

Cameroon



Connection

The Newsletter of the Friends of Cameroon · July 2006

## Bakassi Inhabitants Opt for Independence Ahead of Nigerian Pullout

www.irinnews.org  
August 7, 2006

**CALABAR** -- Inhabitants of the disputed Bakassi Peninsula in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea have declared independence days before Nigeria is due to cede the area to Cameroon under a United Nations-backed settlement.

Residents waved the territory's new blue and white-striped flag at an independence ceremony called by the Bakassi Self Determination Movement on Sunday at Ekpot Abia, which is among land scheduled for handover by Nigeria to Cameroon from Saturday.

"The people have declared their own republic!" said the group's leader, Tony Ene, to the crowd.

Ene claims to speak for all the peninsula's estimated 150,000 - 300,000 population, though only a few hundred turned out for Sunday's special ceremony.

The International Court of Justice at The Hague, Netherlands, ruled in October 2002 that the strip of

700 sq km territory that juts into the Atlantic along the frontiers of both countries belonged to Cameroon. The decision was based on a 1913 treaty between colonisers, Britain and Germany.

President Olusegun Obasanjo's government had angrily rejected the initial ruling before coming round to accept it following the mediation of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. After Annan's last meeting with Obasanjo and his Cameroonian counterpart Paul Biya in June, it was announced that Nigeria would finally pull out its troops in 60 to 90 days.

Ownership of the peninsula, which is rich in oil and fish, brought the neighbours close to war in the 1980s. After Nigeria moved to fully occupy the disputed area in December 1994, Cameroon filed a case at the ICJ seeking to determine legal ownership.

Nigeria has offered to resettle Bakassi inhabitants who do not wish to live under Cameroonian sovereignty. But self-determination campaigners have rejected the offer

to leave what they consider their ancestral lands and condemn Obasanjo's government for agree-

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Cameroon News....3

Africa News....6

Illegal Immigration Crisis....9

Calgary Community Celebrates....10

Kumba takes 'no guff'....12



## Cameroon Connection

Cameroon Connection is the newsletter of the Friends of Cameroon (FOC). It is published quarterly and distributed to members. Readers are invited to submit articles and other information about Cameroon. Submissions must arrive by the first day of the last month of each quarter for inclusion in the next issue.

Emma Stephens, *Editor, Layout*  
Steven Durbano, *Editor*

FOC was founded in 1988 as a collection of individuals who are interested in the people and culture of Cameroon. FOC seeks to assist Cameroonians in Cameroon by funding in-country activities, to assist Cameroonians in the U.S., to inform and educate Americans about Cameroon and to assist members to renew linkages with Cameroon and with those with whom they have lived and worked.

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FOC membership dues are \$15 per year. Joint membership with the National Peace Corps Association is \$50 per year. Overseas members, add \$5.

# Announcements

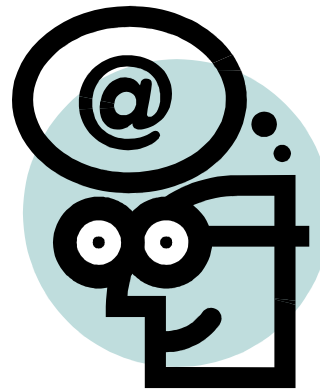
The New FOC Website is up and running!

Check it out at:

<http://friendsofcameroon.org/>

Find out about FOC funded projects, more news from Cameroon, events in your area (like where to get jamajama on September 16th!)

**We welcome member submitted material and any and all comments on the website or the newsletter!**



*(Continued from page 11)*

who is leading the CDC study in that city.

"We know that from all the trials we have done that even in the placebo group, risk is going to go down," the CDC's Paxton said.

Another study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, is expected to start later this year in Peru. It will test Truvada in 1,400 gay men in Peru. Family Health is working on plans for a new Truvada study as well.

# Cameroon News

## Cameroon sees \$5bn debt erased

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

May 2, 2006

More than a quarter of Cameroon's national debt has been cancelled by creditors including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The reduction amounts to about 27% of Cameroon's total debt, worth \$4.9bn (£2.6bn; 3.8bn euros) in cash terms.

