

# 1st ACSUS-UP US-Africa Diaspora Diplomacy Biennial Conference

**Theme: Farooq Kperogi, the Digital Age and US-African Diaspora Diplomacy**

**15 June 2023**

**11:00-16:35 (SAST)**



REGISTER HERE TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE:

<https://up-ac-za.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJltdeGrrDgrHtC5lehXaegGTCovgWfxzguB>



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**African Centre for the Study of the United States**

Afrika-sentrum vir Bestudering van die Verenigde State van Amerika  
Senthara ya Afrika ya Thuto ya Amerika



**Convener: Professor Toyin Falola**

**Toyin Falola** is a renowned scholar of African history and African studies. He holds the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities at the University of Texas, Austin. As an author or editor, he has published many scholarly books on topics ranging from diaspora, migration, and globalization to intellectual history, international relations, religion, and culture. He has been awarded sixteen honorary doctorates and has received, among many other awards, the Distinguished Africanist Award from the African Studies Association and the Cheikh Anta Diop Award for Excellence in African Studies. He served as Vice President of UNESCO's International Scientific Committee and Slave Route Project from 2011 – 2015 and member of Scholars' Council, Library of Congress. He is currently the Chair of the International Board of the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs (TM-School) at UNISA. He is also an Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria.



**Welcome Address: Professor Christopher Isike (Co-Convener)**

**Christopher Isike** is a Professor of African Politics and International Relations in the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria, and Director of the African Centre for the Study of the United States, University of Pretoria (ACSUS-UP), South Africa. He is also the current President of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS), and member of the Board of Directors of Global Development Network (GDN). He conducts research from an Africanist lens, and teaches international relations theory, strategic and security studies, and security theory at the University of Pretoria. His research interests include African soft power politics, women and political representation in Africa, rethinking state formation in Africa, politics in a digital era, and African immigration to South Africa. Prof. Isike is a Social Cohesion Advocate of South Africa appointed by the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture (2020 – 2024). His latest edited books include *Big Brother Naija and Popular Culture in Nigeria: A Critique of the Country's Cultural and Economic Diplomacy* Palgrave Macmillan (2023, with O. Ogunnubi, and O. Ukwueze) and *Conflict and Conviviality: The Ambivalence of African Migrant/Host Relations in South Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan (2022, with E. Isike).





**Opening Address:**  
**Vice Chancellor and Principal, University of Pretoria**

**Professor Tawana Kupe**

**Tawana Kupe** is a Professor of Media Studies and Journalism and has been Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria (UP), South Africa since 2019. He holds a DPhil in Media Studies from the University of Oslo, Norway. In December 2019, he received an honorary doctorate from Michigan State University and another from the University of Montpellier in October 2021. Prof Kupe has recently been appointed as the Knight of the French National Legion Honour in recognition of his remarkable achievement in promoting scientific and academic cooperation by the President of the French Republic. He is the founder of the African Centres for Study of the United States at both UP and Wits University. Prof Kupe is an active member of several civil society organisations and is a board member of several tertiary education networks and organisations globally.



**Faculty message:**  
**Acting Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria**

**Professor Sandy Africa**

**Sandy Africa** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Sciences and Deputy Dean (Teaching and Learning) Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria where she is also the Acting Dean. She has worked in the field of developing national security policies that encompass a human security approach for the past twenty five years, especially in societies undergoing democratic transitions. She regularly facilitates workshops for groups of senior security practitioners and government officials in the South African, Southern African and broader African defence and security communities. Her latest appointment by the South African government was as Chair of the High-Level Review Panel on State Security to probe the July 2021 unrest.



### **Book Reviewer:**

#### **Dr. Dannica Fleuss**

**Dannica Fleuss** is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute of Future Media, Democracy & Society at Dublin City University (Ireland) and a research associate at the Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance (University of Canberra, Australia). Between 2016 and 2022, she was a research fellow and senior lecturer in political theory at Helmut Schmidt University (Hamburg). She is also a co-convenor of the PSA's Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Specialist Group, a co-convenor of the DVPW's Teaching and Learning Specialist Group and an Associate Editor of the interdisciplinary Journal Democratic Theory as well as a member of the Switzerland-based DemocracyNet. Her research focuses on theories of democratic legitimacy, theoretical and empirical studies of deliberative democracy, and approaches aiming at decolonizing democratic theory.



