

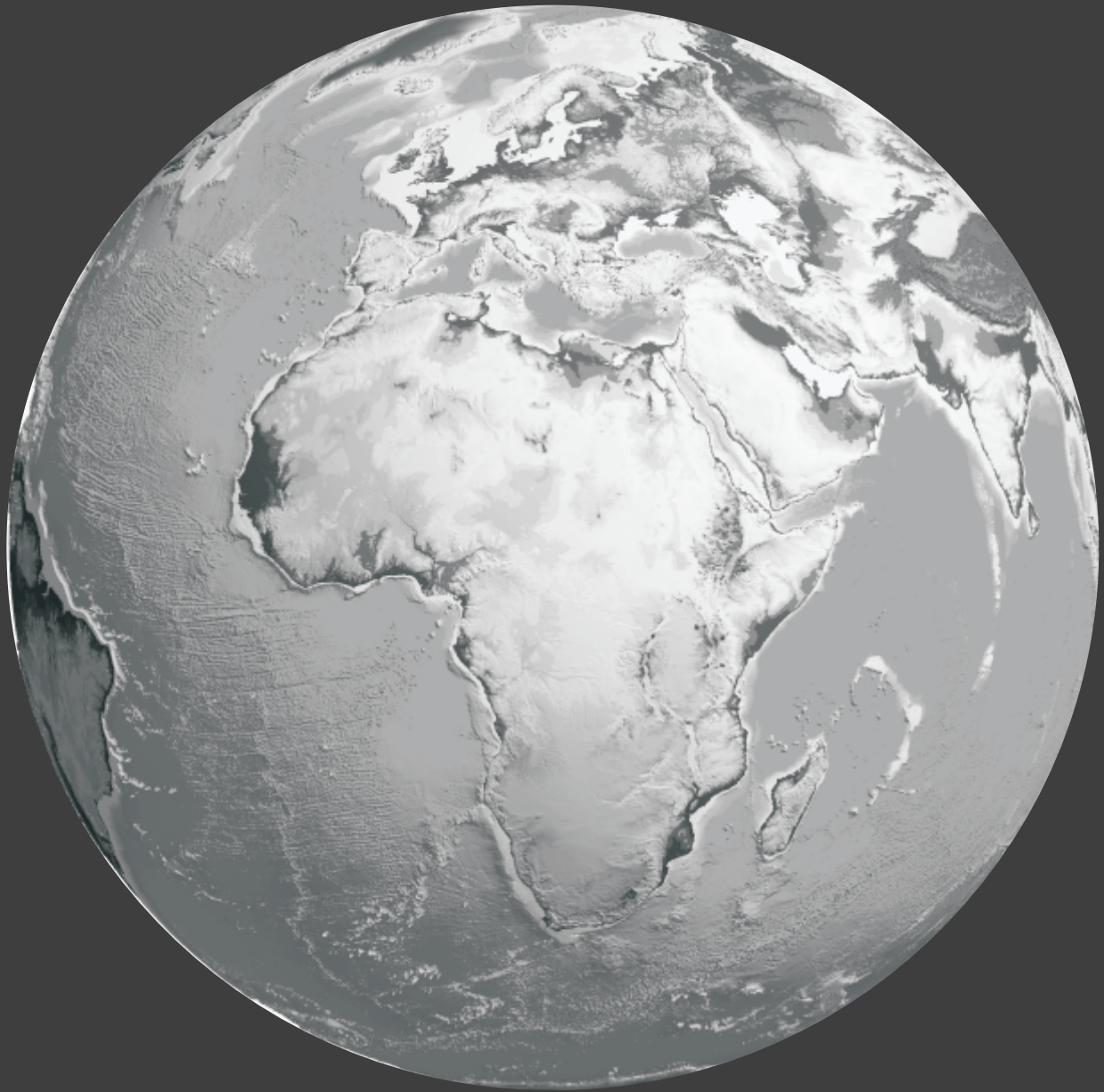
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Editor's Note

This issue of Africa Trends explores significant developments shaping continent's role on the global stage. The cover story by Ms. Ruchita Beri delves into the historic moment when the African Union (AU) joined the Group of 20 (G20) during the summit hosted by India in September 2023. In his commentary, Mr. Mohanasakthivel J examines Africa's diverse responses to the escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict. Mr. Rohit Kumar Sharma's commentary focuses on Africa's response to ransomware threats in the digital age. In the viewpoint, Dr. Shayesta Nishat Ahmed assesses the India- Africa defence cooperation initiatives since the second India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD), highlighting significant strides in maritime security and joint operations. Finally, Mr. Mohanasakthivel J reviews Kerstin Bree Carlson's "The Justice Laboratory: International Law in Africa," which critically examines the impact of international criminal law in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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Cover Story

AFRICAN UNION IN G20: A TRIUMPH FOR INDIA'S PRESIDENCY

The African Union (AU) became a full member of the G20 during the September 2023 summit hosted by India. This move, accepted by G20 members, underscores Africa's growing importance and India's efforts to amplify the Global South's voice. Africa's resilience, rich natural resources, and demographic growth are attracting global attention. India's G20 presidency, themed "One Earth, One Family, One Future," emphasized inclusivity, particularly towards Africa. Major powers, including the US, China, and Japan, are enhancing their presence in Africa. The AU's G20 membership strengthens India's ties with Africa, reflecting its commitment to a more equitable international order.

Ruchita Beri*

The African Union (AU) became a full member of the Group of 20 (G20) during the two-day summit hosted by India on 9-10 September 2023. The G20 member states accepted India's proposal of bringing this key bloc of the Global South to the high table of the global economies. The G20, formed in 1999, comprises 19 countries including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and a supranational bloc, the European Union (EU). It accounts for around 85 per cent of the global GDP over 75 per cent of the global trade and two third of the world's population. AU is the second regional organisation after the EU to gain permanent membership of this exclusive group. African Union's entry in the G20 showcases the rising importance of the region. It also highlights India's efforts under its G20 Presidency to enhance the voice of the Global South, in particular, of Africa.

