



UPHOLDING GOOD GOVERNANCE:

Democracy, elections, and local institutions
under political and social uncertainty



Chapter 6

We need to learn from recent crises in West Africa:

Local governance and civil society solutions

ISSUE BRIEF FROM THE AUTHOR

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In 2016 we saw major progress in addressing two crises that racked West Africa in recent years. First, cooperation between African governments, communities, civic organizations, and international partners overcame initial struggles and succeeded in ending the latest Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. On March 29, the World Health Organization declared the crisis over. Second, while there is still much to be done, there has also been significant progress in the struggle to secure the Lake Chad Basin from the threat posed by Boko Haram. Although the threats from the group remain, the governments of the region have regained control of much of the territory previously held by Boko Haram.

As we enter 2017, African governments and their international partners should reflect on the structural challenges that led each of these crises to escalate and on what lessons should be learned for future crisis prevention and response.

Multilayered threats in a changing world

Ebola and the Boko Haram insurgency emerged from very different places but shared three similar features:

- 1. Center-periphery divisions and local grievances persisted in the context of growing economies.** Both crises were complex regional threats that emerged in the border regions of relatively wealthy African states, but among populations that had deep-seated, and often well-founded, mistrust of their national governments. Ebola broke out in Guinea's Forest region, an area that is home to some of the world's richest iron mines but where minority ethnic and cultural groups have been historically marginalized and have seen few benefits from the region's vast

Both crises were driven in part by factors outside the region, whether the migration of the Ebola virus to West Africa, the impact of state collapse in Libya on weapons availability across the Sahel, or the increased activity by international extremist groups such as ISIS to whom Boko Haram has ultimately claimed allegiance.

mineral wealth. Just six months before the Ebola outbreak, the region experienced ethnic riots against outsiders migrating to the region, who locals saw as benefiting from government support. The riots quickly spread to neighboring regions of Sierra Leone and Liberia, which share similar ethnicities, cultures, and landscapes. Meanwhile, Boko Haram originated in Maiduguri, a center for learning and trade in the Lake Chad Basin, but one of the poorest regions of Nigeria. The movement's radical message gained traction in an area racked by desertification, poor infrastructure, and little hope for its youth to achieve their economic and social potential.

- 2. Global connectivity drove the crises and the international response.** Proponents of international development have long held that health systems and security in Africa cannot be segmented from the concerns of the wider world. The last three years have shown it to be true. Both crises were driven in part by factors outside the region, whether the migration of the Ebola virus to West Africa, the impact of state collapse in Libya on weapons availability across the Sahel, or the increased activity by international extremist groups such as ISIS to whom Boko Haram has ultimately claimed allegiance. Even as fears of global terrorism and pandemics triggered international concerns and mobilized a significant response, these fears also reversed the economic gains of a region struggling to shake an image of poor governance and civil strife, stretching government budgets and decreasing tax revenue.
- 3. A whole-of-society approach to crisis management was required, but adopted too late.** The rapid ascent of Boko Haram and the inefficiency of the initial response to Ebola demonstrated the weaknesses of how national—and then international—systems respond to crises. Ineffective communication with mistrustful communities in Ebola-affected areas led citizens to attack—and even kill—health workers. Eighteen months into the Ebola outbreak, health workers still faced attacks and blockages when they struggled to reach some communities. Abuses by Nigerian and regional militaries in responding to Boko Haram drove recruitment in the early days, and anti-terrorism operations were shrouded in secrecy. As late as mid-2015, many government and security officials working in northeast Nigeria had never held a public forum to discuss security or explain their work to civilians living in the affected areas. But despite this mistrust and the initial weaknesses in the state response, neither crisis was suitable for the kind of massive U.N.-coordinated mobilization of peacekeepers and agencies to replace fragile governments that we see in places like the Central African Republic, South Sudan, or in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was only when government strategies shifted to working more directly with other structures in these regions, including traditional leaders, religious groups, and civil society, that the response was able to reverse the trends in the crises.

Putting social cohesion and accountability at the center of governance

As we go into 2017, African governments, civil society, and the international community should draw three key lessons about the challenges that led to these crises and the measures that ultimately turned the tide.

- 1. Governments cannot do it alone, yet the role of non-state actors is often neglected and under-resourced in crisis response.** While governments play a critical role in providing basic services across the continent, services are not exclusively the responsibility of the government. These are ultimately social issues, everyone has their role to play, and government needs to collaborate with citizens and communities to ensure a whole-of-society response. Community radio stations, religious leaders, town criers and griots, and youth clubs stepped up in the fight against Ebola where pre-recorded radio recordings and “sensitization” campaigns by international agencies and ministries of health were not successful. In Nigeria and Cameroon, traditional hunters and security groups, community organizations, and civilian government officials have played a key role in improving security and responding to the threat of Boko Haram, while in Niger, local “social cohesion” committees work with governments and aid agencies to organize the reception and assistance to refugees fleeing the violence.

Civil society groups have seen success when coordinating with local groups:

“Youth leaders played a big role in the activities to prevent and fight Ebola. People are now open to talk about Ebola today thanks to their intervention. **Eight months ago, you wouldn’t dare come here in your 4x4 vehicle. People would have burned it.**”

- A health worker in Boffa, Guinea discussing efforts by UNICEF, Search for Common Ground, and traditional communicators to address Ebola in hard-to-reach areas.

“When Ebola came to our village, the State sent strangers to sensitize us. The people were reticent, and so we chased them away. After that, the network of Traditional Communicators (RENACOT) began to come. We know them already, and they communicate in our languages. They were able to mobilize many people.”

