

The

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# HORN

## Bulletin

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### INSIDE

<b>Limitations and Prospects of Regionalism in East Africa</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Social Media and Political Change in Sudan and Ghana</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Women in Governance, Peace and Security: Stereotypical Misgivings versus Reality</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>East African Community Summit Decision-Making Fallibilities and Prospective Role of East African Local Government Association</b>	<b>37</b>

### About the HORN Institute

The HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies is a non-profit, applied research, and policy think-do tank based in Nairobi, Kenya. Its mission is to contribute to informed, objective, definitive research and analytical inquiry that positively informs policies of governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Its vision is a progressive Horn of Africa served by informed, evidence-based and problem-solving policy research and analysis.

## Limitations and Prospects of Regionalism in East Africa

By Prof. Fred Jonyo, Ph.D.

### Abstract

This article discusses the essence of regional integration and interrogates why countries join or form regional economic blocs. The key objective is to examine the imperatives that compel countries to regionalism which include affection, gain, threats, and forces of globalization. Functionalism and federalism theories offer insights as to what process and path countries need to take in order to integrate. The article concludes that despite challenges to integration, it remains a valuable avenue through which countries could collectively achieve sustainable development.

### Introduction

The international system is constituted by sovereign independent nation states. These states separately pursue their national interests amidst competing interests from other nation states. Such competing interests if not well managed are likely to undermine the realization of national interests by nation states. Essentially, all states are keen to advance national interests with little regard to others in a kind of self-help mantra. Consequently, the essence of international cooperation becomes fundamental. In order to overcome negative aspects of competition, regionalism has become an avenue of streamlining, strengthening, and harmonizing international cooperation. Evidently, global trends demonstrate a drive towards collectivization of international trade, economic, social, and political relations. Investible capital, labor, and goods are increasingly exchanged across borders enhanced

## African Regional Associations: A Framework for Trade and Communication



*A diagram showing Africa Regional Associations (Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons)*

by technological advancement and would require structured cooperation.

Regionalism became fashionable after World War II (WWII) and has since remained vibrant. New regional blocks are being formed, old ones are being relaunched, collapsed organizations are being revived, and existing regional blocks are being expanded. Should this trend persist, independent nation states will have increasingly lesser role to play as these regional blocks assume a more visible role. Examples of regional integration include Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) (ECA, 2006).

With many countries in Africa finding themselves in socio-economic crisis in the 1980s, the establishment of integrated regional economic platforms was a necessary strategy to allow efficiency in use of resources by the partner states. This would eventually increase productivity growth, competitiveness and improving the living standards of the citizens. Further, most African economies are relatively small, lack diversification, and cannot

sustain a competitive manufacturing in the absence of strong regional trade links. Regionalism opens trade links to regional markets and deepens interactions through which investible capital gains easier and efficient access to bigger markets, supply chains, and abundant labour which favors and enhances their investment portfolio of states (Twarmagazine, 2016).

African countries have capacity challenges in which development is held back by shortage of critical knowhow, leadership crises, and weak institutions. In order to overcome these, regionalism offers a competitive platform in which countries could leverage on their resource opportunities to negotiate for technical skills, capital, and useful partnerships in which their capacity could benefit.

The rationale thus becomes influenced by initiatives that would pool countries rationally to enhance common goals which would be unachievable individually. The following are drivers toward regionalism:

1. A shared vision that aligns the regional economic blocs with the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).
2. The harmonized, streamlined, and strengthened performance capacity of the regional economic communities.

3. Enhanced territorial attractiveness of the regional economic communities.
4. Africa's widened and expanded market opportunities in as far as production and investment are concerned.
5. Gradually and incrementally institutionalized cooperation among regions (ECCA, 2006)

Articles II (1) (b) and (2) (b) of the Organization of African Unity's (OAU's, now African Union) charter promote regional cooperation among member states. This push was later supported in Resolutions CM/Res. 123 (IX) and CM/Res. 125 (IX), as adapted in Kinshasa in 1967, where the need for expanded markets in Africa was touted by leaders (Onimode et al., 2004). In their submission, Herne and Masson (1988) argue that coordination enables countries to identify economic policies that give maximum value to their collective interests. This becomes possible by way of regions collectively harvesting the comparative advantage of their interactions. Cooper (1985) demonstrates various types of interaction. The first is the structural interaction that leads to release of external disruptions between countries. Secondly, countries that produce similar goods would come together and adopt policies that cushion them against negative intra-regional competition that has the effect of reducing net returns. Thirdly, countries coordinate policies to ensure each others' success.

In accordance to the Abuja Treaty, African integration was to be approached at two levels. The first was to use existing regional economic blocs as layers on which to build continental unity. The second was to use sectors as a way of fostering integration. As such, sectoral projects were to be formulated and collectively implemented.

Hence, in their quest to revive the collapsed East African Community (EAC), the governments of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania signed a Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Cooperation. The arrangement was to ensure that member states cooperate in particular in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, culture, foreign policy, and diplomatic areas as spelt out in the East African Cooperation Development Strategy (1997-2000).

The EAC is a regional inter-governmental organization established under Article 2 of the Treaty for the establishment of the EAC that came into force on July 7, 2002. The treaty affirmed that it was establishing a community comprising of a common market that was to evolve into a monetary union, and a political federation.

The membership of the community included the republics of Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. In paragraph 1 of Article 5, the treaty stated that the merger would strengthen, harmonize and streamline the industrial, commercial, infrastructural, cultural, social and political relations. This was intended to accelerate harmonious, balanced development and sustained expansion of economic activities.

The EAC aims are to:

1. Promote sustainable growth and equitable development for its members, including rational use of the region's natural resources and protection of the environment.
2. Strengthen and consolidate the long-standing political, economic, social, cultural and traditional ties of its members.
3. Enhance the participation of the private sector and civil society.
4. Mainstream gender in all its programs and enhance the role of women in development.
5. Promote good governance, including adherence to the principles of democratic rule of law, accountability, transparency, social justice, equal opportunities and gender equality.
6. Facilitate peace and stability within the region (Article 5 (3) of the Treaty of EAC).

Regionalism is viewed by many scholars as a natural and unavoidable outcome of resource power. Hurrell (2016) observed that regionalism is not only intuitive but also a major push for major power status. Mearsheimer (2001) equally perceives regionalism as a pillar of global politics.

The key theories of integration like liberal intergovernmentalism, neo-functionalism and multilevel governance approaches are more focused on domestic players as the drivers of regionalism. The state is thus

“The key theories of integration like liberal intergovernmentalism, neo-functionalism and multilevel governance approaches are more focused on domestic players as the drivers of regionalism”

fronted as a building block to regional integration (Achanga, 2016). Such approaches are characterized by bias as Destradi (2010) has shown. They generalize that region building by sovereign states is a joint venture, and evolve into a powerful hegemon (Destradi, 2010).

These approaches ignore the impact of coercive forces that compel countries to integrate. Nor does it discuss why some states prefer multilateral regional organizations while others pursue bilateral policies in integration.

Regional integration continues to dominate the global economy as countries coalesce within blocs in order to capitalize on gains accrued from the process which include but not limited to greater market access, more bargaining power in multilateral trade negotiations, higher productivity, as well as free movement of goods, labor and capital. The most vital significance of regional integration is that it precipitates socio-economic development hence its persistence in developing areas.

Notably, economic integration is a process of eliminating restrictions on international trade, payments and factor products. It thus results in the uniting of two or more national economies in regional trading agreements. The road towards regionalism passes through Preferential Trade Area (PTA), Free Trade Area (FTA), Customs Union (CU), Common Market, Economic Union and lastly Political Union. The PTA occur among partner states when they agree to eliminate tariff barriers on selected goods imported from other members of the area. FTA occurs when two or more countries in a region eliminate or reduce barriers to trade on all goods coming from other members. CU involves the removal of tariff barriers between members plus the acceptance of a unified external tariff against non-members. This implies that member states negotiate as a bloc with other non members. It provides for establishment by member states of zero duty on goods and services and a common external tariff whereby imports from countries outside the EAC zone are subjected to the same tariff when sold to any partner state.

The common market is achieved when member states trade freely in all economic resources – not just tangible

goods. This means that all barriers to trade in goods, services, capital and labour are removed. Additionally, non-tariff barriers are also reduced and eliminated. The success of common market requires a significant level of harmonization of micro-economic policies and common rules regarding monopoly power and anti competitive practices.

The monetary union entails adapting a common currency, common exchange rate, common monetary policy including interest rates and regulation of the quantity of money and a single central bank such as the European Central Bank or the East Caribbean Central Bank. Finally, the political federation which is based on three pillars, common foreign and security policies, good governance, and effective implementation of the prior stages of regional integration.

The East African countries have moved albeit sluggishly to put in place policies that undermine economic relations between member states to achieve increasing levels of integration. Such policies were witnessed in labour mobility, regionalizing cross border infrastructure with a harmonized facility. Member states have agreed on a number of regional agreements but trade barriers continue unabated. This points to lack of coordinated harmonization.

A World Bank report 2015, titled, *Reshaping Economic Geography of East Africa, from Regional to Global Integration* emphasized that:

“... regional integration will create a free zone that if all goes well, will facilitate duty and quota-free trade movements of goods and services. Governments in the region will have to choose integration policies that are implementable with their national and regional institutions to achieve deeper regional integration with all the economic benefits arising from economic integration...” (World Bank, 2015)

The report and successive studies have noted that trade interests and investible capital thirsty for-profit opportunities largely influence the custom union processes. A huge population estimated at 120 million

The monetary union entails adapting a common currency, common exchange rate, common monetary policy including interest rates and regulation of the quantity of money and a single central bank such as the European Central ...

people provide a magnetic pull for disposal outlets for goods and services. The bigger external markets allow the EAC member states to lobby and bargain for better terms of market access and terms of trade.

In order for the EAC to sustainably progress, institutional infrastructure is critical. The International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2004, pp 105-11) concluded that :

“Even if institutions matter, as seems to be the case, there is too much potential for two-way causality between institutions and policies and too much evidence that the impact on economic performance depends on interactions between policies and institutions, to rule out a key role of policies as well... The bottom line from these findings is not that policies are unimportant, but that our econometric framework (which is constrained, in particular, by the limited time series data on institutions) is not well suited to uncovering a relationship between policies and growth that may be revealed through time” (International Monetary Fund, 2004).

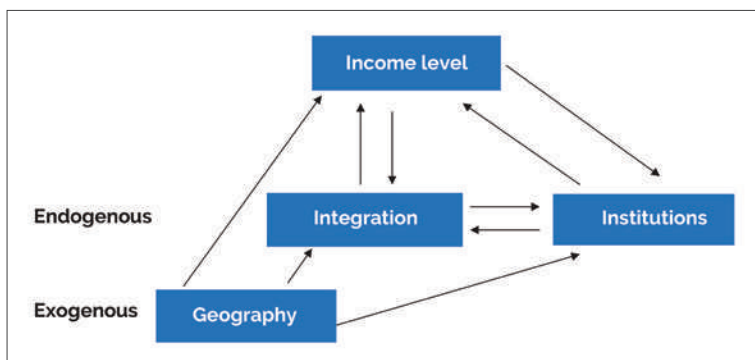


Figure 1: Framework on the Role of Institutions. Source: Rodrik, Subramanian, and Trebbi (2002)

There are four factors that motivate government institutions to play a critical role in market governance rather than being a passive observer (Wade, 2003). Markets as avenues of exchange implies a set of transactions in which consumers and producers interact by way of exchanging goods and services with the motive of gain. Regional economic blocks are the social institutions that require moulding and regulation as markets. Moreover neoclassical institutional theory argue that institutions are alternatives to markets when the cost of using markets become bigger than their benefits (Coase 1937; Williamson 1975).

Although institutions are crucial, there is no single character that will fit all countries. Specific countries or regions would evolve a suitable institutional platform. Consequently, institutional diversity is essential given the prevailing socio-political and economic environments. North (1990) clarifies that “Institutions are the rules of the game of a society or more formally, the limits designed by mankind to give shape to human relationship, be they political, social or economic”. Kay (2004) also observes that:

The integrity of an institution is not the product of its governance structure, but of the values of those who work within it. Many different value systems will be supported by adaptive, self-reinforcing behavior. If institutions are designed on the assumption that individuals are self-interested, self-interested behavior will be adaptive within them. If the premise is that people are not to be trusted, that expectation will be fulfilled (Kay, 2004, p. 347).

Intra-East African trade requires enhancement. The issue is not why East African countries are not trading with each other but rather what East Africa has to trade with itself in the first place. When the countries are engaged in primary commodity production as is the case in East Africa countries, there is very little trade among themselves. Trade would be robust in situations where countries produce what their trading partners do not produce. Access to quality institutional infrastructure is an important requirement for industrial development. Institutions link producers to markets is a way that reduces production and distribution costs, enhance competitiveness, attracts new investors and fosters economic growth.

The treaty establishing the EAC mentions key institutions that will further the cause of political cooperation. These are the Summit, the Council, the Coordination Committee, Sectoral Committees, the EAC Court, the EA Legislative Assembly, and the Secretariat. The EAC thus requires greater efforts to foster wider and inclusive stakeholder participation, strengthen its weak institutions through harmonization of best practices in promoting capacity, participatory governance, rule of law and protection of people’s rights.

