

Bloody Clashes At Ada Over Songor Salt; Scores Injured

There was confusion and bloodshed at Ada in the Greater Accra region following reported violent clashes

between the residents of Kablevu and the police who were allegedly backed by armed land guards over the winning of salt in the area.

As at the time of going to press, it was learnt that the residents of Kablevu, a small coastal town near Lolonya in the Ada area

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Jean Mensa, Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

GES Worried Over Rising Pregnancy Cases Among SHS Girls In West Gonja

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MINORITY

Vows To Resist Use Of Only Ghana Card For Voter Registration

The Minority in Parliament has served notice it won't allow the Electoral Commission's (EC) Constitutional Instrument (CI) for the 2024 general elections to be laid before Parliament next month.

The EC is expected to lay the CI before Parliament to back its decision to make the Ghana Card the primary document for enrolling onto the electoral roll. The National Democratic Congress

Member of Parliament for Sagnerigu Constituency in the Northern Region, A. B. A. Fuseini, has protested this. He said if the EC insists on going ahead with the decision of making

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Why Europe's Treatment Of Refugees Is Racist And Murderous

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The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

The observation recently by a top researcher to the effect that Africa is not developing due to the failure of its governments and leaders to use researchers who will conduct research into developmental issues of interest cannot be far from the truth.

The claim that African governments have also failed to provide adequate resources and funding for researchers to enhance their work such that they can perform their duties to serve as a guide in the formulation of policies to promote socio-economic development is also very instructive.

It is regrettable that our leaders have still not seen the need to rely on research to undertake the developmental goals of the continent when elsewhere research has become a reliable tool for solving many problems that confront us as a society.

In Ghana for instance, some intensive research work conducted into both new and old fields of endeavours and their valuable findings have been shelved or abandoned for no apparent reasons.

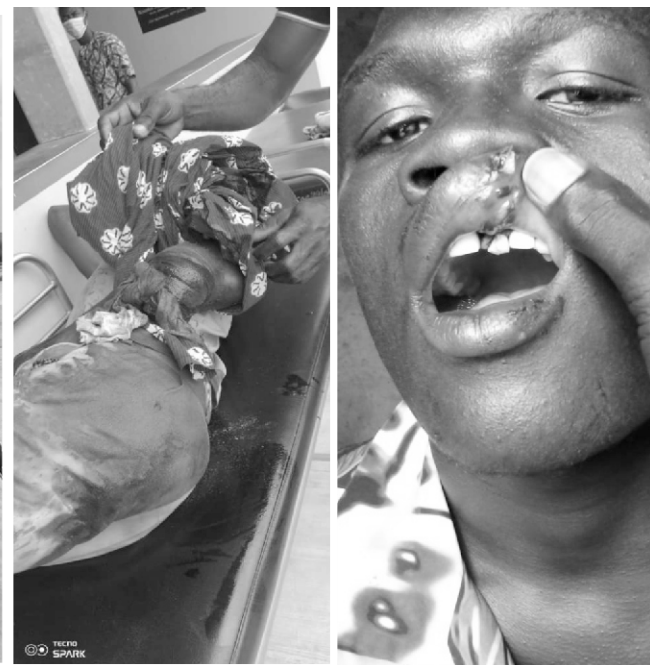
Some of these research works or projects took the pain, sweat and time of individuals in some state or private institutions including some amount of money to arrive at conclusions and findings that seek to address challenges facing our country and society.

The situation is very disturbing in that some of the challenges confronting us as a country could have been easily addressed if policy makers especially political actors had taken research seriously.

Research findings or outcomes the world over, are critical in formulating policies for national planning as the advanced countries had chalked many developmental successes through research, scientific and technological innovations and as a country cannot afford to lose out by shelving some of our invaluable research findings.

It is now time to make use of our research findings for national planning and development and if this requires going back to previous research findings and dusting them to suit areas of challenge the better for us all.

Bloody Clashes At Ada Over Songor Salt; Scores Injured



from front page

had fled for their lives as a result of the clashes with the heavily armed policemen and other well-built individuals described as bodyguards manning the operations of a private salt mining company in the area. Eye witnesses of the violent clashes alleged of indiscriminate firing of rubber bullets to disperse irate youth who were protesting against the operations of Electrochem Company Limited, a subsidiary of McDan Group of Company Limited owned by businessman, Daniel Mac Korley, which has a mining lease to operate in the area.

Some disturbing pictures of the violent incidents show some of the residents with deep wounds and injuries sustained as a result of rubber bullets allegedly fired by the police to disperse them.

In some other pictures, armed policemen are captured positioned at vantage points to prevent members of the community from massing up on the project site.

The protest, follows fears that the decision by the company to channel sea water into the Songor lagoon for commercial production, could flood their entire community, and subsequently deprive them of their source of livelihood.

