



The Role of Economic Diplomacy in the Independence of African Decision-Making From a Security Perspective

KHELIFI Rabah *

Strategic and Geoeconomic Transformations
Research Laboratory Laghouat University
r.khelifi@lagh-univ.dz

BENSMAIL Zakaria

Strategic and Geoeconomic Transformations
Research Laboratory Laghouat University
z.bensmail@lagh-univ.dz

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Abstract

The role of economic diplomacy in building the independence of African decision-making from a security perspective can be summarized as follows:

Economic diplomacy helps establish a security system based on shared interests and sustainable development through mechanisms that link economic development with enhancing internal and regional security and stability. This diplomacy enables African countries to reduce external dependency, address root causes of conflicts like poverty and unemployment, and develop economic and security partnerships free from foreign dominance.

Key pillars include transforming traditional security approaches into developmental economic solutions that tackle the social roots of conflicts and achieve sustainable peace. It also empowers African states to take independent security decisions through reliance on economic cooperation and networks of shared interests with regional partners. Additionally, it promotes regional integration and African unity to confront security risks such as terrorism and organized crime through joint economic projects and integrated trade policies.

Thus, economic diplomacy serves as a vital tool for reinforcing Africa's autonomous security decision-making, fostering sustainable peace and regional stability beyond external influences.

Keywords: Economic diplomacy, African decision-making autonomy, security perspective, regional cooperation.

introduction

* Corresponding author



The Role of Economic Diplomacy in the Independence of African Decision-Making From a Security Perspective

Economic diplomacy plays a vital role in enabling countries to build the independence of their security decisions. Sustainable reliance on solid economic tools enhances a country's ability to confront external challenges and reduces the impact of external pressures on its security policy. Economic diplomacy is characterized as a strategic tool that combines development and security goals, as it allows countries to improve their negotiating and political position through their economic resources, and provides a solid foundation that supports their positions when facing crises. Independence in security decisions can only be achieved through the presence of a strong economic system capable of dealing with international changes and their multiple challenges. This requires the development of clear and integrated strategies based on a deep understanding of economic conditions and international policies. Through this application.

This research paper points out that the African continent faces multidimensional challenges in its quest to achieve true independence in decision-making, as economic diplomacy has become a pivotal strategic tool linking economic security, political sovereignty, and security stability. This analysis examines the growing role of economic diplomacy in promoting African decision-making autonomy within a comprehensive security framework, with a focus on the organic interconnectedness between economic development, national security, and national sovereignty.

Due to the nature of the topic, we will discuss it in detail through the following axes:

- 1- Economic diplomacy and African national security.
- 2- Sovereignty over resources and its security impact
- 3- Tools of economic diplomacy to enhance independence in Africa
- 4- The African Continental Free Trade Area: an instrument of economic and security sovereignty
- 5- The influence of external powers on security and economic dynamics in Africa
- 6- The debt trap and the threat to economic sovereignty



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7- Algerian economic diplomacy: an African model

8- International economic relations and the challenge of sovereignty

9- The role of African institutions in promoting independence

10- The interrelationship between security and development: towards a comprehensive approach

11- Future challenges and opportunities

12- Summary and recommendations

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND AFRICAN NATIONAL SECURITY

Economic diplomacy in the African context represents more than just the pursuit of commercial interests; it constitutes a strategic pillar of national security that links economic independence, political sovereignty, and security stability. African countries realize that political decision-making independence cannot be achieved without freeing economic decision-making from external dependency, as Egypt's national security is closely linked to the economic security of the entire continent¹.

Recent studies have confirmed that economic diplomacy has become a strategic tool for achieving economic independence and enhancing national security, as building a diversified and sustainable economy is today considered one of the most important factors in maintaining national sovereignty and effectively influencing the global economic system. This vision reflects a deep understanding that development cannot be built on the ruins of conflicts, and that economic security is the deepest guarantee of political stability²

Tools of economic diplomacy to promote independence in Africa

¹ - Rami Zahdi, **African Economic Integration.. Between the will of the continent and the challenges of foreign conspiracies to control its wealth**, a study on the website: <https://www.afronews24.com>. 11/18/2025, time: 23:23.

² - Mustafa Ben Mira, **Regional Integration and Economic Diplomacy.. The secret of the Algerian rise**, an article on the website: <https://elayem.news/162466.html> . 11/18/2025, time: 23:51



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- Regional trade agreements: such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreements, which aim to enhance economic cooperation between African countries and reduce dependence on external economic powers.
- Promoting joint African investment: by encouraging bilateral investments that strengthen the national economy and support countries' ability to make independent economic decisions without external interference.
- International economic negotiations: investing negotiation tools in international organizations to secure secure trade terms that support economic independence and non-dependency.
- Developing national economic capabilities: by supporting local industries and economic diversification to create a strong economic base that supports independent political and security decisions.
- Technical economic partnerships: Establishing technological and economic cooperation partnerships that enhance economic sovereignty without external control or interference.

