

BORDER DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS AMONG SOUTHERN AFRICA COUNTRIES: CASE STUDY OF NAMIBIA, ANGOLA AND SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Africa's borders are beset with many challenges ranging from religious and terrorist movements to cattle rustling, military conflicts to human trafficking. The challenges are endless, but whether the boundary disputes are terrestrial or maritime, they are mostly about security and prestige. The African continent is characterized by lots of maritime boundary disputes and unless these are resolved through negotiation or other diplomatic measures and acceptable means, it will jeopardize the continent's short and long term implementation of maritime policies and strategies. Currently, close to 100 active border disputes exist across the continent. Rising nationalism, population and environmental pressures mean that the situation is likely to get worse. Unless, that is, an army of indigenous peace practitioners work closely with available pan-Africanist leaders and statesmen to diffuse and resolve tensions. Namibian exploitation of the Okavango River has been a source of disagreement with Botswana. Unresolved boundaries afflict portions of the Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia borders. Borderlands where mineral resources are being explored or exploited are experiencing increasingly frequent disputes over land claims, delimitation disputes, lawlessness, security alerts, and bitter political exchanges between governments. In theory, boundary tensions could be addressed through various indigenous mechanisms. These include the Councils of Elders and the use of peace radios and peace newspapers by Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development and by the Economic Community of South African States. As regards Angola's relationship with Namibia, it has always been one of peace, nonetheless it needs to be noted that peacemaking is necessitated by conflict. Although economic ties have existed between Angola and Namibia, it does not mean a lack of communication about inherent corruption, illegal deals and other inconvenient events. . In spite of recognition that the colonial boundaries are not viable in their current state, the continent's governing elite has elected and stuck to a policy of territorial status quo, partly because of a legitimate concern that any attempt to review the boundaries will lead to anarchy. Although Africa's governing elite has remained faithful to its policy of territorial status quo, strong lateral and vertical pressures appear to be forcing a re-orientation in the approach to the management of state boundaries.

Keywords: *Border, Dispute, Resolution, Mechanisms, Southern, Africa, Namibia, Angola, South Africa*

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Africa's borders are beset with many challenges ranging from religious and terrorist movements to cattle rustling, military conflicts to human trafficking (Okonkwo, 2017). The challenges are endless, but whether the boundary disputes are terrestrial or maritime, they are mostly about security and prestige. According to Anugwom (2020), growing human population, political awareness and environmental challenges mean that the problems are likely to heighten, unless they are resolved. Despite the provisions of UNCLOS, Africa has several unresolved maritime boundary disputes. In this light, this article aims to examine the African situation, and discuss the challenges involved in the delimitation and management of maritime boundaries in Africa (Kadagi, Okafor-Yarwood, Glaser & Lien, 2020). This article presents the issues, causes, essence and the security imperative of maritime boundary disputes in Africa. Africa's maritime boundaries, in accordance with the relevant international regimes, encompass territorial waters, contiguous zones, continental shelf and exclusive economic zones. The appropriate delineation of maritime boundaries has a lot of strategic, economic and environmental implications. With this in mind, one has to understand why nations do everything in their powers to maintain and protect their maritime boundaries as conceding any part thereof might mean loss of economic resources and threat to the country's security, as well as lives and properties of citizens (Odello, 2021).

At the moment, the African continent is characterized by lots of maritime boundary disputes and unless these are resolved through negotiation or other diplomatic measures and acceptable means, it will jeopardize the continent's short and long term implementation of maritime policies and strategies (Walker, 2015). African countries must treat and make a priority of boundary dispute resolution if imperative and integral maritime economic development must take place. Consequent upon this understanding, African Heads of State and Government have adopted and signed the African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development, on Saturday, 15, 2016 at the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, Lome, Togo (Ndirangu, 2020). The African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development aims to solidify Africa's commitment to an efficient and effective management of its oceans, seas and waterways so as to ensure sustainable, equitable and beneficial exploration of these critical resources (Zuma, 2016).

African national borders are afflicted by a multitude of troubles that straddle villages and communities (Storer & Pearson, 2019). These can include military skirmishes, cattle rustling, terrorism, secessionist movements, smuggling, ethnic violence, people trafficking, irredentism and agrarian revolts. Border disputes have been a reality on the continent through the millennia. Precolonial Africa was hardly a setting of harmony and bliss between African peoples. Most kingdoms paid attention to territorial control and did adapt some precise boundaries. But border disputes are not the preserve of Africa, as the recent conflict between the Ukraine and Russia attests (Anyim, 2019).

