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Andrew E. Yaw Tchie

Published online: 09 Aug 2023.

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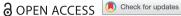
Andrew E. Yaw Tchie

Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, Norway

ABSTRACT

African-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) were established to support the African peace and security architecture by developing integrated capacities for deployment in crises. However, since the deployment of the first African-led PSOs, there has also been the emergence of new types of African-led PSOs, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia; the Lake Chad Basin Commission Multinational Joint Task Force; the Joint Force for the Group of Five for the Sahel; the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique; and the East African Community Force in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The paper examines why African-led PSOs have emerged, arguing that these operations have allowed for increased African agency and shaped the African peace and security space. The paper finds that African-led PSO reflects a more regional and local-specific response in a declining era of new United Nations peacekeeping operations but has also resulted in an overreliance on force to solve the continent's peace and security issues. Consequently, the paper arrives at a novel conceptualisation of African-led PSOs, positing that they represent generation three and a half of peacekeeping which focus on the effectiveness of force and the morality of using force to deal with insecurity and multifaceted crisis.

Introduction

The end of the Cold War was characterised by the launch of numerous interventions designed to solve violent conflicts and widespread instability.[1] The period was shaped by the rise of liberal peacebuilding ideals based on the belief that interventions —aiming to promote peace—can be transformative and that turning conflict-affected countries into democracies offers the best chance for sustainable peace.[2] From the 2000-the 2010s, there was growing disillusionment regarding ambitious post-conflict interventions undertaken under the framework of liberal peacebuilding.[3] The disconnect was prompted by the mixed balance of interventions carried out in the previous decade, leading to a decline in Western interventions and operations.[4] Nevertheless, the number of armed conflicts worldwide appears to have increased[5], and the diffusion of Islamist insurgencies has continued to rise among both Western and non-Western countries.[6]

As a result, the nature of warfare has evolved and with this change has come periods in how United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKOs) have responded to conflict over three distinct periods. The evolution in conflict has led to the strengthening of African peace-keeping capabilities characterised as African-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) underneath the UN and the African Union (AU) to support the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), leading to eleven deployments by the AU (*See table 1: Annex*). In addition, affected states have sought support from Western nations like the United States and France to train their forces as part of bilateral partnerships.[7] These observations have impacted the evolution of African peacekeeping capacity, requiring further examination to understand if and how African-led PSOs are shaping several aspects of Africa's peace and security arena, conse-quently representing a supplementary layer of peacekeeping capacity characterised in this paper as generation three and a half peacekeeping.

The paper is divided into five parts. Part one reviews existing policy and academic literature to arrive at novel conceptualisation of AU PSOs. By examining the evolution of UN PKOs and African-led PSOs, it argues that the latter has evolved with inspiration from UN PKOs but should be categorised within its own generations given that the challenges these operations are designed to tackle are not only similar but, in several cases more dissimilar and more advanced to those which the UN PKOs has deployed to. Part two examines the history behind the types of African-led PSOs while exploring their use and reach. Part three briefly touches on the partnerships that African-led PSOs have formed and how these PSOs have responded to insecurity. Part four discusses the challenges facing the deployment of African-led PSO as a strategy to resolve conflicts and insecurity and how this advancement to some extent, has further militarised contemporary Africa. Part five summarises why African-led PSOs should be viewed as generation three and a half peacekeeping. The final section provides some concluding thoughts.

Challenging international relations perspectives of Africa

Although the literature on African agency continues to grow, international relations scholar-ship on Africa has tended to concern itself with how marginalised, poor and weak African countries behave and are impacted by great powers and international institutions.[8] Critics of international relations theory explore how it projects the 'white experience as a universal perspective' and how this has muddied the security policies and experiences of people in Africa, especially in the area of African security.[9] An example of this interpretation of inter-national relations theories is conflict analysis and the influential 'new wars' literature which focused on outside forces, in collusion with local war-profiting elites, working to perpetuate conflict, war economies and underdevelopment in war-torn regions of the world.[10] This led to research which narrowly focuses on how sizable deployments of peacekeepers reduce vio-lence in civil wars[11] but largely ignored regional, national and local level capacity and agency.

To avoid the fallacy of international relation understandings of African capacity, the paper sets out to critically explore how African multilateral institutions and states have pursued security threats through the evolution and use of PSOs as a response to insecurity. The paper's analytical lens is based on understanding relational and contextualised agency, where structures and agency are continuously reproduced over time. The paper draws on theoretically informed empirical analysis to further understand how African agency has evolved through African-led PSOs and how this agency has taken shape under specific con-ditions and constraints but produced generations of African peacekeeping capacity. The

paper deploys an exploratory approach where the existence and nature of African agency are not assumed but investigated through rich empirical analysis. Thus, the paper challenges narrowly structure-dominated and international relations theories and overly restrictive policies to understand African-led PSOs' responses to contemporary security challenges and arrives at a novel conceptualisation of AU PSOs by reviewing existing policy and academic literature. Finally, the paper poses the need to reconceptualise African-led PSO as generation three and a half peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping in changing environments

