

# Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020

Achievements, opportunities and challenges

Wafula Okumu, Andrews Atta-Asamoah and Roba D Sharamo





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# Executive summary

Conflict, violence and insecurity continue to be major threats to realising the African Union's Agenda 2063. To address widespread instability in Africa, and with the aim of leaving a continent at peace to the next generation, Africa's leaders committed to working towards a continent free from conflict by 2020.

It has been seven years since the declaration, which has become known as Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, and four years since the Master Roadmap of practical steps towards implementing its objectives was adopted. This study assesses the context in which the initiative was rolled out and is being implemented. It examines what the implementation efforts have achieved, and challenges hampering its implementation.

The monograph provides answers to help policymakers understand the extent of progress made and how to improve steps towards silencing the guns in Africa. Using data from extensive secondary sources and interviews with key actors involved in the implementation efforts, this study provides insights on the aspects of the initiative outlined below.

## **Context of the silencing the guns initiative**

Despite general improvements in the overall situation in Africa compared to the 1990s, several countries have experienced various forms of violence since 2012. The nature of these conflicts has been intrastate and driven by a lack of development, poor governance, high-level corruption, historical injustices and grievances, and mismanagement of electoral processes, among others. These problems have all fuelled violence in various ways.

The overall conflict trends show Africa to have been one of the most violent regions of the world between 1989 and 2017. About 27 000 people died in these crises between 2013 and 2017 alone. The intensity of violence in Africa is driven largely by the prevalence of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) from foreign suppliers, arms manufactured by African governments and those made by local artisans. Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Libya and Tunisia are some of Africa's biggest arms importers. Between 2014 and 2018, imports of weapons are estimated to have increased by about 20%. Angola, Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan were the top importers into sub-Saharan Africa.

Over the past decade, about 34 countries have improved their governance performance. However about 18 have registered significant deterioration in governance performance in the same period. The perception of corruption in government institutions has also deteriorated in many African countries. Government structures are generally among the least trusted by citizens and are perceived to be corrupt. This monograph notes that despite some progress in the continent's conflict situation, Africa is still far from silencing the guns and creating the necessary conditions for addressing drivers of conflict and violence.

## **Achievements so far**

Some achievements have been recorded since the rollout of the initiative. Specific tasks to be implemented in efforts to silence the guns have been clarified. Key coordinating structures necessary for implementation, particularly the Silencing the Guns Unit at the AU Commission (AUC), have been established.

There has been improved continental diplomatic outreach and partnership building in the search for peace in Africa. Continental frameworks and institutions for responding to insecurity, and efforts to curb the proliferation of SALWs, have been improved. There has also been progress in specific conflict cases such as the Ethiopia-Eritrea crisis, South Sudan, Sudan, management of the 2016–17 Gambia crisis, and mediations in Madagascar and the Central African Republic, among others.

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Conceptually, silencing the guns remains unclear even among the policy actors who are meant to champion its implementation

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The monograph notes that although the few strides made by the continent are encouraging, they aren't enough to fulfil the goal to silence the guns in Africa by 2020. It recommends that efforts be intensified since Africa, with its enduring structural factors, is nowhere near to eradicating violence.

## **Obstacles to implementation**

The slow progress in efforts to silence the guns can be attributed to several implementation problems. First are the institutional challenges resulting from misalignment between existing structures and the urgency of the goals to silence the guns by 2020. Second is the lack of conceptual coherence due to differences in interpretations of the silencing the guns – or STG – initiative. The STG Unit interprets it as a campaign, while AUC departments are handling its implementation as a pool of projects, and Agenda 2063 approaches it as a programme. Conceptually, silencing the guns in Africa remains unclear even among the policy actors who are meant to champion its implementation.



Having no clear definition means policy interpretation of the initiative is difficult and differs among the various policy actors. It also doesn't have an evaluation process. Politically the initiative suffers from a lack of strong institutions and buy-in at the national level on which to anchor an implementation process. In some countries like Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali, the lack of strong institutions has contributed to setbacks in efforts to deal with violence. Relapses into conflict have therefore been common.

External obstacles to implementing Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 (STGIA2020) also include the continued exports of SALWs into Africa by foreign governments, and meddling of foreign powers in domestic insurgencies, as is currently evident in Libya.

## **Recommendations**

The monograph recommends that the African Union (AU) take steps to address existing challenges to implementing the initiative, and develop a monitoring and evaluation framework. It also suggests enhancing collaboration among AUC departments and ensuring the buy-in and involvement of citizens in its implementation.

Member states should try to adopt and implement existing continental instruments on governance, justice and development since governance problems remain a major obstacle to eliminating violence in Africa. The AU can also invest more in the mediation of violent conflicts through strengthening the role of special envoys, enhancing post-conflict reconstruction efforts and providing support for national regional mediation efforts through the use of the AU's Mediation Support Unit.

Regional economic communities (RECs) and Regional mechanisms (RMs) are encouraged to play active roles in bridging the gap between efforts of member states and the AU. They can help develop regional action plans and popularisation initiatives, and support member states in implementing the Master Roadmap.

The international community and the UN are urged to support African efforts to eliminate the underlying conditions of violence on the continent by engaging in fair trade and helping stem the illicit flow of arms to Africa. Those involved in illicit SALW supplies into African conflict situations should be named and shamed.

Given that only limited progress has been made in the implementation of the initiative by 2020, the AU needs to redefine the initiative by turning it into a multi-year programme focussed on addressing insecurity on the continent. The AU can then build the necessary collaboration with the UN, development partners, the private sector and civil society actors, to implement projects that address different dimensions of Africa's insecurity challenges.

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# Acronyms

<b>AAM</b>	Africa Amnesty Month
<b>AGA</b>	African governance architecture
<b>AHSI</b>	African Human Security Index
<b>AK-47</b>	Avtomat Kalashnikova
<b>AMISOM</b>	African Union Mission in Somalia
<b>APSA</b>	African peace and security architecture
<b>ASF</b>	African Standby Force
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AUC</b>	African Union Commission
<b>CPI</b>	Corruption Perceptions Index
<b>DSA</b>	Department of Social Affairs
<b>FOC</b>	Full operational capability
<b>FRELIMO</b>	Mozambique Liberation Front
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>G5 Sahel</b>	Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel)
<b>HIIK</b>	Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research
<b>IIAG</b>	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
<b>MOUs</b>	Memoranda of understanding
<b>MSU</b>	Mediation Support Unit
<b>OAU</b>	Organisation of African Unity
<b>PSC</b>	Peace and Security Council
<b>RECs</b>	Regional economic communities
<b>RENAMO</b>	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
<b>RMs</b>	Regional Mechanisms

<b>SAAMDEC</b>	South African Aerospace Maritime and Defence Export Council
<b>SALWs</b>	Small arms and light weapons
<b>STGIA2020</b>	Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020
<b>SVA</b>	Structural Vulnerability Assessment
<b>UCPD</b>	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>WPS</b>	Women, peace and security

# Introduction

Since the independence of many African countries in the 1960s, the continent has taken significant steps towards mitigating and resolving violent conflicts, consolidating democracy, improving governance, promoting the respect of human rights, strengthening states and improving people's living standards. Despite these efforts, parts of Africa remain embroiled in violent conflicts and instability resulting from contestation over power, resources, diversity issues and governance deficits.

The prevalence of lethal weapons has made it easier for individuals and groups to resort to and perpetuate violence, which has disrupted economic activities and destroyed infrastructure. This has deprived citizens of critical peace dividends such as employment, education, healthcare, roads, personal safety and decent livelihoods.

This led to African heads of state adopting Agenda 2063 as a blueprint for long-term continental socio-economic transformation and integration. They expressed their commitment to address conflicts and wars on the continent by 2020 in order 'not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans.'<sup>1</sup>

They undertook to deal with the root causes of conflicts, promote conflict prevention, management and post-conflict reconstruction, maintain a nuclear-free continent, address the internal displacements and ensure the implementation of agreements on non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs). This commitment was informed principally by the realisation that Africa's prosperity and stability is possible only in a context of peace.

Since the adoption of this declaration/initiative, efforts to achieve its goals have resulted in numerous policy discussions, high-profile meetings and the adoption of the 2016 Lusaka Master Roadmap. This outlined the interpretation of the initiative and what needed to be done to work it.

Seven years after the adoption of the declaration, in 2020, the year initially earmarked for the achievement of the goals, questions remain as to what has been rolled out in the pursuit of silencing the guns. What has been achieved, what remains to be achieved and what are the key challenges to realising the declared goals? This monograph was informed by the need to find answers to these fundamental questions. It takes stock of progress in the implementation of

the initiative, identifies key achievements so far, outlines gaps in the efforts and proposes ways of improving its implementation.

It is meant to inform policy reflections in the review of the initiative, especially in the context of what was planned to be achieved by 2020. The monograph therefore doesn't focus on the achievements of silencing the guns as the AU's 2020 theme, but as an initiative declared by the AU to find a comprehensive solution to Africa's conflicts.

Findings are based on extensive interviews in the last quarter of 2019 with key policymakers involved in the implementation of the Master Roadmap, independent analysts of Africa's peace and security trends, researchers and civil society actors involved in various dimensions of the initiative. Primary data from the extensive interviews were complemented by an in-depth review of existing literature on outputs and outcomes of activities rolled out by the AU as part of efforts to silence the guns in Africa. The first draft of the monograph was subsequently validated in a meeting, which brought together a selected group of policy and diplomatic people as well as researchers to interrogate the findings before publication.

## **Structure of the report**

The findings in this monograph are organised into five sections. The introduction provides a background to the initiative and the genesis of the silencing the guns initiative. The second section reviews the paradigm of violence in Africa. It discusses the state of violent conflicts in Africa as well as their sources and causes in the context of the continent's governance deficit, the youth bulge challenge and the proliferation of small arms.

The third section outlines major achievements since 2013, before discussing the institutional, strategic, external, operational and political obstacles to the implementation of the initiative in the fourth. The final section focuses on the way forward by providing policy recommendations for various policy actors.

## **Genesis of the silencing the gun declaration**

In recognition of the negative impact of conflicts on Africa's development, African heads of state declared their intentions to root out such violence from the continent by 2020. They aimed to bring peace to citizens and to ensure that the next generation of Africans didn't inherit the burden of conflicts. The declaration, which has subsequently become known as the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 (STGIA2020) initiative, has been hailed by African policymakers as an important commitment to dealing with conflict.

Given the fundamental role of peace in Africa's socio-economic development, realising the declaration's goals is expected to contribute significantly to efforts to reposition Africa globally and advance continental strides towards fulfilling Agenda 2063's aspirations. As one of the 14 flagship projects spearheading Agenda 2063,

STGIA2020 aims at ‘ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence and violent conflicts and [preventing] genocide.’<sup>12</sup>

Details of Africa’s aspirations to be realised through STGIA2020 are in Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063. This affirms the desire for a peaceful continent and building functioning mechanisms for peaceful resolution of conflicts at all levels. It affirms promoting a culture of peace and tolerance among children and youth, and of harmony at grass-roots level so that the management of diversity is a source of wealth and social and economic transformation.<sup>3</sup>

However this aspiration is linked to others that seek to address the fundamental causes of violence. These include poverty, unequal access to opportunities, a tendency towards exclusion and marginalisation in governance, bad governance, injustice, and waste of development opportunities.<sup>4</sup> By 2023, efforts towards the realisation of Agenda 2063 are expected to have achieved the following in terms of peace and governance:<sup>5</sup>

- Democratic values and culture as enshrined in the African Governance Architecture (AGA).
- At least 70% of people in every AU member state ‘will perceive elections to be free, fair and credible; democratic institutions, processes and leaders accountable; the judiciary impartial and independent; and the legislature [an] independent and key component of the national governance process.’<sup>16</sup>
- All AU member states would have ascribed to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) resulting in the achievement of its positive contribution to governance.
- All guns would have been silenced.
- All AU member states would have instituted local and national mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution.