Africa rising

In recent years, Africa has been the centre of global attention. Major powers like the United States, France, China, Japan, and India have been engaging the African countries. This is mainly due to several significant developments in the continent. First, African economies are demonstrating resilience and growth. In 2023, despite the setback during the COVID-19

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pandemic, six of African countries were in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) list of top ten fastest growing economies in the world. They include Libya, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Cote d'Ivoire.¹ Moreover, African Union represents a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of around USD 3 trillion.²

Second, the region is rich in natural resources. Africa is home to 60 per cent of global energy resources.³ It also has over 40 per cent of global reserves of critical minerals such as cobalt, manganese and platinum that are needed for clean energy technologies.⁴ As climate change leads the world towards environmentally friendly fuels, this wealth of critical minerals essential for green transition has the potential to make Africa a substantial player in the global economy. Third, Africa's population is projected to double in the next two decades. It is currently around 1.4 billion and is predicted to reach around 2.5 billion by 2050.⁵ Thereby accounting for 25 percent of the world's population.⁶ The demographic transformation in continent will have global ramifications. Africa is set to become a major source of the global workforce in the future.

India's G20 Presidency

India's G20 presidency will go down in history of this important forum for promoting inclusivity. This was reflected in theme of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* i.e. "One Earth, One Family and One Future", promoted by India. India's spirit of inclusivity was visible in one of the largest participation by the countries from the Global South. At the beginning of its presidency, India organised the "Voice of Global South Summit." The virtual summit received a tremendous response, with 125 countries participating in the event. This included 47 from Africa, 31 from Asia, 29 from Latin America, 11 from Oceania and seven from Europe.⁷

During its G20 presidency, India rightfully brought the focus on Africa, reflecting its commitment towards the region. As reiterated by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "Africa is a top priority for us even within the G20 ... no future plan on earth can succeed without all voices being heard."⁸ During the Leaders' Summit in September 2023, leaders from a large number of African countries were present. Apart from South Africa, which is a permanent member, there was representation from Nigeria, Mauritius, Egypt and Comoros.

Securing the permanent membership for African Union has boosted India's image as a dependable partner for the African countries. It also underscores India's efforts in championing for greater representation from the continent in the multilateral forums. India

Africa is home to 60 percent of global solar energy resources.³ It also has over 40 percent of global reserves of critical minerals...

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India's spirit of inclusivity was visible in one of the largest participation by the countries from the Global South.

Securing the permanent membership for African Union has boosted India's image as a dependable partner for the African countries

in its global war against terrorism. It is also perceived as engaging with Africa through initiatives like the 2022 US-Africa Leadership Summit, primarily, to deter rising Chinese influence. In the last two decades, Beijing has boosted economic and security ties with several African countries. However, China is often accused of following a debt-trap policy in a bid to enlarge its influence. The search for critical resources and challenge of migration has led

The induction of African Union in G20 comes at a time when the continent has become a hotspot, with major powers...

last Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) hosted by Japan in Tunisia, it announced \$30 billion development assistance for African countries.⁹

The entry of AU in the G20 will surely help in improving India's relations with the region. Africans do recognise India's efforts in making the AU a full member of G20 a reality. The response from African countries indicates appreciation and support for India's role within the region. After the conclusion of the G20 summit the Chairperson of African Union, President Azali Assoumani of Comoros, 'thanked Prime Minister Modi for his efforts for making AU a permanent member of G20.'¹⁰ Similarly, Kenya's President William Ruto was quite generous in his praise of India for pulling off this feat. He said, "India has made a very huge contribution. We want to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for making sure that Africa became a permanent member of the G20 during his presidency."¹¹

In conclusion, African Union's entry in G20 is a significant milestone that highlights Africa's growing political and economic potential. It also symbolises India's efforts towards promoting a more equitable and just international order. There is no doubt India's contribution in this development will augur well for strengthening bonds with African countries.

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Commentary

AFRICA'S STANCE ON THE ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT: A CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVE

Israel-Hamas conflict escalated significantly with Hamas launching an offensive against Israel, causing over 1300 deaths and a severe hostage crisis. This marked a major intensification in the longstanding conflict. The African Union attributed the violence to Israel's denial of Palestinian rights, while African nations responded variably. Some aligned with Israel, others with Palestine, and several remained neutral. Diplomatic relations with Israel, influenced by historical and developmental ties, were evident in the varied UN voting patterns. Israel's extensive developmental aid and covert influence in Africa have shaped its role on the continent, amidst recent shifts like the Abraham Accords

Mohanasakthivel J*

Introduction

On 7 October 2023, the Israel-Hamas conflict witnessed a significant escalation as Hamas launched a violent offensive against Israel, resulting in over 1300 fatalities and a severe hostage crisis. This offensive, aimed at securing the release of Palestinian political prisoners, targeted both Israeli citizens and foreign nationals.¹ In response, Israel declared war on Hamas and imposed a blockade on Gaza. This marked a considerable intensification of the longstanding conflict between Israel and Hamas, garnering global attention and eliciting diverse responses from African nations.

The African Union (AU) issued a statement... citing the "denial of fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, particularly that of an independent and sovereign state is the main cause of the permanent Israeli-Palestinian tension"

Divergent Reactions to the Conflict

The African Union (AU) issued a statement on 7 October 2023 attributing the conflict to Israel, citing the "denial of fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, particularly that of an independent and sovereign state is the main cause of the permanent Israeli-Palestinian tension".² Despite this official stance, several member states diverged, adopting

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positions aligned with their national interests. Countries such as Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Zambia, and Cameroon have aligned with Israel. Conversely, South Africa, Algeria, Sudan, Chad, Tunisia, and several North African countries have attributed the violence to Israel, citing grievances related to the illegal occupation. Nigeria, Uganda, Angola, and Tanzania have adopted a neutral stance, advocating for a cessation of hostilities

and a return to negotiations. The conflict's repercussions for Africa are significant, encompassing economic, security, and humanitarian dimensions. The varied responses underscore historical ties and diverse geopolitical interests, highlighting the intricate dynamics within the continent concerning this complex conflict.³

The evaluation of Israel's standing in Africa during the conflict was significantly reflected in the United Nations votes on 27 October 2023⁴ and 12 December 2023.⁵ These resolutions, which called for an immediate ceasefire and did not condemn Hamas, faced opposition from Israel and its allies. Nevertheless, these resolutions received considerable support from African countries, including those traditionally friendly to Israel, such as Kenya and Ghana. Conversely, a number of African nations demonstrated support for Israel. Liberia, for example, voted against the 12 December 2023 resolution, while Cameroon, South Sudan, Malawi, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, and Togo abstained in both votes. Additionally, Ethiopia and Zambia abstained in the first vote but supported the subsequent resolution.

