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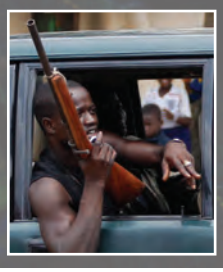
Revolution in North Africa: what's next?



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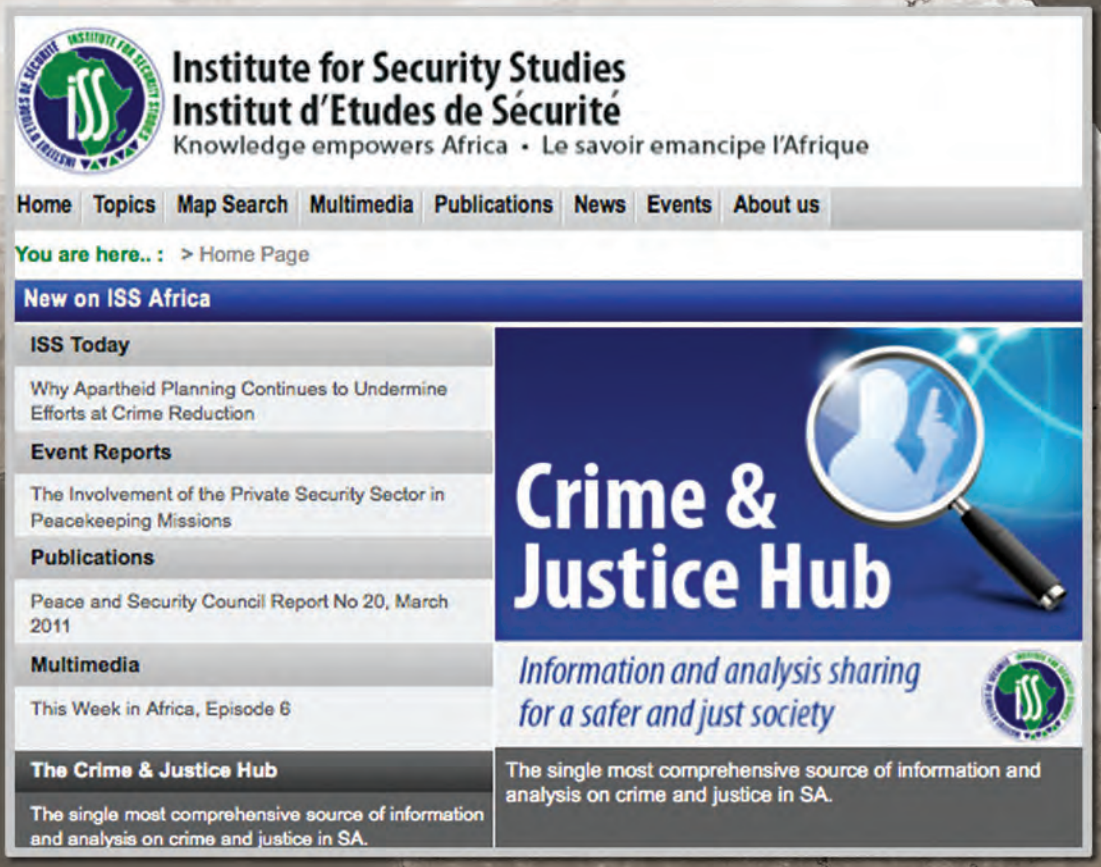

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Dear Reader...

When Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi spoke before a small crowd of supporters in the capital Tripoli on 28 February – at the start of the rebellion against him – people immediately realised something was wrong. The speech only lasted a few minutes.

Gaddafi, who likes to be called the leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, is known for his long rambling speeches, sometimes lasting several hours.

At summits of the African Union he would rant about Africa as one united, borderless country, standing up against the evil Western powers; he would make the most bizarre and homophobic statements on Aids and propose wild plans for a United States of Africa, with himself as leader.

A summit just wasn't the same without the Brother Leader, always arriving hours later than the other African presidents, with the motorcade, the Amazons (Gaddafi's female bodyguards) and the Bedouin paraphernalia. Gaddafi was the star of the show in his outrageous outfits, from the Michael Jackson military look to the flowing robes. Journalists waited for him to liven up the AU proceedings.

The other African presidents seemed to accept it.

Especially since Gaddafi was often bankrolling the affair.

Even the French and the Italians had to stomach the pitching of the tent in their capitals during his recent visits to Europe.

Yet Gaddafi's antics were always taken as a bit of a joke. Who really saw him as a bloody tyrant who would unleash terror on his people?

He was certainly never projected as a bloodthirsty Idi Amin. It was only when reports started to come through of how illegal immigrants from Africa were being treated in Libya that we started to question his lofty pan-African ideals.

Still, no one really thought it would come to this.

Shortly before this edition of *The African.org* went to print, Gaddafi's attacks on Libyans protesting for democracy prompted the United Nations Security Council to authorise a no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians.

Within hours French warplanes were attacking Gaddafi's forces around rebel-held Benghazi and British and American submarines were firing Tomahawk cruise missiles at anti-aircraft sites along the Libyan coast.

The war in Libya has shaken Africa to the core – especially Gaddafi's paid-up allies in the AU – although the real impact of this dramatic turn of events is still uncertain.

Equally, the largely peaceful, democratic revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt have had ripple effects across the continent.

In our special focus on North Africa, a range of analysts and commentators look at various aspects of the mass popular uprisings that have led to the end of longstanding regimes in some countries and constant pressure on others such as Morocco, Bahrain and Yemen.

There is a robust debate across Africa over whether this is a purely Arab phenomenon, or whether other authoritarian regimes will also be touched by it. Will other youths suffering unemployment, poverty and lack of civil liberties be inspired by what is happening in North Africa? North Africa is, after all, as much Berber and African as it is Arab.

Some believe it will and that food riots and popular protests will be transformed into sit-ins like on Cairo's Tahrir Square.

Others, however, point out that Africans have much more faith in elections and in opposition parties than the Arab world has ever experienced. There have been several cases of democratic regime change in Africa, despite the many problems of vote rigging, intransigent incumbents clinging to power and weak and divided opposition parties.

Read the various opinions of our specialists around these ground-breaking events in the following pages and send us your comments.

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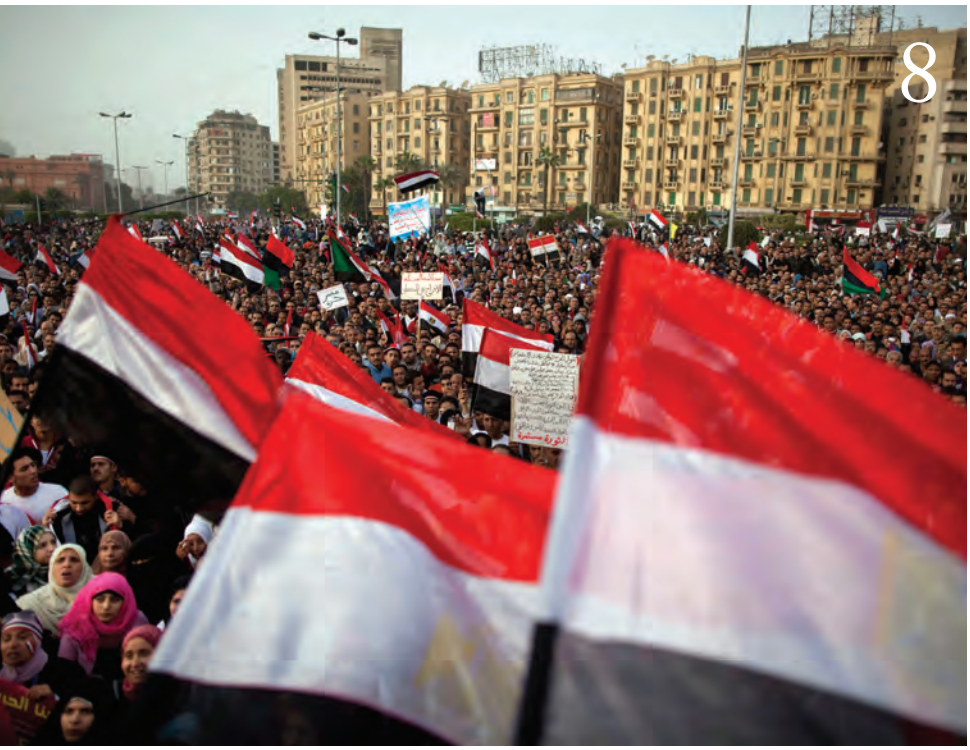
In this issue



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A Libyan woman with her face painted in the colors of the former royal flag during a demonstration against Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi in Benghazi, in eastern Libya, Sunday, Feb. 27, 2011.
(AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

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Museveni 'would have won anyway'

Was this a case of over-rigging an election? Some believe Uganda's incumbent president Yoweri Museveni would have been destined to win the elections held on 16 February this year, if the elections had been free and fair. But the opposition claims that the final results were tampered with 'just to make sure', giving Museveni 68% of the vote while his main rival, Kizza Besigye, got 26% of votes cast.

The Ugandan electoral results highlight the problems confronting opposition parties all over Africa. The problem is that they cannot consolidate an opposition bloc to appeal to undecided voters or attract voters from the main party. One gets the impression that the only time they cease to fight amongst themselves is when they unite to criticise the main ruling party.

Opposition parties are often placed, or place themselves, in a 'lose-lose' situation. Withdrawing from an election risks marginalisation, but participating in elections in their current state often ends up attracting an inadequate level of support. In many cases the international community remains relatively silent over concerns of electoral corruption and the lack of trust opposition parties have in their electoral commissions and processes.

Detention in SA set to improve

The poor condition of South African prisons fell under the international spotlight recently when the counsel of British citizen Shrien Dewani, who is accused of having his wife murdered while on honeymoon in South Africa, argued in preparation for an application for his extradition before a London court. She stated that one of the challenges to the extradition would 'centre on prison conditions in South Africa,' intimating that should he be held in detention while awaiting trial in the country, his human rights would be violated.

There has been a lot of concern about the situation of Awaiting Trial Detainees (ADTs) in South Africa, who numbered 46 432 by the end of last year. Fortunately, it appears that these long-held concerns have finally started to be acknowledged by the government. In October 2010, the cabinet approved a White Paper on remand detention, which proposes the establishment of a specific 'Remand Detention Branch'. This structure will be used for 'coordinating the provision of services in relation to remand detainees in South Africa.' The purpose is to improve the access of ADTs to services such as healthcare.

Moreover, a new Bill is being discussed in parliament to rectify key challenges being faced by the Department of Correctional Services. The Bill proposes separate accommodation for detainees who are pregnant, disabled, elderly or mentally ill.

Fighting piracy in the Mozambique Channel

The South African government has joined the fight against piracy following the hijacking of a fishing vessel off the Mozambique coast in December 2010 and calls for military assistance by the Mozambique government. The South African Navy (SAN) recently deployed one of its newly acquired Valour class frigates, the *SAS Mendi*, to conduct anti-piracy patrols in the Mozambique Channel.

South Africa is considered one of the top 12 maritime trading nations in the world. More than 90% of the country's exports and imports flow through its ports, and South Africa's landlocked neighbours are also dependant on these ports. Their strategic location increases their importance in times of international political and military tension, as current events in North Africa have shown. Consistent pirate attacks in the Mozambique Channel will most definitely threaten South Africa's maritime interests. If Somali pirates are operating this far south, it is clear that at one time or another they will have to dock at nearby ports in the area. Improving port security and intelligence gathering in the Mozambican, Madagascan and Comorian ports would go a long way to improve the immediate situation and to prevent further attacks.

Source: ISS Crime and Justice, Peace Missions and African Conflict Prevention programmes

Worry over Sudan

Over the past couple of weeks, the Abyei region of Sudan has become a flashpoint of violence. On 27 February fighting broke out in the village of Todach between Misseriya militias and a Southern police unit alleged to be aligned with the Government of South Sudan and elements of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

According to Médecins Sans Frontières over a hundred people have been killed and tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced due to the fighting in the Abyei area.

With democratic uprisings spreading from Tunis to Cairo and Tripoli, the world's attention is fixed on the events in North Africa and rightly so. Yet, forgotten in the possibilities of the Arab Spring is the place that might hold more promise – and peril – for democratic prospects elsewhere on the continent: South Sudan.

Significant obstacles remain, including a renewal of violence, before a peaceful and stable democracy can take hold. The challenges are no less urgent and require no less attention than the events unfolding to the north.

The Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP), a collaboration between the Enough Project, Google, United Nations Satellite Application Operations Programme (UNSAOP), the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and other organisations, confirms through satellite imagery that 'buildings consistent with civilian infrastructure appear to have been intentionally burned in Maker Abior and Todach villages' in Abyei. The 4 March 2011 SSP report states that the absence of visual scorching around housing structures indicates that the dwellings had been intentionally destroyed. This evidence of violence is a reminder that deep tensions remain unresolved in South Sudan.

The United States was quick to condemn the violent clashes in the Abyei region, urging restraint from all parties, as well as calling on local and national authorities to ensure that the UN Mission in Sudan had access to protect civilians.

Additionally, the US sent two senior advisers to bolster the North-South and Darfur peace processes. These positive steps notwithstanding, President Barack Obama has not given Sudan its deserved attention and diplomatic lethargy has set in. America's engagement in South Sudan's peaceful progress toward separation is by no means an antidote to the challenges they face, but it would lend the necessary momentum to the process.

South Sudan in mid-March suspended talks with the North over Khartoum's alleged support of Southern rebels. The two sides were set to resume talks in April, so it remains to be seen if the suspension is permanent. However, in addition to the talks on unsettled post-referendum issues such as sharing oil revenues, demarcating the border and resolving the Abyei situation, several other key initiatives have to be undertaken. Foremost, South Sudan needs to reconcile with all militia groups to ensure a long-term peace settlement. This process must include a robust disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programme aimed at integrating militia members into the SPLA. Next, the North's meddling with Southern militias should be addressed openly and honestly. Finally, and maybe the most difficult, is for the South to start building the framework for a democratic society. As Mayank Bubna, analyst for the Enough Project, correctly points out, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) must 'demonstrate commitment… toward inclusive governance, in the form of a democratic constitutional review process and independent political party and civil society development.' These are all difficult measures to address and cannot be shouldered alone. As South Sudanese leaders take on the responsibilities of governing, the international community, including the UN, AU, US – and even China – needs to offer its unwavering support to the tenuous democracy emerging in Juba.

The conflicts in Sudan have raised humanitarian concerns for a long time and it would be inexcusable for the international community to lose interest just as the North and South are on the verge of a new future. The ultimate goal of the people of South Sudan is to establish a fully functioning independent state at peace with its northern neighbour. The stakes are high in Sudan, yet the ultimate outcome will not just determine the life of future generations of Sudanese, but may also create the roadmap for other self-determination struggles on the continent. – Scott Maxwell

North Africa: **what's next?**

Massive street protests have ousted two longtime North African leaders in the space of just a couple of weeks. Another one is in serious trouble. What does it mean for the rest of Africa? Our analysts look at the situation and scenarios for the future of a continent marked by authoritarian rule and a young population yearning for a better life.

Contributors to this special focus on North Africa:

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Freedom leads the people

The popular uprisings in North Africa have shaken the regimes in several countries to the core. **Issaka K Souaré** writes from Egypt about the implications of these dramatic events.

AP Photo/Kevin Frayer

North African solidarity. Protesters in Tahrir square in the Egyptian capital Cairo chant next to a poster of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi on 25 February demanding he should also step down.

