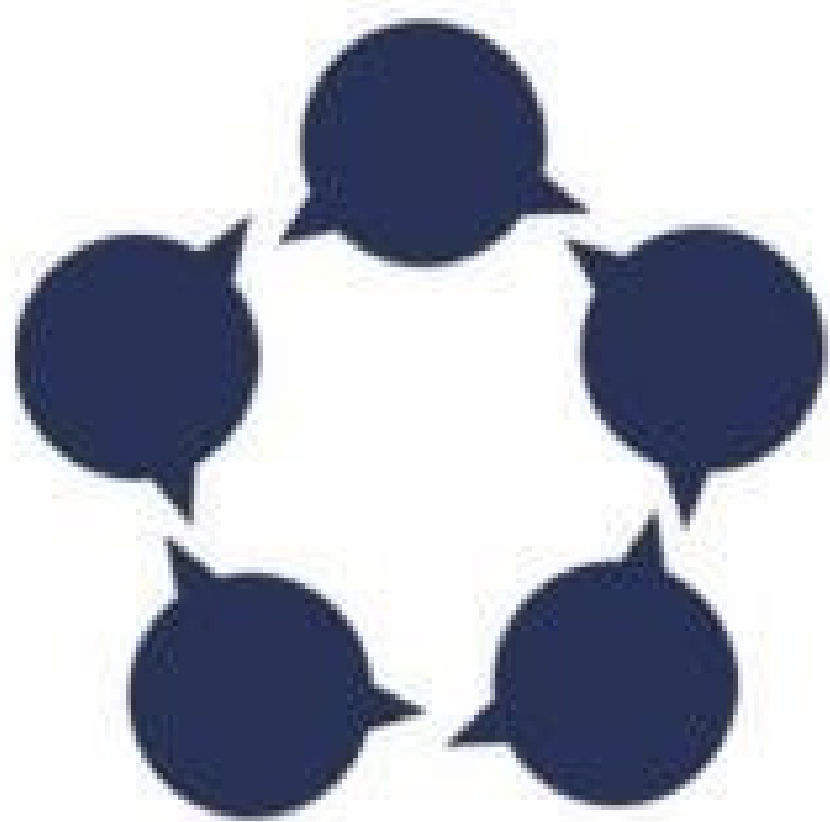
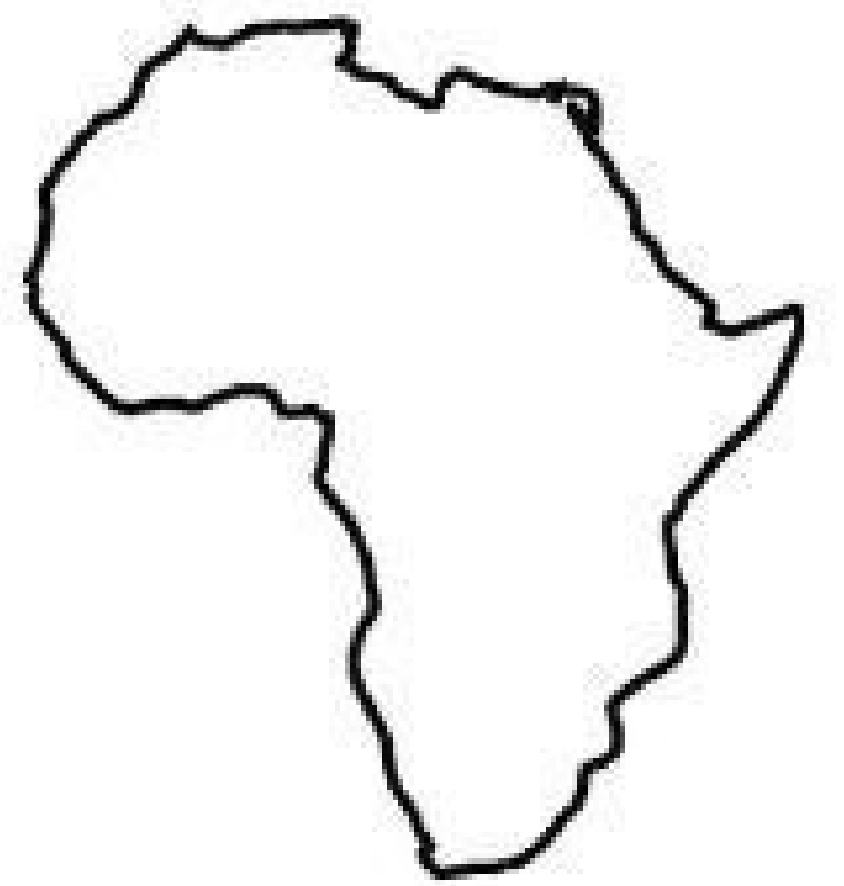