The decision makes Cameroon the 19th state to complete the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Cameroon was given the reduction after meeting poverty reduction targets and social services investments.

Other requirements imposed by the Bank and the Fund included "progress in privatisation and reform in the forestry and transport sectors". But further progress is still required for Cameroon to strengthen its economy.

To achieve "optimal results", Cameroon needs to improve its governance through greater transparency, reduced corruption, and stronger accountability, the IMF said. "A key challenge ahead is to raise investment and economic growth rates to reduce poverty," said Dhaneshwar Ghura, head of the IMF's mission for Cameroon.

Of the total debt written off the biggest single tranche - \$176m - came from the World Bank group, while the IMF wrote off \$37m. The African Development Bank, meanwhile, wrote off \$79m.

The \$4.9bn reduction package is a nominal value, based on what the loan repayments would cost over the 40-year life of the loan. Taking into account the effect of future inflation, the cost of the loan is estimated at \$1.27bn in present value terms.

The figure includes all the country's external debts to other countries.

Launched in 1996, the HIPC initiative was started to create a framework under which creditors could give the world's poorest and most heavily indebted nations debt relief.

At the G8 summit in July 2005, the multilateral lending banks, the IMF, World Bank, and ADB, agreed to take part in the initiative. Other rich countries had already agreed to write off some of their bilateral debts. The debt relief will come into effect on 1 July 2006.

## Cameroon girls battle 'breast ironing'

Randy Joe Sa'ah

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

June 23, 2006

YAOUNDE -- A nationwide campaign is under way in Cameroon to discourage the widespread practice of "breast ironing".

This involves pounding and massaging the developing breasts of young girls with hot objects to try to make them disappear.

Statistics show that 26% of Cameroonian girls at puberty undergo it, as many mothers believe it protects

their daughters from the sexual advances of boys and men who think children are ripe for sex once their breasts begin to grow.

The most widely used instrument to flatten the breasts is a wooden pestle, used for pounding tubers in the kitchen. Heated bananas and coconut shells are also used.

Student Geraldine Sirri recounted her painful experience.

"My mother took a pestle, she warmed it well in the fire and then she used it to pound my breasts while I was lying down. She took the back of a coconut, warmed it in the fire and used it to iron the breasts.

"I was crying and trembling to escape but there was no way."

Another woman from Mamfe in south-west Cameroon told me she ironed her own breasts as a girl so that she would not be forced into early marriage as is the practice in her village.

"I wanted to go to school like other girls who had no breasts," Emilia said.

Many mothers have no regrets about ironing their daughter's breasts.

"Breast ironing is not a new thing. I am happy I protected my daughter. I could not stand the thought of boys spoiling her with sex before she completed school," one woman explained.

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

"Unfortunately, television is encouraging all sorts of sexual immorality in our children."

Anthropologist Dr Flavien Ndonko says that breast ironing is not an effective method of preventing early sex and pregnancies because many of the girls still become pregnant. He recommends plain talking between parents and their daughters.

"What you have to really do is talk about the issue of sexual reproductive health with the child. So that she is aware about what it means growing up and having breasts or having periods," he says.

With the help of sponsors, a group of teenage girls called the Association of Aunties has produced a television campaign to expose the problems of breast ironing.

"Massaging the breasts of young girls is very dangerous. This is harmful to health... Do not force them to disappear or appear - allow them to grow naturally," one of the adverts says.

So far, no research has taken place on the medical effects of breast ironing.

However, Prof Anderson Doh, a cancer surgeon and director of the state-owned Gynecological Hospital in Cameroon's capital, Yaounde, says the practice is dangerous.

"There are structures in the breast made of connective tissue. Now if you over iron the breast, if you use very hot objects, if you pound on

the breast at this tender age when the structures are developing of course you could also cause damage," he says.

The victims do have protection under the law, as long as the matter is reported within a few months, lawyer Buba Ndefiambu says.

If a medical doctor determines that damage has been caused to the breasts, then the person responsible can go to jail for up to three years.

