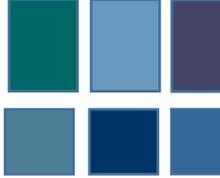




OCCASSIONAL PAPER
78



A roundup of strategic developments and trends in Africa in 2019

ABOUT IGD

The IGD is an independent foreign policy think tank dedicated to the analysis of and dialogue on the evolving international political and economic environment, and the role of Africa and South Africa. It advances a balanced, relevant and policy-oriented analysis, debate and documentation of South Africa's role in international relations and diplomacy.

The IGD strives for a prosperous and peaceful Africa in a progressive global order through cutting edge policy research and analysis, catalytic dialogue and stakeholder interface on global dynamics that have an impact on South Africa and Africa.

3rd Floor Robert Sobukwe Building
263 Nana Sita Street
Pretoria South Africa

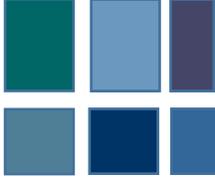
PO Box 14349
The Tramshed,
0126
Pretoria South Africa

+27123376082
+27862129442
info@igd.org.za
www.igd.org.za

All rights reserved. The material in this publication may not be reproduced, stored or transmitted without the prior permission of the copyright holder. Short extracts may be quoted, provided the source is acknowledged.

About the author

Ms Faith Mabera is a senior researcher at the Institute for Global Dialogue. Ms Mabera joined the IGD in October 2014 after completing an MA (cum laude) in International Relations from the University of Pretoria. She also holds a BA Honours degree in International Relations and a BPolSci degree in International Studies, both obtained with distinction from the University of Pretoria. Ms Mabera's research interests include the Responsibility to Protect, African diplomacy, African foreign policies, African peace and security issues and global governance. She is a regular commentator and analyst on South African media speaking on African foreign policy developments and international relations.



■ Introduction

2019 is drawing to a close, and as new developments pop up on the regional and global landscape, it is important to reflect on the past year and zero in on a number of noteworthy trends that have emerged and the manner in which they will influence the geopolitical environment, both from the perspective of risk and opportunity. Turning to future studies and risk analysis, which explore key drivers, scenario planning and knowledge of risk and opportunities in shaping policy, decision makers are increasingly recognising the utility of having a grasp of dynamics and trends and implications for charting well-informed courses for their futures. Pertinent to Africa, the news cycle has been dominated by coverage of democracy and governance issues such as the more than a dozen elections schedule, the complex revolutionary redux of popular uprisings demanding the ouster of authoritarian leaders, the complicated pursuit of sustainable peace in conflict-affected states, and the sequel to the positive, yet nuanced trajectory of economic growth on the continent.

1. Africa's economic growth shows no signs of slowing down

Africa's economic growth continues on the upward trajectory with gross domestic product growth (GDP) growth projected to rise to 4% in 2019, up from 3.5% in 2018 and 2.1% in 2016 (Brookings 2019). Excluding the large economies of Angola, Nigeria and South Africa with average growth of 2.5%, half of the world's fastest growing economies are on the continent with a growth rate of 5% over a five year period, higher than the global average of 3.6%. This includes Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, Benin, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. However, the positive growth outlook is dampened by downside risks, specifically rising levels of government debt and growing concerns about debt sustainability in several countries (AfDB 2019: 2). 14 countries have been marked as being in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress. Rising debt levels have stemmed from declining commodity prices, a glaring infrastructure financing gap and budgetary increases for security-related costs in countries affected by terrorist threats. Debt accumulation raises questions about debt sustainability, particularly with regard to commercial debt sources such as Eurobond and Chinese loans, with policy implications for tax revenue collection and risk mitigation mechanisms such as blended finance and public-private partnerships.

In the face of the dominant neo-liberal international order, analyses of the political economy of development in Africa have shown the multiplicity of challenges, which include the following; dependency on primary exports in the midst of shrinking commodity prices, contractionary macroeconomic policies that stymie agricultural productivity, unsustainable debt levels, limited structural transformation, weak or non-functional institutions, poor market systems, poor governance and inconsistent development policies. Regardless of periods of marked growth associated with the narrative of 'Africa rising' in the 2000s, the trajectory of growth has been saddled with insufficient job creation, widening inequalities, weakening social cohesion,



weakening bargaining power of organised labour and acute social insecurities compounded by global financial, food and energy crises. Furthermore, the disconnect between economic policy and social policy has resulted in poor human development. Indeed, in comparison to other regions on the Human Development Index (HDI), Africa remains behind other regions (Gumede 2018: 126). Consequently, the pattern of growth without development calls for alternative models and frameworks that not only review the role of the state in structural transformation, but also recognize how social policy can be used as levers for socio-economic development, labour productivity, economic growth and improved well-being (Adesina 2010:13)

In tandem with the global agenda for sustainable development, the development discourse in Africa is being forced to come to terms with the glaring imperative to generate employment, structural transformation and generating social and economic development to fulfil ‘the needs and aspirations of Africa’s working peoples.’ Such a view of inclusive development is underpinned by bridging the gap between economic and social policy and an emphasis on the social contract as a priority policy area to build resilient, cohesive societies. What is needed is a democratic, socially-inclusive state-society nexus that prioritises equitable social provisioning, popular engagement, transparency and accountability in policy making and execution while the developmental dimension draws on the state’s inclusive development agenda and the capacity to sustain this agenda for socio-economic progress (Adesina 2007:23; Gumede 2011:180).

