

RESTORING AND RESHAPING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

**“Overcoming Fragmentation”: Advancing a Unified African Union
through the One Africa Gate Initiative**

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Introduction

The title of my presentation is: **Restoring and Reshaping International Relationships in the 21ST Century: “Overcoming Fragmentation”: Advancing a Unified African Union through the One Africa Gate Initiative.**

Let me say categorically that, this document is neither an academic thesis, a governmental proclamation, a religious discourse, nor an instrument of accusation. Rather, it presents a reflective perspective informed by life experience, professional engagement, and decades of cross-border interaction across African nations from a non-governmental and diplomatic standpoint.

Honestly speaking , I would not have wished to present this kind of sensitive national subject matter ,in order to avoid criticism , and or conflict discussion , but when I ponder on the plague of silence ,I was compelled to join my voice today to the global voices for African total freedom from all pre-colonia governances that has failed to diminish from African continents.

And today , I speak not as of myself , but as a Professor of International Relations and as an African Peace Ambassador duty's call.

Therefore , at its core, this paper confronts what I describe as the **silent monster of disunity**, a deeply embedded structural issue that undermines the ideals of the African Union (AU), formerly the organisation of African Unity (OAU), and the broader Pan-African movement.

Some Simple Questions

Before we proceed further, I invite each person here to turn to the individual seated beside them and ask:

- How are you?
- Are you truly fine?
- Do you live in Africa?
- Are you African?
- Did you know me before today?
- Are we friends or strangers?
- Why are we not closer as fellow Africans?

The answers to these seemingly simple questions reveal the deeper fractures within our continental relationships.

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The Problem of African Disunity

A fundamental question remains:

Why are African nations not truly their brothers' and sisters' keepers?

In a globalized world that promotes integration, cooperation, and mobility, Africa continues to struggle with internal fragmentation. Many of our administrative, diplomatic, and territorial systems were inherited from colonial structures deliberately designed to divide, segregate, and control. The “divide and rule” ideology did not vanish with independence; it evolved into policies and bureaucratic frameworks that still regulate and restrict Africans from engaging freely with one another.

I often ask: *Does a lion eat another lion?* Across the continent, Africans frequently encounter restrictions and frustrations imposed by structures that were never intended to support genuine unity, trade, and growth among our nations.

The Hidden Instrument of Disunity: Borders and Visa Restrictions

Speaking as an Honorary Professor of International Relations, an Immigration Consultant, an International Liaison, and an African Ambassador of Peace, I identify a critical instrument of African disunity: **intra-African visa and permit bureaucracy.**

Globally, immigration systems and border controls serve legitimate purposes, such as national security, customs regulation, public health, and migration management. However, within Africa, they often function less as tools of order and more as barriers against continental integration. The challenge is not the existence of borders. The challenge is the **excessive, outdated, and unnecessary visa bureaucracy within the continent.**

A Colonial Structure Still in Practice

African borders were drawn by colonial powers with little regard for cultural continuity, ethnic realities, or economic integration. These borders were instruments of control. Yet decades after independence, many of these restrictions remain intact, now maintained and enforced by Africans upon fellow Africans.

Consider the European Union and the Schengen Agreement. European nations removed many internal visa barriers to promote economic integration, trade, and social mobility. **Why do Africans often face more complex barriers when visiting neighboring African countries than when traveling beyond the continent?**

This contradiction demands serious reflection.

Where Is the “Union” in the African Union?

What is the true meaning of the African Union if mobility remains heavily restricted?

What is Pan-Africanism if Africans cannot easily:

- Visit
- Work
- Invest
- Study
- Collaborate
- Reside

in neighboring African countries without complex visa hurdles?

A union without mobility is symbolic, not structural.

The Bureaucracy Problem

From professional observation across multiple jurisdictions, visa and immigration systems in many African nations are burdened with:

- Excessive documentation
- Obsolete and repetitive requirements
- Manual paper-based processing
- Inconsistent policies
- Lengthy delays
- Unclear guidelines
- Inhumane administrative treatment

These processes do not promote unity; they discourage trade, tourism, investment, innovation, and brotherhood.