This does not always deter mothers who see their daughters hitting puberty earlier and earlier thanks to better living standards.

But the Association of Aunties hopes their campaign will start to change attitudes and spare other girls future physical and emotional pain.



Some instruments used for breast ironing – from [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

### Ossining chemist hopes to make pharmaceuticals in Africa

Robert Marchant  
The Journal News  
[www.aidsfreeafrica.org](http://www.aidsfreeafrica.org)  
April 7, 2006

**OSSINING** — People who receive doctorates in the hard sciences typically end up in corporate suites and laboratories set in comfortable office parks in Westchester, Rockland and northern New Jersey.

Rolande Hodel has worked in those places, but not long after gaining her doctorate in chemistry, she decided to chart a new course, one that will take her far from a little garden apartment in Ossining where she has lived for the past decade.

She plans to take her training in chemistry and put it to use in West Africa.

"I always had a global perspective," says Hodel, 47, a native of Germany who was active in the peace movement for many years. "After I got my doctorate, I got a new perspective on life. I wanted to combine my passion for peace and human rights with being a chemist."

Her goal is to raise \$200,000 in the next two years to build a pharmaceutical plant in Cameroon, where the per-capita income is \$1,900 a year and the average life span is 51 years. Hodel is seeking to manufacture anti-retroviral drugs that fight AIDS, producing medications whose patents have been released.

She also is looking to make regular antibiotics to fight malaria, diarrhea and asthma, diseases that kill Africans in large numbers. Her organization, AIDS Free Africa, also is sponsoring an orphanage.

There is the shell of a new factory standing in Buea, a coastal Cameroonian city of about 100,000. Hodel

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

has been fundraising, applying for grants and networking with colleagues in the field to complete the project, which is being done in collaboration with a pharmacist and an engineer from Cameroon.

Hodel, who lives with her longtime partner, Betty Lewis, came to the states in 1988 on vacation and decided "it felt like home." She said chemists and other scientists have a duty to help those in need in the developing world.



Dr. Rolande R. Hodel, Ph.D., President, CEO —[www.aidsfreeafrica.org](http://www.aidsfreeafrica.org)

"We're not always the bad guys," she said. "People associate making drugs with making profits. This isn't about the profit. It's about creating peace, and you can't have peace without health."

Bill Strassberger, a former Peace Corps volunteer who lived in Cameroon, said the country had a number of advantages that made it attractive for development: political stability, an educated class, a solid agricultural economy and a relatively workable infrastructure. But

it can still be a difficult place to operate, he noted.

"The prospect of establishing any business in the country is a challenge, to put it mildly. Cameroon is well known for its rather intimidating bureaucracy. There's a high level of corruption, though they've taken great strides," said Strassberger, president of an aid and educational organization, Friends of Cameroon. "That aside, there's surely a need in the public-health sector. Whether it's at the village level or the national level, anything that can be done to help is a plus."

### Cameroon tracks 'ghost workers'

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

August 11, 2006

The authorities in Cameroon have discovered that they are paying civil service salaries to 45,000 employees who do not actually exist.

The "ghost workers" were uncovered by a census of public servants as part of a drive to stamp out corruption.

Finance Minister Polycarpe Abah Abah said the fake employees were costing nearly \$10m (£5m) a month.

Earlier this year foreign donors made tackling corruption a condition for cancelling billions of dollars of debt.

"These people have been robbing the state," said Mr Abah Abah, adding that further cases could emerge as the census continued.

The government, he added, would

take legal action against people making fraudulent claims for civil servants who had moved abroad or who were dead.

Other "ghost workers" include some of the 50,000 civil servants made redundant in the mid-1990s under pressure from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Corrupt staff managed to get the names of some of these back on the payroll, officials were quoted by Reuters news agency as saying.

In 2005, the public service ministry found more than half of its 2,700-strong workforce did not exist.

Cameroon's progress as a state has been hampered by a level of corruption that is among the highest in the world.

