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By Alexander Noyes

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Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.



Pakalitha Mosisili, Prime Minister of Lesotho. (Source: AP photo/KEYSTONE/Salvatore Di Nolfi.)

OPTING OUT: TANZANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM BOYCOTT

By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

Tanzania’s draft constitution, scheduled for referendum vote on April 30, 2015, has experienced yet another obstacle on its [long journey toward approval](#). The opposition, once a strong proponent of constitutional reform, is now calling on its supporters to [boycott](#) the referendum, arguing that the new draft constitution does not represent the will of the people. What does the opposition hope to gain by opting out of the upcoming constitutional vote? [more...](#)



Sign directing voters to polling place in 2010 election in Tanzania (Source: AP Photo/Khalfan Said.)

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

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Election Results

None of the over 20 political parties participating in the February 28 election garnered the necessary 61 (out of 120) seats to form a majority government. Prime Minister Thomas Thabane’s All Basotho Convention (ABC) [won](#) 46 seats. Mosisili’s DC just edged out the ABC, winning 47. The Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), led by Mothetjoa Metsing, [won](#) 12 seats. Metsing served as deputy prime minister in the previous coalition, but fell out of favor with Thabane after being charged with [corruption](#). After Metsing pledged his allegiance to Mosisili in the new coalition government, it was decided that Metsing will maintain his old post. Together, Mosisili’s coalition government will have a slim [five-seat](#) majority, providing potential leverage for Metsing and the smaller parties. Announcing the coalition, Mosisili [said](#) the parties “have joined forces to form a government that will serve Basotho [the term for citizens of Lesotho].” He asserted that the new “government’s first assignment is to bring normalcy” to Lesotho.

Previous Political Instability

As highlighted in the February 12 [edition](#) of *Africa Watch*, in the run-up to the election a [shootout](#) took place between bodyguards of Thabane and the military, leaving one dead and three wounded. This incident, combined with other outbreaks of political violence over the previous six months—including a number of [skirmishes](#) between Lesotho’s military and police, as well as an alleged coup attempt in August 2014—fed fears of a violent vote. In this tense environment, it was reported that Lesotho’s military planned to set up roadblocks during the election. SADC—which brokered an agreement in October 2014 that led to early elections—again [intervened](#), warning the military to stay confined to its barracks during the poll and deploying 475 police from member countries to provide security during the vote.

Interneine fighting between the country’s security services stemmed from the rivalry between Thabane and Metsing. Top echelons of the military are [viewed](#) as loyal to Metsing [and Mosisili](#), while Thabane commands support from the police. In an effort to resolve these tensions, SADC, led by South Africa’s Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, brokered a second October 2014 [deal](#), forcing a “leave of absence” on the three top security officials—Lieutenant-General Tlali Kamoli, the former head of the military; Khothatso Tsooana, the former police commissioner; and Maaparankoe Mahao, whom Thabane appointed to replace Kamoli—in which the officials were required to leave the country before the election.



Pakalitha Mosisili, Prime Minister of Lesotho.
(Source: AP photo/KEYSTONE/Salvatore Di Nolfi.)

Conclusion: Volatile Security Situation Likely to Persist

After the new coalition government was announced, Mosisili quickly and combatively [proclaimed](#) that Kamoli would return to head the military, and some [reports](#) suggest that Kamoli is already back in Lesotho from his leave of absence in South Africa. Mosisili also blamed Thabane for the country's previous political instability and divided security services, arguing, "There is no security problem in Lesotho, the problem was Prime Minister Thabane." These statements suggest that Mosisili is intent on taking a hard-line stance on the security situation, rewarding his supporters even if doing so increases the risk of continuing politically motivated violence. The rapid election and a change of government in Lesotho, although fortunately peaceful and fair, seem unlikely to resolve the volatile security situation.

To help ease tensions, international actors could pressure South Africa and SADC to continue engaging Lesotho, especially on the security front. Although prosecutions of the alleged August coup plotters most likely are now politically unrealistic, Ramaphosa would be wise to urge Mosisili against the reappointment of Kamoli, which, if it occurs, will surely deepen divides in the security sector. In the longer term, broader institutional and security sector reform programs are needed to move Lesotho down a sustainable path to peace.

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Tanzania's draft constitution, scheduled for referendum vote on April 30, 2015, has experienced yet another obstacle on its [long journey toward approval](#). The opposition, once a strong proponent of constitutional reform, is now calling on its supporters to [boycott](#) the referendum, arguing that the new draft constitution does not represent the will of the people. What does the opposition hope to gain by opting out of the upcoming constitutional vote?

Background

The April referendum on Tanzania's draft constitution is the culmination of years of pressure by civil society and many opposition political parties on the government to adopt a new, more liberal constitution. From the time of the country's transition from single-party rule to multiparty elections in 1992, the opposition and civil society groups have been demanding constitutional reform. In 2010, the current government announced that it would begin consultations to assist in drafting a new constitution.

It is ironic that the opposition, which for so long worked hard to achieve constitutional reform, is now campaigning against constitutional change. The impasse began in 2014, when a heated disagreement broke out over the fundamental structure of the government. Two previous drafts had recommended a federal system of government, but the ruling party had been steadfast in its preference for a unitary system of government. The issue of government structure has long been a flashpoint for controversy between those on the islands of [Zanzibar who want more autonomy](#) and those from the mainland who prefer the status quo.

Over the objections of the opposition, the ruling party substantially revised the third draft of the constitution to reflect its preference for a unified political system. In February 2014, during the final deliberations phase of the constitutional review process, the opposition chose to walk away from the discussions. Calling themselves Ukawa (short for "[Umoja wa Katiba ya Wanachi](#)," Swahili for "defenders of the people's constitution"), the opposition has not been involved since. On its own, the ruling party passed the draft constitution that will be presented to voters next month.

Ukawa is now attempting to organize a boycott of the April vote. The opposition claims that the draft to be presented to the voters completely disregards the will of the people. Some of the members of the initial constitutional review committee, including influential judge Joseph Warioba, have announced their support for [the boycott](#). Ukawa also asserts that because of its walkout during proceedings, the draft constitution that was eventually approved was [passed without a proper quorum](#). Ukawa is asking the High Court to intercede.

The political climate in Tanzania is tense, with the opposition making multiple accusations of increased repression by the government. In January, 33 members of opposition party the Civic United Front (CUF), including their leader, Ibrahim Lipumba, were arrested for [unlawful gathering](#). CUF members were marching to commemorate the anniversary of the deaths of 30 of their supporters in violence following the 2000 election. Their case has been [adjourned](#) until March 23. The other main opposition party, CHADEMA, has claimed that its leader, Wilibrod Slaa, is the target of an [assassination plot](#) orchestrated by state security forces.



Sign directing voters to polling place in 2010 election in Tanzania (Source: AP Photo/Khalfan Said.)

Why Boycott?

Boycotting is one of the few tools that opposition parties have at their disposal to influence an election, especially when they believe they have no chance of winning. Instead of participating and losing, parties call on their supporters to abstain from voting. A boycott is meant to highlight problems in the process (i.e., unfairness, manipulation, fraud) and to deprive the ultimate victor of some of his or her legitimacy.

Approximately [14 percent of elections held worldwide from 1990 to 2002](#) experienced some form of opposition boycott. Recent examples from Africa include elections held in [Senegal](#) in 2007, [Burundi](#) in 2010, and [Liberia](#) in 2011. The opposition in Togo is currently [threatening a boycott](#) ahead of the April elections unless the government implements certain reforms, including reinstating executive term limits that would prevent incumbent president Faure Gnassingbe from running for a third term as president. The [opposition in Sudan](#) is also organizing a boycott of upcoming 2015 elections.

Although some smaller or weaker parties use boycotts for media exposure or attention in elections they have no realistic shot of winning, most boycotts are organized by [relatively strong opposition](#) parties or movements. Boycotts are more common in new and fragile democracies. Most boycotts take place during local, parliamentary, or executive elections. Boycotts of constitutional referendums are rare but have taken place, such as in Egypt in [2012](#) and [2014](#).

Conclusions

Boycotts can be a foreboding sign. [Recent research](#) has found that electoral boycotts are associated with regime change—not during the election being boycotted but in subsequent elections. Boycotts are also associated with an increased likelihood of extra-constitutional regime change, such as a coup d'état, in the near future. Tanzania has been a stabilizing force in East Africa since independence from British colonial rule in 1961, but the current political situation suggests that there are serious political conflicts taking place. The decision by the opposition to boycott the constitutional referendum is a significant setback for democratic development in the country.