Key Benefits of Reform

Reforming intra-African visa systems would generate measurable benefits:

1. Reduced government expenditure.
2. Restoration of dignity and mutual respect.
3. Growth of intra-African business and networking.
4. Promotion of intercultural relationships.
5. Tourism revenue and economic growth.
6. Faster inter-African mobility.
7. Reduction of corruption.
8. Digital integration and innovation.
9. Youth empowerment
10. Stronger continental identity.
11. Enhanced security and reduced criminal activity.

A Call for Reform: One Africa Gate

The proposal is not for the indiscriminate removal of borders—it is a measured, structured approach to reform.

One Africa Gate represents:

- A harmonized continental visa policy.
- A unified digital travel authorization platform.
- Visa-free short-term travel among African states.
- Standardized permit processes.
- Transparent security integration.
- Data-sharing cooperation among governments.

Security can coexist with mobility while laws and order can coexist with unity.

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What is the Spirit of Ubuntu meant to us in South Africa and in Africa as a whole ?

There is no better time than this month of March 2026, the month of Freedom celebration in South Africa, to address some vital freedom related matters in our country as related to South African and other African nations .

Let me take a lead from one of the African Freedom fighters; Archbishop Desmond Tutu that says , “*A person is a person through other people.*” Ubuntu teaches shared humanity, compassion, hospitality, and collective progress. If we truly believe in Ubuntu, our immigration policies must reflect it.

At this moment, I invite us to examine South Africa's current international relations with foreign nationals, alongside its Immigration Acts, particularly as they relate to undocumented foreign nationals.

Does South Africa's Current Approach to Foreign Nationals Reflect the Spirit of Freedom and or Ubuntu at this current moment ?

Now, let me pose a question to all of us: How are peace and an enabling environment fostered for citizens and African nationals within the country? A point for reflection for everyone.

Nevertheless, I have observed a common tension between the two sides: the conflict between lived reality and the application of law, particularly in how South Africa's Immigration Acts interact with foreign nationals and the broader principle of African unity.

The question remains: who is right, and who is wrong?

I will approach this spiritually. A well-known verse from the Bible invites us to reflect: "Come now, let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). Here, God calls humanity to dialogue and reconciliation, offering mercy and the possibility of transformation. Even deep sins, described as "scarlet," can be cleansed to purity, "white as snow," through reasoning together. This principle reminds us that reconciliation and dialogue are essential in addressing the challenges between South Africa and its foreign nationals.

A structured documentation system for African migrants can strengthen law enforcement's capacity to identify individuals involved in criminal activity or habitual violations, regulate the informal sector—which is where

undocumented foreigners often operate—generate government revenue, and support legitimate mobility.

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CURRENT SITUATION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA’S IMMIGRATION ACTS AND FOREIGN UNDOCUMENTED NATIONALS

It is sad to note that what is currently happening under South Africa’s Immigration Acts mirrors what once occurred during Apartheid, such as the discrimination between documented and undocumented citizens. Does history have a way of repeating itself? I ask myself: is this not the same battle that the ANC and all African nations fought against Apartheid in the name of freedom? If we face the challenge of undocumented foreign nationals, is it not wise to seek a common solution, rather than intimidating and oppressing helpless people with the act of law?

SOUTH AFRICA’S LEADERSHIP AND HATRED AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONALS

Some time ago, one of South Africa’s party leaders was interviewed by a journalist. In that interview, he thundered with fire and anger against undocumented foreign nationals, threatening that they would “see hell” from him and that no undocumented foreign national would find peace among his people.

Such statements from leadership are dangerous. They are capable of fueling hate speech and inciting attacks against foreign nationals. (For reference: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1AwcYNBCEL/>)

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/791590056721681> - A Daily Maverick post of this interview on Facebook.)

While his concern over criminality involving some undocumented individuals is understandable, given his official responsibilities, we must remember that responding to wrongdoing with injustice is never acceptable. Compassion toward the vulnerable must guide our actions. For those who identify as Christians, it is important to recognize that migration is not only a fundamental aspect of human life but also affirmed in biblical teachings.

Several Bible verses regarding the migration of people emphasize compassion, hospitality, and legal protection for foreigners, rooted in the command to "love the stranger."

- In Genesis 12:1–3, God calls Abram to leave his country and promises blessing through migration.
 - (1) Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family, and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.
 - (2) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.
 - (3) **I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you;** And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
- Leviticus 19:33–34 (NIV) commands: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt."
- Hebrews 13:2 (NIV) adds: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels without knowing it."

