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The National Security Agenda of the African Participants and Partners of the BRICS

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Abstract. Following the 16th BRICS Summit in 2024, three African states — Algeria, Nigeria and Uganda — were granted the designation of partner states. The geographical scope and thematic agenda of BRICS activities are expanding, with development and security issues (including on the African continent) occupying a central place. However, the concept of security itself has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades, evolving from the traditional state security paradigm, which focused on countering external military threats, to a more comprehensive approach that encompasses various dimensions, including political, socio-economic, technological and environmental. Referring to the concept of securitization proposed by the Copenhagen School of security studies, the authors proceed from the need to present the African BRICS+ countries (South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia as member-states, Uganda and Nigeria as new partners) as actors formulating the national security agenda. The present study focuses on the threats identified in the official discourse of these countries, which ones are prioritized and how this is argued in relation to the specifics of the national context. The research problem being solved aligns with the objectives of Russian foreign policy to strengthen interaction with the countries of the African continent in the field of security (including through BRICS). Furthermore, the study could contribute to a deeper theoretical understanding of non-Western discourse on security issues. The article provides a comparative analysis of the relevant doctrinal documents adopted in South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda and Nigeria. The analysis of the national security agenda of Egypt was conducted mainly through the examination of official speeches delivered at the UN General Assembly. The problem of contradictions between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding the use of the Nile River was examined through the prism of an approach based on the interdependence of water, energy and food resources. Strategic documents in the field of cybersecurity of Egypt, South Africa, Uganda and Nigeria were not ignored. Despite obvious differences in national approaches to ensuring security, the authors concluded that country strategies respond to global trends of securitizing development issues and complicating the scope of the security concept.

Key words: threats, securitization, Africa, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda

ТЕМАТИЧЕСКОЕ ДОСЬЕ: Отмечая 70-летие Бандунгской конференции…

Повестка национальной безопасности африканских участников и партнеров БРИКС

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Аннотация. По итогам XVI саммита БРИКС 2024 г. три государства Африки (Алжир, Нигерия и Уганда) получили право быть представленными в формате в качестве государств-партнеров. Расширяется не только география, но и тематическая повестка деятельности БРИКС, где наряду с вопросами развития центральное место занимают проблемы обеспечения безопасности (в том числе на Африканском континенте). Однако и сама концепция безопасности за несколько последних десятилетий кардинально изменилась: от традиционного представления о безопасности как состоянии защищенности государства от внешних угроз военного характера к комплексному подходу, позволяющему рассматривать различные измерения (политическое, социально-экономическое, технологическое, экологическое) в их взаимосвязи. Принимая во внимание концепцию секьюритизации, предложенную Копенгагенской школой исследований безопасности, авторы представили африканские страны БРИКС+ (участников — Южно-Африканская Республика (ЮАР), Египет, Эфиопия и новых партнеров — Уганду и Нигерию) в качестве акторов, формулирующих повестку национальной безопасности. Фокус исследования был направлен на то, какие угрозы обозначаются в официальном дискурсе этих стран, каким отводится приоритетное значение, каким образом это аргументируется и соотносится с особенностями национального контекста. Решаемая исследовательская проблема соотносится с задачами российской внешней политики по углублению взаимодействия со странами Африки в сфере безопасности (в том числе в рамках БРИКС). Кроме того, исследование может представлять значимость для дальнейшего теоретического осмысления незападного дискурса по вопросам безопасности. Представлен сравнительный анализ соответствующих доктринальных документов, принятых в ЮАР, Эфиопии, Уганде и Нигерии. Анализ повестки национальной безопасности Египта был проведен главным образом на основе выступлений официальных лиц стран на сессиях Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН. Отдельно была рассмотрена проблема противоречий между Египтом и Эфиопией относительно использования р. Нил через призму подхода, основанного на взаимозависимости водных, энергетических и продовольственных ресурсов. Изучены также стратегические документы в сфере кибербезопасности Египта, ЮАР, Нигерии и Уганды. Авторы пришли к выводу, что при очевидных расхождениях в национальных подходах к обеспечению безопасности (в том числе на этапе идентификации и ранжирования угроз) страновые стратегии отвечают глобальным тенденциям секьюритизации проблематики развития и усложнения предметного поля концепта безопасности.

Ключевые слова: угрозы, секьюритизация, Африка, ЮАР, Египет, Эфиопия, Нигерия, Уганда

Introduction

In the aftermath of the 16th BRICS summit, which was held in Kazan in October 2024, the third wave of expansion of the dialogue format was outlined. Algeria, Nigeria and Uganda were granted the opportunity to be represented in BRICS as partner states. Thus, the African dimension of BRICS activities is becoming increasingly broad and complex, but not only in terms of geographical scope. The declaration, entitled "Strengthening

Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security," adopted at the summit in Kazan, confirmed the BRICS countries' aspirations to interact on the basis of a highly broad mandate that extends beyond trade and financial issues. As Russian analysts accurately observe,[1] the text of the document is based on a finely calibrated balance between the security agenda and development issues.

Security issues have been included in all BRICS summit declarations without exception since 2009, in both the traditional (military) sense and in conjunction with development and international cooperation issues (Degterev, 2024a, pp. 40–41). African countries view BRICS as an international platform for promoting their national security interests. It is no coincidence that the texts of the Johannesburg[2] and the Kazan Declarations[3]

contain the well-known formula *"African solutions to African problems"* (for more details, see: (Denisova & Kostelyanets, 2023)).

Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

In recent decades, the concept of security has undergone a significant evolution, shifting a traditional approach equating security with repelling military threats and the use of force, to a broader interpretation (Baldwin, 1997; Buzan, 1997). Quite often, security challenges are caused by the vulnerability of the state system itself; that is to say, they are of internal origin. Nevertheless, external factors of a legal and extra-legal nature pose no less of a challenge to the national security system, and in some cases, they are given priority over the domestic agenda. Experts often refer to the concept of a *"regional security complex"* (see, e.g.: (Idahosa et al., 2023; Walsh, 2020) in relation to countries whose security cannot be considered in isolation from each other (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The relevance of this concept in the African context is due, among other things, to the high degree of porosity of national borders, which creates favorable conditions for the *"spillover effect."*

During the period of the Cold War, studies of security issues focused on the military attributes of the latter. It was a common practice to equate the concepts of *Security Studies*, *Military Studies* and *War Studies*, while issues that did not conform to the logic of military force were dismissed as "low politics" (Baldwin, 1997, p. 9). Thus, the concept of security largely excluded from the realm of theoretical discourse for a long time, serving more as a "label to be applied" rather than a meaningful notion (Baldwin, 1997, p. 9).

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[1] Kortunov A. V. "Manifesto of the New World Order": Analyzing the BRICS Kazan Declaration // Russian International Affairs Council. October 25, 2024. URL: https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/comments/manifest-novogo-mirovogo-poryadka-razbiraem-kazanskuyu-deklaratsiyu-briks/ (accessed: 01.11.2024).

