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Morocco's Readmission in to the African Union: Implications on Collective Security

Regina Tambwari [α] & Jeffrey Kurebwa [σ]

Abstract- This study focused on understanding the implications of Morocco's readmission into the African Union (AU). Morocco was readmitted into the AU in January 2017 without any changes to the previous circumstances after its withdrawal from the AU in 1984. The discontentment of other countries such as Algeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe over Morocco's readmission is also discussed. As part of the readmission requirements, Morocco was requested to relinquish its hold on Western Saharawi. The admission and readmission criteria and membership requirements should be well spelt and adhered to by all the AU Member States.

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I. Introduction

The United Nations (UN) is viewed as a custodian of the principle of collective security as mandated by the United Nations Charter Article 1.1 where it is required to 'maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace' (UN, 2011).

Collective security therefore, implies that States need to come together and find a common solution to end the problems affecting the peace and security arrangements. Baylis (2002) notes that the United Nations at its inception was mandated to promote and uphold security collaboration at the international level. Member States also have a shared belief that regional collaboration in exercising collective security is more efficacious in eliciting security. This paved way for the creation of regional organizations to pursue regional security collaboration. Some of the regional security organizations included the European Union (1957), Organization of American States (1948), the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) (1963) In order to qualify as collective security organization, countries are required to employ the principles of consensus and commitment to peace and collective response that are fundamental to the collective security concept (African Union, 2017). The European Union (EU) uses voting by consensus to make decisions while the AU uses the majority vote rule to effect decisions. This implies that all States have to comply for the benefit of regional security (Baylis, 2002).

From 1984 to 2016 Morocco was the only African country which was not a member of the AU. McNamee, Mills and Pham (2013) highlighted that Morocco formally withdrew from the OAU in 1984 over the admission of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as a full member of the organisation. Morocco claimed that SADR was part of its territory dating back to the eleventh century while SADR claimed sovereignty over the whole territory of Western Sahara. Tadlaoui (2015) confirms that the dispute between Morocco and SADR had impaired its relations with all African countries and created serious divisions within the AU.

Kimenyi (2015) notes that Morocco actively lobbied for international acceptance of its claim to the territory of SADR, while Algeria and Libya sought recognition for SADR. This dispute saw several reversals with formal recognition extended and withdrawn by foreign governments. All this was despite the founding core values of the OAU which sought to eliminate any vestiges of colonialism on the African continent. McNamee, Mills and Pham (2013: 5) maintains that Morocco's continued absence from the AU did not only threaten to create a permanent rupture in the organization but also limited the catalytic role in Africa's economic development. This is because of Morocco's relative sophistication and depth of amalgamation with Europe, the Mediterranean, and Atlantic basins.

From 2000 Morocco made determined efforts to re-engage with AU on several fronts despite claiming that SADR was part of its territory. Pham and Laremont (2014) indicated that Morocco re-opened several diplomatic representations both resident and non-resident. It reinforced its presence in several African related forums such as the Franco–African summits and the first Euro–Africa summit in 2000. King Mohammed VI of Morocco announced a debt forgiveness plan and removal of customs duty to other African countries. Morocco was readmitted into the AU on 30 January 2017. 39 out of 54 AU countries voted in favour of Morocco's readmission (Sasa, 2017). He avers that ideally AU was not supposed to allow Morocco's readmission into AU if Western Sahara was still colonized by Morocco because the readmission flouted some of the guiding principles of AU as a collective

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security organization. Hicks (2017) however, argued that Morocco's readmission was a small victory.

II. Literature Review

Collective security is primarily aimed at maintaining peace by continuously reaffirming States of their mutual commitment to both the idea and framework for non-coercive international interactions (Johnson, 2010). The term collective security has been associated with threats to peace and security of States. Proponents of collective security argue that it fosters interaction among state and non-state actors in attaining peace. It is a much more effective approach to security than individual countries trying to act alone and collective security arrangements encourage international cooperation (Kupchan and Kupchan, 1995; Anderson, 2009). Collective Security guarantees the security of States against any forms of war or aggression. It is like an insurance system in which all the nations are bound to protect the victim of an aggression or war by neutralizing the aggression or war against the victim (Ebegbulem, 2011).

