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From Pan-Africanism to Nationalism: The Impact of South Africa's Immigration Crisis on Continental Peace and Security

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Abstract

South Africa's recurring immigration crisis has become one of the most significant challenges confronting the realisation of Pan-Africanism and regional integration in contemporary Africa. Although the country has historically positioned itself as a champion of African unity, democratic governance, and continental cooperation, persistent xenophobic violence, restrictive immigration policies, and growing nationalist sentiments have exposed tensions between national sovereignty and Pan-African ideals. This paper critically examines how South Africa's immigration crisis has reshaped diplomatic relations, constrained regional economic cooperation, and influenced collective peace and security across the African continent. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of Pan-Africanism, nationalism, regional integration, and human security, the study analyses the historical evolution of migration into South Africa, the socio-economic and political drivers of anti-immigrant sentiment, and the implications of migration governance for regional stability. The paper further investigates the effects of xenophobic violence on South Africa's diplomatic credibility, bilateral relations with migrant-sending countries, the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the broader objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063. It argues that the persistence of exclusionary migration policies and anti-immigrant mobilisation undermines labour mobility, regional trade, interstate cooperation, and Africa's collective security architecture while weakening confidence in continental integration initiatives. The study contends that sustainable solutions require balancing legitimate national security concerns with regional commitments to free movement, human rights, and economic integration. It concludes that strengthening African Union and Southern African Development Community (SADC) migration governance frameworks, promoting inclusive migration policies, enhancing diplomatic cooperation, and addressing the structural drivers of xenophobia are essential for safeguarding continental peace, regional stability, and sustainable African integration. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that effective migration governance is not only a domestic policy imperative but also a strategic prerequisite for realising the long-term objectives of Pan-Africanism, collective security, and sustainable development throughout Africa.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism; nationalism; immigration crisis; South Africa; xenophobia; migration governance; African Union (AU); Southern African Development Community (SADC); African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); regional integration; collective security; diplomacy.

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1. PAN-AFRICANISM, NATIONALISM, AND MIGRATION GOVERNANCE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

1.1 Evolution of Pan-Africanism from Liberation Ideology to Continental Integration

Pan-Africanism emerged as one of the most influential political and intellectual movements in modern African history, advocating the unity of African peoples and the collective struggle against colonialism, racial domination, and economic exploitation. Initially developed by intellectuals and activists within the African diaspora such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Henry Sylvester Williams, Marcus Garvey, and George Padmore, Pan-Africanism gradually evolved into a continental political project during the decolonization period of the twentieth century. The ideology emphasized the common historical experiences of Africans and people of African descent, particularly slavery, colonialism, and racial discrimination, while promoting political solidarity as a mechanism for achieving liberation and self-determination (Nkrumah, 1963; Malisa & Nhengeze, 2018 ; Appiah, 1998; McEachrane, 2020). More recent scholarship argues that Pan-Africanism continues to provide the normative foundation of continental governance despite changing political and economic realities.

Following the wave of African independence during the late 1950s and 1960s, Pan-Africanism transitioned from an anti-colonial liberation movement into a framework for regional cooperation and political integration. Kwame Nkrumah envisioned a politically unified Africa capable of exercising collective sovereignty within the intern2018;l system, arguing that fragmented states inherited from colonial rule would remain economically dependent and politically vulnerable (Nkrumah, 1963; Malisa & Nhengeze, 2018). Although Nkrumah's proposal finternationalntal federation was not fully realized, it significantly influenced the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The OAU prioritized the protection of newly acquired sovereignty, territorial integrity, and support for liberation movements in Southern Africa. While these objectives strengthened anti-colonial solidarity, the organization's strict adherence to non-interference limited its capacity to address internal conflicts, governance failures, and cross-border humanitarian crises.

The transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in 2002 marked a significant evolution in the practical application of Pan-Africanism. Unlike its predecessor, the AU adopted a broader integration agenda encompassing political governance, peace and security, economic integration, democratic accountability, and human rights. Agenda 2063, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) collectively represent efforts to operationalize Pan-African ideals through institutional cooperation rather than purely symbolic solidarity (Adoo & Wycliff, 2024; Botchway et al., 2022). Contemporary Pan-Africanism therefore extends beyond political liberation to include regional development, mobility, and collective responses to transnational challenges such as migration, terrorism, climate change, and public health emergencies. Nevertheless, scholars note that tensions remain between the aspirational vision of continental unity and the enduring commitment of individual states to national sovereignty and domestic political priorities

The Rise of Nationalism and Sovereign State Interests in Post-Apartheid Africa

Although Pan-Africanism promotes continental solidarity, post-colonial African states have simultaneously consolidated strong nationalist identities rooted in territorial sovereignty. The creation of independent African states transformed anti-colonial nationalism into state nationalism, whereby governments increasingly prioritized domestic political stability, territorial control, and economic development over supranational integration. This evolution reflected the realities of governing ethnically diverse societies facing persistent developmental challenges, security threats, and limited state capacity (Bogaerts & Raben, 2012).

The end of apartheid in 1994 positioned South Africa as a leading advocate of African renewal and regional integration. Under President Nelson Mandela and subsequently President Thabo Mbeki, Soupriorities.embraced Pan-African principles through diplomatic engagement, peacekeeping initiatives, and support for tpriorities. nt of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). South Africa was widely regarded as a continental leader capable of promoting democratic governance, economic cooperation, and conflict resolution across Africa (Bogaerts & Raben, 2012; Ziegler, 2020).

However, persistent domestic socio-economic challenges have increasingly fuelled nationalist political narratives in South Africa. High unemployment, widening income inequality, poverty, housing shortages, and pressure on public services have fostered the perception that immigrants compete with citizens for scarce employment opportunities, housing, and social services. These perceptions have contributed to recurrent outbreaks of xenophobic violence, primarily targeting African migrants from neighbouring countries, including Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Consequently, migration has become increasingly securitised within domestic political discourse, with immigrants frequently portrayed as threats to economic stability, public order, and national security. This securitisation has reinforced exclusionary attitudes, legitimised restrictive immigration policies, and intensified demands for the removal of undocumented migrants (Olabiyi et al., 2025).

