



PMUNC

2015

African Union

Chair: Anna Griffith

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## Chair's Letter

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Hey, African Union Committee!

My name is Anna Griffith, and I'll be your chair for PMUNC 2015. I'm so excited to be working with you guys this fall; this is my first time chairing a committee. I'm starting my sophomore year at Princeton University and plan on majoring in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs with a focus on international development. I'm also studying Arabic and hope to study abroad next year. In the past few years, I have volunteered in India, Ghana, and Peru, working on community development and childhood education at all different levels of implementation. I have always been interested in development and how communities, governments, and non-profits can help to give children in developing nations a better future.

News about radical terrorism around the world has always drawn my attention because of how much I cannot comprehend such senseless acts. I've always said that the key to beating terrorism around the world is to educate people. As Nelson Mandela said, "education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world." I thought that stopping al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, or other groups was as easy as giving a child a book and showing him or her what it means to be kind. With the rise of Boko Haram, ISIS, and other barbaric groups, however, I have realized that the threat of terrorism is a topic that needs to be addressed and fought from many different angles. The senseless killing of innocent people and the forced diaspora from one's own home cannot just be met with a re-education of the younger generation. What's powerful about this conference is that you all will get the opportunity to try and figure out other ways to stop terrorism effectively in a specific region. It may work, it may not, but I look forward to hearing all of your ideas about combatting and sequestering Boko Haram in northern Nigeria.

Being a woman myself, women's rights all over the world have always been very important to me and felt so personal. Across Africa, there are such beautiful, intelligent, and powerful women that can truly change the world for the better, and to think that their potential is being stunted because their family, community, or country believes that they do not have enough value to do great things infuriates me. At the same time, there are nations throughout Africa that are making great strides in women's empowerment and equality that should be commended and respected for their efforts. I was so happy to hear that we will be focusing on the AU's Year of Women's Empowerment during committee, and I think everything that you all will contribute will be inspiring and very informative.

I just wanted to share again how excited I am to chair the African Union committee. The African continent is so expansive, diverse, and exciting, and it truly seems to face such a broad range of issues, problems, successes, and beauty. I look forward to meeting you all in a few months, and, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to email me anytime at [amg2@princeton.edu](mailto:amg2@princeton.edu). Thanks!

Sincerely,  
Anna Griffith  
Chair, African Union Committee

## Introduction

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The African Union (AU) was founded on May 26, 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and launched on July 9, 2002 in South Africa. The AU replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was founded in 1963. Originally, the purpose of the OAU was diplomacy and the mediation of border conflicts between nations. Former Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi suggested in 2000 that a new body be formed that was similar to the European Union, thus having more influence throughout the African continent. Today, the African Union serves a much wider range of functions than did the OAU; it maintains economic power in the region and has a central bank, court of justice, and an all-African parliament. All African nations except Morocco are members of the African Union, and, within the Union's structure, there exist many subgroups with different participating nations. Twice each year, the African Union holds a summit to discuss the challenges facing the continent and how to move forward and ensure a more prosperous Africa in the coming years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/topic/African-Union>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Union)

**The objectives of the African Union are as follows:**

- To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
- To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- To promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- To encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- To promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
- To promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- To promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
- To establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- To promote sustainable development at the economic, social, and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- To promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- To coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;
- To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.<sup>1</sup>

During this conference, you will be representing members of the African Union Assembly, the highest body of the African Union that is “composed of the Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives” of all of the member states.<sup>2</sup> One can find additional and more in-depth information about the Assembly and the other organs and committees of the African Union by visiting the following website:

<http://www.au.int/en/about/nutshell>.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note: this list has been taken directly from the official African Union website at <http://www.au.int/en/about/nutshell>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.au.int/en/organs/assembly>

## Topic A: Combatting Boko Haram

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The members of the African Union have recently decided to work together to fight Boko Haram, but where did this terrorist organization come from, and how will the AU find success in combatting it?

### The Rise of Boko Haram

Boko Haram can be translated into English as “Western education is forbidden.” The organization was formed in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, an Islamic cleric unhappy with the westernization of Nigeria and the democratic and nationalistic influences in the region, particularly in the Borno state of northern Nigeria.



Borno State of Nigeria<sup>1</sup>

According to the *Clarion Project*, a “non-profit, educational organization providing a platform for human rights activists and for challenging Islamic extremism through facts,”

“The group’s official name is not Boko Haram but Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad, which means ‘People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad.’ Members are known to reference the Islamic verse that states, ‘Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors.’”

