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# The 100 most influential Africans

2019  
edition

The Africa Report's 2019 list of influential Africans revealed the people controlling the levers of power across politics, business and the arts; from billionaire barons to unpredictable peace-makers and soft-power superstars.



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# The 100 most influential Africans

*The Africa Report's* inaugural ranking of the top Africans who control the levers of power across politics, business and the arts: from billionaire barons to unpredictable peacemakers and soft-power superstars

By ALISON CULLIFORD, OLIVIA KONOTEY-AHULU, NICHOLAS NORBROOK, OHENEBA AMA NTI OSEI and MARSHALL VAN VALEN

*The Africa Report* is transitioning to a quarterly magazine with a special focus on the decision makers, the money takers and the thought shakers who are not only in the spotlight for their skills and strategies today but will continue to be so for years to come. Our 2019 ranking is based on three criteria: global reach (40%), trajectory (30%) and influence (30%). Global reach takes into account how many countries their activities touch and how well known they are. Trajectory is defined to capture people whose careers are on the up and those involved in crucial industries of tomorrow, like manufacturing, fintech and the creative sectors. And finally, influence is measured as to how much their voices

matter in local and global debates, and how much they are able to change the political, economic and cultural playing fields.

The names that follow – including a Nobel Peace Prize winner, officials helping to run global institutions, a highly sought-after architect and billionaires with hotly awaited stock IPOs – are examples of the heights of African leadership in the world, both at home and in the diaspora. They are coming up with innovations to spur financial inclusion and leapfrog technological stages, tackling climate change and human rights abuses in Africa and across the world, and telling heartbreaking and beautifully imagined stories that make the world a richer place. ●

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor

## Aliko Dangote

*Money talks*

Nigeria

**1** He's the richest black man in the world and Africa's richest man, with an estimated wealth of \$10.3bn. Within Nigeria, Senator Ben-Murray Bruce called him "more influential and powerful than (President Muhammadu) Buhari". The billionaire's latest project is a \$10.5bn oil refinery that will be Africa's largest, so Dangote will not be sitting on the sidelines when it comes to oil-sector reform debates there. He is investing in the continent's manufacturing and agribusiness capacity, and plans to launch the long-awaited London IPO of Dangote Cement in late 2019. Meanwhile, his philanthropy is taking flight.



PLANET PIXZUMA-REA

## Elon Musk

*Rocket man*

South Africa

**2** The yo-yoing of his company shares, his hirings and firings and off-the-wall tweets keep Musk in the headlines. He may be a maverick but his ideas are shaping the future, from reducing global warming with his electric cars to urban transportation on a cushion of air and plans to establish a colony on Mars. His Boring Company could help a boom in urban public transportation, and he is a big pessimist about the impact of AI. He donates to both the Democratic and Republican parties in the US, saying it is necessary to pay up in order to have a voice.

## Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

*The sun keeps rising*

Nigeria

The Nigerian author-cum-public intellectual continues her stratospheric ascent and is as often seen behind a mic as in print these days - engaging audiences about racism, sexism and the human condition. She started the year 2018 slaying a French journalist for her lack of knowledge about Nigeria and ended it on stage with former US first lady Michelle Obama. Who's next?



STEPHEN VOSS/REDUX-REA

## Koos Bekker

*Go-getter in Asia*

South Africa

**3** When China-based Tencent sneezed in August 2018, Naspers share price caught a cold. It didn't last long, but it showed how tied the fortunes of the South African media and entertainment behemoth are to its largest holding (Naspers owns 31% of the Chinese internet giant). Buying a stake in Tencent in 2001 makes Bekker the Buffett of Africa: the initial \$32m investment has grown to \$116bn since then, and Bekker famously waived a salary to get paid in stock options when he was CEO. With the bulk of South African pension funds invested heavily in Naspers and allegations of Gupta-style influencing in a 2017 broadcasting deal, Bekker said the company would work on its transparency at the 2018 annual general meeting.

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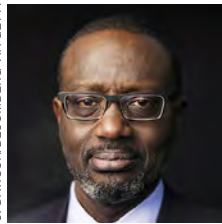
## Trevor Noah

*Mic wrecker*

📍 South Africa

**5** One of the US's most prominent voices critiquing the presidency of Donald Trump, Noah has brought millennial-inspired thinking and an astute outsider's view to *The Daily Show* and taught some Americans that Africa is not a country. With the renewal of his contract in 2017 his job is secure until 2022, which will carry him through the febrile US election season. He is also quite funny.

S. DAWSON/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY



## Tidjane Thiam

*Master strategist*

📍 Côte d'Ivoire

**6** Thiam's turnaround of Credit Suisse since 2016 has left bankers and analysts awestruck. Ignoring naysayers, the Ivorian CEO relegated the derivatives traders and recast the bank as a wealth-management operation focusing on emerging markets. He explained his view to *Euromoney*: "This is a fabulous bank. Or let me be more precise: it has always had a fabulous bank within it." But it faces big blowback for its role in the Mozambique tuna bond scandal.



TAYLOR HILL/WIREIMAGEGETTY

## Davido

*Naija pop idol*

📍 Nigeria

He has riches (he's worth \$16m), good looks, fast cars and political clout. Using his music to inspire Nigerians to vote in the 2019 elections, he also lent his star appeal to presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar's campaign, seriously upstaging the 72-year-old politician. His next act will be to crack the tough US market, with his eyes set on a gig at Madison Square Garden, having filled the 15,000-seat O2 Arena in London in January.

## Enoch Adeboye

*Sacred networker*

📍 Nigeria

**8** In 2017 Pastor Adeboye's resignation from leading his five-million-member church in Nigeria was greeted with dismay by congregations around the country. Nigeria's highest-profile pastor, who numbers the Nigerian vice-president Yemi Osinbajo among his followers, had to step down from running the domestic operations of the church he had built up almost from scratch after a new law put a 20-year cap and 70-year-old age limit on the leadership of non-profit organisations. Adeboye could have argued that The Redeemed Christian Church of God was not, strictly speaking, "non-profit", with Forbes quoting the net worth of the man born into poverty at €39m, but he chose not to.

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor



## Kumi Naidoo

*Crime fighter*

South Africa

Appointed as secretary general of Amnesty International in August 2018, Naidoo was a youth activist in apartheid South Africa and the first African head of Greenpeace. By making clear the link between environmental crimes and human rights abuses, Naidoo heralds a new era for Amnesty, widening its focus from political prisoners to indigenous peoples and everyone in between. "We need to redefine what it means to be a strong leader. Because strong leaders don't bully activists. Yet that is exactly what is happening with a global crackdown on NGOs. We need to see less vitriol and more compassion from our leaders," he explained on Twitter.

## Abiy Ahmed

*Change agent*

Ethiopia

**10** Catapulted into office in April 2018 by the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Abiy has made a huge splash at home and internationally. In 11 months, he has made peace with Eritrea, released 60,000 political prisoners, calmed ethnic tensions, signed multimillion-dollar infrastructure deals with China, started liberalising the economy, persuaded diaspora Ethiopians to contribute \$2.4m to a trust fund, filled his cabinet with women, diffused a potential military coup by doing press-ups with soldiers... and the list goes on.



PICTURE ALLIANCE/SENSIMON/MAKPPP

## Strive Masiyiwa

*The connector*

Zimbabwe

**12** If Masiyiwa stands out as a Zimbabwean success story – he is the country's first billionaire and now worth \$2.3bn – today it is his philanthropy that matters. He has provided scholarships for more than 100,000 young Africans; funded education, health and agriculture initiatives; and mentors on Facebook. Now he has entered the third phase: as thought leader he is on boards including the Africa Progress Panel, The Rockefeller Foundation and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.



