DAILY EDITION

OVERLOOKED

Under-covered news from around the globe. Every story, five layers deep.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2026 26 STORIES · THEOVERLOOKED.NEWS

BREAKING · LATIN AMERICA · LA PAZ

Bolivia declares a nationwide state of emergency as El Niño brings drought and floods



Explainer image: the Bolivian Altiplano. Diego Delso, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

President Rodrigo Paz signed a decree to free up resources as drought hits 78,000 families and has killed more than 75,000 cattle.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Paz signed the nationwide emergency decree on Saturday, Oct. 31. It frees up resources and sends more rescue teams to areas hit hard by flooding and drought. Paz said El Niño will have “very severe impacts in terms of drought and floods.”

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED

A government report this week says drought affects 78,000 families in six of Bolivia’s nine departments and has killed more than 75,000 cattle.

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Climate emergencies in landlocked South American countries rarely reach U.S. front pages, especially while the Iran war dominates coverage.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

According to the source, [Prediction · scientists] El Niño could cause more than 450,000 deaths worldwide, with the poorest countries hit hardest. [Prediction · Al Jazeera] This cycle could be the strongest on record.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Floods in Santa Cruz in December 2025 killed dozens of people. Nearby, Santiago, Chile had its rainiest October ever, and wildfires in Peru killed at least 12 people last month. In September, the World Meteorological Organization put the chance of El Niño lasting through February 2027 at nearly 100%. [Prediction · Al Jazeera] It is expected to peak at the end of 2026.

SOURCES Al Jazeera: Bolivia declares state of emergency over El Nino weather pattern

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/bolivia-el-nino-state-of-emergency

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ALSO IN THIS EDITION

BANGLADESH Bangladesh garment protests hit a third day as police fire tear gas and owners threaten "no work, no pay"

BULGARIA Iotova wins Bulgaria's presidential runoff in initial results as drone attacks hit ships off its Black Sea coast

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DR CONGO Ebola has now killed more than 5,000 people in DR Congo — the country's deadliest outbreak ever

WESTERN SAHARA UN begins shutting down its 35-year Western Sahara mission after rival Russian and U.S. vetoes

ECUADOR Ecuador's fourth curfew of the year shuts down five coastal provinces at night

INDONESIA Indonesia's Supreme Court voids Vice President Gibran's high school equivalency certificate

BRAZIL Smoke from record Amazon fires gave Manaus Brazil's worst air for weeks

MALAWI In Malawi, El Niño drought has herders walking 27km for grass

KENYA Nairobi building collapse: 16 still missing as the Eastleigh search enters its second week

FIJI Fiji's Rabuka backs down and delays the constitution vote after his coalition splinters

PAN-AFRICA Mo Ibrahim index: Africa's security and rights fall in a "strongmen" era

SENEGAL Dakar opens the Youth Olympics — the first Olympic event ever held in Africa

MICRONESIA Micronesian leaders: "An archipelago is not a stockpile" as U.S.–China rivalry grows

YEMEN UN rights worker dies in Houthi custody, and his family learned only weeks later

FIJI Fiji tells nuclear powers "those that did it must pay" for Pacific tests

SAMOA Samoa's prime minister marches for Israel, calling it "God's government," as Israel's Pacific Forum role splits the region

CAPE VERDE Cape Verde, one of Africa's calmest democracies, kicks off its presidential race

GHANA Ghana opens talks with Russia's Rosatom on its first nuclear plant, and Rusal signs a bauxite deal

ETHIOPIA Ethiopian drone strikes kill at least 25 civilians, including children at a displaced-persons camp

COOK ISLANDS Stranded for three years: a Sri Lankan woman can't leave the Cook Islands because no one will let her change planes

ETHIOPIA Ethiopia's Abiy puts his ministers through military training amid conflicts at home

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TANZANIA A year after Tanzania's deadly election, families of the dead still wait for justice

EGYPT Egypt convicts editor Lina Attalah and orders independent outlet Mada Masr shut

BREAKING · ASIA · DHAKA

Bangladesh garment protests hit a third day as police fire tear gas and owners threaten “no work, no pay”

UPDATE: Protests continued Monday for a third day in Savar, Ashulia and Gazipur. Police have used tear gas and sound grenades, the prime minister held an emergency meeting, and factory owners threaten to invoke “no work, no pay.” Workers want Tk30,000 a month, up from Tk12,500.



Explainer image: a garment factory floor in Bangladesh. Tareq Salahuddin from Dhaka, Bangladesh, CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

UPDATE: Protests continued Monday for a third day in Savar, Ashulia and Gazipur, with a heavy police presence in Dhaka’s Mirpur industrial area, Al Jazeera reports. About 500 factories were temporarily shut after protests began Saturday. An industrial-area summary for Nov. 1 shows 529 garment factories closed and 987,190 workers leaving without working. BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan Babu confirmed that 529 factories couldn’t produce, said the wage board had been formed, and said he hopes work resumes tomorrow.

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED

Gazipur/Mymensingh had the most closures: 276 of 836 factories and 645,360 workers. Savar-Ashulia/Zirabo had 185 of 441 factories and 290,205 workers. Mirpur, in the Dhaka police (DMP) area, had 68 of 320 factories and 51,625 workers. No closures were reported in Narayanganj or Chattogram. Thousands of workers have faced tear gas and sound grenades from police (Al Jazeera).

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Labour fights in supplier countries rarely make Western news, even though Western brands rely on these factories.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Workers want a monthly minimum of Tk30,000, up from Tk12,500, plus unpaid wages. Workers blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway. [Analysis · OVERLOOKED] The protests could disrupt global clothing supply chains. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman held an emergency meeting with ministers and advisers. BGMEA president Mahmud Hasan Khan said that if protests continue through Monday, “we will have no option but to invoke the ‘no work, no pay’ provision.” Workers’ federation leader Babul Akhter: “They cannot build a business on the backs of underpaid workers.”

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Demonstrations and road blockades have run since mid-October. On Oct. 31, Labour Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury said both sides had agreed to a wage board. Under the labour law, wages are reviewed every three years, and the next review is due in December 2026. The industry is worth about $38bn and competes with Vietnam, Cambodia and India; owners cite higher costs, energy-market uncertainty during the U.S.-Israel war on Iran, and slowing demand in some export areas.