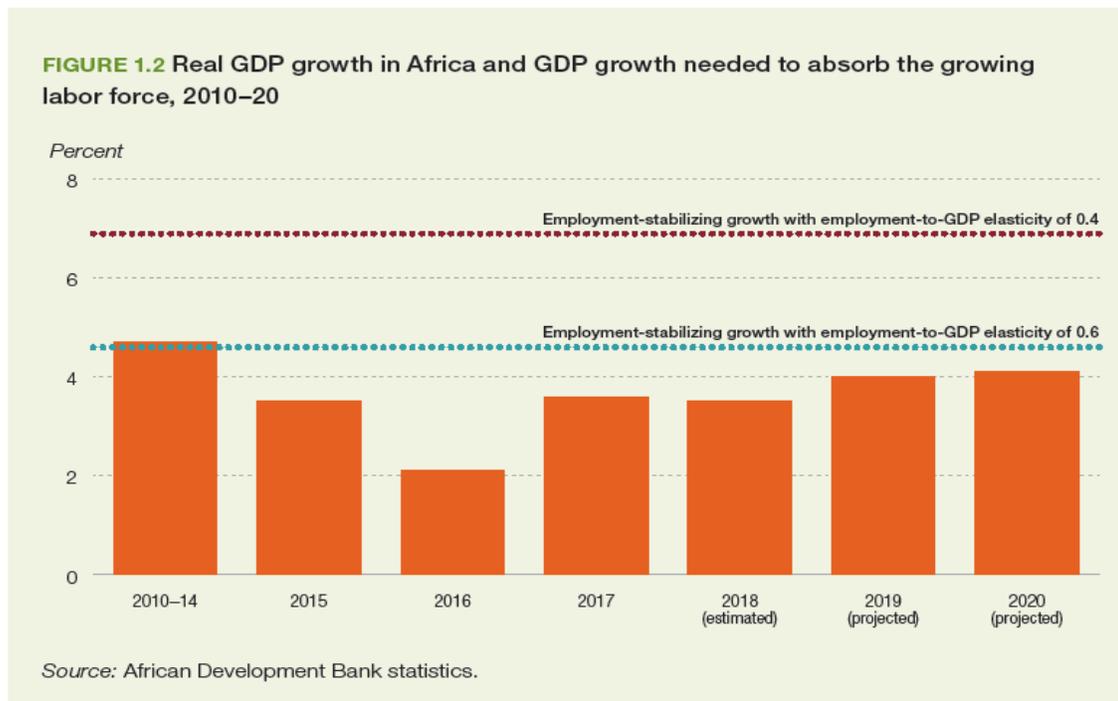


Figure 1: African Economic Outlook 2019



2. The African Continental Free Trade Area becomes a reality

The Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) entered into force on 30 May 2019 with a total of 24 countries depositing their instruments of ratification to date. The AfCFTA came into market on 7 July, amidst high expectations of it as an 'economic game changer' with the potential to raise intra-African trade by 25% or between \$50 and \$70 billion by 2040. In spite of its laudable prospects for trade and investment, there remains a number of sticky issues that will need to be resolved in order for the AfCFTA to move from the aspirational to tangibles. These issues include: configuring most favoured nation (MFN) deals between all countries, ironing out issues around rules of origin, delayed introduction of continent-wide trade facilitation measures and gaps in buy-in from governments, African business and ordinary citizens (Matheson 2019; Adegoke 2019). Another issue that will affect negotiations is the variation in countries' economic clout, which necessitates the implementation of special and differential treatments for least developed countries (Reuters 2019). A 2019 IMF assessment report of the benefits and challenges of implementing the AfCFTA noted that complementing the AfCFTA with structural reforms in sectors where countries have comparative advantages will increase the GDP impact of expanded trade by one-third, yielding substantial gains for agriculture-based and less-diversified economies. Pertinent to income inequality, trade openness from the AfCFTA will decrease inequality slightly in agriculture-oriented economies and raise it in manufacturing exporters who stand to benefit from high-skilled workers (IMF 2019:49).

