

## **Leadership Crisis and the Emerging Resurgence of Military in African Politics**

Christopher Ochanja Ngara  
National Institute for Legislative Studies, National Assembly  
No. 14/18, Danube Street, Off IBB Way  
Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria.  
+234 8036718097  
cossyChris@yahoo.com

Alexius Terwase Ayabam  
Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc, 22  
Hamman Ruwa WayJalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria  
+234 8036002792  
alexius.ayabam@stanbic.com

Edward Ndem Esebonu  
Federal Road Safety Corps, Gwagwalada Unit Command  
Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria  
+234 7035562704  
ed\_sebonu06@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

This paper examines leadership crisis and how it has fuelled the return of military in African politics. The paper contends that most African democratic regimes that were installed at independence were gradually replaced by military rule in a serial wave of military coup instigated largely by leadership ineptitude. It argues that in spite of the wave of democratization that swept through the continent since the beginning of the 1990s, African political leaders ignored the lessons of history and continued the profligate style of leadership which as in the past denied African people the benefits of democratic governance. The democratization process (with few exceptions) was rather seen by African political class as opportunity for power consolidation. National constitution were amended at will to extend tenure of incumbents, human rights abused, opposition excluded, corruption enthroned, economies mismanaged, and elections rigged in favour of approved candidates inter-alia. The socio-economic and political crisis generated by these failures of leadership, the paper argues account for the renewed interest of the military to intervene in African politics. African leaders must therefore embrace good governance and rejuvenate social ethics and professionalism in order to strengthen emerging political and economic institutions necessary to confine the military to its constitutional role of national defense.

**Keywords:** Leadership Crisis, Military Rule, Coup d'État, African Politics, Democratization

### Introduction

Leadership crisis has remained by far the single most important cause of military intervention in African politics. The grant of independence to African states by European colonial powers between 1957 and 1964 established more than 40 new states with democratic constitutions, following the holding of multi-party elections for new African-led governments (Barkan 2006, 17). With the collapse of the nationalist consensus that ushered Africa into independence, one-party state was widely imposed across the continent (Hagg and Kagwanja 2007, 17), and complimented with neo-patrimonial systems that enable dominant elite to appropriate and personalize the state, using it as an instrument of self-enrichment and for rewarding their ethnic kith and kins and clients (Hagg and Kagwanja 2007, 17). This apart from fuelling massive and endemic corruption also led to the exclusion of opposition parties and other rival groups from governance and the consequent reinforcement of fierce ethnic rivalry and contestation for political power.

Over time, the self destructive logic of prebendalism that accompanied this system undermined the fiscal capacity of the state, to provide basic social services to the people (Mkandawire 2008). African states soon became trapped in legitimacy crisis culminating in widespread violence and conflicts. In most cases, African leaders responded to this domestic crisis situation by becoming more authoritarian and repressive in order to quell dissension and suppress opposition. Thus, before long, the euphoria and heady expectations which greeted the achievement of independence dissipated and the once buoyant optimism towards democracy in Africa faded to foreboding (Oko 2008, 4).

Consequently, within the first two decades of independence, the soldiers forcefully removed virtually all of Africa's (except South Africa which was a different story) first set of post-colonial (elected) political leadership (Ngoa 2010, 10). In many if not all the cases, the military cite corruption and inept leadership as the primary motivation for their intervention and promise to withdraw to barracks as soon as military rule had restored a just and disciplined society (Thomson 2004, 131). Thus, from the mid 1960s to 1990, military rule became a permanent feature in African post-colonial political landscape (Sylla 2001; Thomson 2004).

The beginning of the 1990s held out great prospects and promise for democratic reforms and consolidation as factors that hitherto constituted encumbrances to democratization particularly the East-West competition in Africa that provided support or at least protection for authoritarian government came to an end (Kpundeh 1992, 1). Democratization in terms of political pluralism and multipartism [emerged] as the new contour of old Africa (Amuwo 1992, 3), beginning with Benin and Zambia in 1991, and later Malawi (Thomas 1998, 169) among others in which the incumbent rulers were defeated in elections. By the end of 2000, all but five (Comoros, Congo-Kinshasa, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, and Somalia) of Sub-Saharan Africa's 47 states had held multi-party elections (Barkan 2006, 18). In spite of these democratic transitions, many African leaders failed to deliver on their promises to the people as poverty became more entrenched, corruption and armed conflicts became widespread.

