

# An Analysis of South Africa's Foreign Policy Priorities on Africa: The Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus, 2018-2022

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the nexus between South Africa's domestic and foreign policies between 2018 and 2022, using a neoclassical realist framework, and with a focus on South Africa's foreign policy priorities on Africa. It measures the state's performance against its pronounced foreign policy priorities towards the continent. This paper aims to examine whether the citizens of South Africa are an asset or a liability to the state's stated foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, it examines how South Africa can improve its foreign policy such that the domestic developments in the state may positively impact the African continent. The paper uses qualitative research, with data analysis of case studies. The findings indicate that South Africa does not have a coherent foreign policy, which in turn negatively affects the African continent, and that South Africa is a long way from achieving a pan-Africanist foreign policy. The paper concludes by contemplating the importance of educating South African policymakers and citizens in strengthening and implementing the DIRCO's mission and objectives.

## Introduction

### Background of the study

One of the most debated issues is whether South Africa has a coherent foreign policy or not. South Africa's foreign policy has been viewed as inconsistent. The divisive leadership of the former President, Jacob Zuma, and the failures of the ANC to ensure transparency and good governance have contributed to the challenges of South Africa's foreign policy. According to analysts, South Africa's foreign policy is ineligible to be classified as impressive and coherent (Lipton, 2009). The ambiguities in South Africa's foreign policy are still ongoing in the present day under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Apartheid contributed to people living in fixed categories. This meant that people were grouped according to where they were and how they physically looked. This segregation led to Africans being isolated from one another and each state living on its own. Every African state developed its foreign policy based on the interests that the states had. It is believed that to understand South Africa's foreign policy, the political transition after apartheid should be well explained and understood (Habib, 2009). It is crucial to understand what influenced South Africa's ideas, interests, and institutions during the political evolution post-apartheid.

This research paper seeks to examine how South Africa's foreign policy the African continent and whether domestic developments help or hinder the advancement of the aims of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). This paper studies the White Paper on South African foreign policy and what the DIRCO aims to do. It examines Zuma's and Ramaphosa's foreign policies. The paper studies the xenophobic attacks that took place in South Africa between 2018 and 2022, the reclaiming of buildings in Johannesburg under the mayorship of Herman Mashaba,

and the cancellation of the Zimbabwe Special Permit by the South African government. This paper further examines whether or not South Africa can have a pan-Africanist foreign policy.

The research argues that despite its international recognition and connections, South Africa is still has a flawed foreign policy. The paper uses domestic events as a starting point for what South Africa has to work on within its borders before it achieves its goal of building shared prosperity for Africa and its people. It may be argued that South Africa has played a vital role in bringing peace and security to Africa and affirming African development; however, there is instability within its borders. It is for this reason that South Africa has to prioritize its citizens before expanding its priorities to Africa.

## Case Studies

### Introduction

This paper will discuss literature that talks about the South Africa's foreign policy, its national interest, South Africa's position in Africa and in the world. It further discusses literature on administrations by Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa. Additionally, this paper discusses the literature on Herman Mashaba's mayoralty in the city of Johannesburg, xenophobic attacks in South Africa, the function of Operation Dudula and the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit in South Africa.

### White Paper on South Africa's foreign policy

Looking at South Africa's history of liberation, its changing international engagement is centralized around two doctrines, namely the Pan-Africanism and South-South solidarity (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa views itself as an integral part of Africa. This is because it understands its national interest as being connected to Africa's stability, unity and prosperity. South Africa and Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) aim for the next decades is that South Africa's international relations must shape and strengthen the national identity, cultivate national pride and patriotism (DIRCO, 2011). It should address the injustices of the past, including those of gender and race. It aims to bring social cohesion and stability by bringing the divisions in the society (DIRCO, 2011). It also aims to grow the economy for the development and upliftment of its people (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa aims to promote its national interest and achieve a better life for its people and the continent.

South Africa is a multifaceted, multicultural and multiracial country that embraces the concept of Ubuntu as a way of defining who South Africans are and how they relate to others (DIRCO, 2011). Ubuntu is a philosophy concept that means humanity. It is reflected in the idea that when one affirms their humanity, they also affirm the humanity of others. The philosophy of Ubuntu translates into an international relations approach that respects all nations, peoples and cultures (DIRCO, 2011). It recognizes that it is in the states' national interest to promote and support the positive developments of others. According to DIRCO, South Africa supports collaboration of states, cooperation and building partnerships over conflict. South Africa's recognition on interconnectedness and interdependency together with the infusion of Ubuntu into the South African identity has shaped the foreign policy of the state (DIRCO, 2011).

