

The World Humanities Report

# Troubling South-South Solidarity

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# Troubling South-South Solidarity

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Whether as a by-product of fraught and violent histories like the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trade (sometimes referred to as the Arab slave trade) or as a result of more recent migrations for labor, business, or other forms of self- and familial actualization, Arab and African worlds are inextricably linked. Certainly, in many communities “it would be difficult to even distinguish who is ‘African’ from who is ‘Arabian.’”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the histories that have engendered these dynamics, while allowing for cultural, economic, political, and religious ties that have endured for centuries, do not broadly shore up feelings of immediate unity between African and Arab worlds, even when captured under the broad banner of South-South solidarity. This disjuncture notwithstanding, the twentieth-century movement for Global South solidarity is championed at various levels by a plethora of institutions—including the United Nations and academic centers such as the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa and the Arab Council for the Social Sciences. Even those that are grassroots in nature, including many social movements, take up South-South solidarity as immanent to their practices, drawing inspiration from the 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, and principally what Robert Vitalis calls the “fables of Bandung.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite the wide purchase of the Global South or South-South alliance framing, the bids for African-Arab solidarity are troubled by historical and ongoing situated and global events. In an attempt to critically interrogate these appeals for an automatic unity without substantive reflections on the histories that challenge these claims, this essay is oriented around the following questions: How has, in particular, African-Arab solidarity been experienced, and what are the racializations that are part of these processes? What historical factors continue to limit this solidarity? And, above all, what possibilities exist to create critical collaborations that reflect on and decolonize racial hierarchies? I reflect on these questions over the three broad sections that organize the essay. The first section, “Arab Worlds in Africa,” attempts to broadly map out the various articulations

<sup>1</sup> Dalia Awad, “Nation Building and Legacies of Slavery: The Intersections of Being Black and Arab in the Gulf,” *Scene Arabia*, September 3, 2020, <https://scenearabia.com/Life/The-Intersections-of-Being-Black-and-Arab-in-the-Gulf>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Vitalis, “The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah and Other Fables of Bandung (Ban-doong),” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4, no. 2 (2011): 261–88.

of the Arab presence on the continent. The second section, “African Lives in the Middle East and the Arab Worlds of Africa,” traces African existences past and present in various countries across these regions. Both of these sections make evident a continuous flow of encounters beyond but still shaped by the slave trade. The final section, borrowing from an article of the same name, is titled “A Solidarity Shackled by History”<sup>3</sup> and reflects, through a personal narrative, on the enduring challenges to progressive African–Arab cooperation. I conclude by highlighting possible steps toward actualization of more critical encounters for a decolonial South–South solidarity, which will require more critical practices, more troubling.

### Arab Worlds in Africa

Metal chains used to shackle the enslaved can still be found in Zanzibar, and they are memorialized and endure side by side with a culture where Arab influence—in the built environment, genetic and kinship ties, Islam, and spice economies—is celebrated. These coexisting and contiguous presences embody the contradictions in the recognition of Arab histories in Africa: there are widespread links that should enable “cooperation and solidarity” but also the “black spot” that is the slave trade.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly, the links between the Middle East and Africa extend over twelve centuries. Particular to Arab worlds in Africa, Abdul Jalloh documents that “already in the fifth and sixth centuries Arabia and Ethiopia had very close ties. The Prophet Muhammad used to advise his most trustworthy followers whom he wanted to protect to take refuge in Ethiopia in order to escape persecution from the pagans in Mecca.” Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632, there was more migration of Arabs to North Africa, “and by the eleventh century the Arabization of the Maghreb had considerably advanced . . . a general push began southwards from Egypt, Libya and the Maghreb.” Concomitant to these migrations was the spread of Islam, which was, despite its contemporary prominence, a contested process: it was resisted by various African nations such as the Hausa, Bambara, and Mossi. Even so, the spread of Islam, the violence of

<sup>3</sup> Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights McGill and Sarah Shamy, “A Solidarity Shackled by History: How Black–Arab Relations Can Be Maintained,” *McGill Daily*, February 16, 2019, <https://www.mcgilldaily.com/2019/02/a-solidarity-shackled-by-history/>.

