



Peace & Security Council Report

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Chad navigates the Déby void

The death of Idriss Déby on 19 April 2021 plunged Chad into political uncertainty. Déby was reportedly killed on the frontline while leading his troops against *Front pour l'Alternance et la Concorde au Tchad* (FACT) rebels en route to N'djamena to overthrow him.

Déby had just been re-elected for what would have been his sixth consecutive term in office, for the ruling party *Mouvement Patriotique du Salut* (Patriotic Movement for Salvation). Déby's rule – spanning almost 30 years – was becoming increasingly contested, most recently through an imminent armed insurgency from the north (south of Libya) in a tense socio-economic climate.

Four months later, following a meeting in May, an African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) meeting in August 2021 took stock of developments in Chad. Here, questions can be asked about what the transitional roadmap can deliver for Chad's competing constituencies and how this fits into PSC expectations.

Following Déby's death, a military transitional committee (MTC) headed by his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, seized power, violating the constitutional provision that the National Assembly head assumes the interim presidency. The MTC argued that the head of the National Assembly relinquished this prerogative, especially to allow the military to fight off the FACT rebels.

The PSC discussed the situation in Chad on two previous occasions. Following a meeting on 22 April 2021, an assessment mission was dispatched to shed light on Déby's death and meet Chad's political and social forces to discuss the way forward.

The 14 May 2021 meeting examined the mission's report, from which the Council noted the unconstitutional nature of the MTC takeover. However, it decided neither to suspend Chad, nor impose sanctions on MTC leaders. Instead it opted to support the transition, asking that it be confined to 18 months. However, this required modification of the transitional charter – the interim 'constitution' – enacted by the MTC, which allows for extension of the process for a further 18 months.

Miscalculation and bad precedent?

In these two meetings, immediate security and stability considerations swayed the decision towards granting the MTC the leeway to oversee Chad, a regional security pillar, in this turbulent political period. This concession seemed to embolden the soldiers in N'djamena, who opposed the arrival of the AU special envoy for the transition in Chad, Senegal's Ibrahima Fall.

Current PSC Chairperson

HE Ewumbue-Monono Churchill,
ambassador of Cameroon to Ethiopia
and permanent representative to the
African Union.

PSC members

Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon,
Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia,
Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi,
Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal

The MTC preferred a more familiar figure, Republic of the Congo's Basile Ikouébé, already a high AU representative in the country, as special envoy of the AU. This seemingly inconsequential episode reveals the AU's true difficulties in getting the MTC to align with the continental organisation's expectations. The MTC has very strategically invoked Chadian state sovereignty in the face of a continental organisation too accommodating to Chadian soldiers following Déby's death.

At the 14 May meeting, the PSC was also concerned about certain provisions of the transitional charter, as they give full powers to the MTC, particularly its chairman Mahamat Idriss Déby. In addition, the possibility remains to extend the arrangement by 18 months, against the PSC's stipulations. The other sticking point is the eligibility of MTC members, Mahamat Idriss Déby in particular, to stand for election.

At this stage, it appears that AU pragmatism on Chad could be detrimental to the process. Clearly, transition means different things to different actors because expectations (and uncertainty) about what Chad is to become vary among stakeholders. The MTC has pursued a strategy to conserve power, which many external partners believe will prevent a complete implosion of Chad with dire implications for regional security.

Clearly, transition means different things to different actors because expectations (and uncertainty) about what Chad is to become differ among stakeholders

Some Chadian opposition parties, civil society organisations and sections of the population see the transition as an opportunity for genuine political change and a better system for the people. The PSC approach attempts a balancing act, but this may not guarantee an acceptable outcome for all Chadian actors and risks preserving the status quo ante.

The NTC, dialogue and the rebels

Two important benchmarks for Chad were the establishment of the National Transitional Council (NTC) and an inclusive national dialogue. The NTC will, among other things, vote on the constitution that will lay the foundations for post-transition Chad. The national dialogue, intended to be inclusive, must lead to the development of new social contract terms, while strengthening national unity and social cohesion.

The NTC is being appointed, with article 63 of the charter giving the MTC president the power to appoint NTC members. Mahamat Idriss Déby has already appointed the ad hoc committee responsible for its establishment, chaired by MTC vice-president, Major General Djimadoum Tiraina. The organising committee for the national dialogue has also been set up to define dialogue modalities in terms of both participation and content, and expected outcomes.

