

# ECDPM Background note

## Peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict monitoring in the African Peace and Security Architecture

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## The African Peace and Security Architecture

*This background note sheds light on the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and makes reference to the work of ECDPM's SECURE Programme on peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict monitoring in relation to the APSA. It also informs how we connect with other ECDPM work regarding conflict prevention, governance and political economy analysis of regional integration in Africa. More information is presented at the end of this dossier.*

### Trends in global and African regional conflicts: Why APSA is relevant

According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), 2014 was the most violent year since the end of the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> According to UCDP data, more than 100.000 people were killed in organized violence in the year 2014, making it the highest number in 20 years, as the death count in organized violence has not exceeded 100.000 since 1994 when the Rwandan genocide took place. Research indicates that since 2010, it seems there has been a reversed trend from the initial decrease in war since the early 2000s, which had followed a particularly violent post-Cold War period. According to the International Crisis Group, each year since then has seen more conflict, more victims, and more people displaced.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), Africa, together with the Middle East, remains the most heavily burdened with violent conflict. Africa and the Middle East endure the most armed conflict when measured by population size over time. While the majority of Africa is generally at peace<sup>5</sup>, most battle related deaths in Africa have become concentrated<sup>6</sup> in a relatively small number of countries, according to ACLED, including Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia. Another (more recent) trend has been the attempts of leaders to extend constitutional term limits to remain in power<sup>7</sup>, which have led to

<sup>3</sup> UCDP, [New conflict data: 2014 was a very violent year](#), 12 October 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Marie Guéhenno, [10 Conflicts to Watch in 2016](#), Foreign Policy, 3 Jan 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Institute for Security Studies, [Conflict trends in Africa: a turn for the better in 2015?](#), 4 November 2015.

<sup>6</sup> The Guardian, [Nigeria suffers highest number of civilian deaths in African war zones](#), 23 January 2015.

<sup>7</sup> ACLED, [Trends and Unexpected Developments in Africa 2015](#), 11 December 2015.

demonstrations, civil unrest and intra-state conflict. Coups d'état – or attempts thereof – have occurred related to this, in large part as a response to leaders who have sought to remain in power, often through these so-called constitutional 'coup d'états'.

The refugee crisis is a global crisis, but has affected the continent very hard in particular. The protracted conflict in South Sudan<sup>8</sup> has pushed the numbers of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) ever higher, to reportedly over 2.2 million<sup>9</sup>. Also, according to UNHCR in a report released in June 2015, worldwide displacement was at the highest level ever recorded, namely 59.5 million (compared to 51.2 million a year earlier and 37.5 million a decade ago).<sup>10</sup> The African migration crisis is extending beyond Africa's border over into Europe. To read more about our work on migration in the wider development debate, see our Dossier on Linking Migration to Development<sup>11</sup>.

## Unpacking the African Peace and Security Architecture

The establishment of the APSA took place within the context of the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity to the African Union (AU) in 2000s. This transformation was the result of both developments in Africa as well as broader changes following the end of the Cold War and external factors.<sup>12</sup>

### From Non-Interference in the OAU to non-indifference of the African Union

Civil wars on the African continent intensified in the early 1990s, but the nature of conflict changed from primarily interstate conflicts to intra-state conflicts.<sup>13</sup> Already in 1990, the OAU adopted a *Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situations in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World*. It noted that the "[...] possibilities of achieving the objectives we have set will be constrained as long as an atmosphere of lasting peace and stability does not prevail in Africa". This initiated a new period in the way the OAU aimed to deal with human rights, democracy and peace, and with security and development within Africa. Despite the 1990 Declaration however, the domain of peace and security was still considered to be the exclusive domestic jurisdiction of member states. Whenever the OAU was assumed to intervene in internal disputes or systematic violations of human rights, it declined, insisting on existing principles of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs (Article III of the OAU Charter). The conflicts in Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone and the genocide in Rwanda brought these gaps to the forefront.<sup>14</sup> In the transition from the OAU to the African Union in 2001, a normative shift took place from non-interference to non-indifference (see Box 1).

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<sup>8</sup> ACLED, [Trends and Unexpected Developments in Africa 2015](#), 11 December 2015.

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR News Stories, [More than 2.25 million now displaced in South Sudan and across its borders](#), 7 July 2015.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR News Stories, [Worldwide displacement hits all-time high as war and persecution increase](#), 18 June 2015.

<sup>11</sup> ECDPM Dossier: Linking migration to development, [ecdpm.org/migration](http://ecdpm.org/migration).

<sup>12</sup> *The African Peace and Security Architecture, A Handbook* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2014), by Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Elizabeth Choge-Nyangoro, Solomon Dersso, Brenda Mofya and Tim Murithi; *The African Peace and Security Architecture*, Dersso, S., in Murithi, T. (Ed). 2013. *Handbook of Africa's International Relations Publisher*, London: Routledge.

