AFRICA iN FACT

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Good Governance Africa

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LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

AFRICA'S LONG MARCH FORWARD

SWAPO
NAMIBIA'S SINKING SHIP

ZIMBABWE
POLITICS AND THE MILITARY

MASS TRAUMA
WHY AFRICANS VOTE FOR TYRANTS

NIGERIA
ECHOES OF A CIVIL WAR

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*Weekly remuneration available for participants who complete the second phase of the survey. (Ts&Cs apply)

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We aim to improve governance performance across the continent; to inform and persuade the policy community that transparency and accountability are the basic building blocks of successful development; to strengthen the rule of law; and to build an active citizenry that institutionalises constraints on executive power.
Our publications serve to further these goals. Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and not necessarily of Good Governance Africa.

***Africa in Fact* engages with writers and readers across the continent. As part of that, we invite comment to our Letters section.**

Contributions can be sent to info@gga.org or posted to: The Editor, Africa in Fact, Good Governance Africa, P.O. Box 2621, Saxonwold, 2132

All emails should be clearly marked "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line.

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Liberated but still not free

The 1950s, 60s and 70s were a heady time for Africa, as the continent broke free from the shackles of colonialism after more than a century of formal European rule following the 1884-5 Berlin Conference.

Leaders in the vanguard, such Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, whose country was the first to gain independence in 1957, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere and Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta – brimming with "hope, optimism and confidence" as one of our contributors, Issa Sikiti da Silva, describes it – promoted pan-Africanism, a commitment to political and economic unity, including support for those countries yet to be liberated from colonial or white minority rule.



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But decolonisation was a messy business, even in countries that gained independence without a bloody or protracted liberation struggle.

It is against this background that this edition of *Africa in Fact* seeks to examine the legacy of Africa's liberation movements and independence parties, and the extent to which they continue to influence contemporary politics on the continent. Our writers, from different perspectives, ask the question why, after more than five decades of freedom, too many of Africa's citizens remain imprisoned by poverty, underdevelopment, bloody regional conflicts and authoritarian governments ruled by ageing despots who at best pay lip service to the notion of multi-party democracy?

Why have former liberation movements been unwilling or unable to transform themselves and their countries into well-governed, fully functional democracies? Why is power all too often concentrated in the hands of corrupt elites, and most importantly of all, why do their citizens put up with them?

In his opening article, William Gumede examines why African voters continue to elect tyrants and authoritarian governments. He attributes this phenomenon to the "mass trauma" of colonialism, one feature of which is that people are so terrified of being shut out of patronage systems that they are intimidated into voting for the status quo. "The irony is that the impact

of the trauma of colonialism has brought many African leaders to power who mimic the oppressive behaviour of their former oppressors," he writes.

Da Silva writes that the failure of liberation movements to meet the challenges of the democratic era and face the harsh realities of contemporary politics and socio-economic development dynamics has meant they've been unable to meet peoples' needs, especially in the context of rapid urbanisation across the continent.

The sense of betrayal many Africans feel is summed up in a quote from a disillusioned former liberation activist in Angola, now 75, who tells da Silva: "all the enthusiasm, joy and hope that held up our spirits have gone up in smoke."

For this edition Owen Gagare conducted several face-to-face interviews with veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation war. He quotes the late leader, Joshua Nkomo, who died in 1999, from his autobiography, who said: "the hardest lesson of my life has come to me late. It is that a nation can win freedom without its people becoming free." All of the veterans interviewed had no regrets about their part in the struggle for freedom, but all but one expressed their disappointment at the current state of governance in the country. "My participation in the armed struggle was not in vain, Zipra veteran Baster Magwizi, told Gagare. "It brought about independence even if we may not be free."

Francois Misser writes that the discipline imposed during times of struggle within the liberation movements and the need for strictly hierarchical command structures shaped the one-party states that became a feature after independence, facilitated by the involvement of the Soviet Union, its allies and China. He reminds us that many of those liberation movements remain in place as the ruling party as in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Misser also notes that liberation movements played a role in promoting women's rights both out of necessity and for ideological reasons. Yet a darker legacy of Africa's fight for independence has been a culture of violence, including against and women and children in armed conflicts, as well as widespread use of child soldiers.

Efforts by Nyerere and other first-generation leaders to unify their newly independent countries by the centralisation of power also contributed to a proliferation of one-party states. Creating new national identities was always going to be a challenge given the artificial nature of Africa's colonial borders created with no respect for longstanding ethnic, cultural and linguistic divisions. The legacy of some of these has been profound and often toxic, while five decades of centralised power has helped to create a climate where political parties support the people's vote if they win and cry foul if they don't.

Another legacy of the centralised mentality of post-independence parties is the reluctance of old-style "Big Men" to step down, instead changing their constitutions to allow themselves more terms in office and using the judiciary and the military to stifle opposition parties, and voter rigging behind a façade of regular elections.

Contributor Blamé Ekoue writes about one obvious example, Togo, where the Gnassingbé family has ruled the country, from father to son, since 1967. In Cameroon, meanwhile, President Paul Biya, 88, has, says Amindeh Blaise Atabong, managed to cling to power by a strategy of "presidential silence" over the burning issues affecting his country, including the brutal crackdown on Anglophone dissidents and the COVID-19 crisis. As people lose hope in the system, Atabong says, fresh dissent is brewing in various parts of the country. And as he notes, Biya's longevity in power is not incidental to the support he enjoys from Cameroon's former colonial master, France. Another member of this club is Uganda's Yoweri Museveni.

Using Ethiopia and Zimbabwe as examples, analyst Nick Branson says the militarisation of politics in some African states that evolved out of liberation wars will continue to undermine political stability in these countries unless ruling parties commit to constitutional safeguards,

which keep soldiers in the barracks, rather than allowing them to enter politics or do business with the state. For another view on this subject, read political analyst Linos Mapfumo's article, *The Military, Politics and Power.*

In Angola, Ini Ekott writes that while the new president, João Lourenço, initially made some reforms, notably steering Angola away from the familial patronage system under José Eduardo dos Santos, the MPLA is still the ruling party and intends to stay that way. An indication of this, analysts and opposition activists say, is ongoing attacks on dissidents. The ruling party also persists in delaying promised local elections, which would likely see it lose control over sub-national governments.

So, the question must be asked: is Africa doomed to be constrained by past glories and old loyalties, ruled by parties who rely on their struggle credentials to stay in power even as they fail to deliver? Well, there are signs that change is not only possible, but stirring. For a start, as the World Bank noted in a report late last year, sub-Saharan Africa is now home to more than a billion people, half of whom will be younger than 25 in 2050.

And as Ronak Gopaldas points out in his article, in the case of South Africa, the electorate has changed significantly since the African National Congress (ANC) came to power. Young voters do not remember the struggle their parents and grandparents fought and feel less affinity and loyalty to the liberation party. This, as well as greater urbanisation and a declining rural voter turnout, make a future era of coalition politics a real possibility. The ANC, bedevilled by allegations of corruption, economic mismanagement, patronage and non-service delivery, has already seen its national majority eroded in recent elections and it lost three major municipalities in the 2016 local government elections.

Interestingly, as Frederico Links writes, something similar appears to be happening in Namibia, too. The liberation party, Swapo, held sway since independence in 1990 until it narrowly lost its two-thirds majority in the National Assembly in elections in late 2019. Links says that party members opposed to the current leadership are openly calling for a Swapo government to be recalled, including a group called the Namibia Exile Kids Association, made up of children of former liberation leaders, who have called for the "ship to sink".

Meanwhile, in Nigeria, Paul Adepoju writes, a new generation unhappy with the current leadership has harnessed social media to form a decentralised movement for change, including recent protests against police brutality. Adepoju's article examines how these protests echo the grievances that fuelled Nigeria's ruinous civil war in 1967-70, fought between the secessionist south-eastern state of Biafra and the federal government.

However, while anger with bad governance in all its forms are real and present across the continent, and for many economic freedom remains elusive, it is important to recognise the progress that has been made since the independence era.

Raphael Obonyo's article notes that despite having to shake off the dire socio-economic legacies inherited from colonialism, including arbitrary borders, single crop economies and corrupt elites, the continent is transforming itself. He reminds us that in 2018 Africa was the world's second-fastest growing region, experiencing an average annual GDP growth of 4.6% for the period 2000 – 2016. Then came COVID. Nevertheless, the African Development Bank says that economic growth could rebound to 3% in 2021, provided governments manage the infection rate well.

Ultimately, African governments would do well to take note of a point Gopaldas makes in his article: "In the life of every liberation movement there is an inflection point where past performance and history counts less than future service delivery."

Susan Russell – Editor



Africa's mass trauma

The reason why Africans still vote for toxic post-liberation tyrants.

By William Gumede



ABOVE:
People queue to vote at a polling station in Tlhabologang township in Coligny, South Africa, 2019
Photo: Luca Sola/ AFP

Since the end of colonialism, apartheid and white-minority regimes, many African countries appear to have had disproportionally large numbers of psychopathic, narcissistic and just mean-spirited leaders.

All these types of leaders in many cases focus on their own self-aggrandisement, often deliberately sowing societal or ethnic divisions for self-enrichment and looting public resources. In power, they also deliberately cause chaos, confusion and uncertainty – to perpetuate their rule.

African countries, with their high levels of poverty, contestation over legal, cultural and moral codes, and lack of direction, are fertile ground for psychopathic, narcissistic and mean-spirited leaders.

Ravi Chandra, one of the leading psychologists of political leadership, says such leaders are "not beholden to laws or responsible to their relationships, organisation, community or even country as a whole".

Many African liberation movements, in the fight for independence, pursued armed struggles, engaging in guerrilla warfare or violent protests. Examples include South Africa's African National Congress (ANC),

Zimbabwe's Zimbabwean African National Union- Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF), Algeria's National Liberation Front (NLF), Angola's People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo).

A second group of liberation movements are those that did not fight colonial, apartheid or white minority regimes, but fought brutal first generation, post-colonial dictatorship. Examples of these include the National Resistance Army, under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni, who fought Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, one of the particularly brutal first generation African post-colonial dictators.

MASS TRAUMA CAN ALTER THE WAY THE VICTIMS MAKE DECISIONS, THE LEADERS AND PARTIES THEY SUPPORT AND HOW THEY VOTE

Another example is Paul Kagame's Rwandan Patriot Front, which fought the dictatorial government of Juvénal Habyarimana. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of rebel groups that fought and overthrew the brutal *Derg* dictatorship under Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam, also fought an indigenous post-colonial dictatorship.

In violent military struggles, as was the case in the struggles for liberation or independence in Africa, hard leaders, often psychopathic narcissists, who talk tough rhetoric against the oppressors, rise easily through the leadership ranks.

Cases in point are former Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni. Mugabe, to stop the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions from embarking on a strike in 1998, warned them: "I have degrees in violence".

Colonialism, apartheid and dictatorship caused mass trauma to the individuals who experienced them. Carolyn Hilarski, a trauma specialist from the State University of New York, defines historical trauma as: "experienced by a specific cultural, racial, or ethnic group. It is related to major events such as slavery, the Holocaust, forced migration, and violent colonisation".

Research has shown that mass trauma, such as colonialism, apartheid and dictatorships, and chronic long-standing poverty and unemployment, can alter the way the victims make decisions, the leaders and parties they support and how they vote.

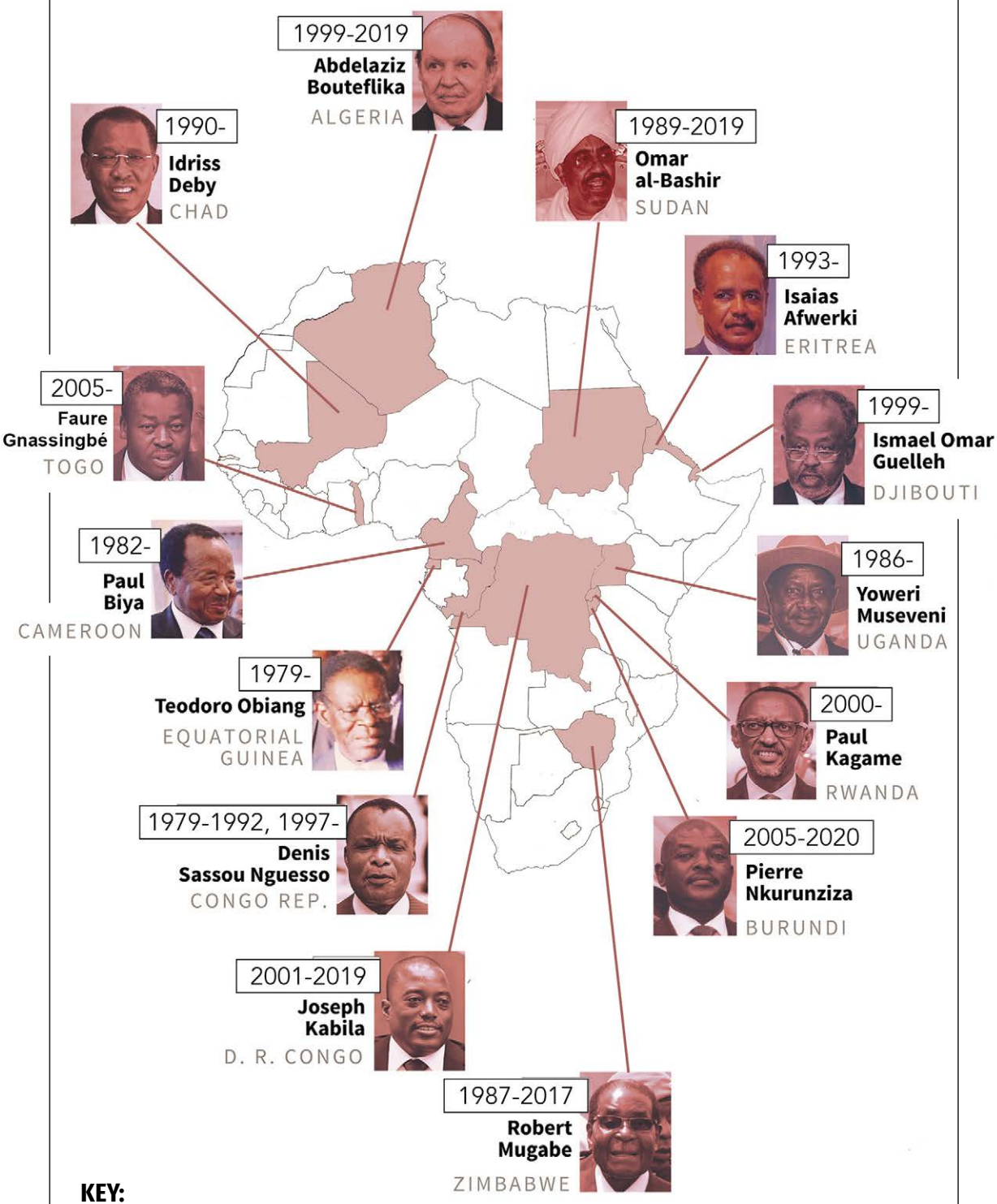
Moreover, Miri Scharf and Ofra Mayseless from Israel's Haifa University, in a study first published in 2010, revealed that unprocessed trauma that caused problems in communication and interaction, could even be transmitted from victims of historical and communal trauma, across second and third generations. The second and third-generation offspring of victims of trauma, although they did not experience the trauma themselves, often also behaved as if they had done so directly.

The study focused on second-generation Israelis who were descendants of Holocaust victims and their children. The study was done on healthy adults, with no apparent psychological problems.

Similar conclusions can be reached about the descendants of African victims of trauma – from colonialism, apartheid and dictatorships. One of the consequences of trauma is that in many African countries, the poor, marginalised and desperate regularly support leaders and parties that, on the face of it, go against their own interests, only further increasing their poverty, marginalisation and underdevelopment.

This is one of the reasons why Africa has remained overwhelmingly poor since the end of colonialism. Power-hungry, violent and cruel leaders, with their populist rhetoric, corrupt behaviour and

AFRICA'S LONG-STANDING PRESIDENTS



Source: AFP



ill-suited policies, crash economies, which leads to mass starvation, societal breakdown and violence.

In Zimbabwe, for example, the poor consistently voted for the late Robert Mugabe, even as his policies caused immense suffering. In South Africa, many desperately poor communities have supported former president Jacob Zuma as leader of the country and as party leader, thereby voting to continue their own poverty, marginalisation and underdevelopment. In Uganda, people have continued to support Museveni, who has clung to power for 35 years, leading the country into continuing cycles of decline, decay and disorder.

Sadly, many ordinary Africans are often so traumatised by the legacy of colonialism or the first-generation post-colonial leaders that they believe the likes of Museveni, Mugabe and Zuma single-handedly liberated them from former oppressors.

Although independence and liberation were achieved decades ago, these leaders often still blame colonialism, apartheid and imperialism for present governance failures, usually a cover-up for their own incompetence and corruption. Voters lap this up – and continue to support them, despite their failures.

These leaders and their parties often castigate black opposition parties as surrogates of former colonial powers and former apartheid governments, who if elected will bring back these former colonial powers and apartheid governments.

"Puppets of the British will never rule Zimbabwe", Mugabe said in 2003 of Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which was challenging the ruling Zanu-PF government.

Mass trauma has instilled a deep fear, anger and resentment among many black communities for former colonial and apartheid elites. The problem is that fear, resentment and anger-based politics against the former colonial powers and the apartheid government creates the environment that makes political leaders who seemingly in rhetoric provide a "fight-back" against the objects of the fear, resentment and anger, more appealing.

THE IRONY IS THAT MANY LEADERS MIMIC THE OPPRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF THEIR FORMER OPPRESSORS

So, mass traumatised, formerly oppressed communities appear to put greater value in parties and their leaders who in rhetoric, violently attack the object of their historical fear, resentment and anger, than those with honesty, competence and moral values.

As political parties, many of these movements give patronage only to those individuals, communities and regions that support them; and punish those that vote against them. People are so terrified of being shut out they are intimidated into voting.

The irony is that the impact of the trauma of colonialism, apartheid and dictatorships has brought to power many African leaders who mimic the oppressive behaviour of their former oppressors or dictators against their own supporters.

Relatedly, many former oppressed African people tolerate exploitative, corrupt and violent black leaders because they may be useless, but at least they are black – supposedly "one of us", and not from the former oppressor communities.

Peoples' continued support for these toxic former African liberation movements – and the support of other leaders on the continent – explains why most African countries have continued to get poorer than they were under colonialism, why these societies continue to decay and why the best local talent leave for industrial countries. GG

LEFT:
Robert Mugabe giving a speech in Harare, 1980
Photo: Scanpix Sweden / AFP



The long shadow of AFRICA'S LIBERATION WARS

Independence meant freedom, but also a legacy of one-party states, civil wars and violence against women and children

By François Misser

Independence was achieved in several African countries after a national liberation war. In many cases, the liberation movements eventually achieved their ultimate aim, at the cost of enormous sacrifices, and managed to gain access to power. Yet, the victory was not always a military one.

In Algeria, for example, the French army took the upper hand on the field against the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FNL) freedom fighters but lost the political battle, which prompted General Charles De Gaulle to recognise Algeria's independence in July 1962.

In several cases, the strict discipline imposed during times of the struggle within the liberation movements shaped one-party states after independence. This was facilitated by the proximity of many of these anti-colonial movements to the Soviet Union and its allies, or with China. These ties in their struggle against the colonial power was one of necessity; only Russia and China were explicit in their support, while the United States and European countries were reluctant to put pressure on a NATO ally like Portugal during the Cold War.

In many sub-Saharan countries, including South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, liberation movements remain in place as the ruling party. This is also the case in Angola and Mozambique, where the leadership was influenced by

LEFT: National Resistance Army girl soldiers with their kalashnikovs in Kampala, Uganda, 1986
Photo: Alexander Joe / AFP

Marxist ideology and adopted the culture of a single-party state. In Angola, the aggression of South Africa's apartheid regime and the civil war between the two liberation movements, *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (Unita) and *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola – Partido do Trabalho* (MPLA) maintained a lengthy climate of tight social control and the permanence of a one-party state whose face, especially in rural areas, was more the party than the state. The UNITA challengers of the MPLA government applied an even stricter discipline in the state-like government structures set up in their so-called free areas.

Mozambique's struggle for independence went beyond the mere transformation of one state. Several liberation movements owe a lot to the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo), which offered support namely to South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) as Nadja Manghezi describes in her book, *The Maputo Connection: The ANC in the World of Frelimo.*

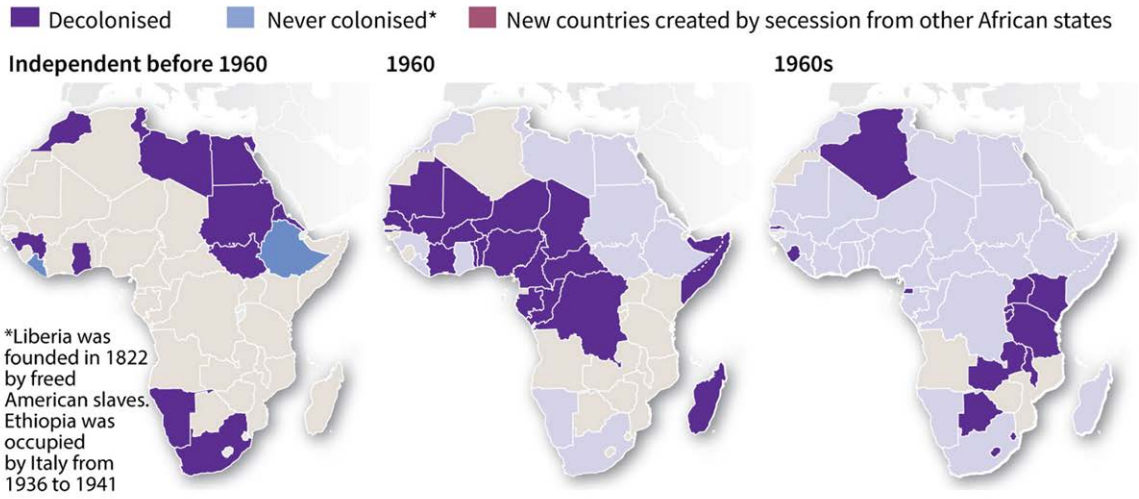
THE STRICT DISCIPLINE IMPOSED DURING TIMES OF THE STRUGGLE SHAPED ONE-PARTY STATES AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Uganda's leadership also acknowledged Frelimo's legacy. During the years he spent at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, from 1967 to 1970, where he studied political science, the current Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, had close links with Frelimo leader Samora Machel and with the Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere.

Museveni, who in 1967 was elected chairman of the University Students African Revolutionary Force (USARF), which grouped students from Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda, spent some time fighting alongside Frelimo in Mozambique. After that, in 1981, Museveni began using his guerrilla experience to start the Ugandan bush war against Milton Obote's dictatorship.

Museveni also supported a number of rebel movements such as John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army.

Decolonisation in Africa Present day borders used to aid comparison



During the so-called Africa's World War in the Great Lakes, Museveni brought support to several Congolese rebel groups who fought the Kabila regime between 1998 and 2002.

To some extent, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), created in 1987, was another Frelimo heir. Its first president, Fred Rwigema, received military training in a Frelimo camp, where he met with Museveni's brother, Caleb Akandwanaho, who later became major general of the National Resistance Army (NRA), after the Rwandan activist joined Museveni's Front of National Salvation (Fronasa) in 1976.