## Methodology

This paper used a six-lens framework to interrogate the factors that drive countries to regionalism. It builds on a combination of political economy parameters of development to ingrain analysis. The EAC has an elaborate

monitoring arrangement as provided for in the protocol. These include:

Article 71: empowers the Secretariat to have a strategic planning management, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs for the development of the community and regularly submit reports on activities of the community to Council through the Coordination Committee,

Article 14 (2) empowers the council to promote, monitor and reap constant review of the implementation of the programmes of the community and ensure its proper functioning,

Article 21 (b) empowers the Sectoral Councils to monitor and keep under constant review the implementation of programs of the community within their respective sectors,

Article 18 allows the Coordination Committee to submit from time to time reports and recommendations to the Council on the Treaty,

Article 49 (2) c empowers the East African Legislative Assembly with powers to consider annual reports of the

activities of the Community, annual audit reports and any other reports referred to it by the Council,

Article 50 of the EAC Common Market Protocol requires the development of a framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the protocol.

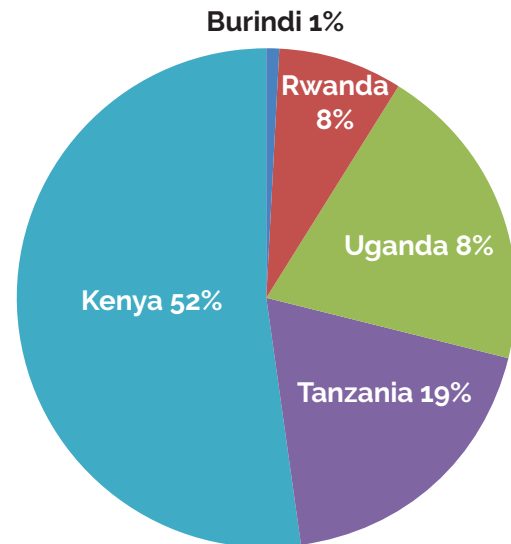


Figure 2: Average Percentage Share of Intra-EAC Exports (2010 – 2013), Source: Sandrey (2015)

Table 1: Logistics Performance Index 2014

Country	Rank/160	Score/s	Customs	Infrastructure	International Shipments	logistics	Traching & Tracing	Time
Kenya	7.4	2.81	1.96	2.40	3.15	2.65	3.03	3.58
Rwanda	8.0	2.76	2.50	2.32	2.78	2.64	2.94	3.34
Burundi	107	2.57	2.60	2.40	2.60	2.51	2.51	2.76
Tanzania	138	2.33	2.19	2.32	2.32	2.18	2.11	2.89

Source: World Bank

The genesis of integration in EAC had its roots in the colonial Kenya–Uganda railway, later on extending to Tanzania. This enabled the formation of the East African Railways and Harbours Corporation in 1947. Other common East African-wide platforms include currency, postal and aviation services, customs and higher education. These were quite an incentive for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to integrate.

This effort which culminated into the East African Community (EAC) in 1967 was full of promise to the region. Unfortunately, the EAC was to fold its operations in 1977 due to political differences among the partner states. The then president of Uganda, Idi Amin,

accused Tanzania of hosting Ugandan insurgents. On its part, Tanzania pursued socialist ideology while Kenya was capitalistic.

After a ten-year lull, the EAC was re-established in July 2000 with the signing of the treaty for the establishment of the EAC in November 1999 by Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It is now a much larger outfit than the previous bloc and comprises six partner states: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and South Sudan, with headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

The key lenses motivating countries towards regionalism include threats, affection and power. Baregu (2005).



East African Community map (Photo Credit: KFW)

Baregu (2005) identifies these imperatives as creating the impetus and lead to the drive and desire for integration among members. Theoretically, functionalism and federalism have been applied in analysis. Federalism argues for a frontal attack on state sovereignty where states surrender aspects of their sovereignties to a larger regional unit (Haas, 1958; Nye, 1965; Hoffman, 1967). The functionalism theory advocates for a gradual process of integration – what is referred to as functionalist unity in which partner states begin to cooperate around economic, social, technical, and cultural units. The path towards integration passes through free trade area, custom union, common market, monetary union and political union (Mazzeo, 1980).

Integration entails relinquishing certain aspects of sovereignty – obligations over a wide economic and social policy to the new regional platform. This could be summarized as follows:

The advantages which may potentially accrues from increase of size of market may quite easily be lost if a group of collaborating economies fail to coordinate their policies effectively, operate at less than full capacity, restrict their investment and thus individually and collectively grow less rapidly. If a group of countries are to gain, they must be prepared from the outset to recognize and accept significant losses of individual sovereignty over their economic affairs (Scitovsky, 1963, pp. 282-290).

## Benefits of Regional Economic Communities

Regional integration efforts according to Van Langenhove should fulfill at least eight important functions:

1. The strengthening of trade integration in the region.
2. The creation of an appropriate enabling environment for private sector development.
3. The development of infrastructure programs in support of economic growth and regional integration.
4. The development of strong public sector institutions and good governance.
5. The reduction of social exclusion and the development of an inclusive civil society.
6. Integration contributes to peace and security.
7. Facilitates establishment of an environment for regional programs.
8. The strengthening of the regions' integration with other regions of the world (De Lombaerde P. & Van Langehave L 2007).

The renewed interest in regional economic community is occasioned by the consequence of and a response to emerging trends in the international political economic order (Nyong'o, 1990; Richards & Kirkpatrick 1999; World Bank, 1989, 2000; Gonzales, 1999). With the liberal market transactions being globally entrenched and capital becoming dominant, market alliances become evident. Prosperity in any one country is increasingly dependent on prosperity elsewhere. The apparent global economy provides an avenue for interdependence, deepening, widening and speeding up linkages. Regional economic blocs thus enable countries to pool together and face the challenges of the market economy.

The contemporary international political economy has evolved into a conducive environment for integration. First, the evolution of global financial market beyond borders with capital penetrating economic opportunities due to liberalization policies. The internationalization of capital has enhanced mobility across boundaries.

Second, the end of the cold war unleashed bigger opportunities for investible capital. The contemporary global economy is no longer restricted by ideological supremacy but competition for markets and scarce resources.

Third, corporate activities and the search for profit maximization by multinational capital has necessitated corporations to extend their activities abroad. Bossier (1997) notes that the revolution made in technology has made possible the 'breaking down' of production into different stages at different localities.

Fourth, the advances made in information, communication and technology has led to intensified interaction where geographical distance is no longer a hindrance.

Finally, the global commons has necessitated collective action by countries. Environmental and cross border problems would best be handled regionally.

With such an environment, partner states would easily enjoy, first, higher levels of production in a regional platform specifically along their comparative advantage. Not only will this lower their costs of production but it will also widen market outlets. Second, partner states would lead to economies of scale. Third, through regional integration, countries could strengthen their bargaining power in multilateral trade negotiations (Whalley, 1998).

Regional integration offers partner states the opportunity to manage collective security. It solves inter-state conflicts as security becomes a common venture.



The EAC Secretary General Mr. Peter Mathuki makes remarks at a past function (Photo Credit: EAC)



Finally, integration allows freer flow of critical factors of production in search of maximization of returns. This is what Ernst Haas had concluded in his seminal work on the Uniting of Europe:

Our study thus substantiates the pluralistic thesis that a larger political community can be developed if the crucial expectations, ideologies and behavior patterns of certain key groups can be successfully refocused on a new set of central symbols and institutions. Yet this conclusion also begs the question of the generality of the process laid bare. Can larger political communities be created on this basis in all sections of the world, in all ages, irrespective of the specific powers initially given to the central authority?

... these findings are sufficiently general in terms of the socio-political context to serve as propositions concerning the formation of political communities – provided we are dealing with 1) an industrialized economy deeply enmeshed in international trade and finance, 2) societies in which the masses are fully mobilized politically and tend to channel their aspirations through permanent interest groups and political parties, 3) societies in which the groups are habitually led by identifiable elites competing with one another for influence and in disagreement on many basic values, and 4) societies in which relations among these elites are governed by the tradition and assumption of parliamentary or presidential democracy and constitutionalism (Haas, 1968, pp. 245 -246)

## Challenges to Integration

The levels of economic development is quite different among the EA countries. This will obviously cause difficulty in benefits distribution. Second, the harmonization of economic, social, security and tax policies would require dedicated resolve and compromise among partners. In the event that overvaluation occurs, then this would be a disincentive towards increasing exports and should

partner states have undervalued rates, then imports from third party states will be forthcoming than imports from partner countries. The membership of a regional bloc should thus adopt a realistic rate regime that do not require to be insulated by a considerable import restrictions and which intends to create a desired global balance of payments (Jonyo, 2013).

Third, is weak institutions at both the national and regional level would slow the process of harmonization of policies. Institutions refers to rules that are at play in society or structurally, the restrictions designed to shape human relationships in the political, social and economic realms. Theoretically, institutions and policies are different but operationally their usage is blurred (Islam, 2004). As such, the key argument focuses on the policy environment and the governmental tasks in establishing a structure that attracts investible capital and a favourable economic framework. Fourth, lack of effective involvement of the private sector will deny the regional platform requisite capital for investments.

Fifth, multiplicity and overlapping membership of regional integration schemes and mandates (Mothae, 2005). This trend has created the following problems; first, member states are forced to spread too thin, second, member states may not be certain of the gains and as such may have divided loyalty and finally, countries may lack strategic consideration given their fragmented membership thus allowing political posturing to prevail.

Sixth, intra-state conflicts have been quite common in Africa which works against allegiance to regionalism. These conflicts have created divisions among elites who consequently lack national vision for their states instead they have become more concerned with regime survival.

In conclusion, despite the challenges EAC faces, the future lies with regionalism. The EAC's success depends on the support and commitment it gets from the member states. Coupled with progressive institutionalization of key organs are fundamental in sustaining integration process.

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# Social Media and Political Change in Sudan and Ghana

By Japheth Ondiek and Gedion Onyango

## Abstract

This article describes the role of social media activism and its central focus is on citizen engagements with governments in Ghana and Sudan. In the revolution in Sudan in 2019, social media tools were heralded as instrumental in facilitating the uprising and toppling of deposed President Omar al-Bashir. Similarly, Ghanaian activists used social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook as tools for organizing and generating awareness of political mobilization in the #FixTheCountry activism. Social media plays a vital role in democracy, political mobilization, citizen engagement and acting as watchdog against abuses of power. Recent studies have shown positive link between frequency of social media use and citizen mobilization. However, there has been no clear elaboration of how social media activism translates into express removal of dictatorial regimes or improves governance. Therefore, this article surveyed citizens protests behaviors using hashtags in social media mobilization and the eventual fall of Omar al-Bashir as President of Sudan in 2019. The article also navigates the use of social media hashtags for opinion expression and activism in keeping the government of Ghana and its leaders accountable.

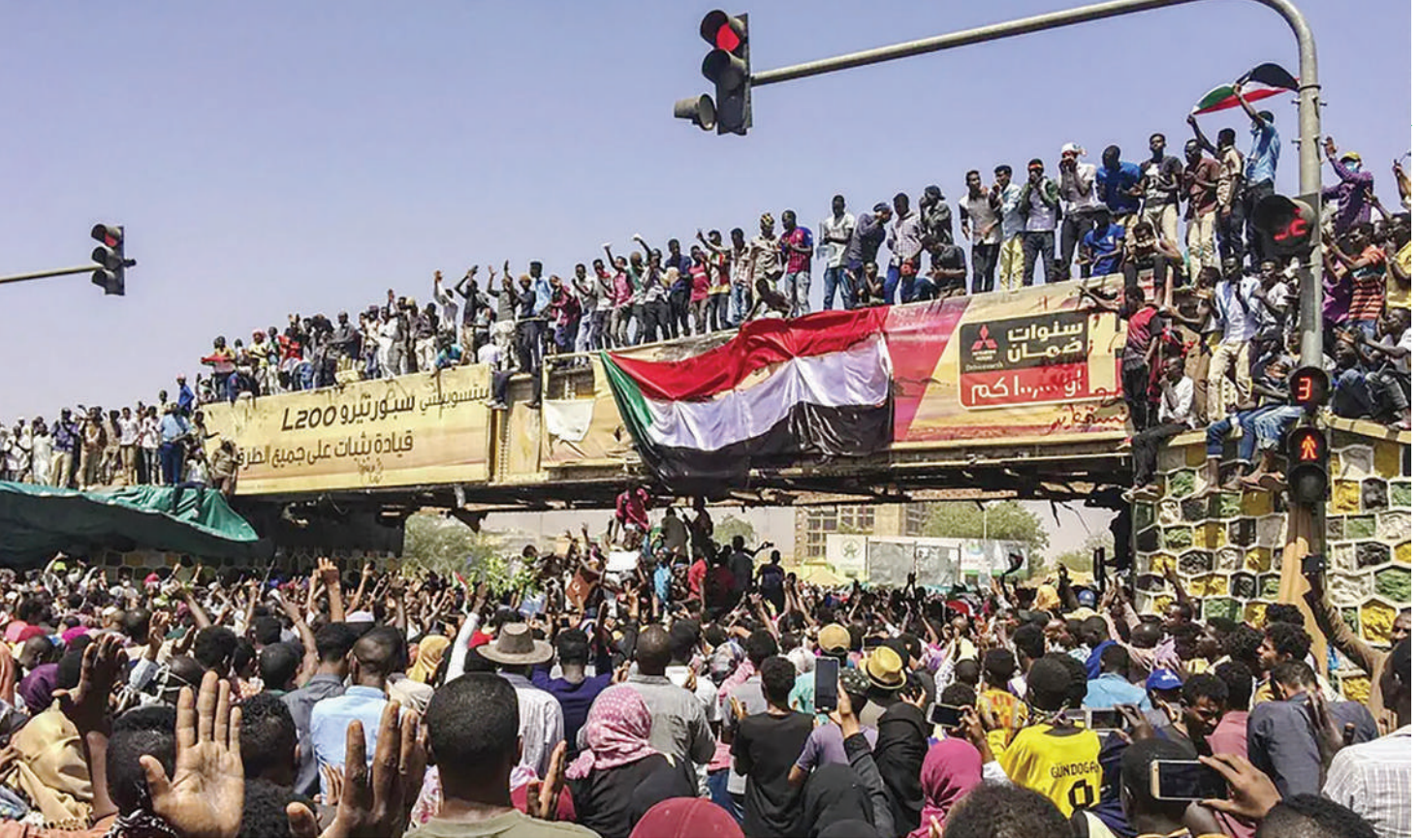
## Introduction

This is the era of information and Africa is no exception to how information impacts governance. The proliferation of the Internet and social media in Africa has changed how citizens and governments relate in recent years. A plethora of legislation on information and communication technology (ICT) and personal data protection, digital mobilizations and social media political activism and communication have confirmed this trend worldwide. Despite being generally understudied in Africa, recent studies and even government actions show the increasing role of social media in enhancing democratic governance (Nyabola, 2018; Bosch et al., 2020). From social mobilization, political and policy communication and the creation of opinion leadership, social media is here to stay, affecting democratic outcomes across Africa. This has also emboldened dictators across the continent who have now developed the habit of censoring social media, especially when faced with re-election challenges (Giles & Mwai, 2021; *The East African*, 2021).