[2] XV BRICS Summit. Johannesburg II Declaration "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism." Sandton, Gauteng, South Africa. Wednesday, August 23, 2023 // National Committee on BRICS Research, Russia. (In Russian). URL: https://nkibrics.ru/system/asset_docs/data/6749/d08d/6272/6906/a461/0000/original/%D0%A5V_%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%82_%D0%91%D0%A0%D0%98%D0%9A%D0%A1_-_%D0%98%CC%86%D0%BE%D1%85%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%B1%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B3%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F_(%D0%B3._%D0%98%CC%86%D0%BE%D1%85%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%B1%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B3__%D0%AE%D0%90%D0%A0__24_%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B3%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0_2023_%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0).pdf?1732890765 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[3] XVI BRICS Summit. Kazan Declaration "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security." Kazan, Russian Federation. October 23, 2024 // National Committee on BRICS Research, Russia. URL: https://nkibrics.ru/system/asset_docs/data/6749/d14d/6272/6906/a464/0000/original/

%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf?1732890957 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

At the turn of the century, a galaxy of researchers from Copenhagen, including prominent figures such as B. Buzan and O. Wæver (2003), provided a significant impetus to the process of theoretical understanding of security by setting themselves the ambitious task of "reinventing the concept of security" (for more details, see: (Gaidaev, 2021)). It should be noted that, in the debates between the supporters of the traditional and broad approaches to defining security, representatives of the Copenhagen School did not openly take sides: the scientists saw the ultimate goal not in defining the boundaries of the security subject field, but in exploring the logic by which they are established (Buzan, 1997, pp. 13–14).

As B. Buzan observed, the meaning of the concept of "security" is as variable as the national context that defines it. National security[4] cannot be tied to a standard set of parameters, much less reduced to one of them (military potential) (Buzan, 1983, p. 43). In this regard, the *securitization theory* introduced into scientific circulation by the Copenhagen School is valuable. In this process, the *securitizing actor* formulates a security agenda, highlighting pressing threats to the *referent object*. Thus, challenges of both military and non-military nature enter the security agenda (i.e. are securitized) when the political and intellectual elite draw the attention of the state and society to them, presenting them as an existential threat (Buzan, 1997, pp. 13–14). For example, the environmental and economic agendas in international relations were securitized in the 1970s and 1980s, while the problem of international crime was securitized in the 1990s, etc. (Buzan, 1997, pp. 8–9).

The securitization of the development agenda (as well as the developmentalization of security) found conceptual embodiment in the construct of the *"security — development" nexus*, which is expressed by the formula "*There is no security without development, just as there is no development without security.*" Although the works of the Copenhagen School representatives dating back to the 1990s did not mention the area of development assistance among the non-traditional dimensions of security, development gaps at the turn of the century have increasingly attracted attention among security threats in international discourse (Bartenev, 2011). Integrating the "nexus" concept, which was first proposed by the Swedish scholar B. Hettne in the 1980s, into international political discourse was largely facilitated by the emergence in the 1990s of the concept of "*human security,*"[5] and the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States served as a powerful catalyst for development issues to move into the realm of "high politics" (Bartenev, 2015).

The inclusion of security issues in the BRICS mandate can be traced back to 2012, when the definition of "security" became an integral part of the title of the summit in New Delhi. Despite the shaky nature of the "nexus" concept, the BRICS countries managed to link security and development issues not only in theory, but also in practice (Bokeriya, 2020). The process of securitization of various aspects of sustainable development is also reflected in the declarations of the BRICS summits, which consistently highlight the issue of food security and regularly emphasize the energy and information dimensions of security are also highlighted quite regularly (Degterev, 2024a, pp. 40–41). Since 2015, healthcare issues have been included in the BRICS security agenda, developing rapidly in the 2019–2022 declarations against the backdrop of the pandemic (Degterev, 2024a, pp. 40–41).

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[4] B. Buzan identified three levels for analyzing security: individual security, national and international security, giving priority attention to the national level. See: (Gaidaev, 2021, p. 23).

[5] Unlike the traditional approach to security, proponents of this concept put the protection of the individual and society at the forefront. Two fundamental principles were proclaimed: "*freedom from fear*" and "*freedom from want.*"

The discourse of Scandinavian security theorists is not alien to the African intellectual environment, where security is presented as a subjective, multidimensional and difficult to strictly define social construct (see, e.g.: (Asaka & Oluoko-Odingo, 2023, pp. 47–48)). This thesis is particularly applicable to the complex conflict-prone environment in sub-Saharan Africa, where the security agenda directly depends on who formulates it and on what principle (Asaka & Oluoko-Odingo, 2023, pp. 47–48).

This study focuses on South Africa (a BRICS member since 2011), Egypt, Ethiopia (joined as participants following the 15th Johannesburg summit on January 1, 2024), Uganda and Nigeria (BRICS partners since January 2025)[6] from the perspective of primarily their actor rather than object roles in formulating the national security agenda. It appears that this formulation of the research problem meets not only the objectives of Russian foreign policy within the BRICS framework, but also modern scientific trends in understanding non-Western approaches to ensuring security (Khudaykulova, 2020; Bokeriya & Degterev, 2024). The authors focus on the threats that feature on the national security agendas of the aforementioned countries, how these threats are ranked, and the justification for such choices by securitizing actors.

The research methodology is based on a comparative analysis of doctrinal documents in the sphere of national security of the respective countries (which also determine policy in cyberspace) and an analysis of the official discourse presented in various sources. Thus, due to the absence of documents in the information field in the sphere of national security of Egypt, a reference was made to the transcripts of the speech and video materials of the UN General Assembly (2022–2024).[7]

The Evolution of South Africa's Security Strategy after Apartheid

The main trend in defining the national security strategy of democratic South Africa was a significant rethinking of the concept of security itself, namely, a departure from the authoritarian policy of internal and external threats of the apartheid era to a new democratic understanding of security (Africa, 2015). The first government of national unity of 1994–1997 under the leadership of N. Mandela published a series of strategic documents on state security (Table 1), which formulated its new foundations: a reduction in the role of the national armed forces, as well as the inclusion of the fight against illegal immigration and transnational crime in the sphere of external security.

In addition, the focus of external security shifted towards regional threats, thereby establishing a new role for democratic South Africa within the international community. Internal threats, such as crime and social unrest, were addressed by a reformed police unit, whose tasks included restoring the trust of the country's residents in the new forces of law and order, which had been lost during the apartheid era. Conceptually, the main feature of the new security approach was the inclusion of the human dimension (*human security*). Thus, in the spirit of the end of the Cold War democratic South Africa introduced a new holistic (i.e. comprehensive, integral) interpretation of security as the relationship between protection from external threats (*security*) and ensuring stability (*safety*). The new strategic documents of South Africa spell out the "security — development" nexus.[8] Thus, poverty and inequality were identified as the main threats to the country's internal security, with the main objectives of the new security policy being the pursuit of democracy, sustainable economic development, and social justice.

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[6] At the time of writing this article, Algeria had not confirmed its BRICS partner status.

[7] General Debate. General Assembly — All Sessions // United Nations. URL: https://gadebate.un.org/en/sessions-archive (accessed: 15.11.2024).

[8] This is clearly visible in the country's strategic document, the "National Development Plan until 2030" (NDP 2030). The plan develops the idea of a developmentalist state, which, through the active participation of citizens, should eradicate poverty and inequality.

