

Africa's Regional Co-Operation and Integration: The Corona Virus Litmus Test

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Abstract

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic is taking no prisoners. It has deeply tested and pierced the fabric of the concept of African integration which is greatly championed by the African Union (AU) and sub-regional economic communities (RECs). The reactions by African states to COVID-19 expose the fallacious presupposition of collective good will in regional integration instruments and structures, widely supported by collective security idealists. COVID-19 has shown the inherent reflex towards the national interest concept of realism as backed by sovereignty, which is widely supported by nationalists and interested external actors. The paper focuses on cross-country human movement, a core component of integration. For a closer, deliberate and focused illustration of the responses, the paper maps out a three dimension tabular analysis, looking at: a regional (AU), sub-regional (8 Regional Economic Blocs (RECs) and national levels. Additionally, the paper briefly looks at China's and United Kingdom's response as states that have had significant influence over Africa's domestic, regional and international relationships. The paper seeks to enrich discussions, evaluations, moulding and implementation of practical models of integration.

Key words: *African regional cooperation and integration, Cooperation, Coronavirus, Covid-19, Economic Communities, Cross-border.*

1. Introduction

Initial cases of Covid-19 were identified in hospitalized patients in Wuhan, China, between December 2019 and January 2020.¹ Human-to-human transmission was indicated as a core way through which the virus was spreading.² The virus had therefore been gradually spreading.³ It was however reported that outbreaks were successfully controlled by isolation of patients.⁴ One of the main challenges identified was the apparent presence of many mild infections which impairs the ability to immediately detect presence of

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The views expressed in this article are the authors' own and not a representation of the views of their affiliated institutions.

¹ Na Zhu and others, 'A Novel Coronavirus from Patients with Pneumonia in China, 2019' [2020] *New England Journal of Medicine*.

² Qun Li and others, 'Early Transmission Dynamics in Wuhan, China, of Novel Coronavirus-Infected Pneumonia' (2020) 382 *New England Journal of Medicine* 1199.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

virus.⁵ Effectively, this meant that infected people could unknowingly transmit the virus at any point, both domestically and externally during movement. By mid-January 2020, several countries had reported sporadic cases of infected people, which were reportedly among travellers returning from other jurisdictions.⁶ The reported transmission scenarios aroused great concerns. As the reported cases of infections and deaths increased and with most infected people being external returnees, countries started putting in place measures on how to handle arrivals so as to minimise the spread. On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. These developments have exposed the fluid and constantly evolving architecture of international peace and security.⁷ Table 1 below shows that most countries declared high levels of cross-country border restrictions between 13th to 22nd March 2020, as further discussed below. One of the immediate issues for consideration in imposing the various measures by states was their effect on their domestic, regional and global obligations under the various international law principles and agreements. This paper focuses mainly on the effect relating to regional integration.

Having established the relevance of COVID-19 in this discussion, the paper next examines various conceptual underpinnings in terms of which any reactions would be formulated, primarily focusing on the subject of African regional cooperation and integration. It then analyses countries' immediate reactions to COVID-19 within the context of integration. The paper hypothesises that even when states are willing to commune, when confronted with hurdles, the first reflex is to recoil and make all adjustments necessary to save the sovereign. While there are various aspects and forms of integration, this paper focuses on movement of people and physical goods.

2. Nature and Ramifications of the Cross-Country Border Restrictions

Most countries quarantined known cases of confirmed COVID-19 within their borders, including nationals of other countries. Other forms of restrictions included imposition of full or partial lockdowns on movement, shutting down airports, imposing travel restrictions and completely sealing of land, international air and maritime borders.⁸ These restrictions effectively left travellers stranded, those with expiring visas further experienced great panic.⁹ They also threatened threaten lines of commodity supply.¹⁰

3. Conceptual and Theoretical Factors Affecting Integration

3.1 Nationalism vs Pan-Africanism

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Lan T Phan and others, 'Importation and Human-to-Human Transmission of a Novel Coronavirus in Vietnam' [2020] *The new england journal of medicine* 3.

⁷ H Njoki Mboce, 'India–Africa Co-Operation on Maritime Security: Need for Deeper Engagement' [2019] *Strategic Analysis* 1.