Thus, from the late 1990s, Africa began to witness growing trends of military coups. This resurgence of coups therefore call for some fundamental questions. In this paper, the following questions become relevant. (i) What is the single most important cause of the reappearance of military coups in the continent? (ii) What are the peculiar historical circumstances that support military intervention in Africa? And finally, (iii) what are the implications for democracy and

democratization? It is against this background that this paper interrogates leadership crisis and the emerging resurgence of military in African politics.

### Conceptual Discourse

**Leadership Crisis:** The concept of leadership just like many other concepts in social sciences is not amenable to a single universally accepted definition. Its definition has been cross-cultural as there are those who attempt to make meaning out of it. Ogunbameru in a simple term defines a leader to mean someone who leads, plans, organizes, controls, communicates, delegates, accepts the responsibility to reach the societal goals (Ayodele 2007, 1). Put differently, a leader is an individual appointed to a job with authority, and accountability to accomplish the goals and objectives of the society (Ayodele 2007, 2). Leadership must guide decisions and actions for sustainable quality services (Dorasamy 2010, 2087). Caiden trenchantly identified a central principle which ought to guide public leadership, which include a clear focus on the common good of the people that will ensure actions conform to public interest and a commitment toward caring for the welfare of the public and not serving the interests of a certain individual so as to betray the rest (Dorasamy 2010, 2092). Leadership therefore has a power and a moral dimension. It can be defined as moral execution of power or as contribution to the solution of public problems (Tenbergen 2004, 30).

In this paper leadership crisis shall mean the failure of indigenous African leaders to lead their people in a manner that actually do or have the potential to create negative or undesirable outcomes (Coombs 1999, 3) with consequences of undermining the reputation and disrupting the normal functioning of the systems or sub-system within it.

**Military Coup d'État:** The term Military coup d'état is a French word for a sudden blow or strike. A coup d'état or simply a coup is a sudden overthrow of a government against the general will (Nkosi 2010, 4). Thomson (2004, 131) defines military coup as a sudden illegal displacement of government in which members of the security forces play a dominant role. According to Collier and Hoeffler (2006, 4), it is a violent challenge to the state, analogous to a rebellion. For Miller (2011, 48), a coup d'état is a forceful seizure of executive authority and office by a dissident/opposition faction within the country's ruling or political elites that results in a substantial change in the executive leadership and the policies of the prior regime. One central feature that is common to all the above conceptualization is that military coup is always intended to dislodge an existing political order and to replace it with those preferred by the coupists. But to achieve this, a lawful process must be breached.

Similarly, some scholars have specified certain conditions that must be present in a coup. These include suddenness and lasting a matter of hours or days, rather than weeks (Thomson 2004, 131). For Marshall and Marshall (2010), coup leaders must seize and hold central authority for at least one week to be considered a successful coup. This also implies that not all coups are necessarily successful. Perhaps this explains the categorization of coup-events into successful and abortive (Duggan 2004). It is sacrosanct to note that social revolutions, transfer of power to opposing force(s) during civil conflicts, popular uprisings, voluntary transfers of powers of authority, and the unseating of regimes by foreign invading forces (Miller 2011, 48) are different from coups especially as used in this paper.

### **Theoretical Explanation**

Scholars have offered a wide array of useful theoretical perspectives in the attempt to understand, explain and proffer solutions to the seemingly intractable problems of recurring military coups in Africa. Broadly speaking, these theoretical view point can be categorized into: political modernization school (Finer 1962; Huntington 1968; Jenkins and Kposowa 1992), socio-psychological theories such as the -greed and -grievance or ambition (Collier and Hoeffler 2006; Decalo 1990), political economy approach (Collier and Hoeffler 2006; Finer 1962; Gorman 1967), military as modernizing agents (Pye 1965; Welch 1970 and Jackman 1978), internal conflict or ethnic diversity (Morrison and Stevenson 1972; Kurian 1991) and military centrality theories (Mayer and Burnett 1977; Jenkins and Kposowa 1992) with numerous variants within them. In this paper, military intervention is contextualized as a consequence of weak institutions which support personal rule, encourage patrimonial system and abuse of power.