These resolutions, which called for an immediate ceasefire and did not condemn Hamas, faced opposition from Israel and its allies.

These votes were complemented by Western-sponsored amendments aimed at condemning Hamas, which are essential for assessing Israel's position in Africa. The results of these votes were somewhat more favourable to Israel. On 27 October 2023, six countries (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Cabo Verde, and South Sudan) voted in favour of the amendment condemning Hamas, while nine countries, including Angola and Ivory Coast, abstained, and 15 countries refrained from voting on the amendment. The 12 December 2023 vote yielded slightly improved outcomes for Israel, with eight countries supporting the condemnatory amendment.

This included three nations that had previously abstained or not voted on 27 October 2023: Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Liberia. Furthermore, Guinea, which had opposed the 27 October 2023 amendment, abstained on 12 December 2023, and Nigeria shifted its stance from supporting the 27 October 2023 amendment to opposing it on 12 December 2023. Although a majority of the UN General Assembly supported both amendments condemning Hamas, the required two-thirds majority was not achieved. In both instances, the absence of votes from African countries close to Israel, such as Cameroon and Zambia, could have potentially altered the outcome in favour of Israel.

African Diplomatic Relations with Israel

Despite emerging as a nation in 1948 while most of Africa remained under colonial rule,

Israel actively courted ties with newly independent African states in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶ This “peripheral doctrine” aimed to build alliances with non-Arab Muslim nations.⁷ However, the 1973 war and peace with Egypt refocused Israel on the Israeli-Palestinian

Today, 44 out of 54 African countries recognize Israel's statehood, and nearly 30 have embassies or consulates in Tel Aviv.

conflict, an issue where many African countries, influenced by their own history, sided with Palestine. The end of the Cold War saw a thaw in relations, with many African states restoring ties with Tel Aviv. Israel's peace treaties with Jordan and the Oslo Accords further facilitated this détente with the African countries.⁸ Today, 44 out of 54 African countries recognize Israel's statehood, and nearly 30 have embassies or consulates in Tel Aviv.⁹ This shift is partly due to Israel's advancements in technology and agriculture, which appeal

to African nations facing challenges like drought and extreme weather. While several African nations have officially recognised the State of Israel and established diplomatic relations in recent decades, many others remain steadfast in their historical solidarity with Palestine.

Israel's Role in African Development

In 1958, during a visit to Western Africa, Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir identified the potential for Israel to assist African nations facing significant developmental challenges. These challenges included food security, water safety, sanitation, healthcare, education, economic development, community building, and gender equality. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion shared this vision, which led to the creation of MASHAV – Israel's Agency for

International Development Cooperation within the Foreign Ministry.¹⁰ MASHAV's mission combines the Jewish value of *tikkun olam* (bettering the world) with the aim of fostering political goodwill. Today, MASHAV operates in over 40 African countries with which Israel maintains diplomatic relations.

MASHAV's influence extends across various sectors such as agriculture, health, and education. Recent initiatives include surgical missions sponsored by hospitals in Ethiopia and Uganda, the PICO Kids food security makeathon in Tanzania, and collaborations on paediatric cardiology in Ivory Coast. MASHAV's capacity building, including the establishment of healthcare facilities across Africa and continuous training for local medical staff. Beyond infrastructure development, MASHAV focuses on sustainable human capital development through extensive training programs. Over 350,000 individuals from Africa and other developing regions have benefited from these initiatives, supported by MASHAV's three dedicated training centers in Israel.¹¹

Additionally, initiatives at Ben-Gurion University reflect MASHAV's broader influence by engaging students from diverse backgrounds in programs focused on environmental, economic, social, and cultural sustainability in African regions. These initiatives empower local communities and enhance global understanding and collaboration, embodying Israel's commitment to shared prosperity and lasting impact in Africa. Recent efforts have expanded Israel's impact beyond agriculture, such as the introduction of drip irrigation in Senegal through partnerships with local and international agencies. This initiative demonstrates

Israel's pragmatic approach, emphasizing tangible results and effective resource utilization to enhance agricultural productivity across West Africa.¹² Despite regional complexities, Israel has cultivated positive relations with Muslim-majority countries like Senegal, fostering engagement through shared projects and mutual respect, even when political alignments differ on international issues.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Israel's engagement spans diverse sectors, including healthcare and disaster response in Tanzania and environmental sustainability projects in Kenya. This multifaceted approach not only enhances Israel's international standing but also significantly contributes to Africa's socio-economic development and resilience in the face of global challenges. Israel's commitment to capacity building and sustainable development in Africa positions it as a constructive partner in the continent's journey toward prosperity and stability. Through initiatives like agricultural training centers and collaborative projects, Israel continues to play a pivotal role in shaping Africa's future through impactful and enduring partnerships. Although Israel's developmental aid is modest compared to other Western countries, its influence in Africa extends beyond financial assistance.

Israel's Covert Influence in Africa

Israel's diplomatic ties with African countries conceal a more intricate and discreet layer of interaction. This hidden dimension includes a network of businessmen, consultants, and firms with extensive operations throughout Africa, participating in back-channel diplomacy that advances Israel's interests. These individuals have direct access to African presidents and are skilled in intelligence, surveillance, cybersecurity, and arms trading, acting as intermediaries for Israeli companies seeking to penetrate the African market.

