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Ad-hoc Security Initiatives, an African response to insecurity

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ABSTRACT

This article contends that Ad-hoc Security Initiatives (ASI) have developed over the last decade in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin and represents a new form of African collective security mechanism. The G5 Sahel Force and the Multi-National Joint Task Force emerged from a context-specific need for small clusters of African states to respond collectively to a shared cross-border security threat(s). The existing African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) mechanisms were not specific and responsive enough to meet this emerging need. Despite substantial investments over the last twenty years by the African Union, Regional Economic Community/ Regional Mechanisms and international partners to establish the African Standby Force, this instrument was not agile enough to respond to the type of threats experienced in the greater Sahel region. In this article, we trace the emergence of a new type of ASI, examine how they fill an essential gap and analyse why the African Standby Force was not able to meet this need. We then consider the implications of these developments for the future of the APSA and how closer collaboration between ASIs and APSA can be developed.

Introduction

Since the launch of the Agenda for Peace by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 for the United Nations (UN) attempts to keep the peace across Africa have continued to occupy the efforts of the UN, the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities or Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs).[1] Part of this determination to secure Africa's peace and security by the UN, AU and RECs/RMs over the last two to three decades resulted in expanding peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and peace support operations (PSOs) across the continent.[2]

This combined effort by the UN, AU and RECs/RMs between the early 1990s to late 2000s, it could be argued, resulted in a dip in the number and intensity of armed conflicts.[3] However, the post nine-eleven `war on terror' spurned an international response to terrorism that focuses on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations and training or traditional state-centric military responses. This approached would in many ways eventually intervene and connect with existing challenges in some African states but also ignited new tensions connecting with existing insecurities or emerging challenges and conflict across the African continent. As a result, the last decade also witnessed sizeable shifts in the nature of violence

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and conflict(s) across the continent—on the one hand, some conflicts actors resorted to sustained insurgence methods, using sectarianism as justifications to use violence,[4] while on the other hand, other actors employed indiscriminate violence against civilians as a weapon of choice against the state.[5] This may suggest that the dynamics of conflict(s) on the continent, particularly in cross-border regions like the Great Lakes, the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, and Mozambique, are shifting. Conflicts surfacing in these regions are complex due to the historical, developmental and security aspects, not to mention the vast network of illicit, ideological, social and governance gaps which strain and setback the gains achieved by the UN, AU and the RECs/RMs.[6] In the long run, if these issues are left unresolved, they impact stability, development and peace across the continent.

The use of PKOs and PSOs to tackle civil wars (for example, conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone) of the 1990s —which focused on the contestation for national power—witnessed noticeable success despite their shortcomings. PKOs and PSOs during this period aimed to assist countries on a path from conflict to peace through the provision of security, political support, and peacebuilding; delivered through civilian–military activities to help reduce violence, instability and produce environments that enable structural and political stability.[7] The success of PKOs and PSOs across the African continent meant that the AU and RECs/RMs have continued to shoulder the burden for international security matters.[8] To date, the has AU deployed ten peace operations, including Burundi (AMIB), the Central African Republic (MISCA and MOUACA), Comoros (AMISEC and MAES), Mali (AFISMA), Somalia (AMISOM and ATMIS) and Sudan (AMIS I and II).[9] While the UN does well in implementing peace agreements and consolidating peace processes, it is not well suited for enforcement actions.[10] However, the AU has demonstrated that it can undertake enforcement and counterterrorism operations.[11] Thus, the UN and AU have mutually reinforcing capabilities that serve as a basis for a strategic partnership that complements each partner's peace efforts.[12]

Nevertheless, PKOs and PSOs are an ill fit for violent extremist conflicts and for dealing with today's violent non-state actors. By their nature, today's non-state actors are more transnational in orientation and ideology than those of previous decades. Past non-state actors from previous decades often deployed tactics that aligned with rejecting statehood, but often these groups did not operate transnationally. Thus, PKOs and PSOs were designed to deal with these non-state actors —be deployed within a specific country and its borders, following a legal agreement between the country and the sending authority. There have also been occasions where the AUs and international efforts to respond to crises across the continent have been insufficient when dealing with an emergency as a first responder. For example, AMISOM is the only counterterror and enforcement mission that the AU has undertaken. While it has successfully achieved its mission —protect the government from al Shaabab and maintain stability—Somali and international efforts to turn stability into peace have not been successfully achieved.[13]

While investments in PKOs and PSOs through the African Standby Force (ASF) has been successful, new and emerging transnational threats such as violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel pose a severe challenge for the existing African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the international system. As a result, over the last decade, what has emerged is a step away from traditional multidimensional PKOs or PSOs to regional coalitions or coalitions of the willing, dubbed Ad-hoc Security Initiatives (ASIs).[14] ASIs developed because of the transnational nature of conflict, violence and instability across the continent[15] and provide the flexibility to respond across state borders to pursue militia, armed groups, or insurgents deemed a threat.