Political institutionalization is a process through which stable, complex political structures and procedures are developed and concurrently legitimized to create a degree of sub-system autonomy (Decalo 1990, 30) where actions are strictly guided by rational rules with little deviations. African states are yet to develop strong political institutions to manage and resolve political crises. Unlike the advanced countries, where institutions have been tested, matured and has developed self-regulating mechanisms to cope with political tensions (Nurudeen 2009, 123). African post-colonial leaders tended more toward personal rule instead of developing and strengthening the legal-rational structures and institutions bequeathed at independence. According to Jackson and Rosberg politics in most black African states do not conform to an institutionalized system... the new African statesman was a personal ruler more than a constitutional and institutional one (Howe 2001, 10).

Because of these tendencies, most Africans are excluded from the political process therefore putting the continent into Finer's category of minimal political culture as compared to the -matured political culture of the West (Thomson 2004, 135). This characteristic weakness predisposes the African state to absence of legitimacy and a lack of respect for authority (Ojo 1999, 54), and as Finer (1962, 21) rightly observe, "where public attachment to civilian institutions is weak or non-existent military intervention in politics will find wide scope-both in manner and substance allowing the military to seize power at moments of political stress and crisis (Ojo 1999, 54).

### **Leadership Crisis in Africa: The Historical Path to Military Intervention**

At independence, Africa was no longer to be referred to as "British, French, Belgium or Portuguese Africa" where it was the prerogative of the colonial masters to dictate the pace of development (Iheriohanma and Oguoma 2010). The achievement of self-government signaled a strong prospect of a bright and prosperous future for the continent. That hope was informed by the dynamism of the crop of leadership that championed the struggle against colonialism as evinced by the mass support of Africans (Ayodele 2007, 1). The pedigree of these nationalists as leaders of the new African states combined with the abundant human and natural resource endowment of the continent triggered an anxiety of wild expectation of a better life and prosperous future especially after long decades of colonial subjugation.

At independence, African economies were systematically tied to the vagaries of metropolitan economies by the departing colonial masters. However, the installation of democratic systems of government based on European models which in substance allowed policy decisions to be made in accordance with the preferences of the majority (Banfo 2005, 4) gave further reassurance of a better deal in the evolving post-colonial states. But these heady expectations were shortly met with failure on the part of African leaders to harness the vast potentials for the benefit of the people (Ayodele 2007) and quickly rejected the multi-party parliamentary system as unworkable. They pleaded the particular circumstances of their country's crying need for national unity in order to achieve rapid social and economic development. Within few years of independence most African governments had established some form of one-party state (Shillington 1995, 3) in order to assure themselves monopoly of political leadership of their states (Nurudeen 2009, 108). These sets of African leaders in their desperate effort to cling to power propounded different theories to justify their claim to power. Accordingly to a Wall Street Journal:

*African nationalists, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, and Hastings Banda, dismissed the concept of "democracy" as alien, claiming that multiparty democracy was "a Western thing," and "a luxury Africa could not afford." Others claimed that "Africa had no democratic culture," and that "too many feuding tribes made democracy a risky venture." For example, Presidents Paul Biya of Cameroon and Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya vehemently opposed multiparty democracy on grounds that it would degenerate into destructive tribal politics. The late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana denounced it as an "imperialist dogma" Said President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire: "Democracy is not for Africa. There was only one African chief and he ruled for life. Here in Zaire we must make unity" (Shillington 1995, 3).*

To achieve personal rule, African leaders employed motley of unconstitutional means to retain power including the frustration of political opponents and muscling down of opposition forces. According to Baker (2000, 53), these tendencies include:

*reversal of federal structures or centralized once; the harassment or banning of opposition political parties and press; the closing of polling stations; decrease regard for legislature; state takeovers of voluntary organizations; ...transfer of many local function to central government; a change from elected to appointed representation at regional levels as well as the manipulation of ethnicity, religion and other divisive tendencies to hold on to power for as long as it is possible (emphasis mine).*

