



## 63 Dead, 20 Missing in Boat Accident

The Associated Press  
February 5, 2007

According to the survivors, who are mainly Nigerians, the boat became overloaded with over 100 persons aboard and four vehicles.

An overloaded wooden boat sank in high waves off Cameroon's coast, killing at least 63 people, a government official said Monday. Fifteen passengers were believed to have survived, but at least 20 were missing and feared dead.

The boat, which was sailing along the coast to Nigeria, sank Saturday night near the Cameroonian village of Mabeta, said Peter Itoe, an official of the local Limbe district reached by telephone. He said 63 of the estimated 100 passengers aboard perished and were buried.

'We learnt from the survivors that the boat initially carried some 29 people, but was collecting others along the coast as it sailed toward its destination in Oron, Nigeria,' Itoe said. 'According to the survivors, who are mainly Nigerians, the boat became overloaded with

over 100 persons aboard and four vehicles.'

He said most of those on board were believed to be Nigerian traders, but many of those who perished did not have identification \_ either because they were in the country illegally or their documents were lost when the boat went down.

Itoe did not say how many survived, but a journalist who visited the scene southwest of the capital Yaounde, Christopher Fon, said 15 people had escaped. The vessel's capacity was not immediately known.

Itoe said high waves splashed into the boat. The flooding, combined with the weight of too many passengers and goods, caused the boat to tip and sink, Itoe said.

Fon said bodies were found floating along the coast and nearby beaches. They were collected by Cameroonian naval units and buried in six mass graves in Mabeta.

*Further coverage on page 3...*

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## 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, and events in your area  
**We welcome member submitted material and any and all comments on the website or the newsletter!**

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emergency generator for backup power, so dialysis treatments are not interrupted during periodic outages.

Eventually, the four machines can be used to treat 24 patients, but the launch has been slow because of the need to train clinic staffers, Trebbin said.

Trebbin, 60, a Springfield native who received his medical degree from Tufts University School of Medicine, said he became interested in health-care in Cameroon while working as the program director for North Shore Medical Center's residency training programs. Some of the medical residents at the Salem hospital were from Cameroon.

"It raised my curiosity as to how such an impoverished country with so little technology can produce such fine physicians," Trebbin says in a posting on the WORTH website. "As I gathered information to satisfy my curiosity, it became blatantly obvious to me that there exists a real crisis in Cameroon for patients with kidney disease."

Trebbin said no one associated with WORTH accepts any payment. So far, it has raised about \$15,000. DaVita has pledged to continue helping, but Trebbin said he hopes to eventually raise \$2 million in donations to serve as an endowment, which he said would generate sufficient investment income to cover \$80,000 a year in operating expenses.

Christopher Rowland can be reached at crowland@globe.com.

## Cameroon News

**Nigeria Plans Aid For Victims**  
-More Survivors Discovered  
February 9, 2007

The Nigerian government is considering an aid package for victims of the Limbe boat tragedy, especially for the orphaned children of the victims, the Nigerian Consul General in Buea, John Abhulimen told Eden in a telephone conversation yesterday.

He said they are still studying the situation since the search for more victims is still ongoing. But he was certain that Nigerian authorities will pay significant attention to the families of those who at the end of the day will be declared dead. A fleet of search boats was still cruising the sea and creeks in the course of which some ten more survivors have been found.

As at the time of our going to press, last Monday when the news broke out, 60 bodies had been retrieved. This was confirmed in Limbe yesterday, by Chief Eyenwan Essien President of the Nigerian Union.

He said about 29 names were found on the manifest issued by the authorities of the Tiko wharf, but said he was reliably informed that there were about 120 passengers on board, mostly Nigerians.

The manifest however carries a few names sounding Cameroonian. Among these were Marie Owona, Maria Mukete, Elisabeth Ngande, and Awountoun Moussa. Nine members of the crew include Eyo-bio, captain, Sunny and Etete water

boys. Others are Etinwa, Artlassy, Tonny and Popular.

The boat named, "The Lord is My Shepard" No.2 owned by a Nigerian, Frank Udoh resident in Tiko, according to chief Essien, anchored at the Mabete fishing port far out in the sea and smaller boats transported more people and luggage out to it, which was said to have been seriously overloaded.

The passengers, according to chief Essien, were mainly from Tiko, Mboko, Ijaw, Mabeta, Limbe and even Muyuka. Goods transported included 3 cars, twenty bags of rice, 200 bags of kola nuts, 70 bags of crayfish, rolls of zinc and personal belongings. According to Chief Essien, problems started when the boat arrived the Bimbia, Man-O-War zone, which is mountainous for wild storms during rainy and dry weathers. The boat was equipped with three engines, two 40 horse powers and one 75 horse power.

Around Bimbia, one of the 4 horse power engines failed and it was discovered that the propellers had been rapped by a net. They started the second engine which also gave way. All attempts to put on the 75 horse power engine failed and the 9 man crew lost control of the boat being tossed in the sea until it crashed into rocks. The passengers tried to rescue themselves to no avail. A few had personal life jackets, however the lack of buoys only sealed the fate of the passengers.

At this point the chief advised mari-

time operators to ensure respect and implement internationally recognised safety standards. The Chief also frowned at extortionist control and checks which influenced boat proprietors to evade certain areas on their route to Nigeria.

Chief Essien also regretted that the Mabeta Police Post was not equipped to accomplish its set goals. "They could not even chase an evading boat because of lack of logistics and in the event of a disaster of such magnitude, they were simply helpless", he said. He appealed to government to equip the post to fulfill its national and international obligations.

Chief Essien also condemned boat owners whose focus was on money and not human lives. Instead of checking the space, they concentrated on money, most often packaging humans and luggage like sardines. The travelers are not spared, Chief Essen regretted. Very often travelers are impatient and even when the boat operators say they are full, many resort to managed under any circumstance, in effect increasing the risk factors. It was therefore necessary to sensitise both transporters and passengers on maritime safety values.