This article is divided into four sections. The first section explores the types of ASIs, ASIs' characteristics, and why it represents a new unique form of security intervention in Africa.[16] The second section considers why ASIs emerged, the legality of the ASI, what needs were not being met and examines what ASIs provide in terms of alternative security arrangements. The third section explores the implications of ASIs for the APSA, ASF, African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC),[17] AU and the UN and the broader African peace and security environment. The final section provides some thoughts and recommendations for the AU and RECs/RMs.

Why ASIs emerged

While the AU has set the standards for deliberate African intervention over the last two decades, the emergence of ASIs suggests states are pursuing solutions that align with their interests. This implies that in some situations, states' needs may not necessarily always be met within the AU structure because of capacity, multiple actors and wider continental focuses and priorities. This shift away from the AU may be due to the existence of some sub-regional organisations like Southern Africa Development Community and Economic Community of West African States, who, over the decades, have become self-sufficient in their functionality as organisations that tackle regional insecurity.[18] However, the rise of ASIs also suggests that the needs of states within and across RECs/RMs are not being met. In many ways, this reflects the position that some states within RECs/RMs do not always necessarily need the AU to deal with regional security matters as they already have political and economic influence within their regions and the international system. This suggests that the three ASIs may be politically more convenient structures that are easy to manage and resourceful at collectively organising themselves. It also suggests that states with emerging threats who attempt to operate within the existing AU systems might fall by the wayside due to a lack of coordinated response between RECs/RMs and the AU. Within the existing APSA system, a state suffering insecurity and requiring support necessitates all countries within a RECs/RMs to agree on joint action, which can be challenging because some states may not share the same interests as affected states.

Furthermore, states making up ASIs have the advantage of coordinating and responding to crises before the situation escalates. In contrast, the ability to convene, coordinate and respond between RECs/RM at heads of state-level or within the AU system is restricted and has a slower response time. Restrictions here can include discussions on peace and security matters, which can often be limited to the AU Commission or Chairperson and the PSC at an Ambassadorial level. Moreover, the PSC summits are at heads of state-level, which often occurs once a year at the side-line of an AU Assembly, which mean decision-makers meet infrequently, and discussions on pressing issues are often time-restricted. Thus, states impacted by insecurity may not be given the appropriate attention, which requires quick-thinking, strategic decisions and decisive leadership. In contrast, at the sub-regional level, heads of state, with support from the relevant technical committees, often lead emerging peace and security interventions and convey pressing matters rapidly.

Types of Ad-hoc Security Initiatives

The first ASI launched was the AU-authorised Regional Coordination Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army, RCI-LRA (2011–2019).[19] The PSC authorised the RCI-LRA on November

22, 2011, to tackle the growing threat of the LRA and its brutal methods to terrorise civilians. As the LRA's activities expanded beyond Northern Uganda, affected countries, including South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, decided to cooperate to facilitate cross-border hot pursuit operations to reduce the threat posed by the LRA and capture Joseph Kony, the leader of the group. In April 2017, Uganda, one of the troop contributors, withdrew from the mission, as it considered that the LRA no longer posed a threat to its national territory. However, the mission's mandate has been extended as the LRA still poses a threat, especially in CAR, which is embroiled in a separate domestic, sectarian-religious conflict.

The second ASI was the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, MNJTF (2015 – ongoing).[20] The MNJTF differs since it already was an existing arrangement linked to a sub-regional organisation —the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC).[21] The MNJTF comprises national armies from several countries that share a common border or sub-region and are designed to cooperate and manage a common threat(s). The LCBC initially established the MNJTF in 1994 to address transborder security challenges.[22] The force was dormant until late 2012, but re-established when members of the LCBC discussed reviving the military force in response to the regional threat posed by Boko Haram in Niamey, Niger, on October 7, 2014. Boko Haram, which emerged in North-eastern Nigeria in 2002, had started spreading its activities across other LCBC states —recruiting and conducting terrorist attacks outside of Nigeria's borders. The LCBC recognised that terrorist acts carried out by Boko Haram had turned into a regional problem that could not be resolved by one state alone. The force consists of four states: Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Benin (a non-member). A few months later, the concepts of operations were adopted.[23] In June 2015, the MNJTF was given detailed definitions and guidelines for strategy, operations and logistics, as well as command, control and coordination structures in addition to composition, troop strength (currently composed of approximately 10,000 soldiers), zones and sectors of operations (Mora in Cameroon; Baga Sola in Chad; Diffa in Niger; Baga in Nigeria).

