

# AFRICA–MIDDLE EAST RELATIONS

Interests, Strategies, Interventions, and Impact

2010–2019 | An Appraisal

ABRIDGED VERSION




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**HORN** INTERNATIONAL  
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### **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.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies set out to investigate the contemporary Middle East-Africa relations in order to increase understanding of the existing matrix of geopolitics, ideology, security, and economics. This was partly informed by the sense that the Middle East has increasingly been engaging Africa over the last decade, informed by changing realities both in the Middle East and Africa. This mixed-methods study, titled *Africa-Middle East Relations: Interests, Strategies, Interventions, and Impact – An Appraisal*, sought to dissect the interplay between geopolitics, ideology, security, and economics in the wake of recent developments in both Africa and the Middle East. It covers the period from 2010 and 2019.

The investigation established that although Middle East-Africa engagements have been increasing; interregional trade has been limited; relations are mostly bilateral, ad hoc, and personalized; humanitarian programs accompanied with built-in subtle, covert and obvious ideological orientations have caused instability and conflicts; lack transparency; and are generally asymmetrical.

With regard to engagements with Africa, in general, Qatar is focused on survival, expansion, and diversification; Turkey on power projection, dominance, control and sway over the Muslim world, economic opportunities; Iran on increasing its foreign influence, spread of Shia Islam, elimination of external interference, and economic survival; Saudi Arabia is keen to maintain its leadership of the Sunni Muslim world, containing Iranian influence, preserving its say among OPEC countries, and freedom of navigation across the Red Sea and finally, UAE policy is focused on maintaining stability for its increasing geopolitical and commercial Interests as well as countering perceived ideological and security threats from the Gulf and surrounding areas.

Overall, while the expansion and deepening of relations holds potential for mutual economic growth and enhanced security, and has done so in some cases, the nature of prevailing climate in the Middle East international relations, notably, the Gulf crisis and a web of conflicts in the Middle East have complicated Africa – Middle East relations with inevitable repercussions in ways that are inimical to the security and stability of the continent and the future of Middle East-Africa relations.

Thus, the study recommends the following: more open multilateral engagements and investments that are mutually beneficial and sustainable; purposeful engagements geared towards promoting mutual stability and collective security; and an establishment of a framework of engagement informed by shared values and interests devoid of ideological adventurism. In particular, the study recommends scrupulous attention is paid to important aspects of Africa-Middle East relationship to limit or eradicate conflict-causing ideological or sectarian triggers and orientations as well as reactionary adventures that are neither informed by successful precedence nor are they guided by evidence of their viability.

## INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted by the HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies to establish the nature, extent and impact of Africa–Middle relations. The study focuses specifically on the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey. It reveals a number of findings that inform the current engagements, the pitfalls inherent in the interactions, and makes recommendations on the courses of action to be taken by countries in both Africa and the Middle East regions, to achieve common interests in security, development, political stability and diplomacy.

This document summarizes key findings, provides trade statistics, discusses the nature of engagements, analyses dynamics of these relations and offers recommendations for consideration in reworking the Africa–Middle East relations, in a way that is mutually beneficial in advancement of strategic, collective, and shared interests of the affected countries.



Source: HORN Institute



## KEY FINDINGS

### POLITICAL

- The Middle East is more engaged in Africa than Africa is in the Middle East.
- Over the last 10 years, Turkey, UAE, and Qatar have significantly increased their political presence in Africa, especially in the Horn of Africa and North Africa.
- The primary drivers of Middle Eastern countries the study reveals, are to advance specific geostrategic interests ranging from Islamist political ideological orientations to trade and the diversification of oil and gas dependent economies.
- The Middle East powers employ both 'hard' and 'soft' power approaches in their power projection in various spheres in Africa. These range from the support for armed state and non-state actors to employment opportunities and student scholarships, to the development of social amenities (schools, hospitals), and infrastructure. However, these approaches appear to follow carefully planned and choreographed long-term political and ideological orientations.
- Africa is driven by the desire for economic and humanitarian assistance to support their growing economies. It is increasingly looking to the Middle Eastern countries for economic support, and for political and security cooperation.
- Africa–Middle East relations are generally asymmetrical, ad hoc, and personalized.
- The 'new scramble for Africa' by the Middle East is largely informed by internal struggles in the region, such as the Yemeni civil war, the 2017 Gulf Crisis, and the politically–motivated religious and ideological tensions in the Middle East.
- Much of these tensions are as a result of politically motivated ideological subterfuges. The contest is between Turkey, Qatar and Iran on one hand, and Saudi Arabia, UAE and their allies (Egypt, Jordan and others) on the other hand of the ideological and geopolitical spectrum.
- Middle Eastern engagements in Africa tend to increase, especially in areas of geostrategic importance, in the run-up to and aftermath of crises.
- Tensions in the Middle East have 'spilt over' to Africa, creating additional fault lines in already volatile and fragile countries.

