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Editor's letter



Dear Valued Readers

As the pages of the calendar turn to March, here at Afri-CAN Magazine, we find ourselves pausing to do more than just welcome the first whispers of autumn. This month, we turn our gaze to the heartbeat of our homes, the pillars of our communities, and the architects of our future: **Women.**

In the spirit of "Afri-CAN," we recognize that the "CAN" in our name is powered by the incredible women who refuse to accept limitations. They are the mothers who work two jobs to put a child through school, the entrepreneurs building bridges across borders, the artists painting our stories, and the leaders fighting for a seat at the table.

This March, we don't just want to celebrate women; we want to respect them. We want to applaud them, not just for their strength in adversity, but for their grace in success, their resilience in failure, and their unwavering ability to nurture and build.

To the women reading this: Thank you. Thank you for holding families together, for challenging the status quo, and for showing us that with determination, Africa, and the world, truly CAN.

Join us this month as we share their stories, amplify their voices, and honor their immeasurable contribution to our shared narrative.

With gratitude,

The Editor
Afri-CAN Magazine

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ONE ON ONE

With Charity Durowaa

By Zvakwana Nomore Sweto

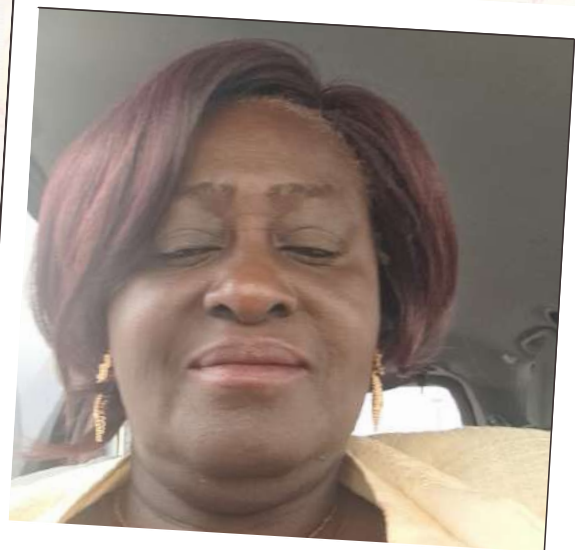
In this special edition for the month of March, we took it upon ourselves to hunt down one of the women making a great impact among the African community in Canada, Charity Durowaa. She is the owner and founder of KASOA Tropical Food Market in Edmonton, which she established on March 7, 2006.

Despite her busy schedule she managed to accommodate us for a one-on-one interview at one of her branches. She is a down-to-earth and humble woman. I spent two hours at her branch and the way she was helping customers, one would mistake her for an employee yet she is the owner.

Here is the excerpt from the interview.

What does KASOA mean?

KASOA in Hausa language means market. But in Ghana we have a suburb called KASOA and they named that suburb KASOA because during the day people go there to shop hence, they named it KASOA which means marketplace. AND I thought to myself, if I use that name people will get to know me better because it's a marketplace and at the same time it's a town in Ghana.



Charity Durowaa - KASOA



As an African immigrant yourself, are there any challenges that you have faced in building your business from scratch?

Yeah, there are challenges from starting a business itself, especially when you don't have capital. It makes it very tough because if you're a new business person and you don't have capital, the bank will not be in a position to offer you any loan. So, it becomes tough to run a business without capital. You need to do something else to support the business.

The reason why you can't get the loan is because they think you might not succeed. I won't say because I'm black or something that one might be there but I want to emphasize on that because truly speaking they will tell you your business is fresh and we can't help you in case you

How does 2026 look for you so far, since we are just about to finish the first quarter?

I think I'm okay. I would say business is okay; by God's grace, business is okay, and I'm hoping for the best this year, just like anybody doing business hopes for the best. I don't want to remain where I am forever; I'm planning to move forward, so I always aim to be the outstanding one. Lately it's hard to find products to sell. Everything is becoming tough; it's becoming very difficult to bring things to Canada.

KASOA BRANCH CONTACT:



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don't make it; you can't repay your loan. Banks or investors won't be having faith in that business that it will be successful. And nobody wants to credit a poor person anyways.

How has been the business so far from the time you started up to now?

Now it's okay, everything seems to be flowing in the way I envisioned it from the start and by God's grace, we keep on winning. I've grown businesswise and my challenges have calmed down a little bit because I can now safely run the business, hire employees and be able to pay them according to Canada standards. When I started the business, it was only me, because I couldn't afford to pay workers. So, I was working by myself, later, I added one person came to two, three people. Now I have like 10 workers for each shop.

Oh, that sounds great. How many shops do you have in total?

I have 2 shops now and am looking forward to opening more branches in other provinces as we continue to bring African products closer to people.

How has the African community been supporting your business?

I think they are patronizing. We have other African stores so I'm not expecting everybody to come to me but for those that come, I thank God for bringing them to me. I get my share let me say. And I don't pray that everybody should come to me. At the end of the day what is mine is mine. If you see other nationalities then probably their husbands or wives are from Africa.



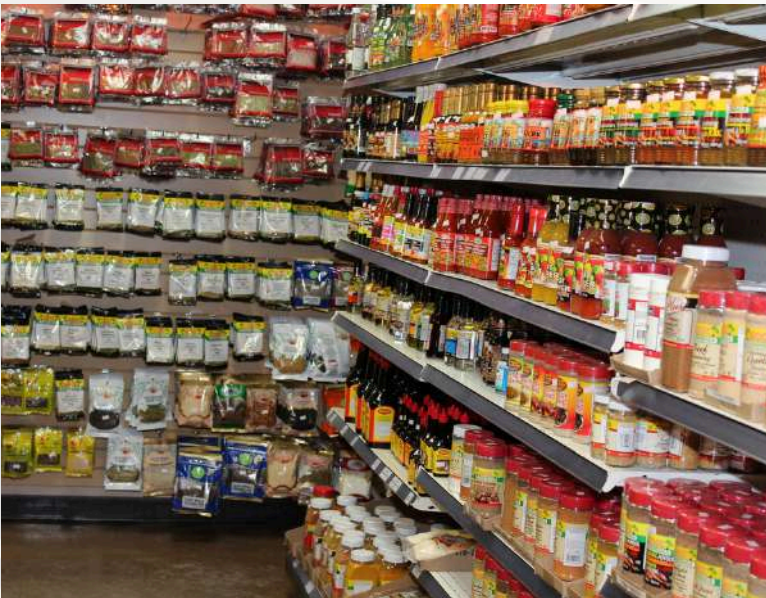
As we celebrate Women's History Month in March, specifically on the 8th of March, we reflect on the women who have paved the way before us. Were there any specific women or people you regard as role models or who inspired you to be in business?

Mmm, I don't know about that one. I don't any specific person I have drawn inspiration from. But If I need to thank people it will be my suppliers. People who supply me from Ghana, people who supply me here in Canada, they have been supportive like anything I want they try to find it for me. It's not easy to get different stuff to stock especially from Africa. I have West African products. I have East African products. It's not easy to get things from other countries to Canada. But all the same I try to get them. So, if to thank any person, I will have to thank all the people I'm doing business with, helping me to get the products to sell.



What kind of advice can you give to women or young girls who see you as their role model, who see something special in you?

I know a lot of people wish they can be like me but it takes hard work to be somebody. You might have the capital but if you don't work hard, your capital will be finished before you even enjoy the fruits of your labour. Yeah, hard work and determination. You should tell yourself I can do it, I can do it. The challenge we are facing now is that this generation doesn't want to work at all. But there are some who are trying to make a difference for themselves, and all I can say is you need to work hard and do everything in all honesty and transparency. You need to be a trustworthy person so that somebody can help you if you need a little bit of help



In terms of marketing, do you exhibit at events here in Canada?

