

# Continuity and Change in War and Conflict in Africa

BY PAUL D. WILLIAMS

Since the end of the Cold War, Africa has experienced a disproportionately large number of armed conflicts. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), there have been an estimated 630 state-based and nonstate armed conflicts on the continent between 1990 and 2015.<sup>1</sup> Explanations for this glut of armed conflicts in Africa remain the subject of debates.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, between the early 1990s and the late 2000s, Africa underwent a period of significant progress in reducing the number and intensity of armed conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

Since 2010, however, the continent has witnessed some disturbing upward conflict trends. Specifically, there have been significant reversals in the decline of state-based armed conflicts and deliberate campaigns of violence against civilians; religious and environmental factors have played increasingly significant roles in a wide range of armed conflicts; there has been a dramatic increase in the levels of popular protests across the continent; as well as an exponential rise in the use of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks and suicide bombings. International efforts to respond to some of these developments by deploying more robust and militarized forms of peace operations and interventions have met with at best only limited success.

This article focuses on the major patterns in armed conflict in Africa since 2010. Although there are significant elements of continuity with earlier periods, policymakers and analysts alike

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need to understand and adapt to the ways in which the character of armed conflict on the continent has evolved if they are to develop effective responses. To address these issues the article proceeds in three parts.

The first section sets the scene by summarizing the political context in which organized violence is occurring. It focuses on issues related to incomplete and contested data collection on this topic; the important distinction between state-based and nonstate armed conflicts; the complex array of often incoherent belligerents involved in armed conflicts in Africa; trends in governance, notably backsliding on democratic reforms; as well as more assertive peace operations deployed by the UN and regional organizations within Africa.

The second section analyzes the key elements of continuity in armed conflicts in Africa, focusing on the importance of understanding repeat civil wars and other protracted forms of organized violence; contested government transitions rooted in problems of democratic deficits and often minority rule; continuing forms of interstate contestation and practices of mutual destabilization; as well as the consistently high levels of nonstate armed conflicts, especially when compared to the rest of the world.

The final section highlights some of the more novel patterns since 2010, notably the rise in state-based armed conflicts; growing levels of popular protests; the increased significance of religious (especially Islamist) factors in state-based armed conflicts on the continent; the likelihood of more intense livelihood struggles exacerbated by environmental change, especially among some nonstate actors; and the growing use of remote forms of violence, especially IEDs and

suicide bombings. The conclusion reflects on the challenges these developments pose for orthodox approaches to peacemaking on the continent and the more militarized forms of peace operations deployed by both the UN and African Union (AU) involving elements of counterinsurgency, stabilization, and even counterterrorism.

## Context

The political context in which the current armed conflicts occur exhibits several notable characteristics. The first point is that despite some important recent advances in data collection—most notably in generating geo-referenced data—our collective knowledge about armed conflicts in Africa still rests upon weak foundations.<sup>4</sup> Debate continues among the leading databases over what exactly should be counted as a relevant indicator of armed conflict, including whether to include nonviolent episodes or just events that produce fatalities.<sup>5</sup> There is also the difficult problem of how to collect accurate and comprehensive information about organized violence on the continent, much of which takes place in extremely remote locations. While the analytic community working on these issues has improved its ability to catalogue events by engaging local reporters, field research can be difficult and dangerous, media outlets are unable to report on all relevant conflict events, nongovernmental and international organizations are not uniformly present across the continent, nor are governments there able to provide accurate data, not least because many of them lack stable and effective bureaucracies to act as repositories of such knowledge. Data about casualty figures remains particularly unreliable. This is connected to a third problem of

interpretation: the fog of war is as difficult to penetrate in contemporary Africa as elsewhere. Whose interpretation of events should be treated as authentic? Taken together, analysts and policymakers alike should start from the assumption that our knowledge of this topic is incomplete and contested.

