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STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY REPORT

2022 / 2023 / 2024

AFRICA IN AN EVOLVING GLOBAL ORDER

IPSS | TANA FORUM SECRETARIAT

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STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY REPORT

2022, 2023 AND 2024 SYNTHESISED REPORT

THEME: AFRICA IN AN EVOLVING GLOBAL ORDER

AUGUST 2025

IPSS | TANA FORUM SECRETARIAT

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACFTA   African Continental Free Trade Area

APSA   African Peace and Security Architecture

ASF   African Standby Force

AU   African Union

AUC   African Union Commission

BRICS   Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

CAR   Central African Republic

CSOs   Civil Society Organisations

ECOWAS   Economic Community of West African States

EU   European Union

IGAD   Intergovernmental Authority for Development

IMF   International Monetary Fund

IPSS   Institute for Peace and Security Studies

MSC   Munich Security Conference

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisations

PSC   Peace and Security Council

CPAPS   African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security

REC   Regional Economic Communities

RM   Regional Mechanisms

SADC   Southern African Development Community

UN   United Nations

WTO   World Trade Organizations as global

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SPSA Synthesised Report assesses the changing conflict trends on the African continent with a focus on 2022, 2023, and 2024. In addition, it also examines the cross-cutting trends relating to the drivers of insecurity, violent extremism, global militarism, the global dimension of armed conflicts, foreign military interventions, and their impact on African governance, peace, and security. The Report will discuss how Pan-African solidarity can enhance the continent's ability to rely on its own agency and capabilities in responding to these challenges.

In addition, the SPSA Report will assess the governance challenges that have undermined democratic stability on the continent, evidenced by the military coups that have afflicted the continent. The Report highlights the importance of citizen participation in engaging with governance processes across the continent.

Africa has witnessed a reversal of some of the democratic gains achieved over the last few decades, marked by the resurgence of contestation for state power, the regionalization of violent conflict, erosion of the rule of law, democratic reversals, and a return to authoritarian rule, all of which are drivers of violent conflict. Limited economic growth, a restive youth population, and high levels of rural-urban conflict and forced migration have created conditions for extremism to spread into vulnerable countries. Furthermore, disputes punctuated with incidences of gender-based violence have placed an emotional, mental and psychological strain on the people of the continent across all regions. The persistence of ethno-political conflict and inter-communal violence undermines national cohesion, threatens democratic consolidation, regional integration, and cooperation, and has led governments to impose security measures that threaten democratic consolidation on the continent.

Geo-strategic interests and pipelines for transnational crime are also undermining the ability of state actors to manage and resolve their internal tensions and conflicts on the African continent. In particular, organized crime, including illicit trade in natural and mineral resources, drugs, arms, human trafficking, cyber-crime as well as wildlife crime, has provided extremists groups with the means to extort resources through which to finance their nefarious activities, which continues to undermine the stability of a number of countries across the continent, notably in the Sahel, Horn of Africa and Central African regions.

The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2719 will redefine the approach to peace support operations on the continent. The devolution of a degree of authority and the provision of financial support to the African Union, will situate it as a key pillar of networked multilateralism. The AU should take the initiative to contribute towards defining the modalities of how the evolving partnership with the UN on peace support operations will be reconfigured and managed.

In 2025, the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted a Theme of the Year focusing on Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations. As a specific case for historical restitution, Africa must advocate for and campaign to transform the international order into a more equitable and democratic global system. The current international order still treats Africans as global

second-class citizens. For decades, African countries have called for the UN Security Council to be reformed and the broader multilateral system to be reconfigured on more equitable terms. And for decades, their appeals have been ignored. African countries could lead a coalition of the willing within the UN General Assembly to draft and invoke Article 109, thereby convening a General Conference to Review the Charter of the United Nations. The Permanent Five Members of the UN Security Council cannot veto this process.

1.1   Key Recommendations:

The State of Peace and Security Report: 2022, 2023, and 2024 Synthesized Report for the Tana Forum undertook an analysis of these issues and identified the following key recommendations:

- The African Union should lead the process of reviving the spirit of Pan-Africanism across the continent, working in tandem with civil society and social movements as a strategy to address the persistence of conflict and mitigate against the drivers of insecurity.

- The African Union, member states, and societies should ensure that they actively participate and lead discussions in global policy dialogue forums where the foundations of the evolving global order and the shaping of a new multilateral system are being defined.

- The AU and member states should issue a policy document on the establishment of a new financing architecture that is responsive to Africa's needs, including debt restructuring and relief, and the development of a new Global Climate Finance Charter.

- The member states should allocate 5% of their national defence budgets to the African Union to ensure the continent's ownership of its governance, peace, and security provisions.

- The AU Peace and Security Council and the AU Commission to ensure that they implement the gender-parity principle in all of their deployments of AU special envoys, including fact-finding missions, election observation missions and PCRD Assessment Missions, with women participating as heads of these missions;

- The African Union and member states should engage in policy dialogues on the issue of artificial intelligence and develop an AU continental policy to manage the unpredictable power of uncontrolled and unregulated machine learning and robotic weapons.

- Governments should ratify the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement and issue the AU passport to all citizens, and adopt a transboundary transitional justice and peacebuilding framework, to complement the African Continental Free Trade Area, to increase cross-border stabilization and economic activity, through convening leader-to-leader, government-to-government, and people-to-people engagements.

- In line with the 2025 Theme of the Year on reparations and historical restitution for Africa's exclusion from the global order, the African Union should contribute towards building a coalition of countries from the Global South, and other progressive states, to immediately begin drafting a UN General Assembly resolution to invoke Article 109 of the UN Charter which will launch General Review Conference will enable wide-ranging discussions to take place on the establishment of a new multilateral system, in order to map out the pathway to a UN 2.0.

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INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), based at Addis Ababa University, actively works to promote sustainable peace and contributing to the implementation of the African Union Tripoli Declaration of August 2009, Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of Addis Ababa University, convenes an annual flagship security conference called the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, now popularly known as the Tana Forum. This initiative is a response to the Tripoli Declaration's appeal for "African-led solutions" and the treatment of peace and security as a collective "intellectual challenge." Since its inception, the Tana Forum has remained a premier flagship event, where eminent personalities, including policy decision-makers, diplomats, analysts, and stakeholders from the continent, as well as regional and global organizations, gather to exchange views.

From the outset, the Tana Forum has witnessed the engagement of political leadership and other stakeholders in informal, yet open and frank discussions on pressing peace and security challenges facing Africa and Africans. This has been a tradition maintained at the Tana Forum. The broad spectrum of challenges that the continent is facing, in an era of global poly-crisis, requires the creation of platforms for frank and in-depth deliberations, which has increased.

The 2025 edition of the Tana Forum, scheduled to take place in October 2025, under the theme *"Africa in an Evolving Global Order,"* aims to continue the tradition and maintain the high quality of debate that has become the established norm at previous convenings. High-level policy decision-makers, heads of regional, continental, and global organizations, as well as thought-leaders from across the spectrum, attend the event.

This Synthesized State of Peace and Security in Africa for the period 2022, 2023, and 2024 will provide an assessment of key conflict trends and drivers of conflict across the continent. Additionally, the Report will offer key recommendations to inform policy and decision-makers.

Africa witnessed a reversal of some of the democratic gains that were achieved over the last few decades, with the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, contestation for state power, the regionalisation of violent conflict and return to authoritarian rule and the undermining of the rule of law, both of which are drivers of violent conflict. Furthermore, disputes punctuated with incidences of gender-based violence have placed an emotional, mental and psychological strain on the people of the continent from Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon, Libya, Mali, the Darfur region of Sudan, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo's border with Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and ongoing strife and political tension in Eswatini, Lesotho, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. In addition, the prevalence of transnational violent extremism in the form of radical religious extremism in the Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique, Boko Haram in West Africa, al-Shabaab in Eastern Africa, Al-Quaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Islamic State in Great Sahel (ISGS) in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, is a persistent threat to the future peace and security of the African continent.

The persistence of ethno-political conflict and inter-communal violence undermines national cohesion, regional integration, and cooperation, and governments have posed security measures that threaten democratic consolidation on the continent. Moreover, limited economic growth, an immense and restive youth population, and high levels of rural-urban conflict and forced migration have created conditions for extremism to spread into vulnerable countries.

The problem of radicalization is linked to the issue of inequality and the propensity of alienated and marginalized African citizens to buy into the narrative of the extremists, with their promise of an illusory paradise in the afterlife, because present conditions for existence are degraded due to economic mismanagement and corruption. Migrant flows from West Africa into North Africa and Europe are a consequence of these theatres of instability. This also highlights the issue of inequality, the forces of globalization, and Africa's inability to trade its way out of its socio-economic crisis. Africa's responses to the regional peace and security challenges should not only be limited to more troops, more hardware, drone technology, but the time-tested spirit of entrepreneurship so that we can fight the trade war rather than simply expend our energies trying to put out the extremist fires - and behaving like a fire brigade, only reacting when is too late.

To a large extent, efforts to ensure sustainable peace, security, governance, and development in Africa have consistently undermined the day's dominant international and geopolitical agendas. Following colonialism, the Cold War emerged, and in the post-Cold War era, the pressures of globalization are affecting Africa's peace and development efforts. However, African states have undermined the continental ability and capacity to promote peace, and their failure to find ways to address their differences and hold each other accountable. Moreover, Africa's leadership deficit leaves the continent extremely vulnerable to internal fissures and external penetration and exploitation. In this regard, Africa has a significant stake in the shifting geopolitical dynamics and in shaping the evolving global order.

2.1 Content and Structure of the Report

The State of Peace and Security Report will focus on a number of issues and will be structured as follows:

Content and Structure of the Report:

1. An assessment of the changing conflict trends from 2023 to 2024, including their national, continental and global configurations.

2. An examination of the drivers of insecurity and their consequences on African countries.

3. An analysis of cross-cutting trends, including terrorism and violent extremism; organized crime, human trafficking and illegal wildlife trade; ethno-political and inter-communal violence; piracy and maritime insecurity; cyber-security threats; climate change and environmental governance; critical minerals extraction and its impact on peace and security; mercenarism and foreign fighters on the African continent; weak governance and political instability.

4. A review of peace initiatives and actors with an emphasis on unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral efforts.

5. An assessment of the African Union and the United Nations security cooperation.

6. An engagement with efforts to reform and finance the African Union with a view to fostering the continental ownership of peace and security provisions;

7. An assessment of the Silence the Guns initiative with a review of the progress on the implementation of its roadmap.

8. A discussion of the African Union Theme of the Year for 2025 on Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through reparations.

9. The report will outline key recommendations based on this analysis.

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METHODOLOGY

This State of Peace and Security Report will utilise a qualitative research methodology based on:

i.   Drawing perspectives from African Union documents;

ii.   Analytical documents from a wide range of institutions;

iii. Extensive desk research and review of documentation;

iv.   Media reports.

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CHANGING CONFLICT TRENDS 2023-2024: NATIONAL, CONTINENTAL AND GLOBAL CONFIGURATIONS

The changing conflict trends tend to point to a recurring challenge in pursuing sustainable peace and improving the livelihoods of people in Africa, notably the incursion and sabotage by the dominant international and geopolitical agendas of the day. In terms of national configurations, the natural resources that are extracted from across the African continent are being exploited equally by governments, some of which are corrupt or not legitimate, as well as armed militia groups, which adds fuel to the fire of conflict and feeding into illegal small arms trading and drug dealing networks that make the situation very difficult for one country to control or manage by itself. This situation has been made possible or easier by the emerging global networks of trade and instant illicit financial flows. The UN Economic Commission for Africa estimates "that over the past fifty years, illicit financial flows have resulted in the loss of at least US 1 trillion dollars … a sum nearly equivalent to all the official development assistance the continent received during the same period."[1] Private military companies, or what we used to call "mercenaries" flourish in this new environment and can operate undetected, unidentified and out of sight. The Sudanese conflict and the crisis in the Sahel has exposed the perilous and precarious danger of constituting private military and security forces, which operated in parallel and sometimes in contradiction to the authority of national sovereign armed forces.

