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Thematic Issue
JANUS.NET, *e-journal of International Relations*

“Twenty years of African Union: Past, present and challenges ahead”

Submission of article ready for review by 31th October 2024

The regional integration in the African continent is widely complex and deep rooted in the pan-Africanist ideal of a United Africa. The regional organisation that emerged in the aftermath of the liberation from colonialism – the Organisation of African Unity – was limited in terms of political integration. With the dawn of the new millennium, the African Union emerged as a more robust and political organisation that its predecessor. The Constitutive Act of the African Union, adopted in July 11 of 2000 and entered into force on May 26 of 2001 marked a new era for African integration process. The first AU's Summit took place in July 2002.

The African Union brings a more complex institutional nature and a more interventionist approach in African affairs. The AU enshrines human rights and peace as core principles of the organisation and aims to foster prosperity for the whole continent. In its early years, the AU was very active in terms of conflict and security issues, bringing a new peace and security architecture for Africa and regional mechanisms for dealing with regional conflicts. The AU's Agency in this regard is measured by the adoption of an AU's Peace and Security Council as well as the consolidation of an African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The Union also developed its institutional human rights and justice frameworks, as the AU developed an approach based on key human rights treaties, institutional reforms, and the reshaping of an African Justice Architecture. But political resistance and intolerance across continent poses real threats to the respect of human rights. The AU also adopted policies and legal instruments that tackle issues in key areas, as development, economic and legal integration, reinforcing its role as a key regional actor in Africa. The recent agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) may leverage Africa's economic development and expand its influence across the globe. In the meantime, Africa still struggle to tackle poverty, human rights abuses, prevalence of political instability, unconstitutional regime changes are some of the issues that delay the promise of a prosperous and united continent. These are some of the issues that African Union must deal with.

This special issue aims to reflect critically on the first twenty years of the African Union and the challenges for African integration process in its different dynamics. What characterises and distinguishes the African Union from another regional organisation in the world? How is the African Union responding to the challenges of a globalised world? Is the African Union a relevant player in the promotion of democracy, peace and stability in Africa? To address these questions, this special issue welcomes contribution for History, International Relations, Political Science, Legal Studies, and other areas of the Scientific Knowledge that reflect critically on the African Union's agency as a key actor for the continent.

Practical information:

1. Articles may be written in English or Portuguese.
2. The first draft of article should be submitted no later than end

of October 2024.

3. Authors may use a qualitative, quantitative or mixed methodology.

Critical approaches are encouraged.

4. For publication guidelines, please check *Janus.Net* website, at <https://janusonline.autonoma.pt/en/publication-guidelines/>

4. Articles should be sent directly to Rui Garrido (rgarrido@upt.pt), but it's recommended to include the other guest editors email addresses

We look forward to receiving your proposals!

Guest editors:

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