<sup>4</sup> Abdul Jalloh, “The Policies of Black African States towards the Arab World: An Overview,” in *Historical and Socio-Cultural Relations between Black Africa and the Arab World from 1935 to the Present: Report and Papers of the Symposium Organized by UNESCO in Paris from 25 to 27 July 1979* (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 17.

slavery, and other economic exchanges contributed to the construction of cities along the East African coastline, such as Mogadishu, Kilwa, and Mombasa. As a consequence of these expansionist and forceful flows of people and goods, “Arab presence stretched over long distances, from Senegal across the savannah to the Red Sea and down the east coast from Ethiopia to Tanzania.”<sup>5</sup>

These movements ensured the development of specific Arab-anchored cultures in North Africa and coastal African Arab communities along the eastern side of the African continent. In these latter spaces, African identities were brought together with Arab-influenced cultural practices patently visible in the language, religion, and built environment (as just a few examples) of these coastal peoples. A key site where these “Arab worlds” congregated was in Zanzibar, which was an overseas province of Oman from 1698 until the early twentieth century.

More recently in West Africa, the largest and most well-known group of Arab settlers began arriving from Lebanon in the late nineteenth century. Although their destinations were mostly the Americas, some passengers disembarked in West Africa after France, often without the knowledge that their destination was still thousands of miles away. Others were left behind unknowingly, after taking a rest from the long journey in African ports. Through these unexpected events, Lebanese dreams of North America or Brazil were replanted in countries like Ivory Coast and Ghana. Today, it is estimated that there are 100,000 Lebanese descendants in Ivory Coast, 7,000 in Ghana, and between 220,000 and 270,000 on the continent of Africa as whole.<sup>6</sup>

For the most part, Arab worlds on the continent are maintained primarily in North Africa, countries which, along with Comoros, Somalia, and Djibouti in the east, evidence and sustain this connection to the Middle East by their participation in the Arab League and regional Arab-speaking political and economic organizations. At the same time, coastal Afro-Arab peoples who can trace ancestors to Yemen, Oman, Iran, and elsewhere memorialize their connection to Arab lineages through dominant institutions such as religion and in everyday practices and customs. The language of Swahili, a product of “Bantu” and Arabic encounters, is spoken across seven countries in East and Central Africa, evoking vernacular Arab worlds in this part of the continent.

On the political front, aid, trade, technical assistance, and other international relations imperatives have connected African liberation leaders and postcolonial

<sup>5</sup> Jalloh, “The Policies of Black African States,” 12.

<sup>6</sup> “From Lebanon to Africa,” Al Jazeera, October 28, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraaworld/2015/10/lebanon-africa-151027114653139.html>.

governments to states and sultanates in the Middle East for decades.<sup>7</sup> The articulations of these events are varied: they extend from aid for religious institutions and humanitarian crises to the leasing of farm land by Qatar in Kenya. Without a doubt, across centuries, there have been grounds for “cooperation and solidarity” even though, as we will see in the next section, the slave trade continues to shape how African worlds survive and are received in Arab territories.

## African Lives in the Middle East and the Arab Worlds of Africa

Since the seventh century, Africans have been living in the Middle East;<sup>8</sup> their descendants contribute to vibrant cultures but often live segregated lives in Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Palestine, and North Africa.<sup>9</sup> Although these African-descended communities are living testimony of the scale and effects of the slave trade, it is important to note that it is not only enslaved peoples that helped form them; beyond slave ships and routes, African merchants, sailors, and other adventurers sought lives and fortunes away from their homes, finding those taken through enslavement and collectively constituting Afro-Arab communities.

Overwhelmingly however, it was, as in the Americas, the violent traffic of enslaved people that created little Africas in the region: “eight million Africans were brought from East Africa via the Trans-Saharan route to Morocco or Egypt [and] a further nine million were deported to regions on the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean.”<sup>10</sup> Beyond the visibility of those who live life “in the skin of a black” in Arab regions,<sup>11</sup> Africa is manifest in less recognized (or perhaps

<sup>7</sup> Ali Mazrui, “Africa and the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” in *Historical and Socio-Cultural Relations between Black Africa and the Arab World from 1935 to the Present*, 73–82; Vitalis, “The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah.”

