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An Aspiring Security Organisation in Africa –
The African Union

Introduction

Africa is often deemed to be weightless in international organisations, despite its growing population and sheer geographical extent. To demonstrate the continent's neglected state, it is enough to mention that despite its sheer geographical size and population, the continent does not have any representation among the permanent members of the United Nations' Security Council. Moreover, Africa was not an active participant in the establishment of the UN either, since most of its territories, save Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and the Union of South Africa, had a colonial status in 1945. Over the years the continent gave two Secretary Generals to the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan, but the special envoys and advisers to the Secretary General, who handled subjects related to Africa remained outsiders until 2017. This neglect can originate form Africa's turbulent history, and from the fact that it achieved its independence rather late (Búr 2019: 9–19).

Despite its unfavourable position, the continent showed a strong willingness to take matters into its own hand. First, the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 provided a framework for cooperation. When support from competing superpowers decreased dramatically in the post-bipolar system, authoritarian regimes started to crumble. Yet, instead of a peaceful transition, long civil wars erupted on the continent, which also showed the pitfalls of non-interference policy. With the realisation that Africa cannot rely on external actors in solving problems on the continent, a new institutional framework was born, the African Union (AU). The organisation, founded in 2002, broke with the formerly mentioned practice of non-interference, and introduced a stronger commitment in solving its Member States' internal problems, placing regional stability over state sovereignty (Marsai 2019: 131–132).

Both organisations stemmed from the idea of continental unity, Pan-Africanism (Mathews 2018: 15–36). This ensured continuity, however, some changes were introduced in this approach. The security domain also went through significant changes, nonetheless both organisations were conceptualised as collective security organisations. Although the OAU also led peace operations, the AU embedded a more comprehensive and sophisticated institutional framework, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) into its system. Moreover, the AU started to formulate the African Standby Force (ASF), a regional, brigade strong military asset to contribute to peacekeeping (Kent–Malan 2003: 72–73) and launch its next generation of operations. The organisation even thought about the finances of the operations, introducing a new, 0.2% levy on selected import items to ease its dependency on external actors, and to accumulate funds to finance AU missions (Matlosa

2018: 95–96). This step shows a certain level of commitment towards the realisation of the stated *African solutions to African problems* approach (Franke–Esmenjaud 2008: 143). Steps in the direction of this commitment were necessary, since four (AMIB, MISCA, AFISMA, AMIS II)[1] of the total nine AU operations launched until 2023 were taken over by the United Nations (UN), due to lack of finances, and ATMIS–AMISOM[2] until 1 April 2022 (Dessu 2022) is leaning heavily on third party donors both in case of finances and logistics (Peace and Security Council 2022). Notwithstanding these constraints, the AU still shows willingness to introduce its homegrown solutions, and still carries out its operations in the continent. Thus, this chapter is dedicated to provide an introduction to the African Union as a security provider, and examine its security institutions as well as the missions and operations it has launched.

The African Union as a security provider

The clear conceptualisation of the OAU and its successor organisation, the AU as a collective or cooperative security organisation is rare in international literature. However, when researchers (like Franke and Esmenjaud) or the AU itself refers to it so, it is stated, that based on its collective identity, the AU forms a collective security organisation to resolve collective African security problems. This approach mirrors the preceding OAU self-definition as well. The aforementioned collective identity is provided by the theory of Pan-Africanism. "Pan-Africanism may be described as a politico-cultural phenomenon which in its early stages regarded Africa, Africans and persons of African extraction as a unit. It has consistently aimed at the regeneration and uplift of Africa and the promotion of a feeling of unity among Africans in general. It also glories in the African past and inculcates pride in African culture" (Esedebe 1970: 127). In practice, it meant the pooling of African assets in the promise of mutual support and assistance in order to counter neo-colonialist incentives of external powers. It was a predominant concept even before the formulation of the OAU of which two further ideas derived, Africanisation and African ownership. These two ideas were the primary vehicles of the development of African integration in the field of security (Franke–Esmenjaud 2008: 139–140). The African continental integration followed a similar path to the European. Following a functionalist approach, it started in the field of economic integration. A similar spill-over effect was expected as was in the case of the EU (Marsai 2019: 130). As it was already mentioned, integration in the field of security is still an incomplete process in the much smaller EU. The African integration is double the size, and it relies on external donors, thus integration development in the field of security has proven to be a slow process.

