



Institute for Security Studies

POLICY BRIEF

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The AU member states have the responsibility of maintaining databases of their standby personnel, and should therefore provide the resources required to establish and manage the respective national rosters. Simultaneously, the AU's Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) should plan to establish its own reserve of voluntary, pre-screened senior police professionals in addition to a possible limited standing capability.
- It is crucial to agree upon the importance and content of the ASF police roster system, and obtain the commitment of all stakeholders. The AU PSOD will need to ensure informed support from the member states for the roster to materialise.
- Resolving the problems related to the lack of clear directives, standards and tools will be critical, and assumes priority over the rest of the measures taken towards establishing the system. The AU Commission, through the AU PSOD, needs to develop and sanction the necessary policy framework and operational guidelines.
- Tackling the financial constraint that discourages member countries from committing themselves to implementing the ASF police roster system is imperative. The AU will need to secure funding for the establishment and maintenance of the roster system.
- Moral obligation might not always suffice to ensure commitment so there should be formal incentives that encourage member countries to pledge police capabilities and maintain and share the personnel rosters. The AU will need to introduce a performance-based incentive scheme and make the pledges as well as the commitments to establish and share standby rosters 'more formal and binding'.⁵ These actions should be reinforced through memorandums of understanding.⁶

A standardised police roster system is critical for the African Standby Force

Tsegaye Deda Baffa

SUMMARY

Contemporary peacekeeping operations necessitate an extensive range of expertise, and meeting the demand for police officers with the requisite expertise for the increasingly complex mandates of peacekeeping has become a great challenge.¹ Consequently, the demand for enhanced systems to facilitate the recruitment and selection of police experts has also increased. Hence, it is of a high priority to establish and operationalise effective roster systems that ensure easy identification and rapid deployment of suitable police personnel.

The African Standby Force (ASF) policy framework document² provides for the development of integrated roster systems at continental, regional and national levels, from which the African Union (AU) may recruit competent personnel for its various missions. ASF roadmaps³ and consultative forums⁴ have not only underlined the significance of the roster system, but also urged for it to be quickly established. Despite the consensus on the need for an integrated roster system for the ASF police, such a system has not yet been established.

With the aim to inform and assist in the establishment and operationalisation of a standardised and integrated police roster system, this policy brief outlines the proposed features and specifications of such a system. It also provides insights into the system's establishment, operationalisation and management processes.

BENEFITS OF THE ROSTER SYSTEM

- **Rapid deployment of qualified personnel:** By maintaining an accurate, updated pool of pre-screened officers with the necessary expertise and ensuring their readiness for deployment, the roster facilitates rapid selection and deployment of qualified officers with the appropriate skills. In the absence of such a system, it is difficult to find rapidly deployable police experts at the start of new missions.
- **Merit-based selection:** Roster systems filter candidates by searching for relevant qualifications and experiences, and thereby encourage

merit-based selection. The current process of assessment and selection is predominantly based on screening out incompetence, which does not necessarily identify the specialised skill sets demanded by the missions and cannot guarantee the identification and selection of the best personnel.⁷ The current system has led to uneven levels of qualifications and performances among the police personnel seconded by member states, as well as great mismatches between the skills needed for certain missions and the skill sets of seconded personnel.⁸ The roster will address these shortcomings.

- Transparency and homogeneity:** An effective roster system provides uniform criteria and procedural guidelines for the recruitment and placement of qualified personnel. The roster will be based on predetermined standards to promote transparency and uniformity across the member states and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs). This will prevent lack of clarity in the selection criteria and process as well as in the acceptance of pledges,⁹ and reduce the discrepancies in the competency of deployed personnel.

