

African security in 2013: a year of disequilibrium?

By Morten Bøås with
James J. Hentz

■ Executive summary

Africa's security is currently standing at a crossroads. Relatively high African growth rates in combination with the increased institutional strength, credibility and legitimacy of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have led to greater confidence in Africa's ability to deal with its security challenges. However, the continent is also confronted with significant security challenges that could have severe ramifications across several countries and regions.

This is vividly illustrated by the attack against the gas plant at In Aménas in Algeria. This well-planned attack occurred a few days after the French intervention in the conflict in Mali. As a force for disequilibrium the attack and its tragic consequences have dramatically transformed the security dynamic of the whole Sahel region and the many local conflicts in the area. In 2013 the Sahel could become the epicentre of the next episode in the so-called "war on terror", and the outcome of the conflict there is far from certain: a decisive military victory is unlikely in this desert and mountainous region.

This report analyses the security trends, scenarios and dynamics in Africa, describing and identifying issues and hotspots likely to manifest themselves in 2013 by focusing on five broad and interlinked regional scenarios: West Africa and the Sahel; the Horn of Africa; and Central, East and Southern Africa. The report will to a lesser extent comment on the role, power relations and dynamics of the AU and subregional organisations such as ECOWAS, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Southern African Development Community in the quest for peace and security on the continent.

Security cannot be seen in isolation from economic issues, so the economic outlook for Africa in 2013 is also briefly addressed. External actors are still playing an important role on the African continent and their relationship to African security is also addressed. The focus is on the role of traditional African external players such as France et al., but also on emerging powers such as Brazil, China, India, Russia, Qatar and Turkey. The importance of the latter group of countries is clearly increasing, but as the French intervention in Mali vividly shows, it is still the traditional external powers that assume leadership roles in times of dire crisis. It is hard to envision that, for example, Brazil, China, India or Turkey would assume the kind of role in the immediate future that France took in northern Mali. The report concludes by highlighting processes and dynamics that are of particular importance to Norway and Norwegian interests in Africa.

Introduction: a note on Africa's regions

This report analyses the security trends, scenarios and dynamics in Africa, describing and identifying issues and hotspots likely to manifest themselves in 2013 by focusing on five broad and interlinked regions: West Africa and the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa.

Drawing the boundaries between Africa's regions is neither easy nor self-evident, and some readers may disagree with the placing of one or two countries for the purposes of this report. For example, it can be debated whether the Central African Republic (CAR) belongs to Central Africa or the Horn of Africa. But the main issue is not geography as such, but how geographies of violence and insecurity manifest themselves in Africa. The subregional case studies should therefore not be seen in isolation from each other or as static signposts on a permanent map, but as dynamic zones. All conflict is locally grounded and it is important that we acknowledge this, but we also need to understand the connections that sometimes – but not always – emerge during times of conflict and how these connections are positioned within a long-term framework of histories of both collaboration and conflict across space and time. This is already obvious in the case of the attack on the In Aménas natural gas plant in Algeria.

2012: a good or a bad year for Africa?

In general 2012 was not too bad for Africa. Some new conflicts emerged, some old ones returned, but while none of the existing conflicts found a permanent settlement, no major new ones broke out either, and with one important exception (e.g. the In Aménas affair in Algeria), none of the existing conflicts spilled over into other countries and regions in a significant way.

In 2012 the Sahel found itself facing post-Qaddafi repercussions in the form of returning labour migrants and Tuareg fighters, but until the first weeks of 2013 even the turmoil in Mali remained centred on the northern areas of that country. It is noteworthy, for example, that there has been no spillover effects so far in neighbouring Niger, which also has a history of Tuareg resistance against the state. In West Africa, Senegal came through an important test of governance when President Abdoulaye Wade gave up his attempt to cling to power after losing the election. Nigeria may remain caught between crisis and world power status, but even the deaths and disruption caused by the Boko Haram rebellion were not able to significantly weaken the Nigerian state. Ethiopia must also be congratulated for its handling of the death of Meles Zenawi in accordance with the constitution, and even if fighting once more flared up in North Kivu in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the conflict did not spread beyond a few districts. It was never a threat to the stability of the whole country and in February leaders from the Great Lakes Region signed a UN-brokered accord in Addis Ababa designed to bring peace to the troubled eastern DRC.

Economically speaking Africa, also bounced back after experiencing the combined negative economic effects of the global financial crisis and the uprisings in North Africa, where economic growth virtually stagnated in 2011. Growth is therefore expected to accelerate to 4.5% in 2012 and 4.8% in 2013, and parts of this growth are being reinvested more wisely than in the past, i.e. in infrastructural and industrial development. West Africa is expected to grow at a rate of 6.2% in 2013, East Africa and Central Africa at around 5%, and Southern Africa at 4.5%. As this is taking place during a global economic recession, it is quite impressive. However, oil-exporting countries will experience most of this growth, whereas those relying on other exports and in particular the European market may grow at a lower rate (e.g. Kenya and several West African countries). If Europe's debt crisis worsens, it could have severe effects for Africa and affect not only the economy, but also peace and security. There are several reasons for this, but lower earnings from tourism and exports of goods and services will mean even fewer jobs and less money in circulation. This could come on top of reduced European aid, foreign direct investment (FDI) and remittances from African migrant workers in Europe, and have ramifications for peace and security issues in several fragile African countries.

Africa's share of global FDI is increasing as a consequence of Asian and Latin American demand for natural resources triggering a boom in international commodity prices that increased resource-seeking investment in Africa. This is good, but these investments have so far not been translated into greater economic opportunities for the population at large. The level of job creation is simply still too low, which is an important issue because Africa has the world's youngest population and it is growing rapidly. Hundreds of millions of young Africans will be leaving school over the next decade looking for jobs that currently do not exist and are not planned for either. Africa's youthful population is not only increasing, but it is also better educated than ever before. There is therefore a double potential here, one positive, the other negative. If Africa can tackle its employment creation needs, this young surplus population could become a huge economic benefit and a comparative advantage. However, if African growth does not become more employment intense, the same youthful population may become a powder keg of enormous dimensions. Security may be the main priority in Mali, the Sahel and the DRC, but there will never be sustainable peace in these areas without people-centred development that can provide economic opportunities to the youthful masses.

As 2012 was coming to its end, an old conflict once more manifested itself. Because it took place in one of the most obscure and little known countries on the continent, i.e. the CAR, it did not create many international headlines as the rest of the world was preparing for Christmas celebrations. However, for the long-suffering population of the CAR, this was important, and because the way in which this rebellion manifested itself also says something more general about

conflict patterns in fragile African countries, it is worthwhile examining what actually happened.

The rebellion started in late November 2012 when three former rebel factions who had signed a peace agreement in 2007 came together under the banner of the Seleka alliance, accused the government of President François Bozizé of failing to honour the terms of the 2007 agreement and subsequently started an armed campaign. Their grievances were initially about payment promised to them under the 2007 agreement, which they claimed they never received. However, as they captured territory, the Seleka rebels also started to put forward a number of political grievances addressing issues ranging from the release of political prisoners to corruption and abuse of power by the president. The rebellion started in the remote Haute Kotto province bordering Sudan, but the rebels rapidly broke through the defensive positions of government forces and captured a number of towns and cities, ending up some 150 km from the capital, Bangui. They then entered into negotiations with the Bozizé government in Libreville, the capital of neighbouring Gabon, under the stewardship of the regional group, the Economic Community of Central African States. This process eventually collapsed, but because the traditional provider of external security, France, refused to intervene, it is noteworthy that a regional organisation that few had heard much about prior to this took up the mantle and managed to bring the parties to the negotiation table, preventing an immediate onslaught on Bangui. However, in March 2013 the rebels abandoned the negotiations, attacked the capital, drove President Bozizé from office and took over the government.