# Youth, Institutions, and the State: Interrogating Political Change from Africa to America



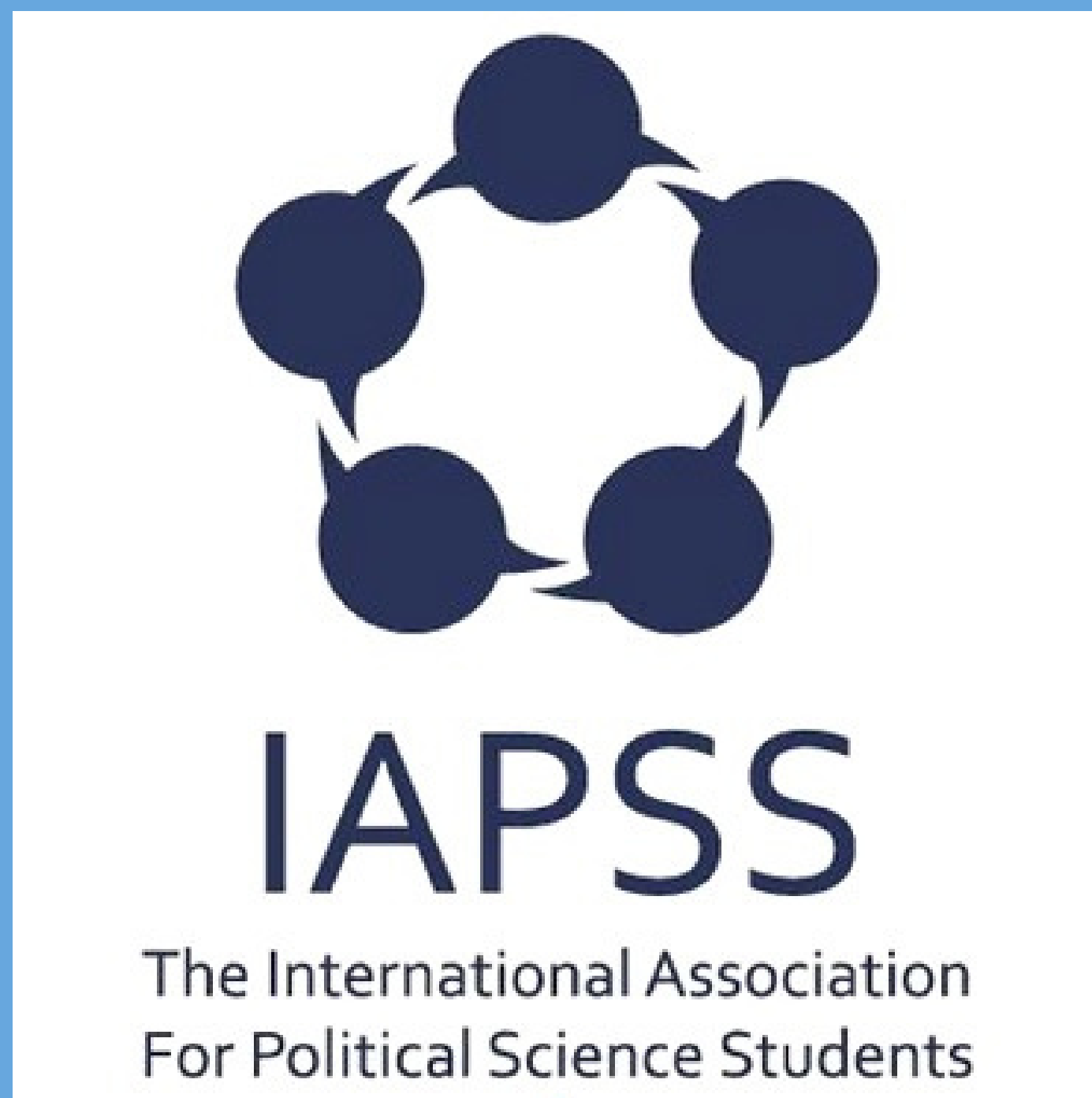
**IAPSS**  
International Association  
For Political Science Students  
**Africa**



**JUNE 2025**

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International Association for Political Sciences Students - Africa Region



## IAPSS Africa June Report: June 2025

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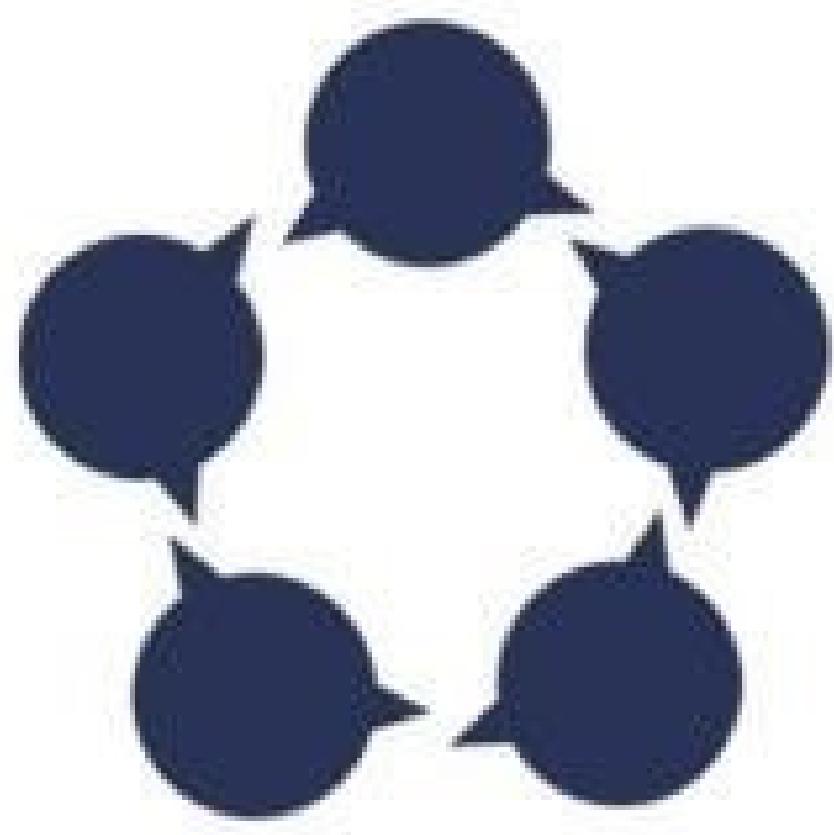
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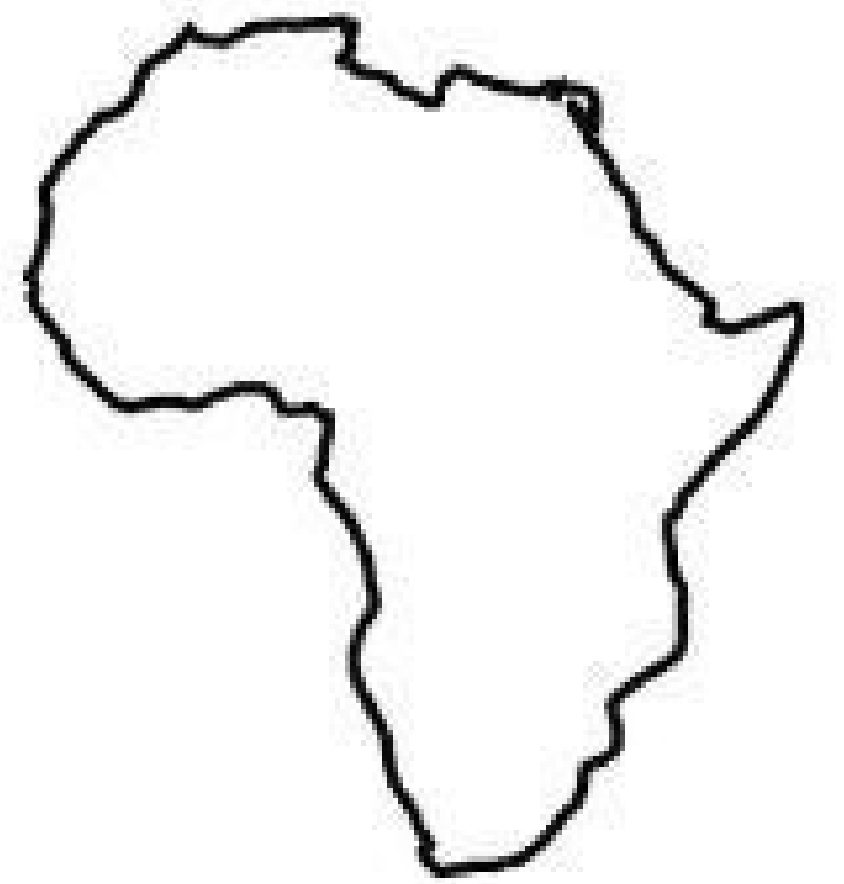
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For Political Science Students



