# THE MAJOR PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES IN AFRICA ON THE 20ᵀᴴ ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN UNION

## AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

# I - INTRODUCTION

2022 marks the 20th anniversary of the inauguration of the African Union (AU).[1] In reviewing the record of the AU in its two decades of existence, the aspect of AU's role that is sure to attract the most scrutiny relates to the area of peace and security. While this special research report is not meant to provide such a comprehensive review, it seeks to provide an analysis of the major peace and security issues in Africa in 2022 as a useful lens for understanding where the AU's peace and security order stands 20 years after AU's launch. In presenting the analysis on the various major peace and security issues afflicting the continent, this report attests to both the importance of AU's role and how its role has become more, not less, important today than at the time of its establishment, notwithstanding recent regressions in its performance.[2]

Despite some positive developments registered in 2021 such as democratic transitions and smooth elections in Niger, Zambia, Cabo Verde and The Gambia and the relative consolidation of peace in Burundi (leading to its removal from the agenda of the PSC) as well as the African Union's (AU) effort in mobilizing lagely successful coordinated action in dealing with the novel corona virus (COVID19), what dominated the peace and security landscape of the continent are events that produced more instability and insecurity with devastating consequences to tens of millions of people caught up by webs of crises. 2021 thus became a year during which civil wars, terrorist attacks, the COVID19 pandemic, natural disasters, military coups and state repression separately and in combination wreaked havoc in various parts of the continent. Media reports whether on TV, print or social media, were dominated with news headlines and reports of fighting, death, destruction and displacement in a context where opportunities for peace making,

mobilizing effective protection for civilians and provision of humanitarian assistance have been shrinking.

Arising from these troubling events of 2021 are certain peace and security issues that define the major peace and security trends in Africa during 2022 and beyond. As the events of 2021 aptly demonstrated, these trends will put further strain on the continental peace and security system anchored on the African Union (AU). As the AU marks the 20th anniversary of its establishment in July 2002, questions are asked on the impact of these changes in the nature and rise in the threats to peace and security in Africa on the AU's agenda for silencing the guns.[3] At the opening of the 35th ordinary session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 5 February, AU Commission Chairperson told African leaders gathered at Mandela Hall at the AU Headquarters that 'the security situation on the continent now calls for a real new approach which should question our peace and security architecture and its correlation with the new destabilizing factors in Africa.'[4] He went on to warn them that without such change he has 'serious questions about the future of our flagship project to silence the guns.'

Indeed, it is against the foregoing background and in a context of rising demands for a more effective response to these rising and changing peace and security dynamics of the continent that the AU summit elected all the 15 members of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the highest standing decision-making body of the AU on matters of peace and security.[5] As preparations are underway for the newly elected and returning members of the PSC to take their seat on 1 April 2022, this special report examines the peace and security issues that

[1] The AU was launched during the first AU summit held in Durban, South Africa in July 2002.

[2] This report is also of immediate policy utility as it contributes to informing the preparation of the new members of the Peace and security Council elected during the February 2022 AU summit. On the 2022 election of PSC members, see Amani Africa's Policy Briefs: 2022 Elections of the PSC: Overview of the Process and List of Candidates, (January 2022) available on https://amaniafrica-et.org/2022-elections-of-the-psc-overview-of-the-process-and-list-of-candidates-2/ and 2022 Election of the 15 Members of the PSC: Conduct and Outcome of the Elections, (February 2022) available on https://amaniafrica-et.org/2022-election-of-the-15-members-of-the-psc-conduct-and-outcome-of-the-elections/

[3] For an in-depth review of AU's Silencing the Guns initiative and challenges in its implementation, see Amani Africa's Policy Brief, Critical Appraisal of the Agenda of Silencing the Guns in Africa, (December 2020) available on https://amaniafrica-et.org/critical-appraisal-of-the-agenda-of-silencing-the-guns-in-africa/

[4] Speech of AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat at the opening ceremony of the 35th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, (5 February 2022) https://au.int/en/node/41442; also see https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/continental-security-agenda-african-leaders-meet-addis

[5] For more on the AU PSC see Amani Africa, The African Union Peace and Security Council Handbook 2021, (2021) available on https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-handbook-2021/

that will dominate the work of the PSC.

# II - DETERIORATING SECURITY OUTLOOK

After the sustained decline in the number and geographic spread of violent conflicts in Africa until the end of the first decade of the century, Africa has in more recent years come to experience a spike in conflicts and crises, including violent armed conflicts as shown in the graph below. The PSC in the communique of its 1000th session expressed 'deep concern over the persistence and resurgence of conflict and crisis situations in some parts of the Continent, including the growing threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism and armed groups.'[6] Further compounding this deteriorating security situation is the spate of military coups, a further manifestation of declining political stability in parts of the continent.

This spike in conflicts can be seen through at least two dimensions. First, there has been a rise in the number of conflicts on the continent during the past few years and this trend continued into 2022. For example, according to the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, one of the major conflict datasets in the world, Africa experienced an increase in civil wars from 18 in 2017 to 21 in 2018, one of the highest numbers of civil conflicts in over 7 decades.[7] This trend continued into 2021. In 2021 alone, some 30,866 events of political violence were registered, resulting in close to 43,791 fatalities. Compared to 2019, the last two years have shown a sharp rise in terms of events of political violence (28%) and fatalities.[8] Second, the geographic spread of these conflict situations has also expanded. One worrying manifestation of this relates to the continuing expansion of the territories in Africa affected by terrorism. Whereas in 2010 only five countries experienced recurrent attacks on their territory from violent Islamist extremism (Algeria,

Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia) largely involving Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab, that number has grown by nearly three folds and today stands at 14 countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia and Tunisia) involving large number of terrorist groups (see the section on terrorism for further reference).

Three factors account for this overall deteriorating peace and security context of the continent. The first of this is the persistence of existing conflicts. Examples that fall in this category include the conflicts in Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, DRC, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, and Nigeria. The second factor has to do with the expansion and/or escalation of some of the exiting conflicts. Situations in Mali, Somalia, Niger, and Sudan are examples that fall in this category. The third factor for the increase in number and geographic spread of conflicts involves the emergence of new conflict situations or eruption of new unrest involving either the operation of terrorist groups or civil conflicts. Some of the situations that illustrate this include those in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, and Mozambique.

## CONFLICT TRENDS IN AFRICA



Source: Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Paper 2020

There is of course regional variations in the state of peace and security on the continent. Most conflicts are generally concentrated in the Horn of Africa, Central Africa and parts of West Africa and the Sahel. Even within regions, conflicts are generally concentrated in a few countries. In Horn of Africa, for example, conflict was mostly confined to Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

In 2021, the situation in West Africa and the Sahel continued to deteriorate with affected countries notably Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger experiencing

---

[6] See communique of the 1000th meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM(1000) (2021) available on https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1000th-meeting-of-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-on-the-activities-of-the-psc-since-its-establishment-in-celebration-of-the-council-s-1000th-meeting-25-may-2021

[7] Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989–2018, (June 2019) available on https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Rustad%20%26%20Bakken%20-%20Conflict%20Trends%20in%20Africa%2C%201989–2018%2C%20Conflict%20Trends%206-2019.pdf

[8] ACLED Dashboard, available on https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard

spike in attacks. Burkina Faso experienced growing number of terrorist attacks, including some of the deadliest attacks since 2015. Three such incidents illustrate both the spike and intensity of these attacks. In June 2021, an attack in Yagha province, near the eastern border with Niger left more than 130 civilians killed, in one of the worst attacks registered in the country. Another attack in northern Burkina Faso near the town of Gorgadji in August 2021 led to the death of over 80 people including, 59 civilians, six pro-government militias and 15 police officers, prompting the government to declaring three days of mourning. On 14 November, a terrorist attack on security forces in Inata in northern Burkina Faso near the border with Niger, which claimed the lives of at least 49 officers and four civilians, opened the flood gates of widespread public opposition against the government. The scale of the casualty that security forces suffered is the deadliest since the jihadist insurgency started to gain foothold in Burkina Faso in 2015/16. Niger also experienced similar spate of terrorist attacks almost every month of the year. These include some of the deadliest incidents of attacks. In January, around 100 died in the west of the country as a result of armed violence and some 200 civilians were killed in the Tahoua region in March, including around 30 children. Attacks of varying gravity were also reported in July, September, October, November and December 2021.