Currently, close to 100 active border disputes exist across the continent (AU, 2020). Rising nationalism, population and environmental pressures mean that the situation is likely to get worse. Unless, that is, an army of indigenous peace practitioners work closely with available pan-Africanist leaders and statesmen to douse and resolve tensions (Güneralp, Lwasa, Masundire, Parnell & Seto, 2017). In North Africa, boundary disputes and contested territories abound, examples include Moroccan claims over Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla (Timothy, 2019). There is the long-lasting Morocco and Mauritania struggle against the Polisario Front, while Libya

and Algeria have intervened in favour of the Saharan national liberation movement. Algeria and Morocco accuse each other of harbouring militants and condoning arms smuggling. Libya appears to claim about 32,000 sq km that apparently is under Algerian control. Sudan claims, but Egypt de facto administers, security and economic development of the Halaib region north of the 22nd parallel boundary (Elaggoune & Aty, 2020). Southern Africa has its own set of disputes. The contestation between Namibia and South Africa over the Orange River has been described as one of the oldest boundary disputes in the world. There are tensions between Swaziland and South Africa. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) accuses Angola of shifting monuments on their common boundary (Langa, 2020).

Namibian exploitation of the Okavango River has been a source of disagreement with Botswana (Mazonde, 2018). Unresolved boundaries afflict portions of the Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia borders (Moyo, 2009). Central African states' ongoing boundary problems include location of the boundary in the broad Congo River between the Republic of Congo and the DRC. Uganda and the DRC continue to dispute the Rukwanzi Island in Lake Albert and other areas on the Semliki River with hydrocarbon potential. Precolonial Africa was very sensitive to migration tensions and territorial conflicts – perhaps even on a wider scale than today. African cultures relied on city walls and other strict boundary markers (Cooper & Frederick, 1996). This is reflected both in oral and written literature. Recent satellite imagery as well as archaeological studies provide overwhelming evidence that ancient Africa relied on precise boundary markers separating states and political groups. For instance, there were about 10,000 town walls, 25% or more of them on presently deserted sites, between Lake Chad and the Atlantic Ocean. There were also the 160km-long Sungbo's Eredo wall, the 45km-long Orile Owu wall and walls completely surrounding the pre-European influence cities of Kwiambana, Old Ningi and Gogoram.

When a dispute arises between a franchisee and a franchisor, informal negotiation is generally the first method used to attempt to resolve the dispute (Bahta, 2019). The parties will lay out their grievances and attempt to reach a resolution through direct exchanges with each other, and perhaps between counsels, but without engaging a third-party neutral to assist. The first exchanges might take the form of demand letters. As the parameters of the dispute become more defined, the parties may decide that it would be beneficial to meet face to face for a more concentrated negotiation session. This meeting typically involves representatives from the franchisee and the franchisor, as well as their counsel, and the two sides talk through their competing positions and concerns. The goal is to negotiate a mutually acceptable resolution (Wang, Grünhagen, Ji & Zheng, 2020). When planning a face-to-face negotiation session, the parties will need to consider the location. It is likely more costly for both parties to travel, but each party may resist the perceived imbalance of going to the other side's offices. The best solution may be to select a neutral location, such as a conference room or rental office in the city where one party is located, so that only one party has to incur travel costs. The language in which the negotiation will be conducted is another concern, with parties most commonly choosing to use the language of their franchise agreement (Wang, Grünhagen, Ji & Zheng, 2020).

BORDER DISPUTES

There are heightened tensions and increasing potential for inter-state conflicts in Eastern Africa due to growing discoveries, or rumors of existence, of natural resources on borders or in borderlands (Mendenhall, Hendrix, Nyman, Roberts, Hoopes, Watson & Sumaila, 2020). The price boom of commodities between 2001 and 2008 due to the rapid industrial development of Asian countries, mainly China, and their efforts to access African minerals, led to a new scramble

for African natural resources. This “new scramble” took place when the populations were burgeoning while governments were increasingly becoming incapable of meeting their most basic needs (Mendenhall et al., 2020). With unreliable foreign aid, most governments furiously sought other sources of income to meet the demands of their growing populations. This inevitably increased the values of territories that were hitherto neglected and marginalized as governments partitioned the land into concessionary blocks that were awarded to Chinese and Western companies to hunt for natural resources.