# Africa

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## FOREWORD:

Dear Members, and Colleagues

As the Chair of IAPSS Africa it is with great pride and honour that I welcome you to the second edition of our IAPSS Africa report and the first publication of 2025. As an organization we remain wholeheartedly committed to tackling, reimagining, and disrupting the socio-political issues across our beautiful, nuanced and often overlooked continent.

This report is more than a mere collection of words on paper. We believe that it is a bold assertion of young African voices reclaiming the narrative, and space. Our focus this year was uplifting, educating, and empowering young African leaders with the aim of ensuring that they take their rightful place in shaping the future of the continent.

I am honoured to lead an organization that thrives because of the commitment, and passion of its members. We are proud of every student, volunteer, contributor, and partner who has made our vision a shared success.

In the past year, we hosted two major events that ignited pertinent conversations and sparked critical insights. The first event explored as well as unpacked the geo-markets and political trends emerging across Africa, while the second spotlighted the rise of young African leaders who are transforming the political and social landscape. Africa is bustling with new opportunities and young leaders who are at the forefront of this magnificent societal shift – this includes youth-led movements such as the youth led riots in Kenya, Mozambique Nigeria and the societal defining #feesmustfall movement which started in South Africa. The leaders of the Sahel region where new controversial leaders are challenging outdated narratives. These young leaders are tirelessly, fearlessly and steadfastly driving progress in governance, climate, tech, and economic reform. As IAPSS Africa we are excited to be at the forefront of the tide that is clearly turning.

This publication is enriched by the brilliant minds of several esteemed writers who have previously presented at our events. They come from organizations that share our mission and values with. These institutions like our very own is rooted in a vision of an Africa that is self-determined, equitable, and sovereign.

As a collective of young Africans, we understand that we must be the architects of the Africa we wish to see. We hope that this report will serve as a mirror of our ambition, a blueprint of our intentions, and a celebration of our capacity. We invite you to read, reflect, and rise with us as we continue to build, disrupt, and dream.

With revolutionary optimism,

**Ontlotile Seemela**

Chair, International Association for Political Science Students (IAPSS) Africa  
June 2025







# DECODING THE 2025 TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: “DRILL, BABY, DRILL” A lesson for Africa by Barend Prinsloo

## Introduction

In 2024, President Donald J. Trump from the Republican Party was elected as President of the United States (US). His presidency started in Jan 2025 and supplanted the Joe Biden/Kamala Harris (Democratic Party) administration. He won the popular vote of the American people as well. Trump issued numerous Presidential Executive Orders upon taking Office, which chiefly affected the US’s foreign, defence, immigration, and economic policies. When taking office, several notable conflicts were raging across the world, either affecting or involving the United States. These conflicts can be grouped into two categories: those involving actors pursuing globalist ideas and those involving actors motivated by expansionist nationalism. I argue in this article that both categories posed a subtle but recognisable existential threat to the United States’ primary source of global power and influence: the continued status of the US dollar as the world’s baseline reserve currency. I further this argument through a discussion, from the perspective adopted by the Trump administration, on the perceived threats that globalist and expansionist nationalist movements pose to the future economic prosperity of the United States. This discussion includes some of the underlying reasons for the far-reaching policy decisions taken by the second Trump administration. The argument concludes with an assessment of the implications for Africa.

The US dollar as a baseline currency in perspective:

The Brookings Institution, explained that governments and central banks around the world hold dollar-dominated assets, for example:

- Dollar assets comprised about 59% of global foreign currency reserves;
- 64% of the world debt was denominated in dollars;
- The dollar made up 58% of international payments and foreign exchange transactions.
- It was used in 54% (as of 2022) of foreign trade invoices globally.

In 2024, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that central banks were shifting gradually away from the dollar resulting in their declining share of global reserves in the world. Its value remaining relatively constant owing to private traders moving into the dollar as trade.

Some of the notable threats to the dollar include the diversification by central banks to use alternative national currencies instead of the dollar; bilateral trade between states in local currencies to bypass the dollar (such as the BRICS+ countries are proposing); "unsustainable" foreign debt levels of the U.S.; and the adoption of cryptocurrencies as alternative stores of value or payment methods<sup>5</sup>. The potential for economic expansion by the BRICS group and its creeping political influence through BRICS+ is contentious to U.S. foreign interests. Although the U.S. had concerns about the growing economic cooperation and trade between Russia and China, the prospect that BRICS+ might introduce an alternative system or baseline monetary unit was of primary concern. Nonetheless, it was the inclusion of Iran in BRICS+ that broke the camel's back, as Iran was officially declared an adversarial state to the US in 2017.

The perceived threat posed to the US by the globalists

According to Dunne, 'Globalisation' implies "a defence of the increased fluidity of goods, wealth, people, and culture across borders, viewing national boundaries as arbitrary restrictions." Globalisation became synonymous with the interconnected nature of the world, including states from the former Soviet Union and China. Though it is mostly used in an economic context, political and cultural contexts are also relevant.<sup>11</sup> In the economic context, globalisation has especially been to great advantage to the economies of the Western world.