The seemingly unstoppable wave of revolution in the Arab world has done what no other North African protest action has ever achieved: toppling two long-time strongmen of the Muslim world, Zine al Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

At the time of writing, Col Muammar Gaddafi of Libya was still desperately clinging to power as armed revolt broke out across his country.

Whatever happens now, North Africa and the rest of the Arab World will never be the same again.

In Libya, various scenarios can be sketched out for the immediate future. For example, the protesters could get the upper hand and successfully oust Gaddafi – but the Libyan leader could also rebound and retake control with the help of the army. Alternatively, the country might find itself divided, at least temporarily.

In the third scenario, the east and parts of the south would be in the hands of the protesters, and Tripoli and its surrounds would remain in the hands of Gaddafi.

This situation could last for some time.

For the protesters, the ideal would be to get rid of Gaddafi as soon as possible – but, as they have realised, it is more complex than that.

Gaddafi certainly has the support of certain elements in the military and of his own tribe. Libya is a very tribal society, and Gaddafi has managed to stay in power all these years by playing the various tribes off against one another. His tribe, the Gaddafah, has steadily grown in influence since 1969, through a series of financial deals and appointments in the military.

If the country is divided, we will then see each side trying to get control of the other. The east is a crucial part of the equation and it was the first to fall into the hands of the anti-Gaddafi camp. It has also traditionally been the region where Gaddafi's rule is the most contested. Before Gaddafi overthrew King Idris Al Sanoussi in 1969, the king was based in the east, which before Libyan independence in 1951 was called Cyrenaica.

A country divided

At that time, the country was divided in three regions: Cyrenaica with the capital in Benghazi, Fezzan in the south with its capital Sebha, and Tripolitania in the north and northwest with its capital in Tripoli. Even though the capital was Tripoli between 1951 and 1969, the king remained in Al Baydah, which is between Benghazi and Tripoli.

Some people ask whether there is any possibility of the return of the monarchy if Gaddafi was to fall, but this is doubtful. In mid-February, the king's nephew, also called Idris, said he was ready to return to the country, but there is disagreement within the royal family about who is the rightful heir to the throne.

What is clear is that the people want to move beyond the Gaddafi era, and perhaps some of them are using the symbols of the monarchy (particularly the tricolor flag) to express their revolt against Gaddafi. But once the dust has settled, the aim should be to move towards a multi-party system or something similar.

Anti-African sentiment

An important issue for consideration is the relationship between Libya and the rest of Africa. Rumours persist about the presence of mercenaries from sub-Saharan Africa fighting on the side of

Gaddafi, but Gaddafi himself has also talked of 'foreign-instigated revolt.'

By blaming the attacks against them on 'African mercenaries,' the protesters seem to be saying that the harshness with which they are being treated can't be the work of their fellow Libyans. That is fallacious. Is there a Libyan cultural exceptionalism that would prevent them from being cruel?

And even assuming that you did have some 'black Africans' doing this, they would be doing it on the orders of Libyans, even Gaddafi. Is Gaddafi not Libyan?

Also, these rumours started on the third day of the protest, which means that Gaddafi must have anticipated the revolution, because employing mercenaries needs preparation. But the people themselves were taken by surprise.

Libya is a very tribal society, and Gaddafi has managed to stay in power all these years by playing the various tribes off against one another

Not being in a position to verify these claims, it is plausible that over the years there may have been a flow of sub-Saharan immigrants into Libya. Of the 6.5 million-strong population of Libya, around a million are foreign. In the south, bordering Chad and Niger, there are Hausa-speakers from sub-Saharan origin. There are also Tuaregs and Berbers in Libya, some of whom are darker-skinned than Libyans of other regions. These people are part of the army and perhaps some migrants joined a militia set up by Gaddafi.

Protesters have also claimed that the Polisario Front has lent mercenaries to Gaddafi, which the Front denies vehemently. Reports from sub-Saharan migrants fleeing Libya into Tunisia suggest that some were forced to fight for Gaddafi's camp, with the promise of payment and the threat of not being allowed out of the country.

The AU should act

All this is fuelling the rumours and some anti-African sentiments among protesters.

That is why it is so important for the AU to get involved, so it can position itself in a post-Gaddafi era, otherwise Libya is likely to become hostile to the rest of the continent.

The only reassuring factor is that there do not seem to be better alternatives to Africa. The Mediterranean union is yet to be born (if it ever is), and with all its faults the AU is more functional than the Arab League. In spite of its tremendous constraints, it is encouraging that the Peace and Security Council has strongly condemned the killing of civilian protesters and resolved to send a fact-finding mission to Libya. However, it will be crucial to see what role African leaders play during and after this crisis.

Algeria and Morocco

Other countries in North Africa have also been affected by the protests in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

In Algeria there have been street protests, but these have been mercilessly suppressed. It is very important that those trying to organise such activities are not linked to any particular political party, because this would allow the regime to crush them very easily. That is what set apart the Tunisian and Egyptian protests. They were apolitical; political parties did play a role but they kept a low profile. We don't know what the situation will be going forward, but the lifting of the State of Emergency in Algeria at the end of February might help alleviate some of the concerns of the protesters.

In Morocco the situation is different again. There are two layers of authority; the monarchy and the government. Moroccans want their king to devolve more power to the government and make parliament more independent, but they don't necessarily want to see the end of the monarchy, as the king still retains some sort of spiritual legitimacy.

With a genealogy traced back to Prophet Mohammed, the king is considered to be the leader of the faithful, which works for him. Now he has an opportunity to devolve more power to the Prime Minister and carry out the necessary reforms. Most people acknowledge, though, that since King Mohammed VI came to power in 1999 after the death of his father Hassan II, there have been some reforms.

No signs of Muslim extremism

For example, the north-eastern part of the country, a Berber stronghold that was always neglected, has seen more development. In a way this region has been isolated from economic hardship, because the majority of the Moroccan migrants in Europe are from here and send remittances back home.

Looking towards a future North Africa, the issue of Muslim extremists always comes up, with some commentators fearing that the current regimes might be replaced by authoritarian theocracies. This is something that Arab leaders like Mubarak and Gaddafi have always used to justify their long stays in power, upholding themselves as the only guarantee against authoritarian rule, but there are no signs at the moment of extremists taking over and capitalising on the present revolt.

Some observers have pointed to what happened in Iran in 1979, with the revolution against the Shah quickly transforming into an anti-American regime, but this had much more to do with the US, which supported firstly the Shah and then Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war. After all, Iran has a better political system, from a liberal perspective (with a parliament where minority Jews are represented and regular presidential elections) than most of the Arab autocracies that are friendly with the West.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, for example, was long used by the Mubarak regime as a scapegoat to refuse any liberalisation of the political system. But some of its characterisations by the regime seem to be exaggerated. In conversations with both Muslim and Coptic Christian Egyptians, just after the fall of Mubarak in early March, many

> Even assuming that you did have some 'black Africans' doing this, they would be doing it on the orders of Libyans, even Gaddafi

expressed the opinion that the regime was sometimes behind 'terrorist' attacks, particularly against Coptic churches, which it then blamed on 'Islamic extremists' in order to set the two communities against each other. Mubarak's former interior minister, Habib Al Adli, who is now facing trial for corruption, is reported to have been behind the explosion at a Coptic church on New Year's Eve.

In Tunisia, the Al Nahda party has now been legalised and the Muslim Brotherhood is likely to play a prominent role in Egyptian politics, so the role they will play in the future of their countries will soon be revealed. One thing is certain, however: while in opposition, as any opposition party that has never been in power, these movements have generally adopted radical lines on various issues.

But once faced with the realities and constraints of being in power, they are bound to change, particularly if their inclusion happens in the context of a democratic system. After all, as two young Egyptian women (one veiled and the other not) told me in early March in Cairo, the people will not remain silent while their liberties are denied or taken away from them, regardless of the regime. This psychological shift towards a feeling of self-empowerment might perhaps be the biggest gain of the ongoing revolutions in North Africa.

Eyewitness: is it really a revolution?

Speaking to people in Cairo and Tunis, everyone agrees that what has happened in their countries these last few weeks is 'revolutionary'. And anyone who has been to these countries in the past can see there have been major changes – at least in terms of freedom of expression. Many people believe they will now be able to hold their future rulers accountable. The majority of Egyptians expressed confidence in the military council and thought that the forthcoming elections would not be rigged, as people would be voting with their national ID cards. Tunisians had less confidence in the Ghannouchi government, but there is general trust in the new government of Caid Essebs, given that he is from the 'old school' – that of the first president Habib Bourguiba – and is known for his integrity. I met a few people who regret the fall of the two dictators, exonerating them of charges of corruption while blaming their entourage for excesses. In Tunisia most of these people singled out the wife of the former president.

What can external actors, such as the AU, do to help?

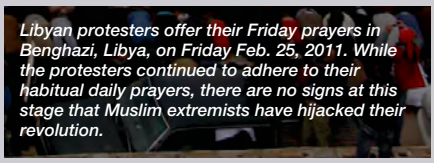
Most Egyptians and Tunisians would prefer to be left alone. They're very proud of their revolutions, perhaps a bit romantically. Most of those I talked to didn't hold the AU's past record in high regard, some thinking the continental body is the mouthpiece of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. While a few political actors expressed the desire for capacity building and experience sharing, the majority thought that the only assistance they would need now is economic, which the AU can't offer. Election monitoring is welcome, however.

Gaddafi's sub-Saharan 'mercenaries'

Most of the Malian, Nigerian, Ghanaian and Sudanese refugees that I interviewed in Ras Ajdir at the Tunisian-Libyan border on 15 March didn't believe there were 'African mercenaries' brought in by Gaddafi after the revolts started. A Malian told me he saw many black soldiers on his way from Tripoli to the border post, which he was not used to seeing before. Some said that Gaddafi's army is, after all, formed mainly of black Libyans and that some migrants were forced to fight, while others said there could be some mercenaries, without their being able to confirm it. Many told me they were robbed of their mobile phones and money on their way to the border.

– Issaka K Souaré

Which way for **religious extremism?**



Libyan protesters offer their Friday prayers in Benghazi, Libya, on Friday Feb. 25, 2011. While the protesters continued to adhere to their habitual daily prayers, there are no signs at this stage that Muslim extremists have hijacked their revolution.

Dictators in North Africa have for decades harnessed international support by presenting themselves as ramparts against Muslim extremism. Anneli Botha looks at some of these movements.

People around the world have been following the anti-government demonstrations around North Africa and the Middle East with great anticipation, witnessing how ordinary people not associated to any particular organisation are managing to achieve what Islamist extremist movements since the 1980s have only dreamt about.

Of course, not everyone supports the uprisings, especially since there are concerns that religious extremists might use this opportunity to strengthen their position.

Fearing a repeat of the Iranian revolution – brought on by another popular uprising, which saw the fall of the Western-backed Shah of Iran in 1979 – some Western analysts draw comparisons with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Others associate the Muslim Brotherhood with al Qa'eda, fearing a new phase of extremism.

It is well known that the Muslim Brotherhood played an important role in the development of core al Qa'eda ideals. Founded in 1928, the Brotherhood went through periods of both cooperation with and violence against the Egyptian state.

However, following the assassination of president Anwar al Sadat in 1981, the organisation gradually began to form two factions: the older generation, which believed that it should stay removed from the institutional politics it considered 'foreign' to the Islamic state it intended to implement; and the younger generation, which demanded the legalisation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a political party. Justifying keeping it on the list of banned organisations, the Egyptian government referred to the Muslim Brotherhood as the ideological origin of extremist organisations, specifically al Qa'eda. The Egyptian government used the threat of terrorism to justify its policy of keeping the Muslim Brotherhood – which by now had grown in strength – from participating in elections.

It is important to note that associating the Muslim Brotherhood with al Qa'eda today is not only irresponsible, it is factually wrong. Al Qa'eda might have borrowed from the Muslim Brotherhood, but the latter has ultimately decided to achieve its objectives in a non-violent manner.

The West only isolates itself further from the Muslim world by placing the Muslim Brotherhood in the 'extremist' camp. Recognising that any organisation has its more extreme thinkers, the opportunity to engage with the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly in Egypt, should not be lost.

Following the successful removal of presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak in Tunisia and Egypt (at the time of writing), many are of the opinion that since one of al Qa'eda's primary objectives has now been achieved, the organisation will lose its popular appeal and cease to exist.

The West only isolates itself further from the Muslim world by placing the Muslim Brotherhood in the 'extremist' camp

This argument might hold some water, but a few other issues should be taken into consideration. Even if all the current leaders in the Middle East and North Africa were to be overthrown, there exist a number of different interpretations of Shari'a law or the 'correct' type of Islamic government. Ultimately, will the direction these countries decide to take satisfy the ideals of extremists?

Overthrowing 'un-Islamic' leaders brings extremist groups just one step closer to their overall objective: the return to the former glory of the Islamic Empire. For example, al Qa'eda and AQIM (al Qa'eda in the Islamic Maghreb) members constantly refer to the glorious era of Andalusia, headed by Yusuf ibn Tashfin and his son Ali ibn Yusuf who, during the 11th century, achieved the height of the western Islamic empire.

In summary, the underlying reason for al Qa'eda's existence is far from being addressed. It is likely that al Qa'eda will use the anti-government demonstrations to its advantage by supporting demonstrators from the sidelines and congratulating Muslims for being one step closer to achieving their objective, as has happened during the crisis in Libya. Even more directly, these groups could step in and use the existing chaos to their advantage.

Al Qa'eda and other extremist groups have always rallied support by accusing the West of double standards; speaking about democracy while keeping autocratic leaders in power. The Western response to the revolutions across North Africa will therefore be a crucial part of whether or not extremists will use these events to garner support.

AP Photo/Hussein Malla

Dictators beware

Festus B Aboagye asks what lessons can be drawn from the popular eruption against authoritarian rule in North Africa and the Middle East.

North African solidarity. Protesters in Tahrir Square in the Egyptian capital Cairo chant next to a poster of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi on 25 February demanding he should also step down.

AP Photo/Kevin Frayer

The wave of popular protests currently sweeping the Arab world is extraordinary in history. It is baffling that the suicide of Mohamed Bouazizi, a disillusioned Tunisian youth, could so seriously impact the region, from Egypt to Bahrain and across much of the Maghreb. How did a small spark ignite such a huge conflagration in a region that since the 1950s has been able to insulate itself against many similar upheavals in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa?

The regional span and impact of the protests; the short timeframe in which so much has happened; and the catalysing role of modern technology (especially satellite communications and social media) appear to be unprecedented, not only in North Africa and the Middle East but in the world as a whole.

We now have to ask whether the pockets of non-democratic and non-accountable governance in Africa indefinitely could cocoon themselves from this wave.

In Tunisia, which aptly qualifies as the 'mother of all the popular protests', the revolt was triggered by Bouazizi's self-immolation in mid-December 2010. His act was committed largely in response to the social injustices in his society, as well as the restrictions on free speech and the lack of political freedom resulting from decades of totalitarianism.

In Egypt, the protests were against the authoritarian system established by Hosni Mubarak, who assumed power after the assassination of Anwar Sadat in late 1981. Towards the end of his rule, Egypt had become mired in political corruption, nepotism, cronyism and the repression of individual rights under emergency laws that extended police powers, suspended constitutional rights, legalised censorship and instituted indefinite imprisonment without charge.

As the protests gathered momentum, there remained a degree of scepticism that they could affect Libya. But they did, predicated on the totalitarian rule

of Muammar Gaddafi, who since 1969 has led what can only be described as a police state.

