

## Kongo DRC: Civilians fleeing North Kivu

In eastern DRC, there is heavy shooting and civilians are caught in the crossfire, including victims of sexual violence who have been transferred from health facilities in parts of North Kivu to health facilities in South Kivu for treatment. Fighting rages between the M23 rebel group advancing on Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, and the South African-led Southern African Development Community Mission (SAMIDRC). During the fighting, a team led by UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix visited the towns of Goma, Beni and Bukavu. Mr Lacroix called on the M23 to immediately cease their attacks in eastern DRC and to adhere to the Luanda roadmap. 09.02.2024

## Ghana: Electricity tax put on hold

The government has suspended its plans to introduce a 15% tax on electricity. The value added tax (VAT) was to be levied on domestic electricity consumers. However, the trade unions rejected the new tax and announced nationwide protests against it next week. The government began introducing a levy on fuel emissions a few days ago, triggering mixed reactions. Ghanaians will now have to pay an annual levy on the CO2 emissions of their petrol or diesel-powered vehicles. Ghana is currently experiencing a severe economic crisis and the government is struggling to increase its revenues. 09.02.24

## Zimbabwe: Abolition of the death penalty

The Cabinet has backed a bill to abolish the death penalty, taking a decisive step towards abolishing capital punishment; if Parliament approves the bill, the maximum sentence will be life imprisonment. President Emmerson Mnangagwa was sentenced to death in 1965 after being accused of bombing a train in the fight against the white minority; however, his death sentence was commuted after his lawyers argued that he was a minor. The country has not carried out an execution since 2005. 07.02.2024

## The entire length of Africa

Russell Cook from West Sussex had planned to complete 360 marathons in 240 days, from the southernmost point of South Africa to the northernmost point of Tunisia, 14,500 kilometres across 16 national borders. The 26-year-old started in South Africa on 22 April 2023, but was forced to extend the challenge due to problems with visas, health, politics and an armed robbery. Having now obtained a visa from Mauritania to Algeria, he has been able to set the end date: 7 April 2024 and will then become the first person to have run the entire length of Africa. The proceeds - £165,000 so far - will go to the running charity. 07.02.2024

## Crime rates in Africa's cities

As is the case worldwide, crime rates in Africa are also influenced by factors such as poverty, limited access to education and economic inequality. Added to this are drugs, kidnappings and armed conflicts. The crime rate, which is calculated by the number of offences per capita per year, shows at the beginning of 2024 that the top 5 cities in Africa are in South Africa: Pretoria, Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town (1 to 5), followed by Lagos-Nigeria, Windhoek-Namibia, Harare-Zimbabwe, Nairobi-Kenya and Casablanca-Morocco (6

to 10). Only a serious examination of these factors can promote safer communities on the continent. 07.02.2024

## Nigeria: Darkness in major cities

The Nigerian power grid collapsed again on Sunday, plunging several cities, including the capital Abuja, into darkness. As the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) announced on Sunday, the collapse occurred at around 11.00 am. The national power grid had already collapsed once before in December. The Nigerian government cites the low gas supply to power generators as the main reason for the poor power supply in the country. 06.02.2024

## Governing party has two-thirds majority

The ruling Zanu-PF party has won all six by-elections and now has a two-thirds majority in parliament. The election victories give President Emmerson Mnangagwa the power to amend important provisions of the constitution. The opposition Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) claims that this will allow him to tighten his grip on power.

## Namibia: Trouble-free transition

President Hage Geingob, 82, died shortly after midnight on Sunday in a hospital in Windhoek following cancer treatment. He was 82 years old. On Sunday afternoon, in a solemn ceremony at State House, Vice President Nangolo Mbumba was sworn in as the country's fourth president and Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as vice president, the first woman to hold the position. Geingob had been president since 2015. During his time in office, a programme for poverty eradication, leadership transparency, gender equality and economic prosperity was launched. Elections will be held in Namibia in November to elect a new head of state. 05.02.

## Senegal: Concerns about the situation

One day after President Macky Sall announced the indefinite postponement of the presidential elections scheduled for 25 February, Senegalese police cracked down on protests in the capital Dakar and arrested at least one leading opposition politician. The situation in the country is a cause for international concern. The West African regional bloc Ecowas and the USA have called on the authorities to clarify when the election is to take place, as no new date has been set. France and the EU have also called for the elections to be held as soon as possible. 04.02.2024

**More Info:** <https://netzwerkafrika.de/>

Take part in the Lenten Campaign of the Laudato Si Movement and get the calendar

## Laudato Si' Lent 2024: Stop and listen

Stop and listen, because we are called to do so during the desert time of lent. This theme can remind us of the devotion of the Angelus and the biblical tradition of the Sabbath. It is above all a way to start or deepen our ecological conversion. <https://laudatosilent.org/europe/> Every Sunday, the calendar will propose a meditation on the Gospel. Every weekday, a small reflection or image will be offered to "stop and listen" for a few minutes at a fixed time each day. Every week, the reflections will be focused on a different theme to explore some dimensions of the ecological challenges we're facing in Europe.