Well, events, no I don't... I don't have time to go to exhibitions and again not that I consider myself I'm a black person so I can't go there but most of the times I'm busy. Going to an event, one needs to plan. You need to organize, you need to buy stuff, you need to have a beautifully designed booth to display your items, you need other workers and set aside a budget for that. I'm absolutely busy with my own stuff here and I just don't have time to go to events. And again, as a black person I stay in my own shell like you know because I can't compete with the big chains right, so the little I can do for my community is what I'm doing.

Recently there's been a surge in the use of drugs and substance abuse among the youth. What advice can you give to the youth of today and young girls?

Again, I would say that they need to study hard. Nowadays, the new generation spends most of their time on mobile phones, surfing the internet, and on electronics (games). They don't want to study. And anything you are doing, you need to study a little bit too. Even though you are blessed with the talent, you need less education to back you up. You do things perfectly. I would say that way you don't have to do advanced education for one to be a millionaire. If you are blessed with what you are doing, you can still do it, be good at it, and be a millionaire. But the world we are in now, if you know a little bit in terms of education, it helps you in planning, and you can do more to improve yourself. All that I can say is the new generation has to learn how to study and take life seriously.

The generation we have, don't take life too seriously. They think it's just me, what I want to do is what I will do, nobody can change me. Somewhere along the line when you grow up it will catch you. Life will not be the same like when you were young because you have to take care of yourself and others. If you become an addict, how are you going to be taking care of your children? How can you take care of your husband? You will still go on doing that crazy stuff. Drugs are not good. I urge you girls and women to stay away from drugs and any substance abuse.

As KASOA, do you have any form of corporate social responsibility that you do?

In Canada, YES. I have some associations that come to me seeking help and assistance, and I do support them. As long as there is tangible evidence of the need for that help, we do chip in as KASOA. Some people need help but are doing things for themselves. You can't come and take my money for personal aggrandizement. Those people once in a while I turn them down.

In Ghana, do you do any form of CSR or something like that? Like helping individuals or entrepreneurs.

Back home, not really no but it's my wish to help some of the African countries, but I don't know the channel to reach them in a transparent manner. In my spirit I can hear their voice; I need to help other countries, orphanages, etc. I discussed the same idea with one lady from Uganda, I think, but I never heard from her again. So, if I have the chance yes, why not.



Why We Must Honor the Women Who Shape Our World

The International Women's Day (IWD) 2026 campaign theme is "Give to Gain," focusing on fostering gender equality through intentional giving, collaboration, and resource sharing to create a more equitable, supportive world. It highlights that when resources, knowledge, and support are given, women thrive.

Every year on March 8th, the world marks International Women's Day. It's a day filled with flowers, greeting cards, and special events. But to truly understand the day, we must look beyond the celebrations and recognize the profound and irreplaceable roles women play in our lives every single day. We honor them not just for one day, but for the countless, often uncelebrated, moments that build the foundation of our families, communities, and society.

From the moment we are born, women are often our first contact with the world. They are our mothers, grandmothers, and caregivers, teaching us our first words, soothing our first tears, and nurturing our earliest dreams. They are the architects of our emotional landscape, instilling in us the values of empathy, kindness, and resilience. This foundational role, however, is just the beginning.

The Name Says It All: WOMAN

She is the Educator. Whether as a professional teacher shaping young minds in a classroom or as a parent helping with homework after a long day of work, women are the primary conduits of knowledge. They foster curiosity, encourage critical thinking, and inspire a lifelong love of learning.

She is the Professional. Women are leaders in every industry; from science and technology to arts and politics. They are the doctors who heal us, the entrepreneurs who innovate, the artists who move us, and the executives who guide corporations. They bring unique perspectives and collaborative strengths that are essential for progress.

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Press Release

U.S. Embassy Zimbabwe

Embassy of the United States of America
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U.S. Embassy Harare

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The United States Regrets Government of Zimbabwe Decision on Health Assistance to Zimbabwe

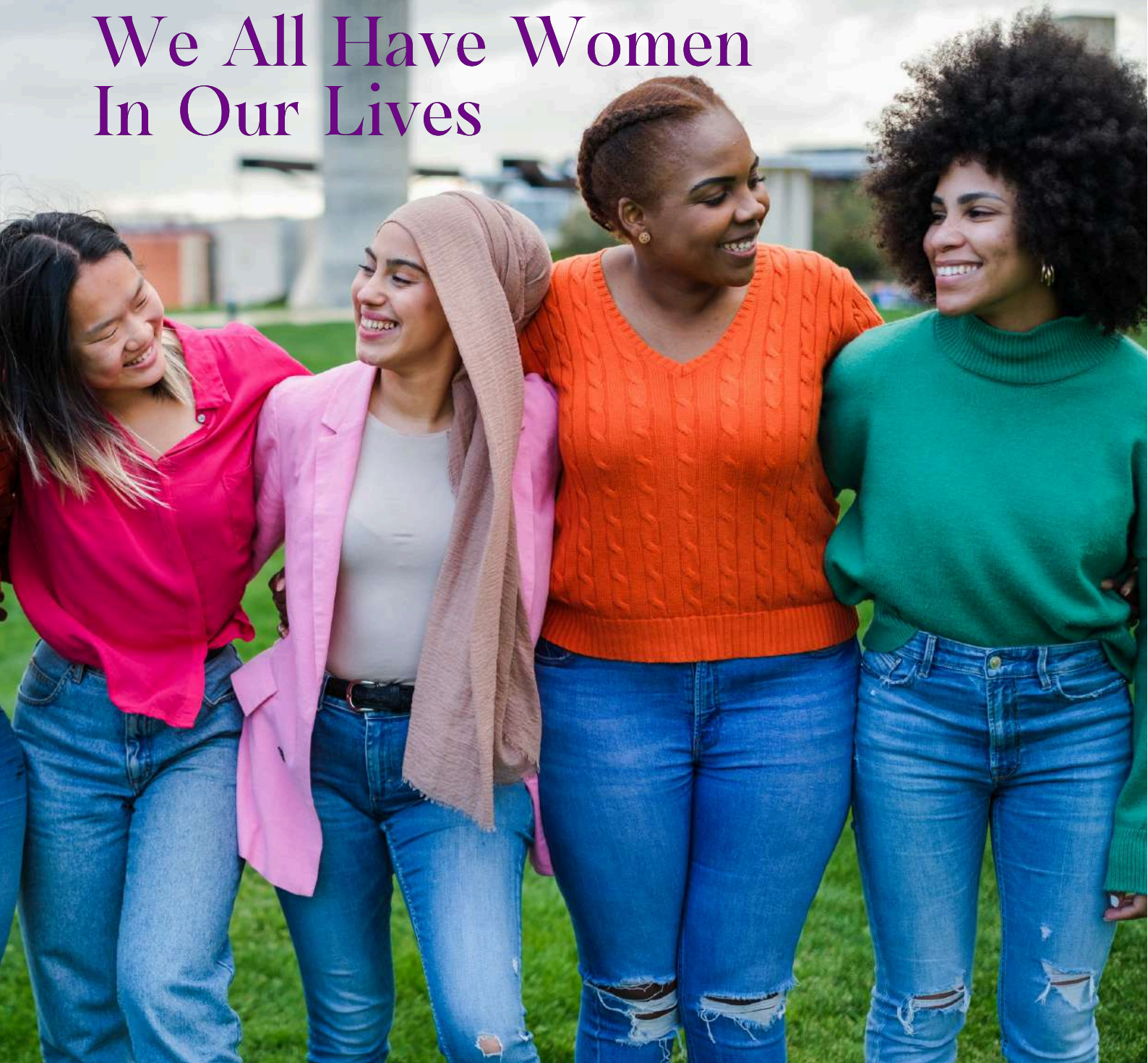
Harare, Zimbabwe, February 24, 2026 – The Government of Zimbabwe has communicated its decision to withdraw from negotiations on a proposed bilateral health Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States. This MOU would have provided \$367 million over five years to support Zimbabwe's priority health programs, including HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, tuberculosis, malaria, maternal and child health, and disease outbreak preparedness. "We believe this collaboration would have delivered extraordinary benefits for Zimbabwean communities— especially the 1.2 million men, women, and children currently receiving HIV treatment through U.S.-supported programs," said U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe Pamela Tremont. "We will now turn to the difficult and regrettable task of winding down our health assistance in Zimbabwe."