ТЕМАТИЧЕСКОЕ ДОСЬЕ: Отмечая 70-летие Бандунгской конференции…

Table 1. **National Security Threats in South African Doctrinal Documents**

Document	Year	Specification	Threats
White Paper on Intelligence	1994	– A new document from the democratic government that laid the framework for South Africa's current intelligence agencies – A new, broad definition of security and national interests, the introduction of a system of checks and balances and respect for human rights is presented. Security is viewed as a holistic phenomenon and includes political, social, economic and environmental issues. The goals of security policy go beyond achieving the absence of war and include the pursuit of democracy, sustainable economic development and social justice – Regional security policy is aimed at promoting the principles of collective security, non-aggression and the peaceful resolution of disputes	South Africa's vulnerability to international drug cartels that use the country as a transit route Increased activity of foreign/hostile intelligence services and agents in the economic, technological and scientific fields
National Defence White Paper	1996	– The first security document written by the new "black majority" government – Security is considered comprehensively – Limiting the external role of the country's armed forces, but assigning a special role to ensure regional stability through peacekeeping operations with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Arms control is a recognition of the end of the Cold War – The priority is to protect the internal integrity and democracy in South Africa. Non-military dimensions of security are gaining importance in post-apartheid South Africa	Internal: poverty and inequality inherited from apartheid External: regional instability, marginalization of Africa, weak role in international institutions
National Cybersecurity Policy Framework	2012	Aimed at strengthening cyber defense and protecting critical information infrastructure from cybercrime and terrorism. Particular attention is paid to human security	Transnational: organized crime, climate change (food security), regional instability
Safety and Security White Paper: Draft	2015	Integrated approach (*safety + security*), alignment of the goals with the National Development Plan – 2030	Internal: criminality, poverty and inequality External: traditional and non-traditional

Source: compiled by E.A. Abramova and D.A. Zelenova on the basis of: Intelligence White Paper // South African Government. January 1995. URL: https://www.gov.za/documents/white-papers/intelligence-white-paper-01-jan-1995#:%7E:text=The%20goal%20of%20this%20White,relevant%2C%20credible%20and%20reliable%20intelligence (accessed: 03.04.2025); National Defence White Paper // South African Government. May 1996. URL: https://www.gov.za/documents/white-papers/national-defence-white-paper-01-may-1996 (accessed: 03.04.2025); National Cybersecurity Policy Framework // South African Government. December 4, 2015. URL: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201512/39475gon609.pdf (accessed: 03.04.2025); Safety and Security White Paper: Draft // South African Government. March 3, 2015. URL: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201503/38526gen178.pdf (accessed: 03.04.2025).

The results of the implementation of new concepts by the South African leadership are quite contradictory. On the one hand, in the international arena, the country has demonstrated its commitment to peace and security in the region over 30 years of democracy, participating in peacekeeping missions in countries that are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), including Mozambique. The South African contingent, the largest among the forces involved in the unification process (with approximately 1,800 personnel),[9] participated in the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), deployed in 2023 to support the Congolese government in restoring peace in the eastern regions of the country. An important contribution of South Africa to defining regional security is the development of the SADC regional security concept, including the preparation of framework agreements for a regional organization to combat transnational crime and the consequences of disasters, as well as the provision of humanitarian assistance.

South Africa's approach to internal security is characterized by ambiguity. The responsibility for the safety of citizens in South Africa is partly delegated to the citizens themselves. The National Development Plan until 2030 describes the role of the "active citizen," who is expected to monitor crime in their community.[10] Despite the fact that the progressive Constitution of South Africa of 1996 guarantees all residents access to adequate housing and free education, as well as free health care and other social

benefits,[11] the level of inequality in the distribution of these benefits in the country remains extremely high.[12] The most unfortunate outcome of implementing new approaches to internal security in South Africa is the failure of the police to combat organized crime and the associated dire situation with the personal safety of citizens. Today, democratic South Africa is known as the most unsafe country in the world according to a number of indicators.[13]

The National Security Agenda in the Doctrines of Ethiopia, Uganda and Nigeria

Ethiopia: Domestic First, External Second

Under the leadership of Prime Minister M. Zenawi (1995–2012), Ethiopia embarked on a course of accelerated development at the turn of the century. It was based on the East Asian model, which implied an active fight against poverty, a strong role of the state, which is historically characteristic of the country, and industrialization based on the development of agriculture (Degterev, 2024b). As the Prime

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[9] SADC Agreed to Withdraw Troops from the Rebel-Held City of Gomaa in the DRC // TASS. March 29, 2025. (In Russian). URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/23546705 (accessed: 25.06.2025).

[10] National Development Plan. Vision for 2030 // Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Republic of South Africa. November 11, 2011. URL: https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/ndp_vision2030.pdf (accessed: 17.06.2025).

[11] Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 // South African Government. URL: https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution/constitution-republic-south-africa-1996-04-feb-1997 (accessed: 17.06.2025).

[12] The Gini coefficient for South Africa is 0.63. See: Gini Coefficient for South Africa (2014) // World Bank Group. URL: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=ZA (accessed: 19.01.2025). The official unemployment rate in 2024 is 34%. See: Unemployment Rate in Southern Africa from 2014 to 2025 // Statista. URL: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1323958/unemployment-rate-in-southern-africa/ (accessed: 19.01.2025).

[13] For example, according to the 2024 Global Security and Safety Index, South Africa ranked 144th (out of 163) in the ranking of the most dangerous countries in the world. According to government statistics, South Africa had the highest rate of kidnappings in Africa in 2024. See: Number of Kidnappings in South Africa from 2022/23 to 2023/24 // Statista. URL: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1400928/number-of-kidnappings-in-south-africa-by-province/ (accessed: 19.01.2025). The level of street protests in the country can also be assessed as one of the highest in Africa.

Minister explained, reducing state participation in the economy is not in itself capable of solving the problem of underdevelopment in African countries. Thus, Ethiopia's development model gravitated more towards non-Western models, which are more characteristic of the BRICS countries (Degterev, 2024b), and opposed to the then dominant neoliberal model (Gebresenbet, 2014, pp. S66–S67).

The securitization of the development agenda shaped the Ethiopian government's approach to developing its foreign policy and national security doctrinal document (2002),[14] as expressed in the text of the document by the capacious formula: *"Domestic first, external second."* It is noteworthy that the strategy determining international policy guidelines expresses a commitment to prioritizing domestic efforts. The main security threat is internal in nature and is rooted in Ethiopia's three main "ailments" — poverty (the word is mentioned more than 20 times in the text!) (Degterev, 2024b, pp. 139–140), backwardness, and ineffective governance (Table 2). As the country's historical experience demonstrates the vulnerabilities of Ethiopia's state system can be exploited by external forces to cause harm and provoke internal chaos, so rapid development is a guarantee of the nation's survival.