Since the eruption of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea over their common boundary in 1998, and the subsequent failure to demarcate it, there has been a growing concern that there could be more inter-state disputes in Eastern Africa as natural wealth is discovered in the borderlands (Müller, 2019). The recent (2009) standoff between Kenya and Uganda over the ownership of Migingo Island in Lake Victoria, the 2008 border incident between Eritrea and Djibouti, the continuing Somali nationalism in the region, and border skirmishes between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) over the oil-rich Lake Albert region, all indicate that border disputes are on the rise. In addition to the potential for armed conflict, demarcated, indefinite, porous, and unmanaged boundaries are being used for illegal cross-border activities that threaten national sovereignties and destabilize regional politics (Etefa, 2019). Sharing more than thirty boundaries, each of the countries in Eastern Africa has had at least one border dispute with a neighbour. These disputes are mainly over territorial claims, and are most frequently caused by the lack of clearly defined and marked boundaries, the availability of trans-boundary resources, and security-related matters. At present the hottest border spots are on the Ethiopia–Eritrea border, the Eritrea–Djibouti border (Temesgen, 2020), the Somalia–Ethiopia–Kenya borders (Majid & Abdirahman, 2021), the Sudan–Kenya border, the Uganda–DRC border, the Sudan–Chad–CAR–DRC–Uganda borders, and the Kenya–Uganda border (Naish, 2017). In the second tier of disputes are the Tanzania–Mozambique, Tanzania–Malawi, Tanzania–Uganda, Uganda–Rwanda and the Kenya–Ethiopia borders.

The borders of Kenya and Ethiopia with Somalia are the most insecure in the region, being populated by Somali-speakers who have, since the 1960s, nursed irredentist tendencies that have resulted in border and insurgency wars (Hassan, 2021). With increased exploration for hydrocarbons in north-eastern Kenya and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, both predominantly occupied by Somali-speakers, their common borders with Somalia present a continuing but evolving security challenge. Although secessionist and irredentist tendencies are currently low due to Somalia's internal problems, there are fears in Nairobi and Addis Ababa that continued marginalization of the Somali regions will sow the seeds of further radicalization and further insurgencies.

Borderlands where mineral resources are being explored or exploited are experiencing increasingly frequent disputes over land claims, delimitation disputes, lawlessness, security alerts, and bitter political exchanges between governments (Hassan, 2021). Recent examples include the Albert basin straddling the Uganda–DRC border, the Elemei Triangle that is contested by Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia, and Migingo Island in Lake Victoria. Border conflicts in such areas seem bound to escalate if local communities are denied the opportunities to benefit from exploitation of the natural resources in their locality (Awange, 2020).

Tunisia is working hard to resolve outstanding differences between Algeria and Morocco amid efforts to “reactivate” the five-nation Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), according to remarks by Tunisian Foreign Minister Khamis al-Jahnawi (Thieux, 2019). The AMU, which includes Algeria,

Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and Mauritania, was established in 1989 with the aim of promoting the economic -- and eventually political union of its five member states. Extending for 1,049 km from the reposit with Libya in the Sahara desert to the Mediterranean coastline, the Algeria–Tunisia boundary follows a combination of straight lines between boundary markers as well as various natural and anthropogeography features. The border was first established during the colonial era and was inherited by both States following independence (Saddiki, 2020). Joint boundary commissions demarcated the southern portion of the border following a 1970 agreement and then the northern section of the border after a 1983 agreement. There are no border disputes between the two governments, and they share relatively stable relations. Recent West African boundaries and borders disputes include: land and maritime disputes between the Cameroon and Nigeria; territorial disputes on the Island of Mbanié between Gabon and Equatorial Guinea; the frontier dispute between Burkina Faso and Niger frontier dispute; and the Benin–Niger frontier dispute. In North Africa, boundary disputes and contested territories abound. Examples include Moroccan claims over Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla. There is the long-lasting Morocco and Mauritania struggle against the Polisario Front, while Libya and Algeria have intervened in favour of the Saharan national liberation movement (Saddiki, 2020).

