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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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زبانهای اروپایی

from the Peoples Dispatch / Globetrotter News Service
18.03.2023

Global News Dispatches: 4 Stories

Note to Editors: This is a selection of news wire reports that have been edited to be relevant for audiences for the next two weeks. You are welcome to select and publish individual items or the whole stack.

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[NEWS ITEM TEXT]

Questions Grow About Tunisian Government Response to Yet Another Migrant Boat Tragedy

[228 words]

The [latest migrant tragedy](#) off the Tunisian coast, in which at least 14 people were killed during the first week of March, has led to further scrutiny of the country's treatment of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa.

Most of the people who drowned on the nights of March 7 and 8 were from sub-Saharan African countries and were trying to [get to Italy](#). Tunisian officials claimed they were able to rescue [54 people](#).

The situation of migrants from the sub-Saharan region has worsened after Tunisian President Kais Saied on February 21 “[denounced](#)” the influx of undocumented immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa adding that this move was aimed at changing Tunisia’s demography. “The undeclared goal of the successive waves of illegal immigration is to consider Tunisia a purely African country that has no affiliation to the Arab and Islamic nations,” he [said](#).

Workers’ Party of Tunisia and the [African Union](#) have [criticized](#) Saied’s remarks as being racist, with the party demanding an apology from the president. While Saied is now [claiming](#) that Tunisia “was proud to be an African country,” the woes of migrants continue.

Migrants living in Tunisia have been heavily targeted by authorities. Many have also lost their jobs and were [forced to return](#) to their homelands. However, a section of them, in a bid to escape their dire economic and political conditions, have tried to migrate to Europe.

South African Trade Unionists Demand Freedom for U.S. Political Prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal

[292 words]

On [March 10](#), members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and the Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party (SRWP) marched to the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria to demand freedom for journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been incarcerated for more than 40 years in the United States.

This march to demand his release was organized as part of an ongoing month-long global [solidarity campaign](#) that was launched on February 16 and involved a host of organizations, including the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in the U.S. The campaign comes at a time when a judgment based on an appeal, which “[would allow for a retrial](#)” in the matter, is expected soon due to the discovery of previously unseen exculpatory evidence.

A former member of the Black Panther Party, 68-year-old Abu-Jamal has been convicted for the killing of a police officer, Daniel Faulkner, in Philadelphia in 1981.

Abu-Jamal had been [targeted](#) and surveilled by state forces since he was a young teenager. His trial and subsequent sentencing in 1982 were marked by official misconduct,

corruption, and blatant racism, with the original presiding trial Judge Albert Sabo [declaring](#) that he was going to “help them fry the [racist slur].”

Abu-Jamal has been incarcerated under inhumane conditions, including severe [medical neglect](#).

“The struggle for the civil rights movement in the 1960s captured the imagination of the world. Figures like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Junior, and Malcolm X became global icons—they fought and died for human justice,” NUMSA national spokesperson Phakamile Hlubi-Majola [said](#) in a speech outside the U.S. Embassy on March 10. “To our disappointment as peace loving South Africans, a Black man in America is always guilty in the eyes of the police.”

Swaziland’s Anti-monarchy Activists Face Increasing Repression Ahead of Elections **[264 words]**

MvuseleloMkhabela, a 21-year-old activist of the Communist Party of Swaziland (CPS), who escaped from a hospital after being [shot and tortured](#) by the police, confirmed that he is safe in a [video message](#) released on March 9.

Mvuselelo is only the latest victim of the brutal repression unleashed by security forces of King Mswati III, Africa’s last absolute monarch, against those who criticize the king. Mvuselelo was [shot](#) on February 28 while [leading](#) a protest against a government campaign to encourage people to vote in the upcoming parliamentary election, expected to be held in the second half of 2023.

CPS International Secretary Pius Vilakati [told](#) Peoples Dispatch that these elections “have nothing to do with the interests of the people of Swaziland.” Only those [approved](#) by the king’s local chiefs—who also control the community land —can contest the elections to the parliament of the southern African kingdom, where all political parties have been banned since 1973.

On February 28, Mvuselelo was shot, and then “the police picked me up and threw me in one of the vans they had brought,” he [told](#) Peoples Dispatch, while speaking from a hideout. The police tortured Mvuselelo for hours, finally bringing him to the hospital in the afternoon. That evening, a fellow party member snuck into the hospital and helped Mvuselelo escape.

The police remain on the lookout for him. Mvuselelo [said](#) that he must soon flee the country. Most political dissidents pursued by the monarchy end up in exile, mostly in

South Africa, after going underground. Others have been assassinated or imprisoned on charges of terrorism.

Former Peruvian President Pedro Castillo is Sentenced for Three More Years in Prison

[268 words]

On March 9, the judiciary of Peru [extended](#) the preventive detention of former left-wing President Pedro Castillo from 18 months to 36 months. Castillo was [overthrown](#) in a parliamentary coup in December 2022 and was [sentenced](#) to 18 months of preventive detention shortly after.

Supreme Court Judge Juan Carlos Checkley [ordered](#) the three-year pretrial detention for Castillo over alleged accusations of organized crime, influence peddling, and collusion in cases related to public works contracts and in the sale of fuel to the state-owned petroleum company Petroperú.

The ruling has been widely criticized as being politically motivated and part of the attempt to completely exclude the ousted president from political and civilian life.

In May 2022, the prosecutor's office began [investigating](#) Castillo's former Transportation Minister Juan Silva and six congressmen of the opposition center-right Popular Action party for [irregularities](#) in the tender for the construction of the Tarata III Bridge.

Businesswoman Karelím López, who was being investigated for money laundering at that time, had [alleged](#) that Silva accepted bribes in exchange for awarding public work contracts with Castillo's authorization. Castillo has denied the charges, adding that he and his administration were being politically persecuted by the prosecutor's office and the judiciary, whom he alleged are controlled by the conservative oligarchy.

Since Castillo's ouster, thousands of citizens have been mobilizing to demand radical political changes. These [include](#) Castillo's immediate release, his successor Dina Boluarte's resignation, advancing the elections, and a referendum on a constituent assembly.

The Boluarte government has responded with brutal repression leading to at least 60 deaths and has left more than 1,200 people injured in Peru.