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# The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities

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## Acronyms

ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (U.S.)
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AMIB	African Union Mission to Burundi
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AMISEC	African Union Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CEWS	Continental Early-Warning System
EAC	East African Community
EASF	East African Standby Force
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IGAD	Inter-governmental Authority on Development
MAES	African Union Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros
MIOC	African Union Military Observer Mission in the Comoros
NARC	North African Regional Capability
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PSC	Peace and Security Council of the African Union
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UNAMID	United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNOAU	United Nations Office to the African Union
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

## Introduction

Africa's strategic importance to the United States increased substantially over the past decade. The continent is a growing source of U.S. energy imports; it houses suspected terrorists; and it offers profitable business opportunities, especially in the energy, telecommunication, and minerals sectors. As Chinese and Indian influence spreads and explicitly challenges the U.S. development model, Africa is an arena of intensifying great power rivalry. And, critically, Africa remains the major epicenter for mass atrocities as well as a potential source of transcontinental health pandemics. Consequently, stabilizing the continent should be a core U.S. policy goal.

The African Union (AU) has great potential as a U.S. partner in Africa. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently noted, regional institutions like the AU are increasingly “called upon to be problem solvers and to deliver concrete results that produce positive change in people's lives.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the AU's practical capabilities in the field of conflict management suffer from a persistent capabilities-expectations gap, falling well short of the ambitious vision and rhetoric contained in its founding documents. The AU's shortcomings are not fatal, however; the U.S. government can bolster AU conflict management capacity in the near and long terms.

Developed during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the AU's founding documents envisage an organization empowered to play a major role in resolving Africa's armed conflicts. The former chairperson of the AU Commission, Alpha Oumar Konare, described the AU's emergence as a shift from the old norm of “noninterference” in armed conflicts to a new posture of “nonindifference” to member states' internal affairs. The AU's member states, bureaucrats, and external donor states are building a set of institutions and instruments—commonly referred to as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)—that enables the AU to play a much greater role in conflict management. Compared to its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), there has been a sea change in the new union's ambition, the tempo of its peace operations and conflict management initiatives, and its embrace of new and controversial political values. However, the AU faced major obstacles during its first decade: its practical achievements fell short of its grandiose declarations of intent; its small number of bureaucrats struggled to keep the organization working effectively and efficiently; and its member states were often divided over how to respond to Africa's conflicts.

These deficiencies stem from three problems. First, the AU attempted to refashion the continent's peace and security architecture at a time when crises and armed conflicts engulfed much of Africa. Local governments and external donors were thus forced “to build a fire brigade while the [neighborhood] burns.”<sup>2</sup> Second, the AU took on formidable conflict management challenges without possessing any big sticks or many tasty carrots. It thus lacked sources of leverage crucial for resolving armed conflicts. Third, AU reform efforts became entangled in broader debates about the appropriate relationships between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Although Chapter VIII of the UN Charter envisions a significant role for regional organizations in conflict management, it remains unclear what form a “strategic partnership” between the UN and the

AU should take. Thus, despite significant steps in the right direction, these deficiencies have and will continue to significantly retard the performance of the AU's principal conflict management instruments: early-warning and response systems, mediation initiatives, sanctions regimes, and peacekeeping operations.

Closing capability gaps in the AU's conflict management portfolio requires both political commitment and technical reform across a range of issue areas. Technical reforms are urgently needed to strengthen the AU Commission, especially its Peace Support Operations Division and the Peace and Security Council's secretariat; to enhance the AU's capacity to undertake effective early warning and response, mediation initiatives, as well as targeted sanctions; and to ensure the African Standby Force becomes genuinely operational. Such reforms will only succeed, however, if accompanied by more proactive and sustained high-level political support. Most urgently, the AU's senior leadership need to forge a strong and productive relationship with the UN's new Office to the African Union and encourage more AU member states to develop and prioritize their own peacekeeping and mediation capabilities.

The U.S. government should help address some of these gaps by undertaking these steps:

- forging widespread political agreement on the core values driving the APSA;
- increasing its diplomatic and economic support for the new UN Office to the African Union;
- increasing civilian capabilities across the AU's conflict management activities;
- supporting the establishment of an AU Mediation Unit;
- strengthening the tactical and operational elements of AU peacekeeping capabilities; and
- enhancing the AU Commission's information management capabilities.

## The African Union's Vision for Conflict Management

The AU's overarching objective is the emergence of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena."<sup>3</sup> The union's more specific vision for conflict management reflects an awareness that the precondition for achieving this overarching goal is security and stability on the continent. The AU's vision—set out in various legal documents and interpreted and implemented by a set of interrelated institutions that constitute the African peace and security architecture—is nothing if not ambitious, particularly when compared to its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity. It establishes a long list of tasks related to the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict across Africa.

The strategic elements of this vision have been endorsed by the union's supreme organ, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, composed of all fifty-four AU members.<sup>4</sup> However, the assembly only convenes twice a year, making it unsuited to oversee day-to-day conflict management. Hence the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC), a fifteen-member elected forum, manages strategic and operational decisions about where, when, and how to manage conflict.

The AU's Constitutive Act, which entered into force in May 2001, outlines the organization's vision of conflict management. It commits AU members to accelerate political and economic integration of the continent, including through the development of a common African security and defense policy; to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of its member states; to promote peace, security, and stability throughout Africa; and to encourage democratic principles of good governance, human rights, and sustainable development.<sup>5</sup>

In substantive terms, the new AU vision has many elements of continuity with the old OAU. The AU retains its predecessor's emphasis on the sovereign equality of members; keeps faith with the legal doctrine of *uti possidetis*, which in this context stipulates that colonial administrative boundaries would become international boundaries when the political unit in question achieved independence; maintains the continent's strong anti-imperialist traditions and hence supports African solutions to conflicts wherever possible; upholds its preference for nonuse of force and peaceful settlement of disputes; and maintains the general commitment to nonintervention in the affairs of its member states.<sup>6</sup>

Yet the AU cites two increasingly important exceptions to its general preference for nonintervention. First, the union has repeatedly confirmed that it will not tolerate "unconstitutional changes of government." Second, it claims a new right of humanitarian intervention under Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act.

### *UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT*

Since the late 1990s the illegitimacy of unconstitutional changes of government has emerged as a central tenet of the AU's approach to conflict management—a major break with tradition. For the

first thirty years of the OAU's existence, the organization was indifferent to how African regimes assumed power. Although particularly brutal despots occasionally generated criticism within the OAU, it was not until the late 1990s that the OAU outwardly condemned coups in Burundi (July 1996) and Sierra Leone (May 1997), declaring the juntas illegitimate and supporting restoration of constitutional government.

These events helped to create a new African norm delegitimizing military coups as a means of assuming power. Since 2003, the AU has consistently condemned every successful coup on the continent, namely those in the Central African Republic (2003), Guinea-Bissau (2003), São Tomé and Príncipe (2003), Togo (2005), Mauritania (2005 and 2008), Guinea (2008), Madagascar (2009), and Niger (2010). It is also now commonplace for the AU to make public statements in favor of democratic governance, and the union has explicitly linked “authoritarian” governance structures and crisis outbreak.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, this approach has its own challenges. In 2002, the AU Assembly adopted a broad definition of “unconstitutional changes of government” to include the overthrow of a democratically elected government by its military, mercenaries, or armed rebels as well as the refusal of an incumbent government to relinquish power after losing a free and fair election. Problematically, though elections became increasingly common in many African states post-Cold War, opposition victories were still decidedly rare. In late 2009, after a prolonged debate in the Peace and Security Council over a broader definition of unconstitutional changes, the PSC finally adopted a broad interpretation of “unconstitutional changes” that included the use of illegal means to maintain power.<sup>8</sup>

#### HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

The other major departure from the OAU approach to conflict management is granting the AU Assembly (on recommendation by the PSC) the right to intervene in a member state “in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.” The exact wording in Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act resulted from a rather odd confluence of factors. In the late 1990s, Libya began lobbying for a stronger AU with powers to collectively mobilize against external aggression, generating a set of debates about the shape of the new union; at around the same time, the moral impetus to stop mass atrocities was growing in salience, particularly after the release in May 2000 of the OAU's report on the international failure to prevent Rwanda's 1994 genocide.<sup>9</sup> Once the Libyans had placed the issue of intervention on the transition agenda, other African states—notably Egypt, South Africa, and Nigeria—effectively hijacked the agenda, shaping the wording of Article 4(h) to create a limited right of African intervention in situations where atrocities were being committed.<sup>10</sup>

As well as signaling a major cultural shift at the AU, Article 4(h) raised some thorny political and legal issues. First, the word “intervene” in Article 4(h) implies that the AU Assembly could authorize military force for humanitarian protection purposes without the host government's consent or prior to a UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution—in possible contradiction to Article 53 of the UN Charter.<sup>11</sup> While there is some debate on this matter, the weight of international legal opinion sees humanitarian intervention authorized outside the UNSC as illegal.<sup>12</sup> Probably in recognition of this problem, by 2005 the *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force* explicitly stated: “The AU will seek UN Security Council authorization of its enforcements actions. Similarly, the [regional economic communities] will seek AU authorization of their interventions.”<sup>13</sup>