In a world that is interdependent and changing fast, it is essential for South Africa to regularly make an evaluation of its foreign policy and to ensure that its national interests are maximized. Foreign policy is not an abstract matter separate from domestic policies and as such South Africa ensures that these inform its foreign policy (DIRCO, 2011).

South Africa's foreign policy is currently based on the primacy of the African continent and the Southern African Development Community, commitment to South-South cooperation, the importance of multilateralism, consolidating relations with the North, and the strengthening of bilateral social, political, and economic relations, while remaining faithful to the constitutional principles that have guided South Africa since 1994 (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa is dedicated to pursuing an aggressive and targeted foreign policy. As the principal advisor on matters pertaining to South Africa's foreign policy, DIRCO's role is to coordinate how South Africa conducts its international relations (DIRCO, 2011). In order to improve South Africa's international cooperation and the execution of its development and humanitarian assistance programs, DIRCO established the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) (DIRCO, 2011).

DIRCO (2011:9) claims that the alignment, coordination, and management of South Africa's international relations and related activities, monitoring of global developments, including the provision of early warnings to political principals, formulation of foreign policy options, protection of South Africa's sovereignty and territorial integrity, economic diplomacy, and public diplomacy, are all ways that its international mission is carried out and mandated.

### *South Africa's position in the world*

South Africa aims to be an influential and successful member of the international community by 2025. It aims to do this by establishing a globally competitive economy that addresses unemployment, inequalities and poverty in South Africa and it also aims to contribute to the development of the African continent (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa gets opportunities from how fast the gap between developed and developing countries is closing and the establishment of the balance of power in the international system (DIRCO, 2011). South African companies have been leading in using technology to develop market conditions and the development of new business models (DIRCO, 2011). This has allowed South Africa to be able to explore markets in sectors such as mobile communications and financial services (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa should continue to explore opportunities to overtake other strategies to open up market sectors (DIRCO, 2011).

The change in the balance of power in the global system together with the increase in the closing capability gap between developing and developed states creates opportunities for South Africa (DIRCO, 2011). States now have an unprecedented opportunity to maximize their influence by taking the lead on specific issues as well as within the region, due to the convergence of trends (DIRCO, 2011). This influence comes from taking the lead on policy, creating institutions, and developing solutions (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa's influence in international fora has increased because of its participation in this position on the African continent (DIRCO, 2011). The next strategic challenge is for South Africa to take advantage of this chance to lead the way in establishing a new world order (DIRCO, 2011).

As some important developing state move closer to becoming developed, the unity of the states of the South may weaken (DIRCO, 2011). Based on their capacities and integration into global governance frameworks, this group of developing states already distinguishes itself from the rest of the developing world (DIRCO, 2011). The capacity and influence gap between major states and the rest of the developing world, particularly the LDCs, has expanded as a result (DIRCO, 2011). This could have an effect on the South's unity and the promotion of the agenda of the developing states in international fora (DIRCO, 2011). In this situation, South Africa should continue to promote the interests and solidarity of the South. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that solid bilateral ties strengthen South Africa's influence and international positions within multilateral organizations and groupings (DIRCO, 2011).

### *South Africa's position in Africa*

The fight for a better life in South Africa is linked to its efforts to create a better Africa in a better world. Its fate is entwined with that of the Southern African region (DIRCO, 2011). The basis for Africa's socioeconomic development and political unification, as well as crucial to our own prosperity and security (DIRCO, 2011), is regional and continental integration. Africa is therefore the focal point of South Africa's foreign policy. In order to respond to and resolve crises, strengthen regional integration, and most importantly, increase intra-African trade and support sustainable development and opportunities in Africa, South Africa must continue to support regional and continental processes (DIRCO, 2011).

