

EFCC stays proceedings in Esther's 15 flats case pending appeal

By Staff Reporter
The Economic and Financial Crimes Court (EFCC), has allowed former first lady Esther Lungu's application

and stayed the proceedings pending determination of the appeal by the Court of Appeal.

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LET'S PACK UP PND'S TRIBAL KATUNDU IN 2026 – CHITALA

... I am working with others in creating a mass movement under PPCC to remove UPND

By Patson Chilemba

Former minister Dr Mbita Chitala says he is in the movement he refers to as the third force that is coming up in the country to remove UPND's tribalist regime and to arrest the skyrocketing cost of living in the country. (To page 2)



Former minister Dr Mbita Chitala with his associate Mwape Mwelwa in Lusaka yesterday

Chief Justice called meeting involving judges, parties in PF fights

... But sources say engagement seemed like a shouting match

By Staff Reporter
Daily Revelation has been informed that Chief Justice Mumba Malila recently called a meeting involving the judges handling the

PF cases, and the parties involved in the same, with a source saying that at some points the engagement seemed like a shouting match.

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Transworld's failure to supply fuel shows govt is not doing enough to support locals – OMCAZ

By Agness Changala

OMCAZ president Dr Kafula Mubanga says government is failing to help local companies. Speaking with *Daily Revelation*, Dr Mubanga said no Zambian company could successfully supply petroleum products because there was no financial system that supported the same, saying companies like Agro-Fuels could not be said to be Zambian.

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EFCC stays proceedings in Esther's 15 flats case pending appeal

(From front page)

In this matter, Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) Gilbert Phiri is seeking forfeiture of Esther's 15 flats in State Lodge on grounds that are tainted.

A panel of three judges namely Pixie Yangailo, Ian Mabbolobolo and Vincent Siloka in their ruling yesterday stayed the proceedings pending the determination of the appeal by the Court of Appeal over Esther's appeal against the EFCC's decision to dismiss her application to summon the deponent in the matter to appear before court to be examined.

Phiri has asked the EFCC court to forfeit Esther's 15 flats worthy K24 million to the State for being tainted.

But Esther argued that the information that was submitted before court by the State were allegations and asked the court to summon the State to be examined by her lawyers in the matter but the EFCC court dismissed her application and ordered

for trial to proceed.

She later appealed to the court of appeal and asked the EFCC to stay the proceedings in the main matter pending the determination of her appeal in the Court of Appeal.

Esther submitted that court has set a return date for the hearing of the main matter and that on the said scheduled date, the court would proceed with the main matter, before the determination of her appeal to the Court of Appeal.

She stated that her appeal raised important questions of law and if not allowed to be determined before the main matter was heard, she would be prejudiced in the enjoyment of her rights to

a fair trial and the appeal would be rendered academic.

In her memorandum of appeal to the Court of Appeal against the ruling of the Economic and Financial Crimes Court of the High Court rendered by Justices Yangailo, Ian Mabbolobolo and Siloka dated December 11, 2023, Esther stated that the court erred in law and in fact in interpreting the provisions of Article 133(3) of the Constitution of Zambia (amendment) Act, No. 2 of 2016 and concluding that (i) a specialized court as provided for in the said Article was a Division of the High Court and that it was established by the Chief Justice through SI no.5 of

2022.

She argued that the EFCC erred in law and in fact by holding that the matter before was properly commenced by the respondent by way of originating notice of motion despite the said mode of commencement not being specifically and particularly provided for by the forfeiture of proceeds of crime Act, thereby divesting the Court below of the jurisdiction to hear the matter.

The former first lady stated that the court below erred in law and in fact by not expunging some of exhibits from the affidavit in support of originating notice of motion on the premise that the provisions of order

38 rule 9 and order 39 of the rules of the Supreme Court of England, 1965 (White Book) 1999 edition did not apply to the proceedings before it.

She stated that the court failed to consider that the said exhibits were in fact depositions as one of

the exhibit sought to be admitted into evidence by the respondent.

She further argued that it was imperative that the affected party in such non-conviction based proceeding, whose property was to be forfeited, should be afforded a fair trial by an independent and impartial tribunal.

The court has set April 13, 2024 as the date for hearing of the main matter.



Esther Lungu

Let's park UPND's tribal katundu in 2026 – Chitala

(From front page)

Speaking with *Daily Revelation Newspaper*, Dr Chitala said he was working with other Zambians "in the huge movement" made up of people from the political, academic, religious circles and the general citizenry under the consultative group called the People's Political Consultative Conference (PPCC). He said the purpose was to remove a system that has divided and misgoverned the people of Zambia.