Collective security reflects the growing interdependency among States and constructs a view of international relations which focus on change and produces a language set of justifications for policy makers to pursue particular policies which are favorable. Collective security is a concept that applies during the times of external aggression of other States. It relates to tampering with threats to peace. Bull (1995) argued that a viable collective security system lies in the practical ability of all States joining forces to prevent one another from using coercion to gain advantage. Claude (2009) indicated that collective security refers to the coming together of States to provide insulation to aggression. According Mwagwabi (2012) the concept of collective security is misguided and naively unrealistic. While the goal of collective security is to rationalise human behavior and interaction, it cannot escape the normative dilemma of prioritizing some values over others (Mc Entee, 2004).

Collective Security wrongly assumes that in the event of an aggression against any nation, the aggressor and the nature of its aggression can be really and easily identified. While in practice it is very complicated to determine and name the aggressor as well as to identify the nature of aggression. In most cases the aggressor acts in the name of self-defense and justifies aggression as a defensive action. Martin (2009) noted that the idea of collective security seems to be a good plan, but very idealistic and not practical because it is difficult for politicians to explain why their country should intervene somewhere while the country has no benefit. Collective security becomes essentially an idealist conception that stability can be obtained through the consent of member countries.

III. Morocco and Western Sahara Dispute

Morocco claims Western Sahara as part of its sovereign territory while Western Saharan nationalists led by Polisario Front an organization representing the indigenous Sahrawi people claim the right to independence through self-determination (McNamee, Mills and Pham, 2013). The Western Sahara dispute was the reason why Morocco left the OAU in 1984. Western Sahara has been at the centre of a dispute between Morocco and the Polisario Front since the 1970s. Morocco annexed the territory in 1975 after withdrawal by Spain. This prompted the Polisario Front to launch a guerrilla struggle that continued until 1991, when the United Nations brokered a ceasefire (Mundy, 2010). The UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara did little to resolve the issue. At the regional level, the Western Sahara dispute saw an interlocking conflict between Morocco and Algeria which originated in 1963 over a border dispute. Algeria is known for throwing its weight behind Polisario Front. The Western Sahara conflict saw Western countries supporting Morocco while the AU and Non-Aligned Movement were in support of Western Sahara. At the heart of this intractable conflict lay sharply contrasting interpretations of key historical events, which shape the opposing communities' identities as well as their sense of justice and what is rightfully theirs (Desmidt, 2016).

Since 1991 Morocco and Polisario Front have been arguing over the criteria for voter eligibility in a proposed UN referendum. The UN Plan comprised a transitional period, repatriation of refugees, exchange of prisoners of war and the setting up of an international peace-keeping force to monitor the cease-fire, planning, and the organization of a referendum. The identification of eligible voters for the self-determination referendum became a permanent stumbling block as both parties rejected alternating referendum proposals in which their putative voters were at a numerical disadvantage (Mundy, 2010). The identification programme altered the process of oneness. People started to be conscious of their tribal ties and the power relations among the different tribes that could jeopardise the project of an equal society (Woldemariam, 2017).

The conflict in Western Sahara has been described as the conflict for the independence of the 'last colony' (Mundy, 2007). It is a struggle for the sovereignty over a territory. The Moroccan government claims the sovereignty justifying it with the ancient bond of the eleventh century empire (Mundy, 2007). Morocco is now manipulating history to justify the common roots of Morocco and Saharawi (Mundy, 2010). Pham and Laremont (2014) noted that UN General Assembly considers Morocco's presence in Western Sahara as an occupation and recognises the right to self determination and independence of the Western Sahara

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with the Polisaro Front as their legitimate representative. In 2016, Ban Ki Moon the UN General Secretary described Morocco as an occupying force (Reuters, 2017). It has to be noted that Western Sahara has never been an independent State such that the King of Morocco calls it 'Sahara province of Morocco.'