This shift illustrates a broader continental pattern in which governments increasingly prioritize sovereign interests over regional mobility commitments. While African leaders continue to endorse continental integration through AU declarations and regional economic communities, implementation often reflects domestic political calculations rather than Pan-African ideals. National governments remain reluctant to fully liberalize migration policies due to concerns regarding border security, labour market competition, irregular migration, organized crime, and electoral politics. The resulting tension between continental aspirations and state sovereignty has become one of the defining challenges of African integration.

1.2 Theoretical Perspectives: Pan-Africanism, Nationalism, Regional Integration, and Human Security

The analysis of South Africa's immigration crisis requires an interdisciplinary theoretical framework combining Pan-Africanism, nationalism, regional integration theory, and human security. Pan-Africanism provides the normative foundation by emphasizing collective African identity, solidarity, and shared responsibility for addressing continental challenges. Rather than viewing national borders as rigid barriers, Pan-African thought conceptualizes migration as an historical feature of African societies and regards mobility as a legitimate expression of shared African citizenship and interconnected development (Nkrumah, 1963; Malisa & Nhengeze, 2018 ; Kasanda, 2016)

Nationalism offers an important counter-perspective by explaining why states prioritize domestic interests even when regional cooperation may generate long-term collective benefits. Classical theories of nationalism argue that political legitimacy derives from protecting the interests, security, and identity of the nation-state. With2018;s framewor2016).vernments are expected to regulate borders, control immigration, and safeguard scarce economic resources for citizens. Rising nationalist politics therefore create inherent tensions with Pan-African commitments to free movement and continental integration, particularly during periods of economic hardshipWith 2018'siframework (2016). kler & Sturman, 2021).

Regional integration theory further explains the institutional dynamics shaping African migration governance. Regional organizations seek to reduce barriers to trade, investment, and labour mobility while promoting collective responses to shared security challenges. The African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), represent institutional mechanisms designed to facilitate policy harmonization across sovereign states. However, unlike the European Union, African regional integration remains predominantly intergovernmental rather than supranational. Member states retain primary authority over immigration control and border management, limiting the implementation of regional mobility frameworks. (SADC, 2020; Planas Gifra, 2025)

Human security provides an additional analytical perspective by shifting attention from state security to the protection of individuals and communities. Introduced in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report, the human security approach broadens the concept of security beyond military threats to include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Applied to migration, human security recognizes migrants as rights-bearing individuals whose protection contributes to regional stability rather than undermining it. Xenophobic violence, discrimination, forced displacement, and exclusion therefore constitute not only human rights concerns but also threats to sustainable peace and regional security ((UNDP, 1994; Lucinescu, 2021).

Together, these theoretical perspectives illuminate the central dilemma facing African migration governance: balancing legitimate state sovereignty with regional commitments to mobility, human rights, and continental integration.

1.3 Migration Governance within the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Government has become an increasingly important component of Africa's regional integration, therefore, to growing intra-African mobility driven by economic disparities, conflict, environmental change, and (UNDP) migration. Contrary to popular perceptions emphasizing migration to Europe, the majority of African migrants remain within Africa, making regional governance frameworks particularly significant for sustainable development and peace. The African Union has consequently developed several policy instruments to harmonize migration management while promoting legal mobility, refugee protection, labour migration, and border cooperation (Mudungwe, 2025).

The AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action, the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018), and Agenda 2063 collectively seek to facilitate the gradual free movement of Africans across the continent while strengthening border management and combating trafficking, smuggling, and transnational organized crime. These instruments recognize migration as both a development opportunity and a governance challenge requiring coordinated continental responses. Nevertheless, implementation remains uneven because many member states have been reluctant to ratify or fully

operationalize free movement commitments owing to domestic political and security concerns (Vhumbunu & Rudigi, 2020).

Within Southern Africa, migration governance is primarily coordinated through the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Historically, labour migration has played a central role in regional economic development, particularly through South Africa's mining and industrial sectors. Contemporary migration flows continue to link South Africa with neighbouring countries, including Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, Botswana, Malawi, and Zambia. While SADC promotes regional cooperation, economic integration, and peacebuilding, its migration governance framework remains fragmented. Unlike other regional blocs that have adopted relatively acountries,obility regimes, SADC continues to rely heavily on national immigration legislation and bilateral agreements, resulting in inconsistent migration policies across member states (SADC, 2020; Nakayama, 2019; Ziegler, 2020).

The absence of a comprehensive regional free movement regime has significant implications for migration management. South Africa's restrictive immigration policies and recurrent xenophobic violence have generated diplomatic tensions within the region, undermining trust among SADC member states and raising questions regarding the practical commitment of governments to Pan-African ideals. Effective migration governance therefore requires stronger policy harmonization, improved border cooperation, enhanced labour mobility mechanisms, and coordinated approaches to protecting migrants' rights while addressing legitimate national security concerns. Achieving this balance remains central to sustaining continental peace, regional integration, and the long-term realization of the Pan-African vision.

2. SOUTH AFRICA'S IMMIGRATION CRISIS: CAUSES, DYNAMICS, AND POLICY RESPONSES

2.1 Historical Patterns of Migration into South Africa

Migration has long been an integral component of South Africa's political economy and regional development. Long before the establishment of the modern South African state, population movements across Southern Africa were driven by trade, pastoralism, environmental conditions, and kinship networks that transcended contemporary national borders. During the colonial period, labour migration became institutionalized as British colonial authorities and mining corporations recruited workers from neighbouring territories, including present-day Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Eswatini, to supply labour for South Africa's rapidly expanding gold and diamond mining industries (Maude, 1992; Maloka, 2002)The migrant labour system became one of the defining characteristics of South Africa's economic development, simultaneously generating regional economic interdependence while reinforcing unequal labour relations based on race and nationality.

