



EFSCRJ Calls on African Masses to Reclaim Their Continent

On this day in 1963, thirty-two independent African nations gathered in Addis Ababa to establish the Organization of African Unity under the banner of liberation, unity, and Pan-African solidarity. The OAU was created to unite African states, defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity, eradicate colonialism and racial domination, promote cooperation and development, and strengthen Africa's collective voice in global affairs.

Rooted in the anti-colonial struggle and the ideals of Pan-Africanism, the organization emphasized solidarity among African peoples, support for liberation movements, peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for the sovereignty of member states. In 2002, the OAU evolved into the African Union with broader ambitions for continental integration and transformation.

Today, the AU's stated objectives are to advance unity, peace, security, stability, and cooperation across Africa while promoting political and socio-economic integration and sustainable development. The Union seeks to strengthen democracy, human rights, good governance, and the rule of law, defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, and position Africa as a stronger and more influential actor in global affairs. Through collective action in trade, infrastructure, education, health, science, technology, and conflict prevention, the AU aspires to improve the living standards and well-being of African peoples and realize the vision of an integrated, prosperous, and self-reliant continent.

During the period under the OAU, two formidable blueprints were conceived, the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty. The Lagos Plan of Action, adopted in 1980, and the Abuja Treaty, adopted in 1991, were landmark continental frameworks aimed at achieving Africa's economic independence, integration, and sustainable development. The Lagos Plan of Action sought to build Africa's collective self-reliance by reducing dependence on foreign powers and restructuring African economies to serve the needs of African peoples through industrialization, agricultural transformation, scientific and technological advancement, regional cooperation, and increased intra-African trade. Building on this vision, the Abuja Treaty sought to establish the African Economic Community through gradual continental economic integration by strengthening regional economic communities and ultimately creating a unified African common market capable of driving prosperity, social progress, and continental unity.

Today, the AU has created another framework, Agenda 2063 with the stated goal of transforming Africa into a prosperous, peaceful, integrated, and people-driven continent that is a strong global actor by the year 2063. It envisions inclusive economic growth, good governance, democracy, human rights, gender equality, youth empowerment, industrialization, regional integration, and sustainable development.

More than six decades after the founding of the OUA and now the AU under the banner of liberation, unity, and self-reliance, Africa continues to face profound governance, security, and development challenges. More than 10 African countries currently remain under long-serving autocrats who have ruled for more than a decade, while more than 20 states are affected by war, insurgency, political violence, or military rule. At the same time, the continent hosts dozens of foreign military bases and facilities operated by powers such as the



United States, France, China, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and others, reflecting the enduring strategic competition for Africa's resources, geography, and influence. Poverty, corruption, human rights violations, repression, displacement, and irregular migration continue to affect millions of Africans despite the continent's vast natural and human wealth.

Meanwhile, Africa remains heavily dependent on foreign aid even as enormous amounts of wealth continue to leave the continent through illicit financial flows estimated at tens of billions of dollars annually. Foreign governments and multinational companies and their local collaborators continue to derive strategic, commercial, and geopolitical benefits from access to Africa's natural resource to the exclusion of millions of African people. The persistence of underdevelopment, economic dependency, weak institutions, and capital flight stands in stark contrast to the visions articulated in the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, and Agenda 2063, all of which envisioned a united, self-reliant, prosperous, peaceful, and integrated Africa driven by its own people and resources.

As we mark 63 years of African Liberation Day, the masses of African people must ask themselves whether the goals and promises of independence, Pan-Africanism, and the African Union have truly been realized. While the continent succeeded in breaking the chains of formal colonialism, the vast majority of Africans still do not enjoy genuine freedom, justice, equality, dignity, or prosperity in their individual countries or across the continent. Poverty, corruption, conflict, repression, weak institutions, economic dependency, and foreign domination continue to define the lived reality of millions. Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice holds that this situation is not only the result of failed leadership and weak governance institutions, but also the failure of citizens themselves to fully assume and exercise their rights and duties in shaping accountable, democratic, and people-centered states.

In an increasingly hostile and competitive global order, it is now more urgent than ever for Africa to unite and establish itself as a strong and respected global power rather than remain vulnerable and dependent. Achieving this reality requires a second liberation struggle aimed not at ending colonial rule, but at dismantling neo-colonialism, corruption, authoritarianism, exploitation, and elite capture of the state.

The people of Africa must rise to demand leadership that serves the public interest and protects the continent's resources, sovereignty, and future. EFSCRJ fears that without urgent political, economic, and institutional transformation, Africa risks continuing not only as a victim of external manipulation but also a theatre of violent global competition for its resources as local elites continue to auction the continent to foreign and selfish interests.

Africa does not need domination or intervention from external powers. What Africa needs is first to stand up for itself, defend its vital interests, and take full control of its own destiny. For this reason, we call on the people of Africa to reclaim their countries and the entire continent from the clutches of local and foreign interests to create the Africa we deserve.

Forward With Africa Liberation, Unity, Dignity, and Prosperity.

2026: The Year of Empowerment – Empowered Citizens. Accountable Leadership.