



SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS

MILITARY COUPS AND THE NEED FOR
DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL IN AFRICA





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DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL IN AFRICA**

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Military coups d'états, which involve the unconstitutional ascension to power by the armed forces, have been on the rise over the past decade.ⁱ Between 2020 and 2022, the continent of Africa experienced six 'successful' military coups – of which two were 'coups within coups' – and three attempted coups. This represents an approximately 229% increase in coup incidence over the previous 20-year period.ⁱⁱ There has also been a growing number of so-called 'constitutional coups', in which leaders revise constitutions to change term limits by allowing for third-, fourth- and even fifth-term mandates. Coups, almost by definition, undermine constitutional rule, entrench bad governance, and create conditions that undermine human rights and civic freedom, including by encouraging future coups. There is an acute need for new approaches and new thinking to tackle this "epidemic of coup d'états", as so aptly articulated by UN Secretary-General, António Guterres.

This new report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) analyses the factors that have contributed to the recent wave of coups across Africa. These include structural and institutional drivers; the immediate factors that may lead to a violent conflict that can foment coups; and triggers such as one-off events that can spark coups. The data shows clear correlations between heightened coup risk and persistent insecurity, stagnant growth, exclusionary economic governance, multidimensional poverty, inequality, manipulation of constitutional term limits, limited youth and women's participation, governance deficits and higher levels of military expenditure. This report also explores difficult questions, such as why there is apparent initial popular support for such coups including where democratically elected leaders were ousted. It starkly shows that when citizens have been disappointed with the delivery of democratically elected governments, they are more likely to support non-democratic styles of governance, including military rule. Crucially, the study combines the latest empirical data and literature with human stories by engaging 5,000 citizens who lived through coups in Africa, contrasting their experiences with those of 3,000 citizens from countries on a path of democratic transition.

The report informs policy and programming options available to regional and international actors to proactively prevent and address the consequences of military coups. That includes feeding the findings into the Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT), a new initiative between UNDP and the African Union Commission that will provide tailored programmatic support to countries in Africa undergoing complex political transitions. In particular, the report calls for a re-focus on development, including good governance, human rights, and access to basic services such as education and healthcare as a critical means to not only prevent coups, but also sustain peace. This is particularly crucial in regions like the Sahel, which face a heightened risk of coups. That investment will also drive game-changing progress in the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063. In short, development is prevention, and prevention means peace. This is a vital baseline that will help to ensure that people's futures are not shaped by an undemocratic few, but people everywhere across the continent can realize the Africa that they want.

AHUNNA EZIAKONWA - UN ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL
UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa

In an era marked by profound transformation and multifaceted challenges, democracies across the globe are encountering significant pressures and strains on their constitutional order.

These trends are taking place in an intricate and dynamic international landscape, marked by an unprecedented confluence of geopolitical shifts, economic challenges, digital advancements, environmental concerns and sociocultural dynamics.

Across Africa, pervasive and contemporary security threats and challenges, particularly around terrorism and violent extremism, climate change and the impact of a global economic downturn, are unfolding even as painful episodes from our past re-emerge in new and alarming ways. The resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) depicted by military coups in some parts of Africa, in particular, threatens to erode much of the gains we have witnessed in previous decades. A recent resurgence of military coups took place between 2020 and 2022. As this report is being finalized, fresh conflict has erupted in Sudan.

The African Union (AU) is contributing to and coordinating immense progress being made by Member States and regional bodies through implementing strong frameworks, tools and partnerships to achieve the prosperity we envision for every African region, state and citizen. The Union is building resilience and responsiveness to the shifts and the changes evident in climate variability, digital transformation, defence and security governance systems in regional, continental and global settings.

The AU Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, among many others, affirm our continent-wide commitment to shared values and principles for peaceful changes of power through free, fair, credible and peaceful election processes. Through the AU Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), one of the most advanced intergovernmental systems of its kind, we have the information to address conflict cycles in a comprehensive and proactive manner. Channels for preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention exist in mechanisms epitomized by the AU Panel of the Wise, FemWise and WiseYouth. Many of the Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms have developed similar instruments that mirror these norms across the continent.

Perhaps with greater urgency than ever before, we are forced to acknowledge the intensity of complex causes that give rise to the phenomena that hamper our progress towards the attainment of AU Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agenda. No single system, instrument or actor can remedy all of the structural drivers of instability. As we assess these trends and take stock of the many tools we can draw on to anticipate, prevent and respond to today's pressures, identifying and effectively addressing the gaps in our efforts becomes a topmost and urgent priority.

What angles are we overlooking? The voices of citizens — especially women and youth — must be heard, loud enough to resonate with change and inspire impact. What fabric of society is being excluded, and is thereby left behind in the political sphere? How can we mobilize and empower all citizens to the national, regional and continental renewal agenda?

As threats evolve and trends emerge, the narratives we rely on to understand these happenings rarely capture the true perspectives and lived experiences of the people whose livelihoods are most directly affected. In what is probably the most extensive study of its kind, this report gathers the insights of 8,000 citizens across Africa. It combines this vast collection of people-centred knowledge with a development approach, and, in a series of actionable findings, begins to illuminate some of the blind spots that have hitherto hampered how we make sense of UCG and — more importantly — how we adequately respond to them and prevent them. The message in these pages is clear: it is a call for AU Member States to build resilience against undemocratic seizure of political power through smart and inclusive governance, and progress towards the goals of The Africa We Want and the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Collectively, we need targeted, harmonized and integrated people-oriented policies and cross-country programmes that simultaneously address multiple challenges. There are tried and tested ways to set at-risk countries back on a path of meaningful development and consistent progress. This should start with a profound recommitment to truly inclusive governance, which delivers for our people.

We are pleased that the release of this timely report forms part of the official launch of the new Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT), a co-created initiative by the AU Commission and the United Nations Development Programme. The AFSIT provides integrated programmatic support to African countries undergoing complex political transitions, including those experiencing or at risk of UCG.

It is our hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for inspiring change, reigniting our collective commitment to collaboratively building resilient, democratic societies in Africa for the peace dividends of effective and sustainable development.

AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY COMMISSIONER
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ACRONYMS

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project	IDP	internally displaced person
AfDB	African Development Bank	IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
AFSIT	Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions	MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism	MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
AU	African Union	MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
AUC	African Union Commission	MYA	Multi-Year Appeal (UN DPPA)
AUC-PAPS	African Union Commission Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security	NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (EU)
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System (AU)	NGO	non-governmental organization
CMAG	Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group	NPC	National Peace Council
CNT	National Transitional Council	OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
CMT	Transitional Military Council	ODA	official development assistance
CSO	civil society organization	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)	OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UN)	PBF	Peacebuilding Fund (UN)
DTS	democratic transition state	PPP	purchasing power parity
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States	PSC	Peace and Security Council (AU)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	RC	Resident Coordinator
EMB	electoral management body	REC	regional economic community
EU	European Union	RM	regional mechanism
EWRS	early warning and response system	SADC	Southern African Development Community
FCV	Fragility, Conflict and Violence (World Bank)	SCM	Synthetic Control Method
FGD	focus group discussion	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
FNDC	National Front for the Defence of the Constitution	SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (UN)
GDP	gross domestic product	SSR	security-sector reform
GovNet	Governance Network of the Development Assistance Committee (OECD)	TSF	Transition Support Facility (AfDB)
HDI	Human Development Index	UCG	unconstitutional changes of government
		UN	United Nations
		UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



Democracies across the globe have faced multiple challenges over the past decade, and Africa has been no exception.

Constitutional manipulation has increased on the continent as some leaders attempt to extend their time in power.¹ But perhaps the most striking factor has been a sudden uptick in military coups. Between 2020 and 2022, Africa experienced six coups and three coup attempts: a sharp rise from the previous two decades.^{2,3} Popular support for coup leadership has been prominent, albeit short lived.

While coups and military rule were common earlier in Africa's post-colonial history, a wave of democratization spread across the continent since the early 1990s. This yielded progress in favour of constitutional order. In many countries, democratic governments were established, and the peaceful change of political power through elections grew.⁴ Democratic governance became a continent-wide norm projected by the African Union (AU) through, for instance, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

Against this backdrop, the recent resurgence in coups has sounded a warning note. It raises the spectre of democratic backsliding, turbulence and the close involvement of the military in political life. When power is seized through military means, it represents a critical risk for peace and democratic progress in each affected country, along with potential spill-over effects and wider destabilization.

The AU has denounced the trend, with high-level statements and communiqués signalling renewed effort to tackle what it terms unconstitutional changes of government (UCG). Similarly, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres lamented the “epidemic of coups d'états” unfolding on the world stage and urged “effective deterrence” from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).⁵

Key research questions

- *What are the development drivers of military coups, as a form of UCG, in Africa?*
- *What explains apparent popular support for such coups ‘in the moment’ – including in contexts where democratically elected leaders were ousted?*
- *What policy and programming options should regional and international actors consider to effectively prevent military coups?*
- *What can these actors do to restore and sustain constitutional order, reset the social contract and boost inclusive democratic governance in UCG-affected countries?*

As part of UNDP’s efforts to address these events, this study adopts primarily a development-focused approach, in line with our organizational mandate. Produced as part of UNDP’s partnership with the AU Commission (AUC), the report supports continental leadership efforts in tackling UCG. It offers a forward-looking perspective – both for preventing further coups and for harnessing opportunities for transformative change and sustained constitutional order.

The research findings are based on a vast perceptions survey, which captured the views of 8,000 citizens across Africa. Among the respondents, 5,000 are African citizens who lived through coups or equivalent UCG events, in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan. Their views were contrasted with those of 3,000 citizens from countries on a path of democratic transition or consolidation, namely The Gambia, Ghana and Tanzania. In the report, we refer to the former countries throughout as UCG settings, and the latter as democratic transition states (DTS).⁶ As a result of this extensive survey, we have been able to interpret issues and trends through a uniquely people-centred dataset.

CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE

Prior to the coup event, each of the five UCG countries experienced unique dynamics. Yet, combining these factors to gain a regional perspective suggests that coup risk is influenced by a multitude of shared factors. Africa’s recent military coups have also unfolded in an age marked by interdependence and complexity. Across the globe, geopolitical, economic, digital, environmental and sociocultural spheres are fusing to create an increasingly dynamic landscape. This makes reductive, single-factor explanations or overly simplistic solutions futile.

To untangle critical factors, the *Soldiers and citizens* research used a conflict analysis approach, which distinguishes between structural and institutional drivers (or root causes), proximate causes and triggers. This provided a contextual frame for analysing the findings of the perceptions dataset.

STRUCTURAL, PROXIMATE AND TRIGGER FACTORS OF MILITARY COUPS

Trigger factors

- In some cases, the immediate factors triggering UCG events were clearly identifiable. In Chad, the death of long-standing president Idriss Déby led to a transfer of power to his son. In Burkina Faso, incidents involving fatal attacks on security personnel allegedly prompted both coups. However, elsewhere, immediate triggers were obscured by behind-the-scenes political dynamics. This highlights the crucial role of individual political agency in making coups possible.

Proximate factors

- **Insecurity in the Sahel.** Most recent coups and coup attempts have occurred in West Africa. Seven out of nine played out in the greater Sahel.

The Sahel has experienced significant insecurity in the past decade as a result of deeper structural and historic issues, contributing to the conditions that shaped the recent UCG uptick. Meanwhile, international actors have begun to engage in a complex pattern of security-driven interventions, linked to the Sahel's geostrategic relevance. This trend has had counter-productive effects.

- **Rising frustration with government performance.** Longitudinal data studies, such as those by Afrobarometer, reveal a decline of civic trust in governments' capacity and commitment to provide inclusive development and economic opportunities.⁷ This is especially true for younger generations. In many contexts, this is coupled with anger at issues ranging from corruption and insecurity to economic difficulty amid a global downturn. Another factor has been disappointment over incumbents' manipulation of constitutional rules to extend their power. The result is a grievance base, which military juntas have readily exploited.
- **Democracy at an inflection point.** The rise in military coups and constitutional manipulation across the continent reflect democratic dysfunctions that appear hardwired into some political systems. These trends signal new appetite to question the status of democracy as an optimal form of government. This trend, along with the failure of leaders (including some who had been democratically elected) to provide for citizens' needs and aspirations, is a critical proximate factor.

Structural and institutional factors

- **History of military involvement in politics.** State formation in Africa often followed a violent trajectory, particularly in the context of colonialism. In many countries, this distorted both the role and character of militaries. The coup-affected countries under review all experienced protracted military rule beyond their independence. Burkina Faso, Chad and Sudan were led by military regimes for three quarters or more of their post-colonial histories. In affected countries, state expenditure on military costs is also particularly significant. These trends reflect a failure to fully reform and differentiate the military within the contemporary state architecture. At the same time, clear checks and balances are often lacking.
- **State fragility and questions of legitimacy.** Coup risk can be seen as a specific subset of state fragility. Since 2019, 12 out of 17 coup events globally have taken place in fragile contexts.⁸ Coup-affected countries score among the lowest on governance and fragility indices. This suggests a strong correlation between coup resilience and robust political, cohesion and governance conditions.
- **A lack of inclusive economic growth.** In four out of the five UCG countries under review (Chad, Guinea, Sudan and, to a lesser extent, Mali), politics and development have been significantly shaped by natural resource wealth. This recalls extensive evidence of the so-called resource curse, where mineral wealth is exploited in a way that leads to pernicious development outcomes. The ranking of these countries on global development indices

confirms the relevance of viewing military coups from a development perspective. Correlations between coup risk and stagnant growth, inequality, the exclusion of youth and women, as well as governance deficits and higher levels of state military expenditure, are all apparent. Exclusionary patterns of economic growth should thus be viewed as a key contributing, although not causal, structural factor.

Citizens' perspectives: *insights from the Soldiers and citizens survey*

A significantly greater number of respondents living in UCG countries believed that safety would improve in the two years following the event (68 percent).

Only 55 percent of DTS-country respondents expressed the same confidence in relation to a recent election.

Hope for a new future

The citizens who recently lived through a UCG event expressed a heightened appetite for change and positive transformation from the recent turmoil. Overall optimism was measured across several indicators. These included whether respondents thought the recent political transition had a positive impact on their country; optimism that service delivery, security and economic circumstances would soon improve; feeling 'heard' in the recent political events; and reporting positive emotions, such as 'excitement' and 'optimism', at the time of the event in question. Some 24 percent more UCG respondents felt excited about their country's direction of travel than DTS participants.

UCG-country respondents showed greater optimism and less scepticism than counterparts in DTS-category countries, indicating that they are willing to take a leap of faith. Yet the findings also conveyed the personal turmoil of living through a coup. More UCG-country respondents selected both positive and negative adjectives to describe their emotional state at the time of the event.

Ephemeral optimism

The *Soldiers and citizens* data also reflects the ephemerality of this optimism, and related popular support for the military coups. Positive feelings were found to be in flux when respondents were asked how they felt 'now' (at the time of the research), as opposed to 'then' (during the political transition). This echoes trends from other settings where coups were popular at first, and suggests that support for coup leaders may be interpreted as a reaction against the status quo, rather than a wholehearted endorsement of incoming military rule. Indeed, in Guinea and Burkina Faso, crowds turned against the same leaders they had cheered into power less than a year earlier. This sensitive interplay between hope, delivery and expectation contributes to the risk of prolonged turbulence in transitional contexts.

Limited delivery of inclusivity

Declining civic confidence in transitional governments is partly explained by limitations in the delivery of promised inclusivity. Except for Sudan (following the coup that pre-dates the current war between armed factions), all the UCG-category countries installed a body acting as the transitional legislative council that, to some degree, reflected the countries' diversity. All engaged in at least some dialogue with socio-political forces in their respective countries to reach consensus about the management of the transition. It was clear in all five cases that inclusive and consultative processes were to guide the drafting and execution of transition plans. All contexts, however, subsequently saw increasing criticism from political and civic actors precisely on the issue of inclusivity. There has also been a general sharpening of hostility between junta leadership and opposition voices.

Divergent views on democracy and the military

In DTS countries, over two thirds of respondents said that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. In UCG contexts, just over half shared this view. The remainder were split between saying that a non-democratic government can sometimes be preferable (17 percent) or that, for them, the type of government system does not really matter (20 percent).

These findings reflect disappointment with the delivery of democratically elected governments. This dissatisfaction further fuels a sense that non-democratic governance may present a legitimate alternative: an attitude that was more prevalent in the UCG countries. However, in both categories, fewer women than men indicated that a non-democratic system could be preferable. (A difference of 7 percentage points in UCG-category countries, and 4 percent in DTS-category settings.) Further analysis of the *Soldiers and citizens* data found that men were 55 percent more likely than women to say that a non-democratic government may be preferable in some circumstances. This finding suggests that improved gender parity and women's rights are better achieved via democracy than without it.

The *Soldiers and citizens*

data revealed a strong appetite for greater women and youth inclusivity in political leadership. Overall, 71 percent of all respondents agreed that more young people are needed in leadership positions. Among respondents aged between 15 and 24, this increased to 78 percent.

The UCG events explored in this study are recent, and longer-term development consequences remain unknown. However, using methods based on counter-factual enquiry, UNDP background research analysed impacts of earlier coups in Guinea (2008) and Mali (2012). The findings indicate that five years after the event, Guinea and Mali had lost an accumulated sum of \$12.13 billion and \$13.52 billion in total gross domestic product (GDP) respectively, based on purchasing power parity (PPP).

Research also confirmed that the coups under review had caused political responses that discouraged investors and curtailed economic activities. Food and essential commodity prices – already under pressure due to COVID-19 and, more recently, conflict in Ukraine – have been affected by the instability in all settings. Humanitarian needs have spiked.

Despite this, a greater number of UCG-country respondents viewed the impact of their recent political transition as positive overall when compared with DTS respondents. This was particularly true for respondents from Chad, Guinea and Mali.

Some 22 percent more UCG- than DTS-category respondents said that when a democratic government is incompetent, the military should intervene.

Attitudes to the role of the military in government were also divergent. UCG-country respondents expressed greater tolerance for military engagement in government affairs, including stepping in when the state shows itself to be incompetent.

Time for change

A desire for change was a recurring theme across the data, particularly among those supporting the recent coup. 'Time for change' was cited as the most important reason for supporting a military takeover (44 percent). Other priorities were 'better governance' (15 percent) and 'security' (21 percent), while 8 percent selected 'don't know'. DTS-category respondents selected three prominent reasons for supporting the results of the last election, namely 'better governance' (21 percent), 'constitutional mandate' (21 percent) and 'time for change' (16 percent).

When asked to elaborate on why alternatives to democracy may be justified, most respondents pointed to instances where democracy was 'abused' or 'not working'. In UCG-category countries, more than half (63 percent) said this would warrant alternatives, while in DTS-category countries, 48 percent of respondents selected this answer. For these countries, a larger share pin-pointed 'corruption' as the second highest reason (29 percent).

Disappointment with democratically elected leaders may therefore inspire readiness to consider alternative systems of government. This attitude was more pronounced in the countries that recently experienced a coup. When asked to rank government performance, similar numbers across both settings felt that improvement was necessary. However, scepticism was again higher among those in DTS-category countries.

Coup risk may spread

Lastly, the findings of the *Soldiers and citizens* study suggest that coup risk may spread. In coup-affected countries, there is a clear risk for volatility to persist and constitutional order to continue eroding beyond transition timelines. (This is evidenced by the warfare between coup instigators in Sudan, which broke out in April 2023.) Coup leaders may also take inspiration from one another, increasingly bypassing the normative frameworks and efforts of regional institutions.

The five recently affected UCG countries are not the only states to experience this particular confluence of structural and proximate factors. This points to the potential for other cases to emerge. The research — and real-time events unfolding in Ghana, The Gambia and Senegal during the study — highlighted vulnerabilities even in states on a path of democratic transition or consolidation.

It is notable that citizens from some of the DTS countries, which are comparatively stable and developmentally advanced, cited higher levels of frustration and scepticism about government than were reported in the coup-affected countries. This discrepancy seems to suggest both higher expectations in these settings, as well as challenges that persist even in contexts with relative development progress. The research shows in a compelling manner that tolerance for ongoing inequality, government under-performance and elite self-enrichment is sharply waning across the continent.

KEY MESSAGES

1. To mitigate coup risk, a development lens is essential

The study found that among the hybrid circumstances that shape vulnerability to coup risk, underdevelopment is prominent. Counterfactual analysis of the cost of coups further highlights that these events significantly slow down development. These findings confirm that development perspectives should be at the centre of UCG response strategies. While coups are neither inevitable, nor necessarily likely, in all low-development contexts, secondary data shows clear correlations between heightened coup risk and stagnant growth, exclusionary economic governance, multidimensional poverty, inequality, limited youth and women's participation, governance deficits and higher levels of state military expenditure. The findings confirm that coup risk can be viewed as a subset of state fragility.



Countries that experience contemporary coups perform poorly on global development indices. These rankings are not abstract, but represent millions of lives marred by exclusion, infringement of rights, restriction of opportunity, and frustration. These grievances create a base of frustration that coup leaders can readily exploit. The *Soldiers and citizens* data reveals optimism and a heightened appetite for change among those who recently experienced a military coup – as if willing for positive transformation to emerge from the turmoil.

Coup leaders have explicitly invoked the giants of Africa's post-colonial history in their rhetoric of revolution and transformation. In so doing, they have captured the popular imagination. This appeal suggests a yearning for a better quality of political leadership, which strives to meet civilians' needs and aspirations. The base of exploitable grievances mentioned above, linked to leaders' failures to deliver inclusive development, creates fertile ground for coups to be staged. It is therefore critical to scale up development-oriented investment that will yield results and boost citizens' confidence in a better future.

2. States must deepen democracy and reset their social contract with citizens

For states across Africa to build coup resilience, deeper democracy, better governance, and inclusive development progress should be a guiding star. The quality of democracy and the prevalence of wider dysfunction in governance systems have been brought to the forefront. **For too long, some states in the region have ruled behind a façade of democracy while deploying innately exclusionary models of governance.** Recent coups in Africa have been more common in countries with a high number of previous coups, and governments that are “neither democratic nor authoritarian, but [...] share some characteristics of both”.⁹ Democracy is at an inflection point on the continent, confronted by its own shortcomings and incompleteness.

A reset of the social contract is needed both to assist coup-affected states in moving forward and to help prevent future coups. To achieve this, governments should shift their focus to practical delivery that directly improves quality of life and opportunity for all segments of society. The initial popularity of coup leaders should serve as a rallying call for governments to do better in demonstrating inclusive and principled governance.

The question of *how* the social contract is best renewed goes to the heart of the governance agenda of today – in Africa, as elsewhere. It emphasizes the need for processes such as national dialogue, which help people to hear and understand each other, and new frameworks for managing differences collectively. The UN Secretary-General's recent *Our Common Agenda* report highlights key policy

areas for transforming lives and building trust. These include universal social protection, health coverage, education, skills, decent work and housing, as well as universal access to the Internet by 2030 as a basic human right.¹⁰

Limited inclusivity could create a crisis of legitimacy of governments and governance institutions. These include traditional institutions (which may shape an individual's choices more than the government itself), the private sector and other economic actors, and social media influencers. Lived experience happens at grassroots and localized levels, whether in cities or villages. This demands a multi-level framing of the social contract that ties the local to the national, regional and global.

Deepening democracy and rebuilding the social contract are long-term endeavours. Key processes should be identified to signal to the population that inclusive development has been made a priority of the state. This can include setting up complaint mechanisms and clear service delivery standards with realistic implementation roadmaps.

3. International and regional partners should reaffirm their commitment to constitutional norms, democratic principles and human rights

Regional and international partners such as the AU, as well as regional economic communities (RECs) like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have played a key role in projecting democratic and constitutional order, responding to coups and helping to prevent further instances. Nonetheless, critical questions have arisen regarding the implementation of norms and incentives for AU member states to comply. Prevarication and inconsistency in upholding continental norms risk undermining their relevance. Efforts by the AU and RECs to uphold norms are, at times, hampered by insufficient political will among member states, creating tensions between normative principle and political interests. The very credibility of these institutions is at stake, should their legitimacy be further eroded in the eyes of African citizens.

In turn, international partners must demonstrate solidarity by encouraging a deepening of Africa's democratic process, while resolving contradictions in their engagement. **In recent decades, investment in governance has declined while security and other pillars of international cooperation have been favoured. Security priorities have in effect, served to undermine principle.**

Some of these at-risk contexts have seen international partners pursue security and political objectives, with scant attention paid to the accountability of government partners. In some scenarios, geopolitically driven interventions have compounded the very factors that heighten coup risk. The recent coups and further risks point to a moment of reckoning. A change of direction is needed.

A FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY AND PROGRAMMING ACTION

Regional and international actors face a momentous responsibility. Coups represent a moment of disruptive change. This also brings opportunities that can be harnessed to contribute to transformative and sustainable outcomes. Yet through failing to do so, actors may instead help to enable a downward spiral – potentially engendering long-term instability and persistent stagnation in a ‘coup trap’.

As international actors consider options and tools for responding to UCG events, several gaps and challenges emerge. These include:

- Responses to UCG events have tended to be reactive rather than proactive, even where political risk analysis may have anticipated coup vulnerability;
- Normative and development priorities have been subordinated to security priorities, with deleterious effects – especially in the Sahel region;
- Regional and international actors have been inconsistent in calling out constitutional manipulation, which risks undermining credibility;
- Clearer frameworks are needed to navigate between pragmatism and principle in working with *de facto* authorities;
- Effective and strategic responses to UCG events require greater coordination across sectors and actors;
- A gap in dedicated funding windows undermines the effectiveness of early response; and
- There is a pressing need for more investment (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to consolidate democratic governance in Africa over the longer term.

The *Soldiers and citizens* research suggests a blend of both short- and long-term priorities for coup prevention, risk mitigation and transitions where coups have occurred.

From the findings, five sets of specific priorities emerge to shape a framework for policy and programming action. In a time when competing global priorities are draining resources and diverting attention away from the continent, regional and international actors need to apply fresh focus and creativity – both in their engagement with coup-affected countries, and to prevent further instances.

Additionally, new approaches are urgently needed to examine how international partnership and intervention in Africa affect the checks and balances between people and governments. Priorities are:

(i) Strengthening continental and regional response mechanisms

The *Soldiers and citizens* research highlights that leaders across Africa must redouble efforts to ensure effective and consistent responses to contemporary coup risk. This calls for improved governance to help reset the social contract with citizens. The political will needed to uphold related norms and principles at regional and continental levels must also be mutually incentivized.

Enhancing AU and REC norms and principles as they relate to UCG, as well as constitutional manipulation to extend power, must be a priority. The ongoing review of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, including clauses related to presidential term limits, is encouraging. A similar review at the continental level would be timely and should be supported.

The capacity of the AU and RECs to uphold norms in member states represents a further challenge. This relates both to having in place relevant structures and mechanisms, such as special envoys, as well as the resources needed to implement such support.

Recent events underscore the necessity for the AU and ECOWAS to enhance their capacities in preventive diplomacy through mechanisms such as the ECOWAS Council of Elders and the AU Panel of the Wise. Effective coordination between the AU and RECs is critical for advancing normative coherence. A further gap in the overall AU architecture is the lack of specific frameworks for planning, establishing, deploying and implementing the necessary support in the event of a coup. The capacity of the AU and RECs to provide technical support for constitutional review and amendment processes is also crucial.

(ii) Preventing further coups

The need for more proactive approaches to coup prevention is clear. Though possibly pre-empted in political risk assessments, the recent coups caught many off guard. Responses were stymied by delays and other challenges, while the risk of multiple coups in the same state became evident. Yet the gains of *preventing* crises and conflict, rather than reacting when they occur, have been recognized at the highest levels of international policy and decision-making for decades. This was also reasserted in the 2017 twin Sustaining Peace UN resolutions, and explored in detail in the recent UN-World Bank *Pathways to Peace* report.¹¹

While the practice of prevention lags behind principle, several actions can be identified to remedy this. **Continental norms that prohibit UCG and discourage constitutional manipulation should be projected in a more consistent and robust manner.** Complemented with sharper AU- and REC-deployable capacities, as mentioned above, this is key for assisting a coup-prevention agenda. Regional and international actors should engage proactively with countries where presidents are nearing the end of their term limits to secure public assurances that they will resign and allow for a peaceful transfer of power.

Additional short- and medium-term priorities are:

- **Boost early warning and response system (EWRS) capacity (monitoring and analysis, as well as response).** Well-developed global and regional EWRS capacities are already in place, housed by different partners and institutions. However, their efficacy has been questioned and barriers debated. Among these, EWRS are typically designed to monitor and respond to a wider categorization of violence than military coups alone, even though such events feature in their analysis. It is urgent to include greater specificity related to the drivers and triggers of coups, as well as appropriate responses.
- **Support problem-solving dialogue processes between political and military elites.** To mount a coup, military factions require sufficient political agency. In countries identified as at risk, early action to facilitate dialogue between political and military factions may represent a fruitful direction for diplomacy. These processes must produce jointly owned solutions that diffuse and respond to substantive issues. Both sides should be held accountable through a structured dialogue process.
- **Prioritize programmatic investment in national infrastructures for peace.** Interim leaders in all the UCG focal countries attempted to engage diverse stakeholders and voices in shaping transition processes. Yet over time, this became more contested. Preventive action in at-risk countries should include proactive efforts to support coalition building, inclusivity in the political process, and wider societal capacity for conflict prevention and mediation.

(iii) More effective responses when coups occur

Regional and international partners, including development agencies and financial institutions, play a critical role in shaping the trajectory of coups. Partners need to support and sustain post-coup transition processes by investing in strategic entry points that boost inclusivity and effectiveness. In this way, the foundations for long-term renewal may be established. For example, UNDP's approach in recent coup-affected contexts has been to 'stay and deliver', and to prevent the development agenda from being jeopardized. Prospects for positive transformation can be optimized by aligning transition plans with inclusive and ongoing national dialogue processes. Addressing grievances across stakeholder groups is vital.

Specific priorities are:

- **Strategic coordination across sectors and partners.** No mechanism currently exists for converging diverse actors into a coordinated strategic response in the event of a military coup, whether at country, regional or global level. Nor is there an accepted protocol around the division of roles and responsibilities, coordination across sectors, or the sequencing of political and development levers. Clarity on these issues is required. It is partly in response to this coordination gap that UNDP and the AUC Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS) have jointly developed the new Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions. The facility aims to provide a platform for coordination, as well as responses to other gaps and priorities identified in this research.

- **Continued assistance to vulnerable populations, with higher levels of risk management and mitigation.** It is a priority to identify mechanisms, economic or otherwise, that can motivate political and military actors to engage meaningfully with citizens, and to honour transition timeframes and commitments. There is a risk, however, that ‘carrot and stick’ approaches marked by sanctions and aid disruptions may be counterproductive where populations are most vulnerable. Coup responses should include a sustained commitment to reaching populations, even amid executive-level political crises. This can prevent compounded vulnerability, isolation and grievances that, in turn, may be readily exploited for political gain. Finding creative operational modalities is a necessary corollary to this principle.
- **Advocate for meaningfully inclusive transition processes.** The only way to achieve lasting transformative change, democratic renewal and a reset of the social contract is to facilitate deep conversations exploring national issues, sources of division and drivers of alienation. Transitional justice processes are critical, and should work to resolve all alleged human rights violations. Regional and international actors must sustain pressure on military juntas and interim leadership to meaningfully and continuously engage a full spectrum of representative groups. Performance milestones are critical to track citizen inclusion in the transition, as well as related national dialogue processes. All key groups should be included, such as youth, women, rural communities, civil society and the private sector. This priority should be as, if not *more important*, than the timing of an eventual election.
- **Support transition processes towards restoring legitimate and inclusive constitutional order.** Regional and international actors should prioritize and coordinate support to the key institutions processes aimed at advancing transition milestones, complementing and providing oversight to the *de facto* executive role. These may include the efforts of constitutional reform bodies; transitional legislatures, oversight committees and their secretariats; electoral management bodies; parliament; anti-corruption authorities; human rights institutions and ombudspersons. Core government functions and ministries — such as those responsible for critical policy areas like justice, decentralization or reconciliation, and others charged with managing the economy and restoring critical service delivery — also require focused and targeted support.

(iv) Building long-term coup resilience by addressing structural and institutional drivers

Addressing the structural and institutional factors that feed into grievances and which, in turn, create readily triggered proximate factors, is a critical pathway for longer-term coup prevention, or ‘coup-proofing’. Long-term responses to the structural drivers of coup vulnerability should emphasize:

Deepening democratic governance

The recent coups have cast a spotlight on the incompleteness of democratic transition in some parts of Africa against a backdrop of global erosion — while paradoxically pointing to a new wave of democratic aspiration across the continent. There is a clear need to make better sense of barriers to democratic

consolidation, and to deepen the quality of democratic governance. Specific priorities are:

- ***Elections in a broader democracy ecosystem.*** Closing the gap between procedural and substantive democracy requires urgent and continuous efforts. Elections are easily manipulated, and the power of elites becomes entrenched when polls are rushed or held without functional accountability systems. *Soldiers and citizens* research participants identified a range of recommendations for improving the integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process, as detailed in other sections of this report.
- ***Support to developmental political leadership.*** The experiences of countries on a path toward democratic transition highlight that developmental political leadership is a significant source of resilience. Programming that fosters a new generation of political leaders on the continent is important, as are initiatives that encourage enhanced leadership from current heads of state in full respect of existing democratic norms and civic rights.
- ***Adjust governance programming to invigorate accountability oversight.*** International development partners should review and adapt interventions designed to promote democratic governance, rule of law, security, justice and human rights. While they should avoid overly state-centric conceptions of state building, partners must project a readiness for robust discourse where commitment to good governance may be in question. Supporting institutional development, championing representative and accountable institutions, and providing platforms for citizens to hold state actors accountable should be top priorities. Local organizations need flexible, sustained and predictable access to funding. These entities should be supported to identify their own priority needs, encourage political participation and advocate for responsive and inclusive services.

Civil-military relations: a strategic reset

It is imperative to recalibrate the civil-military relationship to respond to recent coups, as well as contribute to long-term prevention. Wider efforts are needed to deepen the effectiveness and accountability of security actors. Gains in the security sector can significantly help to reinvigorate the social contract between states and citizens. Specific priorities are:

- ***Civil-military reset through reform and dialogue.*** African states that have invested in processes to reframe this relationship show greater resilience to coups. Governments, with support from regional and international partners, should identify and replicate such successes through peer-to-peer exchange. Senior personnel leaving the military should have career pathways beyond the security sphere, and reform processes must be expedited to separate the influence of military actors from politics. Educating citizens about the appropriate separation of duties in a democratic state is another priority. At the same time, governments should address grievances within the military, including matters of remuneration, equipment, living conditions, career progression and opportunities for serving staff.

- **Improved security-sector reform (SSR).** In some contexts, security forces have been complicit in abuses against citizens – further fuelling insecurity. Ensuring that security forces observe human rights principles, best practices in community engagement and anti-corruption measures in executing their mandates is critical. Lessons from decades of SSR programming suggest that countries confronted by coup risk require new approaches. There needs to be a clear rationalization of the mandates and functions of different forces in relation to each other, while budgeting and expenditures should be transparent. Many interventions are overly focused on working with security forces, without ensuring accountability for malfeasance. Communities, civil society and the media must be supported to play a watchdog role regarding security force conduct. Partners supporting SSR should be ready to challenge and consider withholding support where reform stalls.
- **Local-level, inclusive security-sector governance.** Platforms that convene communities alongside state security actors and local government actors are essential. These platforms should enable participants to identify resources and avenues for jointly owned security solutions, including ensuring forces' accountability, while building a shared understanding of sources of insecurity. Local-level, inclusive security-sector governance must be recognized as a key programming area for enhancing resilience in at-risk countries.

Inclusive economic development and poverty reduction

Finally, in addressing structural drivers, it is vital to place greater emphasis on strengthening and expanding inclusive development gains and progress towards Agendas 2030 and 2063. Such gains must be felt across at-risk countries. Considering the structural drivers of coup risk from a development perspective has significant implications for policy, planning and programming. It suggests that governments across the continent should take demonstrable steps to build societies where citizens feel included in national development. International partners must double down on inclusive economic development, while aligning global trade relations with positive development outcomes. Specific priorities include:

- **Reducing multidimensional post-pandemic poverty.** The most recent Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) also assesses deprivation related to nutrition, cooking fuel, sanitation and housing across Africa. Large numbers of people (250 million) across the continent face these and other burdens, including a lack of water and electricity.¹² This aggregate regional perspective masks specific 'deprivation bundles' at national and sub-national levels. For states to progress towards the goals of Agendas 2063 and 2030, targeted and integrated policies are needed to simultaneously address multiple challenges. Heeding this call across the continent will reduce vulnerability and build resilience to coup risk.
- **Building inclusive economies and improving economic governance.** Governments across Africa should pursue a deliberately inclusive growth trajectory. Continued efforts in economic diversification are also implied by the research findings. The governance and management of extractives and other natural resources should be strengthened to occur in an effective, transparent,

and accountable manner, including by the private sector and civilian oversight modalities. A stronger social contract can be achieved by enhancing domestic resource mobilization and taxation regimes, and anti-corruption measures should be integrated across all sectors. Accelerated support for Africa's domestic private sector can boost structural transformation. This would drive productivity and competitiveness, allowing the sector to better serve and provide for its expanding markets. Creating new and sustainable job opportunities is another priority pathway. It is critical to focus on the informal sector, which provides livelihoods and opportunities for many low-income populations (especially youth and women).¹³ Africa's growth must boost local employment opportunities and benefit a majority, enabling sustained wealth creation. Investing in domestic value-addition manufacturing, upgrading infrastructure, providing access to markets and creating enabling environments for entrepreneurs and small businesses are all steps to be taken with greater purpose. Such investment should occur at both the national and local level.

- **Tackling external constraints.** While the onus is on African states to orchestrate inclusive economic development, relationships with regional and international partners can both help and hinder. Global, regional and national inequalities are exacerbated by asymmetrical and constrained trade relations, which hamper the distribution of economic opportunities. At the regional and international level, much needs to be done to intensify progress under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. The goal must be to expand regional economic opportunities for citizens and new labour-market entrants. Further afield, trade relationships between Africa, Europe and other parts of the world should be reframed to optimize development prospects.

(v) Reorienting international engagement in the Sahel

Although the findings and recommendations of this study are relevant in contexts across the continent, the concentration of recent coups in the Sahel subregion has direct implications for regional and international engagement.

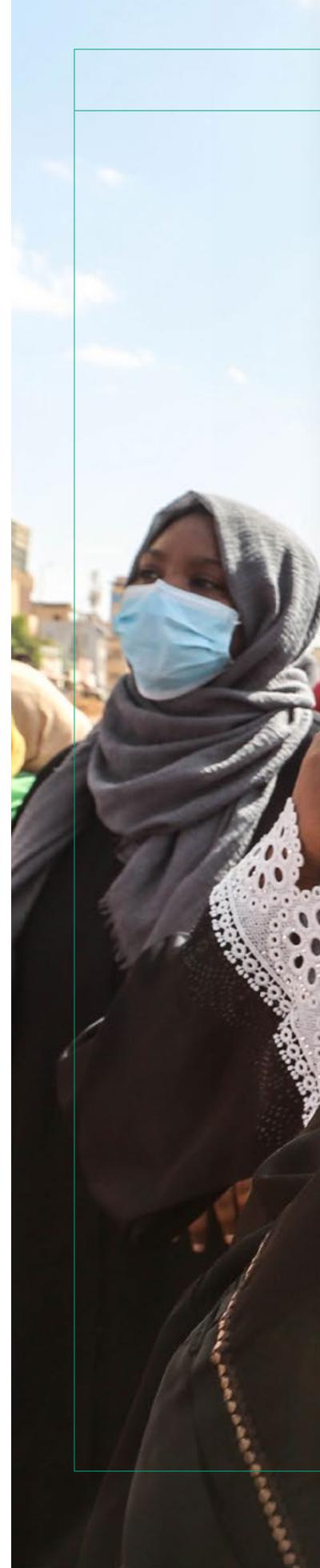
During the past decade, the Sahel has experienced increasing insecurity and turmoil. The recent coups are an expression of that turmoil – and a forewarning of what may yet follow.

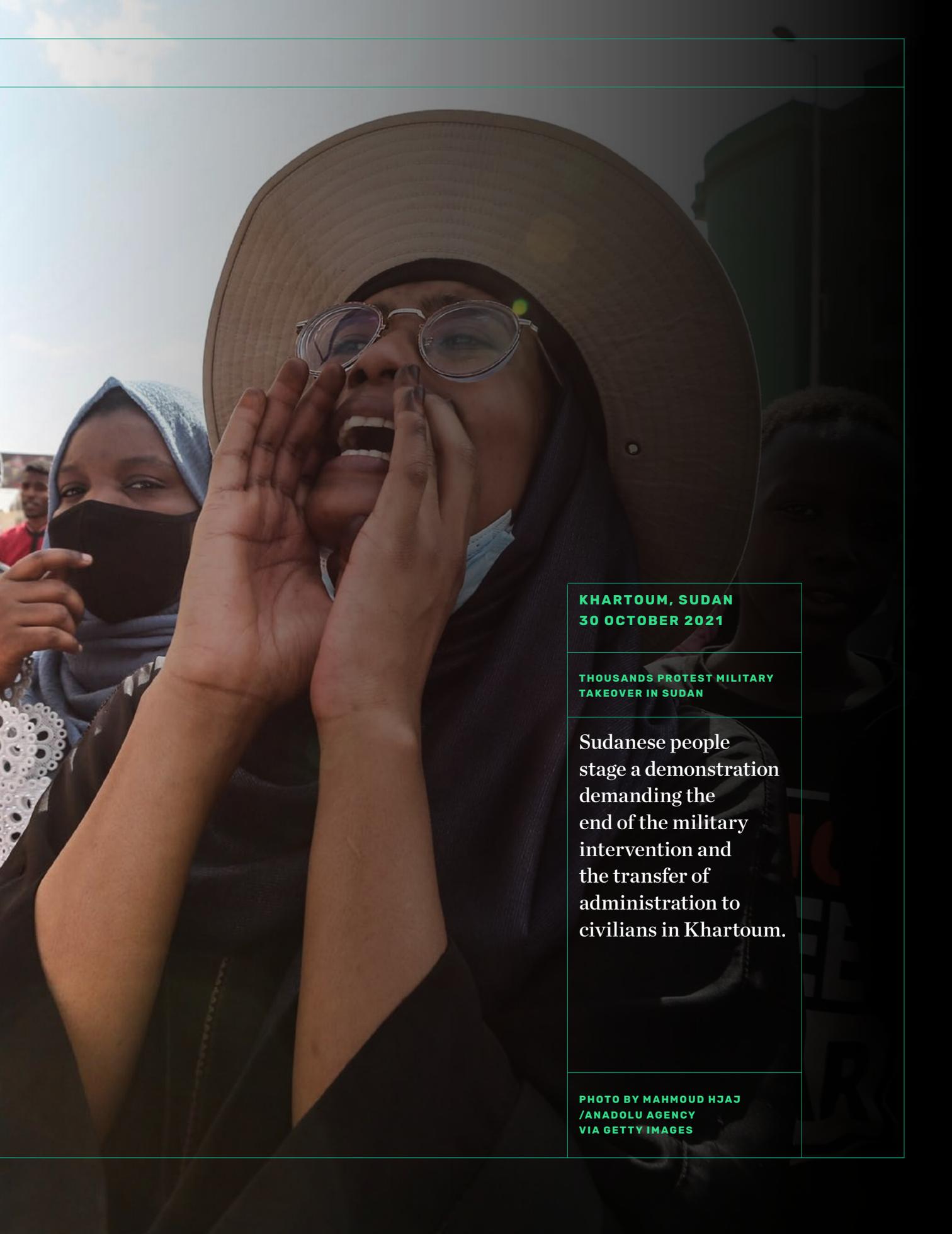
Security deployment and assistance has been extensive and complex, often occurring at the expense of attention to root causes. In this way, various international actors have contributed, albeit unwittingly, to deepening fragility. The Sahel may be one of the most analysed and strategized subregions of Africa. Due to its geopolitical importance, its mineral wealth and ongoing struggles against violent extremism, the region features prominently on international agendas. However, in a context of shifting geopolitical brinkmanship, attention to the region should urgently be renewed and refocused.

Such a recalibration demands a new development response focused on governance priorities and a reset of the social contract between the states and citizens of the subregion. Limited access to justice and basic public services are key drivers of insecurity, and provide opportunities for violent extremist groups to co-opt local populations. Building inclusive local governance should become a cornerstone of

fresh efforts that extend beyond securitized approaches, and both recognize and draw on informal and local governance mechanisms and sources of resilience.

Tackling corruption at all levels of government is essential if investment in state service provision is to succeed. This includes the need for malpractices to be called out more vociferously. It is also crucial to monitor the human rights conduct of security actors. Early results of the ongoing stabilization activities by UNDP and partners in the Lake Chad Basin region – which contribute to the peace-development nexus – provide inspiration. Forging new narratives about the Sahel, which emphasize positive opportunities for growth and prosperity for its peoples, can also contribute to new pathways.





**KHARTOUM, SUDAN
30 OCTOBER 2021**

**THOUSANDS PROTEST MILITARY
TAKEOVER IN SUDAN**

Sudanese people stage a demonstration demanding the end of the military intervention and the transfer of administration to civilians in Khartoum.

**PHOTO BY MAHMOUD HJAJ
/ANADOLU AGENCY
VIA GETTY IMAGES**

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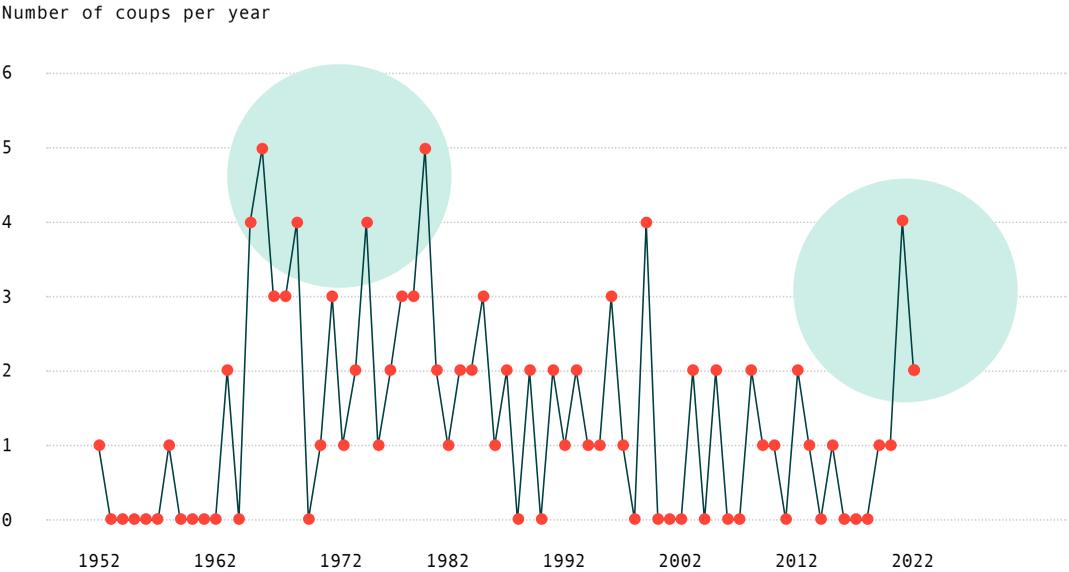
INTRODUCTION

Between 2020 and 2022, Africa experienced six military coups and three coup attempts.