STGIA2020 isn’t the AU’s first attempt to end all violent conflicts on the continent. In 1963, the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was partly driven by an understanding that in order to attain ‘human progress, conditions for peace and security must be established and maintained’ in Africa.<sup>7</sup>

The OAU notably had a responsibility of ensuring that states ‘intensify’ their ‘efforts’ to ‘achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa.’<sup>8</sup> The evolution of the OAU into the AU in 2002 was also partly informed by the weaknesses of the AU in the face of conflicts and other forms of insecurity on the continent. When the AU replaced the OAU in 2000 African leaders were:

... conscious of the fact that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and of the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, the AU assumed the objectives of promoting peace, security, and stability; democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;<sup>10</sup> human rights; and sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels on the continent. To implement these objectives, the Assembly established the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to, inter alia:

... promote peace, security and stability in Africa, in order to guarantee the protection and preservation of life and property, the well-being of the African people and their environment, as well as the creation of conditions conducive to sustainable development.<sup>11</sup>

The PSC is supported by the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that comprises structures/institutions, legal frameworks, policies, norms and guiding principles. In a nutshell, AU policy organs have previously contemplated or taken many measures to silence the guns. These include policy decisions, institution building and actions taken to promote peace and governance under the auspices of the APSA and AGA.

## **Strategic objectives of the initiative**

As a flagship project of Agenda 2063, STGIA2020 is expected to:

- Address the root causes of conflicts including economic and social disparities, put an end to impunity by strengthening national and continental judicial institutions, and ensure accountability in line with Africa's collective responsibility to the principle of non-indifference.
- Eradicate recurrent and address emerging sources of conflict including piracy, trafficking in narcotics and humans, all forms of extremism, armed rebellions, terrorism, transnational organised crime and new crimes such as cybercrime.
- Push forward the agenda of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace support, national reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction and development through the APSA; as well as ensure enforcement of and compliance with peace agreements and build Africa's peacekeeping and enforcement capacities through the African Standby Force (ASF).
- Maintain a nuclear-free Africa and call for global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- Ensure the effective implementation of agreements on landmines and the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons.
- Address the plight of internally displaced people and refugees and eliminate the root causes of this phenomenon by fully implementing continental and universal frameworks.<sup>12</sup>



## Chapter 1

# Context for the silencing the guns initiative

Since the launch of STGIA2020, several countries have experienced armed conflict leading to the destruction of property, livelihoods and lives. These include Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Libya, Kenya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia.

These countries have experienced violence ranging from anti-government uprisings to herder-farmer conflicts, non-state armed groups, politically motivated violence and violent extremism. The tables and figures below present an overview of the extent of armed conflict and violence in Africa.

**Table 1: Selected violent conflicts since 2012**

Country	Nature of conflict	Type	Start
Burkina Faso	Government vs. opposition quest for national power	intrastate	2014
Burundi-Rwanda	Historical regional rivalry	interstate	2015
Cameroon	Government vs. English-speaking secessionist groups	intrastate	2016
Côte d'Ivoire	Electoral dispute, armed rebellion vs. government quest for national power	intrastate	2012
CAR	Non-state armed groups vs. government quest for national power and resources	intrastate	2012
DRC	Bantu militias vs. Twa militias, and government vs. militant groups fighting for subnational predominance	sub-state	2013
Ethiopia	Inter-communal rivalries between Oromos and Gedeo, Somalis, Guraghes, etc. over subnational predominance and resources	sub-state	2017
The Gambia	Opposition groups vs. government quest for national power	intrastate	2016

Country	Nature of conflict	Type	Start
Mali	Inter-communal rivalry between Fulanis, Dogon, Dozo, etc. over subnational predominance and inter-militant rivalry over subnational predominance; and opposition groups vs. government system/ideology, national power. Secessionist claims from the Tuareg minority	sub-state	2012
Mozambique	Government/FRELIMO) vs. RENAMO and MDM over national power; and Islamic militant group vs. government over political system/ideology	intrastate	2012/ 2017
Republic of Congo	Non-state armed groups and opposition groups vs. government over national power	intrastate	2015
Somalia	Government vs. Islamist militant groups and breakaway regions over subnational predominance	intrastate	2014
Uganda	Government vs. Kingdom of Rwenzururu, autonomy; and Bakonzo vs. Bamba et al over subnational predominance	intrastate	2012

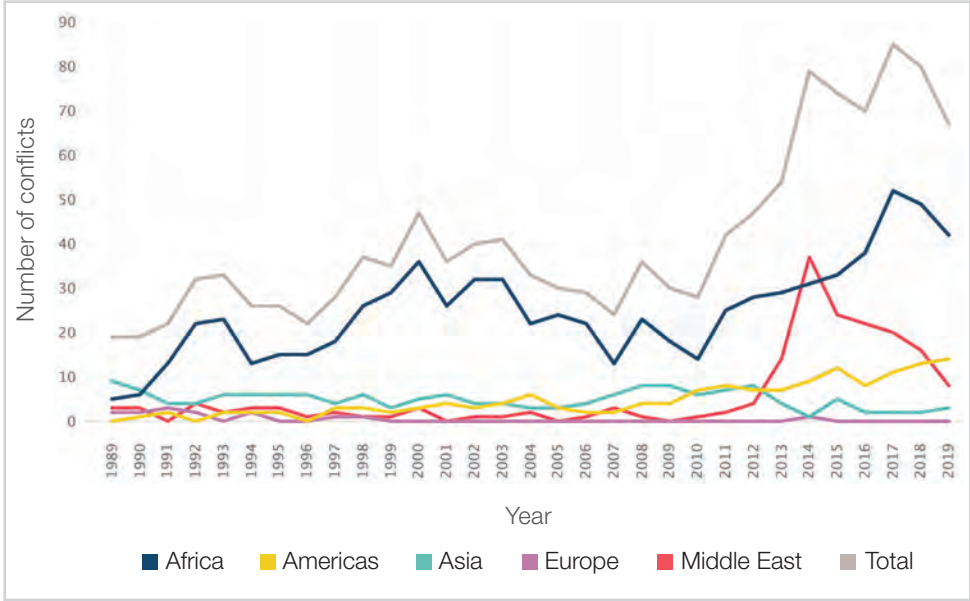
Source: Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research – Conflict Barometer

The ubiquity of violent conflicts in Africa is further displayed by the numerous peace support operations, including those by the AU – such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), deployments by regional organisations and coalitions such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), as well as operations originating from bilateral security arrangements, currently on the continent. The UN has currently deployed seven of its 14 peacekeeping missions in Africa, compared to nine out of 16 in 2013.<sup>13</sup> In the graph on page 7 it is notable that non-state conflicts spiralled from 28 in 2010 to 85 in 2017.

### Sources of African armed conflicts

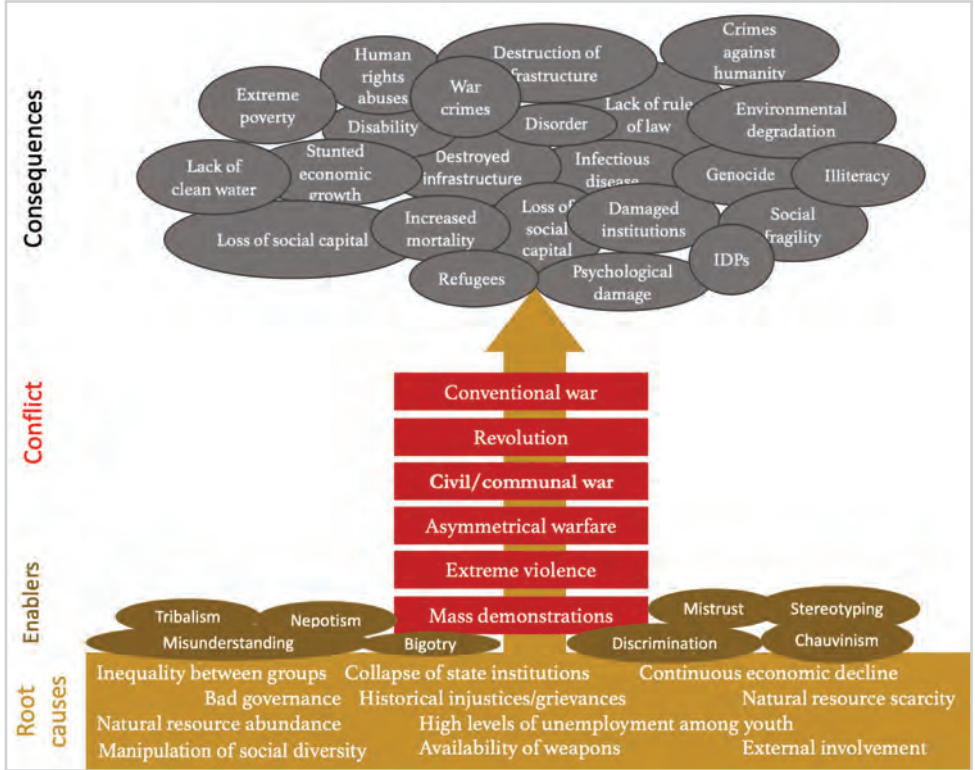
Conflicts and violence, as the conflict tree shows (Figure 2), are traceable to state mismanagement, misgovernance, high-level corruption, historical injustices and grievances, poor handling of electoral processes and social diversities, incumbents manipulating political processes or constitutional orders, foreign interference, etc. The root causes of conflicts, when fuelled by tribalism, nepotism, bigotry, chauvinism, discrimination and stereotyping, have led to public economic downturns, disorder and violence.

Figure 1: Non-state conflicts in Africa between 1989 and 2019



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCPD)

Figure 2: Conflict tree



Source: Authors

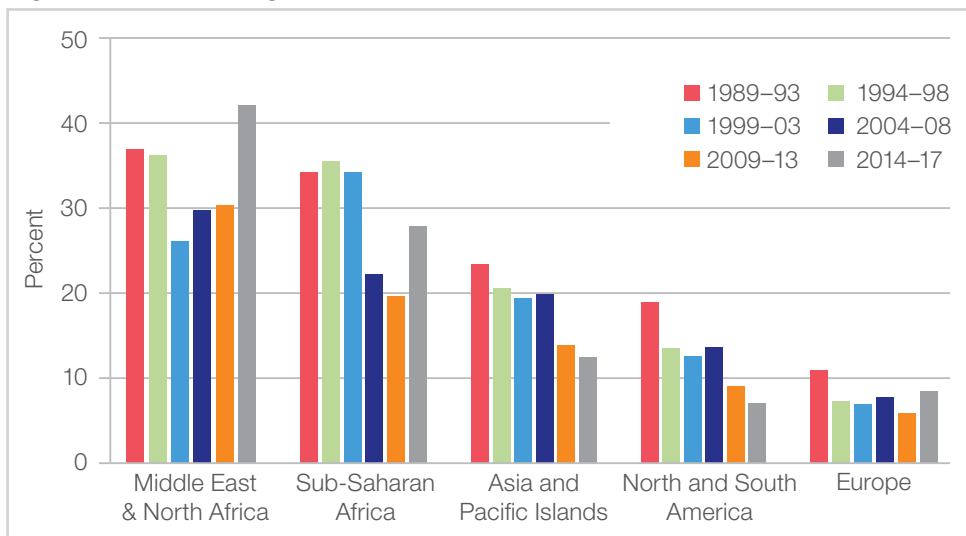
At its 601<sup>st</sup> meeting held on 30 May 2016, the PSC:

... stressed the need to address the structural causes of violent conflicts in Africa, which could be linked to governance deficits ... In the same context, Council reiterated that building strong, responsive and accountable state institutions at the local and national levels that deliver essential services, as well as ensuring inclusive political processes and economic empowerment and opportunities, rule of law and public security, are key to preventing conflicts and in consolidating democracy and peace-building gains.<sup>14</sup>

## Violence in Africa compared to other regions

Violent conflicts in Africa over borders (mainly internal), ethnicity, political stalemates, contestation of resources, extremist ideologies, etc. are marked by their intensity, nature and geographic distribution. Statistics from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) (Figure 3) shows that if North African countries are included with sub-Saharan Africa, then Africa was one of the most violent regions in the world between 1989 and 2017.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 3: Selected regions – share of countries in conflict**



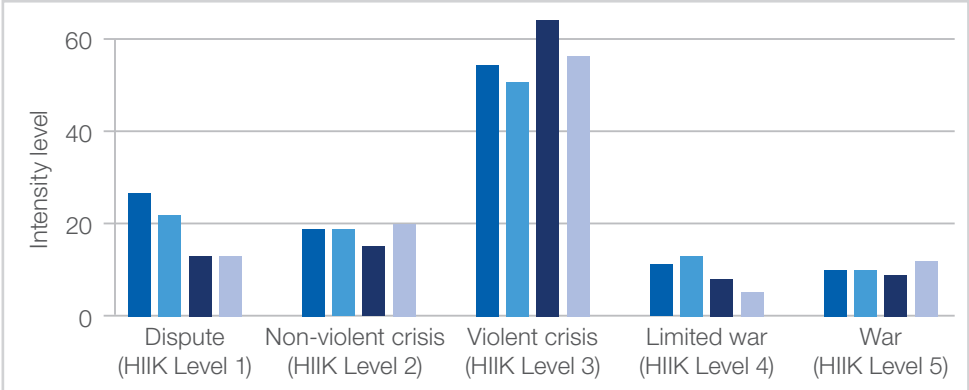
Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)  
<https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/REO/AFR/2019/April/English/ch2.ashx>

Note: The figure shows the share of country-years in conflict in each time period.