Since the 2010's, the World Economic Forum (WEF) started to shape and expand the narrative around globalisation. The WEF could do this since it managed to derive its legitimacy from multiple sources: its affiliation with international organisations like the United Nations and IMF; alignment with global agendas such as the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the status and wealth of its participants; espousing shared normative values like faith and human rights; and the expertise of its members, along with self-praises for the high-quality analysis and data it generates<sup>13</sup>. The EU became closely aligned to the WEF through the European Unions' (EU) flagship strategy, Global Gateway, which includes "hundreds of sustainable and quality investment projects" linked to combining environmental preservation with sustainable economic development (i.e. the global energy transition), creating thousands of jobs, and creating new opportunities for European companies.

In its expanding definition of globalisation, the WEF argued that the world was evolving towards "Globalisation 4.0". However, the WEF cautioned that Globalization 4.0 was unfolding amid ecological constraints, rising inequality, and a shifting multipolar world order.



It further predicted that rapid technological change would transform key systems and require new models of global cooperation and workforce reskilling. It concluded that while artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics evolve in aging societies, a shift toward values of sharing and care is essential – yet it stated that “the world remains largely unprepared for these challenges”. It criticised the US for depicting globalisation as a “political ideology” and praised China for suggesting a more “inclusive globalisation” noting the Chinese Belt and Road initiative.

## The environmental factor

Considering the underlying critique of fossil fuels embedded in the expanded WEF definition of globalism and adopted by the EU, international organisations, and other notable states, their current and proposed economic policies were of particular concern to the US under the Trump administration. Notably, the US has an abundance of fossil fuels which were locked up under the Biden Administration. Even with the restrictions place by the Biden-Administration, the US became the largest producer of oil and natural gas in the world, producing more oil than Saudi Arabia and more gas than Russia. It is also believed to have the largest coal reserves in the world, which offer approximately 470 of years of supply at current domestic consumption rates. Unsurprisingly, upon taking Office in January 2025, Trump signed several EOs related to the environment and energy emphasizing domestic fossil energy production and rolling back regulations that the administration viewed as inconsistent with that objective, including commitments made towards climate rules. As such, the US proceeded to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement which requires signatories to limit greenhouse gas emissions and thereby negated any financial commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## The potential challenge to the US dollar

Both the EU and the WEF increasingly propagated two notable objectives and policies beginning in the late 2010’s: the creation of central bank digital currencies (CBDC), as well as moving away from using fossil fuels as an energy source:

- In short, a CBDC is a digital banknote used either as a retail digital currency or a wholesale digital currency. The European Central Bank stated that its digital Euro could be launched as soon as 2027. And they are not alone: in 2025, 134 countries and currency unions, representing 98% of global GDP, were exploring a CBDC. Notably, all original BRICS member states - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - were piloting a CBDC. Since 2024, BRICS has actively promoted developing an alternate payments system to the dollar.



·The move away from fossil fuels as an energy source posed an additional two-pronged threat to the US's global power: firstly, the value of the US dollar as trade currency in oil could be weakened; secondly, the projected need for energy in the US is increasing by 15.8% over the next five years to a national need of 947 gigawatts.

## The demand for additional energy

The increasing energy demand has a direct correlation with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) and the associated infrastructure needs, such as data centres, semiconductor chip manufacturing, and battery manufacturing<sup>28</sup>. Notably, AI has become a game changer and could drive a 7% (or almost \$7 trillion) increase in global GDP and lift productivity growth by 1.5 percentage points over a 10-year period<sup>29</sup>, according to Goldman Sachs. Mckinsey in turn projected that AI could potentially deliver additional economic output of around \$13 trillion by 2030, boosting global GDP by about 1.2% a year <sup>30</sup>. It is thus largely believed that the state that first harnesses AI's full potential will be the best off in the world. As such, great competition exists among states, and key to achieving this is energy infrastructure development to meet the growing demand for energy.

The elephant in the room is the required global energy demand and competition for energy resources. The demand brings friction to the “new energy transition” policies of the WEF. For reference, in 2023, commissioned new coal plants producing 22.1 gigawatts (GW) while the US decommissioned coal power plants which produced 9.7GW of energy.<sup>31</sup> In 2024, China began building 94.5GW of new coal-power capacity and resumed 3.3GW of suspended projects<sup>32</sup>. Trump's energy policies are undoubtably driven by the future energy demand and power competition with other states such as Cina.

Nuclear energy has the highest capacity factor of all energy sources, operating at full power over 92% of the time annually - nearly twice as reliable as natural gas and coal, and about three times more reliable than wind and solar<sup>33</sup>. Looking at all nuclear reactors built since 1950, for example, the average build time was 8.1 years.<sup>34</sup> Many are built much faster. On average, it took Japan less than five years to build one, and less than six years in South Korea and China. For context, new coal fire power plants also take about 8 years to build.<sup>36</sup> Though the US has ample fossil fuel reserves, the timeframe to extract it and build new fossil fuel power plants would take almost the same time



Microsoft will purchase all the electricity generated by the nuclear reactor (837 MW).<sup>37</sup> In 2024, it signed a 20-year agreement to buy power from the Three Mile Island nuclear plant situated in Pennsylvania plant, which is scheduled to reopen in 2028 following upgrades. The deal aims to provide Microsoft with a clean energy source as power demands from AI-driven data centres continue to grow.<sup>38</sup> However, the global mining production of uranium only meets 74% of global demand.

The perceived threat posed to the US by the expansionist nationalists

The US has long used the dollar's role in international finance to project its geopolitical power and influence. However, it risks undermining that power through the interplay between domestic politics, global financial stability, and the vulnerabilities associated with the dollar's reserve currency status<sup>40</sup>. Trump took office amid rising geopolitical tensions which would lead to global economic and financial fragmentation, if not addressed<sup>41</sup>. Geopolitical tensions and resulting conflicts were attributed to a new wave of expansionist nationalism taking hold globally.

Expansionist nationalism is believed to be inherently militaristic, linking national greatness to imperial expansion and rooted in the belief in the 'survival of the fittest' nation. The military is viewed as the primary instrument to achieve this objective, prompting a focus on remilitarisation and the enlargement of armed forces. In such contexts, the state, government, and military become closely intertwined, with national resources increasingly directed toward the pursuit of global dominance<sup>42</sup>. De Brito cautions<sup>43</sup>: "The external actions of a nation are reflected internally, and its internal actions are reflected externally. A nation-state with an authoritarian structure presents an external posture different from that of a democratic nation-state. An aggressive and expansionist nation-state is unlikely to be guided by a constitution that places a high value on democracy and freedom. A nation that does not respect the liberties of its own nationals will undoubtedly not respect those of other States and their nationals, and vice-versa."