Other states in the region have long stifled liberal democracy, aided by narrow Western interests in pursuing neo-liberal economic policies in spheres of strategic interest and influence. The result has been high human development indices but a false dichotomy between a small, fabulously rich élite and a majority steeped in abject poverty. For decades the quid pro quo helped to guarantee the West's security interests in its relationship with non-democratic, autocratic and totalitarian leaders.

It is clear though that the popular protests sweeping the Middle East and North Africa seem to stem from a democratic deficit: endemic inequality and social injustice.

Now the writing is on the wall, a clear warning to the political classes that, in this era of increasing globalisation, they cannot fool their populations forever – and nor can they continue to hold basic rights and freedoms hostage under the guise of state security that only serves the interests of a narrow minority.

For many regions there are certainly important lessons to be learnt from this wave of uprisings. For now, though, it is critical to focus our examination on Africa, which stands to lose the most if it gets swept up in the tsunami of popular protests, because it is a region whose national institutions are still developing.

Also, the argument that countries in the rest of Africa have comparatively more freedoms than those in the north.

All of Africa is plagued by the same woes: social tensions, political frustrations and high levels of unemployment that proved incendiary to stability in the Maghreb.
A state is not a state only by virtue of territorial sovereignty or political self-determination. Crucially, its governance must be built on institutions that are separate from the state.

We now have to ask whether the pockets of non-democratic and nonaccountable governance in Africa indefinitely could cocoon themselves from this wave

The difficulty for Africa is that in countries like Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan and several others in the rest of Africa, the political classes have, in their pursuit of self-aggrandisement, long blurred the distinction between state and government. In Libya, for instance, the state has been defined for 42 years by its leader's institution of 'people's committees' in a semi-feudal system, and his control of key national structures – military security militias and the economic infrastructure. The situation in the other states are similar.

The state, democracy and governance in Africa

Did Africa need President Barack Obama to point out, as he did during his 2009 visit to Ghana, its obvious need to 'put democracy and good governance at the front and centre of Africa's future and America's hope for it,' and to remind us that 'Africa doesn't need strongmen. It needs strong institutions'?

Leaders like a 'rehabilitated' Gaddafi consider themselves institutions that are coterminous with the state. That may explain why they have been driven by notions of regime security and of their own role as 'liberators' to subject their fellow citizens to traumatizing repression.

It is disconcerting that there are many more like Gaddafi, whose 'liberator' mentality drives them towards regime and not human security. Such leaders see nothing wrong with prolonging their incumbency at all cost – even if it means inciting post-election violence that destabilises and undermines national cohesion, stability and economic development.

The syndrome of political corruption in Africa means that elections are considered an end in themselves and the sole determinant of democracy. It matters little, if at all, that the electoral processes may be flawed.

Côte d'Ivoire is a recent example. Even though the incidence of post-election violence in the country is unacceptable, that reality stems from the non-democratic climate, owing to a divisive rebellion and civil war, the existance of a sub-state and incomplete disarmament and dismantling of irregular forces, compounded by neo-colonial political-economic interests and subterfuge.

Yet, the outcome alone of elections has been used to declare a winner who has been overwhelmingly endorsed by Africa's regional organisations, as well as by the UN and the international community, which were quick to pass a resolution to that effect. On the other hand, the same actors remained silent with regard to the even more serious situation in Libya.

Another example is Uganda, whose just-concluded electoral process in February was seen by international observers as a 'largely peaceful' election, although it was criticised on the use of state resources by the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) to fund its expensive campaign, and on the widespread incidence of bribery.

The issue here is that the lack of a level playing field in Uganda's elections raises fundamental questions about the country's democratic credentials, goes against the tenets of good governance in the country and in Africa and lays the foundation for potential instability.

Protesters wave a Kingdom of Libya flag atop a burnt state security building during protests in Benghazi March 2.

REUTERS/Suhaib Salem

The domino effect of economic decay

The system of patronage prevalent in Africa helps to divert funds away from economic development and enables their investment in personalised forms of rule. This form of totalitarianism is what has allowed leaders like Mubarak, Ben Ali and Gaddafi to stash huge sums of money away for their personal use and that of their family, friends and cronies.

In Libya, this system facilitated a form of 'cheque book diplomacy' in which Gaddafi paid the dues of African countries whose membership obligations to the African Union fell into arrears. More worrying still, it gave him considerable clout to establish an extra-national military infrastructure of pan-Arab and pan-African legions and, it has been alleged, to bankroll conflicts in such places as the DRC, Chad, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda and so on, sometimes through such surrogates as Charles Taylor and the infamous National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

When such military power, including mercenaries alledgedly recruited from the region and elsewhere in contravention of conventions against their use, is unleashed against Libyan citizens asking for better living conditions, it is among other things a terrible waste of national wealth and resources. Although Libya boasts one of the highest per capita incomes in Africa, it suffers 21-30% unemployment.

In fact, Africa's economic under-development overall has in part been a result of the incessant intra-state conflicts, especially in the aftermath of the Cold War, and a result of a huge governance deficit and the ever-widening gap between minority 'haves' and majority 'have-nots'.

The hypocrisy of African states and political classes

Even though African leaders and organisations such as the AU have ardently pronounced themselves on good governance, human security and social justice, the reality is very different. Africa has either eroded its own gains in these areas or made it nearly impossible to consolidate democracy in the continent.

The case here is that the continent's choice of an all-inclusive model of regional integration that brings the good, the bad and the ugly together under one political umbrella has in fact stifled democratic consolidation. The reason is analogous to Francis Fukuyama's analysis of Egypt's Tahrir Square revolt by disillusioned middle classes (even though it borrowed from the example of Tunisia's Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation).

In the piece titled 'Liberals had better get organised' in the *Wall Street Journal* of 2 February, Fukuyama explained that the question 'Why is the Arab world coming so late to a democracy party that Latin Americans, Eastern Europeans, Asians and Africans first started attending 20 years ago?' is, at least in part, answered by 'the deliberate strategy that authoritarian leaders like Hosni Mubarak have pursued – of gutting liberal opposition and permitting the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood to operate just enough to scare the United States and other Western backers.'

One may indeed question Fukuyama's view of the nature and depth of such democracy in Africa and argue that Africa has been complacently hypocritical in accepting the lowest common denominator for building and sustaining democratic culture across the continent. It is something of a paradox that as recently as May last year the AU gave its endorsement to Libya's election, with 155 of the 192 votes at the UN General Assembly, to serve a three-year term on the UN Human Rights Council, in spite of considerable reservations about Libya's human rights record.

It is unfortunate that the AU has developed a reputation of not leading by example when it proclaims its commitment to democracy. The installation of Equatorial Guinea's Teodoro Obiang Nguema as the new chair of the Union at its summit in early 2011, bearing on the theme of 'greater unity and integration through shared values', for instance, adds to the AU's track record of contradictions and inconsistencies.

The organisation's political bankruptcy has undermined the innovative African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) that was touted in 2003 as heralding a new age of accountable governance. The APRM appears to have been buried under the rubble of political corruption and hypocrisy, while the AU continues to talk in vain about shared values and norms.

Unless Africa's few acclaimed democratic states make their voices heard over those of the less democratic ones, their silence could engender popular protests or military extralegal seizures of political power as the reality on the African political and governance landscape for a long time. To widen the scope of Fukuyama's advice to Egypt, the AU and democratic African states that 'want a free and democratic future had better get busy organising themselves.'

The international community as co-conspirators

The hypocrisy and double standards of the West have been a predominant theme and explanation for the protests in North Africa and the Middle East. Western and other powers have been accused of double standards by 'getting into bed' with autocratic leaders in the region.

For instance, the US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, emphasised her country's dismay that the Human Rights Council had not lived up to its potential and 'remains flawed' with the election of Libya, while at the same time the US and other developed economies were doing serious business with Libya's 'rehabilitated' Gaddafi and exploiting the country's oil resources. This accusation has also been levelled against the West that fell for Mubarak's exploitation of the fear of the Muslim Brotherhood in order to get Western acquiescence to political repression and corruption at home.

In a sense, Africa's hypocrisy over democratic consolidation converges with Western agendas that since the 1990s have espoused ethical foreign policies on the world stage but continued to maintain unethical bilateral engagement with Africa's strongmen who undermine democratic institutionalisation, running counter to their own values and to African national and regional stability.

Africa's political landscape is cluttered with autocratic and totalitarian leaders that use the 'war against terror' to gain Western sympathy for their national violations of fundamental human rights. Fighting terror is a good cause, but its use as a cover for political repression and regional hegemony by leaders seeking to gain national, regional and international mileage is counterproductive to sustainable peace and stability.

When the international community gives primacy to economic and other national self-interests over democratic consolidation in Africa, it can only come back to haunt regional and international peace, security and stability.

The normative principle of the responsibility to protect

The continent's hypocrisy is also exposed in measures to leverage good governance and accountability and social justice through institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has jurisdiction over the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Where there is an obvious failure of states to protect their citizens and of the complementarity of national and regional jurisprudence, the ICC can be an appropriate 'soft power' to leverage gross abuses of human rights by leaders such as Charles Taylor, Omar Hassan Al Bashir and Gaddafi, who flout international human rights law and humanitarian law with impunity. The African Union should see the ICC as a force for good in ensuring social justice within Africa.

The situation in Libya and Gaddafi's unpredictability serve as strong motivators for the international community to be seen to be taking precipitate measures, such as imposing an air exclusion zone, freezing private and national assets, imposing sanctions and expelling Libya from international bodies and threatening military interventions.

Short-termism of enforcement action

Such measures are short sighted in that they deal with the symptoms rather than the root causes of national and regional instability. In fact, they can be put down to the erroneous perception that democracy can be imposed through military force. Such measures have failed abysmally in Iraq and Afghanistan, whereas the current wave of popular protests appears to be yielding the desired results of growing grassroots democracy in politically bankrupt states, without any external assistance as advocated by the Arab League and the United States.

The question is, why is it so difficult for Africa's collective political leadership to admit that it is far better to allow society to deal with the root causes of conflict within the continent than resort to expensive, ineffectual measures and building short-term and unsustainable infrastructure for humanitarian security interventions?

Building responsive regional capabilities

Increasingly, the AU and the international community have come to believe in the inevitability of home-grown African capabilities for intervention on occasions when the UN, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, is too slow to act.

Yet efforts since the mid-1990s at conceptualising, establishing and making operational the African Standby

Sudan's Omar Al Bashir and Senegal's Abdoulaye Wade have both seen popular protests against their rule.

REUTERS/Mohamed Nureldin Abdallah

Others in trouble

Several African heads of state are experiencing the rumblings of revolution, similar to those in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, from their young, urban populations. Many of these leaders have been in power for decades, enriching themselves and their clans through corruption and exploitation of their countries' resources. It remains to be seen how they will react to the pressure for more freedom by their people.

President Omar Al Bashir, Sudan

Shortly after the so-called Jasmine Revolution broke out in Tunisia, youths gathered in the streets of Khartoum to protest against the 20-year rule of Al Bashir. Some believe this was partly a knock-on effect of the wave of uprisings engulfing the Arab world and the protests were quickly nipped in the bud.

President Abdoulaye Wade, Senegal

After ten years in power, the 86-year-old Wade has changed his country's constitution in order to stay in power and run in next year's presidential elections. He has also tried to impose his son, the widely unpopular Karim Wade, as his successor.

Senegal has been marked by food riots and rising unemployment. Its youths are also seen as some of the most 'connected', with easy access to the internet and a very active and politicised diaspora population.

President Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe

The ever more autocratic Mugabe has been president since 1980. Despite the country's economic ruin and rapid decline in social conditions, the 87-year-old Mugabe is clinging to power through support from the military and the ruling Zanu-PF.

Following the events in North Africa, some have called for a similar popular revolt to overthrow the regime in Harare.

President Paul Biya, Cameroon

After being in power for 29 years, Biya is facing presidential elections this year amidst growing opposition to his regime.

The rise in the cost of living has prompted the youth to protest in the streets of the capital Yaoundé. Biya confessed he wasn't aware of the high rate of unemployment in the country – a statement described by his opponents as 'heartless.'

Force (ASF) have been long and tedious. While the continent continues to be beset with destabilising conflicts, the expected operationalisation of the ASF appears to have been shifted from 2010 to 2015. In addition, there is perceptible evidence of subtle attempts within the international community to offload on Africa the burden of keeping its own house in order, while opposing the continent's attempts to get the UN to take responsibility for the funding and logistical support to such regional interventions.

Yet a layered response to regional conflicts with implications for international security, and substituting UN responses with African regional interventions, may not be the best formula for peace and security. An old formula that simply harnesses the collective responses of the UN system worked in the past and is likely to work better than the new paradigm of Western hybrid or parallel partnerships in peacekeeping interventions.

Coming full circle, the dilemmas of building regional capabilities and the huge questions over their sustainability would be nullified by less costly efforts to consolidate democratic governance and culture within and between African states.

The lesson for Africa's political establishment is that leaders cannot and should not be allowed to replace one form of political domination and corruption with their own brand of repression, exclusion and unaccountable governance in collusion with external political, economic, security and other interests.

Democratic consolidation in Africa is a zero-sum game, and the only way to avoid paying a high and painful price, with predictable, periodic social unrest and violent armed conflict. The continent as a whole should consolidate democratic governance. There can be no islands of democracy in a sea of autocracy.

A deafening silence from the AU

The African Union (AU) has been largely ignored as a player in the events in North Africa. **David Zounmenou** explains why.

While protesters in the Libyan town of Benghazi burnt posters of Gaddafi other African leaders were hesitant to take a stand.

In an interview with journalists during a recent trip to Paris, South African president Jacob Zuma observed that there is 'a culture within the AU that was also evident with its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which informs the way African leaders approach various issues.'

There is little doubt that Zuma was referring to the lethargy that often characterises the continental organisation or, at best, the foot-dragging attitude on issues that require a speedy reaction from African leaders.

Apart from appointing a panel of heads of state to attempt mediation in Libya, the AU has not shown any initiative or held an extraordinary summit to discuss the North African events. The AU's lacklustre reaction seems paradoxical for an organisation aspiring to create common norms and 'shared values'. The waves of revolutions running across North Africa are of historical significance for the whole continent, which is facing serious difficulties in its search for democracy and good governance – the two main demands of the millions of North African citizens staging protests and challenging their autocratic leaders.

Although the AU subscribes to the principles of freedom and democracy, it also maintains a stand against unconstitutional changes of government. Whether what is happening in North Africa – a series of popular uprisings – is unconstitutional is subject to debate. This difficulty in qualifying the situation in North Africa complicates the matter for the pan-African organisation.

In attempting to make sense of the AU's silence, there are at least five important factors to consider. Firstly,

> It is clear that Gaddafi will not be missed for his meddling in AU decisions

North Africa does not have a functioning regional economic community (REC) and this makes things difficult for the AU. What remains of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) went even further into oblivion with the successive resignations of presidents Ben Ali (Tunisia) and Hosni Mubarak (Egypt). Without an REC to take the lead according to the AU principle of subsidiarity, the AU's approach has been one of prudence that results in its voice being almost inaudible.

Secondly, the continental organisation's influence is limited because of the apparent financial weight of North African countries in the AU budget. The AU's annual budget is around US$129 million, of which $58 million come from member states, while the remainder is provided by donors such as the European Union and the US. Not only do the North African countries shoulder the bulk of the AU member states' finances but also, and perhaps more importantly, many sub-Saharan African countries benefit from bilateral

AP Photo/Kevin Frayer

How Gaddafi bought friends in Africa

Having been shunned by his peers in the Arab world, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi increasingly turned towards the rest of Africa and made the AU his focus of attention.

