



المركز الافريقي للتنمية والاستثمار
Center for Africa Development & Investment

AFRICA MONTHLY REVIEW

June 2023



The Ascendancy of Digital Transactions African Landscape



Africa's remarkable demographic trajectory and fragile financial infrastructure have crafted a fertile landscape for the blossoming of cashless transactions, an innovative solution serving to enfranchise the disproportionately vast unbanked populace of the continent. This swift rise of digital payments represents a paradigm shift in the economic activities of a region traditionally reliant on cash transactions while simultaneously offering a viable means to fortify its vulnerable currencies.

The inception of this transformative trend can be traced back to 1997, with the pioneering establishment of Unified Payments in Nigeria. This consortium of banks launched homegrown digital payment services and infrastructure, signaling the dawn of an era that would gradually witness the permeation of digital transactions across the vast African terrain. This groundbreaking initiative catalyzed a dynamic ecosystem, leading to the emergence of diverse players, ranging from telecommunications giants to innovative startups, all contributing to the ongoing financial revolution.

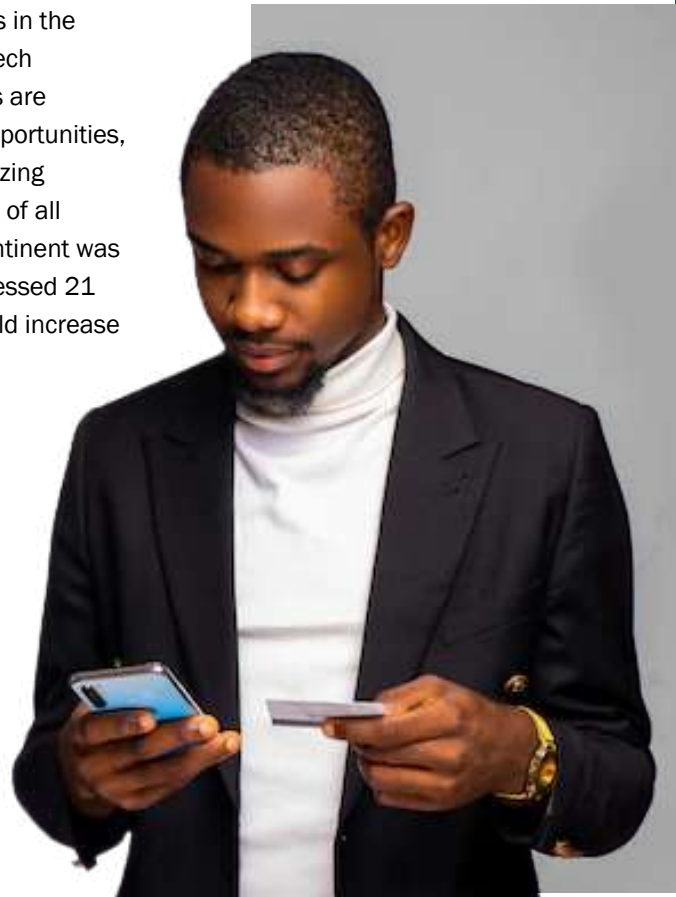
New York-based consultancy firm McKinsey & Co. forecasts the burgeoning African digital payment sector as one of the world's fastest-growing industries, projecting a remarkable 20% annual revenue growth and approximately \$40 billion in revenue by 2025.

This contrasts sharply with a mere 7% global average, accentuating Africa's immense potential in the digital financial landscape. Africa's unique demographic context, characterized by a population that doubles every 25 years, starkly diverges from the static or regressive population trends witnessed in the West and Far East.

An illustrative comparison can be drawn with Latin America, which despite housing roughly a third of Africa's population and experiencing a lower population growth rate, records an impressive annual cashless payment revenue of around \$200 billion. This juxtaposition elucidates the profound latent potential within Africa's largely untapped digital financial market.

Concrete evidence of this burgeoning potential manifests in the escalating foreign investments funneled into African fintech companies catering to the unbanked populace. Investors are increasingly captivated by the rapid growth, untapped opportunities, and comparatively lower investment multiples characterizing African fintech firms. In the year 2021, a staggering 60% of all venture capital exceeding \$200,000 infused into the continent was absorbed by African fintech companies. This period witnessed 21 fundraising rounds exceeding \$50 million, a nearly tenfold increase from the previous year.

The demographic landscape of Africa, characterized by a burgeoning population juxtaposed with the impediments posed by its traditional banking infrastructure, coalesces into a remarkable advantage for the continent. This confluence positions Africa at the nexus of the international metamorphosis toward a cashless economy. This trajectory is fueled by various factors, including technological proliferation, evolving socioeconomic patterns, and governmental interventions galvanizing the digital finance ecosystem.



A salient accelerant of this momentum is the surging urbanization observed across the continent. This phenomenon is noteworthy for the digital economy as urban dwellers, albeit frequently unbanked, predominantly possess mobile phones. These devices have evolved into an indispensable conduit for access to digital financial services, obviating the need for brick-and-mortar banking infrastructures. Mobile phones have thus democratized access to cashless transactions, enabling many individuals to engage in economic activities hitherto beyond their grasp.