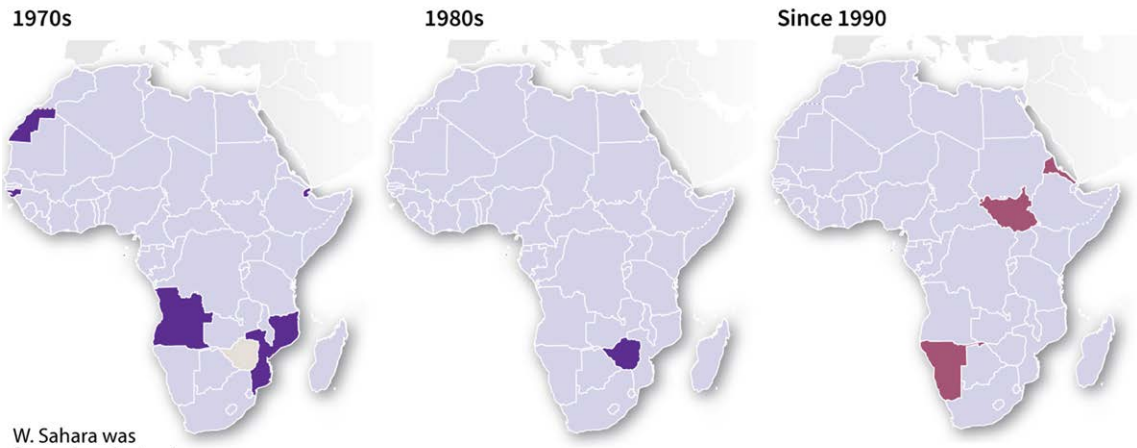
The birth of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1960, followed by the creation of the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF) in 1970, was another legacy of the fight against colonisation. The difference was that the fight was no longer against the colonial power itself but against a decision to hand over Eritrea's territory to Ethiopia, after the departure of the British administration from the former Italian colony in 1952, following a United Nation's decision to federate both territories.

In Eritrea, the liberation movement set up its own administration, which ruled over entire "liberated" territories, finally achieving independence from Ethiopia in 1993. The EPLF benefited from the experience acquired by the complex systems of administration it had developed in its liberated territories where it had introduced land reform and rural cooperatives.

But, as Terrence Lyons, professor at the school of conflict analysis and resolution at George Mason University in the United States points out, the EPLF with its "legacy of intense socialisation, solidarity, and vertical command structures" has produced one of the world's most authoritarian parties.

"The post-war independence era started with great hopes, a referendum in which 99% percent of the population voted in favour of independence, the conversion of the rebel movement into a ruling party, and the creation of a consultative process to write a new constitution," Lyons said in an introduction to his case study published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in January 2019. "In 1998, however, a border war broke out with Ethiopia, resulting in the almost complete militarisation of Eritrean society. It ranks near the bottom of global assessments regarding democracy, human rights, religious freedom, and free media.

"All citizens are required to perform national service, which often takes the form of lifelong military conscription. These harsh conditions and the absence of



Sources: Encyclopedia Universalis, Atlas de l'Afrique (ed.Jaguar), AFP bureaux

economic prospects have contributed to an extraordinary exodus of Eritreans seeking asylum and generating a refugee crisis in Europe," Lyons wrote.

In its 2020 World Report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said: "Eritrea's abuses, especially indefinite national service, continue to drive thousands of Eritreans into exile, including children."

Yet Africa's liberation movements, including the EPLF, played a significant role in promoting women's rights, both out of necessity and for ideological reasons. Visitors to the EPLF's "free areas" were impressed by their achievements in terms of gender equality, and according to Lyons, about 30% of the EPLF fighters were women.

In her book *Women's Lived Landscapes of War and Liberation in Mozambique*, published in 2020, researcher Jonna Katto stresses the important role women played during the country's independence war.

And in Angola, the *Organização da Mulher de Angola*, created in 1962 by Mariana Anapaz in the Congolese bush, mobilised women to participate in all revolutionary tasks, including military ones, but also in health and social services.

Paradoxically, a darker legacy of Africa's fight for liberation has been a culture of violence against women and children in armed conflicts. In a 2002 paper, 'Negotiating Post-war Identities: Child Soldiers in Mozambique and Angola', anthropologist Alcinda Honwana estimated that more than 9,000 children in Angola, and as many in Mozambique, participated in the conflicts as soldiers. In Mozambique, Frelimo's anti-communist rival RENAMO, and Angola's UNITA, were active in recruiting child soldiers, but there are also accounts of both the Frelimo and MPLA governments using children, writes Honwana.

And a 2017 report in *The Guardian* newspaper referred to a UN statement saying that 18,000 child combatants had been recruited in South Sudan during the previous four years.

Meanwhile, UNICEF, which runs a programme to reintegrate child soldiers back into civilian society, said in a June 2020 report that underage combatants were still active in the Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria. As the UN body notes, while children are often abducted or coerced against their will, they also join armed groups for protection, food and a sense of empowerment.

HRW, in a June 2020 report of its own, noted that although



ABOVE:
A guard at John Garang's mausoleum, Juba, South Sudan
Photo: Akuot Chol / AFP



ANOTHER LEGACY OF THE FIGHT FOR LIBERATION HAS BEEN A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICTS

children are primarily recruited by non-state armed groups, there are governments that continue to collaborate with military and paramilitary groups that use child combatants.

This legacy of violence also includes the widespread use of rape as a weapon of war, by government and non-government forces, a contradiction of the values of highly politicised liberation movements, which promoted women's rights. A 2002 HRW report, 'The War within the War', noted: "Within the larger war in the eastern DRC, the warring parties carry out another war: that of sexual violence against women and girls. As military activities increase in one area after another, so do rapes and other crimes against women and girls."

While the UN, NGOs and other organisations such as HRW agree that the practice has been particularly widespread in the eastern DRC, sexual violence against civilians has been widely documented in other post-liberation conflict zones too, such as Liberia, Rwanda, CAR, Sudan, South Sudan and Sierra Leone. GG





An uneasy ALLIANCE

Africa's post-liberation legacy of toxic civil-military relations

By Nick Branson

Unable to achieve their political objectives by peaceful means, African national liberation movements took up arms to compete for power militarily. Freedom fighters aligned with the Soviet Union, such as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), sought to acquire large-scale offensive weaponry for their armed wings. Other groups that adopted the Maoist doctrine of guerrilla warfare, such as the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), initially opted for insurgency and sabotage, but recognised that as the conflict evolved, they would need to prepare for conventional warfare.

In both cases, the act of taking up arms endowed revolutionaries with a sense of righteousness, while military training drilled into them discipline and a respect for hierarchy. The heat of battle further strengthened personal ties between comrades in arms, as acts of bravery and brutality alike solidified their loyalty. However, unity on the battlefield also put soldiers at odds with civilian leaders, who often regarded military operations as a tactic to force their opponents to the negotiating table, rather than the sole path to victory.

Civil-military relations evolved further as African national liberation movements adapted to the act of governing. This required politicians to respond both to popular expectations of inclusive development and pressure from the ranks to share the spoils of war. The latter made demobilising armed wings a risky gambit, lest freedom fighters leverage the abundance of small arms and disgruntled men to foment

LEFT: Pro-Mugabe guerillas train at the Lupane camp in then-Rhodesia, 1980. Later that year, Zimbabwe gained its independence
Photo: Stringer Pressens Bild/ AFP

fresh rebellions against the state. Indeed, while some new governments offered veterans a retirement bonus in exchange for their loyalty, security concerns led other regimes to upgrade their armed forces.

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe viewed apartheid-era South Africa as a threat to stability, and good cause to invest in defence. Mugabe also used the reorganisation of the armed forces as a means to neutralise potential rivals in ZAPU and the Rhodesian security apparatus. Mugabe integrated ex-combatants from all sides into a new Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) with the support of a British military advisory and training team. Four new ZNA brigades were formed by merging battalions from ZANU's armed wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, ZAPU's units, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army, and the Rhodesian Security Forces. In theory, instilling professionalism in the ranks should have kept the military out of politics.

Instead, Mugabe "embraced violence as a pillar of governance", argues Professor Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni of the University of Bayreuth in Germany in his 2015 book *Mugabeism? History, Politics and Power in Zimbabwe*. Central to this was Mugabe's decision to establish a separate fifth brigade reporting directly to him and trained by North Korean military instructors. The unit's nickname, *Gukurahundi*, became synonymous with its indiscriminate attacks on suspected ZAPU "dissidents" and the anti-Ndebele pogroms it perpetrated between 1982-87. The act of committing such atrocities can only have served to strengthen the bond between these men and bound them to Mugabe in the short-term. Yet it also emboldened the top brass, raising questions as to whether the party controlled the gun, or vice versa.

UNBUDGETED PAYMENTS TO FUND THE WAR AND PAYOUTS TO VETERANS STOKED INFLATION AND UPENDED ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY

Zimbabwe's decision to send troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998 owed as much to Mugabe's loyalty to President Laurent Kabila as it did to Zimbabwean generals' lust for mineral wealth. The war proved costly to fund, however, and prompted Zimbabwe's western and multilateral partners to suspend development assistance. Rampant war profiteering benefited a small clique of generals and ZANU-PF elites, while leaving Mugabe to pick up the bill. He was also forced to make concessions to the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, which looked on as the officers got rich. Unbudgeted payments to fund the war and payouts to veterans were funded by printing money, stoking inflation and upending the economy. Veterans seized on the government's weakness, invading white-owned farms, decimating agricultural exports and igniting a political crisis.

The militarisation of Zimbabwean politics only grew as the years passed, with retiring officers securing posts on the ZANU-PF politburo, winning election to parliament, or being awarded sinecures in state-owned enterprises. Indeed, during a 2016 visit to Harare, Professor Hasu Patel, a former ambassador who lectures at the University of Zimbabwe,

warned me that an understanding of "Zimbabwe's civilian-military nexus is crucial to understanding politics". The following year, officers implicated in the *Gukurahundi* atrocities and Congolese looting orchestrated Mugabe's downfall in what their spin doctors dubbed a "military-assisted transition" in a bid to sanitise a *coup d'état*.

The generals launched "Operation Restore Legacy" due to their "disgruntlement with Mugabe's downgrading of 1970s liberation struggle actors and ethos in ZANU-PF; Mugabe's weakening authority; the political aspirations of some generals; and insecurity in the military's upper ranks caused by conditions of precarious tenure and fear of criminal prosecution", argues Professor Blessing-Miles Tendi at the University of Oxford in a 2019 article for the journal *African Affairs*. However, he notes that the catalyst was Mugabe's refusal to meet with the generals on 13 November 2017, which prompted defence forces commander General Constantino Chiwenga to issue an unprecedented public criticism of the president. Chiwenga was appointed as vice-president of Zimbabwe after helping to install Emmerson Mnangagwa as Mugabe's successor.

ETHIOPIAN POLITICIANS GRANTED THE GENERALS ACCESS TO THE SPOILS OF WAR

In Ethiopia, by contrast, the military plays an important but less salient role in politics, thanks largely to decisions taken by the TPLF early in its tenure. Upon vanquishing the *Derg* regime and seizing power in 1991, the TPLF and its allies in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) opted to disband the *Derg*'s army, replacing it with its own men. This would have been a risky step if the *Derg* forces had been committed soldiers rather than press-ganged youth, but many conscripts were happy to lay down their arms and return to their families.

Like the ZNA, the new Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) benefited from extensive military training by western instructors. However, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi never moved to create a special unit loyal to him, as Mugabe had in Zimbabwe. Instead, the entire ENDF was expected to adopt the EPRDF's ideology of "revolutionary democracy", according to a 1993 party document analysed by John Markakis in his 2011 book *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers*. This policy persisted in spite of members of the armed forces being barred from exhibiting political partisanship under the 1994 constitution. Moreover, TPLF fighters dominated the top echelons of the ENDF officer corps, accounting for 46 of the 100 top generals as late as 2017, a former UK defence attaché told me on the condition of anonymity.

Ethiopian politicians granted the generals access to the spoils of war, albeit in a more restrained manner than in Zimbabwe. While Ethiopian military manoeuvres in Somalia and peacekeeping operations elsewhere on the continent led to generous per diems, the ENDF was never granted the same looting opportunities as the ZNA. Rather, the officer corps was kept onside through preferable treatment for its Metals and Engineering Corporation (MetEC), which was contracted for the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and other major projects.

This civil-military pact helped to guarantee stability during the TPLF's dominance, but

TOXIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS WILL CONTINUE TO UNDERMINE POLITICAL STABILITY UNLESS RULING PARTIES COMMIT TO **CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS**

extended protests in Oromia eventually heralded a transition in 2018, with the EPRDF installing Abiy Ahmed as prime minister. Although Abiy had served in the ENDF between 1993-2010 and speaks fluent Tigrinya, he struggled to secure the loyalty of TPLF-dominated security services, which have attempted at least one putsch and were rumoured to be behind a June 2018 assassination attempt. In response to that threat on his life, Abiy established a dedicated Republican Guard, responsible for defending the constitutional order, though he has not turned them on his own people as Mugabe did. Nevertheless, Abiy has been drawn into a major domestic conflict with the TPLF after the party refuted the federal government's legitimacy when national elections were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic last year. In November 2020, the prime minister launched military operations in Tigray Province to free the army's Northern Command, which the TPLF had captured in a pre-emptive strike.

Such episodes illustrate that neither Ethiopia nor Zimbabwe have been able to avoid the militarisation of politics, highlighting the importance of national liberation movements in post-conflict governance. Toxic civil-military relations will continue to undermine political stability unless ruling parties commit to constitutional safeguards which keep soldiers in the barracks, rather than allowing them to enter politics or do business with the state. In this regard, South Africans are fortunate that the ruling African National Congress has respected provisions of the 1996 constitution that bar members of the armed forces from political party membership. This forced former freedom fighters to choose between military sinecures and politics in a way they were never required to in Ethiopia or Zimbabwe. In South Africa, for now at least, formal state structures override chains of command established in the bush. GG



RIGHT: Ethiopian soldiers after taking the town of Barentu in Eritrea, 2000
Photo: Alexander Joe / AFP





NOW FOR ECONOMIC FREEDOM

Good and inclusive governance is critical for Africa's economic growth

By Raphael Obonyo



ABOVE:
African heads of state at the 2018 African Union summit where the African Continental Free Trade Area was established, Kigali, Rwanda
Photo: STP/ AFP

Africa is on the rise. In 2018, it was the world's second fastest-growing region, experiencing an average annual GDP growth of 4.6% for the period from 2000 and 2016. For the five-year period until 2022, Africa's real GDP is projected to grow at 3.9% annually. The African Development Bank says that the continent's economic growth could rebound to 3% in 2021 from -3.4% in the worst-case scenario for 2020, provided governments manage the COVID-19 infection rate well.

Speaking in June 2020 at the Centre for Global Development's virtual event, Conversations on COVID-19 and Development, Vera Songwe, the executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), said Africa had to remain awake and take appropriate measures to help find solutions to the pandemic and its impact.

"Although Africa has experienced a substantial downturn, with growth falling due to a number of reasons including the disruption of the global supply chain,

governments on the continent have taken measures, including putting in place policies and programmes that support inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic recovery that will help the continent to grow back and build back better", she said.

Africa has had to shake off the dire socio-economic legacies inherited from colonialism (the creation of arbitrary borders, single crop economies, an over reliance on the export of extractives and the creation and support of elites, encouraging corruption, to name a few).

As Nigeria's former minister of state for labour and employment Stephen Ocheni argues, colonialism institutionalised poverty amongst Africans; the aim of colonial powers was to extract resources with little concern for livelihoods or quality of life. Also, colonial rule was by state domination rather than legitimacy, an authoritarian political culture that controlled people using violence, patronage and corruption.

AFRICA HAS HAD TO SHAKE OFF THE DIRE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEGACIES INHERITED FROM COLONIALISM

But now, successive African governments have recorded steady growth in GDP, ranking well globally in their population's access to basic services and improvements on the Human Development Index (HDI), which measures life expectancy, education and income.

African countries are also rapidly plugging into the global economy due to its natural resources, digital innovations, technology driven change and a positive shift towards the fourth industrial revolution, which has unlocked new pathways for rapid economic growth, innovation, job creation and access to services.

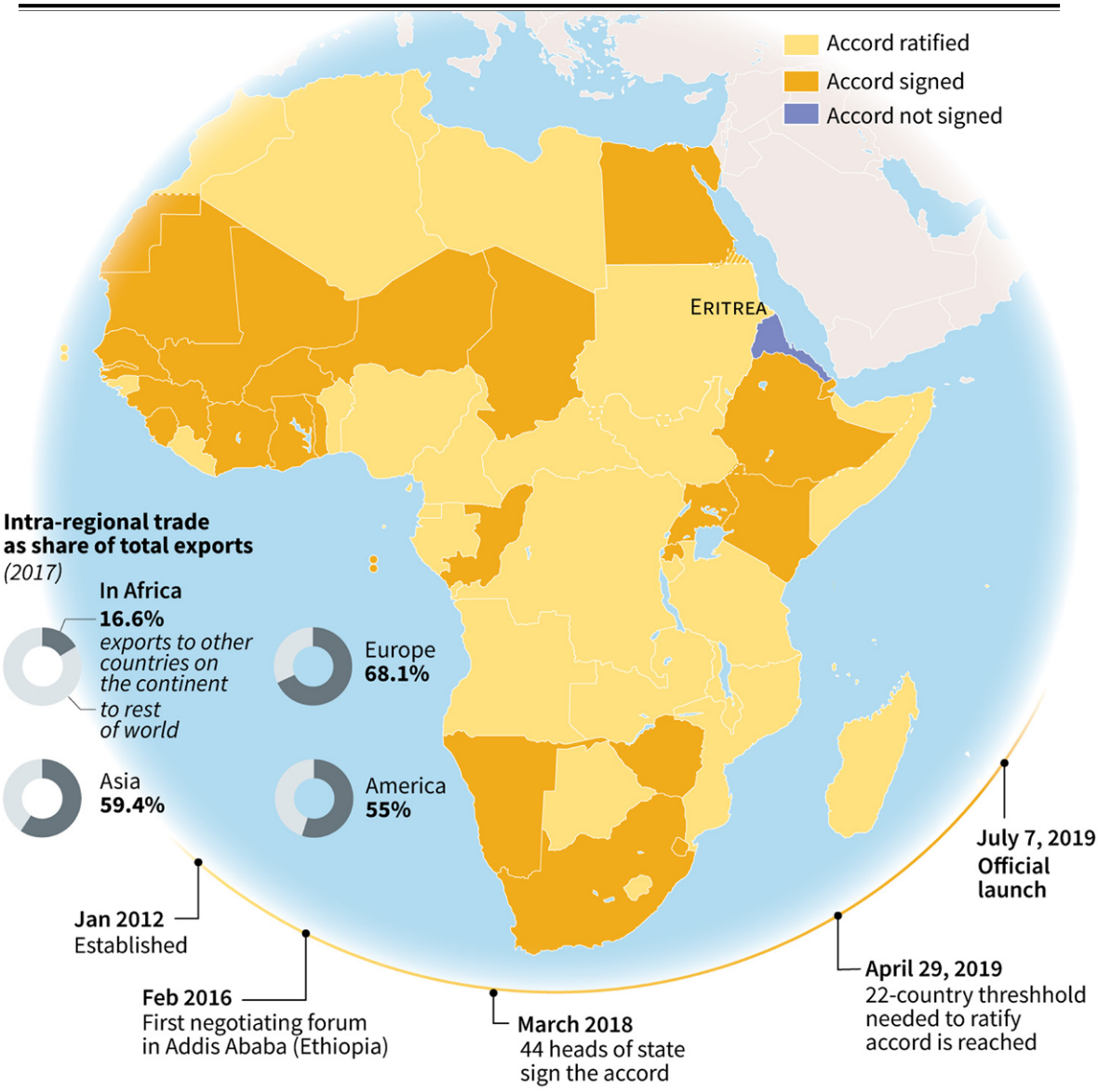
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also notes, for example, that there has been "remarkable progress" since the transition to democracy, spurred in part by the end of the Cold War, which has seen post-colonial authoritarian regimes challenged across the continent, especially by youthful populations, and the emergence of competitive multi-party systems since the 1990s. There is progress in a number of countries in Africa, not only with regard to growth and poverty reduction, but also in terms of reductions in extreme poverty and increases in education enrollment.

As the UNDP's Human Development Report 2019 has noted, African countries have made significant strides in advancing human development – narrowing the gap in basic living standards with an unprecedented number of people escaping poverty, hunger and diseases.

But, as Songwe emphasised, good governance is essential for sustainable development and progress. "There is growing consensus that African countries require a more conducive governance environment for them to be able to pursue better public policies, and ultimately to achieve better outcomes, including structural transformation and inclusive development," she said.

The continent still has significant ground to cover in terms of improving governance for prosperity. A number of countries, including Angola, Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Somalia, among others, are yet to design governance models that can prevent dictatorship, corruption, and economic decline.

Angola's leader, João Lourenço, who succeeded José Eduardo dos Santos in 2017, initially made some progress in ending the patronage system entrenched



African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCPTA)

Sources: African Union, UNCTAD
Source: AFP

in that country, but further efforts have stalled. However, these countries still score poorly on human rights protection and the provision of welfare to their populations.

Ongoing post-colonial sectarian violence and ethnic and religious tensions have also hindered attempts at better governance, encouraging weak and ineffective leadership and a fear of the transformation that underpins separation of powers, with checks and balances. CAR, Somalia, Eritrea, South Sudan and lately, Ethiopia, continue to suffer sectarian conflicts partly emanating from the legacy of their liberation struggles.

A crucial ingredient in improving human development is wealth creation, which requires the existence of an entrepreneurial class; without sufficient peace and security, a culture of entrepreneurship cannot thrive. Countries such as DRC and South Sudan, despite their huge economic

potential due to minerals and oil, have paid heavily for the absence of the rule of law to contain ethnic-induced violence.

Porous and unviable African borders, improperly designed by colonial powers, have caused instability and conflict in many parts of the continent, including West Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa.

"To make greater economic progress," Ocheni says, "Africa must confront its past, and with its leaders and the people they govern create their own identity, culture, technology, economy, education, religion, craft and other key aspects that underpin good governance."

As Christopher Clapham, a professor of African Studies at Cambridge University, notes in a paper 'From Liberation Movement to Government', published by the Brenthurst Foundation in 2012, the experience of struggle has generally been regarded as an enormously positive legacy for the new states, even though "virtually all liberation movements have encountered myriad difficulties in making the transition from struggle to government".

POROUS AND UNVIABLE AFRICAN BORDERS HAVE CAUSED INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT IN MANY PARTS OF THE CONTINENT

Clapham pointed out, however, that demographics typically shift the power balance after a period of time. "High birth rates and correspondingly young populations mean that within a couple of decades of liberation, most of the population will have no personal memory of the struggle at all, and calls by members of the ruling party to remember their heroic contributions will simply fall on uncomprehending ears," he says.

He concludes by saying that while the road to liberation was long, it allowed for the "possibility of eventual reconciliation between the aspirations expressed in struggle on the one hand, and the need for stable and accountable governance on the other. ... In some cases, liberation movements turned nascent government have helped to meet popular demands for employment and public welfare and established national identity, national integration and reconciliation."

Paul Nantulya, a research associate at the Washington-based Africa Center for Strategic Studies, says that "even when founded on noble principles and objectives, successful liberations are not a guarantee of successful democratic transitions. "Legitimacy conferred by the struggle tends to foster a sense of entitlement to rule. The culture of entitlement can become pervasive, leading to a cult of personality where the movements are embodied by a single individual," he says.

Countries in crisis must engage in process-driven constitution-making that values the separation of powers, with effective checks and balances, robust and politically active civil society. An independent judiciary and press are also crucial tools of good governance.

These efforts should also address emerging global challenges such as climate change and pandemics. Regional cooperation and affirmative action among historically marginalised communities such as youth, have become hallmarks of today's constitutions.

Finally, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that came into force on 1 January this year provides a good template to promote good governance among countries on the continent. The AfCFTA is expected to provide many opportunities, including creating a single continental market for goods and services, with the free movement of business, people and investments. GG

A nation on THE EDGE

Cameroon's presidential silence over burning issues has spawned additional resistance

By Amindeh Blaise Atabong

In June 2019, protests at a five-star luxury hotel in Switzerland marked a turning point in Cameroon's President Paul Biya's traditional long stays abroad. More than 250 protesters, scantily clad in military-style garb and waving Cameroonian flags, staged demonstrations against the presence of their "absent" president.



A woman joins a protest against President Paul Abiya's stay at a five-star hotel in Geneva, Switzerland
Photo: Fabrice Coffrini / AFP

Swiss riot police broke up the protests, but the message was clear. Biya cut short his "brief private stay" abroad and returned to Cameroon a few days later. Since then, he has not left the country on one of his usual private trips.