Total AU budget	$ 256.75 m
Member states' contributions	$ 122.6 m
International partners	$ 134.15 m
Libya's official contribution (15%)	$ 18.39m

Unofficially Gaddafi paid the arrears of several African states and continued to finance their AU contributions in order to win votes at the AU for his idea of a United States of Africa.

Three North African members of the AU (Libya, Egypt and Algeria) together provide 45% of the AU budget from member states.

At the July 2010 AU summit Libya also proposed to host one out of every two bi-annual summits of the AU in Sirte, providing all the facilities and covering costs, which would run into several million dollars.

financial support from North African governments.

Libya, for instance, is among the five biggest financial contributors to the AU. The others are South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Algeria.

It is also the eighth major contributor to the group of 77 shareholder nations in the African Development Bank (AfDB) with US$300 million. Gaddafi owns hotels and investments in Burkina Faso, Zambia, Uganda, Togo and Gabon, among others, and he has been generous to certain regimes in an attempt to build support within the AU decision-making structures and mitigate his international isolation. His regime has also provided support for various rebellions, including Charles Taylor's New Patriotic Front in Liberia, Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone and the Tuareg-led insurgencies in Northern Mali and Niger.

Thirdly is the issue of identity. North Africans often prefer not to see themselves as part of sub-Saharan Africa, but instead as Arab, Mediterranean or Muslim. In other words, the people of North Africa seem to feel closer to Western Europe and the Middle East than to neighbouring sub-Saharan Africans. North Africa's involvement in the Union for the Mediterranean, which brings together 43 countries from Europe, North Africa and the Balkans, institutionalises that identity proximity.

Fourthly, there is a feeling that the AU has not been playing a key role in fostering democracy in these countries and in Africa as a whole, partly because of intricate interstate politics. The AU is made up of a group of weak states, which has affected the overall functioning of the organisation for many years. As a political organisation, the AU can only be the reflection of its member states' own capacities.

Finally, many AU states fear retaliation both from North Africa and their own citizens. The fear that Gaddafi might survive this revolution in Libya has contributed to the ambivalence of African leaders in taking a strong stance condemning his disproportionate use of violence and calling on him to listen to his people's legitimate aspirations to freedom.

But like the democratic waves in sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s, the North African revolution is irreversible. Although some African leaders managed to survive the 1990 waves by manipulating the political processes, many others saw their regimes come to an end.

The ongoing violent repression in Libya requires a robust and unambiguous reaction from the AU. While some observers believe that if Gaddafi is ousted the AU will bear the brunt financially, in reality the reverse is more likely to be the case. The AU has sources of funding beyond Gaddafi and is sometimes even accused of being over-funded. This could be an opportunity for the pan-African organisation to take initiatives to ascertain its financial independence. The decision to increase the portion of member states' contribution to the Peace Funds from 6 to 12% is welcome in this regard.

It is clear that Gaddafi will not be missed for his meddling in AU decisions to the point of being disruptive, but there might be some relevance to the idea that his exuberance and extravagant behaviour actually had positive consequences because they forced the AU member states to react to him, in some cases making very novel improvements to the functioning of its institutions.

At a time when the AU is contemplating the institutionalisation of shared values, this is a historical opportunity to move closer to the people. In essence, it is time for the organisation to cease being the AU of the heads of state and government and become the AU of the people. Successfully managing the North African revolution and taking part in shaping a new political dispensation based on democracy and respect for human rights would go a long way towards consolidating the credibility of the pan-African organisation.

Protesters in the streets of Nairobi showing their support for the ICC indictment against Kenyan politicians. The writers believe action against Gaddafi won't meet as much resistance from African leaders.

Gaddafi an easier target than Al Bashir?

The decision by the UN Security Council (UNSC) to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court (ICC) was unprecedented in its speed and scope. **Max du Plessis** and **Christopher Gevers** look at the referral within the context of widespread anti-ICC sentiment in Africa.

Perhaps he saw it coming. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, one of the most active opponents of the ICC who has been central to undermining it through his political influence in the AU, now find himself in the ICC's crosshairs.

On 26 February, the UNSC unanimously passed Resolution 1970 referring the situation in Libya to the ICC. The resolution was part of a robust set of measures directed at the Libyan regime, including a travel ban, an arms embargo, and asset freezes for Gaddafi and his associates.

It is the first concrete action by the UNSC in respect of the events that began in early February, as reports of widespread attacks on civilians in Libya confirmed the lengths to which Gaddafi will go to cling to power. This is only the second time that the UNSC has used its discretion under the ICC's Rome Statute to refer a matter to the Court for possible prosecution. The first referral was made in respect of the situation in Darfur, which led to arrest warrants being issued for three Sudanese including President Omar Al Bashir, who is wanted for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide (he remains at large). All three African members of the UNSC – Gabon, Nigeria and South Africa – supported the resolution targeting Libya, notwithstanding the ongoing tensions between African states and the ICC over its Darfur and Kenya investigations.

The Kenyan government is currently resisting the ICC's efforts to prosecute those most responsible for its 2007-8 post-election violence. ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo announced in December last year that he would seek summons to appear for six Kenyans, including top politicians, believed to be behind the violence. On 8 March the Pre-Trial Chamber, by split decision, issued the summons for all six individuals, albeit for a reduced list of crimes than initially alleged by the Prosecutor. In response, Kenya convinced African states at the last AU Heads of State summit to delay the ICC's involvement by asking the UNSC for a deferral of the matter in favour of local judicial mechanisms.

Mercenaries not excluded

The resolution's preamble states that 'the widespread and systematic attacks currently taking place in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya against the civilian

AP Photo/Sayyid Azim

population may amount to crimes against humanity.' However, the UNSC's reference is by no means binding to the ICC, and the Prosecutor will have to investigate, formulate and prove any charges relating to the ongoing violence. This includes the crucial element of the attacks' widespread and systematic nature, the distinguishing feature of crimes against humanity.

As for the persons potentially falling under the Court's jurisdiction, the resolution contains a controversial provision excluding 'nationals, current or former officials or personnel' of states other than Libya from the ICC's jurisdiction in respect of 'alleged acts or omissions arising out of or related to operations in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya established or authorised by the Council.' Such persons might only be prosecuted if their home states waive their jurisdiction. This proviso, which would apply to any members of an international peacekeeping operation authorised by the UNSC, was included at the insistence of the United States as a precondition to allowing the resolution to pass. Contrary to media reports, however, it does not place the alleged mercenaries in Libya outside the Court's jurisdiction, since they are obviously not acting with the authority of the UNSC.

Furthermore, even though the resolution refers to attacks 'against civilians,' suggesting it is only the conduct of the state and its proxies that will be investigated, there is nothing stopping the ICC from investigating atrocities committed by anti-government forces. In this regard the disturbing reports of migrant workers from neighbouring countries being targeted as mercenaries based on their race could potentially fall within the Court's jurisdiction. Finally, and less controversially, the referral is temporarily limited to events that have taken place since 15 February.

Not the same as the Darfur referral

What about the prospects going forward? Critics will be quick to point out that in this and all other matters currently before the ICC, the target of the investigation is an African country. As with Kenya, the crimes under investigation emerge from an internal political dispute that has escalated, rather than from a typical armed conflict involving an organised rebel group or insurgency (such as Darfur, the DRC or Uganda) or another state (as in the case of Georgia or Gaza).

As with Sudan, the ICC investigation in Libya will take place in respect of a state that is not a party to the Rome Statute and despite the fact that the government under investigation is overtly hostile to the proceedings. For these reasons, sceptics are likely to conclude that it will result in the same difficulties that have left the Court politically isolated in its region of operation (Africa), without a conviction after 10 years of operation and with increasingly impatient benefactors.

There are, however, aspects of the Libyan referral that are different. For one, it is surely the earliest the ICC has ever become involved in a situation: just over a week after it started. This creates potential for it to act as a deterrent for future atrocities and alter the conflict dynamics in a game-changing manner. For that to happen, the ICC Prosecutor must seize the initiative and move with speed to investigate the offences. Moreover, the Libyan regime is one of the most politically isolated – both domestically and internationally – that the ICC has yet been asked to investigate. This increases the prospects of states cooperating with the ICC to ensure that its orders are carried out.

A useful comparison here is Sudan, where the ICC was drawn into an established conflict involving a government that had sufficient domestic support to ensure the Court never operated in its territory and – to date – sufficient regional and international support to prevent its orders from being executed, despite legal obligations on states parties to the Rome Statute. Chad and Kenya, notwithstanding their membership of the ICC, allowed Al Bashir to visit their territories in defiance of the Court's arrest warrant.

In Libya, the hope is that there may in due course be sufficient cooperation domestically, particularly from the successor to the current regime should there be one, and internationally, to secure the arrest and prosecution of those most responsible for the violence.

No counting on AU support

Finally, the Libyan referral needs to be situated within the broader Africa–ICC narrative. Gaddafi has been a key protagonist in bringing the relationship between African governments and the Court to its current low, with the AU ordering non-cooperation in respect of the Al Bashir warrant, requesting UNSC deferrals of both the Darfur and the Kenya investigations, and attempting to amend one of the Rome Statute's most finely balanced political compromises (article 16).

One might be tempted to think he did so presciently, but that would be to ignore the insufferable arrogance that appears to blind him even now to the reality of the situation. Included in that reality is the fact that even for the AU, supporting the Libyan leader in the same manner as they have Al Bashir might be a bridge too far. Moreover, three African states, including powerhouses Nigeria and South Africa, voted in support of the referral. It will now be difficult to take seriously any claims that the ICC's involvement in Libya is a further example of its unhealthy preoccupation with Africa.

Libyans paint the faces of children during a protest in the eastern city of Benghazi, Libya, Saturday, Feb. 26. The writer believes that the youth in the rest of Africa will be inspired by recent events.

AP Photo/Tara Todras-Whitehill

A new generation **changing Africa**

In an address to students at the University of Cape Town (UCT) on 5 March, **Bobby Godsell** spoke about what the Arab uprising means for Africa.

In each generation there are events that reshape the way things are. Early in the 20th century the world was plunged into what we call (somewhat misleadingly) the First World War.

A decade later the economic depression set the scene for what we call the Second World War.

The erection of the wall separating East and West Berlin, and the placing of Russian missiles in Cuba, defined a 'cold war' that saw two superpowers, the United States and Russia, treat the rest of the world, including Africa, as a chess board on which they advanced their strategic interests.

The second half of the 20th century saw the end of colonialism on our continent and the emergence (completed in 1994) of 53 independent countries.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union with it a decade later marked the end of the cold war.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the bombing of the World Trade Centre heralded a new era of conflict, not between nations but defined by organisations operating beyond national borders, whose interests and actions are defined by religious beliefs of a fundamentalist nature.

I am convinced that the events that have recently unfolded, first in Tunisia then in Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Bahrain and, most dramatically, Libya, will reshape the way things are for today's younger generation. I believe they will create for our continent and our country a new way of being African in the world. I am keen to explore with you the outlines of this new way.

The story of this remarkable wave of uprisings in North Africa and other parts of the Arab world is still emerging. It differs in each country in which it occurs. The outline, however, is already clear. I want to illustrate the new way of doing things that it represents from the events around Tahrir Square in Cairo.

Many commentators, from both East and West, were indeed taken by surprise when the seemingly rock-solid regime in Egypt was demolished in a matter of a few weeks. Yet the signs of change were there for those who looked closely. One strand is defined by an organisation called the Shabab 6 April Youth Movement. Their manifesto, to be found on the internet under this name, is worth reading in full. Here are a few quotes:

'We are a group of Egyptian youth brought together for the love of Egypt and the desire for reform… Although the vast majority of us do not belong to any political trend or are linked to politics, we are determined to complete the road, we believe we can continue from where others stopped. We will achieve [change] by providing real solutions to find a real alternative, for a political, economic and social renaissance in Egypt to provide stability and security for the Egyptian citizens.

'In the end, we do not call for a new group… or a new party, but we call on all Egyptians (individuals, communities,

parties) to meet at one project: the awakening of the people to stop the unjust oppression of the corruptive gang, and to eliminate corruption and despotism.'

Using Facebook, this movement signed up 70 000 members. Encouraged by the ousting of Tunisia's long-term autocrat, this movement planned a popular protest to take place on an Egyptian public holiday: National Police Day on 25 January. Through Facebook and Twitter, they indicated they would only proceed with the plan if at least 50 000 signed up to participate. More than 100 000 people signed up, and at least double that number took occupation of Tahrir Square on 25 January and refused to leave until their president had left office.

An insight into who is changing the Arab world was offered by a remarkable television interview with Wael Ghonim just hours after his release from 12 days of detention starting in late January. Ghonim, a Google executive based in Dubai, provided his IT skills to the organisers of the 25 January movement.

As he says in his emotional interview, he was not on the front line, but rather on the internet keyboard. An Egyptian by birth, he took six days' personal leave to help organise a revolution. His conviction, his passion and indeed his consciousness reflect a new kind of political and personal energy.

His interview can be watched on YouTube under the tag Wael Ghonim's Dream Interview. Conducted in Arabic, with excellent English subtitles, it is in four parts. Ghonim, who looks more like the creator of Facebook than a political activist, repeatedly says that he is no hero and that the movement that created Tahrir Square has no one leading it 'on a high horse.'

He is also no traitor acting for foreign interests. He is simply someone who loves his country and wants freedom, democracy and the rule of law for himself and his fellow citizens.

Wael Ghonim is a new Egyptian, a new Arab and a new African. He is a citizen of an information society. He gains his knowledge about the world, and forms his identity within it, in and from the internet. His society is formed and informed by Facebook and Twitter. And this cyber community can shake out and shake off the most well entrenched autocrats – as recent events have shown.

What is the significance of the 6 April Movement, of Tahrir Square and of Wael Ghonim for our country and our continent?

If 1994 marked the end of decolonisation in Africa, then 25 January 2011 marked the beginning of post-colonial politics. It is a political consciousness that is indeed patriotic, in the sense of wanting the best for your country. It is not, however, defined by a narrow nationalism or racial or ethnic consciousness. It is not defined by religious fervour or fundamentalism. Indeed, for weeks Tahrir Square witnessed the most remarkable cooperation between Christians and Muslims.

Equally amazing and profoundly encouraging is the role afforded to women in this movement, a role of full participation and equal dignity that is so different from popular stereotypes of Muslim societies. The Tahrir Square consciousness also does not wear the tired ideological clothes of the great socialist/capitalist divide of the 20th century.

What, then, does define this new way of being in the world? A set of shared values and interests. Values about the rights and dignity of the citizen. Values about freedom and democracy, where democracy offers real elections with real choice and freedom includes opportunities to speak, to organise, to have access to free and independent media. The rule of law (and not of men) and the independence and fairness of courts that apply these laws without fear or favour, in a country where workers can organise in genuinely independent trade unions and fight for their rights. An end, in other words, to 'Big Man' politics.

Log on to twitter and follow #25th January or #6th April, or follow the South African journalist Khadija Patel, or hundreds of others like her. Follow the debate now underway about what should be the content of the new constitution in Egypt. These are the values and interests at play.

And if this is what the Wael Ghonims want for their future, what is it that they want to consign to the rubbish heap of history? Autocratic rule; repression; rule by families instead of by laws and fairly elected assemblies; nepotism; and crony capitalism. They want to see an end to the accumulation of wealth by a small group of politically connected 'tenderpreneurs'.

