. Nyege Nyege Festival, Uganda's largest music festival, brings together local and international artists.



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THE PHRASE “THIS WAY, THAT WAY” IS A COMMON EXPRESSION IN UGANDA INDICATING INDECISION, UNCERTAINTY, OR LACK OF DIRECTION IN DAILY LIFE.

”





ACCOMMODATION IN UGANDA

Uganda offers accommodation options for all budgets. Hotels such as Speke Resort Mubonyo Africana, Serena, Hilton, and Lake Victoria Serena Resort in Kampala provide comfortable stays. Eco-lodges like Bwindi Lodge and Murchison River Lodge offer nature-immersive experiences. Local guesthouses in rural areas provide affordable lodging.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF UGANDA

Uganda is a constitutional republic governed by the 1995 Constitution. The President, elected by the people, is head of state and government, exercising executive power. The unicameral Parliament legislates, approves budgets, and oversees the government. An independent judiciary exists with the Supreme Court as the highest court. Local administrations govern regional affairs. A multi-party political system is in place.

FINAL WORDS

Uganda, known as the "Pearl of Africa," is a unique country notable for its natural beauty, cultural wealth, and history. It has a tropical climate, fertile lands, and diverse natural resources in a strategic location. Uganda's culture features over 50 ethnic groups and diverse traditional elements such as cuisine, music, and dance. Its education system spans primary to higher education. Religious diversity plays a significant social role. Uganda's natural sites like Bwindi Forest, Lake Victoria, and the Rwenzori Mountains make it an international attraction. Governed by the 1995 Con-

stitution as a constitutional republic, Uganda blends historical and modern elements to offer a memorable experience with its hospitable people. For adventure, nature, and cultural discovery, Uganda is an ideal destination. You can start planning to explore the "Pearl of Africa." ■

Yusuf MUGOYA

Born in 1990 in Mukono, Uganda, Yusuf Mugoya completed his undergraduate studies in International Islam and Religious Sciences at Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, and his master's degree in Educational Institutions Management at Istanbul Medeniyet University. He is pursuing a PhD in Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul Gelişim University.

Throughout his education, Mugoya participated in various projects for international students, serving as founding president of the International Student Clubs at Istanbul 29 Mayıs University and Üsküdar Youth Center. He has held leadership roles as Vice President of the African Student Association in Turkey and President of the Ugandan Students Association in Turkey, roles he continues today.

Mugoya is General Coordinator of the Platform of International Student Associations in Turkey and board member of the Turkish Graduates Association (TUMED). He actively engages in humanitarian aid and social responsibility projects. He is founder of Pearl Humanitarian Relief Initiative in Uganda and serves as Head of Foreign Relations at Muyassar Muslim Welfare Foundation.

Mugoya's professional career continues at Bab-ı Âlem International Student Association, where he is General Coordinator of International Student Associations, University Clubs, and Alumni Units.



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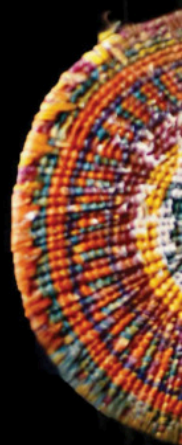
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Maha BAKHIT MOHAMMED

*PhD Student, Department
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WEDDING AND CULINARY CULTURE IN SUDAN







Sudan has been known by various names throughout history that reflect its culture and identity. Although it was known as "Tasiti," "Tanahsu," and "Ethiopia" in ancient times, its most famous name has been "Kush." This name refers to the powerful Kingdom of Kush established in the region.

In the Middle Ages, "Sudan" was used to refer to all the regions south of the Sahara from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, but over time, it became the name of a more limited area.

Between 1821 and 1885, Sudan was under Ottoman-Egyptian rule and remained under British occupation until 1956.

After gaining independence in 1956, it was officially recognized internationally as the "Republic of Sudan" with its current political borders.

Many different cultures and traditions coexist in Sudan. There are thousands of tribes and regional languages.

WEDDING TRADITIONS

Good Wishes (ريخل اقلوق)

The first step of marriage rituals, meaning "good word" or "good wish." This tradition begins with optimism and blessings for the bride and groom to step into a happy future.

At this stage, the groom's family visits the bride's fam-

ily home to make an official request to ask for their daughter's hand. If the bride's family accepts, they respond positively with "good wishes." This acceptance is considered the start of the subsequent stages of the marriage process.

After the proposal, the marriage process continues with the "engagement." During this stage, the groom, his family, relatives, and friends visit the bride's home a second time to formalize the marriage intent and hold the engagement ceremony.

Engagement

During the engagement, the groom usually presents gold jewelry to the bride. Recently, it has become common to add a mobile phone as a modern touch to the gift.

After the ceremony, according to tradition, guests are served "refreshing treats" consisting of light snacks and soft drinks, offered jointly by both families as a gesture of hospitality.

Ramadan Gifts

A traditional marriage ritual in Sudan, highly significant between the two families. The fiancée's family prepares special items for the groom's family for Ramadan, including:

*DURING THE
ENGAGEMENT, THE
GROOM USUALLY
PRESENTS GOLD
JEWELRY TO THE
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YEARS, ADDING A
MOBILE PHONE
TO THIS GIFT HAS
BECOME COMMON.*



Photo: Wikipedia / Megd/salah2055

Engagement



Photo: Facebook/ ORI Persian

Bride's Dress

- Kitchenware
- Various spices
- Hulu Mur (a traditional Sudanese drink)
- Bags of sugar
- Hibiscus (Karkadeh)
- Dates

These items are carefully prepared and sent by the fiancée's family to the groom's family to strengthen the bond and spirit of solidarity.

Marriage Contract

Marriage is officially performed according to Islamic (Sharia) rules before an imam. After the contract, the engagement ring is transferred from the right hand to the left, symbolizing the couple's official union.

Celebration Ceremony

Songs are sung, dances are performed, and the bride wears a white wedding dress. The ceremony holds special significance for both families.

*THE BRIDE WEARS A
RED DRESS FOR THE
CEREMONY, AND A SUGAR-
MADE STRING IS TIED
AROUND HER WAIST.*

Shile Gift: Bride's Bundle

After the marriage contract, the groom's family presents the bride with a special gift called "Shile." This gift consists of a complete set of clothing including a traditional Sudanese dress. A full Sudanese dress is also prepared for the bride's mother. This gift symbolizes the groom's family's respect for the bride and her family.

Cirtag

Cirtag is one of the most important and traditional stages of Sudanese wedding ceremonies. This ritual is performed with rich symbols and rituals to wish happiness and blessings for the couple's new life.

Milk Sprinkling

After Cirtag, the ritual of "milk sprinkling" begins. The bride and groom sprinkle milk on each other's faces, believed to bring goodness and blessings to their new life together.

Bride's Dress

The bride wears a red dress for the ceremony, and a sugar-made string is tied around her waist. This string is cut by the groom, after which sugar is sprinkled over the guests.

Treats

Light refreshments such as sweets and fruits are served to guests during the ceremony.



Milk Sprinkling



SUDANESE CUISINE

The Most Important Dishes of Sudan:

Kisra and Mullaah

Kisra is one of the most important dishes in Sudanese cuisine. This thin bread made from sorghum flour is typically served with Mullaah (a stew), the main dish consumed in many parts of Sudan. Mullaah is prepared with various ingredients and has many variations:

- **Mullaah Na'imiyya:** A yogurt-based variant with a slightly sour taste.

