

# Soldiers in Civilian Uniforms: The Role of the Military in the Pursuit of Third-Termism

## **Abstract**

Militaries are to defend national territorial integrity, protect the citizenry, uphold the constitution and play a supportive role in upholding the democratic ideals of a country. However, some militaries across African countries have defined their roles differently, relying on the instrumentality of force to engage in politics and thereby subvert the people's right to self-determination and suppress democratic freedoms. The result has been an endless tale of militarism in African politics and an undermining of democratic governance on the continent. Militarism in African politics has manifested itself overtly and covertly. Overtly, mainly through coups d'état, mercenary activities and civil wars. Covertly, the military's role in African politics has involved lending support to politicians who refuse to leave after losing elections; or, after exhausting their term in office and manipulating the constitution to extend their stay in power (third-termism). The focus of this chapter is on the support the military expresses or has expressed for third-termism.