

DISCUSSION PAPER No. 228

Tackling the triggers of violence-induced displacement: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE AND AFRICAN GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE

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SUMMARY

Displacement induced by violence affects the African continent disproportionately. The African Union (AU) has developed two key continental instruments to potentially address this issue. The first is the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), for the prevention and management of conflicts. The second is the African Governance Architecture (AGA), that promotes democratic governance in the continent. The AU makes use of these two instruments to tackle governance, peace and security challenges, which are often at the heart of violence-induced displacement.

The links between APSA and AGA activities and how these can reduce or alter the triggers of violence-induced displacement have not yet been explored in-depth. With this paper, we try to understand whether and how the interventions by the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) contribute to addressing the triggers of violence-induced displacement.

We clarify the concept of triggers of violence-induced displacement and look at selected case studies. We also share lessons learned on those factors that seem to contribute positively to reducing triggers of violence-induced displacement and we offer some suggestions on how the APSA and the AGA could better respond in the future.

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¹ It should be noted that this research was completed in December 2017; as a result, conflict dynamics, APSA/AGA interventions and displacement figures considered in the study, hence in this discussion paper, only go as far as August 2017. Some new developments may have occurred in between when the study was concluded and this discussion paper (which is the summarised and abridged version of the study) was made publicly available in September 2018.

Acronyms

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APSA	African Peace and Security Actors
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUCISS	African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DDRRR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, Repatriation and Resettlement
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
ICGLR	International Conference for the Great Lakes Region
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Center
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
JMEC	Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
MAPROBU	African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MS	Member states
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCRD	Peace Consolidation and Post-conflict reconstruction and Development
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department

PSO	Peace Support Operation
PSOD	Peace Support Operations Division
REC	Regional Economic Community
RM	Regional Mechanism
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
TCC	Troop Contributing Countries
UK	United Kingdom
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States

Executive Summary

As a continent, Africa is disproportionately affected by violent conflict and, as a result, by violence-induced displacement. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) are being used to coordinate and carry out efforts to prevent, manage and resolve crises and conflict on the continent, which lie at the heart of such forced displacement. Yet, the links between APSA and AGA activities and the way these can potentially reduce or alter the triggers of violence-induced displacement have not yet been explored in depth. **The central enquiry of this study is the extent to which interventions of the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in the context of APSA and AGA, contribute to addressing the triggers of violence-induced displacement.**

The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase provided literature and conceptual clarifications on triggers of violence-induced displacement - fear of persecution, armed violent conflict, generalised violence and profound human rights violations - and how these can be addressed by APSA/AGA interventions. The second phase looked in-depth at APSA/AGA interventions in South Sudan, Burundi, and Boko Haram-affected areas in the Lake Chad region, including through interviews.

A number of insights were gained from the three case studies on APSA/AGA measures and their contribution to a reduction of violence-induced displacement, prevention of further increase of displacement or the (unrealised) potential to do so.

In the case of **Boko Haram**, the main pathway to tackle forced displacement has been through the military containment of Boko Haram by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the integration of civilian protection and respect for human rights into its mission mandates. Within the MNJTF set-up, actions under APSA did play a role, but only with the marginal role of the AU. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that Boko Haram caused fewer people to be displaced and their return or possible future return has been facilitated as a result of the intervention.

In **Burundi**, the deployment of human rights observers seems to have had positive – if limited – effects on the reduction of violence and human rights violations, though their exact impact in the specific geographic location in which they operated could not be established as part of this study. Nonetheless, it can be said that their presence on the ground allowed the AU to have a direct connection and additional capacity for collecting information. In **South Sudan**, actions aimed at addressing displacement triggers, such as mediation and the conclusion of peace agreements, as well as the mapping of human rights violations, as part of an AU Enquiry, are yet to realise their potential to strengthen accountability and healing.

While much has been achieved, there is room to improve the AU's or REC's efforts to operationalise existing frameworks, tools and plans, in relation to displacement triggers (i.e. human rights violations, violence, instability etc.). The following are areas where APSA and AGA structures could be strengthened to address triggers of violence-induced displacement.

Response frameworks and systems for follow-up

The study found that outputs of the AU/RECs early warning units (IGAD, ECOWAS and EAC) have enabled better decision-making regarding forced displacement triggers through the provision of timely information on emerging or evolving conflicts. Nevertheless, the quality of early warning reports and analysis could still be improved by incorporating information from the ground, making use of external expertise and, most of all, ensuring follow-up of decisions taken by AU or RECs.

Another issue the study uncovered is that the RECs, the AU and AU Member States (MS) do not always pursue aligned responses or discuss issues jointly – though greater cooperation between the AU and RECs has been noted in certain conflict responses.² While each conflict is unique and requires a specific response, it also seems that there are no clear standards or guidelines, according to which different institutions arrive at their positions on the response pathways to take. Political obstacles often prevent the operationalisation of mechanisms, or realisation of decisions taken by AU or RECs. Where political will existed, APSA early warning and early action systems proved to be useful in reducing forced displacement.

Continued and multi-level engagement in conflict prevention, mediation and inclusive dialogue at different levels remains an important strategy to reduce triggers of displacement or to keep them from further rising. The South Sudan case study shows that the lack of engagement and mediation at various levels, beyond high-level dialogue, led to missed opportunities to help reduce conflict locally.

Human rights violations, protection of civilians and accountability

Human rights violations, especially as part of wider conflict and violence, trigger forced displacement. Under the APSA/AGA, efforts are made to integrate human rights issues into conflict management and prevention structures. There is scope to further build on this in order to strengthen the preventative power of APSA/AGA in this regard. Moving forward, it could be useful to feed the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) with more precise data on human rights violations (e.g. by the ACHPR), and to facilitate a more direct information flow between AU's CEWS and its decision-making body, the Peace and Security Council (PSC).

In addition, the PSC and other decision making bodies within the AU should have better exposure to micro-level realities to complement the macro-analysis they so receive. Interviewees of the study have pointed out that increased number of visits by PSC members, liaising with civil society through open sessions and/or invitations, and the composition of the PSC (notably the number of women ambassadors in the PSC) have improved the PSC's awareness of, and sensitivity to individual realities in conflict situations, protection of civilians, and specific violence-induced displacement triggers. Such efforts need to be encouraged and carried out further, in a systematic manner.

Moreover, measures to address **impunity, injustice and accountability** are critical in breaking the cycle of violence, as lack of accountability for violations and abuses is a driver of conflict.³ Issues of human rights and accountability are also relevant for AU-led or authorised military operations **to ensure** peace support operations themselves do not further exacerbate displacement. Currently, active integration of **police and civilian dimensions** in Peace Support Operations (PSOs) seems to be lacking in some PSOs in Africa, in general, and in the MNJTF, in particular. Nevertheless, this is a critical element to ensure PSOs are not only militaristic and combat-driven, but also assist in civilian protection and law enforcement, which are key factors in establishing a sense of safety and stability.

Links between political affairs and peace and security actors (APSA and AGA)

Within the AU, the APSA (PSD) leads security issues and the human rights portfolio falls under the AGA (led by DPA). Coordination and knowledge exchange between the two domains is essential to enhance the effectiveness of responses. There is wide-ranging recognition of this fact, yet coordination between the two sectors and departments within the AUC is weak and rather ad-hoc.

² GIZ (2017).

³ Amnesty International (2016).

1. Introduction

As a continent, Africa is disproportionately affected by violence-induced displacement. Sub-Saharan Africa hosts about 26% of the world's refugee population.⁴ Moreover, the continent is host to a high and rising number of internally displaced people (IDPs). Especially countries in Eastern and Central Africa experience the consequences and challenges of violence-induced displacement and mixed-motive migration. Recent incidents as well as protracted crises continue to displace people in places such as Burundi, South Sudan, Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Mali and Somalia.

While the drivers of migration are complex, violence and conflict-related factors play an important role. In 2015 alone, conflict and violence were the cause of 2.4 million new internal displacements and contributed to increasing refugee numbers in Africa.⁵ In 2016, the Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC) recorded another 2.6 million internally displaced due to conflict and violence in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) coordinate and carry out efforts to prevent, manage, and resolve crises and conflict on the continent.⁷ In accordance with their mandates, APSA/AGA activities aim to address governance, peace and security challenges, which are often at the heart of violence-induced displacement.

Yet, the links between APSA and AGA activities and whether and how these can reduce or alter the triggers of violence-induced displacement have not yet been explored in depth. The central enquiry of this discussion paper is thus how and the extent to which interventions of the AU and the RECs, in the context of APSA/AGA, can contribute to addressing the triggers of violence-induced displacement. This paper is based on a GIZ commissioned study ECDPM carried out, to inform GIZ's support to the APSA and the AGA

The structure of the discussion paper is as follows: it first provides a brief overview of the methodology in Section 2, followed by a discussion on the conceptual framework used to identify triggers of violence-induced displacement (Section 3). Section 4 covers the APSA/AGA pathways through which interventions under these frameworks relate to violence-induced displacement, and presents findings on the effect of APSA/AGA intervention on displacement patterns, in Boko Haram-affected areas, Burundi and South Sudan. The final section, Section 5, summarises the lessons learnt and presents some indicative ways forward.

⁴ UNHCR (2017c).

⁵ NRC/IDMC (2016).

⁶ IDMC (2017).

⁷ APSA is regarded as AU's "blue print for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa". See APSA (N.d.); AGA is a coordinating mechanisms for the various AU bodies mandated to work on democracy, human rights, and good governance. See AGA (N.d.).

2. Methodology

The research and writing for this study took place in two phases: desk research was conducted between April and June 2017, resulting in a conceptual paper on the link between violence and displacement and the role of APSA and AGA in addressing these. This phase also produced an analytical framework for exploring how the AU and RECs have addressed displacement drivers in specific case studies. The second phase (July-September 2017) included further in-depth research on the cases of Burundi, South Sudan and Boko Haram. This took the form of both desk review and approximately 50 semi-structured interviews with policy-makers, officials of the EU, AU, RECs (IGAD, EAC), member states, international organisations, development implementing agencies, civil society actors, and researchers.⁸

The selection of the case studies followed a rigorous analytical framework but the main consideration was ensuring a good mix of cases in order to offer a more comprehensive insight into the diverse ways APSA and AGA tackle triggers of violence-induced displacement. Accordingly, the three case studies were selected from a set of cases where: APSA/AGA intervention were mixed, levels of displacement were high to medium, and the quality and effectiveness of APSA and AGA interventions varied (mix of high and low quality cases). Availability of data, as well as practical factors, such as limiting the number of case studies to only three from the longer list of countries that fit the selection criteria, have also influenced how the three cases were selected.

Indeed, this discussion paper represents a synthesised version of findings from both the conceptual paper and the case studies, with more emphasis on the latter. It has drawn on a wealth of knowledge on APSA and AGA interventions available through previous research conducted by ECDPM and, as of recent, by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of Addis Ababa University.⁹ A more in-depth look at the conceptual links between violence and displacement can be found in the Annex.

There are some limitations to the study. First, little original data was collected of first-hand information from forcibly displaced people and their experiences of peace and security interventions in the locations of the case studies.¹⁰ Although such research would have been beneficial, it was not possible within the scope of the project. To compensate for this, local experts conducted a limited number of interviews with relevant actors in Juba, South Sudan as well as in Bujumbura, Burundi during August and September 2017. In addition, the research team made use of existing reports and research on displacement and its triggers from other organisations, with presence on the ground. A small number of remote phone interviews with actors present in areas affected by displacement have also been conducted.

⁸ Interviews took place in Addis Ababa (4-15 September 2017), Bujumbura (August 2017), Juba (September 2017) and Arusha (11/12 September 2017). A small number of interviews were also conducted via phone.

⁹ In recent years, GIZ, in cooperation with ECDPM and, recently, with the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at the Addis Ababa University has engaged in a long-term project to assess the impact of interventions of AU and RECs in the frame of APSA. It included a systematic mapping and assessment (quality/effectiveness) of AU and African regional organisations' promotion of peace and security through diplomacy, mediation and Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The analysis from this research was fed into APSA Impact Reports. The 2016 APSA Impact Report, named "Cooperation with the African Union in the area of Peace and Security", was published by IPSS and GIZ as part of Development Programme of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Since the AGA platform was only established in 2011, the information on AGA interventions is limited. In addition, capacities and funding of AGA stakeholders (mostly in the DPA) are weaker than that of the PSD, which has more than 200 staff members and financial support by various international partners. However, in most of the RECs, the areas of governance and peace and security are placed in one department.

¹⁰ For example, including through focus group sessions with affected displaced people and those involved in implementing interventions under APSA/AGA in order to explore the possible impact of interventions.