Second, armed conflicts today occur in two distinct “worlds”—those rooted in the African state system that involve governments and their challengers, fought principally over access to state power; and those armed conflicts that occur on the margins or outside of the society of states, fought for reasons other than acquiring state power by a range of nonstate actors including warlord factions, clans, tribes, and various types of militias.<sup>6</sup> Whereas traditional civil wars and interstate conflicts are waged by actors directly connected to Africa’s society of states and seek to improve their status and power within it, the weak states on the continent have also facilitated a world of nonstate armed conflicts fought by actors who are excluded from the state system or exist in its peripheries and fight for other reasons.<sup>7</sup> By failing to control all of their territory, tolerating or sometimes even encouraging unprofessional security forces, or weakening traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, governments in some of the weak states have facilitated the prevalence of such nonstate armed conflicts. As discussed further below, most of the nonstate armed conflicts in Africa revolve around struggles to secure local sources of livelihood, notably issues connected to water, land, and livestock. These “two worlds” have distinct drivers and dynamics although they can occur in the same geographical spaces and sometimes influence one another.

A third notable characteristic of the current political context in Africa is the prevalence of incoherent conflict parties. Most of the state-based armed conflicts on the continent involve a multitude of stakeholders and armed groups, including government forces, paramilitary fighters, militias, as well as opportunistic criminal gangs. Many of these groups are incoherent inasmuch as they lack a single, unified chain of command but operate instead as relatively decentralized entities with their constituent parts retaining

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significant autonomy. Some of them also lack or fail to articulate clear and coherent political agendas. Engaging with this variety of incoherent conflict parties has posed considerable challenges for peacemakers and peacekeepers trying to manage local consent and retain their impartiality and legitimacy.

A fourth notable characteristic of Africa’s contemporary political landscape is the regression of various forms of governance indicators across parts of the continent. During the past decade or so, governance indicators across Africa were mixed, with some areas showing improvement and others

backsliding. They also vary according to the institution measuring them. The Mo Ibrahim Index on African Governance (IIAG), for instance, reports a slightly increased average governance score across the continent from 2006–15.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the overall IIAG category of “safety and rule of law” saw a negative trend during that decade, affecting nearly two-thirds of Africa’s citizens. Similarly, 33 African countries regressed in terms of corruption and bureaucratic effectiveness, with 24 of them registering their worst recorded scores in 2015. Somewhat ominously, two-thirds of African countries (representing 67 percent of Africa’s population) experienced deterioration in levels of freedom of expression during the past decade. This latter finding is confirmed by Freedom House’s work tracking trends in political rights and civil liberties. This shows that annual scores across the 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa reached a peak of freedom in these areas in 2006 and 2008. Since then, the region’s average scores have gone backwards. By 2016 Freedom House identified only nine sub-Saharan African countries as “free” (representing just 12 percent of the region’s population), 20 as “partly free” (representing 49 percent of the region’s population), and 20 as “not free” (representing 39 percent of the region’s population).<sup>9</sup> In 2008, 11 were identified as “free,” 23 “partly free,” and 14 “not free.”<sup>10</sup> The backsliding of six African countries into the “not free” category is particularly notable when one considers the overall risk of intrastate armed conflict is lowest in democratic countries, highest in anocracies, and the risk rises during periods of contested regime transitions.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the increased willingness of the UN and Africa’s regional organizations to

engage in more robust and militarized forms of peace operations has influenced conflict dynamics in some parts of the continent. Peace operations since 2010 have come close to warfighting or crossed the line against particular “spoiler” groups in the Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, and Somalia, as have the multinational forces deployed in Central and West Africa against the Lord’s Resistance Army and Boko Haram respectively. Record numbers of peacekeepers have deployed across the continent in recent years with a range of mandates to use deadly force beyond self-defense, usually to protect civilians, degrade spoiler groups, or extend and consolidate state authority.<sup>12</sup> Many of these operations would not have been possible without a range of international partnerships, including unprecedented levels of cooperation, particularly between the UN and AU.<sup>13</sup>

### Continuity

Although the character of Africa’s current armed conflicts has changed in some significant respects, there are also important elements of continuity. This section briefly summarizes four such elements: the preponderance of repeat civil wars and other protracted forms of violence; contested government transitions rooted in problems of democratic deficits and often minority rule; continuing forms of interstate contestation and practices of mutual destabilization; as well as consistently high levels of nonstate armed conflicts, especially when compared to the rest of the world.