An instructive case study illustrating the essential nature of cashless platforms in times of crisis is the ongoing conflict in Sudan. This turmoil exposed the fragile nature of traditional financial institutions, which were incapacitated by the armed conflict between SAF and RSF forces.

Western Union's cessation of operations and the inaccessibility of banks laid bare the dire necessity for alternative financial conduits. The Bank of Khartoum's innovative foray into the domain of cashless payments through its service, Bankak, emerged as a lifeline in these tumultuous times. Despite intermittent technical challenges, the service proved instrumental in facilitating the transmission of funds, which was pivotal, not only for sustenance but also for enabling individuals to evacuate from conflict-ridden areas. This illustration reinforces that cashless payments are not merely a convenience or economic tool; they have profound humanitarian dimensions. In contexts where conventional financial infrastructures falter, digital platforms can sustain the lifelines of communities.

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However, this transformative shift towards a cashless economy is full of challenges. Despite the remarkable progress, the high costs associated with access to digital services, inadequate digital literacy, and data privacy and security concerns present formidable obstacles. Consequently, stakeholders must adopt an inclusive, user-centric approach to enhance access, foster digital literacy, and safeguard user data to sustain the momentum of this financial revolution.



The advent of digital transactions in Africa represents an exciting socio-economic phenomenon with profound implications for financial inclusion, economic growth, and socio-economic development. Cashless payment systems, once a niche, are steadily cementing their position as the preferred mode of transaction, indicating the dawn of an era where cashless is poised to become king in Africa. McKinsey. AI

The African Agrarian Renaissance

Emergence of a Global Breadbasket



The African continent, characterized by its extensive geographic expanse, has historically been a domicile to a conglomerate of nations often colloquially referred to as “breadbaskets.” Noteworthy examples include Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, and Ethiopia. The moniker “breadbasket” implies an agricultural prowess predicated on the nations’ ability to satiate domestic demand for staple crops and serve as pivotal players in the international agrarian markets. Regrettably, the aforementioned countries have hitherto not been able to materialize these lofty agricultural yields that the designation might suggest.

Analyzing the geopolitical milieu, it is imperative to consider the ramifications of the recent conflict in Ukraine, which has reverberated through the global agricultural landscape.

Ukraine (and Russia, to a degree), often regarded as a quintessential breadbasket, has historically been an anchor in global food security, exporting a plethora of farm products. The conflict has elucidated the inherent fragility of the extant global food security infrastructure, which has been inordinately reliant on a limited set of key players.

Concomitantly, the cascading effects of the conflict have engendered an exigent need for a reevaluation and recalibration of global agricultural supply chains. A palpable shift in focus towards diversification is apparent as stakeholders grapple with the critical need to diminish their susceptibility to geopolitical uncertainties.

In this context, the nations of the Global South, particularly within Africa, emerge as potential alternative epicenters for agricultural production. The salience of Africa in this paradigm shift cannot be understated.

The continent boasts an amalgam of assets - including arable land, climatic diversity, and a burgeoning young population - which can be harnessed to foster agricultural innovation and sustainability.



Virginia Ticha, the President of the International Federation of Consular Chambers for Africa (FICA), ardently posits that Africa is unrivaled in its latent potential to ascend to the status of the world's breadbasket. This proposition hinges on her assertion that Africa's untapped agrarian prospects eclipse other geographical regions.

According to Ticha, the realization of this potential pivots on an interlocking framework of targeted local initiatives, government collaboration, and financial backing from Western countries. She advocates a holistic and integrated approach that accounts for the socio-cultural fabric of local communities and the larger national and international geopolitical forces at play. Highlighting the practical implementation of this thesis, Kenya, Ticha's homeland, was recently incorporated into Phase 2 of a World Bank food security program. An allocation of \$600 million was made to the country (an additional \$300 million was distributed among Somalia, Comoros, and Malawi) with the explicit intention of mitigating the region's recurrent drought-related challenges and concurrently stimulating agricultural productivity.

This program represents a tangible manifestation of the kind of integrated strategy Ticha champions. It seeks to bolster national capacities through improved planning, enhance market access, and propagate public policies that nurture and stimulate the agricultural sector. Ticha's vision underscores the necessity of adopting a multi-pronged, collaborative approach to effectively harness Africa's dormant agricultural potential and transition the continent into a global agrarian powerhouse.

Manifesting Africa's latent potential as a global breadbasket entails confronting and overcoming several substantial challenges. The journey towards sustainable and effective agricultural practices in Africa is complex, as Margaret A Rugadya of the non-governmental organization Landesa explicates in an interview with Investment Monitor.