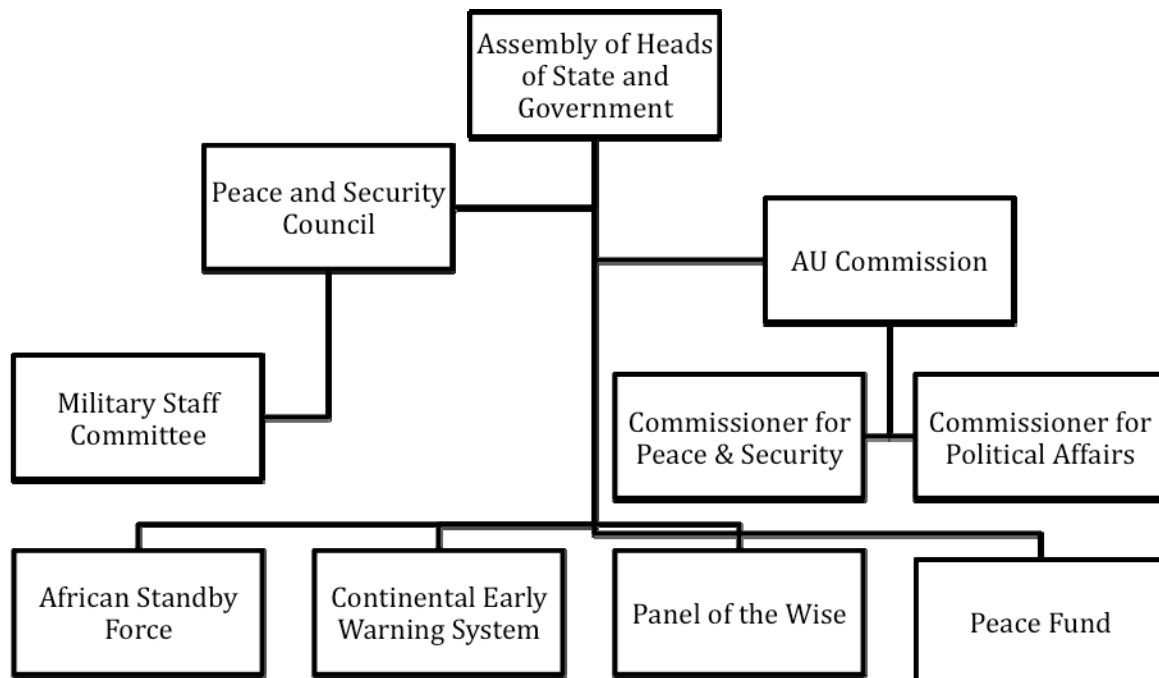
A second problem is the questionable commitment of many AU member states to the idea of humanitarian intervention. To date, Article 4(h) has never been invoked to justify military action against a member state. Even in cases where a relevant international commission actually identified crimes against humanity (such as Darfur in 2004–05) or where the UNSC suspected that such crimes were occurring (such as Libya and the Ivory Coast in 2011), the AU did not invoke Article 4(h). At least three factors explain the AU's reluctance: first, the strength of the host state; second, the residual power of the principles of noninterference and anti-imperialism within the African society of states; and third, the AU's lack of practical military capacity for humanitarian intervention. To be blunt, even if the assembly wanted to invoke Article 4(h) it would struggle to quickly marshal the necessary military capabilities, except against the smallest and weakest AU member states. The AU's reluctance to endorse UNSC intervention to protect civilians in Libya in 2011 merely reinforces this point.



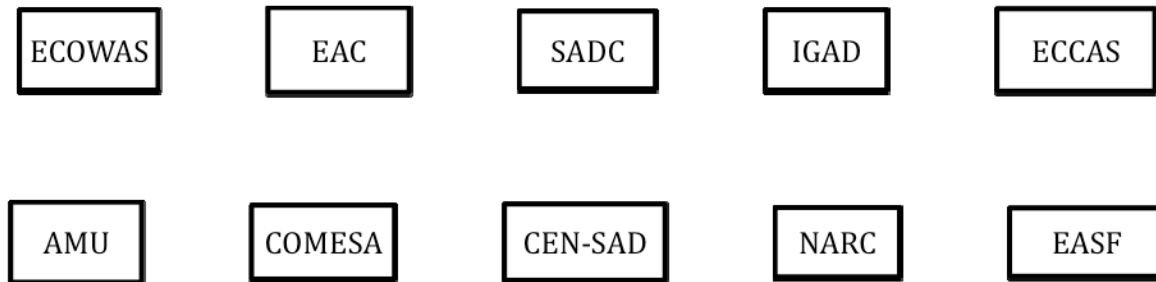
## The African Peace and Security Architecture

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) denotes a complex set of interrelated institutions and mechanisms that function at the continental, regional, and national level (see Figure 1). Nationally, there are AU member states, which house the majority of capabilities relevant to conflict management. Regionally, the APSA relies on the continent's regional economic communities (RECs). The AU recognizes eight RECs as well as two mechanisms for coordinating the African Standby Force (the East Africa Standby Force coordination mechanism and the North African Regional Capability). The relationship between the AU and the RECs is supposed to be hierarchical but mutually reinforcing: the AU harmonizes and coordinates the activities of the RECs in the peace and security realm, in part via liaison officers from the RECs serving within the AU Commission in Addis Ababa.<sup>14</sup> At the continental level, a variety of institutions coordinated by the AU's Peace and Security Council comprise the APSA.

**Figure 1: Principal Institutions of the African Peace and Security Architecture**



## RECs/Regional Mechanisms



### *THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL*

Officially launched in May 2004, the PSC is “a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa.”<sup>15</sup> Its objectives are promoting peace, security, and stability; anticipating and preventing conflicts; promoting and implementing peacebuilding activities; coordinating and harmonizing efforts to prevent and combat international terrorism; developing a common AU defense policy; and encouraging democratic practices, good governance, and the rule of law, as well as protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. To achieve this daunting list of objectives, the PSC was given eighteen “powers,” ranging from assisting in the provision of humanitarian assistance to military intervention.<sup>16</sup>

In practice, the PSC devotes relatively little attention to either conflict prevention or structural issues that encourage “bad governance.” Instead it has been preoccupied with trying to extinguish crises (usually armed conflicts or coups) after they erupt. Nor has the PSC devoted much attention to the nonmilitary dimensions of security, such as environmental degradation, organized crime, and disease. This limited focus is the result of analytical and operational capacity deficiencies, as well as the regularity of hot crises, which makes it difficult for the PSC to tackle the upstream and structural aspects of conflict mitigation.

The PSC was not part of the AU Constitutive Act but emerged out of an ad hoc process to reform the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution (established in 1993). It consists of fifteen members: ten elected for a term of two years, and an additional five elected for a term of three years. The PSC’s membership is based on the principle of “equitable regional representation and rotation” whereby the north, west, central, east, and southern regions of Africa present candidates for election.<sup>17</sup> Within the PSC these regional groupings have played important indirect roles in two main senses. First, member states often coordinate issue stances with their fellow REC members. Second, regional clusters will often take the lead in formulating the PSC’s response to sub-regional issues.

PSC members are meant to have good standing within the AU (i.e., have paid their dues, respect constitutional governance and the rule of law, etc.) and be willing and able to shoulder the responsibilities of membership. By 2010, thirty-five states had been elected to serve on the PSC with Nigeria being the only country to have sat consistently on the council since 2004 (see Table 1). In the past five

years the PSC convened an average of five times per month and by September 2011 had held nearly three hundred meetings. Notionally, the APSA assumes that Africa's more democratic states will be better able to promote peace and security on the continent. As Table 1 illustrates, however, some PSC members have shown little respect for constitutional governance, the rule of law, and human rights, and several of them experienced violent conflicts during their tenure on the council. The persistent election of autocratic regimes onto the PSC has cast doubt on the depth of the AU's commitment to democratic principles. As one analysis put it, a "preponderance of such [autocratic] countries . . . will have implications for the continental legitimacy of the PSC, particularly when it has to pronounce on issues relating to peace, security, governance and human rights."<sup>18</sup>

**Table 1: Membership of the AU Peace and Security Council, 2004–2012**

<i>Region</i>	<i>2004 (years elected)</i>	<i>2006 (years elected)</i>	<i>2007 (years elected)</i>	<i>2008 (years elected)</i>	<i>2010 (years elected)</i>
North	<i>Algeria</i> (3)		<i>Algeria</i> (3)		<b>Libya</b> (3)
North	<b>Libya</b> (2)	<b>Egypt</b> (2)		<b>Tunisia</b> (2)	<b>Mauritania</b> (2)
West	<i>Nigeria</i> (3)		<i>Nigeria</i> (3)		<i>Nigeria</i> (3)
West	<b>Togo</b> (2)	Burkina Faso (2)		Burkina Faso (2)	<b>Ivory Coast</b> (2)
West	Ghana (2)	Ghana (2)		Benin (2)	Benin (2)
West	Senegal (2)	<i>Senegal</i> (2)		Mali (2)	Mali (2)
Central	<b>Gabon</b> (3)		Gabon (3)		<b>Equatorial Guinea</b> (3)
Central	Congo (2)	Congo (2)		<b>Chad</b> (2)	<b>Chad</b> (2)
Central	<b>Cameroon</b> (2)	<b>Cameroon</b> (2)		<i>Burundi</i> (2)	Burundi (2)
East	<i>Ethiopia</i> (3)		<i>Ethiopia</i> (3)		Kenya (3)
East	Kenya (2)	<b>Rwanda</b> (2)		<b>Rwanda</b> (2)	<b>Rwanda</b> (2)
East	<b>Sudan</b> (2)	Uganda (2)		Uganda (2)	Djibouti (2)
Southern	South Africa (3)		<b>Angola</b> (3)		<b>Zimbabwe</b> (3)
Southern	Lesotho (2)	Botswana (2)		<b>Swaziland</b> (2)	Namibia (2)
Southern	Mozambique (2)	Malawi (2)		Zambia (2)	South Africa (2)

*Key: Italicized:* States experiencing a "severe crisis" or "war" according to the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 at <http://hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/index.html>. **Bold:** States declared "not free" by Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, at [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org). The survey measures freedom—the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination—according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties.

