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# The Impact of Modern Technologies on Peace, Security and Development in Africa

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## Abstract

Since the independence processes in the African continent, armed conflicts, peace, security and development has remain contesting issues that have raised concern and attention both at the national and international level. In recent years, most of these issues have heightened the tempo which has given rise to their strong deliberation in the region of Africa. Although, efforts are been made in different quarters in the continent particularly, the African Union to deal with these teething issues still, the growing pace and role of technologies currently in the world has not been appropriately and adequately explored to respond to these concerns in Africa. However, this paper does not aim to give a comprehensive impression of the landscape of new technologies, but focuses on the opportunities and challenges these technologies present to the African continent and how best these technologies could be anchored in the African Union agenda to address the challenges before it. The paper further offers concrete recommendations on the best practices of these new technologies in key areas that would propel Africa in the attainment of sustainable peace, security and development in the region.

**Key words:** Peace; Security; Development; Technologies; Africa

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## INTRODUCTION

While history has its fair share of cases of technologically ill- or under-equipped Davids beating technologically supreme Goliaths, it is also true that more often than not, technological superiority has been a key factor in deciding the outcome of warfare. As such, technology has featured more prominently in war and/or strategic studies than it has in peace studies. One exception to that would be in cases where 'peace' denotes the kind of victor's peace and therefore one group's domination over another. In that case, technology may be used as a tool of discipline and control (Ioannis Tellidis, 2020).

Modern technologies present opportunities for mutual cooperation across a wide range of areas globally. According to Independent Commission on Multilateralism (ICM) (2017), argued that the potential of modern technologies to support and promote sustainable peace, security and development is widely acknowledged, and this is the area where the UN has come to the extreme in integrating them into its discussions and work (ICM, 2017). While modern technologies offer wide-ranging opportunities to improve people's lives, they also present challenges, many of which require multilateral, joint-multi-stakeholders solutions. One such challenge is the enduring "digital divide" both between and within countries, which has led to several multilateral mechanisms for transferring technology to the developing world. Internet governance also faces a challenge in its democratic deficit. While many believe multilateral actors should stay out of Internet governance, selective multilateralism in this area could help address this deficit, as long as what is already working well is preserved. In addition, cyber threats and new technologies such as armed drones require the multilateral system to develop new laws and norms and to adapt existing international human rights and humanitarian laws to meet these challenges (ICM, 2017).

This technological change has created new opportunities for multilateral cooperation. The need for a multilateral response to technological change is nothing new; it was recognized as early as 1865 with the creation of the International Telegraph Union ITU, but later renamed the International Telecommunication Union in 1934, the oldest existing international organization. Since then, the UN has been seeking not only to find its role in addressing modern technologies but also to integrate these technologies into its other areas of work such as area of sustainable development to humanitarian engagement to peace-building and conflict resolution. Though, the latest "waves" of technological change that have taken place throughout modern history, driven by inventions ranging from steam power to electricity to the automobile. The current technological wave is remarkable for its speed and its level of impact on economic development and social transformation (Jeffrey, 2015:82).

Therefore, this paper explores the impact of modern technologies on peace, security, and development in Africa and identifies areas where stakeholders within the region of Africa could play a positive role in mitigating the use of modern technologies in attainments of it public good. This paper does not intend to give a broad view of the background of new technologies but, it aims to analyse opportunities these technologies present across a number of areas in the continent of Africa, and how best these technologies could be anchored in the African Union agenda to address the challenges before it . The paper further explores how best Africa can take advantage of several opportunities presents by the modern technologies. Lastly, the paper offers some policy recommendations on how to benefit from new technologies and develop frameworks and norms to govern and regulate their use.

## AFRICANS AND THE POTENTIALITY ADVANCEMENT ON MODERN TECHNOLOGIES

There is no doubt that the modern technologies have aided and promote peace, security and development across the globe. The emergence of these technologies has created new opportunities in the areas of peace, security and development especially in conflict prevention, peace operations, peace building. Modern technologies have also made it possible to collect data in crime and conflict enhancing the efficiency of early warning and response. Peace operations can now be implemented in asymmetric threat environment and monitoring and observation can be performed more efficiently as a result of this advancement. In addition, the contribution of modern technologies for peace and security, the use of these technologies helps in timely exposing risks of violence and crises thereby strengthening early warning capabilities. Increasing use of these technologies by conflict actors also mean that it has increasingly become possible to establish the positions, motivations and movement of conflict actors, thereby enabling the planning of informed policy responses and mediation and peace-making efforts.