Algeria and Morocco accuse each other of harbouring militants and condoning arms smuggling. Libya appears to claim about 32,000 sq km that apparently is under Algerian control (Spencer, 2018). Sudan claims, but Egypt de facto administers, security and economic development of the Halaib region north of the 22nd parallel boundary. Southern Africa has its own set of disputes. The contestation between Namibia and South Africa over the Orange River has been described as one of the oldest boundary disputes in the world. There are tensions between Swaziland and South Africa. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) accuses Angola of shifting monuments on their common boundary. Namibian exploitation of the Okavango River has been a source of disagreement with Botswana. Unresolved boundaries afflict portions of the Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia borders (Mogomotsi, Mogomotsi & Mosepele, 2020). Central African states' ongoing boundary problems include location of the boundary in the broad Congo River between the Republic of Congo and the DRC. Uganda and the DRC continue to dispute the Rukwanzi Island in Lake Albert and other areas on the Semliki River with hydrocarbon potential. As though dispute over territories and boundaries is not challenging enough, separatist tendencies aiming at the creation of more independent states are rife (Mogomotsi, Mogomotsi & Mosepele, 2020).

BORDER DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM

Commendably, the African Union (AU) has been committed to an audacious border programme since 2007(AU, 2019). This may go down as one of the most significant legal events on the continent. The declaration demands an Africa-wide exercise to demarcate international land and maritime boundaries. But, in line with the “run before you walk” reputation of the AU, it has set an overly ambitious timetable and several deadlines have already been missed. Participation in the initiative has been patchy at best (Sone, 2017). It is scandalous that the programme, originally envisaged to have been completed before 2015, has arguably not achieved more than one-quarter of its objectives. The complete delimitation and demarcation of Africa is a herculean task. We are talking about an area of approximately 6.1 million square km and 28,000 miles of international boundaries (Sone, 2017). In many cases the issue is what exactly was owned and passed over to African states from the colonial powers. Hence, fancy legal doctrines that lawyers like to throw about, such as the so called *uti possidetis juris*, are no more than a logical tautology. This seeks to

freeze all territories to a snap shot of the area states were given on the day of independence (Worster, 2017).

Fortunately, there are examples of good practice among African states to deal with boundary problems. In theory, boundary tensions could be addressed through various indigenous mechanisms (Rothchild & Foley, 2019). These include the Councils of Elders and the use of peace radios and peace newspapers by East Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development and by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Accusations by rights activists of serious human rights violations, including torture and summary executions of Angolan nationals allegedly returned to Angolan forces by the Namibian authorities have persisted, while the international community has expressed concern that the refugees, whose numbers have now reached over 7,000, have not been accorded sufficient protection by the Namibian authorities. Senior Western diplomats told IRIN they were also growing concerned, and this week reiterated warnings to foreigners to avoid travelling to the border areas (Tejedor, Segalàs & Rosas-Casals, 2018).

Namibia and Angola have much in common, but, at the same time, they differ greatly. For example, both countries fought colonial oppression and are now independent; however, one went through civil war, while the other had no such experience. Other similarities include the fact that the former military groups (Angola's *Movimento Popular para la Liberação de Angola*, or MPLA, and Namibia's *South West Africa People's Organisation*, or SWAPO) are now in power in both countries. At one time, the two political movements shared a common ideological platform and lent each other support during their respective liberation struggles. The two countries are also neighbours, with a 1,376-km common border that extends from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Zambezi River in the west. Families and communities on both sides of the international boundary share resources, communicate, trade and engage in other types of exchange. All these facts point to a relationship between the two countries that goes back many decades, and continues strongly today.

As regards Angola's relationship with Namibia, it has always been one of peace, nonetheless it needs to be noted that peacemaking is necessitated by conflict (Brinkman, 2019). Although economic ties have existed between Angola and Namibia, it does not mean a lack of communication about inherent corruption, illegal deals and other inconvenient events. Political and military cooperation between the two countries has always been there, but it existed alongside diplomatic misunderstandings and disagreements – especially during the Angolan civil war. This leads us to understand the position that prevails in the world today: that conflict has become a frequent word in most reports on contemporary challenges facing the African continent. Indeed, this is certainly the case for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region. Put differently, the SADC Region is no stranger to symbiotic relationships (Konstantinus, Zuidgeest, Christodoulou, Raza & Woxenius, 2019). The Region has witnessed conflicts of the worst kind, which have left negative footprints in the family and public life of its inhabitants. It is for the same reason that, when SADC was established in 1992 as a successor to the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC), the promotion of peace was one of the key considerations in formulating its mandate (Konstantinus et al., 2019).