It is important to emphasize that the document as amended in 2002 is currently in force, unchanged, which gives rise to criticism regarding its relevance. The text does not reflect key metamorphoses in bilateral relations with countries in the region (for example, the signing of a joint declaration on peace and friendship with Eritrea in 2018, which ended a 20-year war). Despite the continuity of power in the

country,[15] the internal system parameters have also changed since the adoption of the document. However, transcripts of speeches by Ethiopian officials at the UN General Assembly sessions confirm that the problems of poverty and inequality have not been desecuritized in Ethiopian discourse in recent years.[16] Thus, in 2024, they were identified by Ethiopian Foreign Minister (President of Ethiopia since October 2024) T.A. Selassie from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly as existential threats along with the arms race and climate change.[17]

Uganda: Measures to Contain External Threats

The Republic of Uganda has maintained its status as a "hotbed of regional stability" for several decades, largely due to the political system developed under the presidency of its leader, Y. Museveni, since 1986. The country's president managed to turn the emergence of the armed group "Lord's Resistance Army" in Uganda in the late 1980s "to his advantage, earning him the image of a 'consistent fighter against terrorism'," which allowed him to attract military-political support and economic preferences, from Western partners.[18] However, Uganda has not only adopted the problem of dependence on external aid (which appears on the list of threats

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[14] The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy. November 2002. Addis Ababa : Ministry of Information, 2002 // University of Surrey. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2002_Ethiopia.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[15] The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), led by M. Zenawi, was transformed into the Prosperity Party under the leadership of A. Ahmed, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia since 2018.

[16] There is a completely rational explanation for this: although the poverty rate in Ethiopia has fallen by more than half since the early 2000s (from 58% in 1999 to 27% in 2015), it is still one of the least developed countries in the world. See: World Bank Open Data. URL: https://data.worldbank.org (accessed: 14.11.2024).

[17] 79th General Debate Session — Ethiopia // United Nations. September 27, 2024. URL: https://gadebate.un.org/en/79/ethiopia (accessed: 12.01.2025).

[18] Denisova T. S. Presidential Elections 2021 in Uganda // Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. March 29, 2021. (In Russian). URL: https://www.inafran.ru/node/2435 (accessed: 13.11.2024).

to national security)[19] from Western donors (the largest of which are the United States and the European Union (EU), but also, in a sense, the conceptual guidelines that were reflected in the 2004 White Paper on Defense Transformation.[20] In line with advanced Western ideas, the document recorded an approach based on the "security — development" nexus. Accordingly, alongside external threats to national security, such as armed foreign invasion, raids by illegal armed groups, migration flows,[21] factors of instability of internal origin were also included in the list (Table 2). The latter includes, among others, non-traditional aspects of security, i.e. economic, environmental and social: "Whereas these threats have a direct and immediate impact on the welfare of the citizens, they also have a long-term and equally harmful impact on the political stability of the nation."[22] It is no coincidence that the security dimension is also reflected in the Uganda's Vision 2040.[23] According to the document, ensuring security is a prerequisite for socio-economic transformation, democratic development and

maintaining national cohesion. In her 2022 speech at the UN General Assembly session, the Vice President of Uganda, J. Alupo, stated that issues of peace, security and development are inextricably linked and that work in these areas should be carried out in parallel.[24]

A holistic approach to security is also clearly outlined in the more recent Uganda Security Sector Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20. The document defines security quite broadly, deriving it from the concepts of life, action and choice. It is defined as "freedom from threats or pressures, from whatever source, that might undermine the basic rights, welfare and property of Ugandans and the proper functioning of the system of governance."[25] Consequently, the document presents security not only as multidimensional, but also, in a broad sense, as a concept that is not strictly defined. Despite a number of changes (for example, instead of security threats, factors that determine the strategic security environment are mentioned in a less alarmist form; in accordance with the spirit of the times, risks in the cyber sphere are mentioned, etc.) (Table 2), on the whole, the Plan confirms its commitment to the approach to ensuring national security outlined in earlier documents.

The priority of the external agenda over the internal one in ensuring Uganda's security is primarily determined by the peculiarities of its geographical location. Due to its lack of natural border protections, the country is vulnerable to the various conflict-generating factors that characterize the Great Lakes Region, that is, to the *"spillover effect"* ("Uganda is situated in the heart of Africa's conflict-ridden region," says

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[19] Through its partnership with BRICS, Uganda hopes to diversify its funding sources and reduce its dependence on Western aid institutions. See: Uganda Hopes to Attract Investment Through Cooperation with BRICS // African Initiative. January 11, 2025. (In Russian). URL: https://afrinz.ru/2025/01/uganda-rasschityvaet-privlech-investiczii-cherez-sotrudnichestvo-s-briks/ (accessed: 12.01.2025).

[20] White Paper on Defence Transformation. Republic of Uganda. June 2004 // University of Surrey. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2004_Uganda.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[21] The migration crisis in Uganda remains extremely acute to this day, with government officials mentioning it year after year in their speeches at UN General Assembly sessions.

[22] White Paper on Defence Transformation. Republic of Uganda. June 2004. P. 19 // University of Surrey. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2004_Uganda.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[23] Uganda Vision 2040. National Planning Authority, the Republic of Uganda // Green Policy Platform. URL: https://www.greenpolicyplatform.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/UGANDA)%20Vision%202040.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[24] 77th General Debate Session — Uganda // United Nations. September 22, 2022. URL: https://gadebate.un.org/en/77/uganda (accessed: 12.01.2025).

[25] Security Sector Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20. Republic of Uganda, September 2016. P. 12 // National Planning Authority of Uganda. URL: https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Security-Sector-Plan-SSDP2015.2020new.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

the 2004 White Paper[26]). The country's relatively small size, compared to other countries in the region means it cannot defend itself for long periods of time. Additionally, the lack of access to sea routes makes the security of its supply chains dependent on the stability of the region. In such circumstances, Uganda has adopted a proactive regional strategy aimed at containing potential adversaries and minimizing external threats. Significant attention is devoted to participation in peacekeeping initiatives within the framework of the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the African Union (AU). Y. Museveni's efforts to integrate Rwanda, Burundi (2007), and South Sudan (2016) into the EAC contribute to the formation of a regional security complex in East Africa (Walsh, 2020, pp. 312–313). Membership in regional and international organizations is among the factors determining the security environment. This membership enables Uganda to project its influence and protect its interests. It also creates additional international obligations for Kampala.[27]

Nigeria: Blurred Boundaries Between External and Internal Risk Factors

The 2019 National Security Strategy (NSS) of Nigeria[28] was the result of a revision of the first doctrinal document in this area, which was

adopted in 2014. The 2019 NSS acknowledges that President M. Buhari's administration (2015–2023), which came to power in 2015, faced an existential threat from Boko Haram,[29] which by that time was at the peak of its activity and controlled much of the north-eastern part of the country. Terrorism remains the number one threat to national security. Nigeria consistently ranks among the top ten countries most susceptible to terrorist attacks.[30] Due to the intensification of Boko Haram's activities since the mid-2010s, strengthening cooperation with countries in the Chad Basin region, a hotbed of terrorism, has acquired a key role in Nigeria's foreign policy. One such initiative is the Multinational Joint Task Force, which was created to counter radical Islamist groups (Kostelyanets & Okeke, 2021, pp. 62–63). Nigeria's economic system was not in the best condition, and widespread corruption was destroying public trust in the government.

