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GERMANY ACKNOWLEDGES NAMIBIAN GENOCIDE

After a hundred years of denial, Germany has formally acknowledged its role in the ethnic cleansing of thousands of Herero and Nama people during the early 20th century. Further, Berlin has pledged \$1.35 billion in reparations to Namibia over the next three decades. However, skeptics claim the restitution does not go far enough, partly because none of it will go directly to descendants of the victims of the atrocity, who were not included in the arrangement recently concluded between Berlin and Windhoek.

For Germany, the policy shift is strategic. Mending long-difficult relations with the southern African nation may help Germany - and through it the larger European Union - to counter China's expanding influence on the continent. This is because Namibia has for years had a *laissez faire* attitude toward small-scale loans, forcing smaller businesses and farmers to obtain private sector financial assistance (including from companies connected to Beijing). Germany's reparations will thus provide a cheaper and more accessible avenue to get aid to poorer Namibians. (*Smithsonian*, June 4, 2021)

CONGOLESE FLEE TO RWANDA

Following the May eruption of the Mount Nyiragongo volcano, refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo have fled to neighboring Rwanda by the thousands. Homes in the border city of Goma have been destroyed, leaving many destitute. The influx of Congolese into Rwanda, however, comes amid strained relations between the two countries - a result of what the DRC sees as atrocities committed by the Rwandan government in the east of the country. It is as yet unclear how this refugee movement will impact bilateral relations, but the potential fallout could be significant. Presently, there are already roughly 75,000 people from the DRC actively seeking or taking refuge in Rwanda. (*CNN*, May 22, 2021)

THE WEST RETURNS TO LIBYA

Some seven years after their closure due to Libya's civil war, a number of Western nations have reopened their diplomatic missions in the North African nation. Spain, Greece, and France have all reestablished their embassies in Tripoli as part of an effort to bolster the country's interim government, which continues to battle the forces of opposition warlord Khalifa Haftar. A UN-brokered ceasefire has stopped most of the fighting in Libya, paving the way for a return of the countries which intervened militarily in 2011 to prevent human rights abuses on the part of the government of Muammar Khaddafi. Haftar's military capabilities and the resilience of his offensive, however, remain a real stumbling block to stability in the war-torn nation. (*Washington Post*, June 3, 2021)

FLASHPOINT: GERD

Negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD) faltered in early June. Ethiopia is now filling the reservoir for the second time, despite objections from the international community. Specifically, Tunisia is pressing the UN Security Council to pass a resolution that "calls upon [Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan] to refrain from making any statements, or taking any action that may jeopardize the negotiation process, and urges Ethiopia to refrain from continuing to unilaterally fill the GERD reservoir." Ethiopian officials have rejected the initiative, however, and maintain that GERD development does not "fall within the purview of the council."

The Dam is key to Ethiopia's economic development, but Egypt fears its construction will endanger its access to Nile River water supply, which is vital to over 90% of the Egyptian population. Meanwhile, Sudan is concerned about the dam's safety and overflow, and is siding with Egypt in the dispute. Sudan's concerns have also been exacerbated by decades-old border tensions with Ethiopia, in which Ethiopian farmers have settled on land that Sudanese claim as theirs. (Reuters, July 7, 2021)

NEW LIFE FOR A CHINA-FUNDED PORT IN TANZANIA

A previously-stalled joint venture between the Chinese and Tanzanian governments to build a port along the Indian Ocean may soon be revived. Tanzania's President, Samia Suluhu Hassan, said that his country is seeking to resuscitate the Bagamoyo Port project, a \$10 billion redesign of the current facility, which is located outside the capital of Dar es Salaam. The initial plan for the effort was formulated in 2013 by the former President, Jakaya Kikwete, and the state-owned China Merchants Holdings International. However, the effort stalled and was ultimately abandoned. The project was revisited by Kikwete's successor, John Magufuli. Magufuli died from complications related to COVID-19 earlier this year, and the current president has now signaled plans to "start talks with the investors that came for the project with the aim of opening it for the benefit of our nation." (*Nikkei Asia*, June 27, 2021; Reuters, June 26, 2021)