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## **Editorial Note**

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### **Luka Biong Deng Kuol**

*Editor-in-Chief: African Journal of Strategy, Defence and Security Studies (AJSDSS)*

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Since the successful launching of the first issue of the African Journal of Strategy, Defense and Security Studies (AJSDSS) in June 2025, there has been a considerable increase in the number of quality papers submitted to the Journal. Since the last issue in December 2025, twenty-nine (29) papers have been received with 14 papers have been reviewed and accepted, 9 papers are published in this issue and 15 papers are still at the various stages of review process. Based on this impressive surge in the papers received, the Editorial Board has decided to increase the frequency of the publication of the Journal to tri-annually instead of biannually.

Besides this notable rise in the number of the papers, there has been an increase not only in the geographical and regional coverage but also in the diversity of the papers. This remarkable progress of the Journal in less than one year of its inauguration is a manifestation of the growing research efforts to understand the evolving security threats and provide policy options for improving security governance and delivering and sustaining security and safety in Africa. This progress underscored that the Journal is on the right path in furthering rigorous African academic agency in advancing the African security by building not only a trusted platform for evidence-based and research-policy dialogue but also by sharing of experiences and knowledge between and among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in the security domain.

This issue came at the time when the world is witnessing drastic global and regional security challenges and threats that have exacerbated the complex security landscape of Africa. The persistent and growing violent conflicts, organized crime, political instability, surge in military

coups, and great powers and middle power competition are increasingly shaping the Africa's security landscape. In addition, this Africa's fragile security environment has been further aggravated by the confluence of urbanization, demographic pressures, climate change, the rapid advancement in technology and Artificial Intelligence and evolving warfare technology (ACSS, 2025).

The status of the Africa's security governance is well captured by recently released two important reports; the 2025 Africa Organized Crime Index (OCI) (ENACT 2025) and the 2025 Government Defense Integrity Index (GDII) (Transparency International, 2025). The 2025 Africa Organized Crime Index reveals a surge in organized crime in terms of the growth of criminal actors and networks, as well as weakening state resilience and responses to organized crime across Africa. Alarming, the state-embedded criminal actors largely drive criminality by enabling criminal markets, undermining governance structures, and weakening state capacity to respond to organized crime in Africa. These findings of the Index have profound implications for African Security Governance, as they clearly indicate that this surge in transnational organized crime will persist and will remain unabated without credible, collective, well-coordinated and evidence-informed interventions at continental, regional, national, and community levels.

On the other hand, the Government Defense Integrity Index (GDII) assesses the quality of institutional controls to manage the risk of corruption in defense and security institutions on the basis of five risk areas: financial, operational, personnel, political, and procurement. The 2025 GDII shows that all 17 countries assessed in Sub-Saharan Africa face a high to critical risk of corruption in their defence and security sectors. The countries that perform poorly in GDI are characterized by weak or non-existent safeguards against defence and security sector corruption and are more susceptible to violent conflict, instability and human rights abuses. The results of the GDII underscored that the persistent corruption in the security sector will further exacerbate the already fragile security environment of the continent as it faces growing security threats, political instability and militarisation, with defence and security institutions frequently invoke national security to justify secrecy around budgets and spending (Transparency International, 2025).

Also, the African security landscape has been affected by the Iran war that erupted in February 2026, and developed rapidly into a conflict that triggered reverberating economic and security shockwaves beyond the Middle East (Onditi, 2026). Its repercussion and the consequences are globally felt by most countries; particularly after Iran imposed

restriction on the Strait of Hormuz; one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints (Katona, 2026). It is estimated that the Middle East accounts for 15.8 percent of Africa's imports and 10.9 percent of its exports, while the Strait of Hormuz handles around 20 percent of global oil exports and nearly 90 percent of Persian Gulf oil exports (UNDP, 2026). If the Iran war exceeds six months, it is estimated that the Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) will contract by 0.2 percentage points with the extent of this impact would vary across the continent based on levels of import dependency, exposure to the Middle East, and global market conditions (Ibid). These disruptions occurred at the time many African countries are struggling to address the challenges of security threats and governance, extreme weather conditions, and the consequences of the global shocks of the COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine.

This issue of the Journal has a total of 9 papers that endeavor to provide subtle nuances to the rapidly changing security landscape and the enormous challenges facing security governance in Africa. These papers are grouped and arranged into three categories: national, regional and global focus with an overview of each paper is provided.