Israeli companies have long dominated the wiretapping and electronic surveillance market in sub-Saharan Africa. Among the most prominent are Verint and NSO Group, the latter founded by Shalev Hulio and known for its spyware, Pegasus. Other notable firms include Mer Group, which operates in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Nigeria, and the Republic of Congo, providing services to national intelligence agencies, and Elbit Systems, which has a presence in Angola, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa. These companies benefit from their close connections with the Israeli military and intelligence services, with many employees being veterans of Unit 8200, Israel Defence Forces' cyber-warfare unit. For instance, Shabtai Shavit, who leads the Mer Group subsidiary Athena GS3, directed Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, from 1989 to 1996.¹³

Israeli companies have long dominated the wiretapping and electronic surveillance market in sub-Saharan Africa

Shavit has extensive experience in Africa, having developed relations between Israeli intelligence services and those of Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko's regime and Cameroon. Verint, led by former Israeli army officer Dan Bodner, exemplifies how surveillance technology serves as a crucial tool in Israel's interactions with both autocratic and democratic governments worldwide, including in Africa.¹⁴ In West Africa, one of Israel's clients is Cameroon's long-time ruler, Paul Biya, whose four-decade tenure makes him the continent's

longest-serving leader. Reports indicate that Israeli operatives manage Biya's personal security, and Israel has heavily invested in surveillance technology to suppress dissent and sustain Biya's rule.¹⁵

Recent Developments and the Abraham Accords

In recent years, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has significantly intensified Israel's diplomatic outreach to Africa as part of a broader foreign policy agenda. His visits to African nations and efforts to build stronger ties with key states are integral to this strategy. The Abraham Accords, which facilitated the normalization of relations with several Arab

The Abraham Accords, which facilitated the normalization of relations with several Arab countries,... have effectively gave a final blow to the pan-Arab solidarity for Palestine.

countries, including Sudan and Morocco, have effectively gave a final blow to the pan-Arab solidarity for Palestine. In 2022, a landmark agreement between Israel and Morocco led to the deepening of trade and economic relations, with Morocco recognizing Israel in return for Israel's recognition of Morocco's claim over Western Sahara.¹⁶

Since 2020, two Arab League countries the Sudan and Morocco—have signed the Abraham Accords, formalizing diplomatic relations with Israel. This agreement enabled Sudan to be removed from the US terrorism blacklist.

However, the normalization process in Sudan has been slow, primarily due to the ongoing civil war. Despite this, Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen remained hopeful about achieving a historic peace agreement. However, Sudan's decision to renew ties with Iran, a known supporter of Hamas, shortly after the Gaza conflict erupted has cast doubt on the potential for such an agreement.¹⁷ Conversely, Morocco has adopted a more measured approach. While it has expressed "deep concern over the deterioration of the situation and the outbreak of military operations in the Gaza Strip," it has refrained from openly condemning Israel. Despite this, Morocco has witnessed some of the continent's largest pro-Palestine protests. Rabat's cautious stance underscores its reluctance to jeopardize its relations with Israel, especially given Israel's recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the disputed Western Sahara, a claim opposed by the Algerian-backed Polisario Front and other proponents of Sahrawi independence.¹⁸

Conclusion

Africa's stance on the Israel-Hamas conflict has shifted since the Cold War. During that era, African nations often supported the Palestinian cause, influenced by alliances and rewards from Arab states. Today, the geopolitical landscape has changed. Many Arab countries are now more open to engaging with Israel for diplomatic and economic benefits. This presents an opportunity for African nations to recalibrate their foreign policies. Strengthening ties with Israel can provide technological, agricultural, and security advantages, crucial for addressing economic challenges heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. African nations now seek a balanced approach, aligning historical partnerships and moral positions with strategic engagements that support their economic and developmental goals. However, ongoing Israeli human rights violations in Gaza could force African states into difficult choices, highlighting the need for Israel to pursue peace negotiations to maintain these diplomatic relations.

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Commentary

AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO RANSOMWARE THREATS

Digitalization has significantly transformed Africa, especially post-pandemic, with rapid adoption of technologies like 4G and growing interest in 5G. This shift is prominent in sectors such as fintech and e-commerce, driven by a youthful demographic. However, with digital progress comes challenges, particularly cybersecurity threats like ransomware. Reports show South Africa faces the highest ransomware attack rate in the region. International efforts, such as the Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI), have begun addressing these threats. Regional initiatives, although nascent, aim to strengthen cybersecurity. Moving forward, comprehensive national cybersecurity policies and proactive measures against ransomware are crucial for Africa's digital future.

Rohit Kumar Sharma*

Digitalization has significantly impacted the African continent, much like other parts of the world. Following the pandemic, numerous African nations have witnessed a swift rebound, marked by a substantial rise in the adoption and utilization of digital technologies. In Sub-Saharan Africa, mobile connectivity remains a key catalyst for digital transformation and socio-economic progress.¹ The uptake of 4G technology has recently accelerated, with projections suggesting it could more than double in the coming years. Further, the region is also experiencing a growing momentum in adopting 5G technology.

African nations have witnessed a swift rebound, marked by a substantial rise in the adoption and utilization of digital technologies.

The region's swift advancement of digital technologies is especially noticeable in the financial technology and e-commerce sectors. The potential for technological growth is immense, driven by the young demographic, with about 60 per cent of Africa's population being under 25 in 2020². Critical economic sectors such as finance, education, agriculture, government, security, and manufacturing are proactively embracing digital technologies and shifting their operations to online platforms.

However, as with any technological advancement, digitalisation comes with challenges, with cybersecurity threats, such as ransomware attacks emerging as a pressing concern. The

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speed of digitalisation in the region has surpassed the development of laws and regulations concerning cybersecurity. This lag is somewhat expected, as nations and institutions often need time to adapt to rapid changes in the technological landscape. However, this problem continues to be especially acute in Africa, where essential industries are becoming more dependent on new forms of digital technology.

Ransomware threat in Africa

Prior to delving into the intricacies of ransomware, it is imperative to define the concept and comprehend its ramifications. According to Check Point Software, an IT security firm, ransomware is defined as malware that denies a user or organisation access to the files on their computer.³ The attackers demand a ransom in exchange for the decryption key, compelling organisations to weigh the difficult choice between paying the ransom to retrieve their data or risking the loss of data by refusing to comply with the attackers' demand. In a digitalised world where businesses are built on and around the availability or possession of data, losing access to it is a nightmare scenario for any organisation. Data is also fundamental to the seamless operation of organisations across various sectors, making it a prime target for threat actors. These reasons underscore why attacks concerning data loss or theft cause global concern.