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

EXPULSION OF MPS DEEPENS OPPOSITION SPLIT IN ZIMBABWE

By Alexander Noyes

On March 17, 2015, 21 opposition MPs were [expelled](#) from parliament in Zimbabwe for breaking away from their former party, Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T). MDC-T requested the expulsion last week, and Speaker of Parliament Jacob Mudenda, a member of President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), [ruled](#) in MDC-T's favor, declaring that the seats must be vacated. The expulsions are the latest episode in a bitter fight within Zimbabwe's opposition over leadership of the MDC-T, which boiled over after the defeat of former Prime Minister Tsvangirai and his party in the July 31, 2013, elections. The expulsions illustrate a deepening split in Zimbabwe's opposition, which is likely to embolden ZANU-PF in the short term. [more...](#)



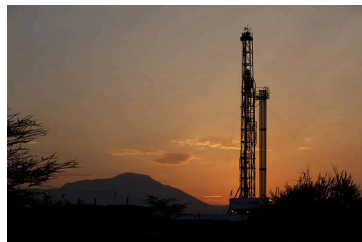
Morgan Tsvangirai, the main opposition leader in Zimbabwe, addresses people who gathered during Workers Day Celebrations at Gwanzura stadium in Harare. (Source: AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi.)

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IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA OF FALLING OIL AND GAS PRICES

By George F. Ward

With the price of crude oil [falling 48 percent](#) from June 2014 to February 2015, effects on the global economy have been widespread. Sub-Saharan Africa has not been spared. The decrease in the price of oil is creating a variety of economic scenarios across the continent, with actual and potential winners and losers beginning to emerge. [more...](#)



Oil exploration in Kenya by Tullow Oil. (Source: Tullow Oil Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/TullowOilplc/photos/pb.115249315219515_-2207520000.1426689829_/694098607334580/?type=3&theater)

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at IDA.

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Morgan Tsvangirai, the main opposition leader in Zimbabwe, addresses people who gathered during Workers Day Celebrations at Gwanzura stadium in Harare. (Source: AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi.)

Previous Tensions and Split

The 2013 elections put an end to a power-sharing government between ZANU-PF, MDC-T, and a smaller MDC faction (first led by former Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara and then Welshman Ncube). The government, in office from 2009 to 2013, was formed after violent and disputed elections in 2008. As highlighted in the February 12, 2014, [edition](#) of *Africa Watch*, tensions within the MDC-T came to a head after the party's decisive electoral defeat in July 2013. In January 2014, a faction within the party led by former finance minister and secretary general of MDC-T, Tendai Biti, openly called for Tsvangirai—who has served as president of the party since 1999—to step down as party leader.

After several [attempts](#) and counter-attempts by Tsvangirai and Biti to suspend and expel each other from the MDC-T, the Biti faction split from the party, forming a splinter group called the MDC Renewal Team. In November 2014, MDC Renewal agreed to join forces with Ncube's MDC party, reformulating the two MDC-T offshoots as the United Movement for Democratic Change (UMDC). On March 2, 2015, the UMDC was officially [launched](#) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second-largest city. Ncube and Senator Sekai Holland serve as co-presidents of the new party, while Tendai Biti and Moses Mzila Ndllovu are co-secretaries general.

Expulsions and Reactions

Both Biti and Holland were [included](#) in the expulsions of the 21 MPs affiliated with UMDC. Explaining the rationale behind the expulsions, Douglas Mwonzora, Secretary General of MDC-T, [asserted](#): "Those MPs can seek new mandate [sic] under their political party. . . . In fairness these MPs can no longer claim to be representing our MDC[-T] members because they are no longer MDC[-T]." The expulsions of the MPs were met with harsh criticism from UMDC. Ncube [argued](#), "the MDC-T's recent attempts to recall twenty-one MDC Renewal from Parliament is one of those incomprehensible decisions which can make sense only to a group of drunkards." Biti went [further](#), accusing MDC-T of working in concert with the ruling ZANU-PF party: "We are not even surprised that we have been recalled because from the onset we knew Tsvangirai was working with ZANU-PF to derail the democratic transition of this country." Biti plans to [challenge](#) the expulsions in court.

The vacated seats set the stage for by-elections to be held to replace the 14 expelled MPs who had been directly elected to office. Seven others of those expelled had been appointed by the MDC-T, which now may put forward replacements. In the past, both MDC-T and UMDC have said they will [boycott](#) by-elections due to unfair electoral practices by ZANU-PF. Because of this, Biti [maintains](#) that the expulsions will "donate the seats to ZANU-PF," a move driven by malice:

"They [MDC-T] are saying it is better for ZANU-PF to occupy the same seats occupied by our members now, which I find unbelievably irrational and I am being very polite because there are better adjectives to describe that action."

Conclusion

With both Zimbabwean opposition parties claiming they will boycott by-elections, the expulsions are likely to further consolidate ZANU-PF's majority in parliament and deepen the fragmentation of the opposition, at least in the near term. As [outlined](#) by *Africa Watch* editor George F. Ward in a recent publication for the Council on Foreign Relations, President Mugabe's ZANU-PF has been consumed by its own unresolved succession struggle over the last several months. Given these divides in the ruling party, combined with Mugabe's age and health issues, Zimbabwe's political and electoral landscape may change significantly by the time elections are held in 2018. If Mugabe departs the political scene and the opposition is able to overcome its current divides, opposition parties may have a genuine shot at unseating ZANU-PF. Thus, if MDC-T and UMDC wish to stay relevant and compete with a resurgent ZANU-PF, it would be wise for both opposition parties to begin mending relations, with an eye toward a potential alliance in the lead-up to the 2018 elections.

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With the price of crude oil [falling 48 percent](#) from June 2014 to February 2015, effects on the global economy have been widespread. Sub-Saharan Africa has not been spared. The decrease in the price of oil is creating a variety of economic scenarios across the continent, with actual and potential winners and losers beginning to emerge.

Africa's Newly Complex Energy Environment

Until the past decade or so, the sub-Saharan Africa energy picture was quite simple. A few West African countries produced oil and, incidentally, natural gas. The other 40 or so sub-Saharan countries remained strictly energy consumers, even as oil and gas exploration activities gradually increased and began to point to substantial reserves in new locations. Today, the sub-Saharan African energy scene is still dominated by two giants, [Nigeria and Angola](#), which in 2013 produced 2.3 million and 1.8 million barrels per day of crude, respectively. Both countries also are major players in the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry, with Nigeria accounting for 8 percent of globally traded LNG and Angola having completed its first LNG facility in 2013. Alongside the two major players, however, a number of other countries have begun to emerge as significant producers of oil and gas. In this increasingly complex energy environment, the fall in oil and gas prices is having a variety of effects that are worth reviewing.

African Consumers are Winners

As noted above, most African countries produce neither oil nor natural gas and rely on imports to cover their needs for those commodities. For some sub-Saharan African countries, including [Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ethiopia](#), oil makes up more than 20 percent of total import costs. These costs had been rising. Rapid urbanization is accelerating the transition to natural gas from wood and charcoal for cooking. Increasing middle-class incomes are stimulating demand for motor vehicles. The plunge in oil prices, which has been a welcome relief for consumers, is projected to stimulate economic growth. Fitch Ratings estimates that the fall in oil prices could [increase growth in sub-Saharan Africa](#) to 5 percent in 2015 from 4.5 percent in 2014. Investors in oil-importing countries are also profiting by the price fall. According to a report by Bloomberg on December 11, 2014, [stock prices surged](#) 22 percent in Tanzania, 18 percent in Uganda, and 9.4 percent in Kenya in the months since oil reached its peak price on June 19, 2014.