The expansionist nationalist ideology of Russia resulted in the Special Operation in Ukraine (starting in Feb 2022) following the 2014 annexation of Crimea. From Russia's viewpoint, the war in Ukraine came as a direct result of the expansion of NATO membership<sup>44</sup>. Russia also holds the view that the Ukraine is not a real country but part of Russia.<sup>45</sup> Under the Biden Administration the US allocated US\$182.8 billion to the Ukraine in response to Russia's actions.<sup>46</sup> On 19 March 2025, Trump attempted to broker peace between Russia and Ukraine. While both sides agreed to a proposed 30-day ceasefire and initial negotiation steps, the deal ultimately fell through and further talks continued<sup>47</sup>. Also in March 2025, the US suspended all military aid and intelligence sharing to Ukraine<sup>48</sup>. This signalled a major win for Russia and much leeway from the Trump administration to Russia.



Very similarly, China views Taiwan as a breakaway province destined to come under its control, potentially by force, while Taiwan considers itself a separate entity with its own constitution and democratic government<sup>49</sup>. China maintains that Taiwan is an inseparable part of its territory and has never been, nor will ever be, an independent nation. Recent PLA military exercises around Taiwan are framed as both a show of readiness and a warning to separatist forces and external actors interfering in the Taiwan issue.<sup>50</sup> Unlike the Biden administration that was spoken pro-Taiwan and anti-China, Trump has not yet clarified his stance on Taiwan<sup>51</sup>. However, it is believed that the U.S. has vital strategic interests in the Taiwan Strait. A Chinese takeover of Taiwan, especially following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, could undermine international order, weaken U.S. influence, and raise doubts about its commitment to allies. It would also hinder U.S. military operations in the Western Pacific, disrupt global semiconductor supply chains, trigger a major economic crisis, and mark the fall of a liberal democracy, with global implications for democratic governance.

In another regional conflict, the “Oct 7 attacks” on Israel in 2023 led to the demolition of Gaza and military operations in Yemen against the Houthis, and in Lebanon against Hezbollah. Israel may not have followed a direct expansionist policy, but the fact that they kept occupying parts of Lebanon and the Golan Heights to serve as a corridor to possibly directly attack Iran, indicates an expansionist projection of power and influence in the ME region. On Zionist nationalism, Sagers argues: “Illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, blocking Gaza for over a decade, and the current Gazan occupation derive from nationalistic fervour and calls for a Jewish state”. In Jan 2025, the Trump administration brokered a cease fire deal between Israel and Hamas but the conflict restarted in March 2025.

## Conclusion

The Trump Administration aimed to address both categories identified above as posing a perceived existential threat to the United States' global dominance. It called for a ceasefire in Gaza and initiated peace negotiations with Russia, with Ukraine being secondary in the talks. The underlying reason for U.S. engagement with Russia is clear: Russia must be reintegrated into the global banking system, and for that to happen, the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the EU must first be lifted. Re-admitting Russia into the global SWIFT system would likely undermine BRICS+ efforts to trade in their own currencies. By strengthening U.S.–Russia relations, the United States may curb the growing influence of China while weakening the strategic relationship between Russia and Iran. Iran is designated as a “foreign adversary” to the U.S., and should Israel escalate its conflict with Iran, Russia would likely refrain from intervening.<sup>12</sup>



Moreover, the United States' national foreign debt levels are staggering. Trump quickly indicated that the U.S. was paying “too much” relative to the EU and the UK to support Ukraine and subsequently halted the supply of aid and intelligence. This placed the EU and the UK in a difficult position, as their military capabilities and defence manufacturing sectors cannot substitute the level of support previously provided by the U.S.

These targeted actions by the U.S. serve to undermine the EU's short-term push toward environmentally green energy, thereby sustaining the global demand for fossil fuels—and, by extension, the U.S. dollar's role as the global reserve currency. They also diminish Russia's prospects of assisting BRICS+ in establishing an alternative global financial or monetary system.

The need to identify and develop new uranium deposits is of paramount importance to the U.S. and other global powers. In this context, Africa is poised to play a crucial role in the short to medium term. While some uranium deposits in Africa are already being mined, many remain untapped. It is highly likely that foreign powers will acquire uranium at extremely low prices -particularly in African states lacking functional governance and where instability and corruption prevail. Africa's political and economic stability remains at risk unless the continent confronts the link between foreign exploitation and domestic corruption—where natural resources benefit a small, elite class while the vast majority of the population remains in poverty. The future is at Africa's doorstep, and the message is clear: it is time to abandon outdated, restrictive ideologies and political alliances that hinder good governance and sustainable economic development. especially in African states which do not have a functional government and where instability and corruption reign. Future political and economic stability in Africa remains under threat unless we take it upon ourselves to acknowledge the link between foreign influence and corrupt practices that allow for Africa's resources to be exported to benefit a corrupt domestic elite, while most of the populations in Africa remain poor.

The future is upon Africa's doorstep, and the message is clear: let go of outdated, restrictive ideologies and political relationships that hinder good governance and economic development. Africa must tap into its own potential by utilizing its natural resources and making energy production a top priority—otherwise, it will remain behind global powers that are advancing by capitalizing on Africa's abundant mineral wealth but ultimately controlling it.







# Assessing Democratic Consolidation in Lesotho: 2012 to 2025 by Bafokeng Moeti

Lesotho witnessed its first coalition government in 2012, led by the All Basotho Convention (ABC) under the leadership of Motsoahae Thomas Thabane. Since then, the politicization of national security forces has become increasingly pronounced. This trend culminated in the assassinations of two former Lesotho Defense Force commanders, Maaparankoe Mahao and Khoantle Mots'ots'o. These incidents were subsequently utilized by the ABC during its campaign for the 2017 general elections, raising concerns about the instrumentalization of political violence for electoral gain.

Several high-profile legal proceedings are currently underway in the High Court of Lesotho. These include charges of treason and the murder case of Maaparankoe Mahao. Among the accused are former army commander Tlali Kamoli, the leader of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), and the leader of the Movement for Economic Change (MEC), among others. The politicized nature of these cases suggests that Lesotho's democratic institutions remain vulnerable to interference and coercion, particularly from elements within the security sector.