⁸ 'Coronavirus: Travel Restrictions, Border Shutdowns by Country'

<<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/coronavirus-travel-restrictions-border-shutdowns-country-200318091505922.html>> accessed 31 March 2020; Andrea Salcedo and Gina Chereus, 'Coronavirus Travel

Restrictions, Across the Globe' *The New York Times* (1 April 2020) <<https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-travel-restrictions.html>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁹ 'Coronavirus and Aid: What We're Watching, 2-8 April' (*The New Humanitarian*, 2 April 2020) <<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/04/02/coronavirus-humanitarian-aid-response>> accessed 4 April 2020.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Africa's integration, as with other regional integration efforts, faces various challenges.¹¹ These militating factors include conflicting national identities of legal, political and economic systems, social elites and migration challenge.¹² Often, politicians mobilise, whip public opinion as well as influence and shape legislation based on populist forces disguised under nationalist arguments.¹³ Nationalists argue that national interests trump any other external agreements while integrationists argue that national interests would be best secured if more states adopt a collective approach.¹⁴ Elites often develop identity narratives based on their experience and biases, which they are then able to influence and condition using their financial and social capital.¹⁵ It is however important to note that there are genuine ideology based proponents of both nationalism and integration.

3.1 Post-colonial Hang-Over and Global Geo-political Dynamics

Africa also faces extra-regional influences mainly from China, the United States of America and United Kingdom, which are shaped by both historical and current global geo-politics and economic dynamics.¹⁶ Idealists further argue that even without agreements, circumstances exist that would require countries to generously apply their positions of advantage in favour of their disadvantaged neighbours (state behaviour vs neighbour's principle). The idealists have been challenged by the analogy that during flights, passengers are advised to wear their masks first before assisting others, in the event of emergencies. Covid-19 has presented a rude conceptualisation of these debates.

Nonetheless, Africa has demonstrated increasing commitment towards integration.¹⁷ Most recent regionally documented efforts have been through Africa's agenda strategic blue print, that seeks to achieve an inclusive and sustainable pan-African development through Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance, which was adopted on 31 January 2015 at the 24th Ordinary Assembly of the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union in Addis Ababa (**Agenda 2063**); and the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area which entered into force on 30 May 2019 for the 24 countries that had deposited their instruments of ratification (**AfCFTA**).¹⁸

4. Methodology, Scope

One of the effects of Covid-19 as discussed in this paper is introduction of governments' limitations on physical movement. In this regard this research is mainly informed by desktop qualitative research as well as online interview. It focuses on cross-border movement as a core aspect of integration, it therefore examines government interventions on border operations. In order to provide a succinct context, the paper

¹¹ Tanja A Börzel and Thomas Risse, 'Identity Politics, Core State Powers and Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond' (2020) 58 *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 21.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ H Njoki Mboce, 'India-Africa Co-Operation on Maritime Security: Need for Deeper Engagement' (2019) 43 *Strategic Analysis* 261.

¹⁵ Börzel and Risse (n 11).

¹⁶ Rawson W Rawson, 'The Territorial Partition of the Coast of Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* (JSTOR 1884).

¹⁷ 'Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area | African Union' <<https://au.int/en/treaties/agreement-establishing-african-continental-free-trade-area>> accessed 20 November 2019.

¹⁸ 'Agenda 2063 | African Union' <<https://au.int/en/agenda2063>> accessed 20 December 2018; 'Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area | African Union' (n 18).

looks mainly at African countries at three levels: regional, sub-regional and domestic, the implementation of the various substantive agreements is therefore effectively tested.

5. Beyond Theory: Testing National Commitments

As at 30th March 2020, the East African Community (EAC) is the only sub-regional community that appeared to have adopted an extensive formal collective approach to the Covid-19 response, including relating cross-national boundary movements.¹⁹ Other RECs such as Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) spoke generally and even then mainly focused on direct monetary issues.²⁰ The other four RECs were yet to jointly substantively speak to these issues. This position is based on a survey of the official websites of all the RECs.

