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Reforming for Peace

State of Peace and Security in Africa 2018

INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
Tana Forum Secretariat

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Executive Summary

- The number of violent conflicts in Africa in 2017 hardly changed from the previous year; however, there was a noticeable change in terms of intensities, spread and fragmentation. According to the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer for 2017, Sub-Saharan Africa witnessed a slight increase in the total number of conflicts to 95 cases compared with 94 in 2016 and 93 in 2015. This continues the trend of marginal changes in the number of violent conflicts in recent years.

- Africa's conflict landscape changed in qualitative terms through the intensification of conflicts; with four conflicts escalating into full-scale wars and two additional (new) violent conflicts emerging in 2017.

- Re-occurring or relapsing conflicts, riots and mass protests, and shifting threats posed by violent extremist groups are key sources and manifestations of violence and insecurity in Africa. Instances of this include violent crisis in Ethiopia; South Sudan inter-communal conflicts and the conflict between the ruling SPLM/A government and the SPLM-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO); the Boko Haram conflict in the Lake Chad Basin; sub-national violence in Nigeria, especially between farmers and herders; and the conflict in Libya. Across these conflicts, new actors, including splinter groups, have emerged apart from original protagonists, while the violence they instigate have spread to new areas and produced fatalities, displacements and human rights abuses of civilians.

- In particular, riots and protests against incumbent governments were the dominant forms of violent event in Africa in 2017 with 5660 episodes (33%). This is followed by violence against civilians with 4562 events (27%) and 4298 battles between armed groups, including government and non-government insurgent/militia groups (25%).

- In spite of the lack of aggregate data in 2017, gender-based violence is estimated to have either increased or maintained the same high tempo of recent years. Anecdotal evidence points to continued targeting of women and girls for rape, sexual assault, kidnapping and other human rights violations across theatres of violent conflict in 2017.

- Violent conflicts and crises are more diffused and cut across fragile and conflict-affected countries and relatively stable ones in 2017. In short, violent conflict transcends socio-economic profile and status of countries. Somalia, Nigeria, South Africa and DRC account for the most conflict incidents in 2017, respectively. Moreover, protests and riots were concentrated in some of Africa's biggest economies in 2017, specifically South Africa (17%); Tunisia and Nigeria with 12% each; Algeria with 8% and Kenya with 7%.

- There are regional patterns to the occurrence and concentration of particular conflict incidents and the fatalities they produce; e.g. North Africa and West Africa account for over half of mass protests and riots; and East Africa alone accounted for half of violence against civilians.

- The incidence of armed conflicts and violence in 2017 differ across Africa in terms of the trigger issues, actors and overall dynamic. However they all reflected similar underlying root causes linked to structural weaknesses such as the youth bulge and high youth unemployment, environmental stresses, poor governance, horizontal and vertical inequality and mismanagement of diversity, spread of small arms and radical ideologies, and the frequent recourse to self-help mechanisms (militia activities).

- The combination of the AU, Regional Economic Communities and Civil Society Groups stepped up the application of Africa-centred solutions to the prevention and management of violent conflict in 2017. The AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) increased its meetings from 111 in 2016 to 146 in 2017 with much of its agenda focused on crisis situations. In terms of specific crisis, the insecurity in the DRC and the Great Lakes regions received 21% of AU's attention; Somalia and South Sudan (14% each); Darfur (11%); and the Lake Chad Basin and Guinea Bissau (8% each). There were also peace deals signed by warring parties and negotiated settlement of conflicts and disputes across Africa in 2017.

- Careful management of potentially explosive situations in 2017 includes the negotiated settlement of two munities by disgruntled soldiers in Cote d'Ivoire and the arduous process of transforming long years of authoritarian rule without much violence or extra-African involvement witnessed in Zimbabwe.

- Admittedly, Africa continues to face cases of stalled or collapsed peace processes; some of the notable cases include Burundi, CAR, DRC, Guinea Bissau, Mali, South Sudan, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia. The usual factors include intransigence and the lack of political will amongst conflict parties, failed implementation, fragmentation of armed groups, and preference for military solutions.

- In 2017 up to 3139 migrants died or were missing in the Mediterranean. This marked a 39% decline from the spike recorded in 2016. The disturbing footage by the CNN on the maltreatment of African migrants in Libya in November 2017 increased global attention to the vicious migration-security nexus. The intra-Africa migrant-security nexus was also heightened by recurring cases of xenophobic attacks against African migrants in South Africa.

- There was marked evidence of 'shifts' in the nature and scale of the threats posed by violent extremists groups. This is evident in the emergence of new terrorist groups or coalitions, and also in the opening of new theatres of battle away from remote border areas to major urban and cosmopolitan areas. This development is further showcased by the increasing scale of humanitarian challenges in areas and regions experiencing attacks by violent extremist groups in Africa; and a general increase in the tempo and regularity of attacks over and above the trend in 2016. In all, they the plethora of violent extremist groups seems to have gained access to new military capabilities or welcomed more experienced fighters into their rank especially following the collapse of the Islamic State Caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

- In many significant ways, still, political transitions shaped peace and security in Africa in 2017. In that year alone, routine election-based transitions (which included local and legislative elections) took place in 12 countries alongside six presidential and general elections. While majority of the cases resulted in ruling political parties consolidating their hold on government, there was a change of guard with the victory by an opposition party in presidential elections in Liberia, and the looming prospect of another in Sierra Leone.

- Beyond the report of violence, the elections in Kenya and Liberia stood-out in 2017 in terms of potential and actual crisis. In both cases, there were landmark judicial interventions in the electoral process, specifically the judicial reviews of election procedures and results based on litigations instituted by rival political parties.

- In 2017, there were three cases of 'forced political transitions' (change of leaders outside of national election cycles) in Africa: in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ethiopia. Remarkably, these transitions took place in three major countries and all within three months; with those of South Africa and Ethiopia happening only one day apart. The forced transitions were underpinned by socio-political pressures associated with poverty and economic deprivation, internal power tussles and bickering within the ruling party, high unemployment (especially among youth), corruption, poor service delivery, impunity and injustice, cycle of police brutality, perceived socio-economic and political inequality, and ethno-nationalism.

- Developments since 2018 already offer a glimmer into the state of peace and security in Africa for the rest of the year, and beyond. For instance, a number of conflict-affected and politically volatile countries have either gone to the polls or are about doing so: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Madagascar, Mali, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Cameroon, and the DRC. Nigeria's election is scheduled for early 2019, but much of the political campaigns and associated tensions would start to build up from mid-2018. Virtually all the elections scheduled for 2018 will test the stability- as much as the progress- likely to be made in terms of peace and security on the continent.

- The AU reform process, in spite of its established business case, faces political challenges in the way it is being implemented, lack of clarity in relation to existing decision-making channels, and its increasing 'technicalization.' Critical reflections on how the reform process will deliver the expected institutional, political and socio-economic partnerships needed for addressing structural vulnerabilities in Africa remain unexplored.

- There are nascent attempts at structural conflict prevention in Africa through the assessment and design of mitigation strategies (Country Structural Vulnerability/Resilience Assessment, CSVA/CSRA). However, Africa's capacity in this regard remain limited, uncoordinated, still focused on crisis response, and considerably slow relative to the increasing pace of transition from structural weaknesses into violent conflict. Thus a 'surge strategy' is needed to rapidly upscale the capacity and resources required to meet the goal of silencing the guns in 2020.

1 Introduction[1]

This State of Peace and Security in Africa (SPSA) Report is a background paper for the 2018 Tana Forum on the theme: Ownership of Africa's Peace and Security Provision: Financing and Reforming the African Union. As in previous years, this report provides contextual information that should, hopefully, inform the nature, quality and direction of debate on peace and security issues on the continent.

This report provides a succinct overview and analysis of the most salient conflict trends and offers a nuanced understanding of the efforts and responses mobilized to manage complex peace and security challenges on the continent. It also documents and presents the broad and thematic overview of peace and security in Africa in 2017. It covers the number and scale of armed conflict and violence, their spatial distribution (by country and region), the scale of threats to civilians and the overall fatalities recorded. It also highlights key thematic issues, namely low intensity conflicts, Africa-centred solutions and peace processes, migration and security, violent extremism, mass protests and riots, and political transitions and security. Finally, it provides a critical reflection of crosscutting structural issues that underpin the trends in peace and security for 2017.

1.1 Specific Aims and Objectives

i. To map Africa's peace and security landscape for trends relating to subsisting and emerging threats; flash points; major actors and interventions; and patterns of continuities, changes and mutations in 2017.

ii. To document 'game-changing' dynamic in the peace and security environment in Africa in terms of underlying drivers and factors, regional variations, and interventions, and connections with national, regional, continental, transnational and global processes in 2017.

iii. To highlight gaps in extant regional, continental and global response mechanisms to peace and security threats broadly and pinpoint options for way forward.

1.2 Analytical Approach

The analytical approach of this report involves the following:

- ***Trend Analysis:*** The identification and breakdown of thematic events/threats, actors/groups, area/geography affected, impacts, and responses/interventions. The trend observed for 2017 were compared with 2016 and previous years to highlight similarities and differences.

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1 The consultant/author (Dr. Wale Ismail, muyiwale@yahoo.com) wish to acknowledge background research support services provided by colleagues at the African Leadership Centre, specifically, Jacob Kamau and Damilola Adegoke.

- ***Level of Analysis***: This is the dissection of peace and security threats and underlying cross-cutting factors at four levels, namely subnational, national, regional/continental and global. This enabled the analysis to uncover potential linkages, similarities, and differences in the nature and dimensions of particular peace and security issues in Africa in 2017.
- ***Disaggregated Underlying Drivers:*** This interrogates the structural foundations and causes of large-scale violence and armed conflict across Africa in 2017. It seeks to harvest a more nuanced exploration of connections between and among peace and security issues/threats in Africa in 2017.
- ***Case Studies (flashpoints and examples):*** This involves empirical illustration using events and incidents in specific countries or regions as signposts of a particular trend, scale or intensity of threat or their unique dimensions. It provided detailed description and interrogation of trends observed in 2017. The choice of flashpoint was guided by factual and thematic relevance, and where possible, regional spread.

1.3 Delimitation of Report

It is impossible for this report and perhaps any other report to cover the totality of issues connected to peace and security in Africa in 2017. This is due to the sheer complexities of each conflict and the collection of conflicts, as well as the multi-layered connections involved, and the rapidly changing dynamic. There is also the challenge of reliable, consistent data. As such, this report is limited to the coverage of issues as outlined in section 1.5 below.

1.4 Data Sources and Methods

This SPSA was prepared through desk-based research and content analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from open sources. The range of data sources includes the following:

- Official Documents of national governments, AU, RECs, UN, and other inter-governmental institutions.
- AU-PSC and UNSC Resolutions and Reports on particular countries, events/incidents, etc.
- Reports of Specialized Missions such as Peace Missions, Election Observation Missions, Human Rights Commission, Expert Panels, etc.
- Academic Publications such as scholarly articles, books, monographs and op-eds on particular incidents/themes, countries and regions.
- Reports of Non-Governmental Actors such as local and international NGOs, CSOs, and major advocacy groups such as Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, etc.
- Media Reports into particular incidents in countries/regions of interest in 2016.

- Existing International Datasets such as the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) Project, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), UNFPA State of the World's Population Report, Mo Ibrahim Governance Index/Report, Global Peace Index, ADB's Africa Economic Outlook, Human Development Index, UNFPA's State of the World's Population, World Development Report, etc.

1.5 Organization of Report

The rest of the report is divided into seven parts. The next section provides the broad statistical overview of armed conflict and violent events in Africa in 2017. It highlights the types of violent incidents, the distribution of violence and the scale of fatalities. Section Three explores the structural issues that underpinned peace and security in Africa in 2017. Section Four provides a theme-based overview of peace processes in 2017, with principal focus on the application of African-centred solutions and the challenges of building peace. Section Five looks at the inter-section between migration and security in 2017, followed by the assessment of the shifting nature of the threats posed by violent extremism in Section Six. Section Seven addresses the phenomenon of riots and protests in Africa in 2017. Section Eight is the analysis of political transitions and security in Africa based on election and forced (abrupt) political transitions in recent times.

2 Overview of Violence and Armed Conflict in Africa in 2017

The headline observation regarding the number of violent conflicts in Africa in 2017 is that very little quantitative change occurred from the previous year despite noticeable change in quality in terms of intensities, spread and fragmentation. In particular, Africa continues to grapple with re-occurring or relapsing conflicts, shifting threats from violent extremist groups, and mass protests. According to the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer for 2017, Sub-Saharan Africa witnessed only a slight increase in the total number of conflicts; from 93 in 2015 to 94 in 2016 and now 95 cases in 2017.[2] A slightly different observation could be deduced from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project of the University of Sussex which showed that there were 17,105 total aggregate of armed conflict and violent events in Africa in 2017. This, according to ACLED, represents a slight drop (2.5%) from the total recorded during two previous years; from 17,539 to 17,537 in 2016 and 2015, respectively.[3] Overall, the drop in the number of violent incidents reported by ACLED was hardly a game-changer; it merely reflects a continuation of the trend of marginal changes in the total number of conflicts in the preceding couple of years.

Globally, there were 385 conflicts in 2017, of which 222 were violent conflicts and 163 were non-violent conflicts. As with 2016, Africa's share of the global total remained the same at 25%. The world witnessed 20 full-scale wars in 2017 (as against 18 in 2016), 16 limited wars and 187 violent crises. Africa accounted for five limited wars, which constitutes a decrease by two compared to 2016, including four in Sub-Saharan Africa and one in North Africa (Egypt). The limited wars in Sub-Saharan Africa include two conflicts in the DRC[4] and Sudan.[5]

The qualitative changes in Africa's conflict landscape are indexed by the change in conflict intensity. For instance, Africa accounted for 50% of the total number of full-scale wars in 2017 and thus emerged as the continent most affected by such wars.[6] Not unexpectedly, all the cases of full scale wars are either on-going or re-occurring violent conflicts. In fact, the year 2017 witnessed the escalation of six conflicts into full-scale wars with four located in Sub-Saharan Africa. The wars include those in the Central Africa Republic between the anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka militias; in the DR Congo between the government and Kamuina Nsapu (KN) militias in the Kasai region, and between government and Mayi-Mayi as well as other militias in North and South Kivu. Two additional violent conflicts erupted in 2017 - the inter-ethnic rivalry between Oromos and Somalis (Ethiopia) and the conflict between the Islamic State and Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The war in Sudan, between SPLM/A-North and the government de-escalated into a violent crisis.[7] The other qualitative changes during the

2 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), (2017). Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 14. https://hiik.de/conflict-barometer/current-version/?lang=en

3 This is based on the analysis of the data released by ACLED for 2017, available at https://www.acleddata.com/data/. Accessed 18 February 2018.

4 This was between Bantu and Batwa, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, and that between the Allied Democratic Forces, ADF versus the governments of the DRC and Uganda

5 Involving inter-communal conflict between the Rizeigat and Ma'aliya. and the Habaniya- Salamat- Gimir. HIIK, 2017. Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 49.

6 This includes nine wars in Sub-Saharan Africa and the conflict in Libya. The Heidelberg Conflict Barometer groups countries in North Africa as part of the Middle East and the Maghreb.

7 HIIK, 2017. Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 49.

year included spread and growing intensity of violent crisis in Ethiopia; South Sudan inter-communal conflicts and the conflict between the ruling SPLM/A government and the SPLM-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). Despite claims by the Nigerian government to have decimated the Boko Haram movement, it continues to deal a devastating blow in towns and villages across the Northeast and in neighbouring countries in the Lake Chad Basin. This is compounded by the upsurge in farmers-herders clashes especially in Nigeria's Middle Belt region. Finally, the conflict in Libya showcases how unyielding armed groups jostling for political power has virtually made the emergence of a credible and acceptable national government impossible. Across these conflicts, new actors or splintering of groups occurred, in addition to the spread of violence to new areas, continued targeting and high impact (fatalities, displacement and human rights abuses) of civilians.

2.1 The Dominant Kinds of Violent Events in 2017

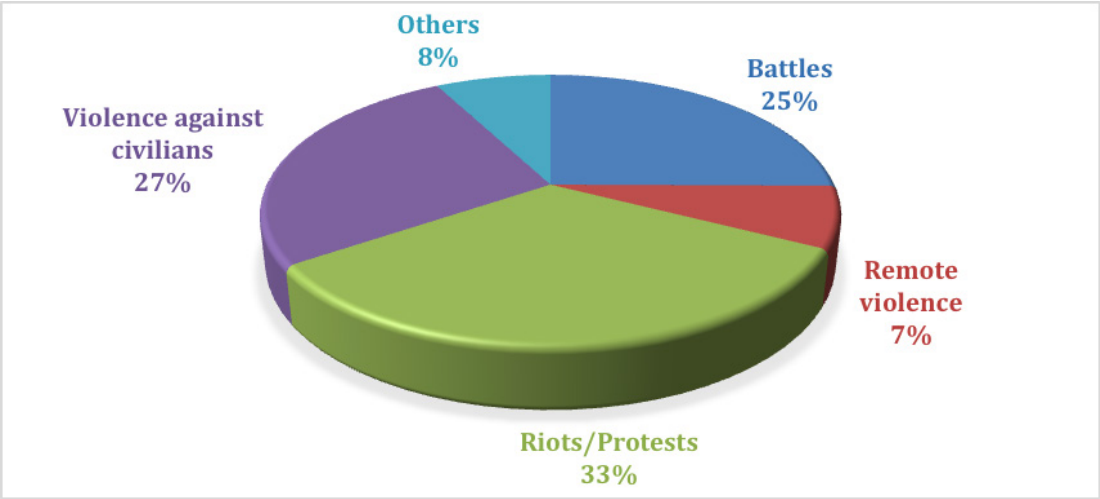
According to ACLED, the dominant form of violent events in Africa in 2017 was riot and mass protest against governments and other incumbents of power which recorded a total of 5660 events (33% of total events). This was followed by violence against civilians with 4562 events (27%) and battles between armed groups, including government and non-government insurgent groups, and militias with 4298 events (25%). As indicated in Table 1.0 and Figure 1.0 below, protests, violence against civilians and battles account for 85% of all conflict incidents in Africa in 2017.

Table 1: Breakdown of Conflict Events in Africa in 2017.[8]

Event Type	Number of Records
Battles	4298
Remote violence	1259
Riots/Protests	5660
Violence against civilians	4562
Others	1326
Grand Total (Occurrences)	**17105**

8 Sources: constructed from ACLED data, https://www.acleddata.com/data/

Figure 1: Breakdown of Conflict Types by Share of Conflict Events in 2017



2.2 Spatial distribution of violent events in 2017[9]

In 2017, Somalia had the highest number of violent events with 2718 incidents (16%), followed by Nigeria with 1492 incidents (9%); South Africa with 935 events (5.5%) and the DRC with 834 events (5%). The conflict events in Somalia was dominated by battles involving no territorial changes; in Nigeria and South Africa it was riots and protest; and in the DRC, by a mixture of battles involving violence against civilian and riots.