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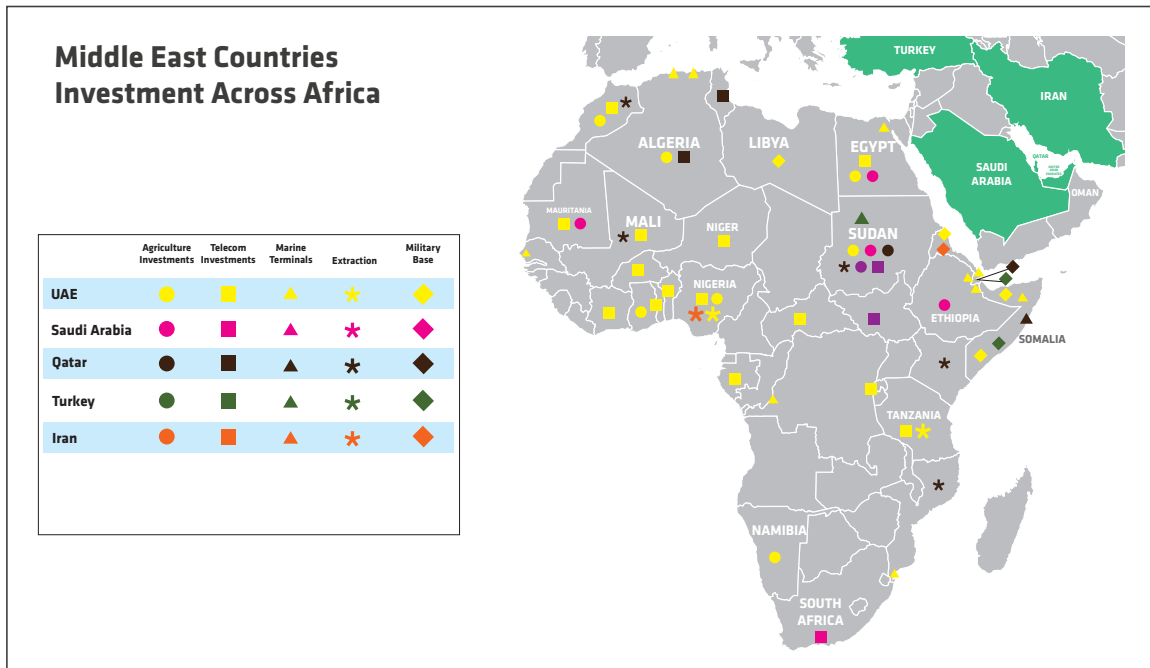
- Although very active in developing social, cultural and economic ties, many countries, both Muslim majority and minority in Africa, have an uneasy relationship with Iran.
- Competition within Gulf countries and Turkey has contributed to destabilization and insecurity in some African countries especially Libya and Somalia.

## ECONOMIC

- After the European Union (45 per cent), the Middle East (17 per cent) is Africa's biggest investor, both by number of projects and by capital investment.
- The Middle East often adopts the flagship model (as opposed to the one-project-at-a-time model), and has initiated flagship projects in Africa in the fields of energy, infrastructure, and agriculture.
- Fracturing of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) bloc combined with a lack of a strong African bloc has resulted in an emphasis on bilateral relations instead of multilateral relations, as was the case prior to 2017.
- In areas of less geostrategic importance, Middle Eastern engagements focus on investment, especially in the extraction, energy, and services sectors.
- Countries in the Middle East seek stability (economic, political, and security), but have varying ideas of what stability means and approaches in advancing it.
- Trade and investments are critical tools for Middle East policy towards Africa. For instance,

Between 2010 and 2017:

- Turkey's exports to Africa totaled USD 102.96 billion, or 8.31 per cent of Turkey's total exports (on average). Turkey's imports from Africa amounted to USD 67.83 billion, or 4.16 per cent of total imports to Turkey (on average).
- The UAE's exports to Africa totaled USD 70.66 billion, or 5.35 per cent of UAE's total exports (on average). UAE's imports from Africa amounted to USD 65.51 billion, or 4.38 per cent of total imports to the UAE (on average).
- Qatar's exports to Africa totaled USD 10.1 billion, or 1.73 per cent of Qatar's total exports (on average). Qatar's imports from Africa amounted to USD 3.7 billion, or 1.85 per cent of total imports to Qatar (on average).
- Iran's exports to Africa totaled USD 17.37 billion, or 1.68 per cent of Iran's total exports (on average). Iran's imports from Africa amounted to USD 4.46 billion, or 1.1 per cent of total imports to Iran (on average).
- Egypt was Turkey's most important export partner, amounting to USD 24.15 billion, or 1.96 per cent of Turkey's total exports (on average). Algeria was Turkey's most important import partner, worth USD 22.09 billion, or 1.38 per cent of Turkey's total imports (on average).
- South Africa was UAE's most important trading partner on the continent. The UAE's exports to South Africa amounted to USD 9.1 billion, or 0.69 per cent of total exports (on average).



The UAE's imports from South Africa are worth USD 12.90 billion, or 0.86 per cent of UAE's total imports (on average).

- o Egypt was Qatar's most important trade partner. Qatar's exports to Egypt totaled USD 4 billion, or 0.81 per cent of Qatar's total exports (on average). Qatar's imports from Egypt amounted to USD 2.1 billion, or 1.24 per cent of Qatar's total imports (on average).
- o South Africa was Iran's most important trade partner in Africa. Iran's exports to South Africa totaled USD 8.2 billion, or 0.83 per cent of Iran's total exports (on average). Iran's imports from South Africa amounted to USD 493 million, or 0.1 per cent of Iran's total imports (on average).
- The engagements do not always produce desired results. Sometimes, the opposite result is realized. For example, engagements aimed at stabilizing a target country, often times destabilizes it or the region instead, as evidenced by the cases of Somalia, Sudan and Libya.
- The Middle East is interested in securing food for its citizens. In 2017, the UAE made the most significant agricultural investment in Ethiopian sugar manufacturing, of approximately USD 3 billion.
- Africa has the largest infrastructure investment gap in the world.
- Gulf countries and Turkey have realized China's growing dominance on the African continent, and are vying to be China's best partners for its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Capital from remittance flows (USD 64.6 billion) from African migrants has rivalled Foreign Direct Investment (USD 66.5 billion) in Africa since 2015.



## UAE

- Of the Gulf countries, the UAE is most assertive throughout Africa. UAE currently is Africa's largest investor after China, investing around USD 11 billion in capital in the continent in 2016 alone.
- UAE–Africa relations are based on UAE's quest for economic diversification, influence and stability, its efforts to counter terrorism and insurgencies in Africa, and to insulate its foreign investments on the continent from the threat of instability and violence.

## Qatar

- Qatar is still a marginal player in most African countries compared to other important Middle Eastern countries in this study.
- Qatar's relations with Africa have been defined by the rift with other Middle Eastern countries, especially following the 2017 GCC crisis.
- Qatar's security engagements in Africa have been characterized by support for allied states and groups through investment in infrastructure, religious institutions, financial support for state and non-state actors.
- Real and perceived support to groups such as *Muslim Brotherhood* has caused tensions and instability in several countries in Africa.



Two of the 24 armoured personnel carriers donated by Qatar to Mali to help the country fight terrorism (Photo Credit: Sahel Intelligence)

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## Turkey

- Turkey and Iran have tried to fill the Middle East's power vacuum created by the 'Arab Spring'.
- Turkey supports ideologically allied groups to enhance its influence informed by its own 'Islamist' political ideology.
- With a total of 39 state visits in nine years, Erdogan is one of the most politically assertive heads of state in the Middle East. Erdogan's visits have often been followed by visits to Ankara by his African counterparts.
- Turkey currently has 32 embassies on the African continent, while the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Council is represented in 19 countries.
- Turkey-Africa relations have been driven by Turkey's quest to become a strategic player and problem-solving country in Africa, albeit with mixed results.
- Some countries view Turkey's involvement, especially the underlying ideological undertones, with deep suspicion.
- Turkey is the Middle East's largest provider of humanitarian assistance in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia.