Chief Essien also revealed that 26 survivors had been registered and search teams were being put in place to carry out intensive searches in and around the Islands in the accident zone.

The 3 engines which powered the

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wrecked boat have already been discovered and are currently lodged in the Bota wharf in Limbe. The Nigerian community is already putting in place aid packages to assist the survivors.

On his part the Government Delegate to the Limbe Urban Council, Samuel Lifanda Ebiamia told Eden that most of the survivors had been transferred to Tiko where they originated. However, the administration was still evaluating the situation and extent.

Upon completion, the Limbe Urban council will evaluate the needs and bring its support to the survivors.

### **Oil Leak Shows Weaknesses in World Bank Pipeline, NGOs Warn**

www.irinnews.org  
January 25, 2007

**YAOUNDE**—Fishermen in the southern coastal town of Kribi are warily casting their nets after a leak in the massive Chad-Cameroon pipeline last week.

"Our town lives on fishing and tourism. If more incidents like this or worse occur it is the economic future of the town that is threatened," Kribi Mayor Gregoire Mba Mba told IRIN.

The Cameroon Oil Transportation Company (COTCO), which built the Cameroon leg of the pipeline, announced on 19 January that the structure's water evacuation system had failed. The company said the leak was quickly brought under control and "no impact on the coast or on the sensitive marine environment is anticipated".

It was not immediately clear how much oil leaked into the sea, for how long and what the environmental impact or the affect on livelihoods might be.

But two Cameroonian NGOs, the Centre for Environment and Development (CED) and the Network for the Fight Against Hunger, alleged on Tuesday that there was a delay in detecting the leak and that COTCO waited five days to inform the public at large about the problem.

The NGOs said the accident at the Kome-Kribi terminal 11km offshore exposed weaknesses in Cameroon's ability to manage such a crisis and that authorities had yet to devise an emergency plan of action in the event of a major spill.

"If there had been an accident affecting the coasts the impact would have been catastrophic because of confusion among authorities and communities who do not seem to know which avenue to pursue in case of a petroleum accident," said Samuel Nguiffo, of CED, in a statement.

The US \$3.7 billion Chad-Cameroon pipeline brings oil from landlocked Chad through a 1,100km-pipeline - with 890km of it passing through Cameroon - to the Atlantic. The pipeline reaches the coast at Ebome, near Kribi, and continues out to sea to the Kome-Kribi tanker loading terminal. Kribi is about 150km southwest of the capital, Yaounde.

The pipeline project was overseen by the World Bank, which de-

manded strict environmental and social standards, in part to prevent oil money from disappearing from government coffers. It signed a new memorandum of understanding with Chad last July after the Chadian government demanded its original promise to put 90 percent of its share of oil revenues into development be reduced to 70 percent.

In Cameroon, a programme of compensation for loss of land, hunting and farming grounds and general inconvenience caused by the construction of the pipeline was drawn up. A community liaison team held more than a 1,000 meetings with villages and individuals and spent over US \$8 million on reparations.

The Montreal-based International Advisory Group is one of several independent monitors for the project. The members of the international consortium running the pipeline are: ExxonMobil, Petronas of Malaysia and ChevronTexaco.

The World Bank says the project could result in nearly US \$2 billion in revenues for Chad and US \$500 million for Cameroon over the 25-year production period.

### **Major Malaria Carrier Identified in Country**

Michael Malakata  
www.allafrica.com  
SciDev.Net (London)  
January 26, 2007

**LUSAKA**—A new study has pinpointed the mosquito species responsible for most malaria cases in southwestern Cameroon -- an area where little is known about the

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transmission of the disease.

The research, published in *Malaria Journal* last week (17 January), could help in planning and implementing malaria control throughout West Africa.

Focusing on three coastal towns in southwestern Cameroon, the 12-month study examined the transmission rates of three mosquito species that carry the malaria parasite.

*Anopheles gambiae* was found to be responsible for the highest rate of infection and transmission -- 73 per cent -- in the region, while *Anopheles funestus* accounted for 23 per cent and *Anopheles nili*, four per cent.

Different malaria carriers breed in different areas and at different times. *A. gambiae*, for example, breeds in small pools of muddy water formed by human activities, such as well-digging.

The results could improve the planning and implementation of malaria control activities in coastal Cameroon and the whole of West Africa, according to lead author Jude Bigoga, from the University of Yaounde, Cameroon. The findings would help scientists understand the behaviour of different carriers and how they should be controlled.

Emmanuel Kafwembe, director of Zambia's Tropical Diseases Research Centre, told *SciDev.Net*, "Knowing how each [carrier] behaves will help scientists develop a system of controlling each differently".

Malaria is a major health problem in Cameroon. According to the

World Health Organization, the country has over 900,000 cases a year. Children less than five years old are the most affected.

Unlike the southern forested and northern savannah areas, little is known about distribution and transmission of the disease in Cameroon's coastal regions.

### **Cameroon Cracks Down on Poachers**

Asong Ndifor  
www.voanews.com  
February 6, 2007

In Cameroon, a law enacted in 1994 prohibiting the hunting of endangered species for bush meat is now being enforced, thanks to a campaign by The Last Great Ape organization. But many Cameroonians say they do not understand why anyone should be jailed for killing a source of food, like the chimpanzee.

The endangered species is a source of livelihood to many rural families and a delicacy for the rich city dwellers. From Yaounde Asong Ndifor reports. Traders in bush meat are being arrested and jailed in Cameroon -- to the anger of many Cameroonians. They argue that no one should be jailed for killing any animal or selling its meat.

Several people have recently been arrested for being in possession of smoked meats. One man is known to have been sentenced to one-month imprisonment and a fine of about \$1,000. for attempting to sell a male baby chimpanzee.

For decades, indiscriminate hunting has provided jobs not only to villagers in Cameroon's vast rain forests but also to thousand of traders who

bring some three tons of every specie of bush meat to the capital daily. Their catch usually include smoked and fresh meat of such protected species as gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants and even lions.