First, it is important to recall that most of Africa’s recent state-based armed conflicts are “repeat civil wars.” This phrase was used by

renowned political scientist Barbara Walter to describe “old wars restarted by the same rebels after a period of peace.”<sup>14</sup> This repetitive trend is not confined to Africa but is clearly apparent on the continent. Walter’s study noted that by the 2000s, 90 percent of all civil wars worldwide were repeat civil wars, most of which occurred in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Incredibly, every civil war that started since 2003 (with the exception of Libya) has been a continuation of a previous civil war.<sup>15</sup> A key policy challenge thus revolves around how to break the cycle and permanently end existing wars and understanding why orthodox approaches to peacemaking in Africa have failed.

As Walter also correctly observed, civil wars “are much more likely to repeat themselves in countries where government elites are unaccountable to the public, where the public does not participate in political life, and where information is not transparent.”<sup>16</sup> “It is not democracy or poverty per se,” she concluded, “but very specific accountability mechanisms that make countries more or less likely to experience repeat war.”<sup>17</sup>

This focus on governance leads to the second major element of continuity visible in many armed conflicts across Africa: the importance of contested government transitions stemming from problems of democratic deficits and often the dynamics of minority rule. The roots of contested government transitions lie in the deficit in democratic governance, the increasing militarization of Africa (most notable in rising defense budgets since 2002), the growth in political militias and various manifestations of presidential praetorian guard units, the suffocation of free and fair electoral processes, and the willingness of populations to participate in

organized protests against their governments.<sup>18</sup> Such transitions have taken the form of coups d’état as well as other forms of armed conflict.<sup>19</sup>

A third area of significant continuity is that it remains misleading to view most of Africa’s state-based armed conflicts as “internal.” Despite often being classified as “intrastate” or “internal” armed conflicts, they are rarely confined to the territory of just one state and they are all influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by dynamics and processes at the local, national, regional, and global levels.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, these levels interrelate in fluid ways. As a consequence, it has been relatively common to view modern Africa as lacking many interstate armed conflicts. The problem with this approach is that it ignores the ways in which state-based conflicts in Africa have frequently involved interstate contestation and mutual destabilization. As a recent study by the World Peace Foundation concluded, most so-called intrastate armed conflicts in Africa could be more accurately labelled as “internal conflicts with important internationalized political and military components.”<sup>21</sup> Interstate contestation is much more common than often assumed. It remains evident in persistently high levels of clandestine cross-border military operations and various forms of (sometimes covert) support to proxies by neighboring countries across Africa.

Finally, as noted above with reference to the “two worlds” of Africa’s wars, nonstate armed conflicts remain a prevalent feature of the contemporary landscape. Since the end of the Cold War, data collected by the UCDP has identified Africa as the global epicenter of nonstate armed conflicts, with the continent being home to more than 75 percent of the

global total between 1989 and 2015.<sup>22</sup> During this period, UCDP identified more than 500 nonstate armed conflict dyads in approximately thirty African countries. On average, each of these conflicts has killed an estimated 160 people in battle-related incidents, totaling more than 80,000 battle-related deaths. About three-quarters of these conflicts have occurred in just seven countries—the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and the Sudan. There are no obvious patterns in the number of nonstate armed conflicts in Africa during this period, although overall there has been a slight increase since the early 1990s with a peak in 2000. Most nonstate armed conflicts stem from localized disputes over sources of livelihood, often related to environmental issues such as access to land and water.

### Change

To what extent is the character of armed conflict in Africa changing? This section summarizes some of the most significant novel trends since 2010. It focuses on the recent increase in state-based armed conflicts; rising levels of popular protests; the growing significance of religious (especially Islamist) factors in Africa's state-based armed conflicts; the likelihood of more intense "livelihood" struggles exacerbated by environmental change, especially among some nonstate actors; and the growing use of remote forms of violence, especially IEDs and suicide bombings.

First, having declined considerably from the early 1990s until 2010, the number of state-based armed conflicts in Africa has recently increased. Among the most notable examples of this reversal are the wars centered on northern Nigeria involving Boko Haram,

the civil war and NATO-led intervention in Libya, the resurgence of Tuareg rebels and various jihadist insurgents in Mali, the series of revolts and subsequent attempts at ethnic cleansing in the CAR, the spread of the war against al-Shabaab across south-central Somalia and north-eastern Kenya, and the outbreak of a deadly civil war in South Sudan. Not only were these some of the most deadly wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most of them reflected the repetitive tendencies discussed above. All of them generated new or reinforced peace operations or other forms of external military intervention. They also exhibited important elements of interstate contestation (noted above), where external states, particularly those from the immediate neighborhood, were directly involved politically or militarily or both.