3. Conceptualisation: the drivers and triggers of violence-induced displacement

While displacement decisions are complex and often involve several considerations, drivers and factors, this paper is specifically concerned with the immediate triggers of violence-induced displacement. The scope and meaning of violence-related displacement triggers that form the basis for this paper, come from existing law and conventions covering displacement. More specifically, the paper looked into 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1969 Refugee Convention of the African Union, 1984 Cartagena Declaration, and the 1998 non-binding Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to identify triggers of violence-related displacement. In the process of defining the type of displacement or categories of displaced people (refugees, internally displaced people), these documents indirectly outline the triggers of displacement.¹¹

The key triggers for forced displacement that this paper will be concerned with are thus:

- I. (Fear of) persecution due to reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group or political opinions;
- II. Armed conflict;
- III. Situations of generalised violence;
- IV. (Profound) violations of human rights.

These factors (further explained in Box 1) will be referred to, here, as 'triggers of violence-related displacement'. Underneath these more acute triggers of displacement explored in this paper, lies an array of other factors that affect the decision to migrate. Although these factors fall outside the scope of this study, they significantly influence the linkages between efforts at reducing the immediate triggers of displacement and their effects on displacement. A conceptual overview of the structural drivers of displacement and the factors that mediate the link between violence and displacement is presented in the Annex.

We will use the term displaced or forcibly displaced to refer to the persons or group of persons for which these triggers played a role in their decision to leave their homes. It therefore includes those who are forced to flee internally within their national borders or externally across international borders. We will not be concerned with the broader category of forced migrants however.¹²

¹¹ The conventions considered are ; The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; The 1969 Refugee Convention of the African Union; 1984 Cartagena Declaration; and the 1998 non-binding Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (a UN document)

¹² The term forced migration is not clearly defined and has no legal distinction underlying it. For IOM and UNESCO forced migration in a broader sense includes not only refugees and asylum seekers but also people forced to move due to external factors, such as environmental catastrophes or development projects. Forced migration can also include forced return of failed asylum seekers or irregular migrants.

Box 1: Definitions: triggers of forced displacement

- **(Fear of) Persecution:** There is no clear definition of the term ‘persecution’, yet it can be inferred from the 1951 Refugee Convention that “a threat to life or freedom due to reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a social group”, can be considered persecution. The UNHCR Handbook¹³ also notes that the word ‘fear’ refers not only to persons who have actually been persecuted, but also to those who wish to avoid a situation entailing the risk of persecution.
- **Armed/violent conflict:** There is no full consensus about what constitutes armed conflict. An often used definition is from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program: “An armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year”.¹⁴ Another useful definition stems from the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer terminology that classifies conflicts into ‘violent and non-violent’. Conflicts with an intensity level of 3 and above, i.e. where a certain level of conflict-related occurrences has been observed are defined as ‘violent conflicts’.¹⁵
- **Generalised violence:** The concept of ‘generalised violence’ is included in the extended definition of a refugee in the Cartagena Refugee Declaration. The Declaration does not have a strict legal definition, but according to the UNHCR interpretation it would encompass situations characterised by violence (perpetrated by state or non-state actors) that is indiscriminate and sufficiently widespread to the point of affecting large groups of persons or entire populations, compelling their flight (UNHCR, 2013).
- **(Profound) human rights violations:** This category partly overlaps with the triggers described above. For the purposes of this study, we include human rights violations that are related to the realm of political and physical security in this category, and focus on specific violations of basic rights that can lead to displacement, including sexual violence and torture, which may be systematic. For human rights violations to act as triggers for displacement, they need to have reached a certain level of profoundness to actually precipitate departure. For the purposes of this study, we will therefore consider profound human rights violations as a trigger for forced displacement.

We will use the term displaced or forcibly displaced to refer to the persons or group of persons for which these triggers played a role in their decision to leave their homes. It therefore includes those who are forced to flee internally within their national borders or externally across international borders.

In relation to these concepts, it is important to note that displacement data may include different categories and triggers for displacement. For instance, UNHCR data on refugees is based on its more narrow definition, and its IDP data used for global reporting includes only those displaced by conflict and violence. The definition of the IDP Guidelines however includes natural disasters and man-made disasters, and excludes those who flee from individual persecution. Thus, data by the Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC) captures both conflict-induced and disaster-induced internal displacement. The data from the IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix, which tracks new flows, includes different drivers of and reasons for displacement. Hence, some of the displacement figures may not allow for making distinctions between these factors and need to be analysed and interpreted within a given context.

¹³ UNHCR (1979).

¹⁴ For definitions see Uppsala Universitet (N.d.).

¹⁵ The intensity is a combined measure of the following occurrences: the use of weapons and personnel, the number of casualties, level of destruction, and refugees/internally displaced persons. For more information see HIIK (2018).

Furthermore, although we use the term violence-related forced displacement for the purposes of this study, this does not necessarily mean that there is a violent conflict on-going in the country of origin. Human rights violations or fear of persecution do not necessarily take place in a context of violent wars, as exemplified by the case of Eritrea.

Underneath these more acute triggers of displacement explored in this paper, lies an array of other factors that affect the decision to migrate. Although these factors fall outside the scope of this study, they significantly influence the linkages between efforts at reducing the immediate triggers of displacement and their effects on displacement. A conceptual overview of the structural drivers of displacement and the factors that mediate the link between violence and displacement is presented in the Annex.

4. African Union and RECs responses to triggers of violence-induced displacement

This section sets out how APSA and some AGA interventions (in theory and in practice) aim to influence and reduce the triggers and factors that contribute to displacement. The analysis specifically focuses on the context of three case studies (Boko Haram, Burundi and South Sudan). Firstly, this section will sketch out the structural set-up of APSA/AGA and outline how the two are relevant to reducing triggers of displacement. It will then discuss the lessons learnt from the analysis of AGA/APSA responses to violence in Boko Haram-affected areas (2014-August 2017) Burundi (post-2014-August 2017) and South Sudan (post-2013- August 2017)¹⁶, and if and how these responses may relate to displacement patterns and figures in these three contexts.

4.1. Pathways of APSA/AGA addressing triggers of violence-induced displacement

The objectives and mandate of the APSA relate to the 'prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts, post-conflict reconstruction and development'¹⁷ in the African continent.¹⁸ According to the 2002 protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC)¹⁹ (article 3), these objectives are: to 'promote peace, security and stability', 'anticipate and prevent conflicts', 'prevent the resurgence of violence', 'combat international terrorism', 'promote and encourage democratic practices, good governance and the rule of law' as well as to 'protect human rights and fundamental freedoms'. These objectives are related to the displacement triggers (as well as some of the proximate or underlying drivers) identified in this study. However, the mandate does not explicitly spell out pathways through which APSA instruments aim to reduce these triggers of displacement.

¹⁶ It should be noted that this research was completed in December 2017; as a result, conflict dynamics, APSA/AGA interventions and displacement figures considered in the study and in this discussion paper only go as far as August 2017. Some new developments may have occurred between the time the study was concluded and this discussion paper (which is the summarised and abridged version of the study) was made publicly available.

¹⁷ For more information see APSA (N.d). Various publications of ECDPM on APSA can be found at ECDPM (N.d.).

¹⁸ The 2002 Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union, which delineates the responsibility and mandate of APSA's components, shows awareness of the links between conflicts, violence and displacement in Africa. Its preamble notes that conflicts have '*forced millions of our people, including women and children, into a drifting life as refugees and internally displaced persons, deprived of their means of livelihood, human dignity and hope*'.

¹⁹ The PSC is an organ of the AU and a key component of APSA. It consists of 15 member states, which are chosen for a term of two or three years. The PSC meets at three levels (Permanent Representatives/Ambassadorial level, which meets at least twice a month, Ministerial level and the Heads of State and Government level meets at least once a year).

The African Governance Architecture (AGA) is emerging as a counterpart to the APSA to establish dialogue between the various actors mandated to promote good governance and democracy in Africa. The linkage between peace and security and governance is clearly made in the PSC Protocol in the above-noted Article 3, through the emphasis on promoting and encouraging “democratic practices, good governance and the rule of law [...] as part of efforts for preventing conflicts”. Various bodies under AGA regularly provide situational analysis to the PSC, e.g. on elections in Africa or on human rights situations and can thus help reduce immediate triggers of displacement. Yet, the core mandate of AGA is related to addressing the underlying political and socio-economic structural drivers of conflict, which are not the focus of this study.

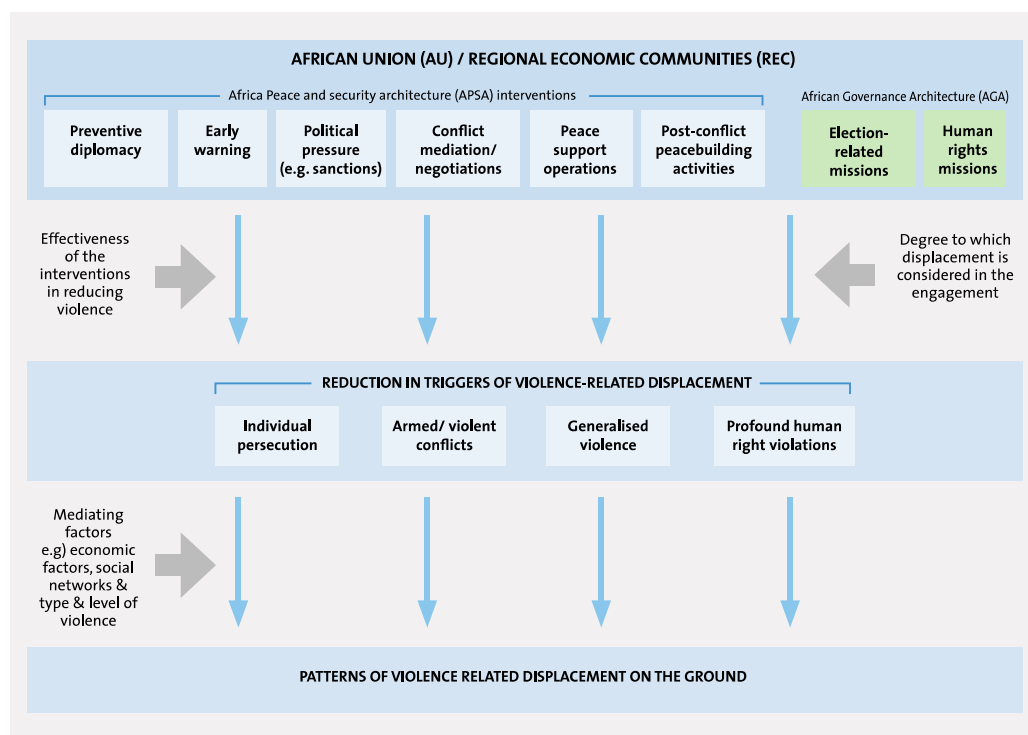
Both APSA and AGA structures have a shared aim of reducing and managing violence-induced displacement. Yet, the ways in which these structures can reduce immediate triggers of displacement, specifically, are not explicitly stated in their constituting documents or mandates. The following diagram (figure 1) will try to distil the ways in which APSA and AGA aim to reduce such triggers.²⁰ In the context of the below diagram, APSA/AGA activities are classified into²¹:

- **Crisis Prevention:** preventive diplomacy (e.g. political declarations, observation missions), early warning and early action
- **Conflict Management:** diplomacy, sanctions, conflict mediations and peace negotiations, Peace Support Operations
- **Peace Consolidation:** participation in and contribution to post-conflict processes and peace consolidating measures

Figure 1 illustrates how, in theory, these three strands of activities can affect triggers of violence-induced displacement and how the existence of conflict and violence as well as mediating factors ultimately determine displacement patterns.

²⁰ It will draw on how, in practice, these triggers have been addressed, as well as on theoretical pathways presented in the literature.

²¹ This classification is found in GIZ and BMZ (2016), p.33.

Figure 1: AU/REC engagement in relation to triggers of violence-related forced displacement

Source: ECDPM

4.1.1. Crisis Prevention

Early Warning

The African Union Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) was set-up to “facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts in Africa”²². This is complemented with the regional early warning systems that are implemented by a number of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Currently, the systems of IGAD (CEWARN) and ECOWAS (ECOWARN) are the most advanced but other RECs are also increasingly putting efforts into developing their own.

Early warning systems can help diminish the occurrence of triggers of violence-related displacement. They may do so by providing timely information on emerging or evolving violent conflicts based on a number of relevant indicators, and by analysing and using this information to give actionable recommendations in order to prevent violence and conflict.²³ Thus, early warning systems help feed information directly into other APSA instruments such as the PSC or mediators involved in conflict management or prevention. Such information can play an important role in the design of effective interventions. While data and good analysis are paramount, success in effectively addressing displacement triggers depends on ‘early action’ by the PSC, governments or other actors based on the information provided.²⁴

²² For more details on the AU Early Warning System see African Union Peace and Security (2018).