In terms of continental and global configurations, the most significant challenge in resolving disputes in Africa is determining how to effectively address the role of international actors who fuel conflict. It is increasingly evident that "many African countries remain vulnerable to global actors and forces that exploit weak state and regional institutions to promote conflicts and plunder resources."[2] Transnational corporations, with the collusion of some of the corrupt leaders, are extracting mineral resources in areas where there is conflict, and these resources are being used to finance endless wars and postpone development. Africa's natural resources include 98% of the world's chromium, 90% of its cobalt and platinum, 70% of its coltan and tantalite, 64% of its manganese, 50% of its gold and 33% of its uranium, as well as significant amounts of a range of other minerals such as bauxite, diamonds, tantalum, tungsten and tin.[3] In addition, the continent holds nearly 30% of all mineral reserves, 12% of the world's known oil reserves, 8% of the world's natural gas reserves, and approximately 65% of the world's arable land. Instead of operationalizing manufacturing processes on the African continent to export finished products to the rest of the world, Africa still finds itself

The conflict trends across the continent illustrate that conflict resolution and development in Africa is no longer the task of an individual nation-state, it is a continent wide challenge and at the very most, it is a global responsibility and implicates the citizens and governments of multi-national companies, especially technology conglomerates, that are making a profit from the exploitation and misery of people in war-affected and under-developed parts of Africa.

At a societal level, the weakening of the fabric of community due to insecurity and conflict has consequences for African societies, in the sense that it perpetuates disillusion and hopelessness which is fueling migration

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1   Tricontinental Institute for Social Research, Defending our Sovereignty: US Military Bases in Africa and the Future of African Unity, Dossier No. 42, July 2021, p.21.

2   Gilbert Khadiagala, *Silencing the Guns: Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa*, (New York: International Institute for Peace, 2015), p.18.

3   Tricontinental Institute for Social Research, *Defending our Sovereignty: US Military Bases in Africa and the Future of African Unity*, Dossier No. 42, July 2021, p.21.

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DRIVERS OF INSECURITY AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES ON AFRICAN COUNTRIES

At a societal level, the weakening of the fabric of community due to insecurity and conflict has consequences for African societies, in the sense that it perpetuates disillusion and hopelessness which is fueling migration to the Global North, through dangerous journey across deserts and the Mediterranean, in search for greener pastures which in the end turn out to be fields of economic subjugation and social servitude in lands that systematically discriminate against African people, since the era of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism.

Major-power interventions have steadily eroded the pretense of any respect for international law and made the world much less stable. For instance, the illegal invasions of Iraq and Syria stoked violent extremist movements, including Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, which have since spread like a virus across Africa. Thanks in part to the chaos spawned by NATO's intention in Libya, Islamist terrorism has taken root across the Sahel region, affecting Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Similarly, in East Africa, religious extremism imported from the Middle East is undermining stability in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Somalia, all of which are terrorized by extremists known as the Al-Shabaab. These threats are not acutely felt in Washington, London, Paris, Brussels, Moscow, or Beijing. Rather, they are faced by Africans who had little say in the military interventions that ignited them.

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CROSS-CUTTING TRENDS

6.1   Terrorism and Violent Extremism

The gains achieved across Africa since the early 1990s, during the era of democratization, remain under threat. Unfortunately, the current trend in some African countries views the current trend toward democratic reversals and regressive authoritarianism as a necessary model for pursuing development. The closure of civic and political space and the killing and arrest of opposition leaders and journalists do not augur well for a more peaceful future in Africa. As a way forward, it is necessary to strengthen the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) by adopting an awareness-raising and empowerment strategy based on a 'whole-of-society' approach to countering violent extremism, which engages civil society, community leaders, youth, and women. This means adopting a more community-engagement approach to countering violent extremism, which will require building bridges between civic and state actors.

In Mozambique, the militant group Ahlu Sunnah Wa Jama'a continues its violent activities in the Cabo Del Gado region in an ongoing conquest to control one of Africa's most lucrative liquefied natural gas (LNG) reserves, which are situated in the region, that are being exploited by companies such as TotalEnergies (France), ExxonMobil (USA), Eni (Italy), Mitsui & Co (Japan), ONGC Videsh, Bharat (India).[4] It is estimated that these foreign companies are extracting in excess of 13 million tonnes of LNG, with an estimated value of $8.7 billion. The extraction of the gas has led to the displacement of local populations, the disruption of fishing, and access to farming land. The misappropriation of these funds and the failure to transform the socio-economic livelihoods of the people of Cabo Delgado and the wider Mozambique have directly led to extensive clashes with the militant group Ahlu Sunnah Wa Jama'a, which has insisted that it is fighting for the rights of the local population.

On 15 July 2021, eight African countries contributed personnel and troops to launch the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), including Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania. The force commander is Major General Xolani Mankayi of the SA National Defence Force. SAMIM's mandate is to support Mozambique's Forças Armadas de Defensa de Moçambique (FADM), to "combat terrorism and acts of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado by neutralising terrorist threat and restoring security to create a secure environment; strengthening and maintaining peace and security; restoring law and order in affected areas of Cabo Delgado Province and supporting the Republic of Mozambique, in collaboration with humanitarian agencies, to continue to provide humanitarian relief to population affected by terrorist activities, including internally displaced persons", according to the SADC Communique of Heads of State, issued on 12 January 2022. In 2024, SAMIM's withdrawal has contributed to recapturing villages and disrupting the operations of armed militia, capturing arms, and creating humanitarian corridors to transmit much-needed assistance to war-affected communities in the region.

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4   NS Energy, 'Mozambique LNG Project', 28 February 2020, available at: https://www.nsenergybusiness.com/projects/area-1-mozambique-lng-project/ accessed 15 August 2025.

However, the SAMIM is confronted by a challenging situation, and the limited resources available to its Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) mean that the mission cannot adequately project its authority. In addition, the continued deployment of SAMIM places a significant strain on the resources of the contributing states, which means that pressing domestic challenges remain unaddressed, and this does not augur well for stability in the southern African region. Emerging analysis suggests that "ordinary Mozambicans are driven to join the insurgency as a result of marginalisation, disenfranchisement and limited prospects for change", and therefore, a strategy for ensuring the long-term stability of the country should focus on addressing the underlying cause of the violence, which is linked to socio-economic deprivation and the absence of opportunities to improve livelihoods.[5]

In 2011, a contested UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which ostensibly authorized a "humanitarian intervention" in the country, led to the collapse of the Libyan state, which was fueled by the US-led NATO bombardment of the country. The subsequent fragmentation of the Libyan state, fueled by radical, violent extremist forces, has since catalyzed instability across the Sahel and led to the spread and escalation of terrorism and violent extremism across the Lake Chad region. Following NATO's war against Libya, the Sahel region descended into chaos with widespread illicit trade in small arms among multiple militia groups, which included piracy, smuggling of natural resources, and human trafficking. In 2014, France led the militarization of the region, an act designed to protect its interests and established the Joint Force of the Group of Five, also known as the G-5 Sahel, a military formation that included Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. These processes included the establishment of military bases in most of the G-5 Sahel countries, ostensibly to address the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism. In addition, the US constructed a drone base in Agadez, Niger, which it utilized to police the region and conduct targeted assassinations across the Sahel and Sahara Desert.[6] It is estimated that France has military bases in at least ten African countries, while the US has at least 29 military bases across the continent. To avoid being outdone, Russia's Wagner group has established a presence in more than 8 African countries. The United Kingdom and China are also involved, with established military presences in several African countries.[7] More specifically, Britain has military bases in Djibouti, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Somalia.[8] In particular, China has an operational People's Liberation Army Support Base in Djibouti, a military base operated by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), indicating its interest in projecting power and collecting intelligence in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Eden.[9]

In 2022, Niger had to endure the effects and presence of a number of radicalized violent extremists in the southern part of the country, including Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State Sahel Province who have been systematically attacking the south-western regions of Niger, including Tillaberi and Tahoua.[10] In addition, the south-eastern regions of Niger have had to endure the devastation caused by the Islamic State in the West African Province and Boko Haram, who, from their base of operations in Nigeria and Cameroon, have caused significant instability in the area.[11]

The insecurity across Mozambique and the Sahel highlights the need for a shift away from traditional processes, which are failing to prioritise people-led peacebuilding and governance processes based on the right to govern themselves and their resources for the benefit of their societies. This requires a peace-informed governance approach that solicits the views of local communities across the Sahel on the nature of governance they would like to establish, one that addresses their livelihood, health, and education needs. In practical terms, this requires a refocus on the mobilization of local and communal actors to drive their own peacebuilding and governance agendas at the societal level, rather than maintaining the top-down state-centric approach to government, buttressed by oversized peacekeeping and peace enforcement intergovernmental missions, which have singularly failed to promote peace and stability in the Sahel region.

5   Amanda Lucey and Jaynisha Patel, "Paying the Price: Financing the Mozambican Insurgency", IJR Policy Brief, No. 37, October 2021, p.1.

6   Tricontinental Institute for Social Research, *Defending our Sovereignty: US Military Bases in Africa and the Future of African Unity*, Dossier No. 42, July 2021, p.7.

7   Lei Wang, 'China and the United States in Africa: Competition or Cooperation?' *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies,* Vol.6, No.1, 2020, pp.1-19.

8   Phil Muller, 'Revealed: The UK Military Overseas Base Network Involves 145 Sites in 42 Countries', *Daily Maverick,* 24 November 2020, available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-11-24-revealed-the-uk-militarys-overseas-base-network-involves-145-sites-in-42-countries/, accessed 1 September 2023.

9   Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples' Republic of China, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei Press Conference Remarks, 21 January 2016.

10   Alice Fereday, *Niger: Routes Shift Amid Post-Covid Increase in Human Smuggling,* Global Initiative Against Transitional Organized Crime, June 2022, p.8.

11   Fereday, *Niger: Routes Shift Amid Post-Covid Increase in Human Smuggling,* p.8.

6.2 Organized Crime and Human Trafficking

Geo-strategic interests and pipelines for transnational crime are also undermining the ability of state actors to manage and resolve their internal tensions and conflicts on the African continent. In particular, organized crime, including illicit trade in natural and mineral resources, drugs, arms, human trafficking, cybercrime as well as wildlife crime, has provided extremists groups with a conduit through which to finance their nefarious activities, which continues to undermine the stability of a number of countries across the continent, notably in the Sahel, Horn of Africa and Central African regions.[12] For example, in Mali, the organized criminal element operates with impunity.[13] The transnational criminal networks in Mali operate to conduct their illegal trade in drugs, arms, people, wildlife as well as the extraction of the country's cultural heritage, for example, the ancient literary manuscripts and artefacts from Timbuktu, to be auctioned off to the highest bidder in underground global markets, facilitated by a nefarious network of actors and banks that provide financial service to enable this exploitation of these resources.[14] This has been documented, for example, in the case of cocaine being transported from Venezuela to the Malian town of Tarkint, in the Gao region, with the knowledge of local politicians, which reinforced the notion of Mali as a conduit for transnational organised crime.[15]

The Malian situation indicates that it is necessary to incorporate an overt approach to addressing organized crime within the mandate of peace support operations and peacekeeping missions, for example, with specific reference to arms and drug trafficking. The opportunities increase for transnational criminals to conduct insidious business dealings with the military junta, further perpetuating instability and insecurity in the region.

There have been ongoing efforts to contain the spread of transnational organized crime in the country and region.[16] A key challenge for the continent is establishing processes that will address the interconnected nature of transnational crime and violent extremism. Specifically, addressing transnational crime and violent extremism requires AU member states to adopt a regional approach, which necessitates transcending national boundaries and implementing fluid and dynamic cross-border interventions. This requires concretely ensuring the free movement of national and regional law enforcement personnel and equipment to ensure a timely and rapid response to transnational crime.

The AU is collaborating with the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa (CISSA), the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to promote enhanced cooperation in combating organized crime, a prerequisite for sustaining peace and security in Africa. The AU-CISSA-AFRIPOL-INTERPOL collaboration is actively exchanging data and information, and pursuing technical cooperation, including enhancing the investigative capacity of personnel in these institutions, to more effectively confront and address the threats posed by transnational organized crime. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of national, regional, and continental judicial systems to ensure that the statutes are adequately designed to enable and facilitate the prompt and effective prosecution of criminal cases. Specifically, AU member states need to ratify the Malabo Protocol on the African Court of Justice and Human Rights (ACJHR), the first regional court with jurisdiction over international, transnational organized crimes.