Across Africa, smallholder production typifies the agricultural landscape, with output primarily catering to local demand and household necessities rather than broader market engagement. Herein lies an inherent tension. Landesa's work often entails situations needing concrete regulatory frameworks, where investors seek substantial tracts of land that can only be acquired through mechanisms not explicitly codified in law.

In such cases, Landesa plays a pivotal role in negotiating equitable outcomes.





Rugadya cites Ghana and Kenya as countries where considerable progress has been made. However, the fulcrum of the issue remains the same; smallholder farmers, while not the principal targets for large-scale food exports, frequently control land, forming the primary point of contention between investors and farmers.

This highlights the essential role of government in formulating stringent land regulations and agricultural policies. The active involvement of organizations like Landesa is also crucial in this context. At its core, the issue demands a balanced approach that assures smallholder farmers will not be disproportionately disadvantaged in agricultural transactions while simultaneously creating an environment conducive to investment and large-scale farming operations. Thus, we see the crucial interplay of regulatory control, non-governmental oversight, and investor interest in actualizing Africa's potential as a breadbasket.

Still, as Africa urbanizes, its agricultural landscape has undergone transformative changes. Smallholder farmers, traditionally focused on local demand and subsistence farming, are now increasingly orienting themselves toward foreign markets. Rugadya, in her discourse, underlines the significance of these shifts and emphasizes that the role of smallholder farmers in this narrative should not be underestimated.

Given their pre-existing land ownership, Rugadya posits that smallholders are indispensable catalysts for agricultural development. However, to leverage their potential effectively, governmental support is critical. Such support should manifest in the provision of infrastructure that enhances market access. As Rugadya aptly states:



"Infrastructure that supports a farmer's access to market is usually the missing link."

In this scenario, technology could be a powerful tool in bridging the existing gaps. It offers potential solutions to logistical challenges and incentivizes younger generations to venture into agriculture. Rugadya points to Kenya as a compelling case study:



"I have seen in Kenya groups of young people join the agriculture sector [through using their] smartphones. They have access to the markets using it. They use online platforms for their products. They have delivery systems that are coordinated on land."

These burgeoning developments present an auspicious harbinger for the future trajectory of agriculture in Africa and, by extension, the more significant agribusiness sector. Moreover, a discernible global trend exists where nations within Africa and beyond increasingly concentrate on bolstering their food security. This focus encompasses an introspective reflection on domestic food production and strategic engagements beyond their national frontiers. Such evolutions furnish tangible optimism for the potential transformation of the African continent into a global breadbasket. They also illuminate various opportunities for foreign investment to play a facilitative role in catalyzing this metamorphosis. However, a note of caution is essential here. Foreign investors must remain conscientious of the social and economic fabric in which they operate.

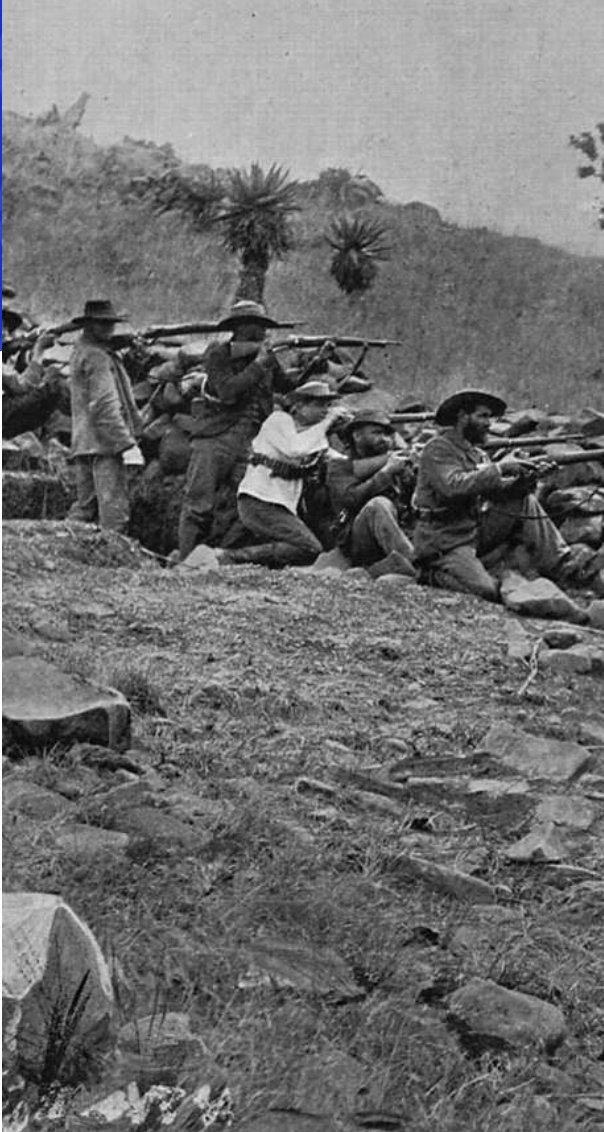


in this context, foreign investments must be structured to be synergistic with the interests of smallholder farmers. These farmers are not just economic agents; their agricultural activities are intrinsically linked to their subsistence and the sustenance of their families.