Data captured by the roster system should include sufficient details about the individuals registered to enable easy identification of the most suitable candidates for peacekeeping assignments

- Effective training and use of trained personnel:** An effective roster system serves as a link between training and deployment, and helps training to be more relevant to unfolding deployment needs. Furthermore, it serves as a knowledge management tool by maintaining information on available capabilities, and past and current contributions and performances of deployed personnel.¹⁰ Rosters will provide an organised pool of personnel for subsequent training and deployment. By enabling efficient recording and tracking of police officers who are trained and deployed, rosters will assist training institutions in their efforts to assess the effectiveness of previous training initiatives and needs for future training, and thereby upgrade their training programmes.
- Benefits for police-contributing countries and police recruitment organisations:** The selection of candidates on the basis of merit provides a market-driven incentive for countries that contribute police to improve the quality and suitability of their candidates. The establishment of

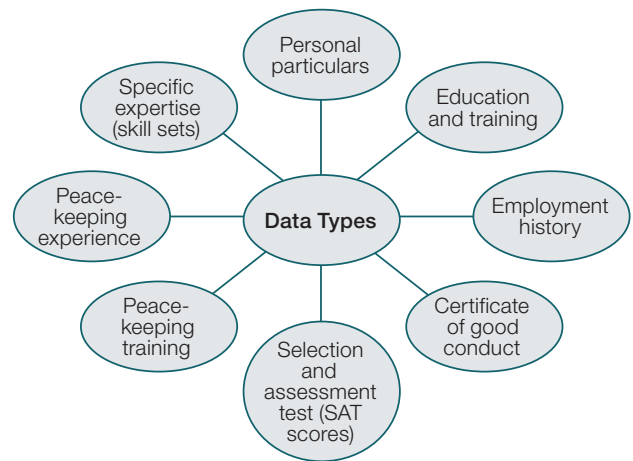
national rosters will help countries improve the range and quality of the candidates they submit through systematic screening of applicants to national roster membership and efforts to train their roster members. This will eventually benefit both sides: the police-contributing countries and the recruitment organisations.

PROPOSED FEATURES AND STANDARDS OF THE ROSTER SYSTEM

The system must be able to ensure systematic recording, maintenance and updating of information on the standby police personnel.

Data captured and processed by the roster system should include sufficient details about the individuals registered in the system to enable easy identification of the most suitable candidates for peacekeeping assignments. See Figure 1 for the types of data to be maintained in the system.

Figure 1 Roster data structure



Profiles of specific competencies required depend on the assignment and mission realities. Therefore, rosters should be designed to encompass all potential police peacekeeping tasks. Rosters should be regularly updated to reflect changes in members' profiles, accommodate the next generation of police experts and changing skill-set requirements, and maintain the required number of personnel in the roster by replacing those removed from the roster for whatever reason.

The system should facilitate quick screening of qualified personnel that meet task requirements.

The system's quality will be reflected in the speed and ease of the screening, and the quality of the personnel screened.¹¹ The screening procedures will need to be applied in three instances – initially, to ascertain whether applicants meet the specified requirements; secondly, to identify the most suitable candidates for arising posts and, thirdly, to weed out roster members who are no longer eligible.

The system should ensure easy access to and systematic sharing of roster information by all legitimate users.

The stakeholders that will need access to the information in the ASF roster system include the roster managers at national, regional and continental levels; institutions involved in ASF police training; and other external stakeholders who may require information for research and analysis. Access to and sharing of the information should, however, conform to a recognised procedure. Hence, a protocol will be required to determine the privileges of stakeholders to access the information as well as the procedures for accessing and sharing the information.

By assessing the needs and impact of police peacekeeping training, the system will help ensure that training courses are relevant to emerging deployment needs

The best means of ensuring effective sharing of the roster information with the RECs/RMs and AU Commission will be to interlink the national, regional and continental systems and establish a web-based platform through which roster managers at all three levels can directly access and share the data. Statistics can also be shared. National roster managers will organise the statistical reports of national roster members in an agreed format and share them with the respective RECs and RMs. On the basis of the national reports, roster managers at the RECs and RMs will be able to generate aggregated regional statistical reports and forward them to the AU PSOD.

The system must be capable of supporting the training, research and development of the ASF police dimension.

