



Wilson Center
Africa Program

Africa: Year in Review 2017

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Please note that the views expressed in these essays are solely the responsibility of the authors, and not those of the Wilson Center.

Cover image: Agriculture could play a critical role in unleashing Africa's development potential, including assuring the continent's food security and boosting youth employment rates. African women, who comprise more than half of the farmers on the continent, are the backbone of the agricultural sector. Any strategies to transform the sector should seek to address the key obstacles confronting them, including weak land security and tenure and poor access to finance, extension services, and agricultural inputs.

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Africa: Year in Review 2017

A Letter from the Director

The Wilson Center Africa Program asked policymakers, experts, and scholars to reflect on the most important and impactful developments on the continent and in U.S.-Africa relations in 2017. They responded with this collection of brief and insightful essays covering key developments in the political, economic, security, and social spheres.

Several issues and developments stood out, including the Trump Administration and Africa; Mugabe's ouster in Zimbabwe; the role of agriculture in Africa and in U.S.-Africa relations; the challenges and opportunities of elections and democratic governance in Africa; and youth and migration in Africa. Some of these issues are presented from a policy perspective and others from a very personal perspective following years of engagement with a country. In some cases, we had more than one contribution on a particular topic demonstrating points of agreement and, sometimes, disagreement on why and how a particular development resonated.

Several contributors focused on the strategic direction of U.S.-Africa relations under the Trump Administration, noting some concerns such as the number of vacant Africa-related senior positions at the U.S. Department of State and in ambassadorial positions. Others noted how the President's approach to North Korea has significant implications for Africa and for U.S.-Africa relations, while another contributor observed that the Trump Administration's lifting of full economic sanctions against Sudan is a major foreign policy step, but that progress requires more work. Others noted the key developments in Africa's agricultural sector in 2017, highlighting the opportunities for employment, trade, and development, even arguing for the sector to play a more central role in U.S.-Africa policy and relations.

Insecurity and its transnational implications was a topic of focus for several contributors. Key developments in 2017 included the rapid expansion of foreign military bases in Africa, as well as U.S. Army Africa's continued efforts to build partnerships and relationships with African countries to promote security cooperation and to help build the security capacities of African countries. Other contributors focused on terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel and the African response to this growing threat, while another contributor addressed the difficult question of whether Mali should consider negotiating with jihadists as part of the way forward. Others focused on the migrant crisis and expressed the hope that the shocking video of migrants being sold as slaves in Libya would serve as an inflection point for addressing the crisis. Another contributor, long engaged with South Sudan, offers a personal reflection on the realities of war and peace in Juba. In picking these developments as the most resonant, and highlighting some of the complexities, contributors also consider responses, including the roles of the G5 Sahel, the U.S. military, and international organizations in addressing insecurity and in promoting peace and security in Africa.

On the democracy and governance fronts it is clear that 2017 was a year of momentous developments. Morocco re-joined the African Union after a 33-year absence, and in doing so raised questions about the way forward on Western Sahara and on regional cooperation in North Africa, especially on security issues. Togo continued to face anti-government protests, with citizens decrying the three-term rule of President Gnassingbé and calling for term limits. Contributors argue that the handling of Togo's protests will have implications for Africa's democratic trajectory, particularly in the West Africa region. Meanwhile, Zimbabwe saw the end of an era with the ouster of President Robert Mugabe, a development that also raised critical questions about whether his removal would bring about much-needed transformation in Zimbabwe given ZANU-PF's continued hold on power. The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon persisted, raising troubling questions about inclusive governance, nation-building, and presidential tenures. Meanwhile, for one contributor, Kenya's 2017 election—noted for the historical decision by the Supreme Court to annul the results after finding significant irregularities—called into question the (proper) role of international observers in providing their imprimatur on whether elections were to be deemed free and fair.

A number of the contributions focus or touch on one of Africa's biggest, best, and underutilized resources: youth. The myths surrounding African youth are dispelled, and the challenges confronting them are highlighted. More importantly, potential solutions—including concrete ways to engage with this growing and important demographic—are provided.

The final piece of the volume highlights a major milestone for the African continent—2017 marked the 10th anniversary since the African Charter for Democracy, Elections, and Governance came into force. With so much of Africa's development hinging on good governance, the Charter is a powerful reminder of and opportunity to reflect on Africa's governance trajectory, including progress made and continuing challenges on the road to embedding and consolidating democratic governance. As we look ahead, this Charter reminds us of the demands and aspirations of millions of ordinary Africans for more people-centered, transparent, accountable, and (peaceful) elections and governance.

We hope you enjoy this collection of essays about key developments that occurred in 2017, and that reverberated both in Africa and in the continent's relations with rest of the world, including the United States. We express our gratitude to the authors for helping us to reflect on 2017, even as we look ahead to 2018.

Dr. Monde Muyangwa
Director, Africa Program

**U.S.-AFRICA RELATIONS AND
AFRICA'S EVOLVING ROLE IN THE
GLOBAL ARENA**

The Trump Administration and Africa

Reverend Eugène Goussikindey

As 2017 ends, the Trump administration is celebrating its first year in office. Those who are interested in Africa are cautiously waiting for a formal U.S. policy toward the continent. There appears to be an Africa vacuum. Among other things, the President has yet to appoint an Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. Perhaps, this is reflective of larger concerns about the role of the Department of State under the Trump administration. While we wait for clarification, the President's vision of Africa is showing in bits and pieces.

On September 20, 2017, during a working lunch with African leaders from Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Namibia, Senegal, Uganda, and South Africa, President Trump made some remarks that offer significant insight on his vision of Africa: "Africa has tremendous business potential. I have so many friends going to your countries, trying to get rich... it has a tremendous business potential and representing huge amounts of different markets. And for American firms it's really become a place that they have to go — that they want to go." Can African leaders become "partners for promoting prosperity and peace?"

