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POLICY BRIEF



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

TOWARDS A NEW *PAX AFRICANA*: MAKING, KEEPING, AND BUILDING PEACE IN POST-COLD WAR AFRICA

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Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, hosted a policy research seminar in Stellenbosch, South Africa, from 28 to 30 August 2013 on “Towards a New *Pax Africana*: Making, Keeping, and Building Peace in Post-Cold War Africa”.

The meeting convened about 30 leading practitioners, scholars, and civil society activists from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America to assess the progress being made by the African Union (AU) and Africa’s regional economic communities (RECs) in managing conflicts and operationalising the continent’s peace and security architecture. The seminar also sought to assist these bodies in building peace in countries emerging from conflict.

1. *Pax Africana*: Past and Present

Since the creation of the United Nations (UN) Security Council in 1945, Africa has played a key role in shaping the nature of the world body’s efforts to maintain international peace and security, particularly after the UN Security Council’s credibility as an impartial actor was damaged by its intervention in the Congo from 1960 to 1964. After the end of the Cold War by 1990, and following fatal UN passivity and the preventable genocide of 800,000 people in Rwanda in 1994, Africans led efforts to stop such mass atrocities in future. The idea of an international “responsibility to protect” (R2P) was incorporated into the Constitutive Act of the African Union in 2000, and into the continent’s new peace and security architecture. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) undertook major peacekeeping missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d’Ivoire between 1990 and 2003. The AU launched its own missions in Burundi (2003-2004), Sudan’s Darfur region (2004-2007), and Somalia (since 2007), but the first two as well as the ECOWAS missions were taken over by the UN, exposing the continental body’s logistical and financial weaknesses. The United States (US), France, and Britain – as three of the five veto-wielding permanent members (P-5) of the UN Security Council – have often marginalised Africa in decision-making on the Council. In 2013, this triumvirate held the pen on 15 of the 18 African cases on the Security Council’s agenda.

6 In 2013, the United States, France, and Britain held the pen on 15 of the 18 African cases on the agenda at the United Nations Security Council



THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS IN AUGUST 2013.

Photo - Lucas Jackson / Reuters
Image source - Times Live
<http://www.timeslive.co.za/world/2013/08/29/u.n.-security-council-to-meet-again-on-syria>

2. Conflict Prevention in Africa

Many African conflicts stem from divisions created during colonial and post-colonial state-formation and nation-building, which often divested local communities and ethnic groups of their indigenous autonomy and many of their means to sustain their own livelihoods, replacing these with centralised authority. After overweening power was assumed at independence from the 1950s by certain privileged individuals and groups, identity-related conflicts, which related closely to inequitable access to political and economic opportunities, proliferated. However, the promotion of equal citizenship is an objective for which all African governments must strive. Accordingly, where states fail to protect their own populations, the international community has a duty to intervene.

Although the Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) seeks to end impunity for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression, its conflict prevention role is limited. The Court may have a deterrent and normative impact that discourages people from committing such crimes, but it can only act after the event, and its remedies are strictly judicial. Indeed the ICC's trials and threats of prosecutions may sometimes exacerbate conflicts, and the UN Security Council's use of the Court often seems to be political and to prioritise international justice over peace and security. In 2014, the ICC was involved in eight conflict situations, all of which were in Africa – Central African Republic (CAR); Côte d'Ivoire; Sudan's Darfur region; the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Kenya; Libya; Mali; and Uganda. The Court has been criticised for its exclusive focus on African cases. Three of the Council's veto-wielding permanent members – the US, China, and Russia – are also not themselves members of the ICC.

3. Peacemaking in Africa

The fears of Western countries such as the US over rising Islamic radicalism and global "terrorism" have shaped renewed international engagement in Africa, particularly in Somalia and Mali. The prospects of success for interventions overseen by the AU, Africa's sub-regional bodies, and the UN will depend on developing effective divisions of labour for these operations, and mobilising appropriate logistical and financial resources. A commitment to sustained post-conflict peacebuilding will also be required.