According to DIRCO (2011), South Africa's role in the African Union (AU) and its structures is to step up its involvement so that the AU can carry out its mandate to promote social and economic advancement as well as unity on the African continent. In addition to warning them about how Official Development Assistance (ODA) contributes to the delay of African unity and solidarity, South Africa intends to continue supporting the AU's function as the main body for coordinating continental positions (DIRCO, 2011). In the meantime, through its planned bilateral activities and other international fora, South Africa will keep advancing common African positions (DIRCO, 2011).

Development must take place in an environment of peace, stability, and security (DIRCO, 2011). Future conflicts will be more frequently threatening due to rising demographic pressures, energy, food, and water scarcities, as well as increased global competition for access to natural resources (DIRCO, 2011). Socio-cultural, racial, and religious barriers might make these problems worse (DIRCO, 2011). The best way to address these issues is through regional political and economic cooperation as well as through tackling colonial legacies and neo-colonial influences (DIRCO, 2011).

As a result, South Africa will continue taking the lead in efforts to prevent conflicts, maintain peace, build peace, and aid in post-conflict recovery (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa will keep collaborating with the AU to prevent unlawful governmental changes (DIRCO, 2011). It will also keep supporting AU and the United Nations (UN) measures to resolve unresolved self-determination and decolonization problems on the African continent (DIRCO, 2011). The values of sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states are upheld by South Africa (DIRCO, 2011).

Insofar as the continent is able to rationalize and streamline the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as pillars of African integration, future economic success and unity on the African continent will be realized (DIRCO, 2011). Agriculture, energy, and water are just a few examples of the complementary industries that continue to exist and will support regional integration and industrial growth (DIRCO, 2011). Regions will become subject to outside interests if there is a failure to maximize the advantages of these complementarities (DIRCO, 2011). Therefore, South Africa would prioritize taking on a constructive leadership role to hasten and deepen regional integration (DIRCO, 2011).

South Africa will continue to support Southern African Development Community's (SADC) regional economic program, which calls for sectoral cooperation, market integration, and policy coordination and convergence through the SADC Free Trade Area (DIRCO, 2011). SADC, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the East Africa Community (EAC) integration would strengthen Africa's political union and economy (DIRCO, 2011). Relationships between South Africa and the various African states continue to be crucial to its approach to foreign policy (DIRCO, 2011). It will continue to strengthen bilateral cooperation with African states through ongoing partnerships for development, including the promotion of trade and investment, the establishment of joint projects for the development of infrastructure, and the provision of technical assistance for

institutional and policy development (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa will also make an effort to better coordinate its bilateral and multilateral engagements in the region (DIRCO, 2011).

### *South Africa's national interest*

The protracted years of the liberation struggle had a significant influence on the principles that motivate and direct South Africa as a state (DIRCO, 2011). South Africa, which has benefitted from several acts of unselfish solidarity in the past, is adamant that what it wants for its people should also be what it wants for all of the world's population (DIRCO, 2011). Thus, its national interest might be described as being centred on its people, including encouraging their welfare, growth, and uplift; safeguarding the environment for future generations; and maintaining the prosperity of the state, its region, and continent (DIRCO, 2011). In pursuing its national interest, South Africa is motivated by a desire for a more just, humane, and equitable world order that promotes more security, peace, dialogue, and economic justice (DIRCO, 2011).

The principles that motivated the development of a free trade and democratic South Africa have stood the test of time and struggle, making the durable (DIRCO, 2011). Documents like the Freedom Charter, which emphasizes non-racism, non-discrimination, liberty and peace, democratic organs of self-government, and equality as essential to achieving the common goal of a "South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, black and white," firmly rooted equality, democracy, and human rights (DIRCO, 2011). These principles, which were ingrained in the founding clauses of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, served as an inspiration to countless people over the years of the struggle (DIRCO, 2011). One of the most progressive constitutions in the world, it affirms the aspirations of South Africa society to live in freedom, equality, and human dignity (DIRCO, 2011).

In South Africa's development and social goals strategy, foreign policy plays a significant role because it is an extension of national policy and interests (DIRCO, 2011). Encapsulating and conceptualizing a South African foreign policy that enables the state to be a decent global citizen is the goal of improving South Africa and helping to make Africa better and safer in a better world (DIRCO, 2011). The state works to create an environment where it may realize its national socioeconomic agenda as well as its political and security goals as it interacts with its region, continent, and the global community (DIRCO, 2011).