In this way, the proliferation of social media in the face of dictatorial tendencies has somewhat resulted in an unsettled political landscape across Africa. Similarly, it can be argued that these are the signs of transformation and the withering of government secrecy as information

becomes readily available and difficult to control. Indeed, most African governments are still wrestling with social media regulation and information created by the citizenry on media platforms. They have little control of citizen-driven information or content creation online that covers the government's performance and efforts by politicians to preserve oppressive regimes. Human rights violations in Africa are becoming more evident through social media than ever before. Citizens are increasingly engaged in online activism through metadata tags such as hashtags to bring such violations into the global stage for more responsive action by concerned authorities (Mutlokwa, 2021). Conceptually, a hashtag is a phrase or word preceded by a hash sign (#) in websites and social media applications to embed digital content on a specific issue to improve solidarity, collaboration, and identification.

Social media has become convenient mobilization and protest platform for those who cannot or may not prefer to go to the streets but would want their voices heard. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become global and not specific to countries such as Sudan or Ghana. Of the numerous social media platforms, Twitter has probably been the most influential media in rallying people to speak up via



*Anti-government protests in Khartoum, Sudan, on April 9, 2019. Social media has played a key role in Sudan's youth-led revolution (Photo Credit: AP).*

social hashtags. It has created a new crop of influencers and opinion leaders such as bloggers who have become alternative information channels besides the conventional media outlets and personalities.

This article briefly explores the role of social media in promoting the recent political mobilizations in Sudan and Ghana. Among other strategies, social media played a significant role in the ouster of former Sudan President Omar al-Bashir, who assumed power in 1989 following a protracted civil conflict between Sudan's south and north. Like elsewhere in Africa, statesman dictatorship in Sudan had resulted in economic insolence, civil wars, repressive regimes and collapsed systems. Indeed, Sudan's problems today are the accumulation of emerging conflicts, which has seriously affected the economy, environment, violation of human rights and undemocratic political process. Cumulatively, these created long term grievances amongst the citizens. Therefore, social media provided the channel for the citizenry to articulate their issues and as a platform for mobilization towards the ouster of al-Bashir. Similarly, the essay also looks into the role of social media activism and mobilization against the Ghanaian government leadership and deteriorating economic situation.

## **Social Media and Political Mobilization: A Brief Overview**

Research on the use of social media for political mobilization and participation started way back in

the 1990s, and several areas have been pursued. One particular area has focused mainly on what is referred to as e-participation and mobilization and alternative participation and mobilization. This comprises of activities that take place primarily through social media, for instance, online petitioning, "hactivism" and "clicktivism," blogging, the use of social media for citizen journalism politics, among others (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). This research indicates that the relationship between citizens and elites are becoming more complex. In certain instances, social media influences actions by citizens who are not otherwise involved in active politics and that there are variations in these relationships based on country and context (Anduiza, Jensen, & Jorba, 2012). Other forms of political participation and mobilization linked to digital media include street protests, various incarnations of global activism and political consumerism. All these were in existence before the emergence of digital media (Karpf, 2012).

Studies on shifts in citizenship and character practices and value change have resulted in the understanding of social media and new media and other alternative forms of participation in changing the cultural context of political participation and mobilization (Dalton, 2008). Another area of research about digital media focuses on what is referred to as "traditional" forms of political participation, such as participation and engagement in political campaigns, voting during elections and contacting political leaders and public officials. These studies, however, have provided less conclusive and

modest findings. For instance, in standard behavioural models that predict traditional political participation and mobilization, variables for digital media use are commonly significant. However, they fail to explain the existing variance (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Bimber & Copeland, 2013).

Regarding all other theoretical constructs that can be measured, various methods of conceptualising and defining mobilization exist. Determining mobilization from political and media communication depends on the framework and subfield of a research study. Some scholars have defined political mobilization as “the process by which a passive collection of individuals within a given society is transformed into a group that is an active group to pursue goals that are common or coerced into participation in politics by a government that is authoritarian” (Cox et al., 1998). Calder (2013) undertook the identification of three main elements of mobilization. These included effective mobilization contact, the aggregate rate of mobilization, and change in targeting mobilization. Calder (2013) established that political mobilization comes with the power to promote individuals’ participation, and the more intense the participation is, the more effective and convincing it will be.

Social media allows people to participate in political discussion through various platforms such as social media networks, online groups, social media pages, and blogs. Bimber and Copeland (2011) established in their study that social media users are usually involved actively in political discourse and general politics.

Technological innovation and developments have increasingly enhanced interests toward politics of those who use technologies hence improving the political efficacy, therefore, creating offline and online political participation and engagements. Jiang (2016) examined the effects of internet technologies on offline and online political participation and found that social media results in political efficacy and political interests among users of internet technologies hence increasing their political participation and involvement. The use of internet technologies is increasingly becoming the primary source of political participation and political efficacy. As a result, social media is enhancing awareness about political campaigns and voting during elections.

Social media increases the number of individuals who usually turn out to vote during elections and enhances the development of approaches that help participate

in political campaigns and the voting process (Larson, 2004). Internet users’ efficacy enables them to understand political affairs by acquiring political information from social media. Kahne, Middaugh, and Allen (2014) investigated the influence of social media on political participation among youth and established that social media had provided a platform of information and communication with large audiences to several people and a means of participating in political initiatives.

For Calder (2013), it is imperative to understand the disadvantages of social media regarding political communication. There is a need to save political participation from this situation rather than accept it. Similarly, Mahmud and Amin (2017) examined social media for political activities among college and university students. The results showed the relationship between social media usage and offline and online participation in politics; however, compared with Twitter and Facebook, the study established that emails plays a very insignificant role in political discussions. Again, Schmiemann (2015) examined social media networks and political participation, concluding that content on Facebook indicates a positive response about political participation. An evaluation conducted by Gibson and McAllister (2012) on online social ties and political participation and how online platforms increase political interaction established that online social contact enhances offline political participation.

Based on this particular research’s development, Papagiannidis and Manika (2016) examined political participation through various offline and online channels. They established that social media and other online channels enable political participants to get involved in politics and openly express their views and opinions on several political issues. Attitudes of individuals tend to vary based on their use of social media and participation in real-life politics. Internet usage and other electronic activities enhance internet users’ knowledge of political

“The use of internet technologies is increasingly becoming the primary source of political participation and political efficacy. As a result, social media is enhancing awareness about political campaigns and voting during elections

issues, events, and developments, spurring political participation.

Thus, social media is increasingly becoming more useful in citizens' mobilization to focus on issues that are perceived as very significant and in priming public opinion among many to be involved in the political processes, democratization, and governance (Kalyango, 2011). The increased technological innovation levels that have contributed to social media development have augmented traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television (Montero, 2009) across Africa. Social media is increasingly penetrating remote regions in many developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, inaccessible to traditional media. This article illustrates these developments in light of the hashtags that characterized the ouster of the former Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir and current political protests in Ghana.

### The Fall of President Omar al-Bashir

To establish his dictatorial authority, al-Bashir successfully banned political parties, suppressed the media, dissolved parliament and introduced strict Islamic law in 1991 (Muna, 2011). After being confirmed as President in 1996, he signed a new constitution and lifted the ban on political parties. He further ousted one of his strongest allies Hassan Abd Allah al Turabi in the same year for plotting against him. In another 2002 election, he was yet again confirmed as president and dismissed the entire cabinet. Evidence of his grip on power continued unabated until 2003, when a black African group in Darfur launched an attack against his oppressive rule and unfair treatment. His response towards the rebels saw him later charged with war crimes under his rule for his role in the Darfur War claiming hundreds of thousands of lives. The International Criminal Court (ICC) accused al-Bashir of crimes against humanity and genocide. The case was later halted and al-Bashir went on to win his first term as an elected president in the 2010 elections (Amnesty International Report, 2016/2017)..

South Sudan obtained independence from Sudan in 2011 following a referendum. The vote was part of a peace pact struck between southern rebels and al-Bashir. The split, however, had enormous financial consequences since South Sudan obtained 75 per cent of the territory's oil. Sudan's economy, already battered by more than a decade of US sanctions, had a severe impact. The government subsequently implemented austerity measures and reduced subsidies in response to the decline in oil revenue, but this resulted in waves of protests as essential goods prices skyrocketed. The government retaliated by dispersing demonstrators, arresting opposition politicians, and controlling the news media. Meanwhile, al-Bashir was re-elected in 2015 in a boycotted poll.

Sudan's sanctions by the US were lifted in late 2017 but the country's economy continued to plummet, with inflation reaching nearly 70 per cent in November 2018. As the value of the Sudanese pound dropped, the government adopted emergency austerity measures and reduced subsidies for bread and fuel. This led to increased displeasure and dissatisfaction by the public in al-Bashir's inability to find peace and end conflicts, institute economic and constitutional reforms. In December, this sparked waves of massive protests across Sudan. The protests began focusing on living costs but later evolved into a call for al-Bashir's resignation. In quelling public displays of dissent, al-Bashir's regime used excessive force to contain the protestors and muzzle the media. The continuing protests and demonstrations in Sudan ultimately contributed to Omar al-Bashir's fall and imprisonment on April 11, 2019 when the military announced Mr Bashir's ouster and detention.

### Social Media in Sudan

To Rane and Salem (2012), the increasing usage of information and communication technologies (ICTs) profoundly affects how governments operate and perform their tasks. Therefore, government decision-makers should carefully consider the benefits of joining

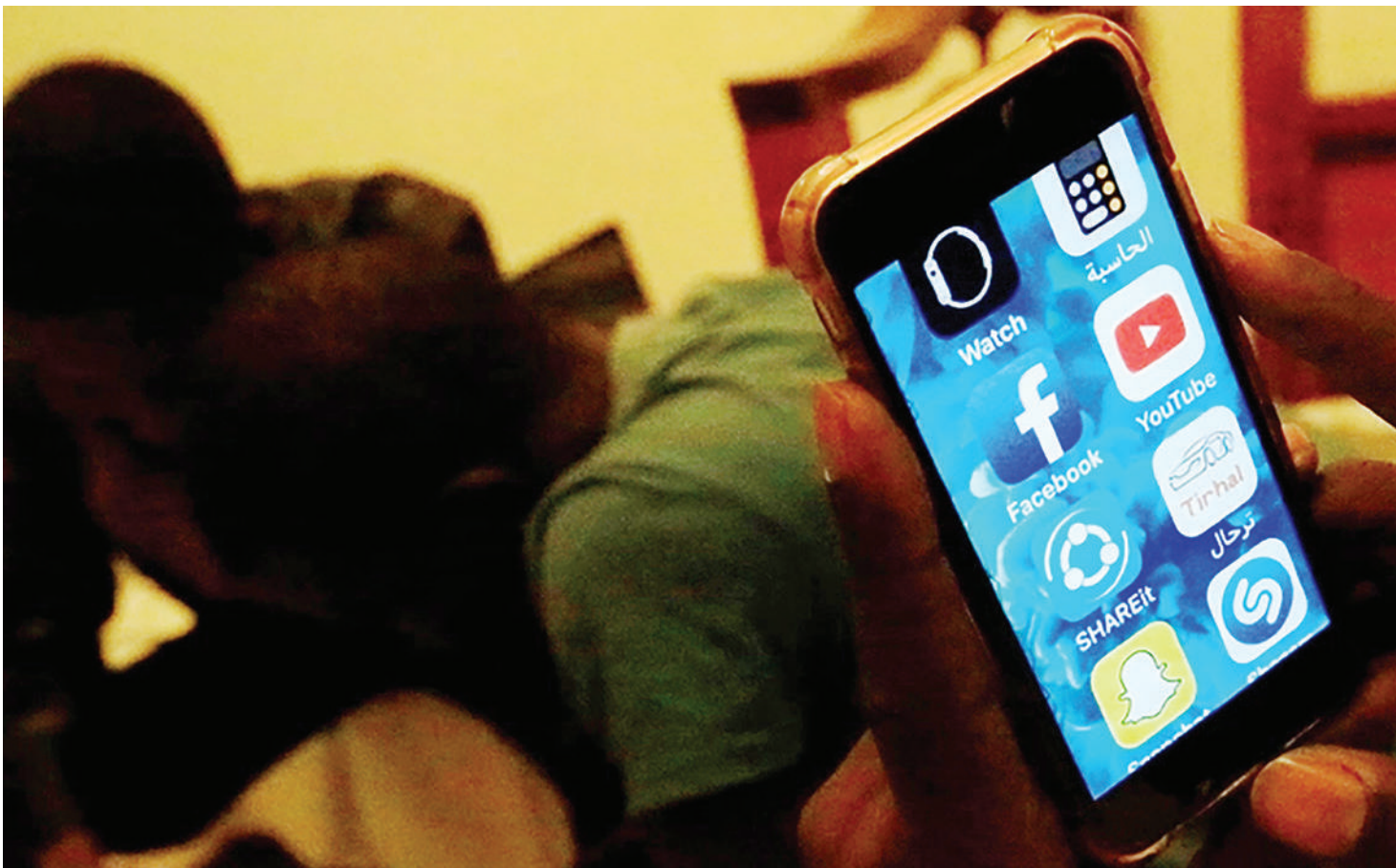
The International Criminal Court (ICC) accused al-Bashir of crimes against humanity and genocide. The case was later halted and al-Bashir went on to win his first term as an elected president in the 2010 elections

a social networking site. Social media has emerged as a critical resource for government organizations worldwide when it comes to emergency management. Social media is a term that refers to a group of technologies that enable individuals to interact with and communicate with others, form relationships, and establish trust.