Dr Chitala said he is not the leader of the movement but was one of the conveners, saying the group will also welcome other mass groups such as the United Kwacha Alliance (UKA), Socialist Party, other political parties and organisations to participate in the election of leadership in accordance to an agreed upon constitution and rules of conduct in July 2024, and the election of the presidential candidate and the running mate as well as candidates to contest both parliamentary and local government elections in the same month.

"As a consequence of the above, we hereto, the Conveners, have resolved to form a People's Political Consultative Conference (PPCC) whose objective will be to hold a national convention of representatives of major political forces and opinion makers, to unite patriots that wish to end the one-party dictatorship of the UPND administration and establish a government of national unity or a multi-



Dr Mbita Chitala

party coalition government in which various political entities have fair and effective representation so as to achieve a unified and democratic Zambia," the group stated in the communiqué.

Dr Chitala said the task of removing the system that has misgoverned the country from office required a mass movement, in the same manner he and Akashambatwa Mbikusita Lewanika also organised the MMD in 1991, which started as a mass movement to remove Dr Kenneth Kaunda from office.

"There are a lot of people in this movement but those from Southern Province are fearing to come fearing intimidation from tribalists in the UPND, but they will eventually come out. There are also traditional leaders

in this grouping and very prominent religious leaders," Dr Chitala said. "We want to install a regime that unites our country and start on the real path of development and poverty eradication. This tribalism has divided us. This tribalism which is so callous has divided us. Senior people who tried to unite us like Dr Kenneth Kaunda must be turning in their graves. That process of uniting the country has come ... Look at where we have come to where we are fearing each other on account of tribe."

Dr Chitala argued that President Hichilema could not be allowed to continue as President after the 2026 general elections.

"The aim should be about uniting the country and the high cost of living, and looking at the plunder of our resources. We need

new leadership to unite the country and ensure the cost of living is addressed, so that people are able to afford their basic needs," Dr Chitala said. "We must remove this corrupt, tribal UPND regime by parking its katundu in 2026."

Under the 'Ten Point Programme of the Consultative Group (CG) for a People's Political Consultative Conference', the group asserts that the UPND poor governance system is responsible for the high cost of living in Zambia as shown by the unaffordable maize meal and medicines, escalating fuel, energy fertilizer costs and impending famine occasioned by the negligent export of the country's strategic reserves, and causing the disintegration of the country's unity by practicing

tribalism provincialism nepotism and bigotry.

The group also accused President Hichilema's administration of involvement in widespread grand corruption, failure to give Zambians a multi-party democratic constitution and continued non-observance of the rule of law where the Zambia Police was abusing the Public Order Act and preventing citizens from enjoying their rights of speech and assembly as provided for in the constitution, and that citizens were facing wanton arrests and intimidation from state security institutions.

"The bad governance of the UPND extends to a process where President Hichilema in contravention of good corporate practice chairs IDC companies and appoints Chief Executives of the 34 SOEs on ethnic, nepotistic and partisan grounds instead of following the merit system thereby destroying the competence of the Public Service; The UPND practicing naked nepotism by basing all appointments and promotions of the Secretary to the Cabinet and DPSs, PSs, Commanders and senior officers of the Defence and Security Services, members of cabinet and staff at State House, on ethnicity and partisan bases instead of meritocratic principles, and Compromising the ACC and DEC by making them subject to President Hichilema's personal control and weaponising them

against his opponents," The group argued. "The UPND administration continue to abuse their power in appointing public officers based on ethnic and partisan basis instead of merit as was the case when President Hichilema appointed twenty Judges. The abuse has been extended to all institutions of government such as the Legislature where President Hichilema appointed on partisan lines the Speaker and Deputy Speakers, Chairperson and Members of the Electoral Commission, the Chairman and members of the Public Service Commission and all other commissions and statutory institutions. This is the case in all State Enterprises and Statutory Institutions where the Chief Executives and members of Boards of Directors are all appointed on partisan and ethnic grounds by the UPND administration. The same ethnic consideration is practiced in the Defence and security wings and the diplomatic service."

The group argued that the blatant segregation of people on ground of tribe has caused much anguish and fury among citizens.

"We will banish and criminalize tribalism, nepotism, provincialism and adopt a policy where merit is celebrated and unite our country," argued the group.

One of the conveners Mwape Mwelwa said those interested in joining the movement could contact him on 0977841041.

Musamba calling dismissed police officers as junkies!

By Daily Revelation Editor
Inspector General of Police Graphael Musamba

yesterday justified the dismissal of police officers he referred to as PF cadres and junkies from the police service, saying their conduct justified the actions his police command took.

It is true that a lot of cadres were employed into the police service and other state agencies during the PF administration,

some without even proper training. And as usually happens with anyone that is not properly trained to perform certain functions they are bound to make a lot of mistakes.