A lunch with a handful of African presidents is not enough to strike a deal with a continent of fifty-four countries now engaged in developing economic partnerships with other regions, including the makings of continental partnerships with China and Japan, both of which are racing to tap into Africa's "tremendous business potential." The Trump administration's Africa priorities seem clear in the security realm. However, if things are left in the hands of the military, the situation could lead to more military equipment, more drone bases, and more training and joint exercises. For America to succeed in Africa, a comprehensive policy that fits a competitive business environment is needed. Such an approach must also engage with both Africa's challenges and opportunities in the economic, security, and political spheres.

Of paramount importance to Africa's prosperity and peace, African leaders should assume what they already know: Africa has tremendous potential. With the growing need to offer hope and jobs to Africa's youth, African leaders should resist the temptation of over investing in the military to the detriment of promoting education, business, and the welfare of the people. African leaders should take note of key lessons from America, and do their part: wealth is at your feet and not in a distant land, diligently take charge, and act responsibly.

Challenging North Korea

Mr. Grant T. Harris

In his first year in office, President Trump staked out an unexpected priority for his Africa policy: sanctions against North Korea. Indeed, North Korea's ties to Africa are a weak spot in international sanctions enforcement, with 11 African states currently under UN investigation on suspicion of violations.

Though trade with Africa pales in comparison to Pyongyang's economic relationship with China, it nonetheless provides valuable hard currency that supports North Korea's weapons programs. In fact, according to the Observatory of Economic Complexity trade with some 30 African states provides approximately \$100 million to Kim Jong Un's regime each year.

Seeking to weaken these ties, President Trump hosted a lunch for African leaders at the UN and extolled them to "stand together and be accountable" in implementing sanctions. Similarly, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson discussed sanctions when meeting with visiting African ministers, and other administration officials have also prioritized the issue. Thanks in large part to U.S. efforts, various states, including Angola, Sudan, and Uganda, announced steps to cut back ties with Pyongyang.

The challenge is that North Korea's relationships with African states have, in many cases, been built on decades of bilateral cooperation rooted in shared ideological bonds, as well as economic and military ties. Clearly, these links will not be washed away overnight. Worse still, some African states have previously pledged to end cooperation with North Korea but have then not followed through on their commitments.

To counter North Korea's links to the continent, the United States will need to show itself to be an enduring and reliable partner to African states. Such an initiative requires seasoned diplomats, increased trade and investment, and strengthened security cooperation. Herein lies the dilemma: President Trump has proposed deep cuts in assistance to Africa, and left key Africa-related positions—including various ambassadorships—unfilled.

In short, the United States cannot expect short-term transactional diplomacy to outplay the many years that North Korea has spent forging relationships and selling cheap weapons in Africa. To convince African countries to unequivocally enforce sanctions against North Korea, the United States needs more diplomatic tools and resources, not fewer—and given North Korea's repeated provocations, it needs to act quickly.

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U.S.-Sudan Relations in 2017: Against All Odds

Ambassador Nureldin Satti

In January 2017, President Obama made a last-minute decision to partially lift the economic sanctions against Sudan, with consideration for full lifting of sanctions if Sudan met certain conditions. In October 2017, President Donald Trump decided to make final the lifting of those sanctions, quoting progress made by Sudan in complying with the five conditions that the U.S. had imposed regarding addressing human rights issues, cooperation in combatting terrorism, allowing passage for humanitarian assistance, and putting an end to the conflict in South Sudan.

Another significant improvement in U.S.-Sudan relations is the removal of Sudan from the list of states from which the citizens are submitted to special restrictions when applying for entry to the United States. However, Sudan has yet to be removed from the list of countries sponsoring or harboring terrorism. Without removal from that list, there can be no full normalization of U.S.-Sudan relations, as continued inclusion of Sudan in that list negatively impacts all other political and economic aspects of relations between the two countries.

In November 2017, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, John J. Sullivan, visited Sudan and made clear that among other things, his visit would address issues of radicalization and weeding out the root causes of religious extremism. He met with religious leaders and educators and encouraged them to implement reforms that can help eradicate religious extremism. While these "recommendations" were welcomed by part of the political and religious establishments, they were decried by others as interferences in the internal affairs of Sudan.

The anti-climax to those overtures came when President Al Bashir of Sudan visited Russia in November 2017 and requested President Putin to "protect Sudan from the United States," while accusing the U.S. of planning to divide Sudan into five countries. The Sudanese Foreign Minister, Ibrahim Ghandour, tried to minimize the significance of the President's statements, claiming the President was referring to the United States' past anti-Sudan positions in the UN Security Council. But observers are still speculating on the possible impacts of these statements on Sudan's relation with the U.S. and its allies in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt. President Trump's recent surprise decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel has added another layer of complication to U.S.-Sudan relations, Sudan being a staunch defender of the rights of the Palestinian people and of relevant international decisions and resolutions to that effect.

It is clear then that despite some positive steps in U.S.-Sudan relations in 2017, the two sides still have a lot to do to overcome historical, political and ideological hurdles hindering the full normalization of their relations.

An Important and Impactful Development in U.S.-Africa Relations in 2017

Dr. Mima S. Nedelcovych

Agriculture is powering economies across the African continent. The 2017 World Food Prize acknowledged this fact by honoring Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina, President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), as the 2017 World Food Prize Laureate, in a celebratory ceremony in mid-October in Des Moines, Iowa. The World Food Prize award demonstrated a growing recognition of the power of agriculture in creating economic prosperity in Africa and could serve as a pivotal point in shifting U.S.-Africa development priorities to focus more on Africa's agricultural transformation.

