

Africa in Review 2020: Anti-Imperialist Perspectives Essential in Understanding the Way Forward

Part III: Neo-Colonialism remains the major obstacle in building Pan-Africanism and Socialism

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Global Research, January 07, 2021

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#)

One of the most serious attacks on the anti-colonial and national liberation legacy in Africa was the attempts by the United States and the Kingdom of Morocco to liquidate the right to self-determination among the Saharawi people in the Northwest region of the continent.

These maneuvers by Washington took the form of geographic misrepresentation suggesting that the Western Sahara, formally colonized by Spain, was an integral part of Morocco.

The efforts to distort the actual history of the struggle for independence by the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) was linked to the purported “normalization” of relations with the State of Israel by Morocco. The diplomatic recognition of Tel Aviv has been a consistent theme pursued by the U.S. State Department throughout Africa.

Millions of Palestinians, like their counterparts in the Western Sahara, are seeking to relinquish the stranglehold imposed upon them by imperialism. A truce declared nearly three decades ago in lieu of United Nations internationally supervised elections in the territory, has recently been rejected by the SADR and its armed forces known as the Polisario Front.

The SADR has been recognized by the UN and the AU as the legitimate representatives of the people of the Western Sahara. Nonetheless, the outgoing administration of President Donald J. Trump has sought to hamper anti-colonial and anti-imperialist efforts on the continent and indeed throughout the world. The incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will inherit a well-established foreign policy orientation which transcends both the Democratic and Republican parties throughout successive administrations.

In addition to the U.S., the SADR has condemned France for its consistent support given to Morocco as it relates to the Western Sahara national question. Moreover, the provisional government has vowed to maintain its disavowal of the truce from 1991 which could threaten stability in the North and West Africa regions.

[Sahara Press Service reported on a statement](#) delivered by the Polisario Front representative to France saying:

“Frente POLISARIO’s representative to France, Mohamed Sidati, said the Saharawi people embarked, since November 13, in a second war of liberation, following Morocco’s aggression against Saharawi civilians, stressing UN

Security Council's recent strong message to the United States and the Moroccan occupier which attempt to derail the decolonization process. Speaking Monday (December 28) to the International Radio of Algeria, Sidati said the Saharawi people's 'return to the path of armed struggle shows they remain so determined to sacrifice themselves for the recovery of their rights.'"

The path of armed revolutionary struggle has been a tactical and strategic approach within the history of the African Revolution since the era of enslavement and colonialism. Such decisions to resist with weapons by genuine anti-imperialist liberation movements and provisional governments are never taken lightly. The purpose of the violent approach to the oppressive state and social system are in essence actions of self-defense, where the objective is clearly aimed at removing the mechanism of exploitation and political suppression.

Sidati, in the article quoted above also emphasizes:

"The Moroccan occupation has completely ignored the will of the Saharawi people and tried to exploit the patience of Western Sahara people, persisting in its tyranny, before being surprised by the strong response of the Saharawi people, he added. On outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to acknowledge Morocco's alleged 'sovereignty' over Western Sahara, the representative of the Frente POLISARIO in France said that 'to exchange the right of a people for such sovereignty is an injustice and a tyranny.' 'This will not succeed,' Sidati stressed, explaining that it will only tarnish Morocco's reputation as wanting to sell the Palestinian cause in order to confiscate a territory that is not its own. This recognition, he said, is a 'kind of international brigandage' of peoples' rights, which is, he added, especially harmful to the United States."

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been a source of the strongest support for the SADR as proponents of the right of independence for the Western Sahara. Zimbabwe, which has been subjected to imperialist-driven economic sanctions for more than two decades, understands clearly, the significance of the Western Sahara question. Consequently, SADC and the AU for the last two years have held "Anti-Sanctions Day" during October in solidarity with Harare and the ZANU-PF government.

Britain and the U.S. have led the sanctions and destabilization efforts against Zimbabwe in response to the radical land redistribution program launched in 2000. Since the expropriation of European settler-colonial agricultural business interests in Zimbabwe, the country has been targeted for regime change. However, Zimbabwe, with the assistance of neighboring African states and the People's Republic of China, has been able to maintain its political independence. Therefore, Zimbabwe and SADC can take positions which coincide with the aspirations of the anti-imperialist forces internationally.

Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ivory Coast: Focal Points for Imperialist Intrigue

In the Horn of Africa state of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia there has been an internal conflict stemming from the need to take control of the Tigray region in the north where the former ruling party challenged the central government headed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali. Under the TPLF which was the dominant party within the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the armed organization came to power after being

designated by the United States in May 1991 as the official representatives of the people.