<sup>13</sup> *The African Peace and Security Architecture, A Handbook* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2014), by Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Elizabeth Choge-Nyangoro, Solomon Dersso, Brenda Mofya and Tim Murithi; Dersso, S. *The African Peace and Security Architecture*, in Murithi, T. (Ed). 2013. *Handbook of Africa's International Relations Publisher*, London: Routledge.

<sup>14</sup> Dersso, S., *The African Peace and Security Architecture*, in Murithi, T. (Ed). 2013. *Handbook of Africa's International Relations Publisher*, London: Routledge.

### Box 1: Normative and Institutional Foundations Of The APSA

The normative and institutional foundations of the APSA constitute of the African Union Constitutive Act, the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC Protocol)<sup>15</sup> and the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP). All three documents include a firm commitment to democracy and good governance, the protection of human rights, respect for the sanctity of human life and humanitarian law. A ground-breaking new principle in this Act is the right of the AU to “intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision from of the AU Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.” (Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act.) This principle creates legal basis for intervention, but also imposes an obligation for the AU to intervene to prevent or stop perpetration of heinous crimes anywhere on the continent. As such, it reversed the primacy of the state and state-centric principles of the OAU.<sup>16</sup>

The AU has come a long way since its establishment and is still maturing. Since its establishment in 2004, the PSC has taken over 500 decisions on a growing number of peace, security and governance issues, ranging from protracted violence to political unrest related to unconstitutional transfers of power. Yet PSC decision-making practice indicates that the African Union is still maturing. The case of Burundi is a critical example in this regard, as it was the first time Article 4(h) was used in a hostile environment. In December 2015, PSC (meeting at the level of Ambassadors) authorized the deployment of a protection force in Burundi, the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU). The PSC - faced by a Member State, which has violated the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance - acted upon Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act and implemented the provisions of the PSC Protocol on early warning. The Burundian government did not welcome this authorization and objected the deployment of a peacekeeping force in the country.

The PSC decision on the MAPROBU was however rescinded during the AU Summit in late January 2016, when the PSC, this time meeting at the level of heads of state and government, considered the deployment of this mission a red line. The AU heads of state and government decided “[N]ot to deploy MAPROBU because it is ... premature to send such a force to Burundi, and that an inclusive political dialogue [is] to be supported, under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Uganda’.”<sup>17</sup> A decision was instead taken to send a high-level delegation to open a dialogue with the Burundian government, obtain consent for the deployment from the Burundian government and support the mediation process between the government and the opposition. Thus far, the future of MAPROBU remains uncertain.<sup>18</sup>

This Burundian example shows the many difficulties in implementing Article 4(h) as a deterrent for interventions, which symbolised the transition from the OAU to the AU. It also points to issues of subsidiarity between RECs and the African Union), decision-making dynamics in the PSC at African Union headquarters, as well as finance issues. With declining international donor contribution to the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Burundi being the biggest troop contributor in Somalia, the AU was faced with a complicated mix of challenges. These political-economy factors need to be taken into account when looking at the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

<sup>15</sup> Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union ([PSC Protocol](#)).

<sup>16</sup> Dersso, S. *The African Peace and Security Architecture*, in Murithi, T. (Ed). 2013. Handbook of Africa's International Relations Publisher, London: Routledge.

<sup>17</sup> Communiqué of the [571st meeting of the PSC](#), at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the situation in Burundi.

<sup>18</sup> Institute for Security Studies (ISS), [In hindsight: Policy lessons from the PSC's efforts in Burundi](#), 7 March 2016.

## Outlining the pillars of the APSA

Several structures emerged that constitute the institutional dimension of the APSA. The APSA is anchored upon a number of building blocks, which include at the centre the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC). The APSA should not be seen as a monolith, but as a set of institutions and bodies with different mandates, objectives and composition. Besides the Peace and Security Council, the African Union Commission (in particular the Chairperson and the Commissioner for Peace and Security), the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF), the African Peace Fund and the regional economic communities are part of the APSA.<sup>19</sup>

The **Peace and Security Council (PSC)** is the AU's sole decision-making body. It serves as 'a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa', constituting of 15 Member States on a rotational basis.<sup>20</sup> Article 7 of the *Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC Protocol)* stipulates the PSC's mandate, including to anticipate and prevent disputes and conflicts, as well as policies that may lead to

**Figure 1: Pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture**



genocide and crimes against humanity; undertake peace-making and peace-building functions in order to resolve conflicts where they have occurred; authorise the mounting and deployment of peace support missions; recommend to the assembly intervention in a member state in respect of grave circumstances as provided for in Article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act; and support and facilitate humanitarian action in situations of armed conflicts or major natural disasters.