This matter is of particular concern given that the council's procedural rules stipulate a preference for consensus-based decisions, meaning that autocracies are fully involved in the decision-making process.<sup>19</sup>

## AU COMMISSION

The AU Commission intends to facilitate, coordinate, and monitor the union's progress toward its overarching vision of peace and security. To do this, the commission pursues two strategic objectives: reducing conflicts and achieving security and stability as a prerequisite for development and integration.<sup>20</sup> In its strategic plan for 2009–2012, the AU Commission allocated \$144 million for peace and

security issues out of its expected overall expenditure of \$784 million (the biggest slice, \$430 million, went to development, regional integration, and cooperation).<sup>21</sup> However, this figure excludes cost estimates for peacekeeping operations and assumed that a fully functional peace and security architecture would be in place by 2012.<sup>22</sup> The commission's core personnel totals less than seven hundred—this number increases to 1,465 if extrabudgetary resources are included that exceed the ceiling placed on hiring through the regular budget under the 2003 AU guidelines agreed to during a high level meeting in Maputo—and in the crucial areas of peace and security the body remains chronically understaffed.<sup>23</sup> The Peace Support Operations Division, for example, has only some forty personnel tasked with planning, launching, sustaining, and drawing down all AU operations—as well as with developing the ASF at the continental level and assisting in the formation of the regional brigades.

### *CONTINENTAL EARLY-WARNING SYSTEM*

While most of the PSCs peacemaking initiatives have been reactive, the APSA was supposed to add an effective set of early-warning and preventive institutions to the AU's policy toolbox. Although the Continental Early-Warning System (CEWS) remains a work in progress, the essential ingredients are falling into place: a central observation and monitoring centre (the situation room) in Addis Ababa to collect and analyze data, and the observation and monitoring units of the regional mechanisms that collect and process data and transmit it to the situation room.<sup>24</sup> With assistance from the UN's situation center in New York and external donors, the AU's situation room can now provide continent-wide coverage of conflict dynamics twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, as well as produce a range of reporting mechanisms, including daily news summaries and more substantial updates on emerging issues. Its focus to date has been on feeding information about political instability to the PSC and it is in the process of developing indicators of threats, vulnerabilities, and risks relevant to civilian protection.<sup>25</sup>

While this is significant progress, the ten situation room assistants working with the AU's thirteen political liaison officers in the field are not enough to effectively monitor and analyze conflict dynamics across the entire continent.<sup>26</sup> CEWS needs more and better-trained analysts as well as an appropriate information-technology infrastructure. Three further problems continue to beset the CEWS. First, it has struggled to develop interoperability with the RECs, which have developed their early-warning mechanisms at different speeds and with varying methodologies.

Second, the CEWS situation room receives insufficient real-time diplomatic reporting and intelligence. The AU lacks its own network of embassies and political offices for information gathering, suggesting the necessity of more political liaison officers. Moreover, senior and mid-level leadership cannot easily access national and supranational intelligence sources, forcing them to rely mostly on open-source journalism or whatever African leaders choose to share. CEWS personnel must also overcome widespread anxiety among AU member states about the potential for spying to occur under the guise of early warning. If the CEWS is to have a real impact on conflict dynamics, it must be able to detect risks and crises at the very early stages. Yet, problematically, it is at this stage that sovereignty concerns tend to be strongest in at-risk countries. Some member states have actually requested that the commission not report on events affecting them; in effect, asking the commission to "turn off" the CEWS when embarrassing situations arise.<sup>27</sup>

The third problem facing the CEWS is the difficulty of analyzing information and using it to influence decision-making within the PSC. For example, CEWS personnel were unable to generate early discussions within the PSC on the crisis surrounding the Kenyan elections in 2007 or instability in

Guinea-Bissau in late 2008. The CEWS faces a delicate balancing act: it is mandated to provide information rather than explicitly engage in analysis and steer the PSC policymaking process.

### *THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE*

A crucial instrument in the envisaged response to armed conflict is the African Standby Force (ASF). Although the ASF has yet to mount a mission it has laid significant groundwork for eventual operations. In May 2003, the AU developed a framework for the ASF based on five regional brigades, each with approximately 4,300 troops and some 500 light vehicles (see Table 2). The ASF functions on three interconnected levels: the continental level (the AU Commission's planning element), the sub-regional level (the five brigades), and the state level (the contributing countries). With subregional organizations playing a crucial intermediary role, harmonizing overlapping memberships and subregional decision-making structures presents a particular challenge.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 2: African Standby Force Regional Membership**

<i>Central (FOMAC)</i>	<i>Southern (SADCBRIG)</i>	<i>Eastern (EASBRIG)</i>	<i>Northern (NASBRIG)</i>	<i>Western (ESF)</i>
	Angola	Sudan	Western Sahara	Mali
	Democratic Republic of Congo	Ethiopia	Mauritania	Cape Verde
São Tome et Príncipe	Malawi	Eritrea	Algeria	Senegal
Equatorial Guinea	Zambia	Djibouti	Tunisia	Gambia
Cameroon	Zimbabwe	Somalia	Libya	Guinea-Bissau
Central African Republic	Namibia	Kenya	Egypt	Guinea
Gabon	Swaziland	Uganda		Sierra Leone
Chad	Lesotho	Rwanda		Liberia
Congo (Brazzaville)	Botswana	Burundi		Ivory Coast
	South Africa	Comoros		Ghana
	Mozambique			Togo
	Madagascar			Nigeria
	Mauritius			Benin
	Tanzania			Niger
				Burkina Faso

The ASF is intended to respond to six crisis management scenarios ranging from small-scale observation to forcible military intervention (see Table 3).<sup>29</sup> Originally the ASF was to achieve full operational capacity by June 30, 2010, but this goal was not met. Today, the ASF still may not be able to respond to scenario five or six on anything but the smallest scale.<sup>30</sup> Planners now hope to achieve a workable level of rapid deployment capability for about 3,000 personnel from each of the regional brigades, with a goal of deployment within fourteen days of securing a mandate and brigade self-sufficiency for at least thirty days.<sup>31</sup> While originally the ASF brigades were to operate outside their subregions, today ASF planners intend that each brigade would deploy only within its subregion, making consistent functionality across regions a priority.

Table 3: African Standby Force Design Scenarios

Scenario	Description	Deployment requirement (from mandate resolution)
1	AU/regional military advice to a political mission.	Thirty days
2	AU/regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN mission.	Thirty days
3	Stand-alone AU/regional observer mission.	Thirty days
4	AU/regional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions (and peace building).	Thirty days
5	AU peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping missions, including those involving low-level spoilers.	Ninety days with the military component being able to deploy in thirty days.
6	AU intervention, e.g., in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly.	Fourteen days with robust military force*

Source: *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force* (AU doc. EXP/AU-RECs/ASF/4(I), Addis Ababa, March 22–23, 2005), section A-1.

\* Here, “robust” means around 2,500 troops (1,000 within fourteen days, and a further 1,500 within the following fortnight) on the ground within thirty days. Source: Jackie Cilliers, *The African Standby Force: An Update on Progress*, ISS Paper No. 160, Institute for Security Studies, March 2008, p. 10.

