Africa in the 21st century: A new battleground?

Summary:

Africa, the continent in which humankind first emerged, with its rich and diverse history and culture, is facing growing conflict and destabilisation. Despite the vast wealth found in its soil, its considerable human capital, its geographical position and other strengths, the truth is that the situation is gradually deteriorating, and these strengths are turning into vulnerabilities.

In a world engaged in global competition, where all African assets are crucial for achieving or preserving global power status, the contest over them continues to intensify, just as the ongoing dispute over the planet.

To this end, by exploiting this diversity through disinformation—often originating from abroad—already weak states are being destabilised, radicalising groups, ethnicities and creeds, thus proving the adage 'divide and conquer' to be true.

A brief examination of this issue, followed by a final reflection make up this "document".

Keywords: Africa, conflict, diversity, disinformation, destabilisation, states.

How to cite this document:

Introduction: Is Africa relevant in the new century?

Africa is not a country, but a large continent; in fact, simply by extension —more than 30 million square kilometres— it covers one-fifth of the planet's landmass, furthermore, it is located between the Atlantic and Indian oceans, with the Mediterranean Sea to the north. A large space between seas... in an era of geopolitical competition[1] for control of them.

These vast territories contain great mineral wealth, making the continent one of the planet's main sources of natural resources, as it accounts for a third of the world's mineral reserves. Moreover, it is also particularly rich in certain elements such as precious metals, diamonds and the increasingly important "rare earths" and strategic minerals[2] , which are essential for new information technologies and renewable energies, elements that are increasingly in demand and coveted.

To all these factors one must add a powerful demographic dividend—the proportion of people of working age—because not only is Africa's population the fastest growing in the world—and will continue to do so—but 60% of it is under the age of 25[3] , and considering the high birth rates, the trend is growing. The African population is thus becoming one of the potential sources of labour[4] on the planet and a new market[5] for the products and services of other powers and nations.

It is also necessary to consider that Africa comprises multiple spaces and regions, which, added to being the cradle of humanity, has generated tremendous and powerful diversity in its population, giving rise to great heterogeneity and richness[6] —cultural, linguistic, etc.— unparalleled on other continents of the planet. This richness and diversity can be used both as an element of soft power on the continent—and beyond, among the

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[1] Various authors. "Blue Geopolitics: Oceans, Key Spaces in the New Global Order," *Strategy Notebook* 227. Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, 2024. Available at: h t tps://www.defensa.gob.es/ceseden/-/cuadernos-de-estrategia-227
NOTE: All links in this document are active as of the date of its completion, 1 December 2025.

[2] SEGURA CLAVELL, José. "Rare earths and the geopolitics of minerals," *esÁfrica*. 17 February 2025. Available at: https://www.esafrica.es/politica-geopolitica/las-tierras-raras-y-la-geopolitica-de-los-minerales/

[3] UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND. *The Demographic Dividend Atlas for Africa: Tracking the Potential for a Demographic Dividend.* 2017. Available at: https://ww w .unfpa.org/resources/demographic-dividend-atlas-africa-tracking-potential-demograph i c-dividend

[4] CHINA DAILY.COM. "Chinese shoemaker finds a snug fit in Ethiopian market." 19 June 2025. Available at: https://www.chinadaily.co m .cn/a/202506/19/WS6853613fa310a04af22c721c.html

[5] BUSSINESSTECH. "Africa: the next frontier of global markets growth." 27 November 2025. Available at: https://businesstech.co.za/news/industry-news/844703/africa-the-next-frontier-of-global-markets-growth/

[6] CEEDO, Buur. "The richness of African cultural diversity: social challenges and its contribution to the world," *General History of Africa*. 8 February 2025. Available at: https://historiadeafrica.com/la-riqueza-de-la-diversidad-cultural-africana-desafios-sociales-y-su-contribucion-al-mundo/

hundreds of millions of Africans in the so-called "African diaspora"[7]—and as a tool to exacerbate differences, following the old adage of "divide and conquer."