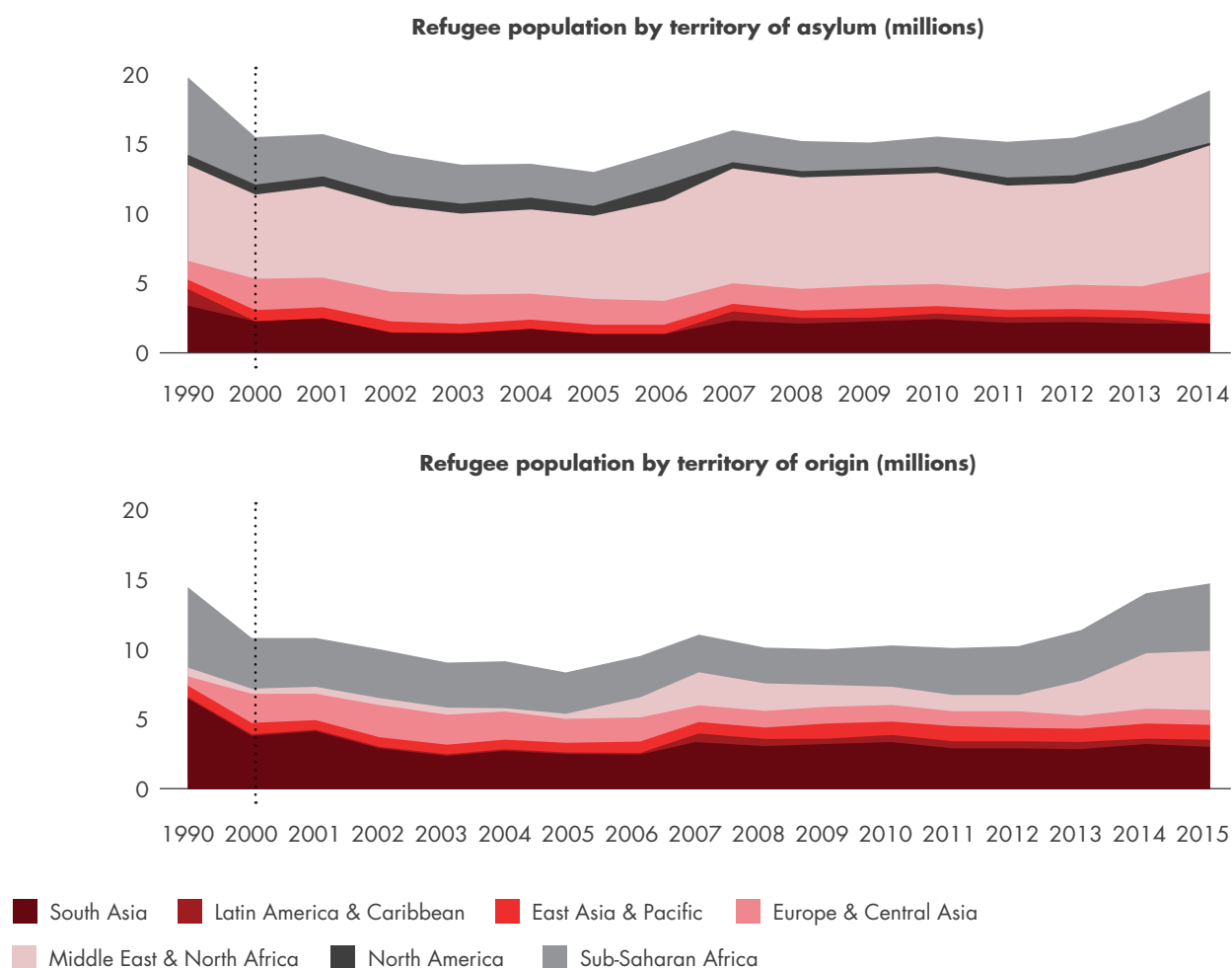
- A woman in Bosso, Guinea.

Non-state actors must play a role not only in criticizing inaction or abuses of power, but also as active partners in crafting and implementing policies to respond to new challenges.

2. Civil society engagement is often limited to a “watchdog” role at the policy level. Non-state actors, whether in formal associations, community-based organizations, or in other institutions (religious, traditional, academic, business), can be key interlocutors to channel citizen input to governments and contribute to policy formulation. Yet, dominant models of civil society-led action and assistance typically overemphasize the adversarial role of civil society in checking state overreach, rather than supporting forums for dialogue and joint policy formulation. While civil society groups can play a key role in generating political will for change, public needs often exceed the capacity of governments to deliver services. Non-state actors must play a role not only in criticizing inaction or abuses of power,

FIGURE 6.1. UNDERSTANDING REFUGEE FLOWS FROM AND IN AFRICA

Unfortunately, the number of global refugees has been on the rise in the past few years. Consequently, much media attention has focused on refugees from Africa and the Middle East moving towards Europe and other developed countries. Notably, though, the large majority of African refugees are in other African countries. In addition, the number of refugees hosted by Africa is much larger than the number hosted by European countries.



Source: World Bank's World Development Indicators, which uses the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Statistical Yearbook and data files, complemented by statistics on Palestinian refugees under the mandate of the UNRWA as published on its website. Available at: databank.worldbank.org/wdi.