6.3 Ethno-Political and Inter-Communal Violence

Ethnic diversity itself is not the problem as far as the maintenance and sustaining of democracy is concerned; the main fundamental challenge is the state structures that were arbitrarily imposed upon the African

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12 Arthur Boutellis and Stephanie Tiélès, 'Peace operations and organised crime: Still foggy?' In Cedric de Coning and Peter Mateja (eds), *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

13 Peter Tinti, 'Drug Trafficking in Northern Mali: A Tenuous Criminal Equilibrium', Institute for Security Studies and Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, September 2020, available at: https://enact-africa.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2020-09-17-mali-drugs-research-paper.pdf, accessed 1 September 2021.

14 United Nations Security Council, Security Council renews Mali sanctions, panel of experts monitoring implementation, unanimously adopting Resolution 2590 (2021), 20 August 2021, available at: https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14616.doc.htm, accessed 1 September 2021.

15 Tinti, 'Drug Trafficking in Northern Mali: A Tenuous Criminal Equilibrium'.

16 United National Security Council, Resolution 2584 (2021), 29 June 2021, available at: https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2584(2021), accessed 1 September 2021.

continent. The types of ethno-political and inter-communal violence that we are witnessing today in Africa divide the population of a state by undermining interpersonal and social trust, and consequently, they destroy the social norms, values, and institutions that may have regulated and coordinated cooperation and collective action for the well-being of the community. Social trust among citizens in this instance is defined as individuals' expectations of the honesty, reliability, and integrity of other community members.

The contestation for access to land and the resources to live is a key factor in fueling ethno-political and inter-communal violence, as illustrated by the conflict and political tensions in South Sudan. Specifically, with reference to the African continent, where the Westphalian nation-state model was forcibly imposed by colonialism, upon societies arbitrarily dividing ethnic groups that had a common heritage and history, in effect, planted the seeds for division and tension, which is, in fact, what we continue to witness today. The nation-state itself was in fact part of the problem and not in fact the de facto "solution" to crisis situations around the world. Analysing the emergence of the nation-state across the African continent, in the early 1960s, Fanon was prophetic in his prediction when he surmised that "the tribalizing of the central authority, it is certain, encourages regionalist ideas and separatism…all the decentralizing tendencies spring up again and triumph, and the nation falls to pieces, broken to bits."[17] More than sixty years after Fanon's prediction the African continent is still afflicted by almost twenty conflict situations, including the Cameroon, Central African Republic, Eastern DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, which are at their core fuelled by the quest for power by the arbitrarily divided ethnic power blocks within countries, often with ties and links to their co-ethnic and co-religious kin in neighbouring countries.

6.4   Piracy and Maritime Insecurity

Africa continues to face significant challenges in terms of piracy and maritime insecurity, notably in the Horn of Africa, situated around the Somali conflict system, as well as in the Gulf of Guinea, fueled by the kidnappings and hijackings in the region. The key drivers of maritime insecurity are related to the weak and fragmented nature of African nation-states and their inability to deploy sufficient assets to effectively secure their waters. However, more fundamentally, the absence of adequate livelihoods, the prevalence of poverty, and the inability of local communities to provide adequate healthcare, education, infrastructure, and opportunities to work and care for their families. The prevalence of organized criminal networks and illicit extraction of resources from the African continent also creates fertile ground for pirates to target merchant ships.

Piracy and maritime insecurity have led to economic disruption, environmental damage, and the disruption of humanitarian shipping lines, notably in the Gulf of Eden and the Red Sea. As part of the strategy to address this phenomenon, the Yaounde (2013) and Djibouti (2009) Codes of Conduct have endeavored to articulate a set of policy interventions focusing on addressing the root causes of the crises, including improving livelihoods in the coastal regions. In addition, efforts have been made to harmonize anti-piracy laws in collaboration with international actors, including the UN and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

6.5   Cyber-Security Threats

The prevalence of cybersecurity threats, particularly through the leveraging of artificial intelligence, Africa is actively participating in the revolution in Artificial Intelligence technology, by leveraging it to promote increased connectivity and growth of its digital industry. The transition to deep learning has fueled a number of global pathologies including the cyber-warfare, cyber-crime and the misuse of social media leading to information over-load, addiction, the sexualization of minors, the uncontrolled influencer culture, the spread of micro-cults on the internet affecting mental health, trolling bots, disinformation, fake news leading to societal polarization as well as the breakdown and fragmentation of democracy.

Artificial Intelligence, through its drive to maximize engagement, has reconfigured every aspect of our society, including our values, identities, politics, economies, and communities. Africa has not been immune to the ability of its leaders to manipulate and frame information, particularly through social media, which has

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17   Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (London: Penguin, 1961), p.148.

a significant impact on the socio-political dynamics within societies across the continent. The development of newer and faster machine learning systems and the GPT-3 -3 the new large language models, will in practice improve efficiency, increase the speed of coding, solving challenging scientific challenges, and increase economic growth. However, AI is becoming increasingly entangled in society in ways that will make it unmanageable for humanity to control. According to the Centre for Humane Technology, 50 percent of Artificial Intelligence researchers believe that there is a 10 percent or greater chance that humans could go extinct from our inability to control Artificial Intelligence.[18]

The rapid evolution of AI can also fuel and lead to the collapse of reality constructs, undermining trust between people, reproducing synthetic relationships, fueling the automation of cyber-weapons, and increasing manipulation of the human political sphere to the point of eroding societal security. More specifically, there is an encroaching danger that AI will become increasingly autonomous and will onboard and upload data relating to individuals without an open global democratic dialogue and a negotiated agreement on the kind of future that humanity would like to create. The African Union and its member states need to raise awareness of the AU Convention on Cyber-Security in order to engage with this issue and work with partners around the world to rein in the excesses of uncontrolled and unregulated machine learning.

6.6   Climate Change and Environmental Governance

The climate change agenda is now critical to the environmental, social, and political security of Africa. There is qualitative evidence that climate change has negatively affected the availability of water resources, which in turn has impacted the fertility of land for agrarian and pastoral purposes, potentially triggering violent conflict. Ultimately, this exacerbates food insecurity and increases competition over resources, which can precipitate violent conflict. Africa's climatic vulnerability is compounded by a low capacity to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. More specifically, "climate change will also adversely affect some African livelihoods, such as farming and energy-related jobs, which are vulnerable to weather-related conditions."[19] In addition, the African continent is heavily dependent on its agricultural and fisheries industries, which could be significantly affected by the increase in drought levels and limited access to clean drinking water. This can exacerbate relations between communities and countries, fueling violent conflict. African governments can leverage the continent's abundance of solar, wind, and geothermal resources, as well as innovate in the sustainable use of Africa's lands, forests, and coastlines, to generate green entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.[20]

The African Union Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) and the Conference of African Ministers of Environment (AMCEN) have been responsible for Africa's approach and appeals to addressing the climate change catastrophe. This led to the development of the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) which among other issues calls for the need to reduce emissions to align with the goals set forth in the Paris Agreement, as well as uphold commitments to the fair and accelerated process of phasing down coal and the elimination of the use of fossil fuels. In addition, African leaders have proposed the establishment of "a new financing architecture that is responsive to Africa's needs including debt restructuring and relief, including the development of a new Global Climate Finance Charter through the United Nation General Assembly and Committee of the Parties processes by 2025."[21] called for "strengthening continental collaboration, which is essential to enabling and advancing green growth, including but not limited to regional and continental grid interconnectivity."[22]

The African Union's leadership through the convening of CAHOSCC is significant in the sense that it demonstrates how Pan-Africanism can serve as a mobilizing principle in terms of developing and enabling the continent to express a common position on an issue of international concern such as climate change.

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18   Centre for Humane Technology, *Key Issues Overview*, available at: https://www.humanetech.com/key-issues#key-issue-areas, accessed 20 August 2023.

19   Dupoux et al.,'Six Megatrends that are Changing Africa and how to Navigate them', p.4.

20   Dupoux et. Al., 'Six Megatrends that are Changing Africa and how to Navigate them', p.5.

21   African Union, The African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, 6 September 2023, Nairobi, Kenya, Paragraph 48, p.7.

22   African Union, The African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, Paragraph 25, p.4.

The African continent, through the African Union, can develop and express a common position on how to transform the evolving global order. The Pan-African position is informed by the need to forge and pursue a shared vision on technology transfer and financing to manage and mitigate the effects of climate change.

6.7 Critical Minerals Extraction and Impact on Peace and Security

African countries that are exceptionally endowed with critical minerals have become a target for external forces seeking to extract their resources, undermining peace and security to the detriment of local populations. The legacy of French colonialism has led to an unstable political, security, and economic landscape in the Sahel. For example, Niger, which is endowed with critical minerals, has descended into becoming a transit country for the tragic trend of human trafficking of migrants who are making their way to Libya and on to Europe.[23] Niger possesses some of the largest deposits of uranium, gold, coal, and a range of other minerals vital to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In 2010, it is estimated that Niger exported €3.5 billion worth of uranium to France and received back only € 459 million, apparently due to the costs of extraction.[24] Additionally, the French company Orano (formerly Areva) has secured a contract to continue uranium mining in Niger until 2040.[25] According to the UN Development Programme Human Development Index, Niger is among the three least developed countries in the world.[26]

In particular, approximately 90% of households in Niger do not have regular and reliable electricity access, which is a perverse paradox when one considers that its uranium powers the homes in France and Europe. In addition to having to endure the presence of the largest US drone base on the African continent, at Agadez, with the security threats that this generates in terms of drawing in radical extremist elements, Niger continues to remain subject to the tutelage of the French CFA monetary zone control and manipulation. Since 2014, the illicit extraction of gold from norther Niger has drawn in a range of smugglers from neighbouring states including Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan, which intersects with narcotic trafficking routes coordinated by transnational organized criminal elements have continued to perpetuate the illegal extraction of narcotics and other resources from the country that would have otherwise have been utilized to provide healthcare, education, housing and building infrastructure for small and medium-sized enterprises to grow in the country. The gold smugglers are regularly targeted by armed groups who extract rent to fund their military actions.[27] For example, on 15 June 2022, the armed militia Union des Forces Patriotiques pour la Refondation de la République attacked a police post at the Djado goldfield which is located about 630 kilometers north-east of Agadez.[28]

6.8 Mercenarism and Foreign Fighters in Africa

The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) analyses how to ensure that key stakeholders work in tandem and avoid duplicating their efforts to combat violent extremism. The Centre has also identified the precipitous increase of so-called Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) on the African continent who proactively engage in executing violent extremism, specifically in Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Somalia, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, and Mozambique. The ACSRT, along with other African and international agencies, is developing mechanisms to identify and locate FTFs, including enhancing data and information collection. In particular, many of these fighters emerge from the crisis in Syria and Iraq and extremist groups such as Al-Quaeda and ISIS. As a result, the FTFs and the phenomenon of the privatization of national security pose a clear and present danger to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of African countries, fueling insecurity and undermining peacebuilding processes.

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23   Alice Fereday, 'Niger: Routes Shift Amid Post-Covid increase in Human Smuggling', Global Initiative on Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), June 2022, p.2.

24   Martina Schwikowski, 'Are Niger's Uranium Supplies to France Under Scrutiny?', available at: https://www.dw.com/en/are-nigers-uranium-supplies-to-france-under-scrutiny/a-66711717, accessed on 29 September 2023, p.1.

25   Schwikowski, 'Are Niger's Uranium Supplies to France Under Scrutiny?', p.1.

26   UN Development Programme, *Specific Country Data – Niger,* 2022, available at: https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/NER accessed 15 August 2023.

27   Ibrahim Diallo, *Agadez: 12 Kilos d'or emportés après un braquage ce matin au centre ville, Air Info,* 8 October 2022, available at: https://airinfoagadez.com/2022/10/08/, accessed 15 August 2023.

28   Mondafrique, 'L'attaque d'un groupe rebelle dans le nord du Niger', 18 June 2022, available at: https://mondafrique.com/lattaque-dun-groupe-politico-militaire-dans-le-nord-niger/, accessed 15 August 2023.