Sadly, as the colonialists packed their bags and returned to Europe, many of those in our continent who took their place, as in the novel *Animal Farm*, came to resemble their former masters. The same palaces, the same police practices, the same states of emergency, the same state-controlled media, and the same economic plunder.

Throughout history, including recent African history, it is sadly clear that ending one evil regime is no guarantee of it being replaced by a regime that is qualitatively better. Political freedom, economic progress and social advancement have to be built, defended and sometimes rebuilt by each generation.

In Egypt's 6 April Movement and in Wael Ghonim, we see a new generation: young, confident, global and connected, laying the foundations for a new Egypt. I am sure that other African countries have their own Wael Ghonims. Indeed, I am sure that there are many in this room.

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Freedom's future **uncertain**

Richard Cornwell believes it is only with hindsight that the true meaning of the events in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya will be fully appreciated.

The revolutionary spirit now manifesting itself in popular uprisings across much of North Africa and in some other parts of the Arab world has come as a surprise to many observers. Previously docile populations appear to have thrown off the paralysis of quite reasonable fear inculcated for decades by their regimes, and are apparently now prepared to risk life and limb for a democratic future of some kind.

This sudden convulsion is driven largely by secular forces and not by militant Islamists, the threat of whom was used by the erstwhile governments of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya to win the support and assistance of their Western allies. In fact, one of the few people who see the hand of al-Qaeda in all this seems to be Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, who is plainly delusional.

There is an immediacy to the events conveyed through the visual media that convinces us of their significance regardless of context. This is reality TV. So we concentrate on what we have seen and what we wish for, rather than on what remains invisible and unknown. Talk of an 'Arab spring' or even a 'fourth wave of democracy' seems premature, however much those things may be wished for.

Something of which many need reminding is that history, although it is lived forwards, is written backwards. A logical sequence is inserted afterwards to make accounts of events intelligible, but the same logic does not necessarily inform actions as they happen. Historical watersheds are most often discerned only in hindsight and over the long term. Those involved in the current dramatic events in North Africa may have a sense that they are shaping the future, as indeed they are, along with the rest of humanity. But it is worth remembering what Karl Marx wrote in his *18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon:*

'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.'

Familiar signposts have been swept

This is certainly a moment pregnant with possibilities, a potential watershed rather than a definitive one

away. The gigantic images of Ben Ali, Mubarak and (in eastern Libya at least) Gaddafi no longer glare at their subjects in public spaces. Sweeping away the symbols of a regime is one thing, but reconstructing a new political order is an enterprise of quite a different scale and far greater complexity. Tunisia, Egypt and Libya will each face different challenges in the months and years ahead, not least because of the various roles of their security forces in the anticipated transitions.

The role of the security services is an opaque one in most societies, but particularly so in the Arab world. It is to be expected, then, that much of the important management of transition will take place away from the media glare.

In Tunisia, the military played a more significant role than its marginalisation in national affairs might have suggested, in that it disobeyed the presidential command to fire on Tunisian civilians. This may even be seen as a form of revenge for years of official neglect and parsimony.

Once that had happened, Ben Ali was finished. Now comes the work of constructing a renewed state and economy out of whatever is left behind by the extended ruling family. A start has already been made with the dismantling of the hated secret police and their apparatus, which soldiers probably undertake with pleasure, given the habitual antipathy between those who train for combat and those expert in the darker arts of torture and assassination.

But for now the transition remains largely in the hands of aged associates of the old regime; those who are willing to distance themselves from the past and blame the most serious economic and political crimes on the presidential family and its retinue.

In Egypt, as far as we can ascertain, the role of the military was quite different. Although Mubarak, like all Egyptian heads of state since the fall of King Farouk, was a military man, he was contemplating a civilian successor: his son Gamal. This prospect angered the public and may have alarmed many in the military, who saw in the heir presumptive and his powerful business associates a potent threat to the armed forces' control of many lucrative parts of the national economy.

Sweeping away the symbols of a regime is one thing, but reconstructing a new political order is an enterprise of quite a different scale and far greater complexity

Mubarak might still have survived in power but for the persistence of the demonstrators and their suffering at the hands of the security police, and a number of tactical and political miscalculations on the part of a ruler kept remote from reality by his faithful courtiers. Eventually, when he became a liability to the interests of the military itself, his resignation was announced.

Attention has now shifted to arraign those held responsible for the protracted looting of the national economy and the denizens of the secret state structures. But the military high command remains firmly in control, determined to remove the more egregiously offensive parts of the constitution while seeking to restore stability and the resumption of economic activity.

In Libya, matters are again rather different. Here popular uprisings in the east of the country at first seemed poised to topple Gaddafi from power. That this effort has currently stalled also relates to the structure of the armed forces, for while the ordinary units of the army often seemed willing to either defect or simply melt away before the rebel militias, the well-armed and disciplined troops under the command of Gaddafi's family have now secured Tripoli and Sirte and launched a vicious counter-offensive.

Since Gaddafi's household brigades also have a monopoly of air and sea power and the means to supply ground forces engaged in protracted operations, outcomes remain uncertain. In Libya the loyalist security apparatus represents the only state structure of note, the rest having been hollowed out to allow for direct authoritarian rule. In the event of Gaddafi's fall, then, there will be few effective gatekeepers to control the ensuing political and economic transformation.

The delicate balance of power in Libya currently occupies much of the world's attention, not least because of the humanitarian catastrophe that threatens the numerous foreign refugees attempting to flee the battleground. But the outside world is only slowly coming to grips with the implications of what is happening across North Africa. Too often geopolitical self-interest predominates, supported by simplistic generalisations based on Western preconceptions of local situations, laid out in terms incomprehensible to the publics of those Arab states.

This is certainly a moment pregnant with possibilities, a potential watershed rather than a definitive one. If we are to understand what is happening in North Africa, and anticipate the plethora of possible futures, we have to realise that ours is now the role of bystander. For the time being, the initiative is finely balanced between an Arab public finding its voice and asserting a refusal to reprise its role as historical victim, and the forces of stability that tend to care more about the price of oil than the value of freedom.

Now it's **Gbagbo vs. the AU**

As fighting continues to intensify in the Ivorian capital Abidjan, causing over 400 deaths and tens of thousands of refugees, **David Zounmenou** and **Dimpho Motsamai** look at the possible short-term scenarios for the country.

The post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire will be remembered as one of the most complex, divisive and intricate cases of peace building exercises in Africa since the end of the Cold War.

If it is resolved, there should be some lessons to ponder for African leaders regarding leverage and opportunity in conflict resolution; how to enforce commitment and compliance to peace agreements; and the use of requisite mechanisms to complement prevailing conflict prevention approaches.

Should the AU's decisions be ignored, it and ECOWAS would have no choice but to rethink their approach. Whatever the outcome, it will be the first time that the AU heads of state – despite initial discord – come out clearly in favour of the winner of an election who is not the incumbent.

In early March members of the AU's High Level Panel of heads of state convened in Addis Ababa for a Peace and Security Council (PSC) meeting on Côte d'Ivoire, following lengthy meetings and a visit to Abidjan.

Their verdict was straightforward and has remained consistent with their original position, which recognised Allassane Dramane Ouattara as the duly elected president of Côte d'Ivoire.

In the communiqué released at the end of the meeting, the Pan-African organisation endorsed the 28

Children look on as a fighter opposed to Laurent Gbagbo passes in a pick-up truck, in the Anyama neighbourhood of Abidjan on Saturday, March 12.

AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell

November run-off results as proclaimed by the electoral commission and certified by the United Nations.

The organisation then called on the Constitutional Council to swear in Ouattara as the legitimate president of the country. Ouattara has to form a government of national unity and take initiatives to promote national reconciliation.

The AU meeting was clearly the last major peaceful opportunity to finally resolve the Ivorian crisis and must be taken seriously by all parties. The significance of the work of the Panel and the group of experts – sent to verify the disputed results – is absolutely paramount. It now consolidates the continental initial consensus around the electoral results and will certainly further isolate Laurent Gbagbo diplomatically.

The threat by Gbagbo's representative to the PSC meeting, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, to hold the AU responsible for the outbreak of civil war in the event that the AU endorses Ouattara, was a strategy to avoid honoring and abiding by the AU's resolutions.

Gbagbo snubs the AU

Undoubtedly, it is precisely the breach of previous official agreements and commitments that has drawn Côte d'Ivoire into the current and prolonged post-electoral impasse. How the AU reacts to the intransigence of key actors to implement its resolutions will be determined by subsequent efforts to convince Gbagbo of the perils of challenging its authority.

Although it is argued that Gbagbo's personal security concerns influenced his decision to send one of his hardliners, Affi N'Guessan, the current chair of the ruling party (Front Populaire Ivoirien [FPI]), to the meeting, there are several possible interpretations of his snubbing the AU meeting. It was probably a decision to avoid being confronted by African leaders and be subjected to their findings, which effectively would challenge his own interpretation. On the other hand, African leaders could have seen this as an insult and a negative signal that their resolutions would be met with indifference if not outright rejection, should they go against his regime.

In fact, Gbagbo had claimed that he could still rely on 7 of the 53 members of the AU, including Angola, Uganda, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Equatorial Guinea and Ghana. The implications of this could be that the outgoing government was expecting some solidarity from the African leaders. This is notwithstanding the glaring truth – albeit inconvenient to Gbagbo's proponents – that the legitimacy of his regime cannot be supported, especially since it has become a major source of instability to the region and an impediment to a speedy resolution to the conflict.

The decision by Gbagbo to deny UN forces the right to use the country's air space could also have the double objective of undermining UN peace operations in the country and preventing Ouattara from returning to Côte d'Ivoire.

The question now is how to short-circuit Gbagbo's grip on power in a way that averts a civil war.

Three scenarios emerge from the AU resolutions.

The first is a perpetuation of the status quo with all the risks that this entails, while the AU High Representative for the implementation of the political solution continues the dialogue and mediation endeavour.

There is a risk that this may be similar to the prevailing impasse in Madagascar, where the coup leader Andry Rajoelina still refuses to concede to his opponents, forcing SADC and the AU to continue working on a controversial 'consensus' that excludes former president Marc Ravalomana from the political process.

Therefore, the longer it takes to reach a definite resolve in Côte d'Ivoire, the more entrenched the Gbagbo regime will become.

The second scenario, albeit somewhat unlikely, is that Gbagbo will step down, having realised that his options to remain in power are exhausted. As the AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra told reporters, the AU 'will not take no for an answer'.

This could be seen as the AU's determination to not only uphold the UN-certified electoral result but also to enforce the resolutions of the meetings – no matter what.

The spectre of civil war

The third scenario is the outbreak of a civil war that would nullify the guarantees currently being discussed for Gbagbo's honourable exit from power. As a case in point, the AU has called on the development partners to uplift the sanctions imposed on Gbagbo and his close allies and has communicated this decision to the UN Security Council and other international actors.

This third scenario seems more and more plausible in the light of increased insurgency in Abidjan between pro-Gbagbo forces and gunmen claiming allegiance to Ouattara. As of the end of March, heavy fighting in several suburbs of Abidjan and massive increases in population displacement point to this outcome.

Connected to this is also the specter of a possible coup d'état by forces opposed to Gbagbo. This will not be the first time Côte d'Ivoire suffers such a fate, but it would clearly not be in the interest of either Gbagbo or Ouattara for a military junta to take over.

President Laurent Gbagbo (L) shakes hands with South Africa's President Jacob Zuma at the presidential palace in Abidjan February 21, 2011.

REUTERS/Luc Gnago

Côte d'Ivoire policy **angers Ecowas**

South Africa's attempt to find its own solutions to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire was not in line with its foreign policy principles, believes **Dimpho Motsamai.**

Following the second round of presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire on 28 November last year, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AU have accepted Allasane Ouattara as the winner and called for incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo to stand down.

South Africa, meanwhile, initially appeared to favour a negotiated powersharing solution, with President Jacob Zuma also maintaining that 'the process leading up to the electoral result must be interrogated.'

As well as being inconsistent with the perspectives of rule-based governance advocated by ECOWAS and the AU, South Africa's approach was at odds with its own traditional exercise of foreign policy.

The AU finally appointed a High Level Panel, chaired by President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of Mauritania and comprising presidents Jacob Zuma of South Africa, Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, Idriss Déby Itno of Chad and Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, to mediate in the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

AU mediation compromised

Kikwete made an unequivocal call for Ggbabo's immediate resignation, while Déby's critique of the UN and the French presence in Chad resonates with Ggbabo's anti-imperialist rhetoric.

South Africa's initial view of the election as 'inconclusive,' however, was directly at odds with the AU guidelines for the Panel's work – in particular, finding a 'peaceful and honourable exit' for Gbagbo and aiding the formation of a national unity government by Ouattarra.

After the failure of numerous previous AU mediation efforts in Côte d'Ivoire, the Panel on Thursday 10 March confirmed the initial AU position of recognising Ouattara as the winner – an apparent about-turn following the initial signs of division amongst the panel's members.

Reports that angry pro-Ouattara youths attempted to swarm Zuma upon his arrival in Abidjan together with the High Level Panel in early March reflected the growing unpopularity, both inside the country and further afield, of South Africa's stance at the time.

Frigate a mistake

Zuma's repudiation of the use of force to oust Gbagbo also contradicted Nigeria's push for UNSC backing for an eventual ECOWAS military intervention.

According to Nigeria, the option of 'legitimate force' is 'to give teeth' to sanctions already approved, nurture democracy, prevent regional spillovers of the conflict, and rescue the credibility of the UN, AU and ECOWAS.

From its first conciliatory statement on 4 December 2010 to the drama surrounding a South African naval frigate, the *SAS Drakensberg,* docked off the Ivorian coast in mid-January, Pretoria's diplomacy has been somewhat temperamental. The chair of the ECOWAS Commission, James Victor Gbeho, said he was surprised 'that a distinguished country like South Africa would decide to send a frigate to Côte d'Ivoire at this time.' The move was interpreted as a challenge to ECOWAS leadership, a possible signal of Pretoria's support for Gbagbo, and a

'complication' to mediation efforts.

Whatever the motive, the presence of the frigate diluted Pretoria's argument of impartiality. Gbagbo's ability to frame the crisis as an anti-imperialist struggle compounded these suspicions, and reference is often made to the ANC's principle of 'progressive internationalism' which seeks to challenge imperialistic tendencies on the continent. The possibility of a power-sharing-agreement proposal, supposedly pushed by South Africa to preserve a role for Gbagbo in the country's government, is in line with this thinking.

Since this was not the regional consensus, or that of Nigeria, it remained doubtful whether there was an appetite for such arrangements.

The country' s neighbours, meanwhile, witnessed an increasingly defiant Gbagbo who, despite sanctions and international isolation, used the military to crush dissent, fuelling crisis-driven immigration. He also seized key state service and financial assets, including the spectacular 'nationalisation' of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO).

SA vs Nigeria

Strikingly, the recent discord mirrors Pretoria-Abuja relations in 2002-4, when former SA President Thabo Mbeki attempted mediation in the Ivorian crisis. This was against the background of competition over a potential African seat on the UNSC. The relationship took a tense turn as a result of South Africa's perceived encroachment into Nigeria's sphere of influence, particularly since the former is expected to play a supportive 'behind the scenes' role, and also abide by the implicit division of labour.

Pretoria has often been seen as a partial arbiter in the mediation process in Côte d'Ivoire, and its association with its strategic partner and SADC counterpart Angola – believed to be providing military and financial support to the Gbagbo camp – points to a foreign policy that is utilitarian at best.

