

# ADDRESSING INSECURITY THROUGH GOOD GOVERNANCE: A PANACEA FOR STABLE AND PEACEFUL AFRICA

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## Abstract

*The realization of a peaceful and stable Africa as one of the goals and aspirations of the 'African Union Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want' is achievable but only in an environment devoid of insecurity and other conditions that threaten human existence. The insecurity challenges in some parts of Africa have assumed a formidable dimension that requires a multi-stakeholder approach to resolve. Meanwhile, good governance has proved to be a virile mechanism to address insecurity and ameliorate conditions that threaten human existence. It is a major driving force towards peace, security, and sustainable development in any country of the world that has experienced or still experiencing such development. This study argues that a stable and peaceful Africa is a mirage in the face of insecurity that is prevalent in some parts of Africa and that good governance is the major antidote to address the issue of insecurity. This study employs content analysis as a source of data collection and engages descriptive research design in its analysis.*

**Keywords:** Security, Insecurity, Good Governance, Stability, African, and violence.

## Introduction

Insecurity and good governance are both implicated in ensuring a peaceful and secured Africa highlighted among the seven key aspirations of the 'African Union Agenda 2063.' Africa has been enmeshed in a cloud of insecurity leading to scores of deaths, especially in the WestAfrica sub-region; the refugee and the internally displaced crisis, kidnapping and

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hostages being taken for ransom, loss of investments, and absence of safety in most parts and food insecurity.

This study notes the great strides the African continent has made in reducing the number of violent conflicts since the end of the Cold War. However, there has been a resurgence of insecurity threats in the last two decades. Historically in Africa, we see that the number of people killed in conflict has increased when the number of conflicts increases. However, we do not observe this trend over the past few years. While there has been a slight increase in battle-related deaths, 2017 saw less than 7,500 battle-related deaths. This is a decrease compared to the past three years. If we look at the relative size of the number of battle deaths, i.e., the number of people killed per million inhabitants, 2017 was the 9th least violent year since 1950. In 2017, the majority of battle deaths occurred in three countries, Nigeria, Somalia, and DR Congo, none of which exceeded more than 2,000 people killed in state-based conflicts. Thus, while we see a considerable increase in conflicts, the number of people being killed is relatively low, suggesting that the increase in conflict has not led to a substantive increase in the intensity of conflict (Bakken & Rustad, 2018).

Meanwhile, state-based violence is not the only type of conflict that is prevalent in Africa. Over the past six years, we have seen a significant increase in non-state conflicts in Africa, i.e., conflicts fought between two non-state actors. In 2017, Africa saw 50 non-state conflicts compared to 24 in 2011, making Africa by far the continent with the highest number of non-state conflicts. There is also a doubling of non-state conflict battle deaths in this period, reaching 4,300 in 2017. However, it seems that this increase is limited to a few countries. In 2017, only 11 African countries have registered non-state conflicts, which is only an increase of 3 countries from 2011 (Bakken & Rustad, 2018). Further, most of these countries also had state-based conflicts in 2017. This lends support to the hypothesis that conflict breeds conflict. The exception is the Central African Republic, which did not have a state-based conflict in 2017. The country did, however, experience eight non-state conflicts and it reached a total of 1,070 battle-related deaths, which is 25% of all non-state conflict battle deaths in Africa in 2017. The challenge here is that state-based conflict tends to get much more attention than non-state conflicts; the conflicts in the Central African Republic thus become forgotten conflicts (Bakken & Rustad, 2018).

