

Current Events



#12: Africa

Like a Phoenix from the Fire

As the Ebola outbreak wanes in Liberia, it is easy to imagine the heroes as the myriad of foreign doctors, nurses, epidemiologists and logisticians.

A group of heroes who are unlikely to make any headlines or be celebrated are the thousands of Liberian citizens that have gone door-to-door asking questions, looking for the ill, offering advice, day after day, after day for months on end.

Thankfully, Liberia appears to be on its way back. It currently has the lowest numbers of confirmed cases of Ebola since the onset of the second phase of the outbreak in the middle of last year. The streets are full of activity and schools have reopened. Across the country, there is an unmistakable sense that people are desperate to get on with their lives.



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/10/opinions/chikwe-ihekweazu-ebola-liberia/index.html>

Retaliation?

Days after a horrific Al-Shabaab attack on its soil, Kenya launched airstrikes targeting the terror group in Somalia, according to a military source, who insisted the strikes were not retribution for last week's massacre at Garissa University College that killed nearly 150 people.



"The latest attack of Al-Shabaab bases by the Kenya military is part of the ongoing operations that started in 2011. It is not a retaliation to the Garissa attack. The operation has been ongoing," the military source said Monday.



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/06/africa/kenya-attack/index.html>

Stuck in Traffic?

A police source said Kenyan authorities had intelligence beforehand that a university in Garissa could be attacked, yet the country's rapid response team was stuck in Nairobi for hours after the massacre began, arranging for transport.

It's not clear exactly why the elite team was stuck in the Kenyan capital, roughly 370 kilometers (230 miles) west of the attack, but the police source in Garissa told CNN that Kenyan politicians and Nairobi-based journalists arrived on the scene before the team did.

Once the team entered the university complex, the situation was quickly defused, journalists and the police source said.



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/06/africa/kenya-attack/index.html>

Big Kitty

Lions have been absent from Gabon, a nation on the west coast of Central Africa, for decades. The last time anyone spotted one of these majestic predators was in 1996.

In 2001, Dr. Phil Henschel found that not only had lions disappeared, but there had been so much poaching that there was almost nothing left in the area. Lions, once plentiful in the region, were declared "locally extinct." He also points out that the lion population in Africa has decreased by 50% in as little as three lion generations, or 20 years.

Though the numbers are still woefully low, things may have turned around locally. Last January, researchers discovered something unusual: a lone male lion.



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/02/africa/gabon-africa-first-lion/>
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/02/africa/gabon-africa-first-lion/>

Worst Day-Care Ever

In spite of the harsh measures the Nigerian government has put in place to punish human traffickers, by the government's own admission, 8 million children are currently engaged in forced labor.

The Global Slavery Index says Nigeria has the highest number of people in modern slavery of any sub-Saharan country.

Paradoxically, the group also rates Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency, NAPTIP, as one of the strongest government responses on the continent -- but it's clearly overwhelmed by the realities of

working in what is now a zone of military operations, Nigeria's north. As the insecurity in the region has spiraled, the worry is that more and more children are falling through the cracks. And as Boko Haram increases its reliance on child suicide bombers, concerns are growing that orphaned children could end up in the hands of the terror group.



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/23/africa/nigeria-children-for-sale/index.html>

Which Way to Flee?

Dozens of Yemenis have crossed the Gulf of Aden in small boats to get to Somalia, Djibouti and Somaliland to escape fighting and Saudi air strikes, the UN refugee agency has said.



The UNHCR said it was looking for a possible site for the refugees in Djibouti in case the fighting worsens.

At the same time Somali refugees are still continuing to arrive in Yemen to escape violence and poverty at home.

Yemen hosts more than 238,000 Somali refugees, the UNHCR says.



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32152698>

Fighting for Education

Gunmen from the militant Islamist group al-Shabab have killed at least 15 people and taken students hostage at a university in north-eastern Kenya.

Reports say 65 others were wounded when gunmen stormed the campus in Garissa. Troops are fighting the gunmen.

More than 500 students were still unaccounted for, a minister said. The number of hostages is unclear.

Al-Shabab, a Somali militant group linked to al-Qaeda, said it was holding Christians hostage and freeing Muslims.