The third ASI is the G5 Sahel Joint Force (la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel 'FC-G5S' (2017-ongoing)).[24] The G5 Sahel Joint Force has its own characteristics but shares similarities with the RCI-LRA and MNJTF. Established under the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) and founded in 2014, the G5 Sahel provides an institutional framework to promote development and security within its member countries, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The Sahel region has been caught in a spiral of insecurity, transnational arms and drug trafficking, smuggling of migrants and human trafficking. On July 2, 2017, G5 Sahel leaders officially launched the Cross-Border Joint Force in Bamako. The AU PSC authorised the deployment of the force on April 13, 2017, for 12 months, with a troop strength of 5,000 consisting of troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger to conduct cross-border joint military and counterterrorism operations. The UN Security Council (UNSC) welcomed the creation of this Joint Force in Resolution 2359 of June 21, 2017.

While all three have commonality, both G5 Sahel and Lake Chad Basin Commission pre-existed as subregional bodies established to manage a cross-national issue. However, they were repurposed as a civilian secretariat for a sub-regional security operation and civilian stabilisation efforts. The combined response and arrangements are coordinated and managed by a command structure or a joint secretariat with member states committing national forces to the joint effort.

Characteristics of Ad-hoc Security Initiatives

Ad-hoc Security Initiatives fall under the AU's collective security and the AU PSC's mandate, which authorises the use of force[25] and are grounded on collective self-defence or intervention by invitation, operating under the UN Charter, Article 51, with consent from the host nation(s). Ad-hoc Security Initiatives also function under bilateral collective defence agreements between states with a specific sub-region, national border, and a shared transnational threat and are aligned with the AU's Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP).[26] Most ASIs have been established within a political framework; for example, the outcome of the five ministerial meetings provided the basis for forming the MNJTF, while the Nouakchott process provided political origin, culminating in the establishment of the G5 Sahel.

Ad-hoc Security Initiatives do not require authorisation from the AU or the UN neither is it a legal requirement for ASIs to seek authorisation from the two entities to function as most of the forces operate in their own national territory. In addition, the states involved have requested each other's assistance for hot pursuit or cross-border operations. However, the AU PSC and the UNSC have welcomed, offered authorisation or endorsements and expressed support for these coalitions. Conversely, the UN is yet to develop a politically coherent approach to the endorsement of ASIs —some ASIs have been endorsed by presidential statements, whereas the UNSC resolutions have recognised others.[27] All three ASIs have opted to seek AU and UN endorsement, granting them additional political legitimacy, authority and reinforces the possibility of accessing logistical support and funding from international partners within a multilateral framework. It could be argued that the formation and increased use of ASIs are a route for states to circumvent established pathways and be selective about which APSA partners are favourable to their cause, often to overcome indecision of the AU and RECs/RMs to address cross-RECs challenges.

Each ASI has legal arrangements under each coalition that underpin cross-border operations, enabling participating countries to position contingents within another state's territory to pursue non-state armed actors and position contingents within another state's territorial domain. This allows each force to be able to cross over the borders without fear of reprisal. Since ASIs are not part of the African Standby Force (ASF), they do not conform to the ASF's original six scenarios for military deployments, designed in 2003.[28,29] However, scenario six allows the AU to intervene 'in graves circumstances – e.g. Genocide situations where international community does not act promptly' via coalitions of the willing.[30] One can thus make the argument that an AU authorised ASI can be accommodated under scenario six of the ASF concept. Another unique characteristic of ASIs is that each participating country contributes resources and is responsible for covering some or all operational costs, including troop salaries. While in other situations, states have formed a joint force authorised to cross national boundaries. The collective abilities of states participating in ASIs allow for a specific division of work based on the actual relationships and comparative advantages of the different actors on the ground. Finally, ASIs, unlike PKOs or PSOs, which work as a distinct multilateral force alongside national armies, serving as guarantor(s) of ceasefires or transitions; work towards the goals and focuses of the states who feature as part of a coalition of the willing, as will be discussed in the next section.