Consequently, any investment strategy must be cognizant of and responsive to the multifaceted ramifications it engenders. The path toward establishing Africa as a global breadbasket is replete with promise but necessitates a balanced and empathetic approach. Investments must be aligned with the broader social imperatives. They must foster an environment where smallholder farmers are not merely passive recipients but active and empowered stakeholders in this transformative journey. AI. Investment Monitor

The Horn of Africa, 1991-2023

Conflict and Peace Mega Trends



the review attempts to offer) a synoptic narration of significant peace and conflict episodes that dominated the Horn of Africa from 1991 to mid-2023, b) tease out four major megatrends that dominated this period and would shape future developments.

A Harvest of Agony

1991-2023 has been a watershed period in the lexicon of the Horn of Africa. It brought about momentous political changes that left their mark on much of the current dynamics, destined to leave their marks in the present and future development of the sub-region. Since then, Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993, South Sudan obtained independence from Sudan in 2011, and Somaliland proclaimed unilateral independence in 1991 - without recognition by Somalia or the United Nations.

Since 1991, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan have experienced various patterns and magnitudes of conflicts; some continue to linger unabated. Consider, for example, the Ethio-Eritrean war (1998-2000), the Djibouti civil war (1991-1994), a continuation of the civil war in Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, and the Southern Blue Nile in Sudan. South Sudan and Sudan fought over the Heglig oil fields and the disputed Abyei region 2012. In 2013,



South Sudan's civil war between the SPLA/SPLM, led by President Silva Kiir and his deputy Riak Machar further plunged South Sudan into political instability and considerable human suffering. After six years of negotiations and several brokered and broken peace agreements, the two conflicting parties reached an agreement in 2018 to end the civil war. At last, Riak Machar was sworn in as the first vice president. Its impacts on the social and political fabric of the people still reverberate.



Likewise, The Juba Peace Agreement (2020) was consummated after the Sudanese uprising against the defunct regime of President Al Bashir in 2019 and the installation of the short-lived transitional government of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok (2019-2021). Regarding peace and conflict, Forces of Freedom and Change, armed struggle movements, including the Sudan Revolutionary Front partners, and a host of other ten liberation movements and organizations signed the Juba Peace Agreement.

Sudan Liberation Movement/Army led by Abdul Wahid Mohamed Al-Nur, Sudan Liberation Movement-North faction led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu rejected the Juba Peace Agreement.

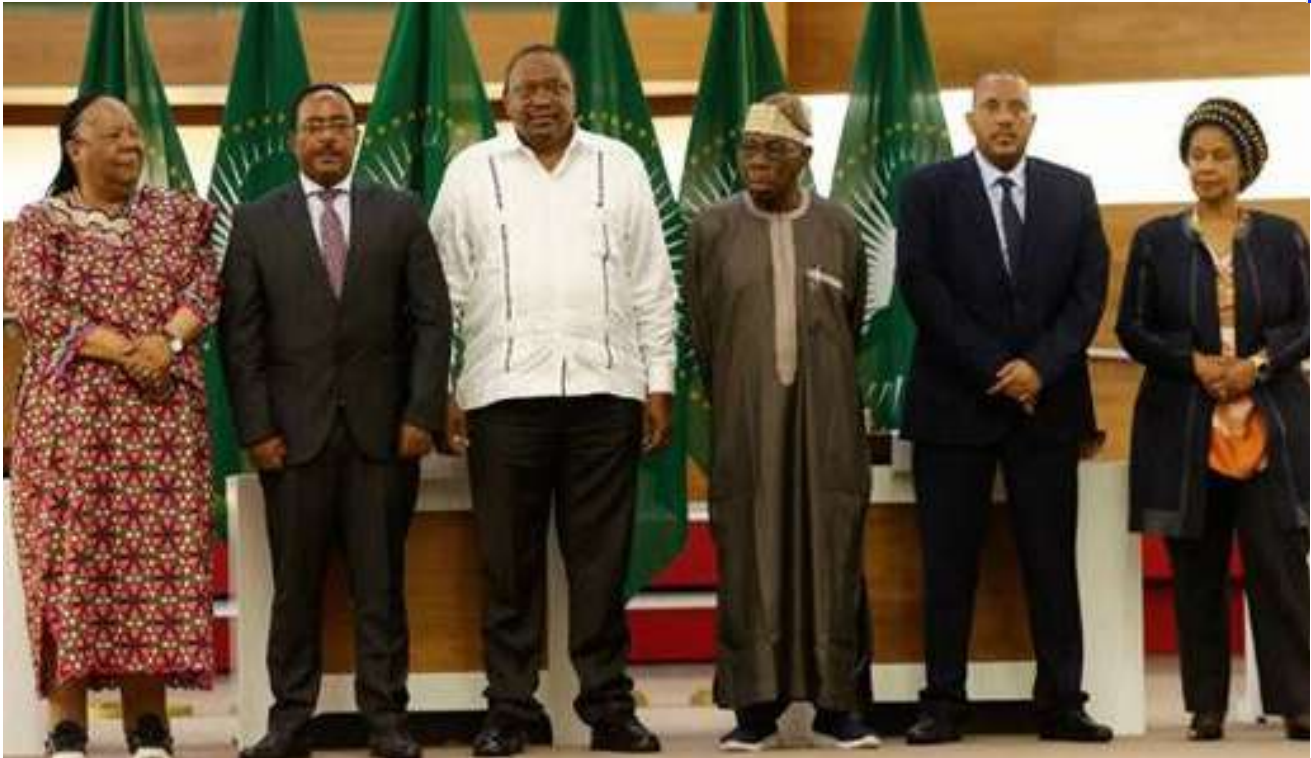
The 25 October 2021 military coup changed the situation on the ground. It gave the army-dominated Sovereign Council unimpeded powers after the civilian partners rejected an agreement (Sudantribune) brokered by PM Hamdok and sizeable sections of the civilian negotiators. The fate of a second agreement between some of the civilian stakeholders and the Sovereign Council, known as the Political Framework Agreement (Framework-Agreement), hung in the balance until it was overtaken by a second military SAF and Islamist reminiscences from the Al-Bashir regime. The war between SAF and RSF focused on urban centers with military bases and airports, not only in Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman but also Jabal Awliya, Al Fashir, El Obied, Kadougli, Nyala, Marawi, Zalinghi.