The radical orientation of this group was in part due to the influence of Osama bin Laden, who sent three million dollars to Boko Haram to fund the education of Islamic extremists.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://legalwatchmen.wordpress.com/2015/04/02/the-significance-of-borno-state-being-announced-last-in-the-2015-presidential-elections/>

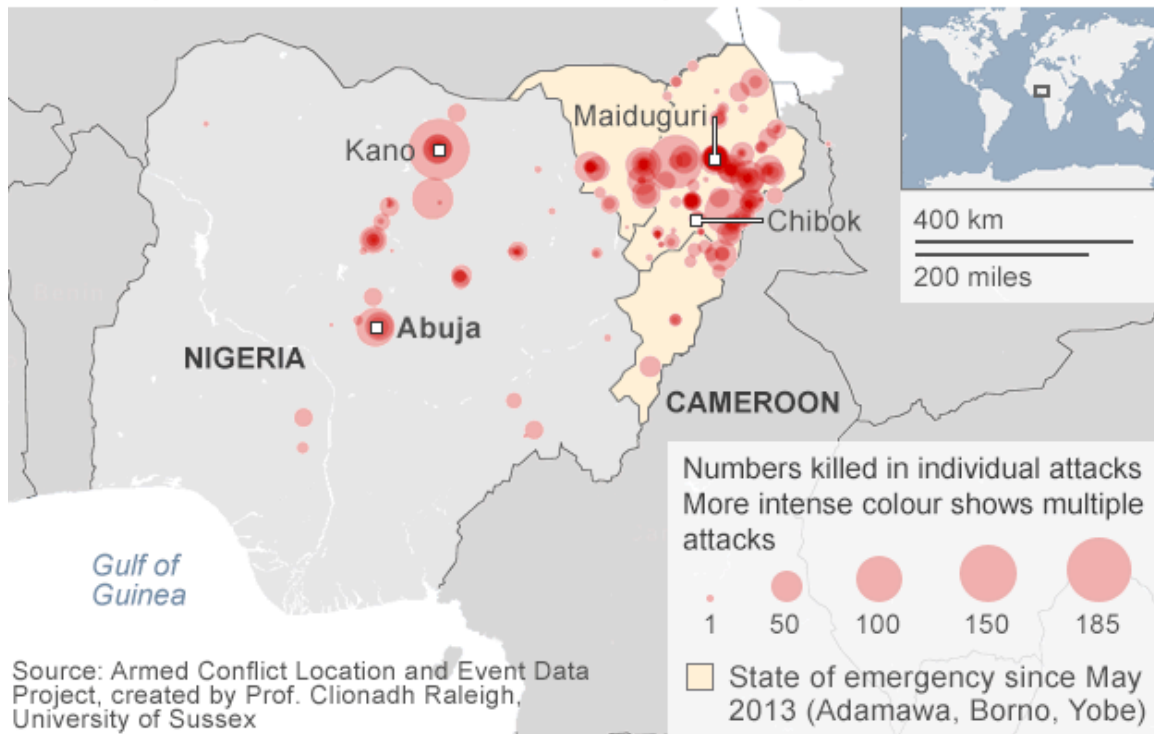
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<sup>2</sup>[http://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/ClarionProject\\_FactSheet%20-%20BOKO%20HARAM.pdf](http://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/ClarionProject_FactSheet%20-%20BOKO%20HARAM.pdf)



**Boko Haram fatal attacks**

Civilians reported killed in Boko Haram attacks Sep 2010 - Apr 2014



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Leader Mohammed Yusuf died in 2009, leaving behind 280,000 followers and a system in place colloquially known as the “Nigerian Taliban.” Yusuf’s death came after years of trying to educate and train members in radical jihad and clashes with Nigerian forces. After four days of intense fighting in the Borno State with the Nigerian government, Yusuf’s defeat sent Boko Haram underground for approximately one year.

Abubakar Shekau released video messages in 2010 warning that jihad had begun, and a September 7, 2010 attack on

Bauchi prison began a series of Boko Haram offenses throughout northern Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> According to the *US Institute of Peace*,

“Since August 2011, Boko Haram has planted bombs almost weekly in public or in churches in Nigeria’s northeast. The group has also broadened its targets to include setting fire to schools. In March 2012, twelve public schools in Maiduguri were burned down during the night, and as many as

<sup>1</sup><http://geopoliticsrst.blogspot.com/2014/11/nigeria-understanding-boko-haram-crisis.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://almanac.afpc.org/boko-haram>

10,000 pupils were forced out of education.”<sup>1</sup>

To date, Boko Haram is said to have taken the lives of over 20,000 people, Nigerians, Chadians, and Cameroonians included.<sup>2</sup>

### Chibok Schoolgirls



On April 14, 2014, Boko Haram members kidnapped 329 schoolgirls from a secondary school in Chibok, Nigeria.

The insurgents woke the girls in the middle of the night, pretending to be guards, and loaded the girls into trucks before taking them away. It is theorized that the girls were taken into the Sambisa forest, although they were not found there. Throughout the summer of 2014,

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR308.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2015/08/30/nigerian-official-boko-haram-is-trying-to-hit-lagos>

<sup>3</sup><http://beforeitsnews.com/war-and-conflict/2014/11/nigeria-boko-haram-militants-capture-chibok-town-again-2454696.html>

Boko Haram leaders continued kidnapping throughout northern Nigeria. By the end of June 2014, it was estimated that Boko Haram had captured approximately 600 girls from different villages and schools around the Borno state, keeping them right outside the border of Nigeria.<sup>4</sup>



While some of the kidnapped girls escaped Boko Haram forces or were found by local governments, there are still 219 Chibok schoolgirls missing. Many sources believe and report that these girls have been killed, sold as slaves, or forced into marriage with Boko Haram leaders. *BBC* reports that many girls have been brainwashed by the radicals and forced into joining Boko Haram as active members. The news station also provides the “Human Cost of Boko Haram” via Amnesty facts, shown below:

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<sup>4</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chibok\\_schoolgirls\\_kidnapping#Kidnapping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chibok_schoolgirls_kidnapping#Kidnapping)

<sup>5</sup><http://newtelegraphonline.com/chibok-girls-buhari-indicts-jonathan/>



“219 of the Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped from Chibok by Boko Haram in April 2014 are still missing.