Dr. Adesina has leveraged his decades-long career at the Rockefeller Foundation, as Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture, and now as President of the African Development Bank, to push for a paradigm shift in approaching the agriculture sector from a "way of life" and development issue to a globally competitive business sector. His vision for revolutionizing agriculture into a business is making headway by expanding access to enhanced seeds, fertilizer, technologies and financing for African farmers, engaging the private sector, and creating a platform for African youth to build profitable businesses.

Indeed, agriculture offers tremendous potential for African countries to achieve key development goals and fuel inclusive growth across the continent. The agriculture sector employs some 65 percent of Africa's working age population, the World Bank estimates. Since the African continent sits on 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land, opportunity abounds for agribusinesses and agro-industry to create much needed and well-paid jobs in the agricultural value chain. Commodity-focused economies are no longer delivering big returns for Africa like they used to. Today, the continent must move beyond commodities to build economies that bring value addition through industrialization.

Accelerating job creation for millions of African youth cannot wait. The African Development Bank's "Jobs for Youth in Africa" report cites that some 10-12 million African youth are expected to enter the workforce each year across the continent. Attracting young people to pursue career and entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture is key in shaping Africa's prosperous future. We must start by shifting the perception of agriculture as backbreaking and hard labor work to showing that agripreneurship is profitable and "cool."

By taking a market-led approach to agriculture, the private sector in Africa and U.S. partners can harness agriculture and agribusiness as engines of economic transformation in Africa and make U.S. development assistance more effective. U.S. agencies, including USAID, MCC, and USDA, must take heed and chart a new direction for global development by forging stronger bilateral public-private partnerships to unleash innovation and progress in the agriculture sector to meet Africa's rising demand for food and improve livelihoods.

A tide of change is moving across Africa in which agriculture is widely seen as a lucrative business that promotes economic growth and prosperity for all. U.S. development policy must now catch up.

Putting African Agriculture at the Apex

Ms. Vivian Lowery Derryck

Preoccupation with the troubled transitions in The Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, and Zimbabwe has overshadowed a looming crisis and potential development bonanza rolled into one: agriculture. Agriculture, the basis of most African economies, provides over 50 percent of employment. With 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land, the continent holds a key to global food security by 2050.

An estimated 40 million Africans are currently food insecure. The crisis comes from a basket of troubles ranging from degraded agricultural land producing drastically reduced crops, production deficits caused by conflicts (e.g., Mali), falling commodity prices, and outmoded farming practices. This crisis has been compounded by growing populations competing for a shrinking food supply. Unless the agricultural sector is given more attention, the number of people experiencing food insecurity will keep growing as Africa becomes the most populous continent by 2050.

The development bonanza could come from countries investing greater percentages of annual budgets and human resources in agriculture to transform economies and strengthen good governance. In its 2017 report, *Agriculture Powering Africa's Economic Transformation*, the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) links agriculture modernization and light manufacturing to increased economic growth and revitalized economies. Transforming agricultural sectors can make countries more food secure, provide employment, incentivize young people to pursue careers in agriculture, and tap the potential of women.

Robust agricultural policies are necessary for survival and growth. Since agriculture competes with other legitimate claims for limited resources, agriculture champions might note the following benefits to strengthen their case. Government should provide food security, which undergirds national security and state sovereignty. A food secure population can support robust civil society, demand good governance, and strengthen democracy.

Agriculture can address the youth bulge by introducing young people to a new profession and providing agriculture-related income-generating skills. Botswanan Nduchwa Margery, 32, who runs a successful commercial animal feed farm and models a pivotal role that women play in African agriculture, says that agriculture needs to become "cool." Providing 70 to 80 percent of farm labor, women are an under-acknowledged and under-utilized resource. School curricula should be re-designed to include agriculture-related courses relevant to current job markets. ACET's report recommends training female extension workers to maximize women's productivity.

Close attention to agriculture can promote better understanding of climate change and environmental degradation and help farmers develop new tools for adaptation and mitigation. China understands the potential of agriculture in Africa, having invested millions and sent more than 1,000 technical experts to Africa. These are contacts and opportunities for trade and relationships that the U.S. is missing out on. So despite U.S. preoccupation with political transitions, for a major investment return the U.S. should prioritize Africa's agricultural development.

The Moroccan Disruption

Mr. Francis A. Kornegay, Jr.

One of the most consequential developments for Africa and U.S.-Africa policy in 2017 was Morocco's double whammy: re-entry into the African Union (AU) and applying to join the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Rabat's gambit threatens destabilizing Africa's regional-continental integration system. This includes the AU's institutional consolidation reform action plan put forth by President Kagame, which would strengthen regional economic communities. Whether ECOWAS indulges Morocco under pressure from Francophone members while Rabat still refuses to budge on the Western Sahara question (which prevents activating the AU's inoperative North African pillar, the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)), may well determine the AU system's fate for years to come (although Moroccan membership in ECOWAS need not necessarily rule out the eventual operationalization of UMA).

Failure of the AU, the UN, the U.S., and Europe to persuade Rabat to follow through in implementing the UN self-determination referendum on Western Sahara has resulted in the UMA remaining inoperative. This has contributed to the security vacuum in the Maghreb and Sahel, thus allowing the crises of terrorism and trans-Mediterranean migration to fester. This has implications for U.S. counter-terrorism effectiveness. The scandalous revelations of slave auctions in a destabilized Libya, which is somehow expected to manage and contain illegal migration and human trafficking of Africans into Spain and Italy, can only be seen as the tip of the iceberg of a trans-Mediterranean 'Eurafrican' crisis metastasizing without a functioning North African regional economic community in the Maghreb.

The 5th AU/EU summit in Abidjan in November 2017 amounted to little more than an evasion from what is needed: a joint AU-EU permanent mechanism for stabilizing northern Africa and the Mediterranean—all because neither the AU nor the EU, or Washington, dare compel Morocco to accommodate Sahrawi self-determination in a manner allowing both multilateral governing institutions to devise a comprehensive and sustainable plan of action for addressing trans-Mediterranean security. The Emmanuel Macron police-military proposal for tackling linked terrorist-human trafficking networks will not solve a problem that is, at least in part, linked to Morocco's imperialist ambitions. A more UMA-focused U.S. policy could make a difference.