*A Turkish military personnel walks past the Turkish military base in Somalia. Turkey opened its largest overseas military base in Somalia in 2017 (Credit Image: Reuters/Feisal Omar)*

## Iran

- Iran's foreign policy to Africa is ambivalent, characterized by suspicion, 'friendliness' and cooperation.
- In 2010 and 2011, Iran's total export to Africa amounted to USD 15.08 billion. In 2012, Iran's total exports to Africa dropped by USD 7.37 billion to USD 1.47 billion as Iran's Rial depreciated in value.





*Mahama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in Tasnim in 2016 (Photo Credit: Ghnewsnow)*

- The suspicion is most intense on Iran’s perceived aggressive state-sponsorship of sectarian agenda (around *Shia* ideology)
- Between 2010 and 2019, international trade and military sanctions have weakened Iran—Africa relations.

### Saudi Arabia

- Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy mostly entails cooperation. It focusses more on *Sunni* Muslim communities in Africa.
- Saudi Arabia’s thrust in Africa is imbalanced with Riyadh concentrating more in the Horn of Africa, North Africa and the Sahel, where Muslim majority countries are.
- Saudi Arabia’s investments in Africa are comparatively minimal, *vis-à-vis* those of other Middle Eastern countries such as the UAE.



*Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi inspecting a guard of honor when he visited Ethiopia (Photo Credit: Crown Prince Court, Abu Dhabi)*



## IDEOLOGICAL

- Historical ties between the Middle East and Africa include religious ideology.
- There are different and divergent interpretations of key Islamic religious ideas and ideologies. This creates confusion and room for abuse and misuse by actors especially violent extremist groups.
- Activities of most violent extremist groups in Africa are religiously motivated. However, some groups' activities are driven by a mix of religious and political, or religious and socio-economic motivations.
- There has been a marked increase in violent extremist activities on the continent in recent times. Around 2010, Nigeria-based Boko Haram and Somalia-based al Shabab were the most significant Africa-based violent extremist groups in Africa. By 2019, there were at least 10 active violent extremist groups.
- The number of main terrorist theatres in the continent increased between 2010 and 2019 from two (Somalia and Nigeria) to seven (Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Libya, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of Congo and to a considerable degree, Egypt and Kenya).
- There was a notable increase on the number of violent extremist groups based in countries such as Somalia (from one to three), Nigeria (from one to three), and Burkina Faso (from zero to two), for example.
  - Somalia: 2010: Al Shabab 2019: Al Shabab, Islamic State in Somalia, and Jabha East Africa
  - Nigeria: 2010: Boko Haram 2019: Boko Haram, Islamic State's West Africa Province, and Islamic Movement of Nigeria
  - Burkina Faso: Around 2010: None 2019: Ansaroul al-Islam, and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
- Niger's experience with violent extremism is the most unique in Africa for two main reasons. First, in addition to Al Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM), Niger also hosts the jihadist groups that are the "most feared" (Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, ISGS), "most dominant, deadliest, and one of the most powerful" in the Lake Chad region (Boko Haram), and the "most powerful jihadi group in the Sahel" (Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen, JNIM). Secondly, ISGS and JNIM work together creating a tactically stronger unit than when either one works alone.
- The increase in violent extremist activity in Africa seems to correspond with the decrease in similar activity in the Middle East following the 'defeat' of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS or IS). It also seems to be associated with the continent's increasing states' fragility as a result of factors such as armed conflicts, environmental degradation, and political instability. For these reasons, Africa is emerging as the next significant theatre of terrorist and extremist activity.
- Most violent extremist groups in Africa are affiliated with al Qaida or ISIS (which are based in the greater Middle East), giving the impression that the region is 'exporting' violent extremism to Africa even though the ideology of jihadism emerged in both the Middle East and (North) Africa in the 1930s.

- There is a tendency of violent extremist groups on the continent to seek affiliation or collaborate with al Qaida, ISIS, or with each other (with varying degrees of success) to advance their goals, remain relevant, gain credibility, and/or gain or maintain their influence in a country or region.
- Owing to territorial proximity, mergers, collaboration, and group fragmentation, there is some overlap in the areas of operation of some violent extremist groups especially in the Sahel, Maghreb, North Africa, and West Africa. This has created a complex web of violent extremist actors in the Sahel-Maghreb-West African region that has, overall, a destabilizing effect.
- With at least 12 jihadist groups active in North Africa, this is the region most affected by violent extremist activity in Africa.
- The web of violent extremist groups is more complex in the Sahel than in the Maghreb.