On 25th March 2020 respective member states' ministers responsible for Health and East African Community Affairs issued a joint statement by Video Conference, on Covid-19 Preparedness and Response in East African Community Region.²¹ All member states were represented. It is reported in the joint statement that the meeting sought to have member states share existing knowledge and information on the COVID-19 pandemic, map up containment strategies to stem out any further spread of the disease in the region and develop a clear plan to mitigate against its impacts in the region.²² It was reported that as at 24th March 2020, the region had reported a total of 91 confirmed cases (Uganda: 14; Kenya: 25; Rwanda: 40; and Tanzania: 12) in 4 out of the 6 Partner States. There were no confirmed cases from Republic of South Sudan and Republic of Burundi.²³

Several directives were issued and resolutions made by the EAC. The summary below relating to cross border movement across member states shows that the community adopted a more collective approach as opposed to a closure of borders. This common statement and approach notwithstanding, the table below shows that a significant level of contradiction in the statements and/ or measures indicated/ adopted by the member states, with most of them announcing lock down measures. While it would have been interesting to examine the effect of these positions on the ground, this however is not the scope of this current discussion. The Ministers, inter alia:

¹⁹ 'Joint Statement by the Ministers Responsible for Health and East African Community Affairs Issued on 25th March 2020 on COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in East African Community Region' <<https://www.eac.int/statements/1705-joint-statement-by-the-ministers-responsible-for-health-and-east-african-community-affairs-issued-on-25th-march-2020-on-covid-19-preparedness-and-response-in-east-african-community-region>> accessed 3 April 2020; 'ECCAS - Economic Community of Central African States | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa' <<https://www.uneca.org/oria/pages/eccas-economic-community-central-african-states>> accessed 18 November 2019.

²⁰ 'ECCAS - Economic Community of Central African States | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa' (n 20); 'Southern African Development Community :: Extra-Ordinary Meeting of SADC Ministers of Health on Covid-19' <<https://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/extra-ordinary-meeting-sadc-ministers-health-covid-19/>> accessed 4 April 2020; Webmaster, 'IGAD - IGAD Executive Secretary Message on COVID-19' <<https://igad.int/coronavirus/2396-igad-executive-secretary-message-on-covid-19>> accessed 4 April 2020.

²¹ 'Joint Statement by the Ministers Responsible for Health and East African Community Affairs Issued on 25th March 2020 on COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in East African Community Region' (n 20).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

- Directed all member states to:
 - i. Continue implementing mandatory quarantine for 14 days for all travellers to the region;
 - ii. Implement strict screening procedures at all border points in order to avoid imported cases;
 - iii. Implement 100% exit and entry screenings by applying the multilayer mechanism to avoid some loopholes, such as transit Passengers;
 - iv. Establish a surveillance system to monitor crew health and enable contact tracing;
 - v. Have the respective embassies and high commissions coordinate their citizens who may have been affected by the closure of borders and to enable them move to their final destination in the EAC region;
 - vi. Support local companies, to ensure the local production and availability of key consumables / products used in COVID -19 response including hand sanitizers, medical products, soap, among others; and
 - vii. Provide additional contingency and emergency funds to address gaps in prevention, impact mitigation and other interventions to mitigate impact of COVID -19 and further urged EAC Secretariat and each Partner State to mobilize resources, and invest in public health systems to ensure resilience and health security
 - viii. Directed the EAHRC to synthesize and conduct research on COVID -19 and inform the Partner states on new technologies, advances in care and treatment, vaccines, behavior of the virus, diagnostic among others, to inform policy and practice in the region;
 - ix. Ensure that trucks / vehicles carrying goods:
 - a) Have only 2 - 3 crew members per vehicle to facilitate smooth border crossing in the region;
 - b) Crew members are in good health, crew are screened and found to be at high risk or positive for COVID-19, the truck will be decontaminated before it is allowed to continue to its final destination and the crew members will be quarantined for 14 days according to the set national guidelines;
 - c) In the event that the crew are quarantined while in transit, truck owners / operators make necessary arrangements to backup crew to ensure that goods are delivered to the intended destination;
 - d) Truck drivers are required to declare their final destination and are urged to stop only at designated points along the transport corridors so as to limit chances of spread of COVID-19 during transit;
 - e) The crew for cargo planes and vessels will be determined by the specifications of the aircraft or ship and set international guidelines. The crew will be quarantined at a government designated hotel for the period of their stay;
- Resolved to:
 - i. Facilitate free movements of goods and services in the region;
 - ii. Strengthen information sharing through press conferences and linkage of national task forces to facilitate quick response, continuous reporting and to facilitate contact tracing for potential COVID- 19 exposed persons;
- At a country level, Benin stands out with regard to the restrictions. Notably, the country has been among the last to effect movement restrictions, with quarantine and suspension of public

transportation starting on March 30 2020 and even then, only in specific cities.²⁴ Reportedly, as at March 30 2020 Benin’s land border crossings were only limited, implementation of strict control measures at border checkpoints declared and air travels not banned, even though travellers entering Benin by air were required to undergo a 14-days quarantine.²⁵

Table: Specific regional and country analysis of reactions to Covid -19, in relation to border operations is contained in the table below.

