AFRICAN FUTURES:

Why most African states may be at war with each other in 2063

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The Agenda 2063

The year 2063 is important to the AU and the African people. Aside from the fact that, by then, many African states will be celebrating 100 years' independence, this is also the year that the goals listed in the Agenda 2063 should have been achieved. The Agenda 2063, which was created in 2015, groups its objectives into four broad categories: inclusive growth; integration; governance; security; cultural identity; women and youth; and partnership. However, the Agenda does not consider the influence of war and conflict. The failure to anticipate and put in place measures for mitigating the impacts of such events means that the goals of the Agenda 2063 are less likely to be achieved.

In this paper, we argue that investigating war and conflict, and its triggers and effects, is necessary, especially in Africa, where armed conflict costs the continent US $18 billion per annum (IANSA, Oxfam and Saferworld, 2007). In 2017, Africa experienced 50 non-state conflicts compared to 24 in 2011 (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2018). During the same year, the continent experienced 18 conflicts in 13 countries – an increase from the 12 conflicts in 10 countries seen 10 years ago. In total, since the

1970s, the continent has seen more than 30 wars (Mengisteab, 2003), which have resulted in more than half of all war-related deaths world-wide and more than 9.5 million refugees (Mengisteab, 2003). These figures show the importance of identifying the factors that might cause or trigger war or other types of conflict. As such, the planners of the Agenda 2063 should have considered the conditions that foment war and conflict; the likelihood that, in 2063, the majority (98%) of African states might be at war with each other; and what should be done to avert this possibility. In addition, the AU planners ought to have critically examined whether or not the trend of increasing conflict on the continent demonstrates a definite build-up of tensions that will erupt into full-blown war in a few decades from now.

In order to try to fill these gaps in the Agenda, we examine three processes: 1) demographic trends, 2) environmental forces and 3) polemogical factors. It will be shown that an analysis of these factors demonstrates why it is necessary that the AU reconsiders its Agenda 2063 and takes into account the likelihood of wide-spread and numerous wars by 2063.

Changes that influence the way we perceive war

The first factor that will shape 2063 is the demographics of Africa. According to Statistica (2018), Africa's average life expectancy is 61 years for males and 64 years for females. In some areas, such as middle Africa, the rate is much lower: 57 years for males and 60 years for females (United Nations Statistics Division, 2019). Using these figures, we have utilized two types of probability models to forecast the life expectancy in African by 2063.

Statistics indicate that the global life expectancy is higher than that in Africa (71 years and 74 years for males and females, respectively) (The Border Project, 2018). This means that 52% and 57% of Africans born in the 1960s and 1970s respectively will be alive in 2063. Those born in 1990s have a 40% chance of living to see 2063. Those born in 2000 will be 63 years old, with females having a higher chances of surviving (58%) than males (56%). Those born after 1990 have a 60% chance of being alive in 2063. This scenario is, however, dependent on a number of internal and external forces, such as the impact of civil wars, higher emotional and physical stress levels, diminishing water and food, and increasing levels of carcinogenic agents in the atmosphere. Furthermore, human ecological studies have unveiled evidence linking climate change to conflicts. This relationship is particularly evident in regions dependent on agriculture for livelihood, countries with politically excluded populations and states with ineffective institutions (Koubi, 2018).

The second factor is environmental change. Like the rest of the world, Africa is experiencing the effects of human, physical, economic, and environmental processes. With the population growth rate in excess of 2% per annum, it is possible that the number of people in Africa will reach the 2.4 billion mark in 2050, up from the current 1.2 billion (World Population Review, 2019). Presently, 60% of Africans are under the age of 25. A youthful population experiencing high unemployment rates is associated with increased war and conflict, which is the case in Ethiopia, Mali, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Burundi, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Egypt. In our estimation, high rates of unemployment are likely to remain for several decades, and perhaps will result in large-scale conflict before 2063.

Moreover, research predicts that, by 2020, 30%–40% of the world will experience water scarcity (Al Jazeera, 2016). By 2025, an estimated 1.8 billion people will live in water-scarce areas (Holloway,

1 Unconditional probability: If we select a child at random (by simple random sampling), then each child has the same probability (equal chance) of being selected, and the probability is 1/N, where N = population size. Thus, the probability that any child is selected is 1/5,290 = 0.0002. The following formula can be used to compute the probability of selecting an individual with specific attributes or characteristics: P(characteristic) = # persons with characteristic / N. Conditional probability: Each of the probabilities computed in the previous section (e.g., P(boy), P(7 years of age)) is an unconditional probability, because the denominator for each is the total population size (N = 5,290), reflecting the fact that everyone in the entire population is eligible to be selected.

