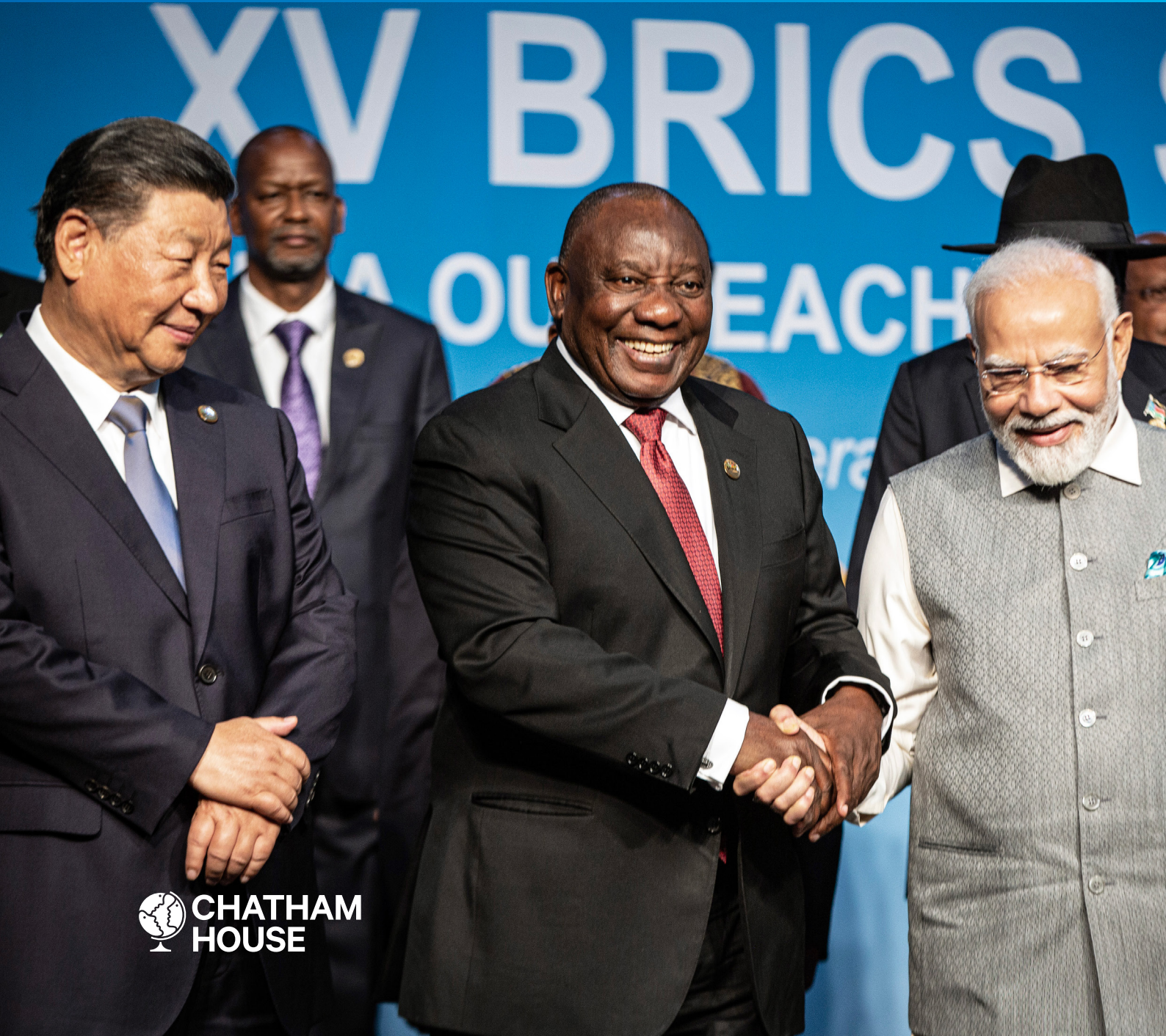


Annual Report

The Africa Programme in 2023



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Cover image: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa with fellow BRICS leaders President of China Xi Jinping and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi.

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Foreword

It has been a year of mixed fortunes for the African continent. High inflation and the financial squeeze of debt servicing and repayment has weighed on economic growth in some countries, while a worsening trend of political instability in parts of the continent, such as nine military coups since 2020 including Gabon and Niger in 2023, have sharpened focus on the fragility of constitutional rule.