This shows how fragile some African states are and how little it takes for a few embittered souls to start a rebellion that as a force of disequilibrium turns the political situation upside down. Quite similar to the M23 rebellion in DRC, the Seleka rebellion in the CAR illustrates how a rebellion that initially has more to do with private grievances (payment not received) swiftly takes on questions of national importance and propels itself into a political position. This vividly illustrates how little it takes to bring a state down and create another theatre of war in this part of the world. It suggests also that there is every reason to be concerned about and monitor small groups of rebels in faraway places, because connections can be made that later may have dramatic consequences far beyond the country in question. This is one lesson that should be drawn from the In Aménas affair, while another one is that we should be very careful about writing about such events based on only superficial analysis. This is also highlighted by the case of Kenya. Less than a year ago the coastal movement's claim for independence for Kenya's coastal region and the letters it sent to Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain on the subject were seen as a joke by most commentators. However, after the violence that has taken place in this area, the issue has become very serious. The problem in Kenya is, however, much deeper than "election violence", which is only the tip of the iceberg of much more fundamental questions

concerning citizenship and belonging.

This is an issue not only in Kenya, but integral to much conflict on the African continent, whether it comes in the form of an autochthony-informed discourse or not. It is present in Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC and Mali, but also in Liberia, Cameroon, Kenya, the Southern African region, and even in Somalia (with the issue of the Bantu Somalis). One of Africa's major challenges in 2013 and beyond is therefore what we may call "a crisis of citizenship". This places Africa at the crossroads and 2013 may very well become a year of disequilibrium for bad – but also possibly for good.

West Africa and the Sahel

Whereas parts of West Africa are showing signs of increased stability and recovery from decades of conflict and mismanagement, several security challenges are not only present, but may become manifest in 2013. Currently, the most precarious situation is the one in Mali, where the West Africa region meets the Sahel and North Africa; other problem areas in the region are in Nigeria, and along the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

In economic terms the region is not doing too badly. There is real and sustained growth in several countries. For example, the *Financial Times* predicts that the Nigerian economy will be the largest in Africa in 2014, overtaking South Africa as the continent's powerhouse. Major global players such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and Goldman Sachs have warmly embraced this favourable analysis. However, there are also examples of West African growth in less predictable places. For example, in 2012 Sierra Leone made the headlines with high growth figures boosted by strong iron ore exports, while in Niger uranium and oil exports brought impressive economic growth (the uranium deposits in Niger are important to France, but less so than they used to be: French imports of uranium from Niger are down from 60–70% of all uranium imports a decade ago to about 40% today).

However, here as in most other places in Africa the growth is in extractive industries, which – at least in the short run – have little employment impact, and as has become evident in the case of the Niger Delta, this can increase social tensions rather than reduce them.

Marginalisation and social exclusion are part of the picture. This is related to debates about citizenship rights and issues of contested belonging, but religion and the role of Islam in particular are also playing an important role. One feature is the rise of militant religious fundamentalist organisations such as Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), but we also need to acknowledge that deeper changes are taking place that are not necessarily linked to these armed groups. Salafism is gaining ground among ordinary people in Mali, Niger and

other West African countries bordering on the Sahel, suggesting that traditional, more pragmatic Sufist views concerning the role of religion in society are being, if not significantly weakened, then at least challenged. This is an issue that concerned external stakeholders must take into consideration, because currently assumptions are made about the role of religion in these societies that do not necessarily reflect what is happening on the ground.

Finally, it should be noted that the Casamance rebellion in Senegal, which started in 1982, is still flaring up at irregular intervals. For the time being this is nothing more than a minor irritation for the state, but the new government in Dakar should nonetheless devote more attention to finding a final solution to it than previous governments did. For the sake of the local population, it should no longer be ignored, and the conflict also has the capacity to connect with a larger conflict zone that includes neighbouring Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. The former is ruled by the increasingly eccentric President Yammeh, while the latter is a hotspot of crime (including international drug cartels) and contested politics.

Northern Mali

The French military intervention has beaten back the Islamist rebels' offensive and gained control over the cities of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. This was, however, the easy part, and a number of challenges still confront the international response to the northern Mali crisis. The Islamists have not really been beaten, but have slipped away into the wilderness. Thus, whereas capturing the major towns of the north may have been relatively easy, controlling this vast territory will be much more difficult for the French army, the joint Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)-African Union (AU) force and the Malian army. What we must keep in mind is that the crisis in Northern Mali is not new. This is the homeland of the Tuaregs, a group of people whose position in the region was turned upside down by French colonialism and made permanent by the post-colonial state system. Thus, the Tuaregs who had once seen themselves as the "masters of the desert" became a minority in several countries, and in Mali in particular a minority suddenly ruled by the black population against whom they had previously directed their slave-catching raids. The Tuareg "problem" is something of a Gordian knot, and ever since Mali became an independent state, the Tuaregs have rebelled against the state. The first Tuareg rebellion took place in the early 1960s, the second in the early 1990s, and after the National Pact of 1992 failed to produce tangible results on the ground, a new rebellion emerged in 2006. This was quite small until Tuaregs started to return from post-Qaddafi Libya with a lot of arms, but little else. This gave new momentum to the idea of rebellion and a new grouping, the Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). Whereas in the past Tuareg separatism had been more of an alias, the MNLA declared the full independence of Azawad (i.e. northern Mali). The issue was no longer about breaking into the Malian state, but breaking away from it. However, what little that may have existed of Tuareg unity

quickly disappeared and as MNLA fighters looted and plundered in the north and the Malian army ran away, other forces stepped in and effectively sidelined the MNLA. These forces were the Tuareg Islamist organisation Ansar ed-Din, led by Iyad Ag Ghaly, a veteran Tuareg fighter from the 1990s, and two other regional movements: AQIM and MUJAO. The two latter are not Tuareg movements *per se*, but both of them – AQIM in particular – have been present in this area for such a long time (from the end of the 1990s) that seeing them as an alien invading force is not only wrong, but would also repeat the mistake of the international community's failure to deal constructively with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda in the DR Congo. Due to the local alliances they have made and the length of time they have been present in the area, AQIM and MUJAO have become an integral part of the conflict mosaic of northern Mali. The challenge facing the international community and the international intervention to support the French forces already on the ground is therefore not only how to deal with this militarily, but also politically. ECOWAS had started talks with Ansar ed-Din in order to try to separate it from AQIM and MUJAO. The question is how possible this diplomatic track is: French forces are on the ground and the whole northern Mali crisis is caught up in the discourse of the "war on terror" following the In Aménas attack. It is interesting to note that a group under the leadership of Alghabass Ag Intalla broke away from Ansar ed-Din after this attack and formed a new group, the Islamic Movement for Azawad, claiming that they were denouncing terrorism and were ready for dialogue. This may be a positive move. However, not only is the size of this group uncertain, but questions should also be asked concerning the influence of its leader. Ag Intalla may belong to an important lineage in Kidal, but this does not mean that his influence on the ground can be taken for granted. Tuareg society has been in flux for a long time and old patterns of allegiance, hierarchy and control are rapidly disappearing. Considerable social engineering will therefore be needed to glue together a Tuareg coalition that could be a credible partner for dialogue with the Malian state and the international community.

This is, however, not only a challenge in Mali's northern periphery; it is just as much the case in Bamako and southern Mali. After the coup, its leader, Captain Amadou Sanogo, reluctantly returned power to a handpicked civilian government, but this is at best a caretaker government, fragmented among various civilian and military groups. It lacks legitimacy and credibility, even if a date for elections has been set (July 31st 2013). Adding to all of this is the issue of the Malian army, which is a problem that goes much deeper than just the lack of training that the EU Mission to Mali suggests. The army may need more up-to-date training and equipment, but the structural problem is the lack of a clear moral compass to underwrite its military operations. It is unfortunately already clear that the Malian army has carried out several human rights abuses in the areas it has recaptured from the Islamists, and more technical training will not in itself solve this problem. This

means that France and the international community have taken on board partners in Mali (the government and the army) that lack both legitimacy and implementation capacity. This is a serious problem that must be confronted if the international community is to avoid repeating several of the mistakes made in Afghanistan.

