Non-State Actors' Reaction To Unconstitutional Change Of Government: The Case Of The UN And The AU

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Abstract—The responses of non-state actors, especially international bodies like the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU), exert substantial influence in shaping Africa's political landscape in the wake of unconstitutional government upheavals, profoundly impacting governance and democracy continent-wide. This study meticulously investigates the elaborate strategies employed by the UN and the AU when confronted with unconstitutional government changes in Africa. It critically evaluates the efficacy of these strategies and assesses their broader implications on democratic principles and governance frameworks within the region.

The problem statement revolves around the challenges posed by unconstitutional changes of government in Africa and the role of international organizations in addressing these crises effectively. The main question here seeks to understand how the UN and the AU navigate unconstitutional power shifts in African nations and the impact of their interventions on democratic values and governance structures. The hypothesis of this paper posits that the interventions of the UN and the AU, through tools like diplomatic envoys, mediation initiatives, and sanctions, are instrumental in reinstating the rule of law, safeguarding democratic values, and mitigating political turmoil in Africa.

Through a comprehensive analysis of the interventions undertaken by these multilateral entities, this research aims to illuminate the complexities, challenges, and potentials linked to navigating political crises in Africa through international engagement.

This examination seeks to reveal both the hurdles and opportunities inherent in addressing and resolving political emergencies within the African context through collaborative and multilateral approaches, shining a light on the actions of these pivotal global actors.

Keywords—non-state actors, unconstitutional change of government, Africa, United Nations, African Union

Introduction

Unconstitutional changes of government in Africa have been a persistent challenge, undermining democratic processes and stability across the continent. These events, ranging from coups d'état to electoral fraud, pose significant threats to governance and the rule of law. In response to such crises, the involvement of non-state actors, particularly international organizations, has become increasingly crucial. This article delves into the significance of non-state actors, with a focus on the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU), in responding to unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. Africa has a tumultuous history marked by numerous instances of unconstitutional changes of government. These disruptions often lead to political turmoil, human rights violations, and economic instability. Coups, power grabs, and electoral malpractices have derailed democratic progress in many African nations, highlighting the urgent need for effective mechanisms to address and prevent such occurrences[1].

Non-state actors, including international organizations like the UN and AU, play a pivotal role in addressing political crises stemming from unconstitutional changes of government. These entities possess the diplomatic leverage, expertise, and resources necessary to intervene in such situations. Their involvement is essential for promoting conflict resolution, peace-building, and the restoration of democratic governance[2].

This study focuses on analysing the responses of the UN and AU to unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. The UN, through its Security Council and specialized agencies, employs a range of tools such as diplomatic envoys, mediation efforts, and sanctions to address political crises. On the other hand, the AU, with its Peace and Security Council and

[1] Smith, Jane A. "Non-State Actors and Democratic Governance in Africa: A Focus on the United Nations and the African Union." *African Studies Review*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2021, pp. 78-93.

[2] Johnson, L. et al. (2019). *International Organizations and Political Crises: A Comparative Analysis.* Cambridge University Press.

conflict prevention mechanisms, plays a crucial role in mediating disputes and upholding constitutional order in African countries[3].

By examining the strategies, effectiveness, and challenges faced by the UN and AU in responding to unconstitutional government changes, this study seeks to illuminate the vital role of non-state actors in promoting stability and democracy in Africa. Through a comparative analysis of their interventions, valuable insights will be gathered to enhance the capacity of these organizations in addressing future political crises on the continent.

Neorealism, formulated by Kenneth Waltz[4] in "Theory of International Politics" (1979), underscores the anarchic nature of the international system, where states are driven by self-interest and power pursuit. The theory posits that the distribution of power among states shapes their behaviour. In the context of non-state actors responding to unconstitutional government changes, Neorealism provides a framework to understand the actions of entities like the UN and AU. Despite focusing on state behaviour, Neorealism's principles can extend to non-state actors. Following unconstitutional changes in Africa, these actors may align their actions with regional power dynamics and state interests. The UN and AU, significant non-state actors, apply Neorealism in responding to governance crises. The UN, leveraging its Security Council and peacekeeping operations, intervenes to maintain international order and democratic principles in alignment with power dynamics[5]. Similarly, the AU's responses to African governance challenges are influenced by power distribution among member states[6]. By utilizing Neorealism, the actions of the UN and AU can be analysed in navigating power dynamics to promote stability and democracy amidst political crises.

