

SESSION 2: DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN POST-AUTHORITARIAN TRANSITIONS

Objectives:

- Provide a historical background of political and economic developments in the region as democratization falters.
- Examine the failure of security sector reform, the lack of political will and leadership required for institution-building.
- Analyze the role that international institutions and actors have played in maintaining, perpetrating or changing governance dynamics.

Background:

The Democratic Movement of the 1990's following the fall of the Berlin Wall impacted African politics in ways that significantly weakened many of the strong regimes across the continent. But the wave of democratization did not rid the continent of its strongmen. On one hand, countries like Benin, Zambia, Malawi and Senegal voted out the incumbents and embraced democratic change. On the other hand, countries, such as the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Angola, Rwanda, Chad, Zimbabwe and Gabon, grappled with the democratic process unsuccessfully and experienced various degrees of conflict and instability.

Today, Africa is divided along fault lines that reflect these differences, a reality that stifles Africa's opportunities for peace, stability, economic development and prosperity. West African countries, through ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), have adopted democracy as a governance principle and a binding condition for regional integration. For the most part, political leaders in this region are committed to democracy and ensure that ECOWAS members abide by that understanding. Despite some progress on the economic front with the advent of the East African Community (EAC), East Africa is a mixture of authoritarian regimes, i.e., Ethiopia, Rwanda and Eritrea, dictatorships in Burundi and Uganda, a democracy in Tanzania and the failed state of Somalia. In Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community, like the EAC, is an assortment of authoritarian regimes, i.e., Zimbabwe, dictatorships like Angola and Swaziland, and democratic systems in Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. The slow pace of democratization in Central Africa means that security forces and law enforcement institutions are directly at the service of the political regimes, not at the service of the country or the populations. As a result, the state itself is a source of insecurity and conflict remains across the region, i.e., Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Republic of Congo, and Burundi.

The current regional security crisis lies at the intersection of weak political leadership, lack of democratization and lack of robust security reform initiatives. Political leaders in the region lack legitimacy and hold power at the barrel of the gun. The legitimacy crisis has negative ramifications on the tenuous security challenges and economic development with dire consequences for the populations. With these conditions in place, Africans cannot enjoy the benefits of their countries' natural wealth. With these contested mandates, political regimes are more interested in self-preservation and survival and pay little to no attention to governance and public service delivery.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the obstacles to successful post-authoritarian transitions in Africa?
2. Is democracy a prerequisite for good governance and economic development?
3. Why has it been difficult for democracy to take hold in post-authoritarian transitions?

Required Reading:

Daniel Posner & Daniel Young, "The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa," *Journal of Democracy*, 18(3), 2007: 126-140.

<http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/institutionalization-political-power-africa>

Recommended Readings:

Eastern Congo Initiative, et al, The Democratic Republic of Congo: Taking a Stand on Security Sector Reform, April 2012. http://easterncongo.s3.amazonaws.com/79/02/5/114/DRC_SSR-Report_20123.pdf

Gettleman, Jeffrey, The Global Elite's Favorite Strongman, *The New York Times*, September 4, 2013
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/08/magazine/paul-kagame-rwanda.html?mcubz=3>

Said Adejumobi, "Elections in Africa: A Fading Shadow of Democracy?" *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2000: 59-73

Scott Straus, "Wars DO End! Changing Patterns of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa" *African Affairs*, Vol. 111, No. 443, April 2012: 179-201