In the words of Kasfir (1976, 227), African leaders act as if participation by anyone other than their intimates or administrators were detrimental to national development. As Hayward painfully notes, "after the first round of elections, post-independence elections became rare events in Africa as a whole" (Banfo 2005, 4). The adoption of one-party system in countries such as Tunisia, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Tanganyika, "heightened political

## Leadership Crisis

cynicism and encouraged ethnic-based rivalries and a rash of military coups in the mid to late 1960s (Banfo 2008, 14) beginning in Togo, Benin and Algeria in 1965. In Ghana, corruption, lavish spending and intolerance of criticism led to the welcome overthrow of Nkrumah in February 1966 (Shillington 1995, 4). In Nigeria, the Federal elections of 1964 and the Western regional elections of 1965 were rigged, with the opposition openly intimidated and threatened. The impatient military staged its first coup in January 1966, (International Crisis Group 2007, 24) and foretold the 1967 civil war (Banfo 2008, 10). Coups continued in Mali and Uganda in 1968 and 1971 respectively (Nkosi 2010).

Although, in almost all cases of military intervention in African politics a laundry list of electoral fraud, incompetence, nepotism, (Banfo 2008, 14), economic mismanagement and host of other misconducts are cited by the military to justify their incursion. But more often than not, the military once installed as rulers, relapse to bad governance and in some cases worse than the civilian regimes they replaced as underscored by the corrupt and tyrannical regimes of General Emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic (1966-79), Field Marshal President for Life Idi Amin of Uganda (1971-79) (Shillington 1995, 5) and Mobutu Sese Seko of former Zaire among others. This is why many commentators and observer have argued and rightly too, that Africa since independence is generally lacking in good leadership be it civilian or military.

### **Leadership Crisis and the Emerging Resurgence of Military in African Politics**

Within the first few years of the first decade of independence, African indigenous political class who inherited political power at independence abandoned their oath of office and embarked on self-seeking ambitions of endless struggle for the consolidation of state power. This struggle for state is fierce and considered a matter of life and death because political power is sought in order, inter alia, to acquire control over means of production. It also created a perception of the state as a channel of accumulation and a source of contestation (Akopari 2008, 90). This is because most African post-colonial states became the main employer, provider and distributor of resources. The private sector which should serve as alternative source of employment and the engine for growth has been small, fragmented and weak and has in many cases depended on the state for capital and direction (Akopari 2008, 90).

Due to the high stakes of the African post-colonial states, the struggle for its control became a cut-throat zero-sum game and in no time, they were reduced into theatres of conflict or what Kasfir (1976), described as "shrinking political arena" characterized acutely by wanton abuse of power, corruption, nepotism, favouritism, and ruthless oppression of political opponents as well as the entrenchment of neo-patrimonial network and prebendalism as "the institutional hallmark of politics" (Bratton and Van de Walles 1997, 61). In this system, "authority is entirely personalized, shaped by the ruler's preferences rather than any codified system of laws" (Bratton and Van de Walles 1997, 61) like those of General Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic, and Samuel Doe of Liberia (Howe 2001, 10).

Due to the preoccupation of African political class in inter and intra elite struggles for state power, most African post-colonial governments failed to deliver "on the promised benefits of independence in the economic sphere" (Somerville 2000, 154). These failures to deliver was a major factor in generating impetus for political change (Somerville 2000, 154) resulting in a serial wave of military coups and counter-coups which engulfed the continent since mid-1960s.

From this period onward to 1989 when the so-called ‘Third Wave of Democratization’ (Huntington 1991) began in the continent over 70 coups were recorded (Thomson 2004; Agbese 2004; Sylla 2001; and Miller 2011).

**Table I: Most Recent Military Coups/Intervention in Africa, 2008-2013.**

S/N	Country	Date
1	<b>Mauritania</b>	<b>3 August 2005 and 6 August 2008</b>
2	<b>Guinea</b>	<b>23 December 2008</b>
3	<b>Guinea-Bissau</b>	<b>2 March 2009 and 12 April 2012</b>
4	<b>Niger</b>	<b>29 May 2009 and 18 February 2010</b>
5	<b>Madagascar</b>	<b>17 March 2009</b>
6	<b>Mali</b>	<b>23 March 2012</b>
7	<b>Central African Republic</b>	<b>24 March 2013</b>

**Source: Authors Compilation**

The transgressions which coup leaders commonly accused incumbent governments of committing (Banfo 2008, 14) has often been highlighted in coup speeches and broadcast. Frequently, this included accusations of rampant corruption, abuse of office, mal-administration, nepotism and lack of patriotism (Agbese 2004, 57). Indeed, Huntington (1968) observed rightly that, political instability in Asia, Africa, and Latin America stemmed from the failure of leaders to promote equality of political participation and in many of the cases; these coups have been welcomed by the people as desirable in order to restore political stability and check the abuses and excesses of the African post-colonial political leaders.