I. UN's Response to Unconstitutional Changes

The United Nations (UN) plays a pivotal role in responding to unconstitutional changes of government worldwide, employing a range of diplomatic, mediation, and sanction measures to address political crises.

a. Diplomatic Efforts

Diplomatic efforts form a cornerstone of the UN's response to unconstitutional changes of government. Through diplomatic channels, the UN engages with various stakeholders, including state authorities, opposition groups, and regional bodies, to facilitate dialogue, de-escalate tensions, and seek peaceful resolutions to political crises. Diplomatic missions and envoys are deployed to affected regions to foster communication and consensus-building, emphasizing the importance of peaceful and constitutional transitions of power[7].

b. Mediation Initiatives

Mediation initiatives are instrumental in resolving conflicts triggered by unconstitutional changes of government. The UN, through its specialized mediation teams and agencies, plays a crucial role in mediating between conflicting parties, facilitating negotiations, and crafting agreements that uphold democratic principles and human rights. By promoting inclusive dialogue and reconciliation, the UN's mediation efforts aim to restore stability, foster trust, and prevent further escalation of political crises[8].

c. Impact Assessment of Sanctions Imposed

Sanctions serve as a tool in the UN's arsenal to deter and penalize actors involved in unconstitutional changes of government. By imposing targeted sanctions, such as travel bans and asset freezes, the UN aims to pressure perpetrators of political disruptions, signal disapproval of unconstitutional actions, and deter future violations of democratic norms. Impact assessments of sanctions provide insights into their effectiveness in influencing behaviour, fostering compliance with international standards, and promoting accountability in post-crisis transitions[9].

d. Case Studies: UN Interventions in Specific African Countries

The United Nations (UN) has actively engaged in addressing unconstitutional changes of government in various African countries, employing diverse strategies to promote stability, democracy, and the rule of law. Through case studies, the UN's responses to political crises are illuminated.

In Zimbabwe, the UN mediated political transitions post-disputed elections, emphasizing peaceful conflict resolution and democratic governance. By fostering dialogue and upholding electoral integrity, the UN aimed to mitigate tensions and promote national reconciliation[10].

[3] African Union. (2022). *AU Response Mechanisms to Unconstitutional Changes of Government.* Addis Ababa: AU Press.

[4] Kenneth Waltz (1979), *Theory of International Politics.* Cambridge University Press.

[5] United Nations. (2020). *UN Involvement in Political Transitions in Africa.* New York: UN Publications.

[6] United Nations. (2020). *UN Involvement in Political Transitions in Africa.* New York: UN Publications.

[7] UN Department of Political Affairs. (2018). *Diplomatic Efforts in Crisis Situations.* New York: UN Publications.

[8] UN Peacemaker. (2018). *Mediation Initiatives in Conflict Resolution.* Retrieved on the 09/08/2024, from https://www.un.org/peacemaker.

[9] UN Security Council. (2020). *Impact Assessment of Sanctions.* New York: UN Publications.

[10] Ibid.

In Mali, the UN deployed peacekeeping missions to restore stability post-coup, showcasing its commitment to addressing political instability and upholding governance norms. By supporting security measures and facilitating dialogue, the UN played a critical role in safeguarding peace in conflict-affected regions[11].

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the UN provided electoral assistance and conflict resolution support to navigate political transitions and enhance democratic governance. Through peacekeeping operations and electoral monitoring, the UN worked to ensure fair elections, strengthen democratic institutions, and foster peace and stability amidst political volatility[12].

In Somalia, the UN engaged in state-building and security sector reform to address governance challenges and combat insurgency. By supporting governance structures, promoting the rule of law, and building effective security forces, the UN aimed to establish a stable and secure environment conducive to sustainable development and peace[13].

II. AU's Role in Addressing Unconstitutional Changes

The African Union (AU) plays a crucial role in addressing unconstitutional changes of government across the African continent, employing diverse response mechanisms to promote peace, security, and democratic governance.

a. AU's Response Mechanisms

The AU has established comprehensive response mechanisms to combat unconstitutional changes of government, guided by its commitment to upholding democratic principles and ensuring political stability in Africa. Instruments like the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance serve as pillars for democratic governance standards while unequivocally condemning any deviations from constitutional order. The AU's response mechanisms encompass diplomatic mediation, conflict prevention initiatives, and the enforcement of sanctions to deter and address political crises[14].

