

Security and Stability as Prerequisites for Development in Africa: Algeria's Vision for the Implementation of the African Union's 'Agenda 2063'

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Abstract :

One of the obvious obstacles that has long hindered development programmes in Africa is instability. Terrorism, coups d'état and conflicts have shaped the political landscape of many countries in the continent in the last few decades. The African Union's long-term strategic framework for transforming Africa into a prosperous, peaceful, and integrated continent by the year 2063, Agenda 2063, which was adopted in 2013, gave priority to this crucial issue. This paper sheds light on Algeria's implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063 and its contribution to the success of this initiative through its active membership in the AU's agencies, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which serves as the implementing arm for the AU's Agenda 2063 development strategy. One major focus of the paper is on the Algerian approach to governance and peace building to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063, ensuring a peaceful, secure, and prosperous continent for future generations.

Key Words: Algeria, stability, Agenda 2063, NEPAD, sustainable development

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Introduction:

After decades of embracing the slogan of sustainable development as a top priority of African peoples and governments, little progress has been achieved in reality. The failure of development programmes strengthened the conviction among African leaders that economic growth and social progress in the continent are inextricably linked to security and political stability. Thus, failure to foster an environment of peace, security, and political stability would jeopardize any endeavour to achieve a real economic take-off that can bring prosperity to the peoples of the continent.

The African Union's new grand plan for long-term development in the continent, 'Agenda 2063', which lays out a transformative vision for Africa's future, recognizes the need to build a strong foundation for sustainable development by way of giving priority to entrench peace, security and stability in addition to fight the sources of conflict and wars. It is only through building an environment of peace and security that the way for a successful agenda for sustainable development will be paved.

Algeria, as a key player in regional security and economic development, has contributed significantly to the shaping of Agenda 2063. And as it firmly believes that sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace, security, and political stability, its vision for implementing Agenda 2063 prioritizes counterterrorism, conflict resolution, regional cooperation, and economic development, ensuring a stable foundation for Africa's progress.

This paper explores the important role of security and stability in fostering long-term development across the African continent. It examines Algeria's implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063 and its meaningful contribution to this initiative through its active membership in the AU's biggest agencies, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which serves as the implementing arm for Agenda 2063. One major focus of this paper is on Algeria's strategic vision and active participation in drawing a roadmap for sustainable development in Africa based on prioritizing peace building and political stability.

The paper explores the Algerian approach to governance and peace building and how it can benefit the African Union's aspiration to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063, ensuring a peaceful, secure, and prosperous continent for future

generations. It highlights Algeria's diplomatic initiatives, counter-terrorism efforts, and investments in regional peace building which reflect a broader vision aligned with the AU's vision and aspirations.

Through this analysis, the paper underscores that achieving Agenda 2063's ambitious goals—ranging from economic transformation to social cohesion—requires not only visionary planning but also the steadfast commitment of African nations to safeguarding peace and stability as essential pillars of progress. Africa's development is closely linked to stability, as peace and security create the foundation for economic growth, infrastructure investment, and social progress .

Algeria has a rich experience which could be shared with fellow African countries especially as regards to fighting terrorism and fostering social peace through reconciliation. This experience demonstrates how political stability, counterterrorism efforts, and economic reforms can contribute to national development. The country's history provides valuable lessons for other African nations seeking to balance security and development.

I. An 'Arc of Instability':

One of the main reasons why development programmes in Africa have achieved little success is political unrest and the lack of stability. The complex and persistent security challenges that have faced many regions in the country, including terrorism, armed conflicts, political turbulences, transnational crime; in addition to poor governance and corruption, have historically halted economic growth, social development and regional integration turning the continent into an 'arc of instability'. Consequently, Africa is largely perceived as the home of wars and instability (Aremu, 2010).