Bellamy and Williams (2010) have termed a shift from a Westphalian to a post-Westphalian approach to world order.[12] The shift takes the form of several progressive changes that are both conceptual and practical and have been echoed in the practice of peace operations. As a result, peacekeeping has gone through three-stage accumulative advancements. First, to conflict resolution were added collective security concerns grounded in the Westphalian order, and later humanitarian preoccupations. Second, from being at their inception a case-bound conflict resolution tool, they became a crucial element in the attempt to reconstitute the core organising principle of Westphalian sovereignty where crises and internal conflicts had cast its primacy in doubt, finally, as in the wake of events such as Rwanda and Bosnia where notions of non-intervention, human rights, distribution of humanitarian aid and the protection of civilians emerged as a critical justification and motivation for the deployment of UN PKOs. However, scholars have argued that using the term 'generations' to understand the evolution of peacekeeping presents a challenge to our theoretical understanding of UN PKOs.[13] More recent critiques of this framework have proposed distinguishing between a minimalist approach which is designed to end violence, a moderate approach designed to end ongoing violence and install forms of good governance and a maximalist approach designed to deal with and, to a large extent, address the root causes of conflict.[14]

While these distinctions are merited, the evolution of peacekeeping has built upon one another, occasionally within a single mission or specific changes to mandates, allowing shifts from one generation to another to occur. As a result, the missions that have emerged over the decades are grounded in the practices of international politics, changes in the conflict environment 'inter-state to intra-state conflicts', the use of force and enforcement mandates, processes of substantial professionalisation of deployed forces, regional challenges and building on past lessons learned, amongst others. Thus, to analytically understand the evolution of African-led PSOs, they must be conceptual and empirically linked to events and advancements in international politics.[15] Furthermore, while African-led PSOs have evolved with inspiration from UN PKOs and context-specific challenges, the evolution of African-led PSOs may have been created by similar or dissimilar characteristics to UN PKOs. Consequently, it is essential to use the existing 'generations' framework to explore whether African-led PSOs are positioned within or outside this framework or have advanced or become their own generation.[16] Next, the paper briefly outlines some of the distinct features of each generation.

Generation one

Since the inception of the first UN PKOs, several peacekeeping missions have taken place through accumulative advancements, leading to three distinct periods in the UN PKOs'

history. The first period was a move away from limited efforts to maintain peace in post-conflict environments towards more robust efforts at peace enforcement. The first mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), in 1948 was designed to monitor the ceasefire along Israel's border. This was followed by two UN Emergency Forces deployed to separate Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Sinai in 1956 and 1974.[17] Later the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) in 1960 was deployed. While the first armed peacekeeping mission occurred during the 1956 Suez Crisis, the UN Charter of 1945 had not mentioned peacekeeping, so the then UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Dag Hammarskjöld referred to the phenomenon as 'chapter six and a half' because it fell between the UN Charter's chapter six (peaceful methods for resolving conflicts) and chapter seven (peace-enforcement). The 'first generation' of traditional peacekeeping (from 1948 and 1978) interpreted the rules in mostly inter-state wars, allowing for deploying an intervening force based on the consent of warring parties to oversee a peace agreement, with the peacekeepers maintaining strict neutrality.[18]

The first generation of peacekeeping involved unarmed or lightly armed forces interceding between warring parties.[19] The nature of peace operations should be seen through three basic principles that guide peace operations dubbed the 'Holy Trinity' of peacekeeping[20]; the consent of the host nation(s); impartiality between the conflict factions; and the non-use of force. However, the deployment of UNEF set an important precedent for all future peace operations since its larger force resulted from the understanding that small, unarmed groups would not be able to cope with the bellicosity of the Suez situation.[21]

Generation two

The changes in the nature and condition of conflict during this period led IR scholars to label these conflicts as 'new wars,'[22] which were illustrated by intrastate or internal conflicts, creating circumstances unforeseen by the UN Charter.[23] This was accompanied by an increasing consciousness of the international community's responsibility to provide humanitarian aid to populations —particularly during famines. This resulted in mandates designed to not only freeze conflicts but to assist the transition to peace under the auspices of Chapter VI, meaning no changes were made to their rules of engagement. The period witnessed more multidimensional features, such as civilian tasks related to the political transition, which led to remarkable successes in assisting states in transition and implementing peace accords.[24] Bellamy and Williams characteristic six features of UN PKOs during this time, The missions take place within a context of ongoing violence; in a context of 'new wars,'; take on new civilian tasks; must interact with an increasing number of humanitarian actors in complex emergencies; often experience shifts in their mandates; and considerable gaps in the relationship between their means and ends.[25]

The second period of UN PKOs (the 1980s-1990s) involved the composition of peacekeepers from the global north, who held notions of delivering liberal democratic norms and wanted to stop violent conflict from getting out of hand. This led to more international interventions and PKOs in Africa, such as the UN Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) (1992–1993), the UN Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) (1993–1995), and the US-led Unified Task Force (1992–1993) Operation Restore Hope. Boutros Boutros-Ghali led the UN during this period with Kofi Annan[26], later expanding UN peacekeeping, resulting in 50 peacekeeping missions being deployed.[27] Mandates included human rights monitoring, training police forces, disarming and reintegrating soldiers, elections and strengthening state institutions

and formal and informal processes of political participation.[28] The 1995 Supplement to an Agenda for Peace reflected these growing tasks.[29]