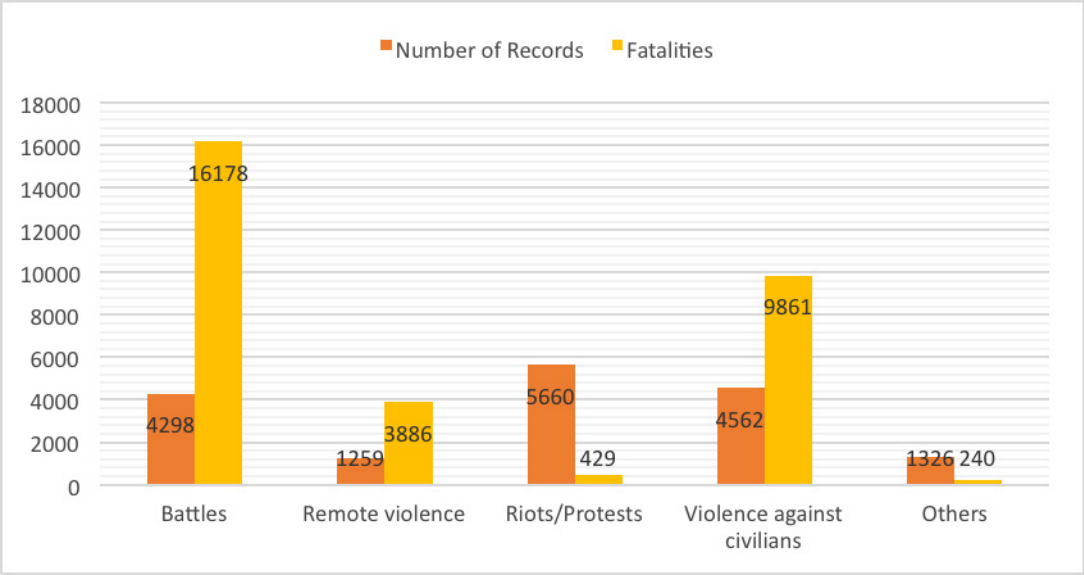
When disaggregated by type of violent event, protest and riots were concentrated in some of the continent's biggest economies and important geo-political countries. Of the 5660 riots and protests, for instance, South Africa accounted for 935 (17%), followed by Tunisia and Nigeria with 12% each, Algeria with 8% and Kenya with 7%. The DRC and Somalia recorded 4% each while Ethiopia accounted for 3%. In regional terms, North Africa recorded the highest number of riots (31%) followed by West Africa (23%), East Africa (21%), Southern Africa (19%) and Central Africa (6%). When matched by fatalities, East Africa produced the highest of fatalities from riots and protests with a total of 201 deaths, followed by West Africa (91), Central Africa (58), North Africa (37) and Southern Africa (15).

The disaggregation of 4298 battles showed that conflict-affected states were also the most affected; Somalia recorded the highest number with 28% (1199 events), followed by South Sudan (13%), the DRC (10%) and Nigeria (9%). The regional disaggregation shows that East Africa accounted for half of battles with 2143 events (50%), followed by North Africa (18%), Central Africa (16%), West Africa with 681 (16%) and Southern Africa (0.3%). The record of incidents corresponds fairly well with the number of fatalities from battles; East Africa had the highest number with 7505 fatalities, followed by Central Africa (3153 fatalities), North Africa (2781), West Africa (2718) and only 21 fatalities in Southern Africa.

9 Unless otherwise stated, the data used in generating the figures and tables in this section are based on the analysis of the data released by ACLED for 2017, available at https://www.acleddata.com/data/. Accessed 18 February 2018.

Violence against civilians, including targeted attacks, was highest in Somalia with 17% of the total 4562 events recorded in Africa in 2017. It was followed by Burundi (14%), Nigeria (10%), Sudan and South Sudan (8.6%), and the DRC (6.4%). The regional distribution showed that East Africa accounted for over half of all violence against civilians in 2017 with 2318 incidents (51%) followed by West Africa (16%), North Africa (14%), Central Africa (13.3%) and Southern Africa (6%). When disaggregated by fatalities, East Africa had the highest fatalities from violence against civilians with 3719 deaths (38%) followed, and importantly, by Central Africa experiencing 27% of fatalities despite having only 13% of incidents.

Figure 2: Conflict Event/Type and Fatalities in 2017



2.3 The Scale and Kinds of Fatalities in 2017[10]

According to ACLED data, Africa recorded up to 30,594 fatalities from 17,105 conflict incidents in 2017. This represents a 2% increase over the level recorded in 2016 (30,000). As indicated in Figure 3.0 below, over half of the fatalities in 2017 were from battles (53%); nearly a third was from by violence against civilians (32%), up to 13% were linked to remote violence, and 1% from riots and protests. When disaggregated by country as indicated in Figure 4.0 below, Somalia accounted for nearly one-fifth (19%) of all fatalities in 2017, followed by South Sudan and Nigeria (15% each), DRC (10.5%) and CAR (6.5%).

10 Unless otherwise stated, the data used in generating the figures and tables in this section are based on the analysis of the data released by ACLED for 2017, available at https://www.acleddata.com/data/. Accessed 18 February 2018.

Figure 3: Fatalities by Conflict Event/Types in Africa in 2017

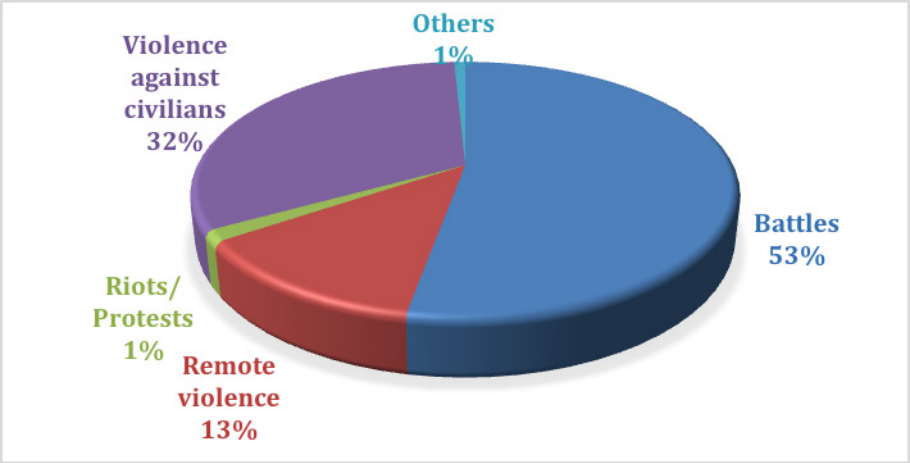
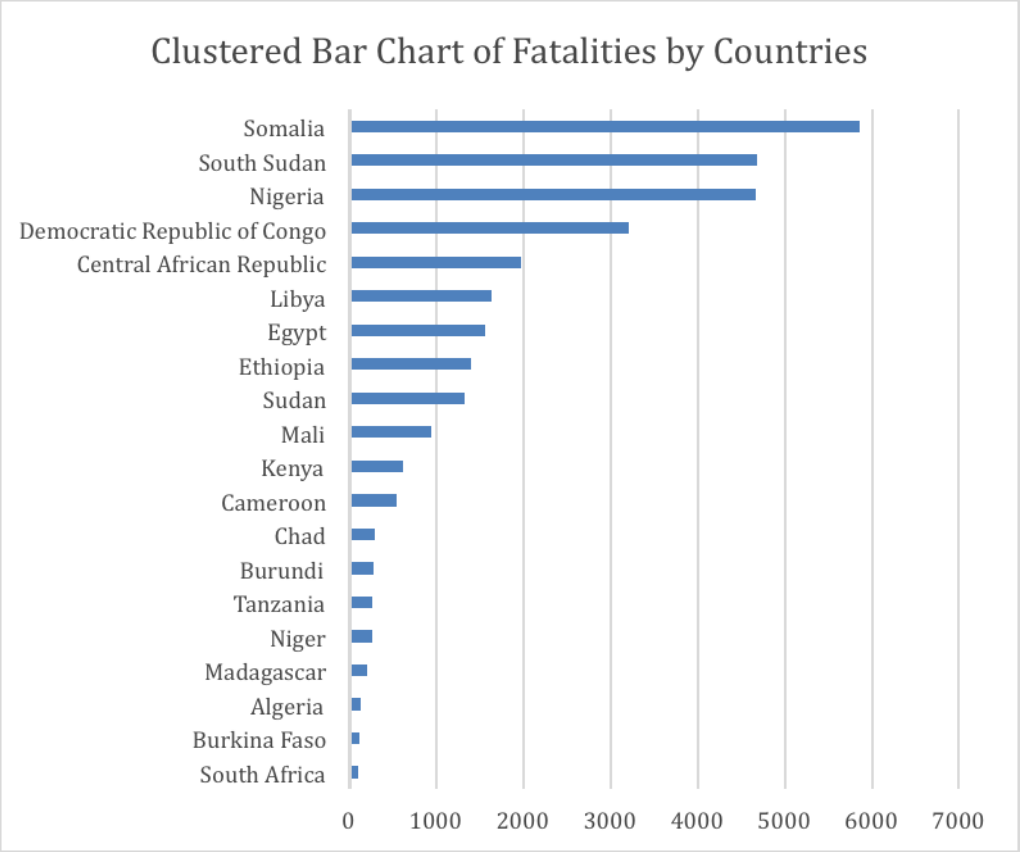


Figure 4: Fatalities by Countries in 2017



2.4 Gender-based Violence

In 2017, there were no aggregate data for reported cases of rape and gender-based violence in the context of violent conflict in Africa. This reflects ongoing difficulties of collecting data on the subject matter; in most cases, the atmosphere of insecurity, lack of services, limited humanitarian access, stigma and fear of reprisals impede reporting of conflict-related sexual violence. Of course, the phenomenon transcends fragile and conflict-affected countries to include the relatively stable ones. It is also not limited to non-state armed groups as there are reported cases of complicity or its perpetration state armed forces and members of multilateral peace missions, and increasing number of male victims as well. However, anecdotal pointers and evidence continue to illustrate and confirm gender-based violence as a lived-reality in theatres of violent conflict in Africa as women and girls continue to be targeted for rape, sexual assault, and other forms of human rights violations. The importance of this issue compels its coverage and use of such anecdotal information in a number of case studies (below) to underscore the need for continued and improved policy attention.

In Mali, the UN recorded 1,368 cases of gender-based violence in the first half of 2017.[11] The MINUSMA in its September 2017 Monthly Report to the Security Council, documented 112 cases of human rights violations and abuses across the country, involving 348 victims, of whom 3 were women and 21 were children, compared with 66 cases and 115 victims in the previous reporting period. The cases included 13 instances of extrajudicial and arbitrary killings, 9 of enforced disappearance, 15 of ill-treatment, 9 of child recruitment and use, 4 of conflict related sexual violence and 31 of unlawful and arbitrary detention. The major armed groups and parties to the 2015 Algiers Accord, including some members of the Malian defence and security forces have been mentioned as alleged perpetrators of gender-based violence.[12]

In the conflict in CAR, the UN Mission (MINUSCA) reported dozens of cases of gender-based violence in its monthly report to the Security Council in 2017. For instance, it documented 73 incidents in February; 27 cases in June; and 55 cases in its October report.[13] Most the reported cases were often in the context of armed attacks in opportunistic circumstances or as part of deliberate acts of war or driven by subsisting inter-group animosities. While all armed groups were highlighted as alleged perpetrators of gender-based violence, those said to be responsible for the highest number of incidents include ex-Séléka factions, the MPC/RJ coalition, and anti-balaka factions.[14]

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11 UN Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali S/2017/811 28 September 2017 Available at: http://undocs.org/S/2017/811 p.10

12 UN Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali S/2017/811 28 September 2017 Available at: http://undocs.org/S/2017/784 P.9

13 See UN Security Council 2018 Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic S/2018/125 15 February 2018, http://undocs.org/S/2018/125 p.10; Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic. S/2017/473 2, June 2017, http://undocs.org/S/2017/473, p.8; and Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic. S/2017/94 1, February 2017, http://undocs.org/S/2017/94, p.7

In the series of violent conflicts in the DRC, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) verified 514 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in 2016. The victims included 340 women, 170 girls, three men and one boy. For the same reporting period, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) recorded 2,593 cases of sexual violence in conflict-affected provinces and highlighted non-State armed groups as main perpetrators (responsible for 68% of verified incidents).[15] The trend appears to have continued in 2017; for instance, in its October Monthly Report to the Security Council, MONUSCO estimates that between June and August 2017, up to 195 persons, including 120 women, 27 men and 48 children, were reported as victims of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by State agents (20%) and armed groups (80%). This is estimated to be an increase compared with the last reporting period.[16]

The 2016 SPSA highlighted widespread gender-based based violence as a deliberate tactic of war in the conflicts in South Sudan. For example, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) documented 577 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, gang rape and sexual slavery in 2016. Other service providers recorded additional 376 cases of sexual violence, of which 157 were forced marriage, with State and non-State armed actors among the alleged perpetrators.[17] This is estimated to be the same or even increased in 2017 given the scale of displacement, a factor that increases the vulnerability of women and girls.[18]

2.5 Key Takeaways

1) Re-occurring or relapsing conflicts, riots and mass protests, and shifting threats posed by violent extremist groups are key sources and manifestations of violence and insecurity in Africa.
2) Battles involving state and non-state armed groups are the deadliest type of conflict incident in Africa. This is in addition to the targeting of civilians by conflict actors.
3) Violent conflicts and crises are more diffused and cut across fragile and conflict-affected countries and relatively stable ones. In short, violent conflict transcends socio-economic profile and status of countries. Somalia, Nigeria, South Africa and DRC account for the most conflict incidents in 2017, respectively.
4) There are regional patterns to the occurrence and concentration of particular conflict incidents and the fatalities they produce; e.g. North Africa and West Africa account for over half of mass protests and riots; and East Africa alone accounted for half of violence against civilians.
5) Rape and other forms of gender-based violence continue to be a menace in theatres of violent conflict in Africa, including South Sudan, Mali, CAR and DRC.

15 UN Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence S/2017/249 15 April 2017 Available at: http://undocs.org/S/2017/249 p.11

16 UN Security Counci.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo S/2017/824 2 October 2017 Available at: http://undocs.org/S/2017/824 p. 9

17 UN Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence S/2017/249 15 April 2017 Available at: http://undocs.org/S/2017/249 p.17-18

18 UN Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 2 September to 14 November 2017) S/2017/1011 Available at: http://undocs.org/S/2017/1011 p.10

3 Structural Causes of Conflict in Africa

> *"Our world is in trouble. People are hurting and angry. They see insecurity rising, inequality growing, conflict spreading and climate changing…societies are fragmented. Political discourse is polarized. Trust within and among countries is being driven down by those who demonize and divide."*[19]

The excerpts above from a November 2017 speech by UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, highlighted the challenge of preventing, as much as managing violent conflict and building peace in today's world. It also underscores the diffused nature of violence and violent conflicts; it is never restricted to particular regions or countries, rather, they manifest in various locations where the structural conditions and vacuums are rife. To this extent violent conflict and other peace and security challenges are not peculiar to Africa but are themselves a product of structural weaknesses – structural vulnerabilities are the reasons for violent conflicts and insecurity in Africa. The structural conditions include socio-economic and political inequality, lack of good governance, widespread injustice, absence of peace education and a culture of peace, dysfunctional gender norms, and vulnerability to multiple risks such as climate change and natural disasters, etc. Significantly, those structural conditions provide the appropriate background to understanding and assessing Africa's peace and security trends in 2017, and across time and period.

The incidence of armed conflicts and violence in 2017 differ across Africa in terms of the trigger issues, actors and overall dynamic. However, they reflect similarity of underlying root causes linked to structural weaknesses such as the youth bulge, environmental stresses, poor governance, and the mismanagement of ethno-religious diversity. These have degenerated due to a number of enabling factors particularly access to arms and the propensity by groups to mobilize a wide range of self-help strategies.

So far, the continent's youth bulge in which young people under 24 years are more than 40% of adult population is proving to be a challenge, rather than an opportunity, for most countries. According to figures from the UNFPA shown in Table 2.0 below, African states have the highest rate of youth bulge with the highest proportion of population within the age brackets of 0-14 and 10-24 years compared with the global average, and twice the global average for fertility rate. It is estimated that Africa would therefore produce an additional 53% to the global population by 2050, thereby intensifying the 'youthening' of the continent.[20]

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19 UN, 2017. 'UN Secretary General Address to the General Assembly, 19 September 2017, https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2017-09-19/sgs-ga-address. Accessed 20 January 2018.

20 UNFPA. 2014. State of the World's Population 2017: Factsheet—Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. New York: UNPFA, p. 1, http://www.unfpa.org/resources/state-world-population-2014-fact-sheet-youth-sub-saharan-africa

Table 2: Demographic Table of Africa[21]

Region	Population (million)	10-24 year-olds (%)	0-14 year-olds (%)	15-64 year-olds (%)	65 year-olds+ (%)	Fertility Rate
Algeria	41.3	29	23	65	6	2.7
Egypt	97.6	33	26	61	5	3.2
Libya	6.4	28	26	67	4	2.2
Morocco	35.7	27	25	66	7	2.5
Tunisia	11.5	24	22	68	7	2.5
East/Southern Africa	581	42	32	55	3	4.5
West/Central Africa	424	44	32	53	3	5.2
World	7349	25	26	66	8	2.5

Despite the opportunities that youth bulge avail, the continent seems to be witnessing negative outcomes as indicated by the sheer number of young people involved in militias, gangster and cult groups, and violent protests. Indeed, youth bulge has been transformed into a security challenge thus far due to high unemployment and under-employment, limited social mobility, easy access to small arms and light weapons, subsisting inter-group animosities, etc. It should not be difficult to understand why most African countries experiencing different forms of conflicts; the notable ones including Ethiopia, Mali, CAR, DRC, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Tunisia, are also those with the highest number of youth and incidences of youth unemployment. For instance, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) assessment of the Human and Economic Cost of Conflict in the Horn of Africa highlights the scale of youth unemployment (with implications for the risk of participation in violence) in Ethiopia and Sudan to be 27% and 22%, respectively, and youth constitute 70% of total unemployed population in Kenya.[22]

Africa's youth challenge transcends unemployment and under-employment to also include exclusion and marginalization from formal processes of decision-making. In spite of their numerical strength, the ratios of youth involved in elected and unelected positions of authority remain limited.[23] A recent Afrobarometer Survey in 36 African countries found political engagement (voting) to be lower among youth (65%) compared with adults (79%); young Africans are less likely than their elders to participate in civic activities; and young women's participation in civic activities was 9% less compared with their male counterparts. Expectedly, youth in Africa had higher levels of participation in protests and demonstrations relative to elders.[24] Youth's participation in a variety of violent incidents has to be

21 Source: Compiled from UNFPA 2017, pp. 124-128.
22 UNECA, 2017. Human and Economic Cost of Conflict in the Horn of Africa, UNECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p. 74.
23 Ismail, O. and Olonisakin, F. 2017. 'Youth Vulnerability and Exclusion and Violence in Africa: A Review of Evidence', Background Research Paper for IDRC presented at a Workshop on Youth Vulnerability and Exclusion and Violence in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 1-3 March 2017.
24 Lekalake, R. and Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2016. Does less engaged mean less empowered? Afrobarometer Policy Paper

understood against this background – as expressions of their agency to transform their individual and collective circumstances and those of their societies. The combination of socio-economic deprivations and socio-political exclusion informs the nexus of youth bulge and peace and security challenges in Africa.

The second crosscutting structural issue is the rise in the scale and intensity of environmental stresses associated with the effects of climate change and limited adaptive capacities across Africa. Much of the African continent is experiencing harsh environmental change related to degraded soils, water resources, and biodiversity, and extreme and unusual weather conditions. Such stresses amplify pressures on already fragile ecosystems, exacerbating the failure by governments to provide sufficient food and water to populations.[25] It is not a coincidence that many fragile and conflict-affected countries in Africa are the very same experiencing acute food insecurity, and also producing the most forced migrants. Moreover, environmental stresses remain a direct factor in several violent conflicts especially in and around the Sahel forcing affected population to take extreme measures in competing for scarce resources.