Numerous studies have examined social media usage in the public, corporate, and non-profit sectors, examining organizations that utilize social media to engage stakeholders, either by “listening” to feedback or “sending” a message. Organizations distribute messages to achieve various beneficial effects, such as enhancing brand awareness or organizing online communities to support their activities or products. While social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were initially designed to connect individuals, they are increasingly being used to connect businesses. The public sector has increasingly leveraged social media for various purposes. These include facilitating interactions and government-to-customer (G2C) relationships, utilizing various social media tools to deliver services and government information, and providing new political participation and deliberation (Rane & Salem, 2012).

Social media and related digital technologies are transforming how mobilization and active citizens engage with their leaders. Social media presents an opportunity for active mobilization, refined activism, collective communication and civilised liberation from oppressive tendencies without appearing in harm’s way. Social media has gone beyond communication tools and has found space in defining political direction, political communication, voter education, and political mobilization. In 2014, an estimated 93 per cent of Sudanese mobile users were actively engaged in social media communication and content sharing for various reasons. Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook were the primary social media platforms utilized.

However, Sudan’s progress toward social media usage was hampered by Omar al-Bashir’s administration’s policies targeted at controlling the internet domain, much as the dictatorship already controlled the traditional media. The regime conducted systematic surveillance of social media users and even detained several independent journalists, bloggers, and activists to produce content that the government deemed critical of the regime and a threat to the country’s national security. Journalists



*A Sudanese man holds his phone with restricted internet access to social media platforms in Sudan on January 1, 2019 (Photo Credit: Mohamed Nureldin Abdallah/Reuters)*

During Omar al-Bashir's tenure, the majority of Sudanese journalists preferred to work through the media. However, there were concerns about the risks of illicit labour and the dread of being detained by government authorities

who were arrested relayed their accounts in confidence, claiming that security personnel examined their emails and Facebook profiles (Dwamena 2019).

According to a 2016 assessment by Thomson Foundation Project Evaluation, a small number of national radio and television stations and some print media outlets heavily rely on the Internet and social media for research and content distribution. In addition, there have been a few online newspapers in Sudan, including Sudan Tribune, Hurriyat, Sudanese Online, and other activist platforms. However, most have been operated and maintained from outside the country. During Omar al-Bashir's tenure, the majority of Sudanese journalists preferred to work through the media. However, there were concerns about the risks of illicit labour and the dread of being detained by government authorities.

### Social Media Hashtags and the Ouster of Bashir

In a country where the state exerts tight control over traditional media, the Internet has emerged as a critical battleground for information in Sudan. Sudan's 40 million populations include around 13 million internet users and more than 28 million mobile phone owners. While VPNs certainly have drawbacks and some Sudanese are ignorant of their availability, activists have extensively used them to organize and document demonstrations. Sudanese authorities responded in January 2019 by restricting internet users' access to popular social media platforms that were being used to organize and broadcast widespread anti-government rallies sparked by an economic crisis. As a result, users of the country's three major telecommunications operators Sudani, Zain and MTN, cannot access WhatsApp, Twitter or Facebook. However, users could access the sites via the usage of virtual private networks (VPNs).

According to Aldardari (2020), former President Omar al-Bashir and his administration limited popular social media

platforms during anti-government protests. However, millions of Sudanese found ways to evade the restrictions and organize others to protest peacefully. In addition, Sudanese living abroad used social media to stay connected to fast-moving events at home. From Sudan and abroad, hashtags in Arabic such as "Sudan's cities revolt" have been extensively disseminated. Additionally, English-language hashtags such as #SudanRevolts have been utilized. Throughout this period, social media had a significant impact, assisting in forming public opinion and disseminating information about what was happening in Sudan to the rest of the globe.

South Sudanese and Sudanese living abroad changed their profile images to blue in solidarity with Sudan and raised awareness about the north African country's rebellion. This began when Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces allegedly shot and killed 26-year-old Mohamed Hashim Mattar during a crackdown on protestors in the country's capital, Khartoum, on June 3. Mattar's favourite colour, blue, was utilized on all of his social media pages, and his family members and friends did the same in memory of him. It quickly gained popularity among social media users, who adopted the hue to honour Mattar and other Sudanese rebellion martyrs. Hashtags such as #BlueForSudan gained traction on social media, with celebrities such as Rihanna wearing the hue and using the hashtag to raise awareness of Sudan's predicament (Belam, 2019). Social media observers dubbed the photographs of Omar Al Bashir a "poor play" by the court and TMC, suggesting they were intended to divert attention away from the current situation and the Khartoum sit-in slaughter. Additionally, they alleged that the TMC portrayed Omar al-Bashir to imply that the dictatorship purged Sudan's endemic corruption (Reilly, 2019).

Other social media critics also noted that Omar al-Bashir had killed over half a million Sudanese in a bid to retain power. However, there appeared to be a desire to hold him accountable for financial wrongdoing, namely ownership of foreign currency and unlawful wealth. By that time, al-Bashir had admitted to killing tens of thousands of people in the Blue Nile, the Nuba Mountains, and Darfur. Regarding al-Bashir's decision to dress in traditional Sudanese garb rather than jail uniform, social commentators mocked the Kober Facility administration, claiming that the prison appeared to be suffering from a chronic scarcity of prison clothing. All of these social media comments boomeranged on Omar al-Bashir (Belam, 2019).



Despite the successful removal of President Omar al-Bashir and the formation of the Transition Military Council (TMC), protest sentiments on social media platforms continued. This has been evident in slogans such as “*It must fall again,*” urging solidarity for a continued sit-in at the General Command area, and a warning with the Arabic phrase “*It has not fallen yet.*” This indicated public pessimism toward the change that occurred during the period and public knowledge that changes needed to be more comprehensive to destabilize President Omar Al Bashir’s administration.

Following the June 3, 2019 violence, there were increased calls on Twitter for revolution and civil disobedience, marches, and international support, as reflected by trending hashtags such as Blue for Sudan, Martyr’s Eid, Alqiada massacre, and *I Am the Sudan Revolution*. Motivational phrases such as “*Struggle and make no concessions*” and the cautionary “*It has not yet fallen*” (in Arabic) continued to dominate the online discourse. The call for total civil disobedience, in particular, was overwhelming, with over 300,000 tweets expressing civic outrage following the June 3, 2019 violence. Following the TMC-FFC agreement, the tone on Twitter shifted to jubilation, expressing a sense of liberation and hope for change. However, it was bolstered by repeated cautionary voices and reminders to the international community to continue monitoring and watching Sudan’s advances. The demands for justice for the martyrs became even more strident.

Following the nomination of Prime Minister Hamdok and until the formation of the technocratic civilian cabinet, tweeting frequency significantly decreased. Sentiments changed toward completion of the difficult job in advance of the transition period. New hashtags expressing people’s visions of Sudan following the revolution and advocating for peaceful cohabitation, freedom, and reform have begun to surface. The popularity of the peaceful cohabitation hashtag, which coincided with the start of peace talks between former rebel groups in Juba, demonstrated the public’s recognition of the critical nature of peace for the new Sudan. Throughout this period, cautionary voices through “*It has not yet fallen*” continued to express public worry about the former regime’s control over the state, which could endanger the revolution’s chances (Aldardari 2020).

Following the creation of the new government, transitional difficulties continued to trend on Twitter, with priority actions demanded transitional justice and the judiciary. Throughout this moment, Arabic hashtags

dominated, with the appearance of the “*Cleaning the State Apparatus*” hashtag and the cautionary call “*It has not yet fallen,*” indicating the crowd’s increased call to eliminate remains of the former regime. In addition, the public emphasis on the critical nature of focusing on revolutionary goals was exemplified substantively by the popular “*Achieving the Revolution aims*” hashtag. Simultaneously, the hashtag #*SaveWaleed* gained popularity to support the release of a Sudanese student held in Egypt on bogus claims of Muslim Brotherhood affiliation and ultimately released.

The hashtag #*We Are All Neighbourhoods Committees* was created in November to claim that Rapid Support Forces (RSF) officers attempted to meet with members of grassroots resistance committees in Khartoum’s neighbourhoods alongside other army leaders. The hashtag was designed to demonstrate support for the committees and to recognise their efforts to the revolution. #*Law to Dismantle the Deep State* gained popularity to reference and celebrate the cabinet’s two provisions adopted on November 28. The first amendment repealed the Public Order Laws (the morality laws). The second overthrew the previous regime by dissolving the former ruling NCP and seizing its assets. #*Awareness is the foundation of the era* was frequently used in conjunction with #*Challenges of transition* to generate support for the transitional government and raise awareness about the issues it faces. The trending hashtags imply that the transitional administration and the laws it established to remove the legacy of the old regime continue to enjoy widespread support on Twitter. The hashtags also indicate rising public awareness of the government’s issues, particularly about the former regime’s supporters’ capacity to obstruct development within the state machinery (Belam 2019).

## The Case of Ghana

The democratisation process in contemporary Ghana has regained its glory after a long period of revolution,

“The popularity of the peaceful cohabitation hashtag, which coincided with the start of peace talks between former rebel groups in Juba, demonstrated the public’s recognition of the critical nature of peace for the new Sudan



Some of the Twitter posts in Ghana during the #FixtheCountry protests in May 2021 (Photo Credit: The HORN Institute)

populism and military dictatorship (Darko, 2010). After long-serving President Jerry Rawlings, the return to a multi-party democracy created hope for the revival of liberalization of industries, opening up media freedom and creating opportunities for economic growth. Ghana has had successful successive peaceful elections since the return of democratic rule in 1992. The peaceful outcome of the December 2008 elections including a peaceful transition of power when President John Atta Mills suddenly passed on to the successful transfer of power to opposition Nano Akofu-Addo in 2016 when he becomes victorious, defeating the incumbent President John Mahama.

Since these events may be viewed as considerable improvement in the democratization process in Ghana, there remain significant weak links towards democratic consolidation. The weak link is attributed to limited policy influence for civil society organizations, excessive presidential powers and implications of democratic sustainability due to sustainable failure to address socio-economic inequalities. In 2016, Akufor-Addo inherited problems from his predecessor John Mahama. This was attributed to the depression of global prices on Ghana's burgeoning public wage costs, increasing prices in essential commodities and increasing debt. President Addo re-election on January 7, 2021, presented a second

opportunity to Ghanaians to restore economic injustices and hope. However, recent social media outrages about his leadership and deteriorating economic situation have caused unprecedented tensions and protests.

In particular, media freedom was entrenched, and many media outlets opened up freedom of communication spaces. However, the quantity in the mushrooming of media outlets did not correspond with the quality of the democratization process desired (Fair, 2008). In particular, despite positive developments, the media sector continued to suffer from a lack of infrastructural investment in the new media technology in the early 2000s (Fair et al., 2009).

### Social Media Hashtags and the Government's Response in Ghana

In Ghana, Twitter space has grown exponentially to the extent that the platform has become a formidable space for championing national issues affecting citizens. Experience from Ghana shows that social media has been used to debate or demand accountability on several national issues. The storm by social media activists in Ghana to create online mobilization to keep the government on notice with #FixTheCountry protest as one of the most recent protests that call for the Ghanaian

political leadership to fix the rising economic situation in the country.

Over 500,000 Twitter users convened the *#FixTheCountry* protest on May 9, 2021 over the high cost of living. The Twitter campaigns quickly spread to other social media platforms generating debate about the state of the economy amidst fuel price hikes to over \$1 per litre. This increase agitated the citizens, and a rallying call by activists on Twitter sparked outrage against President Addo, expressing disappointment over his leadership and dwindling economic situation in the country. Social media users and activists mobilised the entire country through *#FixTheCountry* demonstrating their frustrations about the high cost of living, poor quality of life, and tough economic hardships faced by the majority.

In addition, social media mobilization saw the citizens join the campaigns to highlight poor policies and tax administration by the government, unemployment amongst the youth, erratic economy, supply of water shortages, bad roads, low wages and schools under trees. The government's implementation of a one per cent COVID-19 levelled to increase in calls and data charges by telecommunication operators, further compounding the frustrations of citizens towards the government.