The expansion of UN PKOs during this period had a certain degree of involvement in the domestic affairs of host states and was not based upon any enforcement mandate; instead, they were consistent with the traditional peacekeeping order, where consent remained the primary requirement. However, the expansion created new problems where the UN PKOs became over-extended with a shortfall in personnel, equipment and financial resources necessary to meet the growing demands of peacekeeping. Traditional principles of consent, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence — which had been laid down for peacekeeping operations involved in international conflicts—became inadequate when the UN was confronted with internal conflicts and civil war situations. The UN PKOs of this time led to an intersection with some of Africa's regional organisations, such as the UN PKOs deploying 368 military observers alongside a 16,000 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) mission in Liberia in 1993. In some cases, African peacekeeping missions would be rehatted as UN PKOs.[30]

Generation three

The third period witnessed the interchangeable term of peace operations, or peace enforcement operations, illustrated by increased permission to use force and enforce the mandate of the mission deployed under Chapter VII. [31] Missions experienced changes to the mandates and the deployment of 'robust' UN PKOs, with some missions having enforcement and stabilisation directives like MONUSCO, which had a Force Intervention Brigade attached to the mission.[32] To deal with the challenges the UN made attempts to change the mandate of some peacekeeping operations in action —legally, if the mandates for enforcement are given under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the operations, by definition, do not require the consent of the parties concerned. These mandate changes were, in some ways, designed to deal with intra-state types of conflicts. However, these operations and the immediate mandate change from peacekeeping to peace enforcement created new problems. Since Chapter VI is consent-based and Chapter VII is not, these operations run into difficulties due to the loss of impartiality —an essential requirement for obtaining the parties' cooperation in conflict environments. At the same time, the third period of peacekeeping was designed to resolve major difficulties, such as safe passage, delivering or securing humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, and better protection of human rights. In reality, it also led to UN PKOs being tasked with mandates with limited protection of civilian features or with supporting weak governments in their attempts to extend state authority.[33]

Phase one of African-led Peace Support Operations

The third period included attempts to transfer peacekeeping expertise from the global north to the south, with African states expanding their participation in UN PKOs and the deployment of African-led PSOs, resulting in increase in African peacekeeping capacity from the AU and REC and evolving into three distinctive phases of African peacekeeping capacity. The first phase and categorisation of African-led peacekeeping capacity was denoted by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) deployment of its first PKO to Chad from 1977 to 1982, representing a unique deployment where the state in crisis permitted substantial

intervention by a regional organisation. The introduction of peacekeeping forces in 1981 helped reinforce the mission.[34] This was contrary to systemic norms and organisational principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of member-states and where coercion became distinctive aspect of its peacekeeping operation. This was followed by the deployment of military observers by the OAU during the 1990s to Rwanda, Burundi and Comoros.[35]

Phase two of African-led Peace Support Operations

The second phase and categorisation of African peacekeeping capacity led to the finessing of some regional capacity in PSOs (REC-led PSOs) intersecting with the UN PKOs discussed earlier. The conflicts of this period often focused on the contestation for national power.[36] This led to the advancement of the African Standby Force (ASF) initiative launched in 2003,[37] focused on responding to civil wars. Furthermore, this period witnessed regional peacekeeping or peace enforcement capabilities under the UN Security Council's authorisation. REC-led PSOs denote a second phase and categorisation for African-led PSOs, which converge under the African Union's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). For example, ECOWAS deployed peace enforcement operations to Liberia and Sierra Leone to stop the civil wars.[38] For the AU, this phase would combinate in the deployment of eleven peace operations (*See table 1: Annex*).

Phase three of African-led Peace Support Operations

The third phase and categorisation of African peacekeeping capacity can be characterised by missions such as AMISOM,[39] where firstly, the deployments were designed and focused on stabilising environments and states, which differed from the UN PKOs doctrine focused on the concept or rules of engagement, which implied African-led PSOs were peace enforcement operations.[40] Secondly, African-led PSOs were deployed to protect and support the state against aggressors. Initially, these were internal rebel groups, but lately, aggressors have consisted of insurgents, violent extremists, or local bandits with often no clearly defined political motive. As a result, there has also been the emergence of newer context-specific responses called ad hoc security initiatives (ASIs), which include operations such as the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF)[41] and Joint- Force for the G5 Sahel (JF-G5S),[42] designed to address insecurity linked with insurgency (rebels or insurgents) fighting the state.[43] Thirdly, they operated in support of and, where feasible, alongside host nation forces and in line with the AU constitutional order, designed to support and assist states back to stability through force if necessary.[44] However, this phase has coincided with the closure of UN missions such as in Côte d'Ivoire (2017), Liberia (2018), and Darfur (2020), or leading to the mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) being under pressure to scale down. In other cases, missions have been reconfigured into Special Political Missions, such as Sudan (2021), resulting in no new UN multidimensional peace operations being established since 2015.

Therefore, a clear distinction has emerged where the UN deploys PKOs and has progressed with some stabilisation operations. While African institutional mechanisms or regional organisations (AU, RECs and ASIs) deploy PSOs with primarily peace enforcement mechanisms this has produced several observations.[45] Firstly, an increase in African capacity and agency to deal with insecurity through African-led PSOs deployed by the African Union, REC/RMSs, ASIs and African states in bilateral agreements with states who provide context-specific

responses. Secondly, the impact on African armies and increased deployment, newly acquired expertise and professionalism but military-heavy responses to insecurity. Thirdly, a growth in African agency where African TCCs are influencing the types of operations, tempo and tactics of existing UN PKOs and finessing African peacekeeping capacity.

