EDITORIAL NOTE

Despite concerted efforts within and outside Africa, the continent still grapples with the perennial problem of armed violence, conflict, and other forms of security threats. This has been made worse with emerging forms of security threats, including the activities of foreign powers within the region. Though studies have made various attempts in unraveling the possible cause(s) of these insecurity, the need for further probing remains germane because recent experiences about armed conflict and general insecurity point to the fact that there seems to be no end in sight.

It is against this background that the various contributions in this special volume provide possible strategies for addressing the various protracted and obstinate conflicts that have been blamed for the lack of development in Africa. For instance, Oseghale Christian Osemuyi, Ph.D., and Ajomale Funmileyi Festus, in "Fragile State and the Challenge of Insurgency in Nigeria," adopting the State Fragility Theory, examined the Nigerian state's vulnerability in the face of rising insurgency threats, with an emphasis on kidnappings in Nigeria from 2015 to 2024. And concludes that Nigeria is indeed in a state of fragility, which has resulted in the existence of ungoverned spaces in Nigeria, and non-state actors (kidnappers) are taking advantage of it to entrench themselves deeper in society. As government presence in the space they occupy seems to be nonexistent, this is a major contributing factor to the striving business of kidnappings in Nigeria. The paper therefore recommends, amongst others, substantial investments in small and medium enterprises that are necessary and have the capacity to create jobs in order to upscale economic growth.

Alex Cynthia Nyabola & Jane Wachira, in "Placing Women at the Center of a Coordinated African Climate Change Agenda: A Focus on the Republic of the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)," delved into the contexts of Sudan and the DRC to highlight the critical need for a coordinated African climate change agenda. It

highlighted the need for gender-focused approaches that advance the capacities of women and leverage their conventional societal roles in analyzing the relationship between women and nature, particularly rural women. This article thus proposes placing women and girls at the center of the continent's climate change agenda as a catalyst to realize its collective goals. It concluded by analyzing the gender-focused climate approaches contained in the 'Africa Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action' (Nairobi Declaration). The Nairobi Declaration provides a guiding beacon for mainstreaming gender-specific climate policies and actions. Such approaches entail integrating gender considerations into all policy development, implementation, and evaluation stages, ensuring that women's voices and priorities are heard and addressed.

Faith Nkanta & Olumayowa O. Albert, in their article "Collective Bargaining in West Africa: Navigating a New Global Order," stated by postulating that the collective bargaining of West African states in a changing global order is a critical issue for the future of the region. Therefore, they relied heavily on the postulations of dependency theory and afrocentrism. This research study utilized qualitative forms of data sourced from secondary sources that include newspaper and magazine articles, textbooks, journals, and other print sources in interrogating this dilemma. This study revealed that collective bargaining of West African states is essential for the region's economic development and political stability. By working together through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), therefore, West African states can pool their resources and negotiate more effectively with the world powers. It also discovered that West African states can also strengthen their collective bargaining power through South-South cooperation, while concluding that by working together with other developing countries, West African states can gain a stronger voice in the global arena. South-South cooperation can also help West African states access new technologies and resources, which can give them a competitive advantage in the global economy.

While Emmanuel Chijindu Anabiri in "The Impact of Extrajudicial Killing on Nigerian International Cooperation" assessed the impact of extrajudicial killing on Nigerian international cooperation via the use of case study research design and content analysis in the collection of its data analysis. Specifically, it deployed the criminal justice perspective to explain how extrajudicial killings impact international cooperation. The study observed that internal conflict, regime type, and weak political and social institutions are some of the fundamental causes of extrajudicial killing. That Nigeria in several instances committed extrajudicial killing that put a dent in its global image. It recommended the strengthening of Nigeria and the international legal framework in tackling the scourge of extrajudicial killing so as to hold security agents and state and non-state actors who are guilty of extrajudicial killing accountable.

On behalf of the entire publishing team, I congratulate the authors for their important contributions to addressing the increasing issues of armed conflict and human insecurity in Africa in the special volume.

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