Under apartheid (1948–1994), migration policies were primarily designed to regulate the movement of Black African labour while maintaining racial segregation and protecting white economic interests. Bilateral labour agreements between South Africa and neighbouring states ensured a steady supply of migrant workers for the mining and agricultural sectors, although migrants were denied many political and social rights. Consequently, migration became closely associated with temporary labour rather than permanent settlement, reinforcing the perception that foreign workers were economically useful but socially excluded (Maude, 1992; Maloka, 2002).

The democratic transition in 1994 fundamentally transformed South Africa's migration landscape. The abolition of apartheid restrictions, constitutional protection of fundamental rights, and South Africa's economic dominance within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) attracted increasing numbers of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, and informal traders from across the continent. Political instability in Zimbabwe, armed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Ethiopia, as well as persistent economic disparities within Southern Africa, contributed to substantial migration flows into South Africa (SADC, 2020; Landau, 2011). Unlike the apartheid period, migration increasingly diversified beyond labour recruitment to include humanitarian migration, family reunification, education, and informal economic activities.

South Africa's position as Africa's most industrialized economy has therefore created a migration paradox. While the country depends upon migrant labour in sectors such as agriculture, construction, domestic work, logistics, hospitality, and informal trade, public discourse increasingly portrays migrants as contributors to unemployment, crime, and pressure on public services. This contradiction has become central to understanding the country's contemporary immigration crisis.

2.2 Economic Inequality, Unemployment, Political Rhetoric, and Social Exclusion

South Africa's immigration debate cannot be understood independently of the country's deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities. Despite the significant political transformation that followed the end of apartheid, South Africa remains one of the world's most unequal societies, characterised by persistently high levels of unemployment, poverty, income inequality, and spatial segregation. Structural unemployment, particularly among young people, coupled with slow economic growth, has intensified competition for employment opportunities and access to housing, healthcare, education, and other essential public services (Statistics South Africa, 2024).

Although empirical studies consistently demonstrate that immigration is not the primary cause of unemployment, migrants frequently become symbolic targets for broader frustrations associated with economic insecurity. (Chisadza, (2024); Visagie & Castel-Branco,(2026) argue that anti-immigrant attitudes in South Africa are driven less by actual labour market displacement than by perceptions of economic competition, reinforced through political narratives and media representations. Foreign nationals are often accused of accepting lower wages, operating informal businesses, or receiving preferential access to employment despite limited evidence supporting these claims.

Political rhetoric has further contributed to the securitization of migration. During periods of electoral competition, immigration has increasingly been framed as a national security concern requiring stricter border controls and intensified deportation campaigns. Government officials and political actors have frequently associated irregular migration with crime, undocumented employment, and pressure on state resources. Such narratives resonate with economically marginalized communities experiencing unemployment and declining living standards, thereby reinforcing exclusionary attitudes towards foreign nationals (Misago, 2019.

Social exclusion extends beyond economic competition to questions of belonging and national identity. Post-apartheid South Africa has sought to construct an inclusive democratic identity based on constitutional citizenship and human rights. Nevertheless, many migrants experience discrimination in access to housing, banking, healthcare, policing, and employment because of their nationality or immigration status. Research by Landau (2011) demonstrates that exclusion often occurs not only through formal legal restrictions but also through everyday institutional practices and community-level discrimination that marginalize migrants from economic and social participation. Consequently, immigration has become embedded within broader debates concerning citizenship, identity, and the distribution of scarce public resources (Chisadza, 2024; Visagie & Castel-Branco, 2026).

2.3 Xenophobic Violence and Anti-Immigrant Mobilization

One of the most significant manifestations of South Africa's immigration crisis has been the recurrence of xenophobic violence directed primarily against African migrants. Although isolated attacks occurred during the 1990s, the nationwide violence of May 2008 represented a turning point in public awareness of anti-immigrant hostility. The attacks resulted in more than sixty deaths, hundreds of injuries, and the displacement of thousands of foreign nationals, exposing deep social tensions within post-apartheid society (Misago, 2019).

Subsequent outbreaks of violence occurred in 2015, 2017, 2019, and in localized incidents during later years, targeting migrants from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, and other African countries. These attacks frequently involved looting of migrant-owned businesses, destruction of property, physical assaults, and forced displacement. While often described as spontaneous community reactions, scholarly research suggests that xenophobic violence is frequently organized through local political networks, criminal opportunism, and community mobilization rather than arising solely from individual prejudice (Misago, 2019).

Several interrelated factors explain the persistence of xenophobic violence. First, economic insecurity creates competition over employment, housing, and informal trading opportunities. Second, weak local governance and inadequate service delivery generate frustrations that are redirected toward vulnerable migrant communities. Third, political narratives that associate undocumented migration with criminality and economic decline legitimize exclusionary attitudes. Finally, limited accountability for perpetrators contributes to a culture of impunity that increases the likelihood of repeated attacks (Misago, 2019).

Importantly, contemporary scholarship argues that many incidents commonly labelled as xenophobia also reflect broader forms of violent exclusion linked to struggles over local political authority, economic control, and access to urban resources. Landau (2011) contends that violence against migrants often serves as a mechanism through which marginalized communities attempt to redefine local citizenship and claim scarce economic opportunities. Nevertheless, regardless of terminology, the repeated targeting of foreign nationals undermines constitutional protections, damages South Africa's international reputation, and weakens its commitment to Pan-African solidarity.

2.4 Immigration Legislation, Border Management, and State Responses

Since 1994, South Africa has sought to reform its immigration governance by replacing apartheid-era legislation with a framework that balances constitutional human rights, economic development, and national security. The Immigration Act 13 of 2002 established procedures governing temporary residence, permanent residence, work permits, and immigration enforcement, while subsequent amendments strengthened border control mechanisms and penalties for irregular migration. Complementary legislation, including the Refugees Act 130 of 1998, provides legal protection for asylum seekers and refugees consistent with international refugee law.