Regional Communities	Economic	Member State	Reaction in Relation to Border Operations
AMU (Arab Maghreb Union)*		<u>Algeria</u>	On March 17, Algerian President Tebboune announced immediate closure of all land borders and the suspension of non-cargo international air and maritime travel. ²⁶ Effectively, all commercial international flights were immediately suspended. ²⁷ Suspension of domestic flights was effective March 22 2020. ²⁸
		<u>Libya</u>	Borders have been closed and flights prevented from traveling in/out. ²⁹
		<u>Mauritania</u>	On March 15 all international and local flights were suspended. ³⁰ On March 22, government closed all land and sea borders, and air space. ³¹
		Morocco	Morocco initially adopted a country to country staggered approach to closure of borders and suspension of flights starting with Spain on March 13 2020. ³² It subsequently suspended all flights into the country. ³³

²⁴ ‘Benin: Authorities Enact Restrictive Measures Due to COVID-19 /Update 1’ (*GardaWorld*) <<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/326306/benin-authorities-enact-restrictive-measures-due-to-covid-19-update-1>> accessed 4 April 2020.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ ‘COVID-19 Information’ (*U.S. Embassy in Algeria*, 30 March 2020) <<https://dz.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>> accessed 31 March 2020.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ ‘Libyan Gov’t Suspends Flights in Wake of COVID-19’ <<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/libyan-govt-suspends-flights-in-wake-of-covid-19/1768168>> accessed 31 March 2020.

³⁰ ‘COVID-19 Information’ (*U.S. Embassy in Mauritania*, 24 February 2020) <<https://mr.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information-2/>> accessed 4 April 2020.

³¹ ‘COVID-19 Information’ (n 27).

³² ‘COVID-19 Alert: Morocco Closes Border with Spain March 13 to Stem Spread of COVID-19’ (*WorldAware*, 13 March 2020) <<https://www.worldaware.com/covid-19-alert-morocco-closes-border-spain-march-13-stem-spread-covid-19>> accessed 4 April 2020; AfricaNews, ‘Border Closures: Morocco “isolates” Itself to Control Coronavirus Spread’ (*Africanews*, 15 March 2020) <<https://www.africanews.com/2020/03/15/border-closures-morocco-isolates-itself-to-control-coronavirus-spread/>> accessed 4 April 2020.

³³ ‘Coronavirus: Travel Restrictions, Border Shutdowns by Country’ (n 8).

	Tunisia	On March 16, suspended all international flights and closed its borders. ³⁴
CEN-SAD - The Community of Sahel-Saharan States*	Benin	No reported reaction
	Burkina Faso	In mid-March, the government closed its air and land borders to all but military personnel and cargo. ³⁵
	Central African Republic	No reported reaction
	Chad	No reported reaction
	Comoros	As discussed under COMESA
	Côte d'Ivoire	As discussed under ECOWAS
	Djibouti	As discussed under IGAD
	Egypt	The Egyptian government closed all borders since March 19, 2020. ³⁶
	Eritrea	As discussed under IGAD
	Gambia	Closed its borders and airspace on March 26, 2020. ³⁷
	Ghana	The country closed all borders from 22 nd March, 2020 and ordered a mandatory quarantine for anyone who entered the country before midnight that day. ³⁸
	Guinea-Bissau	As discussed under ECOWAS
	Libya	As discussed under AMU
	Mali	As discussed under ECOWAS
	Mauritania	As discussed under AMU
Morocco	As discussed under AMU	
Niger	Closed its land borders and international airports in Niamey and Zinder. ³⁹	

³⁴ 'Coronavirus: Tunisia Suspends International Flights to Help Combat Virus Spread' (*Middle East Eye*) <<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/coronavirus-tunisia-close-borders-combat-virus-spread>> accessed 31 March 2020.

³⁵ 'Coronavirus and Aid: What We're Watching' (*The New Humanitarian*, 26 March 2020) <<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/03/26/coronavirus-humanitarian-aid-response>> accessed 31 March 2020.

³⁶ 'News Roundup: The MENA Region in the Time of COVID-19 | Wilson Center' <<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/news-roundup-mena-region-time-covid-19>> accessed 31 March 2020.