Nigeria, Boko Haram and the Niger Delta

Nigeria's history since independence is a tale of disappointment, sadness, and futile struggles for justice and social development, but also success in keeping this enormous country together. Nigeria is therefore truly a paradox. Its oil and film industries are global and important, while the rest of the economy is Third World. It is a middle-income country according to UN definitions, but also one of immense inequality where 70% of the population lives below the poverty line. It is the undisputed leader in West Africa, ECOWAS included. It is a vibrant country in search of development and its rightful place on the global scene, but also one in seemingly permanent crisis. Nowhere is this more evident than in its political landscape.

Tribal diversity is significant, and the population in the north is mainly Muslim, while the south is predominantly Christian. Ethno-religious cleavages coincide with economic and social divisions, which is also the case of the country's main political party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Integral to its role as a unifying factor in the country is the party's "power-sharing" arrangement according to which the presidential candidate is supposed to alternate between the north and south in successive elections. The problem is that this formula may be in the process of disintegrating, and the level of trust between northern and southern elites in the party has reached a historic low. Not much trust is left between these groups and they have therefore started playing a very dangerous game. This is where Boko Haram reborn enters into the Nigerian paradox. Boko Haram is a deadly problem. The organisation itself cannot bring down the country, but sectarian violence could take Nigeria to the brink.

Boko Haram originates from northern Nigeria, a part of the country with a long tradition of Islamic radicalism. Traditionally, this has been unworldly, advocating a purer way of Islamic life where young men inspired by charismatic preachers would withdraw into a communal existence of studying the Koran in isolation from society. Sometimes these groups would take to the streets in violent protests, but these were short-lived and never evolved into concerted and organised armed struggle against the state and its local allies. The Boko Haram of Mohammed Yusuf that was crushed by the Nigerian state in 2009 fitted this picture, whereas the Boko Haram that emerged from the ashes of the killing of Yusuf does not.

The reborn Boko Haram is better organised and equipped, and better versed in radical Islamic theology. Its main source of inspiration are the works of Ibn Taimiyya (sometimes also referred to as Sheikh al-Islam Ibn

Taymiyah), who died in 1328 in Damascus, who in his most famous work, *al-Siyasa al-Shar'iyya*, legitimated what has later been called "jihad within the community" against those who depart from Islamic law. This script played a crucial role in the assassination of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in 1981 through Abd al-Salam Faraj's reinterpretation of Taimiyya in the former's text *The Hidden Imperative*. These are the texts from which Boko Haram draws its inspiration and in which it finds internal legitimacy for its violence.

This way of reasoning does not have a large popular following in Nigeria, but the re-emergence of Boko Haram may still be connected to the main fault line in Nigerian politics – the north-south divide and the increasingly bitter conflict over positions, power and money that this cleavage creates. This is in essence not a religious conflict, because it evolves around everything from access to land and political positions to the distribution of oil revenues, and encapsulates many aspects of Nigerian society, including state institutions and political parties: mainly, but not exclusively, the PDP. The question is what Big Men who perceive themselves as being on the losing side of a power struggle stand to gain from assisting Boko Haram. What we need to acknowledge is that if this is taking place, it would not be for the first time in Nigerian history. Nigeria is a country where Big Men have long tried to manipulate violent discontent for their own selfish purposes. This happened during the struggles in the Niger Delta, and it cannot be ruled out that certain individuals and groups who feel that they lost a significant power struggle when Goodluck Jonathan became the PDP flag bearer have an interest in undermining the legitimacy of his presidency to ensure that he will not be able to seek another term in 2015. Boko Haram's spectacular comeback could therefore be home grown, even if this does not rule out the possibility that during 2012 when Islamist forces controlled cities like Gao in Mali, Boko Haram members may have used this town as they use parts of the Nigerian and Cameroonian hinterlands as safe bases and areas for organisation, planning, rest and training.

The Niger Delta is still relatively calm after the general amnesty that was offered in the spring of 2009. However, this situation should not be taken for granted, as the Delta will soon be facing a post-amnesty future when things could return to the normal situation of a lack of social mobility. When the amnesty period ends in either 2013 or 2015, those who have benefited from it will not be able to "eat" anymore. Some of these young men may therefore return to the creeks of the Delta and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta insurgency could start all over again. Added to this is the fact that the federal government may have economically empowered some former heads of the Niger Delta insurgency and thereby disadvantaged others. As we have seen several times in the past, this may ignite divisions in the ranks of the insurgents and lead to even more violence. Both Boko Haram and the Niger Delta should be on the top

of the agenda in Abuja, but this is not the case. Rather, the “talk of the town” there is the issue of the next elections. Thus, less than two years into the first proper Jonathan presidency, the 2015 campaign has already started. Not only is this premature in light of the urgent challenges that Nigeria is facing, but it is also a very dangerous game, as the Nigerian elite is playing with fire. None of them wants to destroy the nation, but this is precisely what they may end up doing. There are clear indications that there are groups in the PDP who have become so afraid of the Jonathan presidency that they would not mind seeing it destabilised. However, this instrumentalisation of violence in order to destabilise the presidency is a dangerous double-edged sword, because it may end up destabilising the whole country and not only Jonathan’s presidency. Nigeria is therefore at a very challenging point in its history. It is the giant of West Africa in almost all possible ways, so a weakened and fragmenting Nigeria is the last thing that this region needs, as it would almost certainly upset the positive trends that have emerged from this part of Africa over the last few years. Nigeria could become the hegemon in Africa, but only if it can solve its domestic political problems, all of which are deeply embodied in the PDP. 2013 is not necessarily a make-or-break year for Nigeria, but as the campaign trail will start moving faster and faster towards 2015, the country and its elite will have to start asking tough questions and finding credible answers to them, because if they do not, years of disequilibrium with devastating consequences may be in the making.

The Mano River Basin: Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia

The Mano River Basin is much more peaceful today than it was some years ago. Both Liberia (2005 and 2011) and Sierra Leone (2007 and 2012) have managed some sort of democratic transitions, and a return to the civil wars and the trajectories of violence from the 1990s does not seem very likely at the moment. However, the situation in Côte d’Ivoire remains precarious and even if President Ouattara seems to sit relatively safely in power, no real reconciliation has taken place, either nationally or locally, between groups defined as first-comers and late-comers, suggesting that there are still groups of Gbagbo loyalists who harbour revisionist agendas. These sentiments are particularly strong in western Côte d’Ivoire, with possible repercussions in Liberia.

This therefore potentially threatens peace and security in the whole region, because conflict along this border may spill over to both Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire, which may in turn reignite local conflicts in volatile places in Liberia such as Grand Gedeh County and Nimba County. The attacks that have taken place across the border have so far been at a relatively low scale. However, since July 2011 at least 40 people have been killed in such attacks and on June 8th 2012 at least eight civilians and seven UN peacekeepers were killed in an ambush in south-western Côte d’Ivoire by what is believed to be a combined group of Ivorian and Liberian insurgents operating from a “base” in Grand

Gedeh, Liberia. Subsequently, Ivorian refugees were once more crossing the border into Liberia.

As of late 2012 there were about 65,650 registered Ivorian refugees in Liberia. This is a significantly lower figure than the 170,000 refugees that were there in early December 2011 at the height of the Ivorian crisis. However, even if many have returned – on their own or through UN High Commissioner for Refugees return arrangements – others have continued to enter Liberia, while the refugees that remain in Liberia seem to be determined to stay there for a considerable time. This may impact negatively on peace and reconciliation efforts in Côte d’Ivoire, particularly in the western region.