New Onshore Producers are Potential Winners

The fall in prices is causing oil and gas exploration companies to scrutinize, and in some cases reduce, their capital spending budgets. Tullow Oil, one of the major players in new oil ventures in East Africa, has [reduced its global 2015 exploration budget](#) to \$200 million, an 80 percent reduction from 2014. Amid the bleak prospects for new oil producers generated by reductions of this scale, there are pockets of hope. Tullow, for example, announced that it would go forward with six basin-opening projects in Kenyan onshore fields during 2015. Kenya, which currently produces no oil or gas, is seen as a relatively stable and fast-growing economy with a potentially large domestic market, as well as proximity to the markets of China and India. In addition, the onshore opportunities that Kenya offers are considerably less expensive



Oil exploration in Kenya by Tullow Oil. (Source: Tullow Oil Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/TullowOilpic/photos/pb.115249315219515-2207520000.1426689829_/694098607334580/?type=3&theater)

to exploit than the deep-water prospects that exist in West Africa. Another potential new producer, Uganda, is in a similar position as Kenya, although costs in that country are potentially higher because of the isolated location of the oil fields and the nature of Ugandan crude, which is waxy and must be heated to flow through pipelines.

Traditional Producers Stand to Lose

The legacy oil producers of West Africa are at greatest risk in three respects. First, despite decades of oil revenues, several producing countries have failed to achieve economic diversity. Oil exports account for anywhere between [40 and 80 percent of the GDP](#) of countries such as Gabon, Angola, Republic of the Congo, and Equatorial Guinea. Second, the governments of some oil-producing countries remain heavily dependent on royalties to finance government operations. In Gabon, Angola, Nigeria, and Equatorial Guinea, oil accounts for more than 70 percent of government revenue. One measure of this sort of dependency is the fiscal break-even price of oil, the price at which a government is able to balance its budget. In general, African producing countries have been able to [lower the break-even price](#) through fiscal austerity, but that price has consistently remained above the current market level. Nigeria has come closest to successful adjustment, lowering its break-even price to the vicinity of \$60 per barrel, yet even that has not been nearly enough. Third, low oil prices are limiting the capacity of legacy producers to replace dwindling oil reserves. The [average finding cost of oil in Africa](#), \$35.01 per barrel, is one of the highest in the world. The cost of finding new oil in deep-water fields is even higher. That is a particular problem for countries such as Angola and Republic of the Congo, which rely on offshore production.

Taken together, the impacts of the three factors described above define the degree of economic difficulty that individual producing countries will continue to face as long as low oil prices persist. Angola, which has failed to diversify its economy, remains heavily dependent on oil revenue to finance its government, and faces high costs for replacing reserves, would appear to be the most threatened of all African producers. The [benchmark rate](#) on Angolan loans had increased by 10 percent as of December 2014. Other, smaller producers, such as Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of the Congo, face similar degrees of hardship. Nigeria would appear to be less at risk because oil represents only 14 percent of its GDP. On the other hand, oil still fuels more than [70 percent](#) of the Nigerian budget, which itself is under great pressure because of the costs of countering security threats such as the Boko Haram insurgency and the demands of a rapidly growing population for better social services. Economic growth projections for Nigeria for 2015 have been [revised downward](#) from 6.4 to 5.2 percent.

Conclusion

Over time, lower oil and gas prices will benefit most sub-Saharan African countries. For some new oil-producing countries, such as Ghana, the dream of petroleum-fueled prosperity will be delayed and diminished, but may still eventually arrive. For Angola and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Nigeria, the future looks worse. Having suffered from the “resource curse” of abundant oil and high commodity prices, those countries appear to be headed for a future of constrained revenues and fiscal austerity. Wise economic stewardship will be required to avoid risks to political and social stability.

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at IDA.

NIGERIA VOTES: THE PAST AS PROLOGUE

By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

Barring any last-minute delays—for which there is a [precedent](#)—Nigerians will cast their ballots in elections for president and parliament on February 14, 2015. Voters are then scheduled to return to the polls two weeks later, on February 28, to vote in local elections for [governors and state assemblies](#). Nigeria, the regional hegemon and continental [economic powerhouse](#), is currently facing a significant threat from the terrorist group Boko Haram, which has been waging all-out war against the government in the northeast part of the country. It is believed that the group may control [between 20,000 and 70,000 square miles](#) of territory across several states, affecting millions of people. There have been attacks virtually daily on villages across the northeast of the country and at least [two very recent attempts](#) by Boko Haram to take over a major city, Maiduguri, capital of Borno State and home to more than [2 million](#) residents. On February 3, a female suicide bomber detonated an explosive [outside a rally in Gombe State](#) where incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan was campaigning. Although the group has yet to claim responsibility, the attack was [most likely planned by Boko Haram](#) and meant to disrupt preparations for the elections. [more...](#)



Supporters of Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan dance, during an election campaign rally, at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos, Nigeria, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2015. (Source: AP Photo/Sunday Alamba.)

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member on the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

MADAGASCAR: PROGRESS ON RECONCILIATION AMID GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE

By Alexander Noyes

On January 14, 2015, President Hery Rajaonarimampianina of Madagascar (known as Hery) [appointed](#) Jean Ravelonarivo, a general in the air force, as his new prime minister. Former Prime Minister Roger Kolo, a technocrat, resigned, along with his cabinet, on January 11 after facing criticism for failing to adequately address widespread electricity failures on the island. On January 25, Hery [announced](#) replacements for eight ministers, including the minister of finance. Twenty-two other ministers retained their positions in the shake-up. While the cabinet reshuffle made headlines—with the appointment of a “military man” as prime minister raising fears of a [return](#) to military intervention in politics—Hery has quietly been leading an impressive effort toward political reconciliation. [more...](#)



President Hery Martial Rajaonarimampianina of Madagascar addresses the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters, Thursday, Sept. 25, 2014. (Source: AP Photo/Jason DeCrow.)

Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

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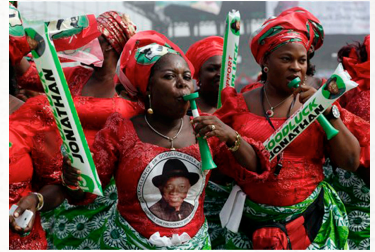
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Supporters of Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan dance, during an election campaign rally, at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos, Nigeria, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2015. (Source: AP Photo/Sunday Alamba.)

Nigeria's Recent Electoral History

Since the return to civilian rule and multiparty elections in 1999, one political party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has won every election. No incumbent Nigerian president has ever lost a presidential election, and there is no guarantee that an incumbent president would accept electoral defeat. This possibility is frequently a concern in the African context, and particularly in Nigeria, where previous military governments have [annulled elections](#).

Complicating matters, the 2015 presidential election is a virtual repeat of the 2011 election in which incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP ran against former military leader Muhamadu Buhari. Unlike the 2011 election, however, Buhari is now a member of the All Progressives Congress (APC), a party formed in 2013 by members of several opposition groups that came together to more effectively contest elections in 2015 against President Jonathan and the PDP. Over the past few years, [several high-ranking disaffected PDP members](#) have crossed the aisle and [joined the APC](#), creating acrimonious relations between the two camps.

President Jonathan continues to be a controversial candidate. Throughout the 2000s, the PDP was able to secure support from a wide swath of political elites by forging an unwritten agreement regarding the positions of president and vice president. The leadership of the PDP decided that to preserve the fragile peace between religious groups—roughly half the population of Nigeria is Muslim and half is Christian—the presidency and vice presidency should rotate between a southern Christian and a northern Muslim. Jonathan explicitly broke this rule in 2011 when he decided to run for election after his predecessor, Umaru Yar'Adua, a northern Muslim, died in office in 2010 and his vice president, at the time Jonathan, assumed office. Much of the leadership within the PDP was split over whether or not Jonathan should be allowed to contest elections in 2011. This debate again came up before the 2015 elections. These fractures contributed to the defection of several of members of the PDP to the APC.

Fraud and Violence

Nigeria's past elections have been marred by serious irregularities and violence. Even elections that are believed to be well organized and with minimal levels of fraud have seen significant violence: the [2011 elections](#), which many have hailed as Nigeria's cleanest, resulted in more than 800 deaths. Already, violent confrontations are taking place before the 2015 elections in places such as [Kaduna](#), [Rivers State](#), and the [Niger Delta](#). Pre-election violence is often a sign of future violence.

In 2011 Buhari's supporters rioted in several cities in the north after it was announced that he had lost to Jonathan. Buhari turned to the courts and, when they found Jonathan the rightful winner, [decried](#) the court's decision. He claimed that Jonathan's presidency was illegitimate and that the court had been captured by the PDP. As Buhari is running again, in his fourth attempt to win the presidency, there is serious question of whether his camp will accept defeat. The government has accused Buhari of threatening [bloodshed](#) if the 2015 elections are not "transparent."