In 2018, an Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) investigation disclosed that between 1982, when Biya, now 88, came to power, and 2017, he had spent no less than four-and-a-half years of his 35-year rule on private jaunts out of the country. These excluded official visits.

The cost of those trips has been estimated at $65 million, excluding food, drinks, shopping, entertainment and private jet rentals, amongst other expenses. But it is not only the use of taxpayer's money to fund these trips that angers Cameroonians. Despite a promising start when he assumed power in 1982, Biya's almost four decades in power have been characterised by poor governance, the repression of freedoms, lack of significant economic and political reforms, as well as the marginalisation of the Anglophone population, all of which have incentivised dissident groups.

While Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea holds the gold medal as Africa's longest-serving head of state, Biya has the silver medal, with no signs that he is ready to relinquish the trophy. Biya has ruled Cameroon since long before more than half of the country's 25.6 million people were born. He is expected to complete his current mandate in 2025, when he will turn 92.

Biya's hold on power is remarkable; in 2008, there were nationwide agitations when parliament revised the constitution – adopting a bill which eliminated the



BIYA'S ALMOST FOUR DECADES IN POWER HAVE BEEN CHARACTERISED BY POOR GOVERNANCE, REPRESSION, AND LACK OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORMS



two-term presidential limit – to allow Biya to seek re-election. Since then, presidential elections in the country have been successively marked by voter apathy, gross irregularities and fraud, according to independent election monitoring bodies like Transparency International.

When Biya rose to power in 1982 he pegged his leadership on "rigor, moralisation and democratisation". His promise of a democratic and economically vibrant country was lofty and gladly welcomed by a large majority. But more recent developments have eroded the gains made in his early presidency and

ABOVE: President Paul Biya shakes hands with French President Emmanuel Macron at a conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tubeculosis and Malaria, held in Lyons, 2019
Photo: AFP

Cameroon is now a textbook example of a fragile state, thanks to, among other things, centralised and personal leadership, widespread corruption and weak institutions, according to the International Crisis Group. The country is classified on the 2020 Fragile State Index as the 11th most fragile state out of 178 globally. The US-based democracy, political freedom and human rights advocacy body, Freedom House, has in the past five years rated Cameroon as "not free" where political rights and civil liberties are concerned.

A notable example is Biya's handling of what has become widely known as the Anglophone crisis. As the International Crisis Group noted in a 2017 report, the crisis has its origins in the badly executed reunification of French and British occupied Cameroon at independence, "based on centralisation and assimilation, [which] has led the Anglophone minority to feel politically and economically marginalised, and their cultural differences are ignored."

In 2016, low-level protests by English-speaking lawyers and teachers, seeking reforms of the legal system and other demands, erupted in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon. In a bid to suppress dissent, the president deployed the army, including the elite Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) that has specialist training in advanced torture techniques and a record of rights violation and extra-judicial killings.

The brutal crackdown radicalised many and pushed even those who were initially moderate to extreme positions. Anglophone dissidents became even more resolute on their opposition to marginalisation by the Francophone-dominated government. Since then, more



BIYA HAS REMAINED INDIFFERENT TO KEY NATIONAL ISSUES THAT ARE NOW ALMOST SPLITTING THE COUNTRY APART

than 30 pressure groups, liberation movements and militia have risen to push for the creation of a separate state they would call Ambazonia.

The conflict, which many analysts say could have been avoided, has caused untold economic damage for the entire nation as important revenue streams have been lost. Also, more than 5,000 civilians, soldiers and separatist fighters have been killed, while there have been mass displacements.

Dr Christopher Fomunyoh, senior associate for Africa and regional director for west and central Africa at the National Democratic Institute, considers the protracted separatist conflict as a "man-made crisis". The Biya government's failure to address the frustration of Anglophones and perceived institutional marginalisation has directly led the country to this critical point, he says.

Analysts also point to France's immediate and continuous post-colonial influence on Cameroon's leaders, which has been instrumental in setting the scene for current events in the country. Most of the actions or inactions of the Biya government have the backing of Paris.

According to Bamnjo Herman, a lecturer in the



ABOVE:
Cameroonian activists protest against President Paul Biya's presence in Paris, 2020
Photo: AFP

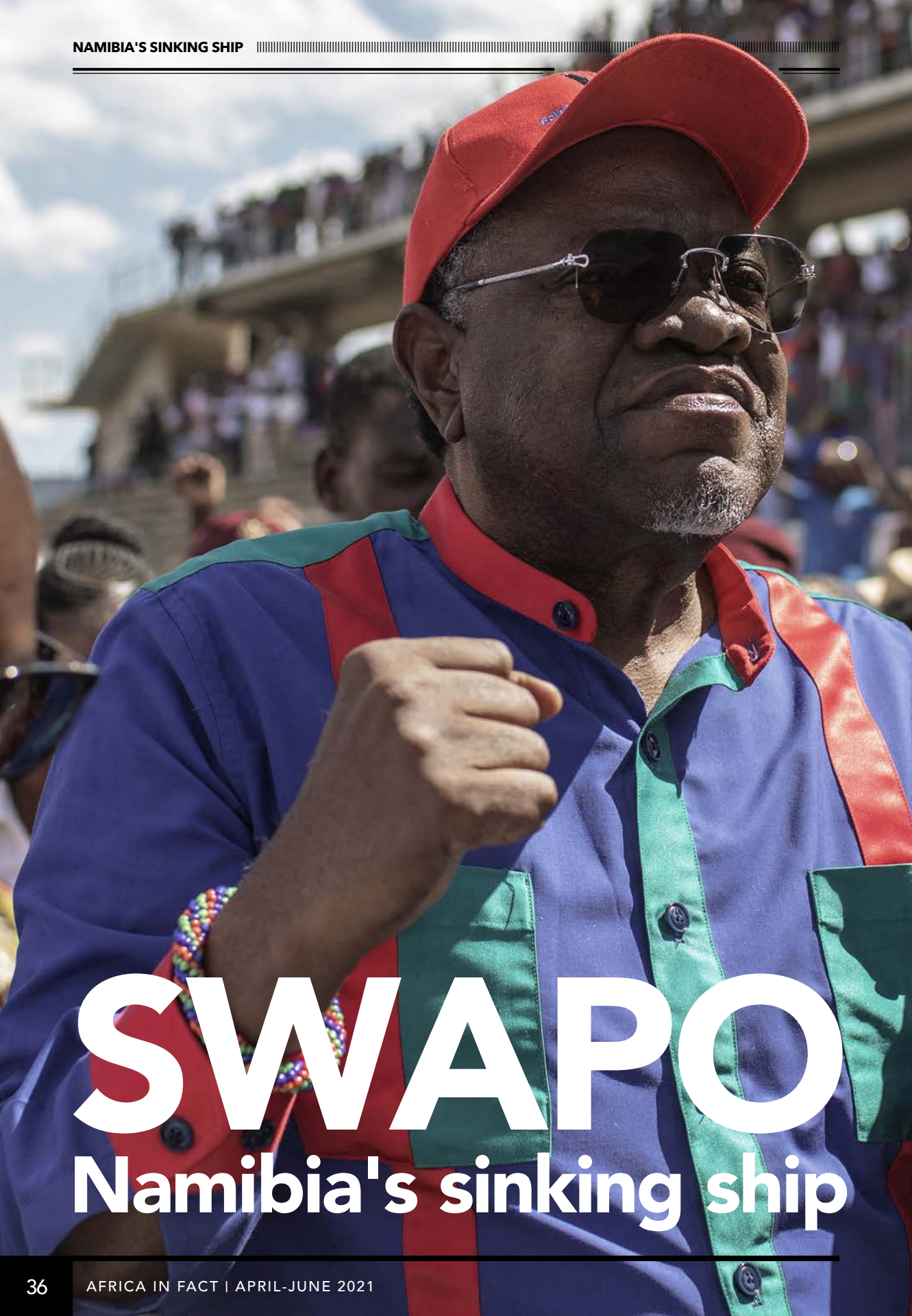
department of political science at the University of Bamenda, French colonialism never ended but took on a new, sophisticated form. Former French colonies, he says, including Cameroon, signed a secret colonial pact with France. "Among other issues [contained] in the pact is the fact that France has to train forces, and former colonies have to deposit their reserves in the French treasury - and for them to withdraw, they must give an explanation on how they intend to use the money."

Meanwhile, in managing his country, Biya has adopted a strategy of "presidential silence", preferring to stay mute over burning issues of national concern rather than publicly address them.

One recent example has been his management of the coronavirus pandemic. While other African presidents were at the forefront, reassuring their people and leading the response to COVID-19, Biya only managed to address the nation once, in late May 2020, after intense pressure from civil society and political parties. It is the same way Biya has remained indifferent to other key national issues which are now almost splitting the country apart.

As people lose hope in the system, fresh dissent is brewing in various parts of the country such as the northern regions where the people are facing real and perceived economic deprivation, aggravated by the climate crisis. Recently, a pressure group, *Mouvement 10 millions de Nordistes*, was formed, bringing together people from the three northern regions. Though Guibai Gatama, the group's flagbearer, has said the organisation is apolitical and aims to boost socio-economic development, the government outlawed it. Since then, the group has gone underground.

The volatile situation in the north also has its roots in Cameroon's post-independence history. In November 1982, the country's first head of state, Ahmadou Ahidjo (from the north), resigned and handed over power to Biya who was his prime minister. The transition was smooth, but tensions later erupted, culminating in an attempted coup in April 1984 blamed on Ahidjo loyalists. The *coup d'état* was violently suppressed and northerners within the army and government were systematically punished. Since then, no process of reconciliation has been initiated, and the happenings of 1984 still remain a source of bitterness for many from the north. GG



SWAPO
Namibia's sinking ship



ABOVE:
Namibian President Hage Geingob at a SWAPO election campaign rally in Windhoek, 2019
Photo: Gianluigu Guercia / AFP

A liberation movement, mired in electoral setbacks and corruption scandals, is quickly losing ground

By Frederico Links

At the first cabinet meeting of 2020, on 4 February, Namibian president Hage Geingob, in a custom he had started in his first full year in office in 2015, titled the political year as the "Year of Introspection".

It was supposed to herald a period of self-reflection, not just for Geingob's cabinet or government, but also Namibia's ruling party, Swapo, of which Geingob is also the president.

In tune with this theme of self-reflection, in the wake of the November 2019 National Assembly and presidential elections, the ruling party also adopted a slogan: "We have heard you".

This was in response to the outcome of the late 2019 elections, from which the party had emerged bruised and stunned, very narrowly losing its generation-old, two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. The presidential candidate, the incumbent Geingob, scraped through a win at the polls by just 56% percent, having seen off the challenge of a Swapo party member, Panduleni Itula, who had stood as an independent.

It was certainly a significant political moment in independent Namibia's history; just over five years earlier, following the November 2014 National Assembly and presidential elections, the ruling party had seemed well on its way to permanently entrenching its rule. Then, the party had garnered 80% of the popular vote, with Geingob attracting a resounding 87% support. At that point, it appeared that opposition politics was on the fast-track to death through democratic means.

Then, from 2015, followed five years of sharp national economic deterioration, a prolonged and devastating drought, a string of high-profile corruption and misgovernance scandals, and political inertia and ineptitude in decisively dealing with the myriad challenges confronting the Namibian state and society. By early



ABOVE: A protestor holds the national Angolan flag during a demonstration against police brutality, 2021 Photo: Osvaldo Silva / AFP

February 2020, Swapo faced the previously unimaginable, but suddenly very real prospect of losing power come the November 2024 national and presidential elections.

At that point, many political commentators (including this one) were still somewhat cautious of reading too much into the shifts unfolding on the Namibian political landscape, warning that the outcome of the November 2020 local authority and regional councils elections would tell whether the previously unimaginable was happening – that Swapo was in steep and probably irreversible decline.

Then COVID-19 happened, exacerbating economic hardship for many and throwing years of neglect of significant state and socio-economic sectors into stark relief. By the time the regional and local elections rolled by in November 2020, the impression had firmed up that the once omniscient-seeming and insurmountable political force that had seeped into every socio-economic and political aspect of Namibian society since 1990 was in a state of rapid demise.

In these elections Swapo, which until November 2020 had firmly controlled all 14 regional councils, lost four regions – including the economically significant !Kharas and Erongo regions – to opposition parties and managed only 57% of the cross-regional vote share. Across local authorities, the ruling party only managed to attract 40% of the votes, including losing the Namibian capital, Windhoek, to a coalition of opposition parties.

A year earlier, the multi-billion dollar

Fishrot bribery scandal, ensnaring Geingob's justice and fisheries ministers and an assortment of ruling party associated businesspeople, erupted just as the final stages of campaigning for the 2019 elections were winding down.

The Fishrot scandal involved an Icelandic fishing company, Samherji, which had allegedly bribed senior Namibian ministers and state-owned enterprises officials for almost a decade to manipulate lucrative fishing quota allocations.

The scandal unfolded throughout 2020, eventually also implicating Geingob and other senior leaders of the ruling party. As the sordid details of possibly the largest corruption scandal in Namibian history continued to emerge, it was clear, judging by the volume of disillusioned and vitriolic comments on social media, that for many Namibians the "we have heard you" slogan rang hollow.

"The first weakness Swapo leadership would have to tackle is the corruption they have allowed to develop within their own ranks," says Graham Hopwood, executive director of the Windhoek-based Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

"Fishrot is but the most prominent and costly of a range of scandals. How far corruption is embedded in Swapo is hard to say, but the fact that many in the leadership are so defensive and reluctant to take action would tend to indicate that many near the top of the party are connected in some way to corrupt activities, even if it is only persistently turning a blind eye to what their comrades are doing."

For Hopwood the other challenge for the ruling party is to disentangle itself from its capture of the Namibian state, which has allowed maladministration, corruption and poor service delivery to become endemic over recent decades.

"At one point those near the top thought they could maintain the loyalty of the masses by running a huge patronage network," Hopwood says. "Key parts of this are the civil service and state-owned enterprises. However, a bloated civil service is no longer sustainable and continuously bailing out failing SOEs is also no longer viable."

Hopwood thinks there is still room for the party to self-correct but added that there didn't appear to be political will among the party leadership for such an exercise. "If a critical mass of people in decision-making roles in the party do not grasp these issues soon, then they are likely to be out of power within 10 years or have to turn to authoritarian and non-democratic means to retain power," he says.

In 2014 SWAPO had

80%

of the popular vote

By 2020 SWAP0 had

57%

of the popular vote, losing

4

regions including the capital, Windhoek, to a coalition of opposition parties

Such tendencies are already evident. Hardliners within the Swapo leadership, notably Defence Minister Peter Vilho, seized the opportunity to issue veiled threats to unnamed political foes from prominent public platforms in 2020.

By the latter half of 2020, with local and regional elections fast approaching, it was clear that deflecting blame and scapegoating unidentified saboteurs for the state of the party had become the preferred response to growing outrage among party members and the public.

On 16 September , 2020, Namibia's deputy prime minister and minister of international relations and cooperation, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, rose in the country's National Assembly

PARTY MEMBERS ARE OPENLY CALLING FOR GOVERNMENT TO BE RECALLED SINCE THE CORRUPTION AND LEADERSHIP SCANDALS



ABOVE: National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) supporters wear traditional Herero attire at a campaign rally in Windhoek, 2019
Photo: Hildegard Titus / AFP

and blamed unnamed "detractors" using social media to "instigate our citizens" to create political and economic instability.

The blame-shifting has been unconvincing, however, and internal party factional skirmishes have grown increasingly brutal and divisive since November 2019. The party has been riven by factional fights for most of the past 20 years, but now divisions have reportedly hardened.

Party members opposed to Geingob's tarnished leadership are openly calling for a Swapo government to be recalled, following the party's weakened hold on power since the 2019/20 elections and the corruption and leadership scandals.

In late January 2021, a group called the Namibia Exile Kids Association (NEKA), with strong links to some party elders and made up of children of former liberation fighters, publicly called for the "ship to sink" and for the entire party leadership to be sacked.

"They must all go," NEKA chairperson Benita Nakaambo was quoted saying. However, while many party members are deeply unhappy, only a very few, such as Nakaambo, have been willing to speak up, and even fewer appear to have the stomach to step forward and openly challenge Geingob's hold on the party.

That is because anybody who is anybody in the party has been compromised over the years, according to Naita Hishoono, executive director of the Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID), who describes herself as a "child of the party" with ties to many party elders.

"The view is that something needs to happen, someone needs to step up," says Hishoono, who is part of a WhatsApp group that includes former and current leaders in the party and senior party cadres in the civil service, the police and security establishment.

"The issue is, if you know you are part and parcel of any rot, then of course you can't step up," she says.



"So, the party is asking for people to step up that are clean. But who would that be?"

For Hishoono, the answer is the youth, but she points out that all the most promising young party members have either been discouraged and left the party or been thrown out over the years. Many young people with potential were simply not interested in joining the party's card-carrying ranks, due to a toxic leadership culture that has long permeated its structures.

Everyone interviewed for this article pointed to the ruling party's 2022 congress, at which Geingob's successor will be picked, as the defining event that will determine the direction of both the party and the country following the 2024 and even 2029 elections. Hishoono said she fully expected the congress to be "a bloodbath".

Similarly, everyone interviewed did not feel confident in the ability of opposition parties to capitalise on Swapo's weaknesses.

"There are no really viable alternatives. There are no real leaders of any gravitas emerging," says Gwen Lister, chairperson of the Namibia Media Trust (NMT) and former editor of *The Namibian* newspaper, who also has longstanding ties with many Swapo leaders. "Really, you'd be hard pressed if you were asked today to identify role models in the political sphere. Everyone seems to be tainted or compromised in some way or another, including the opposition. They don't have the credibility."

Even so, in the final analysis, regardless of what happens, Swapo seems doomed to deteriorate, for as the IPPR's Hopwood notes: "Someone [in the party] said to me recently that 'the Titanic has already hit the iceberg, it's only how quickly or slowly it sinks that's the question'."



A dream DEFERRED

Zimbabwe war veterans mourn a liberation victory marred by corruption, patronage and bad governance

By Owen Gagare

Like many Zimbabweans today, the late Joshua Nkomo, Zimbabwe's revolutionary giant, commonly referred to as "Father Zimbabwe" because of the leading role he played during the country's protracted liberation struggle, was disappointed by life in independent Zimbabwe.

"The hardest lesson of my life has come to me late. It is that a nation can win freedom without its people becoming free," Nkomo said in his autobiography, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*.

Nkomo, who died in 1999, founded the National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1960 to spearhead Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, before forming and leading the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu) in 1962 after the NDP was banned. The Rhodesian government imprisoned him from 1964 to 1974 for championing the cause for independence.

Nkomo-led Zapu and its armed wing, Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (Zipra), waged the country's liberation war with the Robert Mugabe-led Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu) and its armed wing Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (Zanla). Zanu was formed after a split within Zapu in 1963.

Although the two political formations had different political leadership and command structures, they had similar goals, among them to dismantle a racist and brutal system by ensuring an independent and inclusive Zimbabwe with equal opportunities and access to resources, including land.

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, many hoped majority rule would result in greater freedoms, prosperity and the end of tyranny, but this proved to be elusive.

Although Mugabe formed a coalition government with Zapu after winning the 1980 elections and appointed Nkomo Home

LEFT: Heroes Acre, Harare, Zimbabwe
Photo: Garry Benbridge

Affairs minister, in 1982 he accused the Zapu leader of plotting a coup.

Mugabe arrested senior Zapu/Zipra officials, which resulted in Nkomo going into exile in the United Kingdom in 1983. The president also unleashed the infamous North-Korean trained Fifth Brigade, which killed an estimated 20 000 people in the Matabeleland and Midlands regions in what is known as the *Gukurahundi* massacres. The massacres ended after talks between the two parties culminated in the December 1987 Unity Accord, which merged the two parties under Zanu-PF.

The Unity Accord, however, has not led to Zimbabweans enjoying the fruits of the liberation struggle, as state-sponsored brutality, corruption, patronage and misgovernance have taken root. Zimbabwe ranked 157 out of 180 countries on the Transparency International 2020 Corruption Perception Index.

War veterans, particularly from Zipra, who spoke to *Africa in Fact* say the ideals of the liberation struggle have been betrayed. Many Zanla veterans, in the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWA) privately admitted that Zimbabwe today is not what they envisaged during the liberation struggle but were unwilling to say so on record.

Most of the war veterans that *Africa in Fact* interviewed for this article said, however, that while they were disappointed by this, they did not regret going to war.

Their views are shared by former cabinet minister Rugare Gumbo, the only surviving member of Zanu's *Dare ReChimurenga*. The *Dare* was a war council led by Zanu chairman Herbert Chitepo to spearhead the liberation war.

In an article published on 25 January this year, following the death of Mukudzei Mudzi, a member of the *Dare ReChimurenga*, Gumbo said the ideals of the liberation struggle were lost during former president Robert Mugabe's rule.

"The Mugabe regime conflated the party and the state to serve the individual interests of an elite group driven by personal greed and political careerism. The character of today's Zanu-PF is a far cry from the ideals and true leadership of the Chitepo Dare high command, staff, and rank-and-file that are Chitepo's legacy," wrote Gumbo.

It was a damning assessment from arguably the most senior Zanu-linked nationalist alive today. But the disappointment is shared widely, particularly by Zapu/Zipra cadres, who, despite the Unity Accord, were largely sidelined after independence.

Baster Magwizi, spokesperson for the Zipra

MANY HOPED MAJORITY RULE WOULD RESULT IN GREATER FREEDOM, PROSPERITY AND THE END OF TYRANNY

Veterans Trust and a former Zipra cadre, grew up in Harare and was politically conscious from a tender age, thanks to his father who was a Zapu activist in the 1960s. His resolve to fight political injustice strengthened when his family fled their Harare home in 1964 to settle in rural Kadoma because the Rhodesian security forces wanted to arrest his father. In 1972, a group of liberation fighters passed through their area, but Rhodesian forces captured and killed two of them.

"I was very hurt, (but) of course there was nothing I could do at the time," Magwizi recalls. "But in 1973, I asked my father to go to Harare to study when in fact I had decided to join the war."

Magwizi says he was one of the individuals who welcomed Nkomo when he was released

from prison in 1974, adding that his motivation was not to fight white Rhodesians but to fight the oppressive system, "which sadly persists today".

"We were plunged into civil unrest, chaos in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s, and since then we have never had peace. We are independent but not free; this is not what we fought for. The guys ruling now have designed a clique or a hold on power that allows only themselves to be in charge."

Magwizi is disappointed that Zimbabwe's political leadership has closed the doors for dialogue in their quest to retain power. Zimbabwe, he says, is now a one-party state that thrives on violence, the absence of the rule of law, patronage and corruption. The dream of a better life has not been achieved, as evidenced by widespread poverty. Nevertheless, Magwizi remains proud of his participation in the struggle, taking comfort in the knowledge that he fought for a just cause, even though his dream was unrealised.

"My participation in the armed struggle was not in vain. It brought about independence even if we may not be free."

Magwizi's views differ from Thembinkosi Twala, another former Zipra fighter who is convinced that life was better under the Rhodesian system. "Surely, if the masses were to be assured of their security, they will tell you their lives were better in Rhodesia than in Zimbabwe. We thought we were going to improve or better our people's lives, but we have made them worse," Twala says. "My contribution to the struggle was in vain; we surely cannot pride ourselves when people are suffering."

Ben Ncube, who is the chairman of the Zipra Veterans Trust, joined the liberation struggle at 21 in 1974, inspired by family



ABOVE:
Baster Magwizi, spokesperson for the Zipra Trust and former cadre
Photo: Owen Gagare



members who were active in the struggle. "I felt duty bound to join them; I was not recruited or forced by anyone to join the armed struggle."

He and other fighters, the veteran says, were prepared to die for the country because they believed in the cause they were fighting for. "Any death of fellow comrades only fuelled our drive to push further."

However, Ncube is unhappy with the course Zimbabwe has taken. "If you dig deeper, one realises that outside political independence, there is nothing but anger and suffering among former freedom fighters. Even that political freedom has been taken away by the elites. Some people who never participated in the armed struggle are swimming in luxury [due to] our sacrifices.

"Infrastructure that was left by our former white rulers was destroyed beyond repair; you can talk of industries, all of it has been destroyed. Corruption of unmatched proportions also consumed our new rulers post-independence, destroying all that we inherited.