22 April

14 May

PSC MEETINGS ON CHAD

However, the concentration of powers in the individual and the institution presiding over the process – as was the case under Déby – seriously challenges a consensual and peaceful transition. It also casts doubt on the establishment of post-transition institutions that are credible and accepted by all components of Chadian society.

The first implication will be about the quality of the institutions regulating and managing electoral processes. The ad hoc committee recently visited Mali to draw lessons from that country's transition. The selection of members of the NTC and the quality of the national dialogue will be the first full-scale tests of the commitment to an inclusive changeover.

However, it appears that the AU's room to manoeuvre in Chad's transition was seriously undermined by concessions made in the PSC's consecutive decisions. These, despite valid security considerations, favoured calculations of stability above respect for own normative frameworks and the aspirations of Chadians.

The journey must begin to lay the foundations for sincere, credible and transparent institutions to construct and reconstruct Chad

The other real challenge facing Chad is non-state armed groups, including rebels and mercenaries. Mahamat Idriss Déby made an overture to dialogue to the rebels during his Independence Day address on 11 August 2021. But this will take political will on both sides, and substantial and sustained efforts that cannot be consolidated within the remaining transition timeframe.

Clearly, Chad's problems cannot be resolved through and during transition. At best, the journey must begin to lay the foundations for sincere, credible and transparent institutions that can continue the construction and reconstruction that Chad so badly needs.

What can the AU do at this stage?

The MTC has gained the upper hand in the transition thus far. Not only has it imposed on the AU a special envoy of its choice, but it led an aggressive diplomatic campaign reassuring regional and international partners of Chad's military engagements. However, the AU can still rebalance its approach.

It can use suspension, sanctions and other diplomatic tools to ensure progression to civilian rule and genuine political change in Chad. For this, the PSC will have to be firmer on its expectations, particularly the inclusiveness of the national dialogue and the composition of the NTC. These must lead to a consensual constitution, national reconciliation and strong institutions guaranteeing stability. A successful transition in Chad should not lead to more of the same.

Ibrahima Fall

REJECTED AS
AU SPECIAL ENVOY

Africa divided over Israel's accreditation to the AU

African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat's acceptance of Israel's AU accreditation has been opposed by 21 member states. These include some African members of the League of Arab States and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). While these countries are in the minority compared to the total number of AU member states, their number is sufficient to question whether Israel's AU accreditation is the start of a new era in Africa-Israel relations.

The silence of most AU member states may, however, indicate the growing influence of Israel in Africa as a result of changing global political dynamics. Israel's AU accreditation request follows the normalisation in 2020 of its relations with some members of the League of Arab States, including Morocco and Sudan.

Given the opposition, the outcome will be decided at the next Executive Council meeting, on 13 and 14 October. If its accreditation is confirmed, Israel will join a growing list of more than 90 external partners accredited by the AU. It will have limited access to AU documents and sit as an observer when invited to AU meetings. Accredited non-African states and organisations are expected to support the work of the AU in the spirit of its founding principles.

These partners, however, have multiple and often competing interests in engaging with the AU. Beyond discussing whether Israel should be accredited, therefore, the Executive Council should reflect on the contributions of accredited partners to the realisation of AU priorities. The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) should, for its part, review the role and impact of external partners in Africa's efforts to achieve continental peace and security.

Opposition to Israel's accreditation

Southern and northern African countries have objected to what they consider as Mahamat's unilateral decision to receive credentials from Israel's ambassador to Ethiopia, Burundi and Chad without adequate consultation with AU member states.

African members of the League of Arab States shared their collective concern through the League's representative to the AU, albeit opposition from Morocco, Sudan and Somalia. SADC members announced their opposition in a letter addressed to Mahamat following their summit held in Malawi from 17 to 18 August 2021.

The objection to Israel's accreditation centres on political and procedural concerns. The legal and procedural basis for accreditation to the AU is based on the AU's criteria for granting observer status and on a system of accreditation adopted by the Executive Council in 2005.

This system allows non-African states to take part in open sessions of the PSC and in the opening and closing sessions of AU summits. States are also given limited access to AU documents and may be invited by the Commission Chairperson to take part in meetings and make statements, but they cannot vote.