Boko Haram and Fair Elections?

In May 2013, President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the three states in the northeast most affected by Boko Haram violence—Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe—which remained under a [state of emergency](#) with nightly curfews, blockades, and information blackouts until November 2014. At that point, the National Assembly rejected the president's request for an extension (which would have been the third). Several members of congress claimed that the state of emergency was doing nothing to combat the insurgent group but, by making access to people and information more difficult, was exacerbating the situation.

With less than two weeks left for preparations, it remains to be seen how elections will be held in these three states. The conflict with Boko Haram has caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of potential voters, and there seems to be no provision for the displaced to vote on an absentee basis. In total, there may be more than 2 million potential voters affected by the conflict. The chairman of the electoral commission has stated that he will not hold elections anywhere he is [unable to guarantee the safety and security of his staff](#). The APC, however, has warned that elections [must take place](#) in the northeast, where a majority of voters are believed to support the opposition. It is almost certain that attacks by the group Boko Haram, as well as other electorally motivated groups, will continue unabated until at least election day and perhaps long after.

In almost any other country, such a volatile security situation might be cause for the delay or postponement of elections. But in Nigeria, it seems that not holding elections could result in just as much, if not more, violence than holding them. The opposition is demanding that [elections proceed as planned](#). The government's national security advisor suggested in late January that a [slight delay](#) in the vote might be in order to allow the electoral commission additional time to properly prepare for elections and to finish distributing voter cards. As of February 5, only [44 million out of nearly 66.8 million voter cards](#) have been issued. The opposition immediately responded that any delay would be interpreted as an attempt by the government to rig the election. The situation is so combustible at this point that any perceived fraud, injustice, or unfairness in the election process might trigger violence that could envelop the country.

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member on the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

MADAGASCAR: PROGRESS ON RECONCILIATION AMID GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE

By Alexander Noyes

On January 14, 2015, President Hery Rajaonarimampianina of Madagascar (known as Hery) [appointed](#) Jean Ravelonarivo, a general in the air force, as his new prime minister. Former Prime Minister Roger Kolo, a technocrat, resigned, along with his cabinet, on January 11 after facing criticism for failing to adequately address widespread electricity failures on the island. On January 25, Hery [announced](#) replacements for eight ministers, including the minister of finance. Twenty-two other ministers retained their positions in the shake-up. While the cabinet reshuffle made headlines—with the appointment of a “military man” as prime minister raising fears of a [return](#) to military intervention in politics—Hery has quietly been leading an impressive effort toward political reconciliation.



President Hery Martial Rajaonarimampianina of Madagascar addresses the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters, Thursday, Sept. 25, 2014. (Source: AP Photo/Jason DeCrow.)

Previous Political Instability

Madagascar has an extended history of political instability, electoral violence, and military coups. A bitter rivalry between former presidents Marc Ravalomanana and Andry Rajoelina has dominated the political landscape since 2009, with both men still wielding considerable political influence. In 2009, Rajoelina ousted Ravalomanana from office with backing from the military. Ravalomanana fled to South Africa and was subsequently [sentenced](#) to life in prison for deaths that occurred in his overthrow. From 2010 to 2013, Ravalomanana made several attempts to return, but was thwarted by the Rajoelina government.

After both Ravalomanana and Rajoelina were barred from running in the December 2013 elections—under the terms of a Southern African Development Community agreement—Hery [won](#) the elections (with backing from Rajoelina). The new president then quickly fell out with Rajoelina, after Hery refused to do the former president’s bidding (until recently, they [reportedly](#) had not met since March 2014). With a peaceful democratic election and an exchange of power in the rearview mirror, Madagascar looked set to return to normalcy and stability. Shortly after elections, international actors welcomed the country back into multilateral organizations and trade agreements.

Reconciliation Initiatives

As highlighted in the October 17, 2014, [edition](#) of *Africa Watch*, in October 2014 Ravalomanana returned unannounced from South Africa to Madagascar. He was quickly arrested and [detained](#). His return and Hery’s forceful response threatened to push Madagascar back toward instability. Since December 2014, however, Hery has embarked on a number of reconciliation initiatives. With assistance from several South African negotiators, Hery met separately with both Rajoelina and Ravalomanana in mid-December. Days later, under the auspices of the Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar (FFKM), Hery [met](#) collectively with four ex-presidents of Madagascar: Rajoelina and Ravalomanana, as well as Albert Zafy and Didier Ratsiraka, who were in power prior to Ravalomanana. All five men [professed](#) their support for a program of national reconciliation.

Hery also [loosened](#) restrictions on Ravalomanana’s detention, allowing him to travel home for the Christmas holidays and remain under house arrest at his residence in the capital, Antananarivo (he was previously being held in a military town in the north). The FFKM meeting between the four former presidents and Hery resulted in his pledge to free political prisoners, a promise he kept on December 24, 2014, when he [pardoned](#) five prisoners that were close to Ravalomanana, including Jean Heriniaina Raelina, a former military adviser to Ravalomanana.

The opinions expressed in these commentaries are those of the authors and should not be viewed as representing the official position of the Institute for Defense Analyses or its sponsors. Links to web sites are for informational purposes only and not an endorsement.

Conclusion

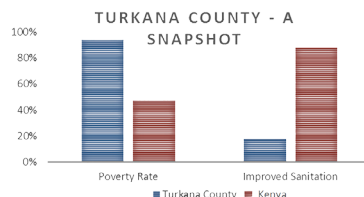
These reconciliation efforts have significantly lessened tensions on the island and led to an unexpected [alliance](#) between Hery and Ravalomanana. It seems only a [matter of time](#) before Ravalomanana is also pardoned and perhaps asked to participate in Hery's government in some capacity (there were [rumors](#) that he was discussed as a possible candidate for the recently vacant prime minister position). Rajoelina appears bothered by this alliance, and publicly [objected](#) to Hery's new pick of prime minister, saying Ravelonarivo benefited from personal ties to the current president and his wife. Despite disagreements between Hery and Rajoelina, Hery's recent reconciliation efforts seem genuine and should be applauded for decreasing prospects for political instability in Madagascar, at least in the short term. International and regional actors—South Africa, France, and United States in particular—should continue to urge Hery, his new cabinet, and Ravalomanana to consolidate the substantial progress already made. There are [reports](#) that a national political dialogue may be held this spring. That would be another step in the right direction and should be encouraged and supported logistically by regional and international stakeholders.

Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

OIL EXTRACTION IN KENYA—POLITICAL AND GEOLOGICAL HURDLES

By Dr. Eliza Johannes

Turkana County, an austere and historically marginalized region located in northwest Kenya, has recently seen a growing number of [intercommunal clashes](#) between the Turkana and Pokot communities. Whereas [cattle rustling and banditry](#) predominantly accounted for violence in the past, competition over ownership rights to land expected to contain at least [600 million barrels of oil](#) has altered the tenor and tone of violence in the area. Raiders from both communities, who in the past sought to steal prized cattle from their rivals, now allegedly torch villages and terrorize civilians in a “scorched earth” campaign meant to dislodge entire populations. Their apparent belief is that whoever remains can lay claim to the land and monopolize its riches. [more..](#)



Source: Kenya County Fact Sheets, www.worldbank.org.