For these and other reasons, Africa seems to be relevant... and even more relevant, if possible, in an era of geopolitical confrontation, where old and new powers compete on a global scale, in an interconnected and globalised world, to achieve their interests and occupy the position of power to which they aspire, in a revisionist environment where the norms and rules of the so-called "world order" have been blown apart and in which even the dialectic of nuclear war has regained its place[8] . And it seems that Africa is becoming a sure battleground... starting with the struggle for that immense space (or certain parts of it) and continuing with its own internal disputes.

The importance of geography!

On a planetary scale, the geographical position of the continent means that its coasts form several of the most important choke points on the planet. Thus, from north to south and clockwise, we find the Strait of Gibraltar[9] , the Suez Canal[10] , the Bab el Mandeb Strait[11] and the Cape of Good Hope[12] (points 2, 5, 6 and 3 in the attached image). These are passageways that constitute real bottlenecks for global maritime traffic and are therefore points of prime geopolitical interest.

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[7] PETTIGREW, Gary. La diáspora africana: desmitificada. African Ancestry, 10 de mayo de 2024. Disponible en https://africanancestry.com/es/blogs/glossary/african-diaspora-demystified
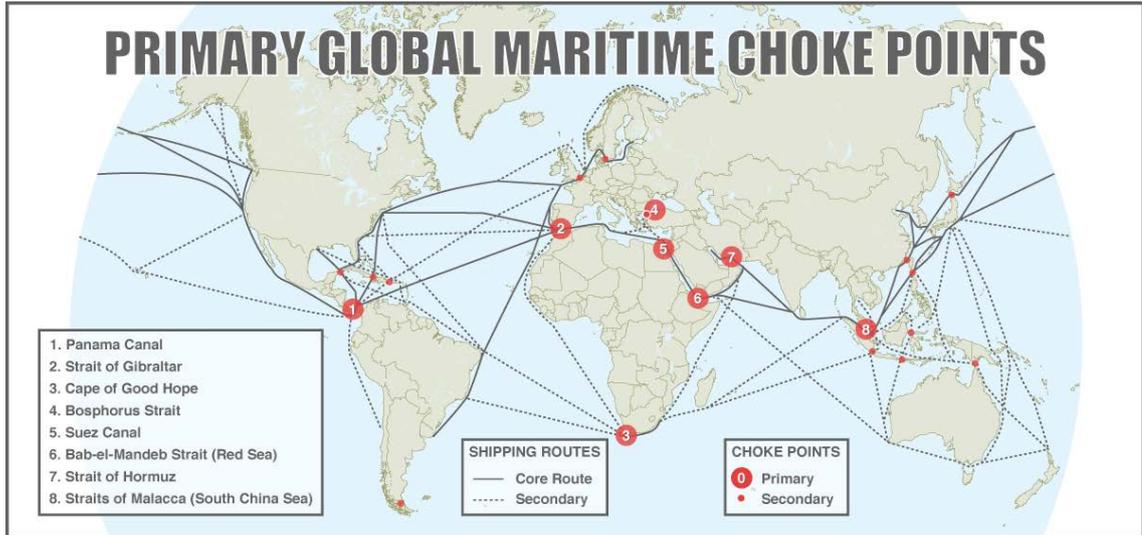[8] VALDÉS FERNÁNDEZ, Ricardo. "The current context of nuclear rhetoric," *Revista Española de Defensa.* November 2024, pp. 56-59. Available at: https://www.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/gabinete/red/2024/11/p-56-59-red-421-nucleares.pdf
[9] CARROUÉ, Laurent. "The Strait of Gibraltar: a gateway, a lock and a strategic interface between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, Europe and Africa," *CNES.* Available at: https:/ /cnes.fr/geoimage/el-estrecho-de-gibraltar-una-puerta-un-cerrojo-y-una-interfaz-estrategica-entre-el-atlantico-y-el
[10] SOUTH PACIFIC LOGISTICS. "What is the Suez Canal and why is it important for maritime transport?", *Maritime transport.* 15 December 2023. Available at: https://web.splogistics.com/blog/post/1024/que-es-el-canal-de-suez-y-por-que-es-importante-para-el-transporte-maritimo
[11] RAGA AGUILERA, Ana. *The Bab el-Mandeb Strait: geopolitical considerations of the strategic bottleneck.* IEEE Opinion Paper 19/2020, 10 March 2020. Available at: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2020/DIEEEO19_2020ANAAGU_BabMandeb.pdf
[12] HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, José Rafael. "Cape of Good Hope, from key route to zone of uncertainty," *Puente de Mando.* 24 February 2025. Available at: https://www.puentedemando.com/cabo-de-buena-esperanza-de-ruta-clave-a-zona-de-incertidumbre/