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[1]   The African Union's missions, namely the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), Mission internationale de soutien à la Centrafrique sous conduite africaine (African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic [MISCA]), African-led International Support Mission (AFISMA), African Union Mission in Sudan II (AMIS II).
[2]   African Union missions, namely African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

Nevertheless, both the OAU and the AU implemented initiatives in order to enhance African ownership and the Africanisation of security. However, the lack of financial resources created a situation where external actors were also providing support to African projects. The African reliance on donations however re-establishes a neo-colonial-like relationship with external powers. This can be explained by the dependence theory, which states that recipient countries have a decreased autonomy over policy making (APUULI 2018: 172). Thus, applying this analogy to the AU, the implementation of the peace and security agenda also suffers of this eroded autonomy. As the AU does not have the financial assets and sufficient military equipment to act independently, it relies heavily on international partners, like the UN in this domain, which raises the question of ownership again (ENGEL–PORTO 2014: 138). Despite the drawbacks, Africanisation of security continues, and African ownership is still advertised. The most prominent elements of this idea are the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Standby Force.

The African Peace and Security Architecture

The transformation of the OAU into the African Union was the first step towards establishing a more credible partner in the security domain both to internal and external partners. The Constitutive Act of the African Union provided a more solid and willing legal framework for the organisation as a security provider. The Constitutive Act presented a clearer and firmer standpoint on the AU's role in promoting peace, security and stability in Africa than the OAU Charter. One of the new aspects is the articulated willingness to intervene in Member States if requested, with the aim to restore peace and security (African Union 2000). With the establishment of the AU, new institutions were created, like a full-fledged and more capable AU Commission, but most of all, a new African Peace and Security Architecture was established. This latter has a great significance, since it institutionalised a framework in which missions and operations can be better managed by the AU (ENGEL–PORTO 2009: 82–83).

The Peace and Security Council Protocol (PSC Protocol), which defines the components and responsibilities of the APSA was adopted on 9 July 2002 and entered into force in December 2003 (African Union 2023). The PSC Protocol defined five main pillars of the APSA: the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund (Figure 1). The PSC Protocol also provided an overview of the decision-making process within the APSA framework. To establish institutions to the APSA, in 2004 the AU adopted its Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP). The PSC Protocol and the CADSP together provide the legal framework of the APSA (ENGEL–PORTO 2009: 84).
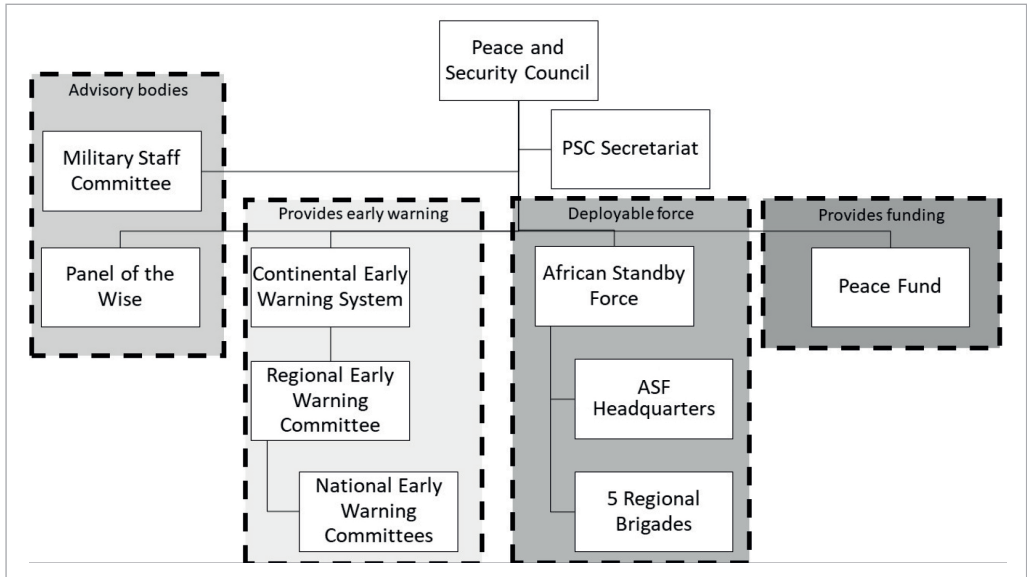
Figure 1: The institutional framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture
Source: Compiled by Mariann Tánczos

