

# AFRICA ATLAS

Mapping the future of  
the AU-EU partnership

By

Giovanni Faleg, Marleen de Haan and Christian Dietrich



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## The authors

**Giovanni Faleg** was formerly the Senior Analyst responsible for the Africa portfolio and the co-director of the Countering Foreign Interference project at the EUISS, where he worked from 2018 until 2023.

**Marleen de Haan** was a trainee at the EUISS, where she supported the EU–Africa portfolio, from September 2022 to July 2023. Currently, she is working as a Policy Officer for the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.

**Christian Dietrich** is Data Visualisation Designer at the EUISS. He holds a Master’s degree in Public Policy from the University of Erfurt (2012).

# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Organised crime</b>	<b>42</b>
		Highways of fragility	
<b>PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY .....</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Violent extremism</b>	<b>44</b>
		Who fills the governance vacuum?	
<b>Food sovereignty</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Popular discontent</b>	<b>46</b>
Optimising resources		The risk of broken trust	
<b>Powering development</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>MIGRATION AND MOBILITY.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Lighting up the continent			
<b>Education and skills</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Regular mobility</b>	<b>50</b>
Mind the gap		Fifty shades of movement	
<b>Healthcare</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Irregular migration</b>	<b>52</b>
A long way to go		Porous borders and lives lost	
<b>Environmental shocks</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Remittances</b>	<b>54</b>
Jeopardising development gains		Africa's trump card	
<b>Debt and state fragility</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Displacement</b>	<b>56</b>
Navigating the permacrisis		Restarting from scratch	
<b>Urban population growth</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Still not connected</b>	<b>58</b>
A megatrend to manage		Africa's bumpy road to development	
<b>PEACE AND SECURITY .....</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>Climate migration</b>	<b>60</b>
		A gathering storm	
<b>Fragile democracy</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>Digital migration</b>	<b>62</b>
More elections, but also more coups		A new frontier	
<b>Managing the military</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL ORDER .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Improving the accountability of the security sector			
<b>Challenging borders</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Integrating the continent</b>	<b>66</b>
Insecurity on the edge(s)		Unlocking power and growth	
<b>Maritime capabilities</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Stronger together</b>	<b>68</b>
Unexplored depths		Claiming a seat at the table	

<b>Security provision</b>	<b>70</b>
Matching supply and demand	
<b>A new power play</b>	<b>72</b>
Foreign information manipulation and interference	
<b>Foreign powers</b>	<b>74</b>
Exerting influence and meddling in conflicts	
<b>Strategic choices</b>	<b>76</b>
The costs of non-Africa	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>78</b>
Key entry points for the AU-EU partnership	78
Bibliography and further reading	80
Abbreviations	85



# INTRODUCTION

The partnership between the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) is going through challenging times, as are relations between European and African countries more broadly <sup>(1)</sup>. Geopolitical factors, particularly since the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, intertwined with intra-Africa dynamics have profoundly modified the tone, tempo and content of policy discussions between the two continents. Examples of how relations have become more strained and fractured include:

- > Intra-continental divergences over the war in Ukraine and certain African countries' non-alignment with the West
- > waves of military takeovers and democratic backsliding, particularly in West Africa since 2021
- > the end of the French Operation Barkhane in Mali and its implications for the regional security architecture in the Sahel
- > the rise of anti-Western sentiment and narratives across the continent, exacerbated by Russian foreign information manipulation and interference campaigns, as well as the expanded presence of the Wagner Group in some theatres.

The last AU-EU Summit, held in February 2022, sought to recast and repurpose

inter-continental relations, through a Joint Vision for 2030 <sup>(2)</sup> which committed member states of both Unions to build a common future as closer partners <sup>(3)</sup>. The choice of moment to declare such an ambition was unfortunate: it followed the Covid-19 pandemic which significantly affected African economies and complicated relations with the EU on issues such as vaccine patents, while the economic shockwaves of the war in Ukraine, affecting food and energy supplies, have driven the two partners further apart <sup>(4)</sup>. With EU diplomatic and military efforts pivoting East, dialogue between the EU and the Southern Neighbourhood has become mired in miscommunication and misperceptions and threatened by foreign information manipulation and interference. More than one year after the Summit, progress towards the achievement of the policy priorities agreed by continental leaders risks falling short of delivery and implementation <sup>(5)</sup>. Furthermore, as Africa has gained geopolitical weight and greater self-confidence in pursuing strategic autonomy, for instance through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), EU countries have failed to substantially change their strategic approach and convey a clear level of ambition to African partners. This gap in perceptions and expectations is illustrated for example by African countries' general scepticism towards the Global Gateway. While Europeans hail it as the response to China's Belt and Road Initiative, the African

(1) See: Islam, S. and Akrimi, Y., 'Fortress Europe' is the root cause for strains in EU-Africa relations', EUobserver, 11 May 2023 (<https://euobserver.com/stakeholders/156997>).

(2) See European Council, 'Sixth European Union-African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2023', Final Declaration, 18 February 2022 ([https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/final\\_declaration-en.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/final_declaration-en.pdf)).

(3) Danglade, R. and Toulmin, C., 'Building a prosperous and sustainable partnership: One year after the 6th AU-EU Summit', Africa-Europe Foundation, 1 March 2023 (<https://www.africaeuropefoundation.org/areas-of-action/building-a-prosperous-and-sustainable-partnership-one-year-after-the-6th-au-eu-summit/>).

(4) McNair, D., 'Why the EU-AU Summit could be a turning point—Even if the headlines disappoint', Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 15 February 2022 (<https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/02/15/why-eu-au-summit-could-be-turning-point-even-if-headlines-disappoint-pub-86448>).

(5) See: Tadesse Shiferaw, L., 'The EU-Africa partnership: One step forward, two steps backwards', Commentary, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), 13 March 2023 (<https://ecdpm.org/work/eu-africa-partnership-one-step-forward-two-steps-backwards>).



side merely sees meagre new funds that are unlikely to make a difference.<sup>(6)</sup>

Yet as the adage goes, ‘when the going gets tough, the tough get going’. It would be normatively, as well as analytically, wrong to assume that the AU-EU partnership has been irremediably weakened due to a difficult political and diplomatic context. A fairer assessment would instead state that the international system in which both partners interact has changed, thereby creating new spaces for power competition and letting new actors project influence in a diverse, multi-faceted and politically fragmented continent<sup>(7)</sup>. Precisely due to these systemic changes, it is of paramount importance that the two continents revive their relations, not only by adjusting to the new international order, but by seizing the chance to jointly shape it<sup>(8)</sup>. To what extent can decision-makers in both continents move from a ‘partnership of equals’ to a mutually beneficial ‘geopolitical partnership’ that contributes to a fairer international system? What are the challenges and opportunities arising from the AU-EU Joint Vision for 2030? By addressing these policy questions, this *Chaillot Paper* aims to chart the way forward for the AU-EU partnership, providing policymakers from both continents with an analytical tool to track the implementation of policy priorities identified at the 2022 Summit, against the backdrop of geopolitical challenges.

The volume reverses the usual ratio of text to visuals in EUISS publications. Here, we have decided to let data speak through graphics, charts and maps. Short texts outlining the main policy messages accompany the graphics, seeking to convey a more direct, impactful

message to the reader regarding the possible trajectories of the partnership.

The *Chaillot Paper* is organised as follows: each one of the four chapters focuses on a priority area identified by the latest AU-EU Summit Declaration, specifically: (i) prosperity and sustainability; (ii) peace and security; (iii) migration and mobility; and (iv) commitment to multilateralism<sup>(9)</sup>. Within each chapter, maps and supporting text boxes are displayed to answer two sets of questions:

1. **What’s up?** What is going on in sectors that are defined as priorities for the relationship? What are the main trends and related policy needs, which require common engagement to devise effective responses?
2. **What to watch out for?** What should policymakers watch out for in the coming months and years? More specifically, what are the most relevant challenges and opportunities for policy action given geopolitical transformations?

Each chapter, therefore, seeks to develop a specific narrative for the evolution of the AU-EU partnership, starting from the current state of play and identifying the entry points for successful cooperation between the two continents. This ‘geopolitical atlas’ has been produced by drawing on public datasets and secondary sources, as well as consultations with African and European experts and policymakers between September 2022 and May 2023. All graphics and visuals are based on data collection and analysis conducted by the authors.

(6) Fondello, L. and Espila, L., ‘Three problems with the EU’s Global Gateway to Africa’, EUObserver, 1 August 2022 (<https://euobserver.com/opinion/155672>).

(7) See: Le Gouriellec, S., *Géopolitique de l’Afrique*, Que sais-je?, Humensis, 2022.

(8) See: Teevan, C., Barana, L., Fattibene, D., Iacobuta, G., Weinlich, S. and Bauer, S., *A New Multilateralism for the post-COVID World: What role for the EU-Africa partnership?*, European Think Tanks Group, April 2021 (<https://ettg.eu/publications/a-new-multilateralism-for-the-post-covid-world-what-role-for-the-eu-africa-partnership/>); Westcott, N., ‘Shared fortunes: Why Britain, the European Union, and Africa need one another’, Policy Brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, 22 April 2022 (<https://ecfr.eu/publication/shared-fortunes-why-britain-the-european-union-and-africa-need-each-other/>).

(9) See: European Council, ‘Sixth European Union-African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030’, pp. 3–6 ([https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/final\\_declaration-en.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/final_declaration-en.pdf)).

# TIMELINE OF AU-EU SUMMITS

## 1st summit

3-4 April 2000, Cairo

The first summit marked the start of the institutionalisation of Africa-EU dialogue. It was held under the aegis of the Organisation of African Unity and the European Union.

The **Cairo Declaration** was a joint statement on common stances and joint commitments to regional economic cooperation and integration; the integration of Africa in the world economy; human rights and democracy; peacebuilding and conflict prevention; and development.



**Cairo Declaration**

## 2nd summit

8-9 December 2007, Lisbon

The summit marked the start of a 'partnership of equals', as articulated in the **Lisbon Declaration**, which presented both the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and the First Action Plan.

The **JAES** set out a long-term vision, values and principles that form the strategic and political bedrock of EU-Africa relations. It outlined four main objectives: (1) reinforcing and elevating the Africa-EU political partnership; (2) strengthening and promoting peace, security, democratic governance and human rights; (3) jointly promoting and sustaining a system of effective multilateralism to address key development issues; (4) empowering non-state actors in order to create a people-centred partnership.

The **First Action Plan** outlined in turn eight Africa-EU partnerships and accompanying Priority Actions to implement the JAES: (1) Peace and Security; (2) Democratic Governance and Human Rights; (3) Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure; (4) Millennium Development Goals; (5) Energy; (6) Climate Change; (7) Migration, Mobility and Employment; (8) Science, Information Society and Space.



**Joint EU-Africa Strategy**



**First Action Plan**  
(2008-2010)



**Lisbon Declaration**

## 3rd summit

29-30 November 2010, Tripoli

The **Tripoli Declaration** presented the Second Action Plan (2011 – 2013) of the JAES. The summit took stock of the developments and achievements since the second EU-Africa Summit. The theme of the summit was 'Investment, Economic Growth and Job Creation', and it highlighted the value of regional integration, stimulating private sector investment and enhanced economic cooperation.

The **Joint Declaration** on Climate Change reiterated the commitment of the EU and Africa to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Specifically, the declaration emphasised the Copenhagen Accord commitments to introduce financing mechanisms to support African countries with climate change adaptation and mitigation.



**Tripoli Declaration**



**Joint Declaration**  
on climate change

#### 4th summit

2-3 April 2014, Brussels

The theme of this summit was 'Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace'. African and EU leaders reconfirmed their commitment to deepen cooperation, economically but also in the areas of migration and mobility for which they adopted the **Joint Declaration** on Migration and Mobility, and pledged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. EU leaders also agreed to support African capabilities in peace and stability and to support African countries in constructing climate-resilient development strategies. During the summit, the leaders reiterated their commitment to the JAES and to this end adopted a **roadmap** to guide EU-Africa relations for 2014-2017.



**Joint Summit Declaration**



**EU-Africa Declaration** on migration and mobility



**Joint Roadmap**

#### 5th summit

29-30 November 2017, Abidjan



**Joint statement** on the migrant situation in Libya



**Joint Declaration** outlining common priorities in EU-Africa partnership

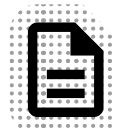
The summit discussed how to shape future Africa-EU cooperation, outlining four strategic areas: (1) economic opportunities for youth; (2) peace and security; (3) mobility and migration; (4) cooperation on governance. The summit mainly discussed the priority areas 'investing in youth' and 'mobility and migration'. For the latter, EU and Africa leaders adopted a **joint statement** that called for international cooperation to counter inhumane treatment of migrants and refugees in Libya. Finally, the EU announced a new EU External Investment Plan.

#### 6th summit

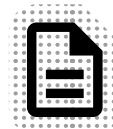
17-18 February 2022, Brussels

During the 6th EU-AU summit, the leaders concluded **A Joint Vision for 2030** to work towards a renewed partnership. The Joint Vision sets out four priority areas for cooperation for 2030, including peace and security, sustainability and prosperity, migration and mobility, and a commitment to multilateralism.

To underpin the Joint Vision and the AU objectives outlined in the Agenda 2063, the EU also presented the **Global Gateway Investment Package** mobilising €150 billion for Africa.



**Global Gateway Investment Package**



**A Joint Vision for 2030**

# A GLOSSARY OF AU-EU RELATIONS

A key limitation of this atlas is that it does not (and could not) encompass all data and maps that are relevant for the partnership. It is neither an encyclopaedia, nor a yearbook. The chapters, and the maps and infographics within them, reflect specific analytical choices by the authors to best answer the research questions outlined above, given common constraints in working with data with regard to comprehensiveness, timeliness and quality. While the authors do not claim to exhaustively cover any one issue area, this atlas offers illuminating angles and context on them. It also treats maps as a concept rather than a strict representation of topography as it *maps* themes that have been selected based on a qualitative assessment of key policy priorities for the AU-EU partnership, based on three elements:

1. the declared commitments included in the Joint Vision (what the AU and EU jointly perceive, and thereby declare as priorities);
2. the needs, challenges and opportunities for the partnership emerging from expert opinions and publications from African and European institutions, based on a review of the literature and secondary sources available;
3. analysis of relevant data from Afrobarometer and other surveys that track public and civil society attitudes.

Therefore, the themes included in this atlas reflect the goals and targets to which decision-makers have publicly committed, what experts think about these, as well as the demands of civil society. Besides clarifying the methodological choice, this approach helps to

delimit the amount of information included in each visual. A full atlas would not only have been impossible to deliver, but also unnecessary to address the analytical questions raised in the introduction – i.e. to identify what kind of AU-EU partnership can best cope with and shape a changing multipolar order.

Against this backdrop, the following glossary can help the reader better understand the policy significance of selected themes, their definition, and how they fit into the overall narrative of this volume.

## Chapter 1: Prosperity and Sustainability

### What's up?

**Food sovereignty:** Food security is defined by the World Bank as a situation where ‘all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life’<sup>(10)</sup>. The 2007 Nyéléni Declaration defines food sovereignty as ‘the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods’<sup>(11)</sup>. A rising world population, a global pandemic, and the war in Ukraine combined with climate change impacts and a surge in inflation have disrupted food production, distribution, accessibility and affordability across the globe. Vulnerabilities in African food systems have been particularly exposed, fuelling further concerns about resilience and sustainability in the food and agriculture industry. Whether the continent will be able to become the world’s breadbasket and tackle food insecurity, or not, will be determined by policy action taken with global

(10) World Bank, ‘What is food security?’ (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update/what-is-food-security>).

(11) Nyéléni Declaration on Food Sovereignty, 2007 (<https://nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/DeclNyeleni-en.pdf>).

partners, and specifically with EU actors, to address current gaps and deficiencies<sup>(12)</sup>.

**Powering development:** The lack of sustainable energy supplies, and in particular limited access to electricity services, is one of the most critical factors hampering the development of the African continent and the empowerment of its citizens. Access to energy has enormous implications for the daily lives – as well as for the future – of African people, since access to reliable, sustainable and affordable electricity services is a fundamental prerequisite for human progress and economic development<sup>(13)</sup>.

**Education and skills:** To spur a fourth industrial revolution and economic competitiveness, African countries need to harness the brainpower of their young and dynamic populations. Even in the context of competing crises – inflation, energy, food security, climate – this is a crisis too severe to ignore, as statistics show that nearly 9 in 10 children in sub-Saharan Africa are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10. Failure to address the education crisis and integrate the continent's growing young population into the formal economy is a perfect recipe for upheaval and social unrest, a scenario that is neither in Africa's, nor in Europe's, interest<sup>(14)</sup>.

**Healthcare:** Financing health systems in Africa is essential. The World Bank estimates that Africa needs between \$2 billion and \$3.5 billion a year just for epidemic preparedness<sup>(15)</sup>. The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside other diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, show how critical healthcare is for the future of the partnership, and for a more people-oriented and fairer relationship

between the two continents. The health sector hence offers an opportunity to strengthen the AU-EU partnership in a way that aligns with Africa's objectives, adopting a long-term vision for fostering the development of resilient health systems<sup>(16)</sup>.

### What to watch out for?

**Environmental shocks:** Environmental factors will constitute a huge challenge for Africa-Europe relations in the years to come. Extreme weather events, heat stress and irregular rainfall patterns, among other factors, will lead to greater instability and pressure on scarce resources, clashing with the continent's soaring demographic growth. Food production and trade between Africa and Europe are likely to be disrupted.

**Debt and state fragility:** The debt burden in the continent has increased in recent years, aggravated by exogenous shocks (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) and against the backdrop of other structural economic problems. A fragmented creditor base and vulnerability to inflation paint a rather grim outlook for African countries, especially in the event of future economic shocks. This could seriously jeopardise a sustainable AU-EU partnership.

**Urban population growth:** Africa is and will continue to be affected by changing urbanisation trends. There are expected to be 824 million urban dwellers in the continent in 2030, and 1.5 billion in 2050, against 548 million in 2018. Urbanisation can be both an obstacle as well as an opportunity for a deeper partnership

(12) See: Leyka, B., 'The future of African food security: Becoming the world's breadbasket – or not', *Brief No 12, Imagine Africa Series*, EUISS, November 2022 (<https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/future-african-food-security>).

(13) See: Sartori, N. and Papa, C., 'Energy', in Faleg, G. (ed.), 'African Futures 2030: free trade, peace and prosperity', *Chaillot Paper No 164*, EUISS, February 2021, p. 39 (<https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/african-futures-2030>).

(14) See: Kwakwa, V., 'What will it take for Africa to lead an education turnaround?', *Africa Can End Poverty Blog*, World Bank, 23 January 2023 (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/african/what-will-it-take-africa-lead-education-turnaround>).

(15) Schneidman, M., 'Investing in medical laboratory networks: Will Covid-19 (coronavirus) be a wake-up call?', *World Bank Blogs*, 12 May 2020 (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/health/investing-medical-laboratory-networks-will-covid-19-coronavirus-be-wake-call>).

(16) See: Karaki, K., Ahairwe, P. and Apiko, P., 'The health sector – a promising avenue for a strengthened AU-EU partnership', *Commentary, European Centre for Development Policy Management*, 21 March 2022 (<https://ecdpm.org/work/health-sector-promising-avenue-strengthened-au-eu-partnership>).

with Europe: if managed, and supported by EU policies and funds, it can trigger the benefits of agglomeration economies, with a positive impact on intra-African trade and industrial competitiveness.

## Chapter 2: Peace and Security

### What's up?

**Fragile democracy:** Africa has experienced democratic backsliding, in the wake of military coups, faltering transitions to civilian rule and due to long-entrenched authoritarian leaders who retain a firm grip on power. At the same time, the majority of Africans have remained committed to good, democratic and accountable governance, as well as free and fair elections. An Africa based on democracy and good governance is clearly articulated as a priority of the AU's Agenda 2063. In this context, EU-Africa cooperation *on inter alia* electoral observation and countering foreign interference can help consolidate African democratic processes to unlock the future that Africans want.

**Managing the military:** The key to internal and regional stability is accountable, professional and financially efficient and viable African security forces. Without legitimate, transparent and accountable forces, and effective justice systems, African state security apparatuses may exacerbate domestic instability, instead of countering major threats such as violent extremism and terrorism.

**Challenging borders:** African borders not only divide, but also connect and facilitate movement. This holds economic potential: free movement of goods, people and services allows African countries to maximise their comparative advantage and create prosperity through trade. Yet the porousness of some African borders means that they are conduits for transnational violence, illicit trafficking and illegal migration, which boosts informal economies and creates obstacles for formal economic development and security. Stable

borders are thus a prerequisite for a secure and prosperous Africa.

**Maritime capabilities:** In the wake of the invasion of Ukraine, the importance of maritime stability in African waters has increased, as the key sea lines of communication (SLOCs) that surround the African continent are critical for economic, food and energy security. This is particularly the case in the Gulf of Guinea and the Gulf of Aden, where besides a multitude of regional and global actors, pirates patrol the waters, posing a threat to the safety of ships and hampering commercial and security interests. Stronger African naval forces are needed to safeguard African security interests and economic development, protect shipping and ensure security on the seas.

### What to watch out for?

**Organised crime:** Transnational organised crime remains firmly rooted – and continues to thrive – on the African continent. Transnational criminal routes connect Africa to the rest of the world, including Europe. African countries constitute source, transit and destination countries for a wide variety of illicit trafficking, including in wildlife, drugs, works of art and small arms. As criminal supply chains increasingly stretch throughout the EU and Africa, isolated efforts are not sufficient to tackle the growing problem of illicit trafficking and concerted efforts are needed to address its causes and consequences.

**Violent extremism:** The intensity of violent extremism has increased over the past decade. Initially primarily located in hotspots in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, extremist groups have expanded their scope to Coastal West Africa and Southern Africa. Besides posing existential security threats to African citizens and threatening African political structures, this also has implications for EU-Africa cooperation. How can the AU and the EU navigate the reality of non-state armed groups by diplomatic means?

**Popular discontent:** The quality of a democratic system of governance is determined not only by the number of elections and political parties, but also by the extent to which all citizens can voice their concerns and are heard. Citizen engagement is an area in which the EU can leverage expertise and assist African countries to boost peace and security in the continent by building resilience from the grassroots level.

## Chapter 3: Migration and Mobility

### What's up?

**Regular mobility vs irregular migration:** Global shocks, but also structural challenges such as demographic changes, are making migration governance increasingly onerous, at a time when the issue of population movement and migratory flows within Africa and towards other regions has returned to the forefront of policy debates. To facilitate regular mobility and address irregular and forced migration, African and European countries need to step up their cooperation, to better respond to Africans' longstanding demands for greater access to legal mobility, less cumbersome visa regimes, and the protection of migrants' rights.

**Remittances:** Remittances represent one of the most direct and tangible links between migration and development. Remittances account for larger inflows of capital than foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA) received by low- and middle-income countries. In 2022, remittances accounted for 2.5 % of sub-Saharan Africa's

GDP. Despite the fact that remittances are the financial lifeblood of many developing countries in Africa, they are not accorded much prominence in the Joint Vision for 2030. Insofar as remittances constitute a stable source of foreign currency and a steady source of development finance<sup>(17)</sup>, their role in how migration policies are formulated should deserve more attention in the future AU-EU partnership.

**Displacement:** The number of forcibly displaced people has increased in recent years and will keep increasing, pushed by factors such as climate events, environmental degradation, and conflicts. Policy discussions about migration and mobility will have to take into account the need for extra support to countries affected by displacement, as well as accelerate efforts to prevent and mitigate situations that trigger population displacements.

### What to watch out for?

**Still not connected:** Improved connectivity, infrastructures and rules facilitating movement from one region to another are key to transition towards a regime of open and regular mobility. Most African countries remain significantly far away from developing 'mobility-friendly' infrastructures<sup>(18)</sup>. AU-EU cooperation has untapped potential to deliver a sustainable network paving the way for the achievement of free movement objectives, with positive spillovers on other migration challenges.

**Climate migration:** In Africa, climate mobility figures are projected to increase for both internal and cross-border migration. Most climate mobility will be internal: estimates suggest that by 2050 the number of internal

(17) Taddele Maru, M., 'AU – EU Sixth Summit: Building the new post-pandemic partnership on migration and mobility', Migration Policy Centre Blog, European University Institute, 23 February 2022 (<https://blogs.eui.eu/migrationpolicycentre/au-eu-sixth-summit-building-the-new-post-pandemic-partnership-on-migration-and-mobility/>).

(18) See: Palleschi, C., 'African Conflictivity: How connectivity can affect conflict and fragility dynamics in Africa', *Brief No 6*, Conflict Series, EUISS, March 2023.

climate migrants will have quadrupled<sup>(19)</sup>. Co-operation on mitigating climate change and providing people with the capacity to adapt to intensified natural hazards will prove critical for how displacement is experienced and managed in the future in the EU and Africa.

**Digital migration:** Migration is increasingly gaining a digitalised dimension: visa and travel itineraries are arranged online and remittances sent via digital financial channels. With increased digitalisation comes a novel set of challenges and opportunities for the partnership. How can digitalisation be harnessed as a tool to improve access to migration pathways and to prevent it from exacerbating inequalities?

## Chapter 4: International Order

### What's up?

**Integrating the continent:** At the dawn of the 2020s, Africa seemed to be embarking on a decade of unprecedented economic integration and growth, boosted by the creation of the AfCFTA, and sustained by the widespread diffusion of technological innovation, hopes of democratic transformation, and the continent's new prominence in global geopolitics. That scenario has been seemingly reversed after geopolitical shockwaves have increased political fragmentation across the continent. How can integration policies and economic transformation be fostered in support of a more resilient and sustainable future for Africa?

**Stronger together:** Since the war in Ukraine, the debate over African agency in international politics has gained new momentum.

The question arises as to whether African countries will be able to shape the emerging international system, and whether they will be given the opportunity to get 'a seat at the table', make their voices heard, and be adequately represented in leading international forums, beyond recent decisions taken by the BRICS and G20.

**Security provision:** Armed conflict trends and multiple forms of violence continue to hamper progress towards peace and prosperity in the African continent. Recent years have been marked by disillusionment about the capacity of foreign interventions to resolve those conflicts and achieve stabilisation objectives. This makes African countries 'net contributors' to global peace and security, but not net recipients of stability. How can security provision be adjusted so as to better address peace and security needs as threats evolve in the continent?

### What to watch out for?

**A new power play:** Sub-Saharan Africa is becoming a testing ground for malign influence operations. While violent extremism and terrorism will remain security priorities for the continent in the next decade and beyond, hybrid threats constitute an exponential challenge in the transnational security landscape. The most prominent rising form of hybrid threat in the continent is information manipulation, an intentional and often covert use of media, manipulating public discourse to mislead and cause harm. It encompasses 'three criteria: a coordinated campaign, the diffusion of false information or information that is consciously distorted [or intentional suppression of information], and the political intention to cause harm'<sup>(20)</sup>. In contexts characterised by competing narratives, information manipulation

(19) Amakrane, K. et al, 'African Shifts: The Africa Climate Mobility Report – Addressing climate-forced migration & displacement', Africa Climate Mobility Initiative and Global Centre for Climate Mobility, New York, 2023 (<https://africa.climate-mobility.org/report>).

(20) Jeangène Vilmer, J.B., Escorcía, A., Guillaume, M. and Herrera, J., *Information Manipulation: A Challenge for Our Democracies*, Centre d'analyse, de prévision et de stratégie (CAPS), Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and Institut de recherche stratégique de l'École militaire (IRSEM), Paris, August 2018 ([https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/information\\_manipulation\\_rvb\\_cle838736.pdf](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/information_manipulation_rvb_cle838736.pdf)).



can be used to stealthily influence perceptions on the ground or fuel a conflict by creating confusion.

**Foreign powers:** Given the world's growing multipolarity, Africa risks experiencing a proliferation of proxy wars on its soil. Some regions are particularly affected, as shown by proxy confrontations between Gulf powers in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea region. However, trends in the Sahel and in West Africa, as well as other parts of the continent, show that in future Africa could be more vulnerable to external meddling by outside powers, including Russia, China, the Gulf states and Türkiye, as competition for resources intensifies and due to spillovers from other conflicts (e.g. Ukraine) into the African theatre.

**Strategic choices:** That Africa is not a country, as has often been observed, has been amply demonstrated by the divisions on display between African countries in international forums. Intra-continental divergences are likely to be exacerbated by geopolitical factors, such as foreign proxies, as well as endogenous ones, such as political and economic developments within countries. Lack of political cohesion, in the absence of a solid continental integration process, poses a serious challenge to African countries' role in the evolving and potentially increasingly fragmented multipolar system. A divided continent in a divided world would clearly be detrimental to African interests and needs – as well as to those of Europe.

Having defined the overall approach and key themes included in the paper, let us now focus on each policy priority for the AU-EU Partnership, and examine what is needed, what is already provided, what challenges lie ahead, and identify foundations for a constructive partnership.

# THIS IS AFRICA

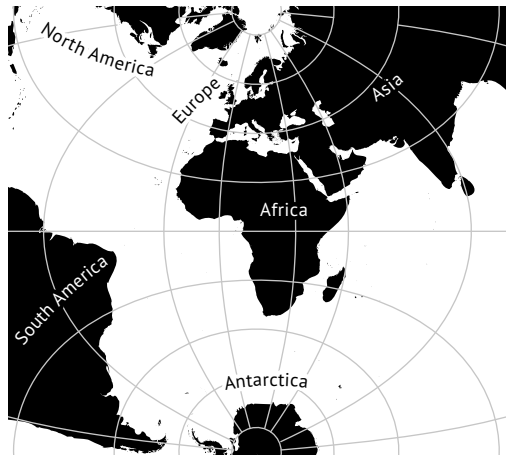
Africa is roughly three times the size of the European continent, spanning 8 158 kilometres from Tangier to Cape Town and 7 034 from Dakar to Mogadishu as the crow flies. Deserts and drylands cover almost two thirds of its landmass. Its coastline measures 26 000 kilometres as compared to Europe's 32 000. It is home to 1.4 billion people, that is 17 % of the world's population and almost twice that of Europe.

These and other geographic and climatic features have a significant bearing on the maps in this atlas. Areas of high population density on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea and the Great Lakes region contrast with vast swathes of nearly uninhabited deserts and rainforests. While the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara Desert act as great natural barriers, the fertile floodplains of the vast rivers of the Niger and the Nile are inhabited by millions of people.

To account for these constants and to facilitate comparison of the maps in this atlas, the authors have opted for one map projection and similarly sized maps throughout. However, on a few occasions, multivariate country-level or timeseries data necessitated a faceted layout of plots that vaguely resembles the shape of the African continent.

