

O PINION

EDITORIAL

Boeremag parole is an insult

THE Department of Justice and Correctional Services' decision to quietly release on parole two members of the notorious right-wing group, Boeremag, is an insult to South Africans, especially the families of political prisoners languishing in jail for decades after being arrested for having taken part in the Struggle against apartheid.

And the fact that Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Ronald Lamola's decision has been shrouded in secrecy adds insult to injury.

Independent Media reported this week that Kobus Pretorius and his father, Dr Lets Pretorius, were quietly released on parole last year after serving seven years of their 20-year jail terms.

They and others were found guilty of preparing a home-made bomb that was to be placed to injure or kill then-president Nelson Mandela in 2002, while he was on his way to open a school in Bolobedu, Limpopo.

While the Correctional Services Department confirmed the release of the two, it has remained silent on the criteria used, and why it failed to inform the public about its process and eventual decision to release the two.

In a country where dozens of its freedom fighters are still in jail for having helped liberate their compatriots, the release of the rightwingers, and the manner in which it has been handled, raise serious questions about selective application of the law by our authorities. Take, for example, former Azanian People's Liberation Army military commander Kenny Motsamai's case. He spent 28 years in jail for killing a white police officer in 1989.

Motsamai, who is now an EFF MP, was sentenced to two life sentences before his release from Boksburg prison on parole in June 2018. Unlike the two rightwingers' secret release, Motsamai's parole was treated as a public matter by the government.

Even after his release, the authorities kept a watchful eye on Motsamai. At some point, he was briefly re-arrested for breaching his parole conditions after taking part in a protest.

The question now is: Why are the authorities handling the release of Pretorius and his son differently from that of Motsamai? In addition to their failure to release anti-apartheid prisoners, the suspicious manner in which the Boeremag case was handled says a lot about the government's commitment to the principle of equality before the law. Quite frankly, it points to selective application of the law.

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Editor Piet Rampedi
Newsdesk 012 300 2107
Advertising 012 300 2200
Subscriptions 0860 326 262
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Mail: PO Box 439, Pretoria 0001