<sup>8</sup> Silja Frohlich, “East Africa’s Forgotten Slave Trade,” Deutsche Welle, August 22, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/east-africas-forgotten-slave-trade/a-50126759>; Beeta Baghoolizadeh, “The Afro-Iranian Community: Beyond Haji Firuz Blackface, the Slave Trade, & Bandari Music,” Ajam Music Collective, June 20, 2012, <https://ajammc.com/2012/06/20/the-afro-iranian-community-beyond-haji-firuz-blackface-slavery-bandari-music/>.

<sup>9</sup> Baghoolizadeh, “The Afro-Iranian Community”; Laura Menin, “Being ‘Black’ in North Africa and the Middle East,” openDemocracy, February 12, 2018, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/being-black-in-north-africa-and-middle-east/>.

<sup>10</sup> Frohlich, “East Africa’s Forgotten Slave Trade.”

<sup>11</sup> Laura Menin, “In the Skin of a Black: Senegalese Students and Young Professionals in Rabat,” openDemocracy, February 13, 2018, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/in-skin-of-black-senegalese-students-and-young-professionals-in-rabat/>.

intentionally misrecognized) ways, for example, in the Bandari music of Iran,<sup>12</sup> despite state projects for homogenization that may seek to deny ethnic difference through “color-blind” policies.<sup>13</sup>

More recent migrations, particularly for labor, to Lebanon, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, as just a few examples, have increased African presence in the region, leading Summaya Kassamali to question: “Who is the Middle East?” If roughly one in ten people living in the region is an “international migrant,” the author argues that we cannot continue to identify the area as solely ethnically Arab. In attending to this question in Lebanon, Kassamali points to the large presence of Ethiopian and South Asian workers and insists that even as they are denied recognition and citizenship and are confined to menial labor, they are “central to any understanding of Lebanese society.”<sup>14</sup>

Yet, even after centuries of African presence in the Middle East, African communities remain marginal to discussions about identity and citizenship.<sup>15</sup> Similar concerns

are raised in North Africa. Citing Moroccan historian Chouki El Hamel, Laura Menin discusses the overall “culture of silence” that has “long prevented these countries from engaging with, and discussing overtly, questions of race, slavery, and color.”<sup>16</sup> Fortifying this “culture of silence” is the “perpetual foreignness” of those who are Black in what is seen as the Arab world.<sup>17</sup> The color hierarchies that these dynamics entrench also establish the undesirability of Blackness on

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Despite the increasing prominence of Black activism(s), and against centuries of anti-Black racism in the Middle East, is a critical and sustained African-Arab solidarity possible?

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<sup>12</sup> Baghoolizadeh, “The Afro-Iranian Community”; Kamyar Jahrazadeh, “Music and Race Politics in the Iranian Persian Gulf: Shanbehzadeh and ‘Bandari,’” *Ajam Media Collective*, February 8, 2013, <https://ajammc.com/2013/02/08/music-and-race-politics-in-the-persian-gulf-shanbehzadeh-and-bandari-music/>.

<sup>13</sup> For more on this in Tunisia, see Afifa Ltifi, “Black Tunisians and the Pitfalls of Bourguiba’s Homogenization Project,” *Project of Middle East Political Science*, July 16, 2020, <https://pomeps.org/black-tunisians-and-the-pitfalls-of-bourguibas-homogenization-project>; and in Iran, see Baghoolizadeh, “The Afro-Iranian Community.”

<sup>14</sup> Summaya Kassamali, “Migrant Worker Lifeworlds of Beirut” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Kassamali, “Migrant Worker Lifeworlds of Beirut”; see also Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Menin, “Being ‘Black’ in North Africa.”