SOURCES The Business Standard: 529 garment factories closed amid workers unrest, nearly 9.9 lakh workers leave workplaces · Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera Staff, Reuters): Bangladesh garment factories disrupted as protests continue for third day

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/bangladesh-garment-workers-wage-strike

BREAKING · EUROPE · SOFIA

Iotova wins Bulgaria's presidential runoff in initial results as drone attacks hit ships off its Black Sea coast

UPDATE: Acting President Iliana Iotova won about 58% in initial results and her rival Andrey Gyurov conceded. Official results are expected Monday. 21 people remain missing after drone attacks on vessels off Bulgaria's coast.



Explainer image: Varna, on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. Спасимир (Spasimir Pilev), CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

UPDATE: Acting President Iliana Iotova won Sunday's runoff with 58% to Andrey Gyurov's roughly 38%, according to several polling agencies' counts and initial results, and Gyurov conceded: "This is how the Bulgarian citizens have voted." Exit polls put turnout at about 27 to 29%, slightly higher than the first round's record-low 23%. Official results are expected Monday.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Bulgarian voters, and seafarers on the Black Sea. 21 people remain missing after a series of drone attacks last month on commercial vessels, and a Greek container ship sank Wednesday after being hit by sea drones.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Small-EU-state elections and Black Sea shipping attacks get little coverage next to the main fronts in Ukraine and Iran.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

If official results confirm her win, Iotova would become Bulgaria's first elected female head of state. She advocates dialogue with Russia and opposes military aid to Ukraine. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen congratulated her on X. Bulgaria has asked its allies for help with maritime security; Prime Minister Rumen Radev summoned the Russian ambassador, though his government said there was no evidence directly linking the attacks to Moscow. Gyurov signed a security cooperation agreement with Kyiv while he was caretaker PM.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Iotova, 61, led the first round but didn't pass 50%, and turnout was a record low of 23%. She became acting president in January after Rumen Radev resigned and won a parliamentary race. [Analysis · political analysts cited by AP/Reuters] Analysts saw his ticket as Kremlin-friendly. Radev, now prime minister, backs Iotova and said the strikes' outcome "benefits the Russian Federation." Gyurov, 50, has pro-Western reformist backing, including ex-PM Boiko Borisov. Both candidates condemned the attacks and want a diplomatic end to the war in Ukraine. Political analyst Teodor Slavev told AFP that voters were passing judgement on "Iotova's unconvincing response" to Russian threats in the Black Sea.

SOURCES Al Jazeera (AP, Reuters): Bulgarians vote in presidential run-off amid Black Sea tensions · Al Jazeera (AFP, AP, Reuters): Initial results indicate victory for Iotova in Bulgarian presidential vote

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/bulgaria-presidential-runoff-black-sea-drones

BREAKING · ASIA · ALBAY

1,510 people spend All Saints' Day in evacuation centers after Mayon Volcano erupts

The Philippines' Mayon Volcano is at Alert Level 3 after an Oct. 30 eruption sent an ash plume 3 km high.



Explainer image: Mayon Volcano, Philippines. Jaycee Esmeria, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

420 families (1,510 people) spent Nov. 1 in evacuation centers in Albay after Friday's "moderately explosive" eruption. PHIVOLCS raised the alert level from 2 to 3, which means a hazardous eruption is more likely.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Residents of the 6 km permanent danger zone in Tabaco City, Ligao City and Camalig. Of the 746 families (2,041 residents) reported earlier, some went to stay with relatives instead. Ashfall reached other towns.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Moderate eruptions in the Philippines rarely make international news unless many people die.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

DSWD Bicol has delivered food packs, with more than 2,000 more planned for ash-hit towns. People couldn't visit family graves at home on one of the most important holidays in the Philippines.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Evacuees are staying in several centers in Tabaco, Camalig and Ligao. Mayon is locally called "Daragang Magayon" (beautiful maiden). The figures come from Albay emergency management monitoring report 163-2026.

SOURCES Daily Tribune: 420 families spend All Saints' Day in Albay evacuation centers

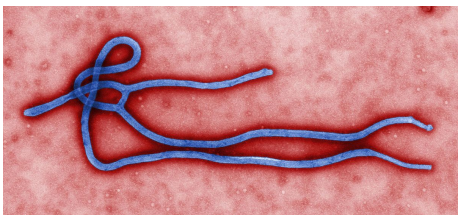
Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/mayon-volcano-evacuees-all-saints-day

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BREAKING · AFRICA · KINSHASA

Ebola has now killed more than 5,000 people in DR Congo — the country's deadliest outbreak ever

Government data shows more than 5,000 deaths and 10,300 confirmed cases in 8 of 26 provinces, with a 48.6% fatality rate and no vaccine for the Bundibugyo strain.



Explainer image: the Ebola virus under an electron microscope. CDC/Cynthia Goldsmith, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

More than 5,000 people have died and over 10,300 cases have been confirmed since the outbreak began in May, government data shows. Eight of DR Congo's 26 provinces are affected; the case fatality rate is 48.6%.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

It became the deadliest in DR Congo's history in August, passing the 2,299 deaths of 2018–2020. The UN says it is the country's 17th outbreak and the second largest ever, behind West Africa 2014–16 (more than 11,325 deaths), and is "taking lives at a much faster rate." The epicentre is Ituri, a conflict zone.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] An outbreak killing faster than any before it in Congo, inside an active war zone, is the textbook definition of overlooked.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

The Bundibugyo species has no approved vaccine or treatment; vaccine trials are under way. Cases have been confirmed in Kenya (9 cases, 2 deaths), Uganda (2 deaths, 20 cases, none since August) and Nigeria, per BBC. ECDC calls the risk in Europe "very low."

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Responders are under attack: a nurse was killed this week, a politician promoting Ebola measures was beaten to death last month, and the Red Cross logged 11 violent incidents in the first 100 days.

SOURCES BBC News: More than 5,000 die from Ebola in DR Congo's deadliest outbreak · Peter's World: Africa Security Nov 1: UN Exits Western Sahara, Sudan Drones

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/congo-ebola-outbreak-5000-deaths

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BREAKING · AFRICA · NEW YORK

UN begins shutting down its 35-year Western Sahara mission after rival Russian and U.S. vetoes

MINURSO's mandate expired Oct. 31 after the Security Council failed to pass either a U.S. or a Russian draft; the UN says Nov. 1 starts the mission's liquidation period.