With the increasing calls and heightened mobilization, the social media activists opted to complement online campaigns to offline demos on the streets to get Ghanaian political leadership to act. This forced the police to act quickly and condemn the planned demo through a court injunction. On the flipside, pro-government online campaigns also created counter-protest movements calling on the citizens to *#FixTheirAttitude* and *#FixYourSelf*. These reactions by pro-government activists did not go down well with users and were deemed insensitive to tell Ghanaians to fix themselves instead of pointing blame on political leadership.

Despite the high court restraining order against the *#FixTheCountry* demo over COVID-19 public gathering restrictions, social media activism and protests continue

to agitate for better governance and accountability from the government. The outcome of the protest has forced the Vice-President to respond to the demands in Facebook posts, and activists have primarily interpreted that as a step forward in getting authorities to take action.

Other than the *#FixTheCountry* Social media protest, Ghana has consistently used social media to advocate for accountability. For example, in May 2015, *#DumsorMustStop* was used to rally protests against rolling power blackouts in the then former President John Dramani-Mahama era in Accra. Social activists led the protest across social media to make the government accountable to its citizens on power-related issues. It is even believed that the power of social media protests led to the deteriorating popularity of the former President and his party of the National Democratic Congress that eventually led to his defeat by Akufor-Addo.

Similarly, in July 2019, *#DropThatChamber* Twitter widespread mobilization pressurised Ghana's parliament to drop a planned construction of a new chamber after citizens mobilised themselves through social media to protest. The proposal estimated to be USD 200 million was terminated after a cross-section of Ghanaians protested the move and expressed their anger on social media using the hashtag *#DropThatChamber*.

Efforts by the then parliamentary leadership to neutralise and contain the outrage backfired when the social media protestors called for a "2 million march", leading to the suspension of the proposal. In another instance, a campaign by social media through *#BringBackOurTaadiGirls* in January 2019 demanded the release of three abducted ladies in Tokaradi, the capital of oil-producing regions by Nigerians.

Social media trends were widely used to pressure police to take action on the kidnapers. Even though the girls' remains were abandoned, the protest mobilization and call to action of the police led to the death sentence conviction for kidnapers and murderers. Therefore, social media continues to be the new force of mobilization

Other social media critics also noted that Omar al-Bashir had killed over half a million Sudanese in a bid to retain power. However, there appeared to be a desire to hold him accountable for financial wrongdoing, namely ownership of foreign currency and unlawful wealth

for calling government and leaders to act and be accountable to the citizens on several different issues.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, social media is creating new governance and citizen-oriented political spaces. It puts the power into the hands of the citizens. However, challenges remain given the prevailing autocratic norms, weak social media infrastructures and the fact that most of the rural population that form the voting majority in African countries are still relatively underrepresented in the emerging social space. But there is also a brighter side, has as been demonstrated in this essay. Despite the relative restrictions on the use of social media, for

example, in Sudan and Ghana, online political activities have significantly influenced political participation and mobilization in relatively more developed countries in Africa. Citizens, especially the young generation, share their political messages and create content online to shape political discussions with fellow citizens and key political players. For example, any citizen can communicate to the president directly or begin an online movement with social media. The targets in such endeavours often reach audiences both within and outside their countries, influencing active participation and mobilization of global citizens to engage in real-life political activities in their countries.

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# Women in Governance, Peace and Security: Stereotypical Misgivings versus Reality

By Michael Sitawa, Ph.D., Col Joyce Sitienei, and Mandek Muhudin Hilowle

## Abstract

The role of women in the peace and security debates has gained considerable traction over the years. Cognizant of the challenges that women face in times of conflict and alive to the impetus that women bring to peace processes, various actors today find it just and productive to reserve a seat for women at the negotiation table. In as much as a lot still remains to be done in order to optimally mainstream gender in matters governance, peace and security, it is worth noting that myths regarding women's roles in the male-dominated field have successfully been debunked; a position backed by empirical evidence. Various resolutions and policy frameworks have been passed and adopted in this regard, but it is the implementation phase that becomes problematic. The strategic, tactical, and operational levels are yet to see a trickle-down effect of the policy documents. The article states a case for the need to have women granted more prominence and presence in the sectors, and gives recommendations on how this can be achieved.

## Introduction

In modern violent conflict situations, the victims are 90 per cent civilian, mainly women and children (a century ago that number was 10 per cent). Rape and sexual violence have become an increasingly common method of warfare, reaching new levels of brutality. On the contrary, women constitute an average of 18 per cent of legislatures and parliaments worldwide. In brief, it would be in order to aver that when violence breaks out, women are substantially less likely to have been at the fore in sanctioning it or actually carrying out the conflict. They are substantially more likely to bear the brunt at the hands of those who did (Friedman, 2009). The above position is aimed at laying ground for the need to have an engendered perspective on peace and security, debunking the myths that misinform society on the position of and capacity in the engagement of the issues in conflict avoidance, management and post conflict reconstruction. This article aims at situating the role of women in governance, peace, and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It specifically seeks to deconstruct the concept of security; outline the societal beliefs that influence the participation in the security debate from theoretical perspective; and assess the present trends on women representation in security initiatives.

## Understanding the Concept of Security

According to the International Peace Academy (2004), the traditional definition of security presented it from the unidimensional understanding that is state centered. It looks at the protection of the key interests, integrity and stability of the state through the application of available instruments at state or international level that can either be political, legal, or coercive in nature. This definition was expanded in the 1990s to include threats of non-military nature that may have the ability to trigger violent conflict and jeopardize the state as well as its citizenry, at community or individual level. Security as a concept can therefore be referred to the pursuit to avert, mitigate, or settle violent conflicts, irrespective of the source or trigger.

Rape and sexual violence have become an increasingly common method of warfare, reaching new levels of brutality



*A woman peacekeeper part of UN Police (UNPOL) lead sensitization classes on sexual education in Bangui. These classes are meant to prevent gender-based violence (Photo Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe)*

Security, according to Bastick and Whiteman (2013) can be defined as the state of being free from danger or threat. With succinct security systems in place, then the due rights of the individual person are protected and treatment by institutions (state and non-state are carried out in a just manner). Security in its contemporary understanding and use as a concept transcends the conventional definition of the absence of armed conflict. It refers to an environment that grants individuals the opportunity to thrive within the social sanctioned and approved norms and value systems. Security initiatives therefore are an embodiment of protection of access to education and health care, democracy and human rights, and economic development. Creating security is a continuous process in which the government, security sector institutions, and communities, including women, all play an important part. The gender representation on the security initiatives at various cadres in society is very important.

### **Societal Notions about Women and Security: A Theoretical Stance**

The conventional beliefs and values systems hold that women interact with security apparatus as recipients; a privilege to be provided by their male counterparts. The notion of them not being considered active participants

or agents in many societies can be explained by the following theoretical models.

### **Standpoint Theory**

This school of thought was propounded by Sandra Harding and further reworked by the sociologist and feminist Dorothy Smith (1987). She anchors her arguments upon Marxist feminist and feminist critical theoretical approaches with focus on the relationship between the political and social power and knowledge spheres of society. This position advocates for power sharing between those at the centre of power and those at the periphery.

In her theory, she draws a relationship between the nature of work that women do in society and how it impacts their thinking. This theory then lays emphasis on unravelling the skill sets and the knowledge that comes with the conventional duties carried out by women in society such as domestic work and caregiving. The position, therefore, is that in the engagement of these activities, the mind-sets are shaped and limited to the delivery of and along the lines of suchlike activities.

There is a belief that the knowledge sets available to one are as a result of some fundamental characteristics limited to individuals within a certain group such as an XX

## The physiological and hormonal composition of a woman is also falsely seen as a weakness which then narrows their perspectives of security issues to those of men, leaving out any fruitful insight by women

chromosomal structure or having ovaries. Aspects such as sexism, chauvinism and gender bias are taken to be offshoots of these dispositions. In this regard, women are seen as incapable of contributing comprehensively to the security discourse. These perceptions lay a false belief that they cannot in any way be involved in these issues as they are preoccupied with matters of lower significance and thus their thinking cannot lend much insight to such issues. The physiological and hormonal composition of a woman is also falsely seen as a weakness which then narrows their perspectives of security issues to those of men, leaving out any fruitful insight by women.

### The Muted Group Theory

This theory was developed by Edwin Ardener and Shirley Ardener in 1975 (Kramarae, 2010). She focussed on how women's opinions and voices are ignored in favor of those given by men. She defines a muted group as people with little power who have trouble giving voice to their perceptions because they must re-encode their thoughts to make them understood to the public sphere. The theory gives the following assumptions:

1. Women perceive the world differently from men because of the differences in experience and activities rooted in the division of labour.
2. Male are the most represented of the genders which will create the notion that female's viewpoints are of a lesser significance.
3. In order to be a part of the society as well as male-dominated role, the female should act in similar manner to that of the governing group, in terms of how they perceive issues.

The theory also opines that the means of communication are also controlled by the dominant group in society, which in ordinary circumstances is the men (Miller, 2005). Various studies have been conducted that affirm the stance taken by the school of thought.

Research within the work environment shows that the general feeling among women is that they lack the

power and authority to challenge any manifestations of discrimination. This is premised upon their gender as well as the stereotypes surrounding their intellectual capacities and understanding of issues. This theory shows the kind of inequalities existent in society and how they affect communication between men and women. This is manifested in security issues too as various socio-cultural dictates support this position.

### The Global Push for Women Representation in Security: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

The United Nations News Centre (2013) The United Nations Security Council and senior UN officials issued a strong call to the international community to strengthen its commitment to ensuring that women play a more prominent role in conflict prevention, resolution and post-war peacebuilding. Unanimously adopting a new resolution, the Security Council reaffirmed that sustainable peace hinges on an approach that integrates "political, security, development, and human rights, including gender equality" concerns. They further urged Member States and UN entities to ensure women's full and meaningful participation in peace and security issues, and committed to increase focus on their adequate access to justice in conflict and post-conflict settings.

In support of this, Hoxha and Shima (2013) cite the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women Peace and Security as critical step to strengthening the push for women representation. It reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. This Resolution also stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. UNSCR 1325 takes cognizance of the manner in which war and conflicts disproportionately affect women and children, and acknowledges the fact that women have not throughout history, been included in the peace processes as well



as stabilization efforts. The Resolution emphasizes the importance of equal participation and full involvement of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, and that military and civilian personnel deployed are trained on issues on protection, rights and needs of women of Member States. UNSCR 1325 aims at addressing the vulnerable situation and needs of women during and after conflicts, especially in times of lack of law enforcement, presence of weapons, and economic and social turmoil. It also calls on all conflict parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. UNSCR 1325 calls for states to adopt National Action Plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The United Nations, European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have adopted Action Plans which aim at implementing the UNSCR 1325. The UNSCR 1325 can be and has been used as an advocacy tool by civil society to lobby for national and international authorities to address these concerns during armed conflict and post-conflict peace-building processes.

In 2003, the African Union adopted *The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* also known as the 'Maputo Protocol' of 1994 that would guide member-states in provision of security for women. Articles 9 on the Right to Participation in the Political and Decision-Making Process and 11 on the Protection of Women in Armed Conflicts focus on this. To date, 28 countries have signed and ratified it, 18 have signed but have not yet ratified, while eight have neither signed nor ratified it (The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2014).

The African Union's strategy on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE, 2018-2028) was launched in February 2019. It is based on an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach and builds on the lessons learned from the 2009 gender policy. It is geared towards transformation in view of the fact that its outcomes are targeted towards the mitigation, if not elimination of the major constrictions impeding gender equality and women's empowerment. The main objective of this is to provide and protect space for women and girls to participate optimally in economic activities, political and social affairs. Of specific focus in this debate is Pillar 4 of the AU-GEWE which emphasizes on leadership, voice and visibility of the female gender. The pillar gives impetus to the need for the voice of women to be heard in an environment that is devoid of barriers and is as well

represented in numbers/ratio and impact; considerations that should also be included in the security sector. The strategy put forward the recommendation to mainstream gender in the redraft of the African chronicles (African Union, 2020).

The gender mainstreaming debate was also given prominence in the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action which called for the United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) to institute a series of measures that would purpose to advance gender balance and gender equality at all levels of peacekeeping missions. The Plan of Action laid emphasis on the significance of the participation of women in all stages of a peace process. It provided the steps needed to be taken by the UN as well as her member states in order to achieve gender mainstreaming. This includes the provision of gender capacity building to all personnel in peacekeeping and recruitment of a higher number of women in high-level, decision-making positions (UN-INSTRAW, 2010, IPSTC, 2016).

According to Friedman (2009), the 2003 Rwandan Constitution included a quota providing for 30 per cent reserved seats for women in all decision-making bodies. In 2008, women occupied the 30 per cent quota and further took up an additional 26 per cent of the seats in the legislative assembly; a reality that was made possible through the vote process at the primaries. This came to a total of 56 per cent. For the 24 women who held the seats that were set aside from the year 2003 to 2008, it was noted that a small fraction contested for these positions. Most of the women now elected to vie for the seats under political parties in the 2008 election, toughing it out with their male counterparts. With many of them registering success, the percentage of women was catapulted to 56 per cent. The reserved seats played a vital role of incubating the female candidates who might otherwise have been left out of the process, providing them the opportunity to vie in the general election.