**CONFLICT PREVENTION,
PEACEBUILDING, AND SECURITY**

2017: The Year of New Foreign Military Bases in Africa

Dr. Alex Vines

2017 was a year of opening of new foreign military bases and facilities. The official opening of China's first overseas military base in Djibouti on August 1, 2017, the same day as the People's Liberation Army marked its 90th birthday, is historic. Officially in English, China describes the base as a logistics hub, but it is a military base, placed to resupply navy ships.

China joins other recent arrivals in Djibouti. Japan too has its only foreign military base there as do the Italians. Troops from Germany and Spain are hosted by the French, but the Russians failed to negotiate a partnership with the Chinese to share their facilities. India is also considering opening a base in Djibouti.

It is not only Djibouti that is accepting new foreign military bases. In February 2017, the United Arab Emirates secured a foreign military base in Somaliland, following its opening of a military facility in Eritrea in 2015. Saudi Arabia is also planning a military facility in Djibouti and Turkey opened a military training base in Somalia in 2017.

India also has facilities in Madagascar and the Agaléga Islands of Mauritius, although a plan to have a facility on the Seychelles' Assumption Island has been postponed. France remains the key foreign military power in Africa with 4,000 troops for Operation Burhane in the Sahel. The French have concentrated their air power and mission headquarters of this operation in Chad; its five Reaper reconnaissance drones in Niger; its special operations troops in Burkina Faso; and its logistics hub in Côte d'Ivoire. There are also up to an additional 1,000 French military in facilities in Djibouti and a smaller presence in Gabon. Africa remains a key foreign policy priority for France under the Macron presidency.

The United States is also scaling up, and 2017 marked the tenth anniversary of U.S. Africa Command. There are roughly 4,000 troops currently in Djibouti at its Camp Lemonnier—the only permanent U.S. military installation in Africa—and approximately 800 in Niger. Washington has doubled its military presence in Somalia to 500 over the last six months. The UK also maintains military training facilities in Kenya and Nigeria.

So, Africa is diversifying its international economic partnerships as well as its military relations with foreign powers. This trend will continue in 2018, and will last until Africa's own peace and security architecture can truly support the current and emerging security threats.

U.S. Army Africa: Promoting Security Cooperation and Strengthening Africa's Defense Institutions

Brigadier General Eugene J. LeBoeuf

Insecurity and instability in parts of Africa are a matter of the concern to Africa, the United States, and other international partners. Successfully addressing these challenges requires long-term integrated efforts involving various U.S. agencies, and the development of strong African institutions to address the drivers of instability. The threat of Violent Extremism posed by organizations such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab, combined with other drivers of instability, will continue to destabilize various parts of Africa if the root causes of insecurity are not confronted. The U.S. Army Africa (USARAF) works to support long-term success in Africa by engaging with African land forces to help enhance their capabilities and professionalism. These efforts enhance respect for human rights and the rule of law, and foster security cooperation among African countries and between the United States and Africa. USARAF's efforts are important because a prosperous and stable Africa matters not just to African governments and citizens, but also to the U.S. and our European allies.

In 2017, USARAF supported the U.S. government's defense institution strengthening through a long-term approach of engaging with leaders, theater security cooperation, and military exercises. USARAF conducted 252 theater security cooperation events, and four multinational exercises with the objective of increasing cooperation and helping to improve Africa's defense capabilities. Because many of the challenges and opportunities faced by our African partners extend beyond national borders, USARAF's activities took a regional approach. In particular, our efforts sought to enhance partner defense capacity in medical, logistics, intelligence, command-and-control, and countering improvised explosive devices. USARAF's ACCORD-series of multinational military exercises helped to build relationships with African partners and to increase the collective and regional capacity to counter common security threats.

Through its leader engagement program, USARAF worked to cultivate relationships with African partner militaries, build trust, and promote security cooperation. Trust between militaries is required to solve complex security problems, particularly during a crisis or emergency. In 2017, USARAF maintained regular contact with senior African Army leaders from 42 countries through partner engagements, the African Land Forces Summit (ALFS), and through Regional Leader Seminars (RLS). The RLS facilitates deeper regional cooperation whereas ALFS is continental in scope. ALFS, as USARAF's premier strategic engagement on the continent, engages African Army Chiefs. During a recent visit, a high-ranking African General described USARAF's engagements as "effective military diplomacy," because the consistent interaction instilled trust and mutual respect between Africa and the United States.

Through these partnerships, USARAF's main approach has been driven by the vision of an end-state that promotes and is centered on African ownership and self-sustainment. One such example is the development of a Sergeant Major Academy that is run by Malawi. Looking ahead to 2018, USARAF will work to build on its the strong partnerships that have been developed with African land forces, and continue these and other efforts to strengthen Africa's defense institutions and provide for a more secure Africa.

Mali: Negotiating with Jihadists?

Dr. Alexander Thurston

In April, Mali concluded its Conference of National Understanding. The conference sought to advance the 2015 Algiers Accord, a peace agreement meant to end conflicts that began in 2012. The conflict and violence in Mali involves many actors, including jihadists, who have been excluded from the Algiers process. The conference recommended that the Malian government open negotiations with two Malian-born jihadists, Iyad ag Ghali and Amadou Kouffa.

The idea of negotiating with jihadists is largely anathema in the United States and Europe, and it has been unpopular with African governments as well. Unsurprisingly, the government of France discouraged negotiations between the Malian government and local jihadists. Mali's President Ibrahim Keita also dismissed the idea.