There are also reports of injuries and

most men including opinion leaders reportedly fled to escape arrest as the police and some persons suspected to be hired landguards besieged the village to effect arrests.

The Chief of Kablevu, Nene Huadze Asem who is against the lease processes which grant Electrochem Company Limited the right to win salt is currently at a hideout. The community has been protesting against salt wining since ElectroChem started operations in November 2020.

THE INSIGHT

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MINORITY

Vows To Resist Use Of Only Ghana Card For Voter Registration

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the Ghana Card the primary document in the next registration exercise, the CI will not see the light of day.

“The EC's CI will be blocked if it fails to review the CI for the 2024 general elections,” he warned. He directed the EC to go back to the Subsidiary Legislation Committee of Parliament to review its earlier decision to make the Ghana Card the primary document for registering onto the electoral roll.

He said until the EC's CI is reviewed, the NDC Minority will not allow the EC to lay the CI on the floor of Parliament when the house resumes for sittings next month. The MP, who is a Ranking Member on the Parliamentary Select-Committee on Communications, relayed the Minority's decision while speaking in an interview with Accra-based Class FM last Thursday, September 8, 2022. He queried what was wrong with

the guarantor system that has worked for the EC over the past thirty years of the country's democracy.

According to Mr Fuseini, “As it stands, millions of Ghanaians do not have the Ghana Cards per the National Identification Authority's (NIA) own reasons,” “If the EC wants to make the Ghana Card the primary document for registration because it wants to get rid of minors and foreigners, aren't there minors as well as aliens with Ghana Cards in the country?

What is the rationale for the EC to say it wants to prevent minors from enrolling on the voter's register?”

The lawmaker said the EC is just impervious to advice adding that any attempt to disenfranchise even one Ghanaian will not be taken lightly.

He cautioned the EC to shelve its obnoxious decision contained in the CI or risk having the CI blocked. Meanwhile, the Electoral Commission has

indicated that the guarantor system will no longer be used for the registration of voters in the country.

According to the Commission, the guarantor system will no longer be used because it has a lot of issues that affected the quality of the electoral register, this is according to citenewsroom.com reports.

Deputy Chairman of the Commission in charge of operations, Samuel Tettey, who disclosed this, said that his outfit will only be using the Ghana Card for the next voters' registration. He added that no Ghanaian will be disenfranchised because persons who do not have the voter's card can go to the district offices of the commission to get registered anytime they get the Ghana Card.

“We are not going to compile a new voters register. Rather, we would continuously register voters to update the current voters' register to ensure that anyone who wants to register as a voter has the opportunity to do so.

“This registration exercise, unlike

the previous registration exercise will be continuous. As such, anyone who has the card can just walk to our offices and register. It is not a periodic or limited registration exercise that could disenfranchise persons who do not have the Ghana Card at the time of the limited exercise.

“This is an all-year-round process. As such, a person who doesn't have the Ghana Card today can acquire it tomorrow and simply walk into a district office where he or she intends to vote and register,” Tettey is quoted to have told Journalists at the Commission's “Let the Citizen Know” encounter. He also urged the National Identification Authority to “accelerate the pace of the printing of the Ghana Cards to make it easy for anyone who is interested in registering with us to do so”.

But, the Director of Elections of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Elvis Afriyie Ankrah, has alleged that the claim of the EC that its C.I. draft for the 2024 election is only for



continuous voters' registration is false.

According to him, the actual plan of the EC is that it wants to create a new voters' register through the draft C.I. it has tabled in Parliament, which requires only the Ghana Card for the registration of prospective voters.

In an interview with Radio XYZ, Afriyie Ankrah added that after the draft Constitution Instrument (C.I.) for the 2024 election is passed, the EC will then file a suit in the Supreme Court that will allow them to remove the names of all the people who used documents other than the Ghana Card to register for the 2020 elections.

GES Worried Over Rising Pregnancy Cases Among SHS Girls In West Gonja



The West Gonja arm of the Ghana Education Service has expressed worry about the high rate of pregnancy among Senior High School girls in the municipality. The Public Relations Officer, Mr Akuka Samuel, has observed that the situation is getting out of hand in the Savanna regional capital,

Damongo.

Mr Akuka Samuel who is popularly referred to as Pastor Samuel raised this concern during the closing ceremony of the World Vision Ghana Girls' soccer clinic staged to help increase awareness about the “End Child Marriage Now” campaign held at Damongo.

He disclosed that the two Senior High Schools in the regional capital, Damongo Senior High School (DASS) and Ndewura Jakpa Senior High School (NDESCO), are leading the pack. “Currently, five pregnant schoolgirls and 13 nursing

mothers are schooling at Ndewura Jakpa Senior High School while seven pregnant school girls and 11 nursing mothers are at the Damongo Senior High school summing up to 36,” he lamented.

