

AFRICA AND THE PHENOMENON OF SIT-TIGHT DICTATORSHIP

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Abstract

The paper focuses on Africa and the phenomenon of sit-tight dictatorship. The high expectations of the people that democracy and governance would reverse decades of poverty, corruption and underdevelopment have hardly been met and these can be credited to some undemocratic practices such as sit-tight leaderships in Africa. The paper examines the reasons Africans tolerate Constitutions with no time limits on presidential terms in office, the reasons it is difficult for some African leaders to relinquish power as against the constitutional provisions and the reasons African countries cum people are tolerant of long-serving sit-tight dictators. The study is anchored on the Power Theory/Political Realism. Hence, the paper employs qualitative/secondary data methodology for data collection which focuses on the use of internet materials, books, journals, conference papers etc. to gather data. The paper examines the mechanism used by African leaders in achieving sit-tight dictatorship and the causative factors enabling it. The study equally takes a critical look at the historical context in Africa and how it influences sit-tight syndrome and tenure elongation in Africa. From all indications, it was discovered that sit-tight dictatorship in Africa has negative implication on the development, security and primitive accumulation (corruption) in



Africa. Based on historical evidence, the paper observes that sit-tight dictatorial tendencies is mostly pronounced in Africa right from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial realities, and as such, this phenomenon comes with its attendant consequences of poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment. This paper therefore recommends that, to combat the menace of sit-tight dictatorship in Africa, there is need for concerted efforts by all and sundry to safeguard liberal democracy that stipulates constitutional office term or tenure system as central tenet or rules of engagement for African leaders. Also, it is recommended that African Union (AU) and other regional bodies like ECOWAS should constantly mobilize resources to campaign and institutionalize a policy for zero tolerance to sit-tight dictatorship in Africa.

Key words: Sit–Tight Dictatorship, Tenure Elongation, Africa, Poverty, Insecurity, Democracy

Introduction

All over the world, history is associated with political leaders who have at different points in time, demonstrated subversive and manipulative tendencies in order to remain in power (Arinbomen, 2023). A critical look at African historical context, from the pre – colonial, colonial and post – colonial periods, there have been leaders who are obsessed with power and who perpetuates and have perpetuated themselves in power and leadership positions. Democratization around the world with widespread acceptance in Africa has not reduced the tendencies of sit – tight syndrome in Africa. Even when leaders are elected through the democratic process, they manipulate some vital democratic institutions such as the judiciary, legislature to enable them suppress opposition in a bid to hang on to power unduly. It is obvious that majority of African societies and Africans (until recently with the rise of military coup mostly amongst former French colonies in the West African Sub – Region) have embraced democracy as the best form of government is no longer in contention, what is however in contention is the degree to which they apply democratic principles in their practice of democracy.



With the wave of democratization that swept through Africa in the 1980s, most African countries had embraced democracy and are trying vigorously to climb the ropes but it has not been an easy task. On this basis, Odoziobodo (2019) succinctly states that “There is no doubt that in African politics today, there is no choice but democracy. Yet, beneath the progressive veneer of democratization lies a lot of ambivalence and contradictions”. These contradiction and ambivalence can be witnessed in sit-tight syndrome and “democratic dictatorship”. Sit-tight syndrome and dictatorship as the norms among African leaders since independence has seen most African presidents’ devise litany of measures such as constitutional coups, intimidation of the opposition, refusal to conduct election, to outright refusal to quit office irrespective of the consequences. To Ogbimi (2006:17), this is not the case with African leaders except in a very few cases like Nigeria in the 2015 general election, when the incumbent president Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the People Democratic Party (PDP) was voted out of power in which he humbly handed over power to Mohammed Buhari of the APC opposition party without crisis and in line with the constitutional provision. In spite of the suffering dictatorial regimes have inflicted on African countries, there are still a handful of them scattered across the continent. Long-serving leadership has permeated deep into the strata of governance circles. As such, Ferim (2018) states that sit tightism has become like a curse on the continent of Africa that all hands must be on deck to reverse it if the continent as a whole or at least some of the African countries must get a glimpse of what it feels like to be among the developed countries of the world.