The use of these technologies in peace processes has not only enabled mediators and peace support operations to have strong situational awareness, but to also engage in public diplomacy. Modern technologies can also help bolster conflict prevention, which is at the very foundation of the UN Charter but continues to suffer from a lack of political and financial investment. ICTs provide opportunities to collect data about crime and conflict and reduce the gap between warning and response. For example, crisis mapping, social media mapping, and crowdsourcing tools can help generate data on conflict indicators. The data generated from these tools can help identify patterns associated with conflict and peace in order to better inform efforts to prevent conflict or to monitor violations of cease-fires or human rights (ICM, 2017).

These technologies also contribute to enhancing the legitimacy of peace processes by enabling engagement with various stakeholders. Similarly, they foster the peace-building efforts down to local level. Modern technologies particularly with the advent of the Internet and mobile phones, opportunities for ICTs to support sustainable development, prevent conflict, improve humanitarian action, and transform state-society relations have greatly expanded. Technology is now integral to security. CCTV, access control systems and alarms, as well as integrated IT management systems can support the security operation to keep organisations and their people safe. ICT could also be a path towards peace, security through embracing participatory governance principles on the one hand, and is implemented through user friendly harmonized, effective and efficient management tools and mechanisms on the other. The latter and more specifically those responsive to the populations needs in harmony with the environment, will allow governments to better channel development actions in order to obtain a positive and sustainable impact and address the challenges faced by African countries. These modern technologies have also led to an exponential increase in the amount of data being produced, which can be used to measure the impact and improve the effectiveness of work in a range of spheres (International Telecommunication Union, 2012).

Moreover, technological advances in satellite imaging, image processing capabilities, and surveillance technologies meant that there was great potential for the UN's core peace and security missions to benefit directly. The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) was the first instance where a Security Council Resolution (1706) explicitly called for 'aerial means' and 'aerial reconnaissance' to be used in order to help protect civilian populations (UN Security Council 2006). The organisation also used drones for the protection of refugees and internally displaced populations (IDPs) in Chad in 2009. In 2013,

the UN officially adopted the use of drones for its mission in Congo (MONUSCO) (BBC News, 2013), not only as a means to respond to violence but also as a tool of deterrence (UN News Centre, 2013)

Again, like ICT, data, both "big" and "small," can play a crucial role in efforts to promote sustainable development, particularly in measuring progress toward the SDGs. According to Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (2014), which claimed that Data provides benchmarks to assess and enhance the effectiveness of development efforts. According to the Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, "Without high-quality data providing the right information on the right things at the right time, designing, monitoring and evaluating effective policies becomes almost impossible. While the lack of high-quality data hurts developing countries most, challenges in data collection, standardization, disaggregation, and timeliness compromise sustain able development in all countries.

Drones for instance, in Africa, have improved healthcare services in Rwanda as they are being used to deliver blood in remote areas, thus helping to ensure the security of the people. Some of these emerging technologies are being researched and tested. Others have already been deployed, including mixed reality merging the virtual and the real world, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Blockchain, among others. Currently, Africa is also engaged in technological Research and Development and deployment. Some countries on the continent already have thriving AI hubs, such as Nigeria and Ethiopia. Google has its own AI hub in Ghana, and the United Nations (UN) has an AI centre, the UN Global Pulse lab, in Kampala. Google has an Artificial Intelligence (AI) hub in Ghana. Just like the rest of the world, modern technologies are becoming highly influential on the security and stability of African states. Among others, the rapid spread of the internet across the African continent has been heralded as a key driver of prosperity and a sign of the continent's technological coming of age.

## EFFECTS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN AFRICA AGAINST AFRICANS

Development and success come with challenges. The modern technologies are radical or novel and may have disruptive effects in the sectors where they are deployed and in society ( Rotolo, et al, 2015). Worldwide, we have seen the various destructive roles such technologies can have and the negative impact on people. For example, technologies powered by AI have been used in persecuting, surveilling, and monitoring minorities (including the Chinese use of AI to target the Uyghur community), targeting specific groups during disinformation operations during elections, or employed in everyday policing. The security literature has started to explore the implications of modern technologies at the levels of the state and within institutions, but less so among the population at large. Garcia, (2018) believes that despite the growing but still very scarce body of literature on emerging technologies in relation to peace and security, very little is known about their implications for peace and conflict dynamics, and even less so in the global South, more specifically in Africa (ACCORDS, 2021).