Most of the Liberian ex-combatants who were recruited to fight in the post-election conflict in Côte d’Ivoire have also returned home. The refugees and the return of these ex-combatants could also have destabilising effects on Liberia. As predicted, the 2011 election led to the re-election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president. However, in comparison to the 2005 election, she now has a weaker mandate due to the low voter turnout after the opposition boycotted the second round of presidential polls. It is therefore important for peace and reconciliation purposes that we have a solid understanding of local conflicts in this volatile borderland. One important question is whether the current situation is re-creating fault lines and cleavages that emerged in earlier parts of the civil wars in Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire.

At this point, the artificial nature of national borders comes into play as the Krahn group in Liberia is basically the same ethnic group and speaks the same language as the Gueré in Côte d’Ivoire, while the Liberian Gio and the Ivorian Yacouba are both part of the Dan group. Despite separation by national borders, these groups have kept close contact and when the war started in Liberia, ethnic relatives on the Ivorian side hosted Liberian Krahn and Gio as kin. This generated tension and in due course the respective groups came to inherit some of the conflict from across the border. Thus, the conflict lines in Côte d’Ivoire made the Krahn population inclined to support Gbagbo, whereas the Gio/Mano are predominantly Ouattara supporters and “allied” to the Yacouba, their ethnic “brothers” across the border. When tensions reached their height in Abidjan, many Krahn who resided in the populous and pro-Gbagbo bastion of Yopougon joined pro-Gbagbo militias. Instigators of violence on both the Gbagbo and Ouattara sides mobilised mercenary soldiers chiefly along ethnic lines in Monrovia and elsewhere in Liberia. These seemingly unvarying patterns of alignment in Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire and thus also along the border are of the utmost importance, as they not only connect, but also cut into conflict lines and cleavages in both countries.

Thus, even if the issues along this border may seem less urgent than the crisis in northern Mali and the Sahel, there is every reason to be concerned about them and to monitor

the situation closely, because the refugee population that currently sits idle in the camps is becoming radicalised, harbouring ideas of return based on violence and not reconciliation.

The Horn of Africa

Last year the two major events in the Horn of Africa were the formation of a new and slightly more legitimate government in Somalia and the death of President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia. Both events will have an impact on issues of peace and reconciliation in the region, but exactly how is still not entirely clear. As predicted, the situation continues to be difficult in and between the two Sudans, with little prospect for much improvement in 2013, and Eritrea continues to be an enigma to most observers.

The regime of Isaias Afewerki is still organisationally strongly embedded in Eritrean society and the relationship with Qatar has also helped bringing in some much-needed FDI in extractive industries. However, trouble may be brewing for the regime. Eritrea's minister of information recently fled the country and sought asylum in Canada, and even more surprisingly, on January 21st 2013 about 200 Eritrean soldiers accompanied by two tanks occupied the Ministry of Information and took control of the state-owned Eritrea Radio and Television Agency, airing a statement calling for the release of all political prisoners and the implementation of the 1997 constitution. The dissident soldiers, allegedly led by General Saleh Osman, ended their siege after they had been surrounded by troops loyal to the president. What has happened to the mutineers is currently uncertain. Some claim that negotiations are taking place within the regime and the military apparatus, whereas others claim that not only have most of them been arrested, but so have Mustafa Nurhusein (the governor of the southern region) and Abdalla Jabir (director of organisational affairs for the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice, and thus one of the very Big Men in the party and the country). This is not only one of very few open displays of dissent against Afewerki, but also – if the rumour of Jabir's arrest is correct – a serious issue that could suggest that the stability of the regime is weakening. As an uprising in Eritrea could both trigger violence in the country and increase tension along the border with Ethiopia (motivated by unity against a common enemy), there is every reason to be concerned and to monitor and understand events in what is a difficult, but not impossible country to penetrate.

Economically, Ethiopia is continuing to grow at a solid pace (the forecast rate for 2013 is 7%) and the Somali economy is much better than one could expect of a country that has been without a state for more than two decades. In fact, there is every reason to believe that if the Somali economy could be properly measured it would show Somalia as a middle-income country in Africa. It is definitely not as poor as, for example, the CAR. On the negative side, the economy of Sudan is collapsing, whereas South Sudan has hit rock

bottom because the Juba government stopped the export of oil through Port Sudan due to its many disagreements with Khartoum. This hurts Khartoum, but damages South Sudan even more. The only reason why the consequences have not been even more dramatic is because relatively few South Sudanese are integrated into the formal fiscal economy. Their existence is one of subsistence.

Whereas regional organisations in West Africa and Central Africa have started to play a more important and autonomous role, this is still not the case in the Horn of Africa. Addis Ababa is important as the headquarters of the AU and the hub of many other international organisations, but the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is still partly paralysed by power politics and the nature of the interactions between the states in the region. This will continue to be the case as long as regional foreign policies are seen as a game of relative gains, in which what is of importance is not only your own gains, but, even more so, the gains made by other states. This makes it very difficult for IGAD to be a real player in the processes around Somalia and the two Sudans.

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the death of Meles Zenawi marked the end of an era. His legacy will be debated for years, but certain things are clear. Meles was integral to the rebuilding of Ethiopia's political system, his years in power created unprecedented economic growth, and the state that he built has real institutional and implementation capacity. However, his legacy is also one of democratic deficits in terms of individual political liberties. There is currently both a new and an old generation of leadership that will have to steer the state in the immediate post-Meles era. Internally, any changes in 2013 will have to come from within the regime, as the opposition is too weak and fragmented to play a leading role. Externally, the new leadership is not likely to change Meles's approach to foreign policy. The question is whether they can run it with the same authority and credibility as Meles. The new leadership will have to pay attention to a number of issues that Meles monitored very closely, including Somalia, the two Sudans and Eritrea.

Ethiopia has a difficult and troubled relationship with Somalia, and the Kenyan intervention in Somalia illuminates the nature of this relationship. For the time being the Kenyans are proud of what they have achieved in southern Somalia. With very modest losses they have captured the important port of Kismayo, deliberately advancing very slowly and carefully, and building alliances with local groups. From an Ethiopia point of view the problem with this approach is that these alliances were mainly made with Ogadeni clans, creating suspicion that this could create not only an opportunity for the Ogaden National Liberation Front to establish a base in Somalia, but also give it something it did not have for a long time – harbour access. It is therefore significant that almost immediately after the Kenyan invasion Ethiopia also sent forces into

Somalia once more, which eventually led to both the Kenyan and Ethiopian forces being formally integrated into the Ugandan-led AU mission in Somalia. One challenge for 2013 is therefore to reduce the level of tension around these issues, because they could have negative side effects for both Somalia and the region at large.

With regard to the Sudans, Ethiopia under Meles managed to cultivate good ties with both Khartoum and Juba. When things went wrong between the two Sudans – which will continue in the future – they looked to Ethiopia for guidance. There is every reason to believe that Ethiopia post-Meles will continue to attempt to be a key player in the Sudans and in relations between Khartoum and Juba. The main challenge is that the man who commanded an authority that both Salva Kiir and Omar al-Bashir respected is no longer there. This is not necessarily good news for the tricky relationship between these two countries that pertains in 2013.

As already indicated, events may be taking place in Eritrea that could have consequences for regime stability in 2013. However, with regard to the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea, what should be noted is that even if Eritrea remains important to Ethiopia, the relationship with Eritrea is not the lens through which everything is seen in Addis Ababa, but the reverse is the case in Asmara. Thus, a more dramatic change to their current relationship in 2013 is more likely to come from Asmara than Addis Ababa.

Somalia

A new government is in place in Mogadishu and even parts of the south-central areas of the country are more peaceful than in many years. However, that this peace will last and grow in 2013 cannot be taken for granted because, despite the new government, Somali society is still fragmented and the Kenyan intervention with its building of local alliances with Ogadeni clans may have contributed to this. Thus, even if there are positive signs, there are also important challenges. These include, but are not exclusive to (1) the issue of who will control Kismayo, (2) the administration of regional states, (3) extending control over rural areas, (4) repatriating refugees and internally displaced persons, (5) al-Shabaab, and (6) corruption.