But it was also a year for multipolarity and growing African voice. The African Union (AU) joined the G20, and increasingly African states asserted their non-aligned preference by not wishing to be pigeon-holed into being pro-western or eastern or pro-Russian.

Terrorism has increased in parts of Africa at an alarming rate, with some states failing to contain it. In 2023 sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 48 percent of global deaths from terrorism. Attacks have spread beyond historical hotspots such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa to Southern Africa and coastal regions of West Africa. Prolonged conflicts, poor rule of law, human rights abuses, discrimination, exclusion, and unemployment have contributed to this crisis.

The war in Sudan from April 2023 with the Sudanese Armed Forces fighting the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, has also raised fears that this will provide space for jihadi forces to reassert themselves there.

Many African citizens have been badly affected by the covid-19 pandemic, high inflation, and climate change. These economic shocks have pushed an estimated 55 million people into poverty since 2020 and reversed more than two decades of progress in poverty reduction. The socio-economic and fiscal fallout has been exasperated by the geopolitical and

geoeconomic impact of the Ukraine war and its impact on food security across the continent. Thirty-three of the continent's states are classified as least developed and equally alarming is that in 2023, eight African states are experiencing debt distress and a further thirteen are at high risk.

There have also been good, bad, and ugly presidential and legislative elections held in DRC, Gabon, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. Gabon's election triggered a coup, Sierra Leone's an attempted one. In contrast in Liberia, a presidential run-off resulted in George Weah conceding.

The following pages highlight our research and convening over 2023 both on individual African states but also on key themes such as peace and security, debt, geopolitics, strategic and critical minerals, economic growth, elections and climate change and adaptation. We also focused on the regional and continental bodies, such as the AU, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) but also on the Africa Three on the UN Security Council (UNSC) – including hosting a visiting fellow from Mozambique to support the country's first ever tenure on the UNSC.

Our research outputs would not have been possible without the support of our funders, and in 2023, we were delighted to welcome Airtel, BHP, Helios, Investec and OSF as new core supporters of the Africa Programme.



Dr Alex Vines OBE

Director, Africa Programme, Chatham House

2023 in numbers



48
research outputs

The Africa Programme produced 48 research outputs, including peer reviewed papers, book chapters, academic journal articles, expert comments, op-eds and multimedia outputs.



80
events

A total of 80 events were hosted by the Africa Programme in 2023, including virtual and in-person roundtables, panel events, and international conferences.



232
speakers

The Programme hosted 232 speakers, including policymakers, governmental figures, and representatives of civil society, academia and industry.



3,000+
citations

Africa Programme staff were cited over 3,000 times in the global media.



32,000+
dissemination

Research outputs are widely read, freely available and distributed to over 32,000 decision-makers and influencers globally.



21
countries visited

Africa Programme representatives visited 21 countries over the course of 2023, including for events and conference convening in Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Nigeria, Slovenia and South Africa.

2023 research highlights





Regionalism, foreign relations and agency

The Africa Programme continued its stream of work on the increasingly assertive foreign relations of African nations and continental institutions. Work around this theme explored questions of Africa's position in the multilateral system and the continent's participation in global summits. A commentary piece by Tighisti Amare and Alex Vines examined the second Russia–Africa summit in July 2023 and its failure to deliver concrete results, and analysis by Christopher Vandome explored the outcomes of the BRICS summit in August in Johannesburg.

In South Africa there is a historically justifiable deep scepticism of Western dominance of the global economic architecture.

Christopher Vandome

Kenya

Kenya's approach to its international relations and priorities for regional engagement have been a key focus of the Programme's work in 2023. At an event chaired by Chatham House's Director and Chief Executive, Bronwen Maddox, H.E. Musalia Mudavadi EGH, Kenya's Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign & Diaspora Affairs, outlined Kenya's positioning in a rapidly changing regional and international context. Earlier in the year, Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Dr Korir Sing'Oei, discussed Kenya's evolving foreign policy and envisaged role on the international stage. Expert comments by Africa Programme Research Analyst, Fergus Kell, reflected on Kenya's debt burden and the role of its largest bilateral creditor China; and explored the country's choice of competing international partners ahead of King Charles's state visit to Kenya in October.