- **Mullaah Wika:** Made from dried okra.

- **Mullaah Maris:** A rich dish made with sheep fat, onions, and dried okra.

Vegetables like potatoes and eggplants are also used to prepare different varieties.

Beverages

Sudanese cuisine offers a wide variety of beverages, mostly made from natural ingredients:

Cold Drinks:

- **Tabaldi (Baobab):** A refreshing drink made from dried baobab fruit.

- **Ardeeb:** Made from tamarind fruit with a slightly sour taste.



Photo: Wikipedia

- **Karkadeh (Hibiscus):** Made from dried hibiscus leaves, consumed both hot and cold.

Hot Drinks:

- **Cebena (Sudanese Coffee):** Special Sudanese coffee sweetened with sugar, sometimes spiced with ginger or cinnamon.

- **Black Tea:** A commonly consumed daily beverage. ■



Kisra



Maha BAKHIT MOHAMMED

Born in Sudan. Completed undergraduate studies in Communication and History at the Faculty of Literature, University of Khartoum. Obtained a master's degree in Modern History from Süleyman Demirel University, continues PhD studies in the Department of History at Istanbul University. Worked as an assistant at Yunus Emre Institute in Khartoum between 2016-2019. Served as an assistant at the Sudan Maarif Foundation Representation between 2022-2023.

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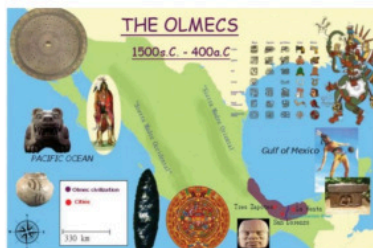


Gökhan AYDOĞDU

Academic / Pharmacology and Toxicology

THE STORY OF COCOA AND CHOCOLATE





The history of chocolate and the production from cocoa tree seeds dates back to the ancient Mayans and even earlier to the ancient Olmecs of southern Mexico (who lived in the Mexican Gulf regions of present-day Tabasco and Veracruz). The word “chocolate” may evoke sweet confections and exquisite truffles. However, today’s candies are quite different from the chocolate of the past. For most of its history, chocolate was not a sweet, rich-flavored treat but a bitter drink. However, after becoming popular in European courts and the colonial Americas, chocolate quickly became a universally beloved commodity as it is today.

Historians believe the Olmecs discovered that the cocoa fruit was edible by observing mice voraciously eating it. Soon after, they realized the tree produced a fruit that could be transformed into thousands of flavors and had nearly as many uses.

The Olmecs (1500-400 BC) were the first to consume chocolate, initially as a beverage. They ground cocoa beans, mixed them with water, and added spices, chili peppers, and herbs (Coe’s Theory). They started cultivating cocoa in equatorial Mexico. Over time, the Mayans (600 BC) and Aztecs (400 AD) developed successful cocoa farming methods. The cocoa bean was used by these civilizations as currency and a unit of measure. 400 beans equaled one Zontli, and 8000 beans equaled one Xiquipilli. The Chimineken people preferred to collect cocoa beans as tax from conquered regions during wars with the Aztecs and Mayans.

For these civilizations, cocoa symbolized abundance. Cocoa production advanced as humans migrated to America. Yet, consumption remained a privilege of the upper class and warriors. By then, cocoa’s invigorating and strengthening effects were widely recognized.

According to other sources, cocoa residues found in pottery in Ecuador indicate the plant was consumed by humans about 5,000 years earlier. The tree was likely domesticated in the upper Amazon and later spread northwards.

DISCOVERY AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF COCOA (16TH CENTURY)

In 1502, Columbus first saw cocoa beans in a native canoe during a stop in Nicaragua but failed to appreciate their tremendous potential value. The importance of this “brown gold” was recognized only after Hernando Cortez drank it with Aztec Emperor Montezuma and brought the equipment to brew it to the Spanish court

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*FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY,
CHOCOLATE WAS NOT
A SWEET AND RICH-
FLAVORED TREAT BUT
A BITTER DRINK.*

”

in 1528. Even then, no one probably foresaw its ultimate importance as a global commodity.

After defeating native tribes and the fall of the Aztec Civilization, Cortez intensified efforts to cultivate cocoa in New Spain to develop profitable trade with Europe.

The Spanish court soon fell under the spell of this exotic elixir, adapting it to their tastes by adding sugarcane, vanilla, cinnamon, and black pepper. Initially, Spain reserved cocoa solely for its own use and carefully concealed it from the rest of the world. They guarded this secret so well that a group of English pirates, when capturing a Spanish galleon, failed to recognize the value of the heavy cargo of beans and burned them!

In 1585, the first shipment of cocoa beans reached the Iberian Peninsula from New Spain, initiating the first cocoa trade. As a result, the first chocolate shops opened, marking a new era of rapidly growing demand for this mysterious nectar from the New World.

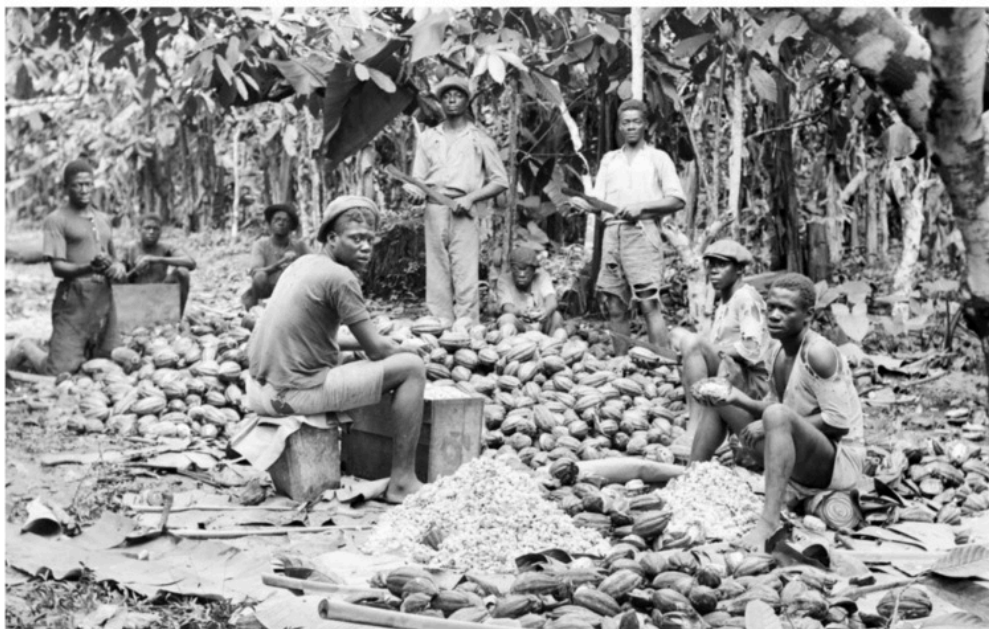


SPREAD OF COCOA IN EUROPE (17TH-19TH CENTURIES)

Cocoa began reaching other European ports in the 17th century, effortlessly conquering regional tastes. Chocolate drinks were first embraced by the French court after King Louis XIII married Spanish Princess Anne of Austria in 1615.

