

# GUIDELINES GENERAL ASSEMBLY



# MUN DES LYCÉENS

9e édition - 2024



GENERAL ASSEMBLY



GA Guidelines

## Summary

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## **Presentation of the Committee**

The general assembly, also known as UNGA is one of the most essential organs of the United Nations, which makes it also the most mediatized one, where almost all the delegations in the world attend. Many issues are discussed in it, issues that concern stability, peace and security on a global scale.

The role of such an assembly is more of an advisory one. Its conclusions are only recommendatory; in the end, it is the Security Council that will decide. The purpose here is going to be to find a resolution that encourages countries to cooperate and take nationwide and worldwide initiatives to deal with the issues that may result from both of the topics discussed.

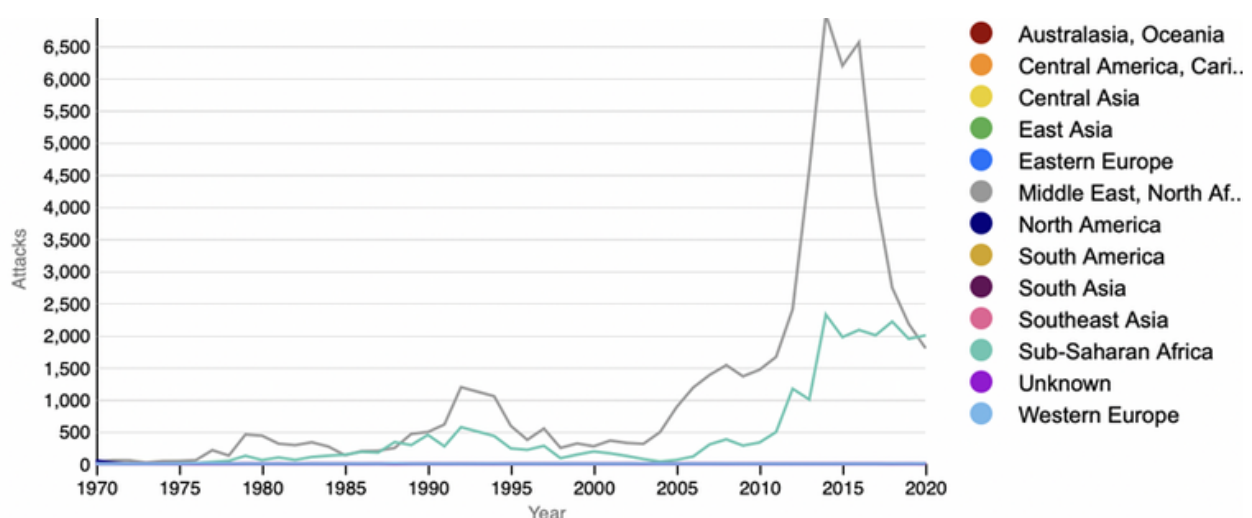
The purpose of these guidelines is to introduce you to the topics of our committee and to help you navigate through your individual research. We hope this Guide will be of good assistance and we look forward to hearing you negotiate for your country's best interest.



## Topic 1 : Countering Islamism and Terrorism in Africa: Fostering Stability and Security

Islamism refers to political movements or ideologies that advocate the implementation of Islamic principles in governance and society. While many Islamists pursue these goals through peaceful means, a subgroup resorts to terrorism, using violence to achieve their goals.

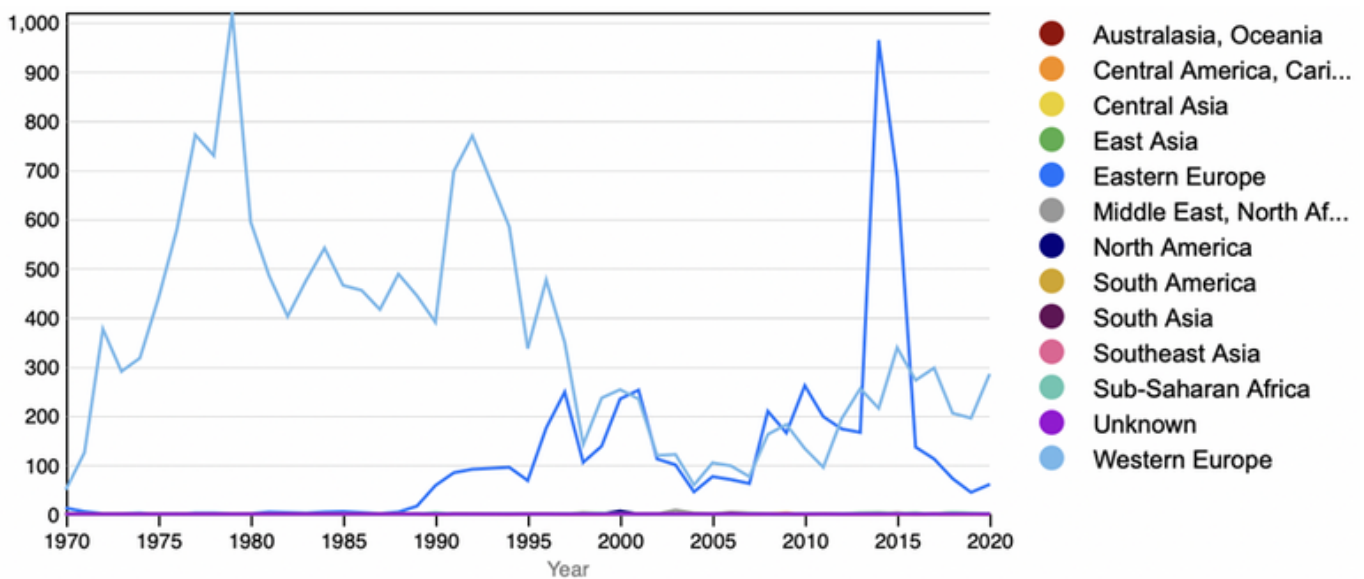
In Africa, the interweaving of historical, social and economic factors has given rise to Islamist extremism and terrorism. Various groups, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and others, exploit local grievances, political instability and economic challenges to recruit supporters and advance their radical agendas. The resulting conflicts pose significant challenges to African nations, leading to displacement, loss of life and hampering development efforts. Governments in affected regions are grappling with the complex task of addressing both the root causes of extremism and the immediate security threats posed by terrorist groups. The international community plays a crucial role in supporting African countries in their efforts to combat terrorism and promote stability on the continent.



<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?charttype=line&chart=regions&search=africa>



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<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=regions&search=europe>

These graphs, taken from the Global Terrorism Database, show the evolution of the number of terrorist attacks over recent years depending on the region. We can see that in Africa (first graph), terrorist attacks have been very high since the 2000s, and even more so after 2010, with a peak of almost 2 500 attacks in one year around 2015. To put things in perspective, we can compare with the situation in Europe (second graph). Indeed, we see that the peak in Western Europe was reached in the 1980s, not exceeding 1000 attacks in one year, and the peak in Eastern Europe was also reached around 2015, barely reaching the 1000 attacks as well. Therefore, we can see that Africa is a particularly vulnerable region and subject to great instability and insecurity compared to the rest of the world when it comes to terrorism.

## **Understanding the Roots of Islamist Extremism in Africa**

The roots of Islamist extremism and terrorism in Africa are complex and multifaceted, stemming from a combination of historical, social, economic and political factors. Among the main causes are colonial legacies that disrupted traditional societal structures, fostering discontent and identity crises. Economic disparities, poverty and lack of opportunity have fueled recruitment into extremist groups seen as an alternative. In addition, political instability, weak governance and ethnic tensions have created fertile ground for radical ideologies to take root. External influences, such as the global spread of jihadist ideologies, have also played a role.

The intersection of these factors has given rise to various Islamist extremist groups across the continent.