Democracy in Africa in 2017

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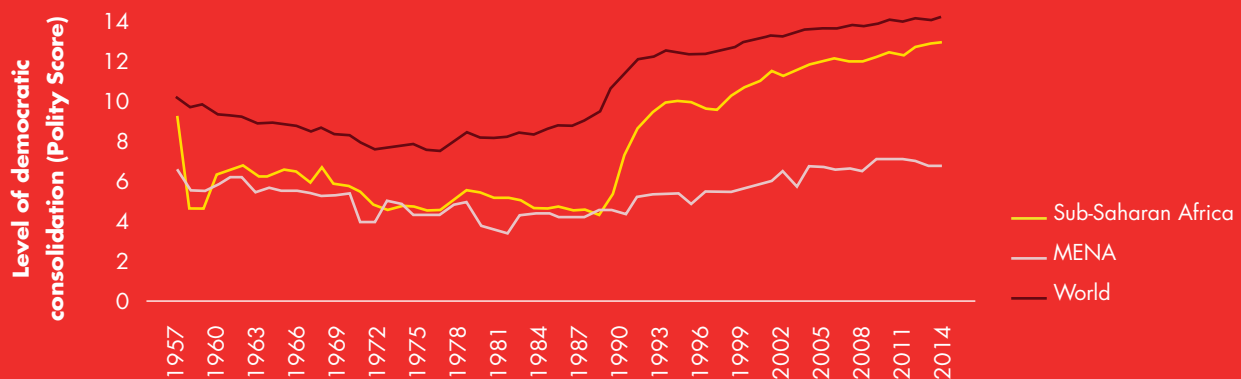
2017 will be an important year for the advancement of democratic government in Africa. Several key elections will determine whether the region experiences democratic erosion or consolidation. As is shown Figure 6.2, on average, the region has made tremendous gains over the last 25 years. And according to Freedom House, in 2016, a majority of people in sub-Saharan Africa (61 percent) lived in countries that were classified as either free (12 percent) or partly free (49 percent). Among the countries classified as not free (39 percent of the population), the majority (65 percent) have a history of civil conflict; while the remaining proportion missed the political transitions that their regional peers went through beginning in the mid-1990s (see Table 6.1). In addition, only Djibouti has become not free due to a significant democratic erosion over the last 15

years. Simply stated, the general trend so far is one of sub-Saharan Africa as a region moving in fits and starts towards greater democratic consolidation.

In 2017 the trend shown in Figure 6.2 is likely to hold. Several of the countries scheduled to hold elections will either improve their scores of democratic consolidation or hold steady. In other words, elections will continue to mirror the divergent trends in democratic consolidation in the region, but with greater gains for the regional score.¹ For example, in Rwanda and Angola, post-conflict incumbent presidents will seek to consolidate their hold onto power, having done away with term limits. But a different set of post-conflict states—Sierra Leone and Liberia—will have open contests as the current incumbent presidents will be term-limited. In Kenya and Senegal, competitive general and

FIGURE 6.2. TRENDS IN DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN AFRICA

Progress towards democracy in sub-Saharan Africa has been on the upswing, especially since the 1990s, though the way has not been smooth.



Source: Marshall, Monty G. , & Jaggers, Keith. 2000. "Polity IV project: Political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800-1999," Unpublished manuscript, University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management.

¹ K. Ochieng' Opalo, "African Elections: Two Divergent Trends," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 23, No. 3 pp. 80-93 (2012).

legislative elections, respectively, will likely lead to greater levels of intra-elite political accountability and democratic consolidation.

Due to the high stakes involved, there is the likelihood that elections in Kenya, Liberia, and Sierra Leone will be marred by violence. In Kenya, the key hotspots will likely be at the sub-national level—especially in the gubernatorial elections. Liberia and Sierra Leone are both weak post-conflict states that will face the normal challenges of holding elections under weakly institutionalized systems of electoral management. Lastly, in Chad, the Gambia, and the Republic of the Congo, elections will serve the purpose of consolidating autocratic rule.

In the countries not holding elections in 2017, government effectiveness in providing public

goods and services and horizontal accountability (through legislatures and courts) will be crucial for continued democratic consolidation. Government failure may precipitate protests that will likely be met by state repression, thereby eroding the values of accountable democratic government. Yet another challenge to democracy in 2017 will be insecurity (either due to urban crime, terror attacks, or insurgencies) and the extent to which elected governments in the region will be willing to use insecurity as a reason for curtailing freedoms of speech and movement in the region. In this regard, the regional forecast of 4.5 percent growth (by the African Development Bank)² suggests that anticipated positive economic outcomes may obviate the need among the more autocratic African governments to revert to coercion, as opposed to good performance, as a way of staying in office.

TABLE 6.1. FREEDOM HOUSE RANKINGS IN 2016

Democracy, rule of law, and respect for freedom continue to deepen in Africa: A majority of people in sub-Saharan Africa (61 percent) live in countries that are classified as either free or partly free.

Free	Partly Free	Not Free
Benin	Burkina Faso	Angola*
Botswana	Côte d'Ivoire	Burundi
Cabo Verde	Guinea	Cameroon
Ghana	Guinea-Bissau*	Chad*
Namibia	Kenya*	Central African Republic
Mauritius	Lesotho	Democratic Republic of the Congo
São Tomé and Príncipe	Liberia*	Djibouti
Senegal*	Madagascar	Equatorial Guinea
Seychelles	Malawi	Ethiopia
South Africa	Mali	Gabon*
	Mozambique	The Gambia*
	Niger	Republic of the Congo*
	Nigeria	Mauritania
	Sierra Leone*	Rwanda*
	Somaliland*	Somalia
	Tanzania	South Sudan
	Zambia	Sudan
	Zimbabwe	Swaziland
		Uganda

Note: Asterisks indicate countries that will hold national elections in 2017. Angola, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somaliland will hold general elections. Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Gabon, and Senegal will hold legislative elections. Rwanda will hold a presidential election. A number of countries—Guinea, Niger, Swaziland, and Togo—will hold local elections. These data are from the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, EISA.

Source: Freedom House rankings are available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/regions/sub-saharan-africa>. Election data are from the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, EISA, as of January 3, 2017. Available at: <https://www.eisa.org.za/index.php/2017-african-election-calendar/>.

² African Development Bank. African Economic Outlook. 2016.

https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/AEO_2016_Report_Full_English.pdf

but also as active partners in crafting and implementing policies to respond to new challenges. In Nigeria, we are supporting “Community Security Architecture” for ordinary citizens to identify security risks, take local action, and jointly approach government agencies where necessary.

