RESEARCH REPORT

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS

(UNDPPA)

ENSURING A PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

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Basic Overview of the Issue

The goals of establishing and strengthening inclusive political processes are to increase public engagement and political power, increase institutional and governmental accountability, and fortify the social compact. To quote the United Nations (UN) Secretary General, the three pillars of the UN mission, as outlined in the UN Charter, are respect for human rights, economic and social growth and development, and international peace and security. Democracy, which is founded on the rule of law, is ultimately a means to achieving these goals.

Colonialism had a complicated history in Africa that continues to influence the continent's political climate. By enforcing artificial borders, exploiting natural resources, and promoting ethnic divisions, colonial powers frequently left behind weakened institutions and simmering conflicts. Many African nations experienced political instability throughout the post-colonial era, which was characterised by coups, civil wars, and authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, the emergence of terrorist organisations like Al-Shabaab in East Africa and Boko Haram in West Africa has seriously threatened democratic government by escalating unrest and undermining the authority of the state.

Current research and publications highlight the obstacles and opportunities for furthering Central Africa's shift towards democratic governance. The region's transition to democracy has been hampered by serious political instability and deficiencies in governance. For example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) faced difficulties in developing efficient democratic institutions as a result of a protracted civil war and political unrest. Similar political unrest and bloodshed have endangered democratic advancements in Burundi, especially after President Pierre Nkurunziza's contentious reelection in 2015. As a result, areas like the Horn of Africa and the Sahel have seen a particularly noticeable impact from terrorist organisations. Terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab have taken advantage of political instability and weaknesses in governance in nations such as Mali and Somalia in order to gain territory and weaken governmental authority. By attacking citizens, governmental buildings, and peacekeeping workers, these organisations increase instability in already unstable areas.

Comprehensive strategies that place a high priority on inclusive governance, institutional strengthening, and conflict resolution are needed to address these issues.

Inequalities in socioeconomic status, deficiencies in governance, and regional conflicts are among the main drivers of political instability and terrorism that must be addressed in order to advance the transition to democratic governance. Furthermore, international cooperation and support are essential to give African nations that are striving to strengthen democratic government and combat terrorist threats financial resources, technical support, and capacity-building.

Despite the fact that Africa has achieved great progress toward democratic governance, ongoing problems with terrorism and political instability highlight the need for ongoing efforts to accelerate the shift to inclusive and robust democracies. Africa can achieve its inhabitants' ambitions for democratic governance, strengthen its institutions, and advance peace and security by tackling these issues comprehensively and encouraging regional collaboration.

Explanation of Important Terms

Democracy

In a recent resolution, the Member States agreed that 'Democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. "*Democracy is a core value of the United Nations. The UN supports democracy by promoting human rights, development, and peace and security.*"

Transitional Period

In the context of world politics, the "transitional period" is understood as a reversal of the fundamental ideas that underlay the previous, now-outdated system of international relations. Transitional times are examined in light of alternate approaches of altering the guiding principles of the international relations system.

Rule of Law

According to the Oxford Dictionary, "rule of law" is the restriction of the arbitrary exercise of power by subordinating it to well-defined and established laws (Oxford Dictionary, 2023). In environments impacted by crises and conflicts, especially those with a history of political violence or going through difficult political changes, strengthening the rule of law is crucial to averting conflict from starting or returning.

Political Pluralism

"Pluralism, in political science, is the view that in liberal democracies power is (or should be) dispersed among a variety of economic and ideological pressure groups and is not (or should not be) held by a single elite or group of elites. Pluralism assumes that diversity is beneficial to society and that autonomy should be enjoyed by disparate functional or cultural groups within a society, including religious groups, trade unions, professional organisations, and ethnic minorities." (Britannica, 2008)

Constitutionalism

According to Britannica, constitutionalism is the belief that a set of laws or a constitution determines the power of a government. While limited government is commonly associated with constitutionalism, that is merely one historical interpretation of constitutionalism and by no means the most common one.

Coup d'état

A coup d'état, or coup, is defined as a "sudden decisive exercise of force in politics". It's the act of overthrowing an existing government, especially by illegal means by a small group or, commonly, the military.

Civil Society

The complex web of associations, networks, and links that separates the individual from the contemporary state is known as civil society. The primary principles of contemporary liberal and democratic theorising now include this contemporary concept of civil society. Apart from its descriptive qualities, the terms "civil society" carry a long list of meanings and ethical and political goals. According to some of its advocates, the development of an autonomous civil society is a requirement for a robust democracy, and the decline or near-absence of it is frequently pointed to as both a cause and a consequence of a number of modern socio-political ills.