The updated NSS reflects the changing context (increasing conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, escalating violence and banditry, etc.), which requires adapting approaches to new, more complex challenges and threats. The developers of the strategy deliberately refused to draw dividing lines between internal and external vulnerability factors (Table 2). In a visualized form, Abuja's approach to identifying threats to national security could look like a "web," where the external is closely intertwined with the internal, aspects of socio-economic life — with the imperatives of politics and security.

One of the country's most pressing national security issues with an international dimension is piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria's territorial waters represent a high-risk area for

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[26] White Paper on Defence Transformation. Republic of Uganda. June 2004. P. 17 // University of Surrey. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2004_Uganda.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[27] Security Sector Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20. Republic of Uganda, September 2016. P. 16 // National Planning Authority of Uganda. URL: https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Security-Sector-Plan-SSDP2015.2020new.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[28] National Security Strategy. Federal Republic of Nigeria. December 2019 // The National Counter Terrorism Centre, Office of the National Security Adviser. URL: https://nctc.gov.ng/storage/2024/01/NSS-2019.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[29] Designated by the UN Security Council as a terrorist organization in 2014.

[30] Global Terrorism Index 2024: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism // Institute for Economics & Peace. February 2024. URL: https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GTI-2024-web-290224.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

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international maritime shipping, raising concerns not only for maritime patrols, but also highlighting more systemic problems, primarily the country's high unemployment rate. Another example is the conflict between pastoralists and farmers, where the relationship between socio-economic and environmental factors is clearly evident.

Table 2. **Internal and External Threats to National Security in the Doctrinal Documents of Ethiopia, Uganda and Nigeria**

Country	Document	Year	Specification	Threats
Ethiopia	*The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy*	2002	Priority is given to the domestic agenda (fighting poverty). External threats are a continuation of internal ones. The list of threats is not clearly defined	Poverty
				Backwardness (economic, technological, etc.)
				The absence of good governance
Uganda	*White Paper on Defence Transformation*	2004	– There is a clear distinction between internal and external threats. Priority is given to responding to external threats – A clear correlation between the security and development agendas has been identified	Border insecurity
				Destabilizing external influence
				Political instability
				Environmental stress and resource constraints
				Human underdevelopment
				Internal insecurity
				Economic shocks
				Social polarization
				Civil disaster
	Security Sector Development Plan 2015/2016–2019/2020	2015	– A list of threats is not provided; instead, the factors that determine the strategic security environment are highlighted (see the "Threats" column) – A holistic approach to security is put forward – The multidimensionality of security, its internal and external dimensions, is recognized	Geostrategic context
				Shallow strategic depth
				Shared natural resources
				Climate security
				Porous borders
				Size and nature of the economy
				Cyber security
				Energy security
				Social cohesion
				Disease threats
				Globalization
Nigeria	*National Security Strategy*	2019	– The boundaries between external and internal risk factors are recognized to be blurred (therefore, there is no clear division of threats into internal and external) – The link between the economy and national security is outlined	Terrorism and violent extremism
				Armed banditry, kidnapping, militancy and separatist agitations
				Pastoralists and farmers conflicts
				Transnational organised crime
				Piracy and sea robbery
				Porous border
				Cybercrimes and technology challenges
				Socio-political threats

End of Table 2

Country	Document	Year	Specification	Threats
				Fake news and hate speech
				Environment threats
				Public health challenges
				Economic challenges (energy deficit, crude oil related crimes, unemployment and poverty, global economic challenges)
				Regional and global security challenges

Source: compiled by E.A. Abramova and D.A. Zelenova on the basis of: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy. November 2002. Addis Ababa : Ministry of Information, 2002 // University of Surrey. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2002_Ethiopia.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025); White Paper on Defence Transformation. Republic of Uganda. June 2004 // University of Surrey. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2004_Uganda.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025); Security Sector Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20. Republic of Uganda, September 2016. P. 12 // National Planning Authority of Uganda. URL: https://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Security-Sector-Plan-SSDP2015.2020new.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025); National Security Strategy. Federal Republic of Nigeria. December 2019 // The National Counter Terrorism Centre, Office of the National Security Adviser. URL: https://nctc.gov.ng/storage/2024/01/NSS-2019.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

The consequences of climate change and the population boom exacerbate the problem of resource shortages (land, water, etc.) and the resulting competition for them. Like its resource wealth, the country's demographic wealth is considered in two ways: as a dividend for development and, at the same time, as a point of vulnerability. It is no coincidence that crude oil crimes are listed among the threats to Nigeria's national security. Moreover, as Abuja acknowledges, Nigeria's economy is highly dependent on crude oil exports, and, consequently, on the global energy market conditions.[31]

Egypt's Official Discourse on National Security

Security issues have traditionally been a priority for the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE) in both domestic and foreign policy (Piazza, 2019), which is largely due to the country's geographical location (Mushoffa & Juniatama, 2020, p. 1600). The Isthmus of Suez, located on Egyptian territory, connects Africa with Asia, linking the country to the Middle East security complex (Table 3). According to Russian experts, despite its indisputable status as a regional power on the scale of the African continent, the state began to position itself as African only in 2014–2017, and before that, it preferred predominantly pan-Arab solidarity (Loshkariov & Protasov, 2024). The Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal can be said to be the Achilles heel of Egypt's national security, especially in connection with the unresolved Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The escalation of conflicts in the Middle East negatively impact on maritime shipping in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, and is disrupting global supply chains.[32] Thus, in 2023, tensions in the Red Sea led to a loss of up to 50% of profits from the operation of the Suez Canal, an

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[31] National Security Strategy. Federal Republic of Nigeria. December 2019. P. 15 // The National Counter Terrorism Centre, Office of the National Security Adviser. URL: https://nctc.gov.ng/storage/2024/01/NSS-2019.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[32] President El-Sisi's Speech at BRICS Plus Summit // State Information Service of Egypt. October 24, 2024. URL: https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/197576/President-El-Sisi's-Speech-at-BRICS-Plus-Summit?lang=en-us (accessed: 14.11.2024).

important source of funds for the Egyptian budget.[33]

Countering terrorism and extremism is crucial for ensuring Egypt's national security.[34] The administration of President A. el-Sisi, which came to power in 2014, launched an anti-terrorist operation in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, where radical Islamist organizations have strengthened their positions due to the "power vacuum" created during the revolutionary upheavals. Some argue that, by presenting itself as a guarantor of security against the Islamist threat, Cairo is seeking to strengthen its regional position and to fuel the legitimacy of the military regime (Piazza, 2019).

Table 3. **Key Security Concerns Identified by Egypt During the UN General Assembly Sessions, 2022–2024**

Year	Security issues				
	Water crisis	The Palestinian-Israeli conflict	Crisis in Syria	Crisis in Libya	Crisis in Sudan
2024	+	+	+	+	+
2023	+	+	+	+	+
2022	+	+	+	+	+

Source: compiled by E.A. Abramova and D.A. Zelenova on the basis of: General Debate. General Assembly — All Sessions // United Nations. URL: https://gadebate.un.org/en/sessions-archive (accessed: 15.11.2024).

