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# Sub-Saharan Africa: Overview and U.S. Engagement

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## Sub-Saharan Africa: Overview and U.S. Engagement

Congress regularly addresses issues pertaining to sub-Saharan Africa (“Africa”) in the exercise of its legislative and oversight functions. Legislation, hearings, and Member statements in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress have dealt with a range of topics relating to Africa and U.S.-Africa policy, including armed conflict in Sudan, the influence and activities of China and Russia in the region, and the possible reauthorization of the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest facet of U.S. aid for Africa. Funding and oversight of U.S. aid and diplomatic and military activity in Africa are of enduring interest to Congress. Issues that have garnered attention among Members and may continue to present opportunities for congressional consideration include

**Governance and Human Rights.** Democratic backsliding in Africa over the past decade, and a series of military seizures of power since 2020, have sparked concern in Congress and impeded U.S. cooperation with some governments in the region. Some Members also have demonstrated interest in various human rights issues in Africa, including wartime abuses, religious freedom concerns, restrictions on sexual minorities, and threats to press freedom. Congress has sought to support democracy in Africa through the appropriation of foreign aid, oversight of U.S. policy, and authorization of sanctions or restriction of aid on governance and human rights grounds.

**Peace and Security.** Security crises have intensified in several African countries over the past decade. Islamist armed groups, some linked to Al Qaeda or the Islamic State, have proliferated and expanded in parts of the region, while conflicts in Ethiopia (2020-2022) and Sudan (2023-) have attracted attention from some Members. Congress has shaped U.S. approaches to peace and security issues in Africa through legislation authorizing, directing, and funding efforts to mitigate and resolve conflicts and strengthen state security forces in the region. Congress also has imposed restrictions on security assistance in selected cases, typically citing concerns over poor governance or security force abuses. Oversight of U.S. military activities, and the use of military force, in Africa has been another facet of Member engagement.

**Economic Affairs.** Promoting economic development in Africa and expanding U.S.-Africa trade and investment have been areas of sustained congressional interest and U.S. assistance. Economic shocks linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war slowed economic growth and have aggravated food insecurity and debt distress in many African countries. A pending issue for Congress is whether, and with what possible changes, to reauthorize the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA, P.L. 106-200, as amended), a cornerstone of U.S.-Africa trade policy that is due to sunset in 2025.

**Global Health.** Public health challenges in Africa have been an enduring focus of U.S. attention and assistance: health aid regularly constitutes around three-quarters of annual U.S. assistance for Africa, much of it for HIV/AIDS programs under PEPFAR. African countries, to varying degrees, have made strides in health care provision over the past three decades, yet as a whole, Africa lags behind other regions in life expectancy, maternal and child mortality, and HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria incidence, among other measures. The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated and aggravated health system weaknesses in Africa.

**Geopolitical Issues.** Congress has expressed mounting concern over the activities of China and Russia in Africa. Among other issues, the implications of China’s commercial influence for governance, debt levels, and U.S. commercial access, supply chains, and national security interests in the region have attracted growing scrutiny. Some Members have also voiced alarm over China’s reported military basing aspirations in Africa. Meanwhile, the Russia-Ukraine war has increased congressional attention on Russian defense cooperation with African countries, the involvement of Russian state-linked military contractors in the region, sometimes in exchange for gold and other natural resource concessions, and disinformation efforts. The impact of the Wagner Group’s June 2023 abortive mutiny in Russia on Wagner’s operations in Africa is not yet clear. African countries’ high abstention rates (relative to other regions) on U.S.-backed U.N. resolutions regarding Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have drawn scrutiny from U.S. policymakers. U.S. messaging on the Russia-Ukraine war has seemed to inflame sensitivities among some African governments to U.S. pressure regarding their choice of external partners.

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## Introduction

This report surveys selected issues related to sub-Saharan Africa (“Africa”) and U.S.-Africa policy.<sup>1</sup> It addresses governance and human rights trends, security challenges, economic affairs, public health issues, and strategic competition in Africa, as well as U.S. diplomatic, military, and economic involvement in the region. U.S. aid for Africa is more fully addressed in a separate product, CRS Report R46368, *U.S. Assistance for Sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview*.

With 49 countries and an estimated 1.2 billion people, Africa encompasses a vast array of social, ecological, economic, political, and security environments.<sup>2</sup> This diversity undermines narratives that cast the region’s trajectory as manifestly positive or negative, and may complicate U.S. efforts to construct a single policy approach or strategy toward the region.<sup>3</sup> Many countries are expected to double in population by 2050, promising new challenges as well as opportunities for regional development.<sup>4</sup> Observers have identified climate change, urbanization, and growing access to digital technology as other “megatrends” whose full implications for economies, public services, and political and social organization in Africa remain to be seen.<sup>5</sup>

Congressional attention on Africa has often focused on major crises (e.g., armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies), governance and human rights issues, and development challenges (notably, HIV/AIDS)—but also on the potential for expanding U.S.-Africa trade and investment. Congress has additionally demonstrated growing interest in the activities of the People’s Republic of China (PRC or China), Russia, and other global competitors in Africa, and the implications for such activity for Africa’s outlook and for U.S. policy, national security, and commercial interests.

Congress has shaped U.S.-Africa policy through legislation authorizing or directing the executive branch to pursue certain activities in the region; funding and oversight of U.S. foreign assistance, military engagement, and diplomatic activities; and resolutions, public statements, and private correspondence setting out views and recommendations on particular issues in African affairs. Engagement with African leaders and publics, such as through regular Member and staff travel to the region, has been another major avenue of congressional involvement in African affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, unless otherwise noted, “Africa” refers to the 49 countries within the jurisdiction of the State Department’s Bureau of African Affairs.

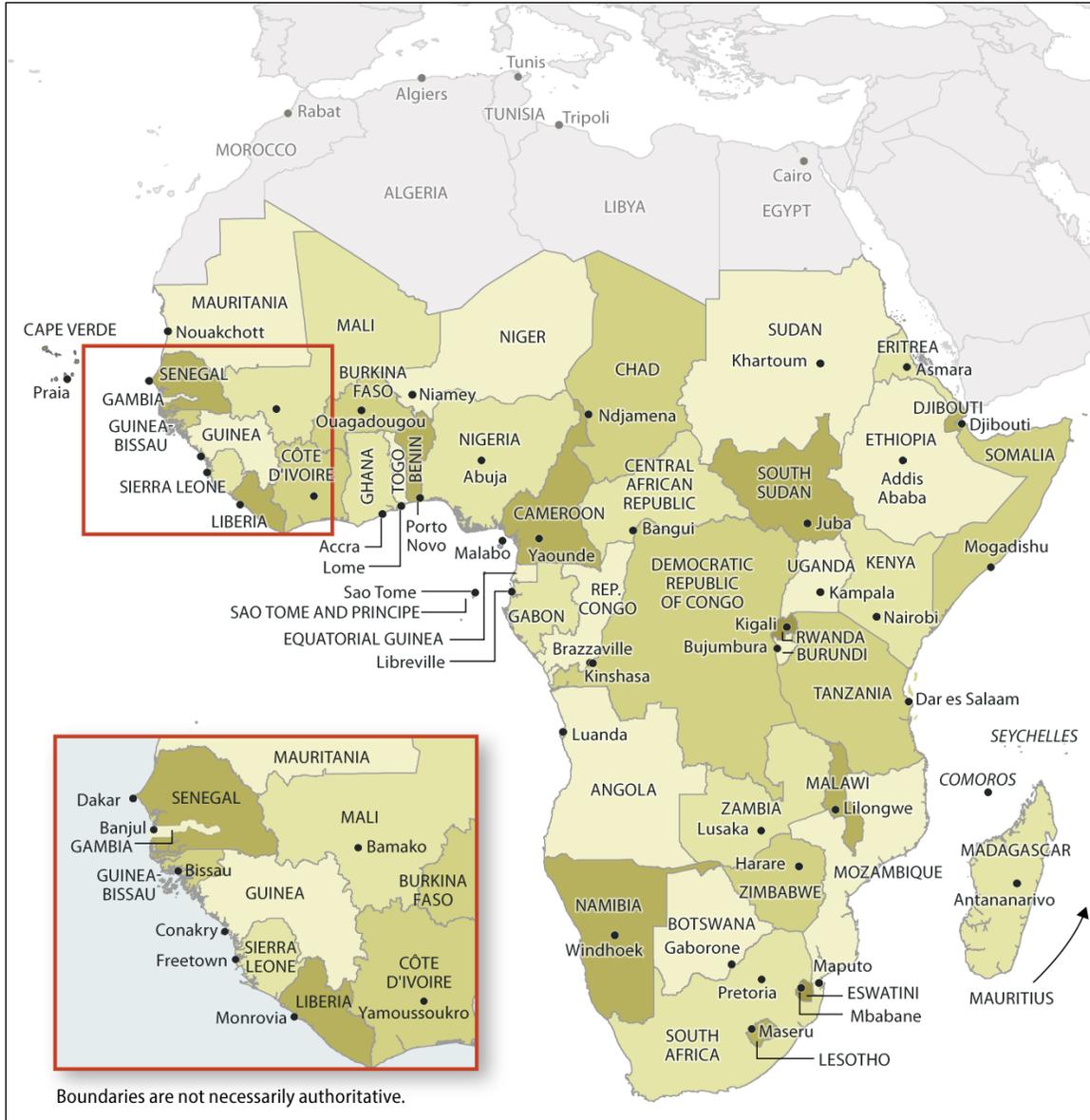
<sup>2</sup> CRS calculation using 2022 estimates in U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base, accessed November 17, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> For one critique of these discourses, see Pius Adesanmi, “For Whom is Africa Rising?” in *Who Owns the Problem? Africa and the Struggle for Agency* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results*, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> See Patrick Dupoux et al., “Six Megatrends That Are Changing Africa—and How to Navigate Them,” BCG, August 29, 2022; and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs “Megatrends Afrika” series of publications. See also discussion of Africa in National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World*, 2021.

**Figure I. Political Map of Africa**



**Source:** CRS graphic created using basemap from the Department of State.

## U.S.-Africa Policy and the Biden Administration

Successive Administrations have set out generally consistent aims for U.S.-Africa policy: promoting economic growth and development; expanding U.S.-Africa trade and investment; responding to health challenges and humanitarian crises; strengthening democracy and good governance; and enhancing security. Congress has broadly endorsed and supported the pursuit of these goals on a bipartisan basis, albeit with some divergences in emphasis and prioritization.

In August 2022, the Joe Biden Administration released its *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, which articulates its approach to U.S.-Africa relations. In a broad sense, the strategy pledges to recognize Africa’s importance to U.S. national security interests and “include and

elevate African voices” in multilateral policy settings.<sup>6</sup> The document lays out four objectives intended to “further embed Africa’s position in shaping our shared future”:

1. **Foster Openness and Open Societies**, entailing efforts to increase transparency and accountability, expose corruption, support the rule of law and independent judiciaries, improve natural resource governance, and enhance food production and food security;
2. **Deliver Democratic and Security Dividends**, with a focus on curbing authoritarianism and military seizures of power, addressing public dissatisfaction with poor governance, supporting civil society and credible elections, investing in peacebuilding, and building counterterrorism and other security sector capacities;
3. **Advance Pandemic Recovery and Economic Opportunity**, by supporting COVID-19 surveillance and vaccine uptake, bolstering infectious disease prevention and response, and providing financing to support economic growth, supply-chain diversification, and improved access to internet and other information and communication technologies; and
4. **Support Conservation, Climate Adaptation, and Just Energy Transition**, centering on efforts to help conserve, manage, and restore natural ecosystems, strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigation, support transitions away from fossil fuels while addressing energy and development needs, and expand critical mineral supply chains.

The strategy commits to “surging assistance” to support democratic openings; bolstering civil society; and deepening engagement with multilateral bodies, African diaspora communities, the private sector, and sub-national governments and entities (e.g., state and municipal authorities). It also pledges to modernize U.S. diplomacy to “empower our ambassadors and officials to engage with African publics ... in more accessible and creative ways,” refine U.S. security cooperation programs in the region, and provide increased support for urban planning and service delivery in African cities, as part of a “rebalance toward urban hubs.”<sup>7</sup>

Various Members of Congress and commentators have examined the framing and content of the strategy and debated its merits relative to approaches put forth by past Administrations.<sup>8</sup> Issues include how the strategy will be pursued in practice and the level of financial and personnel resources available for implementation (see **Text Box**).

#### **Staffing U.S. Embassies in Africa<sup>9</sup>**

As of June 29, 2023, 39 of 49 countries (80%) under the jurisdiction of the State Department’s African Affairs Bureau had U.S. ambassadors in place.<sup>10</sup> Ambassadorial nominees for 8 of the 10 remaining countries were awaiting Senate confirmation. The State Department does not publicly disclose lower-level embassy staffing

<sup>6</sup> Quotes and other information in this section are from White House, *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> The Africa Strategy resembles Africa-related material of other Biden Administration strategies and policy documents. These include the 2022 *National Security Strategy*, which similarly stresses the need to “adapt” U.S.-Africa partnerships in light of African countries’ “important geopolitical role” and sets out commitments to “engage African countries as equal partners”; promote democracy, human rights, and good governance; enhance Africa’s peace and prosperity, including by countering extremism; and support conservation and climate adaptation, among other aims.

<sup>8</sup> For a range of Member views on the strategy, see House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), *Assessing the Biden Administration’s U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., November 17, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> CRS Analyst in Foreign Affairs Cory R. Gill contributed to this text box.

<sup>10</sup> Ambassador positions were vacant in Djibouti, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, and Zimbabwe, as well as Eritrea, with which the United States does not currently exchange ambassadors. There were 40 country ambassadorship vacancies globally. State Department, “Ambassadorial Assignments Overseas,” June 29, 2023.

vacancies, but a 2022 *Foreign Policy* report assessed that U.S. embassies in Africa were “chronically short-staffed,” with one-third to one-half of diplomatic posts vacant in surveyed embassies in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali.<sup>11</sup> Beyond the chief of mission level, Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) leadership and other Members of Congress have voiced concern over personnel shortages at U.S. embassies in Africa.<sup>12</sup> In addition to impeding embassy operations and programming, such shortages could disadvantage the United States vis-à-vis strategic competitors such as China, according to U.S. diplomats and some Members of Congress.<sup>13</sup> Past audits of U.S. assistance programs and embassies in the region have identified position vacancies and other staffing gaps as impediments to the implementation and oversight of U.S. aid for Africa, including security assistance, and U.S. military officials have described insufficient personnel as a challenge for U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) engagement in the region.<sup>14</sup> In March 2023 testimony to Congress, Secretary of State Antony Blinken attributed U.S. staff shortages in Africa partly to low bids from Foreign Service Officers, noting ongoing efforts to study the challenge and “see what we can do to incentivize people” to serve in the region.<sup>15</sup>

## The 2022 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

In December 2022, President Biden hosted senior delegations from 49 African countries and the African Union (AU) for a three-day U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit (ALS).<sup>16</sup> The 2022 Summit marked the second-ever ALS; the first, convened by President Barack Obama, took place in 2014. Members of both parties expressed support for the 2022 ALS and emphasized the importance of congressional engagement in the Summit.<sup>17</sup> The Biden Administration announced a number of commitments and planned aid initiatives during the 2022 Summit, and some Members of both parties have expressed interest in monitoring ALS deliverables.<sup>18</sup> Major pledges include<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Robbie Gramer and Amy Mackinnon, “U.S. Embassies in Africa Are Chronically Short-Staffed,” *Foreign Policy*, July 22, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid; see also remarks by Sen. Tim Scott in SFRC, *American Diplomacy and Global Leadership: Review of the FY24 State Department Budget Request*, hearing, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., March 22, 2023; and remarks and questions related to U.S. Embassy staffing shortages in the Sahel by Senators Bob Menendez, James Risch, and Mike Rounds in SFRC, *Instability and the State of Democracy in the Sahel and the U.S. Policy Response*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., July 12, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Robbie Gramer and Amy Mackinnon, “U.S. Embassies in Africa Are Chronically Short-Staffed.”