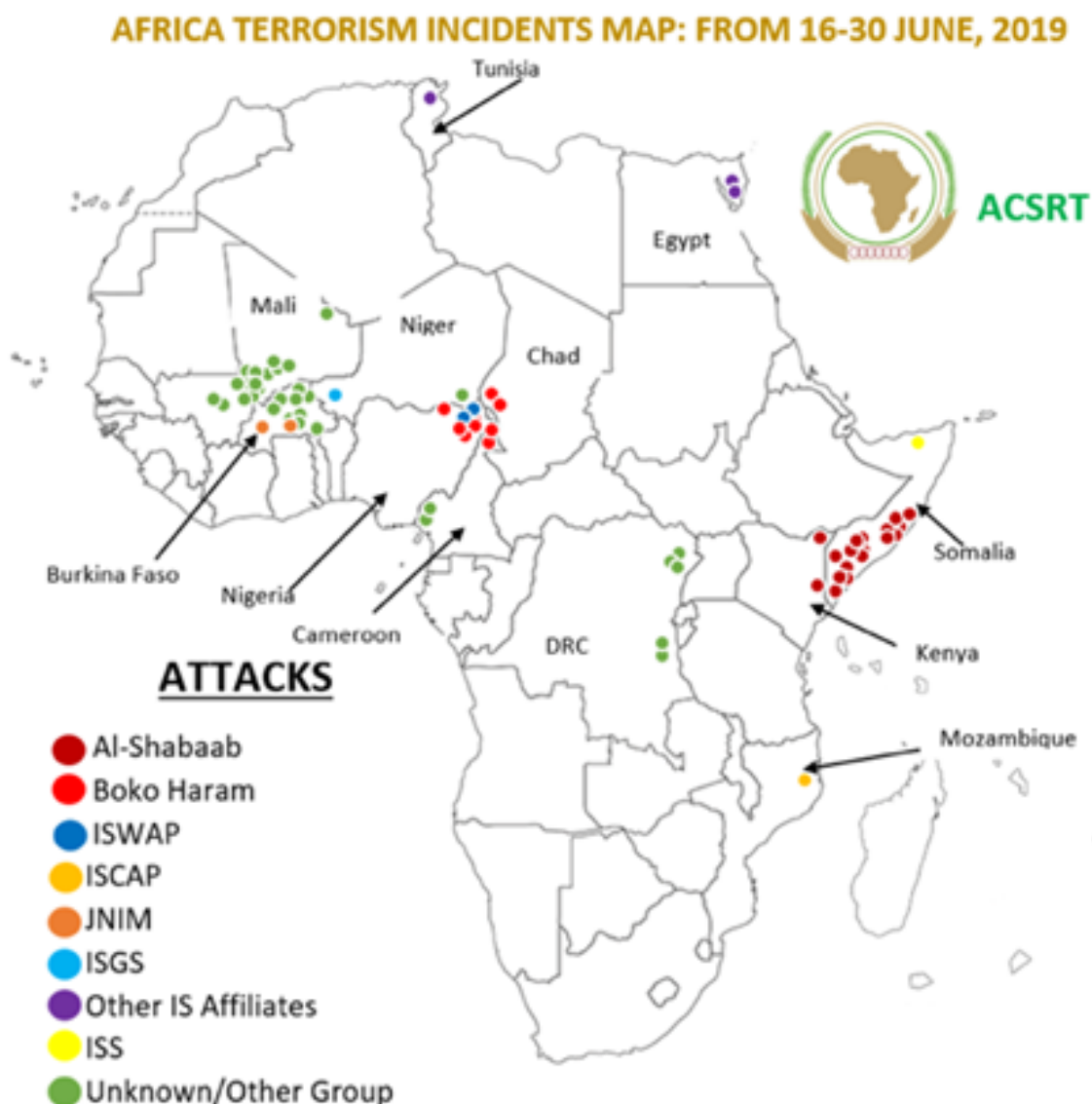
## **Current Context**

### **Different Terrorist Groups and Their Field of Action**

Terrorism in Africa takes various forms and occurs in different regions, often motivated by distinct factors and ideologies. In West Africa, Nigeria faces a significant threat from Boko Haram, an Islamist extremist group that operates mainly in the northeast of the country. Boko Haram, known for its violent attacks and kidnappings, seeks to establish an Islamic state based on its interpretation of the Sharia law. In East Africa, particularly in Somalia, Al-Shabaab is a major terrorist organization. Operating in the Horn of Africa, Al-Shabaab has affiliations with Al-Qaeda and aims to establish a strict form of Islamic law in Somalia.

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The group is responsible for numerous attacks in Somalia and neighboring countries. In North Africa, groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) operate in the Sahel region, particularly in countries like Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. AQIM is known for its involvement in kidnappings, drug trafficking and attacks on military and civilian targets. In the Sahel region, Mali faces challenges from various terrorist groups, including Ansar Dine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). These groups exploit ethnic tensions and weak governance structures, contributing to instability in the region.



[https://www.facebook.com/AUACSRT/photos/a.289854378199098/679965629187969/?pairpv=0&eav=AfZ3B-Fat3ur8I\\_wUKXDctE6H4X42qUzcpdzOxAc4rjLr7AMPXq0AI84LiWLCKEgxyY&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/AUACSRT/photos/a.289854378199098/679965629187969/?pairpv=0&eav=AfZ3B-Fat3ur8I_wUKXDctE6H4X42qUzcpdzOxAc4rjLr7AMPXq0AI84LiWLCKEgxyY&_rdr)

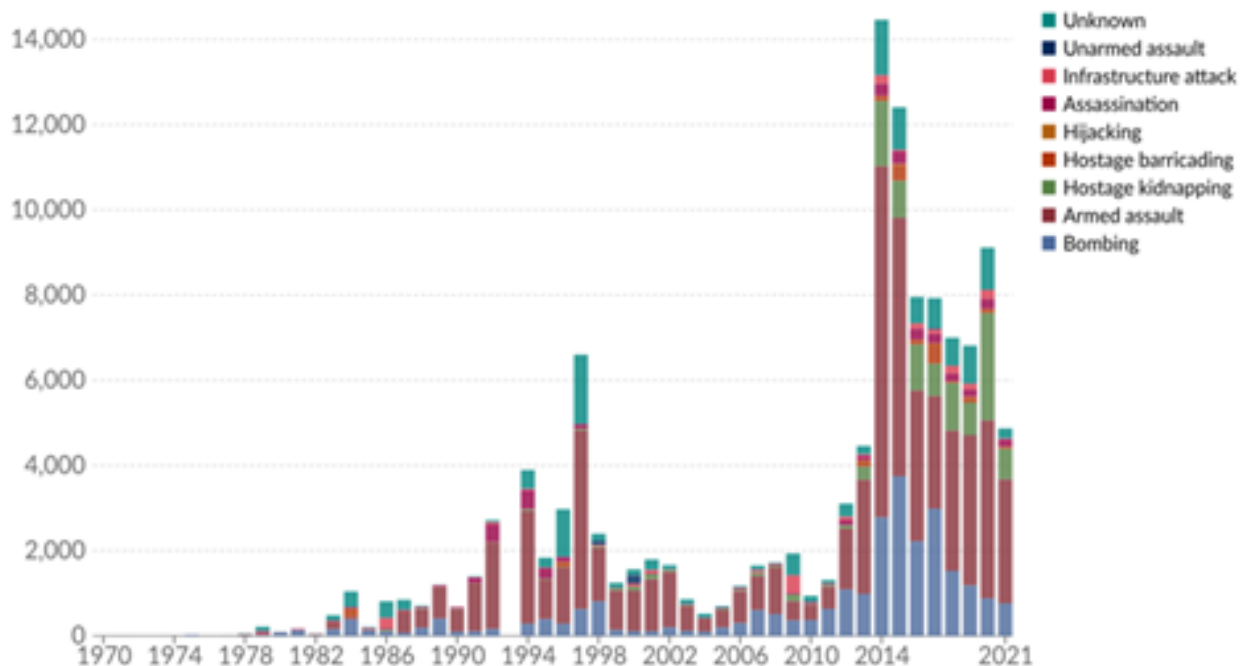


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## Deaths from terrorist attacks, by method of attack, Africa



Confirmed deaths, including all victims and attackers who died because of a terrorist attack<sup>1</sup>, by the primary method the perpetrators used.



Data source: Global Terrorism Database (2022)

OurWorldInData.org/terrorism | CC BY

Note: The GTD omits 1993 terrorism data because of a data loss incident and the complexities of retrieving information on events from over 25 years prior.

1. Terrorist attack: The Global Terrorism Database defines a terrorist attack as the threat or use of violence to achieve a political, economic, religious or social goal through intimidation or coercion by an actor that is not the state. For an event to be considered terrorism: - The perpetrators must be acting intentionally - The perpetrators must threaten or use violence against people or property - The perpetrators must not be agents of a state Furthermore, at least two of the following three criteria must be met: - The actions of the perpetrators are in pursuit of a political, economic, religious, or social goal - The actions are aimed at intimidating or coercing more than the immediate victims - The actions target civilians Learn more: The Global Terrorism Database: how do researchers measure terrorism?

[https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/deaths-from-terrorist-attacks-by-method-of-attack-stacked-bar?country=~OWID\\_AFR](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/deaths-from-terrorist-attacks-by-method-of-attack-stacked-bar?country=~OWID_AFR)

## Their Main Goals

Terrorist groups in Africa pursue diverse objectives, often motivated by a combination of ideological, political and socio-economic factors. A common goal is the creation of Islamic states based on their interpretation of Sharia law. Boko Haram in Nigeria, for example, seeks to create an Islamic state in the country's northeast and opposes what it perceives as Western influences. Indeed, the group has been responsible for ongoing attacks, including suicide bombings, abductions, and raids, particularly in the northeastern part of the country.

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Despite efforts by the Nigerian government and its regional partners to combat the insurgency, Boko Haram has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. The Lake Chad Basin region remains a focal point of Boko Haram's activities, leading to humanitarian crises and internal displacements. Another goal is the redress of perceived historical injustices or ethnic and religious grievances.

In Mali, jihadist groups like Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) aim to address historical grievances and resist what they see as foreign intervention and influence. These groups exploit ethnic tensions and historical animosities to gain support for their cause. Some terrorist organizations in Africa also pursue separatist programs.

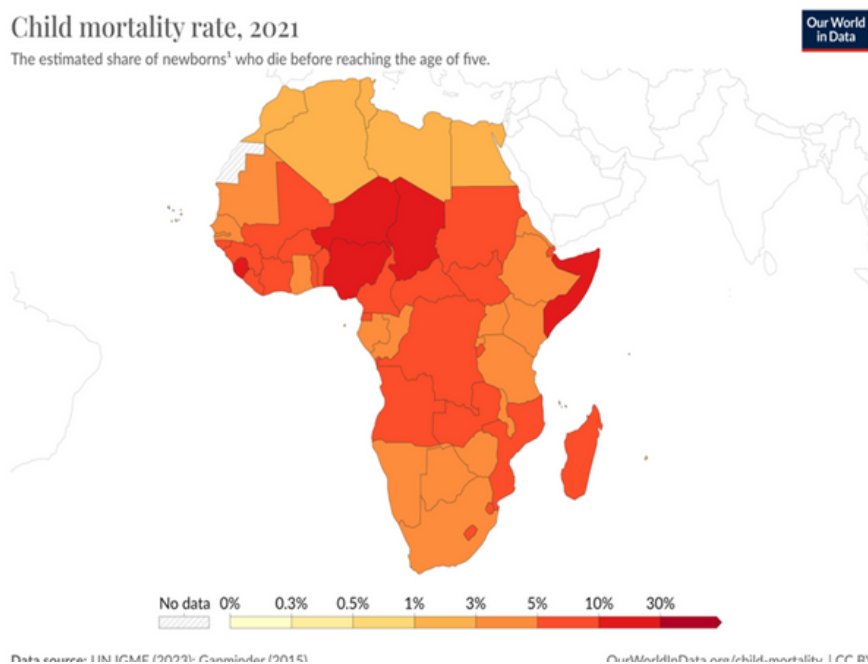
In Somalia, Al-Shabaab has sought to establish an independent Islamic state, questioning the legitimacy of the Somali government. The group, which emerged in the mid-2000s, aims to undermine state institutions, and replace them with its own form of governance. Al-Shabaab is known for carrying out attacks on government institutions, security forces, and civilian targets, using tactics such as bombings and assassinations. Despite efforts by the Somali government, African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and international partners to counter the group, Al-Shabaab maintains a presence in various parts of the country.