'Under Zuma, South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy, typified by the country's commitment to export its model of democratisation to other parts of Africa, is being viewed with increasing suspicion'

Consequently, under the Zuma administration, South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy, typified by the country's commitment to export its model of democratisation to other parts of Africa, is being viewed with increasing suspicion.

One counter response to this is that Pretoria's foreign policy actions must be observed against the backdrop of its broader policy objectives, specifically the respect for sovereignty and the use of 'quiet diplomacy'. But experience shows that wherever these objectives have outweighed multilateralism, the country's participation in advancing African political agendas does not yield the desired results.

Although it is important to consider SA's understanding of the main causes of the Ivorian stalemate and how this has influenced its analysis of events, its catalytic role in resolving conflicts is no longer clear.

The relentless pursuit of selective, self-proposed strategies to solve the Ivorian crisis, however, may come back to haunt South Africa. The country's failure to seek coordination between competing views and discourses during the recent standoff implies a determination to pursue a unilateral agenda.

South Africa is an influential agenda-setter on the continent and it can't to be ambiguous on conflict situations, as this may further damage the country's credibility as a capable peace broker, particularly in light of mounting continental insecurity and ongoing threats to peace.

Although the Zuma administration has committed itself to the principle of foreign policy continuity, these diplomatic interventions point to a certain, albeit muted, shift in conduct. This is further exemplified by peculiar conciliation tendencies, leadership reluctance, and inclinations to the national interest. Furthermore, Zuma's prioritisation of bilateralism, as illustrated by the proliferation of 'strategic' partnerships and bi-national commissions since 2009, may be counterproductive to Pretoria's African agenda. The elevation of SA-Angola relations, for instance, has raised curiosity about a possible geo-continental shift in policy from traditional partners like Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana and others.

The seemingly bifurcated foreign policy may lead to undesirable diplomatic rows with key partners like Nigeria, as well as compromising South Africa's niche in the UNSC and the AU, and undermining its ability to strengthen the relationship between the AU Peace and Security Council and the UNSC.

The country's values and interests should be balanced to preserve its integrity and ensure that its commitments and obligations are not compromised. This will require concerted efforts to strengthen its credibility as a conflict mediator, establish continuous oversight and cost-benefit assessments of foreign conduct, enhance interdepartmental and inter-agency cooperation, and link public diplomacy with public acceptance and understanding of SA's commitments.

The 'do or die' campaigns

As Nigeria heads for watershed elections on 9 April, **Lansana Gberie** reports from Abuja on the frenzy surrounding the polls that are set to introduce major political changes.

'Is this war?' the headline of the Lagos daily *Punch* asked bluntly on 4 March this year. The front-page article was referring to the upsurge in electoral violence in Nigeria as it nears polls set for early April this year.

The question was not a facetious one. The previous day, 'unidentified people' had driven past a campaign rally of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Suleja, Niger State, and thrown explosives into the crowd, killing 13 people and wounding scores more. 'Unidentified people': this ambiguous police phrase means only that this was a political crime that will never be solved.

Just before the end of last year, three similar bomb attacks happened across the country, leaving dozens dead and many more mutilated – in the capital Abuja (just as the country celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of independence); in the perennially bloodstained Jos (riven by communal low-intensity warfare); and in Bayelsa, the grimy oil-rich state from which the political career of the country's current president, Goodluck Jonathan, was launched.

These attacks, along with a spate of assassinations, appear to have unsettled the country's rulers. In January this year, the government announced the establishment of a new 17 000-strong army division deployed across the country solely for the purpose of tackling election-related violence.

That division alone is larger than any other army in the region, and is larger than the UN force deployed to help put together the ravaged Liberia.

High stakes lead to violence

Elections in Africa can be a high-octane and, in some cases, violent, affair. In Nigeria, one searches for a proper register to capture the murderous frenzy that characterises any poll, national or local, in the country. But the polls this year promise to be even more bloodstained, because the stakes are accentuated by a number of logic-defying developments that may well, for better or worse, constitute a paradigm shift in Nigeria's politics.

More than 300 people were killed and many more mutilated during and after the 2007 elections, and that's not counting the mayhem triggered months later by the Jos local elections, which led to the death of hundreds and the serious injury of over 10 000 people. It was during those polls that the former President Olusegun Obasanjo, desperate for his hand-picked successor Umaru Yar'Adua to win at all cost, announced that Nigerian elections were a 'do or die' business.

A brainchild of the PDP

The chilling phrase is freely quoted by the country's leading newspapers, mainly to chide the former president, who has now thrown his frenetic energy behind Yar'Adua's successor, Jonathan. But it resonates more widely than they perhaps know.

The ruling PDP, with Jonathan as its presidential flag bearer, was launched in 1999 by a group of liberal-minded politicians and activists who detested military rule, especially the obdurate and destructive rule of General Sani Abacha. These politicians, from all of Nigeria's main ethnic groups and regions, were chiefly motivated by a desire to keep the unwieldy state together, as well as to keep the military – which had always claimed to be the key guarantor of Nigeria's unity – out of politics. They contrived a consensus by which

Any hope that Jonathan would initiate major reforms of the country is probably an absurdly forlorn anticipation

presidential power would rotate, for two terms each, between the mainly Muslim northern half of the country and the mainly Christian south. The arrangement is, cryptically, called 'zoning'.

The first beneficiary was Obasanjo, a Yoruba from the south who had been jailed for treason by Abacha, who was chosen by PDP grandees in 1999 to be their first presidential candidate when the praetorian ban on politics was lifted. His running mate was a northerner, and they won. Obasanjo was succeeded after two terms, as the 'zoning' logic dictates, by Yar'Adua, a northerner.

Yar'Adua's vice president, again as 'zoning' dictated, was Jonathan, a Christian from the south. In the event, however, Yar'Adua died in office and Jonathan – against opposition from the northern elite – became president in order to complete the pair's term in office.

Many of the northern elites hoped that Jonathan would give way after serving out his term. Instead, he contested – and won by a large margin – the presidential slot on the PDP platform. Northerners had contrived a 'consensus candidate' in the form of Atiku Abubakar, who had been Obasanjo's vice president but had then messily fallen out with Obasanjo. Jonathan crushed Abubakar in the PDP primaries early this year by a very wide margin, defeating him even in his home state.

Flushed by this victory, Jonathan has proclaimed that the 'zoning' business is dead, and that competency and personal appeal are now the only criteria for who runs for President on the PDP ticket. But he was also careful to state that he will not be running again if he wins the 2011 elections. This has certainly not placated his enemies, some of whom have abruptly abandoned the PDP and joined other parties.

Oil policy open to change

Jonathan's (perhaps temporary) phasing out of the 'zoning' policy isn't the only shift in Nigerian politics that he has triggered. Nigeria is a wholly extractive economy that relies solely on oil to run the country. Its politicians and military rulers have made no effort to diversify the economy, since oil revenue has so far been enough to grease the patronage system that passes for governance here.

The ruling elites are wholly rent seeking and almost entirely non-productive in an economic sense. One of the logics of this perverse system is that areas of provenance for the key extractive commodity remain marginal and even oppressed, because empowerment carries grave risks to the entire system. And now Jonathan, who comes from the oil-rich and therefore massively impoverished Bayelsa state, has become president of the republic! Everything, in other words, may now be open to change.

It may not amount to much, however. Jonathan has shown no inclination, apart from his own ambition, to upset the powerful interests underpinning the PDP. He, after all, worked patiently with disgraced former Bayelsa governor Dieprieye Alamieyeseigha, who was, even in the Nigerian context, a prodigy of excess and depravity. On being placed under house arrest in London for money laundering in 2006, Alamieyeseigha donned a woman's wig and clothes and, with a false passport to match, flew out of England back to Nigeria, only to be impeached by his state's legislators. Jonathan took over as Governor, and that's how he was

Enthusiastic supporters with the colours of the Action Congress of Nigeria, led by Nigeria's former anti-corruption chief Nuhu Ribadu, during a rally at the Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos, Nigeria, Saturday, March 5.

AP Photo/Sunday Alamba

picked as running mate to Yar'Adua.

With this background, any hope that Jonathan would initiate major reforms of the country is probably an absurdly forlorn anticipation. But the frisson of the elections, creating at least the illusion of change, is probably why the great events in North Africa hardly resonate here, although similar conditions exist in abundance.

Jonathan's cautious approach to fundamental reforms may explain why, despite their deep animus to him, northerners now appear to be rallying behind him. Two of the other credible options, although northerners, are unacceptable to the northern elite, which has ruled Nigeria for longer and certainly benefits more from the rent-seeking state. The first is the former anti-corruption czar, Nuhu Ribadu, of the unusually progressive Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). Ribadu seems to be garnering more support in the south – his party holds the governorship in Lagos – than in the north. This, of course, limits his chances.

> In Nigeria, one searches for a proper register to capture the murderous frenzy that characterises any poll, national or local

The other is the austere former military leader General Muhammadu Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). Buhari's brutal anti-graft posture is no selling point to the Nigerian elite, which was why he spent less than three years in office (to be replaced by the smooth and thoroughly corrupt Ibrahim Babangida).

Meanwhile, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in early March finally issued the voter registration results. The total voter population this year is 73 528 040, an astonishing increase from the 60 million of 2007. But the 2007 results and voter counts were confected when Obasanjo was in power and may well have been heavily rigged, and, insofar as accuracy is concerned, of no real value. INEC last year got a staggering $572 million for the conduct of the elections.

Since the current INEC chair is respected academic Attahiru Jega, we can take this year's figures to be accurate. In fact, so ramshackle is the history of elections in this country that all hopes of a free and fair outcome seem to rest, perhaps unfairly, on one man: Jega.

An investment **destination to beat**

As foreign investment continues to flow into Nigeria in the run-up to the April election, **Dianna Games** believes that bold choices need to be made if the country is to become a global force in the foreseeable future.

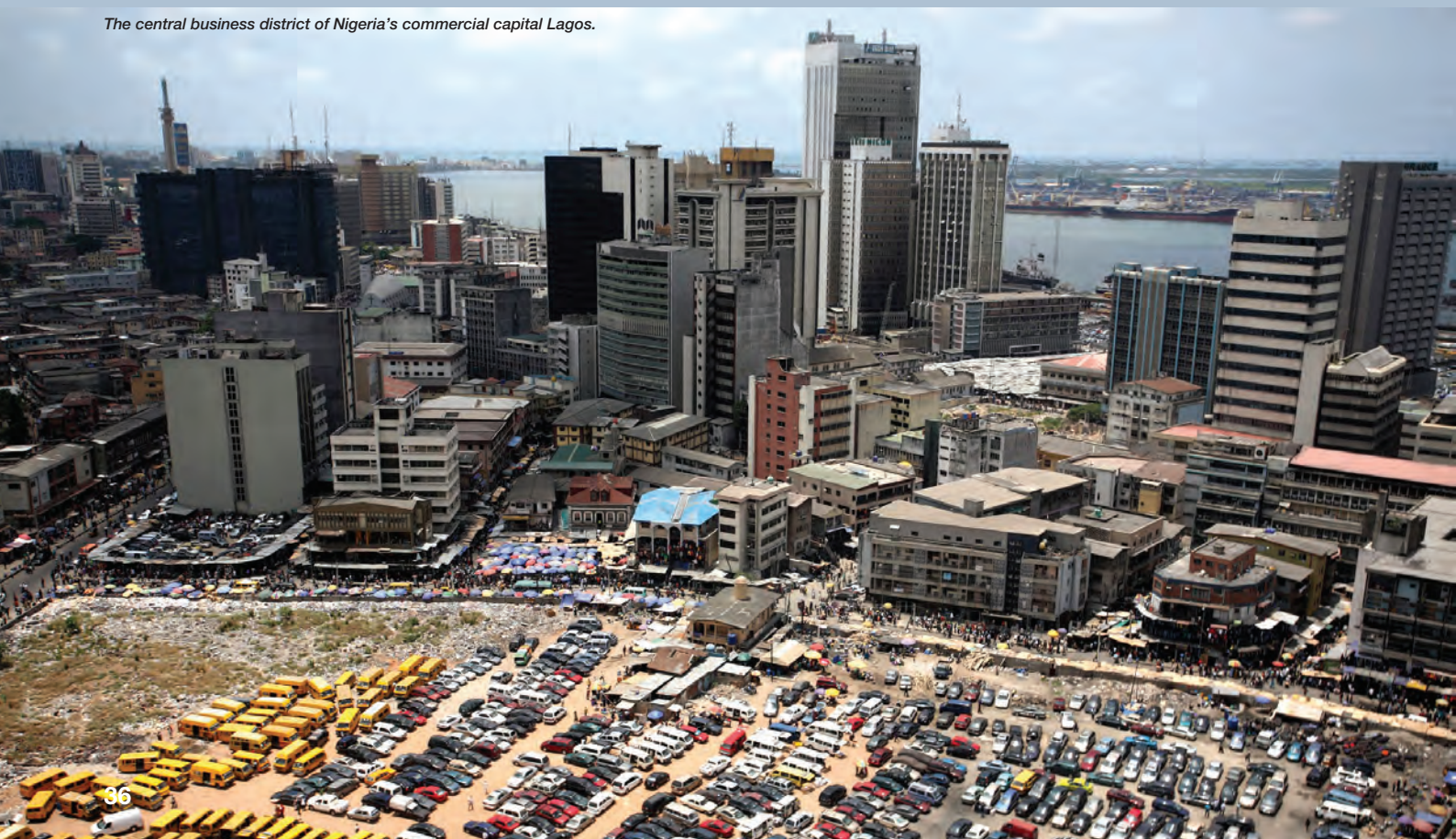
It is probably fair to speculate that more money changes hands in the run-up to a Nigerian election than in all the business deals combined over a similar period in the private sector. No expense is spared in the quest for political power, which is a winner-takes-all game in this complex polity.

But despite the new beginning it symbolically offers, is an election good for business? That is the question many investors have been asking in the build-up to the 2011 April poll, as political risk ratchets up with concerns about conduct at the polls, historically characterised by violence, kidnapping and vote rigging.

But concerns about election-related risk appear to have been allayed by the sheer size of the market opportunity and existing investors' fears of increasing competition. The growth story is a compelling one to companies looking for good returns. This is reflected by the number of announcements made of new investments in the country in the months before the election, primarily in the rapidly growing consumer goods sector.

For example, in March, global brewer SABMiller announced its plans to build a $100m brewery in the country to take on its main rivals, Heineken and Diageo. The brewery, the company's second after its purchase of Pabod Brewery in Port Harcourt several years ago, will be built in Anambra. The two breweries are in south-east Nigeria, which is the region with the fastest growing market in the country.

The beer market, where Heineken has a 70% market share, has been growing



The central business district of Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos.

at an annual rate of 9% over the past decade. In January, Heineken acquired controlling interests in five breweries to expand capacity by a third. SABMiller has a long way to go in this market, where it only has a 5% share – unlike most African markets where it is the dominant player.

Also in the weeks leading up to the election, South African food giant Tiger Brands made an acquisition in Nigeria's food sector as part of its aggressive African expansion, while the multinational Nestlé, which has been in the country for 50 years, said it was to invest in expanding capacity.

The British multinational PZ Cussons is to spend $27m to expand its food and nutrition business in a joint venture with an Asian agribusiness company, and Coca-Cola Hellenic has said it will invest $300m in expanding its bottling operation.

Acquisitions of local banks are underway, with at least two of South Africa's big four banking groups on the acquisition trail.

More large investments are expected to be announced during 2011 as the country settles into a new political landscape and, hopefully, governance risks reduce.

