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Sub-Saharan Africa: Key Issues and U.S. Engagement

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SUMMARY

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Sub-Saharan Africa: Key Issues and U.S. Engagement

Congress may review existing U.S. policies and programs in sub-Saharan Africa (henceforth, "Africa") as it establishes its budgetary and policy priorities and responds to developments in the region. Key enduring issues for Congress include the authorization and appropriation of funding for U.S. foreign aid programs and U.S. military activities in the region, and oversight of U.S. programs and policies.

Economic and Development Issues. Much of Africa experienced rapid economic growth starting in the early 2000s, reducing poverty and expanding the middle class in some countries. Since 2014, however, growth has slowed in many countries—and almost all continue to face high poverty rates and long-standing development challenges, such as food insecurity and malnutrition, ineffective health and education institutions, and infrastructure deficiencies. Other factors hindering socioeconomic development in Africa include low domestic buying power, a shortage of skilled labor, limited access to capital and other inputs, poor governance, and political instability and insecurity.

Governance, Democracy, and Human Rights. Since the early 1990s, nearly all African countries have transitioned from military or single-party rule to at least nominally multiparty political systems in which elections are held regularly. Nonetheless, the development of accountable, functional democratic institutions remains limited in many countries. Corruption and mismanagement are pervasive across much of the region, and state services are limited. Authoritarian governments and armed belligerents in Africa commit serious human rights violations.

Peace and Security. Civil wars and crises have broken out in multiple African countries since 2010, reversing the previous decade's trend of stabilization. Newer crises have unfolded in the Lake Chad Basin, the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Burundi, and South Sudan, while long-running conflicts continue to affect the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Somalia. Porous borders, weak institutions, and corruption have created permissive environments for transnational threats such as terrorism, trafficking, and maritime piracy. Two conflict-affected African countries, South Sudan and Nigeria, face a credible risk of famine in early 2019; in both, insecurity has hindered aid access to affected zones.

U.S.-Africa Policy under the Trump Administration. The Trump Administration's stated approach to Africa includes efforts to advance peace and security, boost development, expand bilateral trade and investment, respond to health challenges and humanitarian crises, and promote good governance. Other, more focused goals include, but are not limited to, the continued normalization of U.S. relations with Sudan, conflict resolution in South Sudan, credible elections in DRC, and democratic reforms in Ethiopia. Past U.S. Administrations have sought similar objectives, and the Trump Administration has maintained several Africa-focused initiatives launched by its predecessors. At the same time, the Trump Administration has proposed changes to U.S. trade policy and foreign assistance, including aid cuts, which could significantly affect U.S. engagement with Africa if implemented. The Administration also has signaled a comparatively greater focus on responding to geostrategic competition in Africa, notably vis-à-vis China. Deepening bilateral and multilateral partnerships to combat terrorism and other security threats, as well as furthering U.S. commercial interests, also have featured prominently in executive branch statements and policies.

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Introduction

This report provides an introduction to select issues related to sub-Saharan Africa (henceforth, "Africa," unless otherwise noted) and U.S. policy toward the region. It includes general information concerning Africa's economic and development challenges, governance and human rights trends on the continent, and key issues related to peace and security. It also provides an overview of U.S. engagement in Africa and current U.S. policy approaches toward the region.

This report is intended to serve as a primer to help inform deliberations on key enduring issues for Congress, which include the authorization and appropriation of funding for U.S. foreign aid programs and U.S. military activities in the region and oversight of U.S. programs and policies. Other CRS products address in greater depth many of the topics considered in this report; several are cited in footnotes.

Africa's Economic and Development Challenges

What are the recent trends in Africa's economic development?

Starting in the early 2000s, many countries in Africa exhibited high rates of economic growth. Buoyed by high commodity prices and strong domestic demand, some countries experienced middle class expansion, rapid growth in access to digital communications, and progress toward some of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),[1] albeit starting from a low base by global standards. Outcomes varied widely across the region, however. Resource-rich states broadly recorded higher growth but achieved smaller declines in poverty and poorer progress toward human development than their resource-poor counterparts, although poverty alleviation was generally limited across the region.[2]

Many African countries have confronted economic headwinds since 2014, as weak global commodity prices and poor agricultural conditions have hampered economic activity. Regional average gross domestic product (GDP) growth dropped from 5% in 2013 to 2.7% in 2016, before recovering slightly to 3.3% in 2017, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).[3] Africa's economic outlook has since improved moderately, owing to accelerating global growth, which spurred rising demand for commodities and a resulting rise in some commodity prices. The IMF predicted in October 2018 that regional growth would gradually rise to 4.5% by 2023, while noting considerable variance between countries. Seven countries—Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Senegal, Djibouti, Ghana, and Benin—are projected to exceed 6% growth in 2018. Meanwhile, Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, is recovering from a 2016 recession, while South Africa entered recession in 2018. Some countries will likely record declines in per capita income in 2018, including Equatorial Guinea, South Sudan, Angola, Burundi, South Africa, and Nigeria.[4] Many African economies remain undiversified and rely on raw or minimally processed commodity exports, especially in the energy, mining, and agricultural sectors. Meanwhile, public debt-to-GDP levels, which fell sharply in the 2000s due to concerted debt relief efforts by international lenders, are rising in multiple countries. In early 2018, the World Bank classified 18

[1] The MDGs were a series of broad development goals agreed to by 189 United Nations (U.N.) member states in 2000.

[2] World Bank, *Africa's Pulse*, Vol. 7, April 2013.

[3] Data in this paragraph from IMF, *World Economic Outlook [WEO] Database*, October 2018, and CRS calculations.

[4] Per capita income in purchasing power parity (2011 international dollar) terms. IMF, *WEO Database*, op. cit.

African countries as being "at high risk of debt distress," up from 8 in 2013. The World Bank attributed the trend to rising fiscal deficits and weak exchange rates, notably in commodity-exporting states.[5] Tax collection remains weak across the region, limiting fiscal policy options.

Figure 1. Map of Africa

Notes: General reference map created by CRS. Boundaries may not be authoritative. Mauritius is not shown.

What major human development challenges does Africa face?

On a per-capita basis and by other measures, Africa remains among the poorest global regions. Despite modest reductions in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2010, 41% of Africans lived

[5] World Bank, *Africa's Pulse*, Vol. 17, April 2018.

under the international poverty line of $1.90 per day as of 2015 (latest data), and 21% were undernourished as of 2016.[6] Only one sub-Saharan African country (the Seychelles) qualifies as "high income" as defined by the World Bank. Six more (Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mauritius, Namibia, and South Africa) qualify as "upper-middle-income" economies, although wealth is unequally distributed and human development indicators remain poor in several of these countries. All other countries in the region are either "lower-middle-income" or "low-income."[7]

Since 2013, economic turbulence, poor agricultural conditions, and violent conflict have hindered human development progress in much of the region. Many countries lack the institutional capacity to facilitate sustained growth and human development. Corruption and insecurity further hinder progress toward socioeconomic improvements in many countries.

By several measures, Africa has lagged behind other developing regions in its pursuit of human development. Its maternal mortality rates remain the highest of any region; in 2015 (latest data), Africa accounted for almost two-thirds of all global deaths due to maternal causes.[8] As a region, Africa's child mortality and stunted growth prevalence rates are also the highest in the world, as are rates of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Lack of access to safe drinking water—which was available to only 24% of Africans in 2015—and unsafe sanitation facilities also impair health in the region: the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that as of 2016, Africa's mortality rate due to exposure to unsafe drinking water and sanitation was four times the global average.

Africa also lags behind other regions with regard to primary education. Nearly one-third of African children aged 6 to 17 do not attend school.[9] African girls are disproportionately excluded, despite progress toward inclusion. Africa's labor market has struggled to absorb a growing working age population. Roughly 79% of Africans are unemployed or in vulnerable employment (such as self-employment), which are often associated with low earnings and insecurity. In 2017, 61% of African workers were in poverty (24%) or extreme poverty (37%).[10]

Africa has a disproportionately youthful population. Sixty-two percent of sub-Saharan Africans were aged 24 or younger in 2018, although youth population shares vary across the region.[11] Population growth projections reflect these rates; by one estimate, roughly 5.3 billion people will live in Africa (including North Africa) by 2050—roughly a quarter of the world's population.[12] While youthful populaces hold notable economic promise, realizing their potential presents governments with profound challenges related to the delivery of social services, political

[6] The international poverty line is measured in international dollars, a hypothetical currency used to compare purchasing power among countries. It is calculated based on factors that include local costs and exchange rates. World Bank, "Poverty Headcount Ratio at $1.90 a Day (2011 PPP)" and "Prevalence of Undernourishment," World Development Indicators database and U.N., *Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, July 6, 2015.

[7] As of July 2018, the World Bank defines high-income as having a gross national income (GNI) per capita of $12,056 or more; upper-middle income as having a GNI per capita of between $3,896 and $12,055; lower-middle income as having a GNI per capita of between $996 and $3,895; and low income as having a GNI per capita of $995 or less.

[8] Data in this paragraph are from World Health Organization, *World Health Statistics 2018*, 2018.

[9] Proportions of out-of-school youth are generally lower at the primary school level (aged 6 to 11) than at the lower and upper secondary school levels (aged 12 to 14 and 15 to 17, respectively). See U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "One in Five Children, Adolescents and Youth is Out of School," February 2018.

[10] Moderate working poverty is defined by an international dollar per capita daily income of between $1.90 and $3.10; those in extreme poverty live on less than $1.90 a day. International Labor Organization, *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2018*, 2018.

[11] The population aged 0 to 24 averaged 63% in East, Central, and West Africa. Southern Africa was lower, at 46%. CRS calculations based on U.S. Census, International Data Base, accessed October 3, 2018.

[12] U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*, 2017.

enfranchisement, and jobs. The risks associated with not meeting such demands are high. In many countries, youth are a key source of dissent.

What Factors Hinder Business Interest in Africa?