INTRODUCTION

Between 2020 and 2022, Africa experienced six ‘successful’ military coups [of which two were ‘coups within coups’] and three attempted coups.¹⁴ This represents a sharp rise in coup incidence over the previous 20-year period, as illustrated in Figure 1.¹⁵ The AU denounced these developments in a series of high-level political statements and communiqués, signalling renewed effort towards tackling the resurgence of what it terms ‘unconstitutional changes of government’ (UCG) on the continent.¹⁶ Similarly, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged the Security Council to act in response to an “epidemic of coups d’états” unfolding on the world stage.¹⁷

FIGURE 1
TOTAL NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL MILITARY COUPS PER YEAR



Source: Based on Souaré, I. (2022a). 'Are coups back in Africa?', dataset, updated as of October 2022.¹⁸

98

Total number of military coups in 70 years (1952-2022)

25

years, over a 70-year period, with no successful coups

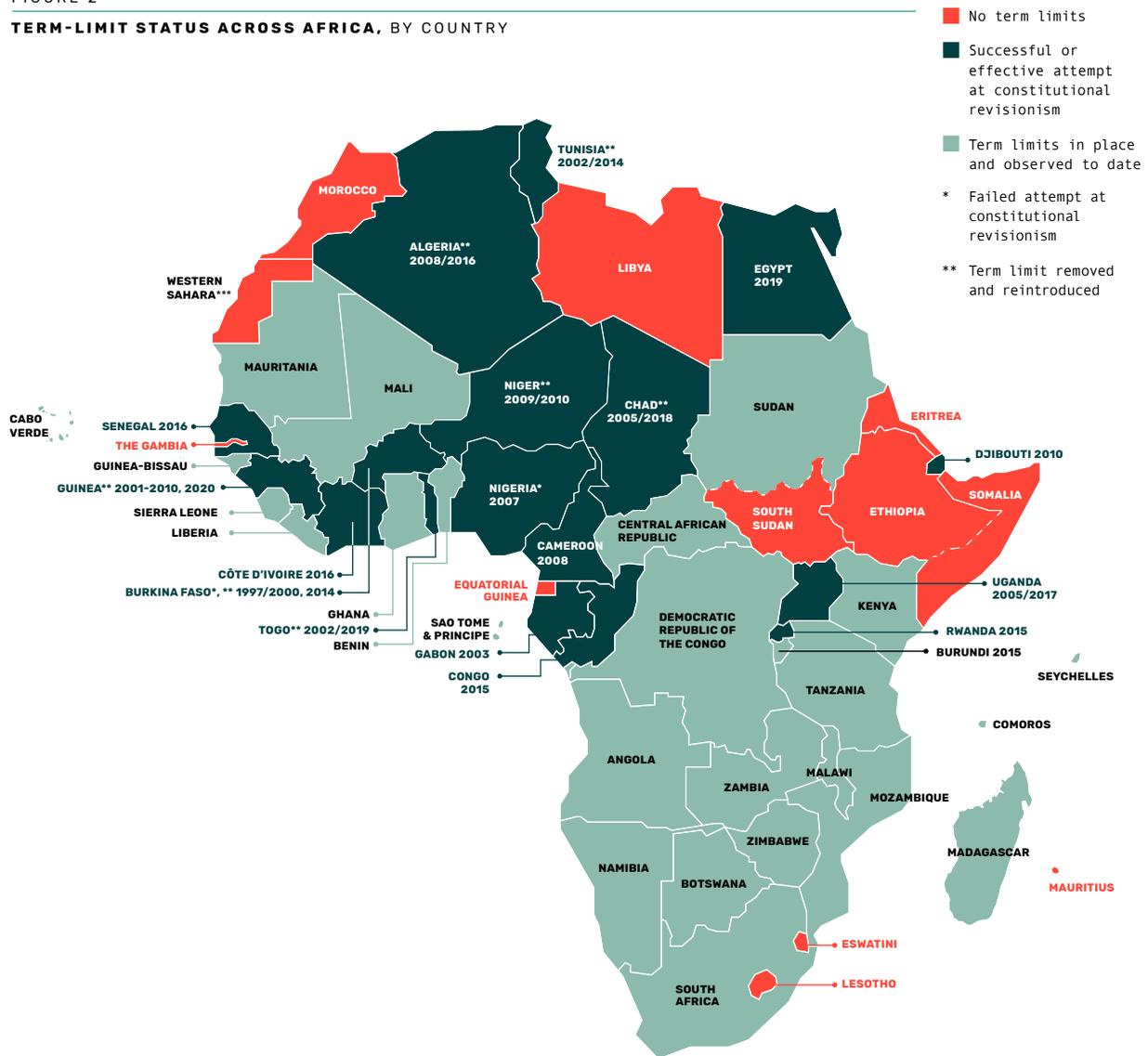
1.4

Average number of successful coups per year

A rise in ‘constitutional coups’ has also been observed, in which leaders attempt to revise constitutions to allow for third-, fourth- and even fifth-term mandates.¹⁹ This practice has intensified since 2014.²⁰ Figure 2 shows the geographic spread of constitutional manipulation (across different types and approaches to it); countries that have no term-limit provision (and those that have never had one); and those which had term limits in place at the end of 2022.²¹

FIGURE 2

TERM-LIMIT STATUS ACROSS AFRICA, BY COUNTRY



Source: Presidential term-limit provisions in African constitutions (Souaré, I. [2022a])

The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the UNDP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

*** Western Sahara is a Non-Self-Governing Territory

Military coups and rule featured prominently in much of Africa's post-colonial history, but from 1990, a wave of democratization yielded progress in favour of constitutional order. Every African country now has a constitution – whether active or suspended in cases of military coups and transitions. Democratic governments have been established in many countries. The AU considers democratic governance as a continent-wide norm through instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. A track record of peaceful alternance of political power through electoral process has been well established and appears to intensify slowly but surely. From 1990–2010, 16 percent of all general elections in sub-Saharan Africa resulted in an opposition victory.²² From 2011–2022, this proportion had climbed to 28 percent.

Against this backdrop of democratic momentum, the sudden uptick in military coups since 2020 conjures the spectre of democratic backsliding, earlier chapters of turbulence, a disregard for constitutional order, and a close re-involvement of the military in political life. **Viewed alongside constitutional manipulation (which can pave the way for military coups), the resilience of democracy in Africa is clearly being stress-tested.**²³

Popular support for new leaders assuming power through military coups has featured prominently as these contemporary coups have unfolded, seemingly constituting a further blow against democracy. Yet this support has been transient. As this report shows, people have taken to the streets to cheer for change in a context of deeply felt, expanding and yet frustrated democratic yearning. Where confidence in existing governments has been eroded, this has expressed itself – in the short term, in some settings – as support for military rule.

Paradoxically, interim popular support for military coups can be understood as symptomatic of a new wave of democratic aspiration that is expanding across the continent. However, if left unchecked, counter-vailing trends may compromise democratic consolidation and fuel further political turbulence.²⁴ The recent UCG events highlight the importance of improving the quality of democracy experienced by citizens, and its delivery against inclusive development priorities.

Coups, almost by definition, undermine constitutional rule, entrench bad governance and create conditions that undermine civic freedom – including by encouraging future coups.²⁵ When power is seized through military means, it represents a moment of profound risk. The future trajectory of each affected country is jeopardized, with potential for spill-over effects to immediate neighbours. Overall progress towards peace and democratic governance is also threatened.

Political risk analyses may have anticipated aspects of the coup events that unfolded between 2020 and 2022. Yet regional and international observers were seemingly unprepared to respond proactively and swiftly. This highlights a need to incentivize political will to act and to scale up prevention.

Dangerous and fraught as they may be, military coups and their aftermath also present opportunities to harness current turbulence for positive longer-term change.

**CHAD,
ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

CHAD'S CITIZENS WERE SET TO GO TO THE POLLS FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON 11 APRIL 2021

A member of the Presidential Guard keeps watch during an election campaign rally for Chadian President Idriss Déby Itno in N'Djamena on 9 April ahead of the presidential election.

PHOTO BY MARCO LONGARI
/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Tapping into popular grievances and understanding structural drivers can yield inclusive and potentially transformational transition agendas and outcomes.

This report is part of UNDP's response to the recent UCG events and is one of several major studies on contemporary features of the development landscape in Africa.²⁶ It applies a forward-looking approach both to preventing further coups from occurring, and to harnessing opportunities for transformative change where crises have unfolded.

The analysis is based on the findings of a perceptions survey that gathered insights from approximately 5,000 citizens who had recently lived through military coups or equivalent UCG events. Their inputs are contrasted with the perspectives of a further 3,000 citizens whose countries are on a path to democratic transition or consolidation.

The methodology used in *Soldiers and citizens* is presented in further detail after this introduction. Section 1 of the report reflects on the multiplicity of factors that may have contributed to recent coup incidence, informed by secondary data and literature sources. Sections 2 and 3 present the findings from the *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey and related qualitative research.

Section 2 unpacks the study's development lens on the structural and proximate factors shaping military coups through the prism of citizens' perspectives. The four chapters in this section respectively focus on socio-economic factors and overall development consequences; governance shortfalls; security and safety; and perspectives on inclusion.

Section 3 considers the aftermath of military coups, providing a people-centred assessment of responses by regional and international actors. Finally, Section 4 draws together the findings to present key messages and a framework for policy and programming action. The report's recommendations are intended to support the efforts of regional and international actors seeking to constructively prevent and respond to military coups as a form of UCG, and the related threat to democratic governance and peace across Africa.

II

METHODOLOGY

The *Soldiers and citizens* study set out to answer the following research questions:

- What are the development drivers of military coups, as a form of UCG, in Africa?
- What explains the apparent popular support for such coups ‘in the moment’ — including in contexts where democratically elected leaders were ousted?
- What policy and programming options should regional and international actors consider to effectively prevent military coups?
- What can these actors do to restore and sustain constitutional order, reset the social contract and achieve more inclusive democratic governance in UCG-affected countries?

Given the complexity of the issues and dynamics at play, the research team established a set of conceptual anchor points to guide the process. These, in turn, informed the development of research methods and approaches. Key elements of the methodology are presented in the following pages.

CONCEPTUAL ANCHOR POINTS

The study adopted three conceptual anchor points that are closely aligned with UNDP's mandate and working approach, including its partnerships with regional organizations. These are:

1. The evolution and implementation of AU norms on UCG;
2. An explicit development lens on military coups as a form of UCG; and
3. Envisaging more inclusive political processes in the quest for sustaining constitutional order on the continent.

1. The evolution and implementation of AU norms on UCG

Over the past two decades, one of the most notable developments in African governance and diplomacy has been the emergence of the AU and some of the regional economic communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms (RMs) as impactful players in the political transition processes of some member states. Recent experiences in countries such as Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, The Gambia, Lesotho, Mali and South Sudan have highlighted the potential influence of the AU and organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).²⁷

This study is situated within the evolving AU normative frameworks on UCG. These began to take shape in the 1990s (under the direction of the then-Organization of African Unity), alongside a commitment to elections as forming the only legitimate basis for assuming and retaining government power.

Norms against UCG are enshrined in various legal instruments. These include the 2000 Lomé Declaration; the AU Constitutive Act; the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (the African Charter); as well as various declarations and decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC).²⁸

Some RECs/RMs have developed regional instruments that mirror these continental norms. The intention to inhibit and prevent UCG is strongly rooted in evolving interpretations of threats to global peace and security within international law. It further aligns with the post-Cold War normative interest of international law and international organizations in the defence of constitutional order and the promotion of democratic governance.²⁹

As articulated in AU instruments, UCG can take different forms (see Box 1). The first of this type of UCG is presently the most prominent of the four, and is the primary focus of this report.

BOX 1

KEY AU LEGAL INSTRUMENTS PERTAINING TO UCG

The **Lomé Declaration of 2000** establishes a framework for an AU response to UCG on the continent.

It defines UCG events as:

- i Military coups;
- ii Intervention by mercenaries;
- iii Removal of democratic governments by armed rebels; and
- iv Refusal of a losing incumbent to relinquish power to the winning opposition candidate.

The **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance** further introduced AU sanctions when UCG were observed, based on the Lomé definitions, as well as further specifications defining UCG to include an amendment or revision of the constitution that infringes on the principles of democratic change of government.

The **Accra Declaration on UCG** of March 2022 stressed the need for AU/REC synergies in addressing UCG, and the full implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Governance Architecture as well as the African Peer Review Mechanism. It further noted, with concern, increasing eliminations and modifications of constitutional term limits as manipulations of democratic processes in AU member states.

The **Malabo Declaration of May 2022** further endorsed the Accra Declaration. It re-asserted the importance of enhanced effectiveness and sustainability in AU support to member states in responses to UCG.

Analysts have identified several gaps in this policy architecture – including a need for clearer provision in response to attempts to extend power through constitutional amendment.³⁰ The March 2022 Accra Declaration reiterated a continent-level commitment to these principles, along with the AU's intention to take further actions to strengthen responses at all levels.³¹

Urgent questions regarding both the implementation of these norms, and incentives of AU member states to adhere to them, require continued attention.³² The normative framework on UCG is thus both still evolving, and in need of renewed commitment. Yet it remains a pertinent, useful and opportune frame through which to view recent developments and shape response strategies, while further strengthening regional leadership and influence. UNDP's own deep partnership with the AU Commission and its various specialized agencies has been a further inspiration.

2. An explicit development lens on coups as a form of UCG

Experience suggests that military coups negatively impact development progress.³³ Abrupt changes in government impede regular policy and programme implementation and stall much-needed investment. Diverse stakeholders, including development actors, need to identify options and pathways to mitigate the profound risks associated with military coups as a form of UCG. Opportunities for positive transformation must be sought and harnessed. UNDP has produced this report to respond to this need. This reflects its mandate as the lead development

actor in the UN system, engaging at multiple levels in supporting African states and citizens, as well as the AU and regional organizations, to work towards Agenda 2030 (in this, its final ‘Decade of Action’) and Agenda 2063.

The study’s starting point posits that a development lens can help yield effective responses to prevent military coups, while complementing political perspectives and instruments to protect and advance development gains. **This approach highlights how different aspects of a country’s development context may influence the occurrence of military coups.** It also sheds light on the development consequences that are likely to accrue when coups take place. These may well be destructive, but the development lens also looks to identify opportunities for securing positive outcomes towards future progress.

This lens derives from Agenda 2030, which, in Sustainable Development Goal 16, emphasizes the centrality of achieving peaceful, just and inclusive societies for delivering and safe-guarding development outcomes across all other areas. Agenda 2063 articulates related priorities in its Aspiration 3 (envisaging an Africa where good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law thrive), and Aspiration 4 (envisaging a peaceful and secure Africa). In the *Our Common Agenda* initiative, the UN Secretary-General places renewed emphasis on building fresh social contracts to deepen trust and accountability.³⁴ This study reaffirms the critical and timely importance of governance-focused dimensions of international development.

Development perspectives also draw attention to citizens’ lived experience of national political events (across different demographic, gender and identity vectors), in ways that political analysis may overlook. The respective and differentiated views of women and youth are key. It is well recognized that these groups are central to development progress, as reflected in Agenda 2063. The people-centred dimension is closely aligned to the UN human security approach and commitment to ‘leave no one behind’, and represents a unique contribution to the discourse. It is embedded into the report’s methodology, as discussed below.

3. Envisaging inclusive political transitions

UNDP produced this report as part of its Supporting Inclusive Transitions in Africa project, reflecting the organization’s commitment to fostering platforms of development that engage the widest range of stakeholders.³⁵ In addition, the report considers the quality and depth of inclusion during the complex political transitions signalled by military coups and during the electoral process.

The research has sought to understand to what extent people feel heard; whether a new social contract can be created after a military coup; and whether elections succeed in renewing citizens’ confidence in the state. The study thus pays close attention to the inclusiveness of political processes. This dimension is presented as a key factor whereby a perilous moment of UCG might be pivoted towards transformative, longer-term outcomes.

The trajectory linking inclusive processes to inclusive outcomes is non-linear and complex. Yet states and societies that are more open and inclusive display greater prosperity, effectiveness and resilience in the long term.³⁶ A substantial body of research demonstrates how the exclusion of marginalized and minority groups from political decision-making, whether quantified or informally perceived, constitutes a key factor in conflict and instability – while also affecting prospects for democratic consolidation.³⁷

Experience in peacemaking highlights the importance of inclusive national dialogue processes for establishing trust and establishing a shared sense of a future, supported and sustained by national infrastructures for peace. These lessons are pertinent in considering post-coup transition processes and priorities. Women and young people's contributions are key to sustainable peace, for instance. As a result, critical policy norms and processes have been generated around women, peace and security; as well as youth, peace and security.

In order for democracy to work, all citizens must have access to participation and representation in institutions and processes – from election management and constitutional bodies to political parties and parliaments. The concept of political inclusion signifies that every citizen should have an equal right and opportunity to engage with, and contribute to, the functioning of these institutions and processes.³⁸ Levels of inclusiveness and representativeness are critical indicators of the overall legitimacy of a given political process, including transitions, whether resulting from elections or following UCG events.

RESEARCH TOOLS

The research process was shaped by the conceptual anchor points mentioned above. The study combined both qualitative and quantitative methods, which are described in further detail below. The methods were designed to triangulate findings across the sources of data, recognizing the complexity of the issues at hand.

Country case selection

The overall methodological approach has been to gather evidence and data for two contrasting types of recent political transitions in Africa. This is based on a working hypothesis that comparative analysis would yield insights. Specifically, the study contrasts UCG-category countries, which have recently experienced a military coup or equivalent event, with democratic transitioning states (DTS), which appear to be on a path of democratic consolidation or transition.

These two categories do not represent a comprehensive typology of contemporary political transitions in Africa. However, they reflect the polarity between two prominent trends: either towards deepened democracy on the continent, as seen since the 1990s – or, seemingly, towards its disruption.

The study's UCG focal countries are Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan, while the DTS countries are The Gambia, Ghana and Tanzania. The emphasis of the analysis is on the first group of five countries that recently experienced a military coup (noting Chad's case is particular in this frame).³⁹ The states in the second list have either experienced a substantial period of democratic transition (Ghana and Tanzania – the latter also being the only country included with no history of military coups), or they have, if only recently, embarked on a path towards democratic transition (The Gambia).

In addition to generating comparative lessons and insights, the inclusion of DTS countries revealed potential limitations of government performance against citizens' expectations, even in apparently functioning democracies.

BOX 2

ATTEMPTED COUP IN THE GAMBIA

In December 2022, as the drafting of this report was in its final stages, an attempted military coup was announced in The Gambia. Four soldiers reportedly attempted to overthrow the government of President Adama Barrow, but were soon arrested. The attempt was condemned by a cross-section of national actors, including the main opposition United Democratic Party, the National Human Rights Commission and citizens, who in news reports, called for a more robust democratic system.⁴⁰ Both ECOWAS and the AU issued statements condemning the coup plot, rejecting all UCG in member states, and congratulating national security services for foiling the attempt.

The events underscore the challenges faced by states undergoing democratic transition, and the ever-present potential for reversals. Mali, for instance, had been heralded as a democratic success story for many years, experiencing three successful elections. This included a peaceful leadership turnover prior to its March 2012 coup and subsequent events.

For the purposes of this study, The Gambia has been retained as an example of a country on a path towards democratic transition, given that the coup attempt was successfully repelled.

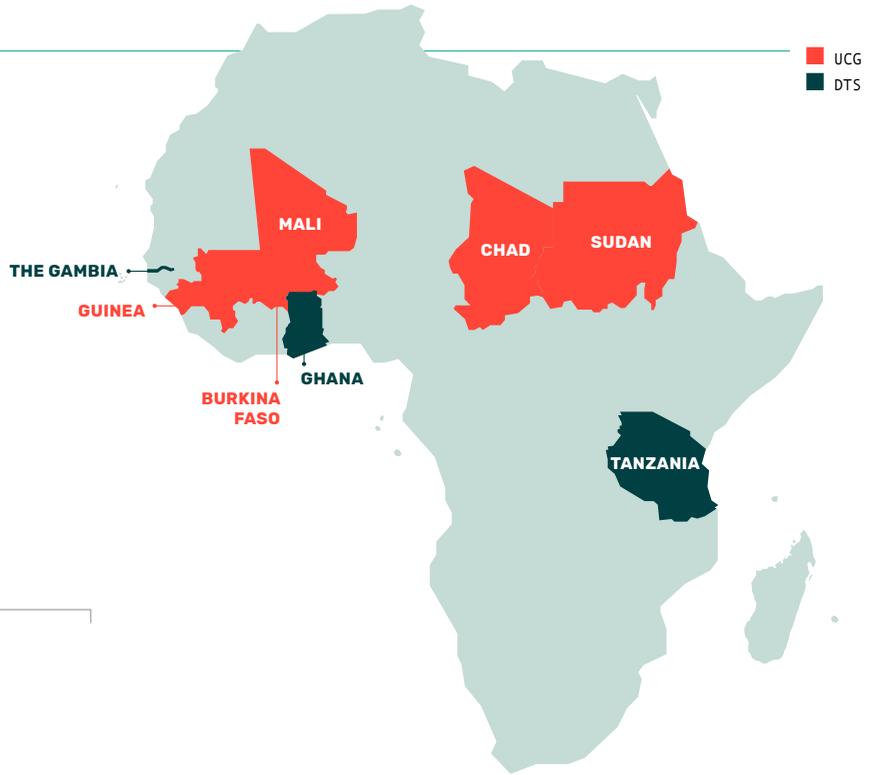
Quantitative research instruments

The study captures the perspectives of approximately 8,000 African citizens from eight focal countries, comparing and contrasting experiences across their locations. The report places these perspectives at its centre – 'listening' to them, while triangulating findings against other data and literature. To allow for a sufficient sample size, 1,000 survey responses were collected in each of the countries, using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).⁴¹ This generated a set of 5,000 respondents from UCG-category countries, and 3,000 from DTS-category countries.

Figures 3, 4 and 5 present a demographic profile of this vast sample. Participants from both settings reflected an even representation of women and men (women comprised 51 percent of respondents in UCG countries, and 50 percent from DTS settings), and the average age of respondents was 35. Respondents were mostly located in urban settings (70 percent UCG, and 58 percent in DTS countries), and across both contexts, just over half of the interviewees were employed.

FIGURE 3

GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS, BY COUNTRY*

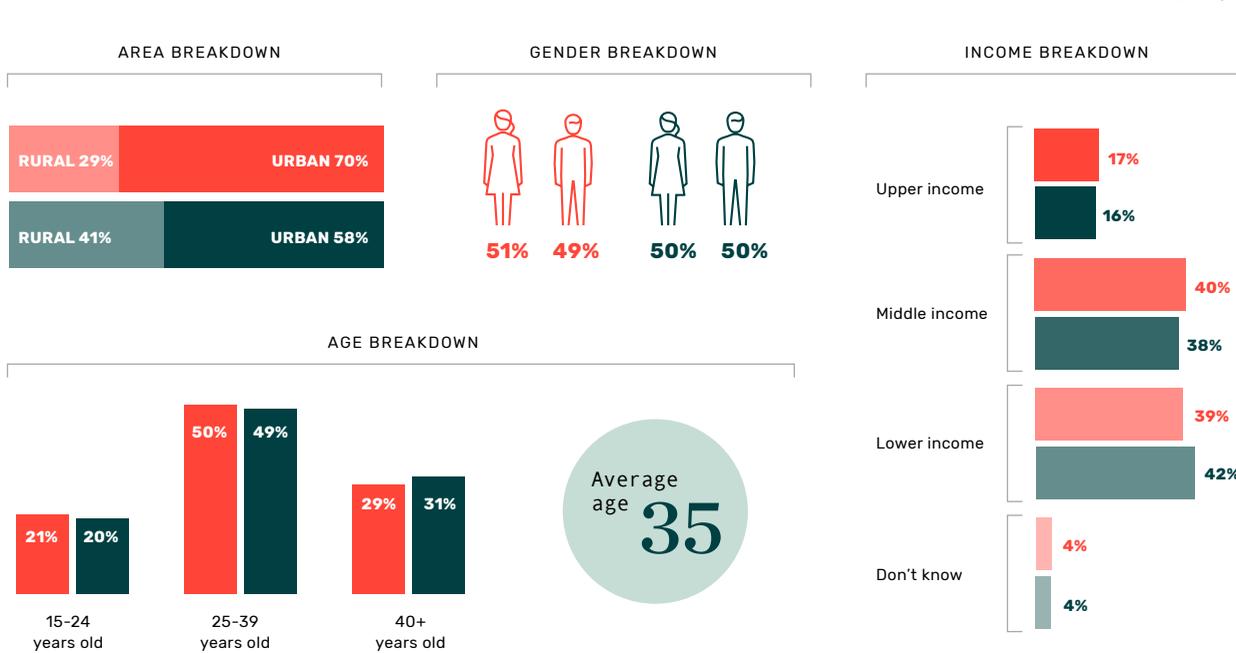


GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD

- 5** UCG COUNTRIES
- 3** DTS COUNTRIES

FIGURE 4

SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PROFILES, BY GENDER, AGE, INCOME AND AREA (URBAN VS. RURAL)



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

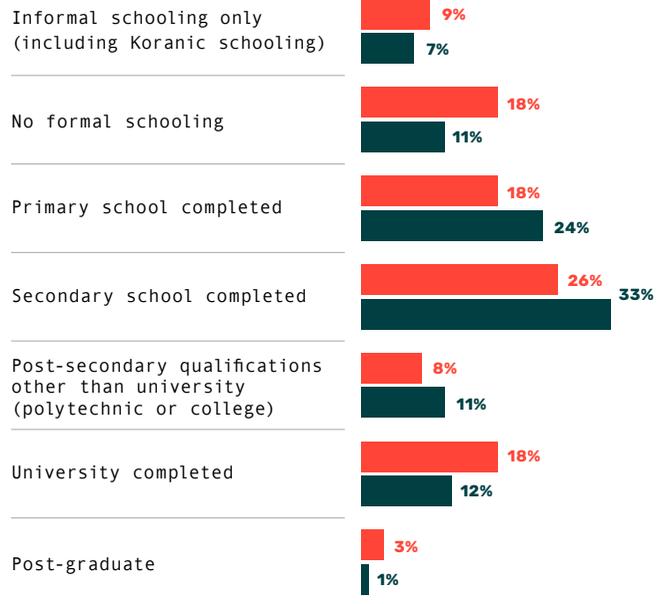
* The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the UNDP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

FIGURE 5

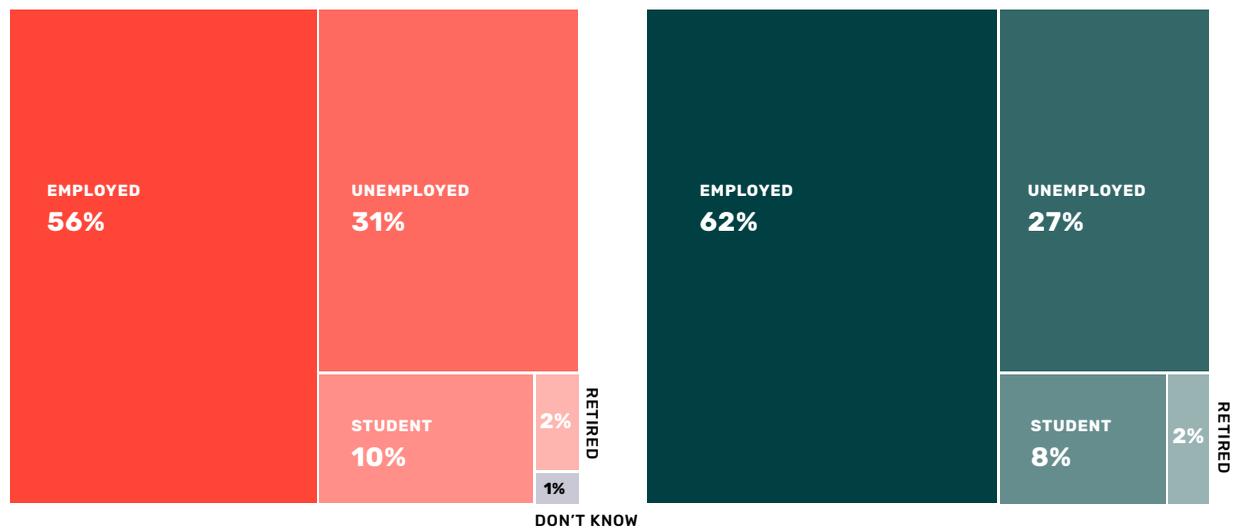
**SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PROFILES,
BY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

■ UCG
■ DTS

EDUCATION BREAKDOWN



EMPLOYMENT BREAKDOWN



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

Note: The employment category includes all respondents who indicated that they were working, whereas the unemployment category includes all non-working respondents. The student category includes both pupils and students. For descriptive analysis, the education category is averaged to those with no formal education and those with formal education, where each category carries equal weight. The income category is based on the basic needs question. The upper income category refers to the "I make enough money to buy basics and save the surplus". The middle income category refers to "I make enough money only to buy basics", and the low income category refers to "I do not make enough money to buy basics".

The respondents from the eight focal countries were asked to think back to the time of the last national-level political event (whether UCG or election), and answer questions related to their experiences and perspectives, as well as supplementary questions related to their attitudes to different forms of government and government performance. Respondents were also asked how they viewed the future based on their assessment of, and confidence in, government performance and the overall direction of travel. The questionnaire instrument is included in Annex 1.

The specific political events discussed in the UCG-category countries were:

- **Burkina Faso:** Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba becoming president through a military coup in February 2022;
- **Chad:** Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno (also known as Mahamat Kaka) became acting president when appointed by the Transitional Military Council in April 2021, following the death of his predecessor (and father) Idriss Déby;
- **Guinea:** Mamady Doumbouya became the transitional head of state through a military coup in September 2021;
- **Mali:** Assimi Goïta became the transitional head of state through a military coup in May 2021; and
- **Sudan:** Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan, chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, removed the civilian prime minister – effectively becoming the transitional head of state of Sudan in October 2021.

The specific electoral events discussed with the respondents from DTS-category countries were:

- **The Gambia:** the re-election of Adama Barrow as president in December 2021;
- **Ghana:** the re-election of Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as president in December 2020; and
- **Tanzania:** Samia Suluhu Hassan becoming president in March 2021, following the death of her predecessor.

Descriptive analysis of findings from the survey forms the basis of the primary data shared in this report. In addition, a second analysis of the dataset was conducted using multinomial logistic regression and statistical modelling to further test emerging findings.⁴² Findings are summarized throughout the report, with a fuller description available as a background paper arising from this project.⁴³

Lastly, a brief exercise probing the economic costs of previous coups in Guinea and Mali was also undertaken, using the synthetic control method (SCM) – introduced in Chapter 2.1.

Qualitative research instruments

The primary *Soldiers and citizens* dataset was supplemented by a range of qualitative research activities. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KII) were conducted in two UCG-category focal countries (Burkina Faso, June 2022, and Sudan, February 2023), and one DTS-category country (Ghana, June 2022). The FGDs took place with four different groups in each country, of which one was limited to women only and one youth.

The discussions took place in different locations within each country to explore the varied views and experiences of the sample population: Manga, Ouagadougou, Koudougou (Burkina Faso), Accra, Tamale and Kasoa (Ghana), and Khartoum and Nyala (Sudan). The discussions revolved around living conditions, the current government, the last change of government, the role of regional and international actors, and the inclusivity of political transitions. Twelve key informant interviews were also conducted in the same countries to further explore the issues raised, through the perspectives of community leaders, CSOs, women's organizations and religious leaders. In total, 132 people participated in the qualitative research activities.

Broader case studies and literature reviews were commissioned for each of the eight focal countries. These aimed to assess historical contexts and developments leading up to, and informing, the political events in question, as framed by the key research questions. A review was also undertaken of selected academic literature on democratization in Africa, military coups and political transition more broadly. The analysis was further informed by position papers that were commissioned on the role of the AU and RECs in relation to political transition, the role of the international development system responding to UCG, and a deep dive into the Sahel's specific experiences in recent years.⁴⁴

The study also draws on the expertise of UNDP, with country offices providing significant support in the data-collection phase within each of the selected countries, and wider staff expertise engaged throughout the process. The research team collaborated closely with a range of other institutions, including the AU, RECs/RMs, the African Development Bank (AfDB), African academic institutions, think tanks and civil society organizations. Multiple consultations across these and other stakeholders, and through a continual peer review process, generated a further essential dimension of the project.

METHODOLOGICAL CAVEATS

Every research project has limitations, and this study is no exception. Key caveats to its methodology are:

Country case selection

Of the 55 member states of the AU, several countries would have made excellent alternative focal cases, particularly in the DTS category.⁴⁵ There are also conceptual challenges in defining and categorizing 'democratic transition',

as events unfolding in The Gambia during the finalization of this report also underscore.⁴⁶ The countries included are indicative rather than comprehensive, illustrating examples of UCG and DTS experiences. The research has intended to look for patterns and correlations, rather than to generalize the eight countries' experiences. Its geographic spread was kept as broad as possible to allow for continent-level relevance (yet noting that military coup occurrence has concentrated in West Africa). All the focal countries were selected based on their relevance to the study, and the availability of both primary and secondary data.

CATI perceptions survey data

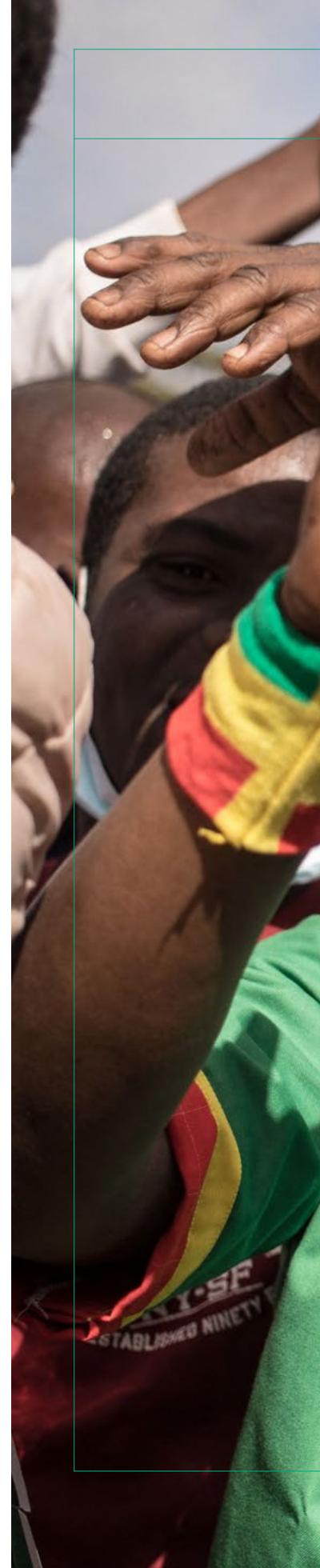
The survey was based on the non-random sampling of approximately 1,000 citizens in each focal country, designed to provide reasonably representative data for each population through using a quota approach for key demographic variables. Telephone interviews, as with all forms of survey research, are subject to design and method limitations. This includes coverage bias, the exclusion of individuals without telephone access, and differential response rates. Asking people to recall how they felt about an event that has passed raises issues of reliability in memory. The data presented here should be interpreted within the context of these limitations. Further, data disaggregation by age, gender, geography, level of education and income yielded limited differences when analysing results, with the exception of the age and gender categories. These are discussed in relevant sections of the report.

Open-source data

The report also makes use of open-source data to inform its comparison between country categories. Indices data can be collected over varying timeframes, and caution should therefore be taken when making comparisons to a specific timeframe. The indices shown in this study have used the latest available data, primarily as of April 2023.

Focus group discussions and key informant interviews

These are qualitative in nature and useful in explaining why people hold certain attitudes – giving people more opportunity to share their attitudes and experience in their own words. Findings cannot be generalized.





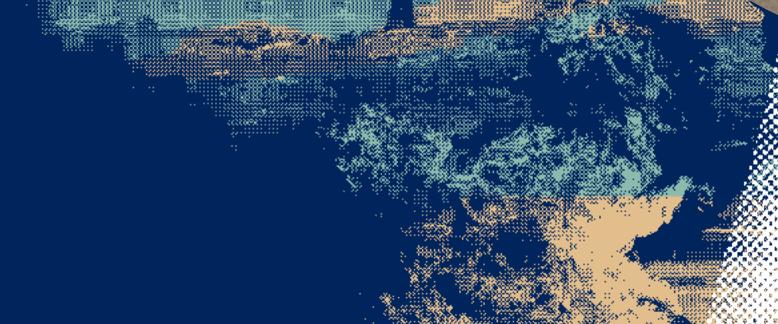
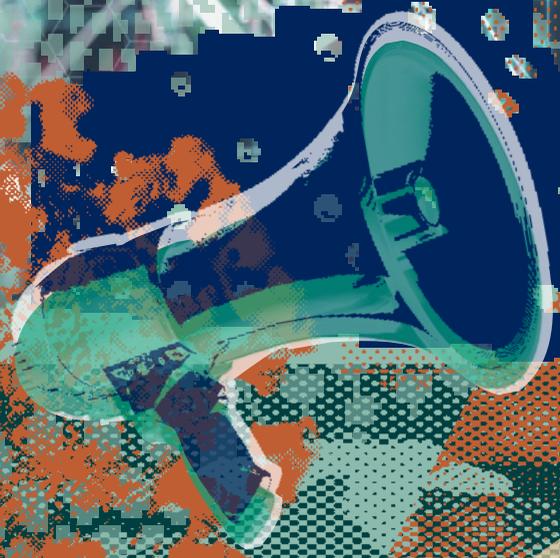
**BAMAKO , MALI
14 JANUARY 2022**

A DEMONSTRATOR HOLDS HIS HAND TO SHOW THE NUMBER FIVE, DEMANDING FIVE MORE YEARS FOR THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT, DURING A MASS PROTEST AGAINST SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON MALI AND THE JUNTA BY ECOWAS.

Malians took to the streets after the military junta called for protests against stringent sanctions imposed by ECOWAS over delayed elections.

**PHOTO BY FLORENT VERGNES
/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES**

Index ▲ 1.56





“ We are tired of coups.
People have suffered, lost
dear ones, were humiliated,
impoverished and even killed.
This is the only country we have
and this is why we have become
so tolerant. We don't want coups
and we have experienced
military coups and rule [...]
we don't want it.”

FEMALE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSANT, ACCRA, GHANA (JUNE 2022)



Africa's resurgence of military coups in context

This preliminary section of the *Soldiers and citizens* report precedes the presentation of its primary data in Sections 2 and 3. In addition to secondary data – in particular global development indices – it draws insights from the broader research literature on democratization in Africa, military coups and political transition. It sketches a broad contextual and conceptual canvas for probing the resurgence of military coups in Africa, and to better interpret the citizens' views gathered through the perceptions survey.

Approaches to the analysis of violent conflict have long found it helpful to differentiate between types of causes that contribute to the grievances and interests that fuel conflict, and the dynamics that may unfold – while at the same time recognizing that interlinkages exist among these. A common categorization is:

- **Structural and institutional (or root) drivers:** pervasive factors that have become built into the policies, structures and fabric of a society, and which may create the pre-conditions for violent conflict;
- **Proximate (or intermediate) factors:** these factors contribute to a climate conducive to violent conflict or its further escalation, and are sometimes symptomatic of a deeper problem; and
- **Triggers:** key one-off acts or events, or their anticipation, that can set off or escalate violent conflict.⁴⁷

The schema is sometimes illustrated using an iceberg metaphor, whereby structural drivers are submerged, proximate factors emerge into view above the surface, and trigger events form the tip (Figure 6).⁴⁸ This frame is useful for plotting the plethora of dynamics at play in relation to recent military coups in Africa.

FIGURE 6

STRUCTURAL, PROXIMATE AND TRIGGER FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CONTEMPORARY MILITARY COUPS IN AFRICA

TRIGGERS

In some cases, these are clearly identifiable – such as the death of former Chadian president or security attacks in Burkina Faso – or shrouded in the opacity of behind-the-scenes political dynamics

PROXIMATE FACTORS

These include the past decade of insecurity and securitization in the Sahel; mounting popular grievances against governments on corruption, constitutional manipulation and responses to a global context of economic downturn; and the incompleteness of Africa's democratization

STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL

Such factors include a history of military involvement in politics; state fragility and questions of legitimacy; and exclusionary patterns of economic growth



Using this frame, the remainder of this section reflects on key features of the continental context within which the recent coups took place. In so doing, it attempts to offer a synthesis perspective, while recognizing that each of the five countries under review faced unique dynamics and experiences.

BOX 3

COMPLEXITY OF COUP OCCURRENCE

Africa's recent military coups have unfolded in a contemporary age of interdependence and complexity. The current global fusion of the geopolitical, economic, digital, environmental and socio-cultural spheres means that political transitions of all types take place in an increasingly dynamic landscape, including coups as a form of UCG.⁴⁹ This underscores the futility of reductive, single-factor or linear explanations, or overly simplistic solutions.

The academic literature on political transitions of various types (including military coups and democratization) can be understood as belonging to three camps – proposing explanations that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. These respectively emphasize structural factors, the role of institutions and individual agency.⁵⁰

Structural and institutional enquiry pays attention to the potential correlation between regime types (the nature of pre-existing regimes shaping future regimes, institutional legacies and state capacity). This category highlights the salience of economic factors, in particular economic wealth and social class (including the emergence of a middle class); and other 'pre-conditions' of democracy.⁵¹ Some academic research points to a strong correlation between levels of poverty and coup incidence. One study analysed data from 121 counties from 1950–1982, and found that the likelihood of a government being overthrown by a coup is significantly influenced by the country's level of economic well-being.⁵²

However, the counter trend in political science emphasizes the agency of political actors, as well as the unpredictable momentum and turbulence that political dynamics can themselves generate, as factors that shape outcomes.⁵³

Approaches that emphasize multiplicity in the causes and effects shaping political transition trajectories also feature prominently. Blended approaches resonate in considering recent events in Africa. For example, one study, based on historical analysis from 1970–2019, contends that three factors are central in assessing the likelihood of military coups in developing democracies.⁵⁴ It finds they are more likely to occur when the ruling administration is increasingly viewed by the public as being corrupt; when it is unpopular with large portions of society and key factions within the state; and when segments of the military perceive their position within the state as being threatened by the current regime. A useful review of the recent military coups in Africa concludes: "... coups are more likely to happen in countries with high levels of previous coups, low levels of economic development and anocratic regime types – that is, governments that are neither democratic nor authoritarian, but that share some characteristics of both".⁵⁵

The explanatory factors highlighted in these studies are echoed in the *Soldiers and citizens* findings. However, even here, when focusing on the combination of features according to the structural, institutional and individual agency framings, a multitude of other relevant factors are omitted.

The political, economic and social consequences of health pandemics (COVID-19, but also the 2014–2015 Ebola outbreak, which particularly affected Guinea and, to a lesser extent, Mali), as well as fallout of the war in Ukraine, have added to this complexity. African regional economic and political integration constitutes a further external factor with impacts on dynamics. UCG events thus intersect with, and are shaped by, global and regional dynamics affecting socio-political and development processes on the continent.

CHAPTER 1.1 TRIGGERS

Certain iconic global events have come to be understood as single, decisive occurrences that tipped a country or even the world's fortunes in a particular direction, even while deeper causes and dynamics surrounding these events continue to be debated.⁵⁶ Some analysts maintain that in certain coup instances, elections heightened tensions and served as trigger events – as have sudden economic shocks in others.⁵⁷ In Africa, during the Cold War era, geopolitics weighed heavily. Some coups occurred as the result of countervailing efforts by either the East or West to maintain influence, triggered by events that signalled apparent gains on the other side.⁵⁸

In some of the contemporary coup cases, such factors are salient – yet they do not appear to have been decisive. Geopolitical dynamics are believed to have emboldened certain coup leaders. Elections – or more specifically, the president's decision to stand for a third term – paved the way for the coup in Guinea, for example, though over a period of nine months.

The key triggers of recent coups, and the precise moment of their occurrence, have been highly political, context-specific and localized. Indeed, reaching a full understanding of triggers requires a granular analysis of the intimate dynamics unfolding between political actors, military factions and individuals. This is beyond the purview of this report, noting its emphasis on the development lens. Such granularity may also remain obscured from public view for years to come. It has manifestly been at play across focal settings, with factional competition and in-fighting violently erupting into open warfare in the case of Sudan's coup leaders from April 2023.

In some countries, a chain of cause and effect can be readily traced, at least in headline form. In Chad, for instance, the 2021 events that have been likened to a UCG – whereby succession did not follow constitutional rules – were clearly triggered by the president's death. In Burkina Faso, relationships between the military and government were already under pressure in the face of deepening insecurity and armed violence at large, with the government seeking at times to blame defence and security forces in signalling its own authority to the public. A series of specific attacks and incidences, in which both the army and local gendarmes suffered significant losses, identifiably served to tip coup leaders into launching the first coup. Similarly, the more recent coup appears to have been triggered – at least in the narrative of the new coup leaders – by an instance of armed violence that took place a few days prior.

Elsewhere, precise triggers are shrouded in the mysteries of behind-the-scenes politics. In Sudan, the October 2021 coup is seen by some as a final, if not inevitable, reassertion of military control that had already been operating behind the scenes of the transitional government for some time. It followed months of civilian military in-fighting amid street protests.

In Guinea, the president's resetting of the constitutional term limit and controversial re-election for a third term in October 2020 can be seen to have

paved the way for the coup in September 2021, yet subsequent political manoeuvring provided the more immediate trigger. In Mali, the 2020 coup followed months of popular protests against alleged government corruption, manipulation of legislative elections and the deteriorating state of the economy hit by COVID-19 and other factors. However, the immediate trigger remains unclear. Meanwhile, the 2022 coup may have been immediately triggered by the proposed removal of two military figures from the transitional cabinet in a reshuffle. These dynamics again point to the salience of power and politics in shaping events.⁵⁹

In conclusion, borrowing from the differing theoretical approaches used to explain the political transition trajectory detailed in Box 3, political agency is a key factor shaping coups. This, in turn, is informed by a range of specific dynamics and issues incentivizing coup leaders in each case – often rendering coup triggers oblique to outside observers.

What is clear is that coup leaders make strategic calculations informed by a range of considerations. These include assessing likely support for their actions, often related to the extent of discontent with the incumbent government across society. The dynamics and issues informing political actors' behaviour in turn thus relate to the deeper proximate and structural factors that resonate more explicitly with the development lens put forward by this report. These are discussed in further detail below.

CHAPTER 1.2 PROXIMATE FACTORS

1.2.1 Insecurity in the Sahel

The majority of the recent or attempted coups have taken place in West Africa, while seven out of nine events have played out in the greater Sahel.⁶⁰ Experts have rightly underlined the country-context specificity shaping respective events, critiquing the notion of 'coup contagion' as limiting.⁶¹ Still, this geographic concentration points to a need to consider features of the Sahel subregion that may have shaped current dynamics. While itself driven by deeper structural and historic issues, the past decade of insecurity in the Sahel manifests as a cluster of proximate or intermediate factors (the visible part of the iceberg), contributing to the conditions that have shaped the uptick in military coups.

The Sahel has emerged as a major source of instability in Africa since 2011 (with the fall of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya a critical factor in turn impacting this trajectory), when a coalition of secessionist and other armed groups attempted to declare an independent state in northern Mali. Its porous borders and related long history of smuggling networks have been increasingly captured by organized criminal networks and trade, including in people and illicit drugs. Expansive 'ungoverned' spaces (with identity groups and networks straddling national borders), weak state institutions and low human-development indicators have further challenged goals of national unity and political inclusion.⁶² The effects of climate change have played an aggravating role in this timeframe, drying out livelihoods in a region facing both demographic expansion and a high dependence on natural resources.⁶³ A cycle of intercommunal violence has become increasingly militarized, with violent

extremist groups intensifying dynamics. These proximate factors create a basis for instability and vulnerability that has both shaped, and in turn been informed by, regional states' capacities and approaches to governing.

The insecurity has been exacerbated by a complex pattern of security-driven interventions by international actors, closely linked to the Sahel's geostrategic relevance to global security priorities. Over the past decade, a plethora of external forces has engaged in efforts to contain the perceived threat of a violent extremist takeover of Mali and the wider Sahel.⁶⁴ International interest has been incentivized further by the region's significance in the irregular migration and smuggling of people to Europe, as well as its mineral wealth.