E-mail: pta.newsdesk@inl.co.za

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GROUP OMBUD

Yogas Nair

yogas.nair@inl.co.za

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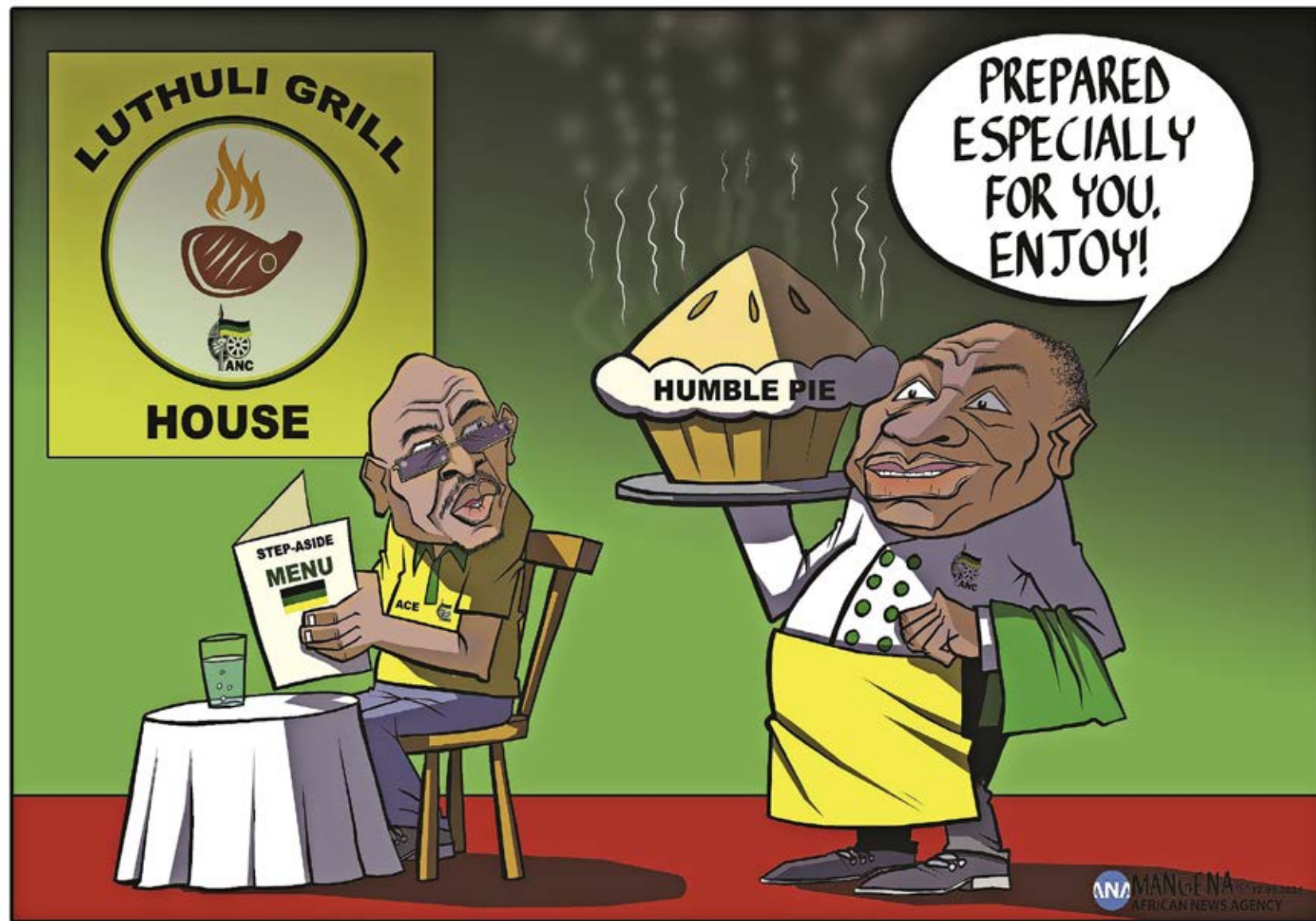
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The causes of insecurity in Africa are multifaceted

COMMENT



KESTER ONOR

NIGERIAN President Muhammadu Buhari has asked the US to move its military headquarters overseeing Africa to the continent, from Germany. This is to better tackle growing armed violence in the region. The Conversation Africa's Wale Fatade asked peace and security expert Kester Onor about the implications of this request.

What do you think of President Buhari's request that the US should move its Africa Command headquarters to the continent?

The request that the US should relocate Africom headquarters to Africa contradicts the previous position taken by most African heads of governments when it was created. Africom was formed in 2007. It was formed as a structure devoted to Africa (excluding Egypt) as part of US national security strategy. It became operational in 2008.

African policymakers, scholars and media resisted putting the command headquarters in Africa. They said it would undermine the precarious human security situation on the continent. They cited previous US military forays in Africa which led to a disproportionate development of military institutions relative to instruments of civilian rule.

Others saw Africom as a naked attempt to exert American control over African resources. African leaders argued that Washington's concern about African development was just a cover for asserting power.

Buhari's request for Africom's assistance in tackling the country's security challenges may seem good in some aspects. These include providing



A US soldier carries his belongings to a waiting truck at a military camp on the outskirts of Niamey, Niger. | The Conversation

technical assistance, intelligence gathering and logistics to Nigerian troops engaged in different operations locally.

But asking it to put boots on the ground may be detrimental to Africans. Africom is a component of the US Department of Defence and State Department. The US Defence Department places emphasis on traditional security imperatives that secure the state – guns and wars – rather than the principles of human security.

The general fear is that highly centralised states with dictatorial leaders may further be militarised. This will be to the detriment of citizens.