Despite the illegality in the hunting of such animals, they are traded openly in most markets in the capital, which explains why people are shocked when they hear of arrests for possession of parts of an endangered species.

Vincent Goudimia Mfoufu is a communication officer of the Last Great Ape Organisation, LAGA. It campaigns for the enforcement of the laws protecting endangered animals.

Mfoumfu says the great apes must be protected to avoid extinction. He says that "About a century ago, more than a million chimps lived in Africa, now there are less than 15,000. Each year about 4,000 chimps and 3,000 gorillas are killed and if they are not protected by deterrent laws, they would be out of existence in a few decades"

He adds that the main activity of his organization which is based in Yaounde, is to assist the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife to enforce the law protecting endangered animals.

Cameroon, he says is the only country in the Central African sub-region that has a law protecting endangered animals. That he adds shows the political will of the government, but because of corruption, government officials are reluctant to enforce the law.

That is where LAGA comes in to help. "LAGA carries out investiga-

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tions in the big cities, sea and air lions whose hunting is prohibited. ports to ensure the big dealers in The second class is reserved for the endangered species and trophies rich who have hunting permits such as lion skins, elephant tusks while the small remnants in the and parrots are arrested and prosecuted. We publicize such arrests in the third class are left to the peasant hunters. the local

media so as to deter those who may want to thwart the course of justice. The real culprits are not the small hunters in the villages but the big dealers who even encourage the village hunters to kill the animals.”

Madame Marie Therese Oyono, a restaurant owner in Yaounde whose views reflects those of many city dwellers says the real victims are the common people. Her restaurant, which used to serve bush meat to the rich, she says, is almost out of business.

“My restaurant used to employ six people, but today, it has only two. Security officials frightened away my customers each time they stormed in to inspect the type of meat being served. But those who make this bad law are the same big people -- you see their wives buying the bush meat in the markets. How do you explain the government’s campaign of fighting poverty especially in rural areas when hunters are taken to prison for killing animals? Some of these people know no other means of livelihood other than hunting. They are not educated and you will not expect them to differentiate endangered species from any other animals.”

Not every kind of animal is prohibited from being hunted. The law puts the animals in three categories. Category A is for endangered species such as apes, chimpanzees and

Most, if not all of the village hunters, are uneducated and are not even aware of the benefits of protecting endangered wildlife. Mfoumfu says apes and other animals act as natural forest gardeners by dispersing seeds for regeneration. On the other hand, they can transfer diseases to man during slaughter.

### **IFJ Condemns Kidnapping Attack on Female Journalist in Cameroon**

Media Release

<http://www.newssafety.com/hotspots/countries/cameroon/ifj/cameroon081106.htm>

November 8, 2006

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) today condemned the recent attack on Cameroonian radio presenter Agnès Tailé, who was brutally assaulted by unknown men in Douala, and continuing threats against the journalist who has taken over the show.

On the night of November 7, 2006, Tailé, who presents the interactive programme A vous la parole (You have the say) on the radio station Sweet Fm, was attacked by three hooded men who abducted her from her home in the Kotto district in Douala at around 3:00 am. The men beat her and abandoned her near a ravine. Tailé’s injuries are not life threatening but because the attackers attempted to strangle her she is still not able to speak.

Alexandre Lembé, editor in chief of the radio station, has taken over presenting duties on the show. He told the IFJ that he is now receiving threats from unidentified callers. The callers have not revealed their reasons for sending the threats or for the attack on Tailé.

“We condemn this cowardly attack on our colleague Agnes,” said Gabriel Baglo, Director of the IFJ Africa Office. “We wish her a speedy recovery and we are calling on the government of Cameroon to conduct an urgent investigation into this case and bring to justice the perpetrators of this brutal act of intimidation.”

Ten days before the attack, Tailé received anonymous calls and text messages, threatening her with violence if she did not stop speaking on her programme. The programme features open debates on various subjects such as politics, society, culture and sports.

The Cameroon Journalists' Trade Union (CJTU) has called on Cameroonian media owners to implement better safety measures and offer medical and other types of insurance to their employees.

“We call on our colleagues, the Cameroonian authorities and the international community to put an end to attacks on journalists, which have increased significantly in recent months in the country,” said Jean Marc Soboth, First Secretary-General of the CJTU.

For further information contact the IFJ: +221 842 01 43

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The IFJ represents over 500,000 journalists in more than 110 countries

### **Deadly clashes over fishing rights in Cameroon**

www.cnn.com (Reuters)  
January 12, 2007

**YAOUNDE**—At least eight people and as many as 14 have been killed in the far north of Cameroon in ethnic clashes triggered by a dispute over fishing in a local pool, a regional government officer said on Friday.

The fighting between members of the Musgum and Kotoko communities broke out after a quarrel last week over control of the pool, located inside the Waza National Park in Far North Province. This extreme northern part of the central African country extends to Lake Chad and borders with Chad and Nigeria.

"While Musgum fishermen were fishing, they were attacked by their Kotoko colleagues, and in the violent confrontation that followed, one Musgum man was killed," an aide to the senior divisional officer told Reuters.

The aide, who asked not to be named, said Musgum fishermen then carried out a revenge attack on three Kotoko villages, setting fire to huts.

Some reports say between 14 and 17 killed

At least six Kotokos and one Musgum were killed in this follow-up fighting and some media reports put

the death toll from the escalating violence at between 14 and 17 killed.

A number of people were also injured in the several days of fighting.

Police had rushed reinforcements to the area, where fishing becomes the main activity each year at the end of the rainy season when the Logone River overflows its banks and inundates the flood plain for a period of three months.

Musgum and Kotoko fishermen earn their annual income from fishing in these months.

"The pool which triggered the clashes is very prized because it's a source of significant revenue during the flood period. To avoid clashes, the Musgums don't usually go near the pool when we're there and vice-versa," a Kotoko fishermen, Mahamat Shifa, told local reporters.

Fearing clashes, local authorities had recently banned fishing in the pool, but poor villagers from both communities had ignored the prohibition.