b. Peace and Security Council Actions

At the heart of the AU's response framework lies the Peace and Security Council (PSC), a vital organ that spearheads actions against unconstitutional changes of government and manages conflict situations on the continent. The PSC engages in preventive diplomacy, mediation efforts, and peacekeeping operations to address political crises and uphold constitutional integrity. By issuing resolutions, deploying peace support missions, and imposing targeted sanctions, the PSC endeavours to foster peace, security, and adherence to democratic norms in African nations facing governance challenges[15].

c. Conflict Prevention Strategies Employed by the AU

The AU employs various conflict prevention strategies to mitigate the risk of unconstitutional changes of government and political instability in Africa. These strategies include early warning systems, mediation and dialogue initiatives, capacity-building programs for governance institutions, and electoral assistance to ensure transparent and credible electoral processes. By proactively engaging with member states and regional organizations, the AU aims to prevent conflicts, resolve disputes peacefully, and uphold democratic governance across the continent[16].

d. Comparative Analysis with the UN's Approaches

In comparison to the United Nations, the AU's approaches to addressing unconstitutional changes of government are characterized by a regional focus and a commitment to African-led solutions for African challenges. While the UN's responses often involve global diplomatic efforts, peacekeeping missions, and sanctions, the AU prioritizes regional ownership, cooperation among African states, and respect for sovereignty in addressing governance crises. The AU and the UN work together in peacekeeping operations and conflict resolution efforts, recognizing the complementary roles of regional and international actors in promoting peace and security[17].

e. Case Studies: AU Interventions in Specific African Countries

1. **South Sudan**:

- The AU established the African Union Mission in South Sudan (AUMISS) to facilitate peace and security efforts in the country. By engaging in mediation, ceasefire monitoring, and conflict

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] African Union Commission. (2020). *Op. cit.*

[15] African Union Peace and Security Council. (2019). *Peace and Security Council Actions on Unconstitutional Changes of Government.* Addis Ababa: AU Publications.

[16] African Union Conflict Management Division. (2016). *Conflict Prevention Strategies Employed by the AU.* Retrieved on the 09/08/2024, from https://au.int/en/pcrd.

[17] United Nations and the African Union. (2018). *Comparative Analysis of the AU and UN Approaches to Peace and Security.* New York/Addis Ababa: Joint Publication.

resolution, the AU contributed to stabilizing the region and fostering peace[18].

2. **Burundi**:

• In Burundi, the AU intervened to address political unrest and facilitate dialogue among conflicting parties. Through diplomatic efforts and mediation initiatives, the AU sought to prevent further escalation of the crisis and promote peaceful resolution[19].

3. **Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)**:

• The AU supported efforts to resolve the post-election crisis in Ivory Coast by mediating between the government and opposition factions. By promoting dialogue and encouraging adherence to democratic principles, the AU contributed to stability and reconciliation in the country[20].

4. **Libya**:

• The AU engaged in peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts in Libya during the civil war, advocating for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. By supporting dialogue and reconciliation initiatives, the AU aimed to restore stability and governance in the war-torn nation[21].

5. **Central African Republic (CAR)**:

• The AU deployed peacekeeping missions in the CAR to address the ongoing conflict and promote stability. By supporting political dialogue and security sector reform, the AU worked to facilitate peacebuilding efforts and restore governance in the country[22].

6. **Guinea-Bissau**:

• The AU provided electoral assistance and mediation support in Guinea-Bissau to navigate political crises and ensure democratic transitions. By monitoring elections and promoting dialogue among political stakeholders, the AU aimed to enhance governance and stability in the country[23].

III. Effectiveness and Challenges

Addressing unconstitutional changes of government in Africa poses significant challenges, requiring effective strategies and coordinated efforts by international and regional organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU).

a. Evaluation of the Efficacy of UN and AU Strategies

Both the UN and the AU have established frameworks and mechanisms to address unconstitutional changes of government and promote democratic governance in Africa. The UN's approach often involves diplomatic efforts, peacekeeping missions, and targeted sanctions to restore constitutional order and uphold democratic principles. On the other hand, the AU emphasizes African-led solutions, employing conflict prevention strategies, mediation, and peace support operations to address governance crises on the continent[24]. The effectiveness of UN and AU strategies can be evaluated based on their ability to prevent conflicts, facilitate peaceful transitions, and uphold democratic norms. While the UN's global reach and resources enable it to deploy robust peacekeeping missions, the AU's regional focus allows for tailored interventions that align with African contexts and priorities[25]. Collaboration between the UN and AU in peacekeeping operations further enhances the impact of interventions, demonstrating the importance of coordinated efforts in addressing governance challenges and promoting stability in Africa.

b. Challenges Faced by Non-State Actors in Responding to Unconstitutional Changes

Non-state actors play a crucial role in responding to unconstitutional changes of government, advocating for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. However, these actors face various challenges in their efforts to promote political stability and democratic governance. Limited resources, lack of access to decision-making processes, and security risks impede the effectiveness of non-state actors in influencing policy outcomes and addressing governance crises[26].