<sup>14</sup> State Department Office Inspector General (OIG), *Audit of the Department of State Bureau of African Affairs Monitoring and Coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program*, 2020; and testimony by AFRICOM Commander Gen. Michael Langley in Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States Central Command and United States Africa Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2024 and the Future Years Defense Program*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., March 16, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Secretary of State Blinken in SFRC, *American Diplomacy and Global Leadership: Review of the FY24 State Department Budget Request*, hearing, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., March 22, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> The 49 country invitees to the 2022 ALS included all countries in good standing with the AU with which the United States maintains full diplomatic relations, including five North African countries. Four countries—Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan—suspended by the AU following military seizures of power were excluded. Also excluded were Eritrea, with which the United States does not exchange ambassadors, and the AU-recognized Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, the self-declared government in exile of the disputed territory of Western Sahara, which the United States does not recognize as a sovereign country. For a list of heads of delegation, see AllAfrica, “Africa: Heads of Delegation for U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit - White House,” December 13, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> In May 2022, the Senate agreed to S.Res. 538, expressing support for the ALS and urging congressional participation in the event, among other provisions.

<sup>18</sup> See, among others, letter from then-HFAC Chair Rep. Gregory Meeks to President Biden, December 21, 2022; and remarks by SFRC Ranking Member James Risch and Sen. Tim Scott in SFRC, *Review of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of State*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., March 22, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> ALS fact sheets and remarks by Administration officials set out a range of additional commitments related to health, food security, trade and investment, youth and diaspora engagement, security, and democracy, human rights, and governance. An overview of Summit commitments is available at White House, “U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit: Strengthening Partnerships to Meet Shared Priorities,” December 15, 2022. A State Department ALS landing page provides links to view recorded Summit events and press releases; see <https://www.state.gov/africasummit/>.

- **High-level travel.** President Biden announced his intention to visit Africa. This would be the first presidential visit to the region since 2015. The White House also announced plans for travel by Vice President Harris, First Lady Jill Biden, and Cabinet members and other top officials.<sup>20</sup> Several high-level officials have visited Africa since the Summit.<sup>21</sup>
- **African representation in the G20 and U.N. Security Council.** President Biden called for a permanent seat for the AU at the Group of 20 (G20), an initiative for which some Members have expressed support; in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Res. 525 would express the sense of the House that the AU should be a permanent G20 member.<sup>22</sup> Biden also reiterated support for a permanent seat for an African country at the U.N. Security Council, which he first voiced in September 2022.<sup>23</sup>
- **Food security and health workforce aid.** Among the largest financial pledges made during the ALS were President Biden’s commitments of “an additional \$2 billion” to address food insecurity in Africa,<sup>24</sup> and to invest \$4 billion in Africa’s health workforce by 2025 under the Global Health Worker Initiative.<sup>25</sup>
- **Digital Transformation with Africa (DTA).** During a U.S.-Africa Business Forum event, President Biden formally announced DTA, an initiative to “expand digital access and literacy and strengthen digital enabling environments across the continent.”<sup>26</sup> He stated his intention to work with Congress to “invest over \$350 million and facilitate over \$450 million in financing” for the program.
- **Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Expansion.** Vice President Harris announced plans for a “next phase” of YALI—which offers training, mentorship, and exchange-based fellowships to emerging business, science, and civic leaders in Africa—entailing “a new investment of \$100 million [ ... to] expand networking for alumni and connect them with social impact and business investors.”<sup>27</sup>
- **Support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).** U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai signed a memorandum of understanding

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<sup>20</sup> White House, “Remarks by President Biden at the U.S.-Africa Summit Leaders Session on Partnering on the African Union’s Agenda 2063,” December 15, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen visited Zambia, Senegal, and South Africa in January 2023; First Lady Biden traveled to Namibia and Kenya in February 2023; and in March 2023, Vice President Harris visited Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia, and Secretary Blinken made his third trip to Africa, visiting Ethiopia and Niger.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. On other congressional support, see, for instance, Sen. Chris Van Hollen, “Van Hollen Applauds Biden Administration Decision to Support African Union Membership in G-20,” December 9, 2022. On the G20, see CRS Report R40977, *International Economic Policy Coordination at the G-7 and the G-20*.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid; and White House, “Remarks by President Biden Before the 77<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly,” September 21, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> White House, “Remarks by President Biden at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit Closing Session on Promoting Food Security and Food Systems Resilience,” December 15, 2022. An accompanying White House fact sheet set out a pledge of “\$2.5 billion in emergency aid and medium to long-term food security assistance”; White House, “Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Partnership to Promote Food Security and Resilient Food Systems,” December 15, 2022.

<sup>25</sup> White House, “Fact Sheet: U.S.-Africa Partnership in Health Cooperation,” December 13, 2022.

<sup>26</sup> White House, “Fact Sheet: New Initiative on Digital Transformation with Africa (DTA),” December 14, 2022.

<sup>27</sup> White House, “Remarks by Vice President Harris at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit African and Diaspora Young Leaders Forum,” December 13, 2022. See also the YALI website at <https://yali.state.gov/>.

(MOU) on U.S. cooperation with the AfCFTA, a pan-African free trade area (on the AfCFTA, see “Economic Affairs and U.S. Trade and Investment,” below).<sup>28</sup>

- **Diaspora Engagement.** In line with the Africa strategy’s emphasis on diaspora engagement, President Biden issued an executive order (E.O.) establishing the President’s Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement in the United States,<sup>29</sup> and the U.S. Export-Import Bank (EXIM) signed a \$500 million MOU with the African Export-Import Bank to expand diaspora engagement in Africa.<sup>30</sup>

**Funding Commitments.** Overall, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan asserted that the Administration would work with Congress to “commit \$55 billion to Africa over the course of the next three years.”<sup>31</sup> The Administration has released few details publicly on how it derived the \$55 billion figure and on the breakdown between past funding and resources that it anticipates Congress will make available in the future. During the U.S.-Africa Business Forum, U.S. and African firms announced ongoing or planned investments and partnerships worth \$15.7 billion.<sup>32</sup>

The Administration’s FY2024 budget request proposes new or increased funding for several U.S. assistance initiatives in Africa, in line with ALS announcements, without indicating how this funding relates to the Administration’s \$55 billion pledge.<sup>33</sup> Congress is considering the FY2024 request as it debates FY2024 appropriations. The Administration has appointed retired Ambassador Johnnie Carson, a former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, as Special Presidential Representative for U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit Implementation to coordinate and oversee ALS outcomes.<sup>34</sup>

**Debates Over Scope and Emphasis.** As with the 2014 Summit, the 2022 ALS generated debate over the relative emphasis of the event’s agenda and the Administration’s Africa strategy, the merits of including or excluding certain African leaders, and policy dilemmas in U.S. relations with African countries. Some commentators praised the ALS as a valuable signal of U.S. interest in Africa, an opportunity to marshal high-level attention to U.S. interests in the region, and a welcome—if overdue—recognition of Africa’s importance.<sup>35</sup> Other, more critical observers alleged that the Summit de-emphasized governance and human rights issues in favor of less contentious topics, and criticized the attendance of autocratic leaders at the event.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> USTR, “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation for Trade and Investment Between the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat and the Government of the United States of America,” December 14, 2022.

<sup>29</sup> White House, Executive Order 14089, “Establishing the President’s Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement in the United States,” December 13, 2022 (87 FR 77459).

<sup>30</sup> White House, “Fact Sheet: U.S.- Africa Partnership in Elevating Diaspora Engagement,” December 13, 2022.

<sup>31</sup> White House, “Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan,” December 12, 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Prosper Africa, *U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit Business Forum Commitments*, 2022, available at [https://www.prosperafrica.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Final-USALSBF-Commitment-Book-16-Dec\\_V3.pdf](https://www.prosperafrica.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Final-USALSBF-Commitment-Book-16-Dec_V3.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> State Department, *Congressional Budget Justification: Foreign Operations Fiscal Year FY2024*, 2023 (hereinafter, “CBJ for FY2024”). Congressional consideration of the FY2024 request was ongoing as of June 2023.

<sup>34</sup> White House, “Statement: Special Presidential Representative for U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit Implementation,” December 15, 2022.

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., Zainab Usman, Juliette Ovadia, and Aline Abayo, “The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit Marks a Seismic Shift in Relations with the Continent,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 22, 2022; Joe Davidson, “Africa summit boasted progress, though differences with U.S. remain,” *Washington Post*, December 16, 2022.

<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., Robbie Gramer, “A Narrow Escape, a Massacre, an Invite to Washington,” *Foreign Policy*, December 16, 2022; Jeffrey Smith, “Biden’s Africa Summit Legitimizes Strongmen Like Kagame,” *Time*, December 13, 2022.

## U.S. Assistance for Africa<sup>37</sup>

The overall level of State Department- and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-administered aid for Africa remained fairly constant in the past decade, averaging roughly \$8.0 billion in annual inflation-adjusted dollars between FY2012 and FY2022, excluding humanitarian aid. U.S. assistance for Africa spiked to \$8.85 billion in FY2021, underpinned by supplemental COVID-19 aid and emergency funding for Sudan.<sup>38</sup> Health aid—primarily aimed at eradicating HIV/AIDS—regularly constitutes around three-quarters of State Department- and USAID-administered assistance for Africa. Other U.S. aid programs seek to foster economic growth and agricultural development; address insecurity, including by building the capacity of African security forces; improve education access and social service delivery; bolster democracy, human rights, and good governance; support natural resource management; and address humanitarian needs. Sections below provide additional information on specific areas of U.S. assistance.

## Governance and Human Rights

In the 1990s, many African countries transitioned from military or single-party rule to multiparty political systems with regular elections. Regional governance trends have since varied. In a handful of stronger democracies, elections are competitive and opposition politicians and civil society activists tend to operate without harassment or impediment. Some (e.g., Cabo Verde, Ghana, and Mauritius) have held multiple electoral transfers of power between parties, while in others (e.g., Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa), political parties borne out of former independence movements have retained executive power for decades.

Meanwhile, the majority of African countries generally have continued to receive middling to poor marks in independent global measures of democracy and civic freedoms (see **Figure 2** below). Predominant among them are flawed democracies that blend elements of democratic governance (e.g., regular elections) with some (official or de facto) constraints on political and civic activity. In other countries, semi-authoritarian or entrenched autocrats tilt state institutions and election systems in their own favor, restrict media freedoms, and repress protests. The leaders of Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini,<sup>39</sup> and Uganda have held power since the 1980s.

Trends or issues that have spurred particular attention and activity from Congress include

**Military Takeovers.** Since 2020, military officers have overthrown governments or engineered extra-constitutional transfers of power in Mali (twice), Chad, Guinea, Sudan, and Burkina Faso (twice).<sup>40</sup> Intra-military tensions, alleged government corruption, state counterinsurgency failures, and economic pressures have fueled this trend.<sup>41</sup> Military coups have complicated U.S. engagement, including security cooperation, amid legislative restrictions on U.S. assistance to military juntas (see “Peace and Security Issues,” below).

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<sup>37</sup> A separate product, CRS Report R46368, *U.S. Assistance for Sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview*, provides a detailed analysis of U.S. aid for the region.

<sup>38</sup> CRS calculations based on FY2012-FY2022 allocations (drawn from State Department CBJs for FY2014-FY2024), adjusted to constant FY2022 dollars with deflators from Office of Management and Budget Historic Budget Tables. FY2021 figures specifically include \$367 million in COVID-19 related Economic Support Fund (ESF) funding provided in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2) and \$700 million in ESF for Sudan provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Title IX, P.L. 116-260).

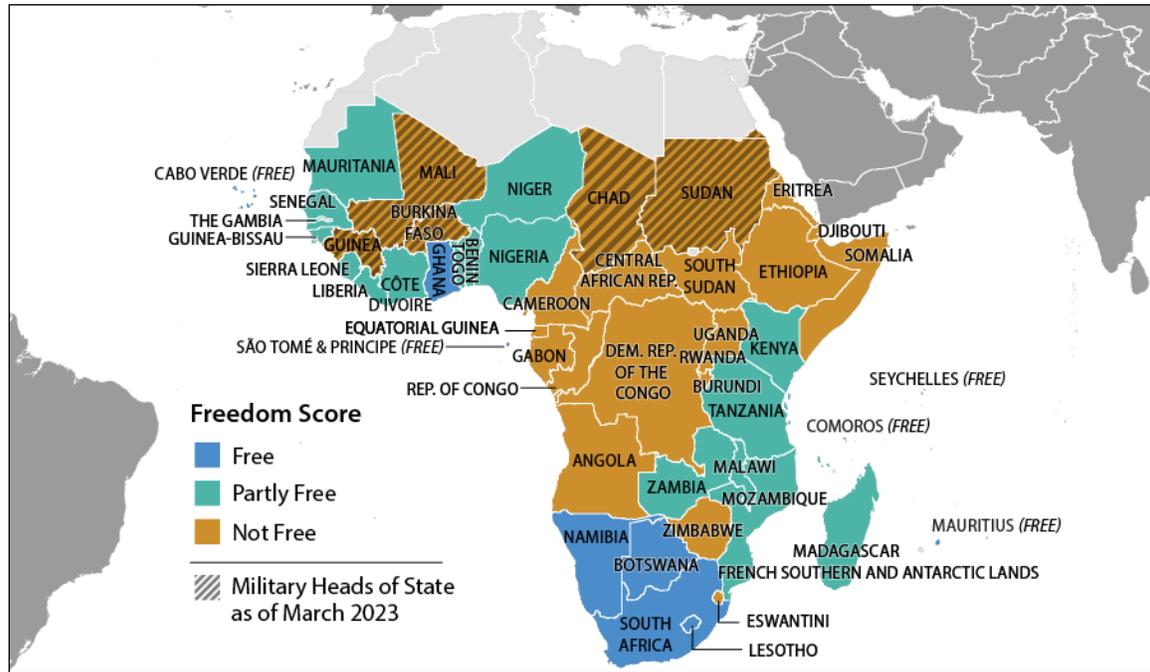
<sup>39</sup> Eswatini, formerly Swaziland, is the only absolute monarchy in Africa.

<sup>40</sup> In addition, authorities in Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Gambia each claimed to have prevented coup attempts in 2022, though details surrounding each event remain unclear.

<sup>41</sup> CRS Insight IN11854, “*An Epidemic of Coups*” in Africa? Issues for Congress.

**Democratic Backsliding.** Some heads of state in the region have abolished or evaded constitutional term limits to remain in power. In Côte d’Ivoire and Guinea, leaders used the ratification of new constitutions as a pretext to evade term limits, arguing that this had effectively reset the clock on their mandates. (Guinea’s president was later overthrown in a military coup.) Some leaders have cited security threats, health crises (including COVID-19), or protests and other social unrest as justifications for crackdowns or restrictions on opposition and civil society.

**Figure 2. Freedom House *Freedom in the World* Rankings for 2023**



**Source:** CRS graphic; basemap from State Department and ESRI; rankings from Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*, 2023.

**Corruption.** While state effectiveness and bureaucratic capacity vary widely across Africa, the development of strong and accountable institutions remains limited in many countries. Corruption has been a major challenge in the region. State Department *Investment Climate Statement* reports routinely cite corruption as a major business challenge in many African countries. In consecutive years, on regional average, Africa has ranked last in Transparency International’s *Corruption Perceptions Index*, a measure of perceived graft. Surveys indicate particularly high levels of public distrust of police, legislators, and other civil servants.<sup>42</sup>

## Human Rights Issues

Human rights conditions vary widely in Africa.<sup>43</sup> The region’s leading democracies have maintained generally positive records in recent years, although state security forces in some of these countries (e.g., Senegal and South Africa) have been implicated in excessive force and other abuses, including during periods of social unrest. Arbitrary arrest, torture, and restrictions on freedoms of expression and assembly occur with general impunity in many of Africa’s semi-

<sup>42</sup> See, among others, Afrobarometer, “Perceptions are bad, reality is worse: Citizens report widespread predation by African police,” Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 512, March 18, 2022.