Despite these legislative reforms, implementation has faced significant institutional challenges. The Department of Home Affairs has experienced administrative backlogs, limited processing capacity, corruption, documentation delays, and insufficient border management resources. These weaknesses have contributed to growing numbers

of undocumented migrants while simultaneously undermining public confidence in migration governance (Department of Home Affairs, 2017).

Recognizing these challenges, the government adopted the 2017 White Paper on International Migration, which proposed a comprehensive migration governance framework emphasizing secure borders, economic migration management, regional cooperation, skills attraction, and improved asylum administration. More recently, the establishment of the Border Management Authority through the Border Management Authority Act 2 of 2020 sought to consolidate border functions previously dispersed across multiple government departments. The Authority aims to strengthen border security while facilitating legitimate trade and migration through integrated border management systems.

Nevertheless, policy responses have often reflected the tension between constitutional commitments and domestic political pressures. Periodic immigration enforcement operations, increased deportations, and stricter documentation requirements have been justified as necessary responses to irregular migration and organized crime. Human rights organizations, however, argue that such measures sometimes contribute to the stigmatization of migrants without addressing the structural drivers of migration or xenophobic violence. Moreover, restrictive national policies occasionally conflict with broader regional commitments under the African Union's Migration Policy Framework for Africa, Agenda 2063, and SADC's objectives of facilitating regional mobility and economic integration.

Ultimately, South Africa's immigration crisis reflects a complex interaction between historical labour migration systems, persistent socio-economic inequality, political mobilization, institutional governance challenges, and competing interpretations of national sovereignty and regional integration. Effective policy responses therefore require more than strengthened border enforcement. They demand comprehensive strategies that address structural inequality, improve migration governance, promote social cohesion, enhance regional cooperation, and protect the human rights of both citizens and migrants. Such an approach is essential if South Africa is to reconcile domestic security concerns with its longstanding commitment to Pan-Africanism and continental peace.

3. DIPLOMATIC CONSEQUENCES: ERODING CONTINENTAL SOLIDARITY AND REGIONAL RELATIONS

3.1 Impact on South Africa's Diplomatic Standing in Africa

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has sought to position itself as a champion of Pan-Africanism, democratic governance, and regional peacebuilding. Guided by the foreign policy principles articulated by Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, the country played a leading role in promoting conflict mediation, economic integration, and institutional reform across Africa. South Africa was instrumental in establishing the African Union (AU) in 2002, championed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and contributed significantly to peacekeeping and mediation efforts in countries such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, and South Sudan (Landsberg, 2014). These initiatives strengthened South Africa's reputation as a normative leader committed to African solidarity and collective development.

However, the recurrence of xenophobic violence against African migrants has significantly undermined this diplomatic standing. Violent attacks in 2008, 2015, and 2019 generated widespread criticism from African governments, civil society organizations, and regional institutions, creating a contradiction between South Africa's external advocacy for Pan-African unity and its domestic challenges in protecting African migrants. Scholars argue that these incidents have weakened South Africa's soft power by exposing inconsistencies between its constitutional commitment to human rights and the lived experiences of foreign nationals residing within its borders (Monareng, 2024; Landsberg, 2014).

Soft power, understood as the ability of a state to influence others through legitimacy, values, and moral authority rather than coercion, has been central to South Africa's post-apartheid diplomacy. The country's peaceful democratic transition, progressive Constitution, and commitment to reconciliation initially enhanced its credibility within continental and global governance institutions. Nevertheless, repeated episodes of anti-immigrant violence have diminished this moral authority by raising concerns regarding the state's capacity and willingness to protect African migrants. Consequently, South Africa's diplomatic influence increasingly depends not only on its economic and political capabilities but also on its ability to align domestic governance with the Pan-African principles it promotes internationally.

The reputational costs extend beyond bilateral diplomacy. International media coverage of xenophobic attacks has portrayed South Africa as increasingly hostile toward African migrants, thereby challenging its image as a destination for regional investment, education, and skilled migration. These perceptions complicate South Africa's efforts to present itself as a leader in advancing Agenda 2063, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and broader continental integration initiatives.

3.2 Bilateral Tensions with Migrant-Sending Countries

South Africa's immigration crisis has also generated diplomatic tensions with several migrant-sending countries, particularly Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Mozambique, Malawi, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic

of the Congo. Citizens from these countries have frequently been the primary victims of xenophobic attacks, prompting official protests, diplomatic consultations, and demands for greater protection of foreign nationals.

Zimbabwe has been particularly affected because of the large number of Zimbabwean nationals residing and working in South Africa. Economic decline and political instability in Zimbabwe since the early 2000s have encouraged substantial migration into South Africa, making bilateral relations highly sensitive to developments affecting migrant communities. Episodes of violence against Zimbabwean nationals have repeatedly strained diplomatic engagement despite the close economic and political ties between the two neighbouring states. Although both governments have generally sought to prevent diplomatic escalation, concerns regarding the treatment of migrants have remained a recurring feature of bilateral discussions.

Relations with Nigeria have experienced similar tensions. Following outbreaks of xenophobic violence, Nigerian authorities publicly condemned the attacks and called upon South Africa to fulfil its constitutional and international obligations to protect foreign nationals. Diplomatic disagreements were accompanied by retaliatory protests against South African businesses operating in Nigeria, illustrating how domestic migration crises can rapidly affect broader economic and diplomatic relations (Monareng, 2024).

These bilateral tensions reveal the interconnected nature of migration and foreign policy in Africa. Labour mobility, remittance flows, cross-border trade, and regional investment depend upon stable interstate relations founded on mutual trust. When migrants become targets of violence, governments are compelled to respond to domestic public opinion while simultaneously preserving diplomatic cooperation. This creates a complex policy environment in which migration management becomes inseparable from regional diplomacy.

Furthermore, persistent tensions may reduce confidence in South Africa's commitment to regional cooperation. Governments whose citizens experience repeated violence may become more cautious in supporting South African initiatives within continental institutions, thereby limiting Pretoria's ability to build consensus on broader issues including peacekeeping, trade liberalization, climate governance, and institutional reform (Ziegler, 2020).