In 2018, the reign of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ended after more than two years of protests led by the country's largest ethnic group, the Oromo, and by members of the second largest group, the Amhara. Historical grievances, state violence, and mass arrests fueled these protests. The rise of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed himself was a leading member of the liberation movements coalition. And the signing of the Peace Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia. During the same year, it opened the door for several Agreements and the return of the opposition forces from Eritrea.



Later that year, PM Abiy Ahmed merged the EPRDF coalition into a new Prosperity Party. The TPLF opposed the party's creation, viewing it as part of an agenda to shift Ethiopia from a federal to a unitary state.

Tensions between the TPLF and PM Abiy Ahmed's government rose, and an election dispute in 2020 led federal and Tigray regional authorities to challenge each other's legitimacy. On November 4, 2020, PM Abiy Ahmed announced military operations in Tigray following an attack by Tigrayan forces on a regional military base. In addition to the TPLF, the war engulfed the Amhara and Afar regions and created animosities between them and the TPLF because they took sides with the government.



After signing the Pretoria Agreement between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), Ethiopia returned to ethnonationalism and violence to settle political differences with the ruling Prosperity Party (PP). For example, the war waged by the Oromo National Army (OLA), mainly in the Oromia National Regional State, and the creation of Fano, an Amhara ethnonationalism paramilitary that resisted integration into the Ethiopian army.

The most common event type was battles, with over 100 events, followed by explosions/remote violence, with nearly 60 events. Over 46% of explosion/remote violence events occurred in the Banadir region, about a 70% increase compared to February 2023.

ACLED records over 180 political violence events and 420 reported fatalities from 18 March to 14 April 2023. Most political violence is centered in the Banadir region, where al-Shabaab launched attacks targeting Somali security forces and civilians.

African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), authorized by the African Union Security Council- AU Security Council, became operational in April 2022. Its 20,000-strong force is from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. ATMIS succeeded AMISOM, which operated in Somalia for over 15 years (2007-2022), to support the establishment of a capable Somali National Army, a professional Police Force, and Federal institutions.

On June 2023, Al-Shabaab militant fighters attacked ATMIS' Bulo-Marer camp, 120 kilometers (75 miles) southwest of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital. The attackers used Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) and suicide bombers, killing 54 Ugandan People's Democratic Army soldiers stationed at a forward peacekeeping force.



On June 2023, Allied Defence Force (ADF) rebels attacked a school in a remote area of Uganda near the Congo border. In addition to the 38 students, one guard and two residents of the local community in Mpondwe-Lhubiriha town were killed.

A Ugandan military statement revealed that the rebels abducted six students, taken as porters of food looted from the school's store. A local mayor told The Associated Press that some students were burned beyond recognition, and others were shot or hacked to death after militants armed with guns and machetes attacked the school in the frontier district of Kasese.

Al Shabaab militants continue to launch lethal attacks across the country to topple the central government and establish a rule based on its strict interpretation of Islam's Sharia law, extending its influence in several East African countries with varying degrees of success. The latest attack on Uganda is a grim reminder that Al Shabaab has not relented in committing gruesome crimes against security forces and innocent civilians.

The human and economic cost of conflicts (death, physical impairments, refuge, mass displacement, and wanton destruction of the factors of development and property) bear the hallmark of wars, old or new.

Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) reported (2023) that the total number of deaths in Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, and Uganda between 1989 and 2022 was over half a million (514,510).