The criteria give the Chairperson the mandate to consider accreditation applications 'bearing in mind the supreme interest of the Union and the known views and concerns of member states'. Only if he is convinced 'there are no reasons why such a request should not be acceded to' shall the accreditation of non-African states be approved.

Member states that have criticised the recent decision claim there are grounds to doubt whether all member states would support Israel's accreditation given the AU's political stance on Palestine. The AU, has called for an '...end to the Israeli occupation that started in 1967, the independence of the state of Palestine on boundaries of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital...'

According to those opposing Mahamat's decision, the AU had rejected two previous accreditation applications by Israel in 2013 and 2016 for this reason. As the situation in Palestine has not changed, they argue, the status of Israel at the AU should also not change. Countries concerned about Israel's accreditation have claimed that it would be against the AU's founding principles and vision. However, these countries, including South Africa and Botswana, have bilateral relations with Israel.

Support for Israel at the AU

In response to the criticism in early-August, Mahamat acknowledged the AU's continued commitment to a two-state solution to the Palestinian issue but argued that accreditation falls within his mandate. He has also pointed out that more than 40 AU member states have bilateral relations with Israel and may not be opposed to Israel's accreditation, hence his decision.

Israel has, in recent years, normalised relations with a number of AU member states. This has been due to its government's renewed interest in Africa, and the shift in regional and world politics in its favour. It normalised relations with Sudan and Morocco in September and December 2020 respectively. This followed a series of cooperation agreements between Israel and Arab states, normalising their relations under what has come to be known as the 'Abraham Accords', mediated by the United States.

Supporters of Israel compare Palestine to Mauritius. The Assembly of the AU heads of state has consistently called for the decolonisation of Palestine from Israeli occupation and the Chagos Archipelago of Mauritius from the United Kingdom (UK). While the two cases vary, they argue that Mauritius, as an AU member, could have received at least as much attention. However, the UK's accreditation to the AU has never come under scrutiny. They thus argue neither should Israel's.

Resolving the standoff

Israel's accreditation has created a standoff between the AUC Chairperson and opposing member states. Both have called for the subject to be included on the agenda of the October 2021 Executive Council meeting. This is in line with the 2005 criteria for granting observer status and for a system of accreditation within the AU. The rules and procedures of accreditation require that if even one member state objects to the accreditation of a non-African state, the Executive Council decides.

In the lead up to the October decision, both opponents and supporters of Israel are lobbying for support. The division within some of Africa's regional blocks is an indication of what to expect at the Executive Council. If member states having bilateral relations with Israel openly oppose its accreditation, more may do so if the issue is put to a secret ballot in October.

With a clear lack of consensus among member states, the issue will be decided through voting. Whether the Executive Council is discussing procedural or substantive concerns of member states will determine the nature of voting. If it agrees the matter is procedural, a simple majority vote by a quorum of two-thirds of member states will decide the fate of Israel's accreditation. Otherwise, a two-thirds majority is required. Accreditation to the AU will be a significant foreign policy triumph for Israel.

While the call continues for a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian impasse, it is plausible to expect Africa-Israel relations to strengthen despite the current uncertainties surrounding Israel's AU status.

13 and 14
October

AU FOREIGN MINISTERS
TO DISCUSS
ISRAEL'S STATUS

Top-level discussions needed before troops march into Mozambique

In early-August, citizens of Mozambican towns along the main routes to northernmost Cabo Delgado province witnessed military convoys that many had not seen in their lifetime.

First Rwandans, then troops from Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho travelled in armoured vehicles to the conflict-ridden province to join the fight against violent extremists. Civilians were seen on video cheering on the African forces coming to help combat the insurgency that has killed up to 3 000 and displaced more than 800 000.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), including Angolan and Tanzanian troops, arrived four months after SADC's April decision to send them – quite speedily compared to similar deployments. The deployment prevented the risk of non-African solutions in the southern African region where very lucrative natural resources prompted fears of what some called the 'Iraqification of Mozambique'.