S.DAWSON/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY

## Mark Bristow

*Golden boy*

South Africa

**11** In September 2018, Bristow's Randgold Resources signed a \$6.5bn merger with Canada's Barrick Gold Corp. When the opening bell rang on the New York Stock Exchange on 2 January, GOLD – the new stock for the merged company – was worth \$23.75bn and Bristow was CEO of the world's biggest gold miner by market cap. Now, a fresh challenge: the proposed hostile takeover of Newmont Mining, to create the world's largest gold miner. He faces challenges by Acacia Mining, a Barrick subsidiary in Tanzania, where the government has been using various tools to try to get a better deal from foreign mining giants (see page 56).

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**Adebayo Ogunlesi**  
*Plane enthusiast*  
 Nigeria

**13** A lawyer and banker, Ogunlesi formed the private equity firm Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) in 2006 and earned the nickname “the man who bought Gatwick Airport”. Ogunlesi, a quiet billionaire, has still not been able to keep out of the headlines – first by being part of Donald Trump’s ill-fated Strategic and Policy Forum, which disbanded after Twitter sackings in 2017, and second by luring World Bank president Jim Yong Kim to summarily leave his job and join GIP as vice-chairman in February. Insiders say Ogunlesi made Jim an offer he couldn’t refuse.



SHAWN BALDWIN/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

**Naguib Sawiris**  
*Opinionated investor*  
 Egypt

After the Arab Spring the Egyptian telecoms billionaire founded the Free Egyptians Party, promoting a liberal, secular agenda. He got sidelined in politics and now mainly uses TV interviews as a soapbox – recently declaring that Trump was right over China, and that he was ready to invest in Venezuela as soon as President Nicolás Maduro was gone. People listen when Sawiris talks, as his capacity to invest can help a country’s fortunes: he says no to Saudi Arabia, but may put \$300m into the Italian economy. On 25 February his investment bank, Beltone Financial, was allowed to resume trading on the Egyptian bourse after being suspended over irregularities in an IPO.

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**Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**  
*Sitting pretty*  
 Egypt

**14** In 2014 Egypt was suspended from the African Union (AU) due to its “unconstitutional” ousting of President Mohamed Morsi. Five years later the country’s strongman president is chairing the organisation. His predecessor, Rwandan president Paul Kagame, showed the potential for AU chairmanship in furthering his own and his country’s interests and Sisi is sure to follow his example, though his focus will be on security rather than internal reform. Sisi supports the Continental Free Trade Area but faces a battle with South Africa’s Cyril Ramaphosa (#16) to get it ratified. Meanwhile, at home Sisi is pushing forward with a constitutional change that would allow him to remain president until 2034.



CHARLES PLATIAU/POOL/REA

**Cyril Ramaphosa**  
*Mountain climber*  
 South Africa

**16** A lot more influential than he was a year ago – when he had just taken on an ailing South Africa and the controversial cabinet of his predecessor, Jacob Zuma, which was mired in corruption – Ramaphosa has doggedly worked at untangling the country’s political and economic problems. He explained the situation when launching the African National Congress’ (ANC) 2019 election manifesto: “After a period of doubt and uncertainty, we have arrived at a moment of hope and renewal”. At 60%, his approval rating is higher than that of the ANC itself. South Africa has significantly more clout than its continental peers on the global diplomatic scene: it is the only African country in the G20 and became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2019-2020. Ramaphosa will further widen his sphere internationally when he becomes the chair of the African Union in 2020.

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## Iyinoluwa ‘E’ Aboyeji

‘E’ for excellence

Nigeria

**17** Aboyeji gave his first TED-talk when he was still a teenager and changes jobs so often his LinkedIn profile simply reads ‘Entrepreneur in the Public Interest’. Everything he does is designed to maximise the talent and potential of African youth. In two years, Andela grew from nothing to a network of more than 1,000 software engineers; payment platform Flutterwave processes more than \$2bn a year. Aboyeji’s new thing, as of November 2018, is Street Capital, connecting global investors and philanthropists with “missionary entrepreneurs” in Africa to empower them and the next generation after that.

## Wizkid

Starboy

Nigeria

**18** He and Davido (#7) are Nigeria’s two biggest musical megastars, but unlike his former rival – now friend – who comes from one of Nigeria’s wealthiest business families, Wizkid (alias Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun) was a street-style hustler from Ojuelegba before becoming the original ‘Starboy’. These days he charges around \$12m to appear in concert; signs up rising stars to his label, Starboy Entertainment; and, of course, went platinum with his collaboration with Drake.



BRUNO LEVY FOR JA

## Denis Mukwege

Nobel cause

DRC

**19** The renowned surgeon, who has devoted his life to helping the victims of sexual assault in the DRC, spoke out to the United Nations in 2012 and was later a victim of an assassination attempt. Co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018, he has used this recognition to hold governments and international organisations to account for not doing enough to stop rape being used as a strategy of war. “All [the Nobel Prize]’s importance will be in its capacity to change the situation of victims in conflict zones.”

## Winnie Byanyima

Rising to a challenge

Uganda

Amidst a storm of scandals affecting the aid sector, Byanyima – who is married to Ugandan oppositionist Kizza Besigye – kept a firm hand on the tiller from the new headquarters in Nairobi, but 2019 will be another tough year for Oxfam. Byanyima also serves on numerous global advisory bodies, including the World Bank’s Advisory Council on Gender and Development. In 2016, when asked if she would ever stand for president in Uganda, she told the Forum for Women in Democracy: “If one day there is an opportunity and a team that shares my vision and wants me to lead it, I will rise.” With the popular movement around Bobi Wine whipping the population up to fever pitch, Byanyima could offer a real policy platform for the opposition.



PAKOB POLACSEK/WEF

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**Mo Ibrahim**  
*Truth teller*  
 Sudan

Through the four pillars of his foundation – a prize, an event, a report and fellowships – the Sudanese businessman-turned-philanthropist keeps people thinking about governance on the continent. The Mo Ibrahim Index, now in its 13th year, parlays more than a decade’s worth of data on governance in Africa into specific and practical recommendations for African leaders. He is working hard to raise a commotion about the climate, democratic and technological changes about to hit the continent.

VINCENT FOURNIER/IA

**Idris Elba**  
*Storyteller*

Ghana/Sierra Leone

**24** The Londoner, whose parents are Sierra Leonean and Ghanaian, has had a global reach via his starring role in cult HBO series *The Wire*. Since then his illustrious career has repeatedly taken him to the continent for films including *Sometimes in April*, about the Rwandan genocide; *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency*, filmed in Botswana; *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, for which he received a Golden Globe nomination; and *Beasts of No Nation*, shot in Ghana and based on the novel by Uzodinma Iweala. In 2019 audiences in the UK will be able to see his stage play *Tree* about life in South Africa after Nelson Mandela, co-written with Kwame Kwei-Armah, artistic director at the Young Vic Theatre. But many are waiting to see if he will end up being the next James Bond.

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JACQUES WITTSIPA

**Muhoho Kenyatta**  
*Family business*

Kenya

**23** President Uhuru Kenyatta’s bespectacled younger brother is so self-effacing he doesn’t even have a Wikipedia entry. But he is the engine that drives the vast Kenyatta business empire. Industrious and diligent, behind the scenes, he has been orchestrating the Kenyattas’ expansion across agribusiness, logistics and finance sectors, including the recent merger of NIC Group and Commercial Bank of Africa (CBA). CBA, owned by the Kenyatta family, is growing fast, spurred by the vast take-off in mobile-money loans in Kenya. The Kenyatta-owned dairy company Brookside is keen on expanding outside of Kenya and is looking for an opening in the Ethiopian market. Kenyan political insiders also say it was Muhoho who brokered the famous 9 March 2018 handshake between his brother and political rival Raila Odinga. This put paid to a long stretch of political acrimony that spilled over into violently contested elections.