In the closing year of the 1980s and the opening years of the 1990s, the drift towards increasing autocracy was halted abruptly (Somerville 2000, 146) and ‘coups began to decline in Africa’ (Miller 2011, 48). One-party states and personal rulers which dominated much of African post-colonial history began to be replaced due to domestic pressures and agitations for democratic reforms as well as ‘changes in the international system following the end of the Cold War’ (Obi 2008, 7). The rise in popular demand for political reform across Africa, the holding of multiparty elections, the alternation of power in several African countries, and negotiations for a new political framework in South Africa (Barkan 2006, 17) all heightened the prospects for democratic consolidation in the continent. Banfo (2005, 6), gave a clearer picture of this scenario when he asserts that:

*By the end of 1989, only eleven countries out of fifty-one (Namibia and Western Sahara excluded) were practicing some form of multiparty government. These countries included Egypt, Morocco, the Comoros, Senegal, and the Gambia. By the mid-1990s, this number had increased to forty-one from a possible fifty-three. By 2005, however, fifty countries had held some form of multiparty election with functioning parliaments and leaders who had been selected through the process.*

Unfortunately, as Obi (2008, 7) rightly observe, by the late 1990s, in spite of the overwhelming presence of democratically elected regimes on the continent, it was possible to

## Leadership Crisis

sense the beginning of popular disenchantment with the new democracies. This popular dissatisfaction has partly, to do with the fact that the multiparty elections held in the early 1990s in many of the so-called democratizing African nations fell short of minimal standards of decency (Banfo 2005, 6) with incumbent leaders ready to exclude strong rivals from contesting against them in elections (Obi 2008, 10). For example, the case of Alassane Outtarra, in Côte d'Ivoire in 1995, and the attempted exclusion of then vice president Atiku Abubakar from contesting the April 2007 presidential election against the incumbent president Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria (International Crisis Group 2007). Similarly, in many countries where elections were held, there were strong reasons to believe that such elections were heavily manipulated in favour of approved candidates. For example, incumbent president Lansana Conteh of Guinea winning the 2004 election with 95 percent of total vote cast (Banfo 2008). Similarly, in Nigeria, the 2003 and 2007 general elections were far from meeting democratic standards. It is in this wise that Levitsky and Way (2006) trenchantly describe most of the democratic government that emerged in the post-1990 Africa as 'competitive authoritarian regimes'.

**Table II:** Some Selected African Countries with Low Party Competiveness from 1990-2013.

Countries		1990-1995	1996-1999	2000-2005	2006-2009	2011-2013
<b>Chad</b>	W	-	71.59%	63.17%	64.67%	83.59%
	R	-	28.41%	16.35%	15.13%	8.60%
<b>Congo Brazzaville</b>	W	61.32%	-	89.41%	78.61%	-
	R	38.68%	-	2.76%	7.46%	-
<b>Cameroon</b>	W	39.98%	92.57%	70.92%	-	77.99%
	R	35.97%	2.50%	17.40%	-	10.71%
<b>Mali</b>	W	69.01%	95.90%	65.01%	71.20%	-
	R	30.99%	4.10%	34.99%	19.15%	-
<b>Namibia</b>	W	76.34%	76.82%	76.44%	76.42%	-
	R	23.66%	10.49%	7.28%	11.08%	-
<b>Uganda</b>	W	-	74.33%	69.33%	59.26%	68.38%
	R	-	23.61%	27.82%	37.39%	26.01%
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	W	83.05%	92.76%	56.20%	90.22%	-
	R	16.95%	4.80%	42.60%	9.78%	-
<b>Central African Republic</b>	W	53.49%	51.63%	64.60%	-	64.37%
	R	46.51%	19.38%	35.40%	-	21.43%