The other elements supporting the PSC in its work within the APSA include the **Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)**. The CEWS is to provide timely advice (early warning) on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in the continent to the AUC Chairperson, to be brought to the attention of the PSC in order to

develop an appropriate and timely response.<sup>21</sup> The CEWS coordinates its work with similar structures in the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Notably SADC<sup>22</sup>, ECOWAS<sup>23</sup> and IGAD<sup>24</sup> have put in place extensive networks and systems of early warning in their respective regions. There remains room for improvement, however, as sensitive security information is not systematically shared.

<sup>19</sup> This chapter relies on the overview provided by Solomon Dersso in: *The African Peace and Security Architecture*, Dersso, S., in Murithi, T. (Ed). 2013. Handbook of Africa's International Relations Publisher, London: Routledge.

<sup>20</sup> African Union Peace and Security Department, The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC), <http://www.peaceau.org/en/page/42-psc>.

<sup>21</sup> African Union Peace and Security Department, The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), <http://www.peaceau.org/en/page/28-continental-early-warning>.

<sup>22</sup> South African Development Community (SADC) [www.sadc.int/](http://www.sadc.int/).

<sup>23</sup> Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) [www.ecowas.int/](http://www.ecowas.int/).

<sup>24</sup> Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) <http://igad.int/>.

The **Panel of the Wise (PoW)** consists of five prominent personalities (representing the five regions of Africa), with a track record of contributing to peace, security and development on the African continent, and is vested with both peace-making and advisory functions, to advise the PSC and the AUC Chairperson on all issues pertaining to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa.<sup>25</sup>

The Chairperson of the **African Union Commission, assisted by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security**, provides operational support to the PSC, and is responsible for the implementation and follow-up of PSC decisions, to keep the PSC informed on its activities, issue periodic reports and other documents. Notably, our policy research has shown how the current AUC Chairperson has consistently used her position to issues numerous statements on conflict situation or events, or to voice support for decisions taken by RECs and other APSA actors.

The **African Standby Force (ASF)** is designed to enable the PSC to prevent and manage conflicts by containing their spread or escalation; to support peace processes; to enforce its decisions in cases of grave circumstances; to support peacebuilding activities; and to undertake humanitarian action, disaster management and reconstruction. The ASF is organized in five regional standby forces and is composed of multidisciplinary contingents on standby in their country of origin, raised and maintained by the five RECs or the Regional Mechanisms (RMs)<sup>26</sup>.

Lastly, the **African Peace Fund** is meant to provide necessary financial resources for peace support mission and other operational activities related to peace and security, to be governed by relevant Financial Regulations of the AU through financial appropriations from AU regular budget, voluntary contributions from Member States, and other sources within Africa, including the private sector, civil society and individuals, and through appropriate fundraising activities.

While not formally a pillar of the APSA, the AU's policy on **Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)** should be mentioned as well. The AU's policy on PCRD was adopted in 2006. It is intended to support the development of policies and strategies that seek to consolidate peace, prevent relapse to violence and promote sustainable development.<sup>27</sup> The AU's PCRD policy as such is envisaged to play a pivotal part in the aftermath of conflict and ensure linkages with development policies. The policy seeks to improve timeliness, effectiveness and coordination of activities in post conflict countries and to lay the foundation for social justice and sustainable peace. The PCRD policy further provides opportunities to strengthen linkages between the APSA and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), when the AU Commission's Peace and Security Department (AU PSD) and Department of Political Affairs (DPA) coordinate efforts to ensure progression from post-conflict to development, as was the case for example in the Central African Republic (CAR).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> African Union Commission Peace and Security Department, Panel of the Wise, <http://www.peaceau.org/en/page/29-panel-of-the-wise-pow>.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), [History and Background of Africa's Regional Integration Efforts](#).

<sup>27</sup> African Union Commission Peace and Security Department, [African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development \(PCRD\)](#).

<sup>28</sup> Matlosa, K. 2014. The [African Union's African Governance Architecture linkages with the African Peace and Security Architecture](#). GREAT insights Magazine, Volume 4, Issue 1. December 2014/January 2015.

## Key challenges for making the APSA work

The actors of the APSA, such as the AU Commission, the Peace and Security Council, the RECs and RMs, diplomats, special envoys and mediators have a wide variety of tools at their disposal, ranging from issuing sanctions, calling parties to negotiations, to deploying peace support operations. Most often, a combination of tools is used to address conflict situations at varying points in time. Peace and Security has become the AU's most demanding work while it is arguably the best funded. APSA actors are now involved in a wide range of conflicts, ranging from highly volatile and protracted crises as a result of Islamist extremists, terror, civil and ethnic unrest, to processes of federalisation and unconstitutional changes of government. Despite the intense engagement by the AU and RECs, huge challenges to ensure peace and stability on the continent remain.

