Africa Report

November 2025

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I. Introduction

November highlighted the intricate interplay of political instability, geopolitical realignment, and institutional pressures shaping Africa's trajectory. Across the continent, contested elections in Cameroon, Tanzania, and a coup d'état in Guinea-Bissau - resulting in the detention of President Umaro Mokhtar Sissoco Embaló who is understood to have gone into exile in Senegal - underscored the fragility of democratic norms, while government crackdowns exposed shrinking civic space and rising citizen disillusionment. Simultaneously, the African Union (AU) and its organs, such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), faced mounting demands to operationalise reparative justice, deepen integration, and enhance conflict-management mechanisms.

Debates on land governance at the 2025 Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA), held in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa on 18-21 November, reflected a broader reckoning with historical injustices, emphasising restitution, harmonised tenure systems, and equitable access. Meanwhile, external pressures, notably from the United States, continued to shape Africa's strategic alignments. Selective engagement in conflict zones heightened atrocity risks and reinforced the necessity for African-led diplomatic and security solutions, emphasising sovereignty and self-determination as core imperatives for sustainable development.

II. Governance and Elections

Democracy Under Siege: Cameroon, Tanzania, and Guinea-Bissau

November's electoral cycle exposed deepening authoritarian consolidation. In Cameroon, President Paul Biya was sworn in on 6 November following a disputed election characterised by opposition suppression, mistrust in the electoral commission, and militarised crackdowns in anglophone regions. Opposition leaders described the process as a constitutional coup, with unrest simmering amid continued security operations.

In Tanzania, the 29 October elections returned President Samia Suluhu Hassan with a 98% majority, as the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party marginalised opposition efforts. AU and SADC observers reported systemic irregularities, including intimidation, ballot tampering, and suppression of youth-led protests, raising questions about electoral credibility and democratic resilience.

Guinea-Bissau's 23 November elections unfolded amid deep uncertainty. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the liberation-era ruling party, was barred from contesting on technical grounds, disenfranchising nearly 860,000 voters and heightening the risk of renewed instability in a country with a history of coups and insurgencies. On 26 November 2025, the military seized power, citing the contested electoral process and political paralysis. This development underscores both the fragility of Guinea-Bissau's institutions and the limited capacity of electoral mechanisms to mediate elite disputes or guarantee legitimacy.

Potential Implications

Militarised suppression in Cameroon risks escalating separatist insurgencies and spillover into Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea maritime corridors. Tanzania's overwhelming CCM victory threatens urban flashpoints and undermines regional governance credibility, inviting external influence, including Chinese debt diplomacy. Guinea-Bissau's PAIGC exclusion and subsequent military intervention exacerbate instability in the Mano River Basin, jeopardising regional trade and cooperation. Collectively, these dynamics erode faith in democratic norms, weaken institutional checks, and amplify risks of migration, militancy, and youth radicalisation.

Post-Electoral Violence

November saw a surge in post-election unrest. In Cameroon, at least 48 civilians were killed and over 2,000 detained following protests in Douala and Garoua. In Tanzania, opposition sources claim hundreds were killed in urban demonstrations, with over 600 individuals facing mass treason trials. Guinea-Bissau remains volatile after pre-election military arrests and the PAIGC disqualification, though large-scale violence has yet to erupt.

These cases illustrate how elections have become tools of repression, eroding citizen trust and revealing the limitations of AU and SADC observer missions. Without credible oversight, post-electoral violence is likely to persist, driving migration, stoking militancy, and reinforcing militarised politics.

III. Land Governance: CLPA and National Experiences

The 2025 CLPA emphasised land as a site of historical injustice and collective restoration. Its Call to Action urged African governments to integrate land restitution, cultural heritage recovery, and reparations into national strategies. Key recommendations included:

- Reinstating indigenous place names and protecting sacred sites.
- Establishing restitution funds and harmonising customary and statutory tenure.
- Prioritising equity for women and youth through digitisation of land administration.
- Mobilising civil society to counter predatory land grabs and exploitative conservation models.
- Encouraging diaspora engagement and decolonising academic curricula on land governance.