PRIMARY GLOBAL MARITIME CHOKE POINTS

1. Panama Canal
2. Strait of Gibraltar
3. Cape of Good Hope
4. Bosphorus Strait
5. Suez Canal
6. Bab-el-Mandeb Strait (Red Sea)
7. Strait of Hormuz
8. Straits of Malacca (South China Sea)

SHIPPING ROUTES
—— Core Route
------ Secondary

CHOKE POINTS
0 Primary
• Secondary

Source: LAURIAT, George. "Global maritime choke points", *Ajot*. 19 April 2021. Available at:
https://www.ajot.com/premium/ajot-global-maritime-choke-points

Considering that more than 80% of world trade travels by sea[13] and that value chains and trade flows are becoming increasingly important for the economy and the very survival of nations —just think of the amount of energy resources that travel by sea to Europe— the significance of these key areas is clear. The fact that Djibouti, a small country—23,200 km²and a population of less than 1.2 million—has military bases[14] from five countries, including the United States, and that others are interested in deploying there due to its location near the Bab el Mandeb Strait in the southern Red Sea, attests to this reality.

From a perspective more focused on the continent itself, Africa is characterised by its high average altitude—around 600 metres above sea level—and very uniform terrain, which means that, despite Africa's thousands of kilometres of coastline, it does not have a large number of suitable locations for building ports or communications links to the interior of the continent.

Although it is crossed by large rivers (such as the Nile, the Niger, and the Congo), these do not allow for easy navigation inland, as there are waterfalls and obstacles in their courses that prevent them from serving as entry and exit routes from the interior. Similarly, the fact that the headwaters of the rivers or their courses are not close to each other has

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[13] UN. "Maritime transport: UNCTAD publishes new statistics." 23 April 2025. Available at:
https://unctad.org/es/news/transporte-maritimo-unctad-publica-nue v as-estadisticas
[14] DECODING THE WAR. "Map of foreign military bases in Djibouti." 17 February 2024. Available at:
https://www.descifrandolaguerra.es/mapa-de-las-bases-militares-extranjeras-en-yibuti/

historically prevented their interconnection, hindering mobility within this vast continent and the emergence of large, more homogeneous regions. For this reason, and as previously noted, Africa's immense multitude of spaces[15] has given rise to an equally immense heterogeneity of peoples and languages, cultures and customs, due, among other factors, to the difficulties of internal mobility created by geography.

On the other hand, most of the population maintains a rural lifestyle, linked to the primary sector (essentially agriculture and livestock, not to mention mining), and is therefore concentrated in areas where water is more accessible. Thus, along rivers and waterways — just think of the Nile River and the civilisations that have sprung up around it — a large part of this population is concentrated, growing almost exponentially and increasingly generating a struggle for basic resources such as drinking water and fertile land. If this dependence on such resources is analysed through the prism of climate change[16] and the aforementioned population growth, the situation becomes critical in many areas.

Faced with these difficulties, people migrate; they migrate to African cities—which are growing at an uncontrolled rate, including megacities[17] with more than ten million inhabitants—and they migrate outside the continent, increasing the African diaspora. This migration has powerful effects, both inside and outside Africa.

But Africa is not a country; it is, as has been pointed out, a very diverse and varied continent[18] ; but, of course, it also has a political division, a division of space into states. And, as the space is large, well...

Africa is not a country, but many, however...!