3. A loaded year for elections in Africa

Over 20 countries (see Table 1) were slated to hold elections ranging from presidential, parliamentary and local government. The year commenced with elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) marred by sporadic violence and widespread reports of rigging in favour of opposition candidate Felix Tshisekedi. In Benin, political deadlock followed contested polls in April which saw opposition parties shut out from participating in the elections, resulting in a low voter turnout of 23% as supporters of the opposition boycotted the polls (Siegle 2019). In Mauritania, the disputed 20 June polls gave way to an internet shutdown and arrests of opposition figures, who raised concerns about irregularities such as the lack of a level-playing field and absence of international observers (Diagana 2019)

In Tunisia, independent candidate Kais Saied secured 72.5% of the vote to win the presidential seat in the country's third parliamentary elections and second presidential elections since the 2011 Jasmine revolution of the Arab Spring. Viewed as an anti-system indictment of the Tunisian elite, Saied's victory was backed by a strong youth vote and popular support for his campaign for economic reforms and accountability (Rahman 2019). Moving ahead, some of the priorities for the incoming government include filling the vacant



seats on the constitutional court, institutional police reform and sustaining momentum for Tunisia's transitional justice process that began under the oversight of the Truth and Dignity Commission (TMS) that wound down in 2018. The new government needs a plan for the effective implementation of recommendations from the TDC report as well as enactment of reforms around transitional justice laws (El Gantri 2019)

Malawi's elections on 21 May 2019 were also marred by reports of irregularities and tampering of hundreds of result sheets altered with correction fluid. Dubbed the 'Tipp-ex elections,' opposition parties called out the fraudulent election results and lodged a court case with Malawi's constitutional court whose decision is pending as of November 2019. In addition to the court challenge, protests in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu have been on and off since the vote in May with protesters demanding the resignation of the chair of Malawi's Electoral Commission. Protesters also want an overhaul of the electoral system based on the first-past-the-post method that saw incumbent president Peter Mutharika win with 38% of the vote ahead of Lazarus Chakwera's 35% (AFP 2019). The gripes of civil society and the opposition parties about the elections have cast a shadow over the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) credibility as an electoral observer following its interim report which declared the elections free and fair. SADC's silence on the contested elections is unsurprising, given its historical inaction over electoral contestations in the region as seen in the endorsement of elections in Zimbabwe and DRC in 2018. (Louw-Vaudran and Chikohomero 2019).

In Botswana, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) maintained its grip on power but realised a significant loss of popular support since independence in 1966. In the elections held on 24 October, BDP won 48.7% of the vote, 5 points down from the last elections in 2009. Newly elected President Mokgweetsi Masisi took over from Ian Khama, who had served two terms in office in line with constitutional limits. Masisi's victory coincides with a split in the BDP following a clash between Masisi and Khama on a number of issues including the lifting of a ban on trophy hunting, which had been outlawed during the latter's term in office. In addition to the leniency for elephant hunting, Masisi has also appealed to populism by promising improved economic conditions through diversification, to curb unemployment, promote inclusive development and shared prosperity from the country's wealth in international diamonds sales (Kirby 2019). Beyond the Masisi-Khama tussle, the political climate in Botswana, opposition coalitional politics and factionalism within the ruling party demand attention to citizens' calls for equitable distribution of wealth and recalibration of government policies in line with Botswana's international reputation as a bellwether of good governance and democracy in Africa (Fabricius 2019).

Overall, commentators have highlighted the retreat of democracy in several case studies, marked by manipulation of electoral process, repression of opposition and narrowing of civic space as political and civil liberties are increasingly curbed. Incumbents continue to cling on to power under the guise of elections but are gradually undermining democratic institutions and ruthlessly clamping down on opposition (Smith 2019). The decline in democracy, particularly the poor showing of electoral integrity, is a worrying trend in



Africa that calls for greater citizen demand for enhanced governance and democratic practice and leadership.

Table 1: Overview of elections across Africa in 2019

Country	Election	Date
Algeria	Presidential	12 Dec 2019
Benin	Legislative	28 April 2019
Botswana	Presidential, legislative and local	23 October 2019
Burkina Faso	Constitutional referendum	Postponed indefinitely from 24 Mar 2019
Cameroon	Legislative and local	Postponed to Jan-Mar 2020 from Oct 2019 and late 2018
Chad	Legislative and local	Late 2019 (postponed from May 2019 and 30 Nov 2018)
Comoros	Presidential and regional	24 Mar 2019; runoff 21 Apr 2019
DRC	Local	22 Sep 2019 (postponed from Nov 2016)
Egypt	Local	Oct-Dec 2019
Ghana	District, Local & Unit	17 December 2019
Guinea	Legislative	6 Feb 2020 (postponed from Jan/Feb 2019)
Guinea-Bissau	Presidential	24 Nov 2019
Libya	Local	30 Mar 2019
	Presidential and legislative	Postponed
Madagascar	Local	27 Nov 2019
	Legislative	27 May 2019
Malawi	Presidential, legislative and local	21 May 2019
Mali	Legislative	Postponed to May 2020 from 30 Jun 2019;
Mauritania	Presidential and senate	22 Jun 2019
Mauritius	Legislative	7 Nov 2019
Mozambique	Presidential, legislative and provincial	15 Oct 2019
Namibia	Presidential and legislative	27 Nov 2019
Niger	Local	13 Jan 2019
Nigeria	Presidential, legislative, state assemblies and governors	23 Feb 2019

