

Embassy Press Clippings – Friday, 17 January 2025

Foreign Politics

China is mobilising the Global South, but is it for peace in Ukraine?

After last year's brilliant success of Chinese diplomacy in reconciling centuries-old ethnic and religious rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, the world was expecting Beijing to take on another Gordian knot — Russia's war against Ukraine. But over time, hopes gave way to disappointment. The 6-Point Consensus initiative, allegedly developed jointly with Brazil, seemed too vague and unspecific. At times, it seemed more like an initiative for the sake of an initiative; China's desire to meet the expectations that prevailed in many countries of the South. There was also criticism of the Chinese plan on both sides of the front. But it seems that the situation is beginning to change dramatically. China is trying to take advantage of the current electoral uncertainty in the United States and get serious about ending the war in Ukraine, preventing even a hypothetical peacekeeper from taking the peacemaking laurels of the current or future White House administration.

[Mail & Guardian](#), 17/01/2024

Domestic Politics

Parliament calls for effective execution of the Bela Act

PARLIAMENT is expecting the Department of Basic Education to implement the Basic Education Laws Amendment (Bela) Act without any excuses. This was the word from the basic education portfolio committee chairperson, Joy Maimela, when she was fielding questions from the media during the weekly committee cluster media briefing in Parliament yesterday. "We engaged the department on the state of readiness and they assured us that they are prepared," Maimela said. She noted that the Bela Act introduced significant reforms on key provisions that included compulsory Grade R, language and admission policy changes.

[The Star](#), 17/01/2024

Bela Act: legal threats

The proclamation of the Basic Education Laws Amendment (Bela) Act is not rational and it was a "political consideration" which swayed the president to sign sections four and five of the Bill, according to lobby groups opposed to the Act. Solidarity's Werner Human said yesterday: "In letters, we request the president to provide reasons – in terms of the Administrative Justice Act – within 10 days why the proclamation notice [to implement Bela Act in its entirety] was signed. "We believe the signing of this notice on the basis of all the work we have done for three months and before would be irrational and reviewable." AfriForum, Solidarity, and the Solidarity Support Centre for Schools have given Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube and President Cyril Ramaphosa 10 days to resolve the dispute or they will challenge it legally.

[The Citizen](#), 17/01/2024

OPINION: SA's pro-rights stance often falls short when the need for protection of dignity arises at home

As a relatively young nation, one of the attributes we pride ourselves on is our ubuntu. We are a people who – partly because of our traumatic history and what others did for us in those hours of need – are always among the first to demonstrate human solidarity in times of tragedy. As most of the world celebrates a historic ceasefire that would hopefully be the first step towards lasting peace in Palestine, SA's vocal role in trying to stop the bombardments that had cost thousands of lives will not go unnoticed. However, there's an argument to be made that SA's intervention – which included approaching the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to demand that Israel stop what SA and others have described as genocide – played a big role in forcing Benjamin Netanyahu's government to the negotiating table. Many commentators and activists have, over the past year, expressed pride over SA's courage to stand up to Israel. Yet, we continue to suffer tragedies, some self-inflicted, that leave one wondering if this reputation of a world champion of human rights is deserved.

[Sowetan](#), 17/01/2024

Economy, Energy, Climate & Agriculture

SA's World Economic Forum team optimistic about economic growth

The South African delegation heading to the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting says the country has a positive economic growth message to share, albeit with some caution over "structural issues" that need to be overcome. Trade, industry and competition minister Parks Tau said on Thursday that the mood prior to the annual meeting is "fundamentally different" this year and not only is there optimism within South Africa, the country's global counterparts are also optimistic about its future. "We are going into next week in that environment. We have the opportunity to present ourselves for who we are, the opportunities we are able to present, but also the opportunities that are available in our country,"

[Mail & Guardian](#), 16/01/2024

Amsa closure: 16,000 automotive jobs at risk

The loss of long steel production at ArcelorMittal SA's (Amsa) Newcastle plant could cost up to 16,000 jobs in the local automotive components industry, slash vehicle exports and wreck plans to localise the industry. That was the stark warning on Thursday from Renai Moothilal, CEO of the National Association of Automotive Component and Allied Manufacturers (Naacam). Exports account for two-thirds of the local motor industry's production. In 2024, the total was 308,830. Describing Amsa's plan as "alarming", he said the company was the sole domestic supplier of about 70,000 tonnes of speciality long steel grades supplied annually to the SA motor industry. Some of that was used to make unique components for export customers, including electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers in the US.

[Business Day](#), 17/01/2024

Verschiedenes

'Why did they hate us so?' HOLOCAUST: KIDS IN DEATH CAMPS, BUT THEY SURVIVED EVIL TO TELL THEIR HORROR TALES Those not killed straight away became slaves of the SS butchers.

They were four years old, 15 or only seven months when they were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald and Ravensbruck. Some were even born there. Somehow they survived, began their lives again and had children themselves. Now, in the evening of their lives, about 40 survivors of the Nazi camps agreed to talk as the world marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the most notorious of the extermination camps. In 15 countries, from South Africa to Canada, Israel to Poland, Russia to Argentina, they sat in front of AFP's cameras to tell their stories, alone or surrounded by their children – proof of their victory over absolute evil.

[The Citizen](#), 17/01/2024