As in other parts of the world, social media plays an important role in the election dynamics in Africa. Some countries, such as Nigeria, Kenya, Madagascar and Uganda, experienced disinformation operations instigated by states such as Russia for example, the campaign led by Russia's Private Military Company (PMC) by the Wagner Group, or by non-state and illusive actors (Knight, 2021)). Some of these operations have succeeded in creating trouble, turmoil, and unrest. They raised the level of anxiety and fear among civilians and succeeded in decreasing the level of trust between the population and the authorities. During the 2017 Kenyan elections, people were victims of the micro-targeting campaign launched by Cambridge Analytica. This company targeted Kenyans using their private data as related to ethnicity, gender, religion, age. People were exposed to horrific messages, including the manipulation of past violence in the country and the instigation of fear related to a future in which Raila Odinga, the opposition would annihilate certain tribes. Such occurrences can have significant psychological effects on the population as they are entrenched in fear and suspicion. In Egypt, during the Arab Spring, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were widely used but in a more strategic fashion such as Facebook was used to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate the activities, and YouTube to inform the world' (Baytiyeh 2019: 76). The problem with emerging technologies has been used by malevolent actors to create situations of conflict and insecurity, despite their so-called decentralised, emancipatory, and empowering aspects, they allow and facilitate the exploitation of vulnerabilities and very often target what is anchored within people like:

> feelings, identities, the historical past, attachment to loved ones, and anger and frustration. Africa is embracing emerging technologies, but at the same time, people are already paying a high price with community violence and conflicts, an erosion of trust between the people and authorities during elections and the pandemic, online organised crime, and disinformation operations targeting the vulnerable. Extremist groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) seem to have found a new home in Africa. They are known to be tech-savvy and use digital tools for recruitment. This is all only just starting on the continent (ACCORDS, 2021).

Other cases show that the major role of disinformation or misinformation in situations involving killing and

community conflict. For example, in cases where it is difficult to trace the individuals or groups engaged in disinformation or misinformation operations, the distribution of content, such as images, memes, videos, and even voice messages, leads to a high level of violence among communities (ACCORDS, 2021). In Nigeria, images of corpses in mass graves were used to fuel animosity between the Fulani Muslims and Berom Christians, which resulted in violence and killing of many people in the country. Other situations have heightened animosity between communities or among conflicting parties. Only just recently, in Ethiopia, there was a series of misinformation cases relating to the Tigray conflict in which people shared fabricated content using images and videos from other conflicts (for example, from Nagorno-Karabakh), which could fuel violence among conflicting parties.

In addition, modern technologies have impacted theatres of war and peace in most part of the world particularly, Africa. With such advancement come the engagement of new technologies such as drones and other modern forms of hybrid warfare that introduces their own set of new challenges. They also carry the potential for adverse effects like the danger posed by the militarization of emerging technologies, especially if used in the context of terrorism. Moreover, cell phones and the Internet in addition to enhancing civic participation and empowerment are increasingly being employed to facilitate conflicts by serving as channel of communication, control public belief, raise awareness on new warfare techniques, documenting intelligence, and taking on cyber-attacks by violent extremists, organized crime and gangs among others.

In Africa, there has been an increase in the number of users and the roles AI plays in social media. In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in destructive AI technologies using a variety of techniques. For example, deep-fake technologies employing deep learning creates synthetic media, including videos and voices. Other techniques use Generative Adversarial Network to manipulate images, videos, and sounds and then superimpose them onto source files so that the latter is altered in a very subtle manner. Deep learning has also been used in the autoregressive language model of GPT-3, a technology that can generate texts independently. The results are surprising, as many of these texts appear to be written by humans, but they are not.

In case of biometric technologies, which have often been deployed in various areas, such as border control, predictive policing, the banking and health sector, and identification, and also used to verify identity at the airport or online in the case of banks. Authorities all over the world are using biometric data from video surveillance to fight crime.