With 440 attendees from 39 countries and 85 scholarly papers presented, CLPA reinforced its role as Africa's leading land-knowledge platform, bridging policy, culture, and social justice.

Domestic Realities: Zimbabwe vs Kenya

Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) has left a mixed legacy: chaotic farm occupations, elite capture, entrenched tenure insecurity, climate stress, and delayed compensation, leaving gender and social inequalities unresolved. In contrast, Kenya's technocratic approach, through the 2025 National Land Commission Amendment Act and National Land Titling Programme, seeks to regularise 10 million titles by year-end, complementing digitisation, transparency, and environmental accountability.

Implications

If implemented with integrity, CLPA reforms could transform land from a site of dispossession into a pillar of sovereignty, resilience, and justice, boosting productivity, social cohesion, gender equity, and diaspora engagement. Success depends on credible enforcement, funding alignment, and context-specific strategies.

IV. Continental Governance: PAP, AU, and SADC

Pan-African Parliament

The Sixth Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), held in Midrand, South Africa, under the AU's theme "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations" (3 November 2025), highlighted the Parliament's evolving role as both legislative and moral compass.

President Fortune Charumbira framed PAP as a unifying platform reflecting Africa's 1.4 billion citizens, emphasising accountability, unity, and people-centred governance.

Key interventions connected reparative justice to institutional strengthening: the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) prioritised transparency, youth engagement, and economic oversight, while the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights stressed that reparations require tangible redress, not symbolic recognition. Multi-sectoral linkages, including collaborations with the African Medicines Agency (AMA), demonstrated a holistic approach where reparations, governance, and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing.

The session signalled a strategic effort to operationalise reparations as a framework for continental renewal, connecting historical justice to policy, capacity building, and intergenerational participation. Emerging priorities include legislative integration of reparative justice, strengthened institutional capacity, youth empowerment, and enhanced AU-wide partnerships, aiming to embed justice as a driver for socio-economic transformation.

SADC Leadership and Crises

Madagascar's 11 October coup and Tanzania's contested elections exposed SADC's reactive posture. South Africa assumed interim chairmanship, providing continuity but highlighting structural weaknesses in rapid response, electoral monitoring, and mediation. While President Ramaphosa emphasised industrialisation, energy transition, and regional integration, SADC's limited enforcement capacity underscores ongoing risks to governance and social cohesion.

V. Climate Change and COP 30

COP 30 (10–21 November 2025, Brazil) prioritised adaptation finance, forest protection, and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), but stalled on fossil fuel phase-outs. Tripled adaptation funding presents opportunities for countries like Kenya to scale NAPs, strengthen disaster resilience, and integrate nature-based solutions.

Case Study – Kenya

The Elgeyo Marakwet landslide on 12 November 2025 killed 26 people, displaced thousands, and destroyed over 1,000 homes. Weak early-warning systems highlighted vulnerabilities, even as community-led climate funds and climate-health integration demonstrated promising resilience practices.

Implications

COP 30 outcomes offer Africa a strategic opening to lead on climate adaptation, pursue green economic diversification, and strengthen regional collaboration, though selective global engagement and limited mitigation commitments leave coal-dependent economies exposed.

VI. Peace and Security

Peace, Security, and External Pressures

The Trump administration's designation of Nigeria as a CPC ('countries of particular concern') for religious freedom and potential military interventions intensifies geopolitical pressure. Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa – accounting for over half of Africa's GDP – face tightening U.S. policy levers that risk undermining sovereignty. This encourages a pivot toward BRICS partnerships and alternative security architectures, strengthening intra-African alliances and AU-led diplomacy.

Sudan: Escalating Atrocity Risks

Darfur faces intensifying violence by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with over 400 civilian deaths, mass displacement, and famine conditions. Inconsistent UNSC engagement contrasts with AU mediation in Tigray and the DRC, underscoring the need for African institutions to assume greater conflict-resolution responsibility.

Western Sahara: UNSC Resolution 2797

The UNSC's endorsement of Morocco's autonomy plan sidelines a referendum on self-determination, fracturing AU unity, diminishing Sahrawi rights, and risking resource exploitation and conflict spillover into the Sahel.

