



भारत 2023 INDIA



# Africa Report

## October 2023



# Introduction

- The October Africa Report covers the dismissal of Ivory Coast's Prime Minister and Lesotho's political conundrum resulting from an imminent vote of no confidence against Prime Minister, Sam Matekane.
- From an economic perspective, the report analyses the United States' decision to remove Uganda, Niger, Gabon, and Central African Republic from Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).
- We also look at the removal of visa entry requirements by the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, South Africa and Ghana.
- The report takes a closer look at the renewed fighting in the eastern DRC as M23 rebels recapture Kitshanga and the reconvened US and Saudi-led peace-talks to try and resolve the ongoing Sudan conflict.
- The report also analyses the run-off in Liberia's recently concluded election, the upcoming parliamentary by-elections in Zimbabwe, after opposition legislators were recalled, as well as the upcoming general elections in Madagascar on 16 November.



## POLITICAL UPDATES

### Ivory Coast: President Removes Prime Minister, Dissolves Government



- On 06 October, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara dismissed his Prime Minister, Patrick Achi, and announced the upcoming formation of a new government, two years before the next presidential elections.
- The decision had been expected in recent days after the President informed members of the government of an upcoming reshuffle during the last Cabinet meeting on 28 September.
- Achi was appointed in March 2021 after his predecessor, Hamed Bakayoko, died of cancer. He resigned as a member of Cabinet in April 2022, before being immediately reappointed to his post in a reshuffle.
- Winning 60% of municipalities and 80% of the regions in September elections, the ruling Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace party (RHDP) is a favourite for the 2025 elections.
- Although the constitution has been amended to allow for the president to run for third and fourth terms, Ouattara has not yet announced whether he will run for a fourth term.

#### Possible Implications

- Ouattara's decision to dismiss the Prime Minister two years ahead of the next presidential elections indicates a potential shift in strategy and priorities for his administration.
- The announcement also hints at Ouattara's intention to consolidate his power and cement his influence in the country.
- By reshuffling the Cabinet, he could bring in loyalists and allies who can help him consolidate power and implement his agenda.
- This move could also be seen as a strategy to strengthen his position ahead of the upcoming presidential elections.
- Ivory Coast remains fragile. Given the history of violence in the country, arising from the 2010 disputed elections between then president Laurent Gbagbo and Oattara, there remain fears that Oattara's hold on power in the midst of vociferous opposition to the extension of his presidential terms may trigger another Ivorian crisis.

### Lesotho: Prime Minister Dodges Debate on his Removal

- On 27 October, 11 opposition political parties in Lesotho countered Prime Minister Sam Matekane's appeal to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), saying that, since its vote of no confidence move, the mountain kingdom has become a quasi-police/military state. According to the opposition parties, the Southern African nation is now at risk of a coup.
- Matekane was the first to write to the SADC, claiming that "selfish" politicians wanted to derail the country's democracy by unseating him constitutionally.
- However, the opposition responded by addressing a letter to the SADC's executive secretary, Elias Magosi, copied to the bloc's chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, Zambia's President Hakainde Hichilema, as well as South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is the bloc's facilitator of the security situation in the country.



- On 16 October, the main opposition, Democratic Congress (DC), initiated the vote of no confidence against Matekane, armed with a 2020 constitutional amendment which clipped the powers of the executive. In a last minute rush, the motion was stopped by a court interdict that will be heard before the Constitutional Court.
- Since the motion, opposition political parties, in its letter, said it was "extremely urgent" to alert the SADC of what was brewing in Lesotho. They alleged that there had been incidents of crackdowns on people linked to the vote of no confidence after the security sector declared the vote would not be allowed.
- The told the SADC that "a plan hatched by some in the current government, in collaboration with some among the Security Services, is to effect a military takeover, should a vote of no confidence be successfully passed".
- Meanwhile, in an address to the nation, Matekane claimed his government was under attack prematurely, adding that it was selfish politicians bent on derailing reforms in the mountain kingdom who want him out.

