

African Politics and Policy

Newsletter
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Editorial

African media have been discussing for months whether Africa needs terms limits and whether African Presidents stay in office much longer than they should. African media have published the list of Africa's longest serving President, Presidents have attempted at times to seek constitutional amendments to remain in power, civil society groups have protested against such efforts, and Western powers have made it clear that regular alternation in office would greatly contribute to the well being of African nations.

But what Western observers, media, constitutional experts, civil society groups and activists have missed that what matters is not so much whether President old on to power for too long, but how they use the power that is entrusted to them. Observers should be more concerned about how well African Presidents govern rather than being concerned with how long they rule.

Africa should worry about the quality of his Presidents, about the level of governance, about the level of institutionalization of the state apparatus, about the fact that bad political leaders, bad Presidents, are able to command the electoral support of large segments of the electorate.

It is not necessary to change the Constitution to prevent the re-election of a bad President. Bad Presidents can be voted out of office. If African voters made a better use of their ballots, the problem of bad presidents and long terms in office would automatically be solved.

Riccardo Pelizzo

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IN THE NEWS

Salva Kiir, President of South Sudan, signed a peace agreement with the rebel forces in the hope of putting an end to a bloody 20-month conflict. Analysts fear that the provisions of the agreement will be violated before they are actually implemented.

Instability

While the Army was able to free several villages from Al Shabaab in Somalia, a wave of instability is still crossing the continent. Violence is escalating in Burundi where analysts it may lead to a civil war. Nigeria is the victim of an increasing number of suicide bombing, while Mali is not making sufficient progress in its war on terror. Recent reports indicate that the nature of the terrorist threat is evolving, that terrorist groups are forging alliances, thus developing the ability to strike in any part of the country

Radisson Blu Hôtel 2 Fevrier

By Romualda Stormy

After several years, the great Hotel 2 Fevrier, one of the historical symbols of Lome will soon reopen its doors.

Indeed the hotel opened for the first in 1980. Because of its history and its architecture it is considered one of monuments in the country. From the beginning, the hotel 2 Fevrier was the place where major events, inter alia great conferences and international meetings, were held.

In spite of its affluence and the many services which he offered, the hotel was not profitable and did not make benefit. It was thus yielded to the Libyan Arab Company of African Investments which had been committed to renovate and making hotel profitable. As foreign investors did not respect the clauses of the contract the hotel was taken away from them and closed.

Nationalized in 2002 by a ministerial decree, the management of the hotel 2 Fevrier is now to entrust Group Kalyan Hospitality Development and to its partners. Work of rehabilitation goes well, is making progress and will soon be finished in order to make it possible the hotel to reopen

its doors.

Renamed Radisson Blu Hôtel 2 Fevrier, the hotel will shelter the International Conference of the African Union on the Maritime security and the Development. The reopening of the hotel will have an unquestionable impact on the economy of the country in particular thanks to employment opportunities which it will be able to create, with subcontracting and the launching in the hotel sector. A true windfall for potential investors.

Let us hope that this revival brings a new life to the hotel and that it will deliver the benefits that it is expected to yield

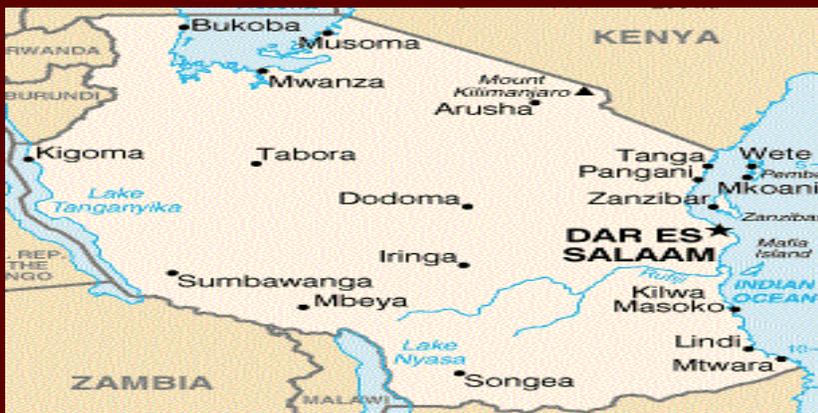


The costs of party system change: the Tanzanian case

In the most recent issue of *African Politics and Policy*, Pelizzo, Kinyondo and Nwokora argue that party system changes and increases in party system changeability have generally been associated with a worsening democratic quality.

On October 25, Presidential elections will be held in Tanzania and there s every reason to believe that they may result in the defeat of the CCM and in a major party system change.

The past does not always allow one to make accurate predictions about the future, but should the past provide any guidance, a major party system change may be conducive, in the short term, to a significant worsening of the level of governance and of the qualities of Tanzanian democracy.



Corruption and trust in African Legislatures

In many countries political parties and parliaments, or legislatures, are the political institutions that enjoy the lowest level of trust.

Legislatures are criticized on a variety of grounds. People believe that legislatures often don't care about what people think, while in other cases, as parliamentarians lament, citizens do not understand what legislatures actually do.

One of the reasons why legislatures enjoy little legitimacy is they are often believed to be the most corrupt institutions in their respective countries.

The extent to which, however, the legitimacy of legislatures is eroded by parliamentarians' alleged involvement in corrupt practices is not entirely clear. The data collected by the Afrobarometer show, for instance, that an overwhelming majority of African citizens believe that African parliamentarians engage in corrupt activities. In fact, 53 per cent of the African respondents believe that some parliamentarians are corrupt, 26 per cent of the respondents believe that most parliamentarians are corrupt and 9 per cent of the respondents is convinced that all parliamentarians are corrupt. While corruption is believed to be a pervasive problem in Afri-

can legislatures, a majority of African citizens has a generally positive opinion of their legislatures. In fact while 45 per cent of the respondents have little or no trust in legislatures, 55 per cent of the respondents reported to have some or a lot of trust in legislatures.

This finding is interesting because it shows that Africa legislatures are able to preserve the confidence of the citizens in spite of corruption.

Riccardo Pelizzo

Governance in Africa

At the beginning of the year there was every reason to be optimistic about governance in Africa.

Eight months later, we probably have every reason to be less optimistic. Elections were peacefully held in some countries (Nigeria, Togo), but not in others.

Political crises, instability, and violence are becoming a more widespread and more acute problem.

Human rights are at times violated as is the physical integrity of many citizens.

Corruption remains rampant in many jurisdictions.

The lack of progress in combating corruption coupled with greater instability and with declining accountability makes one wonder whether governance is as good as it was believed to be at the end of 2014.

Growth Forecasts for Africa

Reports earlier in the year indicated that Africa's GDP was expected to grow by 4.5 per cent in 2015 and by 5 per cent in 2016. While it is too early to say whether Africa will be able to reach these targets, one has to wonder whether growth forecasts should be downscaled in the light of falling oil price, slowing down of China's economy and of the wave of instability that seems to be crossing the African continent.



Job Openings

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana's public policy centre, is seeking highly qualified and experienced Social/Political Scientists .

All applications should be addressed to research@ieagh.org

Collaborators

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