We can even argue that some of the indiscretions that were committed by the police during the PF administration such as the shootings and tear gassing innocent citizens, including the arrest of Hakainde Hichilema himself, were committed by overzealous PF

cadres in police uniforms. These are people who should not have been employed in sensitive institutions like the police service because they could not be expected to operate with level heads especially in hot button political matters.

However, Graphael's actions here amount to someone who is a sinner pointing hands at another sinner, or one with a log in his eyes attempting to remove a log in another person's eyes.

It is not too long ago that Graphael made his tongue slip by revealing to Zambians that the government had actually employed

1000 more police officers than was originally announced to Zambians, 4000 against the 3000. Sources had told this newspaper that the 1000 employed were mostly those connected to very senior UPND officials, and that they were employed in the midst of an ongoing training programme that had already commenced for the other recruits, with those in the administration fearing that they will not be properly trained.

Graphael defended these recruitments saying there was nothing wrong with employing those who were connected to someone in government. All things considered, it means that Musamba

is creating the same problem he's trying to unbundle, only that this time he is blinded because the cadres being recruited are red and not green or even blue.

And we are wondering, does it mean that the only cadres Graphael has noticed in the police are those who were employed under the PF? How about those who were employed during the MMD and other administrations or indeed those who have been employed under the UPND? He can't deny that there are no UPND cadres in the police service, if anything others can also argue that he is in fact the chief UPND cadre in the police service on account of how he

has been conducting himself.

Graphael is therefore justified to rid the police service of what he refers to as junkies from the PF era, if their conduct justifies so, but we are very sure they are not the only ones conducting themselves in that manner. While he is riding the PF cadres from the service, let him also remove the UPND cadres who are said to be moving pompously in corridors boasting that "we are now in charge."

Even in dismissing people there should be no discrimination, which we are informed is rife in all the other aspects in the police and other public institutions.

Editorial

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Amos, wife and sister-law granted K40,000 bail pending appeal

By Agness Changala
Former president Edgar Lungu's press aid Amos Chanda and two others have been granted bail pending appeal to the High Court, in a matter where they were convicted and jailed for obstructing Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) officers who were conducting a search at his house.

The trio has been granted bail in the sum of K40,000 each in their own recognizance and are expected to produce two reliable sureties based in Lusaka in the likesum but in their own recognizance.

In this case Chanda, his wife Mable and sister-in-law Ruth Mulenga were convicted last week Wednesday and have been behind bars for the past one



Amos Chanda

week without being granted bail.

Yesterday, the matter came for hearing of an application for bail pending appeal before magistrate Dominic Makalicha.

Making submissions,

one of the defence lawyers Timmy Munalula told the court that the defence would rely on the documents on record and would address the court viva voce if it need be.

"We invite the court to grant the application based

on the fact that there is an appeal before the High Court and as such, we pray that let there be discretion of this court on the convicts..." submitted Munalula.

Another defence lawyer Jonas Zimba said there were exceptional circumstances in the matter as disclosed by the affidavit in support.

"In particular paragraph seven to 13 and further that if the Court was to review the prospects of success of this appeal, the Court would find that there were serious of success. I invite the court to consider the decision in the case of Lati Umar Krishna Vs the People 2011 Zambia Law Reports that is to the effect that if the convict is likely to serve a substantial part of the sentence, the court should exercise its discretion

in favour of granting bail," Zimba said.

He said the court would note that if the applicants were admitted to bail, no prejudice would be occasioned to the state.

"It is my humble prayer that this court grants bail pending appeal and gives favorable conditions for granting such bail," he submitted.

The state did not object to the application.

"We had the occasion to consider the affidavit evidence attendant to this application and also the sentence that was imposed on the applicants herein. On account of the foregoing, your honour we have no objections," state prosecutor Daniel Ngirwa submitted.

Ruling on the application, magistrate

Makalicha said after considering the submissions, he had decided to grant the trio bail in the sum of K40,000 each in their own recognizance.

He said each of the convicts were to provide reliable sureties based in Lusaka and surrender their traveling documents to the clerk of court.

"After considering all submissions, I have decided to grant bail pending appeal under the following conditions; Bail is granted in the sum of K40,000 each in their own recognizance. Each to produce two reliable sureties based in Lusaka in the likesum in their own recognizance," magistrate Makalicha said.

The court further, ordered that the convicts should surrender their traveling documents to the Clerk of Court and would only be released upon meeting the bail conditions.

The State was also represented by Martin Mayembe.

Kasanda's continued detention without trial unlawful - magistrate

By Agness Changala
Lusaka magistrate George Njobvu says Lusaka businessman Shadreck Kasanda's continued detention without trial is against the law, unreasonable and an injustice to him.