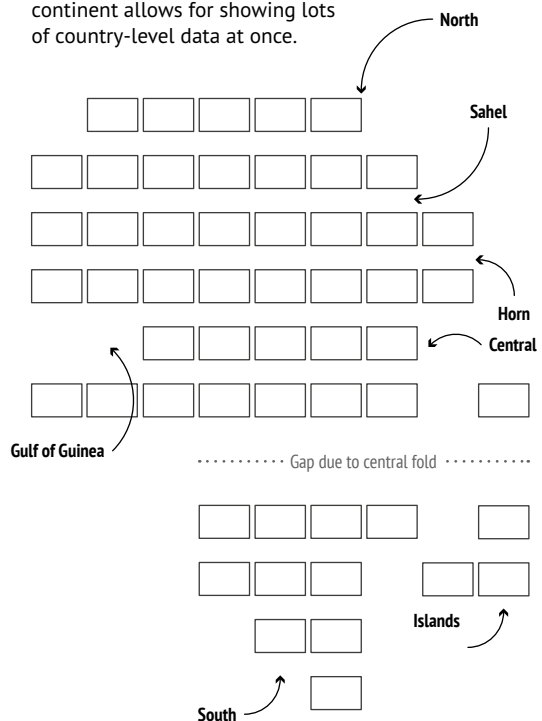
## Geographic projection

This projection is used for most maps where topographic accuracy matters.



## Geofacet

Faceting small graphs per country in a rough approximation of the outline of the African continent allows for showing lots of country-level data at once.





**Legend**

- Country border
- Major airport
- ▽ Major port
- Road
- Railroad
- ◆ Urban area
- Water
- Desert



Image: Annie Spratt/Unsplash



**PROSPERITY AND  
SUSTAINABILITY**

# FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## Optimising resources

African food systems have traditionally been fragile, but they have recently been severely impacted by *inter alia* a global pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the effects of climate change and spiralling inflation. Although African governments have prioritised agricultural reforms as well as investment in technological innovation and private sector development, the continent faces unprecedented food insecurity.

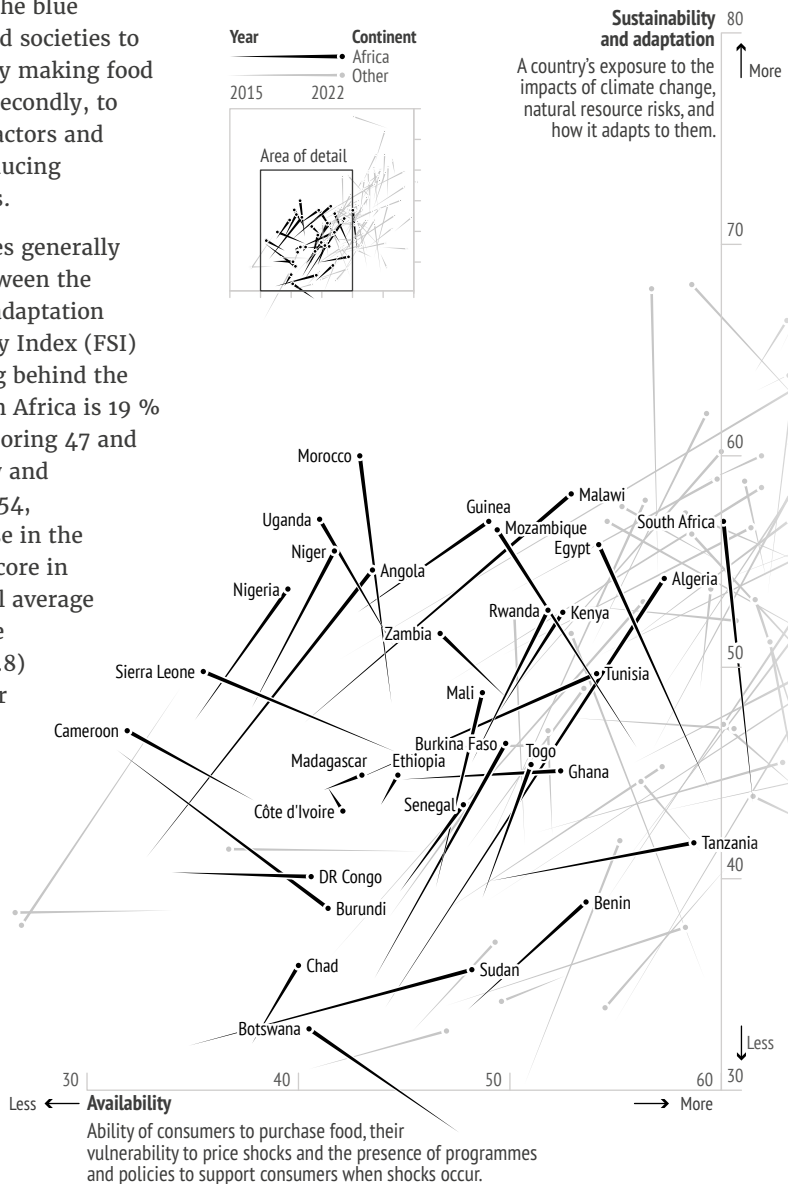
The quest for African food sovereignty exposes two basic policy needs: first, to improve land use and develop the blue economy, to allow countries and societies to reap their full potential, thereby making food both available and affordable; secondly, to reduce dependence on foreign actors and global supply chains, hence reducing vulnerability to external shocks.

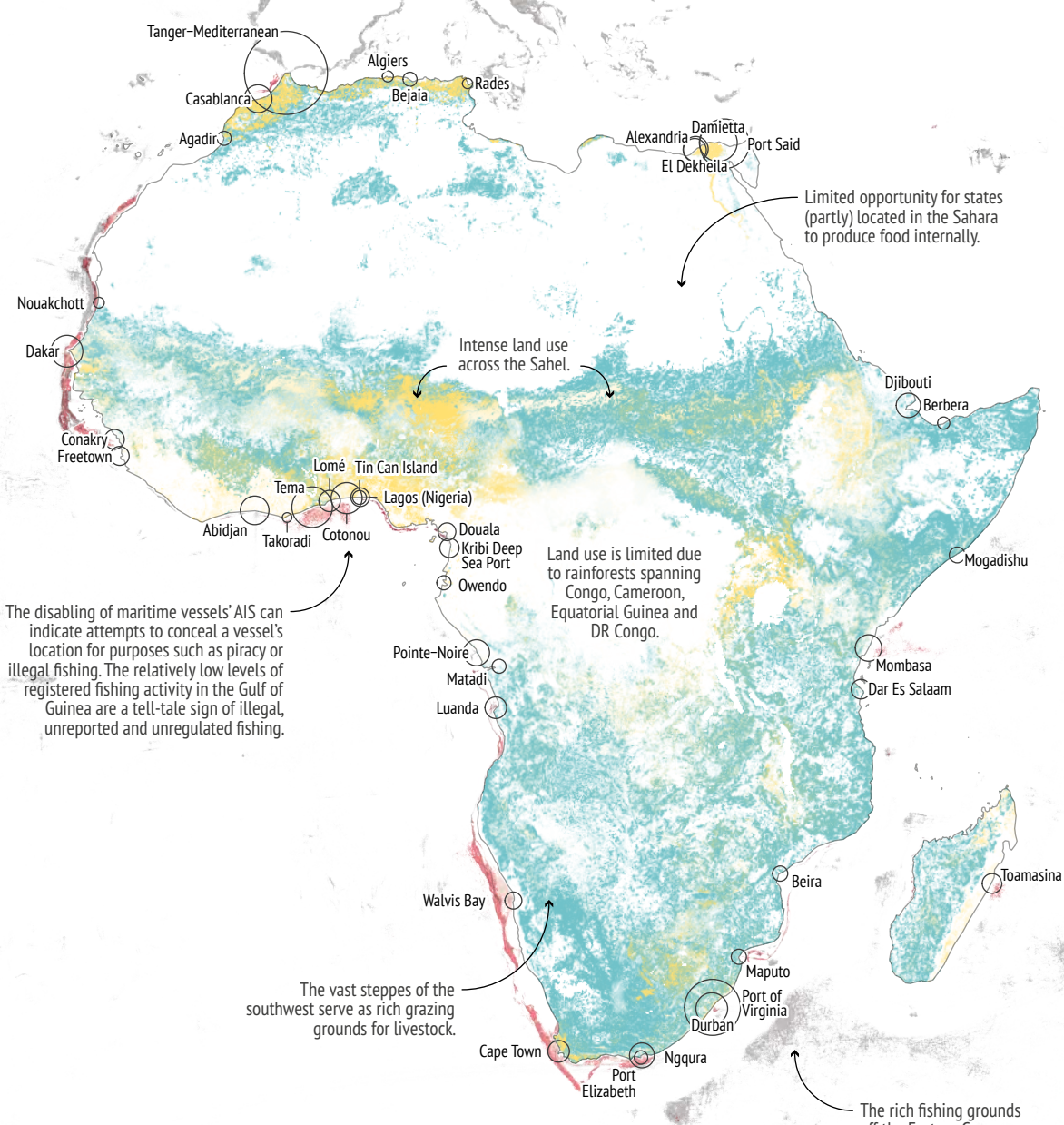
Although most African countries generally show a positive correlation between the availability and sustainability/adaptation dimensions of the Food Security Index (FSI) from 2015 to 2022, they still lag behind the rest of the world. Availability in Africa is 19 % less than the global average (scoring 47 and 58, respectively). Sustainability and adaptation is 9 % less (49 and 54, respectively). While the increase in the sustainability and adaptation score in Africa kept pace with the global average (6.5 points), the increase in the African score for availability (2.8) was below the average for other countries (3.6). Achieving food sovereignty, by creating a more localised and sustainable system of food production coupled with more extensive intra-African food trade, is essential to navigate challenges such as climate change and food supply disruptions, and to catch up with other regions in the world.

### More availability, more sustainability

The Global Food Security Index considers food affordability, availability, quality and safety, and sustainability and adaptation across 113 countries. While most African countries' scores have improved from 2015 to 2022, the continent still lags behind the rest of the world. Availability in Africa is 19 % and sustainability and adaptation is 11 % below the global average.

It should be noted that the GFSI does not currently document countries with significant food security issues, such as Somalia and DR Congo.





Tanger-Mediterranean

Casablanca

Agadir

Algiers

Bejaia

Rades

Alexandria

Damietta

Port Said

El Dekheila

Limited opportunity for states (partly) located in the Sahara to produce food internally.

Nouakchott

Dakar

Conakry  
Freetown

Intense land use across the Sahel.

Djibouti

Berbera

Lomé

Tema

Takoradi

Cotonou

Tin Can Island

Lagos (Nigeria)

Douala

Kribi Deep  
Sea Port

Owendo

Land use is limited due to rainforests spanning Congo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and DR Congo.

The disabling of maritime vessels' AIS can indicate attempts to conceal a vessel's location for purposes such as piracy or illegal fishing. The relatively low levels of registered fishing activity in the Gulf of Guinea are a tell-tale sign of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Pointe-Noire

Matadi

Luanda

Mogadishu

Mombasa

Dar Es Salaam

Walvis Bay

Beira

Toamasina

The vast steppes of the southwest serve as rich grazing grounds for livestock.

Maputo

Port of Virginia

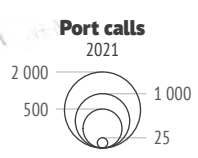
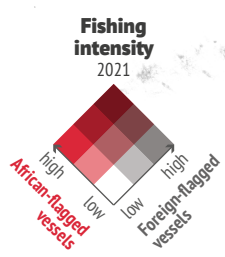
Durban

Cape Town

Port Elizabeth

Ngqura

The rich fishing grounds off the Eastern Cape are mostly exploited by foreign-flagged vessels.



# POWERING DEVELOPMENT

## Lighting up the continent

Driven by demographic and economic growth, Africa's GNI per capita is growing, and an unprecedented number of Africans are connected to the electrical grid. The continent has managed to literally put itself on the map as seen from space over the past 30 years. Despite positive developments many Africans are still without electricity: in 2021 about 583 million sub-Saharan Africans did not have access to electricity. Access to an electricity grid is significantly lower in rural areas (45 %) as compared to urban regions (94 %). To speed up the transition, and to meet growing energy demand in the coming years, access to reliable, sustainable and affordable electricity services is both a formidable

challenge and a fundamental prerequisite for human and economic development, as well as peace and stability. In terms of renewable energy sources, Africa has abundant hydro-power, wind and solar resources. Fostering their development is a key policy priority for the continent in line with commitments to accelerate climate action and achieve a sustainable energy mix. As the continent moves away from the traditional use of biomass and fossils that currently account for a large part of its final energy consumption, a less carbon-intensive model of development would see a rise in the share of renewables in the energy mix, as well as gains in efficiency, digitalisation and the deployment of smart grids.

1992

Main road illuminated by Algerian city lights. Some Algerian towns were built after major oil and gas fields were discovered in the 1950s.

Oil platforms in the Gulf of Guinea and off the coasts of Angola and DR Congo

### Night-time lights

Remotely sensed data from satellites helps detect night-time light emissions to estimate populations and levels of electrification.

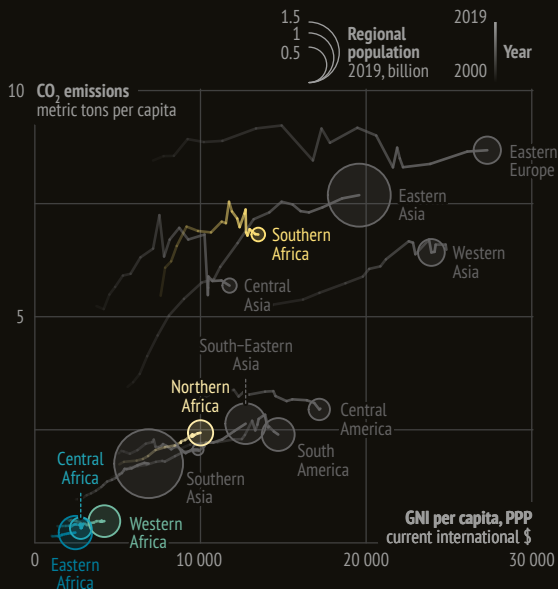
less more



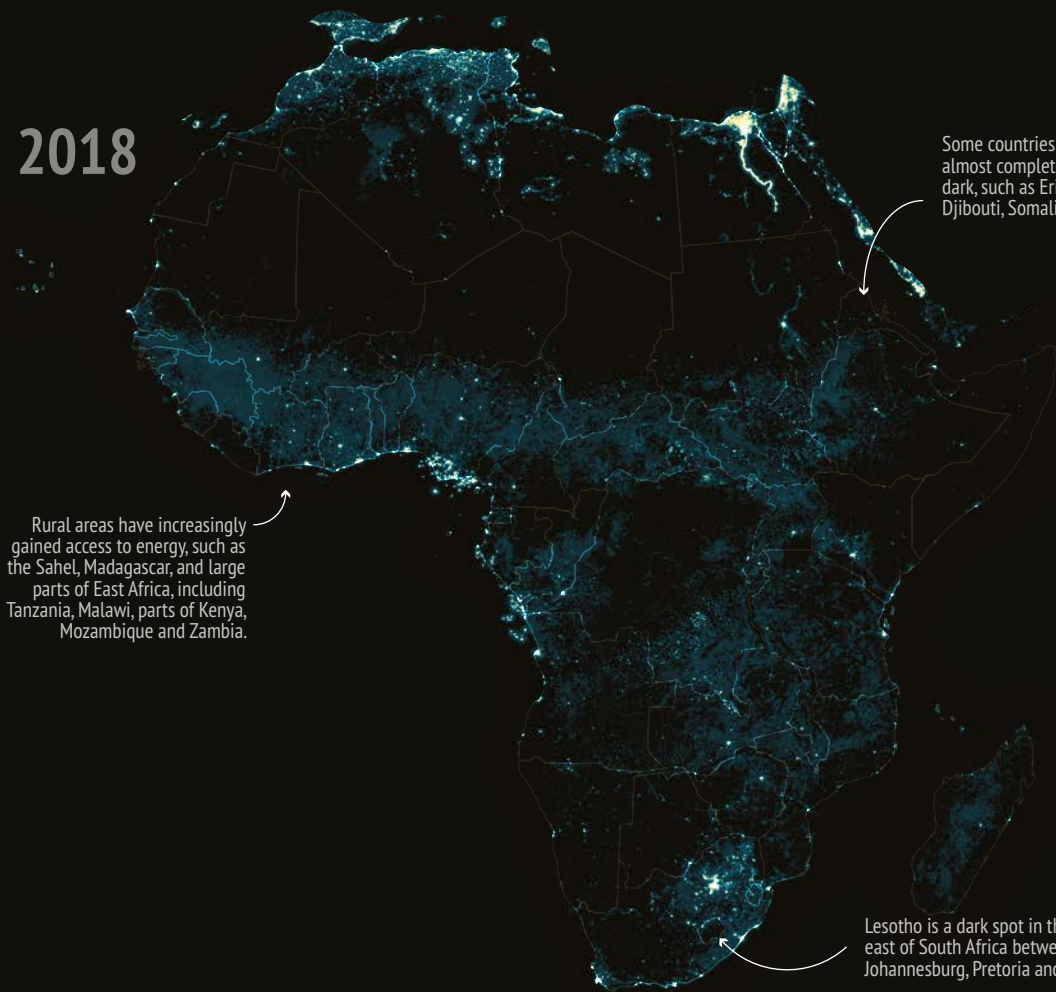
## Hand-in-hand

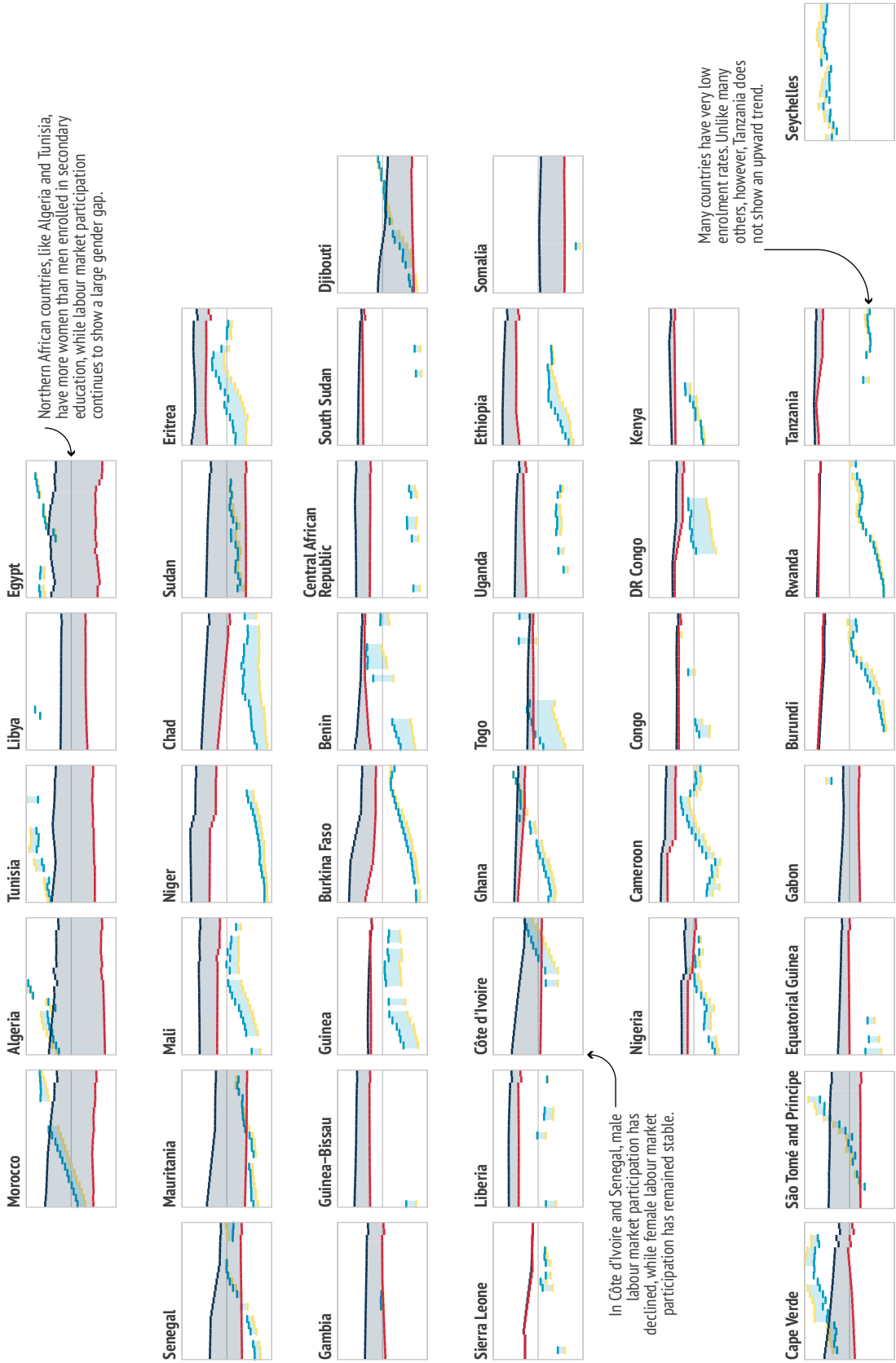
Per capita income and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions correlate, but not everywhere to the same extent

In addition, compared to other developing regions, Africa's development trajectory is accompanied by a relatively small increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. While this is due to several factors, such as the continent's marginal role in global value chains, the decoupling of GNI growth and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is extremely relevant for how African development is perceived in multilateral discussions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and African burden sharing.



2018





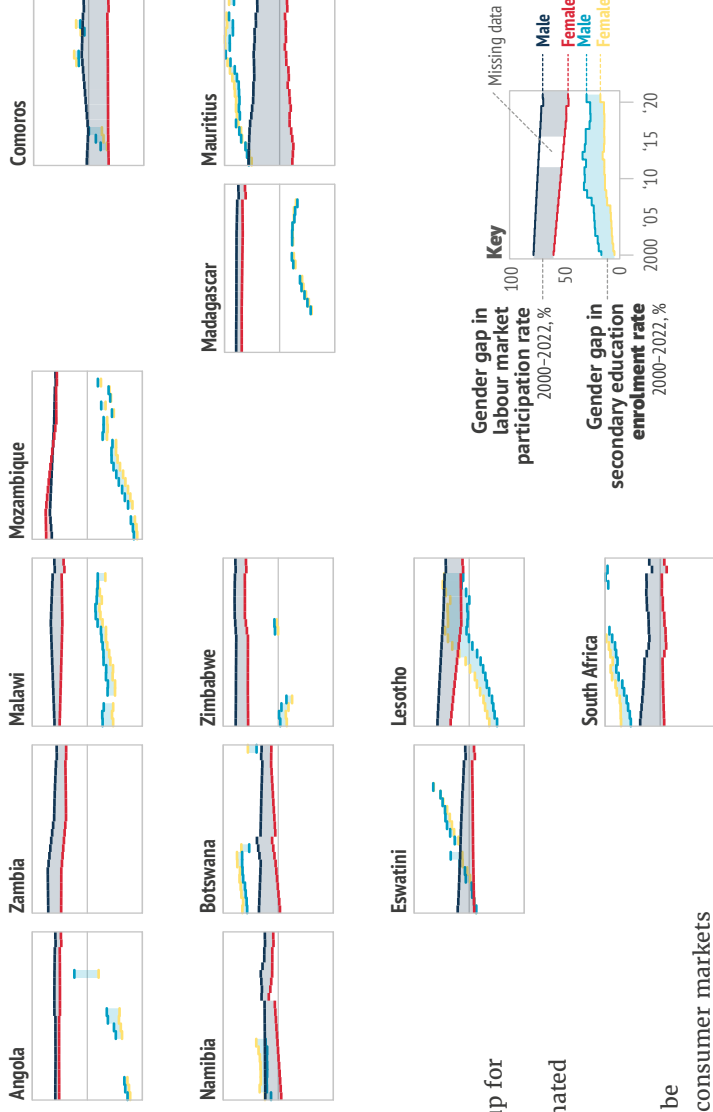
# EDUCATION AND SKILLS

## Mind the gap

An additional 100 million young people will have entered the African labour market by 2030 according to estimates. While the pursuit of inclusive growth in Africa is critical, education alone is not sufficient to guarantee quality employment for young people and, in particular, young women. Labour market participation and secondary education enrolment rates, for instance, do not follow the same trends. While the latter has gone up for both men and women in most African countries, participation in the labour market has largely stagnated or decreased since 2022, with persisting gender disparities.

Geopolitics also come into play. Africa has come to be seen as a vast source of cheap labour and lucrative consumer markets by traditional and emerging global powers alike. A new 'scramble for Africa' has created market failures insofar as youth policies do not sufficiently address work deficits, including knowledge and skills gaps, and the vulnerabilities of young Africans but are instead centred on broader geo-economic interests. Due to the preponderant role of foreign economic actors, young Africans are increasingly exposed to precarious employment in an ever-expanding informal sector.

To make sure the youth bulge stimulates sustainable growth, new entrants to the labour market require adequate training and education, as otherwise they will struggle to find the right job opportunities. African countries need resources and instruments to improve technical know-how and enlarge the pool of skills available. Digital skills will be in high demand for human capital development



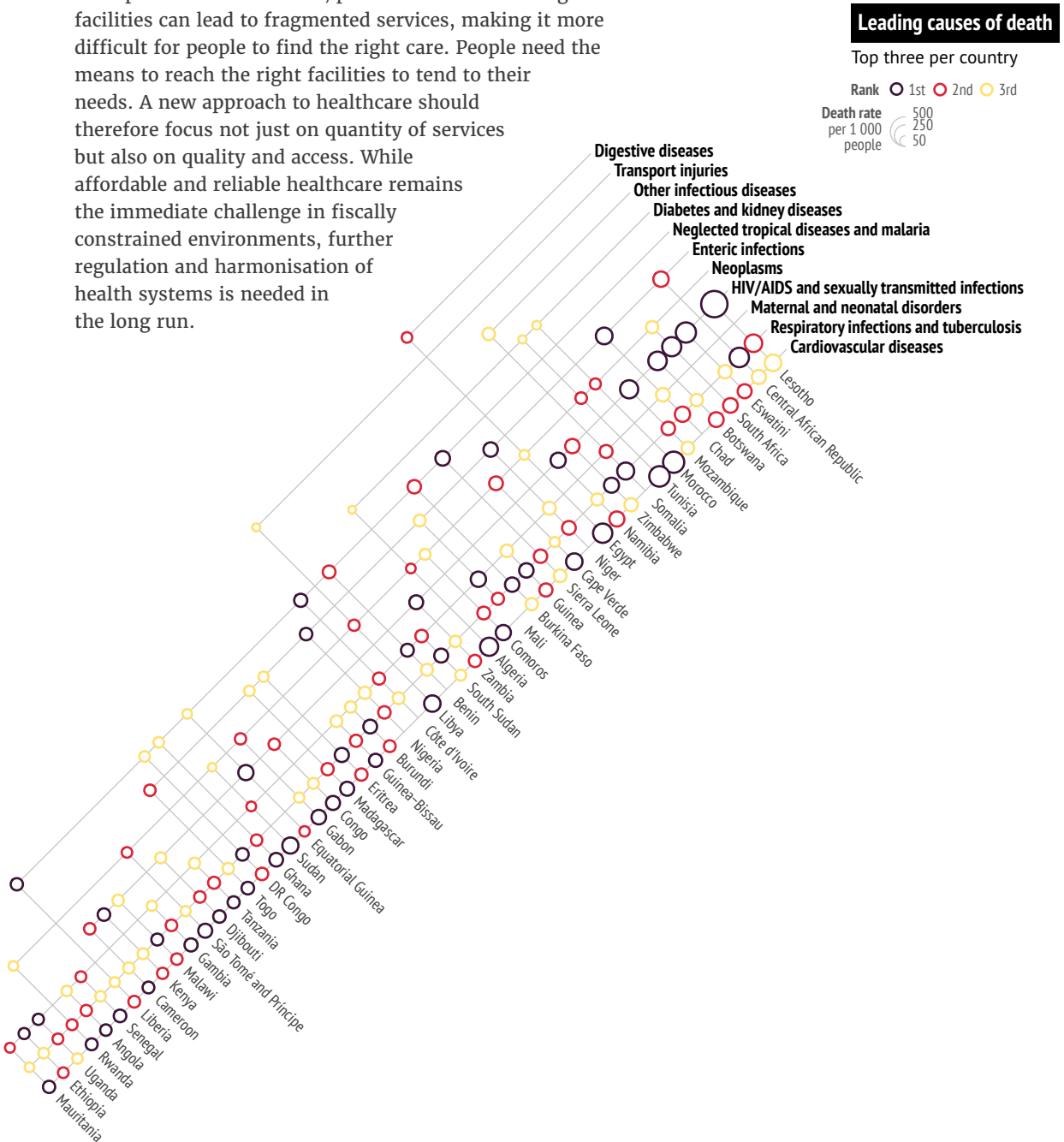
with the advent of the 4th industrial revolution. New ways for foreign investment to create virtuous spillovers for the African labour base should focus on the quality – and not just the quantity – of jobs, such as security and conditions of employment, address the issue of youth marginalisation, promote gender balance, facilitate training and allow young Africans to directly access opportunities. The continent also requires resources to fund education and skills to satisfy the demands of its youth bulge. Young people in Africa are eager for knowledge and access to better educational and employment opportunities.

# HEALTHCARE

A long way to go

While having managed to overcome the Ebola and Covid-19 pandemics, African countries still struggle to provide their populations with access to quality healthcare. Every year, hundreds of thousands of Africans die from curable and preventable diseases like malaria and tuberculosis (for example in 2021, 594 000 Africans died because of malaria). Specific needs, however, vary from country to country due to differences in the number and quality of healthcare facilities, healthcare expenditure, and different rates of exposure to dangerous or deadly diseases.

Challenges to accessibility also occur for a variety of reasons, and simply throwing money at the problem by building more facilities is no panacea. For instance, poor coordination among healthcare facilities can lead to fragmented services, making it more difficult for people to find the right care. People need the means to reach the right facilities to tend to their needs. A new approach to healthcare should therefore focus not just on quantity of services but also on quality and access. While affordable and reliable healthcare remains the immediate challenge in fiscally constrained environments, further regulation and harmonisation of health systems is needed in the long run.