**Mike Adenuga**  
*Alliance builder*  
 Nigeria

**22** As the second-richest entrepreneur on the continent, Adenuga has been breaking out of traditional relationships. He recently funded the building of the *Alliance Française* in Lagos and was rewarded with a *Légion d’Honneur* by French President Emmanuel Macron.



ARMANDO GALLO/ZUMA STUDIO/REA

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## Anas Aremeyaw

**Anas**  
*Truth teller*  
 Ghana

Known simply as “Anas”, his relentless exposure of corruption in Ghana and beyond has spawned many imitators and won him collaborations with major broadcasters including the BBC and Al Jazeera. The murder, in January, of Ahmed Husein, who worked with Anas on an expose that led to the dismantling of the Ghana Football Association and sacking of a FIFA referee was a grim confirmation of the importance of his undercover work. His groundbreaking investigation into corruption in Ghana’s legal system led to the suspension and indictment of several judges.

CRISTINA ALDEHUELA/AFAP



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## Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

*World Banker*  
 Nigeria

**27** Following the surprise resignation of Jim Yong Kim, all eyes are on who will be the next World Bank president. Okonjo-Iweala, a former deputy president who worked at the Bank for 25 years, is eminently qualified and, crucially, is now a US citizen. She is interested in the position: “If the right person were to nominate, and if the circumstances are right and people feel I can do the job, yes!” she told CNN at Davos. Who President Donald Trump’s administration decides to nominate will say a lot about how he wishes to conduct relations with the rest of the world. Meanwhile, the former Nigerian finance minister was appointed to Twitter’s board of directors in January. Her vast experience would be a big asset at the World Bank. She had a ‘super-minister’ role under the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan when it rolled out crucial reforms of the power sector and introduced legislation to support local companies in breaking into the value chains of the oil and natural gas sector. But Jonathan’s government was also infamous for the graft and opaque deals that took place at the time. Her time in government gave her enough material to write a book about corruption, and that is what she did, calling it *Reforming the Unreformable*. Okonjo-Iweala remains a booster of good governance, arguing that countries need to improve the way that they handle and spend money before committing more money to, say, a big new drive to improve healthcare.

HAMILTON/IREA



**James Mwangi**  
*Sharp-eyed*  
 Kenya

**26** By spotting potential at the bottom of Kenya’s economic pyramid, Mwangi has taken Equity Bank from bit-player to market maker in the thriving financial sector. Not stopping there, Mwangi used this momentum to turn Equity Bank into a leading player in the mobile-money space, as well as expanding into regional markets, like South Sudan and the DRC, becoming Kenya’s most international bank in the process.

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PRENSA INTERNACIONAL/ZUMA/REA

**Patrice Motsepe**  
*Mining money*  
 South Africa

**28** The billionaire magnate founded diversified miner African Rainbow Minerals, which is in the market for new copper mining opportunities. Motsepe is also pushing into finance with TymeBank – the country’s first fully digital bank – and into politics, pledging \$250m towards furthering South Africa’s land reform programme. The champion of black economic empowerment made the announcement at December’s Global Citizen Festival, which he hosted, where companies, governments and foundations pledged \$7.5bn to end extreme poverty to the sounds of Jay-Z, Beyoncé, Wizkid (#18) et al. “We are coming together in unity as leaders and are committed to working together to ensure that the current land reform process will result in land with the requisite support and skills being made available to black people living in rural areas,” Motsepe explained.

**Mohamed Salah**  
*Knight in white*  
 Egypt

**29** From his penalty that qualified Egypt for the World Cup for the first time in 28 years to his hat-trick that took Liverpool to the top of the Premier League, Salah brings delight every time he steps onto a football field. His goals have brought him a slew of awards and he has been immortalised in statues and street art, but Salah is loved not just for his prodigious footwork. He is socially engaged on and off the pitch: refusing to celebrate a goal against Chelsea out of respect to the victims of the Sinai mosque attack, he forced fans to think beyond rivalries, and he has given away millions to his home village, Basyoun, and more widely to fight poverty and drug addiction.



MARK CHILVERS FOR TAR

**Olusegun Obasanjo**  
*A-grade fixer*  
 Nigeria

**30** “OBJ” is Africa’s most famous backseat driver. The doyen of Nigerian politics has had an impact on every presidential election of the past 40 years and his blessing makes or breaks political careers. His choices defy party alliances: having backed the All Progressives Congress’ Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, in 2019 he switched to the People’s Democratic Party’s Atiku Abubakar – who was once his own vice-president. He is also one of the country’s wealthiest businessmen.

**Tewolde GebreMariam**  
*High flyer*  
 Ethiopia

**31** The winner of the Africa CEO Forum’s CEO of the Year award in 2012 is still Africa’s most successful aviation executive. He turned the national airline into a profitable tool of Ethiopian economic expansion, successfully battling Middle Eastern carriers for African routes. In February GebreMariam upped the stakes on transatlantic routes, announcing that Ethiopian Airlines would be flying three times a week to New York’s JFK.

**Maria Ramos**  
*Finance supreme*  
 South Africa

Having stepped down from managing one of Africa’s largest banks, the decorated Maria Ramos is no doubt looking for a fresh challenge. Many in South Africa speculate she will play a key role back in government, when President Cyril Ramaphosa puts together his post-May election cabinet.

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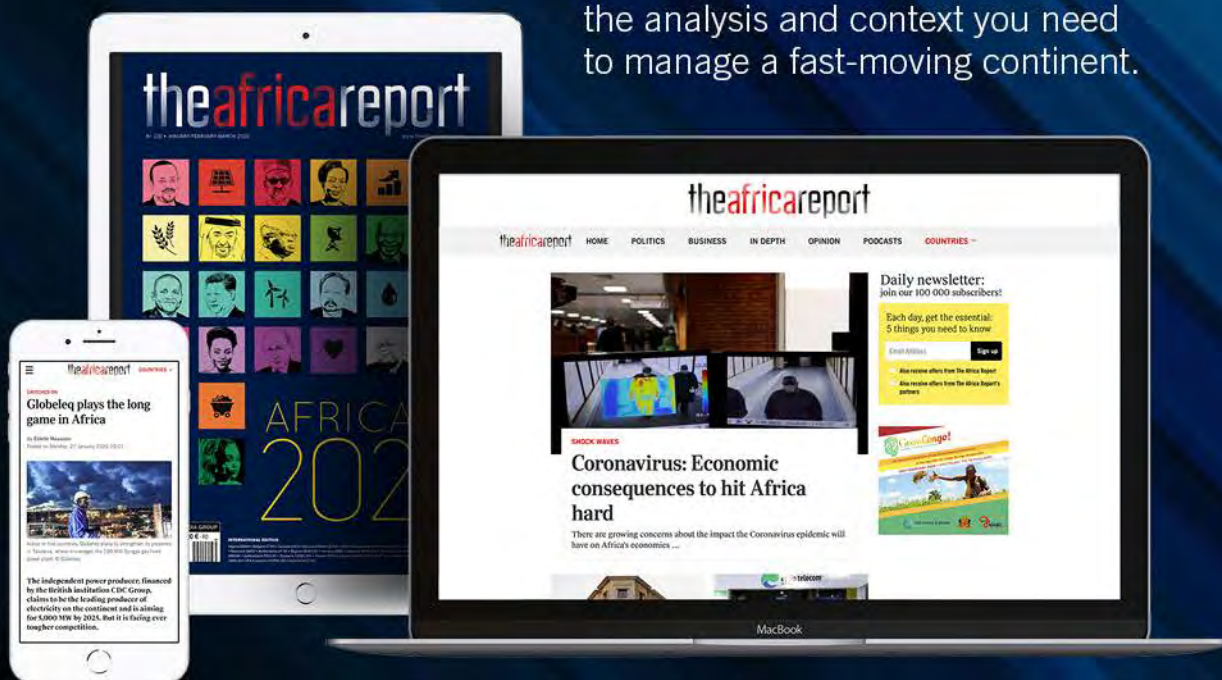


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**Tope Lawani**

*Private eye*

Nigeria

In 15 years Helios has grown to be Africa's largest private-equity firm, with \$3.6bn under management. After buying a 49% stake in Nigerian oil and gas company Oando in 2017, its push into South Africa, where it plans to build 1,000 telecom towers in the next three years, marks its transformation into a genuine pan-African platform. It also offers direct lending to African businesses. Lawani's influence extends to the board of EMPEA industry association and MIT's board of trustees.