And magistrate Njobvu has ordered for a preliminary inquiry (PI) in this case where Kasanda is charged with aggravated robbery involving US\$5 million.

Kasanda's lawyers told magistrate Njobvu that it was illegal to keep their client in detention for a long period of time without being committed to the High Court for trial.

In this matter, Kasanda is charged with one count of aggravated robbery Contrary to the Laws of Zambia.

It is alleged that Kasanda, on August 13, 2023, in Lusaka, jointly and whilst acting together with other persons unknown and whilst armed with an offensive weapon namely a firearm, stole USD 5,000,000 from

Micheal Adel Michel Botros, the property of the said Botros.

It is alleged that at or immediately before or immediately after the time of such stealing, the accused used or threatened to use actual violence to Micheal Adel Michel Botros in order to retain or obtain the things stolen or to prevent or overcome resistance to its being stolen or retained.

When the matter came up for ruling yesterday, magistrate Njobvu granted the application to hold a preliminary inquiry.

He noted that according to the law, the continued detention without trial was against the law, unreasonable, and an injustice to the accused person and his being denied rights to a fair trial and Justice delayed was Justice denied.

Magistrate Njobvu said when Kasanda was arrested on September 8, 2023, he assumed the State had available evidence for the same offence he was

charged with and had fully investigated the matter.

"As fair trial starts with investigations and continuing detaining the accused without committing him to the High Court breaches the constitutional duties of the prosecution guaranteed to an accused person's right of a fair trial," magistrate Njobvu said.

"Upon consideration of the law, it is my considered view that the application holds merit because seven months is indeed a long time without accused person being committed to the High Court for trial and has I assigned injustice on the part of the accused as the duration is unreasonable. Having said that said, the application is granted and I order the immediate holding of a preliminary inquiry."

He also said the State will need time to prepare the witnesses as they come from far places like Egypt.

The case has been adjourned to April 3.



Transworld's failure to supply fuel shows govt is not doing enough to support locals – OMCAZ

(From front page) Dr Mubanga said the government should be stating what exactly they were doing

to support Zambian OMCs that have made strides, saying some times processes

were made so hectic. He said they should explain the processes put

in place to allow TAZAMA to allow local to access the pipelines for instance.

He said the failing of Zambians was pure mockery because it meant that government had not put in procedures to support Zambians, saying it should not be exciting for the permanent secretary to report to Zambians that a Zambian company tried and failed, saying that was an insult to the Zambian system.

He said PS Peter Mumba should have instead elaborated the steps taken to help TRANSWORLD, saying that was why the association was very important and not to be treated like an evil.

Dr Mubanga said there should be an audit for instance to establish where some companies got the money to supply the market, particularly those foreign owned, saying it was either

the same supplier was not working alone which should push the government on how to boost up the local company.

He said the government would just ask one to supply and hit up the same local company with procedures they could not meet.

Dr Mubanga wondered whether the government did the proper checks and balances to ascertain the partnership of an organization TRANSWORLD engaged, Augusta, for the supply of 100,000 metric tonnes of diesel.

He said the ministry of Energy should be straight on this matter.

He said it was in government interest to promote the private sector, saying by virtue of giving one person some licences have been made inactive.

Dr Mubanga said the entire act was biased towards Agro-Fuels.

Chief Justice called meeting involving judges, parties in PF fights

(From front page) And lawyers representing the PF faction of Edgar Lungu have withdrawn the cases that were being handled by Judge Situmbeko Chocho so that they could only focus on the matter which was lodged in by Simeza and Sangwa involving the other presidential candidates in the PF who did not participate in Miles Sampa's convention,

and felt that their freedom of association was breached by Sampa.

Well-placed sources have told *Daily Revelation* that Chief Justice Malila called for the meeting involving the judges handling the PF cases and the parties involved in the same, with a source indicating that nothing substantive was resolved following that meeting as parties constantly

argued their points of view during the engagement.

Sources said although not related to the outcome of that meeting, lawyers representing the Lungu faction, Makebi Zulu and Jonas Zimba proceeded to withdraw the cases that were before Judge Chocho in order to concentrate on just one main matter.

There has been a feeling in the PF that their matters

were being delayed from being heard towards a speedy resolution.

Recently, Archbishop Emeritus Bishop Telesphore Mpundu wrote the United States Government, through their Embassy in Lusaka to sanction Chief Justice Malila among the other senior government officials, over feelings that court matters involving the PF fights were deliberately being delayed in order to disadvantage the biggest opposition party in the country.

Airtel links outages to prolonged power outage

By Staff Reporter
Telecommunications Company Airtel has apologised for the

outages
Responding to a *Daily Revelation* query on the outages experienced on the

day of writing the query in Chalala plus the others which have now become a regular occurrence in

several other areas, Airtel public relations manager Yuyo Kambikambi linked the outage to the power outage in the area.