In the Central Africa region, the situations in CAR, Cameroon and DRC involved major developments in 2021. In the CAR, contestations among various political and armed groups that emerged from disputes over the Presidential election in December 2020 triggered a wave of violence during 2021 leading to the displacement of hundreds of thousands. In Cameroon, a combination of the violent crisis in the North-West and South-West of the country and the terrorist violence in the far North have produced an aggravating humanitarian crisis.[9] One recent research report noted that the conflict in the North West and South West regions of the country was especially violent in 2021 with clashes between separatists and security forces displacing hundreds of thousands, mostly women and children. According to the UN, the violent situations have, among others, led to school closures that affected over 700,000 children.[10] The DRC has also experienced significant spike in violence during the year. Violent incidents have been reported almost every month from a series of village killings in January to the thousands of people fleeing fighting in November 2021. According to UNHCR, fighting in the restive eastern DRC forced at least 11,000 people to flee into Uganda, representing the largest refugee influx in a single day for more than a year.

From the Central Africa region, the major new development was the descent of Chad into political and security uncertainty. This followed the death of Chadian President Idriss Déby in a battle field fighting armed rebel groups and the decision of army generals to suspend the constitution for installing Déby's son in the army Mahamat Déby as the leader of the Transitional Military Council (TMC). Apart from the political and legal uncertainty that ensued from the suspension of the Constitution, the military takeover of power also triggered protest and opposition from the political opposition. Chad is also one of the countries affected by both the growing terrorism menace in the Sahel and the influx of weapons and armed groups operating from Libya.

In north Africa, the major development involves the tension and political unrest resulting from the fierce power struggle that precipitated the delay in the election in Libya. As the tension continues into 2022 with the Tobruk-based parliament facing off political opponents in Tripoli, it is reported that 'omnes of renewed fighting are visible for the first time since an October 2020 ceasefire ended six years of political feuds and intermittent conflict.'[11] Although no major incident was reported in 2021, the other situation of note in this region is the continuation of the tension that erupted in Western Sahara following a major incident of violent confrontation that disrupted the ceasefire during the previous year. It is worth recalling that

---

[9] Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 307, Rebels, cictims, peacebuilders: Women in Cameroon's Anglophone conflict (23 February 2022).

[10] UN News, Violence in Cameroon, impacting over 700,000 children shut out of school, (2 December 2021) available on https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/12/1107072
[11] Crisis Group Statement, International unity is needed to prevent a divided Libya (3 March 2022) https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/international-unity-needed-prevent-divided-libya

this was one of the agenda items addressed during the PSC summit held on 9 March 2021.[12]

In 2021, the region that continues to experience deepening crises and worsening insecurity and uncertainty as in the previous year is the Horn of Africa. The conflict situation that rightly drew growing concern in this region during the year is the violent armed conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, which not only worsened in 2021 but also expanded beyond Tigray into neighboring regions of the country. Apart from featuring as AOB during the 9 March 2021 PSC summit, it was in the context reports of atrocious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and the worsening of the conflict that the PSC held a session over the situation in November 2021.[13] In Somalia, the deteriorating insecurity is a result of the intensification of attacks by Al Shabaab and the political meltdown that brought the country to the precipice more than ones. A major development was the eruption of new political infighting between the President and the Prime Minister along with the persisting tension between Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and some of the Federal Member States (FMS) and the worrying political instability resulting from the disagreement over the protracted electoral process.

The transition in Sudan faced its major setback following the coup of 25 October 2021, which came after months of growing tension between the civilian and military components of the transitional government. This has since plunged the country into persistent and widespread unrest and political instability. With Prime Minister Abdela Hamdok resigning from his position after his reinstatement following a deal with the military in November and Sudanese civilians remaining determined to sustain their peaceful protest against military rule and demanding a civilian transitional leadership,

the prospect for achieving agreement among the various political forces remains bleak, particularly in the face of the military's refusal to make concessions. Apart from upsetting the gains made in the country's peace process particularly in Darfur, the economy of the country is facing major meltdown further accentuating already dire economic and humanitarian situation.

In Southern Africa, the terrorist violence that wreaked havoc in northern Mozambique has continued to be a source of concern. Despite the success of military campaigns involving Rwandan and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces in dealing a major blow to the terrorists, the terrorist insurgency is not defeated. Insurgents remain major source of instability in pockets of the territories they lost and have, as they ceded the territories where they previously had foothold, expanded their presence into neighboring Niassa province and Tanzania.[14]

Going beyond these general and regional peace and security trends, the remaining part of this report considers and examines the seven major peace and security issues in Africa for 2022.

## CONFLICTS, CRISIS AND ELECTIONS IN AFRICA IN 2022
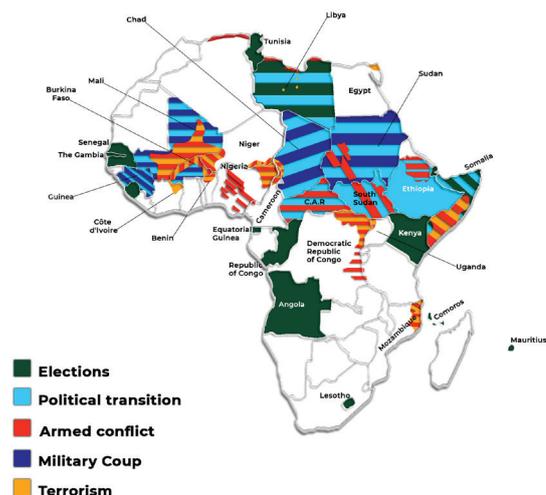
[12] See communique of the 984th meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CMLXXXIV) (2021) available on https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-984th-meeting-of-the-psc-held-on-9-march-2021-on-the-follow-up-on-the-implementation-of-paragraph-15-of-the-decision-on-silencing-the-guns-of-the-14th-extraordinary-summit

[13] See communique of the 1045th meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM.1045 (2021) available on https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1045th-meeting-of-the-psc-held-on-8-november-2021-on-the-situation-in-ethiopia

[14] ICG Africa Report No. 178, Winning Peace in Mozambique's Embattled North, (10 February 2022) available on https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/southern-africa/mozambique/b178-winning-peace-mozambiques-embattled-north

# III - THE RISE AND RISE OF TERRORISM RELATED VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

Africa faces the unfortunate challenge of having become the epicenter of terrorism and violent extremism. As one recent study put it, seventeen (17) militant armed groups designated by the US as Foreign Terrorist Organizations affected at least 22 countries in Africa.[15] The frequency, ferocity and geographic spread of violent attacks involving terrorist groups continues to grow in 2021 as well. Additionally, events in 2021 also revealed the continuing change in the means and methods as well as sophistication of the modus operandi of terrorist groups. Apart from the exploitation of existing grievances and use of natural resources and organized criminal activities for financing themselves, some of the terrorist groups have started the use of drone technology for reconnaissance purposes and such weapons as surface-to-air missiles.[16]

This spike and geographic expansion of terrorism has been most notable in the Sahel region and Lake Chad basin. According to UNOCHA, 'from 2015 to 2020, the number of violent attacks increased eight- fold in the Central Sahel and tripled in the Lake Chad basin.'[17] Violent events linked to terrorism spiked in the Sahel with a 70% increase compared to previous years.[18]

While violent terrorist events in the Lake Chad have reduced in the 2021 compared to the previous year, Boko Haram remains a lethal terrorist group in the region causing the death of about five people on average per single attack[19]. The year 2021 witnessed about 134 attacks on military forces including ambushes, direct attack and Improvised Explosives Device (IED) incidents, while a little more than 150 attacks were carried out on civilian targets.[20] A concerning development in relation to the operation of Boko Haram which has been highlighted in various sessions[21] of the PSC is the increasing use of technologies such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by the terrorist group.

Another part of the continent that experienced major incidents of terrorist violence is the Central Africa, affecting most notably (apart from Cameroon and Chad) the volatile eastern DRC. Indeed, the situation in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) registered notable deterioration. In the first half of 2021 alone, terrorist attacks led to the death of more than 1500 individuals, almost half of the total death registered on the continent.[22] Uganda also experienced several incidents in 2021. Between October and November, Uganda recorded several bomb attacks, including suicide bombers. The attacks were reportedly carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan rebel outfit based in neighboring DRC and affiliated with the Daesh/ISIS terror group.

