

Africa! Africa!! Africa!!!

Which Way Africa?

By

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Across continents today, thousands of young Africans are leaving their home countries in search of survival, dignity, opportunity, and hope. Some migrate legally through education and employment routes. In contrast, many others risk dangerous and uncertain journeys across deserts, seas, and hostile borders simply because they believe that remaining at home offers little future.

The recent directive reportedly asking Africans to leave Cambodia has once again exposed the painful reality of how vulnerable many African migrants have become in foreign lands. While every sovereign nation reserves the right to regulate immigration according to its laws and national interests, the deeper issue that Africa must confront is this: *Why are so many African youths forced into desperate migration in the first place?*

This is not merely an immigration issue. It is fundamentally a crisis of leadership, governance, development, and values.

Africa is one of the richest continents on earth in terms of natural resources, human capital, culture, strategic geography, and youthful population. From oil and gas to gold, lithium, cocoa, agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, and technology potential, Africa possesses enormous opportunities capable of sustaining its people comfortably and competitively within the global economy.

Yet, paradoxically, millions of Africans continue to live in poverty amidst abundance.

The painful contradiction of Africa is that, while the continent is rich, many of its citizens remain poor largely due to decades of poor governance, corruption, weak institutions, policy inconsistency, insecurity, political instability, and leadership failure. In many African countries, public leadership has too often been driven by personal accumulation rather than national transformation. As a result, unemployment continues to rise, educational systems decline, industries collapse, infrastructure remains weak, and public trust in government erodes.

Consequently, many young people no longer see their countries as environments where dreams can thrive. Migration has therefore become not just an option, but for many, a survival strategy.

Sadly, when African youths migrate under desperate conditions, they often face discrimination, exploitation, racism, poor treatment, detention, rejection, or deportation in foreign countries.

Some lose their lives during dangerous migration journeys. Others endure humiliation abroad while struggling to survive.

This should deeply concern every responsible African leader.

The tragedy is not merely that Africans are leaving Africa. The real tragedy is that many are leaving because their countries have failed to provide the minimum conditions for human dignity, productivity, security, and hope.

Africa must now begin an honest conversation about its future.

The continent does not lack resources. It lacks visionary and accountable leadership capable of transforming resources into development outcomes. Africa does not lack talented youths. It lacks systems that empower and productively engage them. Africa does not lack ideas. It lacks institutions strong enough to implement and sustain those ideas beyond political cycles.

If Africa must rise, certain urgent steps are necessary:

1. Africa Must Prioritise Good Governance

Governance must move beyond political rhetoric to practical service delivery. Leaders must place national interest above ethnic, religious, and personal interests. Transparent governance, accountability, rule of law, and responsible public spending are essential foundations for development.

2. Investment in Youth Development and Employment

African governments must deliberately invest in education, digital skills, entrepreneurship, innovation, agriculture, manufacturing, and industrialisation. Youths should become creators of value rather than victims of unemployment and the desperation of migration.

3. Strengthening Institutions

Strong institutions are more important than strong individuals. Anti-corruption agencies, educational systems, judicial institutions, civil services, and democratic structures must be strengthened to function independently and effectively.

4. Economic Diversification

Many African economies remain excessively dependent on raw materials and imports. Africa must industrialise, support local production, encourage regional trade, and develop sustainable economic systems that create jobs and reduce dependency.

5. Pan-African Cooperation

African nations must strengthen regional collaboration through trade, security partnerships, research, innovation, and infrastructure development. The vision of African unity should move beyond ceremonial meetings into practical continental transformation.

6. Responsible Citizenship

Citizens also have responsibilities. Africans must reject corruption, tribalism, political violence, and the culture of celebrating bad leadership. Nation-building is not the duty of leaders alone but of all citizens.

The future of Africa cannot continue to be defined by mass migration, poverty, conflict, and dependency. Africa must rise to become a continent where its citizens can live, work, dream, innovate, and prosper with dignity.

The world will not respect Africa merely because of its resources. The world will respect Africa when African nations begin to demonstrate responsible leadership, productive governance, institutional strength, and sustainable development.

Africa's greatest resource is not oil, gold, or minerals. Africa's greatest resource is its people.

And until African governments begin to genuinely invest in the welfare, productivity, and future of their people, the migration crisis and international humiliations faced by many Africans may continue.

The time has come for Africa to rethink leadership, redefine governance, and rebuild hope.

Africa must stop exporting its future through desperate migration and begin creating conditions in which its youth can confidently build their future at home.

The question, therefore, remains:

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