## Africa News

### Walmart blocking union in Ghana

<http://www.union-network.org/>

June 2, 2006

**UNI-Africa** --The long arm of Wal-Mart has reached Africa and threatens union representation in a garment supplier in Ghana.

UNI affiliate ICU was well advanced with organising and winning recognition for 400 garment workers in Accra when Wal-Mart intervened.

Ghana's fast growing garment industry has become part of the global supply chain to Wal-Mart - the world's biggest retailer that is viciously anti-union on its home base in the United States and Canada.

Arriving for a meeting with local management the ICU team were introduced to Wal-Mart representatives. Later the company told the ICU could not go ahead with the process of union recognition that was well advanced if it wanted to keep its business with Wal-Mart.

The company is currently refusing to sign the required form that would permit formal certification of the union in the factory.

"This shows that Wal-Mart not only refuses to let its own workers join a union, but it goes to extraordinary lengths to stop workers joining unions in its supply chain," said ICU General Secretary Napoleon Kpoh.

He was speaking in Vienna after reporting the Wal-Mart intervention

to the UNI Management Committee.

The ICU hasn't gone away - it's now considering its response.



Napoleon Kpoh —<http://www.union-network.org/uniafrican.nsf/>

### Congo brands uranium report a 'great big lie'

<http://www.businessday.co.za>

(Sapa-AP-AFP)

August 8, 2006

**KINSHASA** — The Democratic Republic of Congo's government strongly denied yesterday that a uranium shipment left its territory bound for Iran last year.

A United Nations (UN) report, dated July 18, said there was "no doubt" that a shipment of smuggled uranium 238, uncovered by customs officials in Tanzania, was transported from the Lubumbashi mines in Congo.

Tanzanian officials told British newspaper The Sunday Times that the shipment was destined for Bandar Abbas in Iran, and was stopped on October 22 last year during a routine check.

"It's a great big lie," Congolese

government spokesman Henri Mova Sakanyi said yesterday. "All our nuclear activities are under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency."

The article said the uranium came from a closed mine in Lubumbashi, was then driven via Zambia into Tanzania, and uncovered during a scan at the port of Dar es Salaam.

"Anyone who knows about uranium knows that it is not exported in raw form in trucks. It must be treated and purified, and we don't enrich uranium in Congo," Sakanyi said.

The paper cited a Tanzanian customs official as saying that the uranium was hidden inside a cargo of 50kg drums of coltan, a mineral used to make computer chips.

The newspaper said it was thought that the uranium was being extracted illegally from the Shinkolobwe mine, which was closed in 1961.

UN spokesman Jean-Tobias Okala said in Kinshasa yesterday that he could not confirm the uranium shipment.

The large UN peacekeeping force overseeing elections in Congo said that tracking of any such shipments would be outside its jurisdiction.

In other developments, Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga may face additional war crimes charges once his trial on charges of recruiting child soldiers is complete, the chief prosecutor of the International

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Continued from page 6)*

Criminal Court said yesterday.

“There are more crimes, of course, and that is why we, after the first trial, will consider if it’s needed to present new charges ... against him,” Luis Moreno-Ocampo said.

Human rights groups last week sent an open letter to Moreno-Ocampo calling on him to file more charges against Lubanga for allegedly murdering and torturing hundreds of opponents in Congo’s tribal conflict.

Lubanga, the founder and former leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots, known by its French acronym UPC, was arrested and transferred to the Hague-based court in March.

No date has been set for his trial.

So far, prosecutors have drawn up only three charges against him, each linked to recruiting child soldiers.

Lubanga’s arrest warrant covered crimes committed after July 1 2002, when the court came into existence. Since then, an estimated 8000 people have been killed and 600000 displaced in Congo’s eastern Ituri province, prosecutors say.

“The idea that it is possible to recruit children (aged) nine, 10 years and transform them into killers is a catastrophe. We think it’s important that the first case will be about child soldiers,” Moreno-Ocampo said.

## **Equatorial Guinea government resigns**

Bernardino Ndze Biyoya  
Reuters  
August 11, 2006

**MALABO** - The government of Equatorial Guinea, sub-Saharan Africa's third largest oil producer, has resigned, opening the way for President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo to appoint a new prime minister.

