

## Norm Revisionists, not Norm Breakers

### The Emerging Multipolar Landscape of Peace Operations

Sylvester B. Maphosa<sup>1</sup>

In the past two decades, the ability of African countries to contribute assets to peace operations has increased to a remarkable degree. Undeniably, this surge is contributing in sum to stabilising different conflict areas and demonstrates the willingness and ability to take on peace enforcement mandates. Using selected field missions in Africa which manifest collective efforts in several conflict and post-conflict situations, this paper considers the changing nature of peace operations in the context of contemporary dynamics in power capabilities. What is the motivation for African countries to contribute troops to current peace operations? What form will future missions take? And how will regional and global structures pool resources for crisis situations?

#### Peace Operations

Peace operations are multifunctional undertakings, conducted in support of interventions mandated by the United Nations (UN) and/or African Union (AU), which seek to achieve a peace process and prevent violence, e.g. peacekeeping, peace-making, peace enforcement, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and humanitarian undertakings.<sup>1</sup> A peace operation is not an event. It is a collective progression of efforts to achieve both short-term and long-term political settlement and/or other conditions specified in the mandate. Notably, the intricacy of modern

conflicts dictates that no actor or strategy can build peace singlehandedly.

#### Factors Influencing Current Peace Operations

Five factors influence the design of and approaches to current peace operations:

- 1 **New security threats**, including the ethnopolitics of poverty and the increasing gap between rich and poor, democratic governance deficits,

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gender-based violence, organised crime, terrorism, piracy, environmental degradation and climate change, HIV/AIDS and Ebola, displacement, and human trafficking all exert significant shifts into new ways of thinking about war, violence, and peace.<sup>2</sup>

- 2 The **reconfigured roles of both Western and Eastern community blocs** in terms of their relative military, political, economic, and soft powers wield major modifications on the character of extant peace operations in Africa. These powers have not declined or 'weakened' in the last two decades, as Wiharta, Melvin, and Avezov assert.<sup>3</sup> In fact, they have repositioned their continued domination of the global peace and security enterprise as major finance-contributing countries (FCCs). New evidence in terms of funding resources and decision capabilities demonstrates unrelenting leverage on an expanded trajectory of engagement in directing the process of peace operations, especially on the African continent.<sup>4</sup>
- 3 **Emerging powers**, including BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum), G20 (Group of 20), and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization),<sup>5</sup> are influencing current peace operations by exercising enhanced regional and global roles. They are providing alternative common ground on key peace and security issues where the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) lacks capacity and flexibility.
- 4 Further, the **growing disenchantment** of the developing world with the current decisions and approaches of the UNSC to violent conflict axes, including those in the DRC, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq<sup>6</sup> and Syria, has led to continued pressure on the UNSC to reorganise its response mechanisms and procedures. In more than a few circumstances, the growing disillusionment with the expediency of the UN mission procedures has revealed inadequacies in effectively addressing the changing nature and context of modern peace and security challenges in Africa (and elsewhere). Protracted maelstroms in the CAR, the eastern DRC, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Somalia demonstrate this cynicism of the UN as evident

in its largely overlooking the socioeconomic dynamic transition of Africa.<sup>7</sup>

- 5 The **bourgeoning role of regional organisations (ROs), including regional economic mechanisms and/or regional mechanisms (RECs/RMs)**, has been affecting peace operations in light of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and successive recommendations by the UN Secretary-General's office to expand the roles of ROs through the division of labour.<sup>8</sup> Boutros-Ghali argued that partnerships in peace operations can help ease the financial and material burdens placed on the UN and also provide special insights into conflicts from their various settings [and mobilise strategic assets by regional mechanisms], resulting in emergencies being responded to more quickly.<sup>9</sup>

## Peace Operations in Africa in 2015

Africa is the leading global theatre of peace operations, with 11 missions being conducted in 2015. This is the largest number of peace missions ever deployed on the continent at a time. They include the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO); United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO); United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID); United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA); United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNIMIL); United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS); and United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). Two of these, viz. MINUSCA in the CAR and MINUSMA in Mali, were formerly AU-led missions that were taken over by the UN in 2014. UNAMID in Darfur is conducted as a hybrid UN/AU mission. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is an existing wholly AU-led (but externally funded) peace support operation. The Regional Task Force Mission to Eliminate the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA-RTF) is also an AU-mandated peace support operation.