Autocratic Rule

Autocracy is the system of government which has the ruler being the absolute holder of power. The ruler in this type of system would be classified as an autocrat. Most types of monarchy and dictatorship fall under the autocratic type of government. Autocracy contrasts with governmental systems such as democracy and feudalism.

Detailed Background of the Issue

Considering the shifts in global geopolitics and social expectations for governance with participation of the general population, the global community recognises the importance of allowing inclusive and peaceful transitions to democratic governance to take place. Establishing or reforming political systems toward democratic ideals is a complex endeavour that requires careful consideration of historical, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts. The guide for promoting responsible and open governance is the idea of democracy, which is based on the concepts of popular authority and citizen participation. Countries that are transitioning to democracy frequently face the difficulty of striking a balance between the many demands and goals of their citizens and the establishment of institutions that protect basic human rights. As history shows, democratic governance transitions are often difficult, involving anything from dictatorships giving in to popular pressures all the way to post-conflict situations looking for stability. Comprehensive political, legal, and social reforms that settle past disputes and create the foundation for a more just and equitable future are frequently essential to the success of transitions. In today's world, several countries are undergoing or are considering a shift to democratic government. The emergence of populism, outside interference, and the ongoing threat of authoritarian regression complicate these transformations. In order to navigate these obstacles, one must have a sophisticated comprehension of the particular circumstances that each nation encounters. Political competition and participation are central to democracy (Dahl, 1971). Elections serve as the main instrument through which these dimensions come about in practice as people have the right to vote and the right to run for office in fair, free, and regular elections. Beyond elections, elements of civil society such as associations and social movements also indicate political interests. Thus, people have several mechanisms through which to hold rulers accountable in democracies.

Authoritarianism

In many African nations, authoritarianism has posed a serious barrier to the continent's shift to democratic government. Centralised power, restricted political freedoms, repression of opposition, and a lack of public accountability are the characteristics of authoritarian governments. The establishment of inclusive governance systems may be

hampered by these regimes' inclination to place more emphasis on retaining power than on promoting democratic institutions and values. There are a number of reasons why authoritarianism is so common in Africa, such as the historical effects of colonialism, the fragility of democratic institutions, and the concentration of power within the ruling class. Numerous African nations inherited authoritarian political systems from their colonial dictators, who instituted centralised, authoritarian political structures that continued long after independence. Authoritarian tendencies in African politics were also reinforced by the legacy of military dictatorships and one-party control in the post-colonial era. In order to hold onto power and eliminate resistance, authoritarian regimes in Africa have frequently employed a variety of strategies, including media censorship, civil liberties restrictions, election process manipulation, and the repression of political protest. These actions increase societal dissatisfaction and political instability while undermining democratic government ideals like accountability, transparency, and the rule of law.

The transition to democratic governance in Africa has been severely hindered by the prevalence of authoritarianism. The resistance of authoritarian leaders and regimes to political reforms that challenge their hold on power restricts the smooth transition to democracy. Furthermore, authoritarian methods undermine public trust in democratic institutions and procedures by creating a climate of dread and suspicion. Despite the obstacles presented by authoritarianism, effective democratic transitions have occurred in Africa on a few occasions. In certain nations, democratic changes have been adopted and autocratic dictators have been overthrown thanks in part to civil society activism, community organising, and external pressure. For instance, public protests in nations like Burkina Faso and Tunisia brought down long-standing authoritarian governments and cleared the ground for the transition to democracy.

One-Party Rule

"One-party rule" is a political system which occurs when a single political party controls the majority of the vote and dominates the nation with little to no opposition. One political party's dominance, the repression of opposing parties, and the degree of political pluralism in this system are its defining characteristics.

In the early years after independence, one-party rule became a popular form of government in Africa, and many recently independent nations adopted it as a way to preserve stability and maintain power. One-party control was frequently defended by the leaders of the ruling parties as being essential to the country's progress, unity, and freedom from the effects of colonialism. In actuality, one-party republics frequently served as platforms for authoritarian governance, which is marked by a lack of political freedom, political repression, and a high degree of accountability. The applications of one-party rule in newly independent nations have had a significant impact on the region's efforts in democratic transition.