In 2024, the heads of the national security forces held a press conference to publicly defend Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane against an impending motion of no confidence in Parliament. This intervention was widely interpreted as an attempted "veto coup," raising alarm over the military's continued influence in civilian political processes and its alignment with the executive.

Transparency International's 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) reports that Lesotho's corruption levels have reached their highest point since 2022. This development has unfolded under the leadership of the Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), a political party dominated by business elites. The RFP had initially been elected on a platform promising economic development and job creation. However, recent evidence indicates that government tenders are disproportionately awarded to RFP loyalists, undermining public trust in the administration.

Moreover, the Prime Minister's appointment of a senior military officer as Director of the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) the national anti-corruption agency has generated significant controversy. Opposition parties and civil society actors argue that the appointment may be aimed at shielding cabinet members from accountability, further eroding institutional independence and democratic oversight.



In conclusion, Lesotho's political trajectory since 2012 reflects a fragile and contested democracy, marked by the politicization of the security forces, selective use of the judiciary, and growing concerns over corruption. Despite efforts to establish democratic governance through coalition politics, the state remains susceptible to elite capture, institutional manipulation, and executive overreach. These dynamics continue to undermine public confidence in democratic institutions and threaten the consolidation of democracy.

It is therefore recommended that immediate reforms should be implemented to ensure the neutrality and professionalism of the military and police forces. This includes legislative safeguards to prevent interference in civilian political affairs. The judiciary must be empowered and protected from political influence, particularly in high-profile cases involving political elites and security personnel. Also, leadership appointments in anti-corruption agencies like the DCEO should be based on merit and transparency, with input from civil society and independent oversight bodies. Lastly, civil society organizations and academic institutions should invest in civic education programs that promote democratic values, transparency, and accountability. International bodies, including regional organizations such as the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), should closely monitor political developments and provide technical assistance to strengthen democratic institutions.







## **Zambia Political Contextual Analysis by Christabel Mwango**

### **POLITICAL SITUATION IN ZAMBIA**

Though the 2026 general election tensions have started building up as observed during the Kawambwa, Pambashe and Petauke Central constituencies by-elections, the country has continued to enjoy relatively peaceful environment. However, the application of justice and the impartial interpretation of the law remains a huge challenge resulting in citizens losing confidence in the courts of law. The country continues witnessing a robust divisive political tribal talks and regional politicking among the political players posing a serious threat on the internal security and unity of the country. The seemingly politically ignited intra-party leadership wrangles among the three major opposition political parties (MMD, UNIP and PF) during the period under review have continued and escalated posing great danger on our young growing democracy.

This has resulted in the mushrooming of political alliances which include but not the least Tonse-Alliance pioneered by the Patriotic Front (PF) under the leadership of former Republican President Dr Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the Kwacha alliance spearheaded by the Citizens First (CF) Party led by Dr Hary Kalaba. The political party leadership wrangles among the said three major political parties has resulted in numerous numbers of litigations initiated in the court law.

### **Human Rights Abuse**

The constitution of Zambia prohibits cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, nonetheless, the country has up to now not enacted appropriate laws to legislate torture. According to the Human Rights Commission, torture has continued to be among many other vices a serious abuse with police having been reportedly as perpetrators of this inhuman treatments. Incidents of torture and assault were still as rife as they were before. Further, it was observed that the Zambia Police have continued to arrest before exhausting their investigations as per the directive from the Republican President Dr Hakainde Hichilema that police should only arrest the suspect when all investigations are done and concluded.

Most suspects arrested during the period under review remained in police custody for many days, weeks and months without being charged or taken to the courts of law. The respect for human dignity is totally a non-existent issue



SADC Youth Network, therefore, wishes to reiterate its call to enact a law that criminalises torture in Zambia. It is our firm belief that the said law once enacted will further provide adequate penalties against perpetrators and compensation to victims of torture. The legislation once enacted will also provide sufficient guidance to various individuals and institutions on what constitutes torture and inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment in accordance with established international human rights law. It is also worthy reporting that the extra Judicial punishment imposed on citizens by the law enforcement agencies especially the police through flimsy charges which in most cases are not even backed by any tangible evidence became a more evident means of abusing citizens human rights. It was observed that citizens were with impunity stripped off their constitutional rights to a fair arrest, bail and police bond. This was more pronounced among the suspected politically inclined citizens especially from the opposition political parties.

The victims were in most cases brutally arrested in a fashion which many likened to abduction, taken to unknown destinations, detained without a charge and worse more denied police bonds even when charged with bondable crimes.

### Resurfacing of political Caderism

Despite the political will exhibited at the highest office of the land with regard to the total abolishment of violent political cadres from the marketplaces, bus stations and other public places, the country during the period under review continued to witness serious acts lawlessness perpetuated by the suspected cadres of some named political parties especially those from the ruling party. The law clearly provides that any person attacking any other person commits an offence. However, the said cadres went scot-free without anyone being arrested and punished for their uncalled for and retrogressive behavior.

### Constitutionalism, Rule of Law & Good Governance

The rule of law and not the rule of men is a cornerstone for any flourishing democracy world over. As such, for the rule of law to be effective, there must be equality under the law, transparency of law, an independent judiciary that promotes access to legal remedy. Further, the rule of law is the foundation for the development of peaceful, equitable and prosperous societies hence the need to adhere to, respect and defend it at all cost is paramount.



However, during the period under review between January and March 2025, it was evidently observed that respect to constitutionalism, rule of law and good governance was unarguably shrinking and being ignored in many aspects and manner of governance. The case in point is the manner within which the 2025 constitutional amendment proposals were announced and shared with the citizens. It was observed that though in the recent past, government repeatedly denied having had intentions to amend the constitution and cautioned the citizens to treat such rumours and purely politically manufactured propaganda by some disgruntled failed politicians. The country was taken by surprise when the Head of State announced during the 2025 Women and Youth -Day celebrations that the country has agreed to amend the constitution. The said presidential pronouncement sparked serious and tense debates among the citizen with most of the key stakeholders advising the president to stop the process citing lack of constitutional amendment road map and lack of countrywide consultations among others as the reason as to why they cannot support the said proposed amendments. A good number of key stakeholders such as LAZ, the three Church Mother Bodes, 14 CSOs among others all rejected the said proposals. However, despite being advised to stop the said process of amending the constitution especially that the country has only remained with 15 months before the 2026 general elections, government seemed to be determined to go ahead with the amendments. This has resulted in some citizens starting litigation against the Attorney General in Constitutional Court seeking relief for the court to stop the aforementioned process.