### **Cameroon highway robbers hold up cars, kill woman**

Reuters  
November 6, 2006

**YAOUNDE**—Arabic-speaking armed robbers in eastern Cameroon killed a woman and stole money, jewellery and mobile phones from dozens of motorists after holding up 30 vehicles on a main road, witnesses said on Monday.

They told state radio the assailants, who were hooded and dressed in

military fatigues, halted cars on Sunday outside the town of Dimako in East Province, which borders with the Central African Republic.

State radio said one woman traveller was shot in the head and killed when she resisted orders from the robbers to hand over her money and cellphone. Some 20 more people were injured, the radio added, but did not explain how.

A senior administrative officer, who was among those robbed but did not give his name, said the hold-up took place in daylight and trapped around 100 motorists.

"We initially thought it was a security checkpoint ... But as we came closer we saw men dressed in military fatigues with hooded heads. Before we could realise what was happening we were surrounded by several others from the bush," he said.

"We were ordered out of the vehicles, forced to lie flat on our stomachs and to surrender all money, cellphones and jewellery we had," he added. He said the robbers spoke Arabic.

After ransacking the cars, the robbers shot out tyres and left obstacles on the road to gain time to escape.

Highway robbers have previously operated in Cameroon's Adamawa, North and Far North provinces, but in recent years they have extended their activities to the south.

No information was immediately available on the attackers' identity.

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Arabic is not commonly spoken in Cameroon, but is more frequently used in neighbouring Chad and Central African Republic, where the governments are fighting rebel movements and widespread banditry.

### Thousands seek refuge from attacks in CAR

www.irinnews.org  
November 30, 2006

**YAOUNDE**—Some 30,000 people from Central African Republic (CAR) have sought refuge in neighbouring Cameroon to escape harassment and child abduction, the United Nations says.

Members of the Mbororo ethnic group that straddles the Cameroon-CAR border first began arriving in Cameroon from CAR in April 2005, but the flow has risen in recent months, aid officials said.

"The eastern and northern parts of CAR are infested with former rebels who frequently assault populations," Jacques Franquin, representative for the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in Cameroon, told IRIN. "The Mbororo, who are pastoralists, are attacked, their cattle taken away and their children are even kidnapped."

Rebel groups across Africa frequently kidnap children to recruit as fighters or to work as servants or sex slaves, human rights groups say. But William Eteki Mbouma, president of the Cameroonian Red Cross Society, says the children from CAR are kidnapped for ransom. The Mbororo are perceived to be wealthy because of their cattle.

The assailants include former rebels who helped bring CAR President Francois Bozize to power in a 2003 coup, as well as defectors from Chad's military and Nigerian criminals, Mbouma said.

"They are only interested in the wealth of these pastoralists and children represent a way to constrain parents to pay ransoms," he told IRIN.

Franquin said Cameroon has deployed elite security forces to protect the local population and the Central Africans, as cross-border assaults are common. The Cameroonian Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation said security forces would escort all UNHCR teams in the field.

Security forces from Cameroon and CAR in 2005 launched a joint operation to flush out the assailants.

Franquin said it first appeared as though the Mbororo people were roaming Cameroon as pastoralists looking for grazing areas, but the number crossing the border in recent months has escalated and people appear to be settling in.

"They negotiate their settlement conditions themselves with local populations and so far things have worked out well without clashes," he said. "Inter-ethnic solidarity facilitates foreigners' settlement."

Meanwhile, the UN children's agency (UNICEF) and the Cameroonian government have begun distributing protein biscuits to children suffering from malnutrition. Many children also have skin diseases,

Franquin said.

The Central Africans have settled over a 100 sq km area, which has impeded coordination of humanitarian activities and attempts at registering them.

"It is a challenge to localise all the people scattered in the bush with their herds," Franquin said, noting that poor communications infrastructure has complicated aid efforts.

He said that his team has so far registered some 15,000 refugees and they hope to process all of the new arrival by mid-December. UNHCR plans to open an office in the region by January 2007.

### China and Cameroon Sign Economic Agreements

http://  
chinaconfidential.blogspot.com/  
February 1, 2007

China signed a series of economic agreements with Cameroon Wednesday, giving the African country more than \$54 million in loans.

The deals were signed as Chinese President Hu Jintao met with Cameroon's President Paul Biya in the capital, Yaounde. Under terms of the agreements, China will provide Cameroon with loans of about \$9 million for economic and technical projects, and \$45 million for telecommunication projects.

Hu also canceled Cameroon's debt to China, the amount of which was not revealed. Biya urged Chinese companies to invest in his country's

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## From Here to Africa: Life-saving machines

Massachusetts MD backs dialysis program

Christopher Rowland

www.globe.com

January 29, 2007

**BOSTON**—Dr. Wayne Trebbin of Salem has spent 20 years treating patients with kidney failure on the North Shore. Now he's taking on a tougher challenge: providing dialysis treatments halfway around the world, in Cameroon.

As in most of the Third World, dialysis machines are virtually unavailable in the West African country. The machines -- they remove waste and excess fluid from a patient's blood during three sessions a week -- are costly, challenging to maintain, and require pure water and steady electrical supplies. They also require well-trained staffs to operate them. But without dialysis treatments, kidney patients are doomed.

"Chronic renal failure in Cameroon basically is a death sentence," Trebbin said.

The most common cause of kidney failure there is black water fever, a form of malaria that is fatal in 25 percent of people who contract it, he said.

Two years ago, Trebbin founded a charitable organization, World Organization of Renal Therapies and undertook the daunting task of shipping dialysis machines across the Atlantic Ocean and setting them up at a university hospital in Yaounde, the capital city.

The clinic's first patient, Nicole, 31, who is unemployed, received her first dialysis treatment in November. Some of the machines that are helping to keep Nicole and four others alive were rehabilitated after having been damaged by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. The machines were donated by DaVita Inc., the second-largest US dialysis chain that owns the Salem clinic where Trebbin treats his patients. DaVita last year started its own charitable effort overseas, called Bridge of Life.