Importantly, the six scenarios focus on peace operations and do not authorize the ASF to engage with other security challenges, such as those associated with counterterrorism, antipiracy and maritime security, disaster management, or broader questions of security sector reform.<sup>32</sup>

The African Standby Force faces a range of technical and political challenges. The first technical challenge is interoperability. As a multinational force—incorporating nearly twice as many states as NATO or the EU—the ASF must develop common doctrine, systems, tactics, techniques, and procedures. Yet ASF units have difficulty collaborating due to varying national approaches.<sup>33</sup> Second, the ASF lacks operational-level command and control because there is no mechanism between the AU Peace and Security Directorate and the ASF brigades.<sup>34</sup> Strategic lift capabilities, or lack thereof, pose a third challenge. The AU remains largely dependent on donors such as NATO and EU states to provide airlift support.<sup>35</sup> Fourth, the logistical capabilities to sustain forces in the field continue to be hugely problematic for the AU, both because of a lack of appropriate resources and inhospitable and remote theaters of operation.<sup>36</sup>

Politically, an effective ASF requires very high levels of interstate cooperation—something that even the deeply integrated states in the EU have struggled with in creating rapid reaction forces. It also requires a level of financial resources that AU member states have been unwilling or unable to commit.<sup>37</sup> A third political challenge is ensuring that member states actually deploy assets when the union calls. As one military expert noted, “Building capacity in countries that will not support continent-wide peace operations will only waste precious resources.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, by late 2010 none of the ASF regional mechanisms had signed a memorandum of understanding with their member states regarding troop deployment.<sup>39</sup>

## PEACE FUND

African states do not have a good track record of making their own funds available to pay for continental conflict management activities. Despite a series of initiatives, the AU has failed to secure sustainable, predictable, and flexible financing for its conflict management activities. Unlike the UN, the AU does not have a reliable system for reimbursing member states' contributions to peace operations. The OAU had originally created the Peace Fund as a way to offset such financial disincentive. Between 1993 and 2005, however, the OAU Peace Fund received less than \$70 million, roughly \$45 million of which was provided by non-AU members.<sup>40</sup> By 2009 the AU's Peace Fund had a negative balance.<sup>41</sup> The *PSC Protocol* stipulates a funding system whereby member states contributing contingents bear the cost of their participation during the first three months while the union commits to reimburse those states within a maximum period of six months and then proceed to finance the operation. But this system has not functioned effectively in practice.

Inadequate funding is emblematic of member states' general unwillingness to provide the organization with sufficient financial resources. Indeed, since January 2006, just five member states (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, and South Africa) have provided 75 percent of the AU's budget, with each of these five contributing 15 percent. Libya is suspected to have also paid the dues of other member states, perhaps raising its effective contribution to somewhere between 20 to 25 percent of the overall total.<sup>42</sup> Thus, recent political turmoil in Egypt and Libya may have detrimental repercussions on the AU's finances.

At the 2009 summit in Tripoli, the AU decided to increase the percentage of the regular budget transferred to the African Peace Fund from 6 to 12 percent. But since this increase will unfold via yearly increases of 2 percentage points, it will only be fully realized in 2012. Moreover, while useful, this funding "will not be sufficient to deploy and sustain current peace support operations."<sup>43</sup> Nor will it address the three-year backlog of financial reporting and audits that have accumulated because of the AU Commission's poor technological systems and multiple donor funding streams.<sup>44</sup> In light of these problems, discussions are underway between the Arab League and the AU to create an Afro-Arab peace facility.<sup>45</sup>

## PANEL OF THE WISE

Officially inaugurated in December 2007, the AU created the Panel of the Wise under Article 11 of the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (2002). Former Algerian president Ahmed Ben Bella and former OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim lead its five members, each appointed by their governments. As people who have made "outstanding" past contributions to peace, security, and development, members are tasked with using their expert knowledge and moral authority to resolve conflicts peacefully. For example, members engage in preventive diplomacy and support the AU's peacemaking initiatives by facilitating communication channels between conflict parties, the PSC, and the AU Commission.<sup>46</sup> The panel has also addressed electoral-related violence; impunity, justice, and reconciliation issues; and the situation of women and children in armed conflict.

Despite its important advisory role, the first formal meeting of the panel and the full PSC did not occur until March 2009—over a year after the panel's creation. According to an internal assessment in late 2010, the "relationship between these two entities has so far been very limited."<sup>47</sup> Neverthe-

less, the panel has engaged with several political crises, including those in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe. Without more serious staffing (it currently has two professional staff and an administrative assistant) and resources, however, the panel cannot function as a dynamic and proactive advisory body.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, to date, external funders have underwritten all of the panel's activities.<sup>49</sup>

#### *MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE*

In theory, the Military Staff Committee consists of senior military officers from PSC member states who advise the council on the military dimensions of its initiatives. In practice, however, it is ineffectual and meets infrequently. This is partially due to the committee's lack of clearly defined working methods, but member states have also hampered it by neglecting to send delegates—or sending civilian rather than military delegates—to the committee. If the PSC intends to authorize more peacekeeping operations along the lines of its missions in Sudan and Somalia, the committee must function more effectively.



## The African Union in Action: Arena, Peacekeeper, Peacemaker

### *THE AU AS A POLITICAL ARENA*

Regional institutions such as the AU are not only actors; they are also political arenas in which multiple actors interact and where ideas, values, and policies compete for dominance. As the fulcrum of the APSA, the Peace and Security Council functions as two interrelated political arenas.

In one sense, the PSC is a forum for debating how transnational and potentially globalizing norms interact with conditions in Africa. Through discussion in the PSC, AU members reconcile and adapt these foreign norms to local situations and identities.<sup>50</sup> The PSC thus mediates between the AU's approach to conflict management and the expectations of "outsiders"—such as representatives of foreign governments and international organizations like the UN and EU, media outlets, and occasionally non-governmental organizations. The PSC's roles in promoting democracy in Africa and mass atrocity response have provoked the greatest controversy.

In another sense, the AU is a political arena where its member states interact alongside a transnational bureaucracy, in this case the bureaucrats within the AU Commission and in particular the Department of Peace and Security. All the players in this arena are "insiders" but tensions surround member states' willingness to cede autonomous power to the commission. Particularly in its first few years it was commonly argued that the commission's bureaucrats "acquired unlimited and overwhelming power" and played the leading role in "setting the PSC timetable, proposing its agenda, preparing its draft reports, and drafting communiqués, which are usually provided only minutes before the meeting for consideration and adoption."<sup>51</sup> Whether the commission's bureaucrats should initiate policies or simply implement instructions from the member states remains a serious point of contention between these two groups.

### *THE AU AS A PEACEKEEPER*

As an actor in its own right, the AU has now conducted a significant number of complex peace operations, especially when compared to its predecessor. While the AU still suffers from some of the same structural impediments as the OAU—dependence upon external financing and insufficient bureaucrats, standing forces, and logistical capabilities—it has pursued a much more active peacekeeping agenda. The AU's peace operations have ranged from small observer missions to two missions involving over seven thousand troops in Sudan and Somalia (see Table 4).

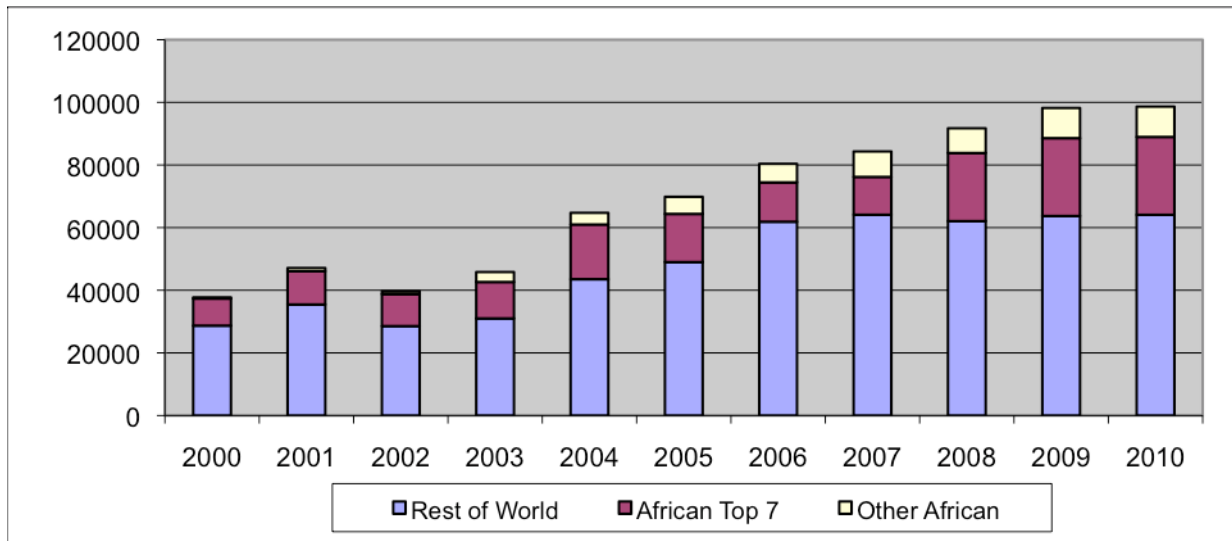
Table 4: The African Union's Peace Operations, 2003–June 2011

Mission	Location	Duration	Size (approximate maximum)	Main Troop Contributors	Main Task(s)
AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB)	Burundi	2003–2004	3,250	South Africa	Peacebuilding
AU Military Observer Mission in the Comoros (MIOC)	Comoros	2004	41	South Africa	Observation
AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS)	Darfur	2004–2007	c. 7,700	Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, Ghana	Peacekeeping/ Civilian Protection
Special Task Force Burundi	Burundi	2006–2009	c. 750	South Africa	VIP Protection
AU Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC)	Comoros	2006	1,260	South Africa	Election Monitor
AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)	Mogadishu	2007–present	c. 9,000	Uganda, Burundi	Regime Support
AU Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES)	Comoros	2007–2008	350	South Africa	Election Support
Democracy in Comoros	Comoros	2008	1,350 (+450 Comoros)	Tanzania, Sudan	Enforcement
AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (UN pays)	Darfur	2008–present	c. 23,000	Nigeria, Rwanda, Egypt, Ethiopia,	Peacebuilding/ Civilian Protection