**With at least 12 jihadist groups active in North Africa, this is the region most affected by violent extremist activity in Africa**

## ENGAGEMENTS

The Middle East invests in flagship, years-long projects in infrastructure, extraction, and agriculture for several reasons. These include: increasing influence in the international arena, power projection, and food security. First, the Middle East wants to improve its global image as a reliable partner, and has used its excess liquidity and flexibility to engage with existing and potential partners. Thus, the Middle Eastern countries use their investments in Africa in part to demonstrate to the world that they are capable of playing as major actors.

Secondly, the Middle Eastern countries' power (both 'soft' and 'hard') is projected in the region through its ability to engage with its partners in critical areas related to security, politics, and economy. For instance, in 2015, Qatar promised a total of USD 2.22 billion to *incentivise* Sudan to terminate its existing relations with Iran. By 2017, Iran's influence in the Horn of Africa had been reduced significantly. Today, Iran's power in the region has waned.

Lastly, to ensure food security for their populations, Qatar, and the UAE have invested in large tracts of arable land in parts of Africa. In Sudan, UAE is planning to develop more than 28,000 hectares of land through Jenaan Investment. In 2017, the UAE made a significant investment in Ethiopian sugar manufacturing worth around USD 3 billion, the single largest investment made between 2000 and 2017.

Qatar was in negotiations with Kenya to develop more than 40,000 hectares of arable land. Additionally, UAE investment in Ethiopian agriculture has the potential to upset its partner Egypt, which has been in a long-standing dispute with Ethiopia over access to water from the Nile. The UAE's continuing agricultural investment in Ethiopia demonstrates efforts that UAE (and Qatar) takes to address one of its potentially existential threats. Unmanaged, large-scale agricultural investments can lead to exploitation and infringements of land rights, which is a volatile issue in Africa.

For their economic engagements to succeed, the Middle East needs stability. However, they have varying ideas of what stability means, and which actor or state should be the one to create and safeguard that stability. For the UAE and Saudi Arabia, stability means that a strong centralized government which can create economic prosperity to keep the citizenry content and thereby prevent possible civil disobedience, civil strife, or a revolution.

Turkey and Qatar consider Africa as a crucial battleground to support local allies and limit Saudi-UAE influence. Both countries view Islamist parties as an alternative for strong centralized (militaristic) governments. For Turkey, stability in Africa means supporting allies who can assist it in its quest for increased geopolitical influence and power projection capabilities. To that extent, Turkey is broadcasting a message of Islamic leadership, vying with Saudi Arabia to fill the Middle East's power vacuum created by the 'Arab Spring' and the Syrian war.

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**The 'new scramble for Africa' by the Middle East is largely informed by internal struggles in the region, such as the Yemeni civil war, the 2017 Gulf Crisis, and politically motivated religious and ideological tensions in the Middle East**





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For Qatar, stability means promoting and diversifying its economy and trading partners, countering UAE and Saudi political and economic influence, and reducing the influence of the two countries.

For Iran, upholding stability is less interesting than survival, both economically and ideologically. Iran's economy has been battered by sanctions, which have resumed after the US withdrew from the nuclear agreement in 2018. It continues to invest in local official and non-official community networks in advancing its soft power foreign policy on the continent.

	 Saudi Arabia	 United Arab Emirates	 Qatar	 Turkey
Main Target in the Horn of Africa	Sudan	Eritrea, Somaliland	Sudan, Somalia, exploring options in Ethiopia	Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia
Dominant Political Interest	Containing Iran, Qatar, Turkey	Leverage against it's competitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage vis a vis Saudi Arabia, UAE</li> <li>New diplomatic partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideological</li> <li>Challenge Saudi dominance</li> <li>Establish foothold</li> </ul>
Dominant Economic Interest	Food production	Regional trade, port's expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial diversification</li> <li>Diplomatic leverage</li> </ul>	Trade, Investment opportunities for Turkish firms, resources extraction (oil/gas)
Key Policy Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aid and grants</li> <li>Support of Islamic Institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgetary support, DP World</li> <li>Aid and grants</li> </ul>	Central Bank of Qatar, Qatar Foundation	Budgetary support, grants for construction of roads and ports
Military Presence	Assab Djibouti	Assab, Berbera and Mogadishu	None (presence on Eritrean Djibouti border withdrawn)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military base in Somalia</li> <li>Intent to build a military outpost in Sudan</li> </ul>

## EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Africa is increasingly looking to the Middle East for economic support, political and security cooperation. Africa's decision to shift away from its traditional development partners, such as the European Union, to other partners the Gulf Middle East, has been informed by the perceived current partners' excessive liquidity, less bureaucracy, and fewer and simpler protocols.