<sup>43</sup> Information in this section is drawn from annual State Department *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*.

authoritarian and authoritarian states. Civilians in countries afflicted by conflict may face threats from non-state armed groups as well as state security forces and state-backed militias.

**Abuses in Conflict.** Atrocities and crimes against humanity in conflict-affected countries have been among the leading human rights concerns for some Members. These include extrajudicial killings by state security forces; sexual- and gender-based violence in conflict; ethnically- and religiously-targeted violence; and attacks or restrictions on humanitarian activity. As discussed below (see “Selected Congressional Engagement”), the 2020-2022 war in Ethiopia generated substantial activity in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, amid reports of extensive abuses in that conflict.

Congress has also focused on the recruitment and use of child soldiers: in 2022 (latest available), the State Department designated the governments of the Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Somalia, and South Sudan under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA, Title IV, P.L. 110-457, as amended). Designation under the CSPA can carry restrictions on certain U.S. security assistance, subject to a presidential waiver; President Biden partially waived restrictions on FY2023 assistance for CAR, DRC, and Somalia.<sup>44</sup>

**Restrictions on Freedoms of Assembly, Expression, and Religion.** Human rights organizations have accused state security forces in some countries of mass killings of protesters (e.g., in Nigeria in 2020 and Chad in 2022). In a number of African countries, governments restrict freedoms of expression and the press, and journalists may self-censor to avoid harassment or arrest.

Many African governments also restrict the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) citizens, and anti-LGBTQI sentiment and discrimination is reportedly widespread in the region.<sup>45</sup> In Uganda, where same-sex relations were already punishable by life imprisonment, President Yoweri Museveni signed legislation in May 2023 prescribing the death penalty for “aggravated homosexuality,” making Uganda the fourth African country with a death penalty for same-sex relations, alongside Mauritania, Nigeria, and Somalia.<sup>46</sup> As of July 2023, Ghana’s parliament was considering legislation that would dramatically increase prison sentences for same-sex relations and for providing health care and other services to LGBTQI individuals.

In some countries, citizens face restrictions on freedom of worship or threats of violence along religious lines. In 2022, the State Department named Eritrea a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) and placed CAR on the Special Watch List for religious freedom violations under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA, P.L. 105-292, as amended). The State Department also named Russia’s Wagner Group as an entity of particular concern, citing actions in CAR (see “Global Power Competition in Africa”). As noted below, some Members have criticized the Administration’s decision to not designate Nigeria a CPC in successive years. Designation as a CPC can prompt a range of sanctions, subject to a waiver or referral to existing sanctions already in place for the country; the Administration referred Eritrea to preexisting sanctions in 2022.<sup>47</sup>

**Labor Abuses and Trafficking in Persons.** Labor abuses in Africa, especially child labor, have been a long-standing emphasis of congressional attention. Engagement has centered on the use of child labor in West Africa’s cocoa industry (with a focus on Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, the leading cocoa producers globally) and in the mining sector, particularly in DRC. Amid U.S. concern related to China’s influence over global mineral supply chains (see “Global Power Competition in

<sup>44</sup> CRS In Focus IF10901, *Child Soldiers Prevention Act: Security Assistance Restrictions*.

<sup>45</sup> Afrobarometer, “‘All in this together’: Africans tolerant on ethnic, religious, national, but not sexual differences,” Dispatch No. 362, May 19, 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Aditi Bhandari, “Uganda’s anti-gay bill is the latest and worst to target LGBTQ Africans,” Reuters, updated May 29, 2023. In Nigeria, the death penalty for same-sex conduct is in effect in the 12 northern states that observe Sharia law.

<sup>47</sup> CRS In Focus IF10803, *Global Human Rights: International Religious Freedom Policy*.

Africa”), some in Congress have expressed increased interest in allegations of child labor and other human rights abuses in the cobalt sector in DRC, where PRC firms play a prominent role.<sup>48</sup>

Human trafficking has been an enduring challenge in the region. The State Department, in its 2023 *Trafficking in Persons* report (mandated under Division A of P.L. 106-386, as amended), ranked Chad, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, and South Sudan as Tier 3 (worst-performing), which carries restrictions on “nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related assistance to the government” for the following fiscal year and on certain other engagement, subject to a presidential waiver.<sup>49</sup> Waiver determinations for 2023 (related to FY2024 aid) are pending.

## Selected Congressional Engagement

**Hearings.** Congress has held hearings on governance and human rights issues in Africa generally, and on developments in specific countries.<sup>50</sup> Hearings on global trends in democracy and human rights, and on particular issues (e.g., China’s support for authoritarianism abroad, global threats to religious freedom, and attacks on LGBTQI people worldwide) also have featured discussion of African countries.<sup>51</sup> Some Members have additionally used annual State Department and USAID budget hearings to express views on governance and human rights conditions in certain countries and request information from Administration officials on U.S. responses.

**Resolutions.** Members regularly introduce and consider resolutions pertaining to political and governance issues in Africa and expressing views on U.S. responses. Resolutions are often tied to elections; the 117<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> (to date) Congresses have considered measures to call for free and credible polls in Angola (S.Res. 736), Gambia (S.Res. 456), and Nigeria (S.Res. 36; H.Res. 143).

Human rights trends or developments in particular countries also have spurred resolutions and Member remarks. Atrocities in the war in Ethiopia drew particular concern in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress (including S.Res. 97, agreed to in the Senate, as well as H.Res. 445 and H.Res. 842), as did Rwanda’s imprisonment of exiled dissident and U.S. legal permanent resident Paul Rusesabagina (H.Res. 892). Regarding religious freedom, as noted above, some Members have criticized the Biden Administration’s decision to de-list Nigeria as a CPC under the IRFA; in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Res. 82 would call for Nigeria to be re-designated, among other provisions.

**Foreign Assistance.** Congress appropriates democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) aid in Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) appropriations bills. Such funding comprised roughly 4% of State Department and USAID-administered assistance for Africa in 2022, although additional DRG aid is provided via programs that are global in scope (as opposed to allocated on a region- or country-specific basis).<sup>52</sup> Among other activities, U.S. DRG

<sup>48</sup> See, e.g., Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC), *Child Labor and Human Rights Violations in the Mining Industry of the Democratic Republic of Congo*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., July 14, 2022.

<sup>49</sup> Tier classifications are set out in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA, Division A of P.L. 106-386, as amended). See CRS In Focus IF10587, *Human Trafficking and U.S. Foreign Policy: An Introduction* and CRS Report R44953, *The State Department’s Trafficking in Persons Report: Scope, Aid Restrictions, and Methodology*.

<sup>50</sup> See, for instance, HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights, *Elections in Africa*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., March 2, 2021; SFRC, *Sudan’s Imperiled Transition: U.S. Policy in the Wake of the October 25<sup>th</sup> Coup*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., February 1, 2022; and HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, *Democratic Backsliding in Sub-Saharan Africa*, hearing, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., September 30, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> See, among others, Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), *Techno-Authoritarianism: Platform for Repression in China and Abroad*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., November 17, 2021; TLHRC, *The State of Religious Freedom Around the Globe*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., July 13, 2021; and HFAC, *Advancing and Protecting LGBTQI+ Rights Abroad*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 24, 2021.

<sup>52</sup> CRS estimates based on data provided by USAID, March 2023.

programs in Africa aim to support electoral bodies and political processes; build capacity of justice sectors, parliaments, political parties, civil society, and journalists; enhance service delivery; and counter corruption. Congress has included provisos in SFOPS appropriations bills that DRG funding be made available for certain countries, with Benin, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, South Sudan, and Sudan, among others, specified in the most recent bill (Division K of P.L. 117-328) and accompanying report language.

**Sanctions and Other Restrictions.** As of June 2023, the United States maintained country-specific sanctions programs pertaining to CAR, DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, Somalia, Sudan,<sup>53</sup> South Sudan, and Zimbabwe.<sup>54</sup> Successive Administrations also have imposed human rights- or corruption-related sanctions on Africa-based individuals and entities under non-Africa-specific programs. These include “Global Magnitsky” sanctions, pertaining to global human rights and corruption, along with Russia-related sanctions programs.<sup>55</sup> Designation under these sanctions programs freezes any assets under U.S. jurisdiction, blocks transactions with U.S. persons, and imposes visa and entry restrictions. The State Department has also publicly designated Africa-based individuals for visa bans under “Section 7031(c)” of annual SFOPS appropriations (most recently, Division K of P.L. 117-328), pertaining to human rights abuses and corruption.<sup>56</sup> The Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, provides the executive branch with additional, broad authority to deny visas or entry on various grounds, generally without public designation.

Other provisions in SFOPS appropriations measures restrict or condition aid for certain countries on governance or human rights grounds. Certain forms of assistance for the governments of countries in the Great Lakes region (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda), along with South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, are subject to some restrictions in the most recent SFOPS appropriations bill. Recurring language in annual SFOPS appropriations measures additionally has directed the executive branch to use its position in international financial institutions to vote against proposed loans or grants to the Government of Zimbabwe, except to meet basic needs or promote democracy. (The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 [P.L. 107-99, as amended by P.L. 115-231] frames U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe more broadly, prohibiting U.S. support for multilateral debt relief and credit for Zimbabwe’s government pending progress toward various governance benchmarks and other U.S. policy goals.) Additionally, Congress has imposed restrictions on certain kinds of U.S. aid following coups d’état or in connection with poor records on human trafficking, child soldiers, and religious freedom.

**Reporting and Consultation Requirements.** Congress has enacted executive branch reporting, briefing, or consultation requirements related to a range of governance and human rights issues in Africa. Most recently, language in the FY2023 SFOPS appropriations measure (Division K of P.L. 117-328) and the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for FY2023 (NDAA, P.L. 117-263) and accompanying explanatory statements require the executive branch to report to or brief Congress on governance or human rights issues in DRC, Ethiopia, Rwanda, the Sahel, South Sudan, and Sudan. Congress also has directed the executive branch to consult with

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<sup>53</sup> Two sanctions authorities are in effect with respect to Sudan. The most recent, E.O. 14098, was issued in May 2023, in response to an outbreak of fighting between wings of Sudan’s military. See Department of the Treasury, “Sudan and Darfur Sanctions,” at <https://ofac.treasury.gov/sanctions-programs-and-country-information/sudan-and-darfur-sanctions>.

<sup>54</sup> For a full list of sanctions programs, see Department of the Treasury, “Sanctions Programs and Country Information,” at <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/sanctions-programs-and-country-information>.

<sup>55</sup> See CRS Report R46981, *The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act: Scope, Implementation, and Considerations for Congress*.

<sup>56</sup> CRS In Focus IF10905, *FY2020 Foreign Operations Appropriations: Targeting Foreign Corruption and Human Rights Violations*.

Congress on the use of funds to be made available for certain countries whose governments have been implicated in abuses; the FY2023 SFOPS bill and House report require consultation on funding for Cameroon, South Sudan, and Sudan, and subject aid for Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe to the regular notification procedures of the Committees on Appropriations.

## Peace and Security Issues

After proliferating in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, armed conflicts diminished in number in much of Africa in the 2000s, with the end of devastating wars in Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and southern Sudan. Over the past decade, however, civil wars and violent political crises have broken out or intensified in multiple African countries (e.g., Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan, and Sudan), while some long-running conflicts have eluded resolution (e.g., in eastern DRC and Somalia). Islamist armed groups affiliated with Al Qaeda or the Islamic State (IS) are active in parts of East, West, and Central Africa. Injecting a new element of insecurity and predation, Russia's Wagner Group, a nominally private military company, has expanded its footprint in several African countries (see "Global Power Competition in Africa").<sup>57</sup> Trends have not been uniformly negative, however. Some countries have weathered political uncertainty or unrest without tipping into conflict, and African-led interventions have made progress in stabilizing parts of Somalia and Mozambique.

U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)'s 2023 Posture Statement, presented to Congress in March 2023, stresses Africa's importance to U.S. strategic interests and to global stability and prosperity. Describing Africa as "the epicenter of global terrorism," it asserts that extremist violence is "the most immediate threat to both American lives and our partners in Africa."<sup>58</sup> The presence of Russia and China—the former "overwhelmingly harmful," the latter offering an "uneven mix of much-needed infrastructure, equipment, and trade alongside depleted natural resources, polluted ecosystems, corruption and deficient military hardware"—as well as climate shocks are other top emphases of the 2023 statement. Issues that have garnered congressional attention include

**Islamist Extremism.** U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) characterizes Somalia's Al Shabaab as Al Qaeda's "biggest and richest franchise" and a potential threat to the U.S. homeland.<sup>59</sup> A U.N.-backed African Union stabilization force has made some counterinsurgency gains, with U.S. and European support, but Al Shabaab continues to control territory and resources.<sup>60</sup> The group has killed thousands of civilians since the mid-2000s and staged large attacks in the broader region, especially Kenya. A small IS faction also is active in Somalia's north. The U.S. military has supported counterinsurgency efforts in the country, including through a long-running airstrike campaign (see "U.S. Military Engagement in Africa," below).

The second-largest Al Qaeda affiliate in Africa, the Malian-led Group for Supporting Islam and Muslims (aka JNIM), is primarily active in West Africa's Sahel region, centering on Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Conflicts involving JNIM and other armed actors, including a rival IS affiliate, ethnic militias, and criminal actors, have displaced millions and deepened development,

<sup>57</sup> See CRS In Focus IF12389, *Russia's Wagner Group in Africa: Issues for Congress*.

<sup>58</sup> AFRICOM, *2023 Posture Statement to Congress*, submitted as written testimony by AFRICOM Commander General Michael E. Langley to the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 16, 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Testimony by AFRICOM Commander Gen. Michael Langley in SASC, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States Central Command and United States Africa Command*.

<sup>60</sup> See CRS In Focus IF10155, *Somalia*, and CRS In Focus IF10170, *Al Shabaab*.

humanitarian, and governance challenges.<sup>61</sup> Russian contractors have been involved in Mali and engaged in outreach to the military junta in Burkina Faso (see “Global Power Competition in Africa”). Since 2020, violence has moved south into previously stable coastal West African countries, particularly Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, and Togo.<sup>62</sup>

In Nigeria, Africa’s most populous country, an Islamist insurgency in the country’s northeast has displaced millions and destabilized surrounding border areas of neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, known as the Lake Chad Basin region. Boko Haram, an extremist group that emerged in 2009 and gained global notoriety for its abduction of over 250 schoolgirls in 2014, later split; since 2016, an Islamic State affiliated splinter faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province (IS-WA), has established itself as the leading Islamist armed group threat in the country.

Since 2017, an IS-affiliated insurgency in northern Mozambique has targeted state facilities and personnel, civilians, and natural gas operations partly financed by U.S. loan commitments, killing thousands.<sup>63</sup> The group also has staged attacks in neighboring Tanzania. The Islamic State also claims an affiliate in eastern DRC.<sup>64</sup> At Mozambique’s request, Rwanda and several southern African countries have separately deployed forces to Mozambique to combat the insurgency. As discussed below (see “Global Power Competition in Africa”), Mozambique was also the site of Russian military contractor the Wagner Group’s most significant defeat in Africa to date, as Wagner withdrew personnel from the country after sustaining heavy casualties.

**Other Internal Conflicts: Ethiopia, Sudan, and DRC.** Congress demonstrated extensive interest in the 2020-2022 conflict in northern Ethiopia, which pitted Ethiopian federal forces, allied militia, and troops from neighboring Eritrea against an ethnic insurgency spearheaded by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front. A peace deal signed in late 2022 has quelled the violence, though prospects for its sustainability—and accountability for abuses that the State Department found to constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing—are uncertain.<sup>65</sup>

In Sudan, fighting between rival state security services—the Sudanese Armed Forces, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Force—erupted in April 2023 and has killed thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands to date. The U.S. government evacuated personnel from the capital, Khartoum, and helped facilitate the departure of over 1,000 U.S. citizens from the country. Some Members of Congress have raised questions about U.S. anticipation of and response to the crisis, including the evacuation process for U.S. citizens, and have made recommendations or sought information from the executive branch on the path forward for U.S. engagement.<sup>66</sup> U.S. and other foreign diplomats have sought to broker a lasting ceasefire, as observers warn that the situation could descend into a broader civil war in an already unstable country.