Biometric technologies also contribute to the creation of situations where civilians are subjected to symbolic violence, which manifests itself, for example, through surveillance capitalism and data colonialism. For a vulnerable population, minorities, or people living in areas where technologies are under-regulated, the collection, gathering, selling, and storing of biometric data can be qualified as symbolic violence. This violence is not direct or physical rather, it is born out of the asymmetrical power dynamics at play in which powerful actors for example; large tech companies, states, and political elite have control over these activities. Weak and vulnerable populations have no control over the kind of data collected about them for example, ethnicity, race, gender, and the purpose for which it will be used; such as policing minorities, how long this information will be stored, and who will have access to it are some of the issues. Recently, countries like Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe have been at the centre of an alarming deployment of facial recognition technologies for mass surveillance. Among the most well-known Chinese companies deploying these technologies is Huawei, which has frequently been accused of spying on the African Union (AU). Some of Huawei's projects in Africa are implemented within the framework of initiatives such as the safe city programmes.

Chutel, (2018) argues that in 2018, the Chinese firm Cloudwalk Technology concluded a deal with the Zimbabwean State to launch a large-scale facial recognition programme. Similarly, Hawkins, (2018) claimed that smaller companies, such as Transsion, also offer cheap technologies like smartphones to civilians and deploy facial recognition technologies that collect data from African people without oversight of the companies' activities. The gathering and selling of such data is an extremely lucrative business, and marketing companies have had no scruples about using these means to micro-target the local population. These types of technologies threaten people's privacy and liberty. More importantly, they are a significant threat to people's security if deployed in authoritarian and police states. An example is the use of facial recognition in Uganda to identify and track opposition politicians during protest movements (Wilson, el ta 2019). In post conflict zones, such occurrences threaten democratic processes, peace and development.

Modern technologies can also be invisible threats that affect the peace of civilians. Disinformation, misinformation, and fake news have been rife in Africa over the last few years. Digital threats are diverse, given the multiplicity of modern technologies that are being tested and rolled out. Once people feel distrust and fear, they engage in actions such as protests, riots and conflicts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many virus conspiracies were spread in the African cyber sphere and, thereafter, disseminated via offline methods, such as rumour.

In Africa, civilians themselves play important roles in securitizing the fifth-generation mobile network (5G). 5G is said to provide high-speed, optimum performance and improved connectivity. Some African people have joined an anti-5G conspiracy. The conspiracy theory surrounding this technology, such as its role in diffusing coronavirus, caused people to view 5G as a threat that must be controlled and destroyed. In the North, this global movement led to arson attacks, and some engineers received physical and verbal threats. An example of this securitization of technology and the implication of 5G in peace and conflict processes in Africa is the recent influence of a global conspiracy theory online in South Africa. In January 2021, Vodacom and Mobile Telecommunication Company (MTN) towers were burnt because of conspiracy theories linking the spread of COVID-19 to 5G. When civilians engage in actions such as the destruction of public goods, it is a sign of dissatisfaction and fear. This demonstrates the extent to which the population is vulnerable if drastic measures are not put in place to manage and regulate the deployment of modern technologies in the region.

While modern technologies have driven economic growth, they have also contributed to environmental pollution. Storing data in the "cloud" requires massive digital warehouses that use enormous amounts of energy are roughly equivalent to the output of thirty nuclear plants worldwide. James (2012), argued that the metals needed to build the components of ICT devices are often extracted in developing countries like Africa, using environmentally destructive methods. Moreover, the amount of electronic waste is rapidly increasing; it exceeded 40 million tons in 2014 and is growing by 4 to 5 percent yearly. Much of this waste is toxic and is illegally dumped in developing countries like Africa.

The most unfortunate thing is that, many of the technologies that are currently used or beta-tested in wars and conflicts are mostly located in the global South and are still researched, prototyped, and developed in the global North, often without stringent regulations. These colonial practices continue unchallenged. In the postcolonial era, we see such practices transferred, copied, learnt, and diffused in the processes behind the deployment of modern technologies like AI as a tool to enhance weapon systems.

## CHALLENGES OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN AFRICA

> There are important questions that would require answers, however. Who owns or leases the technology? And who has access to it and the data it generates? As well as the nature of the subcontractual relations it often depends upon are some of these questions. As Larauri and Meier (2015: 12) have noted, records of this information will most likely outlast the life of the mission, in which case no guarantees can be provided about the extension of "do-no-harm" policies. Indeed, considering the digital gap between developed and developing or underdeveloped countries, it might well be the case that new dependencies are emerging with the adoption of such technologies, which increasingly look like older power relations (Ioannis Tellidis, 2020).

