

CONSOLIDATING PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

Recommendations to the Commission for Africa

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Context

Africa is faced with a range of security challenges, all of which require a long-term capacity-building approach. There are no quick solutions to instability and insecurity in Africa and the UK government should champion Africa at every meeting of the G8 and commit itself to the global reforms and initiatives required for an improvement in the continent's current situation – a long-haul process. Since there is an abundance of literature on the inequalities in the global system that inhibit African development, the rest of this paper engages narrowly on matters relating to peace and security.

Recent years have seen unprecedented levels of African engagement and leadership in conflict management, including support provided to the African Standby Force (ASF) and other components of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). Currently the most serious gaps in Africa as far as peace and security issues are concerned are twofold.

The first is the tentative nature of African commitment to operationalise the linkage between **conflict prevention and governance** – despite the stated intent of the NEPAD APRM to undertake studies on governance standards and capacity. Moving from a focus on conflict intervention and mediation to conflict prevention and its associated focus on human rights, democracy, good governance

and the strengthening of civil society institutions demands that the UK and others should not focus only on the ASF (conflict intervention), but retain a focus on conflict prevention. Africa may suffer unintended long-term damage if the current focus on conflict intervention and the potential diversion of development assistance to emergency response and peacekeeping replaces approaches that address the root causes of conflict and deprivation.

The second relates to **post-conflict reconstruction**. In an environment characterised by extreme poverty, Africa's conflicts are recognised to reflect strong economic incentives. By implication, many current peacemaking approaches, predicated on the achievement of a political agreement between warring elites, ignore the developmental and economic nature of conflict, and therefore its long-term resolution. In response, the international community needs to move beyond the concept of integrated peace missions. Consolidating peace from war requires not only greater coherence and coordination among the various UN departments and agencies and a more integrated crisis management system, but also a clear command and control structure for all UN entities on the ground and coherence in the approaches between agencies as diverse as the World Bank and the UNDPKO. When applied to existing concepts of peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction, implementation of the concept

of 'developmental peacekeeping' can help break the African conflict trap.¹

Responses to insecurity in Africa that should be championed by the Commission for Africa can be listed at international, continental, regional and national levels.

- At international level there is a clear need for an integrated approach to addressing African insecurity. One component is the development of a single concept of peacekeeping where the deployment of components of the ASF can seamlessly translate into UN missions and all forces, robust or Chapter VI, operate under the mandate of a single authority, typically a United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (UNSRSG). The capability and interoperability between AU and UN missions is therefore a key consideration. Beyond the vertical integration of peacekeeping, peacekeeping faces the horizontal integration challenge of speeding up post-conflict reconstruction and development and expanding the mandate of the UNSRSG to include post-conflict reconstruction and even components of development.
- The challenge at continental level is clear – supporting the security architecture presented in the Protocol on the Peace and Security Council and ensuring balance among its various components. While a great deal of attention is being devoted to the ASF, an equal focus should be placed on prevention. The establishment of a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is an insufficient but necessary part of this. It is more important to support the work of the AU Department of Political Affairs, the work of structures such as the Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights and an investment in building sustainable civil society components to root conflict prevention in local and national communities. While the nature, character and structure of the CEWS are still very much at the conceptual stage, the part played by civil society in various roles is crucial.
- Regionally there are substantive differences and gaps in the capacity of various regional economic communities (RECs) and much

can be done to harmonise this capacity and planning at these levels with those of the AU and the UN. The RECs will need special support if they are to fulfil their responsibilities regarding conflict prevention and mitigation. Support by international partners should note the existing disparity in the capacity of the RECs to deliver their part in these processes.

- The biggest challenge remains at national level, since it is the absence of functional states and law and order that fuels African conflicts. No amount of tinkering at regional and continental levels can ultimately compensate for the absence of functional governance at national, provincial and local levels. Most donor countries have already adopted an approach that seeks to reinforce success – measured in democracy, quality of governance and pro-development policies. These tentative approaches should be pursued, actively rewarding and reinforcing success, and enabling stronger states to assist their weaker neighbours. Throwing good money after bad has proven a bad investment over many years, as has been demonstrated in the provision of humanitarian relief and development assistance.

The continent faces a range of other security-related problems. Past and current conflicts in Africa have been exacerbated by the almost unhindered flow of licit and illicit arms. Securing small arms is as easy for ordinary people as it is for most African governments to procure heavy armaments without registering such transactions with the UN. If nothing is done to change this situation, it is doubtful whether any efforts to eradicate conflicts on the continent will succeed.