The administrative division of Africa[19] stems largely from the era of decolonisation. In fact, most of its 54 countries, its nation states, emerged during the 1960s, in one of the last waves of decolonisation on the planet. This means, in turn, that in many cases the borders of the former colonies, drawn with rulers and established according to the interests of the

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[15] MARSHALL, Tim. *Prisoners of Geography*. Ediciones Península, 2017, pp. 169–163.
[16] UNICEF. *Drought in Africa, an urgent humanitarian challenge*. 4 March 2025. Available at: https://www.unicef.es/blog/sostenibilidad/sequia-en-africa
[17] SOLER, David. "The megacities of the future in Africa," *Africa Mundi*. 1 November 2021. Available at: https://www.africamundi.es/p/las-megaciudades-del-futuro-en-africa
[18] FALOYIN, Dipo. *Africa is not a country*. Editorial Capitán Swing, 2024.
[19] GIL, Albert. "The Political Map of Africa," *El Orden Mundial*. 15 August 2023. Available at: https://elordenmundial.com/mapas-y-graficos/mapa-politico-africa/

powers, did not respect certain previous boundaries and borders of the different African human groups, which constitutes, potentially and de facto, a powerful source of conflict.

In fact, even today, colonisation and its effects and consequences continue to be blamed for practically all — or a large part — of the continent's ills. Thus, Cristina Duarte, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Africa, highlights the impact of colonialism on many of Africa's shortcomings and governance difficulties, as colonial action, explains[20] , led to the formation of three distinct geographies: on the one hand, the administrative territory of a country, determined by its borders, while on the other is the territory determined by existing ethnic groups, a geography that transcends the borders of those states; and, finally, she points to the geography that reveals the real presence of the state, the space in which the government exercises its action and presence, which tends to be concentrated in the capital and in certain areas, leaving large areas outside the real and effective control of the state.

And, given this diversity of geographies, he continues, and given the cross-border movements that are perceived as threats and that often lead to attempts to close borders, he points out that it is impossible to contain a historical reality that transcends national boundaries... This is always a complex issue to manage and one that clashes with the structuring of the continent into states, the structures responsible for exercising sovereignty over the territory and population under their jurisdiction.

The stabilisation of a nation, the very project of nation building, rests on essential pillars to realise this common project of peoples and individuals, each with their own ideas and interests, but united by a common good and a common interest.

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[20] UNITED NATIONS. *Root Causes of Conflicts in Africa Must Be Addressed beyond Traditional Response, Special Adviser Tells Security Council Debate on Silencing Guns.* Meetings Coverage and Press Release, SC/15249, 30 March 2023. Available at: https://pres s .un.org/en/2023/sc15249.doc.htm

These pillars may be given different names, or instead of three, as in the attached image[21], they may be subdivided into several more; but the fact is that a minimum level of initial security is necessary —that is the primary reason that brings people together, the idea that 'together we are stronger'— and once a kind of 'social contract' has been established, whereby powers and responsibilities are ceded to a system of government, this system not only provides security, but also lays the foundations —infrastructure, legislation, etc.— that enable the economic and social growth of that population, which in turn directly results in improved security, both internally by increasing cohesion through improved living standards and externally by increasing tax revenue in the face of greater economic development, thus strengthening security tools in a kind of virtuous circle. This is, broadly speaking, the process followed in the construction of nation states around the world... as well as in their destruction.

If the cycle turns in a perverse direction – instead of more security, more governance and more economic and social development, it turns in the opposite direction, less, less and less – the state becomes destabilised and enters a powerful downward spiral; if it also has few economic resources—as is the case in many African countries—if, in addition, the presence and action of the government is weak or non-existent in many parts of the country, and if the population does not perceive an improvement in their situation, but rather a worsening of it, destabilisation is a fact, and moreover, a recurring fact and effect used by both internal and external actors seeking to achieve their own objectives[22] .

If the state ceases to have a presence in part of the territory, creating a power vacuum, a governance vacuum, it is necessary to remember that in geopolitics, vacuums are always filled, and in the case of the African continent, these vacuums are essentially filled by

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[21] SPANISH ARMY. *Stabilisation Operations, Training and Doctrine Command*, PD2-001 (vol. 3). 2013, page 10.