Implications of ASIs on the APSA

With the creation of the AU in 2002, the African continent was marked with a shift from non-intervention to non-indifference at the continental level. Part of this shift included forming the

APSA, which serves as a continuous opportunity for African states to display their concrete political will to develop conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms —through the five pillars that make up the ASPA.[31] Drawn from the 2000 AU Constitutive Act and the 2002 Protocol Relating to the establishment of the PSC, the APSA identifies the systems that need to be put in place for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict by outlining the roles, instruments and procedures of the AU and the RECs/RMs.[32] According to the APSA, the RECs/RMs are recognised as building blocks and implementing agents of the APSA and the ASF. As the ASIs have been established outside the framework of RECs/RMs[33], this has prompted questions about whether the ASIs deviate from the APSA because ASIs operate outside the pre-defined institutional building blocks of the RECs/RMs.

Since the APSA promotes the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and advocates for partnerships between the AU and regional entities, the ASIs represent a flexible solution to address specific security challenges that transcend the RECs/RMs geographical boundaries and lines of authority.[34] ASIs are grounded on collective self-defence or intervention by invitation, operating under the UN Charter, Article 51, with consent from the host nation(s).[35] This means ASIs function under bilateral collective defence agreements between states and aligns with the AU's Common Defence Policy for the African continent,[36] enshrined in Article 4(d) and Article 3€ of the AU Constitutive Act, enabling member states to consult among themselves and adopt a common position on matters relating to defence that affect or constitute a potential threat to the collective security of the continent.[37]

African Standby Force (ASF)

The ASF is one of the critical components of the APSA, declared fully operational in October and November 2015.[38] Under the ASF concept[39], it was envisaged that in the advent of a crisis, the RECs/RMs would generate the standby brigades[40] consisting of 5000 per region (five regions in total) with capabilities necessary for deployment under the strategic leadership of the AU.[41,42] However, the alliance envisaged in the ASF concept is a multinational force deploying into a host state's territory, meaning some of the characteristics of the ASIs were not anticipated or reflected within the ASF concept. Therefore, new threats, such as increased terrorist activity, were not envisioned in the original ASF concept.

The ASF model provides for the possibility for an AU authorised coalition of the willing under *scenario six, whilst the other five scenarios (see footnote 1) foresee the generation of forces via the ASF's regional standby arrangements.* However, the coalitions envisaged under the ASF concept are for a multinational force deployed into a host state's territory. This means the ASF cannot be deployed to similar scenarios as ASIs—since ASIs differ from the international PSO concept in that the contributing forces are mainly deployed within their national territories. At the same time, ASIs do not conform to the deployment model originally envisaged within the ASF. Thus, ASIs are a distinct form of coalitions within the ASF concept. However, this does not mean that ASIs are a replacement for the ASF. Rather, they can be considered as a complementary tool within the APSA framework.

The use of ASIs brings into question whether the ASF may or may not be feasible for responding to certain types of emerging crises —witnessed over the last decade—that require rapid response to threats that cross national and state boundaries. ASI also highlights that if the AU and RECs/RMs want to continue to be leaders of peace and security across the continent and within the various regions, then the AU and RECs/RMs should develop enhanced, sustainable and synchronised structures for working together. This will help

enhance their coordination mechanisms, avoid tensions between the two entities and dupli-
cation of efforts which, in turn, increases their efficiency and sustainability. Consequently, the
AU and RECs/RMs need to play a more proactive role, including coordinating with relevant
actors and international partners but should not be side-lined by international partners
forming bilateral arrangements with individual states or supporting ASIs. This means that
the AU and RECs/RMs should enhance their coordination mechanisms between their liaison
offices with better high-level coordination; and put in place measures to create a permanent
representative(s) who play significant roles in agenda-setting, coordination and strategic
approach to insecurity within the wider APSA.

As the ASF has been designed as a force generation mechanism for AU PSOs, their
capacities reside within member states. Therefore, there is nothing to stop member states
from using these capacities towards different types of interventions that may be more
flexible, rapid and cost-effective and work towards regional security. In essence, the ASF
concept and framework could be expanded to respond to a broader range of operational pos-
sibilities, including ASIs, which could feed into the planning elements (PLANELMs) of the AU
and RECs/RMs. However, the ASIs use must be adequately reflected in the development of the
AU PSO Doctrine and ASF Concept.