- 3. All actors must reinforce a long-term emphasis on social accountability.** Both crises underscored the legacy of deep distrust between state actors and the communities that they serve. The legacy of colonial and authoritarian rule deeply undermined the role of government agencies and personnel as public servants, particularly in remote and historically marginalized areas. Measures such as the Open Government Partnership that increase fiscal transparency and create opportunities for citizen input into public policy are welcome. However, inculcating a culture of accountability within the civil service and security structures also requires fundamental shifts in the way that institutions operate, more active communication with citizens, and engaging with regions and communities that do not trust their governments. Initiatives, such as the World Bank-convened Global Partnership for Social Accountability, which link governments and civil society actors, are promising in their focus on the strengthening the practice of socially accountable, inclusive governance among ordinary citizens.

These two recent crises have shown that even in relatively strong states like Nigeria and Guinea, the relationship of the state with communities living at the periphery can be a threat to national, regional, and international stability.

These two recent crises have shown that even in relatively strong states like Nigeria and Guinea, the relationship of the state with communities living at the periphery can be a threat to national, regional, and international stability. As we enter 2017, African governments, aid agencies, multilateral institutions, global civil society, and the broader community of people who care about ensuring effective and inclusive democratic governance should place social cohesion at the center of their programming and policies.

Africa, Trump, infrastructure

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The Trump policy towards Africa will not be clear for several months at least, if we are to judge by the time it has taken past administrations to put their teams in place and articulate their objectives. While it is apparent that the president-elect has had very little contact with the continent, the same was true for Presidents Clinton and Bush. Similarly, President Obama—who later emerged as a champion of African-U.S. private sector investment—did not develop a strategy for the continent until the end of his first term.

So, what might lay ahead for Africa?

One of the most interesting initiatives to appear in the transition is the formation of Trump's President's Strategic and Policy Forum. The purpose of this group is to provide the president with private sector expertise on creating jobs and accelerating economic growth.

The group is made up of 16 CEOs and, notably, many lead companies that are active in Africa. They include: Blackstone, General Motors, Wal-Mart, Boeing, IBM, Ernst & Young, and GE. The forum's first meeting is planned for February at the White House.

Clearly the focus of the forum will be on the private sector's role in rebuilding America's infrastructure, which Trump announced as a priority on election night. This goal has great relevance and potential for Africa. For instance, one proposal would be to create an economic subcommittee of the forum to look at infrastructure opportunities for American companies in Africa that would utilize American-made components. Enhancing the U.S. role in addressing Africa's infrastructure deficit with American machinery and other products would increase U.S. exports to the region. In 2015, the export of U.S. goods to Africa

was valued at \$18 billion, which supports an estimated 121,000 jobs in the U.S., according to the Commerce Department.

To facilitate its work, an African subcommittee of the forum could coordinate its work with the President's Advisory Committee on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA), which reports to the president through the secretary of commerce. Over the course of three meetings, the PAC-DBIA has made a number of recommendations related to enhancing the role of the United States in developing Africa's infrastructure. These recommendations include creating a U.S.-Africa Infrastructure Center and prioritizing U.S. companies and products in building out Africa's transportation, energy, and health infrastructure.

The last three presidents have left positive legacies related to Africa. This includes President Clinton's signing into law of the African Growth and Opportunity Act; President Bush's support for the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief and the Millennium Challenge Corporation; and Power Africa, the Young African Leaders Initiative, and the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit of the Obama administration. A strategy that incentivizes American companies in such a way that it increases U.S. exports and jobs to reduce Africa's infrastructure deficit would contribute to a legacy in Africa for President-elect Trump on par with his predecessors, if not more so.

To make this happen, African leaders should engage the Trump administration actively and with an open mind. They should also endeavor to point out ways in which a substantial infrastructure program could benefit Americans as much it would those on the African continent.

Election spotlights:

Kenya and Rwanda

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General overview

Despite a few setbacks, many post-election transitions in 2015-2016 (e.g., Nigeria, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and Zambia) have been generally peaceful. These peaceful post-election regime changes augur well for the deepening and institutionalization of democracy in the continent.

However, that was not true everywhere: In Burundi, incumbent President Pierre Nkurunziza sought and obtained a controversial constitutional amendment that paved the way for him to win another term in office, plunging the country into a political, economic, and humanitarian quagmire. Gabon's 2016 closely fought (and somewhat suspicious) presidential election in which the opposition candidate lost by only 6,000 votes produced massive post-election violence. Although the riots have abated considerably, the opposition parties have yet to enter into negotiations with the government. Sudan's 2015 election was boycotted by a significant part of the opposition and was highly criticized by the international community on claims of an environment not conducive to fair, free, and credible elections. Now the Gambia is struggling with a president that conceded the election before rejecting the election results a week later.

In 2017, two elections—Rwanda and Kenya—are likely to have significant impact on peace and security, governance, and economic growth and development in this important region.

