

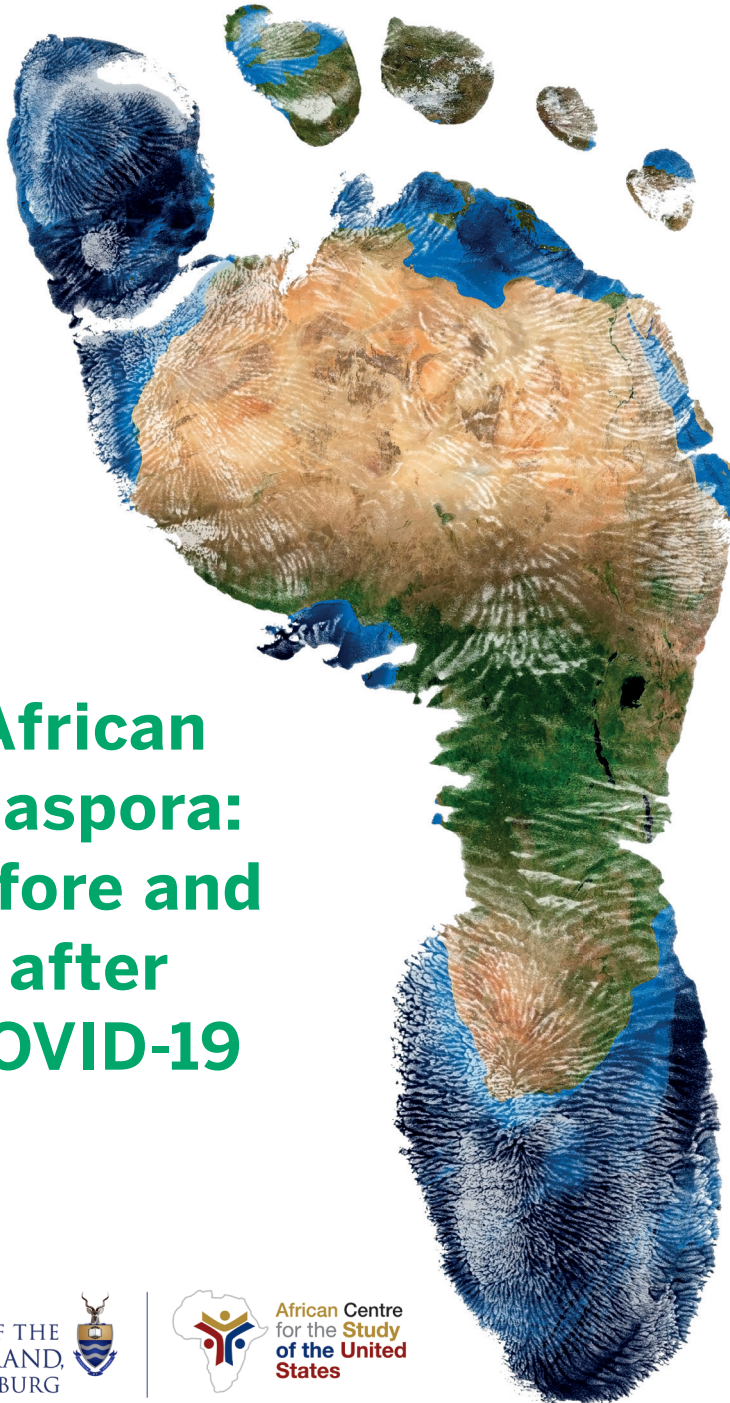
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# Africa inFact

What black scholars can teach us  
COVID-19 and African Diaspora  
Landlocked in lockdown  
African and American engagement

## African Diaspora: before and after COVID-19



UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WITWATERSRAND,  
JOHANNESBURG



African Centre  
for the Study  
of the United  
States



A partnership publication between GGA and the African Centre for the Study of the United States, University of the Witwatersrand

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2020



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### **About Good Governance Africa**

Founded in 2012, Good Governance Africa is a registered NPO with its SADC offices based in Johannesburg, and other offices in Accra and Lagos.