3.4 Challenges to African Union Principles of Solidarity and Free Movement

The South African immigration crisis raises fundamental questions regarding the practical implementation of the African Union's vision of continental integration. Pan-Africanism is founded upon principles of solidarity, equality among African peoples, mutual cooperation, and the gradual dismantling of barriers to mobility. These aspirations are reflected in Agenda 2063, the AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa, and the 2018 Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, all of which seek to facilitate legal migration while promoting economic integration, peace, and sustainable development (African Union, 2018).

Despite these normative commitments, implementation remains constrained by concerns over national sovereignty, border security, unemployment, and irregular migration. South Africa illustrates this contradiction particularly clearly. While the government formally supports continental integration and intra-African trade, it has simultaneously strengthened immigration enforcement, intensified border management, and introduced more restrictive migration controls in response to domestic political pressures.

This divergence reflects a broader challenge confronting African regionalism. Unlike supranational integration models in which member states delegate substantial authority to regional institutions, African integration largely remains intergovernmental. National governments retain primary responsibility for immigration policy, border management, and internal security, allowing domestic political considerations to override regional commitments. Consequently, free movement protocols have experienced slow ratification and uneven implementation across many African states.

The persistence of xenophobic violence further undermines the normative foundations of Pan-Africanism. If African citizens cannot safely exercise rights associated with regional mobility, public confidence in continental integration may gradually decline. Migrants may become increasingly reluctant to seek employment or investment opportunities elsewhere in Africa, thereby reducing labour mobility, entrepreneurial activity, and knowledge exchange that support regional development. In this respect, xenophobia represents not only a humanitarian concern but also a structural obstacle to realizing the objectives of Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The challenge is therefore not solely institutional but normative. The success of African integration ultimately depends upon cultivating a shared political identity that complements, rather than replaces, national citizenship. Without stronger public support for Pan-African values, legal commitments to free movement are unlikely to achieve their intended developmental outcomes.

3.5 Implications for Regional Leadership and South Africa's Foreign Policy

South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy has consistently emphasized African leadership, multilateralism, peaceful conflict resolution, and South-South cooperation. Successive governments have argued that South Africa's national prosperity is closely

linked to continental stability, making regional peace and integration central components of its foreign policy strategy (Department of International Relations and Cooperation [DIRCO], 2011; Madise & Isike, 2020).

However, the immigration crisis has complicated Pretoria's leadership aspirations. Effective regional leadership depends not only upon material capabilities such as economic strength and military capacity but also upon political legitimacy and normative credibility. While South Africa remains one of Africa's largest economies and an influential participant in the African Union, SADC, the United Nations, and the G20, recurring xenophobic violence has weakened perceptions of its commitment to the values it advocates internationally.

Leadership within regional organizations increasingly requires consistency between domestic governance and international commitments. South Africa's efforts to promote peacebuilding, democracy, and human rights abroad risk being undermined when domestic policies appear inconsistent with these principles. This inconsistency creates opportunities for competing regional powers, including Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Algeria, to assume more prominent diplomatic roles within continental affairs (Ziegler, 2020).

The immigration crisis also illustrates the growing intersection between domestic governance and foreign policy. Contemporary diplomacy extends beyond interstate negotiations to encompass migration management, border governance, humanitarian protection, and public diplomacy. Domestic instability associated with migration therefore carries external consequences for regional cooperation, investment, and international credibility.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive foreign policy approach that integrates domestic migration governance with regional diplomatic objectives. South Africa should strengthen cooperation with the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to harmonize migration policies, improve labour mobility frameworks, enhance intelligence-sharing on transnational crime, and coordinate responses to humanitarian crises. Equally important is the need to combat xenophobia through public education, effective law enforcement, community engagement, and consistent political messaging that reinforces constitutional values and Pan-African solidarity (SADC, 2020).

Ultimately, South Africa's long-term leadership within Africa will depend upon its ability to reconcile national sovereignty with continental responsibilities. The country's diplomatic influence has historically rested on its moral authority as a defender of human rights, democracy, and African unity. Restoring that authority requires not only effective migration management but also renewed commitment to the Pan-African ideals that shaped South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy. By demonstrating that national security and regional solidarity are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory, South Africa can rebuild confidence among its African partners and strengthen the institutional foundations of peace, cooperation, and collective security across the continent (Ziegler, 2020.

4. ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY UNDER PRESSURE

4.1 Effects on Labour Mobility, Regional Trade, and Cross-Border Investment

The South African immigration crisis has generated significant economic consequences that extend beyond domestic labour markets to affect regional integration, trade, and investment across Southern Africa. As the continent's most industrialized economy and one of the principal destinations for intra-African migration, South Africa occupies a pivotal position within regional production networks, labour markets, and investment flows. Consequently, restrictive migration policies and recurrent xenophobic violence have implications that transcend national borders, influencing economic cooperation throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the broader African continent (SADC, 2020).

Historically, labour mobility has constituted one of the foundations of Southern Africa's economic development. Since the late nineteenth century, migrant workers from neighbouring countries have supplied labour to South Africa's mining, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and domestic service sectors, creating patterns of regional economic interdependence that continue today (Crush, Jeeves, & Yudelman, 1991). Contemporary migration similarly contributes to addressing labour shortages, promoting entrepreneurship, and facilitating the transfer of skills, capital, and knowledge across borders. Research by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) demonstrates that migrant workers contribute significantly to productivity and economic growth while simultaneously supporting livelihoods in their countries of origin through remittances (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2019).

Despite these economic contributions, the securitization of migration has increasingly constrained labour mobility. Heightened border controls, stricter visa requirements, prolonged documentation processes, and intensified immigration enforcement have reduced the efficiency with which labour moves across the region. Such restrictions are particularly detrimental to sectors that rely on seasonal, temporary, and cross-border labour. Small-scale traders, transport operators, agricultural workers, and informal entrepreneurs frequently experience administrative barriers that disrupt commercial activities and increase transaction costs.