Sadly, these new and intensifying state-based conflicts brought with them an upsurge in the deliberate targeting of civilians by a range of belligerents, including governments, rebels and other nonstate actors.<sup>23</sup> Although the numbers of African civilians killed in these deliberate campaigns of one-sided violence are much fewer than during the mid-1990s, they represent a worrying reversal of the subsequent decline in these episodes that occurred between 1997 and 2010. Any deliberate targeting of civilians represents a failure by the perpetrators to respect contemporary laws of war, international humanitarian law, and hence the fundamental distinction between combatant and noncombatant. But it is notable that some of the existing belligerents in Africa explicitly reject the whole edifice of the modern laws of war, perhaps most notably those groups claiming inspiration from a warped version of religious beliefs. The



Somali women look on as AMISOM soldiers take up defense positions in Mogadishu. AU forces in 2011 continued to conduct security and counter-IED operations in and around the Somali capital, even in the face of a surge of car bombings and IED attacks. (Stuart Price/AMISOM)

deliberate targeting of noncombatants has raised enormous challenges for peacekeepers mandated to protect civilians and for peacemakers who have usually operated on the presumption that the conflict parties will eventually be willing to respect such international norms and legal standards.

A second important development since 2010 has been the large spike in popular protests across Africa. Of course, popular protests in Africa are not new per se but their number has increased significantly since the mid-2000s and especially after 2011 following the Arab Uprising.<sup>24</sup> These protests have emerged from various forms of grievances and frustration driven by unmet popular aspirations for change and the inability or

unwillingness of many African governments to respond effectively. As Africanist scholar Valerie Arnould and her colleagues have pointed out, such protests have assumed distinct but related forms:

*They include street demonstrations against rising food prices and the cost of living (Chad, Guinea, Niger), strike actions over arrears in wage payments and labor disputes (Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe), protests over rigged elections or attempts by leaders to extend their constitutional term limits (Burkina Faso, Burundi, DRC, Gabon, Togo, Uganda), student protests (Uganda, South Africa), and outbreaks*

*of unrest over police violence, extortion, corruption and impunity (Chad, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda).<sup>25</sup>*

Most of these protests have not developed directly into civil wars or stimulated the formation of insurgencies, but nor are they always completely disconnected from such processes, as the cases of Libya and to a lesser extent Burundi demonstrate. Although unlikely to lead directly to regime change, popular protests are important barometers of

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the likelihood that the country in question will go through a contested government transition, with all the risks those entail (noted above).

A third source of contemporary change revolves around the impact of environmental change on patterns of armed conflict across at least some parts of Africa. Specifically, what renowned political scientist Scott Straus dubbed “livelihood” struggles, most of which are connected to issues of access to water and land, are likely to increase in number and intensity.<sup>26</sup> Their intensity will probably increase as a result of the availability of cheap but deadly small arms and light weapons. Their number will likely rise because increasingly significant changes in the climate will increase the risk of the outbreak of armed conflict, especially in those parts of Africa that are already suffering the consequences of these global processes more intensely than

most regions.<sup>27</sup> To be clear, altered weather patterns are not directly causing more armed conflicts in Africa. Specific wars are always the result of the conscious decisions of groups of humans, not the weather. As a contextual factor, how humans respond to climate change is therefore always politically open-ended. But in contexts of poor governance and already existing conflicts that proliferate across at least a dozen African countries, environmental concerns can be a threat multiplier or exacerbating factor. These effects will not be uniform across entire countries. Rather, they will be felt unevenly and most intensely in particular local settings. It is thus likely that environmental issues will be most relevant to understanding some of Africa’s nonstate armed conflicts rather than interstate contestation and state-based armed conflicts.