According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC), the intensity of a conflict can be understood as an ‘attribute of the sum of conflict measures in a specific conflict in a geographical area and a given space of time.’<sup>16</sup> The intensity of a given conflict can be assessed at the level of dispute, non-violent crisis, violent crisis, limited war, and war, and is dynamic and multifaceted. Low-intensity conflicts can easily escalate to large-scale civil wars.

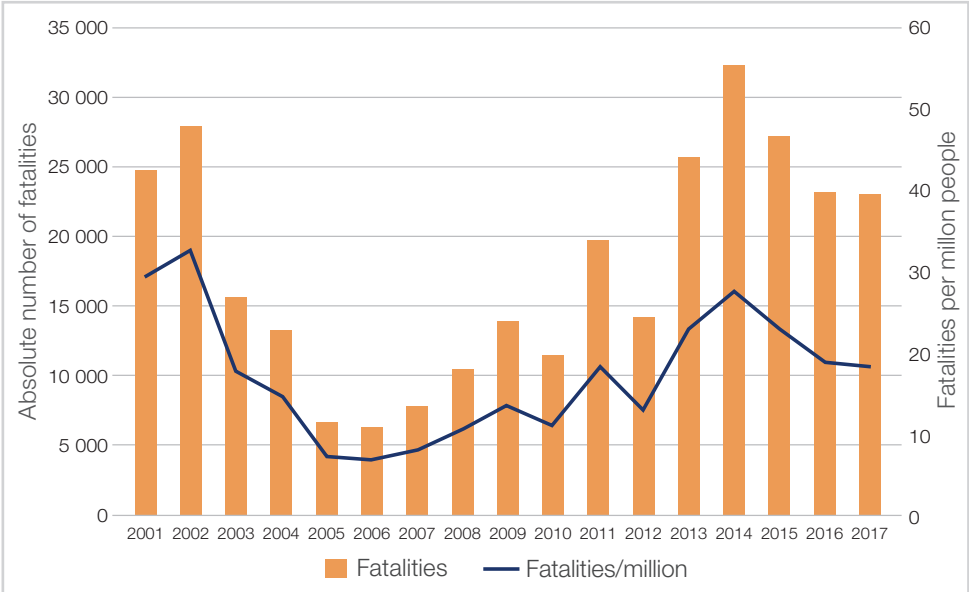
Some conflicts are persistent, others remain at consistent levels over long periods of time, while others heighten and become more volatile in short periods of time. The severity of a conflict depends on how it is managed. Identifying the intensity of a conflict is key to its eventual management. Understanding the indicators plays a major role in preventing future conflicts. Africa has experienced all these variations of conflict, their fluctuations and resultant consequences with the most pervasive being violent crises (Figure 4). From 2013–2017, the absolute number of fatalities in African violent conflicts averaged 27 000 (Figure 5).

**Figure 4: Conflict intensity in Africa, 2014–2017**



Source: Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research – Conflict Barometer

**Figure 5: Number of fatalities as a result of conflict in Africa, 2001–2017**



Source: ACLED, population from UNPD in IFs v 7.33. (Jakkie Cilliers, Violence in Africa trends report: <https://issafrica.org/research/africa-report/violence-in-africa-trends-drivers-and-prospects-to-2023>)

Violence originating from conflicts in Africa has exacted heavy social, economic and political tolls on nations and regions. African countries have incurred billions of US dollars each year in destroyed infrastructure, disrupted livelihoods, etc. Unfortunately there is no definitive study on direct and indirect annual costs of gun violence in Africa.

In order for the campaign to resonate with the people, they will need to have a picture of peace dividends of a violence-free society. This will require an economic analysis of conflict and the broader costs of gun violence as a way of understanding the benefits of a conflict-free Africa.

## Prevalence of small arms in Africa

In communiqué PSC/PR/COMM(DCCCXXIV) adopted at its 824<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 5 February 2019, the PSC noted that ‘the illicit flow of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons (SALW), to non-state actors contributes significantly towards exacerbating insecurity and violence in various parts of Africa, thereby undermining social cohesion, public security, socio-economic development and the effective functioning of state institutions’.

The prevalence of small arms and light weapons in Africa has been a key driver of violence which has undermined ‘social cohesion, public security, socio-economic development and the effective functioning of state institutions.’<sup>17</sup> According to a 2018 report of the Small Arms Survey (see Table 2), more than 40 million firearms are currently in the hands of various civilian actors in Africa, including individuals, businesses and non-state armed groups.

Of this number only about 15% are known to have been registered, while about 16 043 800 are unregistered with the status of the rest still unclear. The total number in civilian hands compared to the estimated fewer than 11 million small arms held by armed forces and law enforcement agencies on the continent implies that about 80% of small arms in circulation on the continent are in civilian hands.<sup>18</sup> Figures 8 and 9 show small arms’ holding across the continent’s sub-regions.

**Table 2: Distribution of civilian firearms by sub-region, 2017**

UN subregion*	Population	Number of civilian-held firearms	Civilian-held firearms per 100 population
Africa total	1 246 505 000	40 009 000	3.2
Eastern Africa	416 676 000	7 802 000	1.9
Middle Africa	161 237 000	4 981 000	3.1
Northern Africa	232 186 000	10 241 000	4.4
Southern Africa	63 854 000	6 012 000	9.4
Western Africa	372 551 000	10 972 000	2.9

Source: Small Arms Survey

There are currently three major sources of arms across the continent. These are outlined below.

## Foreign arms suppliers

According to a 2018 report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), weapons importation by African states decreased by about 6.5% over the past decade.<sup>19</sup> Defence spending, however, increased among North African countries with Algeria accounting for about 56% of African arms imports and Morocco about 15%.

Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia alone accounted for about 75% of Africa's import over the period with a significant increase in purchases (about 20%) between 2009 and 2013, and 2014 and 2018. Within this continental outlook, Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, Cameroon and Senegal accounted for more than half of imports into sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>20</sup>

The greater percentage of imports to the continent were sourced from Russia (49%), the United States (15%), China (10%), France (7.8%) and Germany (7.7%). Ironically, four of the five top exporters to Africa were permanent members of the UN Security Council, with Germany being a major funder of the AU's STGIA2020. Russian weapons and military hardware imports to Africa are estimated to be about \$4.6 billion yearly with more than \$50 billion worth of contract portfolio.<sup>21</sup>

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Of the more than 40 million firearms in the hands of civilians, only about 15% are known to have been registered

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In 2019, Russia had military cooperation agreements with more than 30 African countries to supply them with arms.<sup>22</sup> During the inaugural Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi, attended by representatives of all 55 African states including 43 presidents, on 23 and 24 October 2019, Russia also exhibited weapons.

These included an S-400 missile defence system and other air defence systems; multi-role fighters of the Sukhoi Su-30 family; MiG-29M/M2 multi-role frontline fighters; Yakovlev Yak-130 combat and training planes; an Mi-171 Sh military transport helicopter; Mi-35M and Ansat combat and transport helicopters; BTR-80A and BTR-82A armoured personnel carriers; and Tigr special police vehicles.

## Government-manufactured arms

There are at least 20 African countries producing, and more than 10 selling, weapons. It is notable that 45% of Africa's top 11 arms manufacturers are in Eastern Africa, 27% in Southern Africa, 18% in Western Africa, and 10% in North

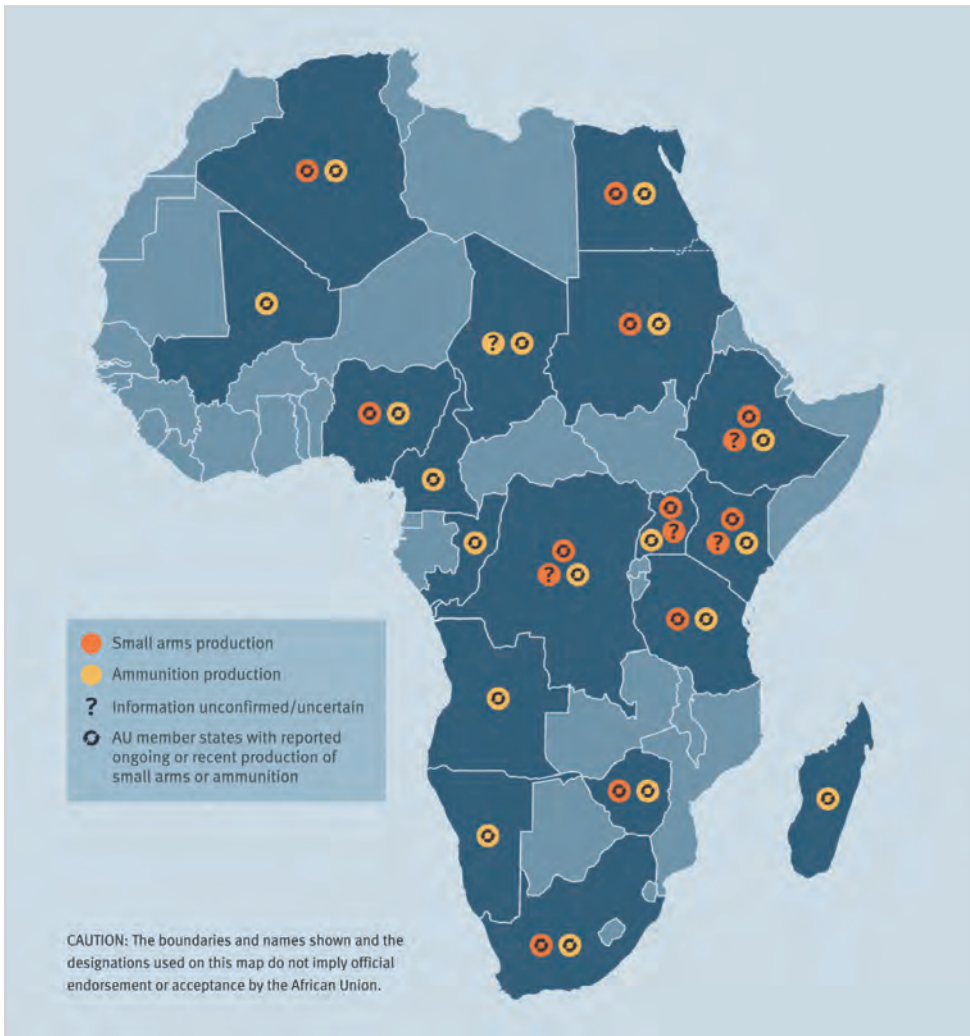


Africa. But the top arms manufacturer in Africa is South Africa. Between 2014 and 2018 it supplied Angola, Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, Swaziland and Zambia.

With some of South Africa's 300 major industries facing difficult financial times due to a reduction of government procurement, they are positioning themselves as promoters of national economic growth and development and to expand into the African market through government-to-government contracting.