The challenge and problem of sit-tight dictatorship in Africa comes in the form of underdevelopment witnessed amongst African countries where sit-tight syndrome is prevalent. Nwosu (2023:47) rightly observes that “the greatest challenge to leadership in Africa is the tendency to remain perpetually in power by African leaders even when it is obvious that they are performing poorly in governance. According to him, there is a common saying that ‘it is only the led that can keep



their leader in power at all cost. But this can only be possible when the leader has performed to the satisfaction of the people...”He noted that most African leaders try to stay in power even when the people no longer want them and had clamoured for their removal. He further observed that a good leader relinquishes power when the people makes demand for it, that a good leader has nothing to do with power not willingly given to him by the people. Furthermore, he noted that a good leader is guided by the people he leads. Ukwuoma (2007:27) also shared the same thought when he opined that:

A good leader is a good leader only because the people he is leading wanted him and willing to allow him to continue to lead them. On the contrary, he noted that the good leader automatically becomes a bad leader any day the people wakes up and say no to him or questions his leadership.

In the expression of Egobueze (2021), the high expectations of the people that democracy would reverse decades of poverty, corruption and underdevelopment have hardly been met by the new democrats; this can be credited to the undemocratic practice of sit-tight leaders that are at the helm of affairs of virtually every Africa country. It is obvious from records of corruption in African countries as examined by Mohan and Power (2009) cited in Ferim (2018) that “leaders who go into power and decide to sit-tight do so with the intention to enrich themselves with the resources and wealth of the country, leaving the economic and general development of the country to her fate.” Sight-tight dictatorship brings about despotic leadership and, abuse of human rights is always the case. The effect is that citizens of the affected country leave the country in their droves, heading to other countries, thereby losing serious manpower. Sit-tight syndrome is anti-developmental.

The prevalence of this sit-tight dictatorship in Africa and the problems it portends to the people as well as the continent brings about the following questions: why African countries or its people are still



tolerant of long-serving sit tight dictators? Why does it take so long for Africans to react, or agree in unison that enough is enough? Why is so difficult for some African heads of state to relinquish power? Why do they change constitutional provisions to perpetuate their stay in power? Why do Africans tolerate Constitutions with no limits on presidential terms in office?

Theoretical Framework

In social sciences inquiry, theories play important roles for interrogating social phenomenon. Quite a good number of theories have been propounded to understand the concept of power and how human behavior as a “political animal” seeks to hold onto power perpetually. Hence, to examine sit–tight dictatorship in Africa, theories such as Power/Greed Theory/Political Realism clearly upheld by contemporary political thinkers and espoused by the German scholar, Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980), Niccolo Machiavelli and recently Robert Greene (2000) in his much celebrated work, 48 Laws of Power, appear relevant.

The paper is anchored on Political Realism/Power Theory for the analysis of sit-tight dictatorship in Africa. To the Power and Political Realism Theorists, man is naturally egoistic and perpetually pre-occupied with the desire to dominate others and the only way to achieve this is by the acquisition of power. Power and Political realism sees the world as a wicked place; Robert Greene and Hans Morgenthau (1904-80), a German scholar who propagated the twin theories man must not think of cooperation with others for there is nothing like that. Man therefore, must, at all times do everything possible to outwit the other and to do this; man must have power; for it is only through the agency of power that man can get whatever he wants in society. Power and Political Realists believe in the efficacy of power and for them, power acquired must be consolidated. Foremost Power/Political Theorists which include Nicolle Machiavelli, Hans Morgenthau and Robert Greene believe and postulate that man must, as a matter of necessity, try



to acquire power, and power acquired must be sustained and consolidated and if possible should not be dropped for whatever reason since man needs power at all times. It is in recognition of this that Robert Greene (2000) authored his much-celebrated work, “The 48 Laws of Power”, where he discussed the *modus operandi* and of acquiring and consolidating power. For instance, Greene (2000) also admonishes that in order to consolidate power, man must be ruthless, hence in Law Fifteen, he admonishes that enemies should be crushed totally so as to avoid a situation whereby the enemy defeated halfway, recovers and seeks revenge.

It is obvious that the realist theory of Political Realism and Power Theory is apt for the analysis of sit-tight dictatorship phenomenon because it is about the acquisition and consolidation of state power even beyond tenure limits. Since presidents in Africa are in love with power and do everything possible to cling unto power, they are apostles of realism. Many African heads of states are oblivious of the fact that power is transient and ephemeral. They want to cling unto power for life forgetting that much as they want power, other people also want it. Abiodun, *et al* (2018) concludes that it is this power-seeking and greed perspective of African leaders who by all means want to maintain a sit-tight syndrome and ensure tenure elongation in politics that breeds political instability and violent conflicts in Africa.

