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Africa: Risk, Security and Mapping of Human Rights Violations

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Abstract

Planetary interdependence makes the task of states and international organizations to guarantee security inside and outside national borders ever more urgent. The tendency is to widen the space from national to international and to conceive of security as multidimensional for the satisfaction of human needs, assumed as priority needs with respect to those of the States. The old concept of national security must today confront the new concept of human security cultivated within the United Nations, which places the fundamental rights of the individual and of people at the centre of attention and lays the foundations for overcoming the traditional politics of power.
The concept of human security emphasises the security of the individual and his protection from political violence, war and arbitrariness. It takes account of the strong correlation between peace policy, human rights policy, migration policy and humanitarian policy.
The contribution provides, through a series of social indicators such as the Global Peace Index (GPI), Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and the World International Security and Policy Index (WISPI), a framework on risk, security, human rights violations in the African continent and examines some significant case studies related to sub-Saharan Africa.
Keywords: *Africa, security, peace, human rights.*

1. Introduction

Planetary interdependence makes the task of states and international organizations to guarantee security inside and outside national borders ever more urgent. The tendency is to widen the space from national to international and to conceive of security as multidimensional for the satisfaction of human needs, assumed as priority needs with respect to those of the States. The old concept of national security must today confront the new concept of human security cultivated within the United Nations, which places the fundamental rights of the individual and of people at the centre of attention and lays the foundations for overcoming the traditional politics of power.

The concept of human security emphasises the security of the individual and his protection from political violence, war and arbitrariness. It takes account of the

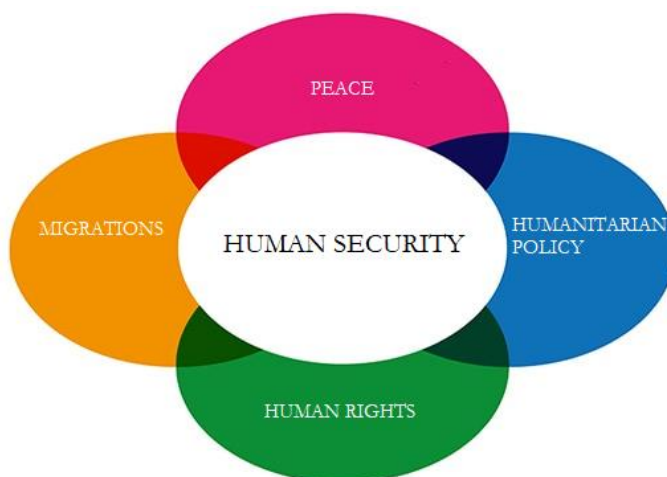strong correlation between peace policy, human rights policy, migration policy and humanitarian policy.

Figure 1. The 4 factors influencing human security. (Source: Human Security Division. Swiss Confederation. https://www.dfae.admin.ch/eda/it/dfae/dfae/organizzazione-dfae/direzioni-divisioni/direzione-politica/dsu.html)

As the historian John Iliffe (1995) wrote, the greatest contribution of Africans, is to have populated and made human a region particularly hostile to man. Even today, perhaps more than any other area of the world (at least, inhabited) sub-Saharan Africa represents a challenge for human development, as well as for that of political, economic and social institutions. At first glance and even superficially, the lack, sometimes apparently the absence of political and economic development, emerges as the most evident and dramatic characteristics of the continent. The present work tries to deepen these themes. The aim is to offer a "map" of the main themes connected with the prospects and problems of development in Africa, with particular attention to the events of the new millennium. The first group of issues that will be addressed is directly related to the socio-economic development of the sub-Saharan area, through an analysis of recent economic progress, but also of the continuing problems. Secondly, the main political developments, the complex process of democratisation, the problems associated with the continuing crisis in state institutions, and the conflicts and riots that accompany these processes are taken into account.

Social Geography also often makes use of tools typical of social research when studying what we call complex social phenomena such as quality of life, well-being, security and development. They are expressed through a multiplicity of variables (qualitative and quantitative), each empirically observable but only as a whole are indicators of the complex phenomenon under study. Therefore, the synthesis variable is not reflected in empirical observation, but is the result of logical and/or

mathematical operations. In this work the phenomena studied were examined with the help of composite indicators.

In fact, this contribution uses indicators such as the Global Peace Index (GPI), Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), World International Security and Policy Index (WISPI) and the Freedom House Index[1] a framework on risk, security and human rights violations in the African continent and examines and examines some significant case studies related to sub-Saharan Africa.

Other complex indicators, such as the Better Life Index[2], have been used in the ongoing wider research on these issues.

The Global Peace Index (GPI) of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) has provided an annual ranking of countries on the basis of their peace levels since 2008. The 2017 report analyzed 163 countries, representing 99.7% of the world's population, examining a series of indicators that measure the state of peace: the level of social security, the extent of domestic and international conflicts and the level of militarization. The Global Peace Index in 2017 also considered the elements that determine a "positive peace", that is, a peace characterized not as the absence of violence but as a set of attitudes, institutions and structures capable of creating and sustaining peaceful societies.

The report shows that the world is slightly more peaceful than in the previous year, with the situation improving in 93 countries and deteriorating in 68 countries. Looking back at the last 10 years, however, global peace has worsened by 2.14%, deteriorating rapidly as a result of the financial crisis but remaining more or less stable since 2010. Compared to 2015, violence cost the world 3% less: 14.3 billion dollars in 2016, which represents 12.6% of global GDP. The economic impact of the war was USD 1.040 billion, while the cost of peacebuilding operations was around USD 10 billion, less than 1% of the cost of the war[3].

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[1] Freedom House is an international non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C. that conducts research and outreach activities on democracy, political freedoms, and human rights Freedom House publishes an annual report entitled Freedom in the world.

[2] The Better Life Index is an interactive tool developed by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) that allows the performance of various countries to be measured according to the importance that is attached to the 11 parameters that contribute to determining a good quality of life.The Better Life Index is updated annually on the basis of new data and includes all OECD countries, the Russian Federation and Brazil. It is currently available in English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, and from this year also in Italian.