Currently there are over 140 000 Saharawi refugees in Algeria who claim that they were forced to flee their homes and leave their families in the Western Sahara (Desmidt, 2016.) Driven by Moroccan planes, phosphorus and cluster bombings, the Saharawi became the political casualties of Morocco's desire to reach out for empire. Since 1984, the Saharawi's are still pushing from the desert where the Algerian government has given them some autonomy for an independent State (McNamee, Mills and Pham, 2013). Besenyo (2010) indicates that there were also hundreds of Moroccan prisoners of war in refugee camps supervised by Polisario Front. Most of these refugees were captured in the 1970s. The Moroccan Government demanded their release on various forums but rejected the possibility of prisoner exchange or ransom. When the cease-fire agreement was signed in 1991, it was indicated in the settlement plan that after the referendum all the prisoners would be released. The referendum however, failed to materialise (Mundy, 2010). The Moroccan soldiers held captive according to the Red Cross who inspected the prisoners' living conditions reported that, most of the prisoners were weak, ill and did not receive proper care. Contrary to the international regulations the prisoners were subjected to hard labour. Polisario Front used to release a few of them from time to time as a sign of benevolence. Besenyo (2010) noted due to the intensified pressure coming from the international community, Polisario released the last group of 404 Moroccan prisoners on 18 August 2006. Unfortunately, unlike the Moroccan prisoners, the Saharawian prisoners' and refugees' cases remain unsolved. Woldemariam (2017) confirms that there are still hundreds of prisoners of war and civilian prisoners in Moroccan prisons without any hope for gaining freedom.

Gaffey (2017) noted the critical role that Algeria plays on the conflict between Morocco and Western Sahara. Algeria is accused of fuelling the conflict because it is currently housing Saharawi refugees and nothing concrete has ever been said about their future. Algeria was the first country to recognise SADR as a State in exile. Polisaro Front is enjoying the conflict and refugee status of Saharawi citizens because Morocco established a program for this and houses were built for repatriated refugees in the cities of the occupied territories. However, most of the houses are empty since Polisario Front does not let the inhabitants of the refugee camps to resettle in territories governed by Moroccan authorities and many of them are forced to stay in the camps. Polisario Front continues to use the camp-dwellers living in poverty as a tool against Morocco (Desmidt, 2016).

Mundy (2010) argues that it is unfair to blame Algeria for the dispute between Morocco and Western Saharawi. He indicates that Algeria did not create Western Saharan nationalism generally nor Polisario Front specifically. The first Western Saharan movement to articulate an explicit demand for independence appeared in 1969 while Polisario Front was formed in 1973. Algeria has had a profound influence upon the Western Sahara conflict (McNamee, Mills and Pham, 2013). The conflict between Morocco and Western Saharawi exist because of Algeria's participation. Western Saharawi nationalism has not succeeded because of because of too much dependency on Algeria. The role of Algeria in the dispute cannot be totally refuted. It suffers the least but enjoys the most benefit from the continued standoff between Morocco and Polisario Front. Algeria has a vested interest in continued stalemate (McNamee, Mills and Pham, 2013).

a) Readmission of Morocco into AU

In 1982 the SADR was admitted to the OAU now (AU). Article IV of the OAU Charter established that the organization was open to 'each independent sovereign African State'. In 1984 Morocco left the OAU in response to SADR's admission into the OAU. 38 out of the 55 AU Member States have explicitly recognized the sovereignty of SADR. From 1984 to 2016 Morocco had refused to rejoin the AU and had remained the only African country that was not a member. Morocco had vowed that unless the membership of SADR which is partially recognized internationally is withdrawn or frozen it was not going to rejoin AU. In a speech commemorating the anniversary of SADR's annexation in 2014, the King Mohammed VI of Morocco stated that 'the Sahara will remain part of Morocco until the end of time' (Pham and Laremont, 2014).

According to the AU press release dated 23 September 2016, Morocco submitted a letter requesting readmission into the AU on 22 September 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (AU, 2017). At AU's mid-term summit in Kigali, Rwanda the same year, Morocco's King Mohammed VI formally requested for readmission into the AU. It however, maintained that it had a right to continue occupying the SADR and was not going to decolonize it even if it was readmitted into AU. On 30 January 2017, African leaders decided to readmit Morocco into the AU after 39 out 54 AU member states voted in its favour (Sasa, 2017).