Kenyan troops captured the town of Kismayo with the support of the Ras Kambooni Movement, which almost certainly agreed to collaborate with the Kenyans in exchange for a guaranteed, but publicly unspecified role in the future administration of the town. The problem is that the new Somali government has other plans and has insisted that it should be responsible for any power-sharing negotiations. These issues need to be sorted out quickly, but delicately, as failure to do so may cause Kismayo residents' enthusiasm for joining the federal government to wane quickly. Related to this question is the issue of the administration of the regional states (e.g. Jubbaland, Himan and Heeb, Khatumo, and others). For example, Jubbaland, along the south-west border

between Somalia and Kenya, is controlled by the Kenyans in alliance with the Ogadeni clans. This is considered problematic both by the clans excluded from power and by the new federal government, which is concerned that Jubbaland may be carving out too much autonomy for itself. This will be a difficult and challenging issue for all parties concerned in 2013.

Al-Shabaab may be weakened, but will not collapse anytime soon, even if it has lost both urban territory and revenue. There are reports that al-Shabaab groups are moving north towards Puntland and the Golala mountain area west of the port of Bossaso, and recent suicide bombings and other attacks in Mogadishu and Kismayo serve as a reminder of the movement's power. The new government's approach will therefore be crucial. Will we see negotiations between the government and al-Shabaab in 2013, and, if so, will the international community tolerate such an approach against a movement it defines as an al-Qaeda-inspired terrorist organisation?

On the issue of Somalia, the role of Turkey has been the focus of considerable interest. The Turkish prime minister visited Mogadishu and massive humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts followed. One thousand Somali students were given scholarships to Turkish universities and Turkish Airways became the first international airline to operate direct flights to and from Mogadishu since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991. This sudden escalation of Turkish involvement in Somalia has surprised many actors traditionally engaged in peace and stability efforts in the country. However, it is important to point out two things. Firstly, Turkey has historical relations with Somalia dating back to the 16th century, when the Ottomans helped the Somalis to rebel against Portuguese forces that aided Abyssinian troops encroaching into Somali territory, and this is not forgotten in Somalia. Secondly, questions have also been raised about Turkey's approach to Somalia, including its promotion of certain religious values, its sensitivity to corruption, and its nearly exclusive focus on Mogadishu, which could be harmful to the relative peace of Puntland and Somaliland. Thus, it remains to be seen how and to what extent Turkey will continue to be an important actor in Somali affairs in 2013.

Dead ringers? The Sudans

The two Sudans were on the brink of both war and financial ruin in 2012, and there is unfortunately every reason to believe that 2013 will be just as difficult. In January 2012 South Sudan halted its oil production in a row with Khartoum over oil transit fees that came on top of a number of other issues, and the tensions between them almost escalated to open warfare. This damaged Khartoum, but hurt South Sudan even more, since oil accounts for 96-98% of the latter's revenues. Belatedly, in the autumn of 2012 South Sudan agreed to resume oil production, but major economic damage had already been self-inflicted on both economies.

In Juba and South Sudan the fiscal gap may have increased the possibility of elite-based inter-ethnic conflict, and it is important that concerned external stakeholders keep in mind that unity in the south cannot be taken for granted, as this is mainly unity against a common enemy and not much else. In the future the relationship between the Dinka and Nuur elites could become particularly difficult.

In Khartoum the allegedly failed coup in 2012 may say a great deal about the precarious position that the al-Bashir regime finds itself in. It has also been hurt by the suspension of oil production in South Sudan, because this oil is exported through Port Sudan and Sudan earns considerable revenue from transit fees. In this situation the continued fighting in the Nuba Mountains and the possible forming of a larger anti-Bashir alliance among Darfur, Kordofan and the Nuba Mountains may be bad news for the regime, but also for the population at large in the short-to-medium term. The two Sudans may be formally separated, but informally the two countries and their respective regimes are locked together as a pair of “dead ringers”. As was the case in 2012, the major problem in 2013 is that they are failing to understand what this should imply for their approach to security.

Central Africa

In Central Africa the major security challenge is still the DRC’s eastern border areas (i.e. the Kivus), and in particular the province of North Kivu. This is the powder keg of the region, and conflict in this province could still have major ramifications for the rest of the region and beyond because the conflict is connected not only to Rwanda and Uganda, but also to Burundi (where the peace is far from secure). Fighting that goes out of control in North Kivu could also spread further north to Ituru and connect to unrest in countries such as Chad and the CAR. However, possible spillover effects apart, the heart of the matter and the epicentre of conflict in Central Africa is North Kivu. This became clear once more last year when the M23 rebels humiliated both the government of Joseph Kabila and the UN.

After capturing and controlling Goma for 11 days, M23 forces left the city, but continue to encircle it. Not only must a more lasting settlement be found, but what happened when the DRC army (the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo or FARDC) ran away and the world’s largest peacekeeping force, the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), stood by and watched as the M23 entered Goma will also have consequences for the UN. Already in 2010 the UN’s approval rating in the DRC was as low as 15%, and there is every reason to believe that this dropped even further after the UN did nothing to prevent the M23 from entering Goma. It is difficult to understand why a mission that costs about one billion U.S. dollars annually and has a force of about 20,000 peacekeepers did nothing to prevent the rebel advance.

Negotiations are currently under way in Kampala between the M23 and the DRC government, and even though no agreement had been reached, the rebels declared a unilateral ceasefire in January 2013. This may be a step in the right direction. The fact that regional actors have taken charge of the process is also positive, because what is needed is a larger regional effort not only to end the current conflict, but also to end the endless circle of integration into and fragmentation from the FARDC. The accord signed in Addis Ababa in February could be the initial step towards such an effort as it was signed by 11 countries of the Great Lakes Region, including Rwanda and the DRC. In this process there is clearly a role both for the AU and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), while the idea of a neutral African force, which in September 2012 was seen as a joke by many international commentators, should have gained ground after MONUSCO failed to prevent the rebel advance on Goma. However, we also need to realise that the M23 conflict is only one of many that undermine the social fabric of the Kivus. At least 25 different militias and rebel groups are operating in these provinces and this is therefore not the time for yet another short-sighted solution. Rather, the humiliation that both the FARDC and UN suffered at the gates of Goma should be used to confront the full conflict mosaic in eastern DRC. In 2013 the time has surely come to make a real attempt to stop once and for all what is one of the deadliest conflicts since the Second World War.

However, if this is to succeed, not only must the full range of stakeholders be brought on board, but those involved also need to understand that the conflict is immensely complicated and multilayered, and involves many actors with different interests. However, despite this, the crisis is commonly presented as a “resource war” and an “international conspiracy” that is simply about pillage and plunder. This is just one part of it. This conflict and the borderland in which it takes place are deeply entrenched in history, and here as elsewhere the past and present are connected in complicated ways. It is by and large an agrarian war, and its root causes must be located in the complex web of uncertainties concerning citizenship and land rights questions that have become an integral part of people’s livelihoods in a borderland where different populations have been coming and going for centuries. The conflicts that this has caused are both fuelled and further complicated by the extraction of valuable minerals that are abundant in this part of the DRC.

Both the first part of the Congolese civil war and its precursor started along the Rwandan border, particularly around Goma in North Kivu and Bukavu in South Kivu. The war rapidly spread along two main fronts lines: up the Congo River and along the eastern border, and to the south into the mineral-rich provinces of Katanga and Kasai. In both wars Rwanda and Uganda first denied their involvement, but thereafter legitimised their interventions on defensive and humanitarian grounds. This is therefore quite similar

to the current situation: Rwanda and Uganda are once more accused of supporting the rebels (i.e. M23) by the UN Group of Experts.