In East Africa, Al-Shabaab, despite the loss it sustained over the years, continues to adapt and maintain a level of organization and capability to recruit, orchestrate attacks (in Somalia and sporadically in Kenya) and maintain control of large parts of rural areas in Southern Somalia. In the context of mounting political tension and infighting among various Somalia political actors, the terror group made gains during 2021. Most recently, it orchestrated an offesnsive targeting police stations and checkpoints in a show of force to make

[15] Tricia Bacon and Jason Warner, Twenty Years after 9/11: The threat in Africa – the new epicentre of global jihadi terror, (September 2021) available on https://ctc.usma.edu/twenty-years-after-9-11-the-threat-in-africa-the-new-epicenter-of-global-jihadi-terror/
[16] Report of the AUC Chairperson on Continental Efforts in the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, AU Doc PSC/PR/RPT.1034(2021) submitted to the 1040th meeting of the PSC on 22 October2021.
[17] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian needs and requirements overview: Sahel crisis, (April 2021) available on https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/sahel-crisis-humanitarian-needs-and-requirements-overview-april-2021
[18] African Center for Strategic Studies, Surge in Militant Islamist Violence in the Sahel Dominates Africa's Fight against Extremists, (24 January 2022) available on https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mig2022-01-surge-militant-islamist-violence-sahel-dominates-africa-fight-extremists/
[19] As above, 13.
[20] Report of the AUC Chairperson on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram Terrorist Group, AU Doc PSC/PR/RPT.1057(2022) submitted to the 1057th meeting of the PSC on14 January 2022.
[21] See communique of the 816th meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXVI) (2018) available on https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/the-816th-meeting-of-the-au-peace-and-security-council-on-the-renewal-of-the-mandate-of-the-multi-national-joint-task-force-mnjtf-against-boko-haram-and-the-regional-strategy-for-the-stabilization-recovery-and-resilience-of-the-boko-haram-affected-areas and communique of the 973rd meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLXXIII) (2021) available on https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-973rd-meeting-of-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-on-the-report-of-the-chairperson-of-the-commission-on-the-multinational-joint-task-force-against-the-boko-haram-18-january-2021
[22] As above, 13.

itsstrong presence in Mogadishu known.[23]

Terrorist attacks have relatively reduced in other parts of the continent. In the province of Cabo Delgado of northern Mozambique, there was about 59% decrease in the number of attacks against civilians by insurgent groups as compared to 2020. [24] However, the region remains volatile and the fighting has continued in the province as well as westward in the province of Niassa.

## ATTACKS AND FATALITIES BY TERRORIST GROUPS IN 2021
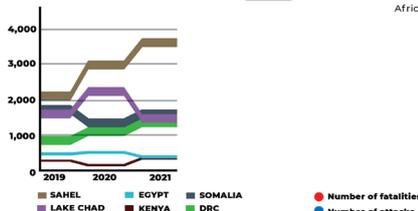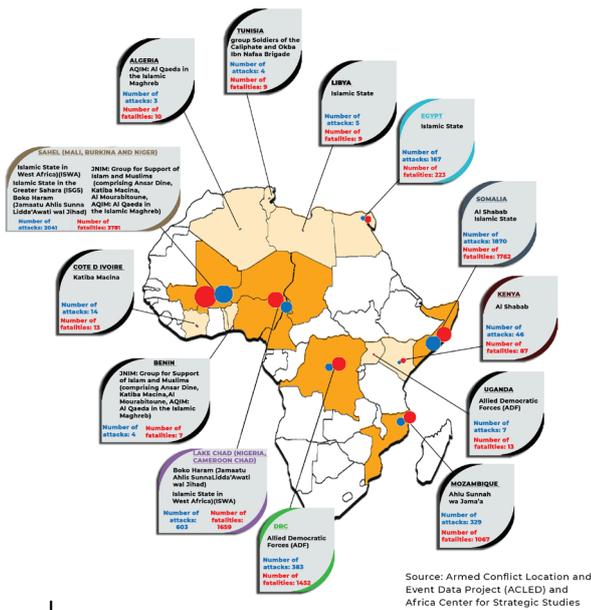


Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and Africa Center for Strategic Studies

## GEOGRAPCHIC SPREAD OF TERRORISM IN 2010



Source: Our World in Data, Global Terrorism Database

There are growing concerns in West Africa on the rising threat of expansion of terrorist activities into the coastal countries of the region.[25] In previous years, incidents of terrorist attacks have been reported in Cote d'Ivoire. The most recent such attack attributed to Katiba Macina, affiliated to the terrorist group Jamaah Al Nusra Al Islam wal Muslimini (JNIM) led to the death of ten soldiers near the border with Burkina Faso. In November 2021, Togo reported terrorist attacks in the northern region, near its border with Burkina Faso. The incident involved the attack of a security post. Similarly, while two soldiers were reportedly killed in Benin in militant attacks in December, Benin experienced its deadliest attack in February 2022 involving IEDs that claimed the lives of nine people in a park on the border with Burkina Faso and Niger.[26]

It emerges from the foregoing that despite its relatively successful peace operation in Somalia by liberating territories from Al Shabaab, the rise and expansion of terrorism in various parts of the continent both highlights the limits of and the challenge it poses to the AU's peace and security architecture and its peace and security partnerships. Given the failure of the security focused approach to terrorism, changing both the characterization of the threat of terrorism as essentially a security problem and the tools used in response to it has become imperative.
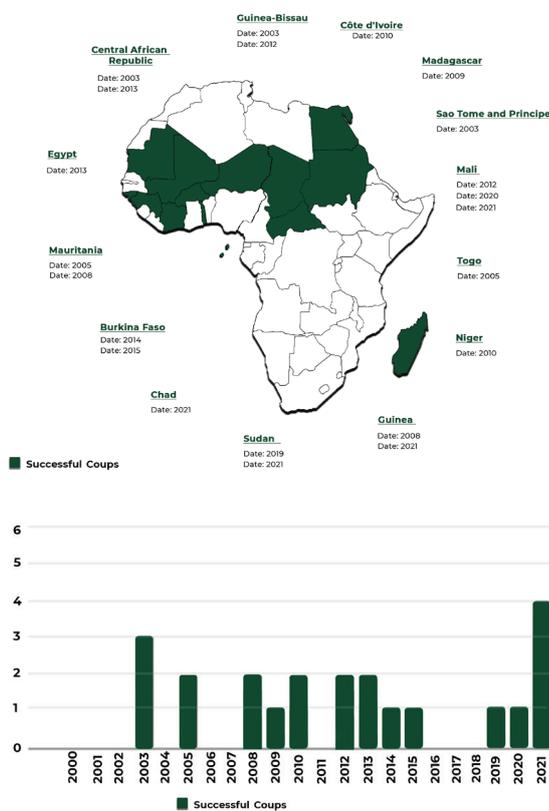
## IV - THE RETURN OF MILITARY COUPS

Since the adoption of the norm baning unconstitutional changes of government, Africa has experienced visible decline in the occurrence of military coups. This changed with the return of coups during the past year. In 2021, Africa experienced the largest number of military coups since the turn of the century. In less than a year between April 2021 and February 2022, there were eight coup

---

[23] *VOA Report (16 February 2022)* https://www.voanews.com/a/al-shabab-attacks-on-mogadishu-police-stations-leave-at-least-5-dead/6444293.html

[24] *ACLED, Cabo Ligado Monthly: December 2021, (21 December 2021) available on* https://www.caboligado.com/monthly-reports/cabo-ligado-monthly-dec-2021

[25] *Sampson Kwarkye, West Africa coastal terrori attacks: Just the tip of the iceberg (9 March 2022)* https://issafrica.org/iss-today/west-african-coastal-terror-attacks-just-the-tip-of-the-iceberg

[26] *Radio France Internationale (RFI), Deadly attacks on Benin's northern border raise fears of jihadist intrusion, (11 February 2022) available on* https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220211-deadly-attacks-on-benin-s-northern-border-raise-fears-of-jihadist-intrusion

attempts and another plot for attempting a coup. These coup attempts and the plot for attempting a coup took place in Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau and the DRC. In 2021, four of these coups in Mali, Guinea, Chad and Sudan were successful in bringing men in uniform to power. The maximum that Africa experienced a coup since 2000 was in 2003. Until 2021 since then, the trends in the occurrence of coups in Africa is largely characterized by decline despite its sporadic occurrence in a range of one to two coups per year.

## MILITARY COUPS IN AFRICA SINCE 2000

**Guinea-Bissau**
Date: 2003

**Côte d'Ivoire**
Date: 2010

**Central African Republic**
Date: 2003
Date: 2013

**Madagascar**
Date: 2009

**Sao Tome and Principe**
Date: 2003

**Egypt**
Date: 2013

**Mali**
Date: 2012
Date: 2020
Date: 2021

**Mauritania**
Date: 2005
Date: 2008

**Togo**
Date: 2005

**Burkina Faso**
Date: 2014
Date: 2015

**Niger**
Date: 2010

**Chad**
Date: 2021

**Guinea**
Date: 2008
Date: 2021

**Sudan**
Date: 2019
Date: 2021

■ Successful Coups

■ Successful Coups

The unprecedented number of coups and attempted coups highlts that the efficacy of current norms and the approaches to coups has reached its limits. Indications are that the failure of the AU to apply the measures under Article 7 (g) of the PSC Protocol against Chad and the precedent that the success of other coups set seems to have set in motion what Secretary-General of the UN, Antonio Guterres called 'epidemic of coups'. This trend has indeed continued into 2022. In January, the military in Burkina Faso removed the democratically elected sitting President. In February around the time of the AU summit, soldiers in Guinea Bissau launched an attack on the presidential place while President Umaro Embalo was chairing a cabinet meeting. While this attack was foiled, it led to numerous fatalities and the ECOWAS designated it as an attempted coup and condemned it. In a subsequent Extraordinary Summit ECOWAS held virtually, the regional body adopted a decision for deploying forces to Guinea Bissau. Similarly, the President of the DRC and outgoing chairperson of the AU Felix Tshekedi had to cut his stay in Addis Ababa for the AU summit short and travel back to DRC after reports of a plot by senior security people reportedly for ousting him emerged.