In line with the incentive of the Africanisation of security, the APSA can be seen as the most important development in the framework of the AU (Söderbaum–Tavares 2009: 71). The institutional pillars also show a commitment towards African ownership. In this realm, the AU seemed to achieve its aim, since in the case of crisis or conflict on the continent, either a regional organisation, or the AU itself is expected to intervene (Cravinho 2009: 198).

The main decision-making body of the APSA, which decides on how to prevent, manage or resolve conflicts and crises is the Peace and Security Council. The PSC has the power to initiate action in all the aforementioned periods of conflict and crisis (Apuuli 2018: 156). It consists of 15 members, based on the principle of *equitable regional representation* [African Union 2002: Article 5 and s. (2)]. As the first step of conflict prevention, the PSC is provided with information by the CEWS. This body is responsible for coordinating with the UN, and it is the most important tool in conflict prevention. The Situation Room collects information 24/7, and produces various reports and updates to the PSC. To be more efficient, the Protocol sought for the establishment of regional and national early warning systems, which is still incomplete by 2023 (African Union 2002: Article 12; Apuuli 2018: 158; Engel–Porto 2009: 86). The PSC has two advisory bodies, the Military Staff Committee, a technical advisory body consisting of the military attachés of the PSC members, and the Panel of the Wise. The latter is a civilian advisory body consisting of five prominent African personalities selected in line with the equitable regional representation principle. Technically, the PSC can seek the advice of both institutions after considering information provided by the CEWS. This, however, is proven to be very limited, in case of the Military Staff Committee because

of African general prejudice against the military approach towards peace operations, and in the case of the Panel of the Wise because of the unclarified relationship between the bodies. However, the latter has already fulfilled conflict prevention and mediation roles since its establishment in 2007 (Porto–Ngandu 2014: 191; Apuuli 2018: 159–164; Engel–Porto 2009: 87).

The AU set up the Peace Fund or Special Fund to finance APSA with the peace operations included. The Fund was established in 1993 by the OAU to provide reserves in case of emergencies. 6% of the OAU's budget was allocated to it. The PSC Protocol, however, explicitly calls for voluntary contributions not from only Member States, but from civil society and external actors as well. In 2009, the AU decided to raise the regular budget allocation to the Peace Fund gradually to 12%, but in 2016 it stood only at 7% (African Union 2022: Article 21; Apuuli 2018: 160–161; Badmus 2015: 100–101). Notwithstanding, with the introduction of the 0.2% levy in 2017 on import items, the state of AU finances could become more balanced. However, this step led to negative repercussions in the World Trade Organisation, as concerns were raised with respect to compatibility with trade principles. The Peace Fund had been reliant on external donations before, such as the UN Trust Fund, and the EU's European Peace Facility (preciously called African Peace Facility) (Apiko–Aggad 2018). This pattern does not seem to change soon, with the consequence that APSA decision-making processes remain less autonomous.