Rwanda	Senate (indirect)	16-18 Sep 2019
Senegal	Presidential, regional and local	24 Sep 2019
Somaliland (autonomous region)	legislative	Postponed from Mar 2019
South Africa	Legislative	8 May 2019
Tanzania	Local	24 Nov 2019
Togo	Local	30 Jun 2019
Tunisia	Presidential, legislative and local	6 Oct 2019

Source: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, available at <https://www.eisa.org.za/calendar2019.php>

An Afrobarometer Survey conducted between September 2016 and September 2018 found that 75% of Africans from 34 countries preferred to use regular, free and fair elections to choose their leaders. Additionally, the perceived quality of elections is linked to the extent to which ‘a change effect’ is realised in terms of a political turnover or electoral alternation with 71% of Africans seeing free and fair conduct in the wake of electoral alternation whereas 56% see the same for elections that retain incumbents in power (Bratton and Bhoojedhur 2019:19). A question about perception of election quality of their last national elections revealed differences across countries with 87% rating in Ghana compared to 17% in Gabon. The survey also showed popular support for elections is higher in countries with two-round presidential electoral systems than in systems in which leaders are chosen indirectly by parliamentary majorities or that allow winners to take office with less than 50% of the votes, such as in first-past-the-post systems (Bratton and Bhoojedhur 2019, 15). Overall, the survey indicated that taking into account a range of institutional, political, and attitudinal factors that influence public opinion about elections, popular support is a function of both leadership alternation and perceived election quality (Bratton and Bhoojedhur 2019, 21).

4. Growing momentum of people power in Africa

The mass uprisings in Algeria and Sudan that resulted in the ouster of strongmen Abdelaziz Bouteflika on 2 April and Omar al –Bashir on 1 April, represent the revolutionary potential of citizens’ resolve against the ‘African strongman syndrome’ and decades-long authoritarianism. Since the 1970s, Africa’s non-violent uprisings have had the highest success rate in the world, toppling dictatorships in one out of three mass uprisings worldwide (Marks, Chenoweth & Okeke 2019). The relative success of African people power can be attributed to the long history of resistance against colonial rule; strategic harnessing of social media for mobilization and outreach; messaging of a unifying political cause that transcends class, age and identity,



and the pivotal role of women in leading and organizing protest activities. However, the mass uprisings in Algeria and Sudan also point to the messier side of revolutions in Africa, sometimes undermined by the influence of far-reaching foreign leaders; difficulty of sustaining momentum over indefinite periods across all sectors of protesters and the lack of functional structures to facilitate seamless transition from military to civilian authority (Allison 2019).

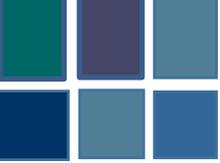
Eight years after the uprising that led to the ouster of Hosni Mubarak, and six years after the military coup that toppled Mohammed Morsi, another wave of protests erupted in Egypt during October and was quickly quelled by security forces. The latest wave of protests was spurred by citizens' grievances around an economic downturn, rising costs of living, increased poverty levels combined with allegations of corruption by the ruling military and political elite and gross mispending of public finances. Although security forces were able to brutally squash emerging dissent, it is clear that underlying grievances will continue to simmer below the surface with the possibility of more protests and resultant repression in the short-term. (African Insiders 2019).

Protests also emerged in Guinea in early November following attempts by President Alpha Conde to remove term limits via constitutional amendments in the lead-up to the 2020 elections. Conde's move to seek a third term follows a similar script seen in other countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Cameroon, Eritrea and Burundi, where term limits have either been amended or abolished. Protests against Conde's plan and resulting violent crackdowns have seen arrests of opposition party members and civil society leaders, pointing to coming months of violent clashes with security forces. In addition to the capital Conakry, the political pressure points of the protests will be mining towns and areas such as Boke, Sangardi and Kamsar where local and foreign mining operations will be heavily affected. An interesting twist in Guinea's case is Russian backing of the constitutional amendment, given Russian company *Rusal's* massive stake in bauxite mining in Guinea (Stratfor 2019)

5. Growing foreign engagement in Africa

Developments over the course of the past decade have pointed to an upsurge in interest by foreign powers in Africa who have been clamouring to strengthen diplomatic, strategic and commercial ties across the continent. For instance, between 2010 and 2016, more than 320 embassies or consulates were opened in Africa with Turkey leading the pack at 26 missions. Trade and investment in the continent has also boomed as China continues to dominate as Africa's largest trading partner with expanding scope to include non-traditional partners such as Singapore, Turkey and Indonesia (The Economist 2019).

Multilateral diplomacy and summitry have also been on the advance with Russia hosting the premier Russia-Africa summit in October in efforts to get in on the expanding multifaceted engagement with Africa by other powers such as China, the US, India, and Japan, among others. External interests in Africa also



extend to the sphere of peace and security, as military engagements have been enhanced alongside diplomatic and commercial relations. For instance, the Horn of Africa has witnessed a growing presence of external security actors establishing military bases, commercial bases and logistics hubs in the region (Melvin, 2019a:2). Djibouti, for instance, hosts a total of 7 foreign bases operated by the US, China, Japan, France, Italy and Spain. In 2017, Turkey built its largest overseas base in Somalia and in addition to its commercial base in the port of Berbera, the United Arab Emirates is set to open a military base in Somaliland.

