

AFRICA DIGEST

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Broken Promises: The Collapse of the DRC–M23 Peace Agreement

In July, the M23 rebels and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government signed a peace deal brokered by Qatar. It was [significant](#) as it built on the DRC–Rwanda Peace deal brokered by United States in June 2025. The deal had raised hopes, but many [cautioned](#) that real peace in eastern Congo would take far more than signatures on paper. Their fears came true when a violent [conflict](#) broke out between DRC and the M23 rebel group on August 11th, jeopardising the future of the July agreement. After the conflict broke out again, the talks to sign the final [peace agreement](#) were stalled as both sides accused each other of breaking the truce, clouding what was meant to be a turning point after three decades of chronic violence.

It is [believed](#) that major demands by both sides are jeopardising the DRC's chance at obtaining peace. Kinshasa is calling for the complete [withdrawal](#) of AFC/M23 rebels and a halt to external backing, while the rebels insist on political and security assurances before agreeing to disarm. While reflecting legitimate concerns, the demands also highlight the disparity between both the parties. Consequently, mutual distrust continues to define the standoff between the two sides.

Nevertheless, negotiations between the DRC and the M23 armed group have [resumed](#) in Qatar, underscoring both the urgency and fragility of peace efforts as violence persists in the mineral-rich eastern provinces despite a recently signed

agreement. According to Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari, delegations from Kinshasa and M23 convened in Doha to assess the [implementation](#) of the July truce, highlighting the continued reliance on external mediation to sustain dialogue between the two sides.

Analysts warn that failure to reach an agreement could prolong the conflict and enable further rebel gains, with both sides already accusing each other of violating the ceasefire. Regional efforts by African leaders, including Nigeria's former president Olusegun Obasanjo and Angola's President João Lourenço, have so far produced little progress. Various [analysts](#) have argued that African mediators lack the leverage to compel compliance, making external actors with greater economic and geopolitical influence, such as the United States and Qatar are better positioned to pressure the parties. Both states have taken on roles in the negotiations, partly to influence Rwanda, whose involvement remains highly contested. While Kinshasa, the UN, and several Western governments accuse Rwanda of backing M23 rebels, Kigali [rejects](#) such claims and instead places the onus on DRC government's failures.

Eastern DRC, home to vast reserves of gold, cobalt, and coltan that are critical to the global economy, has long been mired in violence. Despite its resource wealth, the region has become synonymous with cycles of armed conflict driven by competition over mineral revenues, weak governance, and regional rivalries. Civilians have borne the greatest burden, facing mass

displacement, human rights abuses, and the collapse of basic services. Repeated international mediation efforts have struggled to address these underlying issues, leaving the population trapped in insecurity while armed groups and external actors continue to exploit the region's resources for political and economic gain.

TICAD 9: Japan Deepens Engagement with Africa

The ninth [Tokyo International Conference on African Development](#) (TICAD-9), co-hosted by United Nations Organisation (UNO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank, and African Union Commission (AUC), was held in Yokohama, Japan from 20th to 22nd August 2025. TICAD takes place every three years, with forty-nine African countries attending this year's edition. The aim of TICAD-9 was to promote peace and security, foster multilateral trade, and support social development in Africa. TICAD-9 concluded on 22nd August with [Yokohama Declaration 2025](#) strengthening Japan's multilateral trade in Africa.

It was at the [Plenary session 2](#), where former Prime Minister Kishida emphasised the importance of investment to solving Africa's challenges through public-private collaboration, and also introduced Japanese initiatives. These included promoting growth by leveraging the vitality of the private sector, strengthening regional integration and connectivity with other regions, and economic diversification. In line with this discussion, the Yokohama Declaration 2025 was signed.

At TICAD-9, [UNDP highlighted](#) the central role of youth, human security, digital transformation, and inclusive development in Africa's growth. Through TICAD Youth Forum, young voices shaped discussions on entrepreneurship, creativity, and future cooperation. Key initiatives included a policy brief on strengthening health, education, and social resilience, and a partnership between Tokyo University, METI, and UNDP to build AI capacity for African youth. Discussions on financing focused on strategies to reduce borrowing costs and broaden investment opportunities. UNDP also partnered with Toyota Tsusho to advance road safety and technical skills. These efforts underscore Africa's human capital as the cornerstone of sustainable development, peace, and regional leadership.

Additionally, during the summit, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) [announced](#) the "JICA Africa Hometown". Through this project, JICA aims to foster exchanges between four Japanese cities and four African countries through activities, including events with overseas cooperation volunteers. Alongside this JICA has existing [investment](#) of US\$273.6 million in the Nacala Development Corridor, including the Nacala port. To boost this corridor, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba [launched](#) an initiative titled, "Strengthening the Global Supply Chain through Nacala Corridor Development", linking Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia. The plan focuses on better transport, mining, and farming, aiming to drive investment, jobs, and

sustainable growth while strengthening Japan's supply chains and regional partnerships.

South Africa's President, Cyril Ramaphosa also [addressed](#) the South Africa-Japan Business Forum at TICAD-9. In his address he mentioned that in lieu of Tariffs imposed by President Trump, their government was activating diversifying strategies in which Japan was a "key pillar" in their outreach. He highlighted strong potential for South Africa-Japan collaboration in integrated supply chains, especially in battery minerals, auto components, renewables, and hydrogen tech. This address indicated that South Africa and Japan are poised for strategic collaboration in key sectors.

Post TICAS-9, Japan hosted the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit from 29th-30th August 2025. Here, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba [discussed](#) the deepening of economic ties with the Global South, especially through the new India-Japan initiative for sustainable growth in Africa. Guided by India's MAHASAGAR and Japan's regional vision, the countries plan to boost private investment and make India a key hub for Japanese businesses expanding into South Asia and Africa.

TICAD-9 and the India-Japan Summit mark a turning point in global cooperation, with Japan, India, and African nations uniting for shared growth. By investing in youth, innovation, and infrastructure, and strengthening supply chains, these partnerships signal a future built on collaboration, sustainability, and inclusive development across continents.

Outcomes of the 5th Singapore-Africa Ministerial Exchange Visit

The Singaporean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan [launched](#) the 5th Singapore-Africa Ministerial Exchange Visit (SAMEV) on 26 August 2025. SAMEV is a biennial platform hosted by Singapore since 2014 to strengthen links and encourage the exchange of development experiences between Singapore and Africa. This year's theme for the meet was "Progressing Together towards a Sustainable Future". It was attended by delegates from 14 African countries—Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The delegates attended the 8th Africa Singapore Business Forum (ASBF), which was organised by Enterprise Singapore.

At the opening ceremony, Dr. Balakrishnan extended a warm welcome to the delegates and noted the [significance](#) of their presence during Singapore's 60th year of independence. He further emphasised the importance of fostering dialogue with Africa in times of changing world order. Under the theme "Progressing Together towards a Sustainable Future," [discussions](#) highlighted shared development goals and future collaboration. Dr. Balakrishnan [stressed](#) Africa's central role in global sustainability, noting its vast potential, while also emphasizing Southeast Asia's growth and ASEAN's increasing influence in digital and green economies, making Africa-ASEAN cooperation both timely

and essential. He also highlighted areas of progress like agreements with several African countries to collaborate on carbon credits under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, and educational exchanges with African officials.

At the 8th Africa Singapore Business Forum (ASBF), in his opening address, Ghanaian President, Mr. John Mahama, [highlighted](#) the importance of new alliances, opportunities, and possibilities in current unpredictable times (referring to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff war). He also emphasised on the importance of South-South cooperation, where Africa and Singapore “must be the champion of open markets, trusted rules and practical partnerships that deliver jobs, technology transfer and shared prosperity”. He further stated the importance of Ghana as a reliable gateway to the African continent and Africa's renewable energy potential, encouraging foreign investment. Mr. Mahama also emphasised that Ghana was reimagining its economy through a bold 24-Hour Economy strategy, anchored in the Volta Economic Corridor and catalytic infrastructure projects. Further, in Singapore, its leaders outlined five pillars for collaboration—spanning agribusiness, clean energy, digital services, logistics, and advanced manufacturing, framing a partnership that links Ghana's scale with Singapore's expertise.

Along similar lines at the ASBF, Singaporean Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, Grace Fu also [voiced](#) the need for strengthening of institutional frameworks, commercial partnerships, and people-to-people exchanges, in her address.

Regional integration mechanisms such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) were presented as complementary platforms. Singaporean investments in agribusiness, digital services, and fintech were cited, while cooperation in carbon markets and sustainable finance was promoted.

The 5th SAMEV and 8th ASBF underscored the growing convergence between Africa and Singapore, built on shared aspirations for sustainable growth, open markets, and resilient partnerships. By linking Africa's scale and resources with Singapore's expertise and global connectivity, both regions are positioning themselves as vital partners in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Türkiye boosts defence and security cooperation with Senegal

Turkey and Senegal signed four agreements on 7th August 2025, during a visit by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Dakar. The [agreements](#) revolved around boosting military and defence cooperation, alongside pacts in the fields of education and media. This has become focal point in lieu of similar agreements being signed between Turkey and other African countries, which are turning away from their colonial rulers.

In the [televised press conference](#), President Erdogan announced that Ankara was pleased with the growing African interest in Turkish defence products. It signified the strengthening of Turkish-African solidarity in defence. With the signing of the Turkish deal, President Erdogan hailed Africa as the

“star of our century” with its youth workers, dynamism, and natural beauty. He also added that no country with a global vision could ignore African continent or turn its back on its magnificent geography. He further said “anyone who criticised Turkish-African partnership was trying to confine our country to shallow waters” and rejected “any arrogant, condescending, orientalist approach to the African continent”.

Senegal is seeking to take its defence partnership with Turkey to the next level, not just by buying equipment but by building the skills and industries needed at home. As reported by [Military Africa](#), Dakar wants technology transfer and industrial cooperation that can boost both its security and local expertise. Countries no longer want to remain dependent on outside suppliers, reflecting a growing African shift. Instead, they are seeking partnerships that create jobs, transfer knowledge, and help nurture home-grown industries. For Senegal, working with Turkey offers a chance to strengthen its military while also investing in its own future.

Alongside Senegal, Turkey has also [signed](#) defence deals with a number of countries spanning the breadth of the African continent which include—Somalia, Libya, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Ghana. These agreements have created opportunities for Turkish defence firms, particularly in supplying their widely regarded, [cost-effective drones](#) and [armoured vehicles](#).

The series of defence agreements between Turkey and Senegal, alongside deals with

other African nations, underscores a strategic shift in African security partnerships. By combining equipment procurement with technology transfer and industrial cooperation, African countries are reducing dependence on traditional suppliers while building domestic capabilities. For Turkey, this presents opportunities to expand its defence exports and strengthen political ties across the continent. These developments reflect a broader trend of African nations asserting autonomy in security and economic partnerships, positioning Turkey as a trusted, adaptable partner in meeting the continent’s evolving defence needs while fostering industrial growth and regional influence.

Africa’s growing interest in diversifying defence suppliers, coupled with Turkey’s strengthening political presence in the region, is creating fresh opportunities for Ankara’s defence industry. This shift not only allows Turkish firms to widen their export portfolio but also positions Turkey as a trusted partner, offering affordable and adaptable military systems to meet Africa’s evolving security needs.

South Atlantic Synergies: Reassessing Nigeria–Brazil Ties

On 25th August 2025, Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR [visited](#) Brazil to strengthen economic ties and explore opportunities in trade, diplomacy, science, aviation, and finance cooperation, which are key sectors in Nigerian development agenda. In [pursuit](#) of same, Brazil and Nigeria signed five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Alongside the

Presidential visit, a high-level bilateral [meeting](#) was held between the Nigerian Minister of Defence, Mohammed Badaru Abubakar and his Brazilian counterpart, Mr. Jose Mucio Monteiro Filho. It was also attended by the chief of the Joint Staff of Brazilian Armed Forces, General Renato Rodrigues de Aguiar Freire. The meeting focused on strengthening defence relations, advancing defence-industrial cooperation, and enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, among other defence-related issues.

In tandem with the five MoUs, President Tinubu [announced](#) the return of Brazil's state-run oil company, Petrobras after the company halted its joint venture operations in Nigeria five years ago. Petrobras' return to Nigeria is predicted to reignite economic cooperation in energy sector between the two countries. Petrobras first entered Nigeria in 1998, [exploring](#) the deep waters of the Niger Delta. However, over a decade ago, the Brazilian energy giant sold off its stakes to refocus on projects at home. Since then, Nigeria has been striving to tackle long-standing challenges that have held back its oil and gas production, seeking to revive and strengthen the sector's potential. In another interview with [Reuters](#) in Sao Paulo, Nigerian Minister of Industry, Jumoke Oduwole, told that her country hopes to reach an agreement with Petrobras as soon as this year. However, there is no statement from Petrobras on its potential return to Nigeria.

The two countries took meaningful steps to strengthen their partnership. Nigeria also signed an [agreement](#) with Brazilian aircraft

manufacturer Embraer to set up a service centre in the country, a move expected to boost local aviation capacity. In addition, a new direct flight connecting Lagos and São Paulo, operated by Air Peace, was announced to bring the two nations closer. Embraer also [expressed](#) its commitment to increasing its footprint in Nigeria. Bilateral trade reached \$2.1 billion in 2024, with Brazil exporting mainly sugar and jams, while importing fertilisers. Together, these initiatives signal a deepening of economic and people-to-people ties.

President Tinubu's visit to Brazil marked a significant step forward in deepening Nigeria–Brazil relations across multiple fronts. The signing of five MoUs, coupled with high-level defence talks, underscored the growing importance of bilateral cooperation not only in trade and industry but also in security and strategic affairs. The potential return of Petrobras represents a symbolic and practical revival of Brazil's long-standing presence in Nigeria's energy sector, which could help rejuvenate the country's oil and gas industry while reinforcing economic ties. Equally, the aviation agreement with Embraer and the launch of direct flights between Lagos and São Paulo highlight the intent to strengthen connectivity and broaden people-to-people exchanges. With bilateral trade already exceeding \$2 billion, these developments suggest a renewed commitment to creating mutually beneficial partnerships that go beyond traditional sectors. Ultimately, the visit sets the stage for a more robust, future-oriented Nigeria–Brazil relationship built on shared interests, cooperation, and trust.