A fourth element of change is the growing significance of religious factors in the dynamics of state-based armed conflicts across Africa.<sup>28</sup> In particular, since 2010, varied groups espousing a warped version of Islamic theology to justify their militancy have become more prominent actors in Africa’s conflict landscape. These developments have intensified rising levels of violent extremism, most notably across northern Africa, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa. To be clear, as Caitriona Dowd, a scholar of violent Islamist movements, has persuasively argued, organized violence connected to these groups is not unique but directly comparable to other forms of political violence.<sup>29</sup> Violence connected to groups that claim Islamist credentials such as al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) occurs in areas with high levels of economic, political, and institutional grievances among Muslim populations; a history of pre-existing



Women and children in November 2013 sleep in a makeshift hospital erected at an AMISOM military camp to help those affected by flooding and clan conflict near Jowhar, Somalia. Heavy rains in November, coupled with recent disputes between clans, resulted in thousands of displaced persons seeking shelter there. (Tobin Jones/AMISOM)

violent conflict in other forms in the area; and where such Muslim marginalization has been expanded and intensified through key triggering events in the respective country. Evidence from Africa does not therefore support the thesis that the nature of Islamist violence is global and interconnected. Instead, ideologues and militant leaders piggyback on local grievances against marginalized Muslim populations. Hence, like environmental factors, when religious beliefs have been connected to the outbreak of armed conflict in Africa, it has been when particularly absolutist and divisive groups of political elites have used religious institutions to promote their exclusivist agendas by disseminating an official “script” for violence

that contains appeals to a particular interpretation of religion.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, a fifth set of relatively novel developments concerns the increasing use of “remote violence” in some of Africa’s armed conflicts.<sup>31</sup> Especially significant are the more frequent use of IEDs and suicide bombings by a variety of nonstate actors. The use of remote violence across Africa has grown exponentially during the past decade, accounting for 8.93 percent of recorded conflict events in 2014, up from 0.95 percent in 2005.<sup>32</sup> With regard to suicide bombings, a database compiled at the University of Chicago has noted similarly rising trends in the use of such tactics. Specifically, it catalogued suicide bombings in 16 African countries, the first of which took place in 1995. Since then, 465 of

the 483 suicide attacks in Africa recorded up until June 2016 occurred since 2007. They killed 4,822 people and wounded more than 9,000.<sup>33</sup> Six African countries have suffered most from such asymmetric tactics—Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, and Somalia.

## Conclusions

In 2013 African Union leaders celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Organization of African Unity by articulating their vision of a continent free from warfare by 2020, encapsulated in the slogan, “Silencing the Guns.” It is important for organizations like the African Union to set and work toward ambitious targets and establish clear visions of their preferred political future. But the developments analyzed in this article should illustrate why this goal and deadline will not be met. Indeed, the elements of both continuity and change currently shaping the character of armed conflict in Africa pose serious challenges to international peacemaking and peacekeeping initiatives. Both of these instruments will need to change quite dramatically if they are to stand a chance of “silencing the guns.”

With regard to peacemaking, the orthodox approach in Africa since the end of the Cold War has been for external mediators to persuade and incentivize local belligerents to accept transitional governments of national unity with power-sharing formulas adopted until a new constitutional order can be agreed. This approach has a mixed record at best, in part because international actors have frequently attempted to conduct these initiatives on the cheap, in a rush, while excluding most representatives of civil society, and by parachuting in senior external mediators who demand a deal is signed by

some arbitrary, unrealistic deadline.<sup>34</sup> Not only have international peacemaking initiatives tended to focus almost exclusively on tackling the larger state-based armed conflicts in Africa—representing just one of the “worlds” of conflict on the continent—they have tended to overlook the political economy dynamics that have often proved crucial to the real negotiations between the conflict parties.<sup>35</sup>

The rise of extremist groups such as al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and AQIM pose an additional challenge to this model. The unwillingness of governments and these groups to engage in genuine dialogue or, in the latter case, to clearly espouse coherent political agendas beyond vague demands for “Islamic rule” is sorely testing the stated preference of African institutions for inclusive forms of peacemaking.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, it is notable that the African Union has refused to negotiate with these groups and instead authorized enforcement missions to defeat them. Not only has this development rendered defunct the old peacemaking endgame of transient power-sharing arrangements, it has also made it difficult to engage in peacebuilding activities in territory under the control of such groups.

The limitations of peacemaking through power-sharing have also had important consequences for the record numbers of peacekeepers deployed to Africa in recent years. As noted above, the changing character of armed conflict on the continent has stimulated the deployment of heavily militarized forms of peace operations and military intervention by both the United Nations and African Union that involve elements of warfighting, counterinsurgency, stabilization, and even counterterrorism.

These missions require capabilities that cost more money than traditional peacekeeping but they are also facing serious doctrinal challenges that are undermining their effectiveness.