The roster system will support effective planning and use of trained police personnel in a wide range of peacekeeping tasks. In the interest of research, it should also facilitate access to the information in the database. By means of a user-friendly approach for assessing the needs and impact of police peacekeeping training, the system will help ensure that ongoing training courses are relevant to emerging deployment needs. Therefore, the design of the system should accommodate records of trained personnel, the performance of members deployed to peacekeeping missions, feedback from returning officers on key lessons

learnt, and their challenges and suggestions. This information will be shared with training institutions, researchers and policy organs to facilitate knowledge generation and policy development or review.

The roster system needs to have standardised features, processes and data technology, including the requisite human and financial inputs.

The system should be managed according to clear and comprehensive data operation and sharing guidelines, and the specific roles of the key actors in the development and maintenance of the system. The following are among the key aspects that need to be addressed:

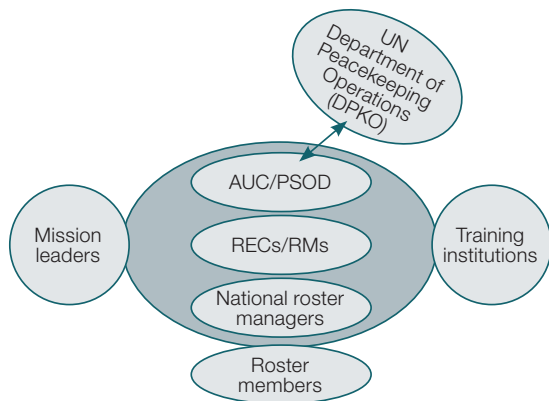
- **The system's standards:** Detailed specifications of the features, functions, architecture (data fields) and components of the roster system, as well as its development and management modalities, processes and responsibilities.
- **Data operation guidelines:** The kind of data captured and processed by the roster system as well as the methodologies and procedures of the roster data operations. The guidelines may also include data access and protocols that specify the modalities and arrangements for accessing and using the data in the roster system.
- **Data operation support tools:** Standardised formats, tables and checklists specifically designed to be used for recording, storing, compiling and sharing the roster data.
- **Database program:** A computer program (software platform) specifically designed to support the data operations in line with the prescribed standards and procedures. Such a program will enable one to conveniently store, modify or update, collate and extract the data.
- **Data operation experts:** Personnel capable of executing the data operations and managing the system according to the prescribed standards. Such specialists should be recruited and trained at national, regional and continental levels. This is an especially critical requirement at the national level, where the data on the roster members is originally captured and maintained.

The standards, guidelines and tools must ensure uniformity in the operations carried out by the roster managers. Primarily, they must be related to the ASF police mandates and structures. They should also be relevant to the deployment needs of the AU, RECs and other end-users of police personnel for peacekeeping missions. Since member countries should use the same database to recruit for UN and AU missions, consistency with related UN standards and experiences should be maintained.

KEY ACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF THE SYSTEM

Establishing and operating the roster system require the concerted effort of several national authorities and institutions, including the AU Commission, RECs, RMs, member states and others (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Actors in the ASF roster system



- As a central planning element (PLANELM), the AU PSOD assumes the key responsibility to ensure not only that the systems are created, but also that the systems and their operations are standardised and integrated across the RECs/RMs and member countries. Through the AU PSOD, the AU Commission needs to develop and sanction the policy framework and operational guidelines of the ASF roster system, including defining the ASF roster membership requirements and screening criteria. The AU PSOD may also have to take part in the roster system's operations at a central level.
- The regional PLANELMs need to facilitate communications between the AU Commission and member states in terms of the policies and standards related to the roster system. They should also take part in the roster system's operation and management at the regional level.
- Training centres should keep records of their training courses as well as the participants' profiles and share these details with the PLANELMs or roster managers at the respective RECs/RMs and countries.
- Mission leaders can assist in the continual updating of the rosters by regularly briefing the roster managers on the kinds of skill sets needed by police in their missions.
- National roster managers will be the principal repositories of the original data. They will also be primarily responsible for the roster data operations – the capture, storage, protection, updating, screening and sharing of data. They will facilitate the selection of personnel for rostering and deployment, thereby managing the complete value chain of training, rostering, selection and deployment.
- Roster members are the principal source of the roster information. They should provide comprehensive and accurate information in their application forms for roster

membership. Once in the roster system, they should keep their profiles updated by developing their skill sets and motivating for how they meet emerging requirements.