The TPLF-EPRDF regime played an important role in facilitating the foreign policy of Washington in East Africa. Ethiopia entered Somalia in December 2006 at the aegis of the Pentagon. The situation in Somalia remains precarious although thousands of African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) troops along with the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) occupy the oil-rich nation. Dating back as far as 1992-1994, the former administrations of Presidents George W. H. Bush, Sr. and Bill Clinton, deployed thousands of Marines to Somalia. U.S. soldiers have been killed in Somalia including during 2020.

As the motivating factors behind imperialist intervention remain strategic mineral and energy interests as well as competition with China, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a prime illustration of the extent to which western states will go to extract wealth and maintain indirect political control. The first elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba sought after taking office in June 1960 to form Pan-African alliances with other governments such as Ghana. Belgium and the U.S. expended considerable intelligence and military resources in order to undermine the Congolese Revolution.

Today, the current **President Felix Tshisekedi** has become embroiled in a row with **former President Joseph Kabila**, who ruled the DRC from 2001 until 2018. A coalition administration appears to be breaking up over which party will control the apparatus of the government.

The disagreement between Tshisekedi and Kabila has recently involved Pan-African cultural figure Tshala Muana, a staunch supporter of Kabila. Muana was detained in November ostensibly for releasing a popular song criticizing the political posture of Tshekedi.

According to the [Standard news website](#):

“Relatives of the Lubumbashi- based singer said agents from the National Intelligence Agency arrested her in Kinshasha on November 14 saying she was wanted for questioning. Their sentiments were echoed by her companion and producer Claude Mashuls, who indicated that the artiste was treated like a criminal. Speaking to Standard Entertainment and Lifestyle through Congolese music promoter Jules Nsana who relocated back to Kinshasha two years ago from Kenya, the musician denied attacking president Tshisekedi, instead saying she was misunderstood.”

Ivory Coast, the largest cocoa producer internationally and an emerging oil exporting country, was the center of an electoral dispute in 2010-2011 that resulted in the military intervention by France designed to topple the Popular Front (FPI) administration of President Laurent Gbagbo. The president and his wife, Simone, the Second Vice President of the FPI and a political leader in her own right, was placed under the incarceration of imperialist-backed interests. The U.S. under former President Barack Obama concurred with the French in overthrowing Gbagbo who was later kidnapped and taken to the Netherlands to stand trial in a contrived International Criminal Court (ICC) tribunal on Ivory Coast.

Due to lack of evidence, the Netherlands-based court could not gain a conviction against Gbagbo. He was released while being required to wait in another European state for the prosecution to develop an appeal to the case. In early December 2020, it was announced that the Ivorian government had issued Gbagbo a passport to return to the country, which

the president says he will soon seek reentry.

Simone Gbagbo was charged by the French-installed regime of **Alassane Ouattara** of crimes against humanity and sentenced to 20 years in prison. After spending several years behind bars, she was released by the neo-colonial dominated Ivorian administration. In [an interview granted to DW](#) she said of the current political crisis in Ivory Coast stemming from Ouattara's insistence on staying in power for a third term that:

"I think that Ivory Coast was targeted by a French conspiracy. First it was [Jacques] Chirac's France, then Sarkozy's France, who decided that Laurent Gbagbo had no right to be in Ivory Coast. They organized things so that Gbagbo would be ousted from power. This they needed to show that he was surrounded by demons. Apparently I became the leader of a death squad. But nobody has ever been able to provide any evidence to support this allegation. I just watched and chose not to say anything. At that time, 2002 to 2003, I took French press agencies who repeated the claim to court in Paris. I won all my lawsuits. They went appealed; I won again. I don't use weapons to act, to expose my ideas, to share my ideas. So I say nothing about the death squads."

Pan-Africanism and Anti-Imperialism in the 21st Century

There can be no functional and effective unification of Africa absent an anti-imperialist orientation in domestic and foreign policy issues. The examples cited above are reflective of the challenges facing the continent in the coming decades of the present century.

Economic integration in its most logical form presupposes ideological and political uniformity. Judging from the pronouncements of the AU along with the trade union, youth, women's and farmer organizations, the African masses yearn for social justice and collective progress.

Nonetheless, the anti-imperialist movement is part and parcel of the class struggle for socialist transformation. The solidarity of oppressed peoples and the international proletariat provides the potential for the eradication of the exploitative capitalist modes of production and social relations.

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