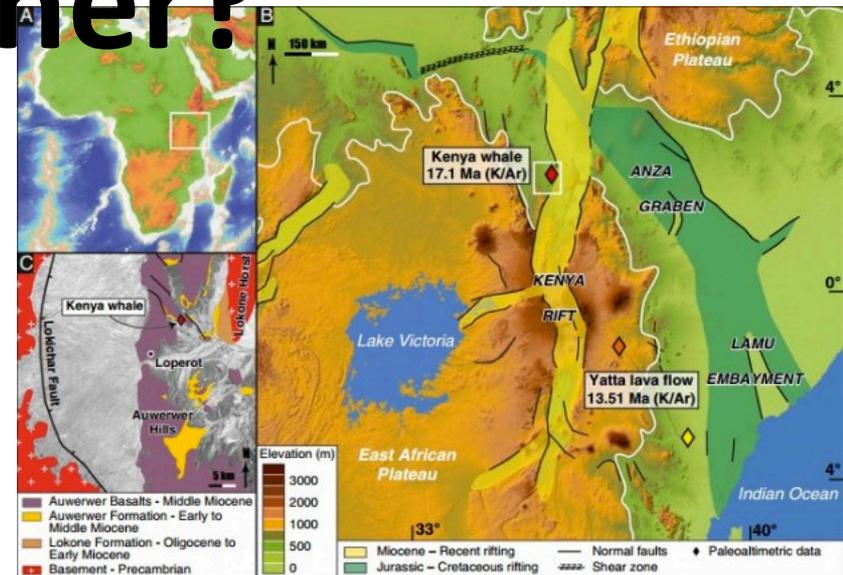
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32157342>

Are You My Mother?

An ancient whale skull is revealing new information about the birthplace of humanity and the role that climate change played in human evolution.

The fossil was lost for nearly four decades, belonged to a beaked whale and was found 460 miles inland in Kenya in 1964. The location of the skull indicated that it must have gotten lost and swam up a freshwater river system, but since it was first identified as a turtle skull, scientists did little analysis on it before it wound up being put to the side.

The now-extinct ancestors of modern humans would have lived in trees in East Africa, the researchers explained. Once the area turned into a savannah, however, those early pre-humans would have gradually started learning how to walk on two feet. The whale fossil helps narrow down when all of this would have taken place, the study authors indicated, placing the events sometime between 17 million and 13.5 million years ago.



<http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1113355731/whale-skull-reveals-birthplace-of-humanity-in-east-africa-031915/>

Changing the Map of Africa

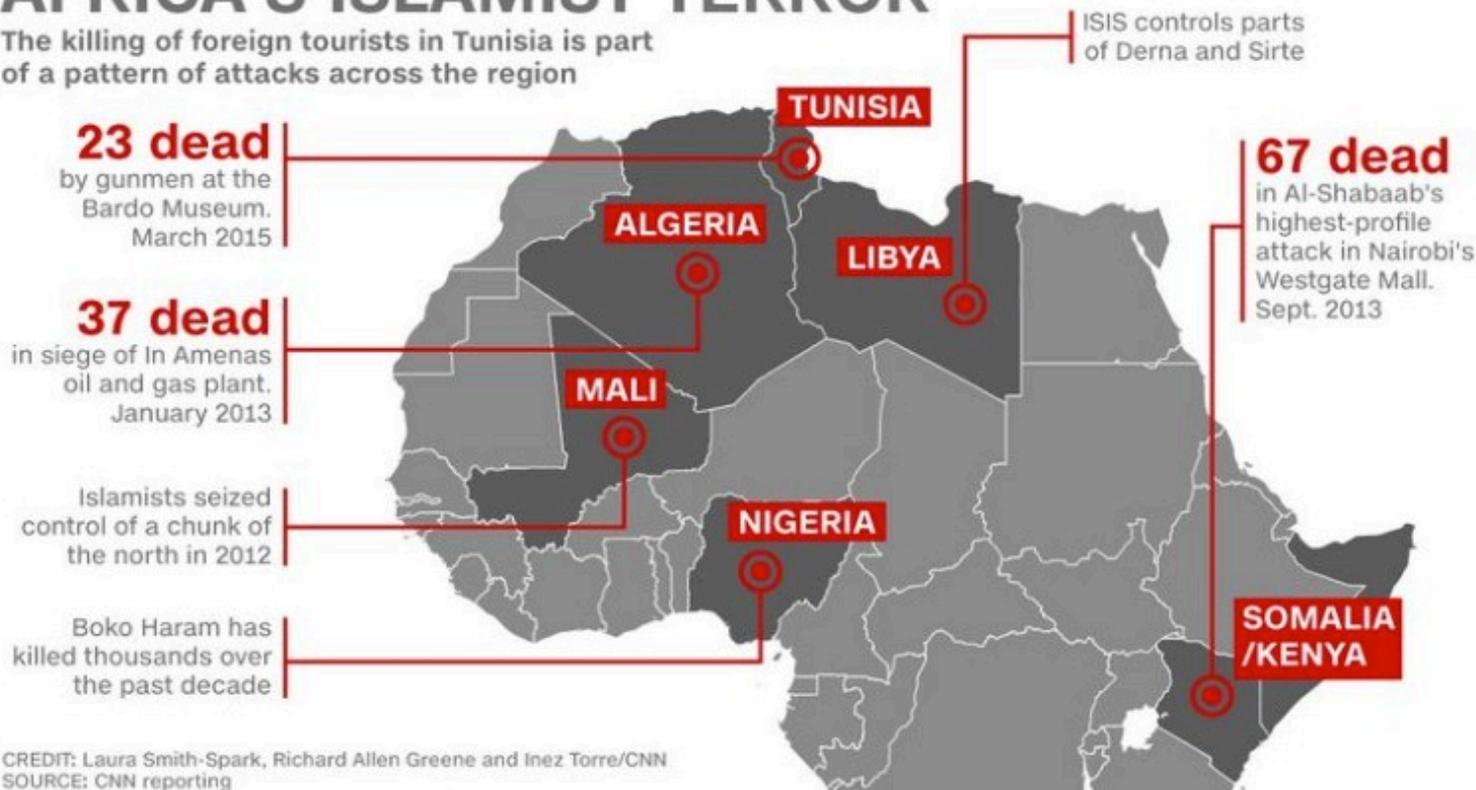
The attack on Tunisia's famed Bardo Museum is just the latest evidence that parts of North and sub-Saharan Africa have become a magnet for Islamist extremism.