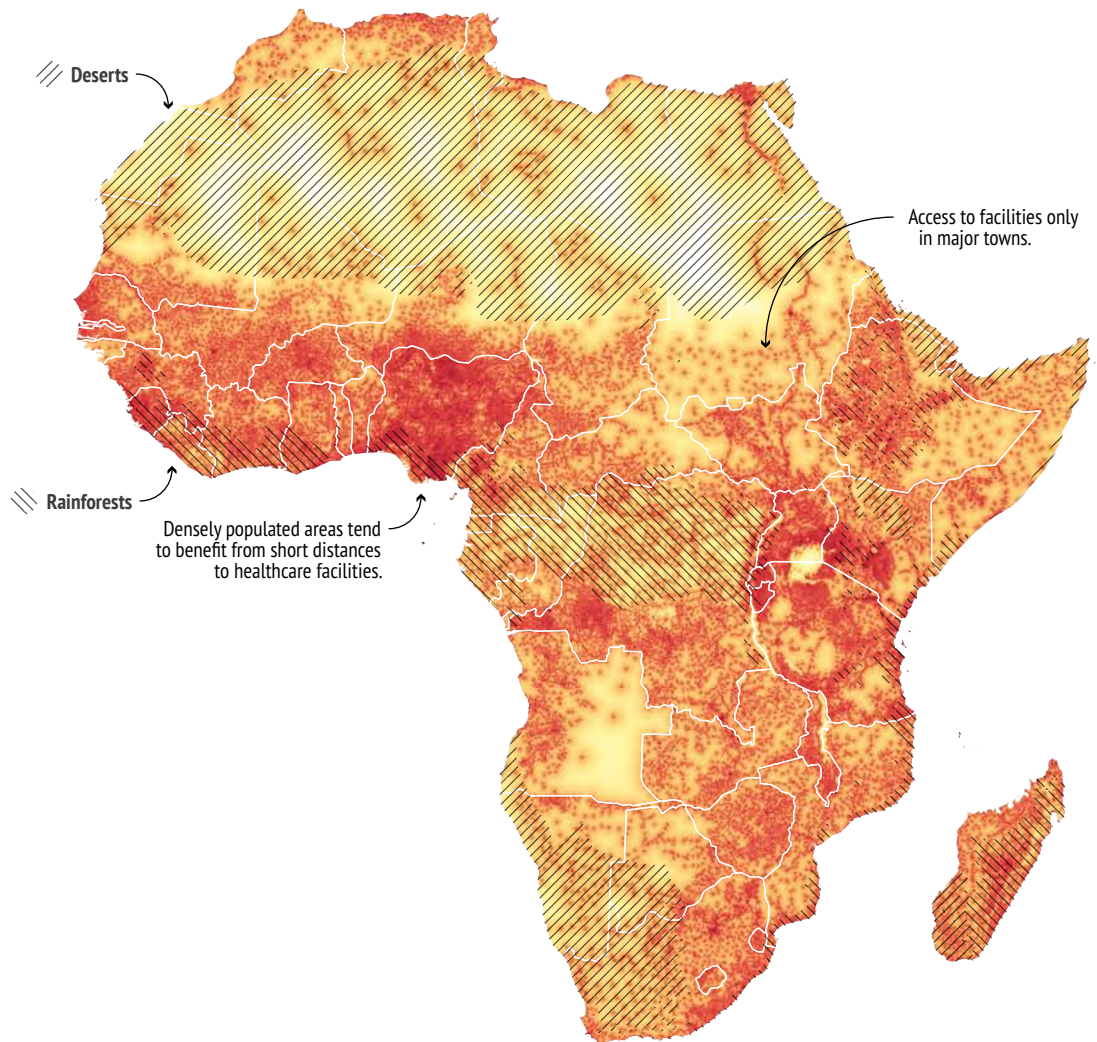
## Walking time to nearest healthcare facility

Hours, 2019 (logarithmic scale)



The deserts and rainforests of the African continent present formidable obstacles to transport. By extension, they also hamper access to healthcare facilities.

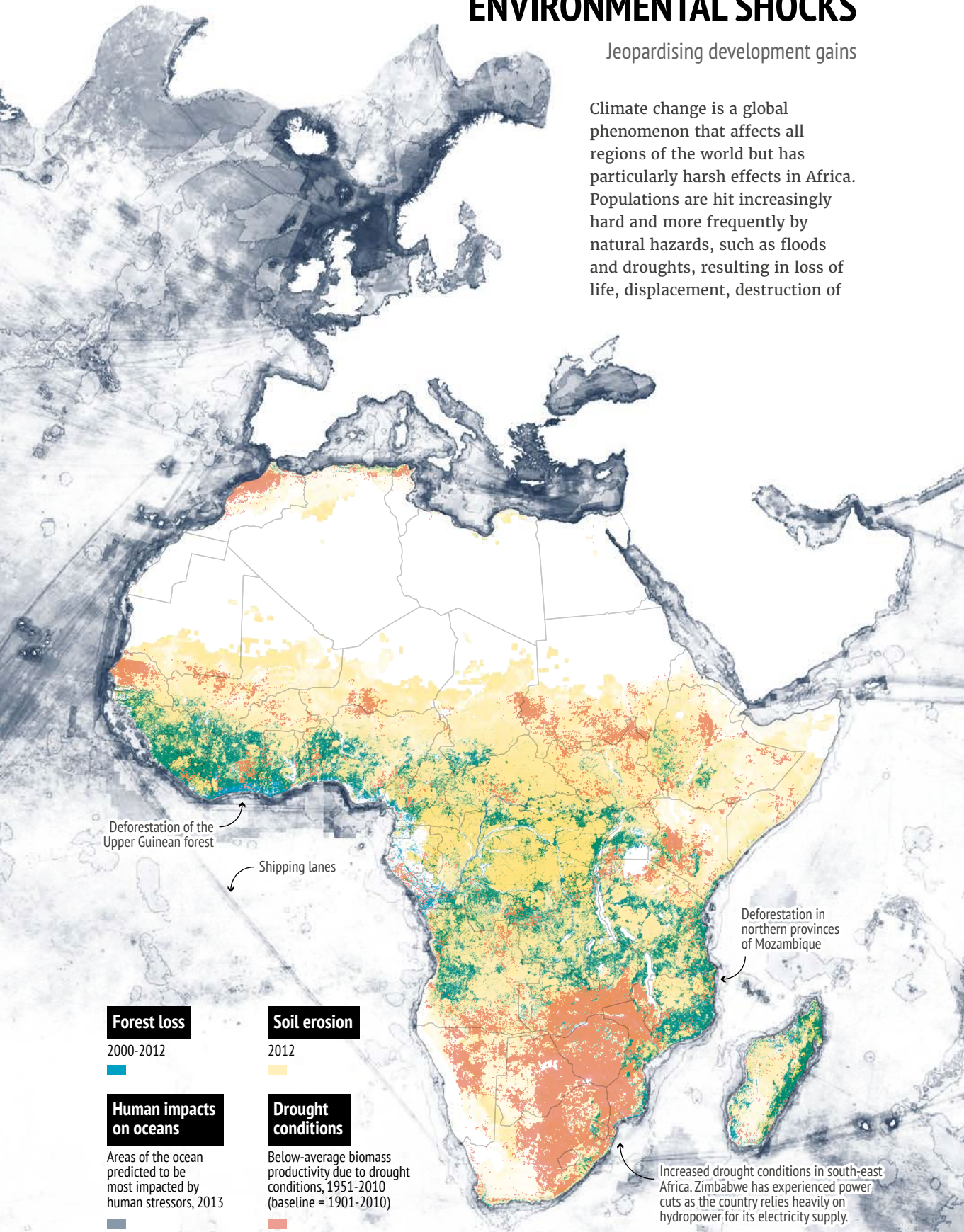
Beyond those areas, large swathes of land especially in sub-Saharan Africa remain distant. The median time it takes to get to the nearest healthcare facility from any of the pixels on this map is 330 hours. This figure drops to about 200 hours south of the Sahara.



# ENVIRONMENTAL SHOCKS

Jeopardising development gains

Climate change is a global phenomenon that affects all regions of the world but has particularly harsh effects in Africa. Populations are hit increasingly hard and more frequently by natural hazards, such as floods and droughts, resulting in loss of life, displacement, destruction of



Deforestation of the Upper Guinean forest

Shipping lanes

Deforestation in northern provinces of Mozambique

**Forest loss**  
2000-2012

**Soil erosion**  
2012

**Human impacts on oceans**  
Areas of the ocean predicted to be most impacted by human stressors, 2013

**Drought conditions**  
Below-average biomass productivity due to drought conditions, 1951-2010 (baseline = 1901-2010)

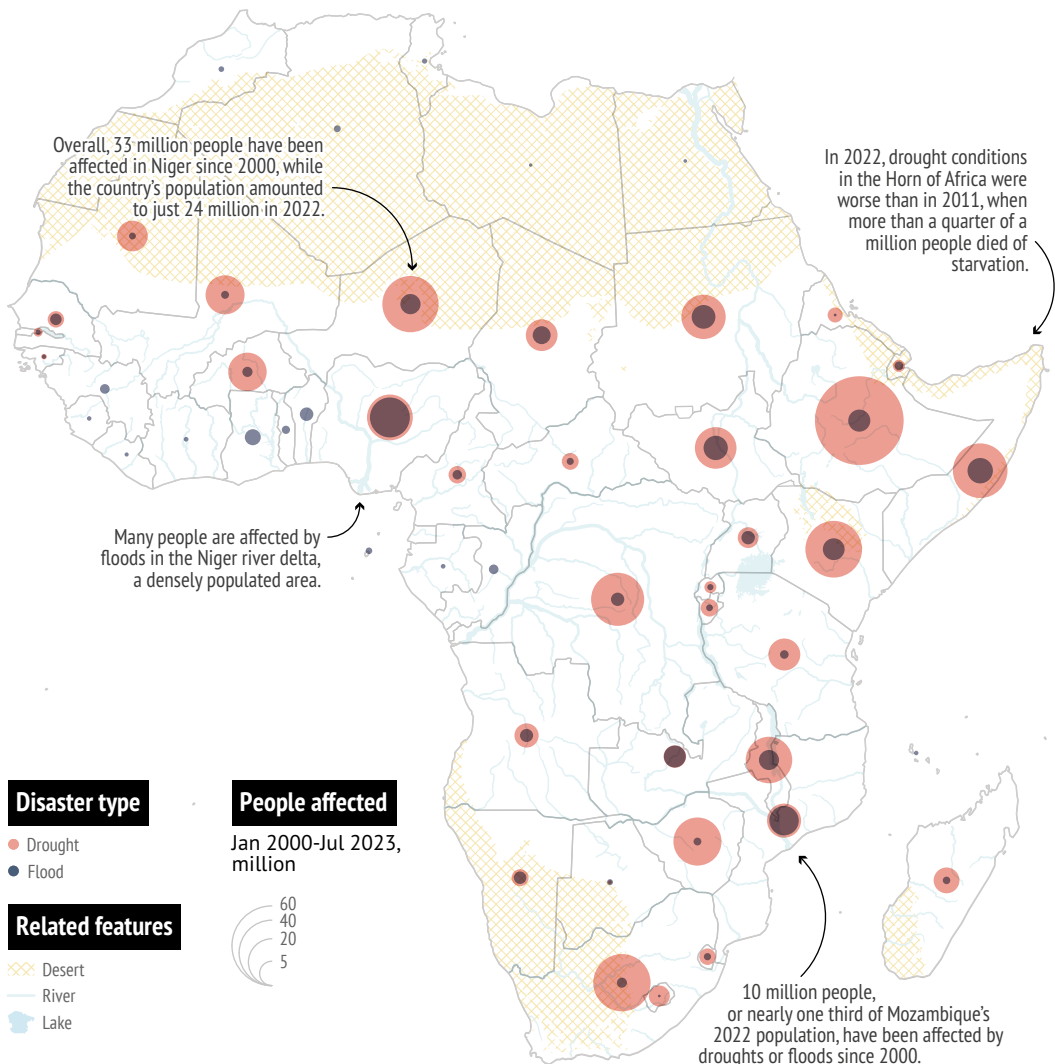
Increased drought conditions in south-east Africa. Zimbabwe has experienced power cuts as the country relies heavily on hydropower for its electricity supply.

infrastructure and economic damage. Africa’s natural environment has also been substantially altered by human intervention, thus compounding the risk of natural hazards and the impact these have on human lives and livelihoods.

**What does this mean for the partnership?**

The AU and the EU have developed an ambitious plan, reflected in the Joint Vision 2030, to ensure a ‘joint’ green transition. While this transition is a key requirement for achieving a sustainable growth model on both

continents, ranging from the development of a circular economy to blue economies and biodiversity protection, policy reforms cannot work without a ‘regime change’ that breaks out of the vicious cycle of illicit trafficking in wildlife and environmental resources, crime and informal economic activities. This transition can only work through ambitious goals for environmental, social and public governance (ESG+) that consider ways to generate concrete and attainable value for citizens and public stakeholders.



# DEBT AND STATE FRAGILITY

## Navigating the permacrisis

Africa's ongoing sovereign debt crisis has intensified in the past decade and is likely to worsen in the coming years. In a climate of geopolitical turmoil and rising interest rates, Africa's public debt has doubled between 2010 and 2022, rising from 32.7 % to 65 %, and creditors have diversified. Following Zambia and Ghana, several African countries risk default due to unsustainable debt servicing costs in the coming two years. China has often been portrayed as one of the main causes of African debt problems. However, Chatham House research suggests that debt-trap diplomacy is not the root cause of African debt distress. Chinese lending accounts for 12 % of Africa's private and public external debt, which increased more than fivefold to \$696 billion between 2000 and 2020. China is a major creditor to many African nations, but its lending has fallen in recent years and is set to remain at lower levels. Rather than being attributable to a single lender, the main negative factors affecting African sovereign debt are its sheer volume, an increasingly large and diverse creditor base, and geopolitical tensions that create turmoil in the markets.

### What does this mean for the partnership?

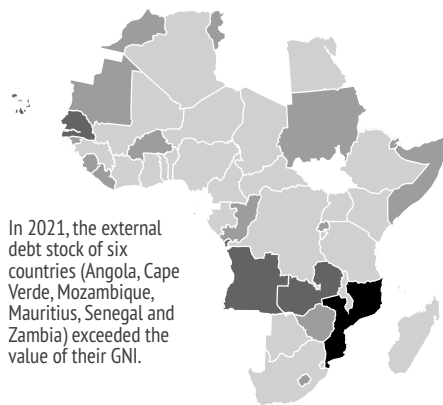
A lasting solution to Africa's debt distress requires multilateral frameworks going beyond the AU-EU partnership. Debt as well as other financing gaps require cooperation between the EU, its Western partners and other global players, above all China. In this regard, the AU-EU partnership can still help build new foundations for a fairer multilateral system to address Africa's macrofinancial instability. In such a system, the AU would

have a stronger voice, including through a fully operational AfCFTA, where larger amounts of private finance can be mobilised and aligned to environmental, social and governance considerations, and where decision-makers can identify and implement mutually-beneficial initiatives to navigate a way out of a financial permacrisis.

### External debt stocks

% of GNI, 2021

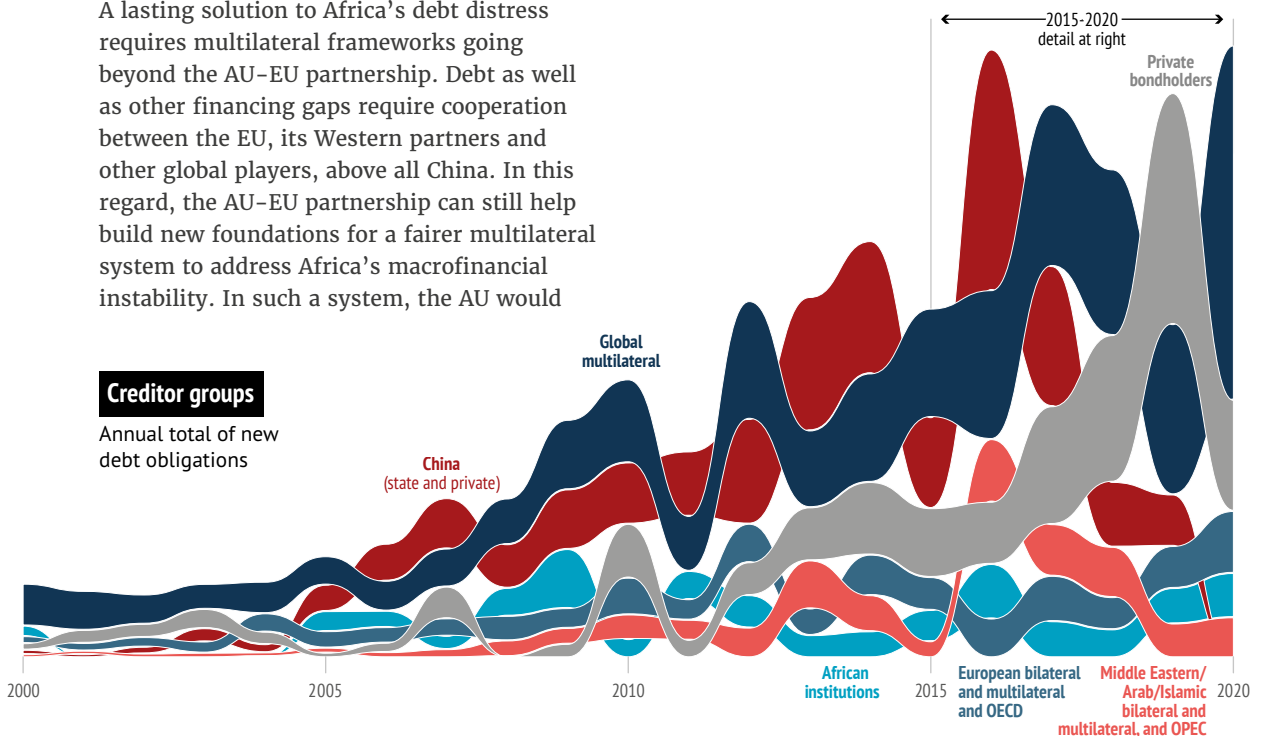
■ <50 ■ 50-100 ■ 100-200 ■ >200 □ no data



In 2021, the external debt stock of six countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Mauritius, Senegal and Zambia) exceeded the value of their GNI.

### Creditor groups

Annual total of new debt obligations

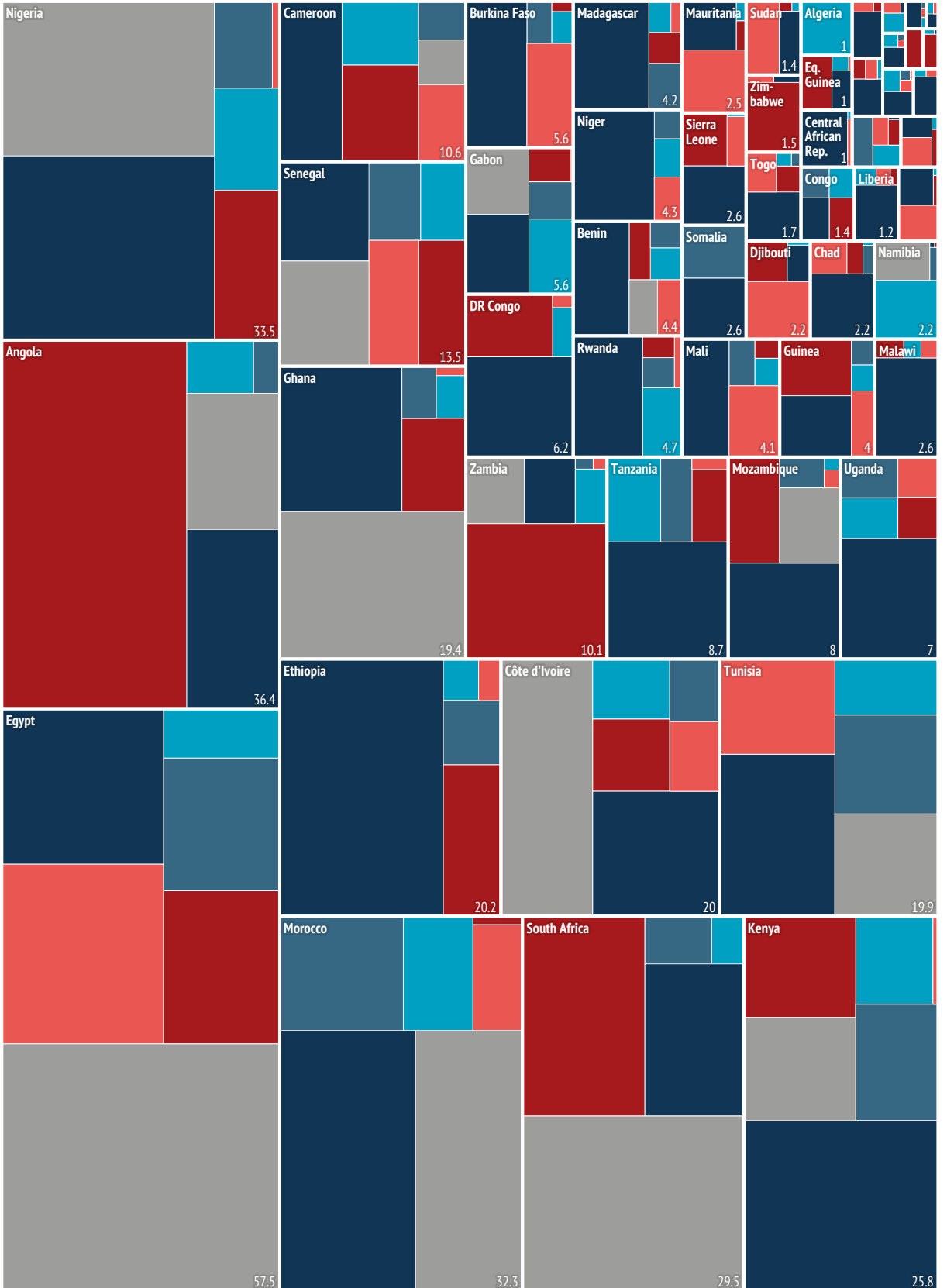




**Debt obligations acquired by creditor group**

2015-2020

African countries acquired **\$429 billion** in new debt obligations in the years 2015 to 2020.



# URBAN POPULATION GROWTH

A megatrend to manage

While Africa’s overall population is growing, its urban population is expanding even more rapidly. This brings unique challenges. Currently, 42 % of sub-Saharan Africans live in cities, compared to 31 % in the year 2000. The uncontrolled expansion of cities and the creation of large informal settlements on their peripheries may lead to additional vulnerability to climate change and exert upward pressures on goods and services. This, in turn, may increase unemployment, inter-group inequality, and lower tax receipts by fostering employment in the informal economy.

The dynamics of African urbanisation involve more than just numbers corresponding to fast demographic growth. Urbanisation is a contentious political process, which has resulted in a deep transformation of African cities: not only have they become increasingly populous, but they have become geopolitical spaces riven by competing claims and grievances related to housing, infrastructure, participation and identity. They can thus pose serious risks to political and social stability.

## What does this mean for the partnership?

The AU-EU partnership cannot fulfil the 2030 vision without developing a ‘city-to-city’ partnership between the two continents, fostering investment, exchange of knowledge and best practices, and other forms of cooperation to support sustainable urbanisation processes. This is a prerequisite for formulating effective responses to fragility, conflict and violence. Establishing a forum of European and African cities can be a first step towards institutionalising dialogue between public actors, private actors and representatives of civil society, with the aim of creating favourable conditions for investment and improving urban governance processes.

## The youth bulge

5-year age groups, 2020-2100

Africa’s fertility rate is set to remain high until the late 21st century, while slowing to a more moderate pace of population growth. Africa’s elderly population will also increase, rising from the current level of 5.6 % of people older than 60 to 9.3 % by 2050 – or 225 million people.

In the graph below, each coloured area represents the totality of the African population per five-year age groups (from red in 2020 to blue in 2100). As the growth in younger age groups slows, the working population begins to bulge.

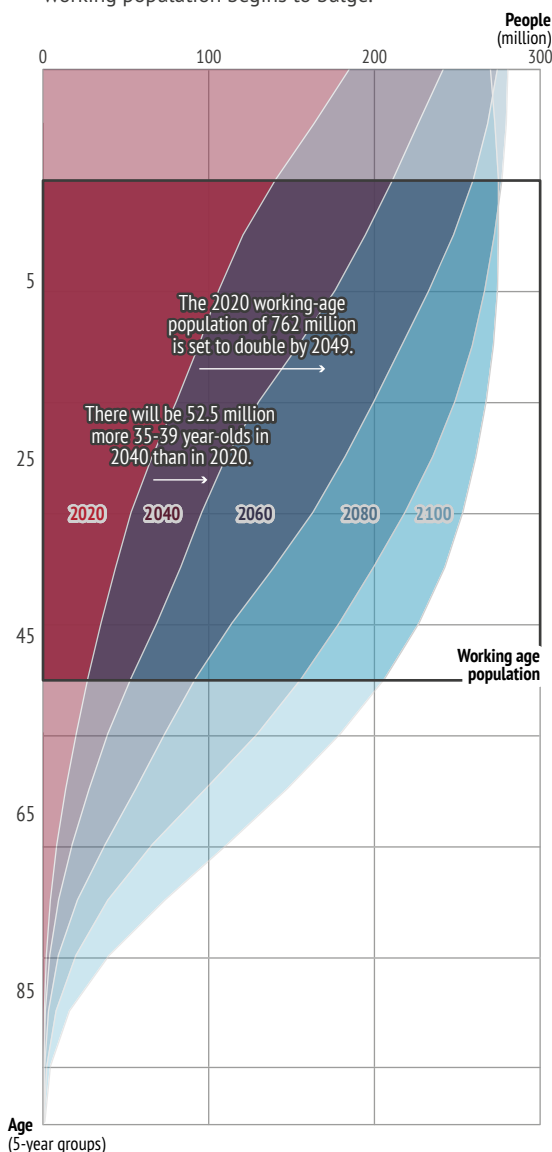






Image: Azzedine Rouichi/Unsplash

The background of the image is a monochromatic teal landscape. The top half shows a sky with soft, wispy clouds. The bottom half shows a sandy or pebbly foreground with subtle textures and shadows. A white rectangular box is centered in the middle of the image, containing the text 'PEACE AND SECURITY' in bold, black, uppercase letters.

**PEACE AND  
SECURITY**

# FRAGILE DEMOCRACY

More elections, but also more coups

Since 2019, democracy has regressed in several African countries following a series of coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Gabon and Guinea, among others. Combined with a faltering transition to civilian rule in Sudan and the increasing political longevity of dictatorial rulers in Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea (to name but two), parts of Africa have experienced democratic backsliding. The rise in the number of coups is emblematic of the fragility of democratic systems and transitions which are further weakened by foreign actors spreading disinformation and meddling in domestic politics, including elections. Consequently, African elections are often subject to fraud and manipulation, tainted by corruption or mired in violence.

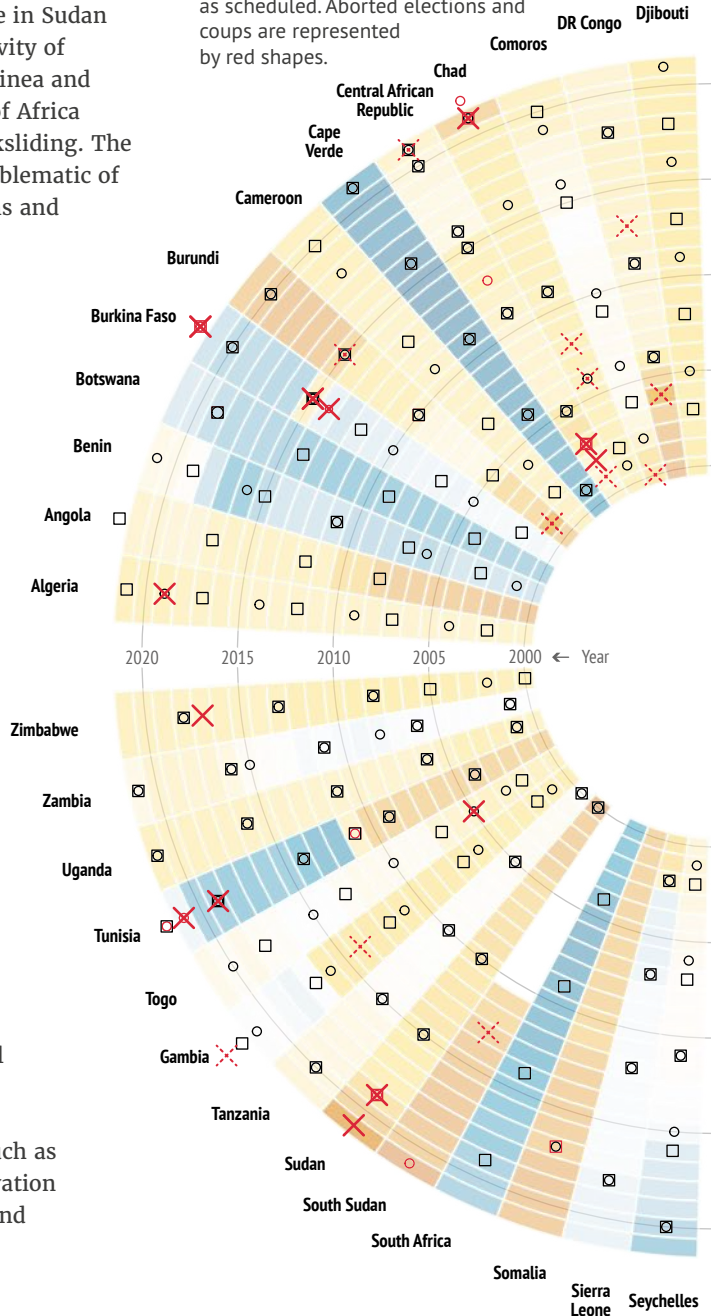
Yet surveys suggest the majority of Africans remain committed to democracy and would like their governments to improve representation and accountability. To this end, Africa needs to bolster its democratic resilience by overcoming obstacles to free and secure elections, such as vote-rigging, media restrictions, foreign influence operations and electoral violence. Unequivocal condemnation of unconstitutional takeovers of power and the strengthening and expansion of electoral observation missions, such as the African Union Election Observation Mission, can help establish safe and transparent electoral processes.

