likely to change in the medium term. Hopefully, the UN's member states will show the same agility that missions have demonstrated over the past couple of years. The coronavirus, coupled with other factors such as climate change, will increase instability and risk.

In the medium term, the AU and UN may thus be faced with a situation 12 to 18 months from now where UN peacekeeping missions in places such as Senegal will no longer be able to operate. The logistics of these missions are complex and sometimes challenging even under normal circumstances. However, the current situation has exposed further logistical challenges. It also means they cannot be operational over this period, which increases the workload on the rest of the continent. In the Central African Republic, the DRC and elsewhere, missions are scaling up support for local mask production by women's groups. Quick Impact Projects and programmatic funding have been repurposed to help local institutions and communities prepare for and cope with the virus. In South Sudan, for instance, government forces have put up checkpoints outside UN compounds in several locations to stop or reduce UN movements. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali and Senegal, the virus has had a devastating impact, with approximately 150,000 people sheltering in civilian camps under UN protection.

Not everything can be done remotely, however. Negotiation over the phone can only take you so far. One of the great assets of peace operations is the ability to engage directly with communities. Whether wearing masks in situations where that is not the norm among the population will only increase such fears and resort to support political processes, to create conditions conducive for protection, to support the negotiation of local peace agreements. It is important not to associate essential activities only with military activities, such as armed escorts. Many of the activities had to be adapted to minimise the risk of spreading the virus to both the people the UN is tasked to protect and to its own peacekeepers. In some contexts, mounted patrols without social interaction do not have the same effect as dismounted patrols. It is thus impossible to expect that peace operations will have the same overall impact today than they had before the COVID-19 pandemic.