Good Governance Africa aims to promote good governance in Africa through applied research and critical debate. Our publications include *Africa in Fact*, the Africa Survey Digital and other projects. Research areas include local government, natural resources and national security.

Good Governance Africa is also concerned with the promotion of education, innovation, leadership, and social values.

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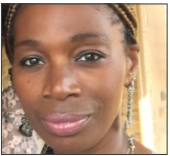
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## African diaspora in Central and Eastern Europe

*The focus on African diaspora in Russia as well as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia needs to be sharpened*

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# The neglected Africans of post-communist Europe

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*István Tarrósy*

**T**he new realities of our globalised world have direct effects on international migration – especially when it comes to the challenges of COVID-19. Migration is truly a profound feature of the global context, and movement has become accelerated and diverse. As international political economist Prof. Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome says: “African immigrants are now part of the transnational communities that can be found in virtually all regions of the world.”

This means that they are also present across post-Soviet spaces, including post-communist Central European countries. I cannot agree more with Russian anthropologist Dmitri Bondarenko, who said that “without taking migrations to Russia (and to the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe) into serious account, any research on global African migration processes and their consequences at the European (or wider) level would be... incomplete and imperfect”.

Yet African communities living in Central and Eastern Europe are often neglected in studies of global African diaspora (people, usually of African descent, residing outside Africa or within Africa in countries other than their own). Both the literature and foreign policies in the former communist Eastern Bloc hardly ever mention the diaspora.

These diaspora communities are an important part of understanding transnational interaction, and connections with the motherland. The potential of African diaspora in the Visegrad Four (V4) countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – needs to become a part of the overall discussion.

And today, this is even more relevant, as more people migrate towards the European Union (EU) via the Serbian-Hungarian border region, and





V4 policies made their citizens more skeptical and intolerant of others – including Africans.

The importance of research on African communities across Central and Eastern Europe, as well as present-day Russia, cannot be denied. This should include reopening diplomatic representation, organising high-level state visits, revitalising university scholarship programmes, fostering technology transfers, investment schemes and developmental aid.

### **Back to Africa**

Following the change of the political systems that swept across the region of the former Soviet Bloc toward the end of the 1980s, ex-satellite states' foreign policies were mostly directed towards the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joined NATO in 1999, with Slovakia, the V4 countries, and six from the ex-communist camp,

following in 2004. Almost the entire post-Eastern Bloc kept echoing the slogan “Back to Europe”, showing a longing for the community of the West.

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Russia today fosters pragmatic foreign policies with African regions and states.

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Nearly a decade later, all these countries began to talk about adapting

their foreign policies to the new realities across the world. New foreign policy chapters were formulated, and another slogan emerged: “Back to Africa”.

While the new Russia, in its first years of existence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, marginally considered African partnerships, it now fosters pragmatic foreign policies with African regions and states – as has every country of the ex-communist Bloc since 2010. Although Mediterranean connections with northern African countries prevail, increased attention is paid to sub-Saharan Africa.

Today, the Czech Republic has 12 embassies on the continent (eight in sub-Saharan Africa), Hungary has 11 (six sub-Saharan), Poland also has 11 (seven sub-Saharan), and Slovakia has six (four sub-Saharan).

In addition to the embassies, honorary consuls, trade attachés and travelling ambassadors were also dispatched.

Policies also reflect increasing Central European-African engagements. In July 2015, the Czech Republic published a foreign policy concept with a pragmatic framework for all Czech engagements, followed by a strategy for relations between the Czech Republic and the states of sub-Saharan Africa in 2017.

Though Poland and Slovakia don't have separate Africa-strategies, both have been running numerous projects across the continent, such as Poland's Go



Migrants in Hungary at the Hungary-Serbian border

*Photo: Gémes Sándor/ SzomSzed*

Africa-project and its high-level meeting series of the Poland-Africa Congresses. Its foreign policy strategy for 2017–2021 includes considerable security and economic angles in Africa. Slovakia’s international development agency, SlovakAid, has also been managing several projects in sub-Saharan Africa.


Hungary’s government published its Africa-strategy in 2019, defining plans for developmental assistance, technology transfer, a wide-scale scholarship programme and export trade diplomacy.