Economic motivations also play a role, with some groups engaging in criminal activities such as drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion to fund their operations. This is evident in the actions of various jihadist groups in the Sahel region, including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), who engage in illicit activities to support their operations.

## Who Is Most Impacted?

Terrorist groups in Africa have widespread impacts, affecting diverse segments of the population, but some groups often bear the brunt of the consequences more than others. Civilians, particularly those living in conflict zones, are among the worst affected. For example, in Nigeria, Boko Haram attacks have led to mass displacement, creating humanitarian crises and leaving many people vulnerable to violence and deprivation. Women and children are disproportionately affected by the activities of terrorist groups.

Cases of mass kidnappings, such as the notorious kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls by Boko Haram, highlight the serious consequences on the lives of young girls and their communities. Women may also face specific forms of violence and coercion under the rule of certain extremist groups. Ethnic and religious minorities often faced increasing vulnerability. In regions with diverse populations, such as Mali, extremist groups such as Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) have targeted specific ethnic communities, exacerbating existing tensions and leading to displacement.



<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/terrorism-deaths?region=Africa>



## **Main Factors of the Development of Islamism in Africa**

### **Political Instability and Weak Governance**

Political instability and weak governance in Africa contribute significantly to the amplification of terrorism. When governments are unable to provide effective governance, ensure the rule of law and respond to the needs of citizens, it creates fertile ground for extremist groups to exploit the resulting power vacuums and social discontent. For example, in Somalia, the lack of a stable central government has allowed Al-Shabaab to gain influence and control over certain regions. Similarly, in Mali, political instability and a series of coups have weakened the state's ability to maintain control of its territory, providing opportunity for jihadist groups like Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) to exploit the power vacuum and expand their power.

Lack of governance capacity often leads to insufficient security forces, making it difficult to effectively combat the activities of terrorist organizations. Political corruption is another issue exacerbating the problem. When corruption is endemic, public trust in government institutions erodes, making it easier for extremist groups to gain support by presenting themselves as alternatives to corrupt regimes.

### **Economic Disability and Poverty**

Economic disparities and poverty in Africa contribute significantly to the amplification of terrorism. High levels of poverty create environments in which extremist groups can exploit lack of opportunities and socio-economic vulnerabilities to recruit new members.

For example, in Nigeria, Boko Haram has capitalized on the economic challenges faced by marginalized communities in the northeastern regions, offering alternative and sometimes coercive livelihoods. Additionally, in regions like the Sahel, where economic opportunities are limited, groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) engage in criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and kidnapping, to finance their operations.

## **Ethnic and Religious Tensions**

Ethnic and religious tensions in Africa often exacerbate terrorism, providing fertile ground for extremist groups to exploit existing divisions and grievances. In countries with diverse populations, such as Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency has taken advantage of long-standing ethnic and religious tensions, particularly between Muslims and Christians, to gain support and fuel recruitment. The group exploits these divisions to present itself as the defender of one community against another. Similarly, in Mali, jihadist groups like Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) have exploited ethnic tensions between different communities, using historical grievances to gain local support. The complex interplay of ethnic and religious dynamics in these regions creates an environment conducive to the entrenchment of extremist ideologies and the encouragement of violence.

## **Historical Grievances and Post Colonial Legacies**

In Africa, historical grievances and postcolonial legacies contribute to the exacerbation of terrorism in various regions. In the Horn of Africa, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in Ethiopia has its roots in historical grievances related to the marginalization of the Somali-speaking population in the Ogaden region.

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The ONLF exploited these historical grievances to advance its separatist agenda. Additionally, in Algeria, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) emerged in the 1990s, influenced by historical resentment toward the government and its perceived alignment with colonial powers.

These examples illustrate how historical grievances, often linked to postcolonial legacies, can be exploited by terrorist groups to gain support and perpetuate violence.

## **External Influences and Global Jihadist Movements**

External influences and global jihadist movements contribute to the exacerbation of terrorism in Africa by providing ideological, financial and logistical support to local extremist groups.

Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) have expanded their influence across the continent, affecting various regions. In the Sahel, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has established links with local jihadist groups, amplifying their capacity for violence. Similarly, the presence of ISIS-affiliated groups in Libya has had spillover effects, influencing neighboring countries and contributing to instability. External actors, often driven by transnational jihadist ideologies, exacerbate local conflicts, as demonstrated by support for Boko Haram in Nigeria.

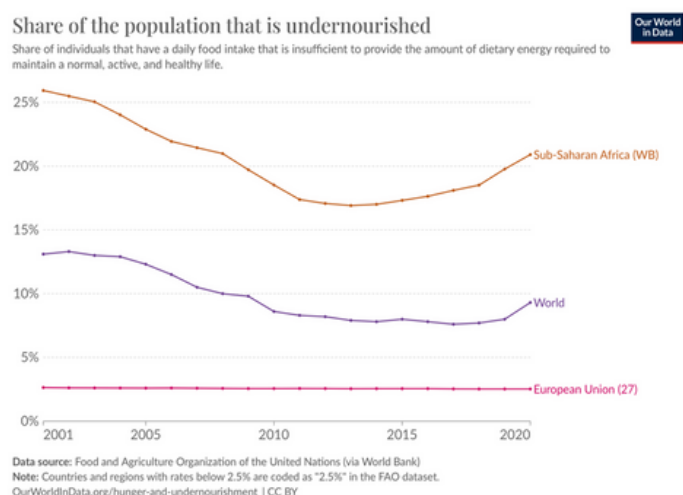
These global influences complicate African countries' counterterrorism efforts, requiring international cooperation to address the broader dimensions of the threat.



## Impact of Terrorism on Nations

### Economic Consequences

Terrorism and Islamist extremism in Africa have significant economic consequences, affecting both individual livelihoods and national economies. The constant threat of attacks and acts of terrorism can deter foreign investment and tourism, crucial sources of revenue for many African countries. In Kenya, for instance, the tourism industry has been adversely affected by frequent attacks by Al-Shabaab. According to data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the number of international tourist arrivals dropped from 1.47 million in 2011 to 1.18 million in 2015, coinciding with a period of increased terrorist activities. These attacks have detrimental effects on businesses and livelihoods dependent on the tourism sector, illustrating the tangible economic repercussions of terrorism in the region. Domestically, the economic consequences of terrorism include disruptions to trade and agriculture. In Nigeria, Boko Haram attacks in northeastern regions have led to displacement, disrupting agricultural activities and exacerbating food insecurity. According to the World Food Program, as of 2021, an estimated 8.7 million people in northeastern Nigeria were in need of humanitarian assistance due to the compounded impact of displacement and disrupted agriculture caused by Boko Haram attacks.



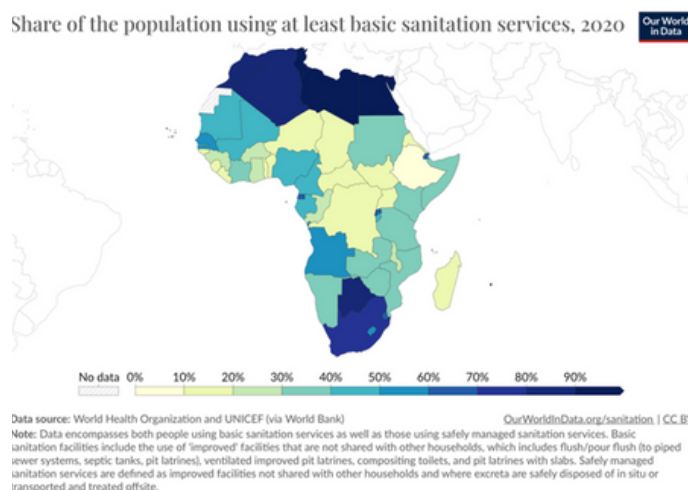
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Additionally, allocating financial resources to counterterrorism efforts strains national budgets, diverting funds from essential social services like education and health care. This dynamic is evident in countries like Mali and Burkina Faso, where the fight against jihadist groups requires significant financial and human resources.

## Social Consequences

Terrorism and Islamist extremism in Africa have profound social consequences, causing the destruction of infrastructures, compromising security and undermining essential services. Attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria have caused extensive damage to critical infrastructures. According to reports, between 2009 and 2021, Boko Haram was responsible for the destruction of over 1,400 schools and the death of more than 2,000 teachers. Additionally, the group targeted hospitals and health facilities, leading to a decline in healthcare access for affected communities. The destruction of public infrastructures, including roads and government buildings, has hampered economic activities in the affected regions. The violence perpetrated by Boko Haram has also resulted in widespread displacement, with an estimated 2.7 million people internally displaced within Nigeria as of 2021, placing immense pressure on social structures and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.



<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/share-of-population-with-improved-sanitation-facilities?region=Africa>

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The persistent threat of terrorism has led to a significant lack of security, particularly in conflict-affected regions such as Mali. According to data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), in 2020 alone, Mali witnessed more than 3,000 conflict events, contributing to an environment of increased insecurity. In these conflict zones, communities living in constant fear of attacks by jihadist groups have experienced a profound breakdown in social cohesion. As a result, trust among community members erodes and growing insecurity forces people to flee their homes. For example, in 2021, it was reported that almost 340,000 Malians were internally displaced due to conflict and insecurity.

## Human Consequences

Terrorism and Islamist extremism in Africa have severe human consequences, causing the loss of lives, displacement, and profound suffering. For example, in Burkina Faso, jihadist violence led to significant human consequences, particularly in the Sahel region. As of 2021, the United Nations reported that over 1.3 million people in Burkina Faso were internally displaced due to the conflict involving groups linked to Al-Qaeda and ISIS. The violence has resulted in numerous casualties, with attacks targeting both civilians and security forces.