Source: classfmonline.com



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Protest By Contract Workers At Emergency Accommodation Center In France Ends In Victory

A 17-day-long protest by contract workers at the emergency reception center at Ibis Hotel in Bagnolet, Seine-Saint-Denis, in France, has ended in victory. 10 workers, of whom nine are undocumented, at the center run by the firm Coallia were demanding full payment of their five months' salary, recognition of their employee status, and necessary documents from the employer for their regularization. The strike was supported by the local chapter of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and the French Communist Party (PCF). Several trade unionists and elected representatives like Stephane Peu and Soumya Bourouaha (both MPs from the PCF) had earlier visited the protesting workers and expressed their support and

solidarity.

In March 2020, the Ibis Hotel was requisitioned by the French government in the wake of the COVID-19 emergency. The center was run by Coallia and the employees were hired by sub-contractor GABA Global Service International. Since July 20, seven workers at the center were protesting (three others joined later) demanding pending salaries, recognition of their employee status and necessary documents for their regularization from the Administrative Forms Registration

and Review Center (Cerfa) file.

Following their 17-day protest, on the night of August 5, the Coallia CEO agreed to give the workers their salary arrears, Cerfa documents and new contracts.

In a statement issued, CGT-93 stated that "the protesting workers at the emergency center were "first line" workers who contributed to the maintenance, reception and the management of an emergency accommodation center for 800 people, opened in March 2020 in the wake of the health crisis. Without Covid

protection, without priority access to vaccination, they have undertaken an important social function, to a precarious public, on a state-run public mission." "The victory of these workers is an important milestone in employees' journey to overcoming the invisibility and vulnerability that will continue to exploit rogue bosses. For the regularization of undocumented workers, the CGT continues to demand, reopening of physical cash registers in prefecture, simplification of procedures, regularization of full rights based on proofs of work (bill,



paycheck, contracts)," the statement added.

While visiting the protesting workers, Stephane Peu said, "the undocumented workers at the emergency reception centre provided security and food distribution in the establishment and they did these missions especially during the whole health crisis. Several of them have even contracted COVID-19 once or more."

Student Activists In Sri Lanka Detained Under Draconian Anti-Terrorism Law

By Shriya Singh

The Sri Lankan government has detained three student activists under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). The police and the Defense Ministry confirmed the detention of the three activists – Wasantha Mudalige, convenor of the Inter University Students Federation (IUSF), Galwewa Siridhamma Thero, convenor of the Bhikku (Monks) Federation, and Hashantha Jawantha Gunathilake, a member of the Kelaniya University Students' Union. The three were arrested from a student rally in Colombo, under a 72-hour detention order while the police awaited approval for a 90-day detention order. Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is also the Defense Minister, approved the 90-day detention.

The activists were picked up from a protest held by the IUSF on August 18, the first day after the emergency imposed from July 17 was lifted.

Nearly 2,000 protesters at the rally raised slogans against the 'Ranil-Rajapaksa Junta' and the ongoing economic crisis in the country. A key demand of the students was the immediate release of anti-government protestors who were arrested under emergency measures by the state authorities in recent weeks.

Soon after the march began, students were confronted by a massive contingent of police including riot control officers. The students were

brutally assaulted with water cannons and tear gas. Journalists for Democracy (JDS) Sri Lanka estimated that 21 students were arrested by the police. While most of the arrested students have now been released on bail, the detention of the three student activists under the PTA is being decried as a new low for the Wickremesinghe government, coming after a month-long series of arrests of citizens for participating in peaceful protests. The PTA was enacted in 1979 under President J.R. Jayawardene. The controversial law has a history of use by consecutive governments to scuttle dissent, especially during the civil war. It was introduced as an urgent temporary bill, and was used to suppress the Tamil population and target those associated with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). More recently, hundreds of Muslim youth were targeted and charged under the draconian law following the 2019 Easter bomb attacks.

The PTA has been the most debated of Sri Lanka's anti-terrorism laws due to its controversial provisions that give unfettered, extensive power to the police. Talking to *NewsFirst Sri Lanka*, Ambika Satkunathan

explained that the law enables human rights violations like torture and arrest without warrant. She says, "Once detained under PTA, the accused can be detained for 90 days without being produced in front of the magistrate. Moreover, a confession made to a police officer is admissible which leaves room for using torture to extract confessions." A 2020 study conducted by the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission on prisons highlighted that prisoners under the PTA category are more vulnerable than others. In January this year, former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa published a bill to amend the PTA. However, according to several experts, the bill left out crucial elements that were undemocratic. In its February 2022 report on the PTA, Human Rights Watch highlighted the Sri Lankan government's prolonged use of the law to carry out arbitrary detentions and torture. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka also criticized the arrests of the student activists, saying that "The recent iteration of the PTA has been grossly manipulated to exert tyranny through undemocratic methods and to justify the wrongful arrest of protestors."