The African Standby Force

The idea of establishing the African Standby Force emerged from a UN initiative originating in 1947, to create multinational standby units for peacekeeping tasks. After a series of reports and renewed interest in the standby forces concept in the late 1990s and early 2000s, African leaders decided to operationalise the idea in 2003 as the fifth pillar of the APSA. The notion behind the creation of the ASF was to equip Africa with a tool to be able to provide timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis on the continent (Kent–Malan 2003: 72). The PSC Protocol of 2002 made the establishment of the ASF possible. The document equipped the Force with the following tasks:
  – observation and monitoring missions
  – other types of peace support missions
  – intervention in a Member State in respect of grave circumstances or at the request of a Member State in order to restore peace and security
  – prevention of a dispute or conflict from escalating
  – peacebuilding, including post-conflict disarmament and demobilisation
  – humanitarian assistance
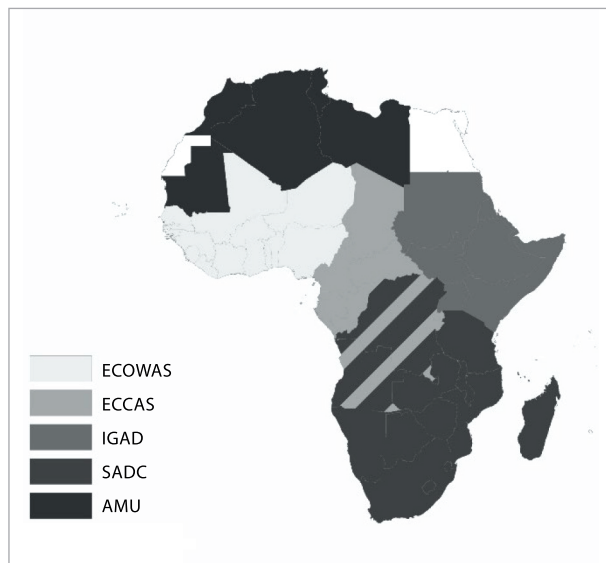 – any other functions mandated by the PSC or AU Assembly (African Union 2023)

Figure 2: The geographical display of African Standby Force regional brigades
Source: Compiled by Mariann Tánczos

According to the Protocol, the ASF would have been composed of 15,000 troops from different regional brigades. This idea was recently changed to regional forces, relying on five regional economic organisations recognised by the AU. These are, as shown in Figure 2, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), 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). All these organisations are responsible to prepare their regional forces, namely the East African Standby Force (EASF), the ECCAS Standby Force (FOMAC), the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), the North African Regional Capability (NARC) and the SADC Standby Force (SSF) (SÖDERBAUM–TAVARES 2009: 71; APUULI 2018: 165).

Over the years, multiple roadmaps were adopted on the full operationalisation of the ASF. It was first scheduled between 2005 and 2008, later pushed to 2010 and finally operationalised in 2016 after the conclusion of the 2015 Amani Africa II field training exercise, which marked the end of a four-year long training cycle. The exercise was held with the participation of 5,400 members of the military, police and civilian (APUULI 2018: 164–169). Despite the optimistic take on the ASF by the AU Assembly, it is arguable if the ASF and the RDC are truly deployable. The establishment of the regional brigades has proven to be even more problematic. The internal political division within AMU countries of achieving any progress in setting up the NARC, the FOMAC in Central Africa was facing capacity constraints, and could not equip fully its brigade, thus it remains undeployable, while the SSF of South Africa also experienced backlashes due to political divisions among SADC member states. The

only two brigades, which showed some progress, were the EASF and the ESF. In the doctrinal level, the EASF followed a bottom-up process, starting with a tactical doctrine, while the ESF derived its own strategic level doctrine from the existing African peace and security operations doctrine (FITZ-GERALD 2017: 623–624). These latter two regions' economic organisations have played important roles before in the formulation of African security. While the ECCAS, responsible for EASF, led successful political mediation in the Central African Republic, the ECOWAS has a more complex agenda to promote peace and security in West Africa. Besides political mediation, the organisation offers assistance in transition and stabilisation, promotes good governance and engages in counter-terrorism and counter-piracy efforts as well. Thus, the ECOWAS possesses crucial capabilities and experience, as the regional organisation deployed ECOMOG in 1990 to Liberia (MOLNÁR 2008), to advance the Africanisation of security (MARSAI 2019: 147–149).