The proposed MOU represented the largest potential health investment in Zimbabwe by any international funder and was built on a co-funding model designed to ensure sustainability and a path toward self-reliance. The MOU asked Zimbabwe to gradually increase its own health funding alongside U.S. support, building on more than \$1.9 billion in U.S. health support to Zimbabwe since 2006 that is directly responsible for Zimbabwe reaching the UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals.

Sixteen African countries have so far signed health collaboration MOUs with the United States, which represents over \$18.3 billion in new health funding including more than \$11.2 billion in U.S. assistance alongside \$7.1 billion in co-investment from recipient countries.

"The United States has a responsibility to American taxpayers to invest their resources where mutual accountability, transparency, and shared commitment are assured," Ambassador Tremont noted. "These MOUs set a higher standard for bilateral health cooperation—one that prioritizes sustainability, measurable outcomes, and shared ownership of results. The Government of Zimbabwe has assured us it is prepared to sustain the fight against HIV/AIDS, and we wish them well."

We All Have Women In Our Lives



She is the Backbone of the Community: Women are often the unseen force holding communities together. They are the neighbours who organize the food drive, the volunteers at the local shelter, and the advocates fighting for social justice. They possess a unique ability to build bridges, foster connections, and create support networks where everyone feels they belong.

She is the Nurturer and the Protector: In families, women are often the emotional core, the peacemakers, and the ones who ensure everyone is cared for. They juggle schedules, manage households, and provide a safe harbour from the storms of life. They are the first to celebrate our successes and the steadfast presence that helps us navigate our failures.

These roles are not performed in isolation: They are woven together in a tapestry of strength, sacrifice, and unconditional love. To honor women is to acknowledge this immense and often invisible labor. It is to recognize that our personal successes are rarely achieved alone; they are built upon the support, guidance, and love of the women who believed in us.

These roles are not performed in isolation: They are woven together in a tapestry of strength, sacrifice, and unconditional love. To honor women is to acknowledge this immense and often invisible labor. It is to recognize that our personal successes are rarely achieved alone; they are built upon the support, guidance, and love of the women who believed in us.

Editor's Desk

EDITORIAL

All articles and contributions sent to us are subject to review.

CONTRIBUTIONS


For article and story contributions, kindly submit by the 15th of every month through our editor's desk.


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A woman with long, dark, curly hair is seated in a wooden chair with a patterned, upholstered seat. She is wearing a black blazer and black trousers. She is holding an open book or document on her lap and a pen in her right hand, looking thoughtfully to the right. The background is a dark wood-paneled wall. The floor is tiled.

Celebrating Women & their Professions



IMPORTANT: RECLAIMING THE TRUE STORY OF AFRICA

Staff Writer

For decades, the image of Africa in the global media has been framed through a narrow, distorted lens. It is a portrait painted in shades of despair; of dusty villages, hungry children, and failed states. This narrative, repeated endlessly in Western newspapers, television broadcasts, and documentary films, has become the default setting for how the world views an entire continent of 1.5 billion people and 54 uniquely diverse nations.

This is not just lazy journalism; it is a harmful and outdated caricature. It is a story told about Africa, not by Africa. And it is a story that costs the continent dearly; an estimated \$4.2 billion every year in higher borrowing costs and lost investment, money that could otherwise fund education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The time has come to condemn this narrative, acknowledge the internal failures that have fueled it, and recognize that only Africans now have the mandate to tell their own, multifaceted story.

The Western media's obsession with Africa's woes is not accidental; it is a structural bias rooted in a colonial mindset that struggles to portray Africans as agents of

their own destiny. The archetypal example remains, The Economist magazine's infamous



May 2000 cover, which branded Africa "The Hopeless Continent," featuring a dark silhouette of a man with a weapon. While the magazine has since retracted that sentiment, the template remains.



Dr. Arikana Chihombori-Quao

According to Dr. Arikana Chihombori Quao, the narrative that Africa doesn't need help. She argues that Africa has been, and still is, supporting the economic development of Western nations.



Selective storytelling in journalism has real-world consequences. When Western outlets obsessively covered the 2014 Ebola crisis, the word "Ebola" appeared in US media more often than "United States" and "summit" combined during the historic US-Africa Leaders Summit, drowning out news of billions of dollars in investment deals. This creates a perception of a continent permanently on the brink, scaring off tourists and convincing investors that the risk is too high, regardless of a country's actual economic fundamentals.

This narrative is not just misleading; it is dehumanizing. It strips Africans of their complexity, their innovation, and their agency. It refuses to see the continent as a place of solutions, not just problems. When Rwanda deploys peacekeeping forces under transparent UN mandates to stabilize the Central African Republic, Western outlets cynically frame it as shadowy collusion with mercenaries, unable to process the idea of an African nation acting as a capable, strategic leader.

The reality is that Africa is a hub of innovation and growth. It is home to young tech entrepreneurs in Lagos, medical professionals doing exceptionally well in South Africa, life-saving solar-powered medical innovations by Kenyan engineers, and groundbreaking agricultural research by Zambian scientists that is helping farmers achieve food sovereignty. It is a continent where, despite immense challenges, the IMF projects economic growth to accelerate, demonstrating resilience in a turbulent global economy.



Nigerian Entrepreneur Who Built A \$3 Million EdTech Company

However, it would be a disservice to lay the blame for Africa's image problems solely at the feet of foreign journalists. We must also confront an uncomfortable truth: corrupt and self-serving African leaders have provided ample fodder for these negative stereotypes and have actively sabotaged the continent's progress from within.

These are the "drunken captains" of the ship of state, who treat public treasuries as personal bank accounts. The stories are tragically familiar. In Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos presided over an

oil-rich nation for 38 years, leaving behind a legacy not of shared prosperity, but of entrenched cronyism. The Luanda Leaks exposed how his family built a global empire worth billions through opaque state deals, while the majority of Angolans lived on less than \$2 a day.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Joseph Kabila's nearly two-decade rule was marked by the systematic plunder of the country's vast mineral wealth. Investigations have traced millions of dollars through shell companies linked to his family, money that should have built schools, hospitals, and improved the country's infrastructure. In Nigeria, a nation of immense wealth and potential, political leaders display obscene opulence, multi-car motorcades, private jets, and lavish estates; while the country grapples with mass unemployment and the highest number of out-of-school children in the world.

I am not going to speak about Zimbabwe today, where certain individuals have explicitly shown an 'I don't care attitude' when it comes to abuse of power and resources meant for the public to sponsor their lavish lifestyle.

These leaders have not only stolen their people's present but have also mortgaged their future, reinforcing the very image of a "hopeless continent" that the West is so
...go to Page. 21



MEET INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

ACCORDING TO

AFRI-CAN

MAGAZINE

Across every continent and in every field imaginable, women are working tirelessly to reshape our world with courage, vision, and unwavering determination. To every woman who has dared to dream, who has worked while others slept, who has lifted others as she climbed, and who has refused to accept a world that tells her "you cannot", we see you, we honor you, and we stand in awe of your magnificent resilience. The world is better, brighter, and more hopeful simply because you are in it, changing everything, one day at a time.