A dynamic multi party democracy cannot flourish under one-party rule because it stifles political competition and concentrates power in the hands of the ruling elites. Opposition parties are frequently suppressed, outlawed, or sidelined, depriving the public of important voting options in politics. In the absence of opposition parties acting as effective checks and balances, one-party nations are vulnerable to corruption, poor governance, and a lack of accountability. Few checks on the authority of leaders and ruling parties result in lawlessness and poor use of public funds. One-party government frequently imposes restrictions on political involvement, civil freedoms, and freedom of speech by silencing or censoring opposing viewpoints. The concepts of democratic governance are compromised by this lack of political freedom, which also impedes the growth of an informed and involved population. There have been opposing views on the continent's transition to more democratic governance systems moving on from one-party rule. In 1992 the Kenyan politician Peter Anyang' Nyong'o stated that, "Apologists for Africa's single-party regimes argue that traditional African societies were always akin to the one-party system. Despite some self-critical statements that he made in 1990, some more recent comments of Tanzania's former president Julius Nyerere indicate that he remains adamantly wedded to this view. While it is true that political parties as such did not exist in so-called traditional African societies, it also follows logically that the concept of political party cannot be used in analysing politics in such societies. Those who justify the one-party system on the basis of our cultural heritage have, therefore, been doing so by means of false analogies and the use of anachronism."

Main Struggles in Transitioning

Transitioning to democratic governance is a complex journey for any nation to undergo and comes along with a plethora of challenges and issues. Certain regions, including our region of focus Africa, have been affected by historical legacies such as colonialism and post-colonial struggles which have left deep imprints on these regions' political landscapes and governmental regimes. The transition to democracy is especially difficult in such nations because authoritarian regimes, which are categorised by centralised control, the repression of free speech, and restricted political liberties, have been in place for a long time.

The absence of inclusive political structures and processes has been one of the main obstacles to the democratic transition. Adding to social injustices and grievances, ruling elites have frequently dominated power, silenced critics, and upheld exclusive political structures. Divisions based on race, religion, and tribe have made politics even more complex, intensifying disputes and inhibiting attempts to create inclusive and active democratic systems. Furthermore, the rule of law and accountability have been compromised by weak or dispersed state institutions, such as security forces, judicial systems, and electoral organisations. This has resulted in the continuation of cycles of corruption, impunity, and poor governance.

The evolution of democracy in the region of Africa (and the Middle East) has also been significantly shaped by outside influences and actions. Foreign interventions, proxy wars, and geopolitical rivalries have frequently heightened already-existing tensions and hindered efforts to achieve inclusive and peaceful governance. Domestic dynamics have regularly intertwined with the interests of regional and international actors, such as major powers, neighbouring states, and non-state actors. Such interventions compromised the sovereignty of affected countries and influenced political results. This has resulted in problems like military interventions, foreign meddling in elections, and the escalation of ethnic or religious hostilities for geopolitical purposes.

Elections in Democratic Governance

Elections are essential to democratic processes such as peace agreement implementation, political transitions, and democracy preservation. Elections offer a vital point of contact between the general public and the interconnected objectives of eliminating

poverty, promoting human development, and eventually achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Reliable elections offer political legitimacy, which is necessary for states to be in good health and provide services a critical responsibility to address the numerous challenges facing sustainable development.

Organising free and fair elections is not the only step in preventing electoral violence. Elections that are fair and free do not provide election security, just as peaceful elections do not ensure democratic quality. Specialised early warning systems and ongoing risk assessments are common components of the many strategies and instruments used to prevent election violence, but they differ greatly in terms of the implementing actor, time, and scope. To enhance accessibility and fairness of the voting process, early modifications to electoral laws may be approved domestically years before voters cast their votes. Since local government officials bear the major responsibility for the transparent and peaceful organisation of elections, they might take preventive actions. As long as the ruling class gives domestic Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) —like youth organisations—room to exist, political parties, the local media, and other organisations may all be beneficial. In addition, the technique of preventing election violence targets certain groups and individuals based on risk assessments in specific situations.

Touching up on the aforementioned "rule of law", there are numerous actions that shall be taken in order to strengthen it. This is especially important for nations that consistently struggle with the process of applying political changes to their governmental systems. Development must be fueled by strengthening the rule of law via inclusive, well-run security and justice systems that enable all citizens, including and especially women, to access the legal system, combat impunity, and adhere to international norms. Establishing trust between the state and society is also essential to strengthening the rule of law. This can be accomplished by supporting national authorities in implementing comprehensive, sector-wide reforms that are inclusive and promote national ownership for long-term sustainability, as well as by helping them achieve quick wins through the prompt restoration of service delivery.