“Sincere apologies for the network outage you experienced in Chalala on March 14th, 2024.

The network failure was due to prolonged power outage in the area,” Kambikambi responded. “As a telecommunications company we aim to give our customers the best-in-class service in all areas from providing innovative and affordable products to a seamless network experience. If and when we encounter some difficulties like on the material day (March 14th) our team works diligently to rectify any issues in the quickest possible time to ensure little or no disruption as we know how much our customers rely on our connectivity.”

However, Kambikambi could not respond when asked when exactly these almost constant outages will end, and that the same did not only happen in Chalala but have been happening in several other areas.

The outages on the Airtel network are now almost becoming a daily occurrence and thereby exposing the impotence of regulator Zambia Information and Communications

Technology Authority (ZICTA).

ZICTA last month claimed in a press release that they had imposed fines on the network service provider, without indicating the nature of the fine imposed.

Following the release of that press query, Daily Revelation first called ZICTA spokesperson Hanford Chaaba who asked that the questions be sent to him through a press query to which he would respond. Obliging, a query was sent to his whatsapp line telling him that his statement had not indicated the nature of the fine imposed on Airtel for poor services.

However, Chaaba has not responded to the press query and never answered any of the follow-up phone calls to his mobile line until he was called again last Friday following another outage.

This time around, Chaaba said he could not respond because he was being asked to respond to questions after working hours.

21st March 2024

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South Africa Parliament Speaker's home raided In corruption probe

A special investigations unit in South Africa searched the home of the Speaker of Parliament for more than five hours Tuesday and seized evidence as part of a probe into accusations that she accepted bribes in her previous role as defense minister.

The search and seizure operation at the Johannesburg home of Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, who is a veteran lawmaker with the ruling African National Congress party, was confirmed in a statement from Parliament.

The Speaker denied any wrongdoing and "reaffirms she has nothing to hide," the statement said. She cooperated with the investigators, Parliament said.

The investigation of Mapisa-Nqakula, 67, was made public this month by a newspaper, which said she was suspected of receiving at least \$120,000 in bribes from a defense contractor between 2016 and 2019. The money was delivered to her in cash in gift bags, according to The Sunday Times newspaper.

A spokesman for the National Prosecuting Authority

said the search operation was carried out by its investigating directorate.

Mapisa-Nqakula was meant to be presiding over a session in Parliament on Tuesday where lawmakers put questions to President Cyril Ramaphosa. She did not appear and the deputy speaker oversaw the questions.

The opposition Democratic Alliance party called for her to step down because "she cannot be entrusted with this high office."

Mapisa-Nqakula was previously accused of taking bribes when she was defense minister, but a parliamentary investigation was dropped around the time she became Speaker in 2021.

Mapisa-Nqakula is another senior ANC figure to be accused of corruption during the leadership of former South African President Jacob Zuma, who was in charge of Africa's most advanced country from 2009 to 2018 before he was forced to step down amid a series of graft allegations. He is on trial for corruption relating to alleged offenses before he

was president.

A commission of inquiry into corruption during Zuma's leadership heard extensive evidence of bribery of government officials by private companies in return for state contracts, yet hardly anyone has been prosecuted and the ANC has cleared some of those implicated to stand again as candidates in a national election on May 29.

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South African President Cyril Ramaphosa gestures while standing next to Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula

Congo reinstates the death penalty after more than 20 years

Congo has lifted a more than two-decade-old moratorium on the death penalty as authorities struggle to curb violence and militant attacks in the country, according to a

justice ministry statement released on Friday.

The statement, dated earlier this week, said the ban from 2003 allowed offenders accused of treason and espionage to get away without proper punishment.

Eastern Congo has been riddled by conflict for decades, linked to more than 120 armed groups fighting for land and power and in some cases, protecting their communities.

The government said the violence in the east has plagued the country with recurrent conflict and resulted in a surge of attacks that have spread terror among the communities.

In recent years, the M23 rebel group — the most dominant in the region with alleged links to neighboring Rwanda — has continued to attack villages, forcing many to flee to Goma, the region's largest city. M23 has laid siege to several communities with about half of North Kivu province under its control.

The violence in the province has worsened in recent weeks as security

forces battle the rebels. Residents have said the group's fighter mostly launch attacks with bombs out of hills overlooking remote towns.

In its statement, the justice ministry said capital punishment will be reserved for offenders involved in criminal conspiracies, armed gangs, insurrection — and also those who commit treason and war crimes. It will also be applied to the military, including those who rebel or desert and join enemy ranks.

Rights groups have condemned the decision, calling it a step back for the country.