Ennaji (2017) argues that the historic return of Morocco to the African Union was an excellent step forward at both the economic and political levels. Economically, Morocco will have access to the promising African wide market which allows for favorable trade while politically it will foster its territorial integrity. Ennaji (2017) further argues that by rejoining

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AU Morocco was avoiding its isolation in Africa at a time when Algeria had turned its back on Morocco, Libya is in ruins, while Tunisia and Egypt are struggling. Hence Morocco seeks to rely on the African bloc in order to dialogue and cooperate more effectively with other African countries. Morocco's readmission into AU has major ramifications. It is a key country in Africa and has strong relations and a considerable impact in Africa (Ennaji, 2017). Morocco is not only central on political and economic levels, but from a cultural and religious perspective as well. A few Muslim countries in Western Africa eulogize the king of Morocco during their Friday prayers as their 'Commander of the Faithful' (Ennaji, 2017).

The return of Morocco into the AU shows its desire to exercise influence and seeks to challenge the presence of SADR (Sasa, 2017). Several countries including Algeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe reportedly wanted to make Morocco's readmission to the AU contingent on it recognizing Western Sahara's borders. Contrary Western Sahara reportedly welcomed Morocco's readmission calling it 'a chance to work together' on organizing a long-promised referendum on the territory's status. This is bound to then open a new era in the Moroccan struggle to defend its territorial integrity and in Morocco's relations with the African continent. By rejoining AU Morocco possibly reverted to its role as a political and economic leader and corrects its previous errors (Reuters, 2017).

The readmission of Morocco goes against South Africa's interests because Morocco's presence in the AU will mean all AU proceedings will no longer be influenced by South Africa and Algeria in the way it was before (Reuters, 2017). South Africa, Zimbabwe and Algeria initially stressed their disapproval of Morocco's bid to rejoin the AU. These countries were concerned with the simultaneous debate on the question of the Western Sahara and the status of the SADR in the AU. The return of Morocco to the AU raises a plethora of issues within the field of Statehood. Desmidt (2016) indicated that Morocco's membership to the AU has a practical effect on the SADR's claim of Statehood. It is also relevant to note that the AU Constitutive Act does not provide for the expulsion of members and that their suspension is only considered in cases of unconstitutional regime change. The latter entails that in the event of a Moroccan bid for suspension, exclusion or expulsion of the SADR, the Court of Justice of the African Union (African Court of Justice and Human Rights) would be entrusted with deciding the question dealing with the 'interpretation arising from the application or implementation of this Act' (AU Constitutive Act, article. 26). Hence the readmission of Morocco can be viewed as an implicit recognition of the SADR and its statehood status by Morocco (Reuters, 2017).

It can therefore be argued that by joining the AU, Morocco would adhere to the principles established in Article 4 of the AU Constitutive Act. These principles include respect for borders existing on achievement of independence, peaceful resolution of conflicts, prohibition on the threat or use of force, non-interference in internal affairs, and peaceful co-existence of Member States (Reuters, 2017). It would therefore be very difficult for Morocco to disregard the above principles in its relations with SADR without the approval of all Member States of the AU.

b) Morocco 1984-2016

Pham and Laremont (2014) noted that during the period 1984 to 2016 Morocco signed about 1000 trade agreements and treaties with various African countries. King Mohammed VI made 46 visits to 25 African countries between 2000 and 2016 (Pham and Laremont, 2014). Morocco has banks in more than 20 African countries. Its state-run airline Royal Air Maroc is one of Africa's biggest airlines in Africa. Morocco's capital city Casablanca is used as a transit point by many sub-Saharan Africans (Ennaji, 2017). In March 2014 King Mohammed VI visited Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Gabon. The tour provided a new dimension to the strategic vision of Morocco and provided unparalleled opportunities for the country's cooperation with Africa. The Ministry of Economy and Finance (2014) reported that more than 90 partnership agreements were signed. Several socio-economic development projects were signed in areas of health, education, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, and social housing (Morocco Ministry of Economy and Finance 2014).

Pham and Laremont (2014) indicated that several diplomatic missions were opened. This reinforced its presence in several African related forums, such as the Franco–African summits and the first Euro–Africa summit in 2000. Morocco's King Mohammed VI announced a debt forgiveness plan for Africa's least developed countries, and the eradication of the custom duties to be levied on imported products. Morocco signed 19 economic agreements with Rwanda and 22 with Tanzania. Tanzania and Rwanda traditionally backed the Western Sahara's quest for decolonisation. Nigeria and Morocco have also signed a total of 21 bilateral agreements, a joint venture to construct a gas pipeline that will connect the two nations as well as some other African countries to Europe. Woldemariam (2017) argued that these economic agreements signaled Morocco's leverage in its campaign to return to the AU and dealt a blow to Western Sahara's aspirations for self-determination. After its readmission into AU, King Mohammed VI visited South Sudan where he signed nine bilateral agreements which established Morocco's commitment to build South Sudan's new capital. In addition Morocco also established a field hospital

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providing care to more than 4000 people daily (Reuters, 2017).

c) What led Morocco to seek readmission into AU?