As a result, regional organisations can be viewed as increasing their capacity and legitimacy to substitute the UN as a provider of peace.[46] This lamination has been gained firstly because regional forces are already on the ground responding to the changing nature of conflicts, which means once a UN PKO is mandated, it often has to rehat African troops who become part of a new UN PKO. Secondly, the success of African forces in stabilising states in conflicts as first responders means that African forces represent valuable assets that the UN PKOs need and cannot afford to lose. Thus, support from African TCCs translates to political support for the mission, providing a form of legitimacy. Thirdly, the political nature of these deployments often includes states with strong leadership – authoritarian or democratic—vital for the UN PKOs to be deployed, sustained, survive and thrive. The support allows the UN and its missions to connect with regional powers that often want to showcase African peacekeeping capacity but may also use the deployments as an opportunity to realign their global standing. Finally, the deployments of African troops to UN PKOs are used by states as a platform to receive bilateral support and compensation and showcase states' contributions to the global political order.

These developments represent an advancement of African peacekeeping capacity and African agency, where regional organisations have increased their legitimacy within a broader multilateral framework while increasing their capacity through African-led PSOs.

Generation three and a half peacekeeping

As the three generations of peacekeeping above have demonstrated, all have evolved over distinct periods, reflecting a growing shift in the division of labour in the global peace operations system. While scholars classify a fourth generation of peacekeeping, this paper posits that African-led PSOs have taken the same evolutionary path as the UN PKOs. But these operations and the mix of regional actors mean they are not precisely fourth generation but represent generation three and a half because they carry distinct characteristics designed to deal with challenges that UN peace enforcement missions often cannot deal with. This has often left the state with no other option but to deploy African-led PSOs as a first response to these challenges that have grown in frequency and magnitude.[47] In the UN context, these new PSOs are framed as peace enforcement missions with connotations of stabilisation operations.

Despite having followed the same evolutionary path as UN PKOs, the evolution of African-led PSOs demonstrates that they are not precisely generation three nor four but warrant their own 'generation' framework because they are continually evolving with different features and challenges than UN PKOs. These features are as follows, firstly, while the doctrine of African-led PSOs is multidimensional in nature, the current categorisation of African-led PSOs mandates do not have enhanced civilian tasks that are more intrusive in terms of their effect on local autonomy. Civilian components are ad-hoc or created later with additional support through liaison offices or existing political organisations who are often part of the mandating authority for the mission but eventually seek approval from the UNSC and AU PSC. Secondly, unlike UN PKOs, which may have peacebuilding features, African-led PSOs deploy stabilisation operations or attempt stabilisation strategies, constituting an essential departure from the previous logic of peace operations as conflict management. Thirdly, African-led PSOs are

not designed to engage in nation-building but deploy more context-specific tasks focused less on a Westphalian mould that has engulfed previous UN PKOs.[48] Fourth, an increasing number of operations are carried out by regional organisations or coalitions of the willing later by the UNSC or AU PSC or authorised or endorsed under Chapter VII of the Charter.[49] This often results in these PSOs' mandates being static, with the parameters rarely adjusted as frequently as UN PKO mandates since they are focused on removing instability. Furthermore, the mandates are limited to and aimed at restoring a peaceful context by the heightened use of force to defeat those deemed as the enemy, increasing the invasiveness of operations. Thus, they are short-term focused and with the understanding that once the objectives have been met, then the mission is handed over or shut down, allowing for the restoration of the state or, in some limited cases, the potential takeover from the UN. Fifth, African-led PSOs do not actively seek to resolve the root causes of conflict but are designed to create conditions for stability through force. While the doctrine guiding most African-led PSO allows for a multidimensional approach to tackle insecurity or crisis, in reality their deployments have been military focused. Finally, the operations engage in robust intervention outside the UN doctrine, but partially, align with principle three of peacekeeping '…defence of the mandate.' The next part of the paper touches on the characteristics and reach of African-led PSOs.

African-led Peace Support Operations

African-led PSOs have developed several characteristics. Firstly, they were not deployed to implement ceasefire or peace agreements after violent conflict seized but to intervene with force amidst ongoing conflict, to protect civilians (Darfur) or to stop a violent insurgency (Somalia, the Central Africa Republic, Mali, Comoros). Secondly, African-led PSOs were deployed to protect and support the state against aggressors. Thirdly, they operated in line with the AU constitutional order, designed to support and assist states back to stability through force if necessary.[50]

This has resulted in three types of African-led PSOs that were outside the original ASF concept. The first is the AU-led PSOs, including African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA), the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) and the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB). The second is RECs-led missions categorised by missions led by ECOWAS in Sierra Leone and Liberia and, more recently, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission to Mozambique (SAMIM) and the East African Community Force- in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (EACF-DRC). The third is a coalition of states or coalitions of the willing states operating inside and outside of two RECs forming ASIs, such as the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA); the Lake Chad Basin Commission Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF); and the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel).[51] All three represent African-led PSOs deployed in conjunction with national security forces.