A variety of organised and unorganised criminal activities continue to threaten the security and development of most African countries. These include the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of drugs, money laundering, and other cross-border crimes such as vehicle theft and human trafficking. The lack of capacity on the part of most African states to collect data on crime, often coupled with a largely absent enforcement capacity, is disturbing.

No less important in enhancing the capacity of the continent to deal with security challenges is the need to strengthen state institutions charged with **security sector oversight** responsibilities. This need is even greater in countries that are emerging from conflicts, given the enormity of the risk of sliding back into conflict if the process of security sector reform is not well monitored. Related to this is the need for a meaningful disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process that empowers ex-combatants for sustainable reintegration into civilian life. Indeed, this cannot be achieved in isolation from the other immediate post-conflict developmental challenges, which include the creation of socio-economic conditions for lasting peace, the provision of basic services and the reconstruction of infrastructure.

The following recommendations in the area of peace and security support the broad issues referred to above.

Recommendations

Adopt, advocate and support the implementation of the recommendations of the recent 'Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, A more secure world: Our shared responsibility'.

Conflict management

- The UK and the G8 should encourage, through the aggressive use of development assistance, the rationalisation of Africa's overlapping RECs, particularly the problems presented in the relationships between COMESA, SADC and IGAD and between ECCAS, EAC and SADC. The G8 should actively discourage funds and projects (particularly through and from the European Union) that support these overlapping structures. In doing so, the G8 should note that the rationalisation of the RECs is a key priority of the AU, even if the AU has little leverage to move forward on its agenda.
- Where comprehensive conflict management structures are absent or inoperative (as with IGAD and ECCAS), the Commission for

Africa should encourage the development of such structures as regional confidence-building mechanisms and support them through capacity-building initiatives.

Conflict prevention including the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

- Provide dedicated/earmarked support to the AU Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in The Gambia. The current budget and infrastructure of the commission does not enable it to deal with its workload and it does not enjoy sufficient priority within the recently approved budget of the AU Commission.
- Provide dedicated support for the African Court of Justice (which will now combine the Court of Justice referred to in the Constitutive Act and the Court on Human Rights referred to in the Protocol to the Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights). The court does not appear to enjoy sufficient support within the emerging architecture of the AU.
- Support the creation of a dedicated fund / earmarked funds for election observer missions through the Department of Political Affairs within the AU Commission. Support the work of the department in the establishment of a database and systems for the equipment, training, organisation and funding of election-monitoring missions. The AU is currently almost entirely dependent on donor funding for election observation and monitoring.
- Support the establishment of a research institute to sustain peace and security work for the commission, the CEWS and the PSC in Addis Ababa, based on the International Peace Academy in New York.²
- Support the establishment, as part of the continental architecture, of a dedicated CEWS at continental and regional levels that uses open-source information and interacts with civil society and others in the provision of conflict-prevention information.
- Provide the Peace Fund with unallocated

funds for use in mediation, by the Panel of the Wise, appointment of special envoys, mediators, etc. Give the AU control over the use of these funds.

- Invest in building selected, sustainable African research institutes that can support policy implementation through competent and credible research.

The African Standby Force (ASF)

- Offer, through the United Nations, a technical study to be undertaken with the AU PLANELM to define a continental logistic system that is integrated with the UN logistic resources for peacekeeping (such as the strategic deployment stocks at the UN logistics base at Brindisi), supports the requirements of the AU, and takes the requirements of the regional brigades into consideration. Currently each of the various RECs is developing an own logistic framework that is often based on political trade-offs (such as decisions on the location of logistic bases) rather than objective criteria related to military requirements and interoperability.
- Support a motion, through the UN, that calls for the integration, harmonisation and standardisation of ASF logistic, command, control and other systems with those of the UN. This is critical if the international community is to advance on the horizontal integration of peacekeeping as advocated in the introductory paragraphs of this document.
- Support the African Peace Support Trainers Association (consisting of a network of key African peacekeeping training colleges, institutions and NGOs) as an additional vehicle to more formal systems in order to integrate African lessons learned into teaching, to develop common doctrine, etc.
- Work within the EU and its commission to simplify the rules and requirements of and red tape within the Peace Facility to allow African ownership and use in a more effective manner.
- Provide support to the AU Peace Fund for use by the AU to augment the Peace

Facility where it is constrained in covering costs for specific budget line items.