**Source:** Authors Compilation using African Elections Database (2014)

**Key:**

**W:** *Winner*

**R:** *Runner-up*

An even more disturbing scenario is that some African leaders have attempted to change [their national] constitution to prolong their stay in power (Obi 2008, 10) against the will of the people. For instance, in Niger, before the December 2010 coup, former President Mamadou



Tandja, who himself came to power in 2001 through a popular election ðreached the end of his second termö in August 2009. However according to the Nigerien ðconstitution, he is expected to cede power to a newly elected president. But, Tandja even though ðfailed to improve economic conditionsö (Miller 2011, 57), decided he did not want to leave power so he engineered a rigged referendum that allowed him to serve for a third termö (Cohen 2010, 35). In 2003, the late Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Africa's longest serving leader [at that time], amended the Togo constitution to allow him to seek another term. A constitutional amendment in 2003 in Guinea allowed Lansana Conteh to serve an extra seven-year term (Banfo 2005, 16). Before his death, General Conté's regime had become notorious for endemic corruption, flagrant nepotism, and dysfunctional state institutions as well as a collapsed economic infrastructure despite the country's endowment with rich solid minerals (Diallo and Bombande 2008, 6).

In the same vein, Bongo of Gabon had parliament remove the limit that had been placed on presidential terms to ensure that he could run as many times as he wished. Museveni of Uganda ran and won election for the third term in 2006 (Banfo 2005). President Obasanjo's spirited effort at extending his mandate was dealt a heavy blow when the Nigerian Senate voted overwhelmingly against a constitutional amendment that would have paved the way for him to contest presidential election for the third time (Nkosi 2010, 39). The 2005 presidential elections in Gabon turned violent when opposition candidates claimed the vote had been rigged in favor of President Bongo who had ruled the country for thirty-eight years. He was subsequently elected to serve another seven-year term (Banfo 2008).

Meanwhile, when one of the longest-serving African dictator, Togo's Gnassingbé Eyadéma, died unexpectedly in February 2005 after 38 years of autocratic rule (Kohnert 2008, 2), Togo's armed forces announced his son Faure Gnassingbé to be the successor, rather than the constitutionally designated successor, the president of the National Assembly, Fambare Ouattara Natchaba (Wing 2008, 47). Similarly, on 6 February 2005, the Parliament engineered a constitutional change which saw Faure inherit his father's term of office until local and international pressure set in to change the situation. It is in view of these among other leadership crisis that Levitsky and Way (2006, 4), classified ðmost of the democratic regimes that appeared after the cold war as hybrid regimesö because they combine the attribute of both post-colonial African political system and western liberal democracy ðin which formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which fraud, civil liberties violations, and abuse of state and mediaö are common practice. Miller (2011, 47), summarized the African leadership crisis when he observed rightly that ðwhile many African leaders attempt to build democratic façades around their regimes, they oftentimes rig elections and modify constitutions to extend their term limitsö. The table below shows the extent to which African leaders can go in order to prolong their stay in power.

Table III: Outcome of Third Term Agenda, 2000-10

S/N	Countries	President then	Mechanism/Date	Outcome
1	Algeria	Abdelaziz Bouteflika	CA 12 Nov. 2008	Successful
2	Cameroon	Paul Biya	∅ 10 April 2008	Successful
3	Chad	Idriss Deby	∅	Successful
4	Djibouti	Ismail Omar Guelleh	∅ 19 April 2010	Successful

## Leadership Crisis

5	Gabon	Omar Bongo	∅		Successful
6	Guinea	Lansana Conte	∅		Successful
7	Malawi	Bakili Muluzi	∅	July 2002	Failed
8	Namibia	Samuel Nujoma	∅	December 1998	Successful
9	Nigeria	Olusegun Obasanjo	∅	2006	Failed
10	Togo	Gnassingbe Eyadema	∅		Successful
11	Tunisia	Zeni el-Abidine Ben Ali	∅	2002	Successful
12	Uganda	Yoweri Museveni	∅		Successful
13	Zambia	Frederick Chiluba	∅	April 2001	Failed

*Source:* Omotola, S. (2011:26).