“The United Nations Security Council and senior UN officials issued a strong call to the international community to strengthen its commitment to ensuring that women play a more prominent role in conflict prevention, resolution and post-war peacebuilding”

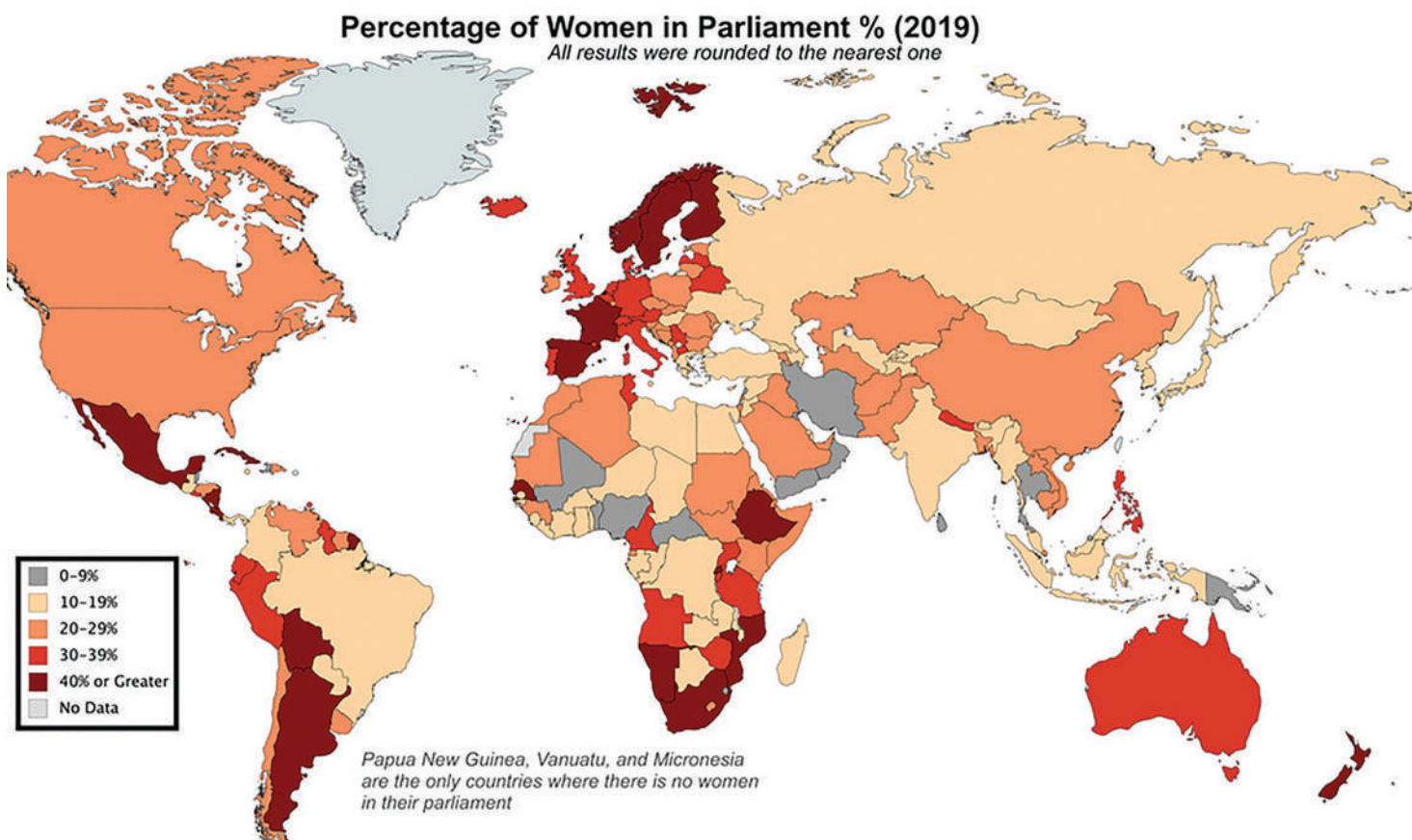
According to Kaimenyi, Kinya and Macharia (2013), the role of a woman in Kenyan society is cemented by the fact that Kenya is a signatory to many international instruments such as the Convention on all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSR 1325) among many others.

Kenya's 2010 Constitution which is celebrated the world over as one of the most comprehensive in light of some of its provisions on gender equality such as Article 27(3) which states that 'women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. The Article further states that 'the state shall take legislative

and other measures including Affirmative action programmes and policies to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination.' Moreover, the Political Parties Act (2011), a subsequent legislation of the Constitution is very clear on gender equality.

### Present trends on Women Representation in Security Initiatives

According to Norville (2011), women are typically excluded from formal peace processes. They tend to be absent at the peace table, underrepresented in parliaments that are developing policy in countries emerging from conflict and underrepresented in peacekeeping forces.

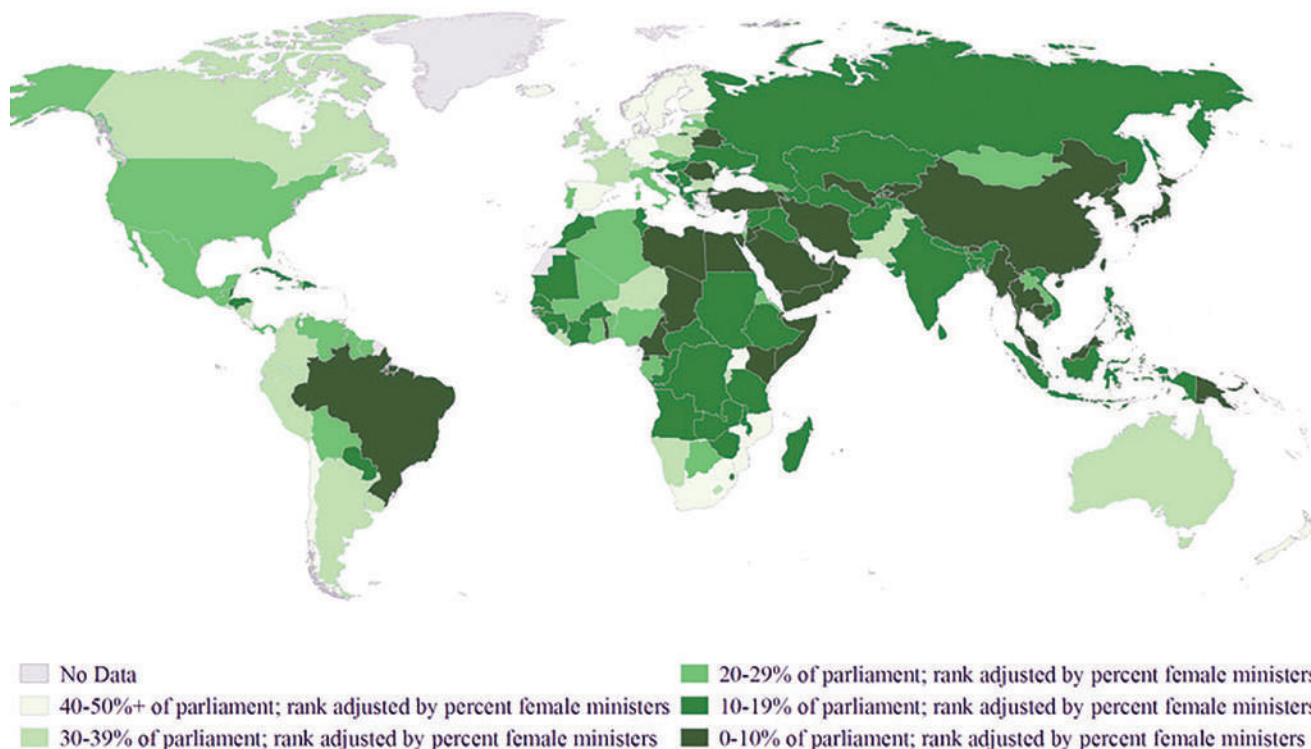


Source: *Pew Research Center*

In the United States of America, there is a significant gender imbalance in the highest levels of the American security sector (just 21 to 29 per cent of senior national security positions are held by women) is a national problem with global repercussions (Hildebrand, 2014)

Kenya's 2010 Constitution which is celebrated the world over as one of the most comprehensive in light of some of its provisions on gender equality

## Governmental Participation by Women



Source: *Woman Stats Project*

Small numbers of female officers actively involved in military peacekeeping serves as a reflection of the low overall levels of women's participation of women in the armed forces of troop contributing countries to peacekeeping forces (United States Institute of Peace (USIP), 2011).

According to the International Crisis Group (2014), Ambassador Donald Steinberg, former US ambassador to Angola and a member of the Luanda-based Joint Commission charged with implementing the peace accords in 1994, observed that the then peace agreement was discriminatory against women and thus far less likely to be successful. The omission of women from the peace processes was reflective of the inability to actualize the Lusaka Protocol and in Angola's return to conflict in late 1998. This not only meant that women's voices were not represented during debates that touched on sensitive issues on peace building, they were not able to issues surrounding their plight in times of conflict such as sexual violence, internal displacement among others.

According to Kagolo (2014), women leaders in police and the army have called for deliberate measures and policies to increase the number of women and promote gender equality in security forces. This was because women are poorly represented in key departments of different

security organs which also affects the quality of security work. Women are poorly represented in management, command and control departments of the Police in Uganda. In total, women were 15 per cent of the total police force, which fell below the 2007 Government policy that set the required percentage of representation at 30 per cent of women across all sectors. In the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF), women are only four per cent which has affected our representation even in the higher ranks. This is evident as only one brigadier and two colonels are women.

In 2009, Kagolo further reported that women officers in Kampala complained that they are sexually harassed by their male bosses in order to be deployed or promoted. Some of the women officers voiced concerns of being denied promotions on the basis of tuning down sexual advances from their superiors. This, they said, resulted to some of them remaining at the same rank for close to three decades. Others voiced concerns of the lack of recognition by their supervisors to acknowledge the challenges they faced such as when they were expectant, when they lacked uniforms and when they went without pay. This is a shortcoming that was accrued to the colonial mentality that security was a preserve for men.

In Kenya, there have been notable strides in the positive direction on the need to engender peace support operations. The International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) came up with the gender policy in 2015. This was upon the appreciation of the ongoing gender mainstreaming efforts, especially in peace building and peacekeeping. Informed by research, there was the need to devote more attention to the needs and experiences of women out on mission – be they military, police or civilian – since those of their male counterparts had already received sufficient attention in regards to integration into most policies and programs. Therefore, as part of the Centre’s strategic plan for 2016-2019, commitment was made to equal opportunities by adopting inclusivity and gender mainstreaming in all its operations.

The same move was made by the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), the mother body of IPSTC, when May 3, 2017, National Defence Policy and Gender Policy was adopted with the signing of the documents by the H.E. President

Uhuru Kenyatta. These fruits of this initiative were realized soon after as in July 2018, Fatuma Ahmed made history after being named the first Kenyan woman soldier to attain the rank of Major General in the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). She had been promoted to the rank of Brigadier in 2015 (Daily Nation, 2020). On April 30, 2020, Colonel Zipporah Kioko was promoted by President Uhuru Kenyatta to the position of KDF Spokeswoman, a move which received applause by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC, 2020).

## Societal Beliefs and Participation of Women in Security Matters

### *The Cult of True Womanhood*

Below is a summary of the gender stereotypes that are posited by the notion of true womanhood as held by the society. It also looks at, in comparison, those attached to men.

**Table 1: Elements of Stereotyping of Women and Men**

The Cult of True Womanhood	Male Sex Role Identity
<p><b>Piety:</b> True Women were naturally religious.</p> <p><b>Purity:</b> True Women were sexually uninterested.</p> <p><b>Submissiveness:</b> True Women were weak, dependent, and timid.</p> <p><b>Domesticity:</b> True Women’s domain was in the home.</p>	<p><b>No Sissy Stuff:</b> A stigma is attached to feminine characteristics.</p> <p><b>The Big Wheel:</b> Men need success and status.</p> <p><b>The Sturdy Oak:</b> Men should have toughness, confidence, and self-reliance.</p> <p><b>Give ‘Em Hell:</b> Men should have an aura of aggression, daring, and violence.</p>

Source: Welter (1978)

According to the World Justice Report (2014), Israeli women have been mostly absent from public life, particularly within the realm of peace and security. This absence is pegged upon in cultural, patriarchal and religious perceptions, which place economic and public responsibilities on men and give responsibility over the private sphere – caring for the family and the home – to women. This is reinforced by the importance placed in Israel on military service in the Israeli Defense Forces and the male norm in this regard. Women’s participation in decision-making processes pertaining to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Israel will not only uphold both Israeli and international law, but will ensure that women’s issues and gender perspectives, representing the diversity of women in Israel, are manifest in all security arrangements and peace agreements, including the physical protection of women and girls

within the conflict. In this regard, Palestinian women are also beneficiaries of the action.

The exclusion of women is not due to a lack of women’s desire or ability to be active in negotiations. In Uganda, where the Ugandan government and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) engaged in a brutal conflict characterized by abductions of thousands of girls and boys by the LRA, displacement, and widespread rape and other atrocities, “Women activists and women-led organizations mobilized to lead not only peace building at the community level but to play a direct role in finding a negotiated settlement” (Nieuwoudt, 2006). During peace talks that were aimed geared towards ending the conflict in northern Uganda, women took to the streets, marching hundreds of kilometres, from Uganda to Juba, Sudan where the talks were ongoing, to push for the chance to

With the legal framework for women's empowerment in place, it was highly expected that women will turn out in large numbers to actively participate in political processes – political party engagement, presenting themselves for elections and ideology formation among others

be granted observer status at the talks. They, however, did not take up any direct role in the negotiations. In similar fashion, women in Liberia were not included in the peace negotiations with the rebel groups in 2003. But, added Liberia's minister of gender and development, Vabah Gayflor, "Women made their voices heard by sheer will," marching, praying, and singing at the site of negotiations. Women were subsequently mobilized to give support to national elections that led to Ellen Sirleaf Johnson becoming president of Liberia. The momentum built during those efforts continues, she said, as rural women take leadership in farm cooperatives and microcredit groups to help reduce rural poverty (United States Institute of Peace, (USIP), 2011).