²³ The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework notes, for example, that early warning is to produce ‘incident and trend reports on peace and security, as well as real-time preventive response options, to ECOWAS policy makers to ensure predictability and facilitate interventions to avert, defuse or creatively transform acute situations of conflict, instability, disruptions and disasters (see ECOWAS, 2008). Similarly, the IGAD CEWARN Strategy Framework suggests an explicit Theory of Change to contribute to peace and stability in the region by providing ‘high quality, credible information and analysis on threats to peace and security – delivered in a timely fashion to the right individuals and institutions to aid in policy and operations decision-making’.

²⁴ Gounden (2015).

Preventive diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy aims to prevent conflict from developing or from spiralling into uncontrollable violence and, by extension, prevent crises that include displacement. It can include political declarations, observation missions (APSA/AGA), and mediated talks (e.g. through the Panel of the Wise, other envoys and special representatives) with conflict parties. Electoral Monitoring or Observation Missions, which have become an integral part of APSA/AGA activities, aim to improve the integrity of electoral processes and, in doing so, contribute to preventing electoral violence by diffusing the triggers associated with it.

4.1.2. Conflict Management***Diplomacy and sanctions***

Diplomatic interventions – from official declarations to sanctions – can exert pressure on conflicting parties to reduce violence (including the specific drivers of displacement), commit to agreements, abide by the rule of law, uphold international humanitarian law, safeguard the protection of human rights, and reduce insecurity. Diplomatic interventions, sanctions, in particular, could also deter possible spoilers.

Human rights observation or fact-finding missions

Human rights observation or fact-finding missions can be part of conflict prevention as well as conflict management. Specifically, in which way these missions aim to reduce triggers of violence-induced displacement also depends on their mandate. For example, it can relate to the promotion and protection of human rights, through gathering information on violations and preparing the ground for accountability. The presence of neutral monitors may also directly restrain conflict parties from exerting violence. Under the APSA architecture, the specification and classification of human rights violations and other abuses that have been committed can help the PSC be more targeted and explicit in its diplomatic efforts. Human rights observation missions may go beyond monitoring and reporting on human rights violations. They can support local conflict prevention and resolution activities and play a key role in the design of appropriate responses. Furthermore, they may highlight protection shortcomings and encourage intervention either on displacement triggers directly or with regards to some of the mediating factors. And finally, they can play an important strategic role, advising mediation teams in how to appropriately take displacement aspects into account in mediation efforts.

Conflict mediation

In Article 4(e), the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) provides for the “peaceful resolution of conflicts among AU Member States through such appropriate means as may be decided upon by the Assembly”. Mediation is at the heart of this and the African Union and RECs have established a number of structures, such as the Mediation Support Units and Mediation rosters, around their mediation efforts

The mandate for high-level conflict mediation is often given to **AU/REC Special Envoys** and eminent individuals (e.g. members of the Panel of the Wise, individually appointed former presidents). If successful, their efforts may help reduce displacement triggers present in given conflicts by keeping conflicting parties engaged in the negotiations, holding them accountable and pressuring them with the specific aim to protect civilians and to end the practices that lead to wide-scale displacement.

Mediation efforts also take place at the **unofficial and grassroots level (track II-III)**. A focus on these levels is equally important in order to involve local populations in the reduction of displacement triggers. In mediated peace negotiations, the concerns of IDPs, refugees or returnees are often integrated. If particular needs of displaced and refugees need to be taken into account for post-conflict security and peace,²⁵ mediators can bring these up. Furthermore, a specialised team can support the aim to reduce displacement triggers or to avoid tensions due to IDPs, refugees and return issues.

Peace support operations

The African Standby Force (ASF) carries out AU Peace Support Operations. The ASF²⁶ is multidimensional and includes military, civilian and police elements, which are expected to complement each other when mandated to implement PSC decisions that have to do with Peace Support Operations (PSO).

How PSOs help reduce the triggers of displacement depends on their mandate, that is, whether the mandate relates to protection (e.g. of civilians, IDP/ refugee camps or to protect specific institutions), deterrence, capacity building or a mix of those, and also on the phase a PSO may be in. Moreover, the extent to which PSO troops uphold humanitarian, human rights and refugee law is a further factor that can have implications for displacement. To ensure that human rights are adequately taken into account, secondments of senior human rights officers can be useful as they can provide advice and help mainstream human rights into mission planning.²⁷

AU or REC initiatives often have both military and civilian components, with the latter supporting the protection of the population (e.g. a Human Rights Observer Group was deployed throughout the mission area of AFISMA).

4.1.3. Peace consolidation and post-conflict reconstruction and development

A variety of APSA and AGA activities may fall under peace consolidation and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD). Beyond the rehabilitation of violent conflict-affected communities, these activities also work on addressing structural drivers of violence and hence displacement, e.g. institutional failures, poverty, socio-economic reform, justice etc. PCRD is considered an area of work at the nexus between democratic governance (which concerns AGA) and peace and security (which concerns APSA).

4.2. APSA/AGA response to violent conflict: findings from the case studies

Triggers of violence-induced displacement are found in most violent conflict trajectories. Effectively mitigating such conflicts is thus a first step to reduce the number of forcibly displaced individuals. As a result of this, APSA/AGA engagement to help reduce conflict has increased over time. Over the course of 2013-2015, the African Union and RECs were involved – through diplomatic interventions, mediation or peace support operations, or a combination of these – in 44% of the total number of violent conflict clusters on the African continent²⁸. Similarly, in 2016, the AU and REC/RMs addressed –28 out of 67 (about 42%) violent conflict clusters through a combination of diplomatic interventions, mediation or peace support

²⁵ ACCORD and AU (2014).

²⁶ The ASF established by Article 13 of the PSC Protocol is made up of five regional and multidisciplinary brigades.

²⁷ Such a secondment took place, for example, for a period of two months to accompany the Multinational Joint Task Force for Boko Haram.

²⁸ The number of conflict clusters is based on the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer Index, which provides information on conflict units on an annual basis. For the APSA Impact Study, these conflict units were used as the basis, and subsequently clustered, in order to account for overlapping conflict dynamics between these conflict units. These conflict clusters then served as the unit of analysis. For more information, see the methodology section in Desmidt & Hauck (2017).

operation. In addition, according to the APSA Impact Reports, both APSA and AGA have shown an improved track record, with regards to quality and effectiveness of interventions.²⁹ Hence, the APSA has been described as a useful overall framework to promote stabilisation and security across the African continent.³⁰

Despite the documented progress of APSA/AGA capacity and willingness to respond to violent conflicts³¹ during the past years, displacement due to violence and conflict, within and from Africa, remains severe and has been rising overall. In 2016, the IDMC recorded 2.6 million new internal displacements due to conflict and violence in this region – up from the previous year.³² According to UNHCR data, refugees and people in refugee-like situations³³ – meaning those displaced by violence and conflict across borders – have increased in Africa. Indeed, at the beginning of 2015, about 3.7 million refugees were recorded in Africa.³⁴ By the end of 2015, this figure rose to over 4.4 million refugees, a 20% increase. Until the end of 2016, the numbers increased again to over 5 million refugees, another increase of 16%.³⁵

In summary, it is clear that even high quality APSA/AGA engagement does not necessarily translate into reduced conflict and violence-related displacement triggers. This is because even if triggers of forced displacement are effectively addressed, displaced individuals' perception of their (future) personal safety matters and influences their decision to stay, leave or return. Moreover, varying factors influence conflict trajectories that are beyond the remit of APSA/AGA interventions. This is a clear lesson that emerges from the case studies on Boko Haram, Burundi and South Sudan presented further below.

4.3. Boko Haram

4.3.1. Background to the conflict and displacement drivers

Boko Haram's insurgency started in 2009, in northeast Nigeria. However, it was only in 2013 that the group attracted significant international media attention. The Boko Haram insurgency is the greatest single cause of forced displacement in the Lake Chad region, with over 2.5 million refugees and IDPs. Indeed, the conflict and violence arising from the insurgency account for about 70% of the total displaced population in the four countries (Nigeria, Cameroun, Niger and Chad).³⁶

Boko Haram's indiscriminate attacks against civilians have prompted millions to flee within Nigeria; around 1.7 million IDPs were recorded in 2017; down from 1.9 million, in 2016 and 2.1 million, in December 2015³⁷. Some fled across Nigeria's northern and eastern borders into the neighbouring countries of Niger, Cameroon and Chad which have also experienced insecurity and displacement due to Boko Haram, within their own territories. This counted for 205,000 Nigerian refugees, in August 2017; up from 170,000, at the end of 2015). However, approximately 92% of people forcibly displaced by the Boko Haram conflict are internally displaced.³⁸

²⁹ For more details see IPSS (2017) p. 10. See also the APSA Impact Reports 2014, 2015, 2016.

³⁰ Desmidt & Hauck (2017).

³¹ IPSS (2017).

³² NRC/IDMC (2017).

³³ A refugee is a person who has left their country for reasons of persecution, violence or generalised war. For definitions see the Scoping Study.

³⁴ This excludes North Africa.

³⁵ UNHCR, 2016.

³⁶ UNHCR & The World Bank (2016).

³⁷ IDMC (2017b).

³⁸ UNHCR & The World Bank (2016).

4.3.2. APSA/AGA interventions in the context of Boko Haram

Even though Nigeria had initially managed to keep the conflict off the AU PSC's Agenda, the growing displacement numbers and the regional spill-over effects of the Boko Haram insurgency played a role in creating stronger regional cooperation. More importantly, the abduction of 276 students by Boko Haram, in 2014, together with its attacks in Cameroon and Chad, in 2015, signalled the regional (no longer Nigerian, national) threat Boko Haram posed. This led the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to revive its dormant Joint Task Force (MNJTF)³⁹ to address the increasing cross-border threat Boko Haram presented. The AU PSC then authorised the MNJTF.

Within the APSA, however, the MNJTF is a unique arrangement. Although it is authorised by the AU, it is not an AU-led operation per se. On the ground, the troops in MNJTF operate under their own national flags rather than the AU's, which is the case in AU-led operations like AMISOM. The MNJTF, therefore, is more of a cooperation framework among national troops to tackle the Boko Haram threat in the region. At the strategic level, the military command of MNJTF lies with Nigeria, while the AU plays a supporting role limited to mandating, financing and procurement of technical equipment, as well as setting-up the civilian component of the operation through a Strategic Support Cell based in the AUC in Addis Ababa.⁴⁰ Further, the LCBC, which is responsible for the management of the mission, is not one of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) constituting the APSA structure⁴¹.

AU's authorisation of the MNJTF in 2015, followed concerns over generalised violence and profound human rights violations – as triggers of displacement. When reviewing AU documents (communiqués, PSC resolutions, statements) the objective to reduce the humanitarian cost of the Boko Haram threat can be seen as a partial driver for regional action and AU involvement. Human security and displacement alone have, however, not necessarily been the primary or sole motivations behind diplomatic and military interventions. The group's ability to threaten state security rather than human security has weighed strongly in prompting interventions. This seems to especially have been the case from the perspective of national armies fighting Boko Haram, e.g. in Nigeria.⁴²

Nonetheless, the mandate of MNJTF revolves around eliminating violence and human rights violations of Boko Haram, as they represent the main triggers of violence-induced displacement in the region. MNJTF's military operations have contributed to a relative success in containing Boko Haram. While Boko Haram groups had not ceased all their violence in 2015 and 2016, there is wide recognition of the MNJTF's significant successes – particularly in gaining back territories that were lost to Boko Haram. This has contributed to a reduction of triggers of displacement and has increased return rates. In a number of places violence has been contained.⁴³ No large-scale attacks on locations are currently taking place, yet small

³⁹ The Task Force had been in existence since 1998 to combat cross-border banditry but was largely dormant.

⁴⁰ African Union Peace and Security Council (2015a). The MNJTF is a unique set-up where the countries affected by Boko Haram: Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger – engage in combat against the group, under the coordination but not the flag of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). On the ground, it has, often been unclear which troops act under national armies and which are part of the MNJTF and troops would constantly change hats according to an interviewee. The MNJTF's deployment is authorised by the AUPSC.

⁴¹ The eight RECs are: Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC). These RECs are considered building blocks of APSA. The MNJTF therefore, doesn't directly fall under these RECs but its deployment is authorised by the AUPSC, which is the ultimate peace and security decision making body under APSA – making MNJTF a unique set-up.

⁴² Interviews Experts and Researchers, Addis Ababa, September 2017. See Gartenstein-Ross & Zenn (2016).

