African conflict prevention and peace-making:

From early warning to early action

Author: Linnéa Gelot

FBA

The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) is the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development.

FBA supports international peace operations and international development cooperation. The agency conducts training, research and method development in order to strengthen peacebuilding and statebuilding in conflict and postconflict countries. We also recruit civilian personnel and expertise for peace operations and election observation missions led by the EU, UN and OSCE. The agency is named after Count Folke Bernadotte, the first UN mediator. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the FBA.

Author Biography
Linnéa Gelot is Senior Researcher at the Research and Development Unit at Folke Bernadotte Academy and an Associate Professor in Peace and Development Studies at the School of Global Studies at Gothenburg University. Her research has focused on: peace operations, with a specialization in African-led peace operations and their protection of civilians; global institutions, especially the legitimacy of African organizations and the African Union–United Nations peace and security relationship; and global militarism. Recently, she has conducted field research on community-based DDR and what from the community angle determines successful reintegration of former combatants in Somalia. She has published articles about how society actors and traditional authority structures in Somalia are shaped by and also shape DDR policies.

Cover photo: UNSOM Somalia Women leaders

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations

APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel–Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECDPM	The European Centre for Development Policy
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
PoW	Panel of the Wise
REC	Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union

Executive Summary

The main objective of this report is to analyse the key trends that are leading to changes in the African conflict prevention and management landscape. The report discusses four major trends in order to report on much-needed adjustments to external donor engagements with their conflict prevention and peace-making African partners.

In a context of sustained political unrest and violent conflicts in many parts of the continent, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is evolving. Its complex efforts in prevention, conflict management and peace enforcement have led to modalities of intervention that force institutional forms to loosen up and work in tandem with state-driven ad hoc crisis response. The scope and breadth of APSA's conflict prevention and conflict management activities are manifested in many ways:

- the African Union (AU) prioritizes simmering conflict situations by quickly placing most of them on the AU AU Peace and Security Council agenda

- there are intricate coordination frameworks in place between the many interrelated and overlapping institutions and organizational structures that make up APSA, as well as with intervening actors outside of APSA's scope

- there is a vibrant, though mostly internal, interrogation about improving and strengthening regional norms, rules and standards in tune with governance, peace and security challenges

Four important trends are transforming the approaches of APSA and African regional institutions to prevent conflict and manage crises on the continent:

Institutional preparedness in conflict prevention and conflict management

There is clearly institutional preparedness in conflict prevention and conflict management that is visible in the collective knowledge, norms, and practical experiences invested in the AU, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and APSA. Through the various joint assessment missions, early warning structures, mediation support teams, etc., a corpus of capacity and expertise is in place. Some 'reactive' or 'operational' institutions, practices and norms have demonstrated achievements and (mixed) outcomes. Of course, an institutional 'culture' in the making requires maintenance and constantly faces pressures to change. To illustrate how on-the-ground realities create pressures on institutional culture, we can think of the citizens of Guinea rising up en masse since 2018 to resist the unconstitutional bid by the incumbent, 82-year-old authoritarian 'strongman', President Alpha Condé, for a third term in office. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has earned a reputation in the West African sub-region for its institutionalization and upholding of democratic norms. Yet ECOWAS did not

embark on a decisive peace process in the case of Guinea, informed by its wealth of early warning data, sanctioning provisions or mediation options. The regional states prioritized regional stability over democracy. In this case, it was preferable to allow Condé, a veteran of the West African ruling classes, to tighten his grip on power in the context of spreading Islamist extremism in the sub-region. Member states did not mobilize a defence of governance norms through ECOWAS, and this bears similarity to other recent cases, such as Togo and Burkina Faso. As one of the most important standard setters and an advocate of norms for APSA, a reversal of ECOWAS' role in this regard forms a challenge to the larger whole of conflict prevention and management that has been invested in APSA. This is one example of a development that is pressuring outside partners and donors to clarify their stance on when to engage, which peace processes are worthy of supporting, and what principles must inform outside assistance.

The rift between AU, APSA and its member states

The know-how of conflict prevention and mediation officials and practitioners is the backbone of APSA, and the framework of APSA is, so to speak, flexible enough to grow and change in response to current conflict needs and trends. However, most 'blind spots' in APSA's engagement in many situations occurs because of the geopolitical dimensions of specific conflict situations. Some conflict prevention and mediation pillars have developed expertise, technical sophistication and platforms of trained professionals, in no small part due to donor funding. One way of expressing the current dilemma is to say that there is a need to go from 'APSA ownership' of these pillars to African state 'membership ownership'. The value of having sophisticated norms, principles, pillars and professional practitioners in place is diminished unless AU member states want to invest in and make use of these capabilities in active scenarios. What is more, the relations between APSA and AU member states are being tested to the extent that AU members states request and mobilize peace processes outside of APSA. This is currently also a bigger question that plays out in diplomacy between the AU Commission and AU member states. Examples include the diplomatic quest to persuade AU member states to stand collectively behind 'African positions' and to strengthen the AU's enforcement capacity by agreeing on and streamlining an AU sanctions regime (Radio Tamazuj 2020).

Challenges to APSA's reach and relevance

New challenges are also appearing and gaining ground. Varied forms of ad hoc arrangements are developing in parallel with or on the margins of formal APSA institutions. These coalition-based early action initiatives are becoming models and setting examples of how African conflict prevention and conflict management can and will evolve in the next few years. To varying degrees, the existing APSA conflict prevention and management actors experience pressure to jump on the bandwagon of the many ad hoc and state-driven initiatives. In some cases, this pragmatic approach may lead to revitalization of APSA. Perhaps it may even help APSA to become more 'fit for purpose' by increasing the leverage of regional bodies and innovating the prevention and mediation toolbox. In other cases, there is a real risk that political and civilian components might be devalued in the comprehensive and global approach. At worst, some of APSA's norms and principles of human security are stretched too far or left by the wayside. If

APSA's conflict prevention and conflict management actors become more reliant on security-driven ad hoc coalitions for their own entry points into conflicts, the challenges in resisting the securitization of their work will be daunting.

Increased African influence in global affairs

African heads of state and diplomats use the umbrella of the AU to increase the collective political authority of 'African solutions to African problems' at the global level. In conflict prevention and management, APSA is meant to express the collective interests of African sovereign elites and peoples. The objective of increasing ownership, of determining a bigger part of the solutions to conflict on the continent, is connected to the discourse about 'strategic autonomy'. The objective is to ensure a greater degree of influence in global governance and to improve the self-funding of the AU and APSA. Institutional reform processes in recent years have had, as overarching aims, making the AU and sub-regional organizations self-reliant and sustainably financed.

With a broadening scope of action in very diverse and complex conflict situations on the continent, APSA, along with all of its constituent institutions, is facing a diversity of expectations on its performance from a growing number of partners, both domestic and external to the continent. The AU and its decision-making institutions are involved in power struggles that have had a lot to do with the structural reform agenda of recent years. Models of continental integration, both new and old, are presently being challenged from within. At the heart of this, key policy- and decision-making actors are calling into question the legitimacy of ideological pan-Africanism, and in recent years the AU reform agenda has resulted in steps being taken to transform the AU into a more performance-oriented management culture (an AU that is fit for purpose). Change processes aimed at conflict prevention and conflict management are also being set in motion. In turn, these are leading to reappraisals of which partnerships with external actors are relevant, moving forward.