Ransomware has evolved into a pervasive global issue, impacting countries and continents on a wider scale. Particularly, Africa has experienced a notable escalation in ransomware attacks in recent years, driven by diverse factors. In order to understand the seriousness of this problem in the region, it is necessary to consider the information presented in the "State of Ransomware2023" report, written by Sophos, a well-known IT security company.

While the report's scope is limited to South Africa and may not fully reflect the broader regional landscape, it nonetheless offers invaluable insights into the prevailing circumstances. Furthermore, it is crucial to highlight that South Africa ranks highest on the Digital Quality of Life (DQL) index within Africa, making it a significant case study for understanding the correlation between digitalization and the escalating cyber threats in the region⁴. South Africa faced the most considerable increase in ransomware attack rate, with 78 per cent of organisations acknowledging being hit in Sophos' survey.⁵

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Interpol's Africa cyber threat assessment report categorises the ransomware threat as one of the most serious threats faced by organisations of all sizes around the world.⁶ The report also noted that South Africa is the country most affected by ransomware attacks, accounting for 42 per cent of all detected attacks occurring in the region. Morocco follows, with 8 per cent, while Botswana and Egypt come in at 6 per cent. Meanwhile, Nigeria and Tanzania each account for 4 per cent of the ransomware attacks detected. The report also highlights that individuals in Africa are facing targeted attacks from various ransomware families, including Lockbit 2.0, Pysa, Lockbit 3.0, and Conti. Among these, Lockbit 2.0 stands out as

the most widespread, being responsible for the highest number of infections across the African region.

Recently, the Development Bank of South Africa, a state-owned bank, acknowledged a ransomware attack on its systems.⁷ In this incident, servers, log files, and documents were encrypted by the Akira gang, posing a significant threat to the bank's digital infrastructure. The Akira group that emerged in March 2023 is reportedly operating from Russia.⁸

Cyberattacks, especially ransomware attacks, pose significant challenges to organisations, particularly businesses. The costs extend beyond financial losses and also encompass damage to the organisation's reputation. According to Cybereasons' *Ransomware: The True Cost to Business* report that studies the ransomware business impact, the cost of ransomware is all-encompassing, impacting the brand and reputation of an organisation along with other disturbing repercussions.⁹ The cascading effect of a successful attack also includes resignations at the Chief Information Security Officers' (CISO) level and significant layoffs of staff and employees. In worse cases, businesses may be compelled to cease their operations. Moreover, such attacks can lead to legal actions from affected clients and regulatory penalties imposed by the government.

International Efforts and African Response

Despite the challenges posed by ransomware in the region, it is crucial to gauge the level of international cooperation and actions taken to counter this growing threat. It is equally important to appraise Africa's position within such collaborative efforts. It is also essential to evaluate regional initiatives aimed at countering the ransomware threat, if any. While broader cybersecurity issues have become an intrinsic part of intergovernmental organisations and other multi-stakeholder platforms, it is essential to inquire whether similar arrangements explicitly address the issue of ransomware.

In a first of its kind on ransomware, the White House brought together world leaders for deliberations on a plan of action to address the ransomware threat. The initiative came in the form of the first Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI) meeting held in October 2021.¹⁰ The meeting was held virtually, and the joint statement of ministers and representatives outlined the broader contours of the problem and proposed measures to tackle the issue. The statement highlighted the "global nature" of the ransomware threat that warrants a shared response.

Notably, only three participants were from Africa: Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa.

...four key pillars to address the issue: resilience, countering illicit finance, disruption and other law enforcement efforts, and diplomacy.

The joint statement focused on the four key pillars to address the issue: resilience, countering illicit finance, disruption and other law enforcement efforts, and diplomacy.¹¹ The statement emphasized resilience is more than technical capabilities but includes "policy frameworks, well-rehearsed incident response procedures, a trained and ready workforce," and

other important segments.¹² It also highlighted the need to cooperate with the virtual asset industry to enhance ransomware-related information sharing. Interestingly, the statement

also shared its commitment to consider “all national tools” available to take action against the perpetrators to disrupt their infrastructure and ecosystem, echoing sturdy resolve.

Following the first CRI, five working groups were established: resilience, disruption, counter-illicit finance, public-private partnership, and diplomacy.¹³ The Second International Counter Ransomware Initiative summit declared its intention to establish specific institutions to address the ransomware issue. The International Counter Ransomware Task Force (ICRTF) is mandated to coordinate “resilience, disruption and counter illicit finance activities” in alignment with the initiative’s thematic pillars.¹⁴ Another important institution is the Regional Cyber Defense Centre (RCDC), which is specially tasked to operationalize ransomware-related threat information-sharing commitments. The joint effort also endeavors to prevent and dissuade ransomware actors from being able to use the cryptocurrency ecosystem.

The third and latest summit welcomed thirteen new members, including three from Africa: Egypt, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone.¹⁵ The summit focused on developing capabilities to disrupt attackers and the infrastructure they use to conduct their attacks, enhancing cybersecurity through information sharing, and actively combating ransomware actors. The joint declaration also discouraged the member states against ransomware payments.¹⁶ Nigeria became the first African nation in CRI as a lead of the Diplomacy and Capacity Building pillar along with Germany. Observing how this issue-specific initiative led by the White House trickles down to the broader African context will be intriguing.

Nigeria became the first African nation in CRI as a lead of the Diplomacy and Capacity Building pillar along with Germany.

Nonetheless, formulating policy frameworks and creating institutions to address the ransomware threat are commendable and essential first steps. Moreover, the participation of African nations in the CRI, at the very least, encourages these countries to adopt adequate measures. These measures can then be shared with regional groupings, fostering a collaborative approach to enhance overall cybersecurity in the African region.