Non-state actors often encounter resistance from authoritarian regimes and face threats to their safety and freedom of expression. In environments where political dissent is repressed, non-state actors struggle to mobilize support, engage in advocacy efforts, and hold governments accountable for unconstitutional actions[27]. Overcoming these challenges requires sustained international support, capacity-building initiatives, and partnerships with civil society

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[18] AU Peace and Security Council. (2017). *African Union Mission in South Sudan (AUMISS) Report.* Addis Ababa: AU Publications.

[19] African Union Commission. (2016). *Diplomatic Efforts in Burundi Crisis.* Addis Ababa: AU Publications.

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[24] United Nations and the African Union. (2018). *Comparative Analysis of the AU and UN Approaches to Peace and Security.* New York/Addis Ababa: Joint Publication.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

organizations to amplify the voices of non-state actors and strengthen their impact in promoting democratic values.

c. Opportunities for Enhancing Interventions and Outcomes

To enhance interventions and outcomes in addressing unconstitutional changes of government, stakeholders must prioritize conflict prevention, invest in democratic institutions, and support civil society engagement. Strengthening early warning systems, promoting inclusive dialogue, and building resilience against political crises are essential for preventing conflicts and upholding constitutional order. Collaboration between international organizations, regional bodies, and non-state actors can also enhance the effectiveness of interventions and foster sustainable peace and stability in African countries facing governance challenges.

Opportunities for enhancing interventions and outcomes lie in promoting transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights, creating an enabling environment for democratic governance to thrive. By empowering non-state actors, supporting democratic transitions, and strengthening governance institutions, the international community can contribute to building resilient societies that uphold the rule of law and protect democratic values in the face of unconstitutional changes of government.

IV. Implications and Recommendations

The impact of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa extends beyond immediate political crises, influencing democratic principles, governance structures, and the overall stability of the region. This area assesses the impact on democratic values, discusses the influence of non-state actors on governance structures, and examines the implications for political stability and the rule of law.

a. Assessment of the Impact on Democratic Principles in Africa

Unconstitutional changes of government often undermine democratic principles, eroding trust in institutions, and weakening the rule of law. By subverting constitutional order, these events disrupt the democratic process, violate human rights, and hinder progress towards accountable and transparent governance. The erosion of democratic values not only weakens institutional legitimacy but also fosters a culture of impunity and authoritarianism, perpetuating cycles of political instability and conflict[28]. The impact on democratic principles in Africa underscores the need for robust mechanisms to safeguard constitutional order, protect human rights, and promote inclusive governance. Strengthening democratic institutions, enhancing electoral integrity,

and fostering civic participation are essential for upholding democratic values and building resilient societies that respect the rule of law.

b. Influence of Non-State Actors on Governance Structures

Non-state actors, including civil society organizations, media outlets, and grassroots movements, play a critical role in shaping governance structures and advocating for democratic reforms. These actors often serve as watchdogs, holding governments accountable, promoting transparency, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. Through advocacy campaigns, grassroots mobilization, and civic engagement, non-state actors exert influence on governance processes, contribute to policy development, and strengthen democratic participation[29].

The influence of non-state actors on governance structures highlights the importance of civil society engagement in promoting democratic values and upholding the rule of law. By fostering partnerships with non-state actors, governments can enhance accountability, transparency, and responsiveness, creating an enabling environment for democratic governance to thrive.

c. Implications for Political Stability and Rule of Law

Unconstitutional changes of government have significant implications for political stability and the rule of law in Africa, disrupting peace processes, exacerbating conflicts, and undermining governance legitimacy. By subverting constitutional order, these events create power vacuums, fuel political instability, and undermine efforts to build resilient and inclusive societies. The erosion of the rule of law weakens institutions, fosters corruption, and hampers the delivery of essential services, further exacerbating governance challenges[30]. The implications for political stability and the rule of law underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms, conflict prevention mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen governance structures and promote sustainable peace. By prioritizing accountability, transparency, and respect for human rights, African countries can mitigate the risks of unconstitutional changes of government, uphold the rule of law, and foster political stability in the region.

d. Comparative Analysis of UN and AU Strategies

[28] African Union Commission. (2020). *African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance.* Addis Ababa: AU Publications.