Apart from the state and non-state-based conflicts, violence against civilians by a formally organized group, which can be either the state or a non-state actor, has been on the increase since 2011. The worst perpetrator by far during this period was Boko Haram in Northeastern Nigeria. In

terms of battle deaths caused by one-sided violence, the worst year by far was 1994, when the Rwandan genocide caused the death of more than 500,000 people. 1996 and 1997 were also years marked by a high death toll, related to the conflicts in DR Congo and Burundi. During the past ten years, there was a peak in 2014 with 8,760 deaths, while in 2017, the number was 5,694 (ibid). In 2017, Boko Haram in Nigeria stands out as the worst perpetrator, followed by various groups in the Central African Republic. The security threats are increasingly driven by the reoccurrence of conflicts in some countries rather than by the emergence of ‘new’ ones. For instance, in West Africa, Marc and Stephen (2015) observe that:

The civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, which together resulted in an estimated 800,000 fatalities, drew to a close in the early 2000s. The civil war in Guinea-Bissau, which contributed to a spike in casualties in 1998, ended a year later. The death toll from the conflict in West Africa nearly halved after 1999 and continued a gradual downward trajectory until 2006 and 2007— albeit with a brief spike in 2003 in part due to the low-intensity civil war in Côte d’Ivoire. The number of fatalities from conflict events began a gradual climb once again after 2007 and accelerated in 2010 due to the outbreak of violence in Mali and Nigeria.

Von Soest and De Juan (2018) note that the “decentralized forms of violence like terrorism, urban riots and small insurgencies in state peripheries have been on the rise. Conflicts with strong regional and international involvement have increased”. Also, the threat from radical Islam has recently been evident in Africa. Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), Kenya, Nigeria, Niger, and Chad republics are among countries in Africa where terrorism is waging serious and uncontrollable war against the state. Collier (2015) observes that Islamic terrorism was existential in Mali and CAR. He notes that without timely French military intervention both states would have been overrun and fallen to radical Islamic factors. Bate and Chine (2013) report that French fighter jets pounded Islamist rebel strongholds deep in northern Mali as Paris poured more troops into the capital Bamako, awaiting a West African force to dislodge al Qaeda-linked insurgents from the country’s north. France is determined to end Islamist domination of northern Mali, which many fear could act as a base for attacks on the West and links with al Qaeda in Yemen, Somalia, and North Africa.

Buttressing the jihadist presence in Mali, BBC News (2021) reports that Jihadist attacks have surged in Mali after two military coups in 16 months contributed to a weak central government and saw France halt joint military operations between the military and the 5,100 troops it had in the

country. The deadly attack on 4 December 2021 was the latest in Mali's rapidly escalating jihadist insurgency. Insecurity in the above-mentioned areas is contagious. The spillover from failing neighbouring countries in which insurgents have been able to build their military capacity affects other countries. For instance, the meltdown in Libya provided a base from which a rebel force could equip itself sufficiently to defeat the Malian army; the endemic insecurity of vast areas of the Sahel enabled a rebel force to defeat the army of CAR and to infiltrate North-East Nigeria; and Islamists in Somalia were able to mount terrorist attacks in Kenya (Collier, 2015).

Meanwhile, the unfolding event in Africa since 2010 does not reflect the African Union's landmark declaration of 2013. It would be recalled that at the 50th anniversary of the AU in May 2013, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted a landmark declaration. They vowed that Africa would not bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation and made a commitment to end the violent conflict on the continent by 2020. This was translated into the 'AU initiative; Silencing the Guns by 2020' (AU Peace & Security Council, 2019). However, the security situation in Africa years after this declaration is not far better than it was. Though threats to peace and security in Africa are not limited to violence and armed conflicts but include poverty, weak state institutions, weak governance, and food insecurity. In order to achieve the goal of the African Union Agenda 2063, there is a need to devise effective African and international responses to changing security challenges. This study raises the following questions which formed the objectives of the study: What are the sources of insecurity in Africa? Does Africa have the capacity to combat insecurity? What is the nexus between insecurity and good governance? How can a peaceful and stable Africa be achieved in the AU Agenda 2063?