Explainer image: the Western Sahara desert. Radosław Botev, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

On Oct. 30 the Security Council rejected two drafts. A U.S. text failed 11 in favour with a Russian veto and 3 abstentions; a Russian text that would have extended the mandate to Oct. 31, 2027 got 3 votes in favour, with a U.S. "no" and 11 abstentions. The mandate expired on Oct. 31.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said "1 November 2026 marks the beginning of the liquidation period," in which a smaller team reporting to the UN Department of Operational Support will oversee the drawdown and disposal of UN equipment (UN News; EFE via Infobae). Secretary-General António Guterres warned of "the risk of an escalation of hostilities." Morocco's foreign minister Nasser Bourita said Rabat would provide "the time, means and logistics" so the withdrawal is "exemplary."

L3 **WHY IT'S QUIET**

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] The UN is ending one of its oldest peacekeeping missions over a single letter — the "R" for referendum — and almost no U.S. outlet has noticed.

L4 **DEEPER IMPACT**

Russia called its vote "a life-saving veto, so to speak," and said dropping the referendum would be a "betrayal" of residents of the Tindouf camps. The U.S. said the veto was used to "preserve the letter R," adding the status quo is unacceptable. France warned an abrupt closure "would be exceedingly alarming."

L5 **FULL CONTEXT**

MINURSO was set up by resolution 690 in 1991 after Morocco and the Polisario Front accepted a 1988 settlement plan. Algeria says it hosts hundreds of thousands of Sahrawi refugees. The UN says its personal envoy will remain available to support dialogue. At the end the mission had about 200 civilian staff, military observers and staff officers from more than 35 countries. Guterres paid tribute to the 20 MINURSO personnel who lost their lives during its 35 years (UN News).

SOURCES UN News: Western Sahara: UN 'stands ready' to keep supporting peace efforts as MINURSO mission ends · UN Secretary-General: Statement on the end of the mandate of MINURSO · The New Arab: UN announces start of liquidation of MINURSO Western Sahara mission · RFI: Sahara occidental: l'ONU acte la «liquidation» de la Minurso · UN Press (Security Council): Security Council fails to adopt two draft resolutions on MINURSO mandate (SC/16498) · Infobae (EFE): La ONU inicia el desmantelamiento de su misión en Sáhara Occidental tras fin de su mandato · Peter's World: Africa Security Nov 1: UN Exits Western Sahara, Sudan Drones · Al Jazeera: UN warns of security risks in Western Sahara as peacekeeping mission ends

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/un-western-sahara-mission-minurso-ends

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BREAKING · LATIN AMERICA · GUAYAQUIL

Ecuador's fourth curfew of the year shuts down five coastal provinces at night

A midnight-to-5am curfew covers Guayas, Manabí, Los Ríos, El Oro and Esmeraldas — including Guayaquil — from Nov. 1 to 10, four weeks before the Nov. 29 local elections.



Explainer image: Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest coastal city. Jordan Fischer, CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 **WHAT HAPPENED**

The curfew suspends freedom of movement from 00:00 to 05:00 local time, Nov. 1–10, in 5 of Ecuador's 24 provinces: El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Los Ríos and Manabí. Only emergency teams may move about. President Daniel Noboa says it protects civilians during police and military "special operations."

L2 **WHO'S AFFECTED**

Residents of the coastal provinces where drug-trafficking crime is concentrated, including Guayaquil, the country's most populous city.

L3 **WHY IT'S QUIET**

It is the fourth curfew of 2026, after March 15–30, May 3–18 and Sept. 17–30, so it no longer registers as news. [Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Normalization of emergency measures hides the story from U.S. audiences.

L4 **DEEPER IMPACT**

Ecuador recorded a record 9,283 homicides in 2025, a rate of more than 50 per 100,000 people (DW/EFE).

L5 FULL CONTEXT

The curfew lands four weeks before the Nov. 29 local elections, in which Noboa's camp hopes to take Quito and Guayaquil from the Correísta movement. Noboa has deepened security cooperation with the Trump administration, including U.S. strikes on Ecuadorian fishing boats the U.S. linked to supplying fuel to drug boats.

SOURCES DW Español (EFE): Ecuador inicia cuarto toque de queda del año para aplacar criminalidad · El Universo: Gobierno oficializa toque de queda del 1 al 10 de noviembre en cinco provincias del país

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/ecuador-fourth-curfew-2026-coastal-provinces

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BREAKING · ASIA · JAKARTA

Indonesia's Supreme Court voids Vice President Gibran's high school equivalency certificate

The Supreme Court granted Subhan Palal's cassation appeal on Oct. 30 (Decision No. 742 K/TUN/2026), fully accepting his suit against the Education Ministry decree that recognized Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka's 2019 high school equivalency certificate. The ruling does not by itself remove Gibran from office; the court is due to explain it on Nov. 2 (Kompas).



Explainer image: the Supreme Court of Indonesia building in Jakarta. Lukman Tomayahu, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

The Supreme Court granted the cassation appeal on Oct. 30, 2026 and, per the administrative court case-tracking system, fully accepted the lawsuit over Decree 9149/D.D1/KS/2019, issued Aug. 6, 2019. Palal had asked that the certificate be declared null and void, revoked and destroyed. "I received the notice at 2:00 p.m., though I do not yet have an official copy of the decision," he told Tempo.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Those affected: Gibran Rakabuming Raka, vice president since Oct. 20, 2024 and former mayor of Solo; the Education Ministry, which issued the decree; and plaintiff Subhan Palal.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

The Supreme Court spokesperson, the education minister and the ministry's secretary-general did not reply to Tempo, and the full decision has not been published. [Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Official silence plus a dense legal process kept it off U.S. front pages.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Legal scholar Denny Indrayana told Tempo the ruling aligns with an early-October Constitutional Court decision that found no convincing evidence Gibran holds a qualification equivalent to a high school diploma.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

The Constitutional Court said it could not remove Gibran because his candidacy ended when he took office, and that the question belongs to the state bodies authorized to evaluate candidacy requirements. The Supreme Court is due to explain its ruling at a press conference on Monday, Nov. 2 (Kompas).