"Poverty is worse than we witnessed during the colonial era, and that hurts any freedom fighter who did not for one single day in the bush think they would live to witness this. This is not what we fought for."

He, too, does not regret participating in the struggle. "I have no regrets at all," Ncube says. "The armed struggle was necessary but those in leadership messed up the country."

Tawanda Tazaranyika Chipato is a self-



ABOVE:
Disabled war veterans show support for leader of the War Veterans Association Chenderai Hunzvi at his fraud case, Harare, 2000
Photo: Odd Anderson / AFP

professed Zanu-PF supporter who joined the liberation struggle in 1977 to fight colonial injustice. He says he was moved to join the liberation struggle after he was traumatised by pictures of fighters who had been killed by Rhodesian forces in 1972-73. He was detained in 1974 for political activism.

"I eventually crossed the border into Mozambique in 1977, where I was fortunate to read a lot of books on socialism and Leninism," he recalls. "I admit that things could be better, but it's not our leaders' fault, particularly Mnangagwa who has done very well."

Chipato says the country's leaders made the mistake of abandoning the country's spirituality, arguing that spirit mediums played a big role in the liberation struggle and were an important source of intelligence.

'MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRUGGLE WAS IN VAIN. WE SHOULD NOT PRIDE OURSELVES WHEN PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING'

"We also forgot to teach our children about the liberation struggle and the importance of loving one's country; that's why we have some Zimbabweans campaigning for sanctions, which are destroying our country. Other than that, I am happy that I am part of the golden generation that held guns and brought independence to Zimbabwe."

Douglas Mahiya, who is spokesperson and secretary for war veterans in the Zanu-PF politburo, says Zimbabwe is on the right trajectory socially, economically and politically.

"We went to war to fight for majority rule and crush an oppressive and unjust system for a better Zimbabwe, with unity and peace," he says. "I am glad that we are on the right path despite some challenges, which were mainly a result of mistakes made in the first republic. But since President Mnangagwa took charge, all indicators are positive. He is correcting the mistakes made by Mugabe."

Mahiya is full of praise for Mnangagwa's tenure. Asked what he thinks about reports of human rights violations and the closure of democratic space, Mahiya laughs. "Human rights abuses were in Rhodesia, not Zimbabwe. Go and watch documentaries and see what (Ian) Smith (the former Rhodesian prime minister) used to do. *Vanhu vairumiswa nembwa* (He used to set dogs on people). Being an independent country does not mean you disturb peace, so when security forces restore peace, people want to say human rights are being violated," Mahiya says. GG

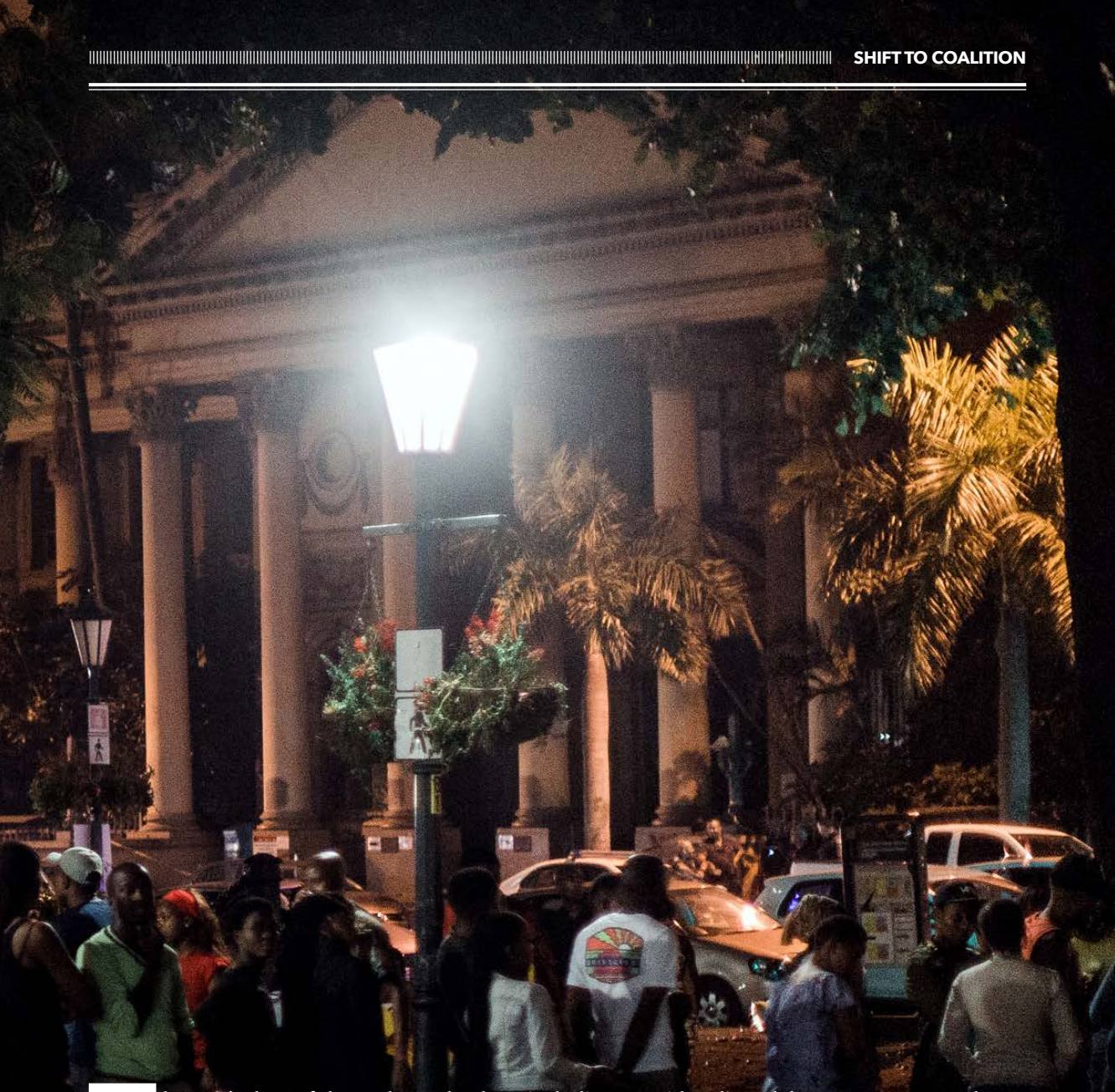
The shift from ruling party to COALITION

What India's post-independence experience can tell us about South Africa's political future

By Ronak Gopaldas



Late voters at a polling station during the national elections in Durban, 2019
Photo: Rajesh Jantilal / AFP



The ANC's share of electoral votes has been in decline for the better part of the past decade. Based on its current service delivery record, mediocre at best, and its divided trajectory, the ANC will probably lose its national majority in 2024 and thereafter be dependent on others to form a governing coalition. This would mark a substantial change in the country's political landscape and a potentially important shift in party-political support.

Is South Africa ready for this era of coalition government? Will such a scenario herald an era of democratic maturity and more inclusive politics or a descent into dysfunctionality? More importantly, what does it imply for governance?

To answer these questions, it is worth drawing parallels with India and the Congress party. What can the Indian experience tell us about South Africa's political future?

The Indian National Congress (INC) dominated the electoral landscape without interruption since Indian independence from the British in 1947. It finally lost this majority in the elections of 1977 – after three decades in power – setting the stage for an era of (often messy) coalition politics. Similarly, after the end of apartheid and the advent of multi-party democracy in South Africa,

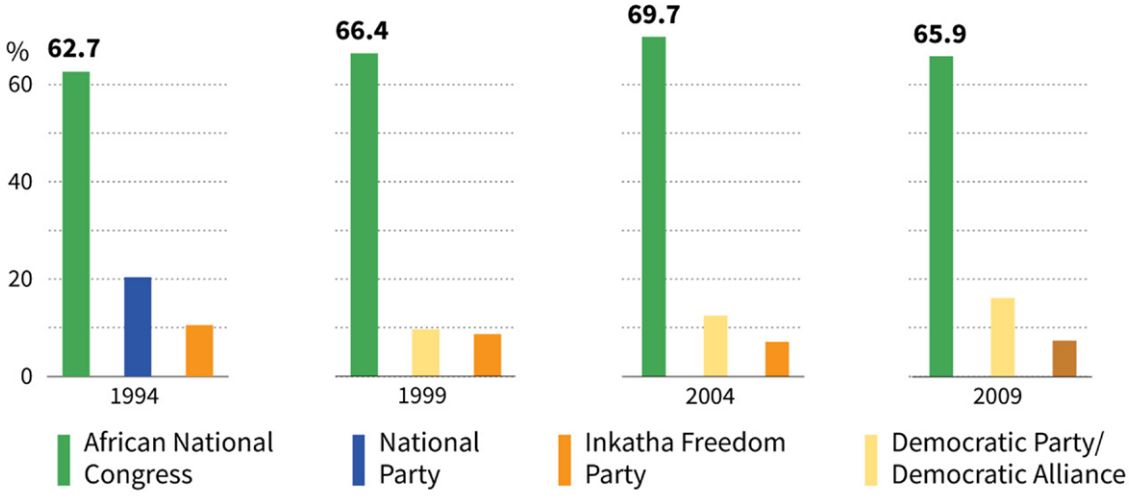
the ANC has won every national election with a clear majority since 1994. Now, as it approaches the end of its third decade in power, the jury is out on whether the ANC will continue to retain its status as the dominant ruling party or suffer the same fate as India's Congress party, which initially moved into the role of opposition, but now finds itself in the political wilderness and searching for relevance.

There are a number of similarities between the two parties. First, both were liberation movements, which then turned into governing parties. While the INC pursued the goal of independence for India, the ANC led the charge to bring an end to apartheid in South Africa. These endeavours bestowed upon each of them a moral legitimacy to govern, as was evidenced by the strong majorities they enjoyed in the first two decades of rule. Furthermore, the ANC was consciously modelled after Congress, and many of its leading lights like Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu drew inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Second, the two organisations are ideologically congruent. Both are "broad churches" or big tents with social democratic leanings, who operate under "the idiom of consensus-seeking internal politics", as noted by Thiven Reddy of the University of Cape Town in a 2005 university research paper. Thirdly, both parties have presided over societies which were deeply unequal and divided, with vast ethnic differences, and presented themselves as inclusive and unifying movements.

Eventually, however, in the life of every liberation movement, there is an inflection point where past performance and history counts less than future service delivery. In this context, it is worth reflecting on the experiences of Congress party, which did not heed the initial warning signs from its electorate. The general elections held in 1967 under the leadership of Indira Gandhi saw the Congress party plagued by internal dissent and factionalism, resulting in a loss of 100 parliamentary seats and four percentage points of the popular vote. Tellingly, it lost eight state elections thereafter, which seriously threatened its dominance, but it continued to remain "the major political force in the country". However, a mere 10 years after this, India rejected the Indira Gandhi-led Congress party en masse.

The ANC vote since 1994

The 3 leading parties in South Africa's general elections



Sources: elections.org.za, brandsouthafrica.com

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DID NOT LIVE THROUGH APARTHEID FEEL LESS LOYALTY TO THE ANC THAN THEIR PARENTS

That result shifted the power balance that gave rise to the first non-Congress (the Janata Party) and first coalition government, which subsequently became institutionalised, and part and parcel of Delhi's political culture.

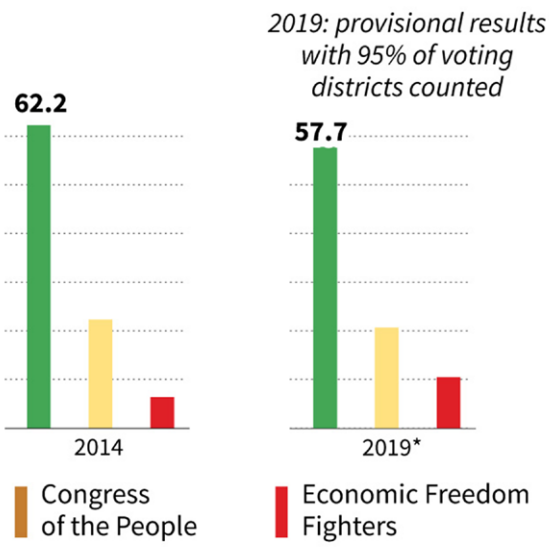
Much like Congress, the ANC has been criticised for fostering nepotism, infighting, complacency, and factionalism. An ongoing economic downturn, high unemployment and the party's failure to fulfil electoral promises, has seen it lose both goodwill and electoral support, while a series of grotesque corruption scandals has eroded its moral legitimacy. Indeed, many of the trends evidenced in India are now mirrored in South Africa as the liberation dividend fades. In the 2019 national election, the party achieved 57.5% of the vote, its worst showing ever, indicating an almost 10% decline at the polls since 2009.

Sreeram Chaulia, professor and dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs, saliently observed in a 2014 analysis that the "ANC's trajectory is heading the way of the Congress, ie., a gradual erosion in its popularity as the fond memory of older generations for the party that gained freedom from colonialism is replaced by frustrations of younger generations for its unfulfilled promises and governance flaws."

South Africa's electorate has changed significantly since 1994. Young voters who did not personally live through apartheid feel less affinity and loyalty to the ANC than their parents. On the contrary, young people and university students have actually been at the forefront of many anti-government demonstrations in recent years, most notably the #FeesMustFall protests in 2015.

Alongside the growing trend towards greater urbanisation, and declining voter turnout in rural areas, evidence suggests that the ANC's share of voters will continue to edge south of 50% unless something drastically changes. The warning signs are already there – as evidenced by the ANC's electoral defeat in three major municipalities (known as metros) during the 2016 local government elections.

These elections were significant for many reasons, not least because it was a stark wake-up call for the ANC to shape up or ship out. It also witnessed for the first time a shift away from historical race-based to issue-based voting patterns and a sense of apathy among the ANC's traditional constituents. The surprise result demonstrated not only the functionality and vibrancy of South Africa's democracy, but also early signs of a political culture



Source: AFP

shifting away from loyalty towards one of political accountability. This has now sparked enthusiasm among minority parties, who have seen that a viable alternative to the ANC can be achieved. However, an important distinction is necessary- opposition parties will need to view themselves as part of the solution rather than as the full solution. Pragmatism, rather than ideology, will need to be the overriding consideration if they are to capitalise on anti-incumbent sentiment.

In his comparative assessment, Chaulia notes: "As was the case in India in 1977, a right/left combination of likeminded allies will be required in the long run to displace [the] ANC from power. Ultimately, as the party of Gandhi and Nehru abandoned idealism, India found political alternatives. Likewise, South Africa's parallel voyage away from single party rule is underway."

Although the ANC recovered some of its losses during the national election in 2019, largely on account of the personal popularity of Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's dire economic situation, rampant corruption and ongoing governance failures since then suggest that this decline will continue. Without an outright ANC majority, the role and importance of kingmakers and opposition parties will become more significant.

Richard Calland of The Paternoster group, a South African political risk consultancy firm, believes that "ANC weakness may not be a good thing, in terms of both consistent policymaking and building national unity. We have now seen the effect of factionalism and division within the ruling party, and the overall impact has been to destabilise government, undermine corruption-combating efforts and diminish the social contract that was painstakingly built during the first decade of democracy, post-1994."

In an ideal world where political parties represent certain interests, a coalition of different parties could be more inclusive, more representative and more responsive to the needs of its electorate. There are compelling reasons why coalition formations may be better suited to developing countries with diverse populations and interests – not least because they advocate consensus and pro-poor policies.

Research by Professors Torben Iversen of Harvard and David Soskice of the London School of Economics



published in 2006 reveals that the rise in inequality is slower in countries that have coalition governments. On the other hand, countries with a majority government have witnessed a rapid rise in inequality. The researchers found that coalition governments are more focused on the redistribution of resources, which is not a priority for majoritarian governments.

Mihir Sharma, in a Bloomberg opinion piece in April 2019, further outlines the case for coalition governments, citing the Indian example: "For three decades, until elections in 2014, India's voters refused to give any single political party a majority in Parliament. It was an age of coalitions – of dissonant and divided cabinets, prime ministers who ruled by consensus, and policy constructed after painstaking



ABOVE: South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) party 100th anniversary celebrations in Johannesburg
Photo: Alexander Joe / AFP

negotiation. It was also the era when the Indian economy came of age. The country opened up, reformed, achieved high growth rates and lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty."

However, the problem, as noted by political scientist Professor Nic Cheeseman, is that coalitions have a dark side too. While they may enable new parties to get a foothold in government, they can also be inherently unstable, and delivery can be bogged down in bureaucratic inertia and policy paralysis. This was on clear display in South Africa when the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) radical ideological differences caused a breakdown in their working relationship.

Despite their obvious differences, the DA and EFF's unseating of the ANC in 2016's local government elections was fuelled by pragmatism. EFF leader Julius Malema is on record as saying that the arrangement was a marriage of convenience, while the DA adopted the mantra that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". However, here it is important to make the distinction between "ideological coalitions" and "governance coalitions". In this case, the parties attempted to achieve the latter, but with little success in the absence of a formal power sharing arrangement.

Lukhona Mnguni, an academic at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and radio host at Power 98.7, believes "the problem in South Africa is that political parties have not identified themselves along ideological lines. Given the cosmopolitan nature of the country's electorate, most political parties seek to appeal to all sections of society. A more



ABOVE:
A souvenir medal celebrating 100 years of South Africa's African National Congress party, 2012
Photo: Alexander Joe / AFP

significant problem in South Africa is that there is no legislation that adequately gives directives on how coalition formation should be undertaken during pre- and post-election periods respectively. There is a need for legislative development in this respect."

Since the 2016 arrangement, the DA has pivoted to the right of the political spectrum, diluting its mass appeal. As a result, it is difficult to envisage this type of configuration replicated again. The DA working alongside the ANC also seems an unlikely prospect, given the intense competition for power between the two. Instead, it seems that the ANC and the EFF are ideological aligned bedfellows that would suggest a shift to the left in policy direction and the pursuit of a more nationalistic agenda.

THERE IS NO LEGISLATION THAT ADEQUATELY GIVES DIRECTIVES ON HOW COALITION FORMATION SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN

The kingmaker role in South African politics, a position the EFF currently occupies with great effectiveness, will likely become even more relevant. Moreover, intense competition for this space will emerge, with parties like former Johannesburg mayor Herman Mashaba's Action SA competing, albeit at a regional level. Amid this power vacuum and shifting environment, there is significant scope for new parties to fill the gaps across the ideological spectrum. Appealing to younger voters, many of whom are either apathetic and/or uninspired by the current range of options, could also materially alter the voting dynamic. All of this fluidity introduces further complexity and uncertainty to the political landscape.

On balance, coalitions are somewhat of a mixed blessing. In theory, they can deliver a more inclusive approach to governance but also create an opportunistic style of politics based on the exchange of favours, which can actually undermine, rather than strengthen, accountability. In India, the formation of coalition governments reflected the transition in politics away from the national parties towards smaller, more narrowly based regional parties. On a positive note, it has helped keep fundamentalism at bay and stimulate diversity of views, but it has also created a culture of short termism and political instability.

Looking at South Africa, an optimistic view suggests that enhanced political competition will improve governance by reducing complacency. The flipside is that it could exacerbate current dysfunction. Regardless of which way it goes, a shakeup of the status quo is badly needed for a restless population beleaguered by unmet expectations and unkept promises. GG

End SARS protests and the ghosts of NIGERIA'S CIVIL WAR

Some 50 years after a vicious civil war, a new citizens' movement demanding an end to police brutality suggests old wounds have not healed

By Paul Adepoju

On weekdays, except Fridays, Dayo Abimbola drives from Ibadan, south-west Nigeria, where he stays with his wife and two daughters, to Ogun state, where he teaches in a privately owned university. On Mondays, he is on the road by 7am even though the trip is about 90 minutes long and his first class is at 9am; he does this to allow for any unforeseen traffic on his way to work.



BELOW: Protestors barricade the expressway between Lagos and Ibadan in protest against police brutality, 2020
Photo: Pius Otomi Ekpei / AFP

But when the protests by End SARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) spread across the country last year, Abimbola's routine was disrupted, forcing him to confront daily uncertainties, including one day when he was caught in the middle of gunfire by security officers seeking to disperse a large crowd in the Molete area of Ibadan.

End SARS is a decentralised social movement aiming to call attention to, and end, the incessant cases of police brutality in Nigeria. Protesters demand, among others things, the disbanding of SARS, a notorious unit of the Nigerian police with a long list of reported abuses.

What began with a social media hashtag in 2017, was revitalised by fresh revelations of police brutality in 2020, leading to city shutdowns, security clampdowns, curfews, arson and scores of deaths.

End SARS has resonated across and beyond Nigeria, with notable international personalities expressing solidarity with the protesters, including then US presidential candidate Joe Biden, who issued a statement in which he urged Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari and the Nigerian military to cease the violent crackdown on protesters.

But the End SARS campaign struggled to gain broad support across the country, as highlighted in several media reports.

On social media, youths from the northern region of Nigeria were accused of shunning the End SARS protest, which Abdulazeez Suleiman, spokesperson for the Coalition of Northern Groups, said was untrue, although he admitted that the region was more interested in reform than in ending the controversial police unit.

"Our view is not to end SARS but to reform it. SARS is just a name. Reforming units and officers is the solution," he said.

But beyond the level of support for the protests in the northern part of Nigeria, what also soon became obvious was an overlap between the movement and the Nigerian Civil War. Widely referred to as the Biafra war, the conflict began on 6 July, 1967 and ended on 15 January, 1970. During the two and half years of conflict, according to available data, there were about 100,000 overall military casualties, while between 500,000 and two million Biafran civilians died of starvation.



END SARS IS A DECENTRALISED SOCIAL MOVEMENT AIMING TO CALL ATTENTION TO, AND END, POLICE BRUTALITY IN NIGERIA

Fought between the government of Nigeria and the secessionist south-eastern state of Biafra, amidst inter-ethnic conflict, a coup and claims that the federal government was marginalising the region, the war was a major chapter in



A man prays at a memorial in Abidgan commemorating the Biafran War
Photo: Sia Kambou / AFP

Nigeria's history of citizens' dissatisfaction with the structure of government and the dynamics of governance in the country. The war ended in January 1970 when Biafra, cut off from supplies and its revenue-producing oil fields, surrendered.

Nigerian political analyst Bayo Ilori notes that the similarities between the Biafra war and End SARS protests are uncanny, adding that both movements are actually intertwined.

"Something that connects both is the fact that there is strong dissatisfaction with the status quo, such that many people were willing to risk getting killed in the quest for freedom and a better life," he said.

It was therefore not surprising that the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) encouraged End SARS demonstrators to take over the streets in response to the deployment of Nigerian soldiers to disperse rallies.

"As this struggle to free Nigerians from bondage gets to its crucial stage, IPOB urges the End SARS protesters not to give up," IPOB's Media and Publicity Secretary Emma Powerful said in a statement in October last year.

Those opposed to the End SARS protests also described the movement as an extension of Biafra's quest to secede.

One of these was Adamu Garba, a former presidential aspirant. He described the End SARS protest as a "failed Biafra movement". "Note that from now onwards, until the recommended deep filtering is done to critically separate #ENDSARs from Biafra, whatever you do for #ENDSARS you are knowingly or unknowingly advancing the movement of Biafra whose aim is to consume us all, not just the north. Mark this!" Garba said.

The End SARS campaign has emerged as a rallying cry for those still seeking the actualisation of Biafra's demands for developmental equity and inclusion.

While protesters kept vigil at the Lekki Toll Gate, the epicentre of the End SARS protest, in October last year, former Niger Delta warlord Asari Dokubo was quoted as saying: "There is nothing to restructure or remodel about Nigeria. Instead of wasting our (Niger Deltans) time in cooperating with the Yorubas and Igbos in ENDSARS or restructuring protests, the only solution as Niger Delta people is to team together with the Ogonis and the Igbos and Efiks and reinvent Biafra because nobody can oppress the Ijaw man in Biafra."

Political analysts have also pointed out that at the heart of the nationalist aspirations that fuelled the Nigerian civil war was southerners' frustration with the northern-dominated federal government, which they believed was not serving their interests. The same seems to hold true for the End SARS protest, which has also been fuelled by the government's disregard for the demands of its people.