Insecurity has persisted in DRC since the 1990s, involving dozens of armed groups, some with roots in or support from neighboring countries.<sup>67</sup> Recent congressional concern has centered on the resurgence, since 2021, of the M23 armed group, which has reportedly received substantial

<sup>61</sup> See CRS In Focus IF10434, *Burkina Faso: Conflict and Military Rule*, CRS In Focus IF10116, *Crisis in Mali*, and CRS Testimony TE10044, *U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Challenges in Africa*.

<sup>62</sup> See CRS Insight IN11938, *Responding to State “Fragility” in Coastal West Africa*.

<sup>63</sup> CRS In Focus IF11864, *Insurgency in Northern Mozambique: Nature and Responses*.

<sup>64</sup> CRS In Focus IF12206, *The Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamic State Affiliate in the Democratic Republic of Congo*.

<sup>65</sup> State Department, “War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia,” March 20, 2023.

<sup>66</sup> See SFRC, “Conflict in Sudan: Options for an Effective Policy Response,” hearing 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May 10, 2023. In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Res. 585 would call on the Administration to take various actions with regard to Sudan.

<sup>67</sup> See CRS Report R43166, *Democratic Republic of Congo: Background and U.S. Relations*.

support from neighboring Rwanda.<sup>68</sup> Regional leaders have sought to facilitate peace talks between the DRC government and armed groups. The Islamic State has separately recognized the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a DRC-based armed group of Ugandan origin, as an affiliate.

**Intercommunal Violence.** Intercommunal conflicts, often spurred by disputes over land and other resources, citizenship rights, and political power struggles, are a major challenge in parts of Africa. Such disputes often coincide with and aggravate ethnic or religious cleavages, presenting opportunities for extremist groups to gain support by exploiting perceptions of marginalization or state predation.<sup>69</sup> In West Africa, for instance, Islamist armed groups have made use of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists to position themselves as “defenders of pastoralist interests.”<sup>70</sup>

**U.N. Peacekeeping.** Almost 85% of all U.N. peacekeeping personnel are in Africa.<sup>71</sup> As of July 2023, U.N. peacekeeping operations were under way in CAR, DRC, Mali, South Sudan, and the Abyei region of Sudan, while a U.N. logistical operation was deployed to Somalia to support the aforementioned AU-led stabilization force. U.N. peacekeepers are expected to withdraw from Mali by late 2023 after Mali’s government called for their departure. With its veto power at the U.N. Security Council, the United States plays a lead role in establishing and renewing U.N. peacekeeping missions.<sup>72</sup> Rwanda, Ghana, and Senegal ranked in the top 10 contributors to U.N. peacekeeping as of April 2023, and several other African countries regularly rank in the top 20.<sup>73</sup>

## U.S. Military Engagement in Africa

AFRICOM’s area of responsibility covers all of Africa (including North Africa) except Egypt.<sup>74</sup> In 2021, AFRICOM’s then-Commander put AFRICOM’s manpower at “just under 6,000 service members, civilians and contractors.”<sup>75</sup> Of these, several thousand are located at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, the lone enduring U.S. military base in Africa. As of June 2023, about 1,000 U.S. personnel were deployed to Niger to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations and support regional counterterrorism efforts.<sup>76</sup> Since 2022, roughly 500 U.S. troops have redeployed to Somalia to support counterterrorism operations, following President Donald Trump’s decision in 2020 to withdraw and redeploy forces to neighboring countries.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See U.N. Security Council, *Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, U.N. doc. S/2022/967, December 2022; State Department, “Statement on Report by UN Group of Experts,” January 4, 2023.

<sup>69</sup> For one study of extremist recruitment in Africa, see U.N. Development Programme (UNDP), *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives, and the Tipping Point for Recruitment*, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Leif Brottem, “The Growing Complexity of Farmer-Herder Conflict in West and Central Africa,” Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), July 12, 2021.

<sup>71</sup> CRS calculation based on May 2023 (latest) data in U.N. Peacekeeping, Uniformed Personnel Contributing Countries by Ranking, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

<sup>72</sup> CRS In Focus IF10597, *United Nations Issues: U.S. Funding of U.N. Peacekeeping*.

<sup>73</sup> U.N. Peacekeeping, Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country and Personnel Type, March 31, 2023.

<sup>74</sup> Before AFRICOM became a stand-alone command in 2008, responsibility for U.S. military involvement in Africa was divided among European, Central, and Pacific Commands.

<sup>75</sup> SASC, *United States Central Command and United States Africa Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2022 and the Future Years Defense Program*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., April 22, 2021. In 2020 testimony to Congress, then-Commander General Stephen Townsend stated that “about 5,100 U.S. service members and about 1,000 DOD civilians and contractors” were active in Africa; SASC, *United States Africa Command and United States Southern Command*, hearing, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., January 30, 2020.

<sup>76</sup> White House, “Letter to the Speaker of the House and President pro tempore of the Senate on War Powers Report,” June 8, 2023.

<sup>77</sup> Testimony by AFRICOM Commander Gen. Michael Langley in SASC, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States Central Command and United States Africa Command*.

The U.S. military conducts a range of activities in Africa, including

**Direct Strikes.** The U.S. military has acknowledged conducting strikes against terrorist targets in two African countries: Somalia and Libya. (On Libya, see CRS In Focus IF11556, *Libya and U.S. Policy*.) The U.S. military commenced airstrikes in Somalia in 2007, targeting members of Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab. In 2016, the Obama Administration publicly named Al Shabaab as an “associated force” of Al Qaeda under the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF, P.L. 107-40; 50 U.S.C. §1541 note).<sup>78</sup> The tempo of U.S. strikes rose under Presidents Obama and Trump, and strikes have continued under President Biden; AFRICOM reported 15 strikes in Somalia in 2022, describing most as “collective self-defense strikes” in support of the Somali army.<sup>79</sup> Several Members of Congress have expressed concern over reported harm to civilians from U.S. strikes in Somalia.<sup>80</sup> AFRICOM has acknowledged that some airstrikes in Somalia have killed or harmed civilians, while rejecting such allegations in other cases.<sup>81</sup> More broadly, some Members have questioned whether the executive branch assertion of authority under the AUMF to target Al Shabaab is appropriate.<sup>82</sup>

Congress has authorized the Department of Defense (DOD) to support “foreign forces, irregular forces, groups, or individuals engaged in supporting or facilitating ongoing military operations” by U.S. special operations forces to combat terrorism (codified in 10 U.S.C. §127[e]). DOD does not publicly disclose the locations or scope of such activities; media have reported programs in several African countries. Some Members have sought to gain a better understanding of the legal authorization under which U.S. military personnel have deployed to Africa, along with human rights-related safeguards governing U.S. partnered operations in the region.<sup>83</sup>

**Building Partner Capacity.** DOD seeks to build the capacity of African forces under a “by, with, and through” approach that emphasizes a supporting role for the United States.<sup>84</sup> The majority of DOD-administered security assistance for African partner forces has been provided under DOD’s “global train and equip” authority, which Congress expanded and codified under 10 U.S.C. 333 (“Section 333”) in the FY2017 NDAA (P.L. 114-328). DOD also implements some State Department-administered security assistance programs.

**Logistical Support.** France withdrew military forces from Mali and Burkina Faso in 2022-2023 amid diplomatic tensions linked in part to Russia’s involvement in the Sahel (see “Global Power Competition in Africa”). French President Emmanuel Macron has pledged to reorient operations in the region toward support for willing partner militaries, as opposed to direct strikes on targets

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<sup>78</sup> Obama White House, *Report on the Legal and Policy Frameworks Guiding the United States’ Use of Military Force and Related National Security Operations*, 2016. See also CRS Report R43983, *2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force: Issues Concerning Its Continued Application*.

<sup>79</sup> AFRICOM regularly issues press releases on such strikes, at <https://www.africom.mil/media-gallery/press-releases>.

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., letter from Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Sara Jacobs to Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, December 19, 2022.

<sup>81</sup> In response to allegations of civilian casualties, AFRICOM conducted a review in 2019, which led to the first official confirmation of civilian killings in its Somalia strike campaign. AFRICOM civilian casualty reports are available at <https://www.africom.mil/civilian-casualty-report>.

<sup>82</sup> See April 27, 2023, House floor debate on H.Con.Res. 30, which would have directed the removal of U.S. forces from Somalia for lack of specific authorization. The resolution failed in the House, 102-321.

<sup>83</sup> Remarks by Rep. Ilhan Omar in HFAC, *The 2001 AUMF and War Powers: The Path Forward*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., March 2, 2021; and remarks by Rep. Sara Jacobs in House Armed Services Committee (HASC), *National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activities in the Greater Middle East and Africa*, hearing, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., March 17, 2022. See also Charlie Savage and Eric Schmitt, “Rules for Pentagon Use of Proxy Forces Shed Light on a Shadowy War Power,” *New York Times*, May 14, 2023.

<sup>84</sup> Department of Defense (DOD), *2022 National Defense Strategy*, 2022.

in Mali.<sup>85</sup> The United States has supported French counterterrorism operations in the Sahel through intelligence sharing and aerial refueling and resupply.<sup>86</sup>

**Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR).** The U.S. military conducts ISR activities in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, operating primarily out of Niger, via facilities in the capital, Niamey, and the northern city of Agadez.<sup>87</sup> Media outlets have reported additional U.S. ISR activities that have not been confirmed by U.S. officials.

**Other Engagements.** The U.S. military conducts regular exercises and other engagements with African militaries. These include Flintlock, the flagship U.S. Special Operations Command-Africa-led exercise focused on West Africa; African Lion, which was jointly hosted by Morocco, Tunisia, Ghana, and Senegal in 2022; and Obangame Express, a maritime exercise in the Gulf of Guinea. The State Partnership Program, which pairs state National Guards with security forces and disaster response agencies in partner countries for training and other engagements, had partnerships in 16 African countries as of July 2023, with National Guard assignments pending for two others (Gabon and Malawi/Zambia).<sup>88</sup> Most U.S. embassies in Africa also host U.S. military personnel, such as Defense Attachés or Office of Security Cooperation staff. A small number of U.S. military personnel (28 as of March 2023) serve as staff officers in U.N. peacekeeping missions in the region.<sup>89</sup>

## Selected Congressional Engagement

**Hearings.** Congress has held multiple hearings on conflict in Africa generally, and on conflicts or crises in specific African countries.<sup>90</sup> The war in Ethiopia spurred extensive Member engagement in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.<sup>91</sup> In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, SFRC held a hearing on the unfolding conflict in Sudan in May 2023.<sup>92</sup> State Department and USAID budget hearings, along with annual AFRICOM posture hearings, have been additional venues for Members to express views or concerns on conflicts in Africa and probe U.S. responses and military activity.

**War Powers.** The 118<sup>th</sup> Congress has debated and considered legislation pertaining to war powers and the use of military force, both worldwide and specifically in Africa. Notably, bills that would repeal, sunset, and/or replace the 2001 AUMF, which authorized the use of military force against those who perpetrated or provided support for the 9/11 terrorist attacks, could have implications for some military operations in Africa (see “Direct Strikes,” above).<sup>93</sup> Separately, the House considered, and voted to table, H.Con.Res. 30, which would have directed the President to remove all U.S. forces, other than those assigned to protect the U.S. Embassy, from Somalia.

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<sup>85</sup> Constantin Gouvy and Andrew Lebovich, “France Shifts Gears in the Sahel as Russia’s Influence Grows,” *World Politics Review*, April 18, 2023.

<sup>86</sup> DOD has provided logistical support under 10 U.S.C. 331, enacted as part of the FY2017 NDAA.

<sup>87</sup> The U.S. military began ISR flights from Air Base 201 in 2019. Congress explicitly authorized funds for construction of the Agadez facility. See DOD Inspector General, *Evaluation of Niger Air Base 201 Military Construction*, 2020.

<sup>88</sup> DOD, “Building Partnerships Around the Globe: State Partnership Program,” accessed July 14, 2023.

<sup>89</sup> U.N. Peacekeeping, “Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Mission, Country, and Personnel Type,” March 31, 2023.

<sup>90</sup> In the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, the HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights held two hearings on conflict in Africa: *Understanding Conflict in Africa*, (1<sup>st</sup> sess.; September 28, 2021), and *Examining U.S. Foreign Assistance to Address the Root Causes of Instability and Conflict in Africa*, (2<sup>nd</sup> sess.; November 15, 2022).

<sup>91</sup> The 117<sup>th</sup> Congress held two hearings on Ethiopia: SFRC, *Ethiopia in Crisis: U.S. Strategy and Policy Response*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and HFAC, *The Conflict in Ethiopia*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 29, 2021.

<sup>92</sup> SFRC, “Conflict in Sudan: Options for an Effective Policy Response.”

<sup>93</sup> For example, H.R. 2501, H.J.Res. 52, and S. 1061, along with several proposed amendments.

**Foreign Assistance.** Congress appropriates State Department- and USAID-administered peace and security assistance for Africa in annual SFOPS appropriations measures. State Department-administered security assistance programs, codified in Title 22 of the *U.S. Code*, include activities to strengthen and professionalize African security forces, strengthen counterterrorism, counter-narcotics, border security, maritime, and other security capacities, and enhance policing and law enforcement. The United States also provides support to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict in Africa, and to train and equip African peacekeeping personnel. The House report accompanying the most recent SFOPS appropriations measure (Division K of P.L. 117-328) directs the State Department to allocate funds for the U.N. support operation in Somalia, national park security in DRC, and surplus weapons destruction in Angola and Zimbabwe. DOD also conducts security cooperation activities with foreign militaries and internal security entities from its own funds; comprehensive information on country allocations and activities is not publicly available.

Congress also has enacted legislation authorizing security assistance activities in Africa. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program (TSCTP) Act of 2022 (Division AA, P.L. 117-103) provided statutory authority for TSCTP, a preexisting State Department-led interagency program focused on North and West Africa. Congress sought to encourage a more coordinated interagency approach to U.S. peace and security assistance via the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (GFA, Title V of Div. J, P.L. 116-94), which required the executive branch to select five priority countries or regions for stabilization or prevention programming over a 10-year period. The Administration subsequently designated Mozambique and “Coastal West Africa” (a grouping of Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo) as GFA partners.<sup>94</sup>

**Sanctions and Other Restrictions.** A provision in regular SFOPS appropriations measures (most recently, Section 7008 of Division K, P.L. 117-328) restricts most U.S. foreign assistance after a coup d’état, with exemptions for democracy assistance, funds implemented by nongovernmental organizations, humanitarian aid, and other funds authorized to be provided “notwithstanding” any other provision of law.<sup>95</sup> In practice, military aid is often affected most directly. As of May 2023, “Section 7008” restrictions were in effect for Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and (since 1989) Sudan. Some Members have urged the executive branch to restrict security assistance for other governments after other military seizures of power, notably in Chad.<sup>96</sup> AFRICOM Commander General Michael Langley, for his part, has criticized Section 7008 as restrictive and misguided.<sup>97</sup>

Some Members have pushed for reviews or reductions of security cooperation with certain African governments following reports of state security force abuses. In 2021, SFRC leaders reportedly placed a pre-notification hold on a proposed sale of attack helicopters to Nigeria, citing human rights concerns.<sup>98</sup> (The proposal later advanced.) In 2022, some Members reportedly requested reviews of security aid for Nigeria (after Reuters alleged that Nigeria’s military had

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<sup>94</sup> The Administration has released summaries of its strategic plans for Mozambique and Coastal West Africa; see State Department, *The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability 10-Year Strategic Plan for Mozambique*, and *The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability 10-Year Strategic Plan for Coastal West Africa*, 2023. See also CRS Insight IN11938, *Responding to State “Fragility” in Coastal West Africa*.