In the region of Africa, there have been numerous attempts in coups d'etats to overthrow the current governmental system. There have been 486 coups (attempted or successful) worldwide since 1950. With 214 of these coups having taken place in Africa, the region accounts for the largest number amongst all continents. At least 106 of these 214

coups in Africa have been successful. According to data gathered by American researchers Clayton L. Thyne and Jonathan M. Powel, at least 45 of the 54 countries in Africa have experienced at least one coup attempt since 1950.
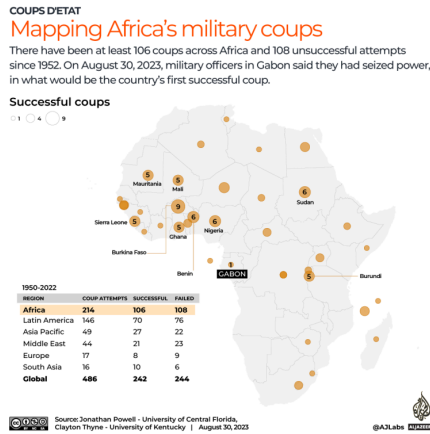

Image 1: AJLabs. "Mapping Africa's Coups d'etat across the Years." Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 31 Aug. 2023

Coup attempts have been ongoing to this day and there have been quite a number of successful coup attempts in the recent years, too.

Table1: Recent Coups in African Countries

Country	Date	Short summary
Niger	July 26, 2023	President Bazoum was overthrown by the military
Burkina Faso	January 2022	President Roch Kabore was overthrown by the Burkina Faso army, which blamed him for not being able to stop Islamist militant violence. Paul Henri-Damiba was forcibly deposed by army Captain Ibrahim Traoré in a second coup that September of that year.
Guinea	September 2021	President Alpha Conde was overthrown by Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, the leader of special forces. Widespread unrest had been sparked a year earlier when Conde had altered the constitution to get around restrictions that would have kept him from running for a third term.

Chad	April 2021	President Idriss Deby was killed on the battlefield while visiting forces battling rebels in the north, and Chad's army assumed control.
Mali	August 2020	Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was ousted as president by a gang of colonels from Mali. The coup came after accusations of corruption, disputed legislative elections, and anti-government demonstrations over worsening security. Nine months later, there was a countercoup led by Assimi Goita, the vice president from the previous coup, who took over as head of state.
Sudan	October 2021	The country's democratic transition was rocked when General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan staged a military takeover in Khartoum, overthrowing a government council that was jointly controlled by the army and civilians.

Major Parties Involved

United States of America (USA)

The US government plays a role in the globalisation of democratic governments in numerous nations. The nation's government frequently offers funds, technical support, and help to nations going through democratic transitions through its organisations like the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The US government's diplomatic efforts are mainly focused on encouraging and facilitating peaceful transitions to democracy. In order to encourage communication, inclusivity, and respect to democratic requirements, this involves diplomatic discussion with both governments and parties in opposition. The US government acts upon this support of transition to democratic governance via the American democracy promotion which adopts the aim of inspiring political reformers, both governmental and non-governmental, to work for political changes that would eventually result in democratic government. Countries going through democratic transitions receive financial assistance from governmental organisations such as the USAID. The US government also helps nations in terms of technical support to

aid their growth in democratic transitions. This can involve competency with the creation of constitutions, election procedures, the rule of law, and reforming governance. This support takes the form of money, cooperation on different projects, and developing the capacity of democracy within the governmental systems.

South Africa

Having leveraged its own successful transition from apartheid to democracy as a model to neighbouring African nations, South Africa has played a significant role in promoting transitions to democratic governance. In several African nations, South Africa has taken a leading role in peace negotiations and conflict resolution. For instance, South Africa was crucial in mediating the early 2000s peace process in Burundi, which resulted in the 2000 signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. In a similar vein, South Africa has participated in mediation initiatives in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and other nations plagued by violence. In order to promote free, fair, and legitimate elections in many African nations, South Africa has offered technical support and assistance for the electoral procedures in those nations. Among the nations where South African observation teams have been sent to observe elections are Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa has also given electoral commissions in other African nations advice and experience.