2 A probability is a number that reflects the chance or likelihood that a particular event will occur.

3 Those born in 1960: current age as of 2019 = 59; age by 2063 = 103; chance of survival = 59/103 = 0.57 or 57%.

4 Those born in the 1970s: current age as of 2019 = 49; age by 2063 = 93; chance of survival = 49/93 = 0.52 or 52%.

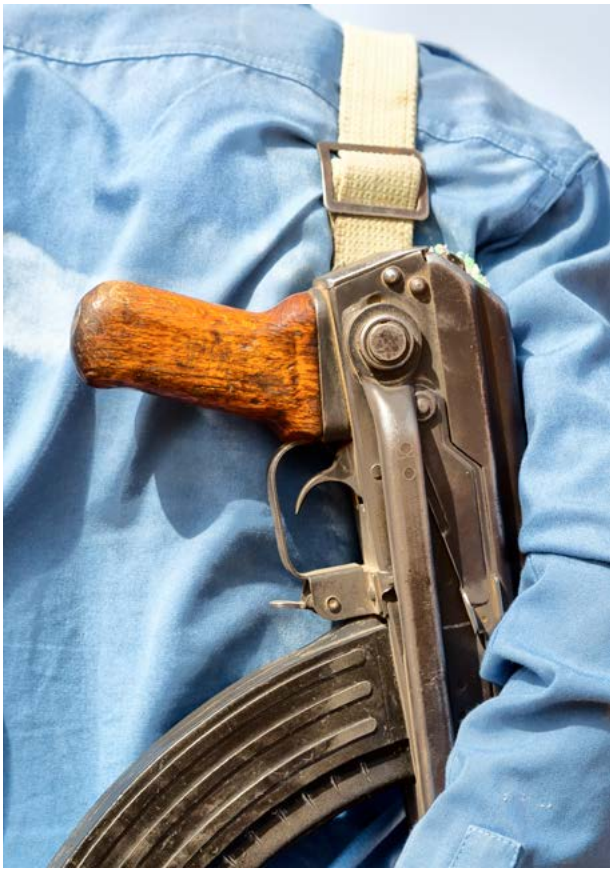
5 Those born in 1990: current age as of 2019 = 29; age by 2063 = 73; chance of survival = 29/73 = 0.397 ~ 0.40 or 40%. Chances of survival is therefore 60%.

6 Chances of a woman reaching 2063, using 60 years as the life expectancy as of 2019 and 104 at 2063: Chance of survival = 60/104 = 0.577 ~ 0.58 or 58%.

7 Chances of a man reaching 2063, using 57 years as the life expectancy as of 2019 and 101 at 2063: Chance of survival = 57/101 = 0.564 ~ 0.56 or 56%.

2019). and five times as much land is likely to be under extreme drought conditions by 2050. The UN predicts that 30 nations will be water-scarce in 2025, up from 20 in 1990s, and that the number will rise to 41 by 2063. This problem is exacerbated by population growth. It is estimated that there will be 1 billion more people to feed in 2025, which means that global agriculture will require an extra 1 trillion cubic meters of water per year (equal to the annual flow of 20 Nile or 100 Colorado rivers). By 2050, the estimated 9 billion people residing on Earth will require a 60% increase in agricultural production and a 15% increase in water supply. Total water demand is projected to grow 55% by 2050 (The Christian Science Monitor, 2019). Moreover, by 2035, the world's energy consumption will increase by 35% (The Christian Science Monitor, 2019). Climate change will thus likely cause major famines and death.

On the account of these demographic and environmental changes, tensions among nations will have escalated in the 2050s and 2060s. War and conflict seem inevitable, especially considering the apparent inability of nations to put strategies in place to decrease risks and effects of war.



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What is war?

Society is mostly geared towards peace and progressive development, not for large-scale war. From this perspective, it makes sense that the AU Agenda 2063 failed to take into account the possibly of war in 2063. To remedy this lack, we propose four approaches to assessing the likelihood and presence of war. The first is the psychological school of thought, based on the competitive nature of human beings and, by extension, entire countries. The second is rational strategy. Political leaders making decisions on war must be aware of three issues: 1) there are hidden costs associated with war; 2) war weakens the fabric of society; and 3) conflict can lead to self-destruction. These issues encourage a rational-strategic approach to war. The third approach is the geopolitics of things. In 1904, British geopolitician Sir Halford Mackinder put forward the idea of the 'heartland' as the key geographical factor that determines power structures amongst nations (Mackinder, 1994). He defined geopolitics as 'the geographical pivot of history'. Although Mackinder's visualisation of power through the prism of geopolitics was designed to explain the global power structure, his methodological classification can be applied to the study of power dynamics within and between nations. For instance, one could leverage psychological weakness (island) of the opponent by maneuvering the enemy into precarious positions through inducing feelings of frustration and confusion.

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Why African states may fight each other in 2063

In Africa, each state has either 'sleeping' or

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‘active’ unresolved border disputes. These inimical relationships form what we term a web-like map of hostilities among states. As such, a country can have a border dispute with more than one neighbour. For instance, Sudan has disputes with Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad, the CAR and, more recently, the Republic of South Sudan. These disputes are over territories that are rich in resources or are strategic locations. There are similar disputes in the Bakassi peninsula between Nigeria and Cameroon (Okoi, 2016) and in the Corisco Bay between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. There is also tension between Kenya and Somalia over the Indian Ocean’s Exclusive Economic Zone, which is around 42,000 square kilometres (Okoi, 2016). Kenya’s objection to the court’s jurisdiction over, and the admissibility of, the case has drawn out the dispute. Finally, the rich deposits of phosphates in the Western Sahara are at the centre of tensions between the territory and Morocco. To complicate the situation, Morocco has benefited from strong political, economic, and military support from its Western (United States) and Arab (Gulf Monarchies) allies (Zoubir, 2010). It is therefore imperative for African leaders to foresee these tensions as potentially escalating into future wars.