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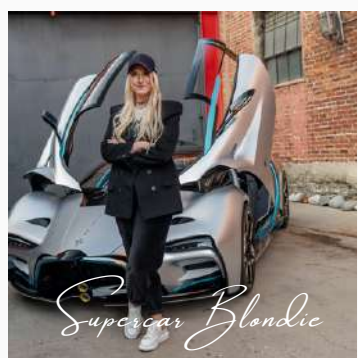
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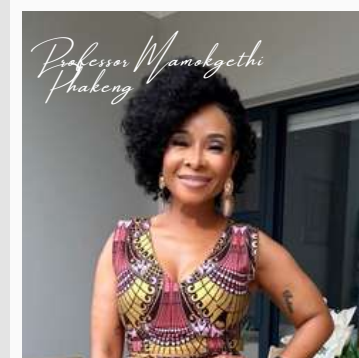
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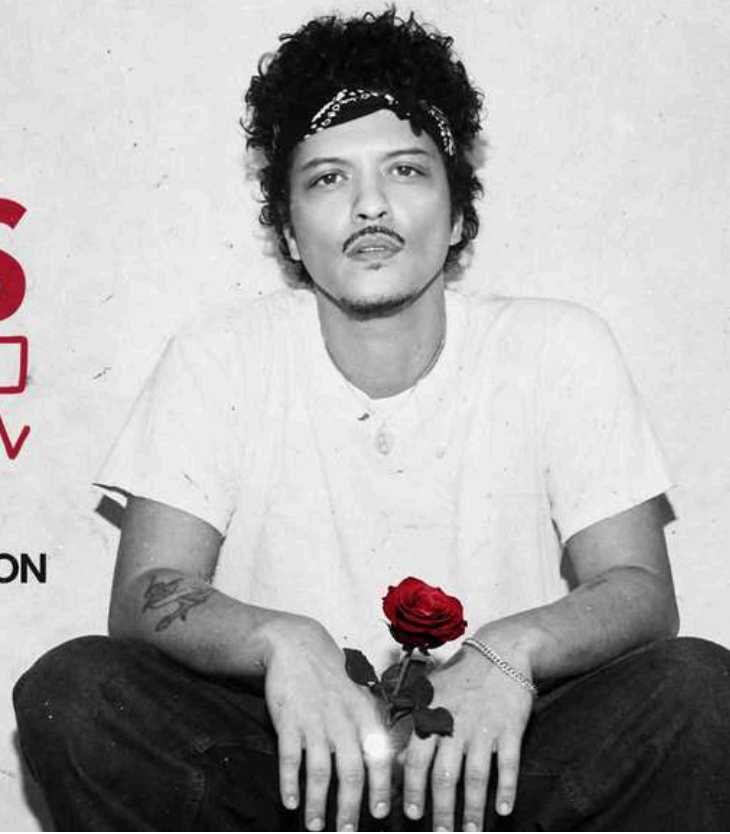


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eager to consume. Their failures have given the cynical Western media a convenient truth to hide behind, allowing them to ignore the bigger, more hopeful picture.



Nowhere is the complex relationship between Africa and the West more visible than in sports, particularly football. For instance, when we watch the French national team, we see the dazzling talents of players with roots in Mali, Senegal, Algeria, and Cameroon. They are celebrated as French heroes, products of a system that has successfully integrated and nurtured their abilities.

But this success story has a dark underbelly. The football industry has become a new frontier of exploitation, a "two-faced hope" for thousands of young Africans. Deceitful agents and informal networks prey on the dreams of teenagers in Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Cameroon, promising them careers in Europe. For the vast majority, the dream turns into a nightmare. They are stranded as undocumented migrants, playing for small clubs under exploitative conditions, or simply abandoned once their usefulness runs out. The system extracts their talent and labor, but offers no safety net.

In some cases, the desperation to reach Europe leads to elaborate fraud. In one instance, a man posing as the coach of Cameroon's national handball team was caught trying to smuggle 19 compatriots into Switzerland under the guise of a sporting event. These are the tragic, extreme outcomes of a system where European clubs and nations benefit from a pipeline of African talent, while the structures that produced those players, local academies, schools, and communities; see little to no return.

However, it would be a disservice to lay the blame for Africa's image problems solely at the feet of foreign journalists. We must also confront an uncomfortable truth: corrupt and self-serving African leaders have provided ample fodder for these negative stereotypes and have actively sabotaged the continent's progress from within.



France's national team, which comprises players of Arab and African descent

Western nations are happy to benefit from the fruit of African talent, but rarely invest in the roots. This is the modern iteration of resource extraction: instead of oil and minerals, it is human potential that is being

harvested, with the profits and glory accumulating elsewhere.

A Call Tell Our Own Story

For too long, Africa has allowed its image to be defined by others, by Western media outlets with colonial hangovers and by its own failing leaders. This must end. The mandate to tell Africa's story now rests firmly with Africans themselves.

This means governments, regional bodies like the African Union, and civil society must actively invest in counter-narratives. It means holding our own leaders accountable. The fight for a positive African narrative is inseparable from the fight for good governance and an end to corruption. A continent that confronts its internal failures with honesty and justice is a continent that can face the world with strength.

The world needs to see the real Africa, not the one-dimensional tragedy peddled by Western newsrooms, but a continent of staggering diversity, resilience, creativity, and undeniable momentum. It is a story of challenges, yes, but also of solutions. It is a story of 1.5 billion people who are no longer waiting for their story to be told. They are telling it themselves.

... DO YOUR PART

Canada Issues Urgent *Warning* Amid Heightened Iran Tensions

In a statement released Saturday February 28, Ottawa reiterated its hardline stance against the Islamic Republic, branding it the "principal source of instability and terror throughout the Middle East" and vowing to take all possible measures to protect its nationals and diplomatic missions in the region.



Statement by Prime Minister Carney and Minister Anand on the situation in the Middle East

"The Canadian government is closely following Iran-related hostilities throughout the Middle East and urges all Canadians in Iran to shelter in place. Canadians in the wider region should follow local advice and take all necessary precautions.

Canada's position remains clear: the Islamic Republic of Iran is the principal source of instability and terror throughout the Middle East, has one of the world's worst human rights records, and must never be allowed to obtain or develop nuclear weapons.

Canada and our international partners have consistently called upon the Iranian regime to end its nuclear program, including at the 2025 G7 Leaders' Summit in Kananaskis and with the United Nations' reimposition of sanctions in September.

Despite diplomatic efforts, Iran has neither fully dismantled its nuclear program, halted all enrichment activities, nor ended its support for regional terrorist proxy groups. Canada stands with the Iranian people in their long and courageous struggle against Iran's oppressive regime. Canada has listed the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity, and has sanctioned 256 Iranian entities and 222 individuals in response to the regime's repression and its violence both against its own people, and persistently, beyond its borders. Canada reaffirms Israel's right to defend itself and to ensure the security of its people.

Canada supports the United States acting to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to prevent its regime from further threatening international peace and security.

The Canadian government urges the protection of all civilians in this conflict. We will take all possible measures to protect our nationals and Canadian diplomatic missions throughout the region."

February 28, 2026



Prime Minister Mark Carney

"We stand with the Iranian people in their long and courageous struggle against Iran's oppressive regime," the statement read, citing what it called "one of the world's worst human rights records."

Grow With Confidence:

Teen Girl's Guide to Grooming & Etiquette

By Mellisa Davids

Being a teenager is an exciting, confusing, and transformative time. Your body is changing, your social world is becoming more complex, and you're figuring out exactly who you are and who you want to become. Amidst all this, topics like grooming, hygiene, and etiquette can feel like just another set of rules to follow. But here's a secret: they aren't about rules. They are about respect, YES, respect for yourself and respect for others.

Think of this as your toolkit for navigating the world with confidence. When you feel clean, put-together, and know how to handle yourself in different situations, you free up mental energy to focus on what truly matters: your dreams, your friendships, and your happiness.

Personal Hygiene (Respecting Your Body)

This is the most important part. Good hygiene is the ultimate form of self-care. It's about feeling fresh, healthy, and comfortable in your own skin. By the way, don't bleach your skin.

Daily Essentials: By now, the basics are a habit, but let's refresh. A daily shower, especially after any physical activity, is non-negotiable. It washes away sweat and bacteria, keeping your skin clear and your body fresh. Use a mild deodorant or antiperspirant. Brushing your teeth twice a day and flossing isn't just for a pretty smile; it's for your overall health. Carry mints or gum for after meals.

Your Changing Body & Skin: Puberty brings new challenges. You might notice your skin becoming oilier, leading to breakouts. This is normal! Find a simple skincare routine: a gentle cleanser, an oil-free moisturizer, and sunscreen every single day. If you're struggling with acne, talk to a trusted adult or a dermatologist.