⁴³ Interview military expert and researchers, Maiduguri, September 2017.

attacks, such as on convoys are on the rise again. This is, however, currently not leading to new mass displacement.⁴⁴

As stipulated in its mandate, the aim of the MNJTF is to contribute to the stabilisation of the affected region, and facilitate “the full restoration of State of authority and the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees”, while ensuring their protection.⁴⁵ Yet, while the design of the MNJTF has taken into consideration the protection of IDPs and refugees and assistance for their repatriation, the military interventions themselves have to some extent triggered displacement or contributed to factors influencing decisions to move. Particularly, there are claims that military troops countering Boko Haram have been involved in harassment and maltreatment of IDPs, refugees and civilians, and have engaged in forcibly returning individuals.⁴⁶

In order to strengthen human rights and the protection of civilians and displaced people, as part of the military operations, a civilian component has been established under the coordination of the AU. While the civilian component initially faced a number of challenges and positions took a long time to fill, it has contributed to improved relations between civilian, humanitarian and military actors. A military observer interviewed for the study stated that the civilian component of the AU made a difference in conduct of military troops since, in his view, national troops not under the formal MNJTF umbrella showed less adequate conduct.⁴⁷ Thus, a focus on civilian protection as part of military interventions seems important to reduce the exacerbation of violence-induced displacement due to military conduct.

4.3.3. Patterns of violence-induced displacement

The reduction of some of the grave triggers of violence-induced displacement in the context of Boko Haram has clearly translated into a lower growth of IDP figures and has positively influenced return figures. A decrease in the number of IDPs in Nigeria is recorded since the end of 2016 and continuing up until August 2017 – albeit with a few peaks, as is shown in figure 2. This shows that people returned to their places of origin.

Figure 2: IDP population Nigeria (North-East) per round of DTM assessment



Source: IOM. Displacement Tracking Matrix, Nigeria Round XVIII Report, August 2017

⁴⁴ Phone Interview, military expert, Maiduguri, September 2017.

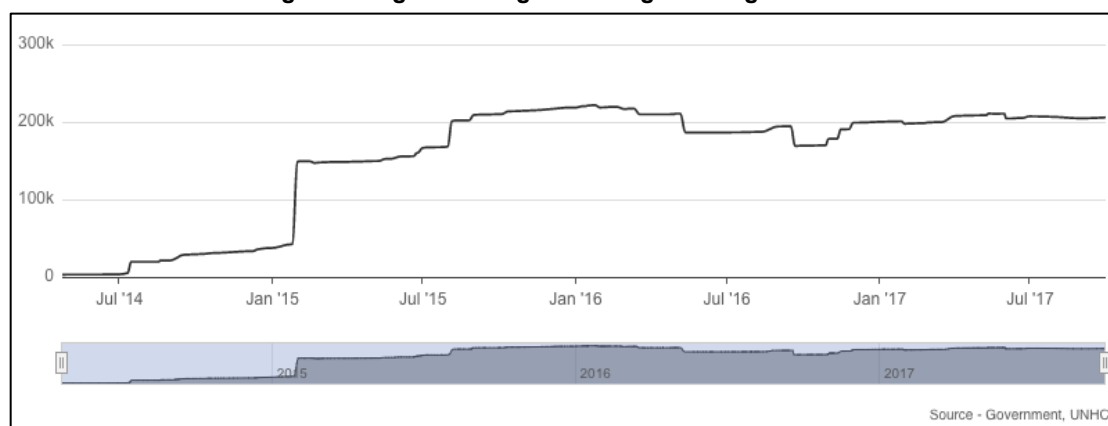
⁴⁵ African Union Peace and Security Council (2015a).

⁴⁶ UNHCR (2017a) P. 16-18; Amnesty International (2017a).

⁴⁷ This distinction is, however, not always very clear since MNJTF troop contingents apparently move in and out of operating under MNJTF structures.

By contrast, it seems refugee numbers of Nigerians in neighbouring countries have not been significantly reduced since 2015, despite the successes of the MNJTF, as depicted in figure 3. While disentangling motivations of movement is challenging, the fact that most of the Boko Haram affected states are also affected by other conflicts in the context of the competition for resources and lack basic services influence the motivation of individuals to return or not. Hence, in those cases where other triggers and drivers exist and where the incentives for return are low, a reduction in violence-induced displacement triggers does not automatically lead to lower displacement figures.

Figure 3: Nigerian refugees in neighbouring countries



Source: UNHCR Statistics⁴⁸

Several interviewees of the study who follow the situation in Northern Nigeria closely noted that it is difficult to establish the exact displacement patterns and the motivations that drive movement or return. In the context of Boko Haram, violence-induced displacement or movement of populations is caused by several, sometimes inconsistent, factors⁴⁹: (i) attacks by Boko Haram (most significant factor), (ii) military presence and brutal counter-insurgencies without adequate warning of the local population and improper military conduct⁵⁰ (iii) the need for humanitarian access. Some displacement has also occurred due to (iv) the departure of the military without notice or explanation resulting in perceived reduction in security. In other cases, movement has been caused by humanitarian interventions acting as pull-factors.⁵¹

4.3.4. Influence of APSA structures on displacement in the case of Boko Haram

The above discussion shows that, while the MNJTF operations have been relatively successful in reducing displacement triggers, actual reduction of displacement does not necessarily follow in a linear way. The main activities under APSA which have had an influence on violence-related displacement are a) military containment through MNJTF operations and b) ensuring the integration of civilian protection and respect for human rights into mission mandates and strengthening the respectful behaviour of troops. The latter can be achieved by training troops on human rights issues, including a strong civilian component as part

⁴⁸ UNCHR (2017c).

⁴⁹ Interview UNOCHA, September 2017.

⁵⁰ The extent to which the MNJTF/national military operations themselves contribute to displacement triggers depends on a number of factors. First, if the Boko Haram group is located close to villages, counter-insurgencies more likely affect civilians leading to displacement. Counter-insurgencies in areas with lower population density lead to less displacement.

⁵¹ Interview UNOCHA, September 2017. These different drivers are often challenging to disentangle and even the interviewed experts monitoring movement on the ground in areas previously affected by Boko Haram and MNJTF activity could not confidently speak about the exact impact of MNJTF operations on displacement trajectories – even though, at large, a reduction of displacement is ascribed to the success of MNJTF. Interview, Addis Ababa, September 2017 and Interview IOM, October 2017.

of the operation and a focus on protection of civilians and human and refugee/IDP rights, as part of the military response.

In the context of the MNJTF, the AU has been tasked with authorising the force, providing logistical and procurement support and with helping to establish the civilian component. On a practical level, however, the AU (and through the especially set-up strategic support cell located in the PSOD) has faced severe challenges in executing its role. According to interviews, the AU was not able to strongly link to the operations. It couldn't set up the civilian component of the MNJTF well in time, and it has delayed its transfer of funding and procurement of the necessary equipment to the MNJTF.⁵² As a result of this, many of the military operations on the ground were organised and resourced by the governments behind the MNJTF. The AU, therefore had a limited role in the overall MNJTF operations and provided less input than it did to AU-led missions, such as AMISOM. Interviewees pointed out that the success achieved by the MNJTF against Boko Haram is primarily due to the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) and their governments, as well as support by the US, the EU, the UK and France.

Regarding longer-term structural aspects, the AU and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) also coordinated the organisation of a Regional Stabilisation Conference, which took place on 2-4 November 2017. However, this conference had been postponed several times and was slow to get off the ground. Its objective is to help develop a framework for a regional stabilisation strategy, which aims to drive and find synergies between various initiatives aimed at stabilising the areas affected by Boko Haram. The conference provided a platform for critical reflection and the development of practical recommendations on the best possible ways to address key issues such as disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement (DDRRR) of disengaged Boko Haram fighters; resettlement of IDPs and refugees; enhancement of local capacities; rehabilitation and enhancement of rule of law institutions; reconciliation, psychosocial counselling and de-radicalisation, taking into account the specific needs of gender and youth. Such stabilisation efforts are important to provide perspectives for communities and to reduce the incentives for individuals to join terrorist or rebel groups. As part of mitigating possible further displacement drivers, accompanying the military operations with such activities seems key and should be further prioritised.

The Boko Haram case has been an example of how triggers of violence-related displacement have been reduced by the MNJTF, while at the same time the return of displaced people has started to increase. However, mobility within former Boko Haram-affected regions is location-specific and very much in flux. While the AU has not taken a leading role in the set-up and operations of the MNJTF, the civilian component and the reconstruction measures it spearheads have a potential to further contribute to reduction of triggers of violence-related displacement thereby enabling individuals to return – both over the short- and the longer-term. Possible ways to strengthen APSA/AGA structures include a focus on oversight, monitoring and accountability structures for AU-mandated military operations, reporting systems, clarifying roles, including the APSA/AGA role in harmonising standards for TCCs regarding civilian protection. Further action in the area of post-conflict reconstruction and development in Boko Haram-affected areas seem necessary to prevent underlying drivers from inducing displacement in the future.

⁵² This has also been partly exacerbated by cumbersome procedures required as part of the management of the African Peace Facility.

4.4. Burundi

4.4.1. Background to the conflict and displacement drivers

In Burundi, the conflict between opposition groups and the government led by President Nkurunziza grew increasingly violent throughout 2015. The conflict revolved around the question whether or not President Pierre Nkurunziza was allowed to run for a third term. He was re-elected in July 2015 in controversial circumstances. Although the election itself took place without major incidents, continued tension between the government and the opposition marred the political landscape and polarised the limited political space, leading to an escalation of violence in the second half of the year. Intimidations by the Imbonerakure (the armed youth wing of Burundi's ruling party) and threats resulting from their actual or perceived political opinions have been cited as reasons for Burundians to flee. The political conflict and outbreak of violence led to a steady outflow of Burundians into neighbouring countries (Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda). From April 2015 to January 2016 refugee figures increased to over 230,000.⁵³ In 2016, the situation in Burundi stabilised only slightly. Nevertheless, the humanitarian situation remained critical throughout 2016 and much of 2017 and all available reports on Burundi by the East African Community, African Union and UN⁵⁴ demonstrate that the situation is getting worse.⁵⁵

4.4.2. APSA/AGA interventions in the context of Burundi

In 2015, APSA/AGA⁵⁶ interventions aimed at reducing armed and violent conflict by preparing and ensuring the holding of peaceful, free, fair, credible elections and restoring democracy and the rule of law in Burundi. This preventive diplomacy was aimed at avoiding the underlying conflict spiralling into uncontrollable violence – yet without clear success. Other bodies such as the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR – a stakeholder within AGA) also engaged in pre-election diplomacy. However, a study carried out by Amnesty International on the timing of ACHPR diplomatic statements noted that these were generally activated too late to influence decisions and that the ACHPR was largely silent, until the moment when the situation deteriorated.⁵⁷

The EAC appointed a mediator in July 2015 and a facilitator in March 2016 aimed at finding a political settlement in resolve of the conflict. However, APSA/AGA actors acknowledged the continuous 'escalation of [generalised] violence' throughout 2015. At the end of 2015, targeted sanctions were agreed against individuals whose actions and statements contributed to the perpetuation of violence (yet, they were not implemented) and AU military experts were deployed to monitor the disarmament of militias and armed groups. The aim of these interventions and sanctions was to exert pressure on parties to the conflict and hence to reduce violence.

In 2015, the AU, within the framework of APSA/AGA, deployed human rights observers to monitor the human rights situation on the ground and to report violations in order to address the human rights violations that lead to displacement. During their mission, the observers faced operational and financial obstacles to their work.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, in interviews, the observers claimed their mission has had a positive impact in restoring a sense of safety, at least in Bujumbura where they were based. They particularly highlighted

⁵³ Humanitarian Information Unit (2016).

⁵⁴ See UNHCR (2017b) and OHCHR (2017).

⁵⁵ Siegle (2017). Note that this study only refers to conflict dynamics and figures up until August 2017.

⁵⁶ The term 'APSA/AGA' here encompasses all regional organisations intervening in the crisis, namely the AUC (through PSC and DPA departments), the East African Community (EAC), the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

⁵⁷ Amnesty International (2017b).

⁵⁸ Most NGOs interviewed for this research did not feel that the AU Human Rights Observers had a strong effect in transforming the conflict.

their added value in fighting impunity, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV and maltreatment of detainees). According to them, their work as third-party observers, documenting and following up on human rights violations and demanding accountability, has in some instances deterred individuals and organised groups from committing human rights violations. By contrast, other observers were more critical of the real impact on violence and human rights violations of the AU human rights observers.⁵⁹

In December 2015, the AU PSC also suggested to send an African Prevention and Protection Mission to Burundi (MAPROBU⁶⁰). The mandate of MAPROBU included, among others, “to prevent any deterioration of the security situation, [to] monitor its evolution and report developments on the ground [and] to contribute, within its capacity and in its areas of deployment, to the protection of civilian populations under imminent threat”. However, the AU Summit at the level of Heads of States and Governments backtracked on this decision one month later, due to a strong opposition from the government of Burundi and reluctance from some AU member states to overrule Burundi’s sovereignty. This mission could have possibly reduced displacement by providing protection to civilians and by contributing to a perception of safety by the population. On the other hand, given that the Government of Burundi expressed strong opposition to any intervention and considered it as an attack on its sovereignty, it could also have escalated the conflict further.