Challenges in Africa remain unlimited and include poor ownership structure, weak financial base, low quality staff particularly the experts and lack of access to information, and conflict with authorities and market interests (Mak'Ochieng, 1994:17 cited in Saleh, n.d). The differential knowledge could be explained in the light of the lack of telecommunications infrastructure; computers and connectivity; the high costs; absence of awareness of the possible implications of ICT on development; lack of ICT skills and support; remaining attitudinal barriers like cultural and behavioral attitudes towards technology; non-availability of governmental information online and lack of motivation to use information over the internet (Cullen, 2002 & Rao, 2003).

According to a study carried out by Pre-Tana Regional Multi-Stakeholders 'Dialogue (2021), the rapid advancement of technology especially, that of the internet across Africa have its own downsides. The study revealed that, aside of the benefits, while 82 percent of the developed countries get access to internet in developed countries the percentage goes to 11 for Africa. This mean that Africa is far from the accessibility of modern technologies in the 21st century compare to other more developed states, and without the necessary infrastructure, gadgets, affordable internet, reliable power and unaffordable costs broadband internet access will remain out of reach for many low-income Africans living in rural areas in many years to come. Such a digital divide poses its own question on governance particularly, to Africans. Moreover, the lack of cultural and behavioural changes towards such transformation along with lack of awareness on the impacts of ICT on peace and security and lack of ICT skills and support makes it more challenging. As the advancement in technologies expand, their benefits and shortcomings foster areas of cooperation at the international level renewing and expanding existing partnerships. Such an opportunity also comes as the challenge of African member states and institutions determining and integrating the role of modern technologies in their policies, work and interactions with their partners. It is an exceptional illustration of harmony among all African states on the perception that the continent's peace, security and development boldly depend on the modern technologies such as Information Communication Technology (ICTs) since the peace and conflict dynamics changed rapidly. This is indeed indebted a great deal to the commitment of many experts in the African Union (AU), Member States and partners.

In addition, the demand for military drones in Africa has significantly been on the rise, driven by a growing number of internal conflicts and counter-terrorism

operations. Libya for instance is often regarded the world's largest 'drone war theatre', with multiple countries supporting one of the warring parties militarily in the civil war through the delivery of drones. France is deploying armed drones in the Sahel region against militants in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, and both US and French air strikes in Africa are notorious for injuring and killing civilians, often without any transparency or accountability regarding civilian casualties. According to a report of AU, Peace and Security Council (PSC) 2022), African countries have increasingly acquired and used (armed) drones themselves in their fights against armed groups. At the same time, armed groups are increasingly putting effort into weaponizing small commercial drones, turning these into surveillance and combat drones, of which Boko Haram is a primary example. These developments make clear that military drones have become an essential tool for armed forces in their operations, but that their use gives rise to questions about clear legal norms, wider military-strategic considerations and improved export controls.

Finally, with Africa's colonial past, it is also critical to investigate the roles of these technologies in postcolonial settings. It is no secret that big technology companies and powerful nations resort to colonial practices when deploying technologies, such as AI, in Africa. For example, Africa's youth and technology talents have been drawn into lucrative jobs carrying out misinformation operations at home and abroad. Such operations manipulate various issues, including colonialism and imperialism, and involve physical violence. For instance, Africa continues to be a victim of wars between powerful nations such as the US, France and Russia. The cyber domain has been central to the tactics they have employed. The recent disinformation operations which Russia led against France in the Central African Republic (CAR) are proof of this. These campaigns targeted France's presence in the CAR and led to violent street protests involving the local population. In view of all of this, there are many issues that require further inquiry into the implications of such technologies on peace and security on the continent.