With the legal framework for women's empowerment in place, it was highly expected that women will turn out in large numbers to actively participate in political processes – political party engagement, presenting themselves for elections and ideology formation among others. But as has been the case for a long time, political parties have directly or indirectly short-changed women. Some were denied nomination certificates despite emerging winners of party primaries, the male-led campaign against women in the guise of preserved seats, violence and intimidation, retrogressive culture, educational qualifications, propaganda and inadequate finances combined to deny women rightful participation in the political process and elections as contestants in particular. Professor Maria Nzomo notes:

While there has been an increase in the number of women legislators from 10 per cent to 20 per cent, the structural barriers that kept them away from office are still the same barriers to date. In fact, even after entrenching affirmative action in the Constitution, women are still being told that the 30 per cent representation will have to be realized progressively. This is big challenge considering the fact that there are no legislations in place that spell-out how this will be achieved.

In Prof. Nzomo's assessment, it is ironical that with affirmative action, lesser number of women got elected in the last elections (5.2 per cent) compared to the last Parliament (7.1 per cent). She noted that this is a sign that patriarchy is fighting back and it will not be an easy task.

### Capacity Building for Enhancement of Women Participation in Peace and Security

Training of women, just like it is the case for men involved in the peace and security agenda from the various perspectives, that is, strategic, tactical or operation is important as it optimally prepares the trainee for various roles and tasks that lie ahead in the line of duty. The African Union has in place Centres of Excellence across the continent which are: the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) based in the Eastern African region; Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) based in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region, Cairo Regional Center for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA) based in the North African Region Community (NARC); L'école de maintien de la paix Alioune Blondin Beye de Bamako (EMP), National Defence College (NDC), Abuja; and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC), Harare based in the SADC region. These were registered under the Africa Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA) (APSTA, n.d.). The African Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA) was founded in 2001 as a framework for improving the capacity of peacekeeping training institutions by facilitating the exchange of best practices and capacity development support, and for enhancing the impact of peacekeeping initiatives by the AU and regional economic communities or regional mechanisms.

Assessing the contributions of the IPSTC, for example, whose mandate is to conduct training, education and research, informing military, police and civilian personnel in all aspects of peace support operations in order to



*Guetel Moiba Esther Adrienne, President of the Central African Women's Organization and former combatant signing the CAR Peace Agreement in February 2019. Three other women also participated in the peace negotiations as government representatives (Photo Credit: UN/MINUSCA/Hervé Serefio)*

improve the effectiveness of the response to complex emergencies (IPSTC, 2021) is important. It provides training informed by cutting edge research which makes trainings more responsive to the contemporary challenges and needs in matters peace and security on the ground. The structure of IPSTC is such that it has successfully managed to resource pool from development partners to facilitate research and training that speaks to women's import in matters of peace and security. Key to guiding this is the adoption of a robust gender policy which as previously discussed, seeks to mainstream gender in all courses offered. Further efforts have been put in place to offer courses that are specific to enhancing women's presence in peace support operations (PSO) such as Female Soldiers Course in PSO, Gender in PSO among others. With collaboration efforts with The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation also known as FemWise-Africa courtesy of support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Southern Hub, capacity-building women in the area of peace and security is in high gear. Such trainings are of importance as they provide Africa with Gender advocates such as Military Gender Advisor Steplyne Nyaboga who received the 2020 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award for her exemplary service in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (United Nations, 2021).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

According to USIP (2011), it is widely understood that economic recovery is important for stability in countries transitioning out of conflict. The determination of who reserves the right to access and harness economic resources is a key factor to the attainment of sustainable peace. In light of the fact that wars bring about a scenario whereby society has more female household heads, forcing more women to take up active roles in informal sectors of the economy so as to provide for their families can survive, reconstruction presents states with the opportunity to take a new look at the constraints women face in building businesses. By investing in the half of their human capital that is most underutilized, countries that institute gender-aware reforms can also realize important macroeconomic benefits of full participation.

Africa's peace and security trajectory is laid out in *Agenda 2063* under aspiration 4 which is a peaceful and secure Africa. At its pinnacle, it envisions mechanisms for peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts will be functional at all levels. In order to achieve this among the other goals of *Agenda 2063*, Africa needs to fully commit to putting making Flagship Project 5 which is 'Silencing the Guns by 2020.' According to Gbowee (2019), among the prerequisites that need to be in place are the

abolition of law systems, traditions as well as cultural practices that diminish the value of women turning them into second-class citizens need to be expunged from the statute books. Women are not objects, they are persons.

This article, therefore, recommends that society should grant and protect the space for women to participate in security issues as much as is the case for men. There is the need to sensitize men on the misconceptions that come with gender roles and the attitudes that are linked to it. The adherence to the various initiatives that target to empower women and enhance their participation in security matters. These are such as the United Nations Security Resolution 1325, the Protocol to the African charter on human and peoples' rights on the rights of women, also known as the Maputo protocol of 1994, The African Union strategy on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE, 2018-2028) alongside the legal

frameworks in place across various jurisdictions that promote women participation that are enshrined in the constitutions of the respective countries.

There is need to promote training of women in peace and security. It is important to address the three components i.e. military, police and civilian in order to have an impact that is as far-reaching and as cross-cutting as possible. Support from development partners channelled to AU's Centres of Excellence as well as other training institutions providing various courses would provide much-needed understanding and enhanced acumen in the area.

Research on issues of women in peace and security are important and thus, need to be conducted. This is because they will provide informed perspectives that can guide policy, practise and academia as they enhance the understanding as well as better informing their *modus operandi*.

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# East African Community Summit Decision-Making Fallibilities and Prospective Role of East African Local Government Association

By Pauline Mbodze Chengo

## Abstract

Decision making is a critical issue in high politics. It is a complex process that goes beyond taking positions, agreeing *vis-a-vis* disagreeing, voting or speaking out in condemnation of wrong doings by partner states to actual resolution of the critical issues at hand. Within regional intergovernmental organizations such as the EAC; the Summit is the supreme decision-making organ of the Community. The EAC summit has been condemned for its silence and inability to resolve sensitive issues and unprecedented events on peace and security as well as governance affecting its partner states. Despite the challenges in its decision making, the EAC Summit is yet to institutionalize a parallel decision-making organ or a second layer institution to ensure joint decision making and pooled sovereignty in a structure that could act as appoint of reference (multi-level decision-making) for sensitive and critical matters that if handled by the Summit would infringe on partners sovereignty and diplomatic relations. This article argues that institutionalizing the East Africa Local Government Association (EALGA) will provide such an opportunity for joint decision making upon the willingness of the Summit to amend the Treaty.

## Introduction

Africa has embraced regional integration as a mechanism of fostering development and continental unity as laid down in its legal and institutional frameworks. The path for African integration which involves progressive establishment of Free Trade Area, Customs Unions, Common Market and finally an Economic and Monetary Union is clearly envisaged in the Abuja Treaty, Constitutive Act of the African union, and African Union *Agenda 2063*, among other instruments. The integration agenda is driven by eight major regional economic communities (RECs) namely ECOWAS, SADC, ECCAS, AMU, IGAD, COMESA, CEN-SAD and EAC at the regional level whereas the African Union oversees continental integration at the continental level and coordinates integration of RECs. There has been remarkable results and success in integration in '*low politics areas*' such as economy, infrastructure, trade, welfare among other areas while integration in '*high politics areas*' of governance, power issues, interstate relations, peace and security has proved to be difficult for most RECs due to sensitivities associated with these areas.

Decision-making related to high politics areas such as overnance, unconstitutional amendments, allegations of electoral fraud are too controversial and sensitive and have dire consequences negatively impacting on foreign ad diplomatic relations between partner states, as well as the greater possibility of a stalled and broken REC. While not every national issue needs to be discussed at the regional level, critical, and sensitive issues that affect the stability of a partner state should and must be discussed by the RECs, otherwise what would be their relevance? Only few RECs such as ECOWAS have dared to make such decisions. In Gambia, the incumbent President Yaya Jammeh lost elections in 2016 to his rival Adama Barrow and but refused to step down citing irregularities in the voting process in which the Independent Electoral Commission of Gambia had declared Barrow as a winner. Economic Community of West African States called on President Yahya Jammeh to accept the December 1, 2016 election results and not take any action that will compromise the transition process. Eventually, Jammeh conceded but fled the country. While, this came as a shock to many RECs, it did



*East African Heads of State at the 20<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit in Arusha, Tanzania in February 2019 (Photo Credit: Flickr/ Paul Kagame)*

set an important precedence, especially with regards to the presidency. This move restored hope that regional intergovernmental bodies can actually help in resolving such sensitive issues to uphold democracy and peace within its region. However, this cannot be said of the EAC summit.

### **The EAC Summit and the Constitutional Changes of Partner States**

The EAC Summit is the most powerful decision-making organ of the community which comprises of Heads of States of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan and is the supreme decision making on critical issues affecting the Community. The Summit has, however, fallen short resolving sensitive issues of peace and security as well as governance issues affecting the partner states.

Over the years, the EAC partner states have undertaken constitutional changes that have favored the incumbent heads of state heads of government of partner states. While the sovereignty power of such changes lies within the citizens of the individual states and the constitutional changes regarded as legitimate by the citizens and achieved through legal frameworks such as plebiscites and parliaments, these changes have not be viewed as so by citizens of the other partner states as well as the

international community for they are seen to go against the general acceptable governance and leadership standards. Just because a country has a good leader is not reason enough to change a constitution in their favor. These actions make it impossible for the Summit to make decisions when issues of violence arise directly related to the constitutional amendments by partner states.

These difficulties associated with decision-making were experienced during the Burundi crisis of 2015 when the then president Pierre Nkurunziza announced his bid to run for third-term sparking violent protests even though it violated Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi that ended a 10 year civil war (Institute for Security Studies, 2016). Despite these protocols, the Constitutional Court in Burundi ruled in favor of Nkrunzinza, effectively paving the way for him to run for the highest office on May 5, 2015. This move further escalated violence. The EAC Summit, in a bid to resolve the crisis in Burundi, made a decision to postpone the Burundi elections by not less than one and half months and agreed on a negotiated settlement initiated by Burundi themselves under a dialogue facilitated by EAC (EAC Report). The decision fell short not only to address the root cause of the violence but also to sanction Burundi after it only postponed the election by a week in total disregard to the earlier decision. The Summit also failed to act on

recommendations from other organs and institutions of the Community. This contributed to the “EAC finding itself in the awkward position of accepting an electoral outcome that its own organs found questionable on legal and political grounds” (Nantulya, 2017). However, the president of Rwanda, H.E Kagame, had an individual opinion that Nkurunziza should step down and stop imposing his will on his people who did not support it. However, as expected, these individual remarks sparked a diplomatic row between Rwanda and Burundi resulting in border closures thus interfering with regional trade at that particular time. While the East African Community (EAC) took the initiative to mediate in Burundi but “it lacks the requisite experience, expertise or resources. Absence of political will and divisions among member states, coupled with the Burundian government’s intransigence, made successful dialogue among the parties impossible” (International Crisis Group, 2019, para. 4).

The failure of the Summit to resolve pre-Burundi crisis of 2015 was foreseen given that previously, there was lack of action during the constitutional changes in Uganda of 2005. It is even ironical when President Museveni was appointed as the mediator – who himself was a beneficiary of constitutional amendments to stay in power – to convince a fellow president who was following in his path. In 2005, the vote by Uganda parliament to remove presidential term limits in favor of Museveni who had stayed in power for 20 years ‘was marred by abuse of security apparatus, and yet in its wake, all relevant regional institutions, including the AU, EAC, and the ICGLR remained silent’(Odinkalu, 2015). Twelve years later, in 2017, the Ugandan parliament passed a bill to remove presidential age limits that would have barred the incumbent president Museveni from participating in the 2021 elections (Dhizaala, 2020). President Museveni signed the bill into law on December 27 just under seven days after the parliament passed the bill. Uganda Electoral Commission declared him the winner with 58.64 per cent of the total vote cast following the January 14 elections. The same issues were experienced in Rwanda where constitutional amendments that were validated by a referendum allowed the incumbent president, Paul Kagame, to run for office. The Summit remained moral blind to all these maneuverers.

Community interstate political relations is another area that has totally been disregarded by the Summit even in the wake of strained relations amongst its partner states. The EAC looks outward in terms of foreign relations with other countries as well as RECs but does not look

inward at its relations amongst them. The EAC has a draft protocol on foreign policy coordination but has no protocol to guide relations amongst its partner states. Strained interstate relations, tensions, and animosities between governments in EAC partner states contributed to the collapse of the defunct EAC in 1977 (Mngomezulu, 2013) which comprised of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The overthrow of Obote’s government in Uganda, a signatory to the EAC treaty, was treasonous in Nyerere’s eyes and should have been condemned. However, Kenya continued trade relations with Uganda despite the tensions between Uganda and Tanzania. These political relations did not provide a conducive environment for functioning of the EAC as “Nyerere could not work with Amin in the EAC and opposed any appointments of Amin into EAC leadership positions and refused to convene the meetings of the East Africa Authority as long as Amin was in power” (Mngomezulu, 2013, p.10). The Authority did not meet for seven years from 1971 until its collapse in 1977 (Deya, 2015). This is an evidence of how personal relationships or alliances in the Summit affect its objectivity to effectively handle issues. The fact that the Summit did not take a collective and firm decision to condemn the coup revealed the soft underbelly of the Summit in dealing with critical issues that could impede integration.