The APSA Impact Studies deemed activities by the AU and by other actors, most prominently the EAC, largely insufficient for the level of conflict, inconsistent and lacking international support⁶¹. While trying to push for the deployment of a number of instruments, the AU did not have sufficient leverage to influence conflict dynamics. The efforts of EAC stalled due to a lack of logistical and financial support and different interests of African states as well as the perceived bias of EAC’s lead mediator Mkapa.

Towards the end of 2016, the different actors increasingly emphasised the improvement of the situation in the country and efforts by external actors in Burundi decreased. Despite a decline in overt violence and fewer incidences of armed confrontation in recent months, close observers attribute this development to the government’s change of tactics from generalised to more targeted and hidden violence than to real improvements.

Therefore, overall, the success of AU and EAC efforts to date have been limited in addressing the core issue of the conflict, which was Nkurunziza’s third term and transforming the conflict well enough to reduce triggers of forced displacement. Some Burundians have returned from Tanzania, yet the situation remains tense, new outward movements are registered simultaneously and in 2017, many Burundians still feel threatened or harassed in a context in which humanitarian needs are growing.

4.4.3. Patterns of violence-induced displacement

Displacement patterns clearly followed political events and the existence of displacement triggers (electoral violence, generalised violence resulting from armed conflict and human rights violations). Violence became acute at the end of April 2015, and it is alleged that at this stage people were fleeing at a rate of around 200-300 per day. In April 2015, after President Nkurunziza announced he would seek a third term in office, this figure surged substantially to 3000 per day with 20.400 refugees received by Rwanda by 28 April

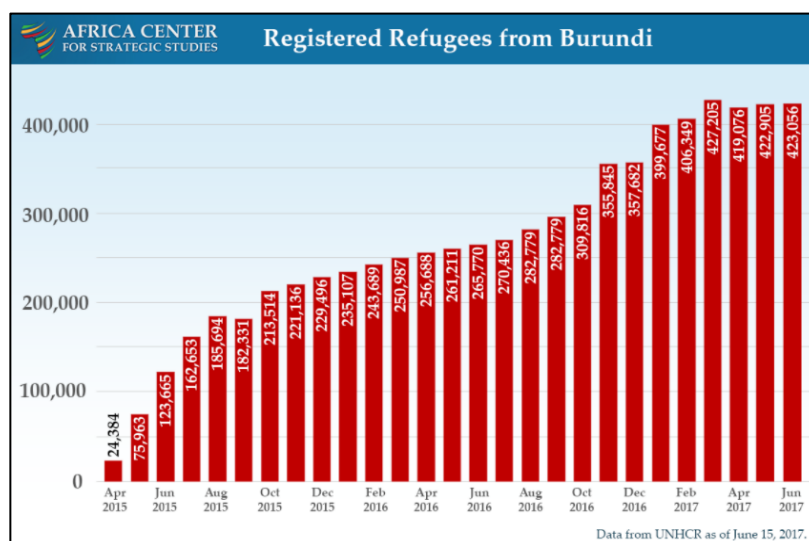
⁵⁹ Interviews with NGOs and researchers in Burundi, August 2017.

⁶⁰ The mandate of MAPROBU included, among others, ‘to prevent any deterioration of the security situation, [to] monitor its evolution and report developments on the ground [and] to contribute, within its capacity and in its areas of deployment, to the protection of civilian populations under imminent threat’, African Union Peace and Security Council (2015b).

⁶¹ IPSS (2017).

2015.⁶² In May 2015, after the attempted coup, displacement figures further increased. Figure 4 shows that there has been no decrease in registered refugees from Burundi from September 2015 to April 2017, despite efforts under APSA/AGA to contribute to a resolution of the conflict. The upward surge in Burundian refugee flows in 2017 corresponds with a rise in violent incidents, many of which have been initiated by the Imbonerakure – the ruling party's youth militia.⁶³

Figure 4: Registered refugees from Burundi



Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2017)

Although, as of 2017, displacement figures are still very high, they did not increase during the period February 2017 to June 2017. This shows that the triggers of displacement, despite the continuous – if scaled down – engagement by APSA actors, have not been sufficiently addressed to convince many Burundians that staying in or returning to Burundi is a safe option. Besides the human rights violations and generalised violence, the deteriorating economic situation in the country provides mixed motivations for people to leave or to stay abroad.

4.4.4. Influence of APSA/AGA structures on displacement in the case of Burundi

While APSA/AGA interventions may not have prevented violence-related displacement or reduced displacement patterns in the context of Burundi, experts interviewed for this study agreed that the AU actively utilised its tools and prepared responses that could have made a difference if they were implemented. The case of Burundi shows that, despite a functioning APSA/AGA machine in terms of monitoring and analysing situations and providing response strategies, political consideration often trumps the leverage of the AU or REC technical departments. APSA/AGA instruments were actively utilised to respond to the Burundi situation: AU monitors reviewed the pre-election setting but refrained from sending election observers due to an unfavourable setting, the early warning system detected the signs of emerging conflict, the EAC sent the Panel of Eminent Persons and the PSC decided to suggest deploying a protection force. These are good examples that even if AU and REC processes work on one level, their effectiveness depends on the political will of their member states to support their implementation.

To conclude, the EAC's mediation efforts had only limited success and thus did not manage to reduce triggers of violence-induced displacement at large. The AU Human Rights Observer Mission may have had

⁶² African Commission on Human and People's Rights (2015).

⁶³ Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2017).

some influence in reducing violence and conflict triggers of displacement.⁶⁴ They might have been even more so if the AU had utilised stronger mechanisms simultaneously, such as the imposing of sanctions on Burundi or the deployment of the protection mission. Overall, the interventions have not been forceful enough to transform the factors of the political crisis, which led individuals to flee.

4.5. South Sudan

4.5.1. Background to the conflict and displacement drivers

In South Sudan, violent conflict broke out in the capital Juba, in mid-December 2013, and rapidly spreading across the country in 2014⁶⁵. Historical tensions within the ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), between President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar came to a head and resulted in a split in the nation's national army. The clashes rapidly took on ethnic dimensions, as government forces started targeting Nuer (men) in Juba. More recently, a proliferation of armed groups along ethnic lines as well as factionalisation has made the political conflict more complex and dynamic.

According to the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan, the main threats for the general population today emerge from i) the violent conflict for power, ii) the deterioration of economic conditions and hardship for most citizens and linked to these iii) the humanitarian crisis. The conflict took a devastating direct toll on the civilian population, mainly due to on-going violence, continued military operations by the government and other factions as well as widespread human rights violations. Moreover, conflict worsened the humanitarian crisis as farmers were not able to tend to their fields, which eroded resilience and food security. Beyond violent clashes and insurgencies between government and opposition groups, factors that contribute to violence and act as triggers of displacement include "extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, forced recruitment, harassment and the destruction of livelihoods".⁶⁶

4.5.2. APSA/AGA interventions in South Sudan

The African Union (AU) and IGAD were the main bodies under the APSA/AGA that intervened and responded to the conflict in South Sudan over the course of 2014-2017. The main channels through which the AU and IGAD sought to influence the conflict dynamics were diplomacy and high-level mediation to find political solutions to the conflict. IGAD undertook intensive mediation efforts from December 2013 onwards, aiming at finding a political settlement resolving the conflict and thus putting an end to fighting and violence. These mediation efforts resulted in a number of agreements. IGAD also established mechanisms to support the monitoring or implementation of the peace agreements. On the other hand, the monitoring of ceasefire agreements sought to minimise their violations and hence – at least indirectly – focused on reducing triggers of displacement. In the case of South Sudan, the information provided by the early warning analysts arguably enabled IGAD mediators to pick up on early warning signs, and provided the mediation team with clear information on where violations happened and who was responsible.

The AU took a supporting role in the IGAD-led mediation process and was involved in activities to strengthen accountability and implementation of peace agreements. Moreover, it engaged in its own mediation and shuttle diplomacy activities. On 30 December 2013, the AU Commission had been tasked with the investigation of the human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict in South Sudan with the aim of guaranteeing healing, reconciliation accountability and institutional reform

⁶⁴ Interview AU Human Rights Observers, August 2017

⁶⁵ Note that this study only looked at the conflict context of South Sudan (and the other case studies in this paper) up until August 2017.

⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council (2017).

for sustainable peace and security in South Sudan. In March 2014, the AUC Chairperson thus established the AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS).

Investigations by the AU, through AUCISS, mapped widespread human rights violations following the outbreak of conflict in December 2013. These violations caused significant displacement. By providing information for accountability as well as a platform for dialogue and reconciliation, the Commission and its report had the potential to reduce those triggers. Yet, little follow-up on the report's findings has taken place. To date, the report had little practical implications for on-going policy or the peace process. The AU has also waited with setting up the hybrid court – another accountability mechanism – as part of the peace agreement, possibly in order to align with IGAD's request to not obstruct the peace process and the newly started Revitalisation Process.

Overall, both the AU and IGAD were responsive to the triggers of violence-related displacement, including major escalation points over the course of 2014-2016 and continued in 2017. The plight of IDPs and issues of forced displacement were directly addressed as part of mediation efforts undertaken by APSA/AGA actors, in particular as part of the two peace agreements (the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and the ARCSS) that were negotiated under IGAD. These have actively aimed at reducing the conflict factors underlying the country's displacement situation. However, as a result of continued disagreements of the warring parties as well as, partly, due to the lack of inclusivity of the ARCSS and the fact that it narrowly addressed power and military aspects of the conflict but not grassroots grievances, fighting continued despite the ceasefire agreement. As a result, violence-induced displacement increased.

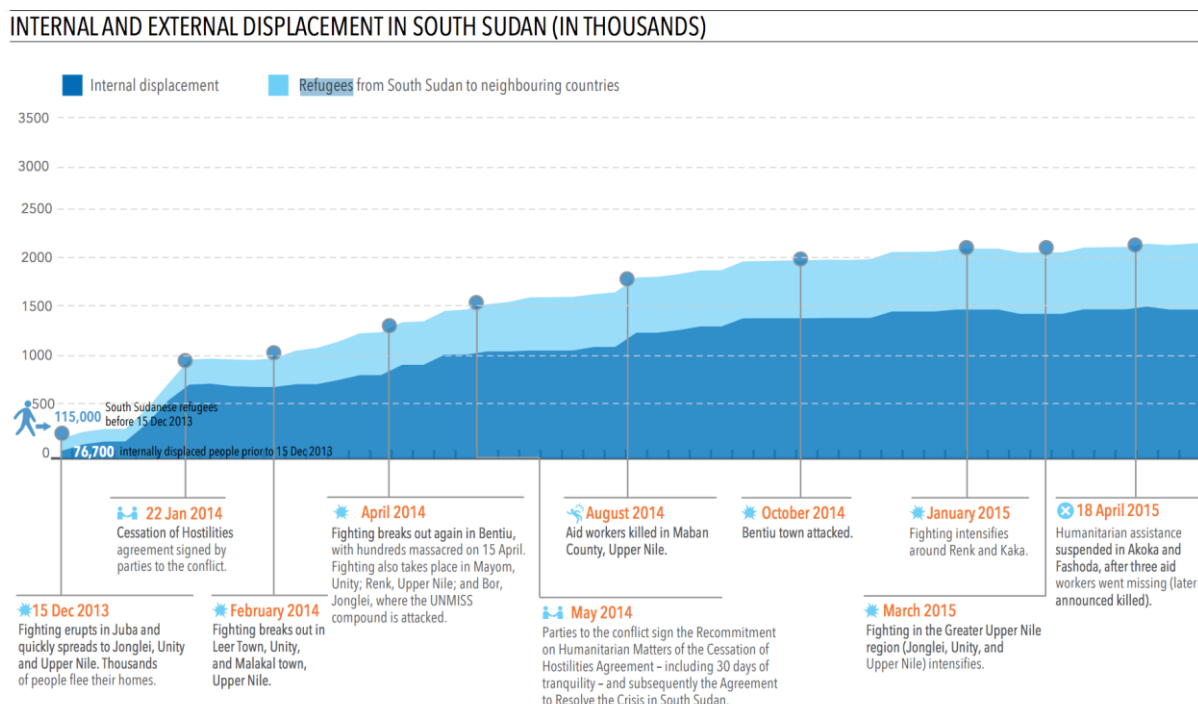
IGAD member states' domestic distractions and different interests in the conflict meant that IGAD faced challenges in leading a robust and neutral mediation process. Moreover, there has been some misalignment between international efforts and regional mediation efforts under the IGAD and the Joint Mediation and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) mediation process, resulting in possibilities to 'forum shop' and overall less effective processes. The IGAD mediation focused strongly on the high-level political process, but less attention was paid to local grievances, which contributed to continued violence. While experts have pointed out that engaged high-level dialogue is important to contain fighting, the proliferation of factions, which has been characteristic of the conflict, means that more peace efforts need to take place at local and regional levels to have a chance of being successful.