Understanding Your Menstrual Cycle: Your period is a normal, healthy part of life. Be prepared. Keep a small pouch in your backpack with pads, tampons, or a menstrual cup, along with a change of underwear and some pain reliever if you need it. Track your cycle with an app or calendar so you're never caught off guard. Don't be embarrassed to ask a friend, mom, or school nurse for a product if you're in need.

Hair Care: Wash your hair as often as your scalp type needs it. For some, that's daily; for others, it's a few times a week. Find products that work for your hair texture. Regular brushing keeps it healthy and shiny.





Grooming (Expressing Your Personal Style)

Grooming is where hygiene meets personal expression. It's not about changing who you are, but about presenting your best self to the world.

Skincare as Grooming: Remember that routine we talked about? That's your first grooming step. Clean, healthy skin is the best canvas.

Hair as an Accessory: Your hairstyle is a huge part of your identity. Keep it clean and find a style that makes you feel like you. It doesn't have to be complicated. A simple, neat ponytail or letting your natural texture shine can be powerful.

The World of Makeup: Makeup should be fun, not a mask. If you choose to wear it, start small. A little tinted moisturizer, mascara, and lip balm can be a great way to enhance your features. The goal is to accentuate your natural beauty, not hide it. And remember, always wash your face before bed!

Nail Care: If you have to do it and if your parents permit, you don't need fancy manicures, but clean, trimmed nails make a world of difference. They show that you pay attention to the details.

Fragrance: A light spritz of a body spray or perfume can be a lovely finishing touch, but less is always more. You want your scent to be discovered, not announced.

Etiquette (Respecting Others & Yourself)

Etiquette isn't about being stuffy or formal. It's simply a set of tools that make social interactions smoother, kinder, and more comfortable for everyone involved. It's about emotional intelligence in action.

The Power of "Please" and "Thank You": These two little phrases are timeless for a reason. They acknowledge the effort of others and show basic human decency. Use them with your parents, your teachers, your friends, and the barista making your coffee.

The Art of Conversation: This means listening as much as you talk. Put your phone down when someone is speaking to you. Make eye contact. Ask questions about the other person. It shows you value them and what they have to say.

Table Manners Matter: You don't need to memorize which fork to use, but the basics go a long way. Chew with your mouth closed, don't talk with food in your mouth, and place your napkin on your lap. Saying "excuse me" if you need to leave the table is a sign of respect.

Digital Etiquette (The Golden Rule for Phones): The way you treat people online should be the same way you treat them in person. Think before you post. Would you say it to their face? Don't text or scroll when you're with other people. It sends the message that a screen is more interesting than they are.

IMPORTANT

As you navigate these years, remember that trends will come and go. The "perfect" look or the "right" way to act will constantly change on social media. But true confidence comes from within. Be kind to yourself. You are growing and learning. You will have bad hair days and moments of social awkwardness. It's all part of the journey. Your worth is not in a mirror. Your value comes from your intelligence, your kindness, your creativity, and your strength.

Celebrating Women

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ZIM GOSPEL MUSICIANS HEAD TO CANADA FOR GRATEFUL EXPEDITION SHOW

- *A Star-Studded Lineup Set to Ignite Edmonton & Toronto*
- *New music and surprise acts on cards*

In what promises to be one of the most spiritually charged musical events of the year, an impressive lineup of top Zimbabwean gospel musicians is preparing to descend upon Edmonton and Toronto, Canada, for the highly anticipated "Grateful Concert" in May, 2026.

"This is more than just a concert; it is a divine convergence. Bringing Zimbabwe's finest gospel ministers to Edmonton and Toronto is our way of creating a sacred space where the diaspora can encounter home through worship.

"We are not merely organizing shows; we are facilitating moments where gratitude becomes a lifestyle and lives are forever changed by the presence of God. The Grateful Expedition show is a spiritual movement, and we are honored to witness what God will do across Canada," Organizer, Grateful Expedition Show

The two gospel shows will feature the incomparable Minister Michael Mahendere, Blessing Jedthun, Takesure Zamar, the dynamic duo The Cherayis, and the celebrated Shingisai Suluma, with the elegant Eleana Makombe serving as host.

This momentous gathering of gospel giants represents one of the most formidable lineups ever assembled on Canadian soil, signaling the growing global reach of Zimbabwean gospel music.

A Worship Experience, Not Entertainment

The Grateful Concert series, which officially kicks off with this Canada edition, has distinguished itself from conventional musical performances by prioritizing authentic worship over spectacle. The concept focuses on creating an atmosphere where prayer, reflection, and testimony blend seamlessly with music, making each event feel more like a church service than a typical concert.



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TICKETS ON EVENTBRIGHT

Time 6PM - 23.59

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Eleana Makombe



Eleana Makombe who has since garnered the attention of music lovers as she has enjoyed a lot of airplay on radio stations from last year, relocated to the UK at the age of 17 and is married to her business partner Tinotenda Makombe.

The musical princess will host the two events, and it's her first concert bringing the new crop of gospel musicians in Canada. This night is not about entertain-

-ment; it's about creating an atmosphere where God moves." Makombe revealed that the Grateful Concert concept is designed to be worship-forward, eschewing flashy production in favor of intimate, spirit-led moments that allow for genuine spiritual encounter.

Shingisai Suluma



The Canada-based gospel legend, who recently celebrated an extraordinary 30 years in ministry, has described the concert as carrying "deep personal and spiritual significance" because of her connection with the audience. For fans who have cherished her timeless classics such as "Maitiro Enyu" and "Tatenda Taona" over three decades, this event represents a moment of profound emotional and spiritual significance.

Suluma's extensive discography, spanning albums including Zvanaka, Huyai Ishe Jesu, Nokuti Wakanaka, Fara Zvakadaro, Maitiro Enyu, and Rwendo, has cemented her status as one of Zimbabwe's most revered gospel voices.

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Minister Michael Mahendere



Leading the charge is Minister Michael Mahendere, who has become a household name in gospel music across Zimbabwe and beyond. Coming from a deeply musical family, his father, Pastor Tom Mahendere, was a prominent gospel musician and pastor. Mahendere was exposed to music from an early age.

Mahendere launched his solo career in 2007 with the acclaimed album "Getting Personal with God," featuring popular tracks such as "Ndinovimba Nemi" and "Mweya Mutsvene." His subsequent releases, including "Sold Out", "Getting Personal with God 2", and "Salt of the Earth", have garnered critical acclaim

-and numerous awards, including recognition at the National Arts Merit Awards (NAMA). Known for hits like "Makanaka Jesu," "Hallelujah," and "Mweya Mutsvene," Mahendere's powerful vocals and heartfelt lyrics have made him a beloved figure whose music transcends cultural and religious boundaries.

Takesure Zamar



The lineup also features the incomparable Takesure Zamar, whose ministry has touched countless lives across Zimbabwe and the diaspora. Known for his distinctive worship style and prophetic edge, Zamar has become synonymous with spiritual breakthrough and intense praise sessions that leave congregations transformed.

His collaborations with fellow gospel artists have further expanded his reach, and recent reports indicate he has been working on new material with South Africa-based gospel artists, demonstrating his commitment to fostering unity within the gospel music community.



CLEANEST CITY IN THE WORLD



Blessing Jedthun



Minister Ellard and Sharon Cherayi



The Cherayis, the dynamic gospel duo, bring their unique blend of harmony and passion to the Edmonton and Toronto stage, promising moments of high praise and deep worship. Their music has resonated with audiences across generations, making them a staple at major gospel gatherings. Meanwhile, Blessing Jedthun, whose name has become increasingly prominent in gospel circles, rounds out the main artist lineup, bringing his own anointed sound to this historic gathering.

Meanwhile, organizer of the event dubbed, 'The Grateful Concert Canada' edition has reiterated that the show is, "designed to be the first step in a multi-city tour across North America and beyond." The series has gained respect for its intimate worship settings, live instrumentation, and testimony-filled moments, creating a platform where both established gospel ministers and emerging artists can shine.

