Sub-Saharan Africa faces many structural pressures that increase the risk of political instability and violent conflict.

States are vulnerable for multiple reasons, and there is no unified set of drivers of instability. Five dimensions of structural pressure that increase the risk of political instability.

Sub-Saharan Africa’s tendency towards political instability has declined.

Risk from low levels of development has also eased and is projected to reduce more in line with better socio-economic performance.

The region’s age structure does not promote stability. However, demographic risk has been reducing steadily and will decrease further to 2040.

Horizontal inequalities and state-led discrimination between groups are likely to continue to fuel grievances and instability.
Understanding the distribution and evolution of structural pressures over long time horizons can provide policymakers with a more nuanced and dynamic understanding of risk.

Poor democracies are more vulnerable to political instability than any type of autocratic regime.

Governments and their partners should support efforts to generate better data. This includes data pertaining to both the national and subnational level.

Governments and their partners should foster institutional form and decision-making processes that expand inclusion across identity groups.

The United Nations needs to maintain the renewed momentum for the multilateral conflict prevention agenda.

See publications at: www.politicalsettlements.org/publications-database