They are among at least 2,000 women and girls abducted by Boko Haram since the start of 2014 (Amnesty figures).

Since the start of 2014, Boko Haram has killed an estimated 5,500 civilians in north-east Nigeria (Amnesty figures).”<sup>1</sup>

The abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls has caused a very significant global response, giving rise to international plans to help combat Boko Haram.

### World Reactions and Politics



The reaction to the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls was swift around the world, with the hashtag “BringBackOurGirls” trending and gaining

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33259003>

<sup>2</sup> <http://mashable.com/2014/05/07/michelle-obama-nigeria-bring-back-our-girls/>

popularity among citizens of nations all over the world. There was a worldwide outcry to save and protect those taken by Boko Haram, but the politics of the region complicated a communal effort to rescue the schoolgirls.

Soon after the kidnapping, Nigeria and surrounding nations (Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin) declared war on Boko Haram, and Nigeria had plans to send out 20,000 troops to combat the terrorist organization. These nations gained intelligence from the British, French, and American governments in order to locate the captives more effectively. The Nigerian military, however, has been accused of haphazardly killing many people that may have been affiliated with Boko Haram.

While military action was the obvious answer to many people, some wealthy and influential leaders in Nigeria, namely Aliko Dangote, campaigned for reform in education throughout Africa, but particularly in the area affected by Boko Haram. Dangote set up an initiative that pours money into schools that teach kids about agriculture, thus giving them options other than the pressures of terrorism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors->

Western countries have made numerous strides to help Nigeria fight Boko Haram and to classify Boko Haram as the terrorist organization that it is. The *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center* has noted that, “[t]he U.S. and British governments designated Boko Haram and Ansaru as terrorist organizations in 2013, while the United Nations designated Boko Haram an al-Qaeda affiliate in 2014.” The center goes on to describe the United States’ and many other countries’ desire to provide military forces to help free the captives, but the Nigerian government has turned down the help in favor of their own forces. Now, with the possibly inhumane tactics of Nigerian forces, it is possible that Western nations will be more reluctant to send aid to Nigeria in any way.<sup>1</sup>

In recent months, Boko Haram has been gaining media attention. In March of 2015, Abubakar Shekau released a statement, saying that Boko Haram pledges its allegiance to ISIS, the terrorist organization illegally occupying land in Iraq, Syria, and the Levant region. ISIS is known for its brutality and claims to be the only true jihadist group, so, in pledging its allegiance, Boko Haram

aimed for “legitimacy” and new recruits to Nigeria.



Abubakar Shekau<sup>2</sup>

Boko Haram aims most of its attacks on, and spends most of its time in, the northeast, Muslim part of Nigeria. The southern part of Nigeria so far has remained nearly untouched, but recent news reports and events indicate that the terrorist group is moving south, to the predominantly Christian area of Nigeria and highly profitable Lagos. In recent weeks, BBC has reported that over 12 Boko Haram members have been captured in Lagos. This city on the southern coast of Nigeria, a booming financial hub for the country, was once thought to be safe from these radical jihadist actions. With recent arrests in Lagos and attacks in Nigeria’s capital

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[view/2014/0519/Africa-s-best-response-to-Boko-Haram](http://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/27796/uploads/view/2014/0519/Africa-s-best-response-to-Boko-Haram)

<sup>1</sup><http://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/27796/uploads>

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<sup>2</sup>[http://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/ClarionProject\\_FactSheet%20-%20BOKO%20HARAM.pdf](http://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/ClarionProject_FactSheet%20-%20BOKO%20HARAM.pdf)

Abuja, the Boko Haram threat is growing for many more Nigerian citizens.<sup>1</sup>

### **African Union Response**

Due to the severity and brutality of Boko Haram forces and the organization's crossing over into Chad, Niger, and other surrounding countries, the African Union met at a summit in January 2015 to decide how to go about combatting terrorism in the region. Out of that summit, the African Union has approved of an AU force, named the Multinational Joint Task Force, of between 7,500-10,000 troops to fight and contain Boko Haram radicals. This group will be based in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, along with troops from Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin operating in a specific zone on the border of Nigeria. The initial mandate of the MJTF is for one year.<sup>2</sup> According to *Al Arabiya News*, "The AU has said it will seek U.N. Security Council approval in the form of a Chapter 7 resolution authorizing the use of force, plus a U.N. "Trust Fund" to pay for it. Diplomats said that while "logistical support" would be forthcoming, financing remained