First, being regularly deployed to active war zones where there is no peace to keep has forced several missions to stretch seemingly to breaking point the traditional notions of impartiality upon which United Nations peacekeeping is based.<sup>37</sup> Second, mandates to protect civilians and build state institutions in some of the world's most protracted and intense crises is a recipe for deploying missions without end. Without a viable peacemaking strategy, even well-resourced, well-prepared, and well-trained peacekeepers face the prospect of treading political water and conducting an exercise in damage limitation without an obvious exit strategy. For underresourced and unprepared peacekeepers the results can be disastrous. Third, peace operations as currently designed have usually focused on addressing national level political dynamics and only secondarily on some local level issues. They are also ill-suited to deal with the localized dynamics driving most of the continent's nonstate armed conflicts, and which often affect larger state-based wars.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, it is unrealistic to expect that peacekeeping contingents deployed in archipelagos across one country can effectively deal with transnational actors, regionalized pressures, or globalizing institutions and processes, from the trade in small arms and light weapons to the spread of radical ideologies that affect conflict dynamics in their theater of operations. Indeed, most African-led operations have utilized states from the immediate regional neighborhood

as troop-contributing countries, with all the predictably contradictory effects this entails. As far as transnational dynamics are concerned, take the example of organized criminal activities, which are deeply intertwined with many of the conflict parties in African theaters where peacekeepers are deployed. Many of the attacks directed at peacekeepers in Mali, for instance, are linked to organized criminal activities. Yet neither the African Union nor United Nations mandated or equipped their missions to counter organized crime. In some cases the central problem confronting peacekeepers is more akin to dealing with mafia organizations than rebels fighting for a national cause. In the DRC, the government and the UN peacekeepers are said to be "no longer dealing with a political insurgency" but "facing criminal groups with links to transnational organized criminal networks involved in large scale smuggling and laundering."<sup>39</sup> How can peacekeepers fundamentally alter such dynamics when they have not been mandated or appropriately resourced to analyse let alone effectively counter illicit networks and organized criminality?<sup>40</sup>

Unless policymakers understand and adapt their peacemaking and peacekeeping operations to the shifting character of armed conflict across Africa, international efforts to "silence the guns" will remain ineffective.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), available at <<http://ucdp.uu.se/>>.

<sup>2</sup> For example, William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (Cambridge: Polity, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> For example, Scott Straus, "Wars do End! Changing Patterns of Political Violence in sub-Saharan Africa," *African Affairs*, 111:443 (2012): 179–201; David T. Burbach and Christopher J. Fettweis, "The Coming Stability? The Decline of Warfare in Africa and Implications for International Security," *Contemporary Security Policy*, 35:3 (2014): 421–445.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview and comparison of how different organizations collect such data, see Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> Among the most useful continent-wide databases are those produced by the UCDP, available at <<http://ucdp.uu.se/>>; as well as the Armed Conflict Event and Location Data Project (ACLED), available at <[www.acleddata.com](http://www.acleddata.com)>; and the Social Conflict in Africa database, available at <<http://ccaps.strausscenter.org/scad/pages/sp-using>>.

<sup>6</sup> Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> The UCDP defines nonstate armed conflict as the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year. UCDP, available at <<http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/>>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), *A Decade of African Governance, 2006–2015*, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> *Freedom in the World 2017, Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy* (Washington DC: Freedom House, 2017), available at <<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017>>.

<sup>10</sup> *Freedom in the World 2009*, The Annual Survey of Political Right and Civil Liberties (Washington DC: Freedom House, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Patrick M. Regan and Sam R. Bell, "Changing Lanes or Stuck in the Middle: Why are Anocracies more Prone to Civil Wars?" *Political Research Quarterly*, 63:4 (2010): 747–59.

<sup>12</sup> Paul D. Williams, "Global and Regional Peacekeepers: Trends, Opportunities, Risks and a Way Ahead," *Global Policy*, 8:1 (2017): 124–29.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations, "Report of the Joint African Union-United Nations Review of Available Mechanisms to Finance and Support African Union Peace Support Operations Authorized by the United Nations Security Council," UN document A/71/410-S/2016/809, September 28, 2016, available at <[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/410](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/410)>.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara F. Walter, "Why Bad Governance Leads to Repeat Civil War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59:7 (2015): 1242–72.