Tanzania

As part of a project on *Tanzania's foreign policy agenda: economic diplomacy and international agency*, the Africa Programme convened two roundtable meetings in Arusha and Dar es Salaam focused respectively on Tanzania's regional role in the EAC and SADC, and on its re-emergence onto the international stage. A research paper due to be published in early 2024 will provide recommendations to feed into Tanzania's ongoing review of its foreign policy strategy.

Zambia

2023 saw the launch of a research paper on *Zambia's developing international relations: Positive neutrality and global partnership* by Africa Programme Senior Research Fellow Christopher Vandome. The paper, which builds on research work and a conference held in Lusaka in 2022, explores the value of Zambia's 'positive neutrality' stance and was complemented by a series of opinion pieces and journal articles.

Regional security and governance

Africa Programme research outputs in 2023 have focused on the evolution of regional institutions and progress towards greater stability. In July, an event was hosted in London with H.E. Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to discuss IGAD's efforts to improve stability in the Horn of Africa. The turbulent context in the Sahel was also discussed at a roundtable with Ambassador Abdel-Fatau Musah, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In-depth interviews with both representatives were subsequently conducted and published on the Programme's *Africa Aware* podcast series.

Image: H.E. Musalia Mudavadi EGH speaking at Chatham House on 'Kenya's foreign policy imperatives' on 7 December 2023.



The interview series also included a discussion with Nancy Karigithu, Special Envoy and Advisor on Maritime and Blue Economy in the executive office of the President of Kenya. Nancy outlined how regional collaboration can enhance maritime security in the face of transnational threats, and highlighted policies to enhance maritime infrastructure and connectivity to improve trade.

We want to rely on regional resources to fight terrorism which has become an existential threat to everybody in the region.

Ambassador Abdel-Fatau Musah

Regionalization of conflict

A report on *Navigating the regionalization of Ethiopia's Tigray conflict* by Dr Abel Abate Demissie, Associate Fellow of the Africa Programme, was published as part of the Cross-Border Conflict Evidence, Policy and Trends (XCEPT) research programme. The report analysed the regional implications of Ethiopia's Tigray conflict and how regional and international actors can help consolidate peace.

In an expert comment, Ahmed Soliman, Africa Programme Senior Research Fellow, explored how the sesame supply chain has intersected with transnational conflict dynamics and exacerbated tensions between Ethiopia and Sudan. Sesame supply chains, land contestation and conflict were discussed further during an *Africa Aware* podcast as part of an XCEPT mini-series, where speakers focused on the regions of Wolkait/Western Tigray in northwest Ethiopia and Al Fashaga in eastern Sudan.

Image: Refugees from Ethiopia's Tigray region board buses to a refugee camp after spending time at a UNHCR reception centre in Sudan, on 7 December 2020. (Photo by Byron Smith/ Stringer/ via Getty Images)



Key elections

Nigeria

In the run up to Nigeria's February 2023 presidential elections, the Africa Programme hosted three of the frontrunning candidates, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Peter Gregory Obi and Rabiun Musa Kwankwaso, as well Professor Mahmood Yakubu, chairman of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). These public events at Chatham House were held across December 2022 and January 2023 and were publicly livestreamed, offering a significant opportunity for analysis of the candidates' policy priorities as well as insight into INEC's electoral preparations.

The Programme also published a series of outputs, including a special #NigeriaDecides mini-series via its Africa Aware podcast, and expert comments that assessed issues of societal inclusion in Nigeria, the implementation of technology and election preparedness.

A post-election comment piece by Idayat Hassan of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) in Abuja, and Dr Alex Vines, who served as a member of the Commonwealth Election Observer Mission to Nigeria, analysed the widespread disenfranchisement following a low turnout of just 25.7 percent. A comment piece by Mathew Page assessed how the Nigerian election highlighted Anglo-American missteps yet offered a chance for US and UK policymakers to reset their relations with Abuja.

Sierra Leone and Liberia

In an explainer piece published ahead of Sierra Leone's and Liberia's Presidential elections in June 2023 and October 2023, respectively Dr Alex Vines reflected on the recent history of democracy in the two West African countries, and the importance of their 2023 elections as both countries have sought to play a key role maintaining peace and democracy.

George Weah faced rising anti-incumbency sentiment, driven by austerity reforms and by a cost-of-living crisis spurred by the Russia–Ukraine war.