## Democracy, elections and coups

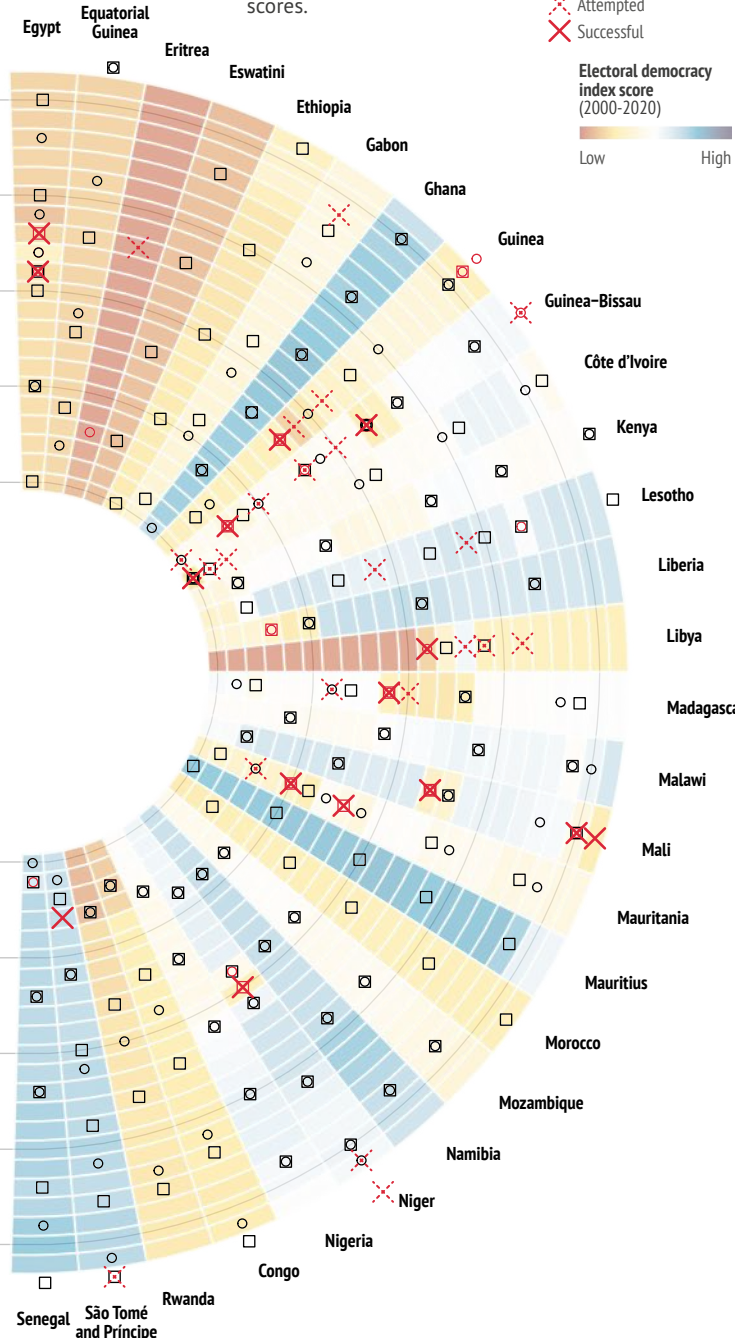
Elections alone are no guarantee for democracy

This graph shows historical data on elections. Years are read from inside to outside (2000-2022) and countries are displayed in a circular layout.

Black shapes indicate elections that took place as scheduled. Aborted elections and coups are represented by red shapes.

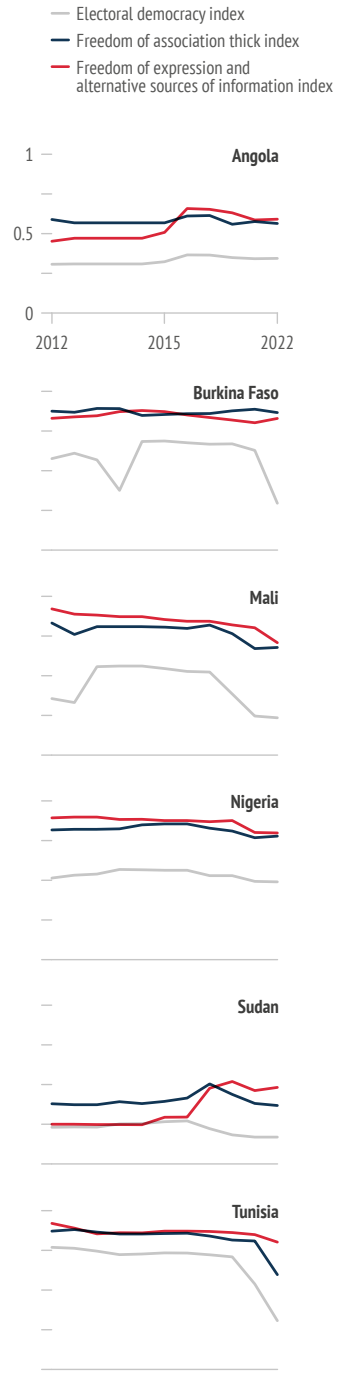


Background shading shows a country's electoral democracy index score. Often a darker red shading correlates with fewer elections, and red and orange shading indicate poor conditions for democratic elections. Since the Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020, there have been almost twice as many cases of backsliding year-on-year (58 %) than amelioration (32 %) in electoral democracy scores.



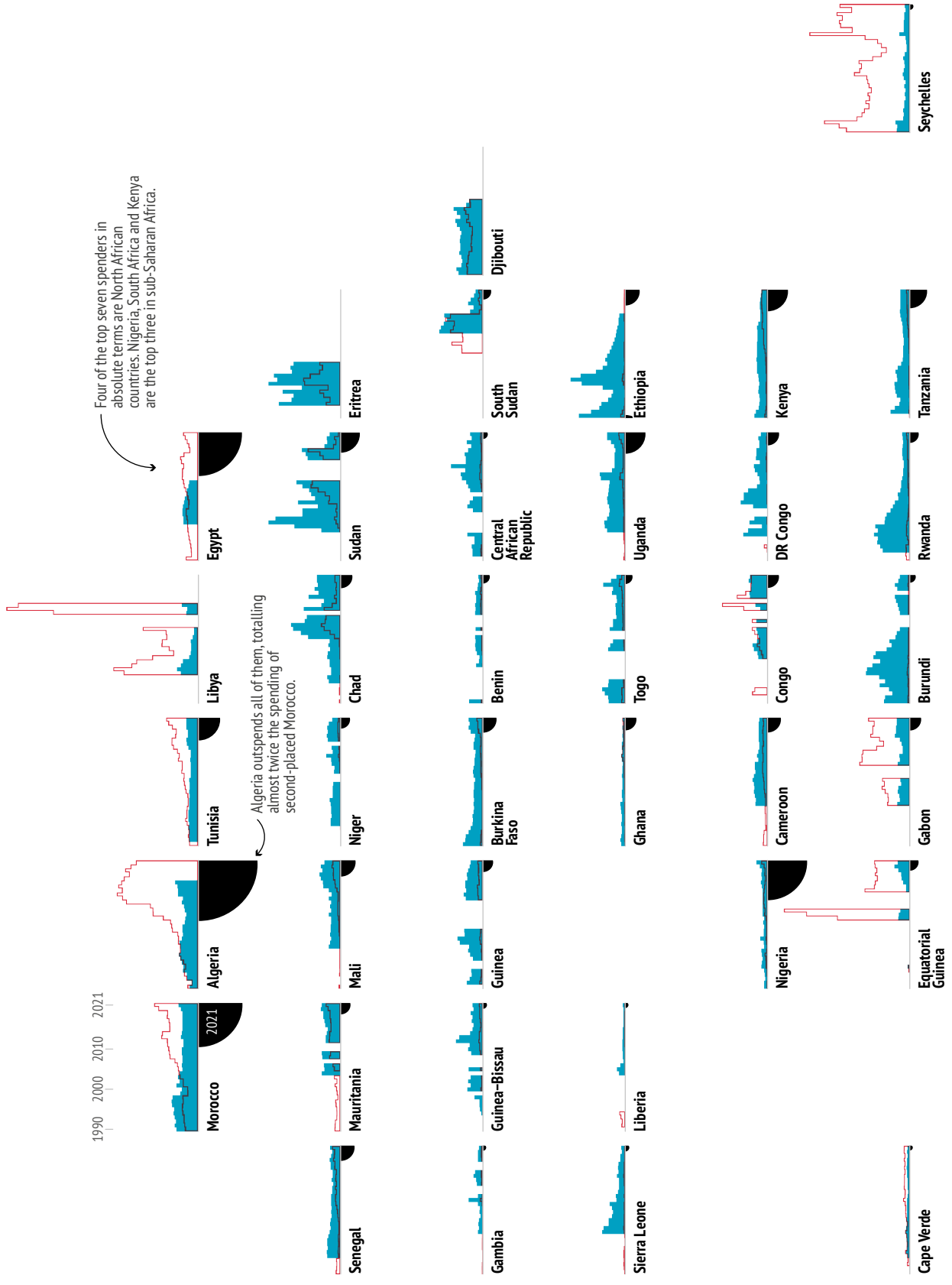
### Backsliding

Democracy index scores of selected countries, 2012-2022



1990 2000 2010 2021

Four of the top seven spenders in absolute terms are North African countries: Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya are the top three in sub-Saharan Africa.





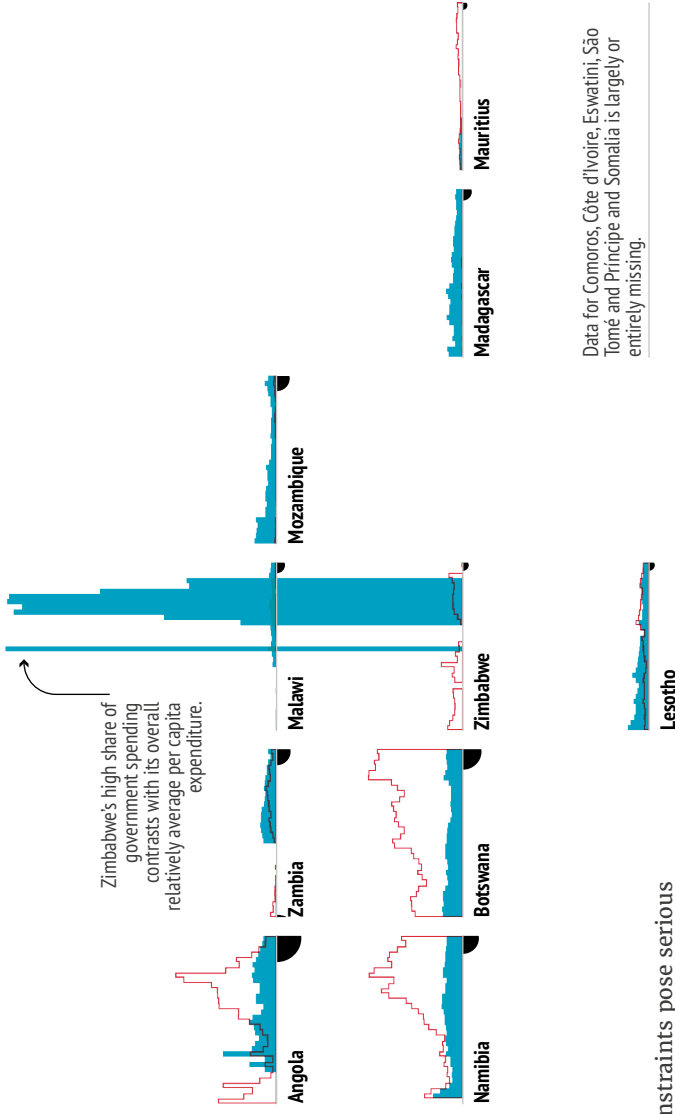
# MANAGING THE MILITARY

Improving the accountability of the security sector

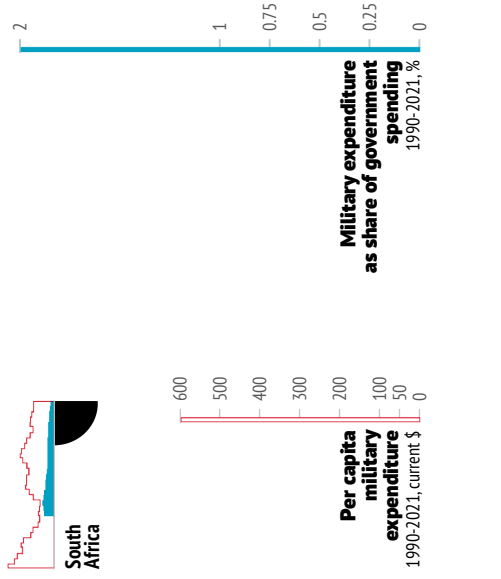
There is not one archetype of the African military. Security apparatuses vary in size, composition and their relationship to governments. However, it is safe to say that African states spend remarkably little on their armed forces by comparison with countries in other parts of the world. In 2021, total African defence spending amounted to a mere 2.1 % of the global total. Yet, African countries face such daunting tasks as countering the spread of violent extremism, while financial constraints pose serious obstacles to creating effective security forces; make it difficult to secure the needed equipment; and militate against proper conduct in environments where training and salaries are not guaranteed.

Coupled with ethnic or political tensions and grievances that permeate relations between the military, the government and civilians, this may lead military forces to safeguard their political and financial interests by virtue of their control of the means of violence. Without democratic structures to hold military leaders accountable or with the military entrenched in political structures, political authorities may be upheld or overthrown depending on the support of African armies.

African security forces need clear structures of accountability and financial management. Better public expenditure management, including of security sector expenditure, is needed to improve the quality of security forces, as is the development, in parallel, of effective justice systems. Learning from best practices and monitoring, reviewing and improving public expenditure management may generate efficiencies in expenditure on military and security forces.



Data for Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, São Tomé and Príncipe and Somalia is largely or entirely missing.

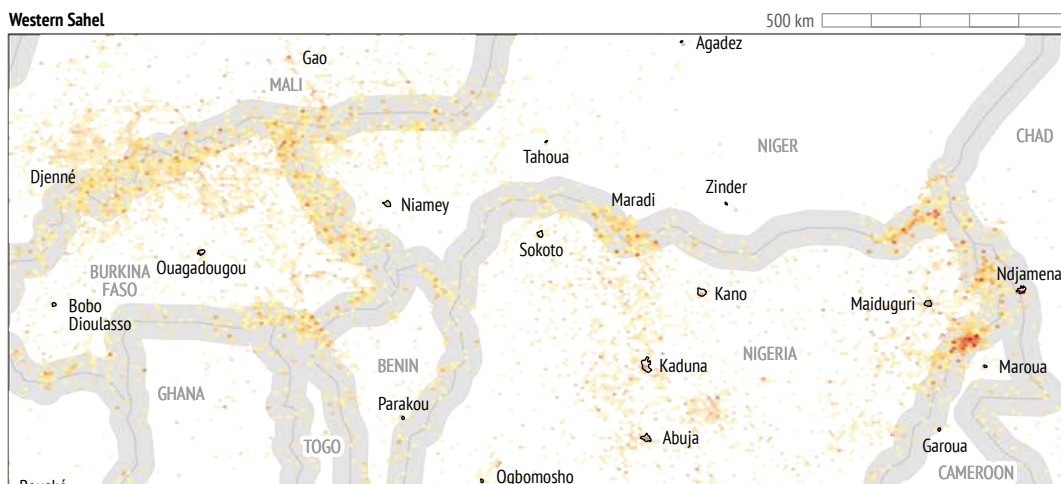
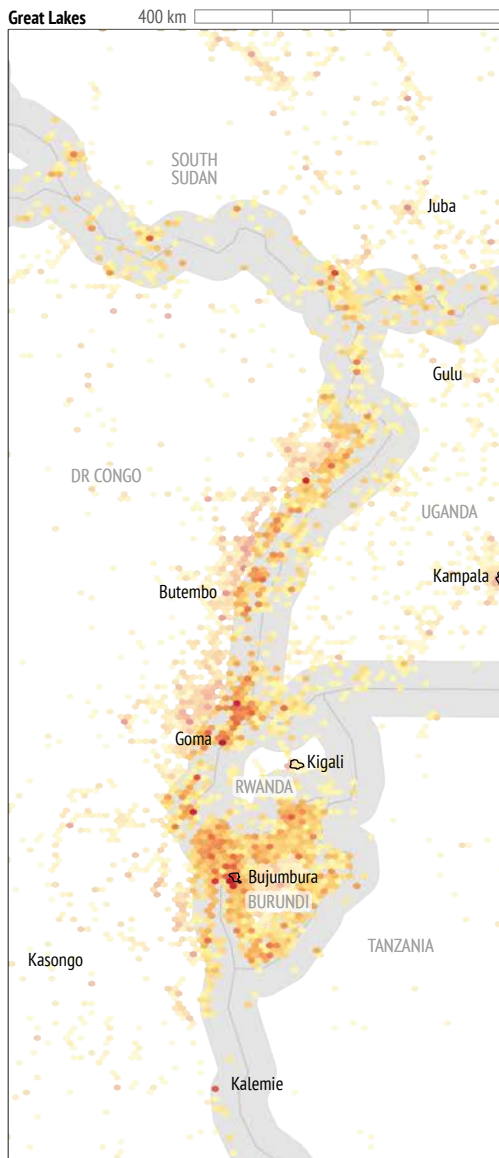


# CHALLENGING BORDERS

Insecurity on the edge(s)

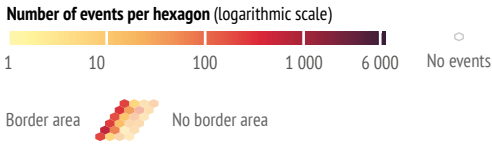
African borders constitute both a security challenge and a source of economic potential. As free movement of goods, people and services is critical for African economic development, establishing open borders is a priority for the AfCFTA. However, rather than being open, some borders are porous; if unregulated, they can serve as conduits for trafficking, crime and conflict. By its very nature, conflict in border areas has a high chance of spilling over – with national cascading into transnational conflict. Unregulated borders also hinder the fight against other transnational challenges, such as terrorism or the spread of disease.

Africa needs stable borders to promote mobility that can generate economic opportunities. Secure borders can foster trade and commercial interactions, while facilitating counter-terrorist operations and reducing trafficking and smuggling. Border stability is thus not only key for internal security, and mitigates the risk of conflict spilling over to neighbouring countries, but it is a prerequisite for regional integration, to attract investment and thus nurture sustainable economic development. To ensure stable borders, Africa needs to upgrade infrastructure connecting border areas with the urban centres, and to improve governance of border areas to facilitate legal cross-border movement of people and goods, thus reducing the gap between centre and periphery and improving participatory opportunities for border communities.



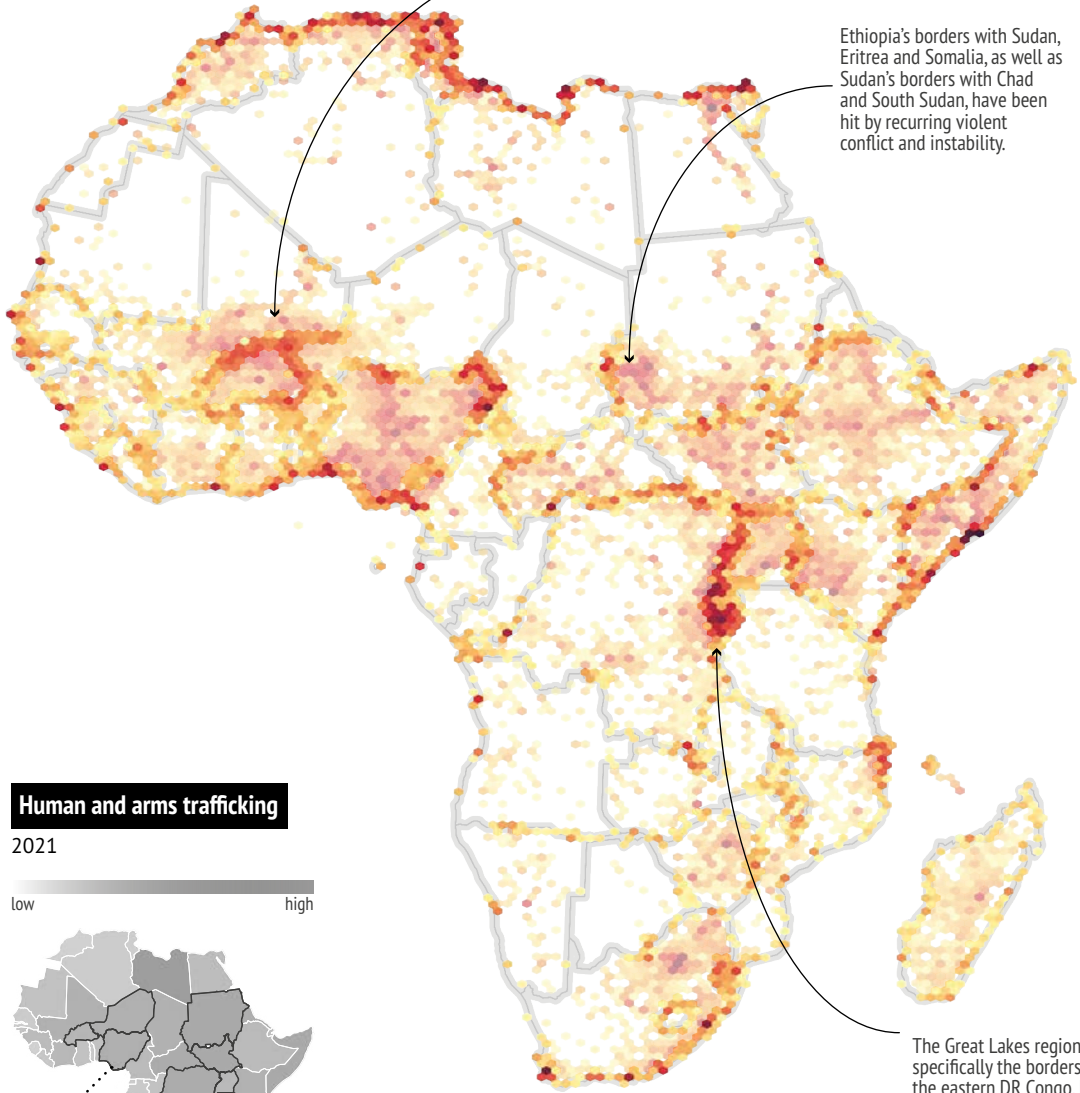
### Violence in border areas

Within 40km of any border/coast, Jan 2010–Mar 2023



In the Western Sahel region, porous borders complicate counter-terrorist operations as they make it easier for terrorist and non-state armed groups to move and proliferate.

Ethiopia's borders with Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia, as well as Sudan's borders with Chad and South Sudan, have been hit by recurring violent conflict and instability.



The Great Lakes region, and specifically the borders between the eastern DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, have been plagued by violence, often involving the notorious M23 rebels.

### Human and arms trafficking

2021



Countries detailed to the left



# MARITIME CAPABILITIES

## Unexplored depths

Key sea lines of communication (SLOCs) surrounding Africa gained in importance in the wake of the war in Ukraine, which obstructed trade in energy, food and fertilisers. The Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea are crucial highways for substantial global trade flows. Therefore, international actors have stepped up their presence in those waters to safeguard their economic and security interests. Even though international counter-piracy efforts were ostensibly the main reason why actors increased their presence, particularly around the Horn of Africa, analysts have also pointed at the increased geopolitical competition that is playing out in African waters.

While countries like Nigeria, South Africa and Algeria have established a strong presence at sea, most African countries' potential for naval force remains untapped. However, for Africa to develop sustainably, it needs to build up its naval presence and become its own maritime security guarantor. Currently, stability in SLOCs remains dependent on external powers that first and foremost promote their own security and economic interests (a case in point being illegal overfishing by Chinese vessels off West Africa). The density of international actors also creates new interfaces and tensions that

could lead to conflict.

For Africa to fully realise its potential as a maritime actor, African countries need to invest in new naval capabilities and in the modernisation of naval assets, despite budgetary constraints. Furthermore, Africa could leverage and reform existing regional cooperation structures and mechanisms, such as the Yaoundé Architecture, to harmonise African maritime security efforts. Finally, on the international level, stronger dialogue and cooperation with international actors could prevent international competition from escalating further.



# ORGANISED CRIME

## Highways of fragility

Transnational organised crime (TOC) remains firmly rooted – and continues to grow – on the African continent, undermining security and economic development. Africa is an attractive target for international criminal groups due to its wealth of mineral and natural resources and the struggle to police related illicit trade. Trafficking routes and informal markets connect local criminals in Africa to the world: ivory harvested from Malawian Elephants is shipped to Thailand; ancient Islamic cultural objects are trafficked to the Gulf region; drugs like heroin, cocaine and cannabis are increasingly produced and shipped to (among others) European destinations. Traffickers increasingly exploit digital technologies and platforms, utilise a decentralised and globalised *modus operandi*, and diversify their activities. Consequently, criminal activities that were once separate have become increasingly intertwined with more disruptive and destabilising effects. Interlinkages between transnational organised crime and terrorism have become increasingly evident and may further fuel instability in the continent – as attested, for example, by the links between al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the drug trade, and kidnappings for ransom and piracy attacks carried out by al-Shabaab.

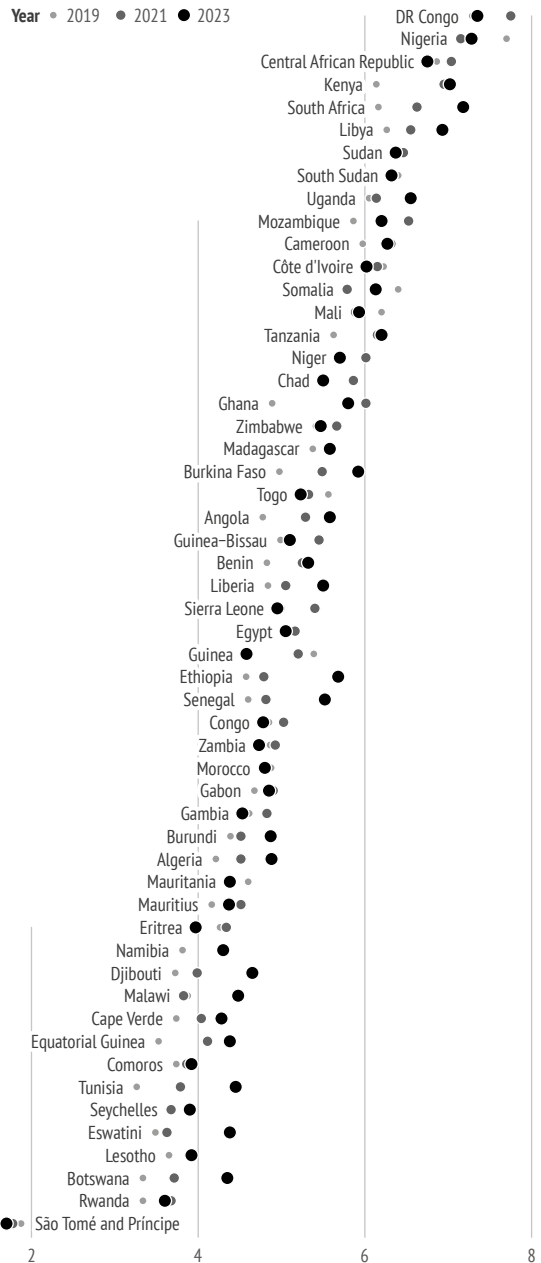
### What does this mean for the partnership?

In the Joint Vision 2030, the EU and the AU committed to creating ‘a space of solidarity, security, peace and sustainable prosperity’. Such a space cannot be achieved without stopping and reversing the spread of transnational organised crime. The EU-funded project ENACT – Enhancing Africa’s Response to Transnational Organised Crime – provides a platform through which the EU can support capacity building of African stakeholders. However, more funding and resources are needed to support African countries in their fight against organised crime. Funds are needed, for example, to provide the necessary training to journalists, civil society organisations and relevant authorities. Furthermore, the partnership’s funds could help African governments to

conduct TOC investigations, and set up and implement up-to-date TOC-prevention strategies that account for how novel technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) may impact the way transnational criminal groups operate.

### More crime

Criminality, Change 2019-2023

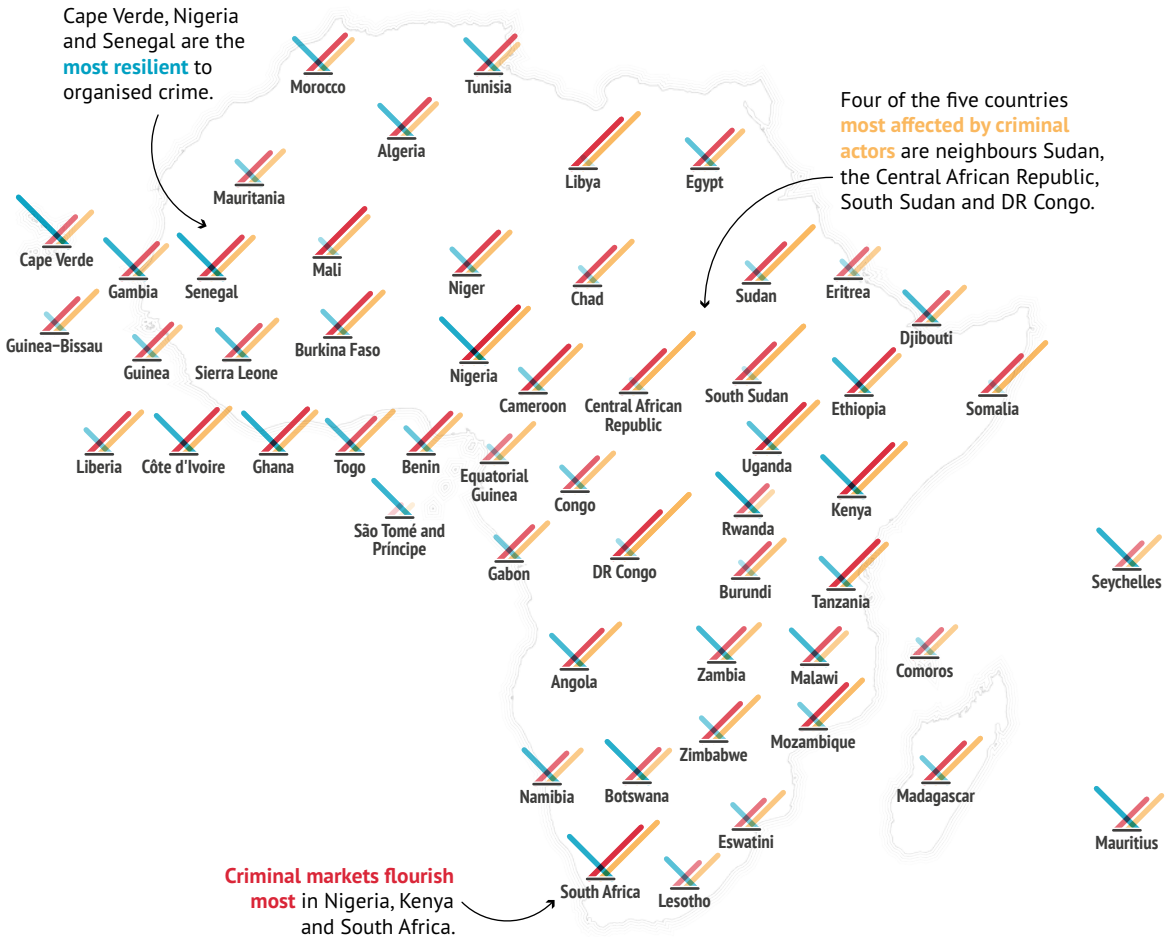
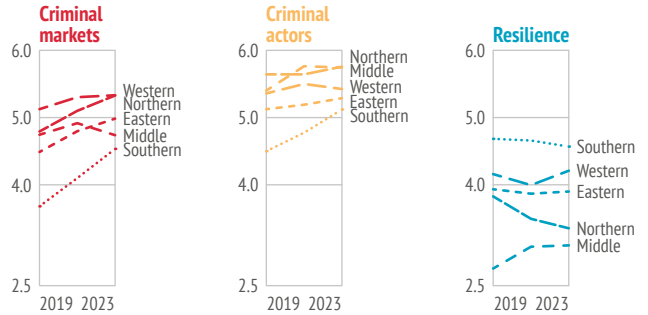


## Rising crime

Global Organised Crime Index, subindex scores, 2023

The Global Organized Crime Index is subdivided into two components: criminality and resilience. Criminality is measured by assessing criminal markets and criminal actors. Resilience assesses the quality and efficacy of national measures to withstand and disrupt organised criminal activities.