One still-uncertain factor relates to Covid-19, and therefore this analysis will take this into account only tentatively. Our knowledge about the medium- to long-term effects is increasing, and already social and economic analyses are telling us that the pandemic has had adverse consequences on development gains, social justice, civil liberties and gender equality (Medie 2021; Okech et al. 2021). This means that early warning and conflict prevention will take on even greater importance in mitigating the risks of instability and violent conflict. It is likely that domestic political pressure to deal decisively with instability will increase in the wake of the pandemic. We are therefore likely to see a continued trend of African political elites and decision-makers privileging security-oriented solutions and 'quick fixes', even though the institutions embody a wealth of knowledge on the advantages of sustained peace processes.

Trends leading to changes in African conflict prevention and peace-making patterns

The state of peace and security in Africa remains grim. The frequency of civil wars, conflicts resulting in high levels of battle-related deaths, and communal violence in Africa have led African states to prioritize regional security cooperation. It remains true that Africa is one of the most violent regions in the world. At the same time, there are also examples of effective governments and emerging markets, as well as good governance and structural prevention initiatives. Across several African sub-regions, the continent still grapples with the threats of violent extremism, the recurrence of election related crises and political violence. Although incidents of mass violence are increasingly rare (McNamee and Muyangwa 2021), the continent is far from reaching its aspired goal of resolving all conflicts and ending all wars, as upheld in the Silencing the Guns by 2020 agenda. Worryingly, an analysis of conflict trends based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program database shows that the number of internationalized civil wars and territorial conflicts reached a record high in Africa in 2019 (Palik et al. 2020). The total number of state-based conflicts increased from 21 in 2018 to 25 in 2019. This increase is due to four new internationalized civil conflicts: in Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Somalia and Burundi (ibid.). Another important trend is the number of African governments that are engaged in conflicts against multiple non-state armed groups within their territories. In 2019 these reached a record number of 25 conflicts in 18 countries (ibid.).

Figure 1. Battle deaths and state-based armed conflicts in Africa, by conflict type, 1946–2019[2]
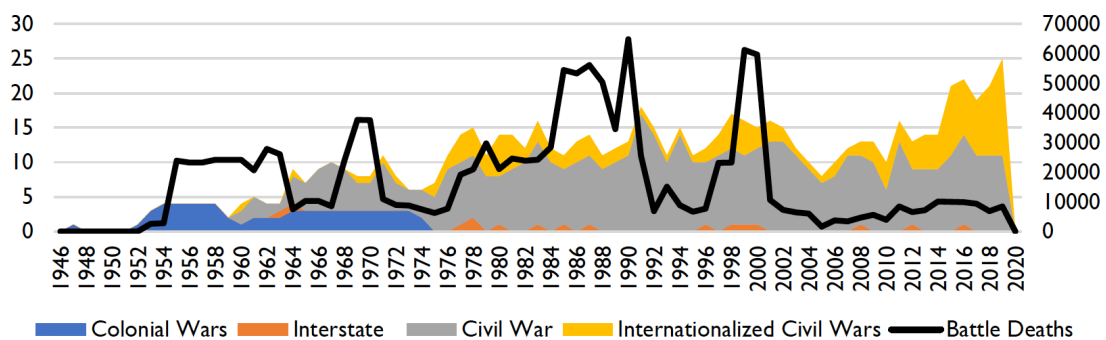
8

Adequate and effective prevention of conflicts is still a major shortcoming of the AU, APSA and their member states. Responses are too often reactive to crisis hot spots. Preventing, managing and resolving peace and security issues remains the most difficult challenge for the AU and its international partners. It remains the case that APSA has been unevenly implemented, both in terms of thematic areas, varying capability of actors and geographical reach.

To this day, few attempts have been made to investigate the implementation of APSA in a comprehensive manner (Nathan et al. 2015; Desmidt and Hauck 2017).[3] Think-tank based and donor-funded research has, on the whole, been quite specialized and compartmentalized. Recently there have been attempts to strengthen theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this research literature. In drafting this report I have consulted academic sources, primary AU documents such as AU Peace and Security Council communiques and reports and primary documents from the RECs.

APSA is as a set of norms and practices guided by formal and informal rules. It is also an expression of politics and collective capabilities and an institution or a set of institutions. Different actors in 'insider' or heavily engaged roles in these institutions also have their personal and nuanced understanding of APSA in accordance with their position, objectives and experiences.

APSA is often considered to be a multi-layered framework comprising continental, regional and national levels, yet in practical, political terms, sub-regional actors (most notably ECOWAS) are actors in their own right as much as they are 'building blocks' of APSA. At times, both regional political actors and external partners and donors treat the 'levels' – the actors, their mandates, programmes and tools – on a par with the AU. There are eight RECs that are recognized parts of APSA: the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD); the East African Community (EAC); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (AU 2008).[4] From among the recognized RECs, ECOWAS is the one that has the richest experience in peacekeeping and peace-making. Its experience dates back almost three decades, starting with the deployment of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia in 1990. In practice, however, it often happens that unrecognized informal arrangements assume leading roles in important peace processes. This means that non-RECs on occasion outperform some of the recognized RECs in conflict prevention and management.

There has been a tendency for external partner and donor communities that wish to collaborate with APSA to start with an organizational chart of APSA and embark on

---

3. See also ECDPM's larger political economy dynamics project, The political economy dynamics of regional organizations in Africa (ecdpm.org)

4. RECs were granted a special status in the Abuja Treaty that entered into force in 1993, since that time, security issues more so than economic issues have underpinned the regional integration process. To accommodate the African Standby Force (ASF), two regional mechanisms were created: the Eastern Africa Standby Force Coordination Mechanism (EASFCOM) and North African Regional Capability (NARC) both have liaison offices at the AU. AMU is inactive and has not convened since 2015.

assessing the formal organizational entities in terms of how well what partners have to offer matches what the departments and structural entities work on. In all likelihood, growing numbers of external partners and donors will shift their approaches to more closely follow the main empirical patterns and modes of trans-regional involvement. This will be less on the basis of whether conflict prevention and mediation actors are deployed by formal parts of APSA at the time and more on the basis of prior interstate relations and context-specific political clout. But just as APSA is undergoing reforms in response to political changes across the sub-regions of the continent, outsiders and partners also have to adapt and adjust. The question is shifting from one of 'how do we support implementation of APSA?' to 'which actors have the empirical leverage and relevance, support from their constituent institutions, or local legitimacy?' As we shall see, an increasingly important empirical trend is that of ad hoc arrangements expanding their scope of action to include crisis response and conflict management.