*Note:* CA = Constitutional Amendment

By 2005, fifteen years into the so-called democratic transition, Africa remained the poorest continent in the world in terms of criteria that are most important for gauging the quality of life- infant mortality, life expectancy, per capita income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and of course, the incidence of HIV/AIDS. Many countries have negative economic growth, while others wallow close to zero percent growth ratesö (Kriegler 2006, 11).

**Table IV:** Comparison of Development using Economic, Demographic and Social Indicators

	GNP Official Exchange	GDP Purchasing Power Parity	Life Expectancy (Years)	Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000)	Adult Literacy Total Population (percent)	Gross Enrolment Ratio (percent)
Country						
Algeria	3,800	8,100	71.7	34	69.9	73.7
Botswana	6,900	14,700	48.1	87	81.2	69.5
Chad	700	1,600	50.4	124	25.7	37.5
Congo, Rep	1,800	3,700	54.0	81	84.7	51.4
Ethiopia	200	700	51.8	109	35.9	42.1
Ghana	600	1,400	59.1	68	57.9	50.7
Kenya	800	1,600	52.1	79	73.6	60.6
Mauritius	5,600	11,900	72.4	13	84.3	75.3
Nigeria	900	2,200	46.5	100	69.1	56.2
Sierra Leone	250	800	41.8	165	34.8	44.6
South Africa	6,200	10,600	50.8	55	82.4	77.0
UK	45,500	35,300	79.0	5	99.0	93.0
USA	45,800	46,000	77.9	6	99.0	93.0

*Source:* Bouchat (2010)

In fact, from the beginning of the 1990s to the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the African continent was undergoing the so-called ‘democratic transition’ was the period under which Africa played host to the world most destructive and devastating, but avoidable conflicts since World War II as witnessed in countries like Liberia (1989-1996; 1999-2003); Rwanda (1990-1994); Sierra Leone (1991-2002); Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2003) otherwise referred to as the ‘Second War of Congo’ or African World War due to the incredible level of human carnage; Somalia (1991-present). Others include the conflict in the Dafur region and between North and South Sudan (now independent), Côte d’Ivoire (2002-2007; 2010-2011), the protracted bloodbath in Central African Republic as well as the recent popular uprising in 2011 that claimed the life of the Libyan leader Colonel Muamman Quaddafi thereby ending his 42 years old rule among others.

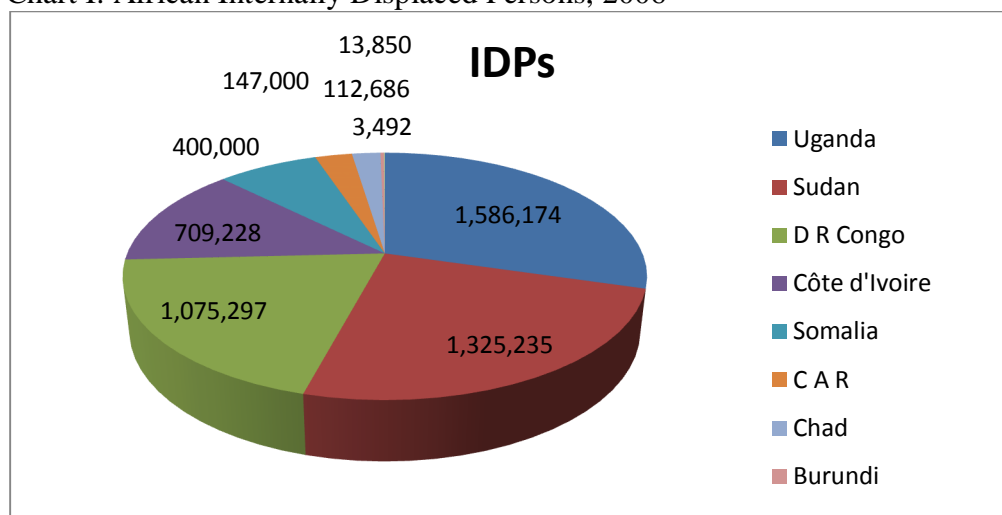
Between 1990-2007 88% conflict-related deaths worldwide occurred in Africa (Hawkins 2008) with corresponding rise in humanitarian crisis such as refugees, internally displaced persons and widespread poverty throughout the continent.