Despite impressive growth in many African countries in recent years, key factors continue to hamper the region's business climate and economic potential. These include the following:

- **Infrastructure.** Africa has limited, unreliable, and often poorly maintained electrical and land, air, and maritime transport infrastructure. These problems impose high production and transportation costs and delay shipments, and may be the largest single impediment to the region's trade flows. The IMF contends that improving the region's infrastructure to average global levels could boost trade by up to 42%.[13]
- **Market size.** Low per capita incomes across much of Africa limit domestic demand, as do the small sizes of many countries' populations and lack of market diversification. There are efforts to deepen regional integration and thereby boost market size and diversity, but their extent and effectiveness vary considerably, with East Africa generally considered to be the most integrated subregion. As a result, most foreign business interest in Africa focuses on the region's major economies (e.g., South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya).
- **Labor and productivity.** Much of Africa suffers from a scarcity of skilled labor due to underinvestment in education, outmigration of educated workers, and the predominance of low-skill informal and agricultural sectors in many countries. By some estimates, farming provides 60% of all jobs in Africa. Low productivity is also driven by a lack of industrialization and high regional disease burdens (e.g., malaria and HIV/AIDS).[14]
- **Value chains.** Many African countries depend heavily on labor-intensive, small-scale, often low-profit and highly variable rain-fed agricultural production, and/or on exports of raw commodities, especially in the energy, mining, and agricultural sectors. Many countries in the region lack the technical expertise and capital investment needed to pursue value-added processing and production.
- **Economic complexity.** Lack of economic diversification, demand, and economies of scale mean that African markets for finance, services, and goods used in production are limited compared to other regions. Such factors often increase production costs and inhibit the growth of cross-sectoral linkages and industrial and manufacturing capacities. The ability to meet production quality and safety standards demanded by global markets is often limited. As a result, Africa is generally far less competitive than other world regions.
- **Regulatory and legal environments.** Governments often have provided inadequate enabling environments for private sector activity, including by failing to adequately enforce contracts or protect property rights. Corruption also remains a challenge. Inefficient cross-border trade procedures and a lack of trade regulation and tariff harmonization also impose high costs on import and export flows, both within Africa and with other regions.
- **Political instability and security.** Business confidence is undermined by the ongoing political instability and conflict that besets many countries.

Governance, Democracy, and Human Rights

What is the state of democracy and governance in Africa?

Since the early 1990s, nearly all African countries have transitioned from military or single-party rule to at least nominally multiparty political systems in which elections are held regularly. Some (such as Senegal, Cabo Verde, Benin, and Ghana) have experienced multiple peaceful electoral transfers of power, while others (such as Rwanda, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, South Sudan, and Sudan) exhibit autocratic regimes that limit civil society and opposition activity.

In parts of Africa, leaders have abolished, altered, or circumvented constitutional term limits to remain in power. The departures of long-serving leaders in The Gambia and Angola in 2017 may

[13] International Monetary Fund, *Trade Integration and Global Value Chains in sub-Saharan Africa*, 2016, p. 19.

[14] Makhtar Diop, "Foresight Africa 2016: Banking on Agriculture for Africa's Future," *Brookings Institution*, January 22, 2016.

present opportunities for greater openness, as may Ethiopia's inauguration of a reformist prime minister in 2018—though entrenched elites could threaten attempts at reform in each country. Meanwhile, a military crackdown after disputed 2018 elections in Zimbabwe diminished hopes of a democratic transition after the historic 2017 ouster of longtime president Robert Mugabe.

According to Freedom House's annual *Freedom in the World* index, which charts global trends related to political rights and civil liberties, Africa has seen subregional divergence since the mid-1990s. Broadly, while states in Southern and coastal West Africa have seen substantial improvements in democratic governance, East and Central Africa "have suffered major setbacks."[15] Civil liberties trends generally follow this pattern.[16] Progress in West and Southern Africa, however, remains fragile. Several Southern African states with relatively strong institutions (e.g., South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia) remain dominated by single parties born during liberation struggles against colonial or white-minority rule.

In much of Africa, the development of accountable, functional democratic institutions remains limited. Even some countries that regularly hold democratic elections exhibit few effective internal checks and balances. Accountability for high-level crimes, such as the downfall of President Jacob Zuma of South Africa in early 2018 due to multiple corruption scandals, remains the exception rather than the rule in Africa. In many conflict-affected countries, state weakness and violence impede the development of institutions and the provision of even basic services.

State institutions in Africa often fail to respond adequately to citizens' needs because they lack human and financial capacity or are beset by corruption and mismanagement. Countries such as Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Guinea-Bissau, and Equatorial Guinea rank near the bottom of Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*.[17] Endemic corruption also corrodes state effectiveness in regional economic powerhouses such as Nigeria, Kenya, and Angola.

Justice systems in many African countries are often weak and subject to political influence; this can weaken public trust in justice and law enforcement systems and has spurred incidents of vigilante justice in some states. Frustrations over a perceived lack of access to justice and protection also may drive Islamist extremist recruitment in some areas, such as central Mali.

What are the region's major human rights challenges?[18]

Like governance trends, human rights conditions vary widely across Africa. Several countries have maintained generally positive human rights records in recent years but continue to face challenges such as security abuses, poor prison conditions, violence against women and children, discrimination against vulnerable groups, and human trafficking. Multiple states (such as Togo, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], and Zimbabwe) actively restrict citizens' right to dissent through protest bans and/or violent repression.[19] Media and civil society in Africa's most authoritarian countries (such as Sudan, Rwanda, Eritrea, and Equatorial Guinea) face state intimidation and barriers to operation.

Violence against civilians, including by state security forces, is a major concern in a number of countries. Police in Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Zambia, among

[15] Jon Temin, "Democratic Governance in Africa: Three Key Trends," *Freedom at Issue Blog*, May 10, 2018.

[16] See, e.g., Reporters Without Borders, *2018 World Press Freedom Index*.

[17] Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index* 2017.

[18] See, e.g., State Department annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*.

[19] Amnesty International, *Report 2017/2018: The State of the World's Human Rights,* 2018.

others, have been accused of using excessive force and mistreating detainees, often with impunity. In Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, and Nigeria, local populations have faced attacks by Islamist extremist groups as well as abuses by national militaries. Internal conflicts and/or state repression in Burundi, DRC, and South Sudan have featured high levels of violence and widespread abuses that may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.[20]

Peace and Security Issues

What are Africa's major peace and security challenges?

Armed conflict and instability continue to threaten regional security, impede development, and contribute to human suffering in parts of Africa. Beyond internal conflicts, the region faces diverse transnational threats, including from terrorist groups, illicit trafficking, wildlife crime, and maritime piracy. Key threats to African peace and security are outlined below.

Internal Conflicts. Violent political crises, civil wars, and/or intercommunal violence have broken out in several African states in the past decade, reversing a previous trend toward greater stability. These crises have triggered mass population displacement and created widespread humanitarian need; multiple African countries rank among the most fragile states globally, according to the Fragile States Index (see **Figure 2**).

Islamist Armed Groups. Violent Islamist extremist groups in Northwest and East Africa have spurred humanitarian crises and threaten stability in their areas of operation. Since 2013, mass casualty attacks on targets such as hotels, malls, peacekeeping facilities, government buildings, and restaurants popular with Westerners in such countries as Kenya, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire have underscored the capacity of some groups to mount complex operations.

In a 2017 study of extremist recruitment in Africa, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) identifies several factors that may encourage radicalization, including family circumstances, religious ideology, economic pressures, and perceptions of government.[21] Seventy-one percent of respondents named state actions, such as the killing or arrest of a relative or friend, as a key factor in their decision to join violent extremist organizations.

Maritime Security. Africa's coastal waters, particularly along the Gulf of Guinea, the Gulf of Aden, and the western Indian Ocean, have been highly susceptible to illegal fishing, trafficking, and piracy. Criminal elements smuggle people, drugs, and weapons, and dump hazardous waste. Maritime commerce and offshore oil production facilities in some zones have faced high rates of piracy, theft, kidnapping for ransom, and sabotage. The Gulf of Guinea has among the highest global rates of piracy and armed robbery, which surged in the first half of 2018 as compared to past years.[22] International antipiracy efforts have sharply reduced pirate attacks in waters off the Somali coast since 2013, but analysts warn of a continued threat of piracy in the region.

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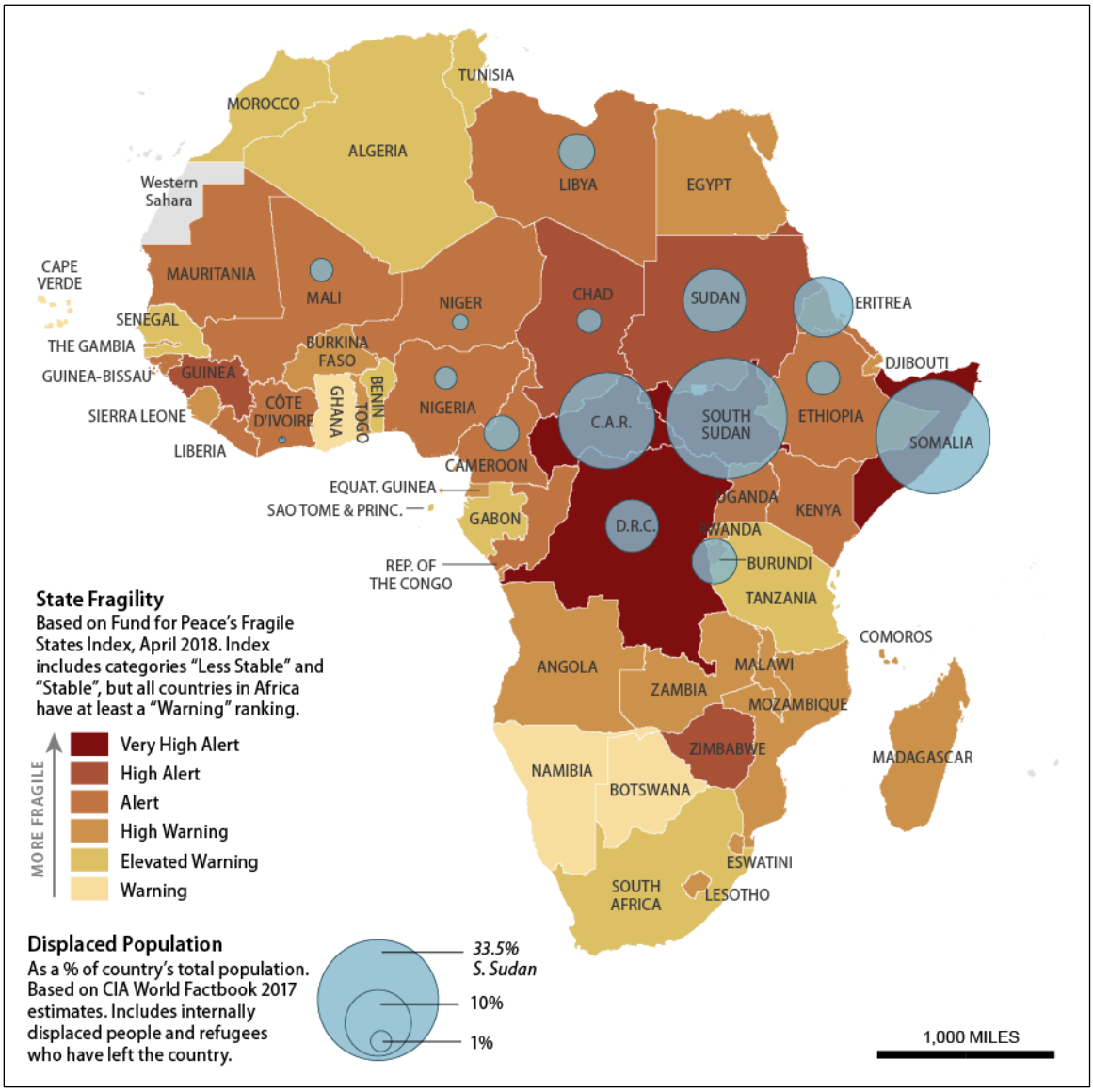
[20] See, e.g., U.N. Human Rights Council, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi*, August 8, 2018, U.N. doc. A/HRC/39/63; U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Report of a Mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights –Accounts of Congolese Fleeing the Crisis in the Kasai Region, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, August 2017; and the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and OHCHR, *Indiscriminate Attacks Against Civilians in Southern Unity: April-May 2018*, July 2018, inter alia.