Institutional preparedness in conflict prevention and conflict management

Decisions by member states on how they position themselves vis-à vis intrastate conflicts are heavily determined by national and regional political objectives. Normative dimensions of APSA, human security and pan-African notions of human protection are often balanced against principles of national sovereignty and regional stability. The AU Constitutive Act and the AU Peace and Security Council Protocol provide both compelling as well as restraining factors affecting these diplomatic practices. This is also the case, to varying degrees, with the foundational documents of the RECs. The specific motivations of larger AU member states remain an important part of the explanation for the probability, the timing and the scale of conflict prevention, mediation and other forms of interventions that take place under the umbrella of APSA. To explain this, it is helpful to think of African solidarity as informal diplomatic praxis that guides influential actors in striking a pragmatic balance between ruling elite protection and human protection (Tieku forthcoming). The specific meaning of African solidarity will change in line with empirical conflict patterns, informing both how conflicts are framed and what solutions are deemed necessary. Both informal and formal diplomatic groupings of heads of state and influential actors will be instrumental in shaping conflict response. The idea is that national interests and aspirational norms connect through practical and behavioural collectivist governing. Diplomacy among African regional elite groupings has both an informal and formal character (Tieku 2019). The inner working of these groupings needs to be better understood in practical terms. This is made harder by the absence of important sources on AU and APSA decision-making, such as meeting minutes and verbatim records from key decision-making bodies.

If we take the example of Omar el-Bashir's presidency in Sudan, it is noteworthy that the solidarity norm among political elites had a stronger protective shoring-up effect during 2003–2007 when he was responsible for mass atrocities. The decision to deploy an initial multidimensional AU peace operation to Darfur in 2004 was a way to match the Union's

Table 1. Sudan, conflict dynamics, APSA responses and African solidarity at two different points in time

YEAR	TYPE	APSA FRAMING AND DIMENSIONS OF GROUP SOLIDARITY	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF PEACE PROCESS
2004–2007	During the administration of Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir's, government forces and armed militias (known as Janjaweed) crushed a rebellion in Darfur. Mass atrocities, crimes against humanity and war crimes took place.	The AU PSC authorized an African-led peace operation because Sudan did not consent to international involvement. The African mission had a mandate to protect civilians, but troops on the ground had to constantly manage the government's consent to their presence on Sudanese territory. The African mission saw a transfer of authority to a AU-UN hybrid operation in 2007. Al-Bashir was protected by his allies among African leaders from extradition to the ICC.	AU and African states: AU peace operation, quiet diplomacy, formal negotiations, contestation of International Criminal Court universal jurisdiction. International actors: UN-AU hybrid peace operation, international criminal law including two arrest warrants issued for Al-Bashir by the ICC in 2009 and 2010, international sanctions.
2018–2020	Sustained civil disobedience and popular uprising. Violent crack-down by state security forces. After Al-Bashir's removal continued protests were brutally suppressed by the transitional military council and the rapid support forces (militia with remnants of the Janjaweed militia still present).	No strong defence of Al-Bashir by the time the military replaced him and a transitional military council took power in April. Al-Bashir was ousted 11 April and shortly after jailed. He awaits extradition to ICC.	AU, IGAD and Ethiopia embarked on high-level negotiations and brokered a constitutional declaration and a power-sharing deal in July 2019. The AU eventually suspended Sudan from participating in the AU's affairs in June, a needed action since the coup met criteria for an unconstitutional change of government. An Egyptian mediation initiative also strengthened the regional position that external actors should refrain from interfering. UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt backed the military leaders after the coup. USA removed Sudan from list of states sponsors of terrorism in 2020. In Oct 2020 some of the biggest Darfuri rebels co-signed a Peace agreement, backed by AU, UN, EU. However, since the UN-AU Hybrid mission announced plans to withdraw, armed clashed are picking back up in Darfur.

norm of intervening to protect civilians in cases of mass atrocities[5] with a newfound African authority on limiting intrusive foreign interference in sovereign affairs should be. Possibly, political elites' patience with al-Bashir had run out by the time popular uprisings occurred. These uprisings required another balance, namely between the norm to condemn unconstitutional changes of government and the primordial need to calm a very explosive power dynamics in the Horn of Africa. The regional reading of the crisis had changed, and different stakes had overriding priority. This is important, because it plays a role for the conditions for entry into mediation. This time, autocratic regionalism was preferred by some of the regional actors, notable Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia, seeing this also as a test to withstand progressive democratic forces of change.

Using the measure of frequency of involvement and activation of several mediation and preventive diplomacy instruments under the umbrella of APSA tends to conflate 'activity' with 'achievements'. A great many APSA institutions are very active and playing the role they were designed to play. Conflict prevention and conflict management have become some of the most visible dimensions of the AU in the eyes of the international community. In fact, the AU and RECs actively collaborate and intervene through a combination of instruments, most commonly through mediation and diplomacy. The European Centre for Development Policy (ECDPM) analyses show that the combination of diplomacy and mediation instruments by the AU and RECs/RMs increased from 32% to 40% and 44%, respectively, between 2013 and 2015. In addition, the higher the intensity of a violent conflict, the more likely interventions and activities by the AU or the RECs/RMs under the umbrella of APSA become. For example, during the 2013–2015 period, the AU and RECs/RMs together addressed 89% of all wars on the continent. While the AU and the RECs/RMs addressed the overwhelming majority of high intensity conflicts, on average 56% of violent conflicts were not addressed, for a variety of reasons (Desmidt and Hauck 2017).

Many international partners have relied on statistics of this kind to make the case that support and capacity-building programmes are having their intended effects. But that is not always what the statistics tell us. Crucially, we still lack systematic empirical analyses of the de facto selection of some mechanisms over others, the quality of involvement and performance, or the medium- to longer-term impacts in terms of preventing, mediating, and indeed resolving conflict situations (Vlavonou 2019).

To treat activation or frequency of certain instruments as an indication that APSA is 'maturing' or more rapidly 'operationalizing' has been a frequent approach by think tanks and evaluators/consultants. But such analyses sometimes romanticize institution-building.

First, they are decoupled from some of the most troubling features of contemporary civil wars on the continent. When some state members of a regional body are active parties in an internationalized civil war, involvement by that regional body will be strongly determined by foreign policy and conflict dynamics, and the frequency of activating this regional body's instruments may simply be an indicator of the complexity of the situ-

---

5. AU Constitutive Act Article 4h states, 'the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity' 34873-file-constitutiveact_en.pdf (au.int)

ation. A better indicator of effectiveness or performance is the regional legitimacy that mediators have among conflict parties. In the choice of third parties, the odds are better when the mediators are African or a combination of African and UN-affiliated, because of the higher levels of legitimacy that they enjoy (Duursma 2020).

Second, there are political- and security-based background motivations behind why a specific mediator is considered legitimate. In one and the same situation, sometimes there is competition among several mediation initiatives by regional and international organizations present on the ground. The AU and the RECs have been called out for their all-too-frequent appointments of eminent statespersons as lead mediators, sometimes showing a distaste for professional mediators such as special envoys appointed by regional bodies (Maiangwa 2015).

Eminent statesperson in lead mediator role

ECOWAS appointed the former president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, as lead mediator in a high-level team deployed to the simmering conflict in Mali in 2012 (ECOWAS Commission 2012). His own undemocratic and despotic record of rule called into question the assumption that underlies appointments of these mediators (Khadiagala 2021, p. 33). This model assumes that they are respected statespersons with an acceptable governance record who can therefore speak with credibility and authority. As this case showed, another reason for why an eminent statesperson should represent governance ideals is that otherwise it damages the authorizing organization – and also, very likely, the peace process.

Among the likely consequences is that mediators who represent vested interests often prioritize regional stability over democracy (Nathan 2016a; Khadiagala 2007). This is why they pragmatically condone undemocratic power-sharing arrangements, accept undemocratic elections and so on (Nathan 2016a).

