

THE 50

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MOST INFLUENTIAL AFRICANS

By **Thano Bhebhe** in Harare **Parselelo Kantai** in Nairobi, **Alex Macbeth, Billie McTernan, Prince Ofori-Atta, Crystal Ordeson** in Cape Town **Nicholas Norbrook, Patrick Smith, Zainab Usman, Marshall Van Valen, Gemma Ware**

Our list of influential people will certainly be disagreed with. Why is this fantastic woman not included? How could this master-of-the-universe have been forgotten? This debate is certainly more important than our own selection, and we encourage you to continue your arguments and propose new candidates on our website, www.theafricareport.com.

In the meantime, we want to outline two caveats and explain our method. First, we preferred to look at less well-known people: not the usual suspects who appear regularly in the media and stamp the conference circuits. We do however have an 'A-list' of the great and the good. And, for balance, we also have a list of the bad and the ugly, those whose influence is more negative and are under investigation or indictment.

Second, we wanted to present exemplars of trends that we feel have resonance beyond the individual selected. For example, the reach of religion, or the renaissance of Africa's think tanks. There are any number of imams and priests and healers who have a huge influence on their followers – but we have included just one representative. Likewise, Africa's intellectuals and activists, a vital part of the upending of the corrupt establishment in North Africa, continue to make their mark felt. We have space for just one think tank, from Ghana, that continues to publish influential reports on inflated costs in the oil sector, keenly noted and perhaps emulated by Nigerian civil society.

There are also Africans who run institutions that make a real difference to the day-to-day life of their co-citizens, such as the competition commission in South Africa.

To put together the list, we reached out to the lifeblood of this magazine, our correspondents, who in turn reached out to their networks on the ground. We called on partner organisations and publications. The long list stretches into several hundred worthy candidates. Only 50 made the final cut. ●