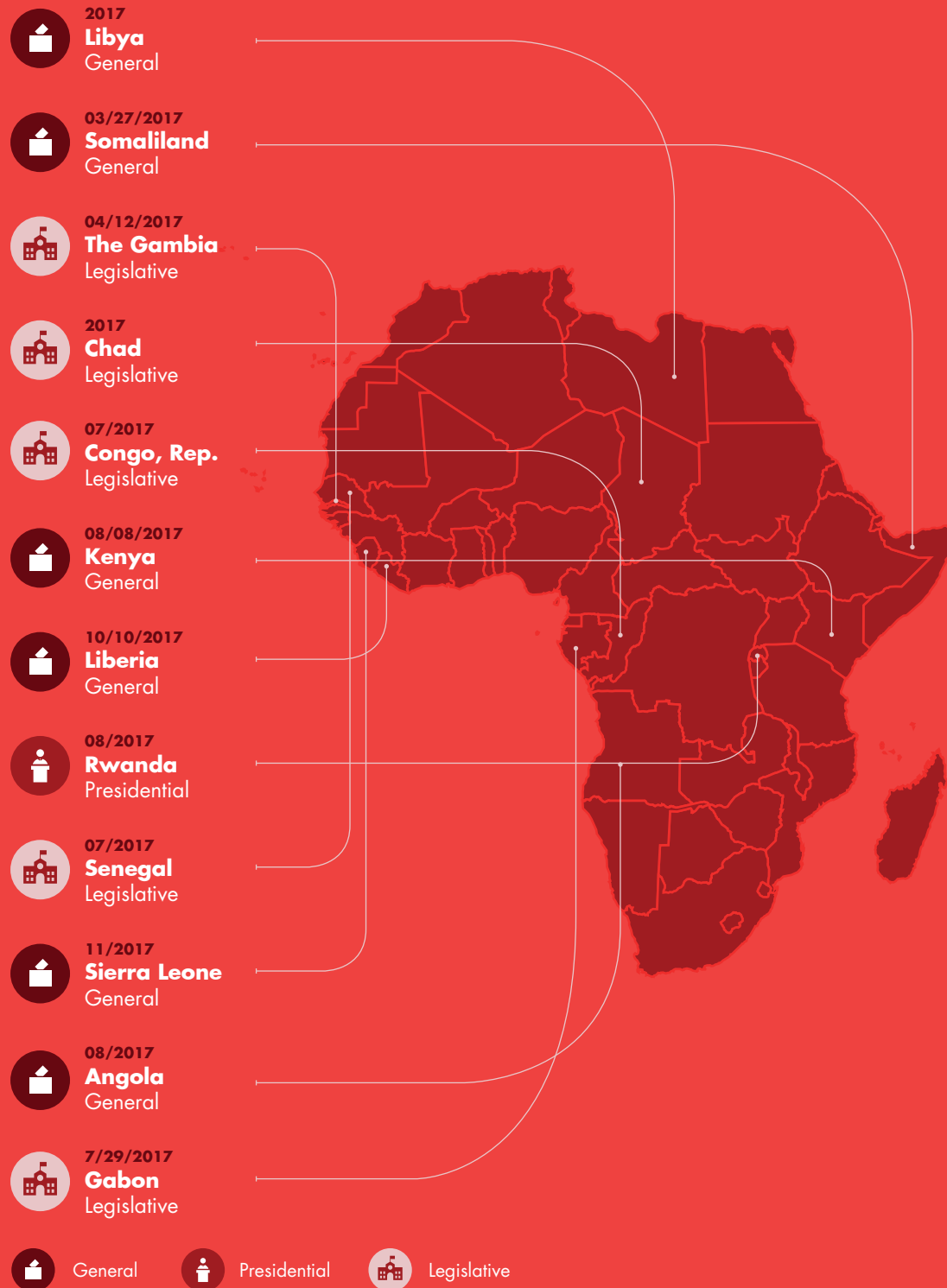
Kenya August 8, 2017

Why are we talking about Kenya?

Kenya is an important partner of the United States and other countries that are fighting transnational terrorism, especially al-Shabaab. Kenya is also a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and has played a critical role in IGAD's efforts to improve security and peace in South Sudan. Additionally, Kenya is a leading center for

FIGURE 6.3.

ELECTIONS IN 2017



Source: Data are from the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, EISA, as of January 3, 2017. Available at: <https://www.eisa.org.za/index.php/2017-african-election-calendar/>.

industrial production and is an economic powerhouse for the East Africa region. Nairobi is the regional headquarters for many transnational corporations and international organizations, and the country has a strong influence on its less stable or more burdened neighbors.

However, Kenya is also struggling to maintain domestic stability because of the uncertainties created by extra-judicial killings, feelings of political marginalization by some ethnic groups, hopelessness among many unemployed youth, and a fear of a repeat of the ethnic-induced violence that gripped the country shortly after the 2007 presidential election.¹

Although the 2013 presidential election was peaceful, many Kenyans remain without hope, distrust the government, and feel marginalized.

After the extreme ethnic-induced violence of the 2007 election, the International Criminal Court charged now-President Uhuru Kenyatta with crimes against humanity, but has since dropped them. Although the 2013 presidential election was peaceful, many Kenyans remain without hope,² distrust the government, and feel marginalized by the policies of Kenyatta's Jubilee government. In addition, many feel that the Kenyatta administration has performed quite poorly in reducing corruption, safeguarding the rule of law, fighting terrorism and improving domestic security, and eradicating poverty, especially among urban youth, rural inhabitants, and other historically marginalized groups. Political rivals, such as Raila Odinga, leader of the opposition Orange Democratic Movement and the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD),³ have stated that the Kenyatta government has not been able to deal effectively with the conditions that produced violence after the 2007 election.

As 2017 approaches, Odinga, the most viable challenger in 2013, has once again indicated his interest to contest for the Kenyan presidency. He has publicly stated that a win for him and the CORD will ensure that two ethnic groups, the Kikuyu and Kalenjin, do not continue to monopolize political power in the country. Given that Odinga's presidential losses in 2007 and 2013 have been to ethnic Kikuyus or a coalition dominated by the latter, this argument has an audience.

Odinga, who is 71 years old, has mostly dismissed calls to step aside to make way for a younger and more vibrant candidate. Nevertheless, both Kalonzo Musyoka and Moses Wetang'ula—leaders of major parties within CORD—have announced that they too plan to independently seek the presidency in 2017. Following rumors that the CORD coalition is in the brink of collapse, Odinga has insisted that when the time comes the coalition would unite behind one candidate.⁴

¹ Gatehouse, Gabriel. "Kenya Violence: Survivors' Tales." BBC News. BBC, 10 Sept. 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24021833>.