What is clear is that whereas Rwanda and Uganda may have entered the DRC with relatively clear strategic objectives, such as pushing back Hutu rebels from border areas and disarming Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces rebels, respectively, these objectives quickly became entangled in the political economy of the complex conflict mosaic on the ground. The respective regimes in Kigali and Kampala may have believed, and perhaps still do, that they were calling the shots. However, if we look at the current situation, it is increasingly clear that there is no easy answer to the question of who is pulling the strings. Rather, it seems like the Rwandan and Ugandan forces have become involved in a series of local identity-based conflicts in which they had little interest and of which they had little knowledge. The question is whether this pattern of internal rebellion and external involvement leading to military and militia fragmentation and stalled political solutions can be broken.

The M23 is not that large a force, but the core M23 officers and fighters are battle-hardened and motivated. They have humiliated the FARDC on the battleground in the past and proved at the gates of Goma that they can do it again. And many of them also feel that they have no other choice than to fight, because if they do not they will become permanent losers as a minority group in eastern DRC. It is this fact, much more than what support they may receive from Rwanda, that makes them so difficult to deal with for the dysfunctional and demoralised FARDC and MONUSCO, which have no appetite for engaging in serious combat operations. There is therefore no immediate military solution to the M23 insurgency, suggesting that a negotiated settlement must be found. This needs to come quickly, as the insurgency is also causing a number of other problems. Most serious is President Kabila's decision to withdraw FARDC forces into city centres and main bases in order to prevent further mutinies, which has caused a security vacuum in rural areas that MONUSCO has done little to fill. Currently local communities are desperately trying to negotiate security arrangements wherever they can find them – even with the Hutu Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) – because small bands of Mayi-Mayi that have merged with ordinary bandits and poachers are roaming the countryside the FARDC deserted, bringing death and destruction with them.

After the emergence of the M23 a series of meetings was conducted in the region under the ICGLR bringing together a number of neighbouring countries, including the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. These countries need to talk to one another, because there will be no lasting solution to the eastern DRC crisis without regional co-operation. Such a development could also lead to some much-needed rethinking of other issues that must be dealt with if peace is to be given a chance in eastern DRC. It will take consid-

erable time and resources to build a legitimate Congolese state and quick-fix solutions will only recreate the politics of patrimonialism from previous decades. Kabila's current strategy of recreating the "Mobutist" type of co-optation from the past will not lead the country anywhere.

This should be combined with a new approach to disarmament in the region, and the suggested African force could play a role in this regard, as previous attempts to create a national Congolese army out of the old army and fighters from different rebel groups have failed miserably and should stop. The only thing that this leads to is the kind of waxing and waning of integration into and fragmentation from the FARDC that the history of the M23 and its predecessor, the Congress for the Defence of the People, attests. Instead, eastern DRC needs a general and large-scale disarmament programme that should be combined with a new approach to employment. Ex-combatants must be given a stake in the peace process, because this is the only way of decreasing the possibility of opportunistic elites preferring the current situation (which allows them to continue to manipulate conflict issues) to a lasting solution.

Artisanal mining is one such possibility, if it is brought under a more transparent regime. The important issue is therefore not to prevent mining, which would mainly hurt households that desperately depend on what little their men can earn from this activity, but to weaken the linkages between mining and "the users of force" that have fuelled and sustained the conflict. The mining sector has been both militarised and informalised during the war. The task is therefore to demilitarise and reformalise it. If this is achieved it would also make it easier to deal with some of the underlying issues such as land rights and citizenship, because it could contribute to a demilitarisation of social and economic affairs in eastern DRC.

With regard to the FDLR, it must be dealt with, because its very existence not only is a concern for the Rwandan government, but also allows that government to justify its involvement in the conflict in eastern DRC. The FDLR leadership is clearly implicated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, but this is not necessarily the case for the majority of its rank-and-file members. They are too young to bear any direct responsibility for the genocide, and many of them are also Congolese Hutu and have no previous attachment to Rwanda. This suggests that what is needed is an approach that combines military pressure with a negotiated solution for those without any direct responsibility for the genocide. Sorting out the FDLR issue will not in itself create peace in eastern DRC, but will at the very least remove Rwanda's excuse for its involvement. It may also make it easier to deal with other underlying issues such as land and citizenship, forging at the very least an understanding that previous compromises can be revisited in a less paranoid and militarised political climate. In this regard the decision by key external development partners to suspend aid to Rwanda may be a double-edged sword. It may make it even more difficult to have a dialogue with the

Kigali regime and it may also mean that the revenue from the Kivus becomes even more important for the Rwandan government. The Kagame regime will not easily bend to this type of external pressure.

East Africa

East Africa is to a certain extent a bastion of stability in Africa, but there is trouble where its borders meet both the Central African region (along the border of Rwanda and Uganda towards the DRC) and where it meets the Horn of Africa (illustrated by Kenya's military intervention in Somalia). One major exception to this is the uncertainty concerning the consequences of the results of the Kenyan elections. In Tanzania, the disputed status of Zanzibar is unresolved, but even if this situation warrants some monitoring, it does not seem to be ready to explode soon.

Kenya

At the end of 2013 Kenya will mark its golden jubilee as an independent nation, but prior to the festivities, at the beginning of March we also witnessed the first general election since the disputed 2007 poll. This latter poll triggered a wave of violence in which more than 1,000 people were killed and more than 250,000 displaced. The March 2013 election is the first poll under the 2010 constitution and also marks the beginning of a new system of governance.

The new constitution is based on the principle of the devolution of power, dividing the country into 47 new counties, each with its own governor, parliament and budget. The idealistic (and naive?) County Government Act also stresses democratic participation at every stage of decision-making, from mass communication and consultation on development plans to village-level debates and the right to petition the courts. The problem is that this theoretically finely crafted constitution will function in a political system of "Big Men" and "tribal godfathers". Uhuru Kenyatta, the Kikuyu leader, is the son of the founding president, Jomo Kenyatta; Raila Odinga, the prime minister, is a Luo chief and the son of Oginga Odinga, Jomo Kenyatta's greatest rival and critic; William Ruto is the political Big Man of the Kalenjin; and the list could easily be extended almost down to the last minor candidate. Thus, while the constitution preaches democracy, transparency and good governance, the election is in essence about personal and tribal loyalties. However, as no single party had any chance of victory alone, several bewildering coalitions of parties were formed in an attempt to secure victory.

Here it is important to keep in mind that politics in Kenya is very lucrative. With allowances, MPs are paid a third more than their British counterparts and the president gets 10% more than the president of the U.S. Thus, getting nominated and elected is very important, and what you need is cash, the backing of a "godfather" and support from your ethnic constituency. The new constitution, despite containing all the right words, will not in itself change this.

At the time of writing, Uhuru Kenyatta was declared the winner of the presidential elections, narrowly getting enough votes to emerge as the winner in the first round (over 50%). Odinga's challenge to this result in the courts was not upheld and Kenyatta was declared president. Some analysts are speculating whether the International Criminal Court (ICC) charges against Kenyatta and Ruto may have tipped the balance in their favour, and for a few voters this may have mattered, because the ICC is opposed in Kenya, as it is in most of Africa, but most likely Kenyatta won simply because he had the most resources available to build the largest coalition.

Adding further uncertainty to the Kenyan situation in 2013 is the combined issue of increasing Islamic militancy and the Kenyan intervention in the Somali conflict. Until quite recently it was assumed that al-Shabaab's recruitment in Kenya was limited to the about one million Somali minority, but this is not necessarily the case any longer. Tensions between the Christian majority and the Muslim minority are growing, for several reasons. The Muslim minority feels excluded and confrontational Salafi groups are becoming more widespread. This is exacerbated by attacks on churches and mosques designed to increase tension and produce communal anxiety. When Christian Kenyan youths responded to a grenade attack in the Nairobi slum of Eastleigh with attacks on Muslims and their businesses, al-Shabaab took to Twitter to capitalise on the sectarian violence, urging Kenyan Muslims to see this as a declaration of war and defend their properties and honour.