Chocolate drinks began consumption in England around 1650, coinciding with the arrival of tea from China and coffee from the Middle East. However, for many





years, it remained a treat exclusive to the upper classes. The first chocolate confectionery was produced in Paris in 1659. In 1720, Italian chocolatiers won awards that helped popularize their products. By 1765, North America discovered cocoa's marvelous qualities.

Thus, chocolate spread throughout Europe and the world. The presentation of chocolate also evolved. The first chocolate tablet was made in England in 1674. Cocoa powder was first produced by the Dutch in 1828. The chocolate bar appeared in Great Britain in 1830. The Swiss successfully entered the chocolate market in 1830 with milk chocolate and soon followed with hazelnut-flavored chocolate.

Thanks to this long period of culinary and production innovation, chocolate consumption increased rapidly and steadily. Pharmacological uses for cocoa and cocoa-derived products were also widely researched. Given the attributes first consumers attributed to it (strengthening, restorative, aphrodisiac), this was not surprising.

INDUSTRIAL AGE COCOA

The industrial era brought fundamental changes in chocolate and cocoa affecting everyone from cultivators to consumers. Spain, the first exporter of choco-

late, opened the first chocolate factory in Barcelona in 1780, and shortly after Germany and Switzerland took steps toward full industrialization of cocoa.

Gradually, the cultivation areas of cocoa shifted. Europeans began colonizing Africa and brought the cocoa tree with them. Cocoa was successfully planted in Sao Tome and Principe, and these agricultural activities spread to the African continent. Although cocoa cultivation spread from the original regions to the Amazon River, the emergence of a new cocoa empire in Africa gradually reduced production in South America. From the early 20th century, Africa took the lead and became the largest cocoa producer.

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*FROM THE EARLY 20TH
CENTURY, AFRICA TOOK
THE LEAD AND BECAME
THE LARGEST COCOA
PRODUCER.*

“

Industrialization had a democratizing effect on chocolate. It transformed from a rare delicacy reserved for royal families to a treat easily accessible to the masses. Unsurprisingly, as it became more popular, many new chocolate products emerged including dried fruit chocolates, liqueurs, fondue, pralines, filled chocolates, powdered chocolates, spreads, creams, pastes, hard candies, beverages, and more. Whether handmade or fast food, chocolate is now a firmly established part of global vocabulary and diets. Many improvements have been made since it first appeared as a beverage.

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin poetically summarized our universal love affair with chocolate: "What is health? It is chocolate!"

IMPORTANT DATES

France, 1776: Doret invents a hydraulic process to make cocoa beans into a paste, facilitating the first large-scale production of chocolate.

Netherlands, 1828: Chemist Coenraad van Houten invents a process to extract cocoa butter and cocoa powder, making chocolate more homogeneous and less costly to produce.

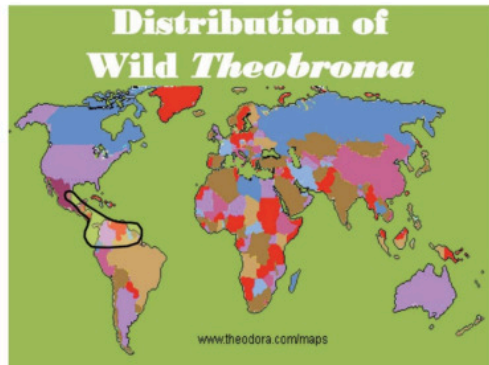
England, 1847: Solid chocolate is introduced to the public for the first time by Fry and Sons (previously only available in royal courts).

Switzerland, 1830-1879: Milk chocolate developed by Daniel Peter and Henri Nestlé follows hazelnut-flavored chocolate. Rodolphe Lindt develops chocolate fondue in this period.

United States, 1893: Milton Hershey notices chocolate-making equipment at the Chicago World Fair and starts production at his Pennsylvania factory.

Chocolate followed French and American infantry to WWI trenches and US chocolate production was fully dedicated to the army during WWII. In France, chocolate desserts emerged in the interwar period, with French pralines (chocolates filled with almonds and other nut fillings) becoming popular. This led producers to experiment with new flavors such as almond paste, cherry in aqua vitae, nougat, caramel. ■

Source: INAFORISTA, BRITANNICA



Gökhan AYDOĞDU

Aydoğdu started university studies in 1992-1994 at Oxford University Cavendish College in Aviation and Tourism Industry, later completed his bachelor's degree at Anadolu University Faculty of Economics. Driven by his interest in health, he obtained an Acupuncture Diploma from Colombo Acupuncture College in 2012-2013. Aydoğdu continued academic studies with a master's thesis on "Bee Venom" at Bursa Uludağ University Health Sciences Institute between 2018-2022.

Since 1998, he has worked on bees and bee products, studied Traditional Medicine Sciences based on acupuncture and apitherapy abroad, attended numerous certificate programs and spoken at various congresses and seminars on apitherapy. He also supported the establishment of the Sudan Investment Group and has worked on agricultural and other projects. For the last decade, he has actively worked with TADD to better understand Africa and reach those in need on the continent.



Enzo IKAH

*Musician / Director / Peace and Refugee
Rights Activist*

AFRICAN MUSIC

**ACCORDING TO OUR AFRICAN ANCESTORS, MUSIC IS THE MAGIC OF NATURE,
AND ITS WORDS ENCHANT THE SOUL.**

Before discussing its various genres, I would like to share my thoughts on music as both a universal and traditional art form.



Scientifically speaking, frequencies affect physical beings such as humans, animals, birds, insects, and frogs. The melodies of bird songs, insect chirps, frogs' harmonic night songs in swamps, and the rhythmic galloping of a horse, when combined in harmony and rhythm, naturally give rise to the art of music.

Paradoxically, music is easy and natural to listen to but difficult to describe. Although easily perceived by the brain, music is a complex arrangement of notes, timbre, and rhythm that varies with era and culture. Along with the various emotions music carries, it involves an advanced cognitive process not yet fully understood today.

“ *THE DIVERSITY
OF TRADITIONAL
MUSIC
CORRELATES
DIRECTLY WITH
THE DIVERSITY OF
ETHNIC GROUPS
AND SUBGROUPS.* ”

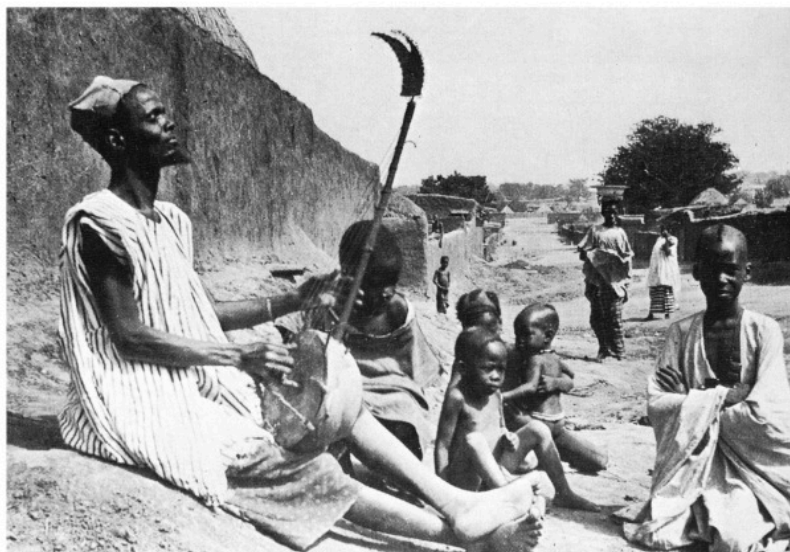
MUSIC HAS TWO DIMENSIONS: ENERGETIC AND SPIRITUAL.