³⁷ 'Health Alert: The Gambia, Government Closes Borders and Airspace and Implements Quarantine Measures' <<https://www.osac.gov/Country/Gambia/Content/Detail/Report/d2fab26-4755-4287-8986-184ab14cd1a6>> accessed 31 March 2020.

³⁸ 'Coronavirus: Travel Restrictions, Border Shutdowns by Country' (n 8).

³⁹ 'Niger Reports First Confirmed COVID-19 Case' <<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/niger-reports-first-confirmed-covid-19-case/1772561>> accessed 31 March 2020.

	Nigeria	All of Nigeria's land borders, which had been under partial closure, was completely closed for human traffic for four weeks effective 23 rd March, 2020. ⁴⁰
	Senegal	The Government of Senegal has suspended all international air travel (with limited exceptions). The restriction came into effect on March 20 and will last until April 17, 2020. Land borders are closed. ⁴¹
	Sierra Leone	On March 27, 2020, it closed its borders for a period of 30 days. ⁴²
	Somalia	As discussed under IGAD
	Sudan	On 16 th March, 2020, it closed all airports, ports and land crossings. Only humanitarian, commercial and technical support shipments were excluded from the restrictions. ⁴³
	Togo	On 21 st March, 2020, it shut down its land borders. ⁴⁴
	Tunisia	As discussed under AMU
COMESA - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa*	Burundi	No reported reaction
	Comoros	No reported reaction
	DRC	It has shut down national borders in a bid to stop the potential spread of the coronavirus pandemic. ⁴⁵
	Djibouti	As discussed under IGAD
	Egypt	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Eritrea	As discussed under IGAD
	Ethiopia	On 22 nd March, 2020 it closed down all land borders, with the exception of incoming essential goods to the country. ⁴⁶
	Kenya	As discussed under EAC
	Libya	As discussed under CEN-SAD

⁴⁰ 'Coronavirus: Buhari Signs Lockdown Regulations, Cases Hit 131, 2 Deaths | Africanews' <<https://www.africanews.com/2020/03/31/nigeria-confirms-third-coronavirus-case-index-patient-fully-recovers/>> accessed 31 March 2020.

⁴¹ 'COVID-19 Information' (n 27).

⁴² AfricaNews, 'Sierra Leone Confirms Index Case of Coronavirus' (*Africanews*, 31 March 2020) <<https://www.africanews.com/2020/03/31/virus-free-sierra-leone-records-covid-19-scuffles-over-quarantine-at-airport/>> accessed 31 March 2020.

⁴³ 'Sudan: Government Closes Borders Due to COVID-19 on March 16 /Update 1' (*GardaWorld*) <<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/323581/sudan-government-closes-borders-due-to-covid-19-on-march-16-update-1>> accessed 31 March 2020.

⁴⁴ FAAPA, 'Togo Closes Borders over Coronavirus – FAAPA FR' <<http://www.faapa.info/blog/togo-closes-borders-over-coronavirus/>> accessed 31 March 2020.

⁴⁵ 'DRC Shuts Borders over Coronavirus' (*Daily Nation*) <<https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/DRC-shuts-borders-over-coronavirus/1066-5503982-bej0liz/index.html>> accessed 31 March 2020.

⁴⁶ 'Ethiopia's Coronavirus Tally Hits 35 amid Race to Bolster Ventilator Stockpile | Africanews' <<https://www.africanews.com/2020/04/03/ethiopia-s-coronavirus-rules-crowd-ban-free-transport-regulate-essentials-etc/>> accessed 3 April 2020.

	Madagascar	No reported reaction
	Malawi	As discussed under SADC
	Mauritius	Mauritius has closed its borders to all foreign nationals, including South Africans, effective from 19 March at 20:00. ⁴⁷
	Rwanda	As discussed under EAC
	Sudan	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Swaziland	As discussed under SADC
	Seychelles	All cruise and leisure ships are not allowed entry into Seychelles waters until further notice. Any passenger arriving from ANY country (except returning Seychellois citizens) will NOT be allowed to enter Seychelles. ⁴⁸
	Uganda	As discussed under EAC
	Zambia	As discussed under SADC
	Zimbabwe	As discussed under SADC
EAC – East African Community	Kenya	As of March 25th, The Government of Kenya suspended all international flights in and out of Kenya. ⁴⁹
	Uganda	President Museveni on Saturday 21 st March, 2020 evening ordered the closure of all Ugandan borders for both exits and entries on grounds. ⁵⁰
	United Republic of Tanzania	No reported reaction
	Burundi	As discussed under COMESA
	Rwanda	On 21 st March, 2020, it closed its borders completely, except for goods and cargo and returning citizens, authorities said. ⁵¹
	South Sudan	As discussed under IGAD
ECCAS - Economic Community of Central African States	Angola	As discussed under SADC
	Burundi	As discussed under COMESA
	Cameroon	On March 17, the government said it shut down land, air and sea borders indefinitely, starting from March