Analysts said the move heralded another periodic reshuffle of ministers by Obiang, who has kept a tight grip on power in the tiny, oil-rich West African state since he seized control in a 1979 coup.

"My resignation will help to revitalise the work of the party in power," Prime Minister Miguel Abia Biteo Borico said in a ceremony at the presidential palace on Thursday in which he handed his government's resignation to the president.

Abia had headed the government for two years. But in recent months, Obiang, who wields overall power under the country's presidential system, had criticised his administration's performance in areas like health and education.

"When a government works badly, that can have a negative effect," the president chided Abia in Thursday's ceremony.

He was expected to choose a new prime minister in the next few days.

Human rights groups have condemned Obiang's long rule as one of Africa's most brutal regimes, denouncing torture and lack of basic political freedoms. But his government has recently made some

moves to try to improve its international image.

Analysts expected another shuffling of faces in the administration, which has occurred every two or three years. They did not expect any major shifts in policy, including in the strategic oil sector.

"There's no doubt that strategic decisions are not taken by the cabinet, but by the presidential palace," said Anthony Goldman, an independent Africa energy expert.

"The pattern of government reshuffles in Equatorial Guinea over the years has typically shown a lot of continuity," he told Reuters.

Goldman said it would be interesting to see whether Obiang's eldest son, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, the agriculture and forestry minister in the outgoing government, would have a prominent role in the new administration.

Equatorial Guinea has been transformed into sub-Saharan Africa's third largest oil producer since oil was discovered in large quantities in the mid-1990s.

Total oil production, including condensate output, is around 380 000 barrels per day (bpd).

US oil companies dominate the fast-growing oil sector and Washington describes Obiang as a friend although it has also criticised his government's human rights record.

Economic powerhouse China is also showing interest in Equatorial Guinea in its drive to secure long-

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

term energy supplies and raw materials from Africa.

American oil firms operating in the tiny West African state include ChevronTexaco, Amerada Hess, and Marathon Oil Corp.

The United States already receives about 15 percent of its oil imports from producers in the Gulf of Guinea, such as Nigeria, Angola and Equatorial Guinea.

Analysts predict this may rise to 25 percent by 2015 and see increasing US diplomatic and military engagement with states in the region.

### **There is nothing wrong with me, says Mugabe**

www.iol.co.za  
August 10 2006

HARARE -- Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe said on Wednesday that he was in good health, and denied suggestions in the Internet-based media that he had left the country at the weekend to seek medical treatment.

State television said Mugabe returned home after a three-day private visit to Malaysia to join his wife, who had accompanied a group of local students to a university there.

Zimbabwe Television showed a jovial-looking Mugabe bounding down the steps of a plane at Harare International Airport. Asked to comment on speculation that he was ill, Mugabe said: "Tell them I am dead. I am now a ghost that has come back!"

He said he was fit enough to box, and was ready to commemorate the dead heroes of Zimbabwe's bloody liberation war next week "in a grand style".

The health of Mugabe, one of Africa's longest-serving leaders, has been the subject of constant local and foreign media speculation over the past decade or so. He has dismissed talk that it is failing.

Last year Mugabe's spokesperson denied rumours the veteran leader had succumbed to heart failure, describing him as "fit as a teenager".

Mugabe, in power since independence from Britain in 1980, is presiding over an economic meltdown critics blame on his misrule, but which he says has resulted from a sabotage campaign by local and foreign opponents of his seizure of white-owned commercial farms for blacks.



Robert Mugabe—from World News.com

### **HIV Prevention Pill Shows Early Promise**

Marilynn Marchione  
Associated Press  
August 12, 2006

The first test of a daily pill to prevent HIV infection gave a tantalizing hint of success, but a real answer must await a larger study due out next year.

The experiment, done in Africa, mainly showed that the drug Viread is safe when used for prevention. Fewer people given the drug caught the AIDS virus than those given dummy pills, but so few in either group became infected that valid comparisons cannot be made, scientists said.