But the idea has some support, and the Malian case has wider implications for other African (and non-African) countries confronting jihadist insurgencies. Even after President Keita weighed in, Malian politicians such as Tiébilé Dramé continued to advocate negotiations. The idea will likely resurface as the conflict drags on. Insecurity worsened through 2017, and the solutions on offer—United Nations peacekeepers, the Algiers process, and French-led counterterrorism operations—have not resolved the conflict. Some Malians' frustrations prompt them to ask what Mali has to lose by opening a dialogue with jihadists. Many Malians also suspect that Ag Ghali still influences peace negotiations even when he is formally excluded from them—and so they conclude that it might be better to include him.

What would the basis of dialogue be? Opponents argue that dialogue will empower jihadists to demand concessions while offering nothing. Past precedents offer mixed lessons. In Mali and in Nigeria, limited negotiations led to prisoner exchanges and hostage ransoms. Such releases may embolden jihadists even as they save some lives. Other, more expansive precedents include the amnesties that Algeria offered some militants after 1999. Amnesties helped end Algeria's civil war, but also helped drive some of Algeria's most hardened jihadists into northern Mali.

These precedents make negotiations unattractive. The question, however, is whether those precedents are less attractive than the grim prospect of further conflict. If talking to jihadists offers a sliver of hope, Mali might eventually take it.

The G5 Sahel: A Homegrown Response to Terrorism in the Sahara

Ms. Kamissa Camara

In October 2017, the deaths of four U.S. soldiers in Niger alongside five Nigerian soldiers triggered many questions about the Sahel region and its strategic importance to the United States. Where is it on a map? Why are we there in the first place? As a rapid response to the longstanding security challenges of the Sahel, on October 30, 2017 the U.S. government pledged \$60 million to a nascent regional counter terrorism force called “G5 Sahel.” The 5,000-strong battalion of troops includes soldiers from Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mauritania.

Formed in 2014, two years after Mali’s state collapse and subsequent invasion by radical groups, the G5 Sahel has received the strong backing of France, the European Union and the United Nations throughout 2017. Those will provide financial, logistical, and operational support to the force. Last December, the force received an additional \$100 million from Saudi Arabia. This was a major boost to the cash-strapped military initiative, which aims to foster intelligence sharing between and among the countries to combat terrorist activity, arms smuggling, and illicit trafficking along borders.

Why should the Sahel and its G5 matter to the United States? What seemed to have been of remote importance to the U.S. 10 years ago now presents major threats to its interests in Africa and beyond. Terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the Islamic State have demonstrated, through highly sophisticated methods, how African and international interests as well as officials and citizens—including those from the U.S.—can become easy targets in the region. For example, the 2015-2016 terrorist attacks in the capital cities of Mali and Burkina Faso resulted in the death of two American citizens, including one USAID worker. In addition, the morphing of State Department designated terrorist organizations such as ISIS, which lost almost the entire territory it controlled in Iraq and Syria and is now eyeing the Sahel as its next haven, make organizations such as al-Qaeda even more threatening to the United States.

Through the G5, countries of the Sahel have demonstrated a willingness to take ownership of their own security challenges. Promoting stability through security and prosperity are major priorities in the Sahel. Support to the G5, a homegrown response to terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel, should be a step in the right direction, and a win-win situation for Africa and its international partners.

The Paradox of South Sudan

Dr. Jacqueline Wilson

On a recent visit to Juba, South Sudan's capital, I was seized by dissonance. Pothole-pocked dirt roads create an obstacle course for drivers, yet tall buildings pierce the skyline just blocks away. The new airport partially obscures the old new airport, yet the arrival hall remains a tent. The origins of inbound passengers have shifted since my first visit in 2005, with blonde-haired Europeans and Americans replaced by Somalis, Eritreans, and Chinese. Money exchangers heft bales of newly printed bills in exchange for the treasured U.S. dollar. Huge billboards laud peace marches and public service messages and provide shade for daylight robberies. Fuel shortages prevent traffic jams, yet the occasional Hummer hulks around town. "Security" forces roam the streets and presidential guards lounge under the palace trees, waiting for the signal to move. Tigers guard key intersections in their hideous striped camouflage, trucks with mounted weapons and a half dozen rag-tag youth patrol like sharks, and yes, well-padded UN peacekeepers make the rounds yet insecurity abounds. Solar-paneled stoplights lend an air of order, despite the joke that green lights are for "the people" while red is for the army (since they don't stop anyway). Restaurants ration their wifi while customers wash down cosmopolitan cuisine with cold Tuskers, and a high-end grocery store sells Christmas decorations while street children beg outside.

It seems bizarrely functional until I'm reminded that "this is a war zone, but you wouldn't know it from Juba." My calendar also reminds of another tragic anniversary. A visit to the Protection of Civilians site (PoC) reminds that people are still targeted by ethnicity and are still raising families in "temporary" shelters. A friend's robbery reminds that soldiers haven't been paid and face a bleak Christmas. A news site reminds that exhausted diplomats try to jumpstart a dead peace process while warriors rearm. Bullet holes remind that Juba itself was also a war zone.

Still, I am reminded of a smiling child in a peaceful village where I watched a young man form the base of a tukul, shaping mud bricks with his hands. It reminds me that South Sudanese are incredibly resilient and resourceful, yet they are caught in the paradox of war and peace—a sad and strange paradox.

**DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE,
AND LEADERSHIP**

The African Migration Crisis in Libya: The Challenge of Human Trafficking and Slavery in the 21st Century

Dr. Getachew Zeru

The fall of the Qaddafi regime in Libya in 2011 slid the country into chaos and civil war. Amid this chaotic situation Libya has also become enmeshed in a migrant crisis as it serves as a transit point for hundreds of thousands of migrants from Africa and the Middle East who are desperate to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean. Most of the migrants in Libya are fleeing armed conflict, persecution, or severe economic problems. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that there are about 700,000 migrants in dozens of detention camps across Libya. Italy, the closest point to North Africa, has been a major entry point into Europe. According to the IOM, in 2016 and 2017, it is estimated that nearly 300,000 migrants and refugees were rescued to Italy, while nearly 6,300 migrants drowned in the Mediterranean.