## **Security Threats and State Responses in Africa**

Terrorism and violent extremism are arguably at the top of Africa's greatest security challenges in recent times. The activities of insurgent groups such as Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP) foment local conflicts and enable organized crime which further destabilizes already fragile political environments. Violent extremism has implications for other security needs such as food security and economic security. The reduction in food production and economic income are partly blamed on the conflict which continues to be the primary driver of the acute food crisis in Africa. In West Africa, some 16.7 million people require immediate food assistance, including 9.2 million people in

northern Nigeria. About 1 million people face an emergency (October-December 2020). The number of acutely food-insecure people could increase to 23.6 million by June-August 2021, reaching a new record high (FAO-WFP, 2020). Food insecurity across West Africa and the Sahel has risen dramatically due to increasing conflict and the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions. Some 22.1 million people were projected to be facing a food crisis or emergency (CH Phases 3-5) in the June-August 2020 lean season period, compared to 14.1 million in the same period in 2019 (WFP, West Africa Food Insecurity Trends).

In Ethiopia, between July and September, an estimated 8.5 million people were projected to be facing Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity, including about 1.4 million in Emergency (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 4) in the seven pastoral and agro-pastoral producing rural areas. (IPC, Ethiopia: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Snapshot July 2020-June 2021). In CAR, a total of 1.9 million people are expected to be facing a food crisis or emergency (IPC Phase 3 or above) between September 2020 and April 2021, including 408,000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) – a deterioration compared to the same time last year, with almost 690,000 people estimated to be internally displaced as of August 2020 (UNHCR, 2020). Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2021) puts it succinctly:

Conflict continues to be the primary driver of the food crisis in Africa. South Sudan is currently experiencing famine (phase 5) in parts of Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Jonglei, and the Warrap States, affecting over 100,000 people. Areas of Soum and Oudalan provinces in Burkina Faso are also in phase 5. Parts of Ethiopia are likely facing famine-level conditions, though access to the affected regions is restricted. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon also have large conflict-affected populations.

Terrorism and violent conflicts in the affected areas contributed mostly to the food crisis and poverty levels in the region. In Northeast Nigeria, where Boko Haram militant groups have increasingly attacked highways and ransacked communities, nearly 4 million people are acutely food insecure while several thousand are internally displaced. In Cameroon, the escalating Boko Haram attacks have driven and displaced several hundreds of Cameroonians to far North regions. Yet, fighting continues between separatists and the military in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions where many of the 4.9 million Cameroonians facing acute food insecurity are concentrated. (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021).

The story is the same in other African nations that are experiencing terrorism and violent extremism.

The spate of killings and displacement in West Africa between 2009 and 2020, for instance, has pivoted the world's attention to the risk of conflict and fragility in the region. Upheaval in Mali, extremism in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad republic, as well as the coups in Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau in 2015 and 2012 respectively, show that West Africa, like other regions of Africa, is still prone to violence and Islamic extremism (Marc et al, 2015). Marc et al (2015) notes that drug trafficking, maritime piracy, and religious extremism have emerged as growing threats to stability and economic development of the coastal states in the Gulf of Guinea, and a sharp increase in the deadly attacks by Boko Haram against Nigeria's civilian population and the rise of extremist groups in the Sahel (such as AQIM and Ansan Dine) risk plunging the region into a protracted period of instability.

The insecurity in Africa has been driven by most notably substantial but highly unequal economic growth in many African countries; (incomplete) democratization which is often coupled with weak state capacity and bad governance; and various demographic factors, such as strong population growth, rapid urbanization and an increasing share of economically and socially deprived youth. Taken together, these factors have created grievances and opportunities for violence that have changed the nature of security threats in Africa (Von Soest and De Juan, 2018). The emergence of religious radicalism across Africa has presented a growing threat to the region. The rise of extremist movements in the Sahel such as Ansar Dine (Defenders of the Faith) and the escalating violence of Nigeria's Boko Haram and ISWAP is considered the new frontline in the "global war" against extremism. The seizure of more than half of Mali's land area by radical groups (Østebø 2012), along with kidnappings, incursions, and the mounting savagery of Boko Haram attacks, has led to the death of nearly 350,000 people as of the end of 2020 (Reuters, 2021), have increased the extent of the threat and as such, triggered fears of contagion and spill over to other parts of the region.