Still, "it's incredibly encouraging," said Dr. Helene Gayle, president of the antipoverty group CARE and co-chair of the International AIDS Conference in Toronto, where the results were released on Saturday.

If future studies show effectiveness, the drug "would be an incredibly important new prevention tool that we should make available as soon as possible," she said.

A vaccine is considered the best hope for stopping the spread of AIDS, but scientists have not been able to make one that prevents infection. Condoms and counseling have not been enough - the virus spreads to 5 million more people worldwide each year.

The new approach involves Viread (known generically as tenofovir), a drug already used to treat AIDS. Animal research suggests that taking it before being exposed to HIV, through drugs or sex, could help prevent infection.

A study by Family Health International, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, tested it on women in Africa at high risk because of multiple sex partners (many were prostitutes). None had HIV at the start of the study. They

(Continued on page 11)

## African exodus goes on as 17 more die off Canaries

Ibrahima Sylla  
Reuters  
August 11, 2006

**NOUAKCHOTT** -- Another 17 African migrants have died of hunger and thirst after two weeks at sea trying to reach Spain, aid workers said on Friday, as European and African governments struggled to stem the exodus.

Migrants on board a fishing boat which left Senegal bound for Spain's Canary Islands had to throw the bodies of 11 of their fellow passengers overboard after they ran out of fuel and food, a senior Red Crescent official in Mauritania said.

The boat, which had been at sea for a fortnight, was intercepted on Wednesday by a naval patrol before being brought to the northern Mauritanian port of Nouadhibou.

"The police told us the boat was detained at high sea and that those aboard said they had thrown 11 bodies into the sea," Ahmedou Ould Haye, head of the Red Crescent mission in the town, told Reuters by telephone.

"When it arrived there were two more corpses on board and four people who were taken straight to hospital, but we've been told they died because they arrived in such a bad state."

Thousands of young migrants have been leaving West Africa's shores in rickety fishing boats hoping to reach Europe and find work to send money home.

Many run out of food, fuel and water and die on the journey of more than 500 miles (800 km) to the Canaries.

But enough succeed on the perilous voyage to encourage their peers to follow, telephoning from Spain, Italy or France to say they have found unskilled work on the black market and are quickly earning more than they could back home.

Some 15,000 illegal migrants have landed on the Ca-

nary Islands this year, double the number recorded last year. A further 10,000 have arrived at other Spanish ports, according to official figures.

This week a boat carrying around 170 migrants -- the most in a single vessel recorded so far -- was intercepted by the Spanish navy.

The wave of illegal migration has prompted a flurry of diplomatic activity, with European Union members wrangling over who needs the most help as growing numbers of arrivals reach Malta, Greece and Italy as well as Spain.

Mauritania and Senegal have intensified their coastal surveillance with the help of the Spanish in return for greater aid spending but officials say resources are still stretched and critics say better policing is only part of the solution.

"There is not much progress being made in terms of short-term solutions or long-term solutions," Soumana Sako, former Malian prime minister and executive secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation, told Reuters.

"No police measures alone will be effective. ... Rich countries have to take a deep look at how they deal with Africa: it is not just a provider of raw materials," he said after attending a conference on migration in Dakar this week.



Immigrants in Detention – Dennis Doyle, Getty Images

(Continued on page 12)

## Focus: Africans Abroad

### 'Dey time: Calgary's thriving African community toasts festival's 15th anniversary

Nick Lewis

Calgary Herald

August 12, 2006

Lynn Olagundoye was born and raised in Calgary, and growing up, there weren't a lot of kids who looked like her. Her Nigerian parents were among the first wave of African immigrants coming to this city for a better life, and the only exposure she had to her culture was in her home.

But with the city's growth, it's a different picture today.

Today, there are some 15,000 Calgarians of African descent, and because of it, African culture in Calgary is stronger than it's ever been.

Tunde Dawodu is the artistic director of Afrikadey!, an annual celebration of African culture that today celebrates its 15th year in Calgary. While at its inception the festival struggled to attract attention in mostly Caucasian Calgary, these days, its main struggle comes in trying to cram everything Africa has to offer into just five days.