The migrant crisis in Libya gained international attention following a CNN report and video released on November 29, 2017, that revealed African migrants being sold as slaves in the country. However, slavery and other well-documented abuses, including forced labor, kidnapping, extortion, rape, sexual exploitation, ransoms, torture, and indefinite extralegal detention while in inhumane conditions are not new in Libya. Such abuses appear to have been exacerbated by the lack of a functioning government in Libya, and by an Italian/European Union policy of assisting the Libyan coast guard in intercepting and returning Europe-bound migrants to the lawless state. Amnesty International and the UN have criticized this policy, although it has been defended by Germany and Italy.

Following the CNN report, various countries and institutions, including the IOM, African Union, the EU, and UN have expressed outrage and condemned the slave auctions in Libya. They have also agreed to provide support to migrants trapped in Libya who wish to return to their home countries. The issue was a top agenda item for the 83 heads of states from the EU and Africa who gathered in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, for a summit from November 29-30, 2017. African and international institutions, as well as African governments, should consider working with the Libyan government to dismantle traffickers' networks and freeze their assets. They could also work towards identifying and prosecuting all those involved in the slave trade and human smuggling without delay. Foremost, the migrant crisis is a symptom of a massive problem that Africa needs to address. African leaders should do more to govern democratically and justly, as well as transform social and economic opportunities so that African citizens, especially youth, have opportunity and hope at home. This will help to ensure that fewer of their citizens make the treacherous journey to Libya and across the Mediterranean.

Effective Engagement with Africa's Youth Challenge

Dr. Marc Sommers

Sub-Saharan Africa has the most youthful human population on the planet. Despite this, 2017 marked another year of ineffectual efforts to address the region's unprecedented youth challenge. Media outlets frequently highlight the negative, depicting Africa's youth as dangerous males—such as Burundi's Imbonerakure militia members or Kenya's street demonstrators—who instigate violence and promote instability.

But Africa's youth challenge is built on distortions. The overwhelming majority of youth are peaceful and resist engagement in violence. Female youth regularly are disregarded. Sharp class divisions routinely are discounted. While most youth definitions feature age ranges, meeting traditional adulthood requirements frequently determines their ability to become men and women. Finally, youth tend to threaten the status quo because policies and practices in countries with youth-dominated populations rarely reflect youth priorities. Indeed, recent research underscores how states with outsized youth populations (including every African nation) are more repressive than the rest.

What can be done? Plenty. There is a need to recognize that many youth cannot access capital, land, livestock, post-primary education, housing, political processes, and social recognition to the same degree that adults can. The popular youth "remedy"—employment programming—is inadequate, narrowly framed, typically has limited reach, and quietly may favor elite over non-elite youth.

A swift corrective is required. First, initiate quality field research with youth to identify their priorities and the main forces that exclude them. Next, apply the new data to three avenues of effort. In coordination with other influential donors, the U.S. should consider the following:

- Work with African governments and regional bodies to tackle youth priorities and reverse political, social, and economic forces that exclude youth. This is a "win-win" strategy, as implemented reforms promise to promote political stability and legitimacy.
- Upgrade youth program goals and objectives. Since programs usually reach tiny fractions of colossal youth populations, they should sidestep elite youth insiders and aim toward inclusion, evaluate the impact of programs on those who cannot access them, anticipate stumbles in efforts to reach excluded youth, and address youth-defined priorities.
- Initiate discussions with national, local and traditional leaders to modify unreachable adulthood requirements. Gaining womanhood and manhood frequently requires youth to marry formally and have children together. In advance, many male youth must secure some combination of housing, land, and livestock. As this often proves impossible, many youth inevitably face humiliation as failed adults. Drug and alcohol abuse, unmarried motherhood, prostitution, urban migration—and perhaps recruitment into violent extremist organizations—can result. Helping youth escape this trap is imperative.

Tenure Trouble in Togo

Dr. Sophia Moestrup

Ongoing tension around presidential term limits in Togo is one illustration of how far democracy has progressed in West Africa. Togo has become an anomaly in the sub region—the only country where a president is serving more than two terms. The Gambia and Togo voted against a proposal to insert presidential term limits into the governing protocols of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at a summit in 2015. Long-serving Gambian autocrat Yahya Jammeh lost reelection in 2016 and the coalition that backed his successor Adama Barrow has declared presidential term limits a constitutional reform priority. This would leave Togo the lone country in West Africa without presidential term limits.

Since August 2017, Togolese President Faure Gnassingbé has faced massive demonstrations as protesters call for his departure and a return to the 1992 constitution with its two-term limits. Faure is currently serving his third five-year term. He became president in 2005 at the death of his father, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who had ruled the country for 38 years after seizing power in a coup in 1967. This year makes 50 years of one-family rule over Togo. In recent months, a new opposition coalition has succeeded in bridging the north-south divide of Togolese politics. Since the 1960s, the north has traditionally supported the Eyadéma family, with the opposition mainly centered in the south. Recent demonstrations have affected all major cities in the north and south.

Hoping to defuse tensions, the government initiated a constitutional reform bill that reintroduced term limits going forward but would allow Faure to run again in 2020 and 2025. The bill did not obtain the required 4/5 majority to be adopted, meaning the government would have to submit it to a referendum. The opposition boycotted the parliamentary vote and does not favor the referendum either. As regional powers seek to facilitate dialogue between the government and the opposition, they must contain the Togolese military, which has been a pillar of the regime. Maintaining the status quo now seems an unlikely option. Togo, like Zimbabwe, shows that the days of African presidents-for-life may soon be over.

