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**‘AFRICA RISKS NEW GEN Z PROTESTS AS IRAN
WAR HITS LIVING STANDARDS’ – FOUNDER OF
AFRICA’S LARGEST SURVEY OF YOUTH
SENTIMENT WARNS AS OIL PRICES SOAR**

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- The warning was made by the Commissioner of the African Youth Survey, Ivor Ichikowitz, at the Commonwealth Youth Development Summit 2026.
 - He said the war will “deepen inequality on this continent” and this risks only further fuelling Gen Z “impatience” and demand for societal change.
 - Youth frustration could become “the most dangerous political event that can happen on the continent”, Mr Ichikowitz said.
 - The Africa Youth Survey is published biennially with the next edition, drawn from research in 30 African countries, to be released on 25th May 2026.
 - New website www.africanyouthsurvey.org launched to allow for easy access to the survey’s results, data and background documents.
 - The African Youth Survey is an initiative of a South Africa-based philanthropic organisation, the Ichikowitz Family Foundation.

Ivor Ichikowitz is available for interview and comment.

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10 April 2026, Oxford, UK: The Commissioner of the Africa Youth Survey, the largest polling of young adults’ attitudes and belief on the continent, has warned that the Iran War and the resulting

economic shock to the global economy will once again disproportionately hit Africa's youth who are already at "a volatile and potentially dangerous turning point".

Ivor Ichikowitz made the warning at the Commonwealth Youth Development Youth Summit 2026 at Oxford University, United Kingdom, today saying: "Every time the world erupts in a crisis in the Middle East, every time missiles fly, every time a carrier strike group repositions, every time oil futures spike and Western capitals go into emergency session, Africa pays the price without being invited to the table."

This, he warned, will "deepen inequality on this continent", further fuelling Gen Z "impatience" with the status quo.

Growing youth frustration could be "the most dangerous political event that can happen on the continent," Mr Ichikowitz told delegates, as previous editions of the survey – which will see its 2026 findings released next month – found young Africans are already at "a turning point".

The warning comes after recent years have seen rising unrest associated with Gen Z, not only in Africa but in other developing nations. 2024 saw youth-led protests in Kenya that re-erupted in summer 2025 while there was also widespread post-election protests in Mozambique and Tanzania. Demonstrations have also been seen in Madagascar and Morocco while further Gen Z protests have been witnessed in Nepal, Bangladesh, Peru, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Africa is home to the youngest population globally, with nearly 60 per cent under the age of 25.

Mr Ichikowitz said: "The conflict now unfolding around Iran is not Africa's war. African youth did not draw those borders. African nations did not sell those weapons. African governments did not sign those nuclear frameworks. And yet, fuel prices are rising across the continent. Food supply chains are fracturing. Aid budgets in Washington and London, already under pressure, are being quietly redirected toward Middle Eastern stability operations.

"When a young man in Bamako or Ouagadougou or N'Djamena watches the global order prioritise the geopolitical contest in the Gulf, when he watches billions mobilised overnight for crises elsewhere, while his own country has no electricity, no jobs, no justice, he does not conclude that the system is imperfect. He concludes that the system was never designed for him.

"And that conclusion, that specific moment of clarity, is the most dangerous political event that can happen on this continent."

He continued: "We have already seen it. In the Sahel, where coup after coup has been greeted not with outrage from the youth, but with relief. Where Wagner and its successors moved into the

security vacuum that Western disengagement left wide open. Where ‘France out’ became a rallying cry not because young Africans are anti-democracy, but because they are anti-hypocrisy. They are opposed to a system that promises partnership and delivers extraction.

“The war in Iran, or rather the world's obsession with it, is an accelerant. It will deepen inequality on this continent. It will distract the institutions that should be paying attention. And in that distraction, in that vacuum, the forces that prey on desperation will move quickly.”

The next edition of the African Youth Survey 2026 will be released on Africa Day, 25th May, with important new findings on attitudes, expectations and likely behavioural patterns of Africa's coming generation. Since 2020, it has published findings based on 20,000 face-to-face interviews carried out by leading global research company, PSB Insights across 30 African countries and is the most comprehensive research into attitudes among young adults in Africa aged 18-24.

The countries, chosen to reflect the continent's wide geographic, cultural and economic range, include South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia, Chad, Somalia, Burkina Faso and Togo. Respondents are asked a wide range of questions that touched on issues including attitudes to politics and governance, commerce and economic opportunity, culture and environment, security and corruption.

The 2024 survey already found that Africa's youth are at a turning point, with frustration hardening into anger-like political sentiment. It reported that 66 per cent of youth Africans believed their country was going in the wrong direction, 85% worried about jobs, 73% were concerned about government corruption and 52% already warning that non-peaceful protest may be necessary to effect political change.

Trailing the 2026 survey's findings, Mr Ichikowitz said: “This generation is not looking to their governments for salvation. They have watched too many government promises dissolve into corruption and incompetence to harbour that particular illusion. They are worldly enough, connected enough, informed enough, to see exactly how it works and exactly who it serves. And they are impatient enough to know, with absolute clarity, that if they do not take their futures into their own hands, they will not have futures worth having.

“So the expectation has changed. Previous generations asked their governments: provide for us. Build the hospitals, the schools, the roads. Deliver the jobs. Create the safety net. Give us something to belong to. This generation is asking something entirely different. They are saying: we will build it ourselves. Just get out of our way.”

The Commonwealth Youth Development Summit 2026 runs from 9-11 April 2026 at the University of Oxford from 9-11 April 2026, bringing together youth leaders, policymakers, institutions and partners from across the Commonwealth.

The 2026 Africa Youth Survey is the fourth in an ongoing series of biennial surveys begun in 2020. The growing body of data represents the world's most comprehensive and detailed research programme into Africa's coming generation.

The African Youth Survey is supported by a South Africa-based philanthropic organisation, the Ichikowitz Family Foundation.

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Note for Editors

Download previous editions of the Africa Youth Survey here:

<https://ichikowitzfoundation.com/our-work/african-youth-survey-2024>

Photos for publication of Mr Ichikowitz:

<https://zбек.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/Zebek/IgBp2fQ0tFLQQ6ygweD8vo0JAc6AMGFleXiAZXunZbAhSfc?e=JJkCZz>

More info on Commonwealth Youth Development Summit: <https://cycofficial.org/cyc-yds-26/>

More info on the Ichikowitz Family Foundation: <https://ichikowitzfoundation.com/>

For more background information, media inquiries and for interviews with Mr Ichikowitz's please contact:

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