Programming cultural events around the second-largest continent can prove to be quite a daunting task for organizers. I mean, if you had to design a festival celebrating all of European or North American culture, where would you even start?

"It's very hard," Dawodu says, laughing. "We're talking about an

entire continent. If we wanted to even focus on one country, like Nigeria alone, a week is not enough to showcase the variety of music from there. So what we've done that seems to be working for us is speaking with the various African communities to ask who they would like to see at the festival, so we can at least make the attempt. And we've been lucky so far."

This year features Salif Keita, an iconic singer from Mali, Somali-born Toronto rapper K'Naan, Nigerian masked performer Lagbaja, and Calgary's Olagundoye, who released her debut album in March.

Olagundoye has been performing at Afrikadey! for years now, and as a child, was frequently involved in a number of group dances.

"Afrikadey! has been going on the majority of my life, and I don't really remember what Calgary was like before it came along," she says. "It's a great festival that keeps growing. It grants a lot of Africans and non-Africans the opportunity to see what we're up to, artistically and musically."

She also believes the festival is a great opportunity for young African immigrants to learn about their culture, instead of trying to latch on to a predominant African-American culture they believe they need to "fit in."

"It saddens me to see that Africans don't see the value and richness in their own culture and I think one thing I'm thankful to Afrikadey! for is to instill that pride," Olagundoye

says. "It's also a great opportunity to show non-Africans that there's more to us than what you see in the news -- poverty, AIDS, starvation -- you know what I mean? There's a number of positive things coming out of Africa and the world needs to recognize and see that. There's a lot of youth that come here and look to African-American culture as the way, and I'm not putting down that culture, but I think we have so much more to gain from being proud of ourselves and where we came from."

African culture has slowly but surely blossomed in Calgary, boosted by a steady wave of immigrants looking for a better life in Alberta. Today, one can cheer on Ghana in the World Cup at an African pub (Millennium Cafe), dine on authentic African food (Marathon Ethiopian or What's Up Cafe) or take in a new, as-yet-unnamed festival celebrating the best of Nigeria in this city in September.

"Calgary has a lot to offer African immigrants, and the influx of Africans here is strengthening the African Community Association," Dawodu says. "The African community has grown by leaps and bounds, and every day, there are more coming. Calgary is getting well-known internationally, and the word is getting out that Calgary has opportunity."

Interestingly, in the past, the majority of Africans coming to Alberta were from English-speaking Nigeria and Arabic-speaking Sudan, but these days, even French-speaking

*(Continued on page 11)*

*(Continued from page 10)*

African immigrants are choosing Alberta over Quebec.

"Nowadays, when I go around, I see people from Cameroon and from Congo, from all these French-speaking countries," Dawodu says. "And of course, we can talk about the Ethiopians, Somalians, people from Ghana and Sierra Leone, and all these other growing communities. "We've been working with a lot of African communities to let people know that it's not just Afrikadey! that you can see African culture in Calgary. There are other locations in this city too. It's part of the evolution of this city."

As Calgary grows more diverse,

Olagundoye says it becomes a better and warmer place for her to perform her particular brand of Afrobeat and soul.

"I love performing in Calgary, I think the one thing I appreciate is that there's not tons of people doing what we're doing," she says. "So when we perform, people are pleasantly surprised by what we do, and we're able to create an experience for them. And the audience allows us to do that, to be a part of it."

Dawodu says it's the willingness of Calgarians to want to make their city more diverse that explains why Afrikadey! has been going so strong for 15 years. These days, he says, the aim of Afrikadey! is not

just for Africans to celebrate the uniqueness of their culture, but to expose others to it to show that people aren't really all that different.

"We are unified in diversity, our differences should not be what separates us," Dawodu says. "So if I'm exposed to Chinese culture, I can learn more about the Chinese, the more I can understand them, the easier I can relate to them. Having these cultural events are good for mutual co-habitation. Because it reminds us that we have so much in common, and that the minute things that divide us are just minute.

"To me, these events are the best way to make Calgary feel like an extended family."

