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One of the challenges that affects the realisation of human rights in Africa is the high level of internal conflicts and political strife. The story of Africa is a story of a diverse culture and people who are always in conflict. Ethnic distrust and rivalry has continued to slow down the pace of development and realisation of human rights in Africa. Since 1970, more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa, the vast majority of them intra-state in origin. In 1996 alone, 14 of the 53 countries in Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts, accounting for more than half of all war-related deaths worldwide, and resulting in more than 8 million refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons.1439 The consequences of these conflicts have seriously undermined Africa’s efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity and peace for its people.1440 There have been armed conflicts in a number of African countries. There is no doubt that such conflicts lead to widespread human rights violations, economic decay and poverty.

In order to have conditions leading to this kind of climate it is necessary to urge the opposing groups in the State parties involved in internal strife and armed conflict to try to settle their disputes through amicable or peaceful means. In this regard calls should be made to the regional and international communities to intensify the on-going efforts in the search of peace and stability in the troubled countries through mediation and other peaceful means. Consequently, African States should be encouraged to adjust their home institutions to conform with the current political changes taking place in the world, which have ushered in multiparty democracy.

Problems of democratic consolidation are another challenge facing the African human rights system. It is undeniable truth that respect for human rights is the foundation of all democratic societies. As a matter of fact, democracy is well on its way to becoming a global entitlement, a right and an entitlement that increasingly should be promoted and protected by collective international will. At the same time, repression of peaceful dissent, even the smallest minority, is an affront and hurts democracy. In other words, there is an obvious interrelationship between democracy and human rights. Democracy will be stronger the more human rights are respected. That is African human rights mechanisms should be allowed to observe and monitor elections in respective States. In this regard, one thinks about the situation in the Republic of South Africa which has raised a number of important problems related to the consolidation of democracy, especially the issue of Xenophobia against migrants from other countries. No one would have thought that the world would be witnessing Africans chasing other Africans on the streets, some of them even being killed. South African authorities failed to show leadership by rigorously upholding national, regional and international law standards by fulfilling their responsibility to protect innocent civilians.

In Sudan, the tendency is resort to military solutions for problems that are primarily democratic in nature and rooted in social and economic marginalisation. This militarised approach to politics undermines the broader objective of democratic governance, risks fanning extremism and ethnic nationalism, and can fuel broader crises that counteract efforts to build a common nationhood.

There is problem of leadership. Most of Africa’s problems could be blamed on certain past and current leaders. Most of African leaders lack vision of human rights. They are part of the problem rather than he solution. The African governments usually made commitment to the promotion of the rule of law. The practical effect of this commitment has not been fully realised largely because of illustrative example would be the state of the justice sector and the depressing controversies that still plague the elections. The genuineness of the African governments’ commitment to the rule of law is further questioned by their failure to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance three years after it adoption. The reluctance of African governments to ratify this instrument is reflective of their lukewarm attitude towards the Charter exhibited by Heads of State and Government around Africa.

There is a need to champion the campaign of promoting this Charter around Africa. Its uniqueness and the timing of its adoption provides solid base in reshaping the Africa rule of law landscape. The Charter holds promise of liberation to millions of Africans who have been subjugated by dictatorial and insensitive leadership. The African Charter on Democracy proclaims a new dawn of democracy rooted in the rule of law. It represents our date with history. Now is the time for our governments to give practical content to their professed commitment to the rule of law. They have a moral responsibility to ratify and domesticate this instrument.

In conclusion, the challenges mentioned above are not insurmountable; efforts have been made since the adoption of the African Charter and the African Commission started its work; there is a new commitment to human rights under AU, NEPAD and APRM which also manifested through the creation of the African Court of Human and Peoples’ Rights now to merge with the African Court of Justice to be come the African Court of Justice and Human Rights. Accordingly, one should conclude on an Afro-optimistic note because prospects are good for the protection and promotion of human rights in Africa.