For ASIs to continually deliver success and effectively implement their mandates and
receive sustained support, ASIs needs to be governed through a multilateral rules-based
system, which will require the AU's continued engagement. This will also mean that the ambi-
guity concerning the lack of doctrinal clarity on how the AU should engage with ASIs and the
different possible models of ASIs or other forms of coalitions of the willing in the future needs
to move beyond the current political realm. In essence, clarification is needed on whether the
AU is responsible for the political authorisation and coordination of these missions.

Peace and Security Council (PSC)

All three ASIs have been welcomed, received authorisation or endorsement, and expressed
support from the AU PSC and UNSC. This has granted ASIs political legitimacy, authority
and reinforced the possibility of accessing logistical support and funding from international
partners within a multilateral framework.[43] Obtaining an endorsement from the AU PSC
has been a prerequisite for attaining the support of the permanent members of the UN Secur-
ity Council (UNSC)[44], and has also compelled the UNSC to consider modalities of sustainable
and predictable funding for these missions.[45] However, the UN is yet to develop a politically
coherent approach to the endorsement of ASIs —some ASIs have been endorsed by presiden-
tial statements, while UNSC resolutions have recognised some.[46] Thus, the sustainability of
current and future ASIs will hinge on member states receiving PSC approval and managing
and operating these coalitions within a multilateral framework.

One way of clarifying the AU's role vis-à-vis these missions is to define the different political
approval processes granted by the PSC to peace operations and ASIs. It must also determine
what the implications for the AU are for each type of political approval. The AU should define
these concepts and ensure that the terminology adopted are consistent by using the term
'mandate' for an operation for which the AU is fully responsible; 'authorised' for an operation
under the authority of another actor; and 'endorse' for an operation in which the AU takes on
an even lesser role. The endorsement of a mission—mandated, authorised, or endorsed—has
consequences for the level of responsibility the AU has towards the mission and the resour-
cing of the missions under international humanitarian law and human rights.[47]

A safeguarding mechanism that allows reporting back to the PSC must be made mandatory and a precondition for continued support if the AU provides financial or other kinds of support. However, determining who has the responsibility to communicate with and report back to the AU must be clarified and preserved for all current and future ASIs. The PSC may consider such clarity to be a precondition for approving the force, which implies that such coalitions would need to consider selecting a lead state or constitute some form of coordination body with a precise rotating leadership arrangement to not only reflect the diverse understandings of ground realities but to ensure the approach is representative. In addition, the PSC will need to request that certain conditions be met before PSC authorisation to ensure all entities, mainly troops operating within national borders, are held accountable under international law. This can include aligning mission documents with international standards following review by technical experts at the AUC to ensure that a PSC authorised mission is held to the highest standard.

African Union Commission

The AU has generated many lessons learned and best practices on deploying, managing and liquidating PSOs. The AU can advise the PSC on the operations it authorises or endorses. However, before PSC endorsement or authorisation, the AUC should brief the Council on core developments and options. After a decision has been taken, the AUC must be tasked with implementing the decision, and if an ASI has been endorsed, the AUC must monitor and report to PSC, but if it has been authorised with a supporting feature, then the AUC must deploy a supporting mission and frequently report back to PSC. This could act as a liaison link between the AUC and ASIs or coalition. In instances where technical support is authorised, this could be deployed from within the AUC peace support operations division. Technical experts from the PSOD have also been involved in setting up the force headquarters and mission start-up in ongoing ASIs.

Recognising that sustainable peace cannot be achieved through a military approach, the AUC can promote and enhance ASIs that take multidimensional characteristics of addressing the root causes of terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crime. Finally, the AUC needs to clarify the division of labour among its initiatives and closely coordinate its efforts with the African members of the UN Security Council (A3) and its broader actions within the UNSC in consultation with RECs/RMs as part of the AU force's development. Coordinated mechanisms with the AUC liaison office have sufficient capacity to follow developments and engage fully in-country and between the AUC, RECs/RMs and UNSC HQ.