Islamist extremism poses a growing threat in parts of North and sub-Saharan Africa.

Extremist groups operating in Africa include ISIS, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Shabaab and Boko Haram

AFRICA'S ISLAMIST TERROR

The killing of foreign tourists in Tunisia is part of a pattern of attacks across the region



[http://
edition.cnn.com/
/2015/03/19/
africa/africa-
islamist-
extremism/
index.html](http://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/19/africa/africa-islamist-extremism/index.html)

Not a Taco Truck



Uganda's mobile circumcision truck has one clear goal: to get as many men and boys as possible circumcised safely. According to the team, they have helped more than 80,000 undergo the procedure in the past five years.

According to the World Health Organization, male circumcision reduces the risk of heterosexual men getting HIV by approximately 60%.

But for many in Uganda, getting it done is not easy, mainly because there are not enough safe facilities and it can be expensive.



Bad Day at the Museum

Tunisian security forces have killed the commander of the group responsible for the recent massacre of 21 foreign tourists at the National Bardo Museum, Tunisia's prime minister, Habib Essid, announced on Sunday.

The commander, Khaled Chayeb, also known as Lokman Abu Sakhr, was killed with eight other Islamist militants by members of the national guard in an ambush in southern Tunisia overnight, the interior minister, Najem Gharsalli, later told journalists in a news briefing.



http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/30/world/africa/official-says-commander-of-group-that-massacred-21-in-tunisia-is-dead.html?_r=0

Not a Peaceful Stay

A siege that started with gunmen detonating a bomb and spraying bullets in a hotel in Somalia ended Saturday with at least 20 people dead, authorities said.

Among the dead was a Somali-American woman, Fahia Bashir Nur, 45, of Alexandria, Virginia, according to her uncle, Yusuf Kheire. He said Nur and her mother were dining in the hotel when the attack began. The mother lost an arm in the attack and was hospitalized.

The attack, which lasted hours, began when gunmen raided the hotel in Mogadishu on Friday evening.



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/28/africa/somalia-hotel-attack/index.html>

Separate but Equal?

For more than two weeks, public debate in South Africa has been dominated by a statue. Students at the University of Cape Town have been demonstrating to have the bronze figure of British colonialist Cecil Rhodes removed from its central position on campus.

Rhodes bequeathed the land on which the university was built, but he also slaughtered Africans by the thousands in colonial conquest and helped lay the foundations of apartheid in South Africa.

The protesters have occupied part of an administration building and wrapped the statue in black plastic.



<http://www.npr.org/blogs/goatsandsoda/2015/03/28/395608605/why-south-african-students-say-the-statue-of-rhodes-must-fall>

Voting For Change

Former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari has become the first opposition candidate to win a presidential election in Nigeria.

Gen Buhari beat incumbent Goodluck Jonathan by more than 2.5 million votes, final results showed.

Mr Jonathan telephoned his rival to concede defeat. Gen Buhari's supporters took to the streets to celebrate.

Observers have generally praised the election, though there have been allegations of fraud.



Faces on Milk Cartons

About 500 children aged 11 and under are missing from a Nigerian town recaptured from militants.

A trader in the north-eastern town told Reuters news agency that Boko Haram fighters took the children with them when they fled.

Troops from Niger and Chad seized Damasak earlier in March, ending months of control by the Islamist militants.

A regional force has recently been helping Nigeria take on the insurgents.

Thousands have been killed since 2009, when Boko Haram began its insurgency to create an Islamic state.



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32044695>