[22] As proof of the accuracy of this statement, note the following, taken from the Spanish Army's counterinsurgency manual: "Broadly speaking, the effect of an insurgency is as follows: it generates instability (or at least creates the perception of instability), which automatically leads to a slowdown in economic activity (withdrawal of foreign capital, decline in local investment, closure of businesses, etc.); this reduced economic activity leads to an increase in unemployment, which substantially increases social unrest and leads to greater demand for social assistance, at a time when the state is receiving lower revenues due to lower tax collection. Faced with this situation, the state's legitimacy is further undermined (the argument being: "what is it for, if it provides me with nothing?") and corruption and underground and parallel economies grow on the fringes of official activity. If the trend is not reversed, there will be mass emigration in search of greater security and economic stability. Meanwhile, in the area in question, institutional power not only loses its legitimacy, but the economic inability to adequately maintain security tools (army and police) and judicial structures leads to the loss of the monopoly on violence, with the emergence of protection rackets, the loss of civic consciousness, and the formation of clans and groups as a security measure against increasingly powerful and unchallenged insurgent and mafia groups. Finally, the state loses control of large areas of the territory, borders are no longer guarded, and the government and institutions are nothing more than figures devoid of any real or moral capacity to act. *Spanish Army, Counterinsurgency, Training and Doctrine Command, PD3-301*. 2008, pp. 3-5.

jihadist terrorist groups or organised crime groups, or by ethnic groups that may, in many cases, be exploited by foreign powers.

And what happens when instability grows?

Destabilised states, a breeding ground for insecurity!

The number of weak or failed states, ⬜ is very large[23] on the African continent, as can be seen in the image below. And it is very easy to superimpose this map of weak states on that of ongoing conflicts in Africa—which are also significant in number. Could it be a mere coincidence?
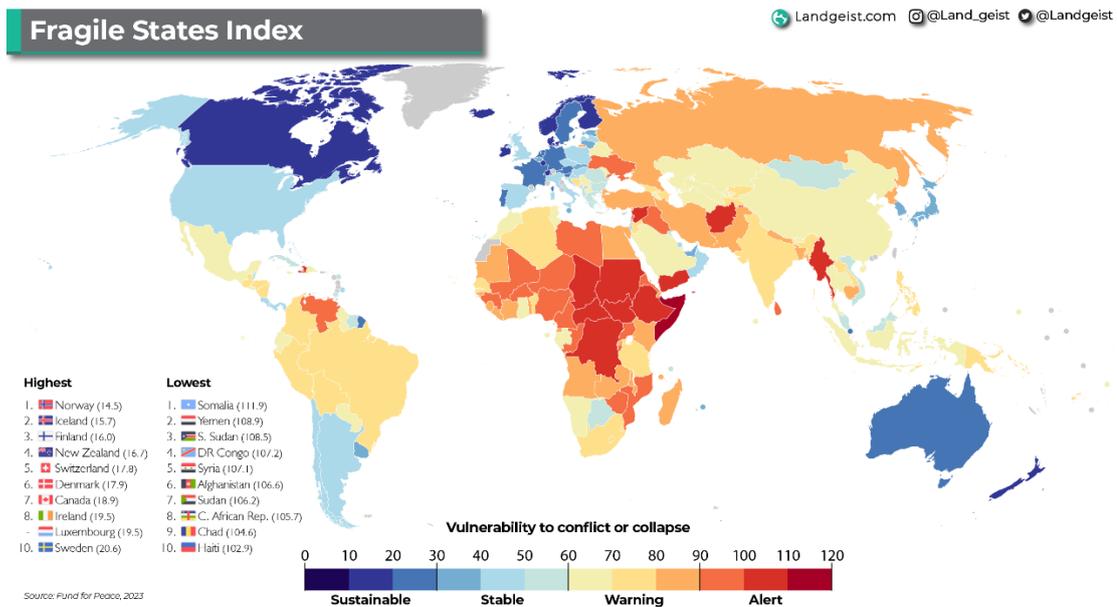
Source: LANDGEIST. *Fragile states index*. 4 July 2023. Available at: https://landgeist.com/2023/07/04/fragile-states-index/