“The mediation process in Kenya following a disputed and violent national poll in 2007 was linked to an institutional process – the adoption of a new constitution”



IN FEBRUARY 2008, GHANAIAN FORMER UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, KOFI ANNAN (LEFT), BROKERED A POWER-SHARING DEAL BETWEEN PRESIDENT MWAI KIBAKI (CENTRE) AND OPPOSITION LEADER RAILA ODINGA.

Photo - Zhu Xiaoguang/Xinhua/SIPA Press/Newscom

Image source - The Christian Science Monitor
<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2008/0808/p25s04-waaf.html>

Conflicts in Africa have their own distinct characteristics, and there is no single effective approach to mediation on the continent. Local ownership of mediation processes and genuine cooperation among regional and external actors are, however, crucial. A key factor in the short-term success of the mediation process in Kenya following a disputed and violent 2007 national poll, was that it was linked to an institutional process – the adoption of a new constitution – that sought to address the proximate causes of the conflict.

4. Africa's Evolving Peacekeeping Architecture

After its creation in 2002, the African Union established a continental security architecture consisting of a 15-member Peace and Security Council (PSC) which authorises peacekeeping missions; an AU Commission which coordinates operations; a Panel of the Wise which advises and engages mediation efforts; a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) which gathers information on potential conflicts; an African Standby Force (ASF) which is to be operationalised by 2015; and a Peace Fund which supports peacekeeping activities. The AU's deployments to Burundi, Sudan, and Somalia demonstrated its commitment to peacekeeping. However, all three missions also revealed institutional, logistical, and financial deficiencies, which were again exposed by the crises in Mali and CAR from 2012. In addition, although the PSC is charged with working closely with African human rights and governance mechanisms to fulfil its mandate, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) lacks preventive measures for managing simmering conflicts, and the AU has been criticised for adopting a "fire

brigade” approach to resolving conflicts. The continental architecture also depends greatly on the efforts of Africa’s sub-regional bodies – in particular the material contributions made by regional hegemony like Nigeria and South Africa to the sub-regional peacekeeping brigades that form the core of the ASF. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among African militaries poses a further potential challenge to the continent’s security efforts.

5. The Practice and Perceptions of Peacekeeping in Africa

Although Nigeria led the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975 in order to reduce French influence in West Africa, Paris continues to exercise greater clout than Abuja in the Francophone countries of the sub-region. In the last decade, despite continuing to contribute to international peacekeeping, Nigeria’s foreign policy clout has declined and its international voice has become muted as domestic concerns stemming from terrorist attacks by *Boko Haram*, have taken precedence. Meanwhile, France has successfully multilateralised its previously unilateral neo-colonial interventions through the UN in Mali, Côte d’Ivoire, and CAR. In Mali, the UN Security Council refused to provide sufficient support to the African-led mission in the country (AFISMA) in 2012 – although the world body’s backing materialised and a UN mission was mandated soon after France intervened in the conflict in 2013. The inability of ECOWAS and the AU to exert more influence in Mali also exacerbated tensions between the two organisations.

“Hollywood reinforces the paradigm of a powerful West “saving” a weak Africa, which hinders the development of approaches to peacekeeping that emphasise genuine cooperation”

In relation to perceptions of peacekeeping, Hollywood often contrasts Western “civilisation” and African “barbarism” in an attempt to resolve the contradiction often inherent in “military humanitarianism” which seeks to use violent means for peaceful ends. Africans are often depicted as either victims or ruthless fighters in films like *Black Hawk Down* and *Blood Diamond*; while the fictional “saviours” often come from the West. Such Manichean characterisations reinforce the paradigm of humanitarian assistance – a powerful West “saving” a weak Africa – which hinders the development of approaches to peacekeeping that emphasise genuine cooperation and international responsibility.



THE 2001 FILM *BLACK HAWK DOWN* DEPICTS AFRICANS AS EITHER VICTIMS OR RUTHLESS FIGHTERS IN ITS PORTRAYAL OF A DISASTROUS RAID BY AMERICAN PEACEKEEPERS IN MOGADISHU IN OCTOBER 1993.