African responses to security threats have been tampered with by a predominant focus on dealing with ongoing violent conflicts rather than on their prevention and, even more so, postconflict peace stability. Apart from ostensible legal impediments (such as weak criminal justice responses, law enforcement woes, with states 'hard pressed' to handle disengaging fighters, compliance with international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law, etc.,) to African countries' capacity to combat terrorism

on the continent, there are other myriads of problems that permanently constrain African countries from fighting terrorism and other security threats confronting the region. These constraints include weak inter-agency cooperation, porous border, ineffective border security practices, weak criminal justice systems, inability to prevent weapons acquisition by terrorists, corruption, and failure of governance to address the root causes of insecurity such as marginalization and deprivation of ethnic or minority group(s), failure to provide critical public goods (security, electricity, good road networks, etc.), unemployment, and the increase in the population of those who are dissatisfied with their economic and social situations.

Overall, Africa has become more democratic since the end of the Cold War. The extension of political and civil rights has been a very positive development that is likely to have contributed significantly to a reduction of large-scale conflict. It is often overlooked, however, that processes of incomplete democratisation may also have fuelled other forms of violence. Democratic setbacks (e.g., manipulations of presidential term limits) and weak governance (e.g., clientelism, corruption, and discriminatory policies) constitute important stability risks, as seen in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Moreover, the introduction of electoral democracy coupled with weak state institutions has also nurtured more decentralised forms of violence (Von Soest and De Juan, 2018). Despite the democratic movements, some African countries still lack the structure and resources to single-handedly combat sophisticated terrorist operations such as Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb and Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP). For instance, the Lake Chad region (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger) adopted a collaborative response to Boko Haram: they initiated a task force known as the 'Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF),' a regional force mandated to degrade Boko Haram (Mahmood and Ndubuisi, 2018).

Also, in 2015, Nigerian leadership undertook discussions with the US government about military assistance to address the Boko Haram situation. US responded by resuming previously suspended infantry battalion training and by positioning a small US Special Operations Forces (SOF) team in Maiduguri to help Nigerian counterparts plan counterterrorism operations. In addition, to make the MNJTF more active and effective, the United States provided logistical support and equipment while advising, assisting, and occasionally accompanying MNJTF security forces on counterterrorism missions (Cole et al, 2017). It is important to note that the US military assistance and commitment to the Lake Chad Region and other parts of Africa is in tandem with the United Nations Security Council's greater efforts to help Africa fight terrorism. For instance, in

March 2020, the Security Council calls on the international community to strengthen its political commitment and to consider mobilizing more sustainable and predictable resources and expertise to strengthen the capacity of African countries in countering terrorism and violent extremism (United Nations, 2020). This development, therefore, explains why African countries embrace external support and resources to combat terrorism and insecurity bedevilling their nations.

Also noticeable in the foregoing are the limitations of African militaries in response to security threats in their respective states. The weakness in some African countries is inevitable in view of their economic and geographical realities. Many African countries have large numbers of poor and disaffected people whose ranks the terrorists and extremists have been able to recruit foot soldiers for their terror organizations. Yet, some countries are too poor to impose security on their highly dispersed population; while political weaknesses and weak institutions are evidently visible in others. Collier (2015) cites the instance of Mali, which was not on any of the three independently maintained lists of fragile states before its collapse: it was one of the betterconducted democracies by African standards. Yet, the solution to the insecurity in Mali and similar countries required a degree of external military assistance.

Moreover, Africa's capacity to deal with the insecurity issues on the continent is constrained by a lack of technology. Technological backwardness is a bane of peace and security in Africa. The terrorist networks, for instance, have demonstrated so much technological capability which African countries' low level of intelligence gathering and weak institutions cannot cope with. According to Agwu (2007), the al-Qaeda terrorist network is constituted of well-educated people who can fly sophisticated planes, produce bombs, are very knowledgeable in chemical and biological warfare, and are into information technological manipulations.