Africa's traditional partners such as the EU and US are often cumbersome and have numerous rules, regulations, and strings attached to aid, loans, and investments, making them incapable of adequately responding to Africa's many rapid changes and needs over the last ten years. Africa's other main partner, China, has witnessed a major economic slowdown, resulting in reduction of funding for projects throughout the continent. Additionally, African leaders are becoming increasingly apprehensive about the economic burden of Chinese loans, which often come with significant interest rates or guarantee requirements involving strategic national assets. These burdens have made Middle Eastern countries—themselves looking to diversify their economies, exert geopolitical influence, and access booming upcoming markets, to look to Africa as logical alternative partners.

### Skewed Relations

However, Africa–Middle East relations is skewed to the extent that the Middle East, especially the Gulf, determines the nature and direction of this relationship. The Middle East can take quick decisions, fund projects, negotiate agreements, send troops, whereas most African states cannot. The Middle Eastern countries are capable of doing so because of their economic resources and superior capacity to conduct foreign policy compared to Africa. Therefore, the Middle East–Africa relations is fundamentally skewed in favor of the Middle East.

### Increased State-to-State Relations

The imbalanced relations are often bilateral, generational, and on an ad hoc and personal basis. A reduction of bloc-to-bloc ties since the fracturing of the GCC in 2017 has contributed to an increase in state-to-state relations. These bilateral relations play out at the highest level, often directly between heads of states.

### Weakened Institutions

Personalized bilateral engagements allow for deeper and broader relations. However, the lack of transparency and checks and balances can hollow out and weaken institutions, leading to more fragile states. Fragility creates overdependence on other states. Additionally, it creates room for governments to ignore necessary domestic reforms. One consequence of this is that collective regional security is compromised.

### Threat to Regional Security

Finally, a major threat to regional security, especially in the Horn of Africa is the hosting of foreign military bases. This can invite different foreign conflicts into Africa and draw African countries into foreign military adventures, which undermines military independence, territorial integrity, and national security architecture of African countries.

## IMPACT

### Africa: A Theater for Geopolitics

Over the last 10 years, the Middle East has been engaging Africa, most notably, Sudan, Somalia, Egypt, Libya, Chad, Djibouti, Tunisia, Algeria, Eritrea, and Morocco has had tremendous impact. These engagements bear the hallmarks of geopolitical power plays. Due to the asymmetrical power relationship between African countries and their Middle Eastern counterparts, the threat of Middle Eastern countries imposing their political, economic and security vision on Africa, either through ‘soft’ or ‘hard’ power, is significant.

### Increased Intra-state Instability

In areas of greater geostrategic importance, Middle Eastern engagements in Africa tend to increase in the run-up to and aftermath of crises. Their intervention at critical points of crises has resulted in the deterioration of various African states. In Libya, foreign competition and meddling resulted in a continued political stalemate, leading to a resurgence of violence.

### MIDDLE EAST MILITARY FOOTPRINT IN AFRICA



Illustration of Middle East Military Footprint in Africa



This is exemplified by the continuing instability and insecurity in Libya since 2011. In Sudan, Middle Eastern engagements contributed to the drawn-out nature of the conflict in that country. In Somalia, tensions are being created and intensified between Somaliland and Somalia, and between the FGS and the federal member states. In Egypt, challenges emerged after the Muslim Brotherhood-led government failed to deliver, and subsequent coup, in which different Middle East countries supported opposing sides. In Djibouti, the 'spill over' of tensions in the Middle East led to withdrawal of Qatari troops from the border with Eritrea, and the annexation of territory by Eritrea.

### **Economic Boost for Some Countries**

In other areas, Middle Eastern countries try to acquire strategic ports and infrastructure through a combination of investments, diplomacy, and security assistance. Throughout West and Southern Africa, significant investment and large-scale infrastructure, energy, or extraction projects create jobs, economic development and critically needed infrastructure. In West Africa, financial and military support from UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar assists in combating extremism and terrorism in the region.