In fact, the African continent finds itself at a moment in which instability is at its highest since the end of the Cold War, with large areas subject to conflicts, and moreover, in an environment of global disorder⬜[24] During the Cold War, both powers, the United States

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[23] LANDGEIST. *Fragile states index*. 4 July 2023. Available at: https://landgeist. c om/2023/07/04/fragile-states-index/
[24] INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP. "Eight priorities for the African Union in 2025", *Briefing 205/ Africa*. Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/ a frican-union-regional-bodies/b205-eight-priorities-african-union-2025

and the Soviet Union, contributed to the sustenance of certain states and attempted to attract others "to their cause" in that global competition, using them as pieces on the world stage that both wanted to control. With the end of the Cold War, the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the United States' geopolitical interest in maintaining its presence on the continent, many countries entered a dangerous drift, without the necessary support to achieve a certain degree of stabilisation. As a result, most African regions are affected by conflict.

This must also be borne in mind in light of the global reality, the global disorder[25] in which we find ourselves immersed. Added to this are the economic difficulties generated, in an already weak environment, by, among other things, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine[26] , which has increased the cost and difficulty of accessing food and fuel for millions of people, not to mention the fact that in the current global reorganisation, international institutions and organisations have largely fallen into disrepute — suffice it to say, as a simple example, comments that the current world is incapable of resolving crises and conflicts, as it only serves the interests of five nations: the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, which can be found in the work published by Turkish President Erdogan[27] — thereby worsening the living conditions of millions of people with no solution in sight. In fact, it is even suggested[28] that for African Generation Z, the social contract has been broken.

[29]This growing instability creates the possibility, and is in turn fuelled by the narratives of certain foreign powers — Russia and China, among others — which blow on the existing embers — in which human group are there no embers related to past grievances? (whether the grievances are real or not)—radicalising positions; and, in the case of Africa, especially on the embers related to colonisation and its effects on the continent. Thus, colonisation—and the former colonial powers—become guilty of all the ills of the African peoples, and, it is argued, it is colonisation—past and present—that hinders the economic

[25] SÁNCHEZ HERÁEZ, Pedro. *The new struggle between the powers: World War 3.0 or Cold War 2.0?* IEEE Analysis Document 28/2023. 19 April 2023. Available at:
https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2023/DIEEEA28_2023_PEDSAN_Potencias.pdf
[26] HAMEIDA, Ebbaba. "The war in Ukraine kills in Africa: 'if we can't eat, we can't live'," *RTVE*. 13 June 2022. Available at: https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20220613/guerra-ucrania-mata-hambre-africa/2383917.shtml
[27] ERDOGAN, Recep Tayyip. *A fairer world is possible: a proposed model for a United Nations reform.* Turkuvaz Kitap, 2021.
[28] PIA. "The 'spring' of Generation Z." 8 September 2024. Available at: https : //noticiaspia.com/la-primavera-de-la-generacion-z/
[29] YAO NICAISE, Adu. "The challenges of combating neo-colonialism in Africa," *Valdai Club*. 2 July 2025. Available at: https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/the-challenges-of-combating-neocolonialism/

development of these countries. In the past, these colonial powers, which were even slave traders, forced the native population, taken by force from their homes and brought to other continents, to work themselves to death to enrich their masters. and today, through their international organisations, through that 'international order' created in their own image, they seek to continue enriching themselves at the expense of the African peoples in a kind of new covert colonisation, a neocolonialism that is difficult to combat.

And for this reason disputes and conflicts in Africa are growing at great speed, in an environment of weak and unstructured states and in many cases through the instrumentalisation of local conflicts by means of proxy forces, arming factions, ethnicities or groups which, in response to that support, confer all kinds of geopolitical advantages on the powers that support them and that seek to fulfil their own objectives and interests, from acquiring key spaces to facilitating the flow of all kinds of resources – from gold to uranium, including strategic minerals, rare earths, hydrocarbons, and so on. The conflict in Libya, which began in 2011, can be seen as a paradigm⬜ of this situation.