The Commission firmly informs that no suspect exercising their fundamental rights under the

Constitution should be wrongly treated as a terrorist."

Global condemnation of arrests

In a statement, Amnesty International South Asia Director Yamini Mishra said that using the PTA against peaceful protestors was "weaponizing of an already highly-criticized law, which should be repealed immediately."

UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Mary Lawlor had also expressed concerns regarding the arrests and urged President Wickremesinghe not to sign their detention order requested by the police. US Ambassador to Sri Lanka Julie Chung, along with her Canadian and EU counterparts, took to Twitter to condemn the move which she claimed promoted the breach of universal human rights and erosion of democracy in the island nation.

Suppression of dissent continues

In its first few weeks in power, the government of President Wickremesinghe has faced increasing criticism for its scuttling of dissent and brutal repression of protests in the national capital, Colombo. State authorities and the police have launched a spate of "witch-hunt" arrests targeting citizens who have been associated with the mass anti-government

protests that ousted President Rajapaksa last month.

The emergency rule placed broad and disproportionate power in the hands of the executive. Some of the arrests were made under new regulations promulgated by President Wickremesinghe on July 17, which attach far harsher punishments than those already mentioned in the penal code.

Sri Lanka's ongoing economic crisis

While Wickremesinghe prepares for staff-level agreement talks with the IMF scheduled to begin on August 24, the inflation rate in the country is set to touch 66.7% in August. The overall rate of inflation as measured by the National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) was reported to be 66.7%, compared to 58.9% in June, according to figures provided by the Department of Census and Statistics. Domestic food inflation rose to a record 82.5% in July from 75.8% in June.

The economic crisis in Sri Lanka continues to be at the heart of the problems being faced by its citizens. Nandalal Weerasinghe, governor of Sri Lanka's central bank, told the media on August 18 that the economic crisis in the country could lead to at least an 8% contraction in the economy, much more than the 3.6% contraction seen in the

Ghana Is In Mess Due To Govt's Bad Policies - Mahama Slams IMF Boss

Former President John Dramani Mahama has taken a swipe at the Director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, for attributing Ghana's prevailing weak economic situation to shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. According to Mr Mahama, the assertion by the IMF boss ignores the basic facts underpinning Ghana's economic challenges, which he cites to be mismanagement on the part of the Akufo-Addo-led government. "While the norm in international diplomacy of being guarded in what one says is appreciated, comments by high-ranking officials must be grounded on facts that take into consideration local realities and opinions. "The incontrovertible fact is that Ghana is in a mess due to the bad policies of this government, which have contributed massively to the dire state of affairs," the former president wrote in a Facebook post. While listing some of the things he said are the actions of the government causing the current challenges, Mr Mahama noted that the IMF chief might have set herself up for making a wrong

diagnosis. "International diplomats must consider these facts and not just ignore them; lest they make wrong diagnoses and prescribe inappropriate remedies. "The consequences of the government's ill-advised policies such as the botched, insensitive and dubious cost in closing down locally owned banks, unbridled levels of corruption and lack of accountability including the mismanagement of COVID-19 funds, unconventional borrowing practices riddled with opaqueness and conflicts of interest, resulting in an unsustainable debt envelope, costly, experimental and untested programmes, etc., cannot be ignored in understanding the current dire state of the Ghanaian Economy. "Therefore, the rhetoric that emanates from international diplomats must reflect local realities. The Ghanaian economy must be managed first for the Ghanaian who lives and experiences it daily, not just for an international audience," he wrote. Ghana is seeking to raise some \$3bn balance of payment IMF support programme to help

resolve some of its immediate economic challenges. The government began discussions with the Bretton Wood Institution in July 2022, reversing President Akufo-Addo's pledge not to seek a financial programme from the IMF. There has been a local split in opinion on what accounts for Ghana's current economic challenges, with the government blaming the impact of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war. Critics, including the opposition, are blaming government inefficiencies for the economic situation. Speaking to Norvan Reports at the Africa Climate Change Adaptation Summit, Kristalina Georgieva said shocks from the two unforeseen factors have heavily impacted the economy and are to be blamed for the country's woes and not "bad policies" said to be implemented by the government. "Like everybody on this planet, you have been hurt by exogenous shocks. First, the pandemic, then Russia-Ukraine. And then we need to realise is not because of bad policies in



Former President says the IMF Chief ignored facts about Ghana's economy

the country, but because of this combination of shocks," she added.