While Southern Africa scores lowest on criminal actors and highest on resilience, it has witnessed a significant rise in criminality between 2019 and 2023.



# VIOLENT EXTREMISM

## Who fills the governance vacuum?

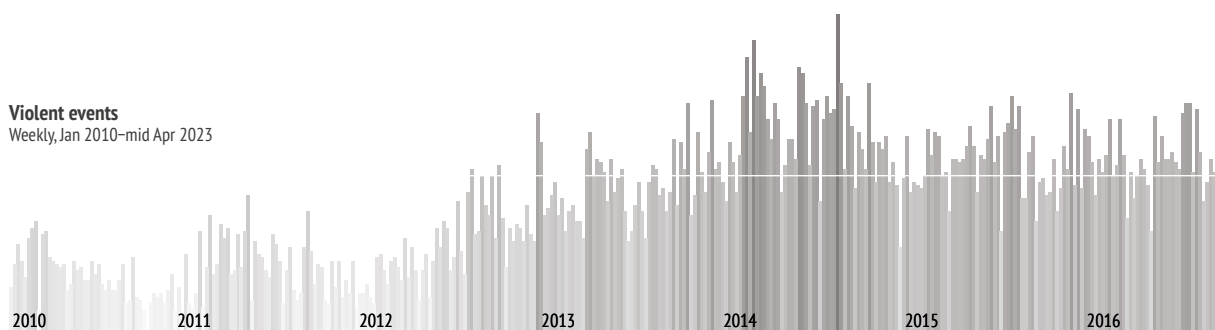
Violent extremist groups in Africa have proliferated and become more deadly over the past two decades. In the early 2000s, violent extremism was still concentrated in hotspots such as the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa. However, it has become increasingly entrenched in the Horn of Africa, Madagascar, Libya and spilled over from the Sahel to the West African coast.

As they no longer have the monopoly on the use of force, the political authority of African state regimes has become more fragmented. Violent extremist groups' tactics are not limited to the use of force. In some cases, they also seek to control movements of people and goods as well as natural resources. Groups may tap into and exploit existing grievances among the population and provide services in areas where the government does not. As a consequence, the social contract between African states and their citizens has become weakened as states fail to provide their citizens with basic services and protect them against violent groups. With the means of violence and the provision of services no longer centralised in the state, power is dispersed and fractionalised among various armed insurgent groups.

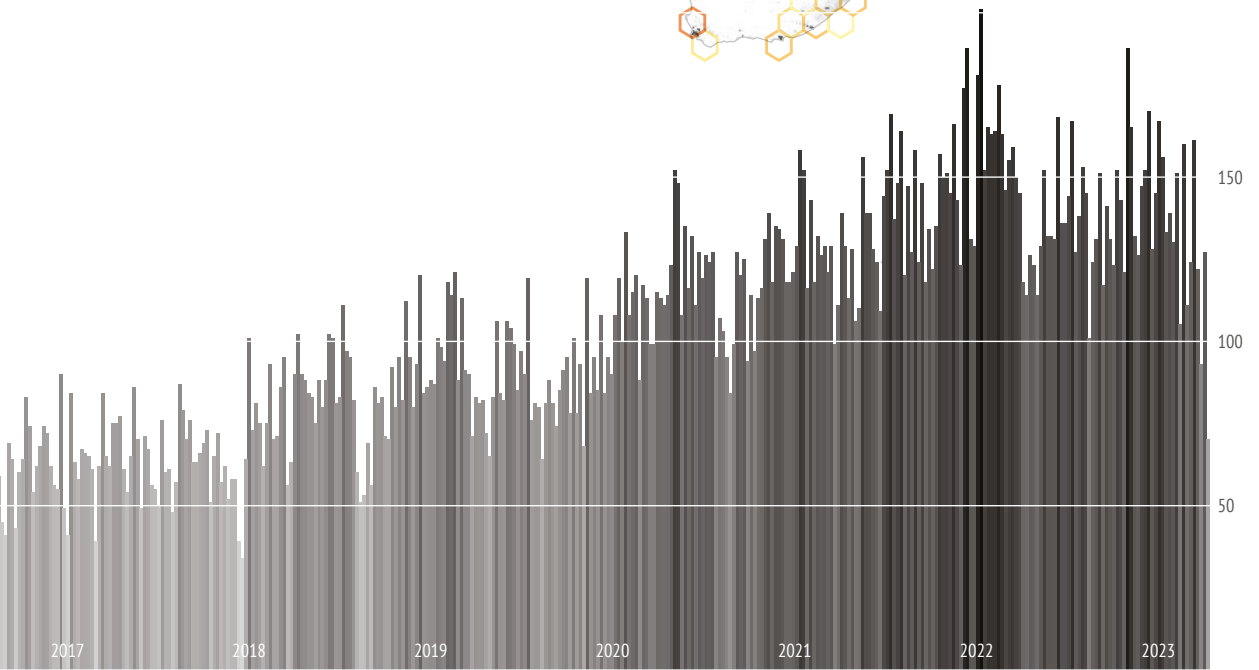
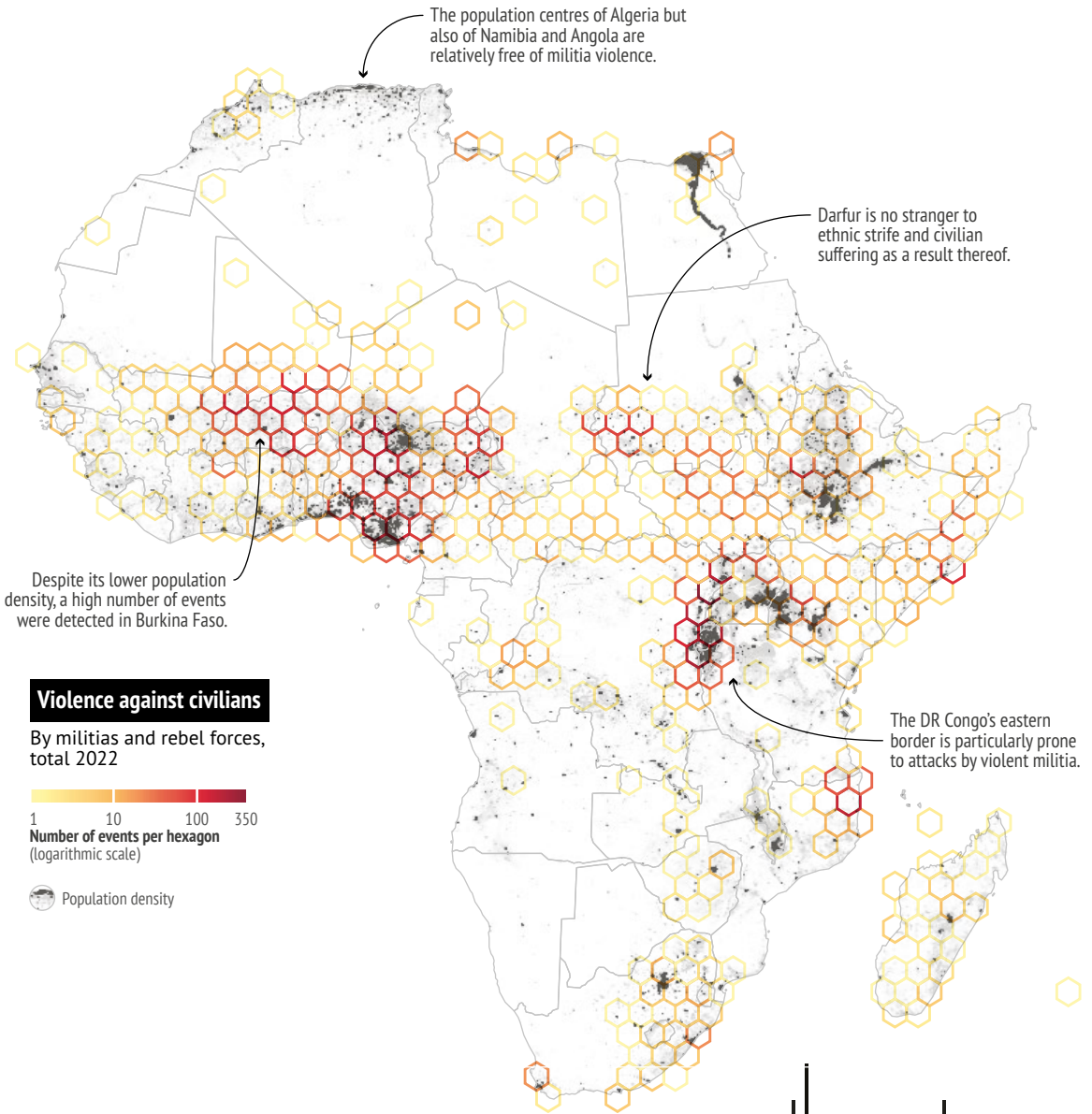
## What does this mean for the partnership?

African governments' global commitments, actions and credibility are at stake given the diffusion of power away from the state. The EU, on the other hand, needs to review the security assistance and support that it provides to African countries battling violent extremism. The past ten years of EU counterterrorism efforts in Africa show that countries that previously cooperated with the EU are increasingly turning to other international actors for help, such as Russia and the Wagner Group in Mali and Burkina Faso. Through its investment in civilian CSDP missions, the EU has developed a new and unique tool that can help address root causes of violent extremism. But better cooperation between CSDP missions and regional security initiatives undertaken by the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) may be necessary to upgrade security cooperation and to counter violent extremism more effectively.

**Violent events**  
Weekly, Jan 2010–mid Apr 2023







# POPULAR DISCONTENT

The risk of broken trust

Citizens' concerns have all too often been dismissed by African elites. Recent research shows that 44 % of African citizens feel that their views are disregarded by decision-makers. Only 22 % of people think local government councillors 'listen to what the people have to say'. Most worryingly, the gap between what African people want and what the government actually provides is growing. The belief that their countries are going in the wrong direction was shared by 62 % of Africans in 2021, up from 47% in 2013. As citizens feel that their voices are not heard, they also become less likely to actively participate in civil society, causing African states to miss out on the valuable social, political and financial capital that citizen engagement can create. The potential is enormous, and with expected rising demographic trends and the advent of a digitalised society in which people interact via online, mobile and social media channels, this will only increase.

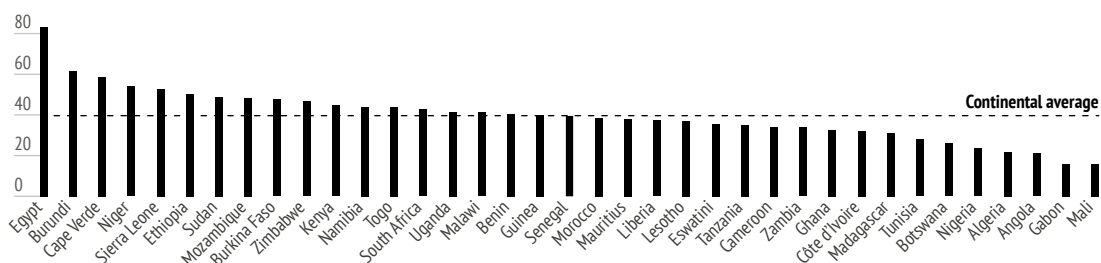
## What does this mean for the partnership?

The EU-AU partnership should tap into citizen engagement to boost peace, prosperity and security in the continent. Strengthening civil engagement is key in creating autonomous and self-sufficient systems spanning many of the priority areas outlined in the Joint Vision 2030 and the Agenda 2063, including food and healthcare sovereignty, energy access and democratic accountability. The EU-AU partnership should aim first and foremost to strengthen its transparency and openness and to create more spaces for inclusive, bottom-up processes and dialogues to shape the policy priorities of the partnership. This would allow EU and AU civil society to engage and exchange knowledge on EU-Africa relations, thus helping construct a partnership that would enshrine both African and European aspirations.

### Trust in national electoral commissions varies

% of people who replied 'somewhat' or 'a lot' to the question 'How much do you trust your national electoral commission?', 2022/2023

Of 37 surveyed countries, only in Egypt, Burundi, Cape Verde, Niger, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia do more than half of respondents trust their national electoral commission.



## Gradients of trust

Participatory democracy and perceptions of corruption correlate, 2022

While the Seychelles, Botswana and Rwanda and Cape Verde all have a relatively high participatory democracy score, only Cape Verde also exhibits relatively low perceived corruption (i.e. a high score).

Meanwhile, at the other end of the scale, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Somalia and South Sudan score poorly for both perceived corruption and participatory democracy.

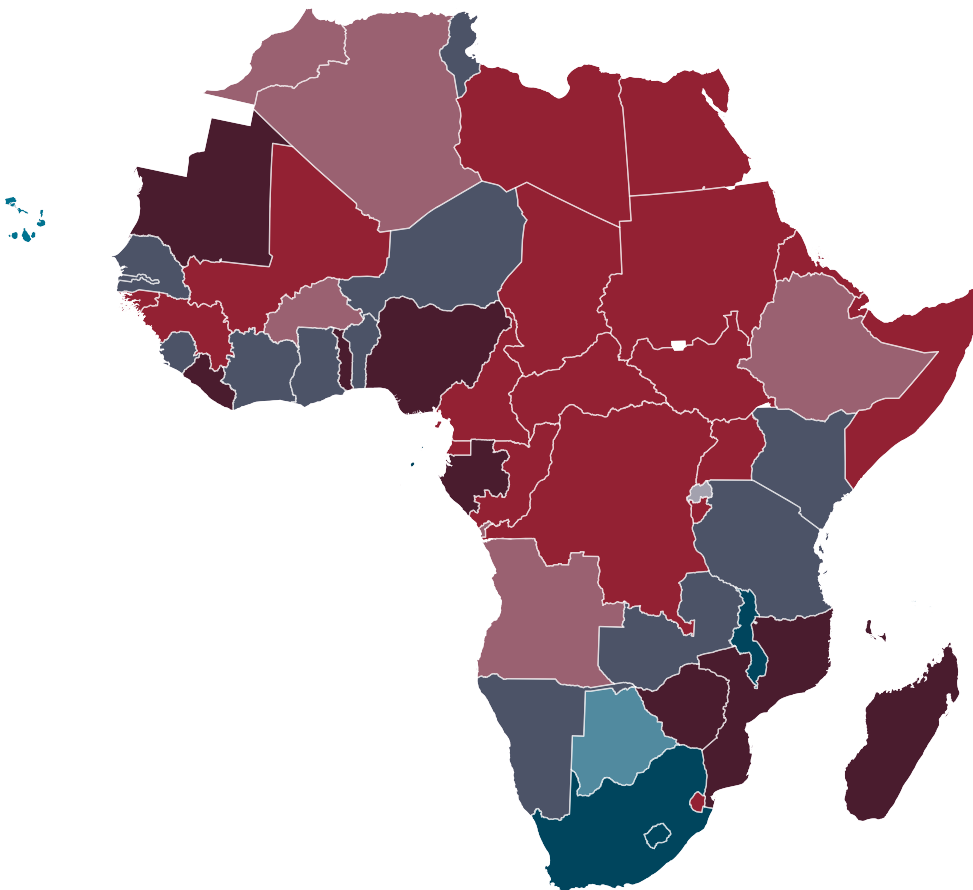
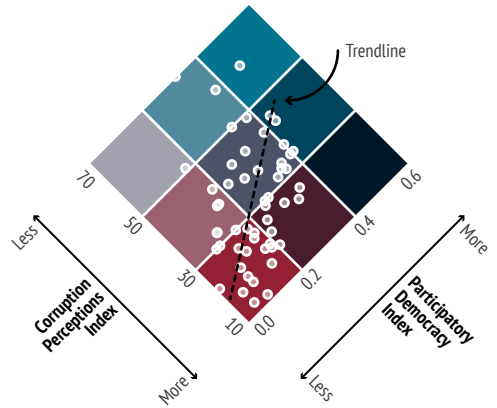




Image: Dami Akinbode/Unsplash

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a bustling street market, likely in an urban area of Southeast Asia. The street is filled with a variety of vehicles, including large trucks with long trailers, smaller vans, and motorcycles. People are visible walking along the sidewalks and near the vehicles. The buildings lining the street have corrugated metal roofs, and there are utility poles with wires overhead. The entire image is tinted with a blue color. A white rectangular box is overlaid in the center, containing the text 'MIGRATION AND MOBILITY' in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters.

# MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

# REGULAR MOBILITY

## Fifty shades of movement

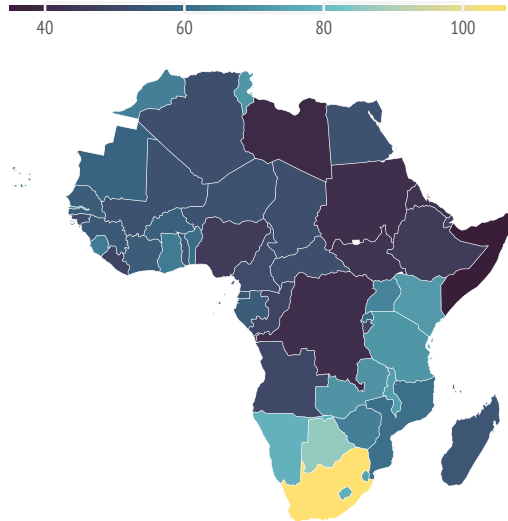
While regular mobility is only occasionally alluded to in policy and media debates, it accounts for the bulk of African migration. For Africa, migration is part of the reality of life and – if managed effectively – can provide a variety of benefits, including enhanced productivity, trade and knowledge exchange. African mobility takes many forms. Most of it is intra-African migration, which is largely centred around economic activity involving cross-border movements of trade and people, including circular and seasonal migration.

Compared to Asia (41 %) and Europe (24 %), the African diaspora makes up only a small proportion (14 %) of the global migrant population. About a quarter of the African diaspora resides in Europe, which generates a variety of benefits for both host and source countries. In host countries, it boosts productivity and counters the trend of an ageing demographic. In 2060, Germany alone would need half a million immigrants annually to compensate for its demographic decline. Immigration from Africa also helps import a wealth of African culture through languages, food, music and film. Source countries benefit from the gained skills of migrants as well as the remittances that they send home.

African migration policy has been shaped by European concerns about irregular migration. African governments attach low priority to migration management and the number of African academic institutions offering migration studies courses remains low. A stronger African voice in the (international) policy and academic communities could be achieved through establishing institutions and expertise on migration management that could help shape policies and initiatives driven by truly African objectives. Currently, the AfCFTA provides a regional framework for free movement. However, its implementation is behind schedule as limited resources and capacities impede progress.

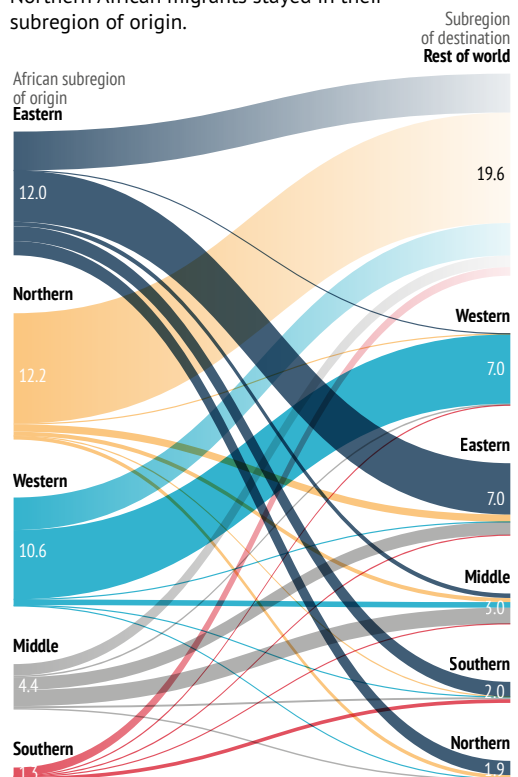
### Ease of travel

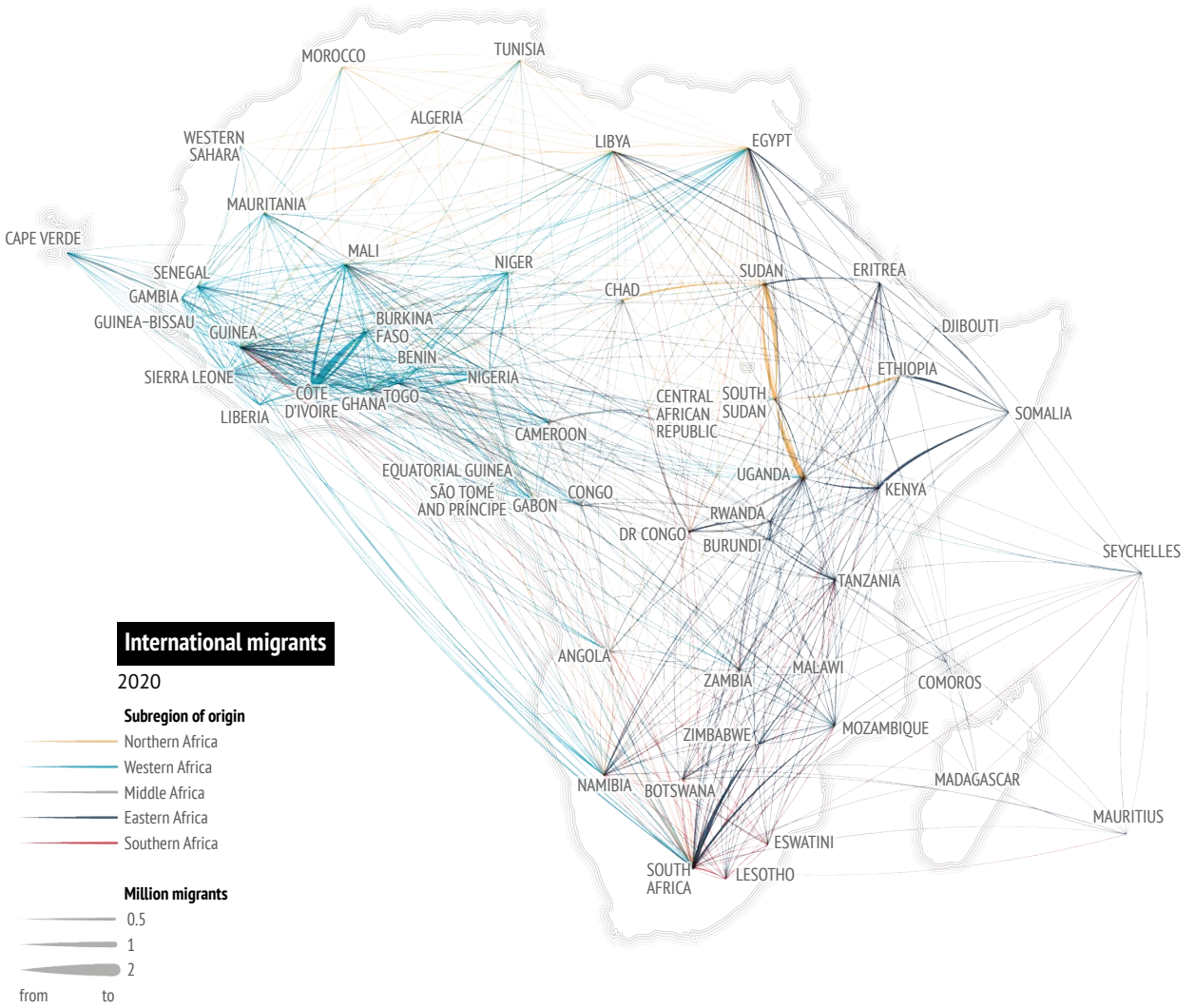
Number of countries to which a passport gives visa-free access



### Intra-African migration

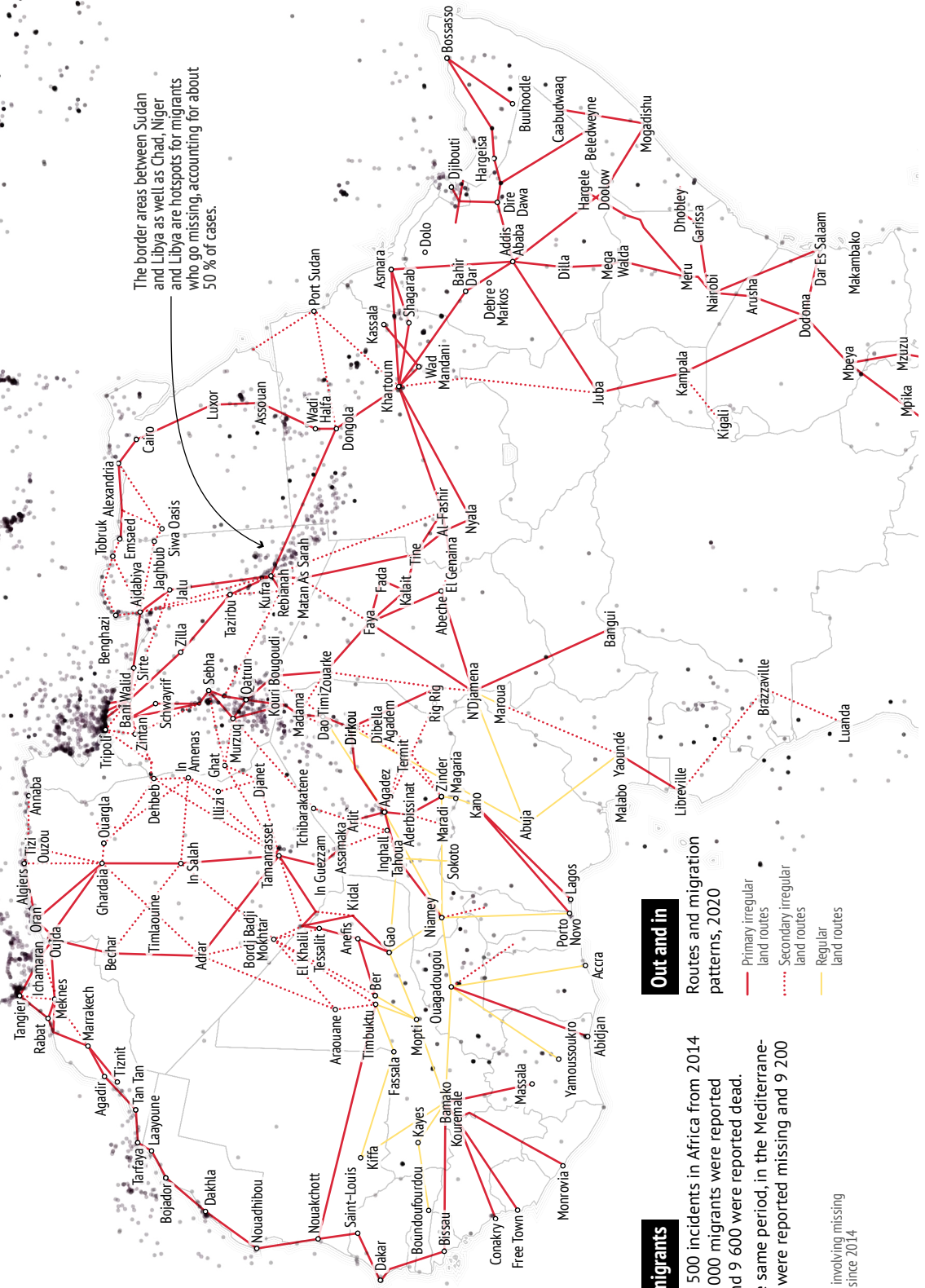
In 2020, 52 % of African migrants (21 million) lived in Africa. 91 % of Western African migrants stayed within Western Africa, while only 23 % of Northern African migrants stayed in their subregion of origin.





Roughly half the migrants reported missing in the Mediterranean put to sea off the Libyan and Tunisian coast.

The border areas between Sudan and Libya as well as Chad, Niger and Libya are hotspots for migrants who go missing, accounting for about 50% of cases.



**Missing migrants**

In about 3 500 incidents in Africa from 2014 to 2023, 3 000 migrants were reported missing and 9 600 were reported dead. During the same period, in the Mediterranean an 17 200 were reported missing and 9 200 dead.

- Incidents involving missing migrants since 2014

**Out and in**

Routes and migration patterns, 2020

- Primary irregular land routes
- Secondary irregular land routes
- Regular land routes



# IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Porous borders and lives lost

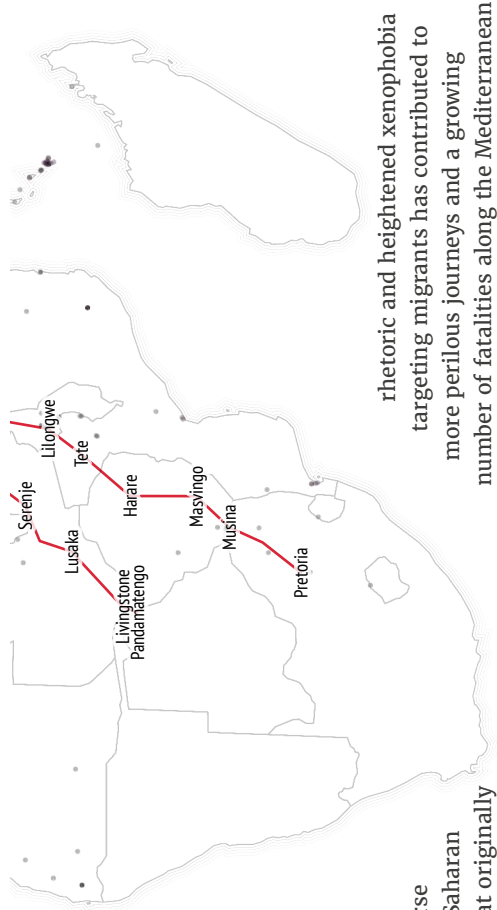
Despite making up only a small proportion (15 %) of all African migration, there are still millions of Africans who move irregularly. Irregular migration is a complex issue that is difficult to measure – not least because there is no universally accepted definition – and is driven by a whole host of economic, political and security-related factors. Irregular migrants are often forced to use more dangerous routes and, rather than relying on legal processes, frequently pay large sums of money to people smugglers who facilitate their departure. In so doing, people become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Migrants, on their journey, may alternate between regular and irregular status: a person may enter a country irregularly but then apply for asylum; or vice versa enter regularly but then overstay their visa. The shifting nature of irregular migration further complicates data collection.