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PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE AHEAD OF POLL IN LESOTHO

By Alexander Noyes

On February 1, 2015, a [shootout](#) between the military and two bodyguards of Prime Minister Thomas Thabane took place at a checkpoint in Maseru, Lesotho’s capital city. The violence left one dead and three wounded. Thabane was not with the bodyguards at the time of the shooting. After the incident, Thabane’s press secretary [alleged](#) that “renegade” soldiers had deliberately targeted the bodyguards. Another senior adviser of Thabane’s [asserted](#) that the bodyguards were perhaps targeted for previously tipping off Thabane about a coup attempt in August 2014, allowing the prime minister to escape to South Africa. The Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) [denied](#) blame for the incident, claiming that the bodyguards shot first. Renewed political tensions in the run-up to [elections](#) scheduled for February 28 have raised fears about poll-related violence in Lesotho. [more..](#)



In this Sunday, Aug. 31, 2014, photo, army personnel outside the military headquarters in Maseru, Lesotho. In August, Lesotho’s prime minister fled to South Africa in fear for his safety. Defense Forces denied any attempt at a coup. (AP Photo)

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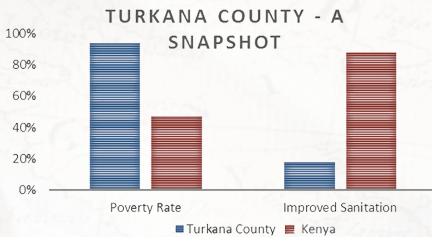
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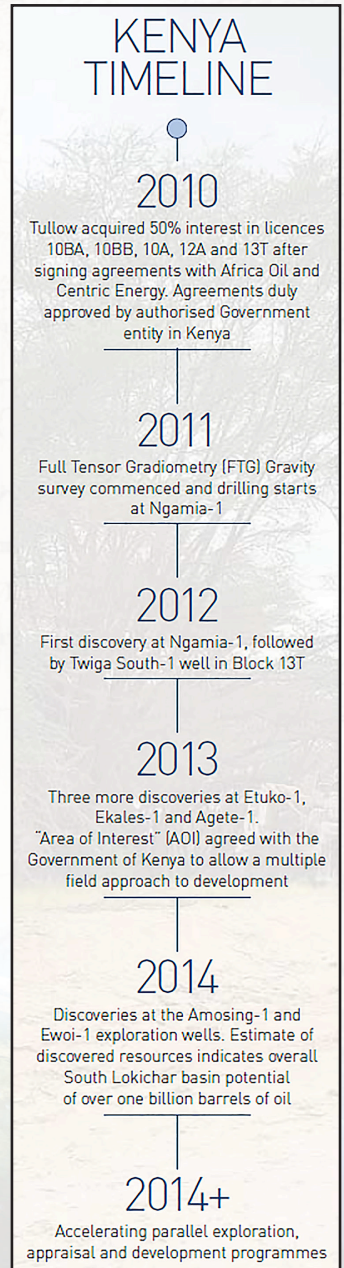


Source: Kenya County Fact Sheets, www.worldbank.org.

past sought to steal prized cattle from their rivals, now allegedly torch villages and terrorize civilians in a “scorched earth” campaign meant to dislodge entire populations. Their apparent belief is that whoever remains can lay claim to the land and monopolize its riches.

Competing accounts offer different descriptions of the role politics plays in alternatively resolving and escalating this long-standing conflict. On February 3, 2015, the Turkana and Pokots separately [hosted](#) members of Kenya’s Senate Security Committee in [Kapedo](#). The committee chairman, Yusuf Haji, was on a fact-finding mission to determine causes and identify possible resolutions to the conflict. He and other national officials in attendance are seeking a politically negotiated settlement to take effect before the “[geothermal project](#), oil, and [gold](#) discoveries in the area go to waste” due to insecurity, an outcome feared by some investors. Other unnamed local politicians are allegedly promoting the violence, which purportedly stems from the belief that if one group wins outright, it will monopolize the rights of landownership. Politicians representing such a group are expected to be advantageously positioned to share the wealth. Turkana is a [trust land](#) owned by the community, a point activists have raised since at least 2012 in support of a negotiated solution—a solution they say will benefit local residents, not outsiders hiding behind questionable titles and deeds.

Against this backdrop of intercommunal conflict and contentious politics, British-owned Tullow Oil plc, the company responsible for oil exploration and development in the area, has pursued the goal of expanded operations in Kenya by working to appease both government leaders and locals. The [Tullow Kenya timeline](#) illustrates how since 2010, the company has prioritized exploring possible oil locations, established estimates for likely yields, and made arrangements for extraction. The [recent](#) drop in oil prices has made offshore drilling less attractive and focused the company’s efforts on developing Kenyan oil deposits in earnest.



Kenya Timeline. (Source: “Special Feature: Kenya,” Tullow Oil.)

To facilitate these efforts, Tullow [describes](#) how it has made \$21.7 million in government payments (e.g., taxes to national government), \$47.9 million in local content expenditures (e.g., locally sourced construction and maintenance projects), and \$1 million in social investment (e.g., investments in local development projects, such as schools, hospitals, and scholarships). While the nearly \$70 million in investments is considerable, it represents only part of an East African strategy that involves coupling extractions in Kenya with others in Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, which would all be shipped for export to a projected port on the Kenyan Coast near Lamu.

Violence and political drama grab headlines, but they are not the most significant hurdles Tullow potentially faces in the region. The company [estimates](#) that every barrel of processed crude oil requires 50 gallons of water. Given the estimates of 600 million to 1 billion barrels of oil in the area, the water requirement is 30–50 billion gallons. Tullow's need for water occurs in a region [renowned for water shortages](#), where the poor are more likely to beg for water than food or money. Currently, Tullow has established what its and the local population's water needs are and is now mapping [subsurface](#) water to estimate the extent of Turkana's aquifers. In 2013, satellite imagery and radar identified the presence of [large water sources](#) underneath the arid land. To date, however, the government has yet to deliver a comprehensive plan for extracting and distributing the "[liquid gold](#)." In the meantime, disputes over scarce water and oil prospects are likely to remain drivers for conflict in the region.

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In this Sunday, Aug. 31, 2014, photo, army personnel outside the military headquarters in Maseru, Lesotho. In August, Lesotho's prime minister fled to South Africa in fear for his safety. Defense Forces denied any attempt at a coup. (AP Photo)

History of Tensions

Lesotho is a small, landlocked country surrounded entirely by South Africa. Although the country has a long history of military coups and political instability, the formation of a 2012 coalition government was hailed as democratic [success](#) story. The coalition consists of Thabane's All Basotho Convention (ABC), the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), led by Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing, and the Basotho National Party (BNP). As highlighted in the October 3, 2014, [edition](#) of *Africa Watch*, hopes for stability sank relatively quickly. Deep tensions within the coalition government can be traced back to June 2014, when Thabane suspended parliament to thwart a no-confidence vote. A coup attempt, followed by clashes between the military and police on August 30, 2014, brought tensions to a head.

Agreements and Security Environment

After the June suspension of parliament, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) began work to facilitate a resolution. An October 2 [agreement](#) negotiated by Cyril Ramaphosa, deputy president of South Africa, allowed for the reopening of a caretaker parliament on October 17, with elections moved up to February 2015. A follow-on [deal](#) agreed to on October 23 attempted to resolve the security situation and deadly rivalries between the military and police. The police are [seen](#) as standing behind Thabane, while the LDF is seen as supporting Deputy Prime Minister Metsing. The deal specified that the three top security officials seen as most responsible for the violence would step down and take "leaves of absence" outside Lesotho. As agreed, Lieutenant-General Tlali Kamoli, former head of the LDF, is now in [South Africa](#), while Khothatso Tsooana, former police commissioner, and Maaparankoe Mahao, whom Thabane appointed as Kamoli's replacement in the wake of the coup attempt, are in Algeria and Sudan, respectively.

Despite the temporary removal of Kamoli, Tsooana, and Mahao, unstable civil-military relations in Lesotho have persisted, with Khoantle Motsomotso, the acting LDF commander, [defying](#) Thabane on a number of directives. After Tsooana stepped down, Thabane [clashed](#) with his replacement, acting police commissioner Masupha Masupha. The latter recently took early retirement. In January, Thabane went so far as to attempt to recall his ally Tsooana from Algeria, but was thwarted by Ramaphosa. During the first week of February 2015, Home Affairs Minister Joang Molapo [argued](#) that previous agreements did not go far enough: "The insistence by Mr Ramaphosa that the security situation is fine and completely under control, has unfortunately proven to be the opposite. . . . It should be clear to everybody there are still issues that need to be dealt with."

Conclusion

As forecast in the October 3 [edition](#) of *Africa Watch*, it appears previous agreements have not been sufficient to decrease political tensions and resolve deep-seated and violent intra-security sector rivalries. The shootout on February 1 was the latest manifestation of a deteriorating security environment in Lesotho. On February 5, four LDF soldiers were arrested in South Africa, where they [allegedly](#) planned to kill the two bodyguards from the shootout, who were in a South African hospital.