Despite international efforts under the APSA/AGA, to date, there has not been substantive progress in establishing security for the civilian population and reducing the triggers of violence-induced displacement in South Sudan. The prime factor is due to a failure of leadership and resort to military means of South Sudan's leaders to retain or gain power. There seems little political will by the government to implement the negotiated peace agreement or to meaningfully address long-standing grievances.

4.5.3. Patterns of violence-induced displacement

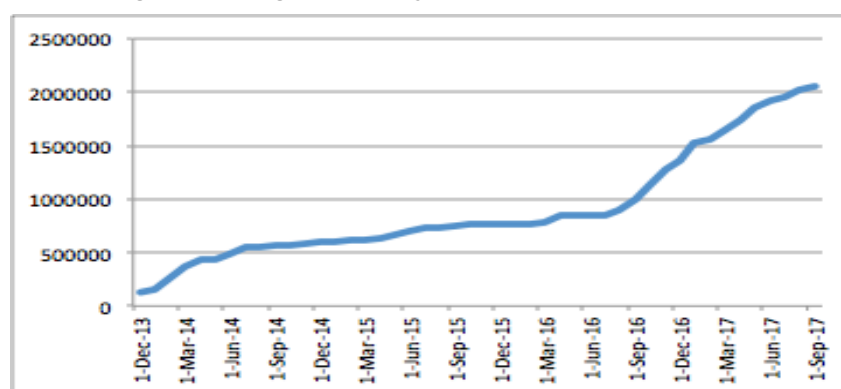
Displacement in South Sudan increased continuously, as figure 5 and 6 show. Especially after 2016, displacement figures soared due to conflict and fighting.⁶⁷ Triggers of violence-induced displacement include the violent and armed conflict, generalised violence and severe human rights violations by warring parties. These conditions have led to a total of about 2.35 million forcibly displaced by 2014 – a number which continued to increase in the following years. According to humanitarian agencies and experts, as of June 2017, about 2 million are forcibly displaced within South Sudan, while another 2 million South Sudanese have fled the country. Especially the increase in violence during 2016 in Juba and Nile and Wau States has contributed to a significant increase in forced displacement.

⁶⁷ IDMC (2017a).

Figure 5: Internal and external displacement South

Source: UNOCHA (2016) the figures include violence-induced displacement and displacement due to other reasons.

UNHCR's 2016 Global Trends on forced displacement report notes that, in 2016, South Sudan's refugee population grew by 85%, mostly in the second half of the year after fighting erupted again.⁶⁸ This suggests that increases in violence-related displacement triggers (fear of persecution, armed violence, generalised violence and profound human rights violations) have had an immediate effect on displacement, and that humanitarian or other efforts by APSA/AGA actors have not been able to adequately mitigate the impact of those triggers.

Figure 6: Refugees and Asylum Seekers from South Sudan

Source: own calculations based on UNHCR Data Overview <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php#>, the figure of refugees and asylum seekers (externally displaced) as a subset of those displaced is smaller than the number of displaced in figure 5.

⁶⁸ UNHCR (2016).

Even if fighting were to stop in South Sudan, the economic impact the war has had on the population means that mixed reasons, including the lack of food and basic services and a mix thereof, has motivated people to move. In Jonglei state, which has been one of the worst affected by the current conflict and which hosts a high number of IDPs, push factors included food insecurity, safety and insecurity as well as lack of basic services.⁶⁹ In other cases, displacement due to violence has led to deteriorating food security and ‘trapped populations’ that employ negative coping strategies such as reducing diets. According to IDMC, around 50% of the nationwide harvest had been lost by December 2015, in the regions affected by violence in South Sudan⁷⁰. The UN declared famine in Greater Unity State in February 2017, after the food insecurity in that state further deteriorated.⁷¹

4.5.4. Influence of APSA/AGA structures on displacement in the case of South Sudan

Despite APSA/AGA interventions, such as the peace agreements negotiated by IGAD, which included a focus on displacement triggers, the efforts to bring stabilisation, peace and protection have not been able to reduce forced displacement. While the conflict trajectory is beyond the sole influence of APSA actors, local and international observers interviewed for this study suggested that AU and IGAD’s efforts have not been necessarily effective in helping to reduce direct triggers of forced displacement and thus had limited impact on movement on the ground. A number of South Sudanese interviewees noted that both AU and IGAD are perceived by the population to be largely reactive with no direct influence on the lives of South Sudanese people.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a direct link between the on-going peace process and the intentions of forcibly displaced populations to return. According to a 2016 REACH study⁷², respondents widely reported that the peace agreement and the formation of a transitional government of unity influenced their wish to return to their preferred origin location. This resonates with earlier research from 2014/15, which found that an end of the war and lasting peace would be a key factor for IDPs to return to their pre-crisis locations.

Some experts have also pointed out that even if the various peace agreements signed didn’t hold, the sustained dialogue and engagement IGAD-coordinated between June 2014 and June 2016 has helped to constrain further escalation of the conflict and, at least, keep violence at the same levels. Between 2014 and 2016, refugee displacement increased only slightly, as figure 6 indicates. Conversely, after July 2016, when the peace agreement imploded and mediation and dialogue were replaced by the monitoring of JMEC, refugee numbers almost doubled.⁷³ Thus, it is plausible that continued dialogue and engagement could have had a positive effect on reducing displacement triggers.

The South Sudan case has shown that, despite sustained diplomatic and mediation engagement by IGAD and the AU under APSA and the 2015 peace agreement signed by both parties, no substantive progress in resolving the conflict and influencing violence-induced displacement has been achieved. With the unravelling of the peace agreements, violence-induced displacement has soared and has exacerbated a number of crises (e.g. food, economic livelihoods), further motivating individuals to move.

⁶⁹ According to a study conducted by REACH in the beginning of 2017, the top three factors cited by IDPs to leave the previous location was food (84%) followed by insecurity (82%) and lack of services, water (31%). See REACH (2017).

⁷⁰ IDMC (2017a).

⁷¹ REACH (2017).

⁷² REACH (2016).

⁷³ United States Institute of Peace (2017).

5. Lessons learnt and indicative ways forward

Out of the three case studies described above, the interventions through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram had the clearest positive effect on reducing the triggers of violence-induced displacement. As a result of the MNJTF intervention, fewer people were displaced and the return of some was facilitated. The success of this task force may be linked to a number of factors. Firstly, the mandate of the military force was specifically targeted at eliminating violence-related displacement triggers (violence, human rights violations, etc.). Second, the mission mandate clearly integrated the stabilisation of regions and the return of IDPs and refugees as well as their protection. Indeed, the main pathways of influence of APSA interventions on forced displacement were through the military containment of Boko Haram, the integration of civilian protection and respect for human rights into mission mandates. Possible measures to further ensure the implementation of this mandate in practice include: training of troops on human and refugee/IDP rights, strengthening the working of civilian components as part of military operations as well as integration of human and refugee/IDPs rights into military response structures.

For Burundi, the deployment of human rights observers seems to have had positive – if limited – effects on the reduction of violence and human rights violations, though their exact impact in the specific geographic location in which they operated is difficult to quantify. Since they faced logistical and operational challenges and were limited in number, they did not influence the broader conflict dynamics and the effect they had on displacement patterns – if any – was very small. On the other hand, their presence on the ground allowed the AU to have a direct connection and additional capacity for information collection and analysis on the ground.

By contrast, in South Sudan, actions that aimed at addressing displacement triggers, such as mediation and the conclusion of a peace agreement as well as the mapping of human rights violations as part of the AU Enquiry have, so far, not unfolded their potential to strengthen accountability and healing⁷⁴.

While the factors that have contributed to success or failure in the case studies are context-specific and not representative of overall APSA and AGA interventions, they may provide general insight into which aspects of interventions affect displacement triggers and displacement patterns on the ground. Table 1 summarises the relevant factors discussed in this section.

⁷⁴ Note that this study only covered conflict dynamics and the progress of the peace process up until August 2017.

Table 1: Illustrative factors from case studies contributing to success or failure in addressing forced displacement triggers

Factors contributing to (partially) successfully addressing triggers of violence-induced displacement	Factors contributing to less success in addressing triggers of violence-induced displacement
Peace Support Operation (against Boko Haram)	Lack of alignment between AU and RECs; and different interests by AU MS leading to weak mediation processes (Burundi, South Sudan)
Human Rights Observers increasing a sense of safety and protection (Burundi)	Lack of attention to the different conflict levels, including local processes in mediation processes, insufficient mediation at various levels (South Sudan)
Continued dialogue and mediation engagement with warring parties (South Sudan)	Lack of implementation of sanctions to accompany mediation/peace processes (Burundi/South Sudan) ⁷⁵
Mediated Peace Agreements (South Sudan)	Lack of focus on continuous dialogue and mediation in the implementation phase of peace agreements at the national and local levels (South Sudan)
A civilian protection component as part of military operations (Boko Haram)	Missed opportunities to send protection missions in situations of strong protection needs (Burundi). This strategy needs to be weighed up, however, against potential consequences, in case of rejection by the host state.
Integration of micro-level realities, (triggers of violence-induced) displacement indicators, testimonies in decision-making processes	Lack of monitoring, follow-up and accountability of the various peace initiatives led by AU and RECs under APSA/AGA, missing checks and balances (South Sudan)

Beyond the specific lessons learned from these cases, the following observations on APSA/AGA responses to triggers of violence induced displacement can serve as indicative ways forward.

Response frameworks and systems for follow-up

The study found that outputs of early warning units of AU/RECs (IGAD, ECOWAS and EAC), have enabled better decision-making regarding forced displacement triggers through the provision of timely information on emerging or evolving conflicts. Nevertheless, the quality of early warning reports and analysis could still be improved by incorporating information from the ground, by making use of external expertise, and, most of all, ensuring the follow-up of the decisions taken by APSA and AGA.

Another issue is that the RECs, the AU and AU member states do not always pursue aligned responses or discuss issues jointly – though greater cooperation between the AU and RECs has been noted in certain conflict responses.⁷⁶ While each conflict is unique and requires a specific response, it seems that there are also no clear standards or guidelines according to which different institutions arrive at their positions on the response pathways to take. Political obstacles often prevent the operationalisation of mechanisms, or realisation of decisions taken by AU or RECs.

⁷⁵ It should be noted, however, that the application of sanctions is not guaranteed to influence conflict dynamics positively depending on the context.

⁷⁶ GIZ (2017).

In the case of Burundi, the AU APSA/AGA response had mastered all dynamics in terms of making use of early warning systems and designing and proposing a strong response. This included extensive plans to prevent triggers that lead people to flee. Yet, member states' interests did not align when it came to deploying the Prevention and Protection Mission for Burundi (MAPROBU). This Mission could possibly have had a preventative effect on further violence-related displacements by restoring a sense of safety. Despite this, the government of Burundi rejected it and warned that if Mission troops were mobilised, it would perceive this as a violation of its sovereignty.

Nonetheless, where political will existed, APSA early warning and early action systems have had positive results in reducing forced displacement. Aligned AU and ECOWAS interventions, for example, significantly contributed to containing violence in post-election crises, in Ivory Coast (2011) and the Gambia (2017). In the interviews, observers and AU officials alike described the swift and coordinated AU/ECOWAS response to the Gambia as a CEWS success story, through which heavy violence and subsequent mass forced displacement was averted.

Continuous and multi-level engagement: Even though the mediation process of IGAD in South Sudan was ultimately not able to put the country on a path to peace, forced displacement stayed at the same level during the dialogue and mediation phase. It was only once the peace process came to a halt, after the April 2016 peace agreement faltered, that displacement spiralled out of control and violence erupted, in July 2016. This may well indicate the importance of continuous engagement and dialogue in order to avoid further violence and forced displacement. Thus, continued support to prevention, mediation and inclusive dialogue at different levels seem to remain an important strategy to reduce triggers of displacement or to keep them from further rising. There are several complex reasons why ultimately the peace agreement in South Sudan did not hold. The case study argued that the lack of engagement and mediation at various levels beyond the high-level dialogue led to missed opportunities to help reduce conflict locally. The fact that many more factions are now part of the picture means that more peace efforts also need to take place, both at local and regional levels, to have a chance of being successful.