RICHARD CANNON/GLOBAL ASSIGNMENT BY GETTY IMAGES FOR THE HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL



**Nicky Oppenheimer**

*Still at the table*

South Africa

**34** The scion of the De Beers diamond family retired from mining in 2012 saying he wanted to invest in African entrepreneurs. Insiders say he's really interested in the health of South African politics. Often held up by radical activists on the left as embodying white monopoly capital (he still owns 1% of Anglo American), he set up the Brenthurst Foundation think tank, which numbers many African presidents on its advisory board. He donates \$6m a year to education causes and stopped big game hunting on his reserve.

**Mitchell Elegbe**

*Fintech frontiersman*

Nigeria

**35** Interswitch could become Africa's fourth unicorn (a tech company valued over \$1bn) if its delayed IPO in London and Lagos goes through by the end of this year. Having started the integrated payment and transaction company in Nigeria in 2002, disruptor Elegbe is now partnering with one of its international rivals, Visa, to drive digital payments across Africa.

**David Adjaye**

*Raising the roof*

Ghana

**36** Adjaye was selected to join a team of architects to design the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC in 2009... and he has been in demand ever since. After a decade of globetrotting, partaking in art collaborations and designing private homes for celebrities, other American museums, the Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo and a Russian business school, Adjaye has returned to his fatherland, Ghana, to build its high-profile new national cathedral. He has also been tapped to design the new UK Holocaust Memorial in London close to the Houses of Parliament.



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**Acha Leke**

*Consulted*  
 Cameroon

**37** McKinsey can depend on the fresh-faced Cameroonian high-flyer to rescue its image after being tainted by association with the Gupta scandal in South Africa. He found a way for pharma companies in Uganda to slash the price of antiretrovirals; co-authored 'Lions on the Move' to bring more investment to African economies; helped open

the continent for visa-free travel; and in his spare time partnered with entrepreneur Fred Swaniker to set up the African Leadership Academy, a pan-African uber high school with 85% of its students on full scholarships. The project has expanded to encompass a university and a Davos-style forum, and Leke has been intimating that he may devote himself full-time to enlarging it.



VINCENT FOURNIER/A

**Aziz Akhannouch**

*Fishing for business*  
 Morocco

**39** One of Morocco's richest men, Akhannouch inherited the family conglomerate with interests primarily in oil and gas. He straddles the worlds of business and politics through his position as agriculture minister and president of the *Rassemblement National des Indépendants* party. Akhannouch's visits to Europe and, recently, Australia to seek cooperation for his agriculture and fisheries strategies make him a leader in soft diplomacy. He has, however, courted controversy in the pricing strategies of his petrol stations.



**38**

**Mohamed El Kettani**  
*Expedition leader*  
 Morocco

Over his 12 years in charge of Attijariwafa Bank he's consolidated the Moroccan lender to make it a market leader - the top bank in the region and seventh-largest in Africa with a presence in 15 countries on the continent and 26 worldwide. A member of King Mohammed VI's close circle of advisers, El Kettani is an intelligent strategist. Next on his list is a push beyond francophone Africa, for which he acknowledges a "cultural and mental revolution" is needed.

**Herbert Wigwe**  
*Minnow-cum-whale*  
 Nigeria

**40** Wigwe and his business partner bought Nigeria's 65th-largest bank in 2002 and turned it into one of the top five. He's not stopping there: Access is currently merging with Diamond Bank to form "the largest bank in Africa's largest economy". On 1 March Wigwe also launched Africa's first corporate green bond, worth \$41.4m. Recounting the story of his success takes him on public speaking engagements around the world, and he invites global leaders back every two years to the Access Conference, a forum on solving humanity's major challenges. He sums up his strategy: "History will only favour the brave. If you don't try something, you won't get it."

VINCENT FOURNIER/A

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STANDARD BANK

**Sim Tshabalala**

*Class topper*

South Africa

**41** Tshabalala became Standard Bank's first black CEO when his job-share ended in September 2017 and his "quiet but very influential leadership" earned him \$3.5m that year. The South African lender faces challenges though, from disruptors Discovery Bank and Patrice Motsepe's TymeBank. He's one of a group of CEOs supportive of President Cyril Ramaphosa who banded together as the CEO Initiative and took a pledge to restore investor confidence.



**Lupita Nyong'o**  
*Screen idol*

Kenya/US

It's going to be a great year for Lupita. The Kenyan-Mexican actress takes her place on the Walk of Fame in 2019, and - after her voyage to Wakanda last year - will once again time-travel in a new Star Wars film, as well as starring in a social drama, *Us*, with Black Panther co-star Winston Duke. She already has an Oscar for *12 Years a Slave*, so what is there left to do? Well, collaborate with Chimamanda (#4) for one thing - she will act in and co-produce (with Brad Pitt) the adaptation of *Americanah*, whose author she first contacted when she was a complete unknown!

EMMA MCINTYRE/GETTY IMAGES FOR TURNER/AFP

**42**

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**Onyeka Akumah**  
*Seed capital*

Nigeria

**43** Akumah started Farmcrowdy in 2016 and has empowered small farmers all over Nigeria via the feel-good crowdfunding platform. He's now a mentor and investor, sitting on the boards of start-ups from New York to Lagos, and is one of the youngest members of the Honorary Council of Abuja's Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

**Ory Okolloh**  
*Impact investor*

Kenya

**44** Tech activist Okolloh founded Mzalendo (for tracking representatives in the Kenyan parliament) and Ushahidi (for crowd-sourcing crisis information) before working for Google and then joining impact investor Omidyar Network. Luminare, the new philanthropic entity formed out of Omidyar's Governance & Citizen Engagement initiative, is the ideal place to pool her exceptional skills.

**Tayo Oviolu**  
*Bill payer*

Nigeria

**45** In the headlong sprint to become the African fintech giant that goes global, Paga is some way behind Kenya's M-Pesa - partly because of the latter's head start and its telecoms company owner. The terrain is different, too, with traditional banks in Nigeria putting up a bigger fight by investing in their own mobile-payment platforms, which already makes Paga's growth there impressive. Licensed in 2011, it quickly went from a mobile-money operator to a full-blown payments system including e-commerce solutions. The gap between them may close if Paga co-founder Oviolu gets his way; another \$10m in the bank in 2018 is being used to fund expansion to Ethiopia, Mexico and the Philippines. Nearly \$4bn in payments have already been crunched in Nigeria. He will have to be quick in Ethiopia, however, as he will come face to face with... M-Pesa.

