

Burkina Faso: Granite art in Laongo

17 sculptors from nine African and European countries have gathered in the village of Laongo, 35 kilometres from the capital of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, to take part in the 14th International Granite Sculpture Symposium. Since 1988, more than sixty artists have expressed themselves on the granite of Laongo. More than 2,000 works will be on display at the end of the symposium. The Laongo site has now become an open-air museum for visitors. Visitor Parfait Zongo says: 'These sculptures allow people to reflect on the past, the present and even the future'. 24.10.2024

Mozambique: Post-election police violence

The results of the elections on 9 October must be officially available by Friday. At the weekend, Elvino Dias, lawyer for the independent presidential candidate Venâncio Mondlane, was murdered in Mozambique. Together with another Mondlane supporter. Demonstrations are held in the capital and Frelimo flags are burnt. The state forces deploy police in heavy armour and disperse the crowd. Protests have been going on for some time because of the ongoing corruption, the rapidly rising cost of living and the broken promise to create masses of jobs. Obvious irregularities in the election, which were also pointed out by EU election observers, are fuelling the anger. The opposition speaks of fraud. Preliminary counts indicate that the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo), which has been in power for almost half a century, will remain in power. 23.10.2024

Ghana: Parliament suspended

The speaker of Ghana's parliament has suspended the session indefinitely after chaotic scenes erupted in the chamber over a dispute about which party has the parliamentary majority. Last week, it emerged that four MPs had switched parties and would be standing for other parties in the parliamentary elections on 7 December. Parliamentary Speaker Alban Bagbin then declared their seats vacant, as the constitution does not allow MPs to defect. The suspension of parliament has major implications as it means the government cannot get approval for key funding and legislation, which could affect the running of the country in the coming year. Ghana has a reputation for being one of the most stable democracies in Africa - but the results of parliamentary and presidential elections tend to be very close. After the 2020 general elections, both the NPP and the NDC had 137 MPs each - with the NPP becoming the majority party after receiving the support of an MP who contested as an independent candidate.

Contractors take over border bridge in West Africa

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has opened the construction site for a bridge over the Cavalla River between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Work on the 288 metre long two-lane reinforced concrete cable-stayed bridge will take 24 months. The contractor for the project is Shaanxi Construction Engineering Group Corporation (SCEGC) from China, and the supervising consultant is AIM Consultants from Nigeria. The bridge will close a missing link in a trade corridor between Dakar in Senegal and Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The Cavalla River forms the border between the two countries

and the location of the bridge is in Prolo in southern Côte d'Ivoire. The project underlines the coordinated efforts of ECOWAS and the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to significantly reduce transport costs and travelling times. This initiative is an important milestone for ECOWAS' long-term sustainable development goals.

Namibia: Opposition to ballot paper contract

As Namibia prepares for parliamentary elections next month, the country's main opposition party has raised objections to the South African company contracted to print the ballot papers. The company, Ren-Form, is being investigated by the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission for alleged electoral fraud. They submitted a petition calling for the cancellation of the contract with Ren-Form to design, print and deliver the ballot papers for the Namibian elections. 15 presidential candidates and 21 political parties are contesting the elections in Namibia, which are scheduled for 27 November. These will be the seventh general elections in Namibia since independence from South Africa in 1990.

Zimbabwe: Co-operation with Algeria

During a visit by the Algerian Ambassador to Zimbabwe to Vice President Dr Constantino Chiwenga, Algeria offered to build a new, state-of-the-art high school in Zimbabwe with more than 600 students and a boarding school at a location to be chosen by the government. Algeria also offers scholarships for students of all disciplines, particularly in the fields of engineering and medicine. The two countries are endeavouring to deepen their cooperation and open up new areas of economic cooperation.

Railway line to connect countries

Uganda has signed a contract worth USD 3 billion with the Turkish construction company Yapi Merkezi for the construction of a 272 km railway section. The agreement concerns the first section of a planned 1,700 km railway line, which is to cost 2.7 billion euros. Construction is due to start in November and will take 48 months. The Northern Corridor Integration Projects (NCIP) aims to connect Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and South Sudan. Kenya is expanding the route from Naivasha to Malaba and Kisumu. The Northern Corridor integration projects comprise 14 areas in which the four countries are working together. The Northern Corridor connects the port of Mombasa in Kenya with Kampala, Kigali, Bujumbura, Juba and towns in eastern DRC.

Benin: Citizenship for slave trade victims

Benin, an important historical centre of the transatlantic slave trade, has passed a law allowing the descendants of slaves trafficked from the region to obtain citizenship. The adopted law stipulates that anyone who can trace their ancestry back to victims of the slave trade and has no other African nationality will be granted Beninese citizenship. Descendants can provide various forms of proof, such as a DNA test proving sub-Saharan African ancestry, to obtain citizenship, which would then be transferable to their descendants. Benin's move mirrors similar efforts in Ghana, which has granted citizenship to African-Americans since 2019.

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

Burkina Faso: Suppression of press freedom