SOURCES Tempo English: Supreme Court Rules VP Gibran's School Certificate Void · Kompas: Besok, MA Akan Jelaskan Putusan soal Suket Ijazah SMA Gibran

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/indonesia-supreme-court-voids-gibran-school-certificate

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BREAKING · LATIN AMERICA · MANAUS

Smoke from record Amazon fires gave Manaus Brazil's worst air for weeks

Fine-particle pollution peaked at 344.5 µg/m³ on Oct. 9, schools closed for up to two weeks, and on Oct. 31 the city again woke to "bad" air.



Explainer image: the Amazon rainforest near Manaus. James Martins, CC BY 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Manaus had Brazil's worst air quality for the first two weeks of October, with fine particles peaking at 344.5 µg/m³ on Oct. 9 (state university's Selva system, via O Globo). On Oct. 17 the IQAir index hit 657 ("hazardous") and Amazonas Civil Defense issued a severe-risk alert (G1).

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Children, older people, pregnant women and people with heart or lung conditions are most at risk, says Fiocruz epidemiologist Jesem Orellana. City schools shut for two weeks and the state university (UEA) for one.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

The smoke built slowly from fires that grew from late August and eased with rain. Orellana warns people have "already normalized" the smoke. [Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Slow-burn environmental crises rarely lead U.S. news.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Burned area in Amazonas in October reached 247,660 hectares against a historical average of 63,239 — 291% higher (O Globo). Brazil logged 29,758 fire hotspots in October, led by Pará.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

The Environment Ministry believes El Niño delayed the fire season, which could stretch it into early next year. A federal task force used 16 aircraft and made at least 10 detentions of arson suspects. On Oct. 31 Manaus again woke to "bad" air (AM Post).

SOURCES O Globo: Após chuva e redução de fumaça, qualidade de ar em Manaus deixa de ser péssimo, mas continua em nível preocupante · G1: Fumaça de queimadas deixa qualidade do ar perigosa em Manaus · AM Post: Qualidade do ar amanhece ruim em Manaus neste sábado (31)

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/manaus-amazon-fire-smoke-worst-air

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BREAKING · AFRICA · MULANJE

In Malawi, El Niño drought has herders walking 27km for grass

In Mulanje district, young men walk 27km at dawn to the Likhubula River to cut cattle fodder; milk output is down and maize bran is scarce and costly.



Explainer image: Ngoni cattle in Malawi, around 1895. Unknown author, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Lawrence Abison, 25, and friends left Nsanjama at dawn and walked 27km to the Likhubula River. Two hours of cutting gathered enough grass to feed 10 cattle for one day. “It’s very hard to find the grass these days,” he said.

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED

Macdonald Khandalawo, 54, treasurer of the New Thuchira Milk Bulking Group (up to 400 farmers), normally earns more than MK1 million ($577) a month from milk. Much of it now goes to paying grass gatherers and buying maize bran, which is scarce and expensive after poor harvests.

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET

There is no single dramatic event — just a slow-burn farm crisis. [Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Human-interest climate stories outside U.S. orbits stay invisible.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Residents say riverbank cultivation and tree loss are making the river shallower and drier, and fodder gatherers now compete with riverside residents who use reeds for mats.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Malawi’s Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services had warned of below-normal rain and prolonged dry spells in the south. Farmers are storing maize stalks and pea and rice residue as stopgaps until the rains.

SOURCES Al Jazeera (Charles Pensulo): Malawi cattle farmers travel farther as El Niño worsens drought

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/malawi-el-nino-herders-walk-27km-grass

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BREAKING · AFRICA · NAIROBI

Nairobi building collapse: 16 still missing as the Eastleigh search enters its second week

A building under construction collapsed on 9th Street in Eastleigh on Oct. 23. Six people have been rescued, a woman’s body was recovered on Oct. 30, and 16 people remain unaccounted for.



Explainer image: a street in central Nairobi. ClaraTowett, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

The building, still under construction, came down on 9th Street on Oct. 23. Six people have been rescued; a woman's body was recovered on Friday, eight days after the collapse. The Star reports about 85% of the debris cleared; Citizen Digital puts it at 90%. Work now focuses on the basement, where some of the missing are believed trapped.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Families of the 16 missing — a figure from a verification exercise by the Kenya Red Cross and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Nairobi North County Commissioner Simon Osumba said. The family of 22-year-old Aurelia Wanjiku says her phone became reachable and someone answered but did not speak (Citizen Digital).

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] A local disaster with no foreign victims reported rarely reaches U.S. news, however long the search lasts.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Citizen Digital describes the structure as an 18-storey building. Investigators from the DCI took part in verifying who is missing.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

National Disaster Management Unit Director Duncan Ochieng says the site is so cramped that "we may even not deploy all the four excavators at the same time because the area is too tight for us" (Daily Nation, quoted in the World Desk handoff because the raw page was blocked).

SOURCES The Star Kenya (Perpetua Etyang): Eastleigh building search enters week two · Citizen Digital: Eastleigh building collapse: family clings to hope as missing woman's phone reachable · Daily Nation: Families hopeful as Eastleigh rescue operation enters day 10 · Daily Nation: Eastleigh collapse: eight days later, 16 still missing as rescuers recover woman's body

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/nairobi-eastleigh-collapse-16-missing

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BREAKING · OCEANIA · SUVA

Fiji's Rabuka backs down and delays the constitution vote after his coalition splinters

UPDATE: A day after confirming he would table it, Rabuka told parliament the special committee would report on the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2026 "at a later sitting date," giving no date. He replaced NFP leader Biman Prasad on the committee, and the planned Dec. 9 referendum date has "hit a wall," RNZ reports.

Earlier: two coalition partners told their MPs to vote against the bill ahead of its third reading. Rabuka needs at least 36 of 53 votes.



Explainer image: Fiji's Parliament in Suva. Collins, Tudor Washington, 1898-1970, photographer, CC BY 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

UPDATE: In a U-turn, Rabuka announced in parliament on Monday that the Special Parliamentary Committee would "table its review report at a later sitting date," to hear more public submissions. With the NFP and Sodelpa objecting, he was unlikely to reach the two-thirds majority — at least 36 votes in a 53-seat parliament — needed for the third reading (RNZ). Earlier, he had promised to table the bill for its third reading and send it to a proposed Dec. 9 referendum.