### *Jacob Zuma's foreign policy*

In 2010, President Jacob Zuma's administration was recognized as being far less ambitious as compared to past administrations (Vines, 2010). However, due to regional challenges like Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Swaziland that still require attention, South Africa is not in a position where it can stop engaging with other states (Vines, 2010). Lessons from prior engagement, including South African peacekeeping efforts in states like the DRC and Burundi, as well as South African mediation efforts in states like Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, and the Comoros, were meant to guide the Zuma administration's future strategy in terms of both substance and style (Solomon, 2010). Although South Africa's performance in accepting international obligations 10 years before the Zuma administration has been inconsistent, there was scope for past experience to influence the Zuma engagement (Calland, 2013).

The priorities of the Republic's international engagement are defined by a set of concentric circles that make up South Africa's foreign policy (Landsberg, 2014). The Zuma government has attempted to learn from that of its predecessor, the Mbeki government (1999-2008), by emphasizing crucial foreign interactions and concerns, with the theory being advanced that these various layers reinforce one another (Landsberg, 2014). According to stated policy, the Republic's international

strategies were centred on pursuing national interests, which came to be seen as the new glue that held it all together (Mabera, 2017). However, four years into Zuma's administration, the concept of the "national interest" was still underdeveloped and needed expansion and to be put into practice (Hendricks and Majozi, 2021). The South African government still could not spell out in detail what the national interest constituted or how it would be pursued (Landsberg, 2010).

South Africa squandered its reputation as a proponent of human rights that was built by the Mandela administration. There has been a noticeable deterioration in South Africa's international engagement on African affairs, starting with Pretoria's abandonment of crisis management in Burundi in 2015 and ending with Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's unexpected resignation as head of the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2017 (Strategic Comments, 2017). Due to its protection of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who was wanted for genocide and war crimes, as well as its threat to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2016, South Africa's moral reputation has suffered greatly (Strategic Comments, 2017). South African diplomats gave sluggish performances at the annual meetings of the G20 and the association of the five top developing national economies- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) - despite the fact that it continues to be the only African member of both groups (Asuelime, 2018).

These developments were the result of Zuma's two crippling periods in government, during which he neglected domestic and international growth while abusing his position to enrich his family and African National Congress (ANC) allies (Basson and Du Toit, 2017). There have been multiple attempts to remove Zuma through party institutions because of divisions within the ANC leadership between revolutionary stalwarts outraged by the former president's nepotism and favouritism and self-serving Zuma acolytes (Yende and Yende, 2022). The stage has been set for South Africa's exclusion from continental and international affairs through his unscrupulous personalization of foreign policy, systematic mismanagement of the government, and rising xenophobia within South African society (Hamill, 2019).

### Cyril Ramaphosa's foreign policy

Cyril Ramaphosa became the president of South Africa in February 2018, he was expected to break from Zuma on critical areas of domestic and foreign policy. Ramaphosa promised to pursue long-overdue economic reforms. He was a harsh critic of Zuma and his allies for allowing corruption to permeate the government despite the fact that both entered office as leaders of the ANC, the party that has dominated South Africa's politics since Nelson Mandela became the first post-apartheid president in 1994 (Strategic Comments, 2021). Even though Ramaphosa carried out his campaign against corruption, which frequently caused strife within his own large political party, the economy of South Africa is now in a worse state than it has ever been (Strategic Comments, 2021). The government has been compelled to prioritize domestic rather than international matters due to the severity of the economic crisis. Ramaphosa had the opportunity to modify (but not completely change) South Africa's foreign policy strategy because the state assumed leadership positions in two multilateral for the first time in 2019 (Hendricks and Majozi, 2021). Compared to Zuma, Ramaphosa's handling of these issues has shown to be more professional and practical, and less anti-Western in nature (Bond, 2023).

South Africa was elected to a two-year term as one of the ten rotating members of the United Nations Security Council (beginning in January 2019 and ending in December 2020), and Ramaphosa himself served as chairperson of the AU for one year (from February 2020 to February 2021) (Nick Pay and Postolski, 2022). These events marked the state's most significant foreign policy decisions since 2018. In these roles, the president worked with the DIRCO and his foreign ministry to develop and synchronize the various themes of Pretoria's foreign policy agenda, such as its long-standing



commitment to using multilateral approaches to solve regional and global issues (Strategic Comments, 2021). Just as the state assumed its seat on the Security Council, Ramaphosa had to deal with three concerning domestic occurrences that would all have an impact on foreign policy (Graham, 2022).