Human rights violations, protection of civilians and accountability

Human rights violations, especially as part of wider conflict and violence, trigger forced displacement. Due to the scale of atrocities, human rights violations and violence against individuals as part of on-going conflicts, the AU and its PSC have recently recognised the link between peace and security and human rights.⁷⁷ Efforts are made to integrate human rights issues into conflict management and prevention structures under the APSA/AGA. How APSA/AGA responds to human rights violations and violence against individuals in crises and conflicts can further be strengthened by ensuring that the AU Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is fed with more precise data on human rights violations (e.g. by the ACHPR). Moreover, the relationship between the AU's CEWS and its decision-making body – the PSC – still needs strengthening and improvement, including facilitating a more direct information flow.

Furthermore, decision making processes within the AU should have better exposure to micro-level realities in addition to macro-analysis they so often receive. Interviewees of the study have pointed out that increased number of visits by PSC members, liaising with civil society through open sessions and/or invitations, and the composition of the PSC (notably the number of women ambassadors in the PSC) have improved the PSC's awareness of individual realities in conflict situations, protection of civilians, and specific violence-induced displacement triggers. Such efforts need to be encouraged and carried out further, in a systematic manner.

⁷⁷ Amnesty International (2017b).

Accountability: Measures addressing impunity, injustice and the establishment of accountability systems can help to transform cycles of violence and reduce triggers of forced displacement relevant for the longer-term⁷⁸. Neglected accountability and reconciliation related to injustices in Burundi and in South Sudan that have not been dealt with have, in the past, perpetuated violence and can do so in the future with negative consequences for forced displacement.⁷⁹ While the AU rejects impunity as part of its Constitutive Act, structures for accountability and institutions for justice have in these two cases faced a number of obstacles. In the case of South Sudan, the objective of keeping warring parties engaged in the dialogue and, currently, in the IGAD Revitalisation Forum, meant that efforts for accountability such as the timely publishing of the report of the AU Commission Inquiry on South Sudan or the establishment of the Hybrid Court were delayed⁸⁰. In Burundi, the Human Rights Observers mandate is to collect information, but it is still unclear how accountability for human rights violations will be supported through APSA/AGA structures.

Issues related to the respect for human rights and accountability pertain to APSA interventions, e.g. PSOs, as these can contribute to forced displacement in the short term. Hence, it is important to intervene with the protection of civilians in mind (e.g. due to the lack of respect for human rights of civilians in fragile zones and the securitisation of approaches).

The active integration (not just in design, but also in practice) of **police and civilian dimensions**, which currently seems to be lacking in many PSOs in Africa, particularly in the case of the MNJTF, is critical. This integrated approach ensures PSOs are not only militaristic and combat-driven, but also that they assist in civilian protection and law enforcement, which are key factors in establishing a sense of safety and stability.

Links between political affairs and peace and security actors (APSA vs. AGA)

Within the AU, the domain of human rights falls under AGA (led by DPA) and while the peace and security portfolio falls under APSA (led by PSD). In order to improve the coordination and knowledge exchange on human rights, governance within peace and security responses, it is important to strengthen the complementarity and cooperation between AGA and APSA, and by extension – between DPA and PSD. Indeed, the human rights portfolio falls under the former, while the latter leads security issues. Although, there is widespread recognition of this need, actual coordination between the two sectors and departments within the AUC is rather ad-hoc.

From a political standpoint, conflict management and preventative diplomacy as part of APSA seem to garner more political will and financial support. Conversely, structures within AGA – designed to raise governance and human rights issues (e.g. ACHPR) – are considered politically sensitive by member states, do not have sufficient means to enforce decisions, and attract less financial support from AU partners.

⁷⁸ Amnesty International (2016).

⁷⁹ Amnesty International (2016).

⁸⁰ There are different views as to the sequencing of peace and justice efforts. IGAD puts more emphasis on the peace process and the revitalisation of the peace agreement, which, if obstructed through a too strong emphasis on accountability, could lead to a worsening of the situation.

ANNEX 1 Conceptualisation and literature review on violence-induced displacement

1. Structural drivers beyond acute triggers

'Root causes of migration' is a term that is often used to describe the social and political conditions that induce departures, especially the prevalence of poverty, repression, and conflict. 'Drivers of migration' is a more inclusive term that also encompasses the mechanisms that mediate migration outcomes, such as social networks and access to information, which influence migration decisions but are not immediate causes or triggers or root causes.⁸¹

Van Hear et al. (2012)⁸² make a similar distinction and suggest differentiating between predisposing, proximate, precipitating and mediating factors. **Predisposing factors** relate to the context that may make displacement more likely and are found in the broader processes of globalisation, inequality and transition. **Proximate factors** are related to the above-mentioned 'root causes' that characterise the context, e.g. general security or human rights environments or economic characteristics and slow-onset causes.⁸³ These can be compared to the root causes of displacement, as described above. **Precipitating factors** are those that actually trigger departure, and when these occur in the political and security sphere (persecution, outbreak of war) they can be viewed as 'triggers of violence-related displacement'. Finally, **mediating factors** are those that "enable, facilitate, constrain, accelerate, diminish or consolidate migration"⁸⁴ and include those factors that make displacement more or less likely.⁸⁵ All these factors do not work in isolation, but rather work in combination to determine individuals' or household decisions, and thus shape the specific form and structure of population movements.

This brings us to the important factor of **human agency**. A growing body of literature, views the forcibly displaced not merely as victims of war or conflict, but rather as actors that take conscious decisions based on a careful calculation of risks and opportunities. Even though coercion shapes the decisions of individuals and households, people are not always without options when deciding when and where to flee⁸⁶. The following section will provide a brief overview of the findings from the literature, on the macro-level causal link between violence and displacement.

2. Causal links between violence and displacement

A wealth of research conducted at both macro- and micro-levels indicates that violent conflict, particularly violence against civilians, is a primary driver of displacement. However, the causality from conflict to displacement is neither automatic nor generalisable, nor linear or mono-causal. The causalities involved are multi-factorial, context-specific and highly complex. In many wars and conflicts, it is also true that a majority of citizens stay put and do not become displaced.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Carling and Talleraas (2016).

⁸² Van Hear et al. (2012).

⁸³ Ibid.p.4.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ In the literature such differentiations are often made, with different authors using different connotations. McAdam (2014), for example, uses the terms 'structural factors', 'proximate causes', 'immediate triggers' and 'intervening factors' referring to similar concepts.

⁸⁶ See for instance Salehyan (2014).

⁸⁷ Raleigh (2011).

Macro-level studies of conflicts confirm violence against civilians as a main displacement driver even “after controlling for economic and social conditions and household characteristics in a number of conflicts”.⁸⁸ In an analysis of several macro-level research projects⁸⁹, Raleigh⁹⁰ found that civil war has the largest impact on migration, followed by genocide/politicide, protest events by dissidents, civil war, and shifts in a state’s political structure (e.g. democratic to autocratic shifts). Structural character and change in a polity have lesser effects on forced migrations, as do smaller conflicts (i.e. ‘ethnic’ or human rights abuses).⁹¹

Households and individuals who find themselves threatened by conflict have to adapt in order to survive and cope with its consequences. A variety of strategies, other than migration, may be used to negotiate safety, such as interacting strategically with armed groups, joining combatants, obtaining economic gains from conflict, or reverting to private life to minimise risk of victimisation.⁹² People exercise a great deal of agency when confronted with conflict. Relocation is not an automatic or inevitable reaction. Thus, according to Ibáñez,⁹³ “identifying the causal effect of violence on the decision to migrate is an unresolved and challenging issue”.⁹⁴ Although research is still scarce on factors that cause people to stay, it is clear that specific household characteristics (wealth, networks, etc) play an important role in decision-making on whether to stay or move.

Individuals impacted by violence may not have the same variety of choices as other migrants and may find themselves trapped in an unsafe situation. In some contexts, civilians become trapped in the middle of an internal armed conflict, without being able to flee, be it to nearby areas or further away. They are then typically at high risk of violence, neglect, and exploitation by the state and non-state actors. It is typically the most disadvantaged in society who become trapped.⁹⁵

The remainder of Section 2 will explore, in more depth, how mediating factors matter in shaping the causal link between conflict, violence and displacement.

2.1. Main mediating factors influencing causal links between violence and displacement

For those that choose to flee, violence, though a determinant factor, is combined with and mediated by the specific conflict dynamics and socio-economic factors that influence decisions whether, when and where to move. The latter can include factors such as identity, class, assets, feasibility, assistance and social networks. In addition to the conditions at the place of origin, the conditions at the places of potential destination, and the costs and difficulties associated with moving are also taken into account.⁹⁶ These characteristics and factors can make movement more or less necessary, likely and feasible.

⁸⁸ Ibáñez (2014) 373

⁸⁹ In the literature, such differentiations are often made, with different authors using different connotations, McAdam (2014), for example, uses the terms ‘structural factors’, ‘proximate causes’, ‘immediate triggers’ and ‘intervening factors’ referring to similar concepts.

⁹⁰ Raleigh (2011).

⁹¹ Raleigh (2011).

⁹² Ibáñez and Moya (2016).

⁹³ Ibáñez (2014)

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Black and Collyer (2014).

⁹⁶ Salehyan (2014).

They can be classified into two categories interacting with each other:

1. Key **contextual factors** relate to (i) the character and level of violence, notably the behaviour of conflict actors towards civilians, and (ii) the perception of insecurity by these civilians.
2. **Micro-level household characteristics**, related to the socio-economic resources and social networks the households can call upon, as well as their aspirations for life.

These two broad types of interacting mediating factors will be discussed in turn, below.

2.2. Further compounding factors influencing displacement

The relationship between violence and displacement is further complicated by the indirect effects of violence. In addition, more structural or slow-onset drivers interact with more acute triggers, making the distinctive contribution of each difficult to disentangle.

Indirect effects of violence

Armed conflict and violence tend to aggravate economic conditions and exacerbate livelihood vulnerabilities due to lack of income, food insecurity, disease, and collapse of or reduced access to services. In other words, violence and abuse can erode resilience over the long term, to a point where vulnerabilities become too strong and decisions to leave are made. As Ibáñez and Moya⁹⁷ noted, “Individuals may migrate not after being victims of attacks or to prevent victimisation but due to absolute destitution brought about by war”.

Displacement itself has consequences, which, in turn, may trigger more violence and displacement. Displacement-related pressure on resources, food insecurity and disease, can provoke inter-communal conflict, generalised violence or foster societal tensions and xenophobia in host areas.⁹⁸ Furthermore, conflict parties may instrumentalise the presence of displaced people; refugee or IDP camps can be used as sanctuaries for armed groups and serve as recruiting grounds for rebel movements.

Environmental changes also shape how civilians respond to violence and economic threats. The empirical evidence on the link between environmental degradation and migration is rather inconclusive, and – similarly to the link between violence and displacement – highly context-specific and multi-factorial.⁹⁹ In the presence of conflict, the effect of environmental degradation is more likely to be a compounding one. Communities who are subject to increasing environmental variation and disruption are likely to become poorer as a consequence, which in turn lessens their ability to respond to the myriad of threats in their environment, including conflict, ecological disasters, disease, or economic hardship.

Interaction between slower drivers and acute triggers

In many cases, forced displacement can be viewed as a response to a series of cumulative pressures that make life at home intolerable and unsustainable for the particular individual or household, at which point the decision to move may be triggered – but not caused – by a particular threat or crisis event.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, ‘triggers’ for violence-related displacement can only really be interpreted against the background of the proximate and predisposing factors, as these always interact with each other. Furthermore, motivations for migration or fleeing may shift along the displacement/migration trajectory. A young Ghanaian man might

⁹⁷ Ibáñez and Moya (2016).

⁹⁸ Salehyan (2014).

⁹⁹ Kouby et al (2012); Raleigh (2011).