The Togolese Governance Crisis: Lessons for Africa's Democracy

Mr. George Boateng

West Africa has made gains in governance in recent years, but security concerns persist. The unrest in Togo is an unhealthy political development. The Global Political Agreement (GPA) for electoral and institutional reforms, signed in 2006 between the President of Togo and the opposition parties, facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has not been fully implemented. Key elements of the GPA intended to deepen governance, such as the re-introduction of presidential term limits and a two-round voting system have not been implemented and, more than 11 years later, the political situation remains unchanged. The former President of Togo, and father of the current president, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, altered the 1992 constitution, scrapping the presidential term limits so he could run again, and lowering the age limit from 45 years to 35 years so his son could run for president after him. These actions strike a familiar chord. Are they a new trend in Africa's democratic dispensation?

Over the years, several protests have been held, but the protests in September 2017 were unique. The violent protests started in the capital Lomé and spread to other parts of the country including Sokodé, the base of the ruling party. Protesters demanded an end to Togo's 50-year ruling family dynasty, and constitutional reforms including the adoption of a two-term cap for future presidents. The government's call for a referendum is in limbo after the opposition boycotted parliament over the term limit issue—which is without retroactive effect, meaning the President may rule until 2030. The experiences of The Gambia's Yahya Jammeh and Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaoré offer proof that the momentum against dictatorship may be rising.

Pressure from ECOWAS was crucial to The Gambia's success. However, ECOWAS and neighboring states have been slow to respond to the crisis in Togo. Why? One key reason could be that Togolese President Gnassingbé is the ECOWAS chairman, and the President of ECOWAS, Marcel Alain de Souza, is married to the sister of Mr. Gnassingbé.

Whether Togo's incumbent feels the pressure and resigns cannot be foretold. However, until then ECOWAS' resolve will be critical. ECOWAS should urge Togo's leadership to fully implement the 2006 GPA recommendations immediately. As it stands, the upcoming referendum leaves much to be desired, and does little to remedy the situation. If ECOWAS gets it right, it could send a broader message to the rest of the continent that allowing leaders to amend national constitutions in order to elongate their hold on power is no longer an acceptable governance norm in Africa. To this end, action is needed, and quickly.

Whither Zimbabwe?

Mr. Steve McDonald

Zimbabwe has changed. Its brutal dictator of 37 years is gone, rejected by his party and replaced by former Vice President, Emmerson Mnangagwa. Stepping aside only after the military placed him under house arrest and parliament started impeachment proceedings, Robert Mugabe is now relegated to history.

The question now is which path will Zimbabwe follow and what will it mean for the watching world? Certainly, the change in leadership seems to offer an opportunity for Zimbabwe to rejoin the community of nations and to emerge as a democratic society. The local press seems suddenly free and unencumbered, protest and assembly are allowed, and President Mnangagwa, in his inaugural address, promised a new democratic era for Zimbabwe. He is on record that elections scheduled for 2018 will be held and be free and fair. Opposition leaders have welcomed this. He has focused on fighting corruption—giving Zimbabweans who have stashed funds overseas a three month amnesty to return them without penalty—and said a priority will be creating jobs in an economy that has an estimated 95 percent unemployment rate. He is quoted as saying, “I am required to serve our country as the president of all citizens regardless of color, creed, religion, tribe, totem or political affiliation.”

If this sounds too good to be true, it may be. Mnangagwa is no democrat and has his own brutal past. He was the Minister for National Security and led the Central Intelligence Organization during the 1980s crackdown in Matabeleland which killed an estimated 20,000 civilians. He was close to Mugabe, shared a prison cell with him prior to independence, and was his personal aide at one point. Allegedly, he also orchestrated the campaigns of electoral repression and violence that occurred between 2000 and 2008. Mnangagwa could continue in this corrupt and dictatorial vein, still exacerbating Ndebele/Shona tensions.

The question is which Mnangagwa will emerge, the past shadowy figure complicit with all of Mugabe’s wrongdoings, or the new self-declared enlightened democratic leader?

The U.S. and all international observers, including financial institutions, want Zimbabwe to come right. Even debt reduction or forgiveness (currently Zimbabwe owes over \$9 billion) is possible should the government be seen to move in the right directions. Reform around ownership and profit repatriation would encourage investors, who still see Zimbabwe as a land of great opportunity, with untapped mineral and agricultural wealth, and manufacturing and industrial potentials. A stable and peaceful Zimbabwe is in the world’s interest.

The U.S. should be reaching out now, focusing on providing assistance for the 2018 elections, but continue to pressure for openness, and encourage reforms as promised by Mnangagwa. It is time for carrots, tempered by the threat of sticks should the “new” Zimbabwe falter.

Mugabe is Out! But Wait...

Dr. Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome

Robert Mugabe's ouster after a 37-year long reign over Zimbabwe was Africa's most notable political event in 2017. In a coup whose architects refused that nomenclature, his removal was novel. As ousters go, this wasn't a particularly bad one for Mugabe, National Liberation War hero and passionate nationalist. He keeps many presidential perks, having negotiated a settlement rewarding him for national service. His man, Emmerson Mnangagwa (former Vice President and enforcer), replaced him. However, this relationship could be damaged by the coup, no-coup situation. Regardless, the challenges of political transition in Africa cannot be attributed only to individual autocrats, since an elite stratum benefits from, and supports authoritarianism. In Zimbabwe the elites are striving to ensure that "After Mugabe = Before Mugabe."

