Katka Durcanska

Group 2

Region: Sub-Saharan Africa

Topic: South African President Spending Scandal

Article: [S. African president survives home improvement scandal](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/south-african-president-jacob-zuma-parliament-spending-scandal/)

Source: CBS News

Date: April 5, 2016

Seven years ago, in 2009, president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, spent $16 million on “security upgrades at his private home.” Investigations found that the money went to things such as a swimming pool, a visitor reception area, a cattle pen, an amphitheatre, and a chicken run. South Africa’s top court ruled that Zuma had violated the constitution in this spending scandal by not repaying the millions of dollars he spent on the improvements. Pravin Gordhan, the finance minister of South Africa, claimed that “it is vital to uphold the constitution and that, in failing to do that, ‘we have moved away from our duty to serve our people.’” Opposition parties threatened the impeachment of the president and a vote was conducted last Tuesday. Parliament voted against removing him from office, in a vote of 233 to 143. With a clear two-thirds majority, Zuma’s political party, the African National Congress, succeeded in keeping him in office. The leader of the main opposing political party said, “‘the ANC has lost its way’ and described Zuma as a ‘broken president.’” Zuma apologized for the scandal and promised to reimburse the amount desired by the national treasury. Although the ANC has supported Zuma through this scandal, analysts claim that it could hurt them in the upcoming elections this year.

I believe that this scandal is unconstitutional and should not have been allowed. The ANC supported Zuma even though it was very clear that he didn’t uphold the constitution. This shows just how corrupt politics can be. I believe that Zuma should’ve been impeached before the situation gets too out of hand. While researching, I found that he is also “under scrutiny because of allegedly improper links to the Guptas, a wealthy business family in South Africa.” In a Shakespeare play, the theme here could be betrayal. Zuma betrayed his country, just how the two evil daughters in King Lear betrayed their father.

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Group 2

Region: Sub-Saharan Africa

Topic: New Ebola found in Liberia

Article: [Ebola: A new flare-up in Liberia, vaccines given out in Guinea](http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/01/health/ebola-liberia-guinea/index.html)

Source: CNN

Date: April 1, 2016

In 2014, Ebola infected tens of thousands of people in a wild rage across West Africa. Authorities managed to hold back the disease, but that doesn't mean that they’re finished it off. In Southern Guinea, seven of the eight people infected with Ebola since last February have died. About 800 people have been vaccinated over the past week. Although there is no universally accepted Ebola vaccine on the open market, the one that has been used in Guinea has proved to be “‘highly effective in preventing Ebola infection in a large trial.’” On a similar note, Liberia has been declared Ebola free twice, only to have been proven wrong twice. Liberia was declared free of Ebola May 2015 as well as September 2015. On March 25, the World Health Organization announced that Ebola had once again reemerged in Liberia in a 30 year old woman who died from the disease. Measures are being taken to keep the disease from being widespread again, by tracking any people who had been in close contact with her.

WHO (World Health Organization) tweeted, “#Ebola is no longer a public health emergency of Intl Concern; but flare-ups, at decreasing frequency, are expected.” This shows that the world should no longer fear a pandemic, but the disease is not yet over. People in Africa are still suffering, and attention needs to be brought to it. Although I’m not happy that Ebola is still prevalent the public is aware and people are still trying to vaccinate against it and do everything in their power to stop the disease. Due to a lack of knowledge, I cannot find any connection of this article to a Shakespeare play.

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Group 2

Region: Sub-Saharan Africa

Topic: Al-Shabaab child soldiers

Article: [Al-Shabaab child soldiers captured in Somalia firefight](http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/31/africa/al-shabaab-child-soldiers/index.html)

Source: CNN

Date: April 1, 2016

On the night of March 14, hundreds of Al-Shabaab fighters fought on the sea against Abdiweli Gaas, president of Puntland, and his security forces. About 200-300 of the Al-Shabaab soldiers died, but up to 100 of them surrendered, knowing that they were overpowered. The prisoners were brought to Puntland, a semi-autonomous state in Somalia. There the soldiers were found to be incredibly young. The article states, “These were children. Many of the fighters did not look as though they'd seen their 13th birthdays.” The young prisoners also had multiple battle scars from previous fights, and some even admitted to being part of the “previous Al-Shabaab attacks, such as a recent deadly attack on a Kenyan African Union base in southern Somalia.” Gaas is interviewing the kids, and has found that most of them had been abducted and forced to fight. The kids are taken at an early age and brainwashed, “because they have little or no sense of their own mortality.” They’re useful when attacking citizens because they are not suspected by the public and fit in very well, aiding in the element of surprise. Although Al-Shabaab has used child soldiers before, AS has never used them in such sheer numbers. CNN has been told that there are currently about 60 child soldiers being held in Puntland. This could show that AS is losing adults or having trouble recruiting them or that AS is preparing the next generation to fight.

This article strikes me very close to home, and I am strongly against using child soldiers for terrorist attacks. The children that have been forced to fight are *my* age, if not younger. Imagining my entire grade level fighting in war, *dying*, is very sad, and I feel sympathy for these child soldiers. They’re lives have been stolen from them, and they’ve been brainwashed into believing horrible things. Gaas said, "It's very important that they will be well treated. This will be more productive in terms of ensuring that these children don't go back, and also understanding why they joined in the first place, which could be useful as part of broader efforts to fight the phenomenon of kids being sucked into these situations." I’m glad that the children are being taken care of, and I hope that they can one day be happy and safe. Due to insufficient knowledge, I am not able to compare this article to a Shakespearean play.