Khadiagala notes that "in most of Africa there has been an increase in the privatization of security, witnessed in the proliferation of security companies that, in some instances, have replaced the legitimate states institutions in the provision of basic security."[29] He further notes that "as states have abdicated the core functions of policing by ceding primary protective responsibilities to non-state actors, they have made their societies more vulnerable and insecure."[30] When African countries cede their authority to private security forces, they in effect undermine their own sovereignty, given their responsibility to maintain the overall control of the use of violence in their territories. The situation becomes significantly more complex when state actors recruit and engage private security actors to actively execute internal wars and to reinforce or buttress their power in deeply divided countries. This trend of state actors recruiting and deploying private security mercenaries is undermining security sector governance on the continent. Khadiagala suggests that "the privatization of security yields the militarization of societies, which is a major governance challenge" and that effective peacebuilding "involves diminishing the role of private actors in the security arena."[31] In this regard, the proliferation of foreign fighters, mercenaries, and private security companies in Africa is a systemic problem that requires a Pan-African approach if it is to be adequately addressed. The over-emphasis on military solutions to issues that are more effectively addressed by improving the livelihood, health, housing, education, and well-being of African citizens. This means that there is a need to pivot more directly towards socio-economic solutions to the underlying crises, rather than deploying overpriced military formations to address what are, in effect, societal and governance issues.

Private security forces and mercenary companies can also be utilized as tools for geopolitical competition between foreign governments. There has been an emphasis on the role of the Wagner Group across Africa, however, this needs to be tempered with an acknowledgement of the presence and proliferation of a wide range of private military companies in Africa from a number of countries including the USA, France, UK, Canada, Germany and Ukraine, which take up arms to fight for governments, often in violation of International Human Rights Law. More specifically, the US private security companies CACI and Academi (formerly known as Blackwater) are the most active on the African continent. The United Kingdom's Erinys, Aegis Defence Services, G4S are private security and military groups that have and continue to focus their operations across Africa.[32] In addition, the French private military group Sycopex, the German Excelles, and Canadian GardaWorld, as well as the Ukrainian Omega Consulting Group, are all active across the African continent.

Foreign mercenaries are infiltrating the dynamics of national and regional political processes, undermining countries' and societies' ability to resolve their underlying issues and develop solutions that ensure country stability. Despite the existence of the 2001 United Nations International Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing, and Training of Mercenaries, which has been violated and abused with impunity by countries from both the Global North and the Global South, the use of private military companies continues to escalate exponentially. Increasingly, these private security companies are becoming implicated in national and regional political processes.

The Wagner Group (rebranded as Africa Corps), which began its operations in Africa in 2017 and has been implicated in military interventions in the Central African Republic, Libya, and Sudan. In 2019, the Wagner group became operational in the Cabo Delgado region of northern Mozambique, which possesses significant reserves of liquefied natural gas (LNG), as well as minerals including gold, diamonds, and rubies estimated to be worth billions of US dollars. The Wagner Group, which is a complex network of businesses and mercenary operations with links to the Russian military and intelligence community, was deployed ostensibly to combat the Islamist insurgency, led by a group known as Ahlu Sunna wa Jama, has exploited the situation of decades-long economic deprivation and alienation to radicalize young people of the region over a period of decades.

The government of Mozambique signed agreements on mineral resources, energy, defence, and security,

29   Gilbert Khadiagala, *Silencing the Guns: Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa*, (New York: International Institute for Peace, 2015), p.18.

30   Khadiagala, *Silencing the Guns: Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa*, p.18.

31   Khadiagala, *Silencing the Guns: Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa*, p.18.

32   Outlook, 'Mercenary Group: A Look at the Big 5, Elite Private, Security Forces in the World', 28 June 2023, available at: https://www.outlookindia.com/international/mercenary-group-a-look-at-5-big-elite-private-sevurity-forces-in-the-world-news-298362, accessed 20 August 2023.

which paved the way for the arrival of the Wagner Group as well as the South African private security company known as Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) in September 2019. The Wagner Group fought alongside the Mozambican army to attempt to quell the insurgency with limited effectiveness. The lesser DAG relied primarily on the use of helicopters and grenades thrown from above to take on the Islamist insurgency, which led to the death of innocent civilians. These interventions were ultimately ineffective in stabilizing the region, and if anything, they contributed towards escalating the tension and further radicalizing the targeted population.

In July 2021, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) deployed the SADC Mission in the Republic of Mozambique (SAMIM) to combat the insurgency in the Cabo Delgado province. The AU PSC subsequently endorsed the Mission in 2022, which enabled it to incrementally contribute towards the reduction of insecurity in the province. However, the military intervention in Cabo Delgado has not been as effective in mapping out a transition towards communal peacebuilding processes, which will continue to be an enduring challenge for the country going forward.

In 2018, the framework of cooperation in Mali was operationalized through an official Russian military assistance framework, which provided combat and surveillance aircraft, and it was within this context that the Wagner Group was activated to provide security services to President Faustin Archange Touadéra and his government, which is encircled and under threat from armed militia from different parts of the country. In return, the Wagner Group, whose recruits receive training in the premises of Russia's Military Intelligence Service (GRU), was provided with lucrative logging rights and control of gold mining fields in CAR.[33] In Libya, the Wagner Group was brought in 2019 to provide support to the Libyan National Army in containing the incursions by armed militias that proliferated following NATO's 2011 bombardment of the country, which led to the eventual death of Muamar Gaddafi.

In Sudan, the Wagner Group was brought in by former President Omar Al-Bashir in 2017 to provide him with additional military force to quell the uprising and citizen-led revolution that ultimately toppled his government in 2018. Wagner's role in Sudan was to train Sudanese troops and guard mineral resources, which included a quid pro quo arrangement to export gold to Russia.

In these interventions, the Wagner Group/Africa Corps has been accused of human rights abuses and violating International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law. In this regard, Wagner's actions as a private military company are not subject to any Pan-African law, and they can act with impunity, which is an issue that needs to be urgently addressed by the African Union and its member states.

A continent so thoroughly riddled with the presence of foreign militaries and fighters can never achieve peace and security on its own terms. As an immediate strategic priority to pursue peace through the continent's own autonomous and self-directed interventions, African Union member states need to develop policies that will limit and roll back the degree of penetration they are currently enduring.

There is an urgent need to review the 1977 Organisation of African Unity Convention on Mercenarism, which is outdated and unable to address the evolving situation across the African continent.[34] It is, in fact a betrayal of the trust of the millions of African's who have to endure the International Human Rights Law violations that are perpetrated on the continent by private mercenary companies and foreign fighters, that the African Union has not yet developed a binding continental legal framework to regulate the behavior and actions of these actors.

The AU Peace and Security Council meeting of 30th May 2016, which received a briefing on early warning and horizon scanning, "noted with deep concern of the existence of foreign military bases and the establishment of some new ones in African countries, coupled with the in ability of Member States concerned to effectively monitor the movement of weapons to and from these foreign bases."[35] The PSC also identified "the continued illegal transfer of arms and ammunitions to non-state actors as a serious

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33   Agenzia Fides, 'Africa – Not Only Wagner: Private Military Companies (PMC) and the Future of the Monopoly of Force', Agenzia Fides, 28 June 2023, p.2.

34   Tshepo Gwatiwa, 'Private Military and Security Companies Policy in Africa: Regional Policy Stasis as Agency in International Politics', *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies*, Vol.6, No.2, 2016, pp.68-86.

35   African Union Peace and Security Council, *Briefing on Early Warning and Horizon Scanning*, 601st Meeting, PSC/PR/BR.(CDI), 30 May 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p.3.

threat to peace and security on the continent."[36] In its statement, the PSC instructed AU "Member States to be always circumspect whenever they enter into agreements that would lead to the establishment of foreign military bases in their countries."[37] This injunction applied equally to the US, French, UK, Chinese and Russian military bases. In addition, the AU PSC emphasized that "the primary responsibility for ensuring effective conflict prevention lies with Member States."[38]

6.9 Weak Governance and Political Instability

A lack of transparency in democratic governance means that Africa's resources have systematically been mismanaged because dictators, oligarchs, and pseudo-democrats who tend to ignore human rights, the rule of law, and citizen participation in political affairs tend to hoard the national wealth of their countries. While there is a role for external actors in encouraging countries to transition to more open and democratic societies, genuine change can only be brought about when domestic, sub-regional, and Pan-African institutions, such as the African Union and its actors, make it their personal responsibility to entrench transparency.

The lack of transparency in democratic governance gives rise to a host of side effects, including the inadequate ability to collect and manage taxes, which would be a natural source of developmental funds. It also leads to the closing down of the political space for associations, civil society, educational institutions, and think tanks to contribute to national and continental policy development, due to a suppression of their ability to highlight the problems afflicting their communities and map out potential solutions. A lack of democratic governance can also undermine the rule of law by co-opting the judiciary and constraining the legislature's freedom to keep the executive branch of government in check. In the cloak of darkness fostered by undemocratic rule, financial corruption and economic mismanagement flourish, and development is deterred. Paradoxically, when aid is injected into such a situation, it can sometimes postpone the attainment of genuine democratic reforms.

In terms of remedying the effects of undemocratic rule in Africa and its addiction to aid, deeper continental integration would provide the means to establish and consolidate a continent-wide process to ensure the self-monitoring of governance conditions within countries. Continental integration, as discussed above, must be premised on principles, norms, and policies that are negotiated with the African people. African presidents, prime ministers, governments, and societies must then commit to upholding these principles and elevating the standards of democratic governance so that the promise of continental integration can be fulfilled. It is only on this basis that the resources necessary to develop Africa can be harnessed for the benefit of the continent and for aid colonisation to become less of a reality in Africa.

The continent's ability and capacity to promote peace is self-evidently undermined by the failure of African leaders to find ways to address their differences and hold one another accountable. Africa's leadership deficit, a source of weak governance, leaves the continent extremely vulnerable to internal fissures, political instability, as well as external penetration and exploitation. For example, the fuel that adds to the flame of conflict in Africa is the role that globalisation plays in perpetuating and sustaining wars. This reality has been made possible or easier by the emerging global networks of trade and instant financial transactions that allow the ability to shift huge amounts of capital at the click of a button to offshore accounts beyond the investigative reach of unsuspecting citizens and civil society organisations, as has now been revealed by the infamous Panama Papers.

The African Union's Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, which was adopted on 17th March 2022, in Accra, Ghana, in its paragraph 8, committed the Union and all member states to:

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36   African Union Peace and Security Council, *Briefing on Early Warning and Horizon Scanning,* p.4.

37   African Union Peace and Security Council, *Briefing on Early Warning and Horizon Scanning,* p.3.

38   African Union Peace and Security Council, *Briefing on Early Warning and Horizon Scanning,* p.3.

"strongly reject any form of internal or external interference on peace and security matters in Africa and warn those who finance coups, foreign fighters and mercenaries in member states that their nefarious actions will not be tolerated; encourage member states to address peace and security challenges through mutual support within the continent as well as … underscore the need for the full operationalization and deployment of the African Standby Force (ASF) to effectively undertake its mandate."[39]

The epidemic of unconstitutional changes of governments exposes the self-evident weakness of African states, is partly due to a fairly to buttress and strengthen the continental and regional institutions that are mandated to protect and sustain peace and security across the continent. Corrosion of the structural integrity of states across the continent in this regard, is a function of the weakness of inter-governmental institutions which have been established to provide guidance to countries and their societies. In this regard, it is necessary to deploy the Africa Standby Force to implement its mandate in contributing towards stabilizing these crisis-ridden societies across the African continent.

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39   African Union, *Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa,* Reflection Forum, 17 March 2022, Accra, Ghana, paragraph 8, p.4.

07

PEACE INITIATIVES AND ACTORS: CONTINENTAL AND GLOBAL PROCESSES

7.1 Peacemaking Efforts in the Sudan Civil War

The escalation of the Sudan civil war in April 2023, pitting the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led to a conflict that has generated unprecedented suffering, severe food insecurity, and a humanitarian catastrophe, resulting in 15,000 civilian casualties and the displacement of over 10 million people. Sudan has been afflicted by racism, hatred, and religious fundamentalism, and there are significant challenges to pursue and achieve a comprehensive peace. The role of external actors in supporting different sides of the war has further complicated the conflict's dynamics. The range of different actors have political and economic motives (in the case of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and Yemen); historical colonial relations (UK, Egypt and Turkey); ideology (Egypt, Iran, Qatar and Iraq (Baath Party)); religion and Arabism (UAE and Saudi Arabia); sponsorships of peace agreements (Qatar, South Sudan, EU, USA, IGAD countries and Nile Basin); and Red Sea security issues (USA, Russia and China).

