

## Tsunami

“We’d normally be at Phuket,” Robert told me as we walked the long wide open Indian Ocean beach on the afternoon of the 26th. He and his family were visiting Tanzania after eight years working in Indonesia.

“Actually, this beach kind of reminds me of Phuket,” Luke interrupted to point out a blowfish struggling against a strong rip tide at our feet. “Wonder why he is going out. The tide should be coming in.” We know our tides these days - they dictate so much about our lives. A few feet further on he pointed to another fish gulping for air, stranded on the beach. “Never seen that before. Got to wonder how it got there.” Out to sea, a thousand miles to our east a giant wave, headed straight for us, rolled over an undersea mountain ridge that changed its course slightly to the north.

Two hours later, just as we were returning from our walk, hundreds of Somalians perished in that wave, while we here in Dar es Salaam were largely spared: 10 dead, hundreds of boats wrecked, thousands of tales of close calls and stories of oddly behaving tides. On December 26th, 2004 mankind heaved a collective sigh for the quarter of a million people who drew their final breaths in the waters of that wave. May God bless those who perished, and those they left behind.