In order to support good governance and improve democratic institutions throughout Africa, South Africa has also participated in capacity building programs. This entails offering assistance and training to legislators, election officials, public personnel, and other significant players. Through a number of training programs and technical assistance projects, South Africa's governance experience—particularly in areas like constitutionalism, public administration, and human rights—has been shared. South Africa actively participates in regional and global forums to advance human rights and democratic governance throughout Africa. South Africa promotes democratic norms and principles and aids in the creation of regional frameworks and mechanisms for advancing democracy, peace, and security as a member of regional organisations like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU).

Utilising its own experience with transitional justice, South Africa has assisted other African nations in addressing past violations of human rights, fostering reconciliation, and establishing lasting peace. Initiatives of a similar nature have been modelled after South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. As the most powerful country in Africa, South Africa has frequently used its moral authority and diplomatic weight to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law throughout the continent. South Africa has continuously promoted democratic government as a crucial component of peace, stability, and development in Africa through its public declarations, diplomatic missions, and participation in international forums.

African Union (AU)

The AU has been actively involved in promoting peaceful and inclusive transitions to democratic governance in the region of Africa through various mechanisms, initiatives, and interventions. Adopted in 2000, the AU's Constitutive Act places a strong focus on advancing human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law as fundamental values that direct the behaviour of its member states. The AU establishes standards and guidelines through its policy documents, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (2007), with the goal of promoting democratic government and human rights respect throughout the continent. Given that disputes frequently provide serious obstacles to democratic transitions, AU is essential to the prevention and resolution of conflicts that endanger peace and security across the continent. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union uses diplomacy, peacekeeping missions, and mediation to avoid, manage, and resolve disputes. The AU helps to create conditions that are favourable for democratic government by addressing the underlying causes of conflicts and encouraging communication between parties.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) has had a significant impact on the historical governance of Africa since the nation contributed to this process via colonisation during the 19th and 20th centuries. In Africa, the British colonial government frequently preferred indirect control, which entailed governing via traditional systems and local leaders. During colonial authority, this system contributed to stability, but it also strengthened authoritarian structures and hindered the growth of democratic institutions and practices. In order to keep control, the

British used divide and conquer strategies, taking advantage of regional and racial differences. Divide and rule has left a lasting impact in post-colonial African cultures, fueling political fracturing, ethnic conflicts, and difficulties establishing inclusive democratic governance. Institutions were frequently created during British colonial authority to further imperial goals rather than encourage democratic accountability or participation. Many African countries had inadequate institutional foundations following independence due to limited investment in education, infrastructure, and the formation of civil society, which hindered the shift to democratic rule. In addition, institutional disparities that still exist today were brought about by British colonialism. For instance, the colonial government gave preference to some areas and ethnic groups over others, which resulted in unequal development, differences in political representation, and unequal access to resources. The consolidation of democracy has been impacted by social and political tensions stoked by these imbalances. The UK has not signed any particular treaties regarding restitution or reparations for colonialism in Africa. However, it has participated in international agreements and campaigns meant to tackle more general concerns like the residues of colonialism, human rights, and development. As part of this, colonial peoples signed the 1960 United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which recognized their right to independence and self-determination. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), which addresses human rights violations in diverse situations, is another document that the UK has ratified. The United Kingdom endorses the human rights concepts outlined in the African document on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), although not being a party to the said document. Additionally, the United Kingdom is a signatory to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which has provisions related to compensation of historical injustices and the advancement of human rights. It is to be noted that these agreements don't particularly address restitution or reparations for colonial abuses in Africa, even though they do touch on more general colonialism-related issues.

France

The role of France in world politics is significant when it comes to foreign and security policy towards the region of Africa. France is a critical global actor, being a member of various international organisations such as the United Nations Security Council, NATO, the

G-8, and the G-20. It is also one of the world's largest economic powers and the second-largest economic power in Europe. France pursued a realistic foreign policy regarding colonialism to exploit Africa's rich resources since the 17th century. France's role in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 was large as European powers, including the nation itself, divided Africa to protect their economic and political interests. France's colonial policy focused on cultural and political assimilation rather than purely economic exploitation. This policy involved imposing French culture and banning African languages and traditions. France established federations in Africa, such as French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, to strengthen its colonies economically. France's economic system in Africa is described as detrimental to African states, as they were forced to trade with France at unfavourable terms, leading to an unfair economic relationship and increased interdependence. During the Cold War era, France maintained its relations with Africa through cooperation agreements, military interventions, and financial assistance policies to protect its economic and political interests in its Francophone African territories. The concept of "France-Afrique" during the era, emphasises the continued strong relations between France and its former colonies despite their independence. From the perspective of international relations theories, France's policy in Africa during the Cold War era is considered to be dominated by a realist approach, characterised by military interventions to expand its sphere of influence. The term "neo-colonialism" may be used to describe France's post-colonial policy towards Africa, highlighting the perpetuation of dependency relations economically and politically. The establishment of organisations like the African and Malagasy Union (AMU) and the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) can be considered as part of France's efforts to maintain a special relationship with Francophone African countries. With the many treaties and agreements, which France were part of, that were signed in order to maintain colonialist power over Africa for centuries and the continuing acts of neo-colonialism, Africa's certain nations still find themselves greatly under the cultural, economic, and political influence of countries such as France.

