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## Recent publications

### **D Kuwali (ed) *Palgrave handbook on sustainable peace and security in Africa***

**Palgrave Macmillan (2022) 617 pages**

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'Africa must take responsibility for its destiny.' These are words of the African Union (AU), echoed by Dan Kuwali in one of his several telling contributions to this well-edited and well-composed *Handbook on sustainable peace and security in Africa*. However, as so many of the chapters contained in this *Handbook* indicate, it is not yet possible for Africa or the AU to take charge of the continent's destiny. Peace is elusive, security an oxymoron.

A dozen states are at war against themselves in today's Africa. Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan all harbour intrastate conflicts. Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and, again, Nigeria and Somalia, are beset by Islamist insurgencies (in several cases) of long duration. Morocco occupies Western Sahara and battles the Polisario Front along the eastern edge of the desert territory.

As to the spread of terror into Western and Eastern Africa by adherents of the Islamic State (separately called of West Africa and of the Greater Sahara) and the continuing wars in the Sahel, chapters in this book by Kuwali and Mphatso Boti-Phiri suggest that in addition to 'better policing and secure borders', the affected nations need to create economic opportunities and political stability sufficient to dissuade the youth to reject violence. How that good result can be achieved, however, is not spelled out. The book was also in print before the full impact of Russian Wagner mercenaries in Central Africa, Mali and Sudan could be evaluated.

Military *coups* occur with surprising frequency, if not as often as they did in the 1960s. Elected autocrats rule some of Africa's nations, as well, with fully-fledged democracy a relatively uncommon phenomenon. Grand corruption prevails, as the South African trial of former President Jacob Zuma demonstrated and the 'Fishrot' scandal in Namibia revealed, but places like the DRC, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe have for decades been mired in similar financial misbehaviour.

In another of his chapters in the *Handbook*, titled 'Commend and condemn: Combating corruption in Africa', Kuwali agrees that 'corruption is an entrenched part of African political culture'. It contributes to underdevelopment and impoverishment throughout the continent. It 'fuels inequalities and undermines access to public service'. It 'scares off investors'. Africa loses billions of dollars each year via corruption and the flight of stolen assets.

Following this trenchant analysis, Kuwali discusses the impact of corruption on African peace and security. Corruption causes rent-seeking by military commanders (as in Guinea, Mali, Sudan and Zimbabwe), budgets that are misallocated and padded, and the shifting of resources away from social needs such as education into war preparation and war making.

Kuwali's list of ways in which to reduce the spread of corruption is broad and hortatory, but hard to put into practice so that politicians and military chiefs stop stealing. Although not discussed in the *Handbook*, one reason why a large Nigerian army has failed for more than a decade to crush the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeastern reaches of its country is the selling of rations and war materiel to Boko Haram by greedy generals and military officers.

Chapters in the *Handbook* deal effectively with some of these national deficits, and a long section discusses gently why it is that the AU has such a hard time either preventing or unravelling national

deviations from acceptable norms. There is a thorough exegesis of the AU's Peace and Security Architecture, but several authors are discreet and gentle. At the AU level, there is too little money available from the member states; the member states hardly want to be criticised or interfered with by AU machinery and bureaucrats. The result is that the AU is largely powerless to demand that military officers leave their coups and go back to barracks.

Likewise, as several authors hint, the AU at the best of moments can hardly criticise even the most egregious of the anti-democratic, poorly-governing despots in their midst. Even the staunchly democratic countries such as Botswana and Mauritius mostly keep their views of others to themselves. The AU is a regional organisation that even in the best of moments, and especially in the peace and security realm that this *Handbook* examines so well, can accomplish little.

One chapter in the *Handbook* examines the effective leadership that is lacking continentally and nationally. The AU leads from behind and so many of Africa's national leaders, now and in the past, have been transactional rather than transformational in their motivations and approaches. Moreover, many, if not most, of the political leaders of Africa have been concerned with furthering their political parties' interest, their lineage or group interest, their family interest, or the interests of criminalised corrupted factions. Few leaders in Africa's independent 60-plus years have really operated in the public interest. Sir Seretse Khama and Sir Ketumle Masire of Botswana were two worthy exceptions. It is possible that Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia and Lazarus Chakwera of Malawi will be two more, and that Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa can overcome innumerable impediments to emerge similarly credible.

The chapter by Tadziana Kapeni on 'The governance conundrum', which also covers leadership, unfortunately has neither been much informed by the governance nor the leadership literature. As a result, he credits Malawi President Bingu wa Mutharika and Tanzanian President John Magufuli with noble leadership accomplishments that neither in my view exhibited. He also mischaracterises the meaning and relevance of legitimacy, especially in securing leadership and governance advances in Africa.

The *Handbook* has many worthy chapters among its 34 chapters. Few handbooks range over so many important topics, but this one manages to include chapters on migrancy, illicit resource flows, conflict resolution, youth unemployment, the role of women in security, cyber security, social media, epidemics and pandemics,

organised crime, human rights, piracy at sea, the scourge of small arms, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The opening section considers 'securing the peace' in Africa, divided up into its relevant sections. Here the analyses are thorough and excessively formal rather than empirical.

Overall, the *Handbook* will become an important resource for anyone working to achieve peace and security in Africa or who seeks to understand why insecurity proliferates, bedevilling the lives of so many African civilians. Moreover, this is a *Handbook* entirely African in its focus and authorship. That, indeed, is a great editorial achievement.