[21] UNDP, *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and The Tipping Point for Recruitment*, 2017.

[22] International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Report for the Period of 1 January – 30 June 2018*, July 2018.

Figure 2. State Fragility and Population Displacement in Africa



Source: CRS graphic by Hannah Fischer using data from Department of State (2015) and Fund for Peace (2018). Displacement data from U.N. agencies (latest estimates); population data from CIA World Factbook, 2017.

Other Transnational Threats.[23] In parts of the continent, porous borders, corruption, and weak justice and law enforcement mechanisms have allowed transnational crime networks to operate with relative impunity. U.S. policymakers have expressed concern over potential links between transnational drug traffickers and Africa-based armed groups. Illegal poaching and wildlife trafficking are also concerns for U.S. policymakers. Some African countries have made significant progress toward curbing such activities, while others have had limited success due to inadequate capacity and/or political will.[24]

[23] See CRS In Focus IF10601, *Transnational Crime Issues: Global Trends Overview*, by Liana W. Rosen.

[24] CRS In Focus IF10330, *Wildlife Poaching in Africa: An Overview*, by Liana W. Rosen et al..

International Peacekeeping. Six U.N. peacekeeping operations are underway in sub-Saharan Africa.[25] Under the U.N. system of assessed contributions, the United States is the top source of funding for U.N. peacekeeping.[26] The United States also provides training and equipment to peacekeeping personnel contributors through bilateral programs, funded largely via the State Department's Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) accounts. The United States has also provided extensive support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which was authorized by the U.N. Security Council but is not U.N.-conducted. AMISOM carries out peacekeeping activities and stabilization and counterterrorist operations, primarily against Al Shabaab, an Al Qaeda-linked group. African states play a growing role in stability operations: Ethiopia was the world's top troop contributor to U.N. peacekeeping missions in 2018, and Rwanda, Ghana, and Tanzania ranked in the top 10.[27]

What are the major armed conflicts in Africa today?

West Africa

In the Lake Chad Basin region, attacks by Boko Haram and its splinter faction, an Islamic State affiliate known as IS-West Africa (IS-WA, aka ISIS-WA) have caused a spiraling humanitarian crisis.[28] Civilians in Nigeria's impoverished, predominately Muslim northeast have borne the brunt of the violence, with border areas of neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger also hard-hit. By some estimates the violence has killed more than 15,500 people since 2011.[29] As of mid-2018, 2.4 million people were internally displaced across the region, and 220,000 more were refugees.[30] A U.S.-backed regional force, led by Nigeria, has curtailed Boko Haram's territorial control but struggled to subdue the groups. Separately, violence between herders and farmers in Nigeria has escalated in recent years, with some 2,500 killed in such clashes in 2016 alone.[31]

In Mali, Islamist armed groups have expanded their reach, leveraging the shortfalls of a 2015 peace accord between the government and northern separatists.[32] International interventions, including a U.N. peacekeeping mission and French military operations, have failed to contain extremist violence, which has spread south and east into neighboring countries. In 2017, regional states launched a "joint force" to counter terrorism and other threats. The force has drawn pledges of significant donor support, including from the United States, but it is not yet fully operational.

[25] These operate in CAR, DRC, Mali, South Sudan, and Sudan (with one in Darfur and one in the Abyei region).

[26] CRS Report R45206, *U.S. Funding to the United Nations System: Overview and Selected Policy Issues*, by Luisa Blanchfield.

[27] United Nations Peacekeeping, *Summary of Troop Contributing Countries by Ranking*, September 30, 2018.

[28] See CRS In Focus IF10173, *Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard and Katia T. Cavigelli.

[29] Council on Foreign Relations, *Nigeria Security Tracker*, accessed October 10, 2018.

[30] U.N. International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM): *Lake Chad Basin Crisis – Monthly Dashboard #4*, July 25, 2018.

[31] International Crisis Group, *Herders Against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict,* September 19, 2017.

[32] See CRS In Focus IF10172, *Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Related Groups*, by Alexis Arieff and CRS In Focus IF10116, *Conflict in Mali*, by Alexis Arieff.

East Africa

The war in South Sudan, which erupted in late 2013, has also been of significant concern for U.S. policymakers.[33] Successive attempts to negotiate an end to the crisis have failed amid reports of widespread atrocities. According to one estimate, nearly 400,000 South Sudanese (including combatants) have died as a result of the war.[34] The conflict has displaced over 4 million people, including nearly 2.5 million refugees.[35] Acute food insecurity threatened more than 6 million South Sudanese in late 2018—including an estimated 47,000 facing famine-like conditions.[36] The United States is South Sudan's largest humanitarian aid donor.

Conflict and insecurity persist in parts of Sudan, notably the western Darfur region and Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states.[37] Over a decade since the United States declared a genocide in Darfur, the conflict eludes resolution; insecurity and access restrictions continue to aggravate dire humanitarian needs. In Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, human rights groups report ongoing abuses against civilians by state security forces and militia groups. As of mid-2018, 7.1 million Sudanese were in need of humanitarian assistance.[38]

In Somalia, Al Shabaab continues to wage an asymmetric campaign against the Somali state, AMISOM, and international targets.[39] It has killed thousands of Somali civilians since the mid-2000s and has demonstrated the capacity to conduct attacks against targets in the broader East Africa region—most notably Kenya, which has faced violence in part for its role in AMISOM. A small Islamic State faction based in northern Somalia also poses a threat. More than a decade of violence has generated a protracted humanitarian emergency: as of late 2018, 2.6 million Somalis were displaced internally, while 1.1 million were refugees.[40] Some 4.6 million are food insecure, including 1.5 million in crisis- or emergency-level food insecurity.[41]

Central Africa

Instability has endured in DRC since the mid-1990s despite extensive international stabilization efforts, contributing to a protracted humanitarian crisis and posing a threat to the broader Great Lakes region.[42] There were 4.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in DRC as of early

[33] See CRS In Focus IF10218, *South Sudan*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard and CRS Report R43344, *Conflict in South Sudan and the Challenges Ahead*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard.

[34] This figure refers to "excess deaths" beyond what would have likely occurred absent war. See Cecchi et. al., *South Sudan: Estimates of crisis-attributable mortality in South Sudan, December 2013-April 2018: A statistical analysis*, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), September 2018.

[35] U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *South Sudan: Humanitarian Access Severity Overview (September 2018)*, September 14, 2018.

[36] World Food Programme, *South Sudan: Emergency Dashboard*, October 2018.

[37] See CRS In Focus IF10182, *Sudan*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard and CRS Report R43957, *Sudan*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard.

[38] USAID, *Sudan – Complex Emergency*, Fact Sheet #5, FY2018, August 14, 2018.

[39] See CRS In Focus IF10155, *Somalia*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard and Katherine Z. Terrell.

[40] IDP data from OCHA, *Somalia: Humanitarian Snapshot*, October 10, 2018, refugee data from U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Operational Portal: Horn of Africa Somalia Situation, accessed October 12, 2018.

[41] OCHA, *Somalia: Humanitarian Snapshot*, op. cit.

[42] See CRS Report R43166, *Democratic Republic of Congo: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Alexis Arieff.

2018, according to U.N. agencies, twice as many as in 2015. Another 800,000 Congolese are refugees; 13.1 million Congolese are estimated to need humanitarian assistance.[43]

CAR has struggled to emerge from conflict and state collapse since 2013, when rebels overthrew the government.[44] The ensuing instability has featured widespread violence against civilians, much of it along ethnic and religious lines, and the disintegration of state institutions. Prospects for stabilization and socioeconomic development appear dim, as 2.5 million Central Africans—including nearly 1.2 million IDPs and refugees—require humanitarian aid as of late 2018.[45]

In Cameroon, protests over the perceived marginalization of English speakers in the majority Francophone country have, since 2017, escalated into a separatist insurgency amid a harsh state crackdown.[46] Government forces and a fractious array of rebel groups have reportedly committed widespread abuses against civilians, resulting in a budding displacement crisis.

In Burundi, President Pierre Nkurunziza's reelection to a third term in 2015, which many viewed as unconstitutional, sparked an ongoing violent political crisis.[47] As of mid-2018, nearly 400,000 Burundians were refugees, while 160,000 were displaced internally.[48] Civil society and perceived regime opponents face violence from security forces and the ruling party's youth wing.

U.S. Engagement

U.S.-Africa Policy under the Trump Administration

The Trump Administration has laid out an approach to Africa that is aimed at advancing peace and security, boosting development, expanding trade and investment, responding to health challenges and humanitarian emergencies, and promoting democracy and good governance.[49] More focused goals include the continued normalization of U.S. relations with Sudan, conflict resolution in South Sudan, credible elections in DRC, and reforms in Ethiopia. These objectives do not depart substantially from the Obama Administration's Africa strategy, and the Trump Administration has maintained most existing programs and presidential initiatives.

Among the most notable ongoing U.S. assistance programs benefitting Africa are the global President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and Feed the Future (FTF) initiatives, and the Africa-specific Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and Power Africa. PEPFAR, an effort to counter the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, was authorized by Congress during the George W. Bush Administration.[50] FTF aims to enhance global food security and foster agriculture-related development.[51] The Obama Administration launched FTF as well as Power Africa, which seeks to

[43] U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Operational Portal: DRC*, accessed October 12, 2018.

[44] See CRS Report R43377, *The Central African Republic: Background and U.S. Policy*, by Alexis Arieff and Tomas F. Husted.

[45] OCHA, *Bulletin humanitaire République Centrafricaine Numéro 38, Septembre 2018*, September 30, 2018.

[46] See CRS In Focus IF10279, *Cameroon*, by Alexis Arieff.

[47] See CRS Report R44018, *Burundi's Political Crisis: In Brief*, by Alexis Arieff.

[48] Refugee data from UNHCR, *Operational Portal: Burundi*, accessed October 12, 2018; IDP data from IOM DTM, *Dashboard des Déplacements: Burundi Août 2018*, August 2018.