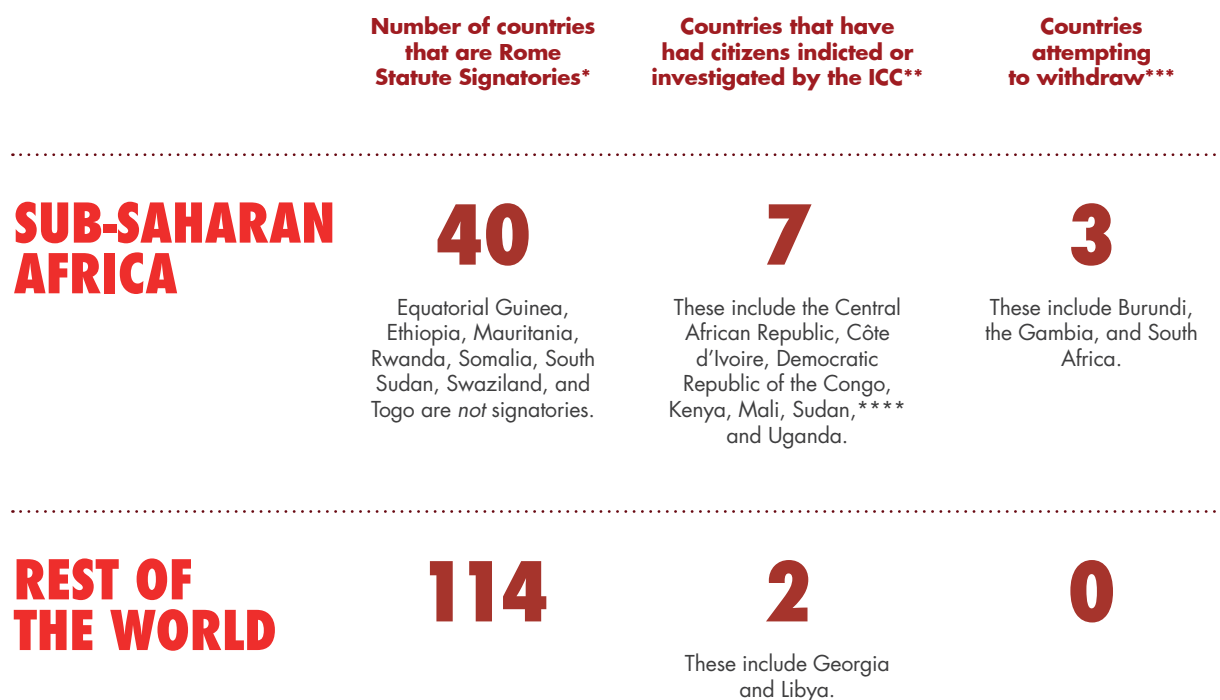
² Alingo, Peter, Hawa Noor. "Signs of Violence Ahead of Kenya's 2017 Elections." ISS Africa. Institute for Security Studies, 17 June 2016. <https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/signs-of-violence-ahead-of-kenyas-2017-elections>.

³ The CORD is a coalition of political parties created to oppose the Jubilee Alliance during the 2013 elections. It includes the Orange Democratic Movement, Ford Kenya, and Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya.

⁴ Some observers believe that the strategy by the three CORD principals to run independently for the presidency in 2017 may be a ploy to prevent Uhuru, the presumptive Jubilee candidate from capturing the 50 + 1 votes (i.e., 50% of total votes cast + 1 vote and 25% in half of the country's 47 counties) needed to avoid a runoff. The hope for this strategy, of course, is that after the first round, Raila would get a chance to go head-to-head with Uhuru and, with the support of the other two CORD principals, he would be able to emerge as Kenya's 5th president.

FIGURE 6.4. THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT AND AFRICA: INDICTMENTS AND WITHDRAWALS

In 2016, three sub-Saharan African countries—Burundi, the Gambia, and South Africa—announced their intention to withdraw from the International Criminal Court. The year 2017 could see more withdrawals too, as other countries, such as Kenya, Namibia, and Uganda have discussed leaving the Rome Statute. African leaders cite not only a bias in the ICC, but also paternalism and even neo-colonialism: The majority of its investigations and indictments have been in African countries. In fact, only two countries outside of sub-Saharan Africa—Georgia and Libya—have faced ICC investigations or charges. Given the sensitivities around the crimes examined by the ICC as well as recent civil wars on the continent, the topic is certainly a controversial one.



*Including those signatories pending approval/acceptance/accesion/ratification. Not included are Israel, Russia, and the United States who originally signed but have expressed their desire to not pursue approval/acceptance/accesion/ratification.

**This does not include situations under preliminary examination. According to the ICC, before an official investigation can be launched, "the Office of the Prosecutor must determine whether there is sufficient evidence of crimes of sufficient gravity falling within the ICC's jurisdiction, whether there are genuine national proceedings, and whether opening an investigation would serve the interests of justice and of the victims. If the requirements are not met for initiating an investigation, or if the situation or crimes are not under the ICC's jurisdiction, the ICC's Prosecution cannot investigate." Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/about/how-the-court-works/Pages/default.aspx#legalProcess>.

***Includes those countries that ratified the statute but have given notice to withdraw.

****According to the United Nations Treaty Collection: "In a communication received on 26 August 2008, the Government of Sudan informed the Secretary-General of the following: '....., Sudan does not intend to become a party to the Rome Statute. Accordingly, Sudan has no legal obligation arising from its signature on 8 September 2000.'"

Source: United Nations Treaty Collection Online. Available at: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtsg_no=XVIII-10&chapter=18&clang=en.

What makes the 2017 election important?