The IMF Director added that Ghana, as a strong country in the sub-region, ought to be supported by the IMF to bounce back because the strength of Ghana impacts positively on neighbouring countries. "And therefore, we have to support (Ghana) because you're a member. You're a strong country, you have fantastic people, but also we have to support Ghana because your

strength contributes to the strength of your neighbours. It contributes to a stronger world," she stated. Speaking further on the anticipated deal with Ghana, she noted the IMF is determined to have an agreement with Ghana by the end of this year. "I am very determined for us to indeed reach an agreement by the end of this year," she quipped.

Aisha Huang Saga: Ablakwa Poses 7 Questions To Government



Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, MP for North Tongu

Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Member of Parliament for North Tongu, has posed seven questions to government relative to the failure of authorities to detect the re-entry into Ghana of notorious illegal small-scale mining, galamsey, kingpin; Aisha Huang.

Ablakwa is particularly disturbed by the wider national security implications of the development at a time Ghana has stated its readiness to combat terrorist threat in the West African subregion. In a social media post dated September 5, 2022; Ablakwa

likened Huang's undetected reentry to 'dribble of the security apparatus' and 'hot knife through butter.' "Aisha Huang has in a spectacular fashion exposed all the grand claims by government officials and national security operatives that they are ready with well-equipped and modern sophisticated systems to combat terrorism." Ablakwa insists that the government or Parliament must institute a probe into the issue before posing seven questions that needed to be answered relative to the issue.

The questions are these:

- 1) Was Aisha Huang truly deported?
- 2) If she was deported, what

were the terms — what deal did our government make with their Chinese counterparts? 3) Why wasn't her biometric features shared with the intelligence community in the subregion to prevent her from using neighbouring countries as a launch pad and an entry point? 4) Who are her collaborators in "high places" as she couldn't have pulled this off alone? 5) Why is our government not protesting to the Chinese authorities for seemingly facilitating the atrocities of their national? 6) Who were the immigration officials on duty the day she allegedly re-entered Ghana? 7) Why should those in charge of national security keep their jobs after this?

Huang was rearrested recently and arraigned before a court on September 5. The National Security is said to have taken over the case because of its sensitivity, the Immigration Service have confirmed. The Attorney General's office have also called for the docket on the matter with AG Godfred Dame reported to have stated that Huang will face charges for her previous and current crimes. She was deported in 2018 after the state discontinued a case against her for engaging in galamsey. She returned to the country and was engaged in galamsey-related businesses until her arrest. She reportedly entered the country with a new name, Huang En.

Why Europe's Treatment Of Refugees Is Racist And Murderous

By Abdul Rahman

According to an *Al-Jazeera* report, around 60 refugees, mostly from Lebanon and Syria, stranded in the Mediterranean sea have not got any help from European coast guards for days despite distress calls and reports of at least three children among them dying. Instead, they are being watched from a container ship. Such reports of criminal insensitivity are not an aberration.

Every year, thousands of people die from drowning or go missing in the Mediterranean while trying to cross over to Europe from conflict-ridden, poor and developing nations in Asia and Africa.

The death of these people, most of them desperate to find safety and a better life given the social, economic and political distress in their own countries, can mainly be attributed to the illegal and inhuman immigration policies pursued by rich European countries who otherwise claim to be champions of human and refugee rights, like in the case of Ukraine. However, the EU continues to deny its role and blames only the victims.

Reacting to the EU's migration policy, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi recently said that he is not surprised. He called

the EU's policy of pushing back other refugees through "restricted legislations, barbed wire, naval blockades" while welcoming Ukrainians racism.

Violent pushbacks

In 2020, a *Guardian* report held EU pushbacks as the reason for the death of over 2,000 refugees. The report pointed to illegal tactics of violence and intimidation including excessive beating, sometimes with metal rods, and physical abuse of "women and children" by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). In most of the cases, refugees remain stranded at sea in small overcrowded dinghies after violent pushbacks by the Frontex before dying due to drowning, dehydration, and hunger.

According to the UNHRC, the total number of refugee deaths in such cases reached over 3,000 in 2021. The figure for this year is already over 750. All these people have died or "gone missing" while trying to cross the Mediterranean sea.

As per the UNHCR, in 2021, 123,300 individual crossings were reported through the Mediterranean and northwest Atlantic, and at least 3,232 people were reported missing or dead in the region. Of these, 1,924 people were missing or dead in the central and western Mediterranean alone, i.e. the coasts between Libya and Italy and Monaco.

According to the IOM's missing migrant project, the Mediterranean accounts for almost half of all missing and dead migrants in the world since 2014 when it started collecting such data. 24,581 migrants (19,484 in the central Mediterranean

alone) have died or are missing in the region, against the total dead or missing migrants figure of 50,087.