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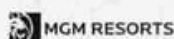
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MAY 10 DETROIT, MI
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JUL 18 LONDON, UK
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The Unraveling of a Prophet:

Passion Java Confirms Divorce from Wife Lily

In a development that has sent shockwaves through his vast following, flamboyant Zimbabwean preacher Prophet Passion Java has officially confirmed the dissolution of his ten-year marriage to Ethiopian wife Lily. The announcement, made via his Facebook page, marks the end of a union that began with a colorful ceremony in Jamaica in 2016 and represents the second failed marriage for the self-styled prophet, who previously divorced his first wife Yasmin in late 2015.

Java's statement reads, "This moment serves to inform our partners, spiritual children, and all well-meaning Christians around the world that Lily and I have officially dissolved our marriage. This decision was not made lightly but with maturity, understanding, and peace. Though our marriage has come to an end, we remain friends and committed partners in raising our three beautiful children."

For keen observers of the charismatic preacher's life, the divorce announcement comes as little surprise, as tell-tale signs of marital discord had been evident for quite some time. Sharp-eyed followers first noticed trouble on the horizon last year when Lily wiped her Instagram account clean, removing any trace of photographs featuring her husband from her timeline; a digital cleansing that spoke volumes about the state of their relationship.

Furthermore, Java's relentless travel schedule, which saw him shuttling between Zimbabwe, the United States, and South Africa, often appeared to be a solitary pursuit, with his wife conspicuously absent from the journey. This pattern of lone travel fueled speculation that all was not well in the Java household, despite the preacher's public persona of a devoted family man.

Adding another layer of complexity to the narrative is Java's own acknowledgment just last year that he was deliberately working to rebuild his ministry and, by extension, his marriage. In a candid August 2024 video, the prophet explained that he had undergone a second wedding ceremony with Lily as a deliberate act to "restart" their marriage and demonstrate his commitment to change. "Varume inini I am trying to rebuild my ministry.

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Zvekuramba ndichinzi ndirikurira ndakasiyana nazvo. Dzimwe nguva zvinombondibata hazvo but I think for the past year you can see I have grown and I have become a different man. Loving my wife and I have just had a wedding to restart my marriage," he said at the time. The revelation that a second wedding was necessary to hit the "reset button" on their union now seems tragically prophetic in hindsight.

However, any statement released by Passion Java must be taken with more than just a grain of salt, given his well-documented history of dramatic antics and questionable behavior. The so-called prophet is notorious for his bizarre social media posts and attention-seeking stunts, making it difficult for the public to discern genuine emotion from performance art. Just a week before his divorce announcement, Java was at the center of a firestorm of criticism after videos surfaced showing him making cruel and dehumanizing remarks about popular musician Greatman Gwaze, who lives with a disability.



In the footage, Java suggested that individuals with disabilities like Gwaze cannot be helped and are merely fit for charity handouts such as "mbambaira and nzungu" (sweet potatoes and groundnuts), remarks that disability rights groups have condemned as "disgusting" and "heartless."

What the Statement Says and What It Leaves Out

In his official divorce announcement, Java struck a tone of reconciliation and mutual respect, emphasizing that he and Lily remain "friends and committed partners in raising our three beautiful children." The statement reads, "We are both fully involved in their lives and will conti-



-nue to co-parent with love, respect, and unity. Family remains a priority to me. Divorce does not change my responsibility or dedication as a father. Our children will continue to receive the presence, support, and guidance they deserve from both parents." Java also framed the separation as spiritually purposeful, noting, "We are also deeply committed to the callings God has placed upon our lives. This new season allows us to walk in those callings with clarity and purpose while maintaining peace and mutual respect."

Yet conspicuously absent from the statement is any explanation for why the marriage failed. The preacher offers no reasons, leaving his followers and critics alike to speculate about the true cause of the split. Given the swirling allegations of infidelity, the mistress scandal involving one lady by the name of Yolanda, and the broader context of Java's globe-trotting lifestyle that kept him apart from his wife for extended periods, the silence on this front is deafening. It is worth noting that the divorce was officially finalized only after months of speculation, including the Instagram purge that first alerted fans to potential trouble.

The dissolution of Java's marriage adds yet another chapter to the biography of a man defined by stark contradictions. Born on October 28, 1988, Java rose from humble beginnings as a young preacher in Chitungwiza to become

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one of Zimbabwe's most controversial religious figures, known for his flamboyant lifestyle that includes luxury vehicles, designer clothing, and close ties to political elites, including President Emmerson Mnangagwa. His ministry has been as much about prosperity gospel and wealth display as about spiritual guidance, with his church once defending his ostentatious social media posts as mere "testimonies of what God can do."

Yet for all his claims of divine favor, Java's personal life has been a minefield of scandal. Beyond the marriage troubles and mistress allegations, he has faced public feuds with fellow musicians like Baba Harare over a failed US\$5,000 album deal, and even a bitter family dispute with his brother

Simba over their late mother's estate, with Simba accusing Passion of blocking him from benefitting from the inheritance. The family drama came to a head just this month, following the passing of their mother Christine, who succumbed to cancer.

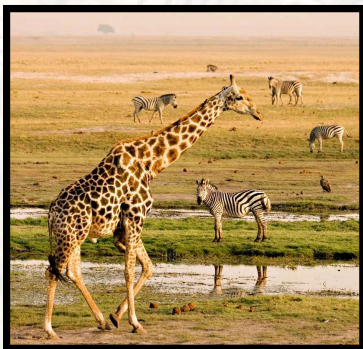
Java concludes his divorce announcement with a request: "I ask for your understanding and prayers as we move forward in grace, faith, and friendship." Whether his followers will grant him that grace remains to be seen. For a man who has built his brand on controversy, who mocks the vulnerable one week and pleads for prayers the next, the public's patience may be wearing thin. For now, Lily exits stage left, leaving her former husband to navigate the consequences of a life lived loudly, publicly, and without apology.

HOW ABOUT A TOUR TO AFRICA

Chobe National Park is located in the northern part of Botswana, near the majestic Okavango Delta. It is home to the Savute Channel as well as the Linyanti River. Chobe is simply a must-see destination for wildlife enthusiasts. Chobe was Botswana's first national park and covers nearly 11,000km². The park is renowned for having the largest concentration of wildlife in Africa, especially elephant and buffalo. Chobe offers a variety of adventures, including private river cruises, game drives, birdwatching, and extraordinary photographic opportunities.

TRIP TO CHOBE NATIONAL PARK: THE BOTSWANA

When you visit the Chobe National Park, you will never forget the first glimpse of the dazzling, deep blue Chobe River, as it winds its way through sandy terrain, small towns, lush floodplains, dense forests of cathedral mopane trees, and endless broadleaf woodlands. The park is named after this majestic river that protects 10,700 km² of the northern Kalahari desert, providing ensuing wilderness and a game density that is steadily remarkable.



Yes, planning a Chobe safari with the entire family can be challenging. But, if do it right, you and the little ones will have the experience of a lifetime. A few things to keep in mind: anticipation is a very important part of the overall trip. Especially if it is the first time your kid(s) will venture out of their comfort zone: talking about it and viewing pictures of the animals helps them prepare. What will they see? Maybe they want to make a checklist of cool animals they want to spot? Involve them in packing their suitcases too; if they feel a sense of responsibility, the trip will be more exciting.

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LADIES, LADIES LADIES, HEAR THIS...

This electric tool ensures that you can achieve salon-quality results without the hefty price tag or time commitment. It's also a great solution for those who find traditional braiding challenging allowing you to achieve desired looks effortlessly. As hairstyles evolve, the Automatic Braiding Machine stands out for its practicality and ease of use, making it a must-have accessory in every beauty collection. Don't miss out on the chance to elevate your hair game with this innovative tool.