KEY STAGES IN THE SYSTEM'S DEVELOPMENT

The development of the system should follow carefully designed and implemented stages involving discrete activities. The proposed key stages include the following:

- **Comprehensive assessment:** By conducting a detailed assessment of which systems are currently being used, one can draw up a comprehensive recommendation of a suitable, universal system and its operations, including the costs of establishing and operating the system. This stage should cover all the three levels of ASF roster management (continental, regional and national).
- **Policy framework:** Formulating the relevant policy and implementation frameworks that define the key characteristics and architecture of the roster system, and chart the detailed processes of developing the system.

Establishing and operating the roster system require the concerted effort of several national authorities and institutions, including the AU Commission, RECs, RMs and member states

- **Data operations manual:** Developing an instructional manual that comprises the data operation guidelines, data sharing and protocols, standardised formats and tools, and specifies the responsibilities of the key actors and their relationships.
- **Technology and equipment:** Procuring, developing and installing the computer program as well as related data operation and communication facilities and equipment.
- **Structure and staffing:** Establishing the roster system management structures and specialised units that perform the data operations, as well as recruiting and training the data operation specialists and roster managers.
- **Pilot implementation:** Testing the system through a pilot project.
- **Review and full operationalisation:** Reviewing the system's standards and tools, and fully operationalising the system.

NOTES

1. A report by the UN Department of Public Information revealed that a significant challenge among the key issues recently facing UN peacekeeping is meeting demands for the recruitment of thousands of skilled police officers and civilian staff with the required expertise. See UN Department of Public Information, *United Nations peacekeeping: Meeting new challenges: frequently asked questions*, 2006, 9, http://books.google.co.ke/books/about/United_Nations_peacekeeping.html?id=EWOPAAAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y (accessed 12 August 2012).
2. African Union, *Policy framework for the establishment of the African Standby Force and military staff committee*, African Union, April 2003, 18, 21, 41, 42.
3. Three subsequent roadmaps have been developed following the AU's decision to establish the ASF. The roadmaps aim to provide clarity on the key steps required for the operationalisation of the ASF. The first (Roadmap I) was developed in 2005 and implemented from 2006 to 2008; Roadmap II from 2008 to 2010; Roadmap III is currently being implemented (2011–2015).
4. See, for example, the report of the ASF fifth annual training implementation workshop, held at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana, 6–8 December 2011; the progress report on the status of the operationalisation of the ASF, presented at the fourth ordinary meeting of the specialised technical committee on defence, safety and security preparatory meeting of experts; and the sixth meeting of the African chiefs of defence staff and heads of security and safety services, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3–7 December 2010.
5. Adam C Smith and Arthur Boutellis, Rethinking force generation: Filling the capability gaps in UN peacekeeping, *Providing for Peacekeeping 2*, New York: International Peace Institute, May 2013, http://www.ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/ipi_rpt_rethinking_force_gen.pdf (accessed 3 May 2013).
6. W J Durch and M L England (eds), *Enhancing United Nations capacity to support post-conflict policing and rule of law*, Stimson Center report no. 63 rev. 1, Washington: The Stimson Center, 2010.
7. Gourlay, *Lessons learned study: Rosters for the deployment of civilian experts in peace operations*, UN DPKO discussion paper, 2006, <http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/Rosters%20for%20the%20deployment%20of%20Civilian%20Capabilities%2014%20Feb%202006.pdf>, 47 (accessed 4 September 2012).
8. Smith and Boutellis, Rethinking force generation.
9. For more on the problems related to the lack of clarity in terms of the selection process as well as acceptance of pledges, see Smith and Boutellis, Rethinking force generation, 11–12.
10. Smith and Boutellis, Rethinking force generation.
11. Gourlay, *Lessons learned study*.

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