To address rising tensions and the security situation, South African President Jacob Zuma, under the auspices of SADC, paid a visit to Lesotho on February 9. After meeting with coalition partners, Zuma [declared](#) that elections would go ahead as planned: “The meeting expressed its confidence that the climate for the holding of elections on 28 February remains on course.” To make this seemingly optimistic rhetoric a reality, South Africa, SADC, and international actors may have to pressure Lesotho’s coalition partners to denounce violence. Stakeholders could also lay out concrete repercussions for parties that do foment election-related violence. In the longer term, the failure of recent piecemeal agreements to adequately resolve political violence suggests that comprehensive [peace-building](#) and security sector reform initiatives will be necessary to help end Lesotho’s recurring bouts of political instability.

Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

THE ILLUSION OF CONSEQUENCE: CORRUPTION AND IMPUNITY IN AFRICA

By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

Corruption and graft are not unique to the African continent. But the scope and scale of such activities suggest a persistent and widespread problem—the [vast majority](#) of countries in Africa have at some point in the recent past been accused of mishandling state revenues. Many of the countries implicated are repeat offenders, and, unsurprisingly, the accused are rarely held to account. When punishments are handed out, they are disproportionately weak in comparison to the gravity of the crime. This fuels a cycle of corruption, scandal, and impunity. Transparency International describes the problem in Africa as a “[situation of endemic corruption](#)” and one of the primary contributors to the continent’s perpetual underperformance in terms of economic and social development. [more...](#)



President Jacob Zuma, center, behind bulletproof glass, stands to attention during the National Anthem at his inauguration ceremony in Pretoria, South Africa, Saturday, May 24, 2014. Zuma was sworn in to serve a second term after the country’s fifth democratic elections. (Source: AP Photo/Ihsaan Haffjee, Pool.)

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COUP ATTEMPT IN THE GAMBIA LEADS TO CRACKDOWN

By Alexander Noyes

On December 30, 2014, a coup [attempt](#) was launched in The Gambia to unseat authoritarian President Yahya Jammeh, who came to power via a military coup in 1994. Jammeh was out of the country in Dubai when his presidential guard thwarted the coup attempt, [killing](#) four in the process. Cherno Njie, a U.S. citizen of Gambian descent who owned several businesses and lived in Texas, [allegedly](#) led the attempt and planned to take over from Jammeh if the coup succeeded. The small group of coup plotters also included two former U.S. soldiers of Gambian origin and the former head of the presidential guard, Lieutenant-Colonel Lamin Sanneh, who was [killed](#) in the attempt. In the aftermath of the coup attempt, Jammeh has cracked down, arresting [dozens](#) and [reshuffling](#) his cabinet. [more...](#)



A giant billboard of Gambia President Yahya Jammeh sits on an empty street in Banjul, The Gambia, Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014, one day after a coup attempt was launched. (Source: AP Photo.)

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Scope and Scale of the Problem

According to the United Nations, illicit financial flows into and out of Africa may total more than [\\$50 billion per year](#). In Nigeria alone, it was alleged by the former Central Bank governor that [\\$20 billion was missing](#) and presumed stolen from state coffers in 2013. That same year, almost [\\$250 million](#) was found to be missing from state accounts in Malawi. It is believed that several high-ranking officials were complicit in the theft. In 2014, a public audit found that approximately [\\$24 million](#) may have been improperly spent by South African President Jacob Zuma for so-called security upgrades to his private residence in Nkandla. Such upgrades included the installation of an in-ground swimming pool that the government defended as a necessary “[fire pool](#)” meant to serve as an emergency source of water in case of fire.

Tanzania was ranked [111th out of 177](#) countries in Transparency International’s 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index. The public energy sector in particular has repeatedly come under fire as the result of corruption allegations. The 2008 [Richmond scandal](#) involved opaque contracting and millions paid to an unregistered international energy company (Richmond Development Company), which promised to construct an oil pipeline and provide electricity during a national shortage. The company did neither. Most recently, the Tanzanian government has been rocked by a series of scandals involving the misappropriation of at least [\\$120 million](#) through the Tanzanian Electric Company Limited (Tanesco). The attorney general, prime minister, and minister of energy, among others, [have been implicated](#).

Consequences?

The penalties for public corruption are generally minimal. Too often, the punishment for corruption is limited to the political and electoral arena. Politicians may lose elections and cabinet ministers may lose their positions temporarily, but rarely are offenders prosecuted. Almost always, the alleged stolen funds are [retained by the accused](#). In response to public pressure, government officials may open a formal inquiry, but these inquiries typically experience frequent delays, and the final reports are vague or inconclusive. In Nigeria, for example, the government has repeatedly [stalled](#) releasing the findings of its report on the 2013 missing funds. The opposition has accused the ruling party of deliberately [suppressing](#) the report and accused the president of using much of the money as a slush fund for upcoming elections.

In [Malawi](#) and [South Africa](#), corruption scandals featured heavily in recent elections. In both cases, the opposition used these scandals in an attempt to discredit the ruling party. In Malawi, this strategy may have been successful—some have linked the corruption scandal to [the defeat of incumbent president](#) Joyce Banda in the 2014 polls. In South Africa, the African National Congress still won the majority of the vote—[62 percent](#)—but this is the smallest majority the party has received since the transition to multiparty elections in 1994.



President Jacob Zuma, center, behind bulletproof glass, stands to attention during the National Anthem at his inauguration ceremony, in Pretoria, South Africa, Saturday, May 24, 2014. Zuma was sworn in to serve a second term after the country’s fifth democratic elections. (Source: AP Photo/Ihsaan Haffjee, Pool.)

Unfortunately, even political consequences can be quite limited and short-lived. In Tanzania, a 2012 government audit found that several ministries were responsible for the “[rampant misuse](#)” of funds. In response, President Jakaya Kikwete [reshuffled his cabinet](#), and six cabinet ministers lost their positions. All six retained their parliamentary seats, however, and will likely run again in 2015. None have been prosecuted. The prime minister who oversaw the Richmond contract, Edward Lowassa, [resigned](#) his position in disgrace in 2008. This was the [second time](#) he had been forced out of his position due to allegations of corruption, the first occurring during his tenure as land minister under the previous president. He remained in political exile for a brief time in 2008 but is now being discussed as a [front-runner](#) for the ruling party’s presidential nomination. With consequences like these, it would seem that politicians and officials have few incentives to avoid acts of corruption.

Conclusion

Widespread corruption in Africa has many causes. In some instances, reliance on natural resource royalties rather than taxes to fund the government budget creates [a disconnect](#) between the governing elite and the citizenry. Weak political and social institutions—the judiciary and media in particular—also create a situation where corruption is infrequently or inadequately reported on and where the state lacks the capacity or will to follow through with prosecution. When made aware of extreme instances of corruption, the international community will respond by withholding aid or assistance until some action is taken, as happened in [October 2014 in Tanzania](#). This donor freeze prompted the government to pressure current Prime Minister [Mizengo Pinda](#) to resign, although he has not done so to date. But as evidenced by the rise, fall, rise, fall, and rise of Edward Lowassa, such a punishment would likely be only a temporary measure. Until substantive reform takes place within individual countries and there are meaningful consequences for offenders, government corruption in Africa is likely to continue.

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A giant billboard of Gambia President Yahya Jammeh sits on an empty street in Banjul The Gambia, Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014, one day after a coup attempt was launched. (Source: AP Photo.)

“The Worst Dictatorship You’ve Probably Never Heard Of”

The Gambia is a small West African country with a population of less than 2 million. Jammeh has ruled The Gambia for the past two decades in an increasingly authoritarian fashion. He has faced recent [criticism](#) from human rights groups over various human rights violations, including stifling dissent, limiting press freedoms, torture, and extrajudicial killings. In 2014, the European Union [suspended](#) a \$186 million aid package to The Gambia over a harsh anti-homosexual law, and last month the United States removed The Gambia from eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act. Last week, Public Radio International [referred](#) to Jammeh’s government as “the worst dictatorship you’ve probably never heard of.” In the wake of the coup attempt, Jammeh [warned](#) any other potential plotters: “No force can take this place and nobody can destabilize this country . . . Anybody who plans to attack this country, be ready, because you are going to die.”

A Coup Born in the U.S.A.