Four general conclusions can be drawn about AU peacekeeping. First, AU peace operations depend on the participation of a small handful of main troop-contributing countries. This reflects the hugely uneven levels of support for peacekeeping across the continent. But it is also, in part, a reflection of states' decisions about which organizations to contribute their soldiers (or police) to. As depicted in Figure 2, several African states—notably Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Ethiopia, South Africa, Egypt, and Benin—remain stalwarts of UN peacekeeping even as the AU tries to develop its own capacities.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, most AU peace operations would not have functioned without the contributions of a small group of committed African states, particularly South Africa (which was crucial to operations in Burundi and the Comoros and played a significant role in Darfur), Rwanda, Nigeria, and Senegal (which together provided the military backbone of the AMIS force), and Uganda (which stood alone in AMISOM for nearly a year before Burundian troops arrived). While Ethiopia eventually provided sizable contingents to UNAMID and to support the South Africans in AMIB, its

most notable impact came through its military operation in Somalia, which served as justification for establishing AMISOM. Considering the AU now has fifty-four members, such a short list of major contributors leaves considerable room for expansion.

Figure 2: Number of UN Peacekeeping Uniformed Personnel, 2000–2010 (December 31 annually)



Source: Compiled by author from UN data.

Second, AU operations rely upon external (non-African) assistance. Between mid-2008 and mid-2012, for example, AMISOM will have received nearly \$800 million from the UN—in addition to the nearly \$40 million pledged to the UN’s AMISOM Trust Fund between 2009 and 2011.<sup>53</sup> This dependence undermines a core rhetorical tenet of the AU’s approach to conflict management, namely African solutions first. Despite significant activity, the AU still lacks sufficient funds, troops, police, materiel, strategic airlift capabilities (for both personnel and equipment), training facilities, management structures, and qualified staff to sustain even relatively small-scale peace operations. One of the AU’s internal assessments referred to this as the “mandate-resource gap” i.e., the disjuncture between “the PSC’s willingness to authorize such missions and the AU’s ability to implement them.”<sup>54</sup> The so-called Prodi Report on AU peacekeeping operations also recently emphasized this point:

the AU will only be able to respond to crises effectively if there is sufficient political and financial commitment of its own member states and, more generally, of the international community. . . . In the absence of the necessary capabilities, such an approach brings a high level of risk, not only of failure but also of raising expectations of the people that cannot be fulfilled. Worse still, it undermines the credibility of peacekeeping and weakens the organisation that is responsible.<sup>55</sup>

Not only have many African governments failed to invest sufficiently in peacekeeping operations, they are also underfunding effective bureaucracies to manage existing peacekeepers or centers of excellence to train future ones. Although there are five centers of excellence for peacekeeping training

in Africa, almost all of them rely on foreign sponsorship and all of them have serious practical limitations.<sup>56</sup> As a result of these huge resource gaps, AU peacekeepers depend upon external assistance, most notably from states within the EU and NATO. Such assistance has usually come in the form of classroom education, field training exercises, the provision of equipment, and support to deploy African peacekeepers and equipment into the theater of operations.

Third, the AU has difficulty agreeing on mandates for peace operations, especially when the host state is a member of the PSC or has friends on the council willing to support its position. This proved particularly important in two cases where primary conflict parties exercised significant influence over the terms of the mission mandate: Sudan in the case of AMIS (2004), and Ethiopia in the case of AMISOM (2006–2007). In both instances, negotiations on mandate terms became a delicate and overtly politicized process.

Finally, with the exception of the operations in the Comoros, the AU designs peace operations as interim measures until the peacekeeping baton can pass to the UN. Perhaps this approach represents the sort of cooperation set out in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which encourages regional arrangements to take the first steps in the peaceful resolution of local disputes. Indeed, the AU's ability to respond rapidly to crises on the continent is one of its few advantages as a peacekeeping organization.<sup>57</sup> But counting on a UN handoff may have encouraged the AU to be overly ambitious, taking on peace operations in extremely difficult circumstances before building the relevant security architecture.

### *THE AU AS A PEACEMAKER*

Fundamentally, the AU's peacekeeping missions can only reduce the worst symptoms of ongoing armed conflict. The acid test of the new APSA is whether the AU can actually resolve the underlying causes of the violence that has done so much to blight the continent's progress.

The PSC's approach to peacemaking reflects its members' preference for consensual decision-making—both within the PSC and between belligerent factions—conducted out of the public spotlight. For much of the post–Cold War period, conflict mitigation initiatives revolved around a search for workable elite bargains in the form of power-sharing agreements.

Confronted with repeated cases of recalcitrant behavior, the PSC adopted more coercive mechanisms to secure compliance with its stated objectives—namely sanctions regimes. As Table 5 shows, the AU has imposed sanctions nine times related to unconstitutional changes of government and once (Eritrea) related to a regime's foreign policy.<sup>58</sup> Prior to sanctions, the AU has tended to first suspend the membership of the recalcitrant regime. It then gives the country roughly six months to conform to its own constitution. If no positive change occurs, the AU may apply targeted sanctions, usually travel bans on select individuals and measures designed to freeze regime assets.

Table 5: The African Union's Sanctions Regimes

Target State	Suspension	Sanctions (economic, travel, etc.)	Summary
Central African Republic	March 2003–June 2005		Military coup. Sanctions lifted in 2005 yet junta head retained power.
Togo	February–May 2005		President dies in office and his son assumes office. Son retains power after fraudulent elections. Son wins new elections in March 2010.
Mauritania	August 2005–March 2007		Military coup. Regime suspended but led to elections and new leader in 2007 (who was overthrown in a military coup in 2008).
Mauritania	September 2008–June 2009	February–July 2009	Military coup. Sanctions lifted after a transitional government was formed. But coup leader won subsequent elections.
Comoros	October 2007–March 2008	October 2007–March 2008	Political coup on island of Anjouan. AU restores order by force in March 2008.
Guinea	December 2008–November 2010	October 2009–November 2010	Military coup (after incumbent president dies) followed by massacres of protesters. Coup leader flees. Presidential elections held November 2010 and coup leaders banned from participating.
Madagascar	March 2009–	March 2010–	Forced resignation of incumbent president. Presidential elections will be held September 2011.
Niger	February 2010–March 2011		Political coup (August 2009) followed by a military coup (February 2010). Presidential elections March 2011 and coup leaders do not participate.
Eritrea	April 2009–January 2011 (Eritrea's decision)	December 2009– (as part of UN sanctions)	AU calls for sanctions against Eritrea for its support to insurgents in Somalia.
Ivory Coast	December 2010–April 2011	March 2011–April 2011 (as part of UN sanctions)	Incumbent regime refused to relinquish power after electoral defeat. UN-France-AU force incumbent regime to step down and de jure government assumes office.

Sanctions serve many purposes: they can signal dissatisfaction, stigmatize the target, act as a substitute for armed conflict, and potentially change political behavior.<sup>59</sup> Given that the AU has not applied—nor been in a position to apply—more comprehensive sanctions or boycotts on important commodities such as timber, minerals, or oil, it is unlikely that it expects sanctions alone to change behavior. Rather, the AU's sanctions are probably meant as symbolic messages within a broader peacemaking strategy—though it is difficult to discern motives because the PSC's substantive discussions occur in private.

The episodes listed in Table 5 illustrate the AU sanctions' overall success given a narrow definition of unconstitutional changes of government. The PSC has taken the encouraging step (in Guinea, Madagascar, and Niger) of determining that leading figures in military juntas are ineligible to contest

any subsequent elections. But the PSC may encounter cases where a military coup can spur democratization by removing an authoritarian regime. Since Africa still has its fair share of tyrants, the AU should consider granting temporary recognition to military juntas that overthrow anti-democratic despots, as President Tandja did in Niger.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the PSC's new approach to unconstitutional changes of government places it in a difficult position when faced with the question of whether to recognize new authorities which topple the incumbent regime through popular protest (as in Tunisia and Egypt) or armed insurrection (as in Libya).