A “unique ecosystem” of forces (or what has also been termed a “security traffic jam”) has seen over 21,000 uniformed personnel deployed across the Sahel to address multiple and intersecting political, economic, security, humanitarian and environmental crises.⁶⁵ These include international actors from the UN, European Union (EU), France and US. Ad hoc security initiatives have also been formed. Among these are the Joint Forces of the Group of Five (G5) regional states (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF, consisting of Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon) to tackle Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

Despite these missions, security and governance indicators have continued to deteriorate across the region, with frequent large-scale attacks against both civilians and defence and security forces. The presence of the Russian military company Wagner Group, for instance in Mali, has further complicated these trends and is itself a manifestation of mounting resentment, particularly against former colonial power France.⁶⁶ These dynamics have made tangible the spectre of external power competition as a further destabilizing factor in an already complex situation.⁶⁷

Researchers have identified limitations curtailing the efficacy of the international security presence, which is compromised by a series of ‘disconnects’.⁶⁸ These refer to a fragmentation of objectives (straddling counterterrorism, migration and stabilization, to name a few); and a gap between discourse and practice (for example, on rights, as well as between ambition and actual ability to effectively deploy.⁶⁹ According to this view, competing mandates, rationales, priorities and directions have stymied the possibility of success.

The need to refocus on governance priorities, rather than only security, has also been stressed.⁷⁰ Analysts indicate that, at worst, these missions may have added to rising levels of regional violence and political instability, particularly by fuelling the narratives used by non-state armed groups to attract recruits. As found by one group of international experts, actors have focused too narrowly on “... bolstering armies or police who then use indiscriminate force, harming civilians, undermining elected governments and setting the stage for coups”.⁷¹

The widening insecurity and governance deficits have impacted on the region's political culture, creating a further intermediate factor contributing to coup risk. Since the 2012 military coup in Mali, political campaigns, victories, elections and other coup occurrences across the Sahel have been justified with explicit reference to a leader's ability or inability to provide security.

1.2.2 Rising frustration with government performance

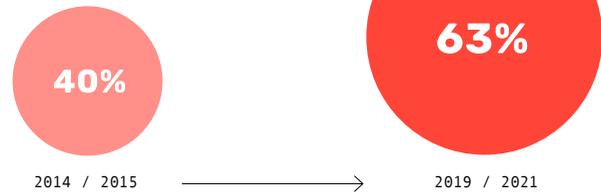
The notion that mounting frustration with government performance serves as a proximate factor in the recent coups finds further weight in a review of data from leading polling organisation, Afrobarometer. A substantially higher number of people from coup-affected countries said they perceived levels of corruption to have increased in Afrobarometer's 2019–2021 polls, as compared with its 2014–2016 round of data collection. Perceptions of governments' ability to handle violent conflict also deteriorated since 2016, as shown in Figure 7.⁷²

In some African countries, largely unarmed and peaceful popular protest has emerged in recent years as a force for political change. This is marked by increased participation of women and young people and is both enabled and amplified by deepening digitalization. Citizens increasingly challenge injustice and inequality, advancing a deeper organic democratic momentum than Africa has hitherto seen.⁷³

FIGURE 7

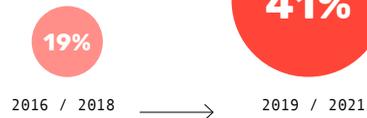
DECREASING CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT, UCG AVERAGE

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION REPORTING THAT LEVELS OF CORRUPTION HAVE INCREASED, A LOT, OR SOMEWHAT, OVER THE PAST YEARS



Source: Afrobarometer data (round 6, round 8) (<http://www.afrobarometer.org>).

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION REPORTING THAT THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT IS HANDLING RESOLVING VIOLENT CONFLICT VERY BADLY



Source: Afrobarometer data (round 7, round 8) (<http://www.afrobarometer.org>).

BOX 4

SOCIETAL DISCONTENT A COMMON THREAD

Popular frustration at government underperformance has driven coup risk, and in part fuelled (at least temporary) support of incoming military juntas.

Analysts recognize that different circumstances and issues influence popular mobilization in each country. Key rallying points range from the management of mining revenues and the March 2020 term-limit amendment in Guinea; to the alleged embezzlement of state funds and rigging of legislative elections in Mali; to perceived corruption of the army's old guard in Burkina Faso.⁷⁴

Yet across these, a shared experience of increasing societal discontent shaped by long-term systemic issues can be identified. Citizens have, at the same time, accused former colonial power, France, of complicity in government malfeasance. This perception has undermined regional and international efforts to deter coup instigators. The Russian flag has become a popular emblem of opposition to France's perceived influence.

At other times, in these same countries' recent history, there have also been instances where popular protest specifically focused on upholding democratic and constitutional plural - principles when political leaders were seen to be subverting these. In Burkina Faso, protest movements led the then-president to reintroduce the presidential term limit, reduced from seven to five years, in 2001. In October 2014, popular uprisings led to the forceful departure of the same regime.

In Mali, the protests that eventually led to the overthrow of then-president Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta were rallied against a perceived attempt to confiscate power and deny people their choice of representatives in the National Assembly. Guinean populations have also taken to the streets in defence of democracy, at the cost of many lives. Protests in 2006–2007 resulted in various constitutional and political reforms. The president's effort to prolong his term through a controversial constitutional change in March 2020 also invoked stern opposition. A National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC) was established in 2019. Composed of civil society organizations (CSOs) and opposition political parties, the FNDC staged protest movements across the country and abroad, despite brutal police repression.

In Sudan, spontaneous protests against the regime of Omar al-Bashir began in December 2018. Several towns saw small street protests over the cost of living. The demonstrations reflected a broad cross section of Sudanese society, led by lawyers, doctors, women's organizations, activists, members of the diaspora and youth — making up a united force never seen before. Issues fuelling the protests included exclusive and corrupt fiscal management; the role of the military elite in politics and business; safety, justice and accountability concerning rights abuses; and the exclusion from decision-making particularly of youth and women, as well as citizens from outside of the capital, among many others.

The erosion of civic confidence in governments' capacity or will to provide inclusive security, development and economic opportunities is a critical proximate factor contributing to the rise in military coups. This has created a grievance base that military juntas have readily been able to exploit.

1.2.3 Democracy at an inflection point in Africa

The wave of democratization across Africa from 1990 yielded a seismic shift in the political culture of the continent, as discussed in the introduction.⁷⁵ Yet, in a context of global backsliding, the limitations of democratic progress have also been increasingly apparent. In 2017, a regional dialogue was conducted to take stock of three decades of democratic transition in Africa. Participants concluded that in all democratic settings on the continent, continued efforts are urgently needed to reconcile the gap between what they called “procedural/formal” and “substantial/real” democracy.⁷⁶ In considering the recent coups, the relevance of this perspective cannot be over-emphasized.

Elections have served as triggers for conflict as ‘zero-sum’ political and identity politics fuse, and rivalries are readily instrumentalized by actors who harness factionalized discontent related to political, economic and/or social grievances. Perceptions of overly politicized electoral management bodies (EMBs) have also led to electoral results being contested. This, again, has morphed into widespread social protests in multiple countries. The capture of the electoral process by long-standing incumbent regimes is well documented.⁷⁷

While the study of democratic transition is rich and varied, it often supposes a linear trajectory — starting with liberation from authoritarianism, and progressing to the establishment of a framework for new institutions (including a constitution and other political institutions), and reaching a state of democratic consolidation.⁷⁸ In the 1990s, a majority of African states reached the second phase of transition. However, recent events highlight an incompleteness in overall progress that has become a proximate circumstance contributing to the recent rise in military coups. Meanwhile, unfulfilled appetite for more substantive

progress towards meaningful democracy swells and ebbs across the continent, even manifesting perilously, as described, as at least initial support of the military coups.

BOX 5

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION THEORY VIEWED AGAINST AFRICA'S RECENT EXPERIENCES

A dominant paradigm on political transition informed the work of development assistance agencies for much of the latter half of the 20th Century. This paradigm tended to project a normative and linear belief in the democratization processes, which often assumed that a move away from authoritarian rule would see the collapse of such regimes, to be followed by political liberalization and the establishment of democratic institutions.⁷⁹

This perspective reflected a wider worldview, which had in turn been shaped by waves of democratization that occurred globally when the Cold War came to an end. Its concern with advancement towards democracy viewed the transitional period to be typically timebound, with the conduct of multi-party elections seen to signify, in effect, its end.

The school of political science referred to as 'transitology' has provided richer nuance embracing a wider range of trajectories. One seminal work analysed the wave of transition that swept Latin America and Eastern Europe during the 1980s, from primarily authoritarian regimes towards an uncertain 'something else'. This resonates more convincingly with Africa's experiences.⁸⁰ A recent study concurs with the notion of complexity and uncertainty characterizing political transition towards democracy, describing how "... once they begin, transitions proceed at different speeds, with advances and retreats, and often with zig-zags".⁸¹

The formal system of democracy was seemingly symbolically and 'democratically' rejected by citizens as some of the recent military coups unfolded, with military rule presenting — at least in the moment, a popularly viable alternative. Some analysts describe that these developments risk legitimizing attempts for militaries to be re-embedded into politics.⁸² Democratic leaders should be spurred to address civic priorities and grievances at all costs.

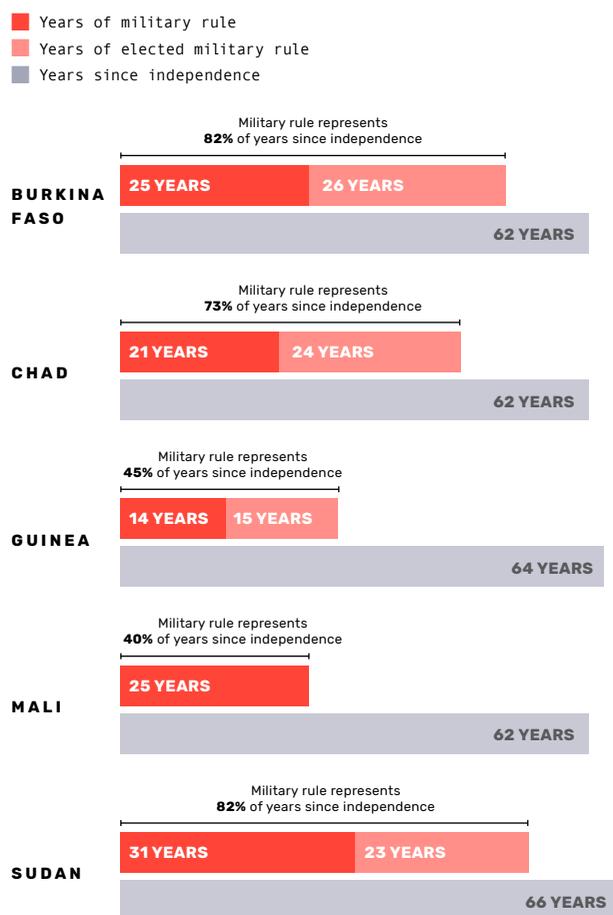
The sense of democracy failing with an 'own goal' and fuelling Africa's recent experience of military coups chimes with the global rise of 'authoritarian populism' — whereby populist leaders worldwide have exploited poverty, inequalities, resentment and uncertainty to attract support and take power.⁸³

Evidence has shown that functioning democracy is effective in reducing poverty and enabling growth, above all through its emphasis on choice and inclusive human development.⁸⁴ However it has, in many settings, failed to live up to these promises. Experts indicate that against such a backdrop, it may be expected that citizens would support groups that represent a break from "corrupt, inept, and ageing" regimes.⁸⁵ Paradoxically, the rallying behind military coups is therefore driven by a profoundly democratic impulse in favour of positive change. Section 2 of this report evaluates these issues through the prism of its primary data.

CHAPTER 1.3 STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DRIVERS

FIGURE 8

HISTORY OF MILITARY RULE IN COUNTRIES THAT RECENTLY EXPERIENCED COUPS, BY UCG COUNTRIES



Source: UNDP-collected data, 2022.

The incompleteness of Africa's democratic transition as a proximate factor contributing to coup risk suggests a need to address the barriers to its fuller consolidation.

Doing so draws attention to deeper drivers pertaining to the robustness of state legitimacy, and the wider social contract between state and citizens. These dynamics, in turn, are intimately meshed with the governance of the economy and other structural factors. This section of the report concludes by reflecting on the 'roots' of the iceberg: the deeper characteristics and drivers that will be critical to resolve if long-term coup resilience, complete democratic transition and lasting peace are to be achieved.

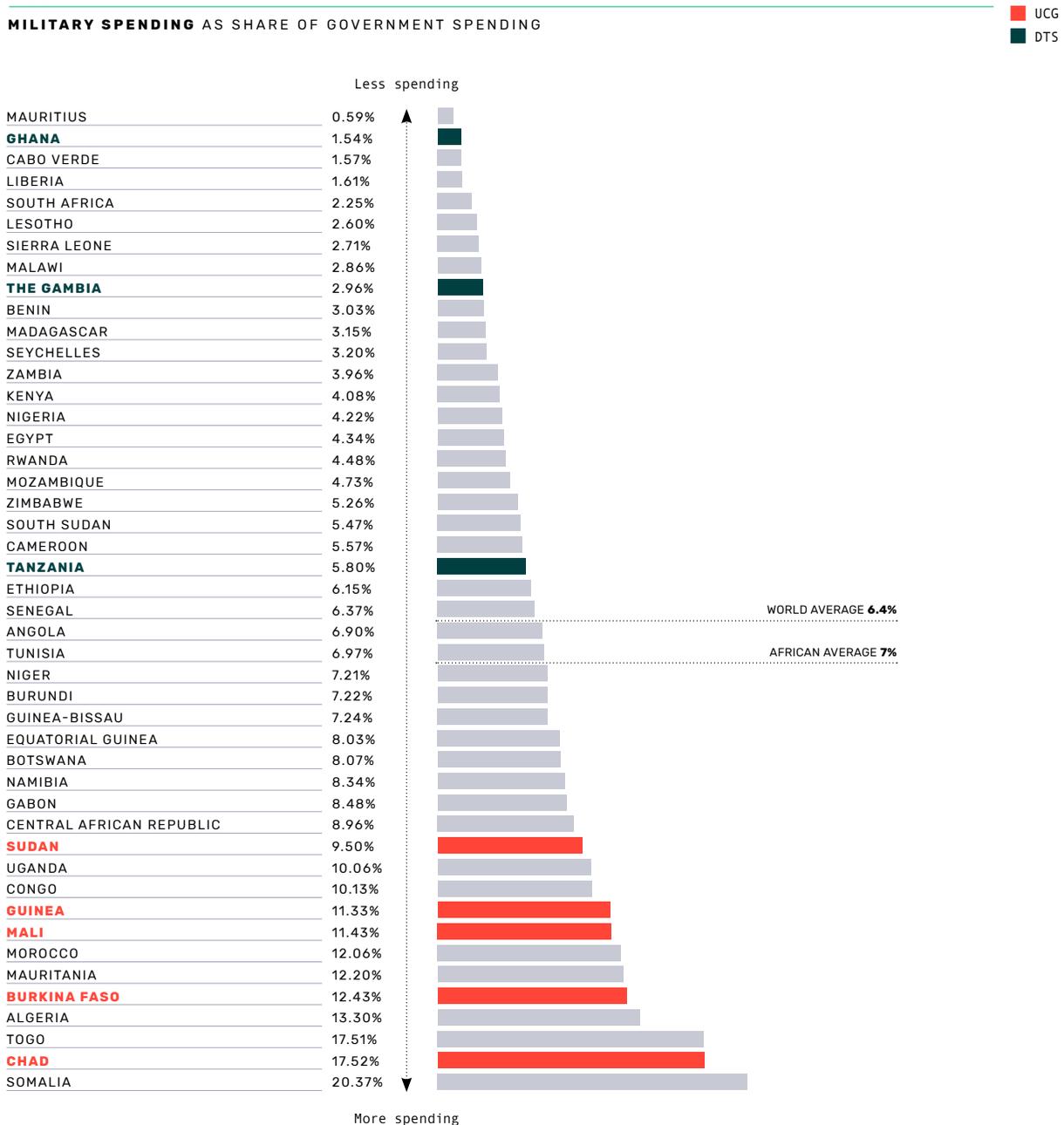
1.3.1 A history of military involvement in politics

Coups often signal the start of prolonged political turbulence and associated insecurity, including further coups.⁸⁶ With the exception of Tanzania, this study's focal countries have a combined record of 31 successful military coups. Burkina Faso has experienced seven cases, followed by Ghana, Mali and Sudan with five cases each, three in Guinea, two in Chad and one in The Gambia.⁸⁷ As illustrated in Figure 1 in the introduction, 98 successful military coups have so far been registered in Africa.⁸⁸ Many of these occurred prior to the establishment of AU norms designed to inhibit UCG, including military coups. This broad experience nonetheless provides an insightful historic context for reflecting on the contemporary phenomenon.

When evaluating the role of the military in socio-political life, response strategies should include open reflection on the violent nature of African state formation in the context of colonialism. A distorted military role and character was often its legacy.⁸⁹ Figure 8 shows that, while varied, the UCG countries all experienced a significant proportion of their post-independence years under some sort of military rule: three quarters or more of the post-colonial period each for Burkina Faso, Chad and Sudan.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has collected data that compares countries' respective military spending as a proportion of public expenditure. This data indicates that the five UCG-category countries rank among the highest among sub-Saharan African states (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9

MILITARY SPENDING AS SHARE OF GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Missing data: Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Libya, Sao Tome and Principe.
Sudan value from 2021.

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure, 2022, (<https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>).

The five UCG-category states are not alone in Africa in having experienced a long period of military rule; or in having a significant share of military spending. However, failure to fully reform, create appropriate checks and balances and define a meaningful role for the military as part of the contemporary state architecture, represents a critical institutional factor. Over time, it becomes a clear structural driver underlying coup incidence in each of the affected countries. Conversely, strategically recalibrating the role of the military in political life has become a source of coup resilience in countries previously afflicted by UCG occurrences, such as Nigeria. These factors have also been highlighted by commentators in considering the recent coup attempt in The Gambia.⁹⁰

Attention to structural drivers of coup risk emphasizes the importance of understanding the influence of broader civil-military dynamics. The notion of 'coup-proofing', referring to tactics employed to forestall future coup attempts, has attracted interest in the academic literature.⁹¹ The term refers to ways in which leadership may leverage resources at their disposal (whether international aid, natural resource revenue or other) to co-opt potential sources of opposition, and build alliances aimed at maintaining their own hold on power. This has often included yielding political and other forms of privilege and power, as well as alternative career paths, to military figures and factions.

1.3.2 State fragility, legitimacy and the social contract

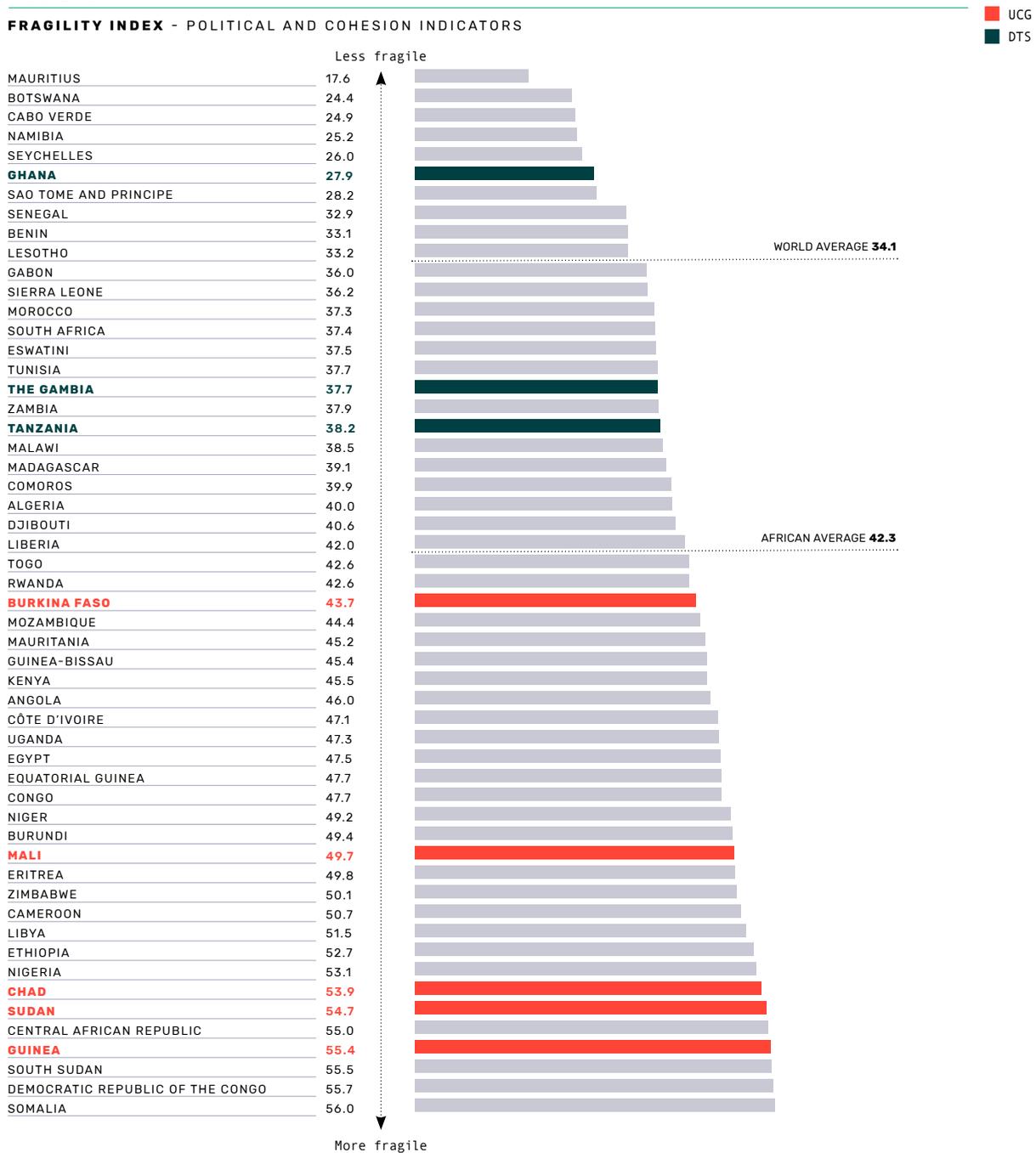
Academic study of African statehood has extensively explored dimensions of state fragility and questions of legitimacy. The exogenous, colonial grafting of contemporary state structures is highlighted, along with associated disconnects from indigenous networks, power and decision-making practices (vertical legitimacy), and particular social groups' inclusion or exclusion from decisions around 'who should participate in the social contract' (horizontal legitimacy).⁹² Enquiry into the nature of legitimacy has been foundational in shaping thinking about conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as development, with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16's 'peace, justice and inclusion' a signature concept at the heart of Agenda 2030.

Coup risk can, to a certain extent, be understood as a specific subset of state fragility. While contested, the fragile states concept has continued to evolve, with contemporary notions underscoring its multidimensional nature and profile in both lower- and middle-income settings.⁹³ The Commission on State Fragility, Growth and Development describes the 'fragility trap' as "... a syndrome of characteristics: fractured identities, a lack of state legitimacy and capacity, insecurity, a dearth of formal enterprises, and proneness to shocks. These reinforce each other, creating a trap."⁹⁴ The indicators developed by the Fragile States Index to monitor fragility and help in predicting and preventing intra-state crises, conflict and coups are also salient.⁹⁵ The 2022 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *States of Fragility* report concurs, noting that "... fragility is an explanatory factor in the recent increase in coup events", while calculating that 12 out of 17 coup events globally, since 2019, took place in fragile contexts.⁹⁶

The political and cohesion indicators of the State Fragility Index are state legitimacy; public services; human rights and rule of law; security apparatus; factionalized elites and group grievance. Together, these constitute the critical governance

dimensions of the underlying development context. Honing in on them suggests that these features are key sources of resilience to military coups. A comparison of UCG- and DTS-category states using 2022 data showed clear divergence between the countries that recently experienced a military coup, and those on a path to democratic transition. All five UCG countries are below, and predominantly well below, the African average, while DTS-category countries are securely above. Ghana, which emerges as the highest performer among the study's focal countries (even above the world average), is a full 28 points ahead of Guinea, the lowest.

FIGURE 10

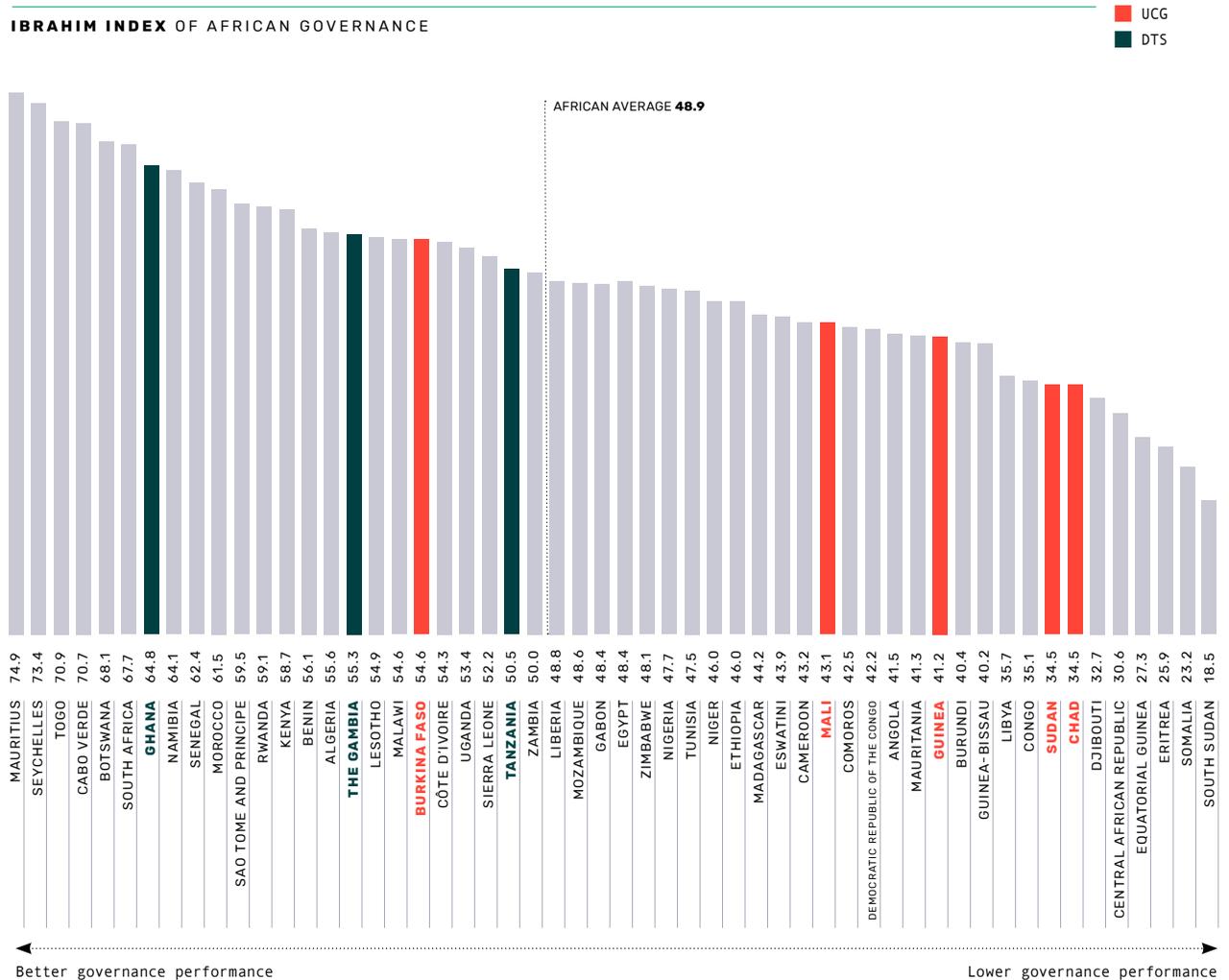
FRAGILITY INDEX - POLITICAL AND COHESION INDICATORS

Source: Fragility Index, 2022. (<https://fragilestatesindex.org/>)

The 2021 Ibrahim Index of African Governance confirms this differentiation between UCG and DTS country types. States that have recently experienced military coups ranked significantly lower, with a difference of 30 points between the highest performer (Ghana) and the lowest (this time, Sudan and Chad).⁹⁷ All three DTS countries are securely above the African average, while most in the UCG category are well below.⁹⁸

FIGURE 11

IBRAHIM INDEX OF AFRICAN GOVERNANCE



Source: Ibrahim Index of African Governance, 2021, (<https://iiag.online/downloads.html>)

The above indicators suggest a strong correlation between robust and improving political, cohesion and governance conditions, and resilience to coup risk. While this may appear logical to the point of verging on tautology (countries that have stronger governance systems are less likely to experience un-constitutionalism), it has profound implications for the prioritization of response interventions.

The prominence of the quality of governance as a development driver correlating with coup resilience underscores that strengthening the social contract between states and citizens must be a key focus in response strategies.

1.3.3 Exclusionary patterns of economic development

To further assess potential structural drivers of coup risk, research for this study scanned other leading global indices to compare its two country categories (UCG and DTS).⁹⁹ Considering most recent available gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, only Ghana sits above the sub-Saharan average of US\$1,633. Each of the five UCG countries appear at the lower ends of continent-wide ranking – despite slow and steady progress. (GDP and all other indices referred to are shown in Annex 2). On UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), these five countries again sit well below the Africa average, despite sharing in continent-wide advances. Honing in on the economic and cross-cutting indicators of the State Fragility Index (which measure economic decline; uneven economic development, human flight and brain drain; demographic pressures, refugees and internally displaced persons [IDPs]; and types of external intervention), a clear divergence emerges between the countries that have experienced military coups, and those in the DTS category.¹⁰⁰ While the latter countries perform above the African average, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad and Sudan all sit towards the lower scores on the scale, in descending order. Rankings on both the Economic Freedom Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index similarly seem to suggest that higher performance points to greater resilience – with the study's five UCG countries among the continent's lowest performers.

The overall economic governance context, which comprises the model of development, political economy, and degree of equality in sharing economic wealth and opportunity, emerges as a key structural factor. A final feature that stands out, and which has played a critical role in influencing governance outcomes, is the abundance of natural resource wealth present in many of the coup-affected countries.

BOX 6

COUP RISK AND THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN AND YOUTH

The study also considered gender and age vectors of inequality to assess potential linkages between UCG countries and their respective socio-economic and political inclusion of women and youth – recognizing each group's critical significance to development progress. Africa remains one of the most unequal regions globally in terms of income distribution by age and gender. Yet substantial development gains are to be anticipated, should the dynamism of its burgeoning youth population be harnessed, and greater socio-economic parity achieved for women and girls.¹⁰¹

Among the focal countries for which data is available, Chad ranked as the most unequal performer on the Gender Inequality Index, scoring at 0.65, followed closely by Guinea and Mali.¹⁰² It is notable that Ghana and Tanzania, the most established democracies in the list, are above the sub-Saharan average – but so is Sudan. Here, the active role of professional and student women in the recent revolution pitted against the ultra-conservative and patriarchal status quo of the Bashir regime hints at a profound mismatch between old and new gender norms as one driver of change. However, taken alone, the data does not yield clear correlations between gender equality and coup resilience. Comparing focal countries' scoring on the Youth Progress Index, however, does seem to suggest clearly that higher levels of youth progress may provide some resilience. The five UCG focal countries were among the lower performers, and those in the DTS category among the highest.¹⁰³

This factor has shaped both the political context and the development trajectory of four out of five of the focal countries that recently experienced military coups (Chad, Guinea, Sudan and, to a lesser extent, Mali). While noting that many states with equivalent or higher proportions of GDP natural resource dependence have not experienced coups, mineral wealth is important in shaping political trajectories.¹⁰⁴ Typically, such states are vulnerable to elite capture of natural resource revenues, poor economic diversification and corruption. Natural resource wealth represents a structural feature of the development landscape that has had direct consequences for the distribution of economic growth and resultant inequalities.

Reviewing leading global development indices to explore whether patterns and contrasts across the focal countries might be identified may be an imperfect science. Yet it nonetheless suggests that socio-economic conditions which result in lower scores do contribute to vulnerability to coup risk, with some inconsistencies and variations. Inequality and exclusion appear to be particularly relevant.¹⁰⁵ However, there are countries that show weak performance, or that also suffer the ‘resource curse’, which have not experienced coups. Unequal economic development is best understood as contributing to the structural factors that shape coup risk, rather than being definitive or causal. Recalling the multiplicity of factors involved described in the opening of this section, it creates a base of risk that has fused with a raft of other dynamics in leading to the events under review.

BOX 7

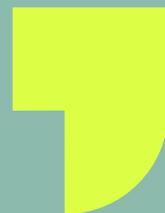
RESOURCE WINDFALLS AND COUP RISK

Guinea’s mining sector is the country’s main engine for economic growth and development, with bauxite reserves estimated at 40 billion tonnes, or two thirds of the world’s reserves.¹⁰⁶ It is also rich in gold, estimated at around 1,000 tonnes, and its diamonds are between 25 and 30 million carats. It boasts one of the highest qualities of iron ore in the world, with reserves at around 15 billion tonnes.¹⁰⁷ This non-exhaustive list of resources testifies to the mining sector’s strategic importance for the national economy. It accounts for more than 90 percent of the country’s total exports, 25 percent of GDP and 60 percent of state revenues. It is also the largest employer in the country after the civil service, providing more than 10,000 permanent jobs and nearly 100,000 casual work opportunities annually.¹⁰⁸ Yet the country’s development trajectory has stagnated. The disconnect between its significant natural wealth and widespread poverty is the result of poor governance, widespread corruption and nepotism of successive regimes. It reflects a classic pattern of elite insulation and enrichment through windfall revenues linked to the extractive industries. The trend is seen to have contributed to popular acceptance of the military junta (as well as opposition to the former president’s third-term bid), with its promises to fight corruption.



“There is no confidence and trust between the military and citizens. We do not believe that they [the military] can protect us if something happens.”

FEMALE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSANT, KHARTOUM, SUDAN (FEBRUARY 2023)



Proximate
and structural
drivers of
coups: *citizens’
perspectives
and experiences*

The *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey data and wider research provide insight into citizens' views of the plethora of factors at play in shaping coup occurrence. It also sharpens an understanding of people's lived experiences of events. The following four chapters revisit some of the structural and proximate factors identified in Section 1 through the prism of popular perceptions. The first chapter explores perspectives on the socio-economic dimensions of development, consequences of the coups and optimism for the future. The second considers governance issues and aspects of the social contract through citizens' perspectives on democracy and government performance. Chapter 3 hones in on perspectives of security and safety, and lastly, Chapter 4 explores perspectives on inclusion and the extent to which citizens felt their priorities were heard during the recent events. This is a crucial dimension for measuring confidence in political processes and the potential for regenerating the social contract.

CHAPTER 2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND OVERALL DEVELOPMENT CONSEQUENCES

A major motivation for this study has been its concern to understand the development drivers and consequences of military coups. The broad review of secondary data comparing focal countries across global development indices (discussed in Section 1) underscored the relevance of development progress to reducing coup likelihood. Correlations between coup risk and stagnant growth, inequality, and the exclusion of youth and women are confirmed – as are linkages between low performance on governance indices and the prevalence of natural resource-based economic growth. However, these factors are contributory, not causal. Other countries that share similar features have not experienced coups.

In addition to highlighting linkages between a country's development context and coup risk, the development lens also emphasizes the development consequences likely to be associated with military coups. Periods of instability resulting from incomplete or contested transitions have historically affected development progress, sometimes catastrophically. Previous coup occurrence is a key variable influencing coup likelihood. Once triggered, a potential long-term path of turbulence may be implied, with associated negative impacts on development progress. However, opportunities to wrest positive development outcomes and state-society transformation may also be presented. Citizens' own hopes and fears underscore both these risks and opportunities.

2.1.1 Comparing citizen perspectives on economic circumstances

The *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey highlights some notable differences in attitudes to their economic situations between respondents living in countries that have recently experienced military coups, and those classified here as democratically transitioned.

Figure 12 shows that in UCG-category countries significantly more people said they were dissatisfied with their personal financial situation and the economic opportunities available to them (51 percent dissatisfied) versus those who said they were satisfied (33 percent). Negativity about the state of the economy revealed a similar trend (54 percent versus 28 percent).

However, overall, the DTS-category participants reported significantly greater dissatisfaction. In these countries, 70 percent of respondents were dissatisfied both with their personal financial situation and the wider state of the economy. This result is particularly striking given that these countries score relatively higher on global development indices, with somewhat less exclusionary patterns of economic development than those that have experienced military coups. It suggests that while the external environment may empirically reflect higher levels of development progress, people's expectations may similarly be higher in these settings, day-to-day challenges plentiful, and aspirations left unmet despite the overall development gains registered.

Soldiers and citizens

qualitative research in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Sudan confirmed high levels of frustration with the economic situation in each country. Participants expressed sentiments like “we are fed up”, “we are tired of this country” and “things are hard”.

Almost all participants complained about the high cost of living and high inflation leading to hikes in the prices of petrol, diesel and food products. Along with rising poverty, youth unemployment and economic mismanagement, these factors have made living conditions intolerable.

Participants noted how their countries' economies are struggling to overcome the effects of the pandemic, along with other external shocks – including the war in Ukraine. Others pointed to the government's poor management of the economy, which is causing persistent currency depreciation and escalating prices.

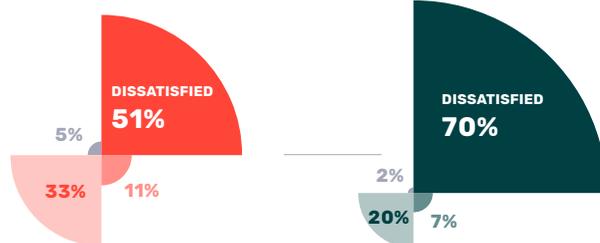
FIGURE 12

SATISFACTION WITH THE ECONOMY AND FINANCES

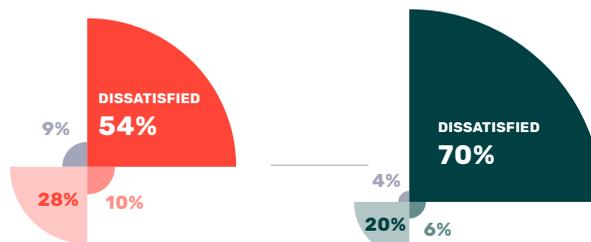
ARE YOU SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED WITH THE FOLLOWING?



YOUR PERSONAL FINANCIAL SITUATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY?



STATE OF THE ECONOMY?



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

In Burkina Faso, *Soldiers and citizens*

qualitative research participants maintained that the coup tarnished the country's international image and disrupted the rebuilding process that had been underway since 2014. One respondent noted that the coup "... has undermined the democratic status of the country and sent Burkina Faso 10 years backwards, if not more".

Respondents also expressed prescient concerns of possible countercoups and a tendency towards authoritarianism if the transition process were prolonged.

Discussants underlined that ordinary people were yet to reap the dividends of the coup, because the transition government had been in power for less than six months (at the time of the research). People were expecting the government to address major challenges such as the fight against terrorism, the return of IDPs and the organization of inclusive elections at the end of the transition.

As suggested in the insights from the supplementary qualitative research conducted for this report, frustration about economic living conditions is shared across diverse settings. In other words, correlation between underdevelopment and overall coup risk can be evidenced. However, popular perception about socio-economic development performance may run counter to indicators and cannot be taken as a straightforward or direct contributing factor to coup risk.

2.1.2 Citizen optimism about future development trajectories

The military coups explored in this study are recent, and their longer-term development consequences remain unknown. However, additional UNDP research on the impact of earlier coups in Guinea and Mali suggested major negative economic consequences accruing over time (see Box 8).

BOX 8

THE ECONOMIC COST OF COUPS

UNDP conducted analysis to assess the economic cost of military coups as background research to inform the *Soldiers and citizens* report. The analysis used the synthetic control method (SCM).¹⁰⁹ The core idea of SCM is to create a counter-factual analysis, asking: "What would a given context be like if x event hadn't occurred?"¹¹⁰

This method relies heavily on data availability to be a good fit for the model. The results presented below for earlier coups in Guinea (2008) and Mali (2012) (Figure 13) met these statistical requirements. The analysis found that these recent coups had a negative effect on both countries, lasting for at least five years.

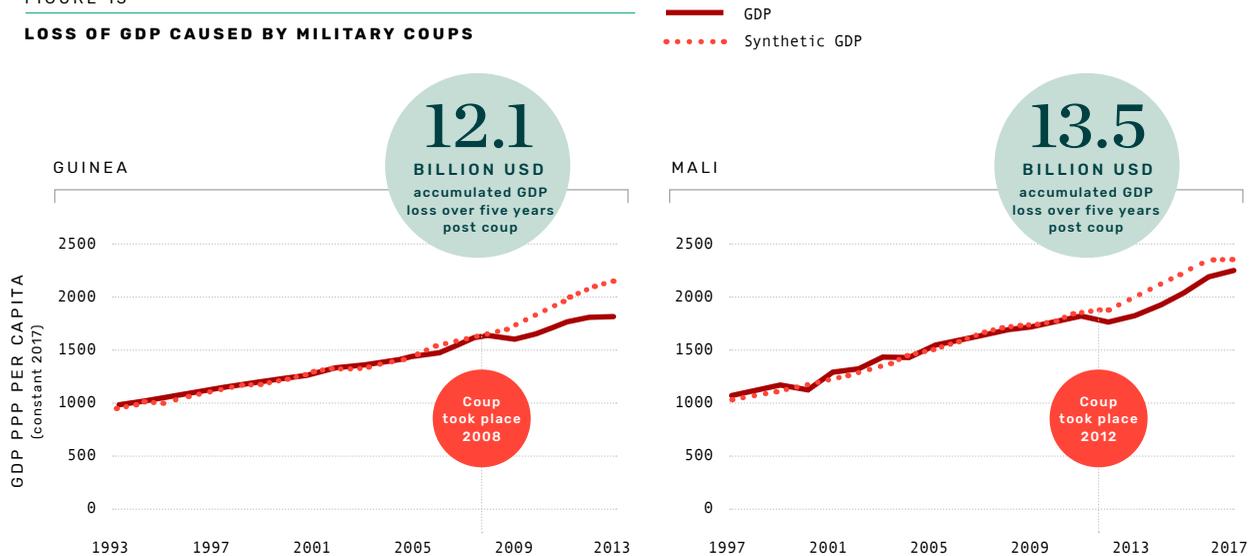
The model indicates that five years after the event, Guinea and Mali had lost an accumulated sum of \$12.13 billion and \$13.52 billion in purchasing power parity (PPP) respectively. This represents for Guinea 76 percent of the total GDP (PPP) in 2008 (the year of the coup), and 48 percent of the GDP (PPP) in 2012 for Mali.

In other words, in the five years following the event, Guinea and Mali respectively lost \$2.43 billion and \$2.7 billion as a yearly average due to the coup. In per capita terms, the figures represent an accumulated loss during the five years after the coup of \$1,150 (PPP) for Guinea, and \$780 (PPP) for Mali.

Research across the five contexts under review confirmed that events had already discouraged investors and curtailed economic activities in the main urban centres, where prolonged periods of street protests have occurred. Food and essential commodity prices – already under pressure due to COVID-19 and, more recently, the war in Ukraine – were affected by the instability in all settings.

Humanitarian needs have also spiked in the countries that experienced coups since 2020. In June 2022, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

FIGURE 13

LOSS OF GDP CAUSED BY MILITARY COUPS

Affairs (OCHA) released an updated humanitarian needs assessment for the Sahel region. The report estimated that over 30 million people across the region would need humanitarian assistance in 2022; at least two million more than the previous year.¹¹¹ This included 7.5 million people in Mali, 3.5 million in Burkina Faso and 3.6 million in Chad. In Sudan meanwhile, at least 11.7 million people are severely food insecure. The economic collapse following the 2021 coup has exacerbated the dire humanitarian situation across the country. Only 21 percent of anticipated humanitarian funding needs have so far been secured.¹¹² Each country has an active Humanitarian Response Plan, although pledged resources remain far short of meeting needs. While the drivers of the humanitarian crises predate the coup events in each country, uncertainties have been significantly compounded.

Other major immediate development consequences relate to the economic impact of sanctions and other measures imposed by regional and international organizations, including the suspension of development assistance by international partners and related disruption to aid and trade. These measures (reviewed in more detail in Section 3) have had a direct impact, with a deterrent ripple effect felt across business environments (see Box 9).

BOX 9**SUDAN'S DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY DISRUPTED**

The 2018 revolution and subsequent installation of a civilian-led government significantly increased development assistance flows and debt relief into Sudan, as donors sought to consolidate the emergence of a potentially more democratic regime. A commitment of \$700 million in development aid aimed at supporting the transitional government was made after the US removed Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terror. The EU, Germany, France, World Bank and others all announced new funding aimed at consolidating the position of the new government.

Several programmes were announced with a view to addressing historic and structural economic distortions. This included launching a social protection programme that targeted poor and marginalized families. Despite challenges, debt relief and international aid enabled the civilian government to achieve greater microeconomic stability, as evidenced by lowered inflation rates and the stabilization of currency exchange.

Following the October 2021 coup, international partners suspended both assistance and debt relief, pending an immediate return to a civilian-led government.

The country's economic crisis was compounded as a direct result. The military coup and subsequent cut in international support has also affected water supply, electricity, agriculture, health and transport. Inflation hit 260 percent and the local currency plunged. The military-led government cut wheat and fuel subsidies. By March 2022, the price of wheat had risen by 180 percent from the previous year.¹¹³

In contrast to their relatively high levels of dissatisfaction with current economic indicators, survey respondents were considerably more optimistic about the future across both categories of countries. However, it is striking that participants whose countries had recently experienced military coups were more optimistic than their counterparts living in DTS-category countries. For example, Figure 14 shows that 64 percent of UCG-category respondents expected that the economic opportunities available to them would get better in the next two years, as compared to 47 percent in DTS focal countries: a gap of 17 percentage points. Meanwhile, 65 percent felt it likely that the quality of key services would improve, compared to 52 percent in DTS-category countries: a gap of 13 percentage points. These findings reflect the different baseline against which improvements are anticipated, as well as the sense of disruption and possible renewal that UCG events may signal.

FIGURE 14

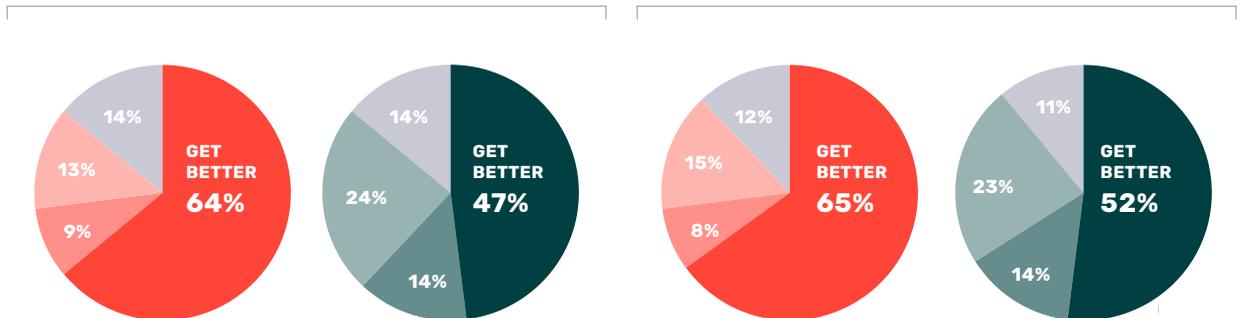
OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE

DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING WILL GET BETTER, GET WORSE OR STAY ABOUT THE SAME OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS?



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO YOU

THE QUALITY OF KEY PUBLIC SERVICES



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

Respondents were also asked to share their views about the impact of the last political transition on their country (for UCG-category countries) or the most recent national electoral event (for DTS settings). Across the former, 47 percent said that the change of government had had a positive impact on the country as a whole, while 35 percent reported a negative impact. A significant percentage answered 'neither positive nor negative' or 'don't know' (19 percent). In DTS-category countries, fewer respondents felt that the recent election had had a positive impact on their country: down 10 percentage points from respondents in UCG-category countries (Figure 15).