Cross-border investment has also been affected by deteriorating perceptions of migrant security. Episodes of xenophobic violence targeting foreign-owned businesses have discouraged investment by African entrepreneurs,

particularly within the informal and small enterprise sectors. Somali, Ethiopian, Nigerian, Zimbabwean, and Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have frequently established businesses in underserved townships and rural communities, contributing to local employment and expanding access to affordable goods and services. However, repeated attacks on migrant-owned enterprises have resulted in business closures, capital losses, and reduced investor confidence (Misago, 2019). Such developments undermine South Africa's attractiveness as a regional investment destination and weaken broader efforts to promote intra-African commercial integration.

Moreover, economic uncertainty generated by recurrent anti-immigrant violence may encourage skilled migrants to seek alternative destinations outside Africa. This "brain circulation" loss reduces opportunities for knowledge exchange, innovation, and regional human capital development. Consequently, migration governance has become increasingly linked to broader questions concerning Africa's competitiveness within the global economy.

4.2 Implications for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents one of the most ambitious integration initiatives in Africa's modern history. Officially launched in 2021, the AfCFTA seeks to create a single continental market for goods and services while facilitating the movement of businesspersons, investment, and productive resources. The agreement aims to increase intra-African trade, stimulate industrialization, strengthen regional value chains, and accelerate sustainable economic development (African Union, 2018; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2021).

The success of the AfCFTA depends not only upon tariff liberalization but also upon the effective movement of people. Modern regional value chains require the mobility of entrepreneurs, professionals, technicians, transport operators, investors, and skilled workers across national borders. Restrictive immigration policies and persistent xenophobic violence therefore create structural barriers that limit the realization of the AfCFTA's economic objectives.

South Africa occupies a strategic position within the AfCFTA because of its relatively diversified industrial base, advanced financial sector, transport infrastructure, and extensive commercial relationships throughout Africa. South African firms maintain significant investments across telecommunications, banking, retail, mining, logistics, and manufacturing sectors on the continent. At the same time, South Africa represents an important destination for African entrepreneurs seeking access to regional markets. When migration governance becomes increasingly restrictive, these commercial linkages are weakened through reduced business mobility, increased regulatory uncertainty, and diminished investor confidence.

The contradiction between supporting continental economic integration while simultaneously adopting restrictive migration practices illustrates one of the principal governance challenges confronting African regionalism. Although the AfCFTA primarily addresses trade liberalization, its long-term effectiveness depends upon complementary policies promoting labour mobility, business travel, and regional migration governance. Without coordinated approaches to the movement of persons, the anticipated economic gains from continental integration may remain only partially realized (UNECA, 2021).

Furthermore, xenophobic violence undermines one of the AfCFTA's fundamental objectives of fostering a shared African economic community. Economic integration requires trust among governments, businesses, investors, and citizens. When migrants experience discrimination or insecurity, confidence in regional markets declines, reducing opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation, and cross-border commercial partnerships.

4.3 Migration, Transnational Crime, and Regional Security Cooperation

Migration governance increasingly intersects with regional security because population mobility may facilitate both legitimate economic activities and transnational criminal networks. In Southern Africa, porous borders have occasionally been exploited for human trafficking, migrant smuggling, illicit trade, wildlife trafficking, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and the movement of counterfeit goods. These challenges require coordinated regional responses rather than unilateral national enforcement measures (African Union Commission, 2020).

However, it is important to distinguish between irregular migration and organized transnational crime. Academic research consistently demonstrates that migrants themselves are more frequently victims than perpetrators of criminal activities. Public discourse often exaggerates the relationship between immigration and crime, contributing to negative stereotypes that encourage discrimination and xenophobic violence (Landau, 2011). Simplistic narratives portraying migrants as security threats risk diverting policy attention from sophisticated criminal organizations that exploit weak governance, corruption, and limited regional cooperation.

Effective responses therefore depend upon intelligence-sharing, joint border management, harmonized immigration procedures, and strengthened judicial cooperation among SADC member states. Integrated border management emphasizes facilitating legitimate mobility while simultaneously enhancing the detection of criminal activities. Such approaches recognize that secure borders should support rather than

obstruct lawful migration, trade, and regional development.

The Southern African Development Community has established several mechanisms promoting regional peace and security, including the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. Nevertheless, migration governance remains uneven across member states because immigration policies continue to reflect national priorities rather than comprehensive regional frameworks. Improved coordination between immigration authorities, customs agencies, police services, and regional organizations would contribute to more effective management of both migration and transnational security threats (SADC, 2020).

4.4 Human Security Implications for Migrants and Host Communities

The immigration crisis has profound human security implications that extend beyond traditional conceptions of national security. Human security emphasizes the protection of individuals and communities from threats to their livelihoods, dignity, and well-being rather than focusing exclusively upon territorial sovereignty (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1994). This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding the multidimensional impacts of migration (UNDP, 1994).

For migrants, xenophobic violence generates physical insecurity, psychological trauma, economic exclusion, displacement, and restricted access to healthcare, education, housing, and legal protection. Many migrants avoid reporting crimes because of fears concerning immigration enforcement or discrimination, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation by employers, criminal organizations, and traffickers. Women, children, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants frequently experience multiple and intersecting forms of vulnerability that require specialized policy responses.

Host communities also experience significant human security challenges. High unemployment, inadequate housing, limited public services, and weak municipal governance contribute to competition over scarce resources. These structural conditions create environments in which misinformation, political manipulation, and economic frustration may be redirected toward migrant populations. Consequently, xenophobic violence often reflects broader governance failures rather than migration itself.

From a human security perspective, protecting migrants and improving conditions within host communities are mutually reinforcing objectives rather than competing priorities. Inclusive development policies, equitable service delivery, effective policing, community dialogue, and anti-discrimination initiatives reduce social tensions while strengthening social cohesion. Such interventions enhance both national stability and regional peace by addressing the structural drivers of insecurity affecting citizens and migrants alike.