The missions and operations of the African Union

The evaluation of first two decades of the African Union would not be complete without the examination of operations and missions, launched by the organisation. The AU made huge efforts and demonstrated significant development in this field. It is not accidental if we take into account that on the one hand, as a collective security organisation the AU is responsible for the peace and stability of its own members, and on the other hand, the countries of Africa are still suffering from numerous challenges. Of course, the deployment of AU troops was and is not without contradiction and hardships. Nevertheless, the Union has managed to maintain its commitment for operations, and peacekeeping and peace enforcement have become integral part of its profile.

The beginnings – Burundi, Darfur and the Comoros Islands

The first military operation of the AU was the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB). The AMIB was deployed in April 2003 after the ceasefire agreements between the government and different rebel groups fell apart and the United Nations was not capable to deploy rapidly peacekeeping forces to the East African country. The AMIB was the early sign of the AU's ambition to engage in peacekeeping operations on its own continent and provide "African solutions for African problems". In this context, AMIB was an archetypical AU operation. The collapse of the ceasefire between the competing hardliner Hutu and Tutsi militias threatened an all-out fight and the continuation of the civil war which had broken out in 1993. To stop the spiral of violence, the AU decided to launch its first peacekeeping/enforcing operation to Bujumbura. The composition of the troops fitted well the impartiality and neutrality of the mission: the Republic of South Africa acted as a lead nation, which had already some troops in the theatre. Besides Pretoria, Ethiopia and Mozambique contributed to the mission. Altogether, 3,128 peace-

keepers were deployed to Burundi – the overwhelming majority from South Africa. The mission managed to maintain stability and stop violence in the country. The AMIB also conducted a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) activity for the combatants, but it was less successful: instead of the planned 20,000 people, only some hundred participated in the programme. AMIB's deployment ended 31 May 2004, when the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) arrived in the country with almost 6,000 personnel (Svensson 2008a).

The AMIB could be considered mainly a success story. It could hold the line and maintain the stability in Burundi until the arrival of a more robust UN peacekeeping force. Nevertheless, the deployment also highlighted the challenges which overshadowed the next AU operations, too. The financial background of the operation was fragile, and dependent on external donors (the U.K., the U.S.). Last, but not least, in spite of its "AU" mandate, the AMIB was mainly in the hands of one single troop contributing country, South Africa (Svensson 2008a).

Unfortunately, the African Union could not repeat the successes of the AMIB in its next missions in Darfur, Sudan. According to the intention of the organisation, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS I) was an answer from the Union to provide protection for the population of Darfur against Janjawid militias against the spiralling violence which had already killed at least 300,000 people. Since the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) became an integral part of the thinking of the APSA, including the Peace and Security Council, Darfur seemed a veterinary house for R2P with the involvement of Khartoum in the massacre and the potential role of the AU as the protector of Fur and other ethnic groups. The original mandate of the mission was to monitor the ceasefire reached in Abuja talks between Khartoum and the different rebel groups. The first branch of 150 Rwandan troops arrived in the country in August 2004 to protect monitors. Other contingents also arrived soon. Nevertheless, the lack of necessary transport (vehicles, helicopters) and logistics as well as the low number of peacekeepers made it almost impossible for the mission to achieve its goals in the huge operational area (Ekengard 2008: 17). Furthermore, the rise of violence also made it evident that the mandate and the tools of the mission were inadequate. To solve the challenges, the AU suggested the expansion and rebranding of the operation. AMIS II involved an increase in military capacity to more than 2,300 troops, and the introduction of a civilian police (CIVPOL) component of 815 officers. The operation also received an enhanced mandate from the PSC. With the new mandate AMIS II came to function as an "enhanced observer mission" (Ekengard 2008: 19). The mission was expanded also geographically with three additional sectors in Kutum, Zalingue and Al Daien. Nevertheless, the arrival of new troops lagged behind schedule because of poor logistics. Until April 2005, only 2,200 of the authorised 3,320 troops had arrived into Sudan (Ekengard 2008: 19). In the same year, the mission was enlarged to almost 8,000 personnel, and the U.K. provided 1,000 vehicles for AMIS II which was essential for the maintenance of operations. European partners financed air components in the form of 18 unarmed Mi-8 helicopters and different aircraft. In addition, NATO also provided assistance for the strategic airlifting of almost 32,000 peacekeepers to the

theatre (Ekengard 2008: 22–23). Since the beginning, the EU has also assisted the mission with logistics and planning (Besenyő 2009: 31–45).

