

Illegal trade with China finances Islamists

The illegal trade in rosewood worth an estimated 23 million dollars a year from Mozambique's ancient forests to China is helping to finance a brutal Islamist insurgency and a large criminal network in the northernmost province of Cabo Delgado. Rosewood is a collective term for a variety of tropical hardwoods that are highly prized in China for luxury furniture. Mozambique's rosewood is protected by an international treaty, which means that only a very limited trade is allowed. However, a four-year undercover investigation has found that poor management of officially authorised forest concessions, illegal logging and corruption among port officials are allowing the trade to expand unchecked in areas controlled by insurgents. The report goes on to say that the insurgents' involvement in the "smuggling of fauna and flora products", including timber, and the "exploitation of forest and wildlife resources" contributes to a "very high level of fundraising" for the insurgent group. It estimates the income from these activities at USD 1.9 million per month. 15.05.2024

Gambia: Swiss court convicts ex-minister

A Swiss court has sentenced former Gambian minister Ousman Sonko to 20 years in prison for crimes against humanity. He had fled to Switzerland in 2016. The government of President Yahya Jammeh, who was in power from 1996 to 2016, was found to have committed numerous violations of the law; there was a sinister paramilitary group known as the "Junglers". Sonko was considered Jammeh's right-hand man and was responsible for the security services in his role as interior minister. Swiss investigators travelled to The Gambia and interviewed dozens of alleged victims and witnesses for the trial. In October, Bai Lowe, a former member of the "Junglers", was sentenced to life imprisonment in Germany for crimes against humanity. 15.05.2024

Mali: „Crépissage de la Grand Mosquée“

The annual replastering of the Great Mosque of Djenne in Mali took place on Sunday. This is an important step in preserving the integrity of the world's largest mud-brick building, which has been on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger since 2016. The mosque and the surrounding city, a historical centre of Islamic learning and sister city to the better-known Timbuktu. Djenné was founded between 800 and 1250 AD and flourished as a major centre of trade, scholarship and Islam, which was practised from the beginning of the 13th century.

Nigeria: Gas-powered vehicles only

President Bola Tinubu has instructed all government agencies to purchase only gas-powered vehicles. The directive says all government ministries and agencies should eliminate all petrol or diesel-powered vehicles in the future. The president ordered that all new government vehicles, generators or tricycles must be powered by compressed natural gas (CNG), solar energy or electric power sources. The directive comes a few weeks after the government announced plans to roll out more than 2,000 gas-powered buses and tricycles to reduce transport costs by 29 May, when President Tinubu completes one year in office. This is part of the country's efforts to switch to cleaner energy and reduce the high

cost of fuel. Nigeria has the largest gas reserves in Africa, but they are underutilised due to inadequate processing facilities. 14.05.2024

US embassy in Tanzania temporarily closed

The US embassy in Tanzania is closed for 2 days due to an internet outage affecting several East African countries. The internet outage has been ongoing since Sunday morning and has resulted in poor connectivity in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. The patchy service is the result of faults in the undersea cables that connect the region to the rest of the world via South Africa. 14.05.2024

Madagascar: Restoration of the baobab forests

Six of the world's eight baobab species are native to Madagascar, where the characteristic trees with their huge trunks have always grown in vast forests. However, these forests are threatened by slash-and-burn agriculture - 4,000 hectares of baobab forest are destroyed in Madagascar every year. Baobab trees can live up to 1,000 years. The fruit is used in food and cosmetics production. In 2020, ARO Baobab Project was initiated to restore and conserve baobab forests through a combination of scientific research and community engagement. In collaboration with the communities, tree nurseries were established, and more than 50,000 baobab and other seedlings were planted with a survival rate of 70%. A women's co-operative is being established to maintain the nurseries and grow indigenous plants to generate income. 13.05.2024

Somalia: termination of the political mission

Somalia's government has requested the termination of a UN political mission that has advised the country for more than a decade on peace-building, security reforms and democracy, according to a letter from the foreign minister to the Security Council. The request for the withdrawal of the 360-strong United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), whose mandate expires in October, took the mission by surprise, three UN officials told Reuters. The end of the political mission is separate from the UN-mandated African Union peacekeeping mission, which currently has at least 10,000 troops and is due to withdraw and hand over to the Somali state by the end of this year. 13.05.2024

Chad: Military ruler wins presidential election

Military ruler Mahamat Déby has been declared the official winner of the presidential elections, thus consolidating his position of power. According to the state electoral authority, citing preliminary results, General Déby received 61.3% of the vote, while his closest rival, Prime Minister Succes Masra, received 18.53%. They have yet to be confirmed by the Constitutional Council. His victory means that the 34-year rule of the Déby family will continue. Many Chadians are still in exile following the deadly crackdown on protests in October 2022. There has not been a free and fair transfer of power in the oil-exporting country of almost 18 million people since independence from France in 1960. 11.05.2024

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

Female genital mutilation on the rise

Mozambique: Cabo Delgado attacked by Islamists