⁴⁷ 'UPDATE: Kulula and British Airways to Suspend All Flights in SA for Lockdown | Traveller24'
 <<https://www.traveller24.com/News/Alerts/all-the-airlines-that-have-cancelled-flights-to-affected-countries-due-to-covid-19-20200305-2>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁴⁸ 'COVID-19 - Seychelles' (*U.S. Embassy in Mauritius & Seychelles*, 17 March 2020)
 <<https://mu.usembassy.gov/covid-19-seychelles/>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁴⁹ 'COVID-19 Information' (n 27).

⁵⁰ 'COVID-19: Travellers Stranded at Katuna as Uganda, Rwanda Close' (*Daily Monitor*)
 <<https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Coronavirus-stranded-Katuna-Uganda-Rwanda-close-borders/688334-5500126-4gc3w5/index.html>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁵¹ Deutsche Welle (www.dw.com), 'Coronavirus: Rwanda Imposes Africa's First Lockdown | DW | 22.03.2020' (*DW.COM*) <<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-rwanda-imposes-africas-first-lockdown/a-52878787>> accessed 3 April 2020.

(It has come up with policy guideline on trade for Africa to tackle covid-19) ⁵²		18. All international flights are suspended, except for cargo planes, until April 17. ⁵³
	Central African Republic	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Chad	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Congo	<u>No reported reaction</u>
	DRC	As discussed under COMESA
	Equatorial Guinea	On Friday, March 13, Equatorial Guinea announced the closure of its land borders with Cameroon and Gabon, the suspension of all commercial international flights. ⁵⁴
	Gabon	As of March 21, all land, sea, and air borders are closed, with the exception of freight shipments, which are still permitted. ⁵⁵
	Rwanda	As discussed under EAC
	Sao Tome and Principe.	Non-resident foreign nationals are prohibited from entering the country as of March 20. ⁵⁶
ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States*	Benin	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Burkina Faso	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Cape Verde	All sea borders closed and restricted flights from 18 March. ⁵⁷
	Côte d'Ivoire	All borders are closed in Ivory Coast until further notice. ⁵⁸
	Gambia	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Ghana	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Guinea	No reported reaction
	Guinea Bissau	On March 17, authorities in Guinea-Bissau announced the closure of land borders and a ban on

⁵² 'Trade Policies for Africa to Tackle Covid-19 | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa' <<https://www.uneca.org/publications/trade-policies-africa-tackle-covid-19>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁵³ 'African Countries See "Rapid Evolution" of Pandemic: WHO | Time' <<https://time.com/5806476/coronavirus-cases-africa/>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁵⁴ 'Equatorial Guinea: Government Implements Travel Restrictions Due to COVID-19 March 13' (*GardaWorld*) <<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/323826/equatorial-guinea-government-implements-travel-restrictions-due-to-covid-19-march-13>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁵⁵ 'COVID-19 Information' (*U.S. Embassy in Gabon*) <<https://ga.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/coronavirus-update/>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁵⁶ 'Coronavirus Travel Updates: Which Countries Have Restrictions and FCO Warnings in Place? | Travel | The Guardian' <<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/mar/24/coronavirus-travel-updates-which-countries-have-restrictions-and-fco-warnings-in-place>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁵⁷ Antonia Wilson, 'Coronavirus Travel Updates: Which Countries Have Restrictions and FCO Warnings in Place?' *The Guardian* (3 April 2020) <<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/mar/24/coronavirus-travel-updates-which-countries-have-restrictions-and-fco-warnings-in-place>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁵⁸ 'Coronavirus: Travel Restrictions, Border Shutdowns by Country | Coronavirus Pandemic News | Al Jazeera' <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/coronavirus-travel-restrictions-border-shutdowns-country-200318091505922.html>> accessed 31 March 2020.