Southern Africa

At first glance, Southern Africa looks remarkably stable. The Uppsala Conflict Data Project registers no conflict in Southern Africa for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011, and since 1975 there has only been one major conflict in the region, in Angola, which ended in 2002 (and one lesser conflict: the civil war in Mozambique). This is in remarkable contrast to most of the other subregions of Africa, and as a region Southern Africa has the most robust middle-class in the continent.

South Africa is the central player in the region. Its economy dwarfs that of its neighbours. It has the most advanced infrastructure, literally tying the region together, and its businesses are spread throughout the region. It also has a military capable of projecting power well beyond its borders. Angola's economic potential might match that of South Africa. Its 40-year civil war came to an end with the sudden killing of Jonas Savimbi in 2002, and its oil and mineral wealth (diamonds), combined with its geographical size and agricultural potential, make it a second possible competing pole to South Africa for regional development. Like South Africa, it also has the military capacity to project power beyond its borders. Zimbabwe, on the other hand, is the most likely potential spoiler in the region. Since its independence from white minority rule in 1980, its only president, Robert Mugabe, has tenaciously held on to

power. In the process, what was once the second most developed economy in the region has collapsed. Zimbabwe is the difficult country in the region and so far neither South Africa nor the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has found a constructive way of dealing with it.

However, if the best predictor for success is success, we should be cautiously optimistic about Southern Africa in 2013 and the immediate years beyond. There are, however, warning flags that need to be monitored closely. Central concerns are economic inequality and bad governance. The disparity between South Africa and its neighbours is both a blessing and a curse. South Africa's private sector has the wherewithal to invest in its near abroad. However, economists warn of the effects of polarisation, where the most advanced economy of a region attracts most of the external investment and grows exponentially faster than its neighbours. For Southern Africa, unequal regional development could engender serious security problems. South Africa is a magnet for immigrants looking for a better life through the push factors of poverty (Zimbabwe) and conflict (the DRC), and the pull factors of a relatively wealthy and advanced economy. South Africa, however, has its own problems, not the least of which is stubbornly high unemployment and high internal income inequality. The region depends on South Africa as the engine of growth, but decades after the end of apartheid it is still uncertain whether the country will assume this role to its full potential capacity, because the factors described above are further stressed by political challenges in South Africa, particularly within the governing African National Congress (ANC).

Finally, the last caution flag for the entire region is creeping corruption and bad governance. South Africa, Angola and Zimbabwe all face significant governance challenges. Zimbabwe is almost the personal fiefdom of Robert Mugabe and his henchmen and supporters. The Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) has been entrenched in power in Angola since independence, and in South Africa no second party has been able to seriously challenge the ANC. Thus, while the region has witnessed an impressive "third wave" transition to democracy, the problem of illiberal democracies continues to cast its shadows in Southern Africa. There is little likelihood of interstate war in Southern Africa, and although state failure or collapse in Zimbabwe remains a possibility, there is also little chance of civil war in the region. The main concern is domestic instability that inhibits economic growth and the necessary foreign investment to spur regional development.

South Africa

Jacob Zuma's rise to the head of ANC and election to the presidency in 2007 signalled a split in the party and the concomitant rise of its "populist" wing. However, almost since the ANC's turn to the right early in its rule, the party has been expected to split into a moderate wing and a populist wing (or even a conservative and radical wing). It never has. Rather, the struggle for power has remained

within the ruling coalition. This power struggle has, however, been moderated by non-party forces, the same that helped overthrow apartheid, and these forces – the judiciary, the media and civil society – remain relatively robust and independent. That said, there is a growing problem of corruption in South Africa. Part of this is due to the ANC's aggressive black economic empowerment programme. Somewhat ironically, the ANC can be said to follow the same model of transfer of wealth to its constituency as the National Party in the 1950s.

In mid-December 2012 the ANC re-elected Zuma as the party head and, therefore, as presumptive presidential candidate in 2014. It was, however, a contentious process. Although, Zuma came out on top in the last round of ANC infighting, the cleavages and fissures within the ANC became an open sore due to the Lonmin Marikana mine massacre. The dispute between rival unions lasted five weeks and cost 44 lives. The Congress of South African Trade Unions, which is one of Zuma's strongest supporters, was weakened and smaller rival unions that became the workers' advocates were strengthened. This may suggest that trouble within the ANC may continue as the country move towards the 2014 general election.

Angola

Angola is a tightly knit oligarchy and the ruling party, the MPLA, is still dominated by the *mesticos*, essentially an urban elite. The central challenges confronting Angola in 2013 relate to economic disparity, political cronyism and exclusion, which still define the country. Despite government protestations, there is little evidence of accountability. Foreign oil companies doing business in Angola are still encouraged to sign secret deals with private Angolan companies that have ties to the ruling oligarchy. This is obviously a problem in Angola, but very unlikely one that will spill over to conflict, because the MPLA state is simply too strong to allow dissidence on such a scale.

Zimbabwe

2013 may be the year that Mugabe steps down; if he does, the next leadership will inherit a seriously weakened, if not completely failed state. In August 2012 a "new" constitution was drafted, which was approved by referendum in March 2013. Looking beyond Mugabe in 2013 is like looking into a dark alley, because it is not difficult to imagine a scenario actually worse than the current status quo. There is uncertainty about what would follow Mugabe's departure or death: a military coup; an internal battle within his party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF); or some as yet unforeseen outcome.

If the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) replaces ZANU-PF, the countryside (ZANU-PF's support base) could become ungovernable because the MDC's main constituency is urban. The military, always Mugabe's strongest supporters, would not necessarily support the new government. Rather, it seems as if the military increasingly has political ambitions. Several "securocrats" have ambitions

of leading ZANU-PF if and when Mugabe steps down or dies. Finally, intraparty factionalism and competition within ZANU-PF, such as between the Zezuru and Karanga peoples, could become more violent. Political transitions in Africa are often dangerous and there is no reason to expect Zimbabwe's to be any different.

Zimbabwe's economy experienced a recovery in 2012, largely due to diamond and platinum mines coming online and the replacement of the Zimbabwean dollar with a range of hard currencies, and inflation remained below 10%. This, however, only means that Mugabe and ZANU-PF have additional sources of patronage available to manipulate political reforms and the elections. Reports from Zimbabwe suggest that the feared Central Intelligence Organisation, Mugabe's secret police, is flush with cash and has bought large numbers of vehicles and weapons from China in recent months. Salaries have been increased and thousands of new officers are being trained, raising concern that they will be used to intimidate voters in the forthcoming election. It still remains to be seen what 2013 will bring for Zimbabwe, but it could indeed be a dramatic year.

External actors in Africa: the BRICS in 2013

Firstly, it is important to dispel some misconceptions. The BRICS grouping (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is not an alliance, nor is it triggering the next Scramble for Africa. BRICS members are in as much competition with one another as they are with the European Union (EU) and U.S. Furthermore, they are at very different levels of economic development: Russia's and Brazil's per capita gross domestic product is close to \$13,000, while China's is \$5,414 and India's \$1,389.

Although the BRICS' economic interest in Africa goes well beyond resource extraction and infrastructure development, Africa's resources are the attraction for Brazil, Russia, India and China. The Scramble for Africa was prompted by the Berlin Conference of 1884/85, when Otto von Bismarck orchestrated the partitioning of Africa. Partition as it occurs today among the BRICS takes place through competition for oil leases, etc. Rather than being analogous to the Scramble for Africa, the situation is more like the so-called "resource denial" strategy of the superpowers during the last decade of the cold war.

For instance, the Indian government is concerned that China will use its financial and military might to secure oil fields that India (a resource-poor country) needs. Bilateral trade between India and Africa has grown from \$967 million in 1991 to \$40 billion in 2009 and is expected to reach \$70 billion by 2015. China and India may have common cause through their association in the BRICS, but they are also geopolitical rivals. India is right to be concerned: China's trade with Africa rose from \$3.5 billion in 1990 to over \$120 billion in 2010 and it accounts for two-thirds of all BRICS trade with Africa.