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34105931>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31057147>

the key obstacle to collective action."<sup>3</sup>

In a recent African Union summit held in June 2015, leaders discussed the importance of self-sufficiency and of not leaning on foreign donors to fund the projects that the organization plans. Funding the fight against Boko Haram will prove to be a very difficult challenge for the African Union.<sup>4</sup>

The plan to send AU forces into the region has been previously supported by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon along with other nations' leaders involved in the conflict. At the January 2015 AU summit, Iran's deputy foreign minister visited and spoke to representatives from the affected countries and said, "We will share our experiences in combating terrorism to defeat Boko Haram. We will achieve that without a doubt." Along with Iran's lending of support to the AU, the United States has also committed technical support along with training and

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<sup>3</sup><http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/africa/2015/03/06/African-Union-endorses-plan-for-anti-Boko-Haram-force.html>

<sup>4</sup><http://mg.co.za/article/2015-06-09-au-summits-focus-on-countries-derailing-africas-growth>

equipment in the fight against Boko Haram.<sup>1</sup>

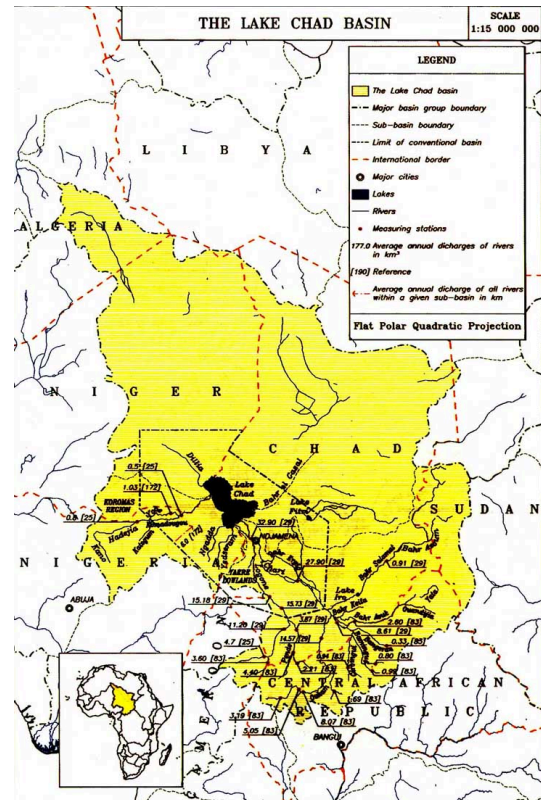


African Union Summit <sup>2</sup>

### Difference of Opinions and Tactical Plans

The African Union force is made up of troops from many nations, all fighting for the goal of containing and defeating Boko Haram in northern Nigeria and bordering nations. The way in which the force can go about doing its job, however, is rather limited.

*Al Arabiya News* reports that, according to an AU official, the MJTF will be operating out of the Lake Chad Basin and be spending most of its time along Nigeria’s borders without being able to cross them. The effectiveness of the force, therefore, has been questioned, but, due to Nigeria’s distrust of foreign troops in



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its country, solely Nigerian troops are allowed inside the borders. Clearly, the issue is that the MJTF is only able to act effectively in cross-border attacks. According to an AU official, though, the MJTF is hoping to work with internal Nigerian forces to “sandwich” Boko Haram forces at the border.<sup>4</sup>

There is a history of distrust among many West African nations, which is the root of the reason that the MJTF cannot enter Nigeria. The African Union has not addressed the issue of preserving

<sup>1</sup><http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/31/nigeria-boko-haram-african-union-troops>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.worldbulletin.net/today-s-news/160554/over-50-african-leaders-to-attend-au-summit>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.fao.org/docrep/w4347e/w4347e0z.htm>

<sup>4</sup><http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/africa/2015/03/06/African-Union-endorses-plan-for-anti-Boko-Haram-force.html>

Nigeria's sovereignty throughout the process of defeating Boko Haram, and, in turn, Nigeria has essentially sealed off its borders. In the past, West African nations have been known to interfere with one another's domestic politics, including supporting different coups while fighting in specific nations (Chad/Cameroon/CAR conflict). From Nigeria's standpoint, the refusal of international help is a defense of its domestic politics, but, to much of the outside world, Nigeria is hurting its own nation.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately for Nigeria, its military is simply not strong enough to combat Boko Haram on its own. Officials from Chad and Niger have been outspoken in saying that Nigeria is not doing enough to combat Boko Haram. Chadian operations have proven to be some of the most successful in the past few months, with Chadian troops being deployed to Cameroon to fight off Boko Haram invasions. Chad has also claimed responsibility for fighting in Northern Nigeria to reclaim the town of Malamfatori, though only because the town was within the area approved for

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<sup>1</sup><http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/2/african-union-forces-may-exacerbate-boko-haram-threat.html>

the MJTF.<sup>2</sup>

While Chadian forces appear to be making great strides in fighting Boko Haram, they still cannot offer enough troops to counteract the hindrance of not being able to enter Nigeria. If the international community does not continue to call on Nigeria to alter its tactics to allow more international influence and aid in fighting Boko Haram, the fight may never be won.<sup>3</sup>

### **Questions to Ask and How to Move Forward**

Fighting a radical terrorist organization is in no way simple. Nigerian and African Union forces are not just trying to eradicate a group of people, but also they must figure out how to combat the doctrine of an organization that claims to be religiously based. As you participate in committee, keep these questions in mind:

1. How should the African Union further its plan to combat Boko Haram and terrorist organizations in the region?
2. In what ways or with what means can the AU fund its troops

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31057147>

<sup>3</sup><https://medium.com/war-is-boring/the-african-union-readies-an-army-to-beat-boko-haram-694150ba6ebb>

and all action it takes against Boko Haram (in particular, without asking for foreign assistance)?