<sup>15</sup> Walter's research is reminiscent of why the Political Instability Task Force included the concept of "complex events," defined as being "made up of two or more temporally linked wars and crises ... where subsequent flare ups of events are considered continuations." See endnote 2, "Consolidated State Failure Events," available at <<http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/consolidated-state-failure-events/>>.

<sup>16</sup> Walter, "Why Bad Governance," 1243.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1263.

<sup>18</sup> World Peace Foundation, *Report for the African Union on African Politics, African Peace*, July 2016, para.37ff.

<sup>19</sup> There have been 13 successful coups in 11 African countries since 2003, most of them in West Africa (CAR, Togo, Mauritania, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Lesotho and Burkina Faso).

<sup>20</sup> See Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, chapter 2.

<sup>21</sup> World Peace Foundation, *African Politics, African Peace*, para.41.

<sup>22</sup> See the UCDP non-State Conflict Dataset, available at <[http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/66/66314\\_1non-state-conflicts-by-region-1989-2014jpg.jpg](http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/66/66314_1non-state-conflicts-by-region-1989-2014jpg.jpg)>.

<sup>23</sup> See the trends identified by the UCDP's One-sided Violence Dataset and ACLED, "Trend 1: Rates of Violence in 2016," January 18, 2017, available at <<http://www.acleddata.com/trend-1-rates-of-violence-in-2016/>>.

<sup>24</sup> See Adam Branch and Zachary Mampilly, *Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change* (London: Zed, 2015); ACLED database available at <<http://www.acleddata.com/trend-1-rates-of-violence-in-2016>>.

<sup>25</sup> Valerie Arnould, Aleksandra Tor and Alice Vervaeke, *Africa Uprising? The Protests, the Drivers, the Outcomes*, European Union Institute for Security Studies Brief No. 33 (EU ISS, December 2016), available at <[http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief\\_33\\_Africa\\_uprising.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_33_Africa_uprising.pdf)>.

<sup>26</sup> Straus, "Wars do End!" These would also include pastoral conflicts. See Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, 109–12.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Ragnhild Nordas and Nils Peter Gleditsch, "Climate change and Conflict," *Political Geography*, 26:6 (2007): 627–38.

<sup>28</sup> Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, chapter 7.

<sup>29</sup> Caitriona Dowd, "Grievances, Governance and Islamist Violence in sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 53:4 (2015), 505–31. Dowd adopts a broad definition of "Islamist" to refer to groups that proactively promote or enforce Islamic ideologies, laws, policies or customs in the state and/or society (507).

<sup>30</sup> Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, chapter 7.

<sup>31</sup> The ACLED database uses "remote violence" to refer to "an event where a conflict actor engages another group while remaining spatially removed from the area of attack." It includes IEDs, airstrikes, rocket attacks and bombs. ACLED, "Political Militias and Remote Violence in 2014," January 28, 2015, available at <<http://www.crisis.acleddata.com/political-militias-and-remote-violence-in-2014/>>.

<sup>32</sup> ACLED, "Political Militias."

<sup>33</sup> University of Chicago Suicide Attack Database, available at <[http://cpostdata.uchicago.edu/search\\_new.php](http://cpostdata.uchicago.edu/search_new.php)>. The African countries are: Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, chapter 9.

<sup>35</sup> See Alex de Waal's discussion of peacemaking in Africa's "political marketplace" in *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> The authors of *African Politics, African Peace* claim that inclusivity is a traditional characteristic of African approaches to peacemaking, paras. 9, 55, 58.

<sup>37</sup> Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>38</sup> For example, Severine Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> United Nations Environment Programme–UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo–Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Great Lakes, "Experts' Background Report on Illegal Exploitation and Trade in Natural Resources Benefitting Organized Criminal Groups," April 15, 2015, available at <[http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP\\_DRCongo\\_MONUSCO\\_OSESG\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_DRCongo_MONUSCO_OSESG_final_report.pdf)>.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Wibke Hansen, *Interfaces Between Peace Operations and Organized Crime* (Challenges Forum, Policy Brief 2015).



The Kibera slum in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, is one of Africa's largest slums with an estimated one million residents. The slum lacks sanitation, trash removal, drainage, safe drinking water, electricity, roads, and other public services. (Trocaire/Flickr)