Due to the developing nature of the ransomware threat, there is currently a lack of issue-specific regional policy frameworks to address this emerging challenge. However, some efforts and arrangements indirectly touch upon the issue of ransomware within the broader category of cybersecurity and cybercrime activities. One such initiative is the African Joint Operation Against Cybercrime (AFJOC), which aims to strengthen the capabilities of national law enforcement agencies to prevent, detect, and investigate cybercrime.¹⁷ It also focuses on promoting cooperation and best practices among African member countries. The role of AFRIPOL¹ becomes equally important when it comes to cooperation between the police agencies of African Union member states. Recently, in a joint operation conducted by INTERPOL and AFRIPOL, individuals and groups running online scams in the region were targeted.¹⁸ Such operations have solidified cybercrime departments in member countries and other regional stakeholders. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is also contemplating a joint effort to address broader cybersecurity issues, including cybercrimes.¹⁹

Way Forward

While it might be too early to expect a ransomware-specific framework and initiative similar to the CRI in the region, there is an opportunity to incorporate prevention and mitigation measures into regional and national rules and regulations. Developing and implementing national cybersecurity policies and strategies involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders is necessary. Governments in the region should also focus on developing legislation for personal data protection, incorporating substantial penalties for organisations that fail to comply, especially those dealing with individuals' data. It is also essential to identify critical infrastructure, the disruption of which could have non-tolerable consequences at the industrial and national levels. Allocating resources accordingly to secure and safeguard these critical assets is imperative.

Moreover, every country in the region should establish Cyber Incident Response Teams (CIRTs) to monitor threats actively and assist organisations in recovering from cyber attacks. Discouraging ransomware payments is crucial and should not be supported or anchored in any cyber insurance policy. This aligns with the broader strategy of minimizing the financial incentives for ransomware attackers.

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- ¹ AFRIPOL is a technical institution of the African Union with a mandate to strengthen cooperation between the police agencies of AU member states in the prevention and fight against organized transnational crime, terrorism, and cybercrime.
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Viewpoint

INDIA-AFRICA DEFENCE COOPERATION INITIATIVES SINCE THE SECOND IADD

Following the Second India-Africa Defence Dialogue, India and Africa have deepened their defence cooperation through joint exercises, training programs, and defence industry partnerships. Key initiatives like AFINDEX and the India-Africa Army Chiefs' Conclave emphasize their commitment to regional security in the Indian Ocean Region. These collaborative efforts include port visits, maritime patrols, and disaster relief missions, aligned with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative. The partnership aims to enhance military interoperability and address challenges such as logistical issues and political unrest, while countering Chinese influence in the region.

Shayesta Nishat Ahmed*

Introduction

As the second India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) held alongside Defexpo 2022 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, marks its first anniversary, India and Africa have strengthened their defence and security cooperation. Their relationship is built on shared security challenges and mutual interests, particularly in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). India's initiatives like SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and its G20 presidency motto, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" reflect its commitment to regional security and growth.

The Second IADD, held on 18 October 2022, focused on "Adopting Strategy for Synergizing and Strengthening Defence and Security Cooperation." During this event, Raksha Mantri

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh hosted African Defence Ministers to discuss enhancing cooperation through increased training, capacity building, joint exercises, and humanitarian assistance.

Rajnath Singh hosted African Defence Ministers to discuss enhancing cooperation through increased training, capacity building, joint exercises, and humanitarian assistance. The past year has seen significant initiatives that have brought India and Africa closer, reinforcing their geopolitical relationship. Defence and security cooperation have become key pillars of this partnership through activities such as training, joint exercises, and defence industry collaborations.

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India-Africa Defence and Security Developments in 2023

On 28 March 2023, in Pune, Maharashtra, the first India-Africa Army Chiefs' Conclave was held in conjunction with the second Africa-India Joint Exercise, or "AFINDEX".¹ The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Manoj Pande, and chiefs and representatives of thirty-one African nations attended the conclave. The conclave was structured around the theme - 'Africa-India Militaries for Regional Unity- AMRUT'.² The Conclave's main objectives were to develop an institutionalised framework for improved cooperation between the countries in the areas of combined military training and peacekeeping operations, as well as to support India's defence industry in the region. The first edition of the conclave was held in March 2019 at Aundh Military Station, Pune. Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh while addressing the delegates of the 2023 defence conclave, emphasised that close cooperation in the areas of hydrography, counter-terrorism initiatives, capability development and capacity-building efforts, and maritime security is pivotal to the close working of the two regions. There was also a display of "Made in India" designs and indigenous industry weapons to promote defence exports to partner countries in Africa. Army chiefs and their representatives from the invited nations were also participants in the "Equipment Display' [...] organized in which 75 indigenous products from 32 industries manufactured under 'Make in India' were showcased".³

The ten-day AFINDEX exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability between India and its partner countries in the region "from 23 African nations including Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, and South Africa, among others. The focus of the exercises was "Humanitarian Mine Action and Peacekeeping Operations under the UN mandate".⁴ Such continued engagement also signals India's continued commitment to development, growth and also at countering the Chinese influence in the area (such as the overseas military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa). Apart from this, many other collaborative defence initiatives have been covered in the current year, such as military exercises, maritime domain awareness (MDA) initiatives, and bilateral visits of senior defence representatives from the region. In addition, a plethora of additional cooperative defence projects have been discussed this year centred on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and non-traditional security concerns. India has additionally contributed to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) efforts during Cyclone Idai in Mozambique in 2019. The collaboration also encompasses regional associations such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), wherein India has assisted its African counterparts in hydrographic studies and COVID-19 relief operations. Additionally, the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) is also a key initiative to enhance maritime domain awareness in the IOR.

The tables below depict the progress in the India-Africa defence cooperation in 2023 through different collaborative exercises such as HADR exercises and joint anti-piracy exercises.