Nigeria initially rejected the US setting up a military base in the country and in West Africa. Now insurgency, banditry and terrorism have escalated beyond manageable proportions due to acute deprivation and the inability of the ruling class to allocate available resources equitably.

This is seen in a lack of political will to confront and address the pathology of insecurity in Nigeria. Previous administrations were pragmatic in handling national issues. President Olusegun Obasanjo banned a radical Yoruba organisation, Odua Peoples Congress, even though it was formed by his own Yoruba people. President Umaru Yar'Adua also offered an uncon-

ditional pardon to Niger Delta militants who agreed to lay down arms and assemble at screening centres. There was also cohesion among the security personnel in previous governments and superb inter-agency collaboration. The US has not said whether the request will be granted or not. But I suspect it will, as this has always been its desire.

What are the implications of Africom headquarters moving to Africa?

The implications are far-reaching. We are in a multipolar world with China, US, Russia, India and France struggling to expand their spheres of influence. Just like China established its first overseas base in Djibouti, other foreign powers will probably follow the same direction, thereby making the continent a war zone.

The US military has intervened in many countries, thereby creating enemies. Examples are Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya and Mali. The relocation of Africom headquarters to Africa will expose the continent to attacks from several fronts. Islamic fundamentalists might attack in ways perceived to inflict pain on the US government and citizens.

An example is the 1998 bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

African countries could be caught in proxy wars between the US and its enemies.

African governments will tend to be influenced in decision-making. This can happen through the application of hard and soft power instruments. This may lead to securitisation and militarisation of policy whereby scarce resources which should be directed to critical sectors may be diverted to military spending.

The American large military industrial complex might lobby its government to create instability in Africa to enable them to market its arsenals. We've seen this in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The establishment of a large American military institution on the continent may truncate Africa's nascent democracies. It undermines the establishment and growth of civil society. It also creates avenues for military incursion in politics. The Command will involve military training and this can encourage coups.

Considering the growing security challenges in West and Central Africa, Gulf of Guinea, Lake Chad region and the Sahel, weighing heavily on Africa, is the relocation an answer to these challenges?

It will not ameliorate or eradicate insecurity bedevilling Africa. The present insecurity in Africa is the consequence of misuse, corruption and endemic poverty. Also, bad governance, gross marginalisation and political exclusion.

These cannot be resolved by the mere relocation of a military institution to Africa. They are challenges caused by underdevelopment.

Insecurity causes are multifaceted, therefore the solution lies in structural reformation of African society. The plural nature of African states demands structural reforms. Reforms that will entrench constitutionalism, the rule of law, and political inclusion. | www.theconversation.com

Onor is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Covenant University in Nigeria

COMMENT



NURSES TRANSFORMING FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

PORTIA JORDAN

NURSES are an unstoppable and an incredible workforce in the health-care environment. According to the database of the SA Nursing Council, there are about 400 000 nurses in South Africa, making nursing an integral and crucial part of our economy.

The Bureau of Labour Statistics in the US expects nursing job growth of 12% through 2028, much faster than the average occupation.

Nurses are the heroes of our health-care system, caring for both sick and healthy individuals across the world. The global Covid-19 pandemic has shown the world the important role that nurses play in keeping people healthy across the lifespan.

As our country combats the pandemic, it has been proven that nurses play a critical role in keeping the health-care system functioning and well managed.

The questions thus arise: What does the future of nursing look like? What role will nurses play in the future transformation of health-care delivery?

The International Council for Nurses (ICN) annually leads the global celebrations for International Nurses Day, which is observed on May 12. The celebration marks the anniversary of the birth of the nursing trailblazer and pioneer, Florence Nightingale.

The theme for this year's International Nurses Day is "A Vision for Future Health Care". This implies that nurses should continue to lead in care delivery, and at the same time take responsibility to transform health care and to cast a vision for health care.