Melodies are series of notes measurable in frequencies. The human ear can hear frequencies between 20 Hz and 20 kHz. There are frequencies below 20 Hz and above 20 kHz that are inaudible but can be felt. These high and low tones affect our physical body. For example, ultrasonic sounds can cause dizziness, and infra-bass or infrasound can cause discomfort despite being inaudible.

A song can comprise many frequencies; some directly influence vibrational tones and thus affect sadness, feelings, emotions, and decision processes. Low-frequency sounds influence low emotions, while high frequencies affect high emotions. For example, infra-bass sounds in drill and trap music activate root emotions linked to survival instincts and basic needs. These emotions can have positive outcomes if moderately triggered but may cause negative feelings if excessively stimulated.

Plato said that if music is a fundamental part of education, it is because rhythm and harmony deeply penetrate and affect the soul.

Aristotle noted that music softens morality and cleanses souls through art.



African ancestors emphasized that music's energy touches the body and has the power to heal a sick soul by penetrating it.

HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE OF GRIOTS IN AFRICAN MUSIC

Temporal organization—periodicity, metric structure, rhythm, and polyrhythm—is of such importance in African music that all other components depend on it. The diversity of traditional music corresponds directly to the diversity of ethnic groups and subgroups, corroborated by their distinct languages and dialects.

Every society with its own unique language also has music that makes it unique. Hence, Central Africa, like its many ethnic groups, languages, and dialects, also has a wide variety of music styles.

Traditional music's consistency is manifested within each community by its functionality intertwined with social and/or religious conditions and its constituent elements (sounds and instruments, scales, time structures, technical processes, etc.). As noted before, rhythm diversifies the messages. Traditional music is passed down orally from generation to generation rather than written.

In the Mandingo Empire (11th–17th centuries) of West Africa (modern Mali), "Griots" were traditional musicians and storytellers. They were a nomadic group earning livelihood by traveling from village to village. Griots narrated their stories accompanied by a string instrument called the Kora.

Griots formed a distinct social class. They were not only artists but also guardians of oral, musical, and poetic traditions. They contributed greatly to the transmission of poetry, music, and history across generations. Thanks to griots, many ancient works have survived to this day. Their significance to collective memory granted them secret advisor and confidant roles to kings, diplomats, poets, musicians, educators, and some judges.

Griots inherit their role by birth, through bloodline, from father to son. Ordinary people could not become gri-

ots. Their household courtyards were places with rare language taboos but respectful of oratory rules, and also training centers for novice griots. Trainees learned how to keep their audiences in suspense or move them emotionally. Being born a griot was insufficient. They prepared oratorical performances with their people and took lessons to learn drumming.

Fables were stories told by griots through songs and passed down generations. Myths and legends were usually sung as songs accompanied by string instruments.



*Trumpeters appear in a 17th-century depiction showing the neighborhood of the Loango King, neighboring the Kingdom of Kongo. Loango King (Maloango), from Olfert Dapper's *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge* (Amsterdam), p. 539, 1686.*

Music was sacred in the Kingdom of Kongo (1528-1914). At the court of chiefs and kings, dancers accompanied specific instruments.

TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTS FROM THE HEART OF AFRICAN MUSIC

Sanza/Likembe: A small "first-hand piano" with one or two rows of keys, with the oldest example found in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Called **Mbira** in Uganda, **Kalimba** in Tanzania.

Kora: A 21-string instrument resembling a traditional harp, emblematic of Mandingo culture in Mali and Gambia.

Xalam: A single-stringed drum specific to Senegalese music, used in Mbalax music.

Boongo: A long, sideways-blown bamboo flute, originally from South Africa and played notably in Tanzania.

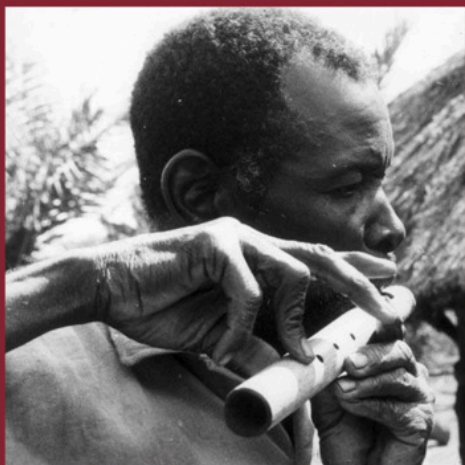
Kundi: From Central Congo, resembling a tilted harp similar to the Egyptian harp. This five-string instrument was used by the Azande people.

Ngoma: A percussion instrument used in ancient times

as a communication tool between neighboring villages, each beat carrying a specific message. Ngoma is still widely used under the same name in many African countries, showing the strength of cultural transmission.

Many other instruments were used for communication. For example, Mpunga/trumpets were played to announce unexpected events or the arrival of strangers. Death of a chief or tribe member, birth, marriage, or other events were announced by Mpunga (made from buffalo or antelope horn or ivory) and Ngoma rhythms. This ancient practice persists in some regions today.

While music today often serves to entertain many people, in Africa's past, it was used as a communication tool.



A bamboo side flute, Boongo



A modern side flute



The Likembe, considered the ancestor of the piano, has two rows of keys.



An example of a double-row Likembe from today.

The Sanza, a hand piano made before 1877 found in Congo. "Royal Museums of Art and History."



TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN MUSIC

Kale Kabasele/Grand Kale Jeff (DR Congo), Mory Kanté (Guinea), Salif Keita (Mali), Fela Kuti (Nigeria)... The modernization of African music post-colonialism...

Congolese contributed greatly to modern music development through their rumbas. With the happiness of freedom, rumba and Congolese modernity were born. Cuban rhythms such as cha-cha-cha, baranga, and especially bolero played from Cuba to Mexico took hold along all Atlantic coasts. Many musicians, including the Congolese music genius Luambo Franco Makiadi who produced over five thousand works, interpreted this music in an African style.

From Congo rumba to Mandingo music, Highlife, Ethio-jazz, or Afrobeat, a polyphonic musical journey began in Africa over a few decades connected to the 1960s liberation.

DISCOVER AFRICAN MUSIC: ETHNIC AND TRADITIONAL!

African music is a broad and rich field encompassing many styles, rhythms, and traditions spread throughout the continent. Deeply rooted in each region's culture and history, it reflects Africa's ethnic and linguistic diversity. Traditional instruments like drums, balafon, kora, mbira, and xalam lie at the core of many African music genres with their unique and distinctive sounds. African music is often polyrhythmic, combining many rhythms harmoniously and complexly. It plays an important role in ceremonies, rituals, and daily life by transmitting history, beliefs, and social values.

Besides its traditional function, African music has a significant impact on world music. Genres like Afrobeat, Highlife, Ndombolo, Soukous, Zouglou, and Coupe-De-cale have gained international acclaim by blending modern influences such as jazz, hip-hop, and R&B. This music is not only an artistic expression but also a voice for marginalized communities and a catalyst for social movements.