[49] See, e.g., State Department, "U.S.-Africa Relations: A New Framework," remarks by then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at George Mason University, March 6, 2018.

[50] CRS In Focus IF10797, *PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act: Expiring Authorities*, by Tiaji Salaam-Blyther and CRS In Focus IF11018, *Global Trends in HIV/AIDS*, by Sara M. Tharakan.

[51] Congress permanently enacted a similar approach by passing the Global Food Security Act of 2016 (GSFA, P.L.

expand access to electricity in Africa, and YALI, which fosters the development of emergent African business, civic, and public management leaders.

While maintaining such initiatives, the Trump Administration has proposed changes to U.S. trade policy and U.S. foreign assistance, including aid cuts, which could significantly affect U.S.-Africa relations. It has also given high priority to strategic competition with China in Africa and pressed African states to join efforts to put pressure on North Korea.[52] The Administration's immigration policies also have affected U.S.-Africa policy. It has used executive orders to prohibit nationals from several African countries (Sudan, Chad, and Somalia) from entry to the United States, subject to certain exceptions, citing terrorism concerns—although as of late 2018, only Somalia remained subject to such prohibitions.[53] Implementing a decision made by the Obama Administration, it ended "temporary protected status" (TPS) for nationals of three West African countries affected by the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak (Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia); it also has ended TPS for nationals of Sudan.[54] The Administration has restricted visas, or threatened to do so, for nationals of some African countries whose governments do not cooperate with U.S. court-ordered immigration removals.[55]

Some observers suggest that the United States appears less engaged on the continent than in previous years, at a time when other foreign actors, notably China and Russia, are seeking to expand their roles in Africa.[56] Some African leaders reacted negatively to a derogatory remark about African countries that was attributed to President Trump in early 2018.[57] Since taking office in July 2018, the Administration's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Tibor Nagy, has sought to challenge perceptions of U.S. indifference or disdain.[58]

How has the Administration approached foreign power involvement in Africa?

The Trump Administration's National Security Strategy portrays Chinese influence as undermining African development "by corrupting elites, dominating extractive industries, and locking countries into unsustainable and opaque debts and commitments." Executive branch policy documents and statements also have cited rising "great power competition" globally, including in Africa.[59] Limited interest by U.S. firms in African markets has restricted the scope

114-195). CRS In Focus IF10475, *Global Food Security Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-195)*, by Sonya Hammons; and CRS Report R44727, *Major Foreign Aid Initiatives Under the Obama Administration: A Wrap-Up*, by Marian L. Lawson.

[52] State Department, "U.S.-Africa Relations," op. cit.; White House, "Remarks by President Trump at Working Lunch with African Leaders," September 20, 2017; 2017 *National Security Strategy*, "Africa."

[53] The White House, "Presidential Proclamation Enhancing Vetting Capabilities and Processes for Detecting Attempted Entry Into the United States by Terrorists or Other Public-Safety Threats," September 24, 2017; *Politico*, "Trump lifts travel restrictions on Chad," April 10, 2018.

[54] CRS Report RS20844, *Temporary Protected Status: Overview and Current Issues*, by Jill H. Wilson.

[55] Department of Homeland Security (DHS, "DHS Announces Implementation of Visa Sanctions on Four Countries," September 13, 2017; and State Department/U.S. Embassy in Ghana, "Statement on Immigration Law and International Agreements," June 20, 2018. For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11025, *Immigration: "Recalcitrant" Countries and the Use of Visa Sanctions to Encourage Cooperation with Alien Removals*, by Jill H. Wilson.

[56] For critiques of U.S. engagement, see, e.g., Judd Devermont, "The World is Coming to Sub-Saharan Africa. Where is the United States?" Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Brief, August 24, 2018.

[57] Kimon de Greef and Sewell Chan, "Trump Comments, Infuriating Africans, May Set Back U.S. Interests," *New York Times*, January 15, 2018 and Josh Dawsey, "Trump Derides Protections for Immigrants From 'Shithole' Countries," *Washington Post*, January 12, 2018.

[58] See, e.g., Nagy, "U.S. is Africa's 'Ideal Partner' for Promoting Democratic Institutions & Economic Growth," *AllAfrica*, September 18, 2018.

[59] Testimony of AFRICOM Commander General Thomas Waldhauser, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *United*

for direct competition with Chinese or Russian actors to date, but the region's long-term potential as a growth market could make concerns over competition more significant in the future.

China replaced the United States as Africa's largest trading partner in 2009. Chinese firms have constructed infrastructure projects across Africa, often using Chinese state financing tied to the substantial use of Chinese goods or services and, in some cases, Chinese access to African natural resources. These activities, which may expand under China's global "One Belt, One Road" initiative,[60] help to fill infrastructure gaps, but their linkage to broader Chinese commercial and strategic interests raises challenging questions for the United States. In 2017, China established its first overseas military base, in Djibouti. In a 2018 report to Congress, DOD stated that the base extends "the reach of China's armed forces, reflecting China's growing influence."[61]

Russia also has shown increasing interest in expanding its presence in Africa; by one estimate, Russia has signed at least 19 military cooperation deals with African states since 2014.[62] Russian engagement is generally centered on arms sales, military training, intelligence exchanges, and access to minerals, notably uranium. One country that has drawn particular attention is the Central African Republic, where more than 200 Russian military and private security personnel have deployed since 2017.[63] The Horn of Africa separately appears to be of increasing strategic importance to international actors. Several of the Arab Gulf countries, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, as well as Turkey, Russia, and China, have increased their involvement. As noted above, China maintains a military base in Djibouti; Russia, for its part, has announced plans to build a logistics center in Eritrea.[64] Gulf actors appear to have helped facilitate reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Whether growing foreign interests in that subregion prove to be a stabilizing or destabilizing force remains to be seen.

U.S.-Africa Trade, Investment, and Economic Cooperation

What is the scope of U.S.-Africa trade and economic relations?

Africa accounts for a small share of overall U.S. trade and investment activity, making up less than 1% of such U.S. global transactions in 2017.[65] As it has over the past several years, the United States ran a goods trade deficit with the region in 2017 (totaling $10.8 billion), importing $24.9 billion and exporting $14.1 billion. U.S. exports are diverse while imports are mostly in primary products (oil alone accounts for over 40% but has declined significantly in recent years). Motor vehicles (exclusively from South Africa) and apparel are the region's only significant manufactured exports to the United States. Over half of U.S. trade with the region is with the two largest economies, Nigeria and South Africa. U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) in the region is

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States Central Command and United States Africa Command, hearing, 115th Cong., March 13, 2018.

[60] See CRS In Focus IF10273, *China's "One Belt, One Road"*, by Susan V. Lawrence and Gabriel M. Nelson.

[61] Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018*, May 2018.

[62] *Reuters*, "Russian Military Cooperation Deals with African Countries," October 17, 2018.

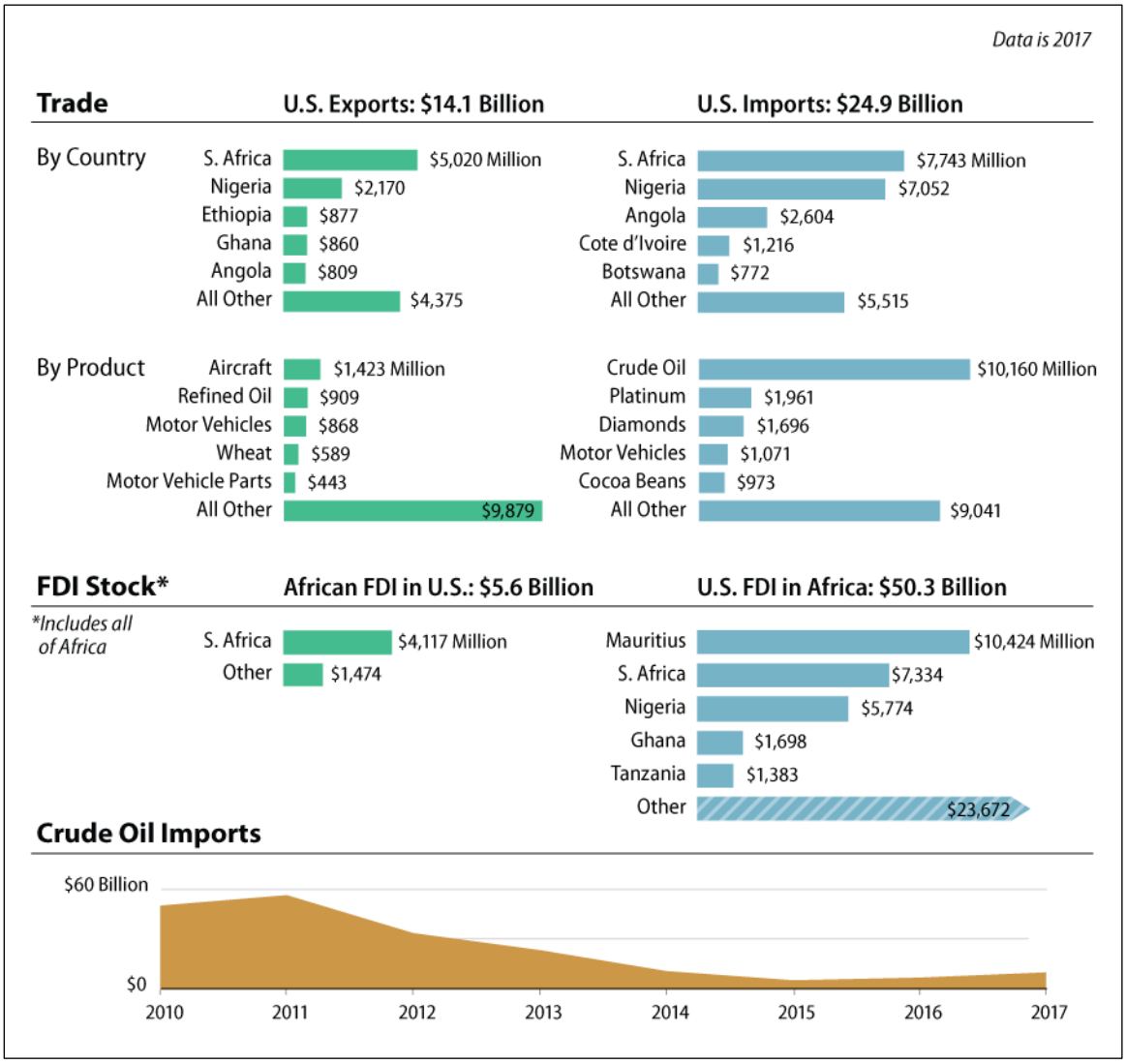
[63] These personnel—apparently a mix of private military contractors—are reportedly training government forces on the use of weaponry that Russia has donated to CAR. Russian personnel also have reportedly been assigned to the CAR president's security detail, while others have established a presence in rebel-held areas. The unsolved August 2018 killing, in CAR, of three Russian journalists probing the activities of Russian private military contractors raised new concerns about Russia's involvement in the country.