#### Possible Implications

- While Lesotho's history has since independence been a history of political instability, the bungling of political reforms in the recent past is largely to blame for the current fracas.
- Despite mediation efforts by South Africa, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Lesotho has largely been pretentious in its commitment to political reforms that are necessary for durable political stability.

- Due to the passage of the Ninth Amendment, the then-Prime Minister, Thomas Thabane, who had lost the National Assembly's confidence, resigned on 19 May 2020, because he could no longer advise the King to dismiss parliament when he had lost the trust of the house.
- The same could happen to Matekane if the opposition gets its way with the law. It will also be the third time within a decade that a sitting prime minister will fight for his position.
- Unlike the motion to remove the Speaker of the National Assembly, which requires the support of two-thirds of the House, the motion of no confidence in the government can be passed by a simple majority.
- Mathibeli Mokhothu, the leader of the DC, is in parliament with 29 seats and thus, working with other fringe parties, they can raise up to 63 seats, enough to upset Matekane.

## ECONOMIC UPDATES

### US to Evict Gabon, Niger, Uganda, and Central African Republic from AGOA



- On 30 October, United States' (US) President Joe Biden announced his intention to end the participation of Gabon, Niger, Uganda and the Central African Republic (CAR) in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade program effective from 01 January 2024.
- AGOA provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the US market for over 1,800 products, in addition to the more than 5,000 products that are eligible for duty-free access under the Generalised System of Preferences program.
- Biden said that Niger and Gabon - both of which are currently under military rule following coups this year - are ineligible for AGOA because they "have not established, or are not making continual progress toward establishing the protection of political pluralism and the rule of law".
- He also said the removal of the CAR and Uganda from the programme was due to "gross violations of internationally recognised human rights" by their governments.

- Last year, the US barred Ethiopia, Guinea, and Mali from accessing the AGOA, over coups and alleged human rights violations, which put them in violation of the program's eligibility requirements.
- From 01 – 04 November, South Africa will host the 20th the AGOA Forum in Johannesburg. The Forum will bring together the governments of the US and AGOA-eligible countries, as well as representatives from key regional economic organisations, the private sector, civil society, and labour.
- South Africa's relationship with the US has been turbulent throughout the year, with SA being embroiled in the Lady R saga and having to constantly clarify its stance on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.
- Yet the US and South Africa are again on opposite ends of the spectrum pertaining to the Israel-Hamas war, as the latter country's governing party, the ANC, has maintained its longstanding support for the people of Palestine.