Some regions in the African continent, including the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, West Africa and Central Africa, have long faced social unrest, persistent conflicts, terrorism, economic crises, food shortages and even famine. There are multiple factors that contribute to the climate of conflict and instability in these regions. In some countries, violent extremism, foreign interventions, political rivalries and ethnic tensions have been the main sources of unrest.

Understanding the origins of instability and conflict in many regions of the continent is a complicated task. This is mainly because the current sociopolitical landscape in many regions—often characterized by instability and unrest—is the product of the interplay of a complex combination of historical, cultural, socio-economic, and political factors.

Firstly, we can not talk about the environment of tension and conflict in Africa without recalling the legacy of the colonial period. Post-colonial Africa has

suffered problems inherited from the colonial period, mainly those caused by the partitioning of Africa by the colonial European powers and the artificial borders they invented. When the biggest European colonial powers left and the African countries regained their independence, the borders they left worked as time bombs.

When repartitioning the continent, the colonial powers followed a certain plan that disregarded ethnic, religious, and cultural realities which created a lot of sensitivities. Subsequently, these enforced colonial borders weakened social cohesion and led to persistent tensions that often developed into armed conflicts in countries like Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Aremu, 2010).

Foreign intervention and the military involvement of some European states have often encouraged coups d'état and insurgencies contributing to armed conflicts and political instability. The continuous interference of former colonial European countries in the internal affairs of their past colonies have led to destabilizing some African countries. It is well-known for example that many coups d'état in the Sahel region and elsewhere have been supported and sponsored by foreign powers (Siegle, 2021).

Some European states like France retain a huge influence in some former colonies, especially in the Sahel region. Their intervention to support one party against the other has often led to more tension and ended up in armed conflict and coups d'état. The increased competition among emerging powers like China, Russia and Turkey over influence in the continent during the recent years have further threatened stability in these regions (Bobin & Quénelle, 2024).

The failure of democratic transitions and the lack of the rule of law have mostly contributed to instability and social unrest in many regions of Africa. These failures have also led to the emergence of a number of armed non-state groups. Consequently, the rise of terrorism and violent extremism has become a major threat to security in the continent and a constant source of insecurity.

II. Instability and Development:

It is well-established in academia that social unrest and conflicts disrupt socio-economic progress and instable environments discourage investments and halt economic development. Foreign direct investment (FDI) and infrastructure projects, for example, require a secure and stable environment. Wars and terrorism in regions like the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and West Africa, have long discouraged investments in vital economic sectors and diverted resources from development projects.

A climate of conflict and political instability poses significant challenges to the attraction and retention of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the development of

large infrastructure projects. Stability in political and economic systems is a fundamental factor that investors consider when deciding where to allocate capital. According to a report by the World Bank, nations facing political turmoil and social unrest typically experience decline in investor confidence, which directly impacts the flow of FDI (World Bank, 2020).

Political instability has been a major reason behind the failure of economic take-off in many African countries. Countries where coups d'état have been common are amongst the poorest and least developed in the continent. Foreign investors look for environments where their investments and assets are safeguarded and not subject to any threats. In the same way, attracting investments requires a secure political environment. The stability of a country's political institutions is therefore crucial for fostering trust among potential investors, as the risk of expropriation, sudden policy changes, or civil unrest can significantly reduce the chances of their success (Asiedu, 2006).

Many African countries are especially in need of big infrastructure projects in order to achieve an economic take-off. This type of projects, which often require substantial capital and long-term commitments, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of political instability. This is because they generally involve several stakeholders, including governments, private companies, and international development organizations. These stakeholders require assurances that the investments they are partners in will not be affected by a volatile political landscape or by sudden violence. Research revealed that a volatile political environment increases the perceived risk of project delays and cost overruns, which, by extension, reduces the likelihood of successful project completion (Hassett & Mathur, 2011). A stable socio-political landscape, both in terms of governance and security, is thus crucial for the successful realization of such projects deemed necessary for economic progress.