Brazil's companies, such as Petrobras (oil) and Vale (mining), have actively competed with China for explorations rights. Brazil has increased its trade with Africa over the last decade from \$4.2 billion to \$27.6 billion. Its interests in the continent, however, are evolving differently from the rest of the BRICS. It is not resource poor, at least not since 2008. Petrobras, the state oil giant, planned to double its investment in Africa between 2007 and 2011; the current plan (2012-15) calls for about 95% of its investment to be in Brazil. Instead of a source of raw materials, Brazil envisions Africa as a growing market for its processed products. Currently, 42% of the goods it exports to Africa are manufactured products. Brazil's Africa footprint is smaller than China or India's: investment is largest in the Lusophone countries.

Russia's position in Africa, like the rest of the BRICS, has grown, but follows a distinct logic from its fellow BRICS members. Africa could become Russia's main competitor for supplying fuel and raw materials to the world. It will need Africa's minerals that are in short supply in Russia, e.g. aluminium ore, while competing with Africa to supply other minerals and commodities, e.g. natural gas. Russia's investment in Africa is, in part, designed to hedge its own market position.

Africa's plans to solve its own problems

Even as the BRICS countries turn their attention to Africa, much of the rest of the developed world is expecting "African solutions to Africa problems". To this end, the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the AU in Durban, South Africa in July 2002 expanded the authority of the organisation. The AU has created judicial, democratic and civil society pillars (the Court of Justice, the Pan-African Parliament, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council). The most significant change is the creation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). With these changes came new expectations of good governance. There is a general consensus that the right to intervene in the internal affairs of member states constitutes a new feature of intra-African relations. This principle was stipulated in Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act, which was adopted on July 11th 2000 at the OAU's 36th summit in Lomé. The AU's security mandate is much more ambitious than its predecessor's.

The primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability under APSA (under Article 16 of the Protocol) is meant to be vested in the seven regional organisations – including SADC for Southern Africa. And to this end there has been a major effort to harmonise SADC's security architecture with APSA; but there is much work to be done, including finding sources of funding. The problem is that the AU cannot accomplish its mandate without external assistance, and the competition among the BRICS outlined above means that the "promotion of good governance and the rule of law" takes a back seat to the pragmatism of cutting a deal.

At the inaugural AU meeting in Durban in July 2002 African leaders agreed to the APRM. This was a Janus-faced instrument designed to both hold themselves to standards outlined in the AU Charter and to attract G7 financial support, which would be conditioned on political peer review under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The most obvious test case for NEPAD in Southern Africa is Mugabe's rule in Zimbabwe. The AU, and by extension SADC, has failed Zimbabwe. The MDC swept to power in the 2008 elections, only to have ZANU-PF steal the elections. Unfortunately, the BRICS have acted as a de facto hedge against the failure to use the APRM to attract G7 funding.

Crossroads, challenges and opportunities: 2013 as a year of disequilibrium?

2013 will be an interesting, but also challenging year for an Africa caught between the optimism of continued economic growth and a set of serious security challenges. Northern Mali and the Sahel are at the top of this list, but here we also find Nigeria, the Horn of Africa (Somalia and the Sudans), the powder keg of North Kivu in eastern DRC, the challenge of stalled reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire, and the outcome of the difficult elections in Kenya and Zimbabwe. These are all different local conflicts and political disputes. Each is quite unique, but they all have, if not cross-cutting themes, at least striking similarities.

The issue of youth, youthful aspirations and lack of employment is one issue that all of them have in common. Another is what we have defined as the "crisis of citizenship", where origin becomes a political cleavage between groups defined as first-comers and late-comers. This is a disturbingly common picture of African politics and conflict, and an underlying dimension from the sand dunes of northern Mali to the forests of North Kivu to the slums of Nairobi. Borders are porous and states' physical and institutional infrastructure is weak, suggesting that conflict can easily spill over borders and create larger regional conflict zones, even if the conflicts as such may have a genuinely local nature. Economic growth can reduce some of the conflict potential, but this is an opportunity that will only become a reality if a real developmental dividend materialises. Right now there is sustained economic growth in much of Africa, but the challenge is to transform this growth from the enclave nature of extractive industries that we see in Angola, Nigeria and so many other places to an economy of opportunity for the masses.

The point is not necessarily that increased wealth for all has to happen very quickly, but people need at least to see that opportunities for social mobility exist through peaceful means. This positions Africa very much at the crossroads in 2013, and we should keep in mind that as harmful and destructive as some of the forces of disequilibrium at play on the continent may seem, they also bring with them the potential for much-needed social and political change. Conflict also means opportunity and in 2013 it will more

than ever be up to Africans themselves to embrace this or face the consequences of failure. This is evident all over the continent, but most strikingly in Mali and the Sahel. The French intervention was also a force of disequilibrium that changed the dynamic of this conflict, but France does not have the financial strength to remain engaged for very long and it will be up to African countries and organisations (e.g. ECOWAS and the AU) to pick up the pieces and try to put the jigsaw puzzle of Mali back together again. It is hoped that concerned external stakeholders will play a constructive supporting role in this difficult endeavour.

Some policy recommendations for Norway

Norway's engagement with Africa's security issues and challenges will have to be based on an active policy of dialogue-based peace and reconciliation backed by development initiatives. Primarily, Norway's interests in Africa have to do with securing peace and constructing a more stable and peaceful world order. For a small country with an open economy such as Norway, this is not merely altruism, but a core national interest. However, Norway as a shipping nation and a major exporter and producer of oil and gas also has certain commercial interests that should be taken into consideration. In the case of Mali, the Sahel and Nigeria, these interests certainly coincide, whereas in other cases, such as North Kivu and Central Africa, they do not. Below are therefore five points for possible Norwegian engagement based on the preceding analysis.

- Norway should assume an active role in northern Mali and the Sahel in between what will be the approach of two regional blocks, the AU/ECOWAS and the EU. In the space that will be available, Norway can use its previous connections with Mali and Malian stakeholders to support local and national peace and reconciliation efforts: internally among the Tuareg communities, among the political elite in Bamako, and between northern Mali and the rest of the country.
- It should continue and increase its engagement with Nigeria within the field of managing the rents from extractive industries and labour market policies, particularly targeting the issue of youth unemployment. West Africa and, in fact, the whole continent depend on Nigerian economic success, peace and stability.
- It should take a clearer constructive, but critical position on the UN in the DRC. MONUSCO is a failure and only serious and deep reform can save it. Norway should work together with African partners in conflict resolution to streamline the relationship between current regional initiatives and the UN.
- It should work with partners in Zimbabwe and the region in preparation for a Zimbabwe without Robert Mugabe.
- It should continue an active engagement with Somalia with a view to finding pragmatic and durable solutions with Somali and regionally based partners that strike a balance between a centralist and federal approach to Somali statehood.

■ THE AUTHORS

Morten Bøås, PhD, is a senior researcher at Fafo's Institute for Applied International Studies and has written extensively on African politics and development. His work has appeared in a number of leading international journals. He has also published a number of books, including the much-cited *African Guerrillas: Raging against the Machine* (Lynne Rienner, 2007), co-edited with Kevin Dunn, and *The Politics of Origin in Africa* (Zed Books, 2013), co-authored with Dunn.

James Hentz, PhD, is a professor in the Department of International Studies at the Virginia Military Institute, which he also chairs. He has contributed articles to numerous journals and edited volumes. He is editor-in-chief of the Taylor & Francis/Routledge journal *African Security*. He authored *The Nature of War in Africa* (Lynne Rienner, forthcoming) and edited *The African Security Handbook* (Taylor & Francis/Routledge, forthcoming).

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Email: info@peacebuilding.no - Phone: +47 22 08 79 32