The reach of African-led Peace Support Operations

The influence of African-led PSOs extends to African armies deployed as part of UN PKOs. It includes increased capacity by states like Burundi, Chad, Ghana, Ethiopia and Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda and other African states expanding their participation in UN PKOs and

African-led PSOs. In the case of Ghana, it is the seventh-highest contributor to UN PKOs, with a deployment of 2,760 uniformed personnel, among which 15.6 per cent are women.[52] Ghana has cultivated its experiences of regional peacekeeping efforts through RECs missions that UN PKOs rehatted and other international deployments.[53] Despite the former president's criticism of the UN peacekeepers 'hiding behind sandbags,' Chadian forces have become a critical military enabler of UN PKOs with stabilisation mandates in the Sahel region. Chad forces have deployed to the Central Africa Republic and Mali, where Chad forces (a non-ECOWAS member) were one of the first responders, and later as part of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); JF-G5S and MNJTF. Rwanda, which emerged from genocide to being considered Africa's policeman with one of Africa's fastest deployable forces, is currently the fifth-largest contributor to UN missions globally, the second-largest continental contributor and supplies the highest number of UN peacekeepers per capita. Its deployments include the AMIS from 2004–2007 with four battalions; the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) from 2005–2010 with 254 personnel; the UNAMID from 2008–2020 with four battalions; the UN Mission in South Sudan UNMISS from 2012-on-going with two infantry battalions as Regional Protection Force; the AU-led International Support Mission to the Central Africa Republic (CAR) (MISCA) from 2014-ongoing and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); and more recently, the bilateral deployment of over 1,000 troops to northern Mozambique.[54]

African-led Peace Support Operations and partnerships

Consequently, African-led PSOs are rarely deployed on their own in today's peace and conflict environments and are usually accompanied by one or more UN and European Union (EU) missions (For example, these missions often include a vast range of development, humanitarian and political and state-building actors). While the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) did manage to stabilise the area compared to the situation in 2003, lessons from UNAMID demonstrate that it is impossible to bring about sustained peace without making political progress. Similarly, one of the assumptions that informed the original ASF concept was that AU PSOs would be the first responder to create a conducive environment for UN PKOs to take over. Although this sequential partnership has materialised in several cases, for example, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (AMIS/UNAMID), the African Union Mission in Burundi/ the United Nations Operation in Burundi (AMIB/ONUB), the African-led International Support Mission to Mali/ the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (AFISMA/MINUSMA) and the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic/ the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA/MINUSCA), in case of Somalia (AMISOM), this has not been the case. The intervention in Somalia was the AU's third PSO aimed at supporting the Transitional Federal Institutions in stabilising the country, advancing the dialogue and reconciliation, and facilitating humanitarian support.[55] While regional actors preferred an AU-led PSO with a combination of regional forces, AMISOM provided the AU with a more flexible arrangement than what was not initially envisaged in the ASF concept.

However, while AMISOMs deployment in 2007 included 1,400 troops from Uganda and Burundi, authorised by the AU PSC as a six-month-long 'bridging operation'[56] and represented a unique AU PSO rooted in a multidimensional approach. Nevertheless, it struggled to deploy enough civilians and police experts within this mission, impacting its multidimensional approach.[57] This resulted in AMISOM being heavily militarised, remaining disconnected

from mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts and policies of the AU or its PSO doctrine. At the heart of AMISOM's success was its adoption of counterinsurgency operations which was 'fundamentally an armed political competition with the insurgents', the success of which hinged on the counterinsurgent's ability to win over the local population.[58] By deploying strategies such as the 'hearts and minds' approach and the prioritisation of the defence of civilians over the targeting and destruction of enemy forces. The mission deployed a clear counterinsurgency approach where the population-centric approaches in practice were missing.[59]

Stabilisation and ad hoc security initiatives

Stabilisation enjoys a broad consensus internationally, especially at the UN Security Council and amongst West African states.[60] African TCCs are also playing an active role in designing and launching regional and UN stabilisation activities.[61] For example, on 13 April 2017, AU PSC authorised the deployment of the JF-G5S. On 20 June 2017, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted resolution 2359 to support the deployment of the JF-G5S. A distinct feature of the RCI-LRA, MNJTF and FC-G5S from typical AU and REC-led PSOs is that ASIs continue to operate within their national borders and territories rather than intervening in other regions or being deployed to one affected state.

While each coalition is distinct, it is possible to identify the inherent critical characteristics. Firstly, the mandates aim to reduce or eliminate the threats posed by non-state armed groups undertaking terrorist and criminal activities. ASIs are grounded on collective self-defence or intervention by invitation and operate under the UN Charter, Article 51, with the host nation(s) consent. Thus, ASIs align with the AU's Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP).[62] Secondly, legal arrangements underpin cross-border operations under each coalition arrangement, enabling participating countries to position contingents within another state's territorial domain and pursue non-state armed actors across borders. Thirdly, each participating country contributes resources to the force and is responsible for covering most operational costs, including troop salaries. Fourthly, the forces have been established within a political framework.[63] While current ASIs have received authorisation from the AU PSC, authorisation from the AU or the UN is not legally required for these types of coalitions to engage in operations, as they are based on the principles of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter, CADSP and bilateral collective defence agreements between states.[64]

A tide of militarisation

Despite the progress made with the ASF, most African-led PSOs have become forms of ad-hoc coalitions of the willing and focus on military means as the ultimate solution to peace and security. In some cases, African-led PSOs (AU, RECs and ASIs) are increasingly being deployed to border areas, but to an extent circumventing the ASF concept and its development.[65] These operations have moved from being designed to address political instability and election monitoring challenges to focusing on terrorism and violent extremism using hard security approaches (stabilisation and counterinsurgency), supplemented by training from bilateral partners whose solutions focus on kinetic strategies. Consequently, many of the Troop/Police Contributing Countries (T/PCC) deployed within African-led PSOs have been exposed to levels of counterinsurgency training which shapes their responses but is only sometimes matched with the right equipment, making these operations further dependent on external

support. These alterations shape the types of response(s), the forces' effectiveness, the formation of strategies for countering these groups, the level of force used and the insurgent response to these approaches, consequently altering the nature of African-led PSOs and its evolution which present several challenges discuss next.