Image source - faezmuhdsaid.blogspot.com
<http://faezmuhdsaid.blogspot.com/2012/11/black-hawk-down.html>

6. Peacekeeping Partnerships and Problems in Africa

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides for cooperation between the UN Security Council and Africa’s regional organisations to maintain international peace and security. The 22,000-strong AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) represents a promising peacekeeping framework established by a regional organisation with the world body. However, other regional initiatives have lacked the capacity to be effective. The ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) missions in Sierra Leone and Liberia were taken over by the UN in 2000 and 2003 respectively, as were the AU missions in Burundi and Darfur in 2004 and 2007 respectively. Effective burden-sharing between the UN and Africa’s regional organisations, therefore, remains an urgent priority. The AU must capacitate its office at the world body in New York sufficiently

in order to engage the UN effectively on African peace and security issues. Africa's leaders should also seek greater diplomatic status for the relationship between the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN's Security Council in order to enhance the legitimacy of the continental body's peacekeeping role.

The militaries of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh contributed over 24 percent of all UN peacekeepers in March 2014 partly because of a principled commitment to peacekeeping, but also due to a quest for international influence, and for the material benefits that can accrue to their own militaries. Concern for Africa occupies an incidental role in these Asian countries' rationales for peacekeeping deployments. UN peacekeepers have been accused of serious crimes in missions in the DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. However, most troop-contributing countries (TCCs), which bear the final responsibility for disciplining their own peacekeepers, have failed to hold them to proper account. The UN should also take steps to inculcate a culture of accountability and to punish perpetrators of abuses during peacekeeping missions.

7. The Practice of Peacebuilding in Africa

Peacebuilding as a practice cannot be neatly separated from peacemaking and peacekeeping – no peace can be built without it first having been made and kept. Building on a strategy that linked political and security issues, the civil war in Somalia has been managed since 2007 through a connected series of peacemaking and peacebuilding processes in which the AU Mission in Somalia played a crucial role. By contrast, peacebuilding efforts in Sudan's Darfur region since 2004 remain weak, with internally displaced persons (IDPs) constituting 2 million of the western province's population of 7 million. In Chad/CAR, peacekeeping interventions by regional and international actors including the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the European Union (EU), and the UN since 2007, have failed to deliver the security necessary for effective peacebuilding. In addition, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes in Africa have received insufficient financial, human-resource, and training support for implementation.

Peacebuilding as a practice cannot be neatly separated from peacemaking and peacekeeping – no peace can be built without it first having been made and kept



UGANDAN PEACEKEEPERS PREPARE TO LEAVE FOR SOMALIA IN SEPTEMBER 2012.

Image source - bigsamphotography
<http://bigsamphotography.wordpress.com/2012/09/05/amisom-troops-uganda/>

8. European Powers: France and Britain in Africa

France's strategic engagement in peace processes in Africa has centred on its use of military power, and has often been motivated by economic self-interest and a concern to enhance its prestige in its former colonial spheres of influence. Although Paris's intervention in Côte d'Ivoire effectively put an end to the conflict there in 2011, the recent conflicts in Mali, Chad, and CAR have not been resolved by the French approach of using military force, and past Gallic support for autocratic governments has often contributed to these conflicts. Britain, like France, has preferred to participate in UN-authorized, rather than UN-led, peacekeeping missions, and has used its permanent membership of the Security Council to shape peacekeeping operations in areas of strategic interest like Sierra Leone and Somalia. However, London has placed greater rhetorical emphasis than Paris on peacebuilding – for example, through security sector reform (SSR) efforts in Sierra Leone from 2000.

9. The United States and the UN Security Council in Africa

Since 2007, the United States has sought to use its global fight against terrorism to pursue its parochial interests in Africa and to promote demands for the militarisation of the continent through its Africa Command (AFRICOM). Although Washington seeks to portray AFRICOM as a force for humanitarianism and development, the Germany-based body has focused on terrorism and was involved in “regime change” in Libya in 2011. American interests on the continent often contradict Africa’s own security agenda which emphasises longer-term peacebuilding.

Africa has provided the context for innovative UN approaches to maintaining peace and security, but the systematic application of these new rules and mechanisms beyond the continent remains partial. Furthermore, the UN Security Council has at times shunned the AU Peace and Security Council and instead sometimes sought cooperation with Africa’s sub-regional organisations that it deems to be more in tune with the interests of its powerful members. Unless the Council is reformed to share power more equitably between the rich North and “global South”, its responses to conflicts on the continent will remain inadequate and its legitimacy will continue to be questioned.