The **lion's share of the AU's peace and security budget is financed by external partners**, for more than 90%. The majority of costs for peace operations on the continent have been carried by a range of international partners, including notably the United States, the European Union, China and the United Nations. The United States are the single largest bilateral donor of UN and African peace operations in Africa<sup>29</sup>. In terms of financing the various facets of the APSA, the European Union is the most comprehensive and structural partner of the AU. The European Union's main instrument to support the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms in their peace and security activities is the African Peace Facility (APF). The African Peace Facility (APF) was set up in 2004 in the framework of the EU-Africa Partnership on Peace and Security, following the EU-Africa Summit in Maputo in 2003. The APF has its legal basis on the Cotonou Agreement and it is funded through the European Development Fund (EDF). The three main strands of action under the APF are capacity building, peace support operations and the development of an early response mechanism. The direct beneficiaries of the APF are the AU and the RECs/RMs, with a mandate in Peace and Security, and relevant institutions within or related to the APSA. Since its establishment in 2004, the EU has committed more than €1.9 billion through the APF.

In January 2015, the AU Assembly adopted a proposal by AU finance ministers to increase member states' contributions to the AU's operational budget to 100%, to the programme budget to 75% and to the peacekeeping budget to 25%. This plan is to be phased in within five years from 2016 onwards. Contributions from AU member states have also been re-assessed "applying the principle of fairness and solidarity".<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Williams, P. (2015), [Enhancing U.S. Support for Peace Operations in Africa](#), Council on Foreign Relations Press, May 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Institute for Security Studies (ISS), [AU summit: Review of outcomes on pressing peace and security issues](#), 10 February 2015.

Related to this, discussions between the African Union and the **United Nations regarding the financial aspects of African peace operations**, especially those authorized by the United Nations Security Council, are still on-going. The African Union would like to rely on more predictable funding for its peace support operations through UN-assessed contributions, which would cover the remaining 75% of the budget once the African Union is able to raise the envisaged 25%. In January 2016, former African Development Bank director Donald Kaberuka was appointed as the High Representative for the African Peace Fund, with a mandate to mobilize additional resources for AU peace and security-related activities, and finding a solution towards finding sustained, predictable and flexible funding mechanisms to support AU-led peace operations, as expressed in the Common African Position on the Report of UN High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO).

The UN's 2015 HIPPO report noted that the strategic partnership with the African Union should be deepened, *"including through more predictable financing, to African Union peace support operations when authorized by the Security Council, even as the African Union builds its own capacity and resources for that purpose."*<sup>31</sup> Yet concerns remain whether the appropriate control mechanisms could be put in place should AU missions be financed through the United Nations' assessed budget, such as United Nations financial and budgetary control mechanism and compliance with United Nations principles of peacekeeping<sup>32</sup>.

**In July 2016, AU Heads of State and Government decided to operationalise the African Peace Fund during the AU Summit, following up on these commitments to finance 25 % of the cost of African Union peace support operations, and based on a proposed conceptualization of the Fund by High Representative Kaberuka. This included the adoption of a 0.2 % levy on eligible imports; a plan is based upon the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Common External Tariff (CET) adopted in 2006. This levy would amount to contributions of USD 65 million per year by each of the continent's five regions, and was expected to increase to \$ 80 million per region by the year 2020. Questions remain whether these new commitments will fulfill the challenging funding needs faced by the AU and its member states. AMISOM's yearly budget alone amounts to \$ 1 billion a year. Other obstacles include the compatibility of the 0.2% levy on imports and international rules. As the report by the High Representative Kaberuka has not been published yet, it remains unclear how and if the AU can unilaterally impose additional import levies in light of existing trade agreement with for example the European Union and the United States.**

**The proposal also offers a number of opportunities, not only in terms of working towards more sustainable financing of AU peace support operations but also the AU's programmes and activities as overall trade with the bloc increase.** It will also impact relations between RECs and the AU, which have been tenuous at times.<sup>33</sup> The current proposal was widely welcomed by regions and individual countries, as it bypasses additional requests on regional and member states' budgets.

African countries and the AU have a strong record and experience in peace support operations. The continent already contributes most of the troops in UN peacekeeping missions and African countries make up more than half of the top 20 global contributors of uniformed personnel. **The African Standby Force's Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC)** has been notably slow to establish itself, especially in light of the mounting security challenges across the continent. The RDC is intended to provide the AU with the kind of rapid military response that could be deployed to stop or prevent emerging genocides, crimes against

<sup>31</sup> United Nations, [Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people](#). 16 June 2015

<sup>32</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, [Principles of UN Peacekeeping](#).