The South African Aerospace Maritime and Defence Export Council (SAAMDEC) has promoted its weapons in Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.<sup>23</sup>

### Map 1: Arms production in Africa



Source: Small Arms Survey

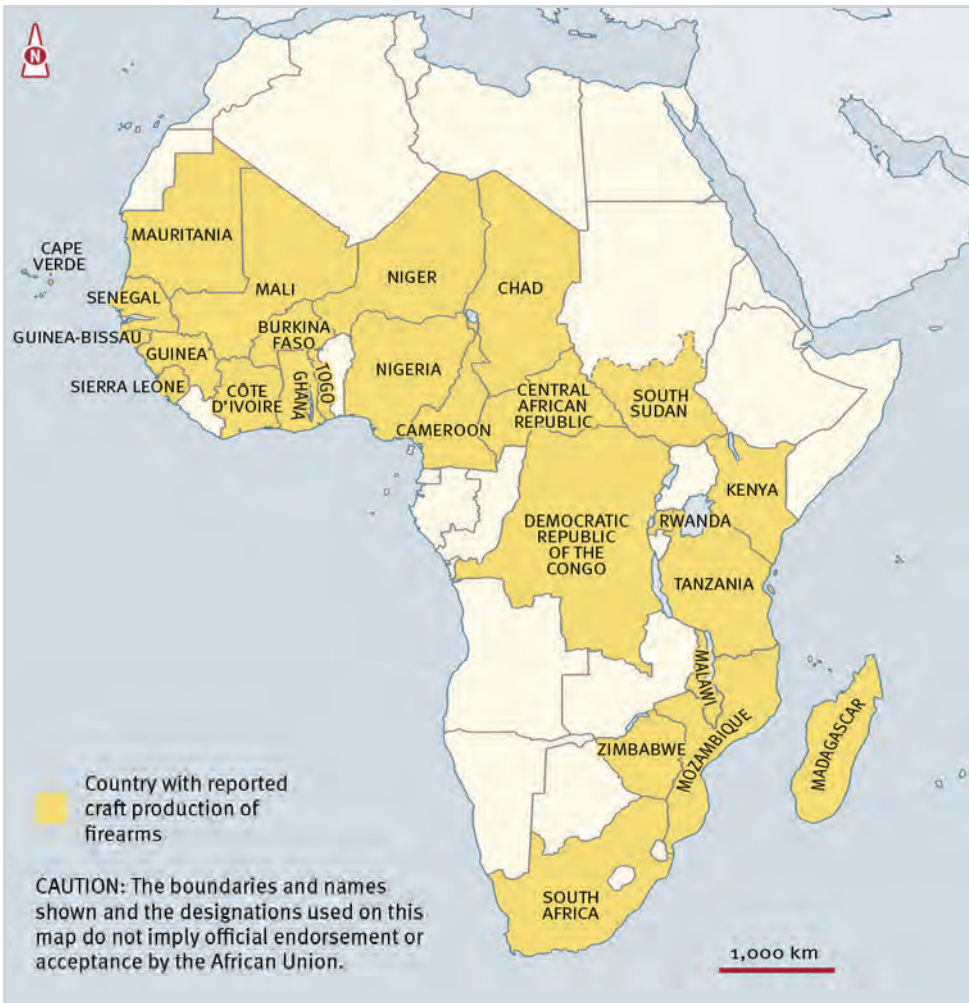


## Locally manufactured weapons<sup>24</sup>

There is a thriving ‘production of firearms by local artisans’ in at least 26 African countries. These homemade weapons, though rudimentary, are functional replicas of popular weapons such as AK-47s.<sup>25</sup> Although these weapons are mostly sold to hunters, some have been trafficked across regional borders or have been used by criminals. Besides cross-border arms flows, locally manufactured weapons contribute significantly to illicit arms in these countries.

In most African countries, blacksmiths double as gunsmiths<sup>26</sup> and account for a large proportion of locally produced firearms.<sup>27</sup> These homemade guns are mostly used in robberies, pastoralist-farmer violence, inter-communal conflicts, political banditry and other forms of violent and criminal activities.

Map 2: Craft production of weapons in Africa



Source: Small Arms Survey

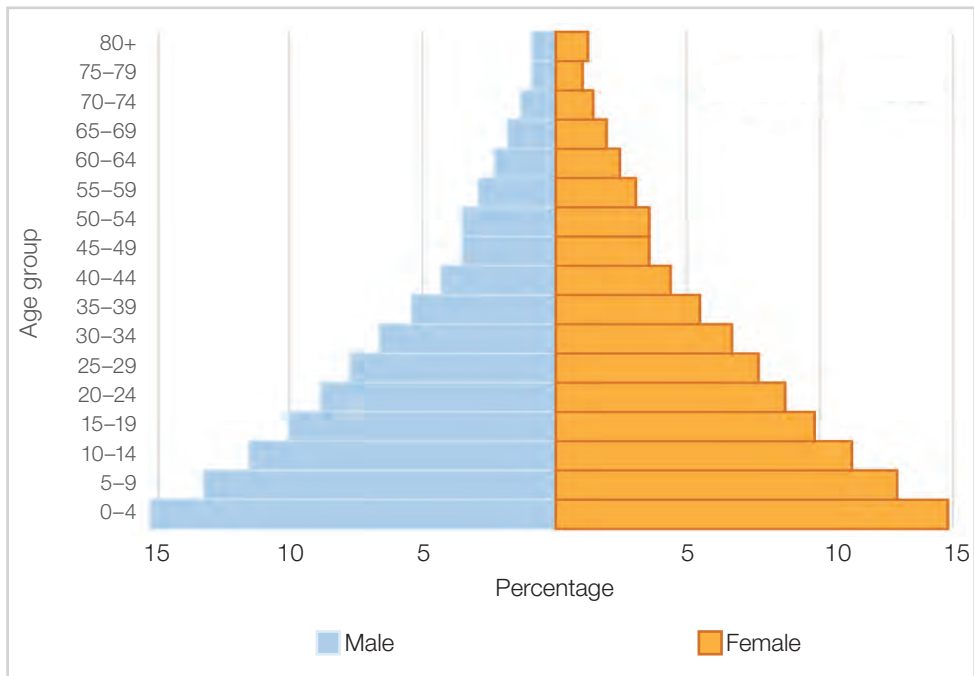
It is estimated that 60% to 90% of armed robberies and acts of banditry in West Africa are carried out using locally made weapons. Due to the clandestine but lucrative nature of local weapon manufacturing, monitoring and regulating their production remains a major problem. Operationally they remain a reliable alternative to commercial weapons for criminals, insurgent groups and private citizens, especially in situations where popular imported options are not readily available or are too expensive.<sup>28</sup>

### Youth bulge and unemployment

Africa’s youth bulge is a cause for concern if it is considered that between 2014 and 2018, youth unemployment has averaged 12% against an average of 6% for adults even though the continent’s population is predominantly young (see figure 6). According to 2015 UN estimates, the more than 226 million youth in Africa is expected to increase by 42% by 2030 and continue to grow rapidly throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see Figure 7).<sup>29</sup> The dangers this poses given concurrently rising unemployment levels is enormous.

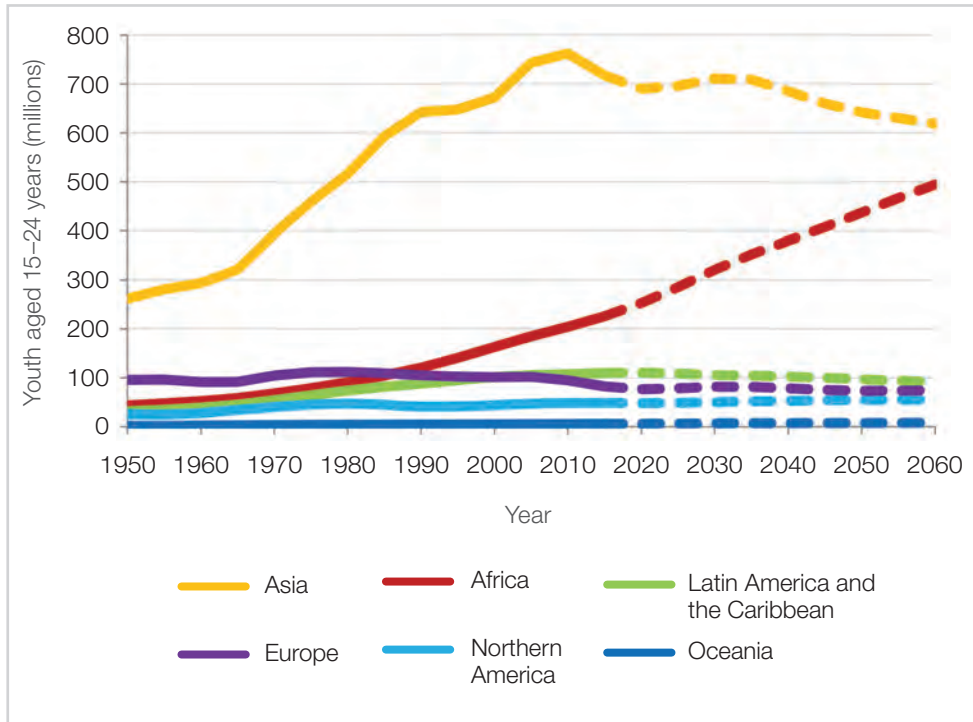
According to Andrews Atta-Asamoah, high levels of unemployment among young people expose them to easy recruitment for ‘religious indoctrination, radicalisation, political polarisation or ethnic manipulation’ which are a primary recipe for ‘destabilisation and political instability’ in many African states.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 6: Africa’s population pyramid, 2015**



Source: UNECA, 2016<sup>31</sup>

**Figure 7: Projected growth of Africa's 15–24 year olds, compared to other regions of the world**



Source: UN Population Division, 2015<sup>32</sup>

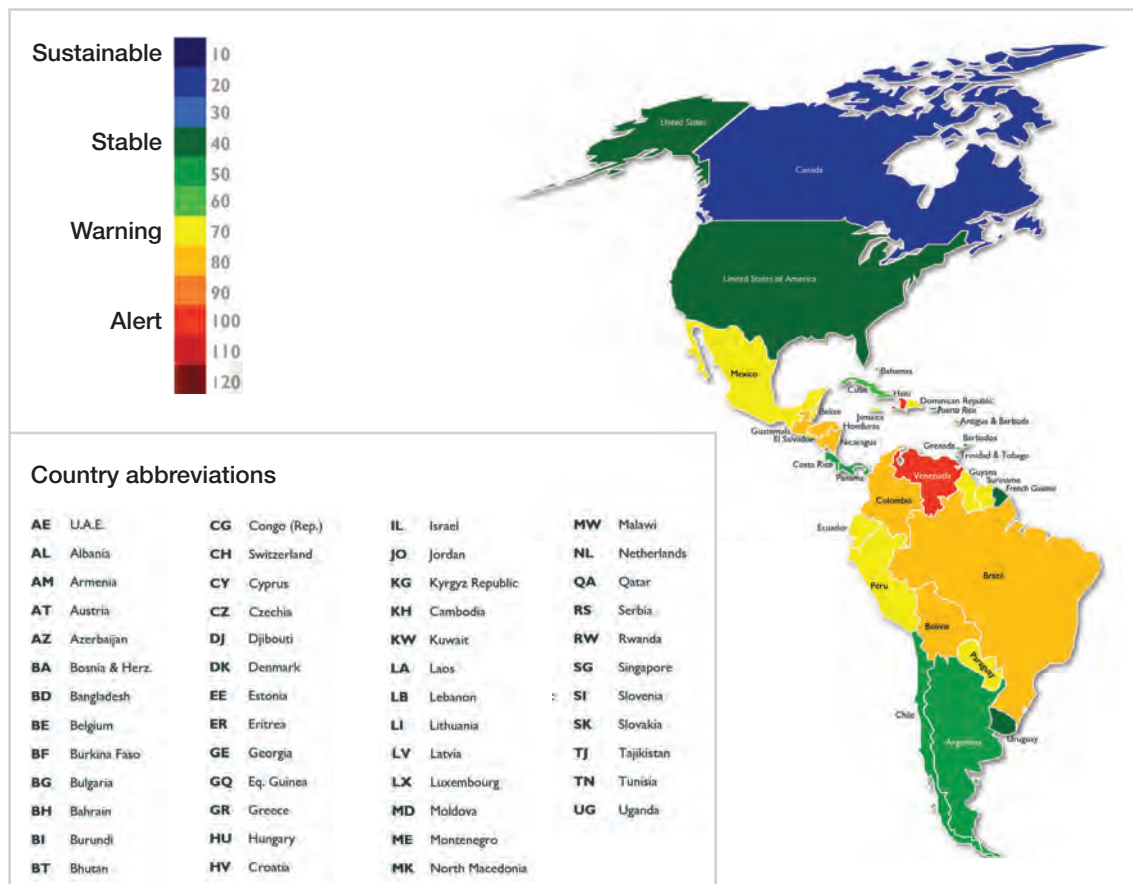
## Governance challenges

Poor governance is one of the major obstacles to Africa achieving its set socio-economic and development goals. When states are poorly run, citizens are deprived of their essential rights, corruption is institutionalised, and states neglect their primary responsibilities of providing public goods and services, political violence can easily become an instrument for seeking redress of grievances. Inevitably the state is weakened, and is likely to collapse, with catastrophic consequences.