Increasingly, the AU calls for *ad hoc* support from African countries to solve crises, especially violent extremism

However, while the mission was mobilised relatively quickly and with considerable resources, SADC's arrival came a few weeks after Rwanda had deployed 1 000 troops and police at the invitation of the Mozambican government. This move wasn't coordinated through SADC or the African Union (AU). Its timing, ahead of the arrival of SADC, was described as 'regrettable' by Dr Stergomina Tax, SADC's outgoing executive secretary.

As the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) prepares to discuss the relationship between regional economic communities (RECs) and the AU on 26 August, it should consider the Mozambique situation.

No AU discussions on Mozambique

The way the intervention in Mozambique is currently playing out should prompt the PSC to look at ways to better coordinate responses to conflicts among various actors. While it can be asked why Mozambique and Rwanda did not coordinate their interventions with SADC, the regional body also didn't consult with the AU.

There has been no formal cooperation nor assistance from the AU's Peace Support Operations division to the SADC mission in Mozambique, say AU sources. However, Tax confirmed to *PSC Report* that the AU had been informed, even though his organisation was not legally obliged to do so.

Significantly, there has also to date been no PSC discussion about Mozambique. The issue was tabled in May 2021, but later withdrawn at Mozambique's insistence that this is a matter for SADC. Sources indicate such a dialogue might take place in the next few months.

As the highest AU decision-making body on peace and security between summits, the PSC could debate any support to SAMIM, especially if it goes beyond the planned three months, which is likely.

The African Standby Force (ASF) is coordinated from Addis Ababa and logically the regional standby forces should be able to rely on AU Commission support and convening power. However, questions have been asked for some time about the role of the ASF in dealing with fast-changing and complex situations.

Ad hoc solutions

Increasingly, AU officials call for ad hoc assistance from African countries to solve crises on the continent, especially violent extremism as seen in Mozambique. Deployments against al-Shabaab in Somalia (AMISOM), Boko Haram in Lake Chad Basin (multinational task force) and jihadis in the Sahel (G5-Sahel) were not conducted by RECs. This was because UN involvement was needed or countries responding to the threat were from different RECs.

Such arrangements play a key early response role while RECs reach consensus on deployment. They are a stopgap to be encouraged if it serves the continental peace and security goal.

AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and other officials recently called for African countries outside the Sahel to contribute to the fight against terrorism, but

there was little uptake. The failed African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) was another example of calls for voluntary contributions to fight threats across regional boundaries. ACIRC didn't take off, not due to a lack of volunteers but to the resistance of states to foreign intervention, albeit from other African countries.

Lately, *ad hoc* deployments from countries such as Rwanda seem to be a favoured solution. Before Mozambique, Rwanda also intervened in the Central African Republic to stall the advance of rebels to the capital Bangui – this was not part of any AU or regional force. This was seen by some as a propaganda coup for Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who wishes to project himself as the leader of one of Africa's military big powers.

SADC should be in it for the long haul

Clearly, it is in SADC's interests to ensure long-term peace and stability in southern Africa. It should assist Mozambique to ensure security – perhaps until long after Rwanda has left – and commit to a holistic plan for Cabo Delgado that addresses the dire humanitarian situation.

SADC's actions show it is conscious of the economic imperatives of restoring peace to the area. After several summit meetings during 2020 and early-2021, the decision to deploy the standby force was prompted by a deadly attack on the town of Palma in March this year. This led to the suspension of a multimillion dollar investment by French company Total Energy, the main investor in liquid natural gas in Cabo Delgado.

Rwanda's deployment should have been discussed among SADC, Rwanda, Mozambique and preferably the AU

So far, Rwandan assistance has been successful, at least in short-term gains. Several towns have been retaken from the insurgents, notably the harbour town of Mocimboa da Praia, which was occupied by insurgents for a year.

Rwanda says it is intervening to ensure 'African solutions' and has denied rumours that its action is being financed by either Total Energy or the French government. The AU's Faki Mahamat welcomed the intervention with a Twitter message stating this was 'a concrete act of African solidarity'. This endorsement supported Rwanda's claim that its mission was sanctioned by the AU.

Whatever the case, this issue shows that continental coordination and discussion are more urgently needed than ever. Rwanda's deployment should have been the object of formal discussions and transparent agreements among SADC, Rwanda, Mozambique and preferably the AU.