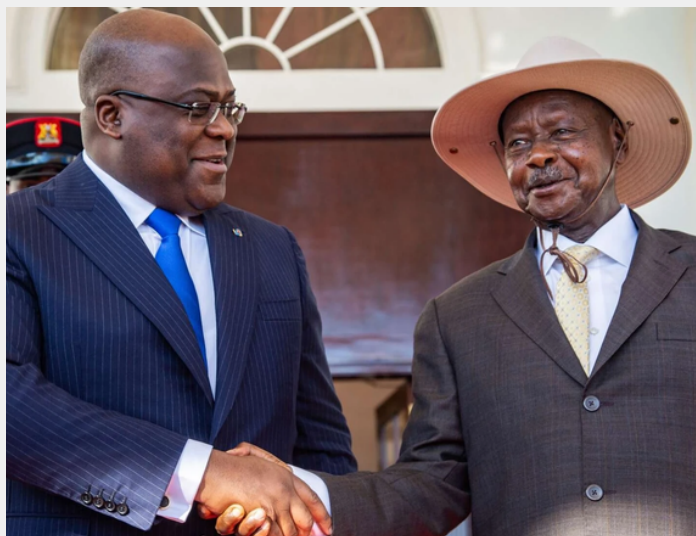
### Possible Implications

- The exclusion of the four nations from AGOA has significant implications for their economies and trade relations with the United States. For these countries, the loss of AGOA benefits can result in reduced export earnings and economic development.
- For instance, many industries, particularly in Gabon and Uganda, heavily rely on AGOA preferences to promote their exports, such as textiles, agricultural products, and minerals. Without this preferential access, their businesses may face increased competition or higher tariffs, making it harder to compete in the global market.
- For Niger and Gabon in particular, the effects of being excluded from AGOA will be disastrous especially considering that the US and European Union have already suspended foreign aid to the two countries as a result of coups that took place.
- For instance, the military Junta in Niger announced on 07 October that it would cut its planned spending for 2023 by 40% because of international sanctions imposed. This will further hobble the economy in one of the world's poorest countries.
- Whilst the sanctions imposed by US and EU are aimed at pressuring the military rulers in Niger and Gabon to restore democratic governance promptly, they have often failed to convince coup instigators to restore civilian rule.
- Although there was initial pressure from some US legislators for the Summit to be taken away from South Africa, the US government recognises the importance of having the country as an ally on the continent. As a result, it is highly improbable that South Africa will lose its AGOA benefits.
- South Africa should lobby the US to expand its AGOA programme to include more products as boost to the country's export base and job creation. All in all, as the US continues with negotiation to extend AGOA beyond 2025, it will have to think of how the programme can be used to increase its influence and counter BRICS.



## Uganda, DRC Agree to Remove Entry Visas Requirements, as SA and Ghana Follow Suit

- On 14 October, the DRC and Uganda decided during the 8th Joint Permanent Commission (JPC) held in Kishasa, to remove entry visa requirements at their respective borders as part of efforts to increase trade between the two nations.
- The agreement aims to facilitate the mobility of citizens of both countries, across both borders and increase trade between the two countries. The deal was reached following recent meetings between officials from the two nations in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC.
- Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has been campaigning for visa-free travel between the two nations for months.
- For some time now, the East African bloc, consisting of 7 Partner States, including Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania, has been floating the idea of eliminating visa restrictions amongst its members.
- On 16 October, a similar move was announced by the governments of Ghana and South Africa after they reached a visa waiver agreement to allow citizens of both countries to travel visa-free.
- The agreement is set to take effect from 01 November, and will see travellers transiting through, departing from and staying in the territory of both countries for a cumulative period of up to 90 days without recourse to work.



### Possible Implications

- The decision to remove visa requirements aligns with the broader objectives of the AfCFTA, to stimulate intra-African trade, create a single market, and establish a continental economic bloc.
- Thus, the commitment to facilitating easier movement of goods, services, and people contributes to the regional integration efforts envisioned by the AfCFTA. By nurturing a seamless trade environment, the two nations contribute positively to the realisation of the AfCFTA's goals.
- Furthermore, the removal of visa requirements would also have a positive impact on tourism and cultural exchange between countries. By simplifying travel procedures, the initiative encourages the movement of tourists, enabling them to explore the diverse attractions and experiences offered in both countries.
- This will not only boost tourism revenues and create employment opportunities but also foster cultural understanding and promote people-to-people interactions that can contribute to stronger diplomatic ties.

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## SECURITY UPDATES

### DRC: Rebels recapture Kitshanga Town in Fresh Fighting



- Fighting has again erupted in the east of the DRC between pro-government forces and rebels from the M23 group. This as the rebels have occupied the town of Kitshanga in North Kivu province since 21 October.
  - Kitshanga, located at a crossroads in the Masisi region, some 80 km north-west of the provincial capital Goma, has changed hands several times since the beginning of the war.
  - The M23, also known as March 23 Movement, a Tutsi-dominated rebellion supported by Rwanda according to many sources, took the town in January this year, continuing its conquest of vast swathes of territory. After six months of precarious calm, clashes resumed around three weeks ago.
- Meanwhile, amidst rising insecurity in eastern DRC, spokesperson for the government in the DRC, Patrick Muyaya, announced that the East African regional force has been unable to restore peace in the east of country and must leave by 8 December this year, as opposed to the initially agreed deadline of December 2024.
  - In September, at the UN General Assembly, DRC President Felix Tshisekedi also requested for an accelerated withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping mission from December. This is against a backdrop of successive anti-UN protests over its failure to rein in rebel groups more than 20 years after its deployment to the country.
  - The eastern part of the DRC has been plagued by violence from local and foreign armed groups for nearly 30 years. The country will hold general elections in late December amid threats of unrest from dozens of armed militias.