**Table V:** Refugee Population by United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR)

UNHCR Regions	Start-2006	End-2006	<u>Annual Change</u>	
			Absolute	%
Central Africa & Great lakes	1,193,700	1,119,400	-74,300	-6.2%
East & Horn of Africa	772,000	852,300	80,300	10.4%
Southern Africa	228,600	187,800	-40,800	-17.8%
West Africa	377,200	261,800	-115,400	-30.6%
<b>Total Africa</b>	<b>2,571,500</b>	<b>2,421,300</b>	<b>-150,200</b>	<b>-5.8%</b>

Source: Hoeffler (2008)

**Chart I:** African Internally Displaced Persons, 2006



Source: Author with data adapted from Hoeffler (2008)

## Leadership Crisis

Thus, one cannot but agree with Howe (2001, 14), that with the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Africa's putative wave of democratization has receded, and personal rule, which had been Africa's predominant and unrepresentative mode of government for its first thirty years of independence, has continued. This has consequently led to the resurgence of military coup d'état with far reaching implications for possible reversal of the democratic transition that have been underway since the beginning of the 1990. Accordingly, McGowan documents that between 2003 and 2009, Africa experienced 11 military takeovers (Nkosi 2010, 2). These includes the coups in Central African Republic (15 March 2003); Sao Tome and Principe (17 July 2003); Guinea Bissau (14 September 2003 and 2009); Togo (5 Feb 2004); Mauritania (3 August 2005); Guinea-Conakry (23 December 2006) (Nkosi 2010, 60). However, the most recent wave of coups that have brought the phenomenon under the spotlight of continental and international bodies are those that have taken place in Mauritania (August 2008), Guinea Conakry (December 2008), Madagascar (March 2009), Niger (February 2010) (Nkosi 2010, 1) and lately Mali and Guinea Bissau in 2012 (Ogude, 2012).

It is noteworthy that while these coups and others around the continent ousted largely corrupt and autocratic regimes, this type of extralegal takeover has never succeeded in engendering durable democratic institutions throughout Africa's history (Miller 2011, 46). Empirical evidence largely suggests that there exists no significant difference between military and civilian governments, when assessed in terms of substantive achievements in office and effective governance (Mackay 2010, 9). More so, the military rulers were just as likely to be corrupt and tyrannical as their civilian counterparts (Shillington 1995, 5). But the poor leadership provided by the political class in many of the African countries since independence provided much of the incentive for military takeover to occur.

### Conclusion

Since independence, a sizeable number of African countries have been trapped in the cul-de-sac of failed, selfish and inept leaders who built and consolidated the post-colonial states for the satisfaction of their personal goals rather than for the welfare of the people they are suppose to represent in government. Many of these African leader rejected both western and indigenous concepts of democratic governance and exploited ethnic, religious and other social divisions to instigate crisis that enable them hold on to power perpetually. Their failure to play the game according to the rules led to series of coups and counter-coups that lasted between the mid 1960s and 1989. But in spite of the bitter lessons to be learnt from these past experiences, not much have changed with respect to the conduct of African post-cold war leaders in the running of the affairs of their respective countries. Although empirical evidence has abundantly shown that, the military rulers who always claim to be corrective have been in most cases worse than the civilian leaders they replace leading to a vicious circle of leadership crisis.

Today, even with the so-called democratic transition, (with very few exceptions) the continent has remained under siege of authoritarian rulers. The benefits of democracy and democratization have continued to elude majority of African population, democratic power transition have become means of consolidating power. Poverty, conflicts and underdevelopment have remained endemic in all facets of the lives of many African populations and the possibility of an assured prosperous democratic future has become increasingly elusive. This has again raised the age long concern about the capacity of Africans to govern themselves. The recent wave of military coups in Africa underscores this point and the socio-economic and political

conditions which produced the coups in those countries are abundant evidence of failed leadership in the continent. African leaders must therefore bring to bear selflessness, honesty, accountability and transparency in governance in order to consolidate the current wave of democratization process in the continent. Equally, African leaders must strive to strengthen political and economic institutions that would increase professionalism, deepen democratic institutions and confine the military to its constitutional role of national defense.

## Leadership Crisis

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