The AU remains the only continental body that can mediate and convene such discussions to facilitate a better outcome. Importantly, with its vast experience and insight into events on the continent, it can also persuade states to draw up workable plans to overcome the threat of long-term violent extremism.

1 000

RWANDAN TROOPS
IN MOZAMBIQUE

Comment: The West, its competitors and African state building

Over the past 20 years, China has become Africa's single most important trading partner after the European Union. Its trade with African countries has more than tripled and is set to increase substantially, partly due to the Belt and Road Initiative.

China's interest in Africa has had many geopolitical consequences. It has reignited the attention of Western governments in a continent that was widely considered hopeless. It has also paved the way for so-called emerging countries' scramble for Africa. More importantly, it has revamped Africa's geopolitical value, adding the continent to the various battlegrounds between the West and its competitors. This rivalry goes well beyond access to global market shares and technological competition.

Problems with the current global security architecture lie in a fundamental difference over norms and principles of the world order. Among the five permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members, the rivalry often pitches three – France, the United Kingdom and United States – against China and Russia. The three push for a human-centred world order based on liberal values, dialogue and the responsibility to protect. Russia and China promote a state-centred approach, emphasising state sovereignty and state security.

As relatively marginal actors in the UNSC without veto powers, African states are caught in the middle of this competition, revealing the vulnerabilities of their own domestic and international situations.

Safeguarding sovereignty and territoriality

State-building in Africa is shaped by liberal values, even though the exercise of power often contradicts those tenets. However, Africa's young governments seem to support the vision promoted by Russia and China. With their often ill-defined borders and semi-autocratic regimes, states in Africa are sensitive about safeguarding their recently gained sovereignty and territoriality.

Furthermore, non-Western states, such as China and Turkey, have shown that socio-economic gains can be attained without the burden of liberal democracy. This contradicts the West's post-Cold War development discourse. Despite Africa's obvious governance

challenges, the experiences of China and some Asian tigers are attractive to countries on the continent.

The dissonance between the West and its competitors was evident at the UN Security Council's first meeting on the situation in Ethiopia, held on 2 July. Since November 2020, Ethiopia's Federal Government has faced armed opposition from the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Humanitarian organisations can be influenced by the perception of bias towards armed opposition groups

The meeting transcript clearly shows the international community's different perceptions. Notions of 'sovereignty' and 'territorial integrity' were primarily used by African members (Kenya, Tunisia and Niger) and others such as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Vietnam, India and France (a Western exception). They were predictably supported by Russia and China, who consider the situation in Tigray a domestic matter. In contrast, the 'Western' bloc represented by Norway, Estonia, the United Kingdom, United States and France emphasised the alarming humanitarian situation and the urgent need to help civilians.

This dichotomy may explain the widespread view in Ethiopia and elsewhere that Western governments and public opinion support the TPLF, which the media widely portrays as the underdog. Humanitarian organisations can also be influenced by this perception of bias towards armed opposition groups, which complicates their access to people and communities in need.

Consciously or not, the positions of Western governments and civil society organisations could undermine the entrenchment of liberal values and practices in Africa – while increasing the influence of China and Russia. For some African governments, the

notion that civilian suffering is more important than sovereignty and territorial integrity is seen as an attempt to undermine the interests of their young nation states.

Liberalism perceived as a Western project

Western countries and their African counterparts are at different points in their histories. While most in the West completed their state formation processes over centuries, notably through violence, the authority of many African governments is still being contested. The paradox is that liberal democracies can only flourish in sovereign states that control their territories through a monopoly over the legitimate means and use of force.

With this growing difference in the global order, the West should consider alternative approaches to governing societies. Not only do most Western governments struggle with this, but they can be self-righteous in their views, based on the conviction that liberal values are more sustainable.

The promotion of democracy and human rights needs to be more adjusted to the perceptions and needs of the customer

There is a lot of support for liberalism itself – both in Africa and globally. But it is often perceived as a Western project that tends to side with armed groups or opposition parties promoting secession or territorial state fracture in other parts of the world. South-Sudan, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Burundi are recent examples.

Along with economic and security considerations, such views push many African states towards Russia and China, who use the situation to advance their interests across the continent.

Economic liberalism has contributed to socio-economic progress in many parts of the world, including China. African states certainly don't need more authoritarianism. As the prevalent governance model throughout most of the continent's history, it has shown limited results. However, unless Western governments can balance their push for liberal values with support for state building, the modest gains achieved over the past decades in Africa could be eroded.