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*(Continued from page 8)*

were randomly assigned to get either daily Viread or dummy pills and all were counseled and given condoms.

No safety problems emerged - an important first step, said Leigh Peterson, project manager for Family Health. After an average of six months, only two HIV cases developed among the 427 women on Viread, compared with six infections among the 432 given the fake drug.

"We really would be irresponsible to draw conclusions at this time," because those are too few cases to make judgments on, said Dr. Ward Cates of Family Health. "But it does underscore the importance of moving forward very quickly now on the other studies on the drawing board."

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has studies under way in drug users in Thailand, heterosexual men and women in Botswana, and gay men in Atlanta and San Francisco. Plans are proceeding to add a third U.S. city, said Dr. Lynn Paxton, project leader at CDC.

The Thai results may be ready late next year and should reveal whether the strategy works. The Botswana study recently was changed to add a second drug, FTC, sold with tenofovir as Truvada by Gilead Sciences Inc. of Foster City, Calif.

However, the Africa study shows the ethical perils in such research. It originally was to include 1,200 women - 400 each in Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria - but Nigeria and Cameroon ended participation prematurely over concerns about whether and for how long women

in the study who became infected would receive treatment for AIDS.

Family Health worked to formalize contracts with local providers for testing and treatment as appropriate so the study could go forward on a limited scope, Peterson said.

And the study itself had benefits - half as many infections occurred than had been expected in the placebo group because the women cut back on the number of sex partners and condoms were used more often.

Some researchers have been worried that the opposite might happen if people believed a pill was protecting them.

"It's good that they didn't see an increase in risk" behaviors, said Dr. Susan Buchbinder of the San Francisco Department of Public Health,

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Movie Review: Justice from Kumba

### In 'Sisters in Law,' the Wheels of Justice Grind Fine

Nathan Lee  
New York Times  
April 12, 2006

The women of Kumba Town take no guff, thanks to the clear minds, bright spirits and rock-steady ethics of the "Sisters in Law," Vera Ngassa (a prosecutor) and Beatrice Ntuba (a judge). Warmly assembled by Kim Longinotto and Florence Ayisi, this winning documentary follows them as they nourish grass-roots feminism in a Cameroon village.



Vera Ngassa, left, is a lawyer, and Beatrice Ntuba a judge in Cameroon — *NY Times*

Men stupid, cruel or negligent enough to wind up in

the courthouse swiftly find their idiot assumptions exposed in the light of constitutional justice: sorry, guy, your wife doesn't have to ask permission to leave the house. Patriarchal arrogance is knocked clean off their hapless mugs as the world's worst alibis crumble before the sisterly smackdown.

The cases are appalling. A pre-pubescent girl is raped and left bleeding. A 6-year-old is beaten with a coat hanger, her body scarred with welts. The wife of a callous, vengeful jerk seeks help divorcing him. Nevertheless, the movie doesn't depress. When the right thing is done, it is uplifting in any context. "Sisters in Law" positively soars.

The movie plays like a cross between Ousmane Sembene's vibrant parable "Moolade" and Raymond Depardon's gripping procedural "The 10th District Court." It's looser than both, and would benefit from some cultural and political background. Committed, in strict vérité, to the here and now, "Sisters in Law" eschews the when and how. I'd happily watch a biographical prequel to this particular slice of life. Who are these women, and can they please take over the world soon?

Produced and directed by Kim Longinotto; in English and pidgin, with English subtitles; director of photography, Ms. Longinotto; co-director, Florence Ayisi; edited by Ollie Huddleston; music by D'Gary; released by Women Make Movies. At the Film Forum, 209 West Houston Street, west of Avenue of the Americas, South Village. Running time: 106 minutes. This film is not rated.

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*(Continued from page 9)*

He said greater equality in world trade and more focused aid spending were vital to controlling migration in the long term.

"This phenomenon is depriving us of our motor for development, the most dynamic members of our youth," Senegal's Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Mamadou Sidibe, told the Dakar conference. (Additional reporting by Nick Tattersall in Dakar)

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