KIMBERLY BRYANT

Black Girls CODE, Oakland - CA USA

Kimberly Bryant is an engineer who worked in the biotechnology field at Genentech, Novartis Vaccines, Diagnostic, and Merck. In 2011, Bryant founded Black Girls Code, a nonprofit organization that focuses on providing technology and computer programming education to African-American girls.

"When I was first starting Black Girls CODE, I was working on the business idea and early development stage for a really long time. I kept hearing people tell me that it was ready and I needed to just launch it already. As a first time entrepreneur, I faced a lot of uncertainty and wanted to make sure that I did it correctly. It held me back from taking the leap, but I eventually got there," Kimberly Byrant



Kimberly Byrant

Samsung

GALAXY S26

Ultra

S26, S26+, and the standout S26 Ultra.

Samsung has officially unveiled its highly anticipated Galaxy S26 series, featuring the S26, S26+, and the standout S26 Ultra. The Ultra model debuts a world-first Privacy Display, a hardware-level screen that prevents "shoulder surfing" by making content invisible from side angles. This third-generation AI phone introduces intuitive features like Now Nudge for proactive task management and a multi-object Circle to Search function.

Powered by the Snapdragon 8 Elite Gen 5 chip for Galaxy, the Ultra boasts a 200MP main camera with a brighter f/1.4 aperture and faster 60W charging. With its enhanced privacy and "agentic" AI, the S26 series aims to be the most intuitive Galaxy phone yet.



More Than Just a Cramp

Understanding What Women Endure During Menstruation and How Men Can Help

This is yet another piece of work that has taken me months contemplating if I should publish it or not. With constant research and the way I feel for my wife when she is having 'her days' of the month has forced me also to drop this one. Uncomfortable as it is, let us all accept that women are a rare breed that God created with a purpose as everything in a woman's life is a lesson to learn.



For approximately 40 years of her life, between adolescence and menopause, a woman will experience menstruation, a natural biological process that, for many, brings with it a monthly battle against pain, fatigue, and emotional upheaval.

Yet despite affecting roughly 1.8 billion people worldwide at any given time, menstruation remains shrouded in misunderstanding, particularly among men who may never fully grasp what their partners, daughters, or friends endure during those few days each month.

The Hidden Struggle

The physical symptoms of menstruation extend far beyond the common stereotype of "a little discomfort." Dysmenorrhea, the medical term for painful periods affects up to 90% of menstruating women, with approximately one-third describing their pain as severe. This pain occurs when the uterus contracts to shed its lining, triggered by hormone-like substances called prostaglandins. These same chemicals can cause nausea, diarrhea, and headaches, turning a week each

month into a gauntlet of systemic distress. What many don't realize is that period pain can rival that of a heart attack. Studies using pain scales have shown that some women experience menstrual cramps at intensity levels comparable to myocardial infarction. The cramps themselves are caused by the uterus contracting; imagine the strongest muscle cramp you've ever had, now multiply it and place it in your lower abdomen for hours or days.

Beyond the cramps, women navigate a constellation of symptoms. Bloating can make clothes uncomfortable. Breast tenderness makes movement painful. Fatigue settles deep in the bones as iron levels drop from blood loss. Migraines triggered by hormonal fluctuations can leave some women bedridden in dark rooms. For those with conditions like endometriosis or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), the pain can be debilitating enough to require hospitalization.

Then there's the emotional terrain. Hormonal shifts affect neurotransmitters like serotonin, leading to mood swings, irritability, and feelings of sadness or anxiety. Many women describe feeling as though they're watching themselves from outside their own bodies, unable to control emotional responses that feel disproportionate to their triggers.

The practical indignities continue behind closed doors. The expense of sanitary products, which can cost thousands over a lifetime; the inconvenience of changing protection every few hours, the fear of leaks and stains, the disrupted sleep from discomfort or the need for middle-of-the-night bathroom trips. For some, periods mean missed work, cancelled social plans, and a monthly pause on life that men simply never have to factor into their schedules.

Practical Support Matters

The question isn't whether women need support during menstruation; they do. The question is how men can offer that support in ways that are helpful rather than patronizing, informed rather than ignorant.



Educate Yourself Without Burdening Her

The first and most crucial step is self-education. Read articles, watch documentaries, consult reputable medical sources. Understand the basics of the menstrual cycle, not so you can quiz her, but so you comprehend what's happening in her body. This knowledge allows you to respond with empathy rather than surprise when symptoms appear. The goal is to arrive already informed, not to make her your personal teacher while she's in pain.

Believe Her Experience

Perhaps the most significant thing a man can do is simply believe what she tells him about her pain. Too many women have been dismissed with "it can't be that bad" or "you're overreacting." Pain is subjective, and her experience is real. When she says she's suffering, trust her. Validation alone can be profoundly healing.

Offer Practical Comfort

Simple gestures speak volumes. A heating pad or hot water bottle for her abdomen can ease cramping. Her favorite tea, prepared without being asked. Pain relievers brought to her bedside if she uses them. A gentle back or foot rub, avoiding the tender abdominal area unless she requests it. These small acts communicate that you see her struggle and want to ease it.

Take on More

During her period, especially the first few days, energy levels may plummet. Step up without being asked. Handle dinner, manage the children, do the laundry. Give her permission to rest without guilt. If she typically handles certain household responsibilities

temporarily absorbing them is an act of love, not a favor requiring gratitude.



Be Mindful of Intimacy

Some women crave physical closeness during their period; others want space. Follow her lead. If she wants cuddling without pressure for more, provide that comfort. If she needs solitude, respect it without making her feel rejected. Never make her feel that her value to you is diminished during this time.

Stock Essentials

Keep a small stash of her preferred sanitary products in your bathroom, car, or bag. Having them available when she's caught off guard by an unexpected period is genuinely helpful. More importantly, buy them without awkwardness. Menstrual products are normal necessities, not embarrassing secrets.

Watch for Red Flags

While periods are normal, extreme symptoms can indicate underlying conditions like endometriosis or fibroids. If her pain is consistently debilitating, if bleeding is extremely heavy, or if symptoms interfere significantly with her quality of life, encourage and support her in seeking medical care. Accompany her to appointments if she wants company.

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Understanding menstruation isn't just about surviving a few days each month, it's about building relationships founded on empathy, respect, and mutual care. When men educate themselves about periods, they dismantle the stigma that has silenced women for generations. When they offer support without being asked, they demonstrate that partnership means sharing both joys and burdens.

Men will never experience menstruation. But they can choose to stand alongside the women who do, with open hearts, willing hands, and the simple willingness to say, "I see what you're going through. How can I help?" In that question lies the foundation of true partnership and love, not just during periods, but through all of life's challenging moments.

This is an emotional piece of message from our co-producer on what she goes through as a woman during her MPs.

What women go through during their monthly periods is not just "a few cramps," like people love to simplify it. It's a full-body and emotional experience that shows up differently every single month. One week you're fine, the next you're questioning your life choices over a missing charging cable.

There's the physical part which comprises of cramps that feel like your insides are being twisted, lower back pain, headaches, tender breasts, bloating that makes your clothes suddenly tight, random diarrhea and then random exhaustion that sleep doesn't fix. Some women deal with nausea, acne, or heavy flow that makes you plan your whole day around bathroom breaks and whole night around careful sleeping positions.

Then there's the emotional side. Mood swings. Irritability. Crying over small things. Overthinking conversations. Wanting space but also wanting comfort. Still, life doesn't pause. Work continues. Kids need attention. Husband needs affection. Deadlines don't care.

It's not weakness. It's hormones shifting, the body shedding, the system resetting. It's strength, honestly. Because despite all of that, women still show up.

Its not about the dressing Real Men Know Their Value



Education is LIFE

AFRI-CAN

MAGAZINE

**XOOL OF
THOUGHT**



WITH
JOURNO ZEE SWETO

Unfiltered advice issued for free, that
can transform your life

Focus on Your Future:

Why School is the Ultimate Path to Success

In a world filled with endless distractions, from the ping of a smartphone to dangerous choices lurking in social circles, there has never been a more important time for students to double down on their education.