<sup>33</sup> International Peace Institute, [AU Peace Fund Could Be Catalyst for True UN Partnership](#), 28 July 2016, by Lesley Connolly

humanity, or war crimes by armed rebel forces. The RDC is envisaged to be able to deploy 12 500 trained and equipped military, police and civilian personnel ready for action, anywhere in Africa, within 14 days; followed by a force of up to 5 000 personnel within 90 days, capable of self-sustainment for 30 days.

The **African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC)** was created in 2013<sup>34</sup> as a temporary measure to overcome the slow operationalisation of the Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) but has been divisive from the start. Observers have noted important diverging opinions between AU Member States regarding the ACIRC and the rapid response force envisaged for the ASF.<sup>35</sup> This has led to a clash of interests between those states supportive of the ACIRC, notably South Africa, and those opposed to the mechanism, such as Nigeria. In essence, lack of clarity remains over the function of the ACIRC. While some have argued this mechanism is to replace the ASF's rapid reaction mechanism, others maintain it serves as a temporary 'bridging mechanism' until the ASF's rapid intervention capacity is fully operational. AMANI AFRICA II, the AU's continent-wide military exercise to test the operationalisation of the African Standby Force, including its rapid deployment capacity, took place in November 2015 in Lohatsha, South Africa.<sup>36</sup> These exercises (the first one was held in October 2010 in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia) are part of the wider APSA operationalisation process. Although the military exercise was deemed a success, rapid deployment remains a difficult task despite a strong track record of several African states in peacekeeping.

**Unconstitutional changes of government** have triggered a number of rapidly escalating conflicts in 2014 and 2015, with Burkina Faso and Burundi amongst the more prominent examples. This challenge is expected to extend into 2016. This has put the AU's implementation of the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance to a test. The Arab Spring already showed how these tensions could rapidly emerge to the fore, such as the case of Egypt showed. A number of attempts by African Heads of State to run for unconstitutional third bid (or more) are putting additional pressure on the AU and RECs. Currently, these are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, the Republic of Congo and, Burundi all following the example of Uganda where President Museveni who is meanwhile in his fourth term and seeking a fifth term in office. Often, these bids go against the constitutional provisions. Going against AU Member States which are challenging the constitutional provisions and thus acting according to the AU's adopted principles of the AU Constitutive Act and other agreed charters, such as the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, would help shed the impression that the AU holds a protective hand over AU Heads of State and Government. According to observers, the low ratification rate of the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance limits the ability of the AU to respond effectively to crisis situations. While the AU Constitutive Act is signed by all 54 AU Member States, the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance<sup>37</sup> is has been signed by 46 but ratified by only 23 states.<sup>38</sup>

## APSA: Connecting Africa regionally and internationally

The AU and REC coordinate responses to conflict and crisis under the principle of subsidiarity (while the UN Security Council holds primacy in matters of threats to peace and security around the globe). The cooperation in the area of peace and security is cemented in the Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union and the RECs and RMs.<sup>39</sup> **As discussed above, the APSA is builds on a number of pillars (see above) at the continental level.** In theory, the AU is expected to harmonize and coordinate its

<sup>34</sup> [Report of the Chairperson of the Commission](#) on the operationalisation of the Rapid Deployment Capability of the African Standby Force and the establishment of an "African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises" April 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Institute for Security Studies (ISS), [Will ACIRC survive the AU Summit?](#), 10 June 2015.

<sup>36</sup> African Union Press release, [Landmark AMANI AFRICA II Field Training Exercise concludes in South Africa](#), 9 November 2015.

<sup>37</sup> African Commission on Human and People's Rights, [African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance](#).

<sup>38</sup> Institute for Security Studies (ISS), [Focus on human rights a change of direction for the AU](#), 12 January 2016.

<sup>39</sup> African Union [Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union and the RECs and RMs](#).

actions and decisions with similar bodies in the existing and future RECs.<sup>40</sup> A number of RECs existed before the establishment of the African Union in 2000 and had evolved at various speeds and in different ways. For example, the institutional set up of ECOWAS differs considerably from that of IGAD. There is overlapping membership between various RECs, for example IGAD and the East African Community (EAC), and some countries are member of more than one REC, for example Kenya, member of both EAC and IGAD. In total, there are 8 official RECs and two RMs.<sup>41</sup> There are other regional economic cooperation organisations not officially recognised by the African Union as RECs, such as the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC). Others, such as the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), have similar authority but are not necessarily economic cooperation bodies. The ICGLR is a formal partner of the African Union, and was established under the umbrella of the African Union and United Nations in 2003.

Our research indicates that the AU and REC develop models of coordination and cooperation on a case-by-case assessment of the situation and the response needed, leading to huge variety in models of cooperation. These varying models of cooperation are not merely between the AU and RECs, but with external actors and donors too. The juxtaposition of RECs brings to light these important differences and the need to take into account the political economy context in which these RECs were established and have later evolved, as is the case when comparing ECOWAS and IGAD (see Box 2). For more information on the political analysis of RECs, see ECDPM's *Political Economy of Regional Integration in Africa (PERIA) Dossier*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> African Union [Constitutive Act](#).