<sup>95</sup> See CRS In Focus IF11267, *Coup-Related Restrictions in U.S. Foreign Aid Appropriations*.

<sup>96</sup> In the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, S.Res. 701 would have expressed the view that events in Chad constituted a coup d’état.

<sup>97</sup> In AFRICOM’s 2023 Posture Statement, for instance, General Langley asserted that “although well intended, U.S. coup restrictions can inadvertently incentivize the most at-risk African countries to dig themselves deeper into the mire of militancy and corruption.” AFRICOM, *2023 Posture Statement to Congress*.

<sup>98</sup> Robbie Gramer, “U.S. Lawmakers Hold Up Major Proposed Arms Sale to Nigeria,” *Foreign Policy*, July 27, 2021.

conducted forced abortions) and Rwanda (over Rwanda's reported support for the M23 in DRC).<sup>99</sup>

The so-called "Leahy Laws" restrict most State Department- and DOD-administered security assistance to foreign security force units that have been credibly implicated in a "gross violation of human rights," subject to certain exceptions.<sup>100</sup> The executive branch generally does not make public which units have been prohibited from receiving U.S. assistance pursuant to these laws.

**Reporting Requirements.** Congress has acted to enhance oversight of U.S. security assistance for Africa. Among other efforts, in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, Section 6502 of the FY2022 NDAA (P.L. 117-81) expanded notification and reporting requirements associated with the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account, the primary vehicle for State Department-administered security assistance for Africa.<sup>101</sup> The TSCTP Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-103), in addition to authorizing TSCTP, established congressional notification requirements on funding allocations, required interagency strategies for TSCTP and regional policy objectives, and mandated regular reporting on progress in meeting TSCTP objectives and resolving past management deficiencies.

## Economic Affairs and U.S. Trade and Investment

By several measures, Africa ranks among the world's least developed regions. According to the U.N. Development Program's Multidimensional Poverty Index, half of all poor people globally—an estimated 534 million, out of 1.1 billion—live in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>102</sup> Extractive industries that have underpinned periods of high gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the region have often created limited employment and social welfare gains. Many countries reduced poverty rates between 1990 and 2020, but population growth meant that the total number of Africans living in extreme poverty rose during the period.<sup>103</sup> Most of Africa's poor reside in a handful of states, led by Nigeria, the region's most populous country.<sup>104</sup> Africa also surpasses other regions in many non-monetary measures of deprivation, such as deficits in electricity and clean water access. In 2021, 17 of the 20 countries with the largest energy deficits were in Africa; Nigeria (86 million), DRC (76 million), and Ethiopia (55 million) had the largest populations without power.<sup>105</sup>

The economic shocks of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war have roiled African economies, heightening poverty and food insecurity. According to the World Bank, the pandemic pushed some 23 million more Africans into "extreme poverty" between 2020 and 2022, albeit fewer than initially projected.<sup>106</sup> More recently, trade disruptions resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine reduced supplies of some goods (e.g., wheat and fertilizers) in global markets, pushing up food

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<sup>99</sup> David Lewis and Daphne Psaledakis, "Senator wants review of U.S. security assistance to Nigeria following abortion report," Reuters, December 20, 2022; and Hereward Holland, "U.S. senator questions aid to Rwanda over human rights, role in Congo," Reuters, July 26, 2022.

<sup>100</sup> CRS In Focus IF10575, *Global Human Rights: Security Forces Vetting ("Leahy Laws")*.

<sup>101</sup> The FY2023 NDAA amended the reporting requirement (Section 5594 of P.L. 117-263).

<sup>102</sup> UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023*, 2023.

<sup>103</sup> Marta Schoch and Christoph Lakner, "The number of poor people continues to rise in Sub-Saharan Africa, despite a slow decline in the poverty rate," World Bank Data Blog, December 16, 2020.

<sup>104</sup> "Nigeria accounts for about one-quarter of Africa's poor (85.2 million); the next four (the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Madagascar) for another quarter; and the next five (Mozambique, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, and Zambia) for the following 25 percent." Luc Christiaensen and Ruth Hill, "Poverty in Africa," in *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa*, ed. Kathleen Beegle and Luc Christiaensen (The World Bank, 2019), p. 46.

<sup>105</sup> World Bank et al., *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2023*, 2023.

<sup>106</sup> World Bank Blog, "Africa might have dodged a bullet, but systemic warnings abound for poverty reduction efforts on the continent," September 28, 2022.

and other prices and eroding local purchasing power in Africa. Of the 19 countries and regional clusters identified as “hunger hotspots” in a joint Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-World Food Program (WFP) study of global food insecurity in late 2022, 12 are in Africa, including four—Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Somalia—facing or at risk of starvation.<sup>107</sup>

Public debt levels have risen sharply in many African countries since 2019, amid increased spending on public health and stimulus efforts alongside a collapse in revenue generation during the pandemic.<sup>108</sup> As of April 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) assessed that at least 19 African countries were in (or at high risk of) debt distress, or unable to service their debts.<sup>109</sup> Two African countries, Ghana and Zambia, have defaulted on sovereign debts since 2020, and some analysts warn of a looming debt crisis in the region.<sup>110</sup> U.S. officials have criticized China, a top lender for many African countries, for delaying debt relief for both Ghana and Zambia.<sup>111</sup>

**Business Climate Challenges.** The U.S. government has identified a number of impediments to doing business in Africa. According to public reporting by the State Department, investors cite poor infrastructure, expensive and unreliable electricity, and currency shortages and foreign exchange volatility as major challenges, even in some of the region’s more advanced economies (e.g., Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa).<sup>112</sup> In many countries, low access to banking and credit have constrained commercial activity and hamstrung businesses’ ability to respond to shocks, though access to financial services has expanded with the widespread adoption of mobile money technologies.<sup>113</sup> Uncertain political and legal environments also may constrain business activity in parts of the region, as may armed conflicts or other insecurity. Many governments have struggled to adequately enforce contracts or property rights, partly due to poor property registration and record-keeping.<sup>114</sup> Intellectual property rights protection also is generally weak in the region.<sup>115</sup>

**African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).**<sup>116</sup> Efforts to deepen regional integration are ongoing under the AfCFTA, a pan-African free trade zone intended to eventually create a single regional market for goods, services, and capital. Fifty-four of 55 AU member states have signed a framework accord establishing the AfCFTA. AfCFTA’s initial implementation phase, centering on trade in goods, began in 2021, though negotiations persist on certain issues, including rules of origin. Realization of the AfCFTA’s full benefits also will require the parties to overcome substantial non-tariff barriers and other impediments. Several Members have expressed support

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<sup>107</sup> FAO and WFP, *Hunger Hotspots: FAO-WFP Early Warnings on Acute Food Insecurity: October 2022 to January 2023 Outlook*, September 2022.

<sup>108</sup> See CRS In Focus IF11880, *Sovereign Debt Concerns in Developing Countries*.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. IMF data on debt distress cover the 35 low-income African countries included (as of April 2023) under the Joint World Bank–IMF Debt Sustainability Framework for Low-Income Countries.

<sup>110</sup> Charles Albinet and Martin Kessler, *The Coming Debt Crisis: Monitoring Liquidity and Solvency Risks*, Finance for Development Lab, Working Paper 1, November 2022; *The Economist*, “Debt repayment costs are rising fast for many African countries,” April 30, 2022.

<sup>111</sup> Department of the Treasury, “Remarks by Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen at Press Conference as Part of 2023 IMF-World Bank Annual Spring Meetings,” April 11, 2023.

<sup>112</sup> State Department, *2022 Investment Climate Statements*, 2022.

<sup>113</sup> An estimated 33% of adults in Africa have mobile money accounts, the highest rate of any region. World Bank, *The Global Findex Database 2021: Financial Inclusion, Digital Payments, and Resilience in the Age of COVID-19*, 2022.

<sup>114</sup> *The Economist*, “The quest for secure property rights in Africa,” September 12, 2020.

<sup>115</sup> U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC), *U.S. Trade and Investment with Sub-Saharan Africa: Recent Trends and New Developments*, 2020, pp. 167-206.

<sup>116</sup> CRS Report R47197, *African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Overview and Issues for Congress*.

for the AfCFTA.<sup>117</sup> During the 2022 Africa Leaders Summit, the United States and the AU’s AfCFTA Secretariat signed an MOU on U.S. support for the AfCFTA.

## **U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment**

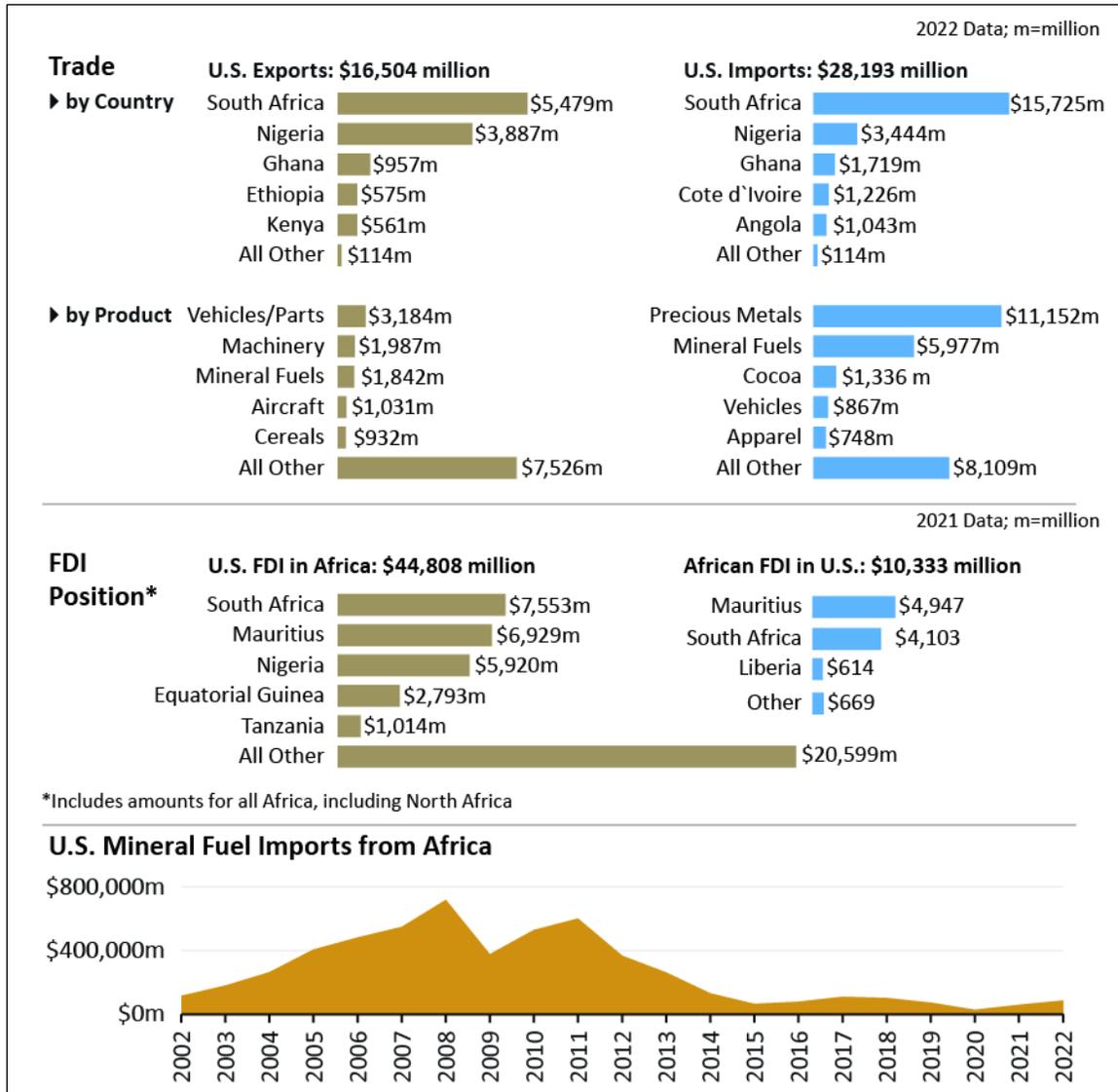
Africa accounts for a small share of overall U.S. trade and investment activity, making up roughly 1-2% of U.S. international trade and of U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) transactions, on average, in the past decade.<sup>118</sup> U.S. goods exports to Africa totaled \$18.6 billion in value in 2022, led by mineral fuels, vehicles and parts, machinery, aircraft, and cereals (see **Figure 3**). South Africa and Nigeria were the top U.S. export markets in Africa in 2022, accounting for more than half of the value of U.S. exports to the region. African exports to the United States totaled \$31.3 billion in 2022, led by metals, mineral fuels, apparel, and cocoa. South Africa, consistently the leading African exporter to the United States, accounted for almost half the value of such imports.

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<sup>117</sup> In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Res. 261 would express “strong support” for the AfCFTA.

<sup>118</sup> CRS calculation based on trade and investment data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis’ “International Data” interactive tables, at <https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/?ReqID=62&step=1>. BEA data for Africa include North Africa.

**Figure 3. U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment**



**Source:** CRS graphic, based on data from U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) Databe; BEA, U.S. Direct Investment Position Abroad on a Historical-Cost Basis: Country Detail by Industry, 2021; and BEA, Foreign Direct Investment in the United States: Position by Detailed Country, 2020-2021.

**Notes:** U.S. export figures reflect total Free Alongside Ship (FAS) value of total exports. U.S. import figures reflect general customs value of general imports. FDI outflow and inflow data include North Africa, due to data availability issues. Mineral fuel import data represent general customs value of general imports for HTS Code 27 (Mineral Fuels, Mineral Oils and Products of their Distillation; Bituminous Substances; Mineral Waxes).

There is limited public information on the distribution of U.S. FDI in sub-Saharan Africa. According to U.S. Department of Commerce data, U.S. FDI stock in Africa has hovered at around \$35 billion since 2010.<sup>119</sup> South Africa, Mauritius, and Nigeria are the top destinations of U.S.

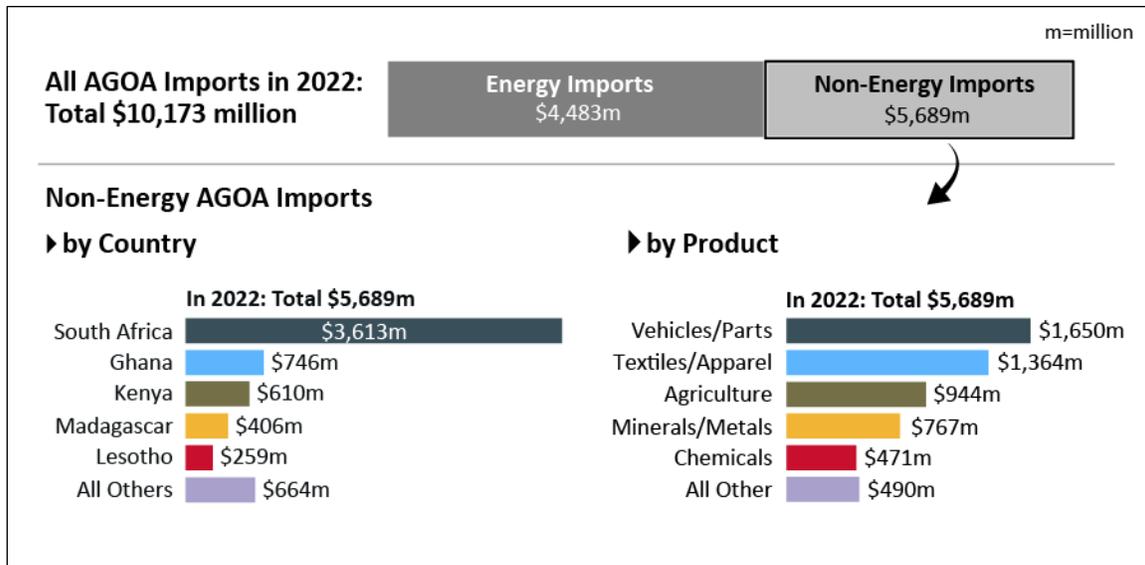
<sup>119</sup> USTR, *2022 Biennial Report on the Implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act*, 2022; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), "Direct Investment Position on a Historical-Cost Basis by Detailed Country."