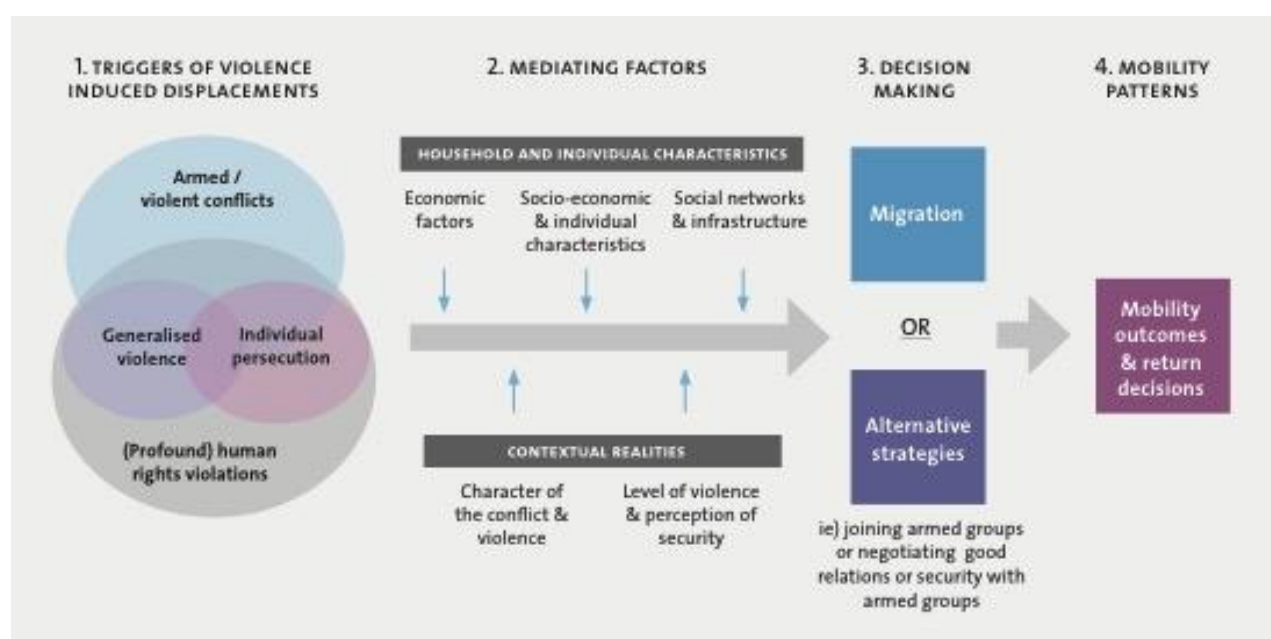
¹⁰⁰ McAdam (2014), also see Martin et al. (2014).

have set out, primarily for economic reasons, but faced immediate danger in Libya, before escaping across the Mediterranean.¹⁰¹

Ultimately, it is generally not realistic to point to one particular factor – violence, economic, environmental or social – or one particular trigger as the cause for displacement. As a consequence, making a clear distinction between voluntary and forced migration, or between a refugee fleeing from war or an economic migrant, is thus problematic as “people move in and out of labels”.¹⁰²

The following diagram summarises the relationship between immediate triggers, mediating factors, and displacement – discussed in the preceding sections of this study.

Figure 7: Analytical Framework



2.3. Contextual factors

Character of the conflict and violence

A major factor for displacement is violence by armed groups that is specifically **targeted** with the intention to displace populations for political reasons, e.g. when the aim is to seek control over a territory or to dispel individuals supporting rival groups. This often takes the shape of targeted attacks against specific civilians with certain characteristics. For genocides and politicides the rates of displacement tend to be higher than in other cases of mass atrocities, since they are directed against a specific group of people.¹⁰³ Such collective targeting is more likely in regions where two or more armed groups are in competition than in regions where an armed group either dominates the territory or has no control over it. Migration happens more in contested places; in controlled territories incidence of violence may be lower.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Carling and Talleraas (2016).

¹⁰² Stepputat and Nyberg-Sorensen (2014).

¹⁰³ Ibáñez and Moya (2016).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Another type of violence that empirically has led to large-scale displacement is **generalised violence**. That is, violence other than warfare that is large-scale and indiscriminate such as election related violence (e.g. the elections in Kenya in 2008 displaced 350.000 people) or violent crime in Latin America.¹⁰⁵ Generalised violence may also accompany armed conflict, either as a precursor to the outbreak of general armed conflict (as in Libya in 2011), or as an inter-linked element of the overall pattern of violence within an armed conflict (as in Iraq from 2004-2009).¹⁰⁶ In these cases, individuals and households are caught in cross-fire or fighting without being targeted directly.¹⁰⁷ A general lack of security can also discourage many from returning, and can thus perpetuate high stock levels of displacement, even if the original trigger for displacement is no longer present.

Human rights violations can also serve as a trigger for displacement. Countries in conflict that experience higher human rights abuses as part of the conflict dynamics tend to produce more displacement than those with a better human rights record.¹⁰⁸ Such abuses can also be an important driver for on-migration, as migrants often fall victim to human rights abuses in transit, for instance in Libya.

Finally, the characteristics of conflict can also influence the decision whether to relocate within the boundaries of the state or to cross an international boundary.¹⁰⁹

Level of violence and perception of security

The level of violence has different effects on displacement. Only when violence reaches beyond a certain level up to which it is acceptable, does it become an important trigger for relocation.¹¹⁰ Lower levels of violence may be correlated with less mobility as individuals withdraw to their homes for safety. Economic mediating factors (see below) play a lesser role when warfare is intense and the risk of suffering violence is high.¹¹¹ When the level of violence and risks is low, the decision to move is less hasty and may give higher weight to longer-term traditional determinants of migration.¹¹²

Perception of security matters. Ibáñez and Moya¹¹³ stress that “it is important to appreciate that, to generate its consequences, violence need not be carried out in fact but only credibly threatened”. In an empirical study based on an opinion survey in Nepal, researchers showed that a one-unit increase in the perceived level of threat of violence results in an increase in the likelihood that an individual will flee. Yet, individuals who experienced an actual act of violence are 32% more likely to flee than those who experienced no violence.¹¹⁴ The presence of different state actors can also affect perceived threat-levels and influence mobility choices. However, how state forces are perceived is context-specific. In the context of Colombia, researchers found that presence of police forces was correlated with a lower likelihood of receiving direct threats, while military presence was correlated with an increased likelihood of direct threats.¹¹⁵ Thus, police presence may signal government control, implying lower expected levels of aggression against civilians. In contrast, military presence may be perceived as a pending violent contestation and an escalation of conflict¹¹⁶.

¹⁰⁵ Combaz (2016).

¹⁰⁶ Farrel and Schmitt (2012).

¹⁰⁷ Ibáñez (2014).

¹⁰⁸ Apodaca, 1998 quoted in Ibáñez (2014).

¹⁰⁹ Moore and Shellman (2006); Bohra-Mishra and Massey (2011).

¹¹⁰ See Morrison and May (1994); Bohra-Mishra and Massey (2011) referenced in Ibáñez 2014: 373.

¹¹¹ Ibáñez (2014).

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibáñez and Moya (2016) 251.

¹¹⁴ Adhikari (2012).

¹¹⁵ Engel and Ibáñez (2007); Ibáñez and Vélez (2008).

¹¹⁶ Ibáñez (2014) points out that displacement triggers in the presence of military actors may be the result of attacks by government forces or simply as a result of the risk of being caught in violent activities.

The predictability of violence also plays a role, as discussed by Lindley (2010), in the case of Mogadishu:

“A key element for participants was the unpredictability of violence, which made it harder to negotiate. For much of the earlier period, when conflict broke out, people knew which areas to avoid, they knew it would be temporary, and they knew where they fitted in local power configurations. Many said that everything was turned 'upside down' since the end of 2006, with changing political and geographical configurations of power, new technologies of war, and new forms of urban insecurity”.¹¹⁷

The overall security situation also influences migration decisions. The risk of migrating through an unsafe territory may be greater than staying put.¹¹⁸ In Somalia for instance, violence impeded departure; routes out of Mogadishu were determined by transport availability, the shifting geography of the conflict and information about the situation at different borders.¹¹⁹ Insecurity of a more random nature poses a more direct risk than more predictable insecurity.

2.4. Household characteristics that influence preferences

Whether similar triggers for violence-related displacement lead to actual displacement varies with the characteristics at the individual and household level. Beyond the fact that violence may be targeted towards specific groups with specific characteristics, individual or household characteristics also influence available coping strategies and therefore preferences and actions.

The main objective for individuals is to minimise the risk of becoming a victim of violence and to remain alive and in safety. Individuals have options to achieve this and often make decisions based on cost-benefit calculations. Responses of and final outcomes for individuals differ according to economic factors, social and political status and resources and personal characteristics. In addition, the presence of social networks and existing pathways of migration play a role, as well as individual aspirations.

Economic factors and cost-benefit analysis

The relative wealth of a household is an important element, but its effect on displacement is neither automatic nor linear. Thus, it is not possible to know, a priori, what impact wealth has on violence-induced displacement.¹²⁰

For example, richer households may be targeted because of their wealth or they may be better able to fund out-migration, both of which may result in their leaving. However, they may also have higher opportunity costs from moving, which may induce them to stay.¹²¹ In particular, the degree to which assets are easily sold matters. Location-specific assets, such as land, tend to deter voluntary migration, in particular in situations where weak rule of law increases the risk of losing the land once abandoned. Assets that are easily sold may provide funding for the migration process.¹²² Employment opportunities also tend to deter displacement. A study from Nepal showed that people with wage employment are less likely to migrate, even when the level of violence was controlled for.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Lindley (2010) 10.

¹¹⁸ Interestingly, international mixed migrant flows are still observed even in contexts of violent conflict such as in Yemen. Despite the on-going conflict dynamics, African migrants chose to cross Yemen to reach Middle Eastern countries in order to obtain work (see Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat).

¹¹⁹ Lindley (2010) 18.

¹²⁰ Ibáñez (2014).

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid. 376.

¹²³ Williams (2008).

Overall, four main economic factors tend to come into play in the cost-benefit analysis:

- the degree to which wealthier individuals are more likely to be targeted;
- the degree of destruction of productive assets and destruction of economic opportunity;
- the ability of households to generate income at the location of origin and destination;

financial resources that may facilitate the funding of migration and resettlement.¹²⁴

Wealth can also play into the choice of destination. Those forced to leave conflict zones are often limited in their choice of destination. Those able to move further do so, but pre-conflict characteristics such as significant assets, legal status, education and skills determine these possibilities. Conflict victims leaving their home country for more developed states tend to be highly skilled and relatively wealthy.¹²⁵

Social status, political resources and individual characteristics

Political position and social status also plays a role. A higher – and more public – status may cause an individual to be explicitly targeted. At the same time, social status and political resources can influence the coping strategies available to individuals or households. They may be better able to negotiate good relations with armed groups, or pay them off, thus creating higher safety guarantees for themselves.¹²⁶

Individual characteristics, such as age, gender, and social group influence motivations and capacities to move, while also influencing whether the individual may be directly targeted. Violence is also known to affect women differently from men, which leads to differences in the way they respond to (threats of) violence. Women may not only suffer the direct consequences of war, but are also, at times, used as instruments of war (i.e. rape, violence, domestic work, human trafficking...) designed to weaken families and disrupt the communities and their structure.¹²⁷

Youth are a special category, in terms of displacement. Youth often have high life aspirations and a sense of frustration about their future prospects, which may induce them to move.¹²⁸ Youth and children (mostly boys and young men) may also be explicitly targeted, for instance for recruitment into militia or criminal gangs.¹²⁹ This may lead to decisions to move and/or induce some families to send young family members away to safer places.

Social networks and migration infrastructure

Social networks are another key mediating factor, which, again, do not come into play in a mono-directional fashion. In some cases, support from social networks and community organisations may mitigate the economic and social consequences of war, and help avoid the confiscation and destruction of assets, and thus prevent forced displacement.¹³⁰ Some research has shown that the presence of local or proximate social networks and community organisations strongly determines the feasibility of staying (if present), the likelihood of leaving (if such support is missing).¹³¹

¹²⁴ Ibáñez and Moya (2016)

¹²⁵ Raleigh (2011) 9.

¹²⁶ Ibáñez and Moya (2016)

¹²⁷ Kangas et al. (2014).

¹²⁸ Carling and Talleraas (2016).

¹²⁹ UNICEF (2016).

¹³⁰ Combaz (2016).

¹³¹ See Adhikari (2012); Van Hear (2004); Williams (2008).

However, the presence of social networks and organisations, if spanning across countries, can also increase the likelihood of moving, as they can provide information and support in destination locations, and thus reduce the cost of out-migration.¹³² Where and what kind of networks are found away from the conflict setting – which has been dubbed ‘migration infrastructure’¹³³ – can also influence the choice of destination, as social networks are an important source of information and of initial support in resettlement.

Smugglers also act as professional network offering services to overcome barriers and they may actively encourage migration through targeted marketing strategies in conflict zones or other desperate situations.¹³⁴

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¹³² Combaz (2016), see also Adhikari (2012).

¹³³ This term was coined by Xiang & Lindquist (2014). This migration infrastructure has five dimensions: the commercial (brokers, smugglers), the regulatory (state apparatus and procedures), the technological (communication, transport), the humanitarian (NGOs and international organisations), and the social (migrant networks).

¹³⁴ Tinti and Reitano (2016).

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