Challenges facing African-led Peace Support Operations

While African-led PSOs have demonstrated a significant ability to adjust and develop significant capacities, several shortcomings have emerged. Firstly, they have struggled to integrate political, governance, security and socio-economic development dimensions and adapt to different levels and periods of peace processes. While the PSOs are often deployed at record speed and demonstrating an ability to undertake enforcement and counterterrorism operations, their responses are largely military, ignoring the civilian dimensions and the root causes of many of these insecurities.[66] Secondly, while nearly all African-led PSOs have been civilian-led, their efforts to develop police and civilian capacities is weak, lacking in civil–military coordination and joint deployment response. While some African-led PSOs have supplemented this deficiency with complementary civilian advisors, liaison offices and political missions such as the Regional Stability Strategy (RSS) in the Lake Chad Basin. The challenge partly stems from the type of mandates these political bodies adopt and the ongoing political and strategic guidance they provide to PSOs.

Thirdly, African-led PSOs have a diluted emphasis on population-centric and civilian governance, narrowly focusing on winning the 'hearts and minds' and on 'hold, clear and build' strategies of the population as a primary strategy to counter insurgencies. The approach needs to address the grievances that drive the conflict and invest in state-building processes that offer a viable alternative for the populations.[67] Fourthly, African-led PSOs have become hybrid fixtures of ongoing operations, acting as both TCCs and unilateral actors who may become embroiled in an increasingly regionalised conflict economy. Further complicating this matter could be the rising number of ASIs and REC-led PSOs —who utilise the ASF concept but do not seek AU authorisation or endorsement for their deployment at the start of their formation. Fifth, with the evolution of a range of African-led PSOs, troops like Chadian forces, who are a part of several operations, are stretched thin.[68] This means that while their responses are quick at the start —due to the rapid force's capabilities and tactics— their engagement can contribute to the changing nature of these conflicts instead of stopping the violence.

Sixth, the increasing use of African-led PSOs has resulted in the selection of roughly one-fifth of the AU's members deploying —Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. However, some states have deployed this expertise during domestic challenges to repress protestors and any anti-state sentiments by opposition leaders.[69] Seven, African-led PSOs heavily depend on external funding to help support TCC deployments, doctrine training and other capacity challenges. Only SAMIM has emerged as one of the few recent missions to be self-sustained beyond a year, while others have been limited to the first 30 days.[70] Further complicating this challenge is the mismatch with the missions' capabilities, resources and capacity.[71] Eight, African-led PSOs carry a significant perception that nonviolent methods have not achieved the desired outcome. This is reinforced by a growing unwillingness and impatience to use peace-making, mediation and peacebuilding as a first response to address the root causes of conflict. This demonstrates that African states are unwilling to engage with populations who may genuinely support insurgents for legitimate reasons.

Conclusion

The future of African-led PSOs is promising, but efforts will need to be placed on ensuring that these missions are not military only, or they risk falling into the trap that many Western stabilisation missions over the last two decades have succumbed to, producing mixed results, leading to rapid withdrawal without a clear exit plan. Nevertheless, African-led PSOs represent a unique African identity that continues to evolve with the context on the ground. Its characteristic contrast with the official multidimensional UN PKOs and AU PSOs doctrine, which advocates for multidimensional deployments —notwithstanding tasks from the AU PSC and UNSC. Within this framework and the empirical analysis above, this paper has argued that African-led PSOs have evolved parallel with UN PKOs but have distinctive features that set them aside from current generation three and four peacekeeping. African-led PSOs have overturned UN PKOs in Africa, representing increased African agency and a hybrid go-between that should be classified as generation three and a half peacekeeping, designed to deal with embryonic conflict dynamics. However, to further harness African-led PSOs, they must run concurrently with a political strategy and process that integrates peace process, governance, security and socio-economic development dimensions. Finally, if insurgencies are to be eliminated, states must admit that deploying African-led PSOs in their current form will not win the conflicts without dealing with the root causes of many of these challenges. Thus, the way forward is for African-led PSOs to be seen as part of an adaptive stabilisation strategy which includes military but encompasses and harnesses political and other critical mechanisms that help solve Africa's evolving security challenges.