FDI in the region. Mining, including oil and gas extraction, is the top target industry of U.S. FDI in Africa, followed by manufacturing, holding companies, finance, and wholesale trade.<sup>120</sup>

**African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).** A cornerstone of U.S.-Africa trade policy, AGOA (P.L. 106-200, as amended), established a nonreciprocal U.S. trade preference program that provides duty-free access to the U.S. market for most exports from eligible sub-Saharan African countries.<sup>121</sup> U.S. imports under AGOA totaled \$10.2 billion in value in 2022 (see **Figure 4**). Crude oil (primarily from Nigeria) is consistently the leading import under the program. South Africa exports the broadest range of products under the program, including motor vehicles, minerals, chemicals, and agricultural products. Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Ethiopia are other top beneficiaries. Congress extended AGOA’s authorization through September 2025 in the Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-27). Looking ahead, Members may consider whether, and with what (if any) possible changes, to reauthorize the program beyond 2025.

As of June 2023, 35 countries were eligible for AGOA.<sup>122</sup> President Biden has terminated AGOA preferences for four countries: Ethiopia (in 2022) for gross human rights violations, and Mali (2022), Guinea (2022), and Burkina Faso (2023) after military coups. Some Members have debated the Administration’s termination of Ethiopia’s AGOA benefits.<sup>123</sup> Some have separately called for other countries to be suspended from the program, for various reasons.<sup>124</sup>

**Figure 4. AGOA Trade Statistics, 2021**



**Source:** CRS graphic based on data from USITC, U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade Data Tables, available at <https://dataweb.usitc.gov/trade-data-reports/sub-saharan-africa/trade-data>, accessed May 8, 2023.

**Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Negotiations and Other Frameworks.** The United States does not have an FTA with any country in sub-Saharan Africa. The Trump Administration made

<sup>120</sup> BEA, “Direct Investment by Country and Industry, 2021,” July 21, 2022.

<sup>121</sup> CRS In Focus IF10149, *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)*.

<sup>122</sup> A list of AGOA-eligible countries is available at <https://agoa.info/about-agoa/country-eligibility.html>.

<sup>123</sup> Sen. Risch and Rep. McCaul, “Risch, McCaul Urge Government of Ethiopia to Take Action to Retain AGOA Benefits,” October 26, 2021; letter from Sen. Van Hollen and Rep. Bass to President Biden, December 21, 2021; and letter from Rep. Beyer to the U.S. Trade Representative, November 18, 2022.

<sup>124</sup> See, e.g., Senate Finance Committee, “Wyden Statement on Uganda Anti-LGBTQI+ Law,” May 30, 2023.

reciprocal trade negotiations a priority of its trade policy with Africa and, in 2020, launched FTA negotiations with Kenya.<sup>125</sup> The Biden Administration undertook a review of the proposal, and later announced a U.S.-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP), a platform for “enhanced cooperation” toward “high standard commitments,” in lieu of pursuing a free trade agreement that would address market access.<sup>126</sup> In 2022, USTR reported that Mauritius had stated interest in an FTA with the United States, and that USTR was reviewing the proposal.<sup>127</sup>

Congress would have to approve any comprehensive trade agreements through implementing legislation. Past U.S. FTA negotiations with African countries have faced hurdles, including concerns on the part of African governments over the extensive nature of U.S. FTAs—such as with respect to the scope of tariff liberalization or level of protections for intellectual property rights—and over how a bilateral FTA may affect efforts toward regional integration.<sup>128</sup> According to USTR, “most African countries have focused on advocating for an additional renewal of AGOA, as opposed to seeking other high standard reciprocal trade agreements.”<sup>129</sup>

The United States also has completed or made efforts toward negotiating several other types of trade and investment agreements with countries in the region, including 16 Trade and Investment Framework Agreements (TIFAs) and nine bilateral investment treaties (BITs). TIFAs aim to provide a forum for high-level engagement on trade and investment issues with the goal of reducing barriers and expanding market opportunities. BITs aim to protect U.S. FDI and promote economic growth by advancing nondiscriminatory rules and other market-oriented policies.

## Selected Congressional Engagement

**Hearings.** Congress has held numerous hearings examining economic and development issues in Africa and exploring opportunities to strengthen U.S.-Africa trade and investment.<sup>130</sup> Congress also has examined broader trends or challenges facing African economies and publics, covering such issues as climate change and the region’s rapidly growing youth population.<sup>131</sup>

**Resolutions.** Congress also addresses topics related to economic and development conditions in Africa and U.S.-Africa trade and investment through resolutions. In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, for instance, S. 158 would seek to increase U.S. exports to Africa, while H.Res. 261 would express support for implementation of the AfCFTA, among other provisions.

**Foreign Assistance.** The State Department and USAID administer most U.S. economic and development assistance for Africa. Agriculture and food security aid is often the largest sub-sector

<sup>125</sup> See CRS In Focus IF11526, *U.S.-Kenya FTA Negotiations*. AGOA directs the executive branch to pursue “reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade agreements,” possibly including FTAs, with African countries.

<sup>126</sup> USTR, “United States and Kenya Announce the Launch of the U.S.-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership,” July 14, 2022.

<sup>127</sup> *2022 Biennial Report on the Implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act*, p. 82.

<sup>128</sup> For a thorough discussion, see the Obama Administration report, USTR, *Beyond AGOA*, September 2016.

<sup>129</sup> *2022 Biennial Report on the Implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act*, p. 82.

<sup>130</sup> See, for instance, HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights, *Understanding the African Continental Free Trade Area and How the U.S. Can Promote Its Success*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., April 27, 2022; SFRC Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, *U.S. Trade and Investment in Africa*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., July 28, 2021; and House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, *Strengthening the U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment Relationship*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., November 17, 2021.

<sup>131</sup> HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights, *The Effects of Climate Change in Africa*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., April 27, 2021; and HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, *The Youth Bulge in Africa: Considerations for U.S. Policy*, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., February 13, 2020.

of such assistance, channeled primarily via Feed the Future (FTF), a global food security effort.<sup>132</sup> Prosper Africa, a USAID-led initiative launched in 2019, is the primary vehicle for U.S. trade and investment aid for Africa. It seeks to facilitate commercial deals, promote market opportunities, and coordinate the services of 17 U.S. federal departments and agencies with development and trade and investment promotion mandates. Trade capacity-building is another emphasis of U.S. trade and investment aid for Africa, with activities to increase use of AGOA; foster intra-regional trade, notably in staple foods; reduce trade barriers; enhance business climates; and promote regional integration.<sup>133</sup> The United States has committed to support the development of the AfCFTA under an MOU signed between the USTR and the AfCFTA Secretariat.<sup>134</sup>

U.S. economic assistance for Africa also includes support for climate change adaptation, natural resource management, and energy generation—the latter under Power Africa, an electrification effort. Other agencies that support economic growth or trade and investment in Africa include the Commerce and Treasury Departments, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF), and the U.S. Development Finance Corporation.<sup>135</sup>

Annual SFOPS appropriations measures generally stipulate funding for the USADF and for U.S. contributions to the African Development Bank (AfDB), a multilateral financial institution. Otherwise, SFOPS bills generally provide economic and development assistance funds on a global (versus region- or country-specific) basis, though they may include provisos and directives pertaining to development assistance for Africa. For instance, the FY2023 SFOPS appropriations act (Division K of P.L. 117-328) directs “not less than” \$260 million for clean energy programs, “including in support of... implementing the Power Africa initiative.”

Authorization bills that have shaped U.S. economic aid for Africa include the Electrify Africa Act (P.L. 114-121), which established a framework for Power Africa, and the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act of 2018 (BUILD Act, P.L. 115-254), which established the U.S. Development Finance Corporation. The Global Food Security Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-195) reauthorized through 2028 as part of the FY2023 NDAA (P.L. 117-263, Section 5588 of Title LV, Subtitle G) endorsed an approach to U.S. food security aid similar to FTF. In the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.R. 6455 would have codified Prosper Africa.

**Reporting Requests and Requirements.** Congress has requested or required that the executive branch submit reports on development and economic issues in Africa and U.S.-Africa trade and investment relations. AGOA’s 2015 reauthorization required USTR to report biennially on U.S.-Africa trade and investment relations; the most recent report was submitted in 2022.<sup>136</sup> In 2022, the House Committee on Ways and Means requested that the Administration report on the AGOA program and specific industries in AGOA beneficiary countries.<sup>137</sup> The FY2023 SFOPS

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<sup>132</sup> Of 20 FTF priority countries globally, 16 are in Africa: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

<sup>133</sup> For much of the two past decades, USAID-administered trade hubs in Southern, East, and West Africa pursued such activities, but only the latter remains in operation. Such activity is now pursued, in part, under Prosper Africa, the regional USAID Africa Trade and Investment (ATI) program, and other programs.

<sup>134</sup> See CRS Report R47197, *African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Overview and Issues for Congress*.

<sup>135</sup> CRS In Focus IF11016, *U.S. Trade Policy Functions: Who Does What?*.

<sup>136</sup> USTR. *2022 Biennial Report on the Implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act*, 2022. In 2022, the House Committee on Ways and Means requested that the Administration report on the AGOA program and specific industries in AGOA beneficiary countries; see USITC, *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA): Program Usage, Trends, and Sectoral Highlights*, March 2023.

<sup>137</sup> USITC, *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA): Program Usage, Trends, and Sectoral Highlights*, 2023.

appropriations act (Division K of P.L. 117-328) subjects funds allocated for Prosper Africa and Power Africa to “the regular notification procedures of the Committees on Appropriations.”

## Global Health

Albeit to varying degrees, African countries have made strides in public health provision over the past three decades. According to World Bank data, between 1990 and 2020, on average, the region’s neonatal mortality rate fell by nearly 40% and under-five mortality rate fell by half, while its average maternal mortality rate fell by one-third between 2000 and 2020.<sup>138</sup> On the whole, however, African countries continue to have the lowest life expectancy at birth, highest infant and maternal mortality rates, and largest cumulative malaria burden, accounting for 95% of global malaria cases.<sup>139</sup> Many of the countries with the highest rates of HIV infection and prevalence are in Africa.<sup>140</sup> Tuberculosis (TB) detection and treatment has increased in Africa since 2000, leading to a decline in TB deaths, but TB incidence remains high in the region, which is on par with Southeast Asia as the region with the highest TB incidence.<sup>141</sup> Among public health issues in Africa, Congress has been especially concerned with:

**HIV/AIDS.** With U.S. and other donor support, African countries have recorded large declines in new HIV infections in the past two decades. Nonetheless, sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2021, the region accounted for almost 60% of new global HIV infections, 82% of girls and young women newly infected with HIV, and almost 85% of new mother-to-child transmissions.<sup>142</sup> East and Southern Africa have the highest sub-regional burden, with an estimated 21 million people living with HIV.<sup>143</sup> HIV/AIDS assistance is consistently the largest category of U.S. aid for Africa, provided under the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which the George W. Bush Administration launched in 2003 with bipartisan congressional support. PEPFAR reports that its programming has saved 25 million lives and helped 5.5 million babies to be born HIV-free worldwide.<sup>144</sup>

**Ebola and other Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers.** In the past decade, there have been major outbreaks of Ebola, an often-fatal viral hemorrhagic fever, in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, 2014-2016) and DRC (2018-2020), with smaller outbreaks identified and contained in DRC and Uganda.<sup>145</sup> More limited outbreaks of Marburg virus, another viral hemorrhagic fever that is similar to Ebola, have been recorded in several African countries, including in Ghana (2022), Equatorial Guinea (2023), and Tanzania (2023).<sup>146</sup>

**Malaria.** Malaria, a life-threatening but usually curable disease caused by parasites transmitted through bites by infected mosquitoes, is a leading cause of death in Africa, particularly among children. In 2021, Africa accounted for around 95% of the estimated 247 million malaria cases worldwide, and for approximately 96% of global malaria deaths; almost 45% of all global malaria

<sup>138</sup> CRS calculations based on World Bank Databank, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/>.

<sup>139</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), *World Health Statistics 2023: Monitoring Health for the SDGs*, 2023.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> WHO, *Global Tuberculosis Report 2022*, 2022.

<sup>142</sup> UNAIDS, *In Danger: UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022*, 2022, pp. 32 and 54.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> PEPFAR, “Latest Global Program Results, December 2022,” 2022.

<sup>145</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “History of Ebola Outbreaks,” accessed June 16, 2023.

<sup>146</sup> CDC, “Marburg Virus Disease Outbreaks,” accessed June 16, 2023.

deaths in 2021 occurred in Nigeria and DRC alone.<sup>147</sup> The U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI), launched in 2005, is the primary channel for U.S. malaria-related bilateral assistance for Africa. In April 2023, the U.S. Global Malaria Coordinator announced the expansion of PMI to three new countries—Burundi, Gambia, and Togo—which will bring the total number of African PMI focus countries to 27, out of 30 focus countries globally.<sup>148</sup> According to USAID, more than 700 million people benefit from PMI programming each year.<sup>149</sup>

**Maternal and Child Health.** Africa countries’ average maternal and child health indicators rank among the worst globally. As a region, Africa accounted for around 70% of global maternal deaths—deaths that occur during pregnancy, at delivery, or soon after delivery—in 2020 (latest comprehensive estimates).<sup>150</sup> Obstetric hemorrhage, hypertension, infection, and indirect causes (e.g., linked to preexisting conditions) are primary causes of such deaths. South Sudan had the world’s highest maternal mortality rate as of 2020, followed by Chad and Nigeria.<sup>151</sup> Africa also has the highest neonatal mortality rates (often linked to preterm birth, birthing complications, infections, and birth defects) and under-five mortality rates (with pneumonia, malaria, and diarrhea among the lead causes).<sup>152</sup> According to WHO, “children in sub-Saharan Africa are more than 14 times more likely to die before the age of 5 than children in developed regions.”<sup>153</sup>

**COVID-19 and Health System Capacity.**<sup>154</sup> Overall, Africa has confirmed far fewer COVID-19 cases and deaths per capita than other regions, though studies suggest that cases, and to a lesser extent mortality, have been undercounted in the region.<sup>155</sup> Reported cases have been concentrated in a few countries, led by South Africa, where testing rates have also been higher. Demographic and other factors may have limited the virus’s toll in Africa. Still, COVID-19 exposed and aggravated health care system capacity gaps in the region, which has the lowest density of health workers globally and among the world’s lowest rates of public health spending per capita.<sup>156</sup> Inadequate cold storage (owing to electricity deficits) and poor infrastructure have impeded vaccine administration in Africa. COVID-19 also underscored inequities in global access to vaccines. Despite efforts to spur local production, African countries generally lack vaccine manufacturing capacity and were unable to compete with wealthier countries to procure doses during initial vaccine rollouts—which some African leaders decried as “vaccine apartheid.”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> WHO, *World Health Statistics 2023: Monitoring Health for the SDGs*. On causes of death in Africa, see WHO, “Cause-specific mortality, 2000–2019,” database, accessed June 16, 2023.

<sup>148</sup> PMI, “U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative Announces Plans to Expand to New Partner Countries,” April 25, 2023. President Trump extended PMI to include Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, and Sierra Leone.

<sup>149</sup> USAID, “U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative,” accessed July 14, 2023.

<sup>150</sup> WHO, *Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020: estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division*, 2023.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> WHO, “Children in Africa: Key statistics on child survival and population,” (January 9, 2019) and “Newborn Mortality,” (January 28, 2022).

<sup>153</sup> WHO, “Child health,” accessed June 16, 2023.

<sup>154</sup> CRS In Focus IF11532, *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Impact in Africa*.