For the time being, most of the indicators of the Better Life Index are not available at a more disaggregated level: in other words, it is not possible to compare the differences within a country or between different social groups (men/women, youth/elderly, etc.). Depending on data availability, future index versions may include this possibility.

[3] One of the most peaceful nations in the world, Iceland is at the top of the league for the tenth consecutive year. This was followed by New Zealand, Portugal, Austria and Denmark, all of which were at the top last year. The countries at the bottom of the list also remain more or less the same, with Syria as the least peaceful country in the world, followed by Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan and Yemen.

In the world and at regional level, six out of nine regions have improved their position. South America has seen the greatest improvements, surpassing Central America and the Caribbean to become the fourth most peaceful region in the world. MENA (Middle East and North Africa), on the other hand, is the less peaceful region in the world for the fifth consecutive year.

At the bottom of the World Index, which measures the capabilities, procedures, legitimacy and performance of the security forces there are four African nations: Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Uganda. Botswana has the most virtuous security forces.

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2017 is developed by the world's largest anti-corruption organization, Transparency International. The index measures public sector and political perceptions of corruption in many countries around the world.

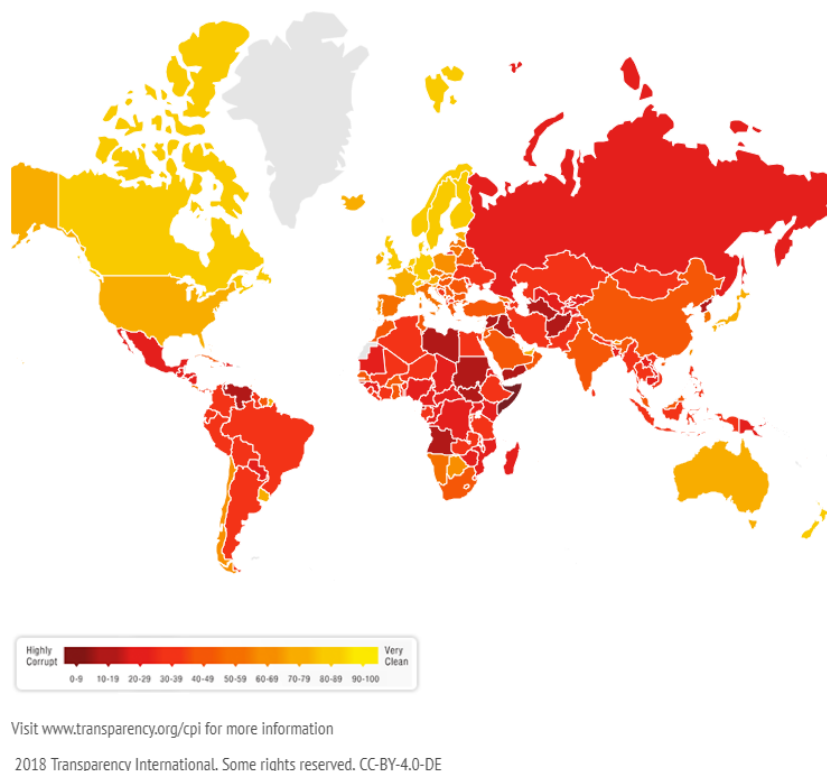## CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2017

Figure 2. Map of Corruption Index 2017. (Source: Transparency International, 2018)

Experts assign ratings ranging from 0 (very corrupt countries) to 100 (clean/transparent countries). The methodology varies and is refined from year to year to be able to give an increasingly reliable picture of reality. In the Report

2017 that reports the situation of 2016 in the last 40 places of the ranking, out of a total of 176 countries examined, there are countries such as: Nigeria (136), Guinea (142), Mauritania (142), Uganda (151), Chad (159), Sudan (170), South Sudan (174), Somalia (175).

Another indicator is the World Index on Internal Security Forces and Police WISPI, produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) on behalf of the International Police Science Association (IPSA). The primary objective of the study is to monitor the security sector and improve cooperation between security and intelligence agencies. To achieve this, in each individual country, the analysis examines four areas of internal security: procedural capacity, legitimacy and results, which in turn are analysed on the basis of four different indicators, for a total of 16.

The 2017 WISPI Report shows a very critical situation for Nigeria and three other African countries such as Nigeria: Uganda Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo were relegated to 124, 125 and 126th place, respectively, out of the 127 countries present in the international ranking.

As a result, the worst police forces in the world are African (cfr. paragraph 3).

Finally, the Freedom House Index was also analysed, which measures the level of civil liberties and political rights guaranteed in each country, an indicator used by various political science research projects. Other annual reports published by Freedom House are: Freedom of the Press and Freedom on the Net, which measure press freedom and internet freedom around the world.

2.   Africa: the map of human rights violations

The 2017/2018 Report presented by Amnesty International in February 2018 analyses the systematic violations of human rights in 159 countries, focusing this year on one particular phenomenon. This is the growing hatred of minorities and diversity, a feeling that is being felt by many leaders in an attempt to manipulate public opinion in their favour, using fake news as well.

This is a trend that also affects Italy in no small way. If the West shows evident political and cultural backward steps, Africa continues to deal with its long-standing problems: dictatorial regimes that leave no room for freedom and expression, countries at war, the widespread presence of Jihadist groups, uncontrolled migratory flows, trafficking in men, drugs and arms, torture and deprivation of basic human rights.

Among the countries of North Africa, Egypt confirms itself to be the state with the most contradictions. Its president, Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, is considered an important and solid partner by European leaders as well as Russia and the Gulf countries. Yet since he came to power in a coup in July 2013, the human rights situation in Egypt has gradually deteriorated. According to the report by Amnesty International, the country is confirmed as the largest "prison" for journalists along

with Turkey and China and in 2017 were obscured for spreading "false information" according to what the Egyptian authorities say.

With reference to Libya, the report indicates "total absence of legality" and shows how Italy is focusing on incorrect strategies to contain migration flows across the Mediterranean. The report says, up to 20.000 refugees and migrants were arbitrarily detained indefinitely in detention facilities in conditions of overcrowding and total lack of hygiene, exposed to the risk of torture, forced labour and illegal killings, at the hands of the authorities and militias who managed these facilities. In providing assistance to the Libyan coastguard and detention facilities, EU countries, particularly Italy, have been complicit in the abuses.