Contemporary African music continues to evolve by integrating modern technologies and international genres while preserving its traditional roots. It is known worldwide for its vibrancy, innovation, and ability to transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries, testifying to Africa's inexhaustible musical heritage.

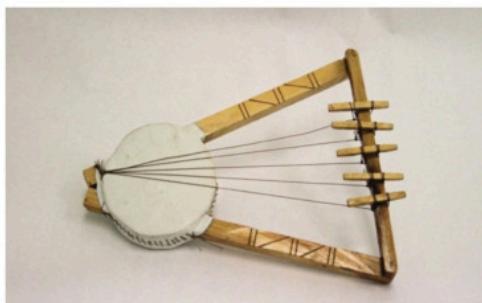
Photo: Brooklyn Museum, Arts of Africa collection



Kundi



An Mpunga made from antelope horn



a kirar/kirara/kirare/
krar from Eritrea (all
spellings used)



AFRICAN MUSIC FROM PAST TO PRESENT

African music is an artistic expression deeply linked to the continent's cultural and geographical diversity. It includes a wide variety of styles, instruments, rhythms, and traditions reflecting the cultures and communities that make up Africa. Some features:

Regional Diversity: Africa is vast with unique musical traditions in every region. From Afrobeat in Nigeria, Mbalax in Senegal, Gnawa in Morocco to Highlife in Ghana, the diversity is astounding.

Traditional Instruments: African music uses a variety of traditional instruments like djembe, balafon, kora, ngoni, mbira, xylophone, kalangu (also called "talking drum"), ud, etc., usually made from local materials with distinctive sounds.

Polyrhythm: Rhythms play a vital role. African music is characterized by polyrhythm, where multiple rhythmic patterns interact simultaneously creating a rich musical texture.

Percussion: Percussion is widespread. Traditional drums and percussion instruments play important roles with lively and driving rhythms.

Vocals and Singing: Singing is important. Vocal harmonies are often polyrhythmic. Lyrics address history, spirituality, cultural values, storytelling.

Cultural and Social Role: African music plays a significant cultural and social role, accompanying ceremonies, celebrations, weddings, funerals, and other social events. It is a way to transmit ancestors' stories, traditions, and knowledge.

Fusion with Contemporary Music: Many contemporary African artists blend traditional music with hip-hop, reggae, jazz, and electronic music, creating unique genres.

Konono: An innovative music style adapted and performed with traditional instruments specific to the Besi Kongo tribe.



African Balafon

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African music is a cultural treasure that reveals the diversity of Africa's people and regions. It continues to influence worldwide, admired for its creativity, vitality, and ability to convey deep emotions.

JAZZ AND BLUES' AFRICAN ROOTS

Africa is the homeland of music. Though jazz and blues are often presented as Afro-American creations, they originate from African music brought to southern U.S. plantations by slaves. Work songs expressing labor in cotton fields reflect the complex polyrhythms of African percussion. People from similar origins and cultures, working together all day, gradually found common grounds to understand each other, inevitably reflecting their culture in their new home.

Religious songs blending African spirit with joy and hope carry the call-and-response pattern of West African music. Blues, emerging in the Mississippi Delta, was influenced by Manding griots, itinerant poet-musicians who passed stories orally. The notes played on blues guitars recall griots' oral storytelling tradition.

Jazz, emerging in the 1920s New Orleans, reflects this

African heritage blended with European instruments. Syncopated rhythms, collective improvisation, and played tones are inspired by African music aesthetics.

Pioneers like Louis Armstrong and John Coltrane embraced and continuously reinvented this Afro-American legacy rooted in Africa.

THE QUEEN MOTHER OF ALL MUSIC

Salsa is accepted as Cuban, Tango as Argentinian, Flamenco as Spanish, Jazz and Rap as American, Samba as Brazilian. All these musics trace their distant roots to Africa's cultural heritage.

The Afro-Cuban group African Groove, specializing in Afro-Cuban music, dedicates itself to exploring some origins of traditional African music.

AFRICAN MUSIC TRADITIONS, SONGS, AND INSTRUMENTS

Can we talk about African music without referring to its origins? It is said there are as many types of music in Africa as there are ethnic groups. African music is always anonymous, popular, collective, passed down orally and by memory rather than notation or theory.

African music's approach to Western music, including notation, harmony, and paradoxically rhythm (which initially characterized it), became more aligned only after the late 1960s decolonization.

RHYTHM AT THE CENTER OF LIFE

Traditionally, African rhythms are associated with short and repetitive formulas with highly complex details revealing their structure. One or more of these rhythm structures later play a unifying role for underlying other structures.

The drum is the main instrument. It provides the basic rhythm supported or contrasted by other percussion. The combination of interlocking rhythmic forms shows the complexity of African music's origins. Its regular rhythm and persistent repetition leave little room for improvisation.



CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN MUSIC AND DANCE

Rhythm: Playing various percussion instruments or body percussion

Polyrhythm: Combination of many rhythms

Ostinato: Continuously repeated melodic or rhythmic motif

Call-and-Response Technique: Dialogue between soloist and group

Dance in Africa: Regional variation exists. In North Africa, hands are raised during dance, Central Africa emphasizes waist movement, and moving south, footwork becomes more prominent with rhythm kept by the feet. ■

Enzo IKAH

Peace and Refugee Rights Activist

Author, artist, musician, composer, songwriter, writer, actor, and director.

Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Enzo Ikah graduated as an educational psychologist from Paris Sorbonne University in 2006. He completed his master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies at Hacettepe University.

Ikah, noted for his work in art and humanitarian fields, was awarded the "Earth Artist" prize by Home for Humanity Paris in 2024 for his contributions to healing humanity, preserving and renewing culture, and offering artistic contributions to our planet. He also received the "Humanitarian World Star of Peace" award in 2015.

A prolific writer, Ikah contributed to chapters of the book "The Makings of Justice," authored a six-volume fairy tale series "Makaku" published by Puslu Publishing in 2017, and wrote "Invisible Chains" published by Üsküdar University.

He is also actively involved in his music career and has released many albums in Turkey.





THE LAND OF CHAMPION RUNNERS: **ETHIOPIA**

Ömer SÖZTUTAN

Journalist / Writer



This is Ethiopia... The place where tradition and talent meet in athletes, where athletics has turned into an industry due to their successes... But what makes them different from athletes of other countries? Genetic predisposition, hard work, muscle structure, geographical conditions?

BEING ETHIOPIAN MEANS BEING BORN DOPED!

Ethiopia is a country with a population roughly equal to Turkey. With its traditions, heritage, history, scenery, rich cuisine, being the homeland of coffee, and many other surprising facts, it is an extraordinary African country...

And that breathtaking, subject of scientific theses, Ethiopian athletics that has written its name in golden letters in world sports history. A country always asked the same question by sports authorities and that makes people ask, "What is the secret of this success?"

Athletes tried many ways to win medals in international competitions. From using banned substances to temporary pregnancies, from switching places with twins to bribery... However, especially in athletics, there is a legal "doping geography" to reach medals. Being born in Ethiopia...

A country that first participated in the Olympic Games in 1956 and since then has sent athletes to Summer Olympics except for 1976, 1984, and 1988 Games, also participated in the Winter Games for the first time in 2006 Torino Games, and has won a total of 58 medals, all in Summer Olympics and all in athletics, cannot be explained by anything else!