3. Can the African Union ensure domestic security for Nigeria in order to allow foreign troops to work within the country?

4. In what ways can the AU help Nigeria to protect its central and

southern cities and, more generally, help to block the expansion of Boko Haram to new areas?

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## Topic B: Logistics of Women's Empowerment

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The worldwide fight for gender equality and the push for women's empowerment has been one of the biggest movements of the modern age. Many nations in Africa, however, continue to be dominated by patriarchal values and customs, thus oppressing millions of women in the classroom, workplace, community, and home. The African Union in its most recent summit talked extensively about methods of women's empowerment throughout Africa and how this goal may be achieved. If a plan is put into place and action occurs, the face of Africa could be forever changed. Many scholars believe that women's empowerment is the key to ending poverty, ensuring economic prosperity, and stabilizing the politics of a nation.

### A History of Oppression

Throughout African history, women have played many different roles in familial and community structures. While some women throughout tribal and colonial history were given responsibilities as leaders of the family or religious community, many were seen as items to be traded or used at the will of a man.

This changing role, however, did not arise until the onset of colonialism.<sup>1</sup>

In traditional African culture (pre-colonial), the subjugation of women was not a societal norm. Women were seen as community organizers, and the roles of a man and those of a woman were complementary to each other. According to the Journal of Pan-African Studies and Ross Leith:

“Culturally, African women were the transmitters of the language, the history and the oral culture, the music, the dance, the habits and the artisanal knowledge. They were the teachers and were responsible for instilling traditional values and knowledge in children. Men were also essential in the transmission of knowledge to the youth because they had a different type of knowledge of the earth and environment, and also of ceremonies and traditions that were performed exclusively by men.”<sup>2</sup>

While men may have taken the leadership roles in many African societies, women were still seen as essential to family and community structure, but, when these different roles were forced

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846733/obo-9780199846733-0005.xml>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol3no6/3.5PowerandWomanhood.pdf>

into a European mindset throughout the colonial period, the value of African women began to change.

European colonists interacting with tribal African communities influenced how men in those communities viewed gender roles and values. From the European mindset, the Victorian woman was much less valuable because she was responsible for the home and children, whereas the man was more important because he was responsible for “real work.” With this different perspective, a new patriarchal religion, and a prejudicial mindset, African women were very quickly demoted in the eyes of society.<sup>1</sup>

Garikai Chengu discusses the main effects colonialism had on African women, as listed below:

1. “The advent of title deeds made men the sole owners of land. Consequently, as women lost access and control of land, they became increasingly economically dependent on men. This in turn led to an intensification of domestic patriarchy, reinforced by colonial social institutions.”
2. “As colonialism continued to entrench itself on African soil, the

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol3no6/3.5PowerandWomanhood.pdf>

perceived importance of women’s agricultural contribution to the household was greatly reduced.”

3. “Colonialism brought with it Christianity and a masculine fundamentalism, which is now prevalent across Africa today. The imported patriarchal religion does not allow women to play the leading roles they have in the indigenous African religion.”
4. “The introduction of wage labour affected women by uprooting men from villages to work in urban areas, causing profound, negative economic impacts on women. Colonial authorities routinely used native African males to impose taxes on women, thereby entrenching male dominance in the Native’s psyche.”<sup>2</sup>

From the era of colonialism leading up to the present day, women’s roles and value in African society have been painfully diminished. With this devaluation has come a disdain for the female population in many societies, leading to numerous types of violence towards women. In recent years, some countries have aimed to improve the

