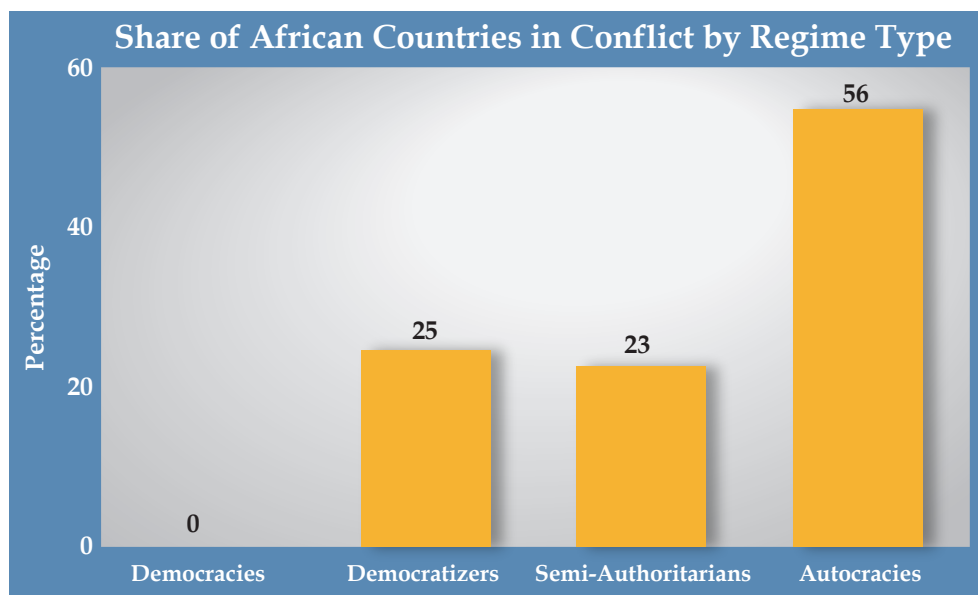# Autocracy and Instability in Africa

Sixteen African countries are experiencing sustained armed conflict. While each is the result of unique, context-specific circumstances, some general patterns are evident. Chief among these is the role of governance.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Three-quarters of the African countries facing armed conflict (12 out of 16) have either autocratic or semi-authoritarian governments.

- Of the 12 armed conflicts with authoritarian-leaning governments, 8 are political conflicts or civil wars.

- The four democratizing governments that are experiencing armed conflict, by contrast, are all facing militant Islamist insurgencies.

- Armed conflicts in Africa's authoritarian-leaning countries have been ongoing for roughly twice as long, on average, as those in democratizing countries.

- 7 of the 9 autocracies facing armed conflict have leaders who have come to power via a coup or prolonged their time in office by evading term limits.

- 8 of the 10 countries of origin for Africa's record levels of forced displacement are autocratic or semi-authoritarian.

- 9 of the 10 African countries facing the most acute food insecurity are autocratic or semi-authoritarian.

- Overall, 9 of Africa's 16 autocracies—56 percent—are experiencing armed conflict.

- None of Africa's democracies, by comparison, are in conflict.

Share of African Countries in Conflict by Regime Type

Regime Type	Percentage
Democracies	0
Democratizers	25
Semi-Authoritarians	23
Autocracies	56

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Autocracy and Instability in Africa

Legend:

- Active Conflict
- Democracy
- Democratizer
- Semi-Authoritarian
- Autocratic

Countries labeled on map: TUNISIA, MOROCCO, ALGERIA, LIBYA, EGYPT, Western Sahara, CAPE VERDE, MAURITANIA, MALI, NIGER, CHAD, SUDAN, ERITREA, DJIBOUTI, SENEGAL, THE GAMBIA, GUINEA-BISSAU, GUINEA, SIERRA LEONE, LIBERIA, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, BURKINA FASO, GHANA, BENIN, TOGO, NIGERIA, CAMEROON, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, SOUTH SUDAN, ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, SÃO TOMÉ AND PRINCIPE, GABON, REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, UGANDA, KENYA, RWANDA, BURUNDI, TANZANIA, SEYCHELLES, ANGOLA, MALAWI, ZAMBIA, COMOROS, MOZAMBIQUE, ZIMBABWE, MAURITIUS, NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA, MADAGASCAR, ESWATINI, SOUTH AFRICA, LESOTHO