And as Ilori has noted, with the power of social media, young Nigerians created an End SARS campaign that trended globally. "They now know that they can get everyone's attention when they unite with a common voice and clearly deliver their message. The movement has also shown that, unlike the initial belief, Nigerian youths can actually do more than tweet, they can also take to the streets," he said.

Faced with the burden of ensuring that the End SARS protests did not escalate into a Biafra now or in the near future, Ilori said the Nigerian government needs to adopt and deploy a less confrontational approach, listening to the people and working to restore public trust in the government.

"Police and soldiers were killed by hoodlums who hijacked the protests and there is no guarantee it will not happen again," he said. "Nobody is entirely safe. Moreover, the Nigerian government and its counterparts in other African countries need to now understand that force, threats and aggression will only jeopardise the delicate peace in their respective countries."

WITH THE **POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA** YOUNG NIGERIANS CREATED AN END SARS CAMPAIGN THAT TRENDED GLOBALLY



Meanwhile, despite missing important meetings at work and enduring long hours in traffic during the protests, Abimbola identified with the protesters, whose actions he described as "justified".

"Most of the problems that they complained about during the Biafra war are unsolved, with unemployment, a widening inequality gap and corruption all mixed with insecurity, making life more difficult for Nigerians than it was in the 70s," he said. "The government needs to address the issues, not clamp down on the protesters, so that peace can quickly and fully return." GG

The outside/inside CONUNDRUM

The African National Congress's legacy of internal struggle for the throne

By Lavan Gopaul



A young man holds up a newspaper announcing the unbanning of the African National Congress, February 1990
Photo: Rashid Lombard / AFP

Forty years ago, the Matola raid (January 1981) resulted in the massacre of 15 African National Congress (ANC) freedom fighters by apartheid forces. Surprisingly, this did not take place on South African soil, but unfolded some 550 km away in Matola on the Mozambican coast.

ANC freedom fighters were in a state of constant fear of being arrested or killed, and the prospect of escaping South African shores and the clutches of the apartheid forces spurred the exile of many of them.

Those in exile were scattered amongst Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Swaziland. Some found refuge in Tanzania, Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, while others reached Europe and the Soviet Union. Lusaka and London



featured prominently as important nodes for those in exile. "Clusters" or "camps" were formed by those that remained in South Africa on the "inside" and those that were in exile on the "outside".

A curious relationship evolved between those who remained in South Africa and those in exile. Those inside expressed joy and relief to learn that their comrades had escaped the apartheid forces. But later, those emotions would sour to envy and jealousy as the ones on the "inside" remembered that their comrades had escaped the beatings, torture, arrest, and even death that they suffered under the apartheid government. These "camps" continued to grow in strength and significance, defining the upper echelons of South African politics and would set the tone for power struggles at the highest level.

ABOVE: Cyril Ramaphosa, Nelson Mandela and Jacob Zuma, as representatives of the African National Congress, attend a two-day Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), in Johannesburg, December 1991
Photo: Walter Dhladhla / AFP

Days after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the ANC and other political groups were banned; banned political parties had to be extremely resourceful and creative in their subversive pursuits in this era.

"There wasn't an active decision to become a freedom fighter. As blacks we were angry and frustrated with the apartheid regime," says "Charles", an ANC cadre of the 1980s. He evolved from angry university student to protester, then activist and subsequently banned person, arrested and later exiled. He was unintentionally subsumed into the struggle for freedom, like so many others.

"The journey of an exiled freedom



fighter often started with a narrow escape, fearing arrest or death," he recalls. The exiles would steal their way to Swaziland or Mozambique. Generally, it was a hushed trip, hurried and often with limited provisions and almost no money.

"(There were) spies everywhere, some 'were in it' for the money, others for a promise of a job from the authorities or just out of fear of the apartheid forces. Cadres in the same group knew little about what the next one was doing; plans, future meetings, and information in general was on a need-to-know basis. Remember, Mandela was arrested in 1962 after leaving Durban, as spies had tipped off the authorities," he says.

One's plans to go into exile were not publicised, even within your own circle. "Often one's arrival at a foreign destination was a surprise," Charles recalls. "Newcomers were met with trepidation and received with suspicion at first. When we reached our place of safety in the new country, we were handled with 'caution' as they tested our reference letters and back story." Reports of the Matola raid and other assassinations of exiled freedom fighters gave credence to these cautious welcomes.

Different "camps" were born out of this time of closed communication and suspicion. The links that formed amongst the groups in London, Lusaka and other places marked the beginnings of separate clusters within the ANC. The fraternal bond developed amongst those in exile or on the outside was often stronger than those at home.

The journey of the first three presidents in the new South Africa is a lucid appreciation of the development of those on the "inside" and "outside".

A young Thabo Mbeki went to the United Kingdom in exile, via Botswana. He was a student at Sussex University in the 1960s and formed lifelong bonds with others in exile. He later held pivotal ANC leadership roles in Lusaka, Zambia and Swaziland. President Mbeki's cabinet and close circle of advisors included those who were in exile with him from those early years. This inclusion may have been because of friendship and congruent thinking, and the trust that developed amongst members of this camp on the "outside".

Jacob Zuma was jailed in the early 1960s and sent to Robben Island prison for 10 years. He then found his way into exile via Swaziland to Mozambique. His time in exile in Mozambique, and later Zambia, helped him galvanise support for a position as the head of underground structures and shortly thereafter chief of intelligence. Zuma's popularity among the militant ranks and the Zulu community in those early years shaped the style and composition of his advisors and confidants.

Following the famous Rivonia trial in 1963-4, Nelson Mandela and other accused were imprisoned on Robben Island for decades. His fellow inmates formed highly cohesive bonds and they graduated to positions of substantial leadership in the post-



THE NEW SA WAS A FRENETIC TIME, AND RETURNING CADRES SWIFTLY MARKED THEIR PLACE IN THE HIERARCHY

apartheid era. The Robben Island political prisoners were automatically respected as struggle elite.

The new South Africa was a frenetic time, with returning cadres wanting to be noticed for positions, and some swiftly marked their place in the hierarchy. It was also a time of rebirth for many with dubious struggle credentials, who also managed to capture important appointments. The jostling for power and recognition amongst the ANC resulted in battle lines being drawn to demarcate the different camps. "New alliances were quickly formed. The fraternal bonds of those who were in exile together remained intact," says an ANC veteran.

The first democratic elections laid the foundation for a multi-party government. Mandela took pains to deliver an all-inclusive cabinet, resulting in a patchwork of parties and political ideologies clumped together. The coveted position of deputy president was concluded with enormous backroom debate. The challenge between Chris Hani, Jacob Zuma, Cyril Ramaphosa and Thabo Mbeki was accompanied by the steadfast support of their respective camps. "Some comrades believe that Hani's assassination was ordered by one of the camps that wanted to eliminate a strong VP candidate," Charles says.

A few years later, the Mbeki presidency reflected a distinct flavour of cadres from his camp, with a strong "outside" representation. "Inside" camps would later fuel the scorching of his administration and his subsequent resignation.

The Zuma camp had to woo the ANC to allow him to succeed as the new president. "Zuma's administration had shadings of his tribal loyalty, his provincial links and



ABOVE:
A freed Nelson Mandela with family and supporters a day after his release from prison, February 1990
Photo: Walter Dhladhla / AFP

certainly made advances to appease his exile and intelligence contacts," an ANC veteran says. It reflected much of the "inside". In the end, the demons that Zuma battled with made it easy for him to be usurped. His replacement, however, was not an automatic result.

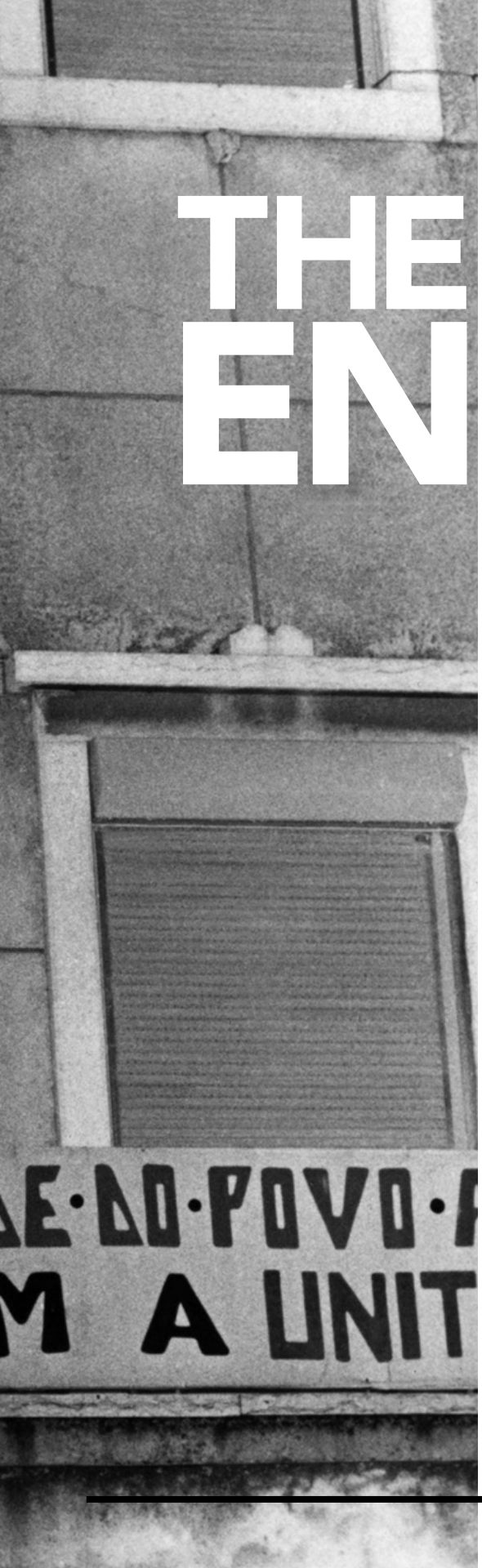
"The deliberate debate and challenge from different contenders and their camps lobbying the ANC elite resulted in Ramaphosa as president," the ANC veteran confirmed. "Ramaphosa's administration was an awkward compromise, which on the surface didn't appear to be a reflection of his choice. It was a smorgasbord of 'inside' and 'outside'," he said.

The inside/outside battle rages on in South Africa; these camps have been instrumental in the selection of the presidency and other key administrative appointments. These divisions have caused financial erosion and opened the door to high-level corruption.

"The old guard were strong revolutionaries and weak administrators, who also held dear the 'inside' and 'outside' camps. The next generation's camps may not be defined in such binary terms," says Charles.

But power struggles and divisions are not unique to South Africa. Similar powerplays are evidenced the world over and history is littered with instances of clusters rallying for the "throne". GG


DO MUANGAI AO
11 DE NOVEMBRO DE 1975
★JONAS SAVIMBI★
O INCONTESTÁVEL LÍDER
ANGOLANO
NACIONAL-VIVA·A·LIBERDAD
DO SOCIALISMO CO



THE END OF AN ERA?

Africa's freedom fighters and the challenge of transformation

By Issa Sikiti da Silva

After defeating colonialism, white minority rule and post-colonial authoritarian governments, many of Africa's liberation movements seem to have lost ground in the democratic era, challenged by the harsh realities of contemporary politics and socio-economic development dynamics.

From Algiers to Johannesburg and Maputo via Praia and Bissau, Lusaka, Luanda, Windhoek and Dar es Salaam, Africa's liberation movements were welcomed after decades of colonialism and white minority rule.

These movements included, among others, the Front for National Liberation (FNL) of Algeria, the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, Mozambique's Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde (PAIGC), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the

LEFT:
Portrait of Jonas Savimbi, leader of the Angolan guerilla group UNITA on a building in Lisbon, Portugal, 1975
Photo: Aei-Noticiosa / AFP

South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and Tanzania's *Chama Cha Mapinduzi*.

Brimming with hope, optimism and confidence, they positioned themselves as the "messiahs" of the continent, making ostentatious promises to improve the lives of their people.

However, more than four decades later, the promises of social justice and prosperity appear to have vanished into thin air, as severe social, economic, environmental and political crises have deepened across the continent, prompting the emergence of a new generation of young activists and calls for political revival.

"The political, social, economic situation is catastrophic in all African countries ruled by governments [that came out of] liberation. All the enthusiasm, joy and hope that held up our spirits have all but gone up in smoke," 75-year-old Maria Agostinha da Silva, a disgruntled member of Angola's MPLA, told *Africa in Fact* from the capital, Luanda.

FOUR DECADES LATER, THE PROMISES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PROSPERITY APPEAR TO HAVE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR

Da Silva, who was 30 years old when the oil-rich nation gained independence from Portugal in 1975 and epitomises the disillusionment of many Africans, said MPLA leaders were no longer the heroes they had been due to the way they had managed the oil-rich nation for 45 years.

"Everything they have done over the years was contrary to what we agreed upon in the very beginning of our movement," she said.

"Initially, the MPLA had a slogan '*o mais importante é resolver os problemas do povo*' (the most important thing is to solve the people's problems). But more than 40 years down the line, not even a single problem of the people has been solved," she said. "The MPLA has, over the years, turned into one of



ABOVE: Hawkers protect their goods as a freight train approaches in the Viana district of Luanda during the general elections that saw José Eduardo dos Santos step down, 2017
Photo: Marcos Longari / AFP



the continent's most corrupt and brutal liberation movements, which will not tolerate criticism and peaceful protests."

Angola is Africa's second-largest oil producer, but 41% of its population lives in extreme poverty, according to the Poverty Report for Angola released in June 2020.

Martin Bwalya, head of the industrialisation division for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), told *Africa in Fact* that liberation movements were designed and constructed essentially for a specific purpose – to liberate.

"Therefore, the onus has been on these movements to transform themselves from 'liberation function and tools' to 'ruling and championing development'. It's this transformation which many of the liberation movements have not done or not done that well," he said.

The consequence had been a failure to respond to people's economic growth and development aspirations, Bwalya added. "This surely opens up a gap between the people and the liberation movements, as the people, especially urban populations, begin to question why their aspirations and access to basic needs remain a dream."

Bwalya said it was not uncommon for liberation



'THERE ARE CASES WHEN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS HAVE CEASED TO BE **INSPIRED AND DRIVEN** BY PEOPLE'S NEEDS'

ABOVE:
Pallo Jordan (left) and Mac Maharaj attend the ANC National Conference in Johannesburg, 2017
Photo: Wikus de Wet/ AFP

movements to rely on their credentials as liberators when challenged.

"Liberation movements think they will sustain their popularity on the basis of past glory," he said. "But there are cases where liberation movements have clearly ceased to be inspired and driven by people's needs – becoming elitist instruments of nepotism and corruption and even oppressive to those that may be asking for genuine people's needs.

"The responsibility is on former liberation movements to evolve and transform into governments with a focus and capability on service delivery and accountable resource management, as well as clear development foresight."

However, despite mounting criticism from civil society, among others, that these movements have not only become irrelevant, but have also run out of ideas and no longer have a role to play, their leaders beg to differ.

Pallo Jordan, a prominent figure in the African National Congress (ANC), which came to power with the end of apartheid in 1994, says no South African political formation has been able to match his party's political and social programme as laid down in the 1955 Freedom Charter.

"The day that a political party with a vision close to or outdoing the Freedom Charter emerges, one could then say the ANC has run out of ideas and has no role to play in the present," Jordan, a former cabinet minister, told *Africa in Fact*.

Disappointed by the approach taken by the party in the post-apartheid era, some influential ANC members left and launched their own political parties, including Congress of the People (COPE) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

Neither COPE nor the EFF have been able to improve on the ANC's programme, Jordan said. "This suggests that contemporary politics has yet to catch up with the ANC's vision. The majority of voters appear to agree," he said.

"All South Africans today are citizens of this country, enjoying equal rights with all others," he said, adding that the former liberation movement had given people a real sense of patriotism.

Despite these achievements, the ANC has seen its support base eroded, particularly in urban areas, where the party has lost ground in local elections in recent years. Failed service delivery promises, corruption and high unemployment have also tarnished the party's liberation credentials.

But Jordan defended the ANC's efforts. "Job creation is a function of economic growth. South African investors have not come to the party and the business community collectively does what it can

FAILED SERVICE DELIVERY PROMISES, CORRUPTION AND HIGH UNEMPLOYEMENT TARNISHED THE PARTY'S LIBERATION CREDENTIALS

to evade legislation aimed at creating greater equality and effectively fighting poverty.

"No corporation has as yet fulfilled its obligations in terms of employment equality. Year after year, South African corporations report serious underperformance in terms of employment equality and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE).

"The spokespersons of business still long for a return to a low-wage economy, with the capacity to serve only the white minority and a tiny black elite. Consequently, economic growth is reliant on stimulation by the government and foreign direct investment."

According to NEPAD's Bwalya, Africa's development outlook, while by no means bleak, certainly has plenty of room for improvement, both in terms of policy and investment options as well as strategies to aggressively grow local industries, including tradeable services.

"The current state of affairs cannot be placed wholly in the laps of the liberation movements. There are certain fundamental principles that Africa needs to boldly embrace – and these are key conditions for successful development.

"One of these principles underpins recent African Union reforms championed under the leadership of Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame (himself the former leader of the Rwandan Patriot Front), that Africa has to look inward and mobilise, and take responsibility to finance development from its own resources.

"As President Kagame has said several times, it is not a lack of resources, but the appropriate mindset to believe in self and discard the perception that western aid is the essential underlying pillar for their development."

The nexus between POWER, POLITICS and the MILITARY

Power dynamics in post-independence Zimbabwe

by Linos Mapfumo

Literature is awash with research on the militarisation of the state, especially in West Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, where military involvement in politics is relatively common.

Militarisation of the state has been a common problem in post-independence Africa as countries attempt the democratisation process. A common occurrence has been the hijacking of democratic transitions which have then morphed into largely dictatorial forms of governance, popularly referred to as "hybrid regimes", whose main characteristic is a mixture of lip service to liberal democracy and a modicum of official representativeness and respect for civil and political liberties, but with fundamentally intolerant dictatorial tendencies and traits.



RIGHT: Members of the Zimbabwe National Army during Defence Forces Day celebrations in Harare, 2018
Photo: Jekesai Njikizana / AFP



The debate continues as to whether Zimbabwe is a militarised state or not. Some scholars, such as Godfrey Maringira, Tyanai Masiya, Enock Ndawana, Martin Rupiya and Blessing Miles Tendi, have argued that the lack of military professionalism and the concomitant militarisation of the country has had a negative effect on development as well as in stifling the choice, will and participation of citizens in the selection of political leaders. Maringira and Masiya (2017) contend that the military should not play any role in politics. They argue that if it is allowed to participate, especially in electoral processes, "it is likely to defend the regime that serves military interests rather than the interests of the voters".

Rupiya (2003) argues that the involvement of the military in politics is not only unprofessional but should be frowned upon, as it is a threat to the security of the people. However, other scholars such as Alfred Stepan, Imad Harb and Samuel Finer argue that there is an overarching reason why the military should be involved in politics.

In the Middle East, for example, the military has always maintained that politics is too important to be left to civilians. In fact, Finer (1974) argues that the military is quite disciplined and so can be trusted to take over political power and thus should be an actor in politics, while Harb (2003) contends that military disengagement from politics should never be final and complete. In the Brazilian context, Stepan argues that the military has a political function.

This article grapples with whether the role of the military in Zimbabwe is in violation of Section 208(2) of the Constitution. It also considers whether this military involvement has in any way harmed good public policy, the developmental needs and concerns of the country, as well as whether it has taken away the electorate's ability to hold government to account on an ongoing basis.

Militarisation is a multifaceted process that includes the following main elements: the dominance of military virtues and ethos; the rise in military spending and proliferation of materiel; significant military control over government programmes or retention of power itself; the preponderance of military solutions to every security problem and the penchant to resort to the use of force or the threat to use it.

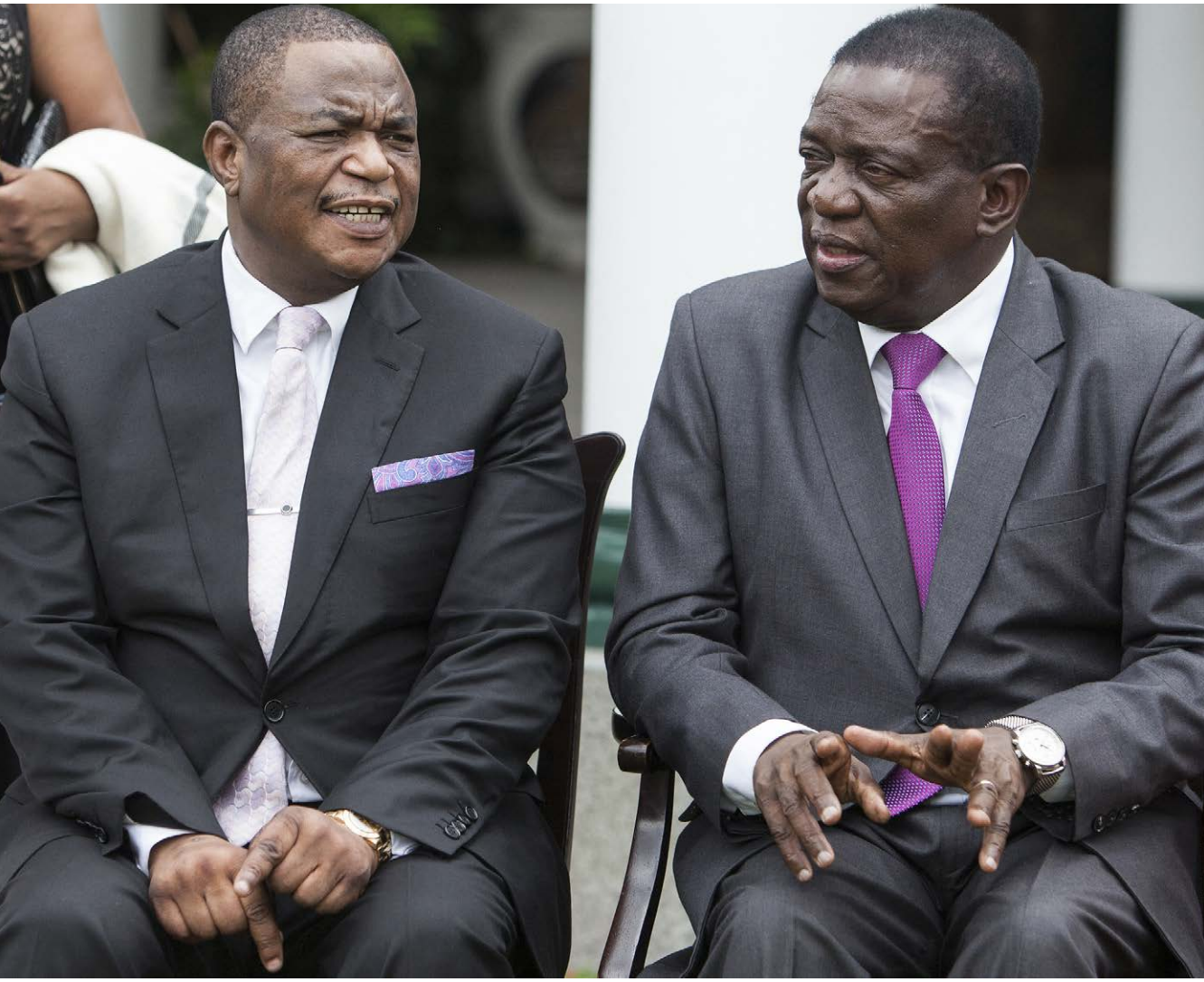
THE MATABELELAND CONFLICT MARKED THE GENESIS OF THE MILITARY'S INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL POLITICS

Militarisation can either be covert or overt, as military personnel may not assume a publicly leading role in the political sphere, but rather use their firm control over the office holders of power to penetrate state structures such as the management of certain key sectors.

However, militarisation in some contexts is synonymous with the military overstepping its professional domain and entering the political space uninvited and usually in the form of a military coup.