Not surprisingly, the AU Commission Chairperson pointed out in his address to the AU Assembly on 5 February that the 'continent's security situation today (2022) is deeply marked by the metastasis of terrorism and the dangerous resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government.'[27] While no one knows how this return of military coup d'état in Africa will evolve in 2022 and beyond, it is sure to remain very high in the peace and security policy discourse and action on the continent. Given the trend the successful coups so far set, the likelihhod of coups taking place in other countries has increased. As we pointed out in our special report, the response of the AU and ECOWAS to these coups principally focusing on a templated application of sanction is utterly inadequate and there is a need for developing both effective preventive measures and response measures that go beyond sanction.[28] Thus, whether and how widely coups would happen depends, among others, on the lessons learned from the coups that happened thus far and the changes that the AU and regional bodies introduce to their policy toolbox.

## V - THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW COLD WAR

Writing in the March 1983 edition of the New York Times under the intriguing title of *Africa: From Cold War to Cold Shoulders* John Holmes summed

---

[27] *As above, 3.*

[28] *Amani Africa, Special Research Report no 10, Critical Reflections on the challenges to and means of strengthening the AU norm banning unconstitutional changes of government, (September 2021) available on https://amaniafrica-et.org/critical-reflections-on-the-challenges-to-and-means-of-strengthening-the-au-norm-banning-unconstitutional-changes-of-governments-ucg/*

up aptly the treatment Africa endured in the hands of foreign interveners: 'Having been carved up and colonized by European powers and turned into pawns, knights and rooks on a cold war chessboard by the superpowers, Africa now faces a devastating new problem: indifference.'[29] As the late former Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan put it in his 1998 report, 'Africa was left to fend for itself'.[30]

But Holmes characterization of the problem as devastating was more a projection of the savior complex than the impact of the experience on its own on the continent. For Africa, the 'new problem' created a policy space for African actors to assume increasing responsibilities for the affairs of the continent. It thus became possible for Africa to witness the transition from the OAU to the AU and register notable improvements in its economic fortunes.

Developments in recent years and most notably in 2021 show that the pendulum has swung from the cold shoulders (of the brief unipolar moment of the post-cold war world order) and the new scramble for Africa of late 2000s to the current phase of securitized rivalry reminiscent of the Cold War. Africa thus confronts once again the challenge of having the same fate befallen her during the Cold War. To borrow from Holmes, this is the fate of being 'turned into pawns, knights and rooks on a cold war chessboard by the superpowers,'[31] although this fate is not necessarily inevitable depending on how African actors exercise their agency in facing the 'new Cold War'.

The increasing securitization of the intensifying intervention of foreign powers in Africa reminiscent of the Cold War has taken at least four forms. The first and traditional form involves security cooperation of various forms ranging from training and technical support, deployment of 'experts' to the provision of supplies. Apart from continuing engagement of old powers, this is an area showing increasing engagement, among others, of China.[32] The second involves the establishment of military bases, with the associated often adverse political and security ramifications. With 13 foreign countries carrying out military operations, more than any other region in the world,[33] Africa has also become home to nearly 50 foreign military outposts, including the first military bases that China and Japan established in Djibouti since World War II. Third, as the situations in Libya, the Sahel and Ethiopia, and Somalia have illustrated another manifestation of the increasing militarization of the engagement of foreign powers in Africa is the rising supply and use of drones as well as provision of military support in Africa's conflicts with all the attendant monetary and human costs. Finally, there is also the increasing use of foreign private military and security companies by governments with weak security establishments facing serious security challenges, including notably in their fight against militant insurgent groups.[34]

These companies, being an extension of their host country's political and economic interest in Africa, are actively competing for space and influence.[35] A case in point is the experience of countries in the Sahel, where the increased discontent against French presence in the Sahel region and the emergence of Russia's influence as a contending global power are changing existing political and security dynamics. Due to the mounting frustration on their own governments and France in bringing security, increasingly citizens in the Sahel region are looking for other powers for protection. Apart from Mali, this was also witnessed recently in Burkina Faso.[36]

[29] *John Holmes, Africa from Cold War to Cold Shoulders, New York Times, (7 March 1993) https://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/07/weekinreview/the-world-africa-from-the-cold-war-to-cold-shoulders.html*

[30] *Report of the Secretary General, The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (April 1998) https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfp000065.pdf*

[31] *Vasu Gounden, Africa: Pawn in a new world dis-order, (10 February 2022) available on https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/africa-pawn-in-a-new-world-dis-order/*

[32] *See, Folashadé Soulé, "Connecting Security, Ideology and Economic Interests: China–Benin Military Cooperation", West Africa Insight: Increasing influence – China in West Africa 6, no. 1 (May 2021); Hannah Ryder and Ovingwe Eguegu, Africans welcome China's role in peace and security, but are pushing for greater agency and responsibility, (10 February 2010) available on https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/africans-welcome-chinas-role-in-peace-and-security-but-are-pushing-for-greater-agency-and-responsibility/*

[33] *https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/africa-second-cold-war-risk-of-lost-decades-by-hippolyte-fofack-2022-01?*

[34] *See Report of the Peace and Security Council of the AU on its activities and on the state of peace and security, AU Doc Assembly/AU/3(XXXV)*

*submitted to the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (5 February 2022), paras. 108-109.*

[35] *as above 24.*

## FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA



| ▮ USA | ▮ SPAIN |
|---|---|
| ▮ FRANCE | ▮ CHINA |
| ▮ RUSSIA * | ▮ TURKEY |
| ▮ INDIA | ▮ JAPAN |
| ▮ UK | ▮ GERMANY |
| ▮ ITALY | ▮ SAUDI ARABIA |

Source: The Intercept, SIPRI, and Centre for Strategic and International Studies

* The Wagner private military contractors allegedly linked to the Russian state but the latter denies any association with the group.

In the current iteration of the new Cold War, one trend that became evident in 2021 is accordingly the dangerous rise in the (often negative) influence of foreign forces on conflicts and political transitions on the continent. More and more conflicts and fragile transitions are becoming a theatre for proxy war or power struggle in which foreign powers seeking influence increasingly flex their muscles for determining the course and outcome of these conflicts and transitions according to their interests. More often than not such interventions are detrimental.

The Cold War like features of the intervention of foreign powers (new and old, big and middle powers) have already led to five devastatingly hot outcomes. First, as experienced in Libya in 2019-2020, they have made the conflicts and the transitions in Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Mali, Somalia and Sudan, very complicated, hence much more difficult to resolve. Putting it differently, these developments are rendering the instruments of mediation and peace making increasingly untenable and ineffective. Second and as a result, the conditions of the deepening securitized interface of foreign powers with Africa have increased the human and material costs of these conflicts and transitions as the violent armed conflict in Ethiopia illustrate. Third, while conflicts and fragile transitions have as a result become sources of major humanitarian crises, it has

simultaneously become more and more difficult to mobilize effective humanitarian response to the humanitarian consequences of these situations. Fourth, the heavy reliance on security instruments in responding to both governance-induced conditions of conflict involving terrorism and political disputes have led to an upsurge in defense spending on the continent, thereby diverting to military use the enormously limited resources that could otherwise have been utilized for meeting development needs of the masses. Fifth, in this context of increasing securitization, worrying signs of resurgence of military coups and hence reversal of gains achieved towards making military coups history have been observed.

The challenge for the AU and the PSC is how to track this menacing trend and craft ways and means of shielding African situations from being entangled into the worst manifestations of this rivalry.

## VI - MANAGING TRANSITIONS AND ELECTIONS

Large number of African countries are in one or another form of transition. This covers countries in nearly all parts of the continent. These include Libya and Tunisia in North Africa, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, Mali and The Gambia in West Africa, CAR and Chad in Central Africa, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia in East Africa and Angola and Lesotho in Southern Africa.