Nurse innovation in the face of an unprecedented global pandemic and health crisis will be the focus of the 2021 nurses' celebrations.

According to the Institute of Medicine Report published in 2010, it was then reported that nurses will lead the future. The report highlighted the need for more nurses to study towards degrees and to pursue speciality nursing degrees, including doctoral degrees.

In South Africa, nurses have the opportunity to further their qualification mix and skill sets by means of enrolling for a new undergraduate Bachelor and Diploma in Nursing.

Nurses who specialise will be leading the future of nursing. Their skills and knowledge will make them one of the most prominent pillars that uphold our health-care system.

The trajectory of the future in health care and nursing points towards increased digitalisation. Innovations such as the internet of things, artificial intelligence and robotics are becoming increasingly integrated into all industries, with health care being a leader among them.

As a crucial part of the system, nurses share a lot of contact time with patient, thus bridging the gap between the traditional and new-age divide of technology with skill, understanding and frequent interaction.

Nursing schools globally are embracing technology and digitalisation by means of tele-health, mobile application with the latest clinical practice guideline at hand on the clinical platform, virtual simulation, second life simulation scenarios, using haptic devices and electronic data capturing and patient interface systems.

Nursing and health informatics' growing role is changing the way nurses record and communicate patient information, how care is co-ordinated, and the development of evidence-based practices is orchestrated.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the enormous strain experienced by the health system.

However, in response to this pressure, nurses as the largest provider of health care took the responsibility to lead, advice, care and spearhead the revolution of the health-care system.

Nurses are at the heart of patient care; they are a linchpin for health reform and a vital link in transforming delivery of care.

As we celebrate International Nurses Day 2021, let's recognise nurses as "the voice to lead, who has the ability to vision and transform future health care".

Professor Jordan is the executive head of the Department of Nursing and Midwifery in the Faculty of Medicine and Health sciences at Stellenbosch University.

LETTERS

Email pta.letters@inl.co.za (no attachments). All letters must contain the writer's full name, physical address and telephone number. No pen names.

Clearing up confusion about Zulu institutions

I NOTE from a letter by Mr Mfizeko Bunu (Cape Times, May 6) that he is "perplexed" about my title of traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation. Allow me to assist.

He is right that this position does not match the Western "English" definition of a prime minister. But that does not disqualify the position.

Under colonial rule, the British reduced AmaKhos to "tribal chiefs" and the king to a "paramount chief".

That does not change their factual existence. Mr Bunu's opinion, that I shouldn't be "given" the title of traditional prime minister because

it "suggests that all the Zulu-speaking people support the principles that (I) stand for", is based on a flawed premise.

If anyone disagrees with the king's principles, should he no longer be called the king? Granted, not everyone agrees with social justice, democracy and honest leadership.

But that has nothing to do with why I bear this title. I was appointed by King Zuprian Bhekuzulu, the King of the Zulu Nation, and served in this position under King Goodwill

Zwelithini for almost 50 years. The position of prime minister, like the position of king, has nothing to do with politics. Thus, regardless of who governs, the institution of the monarchy and *Ubukhosi* remains. I am part of that institution by birth, blood and appointment.

Mr Bunu is right that I was not one of apartheid's "stooges" [the regime did not offer Buthelezi any protection at Robert Sobukwe's funeral in Graaff-Reinet in 1978, which he was forced to leave by angry residents]. But he lacks the

full story of Sobukwe's funeral. I was asked there by the leadership of the PAC. Sobukwe's family asked me to deliver the oration.

Tragically, however, some thugs who were dissatisfied with the pace of our Struggle threatened lives and disrupted the funeral.

Twenty years later, in recognition of my leadership and friendship with Sobukwe, the PAC invited me to deliver the memorial address at his grave in Graaff-Reinet. I encourage Mr Bunu to read my address.

PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI

I MP and Traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu monarch and Zulu nation