When considering these results by demographic breakdown, there was little difference in attitudes to impact by age group. However, it is notable that fewer women than men (by 7 percentage points) in UCG-category countries felt that the recent change of government had had a positive impact. There was little difference by gender in attitudes on this same question among the DTS-category respondents.

Despite higher levels of exclusion of women among UCG-category countries according to global indices, appetite for radical change, or for faith in incoming military juntas, was somewhat muted among women in these settings.

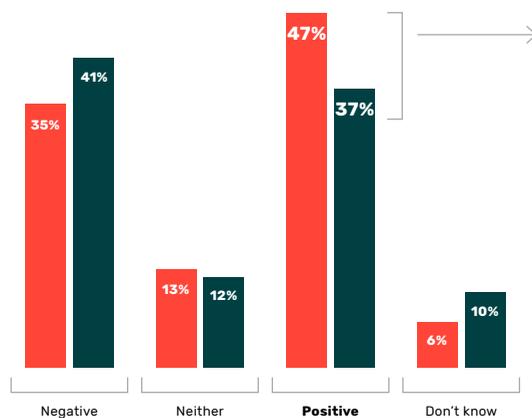
While more respondents felt the impact had been positive in UCG countries on average, it is significant to note that these results mask wide differences between countries (Figure 16). A sense that events were positive was highest in Mali (84 percent), followed by Guinea (66 percent) and Chad (49 percent) – at or well above half of respondents – whereas significantly fewer respondents in either Burkina Faso or Sudan felt so (61 percent of Sudanese respondents saw the military coup as a negative development). The highest percentage of DTS respondents to view the last election result as having a positive impact was in Tanzania, with 56 percent of respondents there agreeing to the statement.

FIGURE 15

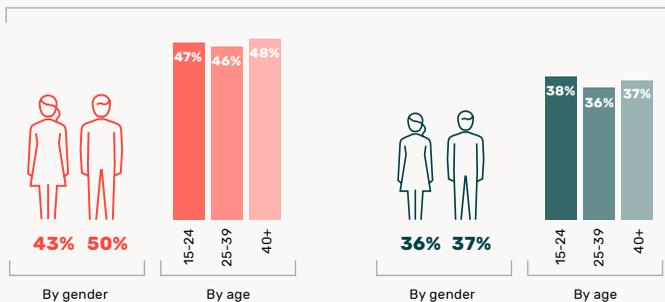
IMPACT OF LAST TRANSITION ON THE COUNTRY

■ UCG
■ DTS

SO FAR, HAS THIS CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT HAD A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPACT?



THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT HAVE HAD A **POSITIVE** IMPACT, BY DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN



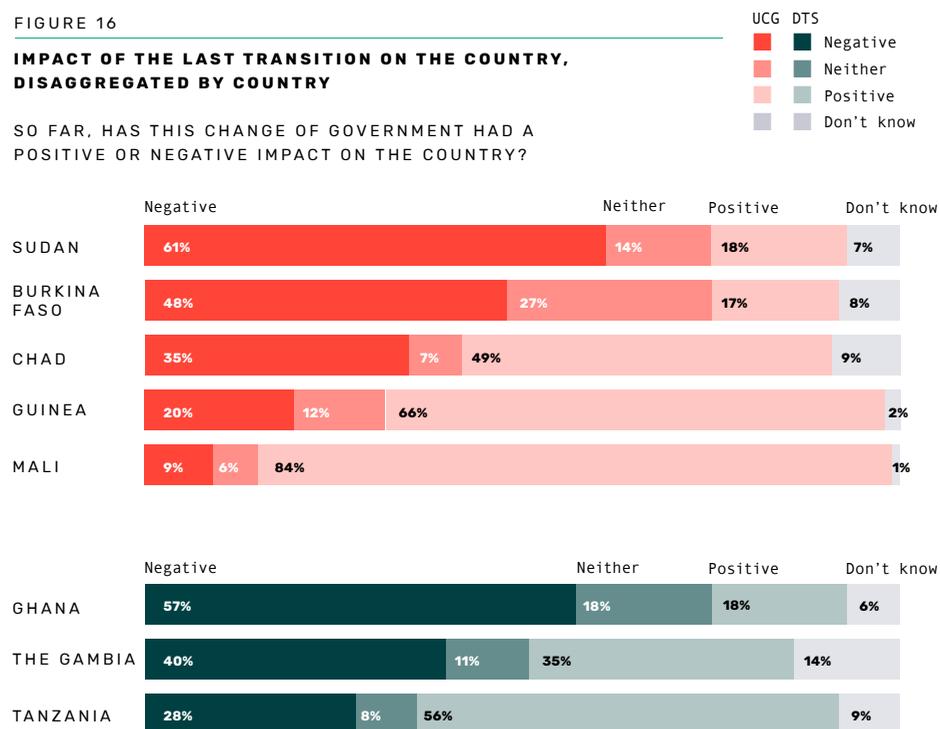
In Sudan, Soldiers and citizens qualitative research participants spoke of ‘insecurity’ and the ‘prevalence of fear’ to describe the post-coup situation. Most of the participants (presciently) indicated that they did not expect anything positive from the coup.

Youth representatives described how the coup constituted a deep shock to young people in particular. They said events plunged many into a state of fear and depression, shattering their dreams of building a modern national state after the overthrow of the previous regime.

FIGURE 16

**IMPACT OF THE LAST TRANSITION ON THE COUNTRY,
DISAGGREGATED BY COUNTRY**

SO FAR, HAS THIS CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT HAD A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE COUNTRY?



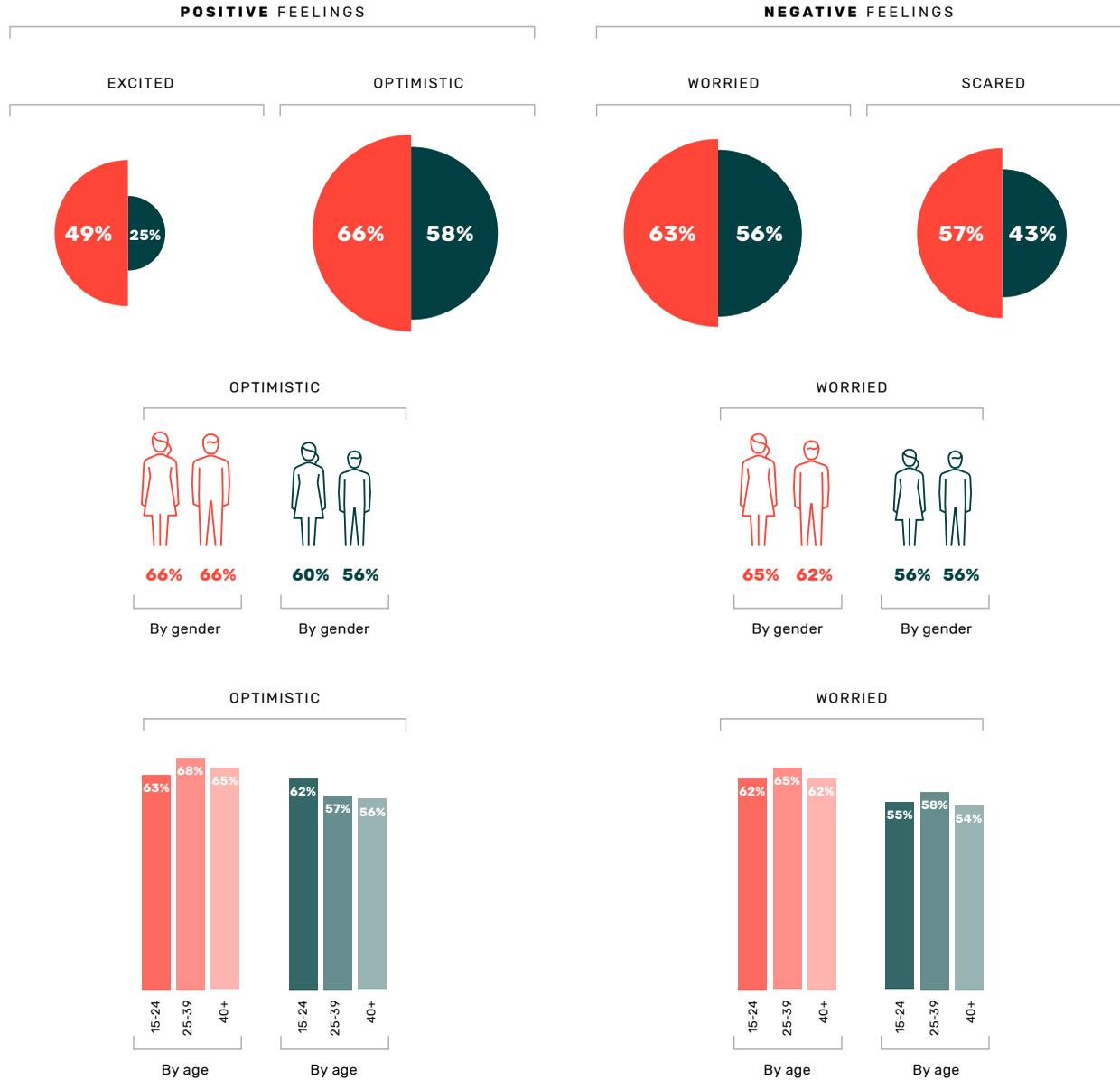
Among the sharpest differences between UCG and DTS countries emerged in the emotional realm, as shown in Figure 17. When asked to select adjectives that describe how they felt about the direction their country was moving in, people across both categories were most likely to say they felt ‘optimistic’ (62 percent overall). The biggest difference between the two country types was between those who selected feeling ‘excited’ (49 percent in UCG countries, versus 25 percent in DTS countries). **The data suggests that living through a military coup seems to produce extreme emotional responses. Many people reported equal measures of excitement and worry, feeling scared but also experiencing optimism. These emotions were notably less intense or prominent among those who had recently lived the routine of an established political pathway (an election).**

FIGURE 17

EMOTIONAL FEELING TOWARDS THE COUNTRY'S DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

■ UCG
■ DTS

WHICH WORDS DESCRIBE HOW YOU FELT ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY DURING THE LAST CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT?



Key findings

A review of the focal countries' positioning on global indices confirmed the relevance of the study's development lens on military coups. Correlations between coup risk and stagnant growth, inequality, the exclusion of youth and women, governance deficits and higher levels of military spend as a share of government budget, were apparent.

However, through the prism of the *Soldiers and citizens* respondents' perspectives, it appears that despite living in countries with relatively less development progress, citizens who had recently experienced a military coup reported *higher* levels of satisfaction with their living circumstances than those in DTS-type settings. These findings suggest that while an external environment may empirically reflect higher levels of development progress, people's expectations may be augmented in these settings. In such contexts, a multitude of day-to-day challenges continue to exist, and aspirations may be left unmet despite overall development gains.

All the cases of UCG events explored in this study are recent, and therefore longer-term development consequences remain unknown. The findings indicate that five years after the event, Guinea and Mali had lost an accumulated sum of \$12.13 billion and \$13.52 billion in total gross domestic product (GDP) respectively, based on purchasing power parity (PPP). Research across the five contemporary UCG contexts confirmed that subsequent political responses have had an economic impact, discouraged investors and curtailed economic activities. Food and essential commodity prices – already under pressure due to COVID-19 and, more recently, the war in Ukraine – have been affected by instability in all settings. Humanitarian needs have spiked.

Despite these realities, a greater number of UCG respondents reported the impact of the coup event as being 'positive' when compared to perceptions of elections shared by DTS-country category respondents. Respondents were most disposed to such views in Chad, Guinea and Mali.

The emotional extremes that accompany an experience of living through a coup were also reflected. Many respondents described experiencing equal measures of feeling excited, worried, scared and optimistic. More UCG- than DTS-category respondents selected both positive and negative adjectives. The biggest difference comparing the two emerged among respondents who selected feeling excited (49 percent of UCG respondents, versus 25 percent of DTS respondents).

The findings reveal an appetite for change among UCG-country respondents, and a perspective of willing positive transformation to materialize from the recent turmoil – despite feelings of fear and anxiety. They also point to significant levels of frustration and scepticism among citizens in comparatively stable and developmentally advanced states. While these states may appear relatively successful, the data shows that living conditions remain deeply unsatisfactory and worsening amid a globally turbulent economy. Tolerance for government under-performance is waning.

CHAPTER 2.2 GOVERNANCE SHORTFALLS

Section 1 reflected on the state of democracy in Africa in an overall context of significant progress, but also rising un-constitutionalism, authoritarianism and risk of reversals. It identified an inflection point, posing a critical need for all stakeholders to prioritize deepening the quality, development, delivery and sustainability of democracy on the continent. The secondary data reviewed also showed a stark correlation between coup risk and lower performance across governance-focused indices.

This chapter shares findings from the *Soldiers and citizens* research to further illuminate how governance shortfalls may impact and shape military coup occurrence. It considers two related sets of issues: belief in democracy, and confidence in government performance.

To understand how participants view the hallmarks of effective governance, respondents were asked to identify the key characteristics of democracy. Five key traits emerged across both DTS and UCG settings. The majority of participants across both contexts (74 and 64 percent in DTS and UCG countries, respectively) identified 'free and fair elections' as the top characteristic of democracy, while the second key trait was 'women have the same rights as men' (61 percent DTS, and 55 percent UCG respondents), followed by 'civil rights protect people against state oppression' (50 percent DTS, and 51 percent UCG participants). Responses for the fourth characteristic, namely 'people obey their rulers' was rated slightly higher in DTS countries (55 percent, versus 50 percent in UCG countries), while the fifth most cited trait was 'the media are free from government control', (46 percent DTS-country respondents, and 49 percent in UCG settings).

2.2.1 Belief in democracy

Democratic momentum that has swept across the continent since the 1990s has led to significant progress. Data from Afrobarometer illustrates that a preference for democracy over any other system of government has been more or less consistently high for the past decade in most African countries.¹¹⁴ Interestingly, however, Afrobarometer data also shows that respondents from this study's five UCG-category countries are among the most dissatisfied with democracy, with an increased belief that a non-democratic system may in some circumstances be preferable emerging from 2014 data forward.¹¹⁵

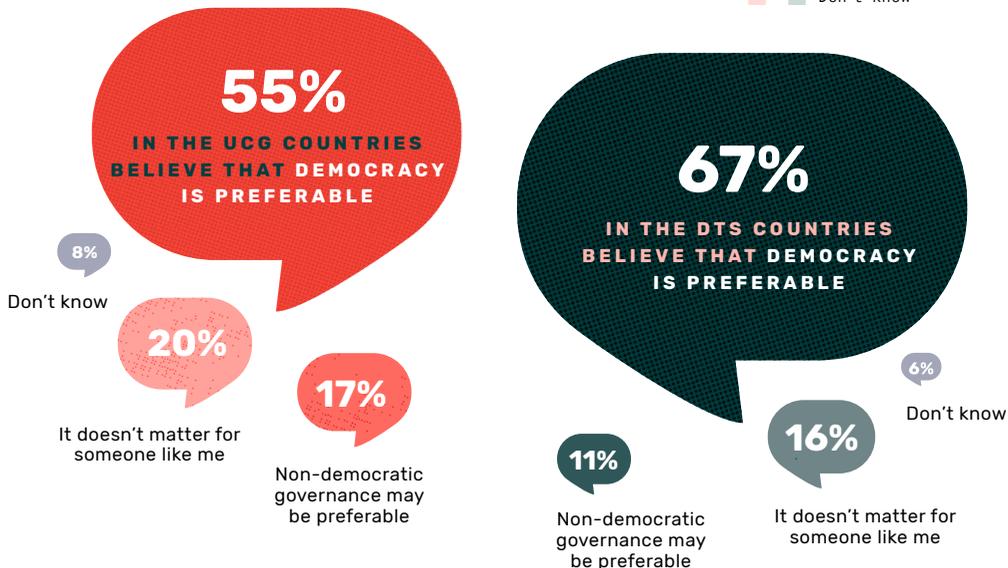
Without being able to corroborate the longitudinal perspective, the *Soldiers and citizens* survey findings do identify a similar divergence in attitudes between its UCG- and DTS-category focal countries. As Figure 18 illustrates, survey respondents were asked to select one of three options that best described their attitude towards democracy. While over two thirds (67 percent) of people living in DTS-category countries indicated that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government, a smaller proportion (just over half) of those in the UCG category shared this view.

FIGURE 18

PREFERENCE FOR DEMOCRACY OR OTHER KIND OF GOVERNMENT

WHICH OF THESE THREE STATEMENTS IS CLOSEST TO YOUR OWN OPINION?

- UCG DTS
- Democracy is preferable
 - It doesn't matter for someone like me
 - Non-democratic governance may be preferable
 - Don't know



DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN, BY AGE AND GENDER



The remainder in UCG countries were broadly split between saying a non-democratic government can sometimes be preferable (17 percent) or that, for them, the type of system does not really matter (20 percent). These findings seem to demonstrate that people do not necessarily value democracy absolutely in either setting, and that significant numbers of citizens view non-democratic forms of government as a necessary option in some circumstances.¹¹⁶ This attitude is more likely in countries that recently experienced a coup.

Interestingly, fewer women than men in both categories felt that a non-democratic system may be preferable in some circumstances (by 7 percentage points in UCG-category countries, and 4 percentage points in DTS-category countries). These findings correlate with the similarly lower percentage of women in UCG countries who felt the impact of the coup was positive, compared to men – as discussed in the previous chapter.¹¹⁷ They may be taken to imply recognition that gender parity and women's rights may be better pursued through democracy than in its absence. Women were also slightly more likely to choose 'it doesn't matter for someone like me', as an answer. Considering results by age, 'democracy is preferable' was a more common response by 7 percentage points among 40+ respondents than with those in the 24–39 bracket in DTS contexts. In other words, older respondents were more consistent in their support for democracy. However, variation by age was marginal among respondents in UCG-category countries.

In building an understanding of the drivers of Africa's recent military coups, it is pertinent to note the relatively lower levels of belief in democracy in the UCG focal countries – while recognizing that the data also shows this group of democracy sceptics to be a minority.

Case study research underscores the readiness of citizens to take to the streets to express grievances in all five UCG countries, both recently and further back in contemporary history. Often, such protests were clearly in support of democratic principle, as highlighted in Section 1. However, popular demonstrations in support of military coup leaders have also featured prominently in recent events. The popularity of the contemporary military coups in the immediate timeframe of their occurrence is also reflected in the *Soldiers and citizens* data – for example, in the higher levels of optimism about the countries' direction of travel discussed in the previous chapter. However, **popular support for these dramatic changes has been widely interpreted by commentators as a reaction against the status quo, and, as such, constitute an expression of democratic demand for better governance, rather than for military rule *per se*.**¹¹⁸

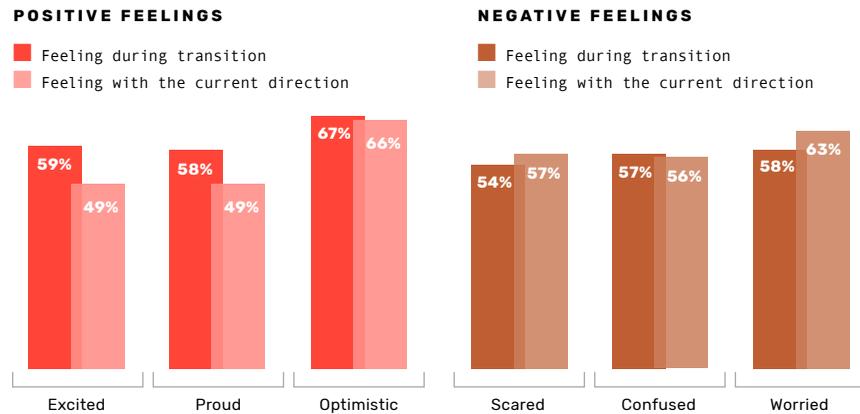
Hints of this dynamic – and of citizens' disappointment when hoped-for outcomes have failed to materialize – also appear when comparing respondents' answers about 'feelings during the transition' and 'feelings about country's direction of travel now', as shown in Figure 19. Positive feelings have declined: 'excitement' by 10 percentage points; feeling 'proud' by 9 percentage points; while optimism remains at similar levels. Negative feelings have shown smaller changes, but an intensification is discernible: 'worried' is up by 5 percentage points – and more so among men.

Statistical analysis of the *Soldiers and citizens*

data found that men were 55 percent more likely than women to say that a non-democratic government can be preferable in some circumstances.

FIGURE 19

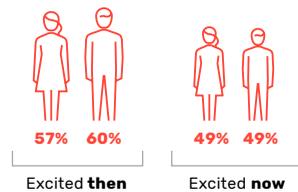
FEELINGS IN FLUX AMONGST RESPONDENTS IN UCG COUNTRIES



DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

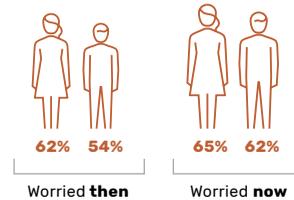
EXCITEMENT AMONGST RESPONDENTS THEN AND NOW

BY GENDER

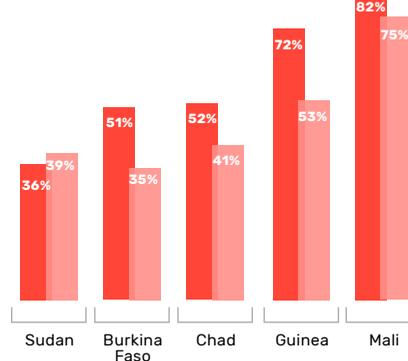


WORRY AMONGST RESPONDENTS THEN AND NOW

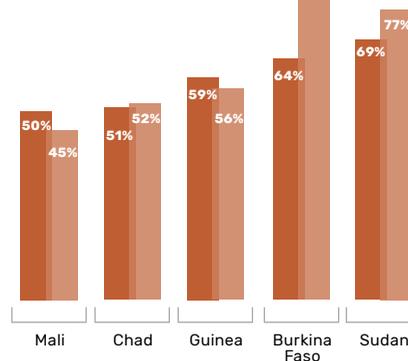
BY GENDER



BY COUNTRY



BY COUNTRY



News sources and secondary analysis of events highlight the ultimately ephemeral nature of popular support for military coups in the recent cases in Africa. In Guinea, a year after Colonel Mamady Doumbouya took power amid popular demonstrations in his favour, sporadic clashes between protesters and security forces broke out in September 2022. These occurred alongside calls by a coalition of opposition and civil society actors for a swifter return to constitutional order, objecting to the repression of dissent and a perceived manipulation of judicial institutions and processes.¹¹⁹

In post-coup Burkina Faso, insecurity related to violent extremism has intensified, despite the junta promising to improve security. As a result, a worsening humanitarian crisis has already displaced millions and public confidence is reportedly being drained.¹²⁰ The changeable nature of popular support was particularly evident when, less than eight months after being cheered into power, Lieutenant Colonel Damiba was forced to step down in a counter-coup, accused of failure to live up to expectations and deliver on his initial promises of restoring security in the country. Turbulent scenes unfolded outside the French embassy, with protesters reacting to rumours that he was being protected there.

The *Soldiers and citizens* survey highlights the relevance of perceived underperformance of previous governments — including those that were democratically elected — in shaping an appetite for change, fuelling bursts of popular support in favour of coup events as they unfold. Respondents who said that a ‘non-democratic government can sometimes be preferable’ were prompted to unpack the circumstances in which they felt this may apply. This was asked as an open question, allowing respondents to provide answers in their own words.

The combined responses were then analysed and coded to identify patterns of views. As shown in Figure 20, by far the most common reason given was that democracy was ‘abused’ or ‘not working’. In UCG-category countries, almost two in three respondents (63 percent) said this was one of the reasons. It was far more important than issues of security (11 percent) or the economy (2 percent).

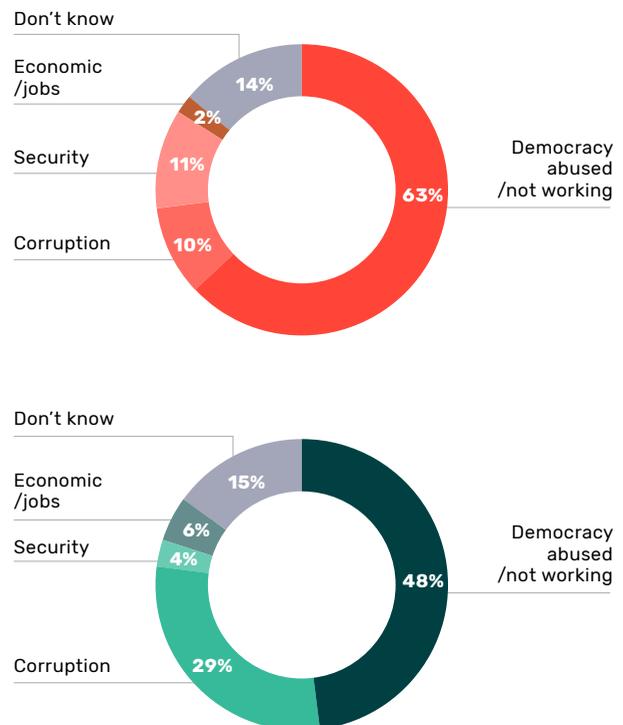
Similarly, in DTS-category countries, democracy ‘not working / being abused’ was the most significant reason (48 percent). But for these countries, the second-highest reason was corruption (29 percent). These findings show that people are most ready to consider alternatives — even in democratically transitioned settings — where they perceive democracy to be dysfunctional, often linked to corruption.

FIGURE 20

REASONS FOR SUPPORT TO NON-DEMOCRATIC FORMS OF GOVERNMENT?¹²¹

■ UCG
■ DTS

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DO YOU MEAN A NON-DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT MAY BE PREFERABLE?



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

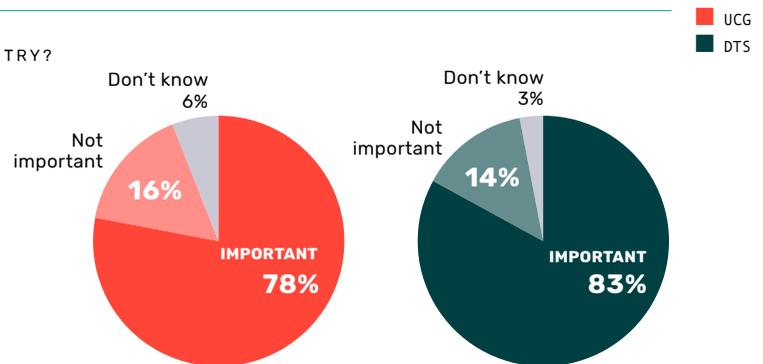
2.2.2 Confidence in government performance

The legitimacy of governments in the eyes of citizens (or lack thereof) is clearly a critical feature of the landscape shaping popular support for military coups. Disappointment in the performance of leadership, including where it has been democratically elected, has shaped a readiness to consider alternative systems to democracy in some circumstances. This attitude is more marked in countries that recently experienced military coups, but is also prominent in DTS-category countries.

The positioning on global governance indices cited in Section 1 reduces to a numerical score the lived experiences of millions of citizens: lives marred by exclusion, infringement of rights, deprivation, restriction of opportunity and frustration. Case study analysis across the five UCG countries depicts inadequate service delivery across security, health and education, as well as horizontal inequalities and risks. Political economies have generated entrenched patronage systems whereby economic opportunities are dominated by close connections to governing elites. The *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey explored people's attitudes to different dimensions of state performance, which are discussed in the remainder of this chapter. The first area relates to effective leadership. Findings suggest that people feel strongly about who runs their country. Across all eight countries, 80 percent of respondents described 'who runs the country' as being very important to them, although this number was 5 percentage points lower among UCG respondents than those in DTS-category countries (Figure 21).

FIGURE 21

IMPORTANCE OF WHO RUNS THE COUNTRY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU WHO RUNS THE COUNTRY?



The importance ascribed to leadership in the eyes of the public is poignant. A factor that stands out in the case study analysis as key in building resilient constitutional order is the historic role of transformational and developmental leaders, who focused on building a strong institutional legacy. The quality of leadership has been a significant factor and source of resilience in shaping the political trajectories of the eight focal countries. This factor is highlighted in other analysis reviewed for this report. For instance, a study by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance concluded that leaders of successful transitions, among other characteristics, tended to have had a strategic sense of direction toward more inclusive and accountable governance. The study also ascribed to these leaders a fundamental preference for peaceful and incremental transformation, while capturing the mood and spirit of citizens and reinforcing the efforts of political parties and social organizations to move toward democracy.¹²²

BOX 10

A LEGACY OF DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and Jerry John Rawlings in Ghana are leaders who played decisive roles in defining the democratic trajectory of their respective countries, both of which have been on a democratic transition course since the 1990s, notwithstanding ongoing challenges in each country. Both leaders are credited with visionary legacies that created a strong foundation for future development progress.

Despite, in Rawlings' case, coming into power through a military coup, both voluntarily left office. This inspired a new political culture and tradition for the medium and longer term. When a strong and influential leader sets a precedent for stepping down peacefully, it becomes difficult to break the trend and reverse the path. Power transitions can create a new and positive path dependence. No successor managed to overstay their term in any of the 21 countries in Africa where one president had left office in accordance with term-limit provisions, as of 2022.¹²³

As some analysts have observed, the new generation of military leaders that has come into power through coups in West Africa "... has wooed disenfranchised youth with the same populist leftist rhetoric [that] West African military leaders used in the 1970s and 1980s".¹²⁴ Each has consciously invoked the spirit and message of previous revolutionary leaders to inspire a sense of historic opportunity and change among young supporters.¹²⁵ Whether they will live up to these references to earlier 'giants' remains an open question. But **the rhetoric perhaps speaks to a yearning on the continent for effective leadership, after decades of rule by patrimonial and exclusionary elites. Its apparent resonance should be taken as a rallying call to principled and purposeful leadership for all serving presidents.**

Turning from the quality of political leadership to other aspects of state legitimacy in the eyes of citizens, the data found that more than half of people in both country categories believed that their system of government needs to improve a great deal. Findings were similar across UCG and DTS settings, as shown in Figure 22. In UCG-category countries, 55 percent agreed, and 33 percent disagreed with the statement that their country's system of government is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful. These views are broadly consistent with the results reported in DTS-category countries, where 50 percent agreed, and 36 percent disagreed, as shown in Figure 23.

FIGURE 22

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT NEEDS IMPROVING

■ UCG
■ DTS

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR OPINION OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN YOUR COUNTRY?

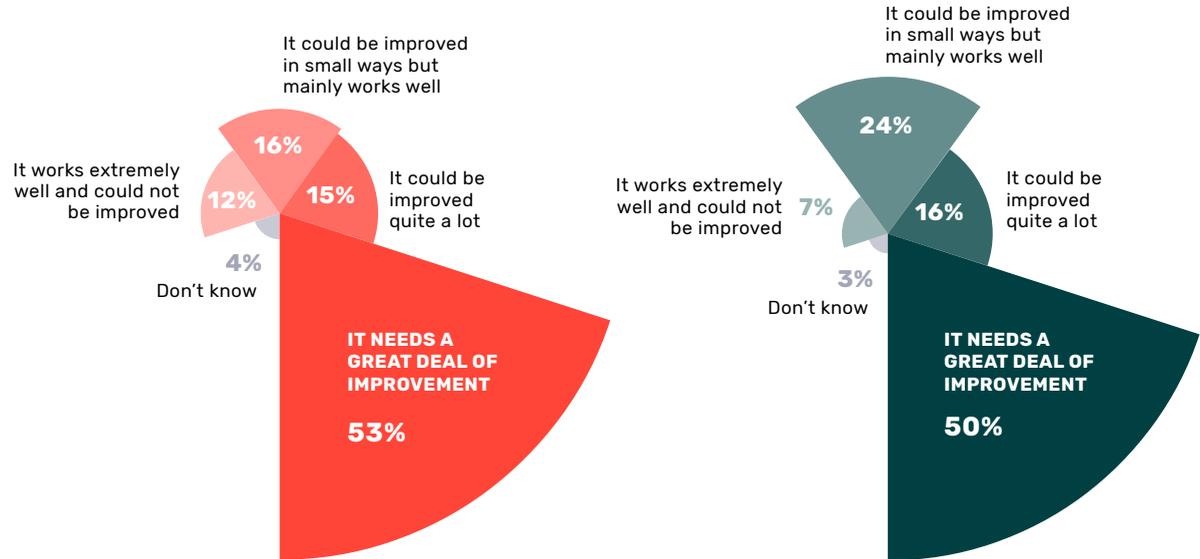
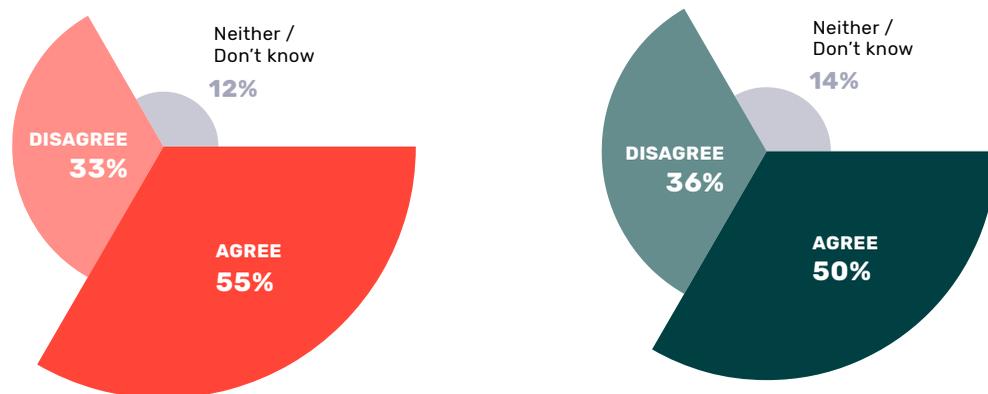


FIGURE 23

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IS RIGGED TO ADVANTAGE THE RICH AND THE POWERFUL

■ UCG
■ DTS

DO YOU AGREE THAT THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IS RIGGED TO ADVANTAGE THE RICH AND POWERFUL?



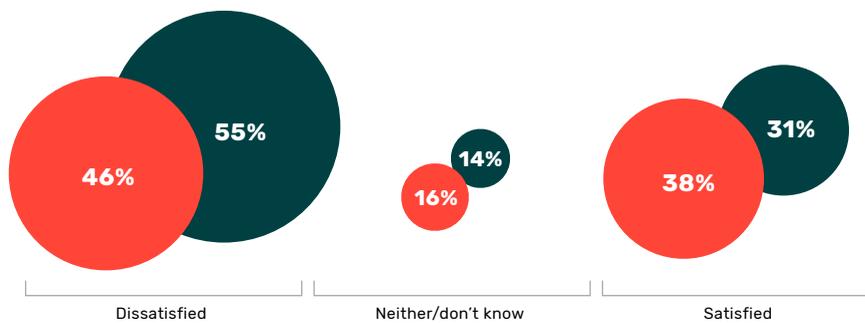
Despite the similarities between the two country categories, differences emerged in other areas related to confidence in government performance. The survey revealed again that, despite conditions being worse in UCG countries (as extrapolated from global indices and case study analysis), levels of scepticism were lower overall than in DTS-category countries. As shown in Figure 24, across the eight countries surveyed, more people on average reported being dissatisfied than satisfied with the way their government is running the country. However, those in DTS-category countries were 9 percentage points more likely to report dissatisfaction than counterparts in UCG-category countries. Dissatisfaction was more pronounced among lower-income bracket respondents in both category countries, but substantially more so in the DTS focal countries.

FIGURE 24

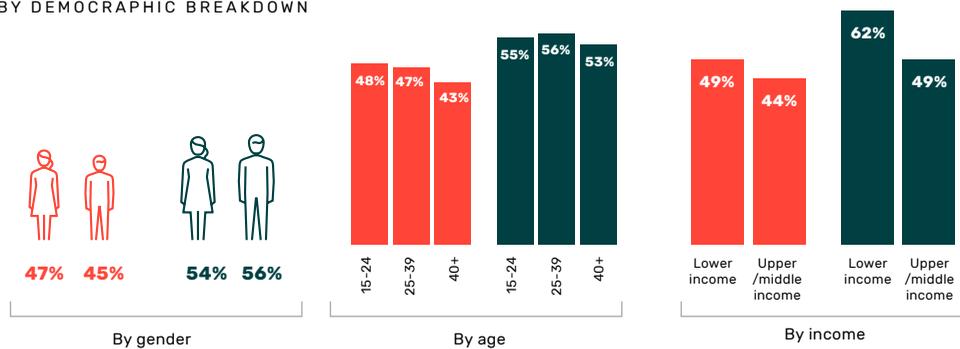
SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT IS RUNNING THE COUNTRY

■ UCG
■ DTS

HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT IS RUNNING THE COUNTRY?



DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT BY DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN



People were more dissatisfied than satisfied with public services in both settings. However, they were more dissatisfied in DTS- than UCG-category countries by 9 percentage points, as shown in Figure 25. Feedback on rule-of-law indicators also points to greater public scepticism (or higher levels of expectation) in DTS than UCG-category countries. In the former, just 10 percent of the public thought that the law was fairly applied to all citizens ‘all of the time’, as compared to 28 percent in UCG-category countries. This point revealed limited differences in attitude by gender, as shown in Figure 26.

FIGURE 25

SATISFACTION WITH PUBLIC SERVICES

■ UCG
■ DTS

ARE YOU SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF KEY PUBLIC SERVICES, E.G. EDUCATION AND HEALTH?

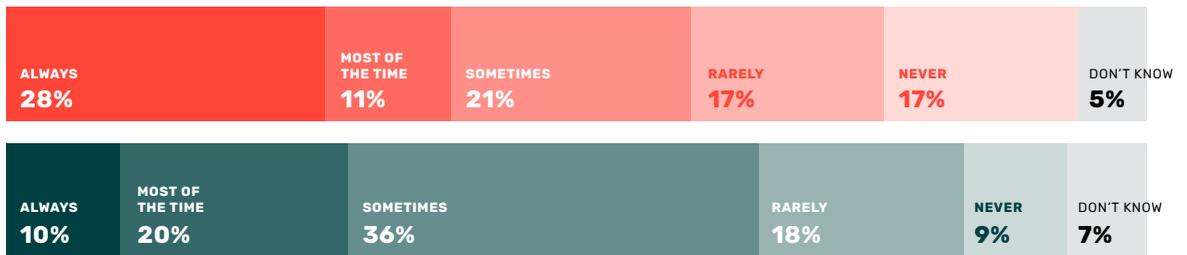


FIGURE 26

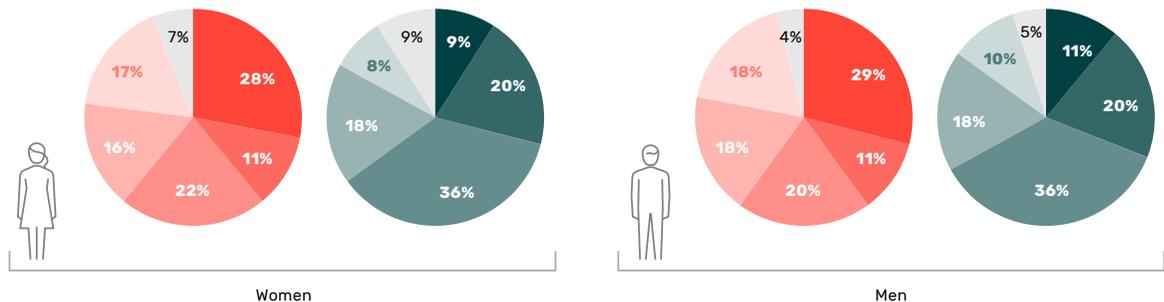
EQUAL TREATMENT OF CITIZENS BEFORE THE LAW

UCG DTS
 ■ Always
 ■ Most of the time
 ■ Sometimes
 ■ Rarely
 ■ Never
 ■ Don't know

HOW OFTEN, IF AT ALL, DO YOU THINK THE LAW IS FAIRLY APPLIED TO ALL CITIZENS IN YOUR COUNTRY?



BY GENDER



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

The need to reframe social contracts emerges as a critical vehicle for delivering improved state performance and development outcomes, while enabling resilience to coups.¹²⁶ The heightened levels of scepticism and disappointment in the delivery of democratically elected governments across DTS countries warns against complacency among relatively high performers. Questions of state legitimacy in the eyes of citizens, and the importance of improving levels of civic trust and confidence, have continent-wide pertinence.

These priorities should not be seen as the sole concern of countries that have shown themselves most vulnerable to coup risk. Macro stressors such as the pandemic, climate change and war in Ukraine contribute to mounting risk across Africa's development landscape.

The qualitative research in Burkina Faso and Ghana

indicated that across these diverse settings, participants have reportedly lost trust in the capabilities of either the incumbent government or opposition to change the status quo and deliver improved outcomes on good governance, justice or socio-economic development priorities.

Participants viewed opposition parties as a replica of the government in power, "just waiting for their turn to loot the nation's resources". While some think the political system of governance needs to change, others contend that liberal democracy as it is currently practiced is not the best political system. These sentiments were particularly pronounced among participants from Burkina Faso.

It was felt that general disappointment in political leadership could lead to voter apathy. Some participants indicated they planned to abstain from voting in elections until major constitutional reforms have taken place.

"People have lost confidence in the government and opposition. They think that they are the same, so voter apathy may set in during the next elections. People are beginning to check out of the system, and that will affect participation. People will not be willing to get involved in the next election process." *Female key informant, Ghana*

However, some participants in Ghana see the current situation as an opportunity for change. In particular, they critiqued the government for failing to address economic hardship.

CHAPTER 2.2

Key findings

Democratic momentum that has spread across the continent since the 1990s has led to significant progress. Many countries, including three of this study's focal countries, are on a path of democratic transition in spite of challenges and countervailing influences. Differences in attitudes to democracy are apparent between the UCG- and DTS-category focal countries, reflecting their countries' respective experiences. While over two thirds of people in DTS countries indicated that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government, just over half of those in the UCG category shared this view. The remainder in UCG countries were broadly split between saying a non-democratic government can sometimes be preferable (17 percent) or that, for them, the type of system does not really matter (20 percent).

These findings illustrate people's disappointment with the delivery of democratically elected governments to date, fuelling a sense that significant numbers of citizens view non-democratic government as presenting a legitimate alternative in some circumstances. This attitude was more prevalent in the countries that had recently experienced a coup.

Fewer women than men, in both categories of countries, felt that a non-democratic system could be preferable in some circumstances

(a difference of 7 percentage points in UCG countries, and 4 percentage points in DTS-category countries). This seems to imply recognition that gender parity and women's rights may be better pursued through democracy than in its absence.

A preparedness to challenge democracy appears to be propelled by a profound yearning for better governance. Popular support for dramatic changes of the political guard may be understood as a reaction against the status quo. That people are cheering for change, rather than offering their wholehearted endorsement of the incoming leadership, is also apparent in comparing respondents' 'feelings during transition' with their 'feelings about the country's current direction'. Positive feelings declined: 'excitement' by 10 percentage points and feeling 'proud' by 9 percentage points. Feelings of optimism, however, remained at similar levels.

The ephemeral nature of the popularity of the recent military coups in the immediate timeframe of their occurrence is thus reflected in the data. Such support is likely to evaporate when change is not forthcoming – as subsequent events on the streets in Guinea and Burkina Faso have underlined.

The perceived underperformance of previous governments, including those that have been democratically elected, appears highly relevant in shaping both a broader appetite for change and the fleeting popularity of military coups 'in the moment'. Equally relevant is mounting scepticism about democratic delivery – even in DTS-type settings. Respondents who indicated that alternatives to democracy might be acceptable were asked to elaborate on the circumstances that would justify such a change. By far the most common reason provided was that democracy was being 'abused' or 'not working'. In UCG-category countries, more than half (63 percent) cited this reason. In DTS-category focal countries, 48 percent also gave this reason. But for the latter countries, a larger share of respondents identified corruption as the second-highest reason (29 percent).

From these findings it emerges that people are most ready to consider alternatives (even in democratically transitioned settings) where they perceive democracy, as constituted, to be dysfunctional or abused, often linked to corruption.

In ranking government performance, similar numbers across settings felt their system of government needed improving. However, scepticism was again higher among those living in DTS-category countries. More of these respondents (by 9 percentage points) said they were dissatisfied with the way the government was running the country; while 11 percent more DTS respondents expressed dissatisfaction with public services. These respondents were 18 percent less disposed to think that rule of law was applied fairly all of the time than counterparts in UCG-type settings. These findings place significant emphasis on the importance of reviving trust between citizens and the state across all settings in Africa.

CHAPTER 2.3 SECURITY AND SAFETY

This report casts a development lens on recent military coups in Africa, which recalls the centrality of ‘peaceful, just and inclusive’ societies as articulated in Agenda 2030 and similarly in Agenda 2063, as a crucial goal and enabler of other development gains and priorities.

A state’s ability to provide inclusive security is partly determined by the functionality and accountability of its security sector, along with the overall state of civil-military relations. This chapter focuses on survey respondents’ attitudes to the military and wider issues related to security and safety.

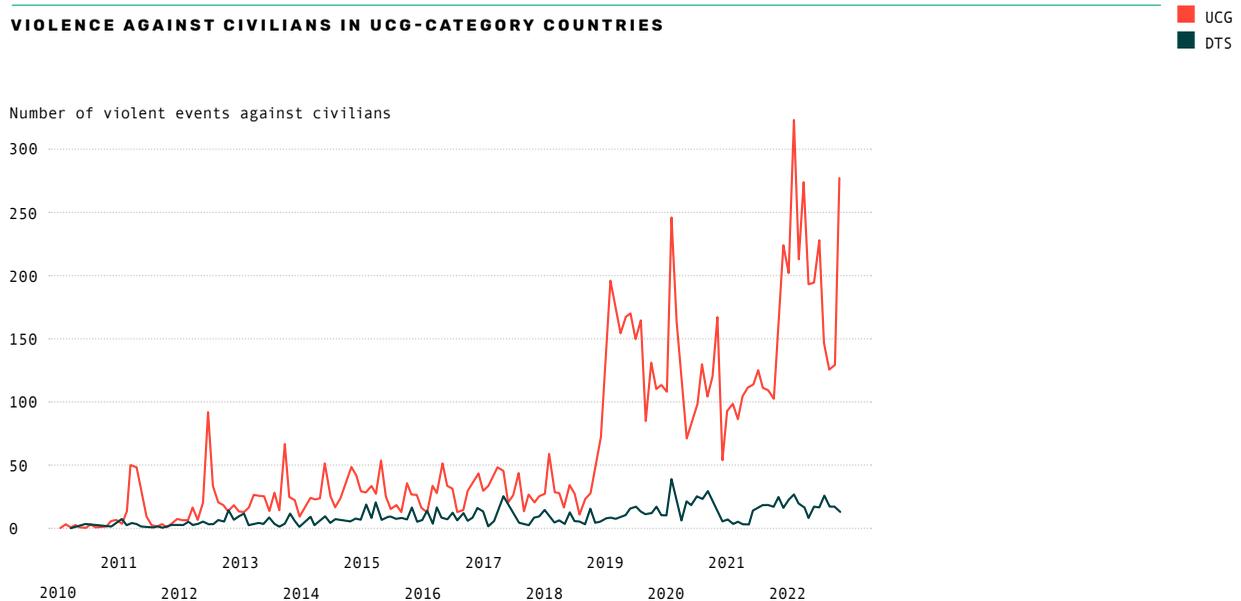
2.3.1 Reformist military over civilian status quo

As has been noted, military coup leaders, especially in Burkina Faso and Mali, leveraged concerns around ineffective state responses to insecurity in galvanizing initial popular support. The impacts of deepening insecurity on daily life in the region are indeed bleak – as illustrated in the stark data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), shown in Figure 27. ACLED defines ‘violence against civilians’ as events where an organized armed group deliberately inflicts violence on unarmed non-combatants. By definition, civilians are unarmed and cannot engage in political violence. Perpetrators include state forces and their affiliates, rebels, militias and external/other forces.