In addition to donating used machines for the Cameroon facility, it donated machines and set up a clinic in Ecuador at the end of 2006. The company is working on similar projects in El Salvador, the Philippines, and India. It is in early discussions with medical authorities in Peru, Haiti, and Nigeria.

Dennis Kogod, group president and DaVita's Bridge of Life coordinator, said DaVita frequently upgrades its machines, and the old ones are worth thousands of dollars.

"We made the decision to leverage our huge inventory to serve humanity, as opposed to just scrapping them or selling them in the aftermarket," Kogod said.

Trebbin and DaVita arranged for the shipment of 10 dialysis machines to Africa; six of them are used for spare parts to support the four machines that actually work in the clinic at Central Hospital University of Yaounde. Trebbin arranged for a dedicated well to be dug to provide a consistent supply of water, and tapped into an

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*Nicole was the first dialysis patient at Central Hospital University of Yaounde.  
Source: globe.com*

# Hitler's Forgotten Victims

Lester Holloway

<http://www.blink.org.uk/pdescription.asp?key=13948&grp=84&cat=425>

February 5, 2007

BLACK SURVIVORS of the Nazi Holocaust are demanding the real story of Hitler's Germany is told.

Black Germans are Hitler's invisible victims. Their story is largely untold, their battle for compensation mostly fruitless.

Thousands of African descent perished in Nazis concentration camps, the New Nation reports today.

Many survivors have since died of old age, their place in history forgotten.

This reporter spoke exclusively to two Afro-Germans, both in their 80s, who revealed their extraordinary story of living under an ever-present fear of death.

One was imprisoned in a Nazi death camp. The other became a member of Hitler Youth who wore a Swastika on his sweater until his mother snipped it off.

They both suffered at the hands of a terrifying fascist regime. 'I feared for my life every day', said 82-year-old Theodor Michael, who has fought for recognition of Hitler's black victims.

The emotional scars of his imprisonment remain. 'Even today', he said mournfully, remembering his friends and neighbours who perished.

Now living in Cologne, he says luck played a part in his survival, but it is clear he perfected the art of avoiding the authorities.

Hitler slaughtered between 10,000 and 25,000 black people, a fraction of the number of Jews killed, but undoubtedly an important part of history.

Black Germans were subjected to medical experiments, mass sterilisation drives and thrown in concentration camps.

In 1930s Germany blacks faced a daily struggle to stay alive. One of them even joined the Hitler Youth ranks.

Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi, 81, the son of a top Liberian diplomat was raised in Hamburg, miles from other Afro-Germans in the Rhineland region near Berlin.

He said he just wanted to fit in. 'There was tremendous pressure to join the Hitlerjugend. All my classmates joined the Hitler Youth movement. I wanted to be part of everything, but I did not know what I became a part of.

'As the only kid with brown skin I had no place to hide. The Jews had a Star of David on their clothes but my very appearance singled me out.

'From the moment the Nazis came to power they categorised Aryans and non-Aryans. I soon found out I was a non-Aryan.'

Grandson of the Liberian consul general to Hamburg, Massaquoi knew his colour prevented him attending high school.

As Jews lost their jobs and homes, facing ever-higher levels of hatred, Massaquoi was repeatedly warned he would be next.

He recalled frequent SS marches and Hitler Youth processions but his first awakening to the real nature of Nazism came when, as an eight year old boy, he experienced a violent race attack.

Both Michael and Massaquoi learnt to keep a low profile. To come to the authorities attention spelt almost certain death.

Michael said: 'I didn't cross the street through a red light. If you get into



Theodor Michael. Source: [www.blink.org.uk](http://www.blink.org.uk)

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the mill of the system you die. I did nothing to get attention, in no way, either positive or negative.'

With his grandfather a chief from Cameroon, Michael tried to flee from Germany.

But like thousands of others his roots in Germany's former African colonies closed off all escape routes.

Britain and France's decision to deny refuge to Afro-Germans on the grounds that they, or their family, descended from a country once ruled by Germany is an outrage, Michael said.

'All those people who had passports of another country left Germany, but we couldn't leave because there was no country to take us. We were stateless.

'The United Kingdom closed off opportunities for Africans from former German colonies to escape. No one wanted us.

'It was a trap, yes. We were trapped in Germany. It cost a lot of lives.'

As the war turned against Hitler and Final Solution began with mass concentration camps, Afro-Germans were stripped of their papers sealing the fate of thousands.

Michael endured years of forced hard labour working around the clock at a municians factory before being liberated by the Russians as the war ended.

He is grateful he was not sent confined a more notorious concentration camp like Auschwitz, and was still alive when set free after Germany's defeat in 1945.

Today, ironically, the absence of material proof that black people suffered under the Nazis has made the fight for restitution harder.

Michael said: 'If you came as a Jew, that was clear. As a German black person it was not so easy that they understood the situation. Mostly they didn't even know that people of colour were persecuted.'

While billions of dollars have been paid to Jewish vic-

tims. The majority of black victims families have received nothing.

A high level of scepticism about their persecution is made worse by the virtual absence of their story from books on the Nazi era, and Holocaust Museums around the world.

Black American historian Professor Clarence Lusane, who authored "Hitler's Black Victims", commented: 'A lot of people who should qualify for compensation are in their 90s and are now just passing away.

'It seems unlikely that there's going to be a big turnaround. There's little knowledge about what happened to Afro-Germans outside of Germany.

'To have this big gap in history is unacceptable. We have to correct the historic record so the next generation will get a broader version of what happened.'

'It should be seen as an important part of history. We can't deal with things today unless we know what happened in the past.'

A recent survey by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust underlined the level of ignorance about mass murder under the Nazis.

Massaquoi left Germany in 1948 and emigrated to the United States where he became a journalist, rising to managing editor of Ebony magazine before his retirement in 1997.

Now living in Florida, he was forced to escape his New Orleans house last year when struck Hurricane Katrina. Hollywood star Whoopi Goldberg was bowled over by Massaquoi's biography "Destined to Witness" and brought film rights to the book.