Joint response from the AU and UN

To help facilitate ASIs, the two institutions must consider a set of joint procedures that ensure the UN and AU (in coordination with RECs/RMs) involve one another from the planning stages of assessments, developments, coordination mechanisms, mission support, benchmarks, and evaluation of all operations. This requires more significant consideration towards a global multilateral peace and security architecture strategy where the UN and the AU agree on a defined division of labour and roles under burden-sharing arrangements. Such an agreement(s) would increase synergy in crisis, enhance cooperation, coordination and create better resource efficiency.[48]

To achieve successful and sustainable operations, the AU needs to resolve complications around the lack of mission support, concept, personnel, —civilian, military and police— systems and resource inconsistencies. The AU needs to rethink how it goes about sourcing sustainable and predictable funding, given that the regional coalitions are both self-funded and dependent on the bilateral partners, which can generate inconsistency and incoherence between the AU and ASIs approach. The AU with UN support could boost the AU relevance and visibility in support of ASIs through the AUs peace fund. While the UNSC has stopped short of funding requests for the G5 Sahel Joint Force, it has authorised MINUSMA to support the G5 Sahel Joint Force with essential logistics, the cost of which is then reimbursed to the UN via the EU.[49] ASIs ought to be eligible to access all potential funding sources, including AU member state contributions and UN assessed contributions and non-AU bilateral contributions. The AU will need to consider the financial support of the ASIs if its function is recognised, respected and considered relevant in the eyes of RECs/RMs. Finally, the UN and AU need to set and deliver on explicit outcomes, such as developing guidelines for joint assessments, shared analysis, joint planning, AU–UN inter-mission coordination and cooperation, mission support, best practices, joint evaluations, and joint standard operating procedures for transitions between AU and UN and UN-AU—if the latter need may arise—operations.[50]

The challenge of ASIs and traditional peace operations in Africa

There are several ways ASIs solves some of the challenges that PKOs and PSOs have struggled with and may explain why ASIs are a more agile solution for states than UN PKO or AU or RECs/RMs PSOs.[51] Firstly, most states do not want an international operation on their soil as it is seen as an invasion of their sovereignty and an international admission of being unable to manage state affairs. Forming an ASI allows states to maintain sovereignty and cooperate in internationally recognised transboundary operations that receive international acknowledgement and support.

Secondly, since the countries involved are using their national forces and are deployed in their national territory, there is no need to generate and support forces for an international PKO/PSO. For ASIs, the process of deploying and sustaining forces to the operational area, or using territorial forces, is a national issue. This makes the process less burdensome, with lower transaction costs than what is required for international deployments. This reduces challenges like rotation, on/off boarding, re-supply, logistical support, and command and control. The international dimension for ASIs is limited to coordination at a sub-regional level with a joint headquarters, and overall, this means the diplomatic, administrative and financial burden is less demanding compared to contributing forces to an international PKO/PSO.

Thirdly, the financing of PSOs has always been a challenge for most operations. Since the AU and RECs/RMs cannot finance large multidimensional operations, they are dependent on international partners for support, impacting the size, duration and mandates of these operations, which must be continuously negotiated with international partners. However, ASIs are less costly than international PSOs, as most of the costs are absorbed by national expenditure as each country is responsible for covering some or all their own operational costs, including troop salaries. Where international support is needed –typically additional fuel, rations and medical evacuation—it can be arranged bilaterally for national operations, and the cost of the international joint headquarters are considerably less than with PKOs or PSOs. Whilst

the ASIs does not entirely solve the need for international financial and material support, it is a significantly less costly option with considerably fewer transaction costs compared to a PSO.

Fourthly, there are fewer legal issues at stake, as forces operate primarily in their own country. Therefore, there is no need to negotiate and agree on Rules of Engagement (RoE) or Status of Forces agreements, other than for limited hot pursuit operations and the joint headquarters. The fact that the forces operate mainly in their national jurisdiction may solve thorny issues of conduct, discipline, and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), reducing ambiguity over which laws apply and under who's jurisdiction.

Lastly, when it comes to the use of force since troops operate mainly in their territory, national laws apply, and there is no need for regional bodies or the UNSC to authorise these operations to use force, nor is there a need to internationally negotiate RoE, other than perhaps for limited hot pursuit operations. This is another reason why ASIs are nimble and represent an option with less international transaction costs for affected states.