- Utilise and expand existing donor consultation fora (such as that in Luxembourg) to coordinate the support provided to the AU and RECs to avoid duplication and improve efficiency. Involve the AU and RECs in setting these priorities and invite the AU and RECs as participants/observers.
- Provide material, technical and logistical support to the RECs to enable them to implement their commitments as part of the ASF. This should be based on needs assessment done by the RECs but standardised across regions in order to ensure regional ownership of the process.
- Support and strengthen current African civil society early warning capabilities (such as those dealing with humanitarian, food security, environmental, small arms and governance issues). They are important assets and integral parts of a holistic and comprehensive African early warning capability.
- Provide continuous political and diplomatic support, encouragement and resources to the AU aimed at advancing the implementation of the PSC Protocol.

International peacekeeping mandates

- Pioneer a review of UN doctrine to ensure concrete action for intervention in humanitarian catastrophe. The review should provide for a mechanism to configure regional standby forces, such as the ASF, as components of UN armed forces within the global security architecture. Given the difficulties related to UN decisions for intervention (affecting the timely deployment of UN forces), the review should provide for a mechanism that allows regional deployments endorsed by the UN Security Council. This would require that deployments aiming at creating conditions for the subsequent deployment of UN peace operations gain access to the strategic deployment stocks at Brindisi.
- Work within the UN Security Council for

an approach where mandates incorporate the responsibility to enforce appropriate decisions of the council relating to any of its peace-building instruments (such as sanctions) that may be invoked.

- Given the centrality of the AU in brokering peace in Africa, regional organisations and regional peace initiatives, the mandates of UN peace operations in Africa should enjoin the leadership of the missions to collaborate/consult with these regional institutions within formal frameworks and not on an ad hoc basis.

Security sector reform

- Strengthen, support and build the capacity of African institutions responsible for playing an oversight role in the security sector such as legislatures, parliamentary portfolios committees and other security reform/oversight committees. Attention should be given to countries emerging from conflict and those with unstable governance institutions.
- Prioritise security in post-conflict African countries. More attention should be given to the creation of professional, efficient and effective armies, police forces and other security bodies. The current focus on downsizing and rightsizing the armed forces and lack of focus on the criminal justice system within the context of massive unemployment and insecurity does not create conditions for newly created security structures to contribute to sustainable peace efforts.
- Regulate the activities of private military companies operating from Europe into Africa and work with African governments in combating mercenary activity.

Arms management and the fight against crime

- Initiate a process towards an international treaty to regulate the arms trade. To this end, broad-based consultations with governments and non-governmental organisations should be conducted. Greater public

transparency in the arms trade is also necessary and would support the inclusion of provisions that promote the exchange of information on arms transfers by African countries. This could be done through the UN Register of Conventional Arms, among others.

- Identify activities that can support states in creating mechanisms for evaluating the impact of small arms in their territory and identify priority areas for action. Support the transfer of success stories from those African countries that have developed national responses with support from the international community.
- Mobilise resource and technical support to enhance the capacity of African countries to conduct research on national and international crimes as well as detection and deterrence.³

Post-conflict reconstruction

- Support the efforts by the NEPAD Peace and Security Committee and others to close the gap between peacekeeping and the commencement of post-conflict reconstruction work.
- Develop realistic alternatives and opportunities for former combatants that enable them to benefit from peace.
- Incorporate a developmental approach to peacekeeping by addressing material drivers of conflicts. Where states have failed or their capacities have been severely eroded, mandates may consider giving transitional administration responsibilities to relevant peace support operations (PSOs).
- Encourage a closer link between development workers and peacekeepers to ensure better coordination and integration of peacekeeping and development tasks.
- Ensure that the energies of donors are focused more on coordinated reconstruction efforts during the immediate post-conflict phase through the development of a single national coordination mechanism. The contribution of the international community to post-conflict reconstruction work in Africa should promote local own-

ership of the process to the extent that this is possible.

- Pay special attention to the youth as part of post-conflict reconstruction plans and programmes, as they may be a threat to peace and constitute the future of countries emerging from conflict.

Conclusion

While we appreciate the daunting nature of Africa's challenges, we believe that concerted international efforts would make a significant contribution to addressing Africa's current status of insecurity and lack of development. Mobilising international support through, inter alia, the G8 and the EU would be an important contribution to the renewal of the continent.

We are mindful that implementation will require the assistance of the international community and the cooperation and efforts of African governments and organisations. While the Commission for Africa is

concerned about what the international community can do for Africa, attention should also be placed on what the continent can do for itself.

Notes

- 1 See an earlier submission from the African Human Security Initiative (AHSI) to the commission: 'From integrated to developmental peacekeeping – breaking the conflict trap', October 2004.
- 2 This, and a number of other recommendations, reflect ongoing work by the ISS and could admittedly be viewed as self-serving.
- 3 A recent extensive study that the Institute did for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) pointed out the virtual absence of reliable data on crime across much of Africa and the problems associated with the limited available data.