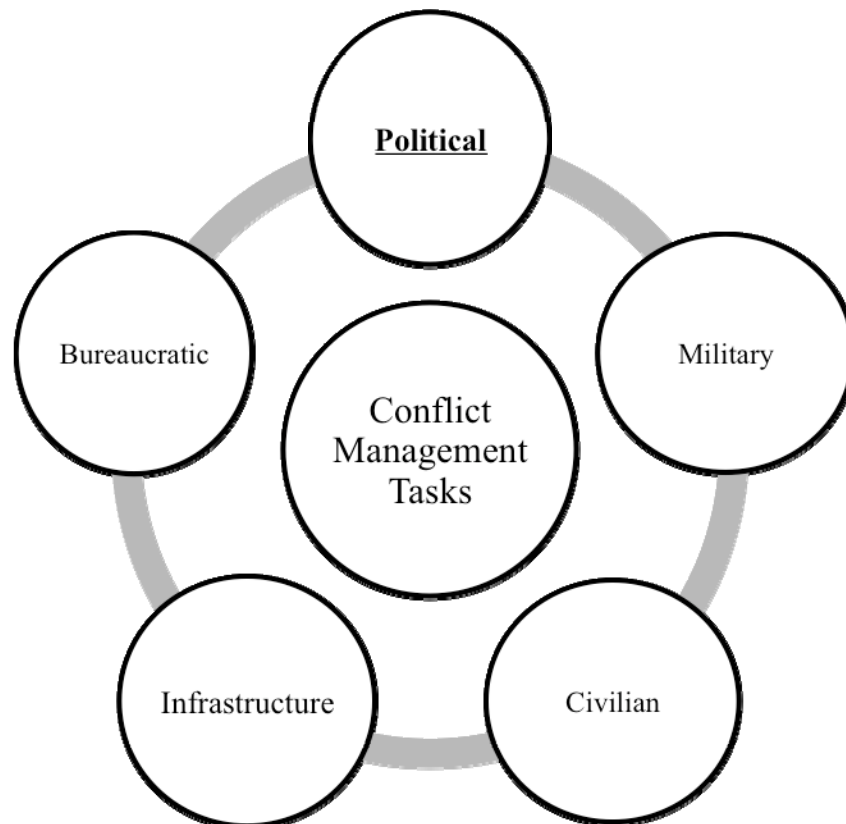
The PSC has also been far less than forthright in cases where African presidents have effectively abolished presidential term limits or held onto power through fraudulent elections. This is a hugely thorny issue given that some of the most blatant offenders are in significant African states, including Algeria and Uganda.

Ultimately, the PSC lacks the relevant capabilities to administer and enforce targeted sanctions regimes. To address this gap, the PSC is establishing a sanctions committee to monitor situations, gather and interpret information, identify and review individuals and entities to be sanctioned, consider exemptions, and report back at least once a month to the PSC. In so doing, the PSC seems to be explicitly copying many EU procedures on sanctions.<sup>61</sup>

## Capability Gaps at the African Union

Effective capabilities to manage armed conflict require more than just the technical assets associated with peacekeeping operations and sanctions regimes. It also involves other important political, bureaucratic, and infrastructural dimensions. These are depicted graphically in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Capabilities for AU Conflict Management



### *POLITICAL GAPS*

Arguably the most important dimension of conflict management is the political piece. As the UN secretary-general correctly concluded, “The African Union’s effectiveness results from the sum of its members.”<sup>62</sup> Important political enablers that affect the AU’s conflict management capabilities include: widespread agreement on what AU peacekeeping operations can (and cannot) be expected to achieve; unity within the PSC in support of those objectives; sustained high-level political engagement to support AU special envoys, committees, and panels as well as peacekeepers in the field; and

genuine cooperation from host-state authorities. Unfortunately, the AU has not performed well in these areas.

When confronting armed conflict, it is particularly important that there be strong and united PSC support for a viable peace process, the force generation phase of the peacekeeping operation, the conduct of the operation, as well as an exit strategy. During the crucial start up/planning phase, powerful African leaders, and not merely commission officials, must champion the mission and play a proactive role in generating the required forces. Early and sustained high-level political engagement makes it more likely that the required technical capabilities will be allocated and maintained during the mission's life cycle.

### *BUREAUCRATIC GAPS*

Effective peacekeeping and peacemaking initiatives require efficient management and bureaucratic structures both in Addis Ababa and in the field to provide strategic vision and support senior mission leadership teams. At present, however, the AU still lacks the institutional capacity and human resources to conduct effective peacemaking initiatives and complex peace operations. According to its own internal assessment, the AU Commission suffers from weak bureaucratic processes and management systems; poor information technologies; inadequate physical infrastructure; a lack of professional and motivated personnel; weak reputation, presence, and reach; and inadequate sources of funds.<sup>63</sup>

At the Peace and Security Council, the secretariat remains severely under-resourced, with just four professional staff, one secretary, and an administrative assistant. Proposals are underway to increase the number of professional posts to thirteen but this figure is still far too small. The PSC secretariat also lacks a dedicated legal expert and translators.<sup>64</sup> An internal AU assessment recently concluded: "The reluctance of member states to approve new posts, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of the need to do so, brings to the fore questions about their level of commitment to the full operationalization of the APSA."<sup>65</sup>

Peacekeeping poses particular institutional challenges to the AU at each stage of a mission's life cycle (i.e., planning, deployment, operations, and withdrawal). In the field, teams of qualified senior leaders, including the special representative, force commander, police commissioner, chief administrator, etc., are difficult to assemble and retain. Back at the AU's headquarters, capacity for planning, force generation, and logistical support remains very small, especially when compared to that of national militaries and other international organizations attempting to conduct similar types of operations. For example, while a policy unit was finally established in the AU's Peace Support Operations Division in June 2011, it currently consists of just two people.<sup>66</sup> Finally, high staff turnover and the absence of a lessons learned unit means that the AU has little institutional memory regarding conflict management.

### *MILITARY GAPS*

The AU consistently struggles to marshal the requisite military personnel and range of military assets needed for complex peace operations. Perhaps the most blatant example of military unpreparedness came in the early phases of AMISOM when the initial Burundian contingents lacked the most basic military equipment (which was ultimately provided by the U.S. government). Among the assets in



highest demand in difficult African theaters such as Sudan and Somalia are helicopters (utility and attack), armored personnel carriers, communications and intelligence equipment, unmanned aerial vehicles, night vision goggles, and, in the case of AMISOM in Mogadishu, battle tanks. AMISOM also lacks a sophisticated mortar radar system, which could have helped it reduce levels of civilian casualties.

As for military personnel, the AU's greatest deficits are specialists with niche skills including medicine, engineering, and intelligence gathering. To fill these gaps, AU missions rely on external donors to provide funding, training, and equipment directly to troop contributing countries—hence bypassing AU systems. AU officials refer to this approach as the AMIB concept, after the method used to support the Ethiopian and Mozambican contingents in the 2003–2004 peacekeeping mission in Burundi.

### *CIVILIAN GAPS*

While military assets are critical, multidimensional peace operations also require civilian capabilities. Here the AU suffers from a shortage of experts in the rule of law and security institutions such as police, justice, and corrections officers—as well as expert trainers to build local capacity in these areas. However, the AU's biggest civilian deficit in conflict management is its lack of mediation capacity. Rather than developing a systematic approach to mediation, the AU has proceeded on an ad hoc basis, largely dictated by the personalities of the senior figures involved. It has often deployed high-level candidates who lack the relevant expertise and experience, while investing meager effort in evaluating what went right or wrong in its previous mediation initiatives.<sup>67</sup>

### *INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS*

The AU's conflict management initiatives critically need adequate facilities, systems, and infrastructure to sustain peacekeeping missions and mediation efforts in the field. For peacekeeping operations, for example, safe and secure accommodation facilities are crucial—as are the provision of Level II/Level III hospitals.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, no mission can operate effectively without logistics chains to facilitate the deployment (and sustainment) of military and civilian capabilities into the theater of operations. Yet the AU has conducted its peace operations without an equivalent of the UN's Department of Field Support. This leaves the AU's Peace Support Operations Division without the capability to effectively manage planning processes in relation to movement control, logistics, human resources, finance, provisions, fuel, maintenance, troop rotations, stores management, and other elements crucial to mission support. To the extent that any of these gaps were ever plugged, it was by Western donor states and various UN agencies. Not only has the UN given the AU practical tools such as pre-deployment checklists and planning tools, it has also brought AU officials to its logistics bases in Brindisi, Italy, and Entebbe, Uganda, to help the AU establish a logistics base in Africa.<sup>69</sup>

## U.S. Policy and Recommendations

Successive U.S. governments have built a solid relationship with the AU. Two major developments shape the geostrategic context for this relationship. First, the establishment of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) provided a new focal point for engagement with the continent. AFRICOM now has the potential to significantly enhance the operational and tactical dimensions of AU peacekeeping missions by supporting current and prospective troop-contributing countries. Second, non-Western powers—principally China, India, Brazil, and Turkey—are gaining influence in Africa. At times, the United States is left to play catch-up as other powers solidify bilateral relationships with some of Africa's most powerful states.

Although it plays third fiddle to the UN and EU on the extent of its engagement in Addis Ababa, the United States generally enjoys a good relationship with the AU leadership. As the first non-African country to establish a separate diplomatic mission to the AU (in August 2006), it now enjoys a U.S.-AU annual summit and strongly supported the AU's decision to take a tougher stance toward military juntas and other unconstitutional regimes. The United States has also provided significant materiel support to various AU peacekeeping operations.

Naturally, there have been major differences of opinion on some issues: the AU did not agree with Washington's imposition of economic sanctions on Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe; in Darfur the AU dismissed the possibility of a no-fly zone and criticized the U.S. government's use of the term genocide; and the AU was against all forms of foreign military intervention in Libya. At times, inconsistent funding of U.S. programs to the AU has caused problems; the first long-term assistance agreement between the U.S. Agency for International Development and the AU, signed in August 2010 and extending through 2013, is thus a welcome step in the right direction.