In Libya at the moment the role of the UNHCR has not been fully recognized, Libya has not ratified the Geneva Convention, and the automatic detention of irregular migrants has not ceased. All this institution-building approach has unacceptable human costs. There are people who are at risk every day of torture, extortion and unprecedented violence. The only solution is to increase very significantly the reception of around 40.000 very vulnerable people who are in urgent need of assistance and to exert different pressure on the Libyan authorities.

With attention to sub-Saharan Africa, the report shows a worsening situation. In according with the Amnesty International Report 2017-2018 "from Lomé to Freetown, from Khartoum to Kampala, from Kinshasa to Luanda, there were mass arrests of non-violent protesters, as well as beatings and, in some cases, killings. The political immobility and failures of regional and international bodies to deal with long-standing conflicts and their causes have risked becoming normal and causing further violations with impunity"[4].

In the sub-Saharan region there are more than 20 countries where the authorities have denied people the right to protest peacefully. They have done so by imposing illegal bans, or by the excessive use of force, with harassment and arbitrary arrests. This was particularly the case in Angola, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sudan, Togo, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

Some governments have adopted new laws with the aim of limiting the activities of human rights defenders, journalists and their opponents. The most obvious cases were Angola, Ivory Coast and Nigeria. Also in Angola, as in Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi, the last election rounds were used by those in power to settle internal accounts.

The victims of discrimination and abuse are women and girls, albinos (especially in Malawi and Mozambique) and LGBT (Senegal, Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria). Foreign companies operating in the heart of Africa are not exempt from blame either. This is true for Western companies, as well as for Turkish and Chinese companies, which have no qualms about paying a single dollar a day for work to those who risk their lives in mines, in construction sites where large infrastructures are built and in oil and gas fields (Pallotti, 2013).

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[4] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

The perennial instability of much of sub-Saharan Africa is greatly affected by the ramified presence of Jihadist groups - first and foremost the Nigerians of Boko Haram and the Somalis of Al-Shabaab -and the ongoing armed conflicts. The most critical case to date is that of South Sudan. Amnesty International also reports that tens of thousands of civilians have been violently displaced in the Upper Nile region, government forces have systematically burned and plundered, and sometimes burned, their homes, and there has been continued sexual violence. In Sudan, the humanitarian emergency remains high in the states of Darfur, the Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan.
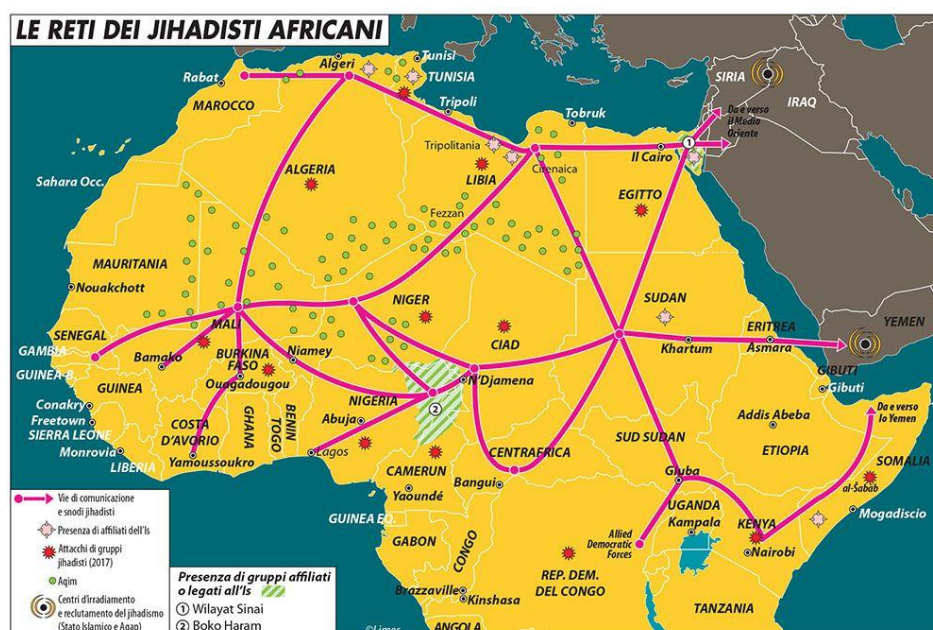

Figure 3. Islamic extremism in Africa. Map property of Laura Canale (Source:
http://www.limesonline.com/il-piano-dello-stato-islamico-per-il-sud-della-libia/103628?prv=true)

In the Central African Republic armed groups are rampant until the gates of the capital Bangui and the country is also reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping troops. Thousands of people have died and more than one million have been internally displaced in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Of these, 35.000 have spilled into the closer Angola.
The armies of Cameroon and Nigeria, in responding to the threat of Boko Haram, are guilty of crimes under international law and human rights violations like extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, detentions and torture. In Niger, a country in which Italy is about to start a controversial new negotiation process for the management of migrants and in which a state of emergency is in force in the western areas bordering on Mali and in the Diffa

region, a trial of more than 700 people suspected of being affiliated to the Nigerian jihadist group has begun[5].

Overall, these elements of instability have led to a sharp increase in internally displaced persons (IDPs). This is the case in Somalia (a total of 2.1 million IDPs), Nigeria (at least 1.7 million people have left their homes in the North-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, where Boko Haram has the strongest presence) and Chad (more than 408.000 refugees from Nigeria, Sudan, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo), and Eritrea (where thousands are trying to flee in order not to be oppressed by the government or to avoid permanent compulsory military service). Even in this sad ranking, however, the primacy lies with South Sudan: since the beginning of the conflict in December 2013, more than 3.9 million people (a third of the population) have been displaced, with peaks in 2017 in the southern region. The human rights situation in Sub-Saharan Africa has been characterised by violent repression of peaceful protesters and coordinated attack against human rights defenders, political opponents and civil society organisations. In this region there are the repressions on popular dissidents. In more than 20 countries, the authorities have denied citizens the right to protest peacefully, including through illegal bans, excessive use of violence, arbitrary arrests and molestations. The right to assembly is meant to be an exception instead of a rule.

In Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Angola, Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia and Togo, as well as in other countries, the authorities have adopted legislative, administrative and other measures in order to impose restrictions and prohibitions of protests, even peaceful.

In Angola, the authorities frequently prevent non-violent demonstrations, even when the law does not require prior authorisation. In Chad, peaceful meetings were banned and many organisers and participants have been arrested. In the DRC, the authorities banned and repressed non-violent protests, particularly those organised in connection with the political crisis triggered by the postponement of the elections[6].

In many countries, the exacerbation of violence and other misconduct in order to spread pacifist demonstrations have resulted in people being killed, wounded and unlawfully detained. In Angola, the only demonstrations that have taken place have been marked by detentions and ill-treatment by the police and security forces. Following the general elections, the Kenyan police intervened by using excessive force against opposition demonstrators, including firing real bullets and teargas and causing several dozen deaths, at least 33 of which occurred under gunshots by the police (Amnesty International, 2018).

In Togo, about 10 people, including children and members of the armed forces, has been killed during the repression of the security forces, which frequently beat protesters and fired teargas and real bullets at them. The security forces of Sierra

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[5] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[6] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

Leone have opened fire on the students, who were demonstrating against a strike carried out by the teaching staff in the city of Bo. The Government of Uganda has not hesitated to resort to raids, arrests, intimidation and harassment to prevent peaceful rallies and to gag those who opposed a constitutional amendment, which would have wiped out the 75-year limit for future presidential candidates.

The general suppression of disagreement has also been reflected in attacks on organisations of organised civil societies, as well as reporters, webloggers and human rights defenders[7].

In Cameroon, civilian society militants, reporters, trades unionists and professors were ransomed and, in some circumstances, brought before the military tribunals. The state has banned the work of political political parties and civilian society organisations. Many people have remained in prison in connection with alleged charges of national security.

Human rights defenders, activist and journalist have been arrested and persecuted by the Chadian authorities, in order to silence criticism of the government, including in response to the rage fuelled by the economic crisis. This it also happens in Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea.

In Ethiopia, arbitrary detentions under the state of emergency continued until the state of emergency was lifted in June 2017. The government has released 10.000 of the 26.000 people detained since 2016 under the state of emergency.

In Mauritania, Mohamed Mkhaïtir, a blogger charged with an apostasy, was condemned to imprisonment but he was also detained after serving his prison sentence (Amnesty International, 2018).

Like Amnesty International reports "the Malagasy authorities have intimidated and harassed journalists and human rights defenders with a view to silencing them. Those who dared to openly denounce the illegal trafficking and exploitation of natural resources have increasingly been targeted with criminal charges. In Zambia, the Law on Public Order was used to suppress the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in particular against civil society activists critical of the authorities and leaders of opposition political parties. The police intervened with excessive force against peaceful protesters, while ignoring the violence perpetrated by supporters of the ruling party against civil society activists[8]".

The Ugandan academic Stella Nyanzi was detained for over a month for posts published on Facebook, in which she criticized the president and his wife, who was Minister of Education.

In addition, some governments have adopted new laws with the aim of limiting the activities of human rights defenders, journalists and their opponents.

The Angolan Parliament adopted five draft laws, which contained provisions restricting freedom of expression and establishing a regulatory body with wide-ranging powers to supervise the media.

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[7] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/
[8] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

In about 30 countries, more than half of the states monitored in the Amnesty Report, media freedom has been reduced and journalists have been prosecuted (Amnesty International, 2018).

Figure 4. A map of Africa.(Source: https://it.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Template:Africa_(mappa_navigabile))

Amnesty international reports that "the improper use of the judicial system to silence dissent has been standard practice in Angola, where the government has used anti-defamation laws, especially to target journalists and academics.In Uganda, the journalist Gertrude Uwitware was arrested for expressing support for imprisoned Stella Nyanzi"[9].

In Botswana, reporters have been subjected to continued intimidation and persecution for their activities; there were three arrested and sentenced to death by

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[9] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

undercover security agents, after conducting an investigation into the construction of President Ian Khama's holiday home.

Attivists including reporters and webloggers were arrested in Ethiopia and many were condemned with the anti-terrorism proclamation, which loosely described the concept of a terrorist act.

Cameroon and Togo blocked access to the Internet to prevent journalists from doing their work and closed down some of the media.

In Cameroon, a military court sentenced him to ten years in prison following an unfair trial of Radio France Internationale correspondent Ahmed Abba for having exerted his right to liberty of opinion. He was dismissed in December, after a judgement of the court of appeal reduced his sentence.[10].

Political repression and violations occur frequently, constantly in the context of parliamentary elections. Fear, intimidation and violence characterized the presidential elections in Kenya. The police intervened after the vote by using excessive force against opposition protesters leading members of the ruling party have consistently challenged the judiciary's autonomy after the High Court has overturned the election results. The UN Coordination Council threatened to impose closure and other punitive measures on some human rights and governance organisations after they had criticised the electoral process.

In the presidential elections of August 2017, Rwanda' incumbent President Paul Kagame achieved an overwhelming victory, following previous constitutional changes that allowed him to stand for a third term of office, according to Amnesty International's report, "in a climate of fear generated by two decades of attacks on the political opposition, independent media and human rights defenders. Potential presidential candidates have been also targeted, including through defamatory campaigns[11]".

The run-up to the elections in Angola was marked by human rights violations, with journalists and human rights defenders repeatedly threatened with corruption and abuses. Those protesting have been arrested and the police have used excessive force.

Political repression has spread in Burundi, with illegal killings, arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances throughout the country.

Cameroon and Togo blocked access to the Internet to prevent journalists from doing their work and closed down some of the media.

Again, according to Amnesty International's report, cases of torture and other ill-treatment have been documented in several countries in the sub-Saharan region.

Cameroon's security forces have tortured people who suspected, often in the absence of evidence, that they were supporting Boko Haram, and these violations constitute war crimes and have been committed with impunity.