The first was the economic crisis, which resulted in South Africa's debt being downgraded to sub-investment or junk status by two of the three major credit-rating agencies: Standard & Poor's and Fitch (Mutize and Nkhalamba, 2021). South Africa had slow growth of 0.8% in 2018, extremely high unemployment of 27% and numerous structural inefficiencies (Strategic Comments, 2021). The second occurrence is when the ANC began to experience major factional strife, which threatened to bring the party to a standstill. According to Ramaphosa and his allies, the old guard connected to Zuma and the networks of state capture and favouritism that had developed around him were pledged to be punished if necessary (Fredericks and de Jager, 2022). The battle for ANC supremacy would later have an impact on policy discussions across the board. Ramaphosa's position today is not unassailable because he was only narrowly elected party leader in December 2017 (Levy *et al*, 2021). Even some of the highest posts in the party leadership were held by some of his political rivals, including the former ANC Secretary General Ace Magashule, a close ally of Zuma who was detained and accused of corruption in November 2020 (von Holdt, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has spread more broadly in South Africa than any other state in the African continent, at least according to official figures, was the third development (Strategic Comments, 2021). Early in 2020, the pandemic quickly rose to the top of the political agenda, pushing all states into crisis management mode, escalating the already dire economic situation, and sabotaging much of Ramaphosa's peace and security agenda for his term as the AU chairperson (Strategic Comments, 2021).

### Herman Mashaba's mayoralty

Herman Mashaba, a prominent businessman from South Africa, was elected mayor of Johannesburg in August 2016 and led a slender DA-led coalition (Beaumont, 2020). At the time of the 2016 local government elections, no opposition party was in power in any of South Africa's metropolitan municipalities outside of the Western Cape, where the Democratic Alliance (DA) controlled both the city and the province of Cape Town (Beaumont, 2020). However, the ruling ANC was beset by scandals as allegations of corruption and state capture involving Zuma, senior ANC officials, and the infamous Gupta family emerged in the first half of 2016 (Beaumont, 2020). The DA acknowledged the significance of picking the best candidate to run for mayor in Johannesburg (Beaumont, 2020). To deliver that vital municipality, it was going to take someone extraordinary (Beaumont, 2020). Herman Mashaba was the name that stuck out among the many that had been mentioned. Although he was not a politician, Mashaba had established a name for himself through his business successes (Beaumont, 2020).

Herman Mashaba claimed to embark on a mission to purge corruption from Africa's wealthiest metropolis, with undocumented immigrants and allegedly fraudulent agreements by ruling party leaders of South Africa as his main targets (Tech Central, 23/03/17). Mashaba stated in an interview that the government ought to seal South Africa's border due to the "massive" influx of unauthorized immigrants (Tech Central, 23/03/17). Additionally, he stated that he was ready to pursue private prosecutions if the national police authorities continue to fail to indict corrupt officials, as he claimed they have (Tech Central, 23/03/17). Mashaba stated that his plan for the downtown area of Johannesburg is to clear out residents of "hijacked" structures, hire private contractors to refurbish them, and then rent the spaces to residents making at least R4000 per month (Times Live, 04/10/17).

According to municipal figures from 2013, about 400 000 of Johannesburg's 5 million residents reside in the city's inner areas (Times Live, 04/10/17). The vicinity of infrequent employment possibilities, educational institutions, medical centres, and cheaper transportation entice people to the area (Times Live, 04/10/17). The local government's efforts to revive the city centre and entice private companies to return to help reduce a housing backlog of roughly 300 000 units are being undermined by the flood of unauthorized immigrants, according to Mashaba (Times Live, 04/10/17). Organizations that Mashaba characterizes as "so-called human rights groups" have expressed concern about the "shock and awe" campaign he is preparing to evict thousands of unauthorized occupants from buildings in Johannesburg's CBD (Times Live, 04/10/17).