The engagements have not necessarily resulted in a significant improvement of economic development of African countries. In fact, trade between Africa and the Middle East represents a fraction of both Africa and the Middle East's total trade volumes. While UAE is Africa's biggest Middle East contributor of foreign direct investment (FDI), Turkey is Africa's biggest Middle East trading partner, followed by the UAE, Qatar, and Iran.

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### **Ideological and political support to groups such as Muslim Brotherhood has caused tensions and instability in several countries in Africa**

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For the Middle East

- o Address ideological manipulation of political and sectarian differences that have a destabilizing effect on the continent.
- o Resist the temptation to sectarianize the religiously factional and schismatic orientations they find in Africa.
- o Work to prevent destabilizing effects of their engagements, within states by prioritizing mutual security and prosperity.
- o Halt and address trafficking of weapons to conflict-prone areas through Middle Eastern countries. Such weapons hurt both local and Middle East interest in the long term owing to perpetual conflicts they cause in both regions.
- o Avoid military adventurism into Africa, as it extends the already complicated Middle East security environment into the continent, thereby worsening Africa's security and conflict environment. This threatens Africa's stability and security as well as that of the Middle East.
- o The Middle East should be careful not to transfer tensions and conflicts in their region to the African continent. North and Eastern Africa are suffering from 'spill over' effects of Middle Eastern tensions, especially along the Saudi Arabia–Qatar fault-line. This has the potential to spur conflict within, between, and among African countries.
- o Create transparency in direct investment, political agreements, and security cooperation. Opaque deals and agreements are viewed with skepticism on the African continent. The Middle East should ensure that their financial assistance are used for intended purposes and not diverted to malign activities.
- o Halt and address any illegal activities related to the extraction industry. Specifically, Middle Eastern countries should address contentious import of charcoal from Somalia that is partly providing a lifeline for terror groups.
- o Commit to the common goal of creating a stable and prosperous Africa, and work to harmonize differing individual views on what constitutes stability, and who should create and uphold that stability for mutual benefit.
- o In their economic engagements, Middle East should try to adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Paris Principles, and UN Human Rights Council Resolutions
- o Engage with African institutions, civil society organizations, and governments to mitigate risks flowing from foreign engagements in Africa and allows for more enhanced people to people diplomacy that is more enduring.
- o Economic and social due diligence should become obligatory for conducting business in Africa.

## Promote multilateral bloc-to-bloc relations instead of bilateral country-to-country relations to profit from the economies of scale

- Develop open-source Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning frameworks for economic engagements in Africa to effectively monitor and evaluate projects, and learn from mistakes, obstacles and unintended negative effects.
- Promote multilateral bloc-to-bloc relations instead of bilateral country-to-country relations to profit from the economies of scale.
- To reach Africa's growth potential, governments and investors need to prioritize targeted infrastructural development, reduce high nonperforming loans, prevent corrupt practices in their engagements, and be transparent in their financial flows.
- Increase trade relations with Africa through purchasing Africa's finished products, removing trade barriers, and allowing for free movement of labor.
- Address the zero-sum mentality with regards to 'scramble' for African states, that forces African states to pick sides in Middle Eastern affairs.
- Disengage ideological foreign policies in Africa to avoid further destabilizing countries and regions on the continent.
- Middle Eastern powers especially the Gulf powers should establish a joint financial taskforce with African countries to help monitor, prevent, and cut terrorist financing.