The increased presence of foreign military actors in the Horn of Africa has significant geopolitical implications for the region, stemming not only from heightened securitization as a result of its incorporation into the extra-regional security dynamics of the Middle East, the Gulf and the Indo-Pacific; but also increased geopolitical competition by the myriad of actors with various geostrategic economic and security interests. The overlapping external security engagements by states with competing interests in the region also affects the regional security agenda, pointing to the glaring need for a functional regional security mechanism in the Horn of Africa equipped to strategically navigate the complex mix of non-traditional security threats such as piracy and terrorism, as well as manage the emerging transcontinental maritime security agenda (Melvin, 2019b:10). Subsequently, the quest for a multilateral framework to manage the shifting dynamics of the Red Sea arena has seen a proposal for a Red Sea forum, championed by Egypt and Saudi Arabia in December 2017. Such a governance framework would be based on a multi-tiered membership structure, including littoral states as well as strategic regional and international partners. In addition to the primary issues of maritime and security issues, other areas of cooperation would range from conflict resolution to renewable energy and infrastructure development. Although differences over design, objectives and membership have hitherto frustrated efforts to establish the proposed Red Sea forum, the potential benefits of a multilateral approach to wider issues of trans-regional cooperation, economic integration and shared geostrategic interests cannot be overstated (Vertin 2019:7).

The renewed interest and geopolitical rivalry by global and regional powers on the continent points to Africa's geostrategic importance as a key site for the complex interactions of interests, power politics and expansion of various spheres of influence. The sheer number of Africa-centred summits held abroad in the course of 2019, including the Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit, the Tokyo International Conference for Africa's Development summit (TICAD7) and the Russia-Africa summit, among others, have far-reaching implications for diplomatic and security arrangements pertinent to Africa's global partnerships. These external partnerships also circle back to the imperative of African agency and the manner in which African actors exercise this agency in the global arena. Geopolitical dynamics cannot be addressed apart from the specific historical and political contexts that have framed Africa's participation in global politics and its perennial portrayal as a 'passive actor and subject on the table' (Bradlow 2013). It also remains to be seen whether expansive external engagement in Africa will be a divisive factor on the continent or will help drive structural transformation and enhance Africa's voice and stake in global affairs (Vines 2019).



The relevance of geopolitics for African political and security dynamics is also evident in partial disengagement by a number of actors. For instance, the US new Africa Strategy can be read largely as a counter-move to Russia and China's footprints on the continent rather than as a comprehensive recalibration of US policy objectives aligned with Africa's developmental needs (Vines 2019). The declining influence of Françafrique in West and Central Africa also indicates the complex status of contemporary France-Africa relations, challenged by China's dominance in trade and investment as well as the growing contestation about the continued usage of the CFA Franc by France's former colonies in West and Central Africa. The CFA Franc is pegged on the euro with hefty reserves in France, raising concerns about neo-imperialism, economic dependence and limits on the competitiveness of countries that use it (Signé 2019)

The increase in diplomatic, commercial and security engagements of foreign actors in Africa points to a number of policy imperatives for Africa's leaders. Africa's policymakers will have to amplify their agency in relations and strategically leverage the range of opportunities for the benefit of Africa's citizens. Such a strategic foreign policy approach demands well-informed and well-trained negotiation teams backed by an accurate understanding of the African collectivist approach to global life. In addition to a cohesive diplomacy-led engagement, African leaders have to enhance political governance at the domestic level to curb malfeasance and corruption and ensure the bounty of development assistance gets to the grassroots.

Closer to home, a noteworthy case has been Morocco's charm offensive into the rest of Africa, beyond its immediate Maghreb region. Morocco's Africa Strategy has seen an increase in diplomatic and business initiatives in sectors such as telecommunications, infrastructure and agro-processing. According to the AfDB, 85% of Morocco's FDI went into Africa in 2016, driven by aggressive trade missions and visits headed by ruling monarch, King Mohammed VI (Kede 2019)

6. Constant flux of conflict dynamics in a complex, volatile peace and security landscape

Trends in conflict and violent events during 2019 have indicated an increase in the number of conflict actors and the transnational nature of threats and vulnerabilities. Cilliers (2018, 3) has also highlighted the proliferation of rebel and extremist groups, bolder linkages between transnational organised crime and violent extremists across Africa and the Middle East, and a rise in the frequency and scale of riots and protests. Securitization of the Sahel, with the involvement of external actors has also been gaining traction since the 2013 French military operation (Operation Serval) that was launched to drive out Islamist insurgents from central Mali. In the aftermath of the French operation, concerns about regional stability and spill-over effects paved the way for a flurry of regional and international initiatives including the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) and the EU Capacity Building Mission in Mali (EUCAP). The form of conflict that has been taking shape in the Sahel, insurgency combined with militant Islamist ideology, is also evident in the conflict in northeastern Nigeria in the hands of Boko Haram whose tactics and strategy have earned its notoriety



as the ‘deadliest conflict actor in the region’ (Eizenga 2019,17). Boko Haram’s expanding threat to regional stability led to the formation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) , a multinational coalition with troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria centred around counter-insurgency operations.