Notes

1. Howard and Stark 'How Civil Wars End: The International System, Norms, and the Role of External Actors'.
2. Paris, 'At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict'; Richmond, 'Peace in International Relations'; Yoshi et al., 'Just How Liberal is the Liberal Peace?'.
3. Howard and Stark, 'How Civil Wars End: The International System, Norms, and the Role of External Actors'; Belloni and Moro, 'Stability and stability Operations: Definitions, Drivers, Approaches'.
4. Gowan and Stedman, 'The International Regime for Treating Civil War, 1988–2017'.
5. Pettersson and Öberg, 'Organised Violence, 1989–2019'.
6. Gowan and Stedman, 'The International Regime for Treating Civil War, 1988–2017'; Belloni and Moro, 'Stability and Stability Operations'.
7. Tchie, 'Nomads and Warlords, Chadian Forces in African Peace Operations'.
8. Brown, 'A Question of Agency: Africa in International Politics.'
9. Danso and Aning, 'African Experiences and alternativity in International Relations Theorizing about Security'.
10. Vines, 'A Decade of the African Peace and Security Architecture'.
11. Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon, 'Beyond keeping peace: United Nations Effectiveness in the Midst of Fighting'.
12. Bellamy and Williams, '*The West and Contemporary Peace Operations*'.
13. Hellmüller, Lobjoy, and Tan. *'Beyond Generations.'*
14. Ibid., 509–33.
15. Ibid.
16. Bellamy, Williams and Griffin, '*Understanding Peacekeeping*.'
17. Bellamy, 'Understanding Peacekeeping'.
18. James, 'International Peacekeeping: The Disputants View'; Albrecht, 'UN Funding Cuts for Peacekeeping have Consequences for Ghana'.

19. Ngoma, 'Peace Support Operations and Perpetual Human Failings: 'Are We All Human, or Are Some More Human Than Others?'
20. Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, '*Understanding Peacekeeping'*.
21. Hillen, '*Blue Helmets: The Strategy of UN Military Operations';* Rikhye, Harbottle, and Egge, '*The Thin Blue Line: International Peacekeeping and its Future*'.
22. Münkler, 'On the Imperative for Military Intervention in These Situations'.
23. Rikhye, *'The Thin Blue Line*'.
24. Fetherston, '*Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: A Reconsideration of Theoretical Frameworks.*'
25. Bellamy, '*Understanding Peacekeeping*'.
26. Annan, 'Press Conference by Special Adviser on Africa'.
27. Weiss and Daws, *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*.
28. Howard, 'UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars'.
29. UN, 'Secretary-General. Supplement to An Agenda for Peace'.
30. Tchie, 'African-led Peace Support Operations in a Declining Period of UN Peacekeeping Operations'. Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations 29, no. 2 (2023): 230–44.
31. Osman, '*The United Nations and Peace Enforcement'*.
32. The Effectiveness of Peace Operation Network, 'MONUSCO's 2021 Mandate Renewal: Transition and exit. Available at: https://effectivepeaceops.net/publication/monuscos-2021-mandate-renewal-transition-and-exit/
33. Bellamy and Hunt,
34. Charter of the OAU, Article III/2.
35. Forsythe, 'United Nations Peacemaking'.
36. De Coning, 'Peace Enforcement in Africa: Doctrinal Distinction between the African Union and United Nations'.
37. Darkwa, 'The African Standby Force: The African Union's Tool for the Maintenance of Peace and Security'.
38. Bobrow and Boyer, 'Maintaining System Stability: Contributions to Peacekeeping Operations'.
39. African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). 'AMISOM Background' and Tchie, 'Waging Peace, towards an African Union Stabilisation Strategy for Somalia'.
40. Thus, it exposes the limitations of UN doctrine, which preserves traditional peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality and minimum use of force.
41. EPON, 'A quest to win the hearts and minds: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Multinational Joint Task Force,'.
42. EPON, 'Shifting from External Dependency'.
43. De Coning, et al. 'Ad-hoc Security Initiatives, an African Response to Insecurity'.
44. African Union Constitutive Act.
45. Regan, 'Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts'.
46. Gelot, 'Legitimacy, Peace Operations and Global-Regional Security: The African Union-United Nations Partnership in Darfur.
47. Findley, 'Terrorism and Civil War: A Spatial and Temporal Approach to a Conceptual Problem'; Fortna, 'Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War'.
48. Dobbins*, 'The UN's Role In Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq.'*
49. Coleman, '*International Organisations and Peace Enforcement'*.
50. African Union Constitutive Act.
51. De Coning, et al. 'Ad-hoc Security Initiatives'.
52. United Nations, 'Troop and Police Contribution'
53. This period verged with notable supporters of multilateral cooperation and other liberal-democratic norms with extensive peacekeeping experience.
54. Straus, 'Wars do End! Changing Patterns of Political Violence in sub-Saharan Africa'; Burbach and Fettweis, 'The Coming Stability?'.
55. Tchie, 'Waging Peace, towards an Africa Union Stabilisation Strategy for Somalia'.
56. [56] Stig, 'Al-Shabaab in Somalia'.
57. EPON, 'Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia'.

58. United States Department of State, US Government Counterinsurgency.
59. De Coning and Tchie, *Forthcoming*, 'COIN in East Africa'.
60. Curran and Holtom, '*Resonating, Rejecting, Reinterpreting'*.
61. Tull, '*The Limits and Unintended Consequences of UN Peace Enforcement';* Mac Ginty, 'Against stabilisation'.
62. African Union, 'Section (e) and Article 4, Section (d) of the AU Constitutive Act'.
63. For example, the outcome of the five ministerial meetings provided the bases for the formation of the MNJTF, while the Nouakchott process provided political origin, culminating in establishing the G5 Sahel.
64. African Union, Section (e) and Article 4, Section (d) of the AU Constitutive Act'.
65. De Coning, et al., 'Ad-hoc Security Initiatives'
66. De Coning, 'Peace enforcement in Africa'.
67. Gentile, 'A Requiem for American Counterinsurgency'.
68. Tchie, 'Nomads and Warlords'.
69. Ibid.
70. Tchie and Ani, 'Standby Arrangements and Deployments Setback'.
71. Each task given to the mission(s) requires different force capabilities, resources, and training. This means that most missions must constantly adapt their training, support and capacity.
72. In this paper, Tchie, A. E. Y (2023), 'African-led Peace Support Operations in a Declining Period of UN Peacekeeping Operations', AU PSOs are AU-led and deployed missions where the AU Peace and Security Council have issued a mandate for a PSO to be deployed with an explicit authorisation, mandate and deployment directive. The AU PSO will often also have a clear UNSC mandate which can be backed by a presidential statement from the council. In contrast, African-led peace operations/ missions are deployed by an African organisation like AU in partnership with the Regional Economics community(s) and mechanisms.