RESOURCE SOVEREIGNTY AND ITS SECURITY IMPACT

Sovereignty over natural resources is a central security issue in the African context, as Africa possesses approximately 30% of the world's critical metal reserves, 70% of platinum, and 60% of the world's cobalt. However, for decades this enormous wealth remained a source of external exploitation rather than local development, which led to the emergence of a new wave of nationalism (resource nationalism) in the Sahel countries and elsewhere³

Countries such as Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have taken decisive action to regain control of their mineral resources. Burkina Faso nationalized two \$80 million gold mines, Niger revoked mining licenses for foreign companies, and

³ - Nisreen Al-Sabahi, **Nationalization of Mineral Resources in the African Sahel: Between Economic Liberalization and the Reshaping of External Influence**, Egyptian Center for Thought and Strategic Studies, publication date 11/03/2025, website: <https://ecss.com.eg/55470>. 11/11/2025, time: 12:35.



Mali introduced a new mining law granting the government a 35% stake in mining projects. These measures express an effort to achieve economic and security independence and disengage from the old economic system based on dependency⁴

But experts warn that resource-for-security swap agreements (resources-for-security) concluded by some African countries with external powers may threaten national sovereignty in the long term, even though they may provide temporary security stability. These agreements often include vague security conditions and restrict countries' ability to change mining laws in the future, undermining sovereign control over natural resources and public budgets.

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE IS: AN INSTRUMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SECURITY SOVEREIGNTY

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents a strategic project that links economic integration and regional security. It could lift 68 million people out of extreme poverty and increase regional income by 7% by 2035, adding \$450 billion. But more importantly, it enhances economic independence and reduces dependence on foreign markets.

Studies show that trade integration in Africa can also enhance humanitarian and security imperatives. Economic interdependence increases the cost of conflict and encourages cooperation, as a 1% increase in a neighboring country's GDP can boost growth in a landlocked country by up to 0.7%. This shows how strong and diversified trade networks reduce vulnerabilities and create mutual growth effects⁵

However, the success of the Continental Free Trade Area is closely linked to peace and security, as conflict in any African country undermines the continent's competitiveness as a destination for trade and investment. Therefore, addressing security and governance challenges and promoting political stability is a prerequisite for achieving economic integration goals.

⁴ - Amber Murrey, **Ongoing Struggles for Resource Control: Economic Sovereignty and Neo-Imperial Backlash**, Pambazuka News, 06.03.2025.

Site Web : <https://www.pambazuka.org/African-Resource-Sovereignty>.

⁵ - By leveraging regional trade, **Africa can better navigate global crises and achieve sustainable economic growth**. The Economic Development in Africa Report 2024 provides a roadmap for this transformation.



THE INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL POWERS ON SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DYNAMICS IN AFRICA

External powers play a prominent role in shaping Africa's security and economic dynamics, entering the African arena through direct or indirect interventions, sometimes marginalizing local actors in favor of their strategic interests. External powers, such as the UAE and Turkey, rely on economic and investment tools in regions such as the Sahel to deepen their presence and enhance their security influence through partnerships, arms deals, and restructuring security agencies in ways that are consistent with their own objectives. This often leads to prioritizing the national security of the intervening countries at the expense of the interests of the African countries themselves⁶

This overlap creates "cross-border security interference" that hinder the building of independent local institutions and impose external models for managing security and the economy, weakening independence and deepening political and economic fragility. The intervention of external powers sometimes contributes to the support of specific elites or parties within the state, which exacerbates political and economic crises and increases the marginalization of large sectors of the population and local communities.

In this context, development becomes turbulent, and the components of social security are shaken by the reshaping of the balance of power in favor of the intervening forces. The negative consequences of this marginalization include the emergence of disputes over natural resources, the escalation of local conflicts, and the decline in opportunities for independent development, which are linked to rising poverty and population displacement. It is clear that achieving independence in security and economic decisions in Africa requires reconsidering the relationship with external powers and formulating collective African policies that limit the negative impact of marginalization and enhance its own immunity⁷

⁶ - Eva Magdalena Stambøl, Tobias Berger, **Transnationally entangled (in)securities: The UAE, Turkey, and the Saharan political economy of danger**, Security Dialogue, 2023, Vol. 54(5),P495.