But while there is positive growth in the non-oil sectors, the country's key revenue generator, the oil and gas sector, is underperforming. This is of particular concern with oil prices skyrocketing in the wake of the Libyan oil shutdown.

Investor concerns centre on the delays in passing the Petroleum Industry Bill, legislation that seeks to usher in significant reforms in the oil and gas sector for the first time in decades.

Championed by late President Umaru Yar'Adua, the Bill has languished in the legislature since his death last year, with his successor, President Goodluck Jonathan, being distracted by his presidential bid.

The delays have caused uncertainty in the sector, with investors reluctant to put their money into a country where the playing field may change significantly after the Bill is passed. Exploration is at a 10-year low.

The country has a chance for a fresh start, which could be a turning point for Nigeria if the new president has the mettle to make a real break with the past

There is controversy about the Bill's proposals. The government says the legislation will give Nigerians a greater share in their resources and increase transparency in the industry. However, international oil companies say it will discourage international investment by cutting profit margins through increased taxes and other proposed measures.

One industry leader – Ann Pickard, Shell's vice president for Sub-Saharan Africa – said it could drive away up to $50bn in new investment in deepwater projects. Other oil executives agree.

Oil and gas analyst Duncan Clarke, CEO of Global Pacific & Partners, maintains that Nigeria has misspent much of its oil revenues and continues to underperform, missing its own reserve and production targets. Experts say Nigeria's poor policies and a harsh fiscal regime have resulted in declining oil and gas production in the country since 2005.

He says the danger is that Nigeria will get left behind as investors plough into lucrative – and less problematic – new oil finds elsewhere in Africa.

The country's foreign reserves, built on the back of oil, have dwindled from $43bn to $32bn during the current administration's term because of high consumption spending, much of it on a bloated government.

On the upside, the government has resumed savings in its excess crude account, which captures oil revenues over a set price per barrel. The crude account, which held nearly $20bn in 2007, dropped to $500m in September 2010, with the money used to plug revenue shortfalls instead of being directed to building infrastructure.

The government needs to find $40bn to get its power sector up and running, without which its noble ambitions to make Nigeria a leading emerging market over the next decade will be dashed.

Apart from the fact that nearly two-thirds of the population do not get power from the national grid, the country has no energy capacity to develop its economy. It is running on just 4 000MW of power against current low demand of about 10 000MW.

The cost of running businesses on generators is keeping the cost of operating extraordinarily high.

Jonathan made the power sector a priority project when he became president, announcing an ambitious roadmap for its revival.

But Nigerian electricity consumption is one of the lowest in the world, making power a hard-sell investment. This is a problem, given that a pivotal element of the roadmap is the sale of the government's 51% stake in 17 of the 18 power companies (11 distribution and six generation companies).

A new government will face many old problems. Nigeria might well be a hard country to beat in terms of investment returns, but this does not change the fact that good governance, prudent fiscal management and strong political will to effect change in the face of many entrenched personal interests are required for this country to move to another level.

Nigeria has bold aims to be a global force in the next 15 years but it is a long way from reaching its potential. The country has a chance for a fresh start, which could be a turning point for Nigeria if the new president has the mettle to make a real break with the past.

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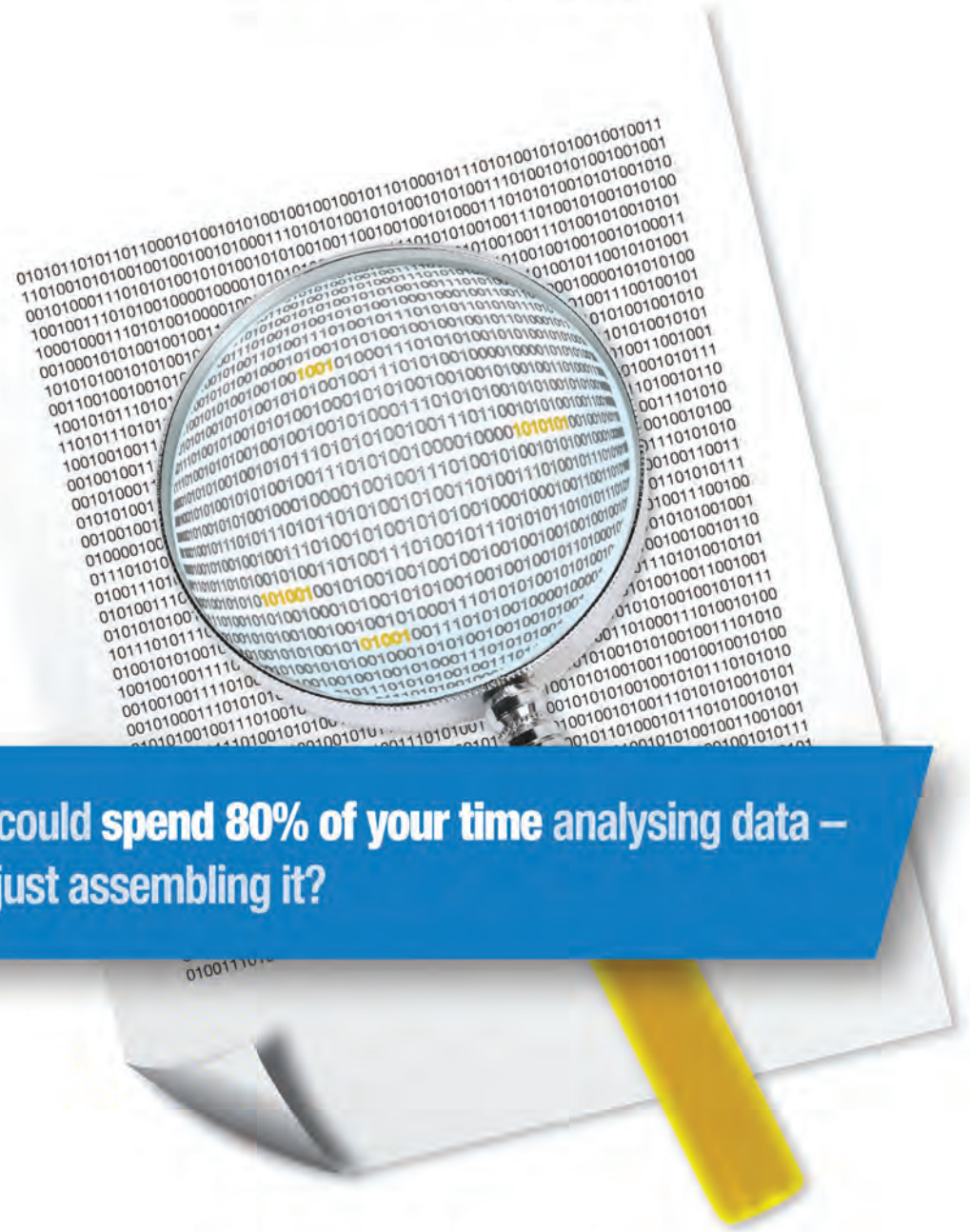

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Music from home

Percy Zvomuya speaks to Malawian musician Erik Paliani about his work, his inspiration and his southern African roots.

Guitarist and producer Erik Paliani could simply be described as 'a southerner'. He was born in Malawi where he lived until he moved to Zimbabwe as a teenager before settling in South Africa. He's also a southerner in a musical sense, a carnivorous devourer of music from what is called, in diplomatic speak, the Global South.

But musically, he's difficult to classify. Some consider him a jazzman, others think of him as a rock musician. His debut album, *Chitukutuku,* shows some of those influences, but there's more: a potpourri of sounds in which the sultry, carefree sounds of the Congo; the resonant drumbeat of Malawi, the groovy, rebellious accents of Zimbabwe and the reflective jazzy tones of South Africa all come together. He flies over all these territories in his *ndege* (Shona and Chewa for 'aeroplane' and, not coincidentally, the title of track number four on his album), stopping in Zambia, the Congo, Mozambique and several other destinations.

Chitukutuku is a 10-track CD with a spirit that hovers at an unnamed place in Southern and Central Africa. If this album were a person, the bureaucrats would probably call him or her stateless. In the title track, *Chitukutuku,* he sets down in soft accents the migrant's angst at finding himself away from home and familiar people. It's a remake of a hit from 1950s Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Malawi) by Wilson Makawa, a Malawian musician working in Zambia. A search on YouTube or Google will only bring up the song in reference to Paliani. The 34-year-old musician has, in more ways than one, resurrected the memory of his compatriot with his rendition of this plaintive and meditative song, which is nostalgic without ever descending to the nauseating mawkishness typical of this genre.

The southerner is keen to emphasise that his is a borderless region. 'There is one southern Africa that's emerging, whether we like it or not. This album is a CD about southern Africa and I would like it to be presented as such,' he says in his soft tones in one of two interviews I've had with him.

He doesn't find South Africa so strange: 'When I go to Soweto I relate to the gogos and mamas in the same way I would relate to my own grandmother. It's a little difficult to think of all these states in southern Africa as separate.'

Paul Botes

Turmoil and the quest for a better life, ease of movement and communication have played their part in opening up the region. And the album's fourth track, *Ndege*, is partly about that. The song begins with a mellow guitar and soft blasts of horns in a call and response format, laid over an expansive bass sound that often threatens to overwhelm the song. Riding over this sound, in his beautiful hiccupy voice, Paliani sings about his travels to Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

The richness of his sound is, in part, due to his band members. He has Mauritian-born Denny Lalouette on bass; Cape Town-born David Klassen on drums and vocals; Tlale Makhene, born in Soweto and raised in Swaziland, on vocals and percussion; East London-born Harold Wynkwardt on keyboards and vocals, and Dutch engineer, Garrick van der Tuin, as sound engineer.

With such a motley crew backing him, the sound doesn't carry the passport of any country; it's always looking to other climes and gesturing at other approaches, but somehow managing to remain the sound of Paliani.

There are times when he shows us his ancestral roots. The interlude, *Ma Born-Free*, is a case in point. It's the kind of sound one is not likely to find on a CD in this part of the world. Based on the template of Nyau dance and ritual, it's a journey into the ghost-ridden nether world in which fierce spirits walk. At once abrupt and ancient, its accents are overwhelming and moving in their atavism and repetitiveness. But most of the songs don't have this primal feel; he has domesticated the sound, fusing it with modern styles.

In fact, his music sounds oddly familiar. One day his Mauritian-born bassist came up to him after an intense otherworldly journey, and said, 'This music, I know it, it's like home, but I don't know which home.'

His de-centred approach comes naturally for a musician who was born in Malawi, whose father personally knew the late Dr Nico (Nicolas Kasanda, Democratic Republic of Congo musician and soukous pioneer), and who has also lived Botswana and Mozambique.

> If this album were a person, the bureaucrats would probably call him or her stateless

His father, a 'collector of African music,' was also a judge in Malawi. It was in the family lounge where the young Paliani first got his musical bearings. 'School was at home,' he says. 'My dad approached music from an intellectual point of view. He was my first teacher – he taught me how to read and write music. If he'd grown up in a different era he would have become a musician.'

In the early 1990s, after finishing high school in Malawi, his parents dispatched him to Zimbabwe, where his grandmother lived in Harare. While studying purchasing and supply at Harare Polytechnic, he worked as an amateur musician on the side – an important period during which he met some of the region's most exciting musicians, including Sam Mataure, Oliver Mtukudzi's jazz drummer. About Mataure, Paliani says: 'We do a lot of things together. He's a big brother.'

After his stint in Zimbabwe he went back to Malawi, where he formed a band in 1995. But his visits to Zimbabwe had raised in him a restless spirit. In the late 1990s he repeatedly visited South Africa, where he met other musicians: Musa Manzini, Themba Mkhize, late Malawian guitarist George Phiri, Jimi

The politicians are taking too long to unite the region but there are others showing us how it can be done

Indi, Louis Mhlanga and Hugh Masekela (whose album, *Phola*, Paliani produced), among others. But it was his work with Zamajobe on her albums *Ndawo Yami* (2004) and *Ndoni Yamanzi* (2008) that helped him attain mainstream success, resulting in his becoming part of Masekela's touring band.

About his CD, Paliani says, 'The CD represents where I have been: Oliver Mtukudzi, (Chimurenga music maestro) Thomas Mapfumo and the melody of South African music.' But the influence extends right up to the Congo. Take, for instance, the song *Dr Nico*, a jazzy song he penned in honour of the great guitarist. It's not a slavish tribute and, although the Congolese accents of Dr Nico are in the vicinity, Paliani avoids the *kwasa kwasa* feel one would ordinarily expect from such a project. He has peeled away the Cuban sound and replaced it with something closer to Ernest Ranglin's reggae jazz accents.

'If I say Chimurenga in 2010, it could be the music or I am just paying my own tribute,' he says. 'My take on the guitar isn't borrowed from Dr Nico but it's something he'd probably have thought about.'

Paliani's stateless sound can only lead to one conclusion: the politicians are taking too long to unite the region but there are others showing us how it can be done. Musically, and beautifully.

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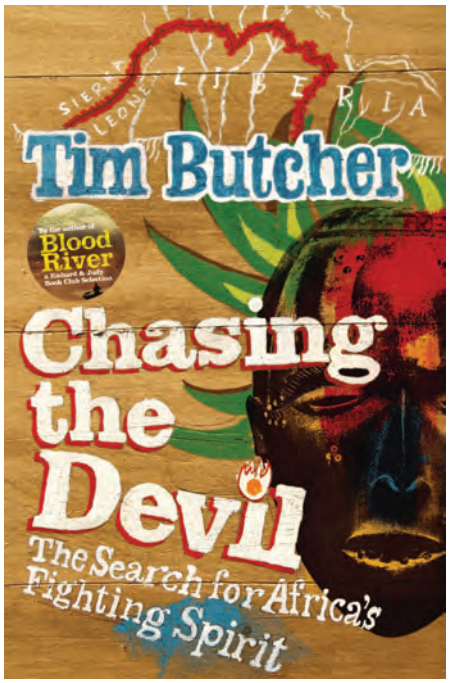


Chasing the Devil: The Search for Africa's Fighting Spirit
By Tim Butcher
Review by Lansana Gberie

In the footsteps of **Graham Greene**

In 1934, a 31-year-old Graham Greene, who had never been to Africa before, was cajoled by the Anti-Slavery Society to visit Liberia and follow up on some awful findings made four years earlier. Liberia had been established as a settlement for freed American slaves with the motto, 'The Love of Liberty brought us here' – this was, of course, a hoax, and in 1930 a League of Nations report found that 'slavery as defined by the anti-slavery convention' existed in the country. The situation was so bad, the Commission opined, that 'any hope of improvement' was futile 'without the introduction of outside special assistance.'

'Trusteeship' (or colonisation) was recommended but never taken up. Greene's romantic fascination with the exotic and his broad liberal views were already well known. He trekked through Liberia accompanied by his young cousin Barbara with the aid of 26 African porters and cooks; there were hardly any roads in Liberia outside the capital at the time. That epic journey is described in *Journey without Maps,* a profoundly insightful, sympathetic and informative book that was published in 1936.

Tim Butcher takes the book as his inspiration for his own *Chasing the Devil.* Unlike Greene, however, by the time Butcher set off for his trek through Liberia in 2008-9, he was already a Fleet Street veteran who had reported from the region as *The Telegraph*'s Africa correspondent and done a more challenging trek through the Congo (the result being his much-praised *Blood River*).