The method adopted in this research is content analysis, using mainly secondary data. The secondary data employed include existing literature on the topic obtained from such sources as the internet, books, journals, newspapers, magazines and conference papers. Hence, the study hopes to contribute to knowledge by embarking on review of related literatures on sit-tight syndrome and dictatorship in Africa and suggesting possible ways to combat the challenge confronting the people of the region



Review of Related Literature

The concept of “sit-tightism” has been conceived differently by authors overtime, hence, there are variations to the definitions as there is no generally accepted definition. Odoziobodo (2019) reviewing Uhara (2013)’s work defines sit-tightism as the willful reluctance on the part of a political leader to relinquish power. This invariably means a situation whereby an elected leader especially in a democratic arena refuses through subtle means to relinquish power at the end of the allotted tenure in office. Odoziobodo (2019) further states that “Sit-tightism presupposes that there is term limits for a Presidents in the Constitution of the affected country, but the President uses some deliberate machinations to prolong or elongate his tenure of office as against constitutional provisions and popular choices.

Abiodun, Nwannennaya, Ochei and Ayo-Adeyekun (2018) sees sit tight dictatorship from a different perspective, hence, they view it as the willful, deliberate or suspension of the constitution or laid down set of rules and regulations by an individual to stay long in power outside a specific tenure of office either as President or Head of State of a country is referred to as sit-tight syndrome. Abiodun, Nwannennaya, Ochei and Ayo – Adeyekun (2018) see the trend as illegal and unconstitutional, but ironically, it is attractive, fanciful and too tempting to ignore by some people who find themselves in positions of authority.

For Kunuji (2017) cited in Rosenje, Onyebuchi and Adeniyi (2022), tenure elongation and sit tight dictatorship in Africa has a long and troubling history, whereby the term limit stated in the Constitution of the affected country is manipulatively exceeded by the incumbent President who deliberately uses intrigues or conspiracies to prolong or elongate his tenure of office as against constitutional requirements and popular practice or choice. In summary, the paper agrees with the submission of Abiodun *et al.* (2018) which stated that sit-tight dictatorship is characterized by a deliberate reluctance of African



political leaders to relinquish power or political offices as against the constitutional provisions of true democracy.

Odoziobodo (2019) on his part, examined the mechanisms which some African leaders used in achieving sit – tight dictatorship in Africa thus:

- Constitutional Coup which means tinkering with the Constitution by abolishing term limit in the Constitution;
- Harassing and intimidating the opposition which is made possible through the use of the state apparatus;
- Claim to messianic mission in the country through the use of falsehood to create a God sent atmosphere and belief amongst the citizens.
- Bribery and corruption perpetuated through enriching themselves with the State resources.

The causative factors and reasons for the widespread occurrence of sit tight dictatorship have been examined by scholars overtime, as such Egobueze (2023); Abiodun *et al* (2018) and Khalid (2015) succinctly list the causative factors responsible for tenure elongation in Africa to include: Power Intoxication and power drunkenness. Thus, these authors feel the grandeur, opulent, allure and the mien associated with power is something difficult to let go by an average mind, hence encouraging corruption which is the abuse of public office for private gain most evident in African countries with sit tight attitude. Khalid (2015), sees lack of Domestic Leadership Education and African Mentality as part of the challenges while Egobueze (2023) feel ethnic divisions within the countries in Africa has a reflection on the leadership structure, as such, Ethnic Hegemony, as characterized by ethnic bias and favouritism; Abiodun *et al* (2018) see Disregard for Public Opinions and Political Warning Signals as one of the causes of tenure elongation; Sycophancy, Nepotism and Mediocrity, this is evident of the sit-tight African leaders; Non-willingness to Relinquish Power to Opposition, in a bid to hang on to power unduly, all the democratic institutions are suspended; Suspension of Constitutional



Provisions, as such most of the leaders in African nations met their countries with already abrogated constitutional provisions while other get it suspended.

Arinbomen (2023); Rosenje, Onyebuchi and Adeniyi (2022); Odoziobodo (2019); Abiodun *et al* (2018); Ferim (2018); Kunuji (2017) have all taken an overview of sit tight dictatorship in Africa over a period of time. Within the confines of Africa, this piece reviews some of the continent's diehard protagonists of sit-tight syndrome. One of the pronounced sit – tight dictatorship is the Togo situation. In Togo, the Gnassingbe family has ruled the country for over five and a half decades uninterrupted. Gnassingbe Eyadema was President of Togo for 38 years, from 1967 until his untimely death in 2005. The second coup he participated in in 1967 culminated in his ascension to power. Even with the introduction of multiparty system, he cleverly manipulated the system to maintain a firm footing on his country's political landscape. At the time of his death, Gnassingbe Eyadema was Africa's longest-serving ruler. The reins of power have, however, remained in the Gnassingbe family; as Faure Gnassingbe, Eyadema's son, was instantaneously clad with the mantle of leadership of the Togolese presidency, following his father's death. Faure Gnassingbe is currently serving his fourth term as President of Togo; and so far, he has been in power for 18 straight years.