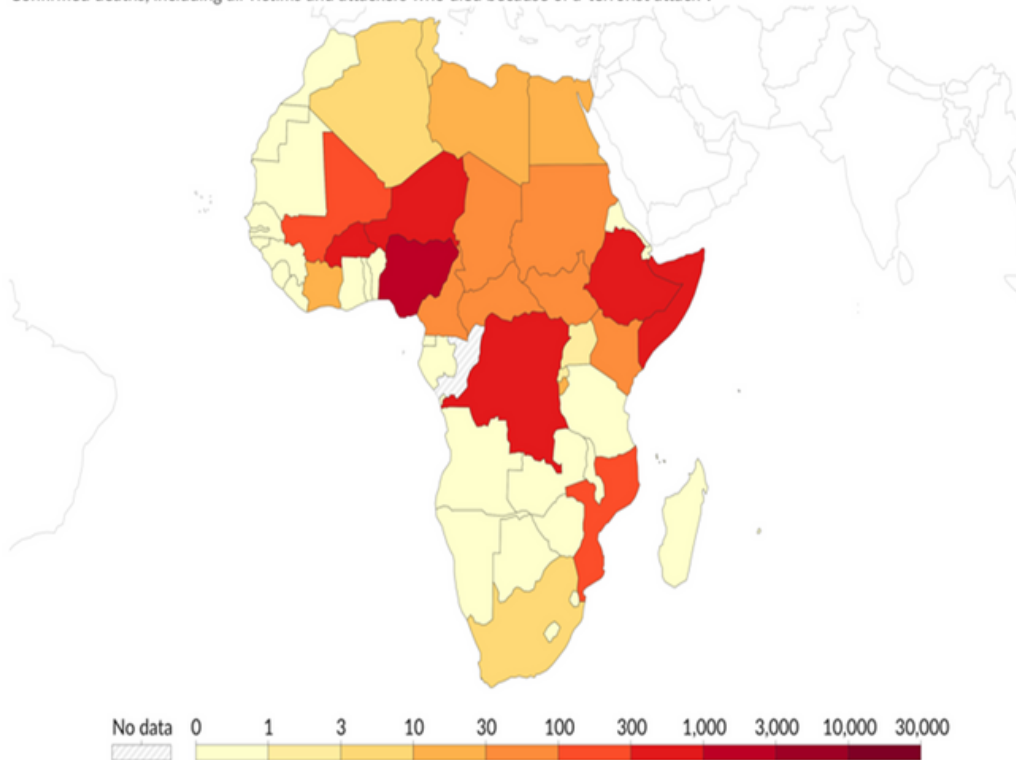
In Somalia, the impact of Al-Shabaab's actions is evident in the loss of lives and widespread displacement. According to the Global Terrorism Database, Al-Shabaab was responsible for over 1,500 civilian deaths in 2019. The group's attacks have created a humanitarian crisis, displacing thousands of Somalis, both internally and externally.

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## Terrorism deaths, 2021

Confirmed deaths, including all victims and attackers who died because of a terrorist attack<sup>1</sup>.

Our World  
in Data



Data source: Global Terrorism Database (2022)

[OurWorldInData.org/terrorism](https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism) | CC BY

**1. Terrorist attack:** The Global Terrorism Database defines a terrorist attack as the threat or use of violence to achieve a political, economic, religious or social goal through intimidation or coercion by an actor that is not the state. For an event to be considered terrorism: - The perpetrators must be acting intentionally - The perpetrators must threaten or use violence against people or property - The perpetrators must not be agents of a state Furthermore, at least two of the following three criteria must be met: - The actions of the perpetrators are in pursuit of a political, economic, religious, or social goal - The actions are aimed at intimidating or coercing more than the immediate victims - The actions target civilians Learn more: The Global Terrorism Database: how do researchers measure terrorism?

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/terrorism-deaths?region=Africa>

## Multifaceted Approaches to Encounter Terrorism

### Foreign Actors

The U.S. has actively participated in counterterrorism efforts in Africa, citing national security concerns and the prevention of extremist activities. Through initiatives like the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), the U.S. has conducted military operations, provided training to local forces, and offered intelligence support. Notable examples include U.S. support for African countries in the fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia.



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France, particularly through Operation Barkhane, has been involved in counterterrorism operations in the Sahel region. Launched in 2014, Operation Barkhane aims to combat jihadist groups and stabilize the region. The French military has conducted various operations in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania. France's interests include regional stability, preventing the spread of extremism, and securing its economic and geopolitical influence in the Sahel. Russia's involvement in Africa, particularly through the Wagner Group, has raised concerns about its motivations and interests. The Wagner Group, a private military company reportedly linked to the Russian government, has been implicated in conflicts in Libya and the Central African Republic. Critics argue that Russia's engagement is driven by a desire for geopolitical influence, access to resources, and strategic advantages in the “New Scramble for Africa”.

## **Regional Cooperation**

The AU has been actively involved in regional solutions to tackle terrorism and extremism in Africa. The AU established the African Standby Force (ASF) as a regional peacekeeping initiative.

Additionally, the Peace and Security Council of the AU regularly convenes to address security challenges. The AU's involvement reflects a commitment to fostering collective security and addressing the root causes of terrorism on the continent. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has implemented regional strategies to combat terrorism in West Africa. ECOWAS established the ECOWAS Standby Force for Conflict Prevention and Management (ESF) and has conducted joint military operations.

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For example, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was created by ECOWAS member states to counter Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, demonstrating regional cooperation against the threat. The G5 Sahel countries—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—formed a regional organization to address security challenges in the Sahel region.

The G5 Sahel Joint Force was established in 2017 to combat terrorism and transnational crimes. This initiative aims to enhance regional cooperation, pool resources, and coordinate efforts to counter the influence of jihadist groups in the Sahel.

## **International Cooperation and Resolution Put In Place**

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has played a pivotal role in addressing terrorism in Africa through various resolutions. Resolution 2374 (2017) focused on countering the financing of terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin, emphasizing international cooperation to cut off financial support for groups like Boko Haram. These resolutions provide a framework for global collaboration to combat terrorism on the continent. The Global Counterterrorism Forum, a multilateral platform, has engaged in initiatives to address terrorism in Africa. In 2012, the GCTF launched the Sahel Region Capacity-Building Working Group to enhance counterterrorism capabilities in the Sahel. This forum facilitates international collaboration, bringing together countries, organizations, and experts to share best practices and coordinate efforts. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, led by the United States, is a collaborative effort involving multiple countries to address terrorism in the Sahel and Maghreb regions. It focuses on building the capacity of partner nations, promoting regional cooperation, and addressing the root causes of extremism.

The Global Coalition Against Daesh, also known as ISIS, has engaged in international cooperation to counter the spread of terrorism in Africa. The coalition, formed in 2014, includes numerous countries and organizations working together to degrade and defeat ISIS. While the focus has often been on the Middle East, the coalition's efforts also extend to countering the influence of ISIS-affiliated groups in Africa.

## **Strategies for Encountering Terrorism in Africa**

### **Dialogue for Peace**

Peace dialogues, particularly cultural and religious dialogues, play a crucial role in the fight against terrorism and extremism in Africa. Initiatives that promote understanding and tolerance among diverse communities can contribute to lasting solutions. For example, in Nigeria, the Interfaith Mediation Center, founded in 1995, engages in dialogues between Christians and Muslims to promote religious harmony and ease tensions. The Center's efforts have contributed to peacebuilding and conflict resolution, countering the narrative of religious division. Such initiatives facilitate conversations that bridge religious divides, emphasizing shared values and common goals. These dialogues can not only build trust, but also create an environment in which communities are less susceptible to extremist ideologies, thereby contributing to lasting peace in the region.

### **Countering Propaganda**

Countering propaganda is a crucial strategy for combating terrorism and extremism in Africa, particularly as it relates to Islamist ideologies.

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By actively challenging extremist narratives through various channels such as social media, community engagement and educational initiatives, countries can diminish the appeal of radical ideologies. This approach not only exposes the lies promoted by terrorist groups, but also promotes critical thinking within communities. Strategic counterpropaganda efforts can help create a more informed and resilient society, less susceptible to recruitment and radicalization. Additionally, by promoting alternative narratives emphasizing tolerance, inclusion and socio-economic development, governments and organizations can work to address the root causes of extremism and foster a sense of national unity, thus contributing to a more stable and secure Africa.

## **Humanitarian Assistance**

Humanitarian aid plays a vital role in combating the root causes of terrorism and Islamist extremism in Africa. By providing essential assistance such as food, clean water, health care and education to vulnerable communities, humanitarian efforts can address the socio-economic disparities and grievances that often contribute to the appeal of ideologies extremists. Access to basic necessities and educational opportunities can empower individuals, particularly in marginalized regions, reducing susceptibility to recruitment by extremist groups. Additionally, humanitarian initiatives focused on rebuilding infrastructure and promoting sustainable development help create stable environments in which extremism finds less fertile ground. By fostering a sense of hope and resilience, humanitarian assistance not only alleviates immediate suffering, but also helps create the conditions for long-term stability, peace and resilience against foreign influence. terrorism and radical ideologies in Africa.



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## Key Questions

- How has my country been directly affected by the issue, and what are its specific security concerns?
- How have regional dynamics and geopolitical factors contributed to the issue?
- What regional alliances and initiatives does my country support or participate in to address the issue?
- How can regional cooperation be strengthened to foster stability and security in Africa?
- What strategies can be implemented to address the root causes of extremism and promote stability through socio-economic development?
- How can my country contribute to humanitarian assistance and development programs in areas affected by terrorism?
- What strategies can be implemented to ensure long-term stability in regions affected by terrorism?
- How can your country contribute to post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts?