The prolonged and growing conflicts in Africa are[30] aggravating the governance crisis on the continent, increasing tension and difficulties in many already fragile and tense regions, allowing for the growing interference of international actors through delegated forces, resource trafficking and manipulation through disinformation.

In light of the endogenous and exogenous circumstances that converge, the question that automatically arises in this highly complex scenario is: is there a solution?

Conflicts without solution?

In fact, the inevitability of conflicts in Africa is sometimes pointed out[31] , precisely because of the plural and multinational configuration of most states. For this reason, two basic dimensions of these conflicts are identified: one internal, resulting from the multi-ethnic

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[30] AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES. "Africa's 2024 security trends in 10 graphics." 17 December 2024. Available at: https://africacenter . org/spotlight/africa-2024-security-trends-graphics/

[31] MOHAMED, Isa, SALIFU EDACHE, Samuel and MARTIN, Anointing. "An Analysis of the Causes and Dynamics of African Conflicts." Taraba State University, November 2021. Available at: htt p s : //www.researchgate.net/profile/Isa-Mohammed-Phd/publication/358895707_An_Analysis_of_the_Causes_and_Dynamics_of_A frican_Conflicts/links/621bf7466051a16582fe985d/An-Analysis-of-the-Causes-and-D namics-of-African-Conflicts.pdf?origin=publication_detail&_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uRG93bmxvYW Q iLCJwcmV2aW91c1BhZ2UiOiJwdWJsaWNhdGlvbiJ9fQ&__cf_chl_tk=sC9FuNsIBgpjvmzv7C1IGwPdbv7harBiK8aSJ 1Xpd8E-1763485440-1.0.1.1-WYcK81cWN5HSPPacOxanFXqMgwUuoD57VntdQrE5D5Q

composition and structure of the states themselves, and the other international, linked to the impact of colonialism, the imperialism of certain nations, and global economic networks and value chains.

Edward Azar sets out a theory[32] he calls "protracted social conflict", for which he states that it essentially consists of prolonged and often violent struggles between different community groups over basic needs such as security, recognition, access to politics and government institutions, and participation in and benefits from the economic system that is generated. Unlike traditional interstate wars, these conflicts are highly complex, long-lasting and fuelled by the identity markers and demands deeply rooted in the groups involved, often with deep historical roots and, to make matters worse, sometimes involving external actors, whether state, non-state or even international.

For this reason, and given that they affect basic needs, they fuel a constant cycle of hostility and violence, since, as previously indicated, they prevent the cycle of stabilisation from turning in a virtuous direction, but rather in the opposite, perverse direction. They are therefore multidimensional conflicts that require a complex, difficult and, normally, very costly solution. Suffice it to say that, in addition to the cost in human lives—which fuels a new cycle of hatred and desire for revenge—it is estimated that each year of conflict results in the loss of between two and three points of the country's gross domestic product[33] —in nations that are already impoverished in many cases—to which must be added the increase in defence-related costs, usually to the detriment of social assistance programmes and services.

And, moreover, even if one is not subject to conflicts, the fact that they occur in neighbouring countries or even somewhere on the continent itself has effects on all the other countries, in a population accustomed to mobility as an inherent part of life and with state borders that are not only porous, but in many cases have few resources for their safeguarding and/or represent nothing or almost nothing to those masses of people seeking better life options. Thus, forcibly displaced migrants often become refugees in nations which, given their economic level and capacities, already have difficulties in attending to their own citizens. In fact, around 45 million people – almost the population

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[32] AZAR, Edward A. *The management of protracted social conflict*. Dartmouth Publishing Co Ltd. 1990.
[33] AFD. 'Armed conflicts in Africa: a continent "trapped in stereotypes"?'. 27 January 2025. Available at: https://www.afd.fr/en / impact-interventions-conflict-africa

of the whole of Spain – have been displaced due to conflicts[34] between different ethnic groups, especially those from other parts of the continent.