		all flights landing at Osvaldo Viera International Airport beginning on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. ⁵⁹
	Liberia	No reported reaction
	Mali	No reported reaction
	Niger	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Nigeria	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Senegal	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Sierra Leone	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	Togo	As discussed under CEN-SAD
IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development*	Djibouti	On March 15, 2020 suspended all international flights. ⁶⁰
	Ethiopia	As discussed under COMESA
	Eritrea	No reported reaction
	Kenya	As discussed under EAC
	Somalia	Somaliland government has already closed its border with Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia due to fears of the spread of COVID-19. The border closure took effect on the 26th of March, 2020 and will last for three weeks. ⁶¹
	Sudan	As discussed under CEN-SAD
	South Sudan	South Sudan's government on March 23, 2020 closed all airports and land crossings. ⁶²
	Uganda	As discussed under EAC
<u>SADC - Southern African Development Community</u>	Angola	Closed its air, land and sea borders on March 20, 2020 for 15 days ⁶³
	Botswana	Botswana's government announced Tuesday 24 th March, 2020 that it was closing all border crossing points with immediate effect.
	DRC	As discussed under COMESA
	Lesotho	No reported reaction
	Madagascar	As discussed under COMESA

⁵⁹ 'COVID-19 Information | U.S. Virtual Consulate in Guinea-Bissau' <<https://gw.usmission.gov/covid-19-information/>> accessed 3 April 2020.

⁶⁰ 'African Nations Close Borders, Cancel Flights to Contain Coronavirus Spread' *Reuters* (15 March 2020) <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-africa-idUSKBN2120YR>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁶¹ 'Somaliland's Tight Measures to Curb Deadly Coronavirus' (*East African Business Week*, 27 March 2020) <<https://www.busiweek.com/somalilands-tight-measures-to-curb-deadly-coronavirus/>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁶² 'South Sudan Closes Airports and Borders over Coronavirus Fears' (*Radio Tamazuj*) <<https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/south-sudan-closes-airports-and-borders-over-coronavirus-fears>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁶³ 'Angola Closes Borders from 20 March – Macauhub' <<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/03/19/pt-angola-encerra-fronteiras-a-partir-de-20-de-marco/>> accessed 4 April 2020; 'African Countries See "Rapid Evolution" of Pandemic: WHO | Time' (n 54).

	Malawi	No reported reaction
	Mauritius	As discussed under COMESA
	Mozambique	No reported reaction
	Namibia	Closed its borders on 24 th March, 2020. ⁶⁴
	Seychelles	As discussed under COMESA
	South Africa	<p>Cross-Border Road Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cross-border road passenger movements will be prohibited for the duration of the lockdown. (From midnight on Thursday 26 March until midnight on Thursday 16 April).⁶⁵ Cross-border freight movement for essential goods will continue to and from our neighbouring countries <p>Aviation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All international and domestic flights are prohibited, irrespective of the risk category of the country of origin. Only essential air cargo will be allowed. However, cargo from high risk country must be sanitized.⁶⁶ <p>Maritime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ban on cruise ships calling at any of our Sea Ports will be strictly enforced. Essential cargo will be allowed at our 8 Sea Ports. However, cargo from high risk countries must be sanitized.⁶⁷
	Swaziland	Borders closed on March 28, 2020. ⁶⁸
	Tanzania	No reported reaction
	Zambia	No reported reaction
	Zimbabwe	As from March 23 rd , 2020, it closed its borders to non-essential human traffic. ⁶⁹

⁶⁴ 'Namibia: Authorities Ban Entry of All Foreign Nationals Due to COVID-19 March 24 /Update 1' (*GardaWorld*) <<https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/326116/namibia-authorities-ban-entry-of-all-foreign-nationals-due-to-covid-19-march-24-update-1>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁶⁵ 'Travel - Coronavirus Covid-19 | South African Government' <<https://www.gov.za/Coronavirus/travel>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ 'Eswatini, Formerly Swaziland Closes Borders and Locks down the Kingdom' (*eTurboNews | Trends | Travel News*, 28 March 2020) <<https://www.eturbonews.com/568625/eswatini-former-swaziland-closes-borders-and-locks-down-the-kingdom/>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁶⁹ 'Zimbabwe's Doctors Call For Action After First COVID-19 Death | Voice of America - English' <<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/zimbabwes-doctors-call-action-after-first-covid-19-death>> accessed 4 April 2020.