There have been fledgling efforts to undertake mediation initiatives that uphold the human rights and dignity of all Sudanese people. It is important to note that both the AU and IGAD have failed the Sudanese people at this point in time. The AU and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), in particular, have the mandate and authority, granted to it by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, to intervene in the Sudan conflict.

Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, adopted in 2000, grants the AU the authority to intervene directly in situations of grave crisis, particularly in cases where there is a threat of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide. As outlined in the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security of the African Union, the AU can intervene through peacemaking, mediation and facilitation, peace support operations, as well as through post-conflict reconstruction and development, which includes the implementation of transitional justice programmes, in line with the AU Transitional Justice Policy of February 2019.

On 20th April 2023, five days after the outbreak of the war in Sudan, on 15th April 2023, during a Ministerial Special Session on Sudan, the AU established what is known as an AU Expanded Mechanism on the Sudan Crisis, which includes: representatives of the Trilateral Mechanism (AU, IGAD, United Nations); League of Arab States (LAS); European Union (EU), permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC P5 – US, UK, France, Russia, China); African members of the UNSC (A3); Sudan's neighbouring countries (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya and South Sudan); countries designated by IGAD to engage the belligerents (South Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti); Comoros (in its former capacity as the Chair of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government), the Quad (USA, UK, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates); Troika (USA, UK, Norway), Germany and Qatar. On 27th May 2023, the PSC adopted an AU Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan (AU Roadmap), in close collaboration with Sudanese stakeholders.

The AU Roadmap seeks to:

i. Establish mechanisms to coordinate support to Sudan;

ii. Secure a cessation of hostilities;

iii. Strengthen the humanitarian response;

iv. Ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure;

v. Compliance with international humanitarian law;

vi. Give impetus to the agency of neighbouring states;

vii. Promote the resumption of an inclusive, fully representative political process.

During the initial stages of the war, the AU convened three meetings of the Expanded Mechanism, emphasising the importance of preventing all forms of external interference in Sudan. As the conflict transitioned into the second year, the meetings of the Expanded Mechanism have since faltered and have in fact been failing the people of Sudan. However, there is scope to revive the Expanded Mechanism, which can play a role in enabling peacemaking in Sudan.

The African Union has also established an AU High-Level Panel on the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan. It is chaired by Ambassador Mohamed Chambas, from Ghana, former Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS). The two additional members are Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, Former Vice President of Uganda, and Francisco Madeira, Foreign Minister of Mozambique. The High-Level Panel undertakes shuttle diplomacy to engage the military factions in the current conflict, as well as to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including international actors and civil society. Similar to the expanded mechanism, the AU High-Level Panel has struggled to make sufficient progress. However, it has a role to play in enabling peacemaking in Sudan.

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has also failed the people of Sudan. At the outset, the President of South Sudan was designated by IGAD as the Lead Facilitator for the Sudan conflict; however, the two military factions, led by General Al Burhan and General Hemedti, effectively ignored the IGAD initiative under the tutelage of Kirr. Consequently, IGAD has had minimal impact in addressing the dynamics of the conflict. In October 2024, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda launched another Presidential-Level initiative to mediate between the two generals through an ad hoc third-party intervention.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has failed as a system of international collective security, and the Permanent Five (P5) – comprising the USA, Russia, China, France, and the UK – are also pursuing their own interests in the Sudan conflict. As a result, a plethora of non-African peacemaking initiatives have emerged, including a Saudi Arabian-US-led initiative in Jeddah, a Geneva peace effort, as well as initiatives by Egypt and Turkey. These initiatives perpetuate mediation forum shopping by the Sudanese parties, which weakens efforts to consolidate African peacemaking initiatives.

The AU and IGAD processes have since become held hostage to the geopolitical forces that are fueling the conflict in Sudan. This includes US interests in ensuring access to the Red Sea and Russia's drive to establish a military base near Port Sudan, as well as the mercenary entity formerly known as the Wagner Group, now rebranded as the African Corps, and its ties with the RSF. In response, the SAF has deployed Ukrainian Special Forces to assist it in combating the Russian mercenary group. The UAE is extracting gold through the RSF supply routes, as well as investing in the development of the harbor in Port Sudan. Egypt has historical ties to Sudan and provides support to the Sudanese Armed Forces, while also maintaining interests in maintaining access to the Nile River waters. There are indications that Israel is providing surface-to-air missiles to the RSF, and in response, there are allegations that Iran is providing the SAF with drone technology. These geopolitical forces have created a situation in which there is potentially an endless supply of weapons funded by the illicit trade of Sudan's natural resources. All of the elements are in place for an extended, prolonged, and very destructive conflict. There is a major risk of further fragmentation of Sudan.

In terms of who can function as a credible mediator given these geopolitical dimensions, one strategy would be to enhance and strengthen the initiatives of the AU High-Level Panel, as well as revive the AU Expanded Mechanism, which includes all the main actors, with an added element of including the Sudanese people. All previous initiatives have excluded the voices of the people of Sudan. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a Sudan Mediation Group (SMG), which can interface directly and, in fact, co-lead the mediation process with the AU High-Level Panel, as well as being included in the AU Expanded Mechanism. The Sudan Mediation Group will include, at a minimum, six mediators, including two aligned with the SAF and two aligned with the RSF, as well as two representatives of the Sudanese people, particularly representatives of the Sudanese revolution, drawn from the Resistance Committees and the Emergency Rooms.

Drawing from the Spider Web Model of mediation, the Sudan Mediation Group would be at the core of the mediation process, at the centre of the Spider's Web, in partnership with the AU High-Level Panel, with the AU Expanded Mechanism functioning as the extended web that draws out from the centre of the web. The AU will bring the legitimacy, authority, and mandate to mediate the establishment of a new decentralized Sudanese state.

7.2   AU Panel Mediation in Ethiopia: Women in Peace Mediation

Dr. Phumzile Mlabo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of South Africa and a member of the AU Panel of the Wise, was a key member of the High-Level Panel that oversaw the mediation process between the Federal Government of the Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), with the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) on 2nd November 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa. The utility of the high-level panel model for mediation in Africa again came to the fore, underscoring the need to strengthen the preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention institutions of the African Union. In the case of the signing of the COHA, former President Olesegun Obasanjo, the AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa, former President Uhuru Kenyatta, of Kenya, and Dr. Mlabo-Ngcuka facilitated the efforts to achieve a signed agreement with the tacit approval of the two opposing sides that were caught in a two-year debilitating conflict that led to approximately 600,000 fatalities and the displacement of almost two million people.

On 7 November 2022, the High-Level Panel convened in Nairobi, Kenya, where the military leaders of the Ethiopian Government and the TPLF agreed on the modalities for ensuring humanitarian access in the Tigray region. On 12 November 2022, the High-Level Panel oversaw the signing of an additional agreement, entitled the 'Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities of the Implementation of the Agreement for a Lasting Peace between the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front'. It remains to be seen whether the parties to the COHA will implement it with integrity or whether we are liable to witness a degree of backsliding and reneging on key elements of the agreement, such as the commitment to adopt and implement transitional justice processes in line with the provisions of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP). This AU mediation intervention points to the continuing necessity of the high-level panel model in addressing crises on the African continent. The stature of high-level mediators is a key factor in enabling processes to move forward, particularly when belligerents have de-legitimized each other and are unable to meet without the intervention of a third party.

In her closing remarks during the signing of the Ethiopian Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, Dr. Mlabo-Ngcuka observed that the two Ethiopian negotiating teams, however, lacked adequate gender representation, which was evident in the absence of any women interlocutors on both sides. The challenge of mainstreaming the role of women in peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peace support operations remains a significant challenge for the African continent. To engage in a more focused manner on this continuing challenge, on 14th and 15th December 2022, the African Union Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security convened the Third Forum on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) on the theme of "Leveraging on WPS Monitoring to Enhance Women's Participation and Leadership in Peace Processes in Africa." The Forum assessed the challenges of implementing the existing provisions to ensure the inclusion and active participation of women in peace processes, how to strengthen and support women's peacebuilding networks, the role of young women and girls in peace and security, and evaluated the delivery of existing

WPS strategies, using the Continental Results Framework.[40] The Forum brought together African women leaders, women peacebuilders, national and regional focal points on women, peace, and security, and other stakeholders to review the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Africa. The Forum noted that 35 National Action Plans have been adopted, as well as 6 Regional Action Plans, which makes Africa the global leader in this process on the continent. The Forum, however, acknowledged that there were enduring challenges in terms of the financing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting processes of the Action Plans. The Outcome Document of the Forum made a number of recommendations, including the need for the:

- AU Peace and Security Council to adopt a Strategy for Systematic Incorporation of the WPS Agenda into all AU conflict response efforts;

- An AU policy imperative for a minimum 30 percent quota system to ensure women's representation, meaningful involvement, and inclusion in all interventions undertaken by the AU;

- The AU PSC to task the AUC to enforce gender-parity principle in all its deployments, including fact-finding missions, Election observation missions and PCRD Assessment Missions, with women participating as Heads of these Missions;

- AU Member States to accelerate the implementation of gender reforms of national defense and security forces to ensure women's meaningful participation, leadership and deployment to peacekeeping missions;

- RECs/ RMs, working with AU member states, to develop Roadmaps for the Roll-Out of the AU Continental Results Framework on WPS (AU CRF) to promote monitoring, progress tracking and advance accountability to the WPS Agenda;

- AU Member States to allocate sufficient budgetary resources for implementation and reporting on the WPS Agenda: African Parliaments should ensure ownership of the WPS Agenda and implementation of NAPS on UNSCR 1325 (2000), by calling for budgetary allocations towards the implementation, monitoring and reporting efforts;

- AU and member states to strengthen efforts for data collection for monitoring progress on the WPS Agenda Mainstream the WPS Agenda into the revised AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy and Transitional Justice Policy;

- AU and member states to promote victim and survivor-centred transitional justice processes, including providing psycho-social and legal support to survivors of sexual violence;

- AU and women's organisations to collaborate with men and men's organizations in advancing the WPS Agenda, including organizing an Annual Conference focusing on Advancing Positive Masculinity to enhance the Implementation of the WPS Agenda.[41]

It is evident from the emerging recommendations that there are a number of challenges that continue to undermine the continent's efforts to promote the inclusion of women in peace mediation initiatives.

7.3 Mediation Efforts in the Great Lakes Region: Eastern DRC and Rwanda

In the case of the crisis between the eastern DRC and Rwanda, the continents RECs convened a regional mediation panel, based on collaboration between the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC). A five-member panel was constituted to include: former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), Uhuru Kenyatta (Kenya), Kgalema Motlanthe (South Africa), Catherine Samba-Panza (Central African Republic), and Sahle-Work Zewde (Ethiopia). M23 Resurgence: The Rwandan-backed M23 rebel group has recaptured key cities like Goma and Bukavu in early 2025, reigniting conflict the regional conflict. In August 2025, African states agreed to merge mediation structures from the EAC, SADC,

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40   African Union Office of Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Third Forum on Women, Peace and Security, African Union, Addis Ababa, 14 and 15 December 2022.

41   African Union, *Call to Action and Outcome Document of the Third Forum on Women, Peace and Security*, 14 and 15 December 2022, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

and African Union into a single AU-led process, aiming for more coherence and regional buy-in for efforts to resolve the crisis.

7.4   Ghana's Mediation Efforts in the Sahel

In the Sahel, President John Mahama took proactive steps to rebuild trust with the Alliance of Sahelian States (AES) after years of tension. In January 2025, Mahama appointed Colonel Larry Gbevlo-Lartey, a former national security chief, as special envoy to the AES bloc. This signaled Ghana's intent to engage constructively with the military-led governments of the Sahel, despite their withdrawal from ECOWAS in January 2025. Ghana's mediation efforts aim to establish a framework for security Cooperation, aiming to coordinate efforts against terrorism, illegal mining, and cross-border crime, issues that affect both coastal and Sahelian states. In addition, the Ghana initiative seeks to bridge the divide between democratic governments and the military regimes of the AES. In the medium to long term, improved relations and a basis for negotiation will enhance prospects for deepening economic integration in the region, expanding trade, energy, and infrastructure links with the Sahel, especially as its ports could serve as gateways for landlocked AES countries.