<sup>17</sup> Ltifi, “Black Tunisians and the Pitfalls.”

scales both public and intimate in the Maghreb, but also in Sudan,<sup>18</sup> as just one example in “sub-Saharan” Africa. Speaking about her native Tunisia, Afifa Ltifi states that Black bodies carry not only “the weight of a suppressed history of slavery but also its racialization and the materiality of blackness that is both fundamentally migratory and thoroughly equated with slavery in a continent where blackness is supposedly indigenous.” This observation can be extended to other Afro-Arab world spaces. What’s more, such an “out of place” position of Blackness intersects with socioeconomic and political deprivation.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, without a doubt, even though not all Black people in the region are the kin of those who were enslaved, not all descendants of enslaved people are Black, and not all Afro-Arab experiences are equal,<sup>20</sup> Blackness and enslavement remain closely associated, denying many forms of citizenship to those of African descent.<sup>21</sup>

But global and local events have contributed toward uprooting this “culture of silence” and have brought to the fore many of its grave anti-Black articulations across the region. Menin points to the role of the magazine *Jeune Afrique* in the Maghreb and the revolutions that have taken place since 2010 in Tunisia and Morocco in furnishing space for “unprecedented forms of black activism.”<sup>22</sup> Luca Nevola highlights similar dynamics in Yemen, and Khalid Albaiah speaks of a “Black Lives Matter moment in Sudan” enabled by the 2019 protests that led to the fall of the military dictatorship.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time as we recognize the importance of these events, we must ask: Despite the increasing prominence of Black activism(s), and against centuries of anti-Black racism in the Middle East, is a critical and sustained African-Arab solidarity possible?

<sup>18</sup> See Khalid Albaiah, “Do Black Lives Matter in Sudan?,” Al Jazeera, August 14, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/black-lives-matter-sudan-200813141537238.html>; Sebatso Manoeli, “We Have No Harlem in Sudan,” *Africa Is a Country*, June 29, 2020, <https://africasacountry.com/2020/06/we-have-no-harlem-in-sudan>.

<sup>19</sup> Ltifi, “Black Tunisians and the Pitfalls.” For this in Morocco, see Menin, “Being ‘Black’ in North Africa”; in Lebanon, Kassamali, “Migrant Worker Lifeworlds of Beirut.”

<sup>20</sup> Awad, “Nation Building and Legacies of Slavery.”

<sup>21</sup> Menin, “Being ‘Black’ in North Africa.”

<sup>22</sup> Menin, “Being ‘Black’ in North Africa.”

<sup>23</sup> Luca Nevola, “On Color and Origin: The Case of the Akhdam in Yemen,” openDemocracy, February 13, 2018, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/on-colour-and-origin-case-of-akhdam-in-yemen>; Albaiah, “Do Black Lives Matter in Sudan?”



## “A Solidarity Shackled by History”

In January 2020, I was invited to take part in a forum in Tunisia that focused broadly on South-South solidarity, but with a keen focus on possibilities for critical people-centered alliances between Asia and Africa. It was interesting that to get from Nairobi to Tunisia, on the same continent, I had to fly through the Middle East. Though we are part of the same African Union, somehow, the plane circuitries from “sub-Saharan” Africa to the north of the continent require a stop in an Arab metropole, formalizing this distinction between the North and the rest of Africa beyond the cultural and language differences that already exist. What’s more, while non-African colleagues could acquire a visa on arrival in Tunisia, with my Kenyan passport I could not. Instead, I was subject to a hazy and protracted visa process contingent on whether I would receive “approval” from Tunis; after handing in my documents at the Tunisian embassy in Nairobi, the only instructions I was given were to “wait.”

Once at the forum, a plethora of discussions took place. Yet amid the theoretical analyses of struggles, the powerful reflections and visual depictions of the “springs” in Tunisia and Morocco and the people versus state power marches in Lebanon, the presence of Africa, demanded at the very least by our location and the title of the workshop (which had Africa as a keyword), was underappreciated. Instead, a critical Africa, which could not be easily annexed by uncritical claims for solidarity, was pushed off the stage to make way for romantic rhetorical claims about a continent that had “deep connections” to, in particular, the Middle East. Needless to say, the violences that occasioned many of these links were silenced.