Militarisation of the state is usually driven by numerous factors but mainly used as a form of coercion by governing elites to contain a restive population in cases of a crisis in legitimacy or a loss of hegemony, as well as the need to control vested economic interests. A crisis in legitimacy is usually caused by the ruling elite's failure to address issues of poverty, illiteracy and disease.

In Africa, militarisation is inextricably linked to the continent's chequered history of imperialism in which both colonial and post-colonial governments were largely authoritarian in nature and relied heavily on coercion to govern.



ABOVE: Former army commander and newly appointed vice president General Constantino Chiwenga (left) and President Emmerson Mnangagwa at their swearing in ceremony, Harare, 2017
Photo: AFP

Furthermore, most post-colonial governments in Africa were born out of politico-military organisations who waged armed struggles to attain independence. Thus, the military is intrinsically part of the governing elite, given that most of their leadership participated in the liberation struggles and share the same ideologies, especially that of anti-imperialism and nationalism.

Militarisation has manifested itself in various forms in Africa, resulting in the continent recording more than 200 coup incidents between 1960 and 2020 of which 81 were successful. Civil wars have not spared Africa either, resulting in militarisation and thereby negatively affecting democratic development, leading to negative socio-economic development and human insecurity. In fact, the military has largely assumed the role of the supervisor, moderator or arbitrator of the democratisation process, especially in countries such as Egypt and Sudan.

In Zimbabwe, the outbreak of the Matabeleland conflict in the early 1980s



marked the genesis of the military's involvement in local politics, firstly as a deployment to the largely ethnic conflict in the southern and western regions of the country. Secondly, the military, over the years, accumulated the highest concentration of highly educated and qualified professionals, whose expertise was required in other sectors within government. This is because as part of its human capital development policy, the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) encouraged its personnel to further their education, partly because they had abandoned school to join the liberation struggle.

To demonstrate this, currently the military has the highest concentration of personnel holding Doctoral (PhD) qualifications. More so, it established its own dedicated university, the Zimbabwe National Defence University (ZNDU).

The government adopted a deliberate policy of appointing individuals with liberation war credentials and high-ranking security backgrounds to senior posts in civilian state institutions. Importantly, these appointments were not limited to members of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) but also applied to the broad spectrum of the country's security services.

The military increasingly became involved in politics after 2000 when socio-economic and political developments dramatically changed, following the rejection

ABOVE: People gather at Harare's airport to welcome President Emmerson Mnangagwa after the military takeover, 2017
Photo: AFP

RIGHT: Major General Sibusiso Moyo reading a statement in a broadcast from the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, which seemed to show the military in control of the country, 2017
Photo: Dewa Mavhinga/ ZBC /AFP



THE GOVERNMENT APPOINTED INDIVIDUALS WITH LIBERATION WAR CREDENTIALS TO STATE INSTITUTIONS

of the new constitution in a referendum. This was further compounded by the emergence of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which ZANU-PF – as a politico-military institution – viewed as an appendage of the West that would perpetuate neo-colonialism if elected to power.

This led to the appointment of many former retired security services personnel to strategic positions within the ZANU-PF national office. In the same vein, the Joint Operations Command (JOC), a supreme organ for the coordination of state security in Zimbabwe, for the first time in 2002 publicly pronounced on political developments in the country. This culminated in the January 2002 televised statement by the command element of the security forces, led by the ZDF commander, General Vitalis Zvinavashe, who declared that they would only back leaders who fought in the country's wars of liberation and that any change designed to reverse the gains of the liberation struggle would not be supported.



Analyst Gorden Moyo argues that the military's growing involvement in the economy through the fast-track land reform programme in the 2000s, the diamond mining in Chiadzwa and the indigenisation programme, in addition to holding prominent positions in both the party and government, made it difficult for it to adhere to its constitutional mandate, as it became preoccupied with preserving the ruling elite's access to wealth.

Thus, a number of scholars have argued that the military's increasing involvement in government suggests an intolerance for elected opposition or dissent. This according to them, has stifled good governance and undermined the will of the electorate.

Furthermore, the military's continued involvement has worsened the governance crisis, resulting in the West imposing punitive sanctions, especially against the command element of the security, making the country a high-risk jurisdiction. The resultant toxic governance has perpetuated the ongoing financial crisis, high unemployment and healthcare challenges. It has diverted the governing elite from solving the country's current economic challenges to a vicious cycle of political brinkmanship and continued underdevelopment of the country.

Meanwhile, the military played an important role in ending Mugabe's rule, following the purging of the party leadership. The events of November 2017 were in fulfilment of the warning in 2016 by the then commander of the ZDF, General Constantino Chiwenga that "we [the military] are stockholders of the country. Some are stakeholders. Stakeholders come and go, but stockholders have nowhere to go, so we are stockholders, we came with it [Zimbabwe]". This statement means that those who fought the liberation struggle have vested interests in the future of Zimbabwe and as such should intervene in defence of the constitution and the flag.

THE MILITARY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN **ENDING MUGABE'S RULE,** FOLLOWING THE PURGING OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP

Tendi argues that Mugabe's refusal to meet with the command element of the military on 13 November, 2017 to deal with increasing disagreements within ZANU-PF triggered his demise. Thus, the military's intervention through Operation Restore Legacy (ORL) was ostensibly designed to protect national interests and, as per the ZDF's statement on 15 November, 2017, to "pacify a degenerating political, social and economic situation in our country which, if not addressed, may result in violent conflict".

It is important to note that the ZDF's actions were not a coup and President Emmerson Mnangagwa's eventual takeover of the state passed the constitutionalism barometer.

After ORL, the military, due to their competencies and ideological orientation, increasingly became involved in state affairs. Ndawana (2020) views these appointments as an acknowledgement that "the new administration's power was derived from, and resided in, the military...and has had a negative impact on a number of democratic institutions, including but not limited to the judiciary, security services, civic organisations and the electoral management body in the country".

This article has provided the political and socio-economic historical antecedents to the debate as to whether Zimbabwe is a militarised state operating on the whims of the military. From the findings, there are indications that a number of problems that form part of the crisis are throwbacks to unresolved colonial legacy challenges.

Zimbabwe, like any state, uses its human resources and deploys them to positions it deems will derive the maximum benefit. This is not peculiar to Zimbabwe. For example, the current and past three administrations in the United States (US) have appointed former military personnel to head strategic departments.

The findings also do not support allegations that the ZDF is in violation of the constitution, and its involvement should be seen in the context of the military's historical genesis as a politico-military organisation.

Dynastic politics and A ONE-PARTY STATE

Togo's thirst for real political change continues

by Blamé Ekoue

Togo held its first multi-party election polls in 1958 under United Nations supervision, before gaining independence from France in 1960 under the leadership of Sylvanus Olympio and his Committee of Togolese Unity (CUT), who had won the elections two years earlier. Then in 1961 Togo became a republic, with Olympio as its president, raising people's hopes that these events signalled an era of stability for the country.

Those hopes, however, were short-lived, as the country experienced a wave of political repression, leading to the detention of activists, the dissolution of opposition parties and the creation of a one-party state. It was against this background that a group of Togolese military returnees from the French army, including a sergeant, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, staged a *coup d'etat* in 1963 and assassinated Olympio. These events



Sylvanus Olympio was president of Togo until his assassination in 1963
Photo: AFP

were two firsts for post-independence Africa – the first *coup* and the first assassination of an elected leader.

The military took over the country, installing a civilian, Nicolas Grunitsky, as president. Eyadéma took power himself in January 1967, banning party politics and creating a one-party state.

Despite a return to multi-party politics in the early 1990s, following protests against Eyadéma's authoritarianism, the Gnassingbé family has remained in power for more than five decades. Eyadéma and his son, the present incumbent, Faure Gnassingbé, have won seven elections between them since 1993 amid ongoing opposition claims of systematic election fraud and wielding undue influence over Togo's electoral commission, the judiciary and the army. To all intents and purposes, Togo remains a one-party state, say observers.

What appeared to be a simple strike by students asking for better study conditions in October 1990, ultimately set the pace for the return of multi-party democracy when, faced with growing unrest, Eyadéma legalised political parties and agreed to multi-party elections. The manifest desire for better living conditions through political change was punctuated by violent confrontations between pro-democrats and supporters of the regime. To date, hundreds of people have died in the struggle for democratic change in Togo.

Eyadéma's own rule came to an end when he died suddenly in 2005. The military wasted no time in installing his son Faure as president in an election characterised, like the others, by irregularities and violence against the opposition.

Since then, Gnassingbé has won four presidential elections, the latest in February 2020, in which, according to the electoral commission, he received 72% of the vote, an outcome that was widely disputed. The main opposition leader, former



RIGHT: The late president of Togo, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, 1973
Photo: AFP

FAR RIGHT: Faure Gnassingbé casts his vote at a polling station in Kara, 2020
Photo: Pius Utomi Ekpei / AFP



DESPITE A RETURN TO MULTI-PARTY POLITICS IN THE EARLY 1990S, THE GNASSINGBÉ FAMILY HAS REMAINED IN POWER FOR OVER FIVE DECADES

prime minister Agbéyomé Kodjo, who came second despite expecting to win and who demanded a recount, fled into exile. A Togolese court has since issued an international warrant for his arrest.

The country's constitution, which was voted for by 97% of the electorate in 1992, remains at the heart of Togo's current political turmoil. Faure's father amended the constitution in 2002 to allow himself unlimited terms of office. Since then, Togolese have been demanding a return to two-term limits, with tens of thousands of people taking to the streets between 2017 and 2019 to demand reform. Bowing to pressure, in 2019 the Gnassingbé government proposed a constitutional amendment to return to two-term limits, but only with effect from 2020, which means that he could remain in power until 2030. This proposal was rejected by opposition parties.

The international community's silence on the phenomenon of "third termism" has been criticised by opposition leaders, who have accused the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),

of which Togo is a member, of turning a blind eye to Gnassingbé's tampering with the constitution to retain power for his clan.

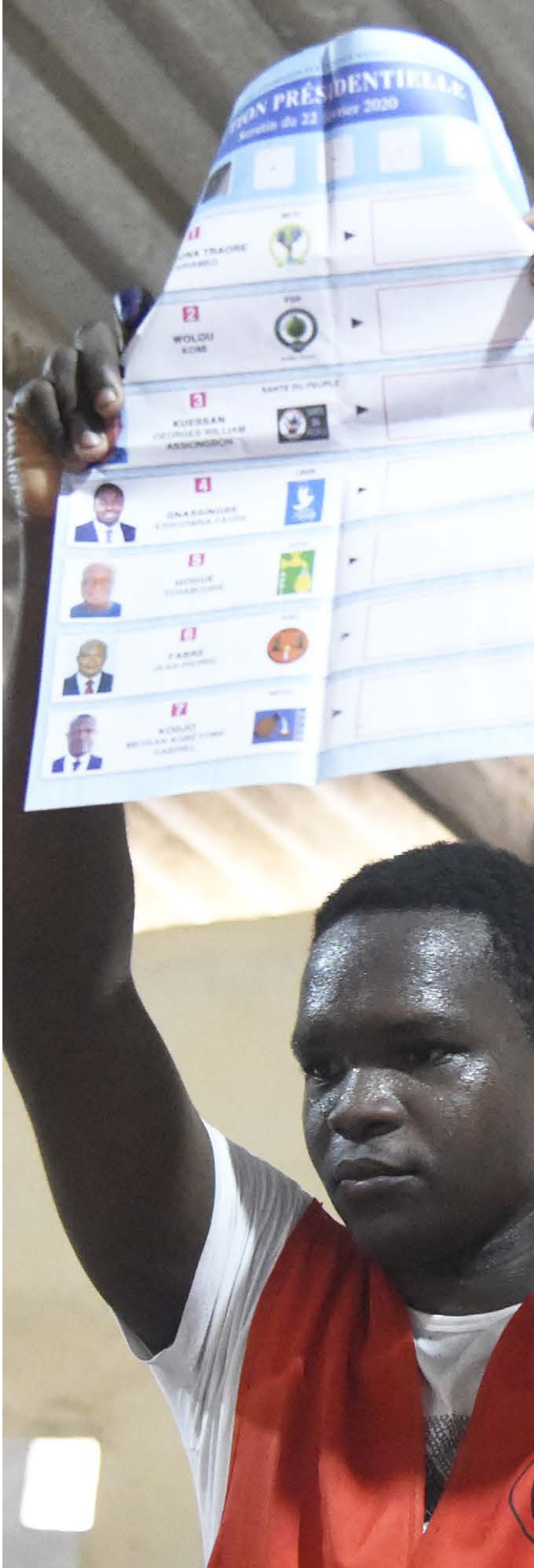
"If nothing is done, any elected leader could easily change our constitution, either to limit or extend the presidential term," Dodji Apevon, a lawyer and leader of the opposition party FDR says. "It is against the rule of law. We must have a sacred, untouchable constitution."

In a review of last year's election, published in March 2020 by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Alix Boucher noted that "more than 70% of Togolese told Afrobarometer in 2017 that a two-term limit should be reinstated in the constitution and that Gnassingbé should not run again in 2020, having already served three terms. Moreover, almost 80% of Togolese say they disapprove of the government's handling of the economy."

Citizens, Boucher wrote, also had little trust in the government: "more than 80% of Togolese say the presidency, parliament, police and judges are corrupt, revealing deep levels of mistrust in government institutions. Similarly, more than 70% of the population does not see the National Electoral Commission (CENI) as a non-partisan, technical institution."

Until COVID-19, Togo's economy was doing well, with annual growth of 5.3% in 2019, according to a November 2020 World Bank overview. Growth was driven by an increase in public investment, expansion in the construction sector, and improved agricultural productivity, the bank said, although the services sector was the main driver of growth due to expanding port and airport operations. However, the crisis triggered by the global coronavirus pandemic was expected to lead to a decline in growth to 1% in 2020.

However, analysts also point out that regional inequality within the country is a concern, with more than 55% of Togo's people living below the poverty line, 69% of them in rural areas.





"Management of the country is calamitous. Politics has divided us, and the regime has put in place an obsolete but authoritarian system to maintain power against the will of the people," Apevon says.

However, despite the accusations against the government from civil rights organisations, Gnassingbé supporters question whether opposition leaders are in a position to take the helm.

"They easily accuse the regime of using an authoritarian system to remain in power, but what are opposition leaders proposing as alternative development programmes? They keep calling for political change, but

'THE REGIME HAS PUT IN PLACE AN OBSOLETE BUT AUTHORITARIAN SYSTEM TO MAINTAIN POWER AGAINST THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE'

they must also show the people that they have development programmes for the country. That is what our leader has done for some years now," says Charles Kondi Agba, dean of the executive bureau of the ruling Union for the Republic (UNIR) party.

Agba also appealed to opposition leaders to not simply try to duplicate western systems of government, "because concepts vary from one geographical space to another". "It has taken a lot of time for European countries to be where they are today in terms of the democratisation process. We have our culture, and our realities are different. The experience of violence, blood-letting and ethnic wars in other parts of Africa shows that the democratisation process must be a gradual process when applied in Africa, where often the machinery of a one-party state has existed for more than three decades following independence. Let a child first learn how to crawl before he can walk steadily."

However, as analyst Léon Amouzou notes: "The last constitutional amendments were made without seeking the approval of the people through a referendum. The head of state used the ruling-party dominated parliament to unilaterally amend the constitution that his father had already amended in 2002, to stay in power for life. If there were ethical rules in politics, the incumbent head of state would not have stood for a fourth term, showing that he respected the will of the people." GG

LEFT:
An electoral official holds up a ballot paper for the 2020 presidential elections
Photo: Pius Utomi Ekpei / AFP



BELOW:
Angola's President João Lourenço (centre front) takes over from José Eduardo dos Santos (front left) at an extraordinary congress of the MPLA in Luanda, 2018
Photo: Ampe Rogerio / AFP

Angola's long legacy of CENTRALISED CONTROL

The ruling MPLA seems determined to retain its grip

By Ini Ekott

João Lourenço largely proved critics wrong after coming to power as Angola's second post-civil war leader in 2017. As José Eduardo dos Santos' preferred successor, it seemed unlikely the new leader would introduce reforms that could affect the interests of his benefactor. Dos Santos had run the oil and diamond-rich nation for 38 years while aggrandising the first family and suppressing dissent.

After being sworn in, Lourenço replaced Dos Santos's influential daughter, Isabel, reputed to be Africa's richest woman, as the head of the state-owned oil company, Sonangol. He fired José Filomeno, Dos Santos's son, as the administrator of the country's sovereign wealth fund.

The government recovered more than $5 billion in looted assets and introduced an anti-graft law. It acquitted journalists facing trial and relaxed state control of the media. Lourenço reached out to political opponents and reorganised the ruling *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, MPLA.

But the momentum of these reforms has slowed in the past two years, and so has public optimism. The government's response to corruption has been less spirited, analysts say. Attacks on dissent have not stopped, and the government has yet to allow the conduct of the country's first-ever local government elections that were expected to lead to decentralisation of power.

This may appear as the trademark behaviour of a resource-rich African nation, but it also points to something more fundamental in Angola: while the president has been applauded for trying to wrench the Dos Santos clan off state assets, the country's repressive political system, orchestrated and perfected by the MPLA for decades of the country's independence struggle and civil war, has not entirely changed.

"Angola's politics and economy remain dominated by a national liberation movement (NLM) in government, the MPLA, and its senior figures," Christopher Vandome, a research fellow with the

Chatham House Africa Programme, told *Africa in Fact*. "Like other NLMs in southern Africa, the MPLA views its accession to power as the end of a process, and this sense of finality supports a belief that no other group can succeed them."

The MPLA's illiberal approach has a long history beginning from the days of Angola's struggle for independence from Portugal. Under the party's central Marxism-Leninist ideology, political competition was not welcome, and ideological opposition was brutally repressed.

After war broke out against its main opposition, *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA), MPLA cemented its position in power through the control of the oil economy. The opposition also took advantage of its access to the country's diamonds to sustain its fight for 27 years.

"Through the control of the state and the oil revenues on which it depended, the MPLA centralised control of Angola's economy to the benefit of the party," said Vandome, who focuses on the political economy and international relations of southern Africa.

In 1991, 12 years after he came to power, Dos Santos tried to dismantle the single-party system as part of accords to end the war. This failed and hostilities resumed.

Since the war ended in 2002 following the death of the UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, Angola has seen increasing popular demands for greater political and economic opportunities, especially from its young population, and the political leadership of the country has oscillated between meeting these agitations by allowing reforms and suppressing them.

Since coming to power, Lourenço has opened up the polity and the economy. Angola now has a privatisation law, a one-stop window for investors, and a social protection registry to take care of the most vulnerable citizens. The new president has tried to steer the nation away from the neo-patrimonial system of the Dos Santos era, where power was exercised through patronage and enrichment. But Lourenço has also retained the MPLA's culture of dominance.

"President Eduardo dos Santos was consistent in his support for the political status quo, a stance continued after the accession of the current President, Joao Lourenço," Steven Kyle, an associate professor at New York's Cornell University, who has conducted several studies on the economic policies of Angola and other Portuguese-speaking African countries, told *Africa in Fact*.

Perhaps, no two cases explain the "political status quo" better than the government's continued failure to allow local

ANGOLA IS THE ONLY SOUTHERN AFRICAN NATION WITHOUT AN ELECTED SYSTEM OF SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

government elections for the first time in Angola's history, and its continued attack on civil liberties.

Although it has four levels of government – national, provincial, municipal, and district – Angola is the only southern African nation without an elected system of sub-national government.

The president appoints the 18 provincial governors, who appoint the 164 municipal administrators, who in turn appoint the 475 administrators of the districts. This arrangement means the central government in Luanda effectively appoints all top officials at lower levels of government.

As a result, the appointees' loyalty is not to the people, but all the way up to the president. Politically, the system allows the MPLA, which has been in power for decades, to fill all senior posts.



A protestor at a demonstration demanding the resignation of minister of state Edeltrudes Costa accused of corruption, Luanda, 2020
Photo: Osvaldo Silva / AFP

Elections would see the ruling party lose its control over sub-national governments, and officials have changed timelines for achieving an election for years. After repeatedly shifting the dates, President Lourenço promised the elections would be held in 2020. The government now blames COVID-19 for moving the dates yet again.

But many do not believe the government has been sincere. They point to the fact that even without the pandemic, local government elections would not have happened in 2020 because the National Assembly went on break without approving the necessary legal framework.

"It is part of a deliberate delaying strategy by the ruling party to maintain a system where the central government appoints all officials at sub-national levels," says Albano Troco, a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand, in an article, 'Why COVID-19 can't be blamed for Angola's failure to have local governance', published in August 2020, on The Conversation.

"The introduction of local elections would see the ruling party lose its monopoly over the local government for the first time since independence."

The second point is just as telling. Although Lourenço has made efforts to reach out to the opposition, his government's response to dissent remains troubling, human rights groups say. This attitude follows from years of the brutal curtailment of open expression of political

DECADES OF THE POLICE'S VIOLENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEMONSTRATIONS REMAIN THE SAME UNDER LOURENÇO

dissent, a notorious past underlined by the 1991 killing of 10,000 to 30,000 people in what became known as the Halloween Massacre.

As recently as 18 January this year, security officials killed several separatists protesting in the country's north-east diamond mining town of Cafunfo, in Luanda Norte province, according to an Agence France Presse (AFP) report.

The report said police claimed the officers had acted in self-defence after around 300 armed protesters assaulted the Cafunfo police station, but video footage of the incident circulated on Twitter showed military and police officers standing over a dozen unarmed bodies in broad daylight.

According to AFP, a senior Human Rights Watch researcher, Zenaida Machado, who shared the video said it was sent to her directly by a police officer at the scene. Machado said decades of the police's notoriously violent attitude towards demonstrations had remained the same under Lourenço.

This manner of excessive control of all aspects of the economy and society by a single party can only lead to the creation and consolidation of "self-reproduction systems and mechanisms, which in turn easily build hardly scrutinised processes of management of resources, and facilitate corruption," says Cristina Rodrigues, senior researcher on Angola and Portuguese speaking Africa, at the Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden.

With growing demands for more opportunities and livelihoods in Angola, the government's priorities must be to deliver modernising reforms that can diversify the country away from oil dependence and unravel deep-rooted patronage networks, Vandome said. GG



RIGHT: Mounted police officers charge protestors at a demonstration in Luanda against police brutality, 2021
Photo: Osvald Silva / AFP


Hapag-Lloyd

Malawi's DEMOCRATIC



ABOVE:
Supporters of the Malawi Congress Party at an election rally held in Lilongwe ahead of elections, 2020
Photo: Amos Gumulira/ AFP

An independent judiciary and a grassroots movement give Malawi citizens a stronger voice

By Josephine Chinele

MILESTONE





When Malawians went to the polls in June 2020 – for the second time in little more than a year - the election not only marked the culmination of a process that saw opposition parties and civil society organisations upend the status quo in a traditionally conservative country, but witnessed the country's highest court send a strong message to the rest of Africa, where too many states still pay only lip service to multi-party democracy and the rule of law.

In February 2020, in a decision that stunned the country, Malawi's Constitutional Court accepted evidence that there had been "systematic, widespread and grave" irregularities during the May 2019 election vote count, but went further to declare that the current first-past-the post system used to choose the president was unconstitutional. The initial results had seen the incumbent president, Peter Mutharika of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), returned for a second term. In future, the justices declared, the winner would need to get more than 50% of the vote, opening the way for coalitions among independent candidates and opposition parties. They ordered a rerun within 150 days.

Opposition candidates, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP)'s Lazarus Chakwera and the United Transformation Movement's (UTM) Saulos Chilima, joined forces to challenge the results in the Constitutional Court based on evidence of irregularities that included return sheets altered with a popular correcting fluid known by its brand name, Tipp-Ex.

On 3 February, amid ongoing national protests against the so-called 'Tipp-Ex scandal', mobilised by the Malawi Human Rights Defender's Coalition (HRDC), the court ruled in Chakwera and Chilima's favour. The judgment, which was widely regarded in Malawi and the rest of the world as an important assertion of judicial independence, was appealed by both Mutharika and the Malawi Electoral Commission, chaired by Jane Ansah.