Frontex is facing several investigations inside the EU for violations of its own laws related to the treatment of asylum seekers. However, as per *Guardian* reports, it continues to enjoy strong support from EU officials. The EU has also supported and financed external agencies, like the Libyan coast guard, in order to prevent the inflow of migrants/refugees, despite knowing their record of abuse and violations of basic human rights. The fact that Libyan authorities and informal militias have been involved in large-scale human trafficking of migrants using the chaos created by the war in the country is well known. Those who survive the pushback by EU authorities and end up in Libya often face torture, extortion of money from their families, and even death during their detention there.

It is clear that the abuses which migrants face cannot solely be blamed on Libyan coast guards or other smuggling groups. In fact, European reluctance to take in the refugees makes them vulnerable to abuse by such elements who use the migrants to make easy money. The suffering of migrants can be directly linked to the EU's policies.

Forced to migrate

In 2020, at least 3.6% of the global population or around 281 million people were living as international migrants, according to the IOM. The number of migrants reaching Europe through the Mediterranean has seen steady growth recently. The number increased to 116,573 in 2021 from 88,143 in 2020,



File Photo: Andrew McConnell/UNHCR The recent incident of refugees being stranded in the Mediterranean without assistance from coastal forces exemplifies a larger pattern of cruelty by European nations towards those fleeing conflict zones

a 20% increase. This is still small when compared to migration within poorer countries and counters the myth and hype propagated by European countries of millions flooding their borders.

Globally, over 100 million people were forced to flee their homes due to conflicts in 2021 alone. This was more than the 89.3 million recorded in 2020. Most of these migrants still live in poorer countries in their own neighborhood.

However, only a small part of the entire migrant population has sought refuge in Europe. The reasons cited by global agencies for continued movement towards Europe from countries in Africa and Asia are political instability, armed conflict, persistent economic challenges, and climate-induced displacement. European countries are directly or indirectly responsible for many of these crises. Most of the conflicts that drive refugee flows – like in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and sub-Saharan and Northern Africa – have seen the direct or indirect involvement of European countries. The Western hand in colonial loot of

Africa and elsewhere is beyond doubt. Instead of disengaging from imperialist aggression, wars, and neocolonial loot of third world resources in order to reduce the burden on their governments and allow policies that can tackle popular distress, EU policymakers indulge in racist and murderous anti-immigration policies. Recently, the UK signed a deal worth millions of dollars with Rwanda which would further deny relief to those who are seeking to escape suffering.

If it is really serious about its commitments to human rights, the EU needs to rethink "the concept of borders which is difficult to reconcile with the idea of universal human equality," Laura Zanfrini, a professor of sociology at Catholic University in Milan, said in a UN conference last year. As Grandi underlined, "fair and effective reception [of all migrants] is possible. We must be careful about a certain type of false nationalism that defends many isolated 'me'."

Israel Justifies Shireen Abu Akleh's Killing, Refuses To Act Against Responsible Personnel

By Abdul Rahman

A report presented by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) on Monday September 5 on the killing of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh claims that after a series of investigations, "it is not possible to unequivocally determine the source of the gunfire that hit Abu Akleh." It further says, "however, there is a *high possibility* that Ms. Abu Akleh was *accidentally hit by IDF gunfire* that was fired towards suspects identified as armed Palestinian gunmen, during an exchange of fire." [Emphasis added.]

On Monday, September 5, family members of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and various human rights groups rejected the report, calling it an attempt to whitewash a war crime. Akleh's family issued a statement rejecting the Israeli investigation. It said that the investigation was an attempt to "obscure the truth and avoid responsibility" for the killing. It stated, "Israeli war criminals cannot investigate their own crimes," and demanded an independent investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and a trial.

Akleh, a senior *Al Jazeera* journalist, was killed by an Israeli sniper on May 11 when she along with other journalists was covering an Israeli army raid on a Palestinian refugee camp in Jenin in the occupied West

Bank. Her colleague Ali al-Samoudi was also wounded in the firing but later recovered. Israeli security forces also disrupted Akleh's funeral procession in occupied East Jerusalem, leading to global condemnation.

Repeating lies

Monday's report reiterated the claims made by the Israeli security forces and several Israeli officials, including then Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, following Akleh's killing despite independent investigations contesting these claims.

Following Akleh's killing, Bennett had shared a video claiming that she was killed by shots fired by Palestinian fighters. Eyewitnesses had however reported that she was shot by Israeli snipers. Israeli human rights group B'Tselem carried out an examination and within hours proved that the video footage shared by Bennett and other Israeli officials in support of the claim of a gunfight was of some other incident and location.