### Xenophobic attacks in South Africa between 2018 and 2022

When Zuma resigned in February 2018, Ramaphosa was elected to a five-year term as the president of South Africa. There was the lowest voter turnout in election history because of rising inequality, high unemployment, and corruption (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In March 2019, xenophobic violence against African foreigners and their businesses was fuelled, among other things, by economic insecurity (Cinini and Mkhize, 2021). As a result, hundreds of foreigners in Durban sought refuge at police stations and other locations as their homes, trucks, and other belongings were looted or destroyed (Ngcamu and Mantzaris, 2021). According to research by the Road Freight Association, which represents suppliers of road freight services, more than 200 people, largely foreign truck drivers have died in South Africa since March 2018 (Mlepo, 2022). The South African government unveiled a National Action Plan to tackle racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, the same day the attacks started (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

In South Africa, xenophobic abuse and violence against foreigners of African and Asian descent is common and occasionally fatal. The government has not done much to make sure that attacks by members of the public, police, and government employees are investigated or that those involved are held accountable, despite the approval of a government action plan to combat xenophobia in March 2019 (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Foreigners have been the objects of widespread protests and shutdown marked by mob violence, looting, and torching of their businesses (Niyitunga, 2023). They are used as scapegoat and blamed for economic instability, criminality and government failures to provide services (Urban and Townsend, 2022). Law enforcement personnel have treated foreign nationals unfairly and violently (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Businesses owned by foreign nationals have been the focus of raids to combat counterfeit goods. Police have carried out raids during which they have fired rubber bullets into crowds of people before searching and looting foreigners' stores (Vigneswaran, 2020). In neighbourhoods with high concentration of foreigners, the police have conducted invasive documentation raids in collaboration with the Department of Home Affairs (Vigneswaran, 2020).

The outbreak of xenophobic attacks has led to a strain in South Africa's diplomatic relations with other African states, notably Nigeria (Ibrahim, Dele and Ukeaja, 2019). Following the attacks, approximately 600 Nigerians living in South Africa were sent back home (Ibrahim *et al*, 2019). The South African government temporarily closed its embassy in Abuja, Nigeria in response to reprisal attacks in that state (Ogunnoiki, 2019). On the other hand, due to the xenophobic atrocities committed against their people in South Africa, Malawi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo did not attend the World Economic Forum on Africa, which was held in Cape Town in September 2019 (Oxford Analytica, 2019).



## Operation Dudula

Operation Dudula is the most recent group to target African immigrants by exploiting the fact that South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. A division of the Put South Africans First Movement, which popularized and revived anti-immigrant activities on social media before finding expression outside, gave rise to Operation Dudula (Al Jazeera, 08/04/22). Nhlanhla "Lux" Dlamini who was born Nhlanhla Paballo Mohlauli, is the leader of the new movement. It was established in Soweto a few months after the July 2021 riots, which broke out when former president Zuma was given a jail sentence for contempt of court. It has been dubbed by some as "xenophobic and dangerous" (Al Jazeera, 08/04/22).

Operation Dudula went after alleged drug dealers and companies that reportedly hired illegal foreign workers so they could pay them less than what was required by law (Al Jazeera, 08/04/22). Intense conflicts between locals and other African nationals are frequent in Soweto, a historic Black township that was at the heart of the anti-apartheid resistance and was the home of legendary figures Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu (Al Jazeera, 08/04/22).

An Equal Education researcher and an attorney with the Equal Education Law Centre have emphasized the importance of recognizing the false narrative used to make foreigners the scapegoat for government failures and incite xenophobic sentiments in the wake of a reported campaign by the anti-foreigner group to expel migrant learners from Diepsloot schools (Daily Maverick, 10/02/23).

While grassroots democracy has the potential to liberate, it may also be used as a weapon against the weak (Open Democracy, 17/02/23). Elvis Nyathi, who was stoned and burned to death in 2022 after a mob of approximately 30 people demanded identification documents (IDs) and money he did not have, appears to have experienced this (Open Democracy, 17/02/23). Nyathi was a Zimbabwean gardener who resided in Diepsloot. Evidence revealed that Nyathi was not the only target of the group who is accused of killing him (Open Democracy, 17/02/23). They had been visiting shacks and requesting money and documents. Operation Dudula, a vigilante anti-immigrant movement, established this tactic. With its racist rhetoric against illegal foreigners, whom Dudula blamed for increased crime and unemployment, Dudula had become well-known outside of Diepsloot (Open Democracy, 17/02/23). The group asserted that because the government was doing nothing to stop the influx of illegal foreigners, thus the people had to take action.