### **Reflections:**

#### **Professor Farooq Kperogi**

**Farooq Kperogi** is Professor of Journalism and Emerging Media at Kennesaw State University's School of Communication and Media, in Georgia, USA, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in new media, global communication, international journalism, news reporting and writing, advanced media writing, communication theory, research methods, writing for public communication, media law, journalism history, and interviewing. His work has appeared in several books, book chapters, and peer-reviewed journals on diverse subjects such as comparative English grammar, online journalism, citizen journalism, diasporic media, virtual reality journalism, alternative journalism, and globalization. Professor Kperogi writes a weekly newspaper column on the back page of Saturday Tribune, which is republished on many media platforms. He was a reporter and news editor at many Nigerian newspapers including the Daily Trust, Daily Triumph, the now defunct New Nigerian.

## PROGRAMME

15 June 2023

11:00 – 11:05	<b>Welcome Remarks:</b> Professor Christopher Isike, Director, African Centre for the Study of the United States, University of Pretoria (ACSUS-UP)
11:05 – 11:15	<b>Opening Address:</b> Professor Tawana Kupe, Vice Chancellor and Principal, University of Pretoria
11:15 – 11:20	<b>Faculty Message:</b> Professor Sandy Africa, Acting Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria
11:20 - 11:35	<b>Book Review:</b> Dr. Dannica Fleuss, Centre for Future Media, Democracy and Society, Dublin City University  <b>Book:</b> <i>Citizenship and the Diaspora in the Digital Age: Farooq Kperogi and the Virtual Community</i> by Toyin Falola, Extraordinary Professor of Political Science, University of Pretoria
11:35 – 12:00	<b>Keynote Speaker:</b> Professor Christopher Isike, Director, ACSUS-UP <i>The Diaspora Diplomacy and Soft Power Agency of the African Diaspora in and Australia and the United States</i>

Conference Break

1<sup>st</sup> ACSUS-UP Biennial Conference: Farooq Kperogi: The Digital Age and US-Africa Diaspora Diplomacy 15 June 2023

12:30 – 14:00	1. Social Media, Diplomacy, Global Politics and Conflict	2. Digitalization, education, social change and chaos	3. Social Media and the Democratic Process in Africa	4. Digitalization and Citizen Engagement in Nigeria	5. The Diaspora Diplomacy Agency of the Nigerian Diaspora in the US	6. The Soft Power Value of the African Diaspora
<b>Chairs</b>	<b>Laura Seay,</b> Assistant Professor of Government, Colby College, USA and Co-Editor for Africa Content, <i>The Monkey Cage</i>	<b>Thabo Leshilo,</b> Politics Editor, <i>The Conversation Africa</i> , South Africa	<b>Cynthia Mbamalu,</b> Co-Founder and Director of Programs, Yiaga Africa, Abuja, Nigeria	<b>Tinahse Nyamunda,</b> Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, University of Pretoria, RSA	<b>Krista Johnson,</b> Director, Center for African Studies, Howard University, USA	<b>David Mickler,</b> Dean Global, and School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry, Curtin University, Australia
	<b>Mmamashilo Herminah Mmako:</b> The role of social media in rebuilding US-Africa relations in the Biden Administration	<b>Orogun Foluso Olanike:</b> Social Media and Youth Sexual Awareness	<b>Ibrahim Yahaya Aliyu &amp; Victor Haggai Kolongs:</b> Social media and the democratic process in Africa: The Nigerian Experience	<b>Ogunsakin Oluwasegun Dare:</b> The Role of Digital Right on Democratic Process in Nigeria	<b>Azeez O. Olaniyan:</b> Fighting from the global space: Nigerian diaspora, social media, and the struggle for good governance.	<b>Olusola Ogunnubi and Dare Leke Idowu:</b> Diasporic Soft Power and Nigeria's Citizenship Diplomacy in the Digital Age
	<b>Medinat Malefakis:</b> Conflict catalyst and peacebuilding tool? Digital technologies in Nigeria's conflict landscape	<b>Abibat Abiodun Ibrahim:</b> Nigerian Women's Right in Islam: Social Media as a Tool for Consciousness and Enlightenment.	<b>Sufianu, Afeez Ayinde:</b> Social Media in Nigerian 2023 Elections: A Case Study of Arise News TV	<b>AbdulGafar Olawale Fahm:</b> The Role of Social Media in Promoting Citizen Engagement in Nigeria: A Case Study of Farooq Kperogi's Activism	<b>P.F. Owojuyigbe:</b> A Review of the Multidimensional Role of Selected Female Nigerians in Diaspora to Nigeria's Development	<b>Gugulethu Lethu Ngwenya:</b> Soft Power Value of the African Diaspora