4.4 The Relationship between Migration Governance and Conflict Prevention

Migration governance has become an increasingly important component of conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding throughout Africa. Poorly managed migration may exacerbate existing political, economic, and social grievances, particularly where communities experience high unemployment, weak governance, and unequal access to public resources. Conversely, effective migration governance can strengthen regional stability by promoting legal mobility, protecting human rights, facilitating economic opportunities, and reducing incentives for irregular migration.

Conflict prevention requires policies that address the root causes of migration rather than focusing exclusively on border enforcement. Economic inequality, political instability, environmental degradation, violent conflict, and limited employment opportunities remain among the principal drivers of population movement across Africa. Regional cooperation addressing these structural factors contributes more effectively to long-term stability than restrictive immigration measures implemented in isolation.

Within the African Union's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), migration is increasingly recognized as both a development issue and a security concern requiring coordinated continental responses. The AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa emphasizes policy harmonization, legal migration pathways, migrant protection, labour mobility, and international cooperation as essential components of sustainable migration governance (African Union Commission, 2020). Similarly, Agenda 2063 identifies the free movement of persons as a critical driver of continental integration and economic transformation.

South Africa occupies a particularly important position in advancing these objectives because of its economic influence, institutional capacity, and diplomatic leadership within both the African Union and SADC. Effective migration governance within South Africa therefore has implications extending well beyond national borders. Policies promoting social cohesion, regional labour mobility, institutional cooperation, and human rights protection contribute directly to conflict prevention by reducing sources of interstate tension and strengthening confidence among African partners.

Ultimately, the relationship between migration governance and collective security demonstrates that national security and Pan-African integration should not be viewed as mutually exclusive objectives. Well-managed migration enhances economic cooperation, facilitates regional development, strengthens institutional

trust, and reduces the likelihood of conflict. Conversely, persistent xenophobic violence, restrictive migration policies, and inadequate regional coordination threaten not only South Africa's domestic stability but also the broader objectives of continental peace, economic integration, and sustainable development envisioned by the African Union.

5. RECONCILING PAN-AFRICAN IDEALS WITH NATIONAL INTERESTS: POLICY OPTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5.1 Balancing Sovereignty with Regional Integration

The contemporary immigration crisis in South Africa illustrates one of the most significant governance dilemmas confronting Africa's integration agenda: reconciling the legitimate sovereign authority of states to regulate migration with the Pan-African commitment to regional cooperation and the free movement of people. Since the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and its transformation into the African Union (AU) in 2002, African states have consistently affirmed that continental unity constitutes an essential foundation for sustainable development, peace, and economic transformation. National political priorities, security concerns, and domestic socio-economic pressures have frequently constrained the implementation of these aspirations.

The principle of sovereignty remains fundamental to international law and enables states to determine immigration policies, protect territorial integrity, and safeguard national security. However, increasing regional economic interdependence, transnational migration, organised crime, climate-induced displacement, and cross-border public health challenges demonstrate that migration can no longer be effectively governed solely by unilateral national policies. Contemporary migration increasingly transcends national boundaries, requiring coordinated regional approaches that recognise the interconnected nature of African economies and societies (Betts, 2011).

Rather than viewing national sovereignty and regional integration as mutually exclusive objectives, policymakers should recognise their complementarity. Effective migration governance enhances state sovereignty by improving border management, facilitating legal migration, reducing irregular migration, and strengthening regional cooperation against transnational criminal networks. Similarly, regional integration contributes to national development by expanding labour markets, promoting investment, facilitating skills mobility, and increasing economic resilience through deeper regional cooperation. The challenge therefore lies not in choosing between sovereignty and integration but in designing governance mechanisms capable of advancing both objectives simultaneously.

South Africa plays a crucial role in a regular strategic position within this process. As one of Africa's largest economies and a leading member of both the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), its migration policies significantly influence regional governance norms. A balanced approach should therefore combine effective border management with policies facilitating regular migration, protecting human rights, and strengthening economic integration across Southern Africa (AU, 2018).

5.2 Strengthening African Union and SADC Migration Governance Frameworks

Although the African Union has adopted several comprehensive migration governance instruments, implementation remains uneven across member states. The Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action, the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018), and Agenda 2063 collectively provide a coherent normative framework for managing migration while promoting regional integration and sustainable development (African Union Commission, 2020). However, relatively few member states have ratified or fully implemented the Free Movement Protocol, limiting its practical effectiveness.

Strengthening continental migration governance requires greater political commitment to harmonise immigration legislation, labour mobility policies, asylum procedures, and border management systems. The African Union Commission should continue supporting member states through technical assistance, policy coordination, institutional capacity-building, and monitoring mechanisms designed to improve implementation of agreed continental frameworks. Enhanced cooperation with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) would also facilitate greater consistency between continental objectives and regional implementation strategies.

Within Southern Africa, SADC remains central to managing migration because of extensive historical patterns of labour mobility and economic interdependence. Despite this importance, SADC has yet to establish a comprehensive regional free movement regime comparable to those adopted by other regional organisations. Existing migration governance relies heavily upon bilateral agreements and nationally determined immigration policies, resulting in fragmented regulatory approaches and inconsistent protection standards for migrants.

Future reforms should prioritise the gradual harmonisation of visa regimes, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, standardised labour migration procedures, integrated border management systems, and improved information sharing among immigration

authorities. Regional labour market information systems could assist governments in identifying skills shortages while facilitating legal migration pathways that benefit both origin and destination countries. Furthermore, enhanced cooperation between the SADC and the African Union would strengthen policy coherence and contribute to the realisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), whose success depends substantially upon the efficient movement of people alongside goods, services, and investment.