Nonetheless, key trends and irregular migration routes can be deduced from this plethora of incomplete information. Among the least documented are migration routes across central and southern Africa. These were traditionally used by mineworkers travelling irregularly to seek work further south. More recently, they have come to serve as a passage for East African refugees.

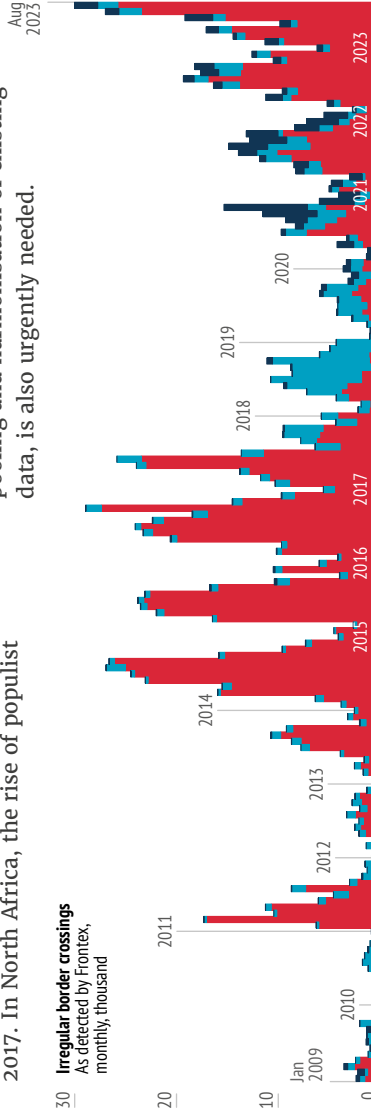
In West Africa, migrants traverse historic trans-Saharan trade routes that originally connected ancient trading posts. North Africa functions as an origin, transit and destination region. Over the course of many years, migrants have been leaving North African coastlines bound for Italy and Malta. From the 1970s until 2014, the number of irregular migrants arriving in Italy remained relatively constant. After a sharp rise in 2014, followed by a relative decrease between 2017 and 2019, numbers have increased significantly since 2020. However, data from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) shows that the route remains highly dangerous. The first quarter of 2023 has been the deadliest since 2017. In North Africa, the rise of populist

rhetoric and heightened xenophobia targeting migrants has contributed to more perilous journeys and a growing number of fatalities along the Mediterranean migration route.

To stimulate regular migration, African countries would benefit from harmonising their respective administrative processes. Legal migration pathways, like visa facilitation and family reunification schemes, facilitate regular migration. However, these pathways are not a panacea, and the number of people able to benefit from them may be limited. For the poorest and worst off, there remain obstacles to using regular migration routes. Better quality data on irregular migration, and investment in research and pooling and harmonisation of existing data, is also urgently needed.



30 Irregular border crossings  
As detected by Frontex,  
monthly, thousand

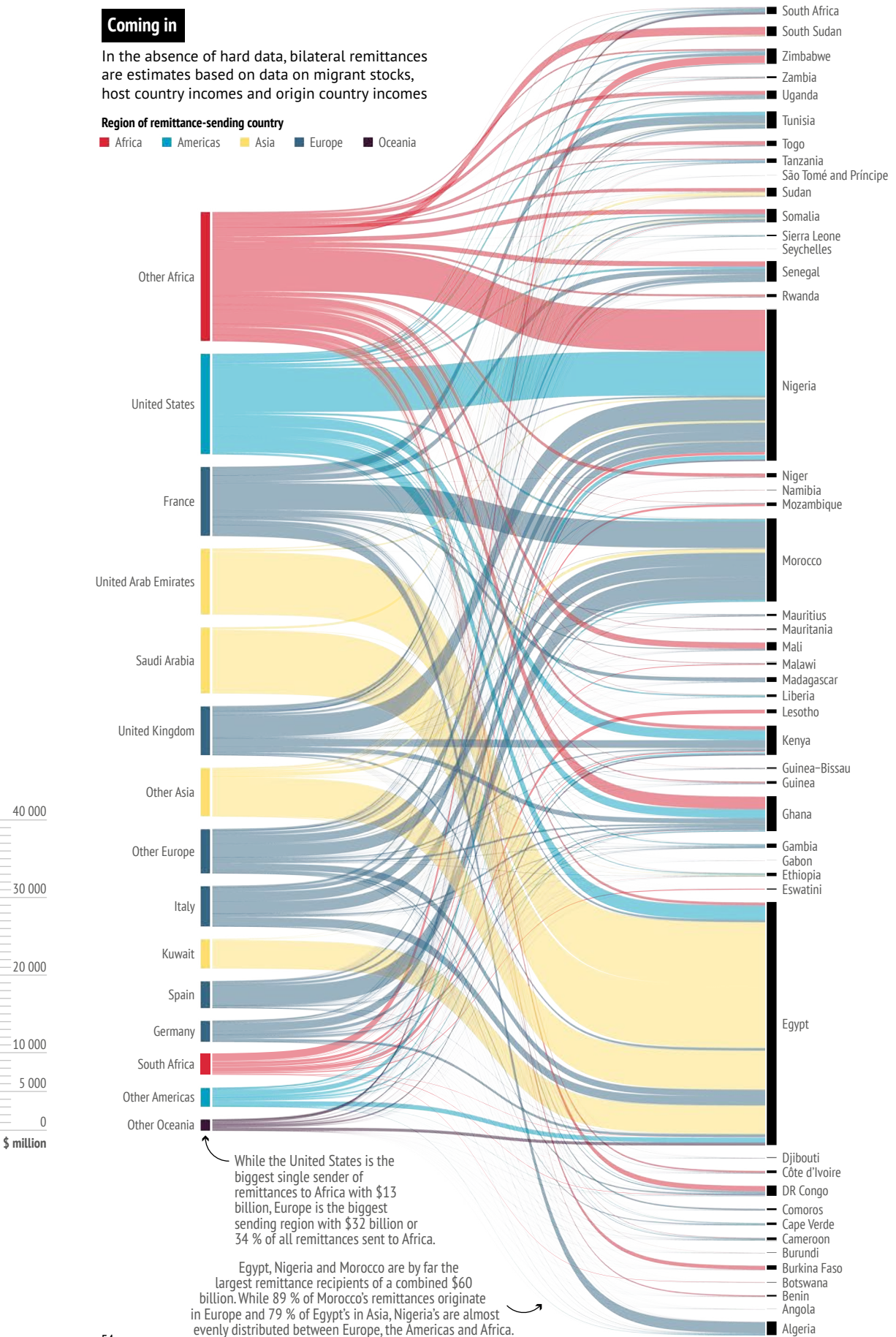


## Coming in

In the absence of hard data, bilateral remittances are estimates based on data on migrant stocks, host country incomes and origin country incomes

### Region of remittance-sending country

■ Africa ■ Americas ■ Asia ■ Europe ■ Oceania



# REMITTANCES

## Africa's trump card

The most tangible links between migration and economic development can be measured by the direction and volume of remittances. Money sent by the African diaspora to home countries exceeds the total amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development aid (ODA) on the continent. For example, Nigeria received about \$20 billion in remittances in 2021, which is approximately six times greater than its FDI in the same year. On average, remittances account for 2.6 % of GDP in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, yet this varies significantly and is much higher in many countries (for example, 9.6 % in Senegal, 12.6 % in Guinea-Bissau and 26.8 % in the Gambia.)

Remittances are not only higher than ODA and FDI, but also stimulate development very effectively as the money goes directly to recipients. They provide local communities with the financial means to send children to school, to access healthcare, build facilities and infrastructures or to achieve other socio-economic goals. Research indicates that, for instance, Ghanaian children that have a family member living abroad are 54 % more likely to attend secondary school. A

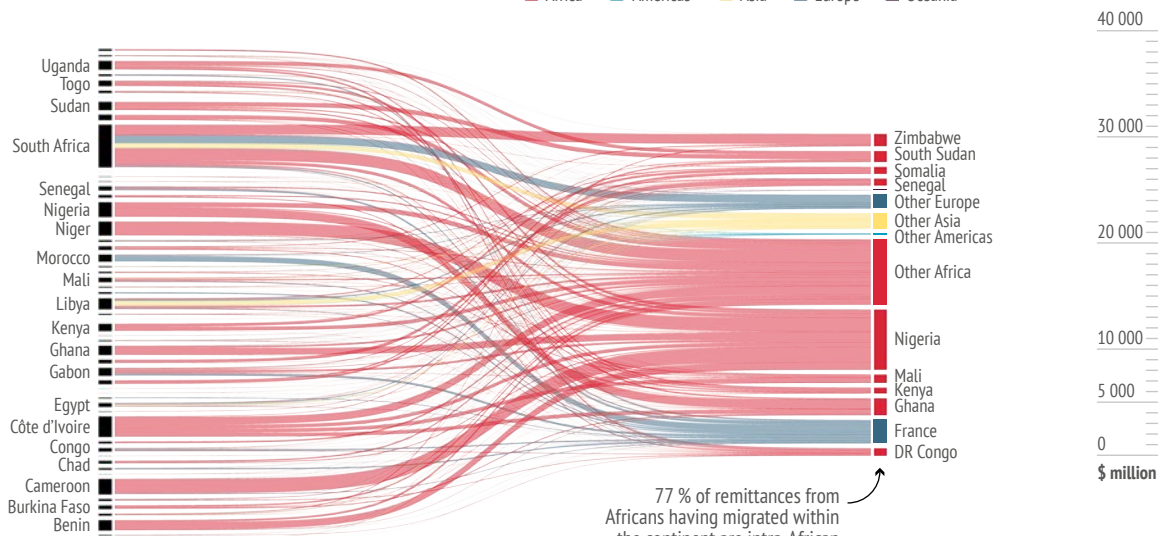
UNESCO report has indicated that lower fees on money transfers could lift private expenditure on education by about \$1 billion annually. Not all remittances are sent through formal channels or digitally, however. Cash transactions are still common practice.

The significance of remittances for development and for the EU-Africa partnership should not be underestimated. Access to bank accounts and financial literacy rates remain low in Africa. Legislation that incentivises remittances and diaspora investment could be of considerable help to African societies. Fees and foreign exchange charges still make Africa the costliest continent to which to send remittances. Rolling out a more extensive, inclusive and digitalised financial infrastructure could help boost peoples' savings which in turn can serve socioeconomic objectives and help achieve African development goals at the grassroots level.

### Going out

Region of remittance-receiving country

■ Africa ■ Americas ■ Asia ■ Europe ■ Oceania



South Africa, the continent's largest source of remittances, sends twice as much as Côte d'Ivoire, the second-biggest sender (\$4 billion and \$2 billion, respectively). A combined \$1.4 billion was sent from South Africa to neighbouring Zimbabwe and Lesotho, while Belgium, France and Israel were its largest non-African recipients.

77 % of remittances from Africans having migrated within the continent are intra-African remittances, with the African diaspora in Europe only accounting for 14 %.

Nigeria receives 23 % of remittances sent from Africa, with France, Ghana, Zimbabwe and South Sudan making up the rest of the top five.

# DISPLACEMENT

## Restarting from scratch

Displacement has recently accelerated on the African continent as a result of natural disasters and conflict. In 2022, Africa saw a 12 % increase in the number of displaced people, totalling 36 million at the end of the year, or 44 % of the global total. Already since the outbreak of violence in Sudan on 15 April 2023, an additional 1.6 million people have been forcibly displaced. The eight crises that are the primary drivers of this displacement are located in Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Mozambique.

Escalating and protracted crises and the difficulties people encounter in reestablishing livelihoods after they have been displaced drive up the figures. Camps and organisations that provide shelter to refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) are ideally temporary solutions. But as crises drag on and become drawn-out and the mobility of people living in camps is restricted, they end up in limbo – not being able to return but similarly unable to rebuild their lives elsewhere.

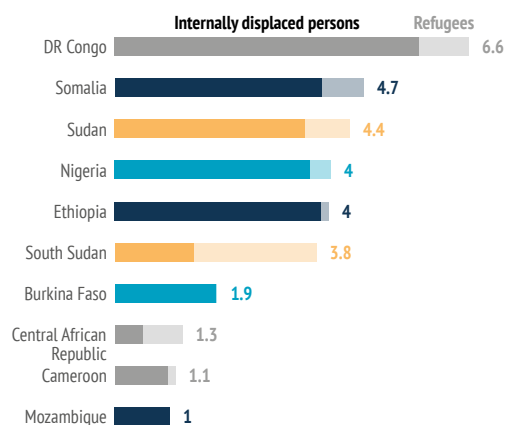
Add climate change to the equation and grim scenarios of mass displacement come to mind. Further acceleration of displacement in Africa will come with a heavy price and jeopardise Africa's development goals on almost all fronts. The EU-Africa partnership should prioritise tackling drivers of

displacement (e.g. climate change mitigation and adaptation, conflict mediation efforts) as well as focus on how to provide displaced people with better and faster opportunities to rebuild their lives. A critical step could be shifting from policies that are primarily place-centered (providing shelter, relocating elsewhere) towards policies that are focused on maintaining social constellations (religious, ethnic, labour and family networks) and nurturing relations between displaced and host communities. These social ties are an indispensable resource for people seeking to rebuild their lives.



### Conflict causes displacement

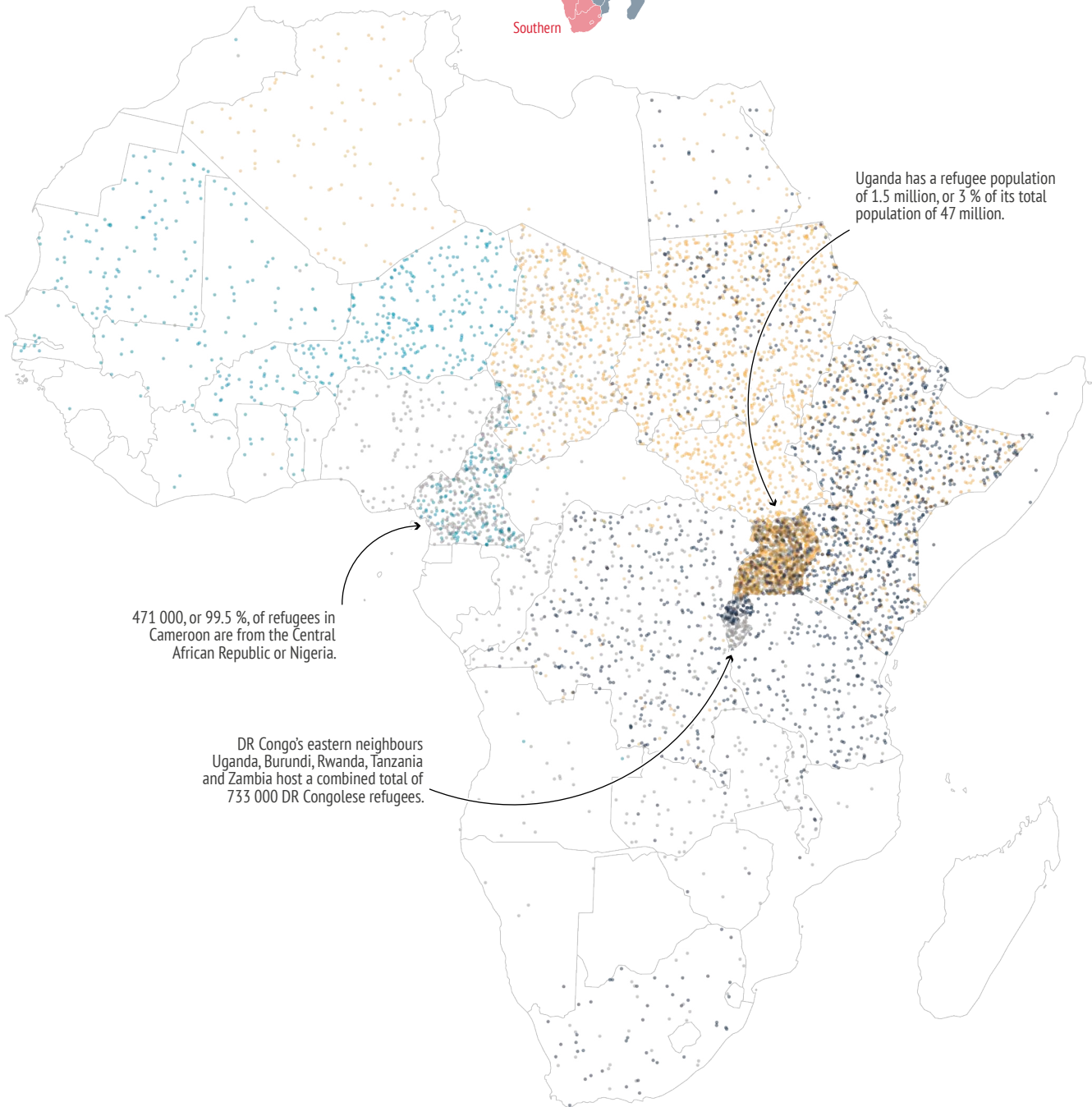
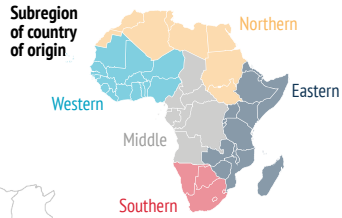
Refugees and IDPs by country of origin, 2022



## Refugees under UNHCR mandate

Countries neighbouring conflicts host large refugee communities

- One dot = 1 000 refugees in host country



# STILL NOT CONNECTED

Africa's bumpy road to development

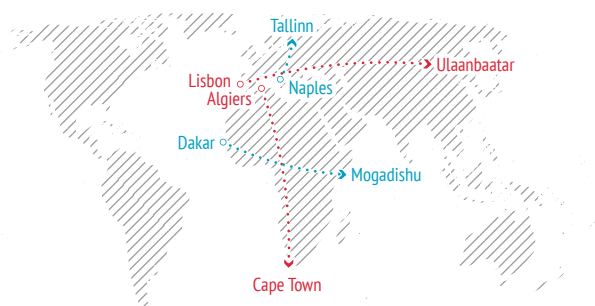
Improved connectivity, through better infrastructure and transport, has been a longstanding priority of the EU–Africa partnership. Not without reason: better connectivity enables people to travel more easily and securely, whether for work, education, to join family members or to seek refuge. This creates a range of economic and security benefits, such as opportunities to avoid dangerous irregular routes, increased tourism and remittances. Thus, to make the most of migration as a development tool, transport and connectivity are critical.

Getting there, however, is still an ongoing process. The extent to which African countries are connected and have extensive and well-maintained infrastructure varies widely. Even countries which rank highly in terms of infrastructure quality, such as South Africa and Tunisia, struggle with mismanagement, corruption, cronyism and criminal activities that have undermined and even reversed trends in infrastructure development. Estimates by the African Development Bank have suggested that Africa needs \$130–170 billion a year to develop its infrastructure, and that in 2018 there was a financing gap of between \$68–108 billion. Conflict and climate change may further drive up costs for future infrastructure development and maintenance.

## What does this mean for the partnership?

While the political and institutional framework to develop qualitative infrastructure in Africa exists, budgetary and technical constraints often pose problems for implementation. As articulated in the Joint Vision 2030, investment in sustainable infrastructure within the framework of the Global Gateway Investment Package can help bridge the financing gap. Exchange on best practices and technologies between the two partners can help provide Africa with technical expertise and enable it to move towards the implementation of the projects laid out under the African Union Programme for Infrastructure Development Africa (PIDA) and the AfCFTA, with positive spillovers for job creation, skills and human development. Specifically, in light of the climate and debt crisis the EU Africa partnership should prioritise making infrastructure development climate-resilient, and enhancing connectivity.

Cape Town to Algiers stretches about 10 500 km by road - the same distance as Lisbon to Ulaanbaatar. The distance from Dakar to Mogadishu is about three times as far (9 400 km) as from Naples to Tallinn.



## Travel time to cities

2015

Estimates of the time it takes to travel to the nearest city are based on 2015 data analysed to assess inequalities in accessibility.

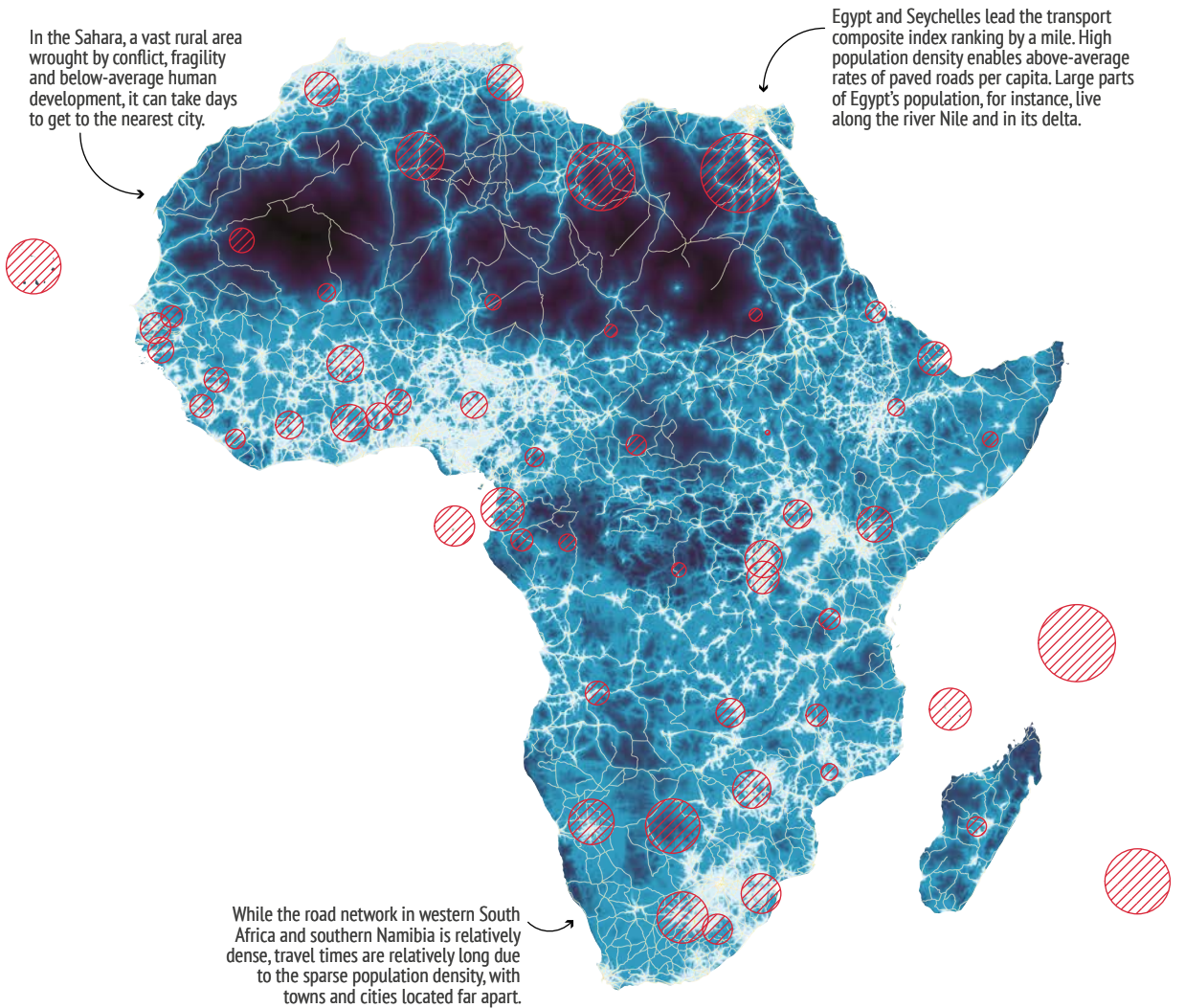


## Transport composite index

2022



The TCI is part of the Africa Infrastructure Development Index (AIDI), produced by the African Development Bank. It measures a country's total length of paved roads in relation to both the number of inhabitants and the amount of exploitable land area.



# CLIMATE MIGRATION

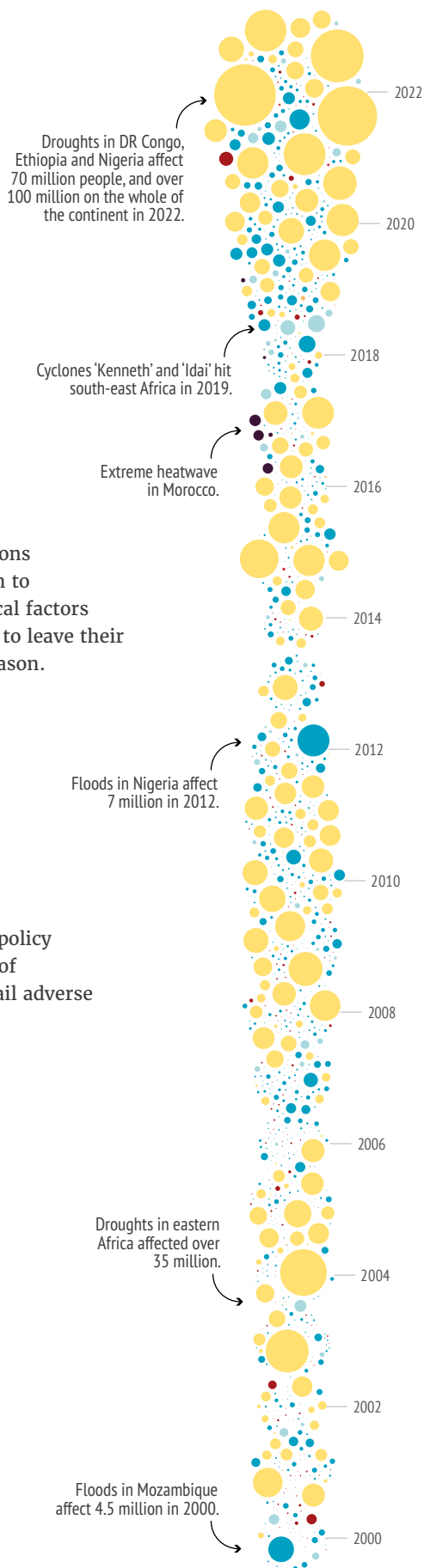
## A gathering storm

With the consequences of climate change becoming increasingly tangible in Africa, the urgency of the climate change-migration nexus is clear, in the same way that there is a clear correlation between conflict and climate change. Estimates suggest that there will be between 25 million and 1 billion climate migrants globally by 2050. African countries will be among the hardest hit by the effects of global warming, as a result of which people will increasingly be on the move.

Research shows, however, that the links between climate change and migration are complex and that reality does not necessarily support predictions of a mass exodus from Africa. People make a decision to migrate based on various economic, social and political factors and less than 1 % of Africans who expressed a desire to leave their country mentioned climate change as the primary reason. Research suggests that while there is a link between climate change and net migration, no generalisations can be drawn on a continental scale as a range of factors including local conditions, geography and the political situation also enter the equation. Migration is primarily a coping and adaptation strategy *vis-à-vis* climate change, for instance in the case of rural-urban migration due to the degradation of agricultural land. Despite having gained widespread policy and public attention, notions that future large flows of international climate migrants and refugees will entail adverse consequences so far have limited scientific backing.

### What does this mean for the partnership?

Besides accommodating and offering the necessary protection for populations displaced by natural disasters, the EU-Africa partnership should prioritise reinforcing the adaptive capacity of local populations against climate change and natural hazards. Improving the resilience of communities will reduce the humanitarian impact of climate change. Populations that are well-equipped to handle climate hazards are less likely to move primarily because of climate change. This underlines the importance of mainstreaming climate concerns throughout the partnership's priority areas, including in the field of migration.