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The Economic Community of West African States: <https://ecowas.int>

The ECOWAS ESF: <https://ecpf.ecowas.int/components/ecowas-standby-force/>

The Multinational Joint Task Force: <https://mnjtfmm.org>

G5 Sahel: <https://www.g5sahel.org>

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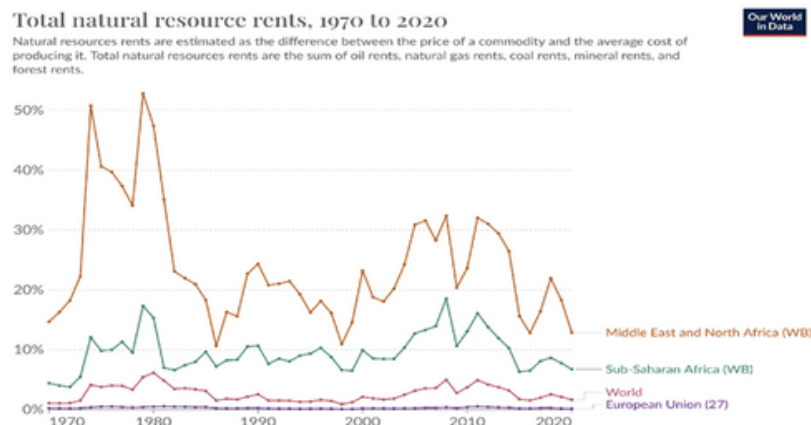
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## Topic 2 : How Can We Make The Most of Resources to Ensure a Better Development In Africa ?

Africa is provided with an extraordinary abundance of natural resources. Natural resources are raw materials found in the environment that have economic value and are used by humans for various purposes. These include elements such as air, water, minerals, plants, and energy sources that contribute to sustaining life and supporting human activities. With around 30% of the world's known mineral reserves, Africa plays a central role in the global supply chain, providing essential resources such as gold, diamonds, platinum, and rare earths. In addition, its fertile soils and favorable climatic conditions favor the production of a diverse range of agricultural products, from cocoa in West Africa to coffee in East Africa, making a significant contribution to the global food market. However, this context of abundant natural resources is double-edged since it presents both immense opportunities and great challenges for the continent, requiring thoughtful and sustainable strategies to exploit these resources in the collective interest of Africa's development. Ultimately, the sustainable use of Africa's resources is the key to stability, prosperity and harmonious economic integration, consolidating the continent's role as a central player on the world stage.



<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/natural-resource-rents?>

country=OWID\_WRL~Middle+East+and+North+Africa+%28WB%29~Sub-Saharan+Africa+%28WB%29-OWID\_EU27

## **Small Historical Background**

During the scramble for Africa, which took place between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, colonial powers took control of vast extents of the continent. This period of colonization was marked by the relentless extraction and exploitation of Africa's abundant natural resources in order to fuel the industrialization of European nations. The consequences were devastating for African societies: forced labor, population displacement and environmental degradation have become lasting legacies of this era. Therefore, after gaining independence, many newly independent nations inherited resource extraction industries that were largely oriented towards satisfying the needs of their former colonizers, which has often led to the continuation of exploitative practices, as well as a lack of capacity and expertise in resource management. In addition, the growing global demand for certain resources has put additional pressure on African governments to strike a balance between economic growth and social development.

## **Root Causes of the Current Challenges Africa is Facing Regarding with The Exploitation of Its Resources**

### **The Curse of Natural Resource**

The The curse of natural resources, often referred to as the "resource curse", is a complex phenomenon that has affected many African nations. Despite the abundance of valuable resources such as oil, minerals and arable land, many African countries face persistent difficulties in achieving sustainable development and improving the well-being of their populations.

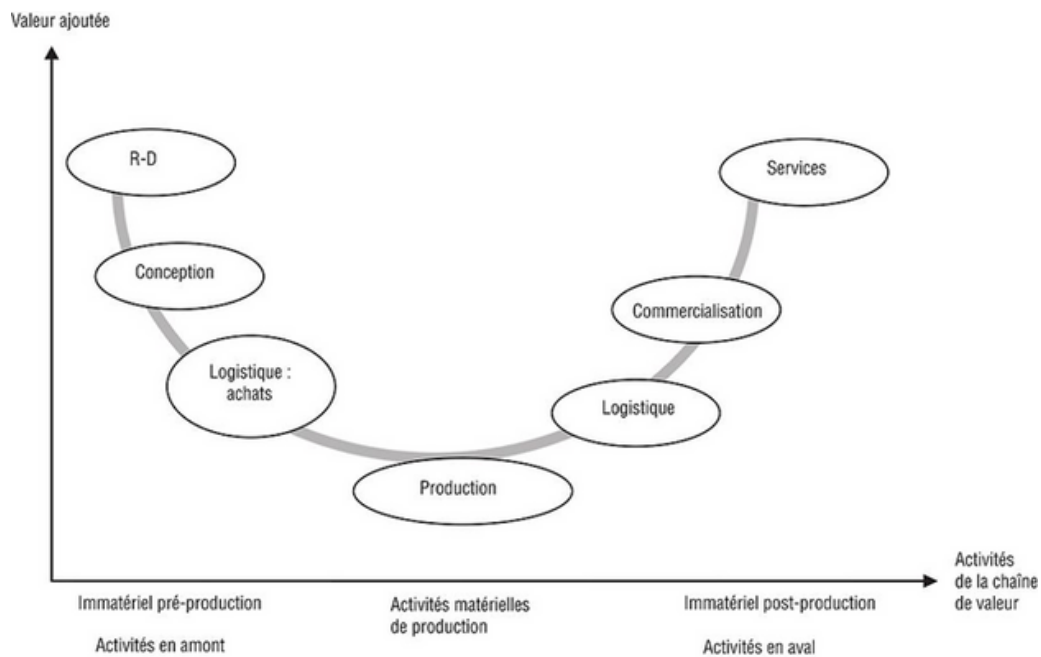


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Paradoxically, the presence of these resources has, in many cases, led to economic and social instability and political corruption. One of the main reasons for this curse is an economy over-dependent on resource exports, which can lead to a certain volatility and vulnerability of the economy to fluctuations in world prices.

Furthermore, the whole economy is then based on exporting a product that is situated **at the bottom of the value chain**. To understand that we need to look at the differences of prices between raw materials and manufactured products. African countries often base their economy on the exports of raw materials, that are quite cheap on the market, and are situated at the bottom of the chain of values. However, those countries still need to buy the manufactured products made from their own material at a higher price from other countries. For example, countries like Nigeria are big oil exporters, but they don't have refineries. They then export raw oil at a « cheap » price, but then have to buy gasoline, an oil-based product but higher on the chain value, from another country at a higher price. This is the main problem for countries with rent-based economies, particularly in oil-producing countries such as Nigeria and Angola. In times of economic slowdown, **single-sector countries face severe shocks** that can lead to economic instability. Moreover, this over-reliance can slow down or even stop the development of other crucial sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Countries that have successfully diversified their economies, such as Mauritius and Botswana, have demonstrated the benefits of a more balanced economic approach, leading to greater stability, sustained growth, and improved living standards.

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<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264203433-5-fr/index.html?itemId=/content/component/9789264203433-5-fr>

This graph illustrates the chain of production in a chronological order, going from research and development to the service itself, in terms of added value for the supplier. We can see that areas such as research, marketing and services are high on the chain on value, which means that they bring a lot of money for the (usually developed) countries responsible for them. On the contrary, **African countries are usually responsible for the production**, which is the lowest area on the value chain, whether by actually manufacturing the products or services, or by providing their natural resources.

## The Debt Track

Many African countries face **significant debt challenges**. As of 2021, the total external debt of African countries reached \$790 billion. For example, countries like South Africa and Mozambique have experienced debt distress, where they struggle to meet debt repayments. High debt levels can limit government spendings on crucial sectors such as healthcare or education, hindering development efforts.

Moreover, for countries such as Angola and South Africa, their wealth in natural resources is also a curse that encourages a lot of capital flight. It is estimated that Sub-Saharan Africa has lost more than \$200 billion to capital flight, with an accelerating trend since the beginning of the century, averaging \$65 billion a year - far more than annual official development aids. China for instance, has employed a strategic approach in lending money to African countries, often linked to large-scale infrastructure projects. Through **initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative**, China provides substantial loans to African nations for building infrastructure such as roads, ports, and railways. However, a notable concern arises from the terms of these loans, which often include allowing China to take possession or control of the infrastructure if the borrowing countries fail to repay their debts.

This practice has raised alarms about the potential for deepening the debt trap, limiting the economic sovereignty of African nations. This approach has therefore sparked debates about the long-term implications of China's financial involvement in Africa and its impact on the economic autonomy of the borrowing nations.

## **Weak Governance**

Weak governance, insufficient institutional capacity and corruption have been major obstacles to sustainable development in many African countries. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2020, sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest average corruption scores, indicating prevalent corruption.

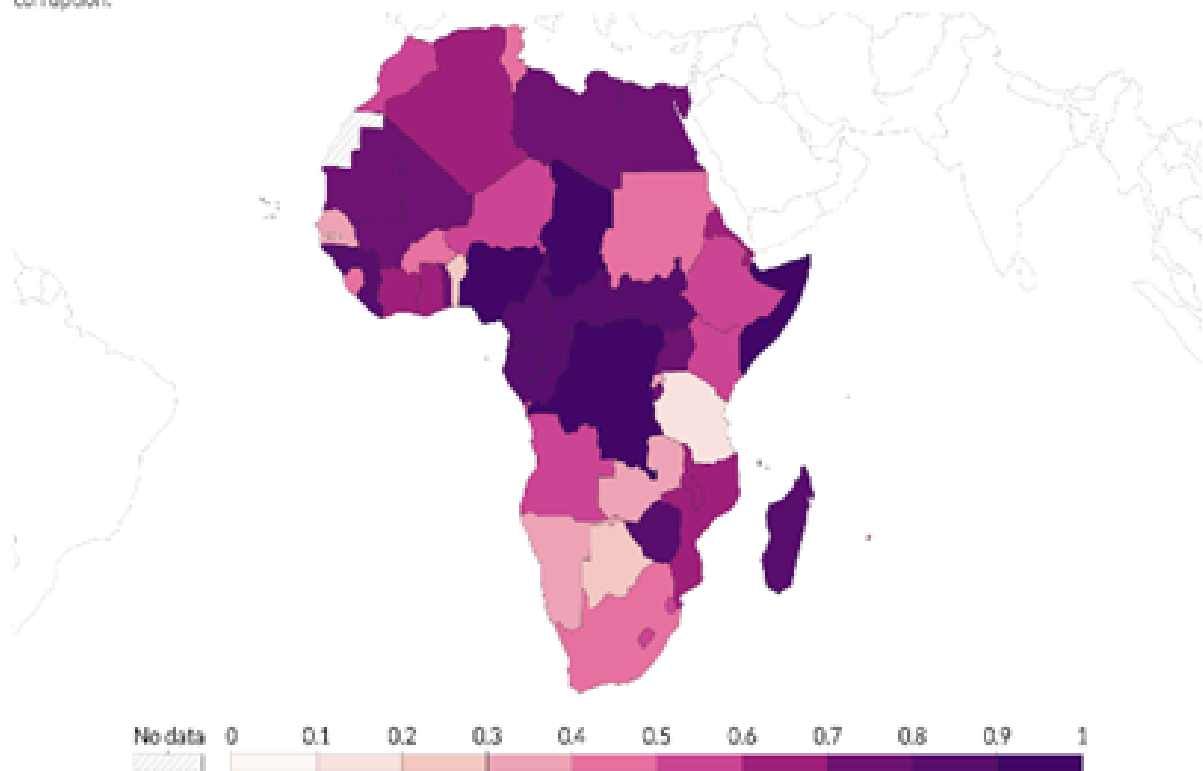
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This situation is also reflected in the World Bank's Worldwide Governance indicators (see graph below), where African countries often score lower than the global average. Indeed, an estimated \$29 billion a year is being stolen from Africa in illegal logging, fishing and the trade in wildlife/plants. The **absence of strong institutions** often hampers the efficiency of public services and fosters an environment favorable to corruption. In Nigeria, for example, corruption is a persistent problem, and the country ranks 149th out of 180 on the Corruption Perceptions Index. Weak governance structures and corruption have negative effects on economic growth, as funds that could be allocated to essential sectors are often diverted.