VII. Geopolitics and External Engagement

AGOA 2.0 and U.S.-Africa Relations

The AGOA Extension and Bilateral Engagement Act ("AGOA 2.0") pressures African nations to align with U.S. priorities, undermining South Africa's non-aligned foreign policy and Agenda 2063 goals.

AU–EU Summit (7 November 2025, Luanda)

The 7th AU–EU Summit reaffirmed the Joint Vision for 2030, deepening trade, investment, critical-minerals value chains, and AfCFTA implementation. The summit reinforces African-led solutions to peace, security, and governance, offering an EU-backed alternative to unilateral U.S. leverage.

G20 Johannesburg Summit (15–16 November 2025)

The first G20 in Africa adopted the Johannesburg Leaders' Declaration, prioritising local value addition in critical minerals, downstream processing, climate finance, and loss-and-damage support. Africa emerges as an agenda-setting force, consolidating leverage in clean energy, industrialisation, and multilateral representation.

Qatar's Enagement in the DRC and Rwanda

The Emir of Qatar visited the DRC on 14-16 November 2025 and Rwanda on 17 November 2025, focusing on energy, infrastructure, investment, and digital transformation. These initiatives illustrate growing Gulf interest in Africa's resource-rich economies, offering industrialisation opportunities while introducing new diplomatic balancing imperatives.

U.S.-Sponsored Ukraine Peace Plan

The U.S. peace framework for Ukraine, although European-focused, diverts international attention and resources from African crises, reinforcing the need for AU-led security solutions and intra-African conflict prevention mechanisms.

Israel-Palestine Ceasefire Collapse

Renewed hostilities in Gaza, starting 5 November 2025, have generated regional instability, diaspora pressures, and economic ripple effects across Africa, particularly in North and East Africa, where energy and trade flows are sensitive to Middle Eastern

Trump's Disinvitation of South Africa from G20 2026

On 26 November 2025, President Trump announced South Africa would be excluded from the 2026 G20. This diplomatic rebuke challenges African agency in global economic governance and incentivises stronger engagement with BRICS, AU-led multilateralism, and intra-African economic integration.

Integrated Analysis

Collectively, these geopolitical developments present both opportunities and risks. Africa is consolidating agency in global forums, expanding partnerships, and diversifying investment sources. Simultaneously, unilateral actions, selective foreign engagement, and conflict spillovers expose vulnerabilities. African governments must strengthen continental mechanisms, enhance crisis response capacities, and operationalise initiatives such as the AfCFTA to reduce dependency and safeguard sovereignty.

VIII. Risk Metrics and Strategic Outlook

Risk Dimension	Level	Key Issues
Model Viability	Moderate	U.S. pressure on Nigeria, selective donor engagement, potential delays in multilateral coordination
Dependence on Donors	High	Conditional aid and investment create vulnerability in conflict and climate crises
AU Capacity Gaps	Moderate–High	Operational, intelligence, and rapid-response weaknesses limit effectiveness in Sudan, DRC, Tigray
Self-Determination / Western Sahara	Moderate–High	UNSC endorsement of Morocco autonomy risks undermining Sahrawi rights and AU cohesion
Electoral Integrity	High	Disputed elections in Cameroon, Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau highlight systemic fraud and elite consolidation
Post-Electoral Violence	High	Deaths, detentions, and unrest threaten regional stability, refugee flows, and youth radicalisation
Dependence on Regional Bodies	Moderate–High	Limited enforcement power of AU/SADC observer missions reduces deterrence

SADC Leadership & Crisis Response	Moderate	Interim leadership mitigates instability but structural weaknesses remain
Geopolitical Shock Sensitivity	High	Ukraine peace plan, Middle East conflicts, Gulf investment, and G20 exclusion highlight vulnerability to external interventions

Strategic Outlook: Africa navigates a complex landscape of political volatility, climate risk, and geoeconomic competition. Continental institutions face pressure to assert sovereignty, strengthen governance, and leverage global partnerships while preserving agency. Nations that enforce credible democratic practices, advance land and climate reforms, and pursue multilateral engagement can enhance resilience, attract investment, and consolidate strategic influence.

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