Following the backlash, Lieutenant General Aviv Kochavi in a statement later claimed that Akleh was killed in crossfire, modifying the IDF's earlier claims that she was killed by a Palestinian's bullet. After widespread

criticism and the B'Tselem investigation, Kochavi said that "at this stage, it is not possible to determine whose gunfire she was hit by and we are sorry for her death." Several investigations carried out independently by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and media groups like *CNN* conclusively established that at the time of her killing, there was no gunfight and no Palestinian armed groups were present at the location. Despite these reports and investigations, on July 4, the US State Department issued a statement confirming the Israeli claims of a gunfight. However, it arrived at the conclusion that gunfire from the IDF was "likely responsible" for the killing of Akleh. It nevertheless absolved the responsibility of Israeli forces, saying that the death was "not intentional but rather a result of tragic circumstances." The report of the Israeli investigation released on Monday reiterates the US State Department's conclusions. It attempts justifying the killing of Akleh by saying that she was not identified during the gunfight. This is despite the fact that the video footage of the incident shows Akleh wearing full gear identifying her as



(Photo: B'Tselem/Twitter). Akleh's family members and human rights groups called the report of the Israeli "investigation" an attempt to whitewash a war crime. They reiterated their demand for an independent enquiry and full accountability in her killing

press.

Attempted whitewash

B'Tselem issued a statement on Monday rejecting the investigation report, saying, "it's not an investigation, it's whitewash, it was no mistake, its policy."

Akleh's niece in an interview with *Al-Jazeera* repeated her family's position and demanded an international investigation. She said that Israel's attempt to justify the killing was expected. Monday's report is being viewed as an attempt by Israel to respond to growing pressure by Akleh's family and human rights groups for accountability, especially given the fact that Akleh was a US citizen. During Biden's visit to Israel in July, her family had attempted to meet him to present their demand for an investigation. However, Biden refused to meet them.

Later, the family met Secretary

of State Antony Blinken in the US.

Israel had initially offered a "joint investigation" in the incident, which was rejected by the PA and Akleh's family. B'Tselem's director Hagai El-Ad asserted that "Israel does not investigate, it whitewashes." Israel later reversed its position and denied any investigation in the matter. *Haaretz* quoted some Israeli officials claiming that such investigations may demoralize the Israeli army and create controversy in Israeli society. The UN and several other groups have also supported the call for an independent investigation into Akleh's killing. The PA has already referred the incident to the ICC for investigation.

Putin Announces Measures To Overcome Western 'Economic Blitzkrieg'



Russian President Vladimir Putin has promised financial help to ordinary Russians and the country's businesses, calling on the nation to come together to overcome the West's "economic blitzkrieg."

Putin made an impassioned defense of his military actions in Ukraine, saying his tactics were "completely justified" and that he had no other choice but to send troops into the

country.

Speaking at a televised government meeting, the Kremlin chief called on Russians to "mobilize" in order to overcome difficulties related to the massive sanctions imposed on the country.

"Yes, it is not easy for us now," Putin acknowledged.

"But this economic blitzkrieg against Russia has failed."

He announced an "increase of all social payments in the near future" and said the Russian economy had "all the necessary resources to solve long-term tasks."

"The current situation is, of course, a test," the longtime leader said.

"I am sure that we will pass it with dignity and hard work. We will overcome these difficulties," he said. He also sought to reassure Russian private companies, saying they played a "key role in overcoming the current issues."

Putin promised "maximum entrepreneurial freedom," ordering his government to "remove administrative barriers" in an economy largely dominated by the state.

'Spit them out like a fly'

The Russian leader said Western sanctions had "one aim: the

destruction of Russia."

He compared the avalanche of Western sanctions to anti-Semitic violence by fascists.

"The West dropped its mask of civility and began to act belligerently. It begs a comparison to the anti-Semitic pogroms" of Nazis, he said.

Putin claimed that the West sought to divide Russian society, railing against a "fifth column" that was "mentally" in the West.

"Russian people will always be able to distinguish true patriots from traitors and just spit them out like a

fly that accidentally flew into their mouth," he said.

He alleged that the Russian army's operation in Ukraine was unfolding "successfully."

"We will not allow Ukraine to serve as a springboard for aggressive actions against Russia," he said. He claimed Western leaders gave him "no option to resolve the process in a peaceful way."

Putin sent troops into Ukraine on February 24 despite Western leaders warning him of massive sanctions that would cripple the Russian economy for months.

Source -- AFP

Small But Mighty: Trinidad And Tobago Freed After 464 Years

By Owei Lakemfa

When Africa and the Black World were repressed internationally, T&T gave us two of the greatest intellectuals and fathers of Pan Africanism. The country's journey to independence was a hard and torturous one. It had existed 5,000 years before Christ. Its enslavement began in 1498 when Christopher Columbus visited both islands and claimed them for Spain. They were later occupied by the British, French and Dutch. In 1606, 470 slaves from Africa were brought by Dutch slave trader, Issac Duvern... The twin islands were incorporated into one political entity in 1889. It took T&T 464 years from the 'visit' of Columbus to be independent in 1962.