<sup>155</sup> WHO, “COVID-19 Dashboard: Situation by Region, Country, Territory & Area,” accessed June 16, 2023.

<sup>156</sup> WHO, *The State of the Health Workforce in the WHO African Region*, 2021; World Bank, “Current health expenditure per capita (current US\$),” data as of 2020, accessed June 16, 2023.

<sup>157</sup> Pia Sarkar, “‘Vaccine apartheid’: Africans tell UN they need vaccines,” Associated Press, September 23, 2021.

## Selected Congressional Engagement

**Hearings.** Congress has held numerous hearings on public health challenges in Africa and U.S. responses. Recent Congresses have considered such issues as the 2018-2020 Ebola outbreak in DRC, COVID-19 in Africa, vaccine production capacity, and the global HIV/AIDS epidemic.<sup>158</sup> State Department and USAID budget hearings also have provided Members with opportunities to examine and express views on health challenges in Africa and U.S. responses.

**Resolutions.** Members regularly introduce resolutions on global health issues that pertain to Africa, often recognizing or expressing support for efforts to address particular diseases or other health challenges. In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, for instance, Members have considered resolutions related to HIV/AIDS and PEPFAR (S.Res. 139) and malaria (S.Res. 170).

**Foreign Assistance.** Congress first authorized appropriations in support of PEPFAR in the “Leadership Act” of 2003 (P.L. 108-25) and has since enacted several bills reauthorizing or reshaping global HIV/AIDS assistance—most recently including the PEPFAR Extension Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-305), which extended several provisions through 2023.<sup>159</sup> As Congress continues to consider PEPFAR’s potential reauthorization, it may consider what changes, if any, to make to the program.<sup>160</sup> Separately, bills under consideration in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (S. 288 and H.R. 1776) would authorize activities to combat tuberculosis, with possible implications for aid for Africa.

Health assistance is consistently the largest sector of State Department- and USAID-administered aid for Africa, regularly comprising 70-75% of annual allocations for the region. In FY2022, U.S. bilateral health assistance for Africa totaled approximately \$5.84 billion. HIV/AIDS assistance under PEPFAR often comprises approximately half of all U.S. aid allocated for Africa in a given fiscal year. Other U.S. health assistance for Africa aims to combat malaria, address maternal, child, and reproductive health issues, strengthen infectious-disease preparedness and response capacities, and improve water and sanitation service, among other activities. Congress also has appropriated emergency assistance in response to disease outbreaks in the region.

**Reporting and Consultation Requirements.** Congress has required the executive branch to report or consult with Congress on global health issues and U.S. responses, including in Africa. For example, bills authorizing U.S. assistance for HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria programs have included reporting requirements to enable congressional oversight of such programming.<sup>161</sup> Congress also has requested the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate U.S. health aid, including programs in Africa.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, *Confronting Ebola: Addressing a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Health Crisis*, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., July 24, 2019; HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights, *Update on COVID-19 in Africa*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., March 17, 2021; SFRC, *PEPFAR at 20: Achieving and Sustaining Epidemic Control*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., April 19, 2023.

<sup>159</sup> See CRS In Focus IF10797, *PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act: Expiring Authorities* and CRS In Focus IF11758, *U.S. Global Health Funding: FY2020-FY2023 Appropriations*.

<sup>160</sup> In an April 2023 hearing on PEPFAR, SFRC leadership and other Members voiced support for PEPFAR’s reauthorization. See SFRC, *PEPFAR at 20: Achieving and Sustaining Epidemic Control*.

<sup>161</sup> See reporting requirements in P.L. 108-25, P.L. 110-293, P.L. 113-56, and P.L. 115-305.

<sup>162</sup> See, among others, GAO, *Global Health Assistance: USAID Has Faced Implementation Challenges Related to U.S. Policy and COVID-19*, 2022; and GAO, *Global Health Assistance: Awardees’ Declinations of U.S. Planned Funding Due to Abortion-Related Restrictions*, 2020.

# Global Power Competition in Africa

## The People's Republic of China (PRC, or China)

Since the creation of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, the PRC has dramatically expanded its trade, investment, and financial ties with African countries, including through the export of PRC services, notably in the construction sector. Such activity is often financed with credit from PRC state lenders and tied to procurements of PRC goods and services. China also has expanded its political, military, and development cooperation with the region, including through cultural, educational, and training exchanges with African countries.

China overtook the United States as Africa's top trade partner in 2009; as of 2020/2021, two-way trade between the PRC and Africa was roughly quadruple the value of U.S.-Africa trade.<sup>163</sup> In 2021, South Africa, Angola, and DRC were Africa's top exporters to China; Nigeria and South Africa were the top importers of PRC-origin products.<sup>164</sup> Fuels, minerals, metals, and precious stones have ranked among Africa's top exports to the PRC in the past decade, while machinery, textiles and apparel, and metals have been Africa's top imports from China.<sup>165</sup> Nearly all African countries have signed cooperation memoranda under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to develop China-centered and -controlled global infrastructure, transport, trade, and production networks.<sup>166</sup>

Some aspects of PRC economic engagement in Africa, such as infrastructure construction and investment, may contribute to meeting development needs in the region. U.S. officials have raised concerns over the governance, environmental, and human-rights implications of PRC engagement in some countries, however. The PRC's pursuit of its goals in Africa may also pose strategic challenges for the United States. Issues that have attracted attention in Congress include

**Military Engagement and Basing.** China has been a top supplier of arms to Africa, alongside Russia (on the latter, see below).<sup>167</sup> The PRC has been involved in multilateral counterpiracy efforts off the Horn of Africa since 2008, China is among the top ten troop contributors to U.N. peacekeeping operations, most of which are in Africa.<sup>168</sup> China has provided training for African military and police personnel in some countries, and opened a military training school in Tanzania in 2018.<sup>169</sup> China also engages in military diplomacy, including military exercises, naval port calls, and senior level meetings.

In 2017, China established its first overseas military base, in Djibouti, several miles from Camp Lemonnier. AFRICOM reported to Congress in 2021 that China had expanded the facility to

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<sup>163</sup> CRS calculation based on data from World Bank WITS Database, accessed July 14, 2023; see also Reuters, "Biden says U.S. is 'all in' on Africa's future," December 15, 2022. For a historical overview of U.S. and PRC trade with Africa, see GAO, *Sub-Saharan Africa: Trends in U.S., and Chinese Economic Engagement*, 2013.

<sup>164</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, *A New Horizon for Africa-China Relations: Why Co-Operation will be Essential*, 2022.

<sup>165</sup> Data from the World Bank World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS) database, accessed June 14, 2023.

<sup>166</sup> See CRS In Focus IF11735, *China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative: Economic Issues*.

<sup>167</sup> According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data, China was sub-Saharan Africa's second-largest arms supplier from 2018-2022, after Russia. SIPRI, *Trends in International Arms Transfers*, 2022, 2023.

<sup>168</sup> U.N. Peacekeeping, "Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Mission, Country, and Personnel Type," March 31, 2023.

<sup>169</sup> Paul Nantulya, "China's Policing Models Make Inroads in Africa," ACCSS, May 22, 2023; *China Military* [a People's Liberation Army news outlet], "Chinese-built military training centre opens in Tanzania," February 14, 2018.

support aircraft carriers.<sup>170</sup> DOD has reported that China may be seeking to establish additional military facilities in Africa, possibly along the western Atlantic coast.<sup>171</sup> In 2023, AFRICOM Commander Langley stated that a PRC military base on Africa’s western coast “would change the whole calculus of the geostrategic global campaign plans of protecting the homeland” and “geostrategically put [the PRC] at an advantage.”<sup>172</sup> U.S. military officials indicated as of early 2022 that PRC outreach had had “the most traction” in Equatorial Guinea, although few developments have been publicly reported since then.<sup>173</sup>

**Critical Minerals.** Successive Administrations have identified PRC influence over global “critical mineral” supply chains as a U.S. national security and economic challenge.<sup>174</sup> China is a top destination for Africa’s raw mineral exports and hosts mineral processing facilities that are crucial to global market supplies. China’s “dominant position” in DRC’s cobalt industry, which accounted for around 70% of global cobalt mined production as of 2022, has spurred particular alarm among U.S. policymakers.<sup>175</sup> (Cobalt is a key ingredient in electric car batteries, among other industrial applications. The Biden Administration designated cobalt as one of a number of “critical minerals” in 2022.<sup>176</sup>) DRC also holds reserves of lithium (another designated critical mineral) and, along with Zambia, is a top global producer of copper—not a designated critical mineral, but vital to some clean energy technologies. PRC firms hold mining concessions and exploration rights in other African countries, notably Guinea, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

**Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and “Digital Authoritarianism.”** PRC firms such as Huawei and ZTE have played lead roles in financing and building many African countries’ ICT infrastructure, including 5G wireless, internet backbone, and government cloud infrastructure systems.<sup>177</sup> PRC firms dominate African cell phone markets, and also are the main implementers of “smart city” projects—which ostensibly aim to leverage technology to improve state services but are sometimes associated, in practice, with artificial intelligence-enabled state surveillance systems.<sup>178</sup> This activity has spurred concerns over data protection and privacy, and over the potential for PRC ICT exports to aid authoritarian practices in Africa.<sup>179</sup> Such activities may also pose espionage risks to U.S. commercial firms and government assets in the region.

**Debt Issues.** PRC lending to Africa is often opaque: both PRC lenders and African governments reportedly often underreport debt, loan terms, and other information.<sup>180</sup> This opacity can restrict

<sup>170</sup> U.S. Naval Institute, “AFRICOM: Chinese Naval Base in Africa Set to Support Aircraft Carriers,” April 20, 2021.

<sup>171</sup> See, e.g., DOD, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China*, 2021 and 2022.

<sup>172</sup> Testimony by AFRICOM Commander Gen. Michael Langley in SASC, “To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States Central Command and United States Africa Command.”

<sup>173</sup> Former AFRICOM Commander Townsend in HASC, “National Security Challenges And U.S. Military Activities In The Greater Middle East And Africa,” 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., March 17, 2022. See also Michael Phillips, “China seeks first military base on Africa’s Atlantic Coast, U.S. intelligence finds,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 5, 2021.

<sup>174</sup> White House, “FACT SHEET: Securing a Made in America Supply Chain for Critical Minerals,” February 22, 2022.

<sup>175</sup> White House, *Building Resilient Supply Chains, Revitalizing American Manufacturing, and Fostering Broad-Based Growth*, June 2021.

<sup>176</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, “U.S. Geological Survey Releases 2022 List of Critical Minerals,” February 22, 2022.

<sup>177</sup> See, e.g., Jonathan E. Hillman and Maesea McCalpin, “Huawei’s Global Cloud Strategy: Economic and Strategic Implications,” Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), May 17, 2021.

<sup>178</sup> See, e.g., Alice Ekman, “Smart Cities: The new geopolitical battleground,” French Institute of International Relations, December 2019.

<sup>179</sup> Voice of America, “China’s Reach Into Africa’s Digital Sector Worries Experts,” October 22, 2021.

<sup>180</sup> On PRC lending patterns and practices, see Anna Gelpern et al., *How China Lends: A Rare Look into 100 Debt Contracts with Foreign Governments*, Peterson Institute for International Economics, Kiel Institute for the World (continued...)

the ability of other lenders—including U.S.-funded international financial institutions—to assess outstanding debt, and African countries’ ability to repay it, in deciding to lend or restructure debt.

Some Members and other U.S. officials have at times accused China of predatory lending and “debt trap diplomacy,” a framing that independent analysts have debated.<sup>181</sup> China has in some cases canceled debts owed by African governments, and in 2020 joined the Group of 20 (G20) Debt Service Suspension Initiative, a U.S.-backed suspension of debt repayments amid COVID-19. More recently, African, U.S., and international financial institution officials have appeared to accuse China of delaying debt relief for debt distressed countries, such as Zambia and Ghana.<sup>182</sup>

**Corruption, Environmental Crime, and Labor Abuses.** Local news reports have documented multiple individual cases of corruption linked to PRC commercial activity in the region, but comprehensive studies are limited. Researchers also have accused PRC firms of labor abuses and environmental crime in several African countries. Some human rights activists have accused PRC firms operating or exploiting mines in DRC that use child labor.<sup>183</sup> Advocates also have alleged a range of ecologically exploitative practices by PRC actors in Africa, including illicit, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, especially in West Africa; illegal and unsustainable logging and timber trafficking; wildlife crime; and polluting mining activities in a number of countries.<sup>184</sup>

#### Public Perceptions of PRC Engagement in Africa

Polling by Afrobarometer, a regional nongovernmental survey institution that receives U.S. support, indicates that public perceptions of China are broadly comparable to those of the United States in the region, notwithstanding (in some cases significant) differences within particular countries—as in Cameroon, where public opinion heavily favors China, and Ghana, where public opinion favors the United States.<sup>185</sup> Preliminary results of Afrobarometer’s most recent survey, released in April 2023, suggest that positive perceptions of both the United States and China declined between 2019 and 2022 in many countries.<sup>186</sup> Polling does not indicate a direct link between alleged illicit or exploitative economic practices by PRC-based actors and public sentiment. For instance, despite the reported involvement of PRC-based firms in IUU fishing and illicit mining in Ghana, Freedom House reports that “most Ghanaians are not overly critical toward the Chinese government and instead hold the Ghanaian government primarily responsible for poor judgment regarding investments that have come at a high cost to the country.”<sup>187</sup>

Economy, Center for Global Development, and AidData at William & Mary, 2021; and Oyintarelado Moses et al., *Demystifying Chinese Overseas Lending and Development Finance*, Boston University Global China Initiative, 2023.

<sup>181</sup> See HFAC, “China Regional Snapshot: Exposing the CCP’s Global Malign Influence,” 2022; and remarks by General Michael Langley in SASC, *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States Central Command and United States Africa Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2024*. For one criticism of such framing, see Chatham House, *Debunking the Myth of ‘Debt-trap Diplomacy’: How Recipient Countries Shape China’s Belt and Road Initiative*, 2020.

<sup>182</sup> Department of the Treasury, “Remarks by Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen at Press Conference as Part of 2023 IMF-World Bank Annual Spring Meetings,” April 11, 2023; Christian Akorlie and Cooper Inveen, “China must join Ghana debt restructuring effort soon, Germany’s Lindner says,” Reuters, February 4, 2023; Andrea Shalal, “Georgieva says she told China to ‘speed up’ work on debt restructuring,” Reuters, April 6, 2023.

<sup>183</sup> TLHRC, “Child Labor and Human Rights Violations in the Mining Industry of the Democratic Republic of Congo.”

<sup>184</sup> CRS In Focus IF11923, *Wildlife Poaching and Trafficking in Africa: An Overview*; CRS Report R47065, *China’s Role in the Exploitation of Global Fisheries: Issues for Congress*.

<sup>185</sup> Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny and Edem Selormey (Afrobarometer), “Africans welcome China’s influence but maintain democratic aspirations,” Dispatch No. 489, November 15, 2021. See also preliminary results of the most recent round of Afrobarometer polling, shared via the organization’s official Twitter page (@afrobarometer), at <https://twitter.com/afrobarometer/status/1650859906193555456>, April 25, 2023.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Freedom House, *Beijing’s Global Media Influence 2022: Ghana*, 2022.

## Russia

Following a period of relative disengagement after the end of the Cold War, Russia has cultivated military, political, and economic partnerships in Africa, building in part on legacies of Soviet-era ties. Russia's engagement still remains limited compared to that of China. Russia's defense and security relations in the region include military cooperation agreements, arms sales, and the deployment of nominally "private" military companies (PMCs), notably the Wagner Group, that U.S. officials assert have close ties to the Russian government. The implications of the Wagner Group's June 2023 abortive mutiny in Russia on Wagner's operations in Africa are not yet clear.