Table 1- India-Africa Defence Cooperation

Date	Events	Participants
	India-Africa Army Chiefs' Conclave ⁵	31 African states
20-23 March 2023	First Training Squadron (1TS) of the Indian Navy ⁶	Madagascar
21-23 June 2023	Visit of Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (DCNS) to Kenya ⁷	India-Kenya
29 August 2023	Visit of Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Defence ⁸	India-Kenya
2-5 October 2023	Visit of Chief of Army Staff to Tanzania ⁹	Tanzania
15-22 October 2023	Visit of Permanent Secretary, Zambian Defence Ministry ¹⁰	Zambia
29 November 2023	MAHASAGAR - Indian Navy's outreach initiative ¹¹	IOR littorals

Source: Compiled by the author from PIB

Table 2- Press Information Bureau. India-Africa Military Exercises 2023

Date	Participants	Nature of Exercise
14-28 January 2023	Indo-Egypt Joint Training Exercise (Army)	Exercise Cyclone ¹²
5-9 March 2023	India, Bahrain, Japan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK and USA	International Maritime Exercise/Cutlass Express2023 (IMX/CE-23) ¹³
16-29 March 2023	25 States	AFINDEX ¹⁴
10-12 July 2023	Combined Maritime Forces	Op Southern Readiness 2023- INS Sunayana ¹⁵
31 August to 14 September 2023	34 States	Exercise Bright Star ¹⁶
2-13 October 2023	South Africa	Operational Sea Training and Safety Audit of SAS Mendi ¹⁷

Source: Compiled by the author from PIB

Military Interactions and Exercises across the Region

The Indian Navy in its overseas deployment operations has been conducting a number of port-calls through certain key ships. The practices showcase its commitment to ensuring a secure and stable IOR and promoting SAGAR in the region. In the context of mission deployments to the African continent, INS Sujata had completed its deployment when it made a port call to Port Maputo in Mozambique from 19 to 21 March 2023.¹⁸ Subsequently, the INS Trishul began an overseas deployment to the East Coast of Africa, visiting five countries along the way, including Mombasa, Kenya, Anjouan Comoros and Durban.¹⁹ INS Sumedha²⁰ on an Extended Operational Deployment also participated in the Indian Navy's second deployment to the anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) patrol, with INS Tarkash having participated in the first GoG patrol in October 2022.²¹

Most recently, it carried out Operation Kaveri, which was designed to evacuate Indian diaspora members from war-torn Sudan in April 2023. The ship also undertook a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) in the region, comprising joint training and practical demonstrations over a spectrum of maritime topics to bolster maritime security and strengthen coordination.²²

From 20 to 23 March 2023, Port Antsiranana, Madagascar, was visited by the Indian Navy's First Training Squadron (1TS) ships, INS Tir and ICGS Sarathi, as part of a long-range training exercise.²³ Likewise, INS Sunayana took part in the Combined Maritime Forces' (CMF) Operation Southern Readiness 2023, which was a multinational endeavour aimed at boosting maritime security and combating piracy to maintain safety and freedom of navigation in the region. The exercise was intended to fortify multilateral connections and enhance collaboration. It coincided with Vice Admiral Sanjay Mahindru's, India's Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, visit to Kenya on an invitation from the Kenya Defence Forces.²⁴ A high-level virtual outreach program by the Indian Navy with the heads of the navies of certain Indian Ocean littoral states was also held on 29 November 2023.²⁵ With a focus on exchanging professional skills and enhancing Special Forces interoperability in desert environment while conducting counterterrorism, reconnaissance, raids, and other special operations, the exercise sought to strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries.

Defence Industrial Cooperation

As demand for Indian defence equipment increases throughout the continent, there is an growing willingness in Africa to engage in defence exports with India. India closely collaborates on defence cooperation with East African nations in order to bolster its access to resources and maritime security posture, given its strategic location. According to a recent India Exim Bank report, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Seychelles have been the main recipients of Indian weapons from 2017 to 2021. India has emerged as a leading defence exporter, accounting for about 15 per cent of all exports, as it works towards meeting Africa's

As demand for Indian defence equipment increases throughout the continent, there is an growing willingness in Africa to engage in defence exports with India.

needs in the maritime, aerospace, and defence sectors.²⁶ There has been interest in extending LoCs to partner African states to cover defence exports during the 18th India-Africa Conclave, which was hosted by the India Export Import (EXIM) Bank in collaboration with India's foreign and trade ministries, in June 2023.

A USD one billion defence partnership agreement between India and Nigeria has been authorised, with the goal of enabling the Defence Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) to become 40 per cent self-sufficient in the production of military hardware by 2027.²⁷ President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania paid India a four-day visit from 8–11 October 2023, during

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which both countries elevated their bilateral relations to the level of strategic partners. In addition, a five-year plan for enhancing defence cooperation was agreed upon by both nations. The deployment of the Indian Military Training Team in Tanzania, the enlargement of the area of defence cooperation, and the triumph of Indian defence businesses' Defence Expos in Dar es Salaam are noteworthy accomplishments. Agreements to strengthen cooperation in the Indian Ocean region resulted from their emphasis on the common concerns of maritime security. India's hydrographic

surveys of Tanzanian ports and bilateral maritime drills, including exclusive economic zone surveillance, were lauded by both parties. The presidents also praised the signing of the Technical Agreement on exchanging White Shipping Information and emphasised the significance of increasing interoperability between their military forces. In the context of the Blue Economy, they also indicated a desire to collaborate.²⁸

2023 also saw close cooperation between India and Kenya in terms of agreeing on a joint cooperation agreement on maritime cooperation named 'Bahari', meaning 'ocean' in Swahili.²⁹ The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by Goa Shipyard Ltd. and Kenya Shipyard Ltd. was also mentioned in the joint statement. This agreement aims to facilitate profitable business partnerships and encourage Kenya's efforts to build up its

...IADD 2022 had proposed the setting up of the India-Africa Security Fellowship Programme at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence and Strategic Analyses (MP-IDSA), to encourage further research of security issues through the offer of fellowships to experts from African countries.

shipbuilding, maintenance, and repair capabilities. The main elements of the vision included boosting maritime trade and industry, advancing maritime security, harnessing the Blue Economy potential, accelerating connectivity, reinforcing capacity development, and improving information sharing. The agreement involved various areas of cooperation, including defence industry collaboration, joint exercises, disaster relief efforts, drug trafficking, and addressing piracy in the Indian Ocean.³⁰ Furthermore, the IADD 2022 had proposed the setting up of the India-Africa Security Fellowship Programme at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence and Strategic Analyses

(MP-IDSA), to encourage further research of security issues through the offer of fellowships to experts from African countries.