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[10] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[11] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

In Ethiopia, detainees accused of terrorism have repeatedly reported in court that they have been tortured and otherwise mistreated by the police during interrogations.

Finally, protracted conflicts combined with persistent human rights violations and humanitarian crises have forced millions of people to leave their homes seeking protection. As a result, refugees and migrants have been confronted with widespread violations and abuses. The number of refugees being hosted by African countries has not been sufficiently supported by the international community.

According to UNHCR, the United Nations Refugees Agency, due to the ongoing conflict and drought, half of the population of Somalia needed humanitarian assistance. During the year, the conflict and drought caused over one million internally displaced persons (IDPs), in addition to the 1.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) already present in informal settlements, in deplorable and insecure conditions[12].

According to Amnesty International's report "in Kenya, more than 285.000 refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia continued to be in urgent need of protection. In February, a High Court ruling blocked the Kenyan government's unilateral decision to close the Dadaab refugee camp; the government's initiative not only violated international law, but also exposed more than 260.000 Somali refugees at risk of being forcibly repatriated. Although the Dadaab camp remained open, the Kenyan executive continued to refuse to register new arrivals from Somalia[13]". Between December 2014 and November 2017, more than 74.000 refugees from Dadaab camp were sent back to Somalia on the basis of a framework agreement on voluntary repatriation. Returnees continued despite repeated concerns about their "voluntary" nature and concerns about the lack of conditions to ensure safe and dignified return to Somalia due to the ongoing conflict and severe drought.

Thousands of Eritreans continued to flee their country, where the human rights situation and the obligation to serve indefinitely created considerable difficulties for many citizens. These people faced serious abuse during their journey or once they arrived in their countries of destination; many of those seeking to get to Europe were detained arbitrarily, abducted and sexually abused during their travels. In August, Sudan forcibly repatriated more than 100 refugees to Eritrea, where they had been at great risk of severe violations in breach of internationally accepted human rights law.[14]

According to the report "in South Sudan, at least 340.000 people fled the escalating fighting in the Equatorial Region, which led to atrocities and starvation between January and October[15]". In the southern region, mainly government

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[12] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[13] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[14] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[15] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

forces, but also opposition forces, have been responsible for crimes under international law and other serious violations and abuses against civilians, including war crimes. Since the conflict began in December 2013, more than 3.9 million people have been displaced, or about a third of the population.

Human rights violations include those committed by armed terrorist groups. Amnesty international reports that "armed groups, including Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, have carried out abuses and attacks against civilians in countries such as Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia. In some cases, the attacks have resulted in serious abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights standards[16]".

In the Lake Chad area, Boko Haram[17] has has been involved in large military crimes. The attacks launched by Boko Haram targeted the civilian population, resulting in deaths and a growing flow of displaced people. New attacks in Cameroon and Nigeria have killed hundreds of civilians. Although the group released 82 of the abducted female students in Chibok, north-east Nigeria in May, thousands of abducted women, girls and young men, victims of terrifying abuses, including rape, were missing on appeal. In the whole of northeastern Nigeria, 1.7 million people remained displaced, many in conditions of malnutrition on the verge of survival.

In October 2017, Al-Shabaab[18] launched one of the cruellest attacks on civilians in recent history in Somalia, killing more than 500 people in the capital Mogadishu.

2.1. Violations against women

In various countries of the sub-Saharan region, discrimination, marginalisation and abuse of women and girls continue and persist, often resulting from cultural traditions and institutionalised by unfair laws. The Amnesty international report reports that "women and girls have been victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence, including in the context of conflicts and in countries with a high influx of refugees and internally displaced persons. Pregnant girls are excluded from school attendance in countries such as Sierra Leone and Equatorial Guinea. In June 2017, the President of Tanzania announced that he would prohibit pregnant girls from resuming their classes in state schools, thus fuelling stigma and discrimination against girls and victims of sexual violence.

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[16] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[17] As is well known, Boko Haram (from the Nigerian Hausa language, meaning "Western education is forbidden") is a Jihadist terrorist organization prevalently spread in northern Nigeria. It is also known as the Sunna People's Group for religious propaganda and Jihād and since 2015 has been an alliance with the Islamic State (ISIL).

[18] The Al Shabaab (in Somali language "the young", "the teens") are an Islamic extremist terrorist group that has sworn loyalty to Al Qaeda. Among them it is very divided into various factions, which follow the ethnic and tribal distinctions and they are called the Black Death in the Horn of Africa for the violence of their attacks against the civilian population.

Gender-based violence against women and girls is widespread in several countries, including Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland[19]".

Unsafe abortions continued to contribute to Liberia's high maternal mortality and childbirth-related harm, one of Africa's highest. Abortion services are largely inaccessible to women who have been raped because they are costly and difficult to access.

According to Amnesty international "in Angola, the government proposed an amendment to the Penal Code, which would have decriminalised abortion in certain limited cases, but Parliament rejected the proposal. Following public protests, the parliamentary vote on the legislation was postponed indefinitely"[20].

Despite the fact that South Africa has progressive legislation on abortion, women and girls face considerable difficulties in accessing services for the purpose of obtaining a legal abortion and face serious health and life risks from unsafe abortions.

Female genital mutilation rates have continued to decline, although the practice is still widespread in many countries despite being prohibited by law, such as in Eritrea.

Unfortunately, they are still widespread in 28 African countries and, in some of them, such as Egypt, Guinea, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti, the incidence of the phenomenon affects 90% of the female population (Primi, Varani, 2011).

But in recent years, in the world, various international movements such as UNEFPA and UNICEF, are struggling jointly to reduce and eliminate this practice, obtaining excellent results. In fact, since 2008, more than 25 million people in some 18,000 communities in 15 different states have publicly repudiated this practice. Globally, the prevalence of FGM has decreased by about 25% since 2000 and today's girls are one third less likely to be subjected to this terrible practice than their peers 20 years ago.

In conclusion, girls who do not undergo this practice tend to grow healthier and have healthier children. They often receive a better education, a higher income and the tools to make decisions about their future[21].