NON-AFRICAN COUNTRIES/ REGIONAL BLOCS		
	China	China's foreign ministry announced on March 26 that it was suspending practically all entry to the country by foreigners and was halting almost all international passenger flights as well. ⁷⁰ Foreign residents of China and foreigners with previously issued visas would no longer be allowed to enter the country as of midnight March 27.
	New Zealand	Its government has strengthened travel restrictions, by closing their border to almost all travelers as from Thursday 19 March 2020. ⁷¹
	Jordan (Asia)	As of March 17, all flights, excluding commercial airfreight traffic, were suspended, according to officials. The country's land and sea borders are also closed to travelers.
	United Kingdom	The United Kingdom has not implemented any entry restrictions, but it is "advising against "all but essential travel to some countries, cities and regions," the country's Foreign and Commonwealth Office said. ⁷² Officials in the United Kingdom are also monitoring direct flights into the country from certain areas, according to the U.S. Embassy, and informing incoming passengers about how to report any symptoms. ⁷³
	United States	<p>The State Department on Thursday raised its global travel advisory to a Level 4, a recommendation — not a requirement — that United States citizens either remain in place or return home. This is the agency's top warning.⁷⁴</p> <p>On March 20, the White House Coronavirus Task Force said it was closing the border with Mexico to any nonessential travel, beginning March 21. The measure comes days after President Trump announced that the United States and Canada were</p>

⁷⁰ Keith Bradsher, 'To Slow Virus, China Bars Entry by Almost All Foreigners' *The New York Times* (26 March 2020) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/world/asia/china-virus-travel-ban.html>> accessed 31 March 2020.

⁷¹ 'COVID-19: Alert Level 4 | Immigration New Zealand' <<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/coronavirus-update-inz-response>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁷² 'Travel Advice: Coronavirus (COVID-19)' (*GOV.UK*) <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁷³ 'Information for U.S. Citizens in the UK (Coronavirus - COVID-19)' (*U.S. Embassy & Consulates in the United Kingdom*, 2 April 2020) <<https://uk.usembassy.gov/covid-19-coronavirus-information/>> accessed 4 April 2020.

⁷⁴ Salcedo and Cherelus (n 8).

		<p>closing their border by mutual decision. The border with Canada is also expected to close on March 21.⁷⁵</p> <p>The measure allows trade to continue but restricts non-essential travel, such as tourism, from Canada. Canadian nationals who daily commute to the United States for work would still be allowed in.⁷⁶</p> <p>On March 11 the United States barred the entry of all foreign nationals who had visited China, Iran and a group of European countries during the previous 14 days.⁷⁷</p>
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Table compiled by: H. Njoki Mboce and Dr. Kariuki Muigua. (March, 2020)***

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**Shows that the community's official website contains no indication of responses on this.*

It is important to note that the information contained in this table is primarily based on analysis conducted as at 30th March 2020. The table also contains a further brief analysis conducted between 30th March 2020 and 3rd April 2020. Further, the nature and scope of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to change and coupled with a growing familiarity with the situation, this could potentially influence further reactions by countries, regional communities and the AU.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Through the Covid -19 litmus test, the paper has shown the shifting global architecture and climate of peace and security which calls for a robust examination of our tools of dealing. It would be negligent to rely on obsolete tools and strategies to deal with fluid problems. In this regard, the need to review cross-border relationships with a view to striking a balance between strengthening domestic and neighbouring countries' capacities cannot be gainsaid. The logic underpinning integration is its collective approach and capacities to crisis management.

Additionally, Covid-19 has provided an unfortunate yet relevant exogenous metre upon which the integration ringing tone can be measured. The diagnosis discussed in this paper is that while ideally the functional demands and ideological justifications for cooperation and integration would be sufficient to anchor, implement and sustain it, the reality is different. The reality as illustrated through the table showing countries' and regional responses is that the degree to which the values of cooperation and integration are engrained in national DNA is a focal component, because this informs and sustains the initial assessment and reflex to any threats or needs.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ 'Fact Sheet: DHS Notice of Arrival Restrictions on China, Iran and Certain Countries of Europe' (*Department of Homeland Security*, 17 March 2020) <<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/03/17/fact-sheet-dhs-notice-arrival-restrictions-china-iran-and-certain-countries-europe>> accessed 4 April 2020.

There is therefore great need for Africa to domestically strengthen her integration fabric with the lessons learnt through the Covid-19 litmus test. More particularly, there is great need for a deeper Africa-centred synergy in the area of cross-border activities and security.

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