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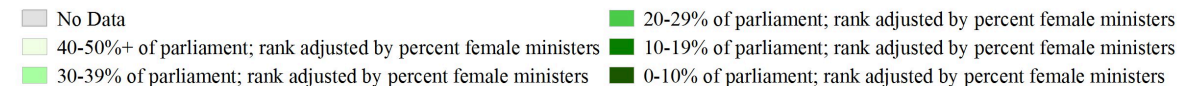
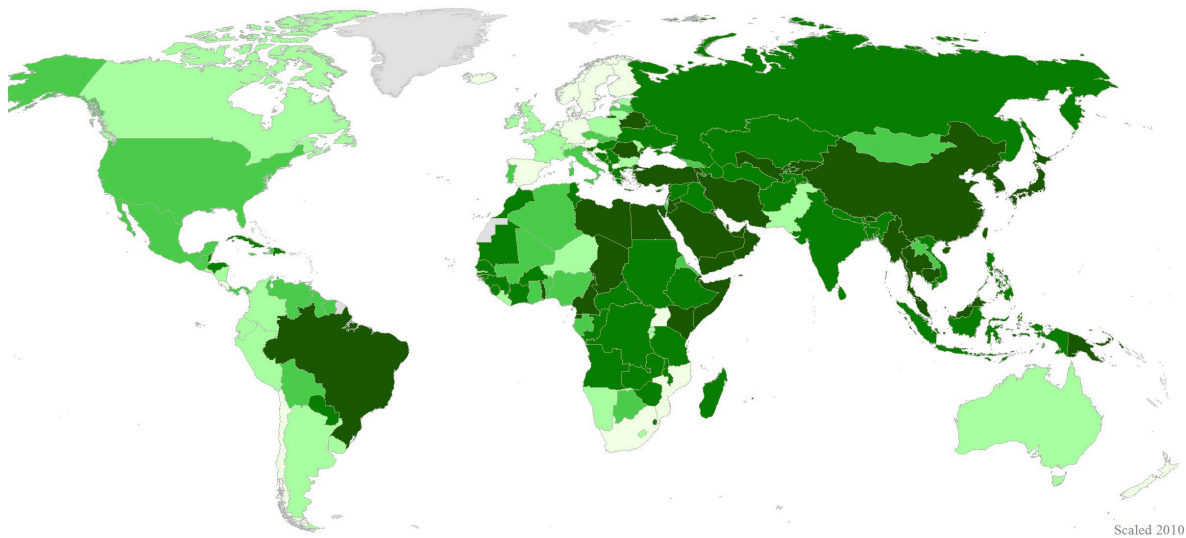
<sup>2</sup><http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/03/06/the-capitalist-origins-of-the-oppression-of-african-women/>

treatment of their women, while others still could use a great deal of improvement.

### Countries Leading the Way

throughout Africa. The Constitution of South Africa ensures equal rights and privileges for all, and there is a framework within legislation to enact programs to empower women,

## Governmental Participation by Women



In the case of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa, there are many countries taking steps to ensure more rights and protections for their female citizens. The implementation and acceptance of the new practices and beliefs, however, do not always work to their full extent.

South Africa is one of the most progressive in women’s empowerment

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<sup>1</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_government)

particularly in rural areas. On its home page, the *UN Development Program* writes,

“The purpose of the UNDP gender equality and women’s empowerment programme is to support the Government of South Africa and Civil Society organisations in achieving gender equality and promoting women’s empowerment in the economic and social spheres. UNDP focuses on gender equality and

women’s empowerment not only as human rights issues, but also because they are a pathway to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development.”<sup>1</sup>

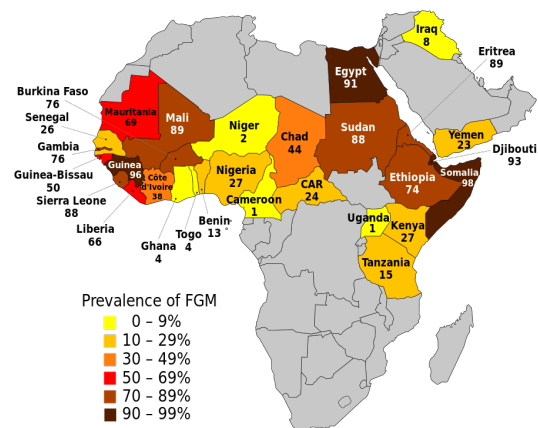
There are multiple nations making similar strides that South Africa has made for women, particularly in protecting women from sexual violence. The practice of female genital mutilation at one point in history was a very widespread means of controlling and oppressing young African girls. Today, this ritualistic and “traditional” practice has been criminalized in eighteen countries including, according to the *Center for Reproductive Rights*:

“Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Togo... The penalties range from a minimum of three months to a maximum of life in prison. Several countries also impose monetary fines.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.za.undp.org/content/south\\_africa/en/home/ourwork/womenempowerment/overview.html](http://www.za.undp.org/content/south_africa/en/home/ourwork/womenempowerment/overview.html)  
<sup>2</sup><http://www.reproductiverights.org/document/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-legal-prohibitions-worldwide>

| Rank | Country      | Lower or Single House | Upper House or Senate |
|------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1    | Rwanda       | 56.3%                 | 38.5%                 |
| 2    | Andorra      | 50%                   | —                     |
| 3    | Cuba         | 48.9%                 | —                     |
| 4    | Sweden       | 44.7%                 | —                     |
| 5    | Seychelles   | 43.8%                 | —                     |
| 6    | Senegal      | 42.7%                 | —                     |
| 7    | Finland      | 42.5%                 | —                     |
| 8    | South Africa | 42.3%                 | 32.1%                 |
| 9    | Nicaragua    | 40.2%                 | —                     |
| 10   | Iceland      | 39.7%                 | —                     |

Top 10 Countries with the Greatest Representation of Women in Politics<sup>3</sup>



Presence of Female Genital Mutilation<sup>4</sup>

Despite the advances that some African nations are making to protect their women and empower them to participate in the business and political world, there are still many African nations that do not grant their female citizens the same rights.