The Sahelian globalised context is illustrative of increased militarised responses to the complex, interconnected challenges in the region, focused on strengthening the coercive power of the state, policing and the decoupling of security from the structural socio-economic and political drivers of conflict and security in the region. In a similar vein, migration has also been framed as a key factor in considerations about security in the Sahel, fostering securitized policies by Europe in response to perceived threats of an influx of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa through the Sahel and North Africa. The overall impact has been the criminalization of migration, increased policing, establishment of detention centres, and repatriation of migrants, resulting in further securitization of economic and political issues and an increase in human trafficking and other transnational crimes (Eizenga 2018, 16)

Attacks by militants affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) terror group in the northern Mozambique province of Cabo Delgado have raised concerns about a resurgent IS presence in new territories where it has drawn allegiance from local militant groups. Several radical militant groups have been active in Cabo Delgado, ranked as the country’s poorest province, where economic grievances, poverty and worsening conditions have made inhabitants vulnerable to radicalization by extremist groups. Although the affiliation between the local insurgent group, al-Sunnah wa Jamaah (ASWJ) and IS has been unclear, and with limited information about the ASWJ’s objectives and membership base, reports show that the group has deployed hit-and-run attacks targeting civilians and religious leaders from some ethnic groups in the province (Kajjo and Vilanculos 2019). Furthermore, the discovery of vast natural gas reserves in the area has realised a growing presence of multinational energy companies and investors, underscoring the province’s strategic importance and the imperative of a sound counterinsurgency strategy by the Mozambican government aided by international partners. A rash militarised approach focused on repression will only prove counterproductive and fester religious and ethnic tensions and entrench radicalization (Matfess and Noyes 2019).

The increased presence of Russian military actors in northern Mozambique has been linked to the security situation in the province amidst reports of Russian military support in government-led operations against armed groups in Mocímboa da Praia and Macomia districts. Reports in August and September also pointed to the arrival of Russian military equipment in Nacala including the Mi-17 helicopter, and the docking of Russian military vessels at Mozambican ports. Defence and security agreements between Mozambique and Russia provide for military training, advice, logistical support and supply of equipment (defenceWeb 2019).



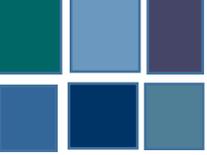
Similarly, the deaths of five soldiers employed by private military company (PMC) the Wagner group following an ambush in the Muidumbe district in Cabo Delgado has raised a number of questions about the role of PMCs in Africa and the impact on the security sector in the continent. In addition to the Russian, Kremlin-linked Wagner group, the American L6G security company run by Erik Prince has also secured lucrative security deals to help root out the insurgent groups in exchange for dividends from the natural gas riches in Cabo Delgado (Solomon, 2019; Club of Mozambique 2018).

While not a new phenomenon in Africa, the activities of PMCs have broadened beyond combat and non-combat support such as military and security training, maintenance of weapons systems, and protection of personnel to include anti-poaching and maritime security operations (Powell et al 2019). The shadowy operations of PMCs have often blurred the lines between effective military support alongside conventional security forces and destabilising activities, with legal and normative implications for conduct of war and post-conflict engagements. The civilian collateral damage associated with PMCs activities and the murky distinction between PMCs and mercenaries further raises complications for international law with respect to the rights and status of actors under international humanitarian law (IHL) (Sullivan 2018). The debate about the future of PMCs in the African peace and security landscape is a long-drawn one, and will continue to raise questions about the commercialization of war, the effects of increased militarization in conflict-affected regions and the instrumentalization of disorder and instability for economic or geopolitical ends.

The evolving nature of warfare is also transforming the African battlespace with increased use of long-range drones by actors such as Khalifa Haftar's Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) in their advance on to Tripoli. The use of drones, sourced from foreign actors, for surveillance and long-range strategic strikes across Libya has altered the dynamics in the Libyan conflict, with both sides conducting more than 900 drone missions since April 2019. The use of drones, coupled with propaganda peddled via wide-spread social media campaigns, has tipped the scales of war in Libya in alignment with proxy actors, with the Libyan case serving as a forerunner of the emerging African battlespace that will demand tactical and strategic adaptability as well as pragmatic policies attuned to on-the-ground realities (Herbert 2019).