## Possible Implications

- The recapture of Kitshanga town by M23 rebels highlights the prevailing insecurity in the region.
- As such, government's request for the withdrawal of external forces must take into account the capacity of the DRC's own security forces to maintain law and order effectively.
- Thus, if the national security forces are unable to fill the void left by the departing EAC and UN forces, it could lead to a deterioration of security, making the withdrawal ill-timed and potentially endangering the electoral process.
- With armed groups still active and posing a threat to stability, it is crucial to maintain a strong security presence to ensure a peaceful environment for the electoral process.

## Sudan: US and Saudi Arabia Reconvene Peace Talks to End Ongoing Conflict

- On 29 October, the United States (US), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), together with the African Union (AU), relaunched humanitarian and ceasefire talks between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).
- Consistent with the May 11 Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan, the reconvened talks continue to have a narrow set of objectives – to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, establish ceasefires and other confidence building measures, and build toward a permanent cessation of hostilities.
- However, just days after the two warring sides accepted an invitation to resume talks, the RSF captured Nyala – the country's second largest city. Nyala is the capital of South Darfur state and is, for the RSF, a strategically important bridge to the Central African Republic (CAR), from which it receives much of its weaponry and reinforcements, reportedly supplied by Wagner mercenaries.
- Earlier on 10 October, Sudan's President Salva Kiir announced he is ready to host representatives of Sudanese political leaders in the capital, Juba, in a bid to end the brutal six-month conflict.
- The Sudanese army has been fighting its former allies, the RSF since April. Thousands have been killed and more than five million people displaced, according to a United Nations' estimate.



## Possible Implications

- The conflict between the Sudanese army and the RSF extends far beyond Sudan's borders. For Gulf superpowers, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, the war is also seen as an opportunity to claim hegemonic power in the Middle East.
- But with the UAE – the RSF's only real sponsor – seemingly not involved in the scheduled negotiations, it is doubtful that Sudan will see peace any time soon.
- There is thus, little evidence of resolution as the conflict remains ongoing. For instance, over the course of the last six months, several short-lived truces have been violated. With Saudi and US-sponsored peace talks now underway in Jeddah, the RSF may have bought some leverage by taking Nyala.
- Unlike the US and Saudi-led peace initiative, South Sudan shares a long history and cultural connections with Sudan, as the two nations were previously united until South Sudan gained independence in 2011. South Sudan understands the regional dynamics, cultural nuances, and historical factors that have influenced Sudan's conflict. This deep-rooted understanding can aid in finding practical and culturally sensitive solutions.
- Furthermore, unlike other neighbouring countries, South Sudan has not shown direct involvement in the conflict and thereby enjoys the trust of both Sudan's rival factions and the international community. This trust can foster the confidence needed for effective mediation and facilitate the rebuilding of trust among the conflicting parties.