Soldiers and citizens qualitative research participants in Burkina Faso indicated that the political and security situation in the country created uncertainty and a humanitarian crisis, resulting in the death of millions of people – especially women and children. Citizens felt unsafe, economically disempowered and unable to have their basic needs met.

FIGURE 27

VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS IN UCG-CATEGORY COUNTRIES



Source: ACLED, October 2022

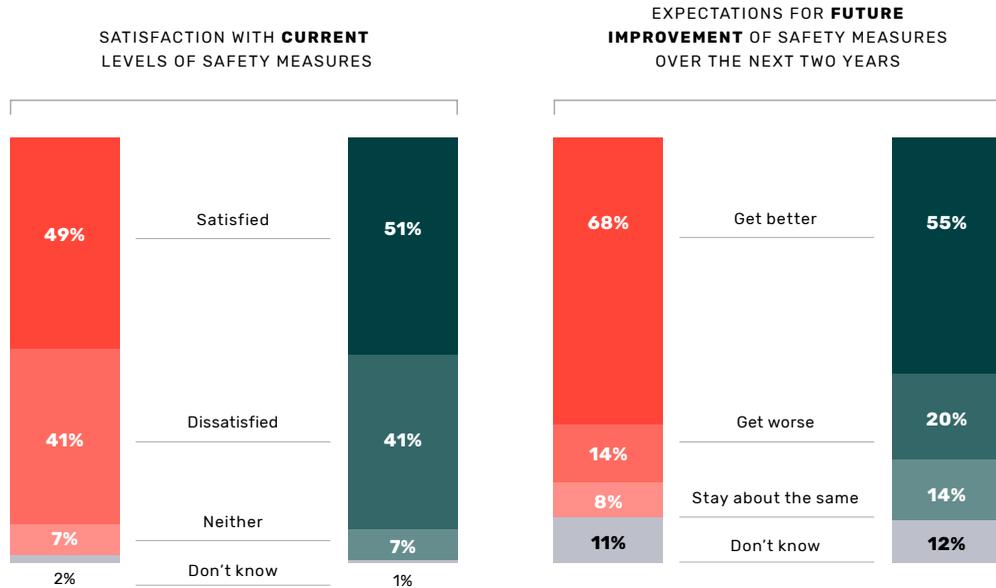
In some countries, the weak state legitimacy highlighted in the previous chapter is both a cause of, and compounded by, aggravated levels of violence perpetrated both by armed groups and state security forces in the name of combatting terrorism. Studies have repeatedly found mistreatment by security forces and state institutions to be one of the most powerful drivers of armed-group recruitment in the region.¹²⁷

The general optimism that UCG-country respondents experienced at the time of the coup event extends to perceptions of safety and security. In both types of settings, 41 percent of respondents reported being dissatisfied with current levels of safety in their countries (see Figure 28). Yet **significantly more respondents living in UCG-category countries believed that safety would improve in the coming two years (by 13 percentage points) when compared to DTS-category country respondents (with 68 percent optimistic that safety would improve, compared to 55 percent)**. Across DTS-category country respondents, 6 percent more respondents anticipated deteriorating safety than UCG respondents (20 percent versus 14 percent).

FIGURE 28

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY IN UCG AND DTS COUNTRIES, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

■ UCG
■ DTS



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

Meanwhile, attitudes towards the role of the military represented one of the most significant areas of difference between UCG- and DTS-category countries.

When asked whether there is a clear separation between the military and the government in their country, half of UCG respondents (52 percent) agreed and 32 percent disagreed, as shown in Figure 29.

However, in DTS-category countries, almost the reverse was true: 32 percent agreed, while 47 percent disagreed. In other words, more respondents in UCG- than DTS-category countries believed that there was a clear separation between military and government, despite having recently experienced direct military intervention, by 20 percentage points.

These results may indicate a higher degree of tolerance toward military involvement in politics that directly reflect the recent coup experiences, while people in DTS-category countries maintain a watchful vigilance on this relationship. Further, **more people in UCG-category than DTS-category countries (by 22 percentage points) responded that it is essential in a democracy for the army to take over when the government is incompetent**, as also shown in Figure 29. [These results resonate with Afrobarometer findings on rejection versus support for military rule, which also found the UCG-category countries to report among the highest levels of support among countries.¹²⁸]

Statistical analysis of the Soldiers and citizens data found that people who felt dissatisfied with levels of security and public safety were more likely to state that in some circumstances, a non-democratic form of government can be preferable – rather than fully supporting democracy.

Those who reported having seen no change in satisfaction on safety until the present moment, were 43 percent less likely to prefer non-democratic forms of government compared to those who were disappointed.

FIGURE 29

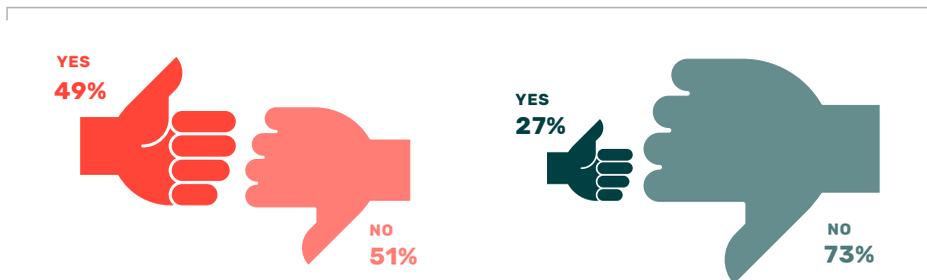
SEPARATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT

■ UCG
■ DTS

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT THERE IS A CLEAR SEPARATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE GOVERNMENT?



IS IT AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF DEMOCRACY THAT THE ARMY TAKES OVER WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS INCOMPETENT?



Sudan was once again a clear exception, with the military coup in question representing a reversal of hope, and respondents rejecting the recent military intervention. The responses in the other UCG settings, however, reflected a more prominent notion that a reformist faction of the military may be better equipped and more effective than civilian governments to tackle prevailing insecurity, corruption and abuses.

It is interesting to note that throughout history, the role of the military in supporting democratic revolution has proven crucial to the success of some transitions.¹²⁹ People may be inclined to put their faith in military actors when gravely disappointed by civilian rule, as shown in many of the UCG-country responses. Yet the long-term sustainability of a close military involvement has also been documented to pose negative effects for development and governance outcomes — as also noted by research participants in Sudan. Indeed, the case study analysis conducted for this report found that proactive efforts to reform civil-military relations formed a key contributor to the DTS countries' relative success in deepening democracy.

BOX 11

CIVILIAN AND DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY AS A SOURCE OF COUP RESILIENCE

In Ghana, considerable progress has been achieved in bringing the military under civilian control and promoting the reform of civil-military relations. Parliament exercises a strong degree of oversight. Efforts have been made to improve equipment supplies, accommodation and conditions of service for uniformed personnel — although challenges persist. These include deployment during national elections, the use of excessive force against civilians, as well as political interference in appointments. The civil-military relationship represents a long-term work in progress, and a critical priority in the overall effort to ensure continued stability and sustainable gains.¹³⁰

“Dealing with arms doesn’t establish schools, institutes or provide services. We just want a civil government.”

MALE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSANT, NYALA, SUDAN (FEBRUARY 2023)

According to participants in the *Soldiers and citizens qualitative research* in Sudan, one of the reasons the military gets involved in running the country is to serve its members' interests, privileges and social status. These incentives were unanimously described in FGDs in Sudan as key causes of the October 2021 coup.

Key findings

The general optimism that UCG respondents reported feeling at the time of the coup extends to perceptions of safety and security. While 41 percent of respondents in both types of settings were dissatisfied with current levels of safety, significantly more respondents living in UCG-category countries believed that it would improve in the coming two years (13 percentage points more than DTS-category country respondents, at 68 percent compared to 55 percent). Statistical analysis of the data also shows that people who felt dissatisfied with levels of security and public safety were more likely to state that in some circumstances, a non-democratic form of government can be preferable – confirming the pertinence of security to government legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

Attitudes towards the role of the military mark one of the most significant areas of difference between UCG- and DTS-category countries to emerge from the data, though with variances that are consistent with differences in attitudes to democracy.

When asked whether there is a clear separation between the military and the government in their country, half of UCG-country respondents (52 percent) agreed, and 32 percent disagreed. However, in DTS-category countries, almost the reverse was true: 32 percent agreed, and 47 percent disagreed. In other words, more respondents in UCG- than DTS-category countries believed there to be a clear separation between military and government, despite recent events, by 20 percentage points.

People living in UCG-category countries, despite having recently experienced direct military intervention, were more likely to believe that separation is at appropriate levels. This perhaps suggests a far higher degree of tolerance for military involvement in those countries, while people in DTS-category countries maintain a watchful vigilance on this relationship.

Similarly, more people in UCG-category than DTS-category countries responded that it is essential in a democracy for the army to take over when the government is incompetent (by 22 percentage points). These findings highlight the risk of a return to an era of close military involvement in African politics, while emphasizing the critical need to reset the role of the military in political life, and wider civil-military relations, as a source of resilience.

CHAPTER 2.4 PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSION

This chapter focuses on impressions drawn from the case studies on the nature and quality of inclusiveness of the formal transition processes in the UCG countries, as well as perceptions arising from the *Soldiers and citizens* survey.¹³¹ The report turns to different dimensions of inclusivity, comparing the two categories of focal countries' experiences. In doing so, it considers not only the involvement of citizens, but also different civic institutions and actors – as well as specific gains and challenges in relation to young people and women.

2.4.1 The inclusiveness and legitimacy of formal transition processes

All five military transitions established a guiding transition charter, which serves as the legal reference document for the transition. With the constitutionally established legislature suspended, each country bar Sudan appointed a body acting as a transitional legislative council. In all cases, the council was, to some degree, reflective of the country's diversity. In Guinea and Chad, this element has since been increasingly contested. All UCG countries engaged in some sort of dialogue with socio-political stakeholders to build consensus around the management of the transition (though in Sudan, this was ruptured first in October 2021, and subsequently by the outbreak of war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in April 2023. It was also temporarily disrupted in Burkina Faso from September 2022). Each also flagged the need to review and update the existing constitutional framework as a critical dimension of agreeing a new democratic settlement. At the same time, each country has encountered difficulties regarding the initial timelines set for restoring constitutional order.

Across the five cases, there has been prominent signalling towards inclusive and consultative process as a principle to guide the drafting and execution of the respective transition plans. This may have reflected influence from the AU, UN and other international partners to some extent, as well as political astuteness on the part of coup leaders in Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, and interim leadership in Chad.

***Soldiers and citizens* qualitative research**

participants in Burkina Faso expressed anxiety that the military junta may seek to hang on to power, using “excuses” of engaging in social dialogue and political reconciliation, the constitutional referendum and reforms, as a means to prolong the transition.

In Chad, the first declarations and actions of the Transitional Military Council (CMT), in calling for inclusive national dialogue and reaching out to armed opposition groups, seemed to have resonated with a high number of citizens. Initiated in mid-March 2022, the Doha Process experienced a series of delays before its conclusion in August of the same year. Various political actors and civil society activists were provoked by the delays, expressing waning confidence in the inclusivity of Chad's transition.¹³² The civil society platform *Wakit Tama* was at the fore among these, and subsequently announced its non-association with the national dialogue process, alongside a number of other groups. At the end of this process in early October 2022, violent crackdowns were witnessed against citizens, opposition and civil society leaders protesting the CMT's announcement of a two-year extension to the transition period. The violence signalled deep shortfalls in achieving inclusivity, and a rupture in popular confidence in the process.¹³³

The popular revolution that initially triggered Sudan's transition plan was already imbued with demand for inclusion across citizens' groups, often organized as resistance committees. The counter-revolutionary coup in October 2021 clearly shifted the prominence and spirit of inclusivity, with ever-deteriorating levels of trust between government, security forces and citizens. (As subsequent events have witnessed, trust between the coup instigators themselves also spiralled, resulting in all-out war between them from April 2023.) In Mali, the appointment of the civilian interim president and prime minister in September 2020 was preceded by consultations with various stakeholders. However, principal political parties and former armed group signatories of the 2015 peace agreement were absent from the December 2021 *Assises nationales pour la refondation*.¹³⁴

In Burkina Faso, the junta initially established a technical committee tasked with proposing measures to ensure consensus around the 'existential priorities of the nation', elaborating a draft agenda and timeline for the duration of the transition, and drawing up of a draft charter. The committee was asked to consult widely and draw on the country's recent history. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Damiba submitted himself to the requirements of the country's anti-corruption legislation by declaring his assets to the Constitutional Court as early as 24 February 2022, on the margins of his inauguration ceremony. He is the only one of the region's incoming coup leaders to have made such a declaration. Despite these efforts to project inclusivity and accountability, scepticism was voiced from the outset about the appointment of military officers and former regime loyalists into strategic positions. Low representation of political parties in the transitional legislative assembly, with only eight members out of 71, was a further source of contention. Captain Ibrahim Traoré, who toppled Lieutenant Colonel Damiba in September 2022, proceeded with a similar consultative process in the formation of his government and review of transition priorities.

The inclusivity of Guinea's transition follows a similar trajectory (see Box 12). Both Burkina Faso and Guinea's transitional military leadership fell out of favour with segments of the public and key constituencies in less than 12 months, as flagged in the previous chapter. The challenges of managing political dynamics both within the junta and between the junta and other political forces at large in society are revealed ever more sharply with every passing month. **Soldiers and citizens, though momentary allies while UCG events are unfolding, may readily become alienated as the complexity and interests bound up in the political transition assert themselves.**

BOX 12

INCLUSIVITY IN GUINEA'S TRANSITION

The ruling National Committee of Recovery and Development (CNRD) junta in Guinea took several robust steps to indicate a clear break from the previous regime. This included the indictment of top-level officials, among others in pursuit of corruption cases and the release of political prisoners.

There was a high degree of confidence as to the inclusive nature of the transition up until January 2022. The junta reached out to a multitude of stakeholders. Colonel Doumbouya visited the graveyards of the two late former presidents and their respective families. The junta also organized public consultations during September 2021, where delegations from almost all political parties, several CSOs, religious and traditional leaders, artists, farmers and other groups were received.

Guinea's Transitional Charter provides for a National Transitional Council (CNT) of 81 members, appointed to act as legislators until the election of a new national assembly. The 81 members of the CNT were seemingly carefully selected to represent various segments of society and included a reasonable representation of women and youth (even though political parties complained that their share of 15 seats was insufficient). Government posts were also allocated to represent various ethnic groups and regions of the country, including members of some political parties.

In March 2022, the junta launched national consultations for reconciliation called *assises nationales*, co-chaired by the grand imam of Conakry and the head of the Catholic Church. This dialogue process aimed at listening to Guineans across the country and in select countries abroad, with a view to reaching reconciliation over divisive issues from the past. The committee facilitating the proceedings presented its provisional report to the leader of the junta at the end of April 2022.

Likewise, in early April 2022, in response to political actors calling for a specific mechanism for dialogue, the junta launched what it called the Inclusive Framework of Concertation (Cadre de concertation inclusif), facilitated by the minister in charge of decentralization and territorial administration. All political parties and interested CSOs were invited to attend and make recommendations about the management of the transition period, including its duration and timeline. With reference to these two mechanisms, Colonel Doumbouya, in a televised address on 30 April, proposed a 39-month transitional timeline. The CNT reduced this to 36 months in a vote on 11 May 2022. In August 2022, a national dialogue process was organized, led by three female facilitators. On 21 October 2022, the junta finally reached an agreement with ECOWAS on a 24-month transitional period starting in December.

All this seemed to indicate strong inclusivity in the post-coup process in Guinea. However, from early 2022, some political parties – particularly the three largest ones under the former regime – began criticizing the transition. They boycotted the national consultations and framework and the August national dialogue, arguing that these were not genuine or that other actors had been invited to dilute their contribution.¹³⁵

Following increasingly vocal and organized criticism of the 36-month timeline, the junta banned the FNDC – a coalition of political parties, trade unions and CSOs. It also banned all public demonstrations. Sporadic clashes have turned increasingly violent since mid-2022. Confidence in the transition process and efforts at ensuring its inclusiveness have been compromised by these developments.

2.4.2 Degree of individual participation in political transition processes

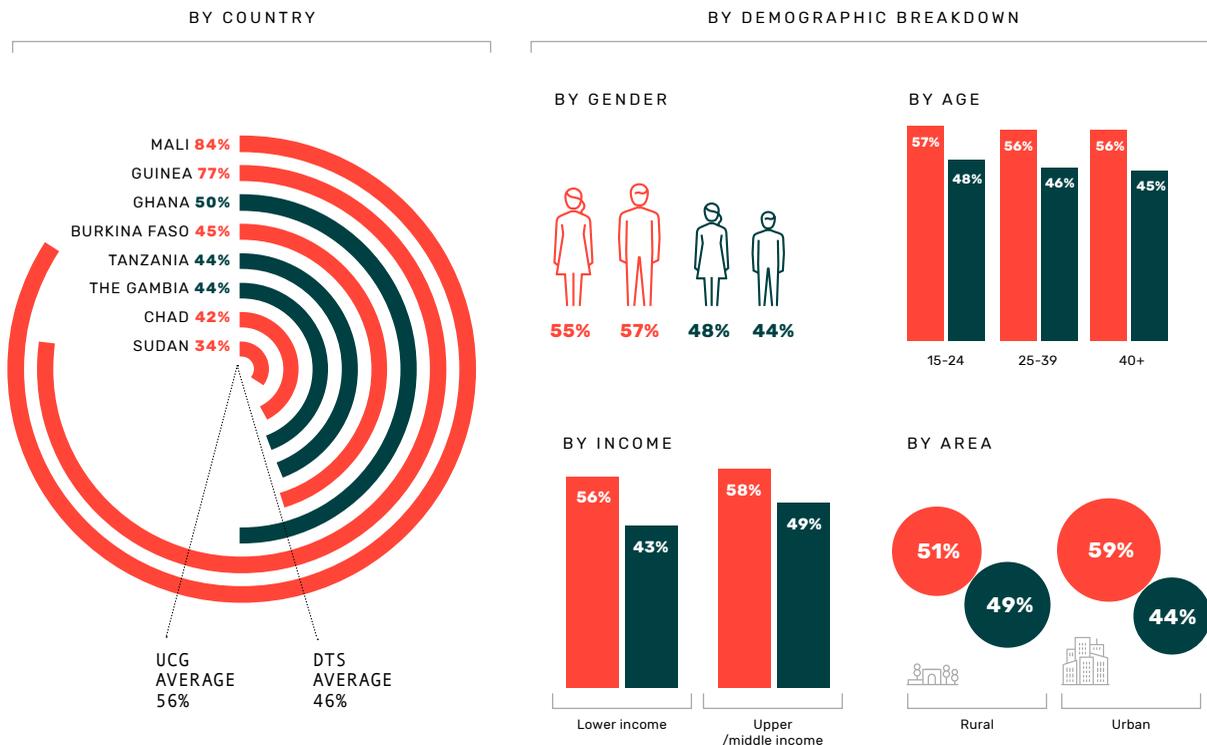
Charting electoral turnout offers a way to assess individual inclusion in political processes. According to secondary data, this is subject to significant variation, looking across this study’s focal countries. Ghana takes the lead with 69 percent eligible voter turnout in the 2016 elections (and close to 80 percent in the 2012 and 2020 elections).¹³⁶ It is followed by Mali, with 43 percent in the country’s 2018 elections.¹³⁷ Deepening participation in elections remains an important focus of governance and democracy promotion. However, even with relatively high levels of voter participation, voting may not always generate a straight path to meaningful inclusion in political transitions.

The *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey indicates varied success regarding the extent to which individual citizens felt that they were heard or included in the last national-level political event (UCG or election) in each country (as shown in Figure 30). As many as 77 percent of respondents in Guinea and 84 percent in Mali felt they had been ‘listened to’ at the time of the coup. On average, more urban and lower-income bracket respondents were among the group that reported such perspectives.

FIGURE 30

CITIZENS’ SENSE OF BEING LISTENED TO IN MOST RECENT POLITICAL EVENT
PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO FELT LISTENED TO “FULLY” OR “TO SOME EXTENT”

■ UCG
■ DTS



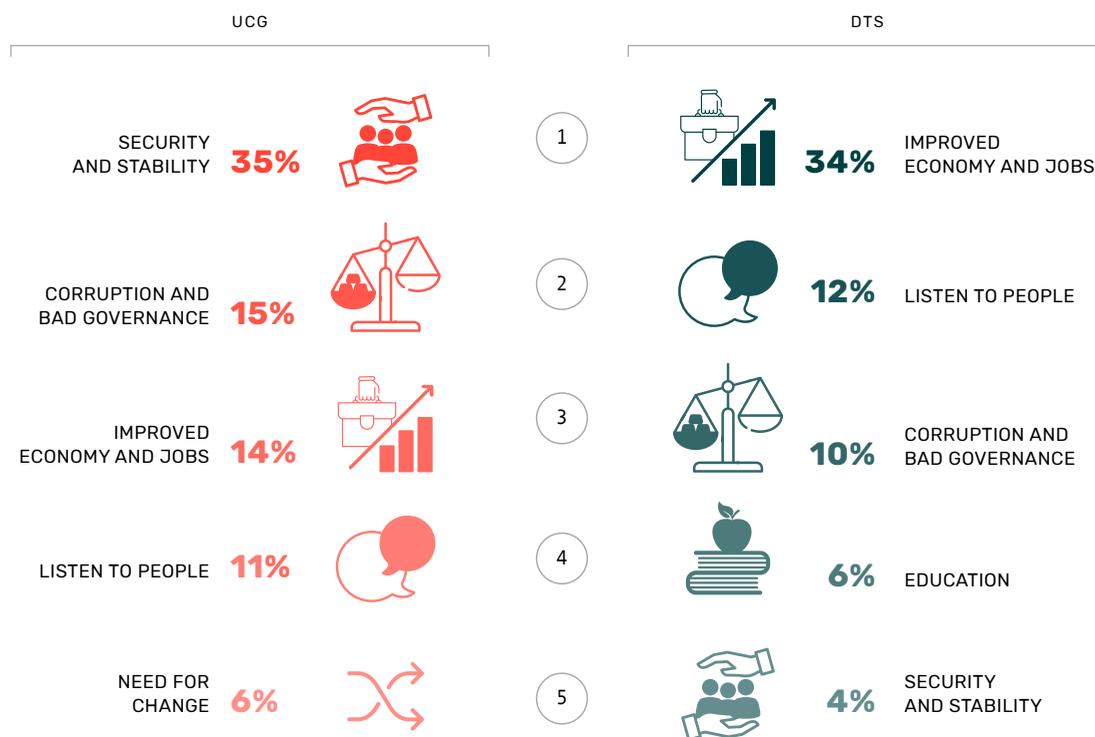
Respondents in Sudan expressed the least sense of individual engagement out of all eight countries (with the question being posed to reflect on the military coup, as opposed to the revolution). However, it is particularly striking to note that despite living in a democratic transition context, no more than half of respondents in The Gambia, Ghana or Tanzania felt like their opinions or concerns were listened to as part of the last electoral cycle.

While more respondents, on average, felt heard in UCG-category countries, this is varied by country and still leaves a significant number who did not select this answer. When asked why they had not felt heard, the most prominent response offered was concern about security issues. This echoes findings from the previous chapter as to the salience of safety and security to government legitimacy in the eyes of the public. The prominence of security concerns in UCG- versus DTS-category countries is stark, as shown in Figure 31.

FIGURE 31

CONCERNS RAISED FOR BETTER INCLUSION DURING TRANSITION

■ UCG
■ DTS

WHAT ISSUES SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER ADDRESSED FOR YOU TO HAVE FELT MORE INCLUDED?¹³⁸

It is telling that a significant percentage of respondents in both UCG- and DTS-category focal countries [28 percent on average] reported neither supporting, nor opposing incoming political leadership.

More women than men, by 7 percentage points, said they neither supported nor opposed the change [35 percent versus 28 percent]. Statistical analysis found an even greater variation by gender. The percentages remain consistent across age groups, as shown in Figure 32. It can be inferred that this same percentage of respondents (with a small but significant gender imbalance) was at least disengaged, if not experiencing a sense of exclusion, from the process.

Active support for the last change of government ranges from 79 percent in Mali to 23 percent in Sudan — echoing sentiments of 'feeling heard'. Sudan is also the only country where more people say they opposed, rather than supported, the last transition.

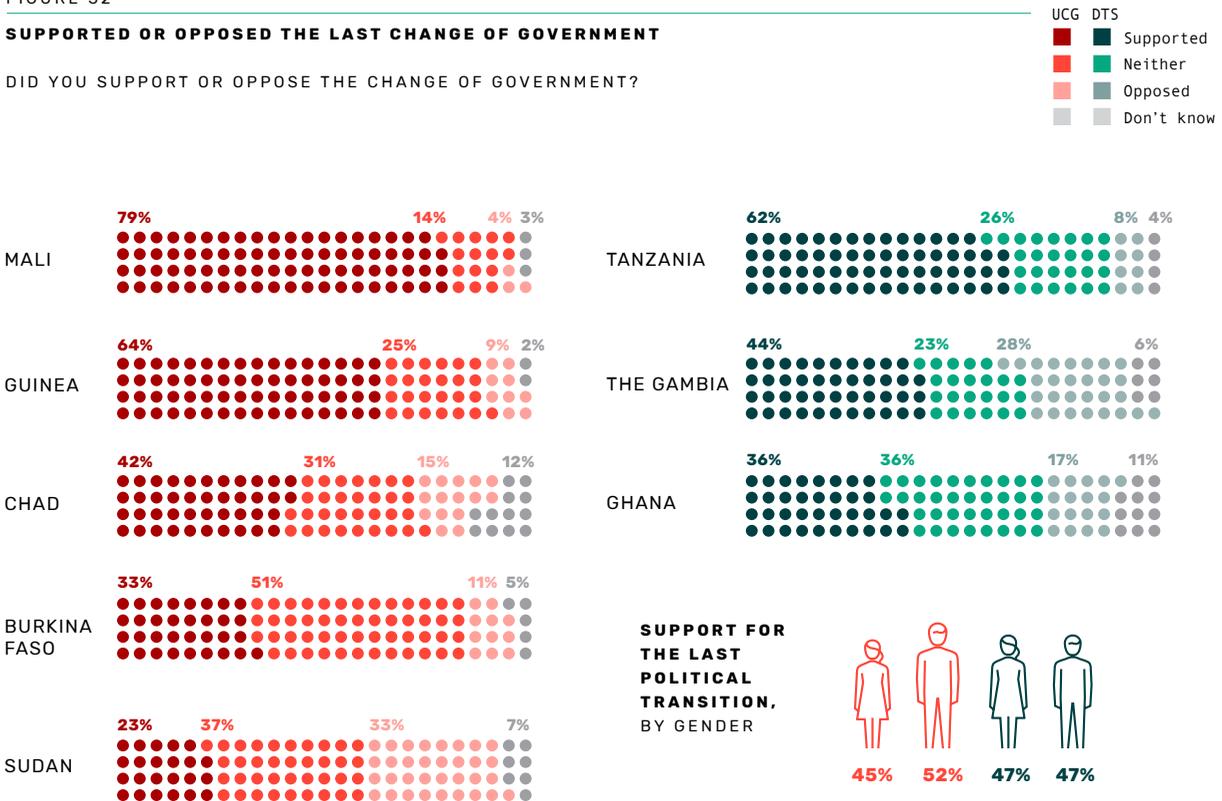
Statistical analysis of the Soldiers and citizens

data found women to be 26 percent more likely to say that they neither supported nor opposed the last change of government, compared to men. For women in UCG-category countries, this rises to 32 percent more likely than male counterparts to indicate a neutral attitude, rather than having supported the coup.

FIGURE 32

SUPPORTED OR OPPOSED THE LAST CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT

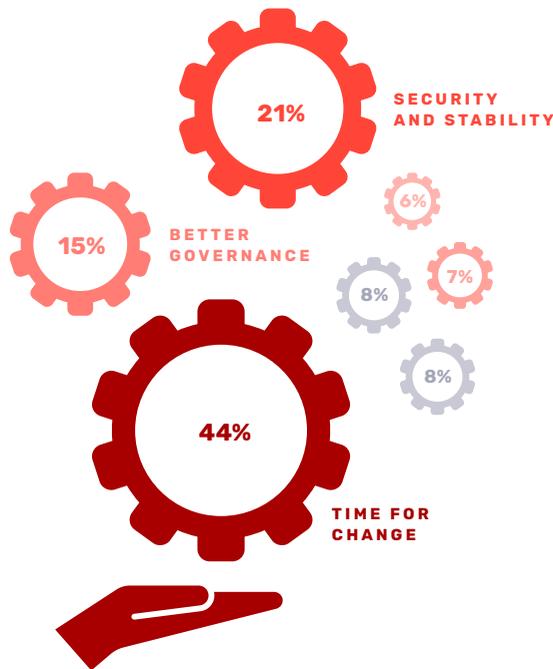
DID YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT?



When asked about their motivations, those who supported the last change of government in UCG settings gave ‘time for change’ as the most important reason for doing so (44 percent), as shown in Figure 33. Other priorities were ‘security and stability’ (21 percent) and ‘better governance’ (15 percent), with 7 percent stating ‘preference’ as the reason. In the DTS-category countries, three reasons stood out in explaining people’s support for the results of the last election: ‘better governance’ (21 percent); ‘constitutional mandate’ (21 percent) and ‘time for change’ (16 percent).

FIGURE 33
REASONS FOR SUPPORTING THE LAST POLITICAL TRANSITION, BY UCG¹³⁹

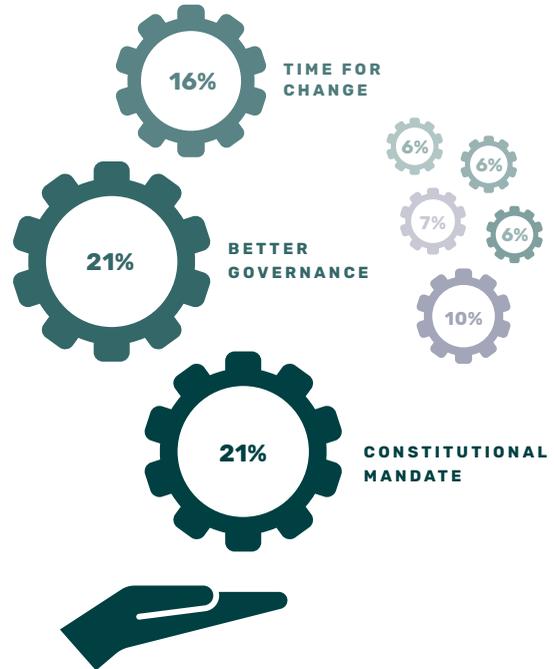
WHY DID YOU SUPPORT THE LAST CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT?



- TIME FOR CHANGE (44%)**
- SECURITY AND STABILITY (21%)**
- BETTER GOVERNANCE (15%)**
- Preference (7%)
- Economic/jobs (6%)
- Other (8%)
- Don't know (8%)

FIGURE 34
REASONS FOR SUPPORTING THE LAST POLITICAL TRANSITION, BY DTS¹⁴⁰

WHY DID YOU SUPPORT THE LAST CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT?



- CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE (21%)**
- BETTER GOVERNANCE (21%)**
- TIME FOR CHANGE (16%)**
- Fulfilled last campaign (6%)
- Transparency in election (6%)
- He was chosen (6%)
- Improved education (5%)
- Economic/jobs (5%)
- Other (10%)
- Don't know (7%)

2.4.3 Role of civil society and other national actors

Civil society and other national actors played an active role in the last national-level political event across all focal countries. Research participants mentioned the varied roles played by CSOs, security forces, EMBs, the judiciary, religious and traditional leaders, national peace councils, traditional media and social media in impacting the different transitions.

BOX 13

CIVIL SOCIETY IN POLITICAL TRANSITIONS

The 'civil society' term is often used as shorthand for referring to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Other uses encompass a wider array of formal and informal institutions where people come together to advance common interests. These may include women's organizations, youth organizations, trader associations, trade unions, faith-based organizations, students' organizations and the media, among others.¹⁴¹ Civil society's role in democratic governance is often seen to have four major functions: as an advocate representing interests of its constituencies; in service delivery pertaining to education, health and other sectors; as a partner with government in development planning; and as a watchdog over government.

Africa's civil society demonstrates significant development in various aspects, despite encountering limitations and challenges along the way. These include the threat of political capture and polarization; restrictions to operating space; the representativeness (or lack thereof) of NGOs as compared with other sectors of civil society, and connections to grassroots society; knowledge and technical skills base to project influence; funding constraints; internal governance challenges and others.

The CSOs active during recent political transitions in focal countries generally provided voter education, peace education, capacity building of electoral actors, policy advocacy, election monitoring and observation. The research also highlighted the important roles of regional networks such as the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Institute for Democratic Governance and the Centre for Democratic Development.

Some political analysts recognize that the popular mobilization and civil society-led revolution created a potentially lasting shift in Sudanese politics. Partisan politics dominated by the traditional political parties became more broad-based, possibly paving the way for enduring political change.

In Ghana's recent electoral cycles (especially in 2008 and 2016) sections of civil society at large, including faith actors and chieftaincy institutions, contributed to averting possible disorder and democratic breakdown. In particular, the Christian Council of Ghana, the Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, and the office of the National Chief Imam actively participated by providing civic and voter education, promoting free and fair polls through election observation and monitoring, as well as peacebuilding and national reconciliation initiatives.

In terms of religious and traditional authorities, research participants emphasized the role of Ghana's National Peace Council (NPC) in building tolerance, consensus and confidence in key state institutions, as well as promoting inter and intra-party dialogues throughout the election period. For example, ahead of the 2020 elections, the NPC – in collaboration with some civil society groups – persuaded political leaders to sign a Presidential Peace Pact on eradicating vigilantism and ensuring peaceful elections.

Although the NPC is seen to have contributed to relatively peaceful outcomes, the main opposition party accused it of supporting the ruling government, leading to physical attacks on the members of the council and damage to their vehicles. Active engagement, without being caught up in polarizing political dynamics, is a continual struggle for civil society actors.

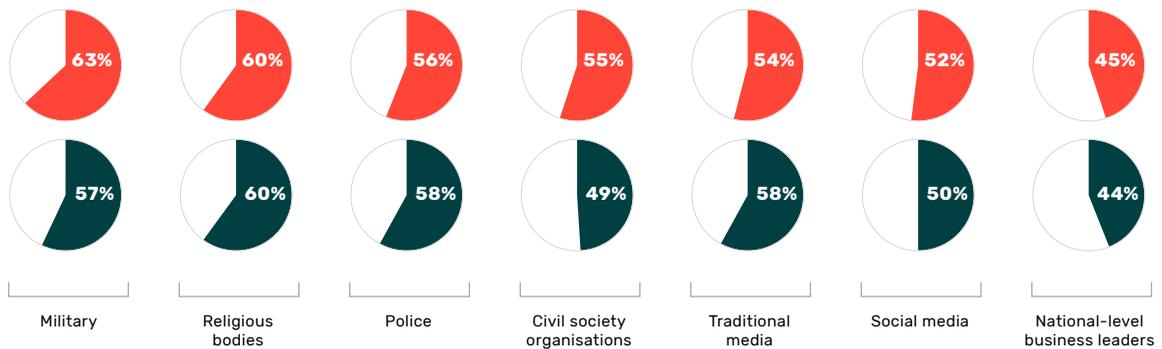
The *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey asked respondents to reflect on what role, if any, different institutions played in the UCG event or election in each country, and whether that role was positive or negative. The results are shown in Figure 35. In some respects, this perceived role is similar across the different types of countries. Social media, police, religious bodies and national-level business leaders are consistently seen to have played a positive role by roughly the same proportion of the public on average. Yet small but significant differences in attitudes between UCG and DTS countries are clear with respect to some institutions. Participants in UCG contexts were more likely to view CSOs as having had a positive role than in DTS elections (55 percent versus 49 percent). Differences were also apparent [echoing responses to other areas of questioning cited in previous chapters], in relation to attitudes towards the military, with respondents in UCG-category countries reporting a 'positive role' at 6 percentage points higher than those in DTS-category countries (63 percent versus 57 percent).

FIGURE 35

ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS DURING TRANSITIONS

■ UCG
■ DTS

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE SAYING THE INSTITUTION PLAYED A "POSITIVE ROLE" DURING THE LAST TRANSITION



2.4.4 Spotlight on youth and women

Youth are often excluded from economic opportunity in many African countries, yet the continent has the youngest population in the world – with 75 percent made up of people under the age of 35.¹⁴⁴ The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs predicts the continent's youth will double from present levels by 2055.¹⁴⁵ Thirty million youth will enter the labour market each year by 2030. This demographic situation presents opportunities, but it also presents risks where the aspirations and choices of young people are constrained.

Meanwhile, a more inclusive environment for women is developing across the continent, as illustrated by advancements in education, health and political representation. The links between increasing gender equality and positive development outcomes are well established.¹⁴⁶ Women in Africa suffer some of the highest levels of sexual and gender-based violence globally. Some African countries feature among the top 15 performers on gender parity globally.¹⁴⁷ However, significant gaps between men and women's opportunities remain a severe impediment to structural economic and social transformation.¹⁴⁸ It has been estimated that \$316 billion could be added to Africa's GDP by 2025 if all countries matched this progress.¹⁴⁹ Understanding and addressing the barriers and constraints to inclusion facing these two diverse but overlapping identity groups represents a fundamental challenge in building pathways to peaceful and inclusive political systems.

The *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey instrument included three specific questions designed to assess people's views on gender and politics. These considered whether the public believes men make better political leaders than women; if the country needs more women in leadership positions; and whether women have the same rights as men.

Across all eight countries, 62 percent versus 29 percent of all respondents agreed that the country needs more women in leadership positions (Figure 36). More women than men felt that the country needs more women in leadership positions by 15 percentage points in UCG-category countries; and 16 percentage points in DTS-category countries.

More men than women agreed with the statement that 'men make better political leaders than women' by 9 percentage points in UCG-category countries and 14 percentage points in DTS-category countries. Interestingly more respondents in the youngest age range (15–25) in both country categories agreed with this statement. In UCG-category countries, more respondents with no formal education agreed (by 15 percentage points) than those with formal education, whereas a smaller increment (by 5 percentage points) of those with formal education, as compared to those without, agreed in the DTS-category countries.

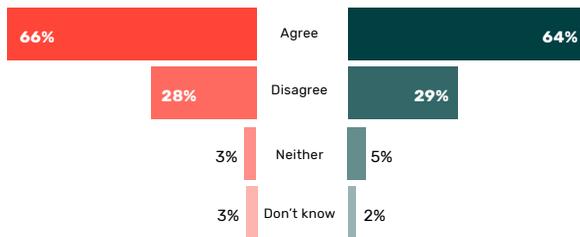
Understanding and addressing the barriers and constraints to inclusion facing women and youth represents a fundamental challenge in building pathways to peaceful and inclusive political systems.

FIGURE 36

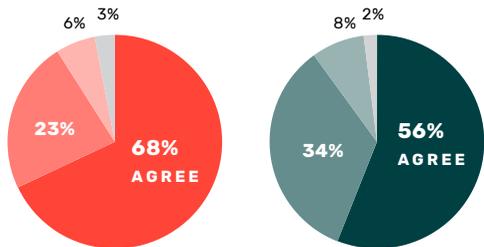
PERCEPTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY

UCG DTS
 Agree Disagree Neither Don't know

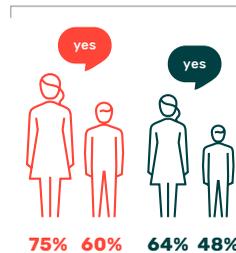
WOMEN HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS MEN:



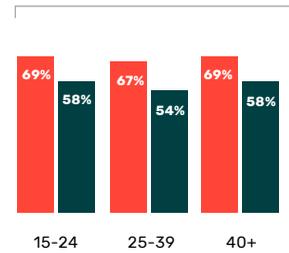
THE COUNTRY NEEDS MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS



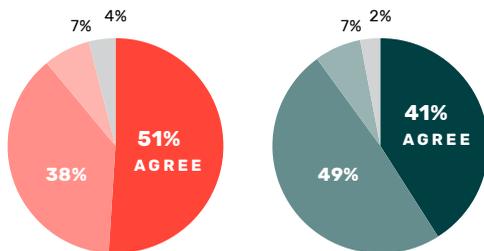
BY GENDER



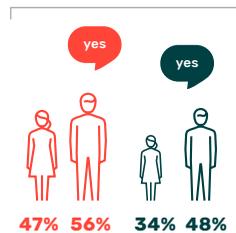
BY AGE



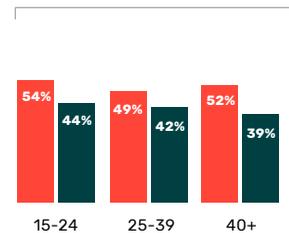
MEN MAKE BETTER POLITICAL LEADERS THAN WOMEN



BY GENDER



BY AGE



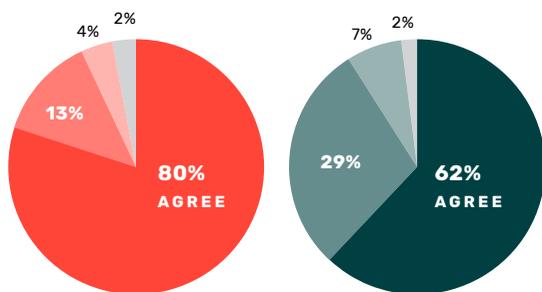
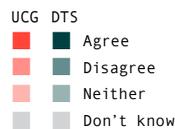
There was strong public support across both types of countries for greater youth involvement in leadership positions (Figure 37). Overall, 71 percent of all respondents agreed that more young people are needed in leadership positions. Just 21 percent disagreed. Support for this proposition was highest among the youngest cohort – aged 15–24 years (78 percent agreed). This level of support slightly decreased with age, but even among respondents in the 40+ category, as many as 65 percent agreed.

Interestingly, there were clear differences in views between UCG- and DTS-category countries on this indicator, with people in the former being much more likely (by 18 percentage points) to agree on the need for greater youth participation in leadership positions. Together, the findings on attitudes to gender and youth in leadership perhaps reflect the greater levels of progress and inclusion of both in the DTS-category countries, as compared to the UCG-category countries. Recalling the secondary data included in Section 1 of this report, levels of participation and inequality of women and youth are, on average, among the worst on the continent among the countries that recently experienced coups. Appetite for progress and greater inclusion is thus higher and starts from a lower baseline – particularly at the moment of potential transformation that the coups may have signified.

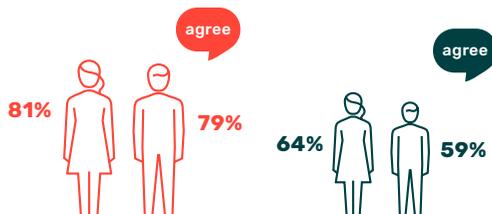
FIGURE 37

YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

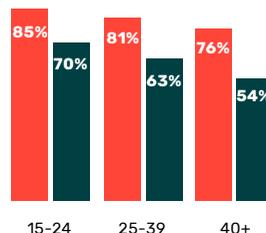
DO YOU **AGREE** THAT THIS COUNTRY NEEDS MORE YOUNG PEOPLE (18- TO 30-YEAR-OLDS) IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS?



BY GENDER (% in agreement)



BY AGE (% in agreement)



Discussions in the qualitative research emphasized youth alienation as a critical factor of concern – shared across settings. The discrepancy between Africa being the world’s youngest region (with an average age of 19 years among its populations) while having, on average, the oldest presidents (with 10 presidents in or fast approaching their 80s) has been widely noted.¹⁵⁰ The gerontocratic nature of African statehood should be considered a relevant factor in understanding the recent coups, as is suggested by the populist support seen for incoming military authorities with relatively youthful leaders (ranging from 39 to 41 years at the time of coming into power).

The findings of the *Soldiers and citizens* qualitative research where responses were compared by age revealed strong youth perspectives. The responses from the youth showed great frustration with political leadership regarding the low representation of young people in decision-making structures, as well as the lack of economic opportunities.

In Ghana, for instance, young respondents appeared to have little confidence that the current system offers opportunities for them to realize their full potential.

One youth leader said: “We have gotten to a point where the youth have given up on the country... most of us have left to seek greener pastures outside, because there is no solid plan for the youth. We believe the system has been made to choke us.”

Ghanaian youth have grown dissatisfied with the political status quo. In recent years, new youth movements have emerged, such as #FixTheCountry. Active on social media, the initiative mounts pressure on the government to tackle the country’s problems. Earlier, in the mid- to late-2010s, #OccupyGhana similarly emerged as a youth social movement fighting corruption and the abuse of public resources using tools such as litigation and media activism. During the *Soldiers and citizens* qualitative research, fears were voiced that coups in neighbouring countries could prompt young people to back similar developments.

Most research participants saw elections as the only legitimate means for the next government transition in Ghana. Yet some younger participants did not rule out the possibility of a coup or possible civil revolt, considering the country’s worsening economic situation and its grievous impact on living conditions. The period leading up to the next election is seen as a critical litmus test of the country’s democracy.

Key findings

With the exception of Sudan, the UCG-category countries studied in this report have all installed a legislative body of the transition that is, to some degree, reflective of the diversity of the country. All have engaged in some degree of dialogue with socio-political forces in their respective countries, with a view to achieving consensus about the management of the transition. Across the five cases, there has been prominent signalling towards inclusive and consultative process, as a principle to guide the drafting and execution of the respective transition plans.

However, as time has gone by, criticism and challenge from some political and civic actors has emerged in all cases precisely on the issue of inclusivity. (In Sudan, this was marked by a more rapid onset of popular critique, as the coup displaced a nascent civilian government that had emerged following the popular revolution.) Confidence has deteriorated, and hostilities sharpened between military leadership and coalitions of opposition voices across settings. The challenges of generating a real sense of political inclusion among citizens, and maintaining an inclusive process in the face of complex interests being asserted, are underscored in the *Soldiers and citizens* data in both settings.

Despite a loss of confidence in national dialogue processes from political and civil society actors, more UCG respondents felt 'heard' during events than counterparts in DTS-category countries during recent elections: as many as 84 percent in Mali and 77 percent in Guinea. This reflects the higher sense of optimism noted elsewhere in the data, with people willing meaningful change to materialize after the turbulence. On average, more urban and lower-income bracket respondents were among the group who felt 'listened to' during the UCG. Among those who did not, security was cited as the overwhelming issue of concern that could have made them feel more included in the process and its outcomes — at 35% of all respondents.

Meanwhile, just 46 percent of DTS-category country respondents felt they had been listened to in the recent election — though this is the same proportion of respondents in Burkina Faso and Chad. Sudanese respondents felt the least listened to at 34 percent — a reflection of the unpopularity of the coup in that country.

The theme of desiring change emerges across the data and is underlined explicitly in answers about motivations among those who supported the recent coup. 'Time for change' was cited as the most important reason for doing so (44 percent). Other priorities were better governance (15 percent) and security (21 percent) — with 8 percent saying 'don't know'. In the DTS-category countries, three reasons stand out regarding people's support for the results of the last election, namely 'better governance' (21 percent), 'constitutional mandate' (21 percent) and 'time for change' (16 percent).

Beyond ‘feeling heard’, it is telling that a significant percentage of respondents in both UCG- and DTS-category countries (28 percent) reported neither supporting nor opposing the incoming political leadership. Women were more likely than men, by 7 percentage points, to say they neither supported nor opposed the change (35 percent versus 28 percent). The percentages remain consistent across age groups. It can be inferred that this same percentage of respondents (with a small but significant gender imbalance) felt at least disengaged, if not experiencing a sense of exclusion, from the process.