L2 **WHO'S AFFECTED**

Fiji's voters, and Rabuka's coalition, which relied on the National Federation Party (NFP) and Sodelpa to form a government in December 2022. The NFP quit Rabuka's special parliamentary committee over the weekend; Sodelpa told its three MPs — all Cabinet ministers — to vote no. Rabuka then replaced NFP leader Biman Prasad on the committee after Prasad said the party would vote against the bill. Prasad: "Constitutional legitimacy cannot be sacrificed for political expediency."

L3 **WHY IT'S QUIET**

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] A parliamentary procedure fight in a small Pacific state rarely draws foreign attention, even when a coup-era constitution is at stake.

L4 **DEEPER IMPACT**

The NFP says the process is being rushed. Sodelpa wants the 2013 Constitution replaced outright, not amended, and the immunity clauses protecting past coup leaders removed.

L5 **FULL CONTEXT**

Fiji must hold an election on or before Feb. 6, 2027. Rabuka told Lau Province leaders on Friday that having the numbers for the third reading was important. The opposition, rights groups and community leaders have criticized the pace. Rabuka told RNZ Pacific he had not announced an election date because of the parallel constitutional process.

SOURCES RNZ Pacific (Kelvin Anthony): Fijian PM Rabuka under pressure ahead of crucial vote on constitutional reform · RNZ Pacific: Fiji PM Rabuka delays vote on Constitution Bill after mounting pressure

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/fiji-rabuka-coalition-splinters-constitution-vote

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AFRICA · LONDON

Mo Ibrahim index: Africa's security and rights fall in a "strongmen" era

30 countries governed better in 2025 than 2016, mostly on economics, but 23 deteriorated, with steep falls in security, rights and participation.



Explainer image: a map of Africa. WiMahrez, CC0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 **WHAT HAPPENED**

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation's latest index finds 30 countries, home to half of Africa's population, had better overall governance in 2025 than in 2016, largely thanks to economies. 23 deteriorated and one was unchanged.

L2 **WHO'S AFFECTED**

The report finds progress on economic opportunity and human development but steep declines in security, human rights and public participation. Seven of the 10 biggest decliners had at least one coup in the decade; Burkina Faso fell furthest, and Nigeria, Sudan and Tunisia were among the worst.

L3 **WHY IT'S QUIET**

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] The index puts numbers on a democratic slide that rarely gets measured coverage in the U.S.

L4 **DEEPER IMPACT**

Ibrahim, 80, told AFP leaders are taking cues from strongmen worldwide. He cited Tanzania, where security forces were accused of killing thousands of protesters, and Uganda, where Bobi Wine was "hunted and physically attacked." "It's just disgraceful," he said.

L5 **FULL CONTEXT**

He called the U.S. termination of USAID "brutal" and said Africa must "depend more on ourselves" and work with any partner. Of his generation: "We wasted Africa... We really wasted some opportunities."

SOURCES Africanews (AFP): Africa suffering in 'strongmen' era: governance watchdog Mo Ibrahim

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/mo-ibrahim-index-africa-governance-strongmen

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AFRICA · DAKAR

Dakar opens the Youth Olympics — the first Olympic event ever held in Africa

About 2,700 athletes aged 14–17 compete in 153 events across 25 sports through Nov. 13.



Explainer image: Dakar, Senegal. Jeff Attaway from Abuja, Nigeria, CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 **WHAT HAPPENED**

President Bassirou Diomaye Faye opened the Games on Saturday before tens of thousands at Diamniadio Olympic Stadium near Dakar, under the motto "Africa welcomes, Dakar celebrates."

L2 **WHO'S AFFECTED**

About 2,700 athletes aged 14 to 17 compete through Nov. 13 in Dakar, Diamniadio and the beach resort of Saly, in 153 medal events across 25 sports.

L3 **WHY IT'S QUIET**

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Africa has never hosted an Olympic event of any kind; that alone makes this news.

L4 **DEEPER IMPACT**

The first refugee team at a Youth Olympics fields six athletes based in Kenya and Uganda, in track and field, judo and taekwondo.

L5 **FULL CONTEXT**

Dakar was originally due to host in 2022 but the pandemic delayed it. Singapore hosted the first summer Youth Games in 2010.

SOURCES Africanews: Youth Olympics open in Senegal marking the first Olympic event in Africa

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/dakar-youth-olympics-first-olympic-event-africa

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OCEANIA · HAGÅTÑA

Micronesian leaders: “An archipelago is not a stockpile” as U.S.–China rivalry grows

At a Guam forum, island voices warned that a U.S. military shift to the Second Island Chain, deep-sea mining and small nuclear reactors could override local consent.



Explainer image: Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. Scot Nelson, CC0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

The concerns came at a virtual forum held by the Guam-based Pacific Center for Island Security in late October, reported by Marianas Press and RNZ Pacific. The forum also launched the Micronesia Security Monitor, an online platform tracking military activity across the region.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Experts discussed China's expanding maritime operations and a possible U.S. shift toward the Second Island Chain — the Marianas, Yap and Palau. Defense scholar Jennifer Kavanagh said that could bring investment but also more environmental pressure.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Decisions about bases, mining and reactors are being made about these islands, often without them.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Anthropologist Theresa “Isa” Arriola warned deep-sea mining near the Mariana Trench could undermine local decisions: “An archipelago is not a stockpile.” Marshall Islands climate envoy Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner questioned small nuclear reactors, citing nuclear-testing history. Former FSM consul general Joe Enlet urged respect for customary landowner consent.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Former Guam delegate Robert Underwood said: “We are living in a multipolar world in which military strength or military spending cannot affect everything-they cannot be the solution for everything.” Journalist Rob Perez cited contaminated water and lost forest on Guam; the U.S. military says it meets environmental standards and runs restoration projects.

SOURCES RNZ Pacific: Micronesian leaders urge people-first approach to US-China rivalry

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/micronesia-us-china-rivalry-people-first

MIDDLE EAST · GENEVA

UN rights worker dies in Houthi custody, and his family learned only weeks later

UN rights chief Volker Türk and Secretary-General António Guterres are calling for an investigation into Mohammad el Shami's death. 71 UN staff were still held as of mid-October.