Alex Vines

At an Africa Programme event in May 2023, Sierra Leone's APC Presidential candidate, Dr Samura Kamara, also discussed the electoral context and the need for including a level electoral playing field and robust local, regional and international observation of the electoral process.



Image: Supporters of President Julius Maada Bio celebrate on the streets following his re-election, in Freetown, on June 27, 2023.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Ahead of DRC's December 2023 elections, the Africa Programme hosted a roundtable with H.E. Vital Kamerhe, Vice Prime-Minister and Minister of National Economy of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The discussion focussed on policy priorities regarding conflict resolution, regional and international engagement as well as electoral preparations and avenues for systemic reforms. An *Africa Aware* podcast with opposition leader and presidential candidate, Martin Fayulu, discussed the challenges for achieving free and fair elections in 2023, the security crisis in eastern DRC, and his vision for the country's regional identity and future global role.

Zimbabwe

In August, the Africa Programme hosted an event in Johannesburg on *Zimbabwe's 2023 elections*. The event included a multi-party panel in which spokespeople and candidates from five of the main political parties taking part in the elections debated their electoral pledges. The event provided space for discussion among representatives of political parties, election observers and civic education experts, and the opportunity to reflect on the wider electoral environment. A recording of the event posted online has since amassed over 650,000 views.

Social Norms and Accountable Governance

In 2023 the Africa Programme began a new phase of its longstanding Social Norms and Accountable Governance (SNAG) project focused on anti-corruption in Nigeria, supported by the MacArthur Foundation. An initial research trip in March, in partnership with Accountability Lab Nigeria, provided an opportunity for interviews with Nigerian anti-corruption leaders.

In July the Africa Programme conducted its fourth national household survey as part of the project, in partnership with the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The survey was conducted in seven states and the Federal Capital Territory in collaboration with local partner institutions in each state, after an extensive multi-day training workshop held in Abuja in July. Following its completion, the project has now surveyed a total of 24,000 Nigerian households.

In July the SNAG project's lead researchers, Dr Leena Koni Hoffmann and Dr Raj Patel, published an article in the *Data & Policy* journal on *Petty bribery, pluralistic ignorance, and the collective action problem*. The article studies the SNAG project data to explore how most people surveyed mistakenly believed that others in their community tolerate or even accept bribery, when a large majority personally feel the practice is wrong.

Image: A member of the University of Makurdi, Benue State, an Africa Programme partner institute for the SNAG project, conducting household survey in August 2023.



Sustainability and natural resources

As part of its workstream on climate change, just energy transition, and responsible natural resource governance, in April 2023, the Africa Programme co-hosted a flagship conference with the government of Slovenia. The conference focussed on climate security and brought together partners from across Europe and Africa to discuss emerging security risks and priorities emanating from climate change, and how security responses can better incorporate climate action and environmentally responsible practices. The themes of the conference will be a focus for the government of Slovenia as it takes up a seat as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in January 2024.

The development of African carbon markets is a major area of interest for African governments and international development partners. In January, the Programme hosted a webinar that assessed multiple different plans and programmes in development to increase carbon trading in Africa and to unlock the financial potential of the continent's natural resource endowment.

Interest in a carbon markets in Africa and worldwide within the business community is at an all-time high. This is moving beyond the traditional players in the sector to specialized project developers and large emitters in the oil and gas and utility industry.

Andrea Bonzanni, International Emissions Trading Association (IETA)

The Programme continued to work on important issues relating to multilateral climate initiatives. In May, a webinar was held to discuss the nexus between climate change and mining, the impact of COP28 on mining governance in Africa, and industry responses and opportunities.

Africa's strategic minerals

Work on climate justice has been central to the Programme's emerging focus area of African critical minerals. An international conference, hosted in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, discussed how African countries can best benefit from their endowments of minerals required for the global green transition. The conference drew on a range of Programme events



Image: Chatham House Africa Programme conference on 'Africa's strategic minerals' Speakers at the event L-R: Ian Mwiinga, National Coordinator, Zambia Secretariat, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; Sheila Khama, Associate Fellow, Africa Programme, Chatham House; Sodhie Naicker, Director at DMT Kai Batla, DMT Group

and research, including written and verbal submissions to the UK Foreign Affairs Committee enquiry on critical minerals. A journal article by Christopher Vandome in the *South African Journal of International Affairs* discussed Zambia's economic diplomacy in the context of its mining industry.