Other likely sources of conflict are found further north in Tunisia and Egypt, where the effects of the ‘Arab Spring’ remain. Even though the revolution was intended to champion democratic governance in the Middle East and North Africa, analysts also fear that the civil war in Libya and the ongoing crises in Yemen and Syria are prolonging the conflicts in North African states (Joffé, 2011). The neo-patrimonial political system in Tunisia and the worsening socio-economic conditions in Egypt may intensify before 2063. Egypt also maintains diplomatic ties with the West (mainly the US and Britain), which is a factor that may see the West continue to destabilise Libya and other North African states through ‘proxy warfare’.

Further issues can result from unstable neighbours. For instance, the CAR is surrounded by some of the most unstable states on the continent: Chad, Cameroon, Congo Republic, DRC, South Sudan and Sudan. Other external forces with significant influence include France, as well as Libya, Uganda and Benin (Kam Kah, 2014). The involvement of South African troops in defending South African mining interests in the country led to standoff between these forces and the Séléka insurgents during their march to the capital city of Bangui. This regional web-like effect was occurred when Benin hosted rebel leaders who caused havoc in the CAR. In the meantime, France and, for instance, Russia continue to pursue their interests to the detriment of political stability in the country.

In neighbouring DRC, the history of protracted conflict is related to a culture of insurgency. In the wake of the anti-Kabila revolt in 1998, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda captured the capital city, Kinshasa, and launched a spectacular transcontinental attack from the eastern town of Goma to the western military base of Kitona, located 1600 kilometres away (Kisangani, 2003). Kabila was aided by Angola and Zimbabwe as part of a military alliance within the SADC. Increasingly, the DRC conflicts have drawn both official military personnel and insurgents from Angola, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. There has been no change in the political regimes in these countries, thus the leaders or their heirs are likely to continue to deploy the same tactics. By 2063, these tactics may have resulted in full-blown wars.

On the Horn of Africa, the relationship between Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia is not amicable. The Badme border between Ethiopia and Eritrea is contested owing to the fact that Tigrayans from both sides use this area as grazing land and to search for alluvial gold. This border point remains controversial even after the de facto independence of Eritrea in May 1991. Eritrea has contended that the unilateral Italian map of 1934 should serve as the basis of the demarcation, but this seems to be contrary to the various treaties and to international law, which Ethiopia is using to contest this position. To the south of the Horn of Africa, the border between Tanzania and Malawi over Lake Nyasa has been subject to dispute

active since May 1967 (Mayall, 1973). Although the government in Dar es Salaam initially accepted that no part of the Lake fell within its juris, a recent change of position suggests the possibly of future conflict.

There are also tensions between Uganda and Rwanda. The relationship between these countries depends on a number of factors, including population growth in Rwanda. In the north, the oil-rich Abyei has been claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan (Johnson, 2012). The pending decision by the Juba government on whether its oil should be exported through the Kenyan Coast of Lamu or through Khartoum also brings further risks and may create another 'war triangle' as soon as South Sudan begins exporting oil on a large scale. In 2019, Kenya also joined the oil exporting countries, which may result in tensions with other EAC partner states.

In southern Africa, while Mozambique does not have active border disputes with its neighbours, the country's position is complicated by internal strife between Frelimo and Renamo. Tanzania and Malawi have sent in armed units to assist Frelimo (Morgan, 1990). A quadrigal relationship between South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho is then described by Valentine Belfiglio (Belfiglio, 1980), who asserts that ties between these countries are loose. The main point of tension here is the fact that South Africa is perceived to dominate the 1969 Customs Agreement. Meanwhile, in South Africa, the problem of xenophobia continues, while the inefficiency of the post-Apartheid regime to implement the September 1991 National Peace Accord is a further cause of dissatisfaction among South Africans. Unfortunately, this violent behaviour against people of African descent is a further reason for war between South Africa and other African states.

War will surely be prevalent in 2063 if nothing is done today

In conclusion, it is necessary to develop a methodological approach to anticipating and planning for war. Doing so might call for a rejection of some of the assumptions made within the Agenda 2063. However, this should not lead to a complete renouncement of the goals embedded within the Agenda. Pragmatic solutions are thus needed that take into account the reality of possible changes in Africa. There needs to be strong advocacy towards more inclusive governing structures in many of the African states to avoid the feeling of exclusion, which ultimately triggers conflicts and wars. Resource exploitation, sharing of revenue, and protection of environmental resources should be taken seriously by African states to avert wars associated with environmental stress. There is also a need for investment in genetic engineering technologies focusing on food production to increase agricultural production to feed the ever-increasing population in the continent. ■

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