In some countries like Libya the transition is multidimensional. It thus involves the reinforcement and implementation of a peace agreement, the achievement of one constitutional system of governance and elections of the president and members of parliament. While much of the attention has been on the convening of elections, the transition in Libya shows the necessity of national reconciliation and a comprehensive negotiated settlement that accommodates the interests of all major political and social actors as well as disarmament and reintegration and reform of the highly fragmented security sector as pre conditions for successful transition. Instead of

---

**36** *Declan Walsh, The New York Times, After Coup in Burkina Faso, Protesters Turn to Russia for Help, (25 January 2022) available on* https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/world/africa/burkina-faso-coup-russians.html

becoming a process that builds on and sanctifies a political settlement, the election in Libya is viewed by the various political groupings as a terrain for a near zero sum competition for seizing power or maintaining their existing power and politico-security influence. In the prevailing political and security environment in the country, the elections may thus become a source of dispute and violence unless a political settlement and a shared clarity over the rules governing the elections and the management of their outcome are achieved.

In Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Guinea and Sudan, one of the major aspects of the transitional process is the transfer of power from men in uniform to civilian authority as midwife of the process for initiating politically agreed reforms towards the restoration of constitutional order. In all these cases, the policy challenge for the AU and RECs is how to remove the transitions in these countries from the hands of the military who seized power by force to a transitional political body under civilian leadership. In some of these cases like Mali, it appears that the military's control of power during the transition seems to have been taken as a given with discussions focusing mostly on the duration of the transition. In all of these cases, there is also the issue of ensuring that no member of the military administration would stand as candidate in the elections that would be organized for returning the country to constitutional normalcy according to the extant rules relating to unconstitutional changes of government in Africa.

In the case of Ethiopia, Lesotho, South Sudan and Tunisia one of the major challenges for the transitions is mobilizing the consensus and commitment of major political and social forces to an agreed upon transitional process. Where there is fierce contestation about or there is no agreed roadmap for political transition, it is imperative that both those in position of power and others seeking power are incentivized and convinced to bargain and agree on such a roadmap to save the transition in these countries from being stillborn as those in control of power seek to impose their will while those seeking share of power fight back. In the case of Tunisia, the constitutional referendum and the national elections scheduled for 2022 will

be a major test for gauging the degree of public support of the current President. They also stand to set the trajectory of the political and democratic stability of the country.

Similar to the elections in several countries in 2021 most notably Zambia and The Gambia, many of the other cases of transition in 2022 relate to the management of electoral processes. These include the elections in Angola, Kenya, Somalia and Senegal. For Angola, this year's elections will be the first elections to be held since long time president Jose Eduardo Dos Santos transferred power to the current President Joao Manuel Laurenço in 2017. The quality of the elections will thus serve as key test of evaluating the degree of progress in the democratization process of Angola under President Laurenço. In the case of Kenya, the national elections will see the end of the constitutionally mandated term of office of the incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta. At issue is accordingly whether the elections will be held in a peaceful atmosphere and based on a clean electoral process that guarantees the credibility of the elections as free, fair and transparent. As in previous elections, the main concern in Kenya is that the presidential elections are set to be closely and fiercely fought in a tense political contestation in which victory and loss are equated with life and death. This is therefore one of the situations that warrants the deployment of preventive diplomacy as the AU successfully did for the August 2021 elections in Zambia.

## ELECTIONS IN 2022
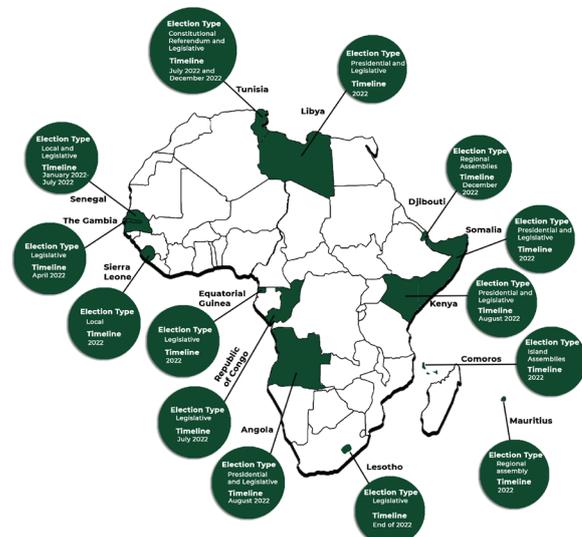
# VII - THE CONTINUING NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF COVID19

After two years of the global novel corona virus pandemic (COVID19), it is becoming more and more evident that the socioeconomic fallouts from COVID19 carry significant peace and security implications on the continent.[37] First, for countries in conflict including those on the agenda of the PSC,[38] it would have the effect of worsening the security situation and the humanitarian impact of conflicts. Reduced state capacity and international support including humanitarian assistance due to the economic impact of COVID19 also aggravates existing vulnerabilities. Second, COVID19 and the response measures have also exposed new sources of fragilities and insecurities. The serious, potentially prolonged, socioeconomic pressure is fueling social tension and putting citizens and governments in general and governments with weak public legitimacy in particular on a collision course. The protests and political instability that Tunisia experienced during the past two years are due, among others, to the aggravation of existing socio-economic challenges by COVID19.

Additionally, peace and security gets affected adversely due to the disruptive impact of COVID19 on national, regional and international efforts for conflict management and resolution. One of the consequences of the impact of COVID19 on conflict resolution efforts is that ongoing peace processes have come under increasing stress. In South Sudan, the impact of COVID19 and recent climate induced flooding further accentuated existing gaps in the resolve of South Sudanese parties for taking the necessary measures for the implementation of the transitional processes in the peace agreement. The contribution of COVID19 to the conditions that resulted in delays and gaps in implementation of the peace process may create further sources of dispute and political instability in the country.

COVID19 and its socio-economic fallouts will also affect peace and security by aggravating existing challenges in two other situations, namely countries in transition and those expected to have contested elections. There is a concern about the abuse by some in government of the anti-COVID19 measures for clamping down on dissenting political voices, opposition political parties and civil society organizations. In countries going for election or in transition, such instrumentalization of the anti-covid regulations can lead to electoral disputes and political instability as experienced in some of the elections on the continent during 2020 and 2021.

The negative implication of the COVID19 pandemic is also felt in the humanitarian front. It has not only exacerbated existing humanitarian challenges but also significantly constrained response measures. The AU, for example reported that, 'the socio-economic situation for Sahrawi refugees living in the five camps near Tindouf in Algeria further deteriorated as a result of COVID-19. Camp-based refugees reported widespread losses of income, jobs, and shortages of cash.'[39]

Despite the various peace and security uncertainties arising on the continent and the delay the pandemic caused to the AfCFTA, the AU has put in place a continental strategy on COVID19 and a COVID19 Response Fund. The Africa CDC has become not only a common source of scientific and technical support for member states but also the framework for coordinated action and mobilization of logistical resources for upscaling the capacity of member states to respond to the pandemic.

As the AU Commission Chairperson pointed out in his address to the 35th AU Assembly, the pandemic resulted in a 2.1% contraction of economic growth in Africa in 2020 and an increase in the debt to GDP ratio by ten points. Underscoring the urgency of the situation, he pointed out that we have to focus on active mobilization of financial resources both through addressing the debt burden of the continent by seeking cancellation and mobilization

---

[37] *For an earlier analysis on the impact of COVID19 on peace and security in Africa, see Amani Africa, Special Report No. 7, Impact of COVID19 on Multilateral Cooperation and Implications for Peace and Security in Africa, (18 June 2021) available on https://amaniafrica-et.org/impact-of-covid-19-on-multilateral-cooperation-and-implications-for-peace-and-security-in-africa/.*

[38] *These include Central African Republic, Libya, Mali and Sahel, Horn of Africa including Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan and countries in the Lake Chad Basin.*

[39] *AU, Report of the Commission on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa, AU Doc EX.CL/1314(XL) 6, (February 2022).*

of special drawing rights and the creation of other innovative sources of financing to reduce the harmful effects of the pandemic on our economies with their well-known structural weaknesses.[40]

The impact of these economic pressures of COVID19 extends beyond the peace and security of states internally. From the perspective of the work of the AU on peace and security, this major setback facing African economies translates into reduced capacity for financing the AU. Understandably, AU member states have been pushing for austerity measures to be applied in AU's budgeting and such measures are not without their implications on the level of member state resources for AU's its peace and security work.

## VIII - PERSISTING HUMANITARIAN CRISES AND INCREASINGLY CONSTRAINED SPACE AND CAPACITY FOR RESPONSE

The other major issue for Africa relates to the humanitarian situation. 2021 has highlighted both the persistence of existing humanitarian crises and the emergence of new ones. The number of people internally displaced and forced to flee into neighboring countries has significantly increased in various parts of the continent. Based on data from the first half of 2021, the AU reported that 'In 2021, Africa witnessed new internal displacements globally as conflict and violence flared in several member states across the continent. Some 1.3 million new displacements were recorded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Ethiopia, conflict in the Tigray region and increasing insecurity in other parts of the country triggered more than 1.2 million new displacements.'[41] It is worth noting that by the end of 2021 this figure has increased substantially with over 4 million people displaced, registering nearly 100% increase from 2020.