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## ELECTIONS UPDATES

### Liberia: Election Set for Run-Off in Tightest Race Since End of Civil War



- Liberia is headed for a run-off election with incumbent President George Weah, a former soccer star who has been in power since 2018, running neck and neck with main opponent Joseph Boakai. This as the two candidates failed to obtain more than 50% votes to secure victory as per the country's electoral law.
  - The National Electoral Commission of Liberia announced that President George Weah, who is seeking a second term in office, received 43.8% of the vote, whilst his main opponent, Joseph Boakai, received 43.4% of the vote in the recently concluded election.
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- Weah, 57, a former international soccer star, came to power six years ago in the first democratic transfer of power in the West African country since the end of two civil wars. He won the 2017 election thanks to high hopes raised by his promise to fight poverty, corruption, and promote infrastructure development in Africa's oldest republic.
- However, Weah has been accused of failing to deliver on his main campaign promises namely, to fight corruption and guarantee justice for victims of the civil wars that ravaged the country. This is the second time he has faced Boakai, whom he defeated by a margin of more than 20% in the 2017 election.
- Boakai, who served as Vice President under Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first democratically elected female leader, campaigned on a promise to save Liberia from what he calls Weah's failed leadership, dubbing himself and his running mate "Rescue 1" and "Rescue 2".
- The elections of October 10 are the closest in almost 20 years since the end of the civil war which left some 250,000 dead.

## Possible Implications

- The run-off will be seen by many as a test for the future of representative government in West Africa, as the region has been rife with coups, postponed elections, presidents clinging to office, and polls tainted by irregularities.
- While the election run-off must take place within 15 days of the election, there is a possibility that there might be delay because of potential appeals.
- The fact that there is no clear winner is indicative that Weah is strong in some areas, but also that people's dissatisfaction with the government is high, given the overwhelming support for the opposition.
- Overall, the run-off promises to be a close contest hotly contested between the long-standing adversaries, who faced each other in 2017, with worry over risk of violence in the second round.
- For instance, during the campaign, there were clashes between supporters of the ruling party and opposition supporters led to several deaths, notably in Lofa county. This raises fears of post-election violence.

## Zimbabwe: Mnangagwa Calls For By-Elections After Opposition Lawmakers Lose Seats

- On 20 October, Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa declared by-elections in nine constituencies that were controlled by lawmakers from the main opposition party who were stripped of their parliamentary seats.
- Mnangagwa's proclamation of new votes is the latest blow to the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC), which has been dogged by infighting and lost presidential and parliamentary elections in August that it claims were rigged.
- The re-run comes after Songezo Tshabangu, who describes himself as the CCC's interim secretary-general, wrote to parliamentary speaker Jacob Mudenda to inform him that 14 of the party's lawmakers had relinquished their membership.
- CCC leader Nelson Chamisa said the move by Tshabangu was a Zanu-PF tactic to clandestinely have a two-thirds majority in Parliament, while CCC deputy spokesperson Ostallos Siziba said the proclamation by the president was part of his grand plan to destroy the opposition.
- Mnangagwa went ahead despite the CCC disputing that Tshabangu was its secretary-general or even held a post in the party.
- Meanwhile, Tshabangu, who is recognised by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) added that, "There's a clarion call from the citizens nationwide, who say that the imposition of candidates was not only in Bulawayo and Matabeleland. As such, we will do relevant recalls as time goes".



## Possible Implications

- The by-elections indicate a potential shift in political power from the CCC to other parties, particularly Zanu-PF.
- The fact that Tshabangu, who describes himself as the interim secretary, is making claims that 14 members have relinquished their parliamentary seats suggests a potential power struggle within the CCC. This fragmentation could further weaken the party's ability to challenge the ruling party and may lead to a loss of public confidence.
- If Zanu-PF were to secure a two-thirds majority, they would have the ability to make constitutional changes without requiring opposition support. This could potentially weaken democratic checks and balances and give Zanu-PF greater authority over legislative decisions.
- How the public perceives the situation will play a crucial role. If voters view the by-elections as an opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with the ruling party or as a consequence of power struggles within the CCC, it could influence voter behaviour in favour of the opposition.
- However, if voters see this as an attempt by Zanu-PF to manipulate the political landscape, it may lead to disillusionment and erode faith in democratic processes.

## Madagascar: 13 Candidates Confirmed to Run for Presidency

- On 16 November, Madagascar will hold presidential elections after the High Court High Constitutional Court of Madagascar (HCC) officially confirmed the candidacy of 13 individuals.
- Among the contenders is the incumbent, Andry Rajoelina, who is seeking re-election. He will be competing against two former presidents, Marc Ravalomanana and Hery Rajaonarimampianina, as well as several former ministers.