All V4 countries also emphasise economic diplomacy and encourage investments and business-to-business cooperation. They have also shown interest in participating in peace operations across the continent.

### **Bridging the gaps**

African diasporic communities are not only important developmental assets, because of the remittances they transfer to their home countries, but could also build bridges between their new countries and their origins. Many governments in these receiving countries are pressured to foster policies that integrate migrants, contribute to mutually beneficial economic deals, and create health, educational or cultural projects. They tend to emphasise a “triple-win” scenario that benefits both countries and the migrants themselves.

*The neglected Africans of post-communist Europe*

From a V4 perspective, their relatively small African communities (usually numbering in the several thousands) can be active contributors to new Africa strategies. However, to create win-win scenarios, action must be taken to reach out to African diaspora and get them on board. 

**V4 embassies in Africa, 2020**



**Network of consulates of the Visegrad countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 2020**

**Czech Republic (23)**

Angola - Luanda (Consulate)  
Botswana - Gaborone (Consulate)  
Burkina Faso - Ouagadougou (Consulate)  
Cameroon - Douala (Consulate)  
Cabo Verde - Praia (Consulate)  
Congo (Democratic Republic) - Kinshasa (Consulate)  
Congo (Republic) - Brazzaville (Consulate)  
Djibouti - Djibouti City (Consulate General)  
Gambia - Banjul (Consulate)  
Guinea - Conakry (Consulate)  
Malawi - Lilongwe (Consulate)  
Mali - Bamako (Consulate)  
Mauritania - Nouakchott (Consulate)  
Mauritius - Port Louis (Consulate)  
Mozambique - Maputo (Consulate)  
Namibia - Windhoek (Consulate)  
Niger - Niamey (Consulate)  
Nigeria - Abuja (Consulate)  
Rwanda - Kigali (Consulate)  
Seychelles - Victoria (Consulate)  
Sudan - Khartoum (Consulate)  
Tanzania - Dar es Salaam (Consulate)  
Togo - Lomé (Consulate)

**Poland (15)**

Benin - Cotonou (Consulate)  
Cameroon - Yaounde (Consulate)  
Eritrea - Asmara (Consulate)  
Gabon - Libreville (Consulate)  
Ghana - Accra (Consulate)  
Kenya - Mombasa (Consulate)  
Madagascar - Antananarivo (Consulate)  
Mauritania - Nouakchott (Consulate)  
Mozambique - Maputo (Consulate)  
Rwanda - Kigali (Consulate)  
South Africa - Durban (Consulate)  
Sudan - Khartoum (Consulate)  
Uganda - Kampala (Consulate)  
Zambia - Lusaka (Consulate)  
Zimbabwe - Harare (Consulate)

**Hungary (19)**

Botswana - Gaborone (Consulate)  
Cameroon - Douala (Consulate)  
Cabo Verde - Praia (Consulate)  
Djibouti - Djibouti City (Consulate)  
Guinea - Conakry (Consulate)  
Kenya - Mombasa (Consulate)  
Mali - Bamako (Consulate)  
Mauritius - Port Louis (Consulate)  
Namibia - Windhoek (Consulate)  
Nigeria - Kaduna (Consulate)  
Nigeria - Lagos (Consulate)  
Senegal - Dakar (Consulate General)  
Seychelles - Victoria (Consulate)  
South Africa - Cape Town (Consulate)  
South Africa - Durban (Consulate)  
Sudan - Khartoum (Consulate)  
Tanzania - Dar es Salaam (Consulate)  
Uganda - Kampala (Consulate)  
Zambia - Lusaka (Consulate)

**Slovakia (12)**

Cameroon - Yaounde (Consulate)  
Guinea - Conakry (Consulate)  
Kenya - Mombasa (Consulate)  
Malawi - Blantyre (Consulate)  
Nigeria - Port Harcourt (Consulate)  
Senegal - Dakar (Consulate)  
Seychelles - Victoria (Consulate)  
South Africa - Cape Town (Consulate)  
Sudan - Khartoum (Consulate General)  
Togo - Lomé (Consulate)  
Uganda - Kampala (Consulate)  
Zambia - Lusaka (Consulate)