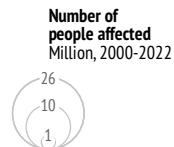
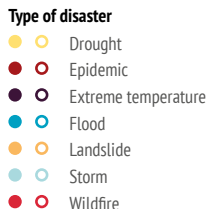




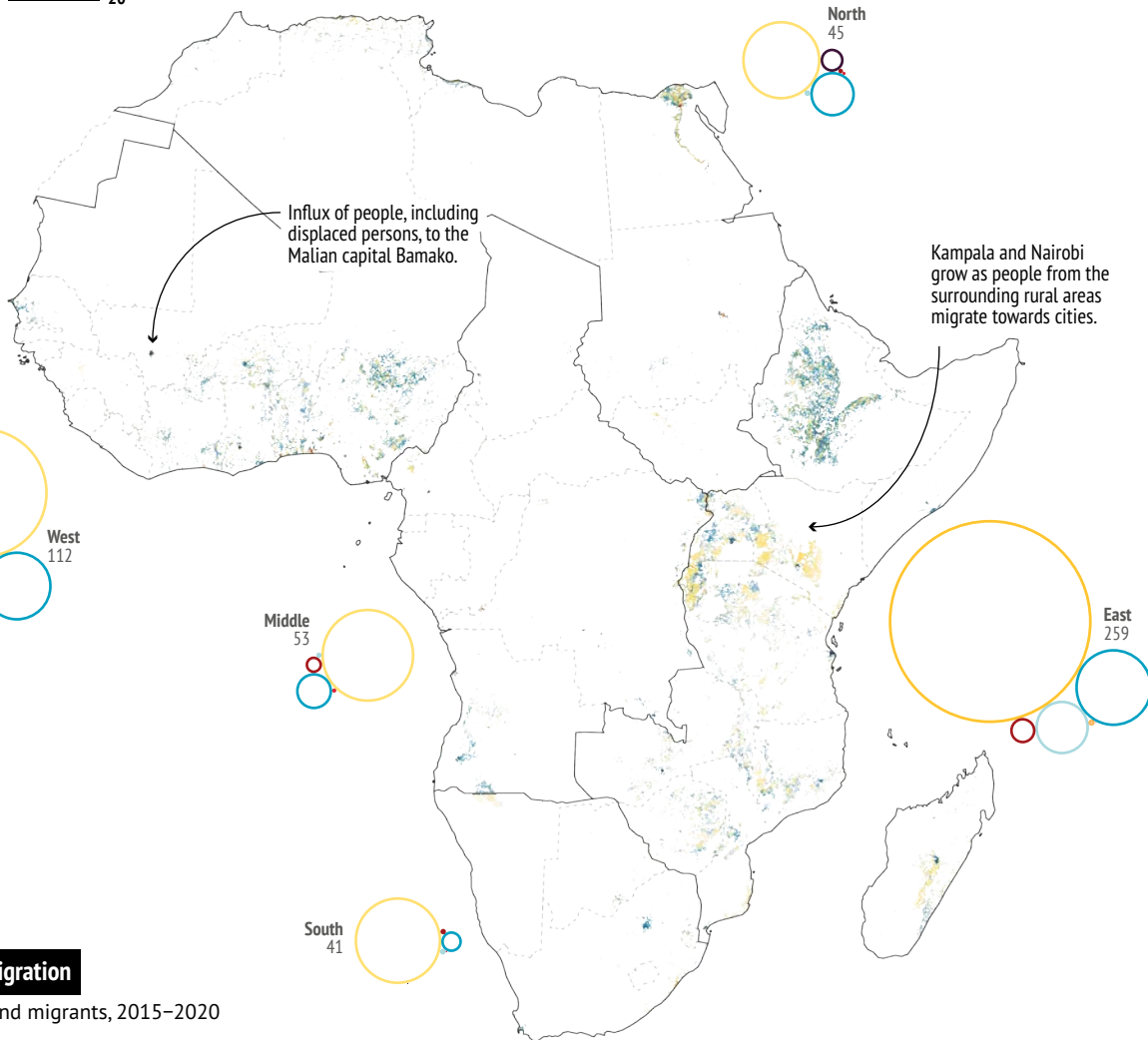
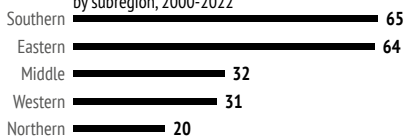
## Mass disasters

Million people affected, 2000-2022

Mass disasters are classed into different types by the International Disaster Database. The population of East Africa, the most populous African subregion, has been hardest hit by disasters since 2000. Western Africa, though almost as populous, has recorded less than half the number of affected people. However, measured against the 2022 population, the total number of people affected by disasters between 2000 and 2022 as a share of the population was highest in Southern Africa at 65%.



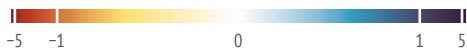
**% of population affected in relation to 2022 population by subregion, 2000-2022**



## Net migration

Thousand migrants, 2015-2020

Net migration (immigration minus emigration) is derived as the difference between 'population change' and population 'natural increase' (births minus deaths).



# DIGITAL MIGRATION

## A new frontier

Migration can be defined as ‘movement from one location to another’. These movements and locations are no longer strictly physical. Processes, information and mobility have gained a digital dimension. Prospective migrants can apply for visas online; people who might have moved for better access to or exchange of information can now remain where they are thanks to international telephone and internet connections; and remittances are sent via digital payment instruments, including cryptocurrency.

This digitalisation of migration will have distributional impacts. It may, on the one hand, reduce inequality by offering greater connectedness to those who are physically and geographically distant, thereby helping to reduce rural-urban divides. On the other hand, however, it may promote inequality, as without inclusive and equal access to digital tools, digitalisation merely speeds up connectivity for those already connected, leaving those in remote locations, without access to the grid, increasingly isolated. In this way, it may reinforce gender-based or

rural-urban inequalities.

### What does this mean for the partnership?

The EU-Africa Partnership aims to establish accessible and inclusive infrastructure on the continent. Without considering the impacts of the digitalisation of migration on inequalities, inclusiveness may be difficult to achieve. The partnership should consider the implications of digital technologies for migration. Who will profit and who will fall through the cracks? How can digitalisation be harnessed as a tool to reduce inequalities and facilitate free movement of people, rather than as a process that may increase inequality? More research and data are needed on the implications of the digital dimension of migration.

### Country access to international connectivity

Mode of connection (latest data available)

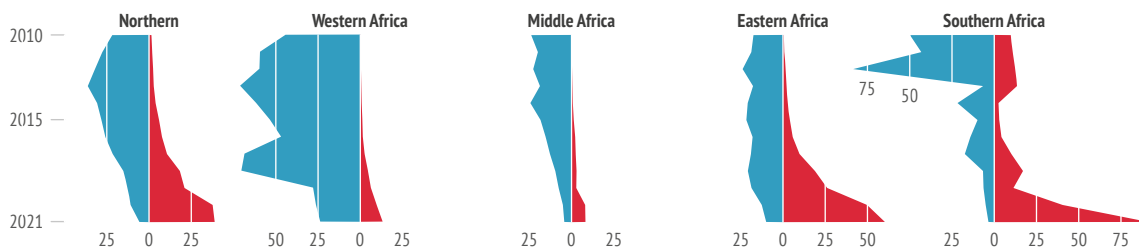
- Fibre
- Satellite
- Submarine cable
- ▨ no data



### International connections shift online

As phone traffic decreased, internet bandwidth usage picked up in each subregion, 2010-2021

- International telephone traffic, 1 000 minutes per person per year
- International bandwidth usage, mbit per person per year



**Change in international bandwidth usage**  
Mbit per inhabitant per year, 2016-2021 compared to 2010-2015

Mbit per inhabitant average 2016-2021

**Change in international telephone traffic**  
Minutes per inhabitant per year, 2016-2021 compared to 2010-2015

Minutes per inhabitant average 2016-2021

**More bandwidth, fewer phone calls**

People across the continent use more international bandwidth, and fewer traditional telephone calls to connect between countries

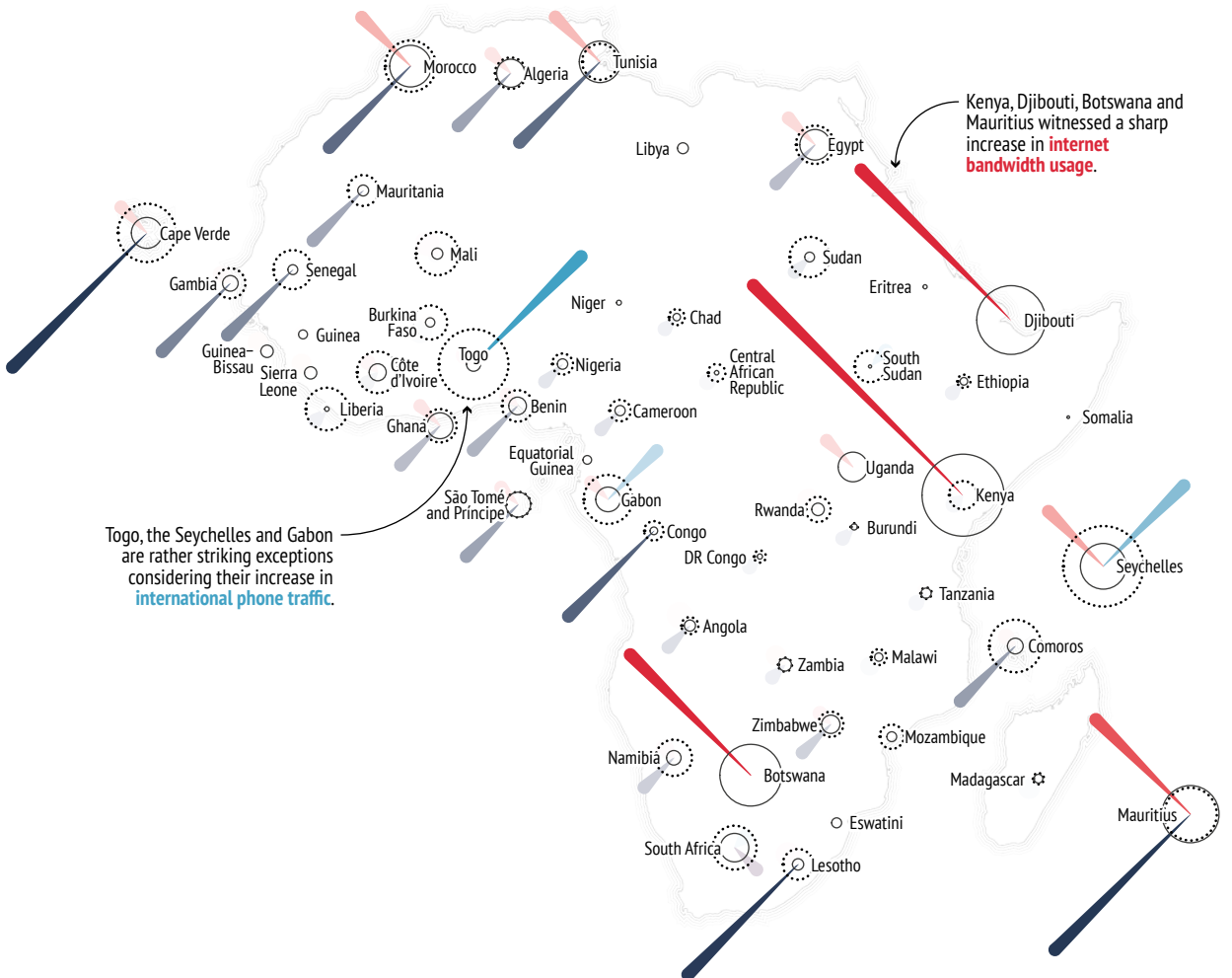
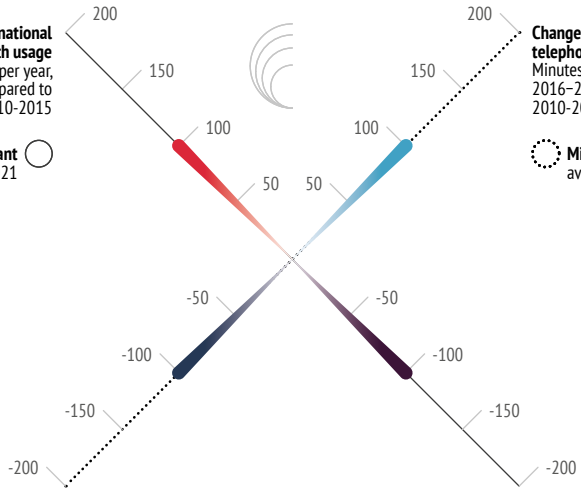




Image: CSDP EEAS

A person in a dark suit is seen from the back, pointing towards a world map on a wall. The background is a deep blue with a pattern of radiating lines, suggesting a globe or a stylized sun. The overall tone is professional and global.

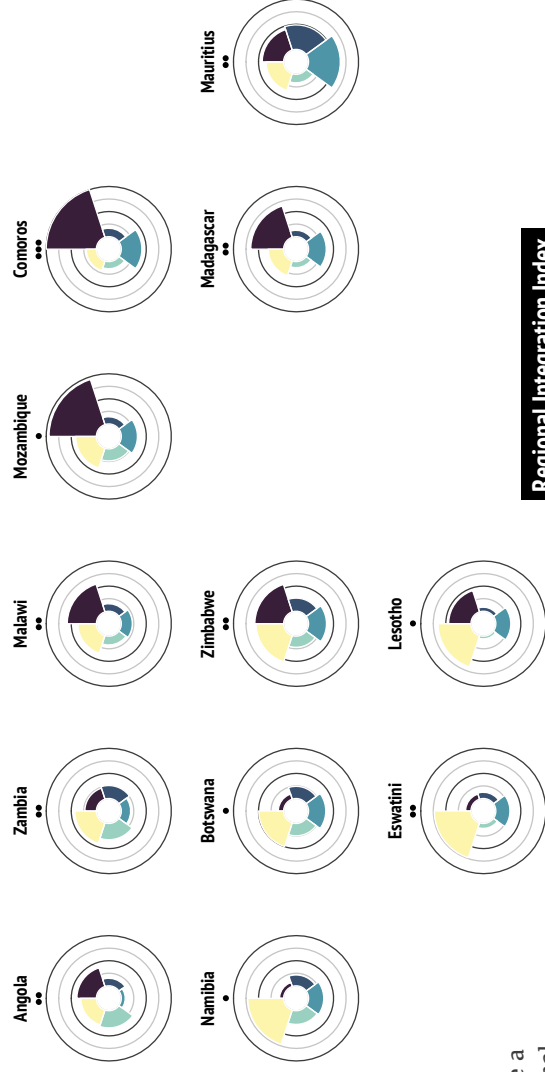
# **INTERNATIONAL ORDER**



Africa needs more and better regional integration as a prerequisite for growth and development. Fully implementing economic integration in the continent, particularly through the AfCFTA, can unlock growth more rapidly than in any other domain in which African countries fail or struggle to integrate. In a globalised international system increasingly characterised by multipolar competition, an African regional bloc, integrated at both economic and political levels, is a precondition for geopolitical relevance – and perhaps the only adequate response to the pressures of globalisation.

However, progress has been slow and institutional – political fragmentation at the sub – regional level has jeopardised substantive regional integration. African countries score on average 0.327 (where a score of 1 indicates being fully integrated) on Africa's Regional Integration Index. This shows that continental integration remains limited, leading to high trade costs, a fragmented investment landscape, and weakening the competitiveness of African countries on the global stage. Strategic autonomy also stands to suffer since fragmented strategic interests and priorities make African countries more dependent on foreign investments, and thereby vulnerable to foreign influence and interference. In order to address geopolitical shockwaves, new impetus must be given to efforts to forge political unity on the continent. The AU, 20 years after its foundation and despite its norm – setting and interventionist ambitions, has shown limited capacity to address the continent's needs, particularly in terms of peace and security, and is witnessing growing disagreement among its member states on key issues, such as the diplomatic response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Regional Economic Communities, while envisioned as the building blocks of African integration, have not fully achieved that objective.

Providing the AU with means to fulfil the Agenda 2063 commitments, upgrade regional integration structures so as to empower RECs in their regional mandates, and building the infrastructure that can connect Africa are therefore key priorities for the future of the continent in the changing international system. Implementing these steps should significantly improve African agency and resilience.

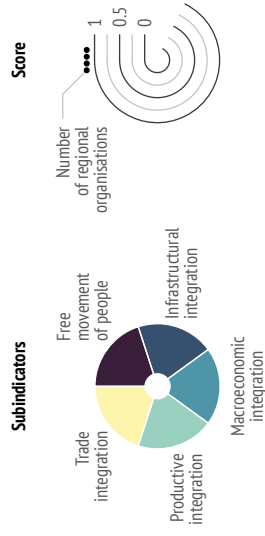


## Regional Integration Index

2019

The AFRICA Regional Integration Index measures the continental integration of each African country along five subindicators. While countries across North Africa tend to have relatively well integrated infrastructures and macroeconomics, some Southern African countries score higher on trade integration.

Regional organisations recognised by the AU include AMU, CENSAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC.

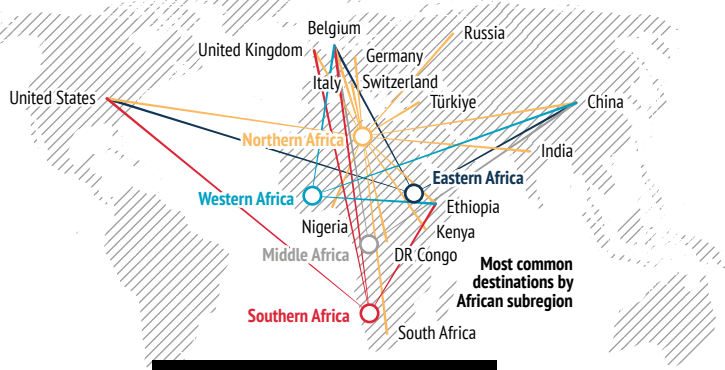


# STRONGER TOGETHER

Claiming a seat at the table

African countries need a stronger voice in world affairs and in shaping multilateral decisions. Although African agency has grown in the past number of years and the continent is integrated into the global economy, the multilateral system hardly reflects the interests and needs of African countries, whose voice remains marginal – including on key issues such as climate negotiations, cybersecurity and data protection, or representation in Bretton Woods institutions to achieve fairer macroeconomic policies and conditionalities. As a result, African countries remain heavily dependent on and vulnerable to globalisation, without sufficient capacity to reform the international system’s regulatory and governance frameworks. Given Africa’s renewed geopolitical prominence in the world, the lack of a coherent voice to advance African interests is just one of the issues. More structural obstacles include the deterioration of nearly all security and macro-economic trends, which weakens Africa’s diplomatic posture and reinforces dependencies on external political and economic actors. Furthermore, in an era of fast-paced technological development, energy and raw material pressures are likely to exacerbate the resource curse, shifting the focus of strategy-making away from long-term planning to accommodate short-term gains. Finally, political fragmentation at the local and regional levels hampers the emergence of a ‘consensus’ on key decisions affecting the future of the continent.

It is clear therefore that providing the AU and the RECs with the right tools and resources to steer the continent’s international engagement, so that Africa can become a leading player in global politics and protect the interest of its citizens, will be a high priority in the years to come.



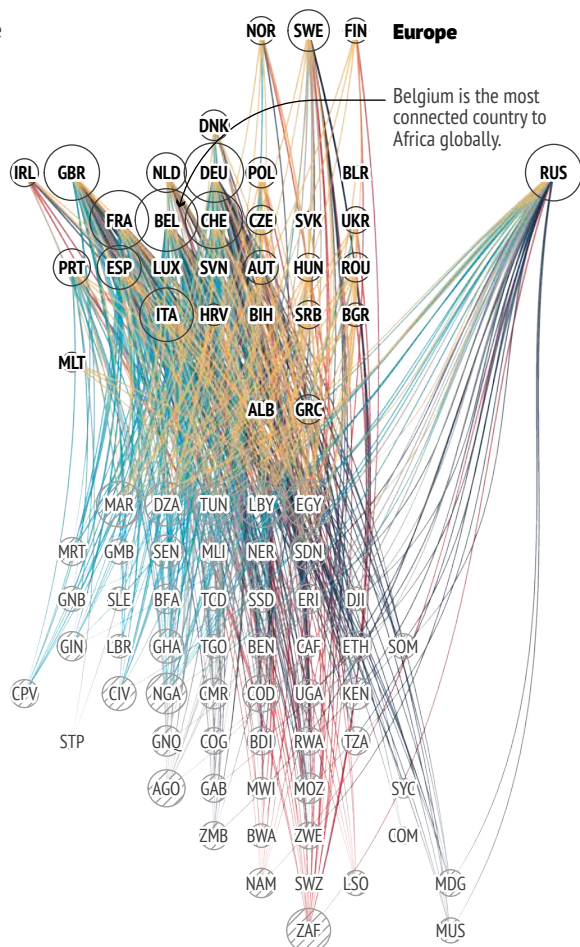
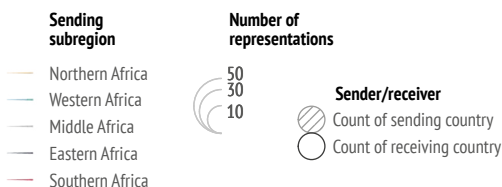
## African diplomatic representations

2020

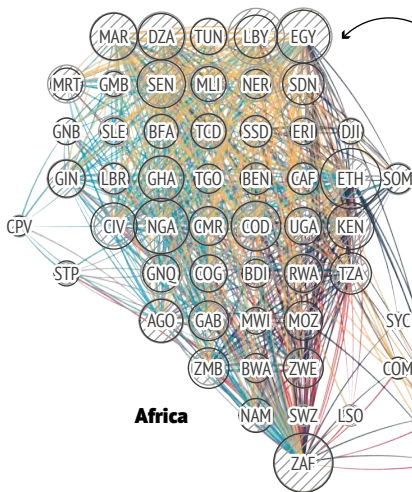
African countries have a total of over 2 000 diplomatic representations.

Egypt, South Africa, Libya, Nigeria and Morocco maintain the highest number, while Belgium, China, the United States, Ethiopia and South Africa are the most common locations of such representations.

These graphics show African countries’ connections to each continent/region separately.



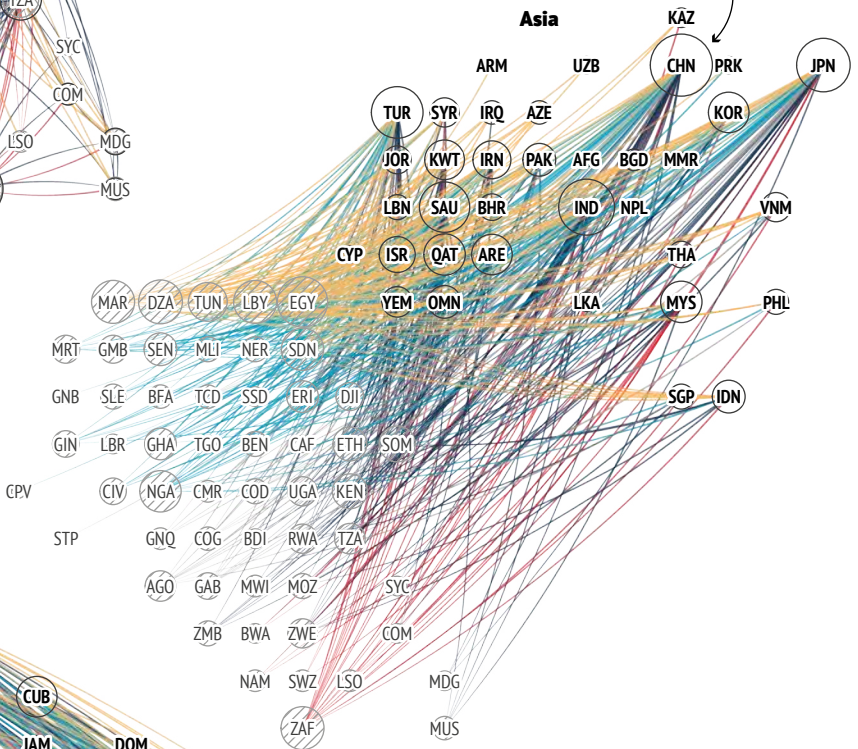




While Egypt is Africa's most connected country globally, South Africa is connected to the highest number of other African countries.

China, India and Japan are the most common Asian destinations for African foreign representations.

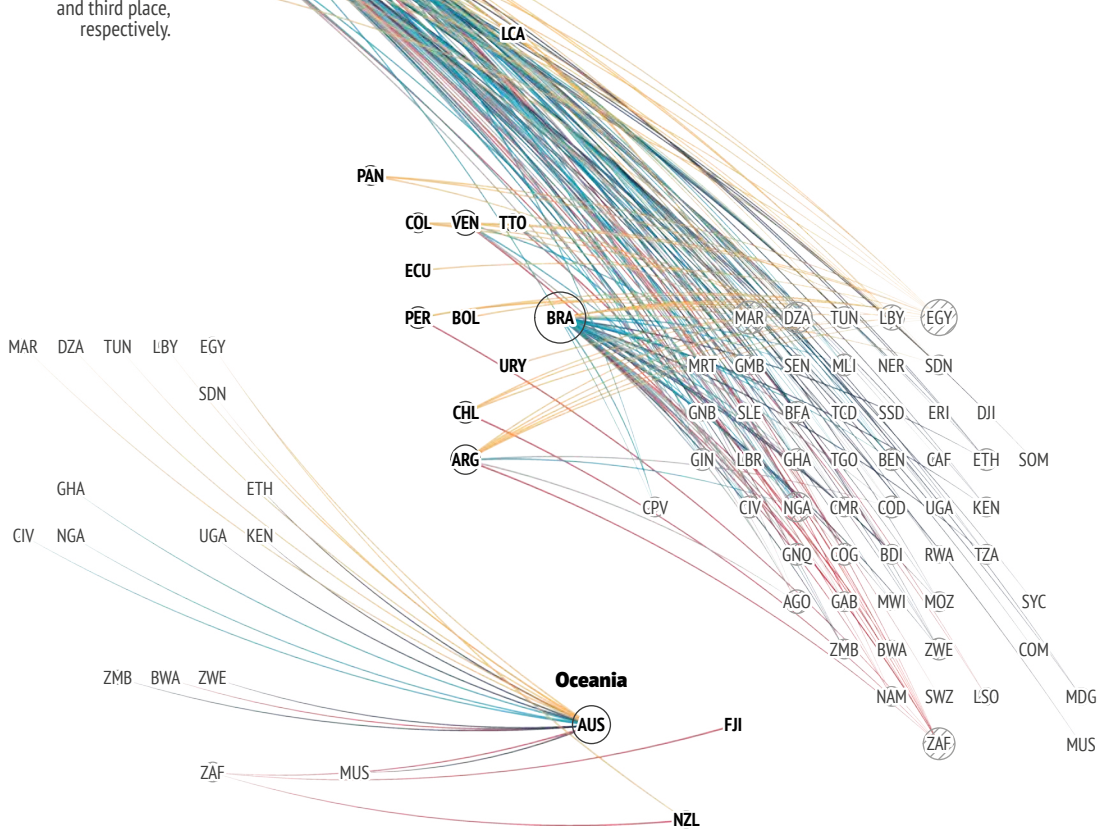
**Asia**



**Americas**



The United States is by far the country that is most connected to Africa in the Americas. Brazil and Canada are in second and third place, respectively.



**Oceania**

# SECURITY PROVISION

## Matching supply and demand

The conflict landscape in Africa is deteriorating and armed conflict trends hamper prospects for stability and growth. In the last decade, state and non-state conflicts, civil wars, violent extremism and last but not least military coups have increased in absolute and relative terms compared to other continents. Once conflicts appear, they leave instability in their wake. In fact, relapse into the cycle of violence is statistically more likely than the path of resolution and transition to peace.

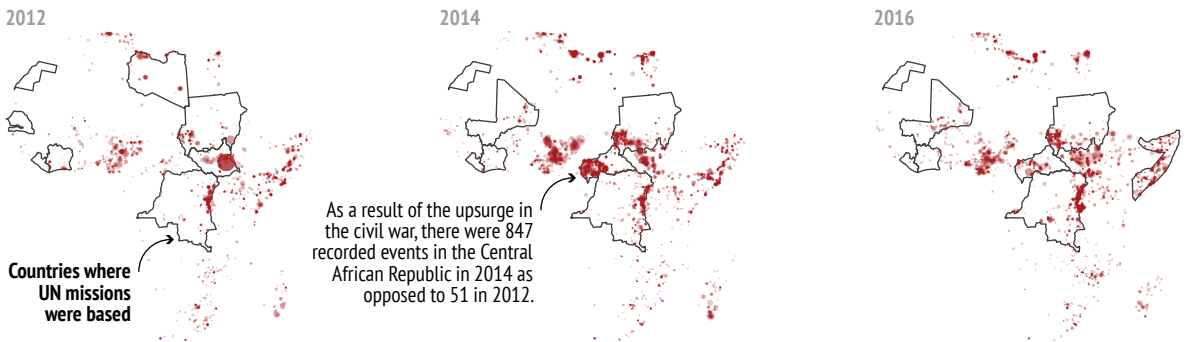
Against this backdrop, although 73 % of UN Security Council resolutions in 2020 dealt with peace and security in Africa, African

countries are not only recipients of peace operations. African countries are increasingly providers of security in conflict-affected settings at the regional and sub-regional level. For instance, 32 % of the military and police personnel of the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) come from neighbouring members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and 31 % of the uniformed personnel of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) come from Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) countries. African-led peace support operations also comply with this logic.

This double trend – an increase in African demand for security and an increase in

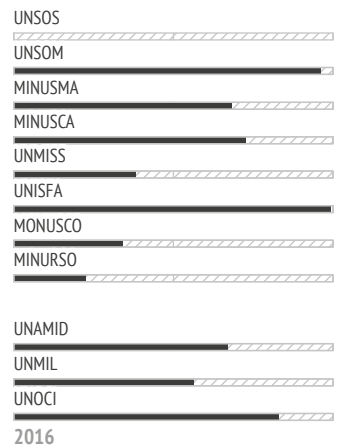
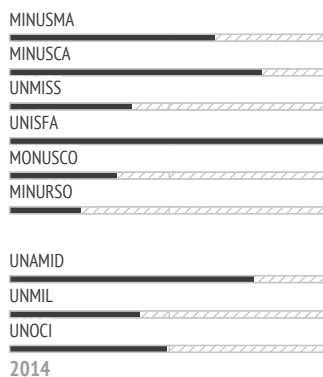
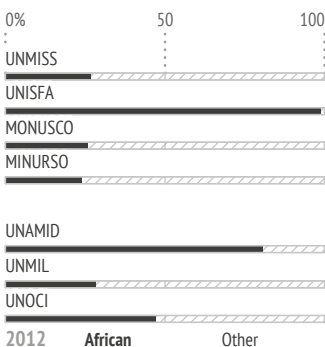
### Political violence involving militia

Fatalities 0 ● 250 ● 500 ● 750 ● 1 000



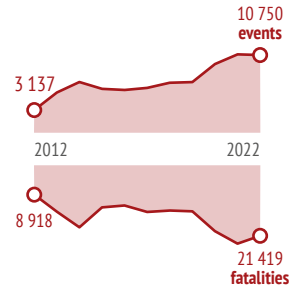
### African personnel contributions

To Africa-based UN peacekeeping operations

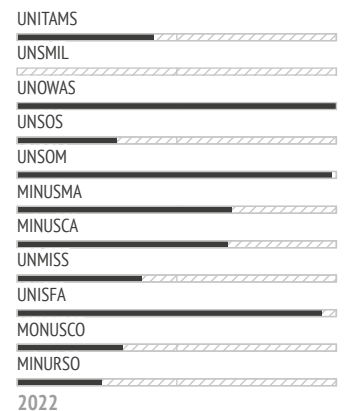
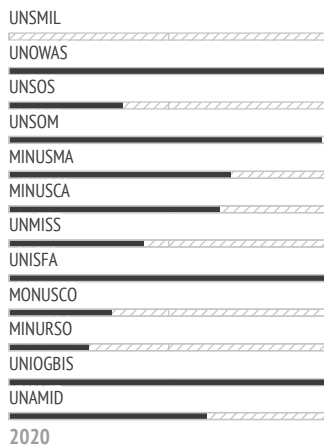
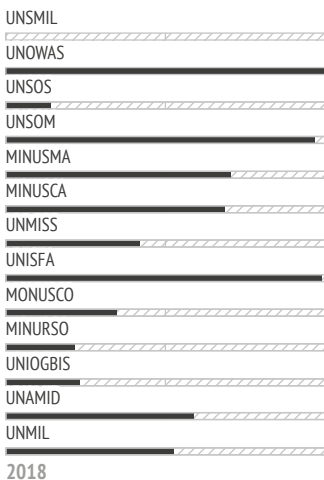
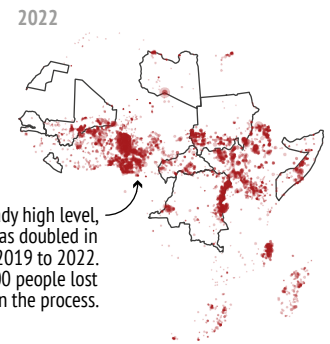
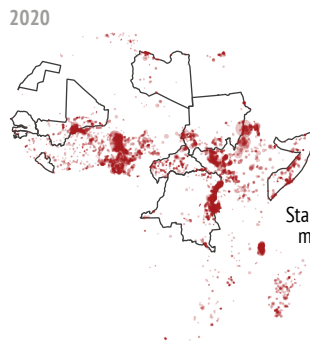
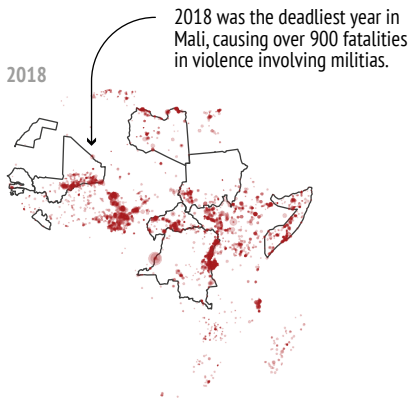
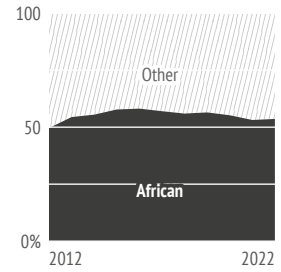


African supply of security – poses two challenges. First, a risk of militarisation of solutions to crises, which translates into a lack of efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the root causes; second, a risk that rising financing needs for African security, without adequate mechanisms and (in some cases) democratic oversight, could work to the detriment of sustainable and accountable African security sector reform, which may further exacerbate, rather than alleviate, conflict situations. This could create a vicious circle whereby African countries are simultaneously security beneficiaries and providers without scrutiny into what implications this could have for conflict dynamics at the regional and local levels.