To use a market analogy – the promotion of democracy and human rights needs to be more adjusted to the perceptions and needs of the customer and less to the anxieties of the supplier.

Entrenching political and economic liberalism is a long-term project that must consider the inherent challenges of state building. Far from being linear, state building is a tortuous, often violent and almost always contested process. And its success should be assessed against the backdrop of the situation in individual countries.

The crisis in Tigray

DIVIDES
INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

PSC Interview: ‘Dialogue is in the DNA of African civilisations’

The African Union (AU) has declared 2021 the ‘Year of Culture, Arts and Heritage’. *PSC Report* spoke to Professor Hamady Bocoum, Director of the Museum of Black Civilisations in Senegal about the initiative and the role of culture in promoting peace in Africa.

Why was it important that the AU dedicate its theme of 2021 to arts, culture and heritage?

This is something the cultural world has waited for. For a very long time we thought that the AU was a club of heads of state and that nothing more interested members.

But throughout this year, all involved in culture have realised that the AU is now acknowledging a fundamental dimension of integration because people first and foremost are about culture. It is through culture that we promote integration and it is through culture that we can erase the political borders inherited from colonisation.

Natural resource wealth is one thing, but what unites a people is culture and it is fundamental to make cultures, arts and heritage priorities

This is something very important, which shows that the AU has a very good vision. Everyone must engage with the organisation on this issue because the greatest resource of Africa is its culture. Natural resource wealth is one thing, but what unites a people is culture and, as unity is achieved through the people, it is fundamental to make culture, arts and heritage priorities.

How, practically, can continental actors support the promotion of arts, culture and heritage on the continent?

It is first about support. In life we don’t live just on bread; we live on culture. If we live in societies looking only for bread, I think we become automatons. Alongside bread, perhaps even before bread, we must support culture and the arts.

The best way to do this is to ensure that there is a real African market for arts and culture. This involves multiple exhibitions, multiple biennials and multiple cultural actions. It entails promoting heritage, providing information on heritage and possibly registering the most important sites on the UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation] World Heritage List.

2021

THE AU'S YEAR
OF CULTURE, ARTS
AND HERITAGE

I also think that Africa should have its own independent heritage list. This would not compete with the World Heritage List, but allow African countries that have in common several heritage sites to- enhance them. Thus middle-class Africans – especially young people, students and schoolchildren – can discover and know this heritage so that it is promoted, protected and enhanced. It can also boost the tourism industry in their countries.

How else can arts and culture contribute to the development and construction of the ‘Africa we want’ described in AU Agenda 2063?

The year 2063 is a bit far away. But everyone is saying today that the coming century is Africa’s, so I think in reality we have what we need to succeed. In my country [Senegal], almost 80% of the population is under 25, so we have youth in addition to the diverse raw materials that the world needs. We also have intelligence (Africans are not ignorant) and creativity. So if we really believe that this is Africa’s century, we need Africans at the heart of creativity, including artistic.

If Africa wants peace, it will not gain it through arms, but through culture, dialogue among cultures and reconciliation

Personally, I have no fear of this not happening when I see the biennials in Africa, the creativity the dynamism and the bubbling around the arts and culture. I am not talking only of Africans on the continent, but of the African diaspora. I think that Africa is showing the direction in creativity, in dreams and their fulfilment, and in achievement.

For this reason, I think that those involved in culture are doing their job and that states should support them. It is necessary that the AU , but also sub-regional bodies such as ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] and UEMOA [West African Economic and Monetary Union, give culture prominence. It is culture that helps us better understand conflicts, violence and radicalisms and how to neutralise them.

How can African arts, culture and heritage foster and promote a culture of peace and tolerance across the continent?

In my opinion, it is very important to consult history. Through a work such as that of Cheick Anta Diop on the cultural unity of Africa, we realise that what unites us is infinitely more important than what divides us. We also learn that each time people meet in Africa, instead of creating conflict and confrontation, we create kinship that allows dialogue and consultation. We do not conflict with each other but we dialogue.

There were very few wars of conquest in Africa, among Africans, before the modern period. In the past, Africans did not go to war with each other. They met, of course, and there were certainly conflicts, but above all they had a dialogue.