Mundy (2016) noted that Morocco feeling the increasing pressure of isolation had to re-evaluate its stance to join the AU. He further argued that most European countries that were not recognising Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara were now rejecting products from Western Sahara. Reuters (2016) reported that on 21 December 2016, the Court of Justice of the EU passed a judgement indicating that Western Sahara was a non-self governing territory but not part of Morocco. This meant that all the products and resources which were coming from Western Sahara were no longer allowed some EU markets. In his analysis, Tadlaoui (2015) indicated that Morocco wanted to end its relative diplomatic isolation with other African countries. King Mohammed VI adopted the strategic use of 'religious diplomacy' where he presented Morocco as a religious authority. Morocco's religious diplomacy promoted religious cooperation and deepened security cooperation between the countries in North Africa. These efforts were meant to thwart terrorism and ensured broader regional stability. Mundy (2016) argued that SADR and Algeria were strategic in Morocco's quest to develop stronger ties with other African countries. Tadlaoui (2015) noted that growing opposition over the case of Western Sahara also forced Morocco to seek readmission into the AU. EU countries were also pushing for a prompt resolution to the Western Sahara conflict. During the period 2013 and 2014, Morocco was against an American proposal to expand UN monitoring of human rights in the Western Sahara and it discarded the idea of an AU envoy to the Western Sahara.

Hicks (2017) indicated that the decision by Morocco to leave the AU in 1984 was a 'strategic mistake' because Africa was Morocco's natural home. Morocco had left an organization and not the continent (Africa Renewal, 2017). Hicks (2017) noted that Morocco was also avoiding its isolation especially in North Africa. Algeria was in support of SADR, while Libya, Tunisia and Egypt were in a humanitarian crisis. Morocco sought to rely on the AU in order to dialogue and cooperate more effectively with other African countries. It wanted to use its re-admission as pedal to exert further control over the SADR. Gaffey (2017) avers that after rejoining AU, Morocco would work from inside to push for SADR's expulsion from the AU.

Rwengabo (2015) opined that the AU faces a serious challenge of resources and therefore Morocco would provide the required financial assistance to run the organization. Its continued absence threatened to create a permanent rupture in the organization and also limited the catalytic role in Africa's economic growth given its relative sophistication and depth of integration with Europe and the Mediterranean and Atlantic basins (McNamee, Mills and Pham 2013). Mogherini (2017) argued that Morocco's absence had repercussions on the continent's security. Fertilizer production units in Ethiopia and Nigeria were established whose benefits will extend to the entire African continent (Gaffey, 2017).

d) Why AU member states voted for Morocco's readmission?

The Emerging Markets Monitor (2017) indicated that Morocco has the resources to be recognized as a regional leader. Morocco is the sixth largest economy in Africa. Its population is the eleventh biggest in Africa while its military budget is ranked fourth. It therefore has the capacity to significantly reinforce a weak AU by providing funding to development programmes and troops to peace-keeping missions. Therefore Morocco's resources are obviously welcome for AU programs. These factors were a central element in some African states' decision to support Morocco's readmission into the AU. Morocco's reasons for readmission into the AU are purely economic. The Emerging Markets Monitor (2017) indicated that several Moroccan companies were betting their growth on sub-Saharan Africa. Just like America, Europe and Asians, Morocco is interested in Africa because of its growth potential.

Some African countries voted in favour of Morocco's readmission, optimistic that the referendum on SADR self- determination would finally take place. Ennaji (2017) noted that in 2016 Morocco regularized the situation of tens of thousands of Sub-Saharan undocumented migrants, and commissioned the Moroccan religious scholars to African Muslim countries for the strengthening of moderate tolerant Islam and the fight against religious extremism. Morocco's recent admission to the AU can be seen as an inferred recognition of the SADR and its statehood (Ennaji, 2017). The African Renewal (2017) claimed that the readmission of Morocco into the AU can be seen as a *de facto* recognition of SADR.