Civil society and other national actors played an active role in the last political transition in all focal countries, representing diverse interests and groups. Research participants mentioned the varied roles played by CSOs, security forces, EMBs, the judiciary, religious and traditional leaders, national peace councils, traditional media and social media in impacting the different transitions. The perceived role of institutions was similar in the different types of countries. Social media, police, religious bodies and national-level business leaders were consistently seen to have played a positive role by roughly the same proportion of the public on average. Small but significant differences in attitudes between UCG and DTS countries were clear with respect to particular institutions, however – specifically, CSOs and the military were both seen as positive by slightly more UCG respondents.

Across all eight countries, 62 percent (versus 29 percent) of all respondents agreed that the country needs more women in leadership positions. More women than men held this view: by 15 percentage points in UCG countries and 16 percentage points in DTS settings. More men than women agreed with the statement ‘men make better political leaders than women’: by 9 percentage points in UCG-category countries and 14 percentage points in DTS-category countries.

Overall, 71 percent of all respondents agreed that more young people are needed in leadership positions. Just 21 percent disagreed. Support for this proposition was highest among the youngest cohort surveyed. Among those aged 15–24 years, 78 percent agreed. This level of support decreased slightly with age, but even among respondents aged 40 and over, as many as 65 percent agreed.

Interestingly, there was a significant difference in views between UCG- and DTS-category countries on this indicator. People in the former were much more likely to agree on the need for greater youth participation in leadership positions – by 18 percentage points. These findings may reflect the lower baseline of gender and youth inclusion identified in secondary data, and hence a higher appetite for progress in inclusiveness – particularly against the backdrop of wider potential transformation that the coups seemed to signify.



నామో గాని

BURKINA FASO
3 OCTOBER 2022

A MAN READS A NEWSPAPER
FEATURING, ON ITS COVER,
A PICTURE OF CAPITAIN
IBRAHIM TRAORÉ, THE
LEADER OF THE MILITARY
JUNTA, IN OUGADOUGOU.

Burkina Faso's junta leader agreed to step down, religious and community leaders said, two days after army officers announced his ouster in a coup that sparked internal unrest and international condemnation. Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba "himself offered his resignation in order to avoid confrontations with serious human and material consequences," the religious and community leaders said in a statement.

PHOTO BY OLYMPIA DE MAISMONT
/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES







“The harm [of sanctions are] mostly on the masses, more than the ‘obstructors’. The coup makers are not affected. There should be individual penalties.”

MALE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSANT, KHARTOUM, SUDAN (FEBRUARY 2023)

The aftermath: *assessing responses to military coups*

What role have external actors played in the aftermath of Africa's recent coups? More specifically, recalling the development focus put forward by this study, what role can regional and international development actors play in responding to military coups as a form of UCG in Africa, operating in concert with political counterparts, tools and mechanisms? This chapter maps out and assesses regional and international responses to date to further inform the report's final conclusions and recommendations.

**CHAPTER 3.1
ROLE OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS**

The literature on patterns of international engagement in coup responses emphasizes that military coups do not happen in a 'domestic silo'.¹⁵¹ In the words of one analyst: "What is a coup, after all, but some military actors claiming that they are the sovereign representatives of that state? To be sustained, coups need to be recognized."¹⁵²

Coup-makers will typically evaluate foreign leverage before conducting a coup. The international community represents a key constituency alongside domestic stakeholders.¹⁵³ External and international reactions to coups have been shown to affect both trajectories towards democratization and the duration of coup-born regimes.¹⁵⁴ Despite the existence of strong norms and principles against military coups in the international system – some of which are summarized in Table 1 – two-way dialogue between coup leaders and different parts of the international community is invariably and necessarily a prominent feature shaping coup outcomes.

TABLE 1

SUMMARIZED NORMS AND INSTRUMENTS AGAINST COUPS

Organization	Relevant normative instrument on UCG
AU	Lomé Declaration, July 2000; Constitutive Act, 2001 (Art. 30); Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, 2003; African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, 2007 (Ch. VIII); Ezulwini Framework for the Enhancement of the Implementation of Measures in Situations of Unconstitutional Changes of Government, December 2009.
Commonwealth Secretariat	The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) focuses on UCG including military coups. In 2011, Commonwealth leaders broadened the mandate of CMAG so it could engage more proactively and constructively with countries where fundamental political values of the Commonwealth are at risk.
ECOWAS	Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Governance, December 2001, (currently under review).
EU	Political and democratic principles of the Cotonou (2000) and post-Cotonou (2021) EU/Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (EU-ACP) Partnership Agreement. Relevant provisions of EU Global Strategy for foreign and security assistance (2016) and the EU Action Plan on Democracy and Human Rights (2020–2024).

**Organisation
Internationale de la
Francophonie (OIF)**

The Bamako Declaration on Democratic Governance, November 2000, imposes sanctions in case of UCG.

SADC

Not explicit, but relevant provisions of the SADC Treaty.

UN

Can act in cases deemed to constitute a threat to regional or international peace and security under Chapters VI or VII of the UN Charter.

US

Section 7008 of the US 1985 Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act. As of October 2022, this provision had been put into effect in five countries: Burkina Faso [following 2022 coup]; Guinea [since 2021]; Myanmar [2021]; Mali [2020] and Sudan [since 1989]. It has been temporarily applied in a further five [including Mali from 2012–2013, Madagascar 2009–2014 and Guinea-Bissau 2012–2014].

World Bank

Operational Policy [OP] 7.30 of July 2001. When OP 7.30 is triggered in case of coming to power of a *de facto* government, such as one ushered in by a military coup, disbursements on projects under implementation may be suspended, and new funds put on hold. This suspension may remain in place until the Bank determines that a proper legal framework is in place and that authorities are willing to respect previously agreed commitments.

In responding to the instances of UCG events under review, regional and international actors continue to face a momentous responsibility. They may collectively help to harness the moment of disruptive change to contribute to transformative and sustainable outcomes. Or, through failing to do so, they may instead come to inadvertently enable a downward spiral. This, in turn, may potentially engender long-term instability and persistent stagnation in a 'coup trap' – or other manifestations of instability.

Regional and international engagement around other forms of political transition – including elections, or constitutional manipulation enabling term extension – is also impactful. By conferring aspects of legitimacy, or otherwise, to these political processes, external actors become key players in domestic dynamics and history, notwithstanding the principle of sovereignty at the heart of the international system.

In principle, all five cases reviewed in this study presented opportunities to pivot to deeper progress towards Agendas 2030 and 2063, and renewed levels of trust between citizens and the state. However, outcomes are far from certain. Best-case scenarios have already been overtaken by events. These may have envisaged the respective juntas being incentivized to adhere to transition plan timelines, leading to the timely restoration of constitutional order, and bringing into power forces that, in turn, were able and mandated to bring in transformative new governance approaches.

Less positive scenarios, whereby military transitional authorities impose either themselves or others outside of the scope of the transitional charter, pose a real threat of deteriorating security – and even armed conflict over time.

Meanwhile, the credibility of regional norms and organizations is at stake. A possible regional-level scenario might see the military juntas in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso team up to challenge regional normative frameworks against UCG – defying sanctions and putting themselves forward for elections, further aided by new international alliances in the geopolitical arena.

This chapter presents findings from the *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey and qualitative research as they relate to respondents' perspectives on regional and international actors, and their role during the recent transitions. The survey specifically focused on attitudes towards the UN and the AU. The chapter then proceeds to present a summary typology of the different responses and engagement on and around UCG, as they have played out, on the part of diverse regional and international actors. The final section presents an analysis of this engagement, identifying some key gaps and issues for the further enhancement of regional and international action. These provide a basis for the recommendations presented in Section 4.

3.1.1 Citizens' confidence in the UN and AU

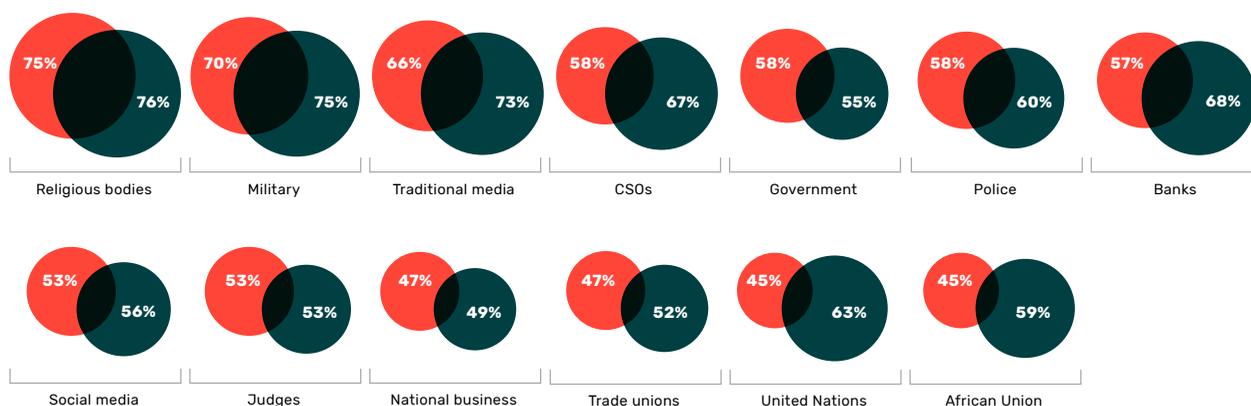
The *Soldiers and citizens* perceptions survey revealed a reasonable level of confidence in the UN and the AU 'to act in the best interest of the public'. As shown in Figure 38, which combines 'complete confidence' and 'a fair amount of confidence' responses, 45 percent and 63 percent of UCG- and DTS-country category respondents respectively had some degree of confidence in the UN. Similarly, 45 percent and 59 percent of UCG- and DTS-country category respondents, respectively, had some degree of confidence in the AU.

FIGURE 38

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

■ UCG
■ DTS

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WITH *COMPLETE OR FAIR* CONFIDENCE IN THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS TO ACT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE PUBLIC



Two aspects of these responses stand out. First, overall confidence in these institutions, while at a fair level, is notably lower than confidence reported in other types of institutions – at least well behind confidence in religious bodies, the military and traditional media in both settings.

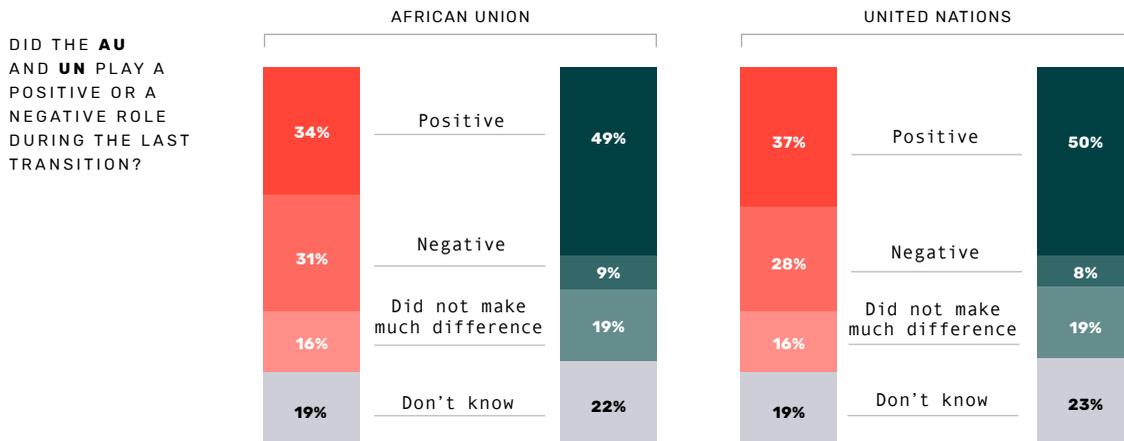
Second, there are significant differences when comparing the two categories of countries. People living in DTS-category countries reported significantly greater levels of confidence than counterparts living in UCG-category countries: up by 18 percentage points in the case of the UN; and 14 percentage points with respect to the AU. Given the amplified engagement of the AU and the UN in the UCG-, as compared to DTS-category countries, the relative scepticism reflected in this result can be taken as an indictment of effectiveness in the eyes of citizens.

As shown further in Figure 39, when respondents were asked to assess the role these two institutions played during the last transitions, just 34 percent and 37 percent of UCG-category country respondents felt the AU and UN had played a positive role. In DTS-category countries, impressions were more favourable, with around half of respondents believing both the AU and the UN played a positive role.

FIGURE 39

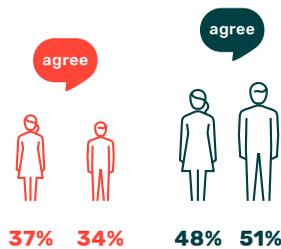
THE ROLE OF THE AU AND THE UN DURING THE LAST TRANSITION

■ UCG
■ DTS

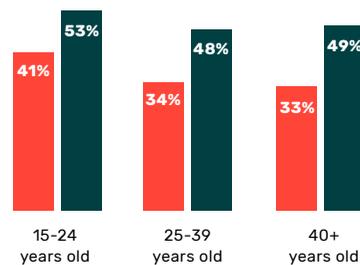


POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE AU AND UN DURING TRANSITION, BY DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

BY GENDER



BY AGE



Percentages might not add up to a 100% in some charts, as they are rounded to the nearest percentage

More than three times as many people in UCG countries than in DTS-category countries felt the AU and UN played a negative role during the last transition or national election. Yet a significant number in both settings said they either ‘did not know’, or that neither institution made ‘much difference’: 35 percent of UCG respondents, and 41 to 42 percent in DTS-category countries.

This high number of agnostic responses suggests that regional and international engagement is far from being front and centre in people’s lived experience of political transition in Africa. Women were slightly more positive than men in UCG settings, while the reverse was true among respondents in DTS settings. In both types of countries, the youngest age group was also more disposed to report a positive impression — perhaps in line with the relatively high numbers of ‘don’t know’ responses among these two groups.

3.1.2 A typology of regional and international response mechanisms

It emerges that citizens may not always see the AU or the UN as either relevant or positive in terms of their respective in-country engagements during national moments of critical political import. These findings emphasize the need for humility and realism on the part of regional and international stakeholders in supporting such processes.

Nonetheless, as discussed above, and as is clear from wider case study analysis, the AU and UN (through their multiple constituent departments, funds, programmes and agencies), alongside other regional and international partners, clearly have a significant influence and role to play — and the stakes are high. The following discussion provides a brief typology of the tools and instruments that regional and international organizations, as well as multilateral development actors, have at their disposal for preventing and responding to military coups as a form of UCG.

(i) Sanctions/regional bloc suspension, and deployment of diplomatic channels

While this study focuses on development tools and approaches, the primary and most prominent tools leveraged in the event of a military coup are essentially political. These include sanctions, suspension of membership from regional blocs, the deployment of special envoys and other mediation capacities — such as the AU Panel of the Wise, and related diplomatic pressure from partners and states. Reflecting the increasing influence of the AU and RECs in projecting constitutional order on the continent, these tools have been used to respond to political events in member states — at times with decisive positive effects.¹⁵⁵

Turning to the recent coups reviewed in this study, and with the clear exception of the particular events unfolding in Chad, both the AU and ECOWAS rejected the coups and suspended affected states within a few days.¹⁵⁶ As a result, ECOWAS — as the regional bloc most directly affected — is now operating without 20 percent of its membership [at time of writing]. Continent-level leadership has been tacitly underscored by the UN across these cases.

Neither the AU nor IGAD suspended or sanctioned Sudan following the removal of then-president Bashir in April 2019, even though a military-led Sovereign Council was established to run the country. Both organizations recognized the change to be

the result of a popular uprising, a distinction that raises important considerations from the perspective of the norms on UCG when compared to military coups.¹⁵⁷ A mediation team was instead deployed. Under its facilitation, the military and civilian forces reached an agreement on the establishment of a power-sharing transitional government for a period of three years.¹⁵⁸ However, the AU suspended Sudan following the military coup in October 2021, and subsequent violence against protestors as well as the transitional military council's unilateral move to end talks with the civilian opposition.

Only Chad has been treated exceptionally, as the AU did not consider the military council's takeover as a case of UCG. The continental body did, however, call for the military to hold elections within 18 months and for members of the junta to exclude themselves from the elections. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) followed a similar path in supporting the transition in Chad. The apparent inconsistency in the treatment of Chad, as opposed to the other countries experiencing UCG events in this timeframe, is discussed further below.

Development partners spoke out strongly in support of regional sanctions in some cases. For example, following the second coup in Mali, France backed ECOWAS sanctions, while the EU introduced new sanctions and asset freezes on individual Malian officials deemed to be obstructing the transition to civilian rule. This included the transitional prime minister and members of the interim president's inner circle.¹⁵⁹

(ii) Aid, trade and security cooperation adjustments, enhancements and suspensions

The role of development actors in supporting transition processes has been prominent. UNDP, for example, remained engaged in Chad through the Basket Fund in Support of the Transition in Chad, which pools resources of development actors in support of key transition milestones. UNDP has also provided continual technical and financial assistance towards the restoration of constitutional order.¹⁶⁰

Various development partners have provisions in place to determine how development and trade assistance should be adapted in response to military coups. Some of these are listed at the opening of this chapter in Table 1. These clauses have been exercised in response to the recent military coups in Africa. For example, following the February 2022 coup in Burkina Faso, the EU halted discussions on future programmes, including on budget support, due to a perceived lack of progress towards the restoration of constitutional order.¹⁶¹

The US triggered Section 7008, pausing its aid programmes, and suspended access to programmes through its Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, in Guinea and Mali.¹⁶² The release of new World Bank projects was also put on hold in the immediate aftermath of the coups in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso based on OP 7.30.¹⁶³ Some EU security assistance support was redirected to other uses, and the EU Training Mission was briefly suspended — although the EU did continue some work with Malian armed forces.¹⁶⁴ France significantly reduced its security engagement, although this should also be seen in the context of more complex bilateral relationships and mounting geopolitical concern about the role of Russia. In Guinea, several partners suspended development projects in the months following the coup.

Disruptions of this nature raise significant dilemmas for development partners. Confronted with mounting humanitarian needs in many cases, this often leads to a mixed approach. New projects may be put on hold, while disbursements of existing projects may continue in particular areas, such as the health sector.¹⁶⁵

As a further example of a partner seeking to navigate these issues, the African Development Bank (AfDB) suspended direct support to the Malian government following the 2020 coup and embarked on a fresh review of its new country strategy for Mali. A decision was subsequently taken to concentrate operational engagement around agricultural value chains. Programmes that reached the most vulnerable groups were also prioritized, especially youth and women, working at the community level. Disbursements to Mali were unfrozen in 2022, allowing for AfDB to fully re-engage.

The leveraging of aid and trade instruments as both the proverbial ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ in coup responses is perhaps most starkly evident in the case of Sudan (see Box 9, Section 2). International development partners rallied with a significant package of commitments in support of the pro-democracy civilian leadership that came into power following Bashir’s ousting in April 2019. The same assistance was suspended following the military coup of October 2021.

As indicated, Chad was largely spared such measures regarding aid, trade and security cooperation, as well as in the political realm. Some partners introduced new development programmes and increased funding despite the executive-level dynamics.¹⁶⁶

(iii) Funding instruments for targeted responses to UCG, coups or political transitions

In mapping out the range of response mechanisms, it emerges that no single targeted funding instrument has yet been created to enable constructive or timely responses to instances of military coups in Africa. Nonetheless, a handful of disparate windows among the programming ecosystem of different partners have been leveraged to do so. Despite different approaches, the funding mechanisms summarized in Table 2 below can be identified as relevant.

It should be noted that the framing around military coups is varied across the international system. This compounds the scattered nature of accessible funding. The UCG terminology is particular to the AU, as well as OIF and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Others have provisions specific to military coups, while some refer more indirectly to threats to democratic order.

Meanwhile, different agencies use the term ‘transition’ to refer to various contexts; whether transitioning from a peacekeeping period back to national leadership; or transitioning out of conflict and fragility. It rarely features across funding tools to relate specifically to the period of transition from military junta rule back to constitutional order.

TABLE 2

FUNDING MECHANISMS RELEVANT TO MILITARY COUP RESPONSE

Funding instrument	Key features
AfDB Transition Support Facility (TSF)	<p>Set up in 2008, the TSF is AfDB's dedicated facility for supporting member states' transition out of fragility. The TSF allows for the flexible disbursement of financial support to countries that are otherwise unable to access it.¹⁶⁷</p> <p>TSF allows AfDB to continue flexible funding and engagement with countries going through crisis, including those that have experienced a military coup, and which might not be able to access funds from other bank offerings. A core aim is to protect development gains when funding dries up during such times, while allowing the bank to maintain relationships with key interlocutors in-country.</p> <p>The TSF was a particularly important mechanism in helping the 2019–2021 transitional government in Sudan to qualify for debt relief in 2021. Following the October 2021 coup, TSF allowed AfDB to continue providing technical support and capacity development to state structures. It also allowed for continued funding to Côte d'Ivoire during the 2002–2011 conflict and supported improved public financial management systems in Mali and Chad.</p>
EU Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)	<p>In 2021, the EU sought to simplify and streamline development and crisis response processes by integrating 11 former financial instruments into a single tool. The 2021–2027 Multi-Annual Framework includes almost €80 billion, of which 75 percent is earmarked for country-focused programming. NDICI is structured around three pillars: geographic, thematic, and rapid response – with an 'emerging challenges and priorities' cushion.</p> <p>NDICI does not include any specific provision to release funds to support EU response to coups. The thematic pillar includes a strong focus on human rights and democracy and peace, stability and conflict prevention, although programme documents make no reference UCG. Programme documents include examples of the rapid response pillar, which has allowed the EU to respond to UCG events – including in Chad.¹⁶⁸</p>
UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) Multi-Year Appeal (MYA)	<p>The MYA is DPPA's primary extra-budgetary instrument to fund and support UN political capacities and interventions to prevent and resolve conflicts. It allows DPPA to be more operational, complementing the regular budget and funding staff and activities at headquarters and in the field.</p> <p>The MYA does not include any explicit commitment to coup prevention or response within its strategic framing. It is, however, the primary funding mechanism for DPPA's crisis-response system. As such, it is widely used to facilitate the UN's immediate preventative diplomacy as well as mediation efforts following UCG events, such as the deployment of senior mediation advisors, including to Burkina Faso and Sudan in the first half of 2022.</p> <p>The MYA has also been used to support broader political transition processes following recent coups. In Sudan, it was used to strengthen women's participation in the UN-AU-IGAD inclusive political dialogue process aimed at facilitating a return to a civilian-led government. In Guinea, MYA was used to support the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel 'peace caravans'. These social cohesion and inclusive dialogue initiatives complement wider UN preventative diplomacy efforts, focusing on preventing local conflict in the context of increased tensions following the 2021 coup.</p>

**UN
Peacebuilding
Fund (PBF)**

The PBF is a programmatic instrument to finance sustaining peace activities in countries or situations at risk of, or affected by, violent conflict. It invests in four priority areas: the implementation of peace agreements; peace dividends; dialogue and coexistence; and re-establishment of basic services. It has a particular focus on facilitating transitions between UN missions and country teams; fostering inclusion of women and youth in peacebuilding processes; and on regional and cross-border activities.

The PBF does not have an explicit commitment to preventing or responding to military coups within the current strategy (2020–2024). It is, however, a source of funding for UN and civil society initiatives working to support political transition processes following UCG events. The PBF is supporting projects in Chad, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso. These include support to early warning to anticipate local-level conflicts, as well as initiatives to prevent electoral violence in Guinea, boost access to legal services in Mali and Burkina Faso, and the creation of more youth-responsive local development plans. They are implemented through a range of different partners, including civil society as well as UN agencies.

**World Bank
IDA19 Fragility,
Conflict and
Violence (FCV)
Envelope**

The FCV Envelope, introduced in the most recent IDA replenishment round, is designed for the World Bank to respond more flexibly and effectively in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It comprises three pillars:

- The Prevention and Resilience Allocation, providing enhanced support for countries at risk of escalating into high-intensity conflict or large-scale violence;
- A Remaining Engaged during Conflict Allocation (RECA), enabling the Bank to continue its engagement in countries that experience high-intensity conflict and have extremely limited government capacity; and
- The Turn Around Allocation (TAA), to support countries emerging from conflict, social and political crisis or disengagement, where there is an opportunity to support reforms to accelerate transitions out of fragility.

Similar to other funding modalities listed here, the FCV Envelope does not include a specific provision for responding to military coups. The RECA, however, provides greater flexibility in direct funding, including to non-state parties, while the TAA provides a potential vehicle allowing the Bank to support political transition plans.

(iv) Broader spectrum of peace-, governance- and democracy-related support

Most international development partners have strong rhetorical commitments to the importance of democratic and inclusive governance, aligned with SDG 16 and the overall Agenda 2030 frame, and direct significant quantities of aid to support related objectives.

At the 2020 High-Level Meeting of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), states confirmed a commitment to "... continue to use our development co-operation to support democracy, the rule of law and human rights, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and association, as essential elements of sustainable development for any society".¹⁶⁹ Conflict prevention and peace-building are similarly well established as development priorities.

The peace, governance and democracy interventions of the EU, UN and bilateral partners cover a wide spectrum of programming areas, many of which have become well-established fields of cooperation between partners and African states over the past 30 years. They typically include capacity support to core and local government functions and service delivery; anti-corruption, transparency and accountability work (both public and private sector); support to all aspects of the electoral process, functioning of parliament working of the constitution; rule of law; support to security, justice and human rights institutions and functions; conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding activities; and advancing the inclusive participation of non-state actors – particularly civil society, women and youth – across all of these.

Many of the biggest development finance institutions have also begun to recognize that they can play an important role in supporting governance reforms. This includes supporting the embedding of democratic norms. Several of these have developed significant organizational capacities around fragility, conflict and violence.¹⁷⁰

'Democracy aid' is seen to have been an important factor in Africa's democratization, and in supporting the evolution of government and institutional capacity and effectiveness in many areas – as well as boosting citizens' engagement in governance processes.¹⁷¹ However, critical questions related to the resourcing, depth and reach of these important portfolios of work need to be addressed, as discussed further below.

3.1.3 Challenges, constraints and opportunities

(i) Reactive rather than proactive

Regional and international organizations face various challenges and constraints in seeking to respond to military coups as a form of UCG. It is clear from recent events that stakeholders need to become better at anticipating and, to the greatest extent possible, proactively preventing such developments.

As has been noted, the recent cases may have been foreseen in risk analysis, and yet delays and other challenges stymied response strategies. The manifest and self-evident gains of preventing crises and conflict, rather than waiting for them to unfold and then seeking to respond, have been asserted and recognized at the highest levels of international policy and decision-making for decades. It was also reasserted in the UN's 2017 twin Sustaining Peace resolutions and explored in detail in the important UN-World Bank *Pathways for Peace* 2018 report.¹⁷²

Participants in the Soldiers and citizens qualitative research

ECOWAS for "failing" to prevent the coup in Burkina Faso, arguing that early warning signs were visible. Others suggested that ECOWAS is always reactive to situations, instead of proactively addressing the governance problems in member states which, in their view, spur coups and other forms of UCG.

However, translating intention into practice remains elusive, as a result of a confluence of factors, chief among which may be political will. Well-established early warning instruments and mechanisms exist — including at a regional level (see Box 14) — precisely to better inform regional and international actors for the purposes of crisis prevention. While these are broader in their focus, an elevated risk of military coups ought to feature. The need to strengthen the anticipatory capacity of regional and international actors in relation to military coups and willingness and readiness to respond has been underscored by recent events. Clear legal instruments and response capacities, beyond norms and principles, are needed to equip and incentivize regional actors to engage when early warning risks are flagged.

BOX 14

THE AFRICAN UNION CONTINENTAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

The AU's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) seeks to address conflict cycles comprehensively. Its operations are coordinated between the AU and eight Regional Commissions. Its situation room in Addis Ababa is responsible for data collection, analysis and the production of daily news highlights, field reports, weekly updates and flash reports for emerging crises. The observation and monitoring units of the Regional Commissions collect data, which is then relayed to the situation room.

The CEWS methodology consists of three sequential steps:

- 1) Information collection and monitoring (collecting structural and dynamic time-specific indicators, using software for analysis and geocoding);
- 2) Conflict and cooperation analysis (providing an assessment of structures, actors and dynamics); and
- 3) Policy and response formulation (through scenario planning and a process of reverse engineering to identify critical moments).

CEWS also addresses structural factors for the longer-term prevention of violent conflict, using a country structural vulnerability and resilience assessment and country structural vulnerability mitigation strategies.

While CEWS represents one of the most advanced EWRS systems and addresses the entire conflict cycle, capacity gaps hinder its functionality.¹⁷³ Crucially, though it has the capacity to provide recommendations, the response component of the system is confined within the mandate of the AU PSC, where the national interests and autonomy of individual states can make it difficult to respond quickly.

A recent review found that the AU could improve responses by further developing its own structures, such as CEWS, to decide when a situation merits early preventive action.¹⁷⁴ Response coherence is also affected by a lack of systemic collaboration between the AU CEWS and the RECs' EWRS. Roles and responsibilities are not clear, and overlapping state membership further undermines efficacy.

(ii) Subordination of normative and development priorities to security priorities

The various agencies that make up the international development system have different capacities, incentives and mechanisms to respond to coups. Moreover, these are located within the broader strategic and geopolitical priorities of particular states, or governing bodies of particular organizations. At times, competing priorities have led to inconsistency in engagement. **The pre-eminence of security goals has muted readiness to adhere to norms and principles related to UCG.** An example is the apparent special treatment enjoyed by Chad's transitional military council. This has been widely attributed to the state's critical role in subregional counterterrorism efforts, among other factors.¹⁷⁵

Responses to the situation in Chad prioritized maintaining positive relations with the new regime, and ensuring continued cooperation in regional stabilization, security and migration management initiatives. Unlike the processes in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso, Chad's Transitional Charter does not prevent anyone – even the transitional head of state – from standing in elections aimed at putting an end to the transition. This is in spite of the AU's insistence on this latter point (that members of the military council would not have candidacy in upcoming presidential elections) in all its pronouncements on Chad. The stark contrast between the regional and international response to events in Chad and events elsewhere may have served to undermine norms and principles, as well as the legitimacy of regional and international actors in the eyes of political actors and citizens alike. Several analysts have suggested that the weak international response seen in Chad may have emboldened the military to strike in Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea.¹⁷⁶

The linkages seen between Chad's inconsistent treatment and the prioritization of security concerns are echoed in wider patterns of security cooperation around counterterrorism, irregular migration as well as organized crime in the Sahel region. As discussed in Section 1, these dynamics may have directly contributed to the governance crisis that underpins recent events, representing an important proximate factor explaining coup occurrence.

BOX 15

GOVERNANCE DEPRIORITIZED IN MALI

The Malian military budget more than doubled, as a proportion of GDP, between 2012 and 2020, while parliamentary oversight remained weak and civil society lacked the access and expertise to serve as an effective watchdog. Despite strong rhetorical commitment to democracy, rights and governance, only 1 percent of the US Agency for International Development's (USAID's) programme allocation to Mali in 2020 focused on this area.¹⁷⁷ The EU's Integrated Strategy in the Sahel is committed to "addressing regional challenges through better governance", and seeks to support more transparent, accountable and democratic institutions and expanded state presence. It further aims to step up developmental action aimed at addressing root drivers of conflict, such as climate change and economic stagnation. However, reference to democracy support is limited to a commitment to election observation missions in this region.¹⁷⁸ Some have argued that the subordination of development objectives to security priorities has skewed power between civilian and military actors, while doing little to address key drivers of fragility and grievances in the country.¹⁷⁹

Development partners are beginning to adapt their strategies in response to the recent coups and broader instability in the Sahel. In the case of the US, congressional leaders have been applying pressure on the Department of State to adopt a more holistic strategy that prioritizes “robust support for good governance and institution strengthening” as a means of reversing the “alarming trend of coups” in the Sahel.¹⁸⁰

The EU, meanwhile, has expressed an intention to rebalance investments, focusing more on action at the political level, specifically on governance, human rights and collaboration with civil society, while maintaining security cooperation with regional forces.¹⁸¹ The UN and AU are collaborating in a high-level review of governance priorities for the region. As discussed in Section 4, new approaches to intervention in the region are a critical priority in preventing further UCG events. Actors must recognize how the lowered prioritization of governance objectives in favour of security interventions contributed to coup risk in the region and ensure that these patterns do not recur elsewhere on the continent.

(iii) Inconsistency on constitutional manipulation to extend term limits

This chapter has mostly focused on regional and international responses to military coups as a form of UCG according to AU norms. However, **regional organizations have also been criticized for what observers view as their failure to take a firm stance on constitutional manipulation across a number of member states.** It is notable that Article 23 (5) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance envisages penalties for the “infringement of the principles of democratic change”. As with UCG responses, inconsistency or inaction in upholding norms on constitutional manipulation to extend power often stems from a lack of political will, linked to wider geostrategic considerations. However, it only serves to erode the legitimacy of those norms and their custodian institutions. There is also clear evidence that such practices can pave the way for military coups and other forms of instability over time.

The lack of strong action enforcing this provision can, in part, be attributed to a lack of legal clarity in determining when a constitutional amendment represents such an infringement. This ambiguity has been readily leveraged by incumbent leaders to secure their own objectives. The move by ECOWAS to explore options for tightening its own norms and practice in this area, through a reform of its 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Governance, could, if sustained and respected, augur a new era of norm adherence (see Box 16).

BOX 16

ECOWAS TIGHTENING TERM-LIMIT RULES

In response to deteriorating trends, ECOWAS has initiated a revision of its 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Governance. In its original form, this regional instrument prohibits any substantive changes to the laws related to elections within six months before elections take place, unless based on clear consensus among the country's socio-political forces. It was on account of this provision that ECOWAS suspended Niger from its decision-making organs in August 2009. Then-president Mamadou Tandja changed his country's constitution to give himself additional years in office while his last constitutional term was ending in December of the same year. Since then, however, leaders in West Africa have carried out their substantive constitutional changes well clear of the six-month parameter of this provision.

The current initiative of reforming the Supplementary Protocol seeks, among others, to protect the term-limit provision from any constitutional reform, thereby prohibiting third consecutive terms altogether in the region – regardless of when a leader tries to modify the constitution.

The review of this protocol was on the agenda of the ECOWAS summits during 2021 and 2022 on the situations in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali. If successful, the initiative might encourage a similar effort at the continental level. While term limits are not a panacea for democracy, there is a clear correlation between adherence to term limits and peaceful leadership transfer. This represents a strong argument for further investment in strengthening these rules of engagement through every means possible.

(iv) Apparent tension between principle and pragmatism in dealing with *de facto* leadership

Once underway, regional and international actors have encouraged a set of constitutional reforms in response to UCG events. This includes establishing transition plans, which typically consist of a national dialogue, redrafting of the constitution and restoration of constitutional order in the swiftest possible timeframe. Some see this engagement of the AU and RECs with coup-born authorities as amounting to tacit acceptance of the coup or, as one analyst described, to “inadvertently provide coup leaders a helping hand across the finish line to consolidate their putsch”.¹⁸² Analysts thus see a contradiction between the principle of condemning coups and UCG in general, and the pragmatism that appears to accept events as a *fait accompli*.

However, the apparently contradictory position is based on the accepted reality that military coups are sometimes driven by the failings of overthrown governments, as well as manifestations of deeper fragilities within the socio-political order. Therefore, while not condoning the UCG event – which is swiftly condemned – diplomatic engagement is activated to help *de facto* regimes restore constitutional order. The transformational momentum may also be harnessed towards delivering a new social contract that may be better than what existed under the overthrown regime.

The foundational AU instrument banning UCG, the Lomé Declaration, stipulates a six-month grace period for coup-born regimes to establish a concrete plan for

BOX 17

WORKING WITH *DE FACTO* AUTHORITIES

Development actors recognize that working in coup-affected countries requires engaging with actors who control the state apparatus: in other words, the *de facto* authorities. Most accept that this carries risks of conferring legitimacy to those authorities; potentially allowing them to entrench power or further subvert democratic processes.

Many have policies to guide decisions on when and how to engage. These typically state that engagement does not imply recognition or infer legitimacy upon them.

Organizations such as the World Bank, AfDB and the UN invariably find themselves responding to UCG events in countries whose governments are themselves members. The government is also typically the ‘client’, and support must be either directed via government systems or to government-approved partners. Many agencies have clauses in their core charters stipulating that decision making must not be guided by the political nature of the host government. Decisions about whether and how to engage are therefore driven by ‘apolitical’ considerations, such as whether authorities are willing to respect contractual agreements signed by previous incumbents.

The UN is in a unique position. It is able to engage with state officials at all levels – including through direct support to local government systems, as well as non-governmental actors. It has practical tools at its disposal for maintaining engagement while monitoring and managing risks.

transition back to constitutional order. As one analyst put it before a meeting of the AU PSC, by not cutting a country loose when sanctioned or suspended, the AU “plays the proverbial African mother who spans an erring child with the right hand and draws the same child closer with the left” – to warn him or her not to do the mischief again.¹⁸³ [However, as noted above, this approach, which is hardwired into the regional normative framework, is readily undermined through instances of inconsistency noted above – whereby the AU [as the guardian of the norms, or parent, to extend the analogy] – reveals itself to be flawed and subject to its own transgressions.]

(v) Disrupted engagement exacerbating harmful effects to populations

One of the most pressing dilemmas confronting international partners following a military coup is the need to find modalities for staying engaged so that assistance reaches populations, even as efforts unfold to incentivize military juntas’ adherence to transition plans and a return to constitutional order. Ensuring that transition processes are fully supported is a further issue – with significant gaps in concretizing pledges.¹⁸⁴

As part of the World Bank’s reorientation to working more effectively in fragile contexts, it has expanded the range of funding modalities available to support state capacity without putting resources directly through state systems. In Burundi (2015) and Guinea-Bissau (2012), for example, the Bank ceased direct budget support to each government following political crisis, instead directing funds to specific projects. Trust funds have allowed the Bank to work outside of state systems in South Sudan, Sudan and Somalia. The Bank can also provide direct support to other partners when authorities are not viable partners.¹⁸⁵ This provision has allowed the Bank to directly support UN agencies that are well positioned to engage with governmental and non-governmental actors and to continue financing critical services, even when there is no universally recognized central government. This has been the case, at different times, in Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen.

Some partners have greater flexibility in terms of who they can engage with and modalities for support in countries following coups. Many can direct resources to non-state actors in civil society. Some have established headquarter-level mechanisms that allow for rapid support to pro-democracy movements or bodies that cannot be supported through country programmes. These can allow partners to remain engaged without directly working with authorities, although not without challenges. It can be difficult to assess the political affiliations of civil society actors. Additionally, supporting non-state service provision can further undermine state capacities in the long term.

BOX 18

UN RESPONSES TO COUPS – STAY AND DELIVER

The UN has continued its engagement following the recent coups, particularly through its support to dialogue and governance-related processes linked to the transition to constitutional order, and usually led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) or Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) office in mission settings. For example, in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea and Mali, UNDP, together with the RC and related staff, such as the Peace and Development Advisor, have offered technical support for the implementation of transition workplans, as developed by transitional authorities. In the case of Mali, where there is a UN peacekeeping mission (the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, or MINUSMA), a UN Integrated Transition Support Plan for Political Transition in Mali was adopted by MINUSMA and the UN country team to guide work during the transitional period. This was subsequently updated following changes to the timeline.

In Sudan, the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan teamed up with missions of the AU and IGAD to establish a trilateral mechanism which assists national actors to find solutions for the consensual management of the transition.

UNDP has maintained full engagement with the governments in Chad, Guinea and Mali, despite recent UCG events. Across all three countries, existing programmes have continued, including many with a focus on supporting key governance processes. In all three countries, new support has been agreed. In Mali and Chad, this has included setting up basket funds that allow UN and other partners to support the implementation of transition plans. These funds also allow assistance to be directed to long-term institutional reform and capacity-strengthening programmes, many with a strong focus on engagement and the inclusion of women and youth in governance processes.

Despite these practices, and creativity in finding operational modalities amid turbulent circumstances, the recent coups have brought about disruptions to aid and development programmes – in turn exacerbating vulnerabilities faced by populations. Better understanding on the part of humanitarian and development actors of how these consequences may be mitigated, while still supporting political processes, is required.

(vi) Coordination across partners

Coordination across regional and international actors in shaping responses to military coups is a further area of challenge. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the range of actors and institutional dynamics at play.

The US convened global democracy summits in 2021 and 2023, seeking to facilitate a more coordinated response among international actors in addressing the root causes of democratic decline.¹⁸⁶

The *Pathways for Peace* report included strong recommendations concerning the importance of aligning peace, security and development interventions for prevention.¹⁸⁷ A recent review found that at country level, increased efforts to coordinate across humanitarian, development and peace actors through a nexus approach has seen considerable advances in recent years – at least in process terms, and through working towards ‘collective outcomes’.¹⁸⁸ The stabilization space has also afforded new platforms for security, development and humanitarian priorities to be blended into joint programming in response to specific crises. Globally, the UN system’s agenda to represent and operate as ‘one UN’ has also advanced.

The goal of better coordination to ensure strategic and efficient international responses to the world’s most pressing crises is well recognized. Given the array of systemic, structural and, at times, political obstacles, attaining this objective is likely to remain elusive, even as incremental progress is achieved. The case studies produced to inform this report confirm that across the typology of regional and international responses to military coups summarized above, coordination between different sectors (security and development have been highlighted in particular), as well as different actors, has been an obstacle.

There is currently no mechanism that encourages diverse actors to converge towards a coordinated strategic response in the event of a military coup – whether at country, regional or global level. Nor is there an accepted protocol around the division of roles and responsibilities among partners, or the sequencing of political and development levers. As noted above, the international community does not share a common language for framing such events (for instance, in reference to ‘transitions’, ‘UCG’ or ‘coups’) – an issue that itself may present barriers.

(vi) Need for a reset of longer-term democracy and governance assistance

As highlighted throughout this report, governance shortfalls and democratic incompleteness represent both proximate and deeper structural contributors to the rise in coup incidence. This suggests a reset of longer-term democracy, and governance assistance must stand at the fore of response interventions. This conclusion is confirmed by a growing number of other analyses, with one positing: “The most significant action the international democratic community can take to reverse the trend of coups in Africa is to incentivize democracy.”¹⁸⁹

Questions have been raised about both the quantity and quality of international partners’ democracy and governance assistance programmes. There is a strong rhetorical commitment to these areas across OECD DAC partners. Yet between 2010 and 2019, only 10 percent of overall Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows from DAC donors was directed towards improving governance and supporting democracy, of which roughly one quarter was primarily directed towards supporting democracy.¹⁹⁰ ODA for conflict prevention and peacebuilding is even more constrained, representing only a fraction of the amount spent on crisis response and reconstruction.¹⁹¹

Clauses have been triggered leading to adjustments and disruptions to aid, trade and security cooperation in many of the affected UCG-category countries under review, as has been discussed above. This approach illustrates the potential for development assistance to position normatively around democratic and constitutional principles. However, taking a broader view underscores a functional neutrality in attitude to regime type that amounts to imperviousness.

Recent quantitative research by GovNet indicates that the nature of a political regime does not have a significant impact on DAC donor development strategies.¹⁹² An analysis of ODA flows into countries disaggregated by regime type between 2010 and 2019 finds few significant differences in the amounts, sectors and delivery modalities used by donors in autocracies or democracies.

The composition of ODA focused on governance is stable across regime types. Roughly three quarters of governance support is focused on state building, while the remaining quarter focused on democracy support. The composition of democracy support is also very similar across regime types. There is a clear trend for donors to increase ODA to countries embarking on democratic transitions, including with support to governance. However, according to the same study, there was no discernible trend following autocratic junctures – such as flawed elections, a sharp deterioration of human rights, or military coups.

This reveals a need for greater nuance, political astuteness and boldness in engaging across different settings, and both incentivising and ensuring that governments are genuine partners in agendas to deepen democracy. The typical *modus operandi* of international democracy promotion and governance programming must also be scrutinized. The events studied in this report, and the perceptions that emerge from its data in both UCG- and DTS-country contexts, underline that new approaches are needed.

As highlighted in Section 1, there appears to be an over-concentration on the formal and procedural trappings of democracy over substantive aspects. One think tank points to eight factors to explain why donor enthusiasm for governance support as a major area of global aid may have “... run aground on the shoals of countervailing realities” (see Box 19).¹⁹⁴ A more recent review of democracy aid committed by Sweden (which has, at times, contributed as much as 30 percent of its total ODA to this area, well above OECD DAC averages), found that the contribution of democracy aid to democracy is small, but positive and statistically significant.¹⁹⁵ However, the strongest correlations between international democracy aid and intended impacts were evidenced where it targeted core areas: civil society, the free media and human rights; as well as placing strong emphasis on distribution to non-state actors, among other features. This confirms the ‘supply side’ bias as a fundamental problem to be overcome.¹⁸⁶

Soldiers and citizens qualitative research

participants in Sudan suggested the international community should expand support to the transition by focusing on civic culture programs, capacity building and democratic awareness, providing funding for these priorities.

BOX 19

PERSISTENT CONSTRAINTS IMPACTING GOVERNANCE ASSISTANCE

- (i) Governance deficiencies are often primarily political and cannot be resolved through technical assistance alone;
- (ii) Fostering citizen demand for better governance is as important as top-down efforts aimed at improving the 'supply' of governance;
- (iii) Governance aid may be more effective at the local level than at the national level;
- (iv) Despite the intuitive appeal of governance best practices, concentrating on locally determined 'best fit' may be more productive;
- (v) Informal institutions are a central part of the governance puzzle and cannot be treated as developmental marginalia;
- (vi) Governance concerns should be integrated into the full range of assistance programming;
- (vii) Donor countries should address international drivers of poor governance; and
- (viii) Aiding governance effectively requires development agencies to rethink their own internal governance.

Source: Carnegie Endowment for Peace (2011).

Key findings

Among *Soldiers and citizens* survey respondents, overall confidence in regional and international institutions (specifically, the AU and the UN), while at a reasonable level, is notably lower than confidence levels reported in other types of institutions. It ranks well behind confidence in religious bodies, the military and traditional media in both settings. People in DTS countries reported significantly greater levels of confidence in both institutions than counterparts in UCG-category countries: a difference of 18 percentage points in the case of the UN; and 14 percentage points in the case of the AU.

Given the amplified engagement of the AU and the UN in the UCG focal countries (as compared to DTS settings), the relative scepticism reflected in this result suggests an indictment of effectiveness in the eyes of citizens. Just 34 percent and 37 percent of UCG-category country respondents felt the AU and UN had, respectively, played a positive role in the recent political transition. Many more people in UCG-category countries than in DTS countries perceived the AU and UN to have had a negative role.

A significant number in both settings also said they either 'did not know', or they felt that neither institution made 'much difference'. This volume of agnostic responses suggests regional and international engagement is far from front and centre in people's lived experience of political transition in Africa. The findings highlight a need for regional and international stakeholders to employ a perspective of humility and realism when intervening in support of national processes.

Nonetheless, it remains clear that both the AU and the UN (through their multiple constituent departments, funds, programmes and agencies), alongside other regional and international partners, do have significant influence and an important role to play – and the stakes are high. Two-way dialogue between coup leaders and different parts of the international community is invariably and necessarily a prominent feature shaping coup trajectory. Regional and international actors face a momentous responsibility.

This chapter identified four sets of tools and instruments at the disposal of regional and international actors in responding to events. While the study set out to better understand development sector responses, clearly the most prominent of these are political: sanctions, suspension of membership from regional blocs, the deployment of special envoys and other mediation capacities, and related diplomatic pressure from partners and states.

These have been variously deployed in the five countries under review by both the AU and RECs, notably ECOWAS and IGAD, however with some inconsistencies. In addition, the typology of responses includes adjustments made to aid, trade and security cooperation on the part of key bilateral and multilateral development partners. These may be triggered by governance rules, but have been variously applied in the different cases under review. Thirdly, a handful of diverse funding

instruments follow parameters that allow for targeted responses to UCG, coups or political transitions – though none are explicitly set up for this purpose. Fourth, the broader spectrum of peace, governance and democracy support offered by international partners is directly relevant to addressing drivers and building the long-term resilience of constitutional order.