Both Njie and Papa Faal, a former sergeant in the U.S. Army who lived in Minnesota, survived the shootout with Jammeh’s guards and managed to flee to the United States via Senegal. On their return to the United States, they were arrested and [charged](#) with weapons violations and attempting to overthrow Jammeh. Njie and Faal are being charged under the Neutrality Act of 1794, which [forbids](#) “any military expedition or enterprise” from the United States against “any foreign prince or state of whom the United States was at peace.” The 22-page FBI affidavit [filed](#) on January 3 outlining the charges against Njie and Faal reveals many details about the planning and the coup attempt.

The document outlines how Njie and his associates hatched the coup plot—allegedly to restore democracy in The Gambia—in August 2014 in the United States. [According](#) to the affidavit, “They hoped they would be able to take over the country without having to kill any Gambians.” The group bought up to 30 weapons at gun shops in the United States. Those weapons were smuggled into The Gambia, along with night vision goggles and other supplies. Njie allegedly was the main financier of the operation, which had a [budget](#) of roughly \$220,000. The document also reveals that the plotters believed that they had the support of members of the Gambian military, noting that they “expected to be joined by up to 160 members of the local Gambian military who supposedly agreed to the coup.”

Since Jammeh, a former military officer, came to power, there allegedly have been [eight](#) coup attempts. Each has been followed by military purges and executions. Maggie Dwyer [argues](#) that existing tensions and internal divides within the Gambian military—at the highest levels—contributed to the most recent coup attempt. After the December 30 shootout, the military demonstrated its loyalty to Jammeh, marching on January 5 with banners [saying](#), “Gambians [sic] soldiers are behind you President Jammeh,” and the army chief announced, “We love you, Your Excellency, and this bond of love and leadership is eternal.”

The Inevitable Crackdown

As after past coup attempts, Jammeh has cracked down harshly, allegedly [arresting](#) “dozens” of civilians and military personnel suspected of being involved in the plot. An activist in Dakar [told Voice of America](#) that up to 22 relatives of those believed to be involved in the coup attempt had been detained. Four military officer suspects have also [reportedly](#) fled to Guinea-Bissau. In addition, Jammeh has [shut down](#) Taranga FM, an independent radio station. After the failed attempt on his office, Jammeh promised to [hunt down his attackers](#): “I am going to set an example. The last time I said it and people begged me to have mercy, this time it is going to be an eye for an eye. And I am going to get rid of these elements one by one until the last person.”

The November 14, 2014, [edition](#) of *Africa Watch* highlighted [research](#) by Clayton Thyne and Jonathan Powell arguing that coups in authoritarian regimes can often lead to democratic transitions by acting as necessary “shocks.” The authors also [argue](#) that even failed coup attempts in authoritarian states may help foster democratization: “We view failed coups as credible signals that leaders must enact meaningful reforms to remain in power.” Based on past coup attempts and this most recent one, the case of The Gambia appears to suggest otherwise. While the longer term effects of the recent coup attempt in The Gambia remain to be seen, it is clear that the plot has prompted a severe crackdown in an already repressive country, a development that bodes ill for prospects of democratization in The Gambia, at least in the near term.

Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

TRADING WHITE HATS FOR BLUE ONES? CHINA SENDS AN INFANTRY BATTALION TO SOUTH SUDAN

By Dr. Eliza Johannes

On January 9, 2015, China deployed an [advance party](#) of 18 peacekeepers to South Sudan. By March, the number will have climbed to 520, eventually topping off at a full battalion of 700. This military contingent will be stationed at the United Nations country office in Juba, complementing assistance provided by approximately [350](#) Chinese engineers and medical staff located nearly [400 miles](#) away in Wau. In a [press release](#), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) said that Chinese troops will focus primarily on “[protecting] civilians living in or near the Mission’s UN House property, carry[ing] out patrols in and around Juba, the escorting of humanitarian relief supplies and the guarding of UN assets.” [more...](#)

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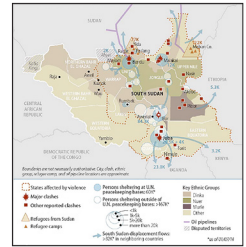


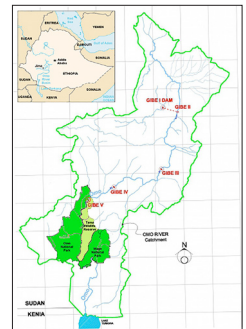
Figure 1. South Sudan Crisis Map

Source: L. P. Blanchard, “The Crisis in South Sudan,” Congressional Research Service, January 9, 2014, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43344.pdf>. Graphic created by CRS. Boundaries generated using data from ESRI, National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and State Department (all 2013), and U.N. Development Program (2012). Other areas and locations based on maps from USAID (01/07/14) and Drilling Info International. Humanitarian data from UNOCHA.

AFRICAN HYDROPOLITICS—ETHIOPIA’S OTHER DAM

By George F. Ward

While much attention has been focused on the controversy over [the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam](#) (GERD), Ethiopia’s 6,000 megawatt hydropower project on the Blue Nile, another major dam project, also hotly debated, has been moving toward completion. The Gibe III hydropower dam on the Omo River in southwestern Ethiopia will eventually generate 1,870 megawatts of electricity. On September 22, 2014, Ethiopian Electric Power announced that Gibe III was [87 percent complete](#) and that two of its 10 generating units would begin operation in spring 2015. Although Gibe III will eventually be dwarfed by the GERD, it will still represent an 82 percent increase in Ethiopia’s currently installed electrical generating capacity when it becomes fully operational as early as 2016. Gibe III’s critics complain that the dam and associated projects will disrupt a delicate ecosystem and destroy the livelihoods of many thousands of people in Ethiopia and Kenya. The Ethiopian and Kenyan governments [counter](#) that far more people will benefit from the electrical power that the dam will produce. With international support, the supporters of the dam seem to be prevailing. [more...](#)



Gibe Dams in the Omo-Turkana Basin. (Source: International Rivers, <http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/maps-gibe-dams-in-the-omo-turkana-basin-4579>, licensed under Creative Commons.)

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at IDA.

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The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

IDA’s three federally-funded research and development centers provide objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise.

IDA’s Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

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According to a Congressional Research Service (CRS) [report](#), Juba is one of three locations designated as a “major clash” area (see Figure 1). It houses nearly 30,000 displaced people in UN camps and contains over 20,000 more in the area not directly serviced by the UN. In addition, another 20,000 have fled into the northern regions of Uganda and Kenya.

[Some](#) argue that China has deployed the infantry battalion to protect its economic and political interests and that the opportunity to assist Sudanese civilians is an added benefit—not the focus. Wang Yi, China’s foreign minister, [dismisses](#) the charges out of hand: “China’s mediation of South Sudan issues is completely the responsibility and duty of a responsible power, and not because of China’s own interests.” At the same time, while Chinese contributions will help support the UN surge from 10,000 to 12,500 troops (originally approved by UN Security Council [resolution](#) in December 2013), critics argue that China’s real aim is to [protect](#) South Sudanese oil workers. Oil workers labor in an industry in which the Chinese have [invested](#) well over \$20 billion. China is the largest foreign investor in oil in both Sudan and South Sudan. Adding to the perception of China being a significant stakeholder in South Sudanese politics is its position as the country’s [largest](#) trading partner. Oil exports drive most, if not all, of the favorable South Sudan surplus in the balance of trade.

While only the Chinese know their real intentions, it is important to note other circumstances surrounding the troop deployment to Juba. A [report](#) published by the U.S. Energy Information Administration indicates that Juba lies at the outskirts of South Sudan’s largest oil and gas field (Block 8; see Figure 2). Juba also happens to

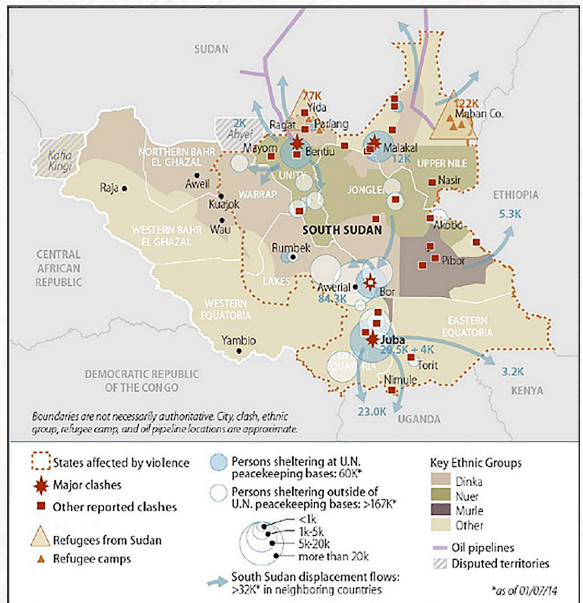


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be at the center of three proposed pipelines: one running from the planned Upper Nile refinery to the north; one running east to the coast off Djibouti; and another running southeast to the Kenyan coastal city of Lamu. Even though Toyota Tsusho, the trading arm of the Japanese carmaker, has [reportedly](#) received approval to build the pipeline to Lamu from South Sudan's President, Salva Kiir, China's position as an industry leader in the country will undoubtedly help it maintain a favorable position. Controlling—or at least significantly influencing—the flow of oil through Juba would be a boon to such efforts. Bolstering Kiir's [strength](#) relative to that of rebel leader and former Vice President Riek Machar through the [alleged](#) distribution of light and medium [weapons](#) could also help to solidify China's position regarding what may become the nexus of South Sudan's major corridor for oil exports.