⁷ - **Joachim Chukwuma Okafor, Olihe Adaeze Ononogbu , Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba , Casimir Chukwunoyelum Ani**, Trans-border Mobility and Security in the Sahel: Exploring the Dynamics of Forced Migration and Population Displacements in Burkina Faso and Mali, PubMed central, 2023 Jun 8:1–14, Site Web : <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10249918/>



DEBT TRAP AND THREAT TO ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY

The debt trap poses one of the most serious threats to African decision-making independence from an economic security perspective. Africa's debt has risen by more than 180% over the past decade, and nearly half of the continent's countries are on the brink of a debt crisis. Most worryingly, more than three-quarters of low-income African countries spend more on foreign debt servicing than on health care, and more than half allocate more to debt than to education.

This situation undermines the financial and political independence of African countries, as dependence on foreign aid weakens accountability and reduces countries' ability to make sovereign decisions. Conditional aid from the IMF and World Bank often imposes neoliberal policies that disrupt local development and reproduce economic dependency⁸

In response to these challenges, African countries are building their own financial mechanisms to reduce external dependence, such as the African Financial Stability Mechanism (AFSM) and the African Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA). AfCRA, is a crucial step towards financial independence, enabling African countries to independently assess their creditworthiness, reducing reliance on offshore rating agencies that often overestimate African risks⁹

ALGERIAN ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY: AN AFRICAN MODEL

Algerian economic diplomacy represents an important model for strengthening African decision-making independence from a security perspective. Algeria seeks to activate the economic dimension in its foreign policy towards the African interior, as it is a vital and strategic space that enables it to diversify its economy and reduce dependence on oil revenues¹⁰

⁸ - Noamane Cherkaoui, **The Sovereignty of Developing Countries: The Challenge of Foreign Aid**, Policy Brief - N° 45/22 - July 2022, p 04.

⁹ - **Africa Takes a Bold Step Towards Financial Sovereignty with the Establishment of the Africa Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA)**, 21/02/2025 Site Web : <https://aprm.au.int/en/news/press-releases/2025-02-21/africa-takes-bold-step-towards-financial-sovereignty>, visite : 10/11/2025 , 17 :30

¹⁰ - Hatat Abu Bakr Esseddiq, Lazhar Abdel Aziz, **The Role of Economic Diplomacy in Achieving Security in the Sub-Saharan Sahel Region: The Algerian Approach**, Journal of Legal and Political Thought, Volume 8, Issue 01, 2020, p. 329.



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In September 2025, Algeria hosted the Inter-African Trade Fair (IATF), a strategic event that promotes African-African cooperation and activates economic integration between countries. Experts confirmed that the exhibition contributes to reducing dependency on foreign markets by increasing intra-African investments and enhancing internal cooperation¹¹

In the Sahel region, Algeria is adopting a development approach to resolve crises through bilateral agreements and support development through major projects, based on the understanding that development cannot be achieved in the absence of security, and security cannot be achieved without sustainable economic development. This approach embodies the interconnection between security and development (security-development nexus), which has become central to African strategic thought¹²

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE CHALLENGE OF SOVEREIGNTY

Africa faces a complex challenge in managing its economic relations with major powers without compromising its sovereignty and decision-making independence. The world is witnessing a shift towards a multipolar system, which provides Africa with new opportunities to diversify its partnerships, but also carries the risk of falling into new traps of dependency¹³

China has become Africa's largest trading partner, while Russia seeks to enhance its influence through military agreements and security-resource swaps. At the same time, the European Union and the United States are reshaping their strategies towards Africa, focusing on the interconnectedness between security and the economy¹⁴

¹¹- Mijat Kontić, **Algeria Poised to Fulfil Its African Ambition**, August 15, 2025, Site Web : <https://www.diplomacyandcommerce.rs/algeria-poised-to-fulfil-its-african-ambition/>, visite : 18/11/2025, 16 :04.

¹²- Hatat Abu Bakr Esseddiq, Lazhar Abdel Azizm Ibid.P 331.

¹³- Kester Kenn Klomegah, **Africa's Economic Development: Exploring Geopolitical Complexities and Contradictions**, Modern Diplomacy, May 12, 2024, Site Web : <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/05/12/africas-economic-development-exploring-geopolitical-complexities-and-contradictions/>.

¹⁴- Africa at crossroads of a new era of economic diplomacy. The imperative of stepping out of traditional investment patterns, 25 April 2019, IRIS, France, Site Web : <https://www.iris->



The problem is that foreign aid and trade often come with restrictive conditions for sovereignty, whether political, economic, or regulatory. Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union (EPAs), for example, have been criticized for being unbalanced and threatening African domestic industries.