Explainer image: the old city of Sanaa, Yemen. Rod Waddington from Kergunyah, Australia, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Mohammad el Shami, a staff member of the UN human rights office in Yemen, died in Houthi detention. His family says he died more than a month ago but was told only recently. On Oct. 31, Türk demanded an independent investigation, and Guterres called it an "appalling tragedy."

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

El Shami's family, who Türk says "deserve to know the truth." Also the 71 UN personnel held as of mid-October, including seven from Türk's own office, plus detained aid and civil-society workers.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Yemen's war has been pushed off the news by other Middle East conflicts.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Türk says the detentions are "gravely undermining" aid at a time when OCHA (the UN aid office) says more than 22 million Yemenis need help. In June, the UN said another detained colleague had already died.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

El Shami was held from June 6, 2024, when Houthi raids seized 13 UN staff. The UN says the Houthis gave no proof of life despite repeated requests. Yemen has been at war since 2014. On Oct. 9, UN envoy Hans Grundberg said the country had "slid back into full-scale war."

SOURCES UN News: 'They deserve to know the truth': UN rights chief demands probe into staffer's death in Houthi custody · OHCHR: Death in custody of UN Human Rights staff member in Yemen devastating – Türk demands investigation · Al Jazeera: UN demands investigation after staffer's death in Houthi custody in Yemen

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/un-staffer-dies-houthi-custody-yemen

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OCEANIA · LAMI

Fiji tells nuclear powers "those that did it must pay" for Pacific tests

Opening a Pacific dialogue on the nuclear ban treaty, Fiji's defence minister Pio Tikoduadua urged a united push for compensation, healthcare and environmental repair for test-affected communities.



Explainer image: Kiritimati (Christmas Island) in 1956, during Britain's Pacific nuclear tests. The photograph was taken by Dennis Hobbs, the Navigator of the plane TG582, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Defence and Veterans Affairs Minister Pio Tikoduadua opened the three-day Pacific Regional Dialogue on Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the Vuvale Maritime Essential Services Centre in Lami. "Those that did it must pay," he said.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Fijian servicemen sent to Christmas Island between 1957 and 1962 — many exposed to nuclear testing risks without adequate information — along with their descendants and other affected communities.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

The harm happened decades ago and is spread across many small island states. [Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Historical injustice stories outside great-power news cycles stay invisible.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Article 6 covers victim assistance and environmental remediation; Article 7 covers international cooperation and assistance.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Peni Volavola, president of the Returned Soldiers and Ex-Servicemen's Association of Fiji, said recognition alone is not enough without healthcare and compensation. He urged a community-driven trust fund, a role for veterans and descendants in implementing the treaty, and a Pacific TPNW steering committee, ahead of the treaty's first review conference later this year.

SOURCES Islands Business (Fane Ledua): Pacific demands justice for nuclear test survivors

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/fiji-pacific-nuclear-test-justice-compensation

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OCEANIA · APIA

Samoa's prime minister marches for Israel, calling it "God's government," as Israel's Pacific Forum role splits the region

Samoa's head of state and Prime Minister La'auli Leuatea Schmidt joined a "March for Israel" in Apia. The Samoa Observer reported La'auli broke down in tears and said it was time to declare support for what he called "God's government."



Explainer image: government buildings in Apia, Samoa. CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED
La'auli confirmed preparations for a Samoan embassy in Jerusalem are continuing despite opposition. The march, organised by the Samoa for Israel group and attended by churches and organisations, was held in front of the Government Building.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED
Samoans, and Pacific Islands Forum members split over Israel's new role.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET
[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Pacific foreign policy rarely reaches U.S. audiences, even when it touches Jerusalem.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT
La'auli linked his support for Israel to his Christian faith, the Samoa Observer reported, and he is among the region's staunchest supporters of Israel.

L5 FULL CONTEXT
Israel's Foreign Ministry announced last month it had been accepted into the Pacific Islands Forum as a sectoral partner. Rights groups, community leaders and former Pacific leaders criticized it; Fiji Deputy PM Viliame Gavoka welcomed it.

SOURCES RNZ Pacific: "God's government": Samoan PM La'auli makes position clear on Israel
Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/samoa-pm-lauli-march-for-israel-pacific-forum

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AFRICA · MINDELO

Cape Verde, one of Africa's calmest democracies, kicks off its presidential race

President Jose Maria Neves rallied hundreds of supporters in Sao Vicente as campaigning opened Saturday for the Nov. 15 vote. Six candidates are running; his main rival is expected to be former Justice Minister Joana Rosa of the MpD.



Explainer image: a street in Praia, the capital of Cape Verde. GualdimG, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Neves, seeking a second term backed by the PAICV, campaigned on raising wages: “No country grows or competes on the basis of low wages.” Campaigning officially ends Nov. 13, per the National Elections Commission.

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED

About 520,000 people on the Atlantic archipelago, which still faces poverty and youth unemployment.

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Calm elections don’t generate conflict headlines, so they rarely reach U.S. audiences.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

The PAICV won a majority in May’s legislative elections. [Analysis · OVERLOOKED] A Neves win would leave the presidency and parliament with the same party.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

A Portuguese colony until 1975, Cape Verde has had no electoral violence since its first free elections in 1991, despite two five-year periods of political cohabitation.

SOURCES Africanews with AFP: Cape Verde president rallies supporters as campaigns kick off

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/cape-verde-presidential-campaign-neves-rosa

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AFRICA · ACCRA

Ghana opens talks with Russia’s Rosatom on its first nuclear plant, and Rusal signs a bauxite deal

Ghanaian media report Accra has begun talks with Rosatom on its first nuclear power station after President Mahama met Putin following the Russia-Africa summit. Rusal signed a deal to develop a bauxite deposit of more than 100 million tonnes at Nyinahin.



Explainer image: bauxite, the ore aluminium is made from. James St. John, CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Mahama told the summit Ghana is pursuing a diversified energy mix to secure its power grid. The Rosatom talks are reported by Ghanaian media; no reactor contract has been announced.

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED

Ghana’s power consumers and communities around the Nyinahin deposit in the Ashanti Region.

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Talks and joint-venture deals at a Moscow summit draw less coverage than signed reactor contracts.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Rusal’s joint ventures with GIADEC cover bauxite mining of up to 5 million tonnes a year, with a second phase for an alumina refinery of 1.2 million tonnes a year. Rusal will hold a majority stake in both JVs, Nyinahin Bauxite and Ghana Alumina Company.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Ghana said this month it would formally apply to join BRICS, and Foreign Minister Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa said Russia “strongly supports” the bid. The summit came as Moscow faces heavy Western sanctions over its war

in Ukraine. Ghana is also a major exporter of gold, cocoa and oil.