But in May 2020, a Malawi court of appeal upheld the Constitutional Court judgment and the election was rerun on 23 June, 2020 declared free and fair, despite COVID-19 restrictions. Chakwera, with Chilima as his running mate, got 59.34% of the vote, while Mutharika trailed with 39.92%. Despite also insisting the rerun had been irregular, Mutharika conceded.

It was a pivotal moment for Malawi and the rest of the continent, where people had been used to leaders who clung to power through fair means or foul in the face of poor or non-existent service delivery, corruption and unaccountable politicians at every level of government.

The anti-government protests, which also called for the



Reinstated vice president Saulos Klaus greets lawyers prior to a Malawi constitutional court ruling which annulled the results of the the 2019 election due to vote rigging
Photo: Amos Gumulira/ AFP

THE HRDC CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE FELT FREER TO AIR THEIR VIEWS ON MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

removal of Ansah, were unusual in a country where, for many years, citizens were remarkably tolerant of an authoritarian government along with widespread corruption and cronyism among its political class.

Malawi became a multi-party democracy only after internal and external pressure, following three decades of dictatorial rule under self-declared president-for-life Dr Hastings Banda who ruled the country like a one-man state following independence in 1964. In 1993, Malawians voted for multi-party democracy in a referendum, and the following year, Banda and his Malawi Congress Party were voted out.

But "fear of the unknown" was long established under Banda's rule. No one questioned his decisions as the appointing authority for public officers such as parliamentarians and ministers, among others. He was minister of defence, agriculture, foreign affairs, justice and public works. Personal liberties were denied; women were forbidden to wear short skirts or trousers, while men could not wear their hair long. Dissidents largely fled into exile.

Movements such as the quasi-religious grouping Public Affairs Committee (PAC) did play a big role in championing the introduction of multi-party politics in Malawi at a time when, after the 1994 elections and the ratification of the constitution, there were high hopes that civil society organisations would take a more active role in safeguarding human rights.

In fact, the PAC and other social movements such as the Episcopal Conference of Malawi and the Malawi Law Society did step up in 2002-3 when the incumbent president tried to amend the constitution to allow himself a third term in office.

But there was no all-encompassing, visible movement to keep government in check and mobilise citizens at a grassroots level, and the post multi-party democracy era saw government taking a business-as-

usual approach, while corruption and human rights abuses took place under the noses of civil society organisations (CSOs) and social movements.

It was to fill this gap that the HRDC was born. "We realised there was no strong CSO. Those that were there had a weak voice, they couldn't strongly push, or powerfully give a voice to people at the grassroots who needed to be heard," Luke Tembo, the HRDC national coordinator told *Africa in Fact*.

The HRDC was launched in December 2017 by several civil rights organisations and the Malawi Law Society "as a space to promote, among other rights, the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly by civil society".

THE HRDC'S INITIAL PLAN WAS TO PROVIDE SECURITY TO MALAWI'S HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS WHO WERE RESISTING SHRINKING CIVIL SPACE

The HRDC's initial plan, Tembo said, was to provide security to Malawi's human rights defenders who were resisting shrinking civil space in the country. However, the HRDC realised that many active CSOs were built around the interests of the elite.

"The HRDC ensures that all national level issues relate to the people on the ground," Tembo said. "We've ensured the establishment of grassroots structures, with community human rights defenders' committees at village, district and then national level.

"Electoral justice has enabled Malawians to understand what active citizenship is about. As the HRDC, we showed citizens how they can hold office bearers to account. There are those who say the HRDC has taught Malawians about human rights in the space of a year or so," he said.

He does, however, believe that there is a need for the HRDC to help Malawians to understand the responsibilities that come attached to rights. "It also has to be clear that when people demand their rights, it doesn't have to be associated with violence."

Political scientist and public opinion researcher Dr Boniface Dulani said the HRDC was effective because its interests coincided with the public interest at that time.

"The HRDC is different from the PAC and other movements in the 1990s or earlier because its agenda is moved by the people themselves, while the PAC didn't need the backing of the people, as they regarded themselves as visionaries," he said.

But leader of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Kondwani Nankhumwa, feels that much as movements like the HRDC might be seen as doing a good job, they are, in most cases, biased.

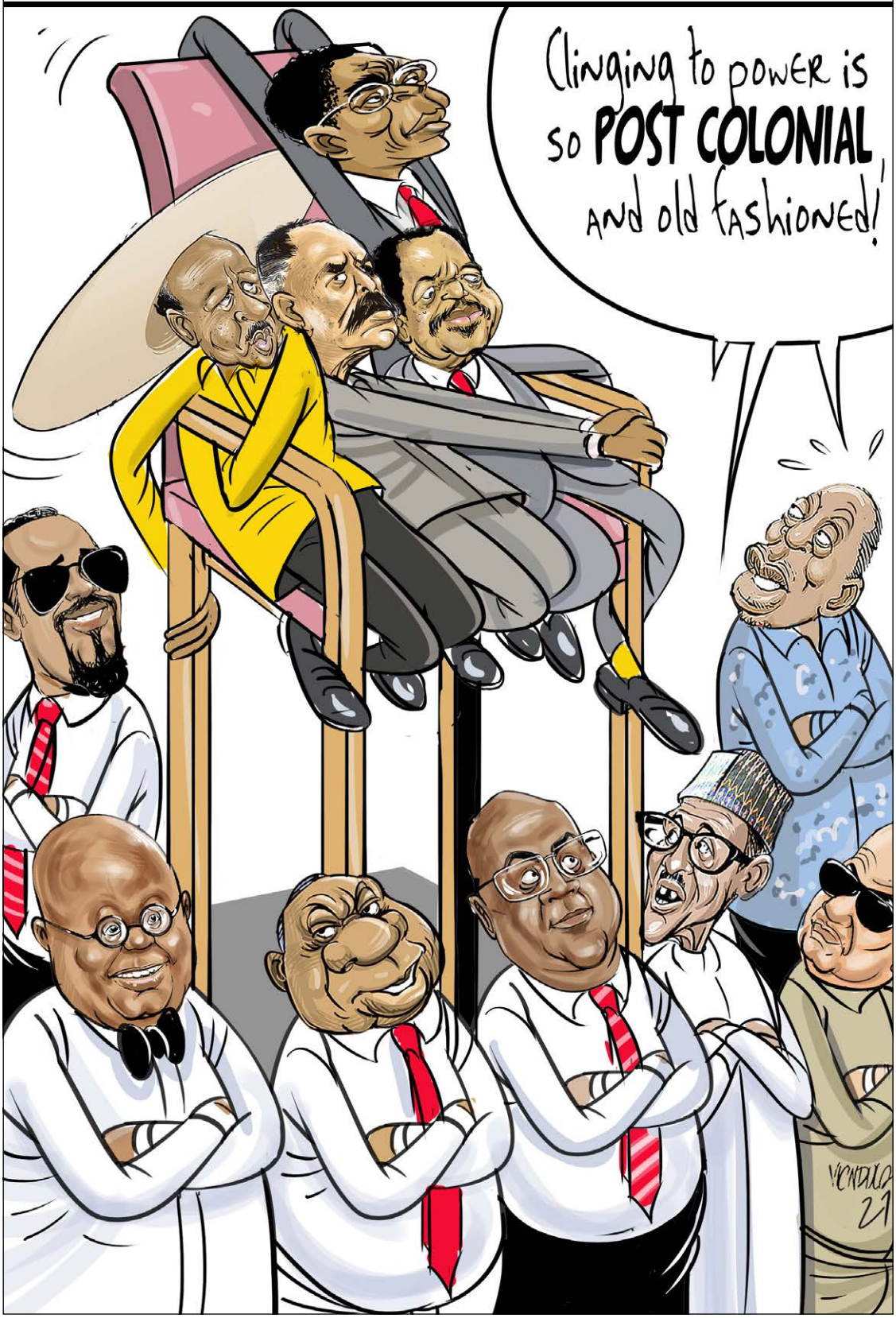
"They lean towards a certain agenda... For example, when the HRDC became popular, they had a relationship with another grouping or political party. So they were not fighting for a good cause, *per se*, in the process of mobilising the people against the DPP government, as it's not that the DPP was 100% bad," Nankhumwa says.

Chancellor College-based political analyst Dr Mustafa Hussein agrees the HRDC played a role in mobilising people to protest the 2019 presidential elections, creating an environment in which people felt freer to air their views on matters of public interest. "The HRDC has undoubtedly succeeded in making Malawi more aware of accountability," he said.

"[But] I don't think the existence of such movements in any way threatens the independence of politicians," Hussein added, "These movements are there to simply play a governance role. Maybe politicians would see them as a threat if such organisations exposed [politician's] Mafioso wrongdoing or corruption."

CARTOON

by Victor Ndula





KENYA COMES FULL CIRCLE

Kenya's independence party is making a comeback via a new generation of politicians

By Tom Mboya



In 2002, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the ruling party in Kenya since independence from Great Britain in 1963, fielded a relative greenhorn as its presidential candidate, the son of the first president Jomo Kenyatta, Uhuru Kenyatta. But the ruling party was outvoted by a strong opposition, the National Rainbow Alliance, under the former vice-president, Mwai Kibaki.

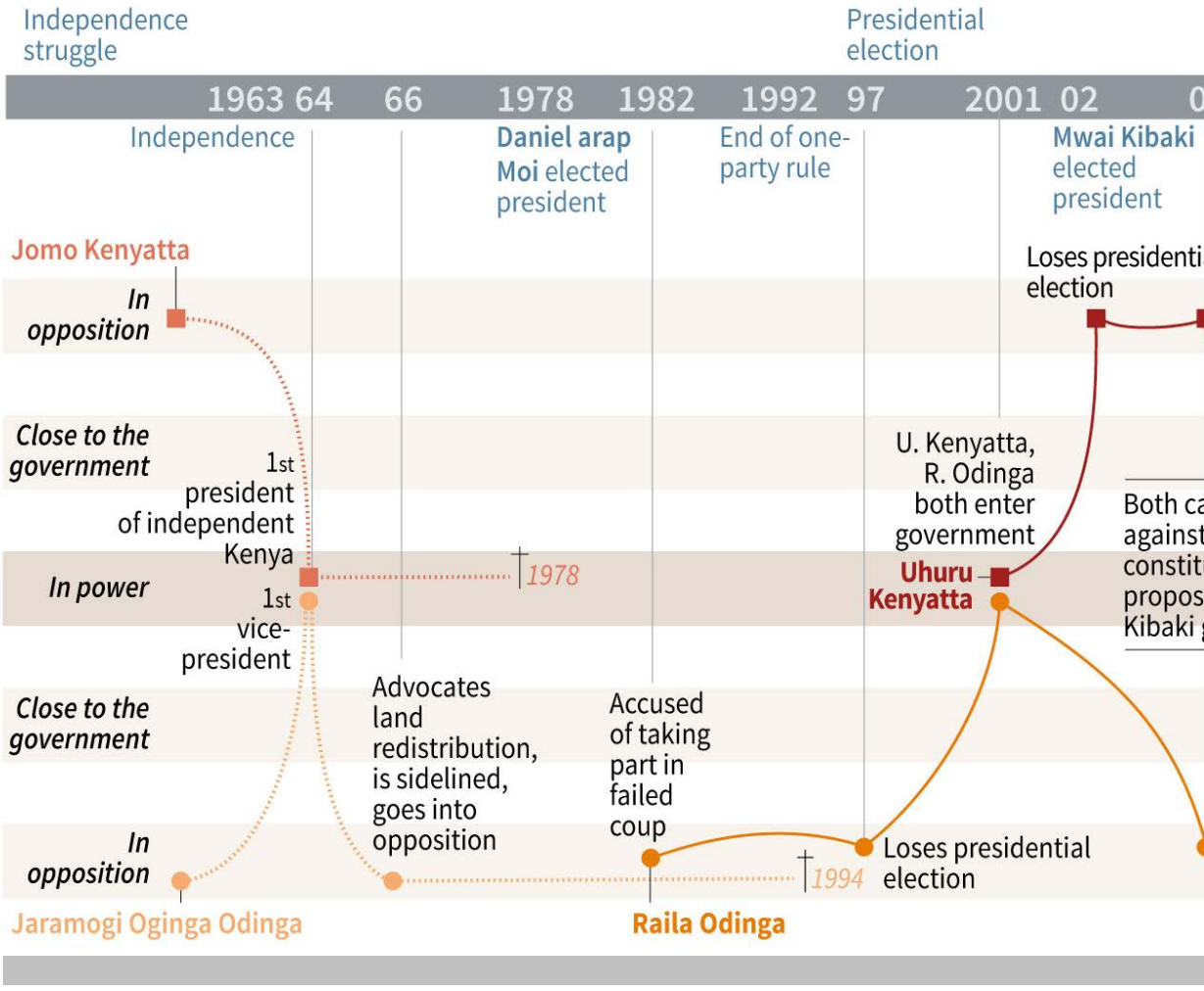
With that victory, many Kenyans celebrated the end of KANU, the party that had come to symbolise oppression and all things bad in the country. In fact, many opined that KANU was dead and buried. A global opinion poll just after the Alliance came to power in early 2003 rated Kenyans as the happiest people on earth, the first time that honour, which normally goes to the Nordic countries, was bestowed on a third world country and African at that.

Fast forward to the present and the younger Kenyatta is serving his second and last term in office after succeeding Mwai Kibaki in 2013 under the Jubilee Party, and a slew of candidates are angling to succeed him.

Former Kenyan president Daniel Arap Moi inspecting a guard of honour at the opening of parliament, 1992
Photo: Alexander Joe / AFP

Kenyan presidents: from father to son

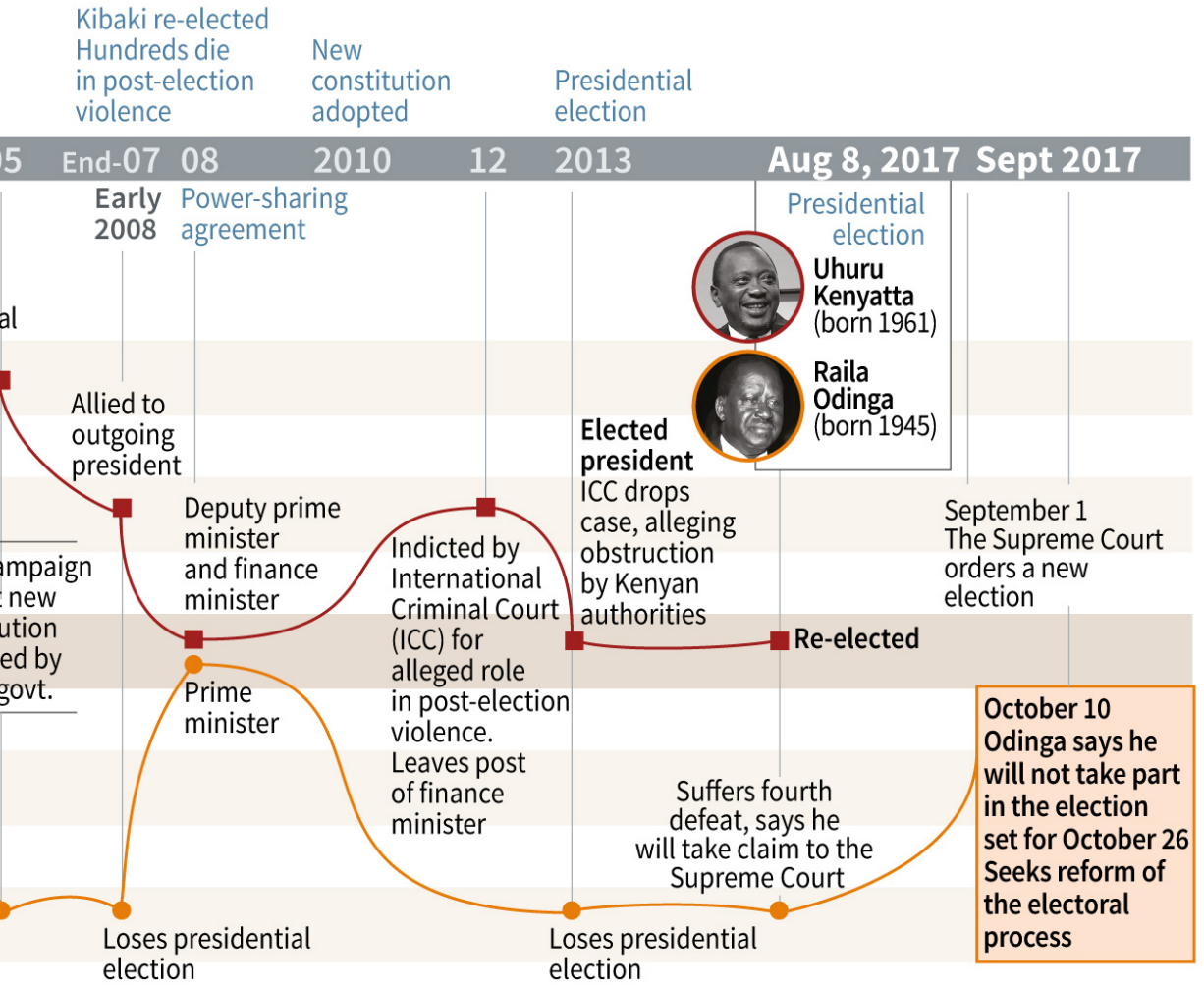
Outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta and his main rival, Raila Odinga, follow in their fathers' footsteps



Leading the pack are long-time opposition leader Raila Odinga, who at one time served as KANU's secretary general; the deputy president William Ruto, who for a long time served as a minister in the KANU government; as well as its secretary general, former foreign affairs minister and KANU organising secretary Kalonzo Musyoka; long-time minister in the KANU government Musalia Mudavadi; and Moi's last-born son, Gideon Moi, who has since revamped KANU and which he now heads.

Back to 2002, and the ousting of KANU was a big deal in the country. In a paper titled 'A New Dawn? Optimism in Kenya After Transition', published as part of a series on Africa under the AfroBarometer in March 2004, authors Tom Wolf, Carolyn Logan and Jeremiah Owti said: "Eight months after the new government took office, interviewers took to the field to conduct the country's first Afrobarometer survey. Overall, the survey findings clearly capture the palpable sense of almost unbounded optimism and hope that permeated Kenya in the days and months following the election.

"On item after item, Kenyans give



Source: AFP

some of the most positive assessments of their government's performance, the quality of their democracy, and even the condition of the national economy, of any of the countries included in the Afrobarometer so far. They also stand out as having one of the highest levels of commitment to democracy and democratic institutions, and their confidence in a more bountiful future is overwhelming."

In fact, Kenyans were replacing words with action. Just after the KANU defeat at the 2002 polls and into 2003, reports of ordinary

KANU HELPED SHAPE THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF KENYA BUT IS NOW A PALE SHADOW OF ITS FORMER SELF

people engaging in citizen arrests against policemen soliciting and receiving bribes were commonplace.

Prior to 2002, KANU had come to symbolise what a ruling party should not be. Year after year, Kenya made it into the top ranks of Transparency International's Corruption Index. In 2001, for example, Kenya was rated two on a score of 10 (10 being the least corrupt), alongside Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Cameroon, Indonesia, Nigeria, Uganda and Bangladesh.

In his autobiography *Memoirs of a Kenyan Spymaster*, published in 2016, former deputy head of Kenya's intelligence, Bart Kibati, details how well-connected people in the Moi administration grabbed and converted public land and other amenities into private property, becoming obscenely rich in the process.

With the party under de facto one-party rule, the clamour for more democratic space gathered pace, with the then vice-president, Mwai Kibaki, telling off dissidents, famously prophesying in the late 1980s that "KANU would rule for 100 years".

However, it was the assassination of long-serving foreign affairs minister Robert Ouko in February 1990 that kicked off serious agitation for multipartyism in Kenya. Ouko, a suave diplomat who had the ears of world political powers, was seen by some in KANU as harbouring ambitions to remove Moi from power.

The chief government pathologist at the time, the late Dr Jason Kaviti, infamously deduced that the minister committed suicide by breaking bones in his legs, dousing himself with diesel, setting himself ablaze and shooting himself in the head. In a newspaper interview a decade later, Kaviti persisted in defending his outrageous theory.

In the first multi-party elections of 1992, Moi defeated the opposition, a feat he repeated in 1997, amidst claims of massive rigging. It was after this that Raila, the son of Kenya's first vice president, Oginga Odinga, dissolved his National Development Party and joined KANU, becoming the ruling party's secretary general.

Raila had hopes of being anointed as Moi's successor, since the constitution barred the president for running for a third term. But Moi went ahead to pick Jomo Kenyatta's son, Uhuru, as his chosen heir. A broken-hearted Raila then made a noisy exit from KANU, taking several high-ranking officials with him. He teamed up with Kibaki under the National Rainbow Alliance Coalition to give the younger Kenyatta a hiding in the 2002 polls.

THE WHO'S WHO OF THE COUNTRY'S BUSINESS WORLD MADE THEIR MONEY THANKS TO CONNECTIONS WITH KANU

But now, the clock has come full circle and as Kenyans head to the polls in 2022, it is former KANU leaders who are battling it out again, and so far Ruto and Raila seem to be frontrunners in the race to succeed Uhuru.

So, what has changed and why? In 1988, Anthony Njui Nuguna, now 61, was elected as a councillor on a KANU ticket. He says the reason is that voter demographics have changed.

"A big number of people who are going to vote were either born in 2002 when KANU was defeated, or they were very young. Telling them about the excesses of KANU does not hold any water because they never saw it. To these people, such stories sound more like fairy tales," says Njuguna who is readying himself to vie again in 2022, but definitely not on a KANU ticket.

Political analyst Gordon Opiyo points out, however, that while KANU helped shape the political and economic landscape of Kenya, right now the party is a pale shadow of its former self under the current leader, Gideon Moi.

But another analyst, Eric Baite, commenting on the



Kenyan African National Union (KANU) supporters celebrate after the opposition Democratic Development Party dissolved itself to join KANU
Photo: Simon Maina / AFP

re-emergence of former KANU leaders, says that in Kenyan politics, the more things change, the more they remain the same. "Moi was so omnipresent when he was in power for 24 years that TV or radio news bulletin always mentioned him as the first item. He then lived 18 more years after office – so it is difficult for me to imagine he is dead.

"Independent Kenya will be 60 years old in two years' time. If it was a person, it would retire from public service in 2023. However, it seems KANU isn't done ruling Kenya. The founders of KANU ruled the country for 50 years; their sons have now taken over."

Elections in Kenya, just as anywhere else in the world, are an expensive affair. To foot the huge bill expected of campaigns, presidential contenders will have to dig deeper into their pockets and reach out to the monied oligarchs who control politics via their wealth.

In Kenya, it is well known that the who's who of the country's business world made their money thanks to connections they had with KANU, either during Jomo Kenyatta or Moi's administration.

In an interview with this writer several years ago, the Reverend Timothy Njoya, a respected clergyman and one of the activists at the forefront of fighting for multi-party politics in Kenya, said: "Look at the leading wealthy families in Kenya and you will find that they are either people who served in senior positions in government or did business with the government."

Like Mafia dons sending their collectors to recall old favours, those now angling for the presidency will without fail call on these moneymen to chip in for campaign funds, a debt they will readily pay knowing that it is an investment for future government tenders and appointments to plum state jobs.

KANU, in one way or another, will indeed rule for 100 years as Kibaki predicted. GG

An appetite for FREEDOM

Women's memories of food offer insights into Mozambique's liberation struggle

By Jonna Katto



BELOW:
A full granary of maize in N'Kalapa in Mozambique
Photo: Jonna Katto

We don't just taste food. Aromas, visual images, sounds and touch are equally part of our eating experience. Food also evokes feelings. We can experience it with joy but also with displeasure. This sensorily evocative power of food makes it an important site for remembering the past, which in turn influences our relation to food in the present.

There is a lot of important literature in Africa that deals with food security and the biological necessity of eating. However, my research explores how food is connected to remembering and making sense of the past, especially a violent past.

Food was not my main focus when I set out to conduct research on women ex-combatants' lived experiences of the Mozambican liberation struggle in northern Niassa province. Yet food and cooking continually came up in my life history interviews with them.

