




Progress toward institutionalizing the norm of presidential term limits in Africa has been mixed. Leaders in 5 countries have evaded term limits since 2015, bringing the number of countries lacking term limits to 18. In contrast, 21 African countries have upheld presidential term limits, and an additional 15 now have such limits on the books. These limits, in turn, have wide-ranging implications:

- Of the 21 African countries that have upheld term limits, the executive officeholders have been in power for 4 years, on average.
- The average time in power for the 10 African leaders who have evaded term limits, in contrast, is 22 years.
- Countries lacking term limits tend to be more unstable. A third of these 18 countries are facing armed conflict. In contrast, just two of the 21 countries with term limits are in conflict.
- Strong regional variations in adherence to term limits are evident.
  - Eight of the 10 countries where term limits have been undone are in Central Africa.

- The Horn of Africa has the highest concentration of countries without term limits.
- Southern and West Africa have made the greatest strides in adhering to term limits.
- While clearly fragile, term limit statutes are now in place for most of the countries in North Africa.

|  <b>Constitutional Term Limits for African Leaders</b> |                                                               |                                                |                               |                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| No Constitutional Two-Term Limit                                                                                                        | Countries with Two-Term Limit in Constitution                 |                                                |                               |                                               |
|                                                                                                                                         | Limit Not Yet Met by Any President (Year Limit to Be Reached) | Two-Term Limit Reached                         |                               |                                               |
|                                                                                                                                         |                                                               | Attempted Modification or Elimination of Limit |                               | Left Office (First Leader to Adhere to Limit) |
|                                                                                                                                         |                                                               | Limit Modified or Eliminated                   | Limit Retained                |                                               |
| Eritrea                                                                                                                                 | Mauritania (2019)                                             | Togo (Eyadéma, 2002)                           | Zambia (Chiluba, 2001)        | Tanzania (Mwinyi, 1995)                       |
| Ethiopia <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                   | Côte d'Ivoire (2020)                                          | Gabon (Bongo, 2003)                            | Malawi (Muluzi, 2003)         | Ghana (Rawlings, 2001)                        |
| Gambia                                                                                                                                  | Guinea (2020)                                                 | Uganda (Museveni, 2005, 2018) <sup>6</sup>     | Nigeria (Obasanjo, 2006)      | São Tomé and Príncipe (Trovoada, 2001)        |
| Lesotho <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                    | Sudan (2020)                                                  | Chad (Deby, 2005)                              | Niger (Tandja, 2009)          | Cape Verde <sup>9</sup> (Monteiro, 2001)      |
| Morocco <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                                    | Egypt (2022)                                                  | Cameroon (Biya, 2008)                          | Senegal (Wade, 2012)          | Mali (Konaré, 2002)                           |
| Somalia                                                                                                                                 | Madagascar (2024)                                             | Djibouti (Guelleh, 2010)                       | Burkina Faso (Compaoré, 2014) | Mauritius <sup>9</sup> (Uteem, 2002)          |
| South Sudan <sup>3</sup>                                                                                                                | Tunisia (2024)                                                | Rwanda (Kagame, 2015)                          |                               | Kenya (Moi, 2002)                             |
| Swaziland <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                                  | Guinea-Bissau (2024)                                          | Burundi (Nkurunziza, 2015) <sup>7</sup>        |                               | Mozambique (Chissano, 2005)                   |
|                                                                                                                                         | Seychelles (2025)                                             | Republic of Congo (Nguesso, 2015)              |                               | Benin (Kérékou, 2006)                         |
|                                                                                                                                         | Libya (2026) <sup>4</sup>                                     | DRC (Kabila, 2016) <sup>8</sup>                |                               | Comoros (Assoumani, 2006)                     |
|                                                                                                                                         | Central African Republic (2026)                               |                                                |                               | Sierra Leone (Kabbah, 2007)                   |
|                                                                                                                                         | Zimbabwe (2027)                                               |                                                |                               | Botswana (Mogae, 2008)                        |
|                                                                                                                                         | Angola (2028)                                                 |                                                |                               | South Africa (Mbeki, 2008)                    |
|                                                                                                                                         | Algeria (2029) <sup>5</sup>                                   |                                                |                               | Namibia (Pohamba, 2015)                       |
|                                                                                                                                         | Equatorial Guinea (2030)                                      |                                                |                               | Liberia (Sirleaf, 2018)                       |

<sup>1</sup> Executive authority largely rests with the office of the prime minister, which does not face restrictions on tenure.

<sup>2</sup> Executive authority rests with a monarch.

<sup>3</sup> South Sudan: Salva Kiir's term as elected president ended in 2015, though he has subsequently remained in office without a renewed mandate.

<sup>4</sup> Libya: The draft 2016 Constitution imposes two-term limits.

<sup>5</sup> Algeria: A limit of two five-year terms was reinstated in 2016, theoretically allowing Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for two more terms starting in 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Uganda: Presidential term limits were lifted in 2005, and the age limit was removed in 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Burundi: While legitimacy remains contested, Pierre Nkurunziza has held onto power past term limit expiration in 2015.

<sup>8</sup> DRC: Joseph Kabila served out his second term in 2016 but has resisted leaving office.

<sup>9</sup> The elected president is term limited, though power is shared with a prime minister, who is not.