<sup>41</sup> The 8 official 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), the North African Response Capacity (NARC) and East African Standby Force Coordination Mechanism (EASF).

<sup>42</sup> ECDPM Dossier: PERIA – Political economy analyses of the African Union and regional economic communities in Africa, <http://www.ecdpm.org/peria>.

## Box 2: ECOWAS and IGAD: Two RECs, Two Stories

In 1975, when the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** was established, its main objective was initially the economic integration of its member states, but political crisis and rivalries between regional leaders proved to be an obstacle to further integration. The 1990s were a defining decade for ECOWAS, when it evolved into an organisation able to intervene diplomatically and militarily in cases of serious threats to security and the ECOWAS community in general. Indeed, ECOWAS played a pivotal role in the civil wars in Liberia (1990-97 and 2003-2007) and Sierra Leone (1991-2002). Nigerian and other Member States' troops were sent as part of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in 1998, and following years of difficult deployment (ECOMOG was accused of behaving as a warring party), Sierra Leone and Liberia received United Nations peacekeeping operations in 1999 and 2003 respectively. ECOWAS' intervention, according to experts, did lead to a stabilisation of the Mano River Basin, the region comprising Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. In 1999, the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS adopted the *Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security*, which outlined the mandate of the Assembly of Heads of State, the Mediation and Security Council (which is very similar to the AU Peace and Security Council) and the powers delegated to the Executive Secretary of the ECOWAS Commission. Since its establishment, ECOWAS too has been faced with a changing security and political environment, with a growing threat posed by cross-border terrorism in the Sahel, increasing piracy activities in the Gulf of Guinea, and the insurgency of Boko Haram in Nigeria increasingly spilling over into neighbouring countries.<sup>43</sup>

The **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)** started out as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) established in 1986 by the six then drought-afflicted Eastern African countries of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Eritrea joined in 1993. Its successor, IGAD, was formed in March 1996 with South Sudan admitted as a member in 2011. Like ECOWAS, IGAD underwent significant transformation from the late 1990s onwards, especially following the end of the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. This introduced a moment of relative peace in the Horn of Africa region, which is faced by three defining and antagonistic relationships in the region within which IGAD must operate. These include the relation between i) Ethiopia and Somalia, as a result of Somalia's ambitions to unite all Somali nationals in one state which now also involves Kenya; ii) Sudan and Uganda, as a result of the protracted proxy war, with Uganda supporting the SPLA and Sudan supporting the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda; and iii) Ethiopia and Eritrea, dating back to the independence struggle for Eritrean independence which led to full-scale war in 1998-2000. The Horn of Africa region countries face a range of common threats, importantly climate change; yet remain very diverse in terms of economic growth, political and social stability, both within and between member countries.<sup>44</sup>

The factors which might support a regional approach (also for peace and security) are arguably hampered by the region's long-run historical grievances and conflicts. Despite IGAD institutions becoming increasingly stronger over the years, regional responses have been addressed mostly through more 'informal' and ad-hoc approaches and mechanisms. The preponderance of regional Heads of State in the field of security has led to a peace and security architecture where the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State acts as a platform to discuss major peace and security issues, but where mechanisms to address those are ad-hoc and under the direction supervision of the Assembly, instead of staff, funded and led by the IGAD Secretariat. Despite this less formalized structure, when compared to ECOWAS, IGAD has been heavily involved in all major crises in the Horn, with notable successes. IGAD, supported by donors and the AU, successfully negotiated the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between Sudan and South-Sudan in 2005 (despite its many flaws) and has played a major role in the reconciliation efforts in Somalia.

<sup>43</sup> Dr. Gilles Olakounlé Yabi, *The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict The Cases of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010; and: Musah, A-F. 2011, *ECOWAS and Regional Responses to Conflicts*. In: *ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peace-building*, Jaye, T., Garuba, D., and S. Amadi (eds.). Dakar: CODESRIA.

<sup>44</sup> Healy, S. 2011. Seeking peace and security in the Horn of Africa: the contribution of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. *International Affairs*. 87(1): 105-120.; and Berhanu, K. 2013. Conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Implications for Regional Security. In: *The Horn of Africa. Intra-State and Inter-State Conflicts and Security*, R. Bereketgab. London: Pluto Press: 71-94.