However, and in the face of constant accusations and the blaming of everything on colonialism — without in any way diminishing the existing burden of guilt, which generates a 'heavy historical backpack' with an impact on the present — it is no less true that in the face of arguments such as the drawing of borders with a ruler as the cause of many of today's ills — borders that can be seen as "scars of the past and wounds of the present"[35] it should be remembered that they could have been modified, in the exercise of their sovereignty, by African countries once they achieved independence. One need only recall the birth of South Sudan in 2011 , which seceded from the former Sudan.

In fact, the first problem faced by the Organisation of African Unity, created on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, was the debate on the "sacredness" of borders; finally, in the organisation's Founding Charter[36] , Article 3 ratified respect for the borders inherited from colonisation[37] .

[38]The reason for this decision not to change the borders, as recently (21 February 2022) pointed out by Kenya's ambassador to the United Nations Security Council — on the occasion of the situation between Ukraine and Russia, which would lead to war — is that attempting to create new states in Africa removing the borders inherited from the colonial era on the basis of ethnic, racial or religious homogeneity, would have led to the outbreak of bloody wars that would still be raging today. Instead of this option, the need to advance economic, political and social integration on the continent was proposed, rather than creating these self-centred nations with dangerous nostalgia.

In essence, and put in other terms, it would be a matter of adequately activating the pillars of the stabilisation cycle so that the identity of "citizen" of a country prevented another type of identity from generating conflicts for that reason… and to think that this is not

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[34] GEOPOLITICAL FUTURES. Africa's worsening refugee crisis. 23 May 2025. Available at: https://geopoliticalfutures.com/africas-worsening-refugee-crisis/

[35] SÁNCHEZ HERRÁEZ, Pedro. *21st Century: Borders... scars of history or wounds of the present?* IEEE Analysis Document 61/2023. 6 September 2023. Available at: https://www.defensa.gob.es/ceseden/-/siglo-xxi-fronteras-cicatrices-de-la-historia-o-heridas-del-presente

[36] *OUA Charter*. 25 May 1963. Available at: https://au.in t /sites/default/files/treaties/7759-file-oau_charter_1963.pdf

[37] ARCONADA LEDESMA, Pablo. "The birth of the OAU and African obstacles," *Africaye.org.* 2 June 2020. Available at: https://www.africaye.org/nacimiento-oua-obstaculos-africanos/

[38] KIMANI, Martin. "Statement to an Emergency Session of the UN Security Council on the Situation in Ukraine," *American Rhetoric*. 22 February 2022. Available at: https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/martinkimaniunitednationsrussiaukraine.htm

possible implies, automatically, implicitly validating the need for states to have ethnic, religious "purity"... and it would entail admitting and validating the impossibility of creating a nation state with some kind of diversity. And is that possible in a global world?

In conclusion

In a global world there is no distant space, there is no crisis or problem that can remain completely encapsulated or isolated, however much one tries; from terrorism or international organised crime to the COVID-19 virus, everything – the good and the bad – travels and circles the planet, and affects all its corners and peoples.

Therefore, it is a serious mistake to think that it is feasible to remain on the sidelines of events and problems, of the complex circumstances affecting a complex world such as today's, which is subject to a geopolitical reconfiguration that seeks to redefine and establish a new status of power and new rules on the planet, and to think that 'keeping a low profile' is sufficient. And, moreover, when talking about Africa, that space and those people who are so tense and subject to so many internal and external pressures, and even more so when talking about the southern border of Spain and Europe, it is a grave mistake.

Not only is it necessary to contribute to taking the appropriate measures so that the planet — and Africa — can recover the order and stability necessary to prevent a progressive worsening of the situation — and to be aware that this entails a cost that must be assumed — but it is also necessary to learn lessons, to draw valuable insights from the processes of destabilisation and conflict, from their genesis and praxis, in order to be more resilient to them, to be able to face them and thus enable each person and each society to continue to steer the course of their own lives.

For this reason, it is very illustrative to analyse, in an objective and calm manner, what is happening – and has been sown for years – related to the generation of institutional weakness, the fragmentation and loss of civic identity in favour of tribal or group identity, and the following of powerful disinformation currents – in many cases of covert foreign origin – that encourage growing radicalisation and the fracturing of the established order.

But these things only happen in Africa... or do they not?

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