Third, global levels of support for international cooperation and multilateralism also change and in recent times have dropped (UN 2021). This also contracts the 'political economy' of donor support for international and regional organizations, along with hallmark practices of collective security, APSA included.

In sum, while many different APSA instruments can be activated and coordinated along a conflict continuum, the intensity of the conflict and its amenability to resolution are intimately connected to how regional governments have framed the issue and how, in the recent past, they have treated their political challengers (Aning 2021).

In terms of preventive diplomacy capacity, the Panel of the Wise (PoW) would need stronger levels of support within APSA and from member states more generally. The 2014 APSA assessment report recommended that '[t]he PSC and the AUC Chairperson

should ensure that the recommendations of the PoW's fact-finding missions and engagements on the ground are carried out by including follow-up mechanisms for all recommendations' (Nathan et al. 2015, p. 55). The newly elected Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Amb Bankole Adeoye, has spoken of the need to invest in preventive diplomacy in order to achieve a conflict-free Africa (Daily Trust 2021). One way to strengthen preventive diplomacy would be to further empower the PoW and reconfigure it from supportive roles to a lead mediation body. The PoW has a specific portfolio of activities and works in unison with the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise) and an informal regional network of special envoys, special representatives and AU commissioners (Gomes Porto and Ngandu 2014). A growing concern in relation to the assembling of trained and prepared mediation support staff in platforms, is under-utilization of this expertise. For instance, many of the women rostered for the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise–Africa) are rarely deployed on a mission. Again, this is because the specific politics of conflict situations inform who can legitimately lead the peace process and take up mediation roles (which, in combination with patriarchal power systems characterizing both conflict areas and regional institutions, is a situation that disadvantages women in the selection of mediators; see Hendricks 2021). When this occurs outside of AU and REC frameworks, mediation support staff are unlikely to be drawn from the various standing rosters. Additionally, non-APSA initiatives will not consider inclusivity norms for the same reasons: i.e., to the extent that there is gender representation on mediation teams, it will less likely be because such initiatives have specific gender provisions or pressures from specific donors to document gender mainstreaming.

Another fairly recent innovation of APSA prevention and mediation is the development of AU election-observer missions as a relevant preventive diplomacy tool. These hold promise, especially when high-level pre-electoral missions are deployed in combination with short- and long-term election observation missions, by the AU and also the relevant RECs. At the same time, APSA is drawn into divisive and politicized situations when responding to contested elections and the variety of flawed electoral practices that lie outside of what is covered by the unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) norm. A good example is in Madagascar post-2009, where the AU elaborated new forms of 'post-coup' interventions. Although anti-coup norms are meant to promote democracy, they also at times facilitate political elites' hold on power (Witt 2018).

Strategic guidance from headquarters is needed in order to preserve some degree of independence for election-observer missions. Scholars and senior AU observers have repeatedly and regularly called for stronger governance dimensions to be made part of APSA. To enhance the protection of peaceful protesters, in situations of government crack-downs on 'popular uprisings', the case has been made for the AU to augment and ensure practical application of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, along with more helpful policies on good governance by government actors, security forces and other relevant actors (Ndubuisi 2021; AU Peace and Security Council 2014).[6] The recent merger of the political affairs and the peace and security departments

---

6. The African Governance Architecture and the African Governance Platform will also be important in doing more prevention and promotion vis-à-vis African member states to adhere to democratic principles and practice.

of the AU, leading to the creation of the AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AU-PAPS) department, sought to recognize the overarching interrelation of political and governance dimensions of conflict management approaches. Its creation also responded to a reform priority to streamline AU institutions, which was also picked up in the most recent structural reform programme born from a proposal by Rwandan President Paul Kagame, together with a team of advisers (AU Assembly 2017).[7]

Overall, the 2014 APSA assessment remains true, that fast-paced and creative forms of preventive diplomacy are undertaken by combinations of the AU, RECs, the UN and/or neighbouring states. These actions need to become better coordinated, harmonized and sustained (Nathan et al. 2015). They are often based on different analyses and have different and even divergent goals and strategies. When REC-to-REC consultations and joint assessment missions do occur, they are highly valuable from the point of view of clarifying comparative advantages, avoiding duplication of initiatives and experience-sharing (ibid.).

Other phases along the continuum of prevention, management and resolution remain less supported by state members of regional bodies. That means that they are less often used in the intended manner (as is the case with early warning) or are not yet fully established (as is the case with post-war reconstruction and recovery phases, including transitional justice).

The rift between the AU, APSA and its member states

Even though APSA is rooted in a common vision for continental peace and security, political leaders differ in their understanding or interpretation of conflict and on a case-by-case basis they use different and sometimes competing action frameworks. A retrospective look at peace and security practices shows that African states have leaned heavily on RECs to initiate and coordinate action on security challenges (Khadiagala 2018). This began to change around 2011, when increasingly we have seen an ad hoc nature in peace and security affairs. These flexible and more temporary responses emerged in large part as responses to terrorist-related challenges.[8] But the other side of that coin is fundamentally about authoritarianism, government repression, unemployment and shrinking civic space. Coalition-building state practices indicate a rift between institutional APSA logics that foster shared values and consensus-based decision-making, on the one hand (AU Executive Council 2011), and national and trans-regional geopolitical priorities, on the other (Gnanguênon forthcoming). This is often captured by observers as a rhetoric vs action gap (or as idealism vs realism) afflicting APSA. To show this rift, observers usually bring up the high numbers of AU member states that default on paying their membership dues and the hurdles to enhancing AU enforcement powers, such as establishing a robust AU sanctions regime.

---

7. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) are among the already-reviewed institutions, as per the priority of realigning and improving performance of AU institutions and the AU structural reform decision. APRM has been given a clearer mandate to perform governance monitoring. It will collaborate with other early warning structures and RECs and is supposed to help place domestic governance deficits more firmly on the AU and APSA agenda.

8. El-Ghassim Wane, 2020. Presentation at webinar State Coalitions in African Conflict Management, Folke Bernadotte Academy, 1 December.

Apart from that line of questioning about why plans or ideas are not operationalized, the puzzle can also be stated differently. Recent contributions focus more on formal vs informal practices of governance (Tieku 2019), the shape of APSA from the bottom-up or an inside-out perspective (Witt 2018; Gelot 2020; Döring et al. 2021) and the empirical factors that explain the emergence of state coalition-building (Gnanguênon forthcoming). From these scholarly works, it becomes clear that low member state confidence or buy-in in an institution means that its authority and outcomes will continue to be mixed and weak. Pushing this argument further, today institutional reinvigoration mostly occurs on the margins and outside of traditional and established structures.

Coalition-building among decision-makers also impacts conflict prevention and entails non-military and military dimensions of APSA alike (Gnanguênon forthcoming). This is crucial, because it is easier to imagine that uniting states behind military objectives is harder than uniting them behind a prevention agenda. One good example is the African early warning systems. Preventive action is, at heart, a political endeavour and relies on political decision-makers appreciating the 'impartiality' of early warning data and the value of acting on the information collected through early warning structures that comprised very sophisticated methodologies and skills. This idea has been nicely captured by Gnanguênon (2021):

> The gap between early warning and early action persists because of challenges in transforming early warning policy recommendations into early response. Three main challenges undermine effective early action: unsystematic interactions between early warning officials and decision-makers, inadequate resources to address trans-regional conflict, and the political dimensions of conflict responses.