Angola and Namibia have deep-rooted cultural, political, economic, social and historical ties dating back many years (Jacklyn, 2018). Angola is geographically strategic to Namibia, and vice versa. The political parties in power in both countries are seen as long-time allies who, at one point, shared an ideological platform and approach to their respective liberation struggles. With Namibia

finally gaining its independence in 1990, the two states established diplomatic representations and improved mutual relations. Emerging from decades of war, Angola is now the biggest market for any trade in southern Africa because of its reconstruction programmes, and offers Namibia many opportunities for export. Today, Angola makes up 10% of Namibia's total exports, although this figure is growing as more opportunities open up and the two governments improve areas of bilateral cooperation. Current agreements between Angola and Namibia include the areas of trade, health and crime prevention (Jacklyn, 2018).

The conflict resolution community seems to pursue conflict resolution efforts in Africa from a variety of purposes and interests and with policies that are often replete with ambiguities and contradictions. This situation may be the reason why many African conflicts may be silenced but remain largely unresolved. As Zartman (2019) has pointed out, although African conflicts involve the activities of seasoned peacemakers using the best of personal skills and recently developed knowledge about ways of managing and resolving conflicts, international efforts at conflict management have not been particularly effective or efficient in overcoming the disasters that have brought them to the continent.

After the independence of Namibia in 1990, a number of water-related disagreements have emerged between the Orange River riparians South Africa and Namibia (Menestrey Schwieger, 2020). These revolve around the demarcation of a common border, water allocation and water pricing, and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). Existing water scarcity in the lower Orange River Basin is likely to be further aggravated by the impacts of climate change. Despite the conflict potential harbored by existing disagreements, the basin's high level of institutionalized cooperation and the possibilities for intra- and inter-basin water transfers could help alleviate water stress and resolve bilateral disagreement over shared water resources. At the time of Namibian independence in 1990, it was agreed that Namibia would receive a certain amount of water from existing infrastructure in South Africa to meet its water demands downstream (Menestrey Schwieger, 2020). Namibia would receive this share of water, which it regards as its "historical allocation," free of charge. Over the years, however, Namibia has sought to develop its southern region, and the only possibility to promote socio-economic development in the south would be by utilizing a greater share of the Orange River waters. In particular, Namibia has additional water needs for irrigation (e.g., table grapes for export), mining (e.g., zinc, diamonds), and power generation (e.g., development of the Kudu gas field). To meet these water requirements, Namibia has asked for an additional temporal allocation of water from South Africa (Menestrey Schwieger, 2020).

South Africa has responded to this demand by suggesting that any additional water allocations to Namibia should be charged at full cost according to South African water tariffs. Also, South Africa has made clear that the "historical allocation" taken for granted by Namibia should in fact be subjected to operation and maintenance costs incurred by South Africa for water storage and regulating infrastructure on the lower Orange River (Shilomboleni, 2020). Currently, Namibia does not have its own water infrastructure on the Orange River, and in the past has benefited from the South African infrastructure without sharing the burden of its costs. In the future, it is likely that a dam tailored to the needs of Namibia will be built on the lower reaches of the Orange (Heyns et al., 2018; 2021).

Faced by the above conflicting perceptions and positions, the presidents of Botswana and Namibia began a search for a resolution to the dispute. Even here the pleadings of the parties to the ICJ Case reveal yet differences of perception on which president or country made the first move for a

peaceful resolution of the dispute. Namibia claims that it was initiated by its government which requested then President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, to facilitate a dialogue between Namibia and Botswana regarding the Kasikili/Sedudu Island. Botswana on its part rejected the Namibian claims and on the contrary that it was its president (the late Sir Ketumile Masire) who initiated the process of dialogue and negotiation which ultimately led to the setting up of the JTTE. Namibia, on the other hand, claimed that it was its government's initiative (through its then President Sam Nujoma) resulted in the two countries setting up a Joint Team of Technical Experts (JTTE), composed of three members from each country to determine where the boundary lies in terms of the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty.