<sup>3</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_government)  
<sup>4</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence\\_of\\_female\\_genital\\_mutilation\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence_of_female_genital_mutilation_by_country)

### **Human Rights Violations**

Even with the strides towards gender equality and women's empowerment that numerous countries have made, exclusionary, abusive, and violent practices still exist and are permitted in numerous parts of Africa.

Some of the worst countries in the world for women to live in are found in Africa, namely Chad, Sudan, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mali. In Sudan, women in the west have seen an increase in rape, abduction, and forced relocation. In the DRC, it is reported that approximately 1,100 women are raped every day. Women in Chad are often the source of hate crimes, and arranged child marriage is popular among girls ages seven to eleven. Genital mutilation is not outlawed in Mali and Somalia, and girls all across both nations are subject to such practices that have a high risk of endangering them later in life.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the rape and bodily harm that women come face to face with

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/29/worst-countries-for-women\\_n\\_6241216.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/29/worst-countries-for-women_n_6241216.html)  
<http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/international/Ten-Worst-Countries-for-Women.html>  
<http://www.wonderslist.com/10-worst-countries-for-women/>

all throughout African nations, discriminatory and sexist laws, practices, and mindsets exist throughout the minds of many African leaders. According to *The Guardian* writer Monica Mark,

“There was the Ugandan minister who defended raping girls as "natural," echoing a similar attitude among Nigerian lawmakers. In Somalia, a court sentenced an alleged rape victim to jail without bringing the accused men to court. This spring, Mozambique could pass a law that would allow rapists to go free if they marry their victims. And women in Egypt have reported a resurgence in notorious "virginity tests" while in police custody... This month, the head of Egypt's top state university said a student who was sexually harassed – watched by a jeering, filming crowd on campus – had brought the incident on herself by wearing colourful clothes. Egypt also ranked alongside north African neighbours Morocco, Sudan, Algeria and Tunisia as the region with the lowest support for women's leadership, and the



highest frequency of discrimination.”<sup>1</sup>

Mark goes on to describe a study conducted on 34 African nations that asked questions about government treatment of women and gender equality. In the study, Egypt and Nigeria were the second and third largest economies of the countries sampled, and a majority of both countries’ citizens believe that the government is not succeeding in

empowering its women.<sup>2</sup> After learning about all of the obstacles that women face in order to achieve prosperity, the concept of empowerment becomes more than just an immediate, economic stimulus. Women’s empowerment is about men and women in Africa changing the mindset of women being lesser and focusing on protecting women from harm and helping them succeed.

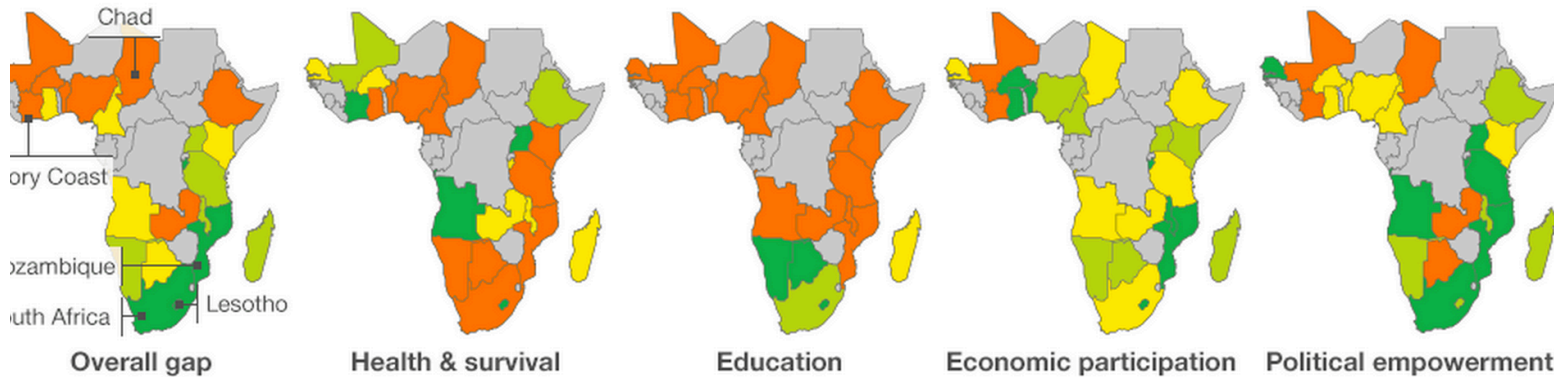
### Middle East and North Africa

Most equal  Least equal  No data



### Sub-Saharan Africa

Most equal  Least equal  No data



<sup>1</sup><http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/mar/28/african-women-progress-equality-afrobarometer-report-2014>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/mar/28/african-women-progress-equality-afrobarometer-report-2014>

### **African Union Summit**

The 24<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit came to an end in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on January 31, 2015 with a resounding message of gender equality. African leaders after the summit declared 2015 to be the “Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063,” in which the AU and African nations will focus on the development of women’s rights all over the continent.