Third is poor governance that often manifests in the gross mismanagement of scarce resources (corruption and economic decline), loss of trust in public institutions, political repression and authoritarian rule, violations of human rights, and attempts to manipulate elections or change constitutional term limits. For instance, a survey of 36 African countries in 2015 indicates that citizens generally trusted informal religious and traditional institutions and leaders far more than formal executive agencies of the state. The legislature and electoral bodies were least trusted by citizens. The lack of instructional trust is directly related to perceptions and realities of corruption, and this limits citizens' engagement and contributions to socio-economic developmental aspirations.[26] Where any of these have occurred, they typically trigger mass protests, rebellions, and other violent reactions. According to the US National Intelligence Council Global Trends Report (2017), denationalization and alienation arising from disconnection from sociocultural mainstream; the inability to participate in the political process; diminished opportunities for marriage or the inability to attain perceived 'deserved' socio-economic benefits and status will remain consistent sources of grievance-driven violence in years to come.[27]

The fourth issue is that a growing number of countries are demonstrating lack of political will or policy capacity to effectively manage diversities, be it ethnic, religious or political. This often manifests in real or perceived horizontal (inter-group) and vertical (among households and individuals) inequalities, especially along ethno-national and religious identities. The absence of all-inclusive models of political representation and participation (or the undermining of such even where the framework

No. 34, August 2016, p. 3. http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Policy%20papers/ab_r6_policypaperno34_youth_political_engagement_in_africa_youth_day_release_eng2.pdf. Accessed 25 March 2018.

25 USA National Intelligence Council (2017) Global Trends: Paradox of Progress, p. 224. www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends

26 Bratton, M. and Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2016. Do trustworthy institutions matter for development? Corruption, trust, and government performance in Africa. Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 112, 23 August 2016, p. 2, http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r6_dispatchno112_trustworthy_institutions_and_development_in_africa.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2018.

27 USA National Intelligence Council, Global Trends, p. 224.

exists), and the general lack of tact in the management of extremely delicate diversity issues have conditioned widespread feelings of alienation. In most cases, this has undercut the legitimacy of governments and state institutions at the same time that they increase real or perceived inter-group inequality. This underlies violent events in countries such as Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, and South Sudan.

Fifth is the growing tendency or propensity towards self-help mobilisations by groups and communities to guarantee their physical safety, socio-economic survival, political representation, and cultural survival. Some of the prominent expressions of this include the proliferation of communal militias, defence forces, vigilantes, and warrior sects. The challenge is that self-help mechanisms have increasingly filled the spaces created by the absence and/or de-legitimisation of governments and state institutions. In other cases, they are quickly co-opted by governments seeking to sundry certain ends, for good or bad. Not unexpectedly, the rise in self-help mobilisations has contributed to the rise in and viciousness of violence and armed conflicts across Africa in 2017 and in previous years.

Sixth are enabling factors specifically linked to the availability and easy access to illicit small arms and light weapons that quickly transform mundane disagreements, grievances, and tensions into violent and deadly affairs. It is estimated that there are over 100 million illicit SALW in circulation in Africa.[28] It is true that SALW do not cause armed conflict per se, however they are important 'game changers' that embolden belligerent groups to turn grievances into violent and deadly episodes. Perhaps with the exception of mass protests, it is hard to imagine any conflict situation without substantial use of SALW in Africa.

The final structural weakness is the global geo-strategic and political-economy context that continues to shape and influence the nature of threats and challenges, and opportunities for conflict prevention and management in Africa. Africa's socio-economic vulnerabilities can hardly be divorced from the nature of its insertion and location in the global political-economy calculus, especially the processes of resources extraction. As indicated in 2016 SPSA Report, natural resources in terms of its ownership, extraction and receipts remain a factor in most conflict contexts in Africa. Moreover, the advent and increasing spread of transnational threats such violent extremism, organized crime, cyber insecurities, and pandemics underscore how Africa's peace and security landscape, including structural vulnerabilities, are a function of global dynamic.

28 See Matt Schroeder and Guy Lamb (2006). *The Illicit Arms Trade in Africa: A Global Enterprise*, African Analyst, Third Quarter.

4 Africa-centred Solutions and Peace Processes in 2017

In spite of the obvious peace and security challenges, it is not all doomsday in Africa, and violent conflict is neither exclusive nor peculiar to the continent. In fact, the 2017 IIAG observes that in spite of the deterioration in Safety and Rule of Law over the last decade, the pace of deterioration appears to be slowing down.[29] In 2017, African governments, regional institutions and civil society groups were actively engaged in preventing and managing ongoing and new conflicts at different levels. This includes mediation efforts, peace support operations, peace processes, and post-conflict reconstruction and development. We unpack these efforts as manifestations of Africa-centred solutions – approaches to preventing and managing conflicts based on African identity and perspectives, political will and commitment, and shared values.[30] The claim to Africa-centred solutions hardly excludes support and partnerships between Africa and foreign entities in preventing or managing peace and security challenges. In fact, there is substantial extra-African funding for the peace and security activities of the AU and other African regional organizations. In this report, the focus is on the activities of the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) and peace processes in the continent in 2017.

For instance, the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) held more meetings in 2017 (146) than during 2016 (111) with much of its agenda focused on brewing, current or latent crisis situations.[31] The PSC also increased its attention to planning and preparing for engagements with partners and field missions to improve the quality and outcomes of interventions. The PSC diary indicated that it was preoccupied with crises in East Africa and the Horn (47%), followed by the Sahel at a distant 17%. In terms of specific crisis, the insecurity in the DRC and the Great Lakes regions accounted for 21%; Somalia and South Sudan (14% each); Darfur (11%); and Lake Chad Basin and Guinea Bissau (8% each).[32] In a similar vein, the 2016 IPSS APSA Impact Assessment Report, the AU and RECs cumulatively undertook preventive diplomacy, mediation and peace support missions in 28 conflict situations in Africa. Of this, 86% were deemed to be of high or medium quality regarding their appropriateness, and 75% of such interventions were either successful or partially successful in preventing or de-escalating conflict situations.[33]

There were also series of peace deals signed by warring parties as well as negotiated settlement to long-drawn conflicts and disputes across Africa in 2017. Following the impressive display of African-centred solution to the political crisis in The Gambia caused by Yahya Jammeh's reluctance to leave office after losing the December 2016 elections, a peaceful resolution of the crisis was reached early in 2017. In the CAR, two ceasefire agreements were signed, including the June 19 2017 Rome

29 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018. 2017 IIAG, p. 28.
30 IPSS, 2014. 'African-centred Solutions for Peace and Security (AfSol)', IPSS Report, December 2014, p. 1. http://www.ipss-addis.org/new-ipss/y-file-store/resources/publication/report/afsol_workshop_report.pdf. Accessed 26 March 2018.
31 According to the ISS, crisis situations accounted for 27% of PSC meetings in 2017, compared with 40% in 2016. Much of attention was focused on thematic issues in 2017. See ISS 2017. PSC Report, Issue 98, December 2017/January 2018, p. 15.
32 Ibid, p. 16.
33 See IPSS, 2017. APSA Impact Report 2016, p. 10.

Agreement expected to form the basis for an inclusive political settlement (representation) by warring parties. In December, Anti-Balaka and a Fulani ethnic militia (3R) also inked a ceasefire agreement.[34]

In the DRC, the Bantu and Batwa groups in Tanganyika Province signed a Peace Deal in February 2017. They also opted to participate in peace dialogue process facilitated by civil society groups and MONUSCO to end violent clashes. The conflict between the DRC government and the Kamunia Nsapu (KN) militias in the Kasai region also attracted a peace forum and the signing of a peace agreement by traditional chiefs.[35]

In Mozambique, the FRELIMO government and the opposition RENAMO signed a "FRENAMO Partocracy" peace deal in February 2018. The deal decentralizes governance to regional assemblies and devolves power to regions in a way that gives opposition parties greater scope for political inclusion and control of provinces where they have majority support. The peace deal is capable of ebbing intermittent skirmishes and a return to full scale armed conflict. Its success is essential to jump-starting the country's economy by boosting trade and the inflow of foreign direct investment.[36]

In the context of subnational conflicts in South Sudan, the Dinka Bor and Murle signed a peace agreement in May 2018 to sheath their sword over violent conflicts and reprisal attacks linked to cattle rustling and access to arable land. In the broader political contestation that pitched the Salva Kiir government versus opposition groups, including the SPLM-IO, the government followed up on its 2016 commitment by initiating an overdue National Dialogue, even though it was boycotted by major stakeholders. The IGAD and the Troika (Norway, the UK, and the US) took steps to rally warring parties to join the Revitalization Forum initiated by IGAD, a step aimed at restoring a ceasefire to end hostilities.

Additional examples of peace efforts in Africa in 2017 were in Sudan where a peace deal was reached between the Gimir and Rizeigat ethnic groups to hold a reconciliation conference following cattle-related clashes. A similar peace deal was reached by the Habaniya and Salamat ethnic groups over peaceful coexistence. The Somaliland and Khatumo leaders also signed a power-sharing deal (Ainaba Agreement) to build on an initial ceasefire agreement. The new deal guarantees the integration of Khatumo militias into the Somaliland security forces, the reopening of the Sool region to international aid agencies, and a commitment to revisit and include Khatumo interest in the constitution.[37]

Beneath the chaos in Libya, the Awlad Suleiman, Tebu and Tuareg ethnic groups reached an agreement to end inter-tribal tensions and hostilities, though it was later rejected by sections of the Tebu community. At the national level, the two main parties, namely the UN-backed Government

34 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), (2017). Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 20.
35 Ibid.
36 Fabricus, P. 2018. "Who benefits from Frenamo's partocracy?", ISS Today, 15 February 2018, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/who-benefits-from-frenamos-partocracy. Accessed 20 February 2018.
37 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), (2017). Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 21.

of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army-Tobruk-based House of Representatives concluded a ceasefire agreement in Paris in July 2017. The agreement provides for elections in 2018.[38]

The careful management of potentially explosive situations in 2017 culminated in the negotiated settlement of two munities mounted by disgruntled soldiers in Cote d'Ivoire.[39] So far, the political conflict and sustained demonstrations in Togo has not resulted in a violent conflict largely due to restraint on all sides, as well as third party mediation by ECOWAS and the AU. In February 2018, opposition groups agreed to call-off protest following mediation by the government of Ghana.[40]

In Zimbabwe, the arduous process of transforming long years of authoritarian rule passed off without much violence and without extra-African involvement. A new political settlement forged within the ruling ZANU-PF party was moderated by a shrewd combination of military action, peaceful demonstration by civil society groups and mediation by Reverend Father Mukonori.[41] Similarly, new political settlements in the context of arresting socio-political, economic and security challenges underpin the changes in political leadership in South Africa and Ethiopia, although the political and security situation in the latter remains dicey.

In Kenya, fears about the repeat of the 2007/8 post-election violence proved largely unfounded as only limited and isolated cases of violence were recorded.[42] This was in spite of the tensions associated with the judicial invalidation, the re-run elections and its boycott by the National Super Alliance, and the campaigns of civil disobedience that followed the inauguration of the Kenyatta government for his second term. In fact, the chief protagonists, President Kenyatta and Raila Odinga, reached a truce to kick-start a process of national reconciliation in March 2018.[43]

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38 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), (2017). Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 22.

39 Security Council Report.2017.Central African Republic June Monthly Forecast(Online) 31 May Available http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-02/cote_divoire_12.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

40 See https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Togo-opposition-groups-call-off-protests-at-Ghana-s-request-632804

41 Africa Confidential.2017. Hopes and fears for the new old guard Vol 58 No 24 1st December Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12178/Hopes_and_fears_for_the_new_old_guard. Accessed on 09/02/2018

42 According to ACLED, while fatalities may have been low, the electoral re-run was a significant contributor to October 2017 becoming the month with the third most events in Kenya in ACLED's dataset going back to 1997. The only months which surpass it are December 2007 and January 2008 which saw the worst of 2007's post-election violence, with more than 1,000 fatalities recorded. See ACLED.2017. KENYA – NOVEMBER 2017 UPDATE 27 December. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/kenya-november-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

43 BBC News, 2018. "Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga now 'brothers", 09 March 2018, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-43345217. Accessed 10 March 2018.

Box 1.0: The non-violent ending of a 37-year Dictatorship in Zimbabwe

Almost two decades of political turmoil in Zimbabwe culminated in the end of the 37-year rule of Robert Mugabe through a military assisted political transition. The entire spectrum of society in Zimbabwe welcomed the end of Mugabe's era thereby giving the transition a measure of legitimacy. Indeed, the Zimbabwe Defence Force enjoys a measure of popular support for removing Mugabe. The events in Zimbabwe called attention to a unique, and home grown, solution in which an internally negotiated agreement was struck for the removal of the old serving president that also received implicit support internationally. Despite his removal, however, questions remain about whether the political transition would bring the deserved changes in Zimbabwe. This is because the transition merely retained the same cohort of influential leaders complicit in the political and economic decline of Zimbabwe. Indeed, the cabinet announced by the new President, Emerson Mnangagwa, included 15 ministers from the previous Mugabe cabinet and headliners from the military rather than a broad based government. The military also has extended its role in internal affairs of the country including heading a number of ministries thereby raising concerns of a new, command-type, leadership or a 'diarchy' in Zimbabwe.

4.1 Stalled Peace Processes

The above cases of peace deals do not tell the full story regarding the ups and downs of peace processes in Africa, including obstacles and challenges to the application and effectiveness of Africa-centred solutions. Admittedly, Africa continues to face cases of stalled or collapse peace processes, including some of the peace deals reached in 2017 and those associated with major armed conflicts. Some of the notable cases include Burundi, the CAR, Guinea Bissau, Mali, South Sudan, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, and the DRC. The usual factors responsible for this include intransigence and the lack of political will amongst conflict parties, failure to implement agreements, fragmentation of armed groups, and tacit preference for military solutions. A few case studies are x-rayed here.

In East Africa, not much progress was recorded in the conflict in Burundi and South Sudan. In the former, there was a relative lull in violence and improvement in the security situation compared with 2015-6. However, human rights violations and the curtailment of civil liberties, targeted political assassinations and isolated skirmishes, continue unabated. Much of the violence is linked to the government and security forces, and the Imbonerakure (youth wing of the ruling CNDD party) and unidentified assailants.[44] Politically, the East African Community sponsored Inter-Burundian Dialogue facilitated by former Tanzanian President Mkapa did not make much headway as opposition groups boycotted it over President's Mkapa's affirmation of Nkurunziza's presidency.[45] In addition, the agreed deployment of 200 human rights observers and military advisers by the AU remains incomplete and underfunded.[46]

44 Security Council Report.2017. Burundi. October Monthly Forecast(Online) 28 September. Available athttp://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-10/burundi_9.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

45 Security Council Report.2017. Burundi. February Monthly Forecast(Online) 31 January. Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-02/burundi_12.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

46 Security Council Report. 2017. Burundi. July Monthly Forecast (Online) 30 June. Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-07/burundi_15.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

South Sudan witnessed a reduction in violence between May and October largely due to the raining season, but violence resumed and increased and spread across the country during the following dry spell. One conservative estimate put the estimated number of fatalities in 2017 at around 1000, with up to 200,000 civilians seeking refuge at Protection of Civilian sites within UNMISS bases and another 700,00 displaced persons fleeing to neighbouring states.[47] The 2016 peace agreement brokered by IGAD was violated by all warring parties through unilateral actions designed to undermine the provisions of the agreement, especially by the ruling SPLMA/A government over power sharing, and redistricting arrangements. Violent clashes hardly abated even with the signing of additional ceasefire and peace agreements in 2017, including the June 2017 deal between an SPLM/A-IO faction based in Yei River and the SPLM/A in Kampala, Uganda. The 21 December ceasefire agreement signed by the major conflict parties in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, has yet to fully establish conditions for stability.

The fundamental issues in the South Sudan conflict remain unresolved; namely, the sharing of political power, representation, and control over resources. While the ruling SPLM/A government and the Riek Machar-led main opposition SPLM/A-IO remain the key actors, several splinter and affiliated militias as well as communal armed groups have sprung in recent times to further complicate the conflict.[48] South Sudan is dotted by a complex network (layers) of several conflicts playing out simultaneously, and most are coloured by inter-communal, inter-ethnic, and ethno-political competition for power. For instance, inter-communal clashes is estimated to have reached unprecedented levels in the half of 2017 with nearly 1.5 times more conflict events involving ethno-communal militias compared with the same period in 2016.[49]

The upsurge in violence in 2017 was a consequence of several factors, including the splintering of conflict parties and armed groups, intransigence of parties, and preference for military solutions. In March, for instance, General Cirillo Swaka resigned from the SPLM/A and formed the National Salvation Front (NSF) to protest alleged SPLM/A agenda of spreading ethnic violence. The SPLMA/-IO also suffered internal tensions and splintering by affiliated militias, some of who are reported to have joined the NSF.[50] The conflict was further complicated by rising criminality (armed robberies and muggings) in Juba. Several battles were recorded in Yei River state (south of Juba), Eastern and Western Nile states, Greater and Central Equatoria and Upper Nile.[51] Across these areas, armed groups exchanged control of territories with devastating impacts on civilians as evident in incessant executions, abductions, and looting and burning down of properties carried out by conflict parties.

47 HIIK, 2017. Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 79.

48 ACLED 2017. Conflict Trends, No. 63, November 2017, p. 8. https://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ACLED_Conflict-Trends-Report_November2017_FINAL-1.pdf. Accessed 10 December 2017.

49 ACLED 2017. Conflict Trends, No. 59, June 2017, p. 8. https://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ACLED_Conflict-Trends-Report_No.59-June-2017_pdf.pdf. Accessed 18 December 2017.

50 Africa Confidential.2017.No let-up in southern fighting.Vol 58 No 22 3rd November. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12160/No_let-up_in_southern_fighting Accessed on 08/02/2018

51 ACLED.2017.SOUTH SUDAN – APRIL 2017 UPDATE 16 May Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/05/16/south-sudan-april-2017-update/ Accessed on 11/02/2018

The prospect for peace in South Sudan is grim, at least in the short to medium term, due to the attitude of key actors and the peculiar nature of the conflict. The political prospect is further compounded by economic problems, including fall in oil revenue, shortage of cash, huge budget shortfalls, and skyrocketing inflation (over 800%).[52] The current situation is likely to further deteriorate with the possible foreclosure of free and fair elections, or any political settlement agreeable to the key actors in 2018.

Box 2.0: The Epicentre of Violence in South Sudan in 2017

2017 witnessed an increase in violence by communal and ethnic militias in Jonglei, Lakes and Bahr el Ghazal States over cattle and land between the Murle and Dinka communities in Jongle states, and the Tonj herder and war farmer communities of Jur River county in Bahr El Ghazal. Violence between Dinka communities also continued in Aweil in Northern Bahr El Ghazal and Warrap.

In the Central African region, the broader conflict in the CAR surged in the level, intensity and spread of violence, especially those targeted against civilians leaving over 1,000 reported fatalities. This is in addition to increased attacks against aid agencies and MINUSCA that resulted in the killing of 13 aid workers and 34 MINUSCA peacekeepers in 2017 alone.[53] Increased attacks against civilians also led to huge increases in the number of displaced persons to over 1.1 million (25% of country's population) and the withdrawal of aid agencies.[54] The security situation outside of the capital, Bangui, deteriorated in 2017 without major breakthrough in or momentum in the peace efforts. There was also no progress in the disarmament efforts given the weak implementation of sanctions.

52 Africa Confidential.2017. A scorched earth peace. Vol 58 No 1 6th January Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11873/A_scorched_earth_peace Accessed on 08/02/2018
53 HIIK, 2017. Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 56.
54 Ibid.