"This initiative is against the constitution," said Jean-Claude Katende, president of the African Association for Human Rights. "We don't think that capital punishment and the execution of this sentence are appropriate measures to restore order."

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After delay and uncertainty, Senegal set for presidential poll this Sunday

Senegal will head to the polls Sunday to vote in a tightly contested presidential race that has fired up political tensions and tested one of West Africa's most stable democracies.

The presidential election will take place after much uncertainty following President Macky Sall's unsuccessful effort to delay the Feb. 25 vote until the end of the year, sparking violent protests.

In the latest turn of events leading up to Sunday's vote, top opposition leader Ousmane Sonko was released from prison last week, triggering jubilant celebrations on the streets of Dakar and renewed excitement about the contest.

Sunday's election is set to be Senegal's fourth democratic transfer of power since it gained independence from France in 1960. The country is viewed as a pillar of stability in a region that has seen dozens of coups and attempted coups in recent years.

Alioune Tine, founder of Afrikajom, a Senegalese think tank, told the Associated Press that

Sunday's election had set a grim record in the country's democratic history, with rights groups accusing Sall's government of repressing the media, civil society and the opposition.

"It was the longest and most violent presidential election process, with the most deaths, injuries and political detainees," said Tine.

Human Rights Watch said nearly 1,000 opposition members and activists have been arrested across the country in the last three years. But in a recent interview with the AP, Sall denied that he's trying to hold on to power.

There are 19 candidates in the race, the highest number in Senegal's history. These include a former prime minister, a close ally of Sonko — who was barred from running — and a former mayor of Dakar. A runoff between leading candidates is widely expected.

Despite the violent upheavals in recent months, analysts say unemployment is the chief concern for a majority of young Senegalese. Around half of Senegal's population of

17 million are under 18, according to Afrobarometer, an independent survey research group.

"The big question right now for the Senegalese election is how are we going to break out of poverty," said Marième Wone Ly, a former Senegalese political party leader. "We can't see the end of the tunnel. People don't see it."

About a third of Senegalese live in poverty, World Bank data shows. Thousands have fled towards the West in search of economic opportunity, undertaking risky and often deadly journeys.

Analysts say Amadou Ba, a former prime minister, and Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who is backed by Sonko, are likely to emerge among the front-runners. Faye was also freed from prison last week, in time to spend the final days of the run-up to Sunday's vote on the campaign trail.

Sonko was disqualified from the ballot in January because of a prior conviction for defamation, Senegal's highest election authority said at the time. His supporters maintain his

legal troubles are part of a government effort to derail his candidacy.

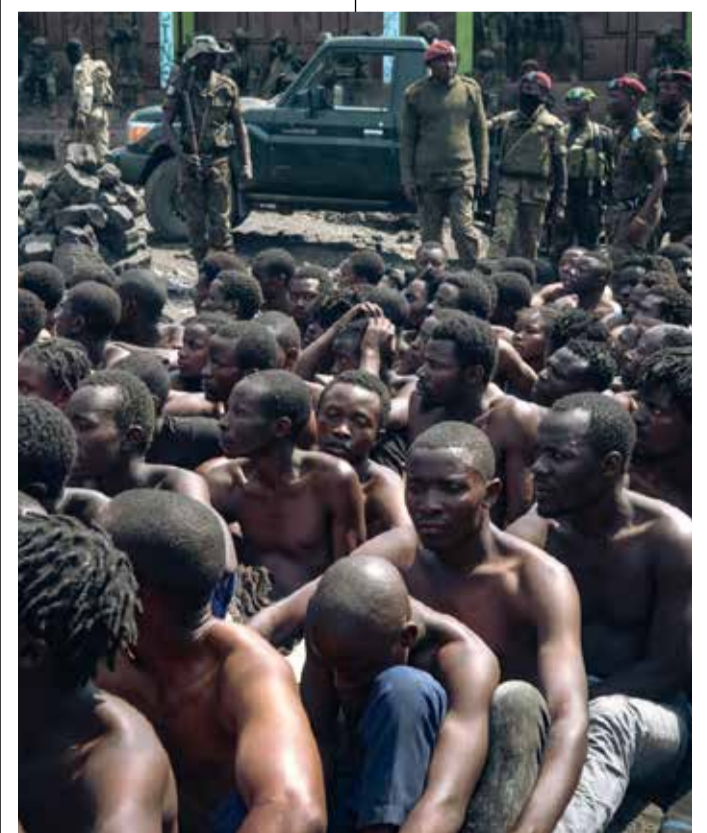
The popular opposition leader has faced a slew of legal troubles that started when he was accused of rape in 2021. He was acquitted of the charge but was convicted of corrupting youth and sentenced to two years in prison last summer, which ignited deadly protests across Senegal.