**Table 1: Peace Operations in Africa in 2015**

Mission	Start Date	Location	Mandating Authority	Budget (US\$)	Strength (including external contribution)	African Primary Asset Contributors (Top five in descending order)
MINURSO	1991	Western Sahara	UN-mandated	55, 990, 080	505	Egypt, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria
MINUSCA – originally MISCA	September 2014	CAR	AU-mandated until taken over by UN in September 2014	253, 424, 400	798	Morocco, Rwanda, Niger, Senegal, Mauritania
MINUSMA – originally AFISMA	July 2013	Mali Azawad	AU-mandated until taken over by UN in July 2013	830, 701, 700	10, 068	Chad, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal
MONUSCO	2010	DRC	UN-mandated	1, 398, 475, 300	25, 591	South Africa, Tanzania, Egypt, Togo, Malawi
UNAMID	2007	Darfur Sudan	AU-UN hybrid mandated	639, 654, 200	19, 657	Ethiopia, Rwanda, Egypt, Senegal, Nigeria
UNISFA	2011	Kordofan conflict Sudan	UN-mandated	318, 925, 200	4, 285	Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania
UNIMIL	2003	Liberia	UN-mandated	580, 830, 400	13, 962	Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia
UNMISS	2011	South Sudan	UN-mandated	493, 570, 300	9, 700	Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana, Zimbabwe
UNOCI	2004	Cote d'Ivoire	UN-mandated	427, 319, 800	7, 466	Morocco, Benin, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritania,
AMISOM	February 2007	Somalia	AU-mandated	600, 000, 000	22, 050	Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti
LRA RTF	2011	Central Africa region (including Uganda, DRC, South Sudan and CAR)	AU-mandated	n.a.	5, 000	Uganda, South Sudan, DRC, Rwanda, CAR

Source: UNSC docs A/C.5/68/26; A/RES/68/299; A/RES/68/297; A/RES/68/293; AU Mission in Somalia, 2014<sup>10</sup>

## Asset Contributions

Assets in peace operations comprise the entire array of inputs necessary to execute a mission, including financial resources, equipment and human resources. Notably, African troops, including non-military capabilities, are increasingly involved on the continent and are assuming leadership roles in more than 84 per cent of peace missions. In addition, in 2011, African troop-contributing countries (TCCs) increased their share of the contribution to UN operations (including police, military experts, troops, and civilians) from 29 per cent to more than 50 per cent of UN troops deployed on the African continent.<sup>11</sup> Today, more than 60 per cent of the top-20 TCCs to UN peace operations are African.<sup>12</sup>

Importantly, African countries, with the support of international partners, are engaging in collective efforts to develop regional and national capacities for peace operations. More and more African countries are willing to deploy their personnel to both AU-led and UN-led peace operations. While in 2010 the AU struggled to find personnel to join Burundi and Uganda on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), hardly three years later the Lord's Resistance Army Regional Task Force (LRA-RTF) had four (4) TTCs, AMISOM had eight (8), the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) had four (4), and the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA, now called MINUSMA), had 13.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2: Top-20 African Asset Contributors to UN Operations in 2015**

COUNTRY	UN TOTAL ASSETS CONTRIBUTION (Including police, military experts, troops, and civilian capacity)
Ethiopia	7852
Rwanda	4635
Nigeria	2970
Ghana	2924
Senegal	2864
Egypt	2540
Tanzania	2309
South Africa	2247
Morocco	2128
Burkina Faso	1984
Niger	1866
Togo	1747
Chad	1263
Benin	1230
Kenya	897
Malawi	895
Gambia	348
Cote d' Ivoire	259
Guinea	226
Djibouti	159