SOURCES Africanews with AFP: Ghana in talks with Russia for first nuclear power plant
Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/ghana-russia-rosatom-nuclear-rusal-bauxite

AFRICA · ADDIS ABABA

Ethiopian drone strikes kill at least 25 civilians, including children at a displaced-persons camp

Drone strikes in northern Ethiopia since Thursday killed at least 25 civilians, including children, witnesses and a medical source told AFP. Four strikes hit a displaced-persons camp in Amhara; a strike in Tigray hit a grain lorry already struck the night before.



Explainer image: the Amhara highlands of Ethiopia. Bernard Gagnon, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED
A witness said 14 were buried at the camp, about 400 km northeast of Addis Ababa, and two more died in treatment; the strikes came “just as the students were coming home from school.” In Rama town in Tigray, at least 11 were killed on Friday.

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED
Displaced families in Amhara — witnesses say children and pregnant women were among the victims — and civilians in Tigray. ACLED says the Rama strike was “believed to have been carried out by the ENDF,” killing 12 civilians.

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET
[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Access to northern Ethiopia is tight and the accounts come from anonymous witnesses, which keeps it off big newsrooms’ radar.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT
The government has used its large drone supply to win a decisive advantage over rebels and has been accused of indiscriminate attacks that killed civilians. The army did not respond to AFP’s requests for comment.

L5 FULL CONTEXT
The TPLF launched attacks on federal forces last month and was pushed back from its strongholds; it is allied with groups including Fano in Amhara. The army has advanced to the Eritrean border, and Eritrea has sent troops to support the TPLF, raising fears of an international conflict.

SOURCES Africanews with AFP: Drone strikes in Ethiopia kill at least 25: witnesses
Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/ethiopia-drone-strikes-amhara-tigray-civilians

OCEANIA · RAROTONGA

Stranded for three years: a Sri Lankan woman can’t leave the Cook Islands because no one will let her change planes

Ruchira Ranasingha, 50, has been stuck in the Cook Islands for three years. New Zealand has rejected three transit visa applications and Australia four, and Tahiti and Hawaii require biometrics that can only be given in person in New Zealand.



Explainer image: Rarotonga International Airport, Cook Islands. Follash, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Ranasingha told the BBC she has offered to go home “handcuffed, bound and gagged.” Her latest New Zealand application, which cited her son’s wedding in November and her mother’s failing health, was also rejected.

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED

Ranasingha, her only son, and her mother, who she says is “constantly in and out of hospital.” Her brother told BBC Sinhala she once said that if they won’t bring her home alive, “they might at least repatriate her body.”

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] It is one person on a small island, first reported by Cook Islands News in early October — the kind of story that never travels.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Auckland immigration lawyer Alastair McClymont says she got “terrible advice” and points to “so-called immigration consultants.” He says New Zealand won’t grant transit because she claimed asylum saying her life was in danger in Sri Lanka, and “no-one will want to take the risk.” Immigration New Zealand told the BBC it was “not satisfied she has a genuine intention to transit”; RNZ says it declined further comment citing privacy.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

She left Sri Lanka in 2018 after closing her T-shirt factory, worked in Hong Kong as a caregiver, went to New Zealand in December 2022 and claimed asylum over threats from lenders. She says a firm, Immigration & Secretarial Services, told her to apply for a work visa from overseas; she went to the Cook Islands (arriving November 2023, per Cook Islands News), was refused, and leaving broke her asylum-linked visa. A Rarotonga hotel houses her free and a director gave her a sewing machine. Sri Lanka’s foreign ministry says it is “taking all necessary steps” to get her home. The firm’s manager, Sylviane Gallant, did not respond to the BBC.

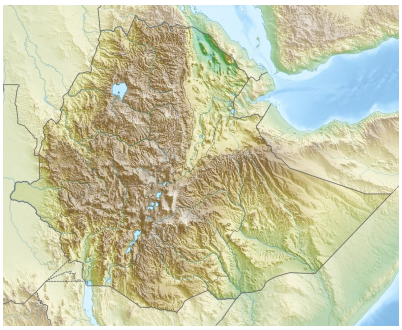
SOURCES BBC News (Ayeshea Perera, Dinuk Hewawitharana): Cook Islands: Why I can’t get home to Sri Lanka · RNZ Pacific: "If not alive, repatriate my body": family fears for Sri Lankan woman stranded in Cook Islands

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/cook-islands-sri-lankan-woman-stranded-transit-visa

AFRICA · ADDIS ABABA

Ethiopia’s Abiy puts his ministers through military training amid conflicts at home

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has put cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and heads of government institutions through military training at the Hurso centre, sharing photos of himself taking part. Participants include Finance Minister Fitsum Assefa and Health Minister Mekdes Daba. The BBC says such training for senior civilian officials is unusual in Ethiopia.



Explainer image: a relief map of Ethiopia. Carport, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Abiy said, “Soldiers have targets while civilians have goals. The objective of both is victory.” It is unclear when the training began or how long it is expected to last.

L2 WHO’S AFFECTED

Senior officials including House of Federation Speaker Muferiat Kamil, Finance Minister Fitsum Assefa and Health Minister Mekdes Daba.

L3 WHY IT’S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] It surfaced through the prime minister’s own social media posts rather than a formal announcement.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

The training comes amid continued fighting in parts of Tigray, conflict in Amhara, insecurity in Oromia and concerns over possible renewed conflict with Eritrea.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Abiy says Ethiopia’s goal of universal prosperity requires leaders who are physically fit, morally strong and intellectually capable, and that military institutions teach discipline, patriotism, teamwork, accountability and leadership. He has previously emphasised military preparedness and national development.

SOURCES BBC News: Ethiopian PM puts ministers through military training

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/ethiopia-abiy-ministers-military-training-hurso

AFRICA · NAIROBI

How Kenyans got caught up in a $130m U.S. “ghost student” aid scam

U.S. prosecutors allege fraudsters used stolen identities to enrol fake students in American colleges and collect federal aid, with money flowing to Kenya. Investigators flagged 830,840 potentially fraudulent aid IDs tied to nearly $130m, which is suspected, not confirmed, losses. Five indictments so far involve Kenyan nationals, with 40 more investigations open.