Nigeria

After Nigeria gained independence from British colonial authority in 1960, the country has had a fluctuating history defined by military coups and authoritarian governance. The end of military rule in Nigeria was signalled in 1999 with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo

as president, which marked a crucial milestone in the country's democratic transition.Nigeria has conducted multiple democratic elections since then, although some of them have been tainted by violence and irregularities. Nigeria has improved in fostering freedom of speech, establishing democratic institutions, and raising political engagement in spite of these obstacles. The consolidation of democratic administration is seriously hampered by Nigeria's ongoing problems with insecurity, ethnic and religious tensions, and corruption.

Ghana

In Africa, Ghana's shift to democratic government is frequently praised as an example of success. With the adoption of a new constitution in 1992, Ghana began the transition to democracy following decades of military takeovers and authoritarian government. Since then, many political parties have alternated in power during a number of transparent and peaceful elections in Ghana. Ghana's democracy has been consolidated in part because of its adherence to democratic ideals, regard for the law, and thriving civil society. Strong institutions, frequent elections, and a generally calm political climate have been characteristics of Ghana's democratic transition. But issues like poverty, unemployment among young people, and corruption still exist and need to be addressed. The leadership of Jerry Rawlings, who first came to power through a military coup in 1981 but later adopted civilian administration, was one of the major elements in Ghana's smooth transition. After the 2000 elections, Rawlings resigned as president, overseeing Ghana's democratic transition and establishing a precedent for peaceful handovers of power. Ghana has established strong democratic institutions, including an independent judiciary, electoral commission, and human rights commission, which have contributed to the country's democratic consolidation. A few of said institutions include; National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Office of the Ombudsman (CHRAJ) which investigates complaints of administrative injustice and corruption, and National Media Commission (NMC) regulating the media industry and promotes media freedom.

Kenya

Kenya's democratic transition to government has been characterised by both achievements and disappointments. Kenya's one-party government ended in 1991, and the country passed a new constitution in 2010 with major changes intended to strengthen democracy, give more power to local communities, and defend human rights.But Kenya has

also had to deal with issues like ethnic division, disputed elections, and electoral violence. A particularly tragic chapter in Kenya's democratic journey occurred during the 2007–2008 post–election violence, which claimed hundreds of lives and caused widespread displacement. Kenya has advanced democratic government despite these obstacles, as seen by its regular election schedule, enhanced independent institutions, and increased civic space. For Kenya to solidify its democracy, ongoing initiatives to combat corruption, advance inclusivity, and uphold the rule of law are essential.

Ethiopia

Significant political reforms have taken place in Ethiopia in recent years, leading to the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as prime minister in 2018. A number of changes have been launched by Abiy's administration with the goals of creating political space, advancing reconciliation, and supporting democratic governance. These reforms include holding peace negotiations with neighbouring Eritrea, freeing political prisoners, and removing restrictions on the media and civil society. However, issues including violence between communities, ethnic conflicts, and violations of human rights impede Ethiopia's democratic transition. Despite these difficulties, the democratic transition in Ethiopia marks a dramatic break from decades of autocratic control by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). In order to successfully implement democracy in Ethiopia, these issues must be resolved while advancing inclusivity, communication, and human rights awareness.

International International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)

International IDEA is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and a global advocate for democracy with the main aim of offering crucial knowledge and assistance to nations going through democratic transitions. This group focuses on democratic governance, constitution-writing, and election procedures. Through research, policy recommendations, and capacity-building initiatives, International IDEA assists governments and civil society in building democratic institutions. The organisation is an essential partner in international efforts to advance democratic principles because of its dedication to inclusivity and best practices, which aid in the creation of durable democratic frameworks around the globe.