During the period from February to mid-June 2023, conflicts have contributed to the making of 3,646,699 refugees and asylum seekers, while Sudan, Somalia, and South Sudan became the home of 11,704,377 Internally Displaced Peoples (UNHCR 2023).

The 2020-2022 conflicts in Ethiopia and the April 2023 conflict in Sudan contributed significantly to the number of displaced peoples, contributing over 50 percent of the Horn of Africa total. During the same period, drought and other natural hazards aggravated the situation as people experienced the impact of war and the vagaries of nature. Although the tenacity of the adverse effects of conflicts persisted and, in some respects, exacerbated.

Conflict and Peace Mega Trends

1991 to 2023 peace and conflict synopsis draws our attention to at least five megatrends that would shape future policy and academic debates. They must also draw our attention to the harsh reality that although the root causes of conflict are dynamic, they continuously acquire new traits, patterns, magnitudes, and conduct in changing national, regional, and global geopolitical contexts. These four megatrends are as follows:

— 01 —

A shift from rural-based guerrilla to hybrid rural-urban warfare

Although insurgencies, including militant Islamist groups in the Horn of Africa, wage their military campaigns from bases located in rural grounds, thus winning the hearts and minds of the local population. The rural areas are suitable for hiding fighter and military munition and equipment and purchasing large amounts of food without being detected. For example, around 2000, the Somali Islamic Court Union evolved from a judicial system to a governing apparatus in Somalia's major and minor towns, providing social services and implementing Sharia law in the territories under its control. The ICU was defeated in December 2006 by troops from Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and Ethiopia, and the group was disbanded (Islamic-Courts-Union).

An Islamic Courts Union off-shoot, and Al Qaeda affiliate, A Shabaab, followed suit, operating from the rural bases to attack urban centers. It has staunch support among youth and clans in all urban centers. On June 2023, Al Shabaab attacked three urban centers in Somalia and one attack in Uganda (see the background of this review entry).

Due to the relocation of the liberation movements from Darfur and the Blue Nile from their rural bases to Sudan Three Towns (Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman), while others remained in their hometowns in Darfur, the war between SAF and RSF was conducted mainly in urban Centre, where military bases and airports are located ((Khartoum, Khartoum North, Omdurman, Marawi, Al Fasher, Al Ginena, Nyalla, Zalingi, and Elobied).

Similarly, the ethnonationalism forces in Ethiopia, such as OLA, Fano, and renegade regional powers, which refused to be integrated into the Ethiopian National Defense Force in Oromia and Amhara regional states, focus their attacks on small but strategic urban centers. In the case of OLA, it controls swathes of West and Kellem Wollega and Borana and Guji in Southern Ethiopia, collecting

taxes, setting roadblocks, and sometimes robbing banks and collecting ransom for kidnapping (World-Politics-Review).



— 02 —

Shifts in Peacekeeping and Peace Negotiations

There are two remaining UN-led peacekeeping missions in the Horn of Africa: United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei ([UNISFA](#)). It is established to monitor the flashpoint border between Sudan and South Sudan and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. It is authorized to use force to protect civilians and humanitarian workers in Abyei. The second peacekeeping mission is the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)), which was established to consolidate peace and security and to help show in 2013 after the break of the civil war in South Sudan. It was reinforced in 2014 to protect civilians, monitor human rights, support the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

It must be recalled that the African Union-United Nations hybrid mission in Darfur, referred to as [UNAMID](#), was established on 31 July 2007 and was mandated to protect the civilians and secure humanitarian assistance, monitor and verify the implementation of agreements, assist in establishing an inclusive political process, promote human rights and the rule of law, and monitor and report on the situation along the borders with Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR).



A significant shift is the transitions of the UN and AU-UN hybrid peacekeeping missions from the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the African Transition Mission in Somalia(ATMIS). ATMIS is a 20,000-strong international mission (military, police, and civilian) authorized by the African Union Security Council that became operational in April 2022. Its 20,000-strong force is from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. ATMIS succeeded AMISOM, which operated in Somalia for over 15 years (2007-2022), to support the establishment of a capable Somali National Army, a professional Police Force, and Federal institutions.

— 03 —

Insurgents' Military Equipment Advances

Terrorist groups, such as Al Shabaab's example, a) use makeshift drones to attack high-value targets. b) Increasing virtualization and reliance on counter-cyber security, with a minimum physical presence, makes detecting their whereabouts most difficult. In this regard, international terrorist groups were found to be using mobile money transfers in some Member States, and there is the possibility that they may also use cryptocurrencies as a means of money laundering to finance their activities. c) Al Shabaab and other terrorists' recruiter networks, national and regional offices, affiliates, and sympathizers operate globally, organizing, coordinating, and exchanging equipment with like-minded criminal gangs.

As can be seen, by the material presented in this section, the tactics used by international terrorist networks are diverse and have become increasingly sophisticated, combining conventional and more recent methods. The standard conventional tactics used by terrorists include hijackings, beheadings, kidnappings, suicide bombings, bombings, assassinations, armed assaults, extortion, and hostage-taking. Most recently, Al Shabaab's been firing weapons from motorcycles, using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones, and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).