Sit-tight dictatorship situation is noticeable in Angola; Jose Eduardo dos Santos will is for clinging to power as president for 38 years in a row, from 1979 until 2017, after which he consented to power transition. He died four years after relinquishing power. A similar scenario played out on Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe where he stayed in power for 30 years, from 1987 until 2017, and had to be forced to step down as the President of Zimbabwe by the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) at 93 years old, he died 2 years after. Sit tight leaders in Africa in the past include Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt,



Felix Houphouet-Biogny of Ivory Coast, Omar Bongo Ondimba of Gabon and Muammar Gaddafi of Libya.

In the contemporary time, the tendency of sit tight dictatorship and tenure elongation is widespread in the Africa. The crop of present sit-tight dictatorial leaders are Yoweri Museveni of Uganda (President since 1986), Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo (President since 1997), Faure Gnassingbe of Togo (President since 2005), Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea (President since 1979) and Paul Biya of Cameroon (President since 1982).

Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has set an unprecedented record in the world as the President of the oil-rich Equatorial Guinea. He is currently the world's longest-serving President, having held on to power for 43 years with his son as Vice President since 2016. Seizing power from his uncle in 1979, after a military takeover, he has continued to manipulate relevant laws and institutions in order to remain in power. Now 80 years old, he won a sixth term in office as President of Equatorial Guinea in November 2022 with 95 per cent of the votes cast.

Popular Cases of Sit – Tight Presidents and Leaders in Africa

S/N	Presidents	Nations	Years in Power	Duration
1.	Teodoro Nguma Mbasogo	Equatorial Guinea	44 years	Since 1979
2.	Paul Biya	Cameroon	39 years	Since 1982
3.	Yoweri Museveni	Uganda	39 Years	Since 1982
4.	Mswati II	Swaziland	37 years	Since 1986
5.	Blaise Campore	Burkina Faso	36 Years	Since 1987
6.	Omar Bashir	Sudan	34 years	Since 1989
7.	Idris Deby	Chad	33 Years	Since 1990
8.	Isaisa Afwerki	Eritrea	32 Years	Since 1991
9.	Meles Zenawi	Ethiopia	28 Years	Since 1995
10	Denis Sassou Nguesso	Republic of the Congo	26years	Since 1997
11	Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasongo	Equatorial Guinea	26years	Since 1997



12	Laurent Gbagbo	Ivory Coast	19 Years	Since 2000
13	Paul Kagame	Rwanda	23 years	Since 2000
14	Abdoulaye Wade	Senegal	23 years	Since 2000
15	Faure Gnassingbe	Togo	19 Years	Since 2005
16	Pierre Nkuruziza	Burundi	19 Years	Since 2005
17	Ali Bongo Ondimba	Gabon	14 years	2009-2023
18	Moummar Ghaddafi	Libya	44 Years	1967- 2011
19	Jose Don Santos	Angola	38 Years	1979- 2017
20	Robert Mugabe	Zimbabwe	37 Years	1980- 2017
21	Omar al – Bashir	Sudan	30 Years	1989- 2019
22	Ben Ali	Tunisia	23 years	1988- 2011
23	Yahya Jammeh	Gambia	23 years	1994- 2017
24	Abdellaziz Bouteflika	Algeria	20 Years	1999- 2019
25	Joseph Kabila	Democratic Rep. of Congo	18 years	2001- 2019

Source: Authors Compilation and Update (2023)

African Historical Context Influence on Sit Tight Syndrome and Tenure Elongation

Africa history is broadly divided into the pre – colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. Most African countries have peculiar pre – colonial leadership pattern which is based primarily on “divine right” leader and inheritance nature of African leadership. The emphasis on this suggests the reason why African societies find it difficult to relinquish power as it is aligned to the African societies where power is inherited within certain lineages and family lines.