Chronology of Important Events

Date	Description of Event
1950s-1960s	**African Independence Movements** During this time, several African nations won their freedom from colonial authority, which was the first step on the path to democracy and self-governance. Each country has different dates, however some noteworthy ones are Ghana (1957), Nigeria (1960), Kenya (1963), and Zimbabwe (1980).
1960	**Winds of Change Speech** In his well-known "Winds of Change" speech, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan expressed support for democratic transitions and acknowledged that decolonization of Africa was inevitable on February 3, 1960, in Cape Town, South Africa. This speech was made to encourage the transition attempts to democratic governance within the region. While it was not a formal treaty nor agreement, it acted as the symbol of Great Britain's moving forward from the colonisation that has had the most impact on the political climate of the regions it affected, including and especially Africa.
May 25, 1963	**Formation of The Organization of African Unity (OAU)** The OAU was established with the aim of promoting unity and solidarity among African countries and accelerating the decolonization process. The OAU's main objectives included safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of African states, promoting cooperation and solidarity among member states, and defending the rights and interests of African peoples. The organisation played a crucial role in supporting liberation movements in Southern Africa and advocating for the rights of African nations in the international arena. In July 2002, the OAU was replaced by the AU.
1991	**Multiparty Democracy in Zambia** After 27 years of one-party rule under President Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia had its first multiparty elections in October 1991, marking the country's

	independence. The Movement for Multiparty Democracy's (MMD) Frederick Chiluba became successful.
1994	**End of Apartheid in South Africa** On April 27, 1994, South Africa had its first democratic elections, bringing in a new age of multiracial democracy and putting an end to apartheid. The first black president of the nation was Nelson Mandela, the head of the African National Congress (ANC).
July 9, 2002	**Formation of the African Union** Following its takeover of the OAU, the AU focused on broader issues such democratic governance, sustainable development, peace and security, and economic integration. AU seeks to promote social and cultural advancement, economic integration, environmental protection, democratic governance, and peace and security across the continent.
2010	**Constitutional Referendum in Kenya** Following a constitutional referendum on August 4, 2010, Kenya adopted a new constitution with the goals of advancing democracy, decentralised governance, and the defence of human rights. Significant changes were brought about by the new constitution, which included an enhanced Bill of Rights and the devolution of power.
2010-2012	**Arab Spring Uprisings** A wave of demonstrations and revolutions hit many Arab nations, including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain, starting in late 2010. These movements called for democratic administration, political change, and an end to authoritarian power, even though their results differed.
2011	**Democratic Transition in Tunisia** On January 14, 2011, Tunisia's long-time ruler Zine El Abidine Ben Ali left the nation following widespread protests. A new constitution was adopted in 2014 after more democratic elections resulted in the installation of a transitional administration.

2015	**Elections in Nigeria** Nigeria's first democratic handover of power from one civilian government to another since independence occurred during the country's presidential elections in March 2015. The incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was defeated by Muhammadu Buhari, a representative of the All Progressives Congress (APC).
2018-2019	**Ethiopian Political Reforms** After months of demonstrations against the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), Abiy Ahmed took office as prime minister of Ethiopia in April 2018. Significant political reforms were carried out by the Abiy administration, including the opening of the media to criticism, the liberation of political prisoners, and peace negotiations with neighbouring Eritrea.
2018-2019	**Sudanese Revolution** The massive protests that started in December 2018 spread throughout Sudan and resulted in Omar al-Bashir's removal from office in April 2019. After taking over initially, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) came to a deal with opposing civilian parties to share power, which allowed for the final transition to civilian governance.

Relevant International Documents

- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, 30th January 2007
  https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-democracy-elections-and-governance
- UNDP International Forum on Pathways to Democratic Transitions in Cairo, Egypt, 5-6th June 2011
  https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/eg/Pathways_1110_Cairo-Report-WEB_FINAL.pdf
- Forum on SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN A CHANGING REGION, ACTORS AND MECHANISMS. Deliberations of Arab Governance Week: November 26-29 2012.

https://www.undp.org/arab-states/publications/social-accountability-changing-region

Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The ICCPR is a significant international agreement that safeguards civil and political rights. It was adopted in 1966 and went into effect in 1976. It contributes to the framework for democratic governance by highlighting the rights to self-determination, free and fair elections, and participation in the political process.In 2007 African Union charter places particular emphasis on democracy, elections, and governance on the continent. It provides tenets and directives for advancing democratic norms, such as holding frequent, free, and equitable elections.While there have been many organisations formed and treaties signed on the issue that are still in the process of supporting peaceful democratic governance globally, there also have been attempts that did not yield effective results. Numerous endeavours aimed at ensuring peaceful and inclusive democratic governance transitions have encountered obstacles and, occasionally, have fallen short of their targeted goals. Numerous causes, such as internal conflicts, geopolitical dynamics, and the complex nature of the transition process, can be attached to these failures.