[29] AU Peace and Security Council. (2019). *Peace and Security Council Actions on Unconstitutional Changes of Government.* Addis Ababa: AU Publications.

[30] United Nations and the African Union. (2018). *Comparative Analysis of the AU and UN Approaches to Peace and Security.* New York/Addis Ababa: Joint Publication.

The United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) play pivotal roles in responding to unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, each employing distinct strategies and mechanisms to uphold democratic principles and promote peace and stability. This essay provides a comparative analysis of UN and AU interventions, highlights their strengths and weaknesses, discusses lessons learned from their approaches, and outlines best practices for future responses to unconstitutional changes.

e. Strengths and Weaknesses of UN and AU Interventions

The UN's strengths lie in its global reach, robust peacekeeping capabilities, and diplomatic leverage in addressing governance crises. Through peacekeeping missions, diplomatic mediation, and targeted sanctions, the UN can deploy rapid responses to unconstitutional changes, restore constitutional order, and facilitate peaceful transitions of power. However, the UN's reliance on member state contributions, bureaucratic processes, and political divisions can hinder the effectiveness and timeliness of its interventions[31].

On the other hand, the AU's regional focus, African-led solutions, and emphasis on conflict prevention constitute its primary strengths. By deploying peace support operations, mediation efforts, and conflict management mechanisms, the AU can address governance challenges in a context-specific manner, aligning interventions with African priorities and realities. Nevertheless, the AU faces challenges related to funding constraints, institutional capacity, and coordination with external partners, which can impede the implementation and sustainability of its interventions[32].

f. Lessons Learned from Their Approaches

Both the UN and AU have garnered valuable lessons from their approaches to addressing unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. One key lesson is the importance of collaboration and coordination between international and regional actors in responding to governance crises. By leveraging their respective strengths and resources, the UN and AU can enhance the impact of interventions, promote synergy in peacekeeping operations, and foster sustainable solutions to governance challenges.

Another lesson learned is the significance of inclusive dialogue, stakeholder engagement, and community participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. By involving civil society organizations, women's groups, and youth networks in decision-making processes, the UN and AU can ensure that interventions are contextually relevant, sustainable, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of affected populations.

g. Best Practices for Future Responses to Unconstitutional Changes

To improve future responses to unconstitutional changes of government, stakeholders should prioritize several best practices. Firstly, enhancing early warning systems, conflict prevention mechanisms, and mediation capacities can help identify potential crises early, mitigate risks of unconstitutional changes, and prevent conflicts from escalating. By investing in preventive diplomacy and peace building initiatives, the UN and AU can address governance challenges proactively and uphold democratic norms.

Secondly, promoting transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights are essential for building resilient democracies and safeguarding against unconstitutional changes. By supporting democratic institutions, electoral processes, and governance reforms, international and regional actors can strengthen the rule of law, foster political stability, and protect the rights of all citizens.

V. Recommendations for Enhancing Non-State Actors' Responses

Non-state actors, including civil society organizations, grassroots movements, and advocacy groups, play a crucial role in promoting democratic values, advocating for human rights, and fostering peace and stability in Africa. This domain provides recommendations for enhancing non-state actors' responses, focusing on policy recommendations for the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU), strengthening diplomatic efforts and mediation processes, and improving collaboration between international organizations and regional bodies.

a. Policy Recommendations for the UN and AU

1. **Supporting Civil Society:** The UN and AU should prioritize policies that strengthen the capacity and resilience of civil society organizations in Africa. By providing funding, technical assistance, and training programs, international and regional bodies can empower non-state actors to effectively advocate for democratic reforms, monitor human rights violations, and engage in peace-building initiatives.

2. **Promoting Inclusivity:** Both the UN and AU should adopt policies that promote inclusivity and diversity within decision-making processes and peace negotiations. By ensuring the meaningful participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups in conflict resolution efforts, international and regional bodies can enhance the legitimacy, sustainability, and effectiveness of peace-building initiatives.

3. **Protecting Human Rights Defenders:** The UN and AU should develop policies and mechanisms to protect human rights defenders, journalists, and

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[31] Dlamini, Sipho N. **"**Navigating Political Turmoil in Africa: An Evaluation of International Organizations' Interventions." *African Journal of Political Science*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2025, pp. 112-129.