"WITH EVERY STEP I CARRIED THE HOPES OF A NATION"

Let's first look at how this brilliant journey started. Moreover, with a story never seen before.

We are in the men's marathon at the 1960 Rome Olympics. Until that day, no African athlete had won an Olympic gold medal. Ethiopian Abebe Bikila's barefoot run breaking the world record marked the games with great surprise and applause. After the cere-

mony where he said, "With every step I carried the hopes of a nation," that flag never came down from the Olympic pole.

Bikila defended his title at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and became a role model for the country's young athletes in athletics.

Following Bikila, Mamo Wolde won gold in marathon and silver in 10,000 meters at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. Wolde's successes showed the world Ethiopia's lasting strength in long-distance running, opening the way for future generations of Ethiopian athletes.

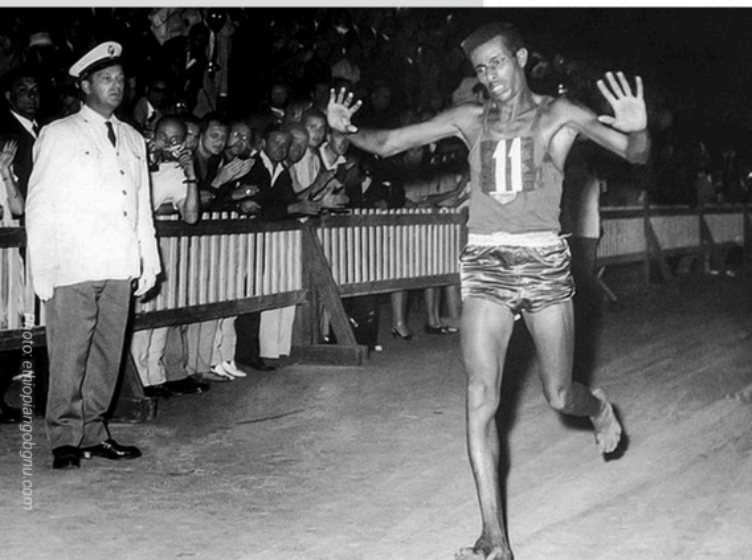
Miruts Yifter, with his unique running style and tactical skills, earned two gold medals and one bronze at the 1972 and 1980 Olympics, securing a special place in Ethiopian sports history.

Success had become a tradition for Ethiopia. The 1990s and 2000s were golden ages. With athletes like Haile Gebrselassie and Kenenisa Bekele, they firmly dominated the track. Gebrselassie won gold in men's 10,000 meters at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and successfully defended his title at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. With extraordinary performances, he set new Olympic records and advised new generation runners, saying, "After earning good money, you must manage everything including your life. Money should not run faster than you."

Kenenisa Bekele continued the "Ethiopian wind" tradition by winning three golds and one silver at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. His victories in men's 10,000 and 5,000 meters and his incredible endurance made him one of the greatest long-distance runners in history. ESPN listed Kenenisa among the "Top 25 African athletes of the 21st century" in July 2024.

Gete Wami and Sileshi Sihine were other notable multi-medalists. Wami's success in women's 10,000 and 5,000 meters in 2004 and 2008 Olympics and Sihine's silver medals in men's 10,000 meters showcased the abundance of talent in Ethiopian athletics.





"THE BABY-FACED DESTROYER" A FEMALE PANTHER!

Ethiopian female athletes have also contributed to the country's Olympic successes. Derartu Tulu became the first African woman to win Olympic gold in women's 10,000 meters at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. She won another gold at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and a bronze at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Nicknamed the "Baby-faced Destroyer," Tirunesh Dibaba won three golds and three bronzes at the 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 Olympics. Her dominance in women's 10,000 and 5,000 meters made her a legend. The Dibaba sisters—Genzebe, Tirunesh, Anna, and Ejegayehu—conquered the world with their incredible talent and inspiring stories. Meseret Defer and Almaz Ayana also contributed to Ethiopia's medal count. Defer won two golds and one bronze in women's 5,000 meters between 2004-2012, while Ayana set a world

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*ALL RESEARCH INDICATES THAT
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Photo: flicker.com/stephenwalli



record in women's 10,000 meters at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Ethiopia's athletics success has continued recently with athletes like Selemon Barega, Tiki Gelana, and Feyisa Lilesa rising on the podium. At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Barega won gold in men's 10,000 meters, and Gelana and Lilesa won medals in women's and men's marathons, respectively.

Ethiopia continues its work as a "talent factory" for international races. New generation athletes seem poised to maintain Ethiopia's status as a powerhouse in long-distance running in the years to come.

WHERE DOES THIS MEDAL'S SECRET COME FROM?

Let's get to the secret of Ethiopian long-distance runners' extraordinary success. Explaining their achievements by a single factor would oversimplify the matter. According to scientific studies and authoritative opinions, factors that take them to the top include:

GENETIC PREDISPOSITION,

Development of maximal oxygen uptake as a result of intense walking and running at an early age, Relatively

high hemoglobin (protein in red blood cells carrying oxygen to tissues) and hematocrit (increased production of red blood cells), Good metabolic efficiency based on somatotype (body type) and lower extremity characteristics, Positive skeletal-muscle-fiber composition and oxidative enzyme profile, Traditional Ethiopian diet, Living and intense training at high altitude, Motivation to achieve economic success.

Some of these factors have been scientifically proven in laboratories, some have been objectively examined in the field, and others have been evaluated by authorities with an observational perspective.

Studies examining possible links between Ethiopians' genetic traits and elite running performance conclude that they are born with a step ahead.

Looking at any medal table from the last 60 years of international competitions, one can see Ethiopia's successes in endurance races.

"LIFE STARTS WITH RUNNING HERE... RUNNING IS A PROFESSION!"

The best long-distance runners that the sports world has

praised for years actually come from a small town in Ethiopia. Because long-distance running is not a sport but a way of life in Ethiopia's Arsi region. The golden years of athletics (successes) coincided with a period associated with poverty, famine, and war, becoming a source of "hope" and "pride" for the country. Most of the world's best runners come from Bekoji, a remote town on Ethiopia's southern plateaus. At the Beijing Olympics, runners from Bekoji won four gold medals in long-distance track events, earning more medals than many industrial countries combined.

This journey of those born and raised in Bekoji and opening to the world stage was brought to the silver screen by award-winning director Jerry Rothwell's film "Town of Runners."

"LIFE HERE IS RUNNING. RUNNING IS A JOB."

There have been countless studies about Ethiopia's running success. Writer and anthropologist Michael Crawley researched running culture in Bekoji, the center of Ethiopia he called "the fastest place in the world."

Spending 15 months living and training with a group of Ethiopian athletes, Crawley prepared his doctoral thesis at Edinburgh University and wrote the book "Out of Thin Air."

Research associated Ethiopians and their great long-distance running rivals Kenyans with "positive somatotypic characteristics contributing to extraordinary



The film, which lasted four years from school track to national competitions, from childhood to adulthood, starts with a very striking opening scene.