ASIs future within a broader African security framework

ASIs have come to serve as a stopgap for the AU, RECs/RMs and the wider international security framework to diffuse new and emerging crises. However, ASIs should only be viewed as one piece of the puzzle which might feature as part of an AU approach to stabilisation.[52] ASIs lack the civilian components that often exist within traditional or multidimensional PKOs or PSOs, making ASIs susceptible to structural weaknesses that earlier UN multilateral and RECs/RMs missions were confronted with. Therefore, ASIs should not be seen as a one-size-fits-all solution to the many complexities facing the Africa continent. ASIs operating under such an environment could result in security forces being overstretched, slowed down, and hindered with efficiency issues, leading to human rights violations and protection of civilian issues over time. Given that ASIs are set up to deal with immediate issues, ASIs can also fail to reach their objectives because of the complexity of problems, as witnessed by MNJTF and G5 Sahel. Thus, ASIs should not be viewed as a panacea to long-term solutions, but clear questions need to be understood, such as what is the exit plan and how is this factored into current CONOPs? Should ASIs transition to RECs, AU PSO or UN PKO, or hybrid missions? What implications will this have for the states or regions making up the ASIs? Finally, if an ASI fails, what happens to the ASI?

Discussion

Until fairly recently, the mainstream approach to insecurity in Africa have consisted of deploying AU or UN multidimensional PKOs or PSOs.[53] ASIs are a new emerging arrangement that put national states in the centre of finding their own security solutions. Based on collaboration with neighbouring states, ASIs respond to transnational threats with transregional collaboration, enabling affected nations to operate within and across their borders employing joint cross-border operations. ASIs can take swift action and are not held back by cumbersome decision-making processes, meaning that an operation can be set into play as soon as information about a threat becomes available. However, as explored in this article, ASIs currently fall outside the scope of the ASF, REC/RM & AU PSOs and UN PKOs.

ASIs security operations do not exist in isolation, and their deployments have resulted in more civilian stabilisation and development assistance being organised and coordinated than observed in the past, making ASIs a catalyst for greater comprehensive and integrated

efforts than had been envisaged. Since they rely on national forces and national capacities (local governments, local civil society organisations, etc.), they are more self-sustainable and institutionalised to an extent than AU, RECs/RMs or UN PKO or PSO.

Therefore, ASIs should be seen as a complement to the APSA and not as a replacement for existing tools such as the ASF. ASIs ought to be welcomed as part of African capabilities and solutions to resolve conflict, address insecurities and must be viewed as an effort to boost national capacities in responding to terrorist and criminal threats. Thus, ASIs present a unique opportunity to enhance the APSA, the ASF and AU PSO capacities at the national level. However, the success of ASIs as a model and tool within the APSA remains to be seen and will largely depend on contextual variables, such as the nature of the threats, domestic politics, regional and geo-political conflict dynamics. It will also depend on the level of support afforded to these forces in executing their mandates—which are ambitious in scope.

Notes

1. Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*.
2. Ruggeri, Gizelis and Dorussen, 'Managing Mistrust', 387–409.
3. Straus, 'Wars do End!'; Burbach and Fettweis, 'The Coming Stability?', 421–45.
4. International Crisis Group, *Exploiting Disorder*.
5. ICRC, *Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas* .
6. Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 120.
7. United Nations Peacekeeping, *UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, Vancouver*; Bobrow and Boyer, 'Maintaining System Stability', 723–48; Regan, 'Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts', 55–73.
8. de Coning, *Can the AU Finance its Own Peace Operations, and if so, what would the Impact be?*
9. de Coning et al., 'Adaptive Peacebuilding', 301–17.
10. Anderson, *The HIPPO in the Room*; United Nations, *High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO)*, note: Report explicitly directed UN troops to abstain from military counterterrorism operations; Karlsrud, 'Towards UN Counter-terrorism Operations?', 1215–31; Karlsrud, 'UN Peacekeeping and Counterterrorism', 153–8; United Nations, *High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO)*.
11. de Coning, 'Peace Enforcement in Africa', 145–60.
12. de Coning, 'Africa and UN Peace Operations'.
13. The Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network, '*Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)*', https://effectivepeaceops.net/publication/amisom/.
14. The term was adopted during a roundtable that gathered several high-level AU Commission staff, experts and partners. The roundtable meeting report and terminology is available here https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/auc-holds-roundtable-with-experts-on-the-implications-of-ad-hoc-security-initiatives-for-the-asf-and-apsa
15. Karlsrud and Reykers, 'Ad hoc Coalitions And Institutional Exploitation In International Security', 1518–36.
16. For example, ASIs are different from the force intervention brigade created from battalions from three SADC member states, Tanzania, South Africa and Malawi; The force has UNSC approval under resolution 2098 'designed to carry out targeted operations in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner. The mission was designed to eliminate the threat posed by the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels in eastern DRC in 2013.
17. African Union, *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council*.
18. Hendrickson, Ball, Olonisakin, Morillon, and Cadij, *African Peace Facility Evaluation. Part 2*.
19. This Ad-hoc security initiative brought together Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, international partners and the AU.
20. African Union, *Multinational Joint Task Force*
21. Brubacher, Damman and Day, 'The AU Task Forces', 275–99.