## The Fight Against Corruption

We believe that policy pronouncements must be supported by affirmative actions and without that they end up making the fight against corruption incomplete and just a mere political rhetoric. So far, the Anti-Corruption Commission has seized a lot of properties including cash from some leaders who served in the previous Patriotic Front government. Apart from seizures there has been no significant convictions so far, making the fight against corruption appear as political persecution. Currently, corrupt practices have just simply changed forms, shapes and sizes in the procurement of drugs, farming inputs, motorized transport, CDF and school perquisites among others.



## Child Protection Policy

SADC Youth Network has noted with sadness the recent rise in defilement cases which has reached alarming levels. This cruel and barbaric act destroys the lives of children, girls and women who fall victim to it. Condemning and facing up to the embedded social norms and prejudices, linked to practices that stretch across the country's histories that are giving rise to sexual and gender-based violence, is a necessary step in building societies where women and girls are able to participate as full human beings. A child who experiences such violence is left with scars that never truly heal, their entire being shattered.

Sexual violence, in any form, is inhumane and should have no place in our society. The abuse of our little children and women must come to an end. The silence is unacceptable and must be challenged. We must decide what kind of society we want to be. Do we allow sexual violence to continue unchecked, or do we stand together and declare that enough is enough.

Zambia, like other countries, has sought to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through institutional reforms. The adoption of Elimination of Violence against Women in 2018. Although progressive, the law has had limited impact because of legal and social norms and harmful practices. The rape and murder of Blessing from Kamwala South, and discovery of an orphanage in Lusaka's Chudleigh area, following allegations of sexual abuse and defilement involving a named church who are running the facility, is a wake-up call. When society chooses to ignore an injustice simply because it appears isolated, it becomes complicit in that crime. The consequence is that this evil spreads like a virus, growing unchecked. We cannot afford to let that happen.

As SADC Youth network, we are serious about ending this violence, we are calling for decisive actions against and towards perpetrators. We demand that this vice should be met with the full force of the law and dragged to the courts of law. We would like policymakers, and the justice system those in power to address this crisis with the seriousness it deserves.

SADC Youth Network states that, it is time for society to rise, engage and show the government key institutions such as the church, civil society organizations, and community leaders, that we refuse to tolerate these crimes. The people must also take the lead by demanding action from law enforcement. Let's refuse to be a nation that normalizes violence against its own. Let's rise, speak out, and fight for justice.



## Implementation of Decentralisation Policy

It is a well-known fact that self-governing, and democratic local governments tentatively offer a mechanism for redressing socio-economic inequalities by identifying local concerns, allocating resources accordingly, and being held accountable for service delivery. Thus, decentralisation should always be seen to be providing a critical framework for redressing economic and social inequalities among the citizens. However, it was noted that among the many factors contributing to the bottlenecks in the implementation of decentralisation, performance and accountability of local governments include but not the least, the inability to meaningfully engage the sub structures in the planning and implementation processes, weak institutional capacity, inadequate mechanisms for accountability and limited availability of information at local level.







## Reimagining Africa: Youth Leadership, Responsibility, and the Urgency of Now by Grant Davis

### Introduction: Africa at a Crossroads

The African continent finds itself at a critical inflection point. With over 65% of its population under the age of 35<sup>1</sup>, the so-called youth bulge; presents an unparalleled opportunity — or alternatively, a profound risk if not adequately harnessed. Our collective future is neither inevitable nor passive; it is an outcome that will be shaped by the actions, leadership, and choices that young Africans make today. It is no longer appropriate to refer to young people as the ‘leaders of tomorrow’; we are the leaders of now. The challenges confronting us are not to be underestimated: unemployment, systemic inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, weakening multilateralism, fractured regionalism, and governance failures. Yet, within these challenges lies the opportunity to redefine the future trajectory of our continent. Africa is not broken — it is simply unfinished. Thus, the question before us is not whether Africa can rise, but whether we — as young Africans — will assume the responsibility to build the Africa we want.

### Understanding the Challenges: A Youth-Centric Lens

The structural constraints facing African youth are deeply entrenched. According to the African Development Bank’s African Economic Outlook 2024, over 41% of young Africans are either unemployed or classified as the working poor, a figure which is anticipated to worsen without swift policy interventions. This systemic exclusion risks manifesting as social unrest, as witnessed in Kenya’s 2024 youth-led protests which led to a reversal of unpopular tax increases. It is becoming increasingly evident that young Africans are rejecting the status quo — and rightfully so.

Parallel to this, Africa is disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change despite contributing less than 4% of global emissions. According to the World Meteorological Organisation in 2024, ‘up to 118million extremely poor people...’ will be vulnerable to drought, floods and extreme weather patterns if adaptive measures are not put in place to protect them, further exacerbating poverty alleviation.

The digital divide further entrenches inequality. In 2022, only 36% of Africans have reliable access to the internet according to the World Bank, while over 600 million Africans lack access to electricity. Without inclusive digital and energy infrastructure, Africa’s youth will remain marginalized from the global economy.



## Governance Deficits and Fractured Unity

While many African states have developed impressive policy blueprints, the failure lies in execution. The Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2024 6 reveals that over 50% of Africans feel that their governments are failing to deliver on basic governance driven by increasing concerns about deteriorating security situations and low levels of perceived commitments to freedom of assembly. Whilst there have been positive developments in some cases, the reality is that political instability and governance failures have created an environment ripe for the emergence of populist movements, these have also contributed towards undermining regional integration. Notably, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger's withdrawal from ECOWAS in 2024 underscores the fragility of Africa's integration project. The aspiration of Pan-Africanism risks being derailed unless credible leadership and governance reforms are urgently pursued.

## Seizing the Moment: Opportunities for Transformative Change - Reclaiming Ubuntu: Redefining African Leadership

Central to Africa's political renaissance must be the principle of Ubuntu – the recognition that our humanity is intertwined. Ubuntu is not merely an ethical or cultural concept; it must be the cornerstone of a new political economy. Africa possesses 30% of the world's mineral reserves, 12% of its oil, and 8% of global natural gas reserves. Critically, the Democratic Republic of Congo alone accounts for over 70% of global cobalt supply, a mineral essential for the green transition.