Senegal was gripped by deadly unrest last summer when protesters took to the streets over concerns that Sall would seek a third term in office. Constitutional reforms prohibit a president from serving more than two consecutive terms as decided by a 2016 referendum.

Sall eventually ruled out a third term.

Other contenders for top spots in the race are Idrissa Seck, who has run in previous races and served as prime minister some 20 years ago before being sacked and briefly jailed over corruption allegations, and Khalifa Sall, a former mayor of Dakar and longtime opposition figure. Sall and the president are not related.

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Africa's new faces: Real Madrid star with Morocco, Barca wonderkid with Senegal

The first international break after the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations offers national teams across the continent the opportunity to reshuffle their rosters and give new faces the opportunity to impress.

The continent's head coaches -- many of whom are new to the job -- have made the most of the friendly fixtures to introduce some uncapped players to their squads.

Here are ESPN's picks for the most exciting players who could be set to make their international bows for African nations over the week ahead.

Morocco entered the Nations Cup as potential title winners, particularly

following their World Cup exploits, but it ended up being a difficult, controversial, and depressingly brief campaign for the 2025 hosts.

Walid Regragui kept his job, and his hopes of building for next year's tournament on a positive footing have been boosted by the 'signing' of Real Madrid's Brahim Diaz.

It's a genuine coup for the Atlas Lions, with Diaz having played -- and scored -- for Spain as recently as 2021 before beginning the process to switch nationalities last year.

Ultimately, the AFCON came too soon, and without him, and with Sofiane Boufal and Hakim Ziyech sidelined, Morocco found themselves

short of creativity.

He was welcomed by a crowd of jubilant fans upon his arrival at Salé airport upon his arrival, joined his first training session with his new teammates on Tuesday, and is understood to have claimed his preferred No. 10 shirt with the Atlas Lions.

Ex-Manchester City academy prospect Diaz, who discussed his nationality switch with Morocco star Achraf Hakimi before committing to the Atlas Lions, now appears determined to make his mark for his new nation.

"I will always do my best to place Morocco at the highest level, that's the most important thing," he



Habib Diarra

told the Royal Moroccan Football Federation. "I'll give everything on the pitch to make the country and my family proud.

"Above all, I want to win important things and make

Morocco shine even more."

Diaz follows in the footsteps of Munir El-Haddadi, who also swapped Spain for Morocco, and can look forward to a Nations Cup and a World Cup on

home soil within the next six years. There's no nation in Africa right now that's producing talented youngsters with the regularity of Senegal.

The last two CAF Youth Players of the Year -- Pape Matar Sarr and Lamine Camara -- were both Senegalese, and don't bet against Senegal making it three in a row come the CAF Awards this December.

The current favourite is Amara Diouf -- the 'New Sadio Mane' -- who's in line to make his second appearance for the national side, but he could face competition from new call-up Diarra.

ESPN



Morocco missed Brahim Diaz at the Africa Cup of Nations earlier this year.

Andy Murray beats Matteo Berrettini, Jack Draper also through

Britain's Andy Murray earned a much-needed win by beating former Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Berrettini - who almost fainted in the second set - in a tricky Miami Open first-round

draw.

Murray, 36, fought back to win 4-6 6-3 6-4 as Italy's Berrettini indicated he was struggling with dizziness.

Murray, who plans to retire later this year, was able to earn only his fourth win in

11 matches this season.

He wrote "life in the old dog yet" on a camera lens after sealing victory.

British number four Murray, ranked 62nd in the world, will next face Argentine 29th seed Tomas Martin Etcheverry, who beat him in a subdued Australian Open first-round exit earlier this year.

Fellow Briton Jack Draper, 22, is also through to the second round in Miami after a confident display against Japan's Taro Daniel.

The British number two won 6-3 6-2 to set up a meeting with Chilean 22nd seed Nicolas Jarry.

Murray earns morale-boosting win

Murray's scrawled message on the television camera - which is customary

for the winner - indicated his satisfaction at extending what is expected to be the two-time champion's final appearance in Miami.

The former world number one, who turns 37 in May, recently said he does not "plan on playing much past the summer" when pressed about his retirement plans.

Murray has been candid about his struggles in recent months and looked to be heading to another defeat against former world number six Berrettini, who was playing his first ATP Tour match in almost seven months.

Berrettini, whose own career has been stalled by a succession of long-term injuries, demonstrated he has not lost his strong service game by landing 78% of his typically-hefty first serves in an impressive first set.

BBC

South Africa withdraw hockey teams from African Games due to poor pitch



South Africa's hockey teams have withdrawn from the hockey competition at the 2023 African Games.

Citing concerns over the poor condition of the pitch at the Theodosia Okoh Stadium in Accra, the teams have opted to prioritize the safety and well-being of their players.