According to the African Union, Agenda 2063 is “both a Vision and an Action Plan. It is a call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny.”<sup>1</sup> While the Agenda is much more than just women’s empowerment plans, AU leaders have decided to dedicate this year to making great strides in reaching the goals and aspirations regarding women. The seven aspirations of Agenda 2063 are as follows:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance;

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<sup>1</sup><http://agenda2063.au.int/en/about>

3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law;
4. A peaceful and secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;
6. An Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth;
7. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner.<sup>2</sup>

The sixth aspiration listed in the Agenda is reinforced by the more specific goals described in several other sections of the agenda, as listed below:

“47. We aspire that by 2063, Africa:

- Is people-centered and caring;
- Puts children first;
- Women are empowered and play their rightful role in all spheres of life;
- Has full gender equality in all spheres of life;
- Has engaged and empowered youth.

48. The African woman will be fully empowered in all spheres, with equal social, political and economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit

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<sup>2</sup>[http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/agenda2063\\_popular\\_version\\_05092014\\_EN.pdf](http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/agenda2063_popular_version_05092014_EN.pdf)

property, sign a contract, register and manage a business. Rural women will have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs and financial services.

49. All forms of violence and discrimination (social, economic, political) against women and girls will be eliminated, and they will fully enjoy all their human rights. All harmful social practices (especially FGM and child marriages) will be ended and barriers to quality health and education for women and girls eliminated.

50. Africa of 2063 will have full gender parity, with women occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels and half of managerial positions in the public and the private sector. The economic and political glass ceiling that restricted women's progress would have been shattered.

52. Youth unemployment will be eliminated, and Africa's youth guaranteed full access to education, training, skills and technology, to health services, jobs and economic opportunities, recreational and cultural activities as well as to financial means to allow them to realize their full potential.

53. Young African men and women will be the path breakers of the African knowledge society and will contribute

significantly to innovation and entrepreneurship. The creativity, energy and innovation of African youth will be the driving force behind the continent's political, social, cultural and economic transformation."<sup>1</sup>

African leaders spent a great deal of time putting Agenda 2063 together, but, by only reading the aspirations, true results may not seem as probable. There has, however, been thorough discussion about how to achieve, enforce, and ensure gender equality.

### **Methods of Empowerment**

Days before the AU summit, over 200 women and women's rights activists gathered in groups all over Africa to discuss progress in the women's rights movement but commented on the importance of making sustainable and realistic goals to be put into action. AU officials involved in the gathering recommended that the year of women's empowerment should be "seized as an opportunity to focus on the implementation of practical solutions that will provide measurable results for

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<sup>1</sup>It might be a good idea to read the entire Agenda, listed here: [http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/agenda2063\\_popular\\_version\\_05092014\\_EN.pdf](http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/agenda2063_popular_version_05092014_EN.pdf)

women.”<sup>1</sup> Specific “Priority Areas” were also determined when implementing the ideals expressed in the Agenda. There are six Priority Areas, designated by stakeholders, partners, and ministers of the department of Gender and Women’s Affairs. They include:

1. Education, Sciences, Technology, and ICT;
2. Agriculture with a Focus on Agribusiness;
3. Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion;
4. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women;
5. Peace and Security;
6. Leadership, Governance, and Democracy.<sup>2</sup>

The specifics of implementation have not been clearly outlined for African nations, although many AU partners are in talks and discussions (25<sup>th</sup> summit) about the best way to implement each section of the Agenda.

World leaders are greatly in support of the Agenda 2063’s proposals. For example, Ban Ki-Moon, the UN

Secretary-General, spoke at a press conference after the January summit, saying, ““Women must be at the centre and front of all our lives... I applaud your proposal at this summit: Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063. Africa is home to Parliaments and Cabinets with the world’s highest percentage of women members.” Ki-Moon also, however, stressed the importance of action and implementation: “We have much more work to do to unleash [their] tremendous potential. They need better access to secondary education, decent work and economic opportunities. They need more help to combat maternal mortality and poverty, and genital mutilation. They need more protection from the scourge of violence at the hands of men and boys.”<sup>3</sup>

In the coming years, many African and world leaders will be waiting to learn more about the actions to be taken that will help empower women across the continent. The AU has created ten-year implementation plans for Agenda 2063, but none have specified how countries will empower their female citizens. For now, the African Union expects stakeholders and nation leaders to use

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2015/looking-beyond-rhetoric-african-union-year-women>

<sup>2</sup><http://summits.au.int/en/25thsummit/events/second-african-union-high-level-panel-gender-equality-women-s-empowerment>

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/02/executive-director-at-2015-au-summit>

the aspirations as standards for their respective countries.

**Necessary Actions and Questions to Ask**

There is clearly a hole in the AU's plan to ensure gender equality: execution. When in committee, consider these questions and issues to make a more prosperous Africa:

1. How can the AU enforce the goals listed in Agenda 2063?
2. What methods of implementing Agenda 2063 will be most attractive to and accepted by nations where gender discrimination is most prevalent?
3. Are there any other ways of fighting for women's empowerment?
4. Can the AU guarantee protections, support, or asylum to women subjected to patriarchal abuses in their home nation?

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