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor

**Mohamed Aly El-Erian**

*Word to the wise*

Egypt

**46** Son of an Egyptian diplomat, US-based El-Erian has carved out a niche as one of the most influential economists of the post-global-financial-crisis era. While at PIMCO, the world's largest bond-trading specialist, he came up with the concept of the 'New Normal' which went viral. His investment guide to the 'age of global economic change', *When Markets Collide*, was a *New York Times* bestseller, as was *The Only Game in Town*. He now serves as chief economic adviser to the board at Allianz, PIMCO's parent company, among a plethora of other engagements.



VINCENT FOURNIER/JA

**Kamel Daoud**

*Acid pen*

Algeria

**47** By writing *Meursault* as a counterpoint to French literary icon Albert Camus's *L'Étranger*, Daoud struck deep at the rotten ties that join France and Algeria. A writer, editor and journalist, he has helped bridge the generations, from the old guard to the angry youth, and has made many enemies by his unsparing positions on Islamists and politicians. An imam who passed a fatwa on him in December 2014 was perhaps surprised to see the pushback; Daoud got him jailed for six months.



**Kola Masha**

*King of yield*

Nigeria

Having worked as chief of staff to the minister of agriculture, Kola Masha is acutely aware of the broad challenges faced by Nigeria's smallholder farmers, the backbone of the country that is often languishing in feudal levels of productivity. His company, Babban Gona, aggregates farmers into groups, gives them cheap seeds and fertiliser, and plugs them into markets. It is a bottom-up approach to national wealth with results that are bearing

fruit. Babban Gona had worked with some 20,000 farmers by the middle of 2018, with its long-term goal of improving the performance of 1 million people. And Masha is no stranger to the sector. His other company Doreo Partners is an impact investment firm in agriculture. And his work has now been recognised by the Skoll Foundation award for social entrepreneurship. He is encouraging the government to look to examples like Brazil to see how to get more capital and better technology to smallholder farmers.

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VINCENT FOURNIER/JA

**Akinwumi Adesina**

*Green gold*  
🇳🇮 Nigeria

**49** As president of the AfDB, Adesina has thrown his passion and weight into agriculture. His vision is that, as the continent's number one employer, the sector can solve the jobs and migration crisis. Fixing the bottom of the pyramid requires the financing to match: Adesina is in a race to get the soft-loan wing of the Bank replenished this year.

**Danai Gurira**

*Cutting edge*  
🇿🇼 Zimbabwe/US

**50** When Gurira isn't destroying the enemies of the Kingdom of Wakanda as Okoye in the film *Black Panther*, Marvel-adapted hit or chopping people up with her katana blades as Michonne in *The Walking Dead*, she is crushing the red carpet at the Oscars ceremony. Her playwriting is acclaimed too: *Eclipsed* won prizes in 2016, while Letitia Wright starred in *The Convert*. In December 2018, Gurira became a UN Women Goodwill Ambassador. Her project Almasi Collaborative Arts builds ties between artists in the US and Africa.

BEN CURTIS/AP/SIPA

**Ngugi wa Thiong'o**

*Voice master*  
🇰🇪 Kenya

A life without compromise has cost Ngugi; imprisoned, forced to flee Kenya after writing and putting on a play that disturbed the powers that be – at that time, President Daniel Arap Moi. Championing his native tongue Gikuyu rather than write in colonial English, he has campaigned to strengthen writing in various African languages over the course of his career: “To starve or kill a language is to starve and kill a people’s memory bank,” he said. And if this seems abstract, consider that Africa’s nations are colonial fictions; Africa’s economies will not be fixed before her politics are consolidated and native languages can be building blocks of that consolidation.

**51**



ALEJANDRO GARCIA/SIPA



**Sauti Sol**

*Groove riders*  
🇰🇪 Kenya

**52** The exceptional afro-pop sensations from Nairobi are politically conscious, laid-back and on point. Like any band scraping a living in the era of skinflint streaming platforms, Sauti Sol are on the road a lot, headlining at the Lake of Stars festival in Malawi in September 2018, and at various US festivals. And they are award scoopers, too, picking up best African group at the All Africa Music Awards, the MTV Africa Music Awards and the Soundcity MVP Awards. But their lasting influence will be their Sol Generation Records, a label the band are using to launch new talents into the East African music stratosphere.

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor

**Shamila Batohi**  
*Jail filler*

South Africa

53

What a time to get the top job: the National Prosecuting Authority had been manned by Shaun Abrahams, whose critics believe was close to corrupt networks around Jacob Zuma. Now, as the first woman to get the post, Batohi has an opportunity to go after the dozens of individuals who dragged South Africa's proud institutions into the mire. She is no stranger to the task, having already served as director of public prosecutions in KwaZulu-Natal from 2002-2009 - and in the 1990s was asked by President Nelson Mandela to investigate hit squads within the police.

JAIKUS MMUTLE /EPANAXPPP



**Mona Eltahawy**  
*Sword and shield*

Egypt

**54** A courageous activist, journalist and writer, Eltahawy speaks for those who lack a voice across the Middle East and beyond. Her 2015 book *Headscarves and Hymens: Why the Middle East Needs a Sexual Revolution* tried to break through the wall of silence that surrounds the sexual violence women in the region deal with on a daily basis. Putting her finger on the hyper-conservative Saudi interpretations of Islam, the headscarf is for her the symbol of oppression, and the hymen the strange guarantor of virginity for layers of male family and religious bureaucracy. Last year, she launched the #MosqueMeToo social media campaign to ensure that the Middle East and North Africa is not spared from the benefits of the #MeToo movement.



**Jim Ovia**  
*Money magnet*

Nigeria

**55** Creating Zenith Bank in a period of economic and political instability, Ovia has guided the institution through choppy waters. But he has retained his belief in the Nigerian economy. Speaking at the launch of a new book, he explained how he started the bank in 1990 with \$4m: "We now have a total asset base of \$16bn. If you look at the arithmetic, there has been over 1,000% growth. You can't get that anywhere, even in the best economies in the world."

**Pravin Gordhan**  
*Bomb proof*

South Africa

**56** The former pharmacist turned activist turned tax authority chief turned finance minister multiple times is a testament to the cadre of personalities moulded in the fires of apartheid South Africa. The group Gordhan created at the South African Revenue Service was the only one that pushed back hard against corruption at the height of the Zuma era, as the South African judicial, police and security forces were slowly gutted or hamstrung. At 69, he has put a desire for a quieter and more relaxed life on the back burner to clean up South Africa's troubled parastatals - like electricity utility Eskom and South African Airways - as the minister for public enterprises.



LIONEL BONAVENTURE/AFP

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor



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**T.B. Joshua**  
*Prophecy and power*  
 Nigeria

**57** Joshua has a huge following across the continent, but especially in his home country. Though he only founded The Synagogue, Church of All Nations in Lagos in 2006, it has expanded rapidly, and the faithful flock there from many African countries for healing and counsel. Joshua is not always popular - the government of Cameroon warned its citizens about attending his church in 2010. But it is his influence with members of the continent's celebrity and political elite that bumps him up the list.

**Albert Yuma**  
*Diamond geezer*  
 DRC

**58** As a key part of former president Joseph Kabila's inner team, Yuma controls the regime's access to the DRC's mineral wealth as chairman of Gécamines. The state-owned mining company - one of the continent's largest - controls strategic reserves of the minerals of our electric future: copper and cobalt. Yuma is central to ongoing efforts by the Congolese to get a bigger slice of royalties from mining companies. Yuma's name was also on a shortlist of candidates to become prime minister in the new government of President Felix Tshisekedi.