Cheikh
Anta Diop

WORKED ON AFRICA’S
CULTURAL UNITY

Africa has developed what we can call the civilisations of encounter and dialogue, which, in my opinion, should be revisited. It is through revisiting this history, this African culture, to show that we have been the precursors of civilisations of encounter and dialogue that we will better understand what is happening to us. I think conflict and confrontation are much more Indo-European values than African values.

I know of very few sectors, if any, in Africa, especially in ancient Africa, where war and confrontation were the only means of settling disputes. In Africa, we have had a lot of dialogue, we have done a lot of synthesis, we have held a lot of meetings. And it is not by chance that we invented the palaver tree under which we discuss anything and everything to try to find pragmatic solutions.

What has been the contribution of culture to peace and reconciliation processes in Africa?

In Senegal, we had a lot of problems in Casamance, with liberation movements and violence for more than 30 years. The military and the rebels clashed, then the cultural actors entered. They said to the belligerents ... listen, we are all the same. Groups such as the Serer, the Mandingo went to the south to the Diola ... carrying a similar message ... 'linear kinship gives us the right to ask you to calm down'.

Today Senegal is resolving the issue of Casamance by using, among other things, the vector of culture. I think this is valid all over Africa because when you map Africa, you have a number of cultural layers where people have met and been able to live together.

The Fulani, for example, are present from Dakar to Djibouti and they cross the entire Sudano-Sahelian strip. They have always had a dialogue with other populations, whether sedentary or nomadic. Why is the problem arising today? First because we accepted the political borders drawn up in Berlin [Berlin Conference]. Then there was climate change, which brought people who lived in the plateaus down to the rivers, as in the Dogon country, and along routes to new pasturelands.

To resolve these challenges, we have the cultural resources to put parties together, discuss and dialogue. And I think that if Africa wants peace, it will not gain it through arms, but through culture, dialogue among cultures and reconciliation. Culture is, consequently, extremely important. Look at the very recent and very political example of Côte d'Ivoire. Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara, fought, there were lots of deaths, but where is the solution?

It is in dialogue, encounter and reconciliation, which I believe are in the DNA of African civilisations. We are always ready to meet, to dialogue. Nelson Mandela, when he took power in South Africa, didn't say we are going to get revenge. He said we are going to tell the truth and we are going to be reconciled.

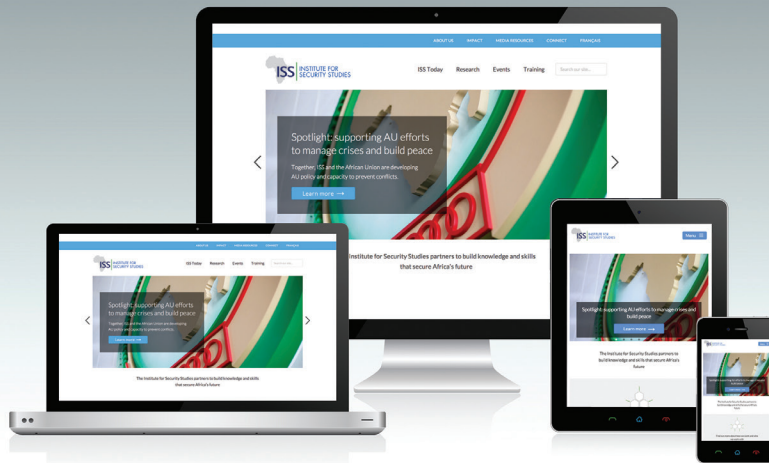
Such an example is a very important model that Africa is giving to the world. The future is not in confrontation and in war; it is in dialogue, in recognition and respect of the other, and in the civilisation of encounter.

Nelson
Mandela

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The *Peace and Security Council Report* analyses developments and decisions at the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC). The monthly publication is the only one of its kind dedicated to providing current analysis of the PSC's work. It is written by a team of ISS analysts in Addis Ababa.

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The publication of the *PSC Report* is made possible through support from the Government of the Netherlands, the Government of Denmark and the Hanns Seidel Foundation. The ISS is also grateful for the support of the following members of the ISS Partnership Forum: the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the European Union and the governments of Canada, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the USA.

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