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Africa Day: EFSCRJ Calls on Africans to Organize, Agitate, Liberate, and Unify!

Today, 62 years after the founding of the African Union, the Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice calls on all Africans at home and abroad to rise up. We call on Africans to rise up against their governments, regional blocs, and continental institutions for their failure to salvage Africa as promised, required, and necessary.

The deplorable situation in Africa today glaringly shows that Africa's leaders, governments, and the regional and continental bodies have failed to provide the people the necessary good governance, sustainable development, shared prosperity, and dignity. As the most endowed region of the world with the most natural resources, Africans remain the poorest people on earth. For over half a century, progress made contrasts insignificantly against the extreme deprivation which persists due to a mix of historical, economic, and political factors. The current state of Africa is neither tenable nor sustainable. Africa must change. Now.

Since attaining independence, the state of Africa continues to be bound and influenced by relationships that are rooted in historical exploitation and colonial legacy. These legacies did not only disrupt its traditional economies and developmental trajectory but also pinned the continent to the mercy of foreign extractive institutions, with artificial borders that have created ethnic divisions and fueling conflicts. In the final analysis, these legacies only enabled resource looting that continue to enrich foreign interests and local collaborators.

The continued perpetuation of these legacies in post-independent Africa lies squarely at the feet of weak governance and corruption. Across Africa, the mismanagement of resources such as oil, diamonds, and minerals often benefits elites rather than citizens. Corruption, which costs Africa nothing less than \$148 billion per year according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) persistently drains funds for healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Due to this failure, the continent has further dropped into a dependency syndrome exacerbated by unfair global trade, aid, and debt crisis, all of which further perpetuate weak governance thus entrenching poverty, deprivation, and conflict.

The effect of weak governance and corruption has not only led to the emergence of authoritarian regimes but also perpetuates the greatest democratic backsliding on the continent since the 1960s. While military regimes litter the continent on one hand, self-perpetuating rule by supposedly democratic governments is widespread on the other hand.

It is precisely due to the combined effect of weak governance and corruption that conflict and instability have become widespread and protracted across the continent, thereby triggering increasing presence of foreign military bases in the name of fighting terrorism. This situation has served nothing other than further weakening and dividing the continent and intensifying the loot of its resources by foreign interests with their collaborators in African governments.

Needless to say, Africa holds a significant portion of the world's mineral resources, making it a key player in global supply chains, especially for minerals critical to renewable energy and technology. Approximately 30% of the world's mineral reserves are found in Africa.





These include the platinum group of metals (Africa holds up to 90% of world's reserves), chromium (90%), cobalt (55%), manganese (54%), gold (40%), natural gas and oil (8%), diamonds (50%), uranium (15%), lithium (5-10%) and Rare Earth Elements (5% of global reserves but growing).

This is why Kwame Nkrumah had observed that,

“If Africa’s multiple resources were used in her development, they could place Africa among the most modernized continents of the world, but Africa’s resources are used for the development of overseas countries.”

Thus, Africa has the resources and potential to end poverty and propel an advanced socio-economic development unsurpassed by any other region in the world. Sadly, weak governance which generate corruption, conflict, and violations of human rights remain major barriers.

The Solution

EF Small Centre agrees with the long-held Pan-Africanist objective which continues to be touted by all African leaders, government, and institutions that the continent need to unite. This is not only for the development of the continent, but African unity is also a survival and security necessity given the present geopolitical dynamics around the world.

At a meeting of leaders who constituted the Casablanca Bloc in 1961 in Morocco, Nkrumah said,

“As I have always stated, and as I will continue to proclaim, I can see no security for African states unless African leaders like ourselves have realized beyond all doubts that salvation for Africa lies in Unity. Your Majesty, excellencies, let us unite, for in unity lies strength, and as I see it, African states must unite or sell themselves out to imperialist and colonialist exploiters for a mess of pottage, or disintegrate individually.”

He went further to statement that,

“What I fear worst of all is the fact that if we do not formulate plans for unity and take active steps to form a political union, we would soon be fighting and warring among ourselves with imperialists and colonialists standing behind the screen and pulling vicious wires, to make us cut each other’s throats for the sake of their diabolical purposes in Africa.”

Today, these remarks have become a prophecy come true. Not only has Africa become poorer, weaker, and continued to be marginalized on the global stage, but also the continent has become the global theatre for conflict. Currently over 50 foreign military bases litter the continent operated by several countries including the US, UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, and Turkey, among others. These bases do not serve the best interest of African people but perpetuate the weakening and exploitation of the continent.

Therefore, EF Small Centre agrees with Kwame Nkrumah and all African leaders and the AU that the continent must unite. At the OAU Summit on May 25, 1963, Nkrumah did not only



passionately call for unity but went further to provide clear, tangible, and achievable proposals for unity.

“Unite we must. Without necessarily sacrificing our sovereignties, big or small, we can here and now forge a political union based on Defense, Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy, and a Common Citizenship, an African Currency, an African Monetary Zone, and an African Central Bank. We must unite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent.”

Conclusion and Call to Action

Sixty two years after that historic Africa summit, the state of Africa remains dire. Corruption and autocracy are prevalent. If not all, but most countries touted as democratic continue to slide back with democratically elected governments employing authoritarian methods and tactics to stifle fundamental freedoms. Not only the governments but also regional blocs and the continental bodies and institutions continue to manifest incompetence, inefficiency, and unethical leadership. As a result, these governments and bodies do not only fail to uphold and abide by their own constitutions, treaties and protocols but also ignore and fail their obligations just to perpetuate the status quo.

In light of the precarious global geopolitical situation, Africa must not stand still as a spectator, recipient, dependent and follower. Africa must rather take charge of its destiny to chart its own way in the best of interest of only Africa. At a time when former colonial masters and global hegemonic powers such as the US, Russia, India, and China are focusing on themselves, Africa cannot remain indifferent and dormant. Africa cannot fail to recognize, appreciate, and respond to the growing global shifts and cut-throat competition between nations for domination and control. We owe no explanation, nor do we need to seek permission or show deference to anyone to pursue what is squarely in the best interest of only Africa.

The time for Africa to assert and focus on herself is long overdue. In this regard, the need for unity is an indispensable and existential necessity. As Nkrumah rightly observed, Africa must unite or perish.

Therefore, we call on the citizens of Africa to rise and demand unity now. We call on the governments and leaders in Africa, the regional blocs, and the AU to bring about unity now. We call on civil society, political parties, businesses, the media, and the academia in Africa to demand and work towards a united Africa now. We need a united Africa by the next Africa Day 2026.

Forward to the United Africa. Happy Africa Day 2025.

2025 – The Year of Transparency and Accountability