Therefore, it becomes necessary for Africa to adopt a unified position in trade negotiations, and to benefit from its collective negotiating power through the African Union and regional economic blocs. The African Agency (African Agency) in global economic governance requires building strong negotiating capabilities and developing a clear strategic vision that balances economic openness with preserving national sovereignty¹⁵.

THE ROLE OF AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS IN PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE

The African Union plays a pivotal role in promoting the continent's economic and security independence, through Agenda 2063, which sets out a long-term vision for development and integration. The Union seeks to achieve financial independence by reducing dependence on external donors, as 54% of its annual budget was funded by external partners until 2017.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame has proposed a 0.2% tax on total imports from member states to finance the African Union, a step toward fiscal independence. The strategic independence of the African Union also requires strengthening its capabilities in four main areas: self-economic improvement, security governance, balanced diplomacy, and regional integration.

Regional economic groupings (RECs) such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development¹⁶ Community (SADC) play an important role in managing conflicts and promoting

france.org/en/136143-africa-at-crossroads-of-a-new-era-of-economic-diplomacy-the-imperative-of-stepping-out-of-traditional-investment-patterns/ viste : 12/11/2025, 16 :55.

¹⁵- Kholofelo Kugler and Tani Washington, **How African Countries Are Responding to the New U.S. Reciprocal Tariffs**, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 5, 2025

Site Web ; <https://carnegieendowment.org/>.

¹⁶- Pr Rachid El Houdaigui, African Union ; **What are the possible Unions for Strategic Autonomy ?** Rabat, July 10,11 2017, P 09.



economic integration. However, its effectiveness is affected by institutional challenges, lack of resources, and political complexities¹⁷.

THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

The interconnectedness of peace, security and development emphasizes that security and economic development are two sides of the same coin. Civil wars cost the average developing country about 30 years of GDP growth, and countries in protracted crises can lag more than 20% behind in overcoming poverty.

In the Sahel, disparities between urban centers and rural areas are a major driver of the security crisis, with violent extremist groups exploiting economic conditions to recruit marginalized youth. Therefore, improving service delivery in deprived peripheral areas can address the root causes of conflict and reduce the attractiveness of conflict-based economies.

A comprehensive approach requires investment in agriculture, education and infrastructure as part of preventive development that addresses the economic causes of conflicts.

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the progress made, Africa faces significant challenges in achieving full decision-making independence. Weak institutional capacities, rampant corruption, dependence on primary commodities, and illicit money flows estimated at \$88.6 billion annually (about 2.9% of the continent's GDP) all undermine sustainable development efforts.

But there are promising opportunities as well. The demographic revolution taking place in Africa, where the average lifespan is 18 years, could transform the continent into a global economic power if investment is made in human capital development, education and innovation. The global energy transition also provides Africa with an opportunity to leverage its critical mineral resources to build local value chains and not just export raw materials.

¹⁷ - Fares Guerra, Talal Lemmouchi, **The Roles of Algerian economic diplomacy in activating African integration pathways: implementing the African Union agenda 2063 as a model**, ELBAHITH for Academic Studies - Vol: 11 - Issue: 02- June 2024, P 90.



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Digitization and the digital economy represent another opportunity for development leaps, but they also require digital sovereignty and the protection of data and digital infrastructure from external exploitation. Monetary independence through the issuance of local currencies and reduced dependence on foreign currencies, as Tanzania does, enhances fiscal sovereignty and protects the economy from external shocks.

Conclusion

Strengthening African economic diplomacy is a strategic necessity to achieve true independence in decision-making from a comprehensive security perspective. The organic interconnection between economic security, political stability and national sovereignty necessitates an integrated approach that combines:

First: Strengthening sovereignty over resources by renegotiating extractive contracts, imposing local conditions for added value, and rejecting agreements that undermine national sovereignty.

Second: Deepening regional integration by activating the African Continental Free Trade Area, building regional value chains, and strengthening cross-border infrastructure.

Third: Achieving financial independence by building African financial institutions such as the African Credit Rating Agency, reducing dependence on external debt, and enhancing the mobilization of domestic resources.

Fourth: Adopting a comprehensive approach to security and development that addresses the root causes of conflicts by investing in agriculture, education, infrastructure, and service provision in marginalized areas.

Fifth: Strengthening the African Agency in global economic governance through collective bargaining, building diplomatic and economic capabilities, and developing a unified strategic vision.



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Sixth: Building strong institutional capacities at the national and regional levels, enhancing transparency and accountability, and combating corruption and illicit financial flows¹⁸

Achieving true independence in African decision-making will only be achieved through true economic liberalization that complements the political independence that has been achieved for decades. Economic diplomacy, when employed strategically and consistent with security and development priorities, can transform Africa from a continent that exploits its resources into a continent that creates its future with its own hands and determines its destiny of its own free will.

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