This suggests that when conflict response is not coordinated through APSA, these challenges are offset and the relevance of early-warning structures is jeopardized.

African foreign policymaking is informed mainly by political realities, their own (de)stabilizing roles in the given situation and proximity, as well as the connecting emotional and ideological tissue between some post-liberation elites (Ndiaye 2016; Nathan 2016b). This is a pattern that has sometimes been referred to as 'Africa á la carte'. Longer-term institutionalization processes have produced models prescribing conflict management practice – but models and standards are not always those deemed suitable when fast-paced ad hoc initiatives arise from heads of state championing a specific issue.

Inter-state cooperation has been poorly coordinated through the various mechanisms put in place to accomplish this within APSA. The subsidiarity principle does allow for the determination of the appropriateness of different actors to handle a specific issue. But a lack of clarity, unresolved tensions and varying degrees of technical capacities are among the reasons for why this coordination does not work optimally or as intended. Actors have a great deal of discretion in interpreting the subsidiarity principle, since there is not yet a consensus on its meaning.[9] These discussions are telling of the com-

---

9. A revised Memorandum of Understanding protocol to govern AU/REC/RM relations is expected to be in place latest by the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in 2022.

petition and rivalry within APSA (Nathan et al., p. 91). But they are also of critical value to how we understand change within APSA. The various meanings of subsidiarity are expressions of interdependencies within APSA. This is because what takes place, on a practical level, when subsidiarity is contested in relation to specific conflicts is a reordering of APSA. Such situations are also signs of the potential for institutional change.

When states believe that security threats or power struggles arise that will not see appropriate or timely APSA resolution, they may choose to act outside of existing institutions. This is an important part of the explanation for why guidelines for mediation and cooperation between the AU and the RECs has not been developed (Nathan et al. 2015, p. 88). One of the priorities of the AU's structural reform package relates to the need to manage the business of the AU efficiently, at both the political and the operational level (AU Assembly 2018). There is a recognition that improved coordination with the RECs must be prioritized, and this is also important to lessen rivalry and improve performance across the multiple scales of prevention and mediation.

The RECs and the AU have differing standings and influence, but also context-dependent and time-sensitive stakes, in amplifying regional states' interests across the layers of APSA and into making reporting or documentation that is useful to the AU's decision-making bodies. Influential actors may decide that it is within a specific REC's domain of action to address a simmering conflict, but this decision is based on politics more than whether this actor is also most capable of resourcing and staffing the peace process, as well as coordinating sub-regional affairs with international/regional actors that are affected or involved.

Challenges to APSA's reach and relevance

APSA's reach and relevance is in question due to the reliance on ad hoc security-driven coalition approaches to conflict in Africa. An Africa á la carte trend has implications for APSA – but also impacts the legitimacy and outcomes of other external actors that rely on partnerships with African actors, including the UN Security Council.

In a historical perspective, it is not useful to think of static conflict prevention and conflict management models and approaches. Since the days of the OAU, institutional pragmatism has existed. Adapting institutions to align with conflict dynamics and state practices has a resolution-oriented rationality to it. According to El-Ghassim Wane, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali, we can think of such practices in this way: the AU revitalized itself and APSA by authorizing and inserting provisions along the way that allowed a certain principled basis and room for manoeuvre for affected regional states to respond quickly to security challenges.[10] From an AU organizational perspective, it may be partly the case that key AU policy- and decision-makers led and initiated these attempts to revitalize APSA. We cannot know how state practice would have developed in the absence of such legitimation from the AU, but the necessity and

---

10. El-Ghassim Wane, 2020. Presentation at webinar State Coalitions in African Conflict Management, Folke Bernadotte Academy, 1 December.

urgency of doing so was certainly linked to the fact that security and governance challenges from the 2010s onwards increasingly took on violent extremist forms.

When agents demanding political change shifted from revolutionaries, rebels, 'sobels' (soldiers and rebels), guerrillas and militias to extremists and terrorists (Bøås and Dunne 2007; Söderberg Kovacs 2014) some states also discovered how to exploit these latter 'trigger' categories in international security (Aning 2021). If governments succeed in categorizing a group that takes up arms to challenge central power as 'terrorists', responding to a threat of that nature legitimates the use of exceptional means and therefore opens up room for heavy-handed measures. However, insurgencies and 'terrorists' are hard to neatly separate from one another, and sometimes governments see opportunities to justify anti-democratic policies to tighten their hold on power, especially if insurgent groups also overlap with disgruntled opposition groups.

In situations where the record of domestic formal governance and service delivery is poor, we see many examples of how informal armed groups quite successfully take on governance and service provision. State institutions in some conflict settings also try to play a double game. That is, formal political actors collude with 'extremist actors' or criminal networks to protect their hold on power and sometimes to co-provide certain public goods and services. Even so, they simultaneously implore international actors to help rid the country of 'terrorists' or smugglers and pirates (Ingiiris 2018; Aning 2021). Of specific concern, therefore, is what global organizations and foreign partners can do to maintain the space for primarily political approaches, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. This is especially true when certain African ruling elites are tempted to disqualify extremist actors and proscribed groups from negotiations and peace processes (Gelot 2020; Söderberg Kovacs 2020).

In my analysis, this assessment by the Institute for Security Studies is all too optimistic and not borne out in practice:

> 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. (ISS Africa 2020b, p. 25)

Rather than strengthening the culture of conflict prevention and mediation, these are actions that can certainly be described as harbingers of institutional change. This would be the forward-looking and more optimistic way of expressing it. Actually, at specific moments, actions such as those mentioned above have damaged the credibility of APSA as an agent in the service of human protection. A more sober assessment would be along the lines of what Amani Africa suggests: '[Political solutions must be] the primary means of silencing the guns and thus addressing the governance and institutional fragilities and weaknesses that create the conditions both for the expansion of the terrorist threat on the continent and the eruption of violent conflicts' (Amani Africa 2020).

Conflict dynamics can also push for institutional fragmentation and change, and pressures to respond to new security threats force innovation at the margins of APSA that test institutional 'elasticity' and reshape them (Döring 2018; Engel 2020). This leaves outsiders with a conundrum. External partners cannot know from the outset which of these initiatives will be only temporary negotiation forums and which prove so useful that they gradually become more formal and institutionalized. The G5 Sahel, for instance, is an ad hoc arrangement that turned out to be so useful that it has moved rapidly towards institutionalization.

Increased African influence in global affairs

The AU is the foremost authorizing and mandating organization for peace, security and governance interventions. That being said, diplomatic efforts to increase agency and ownership in conflict management have a long history. This is not only a matter of lessening dependence on donor financial assistance but is equally about enhancing collective African influence in global affairs. One of the most important debates in recent times has been about strategic autonomy, both in financial and political terms.