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	<p><b>Makhethe Makamase:</b> Exploring the social media and Transnational Terrorism Nexus: The Case of Youth Radicalisation in Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado Province</p>	<p><b>Nabeela Usman El-Nafaty &amp; Mohammad Abubakar Musa:</b> Social Media, Northern Nigerian Muslim Women and the Question of Tabarruj</p>	<p><b>Efio-Ita Effiom Nyok and Osuala Amaobi Nelson:</b> Twitter Nigeria vis-à-vis Deliberative Democracy in the 4th Republic Nigeria: A Philosophical Reflection</p>	<p><b>Olukoya Ogen, Femi Abanikannda and Nurudeen Lawal:</b> Digitization, civil citizenship and Yoruba cultural moral tales</p>	<p><b>Oluwagbemiga Dasyilva:</b> Decoding Root Narratives: Uncovering Diaspora Nigerians' Diverse Influence on Development</p>	<p><b>Adisa Habeeb:</b> Citizen Journalism in the age of Massive Social Media Engagement as it Relates to Traditional Media</p>
	<p><b>Victor Angbah:</b> African - American Returnees and the Digital Age: The Case of Ghana</p>	<p><b>Edidiong S. Akpabio:</b> Digitalization and Citizen Engagement in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects</p>	<p><b>Tahir Adekunle Ijaiya &amp; Adeyinka Patrick Adewumi:</b> The Changing Landscape of Democratic Process in Nigeria: Impact of social media</p>	<p><b>Oyèwálé, Ayòdélé Solomon:</b> Agogo (Traditional Gong) as Information Dissemination Tool in Yorùbá Culture: Challenges &amp; Prospects</p>	<p><b>Olajumoke Jacob-Haliso:</b> Between Kperogi and Falola: Convergent and Divergent Digital Strategies and Influence on US-Africa Diaspora Diplomacy</p>	<p><b>Adeniyi Taiwo Kunnu:</b> Bridges and Breaches in Virtual Vituperations... An Ideal Ensemble or Dystopic Necessity.</p>
	<p><b>Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar:</b> Untapped Potentialities: Social media and Political Actor Engagement in Nigeria’s Presidential Elections</p>	<p><b>Ayomiposi Adegbulugbe:</b> Social Media: Reorganising the Psychodynamics of Adolescent Nigerians Towards Digital Content Creation</p>	<p><b>Tony Oche &amp; Daniel Ekup-Nse:</b> The Cyberspace and Youth Agency in Governance: Nigeria’s 2023 General Elections in Focus</p>	<p><b>Kole Odutola:</b> Poetry in Social Media Age</p>	<p><b>Victor Kalalanda:</b> ‘I Write What I Like’ How Three Notable Diaspora-Based African Columnists Exploit Large-Scale Social Media to Hold Leaders Accountable at Home</p>	<p><b>Olayinka Oyegbile:</b> News Without Borders: The challenge for Gatekeepers in a new world.</p>