The Mozambican liberation struggle against Portuguese colonial rule was mainly fought in the northern bush thickets. Led by the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo), it lasted from 1964 to 1974. The combatants and civilian populations that supported them lived in very difficult bush environments. Most of these combatants were young people. I was interested especially in Frelimo's female detachment, many of whom were in their early teens when recruited. Their main job in the military camps in the beginning was to cook for the male soldiers. However, after 1967 they started receiving military training and became comrades-in-arms, mostly mobilising the population to support Frelimo and working in the bush nurseries and hospitals.







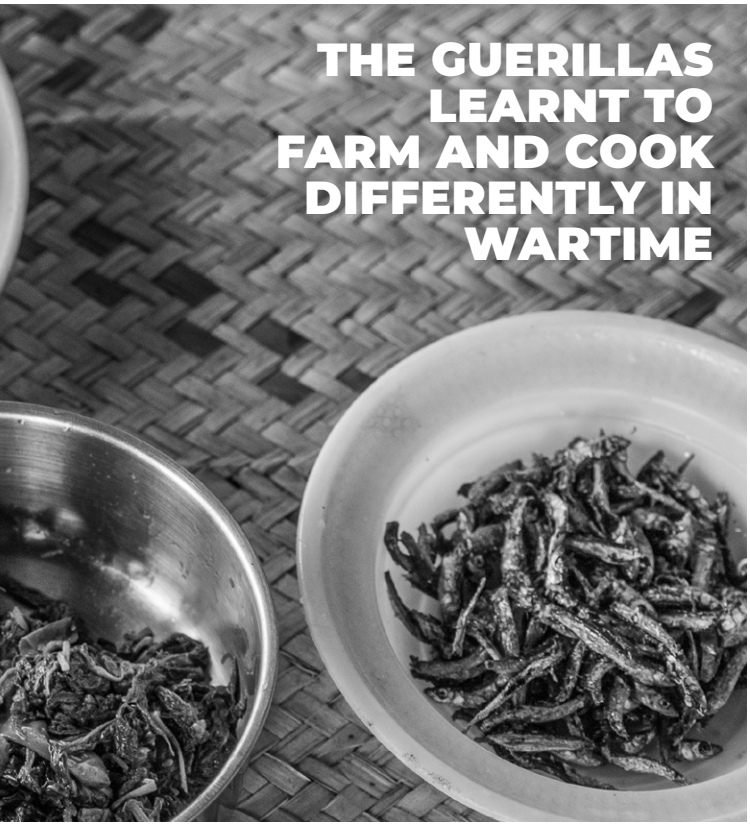
I interviewed 34 female ex-combatants [between 2012-14], starting with their childhood memories. This was followed by an interview on their work and life during the struggle and a third on their experiences after independence. I also conducted individual and group interviews with 15 male ex-combatants.

Growing up in the rural communities of northern Niassa, most remembered their childhood foodscapes as plentiful. Their principal food was *wugadi* (stiff porridge made from maize flour) with an accompanying dish of beans or the leaves of pumpkins, beans or sweet potatoes boiled with salt.

But war disrupted normal village life. In peace time, seasonal changes brought different foods, the rainy season associated with the joy of a new growing cycle. But in the time of war the ex-combatants remembered rain further intensifying the painful conditions of the bush.

Food became a constant struggle. Due to heavy





bombardments by the colonial troops, the cultivation of crops was extremely difficult. There were periods in which the guerrillas experienced intense hunger and were forced to eat things considered inedible during peacetime.

One ex-combatant, Rosa Mustaffa, remembers how the guerrillas were forced to eat just about anything that happened in their path, just to "get rid of the feeling of hunger". Others observed the monkeys to see which roots they were digging up. What didn't kill the monkeys was considered suitable for humans too.

Food became associated with danger. The "things of the bush" could kill a person. Helena Baide explained how the guerrillas cooked poisonous fruits and roots to eat, taking the whole day and changing the cooking water continuously. Ash was added to the water to mitigate the bitter taste associated with poison.

Honey and game meat were the main sources of nourishment, but hunting posed a danger as it could alert the enemy to their location. The guerrillas learned to farm and cook differently in wartime. They cultivated small, dispersed fields on river banks, partially under the cover of trees. Hearing the noise of aeroplanes, they would flee to nearby bunkers. Or they farmed in the moonlight. The noise of the pestle and smoke from cooking fires could also draw the enemy's attention. Often cooking was done at night under the cover of trees.

For many, the promise of liberation carried food-related dreams. This is the future that Assiato Muemedi spoke of imagining during the war: "I will cook with cooking oil, build a house and open a big field to eat food with my children."

After being demobilised, the transition to civilian life was easier for some more than others. Many of the young female ex-combatants had been forced to leave home so young that they had not learned, for instance, how to cook and farm properly. Those who were older found it easier, and they spoke of continuing the work of their ancestors, cultivating crops such as beans, maize, potatoes (regular and sweet) and cassava.

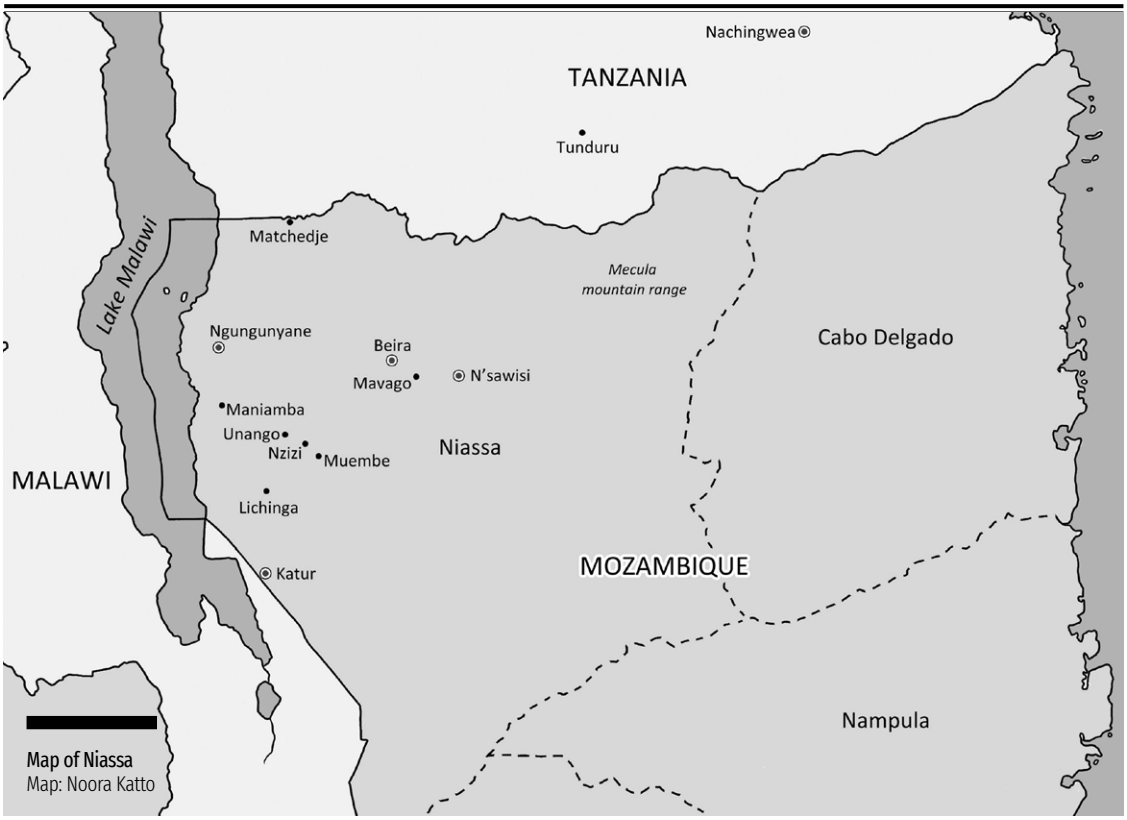
For most ex-combatants, food in peacetime has in many ways been a "liberating" experience of pleasure and fulfilment. Many experience freedom to cultivate, to eat together in peace with family or to buy basic items from nearby markets. This has helped to forget the bad things they ate in the bush.

Yet eating has not only been a positive experience. The idea of "eating badly" is, in

TOP LEFT:
Cooking beans with cabbage, carrots, green pepper and potatoes in a *refugado* of oil, tomatoes and red onion

ABOVE:
Wugadi and pumpkin leaves cooked with red onion and tomato with dried Usipa fish

LEFT:
Cooked pumpkin leaves
Photos: Jonna Katto



Map of Niassa
Map: Noora Katto

the ex-combatants' accounts, strongly associated with their current experiences of social division and inequality.

During the struggle, Frelimo's political talk of unity, freedom and a future good life gave the combatants strength to endure hardship. And they remember that, while they ate badly, they ate together and shared the little they had.

Yet, these days, the former comrades-in-arms of the Niassa forests are divided by space, education and class. Most of those in leadership were transferred to Maputo after independence as part of Frelimo's state-building project.

The ex-combatants in Niassa criticise the elite in Maputo for eating well at the expense of the majority of their former colleagues, who are unable to participate in the new consumerist modernity. In this context, it is the imagined diets of the nationalist elites that have come to symbolise freedom and liberation.

The official history of the Mozambican independence war is a linear narrative that proclaims the happy ending of liberation. Yet this narrative ignores the violence that is intimately part of its lived history.

Studying the ex-combatants' food memories shows how the history of liberation is not a closed process. They continue trying to make sense of their past and present experiences (and even future anticipations) of violence. Food plays a role in this.

THE IMAGINED DIETS OF THE ELITES HAVE COME TO SYMBOLISE FREEDOM AND LIBERATION

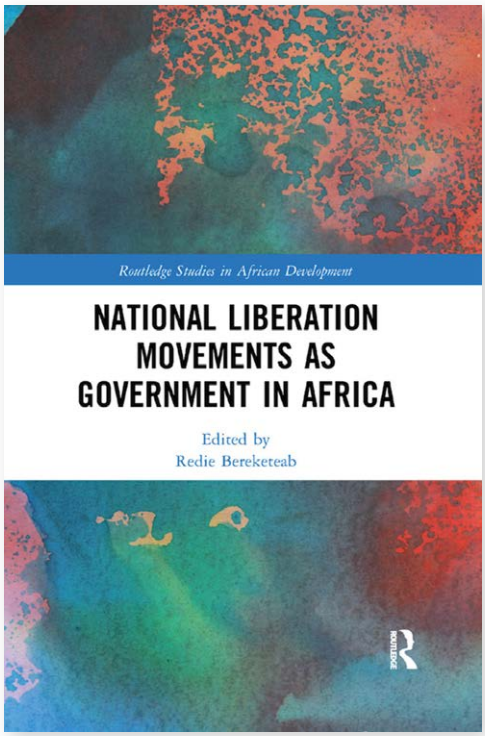
Even today bodily memories of food-related violence persist. So while food again animates their senses, liberation has, for many, a slightly bitter aftertaste. GG

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Personality cults, greed and injustice

National Liberation Movements as Government in Africa
Edited by Redie Bereketeab
Published by Routledge, 2018, Oxford

Review by Yunus Momoniat



Liberation movements begin as war machines animated by the desire for justice and, if successful, end up as governments clinging on to power. They undergo a transformation into their opposite, morphing into that which they sought to vanquish.

Redie Bereketeab has edited a book that looks at 13 examples of this transformation, each author setting out the successes and failures of particular national liberation movements (NLMs) throughout Africa. The chapters are thick with the histories of each NLM, with assessments of their performance as government.

Chapters are grouped under four categories as struggles against: European colonialism (Angola, Algeria, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique); white minority rule (Zimbabwe, South Africa); annexation by neighbouring countries (Namibia, Eritrea, South Sudan); and struggles to change regimes (Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia and Somaliland).

Countries fighting colonisation gave birth to movements that were, from the beginning, wracked by internal divisions that often split off to become rivals. In Angola, three movements competed for state power (MPLA, FNLA and Unita). In Mozambique, Frelimo was ranged against Renamo, but it also suffered internal tensions. According to Adriano Nuvunga "there was conflict surrounding Frelimo's origins, characterised by exclusions, expulsions and revolts ... as leaders competed for control of the party".

In both these Portuguese colonies, rivals went to war with the eventual victors. Angola was plunged into a civil war from 1976 until 2002. In Mozambique, Renamo, based in the north and centre of the country, waged a war against Frelimo before it entered party politics in 1994, almost winning the 1999 election – which was then effectively stolen by Frelimo.

Angola and Mozambique were imbricated in Cold War geopolitics: the MPLA was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba, while Unita was supported by the United States and South Africa. Renamo got backing from Rhodesia and later South Africa. The Soviets also supported the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde) in Guinea-Bissau.

There were also conflicts related to ethnicity. In Angola, the FNLA accused the MPLA of being founded by the "sons of settlers", while the MPLA accused the FNLA of being descended from Congolese. Frelimo saw divides between *assimilados* (assimilated groups from the north) and *mestiços* (people of mixed descent).

Each of these NLMs adhered to Marxist-Leninist or socialist ideologies, which were eventually discarded – some even earlier than 1989, when the demise of the Soviet Union meant it no longer provided support.

Yahia Zoubir argues that Algeria's new rulers built an "authoritarian system in which 'socialist democracy' and the 'power of the masses' dominated political discourse but denied individual liberties in the name of socialist/collective freedom". A pseudo liberalisation was put in place after riots broke out in 1988. A multiparty system was introduced, but when the Islamic Salvation Front almost won elections in 1992 the military declared a state of emergency, kicking off a civil war that lasted for a decade.

THE AUTHORITARIAN DRIFT COULD BE SEEN IN ALL THESE COUNTRIES

The authoritarian drift could be seen in all these countries. Paulo Ingles writes that "the Angolan regime is authoritarian in terms of political participation", and conflicts between rivals "intensified the authoritarianism".

Given these developments, multi-party democracy, with its attendant rights to assembly, free speech and media freedom, could not take hold.

Patrick Bond's analysis of South Africa makes the case that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has betrayed the revolutionary promises it made by yielding to a neoliberal global regime. Even before Jacob Zuma turned the government into a kleptocratic regime, the Mandela and Mbeki administrations gave in to the demands of big capital at the expense of the black majority, he posits.

Bond judges the ANC as a failed government on the basis of "neoliberal deals done by ANC leaders in the first decade of liberation". He cites the rise and frequency of resistance and protests against a lack of service delivery as the cost of ANC policy.

In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) came to power in 1980 after a protracted struggle. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that from its beginnings, Zanu-PF claimed it was the sole embodiment of the will of the nation. Two years into independence, it perpetrated atrocities against ethnic Ndebele people in Matabeleland.

There was progress in health and education services, but an "authoritarian political system carried over from the Rhodesian Front ... was hidden behind a façade of constitutional democracy." Opposition was neutralised, but trade unions opposed the authoritarian drift. Gatsheni categorises Zimbabwe as a pseudo-democracy.

Countries in the Horn of Africa – the scene of an incredibly complex history – were free of colonialism before other countries on the continent, and subsequent conflicts took place between these countries rather than with colonial powers. Challenges to colonial boundaries saw the number of states go from four to seven.

Ethiopia is the largest and most powerful state, bordering Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia and Somaliland. Ethiopia was never colonised but occupied in 1936 by Italy and liberated in 1941. After rule by various regimes, it has been governed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) since 1991. Ethiopia held its first general election in 1995.

Bereketeab emphasises the manner in which the countries were imbricated in each other's affairs:

"At the time that Eritrea became an independent state, the region was already afflicted with festering conflicts. Ethiopia had yet to recover from several decades of civil war; Somalia was in disarray following the fall of Siad Barre; and Sudan was immersed in perennial wars in which centrifugal forces challenged the legitimacy of the post-colonial state. It was not long, therefore, before Eritrea became embroiled in these intra-state and inter-state conflicts."

A creation of Italian colonialism, Eritrea is an exception here, as a struggle against annexation by a neighbour. A part of Ethiopia from 1952 until 1991, it entered into a second war with Ethiopia from 1998 to 2000 and the two now coexist in an uneasy state of "no war, no peace". Nevertheless, Eritrea has emerged as a sovereign state moving to civil government.

Somalia is more aptly classed as a failed state, and Mohamed Haji Ingiriis says the question that must be explored is why Somali liberation movements disappeared. During Barre's clan-based reign opposition forces such as the Somali National Movement (SNM) launched attacks from Ethiopia. When Barre was ousted in 1991, the country ceased to have a central political authority, with regions taken over by clan-based warlords. Somaliland and Puntland have since seceded or declared autonomy. The country is yet to have an election in which each citizen votes, as elections are clan-based, ensuring power sharing.

Ethiopia intervened in 2006 when the Islamic Courts Union took over Mogadishu. The ICU was vanquished, but spawned Al-Shabaab, which has mounted guerrilla attacks on a number of countries ever since. Since 2009, Somalia has been under the shaky rule of a transitional parliament.

The inclusion of Somaliland in this book is an exception, since it has not been recognised as a state despite declaring independence in 1991. Author Michael Walls says the ruling SNM has gone from being an insurgent group, to military establishment, to civilian government, but despite infighting, Somaliland is now on "an increasingly stable political path".

South Sudan appears to have been doomed even before it seceded from Sudan, achieving statehood in 2011. Rabid infighting between leaders led to disagreements even before the first government was established, which quickly unravelled. L Nelson Moro concludes that both the rebellion against Sudan as well as the rebellion within South Sudan were the result of autocratic rule.

IN CONSTANT FLUX

In just two years since this book was published in 2018 – with most chapters written in 2017 – many changes have taken place.

In Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika was ousted by mass resistance after trying to stand for a fifth term after ruling for two decades.

Omar al Bashir was deposed in a coup in Sudan in 2019 and charged and found guilty of corruption. In South Sudan, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar formed a coalition government in 2020.

Angola saw Eduardo dos Santos step down in 2017 after 38 years in power, and his successor João Lourenço has begun a campaign to root out corruption and roll back the influence of the Dos Santos family.

In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe was ousted in 2018 and succeeded by Emerson Mnangagwa, who was elected leader of Zanu-PF. His reign has been described as even more despotic than that of Mugabe.

In South Africa, Jacob Zuma was removed by the ANC in February 2018, and Cyril Ramaphosa took his place as president of the party and of the country, ending a period of state capture that saw massive looting of the state.

In Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed became prime minister in April 2018, and after a promising start, since then the country has seen ethnic clashes between the Oromo and the Gedeo peoples, with up to 1.4m people fleeing their homes. Abiy has embarked on a war with the Tigray People's Liberation Front, which has seen refugees flock to Sudan.

A number of the countries considered in this book are dysfunctional or even failed states: Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Angola. Uganda is a functional authoritarian regime, while the rest are more or less functional democracies.

The NLMs considered here have all had tumultuous histories of rivalries and factional splits. Leaders accede by being brutal and remorseless, hacking their way to the top. When in power, they rule with the same brutality, foreclosing the development of pluralism, democracy and tolerance. They suppress the development of institutions, precisely because these will facilitate accountable government. John Markakis speaks of a "democratic deficit", noting that most NLMs resort to military rule when their control is threatened.

Habits necessitated by struggle, such as loyalty, secrecy and self-reliance, turn into anti-democratic traits after liberation. "The continuation of the liberation political culture into the post-liberation period promoted rigidity instead of innovation," says Bereketeab.



ABOVE: Displaced women at the Tarehe Sita camp in Mogadishu, Somalia
Photo: Stuart Price

Many African countries are dominated by former liberators in one-party states. Zoubir notes that "the conviction that countries with just one strong party were in a better position to modernise society has been disproved by the catastrophic results of such political systems". Opposition exists in pseudo-democratic regimes, but these parties are kept in check and not allowed to grow. When they win elections, results are declared unacceptable.

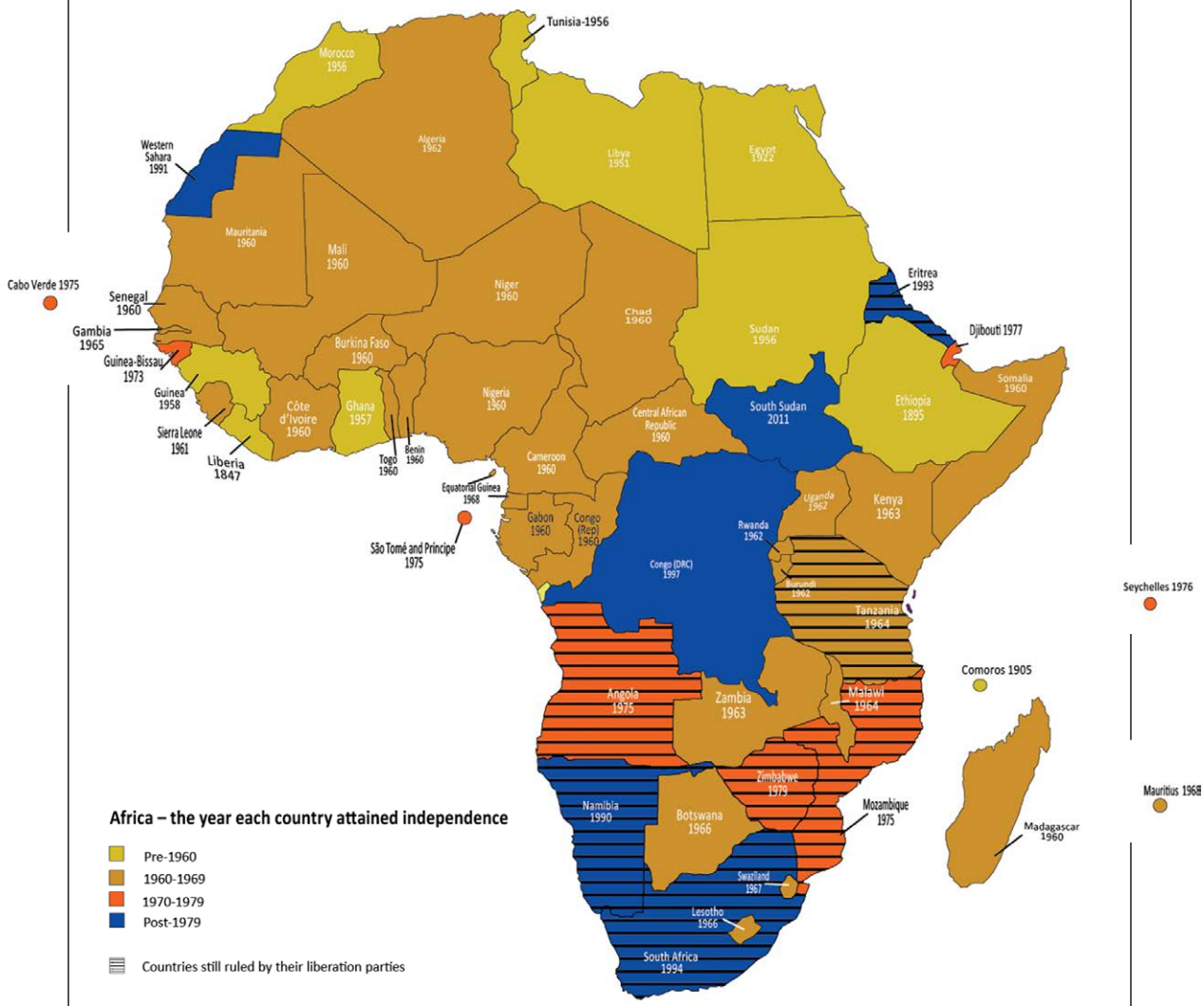
NLMs have often suppressed ethnic bodies and tribes, leading to a return of the repressed, with ethnic conflicts bedevilling many states. Acceptance of colonial boundaries has exacerbated these conflicts, especially in the Horn of Africa.

Most NLMs retain power by patronage and clientelist networks, keeping allies in place by conferring state positions, tenders and other lucrative opportunities.

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni says that when NLMs become political parties, they become "simple 'electoral machines' used to 'conquer' and 'retain power'. Politics is reduced to a narrow and violent road leading to the state house." They conflate "nation with state, party with the state, leader with party, and consequently produce uncaring dictatorial regimes dominated by personality cults, greed and injustice".

Reading the book is a sobering, even depressing experience, highlighting as it does the failure of most African states in their quest to achieve political stability, economic wellbeing and national unity to usher in peaceful and cumulative progress.

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