Explaining Africa's Security Agenda Through the Lens of the Water — Energy — Food Nexus: The Case of Ethiopia and Egypt

In the early 2010s, the concept of the *water — energy — food nexus,* based on the interdependence of water, energy and food resources, is rapidly entering the political and scientific discourse. Global demand for these basic resources will continue to grow against the backdrop of progressively directed megatrends in demographics, economic and technological development.

Agriculture accounts for 70% of the total global withdrawal of fresh water, making it the largest consumer of this resource. Water is also used in the production and transportation of energy, which in turn is involved in the production and supply chains of food (consuming about 30% of the total energy used worldwide), as well as in the extraction, transportation and purification of water resources. Thus, as the scale of human activity expands, competition for access to the corresponding resources between different sectors of the economic system, including energy, agro-industrial and water supply, will naturally gain momentum.[35] The water — energy — food nexus lies in the awareness of often conflicting interests and their skillful management while maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem.[36]

Water plays a central role in this three-component configuration, acting as a control variable. Water is essential for the production of biomass, which is necessary for energy and food security in a green economy (Hoff, 2011, p. 16).

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[33] Suez Canal Revenues Fell by More Than 20% Due to the Situation in the Red Sea // TASS. July 18, 2024. (In Russian). URL: https://tass.ru/ekonomika/21393749 (accessed: 14.11.2024).

[34] Army Ready to Protect Egypt National Security, Confront Challenges: Spokesperson (Interview) // Ahramonline. October 15, 2024. URL: https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/533496.aspx (accessed: 14.11.2024).

[35] The Water — Energy — Food Nexus: A New Approach in Support of Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture // Rome : Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2014. P. 1, 3. URL: https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/86fe97cc-4a38-4511-a37f-8eb8ea8fe941/content (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[36] Water — Energy — Food Nexus // Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. URL: https://www.fao.org/land-water/water/watergovernance/waterfoodenergynexus/en/ (accessed: 13.11.2024).
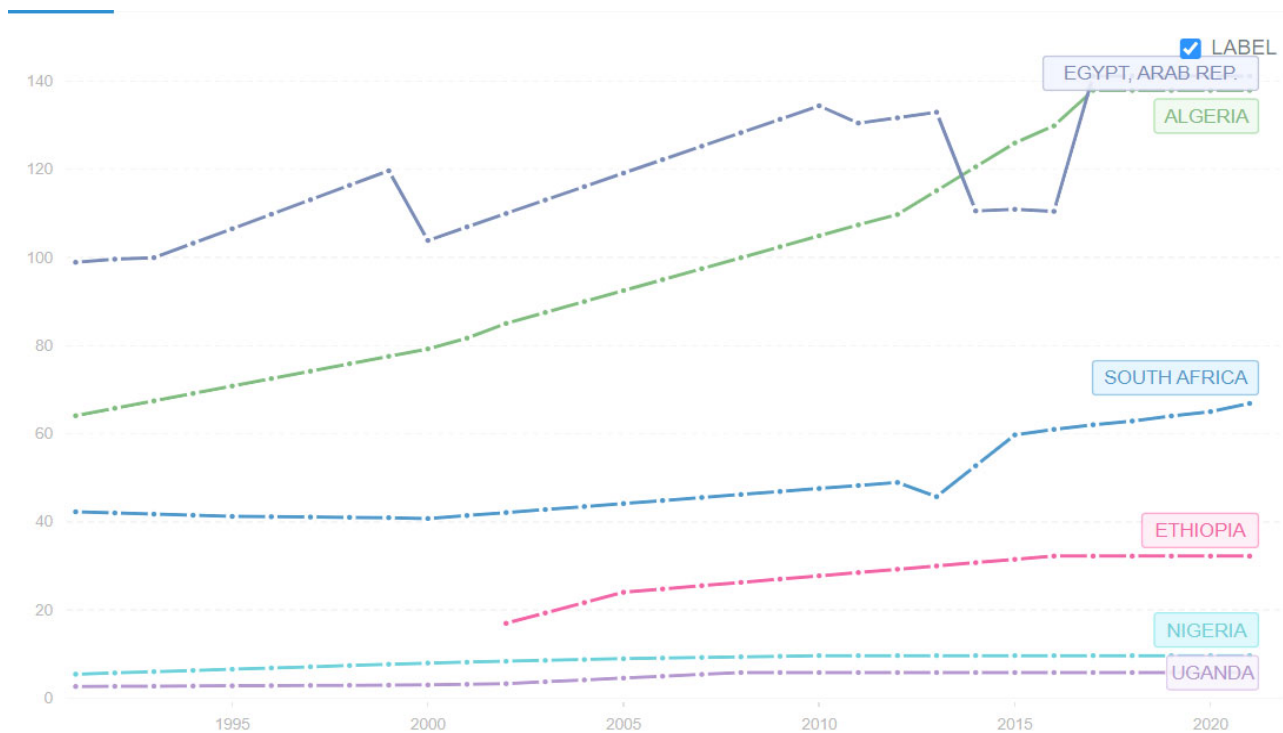
**Level of Water Stress (Freshwater Withdrawal as % of Available Freshwater Resources)
in Uganda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, Algeria and Egypt in 1991–2021.**
Source: Level of Water Stress: Freshwater Withdrawal as a Proportion of Available Freshwater Resources —
South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Arab Rep., Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda // World Bank Group.
URL: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.H2O.FWST.ZS?end=2021&locations=
ZA-DZ-EG-ET-NG-UG&start=1991 (accessed: 14.11.2024).

The data in Figure demonstrate how acute the issue of water resources can be on the national security agenda of African countries. The examples of the Maghreb countries (Egypt, Algeria) with water stress levels exceeding 100% are particularly illustrative.

Such scarce resources are the focus of securitization and often become the subject of interstate contradictions, as was the case with the use of Nile River waters. Ethiopia's 2002 Foreign Policy and National Security Strategy identified the Nile waters as a key irritant in relations with Egypt. Recognizing that Egyptian civilization was built on the sacred waters of the Nile, Addis Ababa justifies its right to use the water resources by the fact that at least 85% of the water flowing into Egypt through this artery originates from Ethiopia (via the Blue Nile tributary). The Egyptian policy is presented in the document as an attempt to impose its sole

right on Ethiopia,[37] based on the erroneous logic of a "zero-sum game."[38]

Not only does the Nile River have sacred meaning for Egyptians based on the cultural and historical context, but there are also quite objective and rational reasons for this: its waters provide vitality for 98% of the country's dynamically growing population. The agricultural sector, which plays a key role in the structure of the Egyptian economy, is entirely fed by the waters of the Nile, providing approximately 40% of the country's labor

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[37] Under the treaty concluded in 1959 between Egypt and Sudan, Ethiopia did not receive any rights to use the water resources of the Nile.

[38] The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy. November 2002. Addis Ababa : Ministry of Information, 2002. P. 112, 117–119 // University of Surrey. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2002_Ethiopia.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

demand (Abdulrahman, 2019, p. 142). Despite changes in power during the period of the independent Egyptian state, the rhetoric of the ruling elite regarding the significance of the Nile River, in essence, retained its "decisive" and, to some extent, even "militant" tone. Egyptian President (1970–1981) A. Sadat threatened to use force against Ethiopia if the rights of the Egyptian people to use the Nile were violated; the country's president, el-Sisi (since 2014), views this issue as a matter of life and death (Abdulrahman, 2019, pp. 137, 144).