Map 3 on page 16 depicts Africa as comprising the most fragile states in the world. Apart from Botswana, Mauritius and the Seychelles, all of Africa's countries are on the watch lists of weak, failing or failed states.

Conflicts and governance in Africa are linked through the use of violence by various actors to settle political disputes, injustice and inequality. Governance institutions are best placed to mediate conflicts and promote order, sustenance, stability and development. Data from the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) shows that some aspects of governance on the continent improved between 2013 and 2017 while others worsened.<sup>33</sup>

Map 3: Fragility in the world, 2020



Source: The Fund for Peace: Fragile States Index

As illustrated in Figure 8, average annual trends in the areas of rule of law, infrastructure, health, gender, transparency and accountability, participation and welfare improved between 2013 and 2017. But they registered significant declines in the trend of personal safety, public management, education, rural development, protection of human rights, business environment and national security.

The 2018 IAG found that governance performance improved in 34 African countries in the past decade. This implies that about 71.6% of African citizens lived in contexts with some level of improved governance.<sup>34</sup> An average of one in four Africans (27.2%) living in 18 countries, however, experienced a decline in governance in the past decade. This is a worrying trend as the continent approaches the deadline for one of its key goals.

When Table 3 (page 18) is analysed in conjunction with Table 1 (page 5) and Map 1 (page 12), the data reveals that countries mainly in the Eastern and Central Africa regions face the severest governance challenges on the continent and are also the most fragile and engulfed in violent conflicts.

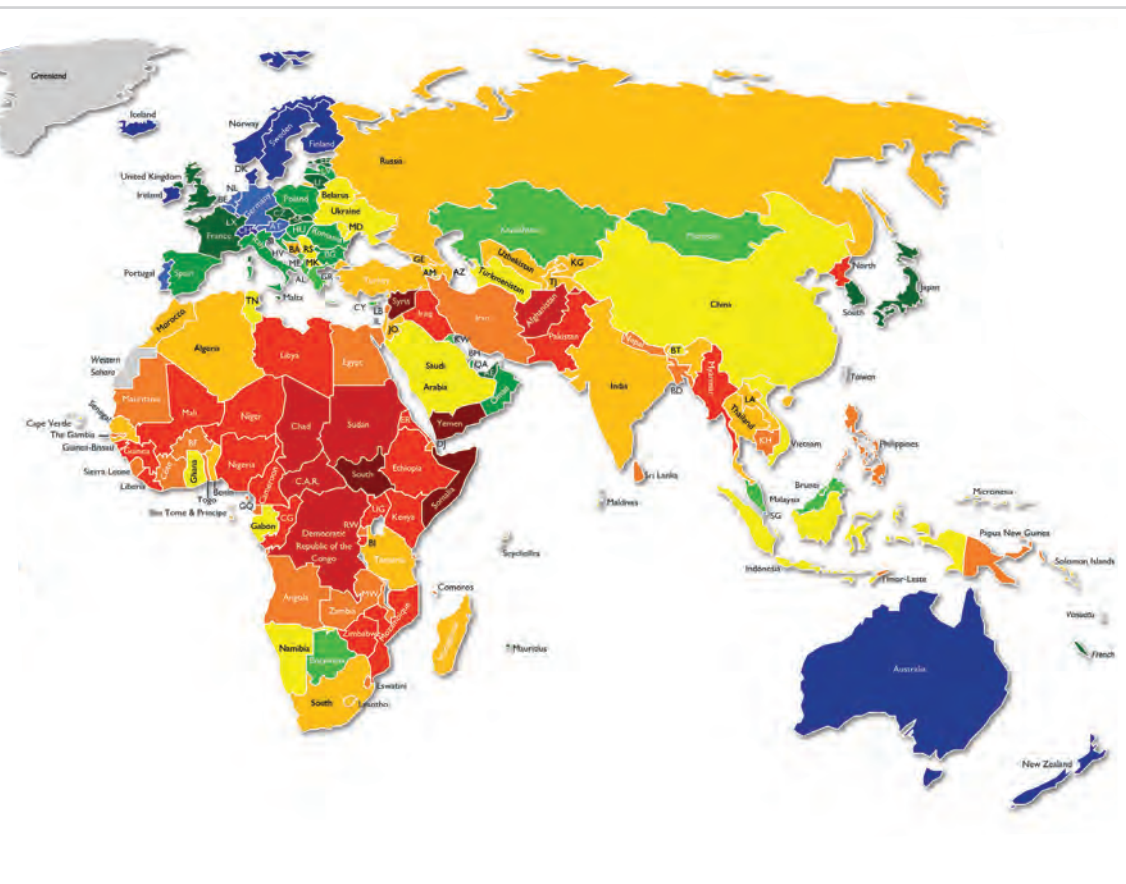
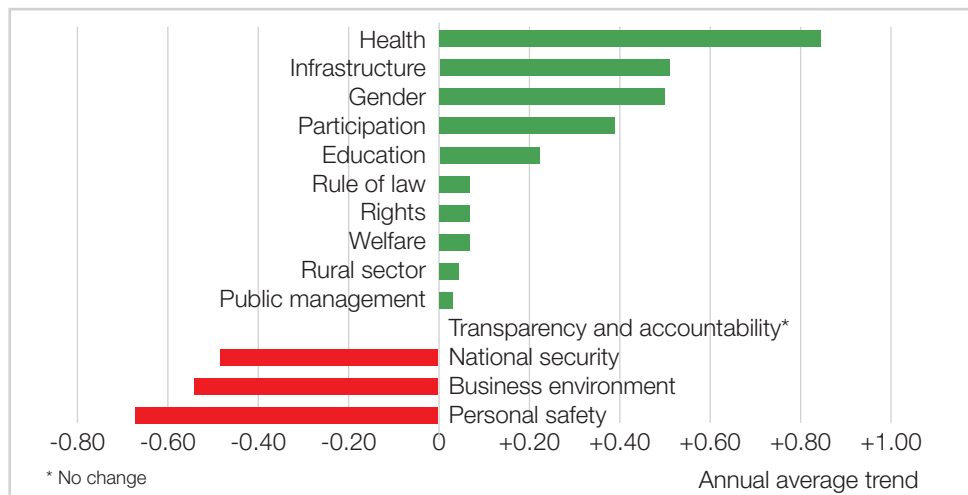


Figure 8: Annual trends in sub-categories of governance



Source: 2018 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)

**Table 3: Overall governance status of African countries**

RANK/54	Country	2017 score / 100.0	Change 2008–2017
1 <sup>st</sup>	Mauritius	79.5	-0.7
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Seychelles	73.2	+4.0
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Cabo Verde	71.1	-0.8
4 <sup>th</sup>	Namibia	68.6	+3.3
5 <sup>th</sup>	Botswana	68.5	-3.7
6 <sup>th</sup>	Ghana	68.1	+0.9
7 <sup>th</sup>	South Africa	68.0	-0.6
8 <sup>th</sup>	Rwanda	64.3	+5.9
9 <sup>th</sup>	Tunisia	63.5	+6.9
10 <sup>th</sup>	Senegal	63.3	+5.9
11 <sup>th</sup>	Kenya	59.8	+6.1
12 <sup>th</sup>	São Tomé and Príncipe	59.2	+2.3
13 <sup>th</sup>	Benin	58.7	-0.1
14 <sup>th</sup>	Tanzania	58.5	+1.3
15 <sup>th</sup>	Morocco	58.4	+7.3
16 <sup>th</sup>	Burkina Faso	57.1	+4.8
16 <sup>th</sup>	Lesotho	57.1	0.0
18 <sup>th</sup>	Zambia	56.2	+1.8
19 <sup>th</sup>	Malawi	55.8	-1.4
20 <sup>th</sup>	Uganda	55.0	+1.4
21 <sup>st</sup>	The Gambia	54.9	+3.0
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Côte d'Ivoire	54.5	+12.7
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Liberia	51.6	+4.8
24 <sup>th</sup>	Niger	51.2	+5.6
25 <sup>th</sup>	Mozambique	51.0	-3.0
26 <sup>th</sup>	Sierra Leone	50.9	+0.5
27 <sup>th</sup>	Algeria	50.2	-1.3
28 <sup>th</sup>	Mali	50.1	-4.0
29 <sup>th</sup>	Egypt	49.9	+3.9
30 <sup>th</sup>	Togo	49.1	+5.2
31 <sup>st</sup>	Madagascar	49.0	-4.4
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Swaziland	48.7	+1.4
33 <sup>rd</sup>	Nigeria	47.9	+2.8



RANK/54	Country	2017 score / 100.0	Change 2008–2017
34 <sup>th</sup>	Comoros	47.5	+3.9
35 <sup>th</sup>	Ethiopia	46.5	+2.6
36 <sup>th</sup>	Cameroon	46.2	-0.3
37 <sup>th</sup>	Guinea	45.9	+6.1
38 <sup>th</sup>	Djibouti	45.1	+0.8
39 <sup>th</sup>	Zimbabwe	44.7	+10.8
40 <sup>th</sup>	Mauritania	43.4	+1.2
41 <sup>st</sup>	Gabon	42.4	-0.1
42 <sup>nd</sup>	Guinea-Bissau	40.2	+0.9
43 <sup>rd</sup>	Burundi	39.8	-5.0
43 <sup>rd</sup>	Congo	39.8	+0.7
45 <sup>th</sup>	Angola	38.3	+0.7
46 <sup>th</sup>	Chad	35.4	+4.6
47 <sup>th</sup>	DRC	32.1	-2.8
48 <sup>th</sup>	Equatorial Guinea	30.9	-0.1
49 <sup>th</sup>	Sudan	30.8	+1.4
50 <sup>th</sup>	CAR	29.5	-2.5
51 <sup>st</sup>	Eritrea	29.3	-2.9
52 <sup>nd</sup>	Libya	28.3	-15.6
53 <sup>rd</sup>	South Sudan	19.3	.
54 <sup>th</sup>	Somalia	13.6	+6.0
<b>African average</b>		<b>49.9</b>	<b>+1.0</b>

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

In communiqué PSC/PR/COMM (DCCLXXVI) adopted at its 776<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 24 May 2018, the PSC urged AU 'Member States to redouble their efforts in the fight against corruption and promotion of good governance and high standards of professionalism, particularly, within the defence and security sectors.' In communiqué PSC/PR/COMM (DCCCXXIV) adopted at its 824<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 5 February 2019, the PSC:

... stressed the importance for all Member States to take effective measures to address in [a] holistic manner the root causes and drivers of violent conflicts, including marginalization of certain groups in society, poverty, underdevelopment, youth unemployment, corruption and mismanagement of natural resources.

After noting ‘the nexus between governance deficits, in particular, diversity management, and violent conflicts in the continent’, the PSC ‘underscored the importance of simultaneous implementation of’ APSA and AGA; ‘stressed the importance of ... all relevant stakeholders commit(ing) themselves to the full implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020’; and ‘requested the Commission to expedite the finalization of the Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism of the Master Roadmap and urgently submit it to Council for its consideration and action as may be appropriate.’