In assessing this response terrain as it has been leveraged in the affected countries under review, several gaps and challenges emerge. Responses have been reactive rather than proactive, underscoring a dearth of political will and readiness to act preventively. Regional and international partners have, at times, subordinated normative and development priorities in favour of security priorities. This is illustrated clearly in the apparent special treatment of Chad, but is also apparent in the wider pattern of international engagement in the Sahel region.

Inconsistency is also apparent in relation to the trend of constitutional manipulation. There is an apparent tension between principle and pragmatism in dealing with *de facto* leadership. The issue is highly nuanced. International partners attempt to remain engaged so that harmful effects to populations are minimized and transition processes are effectively resourced – yet without unduly conferring legitimacy to coup leadership.

Coordination across partners in responding to military coups has been a challenge. There is currently no mechanism for converging the efforts of diverse actors into a strategic response in the event of a military coup – whether at country, regional or global level. Nor is there an accepted protocol around the division of roles and responsibilities among partners, or sequencing of political and development levers.

Lastly, the need for a reset of longer-term democracy and governance assistance is underscored. This demands recognizing how shortfalls in governance and the incompleteness of democracy on the continent have contributed to the rise in coup incidence. Questions about both the quantity and quality, in turn, of international partners' democracy and governance-assistance programmes need to come to the fore.





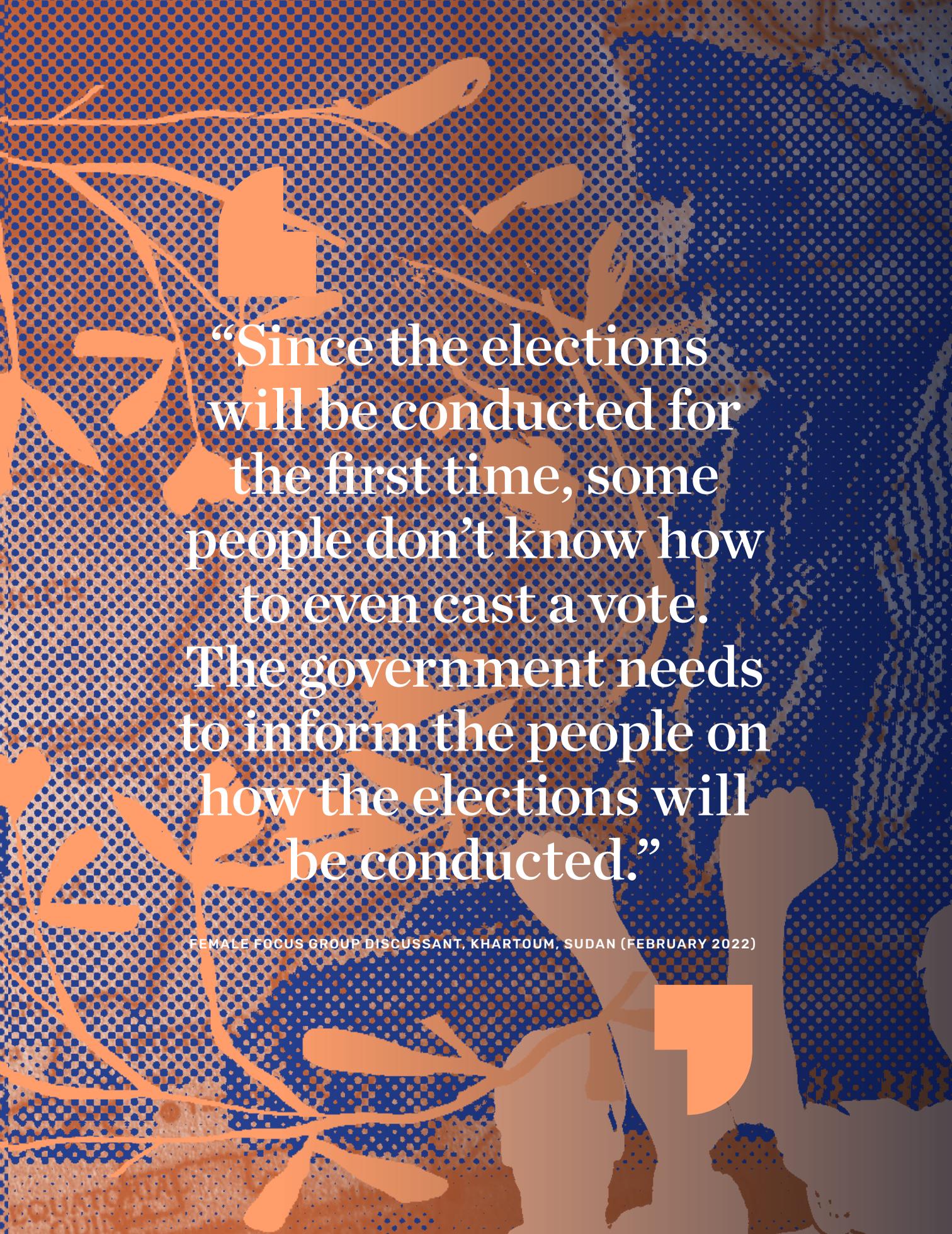
**FIRST ALL-WOMEN MEDIA
OUTLET, BILAN, BREAKS
NEW GROUND IN SOMALIA**

**SOMALI REPORTER KIIN
HASAN FAKAT (LEFT),
A CORRESPONDENT FOR
SOMALIA'S FIRST-EVER,
ALL-WOMEN NEWS OUTLET,
CALLED BILAN, INTERVIEWS
SIRAD MOHAMED NUR,
DIRECTOR OF THE MAMA
UGAASO FOUNDATION, AT A
WEEKLY VOLUNTEER CLEANUP
OF THE POPULAR LIDO BEACH
ON 11 NOVEMBER 2022 IN
MOGADISHU, SOMALIA.**

Supported by the UNDP and launched in April 2022, the six female journalists of Bilan, which means bright and clear, aim to empower professional women in Somali society, as well as tell stories on radio, television and in print.

**PHOTO BY SCOTT PETERSON
/GETTY IMAGES**





“Since the elections will be conducted for the first time, some people don’t know how to even cast a vote. The government needs to inform the people on how the elections will be conducted.”

FEMALE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSANT, KHARTOUM, SUDAN (FEBRUARY 2022)

04

SECTION 4

Policy and programming implications



Contemporary military coups in Africa can be attributed to multiple highly context-specific factors. Triggers, proximate dynamics and deeper structural drivers all inform each other within a complex and interdependent global environment. Reflecting UNDP’s mandate in the international system, the *Soldiers and citizens* report’s focus has been to better understand these factors through a development lens. Its dataset of the perspectives of 5,000 African citizens who had lived through coups or equivalent UCG events, contrasted with 3,000 whose countries are on a path to democratic transition or consolidation, yielded a uniquely people-centred body of evidence through which to interpret these issues and trends.

The findings suggest that coup risk may yet spread. In UCG contexts, the potential for the erosion of constitutional order to persist beyond transition timelines, and for further volatility, is clearly apparent. [This is evidenced by fresh conflict that broke out in Sudan in April 2023.] In a scenario where coup leaders take inspiration from one another, regional institutions’ normative frameworks and efforts may increasingly stand to be bypassed and undermined.

The five recently affected UCG countries are not the only ones to experience this confluence of structural and proximate factors. This points to the potential for other cases to emerge on the continent. The research – and real-time events unfolding in Ghana and The Gambia during the study – have highlighted vulnerabilities even in states on a path of democratic transition or consolidation.

Notably, DTS-country respondents, who are citizens of comparatively stable and developmentally advanced states, cited higher levels of frustration and scepticism about government than were reported in the five coup-affected countries. This discrepancy reflects higher expectations in these settings, as well as the challenges that persist even in contexts with relative development progress.

The research revealed that tolerance for persistent inequality, government under-performance across a spectrum of functions, corruption and elite self-enrichment is sharply waning across the continent. Development drivers of coup risk in the UCG-affected countries, and citizen frustration elsewhere, are exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19 and ongoing conflict in Ukraine, compounding vulnerability.

In responding to this perilous confluence of factors and the alarm bell that has been sounded by the increase in coup incidence since 2020, the research suggests a blend of both short- and long-term priorities for coup prevention, risk mitigation and transitions where coups have occurred. It underlines that well-established prevention priorities must be implemented to immediate effect. Further, it points to the urgency of renewing confidence in government efforts to tackle development challenges in the interests of their citizens.

Indeed, this research has shown a crisis in governance to be at the heart of the recent uptick in military coups in Africa. The relevance of mounting global interest in resetting the social contract, as signalled in the UN Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report, is brought into clear focus. The social contract that exists between states and citizens demands to be reframed, necessitating a sharp pivot towards building trust through inclusive, responsive and accountable government.

Trust and solidarity in the international system is also critical.¹⁹⁷ **In a time when competing global priorities are draining resources and diverting attention away from the continent, regional and international actors need to apply fresh focus and creativity – both in their engagement with coup-affected countries, and to prevent further instances.** New types of international partnership, which are grounded first and foremost in deepening the checks and balances between people and their governments, are needed.

This final section of the *Soldiers and citizens* report draws together the key strategic messages arising from its analysis. Finally, it offers a set of recommendations that constitute a proposed framework for policy and programming action.

4.1 KEY MESSAGES

1. To mitigate coup risk, a development lens is essential

The study found that among the hybrid circumstances that shape vulnerability to coup risk, underdevelopment is prominent. Counter-factual analysis of the cost of coups further highlights that these events significantly slow down development. These findings confirm that development perspectives should be at the centre of UCG response strategies. While coups are neither inevitable, nor necessarily likely, in all low-development contexts, secondary data shows clear correlations between heightened coup risk and stagnant growth, exclusionary economic governance, multidimensional poverty, inequality, reduced youth and women's participation, governance deficits and higher levels of military spend as a share of government budget. The findings confirm that coup risk can be viewed as a subset of state fragility.

Countries that experience contemporary coups perform poorly on global development indices. These rankings are not abstract, but represent millions of lives marred by exclusion, infringement of rights, restriction of opportunity and frustration. These grievances create a base of frustration that coup leaders can readily exploit. The *Soldiers and citizens* data reveals optimism and a heightened

appetite for change among those who recently experienced a military coup, as if willing for positive transformation to materialize from the turmoil. Poor government performance, corruption and failure to deliver security, inclusive development gains and related opportunities for populations all appear to create an appetite for change in any guise.

Coup leaders have explicitly invoked the giants of Africa's post-colonial history in their rhetoric of revolution and transformation. In so doing they have captured the popular imagination. This appeal points to a yearning for a better quality of political leadership, which strives to meet civilians' needs and aspirations. **The base of readily exploitable grievances, linked to leaders' failures to deliver inclusive development, creates fertile ground for coups to be staged. It is therefore critical to scale up development-oriented investment that will yield results and boost citizens' confidence in a better future.**

2. States must deepen democracy and reset their social contract with citizens

For African governments to build coup resilience, better governance, deeper democracy and inclusive development progress should be a guiding star. The quality of democracy and the prevalence of wider dysfunction in governance systems have been brought to the forefront. For too long, some states in the region have ruled behind a façade of democracy while deploying innately exclusionary models of governance. Recent coups in Africa have been more common in countries with a high number of previous coups, and governments that are “neither democratic nor authoritarian, but [...] share some characteristics of both”.¹⁹⁸ Democracy is at an inflection point on the continent, confronted by its own shortcomings and incompleteness.

A reset of the social contract is needed both to assist coup-affected states in moving forward and to help prevent future coups. To achieve this, governments should shift their focus to practical delivery that directly improves quality of life and opportunity for all segments of society. **The initial popularity of coup leaders should serve as a rallying call for governments to do better in demonstrating inclusive and principled governance.**

The question of how the social contract is best renewed goes to the heart of the governance agenda of today – in Africa, as elsewhere. This emphasizes the need for processes such as national dialogue, which help people to hear and understand each other, and new frameworks for managing differences collectively. The UN Secretary-General's recent *Our Common Agenda* report highlights key policy areas

for transforming lives and building trust. These include universal social protection, health coverage, education, skills, decent work and housing, as well as universal access to the Internet by 2030 as a basic human right.¹⁹⁹

Governments often fail to project legitimate governance institutions when engagement with local constituencies, informal leaders and non-state actors is insufficient. These include traditional institutions (which may shape an individual's choices more than the government itself), the private sector and other economic actors, and social media influencers. Lived experience happens at grassroots and localized levels, whether in cities or villages. This demands a multi-level framing of the social contract that ties the local to the national, regional and global.

Deepening democracy and rebuilding the social contract are long-term endeavours. Key processes should be identified to signal to the population that inclusive development has been made a priority of the state. This can include setting up complaint mechanisms and clear service delivery standards with realistic implementation roadmaps.

3. International and regional partners should reaffirm their commitment to constitutional norms, democratic principles and human rights

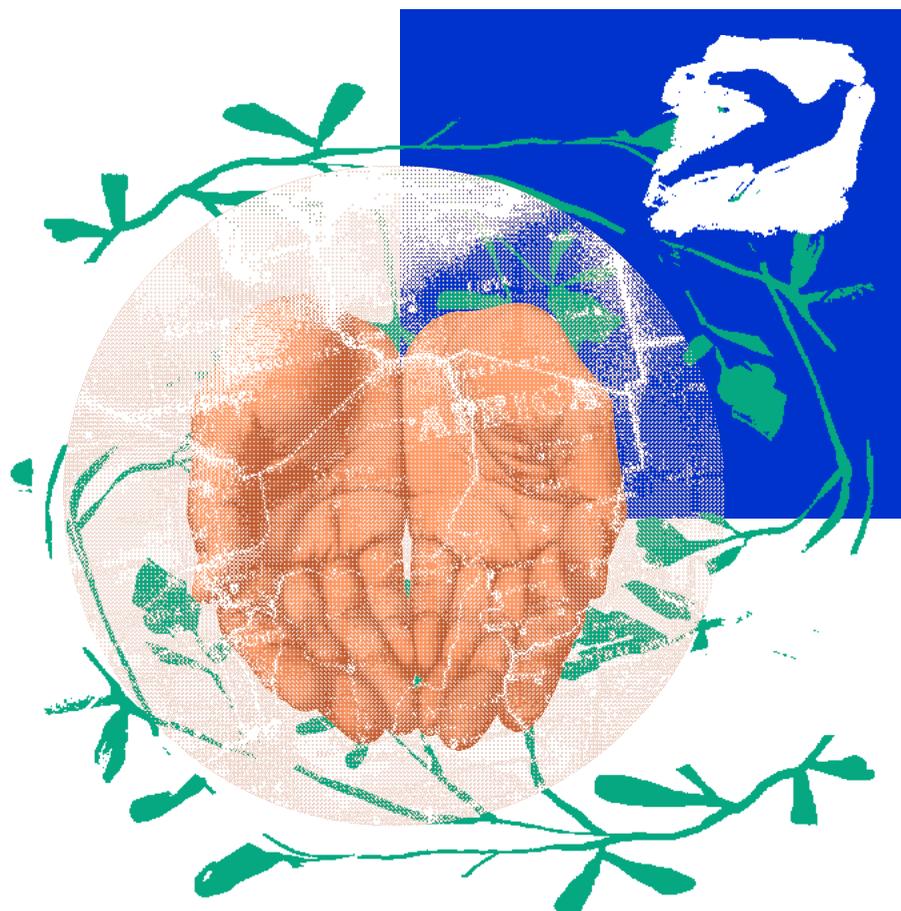
Regional and international partners such as the AU, as well as RECs like ECOWAS, have played a key role in projecting democratic and constitutional order, responding to coups, and helping to prevent further instances. Nonetheless, critical questions have arisen regarding the implementation of norms and the incentives for AU member states to comply. Prevarication and inconsistency in upholding continental norms risk undermining their relevance. Efforts by the AU and RECs to uphold norms are, at times, hampered by insufficient political will among member states, creating tensions between normative principle and political interests. The very credibility of these institutions is at stake, should their legitimacy be further eroded in the eyes of African citizens.

For their part, international partners must demonstrate solidarity by encouraging a deepening of Africa's democratic process, while resolving contradictions in their engagement. In recent decades, investment in governance has declined while security and other pillars of international cooperation have been favoured. Security priorities have in effect, served to undermine principle. Some of these

at-risk contexts have seen international partners pursue security and political objectives, with scant attention to the accountability of government partners. In some scenarios, these geopolitically driven interventions have compounded the very factors that heighten coup risk. The recent coups and further risks point to a moment of reckoning. A change of direction is needed.

Taking the above key messages into account, the findings of this report suggest five sets of specific priorities as the basis for a framework for policy and programming action in responding to contemporary coup risk in Africa. They are:

- (i) Strengthening continental and regional response mechanisms;
- (ii) Preventing further coups;
- (iii) More effective responses when coups occur;
- (iv) Building long-term coup resilience by addressing structural and institutional drivers; and
- (v) Reorienting international engagement in the Sahel.



4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthening continental and regional response mechanisms

The *Soldiers and citizens* research highlights that AU Member States must redouble efforts to ensure effective and consistent responses to contemporary coup risk. As discussed above, this calls for improved governance to help reset the social contract with citizens. The political will needed to uphold related norms and principles at regional and continental levels must also be mutually incentivized.

A series of actions, if taken together, can enable better continental and regional-level leadership in responding to coup risk. Enhancing AU and REC norms and principles as they relate to UCG, as well as constitutional manipulation to extend power, must be a priority. The ongoing review of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance including clauses related to presidential term limits is encouraging. A similar review at the continental level through the African Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections would be timely and should be supported.

The capacity of the AU and RECs to uphold norms in member states represents a further challenge. This relates both to having in place relevant structures and mechanisms, such as special envoys, as well as the resources needed to implement such support.

Recent events underscore the necessity for the AU, ECCAS and ECOWAS to enhance their capacities in preventive diplomacy through mechanisms such as the ECOWAS Council of Elders and the AU Panel of the Wise. Effective coordination between the AU and RECs is critical for advancing normative coherence. A further gap in the overall AU architecture is the lack of specific frameworks for planning, establishing, deploying and implementing the necessary support in the event of a coup. The capacity of the AU and RECs to provide technical support for constitutional review and amendment processes is also crucial.

Preventing further coups

The need for more proactive approaches to coup prevention is clear. Though possibly pre-empted in political risk assessments, the recent coups caught many off guard. Responses were stymied by delays and other challenges, while the risk of multiple coups in the same state became evident. Yet the gains of preventing crises and conflict, rather than reacting when they occur, have been recognized at the highest levels of international policy and decision-making for decades.²⁰⁰

While the practice of prevention lags behind principle, several actions can be identified to remedy this. Continental norms that prohibit UCG and discourage constitutional manipulation should be projected in a more consistent and robust manner. Complemented with sharper AU- and REC-deployable capacities, as mentioned above, this is a key avenue for assisting a coup-prevention agenda. Regional and international actors must engage proactively with countries where presidents are nearing the end of their term limits to secure public assurances that they will resign and allow for a peaceful transfer of power.

Additional short- and medium-term priorities are:

- ***Boost early warning and response system (EWRS) capacity (monitoring and analysis, as well as response).*** Well-developed global and regional EWRS capacities are already in place, housed by different partners and institutions. However, their efficacy has been questioned and barriers debated. Several specific priorities can be identified. These include the need to shift from early warning of imminent violence to a wider awareness of risk that is sensitive to real and perceived exclusion and inequality in societies. Response capacities merit greater investment; and citizens' networks should be more actively engaged in analysing trends.

Other priority areas include linking spheres of conflict (grassroots, local, national, regional and global) into systemic approaches that dynamically plot interdependence; and better harnessing technology to improve monitoring and harmonization across regional and international EWRS platforms. It is apparent EWRS are typically designed to monitor and respond to a wider categorization of violence than military coups alone, even though such events feature in their analysis. **It is urgent to include greater specificity related to the drivers and triggers of coups, as well as appropriate responses.**

- ***Support problem-solving dialogue processes between political and military elites.*** To mount a coup, military factions require sufficient political agency. In countries identified as at risk, early action to facilitate dialogue between political and military factions may represent a fruitful direction for diplomacy. These processes must produce jointly owned solutions that diffuse and respond to substantive issues. Both sides should be held accountable through a structured dialogue process. While framed as short-term preventive intervention, such investment should ideally form part of a wider strategic efforts around civil-military relations, responding to structural drivers in the long term.
- ***Prioritize programmatic investment in national infrastructures for peace.*** Interim leaders in all the UCG focal countries attempted to engage diverse stakeholders and voices in shaping transition processes. Yet over time, this became more contested. Preventive action in at-risk countries should include proactive efforts to support coalition building, inclusivity in the political process, and wider societal capacity for conflict prevention and mediation. Active networks create entry points for advancing peace messages and informing citizens when coup-related turbulence occurs. Such capacities can help to quell and diffuse knock-on social unrest and violence and can usefully be thought of as 'national infrastructures for peace'.²⁰¹

Preventive investment in relevant networks of young people, women, the private sector, CSOs, as well as faith-based and other identity group actors is needed to support ongoing work and platforms to advance social cohesion and address legacies of conflict. Including historically marginalized groups is critical to rebuild trust and foster consensus around shared future priorities. The deployment of resources such as the UN Peace and Development Adviser function should be closely targeted at preventive programming, which is vital for nurturing national infrastructures for peace in at-risk countries.

More effective responses when coups occur

Regional and international partners, including development agencies and financial institutions, play a critical role in shaping the trajectory of coups. Partners need to support and sustain post-coup transition processes by investing in strategic entry points that boost inclusivity and effectiveness. In this way, the foundations for long-term renewal may be established. For example, UNDP's approach in recent coup-affected contexts has been to 'stay and deliver' and to prevent the development agenda from being jeopardized.

Partners must also improve response mechanisms in the event of future occurrences where prevention has failed. **Transition plans can harness opportunities for positive transformation where they are based on, and run alongside, continuous and inclusive national dialogue processes, and are characterized by a readiness to address grievances across stakeholder groups.** Specific priorities are:

- **Strategic coordination across sectors (political, development, humanitarian, security) and partners.** The goal of improving coordination to ensure more strategic and efficient international responses to the world's most pressing crises is well recognized. Increasing efforts to coordinate across humanitarian, development and peace actors through a nexus approach in the stabilization space has seen advances in recent years. However, strategic coordination between different sectors (for example, security and development), as well as between different actors in streamlining responses as coups unfold, has been an obstacle. Partners and priorities often appear to work in tension with each other. As highlighted in Section 3, no mechanism currently exists for converging diverse actors into a coordinated strategic response in the event of a military coup, whether at country, regional or global level. Nor is there an accepted protocol around the division of roles and responsibilities, coordination across sectors, or the sequencing of political and development levers. Clarity on these issues is required. It is partly in response to this coordination gap that UNDP and the AUC Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security

(AUC-PAPS) have jointly developed the new Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT). The facility aims to provide a platform for coordination, as well as responses to other gaps and priorities identified here.

- **Continued assistance to vulnerable populations, with higher levels of risk management and mitigation.** It is a priority to identify mechanisms, economic or otherwise, that can motivate political and military actors to engage meaningfully with citizens, and to honour transition timeframes and commitments. There is a risk, however, that ‘carrot and stick’ approaches marked by sanctions and aid disruptions may be counterproductive where populations are most vulnerable. Just as humanitarian actors’ access is understood to be paramount in the aftermath of crises, the development spend pipeline should also not simply be turned off.

BOX 20

UNDP-AU AFRICA FACILITY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS

UNDP and the AU Commission have been working together from 2022 to advance the concept of a new Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT), underpinned by the present research study.

AFSIT provides integrated programmatic support to countries in transition. Its overall objective is to support credible, inclusive and legitimate transition roadmaps, mechanisms and institutions toward democracy and stability in relevant AU Member States in anticipation of, and during, complex political transitions.

AFSIT is a response to the call by the AU in the Malabo Declaration on UCG for collective action and solidarity in developing a robust response, deepening democracy and fostering collective security. The Facility will coordinate and complement (and not duplicate, replace or consolidate) AU, RECs and UN instruments, as well as other development partners’ instruments and initiatives, in support of inclusive transitions. It seeks to swiftly pre-empt, respond to, and address complex political crisis and UCG. The facility will further provide and deploy rapid technical, human, financial and resource support to the AU, RECs and affected AU Member States to prevent, respond to and mitigate risks associated with complex political transitions.

The co-design process of AFSIT has proactively engaged RECs/RMs, the AfDB, international financial institutions, research institutions, civil society, development partners and national partners. Its design prioritizes sufficient capacity to follow up on commitments made through the March 2022 Accra Declaration and May 2022 Malabo Declaration. In this context, it aims to strengthen both the continental institutions and mechanisms responsible for responding to complex political transitions, and the One UN response – with a particular focus on promoting inclusion.

A sustained commitment to reaching populations, even in the face of executive-level political crisis, should be a key principle in shaping coup response. Sudden or complete disruptions in support may compound vulnerability, isolation and grievances, which in turn may be readily exploited for political gain. Finding creative modalities is

a necessary corollary to this principle. Models such as World Bank and UN partnerships in conflict-affected settings, as well as working through non-state partner networks – including international and national civil society groups – are at the forefront of options for achieving this. However, events also suggest that institutional capabilities should be reviewed to ensure that principled opportunities for agencies to remain engaged are harnessed. Development partners should be prepared to codify rules of engagement that safeguard development programming, even where state partnerships are in disarray. The level of risk that they are willing to accept should be reassessed, security protocols reviewed, and adaptive programme management encouraged.

- ***Advocate for meaningfully inclusive transition processes.*** Transition processes can yield lasting transformative change and pave the way for democratic renewal and a reset of the social contract. This potential will only be realized where new conversations are enabled and used to dig deep into national issues and sources of division and alienation. Transitional justice processes are critical in for resolving allegations of human rights violations where these occur. Sustaining pressure on military juntas and interim leadership, and identifying platforms for meaningful and continuous engagement of the full spectrum of representative groups in society, is a key area for regional and international actors' attention. Performance milestones are critical to measure the level and depth of citizen inclusion and engagement in the transition and related national dialogue processes – including through key groups such as young people, women, rural communities, civil society and the private sector. The process should be tracked in an ongoing two-way dialogue between military junta and international community. This priority should be as, if not more important, than the timing of an eventual election.
- ***Support transition processes towards restoring legitimate and inclusive constitutional order.*** A further priority for supporting effective transition processes is for regional and international actors to prioritize and coordinate support to the delivery of transition milestones, complementing and providing oversight to the *de facto* executive role. These may include the efforts of constitutional reform bodies; transitional legislatures, oversight committees and their secretariats; EMBs; parliament, anti-corruption authorities and national human rights institutions, and ombudspersons. The role and functioning of core government functions and ministries – such as those responsible for critical policy areas like justice, decentralization or reconciliation, and others charged with managing the economy and restoring critical areas of service delivery – also require focused and targeted support.

Long-term coup resilience through addressing structural and institutional drivers

The *Soldiers and citizens* qualitative research

participants offered recommendations on how the inclusivity and integrity of electoral processes could be ensured. These included:

- Encouraging electoral reforms before the next election cycle to reduce the government/ruling party's influence on the process;
- Engaging key opposition parties and CSOs in the restructuring of electoral commissions to make them more inclusive and independent;
- Policy reforms to address the increasing monetization of politics and elections, which is a major impediment – especially for women and youth participation in elections;
- Policy reforms to address 'winner-takes-all' systems of political competition, encouraging consensus or coalition-based politics;

Structural factors feed into grievances which, in turn, represent proximate factors that are readily triggered in support of military coups. Addressing these root causes is critical for longer-term coup prevention, or 'coup-proofing'.²⁰² Responding to the key structural drivers that contributed to coup vulnerability identified in this research (as summarized in Section 1) suggests the following priorities:

Deepening democratic governance

The recent coups have cast a spotlight on the incompleteness of democratic transition in some parts of Africa against a backdrop of global erosion – while paradoxically pointing to a new yearning for democracy as service delivery, transparency and responsive institutions across Africa. There is a clear need to make better sense of barriers to democratic consolidation, and to deepen the quality of democratic governance. Regional and international actors need to focus on incentivizing such a deepening of democratization across the continent. Specific priorities are:

- Elections in a broader democracy ecosystem. Closing the gap between procedural and substantive democracy requires urgent and continuous efforts. Elections are easily manipulated, and the power of elites becomes entrenched when polls are rushed or held without functional accountability systems. *Soldiers and citizens* research participants identified a range of recommendations for improving the integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process. Enabling national governments (whether as the UN Electoral Assistance Division, UNDP, AU, RECs or other international partners) to implement the legislative and institutional reform needed to create conditions for free, fair and credible elections is essential. This also concerns the technical assistance that regional and international actors provide through their electoral support mechanisms, as well as diplomatic and political aspects of mediation and electoral dispute resolution. Sharpening the critical voice of electoral observation is also required to ensure meaningful engagement that upholds norms and good practices, rather than lending legitimacy where it is not deserved.
- Support to developmental political leadership. The experiences of countries on a path toward democratic transition highlight that developmental political leadership is an important source of resilience. Programming that fosters a new generation of political leaders on the continent is important, as are initiatives that encourage enhanced leadership from current heads of state in full respect of existing democratic norms and civic rights.

- Investing in voter education well in advance of the next elections;
- Providing EMBs with clear processes, requirements and methods of identification, with the consensus of all political parties, for voter registration in compiling a new electoral register prior to elections to increase participation and inclusivity;
- Targeted efforts to empower and increase women and youth representation within government, legislature, EMBs and political parties. [This includes the provision of financial support; capacity-building support in areas such as resource mobilization, leadership skills, political communication and campaign strategies; and advocating for affirmative action by election stakeholders to reserve some positions for women and the youth]; and
- Making alternative arrangements for IDPs as well as people with disabilities to participate in voting.

- **Adjust democratic governance programming and assistance to invigorate accountability oversight.** International development partners should review and adapt interventions designed to promote democratic governance, rule of law, security, justice and human rights. **While they should avoid overly state-centric conceptions of state building, partners must project a readiness for robust discourse where commitment to good governance is in question.** Supporting institutional development, championing representative and accountable institutions, and providing platforms for citizens to hold state actors accountable should be top priorities. Local organizations need flexible, sustained and predictable access to funding. These entities should be supported to identify their own priority needs, encourage political participation and advocate for responsive and inclusive services.

Civil-military relations: a strategic reset

A history of often-violent state formation processes, which date back to the colonial era, left a legacy of military interdependence and influence on political life in many African countries. This has been identified as a further structural driver of coup risk, along with higher proportions of state expenditure on the military. It is imperative to recalibrate the civil-military relationship to respond to recent coups and contribute to long-term prevention. In addition, wider efforts are needed to deepen the effectiveness and accountability of security actors. Gains in the security sector can significantly help to reinvigorate the social contract between states and citizens. Specific priorities are:

- **Civil-military reset through reform and dialogue.** African states that have invested in processes to reframe this relationship show greater resilience to coups. Governments, with support from regional and international partners, should replicate such successes through peer-to-peer exchange. Senior personnel leaving the military should have career pathways beyond the security sphere, and reform processes should be expedited to separate the influence of military actors from politics. Educating citizens about the appropriate separation of duties in a democratic state is another priority. At the same time, governments should address grievances within the military, including matters of remuneration, equipment, living conditions, career progression and opportunities for serving staff.
- **Improved SSR interventions.** Ensuring the operational effectiveness of security forces in delivering security for populations, while also observing human rights principles, implementing best practices in community engagement and combatting corruption, is also key. Complicity in abuses against citizens has, itself, fuelled insecurity in some countries. Lessons from decades of SSR programming suggest that countries confronted by coup risk need new approaches. There needs to be a clear rationalization of the mandates and functions of different forces in relation to each other, while budgeting and expenditures must to be transparent. Many interventions are overly focused on working with the forces, without ensuring accountability for malfeasance. Communities, civil society and the media should be supported

to play a watchdog role regarding security force conduct. Partners supporting SSR should be ready to challenge and consider withholding support where reform stalls.

- **Local-level, inclusive security-sector governance.** Platforms that convene communities alongside state security actors and local government actors are essential. These platforms should enable participants to identify resources and avenues for jointly owned security solutions, including ensuring security forces' accountability, while building a shared understanding of sources of insecurity. Local-level, inclusive security-sector governance can itself strengthen the social contract. This presents a key programming avenue for enhancing resilience in countries at risk of coups. This type of programming should be informed by clear political economic and conflict analysis to understand the roles that different actors have played in insecurity. Further, it can be linked to community- and local-level mediation, carried out by traditional, government or community actors.

Inclusive economic development and poverty reduction

In addressing structural drivers, it is vital to place greater emphasis on strengthening and expanding inclusive development gains and progress towards Agendas 2030 and 2063. Such gains must be felt across at-risk countries. Casting the perspective more broadly around this structural driver of coup risk raises a large scope of development policy, planning and programming, reaching towards structural transformation. It suggests that governments across the continent should take demonstrable steps to build societies where citizens feel included in national development. International partners must double down on inclusive economic development, while aligning global trade relations with positive development outcomes. Specific priorities include:

- **Reducing multidimensional poverty post-pandemic.** Africa's deprivation profile was assessed in the most recent MPI to include deprivation in nutrition, cooking fuel, sanitation and housing, with large numbers of people facing these burdens (250 million) – as well as others, such as a lack of water and electricity.²⁰³ This aggregate perspective on the region clearly masks specific 'deprivation bundles' at national and sub-national levels. For states to progress towards the goals of Agendas 2063 and 2030, targeted and integrated policies are needed to simultaneously address multiple challenges. Heeding this call across the continent will reduce vulnerability and build resilience to coup risk.
- **Building inclusive economies and improving economic governance.** Governments across Africa should pursue a deliberately inclusive growth trajectory. Continued efforts in economic diversification are also implied by the research findings. The governance and management of extractives and other natural resources should be strengthened to occur in an effective, transparent, and accountable manner, including by the private sector and civilian oversight modalities. A stronger social contract can be achieved by enhancing domestic resource mobilization and taxation regimes, and anti-corruption measures should be integrated across all sectors. Accelerated support for Africa's domestic private sector can boost structural transformation. This would drive

When asked how further coups could be prevented,

research participants strongly urged that governments should implement robust policy actions to improve economic growth and address worsening economic conditions and associated impacts on the living conditions of the ordinary people – with the support of international partners.

Policy actions can include promoting macroeconomic stability; having an efficient tax system to boost domestic revenue mobilization; cutting government expenditure as part of fiscal stabilization and debt sustainability measures; robust measures to eliminate corruption; creating more sustainable jobs for the youth and supporting entrepreneurship; promoting private investments; and promoting social intervention programmes to support the most vulnerable in society to "alleviate their sufferings".

productivity and competitiveness, allowing the sector to better serve and provide for its expanding markets. Creating new and sustainable job opportunities is another priority pathway. It is equally critical to focus on the informal sector, which provides livelihoods and opportunities for many low-income populations (especially youth and women).²⁰⁴ Africa's growth must boost local employment prospects and benefit a majority, enabling sustained wealth creation. Investing in domestic value-addition manufacturing, upgrading infrastructure, providing access to markets and creating enabling environments for entrepreneurs and small businesses are all steps to be taken with greater purpose. Such investment should occur at both the national and local level – involving not just the private sector, but also evaluating whether local and national government bodies contribute to an enabling environment.

- **Tackling external constraints.** While the onus is on African states to orchestrate inclusive economic development, relationships with regional and international partners can both help and hinder. Global, regional and national inequalities are exacerbated by asymmetrical and constrained trade relations, which hamper the distribution of economic opportunities. At the regional and international level, much needs to be done to intensify progress under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. The goal must be to further expand regional economic opportunities for citizens and new labour-market entrants. Further afield, trade relationships between Africa, Europe and other parts of the world should be reframed to optimize development prospects.

Reorienting international engagement in the Sahel

Although the findings and recommendations of this study are relevant across the continent, the concentration of recent coups in the Sahel subregion has direct implications for regional and international engagement.

During the past decade, the Sahel has experienced increasing insecurity and turmoil. The recent coups are an expression of that turmoil – and a forewarning of what may yet follow. Despite (or, according to some analyses, because of) intensive and complex security deployment and assistance at the expense of attention to root causes, various international actors have contributed, albeit unwittingly, to deepening fragility. Due to its geopolitical importance, mineral wealth and ongoing struggles against violent extremism, the Sahel features prominently on international agendas. However, in a context of shifting geopolitical brinkmanship, attention to the region should urgently be renewed and refocused.

Drawing together the above framework for action in responding to coup risk, such a recalibration in the Sahel demands a reinvigorated development response that puts governance priorities and a reset of the social contract between states and citizens at its fore. Limited access to justice and basic public services are key drivers of

insecurity, and provide opportunities for violent extremist groups to co-opt local populations. Building inclusive local governance should become a cornerstone of fresh efforts that extend beyond securitized approaches, and both recognize and draw on informal and local governance mechanisms and sources of resilience.

Tackling corruption at all levels of government is essential if investment in state service provision is to succeed. This includes the need for malpractices to be called out more vociferously. It is also crucial to monitor the human rights conduct of security actors. Early results of the ongoing stabilization activities by UNDP and partners in the Lake Chad Basin region – which contribute to the peace-development nexus – provide inspiration. Forging new narratives about the Sahel, which emphasize positive opportunities for growth and prosperity for its peoples, can also contribute to new pathways.

Recent events have prompted a rethink on the part of several actors, including the AU, UN and EU as well as bilateral partners and stakeholders. A clear emerging direction is to place a governance perspective at the centre of all areas of cooperation, including in relation to the security sector and security issues. This has been unanimously called for by analysts of the region and is underscored by the findings of this research.²⁰⁵

The UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the AU Sahel strategy have been in place, respectively, since 2013 and 2014. Both place significant emphasis on conflict prevention and governance priorities. The AU and the UN have jointly tasked an independent high-level panel to lead a consultative process, under the stewardship of the former president of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, to critically assess and eventually recalibrate the governance, security and development agenda for the region.

This process offers an opportunity to reimagine collective international support to the region's national and local efforts for sustainable peace and development. A rethink of the EU strategy for the region similarly appears likely to place new emphasis on governance issues and building trust between citizens and the state. Realignment that moves beyond short-term security priorities, towards meaningful and long-term governance progress, will be critical.



GUINEA
14 SEPTEMBER 2021

A WOMAN LOOKS ON IN A RESTAURANT AS THE FIRST SESSION OF TALKS TAKE PLACE BETWEEN COLONEL MAMADY DOUMBOUYA AND CURRENT GUINEAN POLITICAL PARTIES IN CONAKRY

On 5 September 2021, Colonel Mamady Doumbouya's special forces seized power from Alpha Condé in a coup, taking over from the West African state's 83-year-old president.

PHOTO BY JOHN WESSELS /AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



ANNEX

1

SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS PERCEPTIONS SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A. ATTITUDES TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT

- A1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the government is running the country?
- 1 Satisfied
 - 2 Dissatisfied
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
- A2. Do you trust the current government to run the country in the interests of people like you?
- 1 Yes, definitely
 - 2 Yes, probably
 - 3 No, definitely not
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
- A3. How important is it to you who runs the country?
- 1 Very important
 - 2 Fairly important
 - 3 Not very important
 - 4 Not at all important
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
- A4. Which of the following best describes your opinion of the system of government in [COUNTRY]?
- 1 It works extremely well and could not be improved
 - 2 It could be improved in small ways but mainly works well
 - 3 It could be improved quite a lot
 - 4 It needs a great deal of improvement
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

B. DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES

- B1. Please tell me which of these words describes how you feel about the direction your country is moving in today?
- a. Happy
 - b. Excited
 - c. Worried
 - d. Proud
 - e. Scared
 - f. Confused
 - g. Optimistic
 - 1 Yes
 - 2 No

Q. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?

- B2. The state of the economy
- B3. Your personal financial situation
- B4. Economic opportunities available to you

- B5. The quality of key public services,
e.g. education and health
- B6. Your level of safety living here
- 1 Satisfied
 - 2 Dissatisfied
 - 3 Neither
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

Q. Do you think the following will get better, get worse or stay about the same over the next two years?

- B7. The state of the economy
- B8. Your personal financial situation
- B9. Economic opportunities available to you
- B10. The quality of key public services,
e.g. education and health
- B11. Your level of safety living here
- 1 Get better
 - 2 Get worse
 - 3 Stay about the same
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

Q. How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following to act in the best interests of the public?

- B12. The military / armed forces
- B13. The police
- B14. Banks
- B15. Judges / courts
- B16. National-level business leaders
- B17. The government
- B18. Trade unions
- B19. Traditional media like newspapers
and radio
- B20. Social media companies
- B21. African Union
- B22. United Nations
- B23. Religious bodies
- B24. Civil society organizations
- 1 Complete confidence
 - 2 A fair amount of confidence
 - 3 Not very much confidence
 - 4 No confidence at all
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

C. POLITICAL INTEREST AND EFFICACY

- C1. How interested are you in national politics,
would you say you are?
- 1 Very interested
 - 2 Somewhat interested
 - 3 Not very interested
 - 4 Not at all interested
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

- C2. Which of these three statements is closest to
your own opinion?
- Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other
kind of government
- Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic
government can be preferable
- Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter
what kind of government we have
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

- C3. You said that in some circumstance a non-democratic
government can be preferable. In what circumstances
do you mean?
- Probe fully, write in
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

- C4. Many things may be desirable, but not all of them
are essential characteristics of democracy. For each
of the following things I read out, please tell me if you
think it is an essential feature of democracy.
- 1 Governments tax the rich and
subsidize the poor
 - 2 Religious authorities interpret the laws
 - 3 People choose their leaders in free elections
 - 4 People receive state aid for unemployment
 - 5 The army takes over when government is
incompetent
 - 6 Civil rights protect people against state
oppression
 - 7 The state makes people's incomes equal
 - 8 People obey their rulers
 - 9 Women have the same rights as men
 - 10 The media are free from government control
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

- C5. Which of these two statements is closest to your
own opinion?
- Statement 1: The constitution should limit the
president to serving a maximum of two terms in office
- Statement 2: There should be no constitutional limit on
how long the president can serve
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the
following statements?

- C6. [COUNTRY] system of government is rigged
to advantage the rich and powerful
- C7. Men make better political leaders than women
- C8. This country needs more women
in leadership positions

- C9. This country needs more young people (18- to 30-year-olds) in leadership positions
- C10. There is a clear separation between the military and the government
- C11. Women have the same rights as men
- 1 Agree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

- C12. How often, if at all, do you think the law is fairly applied to all citizens in your country?
- 1 Always
 - 2 Most of the time
 - 3 Sometimes
 - 4 Rarely
 - 5 Never
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

- C13. How often, if at all, do you think the law is fairly applied to politicians in your country?
- 1 Always
 - 2 Most of the time
 - 3 Sometimes
 - 4 Rarely
 - 5 Never
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

D. THE LAST CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN [DETAILS]

I would now like to ask you some questions about the last change of government in [ADD DETAILS].

- D1. I am going to read out some words that some people felt about this country during the last transition in [DETAILS]. As I read them out, please tell me if you felt like this about your country at that time?
- a. Happy
 - b. Excited
 - c. Worried
 - d. Proud
 - e. Scared
 - f. Confused
 - g. Optimistic
 - 1 Yes
 - 2 No

- D2. Did you support or oppose X becoming president /the change in government?
- 1 Supported
 - 2 Opposed
 - 3 Neither supported nor opposed
 - 98 Don't know / can't remember
 - 99 Refused

ASK IF SUPPORTED

- D3. Why did you support...? (Write in)

ASK IF OPPOSED

- D4. Why did you oppose...? (Write in)

- D5. Did you feel your opinions and concerns were listened to as part of his change of government?
- 1 Yes, fully
 - 2 Yes, to some extent
 - 3 No
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

IF CODE 2 OR 3 AT D5, ASK

- D6. What would you like to have happened differently in order to feel better included in the change of government? (Write in)

- D7. So far, has this change of government had a positive or negative impact on the country as a whole?
- 1 Positive
 - 2 Negative
 - 3 Neither
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

- D8. So far, has this change of government had a positive or negative impact on you and your family?
- 1 Positive
 - 2 Negative
 - 3 Neither
 - 98 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

Q. From what you remember, did the following types of organizations play a positive or a negative role in [add details about process of change of government], or did they not make much difference?