In general, the transformation at the continental level was accompanied by significant changes in **the regional organisations** as well. As several RECs have evolved in different ways, with different institutional set-ups as a result, good coordination between the AU and the RECs remains key. As our PEA research at ECDPM has indicated, each REC has its own ‘modus operandi’ as a result of historical foundations, geographic location and institutional set-up. Division of labour is decided case-by-case, based on political considerations and informed by a range of factors. This includes the partnership with the United Nations and other external partners, their level of involvement (including funding), the political positions taken by the government and/or warring parties (including in important AU institutions such as the PSC), key characteristics of the conflict, amongst other things. The complex pattern of conflict in Africa combined with a still maturing African Union, and the challenging relationship between the AU and RECs in the context of the on-going operationalisation of the APSA contributes to a complex playing field.

The relationship between the **United Nations and the African Union** in matters of peace and security is a rapidly evolving one. In 2006, the United Nations “Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union” was established to enhance the capacity of the AU Commission and RECs as partners of the United Nations. In 2011, the creation of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) was another major step forward in the UN-AU relations. Since then, a number of significant developments have taken place. As the Capacity Building Programme is coming to an end in November 2016, questions have emerged on how to strengthen a more robust AU-UN partnership for the coming decades. The UN-AU relationships’ main features include a bi-annual meeting at senior level, joint field missions, high-level annual consultations. The UNOAU has supported planning and management of AU peace operations and the facilitation of cooperation between African Union actors and the United Nations. A range of operational partnership models between the UN and the AU have emerged over the past decade, from planned transitions to support packages. Yet significant challenges remain. Both organisations are faced with gaps in capabilities, such as rapid deployment capacities and logistical shortfalls (f.e. lack of aviation capacity for troop and supply transport). Observers have noted that efforts to enhance the institutional relationship between the United Nations and the African Union have fallen short of African expectations of more open ended commitments in terms of institutional cooperation and financing, rather than case by case approaches as preferred by some members of the UN Security Council. The financial aspect is discussed above. But also on a more fundamental level, significant differences remain: the United Nations continues to speak about peacekeeping operations, while the AU adopts a far broader notion of “peace support operations” and is willing to deploy troops where there is “no peace to keep” yet. This divergence undermines a unity of vision on strategic deployment and mission mandates and has hampered the re-hatting of AU troops to UN troops and related transition processes from AU mandates to UN mandates under UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>45</sup> A new AU Commission, a new PSC composition and a follow-up to the UN’s capacity building programme (ending in November 2016) provide an opportunity to streamline decision-making processes and see eye to eye on shared responsibilities on the continent.

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<sup>45</sup> Williams, P. D. and Dersso, S., [Saving Strangers and Neighbors: Advancing UN-AU Cooperation on Peace Operations](#). February 3, 2015; and: Weiss, G. T., and Welz, M. (2014), The UN and the African Union in Mali and beyond: a shotgun wedding? *International Affairs* 90: 4; and Williams, P.D. and Boutellis, A. 2014 Partnership Peacekeeping: Challenges and Opportunities in the United Nations-African Union Relationship. In: *African Affairs*, 113/451.

## Looking ahead

Since its establishment in 2000, the African Union has taken on a challenging peace and security agenda. The African Union's peace and security agenda is both the best financed as well as the most difficult and most time-consuming to manage. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) has addressed a growing number of thematic issues ranging from climate change, epidemic threats and migration in more than 560 meetings since 2004. Relations between the African Union, RECs and RMs in addressing these continue to evolve.

The African Union's peace and security budget remains largely externally financed, causing tension and frustration between the AU and international actors such as the United Nations and the European Union. While efforts are being made to move towards increasingly "internally" financed peace and security budget, implementation of this decision is expected to be slow. Discussions on further external reliable funding, including possibly from the United Nations assessed budget, are so far inconclusive. Further financial strains and donor fatigue amongst donors, including in the European Union, which is the APSA's biggest financial supporter through the African Peace Facility, are expected. This will continue to put a strain on the African Union's peace and security budget. A global economic slow-down, spurred by a slowing Chinese economy might further shrink African Union's Member States resource base, delaying prospects of an increasingly African funded peace and security budget from 2016 onwards.

The Peace and Security Council has primarily adopted an emergency-driven approach since its establishment and continues to struggle to adopt a more preventive approach despite mechanisms in place (such as the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System amongst others). A number of countries are increasingly protracted with no clear sight of a long-lasting solution, including the Central African Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and South Sudan. These countries are taking up most of the African Union's (and RECs) time, absorbing precious resources to take effective steps on conflict prevention. These conflicts all have their roots in a crisis of governance and the lack of a solid social contract between the government and its citizens.

