

INTERNATIONAL NEWS – October 2024

New Māori queen, 27, crowned in New Zealand as her father is buried,

Story by Miriam Burrell, London ES (Evening Standard), August 31, 2024.

New Zealand's new Māori queen has been crowned in a traditional ceremony which also saw her father King Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero VII laid to rest. Her father died following heart surgery, just days after the 18th anniversary of his coronation. Ngā Wai hono i te pō, 27, the youngest child of the late monarch, became the second Māori kuini, or queen, in a tradition dating back to 1858. The new queen holds a Master's degree in Māori cultural studies and teaches 'kapa haka', the Māori term for performing arts. Mourners flocked to the North Island town of Ngāruawāhia, near Hamilton, to pay final respects to the late monarch and witness the ascension to the throne of Queen Ngā Wai. Her ascension represents the rise of a new generation of Māori leaders, one which grew up steeped in a resurging language that had once almost died out. The New Queen was escorted onto an ancestral meeting place, where her father's casket lay draped in feathered cloaks- cheers rang out among thousands waiting along the banks of the Waikato River to glimpse the funeral procession. After her ascension, Queen Ngā Wai accompanied the late king's coffin in a flotilla of traditional waka, or canoes, along the river as he was guided by Māori warriors to his final resting place. New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon praised King Tuheitia as a leader "whose commitment to Māori and all New Zealanders has been felt right across the country." The late king's funeral was attended not only by *iwi* members, but also by leaders of all political parties, past prime ministers, leaders of Pacific Island nations, diplomats and representatives of the British crown. King Charles II and former NZ PM Jacinda Ardern joined in sending comments about the King's death, highlighting his accomplishments

New Māori queen, 27, crowned in New Zealand as her father is buried (msn.com)

Kabul: Silence Women, by Christina Goldbaum and Najim Rahim, The New York Times, September 4, 2024

Afghanistan Taliban rulers have imposed their most draconian restrictions on women yet. The 114 page manifesto codifies all of the Taliban government's decrees restricting women's rights based on the extreme vision of Sharia law. The latest addition, classifies female voices as 'intimate' and bars women from singing or reading loudly enough to be heard in public even if they are inside their own home. The new "vice and virtue" laws not only require women to wear burqas and full veils, but also forbid them to look directly at any man who isn't a relative. The crackdown has emboldened officers of the so-called vice and virtue police, who are government officials who are stationed on street corners to ensure that the country's morality laws are observed. The international outcry against the Taliban's ban on Afghan women speaking or showing their faces in public has been swift. António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, condemned the move, stating, "This is a blatant violation of human rights and a grievous step backward for Afghan society." With New Taliban Manifesto, Afghan Women Fear the Worst - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

Olympian Rebecca Cheptegei dies after being set alight by ex-boyfriend

Celestine Karoney, BBC News, Nairobi, September 5, 2024

Olympic athlete Rebecca Cheptegei has died days after being doused in petrol and set on fire by a former boyfriend. The 33-year-old Ugandan marathon runner, who competed in the recent Paris Olympics, had suffered extensive burns after the attack. Cheptegei finished 44th in the marathon at the recent Paris Olympics. She also won gold at the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2022. A report filed by a local administrator alleged the athlete and her ex-partner had been wrangling over a piece of land. Cheptegei, who is from a region

just across the border in Uganda, is said to have bought a plot in Trans Nzoia County and built a house to be near Kenya's elite athletics training centres. Fellow Ugandan athlete James Kirwa told the BBC about her generosity and how she had helped out other runners financially. Attacks on women have become a major concern in Kenya. In 2022 at least 34% of women said they had experienced physical violence, according to a national survey. Kenya's Sports Minister Kipchumba Murkomen and different organisations within the UN have also spoken out on the issue." We join the UN Population Fund and UN Women in strongly condemning Cheptegei's violent murder." Ugandan runner Rebecca Cheptegei: Olympic athlete dies days after being set alight by ex-boyfriend (bbc.com)

Hospice Carer gets Queen's Nurse Title, Story by Charles Heslett - BBC News, September 12, 2024