- The pre-electoral period has been marked by controversy. Firstly, Rajoelina's eligibility for a second term has been a major point of contention within the country. This controversy stems from his acquisition of French nationality in 2014, which, according to Malagasy law, leads to the automatic loss of Malagasy citizenship, ostensibly rendering him ineligible for elected office.
- While the HCC had summoned [FA1] to adjudicate on this matter based on representations by four opposition parties, it ultimately decided it was not competent to make a ruling on his nationality case, thus permitting him to seek re-election.
- Secondly, the Malagasy constitution provides that the President must resign two months before the first round of elections. Herimanana Razafiahafa, President of the Senate and the designated legal successor, was initially in line to assume the interim presidency.
- However, on 8 September, Razafiahafa cited personal reasons for his unsuitability. This decision paved the way for the appointment of a collective government of ministers led by Prime Minister Ntsay, effectively consolidating Rajoelina's continued influence over institutions in the run-up to and during the election.
- Finally, amidst recent military coups in Africa, growing apprehensions surround the armed forces' role in the lead-up to elections. Just before his resignation, Rajoelina appointed two generals to crucial positions, including Chief of Staff of the Presidency, effectively increasing the military's influence beyond its customary level.



## Possible Implications

- Madagascar remains mired in profound economic and social difficulties, which could further deteriorate if a political crisis ensues. Widespread poverty and rampant corruption have impeded developmental initiatives, despite the nation's considerable untapped resources in mining and agriculture.
- A closer look at politics in Madagascar highlight that over the past five years, Rajoelina has shored up power with such arbitrary measures as reducing the Senate from 63 to 18 members and empowering himself to appoint six of those Senators.
- After subsequent victories of his ruling TGV/MAPAR/IRD coalition in the 2019 national legislative and local elections, and 2020 indirect Senate elections, Rajoelina essentially controls all the levers of power.
- Thus, Rajoelina faces little opposition from outside politics. This is because the separation of powers established by the constitution is weak in practice. Afterall, the executive is the main power, dominating the other branches, which means the president holds vast powers.
- Furthermore, the breakdown of dialogue between the opposition and the HCC, and the retention of control over state institutions by key allies of Rajoelina, raises doubts about the fairness of the electoral process in Madagascar.
- Overall, irrespective of the election results, the next president will bear the weighty responsibility of advancing progress and development considering a declining GDP and a nation in urgent need of substantial transformation.

## RISKS

- **Security and Conflict:** Several regions in Africa face ongoing or emerging conflicts, such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and parts of Central Africa. These conflicts, fueled by various factors including ethnic tensions, resource disputes, and extremist groups, pose significant risks to political stability and economic development.
- **Increased Risk of Coup d'état:** The recent coup d'état incidents in Niger and Gabon including many others before, and the growing fears of coup in Lesotho serve as a warning sign that this trend is likely to escalate and infiltrate other regions. Political instability, regional turmoil, economic disruption, and security challenges are all potential consequences if this risk is not adequately addressed.
- **Youth Unemployment:** Africa has one of the youngest populations globally, with a significant proportion being under the age of 25. However, many African countries struggle to provide sufficient employment opportunities for their growing youth population. High youth unemployment rates can lead to frustration, social unrest, and political instability.
- **Debt Sustainability:** Several African countries including Ghana, Malawi, Ethiopia, and Zambia are facing significant debt burdens, which restrict their ability to invest in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The pandemic-induced economic downturn has exacerbated debt challenges, increasing the risk of debt distress and potential default.
- **Electoral Violence:** The upcoming elections in Madagascar and by-elections in Zimbabwe could see tensions escalating during the election period, leading to instances of violence, clashes between supporters of different parties, or conflicts with security forces. In some cases, if the election outcome is contested or perceived as illegitimate, there could be an increased risk of violence erupting as a result. This could include protests, riots, or acts of insurgency.

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