Terrorism and transnational crimes in the globalization era are technology-driven. Thus, a nation that does not have the technological capability may find it difficult to fight the menace of terrorism within its border. For instance, the abduction of 276 Chibok schoolgirls in Nigeria by the Islamist militant group: Boko Haram, in 2014 shocked the world. The ease with which these girls were abducted by a small rebel group and taken to a forest area that could not be traced by the Nigerian military, was striking and sparked international outrage. It suffices to conclude that the failure of intelligence gathering and technological know-how contributed largely to the successful abduction of the girls.



Africa has persistently found it difficult to attain the goals of sustainable development due to poor development planning, corruption, political brinkmanship, and the incessant outbreaks of violent conflicts in the continent. These conflicts, whether social, political, or environmental, have contributed significantly to crises of immense proportions facing the continent, in terms of loss of human lives and capital as well as the diversion of leaders' efforts away from primary issues in sustainable human development. Internal population displacement has become one of the human tragedies confronting the world today (Fatokun, 2020). Among the causes of internal population displacement or forced migration, conflict-induced appears to be more frequent. These include ethnoreligious, inter-ethnic, and intra and inter-communal and political conflicts and terrorism (Fatokun, 2020).

## **Good Governance and (In)Security Conceptualized**

To understand the concept of insecurity, it is pertinent to define and ably understand the concept of security. As noted by Osimen (2017), security has been a subject that has attracted a rapidly growing interest and concern among scholars in social science. Security has become a major public concern, an issue at the top of the political agenda, and the subject of expanding academic enquiry (Osimen; 2017). Security is broadly conceived as having to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation, the ability to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest, and enhance the wellbeing of its people (Imobighe, 1990; Mijah, 2007).

The concept of Security by Mijah (2007) suggests that in modernizing society, security means development. He notes that security is not military force though it may involve it. Security is not traditional military activities though it may encompass it, it is not military hardware though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security. This is a non-conventional conception of security with an emphasis on human security. It implies that maturation of structures and processes that can endanger and guarantee political space and sufficient conditions for the realization of, among other things, personal group, national, etc. aspirations” (Mijah, 2007).

In his view, Bakut (2006:235) notes that Security has to do with defence, protection, and preservation of core values, and the absence of threats to acquired values. Most scholars agreed that security is more than military security or security from external attacks (Imobighe, 1990; Nwolise, 2006;

Mijah, 2007; Bakut, 2006; Johnson, 2014). Johnson (2014) observes that for many of the four billion inhabitants in developing countries, security is conceived as the basic level for the struggle for survival. This submission must have prompted Nwolise (2006) to posit that African security as a concept should be applied in its broadest sense to include economic security, social security, environmental security, food security, quality-of-life security, and technological security.

Conversely, insecurity is the antithesis of security. The concept of insecurity has usually been ascribed to different interpretations in association with the various ways in which it affects individuals. Some of the common descriptions of insecurity according to Achumba et al (2013) include: state of danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection, and being unsafe, and others. These authors view insecurity in two ways, these are (1) Insecurity as the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury, and (2) Insecurity as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions connote the existence of vulnerability to harmful conditions, loss of life, property, or livelihood.

Achumba (2013), considered insecurity to be a state of not knowing, a lack of control, and the inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group, or that makes them vulnerable. Beland (2005) sees insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from concrete or inadequate freedom from danger". This also connotes the inability of a state or government to counter threats to its core value and interests. Insecurity in the context of this study is encompassing, the inability of a state, government, or nation to adequately protect life, property, or livelihood; inability to protect its core values and interests; inadequate provision or lack of social security, food security, and instability of economic security.

Governance is a concept that involves the interaction among structures, processes, and traditions that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens or stakeholders have their say (UNDP, 2005 cited in Fayeye, 2011: 75). Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. It is a political process whereby decisions and policies are taken for the benefit of the citizenry. From these definitions, governance could be good or bad depending on the processes or methods of the governing authorities. The "good" or "bad" governance

is a model or method of comparing the viability and effectiveness of socio-political and economic institutions of a state or society. According to Kofi Annan (2003), good governance is a means of creating well-functioning and accountable institutions (political, judicial, and administrative) that citizens regard as legitimate, in which they participate in decisions that affect their daily lives and by which they are empowered.