22. de Coning, Gelot, and Karlsrud, *The Future of African Peace Operations*, 8

23. Assanovo, Abatan and Sawadogo, *Assessing the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram*.

24. African Union, *G5 Sahel Joint Force*.

25. The Organization of African Unity, *Article 4(d); (2002): Article 3(e) and Article 7*, 2000.

26. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations, Article 51*; Gibson, 'Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations', 121–38

27. The RCI-LRA and MNJTF received an endorsement from the UN in Presidential statements, while the G5-Sahel Force received unanimous approval in a UNSC resolution on June 20, 2017. The G5-Sahel specifically sought a Chapter VII mandate – which was dropped in the final resolution. The MNJTF had initially also sought a Chapter VII but dropped this provision in its last request to the Council.

28. The other five scenarios are: (1) AU/regional military advice to a political mission; (2) AU/regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN mission; (3) stand-alone AU/regional observer mission; (4) AU/regional peacekeeping force for chapter VI and preventive deployment missions; (5) AU peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional missions.

29. Dier, *The African Standby Force Put to the Test*.

30. African Union, 'Guideline on the Role of the African Standby Force (ASF)'.

31. Brosig, *Ten Years on and Still Under Construction*.

32. African Union, *African Peace and Security Architecture. APSA Roadmap 2016–2020*, 12

33. Karlsrud and Reykers, 'Ad hoc Coalitions and Institutional Exploitation in International Security', 1518–36.

34. de Coning, Linnea Gelot and Karlsrud (eds), 'The Future of African Peace Operations', 8

35. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations, Article 51*; Gibson, Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, 121–38

36. African Union, *Decisions and Declarations of the Assembly of the AU Third Ordinary Session*, Article 13; African Union, *Assembly Declaration on Common African Defence and Security Policy*, Article 8 (ii, g-h)

37. Africa Union, *Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security*, Article 13

38. Machakaire.

39. Dier, 'The African Standby Force Put to the Test'.

40. Warner, 'Complements or Competitors?'

41. Dier, *The African Standby Force Put to the Test*.

42. The ASF force is organised into five Regional Brigades composed of multidisciplinary contingents, consisting of 5,000 personnel on standby in their country of origin. The RECs/RMs (ECOWAS, NARC, EASF, ECCAS, SADC) were responsible for developing necessary capabilities for these brigades to be deployed at the continental level.

43. The RCI-LRA and MNJTF received an endorsement from the UN in Presidential statements, while the G5-Sahel Force received unanimous approval in a UNSC resolution on June 20, 2017. The G5-Sahel specifically sought a Chapter VII mandate – which was dropped in the final resolution. The MNJTF had initially also sought a Chapter VII but dropped this provision in its last request to the Council.

44. Assanvo, Abatan, and Sawadogo, *Assessing the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram*.

45. AU Peace Fund, *Securing Predictable and Sustainable Financing for Peace in Africa*; United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2320 (2016), Welcoming Cost-Sharing Proposal, Stronger Cooperation between United Nations, African Union*.

46. The MNJTF was first endorsed through a presidential statement and only received a Security Council Resolution two years after this (S/RES/2349, 2017). The G5 Sahel Joint Force was endorsed through resolution S/RES/2359 (2017).

47. United Nations, *Human Right Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (HRDDP)*.

48. While current efforts are not based on subsidiarity, but on a functional division of labour where the AU takes responsibility for early stabilisation—what the UN views as peace enforcement—while the UN takes responsibility for peace consolidation via UN peacekeeping operations once sufficient stability has been established.

49. Security Council, *Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel*.

50. de Coning, 'How UN Peacekeeping Operations Can Adapt to a New Multipolar World Order', 536–9.
51. de Coning, and Karlsrud, 'Can the UN Security Council Enhance the Effectiveness of the G5 Sahel Force?'
52. African Union, *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*, Articles 2 and 3
53. Ki-moon, *The Future of United Nations Peace Operations, Report of the Secretary-General*; United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, *Principles and Guidelines.*

Acknowledgements

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