Furthermore, the impact of political instability on infrastructure development extends beyond mere investor hesitation; it can also lead to the reallocation of resources towards conflict resolution or humanitarian aid, which detracts from long-term economic planning. For example, in periods of unrest or conflicts, the state is obliged to divert public funds away from infrastructure investments to address immediate security needs. This redirection of resources further hampers the country's ability to create the infrastructure necessary for economic growth and development. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development UNCTAD, unstable political environments in developing countries often result in lower levels of infrastructure development, which in turn hampers economic growth and makes these countries less competitive in the global marketplace (UNCTAD, 2018).

Attracting investments that can move the wheels of African economy depends on the ability of African states to ensure secure environments where assets and projects are protected from the adverse effects of uprisals and conflicts. The objective of boosting investment and economic development could be attained by focusing on the improvement of political stability and the creation of a secure environment conducive to both foreign and domestic investments.

Good governance and security ensure social and economic development. Education, healthcare, and job creation thrive when a country is stable. The 2022 Ibrahim Index of African Governance revealed that standards of governance in Africa have declined over the past decade. The Sudanese billionaire philanthropist Mo Ibrahim made a link between poor governance and conflict and political violence stating that : “It’s not pretty...If there is deterioration in governance, if there is corruption, if there is marginalisation ... people are going to pick up arms” (Al Jazeera, 2024).

III. Agenda 2063, A New Window of Opportunity and Hope :

In recognition of the multiple challenges facing development in Africa, the African Union launched its long-term strategic framework which declared its ultimate aims is to transform Africa into a global powerhouse by the year 2063. ‘Agenda 2063’ was adopted in 2013 and outlines key objectives and well-defined strategies for inclusive and sustainable development in Africa. Hence, this long-term project opened up new windows of hope and opportunity to African states and peoples.

The proper implementation of Agenda 2063 requires the mobilization of all the member states and the agencies of the African Union. The AU’s development agency NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development, which was originally established in 2001 to promote economic integration and development in Africa), plays a key role in implementing Agenda 2063. Indeed, NEPAD, now known as the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) , serves as the implementation arm of Agenda 2063 (African Union Development Agency–NEPAD, 2019).

The structures of the NEPAD and its long expertise with development programmes in Africa made it the AU’s agency most qualified to play a key role in realizing the goals of Agenda 2063. Some of the main areas of interest for the NEPAD include the development of infrastructure like constructing roads, airports and energy structures. The agency also prioritizes agricultural transformation and food security, industrialization and economic growth, human capital development (education, healthcare), regional integration and trade facilitation, in addition to governance and peacebuilding.

Hence, NEPAD becomes the key mechanism driving the implementation Agenda 2063 and its ambitious vision for a new, developed Africa. Agenda 2063 is perceived as Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into the global powerhouse of the future. In theory, as the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development, Agenda 2063 is perceived by many stakeholders as a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance (African Union, n.d.).

The idea of Agenda 2063 was initially triggered by a conviction among many African leaders that the continent's development agenda needs serious reviewing and reassessment. They saw that Africa needs to shift its priority from the struggle against apartheid and the achievement of political independence, which had been the focus of The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor of the African Union; towards inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security, amongst other issues aimed at repositioning Africa to becoming a strong player in the global arena (African Union, n.d.).

During the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the formation of the OAU /AU in May 2013, African heads of state and government signed the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration . The declaration marked the re-dedication of Africa towards the attainment of the Pan African Vision of An « integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena » and Agenda 2063 is the concrete manifestation of how the continent intends to achieve this vision within a 50 year period from 2013 to 2063. The Africa of the future was captured in a letter presented by the former Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma.

The need to revise and adapt the continent's development agenda was dictated by the new realities imposed by the huge transformations taking place in the global arena. The decision to envision a long-term 50 year development trajectory for Africa is an important and timely move due to the changing global contexts such as increased globalization and the ICT revolution; the increased unity of Africa which makes it a global power to be reckoned with and capable of rallying support around its own common agenda; and emerging development and investment opportunities in areas such as agri-business, infrastructure development, health and education as well as the value addition in African commodities

Agenda 2063 is not restricted to Africa's future aspirations. The vision of Agenda 2063 is translated into key strategic initiatives which can—if appropriately implemented-- boost Africa's economic growth and development and lead to a drastic leap in the sectors of security, economy, education and social progress. These

initiatives can lead to the transformation of the continent within the space of few decades (African Union, n.d.)