Egypt's reaction to the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the largest hydroelectric power station in Africa, located on the Nile, is entirely natural. At the 2022 UN General Assembly session, Egypt stated that "Respecting the Ethiopian people's right to development, however, this cannot be at the expense of the Egyptian people's right to life and survival."[39] According to Cairo's forecasts, the implementation of the Ethiopian project will have a catastrophic impact on both Egypt's food and energy security (according to some forecasts, the energy generation volumes of the Aswan High Dam will be reduced by up to a third (Abdulrahman, 2019, p. 142). Not to mention the accompanying economic and environmental consequences. It should be noted, however, that both the National Plan for Water Management until 2050 (2018) and other planning and strategic documents of Egypt do not mention a scenario in which the volume of water resources entering the country will decrease. Experts view this as a possible indication of the Egyptian authorities' confidence that they simply will not allow such a situation.[40] The administration of H. Mubarak (1981–2011) largely succeeded in cutting Ethiopia off from external financing, reorienting

the Ethiopian leadership to search for internal sources for the implementation of a large-scale dam construction project. This is not only about fulfilling Addis Ababa's ambitions to become the largest energy producer in East Africa, but also about ensuring an uninterrupted supply of electricity within Ethiopia itself (Bragin, 2012).

Thus, the problem of using the Nile River waters, which is closely linked to issues of food and energy security, is considered by the Egyptian and Ethiopian authorities in terms of national security. Moreover, if the doctrinal document of Ethiopia[41] included a formulation about the possibility of finding a mutually acceptable solution to this issue, then Cairo's rhetoric would be more likely to remain uncompromising. The categorical position of the Egyptian authorities can be explained by the data shown in Figure, as well as by the historical settlement of Egyptians along the banks of the Nile. The Nile River plays a huge role in all dimensions of the "water — energy — food" triad of the ARE economy.[42] On the contrary, for Addis Ababa, the use of water resources of the Blue Nile tributary is primarily associated with issues of energy security, which are acute on the agenda of state development.[43]

Responding to Modern Challenges: The Cybersecurity Strategy of African Countries

The securitization process has not bypassed the information space, which has begun to be considered as one of the areas of national security (Ramich & Piskunov, 2022, p. 246).

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[39] General Debate of the 77th Session — Egypt: His Excellency Sameh Hassan Shoukry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs // United Nations. URL: https://gadebate.un.org/en/77/egypt (accessed: 15.11.2024).

[40] Veselov Yu. A. On Egypt's Strategy for Ensuring the Country's Domestic Needs for Water Resources // Institute of the Middle East. May 5, 2021. (In Russian). URL: http://www.iimes.ru/?p=77067 (accessed: 15.11.2024).

[41] The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy. November 2002. Addis Ababa : Ministry of Information, 2002. P. 112–119. URL: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/2002_Ethiopia.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[42] However, this is less relevant in the case of energy, since thermal power plants account for around 90% of electricity generation in Egypt. For more details, see: (Volkov & Sharova, 2018).

[43] Almost half of Ethiopia's population does not have access to electricity. See: World Bank Open Data. URL: https://data.worldbank.org (accessed: 14.11.2024).

Table 4. **Building Blocks in the Cybersecurity Strategies of Egypt, South Africa, Uganda and Nigeria**

Country, year	Threat Assessment	Specification (threats)	Plan of Action	Timeline	Assignment of Responsibilities	Assignment of Resources
Egypt (2018)	+	1. Penetrating critical ICT infrastructure 2. Cyber terrorism and cyber warfare 3. Theft of digital identity and personal data	+	+	–	–
South Africa (2012)	+	1. Cybercrime 2. Cyberterrorism 3. Cyberwars 4. Cyberespionage	+	–	+	–
Uganda (2014)	–	–	+	–	–	–
Uganda (2022)	–	–	+	+	+	–
Nigeria (2021)	+	1. Cybercrime 2. Cyber terrorism and the use of the Internet by terrorists 3. Online child abuse and exploitation 4. Online gender exploitation 5. Elections interference 6. Pandemic-induced cyber threats 7. Other cyber threats	+	+	+	–

Source: compiled by E.A. Abramova and D.A. Zelenova on the basis of: Ajijola A.-H., Allen Nate D. F. African Lessons in Cyber Strategy // Africa Center for Strategic Studies. March 8, 2022. URL: https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-lessons-in-cyber-strategy/ (accessed: 12.11. 2024).

The development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has given rise to new challenges and threats, such as attacks on countries' critical infrastructure and malicious intrusion into the information space, etc. The African continent is the region of the world that is most susceptible to cyber threats. In 2017, the damage to African countries from cybercrimes amounted to USD 3.5 billion (South Africa was among the main victims, with damage from cyberattacks amounting to USD 157 million) (Pantserev, 2022, p. 294). Obviously, such indicators are clearly due to the problems of developing the corresponding infrastructure and, more broadly, ensuring technological sovereignty (Pantserev, 2022,

p. 292). About 40 African countries have developed legislative regulation in cyberspace (Pantserev, 2022, p. 292). However, less than half of the continent's states have national cybersecurity strategies, and only a few of them (Table 4) contain the necessary semantic blocks (threat assessment, plan of action, timeline, assignment of responsibilities and resources).[44]

Of the African BRICS members, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda (among the first on the continent to adopt the relevant documents), and Egypt have a cybersecurity strategy. In

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[44] Ajijola A.-H., Allen Nate D. F. African Lessons in Cyber Strategy // Africa Center for Strategic Studies. March 8, 2022. URL: https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-lessons-in-cyber-strategy/ (accessed: 12.11.2024).

accordance with Ethiopia's course for accelerated development, the doctrinal document in the digital sphere is the *Digital Ethiopia 2025*, which is orienting the country towards an innovative economy. However, despite the apparent "maturity" of South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda in terms of cyber regulation, in the report of the International Telecommunication Union (2024) these countries did not make it into the first tier of states in terms of cybersecurity: Egypt is among the leaders, South Africa is in the second tier (although its national legislative regulation received the highest rating), Ethiopia, Nigeria and Uganda are in the third tier (out of five).[45]

In terms of its structure, the most comprehensive document was adopted in Nigeria (Table 4). The country's national cybersecurity policy and strategy confirm the central role of cyberspace in ensuring national security and the country's socio-economic development (par. 1.2).[46] Thus, Nigeria's 2019 NSS has expressed concerns about the growing financial and technological capabilities of terrorist organizations, which pose a threat to critical information infrastructure.[47] In some respects, local extremist organizations have already surpassed the national government. For example, Boko Haram has been found to utilize drones that are more technologically advanced than those at the disposal of the Nigerian government (Pantserev, 2022,

p. 297). In addition, radical groups use social media and other online platforms to incite hatred, promote extremism, and recruit new members into terrorist networks.

It is also noteworthy that the NSC of Nigeria has developed a broad approach to interpreting the concept of "cybersecurity," considering not only its technological dimensions, but also its informational and social ones. Particular attention is paid to the vulnerability of various social groups, especially children, to threats in the online space, such as cyberbullying, slander and insults to human dignity. In contrast, Egypt's strategy[48] demonstrates a focus rather on a state-centric approach to cybersecurity, with primary tasks including protecting critical ICT infrastructure and repelling cyber threats from foreign states and terrorist groups, although it also contains aspects of human security.

As with the updated National Security Strategy, Uganda's revised cybersecurity strategy[49] reflects a holistic approach, which is dictated by the "complex and interconnected nature of cyberspace."[50] It is noteworthy that in this dimension, the government of Uganda also demonstrates a high degree of openness to international cooperation, both within the AU and at the regional level. Committed to the principles of preventive diplomacy, Kampala advocates for responsible behavior by states in the cyber sphere.[51] A similar appeal can be found in paragraph 54 of the Kazan Declaration of BRICS, which devotes considerable attention to ensuring security in the sphere of ICT use (on

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[45] Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 : 5th Edition. International Telecommunication Union, 2024 // ITU Publications. URL: https://www.itu.int/epublications/publication/global-cybersecurity-index-2024 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[46] National Cybersecurity Policy and Strategy. Federal Republic of Nigeria. February 2021 // Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission. URL: https://www.nipc.gov.ng/product/national-cybersecurity-policy-and-strategy/ (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[47] National Security Strategy. Federal Republic of Nigeria. December 2019 // The National Counter Terrorism Centre, Office of the National Security Adviser. URL: https://nctc.gov.ng/storage/2024/01/NSS-2019.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[48] Al-istratigiyya al-wataniyya lil-amn as-sibraniy 2023–2027 [National Cybersecurity Strategy 2023–2027] // Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt. (In Arabic). URL: https://mcit.gov.eg/Upcont/Documents/Publications_1412024000_National_Cybersecurity_Strategy_2023_2027.pdf (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[49] National Cybersecurity Strategy (2022–2026) // Republic of Uganda, 2022. 42 p. URL: https://urlit.co/WZvOS2 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[50] Ibid. P. 23.

[51] Ibid. P. 36.

several pages of the document's text, with a total volume of 32 pages).[52]

Instead of a Conclusion: Opportunities for Cooperation on Security Issues Within the BRICS Framework

The doctrinal documents on national security of the countries under consideration reveal differences in the approaches adopted to identify priority threats. The government of Ethiopia prioritizes the domestic agenda, namely the creation of a favorable socio-economic environment, while Uganda prefers to mitigate external threats (through preventive diplomacy). South Africa, in turn, strives to maintain a balance between internal and external. The National Security Council of Nigeria does not classify sources of threats according to this principle at all. The same applies to the regulation of the cyber sphere, where the state-centric approach and aspects of human security are related to varying degrees. However, some common denominators can be deduced from such national polyphony of the African agenda.

Firstly, the countries' *broad, holistic approach to defining national security* is consistent with the BRICS agenda, which, along with traditional aspects of security, highlights its non-traditional dimensions (food security, information security, energy security, environmental protection, financial safety, etc.) (for more details, see: (Degterev, 2024b)). As a result of the expansion of BRICS to include new African participants, it appears that the logic of linking security and development issues may be strengthened on a long-term basis as one of the determinants in the agenda of this format.

Secondly, *there is the similarity of the threats*. Terrorism and crime, economic and technological backwardness, poor governance, environmental degradation, challenges in the cyber space are all threats that are recognized to varying degrees by states at an official level. These "African problems" are quite fully reflected in the text of the Kazan Declaration of BRICS,[53] which very clearly demonstrates the motives of African states for joining the association. Given such a broad mandate of BRICS, this format could potentially act as a negotiating platform to settle/reduce conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia over the waters of the Nile River. At the same time, with its new, expanded membership, the association will likely be more selective in setting the agenda, distancing itself from issues that meet the national interests of a narrow circle of BRICS participants, which could potentially lead the consensus principle "to a dead end."

Thirdly, *the trans-border nature of threats* highlights *the importance of the regional dimension* in ensuring the national security of the states, their increasingly proactive position in forming regional security complexes. This circumstance must be taken into account as one of the external factors determining the national security policy of the African BRICS countries

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[52] XVI BRICS Summit. Kazan Declaration "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security." Kazan, Russian Federation. October 23, 2024 // National Committee on BRICS Research, Russia. URL: https://nkibrics.ru/system/asset_docs/data/6749/d14d/6272/6906/a464/0000/original/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf?1732890957 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[53] See, for example, par. 57: "...We commit to intensify efforts in areas of mutual interest, including but not limited to, trade, poverty and hunger reduction, sustainable development, including access to energy, water and food, fuel, fertilizers as well as mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change, education, and health, including pandemic prevention, preparedness and response." See: XVI BRICS Summit. Kazan Declaration "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security." Kazan, Russian Federation. October 23, 2024. P. 15 // National Committee on BRICS Research, Russia. URL: https://nkibrics.ru/system/asset_docs/data/6749/d14d/6272/6906/a464/0000/original/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf?1732890957 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

and, accordingly, the agenda promoted by them within the association. Thus, the text of the Kazan Declaration clearly reflects not only the voice of South Africa (for example, noting the successes of SADC in stabilizing the situation in Mozambique), as well as those of two new African participants — Egypt and Ethiopia. Hotbeds of instability in the Middle East and North Africa (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank,[54] Syria, Yemen, Sudan) were mentioned in the text of the final document, in accordance with the imperatives of Egypt's national security.[55] In addition, the problem of shipping in the Red Sea, a matter of considerable significance for Egypt, was given special mention (par. 33). The Horn of Africa security complex, with which Ethiopia is closely intertwined (at least due to the unresolved problem of the access to the Red Sea), was also mentioned.[56]

It is important to make a reservation that the status of a BRICS partner, as seen at this stage, does not entail direct involvement in formulating the agenda and guidelines for activities, as well as developing the final declarations of the association. This is primarily about providing access to projects and platforms implemented under the auspices of BRICS. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the importance of considering the approaches of Uganda and Nigeria to ensuring security, which can have, if not a direct, then an indirect influence on the process of developing common approaches within the BRICS framework, at least due to their significant role in the international relations on the African continent (including at the level of regional security complexes).

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[54] The declaration placed responsibility for the escalation of violence on the Israeli government. It was a diplomatic success, including for South Africa and Egypt, which strongly condemned the actions of Israel. In addition, "The continuous efforts by the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Qatar, other regional and international efforts in order to reach immediate ceasefire, accelerate the delivery of humanitarian aid and Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip" (par. 30) were welcomed. See: XVI BRICS Summit. Kazan Declaration "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security." Kazan, Russian Federation. October 23, 2024. P. 8–9 // National Committee on BRICS Research, Russia. URL: https://nkibrics.ru/system/asset_docs/data/6749/d14d/6272/6906/a464/0000/original/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf?1732890957 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[55] XVI BRICS Summit. Kazan Declaration "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security." Kazan, Russian Federation. October 23, 2024. P. 8–11 // National Committee on BRICS Research, Russia. URL: https://nkibrics.ru/system/asset_docs/data/6749/d14d/6272/6906/a464/0000/original/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf?1732890957 (accessed: 18.06.2025).

[56] Ibid. P. 10.

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