Olukoshi (2001) views good governance in terms of transparency in doing government business; the fight against corruption, a predictable political system, participatory decisionmaking process, auditing of government transactions, curbing of bureaucratic bottlenecks, decentralization of governance, judicial autonomy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Kofi Annan (2003) and Olukoshi (2001) see good governance from purely constitutional and institutional perspectives respectively. Meanwhile, World governance indicators defined good governance as the practice and foundations by which power is exercised within a given country: the procedure by which governments are selected; held accountable, monitored, and changed; the capacity by which governments manage resources efficiently and formulate, implement, and enforce sound policies and regulations; and the respect for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions (Onigbinde, 2007). Adesola (2012) highlighted the characteristics of good governance to include popular participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, and economic consensus-oriented. Others are equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. Thus, good governance is that type of governance that is responsive to its citizens' needs, provides an avenue for participation in the governance process, publicize their activities, upholds the principle of rule of law, and shows equity and transparency in their dealings.

Ibaba (2020), and Adetoye & Omiluisi (2016) consider the concept of governance as the process whereby public or governmental institutions at both national or central, and local levels conduct public affairs, manage public resources, and guarantee the realization of the public or common good of society. In that sense, the formal and informal processes, methods, and structures put in place to arrive at outcomes can be poor, bad, or good (Ibaba, 2020). The machinery includes the government in power at all levels, its institutions (state actors), and the civil society (non-state actors).

## **Good Governance, (In)Security and Peaceful Africa**

A stable and peaceful Africa is the place where security, in all its ramifications, vis-à-vis military security, economic security, food security, and environmental security, is guaranteed. However, dealing with these

security threats will require the instrumentality of good governance. The increasing spate of acts of insecurity in Africa is a governance challenge on the continent. Over the years, Africa has continued to allocate a larger percentage of its resources towards addressing security challenges; Africa's budgets have seen an increasing rise in security allocations at the expense of other critical sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, and socio-economic development. The activities of the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin; kidnapping, and farmer-herder clashes in Sudan and Nigeria, the proliferation of local wings of Al Qaeda and ISIS, banditry in most parts of the continent, small arms proliferation across Africa, among others, are serious challenges to governance (Idown, 2020). Meanwhile, the resources crisis in Africa has shifted government attention from other crucial sectors to addressing security threats capable of destabilizing continental peace.

Omotoso (2010) conceptualizes governance as the use of political powers to manage a nation's public affairs and to shape its economic and social environment in line with perceived notions of public interest and societal process. Thus, good governance is in tandem with democratic governance which is largely characterized by high valued principles such as rule of law, accountability, participation, transparency, and human and civil rights. UNDP (2009) see democratic governance as "the capacity of a society to define and establish policies and resolve their conflicts peacefully within the existing legal order." This is said to be a necessary condition for the rule of law along with the separation of powers and a legal system that ensures the enjoyment of individual freedom and rights-civil, social, political, and cultural. This requires institutions based on the principles of equity, freedom, participation in decision-making, accountability, and promoting the inclusion of the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Government is usually saddled with the responsibility of providing peace, security, and sustainable development; where the government provides these public critical goods, good governance ensued, where the government failed to provide them, the citizens result in alternatives which may fuel crisis and anarchy which are evidence of bad governance. Inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection, and eradication of poverty and hunger would definitely address some root causes of insecurity in any part of the world. Governments are responsible for the formulation of sustainable economic policies through their various institutions saddled with that responsibility to cater to the needs of the citizenry in all ramifications; this qualifies any government as "good governance". The mutual understanding between the formal and informal sectors of governance is critical for the peace, stability, and development

of any country or region. In other words, the nature (quality and characteristics) of the governance architecture in any society determines its level of peace, stability, and development (Crocker, 2019).

