

Enhancing Regional Responses to Political Transitions

28 - 29 March 2023

Abuja, Nigeria



I. Introduction

The 10th edition of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa was held from 14-16th October 2022, in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, under the theme, "Managing Security Threats: Building Resilience for the Africa We Want". In line with the tradition of the Tana Forum, the Secretariat is mandated to organize multi-stakeholders forum on selected themes with the aim of forging and deepening conversation on topical issues and outcomes. It is against this backdrop that the next Post-Tana Forum will be organized from 28-29 March, in Abuja, Nigeria in partnership with Humanity United and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). This Post-Tana Forum is on the theme "Enhancing Regional Responses to Political Transitions". This post-forum which will also be organized almost at the same time as the Second Summit for Democracy (29-30 March) presents a great opportunity to influence the conversations of the Summit. The United States will co-host this Summit with the governments of Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, and Republic of Zambia. The Second Summit for Democracy will bring together world leaders in a virtual, plenary format, followed by gatherings in each of the co-hosted countries with representatives from government, civil society, and the private sector. This concept note is developed to serve as a guide to participants converging in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital and the ECOWAS capital to deliberate upon and propose innovative ways to advance and strengthen regional responses to political transitions, especially military coups and other forms of Unconstitutional Change of Government (UCG).

II. Rationale

In West Africa alone, three countries were involved in five successful military coups since 2020; in Mali (2020, 2021), in Guinea (2021), and in Burkina Faso (twice in 2022). Within the same period, Niger, Guinea Bissau, and The Gambia survived attempted coups in 2021 and 2022. The resurgence of military coups and other forms of UCGs is now potentially the biggest threat to democracy building and democratic consolidation in Africa. In addition, the gradual withering of governance institutions and processes are stalling any positive developments made towards consolidating previous democratic gains.

Leadership shortfall visible at all levels and socio-political and economic challenges have amplified anxiety, cynicism, and prevalent feelings of anomie. These failures are creating massive widespread disappointment, eliciting the pursuit for other options. Strengthening governance institutions is essential to sustain democratic systems beyond elections. In recent years, the outbreak and spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and the erosion of access to subsidized socio-economic opportunities (including food) and poor social cohesion have further compounded the security challenges facing Africa. The challenge of addressing UCGs on the continent is further exacerbated by the obvious disengagement between the legal, normative and

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This post-Tana Regional Multi-Stakeholder Forum provides a platform for discussion on the unprecedented number of coups and attempted coups and other forms of UCGs in Africa. It will enable participants, drawn from diverse constituencies, to explore critical pathways for effective regional response beyond the current tokenism towards military coups. This seminar will also serve as an opportunity for expert discussion on how to further enhance and streamline partnerships between external actors and APSA institutions toward promoting sustainable peace on the continent, while exploring innovative ways to navigate complex and competing approaches.

III. Objectives

The main objective of this Tana-Post Forum is to deepen understanding of contexts, causes and dynamics of recent political transitions in Africa, and to explore ways to strengthen regional response to stem its tide; including the role of international support to strengthening governance and political stability in Africa.

The post-Tana Forum deliberations will focus on the following specific issues

- ▶ Military coups in Africa with specific focus on West Africa, drivers of military coups and its impact on shaping political culture and practice across the continent.
- ▶ Continental and regional responses to recent political transitions, including coups and UCGs and in-depth analysis of gaps and challenges hampering these efforts to address governance, peace and security issues.
- ▶ Explore pathways towards maximizing regional and international leverage in peace-making vis-à-vis the implementation of AGA and APSA linkages as well as approaches to accompany political transitions post-coups
- ▶ Map the role of African civil society organizations, decision makers, and regional and international organizations and other actors.

IV. Expected Outcomes

- ▶ Deeper understanding on the context, nature and outcomes of recent political transitions, and its impact on governance, peace and security in Africa;
- ▶ Contribute to ongoing debate and national, regional and continental efforts to better manage conflicts that accompany political transitions, in order to create adequate mechanisms for durable peace and bridge the gap between the academic and policy literature on recent political transitions in Africa;
- ▶ Propose practical ways in which African civil society organizations, decision makers, & regional and international organizations and other actors, can better work together in ensuring the effective enforcement of the norm banning the unconstitutional change of government;
- ▶ Identify practical steps to further enhance and streamline partnerships between external actors and APSA institutions toward promoting sustainable peace and governance on the continent.

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V. Expected Outputs

The followings are expected outputs of the forthcoming Post-Tana Multi-stakeholders Forum:

- ▶ Face-to face dialogue and experience-sharing among participants, to identify key lessons towards better management of political transition and sustainable and practical policy recommendations targeting stakeholders;
- ▶ An outcomes document to be shared with peace and security stakeholders as well as other related stakeholders;
- ▶ Coverage of the dialogue proceedings on IPSS and Tana Forum social media platforms;
- ▶ Networking opportunities and enhanced partnerships;

VI. Proposed Approach

The Tana-Post Forum will comprise of experts, political and technical consultations resulting in practical recommendations and networking opportunities for stakeholders working in the field of governance, peace and security in West Africa. The consultation will take place in a face-to face format where not more than 40 participants will be physically present. The Forum will be conducted under Chatham House Rule.

VII. Participants Profile

Participants will include representatives from the government of Nigeria, representatives of ECOWAS, experts, funding partners, development partners, representatives of foreign governments, research organizations, think tanks, academics from the region as well as media institutions based in Nigeria, Abuja.

VIII. Forum Language

The Tana-Post Forum will take place in English with simultaneous interpretation in French.

IX. Venue & Date

The Tana-Post Forum will take place at Johnwood Hotel, Abuja, on 28th and 29th March 2023.