There is fear that a win by Kenyatta's Jubilee Alliance would be interpreted as further political marginalization of the Luo and other ethnic groups. As is the case in many other African countries, the politicization of ethnicity does not augur well for the institutionalization of democracy and the rule of law in Kenya.

At the same time, many Kenyans remain concerned about government impunity like extra-judicial killings and high levels of corruption. For example, in early 2016, human rights lawyer Willie Kimani together with his client and their driver were brutally tortured and murdered. The client had filed a complaint against a police officer over corruption.

Then again, both sides have made moves towards cooperation. In response to increased riots and a worsening security situation, the government agreed to engage in dialogue with opposition principals—mainly the CORD. And in response to intense criticism from Odinga and his supporters about corruption and election rigging, the entire board of the country's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission resigned and has been replaced by members from both sides—an action that has helped legitimize the government's efforts to bring transparency⁵ to the electoral process and has improved the CORD's position as the main opposition.

What might happen in 2017?

As the incumbent government, Kenyatta and the Jubilee Alliance must show Kenyans that they have successfully delivered on at least some of the promises that they made when they came into power in 2013 and that, if given the opportunity in 2017 to govern again, they would significantly improve the security situation in the country, eliminate extra-judicial killings and other forms of government impunity, eradicate corruption, deal with the frustrations of the many citizens who are forced by circumstances to live a life of hopelessness and poverty in dilapidated urban enclaves and rural villages, significantly improve economic conditions, including creating jobs, especially for urban youth, and produce a viable long-term plan to deal fully and effectively with the factors (e.g., a feeling of marginalization by some ethnic groups) that led to violence in the aftermath of the 2007 elections. The Kenyatta government must, of course, also convince Kenyans of how it plans to deal with continuing security threats from al-Shabaab.

⁵ Ngila, Diana. "IBEC chairman and commissioners resign." Daily Nation. 6 Oct 2016. <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-3406560-5j3ynkz/>.

If the CORD is to win the 2017 election, it and its flagbearer must convince the majority of Kenyans, not just their ethnic-based supporters, that they can do a better job of solving the nation's problems than the Jubilee Alliance. As part of that strategy, they must convince Kenyans that they are not simply an ethnic-based coalition, designed to capture power and maximize the interests of their ethnic groups, but that they are a national party determined to promote democracy and the rule of law in the country and provide all citizens, regardless of their ethnic background, viable opportunities for self-actualization.

Rwanda

August 2017

Why are we talking about Rwanda?

Rwanda is a key player in political stability and economic growth and development in the African Great Lakes Region.

Rwanda's 2017 election is worth watching for many reasons: Rwanda is a key player in political stability and economic growth and development in the African Great Lakes Region. President Paul Kagame has improved stability and economic growth in post-genocide Rwanda and many believe that another term in office will allow him to move the country, and perhaps the region, to middle-income status and stable democracy. Then again, many international organizations, including Human Rights Watch, believe that Rwanda under Kagame has evolved into a one-party state. There is a growing fear that Kagame, despite his economic achievements, has become increasingly intolerant of political opposition and has used "genocide prevention" as a strategy to limit competitive politics in the country.

Cognizant of the ethnic-induced genocide, the Rwandan constitution⁶ specifically prohibits the formation of political organizations based on "race, ethnic group, tribe, clan, region, sex, religion or any other division which may give rise to discrimination." Many civil and human rights groups have argued⁷ that this constitutional clause, and other laws enacted by the country's parliament, have granted the government enormous powers to stunt political development.

There is a growing fear that Kagame, despite his economic achievements, has become increasingly intolerant of political opposition.

In the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which as much as 20 percent of the population—Tutsis and their Hutu sympathizers—were massacred, the Tutsi-backed Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which had ended the genocide, transformed into the ruling political party. Kagame first served as vice president and minister of defense, then became president in 2000. In 2003, the country approved a new constitution and Kagame was elected president. Then in 2010 he was re-elected

⁶ "The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda" 26 May 2003. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/64236/90478/F238686952/RWA64236.pdf>.

⁷ Human Rights Watch. "Rwanda: Human Rights Developments." Hrw.org. Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/wr2k3/africa9.html>.

for a second seven-year term in an election that was peaceful, although somewhat criticized due to the government's suppression of opposition political parties. Kagame was expected to step down after his mandate ends in 2017; however, in December 2015, Rwandans approved a constitutional amendment allowing him to potentially remain in office until 2034.⁸ Officially, the president has stated that the idea of the constitutional amendment was actually a grassroots initiative, with a petition said to have been signed by 60 percent of voters. Many critics, however, argue that it is difficult to determine whether the petition actually represents the voters' free will or not.

Who are the major players?

Today, Rwanda is one of the safest countries on the continent and has an economy that is relatively healthy and continues to grow.

Kagame has brought a lot of social and economic success to his country, including implementing free basic education, slashing maternal and child mortality by more than 50 percent, and improving opportunities for entrepreneurial activities, among many other accomplishments. Today, Rwanda is one of the safest countries on the continent and has an economy that is relatively healthy and continues to grow.⁹ Some Rwandans argue that a third term would allow Kagame to consolidate those gains and deliver even more improvements. Many citizens believe he is the only person capable of maintaining peace within the country. Even opposition leaders acknowledge that Kagame and the RPF are very popular.¹⁰

These successes have come at a cost, though. Opponents fear that a third term for Kagame's suffocating and military-style approach to governance could derail the maturation of the country's embryonic democracy.

Many observers argue that the RPF has created a de facto one-party state. Officially, Rwanda has a lot of opposition political parties, though most are rarely critical of the RPF. Frank Habineza, founder and chairman of the Democratic Green Party (DGP), is the country's main opposition leader. The Greens have indicated that they want to become a genuine opposition party, capable of effectively challenging the government on public policies and eventually competing against the incumbent regime.