- D9. Traditional media, e.g. radio and television
- D10. Social media
- D11. Military / armed forces
- D12. The police
- D13. Religious bodies
- D14. National-level business leaders
- D15. Civil society organisations
- D16. Neighbouring countries

- D17 African Union
 D18 United Nations
 1 Positive
 2 Negative
 3 Not made much difference
 98 Don't know
 99 Refused

E. DEMOGRAPHICS

(Some of these will need to be asked at the start of the survey for sampling / quota control)

- E1 Location of respondent
- E2 Respondent's gender
 1 Male
 2 Female
 98 Don't know/prefer not to say
- E3 What is your highest level of education?
 1 No formal schooling
 2 Informal schooling only (including Koranic schooling)
 3 Primary school completed
 4 Secondary school / high school completed
 5 Post-secondary qualifications other than university, e.g. a diploma or degree from a polytechnic or college, some university
 6 University completed
 7 Post-graduate
 99 Don't know [Do not read]
- E4 What is your age?
 (write in)
- E5 Ethnicity
- E6 What is your current employment status?
 1 Full-time employment
 2 Part-time employment
 3 Unemployed / Looking for work
 4 Unemployed / Not looking for work
 5 Student
 6 Retired
 7 Other: WRITE IN
 98 Don't know
 99 Refused

- E7 Which one of these bests applies to you?
 1 I make enough money to buy basics and save the surplus
 2 I make enough money only to buy basics
 3 I do not make enough money to buy basics
 98 Don't know
 99 Refused

- E8 In a typical week, approximately how much money do you make / earn?
- E9 Do you have a disability or long-term health condition that impacts your daily life?
 1 Yes
 2 No
 98 Don't know
 99 Refused

- E10 Do you live in an urban or rural area?
 1 Urban
 2 Rural
 98 Don't know
 99 Refused

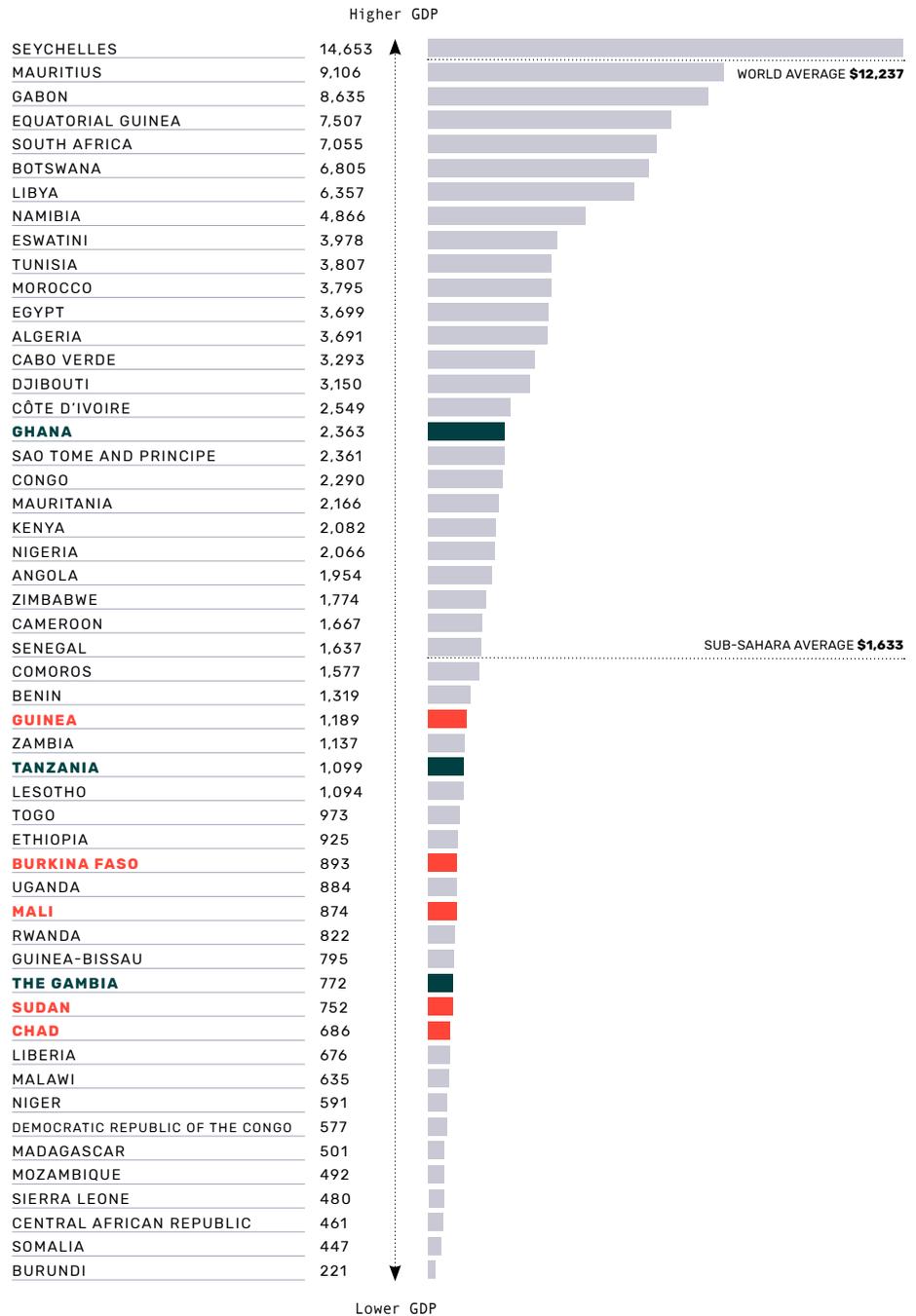
- E11 People are not always able to vote in elections, for example, because they weren't registered, they were unable to go, or someone prevented them from voting. How about you? In the last national election held in [DETAILS], did you vote, or not, or were you too young to vote? Or can't you remember whether you voted?
 1 I did not vote
 2 I was too young to vote
 3 I can't remember whether I voted
 4 I voted in the election
 98 Don't know
 99 Refused

COMPARING UCG- AND DTS-CATEGORY COUNTRIES ON GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT INDICES

FIGURE I

GDP PER CAPITA IN US\$

■ UCG
■ DTS

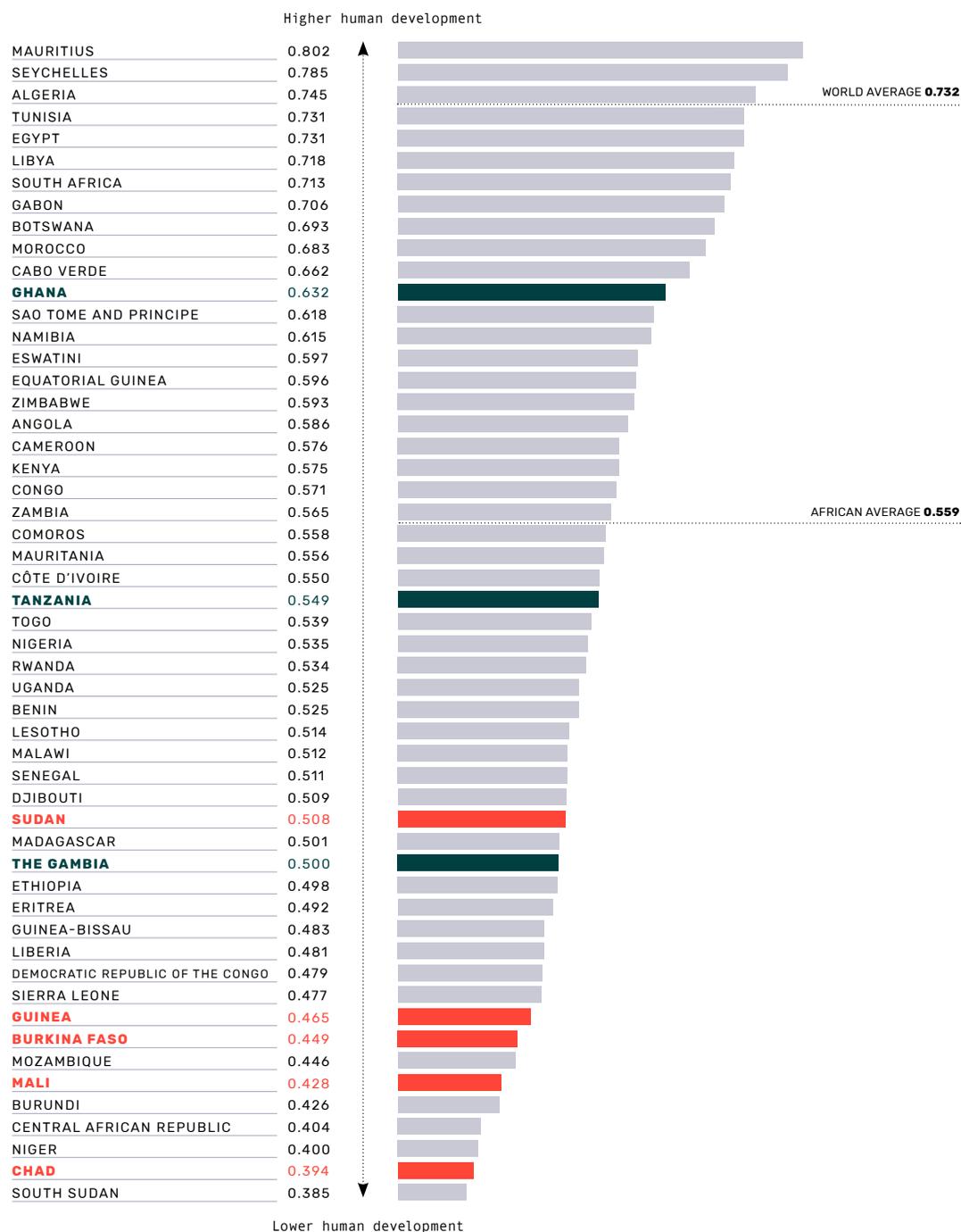


Missing data: Eritrea and South Sudan
Source: World Bank Group, 2021, (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>).

FIGURE II

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

■ UCG
■ DTS



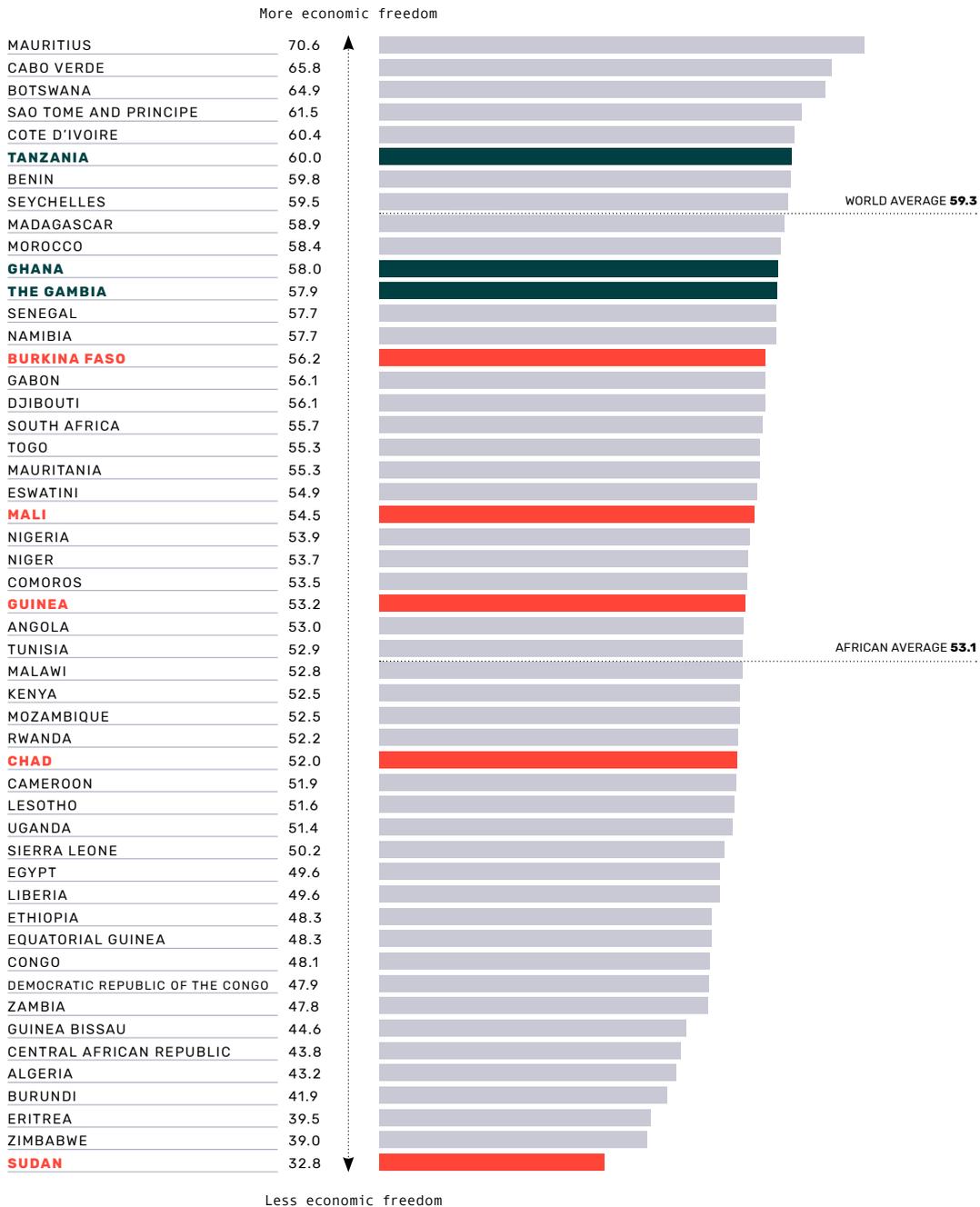
Missing data: Somalia

Source: Human Development Index, 2021, (<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>).

FIGURE III

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

■ UCG
■ DTS

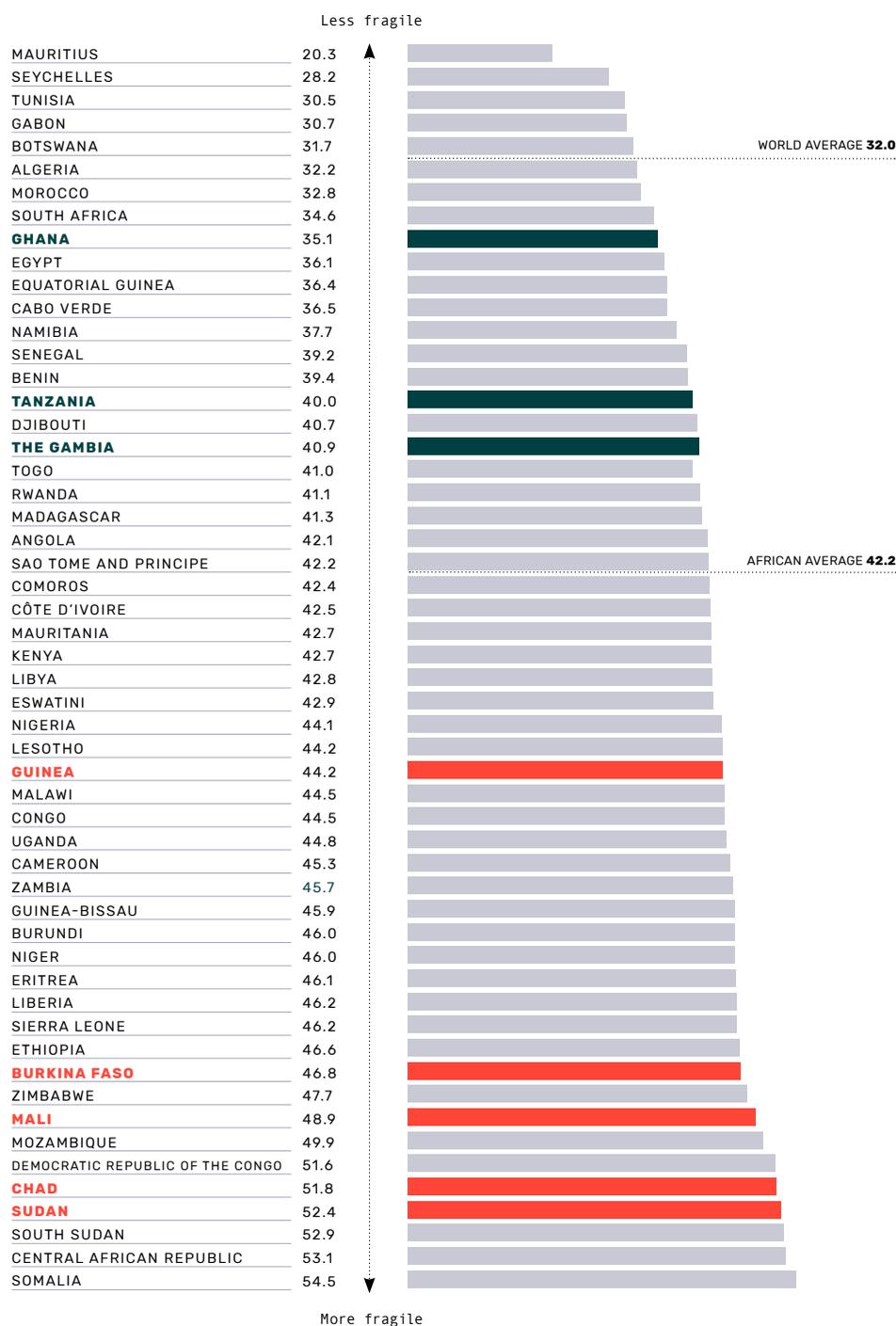


Missing data: Libya, Somalia, South Sudan
Source: Economic Freedom Index, 2023, (<https://www.heritage.org/index/download>).

FIGURE IV

FRAGILITY INDEX ECONOMIC AND CROSS-CUTTING DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

■ UCG
■ DTS

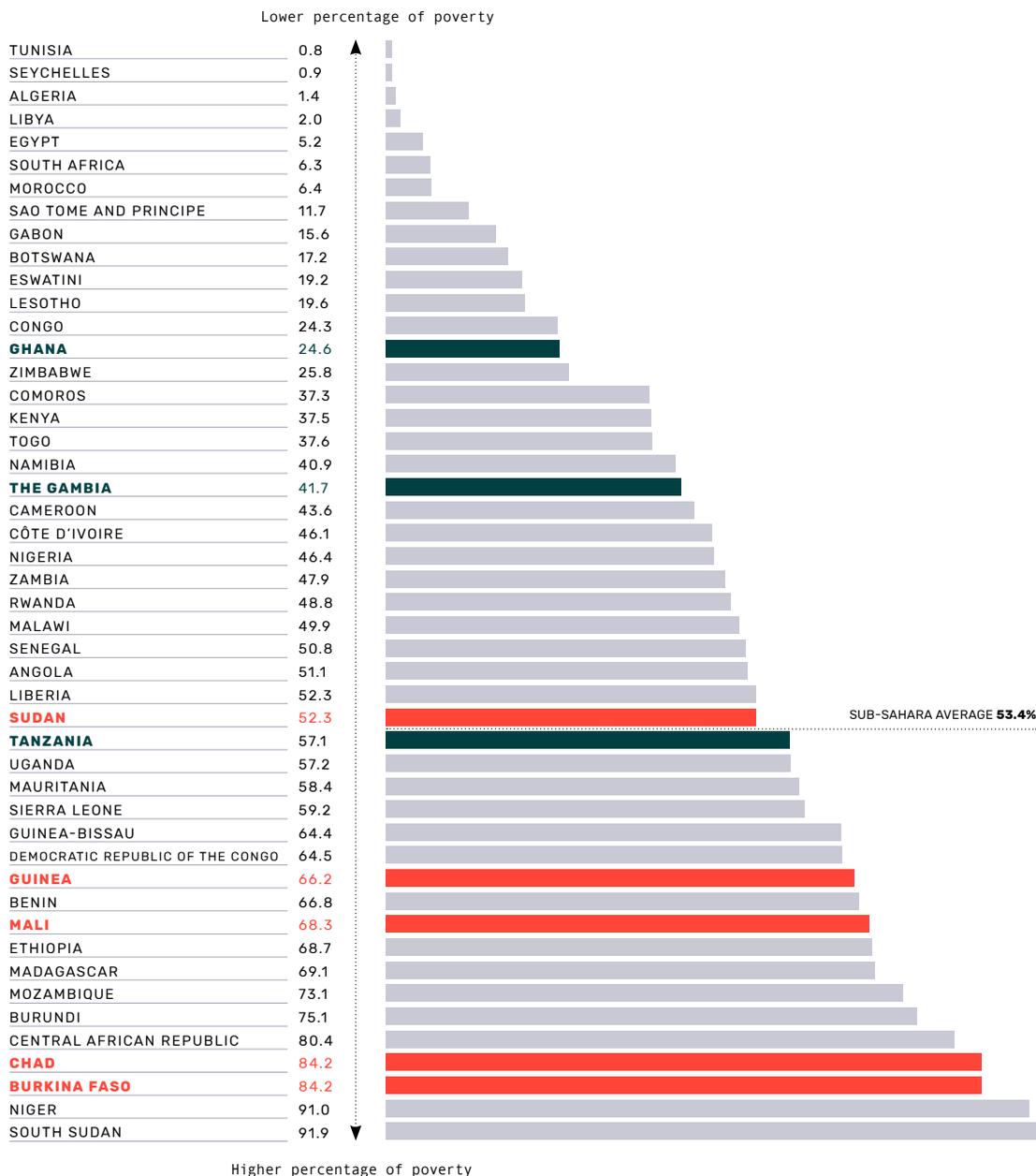


Source: Fragility Index, 2022, (<https://fragilestatesindex.org/>).

FIGURE V

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY, BY PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION

■ UCG
■ DTS



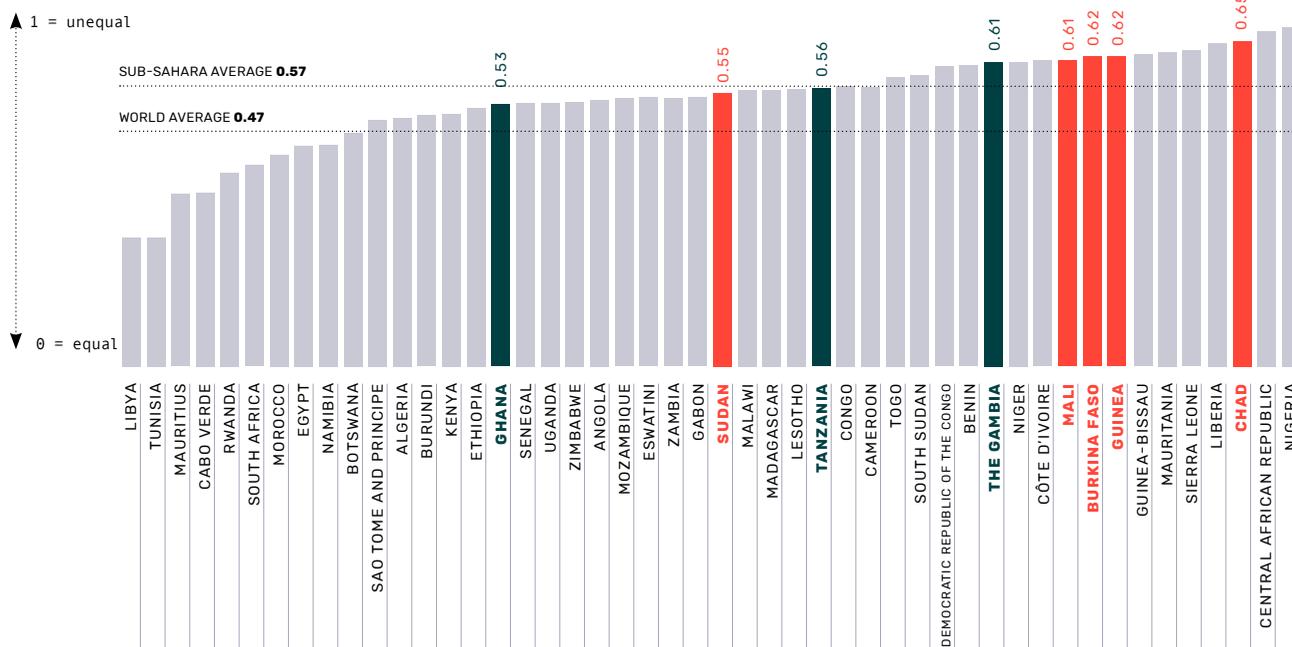
Missing data: Cabo Verde, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mauritius, Somalia.

* Estimated values range from latest collected data between 2010 and 2020.

Source: Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022. (<https://hdr.undp.org/content/2022-global-multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi#/indicies/MPI>).

FIGURE VI

GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX

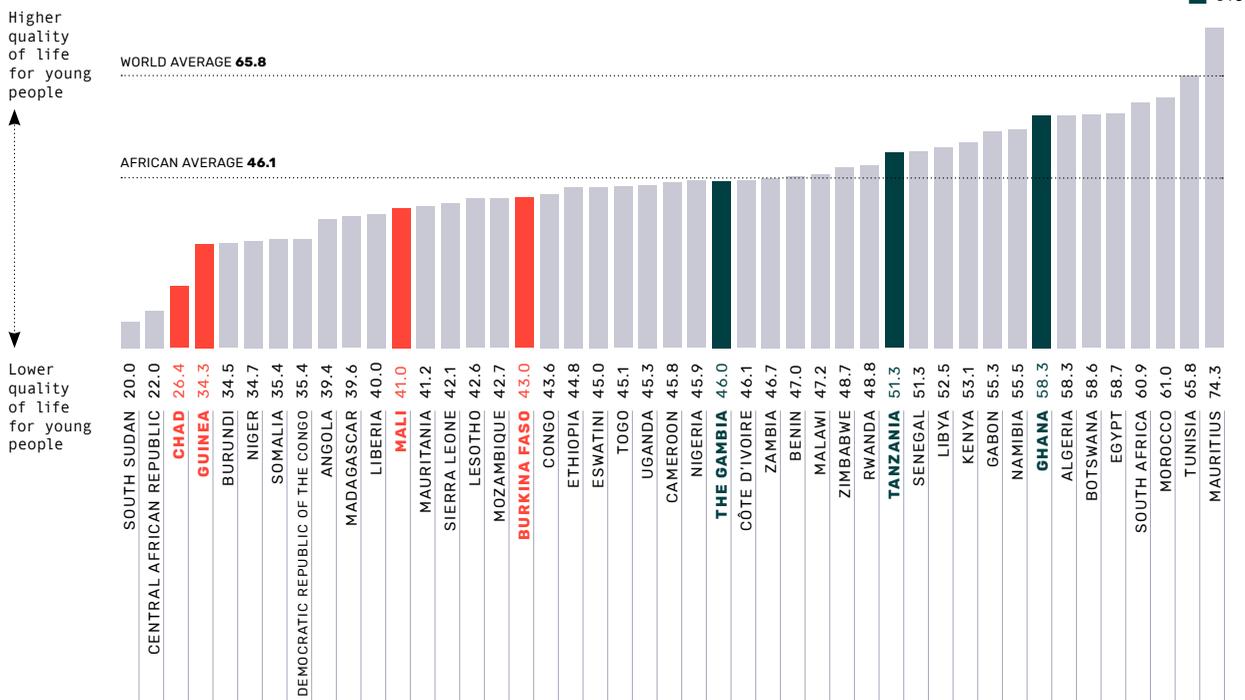


Missing data: Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Seychelles, Somalia.

Source: Gender Inequality Index, 2021, (<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>).

FIGURE VII

YOUTH PROGRESS INDEX



Missing data: Cabo Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sudan.

Source: Youth Progress Index, 2021 (<https://youthprogressindex.org/>).

FOREWORD

- i. There is no explicit definition of military coups in the literature. The only reference document that provides this description is the 2000 Organization of African Unity's (OAU) Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government, which provides four variants of unconstitutionality, including military coups.
- ii. Between 2000 and 2019, a total of 13 successful coups took place (average of 0.7 coups per year), compared to 7 coups between 2020 and 2022 (2.3 coups per year), representing an increase on the average coup per year of 229% this decade, compared to the past two decades.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Nordic Institute (2021). In some cases, such revisions have been linked to coup occurrence.
2. Among these, two were 'coups within coups'. Affected countries have been Burkina Faso and Mali (both of which have experienced two coups in this timeframe), Guinea and Sudan. Events in Chad, whereby power was transferred to the late president's son outside of constitutional process soon after his death, have also been likened to a coup. Coups were attempted, but failed, in Niger, Guinea-Bissau and, as this report was being finalized, The Gambia. The 'coup within a coup' phrase was coined by the International Crisis Group (ICG) after Mali's second coup. See ICG (2021a).
3. Souaré (2022a).
4. From 1990–2010 16 percent of all general elections in sub-Saharan Africa resulted in an opposition victory. From 2011–2022, the proportion had climbed to 28 percent, based on data extracted from the Brookings dataset of electoral processes. Data extrapolated from Brookings leadership tracker data set from 1990–2019, and UNDP-collected data from 2019–2022. Opposition victories include independent candidates but exclude victories of leaders of transitional periods where they were allowed to stand in the election.
5. See Reuters (2021) and Security Council Report (2022).
6. In December 2022, as the drafting of this report was in its final stages, an attempted military coup attempt was announced in The Gambia. This underscored the challenges faced by states undergoing democratic transition, and the ever-present potential for reversals. For the purposes of this study, The Gambia has been retained as an example of a country on a path towards democratic transition given that the coup attempt was successfully repelled.

7. Afrobarometer, round 6, round 7 and round 8 (2014–2015, 2016/2018, and 2019/2021). Indicator: Levels of corruption (R6 and R8), percentage of respondents who answered, ‘increased a lot’ or ‘increased somewhat’. Indicator: Handling preventing or resolving violent conflict (R7 and R8), percentage of respondents who answered, ‘very badly’. It should be noted that several of the DTS focal countries reported declining confidence in this indicator over the same time period, though starting from a lower baseline. For instance, on government handling and prevention of violent conflict, the average across the three countries increased from 9 to 18 percent.
8. OECD (2022c).
9. Faulkner et al (2022).
10. UN (2021). These issues are also highlighted in UNDP (2022b).
11. UN-World Bank (2018). It is also at the foundation of UNDP’s Crisis Offer: A Framework for Development Solutions to Crisis and Fragility. See UNDP (2022a).
12. The COVID-19 pandemic has set progress in reducing MPI values back by 3–10 years (likely the high end of those projections). See OPHI and UNDP (2022).
13. ILO (2018).
16. AU (2022a), AU (2022c) and AU PSC (2022).
17. See Reuters (2021) and Security Council Report (2022).
18. The dataset includes only successful coups, defined as instances when perpetrators seize and hold power for at least seven days. See Souaré (2022a) and (2014).
19. Approaches to this practice varies across at least three broad types of amendment: outright removal of term limits; personalized derogation of term limits (applicable only to the one leader introducing them); and general constitutional amendments that lead to a new political dispensation that enables the incumbent to reinstate themselves. See Souaré (2022b).
20. Souaré (2022b).
21. A multi-dimensional historical perspective would reveal that some countries can be found in different categories at different times. For example, Burkina Faso instituted a term limit in its 1991 constitution; removed it in 1997, restored it in 2000, and wanted to remove it in October 2014 but failed, as protesters attacked parliament a few hours before the vote. Also, in Guinea, the 1990 constitution provided for term limits. This was removed in 2001, but again restored in 2010. The constitution was then changed in 2020 to claim a new republic while keeping the term-limit provision, but set the clock to zero terms limits for Alpha Condé.

INTRODUCTION

14. Affected countries were: Burkina Faso and Mali (both of which experienced two coups in this timeframe), Guinea and Sudan. Events in Chad, whereby power was transferred to the late president’s son outside of constitutional process soon after his death, have also been likened to a coup. Coups were attempted but failed in Niger, Guinea-Bissau and, as this report was in the final stages of preparation, The Gambia. The report’s primary phase of research and analysis pre-dates unfolding events in Sudan which have been the outbreak of armed conflict between military actors involved in the coup. The ‘coup within a coup’ phrase was coined by the International Crisis Group (ICG) after Mali’s second coup. See ICG (2021a).
15. It should be noted that military coups are, in statistical terms, rare events and thus tend to behave differently than pure random events. One of the characteristics of rare events is that sometimes they occur in clusters, giving the impression of a change in trend when there is not enough evidence to confirm one. The recent spate of coups is most accurately described as a concerning cluster that could herald an ongoing trend.
22. Opposition victory is defined as cases where the winning candidate in a presidential or parliamentary election belonged either to a recognized political party, a coalition of political parties, or is presented as an independent candidate. Number of elections is extrapolated from the Brookings dataset of electoral processes. Available at: <https://brookings.edu/interactives/african-leadership-transitions-tracker>.
23. Nordic Institute (2021).
24. Depagne (2022) warned that “Whatever happens in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and other African nations that have experienced coups in recent times, if the continent’s democratic leaders and multilateral bodies continue to ignore the conditions that triggered this new wave of military interventions, what we have witnessed so far might very well be a foretaste of what is to come.” See also CFR (2021).
25. Dersso (2016).
26. UNDP (2017b) and (2019).

METHODOLOGY

27. UNDP (2022c).
28. Dersso (2016).
29. Ibid.
30. As argued by Ambassador Said Djinnit in ACCORD (2021). Other gaps identified include the need to further clarify the status of changes of government that occur as a result of popular uprising, a need to further elaborate the list of measures to be applied in case of different types of UCG, and others. Various declarations of the AU call for the establishment of a related Sanctions Committee and a Sanctions Framework.
31. See AU (2022b). The Declaration places particular emphasis on "... the increase in the number of member states which modify and eliminate constitutional term limits, while others resist efforts to institute term limits in their constitutions", urging political commitment and active engagement of all stakeholders to ensure that root causes are addressed as means to prevent conflicts, including tackling the resurgence of military coups as a form of UCG.
32. To strengthen the role of the AU in this space, the Declaration also includes provision on review and strengthening of all relevant protocols, the creation of a Constitutional Assistance Unit within the AU Department of Political Affairs, as well as a Continental Working Group on Democracy, Election and Constitution Building in Africa.
33. Meyerrson (2015).
34. UN (2021).
35. UNDP (2021).
36. OECD (2020).
37. International IDEA (2013).
38. Ibid.
39. Following the death of Idriss Déby, a Transitional Military Council (CMT) took power, with one of the sons of the late president, Mahamat (Kaka) Idriss Déby, as its head – and thus as head of state. The coming to power of Mahamat Déby may be considered as a UCG given the role of CMT in the process, but also because the constitutional process was not followed. According to the Chadian constitution of May 2018 (Article 82), as amended in December 2020, the president of the senate should have ascended to the presidency and organized elections in three months. Given that the senate, though provided for in the new constitution, had not been operationalized, it was the speaker of the national assembly, the lower house (and the only operational chamber) of parliament who was supposed to play this role. This constitutional path of succession was not followed. The CMT justified this by arguing that the speaker "voluntarily renounced" his right to become interim president. In this case, they should have gone to the vice-speakers in their order of hierarchy, but there is nothing publicly available that proves the latter were consulted and that they, too, renounced their right. In short, the mode of the CMT's coming to power can accurately be classified as a case of UCG, as per relevant AU instruments. The announcement in October 2022 that Mahamat Déby would stay in power for a further two years beyond the original transition timeline further confirms the validity of this characterization.
40. Deutsche Welle (2022b) and Modern Diplomacy (2023).
41. Public opinion research has been conducted by the independent polling company Geopoll in each of the eight focal countries, by utilizing a computer-assisted telephone interview method, based on a survey questionnaire of 61 questions. The survey generated an evidence base on the public's knowledge, experience, attitudes and expectations of political transitions. An initial pilot was rolled out in two countries (Chad and Ghana) to assess the responsiveness of the public in discussing political transitions. It was designed with nationally representative quotas to ensure proper representation of different demographics, including by age, gender and geography. Once each of the datasets was completed, the data was weighted by age, gender and using statistics from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
42. Multinomial logistic regression allows for modelling different possible outcomes of a categorically distributed dependent variable, (such as the survey questions), given a set of independent variables (which can be numerical, ordinal or categorical).
43. Fuentes-Nieva and Reyes (2022).
44. See Dersso (2022), Midgley (2022) and Camara (2022).
45. The African Union has 55 member states, including Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).
46. Definitions of states that qualify as having democratically transitioned differ. A recent review by Sweden provides the definition: "Democratic transition refers to the adoption of democratic institutions in place of authoritarian ones, marked

for instance by constitutional change and the holding of ‘free and fair’ elections.” See Niño-Zarazúa, et al. (2022). Others set the bar of consolidation higher, whereby it is often understood that at least two consecutive cycles of democratic elections must be held in which losers accept the outcomes of the elections and recognize the victory of the winners. See Huntington (1991). Accordingly, none of the three focal countries would qualify. Others question the focus on electoral results as the sole proxy for successful democratic transition; the literature for which is extensive. While observers may highlight deteriorating trends and risks within some of the three countries included as DTS-category examples in this study, their relatively successful democratic transition (as compared to the countries that recently experienced UCG events) stands.

SECTION 1

47. Saferworld at al. (2004).
48. UNSDG (2016).
49. Features of what the UNDP 2022–2025 Strategic Plan terms the “... interconnected puzzles of multidimensional risk that require systemic solutions”. (See UNDP 2021).
50. See Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2022); Lowenthal and Bitar (2015); Fink-Hafner and Hafner-Fink (2009); Przeworski et al. (1996); Beetham (1994) and Linz (1990).
51. See Bratton and Van de Walle (1997), Collier (1999), Przeworski and Limongi (1993) and Geddes et al. (2014).
52. Londregan and Poole (1990). Others have focused on examining the links between poverty and democracy. See Przeworski et al. (2019), Frank-Borge (2019), Diamond (2004), Dodsworth and Ramshaw (2021).
53. Osaghae (2004).
54. Hunter et al. (2020).
55. Faulkner et al. (2022).
56. Infamous examples include the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and the First World War and the September 11 attacks against the US and new era of international insecurity that followed.
57. Wig, Tore and Espen Geelmuyden Rød (2016).
58. Kim (2014).
59. ICG (2021a).
60. UN and AU definitions of the Sahel include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. See Africa Renewal (nd). From an environmental perspective, the Sahel reaches all the way to Sudan, however Sudan is not always included in consideration of the Sahel as a geopolitical subregion (although it is part of the Sahel in the AU Sahel Strategy).
61. Miller et al. (2016).
62. Noting that there are multiple alternate sources of authority governing outside of the reach of the state in these areas. See Raleigh and Dowd (2013).
63. Brookings (2022).
64. Cold-Ravnkilde and Jacobsen (2020).
65. Wilén and Williams (2022). See also Cold-Ravnkilde and Jacobsen (2020).
66. Wilén and Williams (2022).
67. Ibid.
68. Cold-Ravnkilde and Jacobsen (2020).
69. Ibid. Ultimately these authors argue the coexistence of diverse justifications and rationales is indicative of broader challenges confronting contemporary liberal interventionism.
70. ICG (2021b).
71. USIP (2022).
72. It should be noted that several of the DTS focal countries reported declining confidence across these indicators over the same time period, though starting from a higher baseline. The average across the three on government handling of security rose from 9 percent to 18 percent, for instance.
73. Branch and Mampilly (2015). See also Foreign Affairs (2019).
74. Al Jazeera (2022).
75. Carothers (2015). For wider context on the wave of democratization, see for instance Essuman-Johnson (2006), Huntington (1991), Ake (1991) and (1993), Gibson and Gouws (2010) and Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006).

76. As formulated by participants to a 2017 regional dialogue taking stock of three decades of democratic transition in Africa, organized by International IDEA. See International IDEA (2017).
77. For discussion on how odds are often stacked in favour of incumbents in African elections, see Cheeseman (2010) and EDCPM (2019). See also BTI (2020).
78. Thiriot (2017).
79. As described in one critique in Carothers (2002).
80. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986).
81. Lowenthal and Bitar (2015).
82. Depangne (2022).
83. Scoones (2022).
84. VDEM, GiZ and BMZ (2020).
85. Depangne (2022).
86. Girod (2015).
87. Souaré (2014).
88. Souaré (2022).
89. Du Pisani and Lamb (2018).
90. Modern Diplomacy (2023).
91. Girod (2015).
92. Nugent (2010).
93. See, for instance, Clausen and Albrecht (2022).
94. Commission on State Fragility, Growth and Development (2018).
95. FFP (2022).
96. OECD (2022).
97. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance assesses the quality of governance in 54 African countries on a scale from 0 to 100, where the higher the number, the better the ranking. The average score of the continent on this scale in 2021 was 48.9 out of 100.
98. The exception compared with the State Fragility Index findings is that Burkina Faso scores better, which is possibly a reflection of the different timeframes in which the data was compiled.
99. It should be noted the research team considered using SDG reporting. However, as highlighted in the OECD *States of Fragility* report, there are well-known gaps in the availability, timeliness and quality of data to track progress on the SDGs worldwide. The gaps are more pronounced in fragile contexts, where statistical systems are comparatively weaker than in the rest of the world due in part to a lack of capacity and funding for data and statistics. See OECD (2022).
100. FFP (2021).
101. UNDP (2017a).
102. The Gender Inequality Index measures inequality on three important aspects of human development: reproductive health, measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates; empowerment, measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females and the proportion of adult females and males aged 25 years and older, with at least some secondary education; and economic status, expressed as labour market participation and measured by labour force participation rate of female and male populations aged 15 years and older. A higher score indicates greater inequality. The world average score on this index was 0.47, while sub-Saharan Africa averaged 0.57 in 2021.
103. The Youth Progress Index is the most comprehensive measure of the quality of life of young people in 150 countries around the world. A higher score indicates a country's stronger performance across indicators including basic human needs, foundations of well-being and opportunity.
104. The perilous and paradoxical effects of 'resource windfalls' on development and peacefulness have been amply researched and documented.
105. Some of these inconsistencies can be explained by the fact that indices data can be collected over longer time periods, and caution should therefore be taken when making comparisons to a specific time frame. The indices shown throughout Section 1 have used the latest available data, as per April 2023.
106. Diallo et al. (2011).

107. Diallo (2020).
108. Delasnerie and Diallo (2004).
- ## SECTION 2
109. Abadie et al. (2010). This methodology has been used to evaluate the impact of Brexit on the British economy, and the impact of the German Reunification on Germany's GDP.
110. More precisely, SMC aims to generate a synthetic value of a given variable (say, GDP per capita) for a chosen geographical unit (in this case, a country). Using observed characteristics of a group of similar geographical units (a synthetic control group [SCG] of similar countries), the values are then weighted to generate the artificial, non-observed outputs. The synthetic control group is built by a linear combination from a pool of units that are similar to the treated unit (in our case, a country that experienced a coup) in terms of pre-intervention outcomes and other characteristics. The SCG is used as a benchmark to estimate the counterfactual outcome in the absence of the intervention or treatment.
111. ReliefWeb (2022).
112. OCHA (2022).
113. The Economist (2022).
114. Afrobarometer, round 1 – round 8 (1999/2001 – 2019/2021). Indicator: Support for democracy, percentage average of respondents surveyed each round who answered that 'democracy is always preferable' has fluctuated between 62 and 72 per cent over the past twenty years, with an average of 68 per cent throughout the time series.
115. Ibid.
116. Aspects of the *Soldiers and citizens* survey explored different understandings of what democracy is to further substantiate findings.
117. These findings are at odds with others, which have suggested that men have a stronger preference for democracy than women generally. See Afrobarometer (2016).
118. Depagne (2022) and CFR (2021).
119. Africanews (2022a).
120. The New Humanitarian (2022).
121. Coded open-ended question, multiple codes possible. UCG base sample n. = 812 respondents providing n. = 820 responses. DTS base sample n. = 323 respondents providing n. = 338 responses. All responses analysed as percentage of respondents.
122. Lowenthal and Bitar (2015).
123. Souaré (2022).
124. Depagne (2022).
125. Ibid.
126. Loewe and Zintl (2021). The social contract as a conceptual frame through which to understand trust in society, and to define the relationships and set of rights and obligations that exist between the governed and the governing based on such *quid pro quo* trust dates back to antiquity, yet remains as relevant today. The idea of the social contract, reimagined for today's world, has had a fresh resurgence in the face of the global turbulence, as signalled by the UN Secretary-General's emphasis on a reimagined global social contract as one pillar of the 75th UN anniversary, Our Common Agenda, and the use of 'social contract diagnostics' to guide country engagement, as well as a focus on 'social contract renewal' and related discourse by leading international development partners. See UNDP and Wits School of Governance (2018). See also NYC CIC (2021).
127. UNDP (2017b) and International Alert (2018).
128. Afrobarometer, round 8 (2019/2021). Available at: <https://www.afrobarometer.org/data/>. Indicator: Reject one-party rule, percentage of respondents who answered: 'strongly approve' or 'approve'. Burkina Faso, Mali and Sudan all rank amongst the top 10 countries when it comes to the level of approval of military rule as a way to govern the country. Burkina Faso has the highest approval rates on the continent, with 51 percent approval, Sudan with 39 percent and Mali with 26 percent.
129. Degaut (2017).
130. Asante (2020).
131. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been used to measure the degree of inclusiveness, or otherwise, of a given political process or intervention, while this analysis relies on observations from case study research and insights

- gleaned from the perceptions survey. See Potter (2018) and Carter (2014).
132. Deutsche Welle (2022).
133. Human Rights Watch (2022). A December 2022 UNDP strategic assessment mission concluded “... there is no conclusion as to the level of inclusiveness of the transition process in Chad”. See UNDP (2023).
134. Studio Tamani (2021) and Jeune Afrique (2021).
135. Jeune Afrique (2022b).
136. West Africa Gateway (2019). The study did not include Sudan. These voter turnout figures are higher than those of many Western democracies.
137. Ibid.
138. Coded open-ended question, multiple codes possible. UCG base sample n. = 2115 respondents providing n. = 2793 responses. DTS base sample n. = 1383 respondents providing n. = 1736 responses. All responses analysed as percentage of respondents.
139. Coded open-ended question, multiple codes possible. UCG base sample n. = 2337 respondents providing n. = 2505 responses. All responses analysed as percentage of respondents.
140. Coded open-ended question, multiple codes possible. DTS base sample n. = 1396 respondents providing n. = 1450 responses. All responses analysed as percentage of respondents.
141. West African Civil Society Institute (2009).
142. International Alert (2015) and Civicus (2014).
143. Modern Ghana (2020).
144. AUC and Population Reference Bureau (2019).
145. UNDESA (2015).
146. AUC and UNECA (2018).
147. World Economic Forum (2020).
148. UNDP (2016).
149. McKinsey Global Institute (2019).
150. Financial Times (2021).

SECTION 3

151. Shannon et al. (2015). See also Thyne et al. (2018).
152. ISPI (2021).
153. Arbatli and Arbatli (2017). See also Aslan (2020).
154. Thyne and Hitch (2020).
155. The stance taken by ECOWAS, supported by the AU and the rest of the international community, following the about-turn of Yahya Jammeh over his initial acceptance of defeat in the December 2016 presidential election helped ensure a peaceful transition/power transfer in The Gambia in January 2017, preventing the country from plunging into a crisis. Similarly successful were the actions taken by ECOWAS in Niger in 2009, and the decision it took in September 2015, in close coordination with the AU and the UN, to help thwart the military coup in Burkina Faso that nearly disrupted the civilian-led transition started in November the previous year.
156. AU PSC (2020), ECOWAS (2022a) and (2022b). ECOWAS imposed limited sanctions on Mali after the first coup (August 2020) and additional much harsher sanctions after the second one (May 2021), including extensive economic and financial measures, border closure and the severance of diplomatic relations. The AU expressed its support for these measures and also suspended Mali. Following the limited targeted sanctions it had imposed on key members of the military junta in Guinea in September 2021, ECOWAS imposed harsher diplomatic and targeted financial sanctions on key members of the Guinean transitional authorities in 22 September 2022. These included travel bans and requests for member states to recall their ambassadors. Burkina Faso has been suspended by both the ECOWAS and AU, but its previous transitional authorities were not sanctioned because of their perceived cooperation with the regional organizations.
157. Derrso (2019).
158. Under the leadership of the AU Special Envoy, Professor Mohamed El Hacem Lebart, who was later joined by Ambassador Mohamed Drrir, the appointed envoy of IGAD. See Amani Africa (2019).
159. Emmott (2022).

160. UNDP (2023).
161. EEAS (2022).
162. The Millennium Challenge Fund also paused dispersal of US\$450 million of planned development aid in Burkina Faso. See also Reuters (2022).
163. Case study interview. See also AfricaGuinee (2022).
164. Guiryanan et al. (2021).
165. The World Bank has agreed to continue disbursements of existing projects on account of the anticipated humanitarian impact of pausing projects that are primarily aimed at helping the country manage the impacts of COVID-19 on social services. This includes access to additional financing on existing projects. In June 2022, for example, an additional \$61m was approved to support health systems strengthening and the government of Burkina Faso's COVID-19 response plan. See World Bank (2022).
166. For example, the EU approved funding for new investments in green energy projects within a few weeks. See Youngs et al. (2022) and Carnegie Europe (2021).
167. A recent evaluation found that the TSF "... has enabled the Bank to respond effectively to the multidimensional needs of Transition States". AfDB (2022).
168. DG INTAP (2022).
169. OECD (2020).
170. The AfBD was the first major IFI to institutionalize an explicit focus on fragility, first doing so in 2001. Since then, it has invested in building up institutional capacity and developing support mechanisms to assist transitions out of fragility for its members. In 2020, the World Bank Group (WBG) published its first organizational strategy on FCV. It aims to "... enhance the WBG's effectiveness to support countries in addressing the drivers and impacts of FCV and strengthening their resilience, especially for their most vulnerable and marginalized populations". It describes how the Bank will adopt greater risk tolerance, organizational policies and operating systems to encourage contextualized responses, and to build new partnerships, including with non-governmental, humanitarian and security actors. The strategy also describes new funding windows allowing for flexible grants and loans to fragile contexts, and outlines structural reforms aimed at boosting in-country staffing and analytical expertise. See World Bank Group (2020). More recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Investment Bank (EIB) and Islamic Development Bank (IsBD) have put fragility frameworks in place.
171. Gibson et al (2015).
172. UNDP and World Bank (2018).
173. Gnanguenon (2021).
174. Duursma (2021).
175. See Handy and Djilo (2021a) and (2021b).
176. Yusuf (2021).
177. Dion and Cole (2021).
178. EU (2021).
179. Dion and Cole (2021) and Guiryanan (2021).
180. House Foreign Affairs Committee (2022).
181. European Parliamentary Research Service (2021).
182. CISSM (2021).
183. Atta-Asamoah (2022).
184. UNDP (2023).
185. World Bank (2020).
186. Just Security (2022).
187. UNDP and World Bank (2018).
188. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2021).
189. IPI (2021).
190. OECD (2022a).
191. UNDP and World Bank (2018).
192. OECD (2022a).
193. International IDEA (2017).

^{194.} Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2011).

^{195.} Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020).

^{196.} Ibid.

SECTION 4

^{197.} See UNDP (2022b).

^{198.} Faulkner et al (2022).

^{199.} UN (2021). See also UNDP (2022b).

^{200.} It is also at the foundation of UNDP's 2022 Crisis Offer: A Framework for Development Solutions to Crisis and Fragility. See UNDP (2022a).

^{201.} UNDP (2015).

^{202.} As re-asserted by the UN-World Bank *Pathways to Peace* report: "... the best way to prevent societies from descending into crisis, including but not limited to conflict, is to ensure that they are resilient through investment in inclusive and sustainable development. For all countries, addressing inequalities and exclusion, making institutions more inclusive, and ensuring that development strategies are risk-informed are central to preventing the fraying of the social fabric that could erupt into crisis."

^{203.} The COVID-19 pandemic has set progress in reducing MPI values back by 3–10 years (likely the high end of those projections). OPHI and UNDP (2022).

^{204.} ILO (2018).

^{205.} See for instance Centre for European Reform (2021).

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