Conclusion

The domestic, regional and global contexts across Africa have pointed to a number of developments and trends in the course of 2019 that have a bearing on the considerations and policy responses of policy makers in both the short-term and the long-term. The range of issues and developments illustrate a complex mix of gray swans and gray rhinos. Gray rhinos, which are highly probable, highly visible, high-impact developments, include demographic growth directly affecting social and economic policies; elevated debt vulnerabilities amid a sustained growth outlook, geopolitical trade tensions affecting volatility of commodity prices and exports' value and increased occurrence of electoral-related violence linked to negative perceptions of electoral integrity. On the other hand, gray swans that can be anticipated to some degree,



have a relatively high degree of uncertainty and high strategic impact can be seen in cases such as Egypt where the return of protests against Abdel Fatah el-Sisi's regime point to either the possibility of a continued hold onto power or an unravelling of the political centre leading to civil war or a proxy struggle with spill-over effects into the region. The securitization of the Sahel as seen in the engagement modes of regional and international responses may lead to further militarization of the region, intensification of conflict with the proliferation of insurgency groups and decoupling of security, development and economic factors of insecurity. The trend of securitization is also visible in the Horn of Africa where the growing presence of foreign military actors has resulted in increased militarization with implications for the regional politics and agency of actors in building a regional order and security mechanisms. Finally, the ascendancy of PMCs in the African peace and security landscape and the evolving battlespace as a result of use of high-tech tools of warfare such as drones point to complex theatres of war with a range of new actors and complex demands on both combatants and policymakers.



Bibliography

- Adegoke, Y. 2019. 'So we have an African free trade agreement. Now what?' Quartz Africa, 2 June 2019, available at <https://qz.com/africa/1633022/africa-free-trade-deal-will-boost-continent-economy/>
- Adesina, J. 2010. 'Rethinking the Social Protection Paradigm: Social Policy in Africa's Development.', Paper prepared for the Conference "Promoting Resilience through Social Protection in Sub-Saharan Africa", organised by the European Report of Development in Dakar, Senegal, 28-30 June, 2010, available at <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/80eb/ee5e1bf17055ab9a6919f870c44a77029e4.pdf>
- Africa Insiders. 2019. 'In Egypt, protests return to the streets,' African Arguments, 10 October 2019 available at <https://africanarguments.org/2019/10/10/africa-insiders-in-egypt-protests-return-to-the-streets/>
- African Development Bank (AfDB). 2019. African Economic Outlook 2019. available at <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-aeo-2019-english-version>
- Agence France-Presse. (AFP). 2019. 'Malawi activists resume protests over presidential vote result,' 18 September, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/malawi-activists-resume-protests-over-presidential-vote-result-20190918>
- Allison, S. 2019. 'Algeria, Sudan, Libya: Revolutions are hard — and unpredictable,' *Mail & Guardian*, 10 April 2019, available at <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-04-10-algeria-sudan-libya-revolutions-are-hard-and-unpredictable>
- Bradlow, D. 2013. 'The G-20 and Africa: A critical assessment.' SAIIA Occasional Paper No 145, April 2013, available at <http://www.saiia.org.za/policy-briefings/483-the-g-20-and-africa-a-critical-assessment-1/file>.
- Bratton M. and Bhoojedhur, S. 2019. 'Africans want open elections —especially if they bring change,' *Afrobarometer* Policy Paper No. 58, June 2019, https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Policy%20papers/abr7_policypaper58_africans_want_elections_especially_if_they_bring_change.pdf
- Brookings Institute. 2019. 'Foresight Africa: Top priorities for the continent in 2019,' Friday, 11 January, <https://www.brookings.edu/multi-chapter-report/foresight-africa-top-priorities-for-the-continent-in-2019/>
- Cilliers, J. 2018. 'Violence in Africa Trends, drivers and prospects to 2023,' ISS Africa Report, August 2018. ISS: Pretoria.
- Club of Mozambique. 2018. 'Erik Prince's security company in northern Mozambique: Plot or coincidence?' 13 June 2018, available at <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/erik-princes-security-company-in-northern-mozambique-plot-or-coincidence/>
- defenceWeb. 2019. 'Russian military hardware delivered to Mozambique,' 27 September 2019, available at <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/russian-military-hardware-delivered-to-mozambique/>
- Diagana, K. 2019. 'Mauritania opposition candidates challenge presidential election result' Reuters, 26 June, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mauritania-election/mauritania-opposition-candidates-challenge-presidential-election-result-idUSKCN1TR1FO>
- Eizenga, D. 2019. 'Long Term Trends across Security and Development in the Sahel,' West African Papers, No. 25, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/630477ee-en>
- El Gantri, S. 2019. 'The Bird Will Not Return to the Cage:' An Analysis of Tunisia's 2019 Elections,' International Centre for Transitional Justice, 25 October 2019, <https://www.ictj.org/news/%E2%80%98-bird-will-not-return-cage%E2%80%99-analysis-tunisia%E2%80%99s-2019-elections>