2.2.   Violations at work

In the DRC, adults and children risk their lives and in the cobalt and coltan mines for a US dollar per day. In South Africa, UK-based giant platinum worker Lonmin Plc has permitted its workers to stay in squalid conditions in Marikana, despite legally binding commitments over 10 years earlier to build 5.500 new miners' houses. No one was called to account for the 2012 killings of more than 30 people protesting against the harsh working conditions in the mines.

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[19] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[20] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[21] Source: http://www.unicef.it/doc/8095/unicef-e-unfpa-progressi-a-rischio-su-mutilazioni-genitali-femminili.htm

Meantime, signs of increasing public pressure, initiatives and demands for more corporate responsibility have emerged in several countries of the region.

In June 2017, a landmark civil lawsuit was filed against Shell in the Netherlands, in which the company was accused of complicity in the arrest, illegal detention and execution of nine members of the Ogoni community, in southern Nigeria hanged by the Nigerian military government in 1995. According with Amnesty Internationals "international organisations have called for Shell to be investigated for its role in these serious human rights violations by Nigerian security forces in Ogoniland during the 1990s.Some governments have taken positive steps. The DRC has committed itself to ending work for children in mining by 2025, which could be a major step forward in eradicating the use of children, even those as young as seven, in the dangerous work of mines. Ghana ratified in 2017 the United Nations Minamata Convention on Mercury, which aims to protect workers from exposure to the toxicity of liquid metals by reducing the use of mercury in small gold mining and craft activities and to protect children from exposure to this metal"[22].

2.3 Death penalty, towards disappearance…

On the death penalty, all African states have adopted the model of the powers that colonised them in their criminal laws. However, with the independence process, each state has established its own pact on the death penalty rather than following the example of colonial powers by abolishing the death penalty. In fact, independent African states have extended the list of capital crimes to include some economic crimes and others. In Uganda, the spread of a disease may deserve a death sentence. In Burundi, where the death penalty has been abolished for a long time, witchcraft was liable to the death penalty because it was considered a serious crime. In countries where military forces took control of political power or where dictatorship was introduced, punishment was easily used in the name of safeguarding national security, when in fact it was used to negotiate with political opponents who are perceived as threats to the ruling regime[23].

Today, the practice of the death penalty still remains an important point in African debates. The current situation demonstrates the ambivalence or even the opposition that has arisen among African states with regard to the death penalty.

In 2017 Guinea abolished the death penalty altogether, the Gambia is doing so and in the meantime has committed itself to a moratorium, Kenya has cancelled the rule that the death penalty should be an automatic sanction for the murder,

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[22] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

[23] The Working Group on the Death Penalty in Africa, 'Study on The Question of The Death Penalty in Africa', p. 27. This study was adopted by the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples in its 50th Ordinary Session (24 October/07 November 2011) in Banjul (Gambia).

Burkina Faso and Chad are about to amend their legislation to repeal the death penalty (Report on the Death Penalty in Africa, 2017).

Today there are many African states that practise the death penalty for some people, life imprisonment for others or both for still others. For example, South Africa is practising life imprisonment. While Cameroon practices both the death penalty and life imprisonment (Ngo Manga, 2015).

In Africa the Death Penalty is present in: Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

The death penalty in these African states is not always applied and, in most cases, is limited to very specific crimes such as high treason and rape. In other countries, such as Nigeria, we must consider the fragmented political situation; in fact, the death penalty is currently applied only in northern Nigeria.

20 sub-Saharan African states have abolished the death penalty for all crimes, and it is high time that the rest of the world followed their direction and handed over this abominable punishment to the history books.

In 2016, Amnesty International had recorded executions in five states in the region, while in 2017 it had executions in only two, South Sudan and Somalia. The resumption of executions in Botswana and Sudan in 2018 must not obscure the positive steps taken by other states. The Gambia has signed an international treaty committing it not to execute death sentences with a view to abolishing the death penalty and in February 2018 the President established an official moratorium on executions.

The gender issue, fair access to work and resources for citizens and governments, resistance against the advance of Islamic extremist factions combined with the ever sensitive and topical issue of the death penalty represent new and interesting challenges for Africa as it will be affected by a large population increase in the coming decades.

3. States, security and police in sub-Saharan Africa: some cases

Despite the economic and social progress underway, Africa remains a continent of weak statehood. In fact, African states have not completed their constitutive process after colonialism and the decolonisation. Despite the diversity of historical paths and geopolitical contexts of individual countries, the difficult internal balances between different communities and ethnic groups, the progressive increase in population, rapid urbanization, climate change and tensions for water and land are some factors that contribute to increasing the vulnerability of most states on the Continent.

The origin of the African state - as it came to light after colonialism, with a territory designed on the basis of external logic and with an institutional architecture of import - and the subsequent inability to resolve these original vices,

has led observers since the 1980s to speak of " almost-states "(Jackson, 1990), or rather state apparatuses that nominally possess all the primary prerogatives of the state, starting with international recognition, but that are unable to fulfill the essential tasks of the state, primarily the maintenance of political and civil order. within the territory. There are a great many sub-Saharan states whose authorities have been repeatedly challenged by armed rebel movements or other illegal organisations, tensions often intertwined with regional and international conflicts.

The traditional basins of instability were for a long time the Horn of Africa - where the historical dualism between Ethiopia and Somalia, and their internal conflicts, is overlaid by the opposition between Ethiopia and Eritrea, independent since 1991/1993 - and the Great Lakes (where the main violence concerned the eastern area of Congo-Kinshasa, a remote region from the capital Kinshasa and poorly controlled, and the neighboring Rwanda and Uganda). To these must be added, since some years, the Sahelosaharan belt, in particular, in the area of passage between the desert and the savannah in West Africa, where the nomadism of the Tuaregs, and, more generally, of the Berber populations dedicated to licit and illicit commerce along the ancient caravan lines, is struggling to live with the borders and the institutions of the African States (Ercolesi, 2014).