Several reform proposals, as well as the structural reform decision taken by the AU Assembly in 2017, have proposed ways of making the AU, and the regional integration project on the continent overall, more self-reliant and sustainably financed. In 2016, a funding decision at the 27th AU Summit in Kigali revived the long-dormant OAU/AU Peace Fund. Guided by former African Development Bank chief Donald Kaberuka, the proposal of a 0.2 trade levy was designed to reduce dependence on foreign funding by increasing financial commitments from AU member-states. In the three years since the AU Peace Fund was resuscitated, AU member states have contributed 68 per cent of the target of US$260 million, i.e., just US$176 million (tralac 2020; AU 2020).

Progress on payments into the AU Peace Fund is a symbolic show of diplomatic resolve behind APSA. While promising, it is still quite a way away from being a sign of – in the words of AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat – 'AU member states' commitment to ensuring predictable and sustainable financing for peace and security activities in Africa' (Xinhua 2020). To clearly signal advancement on self-reliance, proponents of the 0.2 levy argue for public disclosure of payment records by member-states to the AU Peace Fund (Turianskyi and Gruzd 2019). It remains the case that some African leaders, civil society actors and at times even the AU's own staff have been slow to commit to the AU Peace Fund levy decision (AU Council 2019, §9; AU Assembly 2020a). Hesitant AU member-states, for example, have demanded assurances about sovereign control over the funds, an oversight mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability and a statement of the principles that would govern the envisaged sanctioning of member-states for underpayment of fees. Several member-states have not yet ratified the decision and have looked into the issue of the Fund's interoperability with other trade and investment levy arrangements already in place, such as those in East and Southern Africa. By June 2020, Algeria, Angola Egypt, Morocco and South Africa had not started to implement the levy.

Pan-African diplomats hope that greater regional resolve and financial autonomy will translate into more influence in global/regional peace and security partnerships. This has become even more critical since the UN Security Council veto powers, and most vocally the US, have sought to set a ceiling on how much UN-assessed contribution budget funds can be spent on conflict situations responded to by African partners. A new compromise for a funding arrangement has to be found (the hopes of a '25/75 burden-sharing formula' have ended in an impasse). This issue became more urgent when the European Union (EU) decided to redesign and repurpose its African Peace Facility into the European Peace Facility. On their side, African diplomats have made it very clear that conflicts in Africa – and the funding of UNSC-authorized peace operations – are the responsibility of the international community and not a burden to be shifted onto regional shoulders (ICG 2020). Nonetheless, the African position on this issue still draws moderate levels of support in international circles. Further demonstration that African peace and security activities as a whole have lessened their dependency on outside sources of funding may increase such support levels. But in the current climate of an overall crisis of multilateralism, this will be a harder case to make.

The possibility of the newly launched European Peace Facility to channel funds directly to Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or other ad hoc arrangements, bypassing the AU, will likely play a part in this trend. The EU's more geostrategic positioning on African affairs is accompanied by risks of weakening multilateralism in global governance (ISS Africa 2020a).

The journey towards financial autonomy will require far more than a well-managed AU Peace Fund, supported by AU member states and also by private actors and philanthropists. It will require member states to improve their payment records to the AU, as well as to the RECs. This would strengthen 'membership ownership' of APSA, as opposed to 'APSA ownership'. A sanctions regime agreed upon in 2018 is in place, but enforcement of this regime occurs along pragmatic lines and not along strictly lines of principles (AU Assembly 2018; Hellquist 2020).

Conclusions

The larger political project of establishing an African human protection regime – a project that at heart is able to protect the most universal of values – human life (Chan 2017) – is facing not only the external pressures and challenges that the pan-African political project has always been most attentive to. It is facing internal pressures and challenges to the extent that some of its own institutional developments are leading to adverse outcomes.

As conflict dynamics change on the African continent, and as conflict prevention and conflict management structures undergo evolution and change, external partners and donors will have to dynamically reassess their contact points with APSA and other regional stakeholders and arrangements. Diplomatic and policymaking circles respond by shifting the rules of assistance and partnerships. Support dynamics are read differently. Insofar as political violence and conflict recently has been associated with so-called violent extremism (VE), there is a disproportionate share of donor/partner interest in directly meeting African governments' calls for de-radicalization and meeting counter-terrorism challenges. The need for careful conflict analysis and systematic research by outside partners will increase. Robust evidence is needed to understand governance and democracy deficits so they can be adapted with a view towards achieving peacebuilding objectives and to find ways of partnering on conflict mediation. African regional politics – mainly in the West African and Sahel region – is now strongly characterized by VE-related challenges, and we are seeing systemic and institutional changes in response. External actors need to resist the temptation of getting pulled into securitized stabilization engagements.

Outside partners and donors also need to turn their eyes towards 'classic' conflict resolution techniques, and locally driven traditional prevention is desirable over the preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) agenda in this regard. This agenda more specifically geared to preventing and countering violent extremism can bring opportunities to prevention actors, but at the cost of a myopic approach to conflicts. It runs the risk of focussing attention towards a (messy) descriptor of conflict types or conflict actors. But that limits our ability to understand conflict patterns, and especially the factors that enable violent extremist organizations to build up support in certain locations. Conflict and mediation practitioners in Africa face the pressure of developing approaches and making the case for decision-makers to make use of their knowledge in complex contemporary conflicts that also include violent extremist actors. Experience needs to be shared regarding what works and what techniques need updating. Partnership relations should support knowledge-sharing and best practices, with a view to learning when classical techniques are also effective in contexts with violent extremist actors.

Recommendations for external partners and donors

From capacity-building to mutual gains

External partners and donors who want to collaborate with African conflict prevention and mediation actors need to reframe how they engage. The language of assistance and capacity-building is no longer workable. For the most part, this is a language that no longer reflects reality. Within the context of partnerships, it is more relevant to establish a matchup in the mutual gains and mutual learning or advantages that the relation can bring to all involved. Many of these insights are not new, in fact they are part of a wider political and cultural movement linked to pan-Africanism, but also across the development and peace 'industries' (Fisher and Zimina 2009). The conflict prevention and mediation field is better served by relationships founded on shared objectives, clear mutual gains (that are not reducible to financial ones) and close and networked cooperation. Support will be legitimate, and welcomed, to the extent that it is viewed by the stakeholders involved as strengthening initiatives driven by the conflict prevention and management communities of practice on the continent. Additionally, the next step is to seriously consider how they bring value and learning to both sides in the collaboration. After so many years of overdependence on donor assistance, trainings, validation workshops and capacity-building are not in high demand. All too often, such offers from outside actors are underpinned by an assumption that outside actors possess the expertise and are in the position to transmit these 'goods' to conflict prevention and mediation professionals in Africa. A two-way exchange of knowledge and expertise is instead preferable as the basic foundation of partnerships. This implies that responsibility and decision-making linked to the partnership must be more genuinely shared.

From an over-emphasis on APSA to adapting to changes in conflict prevention and conflict mediation

African conflict prevention and mediation practices take hold when they provide sufficient gains for the key stakeholders involved. Some of the key stakeholders, as we have seen, actually play destabilizing roles, and their framing of their political challengers and the conflict at hand have compounded the situation. This is the difficult starting point for most regional peace processes. The experimentation and ad-hoc nature characterizing APSA are not temporary exceptions to the norm – instead, they are the seedbed for tomorrow's institutional arrangements. What steps can African and non-African actors take to increase APSA's credibility in the face of the many challenges, and how far can its current form be stretched? Will some of its rules and principles become

untenable? The boundaries in today's conflict management landscape will be redrawn depending on what happens with the geopolitical rift currently afflicting institutional structures, and how fast ad hoc regional governance goes from temporary to more settled and formal forms of intrastate cooperation. Outside partners should continue working with established organizations but must not stop at only doing that.