**The National Focus Papers:** This issue starts with six (6) papers that focus on national security governance issues. The first paper by AVM Emmanuel Ogbonnaya Chukwu analyzes "National Security Administration in Nigeria". The analysis shows a fragmented security architecture and recommends comprehensive reforms in security sector. The second paper by AFUNUGO, KENECHI NNAEMEKA and ALBERT ULUTORTI GREEN examines the "AI-integrated security for tracking kidnappers and gunmen in Anambra state in Nigeria". This study finds the presence of suspected insider criminal collaboration networks embedded in the security operations aim at tracking kidnappers and gunmen in the state and recommends the establishment of a police disciplinary body alongside AI adoption. Oluwanifemi Adeyemo and JATTO, Adavize Emmanuel assessed in the third paper "Border management and security challenges in Oyo state in Nigeria". The analysis reveals the presence of inter-agency rivalry, overlapping mandates, and limited resources in the Integrated Border Management (IBM) and recommends the need for clarified command structures, technological investments, and structured community engagement in the IBM. The fourth paper by Samuel Oyeyemi Agbeleoba and Toyin Bamisaye examines is on "Discursive Construction of Power and Legitimacy in Nigeria". The analysis reveals a fundamental and symbolic

clash between personalised political power and institutional/professional legitimacy and makes a significant contribution to the scholarly discourse on political communication in Africa, offering a multimodal perspective on how power is contested, and legitimacy is negotiated in the digital public sphere. Tope Shola AKINYETUN, Ikponmwoşa EBOMOYI and & Ambrose Osariyekemwen IYASE examined in the fifth paper the “Politics, Patronage and Stigma: Local Gatekeepers, Selection Bias and the Social Exclusion of Youth in Niger Delta Reintegration”. The analysis shows that the reintegration programme of ex-militants has been incorporated into the clientelist politics of Nigeria, compromising the inclusion of some and exclusion of many, and hence, becoming invalid in its capacity as an exercise of peace. The study recommends that reintegration requires effective selection procedures, continuous material assistance, anti-stigmatisation at the community level, and a more robust monitoring system. The last paper in this group is by Blessing Simura and it is on “The Rise of urban ungoverned spaces in Zimbabwe”. The analysis reveals that there are micro under-governed spaces in many urban transport bus termini, which, if left uncontrolled, will eventually breed dangerous gang culture in urban areas that would establish fully blown unsafe under-governed zones in the country’s cities.

**The Regional Focus Papers:** There are two papers in this issue that focus on regional security governance issues. Oscar Mujana, Vincent Chakunda, Melody Chindoga, and Sipikelelo Mugari present the seventh paper on “Entanglement of Militarism and Humanitarianism: Rethinking the role of US AFRICOM in Africa’s Security Landscape”. Based on critical examination of the role of the United States Africa Command (US AFRICOM) in Africa’s security landscape since its establishment almost two decades ago, the paper concludes that the entanglement of militarism and humanitarianism in US AFRICOM interventions contributes to the militarisation of Africa’s fragile security landscape. The eighth paper is by Shakira Hannah Osasona and Rotimi Ajayi and it is on “Impact Assessment of Nigeria-Benin Republic Border Management Policies”. The evaluation analysis indicates that despite some infrastructure and policy reforms have improved trade facilitation and bilateral cooperation, significant challenges such as porous borders, corruption, policy inconsistency, and the adverse effects of the 2019 border closure persist. The study recommends strengthening institutional coordination, enhancing technology at border posts, and aligning national policies with regional frameworks such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

**The Global Focus Papers:** There is only one paper in this issue that focuses on the global security governance issues. The ninth and the last paper is by Odeigah Theresa Nfam, Goddy Uwa Osimen and John Ehiabhi Anegbode and it examines “The Risks of an Unconstrained Iranian Nuclear Program Approach: Implications for Global Peace and Security”. The analysis demonstrates that Iranian nuclear hedging and proxy operations accelerate proliferation risks and erode the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The paper recommends integrating coercive diplomacy into a renewed multilateral framework as the effective way of reducing arms-race incentives and prevent miscalculation.

The nine papers in this issue reflect the core vision of the AJOSDSS and have undoubtedly contributed to fostering high-quality, interdisciplinary scholarship that informs policy, advances African security and provides a trusted platform for research-policy dialogue. The editorial board remains committed to sustaining rigorous peer review standards while ensuring diversity, geographical coverage and participation of early-career researchers on Africa security.

As Editor-in-Chief, I extend my profound appreciation and big thank you to the authors for submitting their papers to the Journal and persevering with our peer-review process. Special thanks and appreciation go to the peer-reviewers for availing their precious time to provide their timely and high quality review of the papers for this issue of the Journal. Above all, I exceptionally thank the editorial team for their sterling, diligent and timely editorial process, particularly Asar Ann, Umunna Victor, Professor Jidefor Adibe and Mr. Isaac Onyekachi. I also wish to acknowledge the much-appreciated support provided by the dedicated team at Adonis & Abbey Publishers for advancing this Journal.

With this issue of the Journal, our commitment to nurture and sustain the Journal is irreversible and will continue to build strong community of interest to advance the African security through the AJSDSS.

**Luka Biong Deng Kuol**

Editor-in-Chief

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