7.5   African Citizen Engagement in Peace Initiatives

Citizen mobilisation, engagement, and participation in peace initiatives can contribute to stabilising the African continent. In particular, citizen action to initiate and support peacemaking processes can contribute to interrogating and addressing the underlying drivers of colonially inspired exploitation, which have triggered military coups in several countries, including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, Mali, and Sudan. The underlying drivers of these coups must be addressed to ensure that the progressive gains the continent has achieved in other regions, through the consolidation of the rule of law and the pursuit of human rights and gender equality, are maintained.

08

AFRICAN UNION AND UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COOPERATION

The AU's security cooperation with the UN now has an established, if not challenging, legacy, including collaboration in Burundi, the Darfur region of Sudan, Mali, Somalia, and a number of other situations, given the confluence of mandates that the UN and the AU share there is no question that there needs to be greater policy coherence and partnership between the two bodies. The Group of three African countries that sit as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, also known as the A3, are increasingly aligning their agendas and functioning as a unit within the Council; however, much more needs to be done to strengthen the coordination between the A3 and the AU PSC in Addis Ababa. The Africa Group at the UN must remain vigilant to ensure that the UN system does not exploit developments relating to the financing of AU-led peace support operations as a means to perpetuate paternalism towards Africa. Ultimately, African countries form a significant subset of the UN membership, and the relationship should be based on a reciprocal respect if the UN is to succeed in achieving the noble objectives that it set for itself and humanity at its inception.

The issue of AU-UN security cooperation has heightened the focus on support for African-led peace support operations. In 2019, a UNSC resolution on the financing of African Union Peace Support Operations (PSO) was debated, but with no definitive outcome. In February 2023, the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government adopted the 'African Consensus Paper on Predictable, Adequate and Sustainable Financing for AU Peace and Security Activities'.[42] Subsequently, in April 2023, the UN Secretary-General issued a Report on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017), which focused on the financing of AU PSOs mandated by the UN Security Council.[43] This, in effect, brought the issue of financing the AU-led PSOs back to the forefront of the AU-UN cooperative relationship on peace and security. The UNSC relaunched the negotiation on the draft framework, which had been initiated in 2019.

The AU has led on the establishment of peace support operations in situations where a comprehensive peace agreement has not yet been achieved, for example, in Burundi and the Darfur region of Sudan, in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This approach was a departure from the traditional orthodoxy established by UN peacekeeping missions, which predominantly operated on the basis of an agreement between the belligerent parties. As a consequence, it has become evident that AU-led peace support operations require dedicated and predictable funding, given the precarious and hostile environments in which they tend to operate, such as AMISOM's role in Somalia, which has since been replaced by ATMIS. The acceptance of the necessity and inevitability of the AU's interventions is now gaining traction within UN circles, which were previously hostile to the pre-emptive peace support operation approach. There is an emerging worldview that regional organizations should be empowered to undertake kinetic action as part of the process of re-thinking multilateralism, particularly in the context of "the intensification of the geostrategic tensions between major powers with consequences both to the effective functioning of the

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42   African Union, Consensus Paper on Predictable Adequate and Sustainable Financing for African Union Peace and Security Activities, (Addis Ababa: African Union, February 2023).

43   United Nations, Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017) and Considerations related to the Financing of AU Peace and Security Operations mandated by the Security Council, 29 April 2023.

UNSC."[44]

The AU Consensus Paper on Financing of Peace Support Operations focused on establishing and ensuring a Common African Position on the UN Review of Peace Support Operations. Specifically, it assessed several key issues, including burden sharing and the division of labor between the UN and the AU regarding the financing of AU-led PSOs. The AU Consensus Paper stipulated that 25% of the AU's budget would be dedicated to supporting peace and security priorities across the continent, in order to achieve African ownership of PSOs through a revitalized AU Peace Fund.[45]

Several financing models are being considered, including financing through UN-AU hybrid missions, based on the experiences of UNAMID in the Darfur region of Sudan. The second model includes establishing an enhanced UN Logistics Support Package (LSP) based on the experiences with the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the ongoing AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The third model involved financing to sub-regional peace support operations, such as the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), with the proviso that they are formally established through the AU decision-making processes.[46]

In terms of decision-making, oversight, and command and control of AU-led PSOs, there is a divergence of opinion between the UN and AU regarding which body should maintain strategic and political control of these operations. There is a similar contestation regarding control over financial transparency, accountability mechanisms, and human rights compliance.

The three African non-permanent members of the UNSC, also known as the A3, have prepared a roadmap for financing AU-led PSOs. A key concern emerging from the AU's perspective is that the use of UN-assessed contributions to operationalize AU PSOs should not be viewed as an act of "sub-contracting" by the global body, but rather as a recognition of the comparative advantage that the AU provides to addressing complex conflict and humanitarian crises.[47] The overall sense is that, following the UN Secretary-General's recommendation, the trajectory points towards a UNSC resolution on financing of AU-led PSOs through UN-assessed contributions.

On its part, in July 2023, the United Nations issued its Our Common Agenda Policy Brief on A New Agenda for Peace in a departure from traditional peacekeeping doctrine, confessed that "in a number of current conflict environments, the gap between UN peacekeeping mandates and *what such missions can actually deliver in practice has become apparent.*"[48] Furthermore, it noted that "peace operations help operationalize diplomacy for peace by allowing the Organization to mount tailored operational responses, including by mobilizing and funding Member State capacities and capabilities that no single actor possesses."[49] The UN Policy Brief recommended that as far as the UN Security Council is concerned in cases "where peace enforcement is required" it should "authorize a multinational force, or enforcement action by regional and sub-regional organizations."[50]

The UN Policy Brief proposed the establishment of "a new generation of peace enforcement missions and counter-terrorism operations, led by African partners with a Security Council mandate under Chapter VII and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, with guaranteed funding through assessed contributions."[51] Furthermore, the UN Policy Brief acknowledged "the importance of these operations as part of a toolkit for responding to crisis in Africa, alongside the full range of available United Nations mechanisms" and the necessity "for ensuring that they have the resources required to succeed."[52] This constitutes a break with the past and an important departure from the established and traditional positions that the UN had adopted, which had involved dogmatically adhering to a peacekeeping doctrine that had no resonance with the

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44   Amani Africa, *Seizing the New Momentum for UNSC Resolution on UN Funding of AU Peace Operations,* Amani Africa Report No.15, May 2023, p.7. See also Richard Gowan, 'The Future of Multilateralism', Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Policy Brief No. 6, April 2023.

45   African Union, *Consensus Paper on Predictable Adequate and Sustainable Financing for African Union Peace and Security Activities*, p.

46   Amani Africa, Discussion on Financing AU Peace Support Operations in Africa, 12 May 2023, p.2.

47   Amani Africa, Discussion on Financing AU Peace Support Operations in Africa, 12 May 2023, p.11.

48   United Nations, Our Common Agenda: A New Agenda for Peace, Policy Brief 9, July 2023, p.23, emphasis added.

49   United Nations, *Our Common Agenda: A New Agenda for Peace*, p.23.

50   United Nations, Our Common Agenda: A New Agenda for Peace, p.25.

51   United Nations, Our Common Agenda: A New Agenda for Peace, p.26.

52   United Nations, Our Common Agenda: A New Agenda for Peace, p.26.

realities of conflict and crisis situations on the ground. The AU and its member states, particularly the A3, must continue to advocate for this transition to be formally adopted through a UNSC resolution. This would herald a more proactive role for the African Union as an international actor.

The dysfunctionality of the UN Security Council was exposed again on 24th February 2022, when Russia simultaneously chaired the Presidency of the Council as well as launching an illegal invasion of Ukraine, in contravention of international law. It is unlikely that the world can endure another full-blown major power conflict, for example, over Taiwan, between the USA and China. A confrontation of two other nuclear weapons-bearing permanent members of the UNSC without effective mechanisms to constrain their actions would leave us all in an extremely precarious state of affairs.

The geopolitical crisis precipitated by the invasion of Iraq, Libya, Ukraine, and Yemen suggests that the world is at a tipping point towards even more profound catastrophe and chaos. The most compelling failure of the UN Security Council to prevent and manage a crisis was the genocide in Rwanda in April 1994, and a year later in Srebrenica in 1995. The failure of the multilateral system is most clearly evident in the actions of four of the Permanent Members of the UNSC – US, UK, France and Russia, participating on opposite sides, in the destructive carpet bombing Syria in 2011, which NATO countries replicated in Libya, also in 2011, which in effect transformed this body into a net producer of instability and it more appropriate to rebrand the institution as the 'UN Insecurity Council'.

The global inflection point was amplified when the dysfunctionality of the UN Security Council, a foundational pillar of multilateralism, was exposed on February 24, 2022, as Russia simultaneously chaired the Presidency of the Council, as it was launching its illegal invasion of Ukraine. It is unlikely that the world can endure another full-blown major power conflict, for example, over Taiwan, between the USA and China. A confrontation of two other nuclear weapons-bearing permanent members of the UNSC without effective mechanisms to constrain their actions would leave the world in an extremely precarious state of affairs.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year, many African countries declined to take a strong stand against Moscow. Seventeen African countries refused to vote for a UN resolution condemning Russia, and most have maintained economic and trade ties with Moscow despite Western sanctions. In response, the United States and other Western countries have berated African leaders for failing to defend the "rules-based" international order, framing African neutrality in the Ukrainian conflict as a betrayal of liberal principles. During a trip to Cameroon in July 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron, who has lamented about being a vassal of the US, bemoaned the "hypocrisy" of African leaders and criticized them for refusing "to call a war a war and say who started it."[53] Macron's own hypocrisy was telling, given his criticism of the US for compelling European countries to side with it against China, while attempting to call out African countries that chose to exercise their "strategic autonomy".

As a consequence of these failures and violations, UN peacekeeping operations on the African continent have lost credibility in the eyes of policymakers on the continent. It is notable that the last UN peacekeeping operation established on the African continent was in 2014, more than a decade ago. In the aftermath, there has been a resort to a series of African-led and other bilateral and multilateral intervention missions. In the face of this new reality, the UN Security Council recognized that African intergovernmental institutions would become the primary bearers of responsibility for maintaining peace and security on the continent.

Article 24 of the United Nations Charter assigns to the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security. Article 53 of the UN Charter stipulates provisions for the engagement and utilization of regional organisations to undertake enforcement action to pursue and promote peace and security. The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2719 acknowledges the mandate of the African Union Peace and Security Council to promote peace, security, and stability in Africa, in line with the AU Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In particular, UNSC Resolution 2719 outlines a framework for "cooperation and collaboration between two organisations in responding to conflict and crisis in Africa" by providing direct support to AU-led Peace Support Operations.

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53   Elian Peltier & Aurelien Breeden, 'Macron Criticizes the 'hypocrisy' of some African leaders on the Ukraine War', *New York Times*, 27 June 2022, available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/world/europe/macron-criticizes-the-hypocrisy-of-some-african-leaders-on-the-ukraine-war.html, accessed 15 August 2023.

UNSC Resolution 2719 represents a significant departure from the traditional relationship between the AU and the UN, marking the devolution of responsibility to a continental authority structure. This shift, in effect, contributes to the transformation of multilateralism, particularly in the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, the African Union is emerging as a pillar of multilateralism and will contribute to shaping the manner in which shared, multi-level governance processes devolve global authority in the twenty-first century.

The UNSC Resolution 2719 has emerged as a recognition of the need for African-led interventions on the continent. In addition, UN peacekeeping operations, such as the various iterations of missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), have been operational for several decades but do not appear to have fixed end-dates or effective exit strategies. It is worthwhile to note that despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping mission, the warring parties continued to sustain their ability to wage war, and there was limited or no progress in pursuing an effective peacemaking process, which was at times also held hostage by the sub-regional political interests of neighbouring countries. In addition, the imbalance in resources allocated to peacekeeping, when compared with peacebuilding and transitional justice interventions, meant that the necessary and arduous work of enabling local communities in the war-affected part of the country to take ownership of sustaining peace was significantly under-resourced. As a consequence, this meant that there was a gap in building the necessary infrastructures for peace, which enabled the peacekeeping missions to depart without returning to violent confrontation.