Up to this point, observers have noted China's [self-described](#) use of “soft” power to pursue its national interest on the African continent, favoring business-oriented, economic penetration over military intervention and methods often seen as ideologically patriarchal. By donning the iconic “blue helmet” worn by all UN peacekeepers, are the Chinese taking a new approach to protecting their national interests and assets in South Sudan? Will we see a contest between China and the United States in South Sudan, as some [argue](#)? Or is the Chinese move simply an effort borne of practical concerns for preserving long-held political and economic equities through an international mechanism?



Figure 2. Key Oil Infrastructure in South Sudan

Source: Graphic created by the U.S. Energy information Administration (<http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=su>). Represented boundaries are not authoritative.

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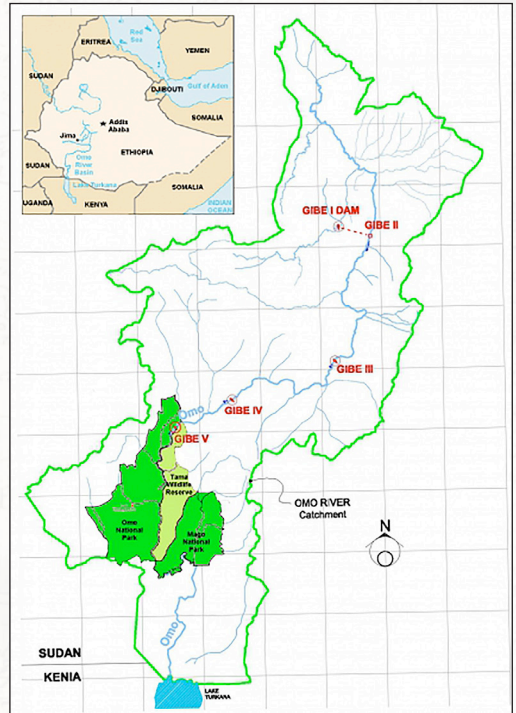
While much attention has been focused on the controversy over [the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam \(GERD\)](#), Ethiopia's 6,000 megawatt hydropower project on the Blue Nile, another major dam project, also hotly debated, has been moving toward completion. The Gibe III hydropower dam on the Omo River in southwestern Ethiopia will eventually generate 1,870 megawatts of electricity. On September 22, 2014, Ethiopian Electric Power announced that Gibe III was [87 percent complete](#) and that two of its 10 generating units would begin operation in spring 2015. Although Gibe III will eventually be dwarfed by the GERD, it will still represent an 82 percent increase in Ethiopia's currently installed electrical generating capacity when it becomes fully operational as early as 2016. Gibe III's critics complain that the dam and associated projects will disrupt a delicate ecosystem and destroy the livelihoods of many thousands of people in Ethiopia and Kenya. The Ethiopian and Kenyan governments [counter](#) that far more people will benefit from the electrical power that the dam will produce. With international support, the supporters of the dam seem to be prevailing.

The Omo River and Its Dams

The Omo River, which runs for hundreds of kilometers through western Ethiopia southward to the border with Kenya, has been seen for decades as a source of significant hydropower. The Gibe III hydropower project would be the [third and largest](#) in a cascade of four or five dams on the Omo. Gibe I is operational; Gibe II is virtually complete; and Gibe IV and V are in the planning stage. Along the length of the Omo River, farmers are dependent on seasonal floods to grow crops. At its terminus in the border region with Kenya, the Omo flows into a delta and empties into Lake Turkana, the world's largest desert lake. The lake supports an active fishery. Farmers and pastoralists from a variety of ethnic groups also inhabit the region.

The Ethiopian Vision

The government of Ethiopia views the Gibe III dam as an important element in an economic development strategy that aims at the country reaching [middle-income status](#) by 2025. The power produced by the dam would increase the percentage of Ethiopians with access to electricity. Ethiopia would also earn revenue through export of power. [Kenya would receive 500 megawatts of power](#) from the dam, and Djibouti and Sudan might also eventually benefit. The export of power would be made possible through the merger of the Kenyan and Ethiopian national grids. That would require construction of [1,068 kilometers](#) of high-voltage transmission lines. In addition, the Ethiopian government asserts that the dam would help control the damaging floods that sometimes occur in the river basin.



Gibe Dams in the Omo Turkana Basin. (Source: International Rivers, <http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/maps-gibe-dams-in-the-omo-turkana-basin-4579>, licensed under Creative Commons.)

Controversial from the Start

Although the concept of the Gibe cascade is decades old, planning for Gibe III began in earnest only in 2006. It has been controversial from the start. Critics have opposed the construction of the dam for [several reasons](#), asserting that:

- The Omo River's downstream flow would be radically reduced, perhaps by 60–70 percent, causing a major reduction of the size of Lake Turkana and destroying the livelihoods of fishermen, pastoralists, and farmers.
- The dam could fail catastrophically, either as the result of an earthquake or design flaws, producing a humanitarian catastrophe.
- The end of seasonal flooding would harm the plant and wildlife species living near the river, with negative economic effects on the human populations in the area.
- The development of planned large-scale sugar and cotton plantations that would depend on irrigation from water drawn from the Omo would compound the economic and environmental damage.

Unsurprisingly, the Ethiopian government has rejected all of these claims, asserting that the reduction of the flow of water into Lake Turkana will be temporary and minimal, defending the dam's design, denying the existence of a substantial earthquake threat, and insisting that controlled release of water from the dam could substitute for seasonal flooding. The Ethiopian case has rested on an [Environmental and Social Impact Assessment](#) conducted by Italian consultancies (the general contractor for the dam is also an Italian firm). That assessment focuses mainly on the impact of the project on Ethiopian territory, addressing the Lake Turkana issue only briefly. More surprisingly, the government of Kenya, while initially [lending credence](#) to some of the criticisms of the dam, has not made the project a major issue in its relations with Ethiopia, and it has actively supported the construction of the power transmission system.

The Battle over Financing

Opponents of the dam sought to block its construction by denying Ethiopia the financial means needed to complete the \$1.8 billion project. An appeal to the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) yielded partial success. At its meeting in Doha in June 2014, the [committee adopted a decision](#) that urged the government of Ethiopia “not to start the filling of the dam and to halt the construction of the large scale irrigation projects” until the completion of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and the identification of appropriate mitigation measures. That decision is not legally binding.

Despite the opponents' objections, Ethiopia succeeded in putting together a financing package. The views of the dam's opponents may have helped [block financing by Western governments and banks](#), but China agreed to finance the turbines and other equipment needed for the project. Ethiopia has itself financed the construction of the dam through domestic and international borrowing. Although the international financial institutions refrained from providing credits for construction of the dam, they later stepped in to help finance the needed transmission lines. On July 12, 2012, the World Bank approved International Development Association [credits totaling \\$684 million](#) for connecting the Ethiopian and Kenyan electrical grids. The following year, the African Development Bank announced a [\\$348 million loan](#) for the same project.

Conclusion

At this point, the government of Ethiopia appears to be in the driver's seat on the Gibe III project. Despite serious, unanswered questions about the effect of the dam on Lake Turkana and the many thousands of people who depend on the lake's waters, Ethiopia is likely to continue its progress toward an initial operating capability later this year. Agreements on mitigating measures are still theoretically possible, but their effects may be limited by the advanced state of the project.

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