These scriptures highlight that the treatment of foreign nationals reflects on the well-being of a nation.

CURRENT NON SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONALS FAMILY CONFUSION AND TENSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa today, as in many other countries of the world, we have witnessed numerous inter-country marriages and families formed between foreign nationals and South African citizens. Yet today, many families of foreign nationals here in South Africa are subjected to a crisis, where foreign nationals are not adequately protected.

To the extent ,for example , that South African women married to Nigerian men have formed an association, called the United Nigerian Wives in South Africa (UNWISA), to provide mutual support to their legally married spouses. This association combats stigmatization, discrimination, and humiliation, especially when dealing with government agencies and immigration authorities. This shows the extent to which the unresolved crisis of undocumented foreign nationals has stigmatized even documented foreign nationals and South African citizens themselves. This is very sad.

What Is the Way Forward?

If we find a problem with undocumented foreign nationals, then let us fix it reasonably, rather than compounding it with unnecessary documentation bureaucracy. As discussed earlier in this presentation, let us fix it. Let everyone here say this with me: LET US FIX IT NOW. WE CAN FIX IT NOW. DON'T PUSH IT BUT FIX IT.

It is high time the government created a simple way of documenting all foreign nationals at no cost, rather than fighting them with immigration acts and policing that have turned our streets into an apartheid-like scenario or a police state. This is food for thought.

A practical approach would be to extend amnesty to all undocumented foreign nationals. If such measures have already been applied to certain African nationals, such as those from Zimbabwe and Lesotho, the same framework can be applied more broadly.

This can be implemented through legislation that provides an open invitation for undocumented foreign nationals to register at designated centres, where their identity and biometrics can be recorded. Successful registration would result in the issuance of an amnesty card, fully integrated into the national Home Affairs identity platform.

This approach offers a constructive mechanism to regularize undocumented foreign nationals, prioritizing administrative processes over enforcement measures, and ensuring consistent treatment under the law.

I respectfully propose that the government, working with the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs and relevant authorities, consider establishing an Amnesty Act for undocumented foreign nationals. This legislation would allow individuals to voluntarily register at designated immigration centres without charge, providing them with a secure and recognized identity.

Drawing on the example of the Covid-19 emergency registration centres, this process could enable people to access services freely and have their identities safely recorded. Registration would allow foreign nationals to study, work, and move freely, while also creating a centralized database to support efficient administration and security.

By adopting this approach, we can offer a practical and humane solution that balances the needs of governance with compassion, promoting both social integration and the well-being of all who reside in the country.

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THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Before concluding this presentation, I wish to acknowledge the vital role of our media in shaping public perception and supporting the rebuilding of international relationships, particularly in portraying South Africa and its foreign nationals.

I encourage our media houses to continue embracing a solution-oriented approach—highlighting constructive initiatives and creating positive narratives—while ensuring accuracy, fairness, and authenticity in reporting. Balanced journalism, thoughtful headlines, and content that seeks to inform rather than inflame can significantly strengthen social cohesion and mutual understanding.

When the media reports responsibly, it contributes to a society where citizens and foreign nationals can coexist harmoniously, free from fear, discrimination, or prejudice. By combining professional integrity with a commitment to constructive storytelling, the media can play a transformative role in building a peaceful and inclusive nation.

Conclusion

Africa cannot achieve full economic transformation, social cohesion, or diplomatic strength while maintaining colonial-era mobility restrictions against itself.

Building Unity for a Stronger Future.

I call upon policymakers, diplomats, scholars, entrepreneurs, and citizens to advocate for structured immigration reform across Africa.

- Let us dismantle unnecessary barriers.

- Let us digitalize intelligently.
- Let us reduce corruption.
- Let us restore dignity.
- Let us promote mobility.
- Let us strengthen trade.
- Let us deepen relationships.
- Let us build One Africa Gate.

One day, Africans will travel across Africa without suspicion, rejection, or humiliation. One day, the African Union will not simply be an institution, but a lived experience. Let that day begin with us.

God bless Africa. God bless South Africa. God bless the ANC. And may God bless the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs in pursuing the right path for unity and dignity.

Thank you all.