Egobueze (2023) in this same line of thought states that the belief in the African traditional kingship system is a justification for a single party structure in most African states. As such, even in multiparty democracies in Africa, there is most often the manipulation of the constitutional provisions to perpetuate leaders in power which Abiodun et al (2018) clearly described as “Constitutional Coup”. The kingship and kinship practices in the pre – colonial empires like the Yoruba



Kingdom, Fulani Emirate, Kanem – Bornu Empire, Kingdom of Kongo, Ashante Empire, Adamawa Emirate, Yeke Kingdom, Luba Empire, Mbunda Kingdom, Sultanate of Bagirmi among others were ruled by leaders who by the standard of the time stay in power until death.

At independence, Africa leaders feel the period change in leadership as democratic practice was in the western tradition which is antithesis and negates African traditional belief. Most traditional African kingdoms and empires practiced monarchical system of government, and those that did not practice monarchy had a regime structure that kings ruled for life. A departure from this pattern of leadership was an anathema and possibly a denunciation of African belief system. More so, the kings were right in every circumstance, so an argument or opposition against the king is visited with hostility (Egobueze, 2021).

Most African states gained independence in the 1960s, 1970s through to the 1980s. This coincided with the high point of the Cold –War (ideological war) between the Capitalist and the Socialist blocs and the rush for African countries as the new beautiful brides. The Soviet Union as the leader of the Socialist bloc made advances through proposals of aids and grants. Hence, accepting this aids and grants come with conditionality which was towards the adoption of socialist practices and doctrines of government which is dictatorial in orientation and promotes sit tight dictatorship. Ghana under Nkrumah almost drifted to the Soviet Union’s interest and was aptly checked by the disapproval of ‘Nkrumaism in Ghana’ by the West. In similitude with Ghana were Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Benin, Ethiopia and others (Egobueze, 2023). Also, to cement their grip in the Africa countries to enhance exploitation of natural resources, the Western bloc was led by America and they also supported African dictators because of economic wealth of the State. For this economic reasons, the West propped up tyrants in Cameroon, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Zaire, and other African countries to the detriment of democratic movements.



Sit-tight Dictatorship in Africa: Implication on Development, Security and Primitive Accumulation

Sit-tight dictatorship is actively perpetuated through tenure elongation and it comes with it attendant consequences. Sit-tight leadership phenomenon or syndrome in Africa result in the abuse of power and waste of the people's resources to remain in power at all cost (Nwosu, 2023:47). Many countries in Africa are faced with developmental issues, insecurity and primitive accumulation accentuated by dictatorial pattern of governance. Many states in Africa have become accustomed to "sit-tight dictators" or military style of leadership, with democracy being propelled by the West for their replacement (Khalil, 2015). In most countries with sit-tight dictatorial history in Africa like Rwanda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo amongst others, people are known to have been killed, maimed and the country thrown into unwanted wars even as the economy suffered. Political persecutions, torture and inhuman and degrading treatments are equally part of the problems sit-tight syndrome has brought to African people. Neighbouring countries are also affected due to the spillover effects which have led to internal displacement, hunger and poverty (Byron and Ochei, 2015).

There are also issues of arms proliferation and increase in robbery and other criminal activities. People are arrested, detained, tortured and political opponents and religious leaders who canvass or preach against the tyrants in places of worship are killed. A cursory look at Zimbabwe and the possibility that Mugabe made the economic situation of the country worse by taking away the investors investments which was largely situated in farming which had largely been successful. Mugabe was trying to "reclaim" land from white settlers and gave them to indigenous Zimbabwean farmers without ascertaining their ability to invest or their knowledge of farming.

The European Union and United States of America now provide food aid on a humanitarian basis to the country. The International Monetary



Fund has suspended the government's request for long-term loans as a result of the government's unwillingness to ratify reforms that could stabilize the economy. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe normally prints money to fund the budget deficit, causing the official annual inflation rate to rise from 32% in 1998, to 133% in 2004, 585% in 2005, passed 1000% in 2006, and 26000% in November 2007, and to 11.2 million percent in 2008; as a result, within a period of four years, the official exchange rate rose from approximately 1(revalued) Zimbabwean dollar per US dollar in 2003 to 30,000 per US dollar in September 2007" (Abiodun, *et al.*, 2018). Many people in Zimbabwe are unemployed and the currency is in bad shape due to inflation.