One presentation did seek to dwell on the more troubling aspects of African-Arab relations. These troubling moments are the grounded, everyday moments that are not theoretical and are not captured in “spring” actions on the street. They cannot be framed comfortably by the romance of Bandung or by ubiquitous chants and slogans for solidarity. This presenter began with this invocation from Frantz Fanon:

How come I have barely opened my eyes they had blindfolded, and they already want to drown me in the universal? And what about the others? Those “who have no mouth,” those “who have no voice.” I need to lose myself in my negritude and see the ashes, the segregation, the repression, the rapes, the discrimination, and the boycotts. We need to touch with our finger all the wounds that score out black livery.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (1952; New York: Grove Press, 2008), 163–64.

By heeding this prompt, the presenter questioned the “universal” and the attempts to render oppression invisible in calls for a broad solidarity, when we have not made efforts, whether at this conference or in much of the activist work represented in the room, to “touch with our fingers all of the wounds that score out black livery.” Extended to this forum on African–Asian solidarity, this passage brought the conversation back to the “black spots” that overshadow South–South alliances and principally the “culture of silence” that haunts African–Arab collaborations. It asked us to question the universal claims of unity by reflecting on anti-Black racism, past and present, in the Middle East and Arab worlds in Africa. We were asked to reflect on the colorism and differential treatment of Afro-Arabs even in Palestine, the desperate struggles of African workers and migrants in these regions, and in Africa, the coded and discursive emasculation of Arab men by vernacular narratives, which also positioned them as cunning and untrustworthy.<sup>25</sup> By immersing ourselves in these experiences we cannot, the presenter asserted, engage in taken-for-granted calls for solidarity while we continue to live the impacts and afterlives of the Arab slave trade in Africa.

This presentation was met with what a recent article has called Arab “denial, defensiveness and obfuscation.”<sup>26</sup> Instead of focusing on the wounds that Fanon underscored, the question of slavery was inverted to explain how referring to it excludes Arab activists from Black activism. That is, these activists responded to the presentation by centering themselves, and only themselves, and did not take the time to reflect on how they had, by omission or intention, been part of denying the need to address anti-Blackness in their present or future work. As a result, the lives of Afro-Arabs in Kuwait, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere in the region will remain in the shadows. Because of the participants’ unwillingness to productively engage with the provocations posed by the presentation, discussion was pushed to the next day and then subsequently cancelled by the organizers. Certainly, despite the objectives of the forum and the abundant bromides at the gathering about the universality of African–Arab unity and the “movement of darker nations,”<sup>27</sup> we learned once again that such solidarity will remain “shackled by history” until the “black spots” are purposefully addressed.

<sup>25</sup> See Dunstan Wai, “Afro-Arab Relations: Misplaced Optimism,” in *Historical and Socio-Cultural Relations between Black Africa and the Arab World from 1935 to the Present*, 47–72.

<sup>26</sup> SPHR McGill and Shamy, “A Solidarity Shackled by History.”

<sup>27</sup> Vitalis, “The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah.”

## Conclusion: How Do We Move Forward?

In 1979, a UNESCO symposium in Paris was tasked with looking into the following questions:

What is an Arab? What distinguishes the Arabs of African countries from those of other regions? To what extent and up to what point have life on the African continent and ties with other Africans affected their culture, religion, etc., creating a difference or a distinction between African Arabs and the Arabs of other regions? What are the relations between pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism and pan-Africanism? What are the relations between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Arab League?<sup>28</sup>

The symposium's attention to these questions led to the publication of a book titled *Historical and Socio-Cultural Relations between Black Africa and the Arab World from 1935 to the Present*. Instructive about the histories and potential of these sociocultural relations, the book was also cognizant of the challenges that remained: above all, racism. Jalloh's contribution to the volume mentioned broad Arab support for African liberation struggles that was "formalized at the Arab heads of state conferences in Algiers in November 1973" and called for the breaking of diplomatic ties with Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia. Jalloh also reflected on the Afro-Arab summit conference in Cairo in 1977, which enabled "the pinnacle of Afro-Arab cooperation." At the same time, he also concluded that "another point that deserves attention is the fate of Africans in countries that are largely Arab."<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, Dunstan Wai's contribution reflected on state-to-state Afro-Arab relations, even as he conceded that "any attempt to analyse the multifarious social, political and economic factors that provide a more or less tenable basis for future co-operation between Black Africa and the Arab Middle East is a difficult exercise. The existing literature on the subject is rhetorical, fragmentary and diffuse, and many events within African and Arab countries constantly defy prediction." Moreover, the author's conclusions in this essay, written nearly five decades ago, continue to ring true today:

<sup>28</sup> UNESCO, *Historical and Socio-Cultural Relations between Black Africa and the Arab World. From 1935 to the Present. Reports and Papers of the Symposium Organized by UNESCO in Paris from 25 to 27 July 1979* (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 9.

<sup>29</sup> Jalloh, "The Policies of Black African States," 24, 23.

A critical examination of Afro-Arab relations tends to show that the optimism that has been voiced is misplaced. The nature of the historical relationship between the Arab world and Africa is lopsided: whereas Arabs have been able to penetrate Africa, Africans have not counter-penetrated the Arab world. African memories of the slave activities of Arabs in Africa are deep and they tend to inhibit candid communications and a free flow of ideas between the two peoples. Moreover, the apparently condescending Arab attitude towards Africans compounds the difficulties in evolving a positive relationship. Negative psychological predispositions on both sides will continue to hamper development of closer horizontal and vertical relationships. The lack of mutual knowledge and respect, and the absence of a genuine commitment to correct this problem will hinder transactions and interactions among Arabs and Africans in the future.<sup>30</sup>

We are now in this future of “hindered interactions.” The African Union can make statements about the killing of George Floyd in the United States, but there is no mention of the grave conditions of African workers in the Middle East. African countries will still, through multilateral bodies such as the UN and in grassroots movements, overwhelmingly support Palestine,<sup>31</sup> but the “culture of silence” about virulent anti-Black racism remains in Sudan, Libya, Lebanon, and elsewhere in the Arab world. Above all, the “absence of a genuine commitment to correct this problem,” as Wai conveyed, continues to make mutual solidarity movements more mythical than real.

But there are openings. African descendants in Iran, Kuwait, Yemen, Tunisia, and across the Arab world are increasingly demanding and bringing forward necessary conversations.<sup>32</sup> These efforts take on identity, citizenship, and beyond, working to trouble and build bridges for this history. As subjects who are both Black and Arab drive these openings, their life narratives highlight the duress of such a position, but also show that it is possible to be both Black and Arab, to claim possibilities for more positive African-Arab futures. In addition, an increased global focus on racism and anti-Blackness, coupled with people-centered uprisings in Africa and across the Middle East, challenge uncritical calls for the “universal,” holding a microscope to all that diminishes

<sup>30</sup> Wai, “Afro-Arab Relations,” 46, 68.

<sup>31</sup> Sitinga Katchipande, “Africa Stands with Palestine at the UN,” *AllAfrica News*, December 5, 2012, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201212051580.html>; Susan Abulhawa, “Confronting Anti-Black Racism in the Arab World,” *Al Jazeera*, July 7, 2013, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/06/201362472519107286.html>.

<sup>32</sup> See Ltifi, “Black Tunisians and the Pitfalls”; Albaiah, “Do Black Lives Matter in Sudan?”; Behdad Mahichi, “We Are Part of the Tapestry: Black Iranians Launch Collective,” *Al Jazeera*, September 2, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/09/part-tapestry-black-iranians-launch-collective-200901201145050.html>.

Black “livery”—the multiplicity of Black embodiments. In a less obvious and taken-for-granted manner, from the Afro-Arab players on the Saudi Arabian football team to the, often unquestioned, reverence for Muammar Gaddafi across generations on the African continent, seeds are planted, and encounters unfold that, however unevenly they are deployed, can build on previous efforts to sustain critical collaborations that reflect on and seek to decolonize hierarchies. Once we merge the histories of “cooperation and solidarity” with intentional attention to the “black spot[s]” that Jalloh highlighted, we can pave the way for an African-Arab solidarity that is more transformative than rhetorical.

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