Moreover, the Touadéra regime was progressively weakened by accusation of inadequate political will, corruption, and loss of popular support.[55] To date, much of the country is still controlled by armed factions belonging to the ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka groups.[56]

The configuration of conflict actors and violence continue to reflect the consolidation of sectarian identities; for instance, predominantly Christian anti-balaka groups target Muslim communities, and vice versa. In addition to existing armed groups, new militias also emerged in 2017, including the Retour, Reclamation and Rehabilitation (3R) formed to protect the Peuhl and Muslims against attacks by anti-balaka militias in places such as Ouham, Ouham-Pendé and Nana-Mambéré in the West. The Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC) led by Ali Darassa Mahamat emerged in Bambari to control gold mining and protect Fulanis against FPRC.[57] Much of the battles in 2017 involved the UPC and FPRC-MPC in Bambari and the larger Ouaka region. Thus battles continued between intra-seleka factions (FPRC versus UPC); between ex-seleka and anti-balaka groups; and between anti-balaka groups versus civilians and MINUSCA. It is unlikely that the renewal and strengthening of the mandate of MINUSCA and the authorized increase in its personnel by 900 will change the current conflict dynamic on ground in any significant way.[58]

In West Africa and the Sahel, the conflict in Mali continued in 2017 without much breakthrough in the full implementation of the 2015 Peace Agreement. In fact, the two-year interim period under the peace agreement elapsed without the implementation of key provisions such as cantonment, joint patrols, interim authorities and DDR. This was in spite of two major factions signing a definitive cessation of hostilities accord that re-committed them to the full implementation of the 2015 agreement. Much of problem relates to opposition to constitutional changes proposed by the Keita regime and the general slow pace of some of the government reforms. Other factors include tensions and fragmentation among the coalitions of armed groups as well as changes in their configurations, especially those that emerged in the aftermath of the 2015 peace deal.[59]

Furthermore, there was a major relapse into violence during the first half of 2017 caused by continued disagreement on the composition and inauguration of interim authorities in Northern Mali, and as a result of the activities of a new coalition of armed islamist groups, the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen, JNIM, also known as Al Qaeda in Mali, AQM. Armed attacks by JNIM affiliates quickly spread across the border into Burkina Faso and Niger just as they peaked in the North and shifted to Central and Southern Mali.[60] Violence also rose as a result of ethnic clashes involving the Fulanis

55 African Confidential. 2017. Concealing disappointment Vol 58 No 9 28th April Available at: ,https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11985/Concealing_disappointment Accessed on 07/02/2018
56 Security Council Report.2017.Central African Republic November Monthly Forecast(Online) 31 October Available ttp://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-11/central_african_republic_23.php Accessed on 16 January 2018
57 ACLED.2017. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC – JUNE 2017 UPDATE 17 July. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/07/17/central-african-republic-june-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018
58 African Confidential.2017.Grenades against peace. Vol 58 No 24, 24 November. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12177/Grenades_against_peace Accessed on 07/02/2018
59 Security Council Report. 2017. Mali June Monthly Forecast (Online) 31 May Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-06/mali_26.php accessed on 16 January 2018
60 Security Council Report. 2017. Mali January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available athttp://www.

and Bambaras over grazing land,[61] and also between the main rebel group known as Coordination of Movements of the Azawad, CMA, and the pro-government Imghad Tuareg and Allies Self-Defense Group (GATIA).[62]

The UN, AU and ECOWAS intensified efforts to promote the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement, including passing a new sanction regime under UNSC Resolution 2374 of September 2017 to pressurize parties into keeping faith with the peace process.[63] The UNSC also gave its backing to the new regional force (G-5 Sahel) under Resolution 2391 of December 2017, outlining ways the UN and MINUSMA is expected to support the new force through medical and casualty evacuation capabilities, access to life support consumables, and engineering support. The political and security situation in Mali remain precarious and the planned elections in 2018 will test the situation further.[64]

Box 3.0: Stalled Peace Process in Mali

Mali witnessed a surge in violent activities in 2017, which was attributed to the activities of the newly formed alliances of terrorist groups, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen, otherwise known as Al Qaeda in Mali (AQM). The alliance brings together Ansar Dine, Al-Murabitoun, Macina Liberation Front (MLF), and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The alliance also shifted the ethnic dimension of the crisis by exploiting deep-seated Fulani grievances following the inclusion of the Fulani MLF. The number of reported fatalities increased between January and May 2017 at an average of 74 deaths per month while in June total fatalities peaked at 185, the highest since 2013. The rise in fatalities was attributed to rising ethnic violence between various groups primary situated in the Mopti area, but also due to continued attacks by the Group for Support of Islam and Muslim's (JNIM). It was compounded by conflict between the government and rebel groups in the North of Mali namely the Coordination of Movements of the Azawad (CMA), and Imghad Tuareg and Allies Self-Defense Group (GATIA). Understandably, key provisions of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali continue to be breached with little progress made in key areas such a DDR and security sector reform. There were also reported attacks against MINUSMA, French and Malian Armed Forces in the Centre, South and North of Mali.

securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/mali_29.php accessed on 16 January 2018

61 ACLED.2017. MALI – MARCH 2017 UPDATE 11 April. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/04/11/mali-march-2017-update/ Accessed on 11/02/2018

62 ACLED.2017. CONFLICT SUMMARIES OF HOTSPOTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE – JUNE 2017 17 July Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/07/17/conflict-summaries-of-hotspots-of-political-violence-june-2017/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

63 Security Council Report. 2017. Mali October Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 September Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-10/mali_27.php accessed on 16 January 2018

64 Security Council Report. 2017. Mali October Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 September Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-10/mali_27.php accessed on 16 January 2018

5 Migration and Peace and Security

In November 2017, Africa and the rest of the world learnt about an even darker side of migration through the Mediterranean (Libya) route when CNN aired footage showing incontrovertible evidence of modern-day slave trade. The documentary showing live slave auctions, appalling conditions in detention camps, physical and sexual abuse of African migrants seeking to cross into Europe via the Central Mediterranean route quickly provoked spontaneous and angry outrage across the world. Evoking the dark days of trans-Atlantic slaving, African migrants were sold at open-air markets for up to $400 depending on their skills and abilities.[65]

The footage sadly re-echoed what the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had observed in April 2017 in its investigation of human trafficking activities in Libya; the IOM found evidence of maltreatment of migrants, including beatings and torture, killing, rape, and starving to death. Detained migrants were made to speak with relatives on phone to send ransom money and in situations where migrants "don't have money and their families cannot pay the ransom… they are being sold to get at least a minimum benefit from that."[66] The UNICEF also made the same observations in its February 2017 report on the experiences of women and children migrants in Libya, noting that they made up about 20% of the 256,000 migrants identified in Libya. As the Fund pointed out, up to 75% of women and children surveyed had experienced violence, harassment or aggression at the hands of adults at some point over the course of their journeys.[67]

The CNN footage triggered additional policy attention and response, especially as it dominated the Africa-EU Summit in Abidjan at the end of November 2017 where a three-pronged Anti-Slavery Strategy was quickly announced. The summit estimated that 15,000 Africa migrants are trapped in over 42 illegal detention centres, and announced immediate plans to evacuate some identified 3,500 migrants from West Africa.[68] The new strategy includes a new Africa-EU security taskforce with the mandate to dismantle human trafficking networks; the mass evacuation (repatriation) of willing migrants; and an AU Commission of Inquiry to look into the root causes of emigration to Europe.[69]

65 See CNN 2017. "People for Sale: exposing migrant slave auctions in Libya", 14 November 2017, https://edition.cnn.com/specials/africa/libya-slave-auctions, accessed 01 December 2018.

66 BBC News 2017. "Libya migrant 'slave market' footage sparks outrage", 18 November 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42038451, accessed 10 December 2017.

67 See UNICEF 2017. "A Deadly Journey for Children: the Central Mediterranean migration route", UNICEF Child Alert, February 2017, https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Child-Alert-2017.pdf?_ga=2.143890166.219337902.1520488426-755977867.1520488426. Accessed 01 December 2017.

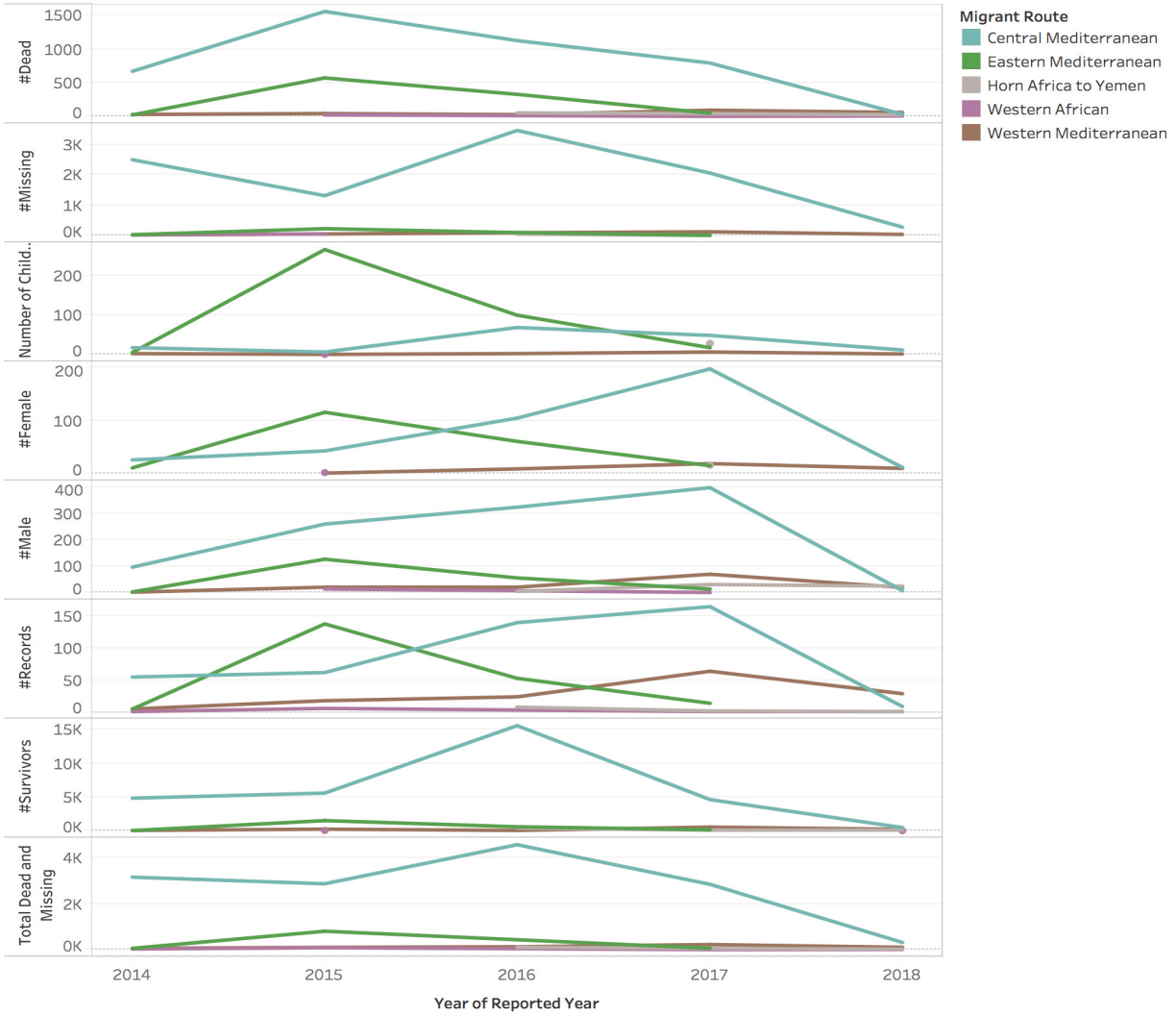
68 ISS, 2017. "Libya's slave trade shocks AU-EU leaders into action", ISS Today, 07 December 2017, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/libyas-slave-trade-shocks-au-eu-leaders-into-action. Accessed 12 December 2017.

69 Ibid.

Table 3: Migrants' Fatalities 2014-17.[70]

	Fatalities by Years			
Region of Origin	**2017**	**2016**	**2015**	**2014**
Unknown/Mixed	2215	3553	1864	1587
Sub-Saharan Africa	823	1108	1040	1065
Horn of Africa	2	30	9	294
Middle East/South Asia	17	397	855	337
North Africa	82	55	17	0
Total	**3139**	**5143**	**3785**	**3283**

Figure 5: Migration route and migrant profile and fatalities 2014-18[71]



70 Source: http://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean
71 Source: from data from http://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean

Beyond the slavery dimension, the broader nexus between migration and security came into bolder relief in 2017, with up to 3,139 deaths recorded in the Mediterranean. Although this marked a 39% decline from the all-time high recorded in 2016,[72] the reason for the drastic drop is still unclear but may not be far from the worsening security situation in Libya, increasing insecurity and harsh conditions along the migration route to Libya, improved border control or even due to the "gatekeeper" role of extremist movements across the Sahel. As with previous years, the Central Mediterranean region, specifically Libya, accounted for 91% of all reported deaths. As indicated in Table 2.0 and Figure 5.0 above, the region of origin of most of the 71% that reported died in 2017 were unknown or mixed but 28.5% were confirmed to be Africans.[73]

The majority of African fatalities were from Sub-Saharan African countries such as Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, etc. It is important to recall that Europe-bounds migration through Libya accentuated following the fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011. The vacuum created by the absence of a central government in Tripoli was quickly filled by a network of organized criminal and armed groups. The pull and push factors of migration through the Sahara desert into North Africa and across the Mediterranean includes environmental stress and limited adaptive capacities of citizens and communities; Africa's youth bulge; dwindling access to socio-economic opportunities; and armed conflict and insecurity.[74] This reinforces the umbilical connection between armed conflict, human trafficking, and migration, as well as other illicit trade in contraband goods as well as small arms and light weapons.

To date, much of the responses by African governments and the international community have been fixed on strengthening border control and security in some of the transit routes; formation of naval taskforces to police the Mediterranean and the training of Libyan coastal guards; and the funding of job creation schemes in migration-prone countries. For instance, under the EU-Africa Emergency Trust Fund, up to €46 million was earmarked for reinforcing Libyan border management in and around Southern Fezzan region; up to €14 million for job creations schemes for returnee and would-be migrants in Ethiopia; and funding for border management and job schemes in Niger.[75] Similar initiatives and additional resources were pledged at the November 2017 Africa-EU Summit in Abidjan.

However, current approaches and interventions would appear to be ineffective or, at best, only capable of bringing modest gains for a variety of reasons. First, although the Trust Fund claims to have expended more than €1.5 billion to implement over 100 different job-creation projects, the EU is still "falling short of its ambition of giving African governments the required incentives to take back economic migrants and rejected asylum-seekers as stipulated under the 'Partnership Frameworks' established at the EU-African Union summit in November 2015." [76]

72 http://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean
73 http://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean
74 Munich Security Report 2017, p. 46.
75 Africa Confidential.2017.All at sea over migration, Vol 58 No 17, 25th August. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12080/All_at_sea_over_migration Accessed on 07/02/2018
76 Africa Confidential.2017.All at sea over migration, Vol 58 No 17, 25th August. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12080/All_at_sea_over_migration Accessed on 07/02/2018

In addition, the naval taskforce EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia has rescued some 40,000 persons in the Mediterranean and provided training for Libyan coast guards. However, this approach is generally seen as misplaced. In one instance, the UK House of Lords had noted that the "naval mission is the wrong tool to tackle irregular migration which begins onshore: once the boats have set sail, it is too late to undermine the business of people smuggling."[77] The naval mission has also been criticized for constraining the search and rescue operations of international NGOs working in the Mediterranean, and that its aggressive interception strategies have led to more boats capsizing.[78] It is also partly blamed for the rise in irregular migration into Europe via the central Mediterranean that increased by 18% in 2016, and by another 19% in the first six months of 2017 compared to 2016.[79] The naval taskforce has also been implicated in human rights violations committed by the Libyan coast guards – the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), and the Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee all indicted the Libyan coast guards in human rights abuses and active involvement in smuggling activities.[80]

The analysis of the migration-security nexus in Africa is incomplete without analyzing the intra-Africa dimension, including the rural-urban, and the circulation towards more prosperous major cities and coastal areas, and more secure areas. Admittedly, very little reliable data exist to track the flow or to give a credible indication of the scale of the phenomenon. Curiously, the same set of social, economic, security, political and environmental underpins that have made the outward flow to Europe via the Mediterranean possible also inevitably drive intra-Africa circulations. Further, the social profile of migrants and possibly their nationalities are similar; they are often young people fleeing insecurity, poverty, lack of social mobility, and marginalization, or simply chasing the dream of a 'better' life. The most obvious of this are persons internally displaced or "refugee-ed" by violent conflicts in places such as CAR, DRC, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan.

The migration-security nexus transcends the intra-Africa experiences of migrants during their journeys to also include their experiences at destination locations. This is most illustrated by events in South Africa since 2015 when a spate of xenophobic attacks directed at migrants in major cities broke out. Sadly, 2017 witnessed even more vicious waves of xenophobic violence against migrants from other African countries in South Africa. The bottom-line is that the typical anti-immigrant violence in South Africa follows a combination of 'we versus them' feelings, criminal opportunism and the quest to blame poor government service delivery and wave of crimes on foreigners.[81] The outburst of anti-immigrant violence in South Africa since 2008 is a function of socio-economic deprivation, poor service delivery, high unemployment and general frustration shared by sections of South Africans. In

77 UK House of Lords, 2017. "Operation Sophia: a failed mission", HL 5, EU Committee, 2nd Report of Session 2017-19, p. 4, https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldeucom/5/5.pdf. Accessed 19 February 2018.
78 Security Council Report.2017.Libya October Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 September Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-10/libya_35.php accessed on 16 January
79 UK House of Lords, 2017. "Operation Sophia: a failed mission", HL 5, p. 4.
80 Security Council Report.2017.Libya October Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 September Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-10/libya_35.php accessed on 16 January
81 ISS, 2017. "Xenophobia again jeopardises South Africa's interests in Africa", 02 March 2017, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/xenophobia-again-jeopardises-south-africas-interests-in-africa. Accessed 02 December 2018.

many cases, routine protests against corruption and poor service delivery turned into anti-immigrant violence as foreigners are seen as sources of the problems and frustration faced by a section of South Africans.

In a majority of cases, the properties and businesses belonging to foreigners are targeted for looting and destruction, in addition to killings. Some of the attacks in 2017 include a January 07 attack on business belonging to migrants in Bankhara Bodulong village, Northern Cape Province. The following months witnessed pockets of xenophobic violence across South Africa targeting Nigerians in Rosettenville and Jeppestown in Johannesburg, Atteridgeville in Pretoria West; and random anti-migrant violence in Blydeville townships in Lichtenburg, North West province; and in KwaMashu and Lindelani in KwaZulu-Natal Province. In fact, a major clash was averted between immigrants and a so-called Mamelodi Concerned Residents, during an anti-immigrant march in Pretoria at the end of March 2017.[82] Virtually all the attacks attracted diplomatic condemnation and warnings from African governments and the international community, with veiled threats not to foreclose the possibility of reprisal attacks and punitive actions by the home government of victims. The South African ambassadors to the home countries of victims were routinely summoned, in addition to calls for the African Union to intervene.[83]

Much of current policy response to intra-African migration has included unilateral action at country level focused on immigration control and clampdown (raids, detention, and deportation); the development of a Protocol on Free Movement of People in Africa as part of efforts to establish the African Economic Community and the quest to liberalize intra-Africa movement and travels. However, there appears to be inconsistencies- or even contradictions- between multilateral policy initiatives on movement and travels vis-à-vis policy approaches adopted by African countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Gabon, to name a few. Until the gaps between multilateral and national level policies are closed up, it is not likely that a durable solution to festering migration-security crises would come quickly and easily.

82 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), (2017). Conflict Barometer 2017, Heidelberg, Germany, HIIK, p. 76.
83 ISS, 2017. "Xenophobia again jeopardises South Africa's interests in Africa", 02 March 2017.

5.1 Key Takeaways

1) There is very little theoretical and empirical evidence that exclusively focusing on job creation scheme to reduce youth participation in violence or migration is effective and sustainable in the long run. At the most, such programmes only demonstrate increase in employment for youth, as opposed to the impact on the risk of armed violence and migration by extension.[84]

2) Beyond joint declarations, there appears to be a lack of African- or even joint- ownership of the responses to the Mediterranean migration crisis thus far, especially as what is currently in place is almost entirely determined and driven by political and security imperatives or concerns within the EU.