But the Ghost actress struggled unsuccessfully for seven years to find Tinseltown backers, and has vented her frustration at Hollywood executives who said the story lacks a "hook."

Last year it was made into a German TV film called "Neger, Neger, Schornsteinfeger", a painful German insult which translates as "Negro, Negro, Chimney

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## Africa News

### EU job centres to target Africans

Alix Kroeger  
www.bbc.co.uk  
February 8, 2007

**BRUSSELS**—The European Union development commissioner, Louis Michel, is in Mali for talks to set up the EU's first job centre for African migrants.

The idea is to match potential migrants with job offers in sectors like agriculture, building or cleaning.

France and Spain have already pledged to advertise seasonal vacancies there.

It's part of the EU strategy to deal with the increasing flow of migrants from Africa, with other centres planned for Senegal and Mauritania.

Mr Michel is holding talks on the centres with Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure in the capital, Bamako.

Last year, 31,000 Africans made the hazardous sea crossing to the Canary Islands to enter the EU illegally, according to figures from the Spanish government. A further 6,000 died trying.

The countries on the EU's southern flank - Italy, Malta and Spain - have been pleading for help.

The EU is stepping up border patrols, both on land and at sea.

But it's also looking at ways of increasing legal migration - both to

fill gaps in the European labour market and to reduce the number of migrants trying to enter the EU illegally.

The International Organisation for Migration, which assists migrants and governments around the world, says it's a "constructive step in the right direction."

"You can't manage migration flows by simply having tougher border controls," says IOM spokesman Jean-Philippe Chauzy. "If you're trying to undercut the people smugglers, the best way is to open up legal opportunities (for migrants)."

The working document on the African centres, obtained by the BBC, says the job centre project will be co-financed by the EU and member states, although it doesn't give any figures.

It says the centres, and matching supply and demand in the labour market, are an "integral part" of the European Commission's "Global Approach on Migration".

Initially the Malian job centre will be in Bamako, but later it will establish regional offices in outlying towns or villages, where migrants begin their journey.

But the idea goes far beyond filling the gaps in the EU labour market. It's also aimed at relieving pressure on the EU by creating opportunities for Africans at home.

The European Commission wants the centre to include a micro credit



*Last year 6,000 Africans died trying to enter the EU illegally by sea.  
Source: BBC News*

facility - possibly run by the Grameen Bank, which pioneered the idea of small loans to help people out of poverty by allowing them to set up their own business.

The centre will also help the people who get jobs to get the necessary papers, including visas and residence permits.

"If migrants leave with proper contracts and visas, this makes them less vulnerable to exploitation," says Mr Chauzy. It also means they're likely to earn better wages and have more money to send home to help their families.

But while Mali may welcome the centre, others are less enthusiastic.

"This is very strange, even a bit crazy" says centre-right Polish MEP Jacek Protasiewicz, author of a report in the European Parliament on the discrimination faced by workers from the post-Communist countries which joined the EU in 2004.

"The first thing the European Commission should do is to diminish barriers for the free movement of workers from within the EU, and then open job centres in other parts

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of the globe," he says.

Even now, people from countries like Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania - as well as Romania and Bulgaria, which joined the EU this year - can't work freely in all EU member states.

"Many millions of Poles, Lithuanians, Romanians (and others) would be happy to have low-skilled jobs in agriculture within the EU," he adds.

But for Mali, as for many African countries, the brain drain is a serious problem.

It isn't just the low-skilled who are leaving: it's the doctors, the engineers and the IT specialists, even if some of them up end up working in jobs far below their qualifications.

"Ways of facilitating circular and temporary migration will be explored," says the working document on the job centres.

For example, a surgeon from Mali could work in the EU for a month or two a year, earn extra money, perhaps acquire some new skills and put those to use at home.

"Someone who's worked for a few years in the EU may have accumulated some capital and can identify opportunities in their country of origin where that capital can be invested and create wealth," says Mr Chauzy.

Remittances from migrants represent the biggest flow of money into many developing countries.

If some of that money can be in-

vested to create jobs - rather than just helping families survive from one day to the next - it could make some potential African migrants think again about risking their savings and their lives on a dangerous journey to Europe and an uncertain future.

### **US to get Africa command centre**

www.bbc.co.uk

February 6, 2007

President George W Bush has approved a Pentagon plan for a command centre for Africa to oversee US military activities on the continent.

"This new command will strengthen our security co-operation with Africa," President Bush said.

Mr Bush said he had asked Defence Secretary Robert Gates to get the new command, known as Africom, up and running by the end of September 2008.

He said the US would consult African leaders on the command's base.

Mr Gates said the new Africa Command would allow the US to better co-ordinate action and counter potential threats.

The US gets more than 10% of its oil from Africa and is worried about increased economic and diplomatic competition from China, the BBC's defence and security correspondent Rob Watson reports.

There are also a variety of US security and humanitarian concerns ranging from the potential rise of militant Islam to the threat of failed states and the spectre of future

genocides, our correspondent says.

The Pentagon has voiced concern about potential threats, including terrorist threats that could emerge in war-torn areas such as Somalia.

US forces carried out at least two air strikes in Somalia last month, targeting suspected al-Qaeda militants.

Africa Command would be the fifth regional operations base for the US.

Unlike other regional US commands, the Africa command will not be about preparing troops for major combat operations, as no African nation poses a direct military threat.

Rather, US officials say, it will focus on military training operations designed to help local governments.

Responsibility for Africa operations is currently divided among three regional commands.

It was unclear whether the new command centre would be located in Africa or the United States, as are the US Central Command, the Southern Command, and the Pacific Command.

The US currently has an anti-terror task force based in Djibouti.

Mr Gates revealed the new plans as he addressed the Senate Armed Services Committee on the defence spending President Bush proposed in his 2008 budget, submitted to Congress on Monday.