## **Corruption and democratic governance in Africa**

Gilbert Khadiagala describes corruption in African governance as a scourge ‘undermining the rule of law, sapping resources away from productive activities, and discouraging investment that would drive economic growth and reduce poverty.’<sup>35</sup> It has weakened state efficacy, corroded the capacity of governance institutions to deliver effectively and undermined any efforts meant to benefit the continent’s population. Notwithstanding, Transparency International’s 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) showed that only eight of the 49 countries assessed in Africa scored anything above 43 out of 100 on the index.<sup>36</sup> At a regional level, the average CPI was 32 out of 100.

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Africa is neither closer to silencing the guns  
nor eliminating the conditions that contribute  
to the possession and use of guns

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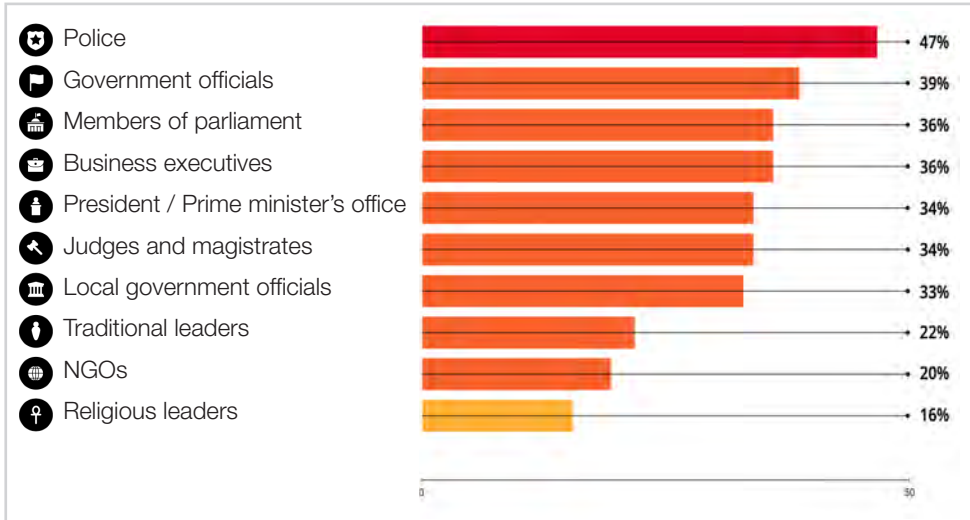
This trend occurred despite 2018 having been declared the AU’s African Anti-Corruption Year, reflecting continental commitment to address graft, but a failure to translate the declaration into concrete steps to combat the problem. Notwithstanding the numerous commitments by African states to various anti-corruption conventions and reform initiatives, graft in Africa continues to worsen even in countries with better governance.<sup>37</sup>

In the past few years, several African countries including Burundi, Congo, Mozambique, Liberia and Ghana have seen a significant drop in their corruption perception performance. The performance of key public institutions, particularly the police, in this trend has not improved.

Detailing Africans’ perception about key governance institutions, Transparency International observed in a 2019 Global Corruption Barometer report (see Figure 9) that police, government officials, parliamentarians, business executives and actors



**Figure 9: Perception of institutional corruption in Africa, 2019**



Source: Transparency International/Afrobarometer, 2019<sup>39</sup>

in the presidency of their countries are all corrupt to different degrees.<sup>38</sup> See Figure 9 for other key sectors perceived to be corrupt.

Figure 9 demonstrates the continent's perception regarding institutional corruption.<sup>40</sup> The above analysis aptly demonstrates that Africa is neither closer to silencing the guns nor eliminating the conditions that contribute to the possession and use of guns in most countries.

The above analysis aptly demonstrates that Africa is neither closer to silencing the guns nor eliminating the conditions that contribute to the possession and use of guns in most countries.



## Chapter 2

# What has silencing the guns achieved?

Since the launch of the initiative in 2013, there have been important efforts towards achieving its objectives at the national, regional and continental levels. This section discusses key efforts the AU has made in providing leadership for the initiative at a continental level.

### Identification of tasks under the initiative

The Lusaka Master Roadmap, adopted in 2016, translated the commitment to silence the guns into a number of component challenges. It outlines 53 practical steps for addressing the identified challenges and more than 100 key ways to work towards overcoming the challenges. It also assigned the major institutions, actors and member states whose work was supposed to contribute to silencing the guns in Africa within the framework of the initiative.

Due to the lack of clarity of the concept of silencing the guns, the nature of the tasks in their expanded form help African policymakers understand what achieving the goals to silence the guns entails. This should guide existing oversight mechanisms and institutions to identify key actions and entities to partner and engage with in their efforts. It is also important in guiding the actions of national and regional contributions as well as securing the buy-in of civil society organisations (CSOs) and external development partners. For an organisation like the AU, with many organs and internal and external coordination challenges, such clarity is fundamental to the effective coordination of interventions.

The 2016 Master Roadmap is a basic building block that can effectively translate the wishes of the silencing the guns initiators into a realistic action plan that can provide the basis for implementation. (Although it doesn't comprehensively identify all the fundamental issues that should be dealt with in achieving peace on the continent.) Why it took more than three years after the declaration of the initiative for the AU to adopt a roadmap to guide implementation however remains a question.

## Structures to implement the initiative

Since the adoption of the 2016 Master Roadmap, numerous appointments have been made at a continental level to create the structures needed for implementation, popularisation and diplomatic representation towards silencing the guns. Notable in these efforts are:

- The establishment of the STGIA2020 Coordinating Unit in the office of the Chairperson of the AU.
- The appointment of Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra as the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa on 5 October 2017.
- The appointment of Ambassador Hadiza Mustapha as the Adviser on Peace and Security to the Chairperson.
- The appointment of Ambassador Osman Keh Kamara as the Special Adviser to the Commissioner for Peace and Security on Silencing the Guns.
- The appointment of Special Envoys and Special Representatives to conflicts in South Sudan, Sudan, the DRC, Mali, Tunisia and Western Sahara.
- The establishment of AU Liaison Offices in Algeria, Burundi, Chad, the CAR, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia,<sup>41</sup> Libya, Madagascar, South Sudan, Sudan, Western Sahara and Somalia.
- The appointment of a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) with the mandate of promoting women's voices in conflict prevention, management and resolution in January 2014.<sup>42</sup>
- On 4 July 2017, the AU Assembly of Heads of State (AU Summit) established FemWise-Africa (Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation) to 'strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)'.<sup>43</sup>

## Partnerships for peace in Africa

The AU's diplomatic outreach towards finding African solutions to African problems has also increased. This is evident in existing and emerging attempts to get intra-African commitment to reform the AU. It can also be seen in continental engagement on issues such as the role of youth and women in peace and security, and in the broader attempt to mobilise collective efforts to address insecurity. Adopting the AU's reform recommendations and ongoing implementation, for example, will bring about the effectiveness and efficiency needed to achieve Agenda 2063.

The AU's relationship with the UN, despite its challenges, has become more focused. The signing of the 2017 Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership

in Peace and Security and subsequent efforts to improve the working relationship between the two organisations at the technical, operational and strategic levels have benefited the broader goals of silencing the guns.

The AU's partnership with the EU, which has since 2017 seen the establishment of a series of joint annual ministerial meetings, also shows the extent of the AU's outreach in seeking to harness external partnerships to address insecurity in Africa. This has enhanced both continent-to-continent partnerships that can address mutual threats to international peace and security, and broader global cooperation in addressing insecurity in Africa.<sup>44</sup>

## **Improved continental response frameworks**

The AU's response to insecurity in Africa hinges on its response architectures (APSA and AGA) and the evolving normative frameworks guiding response decision making. Though not fully operating, APSA's key components have made commendable progress since the declaration of the silencing the guns initiative in 2013.

The Panel of the Wise, FemWise-Africa, the Continental Structural Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) frameworks, the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) (which will eventually help broker peace deals and improve the AU's mediation capacities), an electoral observation and monitoring mechanism and using the good offices of the various AU special envoys including the AU Youth Envoy and representatives have all played important roles in preventing conflicts in Africa.

The AU has also increased its focus on post-conflict reconstruction. The AU Summit-mandated Africa Governance Report is produced by the African Peer Review Mechanism. Its inaugural report was published in 2019.

Continental and regional capacity has been strengthened under peace support operations through deployments such as AMISOM, active involvement in the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA), the MNJTF operation against Boko Haram and G5-Sahel and the use of sanctions to enforce adherence to norms.

## **Progress in specific conflict cases**

After six years since the campaign was launched and three since its roadmap was adopted, the following can be cited as successes in peace efforts: the Ethiopia-Eritrea peace accord, the institution of a transitional government in South Sudan, the Sudan peace deal, management of the 2016-2017 Gambia crisis, and mediation efforts in Madagascar and the CAR. However the effectiveness of these agreements will be judged by their success in establishing institutions for good governance, rule of law, respect for human rights and the non-recurrence of the conflicts – which are critical for peace.

## Improved efforts to curb the spread of SALWs

In response to Africa's SALWs proliferation challenges, the AU launched a campaign for the collection of illicit weapons circulating in member states in September of each year until 2020. Known as African Amnesty Month (AAM), the initiative was launched in 2017 as part of the AU's attempt to implement the provisions of the Master Roadmap.

The AU has since regularly enjoined member states and RECs and RMs to intensify the initiative's implementation by popularising the removal of illicit weapons. In support of these efforts, the AUC undertook a mapping of the proliferation of illicit weapons across Africa. The recommendations of this study were subsequently endorsed by the 18 July 2019 meeting of the PSC.<sup>45</sup>

The AU's Assembly of Heads of State have called for the naming and shaming of anyone involved in the supply, financing and storage of illicit weapons. It has tasked the PSC to provide support for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) processes in member states emerging from conflicts.

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The AU has called for the naming and shaming of anyone involved in supplying, financing and storing illicit weapons

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The AUC's role is to support AAM through experience sharing and financial aid. According to AU sources, the AUC has developed a preliminary guiding document on the technical and operational implementation of the AAM. The initiative, however, appears to have made little progress among member states. There is no indication that the AUC has provided financial and technical support to any member state since the launch of AAM. Member states are also not reporting on the implementation of the initiative, as required.

These few notable strides made towards realising STGIA2020 are encouraging. Nonetheless, as illustrated in Table 1, the incessant sounds of guns across the continent point to the arduous task ahead. They are a call to renewed urgency in achieving the silencing of guns.

African leaders need to appreciate that solving African problems requires help from international partners. While embracing the concept of 'African solutions to African problems', Africa needs international support. It is only through forging lasting international relationships that Africa's perspective on ending endemic armed conflict will change. The international community should also not shun their responsibilities by deferring to the 'African solutions' line since some of Africa's problems have roots outside the continent.

## Chapter 3

# Implementation challenges

Despite marginal achievements to date, Africa's declaration to silence the guns is an ambitious endeavour. The continent is nowhere near to being a gun- or conflict-free region in 2020 as the declaration envisioned. This is clear in the above cursory assessment of the current state of peace and governance on the continent.

As Khadiagala says: 'The salient puzzle is why, despite considerable investment in preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction and development, some states and regions remain engulfed in endless wars.'<sup>46</sup> He asks why it is that 'despite the proliferation of normative frameworks on democratic governance, popular participation, and the management of public resources, parts of the continent are mired in conflicts stemming from dual democratic and development deficits.'<sup>47</sup>

Khadiagala asserts that 'the preliminary step to find means to silence the guns and end all wars' is for Africans to engage in 'honest dialogues' that 'acknowledge' and take 'ownership of (their) weaknesses.'<sup>48</sup> In a nutshell, the categories of factors outlined below have undermined the implementation of STGIA2020.

### Conceptual issues

The differences in understanding what the initiative is and entails has caused enormous confusion in its implementation. In its newsletter, STGIA2020 is referred to variously as a 'program', 'project', 'campaign', 'initiative' and 'plan'. Agenda 2063 refers to it as a 'flagship project' while various top AU officials have called it a branding, a slogan, a cliché, a buzzword, and a catchphrase.

A division head interviewed in the course of this study termed STGIA2020 a 'slogan more than anything else, a slogan that has failed' to address threats such as terrorism. Another official regarded it as 'a metaphor of ending violent conflicts.' Another questioned whether it really addressed the root causes of conflicts. Yet another saw it as a 'mere aspiration.' A prominent scholar referred to STGIA2020 as a 'convenient fiction.'