Connolly (2016) noted that Morocco will benefit from its readmission since AU had survived without it for more than three decades. The African continent already contributes most of the troops to UN peacekeeping missions. African countries make up more than half of the top twenty global contributors of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping missions. Al-Monitor (2017) viewed the readmission to be beneficial to Morocco since it is likely to break the African consensus in support of the Polisario Front and protect Moroccan interests in Africa.

e) Implications of Morocco's readmission to SADR call for self determination

While addressing the 72nd Session of UN general assembly in New York 2017, Robert Mugabe former President of Zimbabwe said that:

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The continued denial of the right to self-determination to the people of Western Sahara who are living under colonial and foreign occupation is immoral and an urgent matter for those seeking peace and security of this time.

He called on the Security Council to demonstrate its authority in ensuring urgent holding of an independence referendum for Western Sahara (UN, 2017). Pham and Laremont (2014) supported Morocco's continued occupation of Western Sahara arguing that Morocco was a major contributor to African solidarity and an ardent supporter of various liberation movements across the continent. Its withdrawal from the OAU in 1984 was occasioned by the fact that OAU had acted perversely against its own founding charter, which stipulated that, the territoriality of states, was a *sine qua non* condition for their membership. This position was not fair to Morocco as it felt that the Polisario Front was never recognized by the OAU as an African liberation movement and that SADR was not a sovereign and independent state with control over its territories. Morocco's official narrative was that Western Sahara was 'an ineluctable part of Morocco' (McNamee, Mills, Pham, 2017).

Kimenyi (2015) acknowledged the strategic role of Morocco to Africa. He argued that AU was actually alienating one of the most ancient and important states in Africa. Morocco is known for championing pan-Africanism, south-south cooperation, and promoting development programs and strategies in every field, much sought-after technical expertise and competence in international peace and security matters. AU would stand to lose all these benefits if it has refused to readmit Morocco into AU. McNamee, Mills and Pham (2013) emphasized that Morocco was not a peripheral figure in Africa's emancipation struggle. Morocco stood at the forefront of the decolonization process and anti-colonial endeavors of the entire continent, asserting its own right to complete decolonization while respecting its national unity and territorial integrity.

Khadad (2017) noted that the majority support that Morocco received from other African states is a clear demonstration of its strategic contribution to the AU. In his expression of anger over AU's support for SADR, King Mohammed VI said:

> "That immoral fait accompli, that coup against international legality, led the Kingdom of Morocco to seek to avoid the division of Africa, and the price Morocco had to pay was the painful decision to leave its institutional family" (Africa Renewal, 2017).

The recognition of SADR by a few African States was an insufficient pretext for admitting a phantom state without the requisite attributes of sovereignty. The government of Morocco indicated that it was never going to recognize Western Sahara, and that AU membership would not change Morocco's stance that Western Sahara was an integral part of Moroccan territory (Moroccan World News, 2017). Morocco's failure to recognize Western Sahara's sovereignty is based on the fact that it is not a member of the UN. Western Sahara does not have any administering power and therefore should be under Moroccan sovereignty. SADR's membership to the AU was a tactic to seek full recognition of her independence and also a means to force Morocco to recognise that position (Daily Maverick, 2017). Morocco's position was that SADR was admitted into the OAU against Article IV of the OAU Charter. Khadad (2017) noted that SADR had no symbol of sovereignty and therefore it had no case against Morocco. SADR therefore should pull out of the AU and seek for its sovereignty status from outside.

The UN General Assembly recognises Morocco as the occupying power in Western Sahara. Shelley (2015) argued that SADR was established in 1976 as a process of establishing the state of Saharawi led by the Polisario Front. This position was recognized by some African countries. Shelley (2015) indicated that the history of Morocco had been manipulated to justify its occupation of Saharawi. AU should assist SADR and Morocco to change their contrasting interpretations of key historical events which shaped their identities and sense of justice to what is rightfully theirs.