[64] *Voice of America*, "Russia-Eritrea Relations Grow with Planned Logistics Center," September 2, 2018.

[65] Trade data include only sub-Saharan Africa and are sourced from Global Trade Atlas. Foreign direct investment data cover sub-Saharan and North Africa and are sourced from the Bureau of Economic Analysis' Direct Investment interactive tables at https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/index_MNC.cfm.

also concentrated in a few countries, including Mauritius ($10.4 billion in 2017), South Africa ($7.3 billion), Nigeria ($5.8 billion), Ghana ($1.7 billion), and Tanzania ($1.4). The small stock of sub-Saharan African FDI in the United States comes almost exclusively from South Africa ($4.1 billion in 2017). See **Figure 3** for a snapshot of U.S.-Africa trade and investment.

Figure 3. U.S. Trade and Investment with Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: CRS with trade data from Global Trade Atlas and foreign direct investment data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis' Direct Investment interactive tables at https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/index_MNC.cfm.

Notes: FDI data are stock values based on historical cost and include North Africa.

U.S. trade and investment policy toward Africa is focused on encouraging economic growth and development through trade within the region, with the United States, and internationally. The U.S. government also seeks to facilitate U.S. firms' access to opportunities for trade with and investment in Africa. A growing number of Members of Congress have supported expanded efforts to pursue such goals, and multiple committees have held hearings on these topics in recent years. A major increase in African trade and investment ties with other countries, particularly China, has been a growing concern of U.S. policymakers due to questions about both lost U.S. export opportunities and potential foreign policy influence associated with such ties. Total China-

Africa trade surpassed U.S.-Africa trade in 2009, and in 2017, at $137 billion, was 3.5 times as large as U.S.-Africa trade.[66]

Improving economic and political climates in some African countries have led to increasing interest in the region as a destination for U.S. goods, services, and investment. Despite these trends, many U.S. businesses remain skeptical of the region's investment and trade potential and focus their investments in other regions thought to offer more opportunity and less risk. Many avoid engaging in business in Africa due to economic governance challenges in many countries, the relative difficulty of doing business, and, in some instances, political instability.[67]

What programs and legislation support expanded U.S.-Africa trade and economic relations?

Given development challenges in the region, U.S. efforts to boost trade and investment ties with Africa have historically focused largely on improving local economic conditions. U.S. trade preferences, or nonreciprocal duty-free treatment designed to encourage exports to the United States, are a central component of that policy, particularly as embodied in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) passed by Congress in 2000 (see below).

The United States also provides aid for trade capacity building (TCB, see text box) in order to help countries better engage in international trade and take advantage of the benefits of U.S. trade preferences, as well as to encourage trade-led growth. TCB funds to the region totaled $826.5 million in FY2016.[68] Three African trade hubs, established under the George W. Bush Administration, are a pillar of U.S. TCB in the region and work to increase regional export competitiveness, intraregional trade, and AGOA use. The Trump Administration has continued the Obama Administration's effort to expand these mandates by turning the hubs into two-way U.S.-Africa trade and investment centers aimed at boosting U.S. business activity in the region.[69]

U.S. efforts have increasingly focused on advancing U.S. business opportunities in the region. The Trump Administration has continued several initiatives established by the Obama Administration, including the Trade Africa Initiative and the President's Advisory Council on Africa.[70] The private-sector-led Advisory Council provides recommendations to the Administration to help facilitate U.S. commercial engagement in the region.[71]

Background on Trade Capacity Building

Trade capacity building (TCB) refers to a broad range of activities designed to promote and expand countries' and regions' participation in international trade. Core TCB activities help build or strengthen physical, human, and institutional capacities to help recipient countries facilitate the flow of goods and services across borders. Among other ends, they also seek to help countries participate in trade negotiations; implement trade agreements; comply

[66] China- and U.S.-Africa trade data from Global Trade Atlas.

[67] A majority of sub-Saharan African countries rank in the bottom tiers of the World Bank's annual *Doing Business* report, which examines countries' performance trends relating to the relative ease of doing business.

[68] This total includes funding for two five-year MCC grants for Ghana ($431.1 million) and Liberia ($217.6 million). USAID reports TCB funding based on the year it is allocated.

[69] The trade hubs are presently located in West Africa (Ghana), East Africa (Kenya), and Southern Africa (with two offices, in Botswana and South Africa).

[70] For a discussion of U.S. trade and investment initiatives in the region, see USTR, *2018 Biennial Report on the Implementation of AGOA*, June 29, 2018.

[71] The latest recommendations and report by the Council from September 2018 are available at https://www.trade.gov/pac-dbia/docs/PAC-DBIA%20Final%20Report%20Sep%202018.pdf.

with food safety, manufacturing, and other standards; join and comply with World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements; and increase economic responsiveness to trade opportunities through business and trade training.[72] Such aid may complement, overlap with, or be tied to other types of economic growth aid, but is generally separate, and often comprises a relatively small portion of overall economic growth assistance. Some aspects of Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC, see below) Compacts, including infrastructure, are also considered TCB assistance. Agency TCB funding allocations vary by year, but U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and MCC are generally the lead funding agencies of TCB projects. Other agencies providing TCB include the Departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce, and Justice, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency.[73]

To bolster U.S. commercial engagement and general economic development in the region, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) provides loans, guarantees, and political risk insurance for U.S. private investment in developing and emerging economies in order to advance U.S. development and foreign policy goals. As of September 2018, 25% of OPIC's portfolio exposure was in Africa, the second-largest share of any region.[74] The Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act (BUILD Act, P.L. 115-254), signed by the President on October 5, 2018, creates a new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (IDFC) that will combine OPIC together with certain components of USAID, including its Development Credit Authority (DCA). The reorganization received strong bipartisan support in Congress and is viewed by many as a tool for countering China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative and growing economic influence in developing countries, including in Africa. The new IDFC, by statute, has expanded authority and capacity compared to current U.S. development finance activities; its $60 billion authorization, however, is arguably dwarfed by finance from China, which in September 2018 offered $50 billion in finance to Africa alone.[75]

Other agencies that promote U.S. exports to the region include the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank) and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA).[76] Ex-Im Bank provides direct loans, loan guarantees, and export credit insurance to help finance U.S. exports to support U.S. jobs and includes a statutory requirement to target African export opportunities. USTDA seeks to advance economic growth in Africa by promoting export opportunities for U.S. businesses. It facilitates access to finance through such activities as funding project preparation and feasibility studies, and by supporting other trade-expanding efforts. As a region, Africa typically accounts for the largest share of USTDA funding.[77]

Other U.S. trade and investment policy tools in place with African countries include Trade and Investment Framework Agreements (TIFAs)—intergovernmental forums for dialogue on trade and investment issues—and bilateral investment treaties, which advance reciprocal commitments to facilitate and protect foreign investment. The United States has a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

[72] TCB may incorporate a wide range of additional types of assistance. See USAID, "About the TCB Database" and "Glossary," USAID Trade Capacity Building Database, at https://tcb.usaid.gov/dashboard.html.

[73] For background on TCB and the roles of U.S. agencies, see the archived 2008 CRS Report RL33628, Trade Capacity Building: Foreign Assistance for Trade and Development, available to congressional requesters from the author. While the report provides a comprehensive TCB overview discussion, funding numbers and certain program details in the report are no longer current. For current data see USAID's TCB database, at https://tcb.usaid.gov/dashboard.html.

[74] OPIC, *Annual Management Report of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2017*, November 9, 2018.

[75] CRS Report R45180, *OPIC, USAID, and Proposed Development Finance Reorganization*, by Shayerah Ilias Akhtar and Marian L. Lawson; and China in Africa Research Initiative, "China's FOCAC Financial Package for Africa 2018: Four Facts," September 3, 2018.

[76] CRS In Focus IF10017, *Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank)*, by Shayerah Ilias Akhtar.

[77] See funding tables as reported in USTDA annual reports.

with Morocco, but there are no existing U.S. FTAs with sub-Saharan African countries. The United States also encourages and provides TCB support aimed at fostering African participation in broader multilateral efforts to reduce trade barriers. This includes support to facilitate African accession to, and implementation of, WTO and other multilateral trade agreements, particularly the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.[78]

What is AGOA and how does it affect U.S.-Africa trade?[79]

AGOA (Title I, P.L. 106-200, as amended) is a nonreciprocal U.S. trade preference program that provides duty-free tariff treatment on certain imports from eligible sub-Saharan African countries. Congress first passed AGOA in 2000 as part of a U.S. effort to promote African development, deepen economic integration within the region, and strengthen U.S.-African trade and investment ties. The program builds on the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which provides similar duty-free treatment on U.S. imports from developing countries worldwide. AGOA covers a wider range of products and has typically been authorized over longer periods than GSP.[80] The Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-27) extended AGOA's authorization for an unprecedented 10 years, to September 2025, and amended some aspects of the program. Thirty-nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa were eligible for AGOA benefits in 2018.

AGOA also requires the President, in consultation with Congress and AGOA beneficiary governments, to hold an annual U.S.-Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum (typically referred to as the "AGOA Forum").[81] The 18th AGOA Forum, themed "Forging New Strategies for U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment," was held in July 2018 in Washington, DC, where U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer focused his remarks on U.S. interest in reciprocal trade agreements in the region.[82]

When it established AGOA in 2000, Congress directed the executive branch to pursue reciprocal trade agreements, where feasible, with interested countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Negotiations on a potential U.S.-Southern African Customs Union (SACU) FTA were initiated in 2003 but suspended in 2006 due to divergent views on the scope. During the 2015 AGOA reauthorization debate this issue resurfaced, in part due to concerns that AGOA countries' reciprocal trade agreements with other advanced economies, such as South Africa's agreement with the European Union (EU), place U.S. exporters at a disadvantage in certain African markets. Congress ultimately reauthorized AGOA for 10 years for all countries but again directed the executive branch to seek reciprocal agreements in Africa. It also mandated reporting requirements on a strategy and progress to that end, as well as on the status of countries' AGOA eligibility and other developments in U.S.-Africa trade relations.

Total U.S. imports under AGOA were $13.5 billion in 2017, and despite the decline in recent years, energy products, mostly crude oil, remain the top import under the program (see **Figure**

[78] To date, 30 African countries have ratified the WTO TFA. See WTO, "Trade Facilitation," at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/tradfa_agreeacc_e.htm.

[79] CRS Report R43173, *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA): Background and Reauthorization*, by Brock R. Williams and CRS In Focus IF10149, *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)*, by Brock R. Williams.