## Political corruption index, 2022



Based on the expert assessments and index by V-Dem<sup>1</sup>, it captures the extent to which the executive, legislative, judiciary, and bureaucracy engage in bribery and theft, and the making and implementing of laws are susceptible to corruption.



Data source: V-Dem (2023)

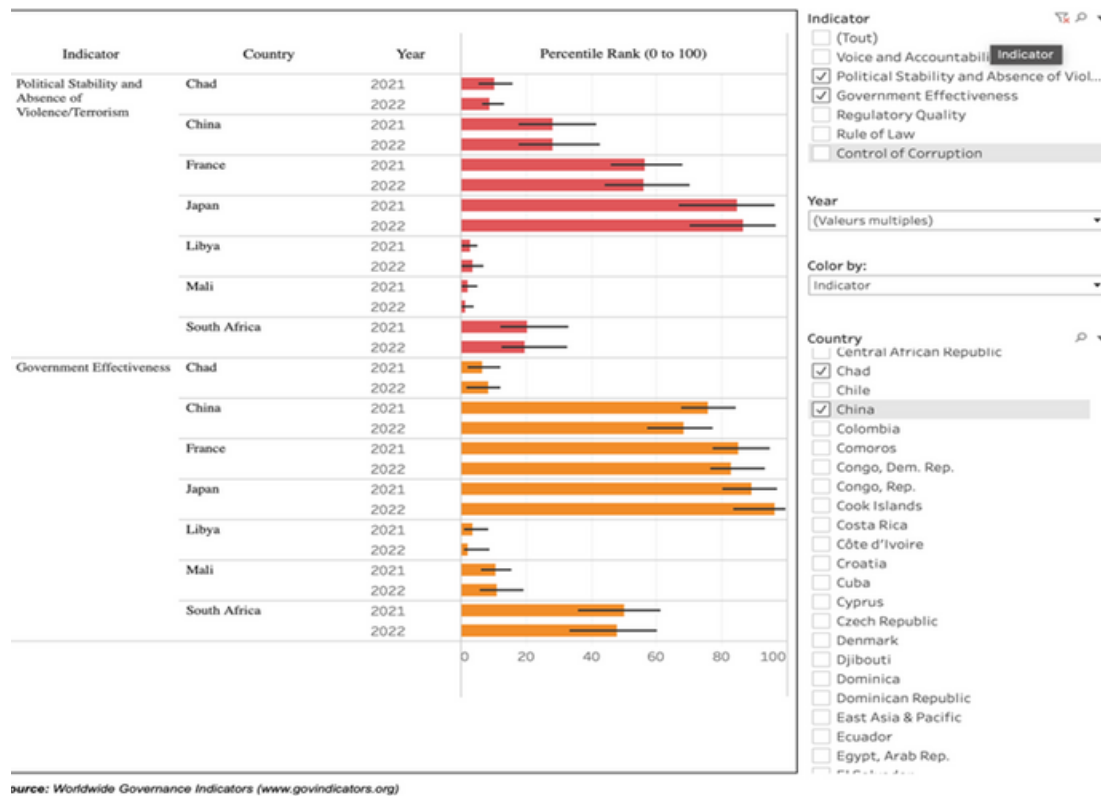
OurWorldInData.org/state-capacity | CC BY

1. V-Dem: The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project publishes data and research on democracy and human rights. It relies on evaluations by around 3,500 country experts and supplementary work by its own researchers to assess political institutions and the protection of rights. The project is managed by the V-Dem Institute, based at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. Learn more: Democracy data: how do researchers measure democracy? The 'Varieties of Democracy' data: how do researchers measure human

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/political-corruption-index?region=Africa>



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This graph compares African countries with developed countries in areas such as political stability and absence of violence, and government effectiveness. We can see that African countries usually rank very low in comparison with developed countries, which shows the **lack of effective governance** in the continent.

## Main Consequences of a Non Sustainable Exploitation of Resources

### Environmental Impact : Ecosystem Degradation, Pollution, etc.

The environmental impact of resource exploitation in Africa is considerable. One glaring example is the oil industry in Nigeria, where decades of oil extraction have had devastating environmental consequences.

The Niger Delta region has seen numerous oil spills, resulting in the pollution of waterways, the destruction of ecosystems and significant damage to the livelihoods of local communities. It is estimated that Nigeria has experienced over 7 000 oil spills since 2000. In addition to oil, mining activities, particularly for minerals such as coltan and cobalt, contribute to deforestation, soil erosion and habitat destruction. In the Democratic Republic of Congo for instance, where a significant proportion of the world's cobalt is mined, unregulated mining practices have led to environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.

## Inequalities

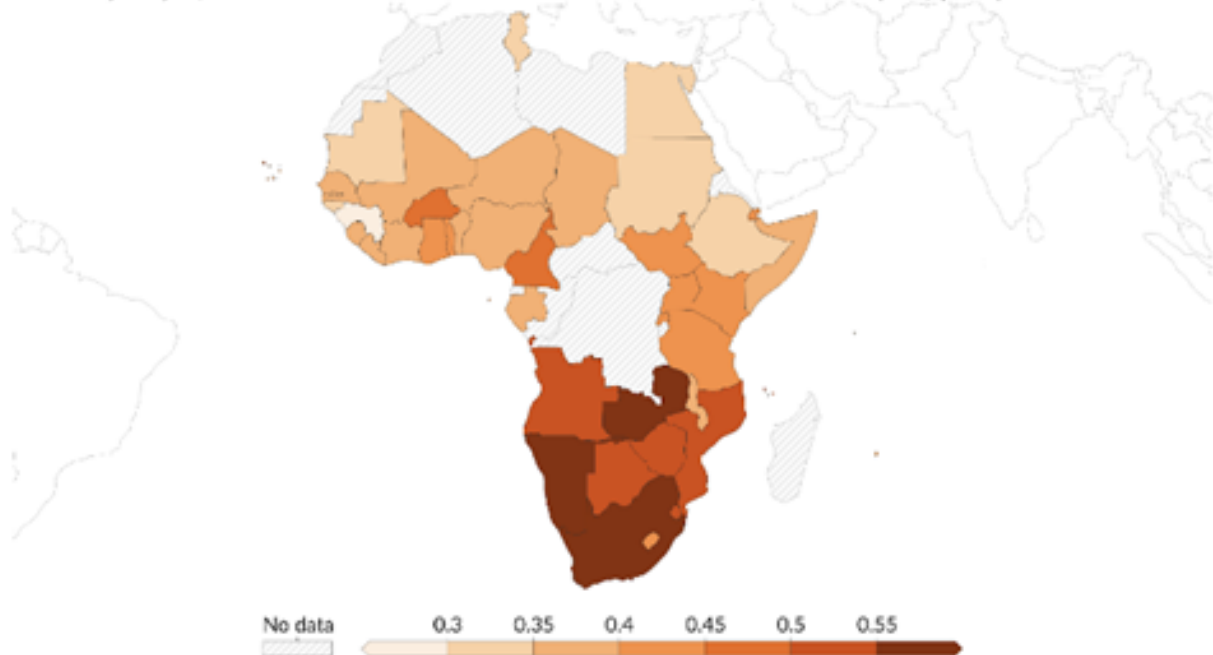
An important consequence of the exploitation of natural resources in Africa is the accentuation of inequalities within societies. Even as resource-rich areas that often experience economic growth, the benefits often do not reach marginalized communities, leading to disparities in wealth, access to education, healthcare and basic services. Therefore, the continent has **one of the highest levels of income inequality** globally, with a Gini coefficient around 0,45. This means that there is a considerable disparity in the distribution of wealth and resources.

For example, in South Africa, the wealthiest 10% of the population earns around 65% of the total income, while the poorest 40% earns only 7%. If we consider the continental scale, the richest 0,0001% own 40% of the wealth of the entire continent, and the 3 richest African billionaires have more wealth than the bottom 50% of the African population. It is the second most unequal continent, home to 7 of the most unequal countries.

## Income inequality: Gini coefficient, 2019

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The Gini coefficient<sup>1</sup> measures inequality on a scale from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate higher inequality. Depending on the country and year, the data relates to income measured after taxes and benefits, or to consumption, per capita<sup>2</sup>.



Data source: World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (2022)

OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality. | CC BY

Note: Income and consumption estimates are available separately in this [Data Explorer](#).