Domestic, regional, and international factors produced the ouster. At 93, Mugabe wasn't an effective leader. For 37 years he monopolized power as patron to the few clients used to dominating Zimbabwe. Many Zimbabweans were fed up with the massive economic destabilization and grim survival struggle, but were powerless to remove Mugabe. Many voted with their feet. South Africa, which had historically treated Southern Africa as its labor reserve, was the most popular destination, although many favored the UK, only using South Africa as a stepping-stone to get there; and some chose the U.S. The EU, UK, U.S., African Union, South Africa (which helped broker Mugabe's ouster), China, and the multilaterals have a stake in post-Mugabe Zimbabwe. They favor stability.

Mugabe's ouster was astounding, but it's about time. The land question had festered, escalating frustration and anger among dispossessed black Zimbabweans and white farmers. The latter were believed to be more deserving, and supported by the United Kingdom and United States—key actors in the Lancaster House Agreement ending the war of National Liberation. Zimbabwe's economy is tattered. Most Zimbabweans labored under extreme privation and material want. The Mugabes and their cronies amassed great wealth, and were exemplars of conspicuous consumption amidst mass impoverishment. Zimbabwe lacked political openness. Mugabe always won elections and suppressed opposition and criticism. Apparently supported by Mugabe, the First Lady, Grace Mugabe was intent on replacing her husband. The final straw was the perception that a power-grabbing Grace Mugabe, using younger-generation allies within ZANU-PF, publicly turned on her husband's war hero colleagues. Using the army and an anti-Grace Mugabe coalition within ZANU-PF, they retaliated, orchestrating the spectacle of apparently honoring Mugabe, while insisting that he step down.

Moving forward, Zimbabweans need democratization and inclusive economic development. African autocrats must be distressed too, by portents of Mugabe's fate for their future. Africans living under authoritarian rule might consider ousting their dictators. They, like Zimbabweans, must prepare for the great struggle to attain democracy and development. It won't be easy.

REFLECTING ON ELECTIONS

A Time for International Election Observers to Reflect on their Role

Ms. Sharon Anyango

The 2017 Kenyan election put the role of international observers in monitoring elections under the spotlight. Less than 72 hours after voting began and before the final results had been announced, various observation groups—among them the Carter Center, National Democratic Institute, the European Union, and African Union observer mission—gave their preliminary report. All of them spoke in unison that they were satisfied with the conduct of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), a decision that was widely criticized by a cross-section of Kenyans who argued that observers majorly concentrated on the voting process and ignored the tallying process.

When the IEBC made its announcement, it declared the incumbent Mr. Kenyatta the winner. Citing irregularities, the Opposition led by Mr. Odinga challenged Mr. Kenyatta's victory at the apex court. The Supreme Court nullified the elections on the basis it was not conducted constitutionally and therefore called for a re-run in October. The court faulted the IEBC on the basis that presidential election results were not transmitted per electoral laws. Electoral results were to be transmitted from the polling station to the constituency tallying center, where all results from a single constituency were to be collated together and then transmitted to the national tallying center. It is there that all results from the 290 constituencies would be collated together and the results used to determine the winner. Furthermore, the IEBC announced the presidential results without receipt of the legally required original forms 34A and 34B, and it was also decided in court that some of these forms were dubious and lacked the required security features.

The ruling raised questions about international observers, whose initial preliminary report suggested that they were content with the conduct of the IEBC. Their actions raised allegations that they were more concerned about the country's stability, given the tense political environment against the backdrop of the devastating 2007 post-election violence.

Observers' main role is to monitor the conduct of elections and thereafter provide their assessment of each electoral stage in the form of a report and recommendations. They observe whether an election process has followed the proper laws, and if it meets internationally accepted standards before declaring whether the election was free and fair. In this role, they are a critical voice speaking on the legitimacy of the electoral process. The Kenyan case shows that international observers neglected key aspects of their role when they released their preliminary findings.

International election observers have an important role to play. In order to more effectively fulfill this role they could do more to understand the electoral laws of a particular country, and interrogate whether these laws have been adhered to before applauding the electoral body for its management of the election. They could also take into consideration pre-election concerns and engage various stakeholders to determine whether these concerns have been addressed. Doing so can help avert problems that may arise in pre-and post-election voting periods.

The Elections We Want

Mr. Rushdi Nackerdien

With the African Charter for Democracy, Elections and Governance celebrating 10 years of being in force in 2017, expectations regarding the integrity of elections in Africa have increased. While many bemoan the falling voter turnout that has characterized elections globally, as well as in Africa, there is evidence of high levels of engagement from African voters when it comes to elections signaling “change.” Angola, Rwanda, Liberia, Senegal, and The Gambia all had increases in turnout from their previous elections. What these countries have in common is that there have been important democratic shifts. This engagement rivals the cynicism that can easily be felt about democracy on the continent.

Elections in both Kenya and Liberia clearly demonstrate that the days of formulaic elections are over. Citizens and parties are demanding a higher level of electoral integrity than before. The courts have demonstrated that they are in tune with holding election management bodies to a higher standard, as spelt out in law. The unprecedented annulment of the August elections in Kenya centered on the weakness on the transmission and verification of the election results. This also sharply focused attention on the role that technology plays in the results management process. In Liberia, the courts differed with the election management body’s interpretation of the constitutional provisions regarding due process and hearing timelines. They issued a writ of prohibition stopping all preparations for the run-off elections, compelling the completion of petition hearings. The run-off took place in December 2017 only after the petitions had been heard.

Citizens have been critical via social media of the role of international election observers. In Kenya, the observers were heavily criticized that they failed to tackle the allegations regarding election results. Observers have had to assess the technical depth of their observation, as well as educating citizens about their role. This speaks to the heightened expectations that exist around African elections today as citizens demand more.

With major elections coming up in 2018 in Mali, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe, election practitioners will do well to consider measures to increase the integrity and quality of their elections. This involves greater transparency, accountability, professionalism, competence, and engagement with all stakeholders. Meeting these expectations will be an important celebration of the African Charter and the aspirations of voters across the continent.

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