Policy Recommendations

The following 10 policy recommendations emerged from the Stellenbosch policy research seminar:

1. The root causes of conflicts in Africa need to be clearly identified and addressed in order to prevent mass atrocities. To this end, African leaders must promote cultural diversity as an integral part of their nation-building efforts;
2. Resolution of the crises in Somalia and Mali will require sustained political and economic commitment to national dialogues that seek to develop long-term power- and resource-sharing mechanisms, and promote strategies to integrate marginalised societies; provide effective delivery of basic services; and reform security sectors in both countries;
3. Nation-building efforts in South Sudan must promote inclusivity, equality, and dignity for all ethnic groups, without discrimination. Sudan should also address the genuine grievances of its marginalised regions such as Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, and Abyei. The African Union and the United Nations must further seek to foster representative, inclusive, and legitimate processes in both countries;
4. The AU should avoid appointing incumbent national leaders who are not seen as impartial mediators. Mediation efforts must also include implementation mechanisms and ensure the compliance of warring parties with peace agreements. The AU Panel of the Wise should develop uniform standards for mediation; oversee the appointment of mediators; and document lessons learned from peace processes;

“American interests on the continent often contradict Africa’s own security agenda which emphasises longer-term peacebuilding”



UNITED STATES PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA ARRIVES AT JULIUS NYERERE AIRPORT IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA IN JULY 2013.

Image source - The Dark Room
http://darkroom.baltimoresun.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/REU-AFRICA-OBAMA_.jpg

“The AU should apply the principle of “variable geometry” to its creation of the African Standby Force, whereby sub-regional forces that are close to brigade-readiness can be deployed first and share experiences with others”



SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIERS JOIN AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST M23 REBELS IN THE EASTERN CONGO IN OCTOBER 2013.

Image source - Aljazeera
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/10/congolese-soldiers-push-back-m23-rebels-20131028231539928612.html>

5. The African Peace and Security Architecture must be urgently reviewed as recommended by the 2007 “High-Level Panel Audit Report of the African Union”. The AU should further apply the principle of “variable geometry” to its creation of the African Standby Force, whereby sub-regional forces that are close to brigade-readiness can be deployed first and share experiences with others. In order to initiate more timely interventions to prevent conflicts on the ground, the early warning systems of Africa’s sub-regional bodies and the African Union need to be more closely coordinated;
6. African peacekeeping missions must be properly resourced, trained, and equipped to ensure the effective implementation of peace agreements. In order to promote greater African control over such operations, the continent’s institutions need to take greater responsibility for funding them, with customs duties and taxes providing a potential source of finance. In addition, an international mechanism for holding peacekeepers who commit atrocities accountable must be established;
7. The United Nations and the African Union should seek ways of working more effectively to enhance security on the continent. African leaders should seek greater diplomatic status for the relationship between the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council in order to enhance the legitimacy of the AU’s role in shaping and implementing peacekeeping missions on the continent. African countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping missions must also help to develop the mandates and implementation of these operations while greater resources must be devoted to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts;
8. Africa should adopt a realistic view of the UN Security Council – that it is an agency that has primary responsibility, rather than primary concern, for global peace and security. African leaders must promote the representation of their interests on the Council more effectively and challenge the parochial bias of Western powers. The 120-member Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) caucus on the Security Council should also be strengthened in order to influence the Council’s decision-making more in favour of African interests;
9. Nigeria should work more closely with other sub-regional powers such as Algeria and South Africa as well as the UN to bolster the effectiveness of African peacekeeping missions and to eliminate the need for external interventions such as those led by politically interested powers such as France. Prejudiced Western perceptions of Africa as a conflict-ridden continent must also be urgently altered; and
10. The AU and the UN should integrate HIV/AIDS prevention into the policy frameworks of the African Standby Force, and the design and command structures of peacekeeping missions on the continent. Adequate staffing and material resources must be made available for HIV/AIDS and safe-sex training in African militaries, which should be conducted by peer educators. Voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) must also be enhanced, and the governments of troop-contributing countries should devise mechanisms to monitor the impact of HIV/AIDS on their peacekeepers.