Other countries where a surge in the number of displaced people is registered in 2021 include Burkina Faso,[42] CAR,[43] Chad,[44] Ethiopia,[45] Mali,[46] Mozambique,[47] Nigeria,[48] Sudan[49] & South Sudan.[50] The AU in its report pointed out that 'new displacements occurred within the following member states in Burkina Faso, there were 120,000 displaced persons in the first six months of 2021, in Central African Republic there were 202,000 displaced persons. In the northern province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique conflict continued unabated, displacing over 120,000 Internally Displaced persons and in Nigeria 165,000 Internally Displaced and South Sudan where 170,000 people were internally displaced.'[51]

Armed conflict and political violence remain the main source of the worsening humanitarian crises on the continent. The dire humanitarian situation in the 1990s promted the AU to state that conflicts forced 'millions of our people, including women

---

[40]  *Remark of AU Commission Chairperson, Opening Session of the 35th ordinary session of the AU Assembly, (5 February 2022) available on https://au.int/en/node/41442*

[41]  *As above, 2.*

[42]  *With over 1.5 million internally displaced persons mainly on account of the violence involving the fighting against terrorist groups, Burkina Faso has become a major displacement crisis.*

[43]  *UNHCR estimates the number of IDPs in CAR to be around 691,791 as of 31 December 2021, available on https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/car/location/399.*

[44]  *IDPs in Chad reached well over 400,000 in 2021, according to data provided by OCHA, available on https://reliefweb.int/report/chad/chad-humanitarian-situation-overview-september-2021*

[45]  *Ethiopia has one of the world's largest internally displaced populations with a total of 4.2 million IDPs as of September last year, according to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) available on https://dtm.iom.int/reports/ethiopia-%E2%80%94-national-displacement-report-10-august-september-2021#:~:text=As%20of%20September%202021%2C%20a,across%209%20regions%20in%20Ethiopia.*

[46]  *Pursuant to OCHA's Humanitarian Response Plan 2022 for Mali, the number of IDPs in Mali 'reached a record high of 401,850 in September 2021, a fivefold increase from 77,046 in September 2018', available on https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2022-january-2022*

[47]  *IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) estimates the total number of IDPs in Mozambique 642, 404 as of last September, of which 86 percent are identified in Cabo Delgado, insurgent hotspot in northern province of Mozambique, available on https://dtm.iom.int/mozambique#:~:text=Mozambique%20Southern%20Africa&text=As%20of%20April%202021%2C%20an,Niassa%2C%20and%20153%20in%20Sofala.&text=All%20displacements%20are%20a%20result,situation%20in%20Cabo%20Delgado%20province.*

[48]  *More than 3 million IDPs are idenitifed in Nigeria in 2021, available at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/nga?id=76&country=502*

[49]  *Similarly, the number of IDPs in Sudan was estimated to be over 3 million, as per the data provided by UNHCR for 2021, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/unhcr-sudan-factsheet-october-2021*

[50]  *In South Sudan, there were around 2 million IDPs in 2021, available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/south_sudan_humanitarian_snapshot_january-2.pdf*

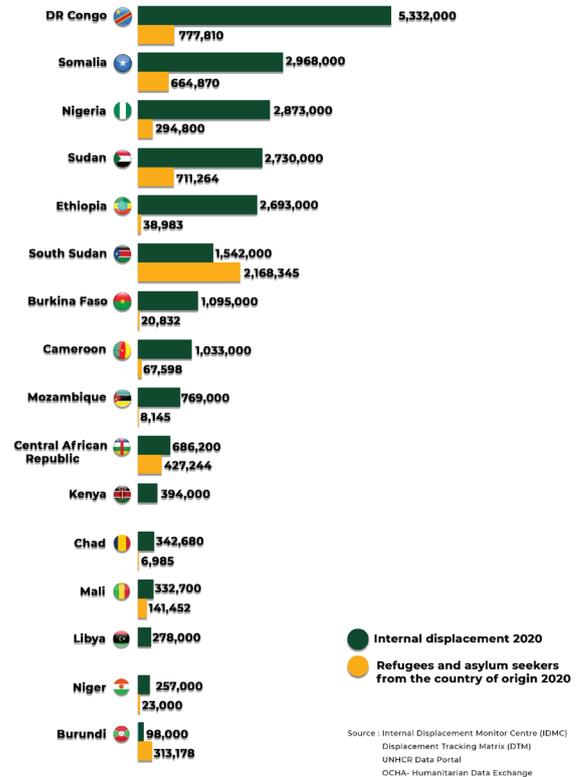[51]  *AU (February 2022), Report of the Commission on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa, AU Doc EX.CL/1314(XL) 2.*

and children, into a drifting life as refugees and internally displaced persons, deprived of their means of livelihood, human dignity and hope.'[52] More people are forced into such a drifting life as refugees and internally displaced persons in 2021 than in the 1990s due to conflict and political violence, highlighting the outrageous level of the cost of conflicts to civilians who bore much of the brunt of the violence and insecurity on the continent.

The challenge is not simply the worsening of the humanitarian situation in Africa. Of equal concern is the declining capacity and increasingly constrained space for delivering humanitarian assistance to people in need. The lack of cooperation of conflict parties with humanitarian actors and their failure to guarantee unhindered humanitarian access are aggravating already dire humanitarian situation. In some cases, as in the conflict in northern Ethiopia, these severe constraints to humanitarian access create tragic consequences as those without humanitarian assistance are condemned to starve to death or perish from lack of access to medicine or health care. The AU observed that 'conflict and insecurity continued to be major constraints to humanitarian access and operations, in particular the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan. Insecurity caused by extremist groups who maintained strongholds in the Burkina Faso-Mali-Niger tri-border area also adversely affected humanitarian operations around the Sahel region.'[53]
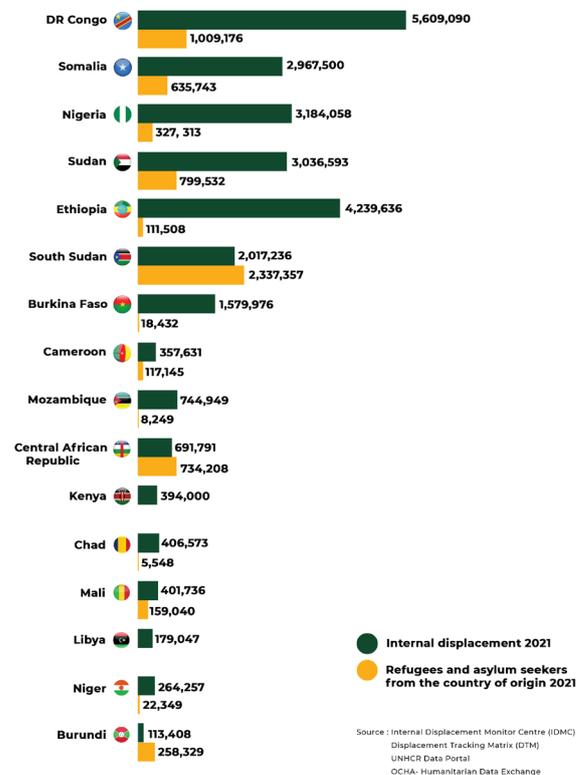
Unfortunately, in the face of the worsening of the peace and security situation on the continent, there is no expectation that the humanitarian situation will improve in 2022 particularly in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. The number of people in need of assistance in the Sahel and Lake Chad more than doubled between 2019 and 2021, while the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) registered in West Africa increased from under 2 million in

2014 to more than 7 million in 2021; including over 3 million in Nigeria and the more than 1.5 million in Burkina Faso.[54]

## IDPS AND REFUGEES IN 2020

| Country | Internal displacement 2020 | Refugees and asylum seekers from the country of origin 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| DR Congo | 5,332,000 | 777,810 |
| Somalia | 2,968,000 | 664,870 |
| Nigeria | 2,873,000 | 294,800 |
| Sudan | 2,730,000 | 711,264 |
| Ethiopia | 2,693,000 | 38,983 |
| South Sudan | 1,542,000 | 2,168,345 |
| Burkina Faso | 1,095,000 | 20,832 |
| Cameroon | 1,033,000 | 67,598 |
| Mozambique | 769,000 | 8,145 |
| Central African Republic | 686,200 | 427,244 |
| Kenya | 394,000 | |
| Chad | 342,680 | 6,985 |
| Mali | 332,700 | 141,452 |
| Libya | 278,000 | |
| Niger | 257,000 | 23,000 |
| Burundi | 98,000 | 313,178 |

Source : Internal Displacement Monitor Centre (IDMC)
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)
UNHCR Data Portal
OCHA- Humanitarian Data Exchange