The "fragility" or weakness of some contemporary states is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon, which responds to pressures both internal and external. Exploded for its diffusion and relevance between the eighties and nineties, it quickly gained a central position among the concerns of observers and actors of African development processes. The Failed States Index (FSI)[24] of the Fund for Peace in Washington, for example, examines this phenomenon by focusing on six socio-economic indicators (demographic pressure, refugees, unequal development, group claims, people exodus and brain drain, poverty and economic decline) and six political and military indicators (state legitimacy, public services, human rights and the rule of law, security systems, divided and polarised elites, external interventions). The result is a ranking of state failure that places some sub-Saharan countries among the top twenty out of a total of 178 (South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia ,Somalia, Chad, Guinea, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo).

This reflection, however, refers to security and police forces and it is essentially based on an authoritative source such as that of the aforementioned World Index on Internal Security Forces and Police WISPI, 2017. The Report shows a very critical situation for Nigeria and three other African countries: Uganda, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, relegated to 124th, 125th and 126th place

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[24] Since 2005, the index has been published annually by the Peace Facility and the journal Foreign Policy. The list has been quoted by journalists and academics in making extensive comparisons on countries or regions.

respectively, out of the 127 countries included in the international ranking, which consequently establishes that the four worst police forces in the world are all African.

In particular, it is interesting to note that Uganda has a very small police force for its size, with 110 security officers per 100 thousand inhabitants. The lowest rate of all democracies completed, examined in the index. Kenya also has a rather small police force, with 99 officers per 100.000 inhabitants, a very small figure compared to the 347 of the general index average and the 268 of the sub-Saharan African average. Another highlight is that only 30% of the population of the Democratic Republic of Congo feel safe walking alone at night in the neighbourhoods of their cities.

Finally, to understand how Nigeria, with a total score of 0.255 placed itself in last place in WISPI, an estimate: a rate of 20 murders per 100 thousand inhabitants - well above the index average.

Among the countries of the continent with the most efficient police, after Botswana, which ranks 47th in the WISPI, Rwanda stands out, 50th place, followed by Algeria, Senegal and Tunisia, respectively in 58th, 68th and 72th position. Other African countries with satisfying situations are Burkina Faso (83), Ghana (85), South Africa (89).

The WISPI Index is developed by means of a careful analysis based on 16 specific indicators related to 4 defined areas (Fig. 5).

Domain	Indicator	Definition	Source
Capacity	Police	Number of Police and Internal Security Officers per 100,000 people	UNODC - Crime Trends Survey
	Armed Forces	Number of Armed Service Personnel per 100,000 people	IISS - Military Balance
	Private Security	Number of Private Security Contractors per 100,000 people	Small Arms Survey
	Prison Capacity	Ratio of Prisoners to Official Prison Capacity	World Prison Population Project
Process	Corruption	Control of Corruption	WB - World Governance Indicators
	Effectiveness	Criminal Justice effectiveness, impartial, respects rights	World Justice Project
	Bribe Payments to Police	% of Respondents who Paid a Bribe to a Police Officer in the Past Year	Global Corruption Barometer
	Underreporting	Ratio of Police Reported Thefts to Survey Reported Thefts	IEP Analysis
Legitimacy	Due Process	Due process of law and rights of the accused	World Justice Project
	Confidence in Police	% of Respondents who have Confidence in Their Local Police	Gallup World Poll
	Public Use, Private Gain	Government officials in the police and the military do not use public office for private gain	World Justice Project
	Political Terror	Use of Force by Government Against Its Own Citizens	Political Terror Scale
Outcomes	Homicide	Number of Intentional Homicides per 100,000 people	UNODC - Crime Trends Survey
	Violent Crime	% Assaulted or mugged in the Last Year	Gallup World Poll
	Terrorism	Composite measure of deaths, injuries, and incidents of terrorism	Global Terrorism Index
	Public Safety Perceptions	Perceptions of safety walking alone at night	Gallup World Poll

Figure 5. World Internal Security and Police Index, Domains and Indicators. (Source: WISPI Report 2016).

According to the WISPI 2017 Report, terrorism remains one of the greatest internal threats to the security of the countries examined. This is shown by the dramatic increase in attacks over the last three years, with more than 62 thousand people killed. And the most significant increase in attacks occurred in Nigeria, the African country situated in the penultimate position on the list (North Korea is the latest). The analysis shows that the sub-Saharan region, together with the Asia-Pacific region, recorded the highest number of variations of the nine examined in the report. Another salient datum is constituted by the fact that the authoritarian regimes of sub-Saharan Africa have police forces and numerically smaller armies,

compared to their Middle Eastern counterparts. Overall, this had a negative impact on the result of the level of capacity, which is the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa.

Cultural factors and political contexts have no influence, but a careful study of the Report shows that geographical factors play a relatively modest role in determining the legitimacy and effectiveness of procedures in authoritarian regimes, while capacities and results are much more influenced by the geopolitical and cultural environment. However, it should be kept in mind that countries with insufficient data are excluded from the index, as are countries currently involved in a prolonged civil conflict, so the four African countries at the end of the ranking may not have the worst situation of internal security at global level (WISPI, 2017).

To complete the reflection, it should be pointed out that in the scenario of sub-Saharan Africa there are new leaders belonging to old parties that may not be able to implement the desired reforms. The new leaders replaced the long-standing leaders in Zimbabwe and Angola in 2017, but their leadership background has raised doubts about the promises of changement. The death of President Robert Mugabe at the end of 2017 left the future in Zimbabwe uncertain, especially for democracy. In Angola, newly elected president João Lourenço began to demolish the family power structure created by his previous president, José Eduardo dos Santos, who had been serving as president for 38 years and remained head of the powerful party. However, it is not clear whether Lourenço would tackle corruption in a comprehensive way or simply establish its control over the sticks of power and public assets[25].

The leaders of many other countries have remained in power, often at the expense of the fundamental rights of their citizens. The Kenyan Supreme Court initially obtained broad support for the annulment of the results of what was considered a flawed presidential election in August 2017. However, the period leading up to the court's response was marked by the absence of substantial reforms, political abuse and the boycott of the main opposition leader, Raila Odinga. These factors jeopardized the credibility of the victory of President Uhuru Kenyatta, who won 98 percent of the vote in the face of a low turnout.