It was like a seamless gathering. Diplomats and academics. Practitioners of two assertive professions – lawyers and journalists. Cultural ambassadors and traditional chiefs. It was in the evening in Abuja on Monday 22 August.

We were gathered for the pre-independence 60th anniversary of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) which comes up on August 31. The representative of the Nigerian government, the youthful-looking Ambassador Mustapha Tunde Mukaila, who is in charge of the world's Regions in the Foreign Ministry, described T&T as a small but mighty country. It was quite an apt description. T&T has a 'very large' population of 1.4 million people, which is no more than the population of a suburb in Lagos. Its landmass of 5,128 kilometres is like a tiny speck, if situated within Nigeria's 923,768-kilometre landmass.

But it has the qualities of a mighty country. An oil-rich nation, it has over a century's experience in oil and gas exploration and production. It has produced over three billion barrels of oil. Back in the early 1990s, it moved its hydrocarbon sector from being oil dominant to a mostly natural gas-based one.

In terms of purchasing power, T&T has the third-highest GDP per



capita in the Americas, after the United States and Canada. It is not surprising that it decided on a choice of an oil expert, Wendell De Landro, as High Commissioner to Nigeria. He has also worked in the Nigerian oil industry. This Monday, he told the News Agency of Nigeria: "We have our gas development. I know for a fact that there is gas flaring in Nigeria and that is a sacrilege to me... Right now, Nigeria is flaring probably half to three-quarters of an LNG train... Nigeria has six trains and is working on the seventh. We (Trinidad and Tobago) have four. We are using our gas, our LNG, and we sell (it). Nigeria is doing that but they can do much more by harnessing the flared gas."

When Africa and the Black World were repressed internationally, T&T gave us two of the greatest intellectuals and fathers of Pan Africanism, who helped reset the brains of the world in relation to the Black people, their humanity and right to independence. Cyril Lionel Robert (CLR) James, born in 1901, was father to generations of Black leaders across the world. He was a noted historian and writer who wrote books like *The Black Jacobins*...

A cultural giant, T&T gave the world calypso, Soca and chutney music and the steelpan, while also producing famous musicians like Mighty Sparrow and Lord Kitchener, Heather Headly and Nicki Minaj. On the steelpan, Ambassador Landro informed that the High Commission has been in talks with some governors in Western Nigeria on the possibility of introducing the

steelpan into the Nigerian school curriculum.

The country has also produced sports greats like Brian Charles Lara and Hasely Crawford, along with the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature winner, Sir V.S. Naipaul. Indeed, the 1992 winner, Derek Walcott, cut his literary teeth in T&T and made it his home.

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that would also emancipate Africa and the Caribbean. CLR in his famous book, *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, analysed the struggles for liberation in South Africa, the Congo, Ghana, San Domingo and the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya.

George Padmore left T&T to study Medicine in the US but ended up revolutionising Black people across the world. One of his mentees, Kwame Nkrumah, led the struggle for independence in Ghana and persuaded him to resettle in Accra. His 1931 book was *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*; the following year, he published *How Britain Rules Africa*, and a year later, *Africa and World Peace*. Four years before Ghana's 1957 independence, he wrote, *The Gold Coast Revolution* and in 1956, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*

On relations with Nigeria, with which it established diplomatic relations in 1973, Landro said: "Trinidad and Tobago is home to a large Nigerian population who occupy top positions in the fields of education and medicine, just to name a few. So much so that one can easily buy 'suya' in various parts of the country."

The Trinidadian population is 35.4% African origin, while another 15% is of African-East Indian ancestry. Indeed, the first time I met Ambassador Landro, I told him that except for his ascent, he looked every inch a Nigerian, while there is virtually nothing to differentiate the Head of Chancery of the T&T High Commission, Mrs Odette Peterson-Thomas from any Nigerian lady. Landro spoke to this close affinity with Nigerians: "It is also known that the Yorubas settled in their own ethnic enclave as a free community of Africans in the north-eastern section of Trinidad. Today, the Orisha tradition in Trinidad is now numbering in the tens of thousands. The community now

boast of an Orisha public holiday on the calendar of Trinidad and Tobago. Yoruba is one of the languages taught in the School of Languages at one of the nation's top universities, UTT."

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In looking back at the path his country had come, Ambassador Landro's conclusion was that: "Over the past 60 years Trinidad and Tobago has grown by leaps and bounds, though a tiny nation with a population of just about 1.4 million, Trinidad and Tobago stands on any world stage with the biggest and the brightest."

As the socials kicked off with some diplomats and guests taking to the floor, the Nigerian cultural icon and former chief executive officer of the National Troupe of Nigeria and the National Theatre, Tar Ukoh, tried his hands on the steelpan.

Owei Lakemfa, a former secretary general of African