- Fabricius, P. 2019. 'Botswana's ruling BDP defies the pundits,' ISS Today, 28 October, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-10-28-botswanas-ruling-bdp-defies-the-pundits/>
- Gumede, V. 2011. 'Policy making in South Africa', in Landsberg, C. and Venter, A. (eds), *South African Government and Politics* (4th ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Gumede, V. 2018. Social policy for inclusive development in Africa, *Third World Quarterly*, 39:1, 122-139, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2017.1374834
- Herbert, M. 2019. 'Libya's war becomes a tech battleground,' ISS Today, available at <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/libyas-war-becomes-a-tech-battleground>
- International Monetary Fund. 2019. 'Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa Recovery amid Elevated Uncertainty,' April 2019. Available at <https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/REO/AFR/2019/April/English/sreo0419.ashx?la=en>
- Kajjo, S. & Vilanculos, A. 2019. 'With Recent Terror Attacks, IS Expands Presence in Mozambique,' Extremism Watch, 18 August 2019, available at <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/recent-terror-attacks-expands-presence-mozambique>
- Kede, S. 2019. 'Morocco continues its push into Africa,' African Business Magazine, 8 May 2019, <https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/region/north-africa/morocco-continues-its-push-into-africa/>
- Kirby, J. 2019. 'The story behind Botswana's closest-ever election and how its consequences will play out,' *Quartz Africa*, 26 October, <https://qz.com/africa/1736199/the-story-behind-botswana-closest-ever-election/>
- Louw-Vaudran, L. & Chikohomero, R. 2019. 'Tippex election can't erase Malawians' dissatisfaction', ISS Today, 26 August, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-08-26-tippex-election-cant-erase-malawians-dissatisfaction/>
- Marks, Z., Chenoweth, E & Okeke, J. 2019. 'People Power Is Rising in Africa,' *Foreign Affairs*, 25 April, available at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2019-04-25/people-power-rising-africa>
- Matheson, A. 2019. 'The AfCFTA is laudable, but its imminent benefits are overstated,' *African Arguments*, 26 June, available at <https://africanarguments.org/2019/06/26/the-afcfta-is-laudable-but-its-imminent-benefits-are-overstated/>
- Matfess, H. & Noyes, A. 2019. 'Counterproductive Counterinsurgency: Is Mozambique Creating the Next Boko Haram?' *Lawfare*, 1 September 2019, available at <https://www.lawfareblog.com/counterproductive-counterinsurgency-mozambique-creating-next-boko-haram>
- Melvin, N. 2019a. 'The foreign military presence in the Horn of Africa region,' SIPRI Background Paper, April 2019, available at <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2019/sipri-background-papers/foreign-military-presence-horn-africa-region>
- Melvin, N. 2019b 'The new external security politics of the Horn of Africa region', SIPRI Policy Brief, April 2019, available at <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2019/sipri-insights-peace-and-security/new-external-security-politics-horn-africa-region>
- Powell, J., Faulkner, C.M. & Lambert, J. 2019. 'The controversial role of private military and security companies in Africa,' *Quartz Africa*, 9 August, available at <https://qz.com/africa/1684416/the-role-of-private-military-and-security-companies-in-africa/>
- Rahman, H. 2019. 'An analysis of Tunisia's electoral result,' *Daily Sabah*, 19 October 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/10/19/an-analysis-of-tunusias-electoral-results>

Reuters. 2019. 'Economic "game changer"? African leaders launch free-trade zone' 8 July, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-07-08-economic-game-changer-african-leaders-launch-free-trade-zone/>

Signé, L. 2019. 'France-Africa relations challenged by China and the European Union,' The Brookings Institution, 5 February 2019, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2019/02/05/france-africa-relations-challenged-by-china-and-the-european-union/>

Smith, J. 2019. 'More unfair elections in Africa, More unrest: An avoidable cycle,' 8 July, <http://www.vanguardafrica.com/africawatch/2019/7/5/more-unfair-elections-in-africa-and-more-unrest-an-entirely-avoidable-cycle>

Solomon, S. 2019. 'Military Contractor Deaths Raise Questions about Russia's Security Presence in Africa,' VoA 4 November 2019, available at <https://www.voanews.com/africa/military-contractor-deaths-raise-questions-about-russias-security-presence-africa>

Stratfor. 2019. 'Guinea's President Tempts Fate to Extend His Reign,' *Stratfor Assessment*, 8 Nov 2019, available at <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/guineas-president-tempts-fate-extend-his-reign-africa-protests-mining-investment>

Sullivan, E. 2018. 'The future of private military companies in Africa,' The Rule of Law post, 11 November, available at <https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/news/8225-the-future-of-private-military-companies-in-africa>

The Economist. 2019. 'The new scramble for Africa,' 7 March 2019, available at <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/03/07/the-new-scramble-for-africa>

Vertin, Z. 2019. 'Toward a Red Sea Forum: The Gulf, the Horn of Africa, & Architecture for a New Regional Order,' Brookings Doha Analysis Paper, No. 27, November 2019 available at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/toward-a-red-sea-forum-the-gulf-the-horn-of-africa-and-architecture-for-a-new-regional-order/>

Vines, A. 2019. 'Continental drifts towards Africa,' *The Mail & Guardian*, 4 January 2019, available at <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-04-00-continental-drifts-towards-africa>