## Zimbabwean Exemption Permits in South Africa

Labour migration from nations like Zimbabwe and others, to South Africa has been a typical aspect of migration in the Southern African region since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Moyo, 2018). But in the years following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, two stages of migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa can be distinguished (Moyo, 2018). Many white skilled and semi-skilled employees fled to South Africa in the early 1980s because they were unsure of their position in the newly established Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2018). Significant migrant flows have recently arisen as a result of the country's deteriorating economic and political condition (Moyo, 2018). Both people with documentation and people without it have migrated from Zimbabwe to South Africa (Moyo, 2018).

Through a special amnesty program known as the Dispensation Zimbabwe Program (DZP), the South African government legalized undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in 2010 (Nyakabawu, 2021). The licenses issued under the program's purview were valid from 2010 to December 2014. The Zimbabwe Special Permit (ZSP), which was established from 2015 to December 2017, replaced the DZP (Nyakabawu, 2021). The Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP), which was implemented from 2018 to December 2021, replaced the ZSP (Nyakabawu, 2021).

The South African government reached an agreement to terminate the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP) with the aim to reserve jobs for domestic citizens (News24, 27/01/23). According to a report released by the University of Johannesburg's Centre for Sociological Research and Practice (CSRP), the proposed termination of the ZEPs is forcing a significant number of people to become undocumented and fostering pockets of corruption (Daily Maverick, 08/08/23). The CSRP report stated that some ZEP holders were at a relatively high risk of going undocumented since other types of visas are difficult to get, and most ZEP holders will not qualify for visas which allow them to work in South Africa because work visas are based on critical skills (Daily Maverick, 08/08/23). Due to a unique permission, ZEP holders may launch an appeal and apply for the visa while still in South Africa (Daily Maverick, 21/06/23). According to the Immigration Act, an employer cannot legally hire someone without a valid work visa if a decision has not been reached by the end of the year (Daily Maverick, 21/06/23). The ZEP holders are also unable to continue working legally in South Africa without a visa (Daily Maverick, 21/06/23).

It has been determined that the Minister of Home Affairs' decision to end the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit program is illegal, unconstitutional, and illegitimate (GroundUp, 28/06/23). The Pretoria High Court's full bench of three judges has ordered the minister to evaluate the situation following a fair process that complies with the applicable laws (GroundUp, 28/06/23). ZEP holders are shielded from arrest and deportation while that process is ongoing, and the permits will stay valid for an additional two months, that is, until the end of June 2024 (GroundUp, 28/06/23).

## Conclusion

Based on an examination of events that occurred between 2018 and 2022, this research paper examined two key issues: whether domestic citizens are an advantage or a liability for South Africa, and whether the state can implement a pan-Africanist foreign policy. This paper concludes that local citizens are a burden to the state and that South Africa has not yet developed a pan-Africanist foreign policy after a thorough analysis. Because the state's decision-makers did not implement the aims and goals they had established for the state, South Africa had a flawed foreign policy and, consequently, a poor diplomacy. As a means of achieving state objectives, diplomacy is described as the art of negotiating and interaction with individuals and state. This means that South Africa does not have good interactions with other states.

A number of critical factors surface when examining South Africa's foreign policy. For instance, the flaws of the DIRCO, followed by Zuma administration from 2009 to 2018, then Ramaphosa's administration and the events that shaped the current foreign policy in South Africa. This research illustrated that although South Africa became a member of BRICS under the Zuma administration, majority of the groundwork was done by Mbeki and the Zuma administration failed to leave a memorable mark on foreign policy. South Africa has failed to maintain influence and relevance on the international scene due to shifting global power dynamics and the appearance of new players.

This paper also examined that there are still ongoing ambiguities in South Africa's foreign policy under the leadership of President Ramaphosa. Even though Ramaphosa carried out his campaign against corruption which caused conflict within the ANC, the economy of South Africa is now in a worse state than it has ever been before. The government has been compelled to prioritize domestic rather than international matters due to the severity of the economic crisis. South Africa still faces inconsistencies despite the fact that Ramaphosa handles issues professionally and practically and in a less anti-Western nature. This shows that South African leadership contributes to the inconsistent and flawed foreign policy.