Way Ahead

After the Second India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) in 2022 and the AFINDEX in March 2023, the geopolitical ties between the two regions—known as the “global south”—have strengthened in the year that has passed. This has been demonstrated by initiatives like joint military exercises, defence industry partnerships, and capacity-building programmes. The story emphasises India’s dedication to the SAGAR initiative (Security and Growth for All in the Region), which focuses on the Indian Ocean. The programmes also cover portvisits, naval deployments, and defence industry collaboration, demonstrating the variety of approaches India uses to deepen defence and security ties with African countries. There are still difficulties, nevertheless, mainly about political unrest, logistics, and supply of resources. Despite these obstacles, both parties are dedicated to fortifying their defence cooperation in the upcoming years.

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Book Review

KERSTIN BREE CARLSON, *THE JUSTICE LABORATORY: INTERNATIONAL LAW IN AFRICA*, USA, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, 2022, 178 pp.

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Mohanasakthivel J*

Kerstin Bree Carlson's "The Justice Laboratory: International Law in Africa" provides a profound exploration of Sub-Saharan Africa as a significant case study in the realm of international criminal law (ICL). At the heart of Carlson's study is how international law has been utilised and its effectiveness in addressing and mitigating political violence in African nations.

The International Criminal Court was established with the Rome Statute, significantly supported by African countries, with twenty African nations among the early ratifiers. However, the ICC's focus on prosecuting primarily conflicts in African countries has led to perceptions of bias and accusations of neocolonialism. Carlson explores these perceptions through the principles of complementarity and sovereign immunity. The principle of complementarity allows the ICC to intervene only when national jurisdictions are unable or unwilling to prosecute crimes, which has been a source of contention. African leaders argue that the ICC's focus on Africa reflects systemic bias and criticize its refusal to recognize sovereign immunity for state representatives. A critical incident Carlson examines is South Africa's failure to arrest Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir despite an ICC warrant, highlighting the tension between international obligations and national interests. This event fueled the African Union's push for an African Criminal Court, which rejects sovereign immunity and challenges the ICC's jurisdiction, reflecting broader discontent with the ICC's operations and a desire for a more Africa-centric approach to justice.

Carlson discusses Rwanda's rejection of liberal institutions post-genocide, emphasizing the challenges of imposing Western legal models on African contexts. While Rwanda, under President Kagame, achieved significant socio-economic progress, Carlson critiques the

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dismissal of liberal institutions and argues for a one-size-fits-all approach. She fails highlight the need for tailored approaches that respect the unique socio-political landscapes of individual African nations, underscoring the importance of considering local contexts in governance and justice systems.

Furthermore, Carlson examines hybrid justice through the *Chambres Africaines Extraordinaires* (CAE) and the Habré tribunal. The CAE, established in Senegal to try atrocities under Hissène Habré's rule in Chad, integrates international legal standards with local procedures. Carlson discusses universal jurisdiction, which allows states to prosecute certain crimes regardless of location. The Habré trial illustrates both the potential and challenges of local judicial systems in addressing state-sponsored atrocities. While the CAE operated smoothly, its impact on Chad's political landscape was limited, highlighting the complex interplay between justice and political realities.

Carlson's analysis extends to the broader concept of transitional justice in conflict-affected regions like South Sudan. She supports the dominant trial-focused approaches advocated by international bodies, arguing instead for more nuanced political solutions. Carlson fails to suggest that mechanisms like truth commissions and power-sharing arrangements may offer more sustainable paths to peace in ethnically diverse societies. The author's viewpoint largely revolves around legalistic framework and fails to advocate for a comprehensive approach to resolving conflicts, akin to consociational democracy as observed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iraq.

The East African Court of Justice (EACJ) is another focal point of Carlson's study. Originally established as a trade court to foster economic integration, the EACJ has evolved into a significant human rights adjudicator. Carlson traces its journey and highlights key cases that have expanded its jurisdiction to include human rights issues. The EACJ's accessibility, without the burden of exhausting local remedies, sets it apart from other regional human rights courts and empowers individuals and NGOs to seek justice more swiftly. This transformation underscores the dynamic nature of regional legal institutions and their growing importance in protecting human rights.

Carlson also explores the emerging African Court of Justice and Human Rights, known as the Malabo Court. This court represents a bold step towards establishing a regional alternative to the ICC, with provisions that address some of the criticisms directed at the ICC. Notably, the Malabo Court grants immunity to sitting heads of state, a contentious provision aimed at overcoming resistance to international justice within Africa. Carlson examines the implications of this provision and the broader impact of international criminal justice on the continent. She highlights the proactive role African countries are playing in expanding humanitarian norms, as exemplified by the Gambia's use of the Genocide Convention to bring Myanmar before the International Court of Justice in 2019.

Throughout the book, Carlson's analysis is supported by a wealth of evidence, including detailed case studies, legal documents, and interviews with key stakeholders. Her thorough research provides a solid foundation for her arguments and offers readers a comprehensive

understanding of the issues at hand. The evidence presented is convincing, highlighting both the successes and limitations of international law in Africa.

However, the book is not without its criticisms. Carlson's Western liberal bias is evident in parts, particularly in her analysis of Rwanda. This bias occasionally overshadows the complex geopolitical realities and the unique paths to recovery and development that African nations are navigating. Additionally, the language and depth of analysis may pose challenges for readers unfamiliar with legal and political terminology.

Despite these criticisms, "The Justice Laboratory: International Law in Africa" is an essential read for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers interested in the intersection of law, human rights, and international relations in Africa. Carlson's work offers valuable insights into the continent's significant role in reshaping global legal norms and provides a nuanced perspective on the challenges and opportunities in implementing international criminal justice. Her research and analyses make this book a noteworthy contribution to the field, shedding light on the dynamic and evolving landscape of international law in Africa.

Call for Contributions

MP-IDSA invites articles, commentaries and book reviews for publication in *Africa Trends*, a biannual magazine on Africa. Submissions can focus on security, political and economic issues relating to African countries. Articles may focus on analysing bilateral, regional and multilateral developments of strategic significance to India's engagement with African countries.

Articles could be of approximately 2000 words. Commentaries can range between 1,000-1,500 words (excluding footnotes) and book reviews between 600-1,000 words. Guidelines for contributors may be found at: <http://www.idsa.in/africatrends>. Submissions may be emailed to the Editor at idsa.africatrends@gmail.com.

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