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On 16 June 2023, it was reported that Sudan Support Force's shot down a Sudanese army fighter jet. Over the years, the military VTOL drone with two 120mm mortar rounds has been seen in several conflicts across the Middle East and Africa. It is also reported that this unique drone is operated by the Sudanese paramilitary forces (the Rapid Support Force (RSF (Armed Drones in Sudan).

— 04 —

ICT Savvy Insurgency and Crypto Currency for Money Laundering

Peaceful use of information technology has been matched with a noticeable cyber insurgency trend taking root along with ICT penetration and social media platforms expansion. Educated unemployed young people are lured to radicalism and joining insurgency because they do not foresee any available job opportunities. Such frustrations often lead not only to attempts to flee to Europe, use drugs, or get involved in petty crime but also turn to extremist religious organizations or insurgencies.

Whether secular or religious, insurgencies are active users of blogs, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tumblr, and Ask FM. Their media campaigns underscore their capacity to stream and propagate graphic images, audio messages, and music. This new trend has created highly decentralized national, regional, and globally linked terrorist networks with different degrees of autonomy from the Centre. For instance, insurgents maintain virtual connectivity with affiliates, members, and recruiters nationally and internationally.

It is challenging to detect terrorists and other insurgents' illicit finances because they are logistically and technically autonomous from international banking, money transfer systems, and investment institutions. For example, on February 2023, a woman was charged with financing a terrorist. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) purported that cryptocurrencies have become well-suited for conducting many illegal activities, including money laundering, terrorism financing, purchase of small arms and light weapons, and tax evasion (CBN banned cryptocurrency).



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Conclusions

Notably, we witness the rolling back of the United Nations peacekeeping missions and the increasing role of the AU and IGAD in peace negotiations Ethiopia-TPLF (Pretoria and Nairobi Processes) and Somalia (African Transition Mission in Somalia, ATMIS) and far less in Sudan's current conflict. Saudi Arabia and the United States lead the charge in Sudan.

Today, liberation movements, insurgents, and militant religious organizations are urban based, using the countryside as a transit to conquer the citadel, using the internet and social media to maintain connectivity with their urban social support base. Creating rapport with particular ethnic groups, regions, or clans became one of the distinguishing present-day insurgencies. It signals the emergence of ethnonationalism trends, reminiscent of Ethiopia liberation movements during the Mengistu Haile Mariam regime (1974-1991) and Sudan post-independence movements that contributed to the independence of South Sudan (in 2011). In Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan, the latest confrontations between government forces and insurgents targeted urban-based government, army installations, and civilian infrastructure for publicity and for weakening the Centre from within. The insurgents-controlled countryside is used to maintain themselves as an organization, collect revenue through taxation, and levy transit dues and contributions from traders and well-to-do notables.

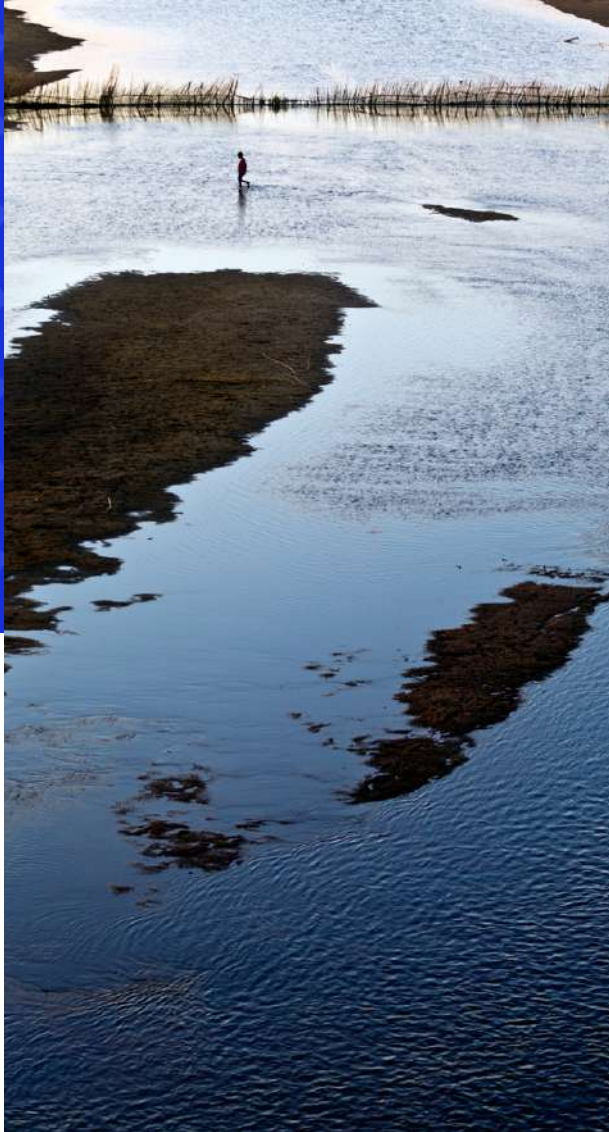
It also helped them to develop sophisticated organization, coordination, networking techniques, and management capabilities with cyber technology pervasive coordination and networking between terrorists in the country, cross-country, regionally, and globally.