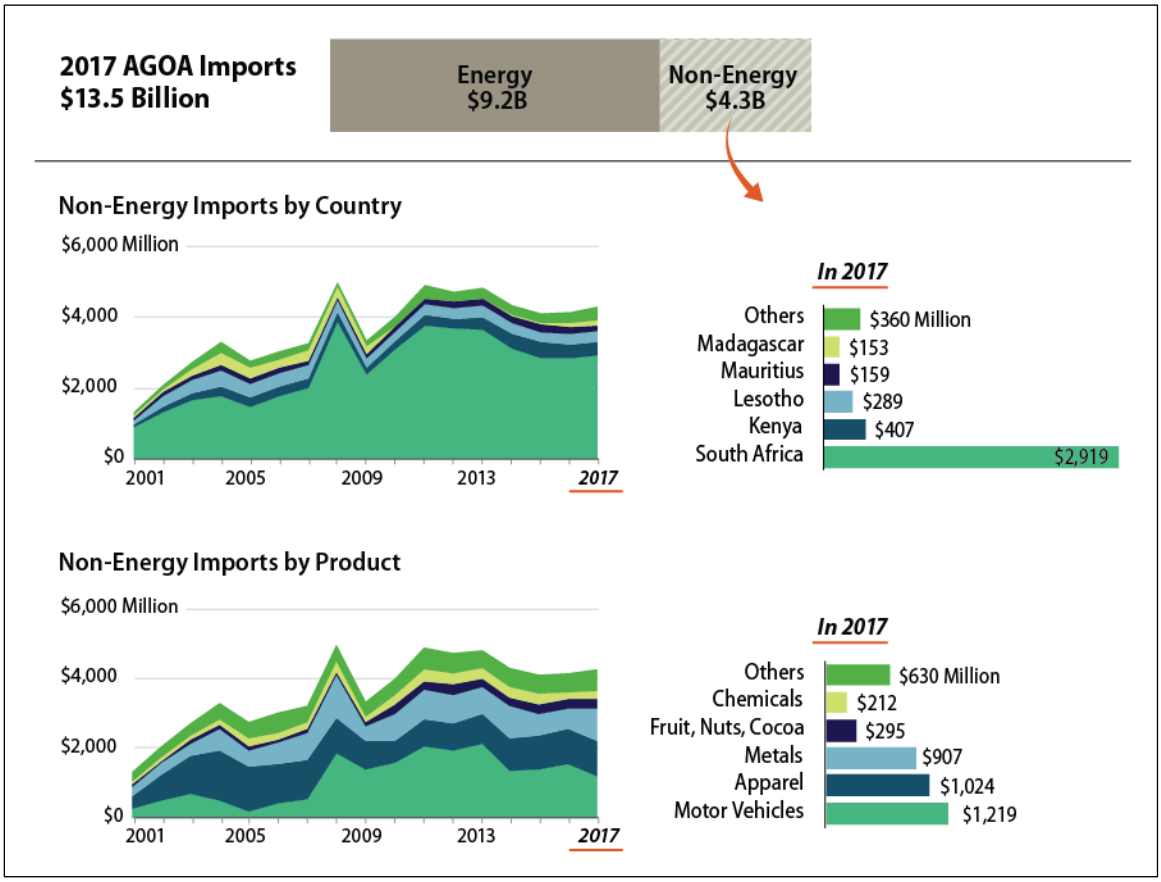
[80] GSP was allowed to expire from January 1, 2018 to April 22, 2018 before being retroactively reauthorized to 2020.

[81] The original AGOA legislation states that the purpose of the Forum, which is held in alternate years in the United States and Africa, is to "discuss expanding [U.S.-Africa] trade and investment relations" and to encourage "joint ventures between small and large businesses," as well as to foster the broader goals of AGOA. Civil society and private sector events are typically held in conjunction with the Forum. Representatives from appropriate African regional organizations and government officials from some other African countries also are often invited.

[82] USTR, "Statement of USTR Lighthizer at the Opening Plenary of the 2018 AGOA Forum," July 2018.

4).[83] Most analysts, however, focus on AGOA and its relation to non-energy trade as a potential catalyst for African development. U.S. imports of such products from beneficiary countries have grown three-fold between 2001 and 2017, signaling success in achieving some of the program's goals, but a handful of countries and products continue to account for the bulk of these imports. In 2017, more than half of the $4.3 billion in non-energy imports under AGOA were from South Africa alone, which exports the broadest range of products, including motor vehicles. Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, and Madagascar are the other major beneficiaries of the program and primarily export apparel products under AGOA.

Figure 4. U.S. AGOA Imports



Source: CRS with data from the U.S. International Trade Commission. Energy products defined as Harmonized Tariff Schedule chapter 27. Non-energy includes all other products.

How does the Administration's trade policy affect U.S. trade with the region?

U.S. trade policy has been a key focus of the Trump Administration, particularly with regard to the U.S. trade deficit, foreign trade barriers, and the effects of import competition on U.S. manufacturing. While U.S. trade with Africa may be of less concern to the Administration, as

[83] Data on U.S. AGOA imports are from the U.S. International Trade Commission. Energy products defined as Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) chapter 27. Non-energy products include all other categories.

such trade is minimal and U.S. imports mostly consist of primary products, U.S. trade policy changes could significantly affect U.S. trade with some African countries, notably South Africa.

- **Tariff actions.** Increased tariffs on steel (25%) and aluminum (10%) imposed under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 are of particular concern for South Africa.[84] In 2017, South Africa was the 14th ($279 million) and 9th ($340 million) largest supplier of affected U.S. steel and aluminum imports, respectively. The Administration has granted product exclusions for a limited number of steel and aluminum imports from South Africa.[85] A Section 232 investigation on U.S. motor vehicle imports remains pending, however, and could result in increased tariffs on such products, South Africa's second-largest category of exports to the United States. U.S. imports of motor vehicles from South Africa totaled $1.1 billion in 2017.
- **Eligibility for U.S. preference programs.** The statutes authorizing U.S. preference programs, including AGOA, give the Administration considerable discretion in determining country eligibility. The Administration's focus on the U.S. trade deficit suggests it may look skeptically at nonreciprocal preference programs such as AGOA, which have a direct and immediate effect on U.S. imports and an indirect and longer-term effect on U.S. exports. To date, the Administration has ended AGOA eligibility for two African countries, Rwanda and Mauritania, citing (respectively) protectionism and human rights concerns. Previous Administrations similarly revoked AGOA eligibility for a variety of issues, including related to governance and labor rights. Congress may seek to consult with the Administration over its enforcement of eligibility criteria to ensure adherence to congressional objectives.
- **Focus on reciprocal trade agreements.** The Administration has made reciprocal trade negotiations a top priority of its trade policy with Africa. It is likely, however, to confront the same challenges that have dogged previous U.S pursuit of an FTA in the region, including concern among African countries over the extensive nature of U.S. FTA commitments and concern over how an agreement with select countries may negatively impact African efforts toward regional integration.[86] On the first issue, the Trump Administration may be more flexible in its approach than previous Administrations, as evidenced by announcements for limited-scope bilateral U.S. negotiations with the EU and Japan.[87] The Administration's stated preference for bilateral agreements rather than agreements with larger regional blocs, however, appears at odds with the push among many African states for more regionally integrated trade policy, including via the African Continental Free Trade Area, signed by 44 African states in March.[88] Congress is also expected to play a role in determining the scope of any new U.S. agreements in the region and would have to approve such agreements through implementing legislation.

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[84] For more information, see CRS Insight IN10943, *Escalating Tariffs: Timeline*, coordinated by Brock R. Williams.

[85] South Africa Department of Trade and Industry, "South Africa Welcomes Product Exclusion for Some Steel and Aluminum Products from Section 232 Duties," October 24, 2018, https://www.thedti.gov.za/editmedia.jsp?id=5643.

[86] For a thorough discussion, see the Obama Administration report, USTR, *Beyond AGOA*, and September 2016.

[87] "Trump Pursues Trade Deals in Asia, Europe Amid Frostiness with China," *Wall Street Journal*, September 25, 2018.

[88] UNCTAD, *The African Continental Free Trade Area*, Policy Brief 67, May 2018, https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/presspb2018d4_en.pdf.

U.S. Support for Governance, Democracy, and Human Rights

U.S. policymakers use several tools to promote democracy and human rights in Africa, including the following:

Diplomacy and reporting. U.S. diplomats often publicly criticize or condemn undemocratic actions and human rights violations in Africa, and raise concerns in private meetings with African leaders. Some Members of Congress likewise raise concerns directly with African leaders, with U.S. executive branch officials, or through legislation. The State Department publishes annual congressionally mandated reports on human rights conditions globally, and on other issues of concern, such as religious freedom and trafficking in persons.[89] Such reports document violations and, in some cases, provide the basis for U.S. policy actions, such as restrictions on assistance. Congress also has imposed certain human rights-related legal restrictions on aid, as discussed below. The State Department and USAID also finance international and domestic election observer missions in Africa that produce reports on the relative credibility of electoral contests.

Foreign aid. Multiple U.S. aid programs support African electoral institutions; train African political parties, civil society organizations, parliaments, and journalists; and assist local government officials in improving service delivery. They also provide capacity-building support and technical assistance focused on issues such as legal changes and governance reforms. Some U.S. security assistance programs are designed to improve the human rights records of African security forces and/or advance the rule of law by building the capacity of judicial and law enforcement bodies. U.S. programs also provide legal and medical aid to foreign human rights defenders, and fund ad hoc programs to address particular human rights challenges.

Foreign aid restrictions. Congress has imposed human rights-related restrictions or conditions on aid to specific African countries (e.g., Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe), often through the enactment of foreign aid appropriations measures. Aid to multiple African governments may also be restricted by legislation curtailing or denying certain types of aid to countries that fail to observe human rights norms. These norms include

- religious freedom, under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-292), with Sudan and Eritrea listed in 2018 as countries of particular concern subject to potential restrictions or other sanctions;[90]
- the recruitment and use of child soldiers, under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act (P.L. 110-457) and related legislation, with DRC, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan listed in 2018 for potential security assistance restrictions;[91] and
- trafficking in persons (TIP), under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (P.L. 106-386, as amended) and related legislation, with Burundi, Comoros, DRC,

[89] See CRS In Focus IF10795, *Global Human Rights: The Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, by Michael A. Weber.

[90] The State Department, when it re-designated Sudan and Eritrea as countries of particular concern in January 2018, referred to existing restrictions for both countries rather than instituting new restrictions pursuant to the law. See CRS In Focus IF10803, *Global Human Rights: International Religious Freedom Policy*, by Michael A. Weber.

[91] For FY2019, the Trump Administration waived the restrictions on certain types of foreign assistance that would otherwise result from designation under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act for Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan. See CRS In Focus IF10901, *Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008: Security Assistance Restrictions and Proposals in the 115th Congress*, by Michael A. Weber.

Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Mauritania, the Republic of Congo, and South Sudan listed in 2018 for potential foreign aid restrictions.[92]

Sanctions. Executive orders issued under previous Administrations permit U.S. sanctions on designated persons implicated in human rights violations and/or undermining democratic transitions or peace processes in several countries, including Burundi, CAR, DRC, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe. In 2017, citing progress by the Sudanese government toward key U.S. priorities, the Trump Administration permanently lifted economic sanctions on Sudan that the Obama Administration had eased, though some restrictions remain in place.[93] Also in 2017, the Trump Administration issued a new Executive Order pertaining to global human rights abuses and corruption, which it has invoked to impose targeted financial sanctions on a key financier of DRC president Joseph Kabila, as well as on former Gambian leader Yahya Jammeh, and associated businesses.[94]

Prosecutions. The United States has helped fund special tribunals that investigated and prosecuted human rights violations in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Chad. The United States is not a state party to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which in practice has prioritized human rights cases in Africa; the American Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2002 (ASPA, Title II of P.L. 107-206) prohibits various forms of U.S. material cooperation with the Court. The Trump Administration has pledged to end a previous policy of providing legally permissible diplomatic, informational, and logistical support to ICC prosecutions on a case-by-case basis.[95] U.S. federal prosecutors have sought charges against some alleged perpetrators of human rights abuses in African countries, notably Rwanda and Liberia, often on the basis of violations of U.S. immigration laws. The United States has been a proponent of the establishment by the African Union of a hybrid court to investigate abuses in South Sudan.

U.S. Aid to Africa

What are the objectives of U.S. assistance programs in the region?

U.S. foreign aid aims to address Africa's development challenges, meet urgent humanitarian needs, and improve security and governance. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) administers much of this aid, typically under country strategies that target specific development needs, as well as under multiple global and Africa-specific presidential development initiatives. The State Department administers additional programs aimed at bolstering health, fostering the rule of law, countering trafficking, and improving military and police professionalism, often in coordination with other executive branch agencies. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) separately supports large-scale, multiyear development projects targeting impediments to economic growth (e.g., building roads or other infrastructure) in countries that meet various governance and development benchmarks.[96] The Department of

[92] See The White House, Presidential Determination with Respect to the Efforts of Foreign Governments Regarding Trafficking in Persons," November 29, 2018, for details of the Administration's application of TIP-related aid restrictions in FY2019. See also CRS In Focus IF10587, *Transnational Crime Issues: Human Trafficking*, by Liana W. Rosen and Michael A. Weber.

[93] Enduring restrictions rooted in law relate to Sudan's debt arrears, support for international terrorism, and pervasive human rights violations. See CRS In Focus IF10182, *Sudan*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard.

[94] See CRS In Focus IF10576, *The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act*, by Dianne E. Rennack.

[95] Remarks by National Security Adviser John Bolton at the Federalist Society, September 10, 2018.

[96] See CRS Report RL32427, *Millennium Challenge Corporation*, by Curt Tarnoff.

Defense (DOD) implements some State Department-funded security assistance programs and is authorized to provide its own assistance to foreign militaries and internal security forces. DOD also carries out military-to-military cooperation in many African countries.

How much foreign aid does the United States provide to Africa?[97]

In recent years, sub-Saharan Africa has generally received between 20% and 25% of total U.S. bilateral aid, most of which supports health programs.[98] In FY2017, $8.35 billion in bilateral State Department- and USAID-administered funds were allocated specifically to African countries. Recipients of at least $300 million each in such assistance included Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, and DRC.[99] Many countries receive additional globally or functionally allocated funding (such as humanitarian or counterterrorism aid), MCC assistance, and/or other ad hoc executive branch agency aid, which is not included in these totals. The United States also channels substantial aid to Africa through multilateral bodies, such as the World Bank.

The Trump Administration requested $5.24 billion and $5.56 billion for African countries in FY2018 and FY2019, respectively—a significant reduction compared to FY2017 and recent prior years. As discussed below, these proposals reflected, in part, an effort to reduce development aid worldwide and eliminate global food aid under P.L. 480 (Food for Peace), the vast majority of which has been provided to African countries in recent years. Administration officials suggested that all food aid would instead be provided under the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account, but did not request commensurate increases in IDA funding. Congress appropriated FY2018 foreign aid under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141), in which it largely did not adopt the Administration's 2018 proposals; final country-level FY2018 allocations are not yet available. FY2019 foreign aid appropriations measures reported during the 115th Congress in the House (H.R. 6385) and Senate (S. 3108) would largely not adopt the Administration's global proposals. Their precise impact on African countries remains to be seen.

What changes to U.S. aid to Africa has the Trump Administration pursued?

The Trump Administration contends that its proposals to reduce and reallocate U.S. aid funding for Africa are intended to reduce spending, enhance efficiency, and prioritize U.S. national security interests. In March 2018, USAID Administrator Mark Green testified that USAID's FY2019 budget request reflected efforts to "balance fiscal needs here at home with our leadership role on the world stage."[100]

As noted above, the Trump Administration has requested annual bilateral State Department- and USAID-administered assistance funding at levels far below those requested by the Obama Administration or appropriated by Congress in recent years. Additionally, the Trump Administration's FY2018 and FY2019 budget proposals would end Food for Peace (FFP) aid under P.L. 480 Title II, most of which has gone to African countries in recent years.[101] Congress disregarded the proposed elimination both fiscal years. The Administration also has proposed merging the Development Assistance (DA) and Economic Support Fund (ESF) accounts—

[97] Aid to North Africa is beyond the scope of this report, but some counterterrorism programs bridge both regions.

[98] CRS calculations based on recent State Department Congressional Budget Justifications for Foreign Operations.

[99] State Department Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, FY2019.

[100] House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, "The FY2019 Foreign Assistance Budget," March 21, 2018.

[101] FFP funding is appropriated in Agriculture appropriations legislation.

through which African countries received roughly $1.33 billion in FY2017—with several smaller accounts under a new Economic Support and Development Fund (ESDF), and requested funding far below FY2018 levels for the accounts it would replace.[102] Congress did not adopt these proposals in enacting the FY2018 omnibus appropriations act (P.L. 115-141). Committee-reported FY2019 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bills pending during the 115th Congress in the House and the Senate (H.R. 6385 and S. 3108, respectively) would likewise retain the traditional account structure and maintain DA and ESF funding roughly at FY2018 levels.

What types of security assistance does the United States provide to Africa?[103]

U.S. security assistance in Africa comprises a range of activities, including programs to train and provide equipment to foreign security forces, professionalization and education initiatives, and law enforcement assistance. A large portion of such assistance seeks to help counter terrorism; the largest cumulative share in the past decade (over $2 billion) has supported African forces fighting Al Shabaab and pursuing stabilization in Somalia.[104] The State Department and DOD each administer some types of security assistance, as authorized and appropriated by Congress.

In addition to peacekeeper support, the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account is the primary funding vehicle for State Department-administered military aid in Africa, including for counterterrorism, maritime security, and security sector reform. It is the primary vehicle for, inter alia, U.S. support to AMISOM, bilateral military aid to DRC, and two multiyear interagency counterterrorism programs in Africa: the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP, in North-West Africa), and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT, in East Africa).[105] H.R. 6018, introduced in the 115th Congress, would formally establish TSCTP in law while imposing new notification and reporting requirements under the program.

The State Department also administers programs to improve African law enforcement entities, enhance military professionalization through training and technical instruction, bolster security forces' capacity to conduct internal, border, and maritime security operations, and support antitrafficking and counternarcotics activities. While some of these programs are funded through the PKO account, those involving internal security forces are generally funded through the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) or Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) accounts.

DOD implements some State Department-administered programs, such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. DOD also funds and administers certain congressionally authorized security cooperation programs to help build the capacity of foreign partner states. These include DOD's "global train and equip" program, which Congress codified under 10 U.S.C. 333 ("Section 333") in the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Section

[102] The Assistance to Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia (AEECA) and Democracy Fund (DF) accounts would also be subsumed under ESDF. See CRS Report R45168, *Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs: FY2019 Budget and Appropriations*, by Susan B. Epstein, Marian L. Lawson, and Cory R. Gill.

[103] See Testimony of CRS Specialist in African Affairs Lauren Blanchard, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, *U.S. Security Assistance in Africa*, hearing, 114th Cong., June 4, 2015. For more detail on U.S. security assistance, see CRS Report R44444, *Security Assistance and Cooperation: Shared Responsibility of the Departments of State and Defense*, by Nina M. Serafino.

[104] CRS calculation based on State Department and DOD notifications to Congress.

[105] TSCTP partner countries are Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. PREACT partner countries are Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, though not all receive funding through the program.

333 consolidated and superseded various "partner capacity-building" authorities that Congress had granted to DOD on a temporary or otherwise limited basis, related to counterterrorism, counterproliferation, maritime security, counternarcotics, and countering transnational organized crime.[106] Top African recipients of DOD global train-and-equip assistance over the past decade include Kenya, Uganda, Niger, Chad, Somalia, Mauritania, and Cameroon.[107] DOD is also authorized to carry out certain assistance related to activities such as countering wildlife crime and cooperative threat reduction.

U.S. Military Engagement in Africa

How large is the U.S. military presence in Africa?

An October 2017 attack that killed four U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) soldiers in Niger, followed by a June 2018 attack on SOF personnel in Somalia that killed one U.S. soldier and injured four others, have drawn attention to the expanding U.S. military presence in Africa. Public statements by DOD officials suggest that there are up to 7,200 DOD personnel in Africa at any one time, presumably including personnel charged with guarding U.S. diplomatic facilities.[108] The majority are stationed in Djibouti, which hosts Camp Lemonnier—the only enduring U.S. military base in Africa. The second-largest number, as of mid-2018, were deployed in Niger, with about 730 troops engaged in a range of activities, including construction of a new airfield in the northern town of Agadez.[109] News reports, citing DOD sources, indicate that DOD's presence in Africa includes an estimated 1,200 SOF members, including those involved in train, equip, advise, and/or accompany missions.[110] The Trump Administration is considering reducing and reorienting the U.S. military presence, including SOF deployments, in Africa (see below).

What roles does the U.S. military play in Africa?

U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM's) *2018 Posture Statement* notes five lines of effort:[111]

1. Develop security and stability in East Africa,
2. Degrade violent extremist organizations in the Sahel and Maghreb regions and contain instability in Libya,
3. Contain Boko Haram and degrade Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa,
4. Interdict illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa, and

[106] CRS In Focus IF10582, *Security Cooperation Issues: FY2017 NDAA Outcomes*, by Liana W. Rosen.

[107] CRS calculation based on DOD notifications to Congress.