According to some commentators a dispute can be defined as a "specific disagreement concerning a matter of fact, law or policy in which a claim or assertion of one party is met with refusal, counter-claim or denial by another".²⁹ This particular definition fits the conflicting perceptions of Botswana and Namibia rather appropriately. What was at issue in the Kasikili/Sedudu case was a boundary dispute³⁰ involving rival claims to an island. The Kasikili/Sedudu Island dispute emerged because no visible boundary had been delimited between the two countries either by the 1890 Anglo-German treaty or otherwise. Disputes of this nature, like all other between states, neighbors, or brothers and sisters, can be said to be part of human relations, and the most important problem they all face is what to do to resolve them. Further it can be argued that the emergence of international law in the past centuries did not seem to bring with it modalities for forming a world government or mechanisms of how to renounce the use of force by states. It was not until 1945, during the formation of the United Nations, which its founder members agreed in Article 2(3) of the Charter to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice are not endangered.

Namibia and Botswana whilst committed to the peaceful settlement of their dispute, they did not consider other steps such as conciliation and arbitration for the ICJ (Stoldt, Göttert, Mann & Zeller, 2020). It can be argued that the JTTE was a form of fact-finding equivalent to conciliation, which will be discussed later. As has been made apparent earlier in this paper, the parties deadlocked on the application of the outcome of the JTTE Report. The JTTE as an institutional arrangement therefore could have been made to serve as a welcome preference to arbitration or other techniques, because the parties desired to have their dispute independently investigated. Even though with limited success, in recent years, there have been elaborate provisions of various treaties and a General Assembly resolution.

When the mediation efforts failed, the two countries should have considered conciliation as a means of dispute resolution (Stoldt, Göttert, Mann & Zeller, 2020). In this particular context, conciliation is understood as a "method of settling international disputes of any nature by way of a commission set up by the Parties, either on a permanent basis or an ad hoc basis to deal with a given dispute. Such a commission typically would do an impartial examination of the dispute and in so doing attempts to define the terms of a settlement susceptible of being accepted by the parties while not necessarily binding on them as an aid they have requested." In this respect, while mediation can be described as an extension of negotiation, what conciliation provides parties to a dispute is the putting of third-party intervention on a formal legal footing and in essence institutionalizes it in such a way comparable, but not identical, to enquiry or arbitration.

CONCLUSION

African national borders are afflicted by a multitude of troubles that straddle villages and communities. These can include military skirmishes, cattle rustling, terrorism, secessionist movements, smuggling, ethnic violence, people trafficking, irredentism and agrarian revolts. Southern Africa has its own set of disputes. The contestation between Namibia and South Africa over the Orange River has been described as one of the oldest boundary disputes in the world. There are tensions between Swaziland and South Africa. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) accuses Angola of shifting monuments on their common boundary. Despite the decisions of the OAU and its successor, the African Union (AU), border conflicts became a source of instability and conflict. Significantly, although intra-state conflicts seem to have replaced inter-state conflicts as the principal source of instability on the continent since the late 1980s, the prospect of destabilising border conflicts is still very real, particularly against the background of Africa's ever-expanding population, which is accompanied by shrinking economic resources and opportunities, and high levels of migration.

Africa's borders are very porous because of a lack of proper demarcation and delimitation. This has been identified as the principal reason for the ease with which governance-related national conflicts in individual states have spilled over to entire regions, as has been the case in the Great Lakes region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa. Significantly, many intra-state conflicts in Africa have been sparked by the forceful fusion of incompatible national groups into one state by the imposition of artificial boundaries by colonial powers. A number of Southern African countries have at different times since independence been in conflict with each other over common boundaries. These conflicts have revolved around issues of trans-boundary minorities, trans-boundary resources, unclear frontiers, and the contestation or difficulty of implementing existing colonial and post-colonial boundary agreements.

Africa's interstate boundaries have remained a major source of conflict and instability on the continent, largely because of their artificial character, poor delineation and demarcation, and their porousness. In spite of recognition that the colonial boundaries are not viable in their current state, the continent's governing elite has elected and stuck to a policy of territorial status quo, partly because of a legitimate concern that any attempt to review the boundaries will lead to anarchy. Although Africa's governing elite has remained faithful to its policy of territorial status quo, strong lateral and vertical pressures appear to be forcing a re-orientation in the approach to the management of state boundaries. The focus is now on transforming borders from barriers to bridges of integration and cooperation, and on developing the border areas to stop these from acting as conduits for the transmission of conflict and violence.

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