Expressing dissatisfaction

with the preparation efforts and fearing potential long-term injuries for their players, both the male and female teams have pulled out of the competition.

This decision comes as they gear up for the Olympics and cannot afford to risk their athletes' health on substandard facilities.

Sports Minister Mustapha Ussif has acknowledged

the concerns raised by the South African teams and has assured that efforts are underway to rectify the situation.

Despite assurances that the hockey facility will meet required standards, these efforts have not been enough to convince the South African teams to reconsider their withdrawal. v

The preparation of the

hockey pitch faced delays, with disagreements between the hockey federation and the contractor over the choice of turf. While efforts are being made to resolve these issues, they have not met the expectations of the South African teams, renowned for their prowess in hockey.

In the ongoing competition, Egypt secured a victory against Nigeria in the men's competition with a score of 5-4.

Other intriguing fixtures are set to follow, including Ghana's female side facing Nigeria and the male side taking on Kenya later on Monday.

The withdrawal of South Africa's hockey teams serves as a reminder of the importance of adequate preparation and facilities in international sporting events, emphasizing the need for all stakeholders to prioritize the safety and well-being of athletes.

africanews.com



Andy Murray became the third active player to earn 30 wins at the Miami Open after Novak Djokovic (44) and Rafael Nadal (40)



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WE WANT TO SEE OUR SHAPE - GRANT



Avram Grant

Kenya and hosts Malawi are the other teams at the Four-Nations where the winners in this Saturday's semifinal will meet on March 26 while the losers will face each other in a third-place playoff on the same date.

Chipolopolo coach Avram Grant has gathered his strongest team with Leicester City striker Patson Daka headlining 12 foreign-based, call-ups for the March 2024 FIFA international match window assignment.

Grant has stressed the objective of the Malawi trip with an eye on this June's 2026 FIFA World Cup Group E qualifying dates away to Morocco and at home against Tanzania.

"This is the last time we can see things before the World Cup qualification resumes in June and the Africa Cup qualifiers after that in a

space of three months," Grant said.

"So I think this tournament is to show our shape and see our players who deserve to be in the national team."

Expectations are high, especially after Chipolopolo's lacklustre performance at the AFCON in January where Zambia made a group stage exit.

While key striker Fashion Sakala who was one of the disappointing faces at AFCON was not selected for the friendlies, there is one last-minute absentee in the team.

Striker Lameck Banda of Serie A club Lecce, who was part of the 24-member team Grant named, is out due to an injury.

In Banda's place, SuperSport United forward Gamphani Lungu gets his first call-up since Grant was appointed in December 2022.

The tournament will also offer an opportunity to fringe players like Power Dynamos midfielder Joshua Mutale and Zesco United winger Abraham Siankombo to stake a claim for the June Group E qualifiers.

Mutale and Siankombo

have been quite consistent in the domestic league but missed the final cut for the 2023 AFCON.

Meanwhile, this will be Zambia and Zimbabwe's first meeting since the 2021 AFCON qualifiers when Chipolopolo beat The Warriors 2-0 away on March 29, 2021, in Harare in a formality match after the latter had qualified.

Daka scored a brace for Zambia in that match and its fingers crossed to see if it is business as usual this Saturday as Chipolopolo tries to move on after AFCON.

Mubukwanu Kaingu
Chipolopolo Zambia returns to action on Saturday for the first time since their 2023 AFCON

campaign when they face Zimbabwe at the Four-Nation friendly tournament at Bingu National Stadium in Lilongwe.

African nations to test their mettle against the world's best as Paris 2024 is officially draw conducted

With the final round of qualifiers for the Women's Football Tournament at the Olympics for the two African representatives set to take place next month, the official draw of the group stages was officially conducted on Wednesday evening in Paris.

Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia are the four nations contesting the two available spots for Africa in Paris, and while their tickets to the global showpiece are

yet to be booked, the group opponents of the eventual qualifiers were confirmed.

The winner between Morocco and Zambia will be pitted against four-time Olympic champions, United States of America (USA), European silver-medalists Germany as well as recent FIFA Women's World Cup™ co-hosts, Australia in Group B.

An equally tough group awaits the winner of the

double-legged tie between Nigeria and South Africa who will be drawn into Group C to face reigning world champions Spain, 2004 and 2008 silver medalists Brazil as well as 2012 silver medalists in the London edition, Japan.

The Women's Football Tournament of the Olympics will kick off on 25 July with a clash between Canada and Colombia at the Geoffroy

Guichard stadium in Saint-Etienne.

Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024 Draw Results:

Group A: France, Colombia, Canada, New Zealand

Group B: United States, Morocco or Zambia, Germany, Australia

Group C: Spain, Japan, Nigeria or South Africa, Brazil

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