Business and human rights

The roles and responsibilities of governments, companies, and civil society in resource governance has also been a cross-cutting theme for the Africa Programme in 2023. An event on soft law governance offered peer-to-peer exchange on implementing voluntary governance initiatives, and work continues on the Programme's projects on business and human rights in Mozambique.

Peace and security

The African continent continues to experience a diverse array of complex security challenges, which remain deeply interlinked with broader trajectories of political governance, climate change, and socio-economic development. An event at Chatham House with H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs at the African Union Commission (AUC), explored the African Union’s efforts to tackle conflict, foster security cooperation among its constituent states and regions, and build lasting peace on the continent within an evolving global context.

African peace processes

In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the AUC, the Africa Programme convened a high-level event in the sidelines of the 36th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly (Heads of State and Government Session) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event on *Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030: Lessons from Mozambique* included high-level interventions and keynotes from H.E. Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique and H.E. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union (2023-2024), and included the first public address by Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the African Union’s High Representative for Silencing the Guns. Following the event, Dr Alex Vines and Tighisti Amare were present at UN Security Council (UNSC) sessions in New York as Mozambique began its term as a non-permanent UNSC member.

Image: Chatham House Africa Programme event on ‘Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030: Lessons from Mozambique’ (17 February 2023) with high-level presentations from HE Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique; HE Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros; Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa, Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, UNDP and Amb William Awinador-Kanyirige, Senior Adviser, Governance and Peace Building, African Union Commission.



Subsequently, the Programme launched its seminal project on African peace processes, which is using a case study approach to examine lessons learned from experiences of African peace processes over the last 30 years, in the context of changing patterns of regionalization in the continent. The project will include studies on Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya, Mali, and Sierra Leone.

Support for Sudan's transition

As part of a project on *Supporting Sudan's Democratic Transition*, a series of webinars and virtual roundtable meetings brought together representatives of Sudanese civil society initiatives and democratic political actors to brainstorm the way forward on issues related to ending the war, providing assistance to victims of the conflict and putting Sudan on the path to democratic transformation.

What we are seeing at the moment is ... an attempt to derail Sudan's democratic transition and to return Sudan to the control of the former regime. This is the point being made very strongly by Sudan's pro-democracy civilian leadership.

Dame Rosalind Marsden

A four-day workshop that was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in December brought together representatives of the Sudanese pro-democracy movement alongside experts, to discuss the priorities for economic stabilization, reconstruction and recovery. It identified options and recommendations that will support the formation of a targeted economic reconstruction and recovery programme, in pursuit of the civilian democratic transition.

Coups and challenges to democracy

As countries in the Sahel and West Africa face increasingly dire regional security and governance challenges, including a rise in military and 'constitutional' coups since 2020, tackling the complex peace and security challenges faced by the region has become a key priority for African governments and international development partners. The Africa Programme held a series of roundtables and consultations to support improved understanding of the different initiatives and the complex architecture of regional economic communities, unions, commissions, and international security mechanisms. These were complemented by public events and written outputs that analysed prospects for reversing democratic erosion, the challenges of implementing effective governance and electoral reforms, and transition towards civilian rule.

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African Development Bank (Abidjan)

African Foundation for Development (London)

CEEI/ISRI Universidade Joaquim Chissano (Maputo)

Centro de Estudos e Investigação Científica (Luanda)

Council on Foreign Relations (New York)

European Union Institute for Security Studies (Paris)

Institut Français des Relations Internationales (Paris)

Institute for Peace and Security Studies (Addis Ababa)

Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria)

Institute of International Relations (Prague)

Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (Lisbon)

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Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (Abuja)

Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (Lagos)

Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (Nairobi)

Search For Common Ground (Diffo)

South African Institute of International Affairs (Johannesburg)

The World Bank (Washington DC)

University of Pennsylvania Center for Social Norms and Behavioral Dynamics (Philadelphia)

United Nations Development Programme (Addis Ababa)

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (Addis Ababa)

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Chevron

De Beers

DP World

ENI

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ExxonMobil

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Globeleq

Government of the United States of America

Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung

Helios

Investec

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Mitsui

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Open Society Foundations

Rio Tinto

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Standard Bank Group

Standard Chartered Bank

The World Bank

TotalEnergies

Tullow Oil

UNDP



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