In spite of the increased number of troops and equipment, AMIS II was incapable to fulfil its objective. Despite AU's presence, Khartoum relaunched its military offensive against the rebel forces in August 2006. Because the AU could not maintain the ceasefire, its reputation was significantly harmed among local population, which led to mistrust, and sometimes, violent incidents. The worst attack happened in Haskanita camp in September 2007 when Darfur rebels overran an AMIS II military base and killed ten peacekeepers. Altogether 59 peacekeepers died during the mission (Besenyő 2009: 23–24).

By the end of the day, it was revealed that the AU – even with the *ad hoc* support by external partners such as the EU, the NATO and bilateral partners – could not cope with its responsibilities and did not have the necessary tools to handle the crisis. Therefore, after long negotiations between the partners, the mission was transformed into a hybrid UN–AU operation, UNAMID on 31 December 2007. Although having strong African component, UNAMID was much more a UN than an AU mission. Its mandate consisted of protecting civilians; facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance by UN Agencies and other aid actors; providing the safety and security of humanitarian personnel; mediating between the Government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur; supporting mediation of community conflicts, including thorough measures to address its root causes, in conjunction with UN country team (UN 2022). At its highest peak, the mission had almost 26,000 authorised personnel with a one-billion-USD annual budget. Still, UNAMID faced numerous logistical and security constraints as it had to operate "in unforgiving terrain and in a complex and often hostile political environment" (UN 2022). In spite of its widening logistic support, UNAMID also struggled with shortfalls in transport, equipment, infrastructure and aviation assets. The mission was finished at the end of 2020. The main reason was not success, but the fact that after the military coup in 2019, the new political leadership of Sudan did not want to contribute to the further deployment of the mission. Perhaps it is not accidental that after the departure of UNAMID in 2022, Darfur witnessed a new wave of violence (ACAPS 2022).

As Arvid Ekengard concluded, "AMIS was too small to reach its objectives. The mandate included protecting civilians, but this task was formulated ambiguously. […] Where deployed, AMIS prevented murder and displacement. However, because of its limited resources, large-scale violence and displacement continued, and the mission could do little to support the Darfur peace process". In addition, "AMIS was dependent on donors, especially the EU" (Ekengard 2008: 4). All these factors contributed to the failure, or at least partial success of the mission.

Last, but not least, we have to mention in this section the African Union's Operations in Comoros in the Indian Ocean: MAES and Operation Democracy. MAES was deployed to secure the elections in Comoros in 2008. Nevertheless, the mission could not have achieved its mandate without the parallel intervention of the AU mission 'Operation Democracy' to keep the territorial integrity of Comoros Islands against the secessionist movements in Anjouan. Although some analysts consider Operation Democracy

a "breakthrough for the AU when it comes to planning and conducting peace operations", and eventually it succeeded in accomplishing its tasks (SVENSSON 2008b: 4), similarly to the previous operations, Operation Democracy could be launched only with significant external logistical assistance. Furthermore, neither the head of the secessionist movement, Colonel Mohamed Bacar, nor his approximately 500 troops demonstrated significant resistance (AMIR 2008).

The African Union in Somalia – AMISOM and ATMIS

Without question, the most robust peace support operation of the African Union is its commitment in Somalia, which has also been the longest and bloodiest operation in the history of APSA.

Somalia fell into chaos in the early 1990s and became the "failed among failed states". After the rule of warlords, the increasing influence of different Islamist militias transformed the political landscape. The Courts of Islamic Union unified Mogadishu in 2006 and started to expand its authority into the countryside. In December 2006 Ethiopia, which was suspicious of the presence of radical elements in the Courts, launched a military offensive against the Islamists with the support of the U.S. The invasion of Addis Ababa fuelled nationalist feelings among Somalis and significantly contributed to the rise of one of the most brutal groups within the Courts, al-Shabaab. While the Ethiopian troops have managed to maintain their presence in bigger cities, al-Shabaab took control of the countryside. To make a shift in the stalemate and to replace the Ethiopians as well as to support the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia, the African states launched the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The first troops arrived in Mogadishu from Uganda in March 2007. The first authorised number of the AMISOM contingent was 8,000, and their mandate aimed at the support and protection of TFG institutions, training Somali national forces, mediation between the different groups, and monitoring the situation. Nevertheless, it was soon revealed that AMISOM faced hard resistance from the Jihadists and it had to act more as a second generation than a first generation peace support operation.