3) The outflow towards Europe is not the only issue, intra-African migration towards cities and more prosperous countries and regions will continue to accelerate and grow into bigger challenge in the years to come as it overlaps with other structural weaknesses that African governments are not in a position to tackle with determination.

4) The vulnerability of African youth to migration can neither be addressed in a linear way nor resolved in isolation from broader issues of exclusion, marginalization and the foreclosure of developmental aspirations. Simply throwing money at the issue is unlikely to address the underlying structural issues that create youth- and citizens- vulnerabilities.

5) A more robust and multifaceted approach to tackling youth vulnerability must necessarily address a multiplicity of issues linked to participation in violence and armed conflict, migration, crime, and gender-based violence. In other words, job creation schemes will only be effective when closely combined- and integrated- with other interventions to address myriad structural weaknesses. This would include, but not limited to, addressing the socio-economic issues linked to livelihoods and social mobility; significant participation of youth in decision-making ensembles at various levels; recognition of and support for youth contributions to peacebuilding; addressing intra- and inter-group inequality; and investment in peace education.

84 For instance, see Walton, O. 2010. Youth, Armed Violence, and Job Creation Programs: A Rapid Mapping Study. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre Research Paper. Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre, Oslo.

6 Violent Extremism: a contained but shifting threat

The 2016 edition of the SPSA had argued that violent extremism, defined by the audacious activities of a growing number of extremist groups sprouting across Africa were being contained and rolled back in some cases. The trend is same for 2017 except that some noticeable shifts occurred in the landscape of violent extremism in Africa. Thus, while they may have been effectively contained in certain parts and ways the threats that extremist groups pose in other places constitute real and present danger to political stability and order in Africa.

The evidence of containment of violent extremist groups in 2017 include the reduced- or degraded-operational capabilities for large scale conventional attacks or battles; the loss of territory and constriction of space to operate; massive loss of fighters; limited or collapsed support infrastructures; loss of leaders; and battlefield loses. In most cases, violent extremist groups only end up launching intermittent guerrilla attacks using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDS) or suicide bombers against 'soft' targets, especially civilians and remote communities. The containment reflects a global dynamic as observed by the 2017 Global Terrorism Index Report that the world experienced fewer terrorist attacks and fewer fatalities from terrorism for the second year in a row, due largely to declines in South and Central Asia and the Lake Chad Basin region of Africa. It adds that Nigeria saw the greatest reduction in deaths with 3,100 fewer people killed by terrorism in 2016 than in 2015. This was due to an 80% reduction in the number of people killed by Boko Haram.[85]

Admittedly, the degree of containment of violent extremist groups operating across the continent varies. For instance, there is evidence that the Boko Haram movement no longer wields the same devastating capabilities it was once notorious for in the Northeastern Nigeria and around the Lake Chad Basin. In Libya, remnants of the Islamic State remain but there has been a considerable drop in its capability to launch vicious and large scale attacks since it has retreated into remote locations as a 'desert army' following its defeat and ouster from Sirte in 2016. It is important to underscore that several foreign powers joined in the containment efforts against violent extremist groups across Africa. In Libya, for instance, the United States continued its aerial bombing of Islamic State locations throughout 2017 to the extent that one conservative estimate put the strength of active Islamic State fighters in 2017 at only 500, compared with 6,000 in 2016.[86]

In Egypt, the Islamic State in Sinai Province launched a number of high profile targets in 2017, including raiding army posts and killing dozens of officers. Even at that, the overall outlook for this year shows a downtrend in comparison with previous years.[87] Apart from an intensive counter-terrorism operation on the domestic front, the Egyptian military sought to secure it border with

85 Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), 2017. 2017 Global terrorism Index, pp. 9-10, http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2017.pdf. Accessed 26 March 2018.
86 ACLED.2017. LIBYA – OCTOBER 2017 UPDATE 9th October. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/10/09/libya-october-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/20018
87 ACLED.2017. EGYPT – OCTOBER 2017 UPDATE 9th October. Available: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/10/09/egypt-october-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

Libya in the Western Desert and joined the containment effort in Libya as it attacked training camps belonging to Islamists groups in Dirma, including Islamic State and the Mujahideen Shura Council. This was a response to the recent Islamic State attacks in Egypt, including the May 2017 massacre of 30 Coptic Christians in Minya.[88]

Tunisia continued it aggressive containment and rollback of violent extremism in 2017 as it successfully prevented any major attack within the country. Last year, the activities of violent extremists were limited to raiding of civilian homes for food, targeted killing of some civilians, and occasional armed clashes between armed militants and security forces in the Western part of the country. Media reports indicate the continued presence of Islamists in mountainous border region of Kasserine – Jebel Chaambi, Jebel Mghila and Jebel Semmama communities.[89]

Across Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, the push back of Boko Haram, including its ouster from its base in the Sambisa Forest, considerably degraded its capacity to launch major offensives or to hold territory for too long. Nonetheless, Boko Haram remained resilient in adapting its tactics by initiating only sporadic attacks that are far in-between. In June 2017, for instance, it launched a series of attacks in Maiduguri killing over 47 people.[90] In July, it ambushed an oil exploration team from the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation in Magumeri, Borno with some 50 Nigerian soldiers, and members of the civilian joint task force, and other civilians killed or abducted. In August, 31 fishermen were killed in Kukawa, Borno, and a further 40 people died in an attack in Madagali, Adamawa state. Similar attacks were launched in the far north of Cameroon; Diffa in Niger; and along the border areas of Chad.[91]

In response to the upsurge in Al Shabaab's attacks, the United States increased its military assistance personnel in Somalia from 200 to 500 and launched more drone attacks against Al Shabaab's facilities and top leadership from May 2017.[92] It is estimated that over 100 Al-Shabaab fighters were killed in drone strikes against Al Shabaab positions.[93] Similarly, Ethiopia bolstered its force and equipment contribution to AMSIOM and the Federal Government of Somalia declared new offensives against Al Shabaab. In the DRC, the Ugandan military announced that more than 100 ADF rebels were killed in eastern DRC in an operation coordinated with the DRC government on December 2017.[94]

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88 Africa Confidential.2017.States of failure. Vol 58 No 12.9th June Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12019/States_of_failure Accessed on 07/02/2018

89 ACLED.2017. TUNISIA – MAY 2017 UPDATE 20 June Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/06/20/tunisia-may-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

90 Security Council Report.2017.Lake Chad Basin Briefing (Online) 12 September Available at http://www.whatsinblue.org/2017/09/lake-chad-basin-briefing.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

91 Security Council Report.2017.Lake Chad Basin Briefing (Online) 12 September Available at http://www.whatsinblue.org/2017/09/lake-chad-basin-briefing.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

92 ACLED.2017. CONFLICT SUMMARIES OF HOTSPOTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE – JUNE 2017 17 July Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/07/17/conflict-summaries-of-hotspots-of-political-violence-june-2017/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

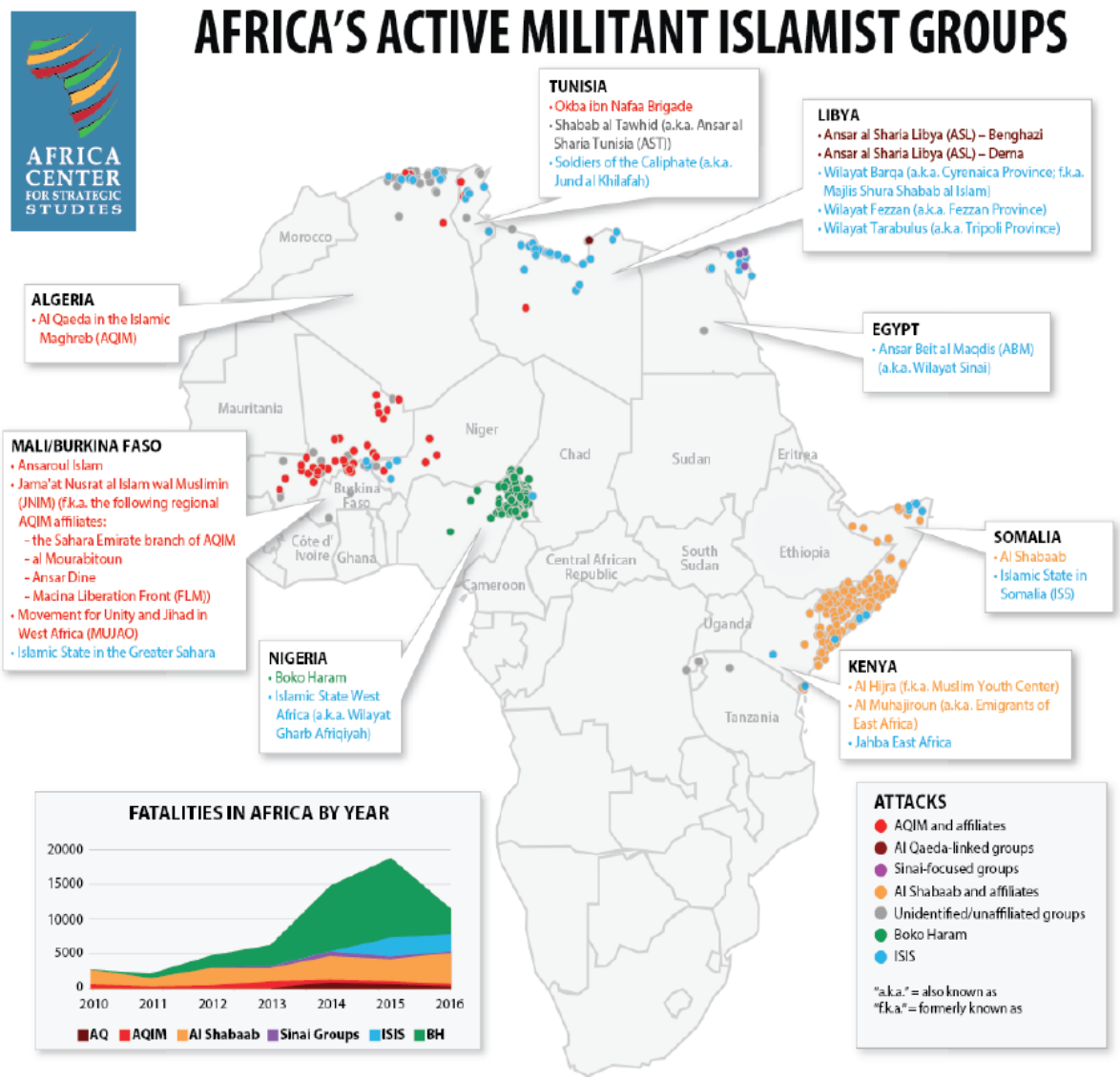
93 Security Council Report. 2017. January September Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/somalia_33.php accessed on 16 January 2018

94 Security Council Report.2017.Democratic Republic of Congo. January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/democratic_republic_of_the_congo_21.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

Table 4: Profile of Major Violent Extremist Groups in Africa

Name	Location/ Operations	Objectives	Activities
Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin **(Al-Shabab)**	Southern and central Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti and Uganda	Seeking to create an Islamic state in Somalia	Insurgent: guerrilla warfare, bombings, suicide attacks and public executions/beatings
Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad **(Boko Haram)**. **Split into two factions: the Al-Musab Barnawi and Shekau groups.**	Nigeria (north-east mainly), Niger and Cameroon	Overthrow government and establish strict Islamic Sharia law and regime.	Insurgency: Suicide bombings, and mass bombings of civilian areas. Criminal: civilian kidnapping (ransom) and robbery.
Al Qaeda in the lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	Algeria, Mali, Libya, Tunisia	Key objective is to rid North Africa of Western influence	Criminal: kidnapping of foreigners for ransom. Guerrilla: ambush, IED, and bombings.
Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM). A merge of Al Qaeda in Mali, Ansar Dine, Al-Murabitoun, Macina Liberation Front (MLF), and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).	Sahel, including Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.	To spread jihad in areas of operation and establish strict sharia law.	Insurgent: guerrilla warfare, bombings, and suicide attacks. Criminal: abduction of foreign workers, and drug trafficking.
Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)	DRC and Uganda	To spread jihad in areas of operation and establish strict sharia law.	Insurgent: guerrilla warfare, and bombings.
'Al Shabaab',	Mocimboa da Praia, Cabo Delgado region Mozambique	To establish strict sharia law.	Insurgent: guerrilla warfare, and bombings.
Ansarul Islam	Burkina Faso	To spread jihad in areas of operation and establish strict sharia law.	Insurgent: guerrilla warfare, bombings, and suicide attacks.
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	DRC, Central African Republic, Southern Sudan	Restore 'honour' to the Acholi ethnic group Install government based on leader's 'version of ten commandments'	Human trafficking, and civilian attacks

Figure 6: Map of Active Militant Islamist Groups in Africa as at April 2017.[95]



95 Source: https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/militant-islamic-groups-as-of-Apr-2017-with-bullets.pdf

6.1 Shifts in threats posed by Violent Extremist Groups

In spite of the instances above, evidence of how the 'shifts' in the nature and scale of the threats posed by violent extremists groups could be illustrated in four ways. The first one is in terms of how quickly new terrorist groups or coalitions are spreading in key hotspots across Africa's Sahel region. In Mali, the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) was formed in the first quarter of 2017 by a merger of Al Qaeda in Mali, Ansar Dine, Al-Murabitoun, Macina Liberation Front (MLF) and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The formation of the JNIM represents a strategic move to fuse Islamist ideologies with Fulani ethno-national politics. This, in turn, has allowed the umbrella group not only to achieve enhanced visibility but also military capability and greater coordination (of attacks). For instance, the JNIM pushed armed clashes away from the North and towards the South to the extent that central Mali, specifically Mopti and Sergou, became the new epicentres of violent clashes.[96]

In the DRC, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) emerged as a major conflict actor in 2017. This Islamist group had sprung up in Uganda, even though it is based in and operates from Eastern DRC. Like most armed groups in the Great Lakes Region, members of the ADF are drawn from cesspool of vulnerable youth in the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. The group undertakes attacks against civilians in Beni communities in the DRC, and in border communities in Uganda. According to the UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) assessment in 2017, the ADF and other armed groups were responsible for the death of 31 civilians in January 2017.[97] The ADF also claimed responsibility for the December 2017 attack against a MONUSCO base in North Kivu that led to the death of at least 15 peacekeepers and wounded dozens.[98]

In Mozambique, a self-styled 'Al Shabaab', a local Islamist group emerged and undertook a series of armed attacks against civilians and police posts in the coastal village of Mocimboa da Praia, Cabo Delgado region. The group demands the imposition of Sharia law, the withdrawal of children from formal secular education, and the non-payment of taxes to the government.[99] Considering the natural resource profile of the Cabo Delgado region, especially its vast deposit of hydrocarbon resources relative to its level of underdevelopment, the emergence of the group has to be understood against the broader political contestations in Mozambique, especially that over the slow pace of devolution of powers and decentralization of governance.
The second dimension is showcased by how extremist groups are quickly opening new theatres of

96 In Central Mali, the Fulanis have a history of clashing with other ethnic groups, especially the Bambara, over grazing rights. See ACLED.2017. MALI – MARCH 2017 UPDATE 11 April. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/04/11/mali-march-2017-update/ Accessed on 11/02/2018

97 Security Council Report. 2017.Democratic Republic of Congo. March Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 February Available http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-03/democratic_republic_of_the_congo_14.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

98 Security Council Report.2017. Democratic Republic of Congo. January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/democratic_republic_of_the_congo_21.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

99 ACLED.2017. MOZAMBIQUE – NOVEMBER 2017 UPDATE, 27 December. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/mozambique-november-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

war, especially the gradual shift from remote border areas towards urban and cosmopolitan areas. In Mali, Nigeria, Egypt and Burkina Faso, recent patterns of attacks suggest a preference for urban and cosmopolitan areas that the likelihood of violent extremism becoming an urban phenomenon in Africa is no longer beyond contemplation. In Mali, the JNIM has shifted violent attacks towards the South, as well as launched targeted attacks against hotels and restaurants patronized by foreigners in major cities. Similarly, attacks by Islamist groups in Burkina Faso have shifted to the capital, Ouagadougou, from the remote northern Sahel areas like Oudalan and Soum sharing borders with Mali and Niger. In Nigeria and other Lake Chad Basin countries (Chad, Niger, Cameroon), the Boko Haram has targeted more cosmopolitan areas, including using children (girls) as suicide bombers to infiltrate and wreak havoc in Maiduguri and other major towns.[100]

Box 4.0: The Shifting Threats of Boko Haram

Consistent with trends in 2016 in which activities of Boko Haram were contained and rolled backed by military forces, 2017 continued these trends of diminished activities by the group. Several explanations could be offered for this decline signposted by a visible drop in conflict fatalities, heavy losses inflicted on the rank-and-file fighters, and limited financial, logistical and military capabilities. In 2017, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria experienced limited militant activities although it is rather hasty to drawn a definitive conclusion that the group is anywhere near obliteration. Indeed, the last months of 2017 resulted in the intensification of attacks by the terrorist group in and around Maiduguri. On 7th June, for instance, the group carried out what has turned out to be its largest attack in Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno State, in almost 18 months during which 17 people were killed. Again, on 25 and 26 June, 16 people were killed in the same city by female suicide bombers. It is evident that the group has shifted tactics to launching small-scale attacks using suicide bombers and raiding army and police posts. The average fatality rate caused by suicide attacks in Nigeria was 34 in 2017 alone, about six times more than the figure for 2016. Out of this number, 7.1 % of the suicide taking place in Borno State in 2017 compared to 35.7% in 2015. Apart from intensifying cross border attacks in the Far north of Cameron and Diffa region of Niger and borders areas of Chad, the group continued to impose a heavy humanitarian toil on populations resulting in more than 2.3 million displaced persons in the Lake Chad basin, and over 7 million food insecure people.

100 As at August 2017, at least 83 of such cases had been recorded. See BBC News 2017. 'Nigeria's Boko Haram conflict: Huge rise in child 'human bombs', 24 August 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41010993, accessed 18 December 2017.