Outside support actors can do a better job at listening and matching their offers of support in favour of actual expressions of what is needed in African conflict prevention and mediation communities. That means that outside partners need some space for flexibility and match-making. This requires an ethical compass, in combination with listening skills or soft skills. Workable ideas are to be found by moving away from predetermined partner support packages and closely paying attention to the changing patterns of preventive diplomacy.

When AU member states prefer non-APSA mediation arrangements, these can seem attractive since they may be efficient, but there are political and moral considerations that need to be weighed in the decision to collaborate. In making space for new forms of engagement in partly new conflict environments, outside actors must rely on principles to guide the collaboration (to mention just a few: conflict analysis, rights-based perspectives, gender mainstreaming, and do-no-harm principles). More time must be spent on finding a good match for collaboration between what conflict prevention and mediation actors request collaboration on and what outside actors are interested in or well-placed to provide.

From pre-determined ideas of what is on offer to joint consultations
There is a drastically declining use in referring to APSA actorhood, such as the typical form of assessment that asks whether APSA has achieved the Silencing the Guns agenda. Outside actors sometimes approach APSA with predetermined ideas of what they have on offer and which parts of APSA they are most interested in partnering with. To date a disproportionate amount of attention has been focused on secretariats, headquarters and charismatic personalities. Such formal-level forms of collaborations still play important political and symbolic functions. They are often entry-points, and a required starting point when the outside actor is a governmental one. Still, we need a relational shift whereby joint consultations and joint assessments arrive at what forms of collaborations are beneficial and legitimate. That is, joint consultations can certainly result in collaborations between outside partners and specific prevention and mediation components of APSA, but this should be the outcome of the assessment and not the pre-set offer on the table. The focus should be more on substance areas (policies, processes and areas where peer-to-peer forms of learning are of mutual value). More consultations should be proposed with operational and technical levels of experts and officials, and these can inform light yet impactful ways of facilitating experience-sharing and best practices.

From thinking for to thinking with
Sound analysis should underpin collaborations, and certainly evidence-based practice is a needed requirement. It is high time to prioritise joint analysis in partnerships and for

outside partners to engage with and use the data and information produced by research institutes, think tanks and academics based on the continent. The crucial point is that in order for analysis to inform preventive diplomacy (for improved practice) it needs to depart from criteria or assumptions that speak to ground realities. The evidence-basis behind improvements to the conceptual and methodological basis of mediators and peacebuilders must be relevant and appropriate to the prevention and mediation communities of practice in operational, technical and hands-on roles. Both 'insider' and 'outsider' analysts and researchers stand to benefit from reflecting and learning about prevention and mediation together. When 'learning processes' occur in tandem with peace processes, this ought to be seen as one marker of progress for a 'North-South' partnership. Outside partners could do much better in terms of creating opportunities during project cycles to verify the pre-existing theories of change and hypotheses of impact. Ambitious conflict analyses, drawing on more diverse sources of data, create opportunities for organisational learning and adjustment of habitual working assumptions.

References

African Union (AU), 2020. Financing the Union. Towards the Financial Autonomy of the African Union. Status Report – An Update. Version Four. 16 June 2020 Report on Financing of the Union Jun 2020 (002) (au.int).

AU, 2008. *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa.* Addis Ababa: African Union.

AU, 2018. 11th AU Extraordinary Summit, November 2018, https://au.int/summit/extraordinary/11, accessed 5 May 2021.

AU Assembly, 2020a. Decision of the Joint Sitting Report of the Ministerial Committee on Scale of Assessment and Contributions and the Committee of Fifteen Ministers of Finance (F15)'. Adopted at the 33rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9–10 February. Assembly/AU/Dec.752 (XXXIII).

AU Assembly, 2020b. Decision of the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union on Silencing the Guns in Africa. Adopted at the 14th Extraordinary AU Assembly held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 6 December'. Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (XIV).

AU Assembly, 2017. 'The Imperative to Strengthen Our Union: Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union – The Kagame Report: Decision on the Institutional Reform of the African Union, Assembly/AU/Dec. 606 (XXVII)', AU Assembly, Addis Ababa (29 January 2017).

AU Commission, 2015. Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (Addis Ababa: AU Commission, April 2015a).

AU Executive Council, 2019. Décision sur le rapport du Haut Représentant de l'UA pour le financement de l'Union et du Fonds pour la Paix relatif aux résultats des consultations régionales sur l'évaluation du Fonds pour la Paix de l'UA . Adopted at the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council held in Niamey, Niger, on 4–5 July. EX.CL/Dec.1061 (XXXV).

AU Executive Council, 2011. Decision on the Report of Member State's Experts Consultations on theme of the Sixteenth Ordinary AU Assembly 'Towards Greater Unity and Integration Through Shared Values,' EX.CL/Draft/Dec.635(XVIII).

AU Peace and Security Council, 2014. 'Press Statement of the 432nd Meeting of the PSC on 'Unconstitutional Changes of Governments and Popular Uprisings in Africa',' AU, April 29, 2014, https://www.peaceau. org/en/article/press-statement-of-the-432nd-meeting-on-unconstitutional-changes-of- governments-and-popular-uprisings-in-africa (accessed 10 May, 2021).

Amani Africa, 2020. Critical Appraisal of the Agenda of Silencing the Guns in Africa, Media and Research Services, Policy Brief 3, 7 December Microsoft Word - PolicyBriefon-SilencingtheGuns.docx (amaniafrica-et.org) .

Aning, Kwesi E., Peter Albrecht and Anne Blaabjerg Nielsen, 2021. West Africa Security Perspectives: Kwesi Aning Explains, DIIS Report 19 May.

Böås, M., and K.C. Dunne, 2007. *African Guerillas: Raging against the Machine*, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Chan, Stephen, 2017. Meditations on Diplomacy Open Access Book – Meditations on Diplomacy: Comparative Cases in Diplomatic Practice and Foreign Policy (e-ir.info).

Daily Trust 2021. The African Union Must Invest in Preventive Diplomacy.

Desmidt, Sophie, and Volker Hauck, 2017. 'Conflict Management under the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA): Analysis of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution Interventions by the African Union and Regional Economic Communities in Violent Conflicts in Africa for the Years 2013–2015', ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 211, April 2017 Conflict management under the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) (ecdpm.org).

Duursma, Allard, 2020. African Solutions to African Challenges: The Role of Legitimacy in Mediating Civil Wars in Africa, *International Organization* 72(2): 295–330.

Döring, Katharina P. W. 2018. 'The Changing ASF Geography: From the Intervention Experience in Mali to the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises and the Nouakchott Process.' *African Security* 11 (1): 32–58.

ECOWAS Commission, 2012. Final communique from the extraordinary summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, 28 March 2012 (Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire). Available at: Final communique from the extraordinary summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government - Mali | ReliefWeb

Engel, Ulf, 2020. Peace-building Through Space-making: The Spatializing Effects of the African Union's Peace and Security Policies, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 14(2): 221–236.