Morocco indicated that it suspended its AU membership to pressure African countries to withdraw their recognition of SADR. Unfortunately despite great strides to force African states to withdraw recognition of SADR, the then AU Commission Chair Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma reaffirmed the AU's support for Western Sahara's independence in 2016. The continued denial for self-determination to Western Saharawi was the central argument for the fifteen AU member states who voted against Morocco's readmission (Africa Renewal, 2017).

The decision regarding the admission of a member state into the AU is the preserve of AU Member States. In support of this view Hicks (2017) indicated that there is need to revisit admission and readmission criteria. Hicks (2017) further indicated that there are prospects of enlarging the AU membership by including the African Diaspora. Given this possibility, the AU should subject each applicant state to a process that assesses its ability and willingness to comply with the union's norms, the likely obstacles to compliance, and the feasibility of assisting the applicant state to redress its shortfalls.

Fagbayibo (2017) also support the above argument by indicating that it's time for the AU to look beyond geography and a simple majority vote. It must start demanding strict adherence to fundamental democratic values. From the time Morocco submitted its application until its formal admission, the question of Western Sahara was swept aside. Morocco easily met the AU's admission criteria. It's geographically located

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within Africa and was voted in by more than a simple majority. Morocco's admission into AU was a mistake as it actually squandered a good chance to discourage Morocco's aggression against Western Sahara. In addition, Fagbayibo (2017) argued that AU had failed to assess the situation of Morocco effectively. Morocco is notorious for forcing dissidents serve long prison terms after unfair trials for purely political reasons. The failure to consider democratic values as part of the AU's admission process continues to have a number of negative effects. Mundy (2016) also concurs that the absence of strict pre-conditions for membership has made it difficult for the AU to manage delinquent behaviour among member states.

f) Implications of Morocco's readmission on collective security

A viable collective security system lies in the practical ability of 'all states joining forces to prevent one of the numbers from using coercion to gain advantage' (Bull 1995:231). Al Monitor (2017) agrees that Morocco actually adopted the stick-and-carrot policy in the dispute over SADR. Firstly it threatened to withdraw its troops from peacekeeping missions in Africa and secondly it pressured countries closer to it to mobilize for the expulsion of SADR from the AU. However, countries such as Algeria, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Nigeria were against the expulsion of SADR from the AU.

Morocco's request to rejoin the AU might provide a new opportunity to negotiate for its withdrawal for SADR thus fostering collective security initiatives. The AU general secretariat noted that maybe Morocco wanted to return in order to argue the SADR issue from within the AU. It further commended that 'Of course the African family welcomes Morocco's return, but no one wants any debates or diplomatic disputes between member states. We want to work together for the benefit of the continent' (AU, 2017).

IV. Conclusion

The readmission of Morocco into the AU was a welcome move. As part of readmission, Morocco was tasked to make sure that it relinquishes its hold on Western Sahara. Morocco's readmission into the AU conforms to realism in the sense that it sought favor with individual member states who then respected their bilateral relations more than the case of SADR during the voting process. Wolfforth (1988:23) argues that 'states employ strategies whose benefits exceed the expected loss thus making rational choices'. The readmission of Morocco sanctifies the common thread in international relations that 'there are no permanent enemies but only permanent interests in politics'. AU member states were more concerned with what their personal relationship with Morocco could do to their national interest rather than sticking to the principles which guide collective security. Wohlforth (1988:23) also adds that 'states are self regarding and they look out for their own security and well-being and they are not likely to equate their well-being for others'. AU Member States were pushed to act on the impulse of national interest or individual foreign policy objectives. Nyathi (2017) argued that Morocco should not mistake being voted back into the AU as automatically voting SADR out of the organization. SADR has the support of AU despite the fact that Morocco was readmitted. There is need to change the admission criteria because this will reduce cases of flouting AU principles in future if a need to admit other possible members of African background arise. Morocco's readmission contravenes the Constitutive Act of the AU of 2000 hence if not well articulated this will likely destroy the collectivism in providing collective security of AU. Future readmission will refer to Morocco's readmission as an example to contravene the principles of AU, thus killing the whole purpose of having AU in the first place. From the study, it was identified that there are no effective checks and balance initiatives by AU to make sure that states are actually adhering to the principles and norms of AU. There is need for stricter rules and well coordinated funding so that those in breach of the AU principles will not exploit others in the context of funding or promoting programs.

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