**Moussa Faki Mahamat**

*Top diplomat*  
 Chad

**59** Herding cats may suddenly seem a more attractive career path for the African Union Commission head. The current job for Chad's former prime minister entails corralling Africa's fractious presidents into a unified position on difficult topics such as the recent elections in the

DRC, the continental free trade zone and big internal AU reforms. While the year did not start well - with the AU speaking loudly on the DRC election before retreating into silence - plenty of challenges await: Sudan, Libya and Central African Republic will all clamour for the AU to act.

**Julius Malema**  
*Agent of change*  
 South Africa

The controversial leftist politician is the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a political party he launched in 2013 after his heavily publicised breakaway from the ruling African National Congress (ANC). A year after, the EFF won 25 seats in the 2014 general elections, securing more than 1.1m votes, and has since played an important role of kingmaker in the Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Bay and Tshwane councils. As Malema's popularity keeps rising, the EFF is tipped to make inroads into the electorate when South Africa goes to the polls in May.

**60**

GIANLUIGI GUERGINA/AFR

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor

**Kwame Anthony Appiah**  
*Contemporary questioner*  
 Ghana/US

**61** Engaging with ideas of race and identity, the New York University-based thinker is tackling questions of a global nature in times when nativist forces are questioning the global infrastructure of the post-Second World War period. He argues that local attachment and cosmopolitanism can be reconciled, saying in a recent *Foreign Affairs* article: “Forgetting that we are all citizens of the world – a small, warming, intensely vulnerable world – would be a reckless relaxation of vigilance.”

**Achille Mbembe**  
*Public intellectual*  
 Cameroon

**62** The South Africa-based Cameroonian academic is a revered voice across the continent, and not only influential in academia, but also in other public bodies. His ideas on postcolonialism, gathered in a collection of critical essays continue to shape the thinking on democracy. He explained: “Postcolonial thinking stresses humanity-in-the-making, the humanity that will emerge once the colonial figures of the inhuman and of racial difference have been swept away.”



WAYNE TIPPETS/REX/SIPA

**Edward Enninful**  
*Voguing!*  
 Ghana

**63** The formerly white bastion of British *Vogue* has been shaken up by Enninful, who took over the coveted editor’s chair in April 2017. A model at 16 and fashion director of the magazine *i-D* at 18, the Ghana-born influencer thrust diversity into the spotlight back in 2008 when he organised the “Black Issue” of *Vogue Italia* to combat the “white-out that dominates the catwalks and magazines” (the magazine sold out and had to print an extra 40,000 copies). He is pushing for much more empathy in an industry that is not well known for that skill. The Queen of England awarded him an OBE in 2016; the Queen of New York, Anna Wintour, may favour him as her successor, if what the rumour mill is saying turns out to be true.



SYLVAIN CHERKAOUJ FOR JA

**Vera Songwe**  
*Adding it up*  
 Cameroon

Armed with a wealth of experience in delivering development results for Africa, Songwe has been working to shake up institutions and buttress economic growth, first as the regional director of the International Finance Corporation covering West and Central Africa and now in her current position as executive secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. A respected voice on development and economic issues in Africa, the Cameroonian economist and former World Bank director has certainly earned her stripes.

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor

## Louise Mushikiwabo

*Diplomat extraordinaire*

Rwanda

**65** Securing the support of both France and the African Union in her bid to lead the 84-member *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* in October last year was a remarkable achievement for Mushikiwabo, who had to face off against Québécois Canadian Michaëlle Jean, the incumbent secretary general at the time, who was seeking re-election. Formerly Rwanda's Foreign Affairs Minister, the diplomat-cum-gender advocate is at the top echelons of the Rwandan government and is a well-known member of President Kagame's inner circle.



FRANCES F. DENNY/NYT-REDUX-REA

## Akwaeke Emezi

*Poetry in emotion*

Nigeria/Malaysia

**67** Emezi's highly acclaimed debut autobiographical novel, *Freshwater*, has been hailed as "one of the decade's most intriguing works of fiction". The novel which forces readers to confront their views on issues such as mental illness and mysticism, tells the coming-of-age story of Ada, and her struggle with several inner voices in a multiple self. The Igbo and Tamil writer, who identifies as a "nonbinary trans and plural person", is set to have an exciting year in 2019, with the publication of two new novels; a second adult novel *The Death of Vivek Oji* and a children's book, *Pet*.

## Mohammed Dewji

*Youthful gains*

Tanzania

**68** It came as no surprise when Dewji's kidnapping by armed gunmen in Tanzania's economic capital made international headlines in October 2018. The 43-year old Tanzanian businessman and former politician is considered Africa's youngest billionaire, with a net worth estimated at \$1.9bn as of January 2019. Dewji, who was released unharmed a week later, is the owner of his father's company MeTL Group, a conglomerate active in product manufacturing and logistics in 11 countries across Eastern, Southern and Central Africa.

## James Mworira

*Meteoric rise*

Kenya

**66** Not many people rise from intern to CEO in seven years but such is the atypical career path of Mworira. At age 30, the multiple-award-winning lawyer and businessman was appointed CEO of Centum Investments, the largest publicly-traded private capital firm in East Africa, and has since restructured the company into a powerful investor in the East African economy. In his first six years as CEO, Centum's asset base increased exponentially, from KSh6bn (\$69m) to close to KSh30bn.



BRUNO LEVY FOR JA

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor

**Tony Elumelu**

*Engaging entrepreneur*

Nigeria

**69** With a branch network that spreads across 20 African countries and three global financial centres, United Bank for Africa brings Elumelu insights into the growth potential of African markets. And his networking is truly international - he brought the French President Emmanuel Macron to an event in Lagos in July 2018, and was at the heart of former president Obama's PowerAfrica initiative. But alongside this top-down strategy of conquest, there is also a bottom-up approach. His foundation brings in promising young entrepreneurs for training and cash. If the next Uber happens under his watch, Elumelu will be plugged into the next generation of wealth creation.

**Tony Attah**

*Riding on*

Nigeria

**70** The CEO of Nigeria LNG (NLNG) is at the forefront of one of the most promising liquefied natural gas projects in Africa. The \$7bn Train 7 project will ensure sustainable feed gas supply to NLNG's six existing trains and the new Train 7 when completed, and is expected to boost foreign direct investment in the country. When he's not focused on Train 7, Attah dedicates his efforts to eliminating gas flaring in Nigeria, with NLNG having helped reduce flaring from about 65% to 20%.

**Fatou Bensouda**

*Prosecutor under pressure*

Gambia

**71** This next era of the International Criminal Court is being shaped by its chief prosecutor, as with the previous. With the international winds blowing against many multilateral institutions and the collapse of the court's cases against former president Laurent Gbagbo and the release of former warlord Jean-Pierre Bemba, there is now a crucial window for international justice to demonstrate its relevance and competence.



WIEBE WIEBstra FOR JA



**Moustapha Cissé**

*Natural and artificial intelligence*

Senegal

"We need a pan-African strategy: a set of ambitious goals for AI education, research and development and industrialisation." Artificial intelligence and robotics in Africa have a champion in the boss of Google's AI centre in Ghana's capital Accra. The outfit's focus is on machine learning and the use of technology in medicine. He is committed to ensuring that technology addresses the lives of people who need its impact the most.