Explainer image: an empty university lecture hall. Theonlysilentbob, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

On Oct. 19 a Nebraska grand jury indicted Francis Mogambi, a Kenyan who came to the U.S. in May 2024 via the Diversity Visa lottery, on five counts of theft of government money and five of aggravated identity theft. Prosecutors allege he kept 30% of diverted aid and sent the rest to associates in Kenya; the intended loss in his case was $20,000.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

People whose identities were stolen, sometimes sold online for $4 to $8, often low-income Americans who never attended college. They can end up with student loan debts in their names.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] U.S. attention has centred on the Justice Department announcement, not the Kenyan networks or cross-border cooperation.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

With Kenyan investigators' help, U.S. authorities seized more than $750,000 from a Kenyan national's cryptocurrency account, which the Justice Department called the first international seizure of its kind in Kenya. A Virginia case alleges a Kenyan national got more than 700 fraudulent refunds totalling about $1.44m; three people in New Jersey are charged as alleged money mules linked to a purported safari company.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

The probe is called Operation Ghostbusters. Assistant Attorney General Colin M McDonald said nearly a third of California community college applicants in 2024 were identified as fraudulent. Mogambi, held pending trial, faces at least 10 years if convicted and has not commented.

SOURCES BBC News: How Kenyans got caught in $130m US ghost student scam

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/kenya-ghost-student-financial-aid-scam-operation-ghostbusters

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AFRICA · ARUSHA

A year after Tanzania's deadly election, families of the dead still wait for justice

A year after Tanzania's Oct. 29, 2025 election, which a government inquiry says left 518 people dead from "unnatural causes," including 197 shot dead, families told the BBC they want justice and help with medical bills. Amnesty International accused President Samia Suluhu Hassan's government of "weaponising counterterrorism laws to silence critics and instil fear."



Explainer image: a ballot box. Antti Leppänen, CC BY 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Amnesty says "not a single official has been criminally investigated, let alone prosecuted." Opposition leader Tundu Lissu, on trial for treason, went on hunger strike this week over lawyer access, which prison authorities denied; his lawyer says he has now been granted a meeting. A verdict in his case is due next week, per the BBC.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Neema Munuo, whose 18-year-old daughter Maria Chami was shot while buying phone credit in Arusha; Mwajuma Hamisi, widowed with five children after her husband George Kisivani was shot; Meshack Sane, shot in the leg, who says he has had more than five operations and can't afford more; farmer Juma Nasibu, whose nephew Juma Shabani's body was never recovered.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] A year-on anniversary with no new official findings rarely makes U.S. news.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

Amnesty interviewed 17 people between Sept. 3 and 17, 2026. A 26-year-old told Amnesty he was arrested on July 24 in Dar es Salaam after backing banned July 7 protests, held without charge for 47 days, blindfolded and abused. Amnesty cites acts that may amount to torture, arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances. Authorities did not respond to the BBC or Amnesty.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Samia was declared winner with 98% of the vote after her two main challengers were excluded. She says the vote was fair and blames foreigners for the unrest. The inquiry report was handed to her in April but the full report has not been made public; she has set up another commission to identify those behind the violence.

SOURCES BBC News: Demands for post-poll justice as Tanzania accused of weaponising counterterrorism laws

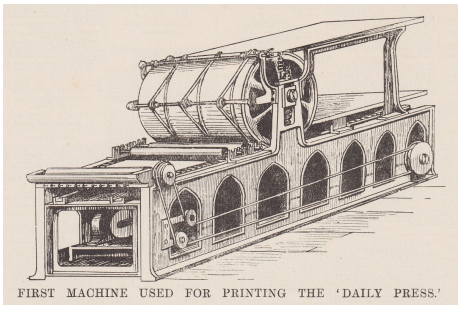
Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/tanzania-election-anniversary-justice-counterterror-laws

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MIDDLE EAST · CAIRO

Egypt convicts editor Lina Attalah and orders independent outlet Mada Masr shut

A Cairo court convicted Mada Masr editor-in-chief Lina Attalah of managing an unlicensed website and ordered the outlet shut. She was briefly detained and released after Mada Masr paid a 3m Egyptian pound fine (about $53,500). Her lawyers say a retrial hearing is set for Nov. 11.



Explainer image: a newspaper printing press. Samuel Loxton (artist), Public domain via Wikimedia Commons. Context, not a photo of the event.

DEPTH five layers, from what happened to the full picture

L1 WHAT HAPPENED

Attalah's legal team says she was in effect ambushed: a judge appointed a defence lawyer for her before security personnel detained her in the courtroom. Her lawyer Hassan al-Azhari told AFP they also discovered she had been sentenced in absentia in 2024 to a year in prison and a 20,000-pound fine.

L2 WHO'S AFFECTED

Mada Masr's journalists and readers, and the entire six-person team of factchecking platform Matsadaash, who were arrested and charged with belonging to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. CPJ says Egypt has 25 journalists behind bars.

L3 WHY IT'S QUIET

[Analysis · OVERLOOKED] Egypt's crackdowns move step by step, which rarely produces a single headline moment for foreign audiences.

L4 DEEPER IMPACT

EIPR head Hossam Bahgat said security agencies are “moving from years of harassing independent media to wiping them out completely.” PEN International says this is the sixth case against Mada Masr in six years but the first of its kind referred to trial.

L5 FULL CONTEXT

Attalah founded Mada Masr in 2013 after coming to prominence during the 2011 Arab spring. Mada Masr says it applied for a licence three years ago and got no reply. EIPR says the moves follow repeated statements by President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi since August about a conspiracy to destabilise Egypt; he has said he intends to remain in power until 2030. RSF called the ruling “outrageous” and “shameful”; Amnesty called it “a crushing blow to press freedom.”

SOURCES The Guardian (Peter Beaumont): Egypt fines prominent editor Lina Attalah and shuts independent news outlet Mada Masr

Read online: theoverlooked.news/story/egypt-mada-masr-lina-attalah-shutdown

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Everything is a fact unless it's noted otherwise (opinion, prediction, guess, etc.). Every claim traces to a cited source.