The third emerging trend is the general increased the tempo, and regularity, of attacks over the figures of 2016, thus suggesting new military capabilities and the possibility that violent extremist groups might have rearmed, or welcomed more experienced fighters into its rank. It is instructive how the extremism franchise has become more formidable and daring against the background of the collapse of the Islamic State Caliphate in Iraq and Syria. In Mali, the JNIM demonstrated its new capabilities by taking battles to the central government in the South through intermittent attacks in Central Mali (Mopti and Sergou) thereby contributing to a 'de-regionalization' of armed rebellion in Mali.[101] Expectedly, the number of attacks by the JNIM increased from June 2017 when the monthly average fatalities from its attacks increased to 185, relative to 74 per month between January and May 2017.[102] Moreover, the increased cooperation and coordination among Islamist groups before and after the formation of the JNIM, also facilitated cross-border attacks by jihadist groups in Burkina Faso and Niger. It is well known that affiliated jihadi groups in Burkina Faso undertook a series of kidnappings and armed attacks against schools, police posts, and military facilities in 2017, and conducted a high profile attack against the French embassy in Burkina Faso in February 2018.[103] It is not impossible that the failure to implement UNSC Resolution 2295 of June 2016 that authorized increased in force levels and mandated a more proactive and robust posture has made violent extremists in Mali and neighboring countries to become more daring.[104]

In Nigeria, the reported negotiated release of some battle-rugged Boko Haram fighters and the payment of ransom in exchange for abducted Chibok girls in 2017 would appear to have re-energized the Boko Haram to launch intermittent attacks in 2017. It is estimated that between December 2015 and December 2017, the group launched 181 attacks and killed 1,101 people, but the actual record of 722 fatalities from 124 attacks in 2017 was twice that of 2016 (379 fatalities from 57 attacks).[105]

In Somalia, a new group allied to the Islamic State became active in communities in and around Puntland allowing Al-Shabaab to step up its attacks from June 2017 targeting the assassination of top government officials (ministers and parliamentarians); expanding beyond its former Southern base to the North, especially Af-Urur near Puntland; and increasing the frequency and number of casualties from attacks. This includes the 14 October twin bomb explosions at the busy K5 intersection in Hodan district and Medina district, respectively, in Mogadishu that recorded nearly 400 fatalities and over 200 injured civilians.[106] It launched additional attacks on major hotels and locations, such as

101 ACLED 2018 'Mali – the 'de-regionalization' of armed rebellion', 16 February 2018, https://www.acleddata.com/2018/02/16/mali-the-de-regionalization-of-armed-rebellion/ accessed 01 March 2018.
102 ACLED.2017. CONFLICT SUMMARIES OF HOTSPOTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE – JUNE 2017 17 July Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/07/17/conflict-summaries-of-hotspots-of-political-violence-june-2017/ Accessed on 09/02/2018
103 The attacks in Burkina Faso were carried out by Ansarul Islam, a local jihadist group with close links with Islamists in Mali. See BBC News 2017. 'Burkina Faso's war against militant Islamists', 14 August 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39279050. See also, BBC News 2018. 'Burkina Faso attack: French embassy targeted in Ouagadougou', 02 March 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43257453, both accessed 10 February 2018.
104 Security Council Report. 2017. Mali January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-01/mali_24.php accessed on 16 January
105 See Daily Trust News 2017. 'Boko Haram Kills 1,100 since being 'technically defeated', 03 December 2017, https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/boko-haram-kills-1-100-since-being-technically-defeated.html, accessed 10 December 2017.
106 Admittedly, Al Shabaab did not formally claim the attack, however it is generally assumed that the group is the only organization with the capability to launch the attack given the scale and sophistication of the twin attacks, and

the 30 July attack against AMISOM's Ugandan contingent and Somali National Army in Garyowein, Lower Shabelle; the October 2017 attack in Xamar Weyne District.[107] Other evidence of Al-Shabaab's resurgence include its occupation of Somalia's Leego town and Mahaday district in the Middle Shebelle region in June and December, respectively; and a series of attacks against Kenyan security agents in north-eastern Kenya and in Lamu county.[108] By the end of 2017, Al Shabaab was truly back on the offensive as it launched a series of coordinated attacks against security agents and civilians.[109]

Much of Al-Shabaab's resurgence may be connected to at least two factors; Al Shabaab continues to generate funds through illicit trade in agricultural products and natural resources. It is estimated, for instance, that it is able to make up to $10 million yearly from charcoal sales.[110] In addition, the start of AMISOM's phased downsizing starting with the withdrawal of 1,000 soldiers from five troop contributing countries in December 2017 could be the exact stimuli Al Shabaab needs to go on another round of offensives.[111]

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the similarity with previous Al-Shabaab attacks. See Security Council Report.2017. Somalia and Eriteria. November Monthly Forecast (Online) 31 October. Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-11/somalia_and_eritrea_3.php accessed on 16 January 2018

107 Security Council Report. 2017. Somalia September Monthly Forecast (Online) 1 September Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-09/somalia_32.php accessed on 16 January 2018

108 Security Council Report. 2017. Somalia September Monthly Forecast (Online) 1 September Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-09/somalia_32.php accessed on 16 January 2018

109 Security Council Report. 2017. Somalia and Eriteria. January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 February. Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-01/somalia_27.php accessed on 16 January 2018

110 Security Council Report. 2017. Somalia and Eriteria. November Monthly Forecast (Online) 31 October. Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-11/somalia_and_eritrea_3.php accessed on 16 January 2018

111 Security Council Report. 2017. Somalia January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/somalia_33.php accessed on 16 January 2018.

Box 5.0: The Shifting Threats of Violent Extremism in Mali/Sahel

While Violence by terrorist group in the Sahel remained contained in 2017, these groups remained active. The activities of these groups expanded geographically from Mali to North East Burkina Faso and Western Niger. Burkina Faso was in particular the target of geographically spreading activities by terrorist groups in the Sahel. The surge in violence is attributed to the activities of the newly formed alliances of terrorist groups, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen, otherwise known as Al Qaeda in Mali (AQM) between Ansar Dine, Al-Murabitoun, Macina Liberation Front (MLF), and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Additionally, In Burkina Faso and Niger, jihadist continued to carry out attacks on security forces and cross border attacks.

Civilians were the main targets of attacks in population centres by violent extremist groups mainly in Mali and Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso, Violence against civilians increased proportionally in 2017, with the targeting of schools and teaches by Ansarul Islam. These increased attacks in Burkina Faso were largely located in the Northern Sahel Province particularly in Oudalan and Soum Regions that border Mali and Niger. There was also a shift in the geographical location of terrorist activities from isolated rural areas to urban centres as witnessed in by attacks in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is the mounting scale of humanitarian challenges in places experiencing frequent attacks by violent extremist groups in Africa. It is indisputable that violent extremist groups pose considerably higher humanitarian threat, in addition to the known security threats. Moreover, the humanitarian and security challenges overlap as violent extremist groups selectively target refugee and IDP camps not only to inflict maximum damage but also to attract international media attention and showcase clout and capacity for havoc. In most cases, the dire humanitarian situation alongside pre-existing structural vulnerabilities serves as key drivers of radicalization and continued instability.[112] For instance, in 2017 and up to the first quarter of 2018, the Boko Haram insurgency has triggered a dire humanitarian emergency across the Lake Chad Basin; the region is estimated to have over 2.3 million displaced persons, and over seven million food-insecure people of whom 5.2 million are in Nigeria's northeast, with 1.5 million in Cameroon, 340,000 in Niger, and 123,000 in Chad.[113] In Somalia, Al Shabaab-related violence continues to be a factor in an unending humanitarian crisis marked by famine and hunger, and the spread of diseases; as at June 2017 for instance, over 70,000 cases of cholera and diarrhea and 1,098 related deaths was recorded.[114] Also, over 6.2 million people were estimated to be in need of food and water.[115]

112 Security Council Report. 2017. Lake Chad Basin Briefing (Online) 12 September Available at http://www.whatsinblue.org/2017/09/lake-chad-basin-briefing.php Accessed on 16 January 2018
113 Security Council Report.2017.Lake Chad Basin Briefing (Online) 12 September Available at http://www.whatsinblue.org/2017/09/lake-chad-basin-briefing.php Accessed on 16 January 2018
114 Security Council Report.2017. Somalia August Monthly Forecast (Online) 31 July Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-08/somalia_31.php, accessed on 16 January 2018
115 Security Council Report.2017. Somalia May Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 April Available at:http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-05/somalia_29.php accessed on 16 January 2018

7 Mass Protests and Riots as the 'New Normal' in Africa

The spectre of mass protests and riots over a combination of socio-economic and political issues did not only continue in Africa in 2017 but also became more or less routinized. As indicated in Section 2, riots and protests was the dominant conflict event in 2017 with 5660 incidents and up to 429 fatalities were recorded. As indicated in Figure 7.0 below, citizens-led marches and agitations cut-across the relatively stable and not-so stable countries across Africa's five regions in 2017. The point was made earlier that the countries with the highest number of protests were South Africa, Tunisia, and Nigeria. The underlying motivation or triggers in all cases are associated with living conditions, labour disputes, unemployment, rising living costs, poverty, poor social service delivery, governance-related such corruption and nepotism, or political issues such as elections, constitutional term limits, human rights, political inequality, dictatorship, and demand for autonomy.

Perhaps, the increasing diffusion of mass protests and riots and other forms of violent incidents across fragile and relatively stable countries, and across small and largest economies in Africa pinpoint the deepening nature of structural vulnerabilities, including the failure to meet the socio-economic and political aspirations of citizens. This 2017 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) observation aligns with this view – the IIAG notes that while Overall Governance has improved over the last decade at an average yearly rate of +0.16, however the pace of progress has slowed down (+0.10) in the last five years, and several countries are showing signs of slowing or even reversing their performance.[116] In particular, performance on human development and sustainable economic opportunities are progressing at a slower pace. To underscore the impact of governance issues on peace and security, the 2017 IIAG also notes that much of slowed progress is due to consistent decline in Safety and Rule of Law.

7.1 Protests linked to Socio-economic issues

Regarding socio-economic issues, the roll call of countries include Angola in Southern Africa; Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa; and Niger, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa. Morocco witnessed its highest rate of protest in May 2017 mostly around the northern province of Al Hoceima in the Rif region over a range of issues, including perceived marginalization, police brutality and injustice, lack of socio-economic development and corruption. The protest actually started in October 2016 but quickly spread in 2017 to several other cities such as Marrakesh, Nador, Oriental, Tangier and Rabat. Indeed, the underlying driver of the initial protests would appear to be the push for socio-economic justice and enhanced opportunities by the Berbers. The government changed from condoning the protest to its heavy-handed suppression from May 2017 by engaging in the targeted arrest of the leader of the Hirak (Popular Movement), a move that sparked further protests.[117]

116 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018. 2017 Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Index Report, pp. 18-19, http://s.mo.ibrahim.foundation/u/2017/11/21165610/2017-IIAG-Report.pdf?_ga=2.229876316.1949460087.1522374396-755121796.1522374396. Accessed 28 March 2018.
117 ACLED.2017. MOROCCO – MAY 2017 UPDATE 20 June Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/06/20/morocco-may-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

The visibility and regularity of protests continued in Tunisia in the first quarter of 2017 but reduced for the rest of that year due to a drop in the number of labour-related disputes. As with previous years, the protests were sparked by weak economic recovery, protracted political bickering, and the failure of government to effectively address the country's socio-economic problems since 2011. The scale of protests increased in number, spread and intensity, this time involving both traditionally restive and quiet governorates; in particular, those in the Southeastern region. As in previous years, young people were at the heart of protests over education, police brutality, high unemployment, economic stagnation, insecurity and frustrations with the lack of meaningful improvement in socio-economic opportunities since the 2011 revolution.[118] In fact, demonstrations turned into violent riots in industrial areas and mining basins of Sidi Bouzid, and Gafsa over industrial disputes.[119] In the energy belt of Tataouine, protests spread over demands for improved share of oil and gas revenues.[120] Angola witnessed a five-fold increase in protests in 2017 with most demonstrations undertaken by teachers and government employees over unpaid wages, and working conditions. There were also politically motivated protests by opposition groups, especially UNITA, demanding free and fair elections in places such as Luanda, Benguela, Huambo, Lubango, Menongue, Namibe, and Sumbe.[121]

In Guinea, nationwide strikes and protests involving eight fatalities and the destruction of public infrastructures were recorded in February 2017. That initial protest was called by the teachers' union to challenge the decision by government to retrench staff or cut the salaries of junior teachers. However other trade unions and pupils joined in to broaden the scope and scale of demonstrations to include agitations for a pay rise across the public sector.[122] In Niger, major protests took place in Niamey, the capital, over labour disputes between government and trade unions, and in a few cases, over insecurity in towns and villages farther from the capital.[123] In Cote d'Ivoire, protests took the form of mutiny by soldiers protesting non-payment of agreed allowances and improved pay and working conditions by the government. Two episodes of mutinous protests took place in January and May 2017 in cities such as Bouake, Yamoussoukro and Abidjan. The protest ended through a negotiated deal to pay soldiers immediate bonuses and additional amounts afterwards.[124]

118 ACLED.2017. CONFLICT SUMMARIES – OCTOBER 2017 27 December. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/conflict-summaries-of-hotspots-of-political-violence-october-2017/ Accessed on 09/02/218

119 ACLED.2017. TUNISIA – MAY 2017 UPDATE 20 June Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/06/20/tunisia-may-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

120 ACLED.2017. TUNISIA – MAY 2017 UPDATE 20 June Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/06/20/tunisia-may-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

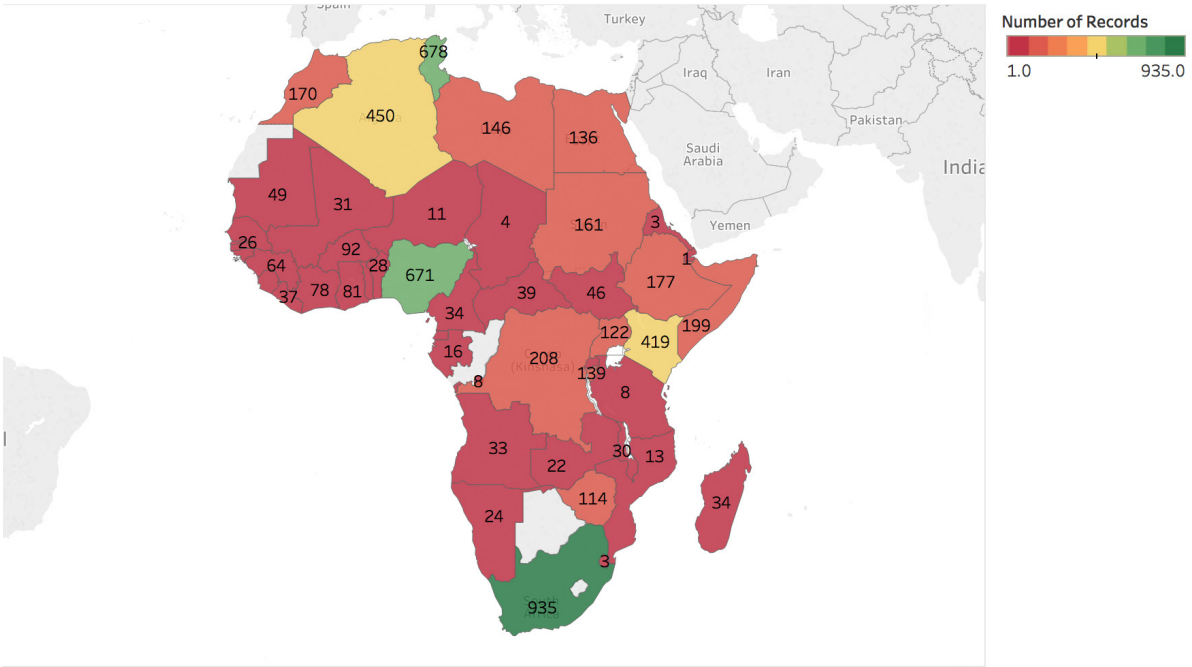
121 ACLED.2017.ANGOLA – SEPTEMBER 2017 UPDATE 22 September Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/09/22/angola-september-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

122 ACLED.2017. GUINEA – FEBRUARY 2017 UPDATE 10 March. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/03/10/guinea-february-2017-update/ Accessed on 11/2/2018

123 ACLED.2017.NIGER – MAY 2017 UPDATE 20 June. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/06/20/niger-may-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

124 Security Council Report.2017.Central African Republic June Monthly Forecast(Online) 31 May Available http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-02/cote_divoire_12.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

Figure 7: Continental Map of Riots and Protests by Country in 2017



7.2 Protests linked to Political issues

Protests over major political issues were most pronounced in the DRC, Cameroon and Togo, and to a lesser extent in Guinea, Zambia, Ghana and Guinea Bissau. The running battle between government and opposition over the timing and cost of elections led to protests in 2017. The end of the constitutionally-mandated two terms for President Joseph Kabila on 19 December 2016 set in motion a series of protests by the opposition coalition "Rassemblement", or the Rally of the Congolese Opposition (OCR), that further compounded the country's already volatile political and security situations throughout 2017 and into 2018. The mediation by the Congolese Catholic Church led to the Saint Sylvester Agreement on 31 December 2016 with provisions for a transition National Council for Overseeing the Electoral Agreement and Process (CNSAP) to be headed by an opposition figure to pilot the affairs of the country until elections before the end of 2017. The political landscape in the DRC in 2017 was further complicated by a series of developments, including the death of Tshisekedi and in-fighting among opposition parties, failure to hold elections in 2017, killing of two UN experts and ongoing armed conflicts with several militias across the country.[125]

The OCR continued to organize strikes, protest marches and sit-at-home boycott in Kinshasa and major cities such as Goma, Kananga, Mbuji-Mayi and Lubumbashi in 2017.[126] The failure of the electoral commission (CENI) to organize elections in 2017 due to claims that it could not raise the estimated $1.8 billion required heightened anti-government demonstrations and actually broadened the opposition to Kabila to include a broad coalition of civil society and citizens groups, especially

125 ACLED.2017. Democratic Republic of Congo – September 2017 Update, 22 September. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/09/22/democratic-republic-of-congo-september-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

126 ACLED.2017. Democratic Republic of Congo – September 2017 Update, 22 September. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/09/22/democratic-republic-of-congo-september-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

youth.[127] For much of 2017, opposition groups staged anti-government protests on the 19th of every month that, in several instances, turned violent. For example, the August and September protests led to the deaths of several dozen protesters and some police,[128] while those between April and October 2017 led to the killing of an estimated 53 protesters in the hands of the state security forces.[129] International mediation by the AU, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the International Community for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) led to a revised election schedule slated for 23 December 2018, a move rejected by opposition groups. By the end of 2017, political tensions remained volatile in the country, especially with the government stifling civil liberties through increase in arbitrary arrests and detentions, killing of protesters, and harassment of opposition groups.[130]

Cameroon was the undisputed epicentre of political protests in Central Africa in 2017. There, agitation for enhanced regional autonomy (and later independence), socio-cultural rights, and socio-political equality by inhabitants of the English-speaking regions, on the one hand, and those against President Biya's 35-year rule, on the other, continued. Several strikes and sit-at-home protests took place in cities such as Buea, Bamenda and Kumbo in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The protests were typically met with the interruption of communication (internet) to prevent mass mobilization, followed by police action (curfews, arrest and banning of rallies), and the deployment of soldiers (Rapid Intervention Brigade). The October 01 declaration of independence by the English-speaking region and the law enforcement action by security forces led to over 17 fatalities and several arrests and detention. With general elections planned for 2018, protests in Cameroon are likely to acquire greater significance since President Biya is expected to contest to further extend his rule.[131]

The epicentre of political protest in East Africa in 2017 was Kenya where a disputed election set off catalyst protest and riots. The scale of demonstrations skyrocketed following the cancellation of the initial 08 August election by the judiciary.[132] Further protests by the opposition; National Super Alliance (Nasa) coalition and civil society groups took place in the lead up to and soon after the re-run election over the lack of genuine electoral reform to address the issues raised by the Supreme Court in its invalidation of the first election.[133] The victory of the ruling Jubilee coalition in the rerun

127 Africa Confidential. 2017. Slippage, not suffrage. Vol 58 No 24, 1st December Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12183/Slippage%2c_not_suffrage Accessed on 07/02/2018. See also, Security Council Report.2017.Democratic Republic of Congo. March Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 February Available http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-03/democratic_republic_of_the_congo_14.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

128 Security Council Report.2017.Democratic Republic of Congo: September Monthly Forecast (Online) 1 September Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-09/democratic_republic_of_the_congo_18.php Accessed on 16 January 2018.