A stone in his shoes

He gives two reasons for writing this book. He had reported on Liberia when Charles Taylor, the country's blood-drenched former dictator, was engaged in fighting insurgents. In *The Telegraph* he had accused Taylor of practising ritual murder and cannibalism, charges that were sensational but certainly not unfounded. Word got to Butcher that Taylor would kill him if he ever got hold of him, so Butcher had not been able to report from Liberia when Taylor was finally forced from the country into self-exile and he now wanted to explore the country more. The more important reason he gives is that, as a reporter burdened by a daily deadline, he had been unable to study Africa profoundly enough. He now thinks that his reports were superficial, and feels punished for that by a 'stone in [his] shoes.' His return to Liberia through Sierra Leone following Greene's epic footsteps is his way of making amends.

> The great problem of Liberia and its proneness to violence results not from politics, but from tradition

This is all well and good, alhough his prose is not as elegant as Greene's. But unlike Greene, Butcher had clearly already made up his mind about Liberia before he set out (also with a companion, in this case a young man just down from Oxford).

Walking through the bush

It was entirely Butcher's choice to walk through the bush from the Sierra Leone border through Liberia, since there is a

Tim Butcher, author of Chasing the Devil: The Search for Africa's Fighting Spirit

road from there to Monrovia (Liberia's capital) and vehicles are available, but he keeps mentioning the hardships of the trek, perhaps to underscore his own stamina and brio (the British press describe him, quaintly, as an 'explorer,' though what this means is unclear).

Irritating though his grouses can be, Butcher's reporting through the trek is good and accurate. It is his anachronistic insistence on seeing 'devils' all along the way, grafting arcane meanings onto mundane events, that makes his journey seem rather pointless. He has obviously learnt nothing he could not have read in a good anthropology or history book on the country in a library at Oxford. As he nears Monrovia, making sure he follows the exact route that Greene took (another constant source of irritation, that insistence on bettering the master), Butcher apparently stumbles on an illumination, his 'Eureka!' moment: The great problem of Liberia and its proneness to violence results not from politics, but from tradition.

Human sacrifice

The problem, he finds, was Poro, the secret society for men widely practised in the region, something that Greene 'had failed… to fully account for.' 'If you believe, as many in the Poro do, that a person does not exist fully as a human unless initiated, then the killing of a non-initiate for ritual reasons is… no worse than the killing of an animal for the pot'. 'Killing 'for the pot': the image, of course, evokes cannibalism, the enduring trope of Butcher's anachronistic book.

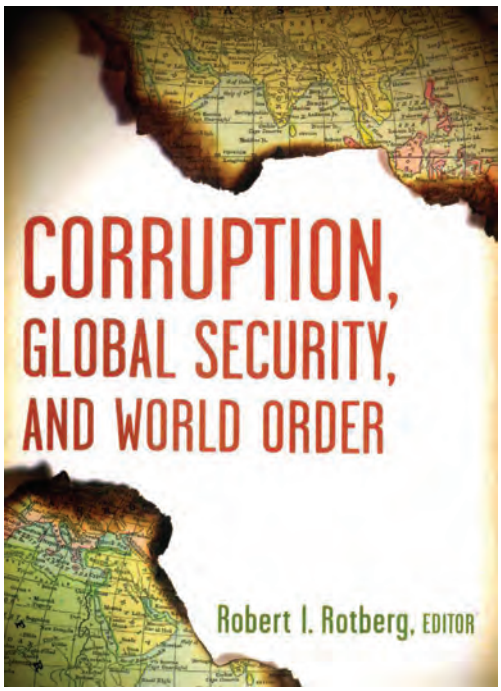
It is his anachronistic insistence on seeing 'devils' all along the way, grafting arcane meanings onto mundane events, that makes his journey seem rather pointless.

In fact, many more discerning observers have applauded the very positive role played by Poro during the war. In *Beyond Anarchy* (published in 2005, way before Butcher set out on his Liberia trip), Amos Sawyer notes that during Liberia's civil war, every town or village was occupied by rebel militia fighters, gangsters who exercised tomcatting powers over defenceless people. The state had imploded, and the only thing that kept any sense of community and society alive in the face of state atrophy was Poro, whose leaders mobilised the community to resist the nihilism of the youthful militia fighters.

That Butcher misses this crucial point leads to the conclusion that he has not quite succeeded in removing that stone from his shoe. He should try harder.

Chasing the Devil: The Search for Africa's Fighting Spirit.
Chatto & Windus, 2010, 325pp.

Corruption, Global Security, and World Order
Edited by Robert I Rotberg
Review by Sandra Adong Oder



Corruption laid bare

Our world is defined by pronounced instability as corruption increasingly features across cultures and continents. Amidst all this, the question is whether the commonly accepted methods of combating, reducing and eliminating corruption are universally acceptable, and whether they will prove useful over time. Robert I Rotberg's book answers with a resounding 'yes and no'.

Rotberg and a distinguished group of contributors discuss the global effects of embedded corruption and show how criminals and criminalised states now control large parts of the world. The book also explores the issues of human and drug trafficking and makes astute observations on the symbiotic relationship between smugglers of weapons of mass destruction and traffickers. Eighteen chapters examine the ways in which corruption deprives citizens of fundamental human rights, assess the connection between corruption and the spread of terror, and examine ongoing efforts and strategies to reduce and contain – yet hardly ever to eliminate – corruption.

Written for a global audience, the book contains an assault on mainstream political, social and legal methods and calls for a redefinition of the essential elements of an appropriate system (bottom-up or top-down) to counter corruption. It explores the links between corrupt practices and threats to global peace, the suppression of human rights and development, the maintenance of tyranny, and health and education. If this book does not cause us to think long and hard about human fallibility and our gullible (and sometimes selfish) nature, it is unlikely that anything will.

Corrupt mindset

In developing appropriate responses to corruption, what strong incentives should be thrown into the pool of solutions? How is it that the same person can write laws to denounce corruption and yet have no qualms about milking state coffers? The psychological shifts of corrupt mindsets are not often explored, leaving unanswered questions on how we should deal with corruption, which are then pushed to the political, lego-technical and social spaces for answers. But the psychological struggles faced by traffickers, terrorists and cyber criminals, among others, are a crucial element of dealing with corruption.

It would be interesting to understand why so many people who condemn corruption also participate in it. Interventions aimed at combating corruption may need to take into account this salient point made by Michael Josephson: 'Perhaps the main reason people fail to act ethically is that it usually meets self-interest to do the unethical or less ethical thing. Simply put, it is easier.' In other words, the immediate environment can neutralise an individual's capacity to rationalise and refrain from unethical behaviour, and it can change public and private boundaries in the process.

Service delivery and bribery

The second challenge is societal: how does one effectively work with the mindset of a citizenry whose service-delivery agendas are fed by corrupt practices, such as paying a nurse

in order to get ahead in the queue in the hospital, paying a bribe to a police officer to 'kill' a case, bribing a water officer not to read the meter correctly, or even offering a bribe for electricity not to be disconnected? How can one capture the cooperation of a community whose service delivery may depend on such arrangements?

An enabling environment

While corruption is rampant in all societies, its particularly devastating effect in Africa is known – it undermines economic growth and reduces the resources available for public service, infrastructure and investment. What is more sinister is that corruption is silent; it is only when we find paper trails or some other inadvertent evidence that corruption is known to have been committed. Will we ever be able to know or measure the real consequences of corruption?

Africa's situation is best epitomised by Nigeria, whose social, political, economic and cultural conduct and affinity for corruption and crime remain rampant. Here the ruling elite, as in many African countries, attach power to national sovereignty, leading to supremacy of state over civil society as well as to the ascendancy of the patrimonial state, which provides an enabling environment for corruption. In such situations, social behaviour is modified to a predatory group behaviour that is intertwined with group identity and group interests. Within a context of pronounced economic and political uncertainty, Nigerians and many other Africans may be caught between a culture of group interests and the processes of development and democratisation.

Does Rotberg's book call for a moralising approach to combating corruption? No. It is inquisitorial and incisive, and it lays bare the fact that today global security and governance may be held hostage by darker forces, largely unseen, secret, suppressive and predatory, which threaten development and increasingly deny an improved quality of life to the most vulnerable members of society.

The book's attempt to develop a definition of corruption is limited, but any deeper attempt would cause ethical difficulties for the reader. A more rewarding approach is to try to 'understand the complex ways in which

Understanding Nigeria's seemingly contradictory positions requires situating corruption in its political, social-relational and moral contexts

this phenomenon is woven into the fabric of political, social and economic life – part and parcel of both the maintenance of social inequality and the struggles to respond to it.'

Daniel Jordan Smith's insightful chapter clearly outlines how corruption can be understood from anthropological and ethnographical perspectives, where 'understanding Nigeria's seemingly contradictory positions requires situating corruption in its political, social-relational and moral contexts. For many Nigerians – not all – corruption can be, on one hand, a survival strategy and a moral imperative, and, on the other hand, a political ruse to be condemned for its deception and venality.' What is troubling is that corruption has become a way of life in many developing countries, which is arguably a symptom that the state is functioning poorly and a failure not only of ethical leadership but of governance as well.

The tone of the book seems, however, to perpetuate the notion that all is not lost, although each author is deeply bothered by corruption, either with regard to its nature and effects or to the sustainable options for minimising it.

A cry for sanity

Does it really matter if any of the authors' projections are off, their ideas for reform impractical, or the contextual and normative analyses wayward? In their attempt to provide a platform for critical thought, and in making difficult connections, we can only applaud them for bringing attention to important issues that need to be addressed in our society. The major concern should be whether their cry for sanity will ever reach those who perpetuate corruption in all its forms, as well as those who contribute to the pursuit of ethical and accountable governance in the interest of national development and empowerment of citizens instead of their leaders.

Corruption, Global Security and World Order. Brookings Institution Press, 2009. 497pp.

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By Andrews Atta-Asamoah

Are we connected enough for a **Cairo-style revolution?**

As revolution sweeps North Africans off their feet, many other nations are asking: 'Could we do it too?' Are East Africans 'connected' enough to organise a popular revolt through Twitter and Facebook?

The bad news is that we aren't even close to the 21% connectivity of Egypt, with its four million on Facebook. Statistics available from the Internet World Stats Newsletter show that Kenya is the most connected of all the countries in eastern Africa. It has internet connectivity via fibre-optic cables, about 10% population connectivity and a penetration rate of more than 1 500%. Currently, Kenya is home to about 3.6% of all the Africans connected to the internet, with about 2.2% of its population on Facebook.

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But no one has yet come up with a scientific formula for the critical mass of connectivity that can influence a revolution. Like North Africa, East Africa also has a huge and growing youth bulge. In Kenya and elsewhere on the continent, young people are restless, disgruntled and fed up with the political elite.

Even if we don't have as many people on Facebook, social media can provide a platform for initiating revolution. From there, it has to rely on other factors, such as physical mobilisation, to sustain its momentum. It may not be a Cairo-style revolution, but that is because no two revolutions can ever follow the same trajectory.

The desire for change in Kenya is not new and has been prominent throughout the country's post-independence political history. In a sense, these struggles have given Kenyans several revolutions of different forms and trajectories since independence. Successes include the widening of the democratic space, multiparty politics, freedom of speech, a new constitutional dispensation, and the ongoing fight against impunity.

These successes have not been monumental 'big bangs' like the Egyptian revolution, but rather an incremental progression towards change. Even though Kenya is making commendable progress towards the entrenchment of democracy, its gradual nature is removing the 'wow' effect of the people's achievements.

And there remain several frontiers for revolution on the political landscape. One that is particularly notable is the persistent dominance of particular cadres of politicians, political lineages and dynasties in the country's affairs. This makes it almost impossible for electorates to get to choose a new and fresh crop of leaders with impeccable political records apart from those they are used to. But although it is not perfect, there exists a space for democratic participation that citizens can exploit, especially within the new constitutional dispensation. In spite of the practical difficulties, the ability to engage the system will offset the need to rely too heavily on social media as an alternative to the real world for political mobilisation.

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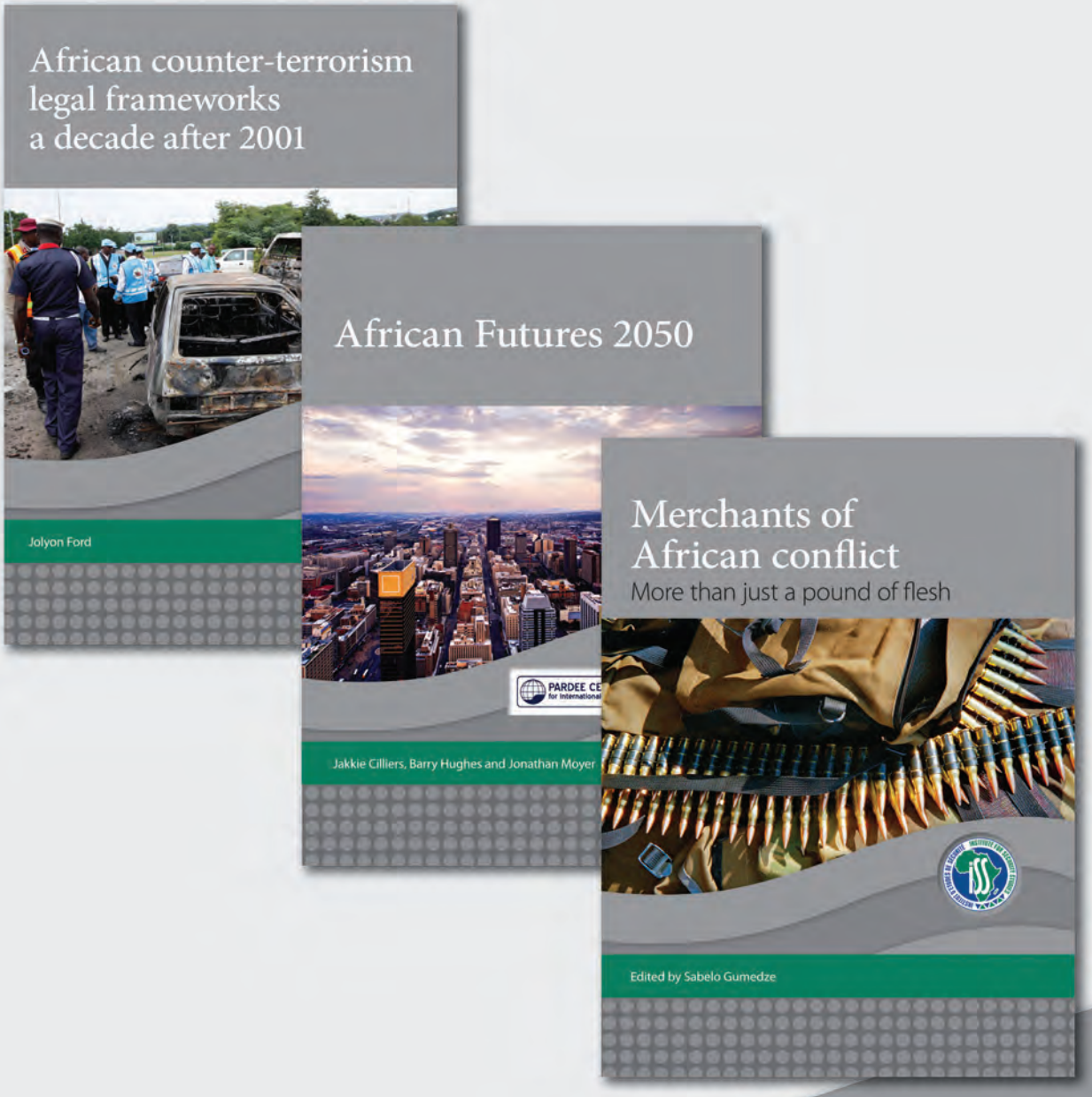

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