These strained relationships have continued to emerge and have resulted in tensions and animosities between partner states, notably, the constant accusations between Kenya and Tanzania, Tanzania and Rwanda, Rwanda and Burundi. Somehow, the Summit seems not to be able to collectively resolve these strained relationships leaving individual partner states to resolve it alone:

Regional leadership rivalries and mutual accusations of destabilisation – Rwandan opposition members regularly pass through Kampala and Uganda accuses Kigali of trying to infiltrate its security forces – have compounded the dispute of late. Animosity

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Internet shutdowns unsettle supply chains and have pervasive and negative effects on efficiency throughout the economy. Particularly, internet shutdowns harm investor confidence and raise risk premiums

came to a head in February 2019 when Rwanda closed its main border crossing with Uganda following the arrest and expulsion of Rwandan citizens charged with espionage. Trade across the region has suffered as the two states exchange barbs (International Crisis Group, 2019).

### A Parallel Decision-Making Organ?

It is evident from the foregoing that the Summit has rarely taken a collective decision to jointly challenge the constitutional amendments in the partner states and when it comes to making decisions on critical sensitive issues affecting the community, the Summit cannot authoritatively impose standards of good governance on a partner state rendering the Summit less objective yet these issues affect individuals who are allies and the need to appease to friendships and alliances. This, therefore, impels the need for an alternative joint decision-making structure alongside the Summit. However, despite the evident challenges associated with decision making in high politic areas, the EAC Summit has not made any initiatives to delegate or share this burden with other institutions within the community and has "failed to amend the treaty to give executive powers to the Secretariat or any other community power for fear of losing power" (Kivuva, 2014). The absence of such alternative decision-making structures has greatly contributed to the ineffectiveness of the EAC to act where needed most.

The EAC treaty Article 7(1: d) provides the principle of subsidiarity which allows multi-level participation of other stakeholders in the integration process. However, this provision is currently limited to participation and consultations that are directed by the different community organs and institutions. The EAC has various organs and institutions established that could serve as Joint decision-making structure alongside the Summit. Kivuva (2014), however, argues that the creation of the current EAC institutions, legislation and processes are not strong enough to safeguard against some of the pitfalls that led to the collapse of the old EAC in 1977. He bases his

argument on how decision-making and implementation is heavily conferred on the Summit which exercises direct power and influence on other community organs. Kivuva further urges that the new institutions that were created such as East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) and the East Africa Court of Justice (EACJ) and the Secretariat would have been endowed "with authority and powers would have reduced overconcentration of decision-making power within the executives of partner states." However, these institutions and Organs of the community are under control and influence of the Summit to the extent that they have been weakened. For example, EALA legislations have to be accented by the Summit and if one partner fails to ascent, the entire legislation lapses given that article 63 gives "power to head of states to reject bills passed by the assembly thus giving partner states a veto over EALA" (Kivuva, 2014).

Muinde (2015) points to the fact that the defunct EAC did not have "mechanisms for resolving conflicts or disagreements among the top leadership and any slight difference even those arising from outside became a threat to the community" (2015, p. 42). The current EAC does not have a protocol to guide the community on issues of high politics such as governance, interstate relations among others neither does it have the mechanism suggested by Muinde (2015). This leaves the community to continuously experience similar problems that are spilling over to other partner states and makes one doubt the viability of EAC if it cannot resolve this issues, hence the need for adoption of joint decision making structures and protocol on democracy and governance.

### Need for a Governance Protocol on Presidential Term Limits and Constitutional Amendments

Presidential term limits and constitutional amendments are critical issues facing the community which the EAC Summit has been unable to successfully intervene. These issues are critical to peace and security manifested in displacement of citizens, refugees, destruction

Access to the internet in Ethiopia has grown steadily over the past few years and has become an increasingly integral part of the Ethiopian economy. Essential banking services, transportation, agricultural trade, and other technology-driven services rely on the internet

of infrastructure, effects to the economy and use of resources in mediation and reconciliation processes responding to such issues. Additionally, these changes in one partner state will affect the entire region especially where government have to accommodate refugees by providing protection and basic needs, therefore, partner states cannot be silent on the grounds of sovereignty or inter-state relations bearing in mind the financial and human resource implications on the crisis.

Mediating and resolving a crisis is a very expensive endeavour compared to preventive concerted decision-making interventions to avert the crisis at an early stage. However, the EAC is not able to finance its mediation intervention as shown by:

In July 2015, at the height of the crisis, the EAC established the Inter-Burundi Dialogue, appointing President Museveni as mediator and, later, former Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa as facilitator to assist him. The regional body took the lead under the AU's principle of subsidiarity, which holds that peace and security issues in Africa should be dealt with at the most local level. The EAC

was not equipped for the task, however. It is first and foremost a forum for economic integration, and as such had no experience or expertise in complex political mediation. It also lacked sufficient financial resources and, with Nkurunziza loyalist Libérat Mfumukeko as secretary general, was open to accusations of bias (International Crisis Group, 2019).

To achieve stability in the region, there is need for establishment of a governance protocol that will provide guidelines for constitutional amendments in its partner states. The EAC has made tremendous efforts to develop a draft democracy and governance protocol that highlight five key pillars: human rights and promotion of equal rights; transparency accountability through economic governance; access to justice, equality and equal opportunities; democracy and democratisation; adherence to the rule of law, constitutionalism and access to justice (EAC, 2013). However, the protocol has remained a draft for over a decade now and the reasons for the delay of its adoption and implementation by partner states has not been given (EACSO, 2018). In its recommendation report of 2013, Committee on Legal,



*Burundi's policemen and army forces face protestors during a demonstration against incumbent president Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a 3<sup>rd</sup> term on 13 May 2015 in Bujumbura. The EAC Summit postponed the elections in a bid to resolve the crisis (Photo Credit: Jennifer Huxta/AFP)*



*The East African Legislative Council (EALA) – the independent, legislative arm of the East African Community – in a meeting in Arusha, Tanzania (Photo Credit: EALA)*

Rules and Privileges, EALA recommended that the “EAC should enhance institutional mechanisms to monitor and evaluate adherence to the good governance principles of the community” (EAC, 2013). While efforts and discussion are currently underway on establishment of the protocol, and calls made to EAC partner states to iron out the contentious issues and finalize the protocol on good governance, there is an urgent need to have a separate document on presidential term limits and constitutional amendment matters of which the EAC summit has proven to be unable to shepherd. These reforms could be pegged on the EAC Treaty (Article 3.3a) that supports “adherence to universally acceptable principles of good governance, democracy, rule of law, observance of human rights and social justice” as one of the requirements for admission into the membership of the Community.

It is, therefore, possible for EAC partner states which have over the years undergone constitutional amendments to realign their reforms towards convergence of political systems and other crucial governance matters for stability of the region. This is because of the different political systems or partner states as:

*EAC partner states have disparities and divergent political and constitutional systems “many citizens of East Africa fear that poor governance practices, including corruption, human rights abuse, and failure to observe constitutionalism and the rule of law<sup>3</sup>, may spill over to Partner States with better*

*governance records. There are commonalities and divergences with respect to political systems within the region. Although the existing divergences such as different election cycles and legislative structures (Bi-Cameral and Uni-Cameral) could possibly be accommodated within a federal entity, as is the case in other federations, it would be better for reasons of efficiency and convenience to push for harmonization and convergence. The lack of convergence in election cycles results in national elections being spread over three consecutive years. This disrupts the integration process and the economies of the Partner States. It is therefore worth considering a convergence to create a uniform election cycle for all five states so that all national elections in all five Partner States can be held in the same year. Nonetheless, it is important to note that despite recent major constitutional reform processes in Uganda (2005) and Kenya (2010), none has sought to achieve convergence in political systems nor been seen to be guided by the EAC Treaty (EAC, 2011).*

The current BBI reforms experienced in Kenya, could act as a great opportunity to ensure that the EAC pushes for uniformity and harmonization of key governance issues such a harmonised electoral cycle. But the EAC Summit and the organs have remained silent thus failing to take advantage of such ongoing processes.

## Institutionalizing EAGLA as a Joint Decision-Making Structure on Key Issues

The consensus mode of decision making at the EAC Summit on sensitive issues has remained a great obstacle to meaningful intervention. This mode provides leeway for members not to participate in issues affecting them if they feel they will lose their interests by simply absconding meetings resulting to stalled processes. This was clearly seen during the Burundi crisis as shown here:

The EAC's decision-making process has further hampered attempts to resolve the Burundi crisis. All countries must be represented at its summits; hence Burundi was able to prevent a crucial EAC meeting, planned for November 2018, from taking place simply by refusing to send representatives. Its decisions are taken by strict consensus, unless a member state is being considered for suspension or expulsion, when that country's views will not be considered. This need for consensus, and the patent lack thereof, have been significant obstacles for the EAC's mediation (International Crisis Group, 2019).

To avoid such situations, it is paramount for the EAC Summit to adopt a parallel decision-making structure such as the EALGF whose membership comprises of the Local Government associations established under the EAC. Although, its status as an institution has not progressed to be recognised as an organ or institution of the EAC, EAGLA is a key platform that can serve alongside the Summit on agreed issues of high politics. There is minimal direct control and influence by heads of states over local governments as majority of them in the EAC region have some level of autonomy. Moreover, their elections give them the mandate to represent the interests of citizens at the grassroots level. The parallel structure can act as framework where interest of citizens at the grassroots level feed into the EAC decision-making

The morning after Hundessa's assassination the internet was shut down nationwide, with the exception of specific locations in Addis Ababa such as government offices, the United Nations, and the African Union

frameworks. Due to lack of EAC governance protocol and taking into consideration the sensitivity of the critical issues, the joint decision-making processes should take a form of explanations and reasoning rather than voting or consensual. Additionally, early monitoring of partner current issues will help in having final decision as well as guiding the partners on what is allowable or not rather than last-minute and ad hoc interventions.

The Summit-EAGLA Council could be established as a supra-national parallel decision-making body of the EAC whose membership could comprise of the Head of states and two representatives from each of the six local government associations at partner states level. The Council to have a limited mandate of monitoring and intervening on the presidential term limits, constitutional amendments, and strained relationships of partners states to ensure compliance to international democratic and governance principles.

The adoption of the EAC protocol on democracy and governance as well as reforms to establish a joint supranational decision making body comprising of the Summit and EAGLA will be a great opportunity not only to achieve stability and foster unity in the region but also achieve the EAC aspirations of establishing a confederation.

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## Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

We are excited to release our nineteenth bi-monthly issue of *The HORN Bulletin* (Vol. IV, Iss. IV, 2020). We bring to you well-researched articles and analysis of topical issues and developments affecting the Horn of Africa. We welcome contributions from readers who wish to have their articles included in the HORN Bulletin. At HORN, we believe ideas are the currency of progress. Feel free to contact the Editor-in-Chief for more details at [communications@horninstitute.org](mailto:communications@horninstitute.org).

Hassan Khannenje, Ph.D.  
Editor-in-Chief, The HORN Bulletin

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### Note:

The views expressed in this Bulletin are those of the authors and they do not necessarily reflect the position of the HORN Institute.

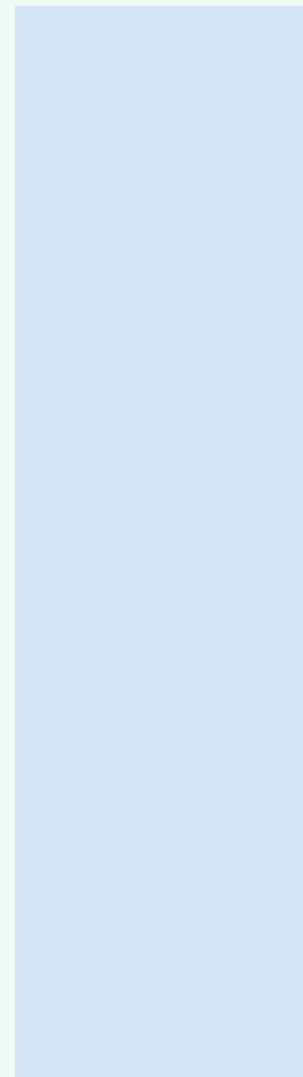
## UPCOMING EVENTS

### International Conference on Africa-Middle East Relations

African and Middle Eastern countries have been relating with each other for centuries. This relationship has been relatively stable and uneventful and interrupted by occasional conflicts in the Middle East that has often spilt over to Africa. However, over the past 10 years, there has been increased bilateral and multilateral political, security, and economic engagements between the two regions. These engagements have been informed in part by geopolitical and geostrategic calculations as well as realities such as Africa's 'youth bulge,' and increasing food security needs of some Middle Eastern countries. To assess the nature, extent, and potential impact of the increasing engagements, the HORN Institute will convene an International Conference on Africa-Middle East Relations. The Conference will be held in Nairobi on August 25-26, 2021. Participation will be by invitation. Please visit the HORN Institute website or contact the Institute through [conference@horninstitute.org](mailto:conference@horninstitute.org) for more information.

### Official Launch: Africa-Middle East Study (2010-2019)

The HORN Institute is pleased to announce the official launch of a study, '*Africa-Middle East Relations: Interests, Strategies, Interventions, and Impact (2010-2019): An Appraisal.*' The study assesses the nature and impact of increasing political, security, and economic engagements between African and Middle Eastern countries on Africa. It finds, among other findings, that the engagements are generally bilateral and skewed in favor of Middle-Eastern countries, but have the potential to spur development on the continent if managed strategically for mutual benefit, concerns over potential destabilizing effects notwithstanding. The study's key findings will be presented, and the study officially launched at the International Conference on Africa-Middle East Relations on August 26, 2021.



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