The style of leadership in Togo and Gabon has been that of a dynasty by two self-wise families in those countries and there are numerous examples of sit-tight never quit democratic dictatorship in Africa (Mac Godson, 2015). Unfortunately, the danger in continuing to have sit-tight leaders on the continent is that some of them grow too old and senile, thus becoming a liability to their countries. Not only do they lack fresh ideas, some of those who actually started well later lost their way. A good example is Museveni: once hailed a progressive, he is now enveloped in corruption, nepotism and intolerance of opposing views. In his recent appointments, he made his wife, Janet Kataaha, a cabinet minister, while promoting his son, Muhoozi Kainerugab – whom many believe is being groomed to take over from him – to the position of a major General in the army. African sit-tight rulers have plunged their countries into political upheaval to satisfy their selfish ambitions to remain in power, long after their constitutionally prescribed tenures had elapsed. The tenure of Gambia's Yahya Jammeh ended on January 18, 2018. He was expected to hand over power to an elected president.

After more than 10 years in power, President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi stunned the world in April 2015 when he announced that he would be seeking a third term, contrary to the prescriptions of the country's Constitution. Ever since, the country has known no peace



(Quinnones, 2009). At least 215,000 Burundians have fled their country, hundreds have been killed, and a coup attempt, made to oust the dictator which failed, led to horrifying reprisals. It did not matter to him that a country like Burundi with a history of genocide ought to be administered with transparency and fairness. The above cases have potentials of turning citizen protests into civil unrest or wars which could turn into catastrophes. In each instance, the economic losses emanating from the elongation of political tenures are beyond calculation.

The long tenure of Mobutu Sese Seko bequeathed to the Congo, many years of civil wars, insurrections and instability which remain till this day. Africa “boasts” of men like President Teodoro Obiang Nguema who has been in power in Equatorial Guinea for 42 years and the most news-making attributes of his regime are the unspeakable corruption of the regime and the scandalous extravagance of his playboy son who is scheduled to face trial in France for money laundering, embezzlement and corruption. French authorities reportedly towed 11 luxury vehicles, including two Ferrari sports cars belonging to the young Nguema who has been described as belonging to “a small club of corrupters” (Transparency International, 2015).

Conclusion

It is obvious that beyond the tale of African leaders’ inclination to hold on to power, there is documented evidence of an uncanny penchant for perpetual reign by political leaders in other continents of the world such as Asia and South America. However, it can be concluded that based on historical evidence, sit-tight dictatorial tendencies is mostly pronounced in Africa and with it comes the attendant consequences of poverty, insecurity, primitive accumulation through pillaging of the state resources, terrorism, internally displaced persons, revolt, corruption and other negative outcomes of the phenomenon. As such it can be concluded that African continent has faced several challenges among which is the peaceful transition from one government to another. At one



time or the other, the continent has become home to several sit-tight and long – serving leaders, who fail to relinquish power enthusiastically at the expiration of tenures in office.

Way Forward

To combat the menace of sit-tight dictatorship in Africa, there is need for concerted efforts by all and sundry. Hence, there is an urgent need to safeguard democracy in Africa as history of slavery, colonialism among others have shown that Africans have been through a lot to get to this stage and therefore there is need to combat this phenomenon on sit-tight dictatorship in the continent. Africans cannot afford to continue to allow those they elected into power to lord it over them and impose themselves on the people whether they like it or not. This can be done by ways of civil protests and demonstrations and all other legal activities that borders on civil disobedience.

The African Union and other regional bodies like ECOWAS should constantly mobilize resources to campaign and institutionalize a policy of zero tolerance to sit-tight dictatorship in Africa, just the way the body and others institutionalized zero tolerance to military coups. This gave them the latitude to intervene in the political crises in Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zimbabwe when democracy was threatened in those countries.

To put an end to sit-tight dictatorship in Africa and for democracy to reign, citizens must resist the temptation of being complacent. Everybody in all countries of Africa must be alert to resist elected presidents whenever they start trying to change the goal-post in the middle of the game. Whenever a sitting President starts talking of changing the Constitution in Africa, one must be alerted that he is up to tenure elongation as it was witnessed during the Obasanjo administration in 2005. This is because time limit is a core feature of democratization.



Egypt was a perfect example where sit-tight dictatorial leadership was removed and overthrown. By this development, Egypt therefore remain a big lesson to all countries of Africa which fought against sit-tight leadership. Such revolution is due and is likely take place in other countries of Africa where the Heads of States refuses to vacate offices at the end of their tenures even when they are not doing well.

Even with the recognition of sovereignty, regional bodies such as ECOWAS and African Union should take the lead in sensitization of the people on the evil of sit tight dictatorial governments in Africa..

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