Unless Africa asserts sovereign control over these resources – negotiating equitable terms in global markets – we risk re-entrenching extractive colonial patterns under the guise of 'green growth.' Equally, Africa's indigenous knowledge systems – in agriculture, medicine, and governance – are assets. Dr Matshidiso Moeti of the World Health Organisation in her message in 2022 noted over '80% of continent's population in Africa relies on traditional medicine for their basic health needs.' Such knowledge must be respected, nurtured, and integrated into modern innovation ecosystems.

## Young People: Agents of Accountability and Innovation

Youth-led activism is no longer a peripheral phenomenon. It is central to political change. In Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa, youth movements have shifted national discourses on governance, corruption, and economic justice. Across Africa, technology-enabled platforms are providing new avenues for organizing, advocacy, and entrepreneurship.



Africa's digital economy is expected to grow to 8.5% of GDP by 2050. Already, mobile banking, AI-driven agriculture, and health-tech innovations are reshaping economies in Nairobi, Lagos, and Kigali. Nevertheless, UNICEF warns that 'four out of five ten-year-olds across the continent struggle to read and understand a basic story.' Closing this gap is essential if Africa's youth are to drive the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

## From Potential to Power: Young Africans Must Claim Their Responsibility - Beyond Protest: Building Movements and Institutions

While protest remains an essential democratic tool, real transformation requires institutional power. It is imperative that young Africans transition from activism to governance, from critique to creation. We must occupy leadership spaces in local councils, national parliaments, civil society, media, and business. This requires a radical commitment to ethical leadership. Africa does not need a new generation repeating old mistakes; it needs leaders committed to transparency, accountability, and collective progress.

As we reflect on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), it is evident that implementation will require deliberate investment in institutions capable of navigating complexity and representing the true interests of Africans. We should not underestimate the power of unity in the creation of the largest trade bloc in the world – we already have the wheels rolling, we need to ensure youth inclusivity to realise the ideals of the AfCFTA.

## Reimagining Society: Ubuntu, Technology, and Indigenous Systems

Africa's rebirth demands that we draw simultaneously from our ancient wisdom and our digital futures. Ubuntu must guide our policies; indigenous systems must inform our innovation; and technology must accelerate our ambitions. A sustainable and prosperous Africa will require the full integration of indigenous knowledge into educational curricula, policy frameworks, and innovation strategies. Africa must engage the world not as a charity case, but as a strategic actor, asserting leadership in shaping global norms and institutions.

## Conclusion: The Urgency of Now

The decade ahead will determine Africa's role in the emerging multipolar world. Climate emergencies will accelerate; geopolitical rivalries will intensify. And technological shifts will redefine economies. Africa's youth – the largest cohort in human history – must recognize that history will not wait. The choices we make today will reverberate for generations. Thus, we must: secure sovereign control over Africa's resources, invest in education, innovation, and infrastructure. We must strengthen ethical, accountable governance and embody Ubuntu at every level – from local communities to continental institutions.

Africa's liberation is not a project of the future. It is an imperative of now. We are not merely; leaders in waiting; We are the architects of the present. And history is already watching.



## **Closing Remarks: From Memory to Mobilisation — Reimagining Africa Through the Eyes and Hands of Its Youth by Nkosana Sithole kaMiya**

As we bring this June 16 Youth Day Series Report to a close, we pause not only to reflect, but to remember. Not in the abstract, ceremonial sense, but in the defiant tradition of the 1976 generation, young people who walked out of classrooms, faced down bullets, and demanded the right to imagine a different future. That spirit lives on in us. Each contribution in this report has provided a lens through which to view our moment in history, turbulent, urgent, and alive with both danger and possibility.

In the analysis of Trump’s likely 2025 return, we see a cautionary tale not just about American politics, but about extractivism and global authoritarian currents that find echoes here on our continent. The phrase “Drill, baby, drill” is not simply about oil, it is about a worldview that treats people and land as disposable. For Africa, where so many of our governments still equate development with extraction, this should serve as a warning.

From Lesotho, we learn that democracy is fragile, not because it is inherently weak, but because its foundations are undermined by elite interests, political volatility, and a lack of accountability. And yet, even in small states, youth are mobilising, building new political cultures in the shadow of dysfunction. They are reminding us that democracy is not a once-off event, but a daily struggle.

Zambia’s political context shows us how quickly hope can be ignited, and how quickly it can be tested. The ousting of authoritarian rule gave many young Zambians a sense of renewed purpose. But real change, we are reminded, is more than a change of leaders; it’s a change of systems. And that change doesn’t happen unless young people push for it, consistently, critically, and collectively.

And finally, Grant’s “Reimagining Africa: Youth Leadership, Responsibility, and the Urgency of Now” gives this report its emotional and intellectual spine. Africa is not broken; it is unfinished. And we, the youth, are not its future, we are its present. With over 65% of Africa’s population under the age of 35, the decisions we make today will not only shape our own lives but the fate of this continent for generations to come.

I write these words not as a detached observer, but as a young African committed to change. Like so many of us, I have felt the weight of systems that were not made for us, education systems that undervalue our languages, economies that exclude us, democracies that silence us, and political cultures that underestimate us. But I have also felt the power of collective action. I have seen what happens when students organise, when young people write and protest and care for one another in ways that make the state itself seem obsolete.



We are not passive witnesses to history. We are its authors.

If there is one thread that ties all these contributions together, it is this: African youth are not a demographic to be managed, we are a political force to be reckoned with. We must resist being reduced to statistics, slogans, or future promises. We are already leading, in the streets, in the ballot box, in digital spaces, and in quiet acts of everyday resistance. But we cannot lead alone.

This report is a call to all institutions, universities, governments, civil society organisations, international bodies, to make space for youth not just at the table, but in the kitchen, writing the recipe, deciding the ingredients. Representation must come with power. And power must be redistributed.

As we honour the youth of 1976, we must ask ourselves: what will the youth of 2076 say about us? Will they remember us as the generation that rose to the occasion, or the one that hesitated?

Let this report be more than a publication. Let it be a point of departure. Let it be a tool for dialogue, strategy, and mobilisation. Let it be a living testament that we, the youth of Africa, did not inherit a future, we built one.

Another Africa is not only possible. It is already being imagined, by us.

**Nkosana Sithole kaMiya**

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