UNSC Resolution 2719 provides a platform to further strengthen and enhance the capacities of the African Union to gradually take ownership and responsibility for governing the continent as far as peace and security is concerned. In particular, several key elements are outlined in UNSC 2719 that warrant highlighting in terms of their potential contributions.

Primacy of Politics: UNSC Resolution 2719 places an emphasis on the "primacy of politics," which provides an opening for UN support for AU-led Peace Support Operations to also focus on conflict prevention and peacemaking, which ensures that crises are addressed prior to their escalation, when victims die as a result of violent conflict. The HIPPO Report confirms that "resources for prevention and mediation work have been scarce and the United Nations is often too slow to engage with emerging crises."[54] The Report further reveals that "too often, mandates and missions are produced on the basis of templates instead of *tailored to support situation-specific political strategies*, and technical and military approaches come at the expense of strengthened political efforts."[55] The HIPPO Report recommends "four essential shifts" in UN peace operations, including the acceptance that:

i. politics must drive the design and implementation of peace operations;

ii. the full spectrum of UN peace operations must be used more flexible to respond to changing needs on the ground;

iii. a stronger, more inclusive peace and security partnership is need for the future; and that,

iv. the UN Secretariat must become more field-focused and UN peace operations must be more *people-centered*.[56]

Concretely, the HIPPO Report confesses that "the prevention of armed conflict is perhaps the greatest responsibility of the international community and yet it has not been sufficiently invested in."[57] It further recommends that "the United Nations must *invest* in its own capacities to undertake prevention and mediation and in its capacity to assist others, particularly at the national and regional level."[58] Ultimately, the HIPPO Report recommends that "the international community must sustain high-level political engagement in support of national efforts to deepen and broaden processes of inclusion and reconciliation, as well as

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54   United Nations, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People,* HIPPO Report, p.vii.

55   United Nations, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People,* HIPPO Report, p.vii, emphasis added.

56   United Nations, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People,* HIPPO Report, p.viii, emphasis added.

57   United Nations, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People,* HIPPO Report, p.ix.

58   United Nations, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People,* HIPPO Report, p.ix.

address the underlying causes of conflict."[59]

AU Coordination with RECs: The UNSC Resolution 2719 refers to AU-led Peace Support Operations without specifying how these missions are mandated or how responsibility should be shared with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC Protocol) emphasizes the central role that RECs play in supporting peacemaking, peace support operations, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Consequently, RECs are an integral component of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and can also be mandated to lead on peace support operations. More specifically, the AU Peace and Security Council should take the lead in establishing its overarching endorsement and ensuring close collaboration with the RECs in the establishment of Peace Support Operations on the African continent. The AU and RECs have not always been aligned in terms of deploying peace support operations, so the advent of UNSC Resolution 2719 will require a more concerted and convergent approach. More specifically, the AU PSC and RECs can endorse and co-lead the establishment of Peace Support Operations to ensure that they fall within the ambit of UNSC Resolution 2719, and thus become subject to the provisions of the Resolution. In terms of joint planning and monitoring, UNSC Resolution 2719 stipulates that the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission should jointly support a report to the Security Council every six months. In this regard, the AU Commission should ensure that it works closely with the UN Office to the African Union as well as UN Peacekeeping Departments to compile and finalize these reports to present to the UN Security Council.

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59   United Nations, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People,* HIPPO Report, p.x.

09

REFORMING AND FINANCING THE AFRICAN UNION: CONTINENTAL OWNERSHIP OF PEACE & SECURITY PROVISIONS

9.1   Assessing the APSA and AGA Merger

The merged AU Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (CPAPS) has faced several challenges in pursuing and consolidating the nexus and synergy between the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA). Since its inception in 2002, the AU has prioritized peace and security over governance and democracy. The inability of this approach to consolidate peace across the continent is now under increasing scrutiny. Ultimately, giving precedence to peace and security issues over governance and democracy issues was a self-defeating delusion. This false dichotomization of priorities was short-sightedness, given the extent to which the failure to ensure transparent and accountable governance and democratic processes has continued to fuel military coups, instability, crisis and conflict across the African continent. Ensuring the effective adoption of governance and democratic norms is a crucial missing dimension in preventing the outbreak of military takeovers and consolidating peace and security in African countries. Consequently, rather than treating governance issues as an afterthought, the AU system is now recognizing that democratic practices are inextricably linked to the maintenance of peace and security.

The events across the continent since 2022 have demonstrated that a security approach is necessary but not sufficient for the gradual stabilisation of societies and regions across the continent. The challenging work of winning the hearts and minds of local populations through the transformation of societies through peacebuilding and governance processes is an equally vital complement to the security initiatives in these war-affected regions, for example, in the Eastern DRC and the resurgence of the M23 forces, as well as the Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique. Moreover, the cyclical nature of conflict highlights the critical need to move beyond temporary stalemates and ceasefires, peacekeeping deployments, and military operations that are so prevalent in this era, toward a regional policy informed by intentionally addressing the underlying grievances that have fueled decades of animosity and violence on the continent.

The AU inherited a cumbersome bureaucracy from its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which it has struggled to transcend. Consequently, there are remnants of the "OAU-way" of doing things that continue to hamper the AU's daily management and administrative processes. The persistence of this culture of bureaucracy has serious implications, as exemplified by the situation in which peace support operations personnel in Somalia are not paid in a timely manner, despite their sacrifices in a challenging conflict situation. This is just one example of many that continue to affect the African Union's operations in supporting peace, security, and governance processes across the continent. In addition, the operationalisation of APSA and AGA has suffered from a weak implementing capacity due to the low budget execution rates.[60] Therefore, there is a need to directly address the horizontal dynamics within the AU Commission and streamline bureaucratic systems, and make them more efficient.

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60   Interview with Senior Official, former Project Management Team (PMT), AU Peace and Security Department; see also African Union Peace and Security Department, *African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA):2014 Assessment Study*, Final Report, 16 April 2015, p.83.

There are also archaic management processes and practices that foster territoriality in the controlling and distributing of service provision goods across the AU. In particular, this is evident in the organisation's human resource recruitment processes, which remain encumbered and mired in bureaucratic inertia. This phenomenon is evident at the level of department directors, some of whom are less inclined to enhance interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration. It is necessary for departmental bureaucracies to pursue closer collaboration, coordination, and distribution of functions if the ideal of greater synergy between APSA and AGA is to become a reality. Establishing interdepartmental task teams, holding regular pre-mission meetings, and coordinating interventions on the ground are steps in the right direction. This needs to be built upon to enhance the ability to achieve the required outcomes, specifically related to conflict transformation initiatives buttressed by post-conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding, and transitional justice processes.

In terms of projecting forward, one dimension that both APSA and AGA need to engage further is how to mitigate against the cross-border effects of violent conflict in Africa. As noted at the outset of this report, the state-centric approach to addressing the crisis in Africa is now outdated and self-defeating. Political violence has real spillover effects on neighboring countries, and armed militias resisting the authority of a particular state are inevitably camped out in neighboring countries, which illustrates the inefficacy of dealing with a "national" crisis. Therefore, there is a need to adopt a regional lens when promoting peace, security, and governance, whether in the Sudanese civil war, the Eastern DRC conflict, the Sahel region, Mozambique, as well as across the Horn of Africa, including Somalia and South Sudan. As we saw above, the AUTJP's focus on addressing transboundary issues enables us to engage with the notion of "regional reconciliation" as an important framework through which the nexus between APSA and AGA can be enhanced and further developed. [61]

The idea is that crises are addressed through regional fora, which bring together the leaders of neighbouring states to address a particular crisis in a formal setting. By extension, this calls for government-to-government collaboration at a regional level to complement the people-to-people interventions, which are already common in situations like the one in the eastern DRC. The African Union can review and revise the overall framework through which APSA and AGA can co-jointly pursue early warning, early intervention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and reconciliation to ensure that the phenomenon of cyclic violence is once and for all expunged from the continent of Africa. The specific modalities of operationalisation of regional reconciliation and linking the APSA and AGA structures need to be further elaborated through future programmatic support to the African Union.

Effective communication and real-time interaction between all AGA institutions remain a key challenge that persists. Prior to the 2021 merger, the former AU DPA was enhancing its functions in this regard by ensuring "that all communication and documents relating to AGA and the Platform are widely disseminated and shared to ensure that the roles, responsibilities and relationships within AGA … are clearly defined."[62] The merged Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security should continue to build upon this experience by increasingly using social media to get its messages out to the wider African citizenry.

9.2   The Role of Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms in Promoting Regional Reconciliation

The notion of focusing on a regional reconciliation approach to peace and security is an important framework through which the nexus between the APSA and non-state actors can be developed further.[63] In addition, the developments towards the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of People and the establishment of an African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will further enable and facilitate efforts to approach peace and security interventions through a regional prism.

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61   Tim Murithi, *Regional Reconciliation in Africa: The Elusive Dimension of Peace and Security*, Annual Claude Ake Lecture, Nordic Africa Institute and Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden, 26 October 2016.

62   Africa Union Retreat, p.4.

63   T. Murithi and L. McClain Opiyo, 'Regional Reconciliation in Africa: Cross-border Strategies for Transitional Justice', Policy Brief No.14, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2014, p.2, www.ijr.org.za, accessed 4 November 2018.

Within a regional reconciliation framework, leader-to-leader processes are initiated to address specific crises in a formal setting. This also requires a regional reconciliation approach based upon government-to-government collaboration across borders to pursue peace and security outcomes. Across Africa, regional reconciliation initiatives are predicated on cross-border interactions through people-to-people interventions. For example, this has been ongoing in the Karamoja Cluster in the Horn of Africa, which encompasses South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda. Therefore, specific modalities need to be developed for operationalising regional peace and security interventions that link the institutions of APSA, AGA, and the regional non-state actor networks based on anchor organisations.

The AU and regional mechanisms can provide the overall framework through which the APSA, AGA, and non-state actors can jointly pursue regional reconciliation by operationalizing early warning, early intervention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding to ensure that the phenomenon of cyclic violence is definitively eradicated from Africa. In addition, the AU and regional mechanisms can improve its institutional credibility by adopting and integrating the correct processes and procedures into its daily work. This means upholding the policies designed to ensure the effective functioning of its operational, administrative, financial, and human resource activities.

Specifically, when assessing interventions, it will be necessary for the APSA and AGA institutions to adopt a regional reconciliation lens to stabilise countries and consolidate peace and security. Unfortunately, the AU remains entangled in seeking national solutions or inward-looking, state-centric approaches to problems that require a more expansive regional perspective.64

Additional reforms of the African Union and the transformation of the political culture across the continent are necessary processes, in order to accelerate the pursuit of political integration as stipulated in Agenda 2063, through the internalization of a commitment to constitutionalism, democratic governance, cross-border trade, and the free movement of people is a necessary corrective to the legacy of the colonially imposed state structures. Deepening political integration through the coalescing of regional economic communities such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC), both of which have issued passports for their citizens, serves as an important example for other regions. The free movement of African people is an important vehicle for promoting regional integration and transcending the constraining straight-jacket of state sovereignty. The AU has articulated its commitment to issuing the AU Passport to all African citizens, by operationalizing the Union's Protocol on the Free Movement of People, however, this has become encumbered by political and bureaucratic inertia, which undermines the efforts to revive and re-animate the spirit of Pan-Africanism.

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64   J. Akokpari, A. Ndinga-Muvumba, A. and T. Murithi (eds), The African Union and its Institutions, (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2008).

10

SILENCING THE GUNS: PROGRESS ON THE MASTER ROADMAP

The African Union's Agenda 2063 identifies one of its objectives as the pursuit of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena."[65] The AU's Silencing the Guns by 2020 Campaign, which emerged out of the deliberations marking the launch of Agenda 2063, marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which subsequently became the African Union. The Silencing the Guns campaign is the flagship initiative of the African Union to promote prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts in Africa. It was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to ensure that the continent's disputes are not bequeathed to future generations of Africans. Despite these noble intentions, the guns across Africa were not silenced by 2020; in fact, there was a net increase in violent conflicts across the continent, and to make matters worse, with the devastating civil war in Sudan, the violence in northern Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, and the resurgence of military coups notably across the Sahel. The AU reviewed the initiative and adopted a revitalized 2030 Roadmap for Silencing the Guns.