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		<b>Grace Edema:</b> Social Media and Education: Benefits and Challenges	<b>Alloy S. Ihuah:</b> Of Truth and Lies In The Era Of Information And Communication Technology: Reminiscing The Post-Truth Challenge In The Buhari Regime			
<b>14:00-14:30</b>	<b>Conference Break</b>					
<b>14:30 - 16:00</b>	<b>7.</b> <b>Farooq Kperogi and the Virtual Community in Nigeria</b>	<b>8.</b> <b>The Digital Age, Government Surveillance and Control</b>	<b>9.</b> <b>The Emerging Media, Citizen Journalism, Misinformation and Fake News</b>	<b>10.</b> <b>Citizen Journalism, Activism, Social Media and Government Policies</b>	<b>11.</b> <b>Web 2.0, Web 3.0 and Virtual Community Building</b>	<b>12.</b> <b>Social Media, Culture and the Future of the World</b>
<b>Chairs</b>	<b>Carl LeVan</b> Faculty President, American University, Washington DC, USA	<b>Wale Fatade</b> Commissioning Editor, <i>The Conversation Africa</i>	<b>Sharon Omotosho</b> Director, Women's Research and Documentation Centre, University of Ibadan, Nigeria	<b>Patience Key,</b> Former Presidential Aspirant, Nigeran 2023 Elections, and CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Chamber of Commerce, USA	<b>Everisto Benyera</b> Department of Political Sciences, University of South Africa, RSA	<b>Bhaso Nzhenzhe,</b> HOD, Politics & International Studies, University of Johannesburg, RSA



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	<b>Pelumi Folajimi:</b> Fela Anikulapo–Kuti on the Social Media: “Coffin for the Head” of State on YouTube	<b>Isma’il Husain Mshelia &amp; G. Umar Kari:</b> Digital Governance: A Pathway for Combating Emerging Public Safety and Security Challenges In 21st Century Nigeria	<b>Hauwa Mohammed Sani:</b> Netnographic Study of the Impact of Misinformation /disinformation on Sociodemographic Group's Behavioural Patterns of the Northern Nigerians During the POST/ COVID-19 Pandemic	<b>Bukola Adeyemi, Oyeniyi:</b> Social Media and the Teaching of African History	<b>Olúwábùkúnmi Abraham Awóšùsi:</b> Building a Global Community and Power Decentralisation in Web 3.0	<b>Ọláléyẹ Samuel Káyòdé:</b> Sàáá bí Olóògùn: The Limitations of Digital and Emerging Media on some Aspects of African Culture: A Case Study of Digital and Traditional Ifá Divination System
	<b>Kamar Hamza PhD &amp; Abubakar Yabagi Akote:</b> Farooq Kperogi, Norm Construction and the Social Media: A Review (2015-2023)	<b>Quadri Ghazal:</b> The balance of Digital Age, Government Surveillance and Control for Africans	<b>Theophilus Femi Alawonde:</b> New Media, Digitalization and Citizen Engagement in Nigeria: Lessons from the Toyin Falola Interview Series	<b>Oge Samuel Okonkwo:</b> Disinformation and Democracy in Africa: Exploring Lessons from Nigeria.	<b>Saibu Israel Abayomi &amp; Olawale Abiola Esther:</b> The New Media as A Medium in Reshaping the Socio-Economic And Political Spaces In Nigeria	<b>Olusegun Olopade:</b> AI and the Future of African Digital Communities
	<b>Dogo, M. B. Ayodele, B. J. Ali, M. B.:</b> Cultural Nostalgia: An Exploration Study of the Themes in ‘SK Beats’ on Invicta FM, Kaduna	<b>Adigun Olajide, Omotosho Oluwadamilare &amp; Yemisi Olawale:</b> Internet Under Siege: Social Media, State Surveillance and Citizenship Journalism in Nigeria	<b>Jacob Shagbaor Suemo, Cyprian Terhemba Gbasha:</b> Emerging Media and Political Misinformation Frames In The 2023 Presidential Elections In Nigeria	<b>Ojo Aderemi:</b> Victims of Activism: Examining the Positive Documentation of Student Activism in Nigerian Universities in the Age of Social Media	<b>Olayombo Raji-Oyelade:</b> Connecting Continents: Digitalizing Nigerians and Nigerian Diasporic Identities	<b>Patience Ogbo:</b> Print media reportage of baby factory phenomenon in South-eastern Nigeria