Violent events involving militia have tripled and fatalities have more than doubled from 2012 to 2022.



The share of African peacekeepers in Africa-based UN operations has hovered just over 50% since 2012. Meanwhile, that figure dropped to 8% for operations outside Africa in 2022.



# A NEW POWER PLAY

## Foreign information manipulation and interference

There is mounting evidence that hybrid threats are rising in Africa, affecting many countries' prospects for stability, resilience and prosperity. The African 'infosphere', the geopolitical space where knowledge, information and narratives circulate, is increasingly fragile, and vulnerable to the actions of malign actors. Technological progress and digital transformations have resulted in the greater prominence and size of the African infosphere, with growing numbers of internet and social media users exposed to new types of threats to personal and societal security.

Meanwhile, the 'global battle of narratives' has prompted actors to engage in various forms of hybrid campaigns, specifically foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), to influence foreign audiences for political gains. Hybrid actors also tend to target and exploit situations where fragility, conflict and violence are prevalent. They capitalise on the inability of African governments to provide effective governance and services, including the provision of security in ungoverned or contested spaces. African contexts (including the Sahel, Horn of Africa, Central Africa and Great Lakes) hence provide fertile territory for malign actors to conduct hybrid operations and test old tactics in new settings, particularly to gain control of 'valuable' geopolitical and geo-economic spaces that present an economic, political, technological or military advantage.

### What does this mean for the partnership?

A fragile and vulnerable infosphere in Africa is a key obstacle to peace and prosperity, as it can allow hostile narratives to change the perceptions and behaviours of populations, as well as create operational hubs in African countries for predatory actions by malign actors. If the African continent becomes the next frontline in the global battle of narratives, this could be to the detriment of African strategic interests and autonomy,

with the risk of countries being embroiled in proxy confrontations. Additionally, hybrid threats may compound other threats, including violent extremism and transnational organised crime, and hinder peaceful transitions towards inclusive and accountable governance systems. This could have serious consequences for the security of African societies. Antidotes to foreign interference and hybrid threats include building capacities at the national/regional level; support to African integration through the AfCFTA; and initiatives aimed at building resilience in countries' infospheres.

### Political violence involving external actors

% of events per country, Jan 2020-May 2023

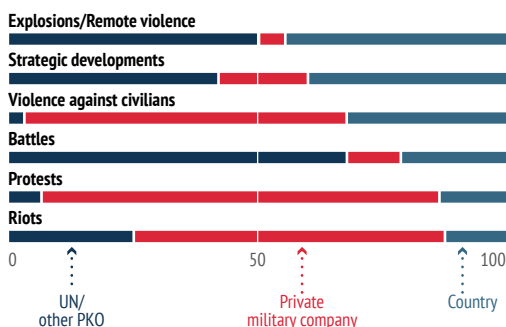


To get a sense of violent events involving foreign actors, we can compare them to the overall number of recorded violent events per country and type of event. In order to separate the signal from the noise we discarded stark outliers by only considering countries and event types comprising a minimum 50 recorded events.

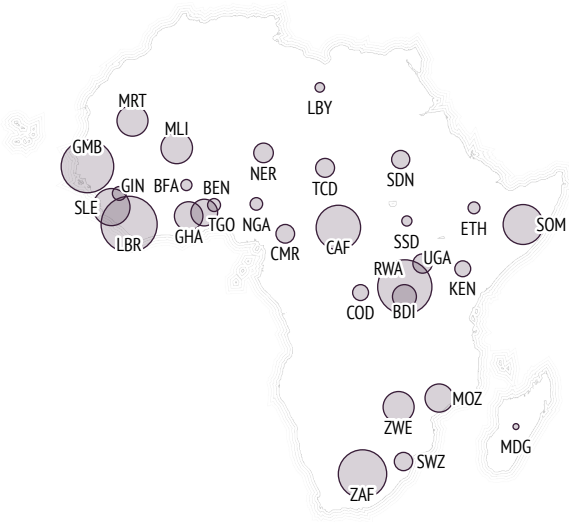
To illustrate, several neighbouring countries' defence forces and private military companies fight Islamist insurgents in northern Mozambique. 17 out of 62 (or 27 %) events of explosions or remote violence involved such forces (either as perpetrators or targets). In another example, 22 % of recorded instances of political violence against civilians in the Central African Republic were perpetrated by foreign actors, virtually all of them by the Wagner Group.

### Share of events by type and actor

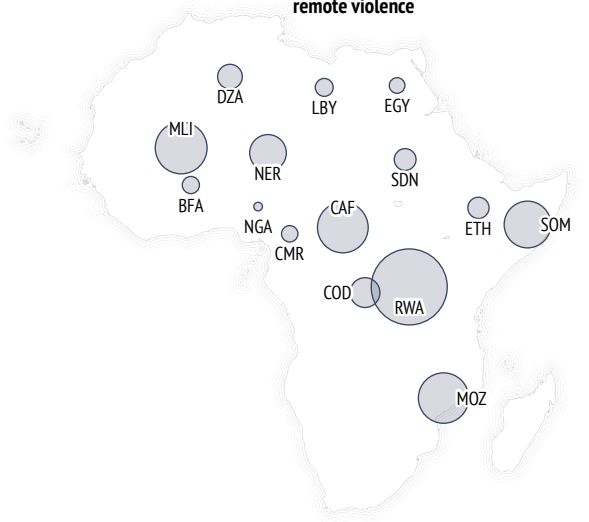
Private military companies are known for their use of violence against civilians and suppressing unrest



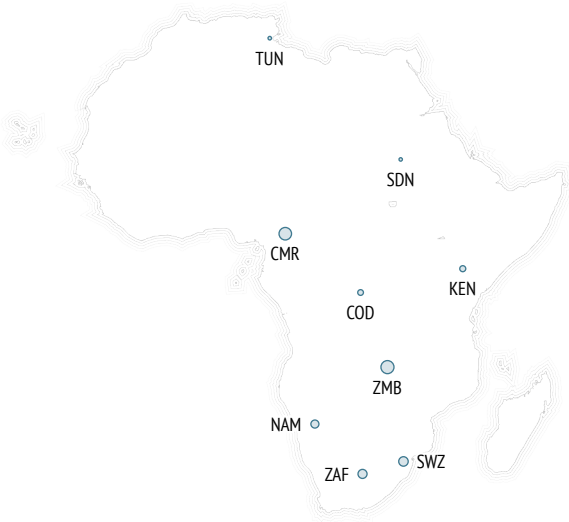
### Battles



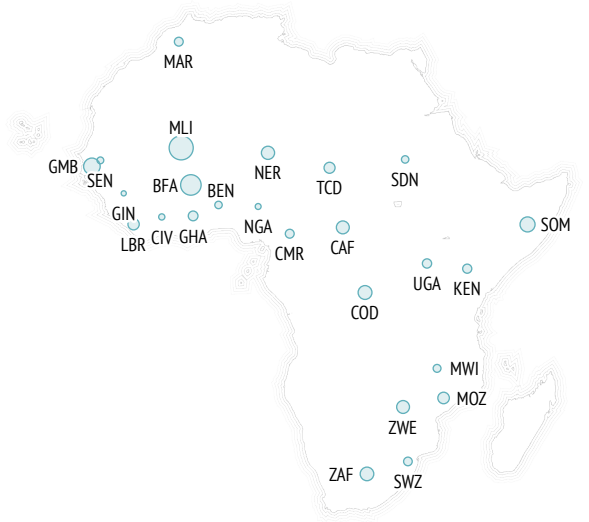
### Explosions/ remote violence



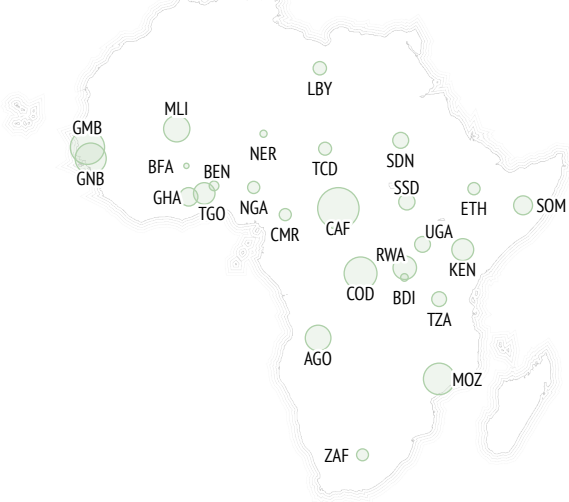
### Protests



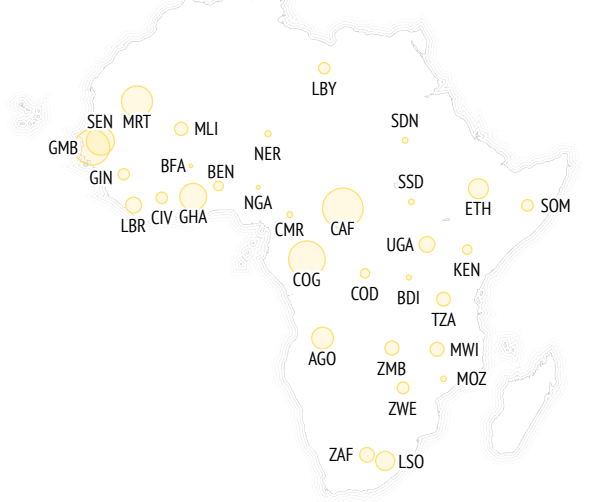
### Riots



### Strategic developments



### Violence against civilians



# FOREIGN POWERS

Exerting influence and meddling in conflicts

Foreign involvement, including attempts to exert influence in crises and meddling in conflicts, has been a rising trend in Africa. Almost half of all wars today involve significant foreign forces, reflecting greater global power competition and greater engagement by middle and regional powers. Libya and Sudan are just two examples of how proxies can aggravate local dynamics. Foreign presence in the Horn of Africa has been growing in recent years. The Red Sea corridor has always been of strategic importance, but its role has become even more significant in the wake of the war in Ukraine, as the waterway is critical for the safe transport of energy to and from Europe. In recent years there has been a large build-up of foreign military bases in the Horn: Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea alone host about ten foreign military bases. A wide array of foreign powers has sought to gain a foothold in the region through a variety of military, economic and cultural means, such as through arms trade, vaccine diplomacy and debt relief. Foreign power proxies can sustain wars and make them more difficult to end.

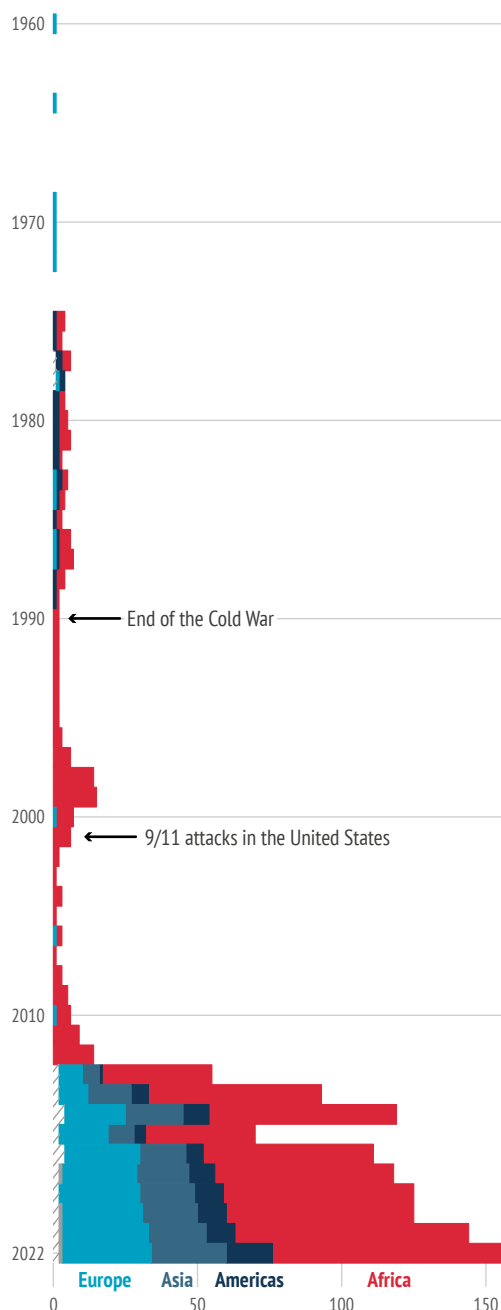
## What does this mean for the partnership?

Given the world's growing multipolarity and the proliferation of threats, Africa will be at the epicentre of proxy wars between different players seeking to expand their presence on the continent or attempting to weaken their adversaries. One of the priorities of the AU-EU partnership could be to protect member states as much as possible from the implications of these trends, for instance by developing common tools and approaches to prevent, deter or counter foreign meddling. The partnership should also support stronger local accountability, leadership and democratic processes. Apart from the normative value of such an approach, this is strategically important as elections and transitional processes are paramount for the region to move forward and mitigate interference. The reinforcement of RECs, AU structures and multilateral initiatives for dialogue can also contribute substantially to make African countries less exposed and vulnerable to foreign involvement.

## Foreign governments meddle militarily

The number of foreign governments supporting armed internationalised intrastate conflicts with troops has risen sharply in the past decade.

While a few – mostly African – governments sent their troops to African conflict zones from 1990 to 2012, 2013 marked a sharp turn. Ever since, an increasing number and share of non-African countries have been sending their forces into active conflicts on the continent.

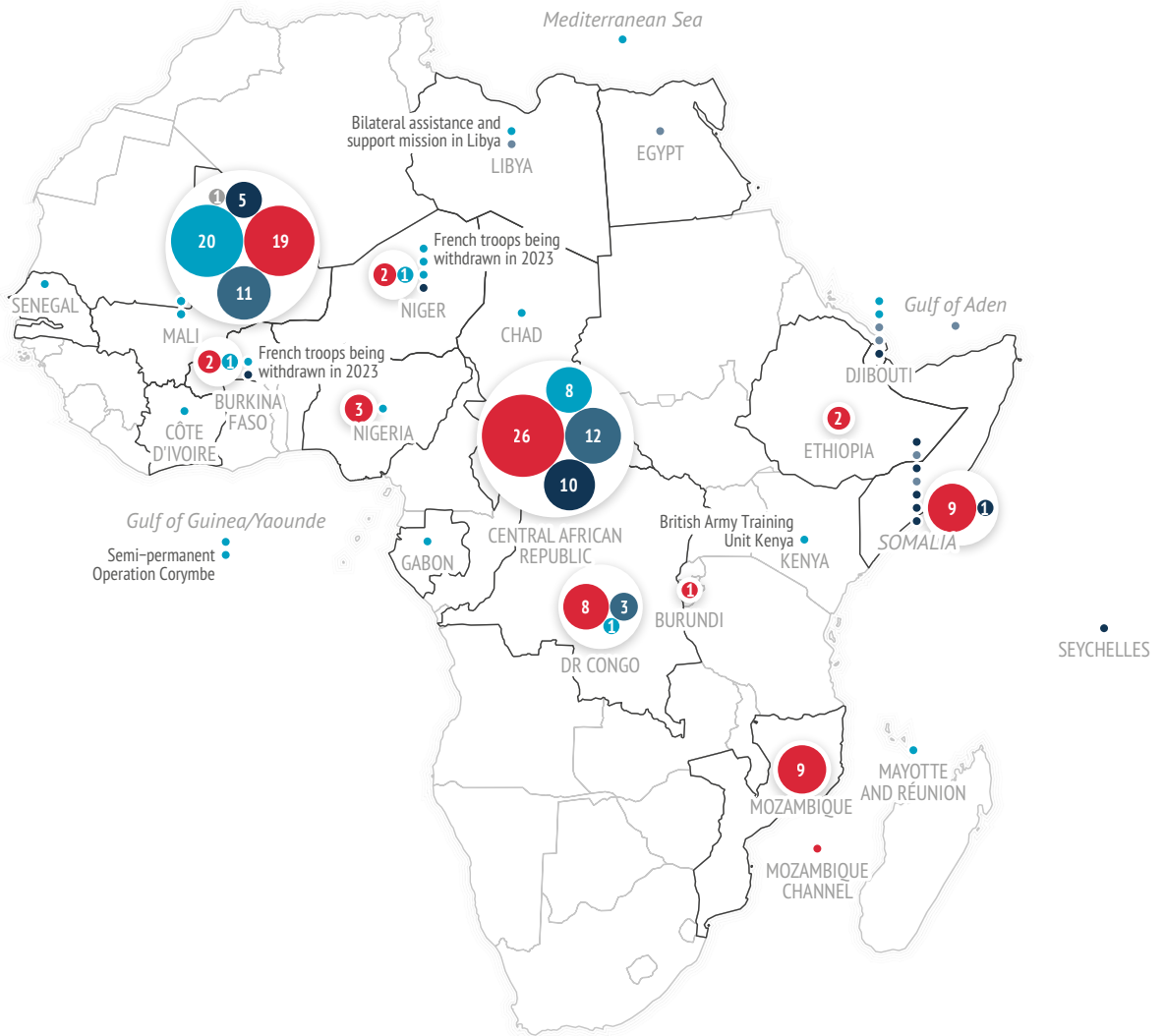


## Foreign military bases and deployments abroad

In 2022, 90 different countries supported 10 African governments in their internationalised intrastate conflicts by sending their own troops, totalling 157 instances of a foreign country sending troops to any one country.

Region of origin ● Africa ● Europe ● Asia ● Americas ● Oceania

Military bases and deployments 2022 ●●●●● Foreign militaries involved in active conflict 2022 ●●●●●



# STRATEGIC CHOICES

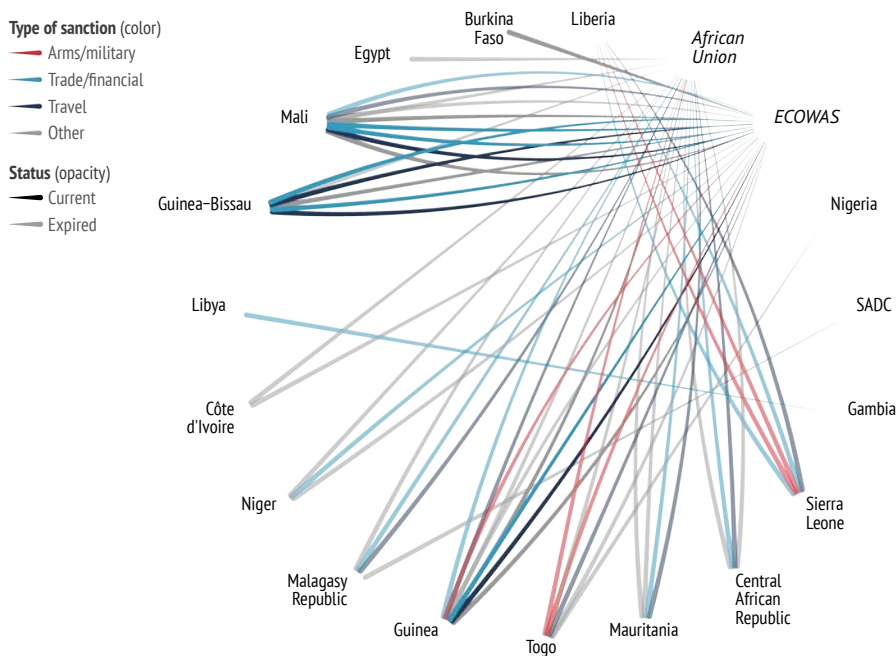
## The costs of non-Africa

The last infographic in this *Chaillot Paper* covers what we believe is a fundamental policy issue, the one connecting the dots between developments in different sectors. Africa's path towards peace and prosperity depends on a cooperative, rules-based global system promoting sustainable growth, as much as it does on internal cohesion and integration. In other words, given that a divided continent in a world that is divided or 'at war' would wipe out economic and human development gains, an integrated Africa in a reformed, equitable international system would probably be the most desirable scenario. However, the continent appears to be increasingly fragmented internally. Those

divisions go beyond the inability of African countries to speak with a unified voice at the UN General Assembly, for example on the resolutions on Ukraine. The continent is witnessing territorial fragmentation across the centre/peripheries dividing line, especially as a result of actions by extremist groups; and a widening divide between democratic and autocratic countries. Cleavages also arise from the different impacts of global shocks on African countries. Some experience humanitarian stress, food insecurity and economic hardship, while others benefit from rising energy prices and the willingness of Western powers to diversify their supplies.

### Who does Africa sanction?

Sanctions by African countries/entities against African countries that have been in place at any point in time since 2000





### What does this mean for the partnership?

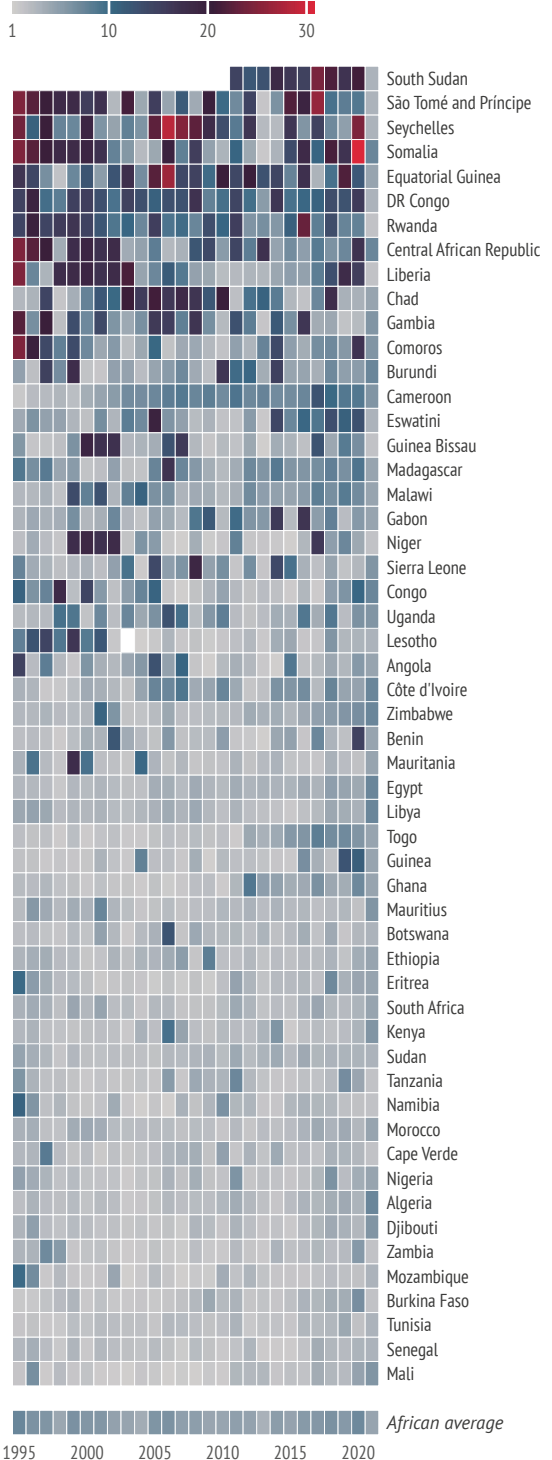
An ‘integrated Africa’ is mentioned as one of the key transformational outcomes of Agenda 2063. Yet intra–continental divisions stand in the way of attaining these ambitious objectives. The AU–EU Partnership should build integration through an emphasis on key functional priorities, generating positive spillovers for other sectors. Investment packages via the Global Gateway should not only facilitate transitions (in the fields of energy, digital technology, jobs, health and education) but also transfer know-how and skills and support sustainable connectivity solutions. To be truly ambitious, the EU’s Global Gateway support to African connectivity can be part of the solution for Africa to transcend the barriers created by geography, politics and history, fostering stronger solidarity among African countries, as well as between Africa and Europe.

#### African voting at the UN

Africa does not speak with one voice, and voting at the UN bears witness to that fact. Taking the numerically most common vote of African countries per resolution as a baseline, one can discern the countries that vote in direct opposition to that majority. While some countries persistently fall out of line in roughly one out of five votes, others have radically changed their stances as a result of a change in government.

#### Countries voting against the African majority

Percentage of country's votes against majority



# CONCLUSION

## KEY ENTRY POINTS FOR THE AU-EU PARTNERSHIP

The table below provides key starting points for stronger AU-EU cooperation to address challenges that affect both continents. The entry points are extrapolated from the ‘What to watch out for’ sections in the previous chapters and highlight the need for policymakers to take immediate action *vis-à-vis* challenges that could derail the partnership or grow exponentially as threats to the agreed priorities to address current needs (see ‘What’s up?’ sections) in the coming years.

### PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

#### Environmental shocks

- > The AU and EU should develop a truly ‘joint’ green transition, building a sustainable growth model on both continents.
- > Ambitious goals for environmental, social and public governance (ESG+) can generate concrete and attainable value for citizens and public stakeholders.

#### Debt and state fragility

- > The AU-EU Partnership can help build new foundations for a fairer multilateral system to address Africa’s macrofinancial instability.

#### Urban population growth

- > Developing a ‘city-to-city’ partnership between the two continents would foster investment, exchange of knowledge and best practices, and other forms of cooperation to support sustainable urbanisation processes.

### PEACE AND SECURITY

#### Organised crime

- > Investment in international cooperation structures such as ENACT to fund training, transnational organised crime investigation and prevention strategies and operations.

#### Violent extremism

- > Better international cooperation between security mechanisms from the EU, the AU and the RECs to tackle both the immediate security threats from violent extremist groups as well as better address root causes of violence.

#### Popular discontent

- > Strengthen transparency and openness of the partnership to create spaces for inclusive, bottom-up processes and

politics to shape the policy priorities of the partnership.

integration through the AfCFTA; and actions aimed at building resilience in countries' infospheres.

## MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

### Connectivity

- > Private and public investment in (climate-resilient) infrastructure to help bridge the African infrastructure financing gap and boost connectivity.

### Migration and climate change

- > Prioritise the rights and protection of climate-displaced people.
- > Reinforce adaptive capacity of local populations against climate change and natural hazards.

### Digital migration

- > Invest in research and data collection on how the digitalisation of migration could be harnessed to reduce, rather than increase, inequality.

## INTERNATIONAL ORDER

### Information manipulation and interference

- > Building capacities to counter FIMI at the national/regional level; support to African

### Meddling by foreign powers

- > Joint AU-EU development of tools and approaches to prevent, deter or counter foreign meddling.
- > Support to local accountability, leadership, and democratic processes, as elections and transitional processes are paramount to mitigate interference.

### Integrating the continent

- > Reinforced investment packages via the Global Gateway should not only facilitate (green, digital etc) transitions but also transfer know-how and skills and support sustainable connectivity solutions to foster African integration.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

## AfCFTA

African Continental Free Trade Area

## AI

Artificial Intelligence

## AIS

Automatic Identification System

## AMU

Arab Maghreb Union

## AQIM

al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

## AU

African Union

## BRICS

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

## CEN-SAD

Community of Sahel-Saharan States

## COMESA

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

## DR Congo

Democratic Republic of the Congo

## EAC

East African Community

## ECCAS

Economic Community of Central African States

## ECOWAS

Economic Community of West African States

## ENACT

Enhancing Africa's Response to Transnational Organised Crime

## ESG+

Environmental, social and governance

## EU

European Union

## FDI

Foreign Direct Investment

## FIMI

Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference

## FSI

Food Security Index

## GDP

Gross Domestic Product

## GFSI

Global Food Security Index

## GNI

Gross National Income

## IDP

Internally Displaced Person

## IGAD

Intergovernmental Authority on Development

## IOM

International Organisation for Migration

## JAES

Joint Africa-EU Strategy

## Mbit

Megabit

## ODA

Official Development Assistance

## OECD

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

## OPEC

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

## PKO

Peacekeeping operations

## RECs

Regional Economic Communities

## SADC

Southern African Development Community

## SLOCs

Sea lines of communication

## TCI

Transport Composite Index

## TOC

Transnational organised crime

## UN

United Nations

## UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## UNFCCC

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Africa is experiencing a far-reaching social, economic and demographic transformation, while gaining increasing prominence in global geopolitics. To take account of these changes, this *Chaillot Paper* sets out to update our ‘mental map’ of the continent and zoom in on the trends and dynamics that are reshaping Africa and thus affecting its relationship with the European Union.

Modelled on an atlas, it presents a series of visually engaging maps, charts and graphics, to convey key messages and statistics on themes as diverse as food sovereignty, urbanisation, climate resilience, migration and mobility as well as peace and security. Using these infographics, it aims to chart the way forward for a modern and forward-looking partnership between the African Union and the European Union. The volume looks at all areas for collaboration that were identified in the AU-EU Joint Vision for 2030, tracking the progress made and, above all, underlining the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.