In neighbouring Tanzania, the government of president John Magufuli, who became a member of the only powerful party the country has ever known in 2015, has increased the suppression of opposition dissent, withholding opposed politics, blocking the media and detaining citizens for having published critical views on social media[26].

In Uganda, elderly President Yoweri Museveni, president since 1986, tried to remove the 75 year-old presidential age limit, which would allow him to re-apply in 2021. Museveni had just won re-election the previous year in a climate of police violence in the foreground, Internet disruptions and allegations of treason against his main challenger.

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[25] Source: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018
[26] Source: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018

South Africa, a country considered democratic, has also seen the corruption scandal involving President Jacob Zuma, with further revelations about the family's vast influence on his government.

The Gambia is the country with one of the biggest improvements, as highlighted in the Freedom in the World 2017 report, moving from a nonfree to a partially free country. For more than twenty years, the country has painfully been under the oppressive regime of President Yahya Jammeh, who gained control in a military coup d'état. Under his leadership, opposition members of the government, independent journalists and rights activists were intimidated, arbitrarily arrested, tortured and forcibly disappeared.[27]

The inauguration of the new President Adama Barrow saw among the first changes the return of journalists and activists to exile, political prisoners were released, ministers declared their assets to an ombudsman and the press union started working on the reform of the media sector. This has led to strong and timely international support for democratic transitions, although good practices and long-term incentives will be needed to ensure good governance over time.

Despite Zimbabwe, thanks to the newly elected President, the country's status has decreased from partially free to not free due to the process by which the former President Mugabe was forced to resign because of military pressure[28].

4. Final notes

This first mapping, even if partial and part of a wider research, tries to highlight the most important elements with regard to security policies and human rights violations in the sub-Saharan African landscape, also taking into account the most important international relations that concern the area.

Moreover, the African continent is one of the focal points of security in international relations. Despite the historical marginalization and submission of the continent, far from being outside the world system, it is today increasingly present as a generator of international politics and great economic interests. Both on a continental scale and in the South-South relationship, Africa, with its individuality and resources, also ranges in transnational processes.

Since the Nineties, after the end of the Cold War, the United States has competed in Africa through bilateral relations and without delegating to the former colonial powers the protection of "security" on the spot. American interference has been less discreet in the former losses of weak powers such as Belgium, Portugal and Italy itself, which have been unable to maintain the necessary influence once they have lost direct control[29]. On the contrary, France has also defended its influence

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[27]Source: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018

[28] Source: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018

[29] The United States tries to keep intact the monopoly of the oil exploitation concentrated in the western tropical zones, while with the enlargement of the base in Djibouti and the birth of Africom, the States have conferred to their military presence a decisive strengthening to protect

in the former colonies from direct competition from Washington, even though it has lost ground in the Great Lakes area.the current French African programme is not limited to a simple re-edition of the Françafrique but aims to introduce the rules of the rule of law and the global market into French-speaking Africa as well. In comparison, although an empire's footprint has remained in Eastern, Southern and some West African states, summed up in the Commonwealth's bridging work, Britain's ambitions are clearly lower than France's and more in line with American projects.

Meanwhile Africa has learned to know a new partner China, which has greatly expanded its influence through an organized and systematic project of penetration into the Continent[30]. Unlike Western practice, the Chinese are not directly concerned with internal political issues, but they are supporters of efficient action at the commercial, economic and financial levels, which has allowed them to grow their presence on African territory with great speed, without ever questioning or making their political status or respect for individual rights. The fundamental problem with the Chinese initiative is the lack of transparency in the recognition of civil rights and the promotion of development focused more on opening up a Chinese market in Africa than on building an African market in Africa (Alden, Large, 2011).

To further increase and complicate the economic and political variables within the African continent there is also the parallel attempt by India and Turkey to grow their area of influence on the East Coast and in the Horn of Africa, while there is a spreading violence by Islamist terrorist organizations, which after the defeat of the Caliphate are now focusing on new fronts.

The reports analyzed in this paper reveal the political immobility and failures of regional and international institutions in dealing with long-standing conflicts, as well as a certain intolerance towards peaceful dissent and a deep-rooted contempt for the law and freedom of association have become the norm in many countries. These trends have been set in a context where progress in poverty reduction and limited progress in Human Development has been slow and often at alternate stages.

Moreover, instability *tout court* in a continent like Africa affects Europe directly through two main effects: the first is immigration, which becomes difficult to control in times of instability, while the second is the lack of confidence on the part of private investors in these geographical areas that have potentially great prospects for growth and development: if they cannot be controlled and pacified they cannot give any guarantee of continuity to possible commercial, economic and financial enterprises.

However, there have been signs of hope and progress, which have rarely gained

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their own interests (Source: http://www.ildolomiti.it/societa/2018/il-futuro-dellafrica-tra-leuropa-che-guarda-la-cina-che-investe-e-gli-stati-uniti-che)

[30] China has started a program of controlled and steady immigration of Chinese from their homeland to Africa to open new small and medium businesses.

the attention of the world press: the courage of ordinary people and human rights defenders, who have fought to demand justice, equality and dignity, despite repression.

However, not everything in Africa is overshadowed by violence. Something, albeit slowly, is moving in the right direction. Kenya's High Court has stopped the closure of Dadaab, the largest refugee camp in the world. In Nigeria, forced expulsions were prevented in the capital Abuja by two sentences which ruled that any threat of forced eviction without due notification to the persons concerned was illegal and that both forced evictions and the threat of their implementation constituted cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. In Angola, the Angolan National Court has declared unconstitutional legislation aimed at hindering the efforts of organised civil societies[31]. The draft of Burkina Faso's new constitution includes provisions that should strengthen the protection of human rights.

In Africa, in the face of a political class that in many cases still follows a wrong "path", there is a civil society that is mobilizing. The African Union itself has launched an ambitious programme to "silence arms" by 2020-2025.

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[31] Source: https://www.amnesty.it/rapporti-annuali/rapporto-annuale-2017-2018/africa/

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