129 Security Council Report. 2017. Democratic Republic of Congo. January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/democratic_republic_of_the_congo_21.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

130 Security Council Report. 2017. Democratic Republic of Congo. January Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 December Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-01/democratic_republic_of_the_congo_21.php Accessed on 16 January 2018

131 ACLED. 2017. Cameroon – October 2017 Update, 9th October Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/10/09/cameroon-october-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

132 ACLED.2017. Kenya – November 2017 Update 27 December. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/kenya-november-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

133 ACLED.2017. Kenya – November 2017 Update 27 December. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/kenya-november-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

polls in October 2017 (following Nasa's boycott) triggered anti-government protests and looting in Nasa strongholds such as Kibera, Mathare, Kawangware, Nyalenda, Kondele and Obunga.[134] The volatile political atmosphere further worsened pre-existing crises such as farmers-herders clashes over grazing land and water in places such as Laikipia.[135] However, the protests and fatalities were small compared with post-election violence in 2007/8.[136] The protests have continued into 2018 through calls for a boycott of businesses linked to ruling Jubilee elites, the formation of a National Resistance Movement by NASA and civil society groups, and the swearing-in of a parallel government in early 2018.[137]

Instances of political protests in West Africa in 2017 took place in Nigeria, and quite surprisingly countries often considered as oasis of peace and stability, namely Ghana and Togo. In Ghana, youth wings and gangs affiliated to the ruling NPP government of President Akufo Addo launched a series of demonstrations over the choice of regional and district appointees they saw as party outsiders. The NPP youth rioted in Accra, Ashanti and Northern regions to demand inclusion in government appointments.[138] Similarly, broad-based demonstration by citizens to end the dynastic rule of the Eyadema family continued into 2017 in Togo. The protests have mostly been concentrated in the capital, Lome where an estimated 800,000 were reportedly involved in the 19 August 2017 protest. The offer of electoral reform and concessions of a two-term limit by President Faure Gnassingbé failed to assuage the protesters.[139] Rather, the protests gained further popularity and intensity as it spread nationally to areas such as Sokodé in Centrale, Bafilo in Kara and Mango in Savanes Region. It even spread to Togolese diaspora with protests marches in major Western capitals including Montreal, Paris and Luxembourg in October 2017 insisting that President Faure Gnassingbé should respect the proposed two-term limit.[140] In addition, agitations over poor governance and intra-political disagreements in the post-independence ruling party in Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) led to demonstrations demanding the resignation of President José Mário Vaz.[141]

134 Africa Confidential.2017.New elections, old battles Vol 58 No 17.25th August Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12082/New_elections%2c_old_battles Accessed on 07/02/2018
135 African Confidential. 2017. Killing fields in the Rift Valley, Vol 58 No 15. 21st July. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12054/Killing_fields_in_the_Rift_Valley Accessed on 07/02/2018
136 Africa Confidential. 2017. New elections, old battles Vol 58 No 17.25th August Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12082/New_elections%2c_old_battles Accessed on 07/02/2018
137 Africa Confidential. 2017. Crisis? What crisis? Vol 58 No 21 20th October. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12135/Crisis_What_crisis Accessed on 07/02/2018
138 ACLED.2017.GHANA – APRIL 2017 UPDATE 16 May, Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/05/16/ghana-april-2017-update/ Accessed on 11/02/2018
139 ACLED. 2017. TOGO – OCTOBER 2017 UPDATE 9th October. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/10/09/togo-october-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018
140 Africa Confidential. 2017. A test for people power. Vol 58 No 20 6th October Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12123/A_test_for_people_power Accessed on 08/02/2018
141 Security Council Report. 2017. Guinea Bissau. August Monthly Forecast (Online) 31 July. Available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-08/guinea-bissau_16.php accessed on 16 January 2018

7.3 Protests Rooted in a Combo of Political and Economic issues

It is extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to make a neat delineation between political and economic issues in the analysis of riots and protests embarked upon to influence government policies and behavior. Indeed, by their very nature, the decision to embark on protests, and the trajectory they eventually assume are best understood in political terms. For analytical brevity, this section identifies three instances of protests; in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, informed or underscored by a combination of political and economic issues with major political implications in 2017. Across the three countries, a varying combination of issues such as poor governance, assault on civil liberties, poor social service delivery, poverty, issues of land rights, corruption, brutality by security forces and political inequality triggered mass protests. We x-ray the case of Ethiopia to underpin the complexities associated with such protests.

Ethiopia's volatile political and security situation continued in 2017. Despite a brief lull during the first half of that year. The remote causes and trigger factors remain structural issues not far from the operation of the federal structure of Ethiopia, one that frequently led to contentious relationship between the federal government and the federating units; exposed critical diversity management issues; instigated rivalries between and among ethnic nationalities; and allowed perceptions of lack of inclusion, political inequity, and lopsided distribution of socio-economic opportunities and development to fester.

The anti-government protests led to the declaration of the 10-month state of emergency in August 2016 and briefly interrupted the wave of anti-government protsts due to the measures taken as a result of emergency powers of security forces ad other relevant government bodies. More importantly, anti-government protests were exacerbated by tensions at the national and political level. On the one hand, there are genuine structural issues in the operation of the Ethiopian federal system as evident in the frosty power relationship between the federal government and regional (federating) units e.g. over taxation and how to manage diversity. This led to the declaration of a state of emergency for the second time in less than a year.

Social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, etc. played key roles in the crises; they were used within and outside (diaspora) of Ethiopia to mobilize and organize anti-government protests by ethno-nationalities. The government reacted by either restricting or shutting down internet access.

The government appeared to start changing track from the third quarter of 2017 through a series of initiatives designed to reduce tension, promote dialogue and pursue a negotiated settlement.[142] This includes the introduction of a draft bill to review the special benefit of the Oromia National Regional State on Addis Ababa, as stipulated in the current Ethiopian Constituiton; the release of a significant number of prisoners, pledge to reform the system of political representation among political parties, and other proposed changes to economic policies. Nonetheless, the intensification of the protests and other undisclosed issues led to the unexpected resignation of Prime Minister

142 ACLED.2017. ETHIOPIA – JUNE 2017 UPDATE 17 July Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/07/17/ethiopia-june-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

Hailemariam Desalegn in February 2018, and, as mentioned above, the re-declaration of a State of Emergency to quell heightened protests and tension.[143]

7.4 Key takeaways

The pattern of mass protests and riots across Africa in 2017 would appear to indicate the following key observations and lessons that could guide current and future perspectives and responses:

1) Effective Strategies for Managing Protests: responses by national governments continue to oscillate between toleration, clampdown or a combination of both. More important is the extent to which such responses have been effective in addressing the key demands of protest groups as this suggests a mixed and rather inconclusive picture. In some cases, ruthless clampdown in the early stages of mass protests succeeded in quelling- or slowing down- the spread of protests as is the case in Zambia. However, even more evidence point to the reverse: that iron-fist response at any stage could also exacerbate the situation on ground in Ethiopia, Cameroon, Togo, DRC, etc. On the balance, however, evidence seems to lean more towards the relative success of toleration, engagement and negotiation in preventing and reducing violence, and in addressing key aspects of demands by protesters. In the end, the trajectory and context of each protest would determine the most effective response strategy to be mobilised to tackle underlying structural and trigger issues.

2) Variations in the Outcomes of Protests: the trend in 2017 and those for previous years suggest that no two mass protests are the same, even when they occur in the same country. Clearly, the nature and issues underpinning protests are different and so are their outcomes. Some protests are limited in nature as they are framed around specific, often less political and non-game changing narratives or issues. This includes protests associated with labour disputes, unemployment, elections, police brutality, etc. These kinds of protests tend to end once the specific demands are addressed or brutally quelled as exemplified in Tunisia, Niger, Guinea, Morocco, etc. Protests framed around structural conflict issues such as political transitions and regime change, resistance of dictatorships, demand for autonomy or secession, etc. have tended to be protracted, more violent, and may reach or stop short of achieving game-changing outcomes in the long term.

3) Protest may solve some, not all problems: as noted, the outcomes of protests vary, but the extent to which the most successful protest brings about genuine structural transformation remains questionable, at least in the short run. For instance, protests fueled by demands for regime change and political transitions in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Libya, etc. have not necessarily resolved the underlying issues or delivered the much-anticipated social and economic dividends. The 2017 IIAG assessment of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in the post-Arab Spring period point to a mixed result in terms of improvements; while Tunisia and Egypt have improved in Overall Governance level, Libya has deteriorated, and even for Tunisia

143 BBC News 2018. 'Why has Ethiopia imposed a state of emergency?', 21 February 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43113770, accessed 25 February 2018.

4) and Egypt, the improvements are varied across categories with deteriorations in some areas.[144] Admittedly protest may open up the political space and create new imperatives or platforms for dialogue and a renegotiation of the social contract in ways that trigger some modest changes. The symbolic and actual relevance of this cannot be underestimated in contexts of long history of authoritarian rule. Still, post-protest scenarios in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Burkina Faso point to limited transformation relative to the original demands of protesters. Protests generally solve less-political, non-game changing problems and demands, but have yet to pave way for genuine structural transformation in Africa.

5) Protests as a long-term aspect of Governance in Africa: mass protests would appear to be the latest vector of state-citizen engagement (or disengagement), democratization, and enhanced assertiveness by Africans at home and abroad (diaspora). The surge in African citizens' awareness, engagement, resistance and capacity to mobilize and organize have no doubts been emboldened by mass access to mobile telephony, internet, and the social media. In the near and distant future, mass protests will likely become even more routinized as a critical form of expression and assertion of citizenship. They will have direct or indirect impacts on political stability, peace and security in Africa, moving forward.

144 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018. 2017 IIAG, p. 23.

8 Political Transitions and Peace and Security

There is little doubt that democracy, even in its perverted form, is the popular form of government among Africans, and African institutions and their normative frameworks. A 2014 Afrobarometer Survey of 34 African countries confirmed this as up to 71% of respondents expressed preference for democracy, and the composite demand for democracy increased by 15% (from 36% in 2002 to 51% in 2012). The demand for democracy was found to be highest in West Africa. However, the survey also found considerable deficits in the supply of democracy as fewer than 43% consider their country a democracy; and the consolidation of democracy was thought to be highest in East Africa and lowest in North Africa.[145] Nonetheless, political transitions through democratic (elections) and pseudo-democratic (protests and military action) mechanisms have direct impact on peace and security in Africa.

In 2017, Africa witnessed both interesting and intriguing developments in the use (or non-use) and outcomes of elections and 'other' forms of political transitions. There was a clear swing between elections and pseudo-elections; between going through the motion or routine of elections or forced political transitions; and finally, between peaceful and non-peaceful processes and outcomes. Regardless, the handling of the processes and actual transfer of political power are hardly divorced from conflicts in Africa and globally. From past and recent histories, political transitions across Africa have become a major factor undermining peace and security. In most countries, the political stakes are often too high and "zero-sum" in nature that the logic of violence becomes inevitable. Subsisting structural issues such as poor diversity management and the dearth of inclusivity in governance systems increase the volatility of political transitions.

Before exploring the patterns and trends in 2017, it is important to draw attention to three empirical ways in which political transitions potentially affect peace and security in Africa. The first is through violent mobilisation in the build-up to political campaigns and elections (pre-election violence). The security situation in most African countries tend to quickly deteriorate ahead of elections as indexed by upswing in cases of police brutality and arbitrary arrests, torture, activities of militias, politically motivated attacks and killings, rape and other forms of gender-based violence. This has informed the signing of peace agreements by political parties as a way of preventing election violence.

Second is violence associated with election as the actual instrument or mechanism of political transition. Disputes over election processes and results, and allegations of election rigging and manipulation, rightly or wrongly, are common in Africa. They invariably, and overtly, increase political tension and suspicions at the minimum. Third, political transition in any form is a factor of the broader struggle for momentous yet disruptive change linked to democratization and its consolidation. Thus, political transition is often the climax of campaigns to end dictatorships, dynastic rule, impunity, and poor governance or simply to press for peaceful transfer of power. The inherently disruptive nature of this change process conditions its impact on peace and security.

145 Bratton, M. and Houessou, R. 2014. Demand for Democracy Is Rising in Africa, But Most Political Leaders Fail to Deliver. Policy Paper #11, April 2014, p. 3, http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Policy%20paper/ab_r5_policypaperno11.pdf. Accessed 26 March 2018.

8.1 Election-based Political Transition (EPT)

Africa experienced two broad forms of political transitions in 2017; the conduct of routine election, and forced political transitions. As indicated in Table 4.0 below, 12 local and legislative elections, and 6 presidential and national elections, took place on the continent during the year. In a majority of cases, ruling political parties used elections to consolidate their hold on political power but a notable change of guard led to the victory by an opposition party led by former footballer, George Weah, in the presidential elections recently concluded in Liberia. A similar prospect looms in Sierra Leone.

Two elections stood-out in 2017 in terms of the potential and actual crisis they threatened to provoke. In Kenya and Liberia, there were landmark judicial interventions in the electoral process forcing a review of election procedures and results based on litigations by rival political parties. In Kenya, judicial pronouncements resulted in the invalidation of elections and thus a re-run. In Liberia, however, judicial processes stalled and forced a postponement of the second round of voting. In both cases, the electoral process was successfully concluded, however the dynamic and impact on peace and security were different.

In Kenya, the Supreme Court's invalidation of the first presidential election over procedural irregularities triggered ethno-political violence over the failure of the government and the electoral commission (IEBC) to address the key demands of coalition of opposition parties, especially Nasa. The demands include the appointment of new executives at the electoral commission (IEBC); stricter rules on the use of technology in vote tallying and transmission of results; announcement of the GPS location of the 40,000 polling stations; appointment of new returning officers for all 290 constituencies; and the involvement of independent international experts in the management of all ICT functions of the election.[146] The Supreme Court's validation of the re-run election dashed the prospect of genuine electoral reform as envisaged by opposition groups. The Nasa's subsequent boycott of the re-run election further polarized the country along regional ethno-political lines and led to violent skirmishes ahead of, during and after the re-run elections. The low turnout of voters for the re-run election (estimated at 38-42%) cast serious credibility and legitimacy questions on the political transition process in Kenya.[147] The formation of a parallel government by Nasa with the hope to force fresh elections overheated the polity to the extent that Kenya continues to stumble along in the aftermath of the 2017 election.[148] It remains to be seen the extent to which the March 2018 rapprochement between President Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga will douse tension and foster national reconciliation in Kenya.

Judicial challenge to the 10 October 2017 first round of election in Liberia led to a temporary suspension and eventual postponement of the second round of elections. Acting on the provisions of the Liberian Constitution and extant electoral laws, the Supreme Court imposed a freeze on

146 Africa Confidential.2017. Crisis? What crisis? Vol 58 No 21 20th October. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12135/Crisis_What_crisis Accessed on 07/02/2018

147 ACLED.2017. KENYA – NOVEMBER 2017 UPDATE 27 December. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/kenya-november-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

148 ACLED.2017. KENYA – NOVEMBER 2017 UPDATE 27 December. Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/kenya-november-2017-update/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

plans for the second round of elections to allow a thorough investigation of alleged procedural irregularities and electoral malpractices in some counties.[149] The Supreme Court eventually dismissed the judicial challenge and permitted the second round election to hold on 26 December 2017. Both the second round of voting and its immediate aftermath, including the inauguration of George Weah as President, were without any major tension or violence episode. Against the background of Liberia's recent history as a post-conflict country, it is important to emphasize that the judicial intervention and the uncertainty it brought increased political tensions and raised fears as to the possibility of a return to violent conflict. With the benefit of hindsight, however, the vicissitude of the election tested Liberia's stability especially following its "back-to-back" civil wars between 1989 and 2003 and the devastation caused by the outbreak of Ebola virus disease that killed thousands from 2014 to 2016. There is a measure of cautious optimism that how first attempt at a smooth civilian-to-civilian transfer of power since 1944 goes would seal, for good or bad, the fate of Liberia.[150]

149 BBC News 2017. 'Liberia election run-off: Ex-footballer versus vice-president', 27 December 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42481278, accessed 01 January 2018.
150 The Guardian, 2017. 'Liberia Supreme Court begins hearing election appeal', 01 December 2017, https://guardian.ng/news/liberia-supreme-court-begins-hearing-election-appeal/ accessed 10January 2018.

Table 5: List of Major Elections in Africa in 2017

Country	Election	Date
Algeria	People's National Assembly & local	May 2017
Angola	National Assembly & President	Aug 2017
Chad	National Assembly & local	2017
Congo Republic	National Assembly	July 2017
Djibouti	Regional Assemblies & Communes	2017
Gabon	National Assembly	29 Jul 2017 (postponed from Dec 2016)
The Gambia	National Assembly	6 Apr 2017
Kenya	President, National Assembly, Senate & Local	8 Aug 2017
Liberia	President, House of Representatives & Senators (half)	10 Oct and 26 December 2017
Madagascar	Provincial & regional	2017
Niger	Local	8 Jan 2017 (may be postponed)
Rwanda	President	Aug 2017
Senegal	National Assembly	Jul 2017
Somaliland	President, House of Representatives, Senate & local	07 March 2018
Swaziland	Local, urban	2017
Togo	Local	2017
Tunisia	Local & regional	Postponed to mid-2017 from 26 Mar 2017

8.2 Forced Political Transitions

Forced political transition relates to the whole range of constitutional and unconstitutional actions that trigger changes to political leadership short of free, fair and credible elections. It is about the actions and inactions of political elites, citizens, protest groups, security forces and so on that 'force' political leaders to quit office or abdicate political power without going through the motion of national elections. The notion is neither a justification nor condemnation of such change of political leadership, especially in situations where it dovetails with the popular wishes of citizens. There is nothing new about this phenomenon, certainly not in Africa where there has been a long-duree of unconstitutional changes such as successful military coup, rebellion, father-to-son transfer of power, and now transitions triggered by mass protests.

In 2017 and the first quarter of 2018, there were three cases of forced political transitions in Africa; in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ethiopia. The transitions took place in three major countries, and remarkably, all within three months, with those of South Africa and Ethiopia happening one day apart. They also evoked a mix of shock and surprise, hope and concern, as well as fears and optimism regarding the fate of other long-reigning political leaders across the continent. In each case, the incumbents were voluntarily, persuaded or subtly forced to relinquish office by a combination of circumstances: steep erosion of political legitimacy, widespread citizens' protests, fractured support within the ruling parties and for some, the military and international pressure, and the threat of violent clashes. These were compounded by social pressures associated with poverty and economic deprivation, high unemployment (especially among youth), corruption, poor service delivery, impunity and injustice, cycle of police brutality, perceived socio-economic and political inequality, and rising ethno-nationalisms.

In Zimbabwe, political plots and intrigues within the ruling ZANU Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) that have been brewing over the years climaxed with the 'resignation' of President Mugabe in November 2017. Before then, the Mugabe regime had faced intermittent civil protests and rumblings in the armed forces over the deteriorating state of the economy characterized by hyper-inflation and unemployment coupled with the display of official impunity and police brutality. To this extent, the demand for political transition widely understood to mean the termination of President Mugabe's 37-year rule was already rife across the country and beyond.

Significantly, also, the support base of the ZANU-PF among citizens; including those from the liberation war veterans and the military, was weakened by years of incessant purge of perceived opponents of President Mugabe and his wife, including successive Vice Presidents. The last straw came with the sack of Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa on 06 November 2017, a move that had triggered a chain reaction in the military and broader civil society. Although it was denied by the military, a bloodless military coup was in the offing from 14 November when members of the Zimbabwean Defence Forces were deployed to strategic positions across Harare and other strategic installations nationwide, including taking over the presidential palace.[151] The move by the military was promptly greeted by broad support and peaceful demonstration by citizens in support of the action to end Mugabe's long rule.[152] Nearly a week of intense behind-the-scene negotiations and mediation between the top hierarchy of the military led by former Vice President Mnangagwa and Army Chief General Chiwenga, on the one hand, and President Mugabe, on the other, led to the latter's 'resignation' from office. The curtain to the entire episode drew to a close when Mnangagwa was sworn-in on 24 November 2017 in what is also termed as a 'military-assisted transition'.[153]

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151 Africa Confidential. 2017. The crocodile snaps back. Vol 58 No 23 17th November Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12165/The_crocodile_snaps_back. Accessed on 09/02/2018

152 Africa Confidential. 2017. A martial mind-set. Vol 58 No 25 Available at: 15th December https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12193/A_martial_mind-set Access on 08/02/2018

153 Africa Confidential. 2017. Hopes and fears for the new old guard Vol 58 No 24 1st December Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12178/Hopes_and_fears_for_the_new_old_guard Accessed on 09/02/2018

While there are still grey areas regarding the constitutionality, or otherwise of the ascension of President Mnangagwa, political steps were taken to situate and legitimize it within the rules and procedures of the ZANU-PF. Rather than make it seem like a brazen take-over by the military, the leadership change was made to follow ZANU-PF rules even if a mere formality. This was the highlight of the 19th November meeting and unanimous vote by the ZANU-PF Central Committee to replace President Mugabe with President Mnangagwa as the first secretary of the party thereby setting up the stage for the motion to impeach President Mugabe in December.[154] Zimbabwe's political troubles continue, not the least with the onset of a 'diarchy'; the government of civilians and military officers, side-by-side with the country's proverbial economic woes. There are even perceptible concerns that the change of government may not mean a complete severance with the Mugabe legacy given how several individuals close to him have now been reappointed into major ministerial positions.[155]

In South Africa, senior executive members of the ruling African National Congress eventually initiated moves to remove President Zuma from office. This followed the progressive build-up of public discontent with and protests against the Zuma government over issues of corruption, poor service delivery, poor economic performance, and the significant setbacks recorded by the ruling party in places traditionally considered its stronghold during local elections.