Russia also exports fuel, cereals, equipment, and fertilizer to African countries, and Russian firms are active in the region's mining and energy sectors. U.S. officials have characterized Russia's approach to Africa as destabilizing, exploitative, and abusive, expressing particular concern over the Wagner Group's activities.<sup>188</sup> Key areas of Russia-Africa engagement include

**Official Military Cooperation and Arms Sales.** According to publicly available data compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Russia was Africa's top arms supplier in 2018-2022, supplying roughly a quarter of the region's arms imports; Angola, Mali, and Nigeria were the top regional importers of Russian arms during the period.<sup>189</sup> In the past decade, Russia has signed numerous military cooperation agreements with governments in Africa, some of which preceded the arrival of Russian military advisors or increased military sales.

**PMCs: The Wagner Group.**<sup>190</sup> The Wagner Group, founded by state-connected businessperson and U.S. sanctions designee Yevgeny Prigozhin, has expanded its presence in Africa over the past six years. As of May 2023, Wagner was active in CAR, Mali, and Sudan (as well as Libya), and had engaged in outreach to Burkina Faso and reportedly sought to destabilize pro-Western leaders elsewhere in Africa.<sup>191</sup> It had previously also been present in Mozambique, prior to suffering significant casualties at the hands of insurgents. The firm has been implicated in human rights abuses in Africa, including massacres and torture in CAR and Mali. In early 2023, the United States designated Wagner a Transnational Criminal Organization (TCO), citing, in part, its activities in Africa, and sanctioned several Africa-based individuals and entities linked to Wagner operations.<sup>192</sup> Wagner affiliates are reportedly active in mining and other commercial sectors. In January 2023, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland testified to Congress that Wagner's access to gold mines in Mali and CAR "directly funds" operations in Ukraine.<sup>193</sup>

**Extractive Industries.** Russian state-owned or -linked firms are active in the oil, natural gas, and mining sectors of multiple African countries. Some of these firms are subject to U.S. sanctions; examples include oil and gas corporation Lukoil (reportedly active in Cameroon, Republic of

<sup>188</sup> See, e.g., Testimony by AFRICOM Commander Gen. Michael Langley in SASC, "To Receive Testimony on the Posture of United States Central Command and United States Africa Command"; Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Russian Proxy Wagner Group as a Transnational Criminal Organization," January 26, 2023; and Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, "Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on Financing of Armed Groups and Terrorists Through the Illicit Trafficking of Natural Resources," U.S. Mission to the United Nations, October 6, 2022.

<sup>189</sup> CRS calculations, based on importer/exporter TIV tables in SIPRI Arms Transfers database, accessed May 3, 2023.

<sup>190</sup> CRS In Focus IF12389, *Russia's Wagner Group in Africa: Issues for Congress*; CRS In Focus IF12344, *Russia's Wagner Private Military Company (PMC)*.

<sup>191</sup> Wagner previously deployed personnel to Mozambique in 2019 to aid the government's counterinsurgency against the Islamist State affiliate there, but withdrew after heavy casualties.

<sup>192</sup> Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Russian Proxy Wagner Group as a Transnational Criminal Organization," January 26, 2023.

<sup>193</sup> SFRC, *Countering Russian Aggression: Ukraine and Beyond*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., January 26, 2023.

Congo, Ghana, and Nigeria) and diamond company Alrosa (active in Angola and Zimbabwe).<sup>194</sup> In Guinea, which holds the world’s largest reserves of bauxite (aluminum ore), aluminum giant Rusal operates several bauxite mines and the country’s only bauxite refinery. Russian involvement in gold mining in African countries—including Sudan, CAR, and Mali—has been of U.S. concern in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war and sanctions enforcement.

**Diplomacy.** Russia has announced plans for a high-level Russia-Africa summit in July 2023, after a similar summit in 2019. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has visited multiple African countries in 2023, including South Africa (which hosted joint naval exercises with Russia in February 2023), Sudan (where Russia seeks military basing rights), Mali, and Eritrea. Multiple African leaders have visited Moscow, including then-AU Chairperson Macky Sall, President of Senegal, in 2022. In June 2023, the presidents of Russia and Ukraine each hosted a delegation of African leaders seeking to facilitate Russia-Ukraine peace talks, seemingly to little effect.

Russia has sought to cultivate support among African countries in the United Nations, in which African states account for around one-quarter of total votes and hold three non-permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) on a rotating basis. Relative to other regions, African countries have abstained from U.S.-backed U.N. resolutions regarding Russia’s invasion of Ukraine at comparatively high rates (see **Text Box**). Russia has also sought to influence African regional institutions, notably the African Union, amid concerns over the negative impact of Russia’s war on Ukraine on African economies and food security.<sup>195</sup>

**African Votes on U.N. Resolutions Related to the Russia-Ukraine War**

In 2022, the UNSC voted on five resolutions concerning Ukraine. Of Africa’s three non-permanent UNSC members in 2022, two—Ghana and Kenya—voted with the United States on four motions<sup>196</sup> and abstained from one.<sup>197</sup> The third member, Gabon, voted with the United States on three resolutions, and abstained from two.<sup>198</sup> Gabon, Ghana, and Mozambique are the three African non-permanent UNSC members in 2023.

As of June 2023, the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) had voted on six U.S.-backed resolutions in emergency special sessions to examine the Russia-Ukraine war. As a region, sub-Saharan Africa has accounted for an outsize share of abstentions and no-votes on each measure (see **Table I**). For example, fewer than 20% of African governments voted in favor of suspending Russia from the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2022 (Resolution ES-11/3), compared to 48% globally, and 53% of African states (compared to 73% globally) voted in early 2023 in favor of calling for a “comprehensive, just and lasting peace” in Ukraine in line with the principles of the U.N. Charter, and demanding that Russia withdraw its military forces from Ukraine (ES-11/6). Regional abstentions and absenteeism on U.S.-backed U.N. resolutions related to Ukraine may partly reflect a common principle of nonalignment that dates to the Cold War. Russia’s veto power on the UNSC also makes it a potentially powerful ally for some governments (e.g., Eritrea) opposed to foreign intervention in their countries.

**Table I. African Countries’ Voting Record on U.S.-Backed UNGA Resolutions Related to Ukraine<sup>199</sup>**

UNGA Resolution	ES-11/1	ES-11/2	ES-11/3	ES-11/4	ES/11-5	ES/11-6
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<sup>194</sup> S&P Global, “Russia’s Lukoil keen to expand upstream presence in Africa: official,” October 6, 2022.

<sup>195</sup> See, e.g., France24, “African Union head Sall ‘reassured’ after talks with Putin on food shortages,” June 3, 2022.

<sup>196</sup> These were Resolution S/Res/2623 (adopted) and S/2022/155, S/2022/231, and S/2022/720 (not adopted).

<sup>197</sup> This was S/2022/821, a Russia-backed resolution related to debunked claims of U.S.-supported biological weapons labs in Ukraine.

<sup>198</sup> These were S/2022/821 (see footnote above) as well as S/2022/720, a resolution to condemn referenda on annexation in Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine.

<sup>199</sup> These resolutions were: ES/11-1 (Aggression against Ukraine); ES/11-2 (Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine); ES/11-3 (Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council); ES/11-4 (Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations); ES/11-5 (Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine); and ES/11-6 (Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine).

In Favor	25	24	9	26	15	26
Against	1	1	8	0	5	2
Abstain	16	19	22	18	23	14
Absent	7	5	10	5	6	7

**Source:** U.N. Digital Library at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/?ln=en>.

**Disinformation.** Russian entities such as the Prigozhin-financed Internet Research Agency (IRA) reportedly engage in disinformation campaigns in Africa and have been active in the context of several elections in the region. The State Department has sought to raise awareness of Russian disinformation and propaganda campaigns in Africa, including IRA support for pro-Russian social media activists in the region.<sup>200</sup>

## Selected Congressional Engagement

**Hearings.** Congress has held numerous hearings on PRC engagement in Africa and implications for U.S. interests.<sup>201</sup> China’s involvement in Africa also has been examined in hearings on global U.S.-China relations, including as it relates to access to critical minerals, China’s BRI, and human rights abuses attributed to the PRC government or PRC firms.<sup>202</sup> Congressional activity related to Russia’s involvement in Africa has centered on the Wagner Group’s expanding presence and the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war on food insecurity and price inflation in the region.<sup>203</sup>

**Legislation.** Congress has considered legislation pertaining to strategic competition with China and Russia, including in Africa. Among other measures, the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act (H.R. 7311), which passed the House in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress but did not advance in the Senate, would have required the State Department to create and report to Congress on a strategy outlining U.S. efforts to counter Russia’s malign influence in the region. Some African commentators criticized the bill, and similar U.S. diplomatic messaging related to Russia, as condescending and punitive, and as an encroachment on African autonomy; several southern African leaders, notably including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and other South African officials, publicly condemned the measure.<sup>204</sup> Supporters of the bill have stated that the measure was intended to curb Russia’s illicit activity in the region.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>200</sup> State Department, “Wagner Group, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, and Russia’s Disinformation in Africa,” May 24, 2022, and “Yevgeniy Prigozhin’s Africa-Wide Disinformation Campaign,” November 4, 2022.

<sup>201</sup> These include, in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, an April 2023 HFAC Subcommittee on Africa hearing entitled “Great Power Competition Implications in Africa: The Chinese Communist Party.” See also U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China’s Strategic Aims in Africa*, hearing, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., May 8, 2020.

<sup>202</sup> See, in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, “Dependence on Foreign Adversaries: America’s Critical Minerals Crisis,” 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., February 9, 2023.

<sup>203</sup> HFAC Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights, “Examining the Realities of Russian Activities and Influence in Africa and Its Effects on the Continent,” 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., July 14, 2022; SFRC Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, “Classified Briefing on Russian Activity Across Africa,” 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., December 15, 2022; and SFRC, “Global Food Security Crisis and the U.S. Response,” 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., July 20, 2022.

<sup>204</sup> Naledi Pandor, South Africa’s International Relations and Cooperation Minister, called H.R. 7311 “unfortunate” and “offensive.” State Department, “Secretary Antony J. Blinken and South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor at a Joint Press Availability,” August 8, 2022.

<sup>205</sup> Peter Fabricius, “US debates bill to counter ‘malign’ Russian activities in Africa,” Institute for Security Studies, May 20, 2022.

In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, companion measures S. 416 and H.R. 506 would urge the Secretary of State to designate the Wagner Group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), citing (in part) the group's activities in Africa. Separately, H.Res. 145 would express opposition to South Africa's hosting of military exercises with China and Russia in February 2023, among other purposes.

**Foreign Assistance.** Supplemental appropriations measures enacted by Congress in response to the Russia-Ukraine war have provided hundreds of millions of dollars in food security assistance for countries affected by the war. In early 2023, the Administration reported that it had allocated \$337 million to African countries in supplemental Economic Support Fund (ESF) aid provided under the FY2022 Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 117-128).<sup>206</sup>

**Reporting Requirements.** Congress has strengthened oversight of PRC and Russian activity in Africa and U.S. responses through reporting and consultation requirements. Among other efforts, in the FY2023 NDAA (P.L. 117-263), Section 1076 required the Administration report to Congress on the potential impacts of China or Russia establishing a naval facility in Africa, while Section 9718 required a report on countering "malign actors" in Africa, with case studies on Mali, Sudan, CAR, DRC, Burkina Faso, and South Sudan. Report language accompanying the most recent SFOPS appropriations measure (Division K of P.L. 117-328) required the Secretary of State to submit a report on PRC predominance in global rare earth minerals supply chains, and on efforts to work with countries in Africa (and other global regions) to develop such minerals.

## Outlook and Issues for Congress

A range of issues related to governance, security, economic and development trends, and global geopolitics in Africa have attracted sustained interest from Congress and may continue to shape policy, budgetary, and oversight priorities in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**In the governance realm,** a trend of democratic backsliding and military seizures of power has frustrated U.S. democracy promotion aims in Africa and complicated U.S. security cooperation with several governments. Members may consider whether U.S. responses to such challenges are adequate and effective, and weigh the benefits and risks of engagement or disengagement with undemocratic or military-led governments in Africa. Congress also may continue to oversee and debate the scope, effectiveness, and application of targeted sanctions or restrictions on U.S. engagement with particular countries related to poor governance and human rights abuses.

**Regarding geopolitics,** the involvement of China and Russia in Africa, and the threats that such engagement may pose for U.S. national security and commercial interests, are likely to attract sustained congressional attention. China's and Russia's military basing aspirations have been a central concern for U.S. policymakers, as has the involvement of Russian state-connected military contractors in several African countries. How the United States might counter these activities without inflaming sensitivities on the part of African leaders who have expressed reluctance to choose one foreign partner over another is a central dilemma.

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<sup>206</sup> State Department, CBJ for FY2024, Supplementary Tables, pp. 12-13.

**In the security realm,** Members may continue to monitor armed Islamist violence in parts of Africa, the status of conflicts or peace efforts in particular African countries (including DRC, Ethiopia, and Sudan), and the shifting footprint of foreign partners, notably France. Debate may persist over how to approach security cooperation with military juntas in the region, and with key partners that have been credibly implicated in security force abuses. Oversight of U.S. military activities in Africa may also remain a priority for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, amid Member scrutiny of the legal authorization for U.S. military action in Africa, the human rights safeguards in place for U.S. partner forces, and civilian harm from U.S. strikes in Somalia. Interest in Global Fragility Act implementation in coastal West Africa and Mozambique is also likely to continue.

**In the health domain,** Congress is considering the potential reauthorization of PEPFAR, the global HIV/AIDS program that reshaped U.S.-Africa engagement in the 2000s and continues to account for the majority of U.S. aid to Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic and other public health emergencies in the region (e.g., outbreaks of Ebola and Marburg) have drawn increased U.S. attention to health system capacity deficits and pandemic preparedness in the region.

**In economic and development affairs,** inflationary pressures, food insecurity, and fiscal crises have shaken economies across Africa, with possible implications for U.S. development, foreign policy, and two-way trade and investment objectives. Among other issues, Members may assess whether U.S. engagement is adequately targeted and resourced to address enduring barriers to development in Africa, and to bolster historically limited U.S.-Africa commercial ties. The 118<sup>th</sup> Congress also may help determine the future of AGOA—which is to expire in September 2025—and shape U.S. commercial engagement with Africa through other means, such as oversight of U.S. support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

**Particular country- and issue-specific developments** also may continue to spur engagement in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. Sudan may remain high on the congressional agenda amid the country’s ongoing internecine conflict, as is Ethiopia, as Members scrutinize the implementation of a peace agreement that quieted hostilities in the country’s north in 2022. Events in DRC also may garner attention, amid ongoing peace talks and regional military interventions intended to stabilize the country’s east. Elections in Zimbabwe (slated for August 2023) and DRC (December) may offer opportunities for Members to assess governance trends in two countries that have garnered extensive U.S. interest in the past two decades, and to articulate their views on U.S. approaches toward incoming governments. South Africa, both because of its economic and political influence in Africa and its engagement with China and Russia, may also attract continued attention.

More broadly, Members may assess the Biden Administration’s policy approach and engagement in Africa, including its pursuit of Africa Leaders Summit commitments. Congress could shape implementation of such deliverables through its appropriation of foreign assistance funding, and may seek additional information on the status of announced initiatives and other outcomes, including through hearings, reporting requirements, and other forms of oversight. In considering these and other developments, Congress may weigh various options, including

- Conducting hearings, briefings, or (Member or staff) travel to examine particular issues, observe and assess U.S. engagement in the region, and state views and make recommendations related to U.S.-Africa policy;
- Regularly monitoring U.S.-Africa policy and relations, and possibly bolstering oversight by enacting additional legislation requiring the executive branch to submit reports to Congress on topics of interest, or directing agency inspectors general or the Government Accountability Office to investigate specific concerns;
- Demonstrating interest or concern or exercising oversight via public statements, resolutions, or correspondence with executive branch or African officials;

- Engaging with outside experts to assess challenges or develop recommendations related to U.S. engagement in Africa; and
- Considering changes to the level or scope of foreign assistance and defense authorizations or appropriations for African countries.

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