[108] In March 13, 2018 written testimony to Congress, AFRICOM Commander Gen. Thomas Waldhauser stated, "On any given day, up to 7,200 U.S. uniformed personnel, Department of Defense civilians, and contractors are in Africa." In late 2018, a DOD spokesperson noted that there were "7,200 DOD personnel operating in Africa." See, e.g., Idrees Ali, "Pentagon to cut troops in Africa as focus shifts to China, Russia," *Reuters*, November 15, 2018. Previously, in October 2017, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford stated that there were "a little over 6,000 forces in Africa…in about 53 different countries." DOD, "Department of Defense Press Briefing by General Dunford in the Pentagon Briefing Room," October 23, 2017.

[109] The White House, "Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate [War Powers notification]," June 8, 2018. See CRS Report R44995, *Niger: Frequently Asked Questions About the October 2017 Attack on U.S. Soldiers*, coordinated by Alexis Arieff.

[110] Helene Cooper and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Prepares to Reduce Troops and Shed Missions in Africa," August 1, 2018.

[111] U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) *2018 Posture Statement to Congress*, submitted as written testimony by AFRICOM Commander Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

5. Build African peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response capacities.

The *2018 Posture Statement* also identifies three enduring tasks of the U.S. military in Africa: protecting U.S. personnel and facilities, maintaining U.S. access, and building partner capacity. The last is conducted under AFRICOM's "By, With, and Through" framework, which "emphasizes U.S. military capabilities employed in a supporting role, not as principal participants in an armed conflict."[112] This approach aligns with DOD's *2018 National Defense Strategy*, which sets out the U.S. military's goals in Africa of "working by, with, and through local partners and the European Union to degrade terrorists" and helping to "build the capability required to counter violent extremism, human trafficking, trans-national criminal activity, and illegal arms trade with limited outside assistance; and limit the malign influence of non-African powers."[113]

Under this framework, the U.S. military provides training, equipment, intelligence, logistical support, and, in some cases, advisory support to various African partner forces, as well as logistical and intelligence support to French forces operating in the Sahel, as authorized by Congress.[114] Other major DOD activities in Africa include the deployment, since 2013, of hundreds of U.S. military personnel to sites in Niger and Cameroon to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin.[115] Separately, in Somalia, the number of U.S. military personnel increased significantly in 2017—from roughly 200 to more than 500—as the United States has deployed more special operations advisers across the country to "advise, assist, and accompany" Somali and AU counterterrorism missions.[116]

The U.S. military also has taken direct action (such as air strikes) against terrorist threats in Africa, notably in Somalia. U.S. strikes in Somalia were initiated under the George W. Bush Administration and have since expanded and accelerated. In 2015, President Obama notified Congress that military operations in Somalia were carried out not only "to counter Al Qaeda and associated elements of Al Shabaab" but also "in support of Somali forces, AMISOM forces, and U.S. forces in Somalia."[117] In 2016, the Obama Administration publicly referred to Al Shabaab as an "associated force" of Al Qaeda, in the context of the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF).[118] President Trump has further broadened the scope of U.S. military involvement in Somalia, authorizing DOD to conduct lethal action against Al Shabaab within a geographically defined "area of active hostilities" in support of partner forces in Somalia (such as AMISOM and

[112] According to this framework, "Security operations are executed almost exclusively by the partnered security forces. U.S. Africa Command works with partnered security forces based on their operational needs. The vital objectives of the U.S. and the partnered nation are achieved through a cooperative relationship in which U.S. Africa Command plays a supporting role." Se AFRICOM *2018 Posture* Statement, op cit.

[113] DOD, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge.*

[114] For an overview of such authorities, see Testimony of CRS Specialist in African Affairs Lauren Blanchard, op. cit.

[115] The White House, War Powers notifications (2013-2018).

[116] Wesley Morgan, "U.S. military builds up," op. cit. "Advise, assist, and accompany" is the phrase used in presidential reports to Congress, "consistent with the War Powers Resolution," since December 2016.

[117] The White House, "Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate Regarding the War Powers Resolution," December 11, 2015.

[118] The White House, Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate Regarding the War Powers Resolution, December 5, 2016. See CRS Report R43983, *2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force: Issues Concerning Its Continued Application*, by Matthew C. Weed.

elements of the Somali security forces). U.S. officials have described some airstrikes in Somalia as conducted in "self-defense" of U.S., Somali, or AMISOM forces.[119]

In 2017, AFRICOM announced that it would end Operation Observant Compass (OOC), a U.S. military advisory mission deployed in 2011 to support African-led efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group then active in CAR, South Sudan, and DRC. Citing progress made in degrading the LRA, AFRICOM stated that some U.S. military personnel would transition to "broader scope security and stability activities" in Central Africa.[120]

The U.S. military also conducts exercises with African militaries and shares skills related to goals such as disaster and humanitarian response and maritime security. In the Sahel, these include a large multinational annual exercise known as Flintlock. A small number of U.S. military personnel (49 as of September 2018) are deployed as staff officers in U.N. peacekeeping operations in the region.[121] Nearly every U.S. Embassy in Africa also hosts some U.S. military personnel, for example as part of the Defense Attaché Office, Office of Security Cooperation, and/or Marine Security Detachment.

What changes to U.S. military engagement has the Administration pursued?

As noted above, the Administration has broadened the scope of U.S. military involvement in Somalia—to comprise lethal action against Al Shabaab within a geographically defined "area of active hostilities" in support of partner forces—and has overseen a continued increase in the tempo of U.S. air strikes there. Reportedly, the Trump Administration also initially expanded the use of U.S. military advisors in several countries in Africa, including missions in which U.S. personnel are embedded with local security forces in the context of counterterrorism operations. Military commanders, however, have more recently signaled that they are reexamining or curtailing some such missions in the aftermath of the October 2017 deadly ambush in Niger.[122]

More broadly, the Trump Administration has signaled that "inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security."[123] In this regard, DOD has announced plans, to be implemented over several years, for "a reduction of about 10 percent of the 7,200 military forces serving in Africa Command," potentially including SOF soldiers involved in counterterrorism missions. Such reductions are part of a broader "optimization" effort that will reportedly also include shifts in emphasis in some areas of operation.[124] Precisely how the downsizing will be implemented, and its implications for specific missions, remain unclear.

The 115th Congress

The 115th Congress has shaped U.S. engagement with Africa through its appropriations, authorization, and oversight roles. It has enacted several pieces of legislation that have influenced

[119] See AFRICOM statement, November 12, 2017; and AFRICOM press release, "Update: U.S. self-defense strikes in Somalia," September 29, 2016.

[120] AFRICOM, "U.S. forces transition counter-LRA mission to broader security and stability activities," March 29, 2017.

[121] U.N. Peacekeeping, *Summary of Contributions to UN Peacekeeping by Country and Post: Police, UN Military Experts on Mission, Staff Officers and Troops*, data as of September 30, 2018.

[122] Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Eric Schmitt, "After Deadly Raid, Pentagon Weighs Withdrawing Almost All Commandos from Niger," *The New York Times*, September 2, 2018.

[123] DOD, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, op. cit.

[124] The DOD statement noted that activities in West Africa would shift from "tactical assistance to advising, assisting, liaising, and sharing intelligence."

U.S.-Africa policy and programs, including the African Growth and Opportunity Act and Millennium Challenge Act Modernization Act (P.L. 115-167), the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-231), the BUILD Act (P.L. 115-254), the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act (P.L. 115-266), annual National Defense Authorization Acts (most recently, P.L. 115-232), and foreign aid and defense appropriations measures (most recently, P.L. 115-141). The House and Senate also have considered bills and resolutions responding to emerging developments in specific countries.

As in past Congresses, legislative engagement by the 115th Congress on Africa-related issues has often centered on responding to humanitarian crises (e.g., S.Res. 114, expressing the sense of the Senate regarding humanitarian crises in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen, and H.Res. 187, on famine response efforts in South Sudan) and condemning human rights violations and undemocratic governance (e.g., H.Res. 128, supporting respect for human rights and inclusive governance in Ethiopia; S.Res. 386, urging the government of DRC to proceed with planned elections; and H.R. 6207, which would codify into law certain sanctions relating to DRC and require that the President submit to Congress a list of senior DRC political figures suitable for sanction). In addition, as noted above, H.R. 6018 would establish in law a long-running regional counterterrorism program in North-West Africa. Hearings in the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee have attended to developments in Ethiopia, Cameroon, DRC, Zimbabwe, and South Sudan; humanitarian crises in Africa; human and civil rights issues on the continent; China's role in Africa; and U.S. military engagement in the region.

Outlook

Significant challenges and opportunities on the African continent, as well as shifts in U.S.-Africa policy under the Trump Administration, may continue to shape Congress's consideration of U.S. policy and programs in Africa. As it debates budgetary, policy, and oversight priorities, Congress may consider issues such as the following:

- Rapidly shifting politics and international engagement in the Horn of Africa, where a new government in Ethiopia has initiated sweeping changes at home and pursued peace with erstwhile rival Eritrea.
- Ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises in South Sudan, Somalia, DRC, the Lake Chad Basin, CAR, and Mali, among others.
- The evolution of armed Islamist extremist threats in Africa, along with other transnational security issues, such as maritime piracy and narcotics smuggling in parts of the region.
- The prospects for expanding democracy in Africa, amid rising repression in Tanzania, leadership changes in southern Africa, and enduring authoritarianism in countries such as Sudan, Rwanda, Eritrea, and Equatorial Guinea.
- Forthcoming presidential elections in several countries, including DRC (December 2018), Nigeria (February 2019), Mauritania (May 2019), South Africa (May 2019), and Mozambique (October 2019).
- U.S.-Africa trade and investment issues, including the effects of the Administration's tariff actions, possible reciprocal trade agreement negotiations, and the implementation of the BUILD Act as it affects the region.
- The scope, status, and operational goals of U.S. military deployments in Africa, following DOD's announcement of a proposed realignment that would reduce U.S. troop levels in the region.

- The scale and programmatic focus of U.S. foreign assistance to African countries in the context of the Trump Administration's forthcoming FY2020 aid budget proposal and FY2019 country allocations decisions.
- The involvement in Africa of foreign powers such as China, Russia, and Gulf states, and the implications for U.S. interests and policy.

Congress may draw on a number of tools to shape U.S.-Africa policy, including foreign aid and defense authorization and appropriation legislation, other legislation, direct engagement with the Administration and African leaders, and oversight activities. While the 115th Congress has not followed many of the Administration's proposals regarding aid to Africa, it has maintained a focus on areas of enduring congressional interest, including U.S. trade and investment, humanitarian crisis and response, human rights and democracy, and U.S. military activities. Congress may continue to consider similar issues as it weighs the appropriate balance between U.S. diplomacy, development and economic engagement, and defense priorities in Africa and responds to emerging developments in the region.

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