At the beginning, AMISOM controlled only the Mogadishu International Airport (MIA), the Presidential Palace (Villa Somalia), and the main roads between the two locations. Al-Shabaab launched regular attacks to threaten the positions of AU peacekeepers. Nevertheless, Ugandan, and since late 2007, Burundian peacekeepers with the logistic support of DynCorps and Bancroft Global private security companies, held the line. The UN, the EU, the NATO and bilateral partners, such as the U.K. and U.S. also assisted the operation. In January 2009, thanks to the Djibouti Agreement between Somali factions, Ethiopian troops left Somalia. Nevertheless, the game changer, which gave a huge impetus for AMISOM, was the attack committed by al-Shabaab in the Ugandan capital, Kampala in July 2010. The bombing demonstrated well that al-Shabaab is not only a Somali but a regional problem. The successful and foiled attacks in Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti between 2012–2015 also fuelled the perception that regional forces had to contain the

Jihadists. Therefore, besides Burundi and Uganda, Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and for a shorter period, Sierra Leone also joined AMISOM, while the number of deployment reached 22,000 personnel. In August 2011, al-Shabaab withdrew from Mogadishu, and allied forces liberated huge areas and dozens of big cities between 2011 and 2015.

Nevertheless, the expansion from Mogadishu to South Central Somalia overstretched the capacities of AMISOM. While the Somali National Army (SNA) and AMISOM could control main cities, most of the countryside remained in the hands of al-Shabaab. In addition, the protection of main supply routes between different AMISOM and SNA bases proved to be a huge challenge because of the regular guerrilla attacks by the Jihadists. In addition, many vulnerable AMISOM and SNA forward operating bases (FOB) were overrun by al-Shabaab. In the different Somali transitional security plans, SNA should have taken responsibility for FOBs and, later, the security of the whole country. Nevertheless, as years passed, newer and newer deadlines were determined for the exit of AMISOM. Although the relocation of troops, and later, the reduction of them started in 2017 (AMISOM 2017), almost 19,500 AU troops were deployed to Somalia still, by the end of 2022 (ZIP 2022), and SNA was only partially capable of keeping security and stability. Donors who finance the mission are exhausted, and with the current numbers and assets AMISOM cannot shift the equilibrium which exists between the allies and al-Shabaab. The re-configuration and re-branding of the mission from AMISOM to ATMIS has tried to address the challenges and handicaps of the operation (ATMIS s. a.). Nevertheless, it does not seem that the new mandate could provide real answers for them.

In the last fifteen years, AMISOM–ATMIS has reached significant successes. It liberated Mogadishu and dozens of big cities and provided a background for the capacity building of the Somali political transition, state building and security sector reform. Nevertheless, it cost a lot both in human and financial resources: although there are no official statistics, according to solid estimations, thousands of AU peacekeepers had sacrificed their lives in East Africa, while the financial burden of the mission exceeds one billion USD annually. Furthermore, a huge part of the countryside has still remained under the control of al-Shabaab, and ATMIS has no capacity to liberate it. The only solution for the Somali conundrum could be a unified Somali elite who consider al-Shabaab the main threat for the country, and not other clans and politicians (for this section see Williams 2018).