Across communities, educators and parents are raising the alarm over two growing trends: an increase in screen dependency and the rising threat of drug and substance abuse among young people. While the challenges facing the younger generation are real, the solution lies in focusing on what truly builds a future: *education*.

Screen Time Trap

It is easy to lose hours scrolling through videos, gaming, or browsing social media. While technology has its benefits, excessive screen time steals something precious: your time and attention.



Studies show that students who spend more than four hours a day on entertainment screens often struggle with lower grades, poor sleep, and reduced face-to-face social skills. Every minute spent staring at a screen is a minute taken away from studying, reading, or pursuing a hobby that could turn into a career.

Challenge yourself to put the phone down. You might be surprised at how much you can accomplish when you reclaim that time.



The Danger of Drugs, Alcohol, & Substance Abuse

Even more concerning than screen time is the exposure young people have to drugs and substance abuse. What might start as peer pressure or an attempt to escape stress can quickly spiral into an addiction that derails dreams.

Substance abuse doesn't just affect your health, it affects your memory, your motivation, and your ability to concentrate in class. It can turn a straight-A student into someone who is just trying to get through the day. More importantly, it puts the future you are working so hard to build at risk.

The truth is simple: drugs and education do not mix. You cannot build a successful career or a stable life while depending on substances that cloud your judgment and steal your potential.

Why School Matters

School is more than just homework and tests. It is the foundation for everything you want to become. Whether you dream of being a doctor, an engineer, an artist, or an entrepreneur, the habits you build now; discipline, curiosity, and hard work will determine where you end up.

Education gives you choices. It is the tool that allows you to lift yourself out of difficult circumstances and build the life you want. No one can ever take your knowledge away from you.

To every student reading this: take your education seriously. Not just for your parents, not just for good grades, but for you.



- Limit your screen time. Set a timer if you have to. The virtual world will still be there after you finish your homework.
- Walk away from peer pressure. True friends will respect your decision to stay clean and focused.
- Dream big, then work hard. Visualize where you want to be in ten years, and ask yourself if your daily habits are getting you closer to that goal.

The road ahead may have distractions and dangers, but your focus and determination are stronger. Choose your future. Choose education.



SPORTS UPDATE



**TOP
T
A**

Elevating Automotive Performance

Powered by passion, perfected by engineering.



NEWS

Know Your Cars



1 Sedan

A classic passenger car configuration defined by its three-box body style, which distinctly separates the engine, passenger, and cargo compartments. This traditional design typically features four doors and a separate trunk, offering a secure and enclosed space for belongings. Historically revered for their comfortable ride, excellent fuel efficiency, and aerodynamic styling, sedans have been a staple of the automotive industry for decades. While their popularity has been challenged by the rise of SUVs, they remain a popular choice for commuters and professionals who prioritize a quiet cabin, refined driving dynamics, and a sleek, elegant profile.



2 Hatch-back

Practical and versatile car design defined by its two-box configuration and a rear door that swings upward to provide access to the cargo area. Unlike a sedan's separate trunk, the hatchback integrates the passenger and cargo spaces, and the rear seats can typically be folded down to create a large, open area capable of hauling bulky items like furniture or sports equipment. Known for their maneuverability, fuel economy, and sporty character, hatchbacks offer a perfect blend of everyday practicality and engaging driving fun.



3 SUV

An SUV, or Sport Utility Vehicle, is a versatile vehicle category designed to combine the ruggedness of an off-road vehicle with the comfort and space of a family car. Traditionally built on a truck chassis, modern SUVs often use a car-like unibody platform for improved on-road comfort and fuel efficiency. They are characterized by their high ground -

clearance, boxy shape, and elevated driving position, which provides drivers with a commanding view of the road. With spacious interiors that typically offer seating for five or more passengers and significant cargo capacity, SUVs have become the dominant choice for families and individuals seeking a vehicle that can handle daily commutes, road trips, and light off-road adventures with equal ease.



4 Mid-SUV

The mid-SUV offers a balanced blend of size, power, and practicality without the cumbersome footprint of a full-sized model. These vehicles are larger than compact crossovers but more maneuverable than their full-sized counterparts, making them ideal for urban environments that still require substantial passenger and cargo space. They often come equipped with a choice of efficient four-cylinder or powerful V6 engines and a host of modern technology and safety features, positioning them as a versatile and compelling option in the automotive landscape.

Essential Car Maintenance Tips and Must-Have Items for Every Driver

By Zvakazana Nomore Sseto

For many of us, a car is more than just a machine; it's freedom. It's the road trip with friends, the commute to work, the late-night run to the pharmacy. We rely on it heavily, yet the inner workings of a vehicle can feel like a mystery. But you don't need to be a mechanic to be a responsible car owner. Understanding a few basics of car maintenance and knowing what essentials to keep on hand can save you money, prevent breakdowns, and, most importantly, keep you safe.



Basic Car Maintenance Every Owner Should Know

Regular maintenance is the key to a long and healthy life for your vehicle. These simple checks can help you catch small problems before they turn into expensive, major repairs.

Learn to Check Your Fluids: Your car relies on various fluids to function. Popping the hood once a month for a quick check is a great habit.



Engine Oil: This is the lifeblood of your engine. With the engine off and cool, pull out the dipstick, wipe it clean, reinsert it, and pull it out again to see the level. It should be between the two marks. Also, note the color; it should be a brownish-amber, not black and gritty.

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Coolant (Antifreeze): Located in a translucent plastic reservoir, the coolant level should be between the "min" and "max" lines. Never open the radiator cap when the engine is hot, the system is under pressure and the fluid can cause severe burns.

Windshield Washer Fluid: This is the easiest to maintain. Keep the reservoir full, especially in winter or during long road trips. You can't have too much of this.

Brake and Transmission Fluid: These are also crucial. If you notice they are consistently low, or if the fluids look dark or dirty, it's a sign to take your car to a professional.



Know Your Tires

Your tires are the only part of your car that touches the road. Their condition is critical for safety.

Tire Pressure: Check your tire pressure monthly (including the spare!) using a simple gauge. You can do this at home or at any gas station. The correct pressure for your car is listed on a sticker inside the driver's side doorjamb, not on the tire itself.

Visual Inspection: Glance at your tires before you drive. Do they look properly inflated? Are there any bulges, cuts, or nails?

Don't Ignore the Warning Lights

That "Check Engine" light or the little oil can icon isn't a suggestion; it's your car's way of telling you something is wrong. Don't panic, but don't ignore it either. Check if it's a serious issue (like low oil pressure or overheating) or if you can safely drive it to a mechanic to have the code read. Most auto parts stores will do this for free.



The Essentials Every Car Should Have

No matter how well you maintain your car, sometimes things go wrong. A flat tire, a dead battery, or being stranded in bad weather can happen to anyone. Being prepared can turn a potential disaster into a minor inconvenience. Put together a kit with these essentials and keep it in your trunk.

The Safety and Emergency Kit:

Jumper Cables (or a Jump Starter): A dead battery is one of the most common issues. A good set of jumper cables is a must. For an even better solution, consider a portable jump starter.

Spare Tire, Jack, and Lug Wrench: Do you know where these are in your car? Have you ever practiced changing a tire? On a sunny afternoon in your driveway, take them out and familiarize yourself with the process. It's much harder to learn in the dark on the side of a busy road.

Flashlight and Reflective Triangles/Flare: If you break down at night, you need to be seen. A powerful flashlight with extra batteries is essential. Placing reflective triangles or flares behind your car alerts other drivers to your presence.

First-Aid Kit: A basic kit with bandages, antiseptic wipes, gauze, and medical tape is a must for any minor injuries.

Multi-Tool or Basic Tool Kit: A simple multi-tool with pliers, screwdrivers, and a knife can be a lifesaver for quick fixes.

Finally, taking care of a car is a form of self-reliance. It's about taking control of your safety and your mobility. By learning these simple maintenance tasks and building an emergency kit, you're not just taking care of your vehicle; you're ensuring that your freedom on the road is as safe and reliable as possible.



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