Arguably the most visible U.S. peace and security activities in Africa are its counterterrorism initiatives in the Sahel and the Horn, counterpiracy and maritime security operations, and various anti-trafficking programs. The United States has also contributed over \$250 million to AMISOM since 2007, and it has provided important communications equipment to bolster the CEWS and communication between the AU and regional ASF brigades. More generally, the United States has provided logistical support, staff training, and exercises for battalion, brigade, and multinational force headquarters personnel, as well as equipment for trainers and peacekeepers, primarily through the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) program. By June 2011, ACOTA had provided training and non-lethal equipment to just over 176,000 peacekeepers from its twenty-five African partner states. Indeed, the rising numbers of African peacekeepers deployed to UN missions (depicted in Figure 2) would not have been possible without the ACOTA program.

There is widespread agreement on both sides of the relationship that the U.S. government should help strengthen Africa's emerging peace and security architecture. U.S. officials also believe that over the long term, the U.S.-AU relationship should come to resemble the U.S.-EU relationship (i.e., one built on strong diplomatic and official relationships between personnel within the U.S. government and the AU across a wide range of sectors). In the short term, the U.S. government should be encour-

aged to strengthen its mission in Addis Ababa and intensify its interaction with AU officials and member states. The secondment of U.S. government personnel to the AU Peace and Security Department and to AMISOM provides a useful opportunity to learn lessons about the benefits of such an approach as well as the potential tensions provoked by such appointments within the AU.

To implement this agenda, the U.S. government should pursue the following steps:

- *Forge political agreement on the core values driving the APSA.* The AU has grown in significance as a political actor and this trajectory is likely to continue. But it still suffers from major conflict management capability gaps, the sources of which are both technical and political. Politically, the United States should work hard with external partners and bilaterally with important African partners to forge agreement within the PSC on the political values which lie at the heart of the APSA. This must be based upon a realistic appraisal of the AU's conflict management capabilities whereby expectations (of insiders and outsiders) are brought in line with continental realities. Without widespread agreement among PSC members on how to respond to critical issues such as unconstitutional changes of government, armed conflicts, or mass atrocities, no amount of technical reforms will deliver effective conflict resolution.
- *Increase diplomatic and economic support for the UN Office to the African Union.* Although the U.S. government has provided substantial assistance to the AU's peace and security architecture, the United States is not the only, or even the biggest, player in Addis Ababa. Washington should therefore ensure there is clear strategic coordination between its own assistance programs and those of the UN and the EU. While the United States, UN, and EU will naturally retain distinct programs and policies, their representatives should work hard to devise a coordinated delivery system for assistance to the AU that reflects the comparative advantages of each actor while remaining sensitive to the AU's limited capacity to absorb funds. In the short term, the United States, EU, and UN should support the newly established UN Office to the AU (UNOAU) because the UN has done much to bridge the AU's bureaucratic and infrastructural capability gaps in conflict management issues, most recently in support of the AMISOM mission.<sup>70</sup>
- *Increase civilian capabilities for the AU's conflict management activities.* Civilian expertise is crucial across every dimension of conflict management: prevention and early-warning, mediation, and peacekeeping, as well as peacebuilding programs. Yet most efforts to develop the new APSA focus on military capabilities. As a consequence, the AU is unable to recruit and deploy sufficient numbers of civilian personnel, especially on short notice. The AU already recognizes its lack of capabilities in this area and the commission has started to develop a peace and security standby roster that should serve the needs of all future peace and security civilian deployments, including mediation. The United States should devise mechanisms to support these ongoing efforts as well as share the lessons of its own—not entirely successful—experiences developing an effective Civilian Response Corps.
- *Support the establishment of an AU mediation unit.* The AU's current approach to mediation has been ad hoc, ill-prepared, and based on little more than the hope of forging elite, top-down bargains, usually under arbitrary deadlines. To ameliorate this problem, the AU is considering establishing a mediation unit within the commission. Such a unit could coordinate mediation support to AU officials and envoys as well as mediation capacity-building activities.<sup>71</sup> To fulfill these functions, it should include a coordinator, two mediation experts, a senior administrator at headquarters, and an administrative officer who can be deployed in the

- field. It could draw envoys and technical mediation experts for deployment from a roster, which is under way with the help of German funding. The AU's liaison offices in countries in conflict or at risk of conflict should also have a senior staff member with training and experience in mediation. In addition, it would be beneficial to establish a mediation fund—as a complement to the Peace Fund—and appoint a mediation adviser to support the Panel of the Wise's efforts to design, manage, and evaluate peace processes, facilitate dialogue, and liaise with parties in conflict and other groups.<sup>72</sup> The United States should provide strong political support to ensure this unit is established as soon as possible and help fund the recruitment and training of appropriate personnel.
- *Strengthen the tactical and operational elements of AU peace operations.* The United States should devote additional resources to strengthening the tactical and operational elements of AU peace operations. The U.S. government should work to ensure that its African partner states factor the ASF into their national defense estimates and doctrine. In the short term, there are three obvious priorities. First, the United States should help the AU to establish an equivalent of the UN Department of Field Support, as well as a continental logistics base along the lines of the UN's bases in Brindisi and Entebbe. Second, the U.S. government should increase the resources available to ACOTA, thereby allowing it to engage with more African partner states while deepening and intensifying the level of training and equipment it can provide to African peacekeepers. Washington might also consider how to forge enhanced partnerships with the continent's most effective peacekeeping contributors and how to expand the pool of ACOTA partner countries. To build sustainable local peacekeeping capacity in Africa, the United States must enhance its “train-the-trainer” programs, ideally going well beyond the details set out in the Global Peace Operations Initiative Phase II strategy. Third, the United States should also incentivize all PSC members send military liaisons/defense attaches to their missions in Addis Ababa to facilitate the effective functioning of the AU's Military Staff Committee.
  - *Enhance the AU Commission's information management capabilities.* Information management is a crucial but often neglected aspect of dealing with armed conflict. Without it, early-warning efforts are doomed to failure; mediation initiatives are unlikely to consistently generate the desired effects; and peace operations cannot be expected to succeed. The AU's dire lack of capabilities and limited human resources to gather and analyze information relevant to conflict management must end. Priority areas for action should include bolstering the PSC secretariat, enhancing the AU's ability to collect early-warning information, and developing the AU's capacity for institutional learning. Without the ability to evaluate missions, produce lessons learned studies, and generate recommendations for reforming existing practices and systems, the AU will never be able to conduct its own peace operations effectively.

## Endnotes

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1. Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks at African Union," Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 13, 2011.
  2. Mark Malan, "Africa: Building Institutions on the Run," in Donald Daniel et al (eds.), *Peace Operations* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008), p. 90.
  3. AU Commission, *Strategic Plan 2009–2012*, AU document EX.CL/501 (XV) Rev.2, May 19, 2009, p. 11.
  4. Except members which are temporarily suspended for reasons such as nonpayment of dues or because they are under political sanctions. Assembly decisions are taken by consensus or, if this is not forthcoming, by a two-thirds majority. On procedural matters, however, decisions are based on a simple majority. Two-thirds of the total membership of the Union forms a quorum at any Assembly meeting.
  5. See *Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy*, adopted by the AU Assembly, Sirte, Libya, February 28, 2004.
  6. These commitments can be seen in various articles within the AU's Constitutive Act, specifically, 4(a), 4(b), 4(e), 4(f), 4(g), and 4(i).
  7. As the ministerial meeting of the Peace and Security Council recently put it, "the persistence of crises and conflicts in different parts of Africa is partly due to lack of decisive improvements in political and economic governance on the continent, conditions that inevitably generate frustration and discontent in the population; culminating in revolts and revolutions in some situations." *Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the State of Peace and Security in Africa*, AU document PSC/MIN/BR.1(CCLXXV), April 26, 2011, paragraph 8.
  8. This was set out in the *Framework for the Enhancement of the Implementation of Measures of the African Union in Situations of Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa*. See PSC 213th Meeting, Addis Ababa, January 27, 2010, AU document, PSC/PR/2(CCXIII).
  9. Carolyn Haggis, *The African Union and Intervention: The Origins and Implications of Article 4(h) of the 2001 Constitutive Act*, Unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2009.
  10. *Ibid.* An amendment to Article 4(h) was officially adopted by the Assembly on July 11, 2003, which called for the Union to collectively intervene to defend Member States against "a serious threat to legitimate order" but as of late January 2011 it had not yet entered into force as only twenty-five AU members had deposited their instruments of ratification (two-thirds of the AU's member states are required).
  11. The preamble to Article 4 (Principles) of the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* explicitly states that the Council "shall be guided by the principles enshrined in the . . . Charter of the United Nations." In addition, the preparatory materials for the OAU Charter indicate that the organization was intended to be one of the "regional arrangements" referred to in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.
  12. See the special section "Kosovo crisis inquiry: international law aspects," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 4, 2000, pp. 876–943. See also Adam Roberts, "The So-Called 'Right' of Humanitarian Intervention," *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law*, Vol. 3, Summer 2001, pp. 3–51.
  13. *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force*, AU document EXP/AU-RECS/ASF/4(I), Addis Ababa, March 22–23, 2005, p. 5. Hereafter, *ASF Roadmap*.
  14. See Memorandum of Understanding signed in Algiers in June 2008
  15. Article 2(1) of the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*—hereafter *PSC Protocol*. This was signed in Durban on July 9, 2002, and came into force on December 26, 2003, (after ratification by twenty-seven of the then fifty-three AU members). The PSC began its work on March 16, 2004, at the ministerial level, at the margins of the 4th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council.
  16. These are listed in Article 7 of the *PSC Protocol*.
  17. The elections for PSC membership take place after the subregional states have consulted one another and put forward a list of candidates. Rwanda appears in "east Africa" as the result of a formal change by Paul Kagame's government, while Burundi remained in "central Africa."
  18. Institute for Security Studies (ISS), "Peace and Security Council Report," Issue 5, December 2009, p. 17.
  19. If consensus cannot be reached, "decisions on procedural matters" may be adopted "by a simple majority, while decisions on all other matters shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote of its Members voting."
  20. AU Commission, *Strategic Plan 2009–2012*, p. 22.