It is important to note that regardless of the similarities in outcomes, the forced political transitions in South Africa and Zimbabwe were qualitatively different from each other. Apart from the fact that the former did not involve the intervention of the military, it also meticulously followed laid down rules and procedures for leadership change in the ANC. The removal of President Zuma was kick-started by popular anti-immigrant protests by South Africans who see foreigners as the source of their unemployment and scuttled social mobility. The ranks of the protesters grew when riots broke out from September 2017 over a proposed 8% increase in school fees.[156]

The protests, in turn, set off a chain of events in the last quarter of 2017, including widespread opposition (event within the ANC) to cabinet changes, damaging details of corruption allegations involving the highly connected Gupta family, and the nomination of Vice President Ramaphosa as ANC's candidate for the presidential election in 2018. These culminated in the official 'recall' of President Zuma, or essentially a vote of no confidence in his presidency. It also clearly marked the loss of ANC's support within the parliament that eventually made President Zuma's impeachment inevitable.[157]

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154 ACLED.2017.WHAT'S NEXT FOR MUGABE? 27 December.(Online) Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/12/27/whats-next-for-mugabe/ Accessed on 09/02/2018

155 Africa Confidential.2017.A martial mind-set. Vol 58 No 25 Available at: 15th December https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/12193/A_martial_mind-set Access on 08/02/2018

156 ACLED.2017.SOUTH AFRICA – FEBRUARY 2017 UPDATE 10 March Available at: https://www.acleddata.com/2017/03/10/south-africa-february-2017-update/ Accessed on 11/02/2018

157 BBC News 2018. 'South Africa: ANC decides Zuma must go', 13 February 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43039928, accessed 20 February 2018.

President Zuma resigned on 15 February to starve-off a no-confidence vote in parliament, and President Ramaphosa was inaugurated on 15 February 2018.[158]

The third instance of forced political transition occurred in Ethiopia. It was markedly similar to that of South Africa as there was no overt intervention by the military, and leadership changes followed established rules and procedures. In the two cases, socio-economic and political tensions as well as wrangling within the ruling party precipitated leadership changes. The elongation of public protests linked to the resurgence of ethno-nationalisms, inter-ethnic violence, and routine state violence may have contributed to the unraveling of the government of Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn. The exact behind-the-scenes political maneuverings, including possible pressures (if any) that precipitated the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam remain unclear. However, what is publicly known- and acknowledged- is that the waves of violent protests and unrest over the last three years were key considerations that forced the political transition. This point was also noted in the Prime Minister's resignation broadcast when he stated that "Unrest and a political crisis have led to the loss of lives and displacement of many... I see my resignation as vital in the bid to carry out reforms that would lead to sustainable peace and democracy."[159]

8.3 Looking to the future

One additional value of exploring the nexus between political transitions and peace and security is in the opportunity it affords for horizon scanning especially since a number of African countries are scheduled to hold general elections in the months ahead. Given that elections have become a major precipitant of violent conflicts and insecurity, there is need to be fully seized on the political-security dynamics especially in countries going into elections. As indicated in Table 5.0 below, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Madagascar, Mali, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Cameroon, DRC and Liberia will conduct one or more of local, legislative and presidential elections in 2018 while Nigeria is on cue for general elections in early 2019.

Table 6: List of Elections in Africa in 2018-early 2019

Country	Security Status	Election Date
Sierra Leone	Post-conflict	07 March 2018
Egypt	Political-security volatile	Feb-May 2018
Madagascar	Politically volatile	May-Dec 2018
Mali	Conflict-affected	July-Dec 2018
Zimbabwe	Politically volatile	July-Dec 2018
South Sudan	Conflict-affected	July-Dec 2018
Cameroon	Political-security volatile	Oct-Dec 2018
DRC	Conflict-affected	23 Dec 2018
Nigeria	Political-security volatile	February 2019

158 BBC News 2018. 'South Africa's Jacob Zuma resigns after pressure from party', 15 February 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43066443, accessed 21 February 2018.

159 BBC News 2018. "Ethiopia PM Hailemariam Desalegn in surprise resignation", 15 February 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43073285, accessed 18 February 2018.

Much as considerable progress has been made to douse instability in some countries, several of the elections scheduled to take place in 2018 will test the resolve of national governments, regional organisations, the African Union, and the international community. For instance, planned elections in the Cameroon and DRC will most likely take place in the context of on-going destabilization by a variety of political tension, ethno-national agitations and armed groups. In Cameroon, the agitation for independence by the English Speaking Amabassonia region, opposition to President Biya's 35 years rule, and the incursions by Boko Haram in the Far North are potential game-changers. The DRC is already gripped by a series of protest over the expiration of President Kabila's term, and a series of armed conflicts involving a cacophony of militias in different parts of the country. Given recent experiences, the proposed election- or any attempt to postpone it- could trigger new conflicts or exacerbate existing ones.

Furthermore, elections in South Sudan and Mali will test on-going peace processes in the two Sahel countries. In the case of South Sudan, the forthcoming election (if it is not postponed) will be the first one since the country became Africa's newest independent country in 2011. It will test, or further complicate, efforts to revive the stalled 2015 peace deal. In fact, recent trends point to a further hardening of positions by key actors, including President Salva Kirr, with limited scope for a free and fair election and an inclusive-enough government.[160]

In Mali, the two-year interim period for the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation otherwise known as the Algiers Accord lapsed in June 2017 without any meaningful progress in the implementation of key provisions such as joint patrols, interim authorities across the north, cantonment and DDR of former insurgents, security sector reform, and overall reform of government. The frequent tensions, disagreements and fragmentation within and between coalitions of armed groups, as pointed out earlier, could impede the already slow pace of progress from war to peace.[161] Since the signing of the Algiers Accord, several new armed groups and splinter coalitions or factions have emerged and are actively impacting the security landscape, with little clarity as to how to bring them into the peace process.[162] It should be of concern that Mali appears politically more polarized than ever due to the violent protests that followed the Keita government's proposal to amend the constitution to strengthen the powers of the presidency, create an upper legislative body, and lay out a framework for institutional, security and justice reforms in line with the 2015 Peace Agreement.[163]

Finally, Zimbabwe and Madagascar are not out of the woods since recent experiences of political upheaval, forced transition and planned elections harbor risk of old and new political impasse to

160 ISS 13 December 2017. PSC Report, Issue 98, December 2017/January 2018, p. 20, https://issafrica.org/research/peace-and-security-council-report, accessed 10 February 2018.

161 Security Council Report.2017. Mali June Monthly Forecast (Online) 31 May Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-06/mali_26.php accessed on 16 January 2018

162 Africa Confidential. 2017. Combat and compromise. Vol 58 No 7 31st March. Available at: https://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11954/Combat_and_compromise Accessed on 07/02/2018

163 Security Council Report. 2017. Mali October Monthly Forecast (Online) 28 September Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-10/mali_27.php. Accessed on 16 January 2018

come to the fore. Moving forward, elections in Egypt and Nigeria will take place in the context of on-going counter-terrorism operations nationally and regionally (neighboring countries).

Box 6.0: Cameroon and things to come

Riots and protests continued in 2017 against the perceived discrimination towards the francophone regions of Cameroon and towards President Paul Biya's 35-year rule resulting in calls for independence of the Anglophone speaking areas. The government, in response, shut down the internet for 92 days, imposed curfew that restricted citizens' movement, denied the existence of the Anglophone crisis and used intimidation and repression against prominent Anglophone activities and other protestors. In this atmosphere, general strikes continued and schools remain closed for a second year while sporadic violence occur that sometimes included the use of homemade bombs by militants. The riots and protests in 2017 were concentrated in the South West of the country particularly in the Nord-Ouest and Sud Ouest Provinces. There is real risk the crisis will turn violent in 2018 ahead of the presidential elections given the increasingly delicate security situation. In late 2017, the crisis escalated following increasing arson attacks and armed attacks on security forces. There are reports of recruitment and training of fighters in the border area to take up armed struggled against the government.

8.4 Key Takeaways

Six key lessons can be inferred from nature and trajectory of political transitions in Africa in 2017:

1) Elections are no longer the 'only' way to bring about change in political leadership on the continent. While the phenomenon is not new, the wave of democratization in the last 30 years made election the popular mode of political transition and reduced the scope of non-election transitions. Events in 2017 showed that 'other' forms of political transition are truly alive, and likely, in Africa; and that elections alone may not achieve genuine political transition when it seeks to oust deeply entrenched dictatorships. In such circumstances, citizens and other members of the elite class have tended to resort to 'forced' means.
2) African citizens, within and in the diaspora, have somewhat become the 'new sovereign' but not necessarily through the ballot as they would prefer. Today, citizens and civil society groups across Africa are demonstrating increasing levels of resilience, assertiveness and readiness to hold governments' accountable using conventional and unorthodox means. The possibility of power incumbents or ruling parties losing elections, or their powers routinely challenged and/or undermined by citizens, is no longer a forlorn dream or death wish.
3) The elite pact, cooptation and other informal arrangements that have produced stability in a number of African countries are now showing signs of strains and unraveling with cataclysmic effects on peace and security.
4) Security forces in Africa remain active political agents, even though they have been away (or behind-the-scenes) from mainstream power for almost two decades now. Still, the move towards democratic governance in many countries cannot discount the enormous clouts that the armed and security forces play in terms of extending or withdrawing loyalty and legitimacy

from incumbents of power. Events in 2017 reinforce the view that African militaries can still be persuaded to act alongside citizens in demanding for socio-economic and political change.

5) Increasing evidence, potential or actual, of the transformative impacts of social media as a tool for social mobilization and citizens' engagement with the state. Social media is silently transforming how citizens organize and mobilize, how they confront state authorities, and in how they are able to forge opinions and consensus on national issues. It is also redefining how governments communicate with citizens, and the relationship between the centre and periphery, broadly defined.
6) It is perhaps too early to be conclusive, but Africa seems to be moving towards two models of governance and power transition, namely the Western and non-Western models.

9 Addressing Structural Vulnerabilities

9.1 AU Reform Proces

In 2013, African countries and institutions (AU) passed a new 50-year strategic vision and plan (Agenda 2063) for "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in international arena."[164] The Agenda 2063 contained provisions relevant to addressing and overcoming structural vulnerabilities to violent conflict. In particular, the Agenda 2063 expressly identified aspirations for an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law; a peaceful and secure Africa; and an Africa whose development is people driven. [165] Agenda 2063 clearly complements some of the existing initiatives such as the AU Constitutive Act, the Protocol setting up the AU Peace and Security Council, New partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance. These initiatives encapsulate shared values and norms, and approaches for transforming the socio-political, technological and economic development of the continent.

Through careful integration with regional and national development plans, resource mobilization, capacity review and development (reform) of continental organs and institutions, the Agenda 2063 is a bold attempt at addressing the socio-economic, political and developmental deficits in Africa.[166] The Agenda 2063 also identified important technological, and socio-economic projects that have direct implications for building structural resilience, including a 'Silencing the Gun' initiative, the continental free trade area, an African passport and free movement of people, a Pan-African e-network, and an African Commodity Strategy. The silencing the gun initiative translates the AU's Vision 2020 of a Conflict-Free Africa by ending all wars by 2020. The Vision was articulated in 2013 at the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU as a solemn declaration to make peace a reality in and for all Africans by getting rid of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and to prevent genocide.[167]

As a follow up to the Agenda 2063, the AU initiated a major reform process as encapsulated by the President Kagame Report that identified six reform areas, including the clarification of continental priorities (political affairs and peace and security, economic integration, and the relationship between the AU an Regional Institutions); the realignment of continental institutions and their mandates; and connecting the AU to African citizens. Other areas are ways of ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness of the AU; strategies for financing the AU and its agenda (including Peace and Security) more sustainably; and a roadmap for ensuring the implementation of the reform agenda.[168] As

164 See https://au.int/en/agenda2063/about
165 Kaitlyn DeGhetto, Jacob R. Gray & Moses N. Kiggundu. 2016. The African Union's Agenda 2063: Aspirations, Challenges, and Opportunities for Management Research, Africa Journal of Management, 2:1, 93-116.
166 The AU Commission. 2015. Agenda 2063: First Ten Year Implementation Plan 2014-2023, http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063-first10yearimplementation.pdf. Accessed 25 March 2018.
167 African Union, 2013. 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, http://agenda2063.au.int/en/documents/50th-anniversary-solemn-declaration. Accessed
10 February 2018.
168 See African Union, 2017. Report on the Implementation of the Decision on the Institutional Reform of the African

highlighted by Jide Okeke, the reform areas and their priorities, if fully implemented, will facilitate the accelerated progress of the AU in the implementation of its Agenda 2063.[169]

The Kagame Report and its steering structure were adopted by the 28th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 30 to 31 January 2017. This the background to the choice of the AU Reform process, including the financing of the African Union as the theme for the 2018 Tana Forum. As highlighted by Engel, the financing of the AU, specifically its peace and security activities, is of critical importance given the overwhelming reliance on extra-African funding and the potential implications this has for the ownership of peace and security agendas in Africa. For instance, "donor assistance to the AU reached an unprecedented level in 2015, when it accounted for 71.8% of the Union's overall estimated budget. The persistent of security threats, especially those linked to violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel, the Horn and North Africa, has increased the urgency of sustainable funding."[170]

Beyond the consensual adoption of the reform agenda, its implementation had raised concerns, criticisms and reservations in some quarters. This is especially in relation to the plan for financial autonomy through a continental-wide levy. As noted in the collection of Policy Briefs for the 2018 Tana Forum, there are concerns as expressed by some member states such as South Africa and Egypt as well as regional blocs such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) opposing the modalities on the implementation of the reform agenda, especially its aspect on financial autonomy.

There are also perceptions, rightly or wrongly, of limited inclusion by member states in the implementation of the reform agenda, and real or suspected back stage taken by some of the major countries (that contributes the most resources to the AU) in the reform process. The reduced visibility of major/regional powers in the reform process relative to the pivotal roles of the leaders of small states represents a major political risk for the reform process in the long run.[171]

Similarly, the status and role of the AU's Permanent Representative Council (PRC) in the reform process remains undefined or side-lined. In particular, concerns have been raised by the methodology of reform whereby reports were presented directly to heads of state and governments, rather than going through the Executive Council (consisting of foreign ministers). It is contended that this bypasses existing legal channels of decision-making as contained in the AU Constitutive Act, including bodies such as specialized technical committees, Permanent Representative Committee, and Executive Council. Yet, the PRC as Ako and Ukeje observe, is a statutory organ established under Article 5 of the Constitutive Act, to bear the primary responsibility of "preparing the work of the Executive Council

Union, July 2017, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33272-doc-au_reform_implementation_report_july_2017_final_v2.pdf. Accessed 20 March 2018.

169 Okeke, J. 2018. Ambition versus Realism: Evaluating the Prospects of Success of the African Union Institutional Reform Agenda, IPSS Tana 2018 Policy Brief.

170 Engel, U. 2018. The Road to Kigali: The AU Finances between Dependence and Increasing Ownership, Reform Agenda, IPSS Tana 2018 Policy Brief.

171 Newsletter of the AU and Horn of Africa, June 1 – 31 August 2017, http://www.reseaupaix.org/en/category/newsletters/hoa-en/. Accessed 27 March 2018.

and acting on the Executive Council's instructions."[172]

Finally, the need for the reform of the AU and its organs is fairly established, at least to reposition it to meet the aspirations of African citizens. Beyond the political and diplomatic squabbles over the AU reform process and its methodology, it remains unclear how the proposed reform will adequately address the structural causes and vulnerabilities of conflict in Africa. Urgent questions and concerns remain as to the 'technicalization' of the AU reform process, relative to its political undertones. For instance, there are concerns about how the political dimensions of structural vulnerabilities could or would be addressed by some of the actors (leaders) complicit in violent conflict. Moreover, critical reflections on how the reform process will deliver the expected institutional, political and socio-economic partnerships needed for addressing structural vulnerabilities in Africa remain unexplored.

9.2 Continental Initiatives

The AU has a long history of undertaking preventive diplomacy to facilitate negotiated settlement of violent conflicts or prevent their emergence. In recent years, the AU has initiated steps to translate its normative frameworks into action by designing and piloting conflict prevention initiatives aimed at detecting and addressing structural weaknesses. For instance, in 2013, the AU developed a Continental Structural Conflict Prevention (CSCP) Framework to facilitate a Commission-wide coordinated approach to structural conflict prevention. The CSCPF operationalizes preventive action as a direct and operational focus of intervening before large-scale violence occurs as well as a structural, strategic focus of addressing the structural causes of conflict.[173] This was backed-up with a 2015 establishment of an Inter-departmental Taskforce on Conflict Prevention (ITFCP) to streamline AU conflict prevention approaches and strategies, and to developing joint work-plans.[174] In 2017, the Country Structural Vulnerability/Resilience Assessment (CSVA/CSRA) and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies (CSVMS) were developed as empirical frameworks and tools for identifying a country's structural vulnerability to conflict at an early stage. The CVSMS is expected to emerge from the CSVA/CSRA process as specified action-points to be taken to forestall the outbreak of violent conflicts. Ghana became the first country to undergo a pilot CSVA/CSRA assessment in November 2017.

Other continental-wide initiatives include plans to explore and transform the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as a conflict prevention tool, the State Reporting system for African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance (ACDEG), and conflict prevention frameworks at regional levels by RECs.

However, African efforts at conflict prevention broadly and in the context of addressing structural vulnerabilities remain limited for a variety of reasons. First, conflict prevention is an emerging area

172 Ukeje, C. and Ako, R. 2018. Reforming the AU's Permanent Representatives Committee, IPSS Tana 2018 Policy Brief.

173 See African Union Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework: Guidelines and Methodology for Country Structural Vulnerability Assessments (CSVAs) and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies (CSVMS) (Draft Methodology), p. 3.

174 Interview with Head of Conflict Management Division, AU-PSD, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15 September 2017.

in terms of operationalizing tools, institutions and processes; at the continental level, systems and processes are still evolving, and at the regional level some RECs already have well developed frameworks. However there are considerable gaps and lack of clarity between the AU and RECs and Regional Mechanisms as to the respective roles, mandates and capacity to implement structural conflict prevention.

Second, due to the burgeoning stage of conflict prevention, it is still largely in a crisis response mode and heavily focused on trigger causes, as opposed to addressing structural causes of violent conflict in a proactive way.[175] Finally, the variety of continental- and regional-level initiatives with actual and potential value for structural conflict prevention remain poorly coordinated, lacking in synergy and dotted with duplication of roles, mandates and activities. Some of the initiatives include the CSVA/ CSRA, AGA State Reporting Mechanism, and APRM.

Finally, the pace of events, especially the transition from structural vulnerability into violent conflict, across several African countries would appear to be faster than policy efforts and initiatives aimed at addressing structural weaknesses. Thus, a rapid upscaling of structural conflict prevention activities (capacities and resources) in Africa is needed to fully manifest the political declarations made and achieve the lofty goals of Vision 2020.

175 UNECA, 2017. Assessing the APRM as a Conflict Prevention Tool, Technical Assessment commissioned by the UNECA, Workshop on the APRM and Conflict Prevention, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, December 2017.

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