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	<p><b>Oluwatoyin Vincent Adepoju:</b> Models of Cognitive Organization: The Tree of Knowledge Across Mental and Electronic Virtualities</p>	<p><b>Kamilu A. Saka &amp; Najeem A. Isiaka:</b> Social-media financing: Myth or Reality for Micro Enterprises in Abeokuta Town?</p>	<p><b>Oluwatoyin Vincent Adepoju:</b> Comparative Cognitive Processes and Systems Mapping the Virtual Cosmos of Pius Adesanmi</p>	<p><b>Knowledge Grey Moyo:</b> Zimbabwe-USA 'Twitteractions' in the Age of Digital Diplomacy c.2015-2022</p>	<p><b>Oyewumi Olatoye Agunbiade:</b> Dynamics of Literary Journalism in the Contest Between Conventional and Social Media: A Case in Helon Habila's Waiting for an Angel</p>	<p><b>Abigail Onowosemenmen Oaikhena:</b> Social Media and Future Concerns: A Cultural Interface on Humanity, Fame and Fortune.</p>
	<p><b>Sakah Saidu Mahmud:</b> Farooq Kperogi: A Voice for Political Socialization, Democracy and Nation-building in Nigeria through the Social Media.</p>	<p><b>Abba Garba:</b> Decentralized Autonomous Organization (DAO): Building digital communities for the public good of Africa and the Diaspora</p>	<p><b>Omale Gloria Eneh, Minna &amp; Dr. Jacob Shagbaor Suemo:</b> Emerging Media, Citizen Journalism, Misinformation, and Fake News: Implication on Professional Media Practice in Nigeria</p>	<p><b>Lukman Adewale Quadri:</b> The Perforation of National Sovereignty by Big Tech in the 21st Century: an evaluation of the intersection between the political realm and cyberspace in Nigeria</p>	<p><b>Onuegbu, Okechukwu Christopher:</b> Availability, Accessibility and Usage of Online Teaching and Learning Among Nigerian Public Universities in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic</p>	<p><b>Austine Emifoniye:</b> Social Media and the future of Visual Arts Education in Nigeria.</p>
			<p><b>Adekogbe, Olatunbosun Samuel:</b> Institutional Decay in Nigeria and the Mis/conception, Mis/interpretation and Mis/information of the Social Media</p>	<p><b>Daniel Ekup-Nse:</b> The US Cyber-Coloniality and its Implication for Patriotism among Young Netizens in Africa: The EndSars Protest in Focus</p>		<p><b>Lucky Amarachukwu Onebunne:</b> Social Media and Future Concerns: a Transcultural Discourse on the Marital Crisis of 'Yanbaba Comedian'</p>

16:00 - 16:15	<b>Conference Break</b>
16:15- 16:30	<b>Plenary Conference Closing</b>
16:15 – 16:25	<b>Reflections:</b> Professor Farooq Kperogi
16:25 – 16:35	<b>Closing remarks:</b> Professor Toyin Falola

## Bios of Session Chairs

**Everisto Benyera** is Professor of African Politics in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, South Africa, where he also got his doctorate in African Politics. He has worked and researched in Zimbabwe, South Africa Namibia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. He researches and publishes on community based non-state transitional justice, human rights, transitology, and decoloniality. He has written 2 books, edited 4 books, written 21 book chapters, and 15 journal articles His books include *The Failure of the International Criminal Court in Africa: Decolonising Global Justice* (2022), *Africa and the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Curse or cure?* (2022), *The Fourth Industrial Revolution and (Re)colonisation of Africa: Coloniality of Data* (2021), *Breaking the Colonial "Contract": From Oppression to Autonomous Decolonial Futures* (2020), *Reimagining Justice, Human Rights and Leadership in Africa Challenging Discourse and Searching for Alternative Paths*, (2020) and *Indigenous, Traditional, and Non-State Transitional Justice in Southern Africa: Namibia and Zimbabwe* (2019).