1. **Gini coefficient:** The Gini coefficient is the most commonly used measure of inequality. It is typically used as a measure of income inequality, but it can be used to measure the inequality of any distribution – such as the distribution of wealth, or even life expectancy. It measures inequality on a scale from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate higher inequality. This can sometimes be shown as a percentage from 0 to 100%, this is then called the 'Gini Index'. A value of 0 indicates perfect equality – where everyone has the same income. A value of 1 indicates perfect inequality – where one person receives all the income, and everyone else receives nothing. Read more in our article: [Measuring inequality: What is the Gini coefficient?](#)

2. **Per capita:** 'Per capita' here means that each person (including children) is attributed an equal share of the total income received by all members of their household.

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/economic-inequality-gini-index?region=Africa>

## Migrations

Migration in Africa exhibits a dual nature, involving **both external movements towards other continents and internal migration** between African countries. Externally, the Mediterranean migration crisis has been a focal point, with numerous people attempting perilous journeys from North Africa to Europe. According to the International Organization for Migration, around 1,3 million migrants, originating from various African countries, arrived in Europe in 2015 alone. Countries like Nigeria, Eritrea, and Somalia have been major contributors to this phenomenon, driven by factors such as economic challenges, political instability, and conflict. In addition, internal migration within Africa is also very persistent.

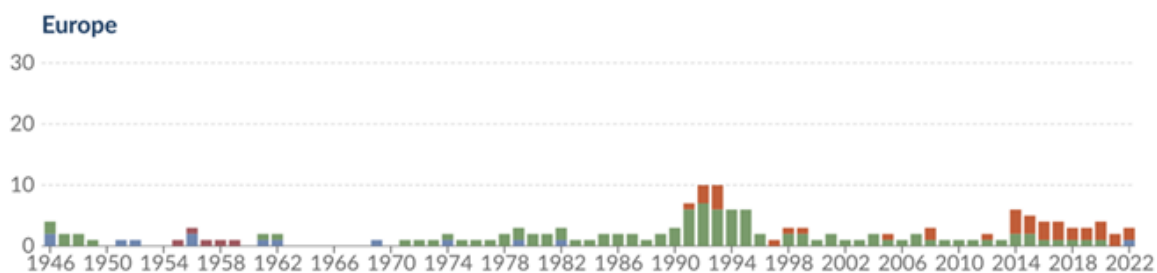
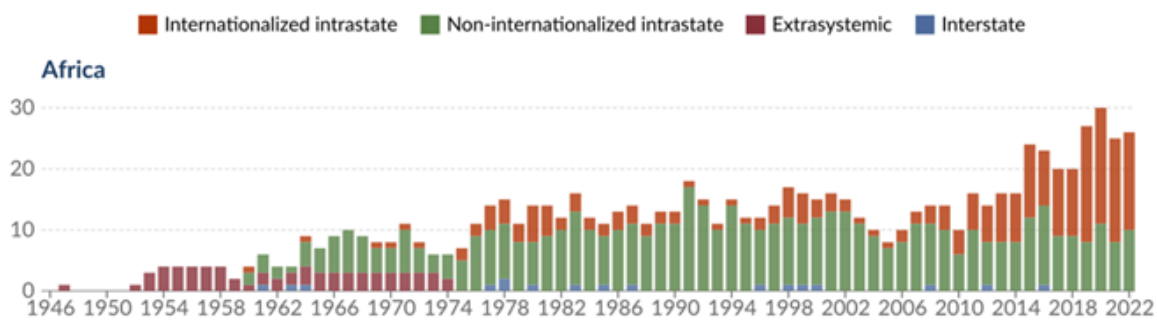
An illustrative example is the migration of South Sudanese fleeing conflict and insecurity. Indeed, since the outbreak of violence in 2013, over 2 million South Sudanese have sought refuge in neighboring nations, particularly Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Another notable case is the movement of people from Zimbabwe to South Africa, driven by economic challenges and political instability. By 2020, an estimated one million Zimbabweans had migrated to South Africa in search of better opportunities.

## Resource-related Conflicts

Resource conflicts are a widespread problem in Africa, as competition for **control of valuable resources can exacerbate tensions**, leading to local or even national conflicts. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a poignant example, where the abundance of minerals such as coltan and cobalt has contributed to prolonged conflict. The exploitation of natural resources has financed armed groups that contest the control of mining sites, resulting in violence, population displacement and the loss of around 6.9 million lives between 1996 and 2006. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, diamonds nicknamed « the blood of Africa » played a central role in the civil war between 1991 and 2002, as rebel groups financed their activities through the illegal diamond trade. The profits from this exploitation not only financed the purchase of weapons, but also allowed these groups to maintain their control over certain resource-rich areas. This conflict left deep scars in Sierra Leonean society.

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Interstate<sup>1</sup>, intrastate<sup>2</sup>, and extrasystemic<sup>3</sup> conflicts that cause at least 25 deaths during a year.



Data source: UCDP (2023)

[OurWorldInData.org/war-and-peace](https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace) | CC BY

Note: We count a conflict as ongoing in a region even if the conflict is also ongoing in other regions. The sum across all regions can therefore be higher than the global number of ongoing conflicts.

1. Interstate conflict: A conflict between states.

2. Intrastate conflict: A conflict between a state and a non-state armed group. If a foreign state is involved, it is sometimes called "internationalized", and "non-internationalized" otherwise.

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/economic-inequality-gini-index?region=Africa>

## Poverty

Poverty remains a widespread problem in many African countries, despite significant progress in recent years. According to the World Bank, in 2019, the sub-Saharan African region had the **highest poverty rate in the world**, with more than 40% of the population living below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is a striking example, with around 40% of its population classified as living in extreme poverty, according to World Bank estimates.

Conflict-ridden regions such as South Sudan and the Central African Republic face even higher rates of poverty, with over 80% of the population struggling to meet their basic needs.

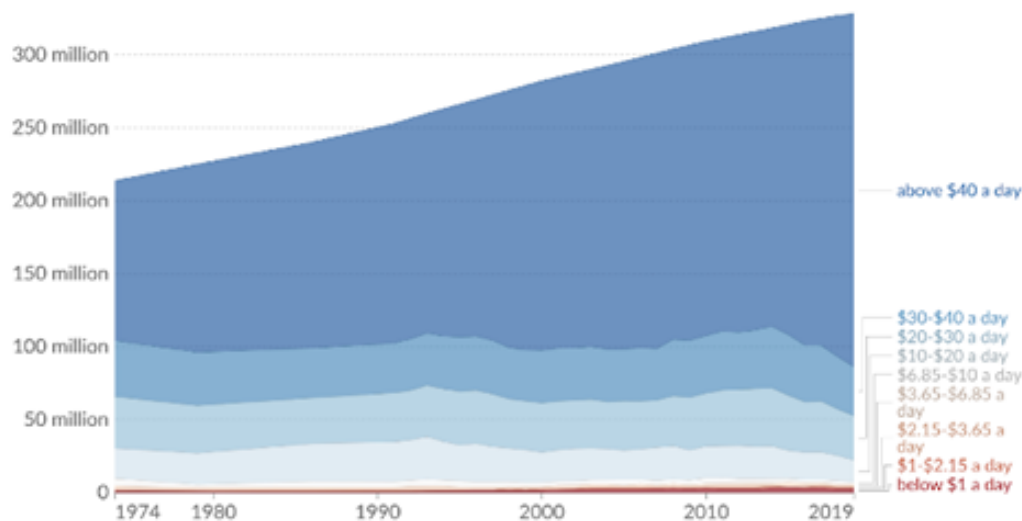


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## Distribution of population between different poverty thresholds, United States, 1974 to 2019



This data is adjusted for inflation and for differences in the cost of living between countries.



Data source: World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (2022)

OurWorldInData.org/poverty | CC BY

Note: This data is expressed in international-\$<sup>1</sup> at 2017 prices. Depending on the country and year, it relates to income measured after taxes and benefits, or to consumption, per capita<sup>2</sup>.

1. International dollars: International dollars are a hypothetical currency that is used to make meaningful comparisons of monetary indicators of living standards. Figures expressed in international dollars are adjusted for inflation within countries over time, and for differences in the cost of living between countries. The goal of such adjustments is to provide a unit whose purchasing power is held fixed over time and across countries, such that one international dollar can buy the same quantity and quality of goods and services no matter where or when it is spent. Read more in our article: What are Purchasing Power Parity adjustments and why do we need them?

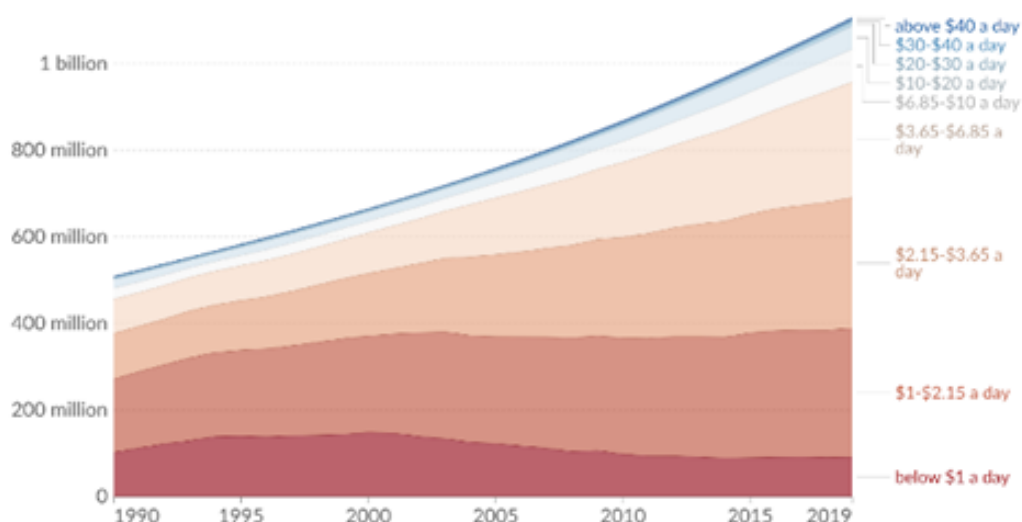
2. Per capita: 'Per capita' here means that each person (including children) is attributed an equal share of the total income received by all members of their household.