The Queen's Nurses' Institute, (QNI) which is the UK's oldest professional nursing organisation and nursing charities in the world has awarded Belinda Marks, 62, a former National Health Service Carer and an advanced practitioner from Oxenhope, the Queen's Nurse Title. The QN award is a recognition of individual nurses who have demonstrated a high level of commitment to ongoing learning, leadership and excellence in healthcare. Following a rigorous application process, Ms. Marks was awarded this prestigious title for her innovations in end-of-life care, which has included the introduction of nurse-led beds and getting more patients in the community to access the Sue Ryder Manorlands Hospice in Oxenhope, Keighley, where she works. She joined the Hospice, after a 40-year career in oncological and palliative care with the Health Service. The title of Queen's Nurse was awarded to just 564 nurses across the UK in previous years.

www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y8ykgn9g7o

Dominique Pelicot charged in French rape trial says 'I am a rapist,' seeks forgiveness, by Marc Leras and Makini Brice, September 17, 2024

In a trial that has shocked France, Gisele Pelicot, 72, exposed her former husband for many years of rape. Dominique Pelicot's hearing, the centrepiece of one of France's most spectacular criminal trials in recent history has triggered nation, and worldwide, protests in support of Gisele, who has become a symbol of the struggle against sexual violence in France. At the trial, which took place in the southern city of Avignon, Dominique Pelicot admitted to drugging his wife and recruiting a total of 72 men, currently aged 26 to 74, who participated in the abuse. They are all also on trial on rape charges. He said, "I am a rapist, and surprisingly adding, "I ask my wife, my children, my grandchildren to accept my apologies. I regret what I did. I ask for your forgiveness, even if it is not forgivable." He told the courtroom that trauma from his youth, when he himself had been a victim of rape, had helped to trigger his abusive behaviour. "It became a perversion, an addiction." The trial is set to last through December. If found guilty, the defendants face up to 20 years in jail.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/dominique-pelicot-frenchman-accused-mass-rape-wife-admits-charges-media-2024-09-17/>

Sigh of relief for Ghana's (not-so) new gender equality law, story by Komla Adom, BBC News, Accra, September 20, 2024

Women's rights advocates are demanding the immediate implementation of a nearly 30-year-old gender equity bill which Ghana's president had recently signed into law. This ends a process which began in 1998, with the bill shuffling between parliaments until the legislature passed it in July this year. Many campaigners faulted Ghana's law-making body for the long delay. Ghana now joins Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Mozambique and others in Africa that have working affirmative action law and have a 30% quota for women in decision-making bodies, in parliament and other state

agencies. Ghana's Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Act 2024 is expected to ensure a critical number of women hold key positions in government, security, commerce and other decision-making spaces. The law promotes the progressive and active participation of women in public life from a minimum of 30% to 50% by 2030, in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of achieving gender equality by 2030. Subjecting an employee to gender-specific verbal attacks, stereotyping, hate speech or harsh rhetoric as well as discriminating against, intimidating or seeking to disqualify a candidate on grounds of gender are all banned under this law. Penalties include fines, and jail terms of between six and 12 months. With the Ghana's general elections approaching in December, there are expectations that it could encourage more women to apply for political office.

Sigh of relief for Ghana's (not-so) new gender equality law (bbc.com)

German Africa Prize 2024 awarded to Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr,

Story by Nikolas Fischer, Deutsche Welle, September 24, 2024

Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, mayor of Freetown in Sierra Leone, has been awarded the 2024 German Africa Prize for her commitment to sustainable urban development and local participation. The Sierra Leonean capital now boasts a liquid waste processing system, with 160 water storage tanks and rainwater collection systems installed. Extensive flood protection measures have also been implemented. Waste from toilets is converted into compost, biogas and heating briquettes. These measures also help protect forests, as fewer trees need to be cut down for cooking fuel. Freetown's water supply has also seen lasting improvements. Water kiosks, equipped with solar-powered purifications systems, now provide many communities with access to clean water for the first time. This initiative not only empowers young women by giving them the opportunity to run their own businesses through the kiosks, but it also reduces their risk of falling victim to sexual assault while collecting water.

Aki-Sawyerr was born in Sierra Leone and lived in Ghana and Canada. After completing her studies, the 56-year-old spent over 25 years working as a financial expert and auditor in London. Her involvement in Sierra Leone's public sector began with her commitment during the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic. In June 2023; the popular politician was reelected for a second term.

German Africa Prize 2024 awarded to Sierra Leone politician – DW – 09/24/2024