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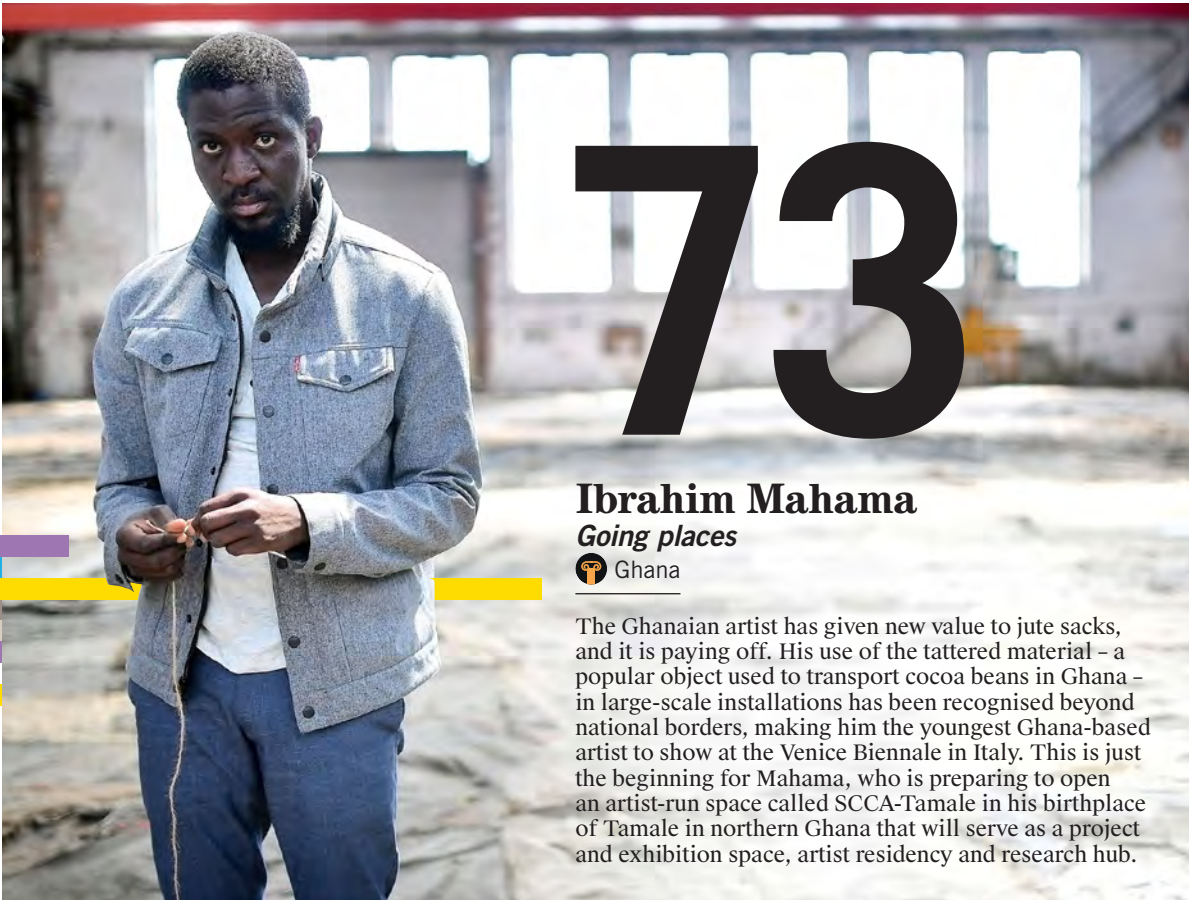
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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor



# 73

## Ibrahim Mahama

*Going places*

Ghana

The Ghanaian artist has given new value to jute sacks, and it is paying off. His use of the tattered material – a popular object used to transport cocoa beans in Ghana – in large-scale installations has been recognised beyond national borders, making him the youngest Ghana-based artist to show at the Venice Biennale in Italy. This is just the beginning for Mahama, who is preparing to open an artist-run space called SCCA-Tamale in his birthplace of Tamale in northern Ghana that will serve as a project and exhibition space, artist residency and research hub.

THOMAS LOHNES/GETTY IMAGES/AFP

## Nunu Ntshingila

*Connecting the continent*

South Africa

**74** Facebook's outsized popularity as a communication tool in Africa gives the social media network's continental boss a crucial role. With a background in marketing, she aims to get millions more of Africa's youth on the platform. A champion of equality, she complained: "Today, as we sit in South Africa, only 2.4% of women are CEOs. That is absolutely nothing."

## Khalifa Haftar

*Stubborn strongman*

Libya

**75** It is improbable that a peace plan for Libya will be agreed without the buy-in of Libyan National Army leader Haftar. The anti-Islamist leader has the backing of allies including Russia and Egypt, but he does not currently have enough strength to exert his influence much further than his base in the east. Peace talks in 2019 will show whether he can parlay his position into something bigger.

## Ken Njoroge

*On the fintech frontier*

Kenya

**76** Scoring a \$47.5m investment from US firm TPG in May 2018 puts the fintech firm Cellulant at the forefront of Africa's fitech space, with its drive to digitise payments and other services. The backing will help Cellulant to expand its operations on the continent. Njoroge has been at the helm of the Nairobi-based company since he co-founded it with Bolaji Akinboro in 2003.



STEVE JENNINGS/GETTY/AFP

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**Wanuri  
Kahiu**  
*Concerned creator*  
 Kenya

**77** The banning of Kahiu's film *Rafiki* in Kenya could not have come at a better time: happening just as the film premiered at Cannes Film Festival in 2018, it exposed the perils faced by many LGBTQ people on the continent. Prior to this, her short film *Pumzi* used the Afrofuturism genre as a way to express ecological and political concerns. A master storyteller, she has turned her hand to children's books and recently signed to direct a film, *Covers*, for Working Title and Universal.



DAMIEN GRENON/PHOTO12/AFIP

**Amina J Mohammed**  
*Goal-oriented*  
 Nigeria

**78** Mohammed has shepherded the UN's development goals for almost two decades. In Nigeria, she coordinated programmes worth \$1bn annually as a special adviser on the Millennium Development Goals, then she crossed over to Washington DC to advise Ban Ki-Moon on the Sustainable Development Goals. After a spell as Nigeria's environment minister in 2016-17 she was back as UN deputy secretary-general. Mohammed teaches at Columbia University, and is a prolific board member.



ZACHARIAS ABUBKER FOR JA

**Mostafa  
Terrab**  
*Renaissance man of phosphates*  
 Morocco

**79** Before he took over at Morocco's largest company, the *Office Chérifien des Phosphates* (OCP), the engineer spent many years in the US, including teaching at the MIT and leading the World Bank's Information for Development programme. His adoption of American-style management is partly what has helped transform the phosphate miner since 2008, selling largely into the US. Terrab is now leading a push into the continent, signing deals in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Ghana to build fertiliser plants.

**Mahmood  
Mamdani**  
*Provocative scholar*  
 Uganda

**80** A leading academic with a foot on both sides of the Atlantic (he directs the Makerere Institute of Social Research and is a professor at Columbia University, New York), Mamdani's reputation was made by *Citizen and Subject*, a book which reignited debate around the legacy of colonialism. He is providing some of the critical thinking that has been lacking in reactions to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's sweeping reforms in Ethiopia, warning in the *New York Times* that Abiy's policies could lead to "Africa's next inter-ethnic conflict".

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81

**Genevieve Nnaji**

*Ace actress*

Nigeria

The veteran acting star made her directorial debut last year with *Lionheart*, in which she starred and which was streaming service Netflix's first original Nigerian film. Nollywood watchers say that she is in talks with Hollywood studios in order to break into the US market.



GARETH CATTERMOLE/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

**João Lourenço**

*In with the new...*

Angola

82 Angola's new broom is still sweeping away the remnants of the corrupt previous regime, but will he be able to give the country a clean slate? The jury is out on that, and the ruling MPLA seems too intent on maintaining its iron grip to allow much transparency or free political competition. There is still a lot of hard work to be done to put the oil-dependent economy on sounder footing, so there are plenty more challenges that will show if JLo is up to the task of ringing in a new era.