<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/distribution-of-population-between-different-poverty-thresholds-up-to-30-dollars?country=~USA>

## Distribution of population between different poverty thresholds, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990 to 2019



This data is adjusted for inflation and for differences in the cost of living between countries.



Data source: World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (2022)

OurWorldInData.org/poverty | CC BY

Note: This data is expressed in international-\$<sup>1</sup> at 2017 prices. Depending on the country and year, it relates to income measured after taxes and benefits, or to consumption, per capita<sup>2</sup>.

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<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/distribution-of-population-between-different-poverty-thresholds-up-to-30-dollars?country=~Sub-Saharan+Africa>

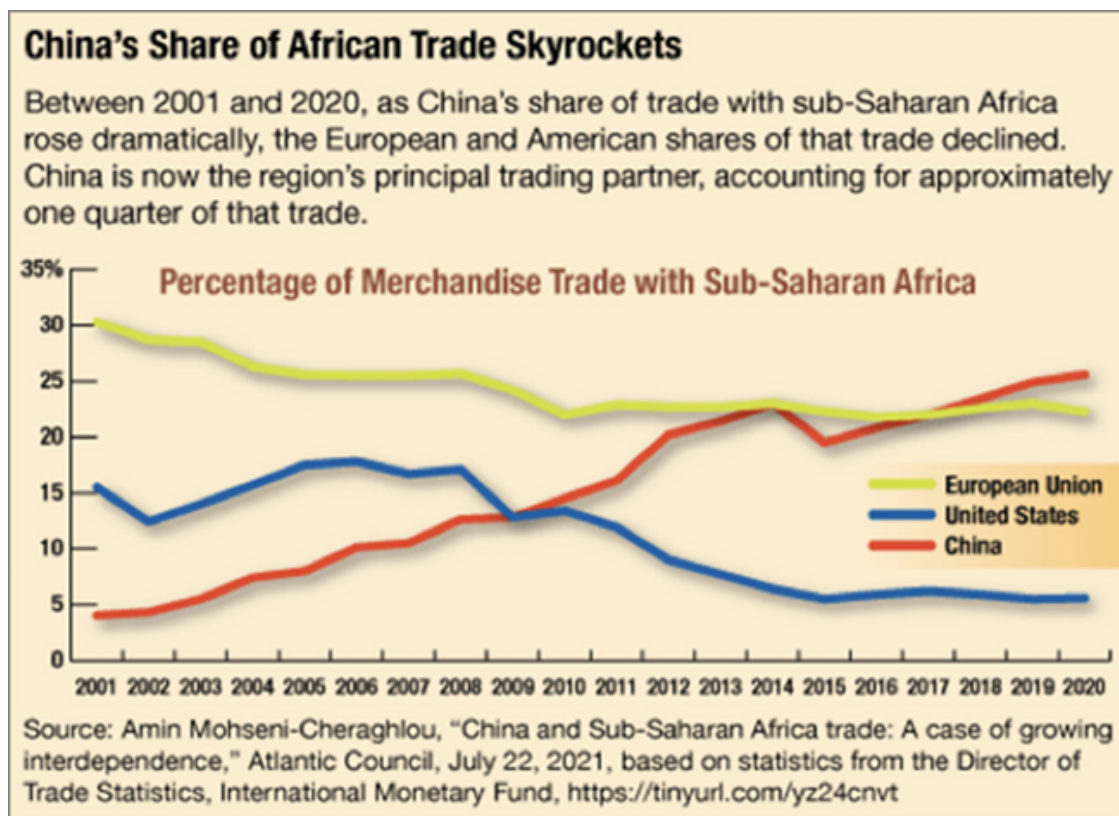
We can also talk about the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), whose work focuses particularly on the challenges and opportunities linked to the exploitation of natural resources in developing countries. There are also several regional agreements and partnerships. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has a framework for mining and extractive industries that emphasizes sustainable development and community benefits. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has similar regional frameworks for resource management.

## **Foreign Actor Defending their Interests (“New Scramble for Africa”)**

The "new scramble for Africa" refers to the growing involvement of foreign players, including major world powers and emerging economies, in the pursuit of economic and geopolitical interests across the African continent. China, in particular, has become a major player, engaging in vast infrastructure projects, trade agreements and resource extraction. In fact, trade between China and Africa, reached \$282 billion in 2022. Similarly, Russia, India and Turkey have stepped up their engagements in Africa, often motivated by resource interests and strategic partnerships. France maintains a strong presence, particularly in its former colonies, through military interventions, economic partnerships, and cultural ties. The CFA franc, used by many African nations with historical links to France, or Operation Barkhane remain a notable example of economic influence. The UK, despite the complexities of Brexit, seeks to deepen economic and trade relations with African nations.

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The UK-Africa Investment Summit in 2020 for example aimed to promote investment and partnerships. The United States, which has a long tradition of diplomatic and economic engagement in Africa, is increasingly focusing on strategic partnerships as well. The "Prosper Africa" initiative aims to strengthen economic ties, while maintaining cooperation on security, which addresses more shared concerns, including the fight against terrorism.



<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fpress.sagepub.com%2Fresearcher%2Freport%2Fthe-new-scramble-for-africa-cqresrre20230414&psig=AOvVaw2ZdmoQXEI33nq4SyESCXrM&ust=1702543745114000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBlQjRxqFwoTCOClyu6D>

## Multinational Companies and their Role in Resource Exploitation

Multinationals operating in Africa often pursue resource exploitation in line with their geostrategic objectives, contributing to complex economic, political, and social dynamics. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) illustrates a strategic approach to resource access and infrastructure development. Chinese multinationals, backed by their government, are heavily involved in African projects.

For example, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has secured oil exploration rights in countries such as Sudan and Nigeria, thereby securing a strategic presence in the African energy sector. These efforts serve China's long-term energy security objectives and promote economic partnerships with African nations.

Western multinationals, particularly those from Europe and the USA, often seek to extract resources in Africa to meet global demand and secure access to vital minerals. For example, technology companies depend on minerals such as coltan for their electronic devices. While companies such as Apple and Samsung are not directly involved in mining, they source minerals from supply chains that often run all the way back to Africa.

Another example would be, Orano, formerly known as Areva, which is a French multinational group specializing in nuclear energy and the management of nuclear materials. It has been actively involved in uranium mining operations in Niger, one of the world's leading producers of uranium, playing a significant role in the country's uranium industry. The company operates several uranium mining sites in the Niger, notably in the Arlit region, where it extracts and processes uranium ore.

## **Paramilitary Groups**

Paramilitary groups in Africa, including entities like Wagner, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab or Seleka Rebels often exploit natural resources to fund their activities and fuel conflicts. These groups engage in illicit activities such as illegal mining, logging, and poaching, taking advantage of weak governance structures and conflict zones.

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The control and trade of valuable resources provide them with significant financial resources, enabling the acquisition of weapons and the sustenance of their operations. This not only exacerbates environmental degradation but also contributes to the perpetuation of conflict, instability, and human rights abuses in the affected regions.

## **Solutions and Strategies for a Better and More Sustainable Exploitation of Natural Resources**

### **Sustainable Management Policies and Environmental Regulations**

African countries can implement sustainable management policies and environmental regulations for resource exploitation by adopting clear legal frameworks that define strict environmental protection standards for a responsible extraction. In addition, community engagement is essential to ensure that local communities affected by resource extraction are actively involved in the policy-making process. Furthermore, encouraging industries to adopt environmentally friendly technologies and invest in renewable energies will help promote sustainable development. Collaboration with international organizations and foreign partners can provide essential expertise and support. In this way, a balanced approach can be created that promotes economic growth while protecting the environment and local communities.

### **Investment in Education and Training to Develop Local Skills**

To ensure better development, African countries must prioritize investment in education and skills development. By fostering a well-



educated and skilled local workforce, these countries can unlock the potential for innovation, sustainable resource management and economic diversification. A skilled workforce contributes to the development of downstream industries, adding value to raw materials and creating more employment opportunities.

Therefore, a better educated population can take all issues into consideration to better contribute, not only to economic diversification, but also to investment and innovation to achieve an upstream channel strategy. Investing in education not only empowers individuals, but also strengthens the overall capacity of African nations to manage resource development projects, thereby promoting long-term economic growth and reducing dependence on a single sector.

## **Diversify the Economy (Upstream Channel Strategy)**

To ensure a better development through resource exploitation, African nations need to prioritize economic diversification, including the implementation of an upstream value chain strategy. Over-dependence on resource extraction leads to **economic vulnerabilities due to volatile prices** and fluctuations in global demand. Diversifying the economy by investing in upstream activities such as processing, refining, and manufacturing adds value to raw materials, promoting sustainability. This strategy not only mitigates the risks associated with dependence on primary resource exports, but also creates opportunities for job creation, technological progress, and the development of a more integrated economic system.

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By moving beyond the extraction phase and investing in higher value-added upstream industries, African countries can build more resilient economies, reduce their vulnerability to external shocks and promote diversified long-term development.

Furthermore, in the long term, African countries must **diversify their economies** towards sectors going beyond resource extraction, such as agriculture, services, etc. Indeed, by diversifying into agriculture, countries can ensure food security, generate jobs, and promote rural development. Investing in the services sector, including technology, finance, and tourism, strengthens economic resilience, creates a more balanced labor market, and contributes to the development of a balanced economy. On the long run, a diversified economy not only promotes sustainable development, but also allows African countries to participate more actively in the global market, stimulating innovation and fostering inclusive growth.

## Key Questions

- Is my country a resource-rich country? Is my country a developing country?
- How can we enhance cooperation between African and foreign entities to ensure responsible resource governance and prevent corruption?
- How can local communities in resource-rich areas be actively involved in decision-making processes to ensure that resource extraction projects are aligned with their needs and aspirations?
- How can foreign countries contribute to building the capacity of African nations in managing and overseeing resource projects, ensuring the transfer of technology and expertise?

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- What strategies can be employed to foster international collaboration that benefits both African and foreign stakeholders, promoting fair and mutually beneficial partnerships?

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