"This command will enable us to

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## In Memoriam

*Editor's Note: George Yebit, APCD for the Agroforestry program, passed away suddenly last October. I regret the delay of sharing the following letter from Cameroon Peace Corps Director, Robert Strauss on George's passing. Our condolences go out to George's family and friends. He will be sorely missed.*

To all our staff, friends, family members, volunteers and trainees:

George Yebit, our beloved friend and colleague, passed away this morning in Maroua where he was on site prospection in the Extreme North with driver Yisah Joseph. George's terribly premature passing comes as a terrific shock to all of us.

It is hard to know where to begin talking about George. He was a wonderful man, a true professional, a dedicated researcher, a walking agronomic encyclopedia, a man of enormous heart who loved trees, plants, nature, his wife, his biological children, his adopted children, Peace Corps, and life. He, his wife Florence, Kim and Jean-Marie Ahanda, Nina and I were all out for dinner together just a few weeks ago. We were at the home of a member of the Cameroonian parliament who feted us until late in the night. We all left laughing, happy and pleased to be in one another's company.

Just a few weeks before that George and I crammed into a car together with many others (and three dozen plants and a thousand pounds of materials) to visit PCV Jenny Stella at her post deep in the South Province where George was conducting a follow-up to the medicinal plants training that had been held in Mvangan some months before. When all of us got thrown out of the village's auberge at 10 PM on a Friday night to make way for a wedding party, George took it all in stride. He wound up sleeping in a Peace Corps car (with two others!) because he didn't want to trouble anyone late at night.

Just yesterday I spoke with George and he sounded like his ever-optimistic self. On my desk, I have cop-

ies of two speeches that were read to me on Tuesday when I was in the Littoral Province visiting two of the communities where PCV Yune Lee works. There's a Post-It now on the speeches where I simply wrote "George" because I wanted to share how happy those Cameroonians are with our volunteers and with the Peace Corps sponsored-training they received in auto-code rearing and medicinal plants cultivation. George would have been so happy to add those hand-written speeches to his always well-organized files. Unfortunately, that day will no longer arrive.



According to George's wife, he was not feeling well last week yet he opted to continue with plans that entailed the long road trip to the Extreme North so that he could finalize sites for his trainees now in PST. I so vividly remember the day George said he would never travel on CamAir again; after his flight to Maroua landed so hard that all the emergency oxygen masks tumbled down from their ceiling compartments. George and I laughed many

times after that episode. In retrospect, maybe this one time George should have stayed home and enjoyed a weekend and a Federal holiday with his wife and five children. Yet as many others on our staff have done so many times, he put Peace Corps, our mission and his volunteers above all else, including, I am so sad to say, his own welfare.

For all of you who ever attended one of George's workshops, who participated in one of his consultancies, who had the pleasure of watching him work with farmers in the field, who struggled to keep up with him as he walked to yet one more farmer's remote field far off the beaten path, or who ever lifted a beer with him at the end of a long work day or ever listened to his stories and marveled at his broad, happy smile, you know what a wonderful and unique individual has left us.

Over the last 28 years, I have spent a good portion of my life living and working in Africa and around the

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Sweep.”

Hitler's desire to get back the African colonies Germany lost at the Versailles Treaty as part of the WWI settlement saw the Nazis make a series of propaganda films showing Germans as the best rulers.

Michael found employment as an actor in these movies, which may have helped him avoid death. Despite German racism towards black people, they had a taste for black performing artists, so the ability to sing or dance gave a better chance of survival. Jazz played by African-Americans was a favourite and the Nazis jazz ban in 1940 only drove the music underground. There is even evidence of black jazz bands entertaining concentration camp guards, who liked to unwind after a day of brutality and murder.

Several African-American musicians, who made their living in Germany, were apprehended by the Nazi authorities, like Valaida Snow, who was held at the Wester-Faengle concentration camp. Some like trumpeter Arthur Briggs were forced to entertain guards before being sent back to the Saint-Denis internment camp. John William, a survivor from Cote d'Ivoire, was a singer who also performed in Nazi camps but also suffered terrible beatings by guards.

The battle for recognition of Hitler's black victims has been going on for many years, yet their stories receive little attention. The question today is whether the last living black Germans will see international awareness rise while they are still alive.

Germany was running death camps long before Adolph Hitler and the Nazis came to power. Their brutal suppression of the Herero people of Namibia at the turn of the last century in many ways appeared like a dress rehearsal for what followed in Europe decades later.

Germans put down a rebellion in the east African colony with such ferocity that they came close to exterminating a whole tribe. The slaughter of the Herero between 1904 and 1907 was overseen by army lieutenant Lothar von Trotha, who ordered that “Every Herero, whether armed or unarmed, with or without cattle will be shot.” In three short years around 60,000 Herero were killed, leaving just 15,000 alive. Officially the German concentration camps in Namibia had a mortality rate of 45%.

Many camps also saw medical experiments, another forerunner to 1930s Germany when the Nazis snatched black families at night, taking them to hospitals for experiments in an attempt to prove their theories of racial superiority.

Eugen Fischer, the father of Eugenics, carried out extensive work in southwest African colonies during this period, including Namibia. Two decades later, the case of the so-called ‘Rhineland Bastards’ shows that hostility towards black people was rising in Germany before Hitler came to power.

After Germany lost the First World War, the allies stationed hundreds of African troops in the defeated nation, many of them from French colonies. German resentment against occupation took the form of a campaign of hate against these black troops and the 100 or so mixed-race children they fathered.

Objective historical sources show that the working class German women were often the ones to make sexual advances, yet the German media whipped up a popular frenzy with tales about rape. Despite hardly any evidence of sexual aggression by black troops, the controversy that took place in the pre-Nazi Weimar era, led to mass sterilisation drives. Germany sterilised most of the ‘Rhineland Bastard’ children.

lholloway@blink.org.uk

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world. I've been fortunate to meet some tremendous people who have dedicated their lives to changing this one world we all inhabit. Among all the hundreds, possibly thousands, I have been proud to count as friends and colleagues, I can say without the slightest reservation that it was my rare, rare honor to work alongside George Yebit. In 2005, I nominated him for the US Mission's Local Employee of the Year Award. Had it not been for the construction and completion of the new embassy in Yaounde, which required the heroic efforts of many on the Embassy staff, I have no doubt George would have been the LES of the Year. As it turned out, he received a Meritorious Honor Award which he richly deserved and which, to my own regret, was several years late in coming.