TIKSA NEGERI/REUTERS

**Abdulsamad Rabi**

*Cementing progress*

Nigeria

83 The merger of Kalambaina Cement and the Cement Company of Nigeria this year makes Rabi's BUA Cement the second-largest cement manufacturer in Nigeria. BUA is planning a new production line for its base of operations in Sokoto. Rabi is also investing big in sectors where he thinks Nigerian firms should outperform imports, like sugar and steel. If his big bets pay off, he will soon be climbing the ranks of Nigeria's rich list.

**Ilhan Omar**

*Representative of a new generation*

Somalia/US

84 When she became the first Somali-American elected to the House of Representatives last year, Omar joined an incoming class with outspoken young women pushing progressive ideas in Congress and on social media. After some initial stumbles talking about the relationship between Washington and Israel, she was one of the first representatives to sign a pledge to impeach President Donald Trump. While she wants to score points against the Republicans in Washington, her Minnesota constituents will be looking for her to score points at home before the next election.

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Business Entertainer Power player Disruptor



DAVIDE BELLUCCA

**Carlos Lopes**  
*Pushing policy makers*

Guinea-Bissau

**85** Africa needs more intellectual leaders. Economist Carlos Lopes fits the bill. The former head of the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa is now teaching about governance at the University of Cape Town. After his work pushing the continental free trade area, he has turned to how a 'New Green Deal', might be applied in Africa, trying to push policy makers on how to adapt to climate change and drive industrialisation at the same time.

**Ashitey Trebi-Ollennu**  
*Star gazer*

Ghana

**87** "Humans always look to the heavens to gain knowledge and use that knowledge to make life a little better", Trebi-Ollennu told CNN. The Ghanaian robotics expert managed the team that designed an arm for the InSight rover that landed on Mars in late 2018 so that it can bring back samples that will allow scientists to study how planets are formed. Through the Ghana Robotics Academy Foundation, he is sharing his love of science and exploration with a new generation of those with stars in their eyes.



CYRILLE CHOUPAS FOR JA

**86**

**Simon Njami**  
*Critical curator*

Cameroon

Njami, a writer and curator, is a forceful voice at the forefront of African art. He argues foremost for its power, telling an interviewer: "The Dakar biennale does ten times more than the pseudo African Union for African integration." Njami was the chief curator of the Dak'Art Biennale in 2016 and 2018 while editing the *Revue Noire*, which he founded. He is a sceptic about Western promises to return looted and other ill-gotten African art.

**Mamadou Biteye**  
*Digital donor*

Senegal

**88** Backing the creation of digital jobs on the continent and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, the Rockefeller Foundation's Africa head is overseeing the channelling of crucial resources to priority areas. The Coding for Employment Programme, managed by the AfDB and funded by philanthropists and tech companies, is setting up 130 coding training outfits so that more African young people will have the skills needed for the jobs of the future.

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## Oluseun Onigbinde

*Transparent ambition*

Nigeria

**89** You might think it would be hard to have transparency gain traction in Nigeria, but the founder of NGO BudgIT does not back down from tough challenges. His drive to hold the government accountable and to get information

into the public's hands has helped put pressure on recalcitrant politicians in Abuja and throughout Nigeria. Now an Obama Foundation Scholar at Columbia University, he is aiming to return to Nigeria this year with new projects in mind and tools at hand.

## Moulay Hafid Elalamy

*Industrious planner*

Morocco

**91** Morocco's trade and industry minister is one of a small group of politicians who combine political power and business acumen. Elalamy founded the insurance company Saham, which South African insurer Sanlam bought a majority stake in for about \$1bn last year. In his day job, Elalamy is overseeing plans for Morocco to strengthen its position in higher-value manufacturing projects, which have taken off in the automobile and aeronautics sectors.

## Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu

*Power to the people!*

Uganda

**92** Rallying the youth of Kampala with his 'People Power' message (see page 48), the singer and parliamentarian known as Bobi Wine has quickly become the most serious threat – other than the ravages of time – on the regime of Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni. He has yet to show that he can rattle the government's foundations or if he will be able to transform his popularity into a long-term political force.



90

## Issad Rebrab

*Business baron*

Algeria

Despite being outside the orbit of Algeria's heavy backing for state-owned industry, Rebrab has become a billionaire and one of the continent's richest men. And to boot, his company Cevital mostly steers clear of the rich oil and gas sector, instead focusing on agribusiness and consumer goods. Rebrab is not only looking at his home market, but announced last year that one of Cevital's companies will invest in a factory to produce water filtration devices in France.

ONS ABID POUR JA

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**Caster Semenya**  
*Pushing forward on and off the track*

South Africa

The middle-distance speedster is again in the spotlight as she takes on international sports authorities for their outdated takes on gender. Starring in popular Nike ads, she is an icon in the LGBT community. After winning three Diamond League titles in the 800m in 2018, she is in fine form for the races ahead in 2019 and her case at the Court of Arbitration for Sport against the IAAF, which wants to force her to take drugs to reduce her testosterone levels.

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**David Adomakoh**

*Black gold*  
 Ghana

**94** Adomakoh, a former banker at JPMorgan Chase, is helping Norwegian start-up Aker Energy to make it big. It is planning a potential IPO this year on the back of its drilling success at the Pecan field. He is also a director at Kagiso Tiso Holdings, a South Africa-based investment firm that has big ambitions, and owns South Africa's *Business Day* newspaper.

**Clare Akamanzi**  
*Building brand Rwanda*

Rwanda

**95** African governments wanting to copy Rwanda's success in attracting investment go straight to the government-run Rwanda Development Board. Akamanzi got the world talking last year when Rwanda signed a three-year sponsorship deal with Premier League side Arsenal. She is now working with Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba to help Rwandan companies to access the Chinese market.

**Sahle-Work Zewde**  
*Soft spoken soft power*

Ethiopia

**96** While reformist premier Ahmed Abiy has Ethiopia's hard power tools, President Sahle-Work is known for her soft-power politics. At her October 2018 inauguration, she explained her goal simply: "If the changes currently being made in Ethiopia are led by both men and women, their momentum will lead to an Ethiopia free of religious, ethnic or gender discrimination."



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## Njideka Akunyili Crosby

*Million-dollar marvel*

Nigeria/US

**97** A rising star on the art scene, Enugu-born artist Akunyili Crosby has grabbed the limelight for selling a painting last year for more than \$3m. A late 2018 exhibition called 'Counterparts' highlighted her hybrid upbringing in Nigeria and later life in the United States. Her beautiful portraits bridge the gap between nostalgia for the present and living in the now.



## Bola Tinubu

*Lagos legend*

Nigeria

**98** With President Muhammadu Buhari having stormed to re-election in February, governing All Progressives Congress godfather Tinubu is planning out his next chapter. Lagos, the commercial capital, is his bastion in the south-west. The Abuja rumour mill is already talking about the potential for Tinubu, 66, to run in 2023 when Buhari ends his second term. Young guns are pushing for younger people to get more involved in politics, but the old guard is putting up a fight.

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## Bridgette Radebe

*Mining might*

South Africa

Radebe is one of South Africa's bright lights in the mining sector and a deal-maker who opts to stay out of the spotlight. She also forms a power couple with her husband Jeff Radebe, who is energy minister in President Cyril Ramaphosa's government. She took over as chair of the Black Business Council in August of last year and serves as the president of the South African Mining Development Association.

## Carlos Saturnino

*Crude prospects*

Angola

**99** The oil industry veteran has been back in control of Angola's economic engine room. With Saturnino in charge, state oil company Sonangol reported a turnover of \$17.7bn in 2018. The powerful firm has stakes in other businesses, like telecoms operator UNITEL, giving Saturnino an oversized influence on the country's growth trajectory. His new focus on marginal fields is boosting lagging production at a time when it is needed most.

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