Further investments in conflict prevention and governance under the APSA are much-needed yet will take time. In 2014, the African Union and RECs committed to "silence the guns by 2020", the African Union's so-called Vision 2020, adopted following a high-level retreat on the theme in late April 2014 in Durban, South Africa. While it seems unlikely that the African Union and its Member States will be able to achieve a conflict-free continent by 2020, wide mobilization and reinforced efforts to operationalise the APSA are essential. The APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 provides a significant opportunity to achieve this. Finalised in December 2015 and officially launched in April 2016, the roadmap outlines a set of five strategic priorities and indicators to measure these objectives. The five strategic priorities are: 1. Conflict prevention, 2. Crisis/conflict management, 3. Post-conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding, 4. Strategic Security Issues, and 5. Coordination and Partnerships. Monitoring the results on these strategic priorities as well as the APSA actor's interventions, which ECDPM has been doing since 2013, is a key element of documenting and tracking the APSA's progress and contribution to peace and security on the continent. For example, the African Union acknowledges that connection between early warning and direct response systems need to be improved. An AU mediation unit is currently being established in the AU Conflict Management Division. Tracking the use of early warning systems and the conflict prevention activities in both individual violent conflicts will enable to systematically identify lessons learned, good practice and areas for improvement.

Besides conflict prevention, the **new APSA Roadmap also provides an opportunity to strengthen efforts with regards to Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) and the African**

**Governance Architecture (AGA) at the continental as well at regional level.** PCRDR was included as a Strategic Priority in the APSA Roadmap. Given that PCRDR has often been overlooked as a result of lacking strategic leadership, this gap was clearly identified and responded to.

As part of the new APSA Roadmap, a Multidimensional Committee on PCRDR will be established in order to interact with international actors on the continent on PCRDR. A PSC Standing Committee is to be established in order to monitor actors and provide support to affected countries. Regular briefing sessions of the PSC are expected to assure the political oversight and support to PCRDR efforts. At the national level, post-conflict Member States are to be supported in the establishment of ministerial committees on PCRDR. Lastly, an interdepartmental taskforce at AU level, involving RECs through their Liaison Offices, will be established and will meet regularly, in order to foster harmonisation and synergies.<sup>46</sup> In the past, the AU Commission’s Peace and Security Department (PSD) and the Department for Political Affairs (DPA) have had challenges to overcome when working together, in particular with regards to governance, conflict prevention and mediation.

**Figure 2: Implementation challenges for the African Governance Architecture**



The APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 provides momentum to strengthen the institutional linkages between the APSA and the AGA, which have been meagre so far; but pertinent given the governance dimension of many of Africa’s current conflicts.

The challenge of AGA’s implementation at the regional level has been discussed in the Discussion Paper Series “The regional economic communities and implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA)”<sup>47</sup>, compiled by ECDPM’s Africa Change Dynamics (ACD) programme.

The APSA remains Africa’s pivotal tool and framework that can tackle conflict on the continent. Faced with a complex conflict landscape and a range of institutional and operational challenges, continuous efforts will be needed to contribute to the effective operationalization of the APSA and a more peaceful continent. The incoming AU Commission will have a lot on its plate.

<sup>46</sup> African Union, [APSA Roadmap 2016-2010](#)

<sup>47</sup> Taddele Maru, M., Fassi, S. 2015. [Can the regional economic communities support implementation of the African Governance Architecture \(AGA\)?](#) The case of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (Discussion Paper 181). Maastricht: ECDPM.

## More information regarding our work on the APSA

Since 2013, ECDPM collaborates with the German Federal Government and GIZ in the yearly APSA Impact Monitoring report, which assesses the interventions by the AU and RECs in conflicts across Africa. Three reports have since then been established, covering the period from 2007-2014. ECDPM's research has primarily focused on violent conflicts, civil wars and wars as described by the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer<sup>48</sup>, with a focus on the AU's mandate in peace and security, primarily emanating from the PSC Protocol and the AU Constitutive Act. Our research has focused on diplomatic interventions, mediation efforts and peace support operation activities undertaken in the context of the APSA in more than 50 violent conflicts, civil wars and wars. More recently, we have started to collaborate on this work with the Institute for Peace and Security Studies in Addis Ababa in collaboration with GIZ. Information on the methodology used for these reports can be obtained from ECDPM. During the course of our expanding work, we have also built on our regular exchanges with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and have made good use of their reports and research on conflict trends in Africa and the challenges for the APSA.

Our work on the APSA was further informed through our contributing research to ECDPM's Centre-wide project on the *Political Economy of Regional Integration in Africa (PERIA)*<sup>49</sup>. We focused here on the African Union, IGAD and ECOWAS' peace and security policies, mechanisms and institutions making use of ECDPM's Political Economy Analysis (PEA) five lense framework<sup>50</sup>. Finally, we have collaborated with ECDPM's Africa Change Dynamics (ACD) on the linkages between the APSA and the African Governance Architecture (AGA). The interconnected issues of conflict prevention, challenges to governance and elections are becoming increasingly salient issues across Africa, and will inform our future work.

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<sup>48</sup> Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC) [Heidelberg Conflict Barometer](#).

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