IV. Silencing the Guns by 2030, Algeria's Vision and Contribution :

The vision of African leaders for Agenda 2063 is fundamentally based on the belief that security and stability are crucial to achieve Africa's long-term development goals. It is based on the realization that Africa cannot be a prosperous continent without being a peaceful continent. Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 made security and peace critical pillars for Africa's development plan. Hence, transforming Africa into a secure and stable continent becomes a top priority in the African Union's new long-term development strategy .

Algeria has long been a key player in African security, particularly in counterterrorism, conflict resolution, and regional stability efforts. Algeria expressed its readiness to effectively contribute to 'silencing the guns by 2030' within the AU Agenda 2063 initiative by way of sharing its leading experience in counterterrorism, reconciliation and deradicalization. Security in Africa requires that countries like Algeria stand at the forefront of counterterrorism efforts , especially in the Sahel and North African region for it was among the first nations to rise the alarm about the danger of violent extremism in Africa. Due to its leading experience in fighting terrorism, Algeria has developed a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy that aligns with the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative under Agenda 2063 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, n.d.).

Algeria's strategy is based on the following principles:

- 1-Stability is essential for development—no country can grow economically or socially in the midst of chaos.
- 2-Peace enables investment, education, healthcare, and infrastructure to thrive.
- 3-A secure continent boosts regional integration, trust, and continental unity.

Algeria supports the implementation of the flagship project of Agenda 2063 on "Silencing the Guns in Africa" to achieve a "conflict-free continent" and eliminate the remnants of colonialism. In this context, Algeria put the full activation of all the components of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which constitutes the continental mechanism for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, at the top of all priorities. The core components of APSA include :The Peace and Security Council, The African Standby Force ,The Military Staff Committee , The Panel of the Wise, The Early Warning System, and The African Union Peace Fund (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, n.d.).

Algeria made tangible contributions to concretize its vision on the centrality of peace and security within the scope of Agenda 2063. It hosts the headquarters of « The African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (CAERT) » and « The African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) ». It also contributes to the African Standby Force, a pillar of the APSA, through the North African Regional Capacity (NARC). Its goal is to achieve the full operationalization of the African Standby Force for rapid deployment and rapid response to crises. These specialized bodies aim to combat terrorism and related phenomena and to stimulate cooperation and coordination among member states in the search for African solutions to the crises and challenges prevailing in the continent.

Also, given its experience and expertise in countering terrorism, the African Union has assigned Algeria the mission of « Coordinator for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa ». Under this mandate, Algeria submitted a memorandum proposing measures to protect Africa and its peoples from the threat of terrorism. This measure focuses on prevention, awareness-raising, and mobilization, and is based on strengthening national and regional counterterrorism capacities, as well as promoting close cooperation between African Union member states and the international community as a whole (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, n.d.).

Having a leading experience in fighting terrorism, many countries in Africa draw inspiration from Algeria's approach to fighting terror. In this context, Algeria's vision aligns with Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063, which aims for "a peaceful and secure Africa" and supports the AU's "Silencing the Guns by 2030" initiative. This is due to the increasing recognition that Algeria has one of Africa's most effective counterterrorism strategies, developed after its fight against terrorism during its black decade in the 1990s (Gherieb, 2016).

The Algerian state has successfully dismantled terrorist groups, some of which had links with international terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIS. Algeria has also tightened its control over its borders. Strict border control measures prevent weapons, drugs, and terrorist movements between the Sahel and North Africa. Hence, Algeria has concretely contributed to the AU's "Silencing the Guns by 2030" initiative through some key initiatives including hosting the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) – Located in Algiers. This AU center trains African security forces and promotes intelligence-sharing.