21. Ibid, p. 7.
22. Ibid, p. 22.
23. Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Support to African Union peacekeeping operations authorized by the United Nations*, A/65/510-S/2010/514, October 14, 2010, paragraph 49. By way of comparison, some 22,000 staff work within the European Commission. *Capacity Survey: Regional and Other Intergovernmental Organizations in the Maintenance of Peace and Security*, (Brussels: UNU-CRIS, 2008), pp. 22, 77.
24. For an overview of these efforts see Benedikt Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2009), pp. 183–212; Ulf Engel and J. Gomes Porto (eds.), *Africa's New Peace and Security Architecture*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), chapter 6.
25. AU press statement, PSC/PR/BR (CCLXXIX), May 18, 2011.
26. The political liaison officers are currently based in Burundi, Chad, Central African Republic, Comoros, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa and Goma), Guinea-Bissau, Kenya (covering Somalia), Liberia, Sudan (Juba and Khartoum), and Western Sahara.
27. Author's communication with AU official, June 2011. Earlier proposals included a sixth ASF brigade to be stationed in Addis Ababa and kept on high alert but this idea was rejected by the African chiefs of defense staff at their May 2003 meeting, apparently after particularly strong objections from South Africa. Malan, "Africa," pp. 109, 115.
28. Jackie Cilliers, *The African Standby Force: An Update on Progress*, ISS Paper No. 160, Institute for Security Studies, March 2008, p.17.
29. *ASF Roadmap*.
30. See Jeffrey E. Marshall, *Building an Effective African Standby Force to Promote African Stability, Conflict Resolution and Prosperity*, Crisis States Discussion Papers No.16, London School of Economics, April 2009, p.19.
31. Author's interview with AU official, Addis Ababa, May 2010; AU, *A Concept Paper for the Development of a Rapid Deployment Capability for the ASF*, draft as of April 16, 2010, paragraph 11.
32. See *Moving Africa Forward: African Peace and Security Architecture 2010 Assessment Study*, AU document, 2010, paragraph 8, [http://operationspaix.net/IMG/pdf/UA\\_African\\_peace\\_and\\_security\\_architecture\\_2010\\_.pdf](http://operationspaix.net/IMG/pdf/UA_African_peace_and_security_architecture_2010_.pdf).
33. Marshall, *Building an Effective*, p. 13.
34. For example, *ibid*, p. 7.
35. There are three obvious alternatives to such donor support. One is that the AU could use the existing lift assets from countries such as Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa and hope that these states will align their priorities with those of the AU. A second is that the AU could investigate hiring private contractors to provide airlift. NATO's Strategic Airlift Interim Solutions (SALIS) might be an option but contractors are expensive, donors will probably continue to pay for strategic lift capabilities, at least for the foreseeable future, and this option will not build the AU's own capacities in the long-term. A third option would be for the AU to start building its own airlift capability. *Ibid*, p. 15.
36. See Cilliers, *The African Standby Force: An Update on Progress*, pp. 6–7; Marshall, *Building an Effective African Standby Force to Promote African Stability, Conflict Resolution and Prosperity*.
37. Cilliers, *The African Standby Force: An Update on Progress*, p. 16.
38. Marshall, *Building an Effective African Standby Force to Promote African Stability, Conflict Resolution and Prosperity*, p. 18.
39. *Moving Africa Forward: African Peace and Security Architecture 2010 Assessment Study*, paragraphs 27, 227.
40. Festus B. Aboagye, "Global and Regional Approaches to Peacekeeping and Security in Africa," presentation to the Potsdam Spring Dialogue, April 4–5, 2008, [www.sef-bonn.org/download/veranstaltungen/2008/2008\\_pfg\\_presentation\\_aboagye\\_en.pdf](http://www.sef-bonn.org/download/veranstaltungen/2008/2008_pfg_presentation_aboagye_en.pdf).
41. *Moving Africa Forward: African Peace and Security Architecture 2010 Assessment Study*, paragraph 177.
42. Author's interview with U.S. official, Washington DC, June 2011.
43. Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, paragraph 51.
44. *Ibid*, paragraph 47.
45. *Ibid*, paragraph 53.
46. See Laurie Nathan, "Mediation and the African Union's Panel of the Wise," submission to the Commission for Africa, July 15, 2004, [www.commissionforafrica.org/english/consultation/submissions/before/sb-jul-aug04-007.pdf](http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/consultation/submissions/before/sb-jul-aug04-007.pdf).
47. *Moving Africa Forward: African Peace and Security Architecture 2010 Assessment Study*, paragraph 19.
48. Interviews with AU officials and independent analysts, Addis Ababa, May 2010.
49. *Moving Africa Forward: African Peace and Security Architecture 2010 Assessment Study*, paragraph 168.
50. Amitav Acharya, "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism," *International Organization*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2004, pp. 241, 239.
51. Samuel M. Makinda and F. Wafula Okumu, *The African Union* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 51, 50. See also p. 120.
52. Morocco also deserves an honorable mention but it is not a member of the AU.
53. Figures are from the UN's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.
54. *Moving Africa Forward: African Peace and Security Architecture 2010 Assessment Study*, paragraph 68.
55. "Prodi Report," i.e., *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, UN document A/63/666-S/2008/813, December 31, 2008, paragraphs 11, 15, 16.
56. Malan, "Africa: Building Institutions on the Run," pp. 104–107.

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57. See Prodi Report, paragraphs 27, 82.
58. For discussions see Eriksson, *Supporting Democracy in Africa*, pp. 31–35; Eki Yemisi Omorogbe, “A club of incumbents? The African Union and Coups d’Etat,” *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, vol. 44, 2011, pp. 125–37.
59. Eriksson, *Supporting Democracy in Africa*, p. 10.
60. Omorogbe, “A Club of Incumbents? The African Union and Coups d’Etat” p. 154.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
62. Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, paragraph 59.
63. AU Commission, *Strategic Plan 2009–2012*, p. 17.
64. *Moving Africa Forward: African Peace and Security Architecture 2010 Assessment Study*, paragraphs 75–77.
65. *Ibid.*, paragraph 78.
66. Author’s communication with AU official, June 2011.
67. For a critique of the AU’s approach to mediation see Laurie Nathan, *Plan of Action to Build the AU’s Mediation Capacity*, unpublished paper commissioned by the UN Department of Political Affairs, November 6, 2009, pp. 14–15.
68. In peacekeeping missions, hospitals are graded from Level I (lowest) to III (highest) based on the extent to which there are facilities available to conduct surgical operations and provide onsite postoperation care and recovery for patients.
69. Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, paragraph 24.
70. For example, with regard to AMISOM, UNSOA provided the delivery of rations, fuel, general stores and medical supplies; engineering and construction of important facilities; health and sanitation; medical evacuation and treatment services and medical equipment for AMISOM medical facilities; communications and information technology; information support services; aviation services for evacuations and troop rotations; vehicles and other equipment; and capacity-building. *Ibid.*, paragraph 30. Since July 2010, UN-OAU has assumed the activities of three previous UN offices: the former UN Liaison Office, AU Peacekeeping Support Team, and UN Planning Team for AMISOM. UNOAU’s principal tasks are to coordinate the work of the various UN entities now under its umbrella, forge a more effective peace and security partnership with the AU, and develop operational partnerships with the RECs. Its fully operational office in Addis Ababa will have a total of sixty-five staff (both locals and foreigners) under the leadership of a new, Kenyan UN assistant secretary-general Zachary Muburi-Muita. Even when all the APSA’s parts are fully operational, the AU will remain a niche actor in peacekeeping terms—at best fielding one or two small- or medium-scale peacekeeping missions and these are likely to be interim measures before the UN takes over. The UN, on the other hand, is likely to continue managing approximately seventy thousand peacekeepers on the continent. Further U.S. political and financial support for UNOAU is thus essential for overcoming the shortcomings inherent in the APSA.
71. See Nathan, *Plan of Action to Build the AU’s Mediation Capacity*.
72. These proposals are contained in *ibid.*

## About the Author

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