## IDPS AND REFUGEES IN 2021

| Country | Internal displacement 2021 | Refugees and asylum seekers from the country of origin 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| DR Congo | 5,609,090 | 1,009,176 |
| Somalia | 2,967,500 | 635,743 |
| Nigeria | 3,184,058 | 327,313 |
| Sudan | 3,036,593 | 799,532 |
| Ethiopia | 4,239,636 | 111,508 |
| South Sudan | 2,017,236 | 2,337,357 |
| Burkina Faso | 1,579,976 | 18,432 |
| Cameroon | 357,631 | 117,145 |
| Mozambique | 744,949 | 8,249 |
| Central African Republic | 691,791 | 734,208 |
| Kenya | 394,000 | |
| Chad | 406,573 | 5,548 |
| Mali | 401,736 | 159,040 |
| Libya | 179,047 | |
| Niger | 264,257 | 22,349 |
| Burundi | 113,408 | 258,329 |

Source : Internal Displacement Monitor Centre (IDMC)
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)
UNHCR Data Portal
OCHA- Humanitarian Data Exchange

---

[52]  *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, adopted by the 1st Ordinary Session the Assembly of the African Union, Durban, 9 July 2002.*
[53]  *AU, Report of the Commission on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa, AU Doc EX.CL/1314(XL) 2, (February 2022).*

[54]  *UNOCHA,*

As the AU report on the humanitarian situation in Africa observed, further deterioration of the humanitarian situation is anticipated in some of the current crises. The worsening of the humanitarian situation and the expanding challenges to humanitarian access for delivering assistance to those in need are on their own serious peace and security concern for the AU PSC. Additionally, these conditions are of concern for the AU because they also exacerbate conflicts and insecurity and make the resolution of conflicts more difficult, as the conflict in northern Ethiopia shows. It is worth noting in this context that the AU Assembly took a decision during its 35th ordinary session to hold an extraordinary summit on the humanitarian situation in Africa in May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

# IX - CLIMATE AND SECURITY

As in the previous years, events in 2021 have shown the extent to which climate change is becoming a growing variable in peace and security in Africa. The Foreign Minister of Niger told the UN Security Council in September 2021 that 'climate change has intensified competition for land, fodder and water resources. That has led to the resurgence of community-level conflicts between herders and farmers, thereby hampering peacebuilding and development efforts in the (Sahel) region.'[55] Similarly, as the AU report put it, climate change is proving to be a growing source of instability and disaster and affected several member states in 2021. 'For example, some regions of South Sudan and Sudan were affected by flooding, hampering humanitarian activities, and resulting in security incidents... Madagascar continues to face a humanitarian crisis resulting from climate change and its impact on food security in the country.'[56]

Climate change is leading to greater food and water insecurity, the loss of livelihoods, depletion of natural resources, and more climate-linked human displacements. In terms of the peace and security impact of the climate crisis, there is perhaps no other part of the world that stands to suffer more than Africa. The latest UN report released last month, which gave the starkest warning yet that any further delay in effective climate action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future, confirmed once again that the climate crisis will have particularly dire consequences in Africa.[57] As it is usually said, Africa is the continent that contributed the little but will bear the most impacts of climate change, in significant measure on account of existing vulnerabilities and weak response capacity. This includes in respect to the peace and security adverse impacts of climate change.

There are at least four aspects to this peace and security dimensions of the climate crisis in Africa. The first is where climate induced scarcity of natural resources on which vast majority of people on the continent depend for their livelihood and survival leads to violent competition over control and access to such ever depleting resources in the face of climate change. A case in point in Africa is the growing inter-communal violence that has become more ferocious and deadly over the years in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. In the Lake Chad basin region, shrinking water resources and the impact of the decline in the lake's ecosystem on the livelihood of people in the basin have sparked resource-based conflicts.[58] Second, climate change induced crises also operate as multipliers and aggravating factors of existing vulnerabilities and conflicts through their interaction with existing national and local political, social and environmental stresses.[59] An example is Somalia. Here, more frequent and more intense droughts and floods are undermining food security, increasing competition over scarce

---

[55] UNSC High-Level Meeting on climate and security (23 November 2021) available on https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv.8864.pdf

[56] AU, Report of the Commission on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa, AU Doc EX.CL/1314(XL), (February 2022).

[57] Patrick Galey, Africa at rick of famine, drought and displacement, UN climate report warns (28 February 2022) https://www.nbcnews.com/science/environment/africans-risk-famine-drought-displacement-un-climate-report-warns-rcna17881

[58] Philip Osano, Climate change amplifies the risks fir violent conflicts in Africa, (10 January 2022) avaialble on https://www.sei.org/perspectives/climate-change-amplifies-risks-violent-conflicts-africa/

[59] Cedric de Coning, Florian Krampe and Anab Ovidie Grand, Impact of climate change on Africa's peace and security, (21 April 2021) avaialble on https://trainingforpeace.org/analysis/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-africas-peace-and-security/

resources and exacerbating existing community tensions, from which Al-Shabaab continues to benefit. Third, climate related disaster interferes with and undermines peace processes and transitions. A case in point is South Sudan, where the devastating flooding it experienced in 2021 has added a layer to various political and security factors that are delaying the implementation of the 2018 revitalized peace agreement. Fourth, climate change in causing disasters and humanitarian emergencies leads to not only displacements that could undermine social cohesion but also impeds development efforts and resilience of societies for averting and managing political tensions and conflicts. It has thus become abundantly clear that climate change is a fast growing security challeng that requires urgent and sustained policy attention within the peace and security and governance processes of the AU.

## X - ADDRESSING THE GAPS IN AFRICA'S PEACE AND SECURITY ORDER

The foregoing major peace and security issues have posed serious challenge to and exposed the limits of Africa's peace and security order. They have underscored the need for not only adjustments such as in terms of enhancing effectiveness of early warning and conflict prevention and the use of a more agile and multipronged tools that address the various dimensions of conflicts and insecurity in Africa going beyond military instruments. They also necessitate achieving a more cohesive, interoperable and joint working relationship between the AU and the sub-regional mechanisms that are active in peace and security in the different regions of the continent. In this respect, the importance of the success of the ongoing reform process focusing on the relationship between the AU and RECs/RMs cannot be overestimated. It is therefore very fitting that the AU Commission Chairperson in his address to the AU Assembly pointed out that 'we certainly need to better clarify the relationship of subsidiarity and complementarity between the regional economic communities and the continental organization.'[60]

They also highlight growing weaknesses both in effective peace and security diplomacy leadership and cooperation and in deploying and effectively operationalizing the available tools of the APSA. There is thus a need for the PSC to fend off attempts from member states and some emerging practices (such as making a country situation on its agenda contingent on the consent of the authorities of the country concerned) that have the impact of curtailing or limiting its role in the promotion of peace and security on the continent. It is also of particular significance that the PSC addresses the fact that 'there are various conflict situations that don't make it to the agenda of the PSC or don't receive the attention they deserve, giving rise to perception of selectivity on the part of the PSC.'[61]

The other aspect that deserves attention is the declining effectiveness of the conflict management and resolution efforts aimed at dealing with some of the existing conflicts, to avert further deterioration of the kind witnessed in 2020 and 2021. One starting point in this respect is addressing one of the challenges that is increasingly inhibiting the effective functioning of the APSA, namely **the increasing use by member states of the defense of sovereignty**, that the AU Commission Chairperson identified during his address to the AU Assembly on 5 February 2022. As he rightly pointed out, 'a restrictive, even dogmatic reading of the intangible principle of the sovereignty of the Member States raises an iron wall against any intervention by the continental organization, either as a preventive measure through early warning, or as a remedy when the crisis breaks out.'[62] Indeed, this defense of sovereinty has come to render the AU's paradigm changing normative commitments relating to Article 4 (h) and 4(p) of the Constitutive Act hallow, by serving, as the Chairperson aptly put it, as 'a protective shield against all sorts of abuses occurring in a member country.'[63] There is indeed a growing concern on the continent that the AU

---

[60] *Remark of AU Commission Chairperson, Opening Session of the 35th ordinary session of the AU Assembly, (5 February 2022) available on* https://au.int/en/node/41442

[61] *Amani Africa Special Research Report No. 3, The Reform of the AU: Towards the Peace and Security Council 'We Want', (August 2018) 6.*

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid.*

is turning its back on its norms and policies and early achivements whether in terms of upholding the principle of non-indifference or that of its zero tolerance to military coups. Without reversing the growing hold on the AU of this politics of indifference reminiscent of the OAU, the credibility of its peace and security order will contibue to be challenged.

There is also the issue of finding more effective ways of supporting transitions including those in Central African Republic, Libya and Somalia. Similarly, the experience of the AU preventive diplomacy in the election in Zambia, which facilitated the acceptance by the incumbent of the outcome of the elections making the smooth transfer of power possible, shows that the AU needs to plan for and deploy similar measures of preventive diplomacy in the 2022 elections facing risks of violent disputes.