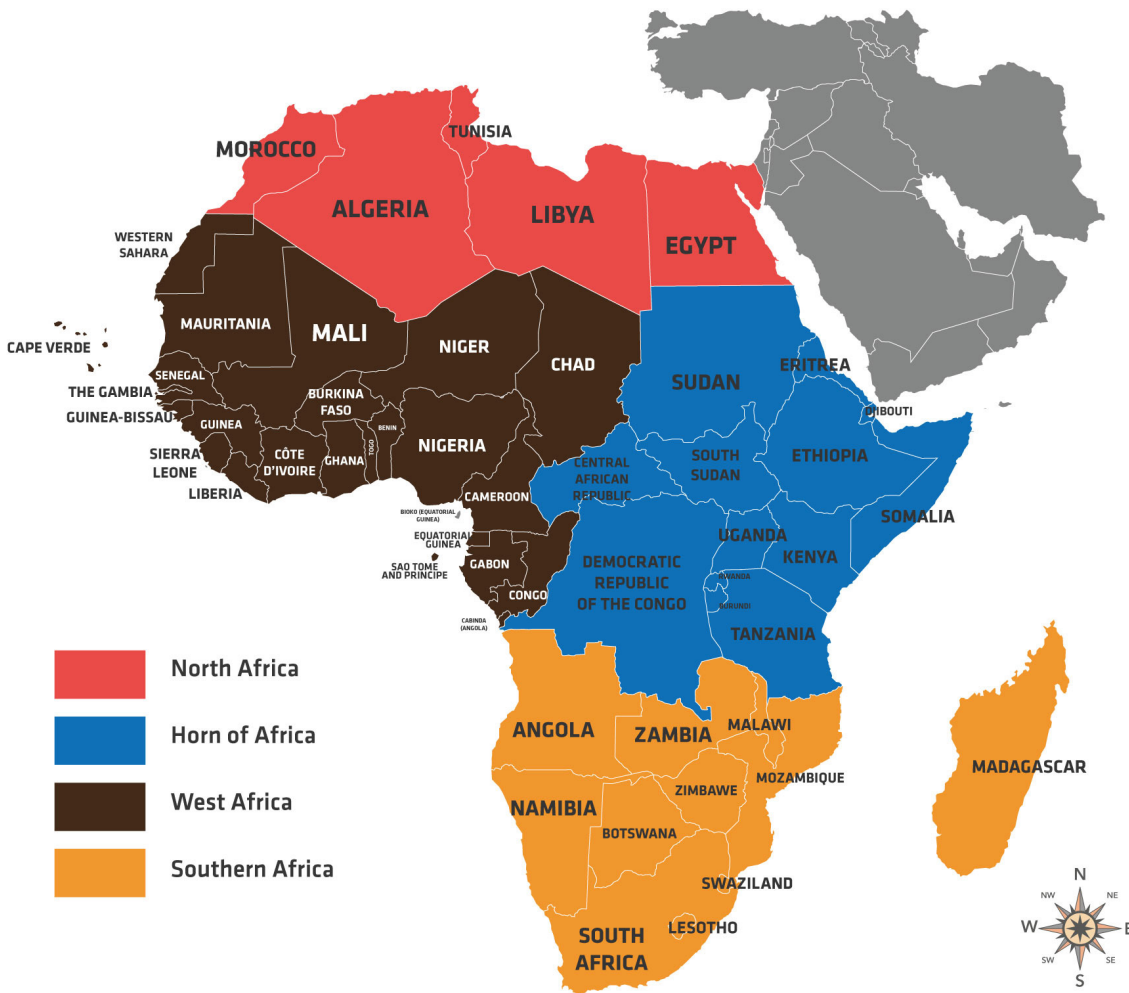
## Recommendations for Africa

- Focus on gaining capital income from remittance flows.
- Develop strong continental and regional frameworks through the AU or regional organizations to address foreign engagements on the African continent, based on Pan-African ideals.
- Develop sound public investment management systems, which increases the likelihood of more private investment.
- Carefully assess, before accepting political, security or economic support from some of the Middle Eastern countries that may risk undermining internal (African) democracy and stability.
- Strive for neutrality in Middle East regional conflicts, but focus attention in working with Middle Eastern countries in fighting terrorism and other common threats.
- Promote multilateral cooperation and relations instead of bilateral country-to-country relations. Bilateral relations have the potential to pit one country against the other and undermine sovereignty, while multilateral relations mitigate that risk.



- o Africa should be careful to avoid religionization and sectarianization of politics, especially along *Sunni – Shia* lines.
- o Resist the establishment of extremist religious and political ideologies in different parts of the continent and/or Africa as a theatre for global terrorism.
- o Through the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), adopt common positions against ideological foreign policy engagements by Middle Eastern powers in Africa, and create a global Islamic network against violent extremism.
- o Increase investment in individual and collective capacity of African states to deter and combat jihadism and reduce reliance on the support of more capable, non-African states.

## Focus In Africa



Map of Africa's Four Regions

## Common Interest Recommendations

- Avoid ideologically based relations that have the tendency to be fractious and likely to widen geopolitical fault lines that may push both regions further into instability.
- Promote mutually beneficial economic engagements and political cooperation that enhances both regions' prospects for development, security, and stability.
- Strengthen partnership and collaboration in engaging the global north
- Adopt common positions on issues on mutual interest in international fora.
- Conduct relations based on mutual respect.

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**Promote mutually beneficial economic engagements and political cooperation that enhances both regions' prospects for development, security, and stability**

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