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Notes on contributor

Dr Andrew E. Yaw Tchie is a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and manages the Training for Peace Programme at NUPI. He is the Editorial Board Member at the African Solutions Journal, a visiting Professor at the University of Buckingham, visiting Senior Researcher at King's College London and an Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute. He tweets at @DrATchie.

ORCID

Andrew E. Yaw Tchie 🔴 http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4549-6823

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Appendix

Table 1.0. African-led Peace Support Operations.[72]

Mission Name	Troop, Police Contributing Countries and Civilian contribution	Period of deployment and conclusion of the mission	Country of Deployment
African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB)- Transitioned into the United Nations Operations in Burundi (ONUB)	Ethiopia, South Africa, Mozambique.	2003–2004	Burundi
African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) I	Algeria, Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa.	2004–2005	Sudan
African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) II	TCCs: Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, The Gambia, Chad, Kenya, South Africa	2005–2007	Sudan
Transitioned into the United Nations- African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur	MILOBs: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Zambia.		
African Union Observer Mission in the Comoros (MIOC)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Togo	2004	Comoros
African Union Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC)	Congo-Brazzaville, Egypt, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Rwanda.	2006	Comoros
African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)- Transitioned into the AU Transition Mission in Somalia	TCCs: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, (Sierra Leone (2013/14), Uganda. Staff Officers: Benin, Chad, Egypt, Eswatini, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zambia. PCCs: Ghana (FPU/IPO), Kenya(IPO), Nigeria (FPU/IPO), Sierra Leone (FPU/IPO), Uganda (FPU/IPO), Zambia (IPO).	2007–2022	Somalia
African Union Electoral and Security Assistance Mission in the Comoros (MAES)	Tanzania, Sudan, Senegal.	2007–2008	Comoros
United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)	TCCs: Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Pakistan, and Tanzania. PCCs: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Germany, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Magnolia, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Nepal, Rwanda, Pakistan, Samoa, Senegal,	2008–2021	Sudan

Table 1.0. Continued.

Mission Name	Troop, Police Contributing Countries and Civilian contribution	Period of deployment and conclusion of the mission	Country of Deployment
	Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Other Contributors of Military Personnel: Bhutan, Cambodia, Ecuador, Germany, Ghana, Iran, Magnolia, Malaysia, Malawi, Namibia, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.		
African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda.	2013	Mali
African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic [Mission Internationale de Soutien à la Centrafrique sous Conduite Africaine] (MISCA)	Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Republic of Congo, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda.	2013–2014	Central African Republic
African Union Human Rights and Military Observer Mission in Burundi (AUHRME)	N/A	2015–2021	Burundi
African Union Technical Support Team to the Gambia (AUTSTG)	Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda.	2017–2021	The Gambia
African Union Military Observers' Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA)	Benin, Congo, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa.	2020–ongoing	Central African Republic
African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)	TCCs: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda. Staff Officers: Benin, Chad, Egypt, Eswatini, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zambia. PCCs: Ghana (FPU/IPO), Kenya (IPO), Nigeria (FPU/IPO), Sierra Leone (FPU/IPO), Uganda (FPU/IPO), Zambia (IPO).	2022–ongoing	Somalia
African Union authorised missions- African-led peace operations			
ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL)	Mali, Nigeria, Senegal	2003	Liberia
ECOWAS Forces in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI)	Benin, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo	2003	Cote d'Ivoire
Multinational Force for Central African Republic [Force Multinationale de	Republic of Congo, Chad, Cameroon and Gabon	2003	Central African Republic

(*Continued*)

Table 1.0. Continued.

Mission Name	Troop, Police Contributing Countries and Civilian contribution	Period of deployment and conclusion of the mission	Country of Deployment
l'Afrique Centrale] (FOMAC)			
Mission for the Consolidation of Peace and Security in Central Africa (MICOPAX)	Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.	2013	Central African Republic
ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB)	Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Niger.	2012	Guinea-Bissau
SADC Preventive Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho (SAPMIL)	Angola, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	2017–2018	Lesotho
ECOWAS Intervention Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG)	Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, and Togo.	2017	Gambia
SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM)	Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.	2021	Mozambique
Regional Economic Community Deployments			
Operation Democracy in the Comoros	Tanzania, Sudan, Senegal.	2008	Comoros
The Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA)	Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Uganda.	2011–ongoing	CAR, DRC, South Sudan, Uganda.
Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko-Haram (MNJTF-BH)	Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria.	2015–ongoing	Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria.
Joint Force of the G5 Sahel (G5-Sahel)	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger.	2017–ongoing	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger
The East African Community Regional Force in Eastern DRC	Kenya, Burundi, South Sudan and Tanzania	2022–ongoing	Eastern DRC