Source: Author adaptation from UN Peacekeeping, 2015<sup>15</sup>

## Objectives of Engagement

In answering the question of what motivates African countries to contribute troops to current peace operations, a cluster of six factors can be distinguished.<sup>15</sup>

- a) *Financial incentives*: Financial encouragements and compensations are among the most appealing aspects of peace operations for TCCs. It is standard UN procedure to reimburse TCCs in the amount of US\$1,028<sup>16</sup> per soldier per month of operations. Countries are also reimbursed for military hardware, including guns, ammunition, tanks, and other logistics that they facilitate.
- b) *Political objectives*: Contributing assets to peace operations yields political benefits both at home and externally. Political objectives include for strategic policy functions to play regional leadership roles, and gaining recognition and standing in the international community.
- c) *Economic considerations*: Economic considerations for TCCs' engagement include gaining individual and/or institutional profits from financial compensation; fostering regional integration in Africa; and facilitating development and prosperity through stability.
- d) *Cross-border dynamic of contemporaneous disputes and violence*: In extant conflict, usually what begins as a small dispute in one region or country soon engulfs the whole region without respect for territorial borders. Violence, crime, and many socio-economic ills are exported to surrounding countries. Fears of the spill-over of conflict thus drive the contribution of assets to peace operations.
- e) *Regional and domestic security and normative considerations*: The organisational landscapes and responsibilities of sub-regional security complexes impose obligations that drive

the participation of member states in peace operations.

- f) *Capacity growth*: Participation provides capacity-building and training opportunities for militaries and also improves military morale. The US-funded Africa Contingency Training and Assistance (ACOTA) programme has been instrumental in driving many countries to participate in troop contribution efforts.

## The Future of Peace Operations in Africa

What form will future missions take, and how will regional and global structures pool their resources for crisis situations? While extant peace operations on the continent are lauded and are yielding essential insights into the forward-looking partnership of the AU with the UN in the promotion of peace and security in Africa, there is also an increasing realisation that focusing exclusively on military solutions to armed violence on the continent only deals with a part of the problem. A long-term strategy would have to address the underlying causes of conflict, including socio-economic marginalisation, the issue of natural resources, the management of diversity, and governance. In a press release in February 2015, the AU exchanged views with a high-level UN panel on peace operations, stressing the need for an enhanced and forward-looking partnership with the UN in the promotion of peace and security in Africa.<sup>17</sup>

The AU provides an impressive demonstration of the application of the principle of subsidiarity resulting in relative peace, prosperity, and stability in the region. Over the last decade, the AU has forged various partnerships to leverage the vision of a free, peaceful, and successful continent driven by its people. It remains well placed to engage in conflict prevention in the region and strengthen the political will of its member states to drive the security agenda on a permanent and not ad hoc basis.

In this context, a creative division of responsibility and partnership is emerging which is beneficial both to the UN and to the people of Africa. The AU intervenes as a first responder in the stabilisation of conflict situations, laying the groundwork for the UN to deploy peace operations later, e.g., MISCA in the CAR and AFISMA in Mali, transformed into MINUSCA and MINUSMA, respectively. In the face of extant threats to human security, the governments and populations of areas affected by armed violence in Africa

will continue in future to welcome robust and intrusive peace operations in their countries, e.g., the eastern DRC, Somalia, and the central Africa region. Further, the appointment of an AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security to promote peace and security in Africa<sup>18</sup> is a new and promising direction for future peace operations which is set to increase specific attention to the role of women in the resolution of conflicts and identify ways in which to promote the effective implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325(2000).