5.3 Promoting Inclusive Migration Policies and Social Cohesion

Addressing South Africa's immigration crisis requires policy interventions extending beyond immigration enforcement to tackle the structural socio-economic conditions that contribute to xenophobia and social exclusion. Research consistently demonstrates that anti-immigrant violence is closely associated with unemployment, poverty, inequality, inadequate service delivery, political mobilisation, and weak local governance rather than migration itself (Misago, 2019; Landau, 2011). Consequently, sustainable migration governance must incorporate broader development and social cohesion strategies.

Inclusive migration policies should be guided by constitutional principles of equality, human dignity, and non-discrimination. Administrative reforms aimed at improving visa processing, asylum determination, documentation systems, and access to legal migration pathways would reduce irregular migration while strengthening public confidence in immigration governance. Efficient migration management also improves state capacity to distinguish between regular migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and individuals involved in criminal activities, thereby reducing opportunities for corruption and administrative inefficiency.

Public education represents another essential component of long-term policy reform. Persistent misconceptions regarding migrants' contributions to unemployment, crime, and public service delivery continue to shape public attitudes despite limited empirical evidence supporting such claims. Government institutions, educational organisations, civil society, traditional leaders, and the media should collaborate to promote evidence-based public discourse emphasising migrants' contributions to economic development, entrepreneurship, innovation, and regional integration.

Strengthening community-level social cohesion is equally important. Municipal governments should establish local dialogue platforms bringing together citizens, migrant communities, businesses, religious organisations, youth groups, and civil society actors to address local grievances before they escalate into violence. Community policing initiatives, early warning systems, and rapid response mechanisms can also reduce the likelihood of xenophobic attacks while improving trust between local communities and public institutions.

Inclusive economic development policies remain fundamental to preventing future conflict. Expanding employment opportunities, supporting small enterprises, improving public service delivery, and addressing persistent inequality would reduce the structural conditions that facilitate anti-immigrant mobilisation. These interventions would benefit both citizens and migrants by creating more resilient and cohesive communities.

5.4 Enhancing Diplomatic Dialogue and Regional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Migration governance has become an increasingly important dimension of African diplomacy because domestic migration crises frequently generate regional political consequences. South Africa's recurring xenophobic violence has periodically strained bilateral relations with neighbouring countries and weakened confidence in its commitment to Pan-African solidarity. Preventing similar tensions requires more proactive diplomatic engagement addressing migration as a shared regional governance challenge rather than solely a domestic policy issue.

The African Union Peace and Security Council and SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation should integrate migration more systematically into regional conflict prevention strategies. Migration-related tensions should be monitored through existing continental early warning systems capable of identifying emerging risks associated with xenophobic violence, forced displacement, and cross-border humanitarian crises. Such monitoring would enable preventive diplomacy before localised tensions escalate into broader interstate disputes.

Regular ministerial consultations among immigration, foreign affairs, labour, and security officials would strengthen regional policy coordination while improving confidence among member states. Bilateral agreements concerning labour migration, skills recognition, social protection, and border management should also be expanded to reduce administrative inconsistencies and improve protection for migrant workers.

Civil society organisations, academic institutions, regional research centres, and international organisations likewise have important roles in supporting evidence-based policymaking. Collaborative research, policy dialogue, and capacity-building initiatives can generate more accurate migration data, improve public understanding, and strengthen institutional responses to emerging migration challenges. Partnerships involving the African Union, SADC, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and national governments would further enhance regional migration

governance through technical expertise and coordinated implementation support (UNHCR, 2018).

5.5 Recommendations for Safeguarding Continental Peace, Security, and Sustainable African Integration

The analysis presented throughout this study demonstrates that South Africa's immigration crisis represents more than a domestic governance challenge; it constitutes a significant test of Africa's broader integration project. The persistence of xenophobic violence, restrictive migration practices, and competing nationalist narratives threatens not only South Africa's diplomatic credibility but also the realisation of continental objectives embodied in Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA, and the African Union's vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa.

Several policy priorities emerge from this analysis. First, South Africa should strengthen migration governance by modernising immigration administration, improving border management through integrated technology, reducing documentation backlogs, and expanding legal migration pathways consistent with constitutional and international obligations. Second, the government should adopt comprehensive anti-xenophobia strategies combining law enforcement, civic education, community engagement, and socioeconomic development initiatives to address both the immediate manifestations and structural drivers of anti-immigrant violence.

Third, African Union member states should accelerate ratification and implementation of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons while harmonising national migration legislation with continental frameworks. Greater institutional support from the AU Commission and Regional Economic Communities will be essential for ensuring consistent implementation and monitoring. Fourth, SADC should develop a more comprehensive regional migration governance framework that facilitates labour mobility, strengthens border cooperation, promotes data sharing, and enhances protection for migrant workers throughout Southern Africa.

Fifth, migration should be more explicitly integrated into Africa's peace and security agenda. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) should strengthen early warning systems capable of identifying migration-related conflict risks while expanding preventive diplomacy initiatives addressing xenophobia, forced displacement, and cross-border humanitarian challenges. Finally, governments should promote evidence-based policymaking through improved migration statistics, interdisciplinary research, and sustained dialogue among policymakers, scholars, civil society organisations, and migrant communities.

Ultimately, the future of Pan-Africanism depends upon Africa's ability to reconcile legitimate national interests with the collective aspirations of continental unity. National sovereignty and regional integration should not be understood as competing political projects but as mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development and collective security. South Africa's experience illustrates that restrictive migration governance and recurrent xenophobic violence weaken diplomatic relations, undermine economic integration, and erode confidence in continental institutions. Conversely, well-managed migration, inclusive governance, and strengthened regional cooperation contribute to economic growth, social cohesion, and lasting peace.

As Africa advances the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area, migration governance will remain a defining test of the continent's commitment to Pan-African ideals. Achieving sustainable peace and security requires political leadership capable of transforming migration from a source of division into a catalyst for regional development, diplomatic cooperation, and shared prosperity. By adopting inclusive migration policies, strengthening continental institutions, and reaffirming the principles of African solidarity, South Africa and its regional partners can help build a more integrated, secure, and resilient Africa.

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