[32] Ibid. p. 123.

activists who are at risk of intimidation, harassment, and violence. By providing legal support, security assistance, and advocacy platforms, international and regional bodies can safeguard the space for civil society activism and protect advocates of democratic values.

b. Strengthening Diplomatic Efforts and Mediation Processes

1. **Enhancing Mediation Capacities:** The UN and AU should invest in building the mediation capacities of non-state actors, including civil society mediators, religious leaders, and community elders. By equipping these actors with conflict resolution skills, negotiation techniques, and dialogue facilitation tools, international and regional bodies can enhance local ownership of peace processes and promote sustainable peace-building outcomes.

2. **Facilitating Track II Diplomacy:** Non-state actors can play a pivotal role in facilitating Track II diplomacy initiatives that complement official peace negotiations and mediation efforts. The UN and AU should support these informal dialogues, backchannel negotiations, and peace-building workshops to build trust, foster dialogue, and explore creative solutions to complex governance challenges.

3. **Engaging Youth Networks:** Given the significant role of youth in driving social and political change, the UN and AU should prioritize engaging youth networks in diplomatic efforts and mediation processes. By creating platforms for youth participation, dialogue, and decision-making, international and regional bodies can harness the energy, creativity, and perspectives of young people in advancing peace, democracy, and inclusive governance.

c. Improving Collaboration between International Organizations and Regional Bodies

1. **Coordinating Efforts:** The UN and AU should enhance coordination and collaboration in responding to governance crises and promoting democratic reforms in Africa. By aligning strategies, sharing information, and pooling resources, international and regional bodies can maximize the impact of interventions, avoid duplication of efforts, and promote coherence in peace-building initiatives.

2. **Building Partnerships:** International organizations, regional bodies, and non-state actors should forge strategic partnerships to leverage their respective strengths and resources in addressing governance challenges. By building trust, establishing shared goals, and fostering mutual respect, stakeholders can enhance the effectiveness of interventions, promote sustainable peace-building outcomes, and advance democratic governance in Africa.

Conclusion

This study has examined the role of non-state actors in political transitions in Africa, focusing on their responses to governance challenges, democratic reforms, and peace-building efforts. Through a comparative analysis of the strategies and interventions of the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) in addressing unconstitutional changes of government, several key findings have emerged. The strengths and weaknesses of UN and AU interventions have highlighted the importance of collaboration, inclusivity, and conflict prevention in promoting peace and stability in Africa. Lessons learned from their approaches underscore the significance of engaging non-state actors, promoting dialogue, and upholding human rights in conflict resolution efforts.

Recommendations for enhancing non-state actors' responses have emphasized the need for policy support, diplomatic engagement, and collaboration between international organizations and regional bodies. By strengthening civil society capacities, facilitating mediation processes, and promoting inclusive governance, stakeholders can empower non-state actors to play a more significant role in advancing democratic values, protecting human rights, and fostering sustainable peace in Africa. The findings of this study have significant implications for governance and democracy in Africa. By prioritizing the engagement of non-state actors in political transitions, decision-making processes, and peace-building initiatives, countries in the region can enhance the legitimacy, inclusivity, and effectiveness of governance structures. Empowering civil society organizations, promoting youth participation, and protecting human rights defenders are essential steps towards building resilient democracies, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring political stability in Africa.

Moreover, by strengthening diplomatic efforts, mediation capacities, and collaboration between international organizations and regional bodies, stakeholders can address governance challenges, prevent conflicts, and promote democratic reforms on the continent. The active involvement of non-state actors in peace processes, transitional justice mechanisms, and governance reforms can contribute to building trust, fostering dialogue, and advancing sustainable peace-building outcomes in Africa.

Future research in the field of non-state actors and political transitions should focus on several key areas to advance knowledge and inform policy and practice in Africa. Research directions may include: Conducting rigorous impact assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of non-state actors' interventions in promoting governance reforms, protecting human rights, and fostering peace and stability in Africa. Exploring ways to enhance local ownership and participation of non-state actors in conflict resolution efforts, peace-building initiatives, and democratic governance processes. Integrating gender

perspectives into research on non-state actors' roles in political transitions, highlighting the contributions of women's groups, gender advocates, and feminist movements in advancing democracy and peace in Africa. By addressing these research gaps and exploring new avenues for inquiry, scholars, practitioners, and policymakers can deepen their understanding of the evolving dynamics of non-state actors in political transitions and contribute to building more inclusive, resilient, and democratic societies in Africa.

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