The AU Roadmap outlined 54 practical interventions that addressed political, social, economic, environmental, and legal issues.[66] They also highlighted the need and the case for funding the African Standby Force (ASF), a core pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). However, in the intervening years, there has been a lackluster approach to operationalizing and strengthening the institutions of APSA, which are required to effectively pursue and achieve the Silencing of the Guns.

The Silencing the Guns initiative has faced a significant range of setbacks, including the failure by the protagonists to honour the peace agreements that they signed up to. Additionally, there have been significant challenges in disrupting the cycles of violence. In particular, a security approach is necessary, but not sufficient, for the Silencing of the Guns and the gradual stabilization of societies and regions across the continent. The challenging work of winning the hearts and minds of local populations through societal transformation through governance is an equally important and vital element of Silencing the Guns in these war-affected regions. The cyclical nature of conflict highlights the critical need to move beyond temporary stalemates and ceasefires, peacekeeping deployments, and military operations that are so common in this era, towards a regional policy informed by intentionally confronting the underlying grievances that have fueled decades of animosity and violence on the continent.

If the revitalised 2030 Silencing the Guns Roadmap is to succeed, it must be anchored, among other interventions, on processes that address past violations as a prerequisite for laying the foundation for future coexistence, which is necessary for promoting stability. Specifically, as the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) stipulates, Silencing the Guns will only achieve traction if transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages across state borders are addressed directly. This suggests that these regional linkages are so strong and interdependent that a change in dynamics in one conflict often affects those in neighbouring regions. Specifically, networks of interdependence are evident in the cross-border supply

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65   African Union, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want,* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2013).

66   C. Nishimbi, 'Why the African Union has Failed to Silence the Guns: Some Solutions', The Conversation, 30 June 2020, available at: https://theconversation.com/why-the-african-union-has-failed-to-silence-the-guns-and-some-solutions-139567, accessed 15 August 2025.

routes for arms, illicit trade, and human trafficking. In some instances, co-ethnic groups living in different countries can serve as a network for this illicit trade, which can contribute to fueling conflicts.

Since conflicts, atrocities, and violations straddle borders, regional reconciliation processes have to be convened across borders in order to achieve a Silencing of the Guns. This would require implementing processes of truth recovery, accountability, and redress across borders as preliminary processes to the pursuit of transboundary transitional justice. In addition, this includes processes that provide transboundary psychosocial support and trauma processing among war-affected victims and survivors of gender-based violence, as a pathway to healing and the improvement of their well-being. These are transboundary processes for which we have no precedent in Africa's international relations, particularly in the implementation of Pan-African transitional justice and reconciliation interventions, which are ultimately necessary for Silencing the Guns.

11

JUSTICE FOR AFRICANS AND PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT THROUGH REPARATIONS: PRACTICAL INITIATIVES

At the Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held between 18th to 19th February 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a landmark decision was taken by the Union towards "building a united front to advance the cause of justice and the payment of reparations to Africans."[67] The AU Assembly directed the "AU Commission, in consultation with Member States, ECOSOCC and other AU organs as well as the RECs to … develop a *Common African Position on Reparations*. In 2025, the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted a Theme of the Year focusing on *Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations*.

The First Pan-African Conference on Reparations was convened in Abuja, Nigeria, by the Commission for Reparations of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (the predecessor to the African Union) the Federal Government of the Republic of Nigeria, and a Group of Eminent Persons, and issued the *Abuja Proclamation* which observed as far as reparations for Africans and people of African descent, "what matters is not the guilt but the responsibility of those state and nations whose economic evolution once depended on slave labour and colonialism, and whose forbearers participated either in selling and buying Africans, or in owning them, or in colonizing them."[68]

The case for reparations has been established within the corpus of international legal norms and standards, and there are also precedents that have been set by the payment of reparations, such as those from Germany to Israel and from Japan to South Korea. Several innovative proposals have been made on how resources could be allocated to reparations for Africans and people of African descent through collaboration with like-minded partners worldwide, notably with the Caribbean Community, in the pursuit of establishing a Global Reparation Fund. A key component of an African Union Programme of Work, as far as the promotion and implementation of reparations is concerned, includes the establishment of an AU Committee of Experts and Legal Reference Group.

In terms of practical pathways to pursue the implementation of this theme, an Africa-CARICOM meeting was convened on 7 September 2025 in Addis Ababa, outlining specific areas of strategic collaboration. These included the launch of a Health Development Partnership (HeDPAC) between the two regions, which would focus on building medical capacity and enhancing public health resilience. In addition, the meeting committed to enhancing inter-regional trade and commerce through engaging with the AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum (ACTIF). The meeting also resolved to challenge the existing inequities in advancing the advocacy of the reform of the global financial architecture. CARICOM and the African Union have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which provides a framework for practical engagement and collaboration on a range of initiatives.

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67   African Union, *Decisions, Declarations, Resolution and Motion,* Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, 36th Ordinary Session, Assembly/ AU/Dec.847 (XXXVI), 18 to 19 February 2023, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p.1.

68   Organization of African Unity and Government of Nigeria, *The Abuja Proclamation*, Pan-African Conference on Reparations, p.2.

The AU Theme of the Year also makes a robust case for political restitution and the inclusion of Africans and people of African descent into the decision-making processes of reformed and transformed global multilateral institutions. This will require the African Union the CARICOM to convene a coalition of willing countries from the Global South, and allies in the Global North, to draft and invoke Article 109 to convene a General Conference to Review the Charter of the United Nations, which cannot be vetoed by the Permanent Five Members of the UN Security Council. Through this General Conference African and Caribbean countries can contribute towards defining and outlining the framework and structures of a new global order.

12

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The State of Peace and Security Report: 2022, 2023, and 2024 Synthesized Report for the Tana Forum undertook an analysis of these issues and identified the following key recommendations:

- The African Union should lead the process of reviving the spirit of Pan-Africanism across the continent, working in tandem with civil society and social movements as a strategy to address the persistence of conflict and mitigate against the drivers of insecurity.

- The African Union, member states and societies should ensure that they actively participate and lead discussions in global policy dialogue forums where the foundations of the evolving global order and the shaping of a new multilateral system are being defined;

- The AU and member states should issue a policy document on the establishment of a new financing architecture that is responsive to Africa's needs including debt restructuring and relief, including the development of a new Global Climate Finance Charter;

- The member states should allocate 5% of their national defence budgets to the African Union to ensure the continent's ownership of its governance, peace and security provisions;

- The AU Peace and Security Council and the AU Commission to ensure that the implement the gender-parity principle in all of their deployments, of AU special envoys, including fact-finding missions, election observation missions and PCRD Assessment Missions, with women participating as heads of these missions.

- The African Union and member states should engage in policy dialogues on the issue of artificial intelligence and develop an AU continental policy to manage the unpredictable power of uncontrolled and unregulated machine learning and robotic weapons;

- Governments should ratify the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement and issue the AU passport to all citizens, and adopt a transboundary transitional justice and peacebuilding framework, to complement the African Continental Free Trade Area, to increase cross-border stabilization and economic activity, through convening leader-to-leader, government-to-government and people-to-people engagements;

- In line with the 2025 Theme of the Year on reparations and historical restitution for Africa's exclusion from the global order, the African Union should contribute towards building a coalition of countries from the Global South, and other progressive states, to immediately begin drafting a UN General Assembly resolution to invoke Article 109 of the UN Charter which will launch General Review Conference will enable wide-ranging discussions to take place on the establishment of a new multilateral system, in order to map out the pathway to a UN 2.0.

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CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

This Tana Forum State of Peace and Security in Africa Synthesized Report for 2022, 2023 and 2024 has assessed the conflict trends and drivers of conflict including violent extremism, resurgence of political tension, transitional organized crime as well as a range of other challenges continued to undermine the continent's efforts to achieve its aspirations of peace, security, governance, livelihood improvement for its people in line with Agenda 2063. The continent is plagued by a number of post-conflict situations that urgently need to be addressed. The overriding challenge for the African continent is to commit to converting the rhetoric of its policy and normative frameworks into a tangible reality of conflict transformation and peacebuilding on the ground.

This Report assessed the evolving nature of the relationship between the African Union and the United Nations through the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2719, which will redefine the approach to peace support operations on the continent. The devolution of a degree of authority and the provision of financial support to the African Union will situate it as a key pillar of networked multilateralism. The AU should take the initiative to contribute towards defining the modalities of how the evolving partnership with the UN on peace support operations will be reconfigured and managed.

The long march to Africa's self-sufficiency in promoting and consolidating its peace and security processes and systems is articulated in the extended "Silencing the Guns by 2030." A major problem facing the AU was the lack of integrity among some of the governments of African countries, which have committed themselves to principles, norms, and values of human rights and democratic governance and the establishment of APSA and AGA institutions, but continue to practice suppression, dominion, and exploitation of their people.

This Report assessed the AU's case for reframing and reorienting the African Union's 'Silencing the Guns' initiative to achieve peace, security, governance, and transitional justice interventions. Projecting forward in terms of the next two decades of the AU, gradual implementation of the Silencing of the Guns initiative, and Agenda 2063, requires a more pronounced synergy between the processes of societal transformation through the effective implementation of peace, security, governance, and trade policies that leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area. A lesson emerging from the AU's initiatives to Silencing of the Guns, is that the peace, security, governance and transformation of any individual country on the continent, can only be achieved by ensuring the security and governance of all, and every African is every other African's keeper, which reaffirms the notion of Pan-African solidarity. Without a genuine commitment across the entire AU system to facilitate and enable this synergy, the pursuit of the Pan-African vision of a peaceful and prosperous continent, as stipulated in Agenda 2063, will remain an elusive aspiration.

The Report argued that despite the growing acknowledgment of the regional nature of conflicts in Africa, there is still a lack of uptake of the AU Transitional Justice Policy by AU member states and the promotion of regional reconciliation. During its first two decades, the AU's interventions related to promoting peace and Silencing the Guns have had only a limited impact in terms of efforts to address the broad dimensions of

regionalized conflict systems. The chapter assessed the case for reframing the Silencing the Guns approach to emphasise the need to implement the AUTJP through national ownership of transitional justice processes, as well as identifying the role of RECs in leading and driving regional reconciliation through the enumeration of the practicalities and modalities of implementing cross-border redress and accountability processes. The self-sabotaging reluctance of nation-states to devolve their sovereignty and adopt processes that might seem outside their sphere of authority and control, through the establishment of cross-border institutions, will be the primary obstacle to implementing regional reconciliation and achieving 'Silencing the Guns', which will ultimately further delay continental integration.

The Report also assessed how, in the absence of a genuine belief in the intentions of neighbouring countries, it becomes difficult to achieve regional integration. This is currently the situation that bedevils Africa's sub-regions and undermines the continent's unity of purpose and the progressive fulfillment of the 'Silencing of the Guns' initiative. Regional integration requires a high degree of coordination and harmonization of policy agendas, and the focused involvement of Africa's leaders and government cooperation as well as proactive citizen participation in engaging and supporting the Silencing of the Guns. The adoption of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the prospective implementation of the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of People are important vehicles that can guide the continent on its journey towards increasing peace through trade and an exchange of views.

The Report noted that there is a degree of continuity between the era of slavery and colonialism and the reality of the persistence of incidences of racism and racial discrimination towards Africans and people of African descent, prevalent in Europe and the Americas which participated and benefitted from the enslavement and colonization of African peoples. In this regard, a global reparation programme would directly contribute towards reconfiguring the relationship between Africans and people of African descent and the descendants of erstwhile enslavers and colonizers, in Europe and the Americas. Furthermore, a global reparation programme would contribute towards establishing a foundation and a basis for the restructuring the way that Africans, people of African descent, Europeans and Americans recognize and relate to each other, which will transform the future relationship between these continents in a positive manner.

The security and governance of one can only be achieved by ensuring the security and governance of all. Every African is every other African's keeper, which reaffirms the notion of Pan-African solidarity. However, in the absence of a genuine commitment across the entire AU system to facilitate and enable synergy, the pursuit of the Pan-African vision of a peaceful and prosperous continent will remain an elusive aspiration.

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ABOUT THE TANA FORUM

The Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa (THLF) is an independent initiative of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of Addis Ababa University and eminent African personalities. The Forum aims to inform the gathering of African decision-makers, peace and security stakeholders, and their broader constituencies about an open and frank discussion of security issues and challenges facing the continent.

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