The long-term trajectory of emerging and resurgent actors in current peace operations is neither very unified nor very revisionist.<sup>19</sup> The AU and its member states and regional mechanisms (RMs) are not seeking to become 'norm breakers' and offer new models for international peace operations. Rather, they tend to engage in inconsequential 'norm revisionism' that is likely to influence future operations only in terms of make-up, design and conduct, e.g., the FIB provided by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the DRC. The AU has largely expressed a positive appreciation for peace operations as useful tools for the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, the chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, in exchanging views with the high-level UN panel on peace operations, underscored and reaffirmed that all African interventions towards the maintenance of peace and security are guided by the primacy of the UN Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.<sup>20</sup>

The policy of 'African (regional) solutions to African (regional) problems' is no silver bullet. Despite the idea being significant in terms of subsidiarity giving more ownership over the missions to the contexts and localities where they are deployed and moderating the influences of external actors, regionalisation will not be sufficient to address future challenges confronting peace operations in an increasingly multi-actor context.<sup>21</sup> Shared economic interests, especially around natural resources, are likely to provide the basis for cooperative approaches to managing key conflict areas while at the same time instigating complex interdependencies and competition. However, the approach of 'African solutions to African problems' holds both conceptual and practical obstacles and limitations. In practical terms, Africa hosts the largest number of peace operations; yet it lacks the capacity and/or political will to deploy its own regional missions. While the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is a clear aim to develop such



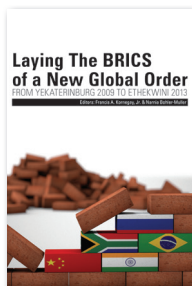
capacity, the current AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs/RMs) unfortunately wield limited economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence in terms of enablers and logistics to leverage long-term stability. In addition, current organisational competition and disagreements over strategies between the AU and the RECs/RMs coupled with a lack of the civilian capabilities needed for peacebuilding impede the region's ambitions to effectively deploy peace operations and spur on positive peace dividends.

## Conclusion

Developing the necessary capabilities depends on a combination of political will and the accessibility of resources. In addition, a coordinated regional and international response that addresses the root causes of conflict is indispensable. In light of this analysis and respecting the continent's long-term goal of 'African solutions to African problems', the global community, particularly the US, EU, and China, will be required to maintain ownership of, and provide support in the short to medium term to, future peace operations in Africa.

## Notes and References

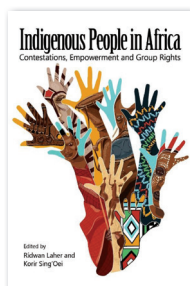
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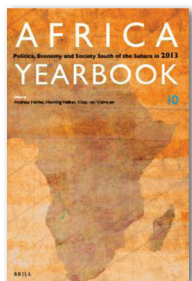
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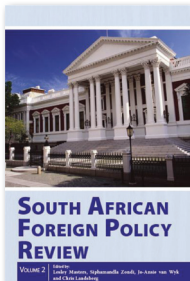


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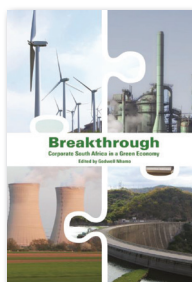
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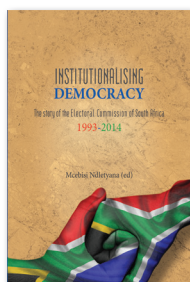
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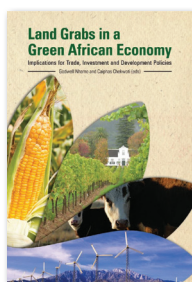


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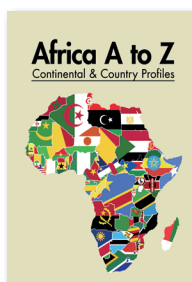
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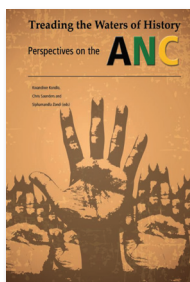
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