



FACT SHEET

The Involvement of the Private Security Sector in African Conflicts, Peacekeeping Missions, and Humanitarian Assistance Operations

I Background Information

The use of private security/military companies (PMSCs) in Africa's conflicts and post-conflict situations has in the last decade tremendously grown in prominence. Some of the challenges, which PMSCs have posed in Africa's conflicts range from their violation of human rights, flagrant violation of International Humanitarian law to lack of accountability and their involvement in mercenary activities within the continent. Very few African States have effective regulatory frameworks (if at all) that are aimed at addressing the privatization of security phenomenon. Among other things, one of the reasons for the absence of such regulatory frameworks stems from the fact that there is no international convention that seeks to address this phenomenon, which has become a serious cause for concern. There is, therefore, a great need for the regulation and control of PMSCs at the national, regional and international levels.

Under the auspices of the Security Sector Governance (SSG) Programme, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) is undertaking a project titled 'The Involvement of the Private Security Sector in African Conflicts, Peacekeeping, and Humanitarian Assistance Operations'. This project seeks to critically investigate the role of the private security sector in African conflicts, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance operations in order to inform the development and application of appropriate norms and standards, including the revision of the 1977 OAU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa.

II Specific Objectives

The project has the following specific objectives: -

- i. *To enhance an informed understanding of the role of the private sector in African conflicts, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance operations (past and present) in the following African States: -*
 - a) African Conflicts - Angola, Sierra Leone and Sudan
 - b) Peacekeeping Missions - Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Sudan
 - c) Humanitarian Assistance - Cote d'Ivoire, Somalia and Sudan
- ii. *To critically explore the trend(s) in the outsourcing of non-core military functions as well as the increased role of the private sector particularly in UN and AU peacekeeping missions in Africa; its impact in the African States subject to the study, particularly in the logistic design and concept of the African Standby Force and the UN-AU hybrid mission (UNAMID).*
- iii. *To explore the interplay between the private security industry and gender with particular focus on women.*
- iv. *To continue to positively influence the policy processes and the development of regulatory frameworks by intergovernmental organizations at the international, regional and sub-regional levels as represented by the United Nations, the African Union and the RECS, respectively.*



III Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the project are as follows: -

- i. An improved understanding of the role of private security sector in African conflicts, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance operations in Africa.
- ii. Contributing towards an appropriate regulatory regime for private military sector engagement in Africa including the elimination of mercenary activity, impacting on the revision of the 1977 OAU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa.
- iii. Achieve momentum and input towards the development of an appropriate legislative and regulatory framework for the regulation of private security companies in Africa including the development of normative standards by PMSC users in African conflicts, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance operations.

IV The ISS-SSG Private Security Project

In response to the increase of PMSCs' involvement in African conflicts, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance operations, the ISS started the project on the *Regulation of the Private Security Sector*, (focusing on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa and Uganda) which was completed in 2008. This project was co-funded by the United Nations University (UNU) and The International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The project was then succeeded by this current project on the *Involvement of the Private Security Sector in African Conflicts, Peacekeeping Missions and Humanitarian Assistance operations*, which is to be completed in 2011.

The project shall be executed in three phases, which will focus on three thematic areas, namely: - private security sector in African Conflicts (2009); private security sector in peacekeeping missions (2010); and private security sector in humanitarian assistance operations (2011). African States to be studied under these three themes are as follows: African Conflicts - Angola, Sierra Leone and Sudan; Peacekeeping Missions - Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Sudan; and Humanitarian Assistance - Cote d'Ivoire, Somalia and Sudan.

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