Therefore, a government that is not able to eradicate poverty, provide security protection to its citizens, and guarantee food security, is non-transparent and violates the principles of rule of law. Thus, such government is qualified with the term “bad governance”. It should, however, be noted that the entrenchment of negative identity politics in Africa is part of the wider causality of insecurity in the continent. Also, the structural imbalance in the ethnic, religious, and regional composition of many African states and the manipulations of such identities logically explains the various ethnoreligious and even communal conflicts in the continents such as in Mali, Libya, Kenya, Boko Haram insurgency, and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin. Good governance provides an avenue for peace, security, and sustainable development because governments are the key provider or the major stakeholder in the provision of these scarce commodities of national interest.

Also, the inequalities between regions and the exclusion of parts of the population are recurring drivers of conflict in Africa. Awareness of these imbalances and deliberate policies to mitigate their negative effects are the most effective ways to decrease their salience as drivers of conflict. In the same vein, the unequal distribution of revenues and allocations contributes to fragility across the continent. Greater awareness of the perception or reality of inequitable distribution and efforts to offset the problem and enhance transparency and governance are critical to managing the risk of instability and guaranteeing a stable and peaceful Africa (Marc et al, 2005: 17). Lamb (2014) observes that the African continent lacks peace and stability because of tension between the state and non-state actors. What this means is that the political leadership (state actors or government) in many African countries does not encourage citizens’ participation in the conduct of state affairs. Suffice it to note that citizens’ involvement in the affairs of a state is critical for purposes of transparency and accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency.

In addition, good governance canvasses transparent and efficient use and management of state power and resources for the interest of all in society. The contrary is poor and bad governance. Both define the political culture (which is the resolve for violence and conflicts or peace, stability, and development) of a nation. Meanwhile, good governance would address the patterns of marginalization and exclusion which have been a key cause of conflict and violence in Africa and a source of perceived injustice

especially, in the West Africa sub-region, where the countries are ethnically, religiously, culturally, and regionally heterogeneous. The overlap between regional and socio-cultural characteristics of many groups in West Africa has led to significant geographical schisms within countries. These schisms have been between the coastal regions and inland/northern areas. These inequalities in cultural differences have been a major source of tension among various groups in the region. However, with good and inclusive governance, these differences and inequalities can be addressed. Thus, Africa would achieve its social and economic targets if good governance is entrenched in the continent.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study argues that good governance would optimally address the issue of insecurity confronting African states and thereby ensure a stable and peaceful Africa as expected in the AU agenda 2063. It identified sources of insecurity in Africa and the responses of African states to those threats. The study observes that the security threats in Africa are not limited to military security but rather, other sectors of security which include food security, economic security, and environmental security. While the study acknowledges the great strides the African continent has made in reducing the number of violent conflicts since the end of the Cold War, it notes that there has been a resurgence of new security threats in recent times. Also, as seen from AU perspectives, regional and international initiatives are key routes to address insecurity on the African continent.

Concurrently, strengthening peace and security on the continent has been one of the main concerns of the African Union (AU). AU's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the primary framework for developing and implementing African solutions for peace and security on the continent (Von Soest & De Juan 2018). Meanwhile, the roles, instruments, and procedures by which the AU, the regional economic communities (RECs) as well as the regional mechanisms can realize their conflict prevention, management, and resolution mandates have been highlighted by APSA (African Union 2015). Yet, despite notable successes, the APSA is ill-equipped to comprehensively deal with the various forms of conflicts and their multiple causes. However, this study opines that insecurity challenges in Africa can be optimally addressed through good governance, and as such, that would pave way for a stable and peaceful Africa. Thus, attaining the aspiration of a stable and peaceful 'Africa of AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want' would be a mirage if good governance is not accorded its rightful place in addressing security challenges that are currently bedeviling Africa.

Therefore, this study recommends that the sources of insecurity must be holistically addressed. Governance must be positioned to address the growing dissatisfaction, discomfort, and distress within the larger society coupled with the unabating official corruption, high unemployment rate, economic crisis, pauperization of the masses, decaying infrastructures, and a futile national integration project that heated the socio-political environment.

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