Although STGIA2020 is conceptualised as eliminating situational factors that impact the need for guns, such as weak policies and bad governance, rather than reducing guns alone, it is generally perceived as pursuing negative peace rather than

positive peace. Instead of ‘silencing the guns’, the AU, if really committed to ending violent conflicts, should aim at ‘burying the guns’ or ‘turning the guns into hoes’. STGIA2020 should be treated as a political solution rather than an operational initiative that seeks to disarm and destroy weapons. Most actions involving arms are politically instigated.

Is a no-gun society a peaceful one? There is a school of thought that ‘violence is ingrained in human nature, however, and guns are by no means a prerequisite for conflict.’<sup>49</sup> To illustrate this, they argue that the Rwandan genocide was carried out mainly without guns, but rather with machetes. Hence armed violence will continue being a feature of human life even if all guns were to be ‘silenced’ or eliminated from society. They argue that just as humanity created weapons such as spears, swords and bows from their primitive environment, so will they invent new forms of weapons for warfare even if all weapons are completely obliterated.<sup>50</sup>

It is not enough to only address people’s motives for acquiring and using guns, since they will pick up other types of weapons to fight each other when they disagree, if guns are removed from society. The High Representative (HR) recognises that STGIA2020 cannot be only about cessation of violence, but also about youth and woman empowerment and structural prevention of conflicts. His dream is to ‘reach a point where there will be no bullet fired in Africa’.<sup>51</sup> Other factors to be pursued include promotion of democratic elections and a culture of peace that will usher in ‘civilised ways of resolving conflicts.’<sup>52</sup>

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### The AU's STGIA2020 Unit seems to be struggling to work with other departments, AU organs and civil society stakeholders

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If STGIA2020 is a metaphor for ‘no-violence society’, then it must be guided by a common definition of ‘violence’. According to the World Health Organization, violence is ‘the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.’<sup>53</sup>

Accordingly, in order to effectively address violence in society, measures must target perpetrators and victims. Because violence is a multilevel problem with individual, group and state perpetrators and victims, it needs to be confronted concurrently at all levels.

Although each category requires specific intervention measure(s), they should be tailored for each level as there is no ‘one size fits all’. While some forms of violence



may require the enforcement of regulations, others may require behaviour change. For instance, at the individual level, measures should include modifying behaviours that contribute to using violence (mainly with guns) to address disputes. This can be done by inculcating peace values through socialisation.

The state should also address the larger cultural, social and economic drivers of violence and other factors, including equitable access to goods, services and opportunities. STGIA2020 will have a far-reaching impact if it's framed as aiming at eliminating violence and ushering in peace dividends, rather than silencing the guns in society.

## **Internal and institutional issues**

Although the PSC developed 'a Master Roadmap of realistic, practical, time-bound implementable steps to silence the guns in Africa by 2020,'<sup>54</sup> the AU has faced operational and institutional capacity constraints to fully implement it. As noted above, the conditions for attaining a non-violent Africa, including addressing the root causes of violence, don't currently exist. However the AU has adopted mechanisms such as the APRM to 'foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, [and] sustainable development.'<sup>55</sup>

Currently not all the key response frameworks for addressing insecurity are operating. For example the African Standby Force (ASF), established in 2003, has yet to be deployed. Likewise, structures such as the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System are not fully operational in order to meet their mandates of preventing conflicts.

Full operation of these institutions has suffered, among others, due to the AU's increasing preference for 'high-level panels' and 'ad hoc arrangements' to intervene in emerging conflicts. Because of this weakness, the Master Roadmap prioritises implementing outstanding components of APSA including the full operational capability phase of the ASF.<sup>56</sup> However key structures such as the ASF are yet to be fully operational and used.

Internal AUC structures also haven't been aligned and tuned to implement STGIA2020. The STGIA2020 Unit seems to be facing challenges of working with other departments, AU organs and other stakeholders such as CSOs. It may not be possible to fully implement the STGIA2020 Master Roadmap due to AU departments elbowing each other; and little collaboration, coordination and communication across divisions and departments with mandates to implement it.

In interviews carried out between 17 and 20 September 2019, it was found out that few AU staff had positive impressions about STGIA2020. A senior AUC official

commented that before being rolled out and for the AU to spearhead the campaign across the continent, it should first silence the guns within itself.<sup>57</sup>

The STGIA2020 Unit lacks adequate human and financial resources to implement the roadmap. It is only staffed by the High Representative (HR), an operations manager and a communications officer. It was in recognition of this staff shortage that the PSC, in communiqué PSC/PR/COMM (DCCCXXIV) adopted at its 824<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 5 February 2019, requested:

... the Commission to take necessary steps towards strengthening the institutional capacity of the office of the High Representative for Silencing the Guns, with a view to enabling him to more effectively implement a successful fast-tracked Silencing the Guns Campaign, in particular, with regard to the strategic and political efforts, as well as the implementation of a Communication and Visibility Campaign.<sup>58</sup>

## Strategic issues

There isn't a common approach among the different actors currently implementing STGIA2020. This had led to different strategies being applied by the various AU departments and stakeholders. Besides confusion over the relationships between APSA, AGA and the STGIA2020 roadmaps, STAGIA2020 is being handled by the STG Unit as a campaign while AUC departments handle it as a pool of projects, when it is conceptualised in Agenda 2063 as a programme.

If it is a project, then it is 'a temporary endeavour' undertaken to create 'a unique result' with a defined start and endpoint. But if it is a programme, then it will be a combination of 'related projects managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits not available from managing the projects individually.'<sup>59</sup> And if executed as a campaign, STGIA2020 will be a planned course of action formulated to achieve defined objectives in eliminating violence in Africa. This discrepancy is what has created a strategic and operational gap.

The initiative also lacks widespread involvement. Strategic partnerships with non-governmental entities and CSOs would allow them to take ownership of its interpretation and implementation at their levels. The sense of strategic buy-in at the level of heads of state and governments hasn't been as strong as that of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) when it was launched in 2002. Its success would be better guaranteed if STGIA2020 had built in the widespread and full support of the African people.

The initiative needs African ownership, particularly by the youth, women, researchers and scholars, and to be anchored in an African paradigm that guides identification of sources and causes of violence in Africa and prescribes appropriate solutions.

## Operational issues

The coordination team won't be able to attain optimal results with the current level of staffing. It needs a full complement of people with the background, expertise, knowledge and skills on all issues under the rubric of STGIA2020. The STGIA2020 Unit has multiple tools at its disposal – the Master Roadmap, a fast-track action plan, the APSA Roadmap, AGA Roadmap, etc. But they complicate the implementation of key objectives because they haven't been harmonised in a way that speaks to their speedy realisation, neither is the required division of labour clear.

Furthermore, implementation within the Peace and Security Department (PSD) doesn't go beyond branding some initiatives as silencing the guns efforts. Although the Department of Political Affairs is also part of the campaign, the department hardly brands any of its activities as such.

It isn't possible to gauge the impact of STGIA2020 activities as the African Human Security Index (AHSI) that was meant to measure its results hasn't been established. With this lack of a monitoring and evaluation tool, it's impossible to assess the steps taken so far and their effectiveness, pinpoint key obstacles, and prescribe remedies for effective and tangible results.

It is also notable that the STGIA2020 Unit's activities are not monitored and recorded. For instance, in Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec. 645(XXIX)] on the Inaugural Report of the PSC on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, the Assembly 'declared the month of September, each year, up to 2020, as "Africa Amnesty Month" for the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons/arms, in line with African and international best practices.'

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The coordination team needs a full complement of staff with the expertise, knowledge and skills on all issues under the rubric of STGIA2020

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However there is no evidence that this exercise is being tracked and recorded to show how many weapons/arms have been surrendered and collected 'in line with African and international best practices'. Also, the STGIA2020 Unit doesn't have records of key national measures taken since 2013 to silence guns in AU member states, or information on how many guns have been turned over as a result of the amnesty campaign.

Since the unit doesn't have a reporting tool and instructions for RECs and member states, it hasn't been possible to evaluate or monitor the contributions

made by various stakeholders identified in the Master Roadmap. It also hasn't been able to make an overall assessment of achievements, successes and failures of STGIA2020.

Although the AU's Department of Social Affairs (DSA) works to promote the organisation's health, labour, employment, migration, social development, drug control, crime prevention, sport and cultural agenda, it is not linked to STGIA2020. There appears to be a silo mentality in the implementation of Agenda 2063 departments as well. Centralised coordination is needed to ensure that all stakeholders identified in the roadmap execute their assigned activities.

In terms of dissemination of information and outreach, at the time this monograph was written the STGIA2020 had no content on its website that can be accessed to inform those interested in silencing guns in Africa. Apart from a promotional video and a brief overview, the website has no information on STGIA2020 activities or documents such as the roadmap and reports.

STGIA2020 also has little social media presence, with only around 514 followers on its Twitter page and about 1 600 followers on Facebook as of July 2020. Given the limited reach of internet connectivity in Africa, STGIA2020 outreach needs to reflect African realities – for example, Twitter hashtags are not accessible to many Africans, who prefer Facebook and WhatsApp. Twitter in Africa is mostly used by the elite. In many parts of Africa, traditional media remains the major sources of information.

The lack of clarity in the sequence of activities also implies that there will be a lack of synchronised monitoring and evaluation processes between the responsible bodies.<sup>60</sup> As observed in the July 2019 ISS PSC Report, the roadmap proposes putting into operation major components of the APSA, such as the Africa Standby Force and Panel of the Wise, while simultaneously assigning them responsibilities of responding to peace and security challenges.<sup>61</sup> These bodies cannot be expected to undertake activities stipulated in the roadmap when they haven't been fully capacitated.

Funding has been a major challenge despite the January 2018 AU Summit stressing the 'urgent need for the AU to mobilise funding in support of the activities of the High Representative to enable him to carry out his mandate, particularly galvanising efforts of all stakeholders to scale up activities in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap.'<sup>62</sup>

It was obvious when STGIA2020 was launched that the AU lacked resources to fully implement its roadmap, although the hope is now for the Peace Fund to attract sufficient resources to support the plethora of activities in the APSA and the STGIA2020 roadmaps. In view of the delayed adoption of the proposed AU reforms, STGIA2020 will continue to rely on external donors for support.

## Political challenges

Ploughing resources into achieving negative peace e.g. through ceasefires however doesn't mean societies won't have structural violence. Countries with weak rule of law, justice and security systems and other governance institutions have detracted from the silencing the guns initiative by relapsing into violence even after their attainment of negative peace. This is most noticeable in countries such as South Sudan, the CAR, Mali and Libya, which are still mired in violent conflict due to weak state institutions or a lack of sustainable political agreement.

Low or no buy-in of African people, leaders and governments has drained political will from the campaign. Member states' lack of political will to commit resources towards achieving this goal is a major problem in silencing the guns by 2020. When political will is measured by indicators such as meeting financial obligations, and implementing commitments made at regional, continental and international forums, African countries score low.

Most AU member states have not only failed to honour their pledges, but to ratify and domesticate key legal instruments that support the APSA and AGA. Others have either maintained or increased high military and security expenditures which, in turn, have deprived their citizens of peace, and have militarised fragile states. Some governments have not yet secured their stockpiled arms, creating easy access for non-state actors' suppliers.

It was in recognition of these facts that the PSC on 5 February 2019 pointed out 'that strong political will is a sine qua non condition to facilitate the realization of a conflict-free Continent in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and, therefore, called on Africa's leadership to mobilize, at the highest level, to carry the Silencing the Guns agenda forward.'<sup>63</sup>

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Lack of buy-in by African people, leaders  
and governments has drained political will  
from the campaign

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As depicted in Map 1, over 20 African countries are producing and selling weapons. Some of these countries are powerful regional anchors or PSC members.

According to a report by SIPRI in 2018, among the top arms importers were Algeria (56%)<sup>64</sup> and PSC members Morocco (15%) and Nigeria (4.8%).<sup>65</sup> Other AU member states, as depicted in Map 4, are hosting foreign military bases or have entered into defence arrangements with foreign governments to supply weapons and training.