The goals of South Africa's foreign policy include, but are not limited to, establishing unity, fostering inclusive economic growth, and promoting shared prosperity for Africa and its people. This demonstrates that South Africa places a greater emphasis on the international scene than the domestic one. Protecting South Africa's territorial integrity and sovereignty is one of the state's foreign policy goals. This goal has not been achieved because South Africa continues to give priority to foreign nationals in order to foster positive relations with other states. Unauthorized immigration from outside is still a problem in South Africa. Foreigners continue to enter South Africa illegally despite licences like the ZEP, and the government continues to shield them. The ZEP program's termination has been ruled to be unlawful, illegal, and illegitimate, but immigrants continue to flout the law. This research extends the idea that domestic citizens and events can influence foreign policy, in line with a number of experts who contend that South Africa's foreign policy is inconsistent and flawed.

This paper showed that South Africa's foreign policy seeks to advance its national interest, safeguard its independence, and uphold the rule of law. Additionally, it sought to improve its citizens' wellbeing, security, and prosperity as well as make Africa and the globe a better place. The reason South Africa is still far from achieving this is that its actions do not align with its foreign policy goals, and it has used the constitution to justify its actions rather than to govern the state. Due to internal problems, it will be challenging for South Africa to maintain positive relations with other African states. When South Africa cannot resolve the issues within its own borders, it cannot unite African states. As long as South Africa's leaders and citizens cannot be united, a pan-Africanist foreign policy cannot be implemented. Prioritizing the needs of its people should come before promoting unity and prosperity in Africa and around the world. When making decisions that affect the state, South African policymakers should look to the state's foreign policy goals and mission as a reference guide to build a more secure and stable state. They should never lose sight of the reasons they were elected and the promises they make to the public. The constitution should always be used to govern the state, not just when it is advantageous to them.

According to neoclassical realism theory, both domestic and international factors affect the state's foreign policy. This paper analysed the South African context. Neoclassical realism predicts that the domestic problems that faced the Zuma administration, such as corruption scandals and economic instability, resulted in a more home-grown approach to foreign policy. Internal pressure and criticism forced Zuma's administration to focus on domestic issues, potentially taking resources and attention away from international affairs. South Africa's foreign policy has been revised as a result of the Ramaphosa transition. According to neoclassical realism, a leader's dedication to solving domestic issues can have a positive effect on the state's international engagement. Ramaphosa's initiatives to fight corruption and spur economic expansion may lead to a more active foreign policy. Neoclassical realism, which incorporates Herman Mashaba's mayoralty, suggests that his leadership and policies have influenced Johannesburg's foreign policy approach, emphasizing economic and urban diplomacy and addressing local issues through international engagement.

According to neoclassical realism, domestic problems like xenophobia have an impact on foreign policy. As a result of xenophobic incidents, South Africa's relations with its neighbours and international standing suffers, thus forcing the government to re-evaluate its diplomatic strategy. An appropriate balance between domestic and international pressures is reflected in the government's response to movements like Operation Dudula. Neoclassical realism suggests that the government may seek to preserve internal stability while managing its reputation and relationships with external partners. Immigration permits for Zimbabweans are a complicated matter. Neoclassical realism contends that South Africa's strategy might be affected by the need to strike a balance between domestic issues like economic and security concerns and its international standing and relations

with Zimbabwe. According to neoclassical realism, DIRCO's function is crucial in converting domestic demands and difficulties into foreign policy decisions. Based on the domestic political climate and global interests of the nation, the department plays a critical role in determining South Africa's international response.

In conclusion, neoclassical realism holds that domestic political dynamics, leadership changes, and public pressure have an impact on South Africa's foreign policy and response to global developments. The government's efforts to balance internal and external imperatives will have an impact on how it stands internationally. The discussed case studies and results highlight the adaptability and relevance of neoclassical realism to actual circumstances. They emphasize that a state's foreign policy is heavily influenced by domestic political dynamics, changes in leadership, economic factors, and public opinion in addition to external pressures. Neoclassical realism is still helpful in understanding the complex interactions between domestic and foreign factors that influence foreign policy.

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