**Wale Fatade** is currently a commissioning editor with *The Conversation Africa*, a general news website written by academics. He studied zoology at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria graduating in 1995. He was a Ford Foundation International Fellow at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism where he earned a Master of Science degree in Journalism in 2005. A past winner of the Nigerian Media Merit Award in entertainment, political reporting, and feature writing at different times, he started his journalism career with *The Guardian Newspapers*, Lagos in 1997. He has worked with *Independent* and *NEXT* newspapers in Nigeria and also interned at Reuters office in New York. He has reported from all continents except Australia. Wale has also spent time in the development sector with stints in ActionAid, United Nations and Ford Foundation.

**Krista Johnson** is an Associate Professor and Director of the Center for African Studies at Howard University and is co-convenor of the HU Women and Gender Studies Collective and the WGSS minor. She received her PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University and has published on a wide range of topics including health policy, gender and HIV prevention, global health governance in Africa, and race and racism in international relations. She has lived and travelled extensively throughout Southern Africa, completed a Fulbright Fellowship in 2012 at the Centre for the Study of HIV and AIDS at the University of Botswana, and was a 2021 Carnegie African Diaspora Fellow at the Institute of Pan-African Thought and Conversation at the University of Johannesburg. Prof Johnson is also currently a Research Associate at the African Centre for the Study of the United States, University of Pretoria (ACSUS-UP).

**Patience Ndidu Key** is the CEO, P-Key Health Solutions Incorporated (NPO) and Patience Key Foundation. She is a Health Professional, Agile/Scrum Master, entrepreneur, strategist, influencer and philanthropist. She was a Presidential Aspirant in the 2023 Nigerian General Elections under the Peoples Redemption Party. Ms key also serves as the President/CEO Nigerians in Diaspora Chamber of Commerce, USA, Vice President, International Association of Women (IAW), Bowie-Maryland Chapter USA, Advisory Board Member, Global Initiative for Africa (GIAA), Advisory Board Member, Diamond Youth Transformation Initiative/Nigerian Youth Decide (DYTI/NYD), and Advisory Board Member, Youths Poll Initiative. She was the first female Chair, Board of Directors (BOD), Nigerians in Diaspora Organization Americas (NIDOA) USA. She also served as Executive Director, Corporate Communications and Strategy, National e-Government Strategist Nigeria Limited and the first and former President of NIDOA USA, Maryland Chapter. Ms Key's skills and career competencies are



matched with an MBA, University of Maryland, graduate program in Public Health, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Coppin State University, and Bachelor of Science in Geography and Regional Planning, Ambrose Alli University, Nigeria.

**Thabo Leshilo**, currently Politics Editor at The Conversation Africa, is a journalist and editor with 30 years of experience. He has been an Editor at the Pretoria News, Sowetan, Sunday World, and Business Times. His main areas of interest are human rights, politics, labour, transport and small business development. He is a past winner of the Sanlam Business Journalist of the Year Award (small business section). He was a 2008/2009 Nieman Fellow (Harvard University). Thabo holds a master's in philosophy (Applied Ethics) and has also been one of the judges on the prestigious Taco Kuiper Investigative Journalism Awards and Sikuville Journalism Awards.

**Carl LeVan** is a Professor in the School of International Service, American University, Washington, D.C where he focuses on comparative political institutions, democratization, and African security. His second book on Nigeria, "Contemporary Nigerian Politics: Competition in a Time of Transition and Terror" (Cambridge 2019), explains how the ruling party lost in 2015 – the first time an incumbent party had ever been defeated. He is the co-editor of three books, including most recently the Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics (Oxford 2018), a collection of 44 new essays, edited with Patrick Ukata. He has also published on the Boko Haram insurgency, power sharing in east Africa, the economic performance of coalition governments, comparative authoritarianism and property rights in Abuja, Nigeria. His current research project examines problems of democratic politics in "post-truth" America. Prior to joining academia, he worked as a legislative director in the U.S. Congress and then as an adviser to Nigeria's National Assembly. He publishes the blog, Development4security and tweets @Dev4Security. A frequent commentator on African politics, he has appeared on *PBS NewsHour*, NPR's Diane Rehm Show, *Voice of America TV*, *BBC World Television*, *al Jazeera*, *MSNBC*, and Amy Goodman's Democracy Now!