## THE FUTURE FOR AFRICANS ON EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN AFRICA

There has been a push towards the implementation of initiatives around cyber peace and security. This concept is still being discussed and defined by scholars, practitioners and actors from the public and private sectors. These initiatives could revolve around defining the norms of responsible state behaviours; control and governance of the internet based on democratic principles; cyber peacekeeping; arms control, including a ban on offensive cyber weapons and AI-powered drones facilitating signature and personality strikes; and the use of AI in peace-building, conflict resolution and mediation (Inversini,2020). It is also about the fight against cyber warfare and cyber conflict, mass surveillance and espionage, disinformation operations, and misinformation, among others. The list is extensive because technologies in the digital world evolve rapidly, while regulation is slow to catch up. Some of these phenomena are already pervasive in certain countries, and malevolent actors are taking advantage of this to sow discord, disturb the peace, and create conflict and war. For example, in the Middle East and more specifically in Syria, AI helped Russians and the Assad regime organize and amplify disinformation campaigns drawing attention away from the abuse they had committed by using anti-imperialist messages and pretending to denounce human rights violations.

Societies and individuals that are neither equipped nor ready to face and deal with the threats posed by modern technologies suffer the most. Recently, organizations deploying peace operations on the continent of Africa or involved in peace processes such as mediation (for example, the UN Department of Peace Operations) have been using AI to support their decision-making processes or analyze data and forecast occurrences of conflicts, such as sentiment analyses using data collected from open-source platforms. With sentiment analysis, an AI technique known as Natural Language Processing identifies and classifies opinions and emotions in data collected from various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, websites, and so on. The analysis and models derived from this technique can be helpful in predicting the occurrence of a crisis or conflict. To what extent do such technologies support peace processes? Do they help resolve conflict? While recognizing the positive outcomes of these modern technologies, it is crucial to identify the threats they pose to peace, security and development in Africa. Very often, local governments are complicit in the deployment of colonial technologies. An example mentioned earlier is the deployment of facial recognition on the continent. Technology is still under-regulated in African countries. This gives leeway and creates loopholes for colonial actors to operate without oversight and very often with significant support from local governments. Africa must be brought to the fore in international governance platforms dealing with modern technologies in the fields of peace, security and development, and it is vital to insist on establishing further local regulations to protect civilians against such threats.

In the light of the foregoing, Africa leaders may need to recognize the enormous contribution as well as its threats to Africans and the potential of these modern technologies in addressing the socio-economic, governance and peace, security and development challenges and for the implementation of AU's Agenda 2063. It is therefore call for the imperative for enhancing Africa's participation both in the development of and access to modern technologies and harnesses them for

the advancement of the wellbeing of the people of the continent. Undoubtedly, the extent to which African Union peace processes, whether in mediation or in peace support operations, are able to harness these positive contribution of these technologies depend on their possession of the requisite skills and capabilities for using these technologies for such ends (AU, Peace and Security Council (PSC) 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Although the modern technological developments are important for mankind, there is a need for a coordinated regulatory framework to mitigate their negative effects. One fact remains crucial, the digital revolution's ultimate legacy will be determined not by technology, but by how it is used. African countries that take advantage of the opportunities and limit the risks inherent in modern technology may achieve greater peace, stability and development. Yet many countries could be left behind. The paper revealed that the benefits of modern technologies are not fully explored or materialized yet in Africa. Their materialization would be the challenge of the next coming years if necessary action is not being put in place. Though, it obvious that Africa has some specific needs regarding, the legal regulatory framework and the incorporation of these technologies in formal and informal contexts will be a better choice. Even though digital progresses such as social media brought new economic opportunities, they also, unfortunately enabled new economic sources for terrorist groups among other non-state actors. Little is currently known about the roles modern technologies play in peace security and development in Africa despite its already overwhelming presence in people's everyday lives. There should be more research into how these technologies co-exist and interact with civilians during times of peace and periods of conflict. As the continent recently recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, African leaders face a choice between harnessing modern technology to improve government effectiveness, increase transparency and foster inclusion, or as a tool of repression, division, conflict and development crisis. The modern technologies not only present opportunities for increasing the greater good but also can pose a threat to humans and their freedoms. In adapting to modern technologies and addressing these threats, the African Union (AU) must determine where it can play a useful role and where existing mechanisms and other actors can better placed.

There is no gain saying conflicts are rampant in Africa and modern technologies can help mitigate them; and equally support peace-building, but their negative effects could also seriously threaten peace efforts on the continent if care is not taking. It is therefore imperative to use a hybrid governance approach that allies traditional methods and emerging technologies to deal with such. Consequently, in achieving this once again, the African Union should play its role of "Big Brother" in stepping up to monitor the use of emerging technologies throughout the continent, collaboratively with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other specialized Mechanisms (RMs).

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