The early 2010s saw a wave of pro-democracy uprisings throughout the Arab world in the Middle East and North African regions with the goal of implementing democratic transitions and political reforms. The wave began with Egypt and Tunisia's quick succession in overthrowing their authoritarian governmental regimes thus inspiring other nations in the region to carry out similar attempts. While some nations, like Tunisia did, saw early success, others, like Syria and Libya, struggled to create stable democratic governance and faced prolonged disputes and authoritarian backlash. Thus the Arab World had failed to make a complete and collective transition to democratic governance and some disputes arising from these attempts still have aftereffects to this day.

The uprising in Tunisia, named the Jasmine Revolution, consisted of protests against poverty, governmental corruption, and political oppression. The protests aimed to force President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali to step down from autocratic rule and succeeded in January of 2011. The Arab Spring greatly resulted in prolonged conflicts, power vacuums, and political instability in countries like Syria and Bahrain. The aftermath of the Arab Spring underscored deep-seated socio-political divisions, sectarian tensions, and struggles for power, hindering the consolidation of democratic governance. The Middle East is sheltering

due to a resurgent Covid epidemic, ten years after the start of the Arab Spring protests. Protests and most other activities have been put down in numerous nations because of this threat. However, in the ten years following, the fundamental issues that led to the Arab Spring—disenfranchisement, breached social contracts, and corruption—have only gotten worse and will only get worse due to the economic effects of the coronavirus. It's possible that the street movements that changed the Middle East in the early months of 2011 were a one-time event that eventually wore out. More likely, they marked the start of an ongoing new chapter in the history of the Arab world.

Solution Alternatives

One cannot stress how important a peaceful and inclusive transition is. There are several instances throughout history where the lack of a peaceful handover of power has resulted in lengthy hostilities and societal divisions. Achieving a successful democratic transition requires putting in place systems for preventing conflict, resolving it, and promoting national reconciliation.

A key component of the transition process is the emergence of civil society, which acts as a platform for citizen voices, human rights advocates, and a check on government responsibility. In order to establish a democratic culture and guarantee the inclusiveness of the transition, non-governmental groups, community organisations, and independent media must actively participate in the process. Encouraging open communication and national reconciliation initiatives that involve all relevant parties, such as government delegates, opposition parties, civil society organisations, racial and religious minorities, and marginalised populations is key. Fostering trust and creating consensus on democratic reforms require resolving past grievances and advancing social cohesion. MEDCs, especially those still connected to African nations financially, and NGOs must make investments to support the development of democratic institutions, such as human rights commissioners, judiciaries, electoral commissions, and anti-corruption organisations . This would eliminate the economic obstacles to an extent. However, they must be ensured to be impartial, open, and efficient in defending the law, defending human rights, and fighting corruption. Programs for technical assistance and capacity building can improve the efficacy and accountability of institutions. Constitutional changes to solve issues with governance and advance democratic

values should be implemented. This could entail updating antiquated or undemocratic clauses, giving local governments more authority, bolstering checks and balances, and making sure minority rights are protected. Participatory procedures are to be used in order to involve the public in the change process, such as national debates or constitutional assemblies. To raise public understanding of democratic ideas, rights, and obligations, civic education initiatives could be put in place. This would hope to encourage political literacy, civic involvement, and democratic principles in children from a young age through curriculum development, community service projects, and media campaigns. Giving citizens the knowledge and abilities they need improves their capacity to actively engage in democratic processes.In order to address the root causes of violence and instability within a nation, priority shall be given to conflict resolution and preventive techniques. Investment is to be made in peacebuilding projects, mediation services, and early warning systems to keep disputes from getting worse. NGOs and developed countries should also be called to invest more directly in such peacekeeping results with treaties and agreements especially mentioning such objectives.

Useful Links

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- CIA Factbook Field Listing: Government type https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/government-type/ (This may be a useful tool to do further research on your delegation's governmental system and other government types)
- Deepening the Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa, www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/deepening-the-transition-to-democratic-governance-in-central-africa.pdf.
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