The film uses a venue resembling our village coffee-houses. It begins with the town youth watching Tiku-nesh's championship run, which they had never seen before, from probably the only TV screen Bekoji owns. Seeing the excitement they felt watching the race from miles away, in unknown places, and in an unknown language is truly impressive. Later scenes present the story of the town and of Hawi and Alemi through the mouth of another young athlete candidate Biruk.

biomechanical and metabolic efficiency." Besides this, Crawley's research included the following views:

They run at high altitude

Ethiopia's most distinctive advantage is also the hardest to imitate within the country. The capital Addis Ababa, where many top runners live, is 2,355 m above sea level. Even if you were in a position to regularly run up Ben Nevis, it would not be more than half that height. Studies show that running at low oxygen levels in the air has great benefits for heart rate and lung function. Coach Abderazak explained after watching me unusually breathless at Entoto, about 3,000 m above sea level,



"Running is all about oxygen. Here your lungs expand to hold more." But if this was the only factor, long-distance runners from Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia's even higher capitals would dominate the Olympics. There must be more...

They start young

Many Ethiopian children unknowingly start their education early. Haile Gebrselassie's family farm was 10 km from his school in Asella, 130 km south of Addis Ababa, and had no access to buses or cars. In an interview with Times of India, he said, "I started running not for fun or competition, but as a daily activity." At the children's races held on Saturday mornings before the Great Ethiopian Run on Sunday, older children warmed up in disciplined lines while Ethiopian children under five ran on a course outside the Ethiopian Youth Sports Academy. Running there is routine.

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They start early in the morning

We meet at 5:30 am and take a half-hour journey towards Entoto Forest. At dawn, we reach a clearing among eucalyptus trees. A football match is already underway. Before hitting the notorious traffic and horn noise leaving the city, we pass multiple running groups along the roadside making use of this dark time. "Kids in our town wake up very early to run and their families

are not surprised," says Coach Sentayehu Eshetu in the film *Town of Runners*. He adds, "In another town, they would ask, 'Are you all crazy?'"

They warm up a lot

Before entering the forest, Coach Abderazak leads a long, slow, and comprehensive stretching series involving standing on one leg with hands on hips and swinging the other leg back and forth. I find it a bit boring. I am eager to move in this foreign scene, but Abderazak insists, "It must be done." Sometimes we warm up for 30 minutes, sometimes for 10. "It depends on the training plan," he says. However, having this warm-up time is very important. If you are new to training, you will suffer a lot. Cooling down is also necessary but warm-up is especially important.

"The difference among athletes is discipline," Haile Gebrselassie tells me. Abderazak once said he tried to play both football and basketball but it didn't work out even though he was a runner and continues, "Running requires you to give your life. It requires courage and commitment. We all take our training very seriously."

They train as a team

It is rare to see an Ethiopian running alone. There is a system in Ethiopia where some running clubs are funded by local businesses. Runners are paid salaries and three meals a day are served for them at cafeterias. Before the "Great Ethiopian Run" starts, I watch lines of runners synchronously running and skipping rope near Meskel Square close to the starting line. "Team training is very necessary," says Abderazak. "Having someone beside you makes you exercise more, train more, and supports you when you feel weak. They encourage you so you don't give up early."

They run in a line

While running in the forest, I tend to run next to my friends to talk, but they run in a line, one behind the other. When I need to notice an obstructive tree root or a pit, they snap their fingers and point to the ground. Crawley explains this in *Out of Thin Air* as: "Following someone's feet means more than just keeping up with them. Literally imitating their steps, putting your right foot when they do, your left when they do, perfectly matching your steps to their rhythm."

They don't just run in straight lines

The clearing where we run in Entoto looks like a golf course with many strange uneven hills. When we en-

ter the forest, I quickly move away from the wide main path. Instead, I zigzag among and around the trees regularly changing direction. "In the forest, we train zigzag for two reasons," says Abderazak. "To get good air for breathing and to make your body more flexible."

They rarely train on the track

This is not because they don't want to use running tracks; it is just due to necessity. There are not as many tracks in Ethiopia as in England. Therefore, it is harder for your team to find a place. The group coached by Abderazak sets aside a track session every two weeks. "We go to the track when we need to do intervals or test our speed for 5K and see how we feel. But most of the time we use the asphalt in the forest."

They don't eat before training

We set off towards Entoto before breakfast and return in time for lunch. The only nourishment served meanwhile is bottled water. The 2011 study titled "Food and Macronutrient Intake of Elite Ethiopian Long-Distance Runners" notes "no fluid intake before or during training and only modest amounts after training." Abderazak says he usually gets a banana after training.

They drink Beso

Instead of protein powders, many Ethiopian runners drink "beso," a solution made of lightly roasted whole grain barley flour, honey, and water. One of my training friends says, "This is the Ethiopian power bar." "Most athletes buy flour for beso and make their own," Abderazak says. Meanwhile, their main carbohydrate need for runners is supplied by "injera," a gluten-free flatbread made from teff flour that looks like a thick, spongy pancake.

They have rivals

Ethiopians are aware that, like everyone else, there is another great running country like Kenya. Without this friendly rivalry, they wouldn't have achieved many of these great victories. Haile Gebrselassie says people still ask him about the close Olympic races he had against Kenya's perpetual silver medalist Paul Tergat. Haile tells me, "My records were especially thanks to the Kenyans. How can you break a world record without them? Thanks to the Kenyans!"

They want to continue their history

Finally, Ethiopian runners are fully aware of their people's past athletic success and are determined to maintain this status. "For other countries, even participating

in the Olympics is a big event. For us, if you're not first, people don't even applaud you," says Abderazak. "Bikila showed us that we can win gold medals, now it's a tradition. Here, in Ethiopia, running is serious!"

THE RACE STARTS AFTER THE FINISH!

Ultimately, all research shows that attributing Ethiopia's running success to poverty or altitude would be the greatest injustice to them.

Supporting their strong genetics with hard work, regular planning, and productivity plays an important role in the success of the country's athletes.

As an Ethiopian running tradition, the philosophy of "new steps after the run" expresses their constant ambition to always go further.

In short, "Nothing in life is coincidence," and every success achieved is the precursor to the next success!

All research shows that attributing Ethiopia's running success to poverty or altitude is the greatest injustice to them.

As an Ethiopian running tradition, the philosophy of "new steps after the run" expresses their constant ambition to always go further. ■

Ömer SÖZTUTAN

Born in 1973 in the Sarıkamış district of Kars. Söztutan, who began his professional life without formal training, worked as a page layout designer for the newspaper "Made In Turkey" affiliated with İhlas Holding between 1987 and 1988. From 1988 to 2008, he served as a photojournalist, reporter, and writer in the sports department of the Türkiye newspaper. He received plaques of appreciation from various sports federations for his news contributions supporting amateur sports.

He started writing the column "Serbest Vuruş" in the Türkiye newspaper in 1989, which he continued uninterrupted and which was renamed "Söz Market" until 2018. Between 2008 and 2014, he prepared special pages in the editorial department of the Türkiye newspaper. At the same time, he prepared and hosted the "Serbest Vuruş" program broadcast on TGRT FM radio. He authored a humor book titled "Gözlüğümlü Ararken Burnumun Ucunda Buldum" (I Found My Glasses at the Tip of My Nose).

While continuing his writing duties at the Türkiye newspaper, he served as the General Publishing Director at İhlas Holding A.Ş. Digital Assets Company from 2016 to 2018.

Söztutan is a member of the Journalists Association and the Turkish Sports Writers Association and holds a "Permanent Press Card."