Gelot, Linnéa, 2020. Deradicalization as Soft Counter-insurgency: Distorted Interactions Between Somali Traditional Authorities and Intervening Organizations, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, DOI: 10.1080/17502977.2020.1734390.

Gnanguênon, Amandine, 2021. Pivoting to African Conflict Prevention? An Analysis of continental and regional early warning systems, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS), Brief 3, February.

Gomes Porto, João, and K.Y. Ngandu, 2014. 'The African Union, Preventive Diplomacy, Mediation, and the Panel of the Wise: Review and Reflection on the Panel's First Six Years,' *African Security* 7(3): 181–206.

Hellquist, Elin, 2020. Regional Sanctions as Peer Review: The African Union against Egypt (2013) and Sudan (2019), *International Political Science Review* https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512120935530

Hendricks, Cheryl, 2021. Women and Mediation in Africa. In Gilbert Khadiagala and Dimpho Deleglise (eds) *Southern African Security Review 2020*, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung and University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 81-120.

Henneberg I, Stapel S, 2020. Cooperation and Conflict at the Horn of Africa: A New Regional Bloc Between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia and Its Consequences for Eastern Africa. *Africa Spectrum* 55(3):339-350. doi:10.1177/0002039720936689.

Ingiiris, Mohamed, 2018. Building Peace from the Margins in Somalia: The Case for Political Settlement with Al-Shabaab, *Contemporary Security Policy* 39(4): 512-536.

International Crisis Group (ICG), 2020. The Price of Peace: Securing UN Financing for AU Peace Operations, Africa Report 286.

Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Africa, 2020a EU peace and security funds can now bypass the African Union - ISS Africa.

ISS, 2020b. Silencing the Guns https://issafrica.org/research/monographs/silencing-the-guns-in-africa-by-2020-achievements-opportunities-and-challenges.

ISS Africa, 2015, AU PSC Stands with Rwanda on Universal Jurisdiction, https://www.issafrica.org/pscreport/addis-insights/psc-stands-with-rwanda-on-universal-jurisdiction.

Khadiagala, Gilbert M., 2021. Mediation in Southern Africa: A Framing Introduction. In: Southern Africa Security Review 2020, eds GM Khadiagala and D Deleglise Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung and The Centre for Defence and Security Management, University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 15-48.

Khadiagala Gilbert M., 2007. *Meddlers or Mediators? African Interveners in Civil Conflicts in Eastern Africa*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff.

Maiangwa, Benjamin, 2015. Assessing the Responses of The Economic Community of West African States to the Recurring and Emerging Security Threats in West Africa, *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52(1): 103-120 https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909615570951.

Mattheis, Frank, and Staeger, Ueli, 2020. How member states and partners impede the African Union's quest for financial autonomy, *The Conversation*, 22 December.

McNamee, Terence and Monde Muyangwa, 2021. 'Introduction'. In T. McNamee and M. Muyangwa (eds) *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 3–14.

Medie, Peace A., 2021. An International Women's Day collection from APSR: A New Agenda for Gender and Politics Scholarship IWD 2021 (cambridge.org)

Nathan, Laurie, 2016a. How and Why African Mediators Compromise Democracy. Prepared for the Conference on the Ethics of Negotiation in Armed Conflicts, Centre for Ethics and the Rule of Law, University of Pennsylvania, 14–16 April 2016, https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/5397-nathan---mediators-compromise-democracypdf (accessed 8 May 2021).

Nathan, Laurie, 2016b. Will the Lowest be First?: Subsidiarity in Peacemaking in Africa Mechanisms. In P. Aall and C.A Crocker (eds) *Minding the Gap: African Conflict Management in a Time of Change*. Waterloo: CIGI.

Nathan, L., R. Kibochi, C. Mainge, M. Ndiaye, and Y. Zoubir, 2015. *African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). 2014 Assessment Study. Final Report*. Addis Ababa: African Union.

Ndiaye, Michelle, 2016. The Relationship between the AU and the RECs/RMs in Relation to Peace and Security in Africa: Subsidiarity and Inevitable Common Destiny. In C. de Coning, J. Karlsrud, and L. Gelot (eds) *The Future of African Peace Operations: From the Janjaweed to Boko Haram*, Uppsala, Sweden, London: Zed Books, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 52–64.

Ndubuisi, Christian Ani, 2021. Coup or Not Coup : The African Union and the Dilemma of 'Popular uprisings'. In Africa, *Democracy and Security*, DOI: 10.1080/17419166.2021.1899915.

Okech, Awino, David Mwambari and Funmi Olonisakin, 2020. COVID-19 responses and human rights in selected African countries, *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, 26:3, 549-555, DOI: 10.1080/1323238X.2020.1813381.

Organization of African Unity, 1991. Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Chapter IV 37636-treaty-0016_-_treaty_establishing_the_african_economic_community_e.pdf (au.int)

Palik, Júlia, Siri Aas Rustad, Fredrik Methi, 2020. Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989-2019. PRIO Paper 2020.

Radio Tamazuj, 2020. South Sudan pays over $9m arrears owed to AU, 25 June South Sudan pays over $9m arrears owed to AU | Radio Tamazuj.

Söderberg Kovacs, Mimmi, 2020. Negotiating Sacred Grounds? Resolving Islamist Armed Conflicts International Negotiation 25 (3), pp. 375-388.

Söderberg Kovacs, Mimmi, 2014. Bringing the Good, the Bad and the Ugly into the Peace Fold: The Republic of Sierra Leone's Armed Forces after the Lomé Peace Agreement. In Roy Licklider (ed), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces After Civil Wars*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, pp. 195-212.

Tieku, Thomas Kwasi, forthcoming. Explaining APSA from the Perspective of International Informal Practices. In Katharina Döring, Ulf Engel, Linnéa Gelot and Jens Herpolsheimer (eds), *Researching the Inner Life of the African Peace and Security Architecture: APSA Inside-Out*, Brill Publishers.

Tieku, Thomas Kwasi, 2019. Ruling from the Shadows: The Nature and Functions of Informal International Rules in World Politics, *International Studies Review* 21(2), June 2019, 225–243, https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viz012

Tralac, 2020. 'Financing the Union. Towards the Financial Autonomy of the African Union. Status Report – An Update. Version 4'. Stellenbosch: Trade Law Centre, 16 June.

Turianskyi, Yarik and Steven Gruzd, 2019. The 'Kagame Reforms' of the AU: Will They Stick?, SAIIA Occasional Paper No. 299, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, July 2019.

United Nations (UN), 2020. Press Release. Secretary-General Statement. Multilateral Partnerships More Important than Ever to Tackle Global, Regional Crises, Secretary-General Tells Heads of Organizations at High-Level Dialogue, SG/SM/20443, 23 November 2020.

Vlavonou, Gino, 2019. APSA and (Complex) International Security Regime Theory: A Critique, *African Security* 12:1, 87-110, DOI: 10.1080/19392206.2019.1587143.

Witt, Antonia, 2018. *Undoing Coups? The African Union and Post-Coup Intervention in Madagascar*, London: Zed Books.

Xinhua, 2020. African countries contribute 141 mln USD to continental peace fund since 2017, 14 January African countries contribute 141 mln USD to continental peace fund since 2017 - Xinhua | English.news.cn (xinhuanet.com)