**Cynthia Mbamalu** is a co-founder of Yiaga Africa where she serves as the Director of Programs. In the past 16 years, she has worked especially on supporting sustainable democracies, promoting political inclusion, electoral integrity, and human rights. As the Director of Program for Yiaga Africa, she has participated in and led different election observation missions in Nigeria and beyond. She currently leads the #WatchingTheVote project, a data and tech-driven initiative for electoral integrity. She was actively involved in the advocacy that led to the adoption of the Electoral Act 2022 in Nigeria and is a founding member of the Not Too Young to Run movement which achieved the amendment of Nigeria's Constitution to reduce the age for contesting elections in Nigeria. She is a lawyer by profession with an LLM in Comparative Constitutional Law.

**David Mickler** is Dean Global, Africa and Associate Professor of International Relations at Curtin University, Australia. He founded the new Centre for Australia-Africa Relations and convenes the Emerging Leaders in Australia-Africa Diplomacy program. He serves as the Australian Representative to the IORA Academic Group and as Deputy Chair of the Australia Africa Universities Network. A/Prof. Mickler is affiliated to the University of Pretoria as Future Africa Visiting Fellow and Research Associate with the African Centre for the Study of the United States. A/Prof. Mickler was previously Founding Director of the Africa Research & Engagement Centre at the University of Western Australia and served as the inaugural Co-Chair of the Global Africa Group in the Worldwide Universities Network. He has also been a visiting scholar at Addis Ababa University and the African Union Commission. His books include *New Engagement: Contemporary*

*Australian Foreign Policy Towards Africa* (2013), *The African Union: Addressing the Challenges of Peace, Security and Governance* (2016), and *Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals* (2020).

**Bhaso Ndzendze** is Associate Professor and Head of Department: Politics and International Relations at the University of Johannesburg where he lectures a postgraduate course on technology dynamics in international relations. His recent books include *The Political Economy of Sino-South African Trade and Regional Competition* (Palgrave Macmillan) *Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies in International Relations* (2021) and *Artificial Intelligence and International Relations Theories* (2023). He is the editor-in-chief of the journal *Digital Policy Studies*. His writing on technology, politics and policy has appeared in numerous academic, policy and popular press publications.

**Tinashe Nyamunda** is an Associate Professor at the University of Pretoria and a Research Fellow in the African Centre for the Study of the United States, University of Pretoria. His research interests include African Studies, Monetary History, Post-Colonial Informal Economies, and Displacement/Migration.

**Sharon Adetutu Omotoso** a feminist philosopher, is currently a Senior Research Fellow (Gender/Media Studies) at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, where she heads the Institute's 35-year-old Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC). Dr Omotoso is also Director, Centre for Applied Ethics and Political Communication in Africa (CAEPOCOMAFRICA), an alumna of the COADY Institute, St. Francis Xavier University Canada, and Fellow of the African Multiple Cluster, Universitat Bayreuth, Germany. Previously, Sharon worked as Acting Head of Department, Politics & International Relations in Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria. She currently serves on the Editorial Board of the journal *Communication Culture & Critique* and as Associate Editor *Feminist Africa*. She has consulted for organizations including NATO STRATCOM COE, INEC, UNESCO, UN Women among others. DR Omotoso co-edited *Political Communication in Africa* (2017) and edited *Women's Political Communication in Africa* (2020). She is a Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Laura E. Seay** is an Assistant Professor of Government at Colby College where she specializes in the study of African politics, development, and conflict. She is also a research associate at the University of Pretoria's African Centre for the Study of the United States. Her research examines governance, state capacity building, and United States foreign policy in Africa's fragile states, especially the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dr. Seay earned a PhD in Government from the University of Texas at Austin. She is a frequent consultant for international, governmental, and nongovernmental organizations. She also serves as co-editor for Africa content at *The Monkey Cage*, the preeminent political science blog previously hosted at the Washington Post. Her writing has appeared there and in *The Atlantic*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Politico*. She provides frequent commentary on African affairs for media outlets, including *Marketplace*, the *New York Times*, and *PBS NewsHour*.