After AMISOM

AMISOM–ATMIS took most of the resources and attention of the African Union, and later military involvement demonstrated that even with foreign assistance the AU had limited capacity to launch other missions. First, in late 2012, the AU wanted to launch a capacity building mission in Mali to strengthen the security sector of the country after the Tuareg rebellion. Nevertheless, the rise of Jihadist groups and their offensive against Bamako in January 2013 washed away the original plans, and the first components of AFISMA were deployed as a protection unit for humanitarian workers and civilian

population. In spite of the arrival of thousands of AU troops, it soon turned out that neither AU nor donors had the will to support financially and logistically the operations: only half of the requested budget had arrived. Therefore, to avoid the collapse, the United Nations and the Security Council decided to take over the mission and transform it into a full blue helmet peacekeeping operation, MINUSMA in July 2013 (WPF 2017: 4–6).

Similar pattern could be observed in case of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA). The AU made the decision on the deployment of MISCA after the civil war in the CAR in 2013. The main role of AU peace-keepers would have been to assist political negotiations, protect civilians and humanitar-ian workers. The 6,000 troops together with the forces of the French Operation Sangaris made tremendous efforts to restore peace and stability in the country (MISCA 2014). Yet, the wide-scale violence, the hard terrain and the lack of necessary logistics and mobility made it impossible for the mission to achieve its goals. Therefore, similarly to AFISMA, the UNSC made the decision to take over the mission. This change took place in mid-2014 (UN 2014).

The failures of AFISMA and MISCA, and the ongoing burdens of AMISOM–ATMIS deterred the African Union from other missions. Therefore, the AU did not launch other peace support operations in the coming years.

Nevertheless, the political and security turmoil of Africa forced certain actors to act. Although the African Union did not start new operations, in the 2020s three regional blocks decided to have a role in the military operation. First, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) – with the contribution of Rwanda – deployed troops to Mozambique to cope with the Jihadist insurgency in Gabo Delgado province. The SAMIM (Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique) which arrived in Mozambique in 2021, consisted of approximately 2,000 troops and an addi-tional 1,000 soldiers from Rwanda. It managed to pull 'the country's north back from the brink' (Cheatham et al. 2022). The second new initiative was the mission of the East African Community (EAC) to the Democratic Republic of Congo in the last quarter of 2022, whose objective is to build stability in East Congo and stop the rule of local armed groups, such as the M23 movement (van de Walle 2022). Last, but not least the Economic Cooperation of West African Countries (ECOWAS) also decided on the estab-lishment of a force, in order to contribute to the stability of the Sahel region (DW 2022).

Conclusions

The self-definition of the African Union as a collective security organisation is based on the concept of collective identity. This is interlinked with the idea of Pan-Africanism, which leads to two additional concepts in the security domain, the Africanisation of security and African ownership. The AU thus set up its African Peace and Security Architecture along these lines.

The APSA's five pillars consist of the Peace and Security Council as the main decision-making body, with the Continental Early Warning System to provide it with essential

information, while the Panel of the Wise can advise the body. The financing tool of the APSA is the Peace Fund, and the operational pillar is the African Standby Force. The Architecture does seem to be a well-organised system at first glance, and if we step closer and investigate the workings of the system, shortcomings become visible. The PSC was accused multiple times in the past that despite the reports provided by the CEWS, it ignored serious situations (Engel–Porto 2009: 90; Williams 2014: 149). Internal communication and the relation between the different bodies of the APSA was not detailed in the PSC Protocol establishing the system, which led to discrepancies. For example, the Panel of the Wise was left completely unused for years, and later on the body was recurred to almost solely in conflict prevention procedures. Problems on the political level influenced the military structure as well. Although the African Standby Force was pronounced operational in 2016, three of the five regional brigades are far from ready to be used, and it would be overly optimistic to call the remaining two fully operational either.

Additionally, despite the willingness of the AU to find a solution for funding, the Peace Fund remains highly reliant on external actors' donations. This practice jeopardises the freedom of decision-making and affects the organisation's autonomy to act. This also influences peace support operations, as at the end of 2022, the AU still lacks not just the financial but also the logistic background for independent operations. Therefore, we can observe the rise of regional actors, which are trying to stabilise their own immediate neighbourhood in small scale, brigade-size missions. Nevertheless, they also need more stable financial background to maintain and continue their activities. Therefore, in the long term, the AU should find a stable and sustainable solution for the financing of its military operations.

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