Furthermore, Algerian Diplomacy has played a leading role in regional conflict resolution by negotiating peace agreements across Africa, particularly in Mali, Libya, and the Sahel region. It has promoted African-led solutions to conflicts, reducing reliance on external interventions. As a non-interventionist power, Algeria

supports political dialogue over military intervention in regional crises. For instance, it played a leading role in signing the Mali Peace Accord (2015). Algeria mediated the Algiers Agreement, a peace deal between the Malian government and armed groups (United Nations, 2023).

The Algerian regional security approach is also based on strengthening African security cooperation. Algeria believes that African security must be addressed collectively through regional partnerships. It actively works with the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and regional organizations like the G5 Sahel to combat terrorism and organized crime. The country promotes military training, intelligence-sharing, and anti-terrorism operations with African allies. One example is the Nouakchott Process – An AU-led initiative (led by Algeria) to improve security cooperation in North and West Africa.

As regards to the principle of sustainable development through stability, Algeria argues that security must be followed by economic development to prevent future instability. The government has invested in African infrastructure projects, such as the Trans-Saharan Highway (Algiers-Lagos) and energy cooperation. It supports the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a tool to reduce economic inequality and conflict (APS, 2022).

There are important lessons that can be learned from Algeria for Africa's security and development. Africa can learn from Algeria's success in maintaining long-term stability through mediation efforts like Algeria's role in Mali and Libya which show that African solutions to conflicts are more sustainable than foreign interventions. Regional Cooperation is also a key strategy, no country can fight terrorism and instability alone and the continent is in need of stronger partnerships and intelligence-sharing mechanisms. Also, providing education and employment opportunities to African youth reduces the risk of radicalization and armed conflict.

Conclusion:

The AU's ambitious and comprehensive Agenda 2063 in an attempt to concretize a conviction that has been advocated by the Algerian state since decades. Regional cooperation aimed at fostering sustainable development in the continent could only be fruitful if priority is given to promote peace and stability and support the building of strong and stable institutions across the continent.

It is the firm recognizing of this interdependence between stability and development that led to the emergence of the African Union's Agenda 2063. Algeria's counter-terrorism strategy directly supports Agenda 2063's goal of a conflict-free Africa, making it a key player in securing the continent's future .

As a matter of fact, Algeria, as a regional power and an active AU member state, had always been a driving force in Africa's fight against terrorism and a proactive advocate for peace, security, and regional cooperation. This enabled Algeria to position itself as both a stabilizing force and a key stakeholder in the implementation of Agenda 2063. Despite the multiple challenges and the complex structural problems hindering development plans in Africa, the strategies outlined in Agenda 2063 seem to open up new windows of opportunity for Africans to make firm steps forward in its trajectory of progress.

The priority given to ensuring a secure and stable environment as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development has given more credibility to the AU's new initiative convincing many member states to contribute significantly to this endeavour. Algeria's counter-terrorism approach, which is based on a combination of military action, intelligence cooperation, border security, and diplomacy, serves as a good example for many African states grappling with the threat of terrorism.

Algeria is one of the member states which show serious commitment to actively contribute to the African Union's Agenda 2063 through various national policies, regional cooperation efforts, and continental initiatives. This paper argued that among the reasons behind Algeria's commitment to this initiative is its belief in the necessity of cooperation and its conviction that as one of Africa's largest economies and as a leading anti-terrorism power, Algeria has a lot to contribute to this agenda. Algeria's leading experience shows that stability and security are the foundation for national and regional development.

In recognition of this interconnectedness between stability and development, Algeria supports multiple pillars of Agenda 2063, particularly in human development, infrastructure, economic integration, and most importantly peace and security. Its contributions through infrastructure projects, peacekeeping, and regional cooperation makes it a key player and reinforces Africa's collective vision for prosperity by 2063.

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