Some megatrends stand out as signposts to the evolving nature of future conflicts and insurgents' capacities to adopt new technologies and advanced military equipment. The current level of insurgency technical expertise is not matching to the national armies; they are catching up fast by using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), and more advances in the cyber insurgency, social media, money laundering, and cryptocurrencies.



Mozambique

An Improved Security Context for 2024 Elections



In 2024, Mozambicans will vote in their sixth multiparty election (1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019) since independence from Portugal in 1975. The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), which led the liberation struggle, won all the elections, from the one-party system Samura Machel (1975–1986), until the first multiparty election to date Joaquim Alberto Chissano, 1986–2005, Armando Emilio Guebuza, 2005–2015, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, 2015–2024). At least four of the last six elections were marred with electoral violence and what some election observers referred to as a lack of electoral integrity under a dominant party system.

The last election (2019) was historic on four accounts: it was the first election without RENAMO's leader, Afonso Dhlakama, who won second place in all contested elections since the onset of multiparty democracy.

Dhlakama died in 2018 and was succeeded by Ossufo Momade, who examined the presidential elections under the RENAMO ticket. Second, the 2019 elections marked the second term of Filipe Nyusi of FRELIMO, and third, in 2017, the Ansar Al-Sunna Wa Jamma (ASWJ) militant Islamist insurgency, also known as Al Shabab (not to be confused with Al-Shabab in Somalia),

targeted the Mozambican coastline and carried out attacks in the Northern province of Cabo Delgado. Fourth, the election was held under the shadow of an economic contraction that pushed the people living under the international poverty line to 63.7%. By 2021, The Jihadist insurgency displaced over 800,000 people, resulting in more than 4,000 deaths (Al-Shabab-in-Mozambique-Taking-Stock-of-an-Insurgency).



The disadvantaged politico-economic environment of the province Cabo Delgado is central to the rise of Al-Shabab. The Mozambican government has marginalized the province for the last decades.³ Being one of the poorest provinces in the country, it lacks primary healthcare, education, and jobs, with food insecurity being one of the most pressing issues.⁴ Over the years, the ruling Frelimo party has privileged the Christian population in the country and the capital Maputo, overlooking the Muslim-dominated Cabo Delgado and coastal regions of other Northern provinces,

five even though President Nyusi himself was born in Mueda, Cabo Delgado.⁶ Severe feelings of collective discontent among the Northern locals have served as a fertile recruitment basis for the extremist group ([Shabab-in-Mozambique](#)).

After two years of failure to make headway in the fight against the insurgency, President Filipe Nyusi's government resorted to foreign private military enterprises (PME): Russian WAGNER, and South-African DAG to intervene militarily in Cabo Delgado in 2019. The foreign Mercenaries could not suppress the insurgency because they lacked terrain knowledge and operational know-how in the rugged Gabo Degalo province. The atrocities, including extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses, drew a wedge between the foreign private military enterprises and the local population. By 2021 WAGNER and South African DAG had left Mozambique.

Rwanda contributed to preceded SADC with a 3,800-strong military force devoted to fighting terrorism in coordination with the Mozambican army. The mission was partially financed by 20 million from the European Facility Fund. By 2021, It was recognized that Rwanda's apparent success in fighting the Jihadists had encouraged Mozambique and SADC to join the fight. In mid-2021, an Extraordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Maputo approved the deployment of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). It was deployed on 15 July as a regional response to support Mozambique in combating terrorism and acts of violent extremism. Since its deployment, SAMIM has registered several milestones, including recapturing villages, dislodging terrorists from their bases, and seizing weapons and warfare material,

creating a relatively secure environment for safer passage of humanitarian support. Additionally, community members have developed confidence in SAMIM forces, feeling more confident and allowing internally displaced persons to return to their everyday lives ([SADC-Mission-Mozambique](#)). However, although most of Gabo Degalo is free from Jihadist operations, they still pose security threats to offshore and inland gas and mineral works.



There are at least two security implications for the 2024 elections:

1) pre-election violence has already surfaced during the voter registration in April-May 2023. Nampula and Manica provinces violence began in Angoche when Frelimo accused Renamo of clandestinely trying to register residents outside the municipal boundary. This was not an isolated incident (cipeleicoes).

2) Constituencies excluded from voting in the 2019 elections for insecurity reasons due to the insurgency may be able to participate in the 2024 elections. Most of these areas are considered opposition supporters – RENAMO and Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM).

3) Mozambique is now better positioned to create a secure environment for the investors, whose activities were disrupted by the insurgents, to resume their work and attract new investors.