**On the growing threat of terrorism in Africa**, it is becoming ever more evident that there is a need not only for enhancing the capacities and local legitimacy of national security institutions of the countries currently affected by terrorist violence including Mali, Burkina Faso and Mozambique and those facing the risks of expanding terrorist violence such as Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo but also more importantly for addressing the political, socio-economic and identity grievances that create the conditions for terrorism to take root. The current approach to the fight against terrorism with its heavy focus on military tools is seriously flawed and has, as the experience in the Sahel has illustrated, failed to deliver. This failure is not surprising considering that it reduces the problem of terrorism to a single issue, namely a hard security issue. The result has been the failure to adequately take account of the political, developmental and environmental dimensions of the crisis. Taking these critical dimensions of the threat of terrorism in Africa necessitates a change in paradigm which among other things requires the prioritization of addressing the political and socio-economic marginalization of affected territories and the implementation of reforms that facilitate a more equitable system of political and socio-economic governance in the affected countries. Additionally, in terms of the de-radicalization effort, there is a

need for putting in place mechanisms for resolving the crisis **through negotiation** as well. In this respect, a major contribution of the AU would be **to develop in consultation with member states and affected communities a policy on negotiation for peace in conflict situations involving terrorist groups**.

There is also a need for security sector reform in countries affected by terrorism and those facing the risk of its expansion. The lessons from Mali and Burkina Faso is that the militaries of these countries are poorly prepared and equipped to contain the serious security threat that terrorist groups are presenting. It is imperative that the balance of power between national security forces and terrorist groups is firmly in favor of national security forces to create the conditions for containing both the frequency and the geographic expansion of terrorist groups. But, the ultimate resolution of the growing threat of terrorism does not depend on the success of security sector reform that enhances the standing of national armies for effectively countering and containing the terrorism menace. The most important component of a successful response to the growing menace of terrorism is the establishment of effective programs that address both the broken social contract between state and society and the institution of legitimate local governance structures that are representative of the interests of local communities and capable of delivering social and public services and addressing the marginalization of local communities. Additionally, the AU should invest in a more effective utilization of its early warning mechanisms and in helping member states to appreciate early enough the gravity of the threats facing them and initiate timely responses to avoid the explosion of such situations beyond the control of national capacities. It is also the combination of these various measures that prevent governments in affected countries from seeking support from private security companies such as the Russian Wagner Group.

The rececent upsurge of military coups is an indication of the need to revisit and streghthen AU insturments banning unconstitutional changes of government. Beyond the reactive measures taken

by the AU and RECs it is also important to closely monitor and intervene to address conditions that may lead to a coup. As we pointed out in our previous report, to the extent that the coup is also a symptom of deeper problems of democratic governance, it is not enough that the response of the AU and ECOWAS is limited to the coup.'[64] The AU should also take active role in helping initiate the necessary policy and institutional reform processes that address the democratic governance deficits that create the conditions for the occurrence of military coups. Moreover, there needs to be a consistent application of the AU norm on unconstitutional change of government, with its zero tolerance policy to coups applied for all cases of military seizure of power without any exceptions. Additionally, there is a need for a standardized approach on the ban on UCG both at AU and RECs levels.

**Regarding the rising negative impacts of foreign power security rivalry in Africa**, there is a need for taking stock of the growth in size and number and the nature of foreign military and security presence in Africa and its increasing instrumentalization or use as a means of prosecuting power rivalry on African soil. This can be done within the framework of the AU Solemn Declaration on African Common Security and Defense Policy and the Peace and Security Council communique of its 868th session of 14 August 2019. Additionally, there is also a need to address the leadership gap and the fading commitment to pan-Africanism as an organising ideology for mobilisation and collective action for securing the interest of the peoples of the continent. The AU Commission Chairperson is right in observing that 'there are many attempts to approach Africa and this no doubt indicates an increased interest in the continent, but this interest has not yet frankly translated into a substantial developmentalist consideration in favor of Africa.' He went on to affirm that 'the African leadership is strongly challenged for a surge in the mobilization of endogenous resources revealed by the immense potential of the continent. There is nosalvationexcept in this African direction for

Africa.'[65]

**With respect to climate and security**, the next step for the APSA as highlighted in the PSC communique of its November 2021 session on climate change is to mainstream the consideration of the impact of climate on peace and security across the conflict cycle. This would entail that there is a systematic consideration of climate-related risks in the PSC engagement with country- and region-specific situations, which could increase the effectiveness of AU's mediation, peace support operations and peacebuilding efforts. The PSC may also task the AUC to commission a study on the impact of climate change on peace and security in Africa and submit a report on the same to the PSC with proposals on measures to be taken for addressing the peace and security dimension of the climate crisis, including the establishment of a dedicated climate and peace and security mechanism drawing on the expertise of the various departments of the AU. Also of particular importance is the need for developing a common African position as part of the preparation for and Africa's active role in the COP27 that will be hosted in Egypt in 2022. Of significance in this respect is the need for incorporating the peace and security dimension of the climate crisis into Africa's existing legitimate common policy position on adaptation and mitigation, taking into account the special needs of Africa where the peace and security impact of the climate crisis is higher and more dire than other parts of the world on account of exiting vulnerabilities. One such important aspect of this common position is the need for achieving a climate financing agreement that is along the lines of the proposal of UN Secretary-General that '50 per cent of climate financing globally be committed to building resilience and supporting adaptation' and the need for developed countries, as those who bear the most responsibility for climate change, to uphold their part of the bargain by delivering on the '$100 billion in climate financing annually to the developing world.'[66]

---

[64]   *Amani Africa Special Research Report No 10, Critical reflections on the challenges to and means of strengthening the AU norm banning unconstitutional changes of governments, (September 2021) 5.*

[65]   *Remark of AU Commission Chairperson, Opening Session of the 35th ordinary session of the AU Assembly, (5 February 2022) available on https://au.int/en/node/41442*

[66]   *UNSC High-Level Meeting on climate and security (23 November 2021) available on https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-*

**Regarding the impact of COVID19**, apart from the underscoring the imperative of addressing **the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic through economic relief measures** including debt restructuring, the reallocation of the Special Drawing Rights to African countries and their channeling through institutions other than IMF notably the African Development Bank **as critical security measure**, COVID19 has shown that a focus on hard peace and security issues is not adequate. There is a need for enhanced focus and investment in soft security matters involving social policy, including most notably those related to health and climate security issues. In this context, there is a need for bringing social policy and governance to the center of peace and security analysis and engagement of the AU. With respect to the APSA, this would entail that more attention is given to the portfolios of the Social Affairs Department and close synergy is established between the peace and security work of the PSC and the work of AU's Social Affairs department. As pointed out by the African Development Bank President during the AU Summit, the AU should put in place the Africa Financial Stability Fund as a critical measure to end the status of the continent as the only region in the world without financial liquidity buffer to cushion the economies of the continent from global emergencies like the pandemic. This is an initiative that the PSC could fully endorse as a measure that also helps Africa in limiting the peace and security consequences that result from the socio-economic adverse impacts of natural (or man-made) global emergencies like COVID19.

**Regarding the humanitarian situation**, it is imperative to address both the factor/s precipitating humanitarian crises and those that impede humanitarian access. At the political and policy level, it is critical to recognise that addressing the humanitarian consequences of conflicts and violence contributes to creating conditions for resolutions of conflicts. This necessitates that the AU and its PSC invest their diplomatic and institutional capital as much in mobilising efforts for addressing the humanitarian fallout of conflicts as in efforts for resolving the conflicts. Second, the

AU should use its various humanitarian norms and policies to secure and facilitate unhindered and full humanitarian access, particularly in situations where access is impeded by conditions attributable to conflcit parties. Third, the AU should fast track the operationalization of the African Humanitarian Agency. This is critical to the extent that it will endow the AU with a dedicated agency that assumes full responsibility for leading AU's efforts in mobilising responses to humanitarian crisis in Africa and facilitate coordination with humanitarian actors. Fourth, the AU should use the extraordinary summit expected to take place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea for mobilising funds and commitment for addressing the funding gaps in delivering humanitarian assistance.
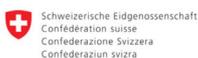
## MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

### ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

Amani Africa is an independent African based policy research; training and consulting think tank with a specialization and primary focus on African multilateral policy processes, particularly those relating to the African union.

We support the pan-African dream of peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa through research, training, strategic communications, technical advisory services, and convening and facilitation.

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland

Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

### ADDRESS
On the Corner of Equatorial Guinea St. and ECA Road, Zequala Complex,
7th Floor, Addis Ababa
Tel: +251118678809
Mobile: +251944723204 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia