

Editors' Note

It is our great pleasure to welcome our esteemed readers in Africa and beyond to this special issue on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. This treaty has a number of unique features that attest to its importance some 12 years after its adoption in 2007. It sets out key concepts at the interface between law and politics, such as “unconstitutional changes of government”, and provides a yardstick to guide, assess and monitor state parties' adherence to agreed standards of political conduct. The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has recognized the charter as a human rights instrument in its jurisprudence; the charter has also played a major role in framing responses to national political crises. Unsurprisingly, it has become, in the short time of its existence, an integral part of the African Union's African governance architecture, informing the approach taken by a cross-section of actors in the field.

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance is a fitting subject for a special issue, both in terms of its normative significance and institutional dimension. We are fortunate, and grateful, to have had an outstanding editorial team, whose members have been intimately involved in key developments over the last decade and beyond, responsible for the conception and production of this special issue. We are privileged to have benefitted from the knowledge and insights of our contributors, most of whom have combined their legal authority with active engagement in core institutions, such as the African Union Commission, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. With their expertise and experience in evidence, this issue has become a rich blend of conceptual inquiry, legal analysis and interrogation of evolving practices.

We hope that this issue will serve as an inspiration and template for more special issues in the future. We intend to publish one such issue every year or every other year, and would welcome proposals. As editors, we are particularly interested in special issues that cover themes of wider interest falling within the scope of the *Journal of African Law*. These could include: a focus on continental or regional developments, be it addressing specific issues, legal instruments or the law and practice of institutions; an examination of innovative legal concepts and practices; a consideration of cross-cutting issues; or comparative dimensions of law in Africa.

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On a final note, we would like to express our gratitude to the Journal's Editorial Managers, Raphael Jacquet and Rowan Pease, and to our copy editor, Rachel Wright, for their professionalism, commitment and support in ensuring timely publication of this special issue.

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