Halime GÜVEN

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REWRITING AFRICA'S STORY:
ABDULRAZAK GURNAH
AND *PARADISE*

This novel, also nourished by the author's own life experiences, examines Africa's social and cultural structure, individuals' search for identity, and the effects of the institution of slavery on society.





Born in Zanzibar in 1948, Abdulrazak Gurnah migrated to England at the age of eighteen following the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, which led to oppression against citizens of Arab origin after the fall of the Zanzibar Sultanate. This event was one of the most significant factors shaping both Gurnah's personal life and literary career. He pursued an academic career in literature and postcolonial studies in England and earned the title of professor. He currently teaches English literature and postcolonial literature courses as an emeritus professor at Kent University.¹

Gurnah, the author of many essays, short stories, and novels, won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature with his uncompromising and compassionate perspective on the effects of colonialism and the fates of refugees caught between cultures and continents.

Themes such as colonialism, belonging, migration, and alienation play a decisive role on the characters he creates. In his works, past and present, old and new are sometimes in conflict and sometimes in dialogue seeking reconciliation. Since Zanzibar was an important stop in Indian Ocean maritime trade, traders and commercial activities (slave, spice, ivory trade) also hold an important place in Gurnah's novels.

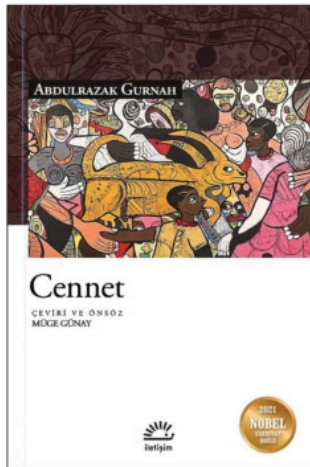
Gurnah approaches individual and social events with a literary aesthetic. Drawing from his own life and historical contexts, he shapes his characters and confronts the reader with complex human situations.

One notable aspect in Gurnah's novels

is "silence." The silence of the characters is often associated with strong social and individual issues such as migration, identity crisis, and postcolonial trauma. This silence reflects their inner conflicts, feelings of exclusion, and pains that cannot be expressed through verbal communication.

The emphasis on silence in his works can also be seen as a form of resistance. Immigrant or minority characters struggle to express themselves in societies where they are foreigners. Often, they cannot find a space or listener for their stories. The characters' silence reflects how they are trapped within social and

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cultural contexts and the difficulties they face while trying to find their own voices. Through the characters he creates, Gurnah becomes the voice of those buried in silence and draws attention to this. At the same time, he vividly portrays the storms in their inner worlds and the dilemmas they experience.

Among his novels translated into Turkish, the most popular is *Paradise*, which was also nominated for the Booker Prize and marks an important milestone for Gurnah's Nobel journey. First published in 1994, the events in *Paradise* take place in early 20th century East Africa. Gurnah depicts the rich cultural and historical structure of East Africa, trade routes, and the dynamics of pre-colonial society, witnessed during his childhood.

This novel, nourished by the author's own life experiences, examines Africa's social and cultural structure, individuals' quest for identity, and the impact of slavery on society. With this novel, Gurnah invites the reader on a historical journey to question the effects of the past on the present.

Paradise revolves around Yusuf, who was given as a slave to the wealthy trader Aziz at the age of twelve due to his family's debts. Yusuf resembles the Prophet Joseph in his beauty, charm, dreams, and some experiences. Yusuf begins living near Aziz's large mansion with gardens. The trees, flowers, and exotic fruits in the garden add color to Yusuf's life but also define the limits of his freedom. Aziz's garden appears as both a metaphor for paradise and a prison.

Yusuf embarks on long trade journeys with Aziz. During these journeys, he undergoes both physical

¹ <https://iletisim.com.tr/kisi/abdulrazak-gurnah/11404>. Erişim tarihi: 20.01.2025

2 Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Cennet*, çev. Müge Güney (İstanbul: İletişim yayınları, 2022), 7.

and emotional changes and gains knowledge about the region's rich cultural diversity, religious beliefs, and social structure. Yusuf's innocence is tested through the challenges and experiences he faces.

This trading adventure among various villages, towns, and indigenous people also touches upon East Africa's economic system. Yusuf confronts harsh realities such as slavery, human trafficking, and class divisions. Moreover, he becomes aware of Muslim and Christian, African and European, rich and poor, master and slave distinctions. The years Yusuf spends under Aziz's patronage help us understand the effects of economic and social oppression on the individual.

Yusuf's loyalty to Aziz stems not only from the debt relationship but also from the hierarchy within the social structure of the period. As Yusuf grows up with the hope of gaining freedom, he also experiences an inner conflict: whether to stay under Aziz's protection or embark on a journey into the unknown.

While building relationships with Aziz's family and surroundings, Yusuf experiences his first love, but this love faces both class and cultural barriers. Yusuf begins to question not only himself but also his place within this system. He feels he does not fully belong to either his family or Aziz. This deepens Yusuf's struggle.

Paradise is more than a story of individual growth; it is a historical, cultural, and social journey. Told through Yusuf's eyes, this story reflects the transformation of a society and the world. Yusuf's story does not conclude at the novel's end; rather, the reader is left in ambiguity. This ambiguity is a frequent feature in Gurnah's literature.

PARADISE IS MORE THAN JUST A PERSONAL GROWTH STORY; IT IS A HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL JOURNEY.

“Bu anlamsız dünya kargaşa dolu ve ben de kaybolanlardan biriyim.”



Gurnah's novels delicately explore individuals' inner journeys and conflicts with social structures. They encourage readers to reflect on free-

dom, belonging, and human values. Therefore, Gurnah holds a privileged place not only in African literature but also in world literature. ■

Halime GÜVEN

He was born in Istanbul in 1990. After completing his undergraduate degrees in Turkish Language and Literature and Sociology, he pursued a master's degree in Applied Sociology at Istanbul Commerce University, conducting academic research on Turkish modernization. In 2013, he began working as a Turkish Language and Literature teacher within the Ministry of National Education. Between 2021 and 2023, he worked as a Turkish language teacher for foreigners at the Turkey Maarif Foundation Schools in Zanzibar. During his time in Zanzibar, he conducted extensive research and observations on the region's history, culture, and sociology. He currently continues his teaching position at the Ministry of National Education and also works as an editor for TADD AFRICA magazine.

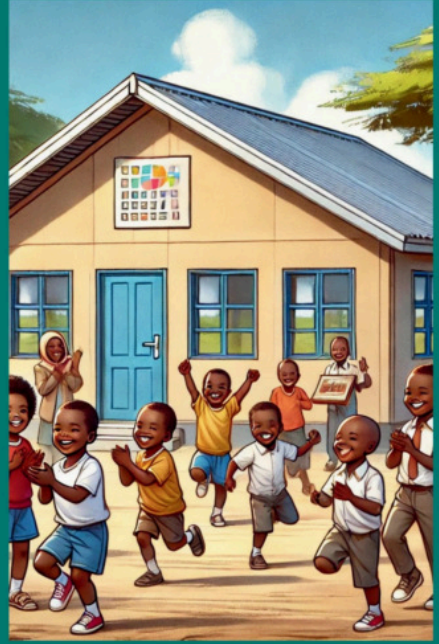


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