The resurgence of sovereign attachment to self-preservation, rising insecurity in some states and dependency on small arms in Africa provide various perspectives

on why efforts to address arms proliferation as part of STGIA2020 have struggled. The rise in states' efforts to preserve power could partly explain the lukewarm reception of STGIA2020 across the continent by weapon importing countries. Some argue that since states are the only entities allowed to monopolise and use violence, they would lose their capability to protect their citizens and to defend their territories if they were compelled to disarm.

In some rural communities where gun ownership is a central part of livelihoods, people want access to guns to be able to hunt. In cases where cattle rustling is a major issue, guns are sought to protect livestock and property from invaders. The same applies to communities that are on the frontiers of conflicts in some countries. People in such communities sometimes argue that they will lose their protection since the government has no capacity to govern far-flung areas.

There are other critical political questions that require answers if STGIA is to achieve its objectives. For example if African countries stopped manufacturing their own weapons, or even purchasing them, would they not be subjecting themselves to conquests from elsewhere?

Can African governments convince their citizens to give up arms in their possession when citizens have no guarantees that the state won't abuse its monopoly of violence to violate their rights? The AU has on numerous occasions sent mixed messages. On 5 and 6 October 2016, the Africa Security Technology Symposium – a gathering of armaments manufacturers and merchants – was held at the AUC Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.<sup>66</sup> The event was organised in partnership with the PSD and was addressed by some of its leaders.

Besides exhibiting the latest modern weapons, representatives of arms manufacturers addressed a meeting of ministers in charge of borders whose theme was silencing guns on African borders. During a summit hosted for African heads of state and government in Sochi in October 2019, Russia's President Vladimir Putin stated that his country 'stands with the countries of Africa on matters of strengthening peace and stability on the continent and ensuring regional security.'<sup>67</sup> However African leaders spent billions on arms exhibited at Sochi, media reports later depicted photographs of African delegates clutching samples of Russia's sophisticated weapons.

## **External influences**

In an interview on 17 September 2019, the High Representative for STGIA2020 said he wanted to ensure that the initiative remained a campaign driven by African experiences and resources. He saw the campaign as providing opportunities for African people to contribute to the systematic implementation of its roadmap. However without funding the initiative from African sources, the continent can't control its eventual outcome.

In early 2019, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) was 'accorded the implementation role' of STGIA2020 by the AU.<sup>68</sup> This role included 'developing, executing, monitoring and evaluation of a continental awareness-raising campaign for the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative.'

The GIZ was also given the 'responsibility for contracting an external communication entity that will work closely with the AUC to develop target-oriented communication products, and to use the best possible tools and channels to diffuse them to diverse stakeholders.' The GIZ had previously in 2010 supported a similar media campaign titled Make Peace Happen! As a result of this arrangement, a 'draft Fast-Tracking Action Plan' has been published creating confusion and derailing focus on the STGIA2020 Master Roadmap.

Though partnership has been key in the AU's peace and security efforts, over-reliance on external sources is contrary to the PSC communique PSC/PR/COMM (DCCCXXIV) adopted at its 824<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 5 February 2019, that 'stressed the importance of (African) ownership and leadership of peace efforts on the continent.' The heavy reliance on external partners to finance STGIA2020 undermines the spirit of 'African solutions to African problems.' An initiative such as this loses its 'Africanness' once an international partner takes over its implementation.

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Import of Russian weapons into Africa is estimated to total about \$4.6 billion yearly, with more than \$50 billion worth of contract portfolio

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Some foreign governments have a stake in the export of arms to Africa. Weaponry is currently Russia's second largest export to Africa after food. According to Putin's inaugural address at the 2019 Russia-Africa Summit, Russia exports an estimated \$25 billion worth of food to Africa while arms export is about \$15 billion and is expected to double in coming years.<sup>69</sup> At the end of the summit, Russia had secured military deals to sell weapons to African countries worth \$4 billion, including 12 Mi-35 Hind E attack helicopters to Nigeria.<sup>70</sup> Import of Russian weapons into Africa is estimated to total about \$4.6 billion yearly, with more than \$50 billion worth of contract portfolio.<sup>71</sup>

Other major challenges to STGIA2020 include foreign military alliances and presences on African soil. According to Andrews Atta-Asamoah, 'Foreign military presence in Africa is ... driven by AU member states leasing their territories to foreign powers for military bases, mainly for domestic economic gain.'<sup>72</sup> For example, 'Djibouti generates more than US\$300 million annually from the foreign military presence on its soil.'<sup>73</sup>

Militarisation and armament is a potential source of interstate wars in a region with over 100 latent border disputes. It is in recognition of the dangers posed by these military alliances and presences on the continent that the PSC, in communiqué PSC/PR/COMM (DCCCLVII) adopted at its 857<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 5 July 2019, ‘strongly condemns the external interference, by whomsoever, into African peace and security issues.’<sup>74</sup> Before that the PSC, at its 601<sup>st</sup> meeting held on 30 May 2016:

... noted with deep concern the existence of foreign military bases and establishment of new ones in some African countries, coupled with the inability of the Member States concerned to effectively monitor the movement of weapons to and from these foreign military bases. In this regard, Council stressed the need for Member States to be always circumspect whenever they enter into agreements that would lead to the establishment of foreign military bases in their countries.<sup>75</sup>

In communiqué PSC/PR/COMM (DCCLXXVI) adopted at its 776<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 24 May 2018, the PSC expressed ‘deep concern over the potential negative effects of the presence of foreign military bases in some volatile parts of the continent to the future security and stability of Africa.’<sup>76</sup>

In its 868<sup>th</sup> communiqué of the meeting on the state of foreign military presence in Africa, held on 14 August 2019, the PSC ‘note(d) with concern ... the increase in the establishment of foreign military presence and military bases in Africa’ that were ‘undermining national sovereignty and peace efforts.’<sup>77</sup>

While strongly condemning ‘any external interference into ... Africa’s peace and security affairs’, the PSC appealed:

... to all AU Member States that decide to host foreign military entities/bases in their countries to deploy necessary efforts to inform their neighbours, their respective Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanism (RECs/RMs) and the African Union and ensure that the signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) are in conformity with the provisions of the Common African Defence and Security Policy and other relevant AU policies on defence and security and that they contribute towards the objectives and priorities of the AU.<sup>78</sup>



Map 4: Foreign military presence in Africa



Source: ISS Peace and Security Council Report, Issue 116



## Chapter 4

# Way forward

Ending all violent conflicts by December 2020 may not be possible. However substantive progress can be achieved if the various actors and institutions identified by the Master Roadmap play their respective roles in contributing towards silencing the guns. Recommendations are outlined below.

### African Union

The lack of conceptual clarity at the continental policy level about what STGIA2020 is and isn't means that the focus of the initiative has been too broad, and within a timeline that is unrealistic to meet. For the initiative to make remarkable achievements, the African Union must concentrate on defining issues such as the import, circulation and availability of arms (or even just SALWs) since these contribute significantly to the continent's conflict. STGIA2020 should therefore be about AU efforts to control arms, rather than to completely end conflict in or bring peace to Africa. Trying to end conflict completely creates major overlaps with the function and focus of the APSA and AGA, and many other AU departments.

Very little progress has been registered since STGIA2020's inception. If the AU wants to keep the focus of STGIA2020 as broad as it is now, it should discard the 2020 timeline and declare it a multi-year AU programme encapsulating various projects focusing on the specific dimensions of the many drivers of Africa's conflicts and insecurity. As a multi-year programme, the AU can then collaborate with the UN, development partners, the private sector and civil society actors, to implement projects that address different dimensions of Africa's insecurity challenges.

The AU should take active steps to address the numerous challenges and obstacles STGIA2020 has experienced since inception. It should monitor and evaluate the Master Roadmap through the African Human Security Index (AHSI), and design a standard reporting template, document actions taken to silence the guns and encourage a strictly scientific assessment of interventions in different settings.

It should capacitate and fully fund the activities of the STG2020 unit; enhance coordination and collaboration within the AUC; and clarify the division of labour between the AU, RECs and RMs and member states in terms of policy formulation,

adoption, implementation and monitoring, and progress assessment. The campaign should be fully African-owned and -driven. The AU should hold African and foreign arms manufacturers accountable for the violence they contribute to conflict on the continent.

The lack of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track progress in the implementation of STGIA2020 is a major weakness of the initiative and should be addressed urgently. However AU member states lack capacity on various fronts, and may have problems establishing STGIA2020 units dedicated to monitoring and reporting.

The AU should therefore establish a unit that focuses on arms control data and tracks efforts on controlling arms. This unit should be situated in the PSD. It should report to the annual AU summits on national progress and the state of small arms and light weapons import and circulation on the continent. As December 2020 approaches, and with the benefit of lessons learnt and good practices gathered over the past seven years, there's a need for further discussions on the division of labour between the AU, RECs, RMs and member states.<sup>79</sup>

## **AU member states**

As primary drivers of STGIA2020, member states should develop and implement action plans, prioritise the establishment of effective, functioning national institutions, and fully implement policies and measures to prevent, manage and resolve all forms of conflict. Member states should promptly submit annual reports of their efforts in this regard to the AU's STGIA Unit, and avoid engaging in activities that undermine the objectives of STGIA2020.

Since violence is partly a governance problem and is preventable, AU member states should be encouraged, supported and assisted to sign, ratify and fully domesticate all AU instruments and decisions relating to the promotion of peace, justice, governance and development. This includes submission to the APRM process and implementation of its recommendations.

## **Regional economic communities**

RECs and RMs, the building blocks of the AU, should serve as critical bridges between the AU and member states in achieving the STGIA2020 objectives. They should develop regional action plans and work closely with their member states to implement the Master Roadmap by organising meetings to popularise STGIA in their respective regions.

Importantly, RECs and RMs should strengthen their structural capacities and efficiency in implementing the AU's APSA and AGA frameworks, and push their member states for resolution of the many intrastate and some interstate border-related conflicts.

RECs and RMs should play more robust roles in promoting sub-regional peace, security, governance and development. This includes taking the lead in solving conflicts in the sub-regions, promoting democratic values and good governance by objectively and impartially monitoring and observing elections, and developing social charters that bind their member states together and promote peaceful coexistence. Since more integrated regions tend to be more peaceful and developed, it's important that RECs and RMs continue to promote economic, infrastructural and political integration of their regions. If Africa had more integrated regions, it would be a more integrated continent.

### **International community**

The international community should work closely with African states, the AU and RECs to eradicate conditions that germinate the seeds of violence. Specifically it should contribute to making Africa a no-war zone by supporting the AU's and RECs' peacebuilding efforts, stopping weapons flows to the continent, and engaging in fair trading with Africa.

Foreign countries and companies that supply arms, establish military bases, and interfere in African efforts to silence guns on the continent should be named, shamed and held accountable for the consequences of violence caused by guns used in African conflicts.

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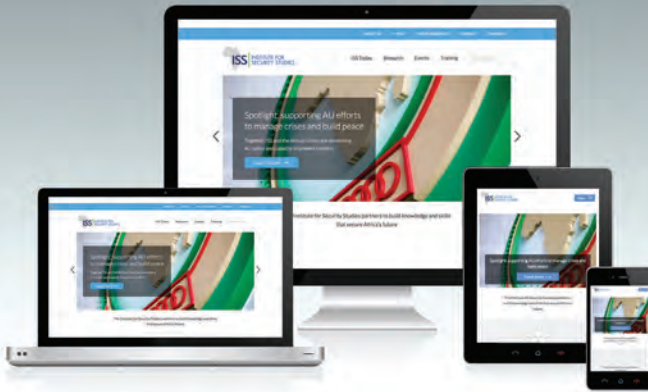
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### About this monograph

Seven years after Africa's ambitious declaration of commitment to silence the guns by 2020, very little progress has been recorded in its implementation. This study assesses the context in which the initiative was planned, its marginal achievements so far and obstacles to reaching its goals. It notes that even in policy circles, the notion of 'silencing the guns' remains conceptually debated. The monograph also discusses the institutional, conceptual, political and operational issues that should be urgently addressed by states, regional economic communities and the African Union.

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