The DGP began facing many problems immediately after its founding in 2009, the most important being that it was unable to receive official recognition as a legitimate political organization. In 2013, the party was finally granted recognition,¹¹ but it continued to struggle financially

⁸ "Paul Kagame's third term: Rwanda referendum on 18 December", BBC, BBC, Dec 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-3504988> and McVeigh, Tracy "Rwanda Votes to Give President Paul Kagame Right to Rule until 2034" *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, Dec. 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/20/rwanda-vote-gives-president-paul-kagame-extended-powers>.

⁹ Rosen, Jonathan. "Ahead of vote on term limits, Rwandans worry about presidential power grab", al-Jazeera America, al-Jazeera, Dec. 2015. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/12/16/paul-kagame-rwandas-president-for-life.html>.

¹⁰ Johannsen, Jesko. "Fighting for Recognition: Political Opposition in Rwanda." DW.COM. Deutsche Welle, 09 Sept. 2015. <http://www.dw.com/en/fighting-for-recognition-political-opposition-in-rwanda/a-18703252>.

¹¹ Ibid.

Opponents fear that a third term for Kagame's suffocating and military-style approach to governance could derail the maturation of the country's embryonic democracy.

and found that the police often interrupted the party's assemblies. In addition, several high-profile DPG leaders have disappeared¹² or been murdered¹³ in the past few years.

The Greens have made an effort to function as an effective opposition to the government. In fact, the party brought action against the third-term constitutional amendment before the Rwandan Supreme Court. While the court rejected the argument, Habineza maintains that either the people were misled or there was simple fraud in obtaining the alleged 3.7 million signatures requesting that the constitution be amended.

What might happen in 2017?

Should Kagame choose to run in 2017, he would most likely win by a significant majority. Nevertheless, this could prove disastrous to the democratic legacy that he and his party have built since 1994.

Although the United States has been a strong supporter of Kagame, especially with respect to the president's ability to bring peace and economic growth to the country, the U.S. government has not supported efforts by Kagame to extend his term in office. U.S. officials, instead, are asking him to step aside. What happens between now and the August 2017 election could set an example for other countries in the region. Indeed, some observers believe that keeping Kagame in office could produce violence in the future, especially if it becomes evident to opponents that the new law would relegate them to the political periphery until at least 2034. Some critics even fear that Kagame's victory could provoke rivals to forcefully extricate him, an action which could lead to civil war.¹⁴ Of course, it is not yet too late—despite the change in the constitution, the president can still step aside and allow a younger group of individuals to contest the presidency and lead the country. He can then retire to serve as an elder statesman.

The deepening and institutionalization of democracy in a country begins with civil servants and politicians. If they are not willing to respect the laws but are instead eager to either subvert or change them in order to maximize their personal interests, they should not expect ordinary citizens to adhere to the rule of law. The practice of constitutionalism can and does interfere with the personal ambitions of not just political elites, but of virtually all citizens. But that is the price that citizens must pay for all ethnocultural groups to live together peacefully with equal opportunity for self-actualization.

¹² Rwanda Today. "Rwandan Family Says Green Party Official Missing after Phone Call." *The East African*, 11 July 2014. <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/Rwanda/News/Rwandan-family-says-Green-Party-official-missing/1433218-2381092-93laqa/index.html>.

¹³ Rice, Xan. "Rwandan Opposition Leader Found Dead." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 14 July 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/14/rwanda-opposition-politician-found-dead>.

¹⁴ Rosen, Jonathan W. "Ahead of Vote on Term Limits, Rwandans Worry about Presidential Power Grab." *Ahead of Vote on Term Limits, Rwandans Worry about Presidential Power Grab*. Al Jazeera America, 16 Dec. 2015. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/12/16/paul-kagame-rwandans-president-for-life.html>.

EVENTS TO WATCH

JANUARY 2017

African Union Elective Summit

The African Union (AU) held elections on July 18, 2016 to determine the next African Union Commission chairperson, leader of the regional body's secretariat; however, seven rounds of voting failed to produce a winner from among the three main candidates. When none of the contenders garnered the requisite two-thirds majority of member states' votes to win—owing to numerous abstentions—the summit opted to postpone the elections to January 2017 and allow the commission to continue under the leadership of the chair Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma until then. According to the AU assembly chair, President Idriss Déby of Chad, the 2017 election will open up the contest to new candidates.

2017

The Fifth European Union-Africa Summit

Following the fourth and most recent April 2014 EU-Africa Summit in Brussels, the fifth EU-Africa Summit will take place in Africa and convene European and African heads of states and governments to develop a new roadmap to guide the Africa-EU partnership from 2017 to 2020. The last roadmap (2014-2017) focused on joint priorities related to peace and security, democracy, good governance, human rights, human development, sustainable and inclusive development, continental integration, and global and emerging issues. Several prominent trends are expected to shape the dialogue in 2017, such as Africa's changing demographics and challenges to sustainable development, migration flows from Africa to Europe, and Europe's internal security and economic crises.

JUNE AND JULY 7-8, 2017

G-20 "Partnership with Africa" and Leaders' Summit

Germany's G-20 presidency will last from December 1, 2016 to November 2017 and will embody the motto "shaping an interconnected world." The three pillars of the German G-20 Agenda are: 1) ensuring stability, 2) improving viability for the future, and 3) accepting responsibility. The third pillar specifically relates to the G-20's responsibility to promote sustainable development in Africa. In particular, during the German presidency, the G-20 will aim to implement steps to improve standards of living, establish economic environments conducive to investment, and boost infrastructure development in Africa. Additionally, in June 2017, a G-20 conference entitled "Partnership with Africa" will be held in Berlin. Other global and African issues that the G-20 will discuss during these meetings include migration and refugee flows, the global fight against terrorism, and corruption and illicit financial flows.