At George's request, I have been giving a final polish to the indigenous plants book he just finished writing, one of the many extracurricular activities he undertook over the last few years. In his acknowledgement, George wrote, "I was inspired to take an interest in medicinal plant science by CD Robert Strauss. He has been a wonderful motivating force throughout this endeavor. I lack the words to express my appreciation for his support and guidance toward the accomplishment of this work."

As I sit here at the keyboard, tears choking my breath and blurring my vision so that I cannot see the words I am typing, I, too, can say that George was a wonderful, motivating force in my life and that I, too, lack the words to express my gratitude for his support, his guidance, his ever cheerful voice, his willingness to try something new, his wisdom and his friendship.

At the school where I did my graduate studies, they occasionally honor an alumnus with the distinction of "The Uncommon Man." George and all of us share a common alma mater; Peace Corps. I'd like to bestow upon George the post humus distinction of his having been and truly meriting being remembered as an "Uncommon Man." Cameroon, Peace Corps, and everyone who ever had the good fortune to cross paths with George is richer for having done so and so much poorer for no longer having the chance to do so again. I feel a sadness I have not known in many years as I am sure many of you do. George's body will be brought to Yaounde tomorrow by plane. I will be in touch regarding his final arrangements and burial. For those who would like to make a contribution to a fund that will help support George and Florence's five children, you may do so in care of me. I will ask that Friends of Cameroon also assist with this effort. Nina's and my hearts go out to each and every one of you.

Robert L. Strauss, Country Director, Peace Corps/Cameroon

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energy, mineral and timber industries.

Hu's visit to Cameroon is the start of an eight-nation tour of Africa. China is seeking to strengthen its ties on the continent, as part of efforts to secure more markets and natural resources for its economy. Hu heads next to Liberia. He also will make stops in Sudan, Zambia, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and the Seychelles. This trip is his third to Africa since taking office in 2003. Chinese state media say the president will use the 12-day tour to carry out aid pledges made to African leaders at a summit in Beijing in November.

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have a more effective and integrated approach than the current arrangement... an outdated arrangement left over from the Cold War," Mr Gates said.

He said the Africa command centre would "oversee security, co-operation, building partnership capability, defence support to non-military missions, and, if directed, military operations".

## New Director for Peace Corps Cameroon

Earlier today I received a call from Peace Corps Regional Director for Africa Henry McKoy letting me know that Peace Corps Director Ron Tschetter has selected James Ham to be the next Peace Corps Country Director for Cameroon. All staff and many volunteers know James from the times he served as Acting CD in Cameroon in 2004, 2005 and 2006. James is an RPCV/Guinea, was the Country Desk Officer for Cameroon for several years, and has recently been serving as a roving CD in the Africa Region. Below, please see James' more detailed bio.

James plans to come out to Cameroon sometime in January so that he and his wife Sharoya can get their three boys into school in Yaounde. James and I will work together until the end of February when I will complete my five years as Country Director. This will help ensure a very smooth transition. From the four years that James and I have already worked together, I know that he loves Cameroon and has been very excited about the possibility of becoming the Country Director here. Whereas Nina and I will be sad to leave Cameroon, we'll be glad to know that my old office will be occupied by someone who couldn't be more enthusiastic about the country or Peace Corps.

Regards to all and best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

Robert L. Strauss, Country Director, Peace Corps Cameroon

### **Bio**

James T. Ham, Country Director Designate

James T. Ham is newly selected Country Director for Peace Corps Cameroon. Just prior to this appointment he served as Country Desk Officer for the Peace Corps Africa Region. He was responsible for the Peace Corps programs in Benin, Cameroon and Burkina Faso. He has served in this position for two years. Among the duties that he has participated in include: the closure and suspension of Peace Corps Gabon and Chad, CD Selection Panels, PCMO selection panels, APCD selection Panels and also served as the Office of Special Services Duty Officer. On three different occasions served as the Country Director for Peace Corps Cameroon. (June - September 2004, July 2005 and March - May 2006). Other activities include co facilitated the Southern Africa Diversity workshop in Mozambique in 2004.

Prior to becoming Country Desk Officer in the Africa Region, James Ham served as the Country Desk Assistant for the nations of Ghana, Guinea, Togo and the Ivory Coast. He assisted with the evacuation of the Volunteers in the Ivory Coast and served on the State Department Task Force during this evacuation process.

Other positions served at the Peace Corps include those of Staging Director, Co-Chair Black History Month committee, member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance Committee, Women's Month Committee. Mr. Ham was selected by the Director to serve as Co- Chair of the 2005 Combined Federal Campaign for Peace Corps. The Campaign raised over 127% of its \$86,000 goal.

Mr. Ham is veteran of the United States Navy. Currently he holds a Bachelor of Arts in Middle Grades Education from North Carolina Central University and in December 2005 received his Master of Arts degree in International Education from American University.

An educator for over ten years teaching in urban, rural and international settings, he is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer where he served as a teacher in Guinea (96-98). Mr. Ham speaks French fluently and was selected to participate in the International Career Advancement Program in Aspen, Colorado in 2004.

James is married to Sharoya Ham and has three sons, Jeremiah 8, Myles 5 and Malachi 3.

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## Electronic Distribution Request

Over the last few years the cost of printing the quarterly newsletters and annual directory has increased significantly. In addition, most FOC members now have access to the internet and have email accounts. We are requesting that you accept that the newsletter and annual directory be sent to you electronically. You will be informed by email as to where you can download these documents using a standard web browser. The email will also contain a password that will allow you to unlock the document. All documents will be distributed via Adobe PDF format. If you do not accept electronic distribution, you will continue to receive these documents via regular mail as in the past. Please indicate your selection below. If accepting, please assure you entered a valid email address above.

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